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available avenues of signals intelligence to avoid political backlash of collateral damage that hinders the strategic goals of US foreign policy. At the same time, as recent operations like the Israeli targeted killing of high-ranking member of Hamas in Dubai, as well as the allegedly-Chinese breach of the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) show, human spies must overcome newfound operational security obstacles drawing from emerging counterintelligence capabilities with roots in the advent of digital technology. Finally, by looking at the US intelligence collection operation following the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, and the US sabotage operation against Iran’s nuclear program revealed in 2010, it is evident there is need for a reorientation of human intelligence from paramilitary operations towards a refocus on traditional human spying at the frontline that embraces an enabling role for signals intelligence to facilitate access to hard targets. While the role of human intelligence has undergone a brief period of uncertainty over its role in US intelligence collection following the growth of signals intelligence capabilities, it must remain at the forefront of efforts abroad, particularly to gain access to hardened adversaries.

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In Africa, China is waging an insurgent campaign using means of unrestricted warfare to compel the US to accept its interests. Increasing China’s strategic autonomy entails undermining US legitimacy and reducing its ability to influence events. This is a direct and important challenge to the United States that hasn’t been properly assessed to date. The stakes in Africa are set to increase just as the Chinese presence grows. On a material level, African markets and rare earth minerals will play an increasingly prominent role in the global economy. On an ideological level, the determinants of legitimacy are still up for debate in Africa. The US should marginalize China by: attacking the adversary’s strategy by forcing African nations to choose between the US and China; undermining its ways through subversive action; acting rapidly before the insurgency grows; and expanding US action beyond intergovernmental relations to redefine governance around effectiveness. The US strategy should reinforce China’s isolation as the key to denying it the legitimacy it seeks. Compellence and a compelling ideology are key tools that can be adapted to fit the Westphalian-Plus construct that exists in Africa today.
Did Repressive Tactics Redeem a Flawed Soviet Counterinsurgency in Western Ukraine?

Nicholas Fedyk

Counterinsurgency best practices often emphasize the “hearts and minds” approach: that is, understanding and addressing why insurgents take up arms and organize resistance movements. The Soviet’s experience combating the Ukrayins’ka Povstans’ka Armiya (Ukrainian Insurgent Army, or UPA) tells a dramatically different story. In their efforts to restore peace in western Ukraine, the Soviets utilized ruthless, indiscriminate tactics in service of a narrow strategy based on Communist class warfare theory. While some Ukrainians did ally with the Soviets, the brutality of deportations, mass arrests, and torture alienated locals and did not adequately address root causes, such as ethnic hatreds and social instability. But the story does not end there. In fact, the Soviets achieved a military victory primarily by infiltrating the UPA’s ranks through superior human intelligence. By 1950, they had driven the UPA back underground, where it was unable to incite further resistance among the exhausted, repressed population.

This paper will proceed in four parts. Part I identifies the UPA’s history and complex root causes. Part II explains how and why Soviet leadership ignored these root causes in favor of a communist-inspired, class-based counterinsurgency strategy. Part III examines how the Soviets implemented this strategy through four primary methods: controlling the population through mass deportations and agrarian reforms; liquidating nationalist institutions, such as the Ukrainian Catholic Church; recruiting Ukrainians to local militias; and developing invasive human intelligence networks that disrupted the UPA’s internal cohesion. In conclusion, Part IV evaluates the successes of Soviet counterinsurgency, and whether repressive tactics ultimately redeemed their strategic shortcomings. While ruthless and alienating, Soviet methods collectively exposed flaws within the UPA, provoking it to commit several grave mistakes that led to its demise.

Introduction

The Ukrayins’ka Povstans’ka Armiya (Ukrainian Insurgent Army, or UPA) emerged in western Ukraine in the 1940s, a period of dramatic regional instability. A variety of goals and desires motivated insurgents to take up arms against Soviet rule, including economic and political disenfranchisement, ethnic hatreds, and personal insecurities. The insurgents posed a direct challenge to the Soviet’s Communist vision for western Ukraine, which promised a massive disruption in traditional ways of life, like collectivized agriculture. The Soviets responded with
overwhelming force and indiscriminate tactics; instead of picking out the insurgents one-by-one, they sought to collectively punish the UPA and its supporters, even at the price of losing local popular support. What were the second and third-order effects of these tactics? How did the Soviets identify and respond to setbacks, if at all? How did losses in manpower and territory affect the morale and discipline of UPA insurgents? And, perhaps most importantly, how can the overall success of Soviet counterinsurgency in western Ukraine be evaluated? These questions comprise the focus of this paper.

I: Root Causes of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army

The UPA originated in Galicia, a region of western Ukraine characterized by dramatic and violent political instability. As a borderland between empires, a number of political powers fought over Galicia, including Poland, Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany. Aggravated by repeated and repressive occupations, Ukrainian nationalist leaders, most notably Stepan Bandera and Andriy Melnik, began supporting the establishment of a Ukraine free from foreign rule. To this end, they established the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) in 1929, a group of intellectuals and militants who pledged support for a Ukrainian state independent from Soviet rule.¹ Throughout the 1930s, they assassinated local Polish and Soviet administrators and spread nationalist propaganda to inspire popular support against occupying powers. Its popularity and size grew significantly from 1929 to 1942, exerting its authority through a loosely organized network of militant bands. In 1942, these bands united and formed the UPA.² Like Bandera and Melnik, its leaders were predominantly middle and lower-middle class urban nationalists, many of whom were educated, well-connected to nationalist cadres, and effective community organizers.

UPA rank and file members were mostly younger peasants who had complex and varied motivations for taking up arms. Nationalist ideology inspired some, as did the heroic tales of men like Bandera, Melnik, and their ancestors. Others were inspired by ethnic hatreds; UPA writings and propaganda evoked fascist sympathies that supported the ethnic cleansing of Jews,

¹ In 1929, the OUN published their official “Ten Commandments,” which included: “attain a Ukrainian State, or die in battle for it;” “treat the enemies of Your Nation with hatred and ruthlessness;” and “aspire to expand the power, wealth, and glory of the Ukrainian State.” See “The Ten Commandments of the Ukrainian Nationalist,” in Ukraine during World War II, ed. Yury Boshyk (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986), 173.

² Estimates of its size vary, partly due to the elusive definition of “insurgent.” The UPA’s armed strength peaked in 1944, with perhaps 25,000-40,000 guerrilla fighters in its ranks at that time. See Alexander Statiev, The Soviet Counterinsurgency in the Western Borderlands (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 106; Boshyk, Ukraine during World War II, 30.
Poles, and other minorities in the hopes of establishing an ethnically pure Ukraine. The tense historical relationship between Ukraine and Russia provided a number of other motivations. While the Red Army claimed to be liberating and protecting their brother Slavs in western Ukraine, many locals viewed the Soviets not as friends, but as foreign invaders. Indeed, western Ukrainians, particularly those in Galicia, had far fewer ethnic, cultural, and economic ties to Russia than other regions that the Red Army reoccupied in 1944 during their final push toward Berlin. Memories of past Bolshevik and Soviet occupations were grim, characterized by unpopular communist reforms, high taxation, deportations, and police violence. The Soviets were unpopular even in retreat: when fleeing the invading Germany army in 1941, they conducted mass execution of inmates and political prisoners, killing over 11,000 in their jail cells. They burned warehouses and farming equipment, crippling those Galicians who stayed behind. Western Ukrainians had plenty of reasons to fear another Soviet occupation in 1944.

Finally, many UPA insurgents were less motivated by nationalism or hatred as by a basic concern for their own welfare and security. In a period characterized by frequent invasion and occupation—the Bolsheviks in World War I, Poland in the interwar years, the Soviets in 1939, Germany in 1941, and Soviets again in 1944—it is likely that Galician peasants and farmers preferred whatever system guaranteed the most stability. As Part III will explain, Soviet counterinsurgency was profoundly destabilizing. Under Soviet occupation, Ukrainians saw their property collectivized and redistributed, their families deported and interrogated, and their cultural institutions liquidated and Sovietized. Many cooperated with these measures because they had few alternatives, but others supported the UPA, especially in 1944 and 1945 when it provided the best hope for resistance.

II: Soviet Counterinsurgency Doctrine

Though facing an inspired and diverse insurgency in western Ukraine, Soviet counterinsurgency developed around a narrow premise: that awakening class-consciousness would rally the Ukrainian peasants to the Soviets’ side. Based on the communist theory of class warfare between the bourgeoisie (called kulaks in Ukraine) and proletariat, this premise shaped

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3 Poles and Jews accuse the UPA of not only supporting ethnic cleansing, but actively carrying out pogroms against them, often in cooperation with the invading German army. The Volhynian Massacre in eastern Galicia, where tens of thousands of Poles were slaughtered in 1943, is among the most famous and contested. See “The tragic massacre in Volyn remembered,” Economist, June 15, 2013, http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2013/07/polish-ukrainian-relations

counterinsurgency strategy against the UPA and had a profound impact on tactics and targeting. Viewed through this class-based lens, enemies and allies were easy to distinguish: the counterinsurgent had to simply determine the class of an individual, and then implement social reforms to “transform the conservative ‘petty bourgeoisie’ into a progressive rural proletariat.”

Meanwhile, there was no official Soviet counterinsurgency doctrine and few military manuals to implement. While the Bolsheviks repressed several insurgencies years earlier, including the Tambov peasant rebellion in 1919-1921, these experiences produced little institutional knowledge that shaped future strategy. Indeed, the Bolshevik party banned the study of foreign revolution and insurgency altogether, believing that class was the fundamental nexus around which all insurgencies revolved—regardless of local peculiarities and root causes. Mikhail Tukhachevsky, a leading Soviet military commander and author who published several writings on counterinsurgency, was one exception. After brutally crushing the Tambov rebellion, he published “Struggle with Counter-revolutionary Uprisings” in the journal War and Revolution in 1926, in which he explained the importance of understanding local characteristics and working by, with, and through the population. Yet, such local engagement was secondary to class-based warfare, which Tukhachevsky encouraged through “the eviction of bandit families, the confiscation and redistribution of their property, the assumption of collective guilt and widespread use of detention and deportation.” The Soviets used these same blunt instruments against the UPA in the 1940s.

With the rise of Stalinist authoritarianism in the mid-1920s, this class-based strategy became more entrenched. Josef Stalin’s chronic paranoia over foreign infiltration and sabotage, epitomized by his Great Terror campaign in the 1930s and frequent internal cleansing of dissidents, created a toxic environment in Moscow that was anathema to change. Dissent could mean political suicide, an environment characteristic of many authoritarian regimes. While the Communist party maintained a strong grip over counterinsurgency strategy, its immunity from

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5 Statiev, Soviet Counterinsurgency, 9.
7 Ian Beckett, Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies (London: Routledge, 2004), 50. Emphasis added by the author of this article (Nicholas Fedyk).
8 The Great Terror refers to a period of particularly intense surveillance, imprisonments, and executions orchestrated by Josef Stalin from 1936-1938.
public pressure and choking of dissent inhibited its ability to adapt to changing circumstances and correct strategic and tactical shortcomings.9

The Communist party’s rigid bureaucracy and decision-making hierarchy further entrenched this strategy. Communist leaders had a penchant for implementing party-led “campaigns” with arbitrary deadlines. For example, Nikita Khrushchev (then the leading secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party) ordered provincial authorities in January 1945 to suppress UPA resistance within six weeks, yet failed to define what constituted suppression, whether six weeks was enough time, and whether repressive measures served the Soviet’s ultimate strategic goals.10 These short timelines encouraged local officials to demonstrate they were doing everything possible to meet their deadlines, including fabricating numbers and using excessively harsh measures that escalated violence.11

These campaigns were often the product of internal struggles within the Communist party, characterized by intense inter-service rivalry and frequent interference by party bosses who cared more about their political careers than counterinsurgency goals. The Prosecutor’s Office, tasked with punishing crimes committed by Soviet officials and enforcing Soviet laws in the borderlands, was especially handicapped by this struggle. Believing that prosecutors were “enemies of the people” whose “overzealousness” aided UPA insurgents, party bosses frequently interfered with investigations, impeded the trials of their friends and party allies, and vetoed the proper administration of justice.12

III: Soviet Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Practice

The Soviets carried out their class-based, authoritarian counterinsurgency against the UPA through several mechanisms that attempted to ruthlessly pacify the population. They were both population and enemy-centric; since the Soviets had a very broad definition of “enemy” and believed that expansive social reforms were prerequisites for pacification, the population writ large was often the prime target. Furthermore, they were largely coercive. As Tukhachevsky wrote, “the morale of the bandits can be broken only if they know suppression will be conducted

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9 Daniel Byman, “Going to War with the Allies You Have” (Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), 18. Byman exposes several flaws in the authoritarian approach to counterinsurgency, including inaccurate intelligence, illegitimacy, and the inability to win over popular support.
10 Statiev, Soviet Counterinsurgency, 304. See excerpt from Khrushchev’s letter to the Ukrainian provincial party committee (March 1945).
11 Ibid., 305.
12 Ibid., 307. See excerpt from a December 1946 meeting of the district party committees, which proclaims: “We should fight those who violate revolutionary legality, but at the same time, we have to fight overzealousness.”
consistently and with cruel persistency...Once a threat has been made, it should be fulfilled even if it means cruelty.” The mechanisms outlined in this section embody this attitude.

**Agrarian Reform and Deportation**

Agrarian reform was a vital instrument of Soviet counterinsurgency. Drawing inspiration from the original Bolshevik Decree of Land in 1917, the Soviets attempted to nationalize all arable land, confiscate it from *kulak* landowners and the church, and redistribute it among peasants. This policy stemmed directly from communist class warfare theory: by empowering peasants with new property, Soviets hoped they would spark civil violence against the *kulaks* and increase peasant support for counterinsurgency. In other words, land redistribution was supposed to transform counterinsurgency into civil war.

Naturally, many *kulaks* resented these reforms, but Soviet authorities forced their compliance by threatening deportation. In noncompliant areas, Soviets systematically deported entire villages and families who refused to move from their land or had ties to suspected insurgents. Deportees were mostly sent to Siberia, sentenced to hard labor in the mining and industrial camps scattered throughout the miserable terrain. Since *kulaks* were traditional class enemies of communism, and thus assumed to be UPA members or sympathizers, deportation served two objectives: eliminating a nascent UPA “fifth column” and facilitating collectivization.

These population control mechanisms yielded mixed results. While land redistribution formed the backbone of communist doctrine, it was more attractive in theory than in practice. Redistribution produced numerous parcels of fragmented farms; peasants with large land plots

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14 In his directive, “Intensification of the Struggle against the Ukrainian-German Nationalists,” Nikita Khrushchev ordered the police to conduct a comprehensive census of “every man and woman.” Those with unknown whereabouts were immediately suspected of insurgent activity. Families and friends of suspected insurgents were likewise carefully monitored, and collective punishment was encouraged in the spirit of Tukhachevsky. Cited in Statiev, *Soviet Counterinsurgency*, 173.

15 Soviets also encouraged the repatriation of ethnic and national communities living in other Soviet republics and satellite states, especially those along the Polish-Ukrainian border. By persuading ethnic Poles to return to Poland, for example, Soviet authorities in Ukraine hoped to eliminate the possibility of Polish secession within Ukrainian territory. Between 1944 and 1946, some 1 million Poles emigrated from western Ukraine into Poland. In general, Ukrainians were far less likely to repatriate voluntarily; news of deportation and collectivization spread quickly across borders, sowing fear among refugee communities. The UPA also sabotaged Soviet repatriation campaigns by burning the property of repatriated communities, destroying railways, and assassinating repatriation committee members. See “Why the Displaced Persons Refuse to Go Home,” Document 15 in Boshyk, *Ukraine During World War II*, 214; Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 483.
soon found that they had neither the laborers nor the equipment to cultivate them, much of which was destroyed in World War II. This led to a steep drop in overall agricultural production, a decrease in living standards, and the abandonment of traditional agricultural methods, such as private backyard gardens.\textsuperscript{16} To make matters worse, drought and famine struck in 1946. These poor conditions alienated local villagers and farmers, who accused Soviet authorities of poor planning and ignoring local needs.

In addition, agrarian reforms and deportations had only minimal effects on UPA recruitment. While a large number of \textit{kulaks} were deported, the Soviets overestimated how many \textit{kulaks} actually supported the insurgency, whose ranks were largely comprised of middle and lower-class peasants. As Soviets continued to repress and persecute \textit{kulaks} regardless of their sympathies for the UPA, more \textit{kulaks} began to take up arms. Indeed, the Soviets even barred them from joining the collectivized farms, leaving them with little choice but to resist.\textsuperscript{17}

Despite these drawbacks, the Soviets managed to convince some insurgents to surrender by threatening to deport their families. Some families even turned their own relatives over to the police, fearing for their safety. The Soviets also granted amnesties, sometimes without deadlines, to surrendered insurgents and their relatives, especially to peasants. Believing that they had simply been tricked by \textit{kulaks} into joining the insurgency, Soviet officials were remarkably lenient to peasants who laid down their arms, and treated them as natural class allies. Many later served as agents against their former UPA comrades, as discussed below.

\textit{Liquidating the Ukrainian Catholic Church}

The NKVD (\textit{Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del}, or Russian internal police) threatened, harassed, and eventually liquidated civil society organizations in western Ukraine that promoted anti-Soviet sentiments among the population. These include scouting troops, traditional Ukrainian heritage schools, and non-Orthodox churches and religious communities. The systematic transformation of religious life is an especially vivid example of how the Soviets manipulated cultural institutions to root out UPA sympathies. In western Ukraine, the Ukrainian Catholic Church (or Uniate Church) was the religious group most directly opposed to Soviet occupation. The Uniates’ history and theology starkly contrasted both the state-supported

\begin{footnotes}
\item[16] By 1950, grain production was only 60 percent of the 1940 level. See Subtelny, \textit{Ukraine: A History}, 485.
\end{footnotes}
Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and the wider communist agenda: they had close ecumenical ties to western Catholicism and the fervently anti-communist Pope Pius XII.\(^{18}\)

While the Soviets initially believed that the Uniate Church could pacify its followers and even attempted reconciliation with the Vatican, its clergy's continued aid for insurgents convinced them to adjust their strategy.\(^{19}\) Indeed, clergy regularly delivered sermons condemning godless communism, and a minority even collected supplies for the UPA or took up arms themselves.\(^{20}\) In 1945, Soviet intelligence agents began gathering incriminating evidence against these clergy and employing writers to slander and intimidate them in local and national newspapers.\(^{21}\) In 1946, the Soviets officially incorporated the Uniate Church into the ROC, destroying its existence as an official institution and driving many of its faithful underground. Official incorporation occurred through the 1946 Synod of Lviv, when Uniate leaders—many gathered under the penalty of death—denounced their church's support for Germans, the UPA, and other enemies of the state, liquidated the entire church hierarchy, issued arrests for uncooperative clergy, and authorized the transfer of thousands of Uniate parishes to the ROC.

Uniate believers recognized this reorganization was a sham, and believers and nonbelievers alike resented the Soviets' widespread arrest and exile of uncooperative clergy, who were highly regarded for their resistance. Many priests and believers who converted did so only to save their lives, and an underground church survived through the counterinsurgency period—and indeed outlasted the Cold War. The Soviets underestimated the enduring influence of Uniate clergy; their persecution elevated them to martyrdom status.\(^{22}\) The ROC priests imported to western Ukraine were not substitutes for Uniate clergy, but imposters. It was “impossible to find a single person who would approve the Soviet regime after the arrests of the clergy in

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19 In fact, Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky, the Uniate head from 1901 to 1944, demonstrated sincere intentions to cooperate with the Soviets, as did many of his fellow hierarchs. While they defended Ukrainian nationalism, they condemned the UPA's resort to violence and terrorism and encouraged them to “return from the wrong path.” See Bohdan Bociurkiw, *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Soviet State* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1996), 78, 85.
21 Communist writer Iaroslav Halan was one of the most well-known of these writers. His piece “With a Cross or a Knife?” attacked the Uniate Church for deliberately sabotaging the Soviet Union and the ROC. See Bociurkiw, *Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church*, 107-108.
22 The Catholic Church is now in the process of canonizing several Uniate leaders (i.e. declaring them to be saints), most especially Metropolitan Sheptytsky.
Galicia… What did they attain by arresting [Metropolitan Josef] Slipyi, the Bishop Budka, and others? Nothing, except killing good will even among those who had had it.”

This repression coincided with the reemergence of the ROC as a cultural and political force in the Soviet Union, whose social capital added legitimacy to the Soviet’s agenda. ROC hierarchs signed pledges outlining their role in inspiring popular support and spreading propaganda; in one such pledge, they agreed to direct “clergy toward loyalty to the Soviet power and to instruct ordinary believers in the same spirit,” “forbid the clergy categorically to use the pulpit for anti-Soviet propaganda,” and to “preclude priests from participating in partisan formations or supporting them in any way.” ROC clergy also encouraged their congregations to support amnesty and turn their insurgent relatives in to the NKVD.

Raising Local Militias

Local militias armed and trained by the NKVD—called “destruction battalions” or “neighborhood watch units”—played a critical role in the Soviets’ clear and hold strategy beginning in 1945. Ukrainians had various motivations for joining these militias. While anti-Soviet hatred was rampant, UPA tactics began to alienate many Ukrainians as the insurgency progressed. In addition, the militias provided an alternative to being drafted into the Red Army, which was fighting a notoriously bloody defensive on the Eastern Front of World War II. Finally, while some actually joined due to their support for Soviet reforms, many were thugs who enrolled merely for their own self-interest. Armed and granted the authority to maintain local order.

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24 Banned and persecuted by Soviet authorities in the 1920s and 1930s, Stalin reengaged the ROC during the Second World War and eventually ordained it the official state church of the Soviet Union, emphasizing the symbiosis between the church and the communist government. At the expense of its rival denominations—including Catholics, Muslims, Jews, and other religious minorities—the ROC expanded its membership, ordained new bishops and priests, rebuilt monasteries, and established new schools for religious education.


26 “Clear and hold” is a common counterinsurgency operation. First, the military eliminates active insurgents in a strategically important town or region. It then transfers authority to local police units, who are responsible for maintaining law and order.
order, militia members frequently harassed and looted the local population, even after receiving benefits like pensions, rations, wages, and uniforms starting in 1945 and 1946.27

While militia members’ loyalties and motivations were diverse and often nefarious, the Soviets accepted these risks for several reasons. First, they provided essential local manpower that supplemented the Soviets’ scant resources in remote areas. With insurgencies active throughout the Soviet borderlands, they simply did not have enough troops or police to secure and hold all of their territories, especially in the difficult, mountainous, wooded terrain of Galicia and western Ukraine. NKVD security divisions could sweep and clear these areas, but without permanent security patrols and garrisons, the UPA could quickly reorganize and emerge from hiding, taking advantage of a new power vacuum once the Soviets moved on to another village.

The militias served an important psychological purpose. The very fact that Ukrainians themselves volunteered to join them made it more difficult for the UPA to promote the Ukraine-versus-Russia narrative. Persuading Ukrainians to monitor and fight their own people was another way the Soviets hoped to transform their counterinsurgency into a civil war. This had profound psychological effects on the insurgents: How could they claim to be fighting on behalf of Ukraine when their fellow countrymen allied with the Soviets? As one insurgent lamented, “Nothing is more painful than to see our own dog infected with Bolshevik rabies. NKVD knows well what it can attain by urging one brother on another.”28

However, several factors limited the militias’ effectiveness. At the tactical level, they were poorly trained and poorly equipped. The official “Training Manual for Destruction Battalion Privates” limited their training to 64 hours, which included only six hours for essential counterinsurgency tactics like patrolling, forest combing, and sentry duties.29 Many recruits were peasant farmers who had little to no experience firing a weapon, yet the manual reserved only four hours for shooting practice. Furthermore, their scattered motivations resulted in poor discipline and unit cohesion. These weaknesses proved disastrous when pitted against the UPA, which was better trained, armed, and motivated in most head-to-head skirmishes and battles in 1945-1946. The UPA successfully infiltrated militia ranks, turned members into valuable intelligence agents, and looted their weapons and supplies.30

28 Volodymyr Serhiichuk, ed. OUN-UPA v roky viiny [OUN-UPA in the war years] (Kyiv: Dnipro, 1996), 421.
30 Statiev, Soviet Counterinsurgency, 221-222.
Despite their underperformance, the Soviets recommitted to these local militias. The Ukrainian Communist party ordered a brutal purge in 1946 meant to weed out “OUN [Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists] members, bandit accomplices, kulaks, double agents, traitors, marauders, and demoralized elements.” The purges arrested or expelled nearly 50 percent of militia members. While the NKVD provided better training and indoctrination to those who survived the purge, discipline remained the militias’ greatest problem. Even as their tactical proficiencies improved, they operated in remote regions that lacked central authority, meaning their actions and abuses were difficult to monitor or punish. Efforts to limit abuses were haphazard and often depended on the personality of Soviet commanders, who were reluctant to penalize their own men. In addition, the broad, class-based identification of enemies facilitated widespread violence. A “class enemy” could be a priest who refused to convert, an uncooperative farmer, a draft evader—ultimately, it was up to the counterinsurgent to decide culpability. In addition, wanton acts of violence, including rapes, arsons, murders, and beatings—many perpetrated in a state of drunkenness—horrified local communities. Committed by men wielding Soviet authority, these crimes and abuses left villages and peasants with a nasty, brutal image of counterinsurgency, making it increasingly difficult to win over popular support.

**Intelligence Networks**

While the NKVD raised local militias, it conducted its most effective policing and intelligence gathering when it managed operations itself. Both policing and intelligence collection were critical elements of Soviet counterinsurgency; this was especially true as the UPA transitioned from employing larger, battalion-sized units to smaller teams living in undercover cells practicing more traditional guerilla tactics. Insurgents constructed elaborate hideouts, bunkers, and supply rooms dotted throughout the forested landscape, which were difficult to detect without precise intelligence. Insurgents were very resourceful and creative: “Set behind stoves, under or through dog houses, smoke houses, churches and church altars, inside wells,

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33 These crimes were sometimes documented and sent to NKVD headquarters. Reports reveal that discipline was a problem across many militia operations, not only in Ukraine but in the Baltics and Moldova, where counterinsurgencies were ongoing. In one report, a Ukrainian district party secretary commented that the militiamen were engaged “solely in plundering,” a state of affairs echoed many times over. See Volodymyr Serhiichuk, *Sami sebe zvoiuvaly [They patrolled themselves]* (Kyiv: Ukrains’ka Vydavnycya Spilka, 2003), 17-18. Cited in Statiev, *Soviet Counterinsurgency*, 227.
under and through trees, rocks, cliffs, and any other imaginable fortification, the hideouts were designed especially to resist discovery even in the most vigilant search.”

The NKVD responded in several ways. They formed smaller police units of their own to avoid detection by the UPA and blend in with local farmers and villagers. They also began carrying lighter, more mobile weapons for long-distance patrols across rough terrain. They organized more ambushes, performed search-and-destroy missions, used radios to coordinate operations, and shared intelligence with other police teams operating in neighboring villages. As the Soviets devoted more attention and resources to these efforts following the collapse of Germany in 1945, these adjustments reaped rewards. From 1945-1946, some 28,000 hideouts were uncovered in western Ukraine and insurgents began surrendering in greater numbers.

However, these tactics became less effective as the UPA grew even more dispersed after 1946. With their numbers falling and hideouts less secure, many insurgents withdrew from full-time mobilization and returned to their villages, where they could resume normal routines and blend in with the local population. Blind without accurate human intelligence, the Soviets encountered a common counterinsurgency problem: it was nearly impossible to distinguish “insurgent” from ordinary person. Insurgents could be farmers by day and saboteurs by night.

Recognizing this handicap, the NKVD began recruiting undercover agents and planting them within UPA ranks. The Soviets had valuable experience organizing hierarchical, expansive intelligence networks; indeed, the Communist party’s own hold on power was facilitated by its obsession with self-monitoring and internal purging, which escalated under Stalin’s leadership. Communist intelligence professionals excelled in western Ukraine, where they established a three-tiered hierarchy similar to the one they implemented against German collaborators in World War II: informers, who collected knowledge about their neighbors simply by being observant; agents, who actively searched for information by posing as insurgents or conducting secret raids; and chief agents, who managed and supervised these informants and agents operating in as many as ten villages.

Ukrainians acting as agents and informers cooperated with the Soviets for a number of reasons. Some were Soviet loyalists initially recruited during the 1941-1944 German occupation of Galicia, who aided Red Army soldiers that worked behind enemy lines. Others were targeted by the UPA and sought retribution. Still others were former insurgents, turned by promises of

35 Ibid., 95.
36 Jeffrey Burds, Sovietskaia agentura (Moscow: Sovremennaia Istoriia, 2006), 215.
supplies, food, and amnesty. The Soviets also coerced and intimidated locals to cooperate by staging public trials and executions. In some cases, they would even dump dead bodies of insurgents in the public square, leaving them to rot. While not every intelligence recruit became a prized agent, the NKVD relied on villagers to at least serve as passive informants.

Undercover agents were one of the greatest assets to the counterinsurgency. They formed the backbone of intelligence networks that disrupted UPA operations not only by anticipating and countering UPA offensives, but by sowing discord and confusion within their ranks. Aided by accurate human intelligence, the NKVD used a wide range of deceptive tricks to incite insurgent-on-insurgent violence and shatter their cohesion and morale. For example, after raiding a hideout, NKVD operatives would intentionally leave behind a list of UPA members who were Soviet “informants,” causing the insurgent group to doubt the loyalties of its own fighters. In other cases, undercover agents posing as insurgents forged seditious correspondence, spread rumors, and incited rivalries between UPA platoons. Fearful of backstabbing, insurgent leaders executed suspected turncoats, as well as their close friends and relatives.

This had crippling psychological effects on UPA units. Collectively, the widespread use of Soviet agents “sowed suspicion among resistance members, shattered their morale, eliminated key leaders, provoked the purge of thousands and the defection of thousands more, and helped the authorities drive a wedge between civilians and the resistance that alienated people with chaotic reprisals in an attempt to root out treason.” As their movement grew weaker, insurgents lived in fear and uncertainty. One lamented about the Soviets: “The Bolsheviks tried to take us from within...you can never know exactly in whose hands you will find yourself. From such a network of spies, the work of whole teams is often penetrated...”

**UPA Shortcomings**

While the Soviets’ repressive measures did little to win the hearts and minds of western Ukrainians, the UPA committed several strategic and tactical errors that undermined its popular support in the long term. First and foremost, the UPA was unable to guarantee the basic security of the civilian population. Contrary to its mantra of being the protector and representative of the Ukrainian people, the UPA perpetrated mass violence against civilians in western Ukraine. According to NKVD files, from 1944 to 1946 the UPA killed more civilians than NKVD

38 Ibid., 239
39 Ibid., 252
40 Evsikov, “War against the UPA,” 23. “Bolshevik” is a derogatory term for Soviets, and appears frequently in writing and rhetoric even after the official Bolshevik party was out of power.
opportunists, militia members, and Soviet activists: civilians constituted 48 percent of UPA-inflicted deaths in 1944, 63 percent in 1945, and 54 percent in 1946. As Soviet intelligence agents increasingly infiltrated their ranks, UPA leadership grew more desperate and applied drastic measures to ensure internal security. They violently purged their own ranks of suspected Soviet agents, tortured prisoners to extract information, and terrorized civilians who refused to support the insurgency. Their counterintelligence manual “For Greater Revolutionary Vigilance” reflected this rising paranoia, and the definition of “enemy” became increasingly broad. Even Uniate priests who had converted to Orthodoxy were harassed and, in some extreme cases, assassinated.

Some UPA commanders objected to such brutality, but their opposition did little to reverse the violence. One commander described the dark atmosphere in such a way: “There were horrible incidents in our region: SB local units [UPA’s equivalent of the NKVD] shot people indiscriminately... Dark souls wander around and do their dirty business... There is no point in doing political work in areas... where SB perpetrates such violence.” By the insurgency’s end in the late 1940s, the UPA had committed war crimes as grave as those of the NKVD or local militias, from setting entire villages on fire to shooting down innocent women and children. “[H]undreds of villages burned down and thousands of Ukrainian men, women, and children shot, tortured to death, hanged or strangled,” writes one witness. “These satanic activities were carried out under the banner of the Ukrainian revolution.”

The UPA’s second mistake was overestimating its strength and popular support. Riding a wave of confidence before fighting even began, some UPA commanders dreamed about reclaiming territory as far east as Kiev, the capital in the center of the country. In reality, they rarely organized resistance outside of western Ukraine, which remained their center of gravity throughout the insurgency. While many civilians in that region sympathized with the insurgency’s goal to establish an independent state, the gap between passively supporting the

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41 Drawn from a police report from the State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF). Cited in Statiev, Soviet Counterinsurgency, 125. Somewhat insightful, such statistics should be treated with skepticism given the inconsistent and partial reporting tendencies of Soviet officials. Furthermore, the distinction between civilian, Soviet activist, and militia deaths is unclear, since civilians could be classified in the latter two categories depending on the time of year, time of day, or other unpredictable factors. Indeed, someone considered an innocent “civilian” by the NKVD could be considered a Soviet activist by the UPA.

42 Burds, Sovetskaia agentura, 258.

43 Subtelny, Ukraine: A History, 490.

44 Wiktor Poliszczuk, Bitter Truth (Toronto: Wiktor Poliszczuk, 1999), 290.


46 Statiev, Soviet Counterinsurgency, 108.
movement and taking up arms was high, especially in light of severe Soviet penalties for doing so. In addition, the UPA failed to recognize the complex root causes of anti-Soviet resentment, and overplayed ethnic hatreds.

This dissonance led to several tactical mistakes. UPA units fighting the Red Army in 1944, the first year of widespread military engagement, thought that they could replenish their ranks more quickly than was possible. UPA commanders leading 600-men battalions fought the Soviets using conventional tactics and suffered tremendous losses. The Zagrava division, for example, lost half of its men in 1944 and over half of its commanders. The UPA finally decreased its unit size and employed more guerilla tactics in 1945. Yet, troops lost in the early months were difficult to replace, especially as the NKVD’s intelligence agents penetrated the UPA and destroyed unit cohesion. As the UPA’s attacks became more indiscriminate and its numbers decreased, popular support became more tepid and even openly hostile to the insurgency.

IV: Defining Soviet “Success” in Western Ukraine

Class warfare, the lynchpin of communist theory, heavily influenced the way that the Soviets developed their counterinsurgency strategy and evaluated success. Western Ukraine was on the cusp of the next great class uprising, and wide-reaching reforms like collectivization were supposed to inspire the peasant class to rise up and counter the kulak-led UPA. In this context, “success” depended on how many class opponents were eliminated at day’s end, and how many class allies joined the Soviet’s side. As is evident in their disruptive, violent tactics, this ratio mattered more to the Soviets than the human cost of achieving them, the restoration of social services, or changes in the overall level of guerilla activity. Ruthless measures like mass deportations of class enemies and the forced liquidation of the Uniate Church was intended to isolate and eliminate enemies—both real and potential—making pacification easier in the long run.

The Soviets applied this strategy with dogged persistence. But was it the right strategy? In other words, was it based on an accurate understanding of the root causes and facts on the ground, and was it designed to address those root causes? This was not the case. While a number of insurgencies arose in the 1940s, including in the Baltics, Belorussia, Moldova, and western Ukraine, meddling Communist party leaders in Moscow applied a stiff, class-based strategy that displayed little appreciation of local characteristics. Aside from regional differences, the UPA

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even demonstrated a large degree of nuance within its own organization, colored by the diverse and changing factors described in Part I. The UPA was not primarily class-oriented or exclusively appealing to kulaks. Nevertheless, Soviet leaders like Nikita Khrushchev continued to think in over-simplified generalizations. “Any kulak is a guerilla accomplice,” he confidently declared at a party meeting in 1945.49

In part, this misled strategy was the product of a narrow, class-based theory rigidly applied by Moscow. Yet, it was also the product of the foreign character of Communist party leadership in western Ukraine, which largely originated from eastern regions of the Soviet Union. In western Ukraine, only 8.4 percent of district, town, and regional Communist leaders were natives of the region.50 Many did not speak Ukrainian and were unfamiliar with local traditions and culture. The attempt to “replace” the Uniate Church with the Russian Orthodox Church is one example of this blindness, as officials misunderstood the historic divisions between the Catholic and Orthodox churches.

Thus, in a region geographically and culturally distant from Moscow, it was natural for farmers and villagers to perceive counterinsurgency as a foreign operation led by foreign agents with few sympathies for the local people. The exasperated tone of a newspaper editorial about the “russification” of the Uniate Church, written several years after the insurgency, is but one example of the chasm between the counterinsurgents and the local population:

“Why [does] an atmosphere of Russian chauvinism [pervade] the seminary? Why [are] services in the churches of Ukraine conducted in Russian...Why is there no religious literature published in the Ukrainian language?...It is because there is no official Ukrainian Church in Ukraine... Moscow’s Orthodox Church is an instrument of russification. Key administrative positions in the Church are held by obedient lackeys who care only about their earthly comforts and who receive a dole from the satanical regime for their black hypocritical deeds.”51

The malicious and undisciplined actions of Soviet intelligence agents and militia members perpetuated this feeling. Incidents of rape, torture, arson, and hooliganism alienated

49 “Minutes of Comrade Khrushchev’s speech at the meeting of secretaries of provincial party committees” (May 1945). Cited in Statiev, Soviet Counterinsurgency, 152.
the population and made their cooperation more difficult. Eventually, Soviet leaders realized the negative effects of arbitrary violence and began to condemn the systemic abuses of their authorities in the field, improve training, and even publicized the trials of policemen. Yet, their effects were limited, partly because abuses were so widespread and brutal to the local population.

However, “success” is an elusive and ill-defined term in counterinsurgency, and the Soviet case proves the point. The Soviets succeeded in some respects, despite their mistakes. They executed mass deportations of suspected insurgents and their families, losing popular support but draining the UPA of essential material resources and manpower. They drove the Uniate Church underground, eliminating a powerful cultural symbol of resistance from the public eye. Most importantly, the NKVD established a penetrating intelligence network, turning insurgents into Soviet agents and sowing mistrust and division among their ranks. Perhaps these operations expended more resources and caused more suffering than was necessary. To be sure, Soviet tactics were blunt and unpopular; but they were persistent, driving the UPA to desperation. Violence was often arbitrary and indiscriminate, but it was also overwhelming. Indeed, Communist party leaders were so dedicated to expunging their class enemies that they continued to devote resources and manpower to pacifying and reforming western Ukraine, regardless of how flawed their counterinsurgency strategy may have been. Not only was Soviet leadership immune to criticism, but it was largely immune to time and to blood—two factors that may have taken down another counterinsurgency. Uninhibited by “moral considerations and possessing a wider range of means than democratic governments, the Soviet leaders were determined to do whatever was necessary to crush the resistance.”

Crush it they did.

The effect on the UPA’s military strength was plain. Its hopes for victory were brightest in the early 1940s, when nationalist spirits were optimistic, insurgents operated aboveground, and local networks were intact. By the end of the decade, however, the UPA was increasingly desperate, crippled by a vicious circle of internal purges and retributive violence ironically similar to what the Communist party practiced itself. The insurgents began operating in smaller bands, and they eventually found themselves back underground, from which they never reemerged as a

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52 Such random and arbitrary violence diminishes the effect of deterrence and confuses the population: “[Random violence] defeats deterrence because it destroys the possibility of anticipation of a forthcoming evil and hence the ability to avoid it; it erases the relationship between crime and punishment… Its sheer unpredictability makes everyone fear lethal sanctions regardless of their behavior; innocence is irrelevant, and compliance is utterly impossible.” See Stathis Kalyvas, The Logic of Violence in Civil War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 143.

53 Evsikov, “War against the UPA,” 32.

54 Statiev, Soviet Counterinsurgency, 335.
potent fighting force. Communist bureaucrats then carried out expansive political and economic reforms in the fashion of the other Soviet socialist republics. With the exception of minor political unrest, post-UPA Ukraine was thereafter pacified for the duration of the Cold War.

Opportunities for Further Research

The Soviet counterinsurgency in western Ukraine can be criticized for its excessive violence, inefficient allocation of resources, and inability to adapt to changing circumstances. Indeed, it had many shortcomings. Yet, after nearly ten years of bitter repression, UPA insurgents did lay down their arms, and the Soviets continued their Communist transformation of Ukraine. Moscow thus attained both a political and military victory. Despite a convincing narrative that Soviet counterinsurgency was a success, the verdict remains a debatable one.

A more important question remains unanswered here: whether such a strategy can and should be copied in future campaigns. One would think that the high price of victory, measured by the thousands of lives lost, villages destroyed, and enemies made, would render such a counterinsurgency unimaginable in the future, especially if the international community strongly condemns it. Recent history proves otherwise. Moscow’s unapologetic shelling in Aleppo, Syria and its campaigns in Georgia and Afghanistan are but a few examples of iron-fisted counterinsurgency. The conditions under which such ruthless campaigns can achieve military and political objectives deserve further scholarly attention.

About the Author

Nicholas Fedyk is a second-year master’s student in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University, where he focuses on terrorism and Russian foreign policy. He is a project associate at the Religious Freedom Project of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs.

55 The death of UPA commander Roman Shukhevych in 1950 was a decisive setback for the insurgency and marked its unofficial defeat. Soviet assassins also targeted UPA leaders exiled or hiding abroad, mostly notably Stepan Bandera, whom the KGB assassinated in Munich in 1959. See Subtelny, Ukraine: A History, 490.
The Lashkar-e-Taiba Narrative: How Its Members Justify and Imagine Their Violence

Nicole Magney

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a Pakistani terrorist group that mainly operates in the Kashmir region between Pakistan and India, defines its terrorist violence through several beliefs: the juxtaposition of its followers and non-Muslim ‘oppressors’; the righting of perceived historical and current wrongs; the desire for reform within the existing Muslim community, and; a complex symbiotic relationship between education and both violent and non-violent jihad. Individual LeT member’s narratives of violence illustrate the common themes of revenge, honor, redemption, and a search for higher meaning. LeT members view their violence as an important piece in a complicated puzzle, where the finished picture is a world in which Muslims follow a purer form of Islam and are once again in control of lands they once ruled over. The situational context and tension between Pakistan and India that has fed motivation for LeT militants over the past two and a half decades is still very much alive. Therefore, understanding how LeT militants justify, think about, and imagine their involvement in political violence and terrorism is key for developing policies and narratives for countering the group’s appeal.

Introduction

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operates in a complex environment in Pakistan, India, and the contested area of Kashmir between the two nations. The group was officially formed in 1990 under the ideological leadership of Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, and, while elements of its ideology have remained static since its inception, other elements have evolved with time to reflect the group’s escalation in violence. The ideological underpinnings and historical context of LeT provide insight into how its members view their involvement in political violence. The Ahl-e-Hadith belief system, the desire to right perceived historical wrongs and reform the Muslim community, a complex hybrid identity, and notions of cosmic war and martyrdom all play significant roles in explaining LeT’s worldview. Within this worldview, LeT’s rhetoric relies on themes of revenge, religious redemption, and honor to justify violence against perceived enemies. Furthermore, the group uses the symbolism of women and dreams in particular to shape its identity. Ultimately, LeT members view their violence as an important piece in a complicated puzzle, where the finished picture is a world in which Muslims follow a purer form of Islam, and are once again in control of lands they once ruled over.
Definitional Framework and Methodology

In order for this exploration of LeT’s ideology and worldview to be useful, this essay’s definitional framework must be clear from the outset. Therefore, going forward this essay will forgo the use of the word ‘terrorism,’ except in cases where the group has specifically targeted civilians, like the group’s most infamous attack in Mumbai in 2008. In other instances where LeT has aimed its attacks against non-civilian targets, like the Indian military, this essay uses the term ‘political violence’ to describe the actions instead. This distinction does not serve to legitimize either form of violence over the other, but rather points to the complicated academic debate surrounding the definition of terrorism and how inclusive the term should be. In addition, by calling attention to the different categorizations of violence, this essay seeks to highlight the group’s own rhetoric on targeting civilians, and how it has evolved since the group first began carrying out violent attacks. This topic is explored in more detail in the final section of the essay.

While LeT can be explored from many angles, this essay focuses on several elements of the group’s ideology and motivations for carrying out violence that appear frequently throughout the existing source material. Despite the group’s publication of an English language journal for several years, primary source material from the group is difficult to obtain. Therefore, the insights in this essay are largely gleaned from translations of excerpts from the group’s members and leadership and other scholarly explorations of the group with wider access to primary source material. This essay draws on multiple fields of research, including but not limited to terrorism studies, psychology, sociology, history, and religious studies. The sources available provide ample material for analysis, including key passages and quotes from members that illustrate how members perceive their involvement, and how they wish others to view their involvement in political violence and terrorism.

Ideological Underpinnings and Historical Context

Ahl-e-Hadith Beliefs: Education, Da’wa, and Jihad

Lashkar-e-Taiba, or the ‘Army of the Pure,’ was established in 1990 in Pakistan as the militant arm of Markaz al-Dawa wal-Irshad (MDI), an Ahl-e-Hadith missionary organization dedicated to promoting a Salafist form of Sunni Islam.\textsuperscript{1} MDI is composed of LeT, which wages violent jihad, and Jamaat ud Dawa, which focuses on missionary activities and education. While much of this essay will deal with the LeT ideology specifically, an understanding of the overall worldview of MDI is essential for situating LeT’s violence and examining how its members view

their participation in this violence as part of a larger effort to reform and purify Islam and establish an Islamic caliphate.

Three Ahl-e-Hadith ideologues and intellectuals, Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, Zafar Iqbal, and Hafiz Abdul Rehman Makki founded MDI in 1986. At its inception, Abdullah Azzam, one of the main visionaries of the Afghan jihad, also heavily influenced the movement and opened the door for future communication between MDI and other Sunni extremist groups. MDI’s main purpose is to bring about the purification of society, as the Ahl-e-Hadith sect heavily emphasizes this goal.

To accomplish this goal, the movement puts equal emphasis on violent and nonviolent methods. According to LeT’s leader, Hafiz Saeed, education and preaching are vitally important components of the Ahl-e-Hadith faith, and complement the notion of violent jihad. Saeed claims that when “Muslims gave up jihad, science and technology also went into the hands of others.” Thus, in this context, jihad becomes a means of “challenging oppression and establishing the rule of Islam.” MDI’s ideology purports that jihad interlinks not only with religious education, but also with education on secular topics like Arabic, English, computer science, and math. In stressing both religious and non-religious education in concert with jihad, the movement seeks to create “reformed individual[s] who [are] well versed in Islamic moral principles and the techniques of science and technology,” and who therefore possess the skills for introducing “an alternate model of governance and development” based on the Qur’an and Hadith.

Although MDI’s ideology is steeped in an Ahl-e-Hadith worldview that stresses the positive effect of missionary work and education on purifying the Muslim community, not all Ahl-e-Hadith believers cross into violent ideological territory. In contrast, however, to the majority of Ahl-e-Hadith believers who do not condone violence, Hafiz Saeed argues that da’wa (preaching) “alone develops into mysticism and [violent] Jihad alone may lead to anarchy.”

According to MDI and LeT, the purification of Islam will be achieved only by exploring both

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3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., 136.
6 Ibid., 143.
with equal vigor. Thus, while LeT is an important component of MDI’s larger ideological framework, it is not the only key element.

The concept of when jihad is appropriate or obligatory also sets MDI ideology apart from Ahl-e-Hadith beliefs more broadly. Believers of the Ahl-e-Hadith sect writ large argue that the “greater jihad” of individual self-purification is more important than militant jihad against outside enemies.\(^7\) In contrast, MDI and LeT vigorously assert that violent jihad is “absolutely obligatory” for all Muslims in pursuit of the purification of society and the Islamic caliphate.\(^8\)

MDI is somewhat unique in its assertion that “efforts to conduct da’wa (missionary activism)...and to reform Pakistani society from within” should be coupled with violent jihad outside of Pakistan, especially in India.\(^9\) MDI entrusts LeT with the responsibility of executing this violent jihad, and the group has developed justifications for its violence in response to perceived historical wrongs – mainly induced by Hindus or the Indian state at the expense of Muslims. This emphasis on India and the Hindu ‘enemy’ is rooted in a deep historical context that ultimately circles back to Salafist ideology.

**Righting Historical Wrongs and ‘Reconquering’ Muslim Lands**

The tumultuous and violent history between Pakistan and India traces back to British colonialism in the region. Britain’s colonial empire encompassed both India and what is now Pakistan. During the region’s independence from colonial rule, Pakistan and India became separate states in 1947, with Pakistan as the self-dedicated home of South Asian Muslims. Therefore, from its very inception Pakistan has defined itself in opposition to the Hindu Indian state. India’s intervention in support of East Pakistan’s bid for independence during the conflict between East and West Pakistan in 1971 further galvanized this polarity. As a result of this conflict and India’s intervention, Bangladesh established its independence from Pakistan, and subsequently “robbed [Pakistan of]...its justification as a homeland for [all] South Asian Muslims.”\(^10\) This perceived attack on Pakistan’s Muslim identity created the environment in which the emergence of violent entities like LeT became possible.

Kashmir, the region between India and Pakistan, has been a particular point of contention between the two nations. The area, which is divided into sections administered by

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\(^8\) *Ibid*.


each state, has been victim to violence from both Kashmiri-nationalist groups and groups like LeT that have Pakistani origins and are largely considered proxies of the Pakistani state in its ongoing struggle against India.\textsuperscript{11} LeT seeks to incorporate Indian-administered Kashmir into Pakistan to “establish an Islamic state as a prelude to a wider project of reconquering India.”\textsuperscript{12} The concept of ‘reconquering’ India is a reference to a larger goal of reclaiming land that was historically under Islamic rule. This reclamation is not limited just to Kashmir or India, although these areas are the immediate targets of LeT’s violent endeavors, but also encompass the Middle East, Afghanistan, Iran, Central Asia,\textsuperscript{13} Spain, Nepal, Burma, Bulgaria, and Hungary.\textsuperscript{14} LeT’s efforts to reclaim land are based on its desire to establish an Islamic caliphate dedicated to its puritanical, Salafist practice of Islam.

\textit{Constructing a Hybrid Identity}

Two complementary elements, Pakistani nationalism and pan-Islamism, primarily define LeT’s identity and worldview, although other factors also influence the group’s identity complex. At first glance, nationalism and pan-Islamism may seem contradictory. However, LeT incorporates these elements into a hybrid identity whereby its members define themselves as defenders of Pakistan and as Muslims oppressed by outsider ‘infidels.’ LeT’s long-term goal of establishing a global Islamic caliphate is no different from other jihadi-Salafist groups. However, LeT’s regional focus and commitment to the Pakistani state set it apart from these groups. In general, jihadist groups tend to fall into five categories of focus: state-oriented, morality-oriented, sectarian, nation-oriented, and ummah-oriented.\textsuperscript{15} In reality, LeT’s ideology and goals identify elements within all of these categories. Although LeT directs its violent jihad outward, its parent organization MDI seeks to alter, purify, and further Islamize the Pakistani state. LeT is also morality-oriented in its desire to lead Muslims to a purer form of Islam structured by strict adherence to the Qur’an and Hadith. LeT’s leadership has denounced sectarianism as a “conspiracy to divert Muslims from waging jihad against the infidels.”\textsuperscript{16} However, the group has also played on sectarianism within Pakistan in order to gain power and sway over the local

\textsuperscript{12} Zahab, “I Shall Be Waiting for You at the Door of Paradise,” 133-4.
\textsuperscript{14} Behera, \textit{Demystifying Kashmir}, 318.
\textsuperscript{15} Tankel, \textit{Storming the World Stage}, 34.
population. LeT seeks to bring the areas of Kashmir and India under Pakistani control in an effort to liberate these areas from “non-Muslim occupation or domination,” thus appealing to a nation-oriented approach. Lastly, beyond Kashmir and India, LeT seeks to liberate any land that is perceived to belong to the larger Muslim ummah or community. Therefore, these five categories are not mutually exclusive but all add depth to the description of LeT’s goals, ideology, and worldview.

Cosmic War: Defining ‘Enemies’ and Morality

As the previous section illustrates, LeT’s framework is multidimensional. However, the group’s ultimate goal—achieving a purified Islamic caliphate—references the concept of cosmic war common in fundamentalist, jihadi-Salafist rhetoric across situational contexts, and within religious extremism more broadly. Mark Juergensmeyer’s description of cosmic war posits that the notion is “intimately personal but can also be translated to the social plane,” resulting in a concept that “transcends human experience.” LeT members experience the notion of cosmic war both on this personal and societal level, whereby the struggle is an individual “conflict between faith and lack of faith” and a “social…battle between truth and evil.” All LeT members undertake a personal religious reform and purification process as an element of their adherence to the Ahl-e-Hadith faith, and seek to extend this reformation to the rest of Pakistani society.

However, LeT’s ideology revolves around the desire to also reform the religious and political nature of the world system and “launch…a wider civilization conflict that would ‘continue until Islam becomes the dominant religion.’” In pursuit of this goal, LeT’s leader Hafiz Saeed has emphatically rejected the current global political system. He also rejects any attempts to reform the political system through democracy. According to Saeed, “The answer is not democracy. The answer is the caliphate.” The group is willing to defend its views on democracy and religious corruption within Muslim governments through violence. In fact, one of LeT’s slogans translates to “demands for democracy will be met with grenades and bomb blasts.” The notion of an Islamic caliphate goes beyond worldly political considerations.

17 Tankel, Storming the World Stage, 35.
19 Ibid., 151.
21 Ibid., 319.
22 Behera, Demystifying Kashmir, 158.
Therefore, LeT militants view the violence they enact as not only desirable, but also highly moral.\(^{21}\)

In constructing a worldview that incorporates so many diverse elements, LeT has developed a unique morality complex which revolves around defending the Muslim ingroup against perceived threats to group identity, which relate to both the group’s notion of cosmic war and more earthly political and territorial considerations. The ingroup with which LeT members identify is not static and may be different to each member. Identification results from personal desires for revenge and a much broader sense of injustice that draws connections to the rest of the global Muslim community. By identifying with multiple levels of Muslim ingroups—as perceived victims of Indian and Hindu oppression or members of the global Muslim ummah, for example—LeT members illustrate the complexity of identity formation in any context.

All humans go through complicated group identification processes, and yet, not all humans commit violence. Therefore, members of groups that carry out political violence must undergo additional steps that allow them to view their violent actions as moral and obligatory for the defense of their ingroup. These steps include the identification of an ‘enemy’ or outgroup that is perceived to directly threaten the ingroup.\(^{24}\) Given LeT’s complex and multi-dimensional identity formation process, the organization juxtaposes itself against several outgroups: Hindus, Indians, and the West. Belonging to the LeT ingroup provides its members with “a substitute identity and a feeling of moral superiority” over these outgroups, and thus allows its member to overcome inhibitions to committing violence against them.\(^{25}\) Therefore, members’ identities become defined by their “association, solidarity, and belief” in the LeT ideology.\(^{26}\)

In line with the notion of cosmic war, these threats are not just manifested in the territorial dispute over Kashmir, but also translate to a much larger struggle between perceived moral purity and immorality, or ‘good and evil.’

**Martyrdom and the Search for Meaning**

LeT’s constructed identity influences the group’s portrayal of martyrdom and individual members’ desires to find higher meaning in their actions and deaths. Roger Griffin describes the

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\(^{25}\) Zahab, “I Shall Be Waiting for You at the Door of Paradise,” 152-3.

\(^{26}\) Shafqat, “From Official Islam to Islamism,” 132.
concept of the “nomos” as the “belief in a suprahuman structure inherent to the universe.” In the LeT case, this nomos revolves around ingroup identity, defense of perceived threats against the ingroup, and themes such as revenge, reform, honor, and redemption. Individuals within LeT defend the group’s nomos or worldview through violence as a method of ascribing meaning and purpose to their lives. Within the LeT mindset of cosmic war, the stakes of its cause are so high that existence within the LeT nomos is “sought at the cost of all sorts of sacrifice and suffering and even at the cost of life itself,” because individuals believe “that this sacrifice has nomic significance.”

The natural human need for individuals to feel their death has a purpose larger than life itself illuminates LeT’s views on martyrdom and bodily sacrifice in pursuit of its goals. In the testimonials of over 900 LeT martyrs recorded before their deaths, militants consistently cite the desire to “live a more meaningful and purposeful life” as a serious motivation for joining the group. In connection with this motivation, many also discuss their desire to rid society of “moral depravity” and indicate feeling a “moral obligation to help fellow Muslims” in Kashmir, India, and globally. Furthermore, LeT members view death by mundane causes—old age, disease, accident, etc.—as meaningless, whereas “heroic death” buys members eternal salvation.

LeT’s rhetoric on martyrdom and death indicates that the group ascribes significance and meaning to ‘heroic death,’ but does not see death as necessary for fulfillment of the cause. While martyrdom is often a consequence of LeT’s violent actions, the group does not send its militants on missions where “death is certain; [instead] they select missions where they have a chance, however slim it might be, of returning alive.” Therefore, LeT’s position on martyrdom starkly contrasts with other jihadi-Salafist militant groups that use suicide bombers to kill targets. LeT uses the term fedayeen (one who gives his life for a cause) for its militants in an effort to separate their possible deaths from suicide. This focus on terminology points to the group’s strict adherence to Ahl-e-Hadith principles against suicide. In the words of a senior LeT leader, “suicide is to kill oneself in desperation after one fails to achieve the goal that has been set,” whereas fedayeen that are killed during operations die in pursuit of “a virtuous goal.”

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28 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 139.
While LeT’s ideology on martyrdom prohibits the group from sending its fighters on suicide bombing missions, the group celebrates those martyrs who die as true champions of their jihad, and certainly does not shy away from operations that will almost certainly result in their deaths. The group “endows their death with a sacrality that hides its suicidal dimensions” and emphasizes the importance of both life and death. In this way, LeT’s martyrdom ideology is similar to that of other jihadi-Salafist groups who do employ suicide-bombing tactics, in viewing those who die as symbolic sacrifices or “gifts” for the cause.

Common Themes

The key themes of revenge, religious redemption, and honor appear frequently within LeT rhetoric and illustrate how the group’s individual members operate within a larger morality complex, group identity, and nomos in order to justify and imagine their political violence.

The theme of revenge is key to understanding how LeT members view their violence as moral. Almost every available testimony and writing from LeT militants cites revenge as a motivating factor in some form. This narrative takes the form of personal revenge, revenge for the actions of the Indian state and military, or revenge against perceived wrongs that have been committed against the Muslim ummah. The prevalence of this theme indicates that not only does revenge play a large role in explaining how individuals within the group justify their violence, but it also provides the lens through which the group urges its members to view and describe their violence.

An examination of the personal history of the group’s leader, Hafiz Saeed, illustrates the impact that individual circumstance and desire for revenge have influenced LeT’s evolution. The partition of India and creation of the Pakistani state in 1947 resulted in atrocious communal violence that left millions dead. Thirty-six members of Saeed’s family were killed as they attempted to travel to the new Muslim homeland in Pakistan. The memories of this violence left a lasting impression on Saeed’s personality and his desire for revenge against those who continue to threaten Muslims within India. In addition, some militant accounts recall specific “pogroms” within India or Indian-administered Kashmir where Muslims were targeted and killed as the catalyst for LeT-initiated violence against Indian and Kashmiri targets. For example, the

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34 Ibid., 141.
36 Tankel, Storming the World Stage, 13.
destruction of the Babji mosque in Hyderabad in 1992 by Hindu fundamentalists led several local Muslim residents to join LeT and seek revenge.38

The pervasiveness of the revenge narrative illuminates the group’s thinking on issues of self-defense, resistance, and oppression. According to one of LeT's most seminal texts, Abdul Salam bin Mohammad's Why We Do Jihad, Muslims are obligated to fight and seek vengeance against any oppression or targeting of Muslims across the globe.39 This also connects back to the notion that LeT seeks to establish a caliphate on all lands that were historically under Muslim control. Although all mistreatment of Muslims is viewed with anger and vengefulness, LeT members view any oppression of Muslims in these lands to be particularly deplorable.

When viewed through this lens, violence against non-Muslims becomes a form of self-defense and therefore a “moral motivation for violence.”40 By connecting the concepts of revenge and self-defense, the group has contributed to the Pakistani national narrative that pits 'Islamic' Pakistan against 'Hindu' India.41 This identity polarization is evident in the language that LeT militants and leadership use to describe the Hindu/Indian ‘other’ or outgroup. In one instance, Hafiz Saeed referred to Indian soldiers as “pigs to hunt” in an effort to dehumanize them, and thereby justify violence against them.42 This psychological tactic of moral disengagement allows LeT members to “dispossess [their] foes of humanness,” and thus place them outside the range of moral concern and necessitate violence against them.43

Religious redemption also plays a large role in how LeT militants see their involvement in political violence, particularly their deaths. Many militants view their deaths as a way to redeem not only themselves in ‘paradise,’ but also members of their family. While the narrative of meeting virgins in paradise is not common in LeT rhetoric, other narratives relating to paradise are instrumental. LeT stresses that its militants will be able to ensure spots in paradise for 70 of their relatives and friends after they have died.44 Therefore, the group’s militants view

41 Tankel, Storming the World Stage, 14.
44 Farhat Haq, “Mothers of Lashkar-e-Taiba,” Economic and Political Weekly 44, no. 18 (May 2-8, 2009), 17.
their deaths not just in terms of meaning for themselves but also for those around them. By
dying for the LeT cause, militants believe that they are offering their loved ones a chance at
redemption.

This is appealing to militants for two main reasons. The first is practical. The narrative
makes it easier for militants to sway skeptical family members that their involvement in violence
is worthwhile and meaningful, making involvement in LeT’s political violence a family affair.
Militants seek familial, particularly maternal, blessing for their actions, and family members hold
a significant amount of power over influencing a young man’s decision to join the group. The
second reason revolves around militants’ feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness prior to
joining LeT’s ranks. The group allows them the opportunity to not only be the masters of their
own fates, but also the fates of their loved ones. This exerts a powerful influence over young men
who seek a sense of purpose through militancy.

The theme of honor figures significantly in LeT literature as well, particularly as honor
relates to women’s bodies. LeT rhetoric often uses the rape of Muslim women by Indian soldiers
as a motivator for revenge. Couched within this narrative is the idea that Muslim honor depends
on the protection and defense of Muslim women’s bodies. Therefore, when a Muslim woman is
raped, LeT militants feel they must “take revenge for the honour of [their Muslim] sisters” by
carrying out violence against Indian military targets and sometimes Hindu civilians. Both the
LeT leadership and lower ranks use language that portrays women’s bodies as bastions of honor.
One LeT militant cites his inability to “sleep at night [because he is] thinking about [his]
Muslim sisters being raped by the Hindu soldiers.” Here, the militant uses the word sister to
indicate solidarity with all Muslim women, not just immediate familial relations.

The invocation of violence against Muslim women as a motivating factor for revenge
allows LeT militants to justify their commitment to violence and “legitimize their choice” to
both themselves and others in their community. Women’s bodies also serve as a symbolic
representation of the wider oppression against Muslims that LeT militants feel they must fight
against.

46 Zahab, “I Shall Be Waiting for You at the Door of Paradise,” 141.
49 Zahab, “I Shall Be Waiting for You at the Door of Paradise,” 141.
Symbolism within LeT Narratives

The symbolism of women and dreams within the LeT’s ideological framework and thematic narratives enhance the group’s appeal and justification for its political violence. Building on the concept of women’s bodies as indicators of honor, the juxtaposition of veiling and rape symbolizes LeT’s belief in the inevitable triumph of a purified, Salafist caliphate over the current global political system. On the one hand, the “violated body of the raped Muslim woman” symbolizes all that is wrong with the morally corrupt world that surrounds LeT, and this image serves as a “call to action” for young men. In essence, the rape of Muslim women represents the rape and oppression of Muslims by ‘enemies’ on a global scale. On the other hand, the veiled Muslim woman symbolizes the “purity of the revitalized Muslim ummah,” which LeT painstakingly promotes. In this narrative, the purdah or veil exemplifies the purpose for the fight and women’s bodies become the “value system” on which the battle is waged.

By framing its militants as the protectors of Muslim women’s honor, and thereby the honor of the entire Muslim ummah, LeT perpetuates a “jihad mythology.” Within this mythology, its fighters are told tales of bravery, sacrifice, and martyrdom in pursuit of regaining lost honor. This narrative promotes the image of a ‘mythic hero’ steeped in the vital notion of sacrifice for the cause – in this case, violent jihad. By conflating women’s bodily purity with the larger desire for Muslim purification, every violent action against the Indian/Hindu ‘rapist’ or oppressor becomes a symbolic of a larger victory for the LeT movement.

The group’s dream symbolism also illustrates the importance of women and representations of women to the LeT ideological narrative. Militants emphasize the significance of their mother’s approval and blessing for their violent actions. Days before militants deploy on violent missions that will likely result in their martyrdom, their mothers often report dreaming of their sons in paradise “wearing beautiful white clothes, smiling, surrounded by trees and flowers and drinking milk.” These dreams are often an indication of a mother’s approval for her son’s choice to carry out violence.

51 Ibid.
52 Haq, “Mothers of Lashkar-e-Taiba,” 17.
53 Shafqat, “From Official Islam to Islamism,” 142.
55 Ibid., 63.
56 Zahab, “I Shall Be Waiting for You at the Door of Paradise,” 144.
In addition to signifying approval, the dreams also point to the influence of the marriage motif in LeT ideological imaginaries. The flowers and milk draw parallels to marriage rituals, as “flowers are used as communicators with the divine” and milk is seen as a symbol of purity within the South Asian Islamic context. Therefore, a mother who claims to see her son in paradise under these conditions acknowledges the violence to come as a “symbolic action that conveys cultural meanings, most importantly ideas of legitimacy” and purity.

The Evolution of LeT’s Violence

Although many of the thematic elements within LeT rhetoric have remained relatively static since the group’s creation, one important component of its ideology has shifted over time to accommodate an escalation of violence. In its early years, LeT emphatically denied being involved in attacks that killed civilians. Instead, the group claimed to focus its violence on Indian military or political targets, like army outposts and an Indian parliament building. Scholars generally argue that LeT did in fact carry out attacks on Hindu civilians during these early years. Therefore, the group’s denial brings up interesting questions about its morality complex.

LeT’s early rhetoric largely relied on classifications of the ‘enemy’ as the Hindu, Indian soldier, whereas in later years the classification widened to include more discussion of Hindus civilians, Jews, Christians, and Westerners. As the group came to view the threat against it as more diverse and widespread, it underwent a morality shift to justify and celebrate the killing of civilians. What LeT once thought of as morally taboo came to be considered an integral part of group’s ideological framework over time. In this way, LeT members have been able to “maintain a moral image of the ingroup” while widening the targeting of their violence.

In November 2008, LeT militants carried out a series of sophisticated attacks on various crowded locales in Mumbai, including hotels and a train station, over the course of three days that resulted in the deaths of 166 people. The siege on the city indicated the group’s full shift to embrace the killing of not only Hindu civilians in Kashmir—which it had been doing for some

57 Zahab, “I Shall Be Waiting for You at the Door of Paradise,” 144.
59 Zahab, “I Shall Be Waiting for You at the Door of Paradise,” 137.
time—but also other civilians in the Indian state. Although these attacks were largely indiscriminate, some sources indicate that at one of the target locations where the militants took hostages, the attackers attempted to separate out and spare Muslims, calling them “brothers.” This effort, while seemingly insignificant given the overall carnage of the attacks, is important in what it reveals about LeT’s ideological framework. While the group has undergone morality shifting to some extent to justify the killing of civilians that belong to outgroup or ‘enemy’ identities, it has yet to embrace violence against Muslims, even if the Muslims in question do not ascribe to the group’s jihadi-Salafist ideological framework or embody the tenets of purified Islam.

Conclusion

In recent years, LeT has largely drifted off the global radar and into the shadows of other jihadi-Salafist groups who appear to be more of a direct threat to Western civilians and interests. This is partly because the United States and its allies pressured Pakistan to outlaw LeT following 9/11 and increasingly urged the Pakistani government to crack down on support for the group after the terrorist attacks in Mumbai. While Pakistan acquiesced to this demand on paper, Saeed continues to live freely and openly in Pakistan and runs LeT’s partner organization, Jamaat ud Dawa, which still actively preaches its message of purifying Islam and provides charity and social services throughout a wide swath of Pakistan. LeT is still active in the Indian-administered Kashmir region, most visibly through its organization of marches and protests. It is likely that the group still maintains cells in India and other places as well, including Western countries. In order to mitigate the threat that LeT poses to the delicate balance of power in South Asia, the United States should exert considerably more pressure on Pakistan than it currently does to encourage a firmer government stance against the group. In addition, the United States should urge Pakistan to develop stricter policies to delineate Jamaat ud Dawa’s social and charity work from its connection to political and terrorist violence.

64 Tankel, Storming the World Stage, 213.
Discussions of the group’s moral framework, narrative, and thematic elements remain relevant to any exploration of political violence and terrorism in South Asia, given that the group’s ideology is still a significant force in the region. The situational context and tension between Pakistan and India that has fed motivation for LeT militants over the past two and a half decades is still very much alive. A renewal of active LeT militancy, or one operating under a very similar ideological framework, is not far-fetched. Therefore, understanding how LeT militants justify, think about, and imagine their involvement in political violence and terrorism is key for developing policies and narratives for countering the group’s appeal, such as those mentioned above.

About the Author

Nicole Magney is a second year master’s degree student in Georgetown University’s Security Studies Program, focusing her degree on terrorism and substate violence in the Middle East and South Asia. She currently works as a teaching assistant for former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and recently interned at the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point.
The Reassertion of Human Intelligence in the Digital Era

Levi Maxey

The growth of cyberspace has had far-reaching implications for how governments conduct espionage, but how has the digital era affected the role and importance of traditional human spying? By examining the evolution of espionage within the US intelligence community throughout the global War on Terror, it is clear that while signals intelligence has become vastly more important in identifying dispersed networks of malicious non-state actors, human intelligence sources should continue to ensure accuracy and contextual understanding with newly available avenues of signals intelligence to avoid political backlash of collateral damage that hinders the strategic goals of US foreign policy. At the same time, as recent operations like the Israeli targeted killing of high-ranking member of Hamas in Dubai, as well as the allegedly-Chinese breach of the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) show, human spies must overcome newfound operational security obstacles drawing from emerging counterintelligence capabilities with roots in the advent of digital technology. Finally, by looking at the US intelligence collection operation following the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, and the US sabotage operation against Iran's nuclear program revealed in 2010, it is evident there is need for a reorientation of human intelligence from paramilitary operations towards a refocus on traditional human spying at the frontline that embraces an enabling role for signals intelligence to facilitate access to hard targets. While the role of human intelligence has undergone a brief period of uncertainty over its role in US intelligence collection following the growth of signals intelligence capabilities, it must remain at the forefront of efforts abroad, particularly to gain access to hardened adversaries.

Introduction

The advent of digital technology has found its way into nearly every aspect of people's lives, forever affecting the way humans interact with each other, as well as how we store and access information. The growth of cyberspace has also had an incredible transformative impact on the way governments administer the age-old function of espionage. Michael Hayden, former director at both the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), suggests, “this will be the golden age of SIGINT,” or signals intelligence. Former Inspector General at the NSA, Joel Brenner, argues, “if someone can steal secrets electronically

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from your office [in] Shanghai or Moscow, perhaps they don’t need a human spy.” These statements raise an interesting question: how has cyberspace impacted the role and importance of human intelligence, or HUMINT? To answer this question, this paper will examine the increasing US reliance on SIGINT in parallel with the Global War on Terrorism, the effects of digital technology on operational security and counterintelligence and, finally, by scrutinizing the 2004 US phone tapping operation in Athens and the US sabotage operation against Iran’s nuclear program to highlight the human intelligence factor in cyber operations. This paper argues that with the growth of cyberspace—and, in turn, the increasing importance of signals intelligence—human intelligence must refocus to confirm, contradict, and contextualize intelligence despite new operational security and counterintelligence challenges, and ultimately, be closely integrated into a facilitating partnership with signals intelligence to enable access to hard targets.

The rise of signals intelligence

While the practice of HUMINT involves gleaning intelligence from interpersonal contact, the field of SIGINT broadly includes intercepting civilian and military radio signals, satellite links, telephone traffic, mobile phone conversations, in addition to intercepting communication between computers like internet activity, as well as breaching computer networks in order to exfiltrate data. SIGINT is not new to the digital age, but the massive growth of cyberspace has created new exploitation opportunities. As early as 2000, 60 percent of the president’s daily intelligence briefing came from the NSA, the agency primarily responsible for US SIGINT collection.

The surge of SIGINT capabilities came in parallel with the Global War on Terrorism. The United States found itself dependent on digital surveillance systems to fill gaps in human intelligence resulting from the global yet fragmented nature of their newfound enemy. As the human intelligence collection-focused Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) did not have access to a strong informant network within al-Qaeda following the attacks of September 2001, the United States promptly turned to the NSA’s communications interception capabilities to fill

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3 Ibid.
4 Priest, “NSA Growth.”
intelligence void. From here the NSA became the principal US intelligence agency tracking al-Qaeda and other adversaries overseas.\(^6\) The escalation of SIGINT gathering in concert with the rise of cyberspace and the growth of the Global War on Terrorism can be seen in the expansion of the NSA. Between 2001 and 2010, the agency’s workforce increased by one-third, to 33,000 employees, its budget nearly doubled, and the number of private contractors it employs more than tripled, from 150 in 2001 to around 500 in 2010.\(^7\) The narrow focus on combating global networks of malicious non-state actors has shaped the way the US collects intelligence. The 2007 US troop surge in Iraq is a crucial moment in the evolution of SIGINT. The NSA deployed a new tool, called Polarbreeze, which wirelessly taps into nearby computers. An intelligence officer or recruited agent would sit in a café, pretending to check email or talk on the phone when really using the Polarbreeze device to remotely exfiltrate data from computers in the room.\(^8\) This was a harbinger for the intersection of SIGINT and HUMINT to be discussed in a following section.

The NSA’s operations during this time were considered pivotal as the intelligence gleaned from computers and phones gave US troops the necessary knowledge to find insurgents. As a result, al-Qaeda attacks in Iraq dropped from 300 in 2007 to 28 in the first half of 2008, while civilian casualties attributed to insurgents plummeted from 1,500 in 2007 to 125 by mid-2008.\(^9\) The techniques the NSA forged on the battlefield in Iraq would soon become considered “the most sophisticated global tracking system ever devised,” and its close alliance with the military would change the way the United States conducts warfare.\(^10\)

With its expertise in tracking terrorists via their digital footprint, the NSA began collaborating with the CIA and the Pentagon’s Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) drone programs. For JSOC, the NSA provided a geolocation system called Gilgamesh that was attached to drones to geographically locate SIM cards or mobile devices of those targeted.\(^11\) The NSA provides similar devices to the CIA, called Shenanigans, a pod attached to drones that essentially vacuums up all Internet data from computers, routers, and smart phones within

\(^6\) Priest, “NSA Growth.”
\(^7\) Ibid.
\(^9\) Ibid.
\(^10\) Ibid.
With these tools the NSA quickly became the primary intelligence provider for the High Value Targeting system—a cornerstone of US counterterrorism strategy.

Through the analysis of metadata—the who, when, where, and how of digital communications data—the NSA was able to locate SIM cards or handsets of a suspected terrorists’ mobile phones, enabling the CIA and US military to conduct night raids and drone strikes to either kill or capture those in possession of the devices. The vast majority—around 90 percent—of these targeting operations are triggered by SIGINT analysis. With a motto “We Track’Em, You Whack’Em,” the NSA’s prominent role in the US High Value Targeting program is clear; SIGINT’s value has far eclipsed HUMINT for tracking terrorists in areas such as Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Iraq and Syria, where informant networks are limited and SIGINT is ubiquitous.

However, by identifying individuals primarily according to a phone number attached to a SIM card—as opposed to confirming the identity of the target with human operatives or informants on the ground—targeted strikes are more prone to mistakes. Terrorists are increasingly cognizant of US reliance on SIGINT and have taken steps to prevent virtual tracking. Some of these methods include having multiple SIM cards, lending phones to friends and family, and trading and distributing SIM cards among their units to elude accurate monitoring so that even when the NSA correctly identifies and locates a SIM card belonging to a terror suspect, the phone may be carried by someone else, who is then mistakenly killed in a strike.

Since the first kinetic attack in October of 2001, rough estimates of the US drone program suggest that out of at least 522 strikes that have likely killed some 3,852 people, at least 476 of those killed have been identified as civilians. Humanitarian concerns aside, collateral damage from the US drone program has been a strong recruitment point for extremist groups like al-Qaeda—and now the Islamic State—therefore it would be in the strategic interest of the

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12 Jeremy Scahill and Glenn Greenwal, “The NSA’s Secret Role.”

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Priest, “NSA Growth.”

16 Scahill and Greenwald, “The NSA’s Secret Role.”

17 Ibid.

United States to limit such damage as much as possible. The CIA now deploys new airborne biometric sensors to better confirm the identities and locations of al-Qaeda operatives.\(^{19}\) At the same time, while there may be a modicum of truth to the NSA proverb “SIGINT never lies,” it stands that HUMINT should still play a role in confirming, contradicting, and contextualizing information obtained through SIGINT collection before it becomes lethally actionable to avoid the consequences of collateral damage.\(^{20}\)

**Impacts on operational security**

While human intelligence should confirm, contradict, and contextualize signals intelligence, it should be acknowledged that the growth of digital technology has also made it more difficult for human spies to operate with the necessary secrecy. Traditional HUMINT tradecraft, such as aliases, disguises, dead drops, and other methods intended to ensure operational security—or the protection mechanisms to safeguard sensitive information and preserve the secrecy of operations—are no longer as effective as they once were. The 2010 Israeli assassination of high-ranking Hamas member, Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, in Dubai, codenamed Plasma Screen, provides an example of these new operational security challenges facing covert and clandestine operatives.

The Israelis monitored al-Mabhouh’s Internet activity through a Trojan horse malware planted in his computer, which gave forewarning of his scheduled arrival in Dubai allegedly to arrange shipments of weapons to the Palestinian militant group Hamas.\(^{21}\) An Israeli surveillance team was able to follow al-Mabhouh to his hotel, where he was killed in his room.\(^{22}\) Seventeen hours later, al-Mabhouh’s body was discovered. This prompted a meticulous investigation by Dubai authorities that capitalized on seemingly minor mistakes in operational security. For instance, surveillance cameras captured two operatives entering the public bathroom and then exiting with “poorly conceived disguises,” while two others spent hours in the hotel lobby wearing tennis gear yet showing no interest in actually playing.\(^{23}\) This made it easy for authorities to quickly identify them as suspects, after which they pieced together hundreds of hours of surveillance camera footage, cross-referenced it with airport and hotel registries that

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\(^{19}\) Gellman and Miller, “Black Budget.”

\(^{20}\) Scahill and Greenwald, “The NSA’s Secret Role.”


\(^{23}\) *Ibid.*
identified the operatives and connected them to each other—and ultimately to Israel—through phone records.\textsuperscript{24}

The new operational security hurdles intelligence operatives must overcome when conducting both espionage and covert action within the digital era can be seen in the most common case: their entry into a foreign country under diplomatic cover. Upon arriving for duty in places like Moscow or Beijing, US diplomats undergo scrutiny by Russian and Chinese intelligence services that use analytic tools to check the digital trail associated with the name provided.\textsuperscript{25} If the diplomat is thought to have an insufficient digital footprint—such as a lack of social media posts, phone calls, debit card transactions—they are immediately flagged as an undercover intelligence officer. This presents a difficult problem for creating thorough background covers, as they must extend years into the past with a level of detailed personality not easily created at scale. As one senior official from the CIA’s Directorate of Operations described it, “the days of a black passport, a fistful of dollars and a Browning pistol are over.”\textsuperscript{26}

While the digital era creates difficult problems regarding the operational security of intelligence officers, it can also create unique vulnerabilities for US counterintelligence. Lessons can be extrapolated from the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) breach, where the Chinese government allegedly accessed OPM databases over the course of six months through stolen login credentials and exfiltrated nearly every OPM-managed security clearance application since 2000.\textsuperscript{27} Data withdrawn from the OPM background-check system included files on 19.7 million individuals who had submitted applications for security clearance including 1.1 million sets of fingerprints, detailed financial and health records, online passwords, past places of residence, close contacts, neighbors, and any foreign travel, as well as another 1.8 million files on their spouses and family members.\textsuperscript{28}

Access to such detailed information on government employees has far-reaching implications for counterintelligence. China—or others who gain access—could use the data to identify US government employees who might be susceptible to pressure or inducements to

\textsuperscript{24} Zetter, “Dubai Assassination Followed Failed Attempt by Same Time.”
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
engage in espionage again the US.\textsuperscript{29} Furthermore, despite the CIA application files being held on separate servers, foreign intelligence services could identify US intelligence personnel under diplomatic cover by comparing public rosters of US embassies with the OPM records, and through a process of elimination, reveal the identities of CIA operatives.\textsuperscript{30} Therefore, not only is the United States susceptible to insider threats because of vulnerabilities exposed by weaknesses in cybersecurity, but the operational security of US intelligence operatives abroad holds greater potential for compromise.

**Human facilitation of cyber espionage**

Much like the necessity of HUMINT to ensure accuracy and understanding while overcoming newfound operational security challenges, there should also be a refocus of human intelligence to better enable targeted signals intelligence against hard targets. In short, traditional human spying can facilitate cyber espionage.\textsuperscript{31} Furthermore, while recruiting agents via Skype, Facebook, Twitter, or email is now conceivable, human recruitment remains superior as neither the value of tacit knowledge nor personal trust and interpersonal relationships diminish with digital technology.\textsuperscript{32} To refocus HUMINT in the face of burgeoning cyber growth means strengthening the human element of cyber espionage to penetrate hard targets.\textsuperscript{33} This section displays the need for human intelligence assets to facilitate covert cyber action by highlighting two NSA operations—the Athens wiretapping following the 2004 Olympic Games and the Stuxnet worm targeting Iran’s nuclear program.

Like many before it, the NSA took an active role in intercepting communications during the 2004 Olympic Games held in Athens, Greece. As the first Olympics outside of the United States since the attacks of September 2001, there was an acute fear of a terrorist attack. The NSA asked the Greek intelligence service, the EYP, for access to their telecommunications systems through a “lawful intercept.”\textsuperscript{34} Often built into modern telecommunication systems, a

\textsuperscript{29} Nakashima, “Hacks of OPM Databases Compromised 22.1 Million People.”

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{31} Rid, *Cyber War Will Not Take Place*.


\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.

lawful intercept allows a telecom company the technical capability to monitor a suspect’s communications in response to a warrant.

Due to the Greek government’s rudimentary wiretapping technology at the time, the agreement necessitated the NSA directly handle collection and analysis. The NSA would in turn tip off the EYP of any possible terrorist activity during the games. As the Greek government did not yet have the technical capacity for such a lawful intercept, they lacked an adequate legal framework to govern its use. The Greek government discretely approved the NSA’s request to access to their communication system contingent upon the expectation that after the completion of the Olympics, the NSA would quietly delete their software, pack up their equipment and leave of the country.35

Instead, the NSA continued the spying operation, but instead of searching for potential terrorists, they monitored over 100 top Greek officials.36 Rather than shutting down surveillance at the end of the Olympics, the NSA continued to exploit the communication systems, as once given initial access, the NSA was able to implant malware that secured a backdoor into the lawful intercept software belonging to Vodafone Greece, the primary telecom network. The NSA captured a parallel stream of phone conversations and metadata by relaying exact copies to 14 prepaid NSA “shadow” phones.37

Due to the illegality of the communications interception under Greek law, the NSA had to obtain access discretely, therefore requiring a Vodafone employee to operate outside of the law on behalf of the NSA.38 Costas Tsalikidis, a senior engineer in charge of network planning at Vodafone was identified as the employee who accepted the delivery of the lawful intercept software upgrade in January 2002. Nearly six months after the conclusion of the Olympics, Vodafone was notified of the malware in its system, and by the time authorities identified the shadow phones, they were already disconnected. The following morning Tsalikidis was found hanging in the bathroom doorway, eventually prompting the Greek government to issue an international arrest warrant for a CIA officer identified as William George Basil.39 In this case, Basil may have been the intelligence officer that recruited Tsalikidis for his proximity to Vodafone’s systems to either physically deploy the malware for the backdoor or simply to ignore the continuation of the NSA SIGINT operation monitoring Greek officials after the end of the Olympics.

35 Bamford, “Did A Rogue NSA Operation.”
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
While this is only one example, recruiting telecom employees as insiders—wittingly or not—to facilitate SIGINT collection is not uncommon. This becomes apparent when considering the NSA program called Sentry Owl, which uses human assets in companies to make their products “exploitable for SIGINT.” Another NSA program, called Sentry Osprey, introduces the next operation to be discussed. It relates to the NSA’s cooperation with the CIA for human facilitated SIGINT, or even the NSA employing its own HUMINT assets to support SIGINT operations under the code name TAREX—known as close-access operations.

The second NSA operation is the Stuxnet worm that breached the Industrial Control Systems (ICS) of the Iranian uranium enrichment facility at Natanz, which was intended to delay Iran’s nuclear ambitions by causing the physical destruction of hundreds of centrifuges. This revolutionary digital weapon was the first to achieve kinetic results in that it destroyed physical centrifuges with virtual code by weaponizing the system against itself. The technical sophistication of the malware was so remarkable that it fascinated security researchers around the globe. Regardless of the technical significance, HUMINT was a central enabler of the operation. An internal log file chronicling all of the worm’s movements means the technical details of the operation are widely documented. For the sake of brevity, the technical details will only be mentioned as relates to the role of HUMINT.

The Stuxnet operation appears to begin with the attack payload jumping an air-gap onto the isolated—not internet-connected—Natanz network. It is believed that the worm was transported by a removable drive and deployed a zero-day exploit that targeted a vulnerability in the Windows operating system. From here, the worm aggressively, yet stealthily spread across the Natanz network. The worm included the ability to autonomously “phone home” if it infected internet-connected devices. This advanced capability allowed Stuxnet to update as it crawled across the network. The target was the Simatic WinCC Step7 software developed by the

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41 Ibid.  
German firm Siemens. This software ran a Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) used to control analog mechanisms like motors, values and switches in industrial manufacturing plants. With the use of another zero-day, the worm subtly manipulated the motor controllers for the centrifuges causing them to operate at abnormal speeds.

By alternating the rotating frequency of the centrifuges—resulting in their gradual damage—Stuxnet quietly and temporarily sabotaged Iran’s enrichment process. Human intelligence operations played an enabling role in this sabotage operation. For example, while Siemens systems are used in all sorts of industrial facilities, the PLC blocks targeting the frequency converters were specific to the configuration at Natanz and would therefore have required prior knowledge of the specific components Iran planned to install at the plant. As early as 2000, the CIA had recruited key suppliers in the AQ Khan network who provided intelligence about the components the network had supplied to Iran, possibly even the Siemens control systems Iran planned to install at Natanz.

Knowledge of Siemens equipment could have also created an opportunity to jump the air-gap between the Internet and Natanz’s closed network. The United States likely viewed Siemens engineers—who assisted in maintaining the PLCs at Natanz—as possible human carriers of the removable drive that penetrated Natanz’s isolated network. Whether it was the NSA that recruited a Siemens employee to cross the Natanz air-gap through their TAREX group based in Germany, or it was German intelligence friendly to Israel that arranged the cooperation of the Siemens engineers is unknown, but ultimately the Iranians became suspicious of the German engineers and revoked their access to the facility.

Another instance of potential human facilitation of the Stuxnet worm relates to the subtle exploitation of Windows. The malicious drivers automatically installed by the worm were signed by two compromised digital certificates—similar to passports, but used by software companies to authenticate their programs as legitimate products of their company. Companies holding certificates often store them on air-gapped servers or in hardware security modules for protection, and therefore require physical presence to access them. The two companies where the digital certificates came from—RealTek and JMicron—are within a two-block proximity of each other in Hsinchu City, Taiwan. The close vicinity has led to speculation the buildings were

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46 Ibid.
47 Rid, Cyber War Will Not Take Place.
48 Maass and Poitras, “Core Secrets,” Rid, Cyber War Will Not Take Place.
49 Zetter, Countdown to Zero Day.
broken into in order to steal the certificates, or that human operators recruited insiders within both companies to commit the theft.

So while human spies may no longer be the whole game, they are still necessary when considering that around 70 percent of the NSA’s exploitation is human enabled. Operatives and their agents provide the needed physical access without which the NSA cannot conduct signals intelligence. The need to strengthen HUMINT in the digital era is reflected in the $52.6 billion budget for the 2013 US intelligence apparatus as spending by the CIA has surpassed all other US intelligence agencies—up to $14.7 billion, or 28 percent of the total intelligence community budget. Comparatively, the NSA—long considered the behemoth of the community—received $10.5 billion. The resurgence of HUMINT in the digital age is compared to the black budget in 1994 with the CIA accounting for only $4.8 billion of the $43.4 billion intelligence budget with the NSA receiving a much greater share.

In the last decade, the CIA has dedicated billions of dollars to recruiting and training a new generation of case officers, and its workforce has grown from around 17,000 to over 21,500—about one-fifth of the entire US intelligence community. Some may argue that the growth of the CIA is a result of secret prisons, payoffs to African warlords, and a global drone program, but it should be noted that only $2.6 billion is set aside for “covert action programs,” while around $5.5 billion is delegated to traditional human intelligence operations and their support systems.

The CIA has also devoted $1.7 billion to technical collection efforts, including a joint program with the NSA called CLANSIG through its Information Operations Center. This culminated in March 2015, when the CIA announced plans for complete institutional restructuring, declaring the creation of a new Directorate of Digital Innovation “that will be responsible for accelerating the integration of our digital and cyber capabilities across all of our mission areas” because “every aspect of intelligence, including covert action, recruiting agents and protecting officers’ covers, is now linked to information technology.”

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50 Bamford, “Did a Rogue NSA Operation.”
51 Ibid.
52 Gellman and Miller, “Black Budget.”
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
may bring HUMINT and SIGINT into a more symbiotic relationship, it could also weaken human intelligence capabilities to prioritize a build-up of digital assets at a time when the agency needs to refocus its efforts on human espionage.58

Ongoing fears of adversaries “going dark” by adopting strong encryption at scale and the potential widespread incorporation of biometric identity authentication could mean a necessary pivot to greater end-point exploitation—necessitating physical access to devices. The most probable avenue of gaining access to these hard targets will be through covert action or the recruitment of human intelligence assets. It is through HUMINT that SIGINT will be able to leverage digital technology against hard targets.

Conclusion

The dependence of the US military on the NSA’s signals intelligence collection in the Global War on Terror suggests that HUMINT has seemingly taken back seat to SIGINT in parallel with the growth of digital technology. However, SIGINT alone is not enough to understand the complex security challenges of today, and human intelligence sources can actively confirm, contradict and contextualize intelligence received through cyber means. At the same time, human intelligence is experiencing novel difficulties in operational security due to emerging digital capabilities and, as the OPM breach displayed, cyber vulnerabilities can indirectly create unprecedented counterintelligence liabilities. Furthermore, like the Athens wiretapping and Stuxnet cases show, HUMINT must refocus and closely integrate with SIGINT collection in a facilitating role to enable access to hard targets. The ubiquitous prevalence of digital technology may have caused a shift away from traditional human spying, but the reassertion of HUMINT at the forefront of intelligence collection should be a priority with consideration for the operational needs of the virtual domain.

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58 Rohdes, “Digitizing the CIA.”
About the Author

Levi Maxey is the Cyber and Technology Producer at The Cipher Brief, a global security news platform. He previously worked at the Stimson Center’s Managing Across Boundaries initiative in Washington D.C. as well as the Global Governance Institute’s Peace and Security Section in Brussels. Levi holds a Masters Degree from the Department of War Studies at Kings College London, a B.A. in International Studies from Roosevelt University in Chicago, and studied European Peace and Security at Vesalius College in Brussels.
This article explains why today's German nationalists are unlikely to resort to terrorism, like their Basque counterparts did fifty years ago. In the 1960s, Basque nationalists launched a terrorist campaign against Spain's autocratic regime to provide the movement with a sense of collective identity, and to expand the movement's popular base of support. Today, German nationalism will become neither a more cohesive, nor a more popular movement, by launching a terrorist campaign against Germany's democratic regime. Indeed, in contemporary Germany, German nationalists will more effectively pursue their agenda by entrenching themselves in the system and its institutions. The article is divided in four sections. It starts by providing some background information on the Basque and German nationalist movements. The next section reveals why German nationalists cannot benefit from the use of violence like Basque nationalists did. Indeed, there are two critical disadvantages for German nationalists in engaging in a terrorist campaign against the German state; these are outlined in the section that follows. The paper then provides three policy recommendations for the German state to reduce the risk of nationalist-motivated violence. The paper concludes by providing further supporting evidence that PEGIDA's strategy of entrenching itself in the system is a more effective means to advance a nationalist agenda in a democracy than ETA's terrorism.

Introduction: background information on the Basque and German nationalist movements

In the early 1950s, a group of six or seven Basque university students started to hold clandestine weekly meetings to study and discuss Basque history and culture. They adopted the name Ekin (To do). Their goal was to save Basque culture, which had been under siege by Francisco Franco’s regime since the end of the Spanish Civil war a decade before. Franco had prohibited the use of the Basque language in schools, radio broadcasts, and public gatherings. He had also ordered mass burnings of books written in Basque, as well as the closure of all Basque cultural associations. Franco had even prohibited the most innocuous forms of Basque cultural expression, such as dance and music. During these years, an unprecedented influx of immigrants from other areas of Spain reached the Basque country, attracted by its strong economy. This only compounded Basque nationalists’ fears of cultural extinction. Therefore, these youngsters took it upon themselves to prevent the destruction of Basque cultural heritage. During the first few years, the group concentrated exclusively on intellectual tasks, and focused its propaganda efforts
on the publication of a bulletin. The group expanded through personal contacts with friends and trusted acquaintances. Once it had reached critical mass, ten years after its launch, Ekin transformed into ETA, or Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Liberty). ETA was also originally conceived as a cultural organization. However, only a year after its founding, ETA engaged in its first acts of political violence. Group members placed explosive packs on government buildings in different cities. The first premeditated political murder was carried out seven years after that, when ETA militants assassinated a police commissioner.¹

In 2014, Lutz Bachmann, a German public relations agent, founded ‘Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West,’ abbreviated as PEGIDA in German. Bachmann’s decided to launch a movement against the ‘Islamization’ of Germany after he saw a rally of supporters of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) in Dresden, who were demonstrating against ISIS. Bachmann became preoccupied with the potential for a ‘religious war’ on German soil. Therefore, he set up a Facebook page in which he rallied fellow Germans to join him in a demonstration against the ‘Islamization of the West.’ About three hundred citizens answered Bachmann’s call. The number of citizens joining PEGIDA’s weekly rallies grew consistently, up to a peak of twenty-five thousand people only three months after the movement’s launch.²

The PEGIDA movement is particularly concerned about the risks of loss of German cultural identity, exacerbated by the influx of immigrants triggered by the refugee crisis. Thus, most of the movement’s demands are related to immigration issues: limits on immigration, immediate restrictions to asylum regulations, border controls, or stringent deportation of criminal foreigners, amongst others. Most of its members are men from Dresden, aged thirty to sixty, with a medium to high education level. The movement has only successfully mobilized a critical mass of supporters in Dresden and its surrounding areas.³

The role of violence in ETA’s strategy reveals terrorism offers no benefits to PEGIDA

ETA embraced violence to fill the group’s ideological vacuum. Its founding members lacked any ideological formulation, besides their ‘anti-Spain’ rhetoric. In fact, one of ETA’s leaders once stated, “ETA has never been defined by an ideology.”⁴ ETA’s terrorist strategy

³ Karsten Grabow, “PEGIDA and the Alternative fur Deutschland: two sides of the same coin?” European View, November 29, 2016, 3-5.
⁴ Conversi, The Basques, the Catalans, and Spain: 226.
created communal bonds amongst its militants, thus providing the movement with a sense of purpose, despite its lack of any ideological formulation. This was a direct consequence of ETA’s adoption of the theory of the cycle of ‘action/repression/action.’ ETA used violence to trigger indiscriminate retaliation from Spain’s regime. Spain’s repressive retaliation measures—which included torture and the death penalty—embedded a ‘spirit of struggle’ with ETA’s militants, creating a bond between them. ETA’s leader quoted above also stated that, “ETA was defined by a spirit of struggle.” In summary, violence became an end in itself for ETA as a source of collective identity. Due to the lack of ideology, violent action became ETA’s tool to give its members a sense of purpose. Indeed, one of ETA’s mantras was: ‘When a situation appears desperate, with no exit, action always precedes hope.’

In addition, ETA’s leaders resorted to terrorism to spread ETA’s popular support base. Franco’s regime repression measures constantly targeted the Basque Country. Indeed, between 1956 and the end of Franco’s dictatorship in 1975, ten out of the eleven states of emergency decreed by the dictator affected the Basque Country. Such an environment was ideal for ETA to justify its terrorist campaign against the Spanish state. ETA’s propaganda described state violence as the original violence that justified ETA’s actions. Basque underground literature of the time contains statements supportive of ETA’s vision. Therefore, state violence against ETA only served to legitimize the group in the eyes of the Basque population. However, after Franco’s death, popular support for ETA declined in tandem with the consolidation of Spain’s democracy. Whereas seventeen percent of Basques regarded ETA’s militants as patriots in the early stages of democracy, only four percent did so thirty years later. Nowadays, sixty-six percent of Basques disapprove of ETA’s use of violence.

As highlighted above, the only ideological tenet of PEGIDA’s movement is its ‘anti-Islam’ and ‘anti-immigration’ rhetoric. Moreover, the director of the German Institute on Radicalization and De-radicalization studies, Daniel Koehler, has indicated that violence is also a defining factor of individual and collective identity for German right-wing extremist groups and actors. This could explain why some members of the PEGIDA movement engage in violent action. For example, in October 2015 German authorities arrested seven organizers of PEGIDA

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6 Ibid., 225.
7 Ibid., 225; 231–233.
demonstrations, and charged them with planning two bomb attacks against refugee homes.\(^{10}\) In addition, extremists labeled a recent assault on a German politician by a neo-Nazi as an ‘act of self-defense’. The politician had previously expressed his support towards immigrants, which is anathema to right-wing extremists’ view of the world.\(^{11}\) German right-wing extremists see the world through the lens of a Manichaean struggle between ‘us’ (German nationals), vs ‘them’ (foreigners). Therefore, they regard violence against those who do not subscribe to their worldview, including the German state, as justified within the context of their struggle. This attitude is akin to ETA’s ‘spirit of struggle’ in their conflict against the Spanish regime. However, radical German nationalists should not expect ETA’s ‘action/repression/action’ strategy to work in contemporary Germany. Germany is a democracy, not an autocracy like Spain was in the 1960s.

Germany scores thirteenth out of one hundred and seventy-six countries in The Economist Democracy Index.\(^{12}\) Therefore, PEGIDA’s members will not trick Germany’s authorities into retaliating with state violence. It is thus very unlikely for the German public to support a nationalist terrorist campaign against the state, notwithstanding the polarizing debate about the refugee crisis. Moreover, Germany’s counterterrorism policy is based on laws and regulations, not torture and other forms of state violence deployed by the Spanish state against ETA’s militants.

German jurisprudence on terrorism limits prosecutors’ ability to impose terrorism-related charges on right-wing extremists who engage in acts of violence. Therefore, most perpetrators of right-wing violence are charged with individual crimes, such as possession of weapons, or criminal assault.\(^{13}\) These violent right-wing extremists have been terrorizing immigrants by launching arson attacks against refugee centers. Indeed, German law enforcement counted about two thousand arson attacks against refugee centers in 2014 and 2015 combined. However, in 2015 German authorities were only able to gather enough evidence to prosecute the perpetrators of arson attacks against refugee centers in a mere 5% of the cases.\(^{14}\) All of the above implies that

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\(^{10}\) Koehler, *Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in Europe*, 2615.


\(^{13}\) Koehler, *Right-Wing Terrorism in the 21st Century*, 2594.

engaging in violent action triggers no negative consequences for most German extremist right-wing actors. This contrasts to the dramatically negative consequences faced by ETA militants. As highlighted above, ETA militants captured by Spanish law enforcement were frequently tortured, and in some cases even executed. Facing such threats together embedded ETA militants with a sense of communal struggle, as previously indicated. It is very unlikely that German state countermeasures will awaken such communal bonds on German right-wing extremists. Most perpetrators of right-wing violence do not suffer even mild punishment from the German state. Therefore, they have no sense of needing to rely on each other to fight the German state.

All of the above indicates that a terrorist campaign offers limited strategic value for PEGIDA. PEGIDA would become neither a more popular, nor a more cohesive movement; on the contrary, engaging in terrorism would limit PEGIDA’s ability to further its agenda.

Disadvantages for PEGIDA of launching a terrorist campaign against the German state

PEGIDA founder Lutz Bachmann set up the Liberal Direct Democratic People’s Party (FDDV) in July 2016. This replicates the strategy followed by the Basque nationalists after Franco’s death. Once Spain became a democracy, radical Basque nationalists set up political party Herri Batasuna, known as Batasuna. Batasuna was, for all intents and purposes, ETA’s political front. Extrapolating Batasuna’s relationship with ETA to contemporary Germany highlights two disadvantages for the PEGIDA movement, were the FDDV to become a political front for a terrorist organization.

First, the FDDV would lose access to public party funding. Germany’s federal government spends about $150 million a year on political party funding. The threshold for access to the aforementioned funds is low at half a percent of the vote in a federal election, or one percent of the vote in a state election. For example, right-wing party Alternative for Germany currently receives about $1.5 million per year in public funding, as a result of getting seven percent of the vote in the 2013 federal election. Batasuna was eventually banned due to its ties to ETA. At that point, radical Basque nationalists lost access to public subsidies worth almost $2 million per year in today’s money. ETA had other sources of funding, such as trafficking of illicit goods and kidnappings. However, public subsidies consistently exceeded the revenues raised

through illegal activities. Moreover, the expenses associated with the infrastructure required to engage in the aforementioned illicit activities are significant. Thus, from a cost-benefit perspective it does not make sense for the FDDV to become the front for a terrorist group. Indeed, FDDV would most likely be banned and lose access to German public funding. It is unlikely that any funds generated by the clandestine terrorist organization would make up for the lost subsidies, based on ETA/Batasuna’s precedent.

Second, if the FDDV became a terrorist organization front, it would waste opportunities to leverage the system to its advantage. As highlighted above, the party would be banned. Therefore, it would not be able to participate in elections. This is against FDDV’s interests, since winning government seats gives political parties an ability to influence the system to their advantage. For example, Batasuna influenced the Basque local police’s activities from the party’s seats in the Basque Parliament. At one point, two thirds of local police agents indicated they had been ordered not to interfere with illegal activities carried out by organizations known to be acting as fronts for ETA. After Batasuna was banned, radical Basque nationalists were no longer in a position to dictate the local police’s strategy.

PEGIDA leaders’ behavior indicates that they understand the disadvantages of terrorism in a democratic system. Indeed, their approach to violence is very different to that of Batasuna’s leaders. Batasuna’s leaders never publicly condemned ETA’s violence, and maintained strong links with ETA. In fact, 60% of Batasuna’s members were arrested by Spain law enforcement authorities at one point or another for belonging to ETA. On the other hand, Bachmann’s publicly denounces extremist violence, and the relationship between the recent wave of arson attacks and the PEGIDA movement remains unclear.

Policy recommendations for German authorities to reduce the risk of violence

The arguments presented in the two previous sections indicate there are a number of opportunities for the German state to prevent radical German nationalists from embracing terrorism in the way their Basque counterparts did fifty years ago. There are three recommended courses of action for the German state to follow.

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18 Ibid., 203.
19 Ibid., 182.
21 Koehler, Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in Europe, 88
First, Germany’s political establishment must maintain open channels of communication with charismatic German nationalists, such as Bachmann. While he uses incendiary rhetoric, and is often criticized for displaying questionable character, he may resort to more radical rhetoric and behavior if marginalized by the German government. Importantly, the German state should renounce any temptations of ending the PEGIDA movement by decapitating its leadership. It is most likely that the vacuum will be filled by a new generation of leaders who will be more radical, and more uncompromising, as in ETA’s case. Every exile or imprisonment of ETA’s leaders created a vacuum that was soon filled by more radical elements. In fact, ETA perpetrated its most bloody attack one year after the most charismatic of the band’s ‘old guard’ leaders, Txomin, had been forced into exile.

Moreover, the German state should avoid the implementation of measures that delegitimize the state’s security apparatus, especially after the scandal in the aftermath of the discovery of terrorist cell National Socialist Underground, or NSU, in 2011. The media revealed that German intelligence had spent millions of dollars on salaries for informants in the close periphery of the NSU. However, these informants never provided any valuable intelligence about the group’s whereabouts. Many critics argued that the state had been directly funding terrorist organizations. As a consequence of the revelations, six heads of intelligence and police agencies had to step down. Indeed, the Basque experience highlights the long-term negative implications of delegitimizing the state’s security forces. Almost forty years have elapsed since the end of Spain’s dictatorship. However, earlier this year, fifty-six percent of participants in an opinion poll carried out in the Basque Country stated they distrust the Spanish National Police and the Civil Guard. This provides an important lesson for Germany’s government when it comes to devising a strategy to fight nationalist violence. Spain’s experience reveals it takes more than one generation to erase from the collective memory any mistakes committed by the state.

Finally, the German state should implement measures to accelerate the process of immigrants’ assimilation. This will help diminish the fear of cultural extinction amongst PEGIDA supporters. The German state can implement two sets of measures on this front. First, the state can fund language schools for refugees, as being able to communicate in German will facilitate immigrants’ assimilation into German society. Second, the state can promote cultural associations that encourage immigrants and native Germans to participate together in events of

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22 Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans, and Spain*, 251.
popular folklore and culture. The costs of the aforementioned initiatives will pale in comparison with the potential long-term costs associated with terrorism. During the last decade of ETA's activity, the gap between the Basque Country's realized and potential GDP amounted to around twenty percent per year on average.\(^{27}\) There are emerging signs that nationalist extremism is impacting Germany's economy. The number of domestic tourists visiting Dresden, PEGIDA's birthplace, has declined by almost four percent year-on-year during the first half of this year.\(^{28}\) It is likely that potential visitors have been hesitant to travel to Dresden by the fear of demonstrations potentially going violent.

All of the above suggests that at this point the German government is in a position to tackle the risk of nationalist violence at relatively limited costs. Therefore, it makes sense for Germany to look at what has and has not worked in Spain, a country that struggled with nationalist terrorism for forty years.

Conclusion

German nationalists are unlikely to resort to terrorism. ETA's failure provides evidence that launching a terrorist campaign against the state does not yield results in a democracy. ETA was eventually forced to announce a definite ceasefire, despite being very far from achieving its separatist goals. PEGIDA leaders have learned from ETA's mistakes, as proven by the following two sets of evidence. First, they favor taking maximum advantage of the freedoms granted by Germany's democracy over clandestine activities. Bachmann registered PEGIDA as a legal entity and subsequently applied for non-profit status, in order to have access to the associated tax benefits. In June 2016, Bachmann founded a political party, thus becoming eligible for public political party funding. Second, PEGIDA's leaders use different means than ETA to delegitimize the state. Instead of violence, PEGIDA's leaders focus on eroding citizens' confidence in the state's ability to handle the refugee crisis by using inflammatory rhetoric that inspires radical actors to engage in violence. Thus creating an environment of chaos and helplessness for the average population.

PEGIDA leaders' rhetoric emboldens rally participants to form spontaneous groups to perpetrate arson attacks against refugees. The members of these groups, which quickly disband after the incident, are for the most part not active in any right-wing extremist organizations.\(^{29}\)

\(^{27}\) Buesa, "ETA, S.A.," 168.
\(^{29}\) Koehler, Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in Europe, 95.
Such low-threshold violence serves PEGIDA’s purpose by creating a climate of instability, while simultaneously avoiding institutionalized links between PEGIDA and the perpetrators of the attacks. Citizens blame the turmoil on the refugees’ arrival, and gradually lose confidence in the state’s ability to handle the crisis. Disillusioned citizens looking for solutions are more likely to give their vote to the FDDV. Thus enabling the PEGIDA movement to further entrench itself in the system.

History has come full circle, and today’s radical Basque nationalists are replicating PEGIDA’s model. Their political party, EH Bildu, publicly rejects ETA’s violence. Notwithstanding the fact that EH Bildu is the same as Batasuna, only with a different name. Moreover, EH Bildu also organized large demonstrations earlier this year to demand the relocation to the Basque Country of ETA’s militants serving prison sentences elsewhere. Several high profile ETA members participated in these rallies.30 This is noteworthy, since it contrasts with these individuals’ approach to dealing with the Spanish state in the past. ETA murdered Basque politician Miguel Angel Blanco when the Spanish government failed to acquiesce to the band’s demands for prisoner relocations, after hosting Blanco hostage for forty-eight hours. However, the above revamped strategy has not translated into improved electoral performance for EH Bildu. The party obtained twenty-one percent of the vote in last month’s Basque regional elections, in line with Batasuna’s historical share of the vote.

Evidence of EH Bildu’s electoral performance cap should further deter the FDDV from embracing terrorism. The FDDV will inevitably affect some degree of change in Germany’s democracy. However, the magnitude of change is unlikely to match PEGIDA’s end goals, since it is very unlikely that the FDDV will achieve a majority of the vote. Indeed, very few European far-right nationalist parties have done so. Even though thirty-nine European countries currently have nationalist parties represented in their parliaments.31 Most importantly, the aforementioned change will not come at the expense of human lives.

There is evidence that PEGIDA has affected German society. Germany’s Willkommenskultur, or welcoming culture, suffered as a consequence of PEGIDA’s growing visibility. Today a majority of Germans rejects the state’s refugee policy.32 Thus a terrorist campaign against the state is redundant for PEGIDA in Germany’s contemporary democracy.

31 Koehler, Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in Europe, 95.
Indeed, the movement can achieve its goals more efficiently by entrenching itself in Germany's democratic system and its institutions.

About the Author

Virginia Lopez Rubio is a master's degree candidate in Georgetown University's Security Studies Program. Prior to joining the program, Virginia worked at Goldman Sachs Securities Division in New York.
Countering China’s Unrestricted Insurgency in Africa

Colin Geraghty

In Africa, China is waging an insurgent campaign using means of unrestricted warfare to compel the US to accept its interests. Increasing China’s strategic autonomy entails undermining US legitimacy and reducing its ability to influence events. This is a direct and important challenge to the United States that hasn’t been properly assessed to date. The stakes in Africa are set to increase just as the Chinese presence grows. On a material level, African markets and rare earth minerals will play an increasingly prominent role in the global economy. On an ideological level, the determinants of legitimacy are still up for debate in Africa. The US should marginalize China by: attacking the adversary’s strategy by forcing African nations to choose between the US and China; undermining its ways through subversive action; acting rapidly before the insurgency grows; and expanding US action beyond intergovernmental relations to redefine governance around effectiveness. The US strategy should reinforce China’s isolation as the key to denying it the legitimacy it seeks. Compellence and a compelling ideology are key tools that can be adapted to fit the Westphalian-Plus construct that exists in Africa today.

The People’s Republic of China is increasing its presence in Africa. While many external powers are doing the same, China’s actions go beyond the normal limits of international competition. In Africa, China is waging an insurgent campaign using means of unrestricted warfare\(^1\) to compel the US to accept its interests. Increasing China’s strategic autonomy entails undermining US legitimacy and reducing its ability to influence events. This is a direct and important challenge to the United States that hasn’t been properly assessed to date. Since 1990, actors of different types have emerged. Many posed a limited threat to specific US interests, but none ever represented a challenge to US legitimacy. As a global power, international legitimacy is an important national interest that has enabled the United States to use the structure of the international system to project influence and shape events.\(^2\)

The stakes in Africa are set to increase just as the Chinese presence grows, in two ways. On a material level, African markets and rare earth minerals will play an increasingly prominent role in the global economy. On an ideological level, the determinants of legitimacy are still up for debate in Africa, unlike in Europe or Southeast Asia. From the perspective of commercial

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interests, China pursues a monopolistic economic agenda through non-military means of warfare that would disrupt the global supply of rare earth minerals, which are essential to entire industries within the US economy. In addition, China seeks not only resources but to undermine US legitimacy by promoting an alternative set of rules that would enshrine China as the most legitimate international actor. Africa's experimentation with different sources of legitimacy, including competing politico-economic ideologies, highlights the emerging “Westphalian-Plus” construct. In the African context, the Westphalian-Plus concept takes on additional salience, as sovereign states were formed in Africa through a juridical rather than an empirical process. Assessing options for US policy will entail widening American conceptions of statehood and governance beyond the formal institutions of Westphalian states to identify new levels of engagement based on African practices, norms of legitimacy, and criteria for effective governance: “Even when an efficient state bureaucracy is absent, power, hierarchy, and even institutions may exist.”

China's economic, military, and political penetration of Africa amounts to an insurgency against the US-dominated international order. The US must adapt its strategy to mount an effective counterinsurgency in Africa. This article will show how Chinese actions to gain access to markets, resources, and logistical hubs amount to a concerted campaign to undermine the US as an outgrowth of its strategy to “compel the enemy to accept [its] interests.” China scholar Yun Sun highlighted the strategic intent guiding China's actions:

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4 Barry Pavel, Peter Engelke, and Alex Ward argue “nation-states are increasingly joined on the global stage by powerful individuals, groups, and other actors who are disrupting the traditional world order, for better and for worse. We now can call this a “Westphalian-Plus” world, in which nation-states will have to engage on two distinct levels: dealing with other nation-states as before, and dealing with a vast array of important non-state actors.” Pavel, Barry, Peter Engelke, and Alex Ward, “Dynamic Stability: A US Strategy for a World in Transition,” Atlantic Council Strategy Paper No. 1, April 2015, p. 1, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/reports/dynamic-stability-us-strategy-for-a-world-in-transition.
7 Ellis, Season of Rains, p. 127.
Especially in Africa, China is looking beyond the traditional pursuit of economic benefits and aspires to increase and solidify its strategic presence through enhanced political, economic, diplomatic and academic resources. The failure to perceive and prepare for China’s moves would be dangerous, unwise and potentially detrimental for the United States in the near future.9

Victory in this context will not be the destruction of China’s capability for warfare, an impossibility in the era of unrestricted warfare where means exceed the military domain. Applying Galula’s framework for insurgencies will show that redefining legitimacy in Africa is a core objective for China. To that end, it is attempting to gain partners and allies, recognizing as Kautilya did that they are a legitimizing source of power.10 Properly understanding China and its intentions will make it possible for the US to develop a focused strategy that defines victory as the ability to deny China the legitimacy it craves, by increasing its relative isolation in Africa and securing a stable supply of critical resources.

Though current US strategy suffers from a lack of focus, the logic of China’s policy contains a central weakness that the US can exploit to attack Chinese grand strategy. China is deploying non-military means of warfare, including entities traditionally outside the realm of the state, at the very moment when the international system is evolving toward a Westphalian-Plus environment—but does so in the name of a political project centered on interstate sovereignty. This tension will lead to considerations for a possible grand strategy but contains immediate implications for the US strategy required to counter the insurgency it faces from China in Africa.

Understanding China’s actions in Africa

Chinese actions in Africa threaten important US economic interests. African countries possess rare earth minerals that are essential to the international economy. The US does not seek a monopoly on these resources but rather a stable supply to meet global demand from an array of nations, consistent with the principles of the liberal order it promotes.11 China, however, pursues a predatory policy12 that will disrupt the flow of resources by establishing exclusive Chinese rights through deals with cash-poor governments in Africa. Thus, the economic investment

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11 Ikenberry, G, John, “Persistence of American Postwar Order”.
conglomerate known as the “88 Queensway Group” deliberately targets isolated regimes and offers deals with short-term gain but long-term and destabilizing losses for African governments and peoples. Moreover, as African populations continue to experience rapid growth, domestic demands will rise. These new markets will be far too large to cede their collective resources to a single nation—especially one bent on short-term exploitation without regard to the long-term sustainability of important resources. Allowing China to continue expanding its economic influence unimpeded will imbalance global trade of critical resources and undermine the United States’ ability to compete with a growing market that will represent an increasing percentage of the wealth consumption in the years ahead.

Chinese actions reveal a true political challenge that extends beyond a conventional economic competition scenario. Its campaign far exceeds the traditional domains of warfare because there are more than dollars at stake. For China, the means may be non-military, but this is a campaign nonetheless, waged according to Sun Tzu’s principles of deception and surprise. Indeed, unrestricted warfare builds on a blend of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu: it espouses an avoidance of direct force whenever possible, yet clearly aims to destroy the adversary’s center of gravity. In unrestricted warfare, the goal is not to impose one’s will on the adversary but to compel the adversary to accept the state’s interests—in this case, increasing autonomy for China. Yet this quest for autonomy masks an attempt to undermine US legitimacy. One illustration of China’s efforts to compel the US into accepting its interests in Africa is the recent acquisition of an extensive “logistics hub” in Djibouti, providing China a permanent military foothold on the continent. The case of the “88 Queensway Group” is again revealing: the group possesses significant ties to Chinese governmental officials, and acts at times as an intermediary for the People’s Republic of China. Economic interests and political influence converge in China’s holistic and sustained attempt to assert Chinese prerogatives in Africa, which is a core objective of unrestricted warfare. Additionally, China targets specific industries for investment, such as the telecommunications industry, which provides a way to monitor extensive swaths of activity in a target country and utilize espionage as a true tool of political power.

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At the strategic level, China’s engagement in Africa amounts to an insurgency against the United States, a characteristic that US actions to date have overlooked. Recognizing the nature and scope of the threat is vital to countering it effectively. China uses subversion to compete with and undermine the United States in Africa, knowing full well the US cannot respond in a tit-for-tat manner. China’s unrestricted warfare campaign will inevitably lead it to target vulnerable US companies in the region, either through cyber penetration or to pressure or disrupt key nodes in global supply chains. In short, the US cannot mimic Chinese provocations or actions of subversion in a reflexively reciprocal exchange: the US private sector is too vulnerable to pressure and would not support the escalatory logic of such an approach. US companies do not enjoy the same level of governmental support that state-owned enterprises can benefit from under the Chinese system of state-directed capitalism. Moreover, China consistently favors inter-governmental transactions or deals between Chinese intermediaries (such as state-owned companies or the 88 Queensway Group) and African regimes. In so doing, China is positioning itself as a sovereignty-centric power and partner of choice for regimes who derive considerable benefits from legal command and juridical sovereignty. The effects are comparable to that of a military campaign: China is challenging the legitimacy of the US presence in Africa and promoting an alternative vision of global politics, resolutely centered on absolute respect of sovereignty, in which it becomes the most legitimate actor for African governments. Like an insurgency, its main target is undermining the US political order; like an insurgency, it does not have to abide by a code of conduct that binds the US as the established authority; like an insurgency, it takes advantage of “China menace” rhetoric and of attempts to impose a Western definition of legitimate governance to criticize American neo-imperial overreaction. Like a government facing an insurgency, the US can’t hit back symmetrically against China who is less constrained and uses firms to engage in a predatory pursuit of monopolies.

In response, US actions to date suffer from several key deficiencies. Current US policy seems unaware of the challenge the United States faces and thus opts for counterproductive responses. Moreover, the US disperses its efforts rather than targeting the core adversary’s centers of gravity. Finally, mirroring leads the United States to erroneous assumptions regarding sources of legitimacy in Africa that enable China to wage its strategic insurgency.

Limits of the current US approach

The current US strategy toward Africa, in which China is but one factor, commits the cardinal sin of failing to identify the adversary properly. China has successfully exploited the diversion of US attention toward issues of “state-building” to hide its true intentions. As a result, US actions have actually enabled China’s strategy. The United States has been driven by the notion that encouraging greater Chinese participation in international affairs will induce changes in the Chinese government’s behavior over time. This disastrous and counterproductive approach led the United States to invite China to participate in counter-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa. The United States instantly legitimized any Chinese naval presence off the coast of Africa: having invited China as a partner, it would be difficult to denounce its presence later. Encouraging and facilitating greater Chinese participation in African affairs will not change its behavior. To the contrary, these actions help China gain legitimacy and bolster its ability to develop a military presence on the African continent. Whereas China’s naval counter-piracy deployments initially presented themselves as “an overseas naval presence without overseas bases,” China’s new “logistics base” in Djibouti, its first overseas military outpost, reveals its true strategy of incremental expansion while hiding its intent. Adopting the insurgent lens to assess China’s approach, the gradual increase of its military presence under non-threatening guises, corresponds to the pre-confrontational stage of an insurgency where the insurgent focuses on gaining support and developing a cohesive ideology.

In its dealing with African nations (which are all called “partners” irrespective of their ability to contribute to US interests), the United States has hobbled itself considerably. The United States defines democracy promotion as its most important interest in Africa; “strengthen[ing] democratic institutions” is the first pillar of the U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-

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Saharan Africa released in 2012. This leads the United States to seek changes in African governance structures that African governments do not want. The United States desires African political liberalization more than the African governments themselves. This situation reflects a lack of coherence in US strategic thinking that commits two principal sins. First, by assuming that Africans must adopt the Westphalian construct that has been beneficial to Western states in order to succeed, US thinking falls victim to mirroring bias. Second, American reasoning also relies on kindness, enabling an affect heuristic that focuses on good intentions more than good results. This is in fact a strategic shortcoming. Faced with a nascent insurgency, such noble instincts become liabilities; Clausewitz warned against this very error: “War is such a dangerous business that mistakes that come from kindness are the very worst.”

China seeks for now to avoid a direct confrontation with the United States in Africa, since it remains far weaker and counts fewer partners. Yet China’s insurgent campaign to expand its presence and consolidate influence over African governments are pieces in a later game to undermine the United States in the future. Now is the time to adopt a new strategy in Africa that recognizes China’s growing influence as a threat to important national interests and respond accordingly, focusing efforts on defeating China’s non-military insurgency by simultaneously bolstering US legitimacy and isolating China.

A new course of action for the United States: compellence and the legitimacy of effectiveness

To counter China’s actions—unrestricted warfare in service of a strategic insurgency—a new course of action is required. Having properly assessed the threat and the interests at stake, it is possible to outline a coherent US strategy to counter China in Africa by reaffirming control in a Westphalian-Plus construct. China’s strategy possesses a core weakness: it defined an objective it must attain. By definition, an insurgent adversary begins with the initiative.

Reversing the traditional dynamics of an insurgency offers the United States the opportunity to define victory by denying China its goals. The United States should marginalize China by: attacking the adversary’s strategy by forcing African nations to choose between the United States and China; undermining its ways through subversive action; acting rapidly before the insurgency grows; and expanding US action beyond intergovernmental relations to redefine governance around effectiveness. The US strategy should reinforce China’s isolation as the key to

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denying it the legitimacy it seeks. Compellence and a compelling ideology are key tools that can be adapted to fit the Westphalian-Plus construct that exists in Africa today.

The United States must regain the initiative and recognize that it faces an evolving challenge. Clausewitz underscores that warfare is akin to wrestling and constant grappling, where adaptation to the enemy is essential for success.25 The United States cannot remain passive under assault from China. Yet it cannot overreact, as balance and proportionality in the response is a core factor of victory in Clausewitz's analysis. For instance, Galula highlights the need for discretion to “act without giving undue publicity to the insurgent,” particularly during the early stages of a counterinsurgency campaign.26 Thus, media campaigns hyping the “China threat” in Africa may be counterproductive, as they can appear to be an overreaction that undermines US credibility and brings further attention to China. Furthermore, engaging in reciprocal action in response to Chinese subversion would fail to focus on the true center of gravity. This course of action would draw attention to the disruptive consequences of efforts to counter China, making the costs appear high to the US economy and the United States vulnerable.

Second, the United States needs to apply discrete compellence adapted to the context of unrestricted warfare to deny China its goals and reassert US influence. From a Kautilyan perspective, subversion and compellence are ideal tools to isolate China in Africa.27 The United States remains more powerful than China and thus able to offer more attractive options to African governments. Clearly defining the array of US assets available to potential partners and contrasting them with the far more limited range of options available through cooperation with China would create a stark choice and identify the vocal minority most supportive of China. These regimes must be isolated with China. China has short-term commercial transactions, not partners in Africa. This constitutes a central shortcoming of China’s strategy, since both Kautilya28 and Mao29 note that allies are a key factor of strength for an expanding state and for an insurgent. Because China’s continental insurgency does not rely on fomenting instability to challenge the United States, but rather promoting its approach as the true guarantor of stability to African regimes, it has objectives that can be frustrated. In short, the United States can flip the traditional insurgent/counterinsurgent paradigm and simply deny China its objectives.

25 Clausewitz, On War, p. 75.
26 Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare, p. 45.
27 Kautilya, The Arthashastra.
28 Ibid., 523.
Economic, military, and political instruments of power can be brought to bear. The United States can no longer be afraid to use its power or desire stability in African nations, more than local governments want it, for its own sake. Some will claim that such actions will create collateral damage by depriving Africans in need of assistance of vital support. A well-calibrated public relations campaign could easily counter these charges, by arguing that the current US approach enables African regimes to continue their poor stewardship of national resources and disincentives governmental reforms.\(^\text{30}\) In short, focusing on countering Chinese influence would also enable the United States to break free from counterproductive policies.

The United States needs to define new forms and levels of engagement to do so. As Peter Pham noted:

“Even given the persistence of African states with differing results in terms of legitimacy, institutional strength, governance capacity, and overall effectiveness, other entities are emerging that hold increasing geopolitical and economic relevance, both as complements to and substitutes for the Westphalian state. In Africa, this is happening at the supranational and subnational levels—within governments and, parallel to them, in the private sector, whether civil society or business.”\(^\text{31}\)

US actions cannot remain dispersed but must focus on disrupting China’s strategy. To that end, a targeted propaganda campaign tailored for the emerging Westphalian-Plus construct can serve multiple purposes. By defining governance not as a Westphalian state governed by democratic norms but as the capability to deliver services, the United States can attack the enemy’s characteristics à la Mao\(^\text{32}\) and bolster the United States’ reputation. Indeed, the United States can then use intermediaries to denounce Chinese actions not for their anti-American effect but instead for their predatory nature. Underscoring the rapacious dynamic underpinning Chinese actions would create a jarring contrast with China’s rhetoric of partnership with African peoples. US projects that create economic benefits for local populations, either large commercial transactions or investments such as the Power Africa initiative, would buttress the US image as a benevolent power. If the United States ceased its counterproductive lectures on values, it could weaponize goodwill. This would also enable the United States to break free of its current tendency to project what the United States wishes African realities were. Working at multiple


levels of political leadership to promote and redefine governance around service delivery will bolster US appeal across the continent and counter criticisms on several levels.

Redefining effective governance at the sub-national level would enable further engagement with key actors from the religious and private sector spheres as well as mayors, provincial governors. Not only would US power no longer be mired in futile restraint, it would work through adapted channels to promote governance in Africa, thus providing an easy narrative for a propaganda campaign to highlight its Westphalian-plus attempt to promote legitimate governance with African characteristics. Finally, key relays in Africa can be mobilized to argue that criticisms of the decision to move away from traditional assistance suffer from an ethnocentric lens.

Implementing the strategy laid out in this article requires renouncing the United States’ transformational agenda that seeks to export democracy under the mistaken belief that all states want to be like the United States. This shift would have profound implications for a possible grand strategy. Democratic transitions often fail, and democracies require an economically independent middle class for the state to flourish. Thus, current political efforts will succeed only at sowing mistrust of the United States among other states, including African partners, which no amount of aid can dispel but that China can exploit. Instead, the United States must embrace new opportunities and new partners in an emerging Westphalian-Plus construct to redefine legitimacy through effectiveness, not values, and bolster the US standing atop the global order through the use of compellence, propaganda, and subversion. This remains crucial for buying time to address the United States’ deeply imbalanced economy, which remains a core, long-term challenge for American national power.

33 During a symposium on Africa organized by the Institute for Defense Analyses with the National Intelligence University in July 2016, a speaker highlighted the growing importance to US interests of “empowered individuals” who wield significant influence over specific regions of significance, either due to their size or transnational nature. They can come from the public, private, or religious spheres (or belong to multiple domains simultaneously) and through their standing in society or resources they control are able to influence public behaviors and popular perceptions in a given territory in a direct manner.

About the Author

Colin J. Geraghty is a graduate of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, a former Wilson Center National Security Fellow, and Visiting Fellow with the West Africa Research Center in Dakar, Senegal. He recently spent a year in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, African Affairs. The views expressed here are the opinion of the author alone and represent no US Government or Department of Defense positions.