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THESIS

**EVALUATING INSURGENCY EXTERNAL SUPPORT
THROUGH THE FRENCH-ALGERIAN WAR, VIETNAM
WAR, AND ISLAMIC STATE**

by

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March 2017

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FRENCH-ALGERIAN WAR, VIETNAM WAR, AND ISLAMIC STATE**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the role of external support for insurgencies, with particular emphasis on the Islamic State (IS). The research evaluates such support during the French–Algerian War, the Vietnam War, and the current war with IS utilizing a model from a 2001 RAND book titled *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*. The book identifies the following external support elements: safe haven and transit, financial resources, political support, propaganda, and direct military support. As this analysis will show, *indirect* military support (unintentional and or unknowing) is just as relevant today as *direct* military support. This thesis identifies patterns and vulnerabilities of external support for IS and assesses the current relevance of the 2001 model outlined in the RAND book. Analysis of three case studies reveals continuity among all three in patterns and areas of vulnerability regarding safe haven and transit, financial resources, and propaganda; political and direct military support appear to be less relevant to IS than to prior insurgencies. The current information era, dispersed support, the role of natural resources, and non-state actors have changed the profile of external support for insurgencies today. This thesis recommends improving the condition of fragile states to prevent safe havens for IS, reclaiming territory from IS, and implementing UN sanctions to cease IS financial support. Political pressure and the elimination of non-state support could also deter states from directly or indirectly supporting IS. Further, IS propaganda could be diminished through a global antipropaganda campaign. Finally, strengthening alliances could prevent state and non-state actors from covertly or indirectly providing military support to IS.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALN	Army for National Liberation
AQI	al-Qaeda in Iraq
BOAC	British Overseas Airways Corporation
CAT	Center for the Analysis of Terrorism
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COIN	counterinsurgency
CRUA	Revolutionary Committee of Unity and Action
DLE	Direction Logistique Est
DMZ	cemilitarized zone
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
EFTs	electronic funds transfers
ENI	Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale
FTFs	foreign terrorist fighters
GPRA	Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic
HUMINT	human intelligence
HVT	high-value target
IS	Islamic State
ISF	Iraqi security forces
ISI	Islamic State of Iraq
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
MACTHAI	Military Assistance Command in Thailand
MARG	Ministère de l'Armement et du Ravitaillement Général
MLGC	Ministère des Liaisons Générales et des Communications
MNA	Movement National Algerian
MSB	money service business
MVTS	money or value transfer system
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	nongovernmental organization

NLF	National Liberation Front
NLFSVN	National Liberation Front South Vietnam
NSS	national security strategy
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
PLAF	People's Liberation Armed Forces of South Vietnam
POW	prisoner of war
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSYOP	psychological operations
SOI	Sons of Iraq
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USIA	United States Information Agency
VAT	value-added tax
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

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I. INTRODUCTION

Non-state actors have become a growing concern over the last few decades. Non-state actors who are striving to gain territory are also referred to as insurgents; those who are more concerned with spreading fear along with their messages are referred to as terrorists. The non-state actor Islamic State (IS) is the most recent Middle East extremist group. IS has expanded throughout Iraq and Syria and created havoc for many. From 2014 to 2015, IS's presence increased at an alarming rate, partly because as an organization it has successfully learned from prior extremist movements and constantly adapts and has gained international support. However, very little thorough research has been conducted on IS's external support structure.

I analyzed IS through the lens of a small number of theories about external support, using books, academic journals, news articles, and reports from nongovernmental organizations (NGO) and governmental organizations. Bruce J. Reider from *Small Wars Journal* defined external support as “any form of support provided to an insurgent force outside the political boundaries of the insurgency.”¹ The purpose of this research is to aid global efforts to predict and identify key variables of vulnerability for IS's external support network. In order to develop a more peaceful Middle East and alleviate a global extremist threat, nations must refine techniques to remove current threats and to support proxy interdiction.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the current trends in IS's external support structure. Using a model of external support to insurgencies presented by RAND's book titled *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, this thesis compiles in-depth case studies of the French–Algerian War, the Vietnam War, and IS. The first two case studies were chosen because they involved the U.S. and France, in different geographic locations confronted by weaker insurgencies that eventually succeeded. The final case

¹ Bruce J. Reider, “External Support to Insurgencies,” *Small Wars Journal* (October 2014): 2.

study, IS was chosen to help the U.S. best eliminate external support for this current insurgency. This thesis then assesses the ways the major external supports for insurgences have changed, before finally determining patterns, areas of vulnerability, and relevance of the RAND model for understanding and countering IS.

B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My research in this thesis will approach the following questions.

1. Can the French–Algerian War and the Vietnam War help identify patterns and areas of vulnerability in the external support IS currently receives?
2. Are the five external support elements discussed in this thesis (safe haven and transit, financial resources, political support, propaganda, and direct [to indirect] military support) still relevant to modern non-state actors like IS?

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

Changes in U.S. doctrine over the past 13 years have laid the groundwork for new strategies focusing on proxy wars and smaller-scale approaches to terrorism. These changes to doctrine support indirect efforts, including disrupting external support networks. The national security strategy (NSS) of the United States of America has changed drastically between the last two presidential administrations in terms of how it aims to deter and defeat the constant global terrorist threat. The September 2002 U.S. NSS focused on developing international relations and institutions and on confronting terrorist threats in their homelands, no longer considering deterrence a viable strategy against extremists. The same U.S. NSS was “centered on a new Department of Homeland Security and [included] a new unified military command and a fundamental reordering of the FBI,” along with public- and private-sector support to defeat global terrorism.²

The February 2015 U.S. NSS shifted the global strategy on terrorism to sustain prolonged operations. The new U.S. NSS transitions the U.S. from full-scale military assaults toward proxy wars to support sustained operations. Rather than eliminating threats through direct conflicts, the U.S. will work to counter the ideology and narratives

² The White House, “National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” Washington, DC, September 2002, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf>

of global extremists, in this case to degrade and defeat IS. Countering IS's ideology and root cause will involve sponsoring weak states through strengthening their militaries, developing institutions, and supporting freedom and free trade, along with the international community's support to build global counterterrorism coalitions.³

1. Useful Theories

Theories on external support for insurgencies in general can provide tools to analyze how external support networks function for IS specifically. This thesis will use several such theories to understand IS's global support networks. The article "External Support to Insurgency" by Bruce J. Reider displays several key considerations when evaluating an insurgency's external network. Reider's thesis defined the importance of external support:

external support is a decisive factor in determining the outcome of an insurgency and identifies the need for development of a comprehensive counterinsurgent response theory aimed at isolating the insurgent using the diplomatic, information, military, and economic instruments of national power.⁴

The author describes how insurgents can receive either active or passive support.⁵ Both of these can support the longevity of an insurgency operation.

Also useful here are the article "External Assistance: Enabler of Insurgent Success" and the book *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win*, both by Jeffrey Record. In his article, Record explains how external assistance could be the tipping factor for decisive victory for an insurgency, stating it "can alter the insurgent-government power ratio even to the point where the insurgency becomes the stronger side."⁶ In *Beating Goliath*, Record reviewed 11 insurgency wars from 1775 to 2007 to identify how the

³ The White House, "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," Washington, DC, February 2015, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf

⁴ Reider, "External Support to Insurgencies," 1.

⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁶ Jeffrey Record, "External Assistance: Enabler of Insurgent Success," Strategic Studies Institute, 2006, 36, <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/articles/06autumn/record.pdf>

weak can win. Record concluded that external assistance has a direct connection with an insurgency's success but also recognized that other variables such as determination, strategy, and strength of the opposing government play significant roles in conflict outcome.⁷

The 2006 article “Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and the Indirect Approach,” by Colonel Gregory Wilson, U.S. Army, described how the Philippine government used the McCormick diamond (Figure 1) to defeat an insurgency movement. The McCormick diamond model was developed by Gordon McCormick while he was working at Naval Postgraduate School. The McCormick diamond primarily focuses on the internal environment or population and states that “population support [is] the center of gravity.”⁸ However, the model also takes into account the external environment, which includes international actors who can provide support for an insurgency operation. The McCormick diamond focuses on simultaneously employing diplomacy and attacking the insurgents' international support to permanently remove any external support.⁹ While most theses focus on the internal environment, Legs 1–3 in the diamond model, this thesis will use the lower half of the McCormick diamond to evaluate the external support elements of IS, concentrating on Leg 5.

⁷ Jeffrey Record, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, Inc., 2007), 1–180, Kindle edition.

⁸ Gregory Wilson, “Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and the Indirect Approach,” *Military Review: The Professional Journal of the U.S. Army* (2006), 4.

⁹ *Ibid.*

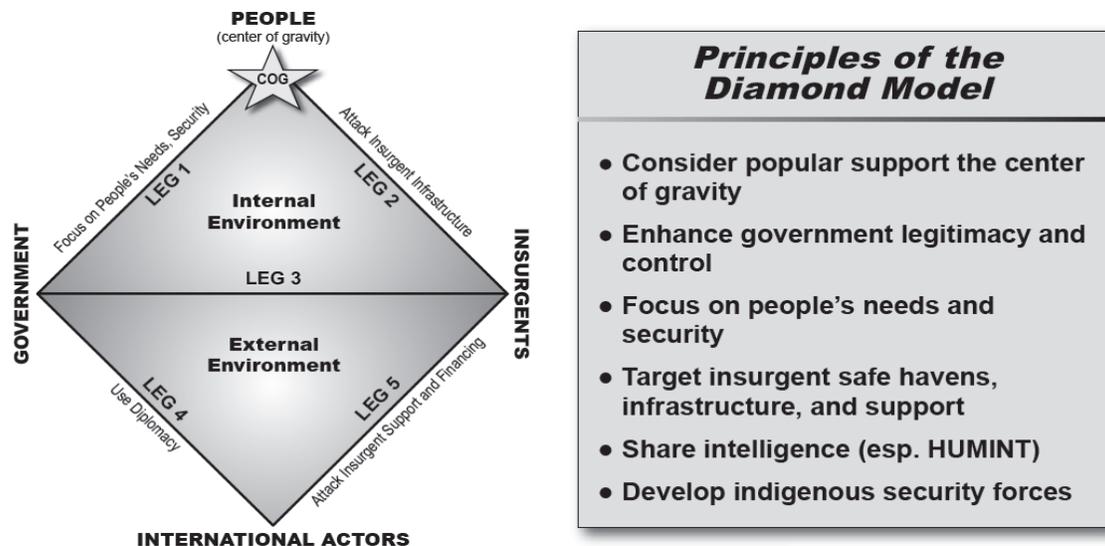


Figure 1. McCormick's Diamond Model.¹⁰

The 2001 RAND book titled *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, by Byman, Chalk, Hoffman, Rosenau, and Brannan explains the major components of an external support network for an insurgency, stating that external support originates from state or non-state sources, including diaspora sources and refugee sources.¹¹ The five major categories of external support are *safe haven and transit*, *financial resources*, *political support*, *propaganda*, and *direct military support*.¹² This thesis will use these five categories to present an analysis of IS's situation in the bottom half of the McCormick diamond. The book also concludes that analysis must not solely consider the traditional country-based focus when determining the threat; rather, it must incorporate the host country's government strength, the overall balance of forces, and any other pertinent factors that could affect the conflict outcome.¹³ Therefore, this thesis will consider as many of these factors as possible in its analysis.

¹⁰ Source: Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation," 4.

¹¹ Daniel Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2001), v-vi.

¹² Ibid., 84-91.

¹³ Ibid., 107.

2. Overview of External Support

A review of background information on the Islamic State is necessary to see the big picture and understand the role of external support to their overall operations. IS has received either direct or indirect assistance from state and non-state actors, which diversifies its support structure, making it difficult to target. Direct support is considered support that is intentionally contributed, and indirect support is considered unintentional and or unknowing.

The 2001 RAND Corporation book on insurgency external support divided external support into two categories: human requirements and material requirements, with the category “human requirements” accounting for both political and propaganda support.¹⁴ Though the book grouped these two support sources into this single category, this thesis will consider them separately. Human requirement support is normally easier to procure than material support and therefore normally in place first. Political support involves outside state support and international leverage to help promote a non-state’s legitimacy.¹⁵ The U.S. Army’s May 2014 document *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies* defined propaganda as the most valuable tool for insurgencies—through mass messages, non-state actors gain political and population support while destroying the state’s legitimate narrative.¹⁶ Propaganda needs to be delivered on both a micro and a macro level to increase legitimacy, funding, and recruitment, internationalize an armed conflict, and stigmatize the opposing state.

The category “material requirements” accounts for safe haven and transit, along with financial and direct military support.¹⁷ Safe haven and transit can provide, protect, and promote propaganda expansion, along with supporting training, planning, staging,

¹⁴ Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support*, 84–91.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 88–89.

¹⁶ Department of the Army, *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies* (FM 3–24 MCWP 3–33.5) (Washington, DC, 2014), 73–74.

¹⁷ Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support*, 84.

and resting areas imperative for operations.¹⁸ Financial support is vital in order to purchase weapons, bribe key personnel, pay individuals, and develop and deliver propaganda. These funds may be obtained through extortion, ransom, donations, or selling of natural resources or lucrative items on the black market, along with direct state or non-state assistance.¹⁹ Finally, direct state military support can foster large conventional attacks and normally unattainable insurgency operations, due to states being better equipped and organized.²⁰ Direct state support can easily turn an intrastate conflict into an interstate conflict.

3. Case Studies

Examples of insurgencies and counterinsurgency efforts from other historical contexts can illustrate the influence of external support and how sustaining that support can prolong an insurgency operation. Conversely, when external support is disrupted, it will most likely lead to the defeat of the insurgency. The first external support case study this thesis looks at is the Algerian Revolution (1954–1962). The Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) insurgents acquired adequate support from financial resources to military arms, along with state support.²¹ The French recognized this and decided to seal the border. This took about a year and removed approximately 90 percent of the insurgency's external support structure, eventually giving the French Army superiority over the FLN at that point in the war.²² However, this was undermined when the French government gave autonomous authority to the French Army in Algeria. This led to suspected war crimes, and France began losing political support for the war. Ultimately, France acknowledged the independence of Algeria in 1962.

The second case this thesis will evaluate is the U.S. Vietnam War, to varying degrees, lasted from 1955–1975 against the North Vietnamese. The North Vietnamese

¹⁸ Ibid., 86.

¹⁹ Ibid., 87–88.

²⁰ Ibid., 92–93.

²¹ Reider, *External Support to Insurgencies*, 3.

²² Ibid., 3.

were receiving supplies, weapons, ammunition, training, and sanctuary through the Soviet Union, People's Republic of China (PRC), North Korea, Cuba, Laos, and Cambodia. The U.S. attempted several times to secure the borders between North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, but unsuccessfully. The U.S. also began to lose political support for the war domestically. This eventually contributes to a U.S. defeat as North Vietnam continued to receive external support.²³

For both the Algerian Revolution and the U.S. Vietnam War, this thesis reviewed multiple sources for information. Some of the sources used in discussing the Vietnam War include *External Support to Insurgency*, by Bruce J. Reider; *The Story Behind the McNamara Line*, by Peter Brush; and *The Art of Insurgency: American Military Policy and the Failure of Strategy in Southeast Asia*, by Donald W. Hamilton. Some of the sources on the Algerian Revolution include *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–1962*, by Alistair Horne; and *The Social Origins of the French Capitulation in Algeria*, by Gil Merom.

²³ Ibid.

II. CASE STUDIES

A. FRENCH–ALGERIAN WAR

The French–Algerian War case study will help to identify trends in external insurgency support by evaluating how an insurgency within Algeria managed to resist France. This case study will first provide a brief background of the French–Algerian War and then will evaluate the five types of external support proposed in the RAND book—*safe haven and transit, financial resources, political support, propaganda, and direct military support*—and how the FLN received or did not receive these forms of support throughout the war.²⁴

1. French–Algerian War Background

Algeria began to gain international attention from Europe and the United States in the early 19th century.²⁵ In 1830, the region seemed susceptible to invasion, and the French invaded the same year and colonized Algeria, implementing a French constitution there in 1848.²⁶ France divided Algeria into three regions for governing purposes: Algiers, Oran, and Constantine.²⁷ Shortly thereafter, many Europeans began to settle in these regions. The Crémieux Decree of 1870 granted French citizenship to Jews within Algeria, but denied French citizenship to Muslim Arabs and Berbers.²⁸ This distinction in citizenship began the tensions within Algeria for independence.

The lack of civil equality for Muslims living in Algeria became another major grievance. Documents show that in 1892, 2.5 million francs were allotted for educating European children, while only 450,000 francs were dedicated to educating the illiterate

²⁴ Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support*, 1–138.

²⁵ Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace 1954–1962* (New York: NYRB Classics, 2006), Chapter 1, Kindle edition.

²⁶ Melvin E. Page, ed., *Colonialism: An International Social, Cultural, and Political Encyclopedia*, (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 3:130.

²⁷ Jean-Denis G. G. Lepage, *The French Foreign Legion: An Illustrated History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2007), 6.

²⁸ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, Chapter 2.

Muslim children in Algeria. By 1945, “200,000 [European] children [were being educated in] 1,400 primary schools, [while] 1,250,000 [Muslim] children [were allotted only] 699 primary schools.”²⁹ Land ownership in Algeria became another source of turmoil in the Muslim community. The grape phylloxera in the mid-19th century, which destroyed many vineyards in Europe and particularly in France, contributed to French farmers moving to Algeria. It was reported in 1954 that 25 percent of farmable land in Algeria was owned by only 2 percent of the farming community; it was also documented that year that the Muslim community only owned 11.6 hectares of farmable land, while the European community owned 123.7 hectares of farmable land.³⁰

The Algerian independence movement began with the formation of the Revolutionary Committee of Unity and Action (CRUA) in the spring of 1954.³¹ On 10 October 1954, the CRUA was renamed the National Libération Front (FLN).³² Then on 1 November 1954—All Saints’ Day—at 12:01 a.m., the FLN officially began operations with simultaneous attacks throughout Algeria.³³ The FLN liberated Algeria through a radical nationalist political agenda and a loose Islamic framework. The FLN consisted of two subgroups: a radical militant wing called the Army for National Liberation (ALN), who fought the French army with guerrilla tactics, and the Movement National Algerian (MNA). The MNA conducted a similar strategy to the FLN’s, but planned to compete against the FLN to win Muslim support in Algeria.³⁴ The MNA eventually collapsed under the ferocity of the ALN’s guerrilla tactics. By August 1956, the FLN was dominant

²⁹ Ibid., Chapter 3.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ “National Liberation Front | Political Party, Algeria,” Britannica.com,” accessed 14 May 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/National-Liberation-Front-political-party-Algeria#ref225866>.

³² Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, Chapter 3.

³³ Ibid., Chapter 3.

³⁴ Lepage, *The French Foreign Legion*, Chapter 8.

in Algeria, aligning organizational support from “the Oulema [sic] (Islamic scholars), the liberals, as well as the communists.”³⁵

France would eventually counter the FLN with a strong military presence and the Morice Line in 1957. The Morice Line consisted of fences along the western and eastern borders of Algeria to prevent external assistance from reaching the FLN. In 1958, Charles de Gaulle became the minister of defense, and six months later the president of the French Republic. Both De Gaulle’s determination to keep the Algerian colony and his aggressive tactics ended up benefiting the FLN and shocking the Western world.³⁶ From 1959–1966, de Gaulle removed France from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which protested its hold on Algeria, in hopes of preserving the French–Algerian colony.³⁷

During the French–Algerian War, Algeria’s southern border was the Saharan Desert, its northern border was the Alboran and Balearic Seas, and it bordered Morocco to the west and Tunisia to the east (Figure 2). Figure 2 also shows the six wilayas (see footnote 38) within Algeria, which were developed by the ALN for organizational purposes. Wilaya 1 covered the Aurès Mountains, Wilaya 2 the region of Constantine, Wilaya 3 Kabylia, Wilaya 4 the region of Algiers, Wilaya 5 the region of Oran, and Wilaya 6 the Sahara Desert; Wilaya 7 (not visible in Figure 2) was established within France to generate support and organization for the ALN.³⁸ The ALN decentralized for politico-military commands, making each wilaya accountable for “indoctrinating,

³⁵ Abdelkader Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse: Witnessing to a Différend*, eds. Michael G. Paulson and Tamara Alvarez-Detrell, vol. 58 (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2010), 174.

³⁶ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, Chapter 13.

³⁷ Horst Mendershausen, *From NATO to Independence: Reflections on De Gaulle’s Secession* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, March 1966), 1–35.

³⁸ Lepage, *French Foreign Legion*, 195; Algeria was divided into six provinces or regions, called wilayas, each governed autonomously under political-military command.

mobilizing, and taxing the civil population, by persuasion or terror; and recruiting, training, arming, and commanding the ALN” within their region.³⁹

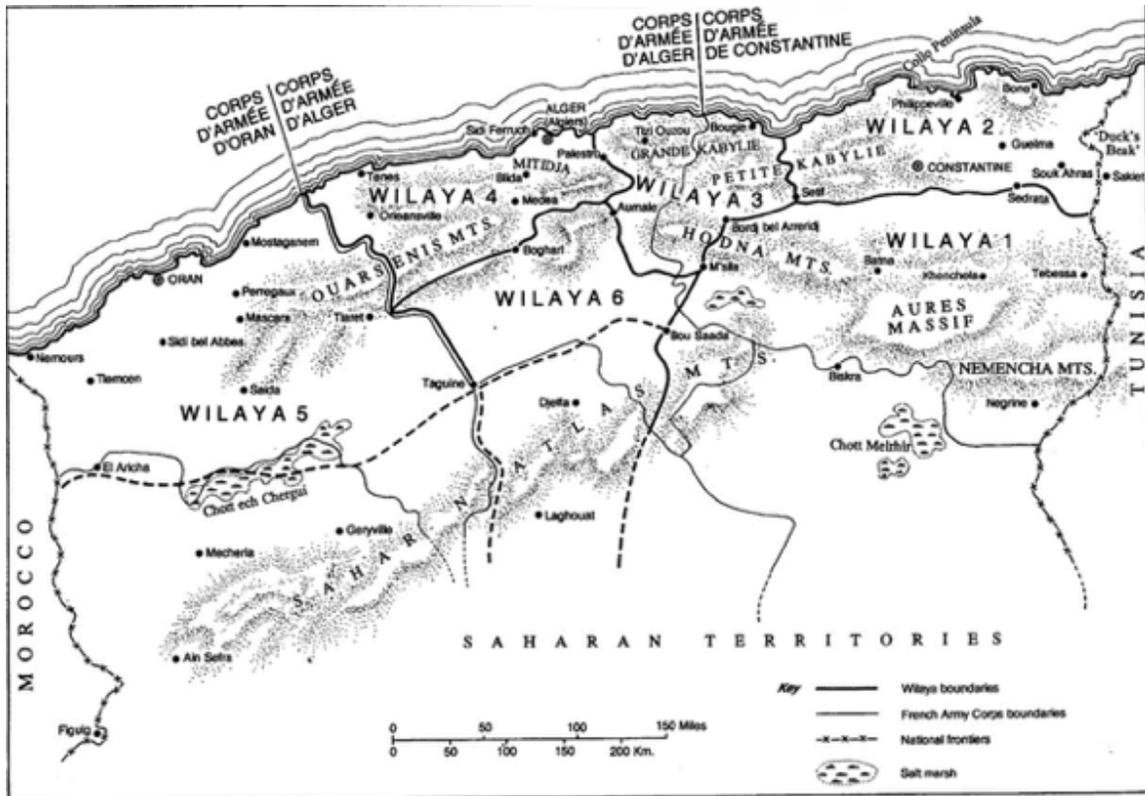


Figure 2. Algeria during the French–Algerian War.⁴⁰

2. Safe Haven and Transit

Safe havens are imperative for insurgencies to develop and succeed.⁴¹ Safe havens allow insurgencies to shuttle personnel, equipment, and funds through their territory and support propaganda, recruitment, and essential training and resting locations for fighters, which all strengthen insurgencies’ resilience. The FLN formed two different

³⁹ Martin Windrow, “The Army of National Liberation,” in *The Algerian War 1954–62* (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2013), Kindle edition.

⁴⁰ Source: Windrow, “The Background,” *The Algerian War*.

⁴¹ Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support*, 84.

insurgency groups, an external group and an internal group within Algeria.⁴² The external group provided military supplies to the internal group through the weak borders of neighboring Morocco and Tunisia. The internal group executed guerrilla operations within the six wilayas of Algeria. On 22 October 1956, future Algerian premier Ahmed Ben Bella was apprehended and imprisoned by the French army while on a Moroccan airline.⁴³ This event, along with Morocco's and Tunisia's own recent independence from France in March 1956, persuaded those countries to side with the FLN.⁴⁴ Morocco and Tunisia supported the FLN with safe havens by providing training facilities for future FLN insurgency fighters, facilitating refugee recruitment, and tolerating the movement of approximately 1,000 fighters per month across their borders.⁴⁵

The FLN eventually made the external group more organized to aid in mass shipments to Algeria. In 1960, after a massive restructure and activity-level reorganization to confront the French army, the MLGC (Ministère de Liaisons Générales et de Communications) and MARG (Ministère de l'Armement et des Ravitaillements Généraux) merged. The MLGC and MARG had each supported logistics movement for reliable transportation into Algeria. Under the new merger, the Direction Logistique Est (DLE) was established, with two subdepartments: weapons and material, and general supplies. The DLE established personnel in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Germany to support resupply to the eastern front of Algeria through Tunisia.⁴⁶

The FLN used vehicles, planes, and maritime platforms through safe havens to receive essential supplies during their fight for independence. Vehicle supplies into Algeria used specific routes to avoid detection. One westerly vehicle route that facilitated transit for the FLN traveled from Guinea to Mali and eventually to one of the three

⁴² Peter Brush, "The Story Behind the McNamara Line" *Vietnam* (Leesburg, VA: Cowles Media Company, 1996), 18–24.

⁴³ Windrow, "Summary of Main Events," *The Algerian War*.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Windrow, "The Army of National Liberation," *The Algerian War*.

⁴⁶ A. Bouzid, "Summary of Armament during the 1954 Revolution," trans. Pierre Asselin and Paulina Kostrzewski, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Reference Collection of the Algerian National Archives, July 1996, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121595>.

provinces in Algeria: Bordj Badji Mokhtar, Tamanrasset, or Ain Salah. An easterly route the FLN used was from Egypt through Libya to Tunisia, ending in Algeria. Travelers on this route moved only at night, for approximately 2,600 km one way. Two drivers in a modified vehicle could travel from Egypt to the eastern front of Algeria without refueling. The route was divided into sections, with tow trucks and mechanics available to ensure no vehicles were abandoned and to allow quick handling of maintenance issues.⁴⁷ A digitized document by Bouzid, identified the shipments of vehicle resupply along the eastern front of Algeria between 1957 and 1962 consisted of

- 1957: Two return trips per month with six 10-ton trucks; itinerary Marsa Matrouh – Tarhouna.
- 1958: Two return trips per month with six 10-ton trucks.
- 1959: Six return trips per month with six *Mercedes* trucks of 10 tons and six *Lancia* trucks of 25 tons (Chinese delivery – 20,000 U.S. guns 7.62 with SASCO trucks of 10 tons).
- 1960: Two return trips per month with six *Mercedes* trucks of 10 tons.
- 1961: Four return trips per month with six trucks.
- 1962: Four return trips per month with twelve trucks⁴⁸

The FLN also incorporated planes and maritime vessels traveling through safe havens to replenish their insurgency operations. One aerial channel consisted of Tripoli, Libya, to Casablanca, Morocco, and eventually across the border into Algeria. This route involved smuggling shells and weapons on civilian aircraft owned by the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC). Vessel shipments were also made possible through the Atlantic Ocean, Alboran Sea, and Mediterranean Sea. Even though the French Navy kept constant vigilance over the ocean bordering Algeria, several shipments of weapons managed to reach the FLN.⁴⁹ See Table 1.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1–8.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Table 1. Nationalities Supplying the FLN and Arrival Ports.⁵⁰

Nationality	Arrival Port
Chinese	Alexandria and Tunis
Russian	Alexandria
Jordan	Alexandria
Greece	Alexandria and Tunis
Others	Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco

To combat the safe haven provided by Morocco and Tunisia, the French military proposed constructing a wall, which they named the Morice Line, to prevent the transit of financial resources and military equipment over the border.⁵¹ The Morice Line stretched across 750 kilometers on the Moroccan border and 460 kilometers on the Tunisian border. The borders consisted of multiple levels of reinforced security measures including minefields, eight-foot electric fences with electronic sensors, and roving personnel with dogs. The FLN was relentless in their attempts to penetrate the Morice Line. They attempted everything from digging under the fences to going around the fences through the Sahara Desert to employing Bangalore torpedoes to clear a passage.⁵² Virtually no attempts could get past the overwhelming presence and safety measures the French Army had implemented. Ultimately, the Morice Line was able to “[reduce] infiltration into Algeria by ... 90 percent.”⁵³ The completion of the Morice Line in September 1957 forced the FLN to reassess their external support means and was the closest the French came to victory throughout the entire French–Algerian War. The Morice Line allowed temporary containment of FLN external support by the French army and forced the FLN to acquire insurgency support elsewhere. Eventually, the Morice Line was abandoned after French political support for the war declined.

⁵⁰ Source: A. Bouzid, “Summary of Armament during the 1954 Revolution.”

⁵¹ Reider, *External Support to Insurgencies*, 3.

⁵² Brush, *The Story Behind the McNamara Line*, 18–24.

⁵³ Ibid.

3. Financial Resources

The FLN implemented several financing methods to support their revolution against the French Army. The FLN generated financial support through mandated taxes, individual contributions, and support from other states, specifically Saudi Arabia and the PRC.⁵⁴ To provide an idea of how much money was raised by the FLN during the French–Algerian War, estimates indicate that the FLN contributed 80 percent of the budget for the GPRA (Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic) to gain international recognition for itself.⁵⁵

Between 1957 and 1958, the FLN developed a revolutionary tax in Wilaya 7, which targeted all French–Algerians living in France.⁵⁶ If individuals refused or were unable to pay the revolutionary tax, the FLN implemented extortion or beating methods to force them. The FLN also depended on voluntary donations from citizens to support their insurgency.⁵⁷

The FLN also received financial support from individuals driven by ideology or profit. Francis Jeanson, a Marxist, teacher, writer, and editor residing in France, was one such individual. In 1957, Jeanson established a secretive network to support the FLN, referred to as the “suitcase carriers.”⁵⁸ The Jeanson network consisted of left-wing French militants striving to destroy colonialism. The network supported the insurgency by smuggling suitcases full of French francs from Algeria to Switzerland, with intentions to gain hefty Swiss interest rates for the FLN. Jeanson had no fewer than 40 individuals

⁵⁴ A. Bouzid, “Summary of Armament during the 1954 Revolution,” 1–8; “Letter to the GPRA Prime Minister, ‘Mission Summary,’” trans. Asselin and Kostrzewski, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1 September 1960, 1–3, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121598>.

⁵⁵ Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse*, 174.

⁵⁶ The Catholic Counter-Reformation in the 21st Century, “The Strong National Reaction on May 13, 1958,” in *The Algerian War*, accessed 13 December 2015. <http://crc-Internet.org/our-doctrine/national-restoration/algerian-war/6-national-reaction-may-13/>.

⁵⁷ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 1–607.

⁵⁸ “Philosopher Founder of Algerian Resistance Network Dies,” Radio French Internationale, 3 August 2009, http://www1.rfi.fr/actuen/articles/116/article_4608.asp.

running this network. They operated for three years before the French eventually discovered them.⁵⁹

Another source of financing for the FLN came from oil businessman Enrico Mattei.⁶⁰ Mattei, an Italian national, developed a business strategy through the company Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (ENI) that deterred most major oil companies from participating in oil trades. He generated relationships with Egypt in 1955, Iran in 1957, Morocco in 1958, Libya and Sudan in 1959, Tunisia in 1961, and Nigeria in 1962. Mattei's strategy for going against colonial powers and NATO regulations allowed ENI to gain partnership with Algeria in the oil industry. Algeria was first noticed as an oil source in 1956, with the discovery of commercial oil in the Hassi Messaoud oil field; oil production followed in 1958.⁶¹ The discovery of oil in Algeria sparked Mattei's interest to conduct unsavory business, allowing Mattei to implement his Mattei formula, which allowed host countries of utilized oil reserves to receive 75 percent of all profits,⁶² making it extremely difficult for major oil companies to compete. Mattei's business history was cut short when his plane mysteriously crashed in 1962.⁶³

Several countries also sent financial support to the FLN. In 1955, the Saudi Arabian royal family reportedly gave francs to support the Algerian revolution.⁶⁴ The Chinese feared that directly supporting the FLN could damage their international market with other nations. Instead, they offered Algeria a 15 percent reduction in custom tariffs through the Sino-Algerian Accord in 1960.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, Chapter 11.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Chapter 11.

⁶¹ "Algeria Facts and Figures," OPEC: Algeria, accessed 21 October 2016, http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/146.htm.

⁶² "Enrico Mattei," Britannica.com, accessed 14 May 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Enrico-Mattei>.

⁶³ Mark H. Hayes, "Algerian Gas to Europe: The Transmed Pipeline and Early Spanish Gas Import Projects," working paper #27 of the *Geopolitics of Natural Gas Study* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, May 2004), 15.

⁶⁴ A. Bouzid, "Summary of Armament during the 1954 Revolution," 1–8.

⁶⁵ "Letter to the GPRA Prime Minister, 'Mission Summary,'" 1–3.

4. Political Support

Political support was another external support element that gave the FLN international recognition. The political support the FLN gathered led to assistance through funding, supplies, and propaganda, ultimately resulting in Algeria gaining independence from France. The FLN managed to gain representation through conferences, state political support, speeches, and political organizations. Inhumane military actions by the French Army indirectly contributed to the FLN's political support also, until eventually Algerian independence was placed on the agenda at the United Nations (UN).

Between April and May of 1955, the FLN was given third-world recognition through the Bandung Conference, in Bandung, Indonesia (also referred as the Afro-Asian Conference).⁶⁶ At the Bandung Conference, the FLN was recognized as the only acceptable representative for Algeria.⁶⁷ The Bandung Conference attracted 29 nations to discuss peace and the development of third-world nations through economic growth and decolonization.⁶⁸ Since Algeria was not recognized as an independent state, they could not officially attend the conference.⁶⁹ Despite their not officially being able to participate, Algeria's presence at the Bandung Conference was welcomed in hopes of moving closer to a goal of global decolonization. Algeria's attendance at the Bandung Conference built their momentum for international acknowledgement as an independent state.

The United States, along with other major world leaders, feared the outcome of the Bandung Conference. The U.S. identified the conference as having a left-wing socialist stance due to its ideological beliefs about the newly anticolonial independent states in Africa and Asia. Two interesting themes emerged from the conference. First, the United States was split between supporting the developing anticolonial nations and

⁶⁶ Windrow, "Summary of Main Events," *The Algerian War*.

⁶⁷ Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse*, 176.

⁶⁸ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, Chapter 6.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Chapter 6.

Western European powers. Second, the conference echoed the themes of the U.S. Civil Rights era, which was just beginning.⁷⁰

The Afro-Asian Conference allowed Algeria to develop introductory contacts with the Soviet Union and the PRC. The FLN expanded their relationship with the Soviet Union and the PRC for political support, hoping both countries could apply direct and indirect political pressure on France. However, the Soviets realized that de Gaulle intended to disrupt the Atlantic Alliance and felt that disturbing this momentum would not be in the Kremlin's best interest.⁷¹ As a result, they outwardly gave the FLN the cold shoulder and only supported the insurgents covertly, in small shipments. The PRC, on the other hand, were one of the first nations to recognize the GPRA.

In the fall of 1958, French Army general de Gaulle asked the FLN to surrender by offering "the peace of the brave," with no option other than relinquishing their weapons.⁷² Such an offer contributed to the FLN establishing the GPRA, a provisional government to gather Arab League and communist political support.⁷³ The GPRA was formed in September 1958 and ended in 1962, when Algeria gained independence, and it was essential to Algeria, because it displayed proof of representation and an independent Algerian government. This allowed the FLN to gain political support for their insurgency against the French army.⁷⁴ Table 2 displays 18 countries that recognized the GPRA in 1959.

⁷⁰ Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, "Bandung Conference (Asian-African Conference), 1955," U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/bandung-conf>.

⁷¹ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, Chapter 19.

⁷² Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse*, 181.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁷⁴ Windrow, "Summary of Main Events," *The Algerian War*.

Table 2. 1959 GPRA Representation for the FLN.⁷⁵

State	Type	Date
Ghana	de facto	10 July 1959
Indonesia	non-specified	27 September 1958
Lebanon	de jure	15 January 1959
Vietnam/North	de jure	26 September 1958
Democratic Republic of Korea	de jure	25 September 1958
People's Republic of China	de jure	22 September 1958
Morocco	de jure	19 September 1958
Saudi Arabia	de jure	20 September 1958
Libya	de jure	19 September 1958
Palestine	de jure	19 September 1958
Jordan	de jure	20 September 1958
Sudan	de jure	22 September 1958
UAR [United Arab Republic]	de jure	[no date]
Tunisia	de jure	[no date]
Guinea	de jure	[no date]
Iraq	de jure	[no date]
Outer Mongolia	de jure	[no date]
Yemen	de jure	[no date]

Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser was one of the leading political supporters for Algeria's independence.⁷⁶ Nasser was the second president of Egypt and believed in aiding anticolonialism for free and independent nations. In November 1956, Nasser increased aid to the FLN, thereby supporting international recognition of Algeria.⁷⁷ Nasser simultaneously lobbied the UN to pass resolutions supporting independence in Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria, along with aligning support from China and India.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Source: "List of Recognitions of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA)," trans. Asselin and Kostrzewski, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1959, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121604>.

⁷⁶ Nazeer Ahmed, "The War of Algeria's Independence — 1954–62," History of Islam: An Encyclopedia of Islamic History, <https://historyofislam.com/contents/the-modern-age/the-war-of-algeria%E2%80%99s-independence-1954-62/>.

⁷⁷ Windrow, "Summary of Main Events," *The Algerian War*.

⁷⁸ Rami Ginat, *Syria and the Doctrine of Arab Neutralism: From Independence to Dependence*, G&G Editorial ed. (Sussex Academic Press, 2010), 110–112.

Syria also supported independence for Algeria, through political organizations and government leverage. Both the Ba'ath Party and the Muslim Brotherhood openly supported the FLN within Syria through demonstrations. The demonstrations were organized around anti-Western colonial values and demanded an economic, political, and cultural protest of France. The Syrian Parliament eventually aligned with the anti-French protests within Syria and moved to stop exporting wheat and cotton to Algeria and France, even though this would have devastating results for the Syrian economy. The Parliament's actions resulted in Sa'id al-Ghazzi's government resigning on 2 June 1956.⁷⁹

Several world leaders openly spoke of their support for a free and independent Algeria, including Senator John F. Kennedy and Fidel Castro. In July 1957, Senator Kennedy spoke on the Senate floor, arguing to President Dwight D. Eisenhower and director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Allen Dulles that supporting Algerian independence from France was imperative.⁸⁰ As American support began to favor the FLN, France started receiving increased U.S. political scrutiny, with Senator John F. Kennedy as one example.

During the 1960s, Fidel Castro was a strong advocate for the spread of communism and anticolonialism. Castro realized that supporting uprising through insurgency movements was one of the most effective methods to achieve these outcomes. In 1962, Castro made several speeches expressing his support for an independent Algerian government. During the Cuban Revolution anniversary in Havana, Castro and Che Guevara met with the GPRA minister of foreign affairs, and Castro reiterated Cuba's pledged support for the Algerian revolution:

Algeria has made enormous sacrifices and the sooner the war ends, the better. It is in this phase of the struggle that Algeria needs the most support from the international community. I pledge to convince all the friendly countries to recognize the GPRA. With respect to negotiations between the latter and France, what is most important to take from France is power. You cannot let the levers of political control in the hands of the

⁷⁹ Ibid., 151.

⁸⁰ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, Chapter 11.

French. Specifically, the maintaining of public order (public security) must be in your own hands. Make the largest concessions possible with respect to economic matters (oil in particular), guarantees to the European minority, and military bases. Once peace has been restored and you are firmly in control, then you will be able to do anything you want. Because international conditions are such that once France has exited politically, it will never be able to come back.⁸¹

In October 1962, newly declared Algerian premier Ahmed Ben Bella visited Havana to meet with Castro and celebrate the newly independent Algerian nation. Which also overlapped with the Cuban Missile Crisis. Castro stressed to Bella that a “free, independent, and sovereign Algeria will be the seed, the mirror, and the spur for the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America who have not yet achieved their national and social liberation.”⁸²

All the political support the Algerian nation received contributed to and maintained Algerian independence, which eventually led to UN membership on 8 October 1962,⁸³ six years after Tunisia and Morocco had also been accepted.

The French Army’s use of violence also indirectly contributed to the Algerian narrative and increased the FLN’s international political support. The overzealous approach of the French resulted in accidental bombings of innocent civilians at schools and hospitals in Tunisia.⁸⁴ On 8 February 1958, 35 French planes bombed villages in Tunisia, hoping to terminate the FLN’s influx of external support.⁸⁵ However, the bombing resulted in the deaths of eighty noncombatants.⁸⁶ For these actions, the French Army was restricted by the French government from operating in Morocco or Tunisia.

⁸¹ “Note to the GPRA Minister of Foreign Affairs, ‘Mission to Cuba,’” trans. Asselin and Kostrzewski, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 18 January, 1962, 1–3, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121596>.

⁸² Fidel Castro, “Greeting to Algerian Premier upon Arrival” (speech, Havana, Cuba, 16 October 1962), Castro Speech Database, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1962/19621016.html>.

⁸³ “Member States,” United Nations, accessed 14 May 2016, <http://www.un.org/en/member-states/>.

⁸⁴ Kelsey Lilly, “A Policy of Violence: The Case of Algeria” (academic paper, Davidson College, December 2011), <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/09/12/a-policy-of-violence-the-case-of-algeria/>.

⁸⁵ Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse*, 179.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 179.

The French also used inhumane interrogation tactics to gather human intelligence (HUMINT).⁸⁷ The French Army's use of violence became a UN discussion topic and further amplified the FLN's political message for independence throughout the international community.⁸⁸ Political pressure on France was imperative for the FLN as they attempted to justify their grievances globally.

5. Propaganda

The FLN's propaganda movement was executed both on a locally micro and internationally macro level, each designed to generate political acceptance and external support for the Algerian narrative. This, it was hoped, would damage the international view of the legitimacy of France's use of armed forces against the Algerian population. Immediately after the FLN's initial attacks on 1 November 1954, they released a message aiming for Algerian acceptance, stating the revolt was "a national struggle to destroy an archaic colonial regime ... not a religious war."⁸⁹ The 1 November attacks instantly moved the Algerian desire for independence into international news.

The CRUA's internal propaganda movement originated in the spring of 1954 and worked to maintain nationalist traditions within Algeria. The CRUA propaganda narrative greatly supported insurgency recruitment by aligning local support within Algeria between the Arab and Kabyle populations. Aligned local support began to take form on 5 July 1954, in a meeting with revolutionary operatives within Algeria who referred to themselves as the Committee of the 22 and represented CRUA members. The meeting called for "the armed revolt under preparation ... [as not being a] single blow aimed at drawing concessions from France, but an 'unlimited revolution' [instead]."⁹⁰ When the FLN was formed, they further elaborated on this message, but took a violent approach beginning in November 1954. Saadi Yacef, the military leader for the FLN in

⁸⁷ Horne, "Preface," in *A Savage War of Peace*.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Chapter 5.

⁸⁹ Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse*, 175.

⁹⁰ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, Chapter 3.

Wilaya 4 (Algiers), began radicalizing the inmates in local prisons for propaganda and recruitment purposes.⁹¹

The French Army's excessive use of violence only serves to reinforce the FLN's propaganda message. From 1956 to 1957, the FLN intensified their guerrilla warfare tactics against military and civilian targets. This escalation resulted in the French Army's use of inhumane interrogation techniques and excessive violence on Algerian civilians. The French Army, along with the local police and colonial volunteers, conducted "arrests, mass round-ups, systematic torture, summary executions, bombings using airplanes, and burning of whole villages and forests."⁹² In August 1955, the French Army and police killed 12,000 innocent Algerian civilians and detained thousands more as a show of force and in response to a recent FLN attack.⁹³

Reaching an external audience was equally important for the FLN to generate international attention. The FLN conducted external propaganda with the help of supportive states that sought to end imperialism, colonialism, or neocolonialism, or that sought something specific to gain. Egypt, the United States, and the PRC all contributed to the FLN's propaganda. Egypt's President Nasser was a strong supporter of the FLN and "asked all Muslims in Algeria to join the national struggle [against France]."⁹⁴ Nasser also allowed the FLN to establish a broadcasting station in Egypt to deliver messages over Cairo radio and in local Arab prayer services.⁹⁵ This helped generate Egyptian Muslim support for the FLN in the form of insurgency fighters, supplies, and eventually political support.

⁹¹ Gillo Pontecorvo, *The Battle of Algiers*, ed. Saadi Yacef and in collaboration with Igor Film—Rome. Algeria, 1966. DVD .

⁹² Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse*, 175.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁹⁴ Frank E. Smitha, "Algerian War: 1954 to 1962," *Macrohistory and World Timeline*, accessed 14 May 2016, <http://www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch23algeria.htm>.

⁹⁵ Ahmed, "The War of Algeria's Independence."

The FLN also contacted anyone outside the region who would listen to their justification for independence. In 1958, M'hamed Yazid sent a letter to the *New York Times* about the fraudulent election system established in Algeria by the French. Yazid stated that in the 1948 election, “more than 30 of us were arrested during the electoral campaign and put into jail for years.”⁹⁶ This was published not long after Senator Kennedy reiterated his belief in an independent Algerian nation on the Senate floor in July 1957.

The PRC agreed to help develop the FLN's propaganda-delivering methods and techniques. In Cairo on 1 September 1960, the GPRA Prime Minister Ferhat Abbas met with the PRC and Soviet Union ambassadors. In the meeting, the PRC ambassador told Abbas that China would allow “three [Algerians who specialized in] communication service [to depart for Beijing, where they would receive] training in radio broadcasting.”⁹⁷ This allowed the FLN to improve their propaganda-delivery techniques, which had been limited to radio, printed handbills, and random acts of violence as scare tactics to influence intrastate and interstate public opinion.

6. Direct [to Indirect] Military Support

The FLN received indirect military support through arms from the U.S., Great Britain along with arms transportation from Egypt and direct military support from Iraq, Turkey, China, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia.⁹⁸ Indirect support is considered unintentional and or unknowing, and direct support is considered support that is intentionally contributed. The FLN also received material other than arms from East Germany and Albania. When the French–Algerian War became a talking point in the UN, the U.S. and Great Britain were quick to support ending the revolution, fearing France

⁹⁶ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, Chapter 3.

⁹⁷ “Letter to the GPRA Prime Minister, ‘Mission Summary,’” trans. Asselin and Kostrzewski, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, November 1960, 1–3, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121606>.

⁹⁸ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 1–624; Bouzid, “Summary of Armament during the 1954 Revolution,” 1–8; “Development of Relations with Socialist Countries since March 19, 1961,” trans. Asselin and Kostrzewski, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1–2, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121586>; Catholic Counter-Reformation in the 21st Century, “The Strong National Reaction on May 13, 1958”; Windrow, *The Algerian War*, 1–48.

was misusing NATO equipment in the war.⁹⁹ In November 1957, the U.S. and Great Britain decided to send arms to Tunisia, knowing they would eventually reach FLN insurgents.¹⁰⁰

Egypt acted as a courier who transported arms from other countries to the FLN during the French–Algerian War. In 1956, the Egyptian government sent several shipments to the FLN, only one of which was intercepted. On 16 October 1956, the French Navy boarded the ship *Athos*, even though it was flying a Sudanese flag.¹⁰¹ The *Athos* was carrying over 70 tons of arms and ammunition for the FLN; the cargo had been loaded in Alexandria, Egypt, and purchased with Egyptian money. Author Alistair Horne, in *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–1962*, confirmed the *Athos* arms manifest consisted of

- 70 mortars
- 40 machine-guns
- 74 automatic rifles
- 240 sub-machine-guns
- 2,300 rifles
- 2,000 mortar shells
- 600,000 cartridges¹⁰²

This shipment would have been extremely significant to the FLN had it been received. At that point, the FLN had a maximum of 20 mortars and 10 machine guns in Algeria.¹⁰³

Bouzid validated that the Egyptian government sent another shipment of weapons to the FLN on 20 November 1956. This shipment originated from Egypt, bound for

⁹⁹ Angel Rabasa et al., *Money in the Bank: Lessons Learned from Past Counterinsurgency (COIN) Operations*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007), 1–104.

¹⁰⁰ Catholic Counter-Reformation in the 21st Century, “The Strong National Reaction on May 13, 1958.” <http://crc-Internet.org/our-doctrine/national-restoration/algerian-war/6-national-reaction-may-13/>.

¹⁰¹ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, Chapter 7.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Tunisia, with a final destination of Algeria.¹⁰⁴ This shipment was distributed between the wilayas with the following deliveries:

- *Wilaya I*: 400 [quantity of] 303 guns and FM Bren machine guns with ammunition.
- *Wilaya II*: 400 guns and FM Bren machine guns with ammunition.
- *Wilaya III*: 450 guns and FM Bren machine guns with ammunition.
- *Wilaya IV*: 550 guns and FM Bren machine guns with ammunition.
- Eastern base 100 guns and FM Bren machine guns with ammunition¹⁰⁵

Ten days prior to the 20 November 1956 shipment to the FLN, brothers Mahsas and Laskri also sent a quantity of 30 303 guns to Wilaya 2.¹⁰⁶ Algerian nationals Mahsas and Laskri were in favor of the FLN's movement for a liberated Algerian nation. Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser also contributed to the Algerian revolution with military protective equipment. From 1957 to 1958, Nasser provided British Mk. III steel helmets to the FLN.¹⁰⁷

In 1957, both Iraq and Turkey gave armaments to the FLN. Iraq sent a shipment "loaded with mortars of 50, 60, 80, and 81 millimeters, artillery shells, FM [Fusil-mitrailleur Modèle] and submachine guns."¹⁰⁸ Turkey also contributed to the FLN that year by giving 5,000 PA (pistol automatic) and munitions for MGs (machine guns) 34 and 42.¹⁰⁹ Both these shipments provided the FLN with much-needed machine guns, which were sparse in Algeria.

The Chinese offered the FLN more arms than all the Arab nations combined; they also supplied military assistance with material other than arms. In December 1958, the FLN sent their first teams to visit China, the Soviet Union, North Vietnam, and North

¹⁰⁴ Bouzid, "Summary of Armament during the 1954 Revolution," 1–8.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Windrow, "The Plates."

¹⁰⁸ Bouzid, "Summary of Armament during the 1954 Revolution," 4.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 1–8.

Korea to establish international relations. At these talks, the Chinese promised the delivery of two million francs (\$2,050,000) in arms to the FLN.¹¹⁰ Following the meeting in Peking, the PRC delivered as promised to the FLN in July 1959, shipping 13,000 tons' worth of weapons to the ports in Alexandria, Egypt.¹¹¹ This shipment consisted of 20,000 7.62mm U.S. guns and was eventually transported to the FLN in Algeria by vehicle.

A manifesto from the General Secretary of the GPRA identified that China also sent substantial military supplies to the FLN in 1960. While in Cairo in September 1960, the GPRA prime minister met with Chinese and Soviet ambassadors over arms shipments. During that meeting, the Chinese ambassador promised the shipment of 5,000 binoculars of varying focus grades.¹¹² In November 1960, the Chinese shipped a large armament to the FLN that consisted of

- Magazine for machine guns: U.S.-type [illegible] (9 caliber): 20,000
- Magazine for U.S.-type rifle: 15,000
- Magazine for machine guns 11.4: 15,000
- Shovels: 2,000
- Pickaxes: 2,000¹¹³

All the Chinese shipments helped the FLN maintain an aggressive stance against the French Army.

Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia also contributed to FLN's military surplus. In March 1961, Czechoslovakia gave a considerable shipment of weapons and equipment to the FLN.¹¹⁴ As they noticed the FLN slowly gaining international recognition, the Soviets gradually increased their support for the FLN in

¹¹⁰ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, Chapter 19.

¹¹¹ Bouzid, "Summary of Armament during the 1954 Revolution," 1–8.

¹¹² "Letter to the GPRA Prime Minister, 'Mission Summary,'" 1–3.

¹¹³ "Note from the GPRA General Secretary, 'Issue: War Material,'" trans. Asselin and Kostrzewski, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, November 1960, 1–2, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121606>.

¹¹⁴ "Development of Relations with Socialist Countries," 1–2.

Algeria, shipping large quantities of SKS rifles to Tunis, Tunisia.¹¹⁵ Yugoslavia was known for supporting post–World War II anticolonial revolutions throughout Asia and Africa,¹¹⁶ and in 1962, they sent the FLN Soviet bloc artillery and armor.¹¹⁷

Two other European countries supporting the FLN with non-weapon assistance were East Germany and Albania. East Germany established Red Cross representatives in Morocco as a covert, unofficial means of assisting Algeria, then used this Red Cross connection to ship over material assistance.¹¹⁸ Albania also provided equipment other than arms to the FLN, which included military and civilian clothes and food, and educated select Algerians in Albania.¹¹⁹ Receiving food and military clothes was important for the FLN, as it allowed them to concentrate their resources elsewhere.

7. Conclusion

Reviewing the French–Algerian war shows how significant external support can be, even against a far superior force: the French Army. Record explained in *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win* that “most states that lose to insurgencies appear to suffer from some combination of inferior political will, inferior war strategy, and an inability to isolate insurgent forces from external support.”¹²⁰ The FLN was able to make use of safe havens and transit through bordering countries to shuttle supplies, personnel, and military support to their organization. They leveraged financial resources, political assistance, and propaganda throughout their asymmetric conflict, and the French Army’s excessive use of violence escalated international recognition for the GPRA. Gil Merom stated this

¹¹⁵ Windrow, “The French Army in Algeria,” *The Algerian War*.

¹¹⁶ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, Chapter 21.

¹¹⁷ Windrow, “The Army of National Liberation,” *The Algerian War*.

¹¹⁸ “Summary of Meeting between Third Secretary Hassenkhe and Head of Socialist Countries Bureau Yaker,” trans. Asselin and Kostrzewski, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 16 May 1961, 1–2, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121591>.

¹¹⁹ “Letter from the GPRA Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the GPRA Ministry of the Interior, ‘Material Assistance,’” History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 10 February 1962, 1–2, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121590>.

¹²⁰ Record, *Beating Goliath*, x.

escalation was due to the French government giving the French Army excessive autonomy in Algeria, which led to inhumane military actions.¹²¹ Merom explained that the French Army's aggressive actions in Algeria raised moral criticism, which shifted the "war's center of gravity and public's interest."¹²²

The FLN was able to sustain the French–Algerian War because of direct and indirect military support from state actors, even though France had a superior force. The various motivations of anticolonialism, spreading communism, anti-Western views, supporting Muslims, and propping up an independent Algerian nation contributed to state military support for the FLN. France dominated the FLN militarily, but collapsed in the political and diplomatic area. The FLN lacked a standing army with military resources and competing technological capabilities against the French, but they organized internally and externally to generate the outside resources they needed. In the end, between the fall of the fourth French Republic, the UN General Assembly decision, and NATO pressure, the French supported Algerian independence on 3 July 1962.¹²³

B. VIETNAM WAR

The Vietnam War case study will also help to identify trends in external insurgency support. This case study will first provide a brief background of the Vietnam War, also called the Second Indochina War, and then evaluate the five external support elements—safe haven and transit, financial resources, political support, propaganda, and direct military support—for the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) throughout the Vietnam War.¹²⁴ This thesis will use the term *intrastate* to refer to the North and South Vietnam region, and *interstate* will include the remaining countries that participated in the war.

¹²¹ Gil Merom, "The Social Origins of the French Capitulation in Algeria." *Armed Forces & Society* 30, no. 4 (Summer 2004), 619.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 1–624.

¹²⁴ Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support*, v–vi.

1. Vietnam War Background

The U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, to varying degrees, lasted from 1955–1975. However, Vietnam had been at war with France, during the First Indochina War from 1946–1954. A variety of events after World War II had led to the political divide of Vietnam and the Second Indochina War. On 2 September 1945, the Potsdam Conference, which was held in and named after the northern German city Potsdam, prepared for the end of World War II.¹²⁵ During the conference, world leaders decided to divide Vietnam at the 16th parallel in hopes of reducing the strength of Japan. This strategy relied on China accepting the surrender of Japanese force in northern Vietnam and the British accepting the same in southern Vietnam. During the Potsdam Conference, the French asked to reclaim their colonies in Southeast Asia (Indochina). The French request was granted, turning Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia back into French colonies. This return to colonialism resulted in the Ho Chi Minh rebellion, which established a provisional government, the DRV, in northern Vietnam. On 2 September 1945, the DRV declared Vietnamese independence.¹²⁶

Then, on 19 December 1945, 30,000 Vietnamese attacked the French in the city of Hanoi, Vietnam, which began the First Indochina War. In January 1950, the PRC under Mao Zedong and the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin acknowledged DRV rule through Ho Chi Minh. Once the PRC and Soviets had recognized the DRV, channels of external support quickly opened for Ho Chi Minh against anticommunist nations. On 21 July 1954, the Geneva Accords proposed to divide Vietnam at the 17th parallel—the same year the French withdrew from Vietnam, after losing approximately 75,000 troops.¹²⁷ The heavy French losses were partly due to the DRV receiving substantial external support to sustain insurgency operations.

¹²⁵ Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, “Harry Truman and the Potsdam Conference,” accessed 1 April 2016, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/teacher/potsdam.htm>.

¹²⁶ The History Place, “The Vietnam War, Seeds of Conflict 1945–1960,” accessed 1 April 2016, <http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/vietnam/index-1945.html>.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

The Geneva Accords relied on a divisional solution at the end of the Korean War in 1953, which divided Korea at the 38th parallel.¹²⁸ The Geneva Accords' proposed a division of Vietnam that would allow Ho Chi Minh to control the communist northern Vietnam, and Bao Dai, the emperor of Vietnam until August 1954, was to control southern Vietnam.¹²⁹ The United States wanted this division to be temporary, fearing the development of a long-term communist nation. However, in January 1957, the Soviet Union suggested making it permanent and allowing both North Vietnam and South Vietnam to join the United Nations. The United States opposed the Soviets' request, fearing a communist expansion. In March 1959, Ho Chi Minh announced a people's war against the Republic of Vietnam, which cascaded events into the Second Indochina War. In December 1960, the National Liberation Front (NLF) arose in Hanoi to represent the communist guerrilla fighters in South Vietnam.¹³⁰ The NLF supported the development of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA), which used guerrilla tactics against the anticommunists' conventional tactics.

There were many players in the Vietnam War, several of which have more than one name. The North Vietnamese government, also referred to as the DRV, was the government under Ho Chi Minh acting to spread communism against the United States. Western regional experts implemented the term *Viet Cong* for the NLF. The NLF established the People's Liberation Armed Forces of South Vietnam (PLAF),¹³¹ with both guerilla and conventional tactics. Due to their being located in South Vietnam, some of the PLAF were recruited to join the People's Army of North Vietnam, also called the NVA. For the remainder of this paper, I will use the term *DRV* for the North Vietnamese government and *the NVA* as the pro-communist army fighting the United States and South Vietnam. As the United States and South Vietnam (officially the Republic of Vietnam) were fighting the spread of communism in Asia, the DRV was receiving

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Donald W. Hamilton, *The Art of Insurgency: American Military Policy and the Failure of Strategy in Southeast Asia* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publisher, 1998), Chapter 5, Kindle edition.

¹³⁰ The History Place, "Vietnam War."

¹³¹ Ibid.

substantial external support to sustain a robust insurgency. The Vietnam War quickly escalated into violent guerrilla attacks orchestrated by the NVA, while the United States was primarily depending on conventional warfare tactics.

Figure 3 shows a map of the Vietnam region during the Vietnam War and the 1954 Geneva Accords 17th parallel line (Demilitarized Zone or DMZ) dividing Vietnam. It shows how Vietnam was bordered to the south and east by the South China Sea. It also displays the northern border of Vietnam, shared with China, and the western border of Vietnam, shared with Laos and Cambodia.

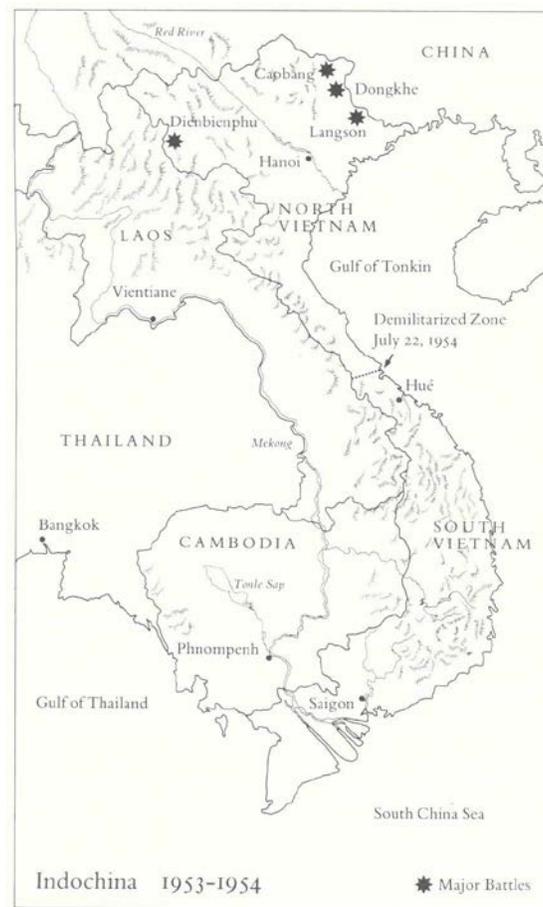


Figure 3. Indochina (1953–1954).¹³²

¹³² Source: Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York: Viking Press, 1983), 203.

2. Safe Haven and Transit

At the interstate level, the NVA used safe haven and transit to move people and resources freely in and out of Vietnam with little interference. The NVA took advantage of weak borders to receive shipments through the South China Sea to transport along the border with the PRC and eventually along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which connected northern Vietnam to southern Vietnam while running inside the Laos and Cambodian borders. The Ho Chi Minh supply lines would later prove a serious problem for the U.S. military during the Vietnam War.

In July 1954, the Geneva Agreements, also known as the Geneva Accords, signed in Switzerland, were designed to end the First Indochina War.¹³³ They resulted in the partitioning of French Indochina into Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, which was further divided at the 17th parallel into North and South Vietnam. However, the partitioning of the two Vietnams, theoretically, was to last only until a free election could be held. Figure 4 shows French Indochina before the Geneva Agreements. Following the agreements, the NVA was viewed as a proxy force for the Chinese,¹³⁴ resulting in the U.S. entering the Vietnam War one year after the partition.

¹³³ George Katsiaficas, *Vietnam Documents: American and Vietnamese Views* (Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Routledge, 1992), Chapter 2.

¹³⁴ Harry G. Summers, *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*, reissue ed. (New York: Presidio Press, 2009), Chapter 5, Kindle edition.

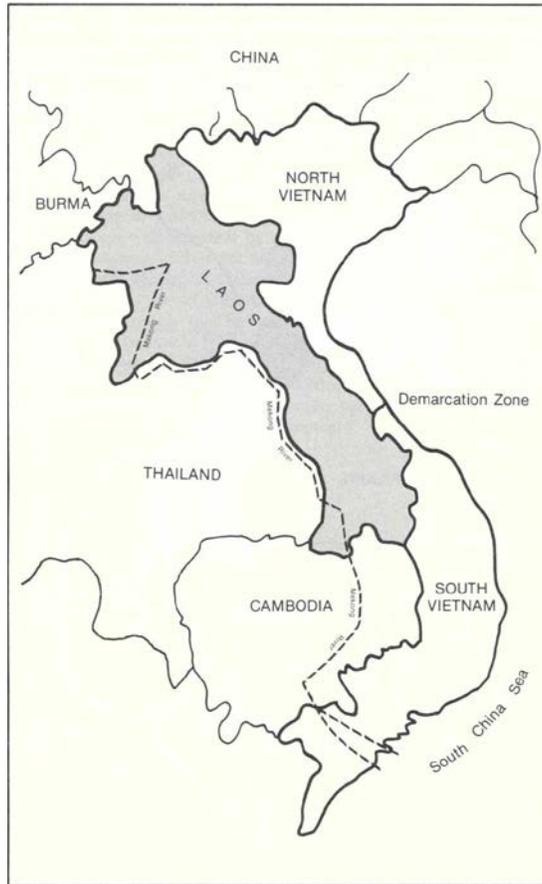


Figure 4. Laos as an Integral Neutral Buffer before the Geneva Accords.¹³⁵

The Geneva Agreements would eventually present opportunities for Laos to be extremely beneficial to the NVA by providing safe havens, and in turn, these opportunities would make Laos a crucial element in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. In January 1961, President Eisenhower gave advice to Kennedy the day before his presidential inauguration, stating “[Laos is] the strategic key to the entire area of Southeast Asia.”¹³⁶ In 1962, another Geneva meeting was held, this time addressing Laos’s neutrality. The 1962 signing of the International Agreement on the Neutrality of Laos resulted in the U.S. slowly accepting communist intervention into neutral Laos

¹³⁵ Source: Norman B. Hannah, *The Key to Failure: Laos and the Vietnam War*, 3rd ed. (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1987), 71.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 217.

through the Ho Chi Minh Trail.¹³⁷ Roger Hilsman, assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs from May 1963 to March 1964, described several elements of the 1962 Geneva talks, including the assertion the NVA had failed to withdraw from Laos and abide by the 1954 Geneva Agreements, while the U.S. had upheld the agreements' strict guidelines.¹³⁸ The 1962 Geneva talks resulted in a formal agreement of Laos's neutrality, simultaneously contributing to a "tacit agreement" about how the world powers would use Laos for regional influence: the U.S. would control the capital region of Laos, and the communists would control eastern and southern Laos.

The 1962 political agreement created a hypothetically neutral Laos, but in reality the NVA could use the country for safe haven and transit so long as the truly neutral northwestern section of Laos was untouched. The NVA slowly expanded into Laos along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, through mutual support with the Pathet Lao, the communist party in Laos.¹³⁹ The NVA managed to distract the U.S. and make them think that U.S. political intervention in northwestern Laos was making considerable difference, while the NVA made use of the eastern half of Laos. The U.S. was also confronted with the dilemma of either invading Laos, most likely escalating a communist intervention, or doing nothing and hoping the NVA would not exploit the safe havens and transit opportunities Laos presented into South Vietnam.¹⁴⁰

In December 1970, Congress passed the Cooper-Church amendment, which "prohibited any U.S. forces from operating on the ground inside Cambodia or Laos."¹⁴¹ This would severely restrict U.S. forces' efforts to block safe haven and transit opportunities the NVA were using in Laos and Cambodia. The United States' decision to stay out of Laos made them unable to disrupt NVA travel through Laos and Cambodia to South Vietnam, which contributed to an influx in NVA personnel into South Vietnam.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 61–62.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 63.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 64.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 66.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 282–283.

Figure 5 shows the region following the 1962 tacit agreement. The southeastern section of Laos (dotted area) is where the Ho Chi Minh Trail was operating under NVA and Pathet Lao control,¹⁴² allowing the NVA direct access to Cambodia, which was striking distance from Saigon. The northwestern section (lined area) of Laos in Figure 5 was considered the neutral Laos area, with U.S. support. It was implied in the tacit agreement that if the U.S. did not interrupt NVA access through Laos to South Vietnam, the NVA would not overrun northwestern neutral bases in Laos.¹⁴³



Figure 5. Laos Partitioned in the Framework of the Tacit Agreement.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Ibid., 64–73.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 73.

¹⁴⁴ Source: Hannah, *The Key to Failure*, 72.

The NVA received transit support from the Soviets through the South China Sea. Data from the former USSR Foreign Ministry stated the DRV received annual shipments worth \$450 million from the Soviets, \$180 million from the PRC, and \$190 million from other communist countries.¹⁴⁵ The Soviets mostly carried military supplies and personnel through the South China Sea to the NVA while avoiding patrolling U.S. warships. Select NVA personnel were brought to the Soviet Union to learn the military details of running a modern army, along with specific combat skills.¹⁴⁶ In July 1972, the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow, as quoted by Sarin and Dvoretzky, stated, “Almost 20 percent of the commanders of the Vietnamese Army have studied in our academy.”¹⁴⁷ It was reported that between 1965 and 1974, more than 10,000 NVA personnel attended Soviet military academies.¹⁴⁸ The training the NVA received in Moscow was only possible due to safe haven and transit around Vietnam.

The PRC’s relaxed southern border with Vietnam greatly contributed to the longevity of the NVA through strategic staging areas, free movement of supplies, and infrastructure support. The Chinese built airfields along their border with Vietnam, offering NVA pilots a safe haven for repairs, maintenance, and refueling.¹⁴⁹ The Chinese also allowed the NVA access to railroads for moving supplies within the PRC from the South China Sea to the Ho Chi Minh Trail, travel that was only possible because the U.S. feared future conflict with the PRC or the Soviet Union. The PRC facilitated a movement amongst Chinese workers to help repair DRV infrastructure damaged during the war. This allowed the NVA to fight instead of spending time and resources building railroad

¹⁴⁵ O. Sarin and L. Dvoretzky, *Alien Wars: The Soviet Union’s Aggressions against the World, 1919 to 1989* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1996), 93–94.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁴⁸ Rakesh Krishnan Simha, “Vietnam War: The Critical Role of Russian Weapons,” *Russia and India Report*, 30 April 2015, http://in.rbth.com/blogs/2015/04/30/vietnam_war_the_critical_role_of_russian_weapons_42917.

¹⁴⁹ Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950–1975*, ed. John L. Gaddis (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 132, Kindle edition.

tracks, bridges, tunnels, bunkers, or fortifications.¹⁵⁰ The safe haven and transit provided by the Chinese virtually turned the Ho Chi Minh Trail into a highway (Figure 6).

Established centuries before the Vietnam War, the Ho Chi Minh Trail was originally foot trails used for trade, but it was transformed as the war progressed and the DMZ was established along the 17th parallel.¹⁵¹ The DMZ ran from the border of Laos to the South China Sea and was approximately 5 km wide, making it very difficult to cross. By 1965, U.S. involvement had ramped up the DMZ, making it almost impenetrable, which forced the NVA to rely on the Ho Chi Minh Trail through Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam.¹⁵²

The extensive use of the Ho Chi Minh Trail could not have been possible without the work of the NVA 559th Command Group, which was named for the date of their formation, May 1959. The 559th Command Group began to develop the Ho Chi Minh Trail, strategically placing air defenses, communication, medical support bunkers, tunnels for soldiers to sleep in, and security posts along it. The Ho Chi Minh Trail proved invaluable over the years for the NVA by allowing transit of much-needed military supplies and personnel to fight the Vietnam government. Lanning and Cragg estimated that traffic of NVA soldiers along the Ho Chi Minh Trail went from 6,000 in 1964 to over 100,000 in 1969.¹⁵³ By 1973, the trail included 20,000 kilometers of communication cable, a 1,000-kilometer-long by 8-meter-wide all-weather road that supported 10,000 vehicles a day, and a pipeline 5,000 kilometers in length.¹⁵⁴ This allowed the NVA to receive 100 tons of supplies per day, transferred through three locations: 15 tons per day through the

¹⁵⁰ Jennifer Llewellyn, Jim Southey, and Steve Thompson, “Chinese and Soviet Involvement in Vietnam,” Alpha History, accessed 23 March 2016, <http://alphahistory.com/vietnam/chinese-and-soviet-involvement/>.

¹⁵¹ Michael L. Lanning and Dan Cragg, *Inside the VC and the NVA: The Real Story of North Vietnam's Armed Forces* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1992), Chapter 2, Kindle edition.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, Chapter 4.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Chapter 12.

DMZ, 50 tons per day through Laos, and 35 tons of food per day through Cambodia.¹⁵⁵ The Ho Chi Minh Trail was a success for the NVA, as the United States and South Vietnam did little to stem the continuous flow of support.



Figure 6. Ho Chi Minh Trail.¹⁵⁶

In 1965, the United States began considering a barrier wall and blocking strategies to counter the supplies reaching South Vietnam from North Vietnam. A barrier concept was proposed to General Goodpaster, who discussed it with then-U.S. secretary

¹⁵⁵ David F. Gordon, *Estimative Products on Vietnam: 1948–1975* (Pittsburgh, PA: National Intelligence Council, April 2005), 532.

¹⁵⁶ Source: Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, 333.

of state Robert McNamara.¹⁵⁷ The idea was sent to the Institution of Defense Analysis. Its JASON Division (JASON: July, August, September, October, November) proposed a plan that would include choke points utilizing advanced sensor technology with electronic fence, mines, and air and ground observation, just south of the DMZ.¹⁵⁸ The U.S. government poured \$1.5 billion into the McNamara Line for construction and estimated an additional \$740 million for annual operations.¹⁵⁹ Many senior military officials believed that the McNamara Line would prove inadequate to keep the NVA out of the south. The barrier concept was eventually abandoned once troops maintaining the McNamara Line began taking regular shelling by the NVA.¹⁶⁰ The excessive costs of maintaining the McNamara Line, combined with the alternative route to South Vietnam through the Ho Chi Minh Trail, also contributed to the decision to vacate the McNamara Line.

In January 1966, the U.S. Military Assistance Command in Thailand (MACTHAI) first proposed an isolating strategy. MACTHAI proposed using anticommunist troops to put pressure on southern Laos from the west and east to gradually cut off the Ho Chi Minh Trail.¹⁶¹ General Westmoreland, who believed that eliminating the support along the eastern side of the Ho Chi Minh Trail would thoroughly turn the tables in the war, followed up with a similar suggestion for interrupting the supply channels along the trail. He was unable to execute his blocking strategy, though, due to opposing U.S. policies and the 1968 Tet Offensive.¹⁶² In 1976, a year after the Vietnam War ended, General Westmoreland stated in his memoir, “I still [hope] some

¹⁵⁷ Edward J. Drea, *Secretaries of Defense Historical Series*, eds. Erin R. Mahan and Stuart I. Rochester, vol. 6, *McNamara, Clifford, and the Burdens of Vietnam 1965–1969* (Washington, DC: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2011), 127.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹⁶⁰ James W. Gibson, *The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986), Chapter 12, Kindle edition.

¹⁶¹ Hannah, *Key to Failure*, 219.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 220.

day to get approval for a major drive into Laos to cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail.”¹⁶³ The NVA benefited from political confusion about Laos’ neutrality and inadequate U.S. military strategies, which together made it possible for countless supplies and personnel to move into South Vietnam.

3. Financial Resources

The DRV received funds from the Soviets and the PRC, both of whom supported the DRV in hopes of a communist victory. The Soviet military and economic aid to the DRV totaled \$365 million between 1954 and 1964. Aid in the following years modestly increased. Soviet aid was \$295 million in just 1965. In 1966, the Soviet contributions to the NVA were \$510 million, and they rose to more than \$705 million in 1967. For the remaining years of the Vietnam War, the DRV received an average of \$420 million per year from the Soviets.¹⁶⁴

The PRC also gave financial support to the DRV during the Vietnam War. In the decade before 1965, the PRC gave more than \$670 million to the DRV. In 1965, the PRC’s contributions increased from \$110 million to \$225 million between 1965 and 1967.¹⁶⁵ This robust financial support from the Soviets and the PRC allowed the DRV to wage a prolonged campaign against the U.S. and South Vietnam.

4. Political Support

Political support allowed the DRV to justify their cause on a global scale. Political support for the DRV came from the Soviet Union, the PRC, and Cuba. Joseph Stalin, whose concern was spreading communism in Asia and who gave little regard to the people of Vietnam, established a diplomatic relationship with the DRV on 30 January 1950, opening the door for future Soviet support.¹⁶⁶ On 17 November 1964, Soviet

¹⁶³ William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., January 1976), 198.

¹⁶⁴ Lanning and Cragg, *Inside the VC and the NVA*, Chapter 7.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Sarin and Dvoretzky, *Alien Wars*, 88.

premier Alexei Kosygin had a message delivered to the National Liberation Front South Vietnam (NLF SVN) affirming the Soviets' support.¹⁶⁷ Strengthened political relations allowed the NLF to occupy an office in Moscow.¹⁶⁸ On the 6 February 1965, Kosygin visited Hanoi, Vietnam in hopes of strengthening the bond with the NLF.¹⁶⁹ During Kosygin's visit to Hanoi, he demanded the U.S. withdraw from South Vietnam and promised the Soviets would provide material to Ho Chi Minh's struggle.¹⁷⁰ Kosygin's visit to Hanoi paved the way for the Soviets to spread communism in Asia and gain global allies during the Cold War era.

Between 1964 and 1965, Mao Zedong feared U.S. involvement in Vietnam would lead to a complete encirclement of China, jeopardizing their national security.¹⁷¹ Mao believed in strengthening the political relationship with the DRV, hoping for a communist victory against a major Western power. Chen Jian, author of *China's Involvement in the Vietnam War, 1964–69*, believes Mao wanted to support the DRV's conflict in order to promote the PRC's "continuous revolution."¹⁷² In addition to their political support, the PRC eventually gave the DRV financial aid, personal assistance, supplies, and safe haven and transit throughout the Vietnam War.

Cuban prime minister Fidel Castro believed in generating as many allies as possible against major Western powers like the United States. Castro learned that supporting small revolutions through proxy conflicts could be the quickest and easiest way to gain political support. He publically stated Cuba's support for the DRV on 30 August 1971, at Havana University, stating:

¹⁶⁷ R. B. Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War: The Struggle for South-East Asia 1961–65* (London, UK: Macmillan Press, 1985), 2:183.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 202.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, 149.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁷² Chen Jian, *China's Involvement in the Vietnam War, 1964–69* (London, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 363.

We hold that in Vietnam the fighting spirit and heroism of the nations have been manifested to the highest level. When faced with the necessity to cope with the U.S. imperialists who have used all the most up-to-date means and every weapon of destruction to attack them, the Vietnamese people have not hesitated to cope the U.S. imperialist and in reality they are defeating them.¹⁷³

Castro reiterated Cuba's political support for the DRV in a July 1973 delegation speech in Hanoi, and in September 1973, he addressed the central committee of the Vietnam Workers Party. In March 1974, Castro sent a message supporting the Vietnamese Women's Congress, and the same month, Cuba held a Vietnam solidarity rally in Havana.¹⁷⁴ Castro's political support for the DRV was similar to political support Cuba had offered to the FLN in Algeria.

5. Propaganda

Andrew Mack stated in *Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflicts* that "If the external power's 'will' to continue the struggle is destroyed, then its military capability—no matter how powerful—is totally irrelevant."¹⁷⁵ The DRV realized the importance of propaganda during the Vietnam War and attempted it internally throughout Vietnam and toward a wider international audience. The U.S. military's excessive force and repercussion press coverage inadvertently contributed to the DRV's propaganda messages throughout the war. The North Vietnamese also benefited indirectly from changes in the U.S. media coverage of the conflict. The U.S. failed to spot the importance of propaganda, given their overconfidence in the asymmetric war with Vietnam and their previous victory in World War II.

Daniel Byman, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau, and David Brannan in the book titled *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* state how insurgencies can use propaganda to legitimize their goals, support funding and recruiting,

¹⁷³ Fidel Castro, "Greeting to Algerian Premier upon Arrival."

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Andrew Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," *World Politics* 27, no. 2 (1975): 179.

discredit opposing governments, and internationalize their conflicts, all through either an intrastate or interstate approach.¹⁷⁶ Several new schools of thought arose from the DRV's usage of propaganda during the Vietnam War. The DRV conducted on-camera interviews through the U.S. press, which contributed to their global message.¹⁷⁷ They also used non-recorded face-to-face interviews, printed handbills, posters, pamphlets, and radio broadcasts to generate support from local Vietnamese in remote locations and from U.S. civil workers in Vietnam to hopefully resonate back to the U.S.¹⁷⁸ These actions eventually contributed to mass antiwar protests throughout the U.S., which also affected political views of the war. Ultimately, the DRV's propaganda resulted in a legitimacy for them and an international arms conflict against anticommunist governments.

The United States media indirectly contributed to the interests of the DRV through coverage of the Tet Offensive, alleged GI war crimes, and American POWs in Vietnam. During this period, the spread of home television allowed the media to gain more influence over the American population, since TV owners went from 10,000 to 46 million between 1945 and 1960.¹⁷⁹ A 1964 survey by the Roper Organization for the Television Information Office reported that 58 percent of American respondents received their news from TV.¹⁸⁰ In April 1961, President John F. Kennedy realized the influence the media had over the American population and addressed the issue by stating:

If the press is awaiting a declaration of war before it imposes the self-discipline of combat conditions, then I can only say that no war ever posed a greater threat to our security. If you are awaiting a finding of "clear and present danger," then I can only say that the danger has never been more clear and its presence more imminent. ... Every newspaper now asks itself

¹⁷⁶ Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support*, 88–91.

¹⁷⁷ Frank L. Goldstein and Benjamin F. Findley, Jr., eds., *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1996), 345.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁷⁹ Rusty Monhollon, *Baby Boom: People and Perspectives*, *Perspectives in American Social History* (ABC-CLIO, 2010), 182.

¹⁸⁰ Daniel C. Hallin, "Part II: The War on Television, 1965–1973" in *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1986), Kindle edition.

with respect to every story: “Is it news?” All I suggest is that you add the question: “Is it in the interest of national security?”¹⁸¹

For the first time, media was embedded with GIs in combat, giving Americans a new understanding of the Vietnam War. Walter Cronkite, a *CBS Evening News* reporter, was notorious for giving the weekly American body count in Vietnam.¹⁸² On 9 October 1967, Walter Cronkite released a graphic video in which a GI soldier cut off a Vietcong soldier’s ear for a souvenir, filmed two days prior.¹⁸³ It was later confirmed that the Cronkite media team had given the knife to the GI and dared him to cut off the ear of a dead Vietcong.¹⁸⁴ The media’s involvement gave Americans a never-before-seen view of war that made them question the U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

The 1968 Tet Offensive (Figure 7) was the beginning of U.S. withdrawal from the Vietnam War.¹⁸⁵ Tet marks the Vietnamese New Year, a time when families reunite and exchange gifts. Weeks before the Tet Offensive, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong offered a seven-day truce with the South Vietnamese Army to mark the holiday.¹⁸⁶ The South Vietnamese and allied forces acknowledged they would implement a 36-hour truce,¹⁸⁷ but in January 1968, the NVA executed multiple aggressive attacks against South Vietnam, ignoring the agreement.¹⁸⁸ In the Tet Offensive, “34 provincial capitals, 64 district capitals, and all autonomous cities were attacked.”¹⁸⁹ The Tet Offensive was unable to destroy the South Vietnamese Army or sociopolitical system. However, it did

¹⁸¹ Ibid., “Part I: Escalation and News Management,” 1961–1965.

¹⁸² Hannah, *Key to Failure*, 213.

¹⁸³ Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 320, Kindle edition.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Hannah, *Key to Failure*, 69.

¹⁸⁶ Kent Seig and David S. Patterson, eds., *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968*, vol. 6, *Vietnam, January–August 1968* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Public Affairs, Office of the Historian, November 2002), 213.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 213.

¹⁸⁸ Hannah, *Key to Failure*, 241–242.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 242.

have a drastic impact on the American population, who were accustomed to winning wars and now were receiving daily graphic media images of GI casualties.¹⁹⁰

Following the Tet Offensive, journalist reports on GI victories in Vietnam decreased from 62 percent to 44 percent.¹⁹¹ In February 1968, shortly after the Tet Offensive commenced, Walter Cronkite addressed the American population on *CBS Evening News*, stating:

To say that we are closer to victory today is to believe, in the face of the evidence, the optimists who have been wrong in the past. To suggest we are on the edge of defeat is to yield to unreasonable pessimism. To say that we are mired in stalemate seems the only realistic, yet unsatisfactory, conclusion. On the off chance that military and political analysts are right, in the next few months we must test the enemy's intentions, in case this is indeed his last big gasp before negotiations. But it is increasingly clear to this reporter that the only rational way out then will be to negotiate, not as victors, but as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy, and did the best they could.¹⁹²

The Tet Offensive was perceived as a U.S. military defeat even though it was the NVA who were defeated; the U.S. military strategy switched from pursuit to withdrawal with Vietnamization, which infuriated many U.S. Army generals.¹⁹³ In General Westmoreland's memoir, he stated that American reporters had contributed to the NVA's psychological victory from the Tet Offensive.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Hallin, "Part II: The War on Television, 1965–1973," *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam*.

¹⁹² Walter Cronkite, "Who, What, When, Where, Why: Reported from Vietnam," *CBS Evening News*, February 1968.

¹⁹³ Hannah, *Key to Failure*, 242.

¹⁹⁴ Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, 321–325.

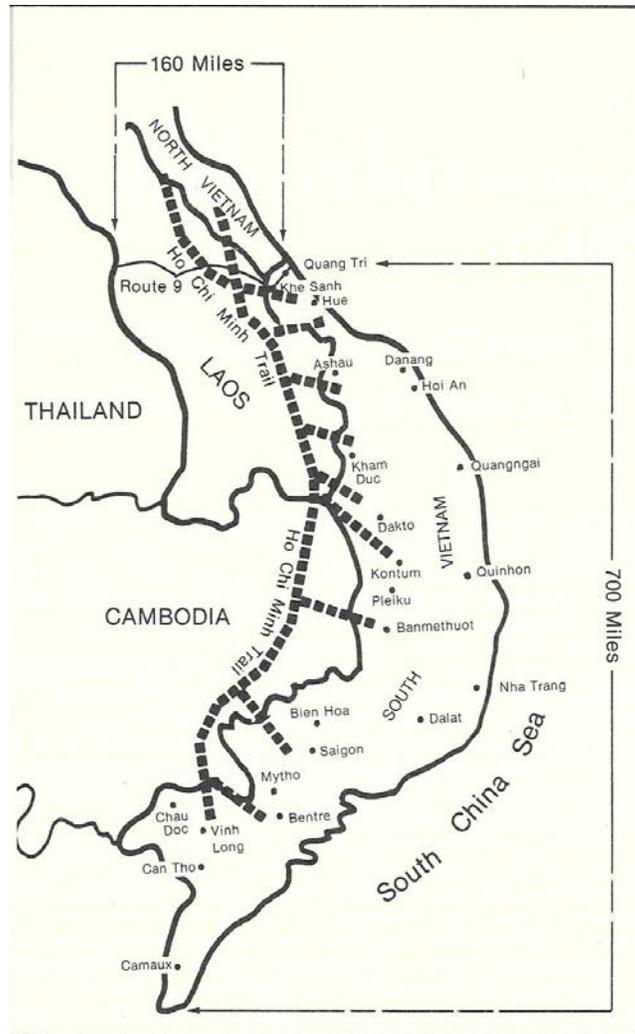


Figure 7. Southern Vietnam, January 1968: Tet Offensive Major Battles.¹⁹⁵

America's actions during the Vietnam War created a negative image of anticommunists and supported the DRV propaganda narrative. A report assembled by the Pentagon in the 1970s contained 9,000 pages of alleged U.S. war crimes in Vietnam and is supported by investigative files, witness statements, and situation reports from senior military officers.¹⁹⁶ *America in Vietnam* estimated that from 1965–74, 30–40 percent of

¹⁹⁵ Source: Hannah, *The Key to Failure: Laos and the Vietnam War*, 218.

¹⁹⁶ Nick Turse and Deborah Nelson, "Civilian Killings Went Unpunished," *LA Times*, 6 August 2006, <http://www.latimes.com/news/la-na-vietnam6aug06-story.html>.

the Vietnam War deaths were civilians.¹⁹⁷ As quoted in *The War Behind Me: Vietnam Veterans Confronting the Truth About U.S. War Crimes*, Vietnam War veteran John Kerry testified to Congress on 22 April 1971 and described the actions of other American soldiers in Vietnam:

[They] raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blew up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam in addition to the normal ravage of war.¹⁹⁸

The atrocities committed by some American GIs in Vietnam indirectly strengthened the DRV propaganda message in favor of communism and were a huge lesson for the U.S. to remember in future conflicts.

The American POW presence in Vietnam eventually influenced Congress to implement several bills in protest of the Vietnam War. In June 1971, the U.S. Senate voted for the Mansfield Amendment, which required all American GIs to vacate Vietnam within nine months,¹⁹⁹ contingent on U.S. POWs being released by the NVA.²⁰⁰ The exact treatment of American GIs held by the NVA was not fully understood until 1973, following the Paris Agreement.²⁰¹ On 27 January 1973, the Paris Agreement (or Peace Accords) was signed in Paris between the Viet Cong, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the U.S., formally ending the Second Indochina War.²⁰² The Paris Agreement also acknowledged both sides were to release POWs; the U.S. would vacate Vietnam, and

¹⁹⁷ Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, 458.

¹⁹⁸ Deborah Nelson, *The War Behind Me: Vietnam Veterans Confront the Truth about U.S. War Crimes* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 3, Kindle edition.

¹⁹⁹ Richard Reeves, *President Nixon: Alone in the White House*, revised ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 336.

²⁰⁰ Hannah, *Key to Failure*, 291.

²⁰¹ Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, 329.

²⁰² "Vietnam War, 27 January 1973: Paris Peace Accords Signed," History.com, accessed 22 October 2016, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/paris-peace-accords-signed>.

North Vietnam would not cross the DMZ to invade South Vietnam.²⁰³ American POWs described the inhumane treatment they had received as NVA captives, revealing that the NVA had not followed the 1949 Geneva Conventions under Article 13,²⁰⁴ which states that “measures of reprisal against prisoners of war are prohibited.”²⁰⁵ Finally, after the U.S. withdrew from Vietnam and POWs were released, Congress enacted the War Powers Act in 1973 to prevent future U.S. presidents from deploying American forces without Congressional approval.²⁰⁶ The accumulation of events through the Tet Offensive and the alleged GI war crimes publicized by American media directly deepened American discontent with the Vietnam War.

6. Direct [to Indirect] Military Support

Direct military support was probably the most important element for the DRV’s guerrilla operations against the U.S. and South Vietnam. Direct support is considered support that is intentionally contributed, and indirect support is considered unintentional and or unknowing. The DRV’s military support came from prominent countries: the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, and Cuba. The U.S. had no intention of escalating conflicts with these countries, which allowed them to transport military supplies and personnel to the NVA virtually unchallenged.

The Soviet Union provided abundant military equipment and military personnel to sustain the communist campaign against the U.S. and South Vietnam, along with early warning systems. During the war, Soviet ships would identify U.S. B-52 bombers departing from Okinawa and Guam to Vietnam and quickly calculate their trajectories to notify the DRV and NVA. Between 1968 and 1970, U.S. B-52 bomber runs over Vietnam did not kill a single NVA soldier, thanks to these alerts.²⁰⁷

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, 329–330.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 331.

²⁰⁶ Thomas E. Mann, *A Question of Balance: The President, the Congress and Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1990), 18–19.

²⁰⁷ Simha, “Vietnam War: The Critical Role of Russian Weapons.”

The Soviets provided the NVA with weaponry more modern than the NVA possessed (see Table 3), along with military advisors (see Table 4). The NVA received approximately “2,000 tanks, 7,000 artillery guns, [more than] 5,000 anti-aircraft guns, and 158 surface-to-air [missiles (SAM)], ... [along with] oil, machinery, and spare parts.”²⁰⁸ Between 1965 and 1972, the Soviets gave NVA 95 missile complexes and 7,658 SAMs.²⁰⁹ *Alien Wars: The Soviet Union’s Aggressions against the World, 1919–1989*, provides a table of Soviet military equipment sent to the NVA from 1965–1972

Table 3. Soviet Military Equipment Provided to the NVA, 1965–1972.²¹⁰

Type	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Aircraft	82	63	57	44	36	26	18	14
Radars	31	—	43	16	22	18	16	10
FA guns	127	116	114	177	119	90	78	—
AD rocket systems	10	12	14	—	14	10	10	10
Small Arms ammunition	17	18	12	12	12	13	10	10
Artillery ammunition	29	16	16	17	19	16	11	8
Small arms	16	17	22	18	14	18	16	10
Food	124	116	137	122	118	113	106	110
Medical supplies	3.5	4.2	6.3	5.0	8.0	11.0	10.0	5.0

Note: ammunition is in thousands of cases; small arms in thousands; food and medical supplies in tons.

The Soviet Union also sent the NVA military advisors, approximately 15,000 personnel over the course of the war.²¹¹ *Alien Wars* also provides a table of Soviet personnel in Vietnam from 1965–1972.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Sergei Blagov, “Russian Missiles to Guard Skies over Vietnam,” *Asia Times Online*, 5 September 2003, http://atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/EI05Ag02.html.

²¹⁰ Source: Sarin and Dvoretzky, *Alien Wars*, 91.

²¹¹ Sarin and Dvoretzky, *Alien Wars*, 94.

Table 4. Soviet Personnel Provided to the NVA, 1965–1972.²¹²

PERSONNEL	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Pilots	102	148	152	136	171	128	84	64
Aviation technicians	96	87	84	82	54	32	27	19
Radar operators	74	68	92	81	87	54	38	14
Aviation engineers	54	41	35	44	19	14	---	14
Infantry	117	108	92	87	---	63	39	28
Artillery	37	68	84	52	39	34	26	16
Armor	56	28	---	27	43	21	17	13
Engineers	72	137	124	118	---	19	34	18
Administrative troops	48	32	17	21	43	14	16	14

Note: Dashes in the above table mean that the information was not available.

The PRC sent direct military support in the form of military equipment (see Table 5), personnel, and food. The PRC provided the DRV with four air defensive divisions, one antiaircraft division, and fifteen MIG-15 and MIG-17 planes.²¹³ In the summer of 1962, the PRC donated 90,000 rifles and ammo.²¹⁴ *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950–1975*, gives a table of PRC military equipment sent to the DRV from 1964–1975.

²¹² Adapted from Sarin and Dvoretzky, *Alien Wars*, 94.

²¹³ Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, 132.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 115–116.

Table 5. China Military Aid to the DRV, 1964–1975.²¹⁵

China's Military Aid to the DRV, 1964–1975												
Items	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Guns	80,500	220,767	141,531	146,600	219,899	139,900	101,800	143,100	189,000	233,600	164,500	141,800
Artillery pieces	1,205	4,439	3,362	3,984	7,087	3,906	2,212	7,898	9,238	9,912	6,406	4,880
Bullets (thousands)	25,240	114,010	178,120	147,000	247,920	119,170	29,010	57,190	40,000	40,000	30,000	20,060
Artillery shells (thousands)	335	1,800	1,066	1,363	2,082	1,357	397	1,899	2,210	2,210	1,390	965
Radio transmitters	426	2,779	1,568	2,464	1,854	2,210	950	2,464	4,370	4,335	5,148	2,240
Telephone sets	2,941	9,502	2,235	2,289	3,313	3,453	1,600	4,424	5,905	6,447	4,633	2,150
Tanks	16	–	–	26	18	–	–	80	220	120	80	–
Ships	–	7	14	25	–	–	–	24	71	5	6	–
Aircraft	18	2	–	70	–	–	–	4	14	36	–	20
Vehicles	25	114	96	435	454	162	–	4,011	8,758	1,210	506	–
Uniforms (thousands)	–	–	400	800	1,000	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,400	1,400	1,400	–

Source: Li Ke and Hao Shengzhang, *Wenhua dagerningzhong de renrnin jiefangium*, 416.

The PRC also provided military personnel and advisors, along with food so DRV personnel could sustain guerrilla operations. Author Zhai reports in *China and the Vietnam Wars* that 320,000 PRC troops served in Vietnam between June 1965 and March 1968, reaching a peak in 1967 with the participation of Chinese 170,000 troops.²¹⁶ In addition, the PRC sent food for troops and local Vietnamese. Brantly Womack estimates in *China and Vietnam: The Politics of Asymmetry* that the PRC provided five million tons of food during their Vietnam War support period, equal to the annual Vietnamese food consumption. In 1966 alone, the PRC provided 10 percent of Vietnam's food.²¹⁷

North Korea, another procommunist country, supported the DRV campaign primarily by providing aerial military logistics. According to Vietnamese air defense history, North Korea provided military support to the DRV during the Vietnam War.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Adapted from Zhai, *China & the Vietnam Wars*, 136–137.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 136.

²¹⁷ Brantly Womack, *China and Vietnam: The Politics of Asymmetry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Chapter 8, Kindle edition.

²¹⁸ Merle L. Pribbenow, "The 'Ology War: Technology and Ideology in the Vietnamese Defense of Hanoi, 1967," *Journal of Military History* 67, no. 1 (January 2003): 184.

Pribbenow stated in “The ‘Ology War: Technology and Ideology in the Vietnamese Defense of Hanoi, 1967” that North Korea had a fighter regiment covertly replace the NVA 921st and 923rd fighter regiments while executing covert missions in a denied area.²¹⁹ Approximately 200 North Korean pilots were sent to Vietnam to help protect Hanoi.²²⁰

Cuba offered the DRV engineers, military advisors, and prison guards. On 4 November 1999, Michael Bengé, who served as a civilian economic development officer in South Vietnam, stated before the House International Relations Committee that Cuba sent several thousand engineers to Vietnam to support the construction, repairs, and guarding of the essential Ho Chi Minh Trail the NVA used during the war.²²¹

According to the P.O.W. Network, Bengé reported that the Cuban intelligence agency, the Directorate of Intelligence (DGI), ran an initiative called the Cuban Program in which Cuban guards tortured American POWs.²²² Former POW John McCain noted in his 2000 memoir *Faith of My Fathers* seeing Cuban guards in POW base “Camp Unity” during the Vietnam War attempting to break Americans or torture them to death.²²³ In 2008, Fidel Castro denied that McCain had been tortured by Cuban guards during the war as he had claimed.²²⁴

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Richard M. Bennett, “Missiles and Madness,” *Asia Times Online*, 18 August 2006, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Korea/HH18Dg02.html>.

²²¹ Testimony of Michael D. Bengé before the House International Relations Committee, 4 November 1999, POW Network, http://www.pownetwork.org/fonda/fonda_testimony_of_michael_d.htm.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ John McCain and Mark Salter, *Faith of My Fathers* (New York: Random House, August 2000), 319, Kindle edition.

²²⁴ “Castro Denies McCain’s Claim on Torture,” NBCNews.com, 11 February 2008, <http://www.nbcnews.com/id/23114586/#.VvQIDz9JZ7F>.

7. Conclusion

Like the French–Algerian War, the events of the Vietnam War show the importance of external support to insurgencies. Record explains in *Why the Strong Lose* that “it seems no less reasonable to conclude that highly motivated and skilled insurgents can be defeated if denied access to external assistance and confronted by a strong side pursuing a strategy of barbarism against the insurgency’s civilian population base.”²²⁵ The Vietnam War displayed how safe haven and transit can assist in shuttling supplies, personnel, and military support to an insurgency. Financial resources from state actors proved important for the insurgency, especially given their lack of efficient means to generate funds. Political assistance was vital as support for the insurgency’s narrative and arms struggle against anticommunist nations. The DRV insurgency executed their propaganda strategy both internally and externally while indirectly benefiting from U.S. media actions. The NVA lacked the military resources and technological advances to confront the United States and South Vietnam, but with external procommunist assistance, they turned the outcome of the war. The U.S. had failed to study the importance of external support in the First Indochina War, resulting in approximately 58,000 Americans dead in Vietnam.

C. ISLAMIC STATE

The third case study this thesis will look at to identify trends in external insurgency support is IS. This case study will provide a brief background on IS, then will evaluate the five external support elements—safe haven and transit, financial resources, political support, propaganda, and direct military support—for IS.²²⁶ This thesis will use the term *intrastate* to refer to the countries of Iraq and Syria, and *interstate* will include the remaining relevant countries for IS. This case study will cover IS from its inception until August 2016.

²²⁵ Jeffrey Record, *Why the Strong Lose* (Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), 24.

²²⁶ Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support*, 1–138.

1. Islamic State Background

Between 1968 and 2003, the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party ruled Iraq, providing economic growth and soaring prosperity through oil revenues. In 2003, the U.S., along with the Coalition Provisional Authority, toppled Saddam Hussein and ended the Iraqi Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party. The Coalition Provisional Authority consisted of the U.S., United Kingdom (UK), Australia, and Poland. Iraq's inadequate domestic political reform plan and the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq in 2011 created an opportunity for an insurgency force like IS to emerge. IS originated in Iraq and has since expanded globally.

IS evolved to fill a void left in the Middle East, disrupting the existence of many through genocide of ethnic groups, extortion, and unjust governing throughout Iraq and Syria. IS has demolished cultural heritage sites in Iraq and Syria, including mosques and shrines, churches, and ancient and medieval sites. This destruction track has forced the displacement of millions. The United Nations reported that IS's insurgency has forced more than three million Iraqis to become refugees and relocate.²²⁷

IS has managed to develop an enormous international support infrastructure, which, as author Bruce J. Reider has stated, is imperative for an insurgency force to sustain operations.²²⁸ IS is using online social networks, *Dabiq* (a propaganda magazine), preachers, and, theoretically, a caliphate. A caliphate, if recognized, would reactivate dormant Islamic law, requiring devout Muslims to migrate to the territory occupied by the caliph. This has facilitated funding, equipment, weapons, safe passage, alliances, and personnel including foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and wives for IS insurgents. In spring 2015, the U.S. intelligence community established, as a conservative estimate, that IS's insurgency included between 9,000 and 18,000 fighters.²²⁹

²²⁷ "UN Says More than 3 Million Iraqis Displaced by ISIS, Fighting," Rudaw, 23 June 2015, <http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/230620154>.

²²⁸ Reider, *External Support to Insurgencies*, 1.

²²⁹ Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, "How Many Fighters Does the Islamic State Really Have?" War on the Rocks, 9 February 2015, <http://warontherocks.com/2015/02/how-many-fighters-does-the-islamic-state-really-have/>.

IS was able to capitalize on an ideal insurgency environment in Iraq to expand in the Middle East. A variety of processes caused discontent among the Iraqi Sunni population, which IS used to their advantage. Sunnis, who are not the majority population, were politically disenfranchised when the Iraqi government came under Shia-Kurdish control following the de-Ba'athification process. This process aimed to rid Iraq of the Ba'ath Party, which reigned from 1968–2003. The Saddam regime collapse in 2003 “also ended centuries of Sunni control of Iraq and empowered Shia Muslims and ethnic Kurds.”²³⁰ The Sunnis were ousted from Iraqi governmental power due to their violent means and separatist actions regarding domestic issues and their constantly addressing “old [religious] frames of reference.”²³¹ The Shiites and Kurds came to dominate the new Iraqi government. The Sunnis began striving for the Iraqi presidency once again to obtain better representation. However, even if Sunni leaders could win the Iraqi presidency, the new Sunni governing strategy was not acceptable to “radical Sunnis who wanted the discontented Sunni population to take up arms against Baghdad [the Iraqi government].”²³²

Several events led to the displacement and unemployment that pushed Sunnis to become fighters. As reported in the *Washington Post*, shortly after the Saddam regime fell in spring 2003, “400,000 members of the defeated Iraqi army were barred from government employment, denied pensions—and also allowed to keep their guns.”²³³ The disbanding of the regime army forced many angry Sunnis to find food and work to provide for their families. The Sunnis began to resent Shias, Kurds, Yazidis, Jews, Americans, and coalition forces and began to bond among themselves as a community.

²³⁰ Salah Nasrawi, “Iraq’s Sunnis: Rebels with a Cause?” Al Jazeera, 31 December 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/12/iraq-sunnis-rebels-with-cause-2013122781113301705.html>.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Liz Sly, “The Hidden Hand behind the Islamic State Militants? Saddam Hussein’s,” *Washington Post*, 4 April 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/the-hidden-hand-behind-the-islamic-state-militants-saddam-husseins/2015/04/04/aa97676c-cc32-11e4-8730-4f473416e759_story.html.

The blueprints of IS developed long before the group appeared as a threat. There are many players involved in the current IS conflict, some of whom go by multiple names. Patrick Johnston, Jacob Shapiro, Howard Shatz, Benjamin Bahney, Danielle Jung, Patrick Ryan, and Jonathan Wallace, trace back the lineage of the Islamic State back to the 1990s, when Abu Musab al-Zarqawi established Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (an insurgent Jihadist group) while in Jordan.²³⁴ Zarqawi then went on to operate in Iraq.²³⁵ Johnston et al., explained eventually, in 2004, Zarqawi's Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda, which merged into al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), and this alliance lasted until 2006. AQI rebranded once again in October 2006 as the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), which lasted until 2013.²³⁶ The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) was created in April 2013, before the group finally took on its current name of the Islamic State in June 2014 with the declaration of a supposed caliphate.²³⁷

After the death of Haji Bakr, a former Iraqi Army colonel in the intelligence service, in January 2014, local Iraqi rebels discovered documents detailing how IS could have been developed.²³⁸ In 2003, after the Saddam regime fell, Haji Bakr, also known as Samir Abd Muhammad al-Khelifawi, like many other Sunni fighters, became unemployed. This forced him to go into hiding, where he linked up with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in the Anbar province of Iraq. Zarqawi was considered more radical than Osama Bin Laden and helped develop Bakr's ideology. From 2006–2008, Bakr was confined to U.S. military's Camp Bucca and Abu Ghraib war prison.²³⁹ During this time, Bakr managed to socialize with other jihadists and began to develop an intricate network, along with plans for

²³⁴ Patrick Johnson et al., *Foundations of the Islamic State: Management, Money, and Terror in Iraq, 2005–2010* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2016), Chapter 2.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, Chapter 2.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, Chapter 1.

²³⁸ Christoph Reuter, "The Terror Strategist: Secret Files Reveal the Structure of Islamic State," *Spiegel Online*, 18 April 2015, 1, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/islamic-state-files-show-structure-of-islamist-terror-group-a-1029274.html>.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

developing the Islamic State. Bakr constructed these plans using his military training and prior experience in the Saddam regime, which had depended on spreading fear.

Bakr's designs consisted of opening *dawah* offices (see footnote 240) and Islamic missionary centers throughout Iraq and Syria.²⁴⁰ These centers seemed innocent enough and allowed Bakr to embed spies to achieve a variety of objectives. Christoph Reuter defined the different objectives Bakr used to embed spies in his article "Secret Files Reveal the Structure of Islamic State":

[Gather lists of] the powerful families. Name the powerful individuals in these families. Find out their sources of income. Name names and the size of (rebel) brigades in the villages. Find out the names of their leaders, who controls the brigades, and their political orientation. Find out their illegal activities (according to Sharia law), which could be used to blackmail them if necessary.²⁴¹

Bakr had the *dawah* offices say nothing about IS and only mention "[we are] brothers" when someone entered.²⁴² For the missionary and *dawah* centers, Bakr only selected intelligent individuals to become Sharia sheiks, training them to support the developing IS. Bakr also had Sunnis marry into influential families to gain a competitive edge and local tribal protection. Spies also implemented this strategy in the "finance, school, daycare, media and transportation areas."²⁴³

After the position of Prime Minister was turned over fourteen times following the collapse of Saddam Hussein in 2003, in May 2006, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki (2006–2014) took office. Maliki represented a shift in Iraq from the rule of Sunni dictator Saddam Hussein to a Shia sectarian prime minister. The same year, Iraq was facing an influx of al-Qaeda insurgent fighters creating havoc.²⁴⁴ In 2006, AQI fighters lacked knowledge about governing or supporting towns, which meant they had little support

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 2, Individuals attend dawah offices for religious work or volunteering purposes.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid., 4.

²⁴³ Ibid., 2.

²⁴⁴ Bradley Brooks, "Sunni Fighters Need Political Role," USA Today, 24 December 2007, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/topstories/2007-12-23-1748979433_x.htm.

from the local population. AQI also wanted to minimize the possibility of non-extremist Sunnis being involved in politics within Iraq, to prevent the compromises this could lead to.²⁴⁵ Such political compromises would bring non-extremist Sunnis into a more legitimate political position and therefore make them more subject to Iraqi government rule, forgoing the perceived support AQI could offer. The Sunni locals of Anbar Province, Iraq, eventually became infuriated and decided to unite to counter the relentless insurgency violence. In 2006, a tribal leader and Iraqi military officer established the Anbar Awakening, which was followed by the Sons of Iraq (SOI) in 2007, to counter AQI, which was then under its new name ISI. The U.S. military sponsored the Anbar Awakening operation.

The Anbar Awakening created more tensions throughout Iraq than expected. Anbar Awakening fighters grew to 70,000, which petrified the Iraq government, since the Shiite majority army and police consisted of only 440,000.²⁴⁶ As reported by *USA Today*, the Iraq government had different plans for the Sunni group once the U.S. military stopped funding them:

Iraq's Shiite-led government has said that American-backed Sunni groups key to battling Islamic extremists will not be allowed to become a separate military force and must be eventually disbanded.²⁴⁷

Experts warned the Iraqi government to provide jobs for the Sunni fighters before eliminating their funding, and Iraq planned accordingly to absorb “25 percent of the Sunni fighters into security” positions.²⁴⁸ The Iraqi government matched the “\$155 million the U.S.” designated for “employment creation” for the Sunni fighters, but analysts were concerned about the 75 percent of Sunni fighters remaining unemployed.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

The Iraqi government would realize the mistake of not employing more Sunni fighters. The government employed 3,000 Sunni fighters to work alongside the Iraqi military, hoping the newly hired Sunni fighters could also provide HUMINT about “militant activity in the area.”²⁵⁰ The Shiite militia force of Iraq was dominant but lacked Sunni support because of prior human rights violations.²⁵¹ The Iraqi government also faced a growing unemployment problem with experienced Sunni fighters from the disbanded Anbar Awakening movement. This created an enormous opportunity for ISI not only to absorb seasoned fighters but also to support their insurgency movement.

The Arab Spring (also known as the Arab Awakening and not to be confused with the Awakening in Iraq from 2007–2008) presented changes needed which ISI prophesied they could support through just governing with an Islamic State. In December 2010, the Arab community throughout Africa and the Middle East stood up to their governing regimes. The article “The Arab Awakening,” by Rami Khouri, defined the grievances spurring the turning point that developed after years of people being denied:

their human rights and their citizenship rights, the result of decades of socioeconomic stresses and political deprivations. These include petty and large-scale corruption; police brutality; abuse of power; favoritism; unemployment; poor wages; unequal opportunity; inefficient or nonexistent public services; lack of freedom of expression and association; state control of media, culture, and education; and many other dimensions of the modern Arab security state.²⁵²

The majority of participating Arabs in the Arab Spring movement were between 15 and 29 years old.²⁵³ The lack of work and basic state services and the inability to afford a home resulted in delays to people’s hopes of getting married. All this put immense stress

²⁵⁰ “Sons of Iraq Join Diyala Offensive,” UPI.com, 6 August 2008, http://www.upi.com/Emerging_Threats/2008/08/06/Sons-of-Iraq-join-Diyala-offensive/UPI-56801218068861/.

²⁵¹ Kenneth Katzman, *Iraq: Politics, Security, and U.S. Policy* (Congressional Research Service, 22 June 2015), 47.

²⁵² Rami G. Khouri, “The Arab Awakening,” *Nation*, 24 August 2011, <http://www.thenation.com/article/arab-awakening/>.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

on Generation Y. Arab youth suffered from these economic difficulties and political repressions.

The protesting Arab communities' resentment emerged in response to Arab regimes, Israel, and the United States. This resentment was brought by from regime dictatorships, Israel's actions in Palestine and Lebanon, and U.S. involvement in the Middle East. Most Arab citizens believed that Arab leaders catered to international demands and hoarded wealth for themselves. As detailed in the *Nation*, the Arab Spring's goals were to bring "basic rights of the citizen and citizenry, ... legitimate state authority that is accountable to the people's demand for social justice ... the birth of politics, [and an end goal concluding with] national sovereignty and self-determination."²⁵⁴ The Arab Spring presented economic downturns and ethnic division, which aligned with supporting ISI, if ISI could provide the governing needs that dictators and regime leaders had neglected.

The Arab Spring resulted in citizens uniting to develop organic social movements throughout the Arab world. These movements were fueled by the removal of corrupt Arab leaders. Unfortunately, they were often unable to empower the overthrown leaders' political successors. This resulted in a volatile Middle East, which allowed ISI to exploit political opportunities.

In the summer of 2011, ISI headed into Syria to support resistance fighters against the Shiite government of Bashar al-Assad. The Syrian Civil War had grown out of the Arab Spring social movement and now offered ISI an opportunity to expand its organizational strength by connecting Al Anbar, Iraq, to Syria through the Syrian Desert. By moving into Syria, ISI instantly increased their recruitment population and operating area. Once there, ISI strategically attacked oil fields for self-sustainment and conducted border-breaking operations between Iraq and Syria to encourage a borderless IS.²⁵⁵ The Syrian Civil War became a crucial opportunity for ISI.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Martin Smith, "The Rise of ISIS," *FRONTLINE*, documentary, 28 October 2014.

In 2013, under the new name ISIL, the organization furthered their insurgency narrative through events at a protest and a prison break. In April 2013, while Sunnis held a peaceful protest in Hawija, Iraq, in an attempt to gain recognition by the Iraqi government, a few ISIL insurgents infiltrated the Sunni protest and apparently killed an Iraqi police officer.²⁵⁶ The morning of 23 April 2013, Maliki had the Iraqi SWAT confront the peaceful protest, resulting in hundreds of innocent dead Sunnis.²⁵⁷ On 21 July 2013, ISIL concentrated on Abu Ghraib, Iraq, to strengthen their fighting force. The prison break resulted in approximately 500 freed inmates (and also delivered a huge propaganda message), strengthened their fighting numbers, and supported HUMINT gathering from Saddam supporters, Sunni tribesmen, and former Ba'ath leaders.

Finally, in December 2013, the Sunni population in Iraq held a peaceful protest in Ramadi, fueled by sectarian ethnic divisions, with prominent Sunni figures speaking. The Ramadi protest was interrupted at Maliki's request, and Sunni parliamentarian Ahmed al-Alwani was arrested for speaking, despite his parliamentary immunity. His brother and sister were killed.²⁵⁸ On 31 December 2013, the Iraqi army withdrew from Ramadi and Fallujah, hoping that tribesmen would enforce local law and keep ISIL out. However, after the recent protest and the lack of trust in the Iraqi government, the local tribesmen refused to confront the influx of ISIL insurgents. To counter the overthrow of Ramadi and Fallujah, the Iraqi government shelled the cities at random, hoping to kill insurgents. In Fallujah, 25 women and children were killed by shelling in August 2015.²⁵⁹ The actions by the Iraqi government further divided the Sunnis and Shia-Kurdish populations, presenting another excellent opportunity for ISIL to leverage Sunni animosity.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Kirk H. Sowell, "Maliki's Anbar Blunder," *Foreign Policy*, 15 January 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/01/15/malikis-anbar-blunder/>.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ "25 Women and Children Killed, Injured in Shelling Targeted Hospital in Fallujah," *Iraqi News*, 13 August 2015, <http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/25-women-children-killed-injured-shelling-targeted-hospital-fallujah/>.

²⁶⁰ Smith, "The Rise of ISIS."

In June 2014, the newly named IS set their next target: Mosul, Iraq, population 1.8 million. IS managed to conquer Mosul with just 800 fighters and the help of a local Ba'ath military cadre, who provided invaluable intelligence. IS confiscated the Iraqi stockpile of weapons the United States had provided and moved on to overtake Qayyarah, al-Shirqat, Hawija, and Tikrit.²⁶¹ All of these opportunities greatly supported the expansion of IS and reinforced their justification through a strong Islamic State (see Figure 8).

In June 2014, IS declared Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi caliph, believing this would support their legitimacy in the Muslim community.²⁶² Declaring a caliph was significant, as the last caliph had died 90 years before.²⁶³ By trying to establish a caliph, IS was attempting to emulate the power structure of the Prophet Muhammad, considered the last prophet sent from God, giving him supreme authority to reign over the land he controls. On 29 June 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi preached in Mosul, Iraq.²⁶⁴ Not only did Baghdadi speak in the Great Mosque of al-Nuri, but he also spoke in broad daylight, something no other insurgent leader had yet done. This was a monumental moment for IS, strengthening their cause for statehood collective actions, motivating jihadis to join IS, and ramping up their propaganda message. IS supporters argued that having a caliph reestablished dormant Koranic, law requiring all Muslims to immigrate to the land where caliph law is applied.²⁶⁵ These events supported the strategic framing for IS.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *Atlantic*, March 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>.

²⁶⁴ Smith, "The Rise of ISIS."

²⁶⁵ Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants."

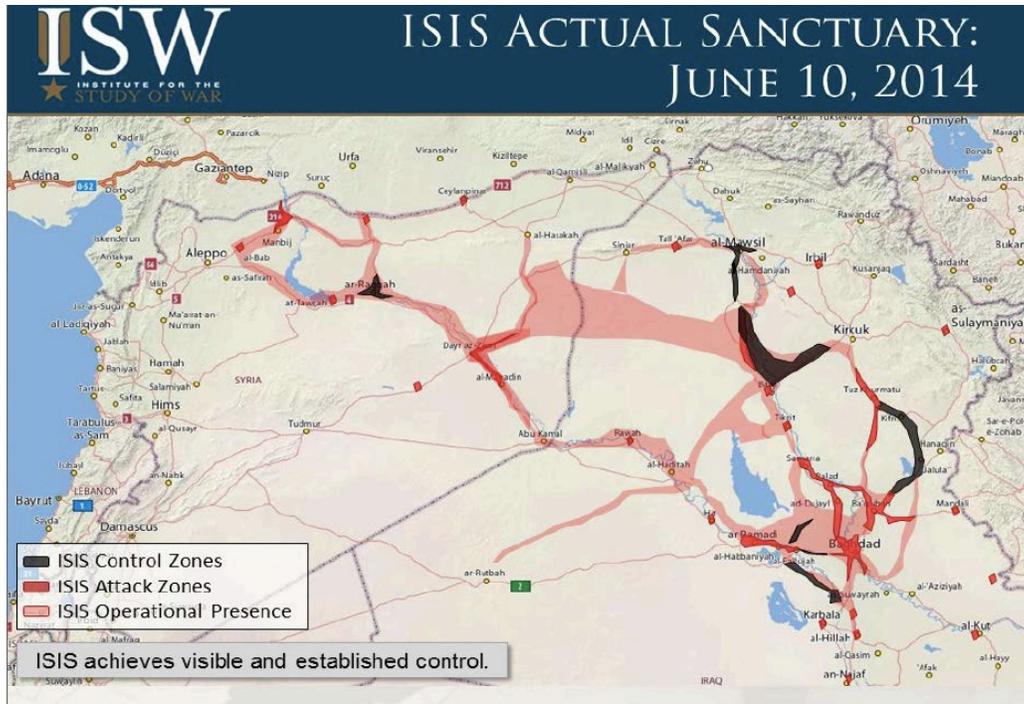


Figure 8. ISIS Sanctuary, 10 June 2014.²⁶⁶

2. Post-declaration of an Islamic State Caliph

In the year after the announcement of the caliphate, IS made rapid gains across Iraq, Syria, and the Levant. In July 2014, IS took over the largest oilfield in Syria.²⁶⁷ This supported their financial strategy of becoming self-sustained through natural resources. In August 2014, IS attacked the town of Sinjar, which has a primarily Yazidi population (see footnote).²⁶⁸ During the Sinjar attack, IS killed over 500 Yazidi and forced approximately 30,000 families to seek safety in the mountains nearby. In November 2014, following the Yazidi massacre, the UN Independent International Commission declared that IS had “committed war crimes and crimes against humanity.”²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Source: Institute for the Study of War, “ISIS Sanctuary Map: June 10, 2014,” 3 August 2015, <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/isis-sanctuary-map-june-10-2014>.

²⁶⁷ “ISIS Fast Facts,” CNN Library, accessed 5 August 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/08/world/isis-fast-facts/>.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*; The Yazidi population is considered ethnically Kurdish, an ethnic minority throughout Iraq, Syria and the Levant, and include their own independent religious groups.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

IS managed to overrun cities in Iraq and Syria key for population control and as strategic locations. In May 2015, IS stormed Ramadi, Iraq, after Iraqi security forces had retreated.²⁷⁰ Seizing Ramadi furthered an IS strategy of financial extortion. In May 2015, IS took over Palmyra, Syria, a strategic border crossing between Syria and Iraq enforced by Syrian troops. This moved them closer to their utopian idea of IS expansion through a borderless Middle East. In June 2015, the U.S. State Department's annual terrorist report revealed the enormity of an IS global threat—IS had become a more significant domestic threat than al-Qaeda.²⁷¹

In October 2014, a coalition of more than 60 countries (but few troops on the ground) united to counter the fight against IS,²⁷² which began to impact IS military presence and networks. A leadership change supported a unilateral strategy in September 2014, with Shia Haider al-Abadi taking office as the new Iraqi prime minister, replacing Maliki. In January 2015, U.S. officials claimed that anti-IS airstrikes had killed approximately 6,000 fighters and estimated between 9,000 and 18,000 IS fighters remaining.²⁷³ In February 2015, President Obama asked Congress for backing to use U.S. military forces, after the death of U.S. aid worker Kayla Jean Mueller was reported. Kayla Mueller's death enraged Americans about IS's unchecked expansion and brutality in the Middle East. Following President Obama's request for U.S. troops in Iraq, IS began to experience catastrophic shortfalls. The Iraqi Army was able to reclaim the majority of Tikrit from IS strongholds in March 2015; given Tikrit's population of approximately 160,000, this put constraints on IS by reducing their collection of local taxes. In May 2015, U.S. Special Forces killed Abu Sayyaf in a Syrian raid and captured his wife.²⁷⁴ CNN reported that Abu Sayyaf had been a highly networked "senior [IS] leader who, among other things, had a senior role in overseeing [IS] illicit oil and gas

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Bryan Dominique, "Inside the Coalition to defeat ISIL," U.S. Department of Defense, 21 April 2015, <http://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/604494/inside-the-coalition-to-defeat-isil>.

²⁷³ "ISIS Fast Facts," CNN Library.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

operations.”²⁷⁵ The Sayyaf raid generated significant intelligence on IS structure and communications,²⁷⁶ along with a huge anti-IS propaganda message that coalition forces could identify and execute precision attacks against high-value targets (HVT) with ease.

Between June 2015 and August 2016, IS has faced numerous setbacks in operations and finance. In June 2015, for the first time, a U.S. Army general described how the U.S. had been able to track and target an IS fighter through a selfie posted on social media. Only 22 hours after the selfie was posted, airstrikes were being conducted.²⁷⁷ In July 2015, IHS Jane’s, a British defense-analysis open-source company, estimated that IS had lost approximately 9.4 percent of their controlled territory during the first half of 2015.²⁷⁸ This report demonstrated that defeating and eliminating IS is possible, by reducing IS sanctuaries within Iraq and Syria through unilateral operations.

October 2015 saw the beginning of Operation Tidal Wave II, a U.S.-led coalition campaign to disrupt IS oil operations and financial revenue.²⁷⁹ The operation mirrored the World War II Operation Tidal Wave, which was executed to deny Axis powers access to Romania’s oil industry.²⁸⁰ The campaign reportedly decreased IS oil revenue by 30 percent, based on coalition calculations.²⁸¹ Next, the campaign targeted IS-controlled banks, which stored essential cash. In one incident in January 2016, airstrikes against banks in Mosul destroyed between “tens of millions [and] a billion” IS dollars.²⁸² By

²⁷⁵ Barbara Starr, Laura Smith-Spark, and Ray Sanchez, “Abu Sayyaf, Key ISIS Figure in Syria, Killed in U.S. Raid,” CNN.com, 17 May 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/16/middleeast/syria-isis-us-raid/index.html>.

²⁷⁶ “ISIS Fast Facts,” CNN Library.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Patrick B. Johnston, “The Islamic State’s Money Problems,” *RAND Blog*, 5 March 2016, <http://www.rand.org/blog/2016/03/the-islamic-states-money-problems.html>.

²⁸⁰ Michael R. Gordon and Eric Schmitt, “U.S. Steps Up its Attacks on ISIS-Controlled Oil Fields in Syria,” *New York Times*, November 2015.

²⁸¹ Johnston, “The Islamic State’s Money Problems.”

²⁸² Ibid.

early 2016, IS was beginning to face oil-field losses from Operation Tidal Wave II; along with declining oil prices, this created an immense financial burden.

Also during Operation Tidal Wave II, IS began to lose control of sanctuary cities and essential networked individuals. In November 2015, Iraqi Kurdish forces announced they had reclaimed the town Sinjar from IS. The Kurdish forces were supported by U.S. coalition air strikes.²⁸³ In December 2015, Abu Saleh, the IS finance minister, was killed by coalition airstrikes. Also in December, the Iraqi Army retook Ramadi from IS and raised an Iraqi flag over the local government building. In March 2016, U.S. officials announced that the new IS finance minister, Abd al-Rahman Mustafa al-Qaduli, had also been killed by U.S. forces.²⁸⁴ Recently, in June 2016, an Iraqi general announced that the Iraqi Army had reclaimed Falluja from IS.²⁸⁵ The retaking of Sinjar, Ramadi, and Falluja and the HVT killings of finance ministers presented a huge propaganda setback, along with the loss of potential financial revenue for IS (see Figure 9).

For the remainder of the case study, this thesis will refer to this insurgency as *IS*, unless I am emphasizing a time period during which the group used a different name. This thesis will now discuss the five external support elements for insurgency: safe haven and transit, financial resources, political support, propaganda, and direct military support.²⁸⁶

²⁸³ “ISIS Fast Facts,” CNN Library.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support*, 1–138.

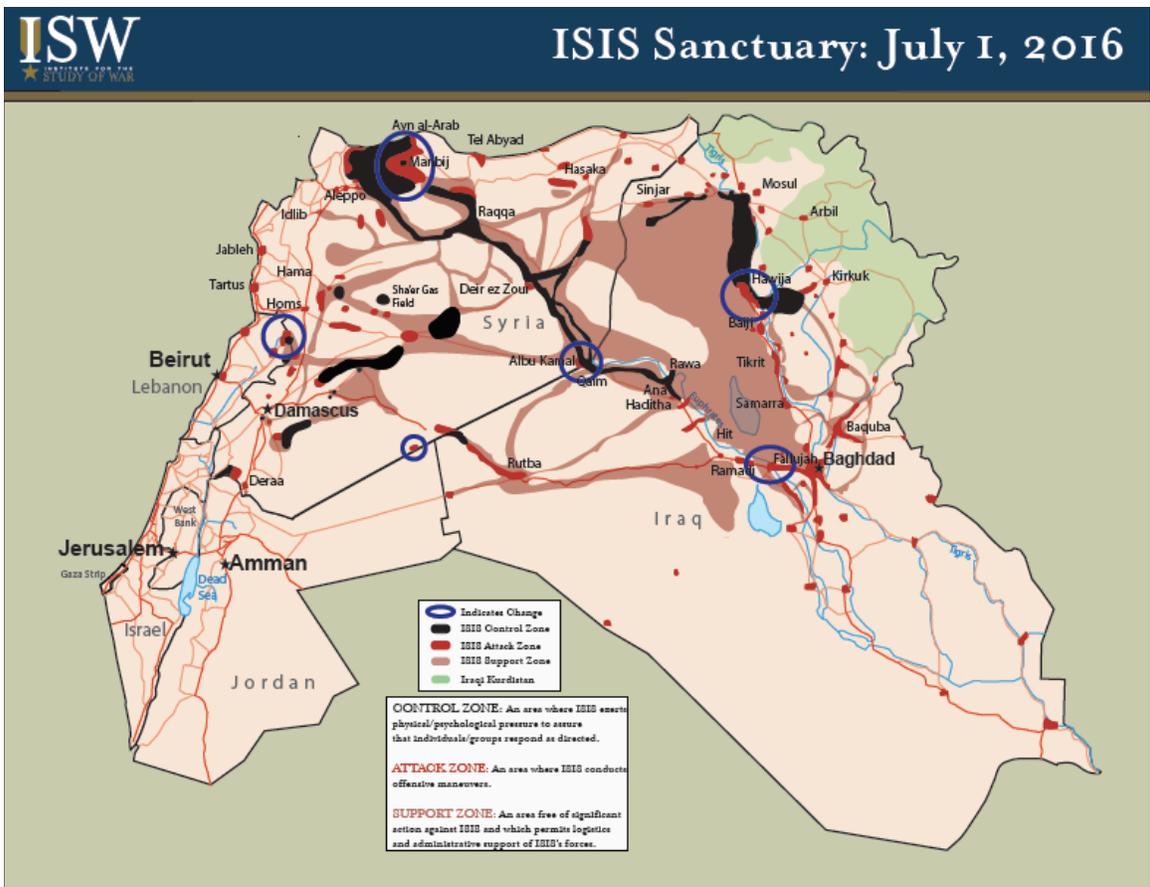


Figure 9. ISIS Sanctuary, 1 July 2016.²⁸⁷

3. Safe Haven and Transit

Safe haven and transit are imperative for insurgents to sustain recruitment through foreign fighters, to receive supplies, to travel safely within their operating area, and to support training. In June 2016, the U.S. Department of State released the *Country Report on Terrorism 2015*, and defined safe havens to be “ungoverned, under-governed, or ill-governed physical areas where terrorists are able to organize, plan, raise funds, communicate, recruit, train, and operate in relative security because of inadequate governance capacity, political will or both.”²⁸⁸ The conflict-wracked states of Iraq and

²⁸⁷ Source: Institute for the Study of War, “ISIS Sanctuary Map: July 1, 2016,” 1 July 2016, <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/isis-sanctuary-map-july-1-2016>.

²⁸⁸ Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, “Chapter 5: Terrorist Safe Havens (Update to 7120 Report),” in *Country Reports on Terrorism 2015*, accessed 15 January 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257522.htm>.

Syria have provided safe havens for training opportunities in weapons firing, tactical movement drills, and technical bomb-making skills.²⁸⁹ Safe haven can also offer unrestricted communication for IS with the following: al-Qaeda in Syria (al-Nusra Front), the Free Syrian Army (opposition force), the Assad regime, Lebanese Hezbollah, and the Iranian Quds (Jerusalem) Corps. In April 2015, the U.S. Department of State released a list of the countries that offer terrorist safe havens in the Middle East: Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, and Yemen.²⁹⁰ Georgia, Cyprus, Bulgaria, and Turkey have also indirectly provided safe havens to IS.

Georgia, Cyprus, and Bulgaria do not share borders with IS sanctuaries but still indirectly provide safe haven and transit. Due to Georgia's strategic geographic location, bordering Russia, Turkey, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, Georgia has become a transit route for IS recruits. Georgia's remote Pankisi Gorge, which is near the Chechen-Georgian border and is 13 km long by three km wide, offers a safe passage for foreign fighters.²⁹¹ Recruitment enabled by transit and weak borders is essential for IS to sustain insurgency operations. Cyprus, too, has become a staging area and leap point into Turkey from Northern Cyprus through daily ferries. A February 2015 *Wall Street Journal* article by Maria Abi-Habib and Joe Parkinson described the dilemma of countering the Cyprus transit, which is complicated by the fact that the international community fails to recognize the Turkish-inhabited north that impedes extradition and vital intelligence sharing.²⁹² Abi-Habib and Parkinson also explained that the 170 miles of border between Bulgaria and Turkey has proven invaluable for potential jihads transiting to and from Syria through Turkey. Despite Bulgaria increasing its border presence and accepting U.S.

²⁸⁹ Brian Michael Jenkins, "Disrupting Terrorist Safe Havens," *The Hill*, 18 August 2014, <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/defense/215348-disrupting-terrorist-safe-havens>.

²⁹⁰ Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Chapter 5: Terrorist Safe Havens (Update to 7120 Report)," in *Country Reports on Terrorism 2014*, accessed 30 August 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239412.htm>.

²⁹¹ Luke Coffey, "Recruiting Georgia in the Fight against ISIL," Al Jazeera, 14 May 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/05/recruiting-georgia-fight-isil-150509063258263.html>.

²⁹² Maria Abi-Habib and Joe Parkinson, "How Jihadists Slip through Europe's Dragnet and into Syria: Despite Heightened Security, Recruits Find Alternate Routes to Join Islamic State Fighters," *Wall Street Journal*, 23 February 2015. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/how-jihadists-slip-through-europes-dragnet-and-into-syria-1424653670>.

military border training, the 170 miles still remain vulnerable at night, according to one Bulgarian official.²⁹³ Identifying and eliminating these relaxed border areas has become extremely challenging for Iraq and Syria.

By contrast, Turkey does border an IS sanctuary. Some states are inadvertently creating safe havens for IS by implementing refugee safe zones and supporting the rebels fighting Assad. It has been rumored that NATO ally Turkey has been aiding IS directly or indirectly. This is why for years the border crossing between Turkey and Syria has been called the jihadi highway.²⁹⁴ In 2015, Turkey and the U.S. agreed to implement an Islamic State-free zone, stretching across 68 miles of the Syrian-Turkish border, to support safe passage for fleeing refugees.²⁹⁵ Some fear that the proposed safe passage could increase an IS FTF presence.

The bordering safe havens to IS-controlled territory in Iraq and Syria are part of how FTFs have been able to bring essential arms, equipment, and cash to aid IS. A February 2015 Financial Action Task Force (FATF) report revealed that IS had approximately 19,000 FTFs (Figure 10), based off U.S. official documents as of December 2014.²⁹⁶ In March 2016, the *Telegraph* reported between 27,000 and 31,000 FTFs (Figure 11) have traveled to IS sanctuary cities between Iraq and Syria in support of jihad. Significant in the *Telegraph's* findings was that the Asian continent (see footnote) had contributed the most FTFs to IS, followed by Africa second and Europe third.²⁹⁷

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ben Norton, "Turkey's 'Double Game' on ISIS and Support for Extremist Groups Highlighted after Horrific Istanbul Attack," *Salon*, 30 June 2016, http://www.salon.com/2016/06/30/turkeys_double_game_on_isis_and_support_for_extremist_groups_highlighted_after_horrific_istanbul_attack/.

²⁹⁵ Susan Crabtree, "U.S., Turkey Agree to Create ISIS-Free Safe Haven," *Washington Examiner*, 28 July 2015, <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/u.s.-turkey-agree-to-create-isis-free-safe-haven/article/2569134>.

²⁹⁶ *Financing of the Terrorist Organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)*, (Financial Action Task Force, February 2015), 20.

²⁹⁷ Ashley Kirk, "Iraq and Syria: How Many Foreign Fighters Are Fighting for ISIL?" *Telegraph*, 24 March 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/03/29/iraq-and-syria-how-many-foreign-fighters-are-fighting-for-isil/>; The Asian continent consists of 48 countries and covers 30% of the earth's land mass.

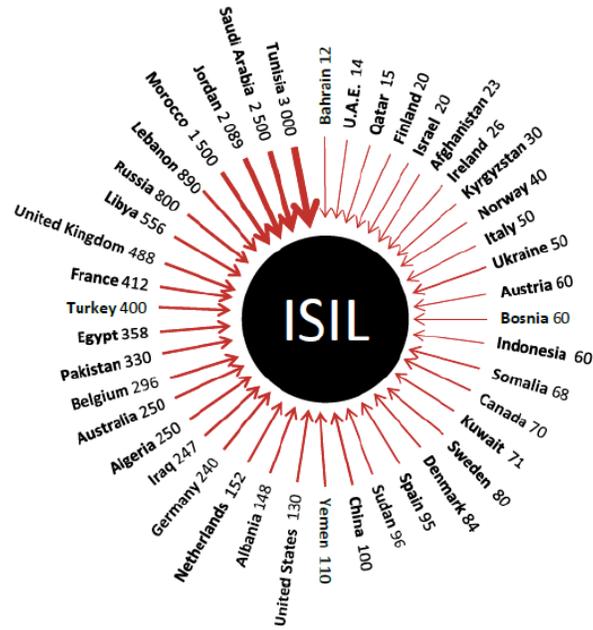


Figure 10. FTF by Country as of 31 December 2014.²⁹⁸

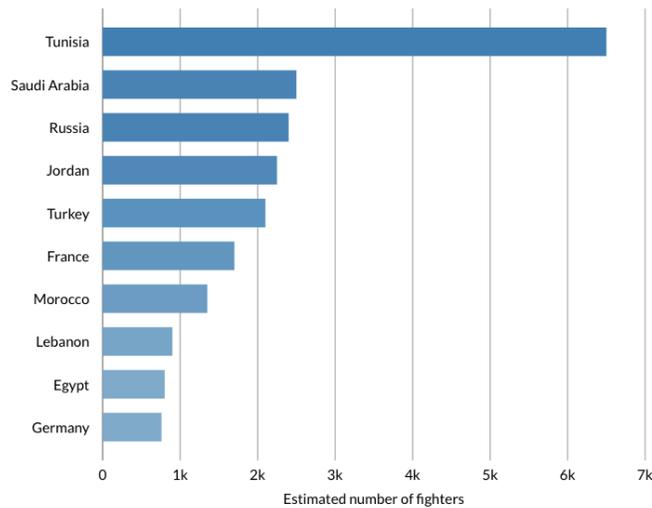


Figure 11. FTF from Top 10 Countries as of March 2016.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ Source: Financial Action Task Force, *Financing of the Terrorist Organization Islamic State*, 21.

²⁹⁹ Source: Kirk, "How Many Foreign Fighters are Fighting for ISIL?"

The Combined Joint Task Force of the coalition forces agrees that Bashar al-Assad must be removed from dictatorship, but worry about even more extremist safe havens springing up. The real dilemma is that if Assad is removed from power, his removal could create an immense vacuum for IS or future extremist groups to expand and possibly control the Syrian capital, creating further safe haven and transit opportunities for the IS and possibly generating essential local population support.

4. Financial Resources

Insurgents must acquire financial resources in order to expand and sustain operations. IS does receive external funding but primarily relies on internal funding. IS's four means of funding are donations, kidnap and ransom, extortion, and selling of natural resources acquired within Iraq and Syria.³⁰⁰ They have also implemented a very sophisticated system for shuttling funds to and from IS-controlled territory to elude detection. U.S. Treasury Undersecretary David Cohen outlined three ways to disrupt IS's financial resources: "cutting off IS's access to revenue, restricting IS's access to the international financial system, and targeted sanctions against IS's leadership and facilitators."³⁰¹ The Center for the Analysis of Terrorism (CAT) released an IS strategy obtained from internal documents: "The wealth of the State is the principle component and source of financing for all internal and external operations, and the existence of secure financial resources whose value does not change in every time and place is a must."³⁰²

IS has implemented the wealth of the State strategy through an organized financial hierarchy. IS's Ministry of General Finance is the department that collects local taxes and is one of eight ministries that report directly to al-Baghdadi.³⁰³ A global marketing campaign allowed IS to receive funding of up to \$2 million per day in

³⁰⁰ Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015* (Thomson Reuters, May 2016), 21.

³⁰¹ Patrick B. Johnston, *Countering ISIL's Financing* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, November 2014), 4.

³⁰² Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 5–6.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 7–8.

September 2014, which supports creative online fundraising methods.³⁰⁴ IS revenue declined by almost 16 percent from 2014 to 2015, from \$2.9 billion to \$2.435 billion (Figure 12).³⁰⁵

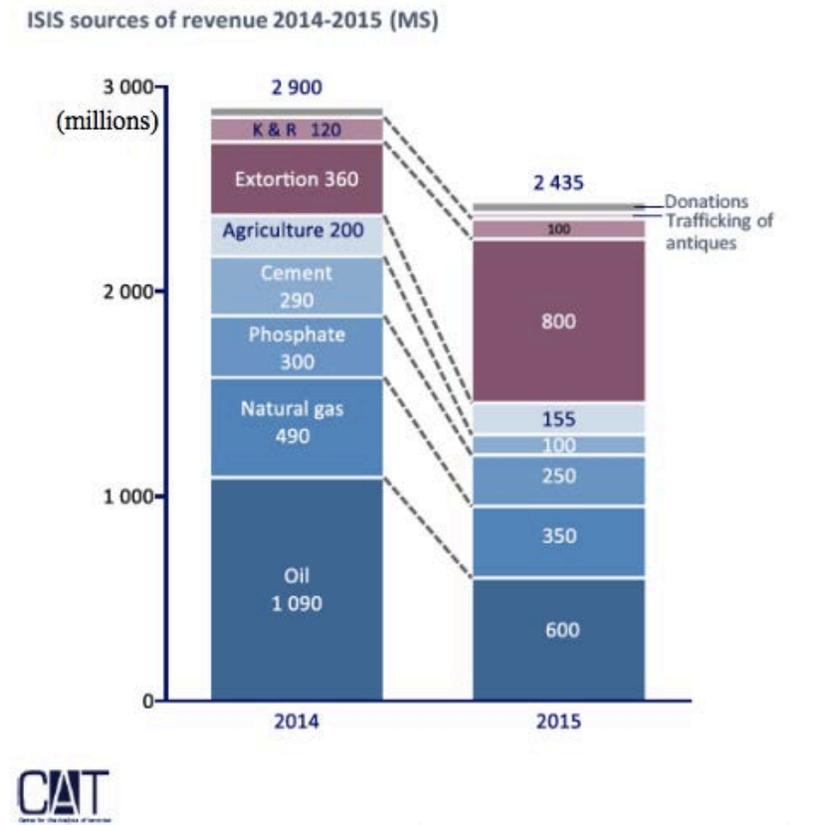


Figure 12. ISIS Sources of Revenue, 2014–2015 (Mean Scores).³⁰⁶

a. Sources of Funding

The CAT stated that in 2015, IS received up to \$50 million in donations.³⁰⁷ IS has received private donations from wealthy businessmen, religious leaders, and NGOs,

³⁰⁴ Gregor Aisch et al., “How ISIS Works,” *New York Times*, September 2014, based on reporting by Tim Arango et al., http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/09/16/world/middleeast/how-isis-works.html?_r=0.

³⁰⁵ Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 21.

³⁰⁶ Adapted from Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 21.

³⁰⁷ Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 20.

mostly from Persian Gulf countries consisting of Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.³⁰⁸ This is partly because the Sunni IS has appeared to be the only dominating force against the Shia political power of Bashar al-Assad, whose actions during the 2011 Arab Spring morphed into the current Syrian Civil War. Less-wealthy foreign supporters who cannot travel to fight alongside IS have turned to microfinancing.³⁰⁹ These donations are extremely difficult for authorities to detect and deter due to the relatively small monetary values being transferred.

IS's three major ways for generating funds from foreigners are online crowdfunding, fraud and theft, and business-related fraud.³¹⁰ The FATF also explained that IS's rapid social media expansion allowed them to make use of Twitter storms and crowdfunding. Twitter storms are messages that reoccur and go viral to support future funding. Crowdfunding is a technique used by companies to solicit donations from mass groups of people through technology and marketing.³¹¹ The *CTC Sentinel* reported that IS is successfully crowdfunding in the Gulf States and possibly recently in Europe.³¹²

The *CTC Sentinel* also reported that a significant number of foreign supporters for IS have prior criminal convictions, which means fraud and theft may be common traits among them. Many IS foreign supporters practice bank fraud, withdrawing loans with no intention of repaying them.³¹³ Ranstorp notes vehicle loans as the most common fraud practice by foreign supporters—supporters can walk away with cash and possibly also a vehicle they can use to support IS directly.³¹⁴ Finally, IS has benefitted from social

³⁰⁸ Fernanda Uro Aboites, "What Keeps ISIS Running: The Funding and Support of a Terror Organization," *Egyptian Streets*, 11 May 2015, <http://egyptianstreets.com/2015/05/11/what-keeps-isis-running-the-funding-and-support-of-a-terror-organization/>.

³⁰⁹ Magnus Ranstorp, "Microfinancing the Caliphate: How the Islamic State Is Unlocking the Assets of European Recruits," eds. Paul Cruickshank and Kristina Hummel, *CTC Sentinel* 9, no. 5 (May 2016):11–15.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ *Financing of the Terrorist Organization Islamic State*, 24–25.

³¹² Ranstorp, "Microfinancing the Caliphate," 12.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

insurance fraud conducted by foreign supporters, and some supporters have even collected European government-assistance checks while operating in the Middle East.³¹⁵

Value added tax fraud (VAT fraud) is a very profitable business-related fraud foreign supporters use to generate large sums of money for IS. Figure 13 depicts one way a fraudulent VAT transaction can occur. There have been multiple cases of VAT fraud in which one individual charges a selling tax but does not claim it to taxing authorities. Usually, these schemes make use of a “fall guy,” allowing the masterminds to continue VAT scam operations.³¹⁶

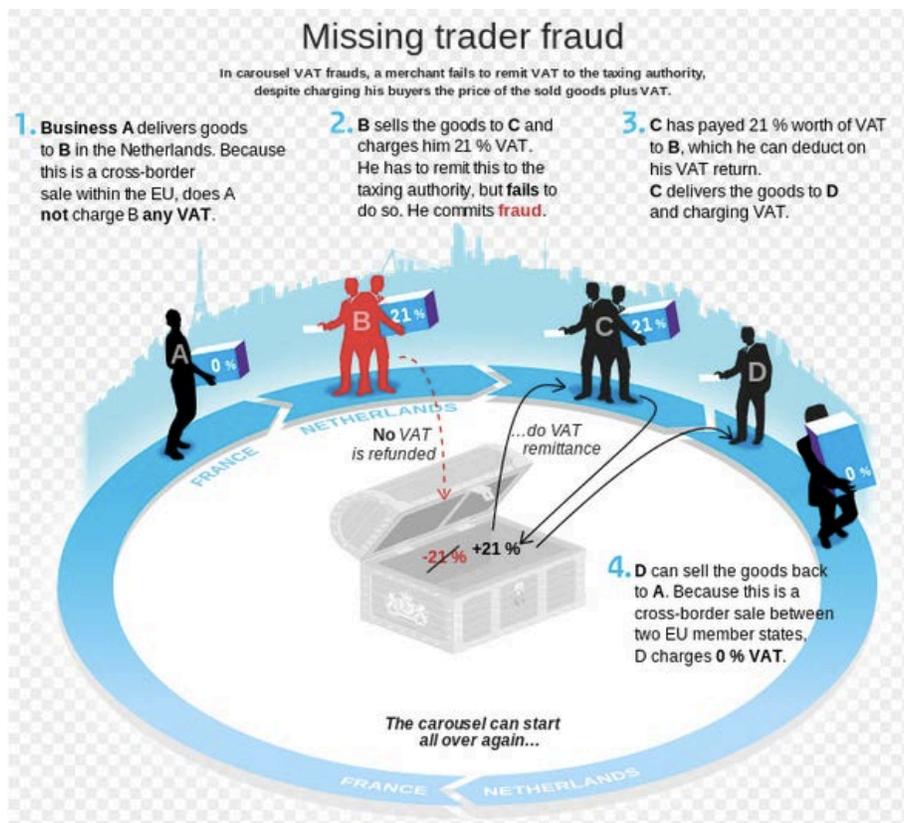


Figure 13. Value-Added Tax Fraud.³¹⁷

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Source: Belastingdienst (Dutch Tax and Customs Administration), “Missing Trader Fraud,” <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carrouselfraude.svg>.

IS also uses kidnap and ransom as a means of generating revenue. The CAT estimated that IS generated up to \$100 million from kidnap and ransom in 2015. This strategy focuses on wealthy businessmen, political figures, religious leaders, and all foreigners. This source of revenue declined for IS in 2015 after people began avoiding their territory. In early 2015, IS released 200 Christians in exchange for several million dollars.³¹⁸

Yazidis are an ethnic minority IS is known to target. IS has generated up to \$4,000 through Yazidi ransom sales. IS has also sold Yazidi women and children, who seem to generate the highest revenue.³¹⁹ IS attempted to justify this through a fatwa stating women should be made sexually available to men conducting jihad to prevent them from becoming sexually frustrated during the war and allowing men to keep enslaved women for a duration of hours up to one week. The recorded amounts paid for Yazidi women under IS control are \$170 for girls nine years old and younger, \$130 for girls 10–20 years old, and \$90 for women 20–30 years old.³²⁰

IS also uses extortion as a means of generating revenue. The CAT estimated that IS generated up to \$800 million in extortion activities in 2015. Extortion was also one of the only two revenue categories that increased in 2015. Extortion is leveraged through four different categories of taxes, fees, and confiscations to support funding (Figure 14).³²¹

³¹⁸ Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 18–19.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

³²⁰ Mah-Rukh Ali, *ISIS and Propaganda: How ISIS Exploits Women* (Oxford: Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper, University of Oxford, 2015), 17–18.

³²¹ Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 15–18.

Different types of extortion in ISIS revenue (% of total extortion)

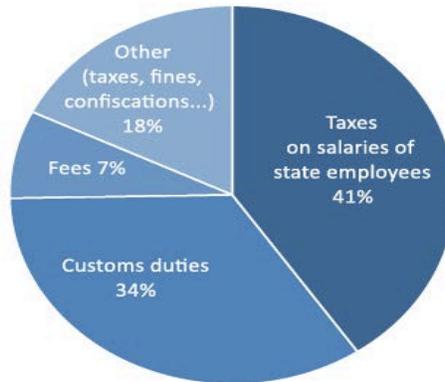


Figure 14. Types of Extortion by ISIS.³²²

IS extorts several types of taxes from people, among which are religious taxes and protection money from Christians who live in the territories IS controls.³²³ This has been a significant source of income for IS, as they have eight million civilians living in their territory, many of whom are Christian. The number of Christians for IS to extort is decreasing, though—a March 2015 *Newsweek* article by Janine di Giovanni and Conor Gaffey revealed that Christians have dwindled from “20 percent [of the population of the Middle East] at the [beginning] of the 20th century to [only] 5 percent” as of March 2015.³²⁴ Giovanni and Gaffey estimated the numbers of Christians living in Syria and Iraq as of March 2015 respectively at 400,000 and between 260,000 to 350,000.³²⁵ Until late 2015, IS was also collecting taxes from Iraqi government employees who lived in IS-

³²² Source: Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 18.

³²³ Nour Malas and Maria Abi-Habib, “Islamic State Economy Runs on Extortion, Oil Piracy in Syria, Iraq,” *Wall Street Journal*, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/islamic-state-fills-coffers-from-illicit-economy-in-syria-iraq-1409175458>.

³²⁴ Janine di Giovanni and Conor Gaffey, “The New Exodus: Christians Flee ISIS in the Middle East,” *Newsweek*, 3 April 2015, <http://www.newsweek.com/2015/04/03/new-exodus-christians-flee-isis-middle-east-316785.html>.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

controlled areas and leveraging between 10 and 50 percent of their government salaries in taxes. The Iraqi government faced the dilemma of cutting off government pay in IS-controlled zones, which would support an IS propaganda message and create a humanitarian issue, or continuing to fund employees, which indirectly supported IS financially. Additionally, IS has implemented a custom tax on all commercial vehicles entering and leaving IS-controlled checkpoints, ranging from \$400 to \$600.³²⁶

Fees and confiscations also support IS in sanctuary cities. A fee for water and electricity ranges from \$1.25 to \$2.50 per house. Telephone tax is collected at \$1.25 per house.³²⁷ IS enforces a vehicle tax and a registration fee for schools and universities. This has not only made IS appear statelike, but it has also given it a continuous flow of funds like those a legitimate state. In terms of confiscations, houses owned by those who fled IS territory have been sold for profits, and IS has confiscated cars, trucks, land, cattle, and restricted goods including cigarettes.³²⁸

IS also raises funds by seizing and selling natural resources from Iraq and Syria, which provided an estimated \$1,455 billion in revenue in 2015. The five primary natural resources from which IS profits are oil, natural gas, phosphate, cement, and agriculture. Between 2014 and 2015, IS's sales of natural resources declined by almost 39 percent.³²⁹ This is primarily the result of territory lost to an aggressive strategy by coalition forces and Iraqi security forces (ISF).

IS was making from \$1 million to \$2 million a day in oil revenue sales at their peak.³³⁰ What makes IS-controlled territory in Iraq and Syria especially important is that Iraq ranks fourth globally in oil exports.³³¹ Between 2014 and 2015, IS oil revenue

³²⁶ Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 15.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

³³⁰ Ashley Fantz, "How ISIS Makes (and Takes) Money," CNN.com, 20 February 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/19/world/how-isis-makes-money/>.

³³¹ Jean-Charles Brisard and Damien Martinez, *Islamic State: The Economy-Based Terrorist Funding* (Thomson Reuters, October 2014), 6.

declined by almost 45 percent.³³² According to the CAT, IS has run into problems with recruiting competent individuals and with depleting oil wells. The CAT also explained how IS is able to maintain relatively high oil prices: a highest-bidder selling strategy and control of the local oil industry, which forces many to purchase oil despite IS control. IS has also implemented a new selling strategy focusing on independent traders who can either sell on site or risk transporting crude or refined oil.³³³

Natural gas is the second-highest natural resource revenue source for IS.³³⁴ However, between 2014 and 2015, IS natural gas revenue declined by almost 29 percent.³³⁵ At their peak in 2015, IS operated only a dozen natural gas locations.³³⁶ The CAT described how producing natural gas is a more intricate process than preparing other natural resources for the market, and IS has recently lacked experienced operators, which has lowered their revenue. Controlling key natural gas locations has allowed IS to negotiate distribution deals with the Syrian regime and local companies.³³⁷

Phosphate is the third-highest-profitting natural resource for IS.³³⁸ IS has confiscated mines in hopes of producing sulfuric acid and phosphoric acid.³³⁹ However, between 2014 and 2015, IS phosphate revenue dropped by almost 16 percent.³⁴⁰ Transporting the material to ports for the landlocked extremist group has been challenging; combined with minimal sales returns, this makes it unlikely they will continue mining phosphate.³⁴¹

³³² Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 21.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 10–11.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 11–21.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

Agriculture is the fourth-highest-profiting natural resource for IS. Between 2014 and 2015, IS agriculture revenue diminished by almost 22 percent.³⁴² IS primarily grows wheat, barley, and cotton in the Middle East, but aggressive military attacks, farming equipment shortages, infertile seeds, and distribution difficulties have drastically hurt their agriculture industry.³⁴³

The final natural resource from which IS profits is cement.³⁴⁴ Between 2014 and 2015, their cement revenue decreased by almost 65 percent.³⁴⁵ At IS's height in 2014, they operated five cement plants, but from 2014–2016, they lost control of several of these plants, and a reduction in output further affected their cement revenue.³⁴⁶

b. Methods of Moving Monetary Funds

IS is constantly refining its international monetary system for moving funds while preventing detection. Confiscating local banks within Iraq and Syria allows IS to quickly acquire cash and to tap into the international banking network.³⁴⁷ The CAT stated that from 2014 to 2015, IS went from 125 seized banks within Iraq and Syria to 115.³⁴⁸ The seven main financial tools IS uses to transfer and receive monetary funds are electronic funds transfers (EFTs), money or value transfer systems (MVTs), money service businesses (MSBs), the hawala system, Bitcoin, prepaid cards, and cash couriers.

Controlling multiple financial institutions in Iraq and Syria has greatly benefited IS through EFTs, MVTs, and MSBs. An EFT is a common monetary transaction between one financial institution and another. The majority of Iraqis and Syrians do not have financial accounts, requiring them to depend on other means such as MVTs to

³⁴² Ibid., 21.

³⁴³ Ibid., 13–14.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 21.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 13.

³⁴⁷ *Financing of the Terrorist Organisation Islamic State*, 23.

³⁴⁸ Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 23.

transfer funds.³⁴⁹ MVTS networks have been established through trusted brokers, and instead of relying on a bank wire transfer, they depend on “[sending] messages via email, fax, or telephone to a local or foreign associate to pay or receive payment from the counterparty to a transaction.”³⁵⁰ An MVTS deal is then resolved in the future through physical cash or bank transfers.³⁵¹ An MSB provider is very similar to Western Union, which provides currency exchange services, but the ones IS uses have been exploited for money laundering to support terrorist activities. This is conducted through multiple small transactions to evade mandatory reporting, along with possibly employing a “smurfing or proxy technique” (see footnote) to prevent identification.³⁵²

Another utilized technique is the hawala system, which has created a loophole for terrorist funding. Hawala is an informal monetary transfer system based on trust through developed networks of money brokers. The CAT illustrates how the hawala system works in Figure 15. The system has allowed IS to conduct import trading with Jordan and Turkey.³⁵³ In February 2015, Australian senator Jacqui Lambie noted that “[hawala] certifiers are not legally required to disclose their fees, nor is there a formal reporting or auditing system to ascertain whether funds are being misused.”³⁵⁴ The CAT also explained how difficult it would be to prevent unlawful transactions, since hawala is utilized by 50 percent of Iraqi businesses.³⁵⁵ It is believed that IS will rely more on the underground hawala system as they expand, since they will inevitably be denied access to the international banking system in the future.³⁵⁶

³⁴⁹ *Financing of the Terrorist Organization Islamic State*, 28.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² Ranstorp, “Microfinancing the Caliphate,” 14; Smurfing is a technique used to break up transactions into smaller transactions under the reporting threshold to avoid detection.

³⁵³ Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 24.

³⁵⁴ Rashida Yosufzai, “‘Halal Money’ Funds Terrorism: Jacqui Lambie,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 February 2015, <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/halal-money-funds-terrorism-jacqui-lambie-20150210-13b868.html>.

³⁵⁵ Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 24.

³⁵⁶ Ranstorp, “Microfinancing the Caliphate,” 14.

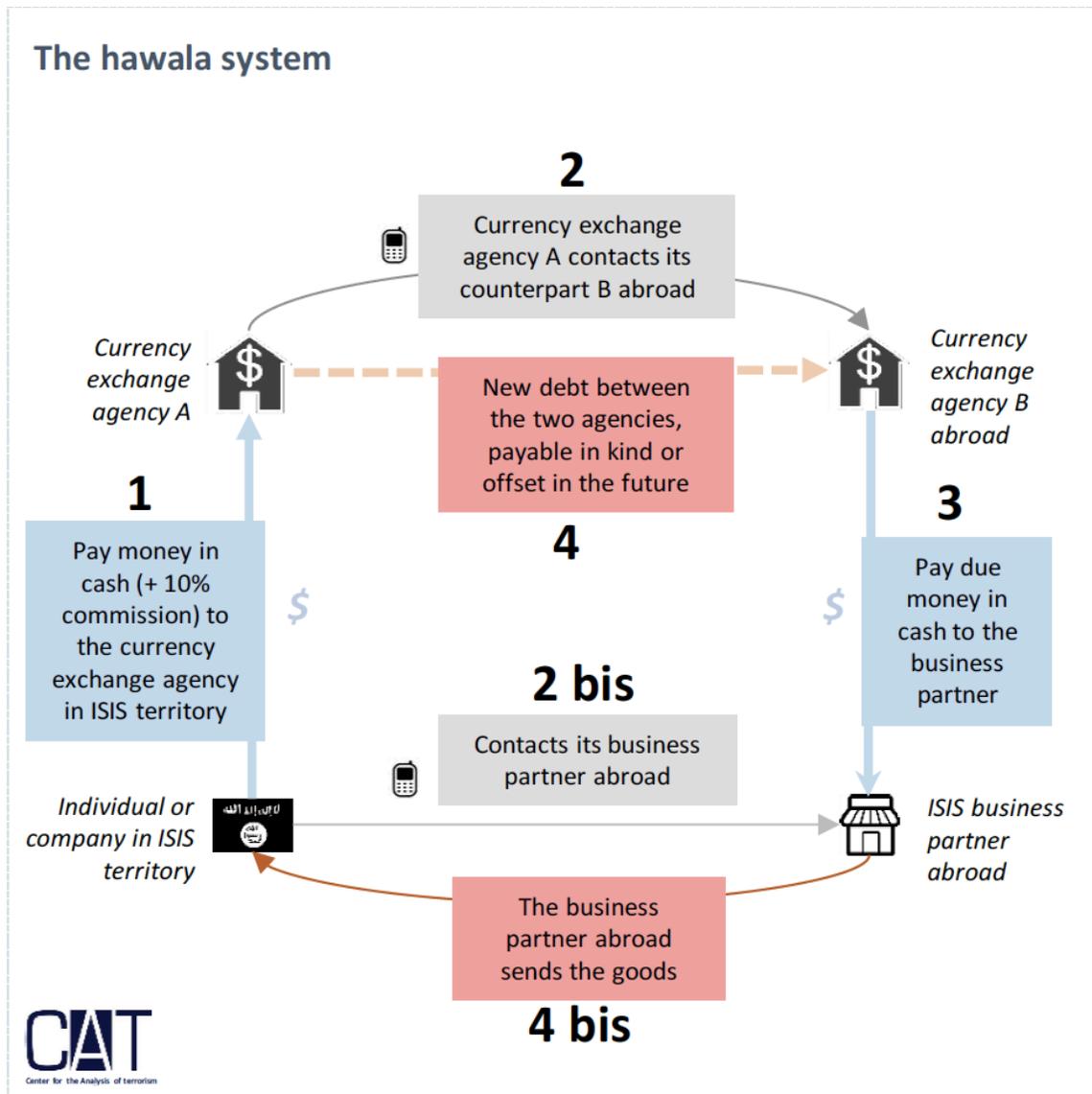


Figure 15. The Hawala System.³⁵⁷

Bitcoin (described in Figure 16) is a cryptocurrency that allows buying of electronic and tangible services or items. As Brooke Charles noted in an article for the website Security Intelligence, Bitcoin is “not contractually backed by assets or legal currency laws, it is not controlled by a central authority and it is not a tangible good. ...

³⁵⁷ Source: Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 24.

[It can be used by] anyone who has an Internet connection.”³⁵⁸ Fernanda Aboites in *Egyptian Streets* quotes the former undersecretary of the U.S. Treasury Department, who claimed that “Bitcoin is currently not regulated” and that terrorists “could have found a gap in [the U.S.] regulatory system that they may be exploiting.”³⁵⁹

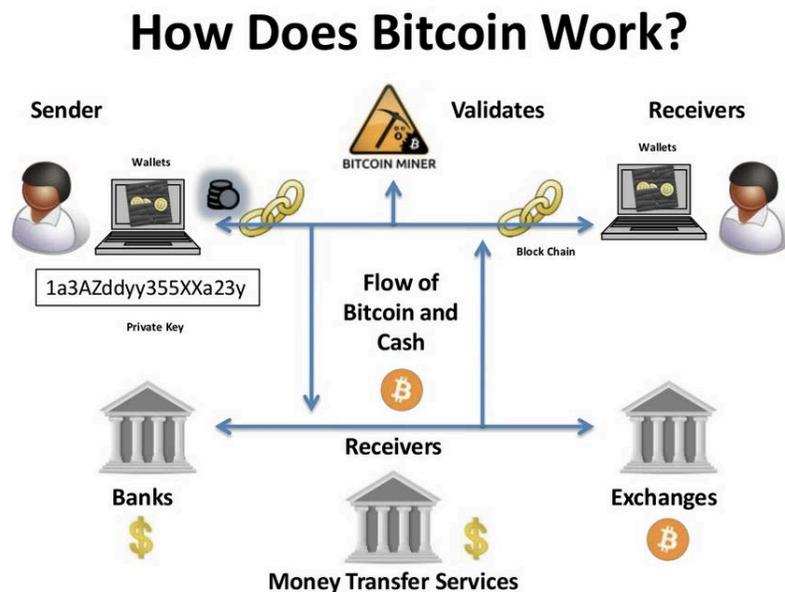


Figure 16. How Bitcoin Works³⁶⁰

Prepaid cards and cash couriers are probably the easiest methods of fund transfer to implement, and they are extremely hard to detect. Prepaid cards allow easy recharging without personal identity checks as long as the amount is less than \$2,800 per year. Cash couriers can avoid financial regulations and detection, and they make movement of cash into Turkey possible through refugee travel. IS has turned this system into a bidirectional movement of funds, as FTFs bring cash into Iraq and Syria.³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ Brooke Satti Charles, “ISIS. Are they using Bitcoins to Fund Criminal Activities?” Security Intelligence, 29 October 2014, <https://securityintelligence.com/isis-are-they-using-bitcoins-to-fund-criminal-activities/>.

³⁵⁹ Aboites, “What Keeps ISIS Running.”

³⁶⁰ Source: Atlas ATS PowerPoint (5th slide), Indieogogo,” <http://www.slideshare.net/atlasats/atlas-ats-powerpoint-indieogogo>.

³⁶¹ Ranstorp, “Microfinancing the Caliphate,” 14.

5. Political Support

Political support has traditionally come from state actors, but non-state actors will have to be considered in the future. It is difficult for an insurgency to acquire political assistance, but if they do, it can prove extremely beneficial. The 2015 U.S. Department of State document on states that sponsor terrorism did not identify any states that directly support IS. However, the document acknowledged that the Syrian government allowed safe passage for al-Qaeda's foreign fighters into Iraq to engage coalition troops, indirectly supporting the rise of today's IS.³⁶²

Insurgents are more likely to receive indirect political support, which may benefit states. One major driver of political support in the Middle East is oil, often in ways which affect the global oil industry. An OpenOil article discusses how significant Syria could become in delivering oil and natural gas to Europe from the Middle East. Indeed, in 2009, the Assad regime realized Syria's potential to unite the Persian Gulf, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, and Mediterranean Sea, and the "Pipelineistan" project was initiated to move in that direction.³⁶³ The project was halted shortly after the Syrian Civil war began in 2011. The current IS conflict has forced states to make political decisions between the sectarian dictator Assad, whose actions inflamed the Syrian Civil War and halted the Pipelineistan project, or the savage actions of the repressed Sunnis.

Prospective alliances in the Middle East have also provided indirect political support for IS. Iran has been spotted targeting the Kurds, who are a major fighting force against IS and receive Western backing.³⁶⁴ It has been reported that Hezbollah and Iranian ground forces have supported the Assad regime in the fight against the rebels and

³⁶² Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Chapter 3: State Sponsors of Terrorism Overview," in *Country Reports on Terrorism 2014*, U.S. Department of State, accessed 30 August 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239410.htm>.

³⁶³ Amrit Naresh, "Syria's Transit Future: All Pipelines Lead to Damascus?" OpenOil, 28 March 2012, <http://openoil.net/2012/03/28/syrias-transit-future-all-pipelines-lead-to-damascus/>.

³⁶⁴ Dan Stewart, "Meet the American Who Went to Iraq to Fight ISIS but Ended Up Taking on Iran," *TIME*, 24 August 2015, <http://time.com/3999270/american-ryan-oleary-fighting-iraq/>.

IS, backed by Russian air support.³⁶⁵ Both Iran and Russia believe Assad is the only viable state actor in the region, and their attacking the rebel forces has indirectly supported IS resilience—Iran and Russia’s actions help develop voids in the Middle East, which allow IS to expand. Countries have also been inclined to support Assad due to the strategic location of Syria and access to oil. These actions have built indirect military and political support for IS, which appear to go hand in hand.

Although no state is overtly supporting IS, the insurgents have managed to find allies globally in the form of non-state actors, which could help in their struggle for political support. IS has received allegiances from the Abu Sayyaf group in the Philippines, Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia, and Ansar Beit al-Maqdis in Egypt.³⁶⁶ In March 2015, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau pledged allegiance to IS.³⁶⁷ All these alliances have supported IS with FTFs, external financial donors, and possible IS-inspired foreign attacks.

6. Propaganda

The CAT reported in 2015 that in one year, IS was able to distribute approximately 15,000 propaganda messages, 800 videos, and 20 magazines in 11 different languages.³⁶⁸ A propaganda campaign must incorporate an appealing message and reach the insurgents’ audience to be effective. The *U.S. Army Field Manual* defines propaganda as:

Any form of communication in support of national objectives, designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any group in order to benefit the sponsor, either directly or indirectly.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁵ “Russia, Assad, Iran and Hezbollah to Begin Offensive against Rebels in Aleppo,” *Newsweek*, 14 October 2015, <http://www.newsweek.com/russia-assad-iran-and-hezbollah-offensive-against-rebels-aleppo-382985>.

³⁶⁶ Johnston, *Countering ISIL’s Financing*, 4.

³⁶⁷ Hamdi Alkhshali and Steve Almasy, “ISIS Leader Accepts Boko Haram’s Pledge of Allegiance,” CNN.com, 13 March 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/12/middleeast/isis-boko-haram/>.

³⁶⁸ Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 22.

³⁶⁹ Department of the Army, *Psychological Operations* (FM 3–05.30 MCRP 3–40.6) (Washington, DC, 2005), 160.

IS's propaganda is disseminated through video, print, the Internet, and social media, in operations run by their information committee.³⁷⁰ Analyst Charlie Winter stated that the IS's propaganda "has generated a comprehensive brand ... composed of six non-discrete narratives—brutality, mercy, victimhood, war, belonging, and utopianism."³⁷¹ The IS has managed to constantly refine their propaganda through violence, developing different methods of distribution, and targeting population segments for specific purposes.

a. Violence

IS has managed to transform violence into a global propaganda message. Fear is one of the propaganda strategies used by IS to stand out among global insurgencies. Insurgencies must assess their use of violence over the local population, as described in the equivalent response model, which states that the level and duration of violence over the local population must be considered to prevent a population polarization.³⁷² IS has implemented their violent strategy through publicly released videos of killings, excessive violence locally, and orchestrated foreign attacks. In 2004, al-Qaeda was the first to release a beheading video of American contractor Nicholas Berg.³⁷³ In 2014, IS recorded the decapitations of journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, humanitarian aides David Haines and Alan Henning, French national Hervé Gourdel, American national Peter Kassig, and Japanese citizens Haruna Yukawa and Kenji Goto, to name just a few.³⁷⁴ When IS realized that beheadings were not receiving the attention they felt they deserved, they decided to implement new public killing methods. In June 2015, IS security officer Ayad Hamid Khalaf al-Jumaili (see footnote) recommended releasing videos of victims

³⁷⁰ Johnson et al., *Foundations of the Islamic State*, 76 and 250.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 250.

³⁷² Eric P. Wendt, "Strategic Counterinsurgency Modeling," *Special Warfare* 18, no. 2 (September 2005): 4–5.

³⁷³ Johnson et al., *Foundations of the Islamic State*, 53.

³⁷⁴ Ali, *How ISIS Exploits Women*, 9.

being burned alive, drowning in cages, and being beheaded using explosives around their necks.³⁷⁵

IS has also used violent measures against the Yazidis. Several Yazidi women captured by IS have attempted to rebel against their captives, and some even committed suicide with their own scarves before IS banned wearing scarves to prevent further financial losses.³⁷⁶ IS uses barbaric treatment of uncooperative women. One 20-year-old Yazidi lady was reported to have been burned alive after refusing extreme sexual demands. In another incident, a Yazidi woman who refused extreme sex was forced to eat her own child.³⁷⁷ The IS's unimaginable savage acts of terror explain just how far they will go to finance their illegitimate state.

IS's global strategy has given the impression that they are stronger than they actually are. A recent increase in foreign attacks has spread this propaganda-based image of strength. In his 2016 book *Governing the Caliphate: Profiles of Islamic State Leaders*, Kyle Orton identified two possible reasons for the increase in IS foreign attacks. First, IS experienced defeats from 2008–2010 and an increase in HVT killings by coalition forces.³⁷⁸ Second, IS territories in Iraq and Syria were reduced by 45 percent and 16–20 percent respectively between June 2014 and June 2016.³⁷⁹ Both of Orton's possibilities suggest IS is weaker than perceived and using foreign attacks to cover the insurgency's lack of regional strength. In a July 2016 analysis, the *New York Times* identified over 1,200 foreign attack deaths outside of Iraq and Syria between September 2014 and July 2016 with links to IS (Figure 17).³⁸⁰

³⁷⁵ Kyle Orton, *Governing the Caliphate: Profiles of Islamic State Leaders* (London: Centre for the Response to Radicalization and Terrorism at the Henry Jackson Society, 2016), 52; Al-Jumaili is a former intelligence officer in Saddam's regime and now runs the IS *amniyat* (security units), which are in charge of internal security and counterintelligence for the caliphate and the caliph.

³⁷⁶ Ali, *How ISIS Exploits Women*, 19.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 17–19.

³⁷⁸ Orton, *Governing the Caliphate*, 4.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁸⁰ Karen Yourish et al., "How Many People Have Been Killed in ISIS Attacks around the World," *New York Times*, 16 July 2016.

Major ISIS Attacks

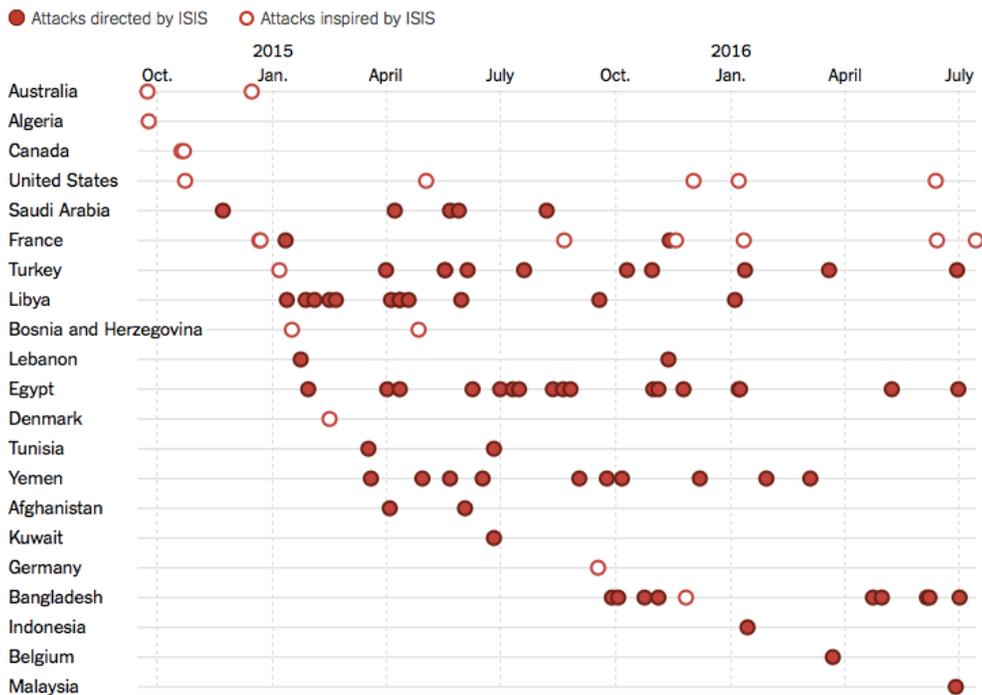


Figure 17. IS Foreign Attacks/IS-Inspired Attacks (September 2014–July 2016).³⁸¹

Orton also stated that IS-directed or IS-inspired foreign attacks would have taken several months to plan, evidence of a highly developed propaganda strategy. Between 21 May 2016 and 29 July 2016, there were at least a dozen foreign attacks claimed by IS.³⁸² Kyle explains that most foreign attacks are not “lone wolf” attacks, but instead are normally planned by groups several months in advance, making them extremely hard to detect.³⁸³ Both lone wolf and group foreign terrorist attacks have provided direct and indirect propaganda support to IS. Orton broke down three categories in the execution of a foreign attack: command and control or directed, suggested or endorsed, and

³⁸¹ Source: Yourish et al., “How Many People have been Killed in ISIS Attacks.”

³⁸² Orton, *Governing the Caliphate*, 2.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 4–6.

inspired.³⁸⁴ This leads analysts to believe that IS has been plotting foreign attacks for years, which they are executing now even as they lose their utopian state.

b. Developing Different Methods of Distribution

IS has been able to disperse their propaganda through global and regional strategies. The information age has allowed them to broadcast their propaganda message, which is a key element of any insurgency's external support structure. IS's propaganda message has been implemented with more sophistication than the advertising of many U.S. businesses, and they have considerably improved their propaganda campaign since 2014 with the help of the Internet.³⁸⁵

Complete control of information about IS-controlled territory has also become a strategy. Due to the inherent danger of the region to journalists, the only information coming out of IS-controlled territory is their own messages. This has forced the international community to rely solely on IS-released propaganda, defected IS fighters, or confiscated documents. IS's sanctuary strongholds are becoming black propaganda areas, "comprised [of] false information or half-truths," compared to white propaganda, which consists of facts and creditable, cited information.³⁸⁶ A black propaganda area is not open to journalists or free speech, which makes gathering current information extremely difficult.

The FATF, an independent intergovernmental entity that advocates policies to counter money laundering, terrorist funding, and procurement of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), described the multiple tiers that support IS's propaganda campaign. IS has created the Al-I'tisam Establishment for Media Production and the more recent Al-Hayat Media Center, which concentrates on social media.³⁸⁷ Mah-Rukh Ali published a fellowship document while attending the University of Oxford in 2015, titled "ISIS and

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 4.

³⁸⁵ *Financing of the Terrorist Organization Islamic State*, 1–48.

³⁸⁶ Ali, *How ISIS Exploits Women*, 8.

³⁸⁷ *Financing of the Terrorist Organization Islamic State*, 24.

Propaganda: How ISIS Exploits Women,” which identified the IS propaganda subdepartments: “Al-Furqan focuses on material that shows military strength, while Al-I’tisam deals with ceremonial and religious activities.”³⁸⁸ This allows IS to refine their propaganda market segmentation for distinct global regions.

The information age has rewritten the way social media can be used for a global propaganda message. In January 2015, a U.S. congressional committee reported that Twitter is the “gateway drug” (Figure 18) to cyber jihad radicalization, followed by Kik or WhatsApp, and eventually leading to secure chat applications.³⁸⁹ A 2016 RAND study found that in the last quarter of 2014, IS advocates ran 46,000 Twitter accounts, 20 percent of which were in English.³⁹⁰ The January 2015 U.S. congressional committee report revealed several problems with confronting and eliminating IS social media propaganda. First is the idea of freedom of speech, which underpins almost all online posts, and second is the need for social media corporations’ cooperation. One Twitter official was reported saying, “One man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.”³⁹¹

IS has identified the many Internet applications that can be used for communication. Al-Qaeda made very grainy movies with virtually no editing, music, or computer graphics, then disseminated them through local TV/news stations to win over the population and recruit fighters. IS is using the Internet for its marketing networks, including Facebook, Ask.fm, Pinterest, YouTube, WordPress, and Tumblr.³⁹² These applications have allowed IS to conduct bidirectional communication, which was not possible during the French–Algerian War or the Vietnam War. They are also using digital

³⁸⁸ Ali, *How ISIS Exploits Women*, 10.

³⁸⁹ J. M. Berger, “The Evolution of Terrorist Propaganda: The Paris Attack and Social Media,” testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, 27 January 2015, 7.

³⁹⁰ Johnson et al., *Foundations of the Islamic State*, 250.

³⁹¹ Berger, “The Evolution of Terrorist Propaganda,” 6.

³⁹² Jason Duaine Hahn, “ISIS Is Better at Twitter than the Bey Hive: How the World’s Most Dangerous Group Uses Social Media,” *Complex.com*, 6 April 2015, <http://uk.complex.com/pop-culture/2015/04/isis-social-media-methods>.

magazines (*Dabiq*),³⁹³ websites, private chat rooms, and live online gaming chats (PlayStation Network). *Dabiq* magazine is translated into German, French, and English, making it more accessible to a global audience.³⁹⁴ A 14 November 2015 *Forbes* article by Paul Tassi explained how IS fighters may have used the PlayStation 4 to plan and execute the 13 November 2015 Paris attacks.³⁹⁵ IS has improved on al-Qaeda’s outdated marketing strategies by utilizing the Internet in all these ways.

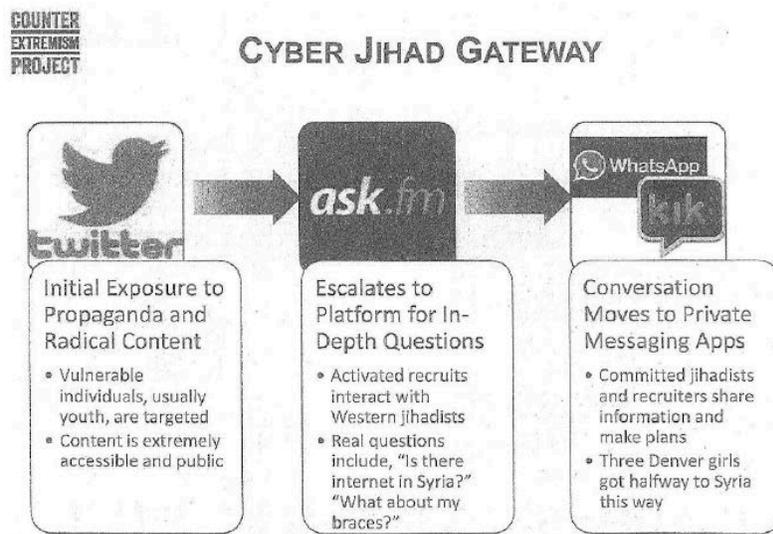


Figure 18. Twitter Is the Gateway to Jihadi Propaganda.³⁹⁶

IS has also implemented basic forms of local propaganda through preacher vans to spread their message, which helps them generate local support.³⁹⁷ A VICE News documentary described how IS uses a preacher van to spread the message of Islam and

³⁹³ “The Islamic State’s (ISIS, ISIL) Magazine,” Clarion Project, 10 September 2014, <http://www.clarionproject.org/news/islamic-state-isis-isil-propaganda-magazine-dabiq#>.

³⁹⁴ Ali, *How ISIS Exploits Women*, 10.

³⁹⁵ Paul Tassi, “How ISIS Terrorists May Have Used PlayStation 4 to Discuss and Plan Attacks [Updated],” *Forbes*, 14 November 2015, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/insertcoin/2015/11/14/why-the-paris-isis-terrorists-used-ps4-to-plan-attacks/#19be4271731a>.

³⁹⁶ Source: U.S. Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, *The Evolution of Terrorist Propaganda*, 27.

³⁹⁷ “The Islamic State’s (ISIS, ISIL) Magazine.”

the newly developed IS, focusing on underdeveloped areas where people have no Internet access.³⁹⁸ VICE News also reported that IS has a dedicated press officer whose job is to “win the hearts and minds of the local population, which supports Islamic State fighters and recruitment,” to prevent population polarization. The al-Bayan radio network was also established by IS to generate followers; it broadcasts in Russian, Arabic, and English. The radio station gives a general picture of IS’s suicide attacks and military campaigns.³⁹⁹

c. Targeting Population Segments for Specific Purposes

IS appears to be disseminating a broader propaganda message globally. In an article in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Aaron Zelin analyzed one week of IS propaganda from 18–24 April 2015, revealing how IS had evolved into a “centralized decentralization” system through multiple online accounts, which allows them to adjust their operations if one online account is removed.⁴⁰⁰ Zelin also explained that the common failure to grasp the true magnitude of the IS propaganda machine is due to the *Dabiq* magazine being the only IS propaganda medium published in the English language. Only 6 percent of the propaganda Zelin identified was in English; 87 percent was in Arabic. Zelin’s research revealed that 88 percent of IS propaganda was in a visual medium, either in the form of pictures, videos, or graphics, and 48 percent of the propaganda was of military-type operations. Propaganda of military operations is likely designed to attract young men to engage in jihad, while visual propaganda could be used to compel young women to relocate and support IS fighters.

Attempting to persuade women is just one example of IS’s propaganda-segmentation strategy. Women can support IS through procreating, nurturing new generations of jihad fighters, and supporting their future husbands in jihad. IS developed their propaganda toward women through the release of a document in 2015 detailing

³⁹⁸ *The Islamic State*, VICE News, documentary, December 2014.

³⁹⁹ Ali, *How ISIS Exploits Women*, 11.

⁴⁰⁰ Aaron Y. Zelin, “Picture or It Didn’t Happen: A Snapshot of the Islamic State’s Official Media Output,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 4 (2015), <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/445/html>.

women's basic roles/rights and those of the jihadi bride, specifically targeting women in societies ruled under fundamentalist Islam. The document, called "Women of the Islamic State: A Manifesto on Women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigdae," was translated in February 2015 by a British think-tank corporation, the Quilliam Foundation.⁴⁰¹ It clearly defined women's duties, what basic home economics classes they would receive, and under what circumstances they could leave their houses.⁴⁰² In August 2016, a *CTX* article by Major Eric East described how Baghdadi has become more "progressive" toward women by allowing all women to attend grade schools and higher education and developing a female "shari'a police brigade called *al-Khansa* to go along with the all-male *Hizbeh* police force."⁴⁰³ For the first time, women under fundamentalist Islam had a document clearly defining women's basic roles, along with newly developed basic privileges, no matter how minuscule.

The idea of being a jihadi bride has also attracted some Western women to join IS. Ali's 2015 document reported "an estimated 500 European Muslim girls have made the journey abroad from their homes to join [IS]."⁴⁰⁴ Some IS-affiliated women within IS-controlled zones are posting happy daily family events, recipes they have cooked, and photos of their families and pets online. These women suggest that all good Muslim women have a duty to travel to Iraq and Syria outlined in sharia law and will be appreciated for supporting their families and fighting alongside their husbands. IS has even influenced young women in IS territory to recruit other women and help them travel to Iraq and Syria by advising them on appropriate clothing to bring and sanitation to expect.⁴⁰⁵ IS has managed to use propaganda to make living in the Middle East under

⁴⁰¹ Charlie Winter, trans., *Women of the Islamic State: A Manifesto on Women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade* (London, UK: Quilliam Foundation.org, February 2015), 1–41.
<http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/press/quilliam-translation-and-analysis-of-islamic-state-manifesto-on-jihadist-brides/>.

⁴⁰² Ali, *How ISIS Exploits Women*, 13–14.

⁴⁰³ Eric East, "Dàesh, Legitimacy, and the Rise of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi," *CTX* 6, no. 3 (August 2016), 11.

⁴⁰⁴ Ali, *How ISIS Exploits Women*, 15–16.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

subpar conditions with an extremely violent extremist group seem appealing to some young women.

7. Direct [to Indirect] Military Support

The exact military support and equipment IS has acquired is uncertain. Though much of it was taken from Iraqi forces in 2014. Malcolm Nance, a former U.S. naval intelligence officer, identifies the kinds of weapons IS possess as of March 2016 in *Defeating ISIS: Who They Are, How They Fight, What They Believe*. Nance's book lists the weapons that IS currently employs: armed vehicles, suicide car bombs, suicide pedestrian bombers, tanks and artillery, antitank weaponry, anti-aircraft guns, surface-to-air missiles, chemical and biological weapons, small arms and machine guns, and drones.⁴⁰⁶ Nance's book revealed how innovate IS has become with their weaponry.

As discussed earlier, no state is believed to be supporting IS through overt, direct military support. Direct support is considered support that is intentionally contributed, and indirect support is considered unintentional and or unknowing. However, some Sunni states are speculated to have provided covert, indirect military support: Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain. The Shia states that could counter IS's insurgency are Iran, Syria, and Iraq, along with the Combined Joint Task Force which was established in October 2014 for that purpose, which includes personnel from more than 60 countries.⁴⁰⁷

Iran is also believed to be supporting an IS expansion through indirect military actions. Iran's Sunni militants have engaged the Kurdish minority forces. The Kurds are one of the dominating forces against IS, backed by Western forces.⁴⁰⁸ In August 2015, former Iowa National Guard soldier Ryan O'Leary went to Iraq intending to join Kurdish

⁴⁰⁶ Malcolm Nance, *Defeating ISIS: Who They Are, How They Fight, What They Believe* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2016), Chapter 16.

⁴⁰⁷ Dominique, "Inside the Coalition to Defeat ISIL."

⁴⁰⁸ Anne Gearan, "Iran Won't Join U.S. in Islamic State Fight," *Washington Post*, 15 September 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/iran-wont-team-with-us-against-islamic-state/2014/09/15/92ea7648-3cd8-11e4-a430-b82a3e67b762_story.html.

forces and train them to counter IS.⁴⁰⁹ O’Leary was surprised to see the Iranian military repressing and killing the Kurds because the Kurds favored Western socialist democracy.

Non-state actors can also support insurgencies, which sometimes leads to proxy conflicts. Proxy conflicts can benefit a state through their vested interests, while avoiding being seen by the international community as directly supporting an insurgency, thereby preventing a globalization calamity. Non-states that may have supported IS are the Sunni al-Qaeda and al-Nusra Front and possibly the Shia Hezbollah insurgency. Individuals also supply IS with arms through porous neighboring borders.

8. Conclusion

IS was able to expand because of events in Syria and Iraq linked to the Arab Spring, U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, and multiple failed states in the Middle East, and then exploited multiple areas to build and sustain their external support structure. Carl Von Clausewitz explained in *On War* that “before the battle, the two sides [are] in balance, real or assumed; this balance has now been upset, and an outside cause is needed to restore it. Without such external support, any further exertions will only result in further loss.”⁴¹⁰

IS developed financial strength through embedded networks that supported revenue via donations, kidnap and ransom, extortion, and selling of natural resources from Iraq and Syria. IS has become financially self-sustaining and able to forgo donations from wealthy individuals, which might influence the fighters’ agenda. Very little overt political support has been identified for IS, as states do not wish to be ostracized internationally. IS has rewritten the way propaganda is used by including bidirectional communication and encrypted chatrooms and eluding state efforts to block radical propaganda messages. Finally, IS military support includes confiscated military stockpiles and possibly covert aid from states or non-states. Understanding the rapid IS expansion can help determine how to mitigate future insurgencies. It can also support analysts in designing effective policy recommendations in the struggle against IS.

⁴⁰⁹ Stewart, “Meet the American Who Went to Iraq.”

⁴¹⁰ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (1832; repr. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 255, Kindle edition.

III. ISLAMIC STATE EXTERNAL SUPPORT IN CONTEXT

Insurgencies have evolved as external support capabilities have developed, and likely will continue to do so. There have been enormous changes in external support in the last 60 years from the FLN to the NVA to IS, and some trends will probably continue. As successful insurgencies learn from their predecessors, this adaption could create new challenges for counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. This chapter will look at all five external support areas as they relate to IS, then address the two research questions directly. The chapter will discuss applications in the continuing effort against IS and finally address areas for future research.

A. ANALYZING ISLAMIC STATE EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Patterns are emerging for insurgencies, including the role of the Internet, globalization, and revenue from natural resources. The Internet is anticipated to remain an essential tool for insurgencies in soliciting financial revenue, generating political support, and developing propaganda. As of August 2016, only 42 percent of the global population are web users,⁴¹¹ leaving 58 percent as potential future Internet users who could increase an IS target-support segmentation.

Globalization and revenue from natural resources have changed the way insurgencies operate as states come to depend on each other more through commerce and foreign investment. Increased globalization has also allowed for more relaxed borders. These relaxed borders can support an insurgency through safe havens and transit, making financial resources available, and giving insurgents access to indirect political and military support. Natural resource revenue has supported IS in becoming the most lucrative insurgency as of August 2016. This has allowed IS to forgo private donations, which come with demands on an insurgency's direction and goals.

⁴¹¹ *The World Factbook*, Central Intelligence Agency.

1. Safe Haven and Transit

As noted in Chapter II, Section C3, the State Department has acknowledged that IS has relied on weak borders allowing safe haven and transit to facilitate movement of goods and people, as did the FLN and NVA, but they are less dependent on weak borders than prior insurgencies were for the transfer of funds. The continuing phenomenon of failed states also offers safe haven and transit opportunities.

Safe haven and transit played a significant role in both the French–Algerian War and Vietnam War. During the French–Algerian War, Morocco and Tunisia, who did not join the UN until 1956, were hostile to French interests. The weak borders allowed the FLN to receive external support, while the French could not advance into these neighboring states. The Morice Line only temporarily contained Algeria. During the Vietnam War, safe haven and transit were the deciding factors. The NVA built the robust Ho Chi Minh Trail that skirted inside Laos and Cambodia, alongside the Vietnam border. The Ho Chi Minh Trail shuttled vehicles, equipment, arms, and personnel for the NVA into South Vietnam.

Today, borders appear to be relevant in funneling foreign recruitment and essential supplies for IS. Borders are weakened by the expansion of globalization. As the world moves from nation-states toward a global presence (fractal governments), as described by Thomas Frey, this will initially require relaxed borders to support globalization.⁴¹² These relaxed borders make states susceptible to foreign fighter recruitments and the shipment of arms and crucial supplies to sustain an insurgency.

Failed states have also contributed to weak borders and the existence of safe havens. As states move toward failed-state status, international investment ceases, unemployment rises, and populations become less satisfied with leaders, dictators, or presidents. This can create an environment that is inviting to a newly developed insurgency. As that insurgency intensifies its violence, the diaspora population will increase, as seen recently in Iraq and Syria. This flow of refugees leads to conditions that

⁴¹² Thomas L. Frey, *Communicating with the Future: How Re-Engineering Intentions Will Alter the Master Code of Our Future* (CGX Publishing, 2011), 126.

allow insurgencies to shuttle external support. Insurgencies will continue to depend on the weakness of neighboring borders to transport personnel and equipment.

Understanding how safe havens and transit function for IS can inform COIN efforts. To reduce safe haven and transit, strong, developed states must continue to invest in state-building strategies to prevent failed states. Diplomacy can be used to shore up fragile states by discouraging sectarian leadership and encouraging social services and just, government-enforced law and order for the local population. As long as the free flow of insurgencies across failed-state borders continues, IS will have access to safe havens and transit.

2. Financial Resources

Financial resources have evolved for IS from a grassroots strategy similar to the FLN's toward a heterogeneous strategy involving both a global Internet-enabled support structure and internally generated revenue. The FLN had to depend on cash from other states to support their insurgency, grassroots networks, international connections, and diasporas. The NVA were able to receive financial support from procommunist countries like the Soviet Union and the PRC. This grassroots approach to donations limited the FLN's and NVA's financial revenues to their pre-Internet eras.

The current transition into the information age has aided IS's financial network, which utilizes Internet-driven funds. Their financial network is constantly innovating new techniques, finding loopholes in international regulations, and updating security measures. As more people come to use the Internet, IS could benefit financially.

Self-generated financial resources have developed since the 1950s. The FLN depended on taxes, donations, and extortion for their organic financial network. The NVA was able to use donations as a self-generated funding method. IS also uses these resources, along with criminal activity, to fund external support.⁴¹³ Unlike the FLN and the NVA, IS has managed to become financially self-sustaining, most significantly by

⁴¹³ Fantz, "How ISIS Makes (and Takes) Money."

selling natural resources (agriculture, cement, phosphate, natural gas, and oil).⁴¹⁴ Their internal resources have earned IS several million dollars per day, with oil sales the major contributor.⁴¹⁵ One predictable IS trend is that use of taxes, donations, and criminal activities will continue, but natural resources will eventually be depleted.

There are a variety of ways to counter IS's financial network. A desirable counter operation would be to target isolated Internet users and black market sales supporting IS and to simultaneously run developed psychological operations (PSYOP). Blocking monetary transactions over the Internet could cripple IS. Their black market selling of natural resources could be targeted and blocked through UN sanctions. Finally, a PSYOP through dropped leaflets over IS sanctuary cities could coerce individuals to flee. This could deprive IS of extortion and tax revenue, along with personnel to maintain the daily tasks necessary for operating natural resource revenue. An attack on IS's internally generated financial revenue must be executed precisely, to avoid a humanitarian issue among the local population in sanctuary cities.

3. Political Support

Global inequalities between states during the Cold War created political opportunities for insurgencies. The PRC and Cuba were in favor of supporting state and non-state actors to expand communism, so they gave the FLN international support; along with the Soviet Union, they repeated this political support for the NVA. During the French–Algerian War, Morocco and Tunisia did not agree with colonial traditions and favored Islamic principles, leading them to openly support the FLN. The FLN's and NVA's political support allowed direct and indirect political pressure on the state actors opposing them. IS, unlike the FLN or NVA, has not had political support, but instead has strived for indirect or covert political support and non-state-actor support.

Political support for insurgencies has evolved over the years, with the end of Cold War (1947–1991) and the expansion of globalization; the majority of states seek to

⁴¹⁴ Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing: 2015*, 21.

⁴¹⁵ Fantz, "How ISIS Makes (and Takes) Money."

appear cooperative with global security concerns. The expansion of the global community has also shifted the landscape of political support. UN membership has drastically changed from the Cold War era to present day; there were just 76 members in 1955 and 193 members in 2011, out of 196 countries. This change also contributed to globalization; as economist Thomas Friedman stated, the world has become “flat.”⁴¹⁶ Globalization has allowed for simplicity of free trade on open markets, and countries fear global repercussions if they provide direct overt political support to unjustifiable state or non-state actors. IS’s excessive use of brutality has also affected the kind of political support they receive. This is partly why IS is currently only receiving indirect state and non-state-actor support.

There are a few options to block IS from gaining political support from Sunni states. A feasible counter operation to political support would be building strong state alliances through diplomacy and supporting the development of fragile states. Alliances could deter states from acting against a supporting state’s interests. Developing fragile states could also prevent opportunities for non-state actors to emerge and support IS through funding, equipment, propaganda, foreign fighters, or HUMINT.

4. Propaganda

Propaganda has changed vastly over the years due to Internet usage and software innovations. The FLN used basic forms of radio, printed handbills, and other traditional forms of media. The brutal actions of the French Army in Algeria and the press coverage of the Vietnam War indirectly supported the FLN’s and NVA’s propaganda messages. The French Army’s inhumane interrogation techniques and excessive use of violence against civilians became talking points in the UN, reports of which educated the international community on the atrocities taking place in Algeria. During the Vietnam War, news media on GI deaths, the Tet Offensive, and alleged American war crimes indirectly supported the NVA through propaganda. The French and United States’

⁴¹⁶ “[G]lobalization has made the world ‘flat’ removing many of the traditional barriers and obstacles that separate states and markets from each other.” Patrick O’Neil and Ronald Rogowski, “Chapter 11: Globalization,” in *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*, 4th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), 588.

aggressive actions during the French–Algerian War and Vietnam War can be understood through Merom, who stated that the domestic structures of democracies depend on the “crucial role played by the society and culture of the strong [democratic] contender.”⁴¹⁷

IS has managed to expand its propaganda techniques by using the Internet to reach millions of web users globally. This has allowed IS to instantly send photos, videos, and updates of current battles while manipulating the messages with sophisticated software to present an IS utopia. IS’s violence has prevented journalists from entering their strongholds, forcing Western nations to rely solely on IS propaganda, confiscated documents, or defected jihadi fighters to gather IS intelligence.

Western countries are playing catchup with antipropaganda campaigns against IS. These techniques were last frequently used during the Cold War. The United States Information Agency (USIA) (1953–1999) was designed to influence foreign policies to support U.S. interests and was disbanded following the end of the Cold War. An antipropaganda campaign has been difficult due to both the democratic value of freedom of speech and easily accessible mobile devices. A counterstrategy utilizing a PSYOP plan could be executed through white, gray, or black propaganda (see footnote) to confuse or disseminate the truth about IS.⁴¹⁸ The strength of propaganda for IS is likely to continue unless the global community realizes its magnitude. A counterpropaganda campaign could be developed on a global scale, but would require relinquishing some common democratic freedoms.

5. Direct [to Indirect] Military Support

IS, unlike the FLN and NVA, has not benefited from direct military support, relying instead on indirect military support by confiscated and illegally procured means. Past insurgencies have received direct state support, particularly during the Cold War—for example during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, when the Soviet Union shipped

⁴¹⁷ Merom, “The Social Origins of the French Capitulation in Algeria,” 619–620.

⁴¹⁸ Goldstein and Findley, *Psychological Operations*, 6; White propaganda is the truth and displays its origin, gray propaganda does not indicate where it originated, and black propaganda is released from one origin but imitates a different origin.

ballistic missiles into Cuba prior to the 13-day Missile Crisis.⁴¹⁹ The FLN had direct military support from state actors, buying weapons from China and the Soviet Union to support their insurgency. The NVA had direct military support from the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, and Cuba. However, similar to the way political support for insurgencies has dwindled, the end of the Cold War led to a decline in direct military support.

Although IS has not received direct military support, they have managed to generate an arsenal by confiscating government armories, commandeering direct weapons acquisitions after successful battles, and possibly acquiring weapons covertly from states or non-state actors when FTF enter the IS sanctuary and transport military supplies. To counter indirect military support for insurgencies, alliances must be formed among states to enhance international relations. Diplomacy could encourage weak states to maintain better control over stockpiles of military equipment. State-building relations could also deter weak states from illegally selling military equipment.

B. ANSWERING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Can the French–Algerian War and the Vietnam War help identify patterns and areas of vulnerability in the external support IS currently receives?

Evaluating the three case studies simultaneously has helped to identify recurring IS trends and potentially fragile areas of external support that can be targeted in counter-IS operations. IS has made use of the benefits of safe haven and transit, financial support, and propaganda, much in the manner the FLN and NVA did, and these constitute the key areas of vulnerability. Political support and direct military support have not played overt roles, unlike with the FLN and NVA, and therefore represent more challenging areas of external support to target.

Safe havens and transit and propaganda are important trends and areas of vulnerability in all three case studies. Safe havens will continue to remain important for IS for foreign fighter recruitment, insurgency expansion, local population support,

⁴¹⁹ Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, ed. Jennie Errickson, 2nd ed. (Chicago, IL: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 1999), 1–416.

extortion practices, and selling intrastate natural resources. All the IS benefits of safe haven and transit could be eliminated with secure borders and the development of robust states with just police and military forces to maintain law and order while preventing insurgency from developing.

All three insurgencies used propaganda to disseminate their grievances through a perceived narrative, to influence foreign fighter recruitment, to extract financial aid, and to acquire political and indirect military support. IS has even used propaganda to inspire foreign terrorist attacks in at least 21 countries as of July 2016.⁴²⁰ As IS now uses the Internet as their main avenue to disseminate propaganda and to communicate, it presents a single point of vulnerability. If countries and social media companies could cooperate to pursue a common enemy, targeting and eliminating IS propaganda could be possible.

Different financial support methods appear in the IS case study than in the FLN and NVA studies, but vulnerabilities have existed in all three cases. The FLN and NVA primarily relied on currency being shuttled across their borders. IS, in contrast, has developed a robust financial infrastructure and primarily relies on selling intrastate natural resources and moving monetary funds via the Internet. This has allowed IS to be self-sustaining and to forgo donations. As IS loses territory, they are deprived of natural resource revenue. IS has also developed very sophisticated means of moving monetary funds in and out of their sanctuary territory. This does present areas of vulnerability, but it could also create humanitarian issues if targeted, which could indirectly strengthen an IS propaganda message.

Direct military and political support are more difficult for IS to obtain than they were for the FLN and NVA. Diplomatic means have deterred states from directly supporting an IS insurgency with military aid or overt political support. IS offers little to coerce states into abandoning alliances to support it, aside from offering monetary funds and natural resources. Neither military aid nor political support are areas that can be easily targeted in COIN operations.

⁴²⁰ Yourish et al., “How Many People Have Been Killed in ISIS Attacks.”

2. Are the five external support elements discussed in this thesis (safe haven and transit, financial resources, political support, propaganda, and direct [to indirect] military support) still relevant to modern non-state actors like IS?

Since the 2001 RAND book titled *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* was published, elements of external support have evolved for insurgencies. Safe haven and transit, financial support, and propaganda are still relevant to IS. Although the means of using these things have changed, they will continue to remain essential for insurgencies.

Political and direct military support appear not to be relevant to IS's external support. Indirect and/or covert support through political and military means has become more common for IS, while direct and/or overt assistance was more common for the FLN and NVA. The information age, dispersed support, and non-state actors have contributed to this shift. The information age has allowed IS to instantly communicate bidirectionally with individuals and groups globally to generate dispersed support, which contributes to non-state-actor support, making it extremely difficult to implement COIN operations simultaneously across multiple regions.

C. FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis established the patterns, vulnerabilities, and relevance of IS external support as defined in the 2001 RAND book titled *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*. The answers to the research questions hopefully show the importance of analyzing insurgency means of external support and provide a starting point for future research. Follow-on research might consider using regressions to analyze quantitative and qualitative measures of means of external support. Continued research could also determine if IS's external supporters can be coerced into becoming external detractors. Finally, a proximity-model approach of insurgency support could be evaluated to determine current trends, vulnerabilities, and relevancy.

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