

Cultural Perspectives, Geopolitics & Energy Security of Eurasia: Is the Next Global Conflict Imminent?



**General Editors
Dr. Mahir J. Ibrahimov
Mr. Gustav A. Otto
COL Lee G. Gentile, Jr.**



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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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Editor

Jennifer B. Fike

Foreword

Geopolitics and the socio-cultural aspects of regional affairs continue to change at a rapid pace. Military decisions that directly affect strategic outcomes rely heavily on cohesively understanding the operating environment and associated regional cultures of our allies and our adversaries. Army leaders at all echelons must be able to recognize and adapt in stride or ahead of these geopolitical and cultural changes in the operating environment and understand how they can directly affect broader mission outcomes. The US Army's Culture, Regional Expertise, and Language (CREL) Program provides a mechanism for the Army to prepare for its premier land force to operate within a region's indigenous cultures.

This anthology, *Cultural Perspectives, Geopolitics & Energy Security of Eurasia: Is the Next Global Conflict Imminent?* Volume 1, written under the auspices of the CREL Management Office (CRELMO), provides insight and observations on the importance of the Eurasia region, including Russia and other countries of the former USSR. The articles that make up this work provide a detailed description of regional realities, including a contextual discussion of the current Ukraine situation, viewed through the prism of Russia's traditional military-strategic culture. As with all countries in the Eurasian region, Russia's traditional strategic interests play a critical role in the geopolitical and socio-cultural situation in that region.

The insights offered in this volume are important for Army professionals who lead Soldiers in a variety of missions across the globe. The anthology goes beyond the obvious military strategic nexus and seeks to identify new spaces for consideration by planners and policymakers alike.

I know you will both enjoy and benefit from this anthology.

John S. Kem
Major General, US Army
Provost, Army University

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Introduction¹

Dr. Mahir J. Ibrahimov

We have learned many lessons over the last 10 years, but one of the most compelling is that whether you are working among the citizens of a country, or working with their government or Armed Forces-nothing is as important to your long term success as understanding the prevailing culture and values.

GEN Raymond Odierno
Chief of Staff of the Army

Culture, Regional Expertise and Language (CREL) creates a sustainable advantage for regionally aligned forces in any combination of indigenous cultures by providing training and education tools that enhance Professional Military Education, Pre-Deployment and Functional Training. CREL is a critical strategic security concept to prepare globally responsive and regionally aligned forces that work with a variety of partners including host nation militaries and populations to execute our Prevent, Shape and Win strategic role.

MG Christopher P. Hughes
Deputy Commanding General
US Army Combined Arms Center²

Globalization, the Internet, and instant access to worldwide media and news have encouraged the merging or partnering of ideological groups that oppose the US and/or US policies. These groups operate in pan-regional and multi-regional spaces comprised of numerous cultures, both friendly and hostile. It appears likely that during the coming decades the operational environment will be characterized by persistent and unpredictable conflicts in battle spaces of multiple foreign cultures. The US National Security Strategy (NSS), in particular the Department of Defense's National Defense Strategy, must be prepared to ensure that the nation's military forces can effectively operate with multinational and host nation partners against sophisticated and adaptive adversaries in order to achieve US objectives. This dictates that Soldiers of every rank must become "culturally astute" about the areas in which they operate.³

This anthology's insights and observations of the socio-cultural aspects and geopolitics, from both historical and current perspectives, re-emphasize the importance of the Eurasia region, including Russia and other countries of the former USSR. The book's detailed description of the realities of the region is especially revealing in the context of the current situation in Ukraine viewed through the prism of Russia's traditional military-strategic culture. These traditional strategic interests, informed by inextricable historical and socio-cultural factors, are playing a critical role in the situation in and around Ukraine.

Russia's intervention in Syria has changed the military and diplomatic dynamic in the regional crisis and left the US to search for a new approach. US influence in the region might be in jeopardy. Some traditional American allies are already talking with Moscow about how to resolve the crisis, which could potentially change the strategic landscape.

Several chapters of the book describe the beginnings and the current approaches of the US Army's Culture and Language Program and its continuous importance for our military missions in and among indigenous cultures such as those in Eurasia. Others go beyond the obvious military strategic aspects trying to identify new areas for consideration by our analysts and policymakers.

Global geopolitics are rapidly changing and understanding the socio-cultural and economic aspects of the major and regional players are becoming even more important. The strategic outcomes of our decisions will depend at a greater extent on understanding of the above factors of the adversaries.

Ongoing active Information Campaign (IC), Electronic Warfare (EW), Cyber, etc. in the so called "Grey Zone," (a term used by US Army Special Operations Forces for non-traditional, unconventional military capabilities) from multiple regional and global players are exacerbating the Operational Environment (OE). All these make the situation even more unpredictable and reinforces the importance of understanding the historical, socio-cultural and regional considerations.

One example that demonstrates the extent of the current complexity and sensitivity in the OE is the document titled "Clarification Note to the Decision of employment of the military units *Sever* (North) in Ukraine." This directive, equivalent to US or Western military Operations Order (OPORD), was allegedly disseminated by the Russian Defense Ministry in the summer of 2015 as a "Top Secret" document.⁴

It's still unknown if this is a real document which was leaked, or a result of Ukrainian counter-propaganda. In any case, whoever wrote it is very familiar with the former Soviet/or Russian military doctrine and is likely a graduate of a top former Soviet/Russian military institution such as M.V. Frunze Military Academy or Marshal Voroshilov Military Academy of the General Staff. Also, there is no map, which would normally be attached to the document, another indicator that the document might not be real and absence of the date reinforces that point. But there is the related "Phasing Matrix (schedule) of Preparation and launching of the First Targeted Fire Attack of the Military Units of *Sever* in a Special Operation." The document is also signed by LTG V. Astapov, the Commander/Chief of the HQ for the Western Military District, and MG I. Kovalenko, the Chief of the Operational Department (of the same HQ for the Western Military District).⁵

This document underlines how a preventive Information Operations (IO) Campaign based on understanding of potential individual approaches leveraged by Russia towards different regions would likely be one of the realistic tools applied. Also, the violations of the principles of the international law could be emphasized to try to paralyze further actions in ways similar to those used in the Crimea annexation. Depending on the region/country, other internal tools of influence could be leveraged. The bottom line is to learn how Russia and other adversaries operate and apply the same methodology to achieve our objectives.

There have always been discussions about the principles of territorial integrity and self-determination. Where is the fine line between these concepts? I believe understanding how these two concepts interact is the main lesson that can be learned from Russia's policies in the region.

The Russian annexation of Crimea represents a different approach compared to that taken by Russia in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Donbas in the east of Ukraine. The justification of the Crimea approach was based on the referendum which, from the perspective of Russian and pro-Russian Crimea leaders, reflected the aspiration to rejoin the rest of Russia. This reunification would address the historical injustice perpetrated when former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev decided to transfer Crimea from the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954. Thus, according to this viewpoint, the annexation fulfilled the principle of self-determination of the Crimean people.

So what about the Crimean Tatars with their recognized leader Mustafa Dzhemilev, former Chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, who opposed and continues to oppose the annexation? What about other so called “hot spots” and annexations which were supported by Russia in early 90s and later, such as Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia-Georgia-Ossetia and other conflicts? With the annexation of Crimea, Russia has once again violated the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a country based on the world order agreed upon by the international community after the World War II and post-Soviet, post-Warsaw Pact Budapest Memorandum.

The Baltic republics, which are presently NATO members, fall under article 4 and 5 of the NATO constitution which provide a protection mechanism in case of aggression against them. Russia would likely apply tactics towards that region similar to its approaches in Luhansk and Donetsk regions of Donbass, and now in Moldova and elsewhere, rather than openly attacking those countries which might cause a NATO response. There are significant ethnic Russian or Russian speaking communities in those countries and Russia has historical expertise and relevant socio-cultural aptitude at leveraging them to ignite tension at certain times to meet its geopolitical objectives.

We can learn from both Russian experiments in Crimea as well as in Eastern Ukraine. The main lesson is that Russia will likely continue applying a combination of approaches, mentioned above, as well as socio-economic pressures which we witnessed in case of Ukraine and elsewhere. Open military involvement, like that which happened in Georgia in 2008, is unlikely, unless circumstances similar to that conflict emerge.

Russia’s strategic change is driven mostly by its concern over the NATO’s expansion at the expense of former Warsaw Pact countries (Eastern Europe) and former Soviet republics (Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania). Not surprisingly, the Lithuanian and Estonian defense ministries have expressed alarm at the increased military activity, and drawn comparisons with moves prior to the Russian invasion of Crimea. As one analysis of Russian intents in the Baltic region put it, “Russia’s frequent snap military drills near its eastern European neighbors could be part of a strategy that will open the door for a Russian offensive on the Baltic states.”⁶

It is believed that Georgia’s and Ukraine’s aspirations to join NATO were the principal reasons for Russian relevant violent policies towards those former Soviet satellites. As a result of all the above, relations between the West and Russia have deteriorated to their lowest point since the end of the Cold War, eroding global geopolitical stability and damaging trade and economic relations between major global and regional powers.

Rapidly changing regional and global geopolitics are influenced and complicated by broader developments such as China’s increasing influence, especially its gradual economic, military, and strategic rapprochement with Russia, the countries of central and south-west Asia, Transcaucasia, among other regions of the world.

Estranged from the West over NATO Expansion, and especially because of the situation in Ukraine, which led to the Western sanctions, Russia seeks closer economic and political rapprochement with China. As a result, a coalition of new alliances were formed. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), coalition of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), Eurasian Customs Union (ECU) among others are mostly aimed at opposing US economic and strategic dominance. Specifically, arms deals between China and Russia are growing and amount to at around \$2 billion annually, including a potential \$3 billion deal for S-400 missile systems.

It is obvious that Russia-China rapprochement presents a profound challenge to the United States. The realpolitik question for US policy makers would be how to prevent this historically unlikely alliance between the two major global and regional players. The same question would apply to evolving Russia-Iran collaboration in different areas, including military cooperation, which have never been friends in the past. Turkey renewed its efforts to rebuild ties shattered by downing of a Russian warplane last year. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Russia in August 2016 as part of that effort.

At the same time, Turkey’s relations with traditional allies – the United States and Europe – show increasing strain amid Ankara’s crackdown following a failed coup. It is believed a new alliance between Turkey, a NATO member, and Russia, is an example of the latter power’s strategy to split NATO. The United Kingdom’s Brexit in summer 2016 vote shows the likelihood for more strain in the EU and NATO as well. That new important development would potentially meet the objectives of the anti-American economic and strategic agenda in Europe, would diminish US influence among its traditional allies, already affected by Europe’s pragmatic considerations of close trade and economic relationships with Russia and China. Adding to that complexity was Poland’s decision in July 2016 to file a formal objection against Russia’s proposed “Nord Stream 2” gas pipeline.⁷ Observers say that construction of that pipeline would divide Europe from the US, isolate Ukraine, and reinforce Moscow’s energy dominance for another generation. This initiative is another example of how consistent pipeline politics serves as an important tool of regional and global geopolitical efforts to achieve strategic objectives.

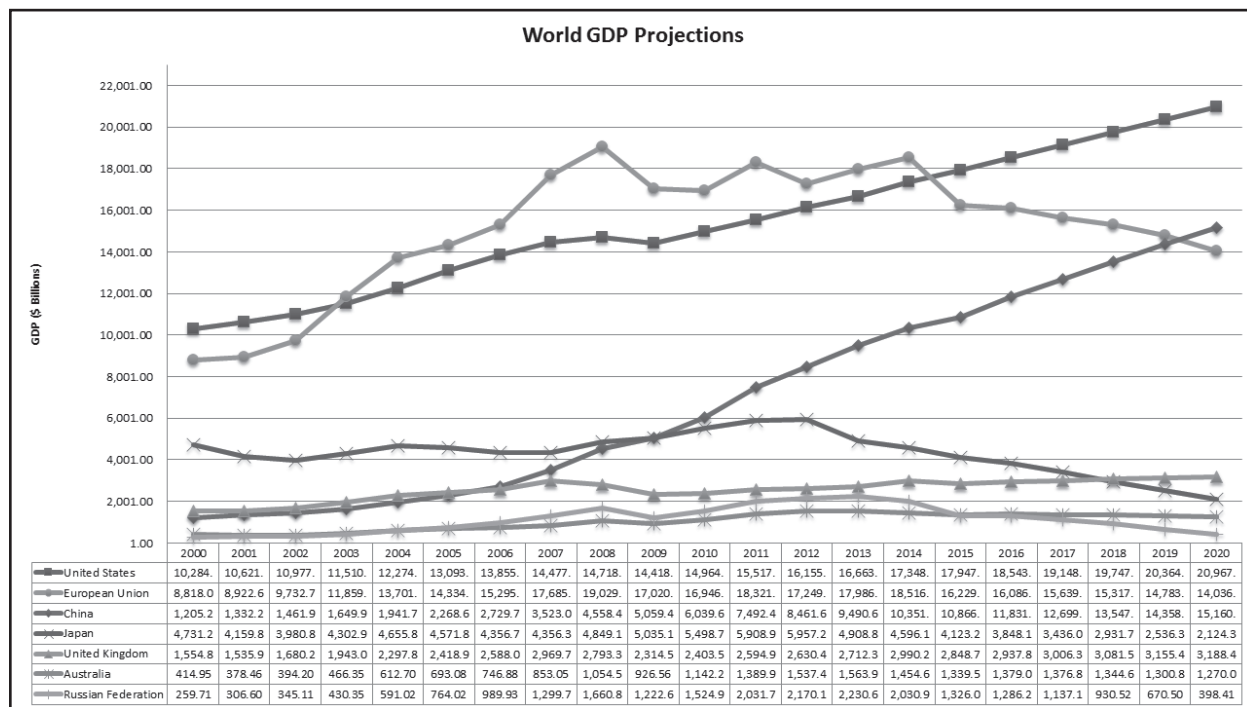


Figure I.1. World GDP Projections. Developed from the World Bank website.⁸

Changing geopolitical and economic dynamics have also added uncertainty and complexity to Eurasian affairs. These trends are clearly reflected in the graphic depicted below of the World Bank data, adjusted for

the purposes of this anthology. The statistics are based on billions of dollars of national GDPs of the major regional and global powers. Clearly, China's economy is projected to continue growing while the economic output of the European Union, Russia, and the UK will remain static or even decrease.

The rise and expansion of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Russia's active political and military involvement in Syria, and the largest refugee crisis since World War II contribute to the challenges in Eurasia and present a profound threat to the national security interests of the US and the West.

The authors' observations and expertise presented in this volume provide valuable insight to help better understand and contextualize the current and emerging realities of this critical region. These insights and observations on how the US is perceived in the Middle East, Asia, and the former USSR deserve the attention of American readers because they come from scholars and practitioners who combine insight practical knowledge as well as a rich academic expertise. This combination brings a better understanding of the local culture and the regional and ethnic conflicts that have shaped it. It tells us a lot about a corner of the world where death is preferable to dishonor and honor is defined in a quite different way than in Western society.

The anthology includes the chapters from a wide range of regions, including the Western Hemisphere. This broad approach reflects the fact that regional and global geopolitics are interconnected socio-culturally, economically and historically. Russia, with significantly fewer resources compared to the former USSR, is still playing an increasingly active role on the Eurasian geopolitical landscape. One of the factors which influence current Russian foreign policy not only in Eurasia and beyond is the concept of "Eurasianism." The significance of the term "Eurasian" has changed to a great extent, but still suggests strategic rivalry and most importantly has a socio-cultural content. It is believed that it still represents a significant force within Russian strategic and military thinking which was shaped over the centuries.⁹ The Army's recent "Russian New Generation Warfare in Ukraine" study which required of this author's travel to Ukraine as well as other Eurasia related research have clearly identified significant gaps: shared historical, cultural and language heritage between Russia and Ukraine that would be difficult to break.

At the same time, there is a gap and lack of understanding and appreciation by the US of the indigenous cultures, including those of the Eurasia region. The new generation of warfare is already ongoing in Ukraine and other regions. Operations are occurring within the "gray zone." Russians are effective in these areas because they have been active in operations like this for centuries and have a socio-cultural aptitude and common linguistic capabilities. Russians understand the value of culture and soft power from having experienced it during the Soviet period and before.

Eurasianism, has been an important factor for the Russian culture which was shaped for centuries of involvement on two continents. Debates still continue about Russia itself: is it part of the West or Asia? We must remember that the Soviet Union lost approximately 30 million lives to the Nazis and has been invaded by others such as Napoleon and the Mongols.¹⁰ This historical loss and suffering have been the key in the formation of the Russian mindset. Consequently, Russia is currently seeking to create security and economic organizations that could be used to rival the existing structures such as NATO and the World Bank. Russia, China, Iran, and other countries have undertaken these and other steps which are not in the national security interests of the United States.

Current National Security Strategy, military doctrine, and other guiding documents of the Russian Federation reflect Russian strategic military culture. Amid other concerns, the main point behind these documents is responsiveness to NATO expansion. This is the core principle which is driving Russia's strategic efforts in the region and beyond. Russian geopolitical interests coincide in many respects with national

security interests of some of the regional and global powers. It is likely that the strategic rivalry between Russia and China led Eurasia and the US will continue to increase.

The United States' traditional allies in Europe might increasingly take a more pragmatic approach towards the Eurasia region in their relationships including with Russia and China, based on economic and trade interests. At the same time, the fact that two oceans separate the US geographically, historically and socio-culturally from both Europe and Asia might negatively influence US National Security Strategy objectives, unless the right decisions are taken by policy makers.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciations to Sterilla A. Smith, Harrison L. Sarles, Joseph Rodman, William C. Hardy, Dr. Robert McClary, Rhonda L. Quillin, Venita A. Krueger, Gary Hobin, Charles K. Bartles, and many others for their very valuable support in reviewing and editing of this manuscript.

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[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

Notes

1. Although not directly cited, the following publications were influential in the development of this chapter: Vladimir Putin, “Voyennaya Doctrina Rossiyskoy Federatsii” [The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation], 26 December 2014; Vladimir Putin, “Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii o Strategii Natsionalnoy Bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii” [“The Decree of the President of the Russian Federation on the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation”], 31 December 2015 (in Russian); “Azerbaijan 24 sene sonra Ermenistan’dan geri aldı” [“Azerbaijan Returned (lands) from Armenia 24 Years Later”], *Milliyet.com*, 25 April 2016 (in Turkish); Ramiz Mehtiyev, “Azerbaijan Halqi Oz Torpaglarinin Ishgal Altinda Galmasi Ila Hech Vaxt Barishmayacag” (“Azerbaijan Will Never Agree Its Lands to Remain Under Occupation”), *Halq Gezeti*, 6 April 2016, (in Azerbaijani); Mahir Ibrahimov, *Invitation To Rain, A Story Of The Road Taken Towards Freedom* (New York: Global Scholarly Publications, October 2008).
2. U.S. Army Culture, Regional Expertise and Language Management Office (CRELMO) Mission Statement, accessed 27 January 2016, <http://usacac.army.mil/organizations/cace/lerc>.
3. Mahir Ibrahimov, “Operational Culture in the U.S. Army: the Fires Center of Excellence Culture and Foreign Language Strategy Sets the Standard for the rest of TRADOC, Army,” *Fires* (January-February 2011): 23.
4. General Polkovnik A. Sidorov, Kommandyushiy Voiskami Zapadnovo Voyennovo Okruga, General leitenant V. Astapov, Nachalnik Shtaba Zapadnovo Voyennovo Okruga, “Poyasnitelnaya Zapiska K Resheniyu Na Primeneniye Gruppировki Voysk “Sever,” Shtab Zapadnovo Voyennovo Okruga, g. Sankt-Peterburg, Sovershenno Sekretno (Clarification Note (in Russian) to the Decision of Employment of the Military Units “Sever” (North) in Ukraine) was disseminated around last June as a “Top Secret” document. This is an equivalent to US or Western military Operations Order (OPORD) and allegedly was issued by the Russian Defense Ministry, signed by the Commander of the Western Military District LTG A. Sidorov and MG V. Astapov (translation from Russian with equivalents of US general officers ranks. The document is undated. An independent expert appraisal at the Open Source Center confirmed the document’s authenticity Open Source Center, accessed 27 January 2016, <http://www.opensource.gov>.
5. “Phasing Matrix (schedule) of Preparation and Launching of the First Targeted Fire Attack of the Military Units of “Sever” (North) in a Special Operation” (translation of the title from the Russian original document). This document is signed by LTG V. Astapov, the Commander/Chief of the HQ for the Western Military District, 2015 (no day or month); and MG I. Kovalenko, the Chief of the Operational Department (of the same HQ for the Western Military District). An independent expert appraisal at the Open Source Center confirmed the document’s authenticity Open Source Center, accessed 27 January 2016, <http://www.opensource.gov>.
6. “Defence experts: snap military drills could be prelude to Russian assault on Baltics” *The Baltic Times* 25 February 2015, accessed 23 November 2016, http://www.baltictimes.com/defence_experts_snap_military_drills_could_be_prelude_to_russian_assault_on_baltics/.
7. Max Seddon, “Nord Stream 2 partners withdraw amid Poland pressure,” *The Financial Times*, (12 August 2016), accessed 30 December 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/97491341-152b-3c13-8961-7fbf3b87540c>.
8. World Bank, “GDP growth (annual %),” *World Development Indicators*, accessed 12 September 2016, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?Code=NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG&id=af3ce82b&report_name=Popular_indicators&populartype=series&ispopular=y#.
9. Alexander Dugin, *The Fourth Political Theory* (London: Arktos Media, 2012). See also Alexander Dugin, *Eurasian Mission: An Introduction to Neo-Eurasianism* (London: Arktos Media, 2014). During the recent G20 Summit in China the concept of Eurasianism gained some momentum, indicating new trends in the formation of new alliances and related significance for countries such as China, Russia, India, Iran and even Turkey. In addition to the geopolitical, military and financial aspects of Eurasianism, there are larger implications for countries such as Russia.

There has been a debate in Russian culture for centuries about whether Russia belongs to the West, or is a distinctly to Eurasia (*yevraziiskaya*) culture that is separate from the West.

10. J.T. Dykman, "The Soviet Experience in World War Two," Paper prepared for the Eisenhower Institute at Gettysburg College, accessed 13 November 2016, 2002. <http://www.gettysburg.edu/>. According to various historical estimates, America lost slightly more than 400,000 soldiers (killed or missing) and almost no civilians during World War II. The USSR, on another hand, lost at least 11,000,000 soldiers (killed and missing) and between 7,000,000 and 20,000,000 million of its civilian population during the Great Patriotic War.

Section 1:
History and Geopolitical Trends

Chapter 1
Russian and US Policy in the Near Abroad, 1985 – 1996:
Through the Lens of the First US Army Culture and Language Advisor
Dr. Mahir J. Ibrahimov

The Demise of an Empire: Regional and Global Implications (from the perspectives of a former Soviet soldier and first senior diplomat)

Soviet culture was an ideologically driven, atheist-based set of norms and behaviors. Despite all efforts at homogenization, the Soviet Union remained a deeply ethnic conglomeration comprised of a vast diversity of peoples. Ethnic groups defined themselves through a shared heritage, but according to the government, they were all citizens of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). There was an unofficial hierarchy between Russians and non-Russians that the central government perpetuated, particularly in the more distant and ethnically-Asian Republics; Russians were treated with greater respect and afforded more privileges while non-Russians were largely marginalized. For instance, in the former Soviet Army, ethnic Russians created distinct enclaves, called *zemliachestvo* or *gruppovshchina*, within units in order to protect themselves among the diverse collection of soldiers and persecute other ethnic groups. Asserting one's ethnic identity and independence was not encouraged. . . and in fact was punished.

On 11 March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev was elected General Secretary of the Communist Party and de facto ruler of the Soviet Union. The world changed. When he came to power, the Soviet economy was failing. Miners were striking *en masse*, store shelves were empty. The entire structure of Soviet society, as I had known it, began to shift. At the time I was unsure how I felt about it. Several of the Soviet republics were making louder calls for greater independence, and ethnic conflicts in Transcaucasia were accelerating.

Gorbachev transformed the Soviet Union. His policies of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) gave the populace a sense of power and a taste of freedom that was the ultimate undoing of the seventy-year old union of republics. For the first time, representatives of foreign countries came to the Soviet Union to invest and exchange goods and ideas.

Fortunes were being made, but it seemed as though the people making them were the same people who had been in power under the old system.

Independent newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations popped up. The *Ploshad Nogina* (Nogin Square), where I worked, was situated across from a quiet park. Before Gorbachev's reforms, an elderly woman used to sweep the square every morning. Every morning I would say "hello" to her and she would reply, "Good morning, son." Then the character of the *Ploshad Nogina* changed. It became a gathering place for the new Russian businessmen, complete with cell phones, laptop computers, and prostitutes. Clothing styles, and even the manner of talking to other people, changed. Life became louder and more frenetic. Restaurants popped up along the plaza like mushrooms.

Perestroika, in theory, should have led to greater debate and understanding among the different populations of the Soviet Union; instead, it had the opposite effect, creating an opportunity for many to express long held ethnic hatred with little fear of reprisal.

The transformation was most evident in the nuances of language one heard during this time: "comrade" instead of "friend," "micro rayon (micro-district)" instead of "home" or "apartment," "Azeri" or "Armenian" or "Georgian" instead of "citizen." The heat and fire from the mixing of races and ethnicities in the

US created a melting pot. In the Soviet Union those same elements only served to create greater friction and separation among its peoples. During *perestroika* things turned ugly and unpredictable. The children of communism had never been taught how to deal with freedom, and the State as a parent had been too restrictive during their youth. The release of state control over all things created a vacuum. The population acted as ill-behaved teenagers who no longer needed to heed rules of common civility.



Figure 1.1 Russian Strategic Military Culture. Graphic created by the author.

Imperial Russia was one of the most militarized cultures in history, rivaling, if not exceeding, those of Prussia, Imperial and Nazi Germany, and Imperial Japan. The collapse of the USSR provided a possibility of changing this nature – “demilitarizing” Russian strategic culture. Is the Russian military coming back? Russia now spends about 2.7 percent of its GDP on defense (USSR was about 4.5 percent).

The disintegration and ultimate demise of a socialist society as a system was a good thing, but its unexpected and unintended consequences led to a proliferation of ethnic conflicts. It occurred first among the peoples of the former Soviet republics and later in the Middle East, which was no longer controlled through the balance of power between the US led NATO and the Soviet Union led Warsaw Pact. Gorbachev did not foresee that his policies would lead to the dissolution of the USSR. Instead, he intended to be a great reformer, with the health, prosperity, and unity of the Republics in mind. When he realized the consequences of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, it was too late. As Gorbachev himself used to say, “*protsess poshel*” Russian for “process has begun” but it was too late to stop it.

The Soviet Experiment in Afghanistan

I met Nikolai at the Medvedkovo metro station in a suburb of Moscow in November 1988. Moscow still was the capital of an empire that was destined to collapse in just a few years. Nikolai was telling me

about his experience in Afghanistan as a former member of the *spetsnaz* (Soviet Special Forces). Seven hundred members of this elite *spetsnaz* combined with KGB and GRU officers from the Alpha and Zenith Groups dressed in Afghan uniforms, stormed President Hafizullah Amin’s Taj-beg palace in winter 1979. That marked the beginning of the ten year Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The reason for the invasion: the Soviets decided that the pro-Soviet Afghan president was not pro-Soviet enough.

Afghanistan once again became a battleground of empires. Many years later I would be fascinated to learn from the BBC that one of the *spetsnaz* members, who led the initial special operation mission in Kabul, Afghanistan in winter 1979, who now lives in Moscow, and an Afghan woman, who as a girl had survived the onslaught in the Afghan president’s palace, would meet in a video teleconference. During this conversation, more than 30 years after the Soviet invasion, she asked him difficult moral questions about the USSR’s actions that night at the palace and over the subsequent decade of occupation. In accordance with Soviet military doctrine at the time, almost everybody in the palace was murdered that night. Soviet occupation ultimately led to more than one million Afghan deaths, destruction of the country’s infrastructure, and loss of the hearts and minds of Afghans throughout the country.

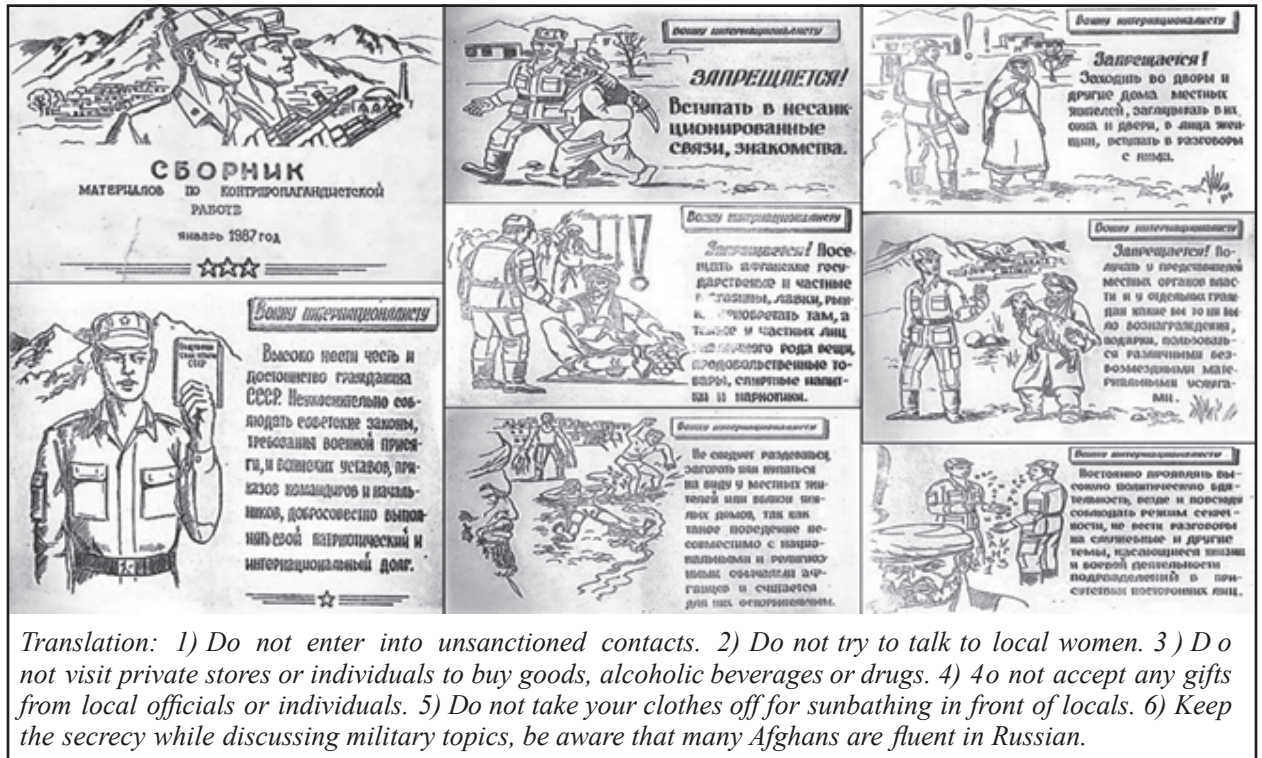
Soviet Occupation	December 1979 – February 1989
Soviet Losses	Dead: 14,553 Wounded: 53,753
Afghan Losses	Dead: 1 Million Internally Displaced: 2 Million Refugees: 5 Million* * During the 1980s, one out of two refugees in the world was an Afghan

Figure 1.2 Impacts of Afghan-Soviet War. Graphic created by the author.

Nikolai is a huge, athletically-built guy in a primitive wheelchair that he moves with his hands. He returned from Afghanistan after being ambushed by Afghan *mujahedeen* (holy warriors) and lost his legs. Despite his youth he seemed to be completely lost and morally devastated. He blamed the West and China for the support of *mujahedeen* and Afghans for the betrayal. He told me that many Afghans were calling them friends and brothers but then turned against them and joined the insurgency. He repeatedly asked what went wrong and why the “internationalist duty” of the Soviets was not appreciated and welcomed. He said that the country was making huge sacrifices: militarily, politically, and economically. Yet he still believed in the popular notion in the country that Afghanistan was going to become the sixteenth Soviet Republic of the USSR and he still considered himself a proud Soviet citizen. “Nobody can defeat our country, our country is the greatest!” he proudly declared.

He showed me the brochure (below) given to him and his comrades as a part of the Soviet counterinsurgency tactics in Afghanistan. More than 20 years later I see the equivalent of those materials with “do’s” and “don’ts” disseminated to US troops being deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. The brochure depicted below, published in 1987, contains prohibitions for Soviet troops serving in Afghanistan: “Do not enter into unsanctioned contacts. Do not visit private stores or individuals to buy goods, alcoholic beverages or drugs. Do not take your clothes off for sunbathing in front of locals. Do not try to talk to local women. Do

not accept any gifts from local officials or individuals. Keep the secrecy while discussing military topics. Be aware that many Afghans are fluent in Russian.”¹



Translation: 1) Do not enter into unsanctioned contacts. 2) Do not try to talk to local women. 3) Do not visit private stores or individuals to buy goods, alcoholic beverages or drugs. 4) Do not accept any gifts from local officials or individuals. 5) Do not take your clothes off for sunbathing in front of locals. 6) Keep the secrecy while discussing military topics, be aware that many Afghans are fluent in Russian.

Figure 1.3 Soviet Soldier Cultural Awareness Guide. Picture and translation from Soviet Guide given to the author in the 1980s by a SPETZNAZ member. Author’s personal collection.

The country of which I was then a citizen no longer exists. The Army in which I served is also gone.

The Geneva Accords, signed on 14 April 1988, among other issues, included the principles of non-interference, non-intervention and the voluntary return of Afghan refugees. The phased withdrawal of foreign troops was supposed to begin on 15 May. The US and the USSR also signed a declaration on international guarantees, stating they would both refrain from any form of interference and intervention. 50,183 Soviet troops withdrew in the first three months, while another 50,100 left between 15 August 1988 and 15 February 1989. During the withdrawal, troop convoys came under attack by Afghan fighters, 72 Soviets were killed.

The total withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Afghanistan was completed on 15 February 1989. In a symbolic move, Lieutenant General Boris Gromov, overall commander of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, was the last member of the Soviet military to leave the country.² I still remember the images on television that showed Gromov look towards the Afghan territory one last time and walk away over the bridge separating Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.

Prior to the Soviet experiment in Afghanistan there were some useful lessons to learn from the British experience in the region. Importantly, these include positive examples of what sufficient cultural awareness and language proficiency can accomplish in an indigenous operational environment to help a foreign power

achieve military success. 19th century British Brigadier General John Nicholson was noted for his participation in the British Empire in India and his example of a positive interaction with indigenous cultures. He was so well known that Western researchers in the 1970s found Pashtun mothers were still telling their children, “You better behave – Nicholson is coming!”³

PASHTUNS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The biggest tribe in Afghanistan• Fought the British to a standstill in the 19th century• Extremely proud of their martial heritage• “We are only at peace when we are at war.”• Nicholson factor – Sir John Nicholson, a British officer in the 1850’s left long lasting heritage among Pashtun tribes: courage, honor and integrity inspired respect

Figure 1.4 Pashtuns. Graphic created by the author.

Intellectual Debates in US Foreign Policy: Implications for Regional and Global Geopolitics

The processes which were taking place in Eurasia after the demise of the USSR in the beginning of 1990s laid the foundation for many subsequent regional and global challenges which the US and the West are currently facing.

The first references to the term of “near abroad” started to appear in the Russian media in the beginning of 1990s. This is because as the bipolar international system became unipolar, Russia ceased to be a great power with significantly less resources. Despite this, the “near abroad” remained strategically important as Russian politicians actively used the term to conceptualize Russia’s traditional sphere of influence: namely, the former Soviet Republics outside of Russia. The term “near abroad” mainly connoted a geo-political concept, a cultural and socio-economic construct rather than specific geographical locations of the former Soviet satellites. Interestingly, the former Soviet Republics of Tajikistan and Moldova had also been included in the “near abroad” by Russian politicians in spite of the fact that those countries were located thousands of miles away from the Russian borders. At the same time, the Baltic states of the former USSR were not included in the “near abroad” despite the common borders they shared with Russia. The firm and consistent Western and American policies which had never recognized the legitimacy of those three Baltic Republics as part of the former USSR have played a significant role in this distinction.

Russian leadership’s geopolitical conceptualization of the “near abroad” was a product of a complex and tumultuous domestic political situation following the dissolution of the USSR, and the historical, socio-economic and cultural peculiarities of the Russian people and their state. This was further aggravated by the “Russia First” policy that the George H.W. Bush administration pursued during the immediate post-Soviet years, which sought to re-orient Russia to the West and entrench western-style democracy. The fragile nature of the nascent Russian democracy perhaps required a more delicate policy of engagement by the American administration.

In the next section, the discussion will focus on the nature and circumstances of the US Administration's "Russia First" policy and consider its implications on the relationship between Russia and its neighbors.

Historical Background of Political Trends in Eurasia and the US Reassessment of Implications for Regional and Global Geopolitics



Figure 1.5 Post-Cold War and Post-Soviet Era NATO Membership. Graphic courtesy of NATO, located at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_81136.htm.

Having recognized the economic and strategic dependence of the countries of the "near abroad" on Russia and the overwhelming importance of Russia to global security concerns, the US essentially engaged in a "Russia First" foreign policy from the very beginning of the collapse of the USSR. Boris Yeltsin's Russia has been seen as a partner of the US, and here at least the Cold War policy of containment has been abandoned in favor of support of Russia's interests above other states in the region.

One of the major arguments in favor of the "Russia First" policy was that the greatest effort must be made to keep Russia on the path to democracy and the market economy to prevent its return to an authoritarian or imperialist path, in which case the future of all the other former Soviet republics would be jeopardized. American and European strategic interests in the former Soviet Union were to foster stability that would prevent the resurgence of a rearmed authoritarian, imperialist Russia. But the "Russia First"

policy and reliance on the President of Russia as a main guarantor of the Russian democracy did not prove to be entirely efficient or correct.



Figure 1.6 Post-Cold War: Commonwealth of Independent States. Graphic courtesy of CIA, located at the Library of Congress, <http://tile.loc.gov/image-services/iiif/service:gmd:gmd7:g7000:g7000:ct001612/full/pct:50/0/default.jpg>.

A number of notable domestic events preceded the Russian military invasion of Chechnya ordered by Yeltsin: the Russian parliamentary crisis in October of 1993, tanks sent by the President to crush the Russian opposition, the subsequent results of the Russian November parliamentary elections, and Russia's newly aggressive military doctrine that was especially geared towards the "near abroad," giving Russia the right to intervene in former Soviet Republics. Moreover, the Russian President approved Presidential Order #174, which stated,

To agree with the suggestion of the Defense Ministry of Russia in co-ordination with the Foreign Ministry of Russia about creation of the Russian military bases on the territory of the CIS-member states and the Republic of Latvia for ensuring security of the Russian Federation and mentioned states and also for testing of a new armaments and military technology.

The decree authorized the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs jointly with the Defense Ministry and other related ministries and departments of the Russian Federation to hold negotiations on that issue with the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Republic of Latvia and the power to adopt relevant documents.⁴

At the same time, Russia intensified its efforts to create a single economic, political and security space within the CIS framework in the territory of the former USSR. Perhaps the most important reality and rationale for US/Eurasia policy at the time, however, was the increasing global interdependence in energy and trade. Vast reserves of oil and natural gas in and around the Caspian Sea were the primary source of the US's initial interest in the region. That interest could provide the foundation for stronger ties between the US and regional states, with the US providing protection to ensure regional stability and the political independence of the littoral countries.

This was illustrated at the Budapest summit of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Through the efforts of US President Bill Clinton, Turkey's Prime-Minister Tansu Ciller, Chancellor Kohl of Germany, Prime-Minister John Major of the United Kingdom, and others, the summit made an attempt to resolve fundamental issues: to change the very status of the organization in order to strengthen the CSCE's role in European security and to work out the specific mechanism for multinational peacekeeping operations in the "near abroad."

The leaders of the CSCE gathered for the first time on 5 December 1994 in Budapest, Hungary to work out a new strategy among its 53 member states. Created in 1975, the CSCE was the only institution in which NATO and the former Warsaw Pact countries could come together to discuss the issues of security, human rights, and "preventive diplomacy." The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict became the first crucial test case of the ability of this organization to play an effective role in resolving territorial and ethnic conflicts.

At the end of the two-day summit, the CSCE member states approved, in principle, dispatching a 3,000 man multinational peacekeeping force to the conflict zone. This decision was formalized in the final resolution adopted by the conference. At the insistence of the US and other countries, the CSCE multinational peacekeeping force had to be strictly monitored.

This decision was possible as a result of US and other Western countries' position on the issue of the expedience of multinational peacekeeping force to be sent to the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the territory at the core of the dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia. While there was an informal agreement between the CSCE member states that no single country would be able to contribute more than 30 percent of the 3,000 man force, the final document did not specify the exact percentage from each country. Azerbaijan urged that the 30 percent figure be adhered to. A related issue concerning additional "third-country peacekeepers" (in fact, Russian peacekeepers) was deadlocked. Moreover, the deployment of Russian troops to the area remained in doubt because of events in Chechnya.

The reaction to the adopted decision was very positive and optimistic. According to the Hungarian President Arpad Goncz, "the CSCE has taken one of the most important decisions in its history."⁵ One cannot underestimate the importance of the adopted decision. It was possible because of the steadfast Azerbaijani stance, which had been insisting on multinational mediation and peacekeeping operation.

There were also some important developments in Azerbaijan and the region, which raised the US and Western countries' economic and strategic interests in Azerbaijan and likely spurred their interest in resolving the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict. For instance, a consortium of Western oil companies, five of which

were American, signed a \$7.5 billion oil contract with Azerbaijan. This had a number of significant consequences. First, it proved Azerbaijan's commitment to a market-oriented economy, and its firm intention to join the international economic system. Second, the US government became more aware of the situation in the region and prospects for a stable democracy in Azerbaijan. Following this, the US government intensified its efforts to settle the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. From this viewpoint the Budapest meeting could be seen as a major turning point.

American foreign policy orientation towards the "near abroad" was seen as a condemnation of Russian military actions in Chechnya, including its mass violations of human rights there. More directly, the US State Department denounced the policy of the Russian authorities in Chechnya. Sharp criticism also came from capitals all over Europe. At the same time, the Clinton administration continued to undertake some diplomatic steps aimed to keep Russia committed to previous agreements. For example, Senator Jesse Helms, the North Carolina Republican, came out in favor of ratifying the START 2 arms reduction treaty but stated he was "concerned that Russia's military intervention in the breakaway region of Chechnya meant that Moscow could not be trusted."⁶

The START-2 treaty, which US President Bush and Russian President Yeltsin signed in January 1993, would reduce the two countries' nuclear stockpiles to between 3,000 and 3,500 warheads by the year 2003. That was about half the amount permitted under the START-1 Treaty. START-2 would also ban long-range missiles that carry multiple warheads.

Soon after, in 1994, the Clinton administration pursued a two-pronged policy towards Ukraine, another key republic of the former USSR. The goals were (1) to make Ukraine a non-nuclear-weapon state and (2) to provide security assurances to Ukraine. In particular, once the START-1 Treaty entered into force and Ukraine became a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the United States and Russia:

- Reaffirmed their commitment to Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of the CSCE Final Act, to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of the CSCE member states;
- Reaffirmed their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state;
- Reaffirmed their commitment to Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of the CSCE Final Act, to refrain from economic coercion designed to subordinate to their own interest the exercise by another CSCE participating state;
- Reaffirmed their commitment to seek immediate UN Security Council action to provide assistance to Ukraine, as a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the NPT, if Ukraine should become a victim of an act of aggression or an object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons are used; and
- Reaffirmed, in the case of Ukraine, their commitment not to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon state party to the NPT, except in the case of an attack on themselves.

Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin informed Ukrainian President Kravchuk that consultations had been held with the United Kingdom, the third depositary state of the NPT, and that the United Kingdom was prepared to offer the same security assurances to Ukraine once it becomes a non-nuclear- weapon state.⁷

President Clinton reaffirmed the US commitment to provide technical and financial assistance for the safe and secure dismantling of nuclear forces. In particular, the US had agreed under the Nunn-Lugar

program to provide Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus with nearly \$800 million in such assistance, including a minimum of \$175 million to Ukraine.⁸

Nevertheless, the further shift in Russia's foreign policy under President Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev put it at odds with US interests. This became more apparent as Russia's opposition to NATO expansion grew particularly shrill in late 1993. During this time, President Yeltsin warned that a NATO move eastward would plunge the world into a "cold peace."⁹ Furthermore, at the United Nations, Russia demonstrated its increasingly anti-Western posture by using its first Security Council veto since the dissolution of the USSR to support its stance.

While Russia was pursuing interests in the former USSR and in Central and Eastern Europe, the American administration seemed to be accepting the legitimacy of those interests by acknowledging Russian concerns about international isolation. Even some American officials spoke out in favor of the idea of Russia as a force for stability in the former Soviet republics, particularly in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Meanwhile, Russia moved to broaden its foreign policy beyond the near abroad by developing its relationships with Iraq and Cuba, again challenging key American interests. These diplomatic efforts were aimed at lifting UN sanctions in Iraq and restoring severed links after the collapse of the USSR with the leadership of Cuba.

At the same time, Russia was also strengthening relations with Iran. Russia announced that it was about to complete an Iranian nuclear power plant. American and Western industrial democracies had not cooperated with Iran on nuclear power since the fall of the Shah because of political and security concerns. There was also an indication that Russia was seeking ways to limit US influence in Syria. And finally, Russia was also challenging and undermining US commercial interests in the former Soviet republics. In September, the official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry Grigory Karasin stated that Russia didn't recognize a \$7.5 billion agreement with Azerbaijan to exploit oil on the Caspian shelf in cooperation with the Western Consortium, which included American oil companies such as Amoco, Unocal, Pennzoil, McDermott Int., and other companies.

Some observers believe that one of the main reasons for the Russian military assault in Chechnya had been the Azerbaijani oil. US and the Western companies and Azerbaijani State Oil Company (SOCAR) had been considering several possible routes of the future pipeline. Russia has been assertive to get the pipeline through its territory to the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk. The Russian pipeline runs directly through the territory of Chechnya. Having the Azerbaijani oil pipeline pass through its territory would give Russia a political leverage over Azerbaijan. In fact, it would conflict with the American and Western commercial interests in this region. Russia already had such a policy in the case of Kazakhstan, where American oil companies were also involved (i.e., Chevron).

Moreover, Russia had already challenged the southern flank of NATO, trying to exert pressure on Turkey by leveraging its traditional relationships with a number of Kurdish organizations. The conference of the Confederation of CIS Kurds was held in Moscow in October 1994. At the same time, the leaders of the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan had been trying to gain support from Russia as "mediator and peace-keeper" in the conflict between Kurds and Turkey. Additionally, there was a strong evidence of growing anti-American and anti-Western mood among Russian politicians.

There were also some indications that the Clinton administration was beginning to realize the nature of Russia's relations with the other Newly Independent States (NIS) and the implications of those relations for US national security interests. On several occasions, American officials pointed out that the CSCE

principles framed the American position on Russian relations with its neighbors, taking into account the complexities of regional dynamics and the various motivations leading Russia toward a more assertive posture in the former Soviet Union.

For example, Mr. James Collins, the senior coordinator of the US foreign policy in the “near abroad,” pointed to those CSCE principles that were supposed to serve as guideposts to a consistent American policy towards the region. During the testimony before the CSCE Mr. Collins said,

while we recognize that Russia, like other states in the area, has legitimate interests and concerns relating to regional developments, we insist that no country should assert or exercise a special role or prerogatives that are inconsistent with international standards governing relations among states; we seek cooperation, not competition, between Russia and the international community in resolving the conflicts in the region-whether in Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Moldova, or Tajikistan.¹⁰

The US seemed to be reconfirming its commitment to basic traditional principles in its policy in the (NIS) region. Indeed, the US could seek to use the restructured Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE, formerly CSCE) to support the newly emerging states in their transition to market economy and democracy. Only such a policy could lead to secure peace and the values promoted by the Helsinki process.

Nevertheless, the inconsistent US policy toward the “near abroad” in the immediate post-Soviet era can probably be explained by two main reasons. First, the demise of the USSR led to a dramatic and unexpected change of the global geo-political environment, which required some time for the new US administration to shape an updated policy to accord with the realities and complexities of the post-cold war period. Second, certain socio-economic and political trends in Eurasia had a significant impact on US policy toward this region. The US policy toward the former USSR during the immediate post-Soviet era can be characterized as a transitional period. It was gradually reshaping and adjusting to the new realities in Eurasia. Next, we will focus on some of these factors, and particularly on the socio-economic and political trends in Eurasia and the US which influenced the US policy in Eurasia.

Historical Background of Political Trends in Eurasia and the US

The quick and unexpected disintegration of the Soviet Union and the formation of the NIS on the one side, and the unification of Germany in the middle of Europe on the other, radically changed the global geopolitical situation and determined a new direction of international relations.

Concurrently, the US became occupied with its own domestic problems and with what could be called the policy of economic pragmatism. The initial stage of the Clinton administration was focused on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), health care reform, and American-Japanese trade relations. It appeared the traditional role of the US as the political leader of the non-Communist world was relinquished during that period. While the US was the only superpower for a significant period of time, Russia had begun to reestablish itself as a major global power.

Eventually, all attempts of the US to intervene in the settlement of the numerous conflicts around the globe were declarative rather than constructively concrete. The aspirations of the US to use international organizations as political tools for resolution of the conflicts (United Nations or CSCE, which later became the OSCE) proved to be inadequate. The American foreign policy with its emphasis on trade and economics was not very successful or efficient in that period. Some political issues should have been and could have been solved by more decisive actions.

Meanwhile, the vast territory of what used to be the former USSR and the Soviet Bloc in Eastern Europe was moving deeper into the abyss of unrest and unpredictable political and economic uncertainty. In Russia, in spite of its democratic rhetoric, the Yeltsin administration desired to interfere more actively in politics of neighboring areas, even by military means. The Balkan wars, the unrest in Georgia, the continuous ethnic tensions in Moldova, the forceful deportations of ethnic Russians from Estonia and Latvia and of people of Caucasian and Central Asian origins from Moscow and other Russian cities, a bloody civil war in Tajikistan, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, and finally the situation in and around Chechnya of the Russian Federation are the clear examples of political instability.

The realities of such political developments had already started to influence some revisions of American foreign policy and this could be considered to some extent as a beginning of a shift in the policy to “passive participation,” which proved to be unsuccessful. For example, the resignation of four US State Department officials who expressed their opposition to the policy of “non-involvement” in Bosnia could serve as a signal from within to alter the course.

It is necessary to repeat that the US was still in the period of uncertainty and of re-establishing its global identity that began with the end of the bi-polar Cold War international structure. The entire American political system was rethinking the US role in the world. US leaders were, and are, still uncertain how to face the various conflicts and interests which presented themselves then and now as issues which are very different from the previous global security construct.

What are the US interests in the new world order? What has changed about US role and what are the new realities?

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger asserted in his book *Diplomacy* that, “What is new about the emerging world order is that, for the first time (in its history), the United States can neither withdraw from the world nor dominate it.”¹¹ That to a significant extent explains US policy in the oil-rich Transcaucasian region, which has historically been an area where the major powers were competing for spheres of influence.

The US was at all times self-reflective and self-critical. It is difficult to say with certainty at any point what the overt and lasting international interests of the US are, since this is constantly discussed and evaluated. There is continuous political struggle and public debate over what the international role of the US should be. Should it be engaging extensively or withdrawing from global politics? Should it act unilaterally, or should it cultivate multilateral avenues of engagement?

Should the US focus in a realistic way on security matters and the balance of power, or should it promote change toward a more democratic order and free-market means of exchange?

The US historically has enjoyed the luxury of this debate and of great freedom of action, rather than the requirements of necessity faced by most countries, due to its global position, geographical location, and the distance from any potential major threats. That is why it is not surprising that the US was always reassessing its role in regard to Russia and the former Soviet states. In addition, the nature of US policymaking is characterized by the sharing of powers, and wide-spread participation in influencing policy. Congress shares power with the President, and non-governmental groups also have influence.

This influence can be seen especially in cases such as the Trans-Caucasus where little official policy has been developed. A very clear example was a 907 Amendment to the Freedom Support Act, adopted by the Congress in 1992, which prohibited direct US humanitarian assistance to Azerbaijan and was the direct result of the influence of the Armenian lobby in the Congress.

Congressional Action

After the dissolution of the USSR, the Administration developed a program with the purpose to enhance democracy and free markets in the republics of the former USSR. That evidently was the first attempt of the administration to shape a new policy toward the region in the post-Soviet period. On 1 April 1992, President Bush announced what he called “a comprehensive and integrated program” authorizing aid to the new states of the former Soviet Union.¹² The Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992, known as the Freedom Support Act, contained a number of important features, including a \$12 billion US commitment to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and support to US participation in currency stabilization funds to Russia and other former Soviet Union (FSU) states which allowed a commitment to up \$3 billion for this purpose. It eliminated certain restrictive trade and aid legislation, as well as allowed flexibility in certain agricultural assistance programs.¹³

In presenting his FSU aid package, the President emphasized that if the new republics could be set on the path of democratic and free market reform, the costs of defending the US from possible future totalitarian regimes would be reduced. In addition, an economically open and growing FSU would likely have significant trade and investment benefits for the United States. Moreover, administration officials also argued that the act was an opportunity for the United States to exercise leadership in coordinating the world’s response toward the FSU related issues.

But many questioned then and now whether or not the US aid contribution would be effective in producing a stable, democratic, and free-market FSU. The problems faced by the republics of the FSU are enormous. Opponents of American aid to the former Soviet Republics often stated that billions in aid to the FSU in recent years have had no discernible effect.

Much of this aid had yet to be disbursed. Nevertheless, even supporters of the aid program agreed that outside assistance alone cannot ensure a positive outcome. First, US contributions were part of a larger package, which in conjunction with assistance from other donors might have greater impact; second, the aid could create a significant impact simply by providing the region with a sense that it was not alone in its struggle for reform and democratic change. From this viewpoint, the assistance program to this region had a very important political significance.

The conference report for the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992 (S. 2532) contained general criteria for aid allocation, including the extent to which former Soviet republics were taking steps toward establishment of democratic systems, respect for human rights, economic reform based on market principles, respect for international law, and adherence to responsible security policies.

The Freedom Support Act aimed at this specific region in the immediate post-Soviet period was a very important instrument of US foreign policy in the former Soviet Union. But this program had several shortcomings that appeared to contradict clearly declared criteria of US assistance programs and US policy in this region.

First, the targeting of the bulk of the assistance to Russia, and the neglect of the other newly independent states of the former Soviet Union, could, in retrospect, be seen as a mistake. Such a policy did not significantly contribute to the strengthening of independence of the rest of the former Soviet republics, vis-a-vis the possible resurgence of the Russian imperialistic intentions; second, reliance on personalities, rather than basic principles, in US dealings with Russia tied the future of American interests to the political viability

of certain Russian politicians. In connection with this last point, it is obvious that the administration was caught off-guard by the results of Russia's November 1996 elections. In a series of contradictory and confusing statements, Clinton administration officials characterized the results – especially Zhirinovskiy's ascendancy – as an inconsequential protest vote, an indication that the US was not on the right course. Another indication was the Russian military operations in the Caucasian republic of Chechnya ordered by President Yeltsin, whom the West and the US considered to be the main guarantor of democracy in Russia.

There had already been efforts to reemphasize dependence of US foreign aid on the democratic criteria mentioned above. At the same time, it was reconfirmed and underlined that the US foreign aid programs must respond to US national security interests. For example, US Senator Mitch McConnell announced on 12 December 1994 that he was introducing a 1996 Foreign Aid bill to revise the current system. Stating that both the world and the Congress had changed, McConnell offered three primary goals of his bill, that “foreign aid must protect American security, it must promote American economic interests, and it must preserve political and regional stability.”¹⁴ McConnell believed that specific national priorities needed to be defined.

Regarding the global democratic aspect of the US foreign aid bill, McConnell would seek to condition aid to Russia on non-intervention in other republics, earmark aid to Ukraine, Georgia, and Armenia, and target NATO expansion by providing International Military Education and Peacekeeping Training, and Materiel to Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

According to one journalist, McConnell wanted to,

maintain the \$12 billion in aid to the former Soviet bloc but with two major twists: aid to Russia would end if Moscow interfered in its former republics and special programs will be earmarked for the former republics of Georgia, Armenia and Ukraine.¹⁵

American spending overseas had been an important factor of foreign policy instrument since the end of World War II, when the aid program began as an instrument in the Cold War against the communism. Now it was being refocused.

Russia received \$400 million, and another \$400 million was split among former Soviet republics such as Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and Azerbaijan, but direct American assistance to Azerbaijan was seriously restricted by the 907 amendment of the “Freedom Support Act,” in spite of the fact that the US had the direct strategic and economic interests in this former Soviet republic. And again even after \$7.5 billion oil contract between Azerbaijan and Consortium of Western oil companies, including five American ones, had been signed and ratified by the Azerbaijani parliament, the repeal of the 907 amendment was not included in the 1996 Appropriations bill.

The aspect of influence of appropriate groups on the decision-making process in the American political system, especially in the legislative branch, seems to be very strong. The passage of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act and maintenance of those economic restrictions against Azerbaijan are the clear demonstration of that. Those decisions in many cases contradicted the economic and national security interests of the US.

Steve LeVine, an American journalist and author, argued that the Armenian lobby in the United States, has been especially skillful in targeting campaign contributions. One of its strongest supporters, Congressman Joseph Kennedy for example, received more than 10 percent of his 1994 individual campaign donations from Armenian contributors, according to public records in Washington.¹⁶

LeVine considered the success of the Armenian diaspora an illustration of,

An outgrowth of Europe's post-cold war rush of nationalist wars. This has been an increase in power of diaspora groups... to influence politics in Western countries where they live and in the nations from which they emigrated.¹⁷

When originally proposed by the Bush administration, the Freedom Support Act did not contain the prohibition on assistance to Azerbaijan. In fact, this provision was first adopted by voice vote by the House Foreign Affairs Committee and added to that committee's draft of the bill.¹⁸ When the Senate Foreign Relations Committee met to draft its version of the bill, John Kerry (Democrat of Massachusetts) proposed adding the House's Azerbaijan provision to the Senate bill. After general discussion, the addition was agreed upon, again by voice vote.

Subsequently, Richard Lugar (Republican of Indiana), Terry Sanford (Democrat of North Carolina), Nancy Kassebaum (Republican of Kansas), and Mitch McConnell (Republican of Kentucky) filed a statement in opposition to the proposal:

By imposing sanctions against a specific country in the former Soviet Union, this amendment would establish a potentially dangerous precedent of choosing sides in conflicts which have deep historical roots. Indeed, we fear that this Amendment would be an invitation to consider other such provisions in which the United States is asked to side with one state, nationality group, or religious entity against another state, nationality, or religious body within the former USSR. That would be most unfortunate. We simply do not believe that the provision will have any positive effect on resolving the conflict.¹⁹

Since both bills contained identical provisions relating to Azerbaijan, it was never debated in the conference committee, and Section 907 was accepted as part of the final bill that went to President Bush for his signature. While the Bush administration did not favor the provision, it chose not to veto the whole bill.

Later on, several members of Congress spoke out against Section 907, including one of its original supporters, Senator Dennis DeConcini (Democrat of Arizona). In addition, Representative Timothy Penny (Democrat of Minnesota) stated that "Section 907 runs counter to our strategic and humanitarian interests in the Caucasus."²⁰

Section 907 had other problematic implications. To begin with, it put the US government firmly on one side of a knotty and evolving conflict. This especially was a mistake because, as a member of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the OSCE Minsk group was trying to settle the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.²¹

Section 907 severely reduced American influence in Azerbaijan; why would the US government tie its own hands by legally restricting its policy options? In February 1994, Richard Armitage, who coordinated US assistance to the former Soviet Union under the Bush Administration, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that "we have dealt ourselves out of the game of influence with the government in Baku, with the Azerbaijanis, because of our inability... to have any influence, because of the legislation."²² Former US envoy to the OSCE Minsk group John Maresca had also repeatedly argued for a repeal of Section 907, noting that "with almost a million internal refugees and one-fifth of its territory occupied, a unilateral prohibition of even humanitarian aid to Azerbaijan is deeply unfair."²³

Implications for the US policy

The main impact of this policy on the US position in the Transcaucasia was the practical exclusion of the US from the peace process in the region. While the American peace policy in the Middle East was extremely effective during that period, it could not be effectively expanded on the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict while the restrictions remained in force. Secondly, as mentioned before, the 907 amendment failed to provide the region with a sense that it was not alone in its struggle for reform and democratic change. Thirdly, after signing the \$7.5 billion oil contract between Azerbaijan and the Consortium of Western oil companies, which included American firms, it became clear how much the prohibition of US governmental assistance to Azerbaijan in the frameworks of Freedom Support Act contradicted the American strategic and economic interests. It was also an important encouraging signal for those in Russia who wanted to restore Russian influence in Azerbaijan. Fourthly, the 907 amendment put the US on one side of the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict. Therefore, it violated one of the main principles of American foreign policy – the principle of impartiality towards conflicts having the deep historical roots. These restrictions legally tied the US hands in its political and economic opportunities in Azerbaijan and generally reduced American influence in the region.

The mistakes and artificial impediments such as Section 907 hamper the prospects of Azerbaijan from becoming pro-Western, democratic, and market oriented. This last consequence is a particular shame because, like their fellow Transcaucasians (Georgians and Armenians), Azerbaijanis had traditionally shown a great aptitude and mindset towards a market-oriented economy. Their business activities and talents are notable across the former USSR today, an abundance of natural resources, an appealing climate, and a central location gives the country a great potential for a quick transformation.

Pipeline Politics and its Regional and Global Implications

The strategic pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC), was inaugurated in 2005. Beginning in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, and transiting through the territory of the former Soviet Republic of Georgia towards the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, it was the first major pipeline to bypass Russian territory. From there, oil is taken by tankers to the world markets. Having up to one million barrels per day capacity, the pipeline has an even more important strategic implication. It will strengthen the political and economic independence of the countries of the region from possible resurgent Russian ambitions. But even before its completion, it had also marked the beginning of the new “Great Game” with global and regional powers such as the US, China, and Russia vying for influence in the area. Once again the region became very attractive for global geopolitics, enhanced by the discoveries of natural resources in Afghanistan such as natural gas, oil, marble, gold, copper, chromite, etc.

At the same time, Afghanistan’s significance stems from its geopolitical position as a potential transit route for oil and natural gas exports from Central Asia to the Arabian Sea. This potential includes the possible construction of oil and natural gas export pipelines through Afghanistan, which was under serious consideration in the mid-1990s. The idea has since been undermined by Afghanistan’s instability.

US Ambassador John J. Maresca, Vice President for International Relations of the Unocal Oil Corporation, in testimony to the House Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific on 12 February 1998, concluded his Congressional testimony with the following statement:

Developing cost-effective, profitable and efficient export routes for Central Asia resources is a formidable, but not impossible, task. It has been accomplished before. A commercial corridor, a ‘new’

Silk Road, can link the Central Asia supply with the demand—once again making Central Asia the crossroads between Europe and Asia.²⁴



Figure 1.7 Gas Pipelines to Europe. Graphic courtesy of CIA, located at the Library of Congress. <http://tile.loc.gov/image-services/iiif/service:gmd:gmd5:g5692c:g5692c:ct003073/full/pct:12.5/0/default.jpg>.

While the hope is that export pipelines could provide an economic boost to the region, thereby bringing peace and prosperity to the troubled South and Central Asia, Caucasus and Caspian regions in the long run, the fear in the short-term is that the fierce competition over pipeline routes and export options will lead to greater instability. During my diplomatic service in Washington DC and Ambassador Maresca's tenure at the Department of State, we had numerous discussions on the issues of pipeline politics and US policy in the region.

Conclusion

This discussion has reviewed US policy toward the region of the former USSR during the important period between 1985 and 1996. The region seemed to be increasingly attracting the American commercial and gradually strategic interests. Taking the different former Soviet republics as examples we can see the differences in US approaches towards those newly independent states. **The first stage** was characterized by the administration's "Russia First" Doctrine in the immediate post-Soviet period. **The second stage**,

which from 1992 and 1993 was characterized by more US interest toward the other republics of the former USSR, in particular Ukraine (from the security viewpoint), and Azerbaijan (mainly in terms of American commercial interests and counter-balance to Iranian influence). But common in both was that US policy toward the whole “near abroad” was being significantly influenced by the state of US-Russian relations. These relations deteriorated during 1992 and 1993 during President Yeltsin’s growing reliance on Russian military’s support during his political struggles with parliament. That greatly enhanced the military’s position in redefining Russian security policy.

One could predict the further deterioration of US-Russian relations with the Republican victory in the Congress then and after the presidential elections in the United States and Russia in 1996. These events would bring more conservative rhetoric during the presidential campaigns of both Republican and Democratic camps of the American political spectrum and a more nationalistic agenda into Russian political life in that period. That in its turn led to two consequences: strengthening of the role of the Russian military and increasing its assertiveness in developing a consensus in favor of reestablishing Russian dominion over its neighbors. President Putin’s Russia and its current internal and foreign policies prove that our analysis based on that important post-Soviet historical period seems to be accurate to a greater extent.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

Notes

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3. Melissa Bower, "Former Soviet soldier leads US Army's culture efforts," *Fort Leavenworth Lamp*, 15 March 2012.
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5. CSCE Summit, "Closing Statement of the Hungarian President," *RFE/RL Daily Report* No. 231, (8 December 1994). See also, Mahir Ibrahimov, "CSCE Summit: Critical Turning Point for the Fate of Nagorno-Karabakh-Hopefully," *Azerbaijani International* (Spring 1995): 54-55.
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7. The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, *Trilateral Statement by the Presidents of the United States, Russia and Ukraine*, 14 January 1994.
8. The White House, *Trilateral Statement by the Presidents of the United States, Russia and Ukraine*, 2.
9. Elaine Sciolino, "Yeltsin Says NATO Is Trying to Split Continent Again," *New York Times*, 6 December 1994, A10.
10. Testimony by James Collins, Senior Coordinator of the Office of the New Independent States before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 24 May 1994.
11. Henry L. Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 19.
12. "Aid to Russia; Excerpts From Bush's Remarks on Aid Plan: 'Today We Must Win the Peace.'" *New York Times*, 2 April 1992, accessed 30 December 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/04/02/world/aid-russia-excerpts-bush-s-remarks-aid-plan-today-we-must-win-peace.html>.
13. *Public Law 102-511*, 102nd Congress, 1. See also, Mahir Ibrahimov and Erian Kurbanov, "Policy Brief: Getting it Wrong in the Caucasus," *Middle East Quarterly* (December 1994): 65-70.
14. C-SPAN, Transcript of Press Conference on Foreign Aid Reform, 12 December 1994, accessed 14 October 2016, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?62141-1/foreign-aid-reform>.
15. Ben Barber, "New Senate panel chief aims to slash foreign aid," *The Washington Times*, 13 December 1994.
16. Steve LeVine, *The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and Fortune on the Caspian Sea* (New York: Random House, 2007), 186.
17. LeVine, *The Oil and the Glory*, 186.
18. A voice vote, in which members vote in unison as "yea" or "nay" is generally used when there is a strong consensus one way or the other; it is not possible to ascertain how individual members voted. It is only in a roll call vote that members are specifically recorded as being in favor of or opposed to a piece of legislation.
19. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Report on the Passage by the Committee of Freedom Support Act, October 1992.
20. Timothy Penny, "The Armenian Genocide," *Congressional Record*, Volume 140, Number 60, 16 May 1994, accessed 30 December 2016, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CREC-1994-05-16/html/CREC-1994-05-16-pt1-PgE4.htm>.
21. The OSCE Minsk group is a negotiating body mandated to find a solution to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, and includes the United States, Germany, Belarus, France, Italy, Russia, Sweden, the Czech Republic, and Turkey) the US government has direct diplomatic role in that conflict (indeed, this is the only conflict in the former Soviet Union in which the United States has such a role.
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Chapter 2 Strategic Central Asia

US Ambassador (Ret) Richard E. Hoagland

Central Asia's Neighbors

AFGHANISTAN, after a third of a century of war, is still enormously fragile but has never, either overtly or covertly, pursued territorial claims against its northern neighbors. Nevertheless, the Islamic State in Syria (ISIS), having vowed to resurrect the ancient Kingdom of Khorasan in Afghanistan and beyond, deeply worries the Central Asian governments, and rightfully so. According to a United Nations report issued on September 25, 2015, ISIS was reported to have a presence in 25 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, including in some of those provinces that border Central Asia. The fear of ISIS, and other radical organizations like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Jihad Union, even though they are weaker than they ever were before since they were pushed out of Pakistan into Afghanistan, is in part responsible for the continued slap-down by Central Asian leaders of *any* opposition groups or individuals in their countries. This one-size-fits-all approach further feeds the Western view of Central Asia as a land of harsh authoritarianism and egregious violations of human rights.

Further, the Central Asian states, especially those bordering on Afghanistan, still worry about the Afghan Taliban, even though the Taliban have never stated a policy of expansion into Central Asia. "If the Taliban gain control in Afghanistan again, as they eventually did after the Soviet Union withdrew its troops from that unlucky country, might we not be next?" the leaders worry. The September 2015 Taliban takeover (albeit only temporary) of the major northern city of Kunduz, not all that far from the Afghan-Tajik border, only exacerbated that anxiety. Several states, specifically Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan, have indeed maintained discreet relations and communication with the Afghan Taliban; however, in day-to-day reality the Taliban are a Central Asian nightmare.

RUSSIA has long declared Central Asia to be its privileged *sphere of influence*. Because of history, economic ties, a colonial *lingua franca*, the Russified culture of the elite, and since Crimea and Ukraine, and because of a *tsunami* of propaganda on the Russian broadcast media that blanket Central Asia, Russian near-absolute dominance there should be a foregone conclusion. However, it's not. Each Central Asian state jealously guards its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, and ever more so since Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, which was a quiet game-changer, even a wake-up call, for each of the Central Asian governments.

Further, Russia regularly whispers in Central Asian ears a so-far exaggerated threat of the Islamic State. While the threat does indeed exist because of the ISIS declaration of a sub-caliphate of Khorasan in Afghanistan and its neighboring regions, the dire Russian admonitions purposely exaggerate the threat to try to impel the Central Asian states to turn more fully to Moscow for security. Russia already has a permanent military presence in Central Asia at the Kant Airfield outside Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan and with its 201st Motorized Rifle Division at three locations in Tajikistan: Dushanbe, Qurghonteppa, and Kulob. The 201st is Russia's largest military base outside the borders of the Russian Federation. By contrast, while the United States did for a time have military facilities in Central Asia to support Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (Karshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan, 2001-2005, and the Manas Transit Center at the Bishkek International Airport, 2002-2014), Washington has repeatedly stated it has no desire for *permanent* military bases in Central Asia.

Central Asian leaders who already consider stability as a *sine qua non* for continued rule don't really need regular sermons from Moscow about the evil of so-called color revolutions, supposedly plotted in Washington – the unconstitutional changes of government in Georgia (the Rose Revolution of 2003), Ukraine (the Orange Revolution of 2004 and, more recently the Maidan of 2013), and Kyrgyzstan (the Tulip Revolution of 2005) – but such warnings are part of the regular Russian liturgy in Central Asia. In short, Moscow demonizes democracy and trumpets authoritarian rule in the service of stability but also to try to herd the Central Asian sheep into its own, and exclusive, pastures.

Russia has created two multilateral structures for regional integration. The first is the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in which the members (“Permanently Neutral” Turkmenistan maintains only observer status) pledge to support and defend each other's mutual security. Despite annual summits and fairly regular military exercises, the CSTO is still not seen as an especially effective organization, either by its members or more broadly in the greater Eurasian region. And whether it would respond in an emergency situation is open to question. It is useful to note that during Kyrgyzstan's ethnic turmoil in Osh that began in June 2010, Bishkek asked for security assistance from the CSTO, but Moscow did not respond.

The other, and more recent, Russia-dominated multilateral organization in the region is the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), comprising initially Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus, and now including the poverty-stricken states of Kyrgyzstan and Armenia, with Moscow putting pressure on others, like Tajikistan, to join. Tajikistan, arguably the weakest state in the region, has responded to Moscow lukewarmly, so far saying neither yes nor no. Historically, Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev proposed the EEU in the 1990s, but Moscow tended to dismiss it until Putin's third presidential term when he apparently saw it as potentially an effective tool of *Putinism*, which some go so far as to dub *neo-sovietism*. Many suspect that Moscow sees the EEU as a *bloc* structure – led by Moscow – that will inevitably take on a political dimension. So far, however, Kazakhstan has politely said *nyet* to any kind of political dimension – or, to go even further, a common currency – for the EEU. Why Kazakhstan? Because it rigorously guards its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, especially because its population, unlike the populations of the four other Central Asia states, is still just under 25 percent Slavic, concentrated largely in the northern part of the country bordering Russia and around the former capital, Almaty. It's especially the north that concerns Astana (and why Nazarbayev moved the capital of his country from Almaty to Brezhnev's “Virgin Lands” city of Tselinograd on the *steppe* in the middle of nowhere) because, from the 1990s to this very day, influential voices in Russia (and not just the clownish Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, himself born in Almaty) continue to call for the annexation of the northern third of Kazakhstan that some insist was always historically a part of Russia.

CHINA is another contiguous neighbor of Central Asia that bears watching closely. China's presence in Central Asia has generally been politically benign as it has sought to gain access to the hydrocarbon and mineral wealth there to fuel its own economic growth. Even as China increasingly bought into the oil sector of Kazakhstan and the natural-gas sector in Turkmenistan (where it is the only foreign nation allowed to operate its gas wells and pipelines directly on Turkmenistan's sovereign soil), the West, including the United States, saw no problem because there was no perceived political threat.

The West, however, perked up its ears when China's President Xi Jinping announced at Nazarbayev University in Astana in September 2013 its New Silk Road Economic Belt, running from east to west across Central Asia and on to northern Europe. Initially, the United States, with its New Silk Road Initiative, paid little attention because the US version of the New Silk Road focused on forging north-south links from

Russia's southern border into India; whereas China's stated goal was to facilitate transport of its industrial production, especially from Western China, overland to Europe. China, as we now know, was making it up as it went, and by 2014 had mostly formulated and finally announced its One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative that went far beyond Central Asia to include elements in Pakistan (from the Karakorum Mountains to the warm-water port of Gwadar), Southeast Asia, and maritime lanes through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean to all the littoral ports, including those of East Africa.

The initial US view of China's New Silk Road Economic Belt was rather simplistic: "They do hardware; we do software," meaning that Beijing would probably focus on upgrading the east-west highways and rail lines in Central Asia, while Washington focused on technical capacity building for things such as customs modernization and border security. As China's OBOR policy emerged, however, it became apparent that China was actually creating more of an industrial investment scheme, in part to stimulate economic growth among its nearest western neighbors. Near the end of 2014, US diplomats met for the first time with appropriate contacts in Beijing to compare notes on each other's New Silk Road policies. Those initial meetings were friendly and, to some participants and observers, surprisingly forthcoming, but they only scratched the surface. Follow-up came in May 2015, again in Beijing, where the United States offered a short list – a menu, if you will – of possibilities for concrete cooperation in Central Asia. Not much came of this at that time – in part, it seems, because China was not sure of US intentions, and, probably more important, because China has nominally allied its New Silk Road Economic Belt with Russia's Eurasian Economic Union. Because US policy was not fully invested in seeking Chinese collaboration in Central Asia, Washington let these initial forays fall by the wayside. Yet, the potential certainly does exist for Sino-American cooperation in Central Asia.

More broadly, the China-dominated Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) plays a certain role in Central Asia, certainly more so than the Russia-dominated CSTO. For many years, the SCO was seen by outsiders (and even by some participants) as just one more "talk shop." Soon after the SCO was founded, member-state Uzbekistan recommended that the United States be granted observer status. Before the SCO could decide on this recommendation, Washington rejected the offer, unwilling to be associated, even as an observer, with an organization comprised of Russia, China, and "un-reformed" former Soviet states. This rejection was, perhaps, understandable but was shortsighted and typical of ideological decision-making in Washington.

While it still does not play a very concrete role in the Central Asian states' policy-making process, the SCO is slowly emerging as a respectable multi-lateral organization. However, at its summit in the summer of 2015 in Ufa, Russia, SCO announced it would begin the accession process for both India and Pakistan. For an international organization that operates, so far, on the full consensus of its member states, this development has left some scratching their heads and wondering if this is far-sightedness or over-reaching, because it is hard to see Pakistan and India marching along in shoulder-to-shoulder consensus on very many issues at all. In fact, it's the historic India-Pakistan standoff, defined at its core by the issue of Kashmir, that is one of the roadblocks to the US version of the New Silk Road that seeks to link Central Asia to the vast markets of India.

IRAN is still a bit of a wild card in Central Asia. Tehran has long been interested in its Central Asian neighbors, but until recently has been economically constrained by the international sanctions that crippled its economy. That, however, will inevitably begin to change as some of the international sanctions are lifted. Iran is likely to emerge for Central Asia as a more realistic access to the world market for its natural

resources and (limited) production. In fact, a Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railroad already exists and is likely to be expanded.

Still, Iran will have an uphill slog to gain any significant political influence in Central Asia. The most natural affinities should exist between Dushanbe and Tehran, because, unlike the other Central Asian states that are generally Mongol-culture and Turkic-speaking by heritage, Tajikistan is a Persian-culture nation, having once in the long-distant past been an outpost of the ancient Persian Empire; Tajik and Farsi are mutually intelligible. However, even Dushanbe is more than a little leery of Tehran because Tajikistan's population is majority Sunni, except for the large but remote Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast where Ismaili Shi'ites predominate. Iran has had a certain degree of friendliness toward, if not significant influence on, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan – the only religious-political party in the entire region, which the government of Tajikistan has now determined to quash as a supposed terrorist organization. The other Central Asian states, too, cast a wary eye toward Iran because it is a self-proclaimed Islamic revolutionary state, a fact that alienates the determinedly secular and autocratic leaders in Central Asia. Still, Iran can expect to gain incrementally more influence in Central Asia in the coming years, especially economically, as its trade and energy linkages increase with the Caspian-littoral states of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

How Does Central Asia See the World?

To one degree or another, all five Central Asian states practice what they call a *multi-vector foreign policy*, meaning they seek generally to balance their relations with Russia, China, the United States, and the European Union. Balance, yes, but sometimes they also seek to play one off against the other, especially Kyrgyzstan that in recent years has lurched between Moscow and Washington attempting to instigate a bidding war for Bishkek's love. Some Central Asian officials will readily admit that Russia and China are immediate neighbors; Europe and the United States are rather far away. The European Union, as an entity that is a grouping of 28 nations and must make policy by consensus, is not as big a player in Central Asia as some of its individual members, like the United Kingdom, Germany, sometimes some of the Scandinavian countries, and even Latvia. Even so, the EU in 2015 updated its Central Asian policy and significantly increased its development assistance within the region. Therefore, clearly the EU sees Central Asia as a region that deserves a certain degree of attention. So, too, does the United States.

US Interests in Central Asia

US policy in Central Asia, as of December 2014, is consonant with the President's *National Security* of 2013, the current policy document at that time, as well as with the subsequent 2015 *National Security Strategy*. In broadest terms, US interests and strategic objectives in Central Asia are the following: prevent terrorists from gaining safe haven anywhere in the region; encourage the five countries to contribute to stability in Afghanistan and, of course, in the region; preserve the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of each of the Central Asian states; safeguard US economic interests and continue to promote economic reform so that the five nations can be better embedded in the global economy; and promote good governance and respect for civil liberties. These are laudable and non-controversial goals. Implementing them, however, takes some finesse, because since their independence a quarter of a century ago, each of the five nations of Central Asia has gone its own way – they certainly can no longer be lumped together generically as “the ‘stans” – and the United States has developed a distinct history with each of the countries.

KAZAKHSTAN. Almost four times the size of Texas but with a population just slightly over 18 million, Kazakhstan is the key country of Central Asia. Apart from the fact that a northwestern bit of

Kazakhstan, across the Ural River, is technically on the European land mass, Kazakhstan, as it frequently insists, is indeed different from the other four, not because of its truly Eurasian geography but primarily because of decisions that President Nursultan Nazarbayev and his government made in the immediate months after independence. At least three are especially important.

First, Kazakhstan committed almost from the beginning to macro-economic reform away from the Soviet command-economy model so that today its banking and other financial systems are on a par with Central Europe's. This means that Kazakhstan is much more deeply embedded in the global economy than the other four that still limp along with the tattered remnants of an outmoded command economy.

Second – and this is probably even more important – President Nazarbayev decided that if Kazakhstan were to be an independent country that emerges onto the world stage, it would need a new generation of leaders who think differently. Therefore, he created the Bolashak Program (*bolashak* means *future* in Kazakh) that sent young Kazakhstani citizens abroad for full university educations and, for some, even graduate degrees; and he established this far-sighted policy in the earliest days of independence even before Kazakhstan began to rake in the wealth from its Caspian oil deposits. The result is that Kazakhstan now has a cohort of about 10,000 alumni of the Bolashak Program, globalized (and often speaking English and other world languages) young people rising in both the public and private sectors.

Third, and of special importance, Kazakhstan is an exemplary nuclear non-proliferation partner of the United States. At its independence, Kazakhstan found itself with the fourth-largest nuclear arsenal in the world, but President Nazarbayev committed to total denuclearization, in part because of the devastation that Soviet nuclear testing had inflicted on the land and population around Semipalatinsk in northeastern Kazakhstan. The decade-long US-Kazakhstan effort to clean up the BN-350 nuclear fast-breeder reactor site at Aktau on the shore of the Caspian Sea reached a significant milestone in November 2010 when Kazakhstan secured and locked down under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards at Baikal-1, near Semipalatinsk, 3,000 kg of weapon-grade plutonium and 10,000 kg of highly enriched uranium.

One more fact sets Kazakhstan apart from the other Central Asian states: it's an aid-giver, having established in 2014 its own international developmental assistance agency, KazAID. Its initial projects are in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan; but it plans to reach further afield and become an international player.

KYRGYZSTAN (THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC). Kyrgyzstan, the second-smallest country in the region (after Tajikistan), not quite the size of South Dakota and with a population just a little over 5.6 million, is the second-poorest country in the region after Tajikistan. Soon after independence, it established a reputation in the West as “the only democracy in Central Asia” with an independent parliament, relatively free (if biased) mass media, and a vibrant civil society. Soon after 9/11, the United States established one of two temporary military facilities in Central Asia to support Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan at the Bishkek International Airport, an important facility that came to be called the Manas Transit Center. The other was at Karshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan (see below). Kyrgyzstan has generally conducted relatively free and fair elections, but it has also seen two unconstitutional overthrows of government, ousting President Askar Akayev in 2005 in the so-called Tulip Revolution and then President Kurmanbek Bakiyev in 2010. Some human rights activists in the West applauded these overthrows as “democracy in action;” they were, nevertheless, extra-constitutional.

Apart from its volatile political culture, Kyrgyzstan faces significant internal and external threats to its stability. Its poverty (the only significant natural resource is gold) and ethnic divisions (primarily Kyrgyz-Uzbek in the volatile Fergana Valley) threaten it from within. The country's generally unguarded borders and mountainous terrain mean that threatening elements from terrorists to narco-traffickers can seep in from the outside without much resistance from the weak military and law-enforcement bodies. To address these weaknesses, Kyrgyzstan has developed a strong security partnership with Russia, but that only alarms Kyrgyzstan's neighbors. After prematurely closing the Manas Transit Center in 2014, the current government of President Almazbek Atambayev has grown ever closer to Moscow, much to the Kremlin's satisfaction but to the distaste of some of Kyrgyzstan's immediate neighbors that would prefer a bit more "multi-vector foreign policy" in Bishkek. The United States would do well to be patient with Kyrgyzstan because Russia, battered by international sanctions and, especially, by low hydrocarbon prices, will not be able to keep the economic promises it has made to Bishkek.

TAJIKISTAN. This second-most-mountainous country in the world (after Nepal), slightly smaller than Wisconsin, has a population just over 8 million. The poorest country in the region, it traditionally limped along economically by exporting migrant laborers to Russia and came to depend for about 50 percent of its GDP on remittances from these guest workers, one of the highest percentages in the world. That will change with the current global economic downturn; and returning workers, who will face bleak economic prospects in their home country, could lead to social instability. Economically, the country has depended on two outmoded resources: a Soviet-legacy cotton monoculture and a Soviet-legacy aluminum tolling plant, Talco, in the eastern part of the country that is a source of significant pollution.

President Emomali Rahmon (formerly Rahmanov) from Khatlon Province in the south came to power in November 1994 during the devastating north-south Civil War (1992-1997) as part of an internationally assisted power-sharing agreement. Over the years, Rahmon has become increasingly authoritarian and runs his country as a family (and crony) business. Of special concern, Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan is poorly guarded, despite some US and European Union assistance, since Rahmon expelled the Russian Border Guards in 2005, and Tajikistan has become a major transit state for Afghan heroin flowing to Russia and beyond. In fact, Tajikistan is in danger of becoming a narco-state; the many surprisingly opulent mansions in Dushanbe are informally known as narco-mansions. Legislation pending at the beginning of 2016 in Dushanbe seems designed to pass leadership to Rahmon's pampered son, Rustam. In January 2016, Rahmon named one of his daughters (he has seven), Ozoda, as his Chief of Staff, after she'd served a stint as First Deputy Foreign Minister. Rustam himself, at a young 28-years-old, serves as the head of Tajikistan's anti-corruption agency, a fact that has led to a fair amount of eye rolling in Dushanbe and beyond.

Yet, Tajikistan should be taken most seriously. It's a front-line state with Afghanistan and, potentially, has significant natural gas deposits. Further, with a better-developed infrastructure and with more adherence to rule of law, it could become a major tourist destination because of its spectacular natural beauty.

TURKMENISTAN. Slightly larger than California, with a population of about 5.25 million, with the fourth-largest natural gas reserves in the world, and with a long Caspian-sea coastline, Turkmenistan should be the second-most-promising nation in the region after Kazakhstan. Instead, its reputation has become an international joke – "the North Korea of Central Asia." That's wildly exaggerated, of course, but Turkmenistan is indeed a curious country. The first president, Saparmurad Niyazov, was a bizarre megalomaniac who irrationally gutted the country's educational infrastructure and embarked on building a massive personality cult epitomized by renaming some of the months of the year after his family members and, most famously,

by erecting a golden statue of himself in central Ashgabat that rotated (at least when it functioned properly) always to face the sun. Equally infamously, he used the massive profits of his country's natural gas (mostly sold to Moscow before he and his successor, Gurbanguli Berdimuhamedov, turned to China) to transform the ceremonial parts of his capital into a sort of futuristic white-marble mausoleum, decreeing that all buildings must be built of white marble. To this day, visitors to Ashgabat's ceremonial avenues marvel that "it's an empty city – where are the people?" (Go two blocks off the empty avenues, and, of course, you'll find a real city.)

It's easy to see Turkmenistan as a joke – but it's not. Despite its official policy of "Permanent Neutrality" that generally eschews all bilateral relations in favor of international bodies (the United Nations Regional Center for Preventative Diplomacy, admittedly a rather obscure body, is located in Ashgabat), Turkmenistan has been a surprisingly good, if publicly skittish, partner for the United States. During the height of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, Turkmenistan quietly provided a refueling operation at Ashgabat International Airport for US and NATO aircraft. Ashgabat has long maintained discreet diplomatic relations with Afghanistan's Taliban and furnishes natural gas to northwestern Afghanistan.

In recent years, the United States has championed, or at least has given lip service to, the TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) natural gas pipeline as a way to link Central and South Asia as part of the Obama Administration's New Silk Road Initiative. The failure, to date, of this TAPI effort is primarily due to Turkmenistan's idiosyncratic (and self-defeating) policy of not allowing international oil companies (that have the financial resources to build such a pipeline), other than China's, to function on-shore in Turkmenistan in a production-sharing capacity. The United States talked a good line to promote TAPI, but it never seriously devoted significant diplomatic capital to ensure the project as it did in the 1990s to see to completion just a short hop across the Caspian Sea the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyan pipeline from Azerbaijan to Turkey.

The United States cannot afford to relegate Turkmenistan to the comedy club of international relations. It borders Afghanistan and Iran. It could provide natural gas to Europe via a long-discussed Trans-Caspian Pipeline. Turkmenistan is indeed economically constrained, like Russia and much of the rest of Central Asia, by low hydrocarbon prices. However, it is still a relatively rich nation; in 2013, Turkmenistan's power-generation tenders comprised 7 percent of General Electric's overseas turbine business. Even more important, Turkmenistan will play a certain role in Iran's economic emergence and China's New Silk Road Economic Belt.

UZBEKISTAN. Just a little smaller than California and with a population of somewhat over 29 million – by far the largest in Central Asia – Uzbekistan could be the economic powerhouse for the region. However, it's not. Ruled since independence by the wily, near-octogenarian former-Soviet *aparatchik*, Islam Karimov, Uzbekistan remains firmly stuck in the past with a hobbled command-style economy. It's interesting to note that Uzbekistan sees itself as the natural leader of Central Asia and, by extension, of *all* Turkic people, including into western China. In the 1990s, some Uzbek officials, asserting Uzbekistan's natural leadership, sniggered privately that civilized Uzbekistan taught the benighted nomads elsewhere in the region "not to piss in their teapots." This attitude draws on the fact that the celebrated Arab Renaissance of the Middle Ages that strongly influenced the Western Renaissance was actually based in Uzbekistan's great Silk Road cities of Samarkand and Bukhara. However, past glory does not necessarily translate into modern achievement.

Further, Uzbekistan has developed an especially pernicious reputation for repression and violation of human rights. The classic example, although there are many, is the so-called Andijon Massacre of May 2005 when Interior Ministry and National Security Service forces fired into a crowd of peaceful economic protestors in the Fergana Valley city of Andijon, killing at least 200 but perhaps as many as 1,500. This naturally outraged the international human-rights community, and the United States firmly condemned the government of Uzbekistan for this tragedy.

This condemnation then reverberated elsewhere in US-Uzbekistan relations. Almost immediately after 9/11, Uzbekistan, with Moscow's concurrence, granted the United States access to its air base at Karshi-Khanabad in south-central Uzbekistan to support militarily Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. US diplomats who negotiated that agreement remember a marathon 36-hour negotiating session. When they straggled back after signing the agreement to the Intercontinental Hotel in Tashkent, excited watchers of CNN in the hotel lobby shouted, "Look! We're helping you bomb the Taliban!" as the US air war began.

Late 2001 to 2005 might have been a sort of Golden Age for US-Uzbekistan relations. However, Andijon helped to end that. Washington's high-profile condemnation of Tashkent for the massacre led, in part, to Uzbekistan annulling in summer 2005 the agreement for US use of Karshi-Khanabad. In part, it can be said, because there was another factor. Tashkent had come to learn that Kyrgyzstan was receiving rent payments from Washington for the use of Manas International Airport, whereas the original US-Uzbekistan agreement for Karshi-Khanabad was silent on reimbursement. Tashkent asked to renegotiate the agreement, but Washington would not entertain such a notion. And so, thin-skinned Tashkent, already irked by US condemnation of its actions at Andijon, said, "Fine. *Do svidaniya* (Russian for 'good-bye')," and US-Uzbekistan relations went into a near deep-freeze for close to a decade. It was only Russia's action in eastern Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, along with adroit US diplomacy, that caused the leaders in Tashkent to say, in effect, "OK, we are ready to reconsider your past actions." While relatively reformed and increasingly globalized Kazakhstan might appear to be leaving Uzbekistan in the dust, the United States cannot ignore this important Central Asian nation. It is in our own national interest to bring all – repeat, *all* – of the countries of Central Asia together. How do we do that?

US Policy in Central Asia

US policy immediately after the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of 16 new independent states was colored by a bit of *irrational exuberance* that assumed, through Washington's rose-colored glasses, *of course* the peoples of the former Soviet Union were naturally yearning to breathe free and, with the appropriate assistance, would quickly become free-market democrats. Using the authorities of the 1992 freedom support act – in which freedom is one of those quirky congressional acronyms that stands for "freedom for Russia and emerging Eurasian democracies and open markets – Washington dedicated considerable resources to support the former soviet states as they transitioned, over a relatively short time it was assumed, at least by the ideologues, from communism and central planning toward the western ideals for them of democracy and free markets. As we now know, it didn't turn out to be as simple as transitioning from one ideology to another.

Of course, there were other reasons to pay attention to the new Central Asian states. Perhaps most important is Kazakhstan's historic commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. But also, the region is awash in natural resources. Turkmenistan has the fourth-largest natural-gas reserves in the world. Kazakhstan has the second-largest oil reserves of the former Soviet Union, second only to Russia, and US and European

international oil companies early on made major investments there that continue to this day. Uzbekistan is a major producer of uranium, as is Kazakhstan, and has large natural-gas reserves, as does, quite likely, Tajikistan. Both Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan hold significant gold deposits. In addition, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have world-class hydropower potential, as demonstrated by the current casa-1000 project to deliver their summer-excess hydroelectricity across Afghanistan to electricity-starved Pakistan.

To add a bit more nuance, the economies of Central Asia are more than the sum of their natural resources and energy-generating potential. Kazakhstan's early commitment to macro-economic reform has, 20 years later, created a financial-services hub for the region. Uzbekistan's educated population of about 30 million has a real potential to provide entrepreneurial and innovative economic growth. Kyrgyzstan, from the beginning, made a fundamental commitment to democratic structures of government and to this day remains a test case, albeit a fragile test case, for democracy in Central Asia. And Kyrgyzstan's and Tajikistan's stunning natural beauty could well attract thongs of tourists from Boise to Beijing, powering a thriving tourism sector, as could Uzbekistan's great silk road cities of Samarkand, Bokhara and Kiva.

To focus a bit more tightly, US core policy interests in Central Asia are to support independent, sovereign states that uphold regional security, increase their economic integration with regional and global markets, and demonstrate respect for human rights and democratic governance, while not becoming sources of transnational threats to the United States or to any other nation.

Over time, Washington has learned to take each country as it is. The early days of talking about *the 'stans* collectively are long past. Policy makers in Washington recognize that the countries of Central Asia have differentiated their own paths and, to be blunt, sometimes jostle against each other. The interests of one sometimes conflict with the interests of another: Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have mostly been at loggerheads since the Tajikistan civil war of the mid-1990s. Upstream and downstream countries are still working to sort out what they see as nearly existential water rights. At the beginning of independence, borders were ill defined, especially with the unusual system of enclaves and exclaves in the sensitive Fergana valley that the Soviets carved up among Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in a classic "divide and conquer" cartographic and ethnographic exercise in the 1920s and 1930s. Independence also meant that supply chains for essentials like food and electricity were suddenly split among separate sovereign entities that had no desire to cooperate, at least at first. Nevertheless, the passage of time and a healthy dose of strategic patience suggest that regional cooperation in Central Asia might possibly be just a bit more than a schematic and idealistic gleam in western eyes. During the fall 2015 UN general assembly in New York City, US secretary of state John Kerry met in a collective setting with the foreign ministers of all five Central Asian states – an historic first – in a format called the C5+1. To the surprise of many, and without any sharp elbows, the five foreign ministers discussed with Kerry potentials for regional cooperation and wider responsibilities, including countering violent extremism in responsible ways.

The implementation of US policy in Central Asia, as in other parts of the world, is not always readily visible and is almost never front-page news. Moreover, it's based on a long-term commitment. Russia is still the primary security partner for the Central Asian states. But where it is welcome, the United States works with Central Asian militaries and other security structures, especially the border guards, to modernize militaries and to ensure that border guards are increasingly capable of preventing the flow across borders of contraband, including narcotics and the components of weapons of mass destruction, while facilitating the passage of legitimate travelers and enhancing trade and commerce. In Kazakhstan, especially, Washington

has been working with its partners there to build a battalion that can serve with United Nations peacekeepers, further embedding that country in the family of responsible and outward-looking world nations.

To implement its broadest policy goals in Central Asia, Washington's assistance focuses, as it does elsewhere in the world, on improving and modernizing health care and education and alleviating the worst forms of poverty. Further, Washington supports human-rights organizations, rule-of-law reforms, civil society, and the mass media, including, increasingly, social media. In its most altruistic form, US policy supports the people of Central Asia who want nothing more than better lives for their children and grandchildren, as do people all over the world. Over the last 23 years, well over 24,000 citizens of Central Asia have visited the United States on State Department and other US government-funded exchange programs. More than a few of these have gone on to become high-ranking government officials, effective and creative community leaders, and successful business pioneers, including female entrepreneurs. That matters.

However, US policy could put one more arrow in its quiver.

A Proposal for Central Asian Security and Prosperity

One of the hallmarks of the Central Asian states has been their go-it-alone policy of the past quarter century. While the leaders meet occasionally, sometimes bilaterally, sometimes together under the *aegis* of Russia or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, there has been a notable absence of region-wide cooperation. Some of this can be attributed to the Soviet heritage when all roads led to Moscow, and some is simply the result of each of the five states jealously guarding its prerogatives of sovereignty in the early years of independence. Further, there is serious competition among the five, especially for regional water rights, and in some cases for regional leadership. Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, especially, have been at loggerheads for years; and, to this day, there are no direct flights between the two capitals.

But imagine for a moment what could happen if the five, and then Afghanistan when it is ready, formed something that might be called the Association of Central Asian States, or ACAS. Setting aside personal rivalries for the greater good, ACAS, over time, would work to fully modernize and harmonize its members' customs regulations to stimulate economic growth and international trade. ACAS, over time, would improve but also strengthen border security to facilitate the legitimate movement of people and goods, but better guard against the illicit smuggling of contraband of all sorts, including the elements of weapons of mass destruction and the illegal transit of terrorists and of people known as trafficking in persons. ACAS would work, over time, to build associations of mutual trust and respect with existing international organizations. While this all seems logical, there is one internal requirement that would be essential for ACAS to work: endemic, and sometimes government-sanctioned, corruption would need to be reined in. That's a tall order indeed, but there is no real reason it could not be done. However, it would take political will at the top of each of the member states. US talking points have long had a *pro forma* sentence or two about corruption, but there has never been a concerted, top-level engagement on this fundamental issue.

At the current moment, Central Asia is one of the most isolated and least connected regions of the world, and it could significantly benefit by creating the conditions that would enhance its participation in the global economy. China understands this, and through the Central Asian portion of its One Belt One Road policy, the New Silk Road Economic Belt, Beijing has stated that this is a priority. The United States understands this, and through its New Silk Road Initiative seeks to encourage Central and South Asian connectivity. However, the kinds of fundamental shifts and reforms that need to be undertaken can be *encouraged* but cannot be *imposed* from the outside. The Central Asian states themselves need to be convinced that it is in

their mutual interest to do so, and that they could accomplish this through an Association of Central Asian States, and that should now, a quarter century after the independence of the Central Asian states, become the focus of US diplomacy. ACAS would not weaken its members' sovereignty and independence. It would strengthen its members and Central Asia would finally become a region to be reckoned with on the international stage. The United States can help to accomplish this, but it needs to take Central Asia off the back burner. It needs to establish regular and sustained high-level diplomatic engagement because, in the end, that's all that the Central Asians take seriously.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

Chapter 3

Eurasia's Unequal Partners: China-Russia Relations—Past, Present, and Future

Dr. Joseph “Geoff” Babb

China's blessed geography is so obvious a point it tends to get overlooked in discussions of the country's dynamism and national assertiveness. Yet it is essential: it means China will stand at the hub of geopolitics even if the country's path toward global power is not necessarily linear. . . China's internal dynamism creates external ambitions. Empires rarely come about by design; they grow organically.¹

– Robert D. Kaplan

Introduction

This chapter provides a China-centric overview of the history of Sino-Russian and Sino-Soviet (hereafter Sino-Russian) relations from the late 1500s to the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 1996. The chapter ends with a brief examination of the period after the SCO was announced officially signaling the latest era of improved ties in this important and complex relationship. This exploration covers the geostrategic and historical factors that could potentially influence the leadership of these two countries to cooperate and those that have, or might again, precipitate rifts or conflict. The conclusion discusses how the shared history and geography of this complex and turbulent relationship might influence future decisions and events.

Chinese and Russian historic geopolitical and military relations along their shared border – the autonomous region of Xinjiang (Sinkiang) in China's west abutting Central Asia; Mongolia in the center with historic ties to Tibet (Xizang) to the south and Siberia to the north; and Manchuria, a battleground for centuries in the east – are surveyed in this chapter. For past millenniums, the Himalayas and the vast deserts to the west provided natural defensive barricades to China in the south and west. In the north, China built and maintained a wall to keep out its enemies. This failed and crumbling barrier remains a symbol of unsuccessful attempts to thwart foreign aggression. In two instances, full-scale invasions from the north created non-Chinese ruling dynasties, the Yuan (Mongols) and the Qing (Manchus).

The population of non-Han Turkic people in the west and the Russians of various ethnic and tribal groups north of the four thousand mile long Great Wall are a constant reminder to Beijing of the requirement to manage the “barbarians.” Threats from the predominately Muslim west, and especially from the vast northern frontier, demand vigilance for the sake of China's sovereignty and the protection of its national territory and interests. However, unlike the indigenous nomadic raiders from the steppes and the northern forests, the Russians incrementally moved east to build a Eurasian empire, and were relative latecomers along China's northern periphery. In spite of their small numbers initially, a clash of empires began as the Russians moved to expand their territory at the end of the Ming dynasty period.

Beginning in the 1550s, Russian merchants seeking their fortunes east of the Urals and Cossacks seeking new lands and opportunities, moved inexorably across the steppe and forested regions of Siberia setting up forts and trading posts. By the early 1640s, the Tsar sanctioned further exploratory missions, and small bands of Russian traders and Cossacks began to move across Siberia and into the Amur River region of northeast China. While the primary purpose was commercial and not territorial conquest, there

were skirmishes with the nomadic tribes they encountered along the way. There were also clashes with the native Manchus in the northeast who replaced the ethnic Han Ming rulers in 1644 and established China's Qing dynasty.²



Figure 3.1 Asia Map. Graphic courtesy of CIA Fact Book, located at https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook//graphics/ref_maps/political/jpg/asia.jpg.

From the seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century, three great empires – The Manchu Qing (1644-1911), the Muscovite-Russian (1613-1917), and the Mongolian Zunghars (1671-1760) – contended for power in the heart of Eurasia. By the end of the epic confrontation, an early version of the “Great Game,” only two empires were left standing. The Qing and the Russian faced each other along an extended border.³

The Qing Dynasty Period (1644-1911)

After several failed attempts, in 1656 an official Russian emissary arrived in Beijing and was allowed to begin negotiations with the Qing court. Over the coming decades, agreements were sought over a variety of issues including trade and eventually the demarcation of the border. The concurrent reemergence of increasingly united Mongol forces, in a swath of territory from Tibet to Siberia, began to interpose between the newly established Russians and China's ruling Manchu. The rising Mongol threat and the desire for increased trade created a common cause. Both sides grew more willing to work together and compromise.⁴

The signing of the Treaties of Nerchinsk (1689) and Kiakhta (1729) were attempts by Qing China to both work more closely with Russia and to mitigate further encroachments. These pacts helped set the stage for the growth of Russia's military and economic presence and power in the far eastern territories of its now vast empire stretching from Central Europe to the Sea of Okhotsk and the Bering Sea. These predominately diplomatic and economic agreements put Russia into the orbit of China's last dynasty as the ruling Manchus attempted to protect China's borders and territory from the pressure of both domestic and foreign challenges. The relationship with Russia was unique because of geography and the shared threat of nomadic tribal groups. By the mid-19th century, in addition to major internal revolts such as the Taiping Rebellion, China was increasingly challenged by predatory imperialist powers – and this included Russia.⁵

The Tsar's expanding interests in the region and the growing weakness of the Qing dynasty led inexorably to Russia taking on the role as just another of the European powers intent on “carving up the melon.” However, unlike the other Europeans, Russia was also now an Asian power that shared a long border, the Mongols, and a unique history of diplomatic relations with China. Perhaps most importantly, the two countries had mutual desire to limit the territorial imperatives and influence of the other outside powers – Asian, American, and European. That shared desire would not be without cost or conflict for China in its relationship with Russia. It would also eventually exact a price from Russia as well.

By 1858 at the Treaty of Aigun, and in 1860, when Russia played the role of go-between in China's Second Opium War with Great Britain and France, China was forced not only into concessions to these two European powers, but also to cede important territory to Russia, its interlocutor. An unequal treaty with one foreign power normally resulted in “most favored nation” status for all the others involved with China. During the period 1879 to 1881, two years before its war with France over influence in Vietnam and the East China Sea, the Qing also had a border dispute with Russia in East Turkistan, now the Uygur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang (Sinkiang), called the Ili Crisis. While territory occupied by Russia was returned, the borders and influence with ethnic groups in the west remained fluid, disputed, and periodically contested militarily, not only in Xinjiang, but also in Tibet. There are territories in the west, ceded to the Tsar at this time, that remain part of the Russia Federation and Central Asian states today.⁶

These agreements are part of the legacy of unequal treaties signed under duress, an era the Chinese call their “century of humiliation.”⁷ Despite these “forced” territorial concessions and in some cases requirements to pay reparations, China and Russia were to a certain extent natural allies, albeit in the 1800s and early 1900s as it has been at times since, this was an unequal partnership. While there was a “Great Game” in Central Asia between Great Britain and Russia, there was arguably a greater game with more players ongoing within China. This was most obvious with the growth of the foreign concessions and treaty ports along the coast beginning in the southeast, working its way north to Shanghai and up the Yangzi River, and into the resource-rich northeast.⁸ Their shared border and the historical evolution of their relationship made Sino-Russian bilateral ties unique in this other Asian game for international influence in China. This competition also led both countries into periodic disputes with each other, and especially with Japan, a nation with increasing ambitions on the Asian mainland.

In 1894-1895, the Chinese suffered a humiliating defeat in a war with the “restored” Meiji Japan over control of Korea. In the Treaty of Shimonoseki ending the war, the Japanese were given territorial concessions on the Liaodong peninsula in addition to Taiwan and the Pescadores. However, the Liaodong port acquisition was later rescinded because of the Triple Intervention by France, Germany, and Russia. Japan was forced into the position of the unequal and lesser partner in its relations with the European powers and

China. Although this partially closed a door for Japanese expansion temporarily, other routes into Manchuria were also available, and weakly defended. Shortly thereafter, China was again “forced” into another unequal agreement by Russia.

Port Arthur at the end of the Liaodong peninsula, which had been originally ceded to Japan in 1895, was given to Russia. The Qing dynasty, and imperial rule in China, was fast coming to an end. Playing off the foreign powers vying for territory, trade, and influence in China against one another was a survival mechanism for a regime that was coming apart at the seams. This incessant foreign meddling in Chinese internal affairs set the stage for even more international competition in Asia. This included decades of competition and conflict between Russia and Japan for access and control of northeastern China and Manchuria. Ironically, this relationship began with these two nations acting as allies.⁹

In 1900, Russia and Japan provided the largest military contingents in what the Chinese call “The War against the Invasion of the Eight-Power Allied Forces.”¹⁰ The Boxer Relief Mission, including forces from the United States and seven other nations, was opposed by Chinese imperial troops as well as thousands of Boxers – religious fanatics of the Society of the Righteous and Harmonious Fists. The poorly armed and coordinated Chinese regular and irregular forces were defeated over a period of about two months. The Qing court led by the Empress Dowager Cixi escaped to Xian in the northwest. The surrendered Imperial forces could only watch as Beijing and the surrounding area were occupied and ransacked by the forces of the foreign powers.¹¹

In the aftermath of this humiliating defeat, the Chinese were forced to pay huge reparations and suffer the continuing indignity of foreign militaries occupying its capital city and a corridor from Beijing through Tianjin to the Daku Forts on the Bohai Gulf. For the next decade, multinational forces including American Army and Marine units rotated into China’s capital region. In 1912, the United States Fifteenth Infantry Regiment was permanently stationed in the Tianjin area and remained there until 1938 as part of this foreign occupation force.¹² Japan and Russia also stationed large contingents of military forces in occupation as both countries had enduring designs on Chinese territory, key ports, and internal lines of communication. Given a rising and aggressive Japan, China’s political and military weakness, and a deteriorating situation in Russia’s ruling Romanov regime in far off Moscow, a war between these two “allies” on Chinese territory was not long in coming after the Boxer Uprising.

In 1904, open conflict between the two erupted in the northeast and in the adjacent waters. The Russians were soundly, but not decisively, defeated in land battles conducted on Chinese soil. The Russians lost Port Arthur and the fleet stationed there early in the war. They later lost the majority of their expeditionary European fleet in the Battle of Tsushima Strait. Rather than continue this costly and humiliating fight the Russians sued for peace. Again, the United States was involved tangentially, as President Theodore Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to end the war with the Treaty of Portsmouth. However, this pact did little to curb competition for control of Manchuria between these two powers.¹³ Russia’s defeat by Japan influenced the eventual collapse of the Tsarist regime. The failed Russian Revolution of 1905 followed by the economic and social costs of World War I beginning in 1914, led to a second revolution in 1917 by Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Not unexpectedly, Japan and other foreign powers intervened to protect their interests in the Russian Far East.

From 1918-1922, a multinational force including the United States (7,000) and Japan (70,000) deployed to the area of Vladivostok in the midst of the Russian Revolution. Japan was concerned about the new Communist government being formed and what that would mean for Russian territories in the Far East.

Japanese and Soviet (Bolshevik) forces clashed as the Communists attempted to consolidate territory and gain control of Vladivostok. Japan tried to take advantage of the new government's weakness in the region and fought against the Soviet forces; however, when the Soviet Union was established and recognized, the Japanese forces withdrew from the region. This part of Russia, and after 1922, the Soviet Union, had been part of China since the Treaty of Aigun. While events in Europe were critical to these momentous changes in Russia, relations with China, and especially its competition with Japan, played a role in the fall of the Romanovs. However, China was on a parallel path to radical political change about this same period.¹⁴

The Chinese Republican Era (1911-1949)

After a failed effort at reform beginning with the humiliation of the Boxer Rebellion, the Qing Dynasty finally collapsed in October of 1911 in the aftermath of an attack on Imperial forces at Wuchang in central China. A weak and fractured Republic of China (ROC) was established under Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan), but military rule soon returned under Yuan Shikai, a warlord, who in 1915 proclaimed himself the new emperor and died soon thereafter in 1916. Sun Yat-sen returned to power in 1919 and in the early 1920s selected Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi), who had attended military school in Japan, as his military commander. The Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang (Guomindang), and its military arm, the National Revolutionary Army (NRA), quickly gained momentum from its base of operations in southern China. Sun, a medical doctor by education with socialist political views, sought Soviet help and support for his new movement and in 1924 sent Chiang to the Soviet Union on a fact-finding mission. Chinese Communists were also part of Sun's socialist movement and included those educated in France during World War I and in the Soviet Union as well as those like Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong), who had not left China.¹⁵

The Chinese Communist Party held its first conference in Shanghai in 1921. As the turbulence of its own revolution subsided, the USSR, now led by Joseph Stalin, began to provide military assistance to Sun's Nationalist movement. A new stable and militarily competent China could be an ally against Japan. The Chinese Communist and the Nationalist movements had evolved into two wings of the same party.¹⁶ The Soviets provided advisors to the Whampoa (Huangpo) Military Academy established in 1924 in southern China to produce professional officer cadre for the nascent NRA. Chou En-lai (Zhou Enlai), the Communist leader and future, long-serving second-in-command to Mao, was Chiang's deputy and headed the school's political department.¹⁷

The military leaders produced in this school played a key role in Chiang's political and military efforts to defeat or integrate the regional warlords and unify China. His Northern Expedition to unite the country began in 1926. His offensive included a move to eliminate the Communist faction within the Nationalist movement in the spring of 1927. This precipitated a crisis of sorts between Stalin and Chiang. Disenchanted with a Soviet agenda he saw as too overtly political and Communist, Chiang replaced the Soviet advisors with German officers. While support from the Stalin was not completely cut off, the Soviets shifted some of their support to the Chinese Communists elements that had survived Chiang's initial purges.¹⁸

Chiang's violent split with the Chinese Communists drove them underground and led to the formation of the rural-based Chinese Soviets (Sanctuaries) in several remote rural areas in the southeast. A significant number of the Chinese Communists leadership had lived and were educated in the Soviet Union. Ironically, while attacking the Communists in China, Chiang's oldest son, Chiang Ching-kuo (Jiang Jingguo), was attending college in the USSR. He lived there for twelve years (1925-1937).¹⁹ Chiang's rift with Stalin over his continuing effort to wipe out the Communists in China would heal after the 1936 Xian Incident and the

declaration of the 2nd United Front. However, during the early 1930s, Chiang moved to consolidated power and unite China. His key aim was the destruction of the Communist movement in China.

In the early 1930s, Chiang mounted five “Extermination” or Encirclement campaigns against the Chinese Communists. The last of which would result in the Communist retreat from the southeast of China to the northwest – the Long March.²⁰ What happened in China was important to Stalin, for both his consolidation of the Soviet portions of Central Asia, and especially, with the ongoing problem of the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo (Manzhuguo) established in 1932 with the deposed “Last Chinese Emperor,” Puyi, as titular head. The independent, and unpredictable, Japanese Kwantung Army not only had a tight grip on Manchuria, but also had designs on additional Soviet and Chinese territory.²¹ Stalin was not only having trouble dealing with Chiang, but also with the Chinese Communists. During the Long March in 1934-1935, a rift over how to carry out the war against Chiang’s Nationalists erupted within the Chinese Communist Party leadership. Mao, the home grown Communist, took control of the Party and the Red Army, rejected Soviet help and advice, marginalized or executed the Soviet-educated Chinese Communists, and began a period of extended guerrilla warfare.²²

By 1937, Stalin again supported both Chinese factions. This was facilitated by the July 7th Incident at the Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing, marking the beginning of World War II in Asia. The Soviet decision was influenced by the end of German military support to the Nationalists; the escalation of its own conflict with the Japanese along the border in Manchuria; and, the formation of a Second United Front by the Nationalists and Communists coalescing Chinese opposition to the Japanese. Ultimately, Stalin abandoned support to China because he did not want a two front war with the Germans in Europe and the Japanese in Asia. A Russo-Japanese neutrality pact was signed in the spring of 1941, essentially ending Soviet support to China until Stalin’s forces re-entered the Second World War in Asia on the 8th of August of 1945 with an attack and a follow-on occupation of Manchuria. With Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor and the Philippines, the United States was in the war, and would ramp up support to Chiang.

During World War II, he [Stalin] often made slighting remarks about Mao Tse-tung. Somewhat to the surprise of his listeners, he seemed to value Chiang Kai-shek more highly than Mao, whom he referred to as a “margarine Communist” – a fake Communist. Both during World War II and after, Stalin turned his back demonstrably on Mao; there is nothing more difficult to establish than a candid appraisal of one Communist leader of another.²³

In late August of 1945, Stalin and Chiang signed the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance. The Chinese acquiesced to the independence of Mongolia and long term Soviet use of the port of Dalian (Old Port Arthur). The Soviets agreed to suspend support to Mao and the Communists, and withdraw from Manchuria where they had defeated the Japanese forces. The Soviet Army, however, extended their stay in Manchuria, removed key industrial infrastructure, and helped thwart Nationalist attempts to use ports there to logistically support its forces fighting Mao’s Red Army in the northeast.²⁴

After failed attempts by first Ambassador Patrick Hurley and then General George C. Marshall, supported by the continued presence of American military forces and advisors, to negotiate a unified China from the fall of 1945 to early 1947, China erupted into full scale civil war. By October of 1949, Mao and the Communists defeated Chiang, and the Nationalist fled to Taiwan. Stalin played both sides in the Chinese Civil War, and the degree to which he supported Mao and the Communists with arms and equipment is still much debated. However, it is clear America continued to support Chiang after 1947, which gave Mao no real option other than to turn to Stalin and the Soviets for support, both then and after 1949. This Soviet

assistance was, however, not without its quid pro quo. The continued use of Chinese ports, acceptance of the status of Mongolia, and, potential territorial prerogatives in China's far west, all remained in play at the end of the Chinese Civil War.²⁵

Mao and the People's Republic of China (1949-1976)

On 2 October 1949, the Soviet Union was the first country to recognize the newly established People's Republic of China (PRC).²⁶ Mao, in his first visit to a foreign country, traveled to Moscow in February 1950 to meet with Stalin. Mao was first ignored and made to wait for an audience. Ultimately a new Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Aid was signed introducing a new era of guarded Sino-Soviet friendship. Military equipment, advisors, and technical assistance to China were forthcoming as was a major confrontation with the United States. In June of 1950, North Korean forces attacked south, captured Seoul, and despite the employment of American ground troops deployed from occupation duty in Japan, drove United Nations (UN) forces into a small defensive perimeter at Pusan in the southeast.

In September, UN forces counter-attacked and drove north to the Yalu River and the Chinese border in apparent decisive victory and the unification of the peninsula. However, in October the Chinese People's Volunteers attacked and inflicted what is perhaps the worst military defeat in history on American forces.²⁷ As the war dragged on over more than two years, it was China and not their ally the USSR that suffered the casualties and paid the human cost of Communist fraternity and unity. Stalin's death in 1953 again changed the trajectory of Sino-Russian relations as Nikita Khrushchev rose to power.

The first tangible proof of this change was the lack of Soviet support during the First Taiwan Crisis of 1954-1955 between the United States and China.²⁸ As the 1950s unfolded, the relationship continued to be more problematic. China's role in the Non-aligned Movement and the Soviet crackdown in Hungary in 1956 began to seriously fray the relationship. Mao again visited the Soviet Union in 1957 and further disagreements with the Soviet leadership over détente with the West, the sharing of nuclear technology, and Soviet policies in Eastern Europe presaged the end of military advice and support by 1960. This was exacerbated by the Soviet refusal to back China in a second Taiwan Strait crisis in 1958.²⁹ China's disastrous Great Leap Forward and inward looking policies from 1959-1962 further estranged the relationship. Soviets support for India in 1962 in the border crisis with China only accelerated the downward trend.

Mao's initiation of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) was marked not only with internal turmoil within the Chinese Communist Party, but also with the further deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations, culminating in a border conflict in the northeast along the Amur (Heilongjiang) River.³⁰ While this was a minor skirmish in terms of casualties, Mao's move to improve relations with the United States as it sought China's help in negotiations to end the Vietnam War came as something of a surprise. By 1971, Kissinger's Ping Pong Diplomacy and America's acquiescence of the PRC replacing the ROC in the United Nations showed Mao's decision was well under way. The Nixon visit in 1972 cemented the complete split from the Soviet Union and the turn toward the United States.³¹

China Post-Mao

This rapprochement survived the death of Mao in 1976, a brief interregnum, and gained momentum at the end of 1978 when Deng Xiaoping became the undisputed leader of China. In 1978, the Soviets increased support to Vietnam as its relations with China soured after the 1975 unification of the country. In 1978, the Soviets and the Vietnamese signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation that provided military and economic assistance to Vietnam, but also gave the Soviets access to bases and facilities. Soviet forces

and “friends” (India and Vietnam) now surrounded China. Vietnam’s closer relations with the Soviets, its 1978 invasion of Cambodia, tensions along the Sino-Vietnam border, and the issue of refugees flooding out of the country brought the two nations to the brink of war.

In January of 1979, Deng Xiaoping conducted a very successful visit to the US and signed the 1979 Communiqué establishing full diplomatic relations with the US. This was quickly followed by a bold attack in February of 1979 by China into Vietnam, now a virtual client state highly dependent on the Soviets for assistance. The Soviets had postured their forces in the Far East and warned the Chinese not to invade. China ignored the warnings, an action with the potential to precipitate a major conflict. In the end, the Chinese withdrew from Vietnam in about three weeks, but the Soviets had failed to directly support their ally. By the end of 1979, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and both China and the US moved to support their mutual ally, Pakistan, now a front line state in opposing Soviet aggression. Arguably, in 1979 the Sino-Soviet relationship was historically low. Over the next decade Sino-American relations continued to warm with the visit of President Ronald Reagan in 1984 followed by a series of arms sales agreements, military-to-military activities, and high level reciprocal visits.

In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union and again major changes in Sino-Soviet Relations were on the horizon. Soviet relations also improved with the United States, as Gorbachev and Reagan began a series of meetings that would eventually lead to the end of the Soviet Union. In May 1989, after having withdrawn Soviet troops from Afghanistan in February, Gorbachev was in Beijing meeting with Deng during the protests in Tiananmen Square. The brutal response by the Chinese government in June caused the US to re-think its relations with China and the door was now open for better Sino-Soviet relations. By 1991, the Soviet Union had collapsed, the former Soviet Socialist Republics including the Central Asian states were independent, Gorbachev was out of office, a coup had failed, and Boris Yeltsin was now leading the Commonwealth of Independent States. Concurrently, the US was at war in the Middle East. The economic reforms instigated at the end of the 1970s by Deng Xiaoping had begun to produce ten percent rates of growth in the Chinese economy. Jiang Zemin had replaced Deng as the Party Secretary and was the new emerging leader of China. The two decades of better Sino-US relations was ending and with the rise of Vladimir Putin. A new Sino-Russian relationship was emerging. What does the history and geopolitics of the last 450 years of Sino-Russian relations tell us about the future of the Eurasian “heartland?”³²

The Interplay of History and Contingency: The SCO and Beyond (1996-2016)

In 1996, Putin joined the Boris Yeltsin government and quickly rose through the ranks to the leadership of Russia. In that year, five countries in Eurasia, the Shanghai Five, came together to further mutual economic and security interests in the region. In 2001, a decade after the disestablishment of the Soviet Union and the creation of the Russia Federation, the leadership of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, with the addition of Uzbekistan formed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Since that time these core states have added several partners and observers. In the fall of 2015, Pakistan and India were invited to participate as full members. As a block, these members with the additional observers represent the development of a potentially powerful coalition in Eurasia. Indeed, this may be the most important organization to watch in terms of indications of the future of Sino-Russian relationship. What comes next in Eurasia will be in part contingent on intervening events. The following paragraphs offer an opaque look at a hazy contingent horizon of Sino-Russian relations which promises to be as complex and convoluted as the history described above. Nevertheless, precedent, however fickle and ambiguous, may be our best guide to the future.

Currently, there is an overarching set of contingencies binding the Russians and the Chinese together – their geography, resource complementarity, and strategic military pressure from both east and west. The effort to expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) eastward has driven Russia to find an ally of convenience. Incidents in Estonia, Georgia, the Ukraine, as well as current NATO deployments into the Baltic States and Eastern Europe, continue to encourage Russia to maintain a closer relationship with China. In complementary terms in Asia, China was pushed closer to Russia in 2011 with the announcement of the American pivot to Asia. This is interpreted by China as a further indication of the implementation of the tried and true American strategy of containment. These two American interest driven strategies have given Russia and China greater common cause. Nevertheless, there are easily imaginable contingent events that could change that relationship making it stronger or splintering it. Both governments are run by realists who understand and strive to attain their own personal and national interests – the history of these two countries clearly shows they are neither friends nor allies. Below are four sets of contingencies with the potential to influence this relationship and, therefore, future events.

The first set of contingent events relate to the potential expansion of Al Qaeda or Islamic State in the Levant-like violent Islamist groups into Central Asia and Western China. Russia's wars against majority Muslim areas such as Chechnya in 1994 and 1999 could easily creep to the east. Greater instability in Central Asia is the likely result of the inevitable changes that are coming in the Soviet-era authoritarian leadership in the region. This could easily spill over into China. Since 1949, the PRC has used overbearing military and police power to control the Central Asian Turkic Muslim Uighurs in Xinjiang. For China, the Uighur-based East Turkestan Independence Movement is more than a potential threat. A senior Chinese official recently announced that “hundreds and thousands” of Chinese Uighurs have joined ISIS.³³ The response to instability in Central Asia could sow discontent between China and Russia by bringing on a new great game, or it could bring them closer together as these areas become sanctuaries for violent Muslim extremist organizations pushed out of Iraq, Syria, or other current or potential areas of unrest.

The second set of potential contingencies is in Northeast Asia. Manchuria is still important to both China and Russia. An outbreak of major hostilities on the Korean peninsula, depending on the circumstances of initiation, could again either foster or split Sino-Russian relations. How to deal with a nuclear North Korea exacerbates the problem for all interested parties. A collapsed North Korea could be both a humanitarian disaster and a rogue nuclear state problem. The unification option also offers challenges in terms of which way a single Korea might “lean.” In addition, there will be economic costs with any future scenario in the Korea. A nuclear, independent, and aggressive North Korea and a reticent or retreating America could spark a major effort by Japan to rearm. Japan and China have had two wars. Japan and Russia have not cleaned up the territorial mess in the Northern Territories from its two wars. This leads to the third contingency influencing Chinese and Russian behavior – the rearming of Japan.

With or without a nuclear capability, Japan with a growing military, whether supported by the US or not, would likely drive the PRC and Russia closer together. Both China and Russia have separate long-standing issues with Japan. China has long sought reparations and a proper apology for atrocities committed during World War II. In addition, there are unresolved territorial sea claims with potential oil reserves in the East China Sea. Russia and Japan still disagree on sovereignty of the Kurile Islands. If any of these issues were solved, better relations could ensue. Nevertheless, bad blood between Japan and Russia has never really benefitted China. Enhancements in Japan's naval and air capability, especially in combination with greater interoperability with the American navy, favors neither China nor Russia.

The third set of major contingencies is related to China's growing requirements for oil, gas, and natural resources. Where is the new Manchuria, the new China Eastern Railway, and who owns and controls it? Unless the US Navy was to withdraw "east of Guam," America is always a threat to sever China's vital sea lines of communication in time of conflict or crisis. Therefore, the land route either along the old Silk Road through Central Asia or from Russian along spur lines off the Trans-Baikal and Trans-Siberian railways are important land alternatives where good relations with Russia would be critical. China's resource lifelines are in the hands of the US Navy and the Russians. Although there is a third land route from Iran through Pakistan to western China, strategically, China must keep its options open. However, Russia holds the land trump card. The last contingency is directly related to the Sino-Russian relationship.

A fourth contingency is about Chinese "lebensraum" or living space in Mongolia and the Far East. The population statistics of Russians versus Chinese east of the Urals are striking. "4.3 million Russians facing 109 million Chinese."³⁴ A growing Chinese population in the area of their common borders and a shrinking Russian population does not auger well for China's people in the northeast staying put. Increased trade, commerce, investment, and immigration into lands once considered part of China have a certain inevitability in terms of the loss of Russian control. Add to this the Mongolia problem of trying to stay neutral between the two giant states. Resource rich and landlocked Mongolia will find it difficult not to succumb to China's market charms and be swallowed up by the growing need for natural resources. This last potential contingency may be the most likely to break the growing bond between China and Russia.

Conclusion

A key underpinning of China's rise, strategic goals, and concurrent increase in defense capabilities is the historic concept of "a century of humiliation." The period from the Opium War of 1839-1842 to the establishment of the PRC in October of 1949 was one hundred and ten years of foreign involvement in China's internal affairs. War and conflict with foreign powers resulted in the loss of sovereign rights, territory or prestige or face in Asian terms. Russia was both a partner with China in some of these conflicts, but was also a perpetrator and recipient of special rights in, and control over, Chinese lands. There are limits to this relationship no matter how much contingent events and mutual interest drive Russia and China together in this uneasy, unequal and fragile partnership. In Asia, history matters and for Russia and China the past is filled with unhappy and unhelpful memories.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

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Chapter 4
Made by History: Power, Energy, Security, and Conflict
The First World War in the Caucasus and North Persia in 1918
Major Roland Minez

Introduction¹

If “what’s past is prologue,” then there are few better regions than the Caucasus in the world to study diplomatic and military operations.² In the Caucasus, the Eurasian landmass meets the Middle East. Flanked by the Black and Caspian Seas, ringed by beautiful mountains, and cursed with abundant natural resources, it has long been coveted by great powers.

Such competition in the region between the great powers will continue. The Caspian Sea has been estimated to contain oil and natural gas reserves that exceed that of Kuwait, the Gulf of Mexico, or the North Sea. The ongoing struggle over the control of the energy pipelines through the independent states of the Caucasus will decide how much Russia can dominate its former satellites.³

As a crossroads between cultures and empires, it is home to diverse ethnicities with a deep sense of history. Intense nationalist and religious loyalties lead to conflict. The modern descendants of the regional players in this study will be familiar to followers of current events: Turkey, Iran, Russia, Iraq, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Kurdistan.

In 1918, a British task force found itself deep in the Caucasus, far from support, amongst conflicting revolutionary and ethnic factions, fighting the Ottoman Army in the final months of World War I. The Central Powers were on the offensive in the Caucasus. The allure of Caspian oil, the opportunity for a new Turkic ethnic empire, and the perceived vulnerability of British India inspired fresh efforts in the region by both the Ottomans and Germans. Their rival objectives in the Caucasus would bring these erstwhile partners into conflict.

The collapse of the Tsarist Russian Empire and its replacement by communists unwilling to continue fighting the Central Powers left a dangerous gap to the north of British Forces in the Middle East. It was into this gap that the British task force was meant to strengthen the ethnic groups in the path of any Ottoman offensive. The original objectives of this task force, named Dunsterforce after its commander-Major General Lionel Dunsterville, were anything but clear. Policy makers in the British government dreamt up the operation in the previous century’s tradition of economy of force colonial missions. However, support for Dunsterforce was placed under skeptical control of the British command in Baghdad that had learned the requirements of modern mechanized warfare from painful experience.⁴ Furthermore, the disruptions caused by the First World War and the Russian revolution of the previous year unleashed a cauldron of conflicting groups in the Caucasus seeking an advantage from the confused situation. Dunsterville and his men would have to navigate this environment to accomplish their mission.

In January 1918, none of the belligerents could confidently predict the outcome of the ongoing titanic struggle known to us now as the First World War. The conflict had begun over three years before, and the size and scope of the war dwarfed the expectations of experts on both sides. Amidst this uncertainty, few military and political leaders believed the war would end within the year. Yet all sides realized that 1917 ushered in profound political and military changes that altered the calculus of the conflict. As a result, the belligerents braced for a climactic year in the struggle, none sure of the outcome.

The participants themselves looked first to the Western Front. During the first three years, this had been the key arena of the war, where most combatant powers had allocated the majority of their forces. From Switzerland to the English Channel, in France and Belgium, the massive armies of these powers had slaughtered each other in seesaw battles over well-developed defensive positions. 1918 would prove no different. The United States had only recently entered the war and the Allies, also known as the Entente, impatiently awaited the arrival of American forces to reinforce their badly depleted armies and alter the balance of power on the Western Front.

Yet it was on the Eastern and Middle Eastern Fronts where the most significant changes had occurred. The Tsarist Russian Empire had been convulsed by revolution and left the war. Russia had previously suffered a string of catastrophic defeats fighting the Germans on the Eastern Front. Following the abdication of the Tsar in March 1917, the embryonic government led by Alexander Kerensky attempted to remain in the struggle in accordance with the agreements made with the other Entente powers – notably France and Great Britain. However, in November 1917, a communist coup within the revolution seized control of the country.⁵ This communist group, known as the Bolsheviks, and their leader, Vladimir Lenin, demanded that Russia leave the war. The rallying cry energized elements within the Soviets, or councils of workers and soldiers, to side with the Bolsheviks.⁶

Germany had orchestrated Lenin's entry into Russia during the upheaval. As a result, the Entente powers believed Lenin was an agent of Germany and refused to recognize the Bolshevik regime.⁷ Regardless, the Russian collapse enabled Germany to mass its troops in the west for planned offensives meant to destroy the Allies before the arrival of more American forces. Russia's exit also opened up opportunities for Germany and her Ottoman Empire ally in the Middle East and Central Asia.⁸

When the war began, the Ottoman Empire controlled much of the Middle East. Its capital was the ancient city of Constantinople, also referred to as Istanbul. Although it ruled many people and religions, its core was Turkish Anatolia and its power resided firmly with the Sunni Muslim Turks. The Empire was nominally led by a Sultan, who also held religious authority over the world's Sunni Muslims through his title of Caliph. Consequently, in 1908 a group of energetic liberal reformers, popularly known as the Young Turks, seized power.

In October 1914, the Young Turks led the Ottoman Empire to formally join the Central Powers, an alliance that included Imperial Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Ottomans hoped to protect their empire against their traditional antagonist – Tsarist Russia – as well as encroaching French and British interests.⁹ Their alliance with Germany built upon ties begun in earnest by Kaiser Wilhelm II before the war. Most noticeably, these ties included the planned Berlin-Baghdad railway and a sizable German military mission sent to modernize Ottoman forces.¹⁰

The Young Turk leaders who ran the Ottoman Empire also hoped to retake long-lost provinces in Caucasia from Russia and eliminate British and Italian *de facto* control of their territories in Egypt and Libya. The Minister of War, Enver Pasha, had even grander designs to extend the Ottoman Empire.

Enver dominated the formulation of Ottoman military strategy during the First World War. Dynamic, creative, and aggressive, he sought glorious operational victories for the Ottoman Empire. The pursuit of such grand designs and his innate optimism led him to overestimate the capabilities of his forces and underestimate the obstacles in his path.¹¹ As an avowed Turkish nationalist, he was the principal advocate of a Pan-Turkic policy to unify Turkic ethnic relatives in the Caucasus, Persia, and central Asia.¹²

By 1918, these Ottoman aspirations had been thwarted in a series of stinging defeats. Earlier in the First World War, the Ottoman and Tsarist Russian armies had fought in the Caucasus. In the midst of the winter of 1914-1915, Enver Pasha personally oversaw a bold but foolhardy offensive across the snow covered Caucasus Mountains that attempted to envelop Russian forces. After suffering immensely in the frigid weather, an Ottoman detachment reached the city of Sarakamis only to be destroyed. Ill-equipped for the subzero temperatures, the Ottoman Third Army suffered a catastrophic defeat losing 75,000 men and most of their artillery.¹³



Figure 4.1 Area of Operations. Graphic created by Sven Hoogerheide, from a concept by the author, 18 February 2016.

In January 1916, the Russians launched their own offensive targeting the prized fortress city of Erzerum. In a brilliantly conceived assault, during the night of 13 February, Russian troops climbing, and sometimes crawling over their coats to not sink in snowdrifts over five to six feet deep, seized the commanding heights and turned the remaining Ottoman outer defenses.¹⁴ On 16 February, the Russians entered the city itself. The

loss of Erzerum was so devastating that it was hidden from the Ottoman Sultan for several months.¹⁵ The Tsarist Armies, before their own collapse, also defeated Ottoman offensives in Persia, today known as Iran. Moreover, although Ottoman forces successfully repulsed the Allies in battles over the Dardanelle Straits, their own Egyptian offensives were quickly defeated.

The Strategic Outlook of the British in the Middle East 1917-1918

The Ottoman threats to British-controlled Egypt directly targeted the sea line of communication between Britain and her colonies and dominions in the East. Australia, New Zealand, and British India, among other territories, were key providers of manpower and other resources throughout the First World War. All such men and material passed through the Suez Canal in Egypt, the objective of two daring but unsuccessful offensives by the Ottomans. Before World War I, the Ottomans had continued to exercise official control over Egypt in uneasy coordination with Britain and the semi-independent Egyptian Governor. Thus, the security, and perceived vulnerability, of the Suez Canal drove the British to commit increasing resources to the Middle East and search for ways to defeat the Ottomans.

By 1917, the British were advancing in the Arabian Peninsula, Palestine, and Iraq, then known to the British as Mesopotamia. In the Arabian Peninsula, Arab irregular forces famously aided by British officers such as T.E. Lawrence seized isolated garrison towns and harassed Ottoman forces. In Palestine, a British Army under General Edmund Allenby broke through Ottoman defenses and entered Jerusalem before Christmas 1917.¹⁶

In Mesopotamia, initial British successes in seizing the access to the Persian Gulf and the city of Basra led to overextension and disaster. In one of the greatest defeats in British military history, a large force surrendered to the Ottomans after a lengthy siege at Kut al-Imara in 1916. British reorganization and reinforcement under General Stanley Maude ultimately led to their capture of Baghdad in March 1917.¹⁷

Meanwhile, Persia, an ostensibly neutral country, had become an arena of conflict between the warring states. In 1907, Britain and Russia divided the nominally independent country into spheres of influence. The Russians would oversee the northern third of the country and the British would likewise control the southern third. The center third of Persia would remain independent of foreign domination. This treaty ended the competition in Asia between both powers, popularly known as the Great Game, and enabled their alliance during the war. Understandably, the Persians greatly resented this violation of their sovereignty.¹⁸

Furthermore, the British had discovered oil in Persia before the First World War. This source of fuel was essential for the operation of the Royal Navy fleet. It was initially in defense of these oil fields that Britain had attacked Mesopotamia in 1914.

During the First World War, Russia and Britain deployed forces to Persia to secure their interests in the officially neutral country and deny its terrain and resources to the Central Powers. Earlier in 1917, Russian Cossacks linked up with British forces in Mesopotamia in the first tentative steps of a dreamed unified front against the Ottomans. The subsequent Russian collapse following the revolution left a gaping hole to the north and east of the British in Mesopotamia.

As a result, by December 1917, the rise of the Bolsheviks and successes of the Central Powers emboldened Persian nationalists, who placed increasing pressure on the government they perceived as collaborating with the Entente. British authorities worried that Persia might erupt and support the Central Powers.¹⁹

The Objectives of the Ottoman Empire and Germany in the Caucasus and Northern Persia 1918

Entente successes on the Middle Eastern Fronts placed increasing strain on the war-weary Ottoman Empire and resulted in the loss of significant Ottoman territory. Yet, the Russian collapse in 1917 provided new opportunities to make up for those losses. The temporary weakness of their colossal nemesis, Russia, encouraged the Ottomans to redraw the geopolitical boundaries. Enver Pasha wanted to seize the Caucasus and Trans-Caspian regions from a defeated Russia and the embryonic ethnic state(s) that had sprung up in the power vacuum. He also hoped to overwhelm Persia and envelop the British in Mesopotamia.²⁰

These plans built upon previous designs by both Germany and the Ottomans. A key objective of the Germans in securing an alliance with the Ottomans earlier in the war was to leverage the religious authority of the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph to mobilize Muslim inhabitants of the British, Russian, and French Empires in a holy war against their rulers. At the time, the British Empire had the largest Muslim population in the world, greater even than the Ottoman Empire itself.²¹ Three weeks after the Ottomans entered the war, the Sultan-Caliph issued a *fatwa*, or religious ruling. It was read aloud in all the mosques of the Ottoman Empire and propaganda leaflets were smuggled into the Entente's Muslim domains calling for "annihilation of the enemies of Islam."²²

One of the most enticing targets of this campaign was India, the centerpiece of the British Empire. It held a large Muslim population, a burgeoning independence movement, and a history of violent insurrection against British rule. Germany dispatched military, diplomatic, and intelligence officers to Persia and Afghanistan to incite local tribes against the Entente powers. They ultimately hoped to convince the rulers of both those states to join the Ottomans and declare war against the British Empire opening the way for an assault on India itself.²³ Such covert maneuvers were conducted in conjunction with two conventional Ottoman offensives into Persia, checked by the Tsarist Russian Army. These initiatives destabilized Persia but did not succeed in directly threatening British control there or in India.

By 1918, these earlier goals to foment insurrection were now joined by the desperate need of both the Ottomans and Germans to secure the raw materials necessary to continue prosecuting the war. The Caucasus could supply the cotton and oil that the Central Powers craved; Baku itself had over two hundred oil refineries before the war.²⁴ In the 1890s, the city provided around 50 percent of the world's oil needs. While the war adversely affected production, Baku still produced 7 million tons of oil every year. In 1918, there were 2,000 oil wells in the vicinity of the city.²⁵ British business interests controlled 60 percent of this production.²⁶

Therein lay the seeds for a rupture in the alliance between Germany and the Ottomans. In late November 1917, the Bolsheviks radioed the Germans on the Eastern European front requesting a ceasefire. Enver Pasha, sensing an opportunity, instructed the commander of the Ottoman 3rd Army in the Caucasus, Vehib Pasha, to propose a similar ceasefire with Russian forces in the Caucasus. On 18 December, the Russian Caucasus Army signed an armistice with the Ottomans.²⁷

On 22 December 1917, Germany led a Central Powers delegation to negotiate the removal of Russia from the war. In Brest-Litovsk, they demanded huge tracts of land from within the borders of the now defunct Russian Empire. Nevertheless, the aspirations of the Ottomans and Germans clashed over the Caucasus, where both powers had long ties: the Germans with the Georgians around Tiflis, now Tbilisi, and the

Ottomans with the ethnic Turkic peoples that stretched into Central Asia. Both powers set their sights on the prize of Baku and its oilfields.²⁸

Erich Ludendorff, the Quartermaster General of the German Army and de facto military ruler of Germany, stated:

We could not rely on Turkey in the matter...we could expect to get oil from Baku only if we helped ourselves. The shortage of fuel at home ...were only too firmly impressed on my memory . . . the Army's reserves of fuel had run out, and we felt the shortage keenly. Oil was needed. . . . It now seemed possible to supplement it from trans-Caucasian sources, and in particular from Baku.²⁹

In January 1918, the Ottoman forces in the Caucasus consisted of the Third Army commanded by Vehip Pasha. The Third Army had three corps with nine divisions.³⁰ As the Ottoman offensive developed, Enver Pasha would dispatch additional forces and create a new force called the Army of Islam to conquer the Caucasus.

The Interests of Russians, Armenians, Georgians, Azeri/Tartars, Kurds, and Persians in the Caucasus and Neighboring Regions 1917-1918

Then and now, diverse ethnic groups with a deep sense of history and complex alliances inhabit the Caucasus and neighboring regions. An Arab geographer in the Middle Ages noted the immense diversity and named the region a “mountain of tongues.”³¹ The climactic events of the First World War fragmented the traditional balance of power both amongst these ethnicities and outside powers. In 1917 and 1918, these groups would scramble to best take advantage of the new dynamics.

The Russians had long dominated the region but the revolution had splintered their power. Tsarist army officers, nobles, Cossacks, and some businessmen began to coalesce in order to reinstate the Tsarist regime. Across the Caucasus, they allied with any group willing to oppose the Bolsheviks. In addition, the Tsarist Russian Army in the region had been victorious on the battlefield and the relationship between the men and their officers stronger. As a result, the spontaneous demobilization and violent reprisals against officers that occurred on the Eastern Front were slower to appear in the Russian forces of the Caucasus and Persia.³² Power was now with the revolutionary councils established by workers and soldiers.³³ However, the revolutionaries themselves were divided between the Bolsheviks and other rivals such as the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries.³⁴

The Armenians were spread across the Ottoman Empire, Russia, and Persia and suffered greatly during the war. Identified by the Ottomans as conspirators with their fellow Christian Russians, they had undergone widespread slaughter and ethnic cleansing in those territories under Ottoman control. Between 500,000 and one million Armenians died.³⁵ In 1917 and 1918, the Armenians of the Caucasus lost their Russian Army shield. They braced for an Ottoman onslaught and sought any allies who could help them withstand it.³⁶ As Christians, the Georgians also feared an Ottoman seizure of their territory, but they had ties to Germany and hoped to use those relationships to protect them from the Ottomans.³⁷

The Caucasus held numerous Muslim ethnicities: Ajars, Azeris, Tatars, and others. Of these, the most numerous and powerful were the Azeris. The Azeris spoke a Turkish dialect but most were members of the Shia branch of the Islamic faith and thus had cultural ties to both the Ottoman Empire and Persia. The Muslims of the Caucasus were then all commonly referred to as Tartars.³⁸

Many Tartars welcomed their newfound freedom from Russian rule and as Muslims did not generally fear an Ottoman advance. In fact, Enver Pasha invited a delegation of Tartar notables to Constantinople to discuss the possibility of an Ottoman advance into the region. Furthermore, the Ottoman “Army of Islam” created by Enver Pasha planned to receive much of its manpower from local Tartar volunteers.³⁹

However, socialist and democratic thought influenced members of all three groups – Georgian, Armenian, as well as Tartar – and jointly they established the Transcaucasian Commissariat.⁴⁰ Its capital was Tiflis, now known as Tbilisi, in Georgia. This short-lived government, with equal representation of the three ethnic groups, hoped to deter the Ottomans and refused to recognize the authority of the Bolshevik regime. The more radical Bolsheviks sensed an opportunity. They consolidated their power amongst the oil workers in Baku under the charismatic leadership of Armenian communist Stepan Shaumian.⁴¹

Baku was a microcosm of the greater Caucasus region. Legend dictates its name comes from the Persian phrase for “buffeted by winds.”⁴² Its history has certainly been that of a city tossed by fortune. Oil, and the desire for it, has long been central to Baku’s identity. Zoroastrian fire worshippers built an ancient temple with an eternal flame nourished by underground oil. With the growth of the modern petroleum industry, Russians, Armenians, Persians, Jews, and others flocked to the traditionally Tartar city. In 1917, of the 110,000 workers in Baku, approximately 52% were Muslim, 23% were Russian, and 22% were Armenian.⁴³

Further south, the Kurds continued to fiercely guard their limited autonomy. They operated as irregular forces for the Ottomans and sought opportunities of advantage against other ethnic groups but did not welcome direct Ottoman control. To the East, the Persians continued to chafe under the de facto control of the British. It was this nationalist discontent that Germany had tried to leverage earlier in the war. Iranian nationalists, most closely associated with the Iranian Democrat Party, saw Germany as a natural ally. It was too geographically distant to pose a direct threat and was at war with the great powers that subjugated Persia. With the Russian collapse, armed movements began to operate to rid Persia of foreign dominance.

The Political and Military Objectives of Dunsterforce

The Russian collapse destroyed the carefully constructed *cordon sanitaire* to block the Central Powers in the region. Reports of Enver Pasha’s plans to conquer the Caucasus presented British policy makers, especially those trained for years on the “eastern question,” with a nightmare scenario: British forces in the Middle East outflanked, the natural resources of the Caucasus at the disposal of the Central Powers, and India vulnerable to German-Ottoman inspired insurrection.⁴⁴

Yet an Ottoman offensive in the Caucasus, no matter how great a perceived threat, joined a long list of dangers faced by Britain and her allies in 1917-1918. The bloody offensives at the Somme and Passchendaele had exhausted the British Army on the Western Front. The U-boat campaign and German air attacks put additional strain on a British home front numbed by endless casualty lists. In 1918, the Entente powers also needed to conserve their manpower for an expected German offensive in the West following the fall of Russia.

In December 1917, the British and French met to discuss what actions, if any, should be taken towards the new Bolshevik government in Russia, as well as the disparate ethnic groups and any Russian forces that might be willing to continue fighting the Central Powers. An Anglo-French memorandum issued following that meeting specified that they should establish unofficial contacts with the Bolsheviks and others. It also highlighted the need to deny the Central Powers the grain and military supplies of the Ukraine and block any Ottoman attempt to seize the Caucasus and establish a Pan-Turkic movement in Central Asia.

Furthermore, in a classified addendum to this general plan, the Allies divided the geographic responsibility with France taking the Ukraine and Britain the Caucasus.⁴⁵

Thus, British policy makers sought alternatives to an additional commitment of land forces, which were in any case unavailable, to contain the Ottomans in the Caucasus. An unwieldy trinity composed of the British cabinet in London, its Middle East headquarters in Cairo, and the Viceroy in India formulated British policy in the Middle East. However, it was the Eastern Committee – as well as its predecessor Persian Committee – of the British war cabinet, and its chair Lord George Curzon, who were most adamant to block the Ottoman thrust into the Caucasus.⁴⁶ Lord Curzon had previously served as the Viceroy in India. For the British political and military leaders with experience in India, historical precedent existed for the dispatch of small forces, knowledgeable of the region in which they operated, to accomplish ostensibly impossible missions.⁴⁷

In a flurry of memoranda between government committees, a solution was devised; the organization of a small task force composed of veteran officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) to organize, train, and direct the resistance of Christian Georgians and Armenians in the South Caucasus path of the Ottoman advance.⁴⁸ This organization was originally designated the British mission to the Caucasus. Its commander would also be the senior British representative in Tiflis, the city envisioned to be its headquarters.⁴⁹

This task force, ultimately dispatched to northwest Persia and the South Caucasus, would not be operating alone. Another expedition (MALMISS), under the command of Major General Wilfrid Malleison, deployed to Meshed, eastern Persia, in order to secure Central Asia east of the Caspian Sea should the Ottoman advance take Baku.⁵⁰ Even further afield, a small team under Colonel Frederick M. Bailey went to Kashgar, in what was then called Chinese Turkestan, to monitor events.⁵¹ Finally, and most importantly, a small British unit was already operating in Tiflis under Lieutenant (later full) Colonel G. D. Pike.⁵² Originally sent to coordinate with the Tsarist Russian military command, it subsequently served as a source of intelligence on the situation in the region.⁵³ When the Germans entered Tiflis at the behest of the Georgians, the British mission retreated further north into the Caucasus but continued to operate.

How well did the British government understand the situation in the Caucasus? In spite of a relatively developed intelligence and diplomatic network, the situation was much too fluid and confused for policymakers to fully grasp, hunched over pristine maps thousands of miles away. The ability of these ethnic groups to successfully resist an Ottoman military offensive was questionable. Nor did British policy makers fully comprehend the interests and objectives of the Bolsheviks or the other revolutionary organizations in the area that had sprung up in the wake of the Russian Empire's downfall. The British also did not grasp the depth of the growing discord between the Ottomans and Germans or the strength of armed Persian nationalists astride the line of advance of any British task force sent to the Caucasus.

What was not understood or known could be overcome by the skill and savvy of the right men, or so thought the political and military leaders who conceived this plan to accomplish British political and military objectives in the region. According to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General William Robertson,

What was needed (in Persia and Trans-Caspia) was to dispatch to the *centres* of intrigue and disaffection a few Englishmen of the right type to give our version of the state of affairs, furnish them with money to pay handsomely for information and services rendered, and provide them with just sufficient escort to ensure their personal safety.⁵⁴

The strategic goals of the British in the region were listed in a document entitled “British Measures in Trans-Caucasus” dated 9 February 1918 as:

1. Protection of the Christian Armenians from the Turks;
2. Retention of as many Turkish troops as possible on the Caucasian front, in order to relieve pressure on Mesopotamia and Palestine; and
3. Checking the Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turanian propaganda, in order that it might not create unrest in Central Asia, Persia, Afghanistan, and India.⁵⁵

Yet the operational objectives of what was officially the British Mission to the Caucasus would change many times during the course of the operation. British Prime Minister David Lloyd George disingenuously suggested in his memoirs that the force was originally designed to “carry out famine relief in North Persia and keep open the route between Baghdad and the Caspian” only later being tasked to defend Baku.⁵⁶ However, it is clear that the initial objectives of this task force were much more ambitious.

It was originally meant to proceed all the way to Tiflis, far beyond Baku, and assume command of the military mission already operating there in order to “reorganize broken units of Russian, Georgian, and Armenian soldiery, and restore the battle-line against the Turkish invasion.”⁵⁷ Official documents after the war state that the object of the mission was:

[T]o organize, train, and eventually lead the Armenians, Georgians, and Tartars (those being the people of the Southern Caucasus) for the prevention of the spreading of German propaganda to Afghanistan and thence to India, the protection of the Baku Oil fields, the prevention of the Cotton Crop store at Krasnovodsk getting into German hands and to provide an additional force to operate against the Turks from the East, and to hold the Baku-Tiflis-Baku-Krasnovodsk line to Afghanistan.⁵⁸

The objectives changed because of both the fluctuating situation and internal conflict between British leaders on what could realistically be accomplished with such a small force. For example, by the time the task force was truly operational, German troops had already landed in Tiflis and the Bolsheviks would not allow the British to enter Baku. As a result, the force was then tasked with only securing Northwest Persia. When the Bolshevik government in Baku fell and Britain again had the opportunity to deploy to the Caucasus, a fierce debate erupted amongst British leaders on the wisdom of such a move before finally authorizing the force to proceed to Baku.⁵⁹

Long-term British Policy Interests in the Region

The true goals of the British mission to the Caucasus have been a source of debate between historians ever since. Numerous Soviet accounts during the Cold War claim the expedition’s ulterior motives were to crush the communist revolution and secure Baku’s oil for the British Empire.⁶⁰ This is not surprising considering Allied interventions elsewhere in Russia following the revolution and British intelligence efforts to overthrow the Bolshevik commune in Baku in order to enable the task force to enter the city.⁶¹

In reality, British official documents make clear that they were truly attempting to block the advance of the Ottomans, deny the natural resources of the region to the Central Powers, and protect their Indian colony.⁶² Furthermore, Britain initially feared the repercussions of directly targeting the Bolsheviks. According to the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George,

Any overt step taken against the Bolsheviks might only strengthen their determination to make peace, and might be used to inflame anti-Allied feelings in Russia, and so defeat the very object we were aiming at.⁶³

However, the British long-term interests in the region did include maintaining access to the significant oil reserves in Baku and Persia. In addition, British policy makers were beginning to formulate a plan to govern large tracts of the Middle East in order to secure India. Distaste for communism would color British interactions with the Bolsheviks throughout the operation. In the vacuum, British military commanders would take an increasingly anti-Bolshevik stance that would later become official policy.

The British high command conceived a handpicked light force that would substitute mass and firepower with skill and mobility. It was originally task organized to consist only of 150 officers and 300 NCOs with five squadrons of eight armored cars each and significant gold to sway the wavering groups it was meant to operate amongst.⁶⁴ Strategic necessity led British policy makers to conceive a small task force of handpicked troops for a complex political and military mission. What could be achieved depended on both the leader and men selected and the interplay of numerous variables beyond the control of Britain.

Ethnic Bloodletting

As Russian soldiers streamed home from the Caucasian front, little remained to block the Ottomans. An Armenian Corps, Georgian force, smattering of Russian volunteers, as well as a division of Greeks and local Tartar tribesmen formed to defend the Caucasus. Of these, only the Armenians, driven by fear and ancient hatreds, were fully committed to fighting the Ottomans. British funds to support these troops, funneled through the Russian command in the Caucasus, were paid first to the Armenian troops. This exacerbated growing ethnic tensions and the Tartar force left the field in protest.⁶⁵

In addition, Kurdish irregulars targeted weak and dispersed Armenian detachments. Small unit engagements between Armenians and Kurds or Tartars grew in frequency and intensity. Furthermore, Armenians and disbanded Russian soldiers committed atrocities against Tartar villages in their path. The resulting animosity accelerated the Tartar communities' drift towards the Ottomans. Armed Tartar bands were soon operating throughout the Caucasus, some with Ottoman officers as advisors. They disarmed retreating Russian troops, harassed the lines of communication between Baku and Tiflis, and declared independent Muslim governments in different rural areas of the Caucasus.

Such ethnic conflict came to a head in Baku. The Tartars in Baku felt uneasy in their alliance with the Bolsheviks, the majority of whose troops were Armenians. They invited members of the Savage Division to the city. Known for its ferocity in battle, the Savage Division was an old Tsarist unit recruited from Muslim tribes in the Caucasus. Their arrival kindled Bolshevik, Armenian, and other resident's fears on the loyalty of the Tartar population in the city. This ignited a brutal suppression of the Tartars. In March 1918, the Caspian fleet, Bolsheviks, and Armenians allied to attack all Muslims in the city. For four days, battle raged throughout the city between the opposing forces. By the fifth day, a witness remembered, "not a single *Moslem* of any importance was left in the town."⁶⁶ These actions consolidated Bolshevik control of the city in a government called the Baku Commune.

Reports of atrocities against the Tartar population were used by the Ottomans to justify their advance beyond that conceded at Brest-Litovsk. On 11 May 1918, in negotiations with the Transcaucasian Commissariat, the Ottomans demanded the occupation of additional regions, the transfer of control of the railway line into North Persia, and the use of all Transcaucasian railways so long as the war continued

against Britain.⁶⁷ It appeared that only the weak Commissariat stood in the way of Enver Pasha's pan-Turkic dreams. The Ottoman Empire's growing ambitions alarmed Germany who needed unfettered access to the natural resources in the region.

While negotiations continued, the Ottoman military offensive drove relentlessly forward. In a three-pronged plan, a corps drove north along the Black Sea coast, while two other corps moved north and east further in the interior. The Armenians fought desperate rear guard actions as the Christian inhabitants fled before the Ottoman advance.

The impending Ottoman threat finally snapped the thin bonds that had united the people of the Caucasus. Tartar delegates of the Transcaucasian negotiating team secretly encouraged the Ottomans to seize Baku. Meanwhile, the Georgians had begun conspiring with Germany who did not want the Ottomans to completely control the resources of the region.

On 26 May 1918, the Transcaucasian commissariat dissolved and Georgia proclaimed her independence. Two days later, Georgia and Germany signed an agreement giving Germany access to Georgian railways and stipulating that all railroad stations be occupied by German troops. Georgia's deft diplomatic maneuver saved it from the Ottoman onslaught. German and Ottoman forces would exchange fire before the Ottomans conceded and pivoted east towards Baku and Persia. Meanwhile, Germany sought an agreement with the Bolsheviks to access the oil of Baku in return for protecting the city from the Ottomans.

Azerbaijan and Armenia followed suit and declared their own independence. Yet, it was Armenia, now alone, that faced the wrath of the Ottomans. On 4 June 1918 the country signed a peace treaty with the Ottomans that gave up significant portions of her territory and the Ottomans complete control of the important rail network to Persia. The Tartars of Azerbaijan and the Ottomans now together focused on seizing Baku.

Dunsterforce's first attempt to move his force to the Caucasus failed. The speed and initiative of the small convoy allowed it to reach the Caspian Sea before its opponents could intercept it. However, its large signature and limited firepower left it vulnerable to the various groups who opposed its presence in the region. Had this initial force been able to enter the Caucasus, it is unlikely that the majority of the officers and NCOs of Dunsterforce who had yet to arrive in the theater would have been able to follow it.

On the other hand, individual well-trained British officers with excellent language skills were able to infiltrate the Caucasus. At great personal risk and in the absence of a larger force, they attempted to shape a chaotic operational environment. Their results were mixed. However, the connections they developed and their presence would enable Dunsterforce's later operations in the Caucasus.

British vulnerability in Persia led the high command to change Dunsterforce's mission. To deter a Turkish offensive and stabilize the political situation in Persia, Dunsterforce was instructed to secure Northwest Persia, and in particular the line of communication between Mesopotamia and the Caspian Sea. In this, Dunsterforce was successful. Through the skillful use of intelligence and diplomacy, Dunsterforce was able to reduce Persian agitation.

The presence of British troops certainly contributed to the famine then ravaging the Persian population. On the other hand, there is also no doubt that Dunsterforce genuinely attempted to alleviate the humanitarian crisis. Some of these work/food programs were obviously also used by the British to develop their lines of communication. Additionally, the construction of airfields and addition of an air arm, allowed the British to extend their reach and reconnaissance capability.

Most pressing for Dunsterville was the need for troops. Without a sizeable ground force, the situation would remain tenuous. Bicherakov's disciplined Cossacks filled a critical gap. So too did the development of local Persian forces and the arrival of the men assigned to Dunsterforce from other theaters. However, Dunsterville would continue to request conventional British forces. In this, he would draw the ire of the British commander in Mesopotamia who understandably feared the overextension of his forces and dissipation of his combat power. With the arrival of even small British conventional units, Dunsterville was able to secure his position and go on the offensive against the Jangalis.

Dunsterforce had been able to establish a thin screen in Northwest Persia. It is doubtful this screen line could have defeated a serious Ottoman military thrust. Conversely, its true utility was its deterrence to both the Ottomans and internal Persian opponents. As a result, Dunsterforce was successful in North Persia. Nevertheless, the Central Powers continued to advance in the Caucasus. Dunsterforce had yet to truly influence the area of operations for which it had been designed.

Ottomans Reorganize

In the Caucasus, Enver Pasha organized a new operational force, the Eastern Army Group. The Army group consisted of the Third and newly formed Ninth Armies, as well as the Army of Islam. In total it had ten regular infantry divisions and assorted independent units of cavalry and irregulars.⁶⁸ Enver gave command of the Army of the Islam to his half-brother, Nuri Pasha, recently returned from leading Islamist guerilla forces in Libya.

Enver intended the Eastern Army Group to operate on a wide front. The Third Army would continue east to advance towards the Caspian Sea while the Ninth Army pushed south into Persia. The Army of Islam had "a hard core of Turkish divisions" but was meant to mobilize local Tartar Islamic forces.⁶⁹ The fighting quality of volunteers was valued over Islamic learning. When a Tartar Muslim holy man tried to enlist, he was ironically told "the Army of Islam is no place for men of religion."⁷⁰ There was a place, however, for Christian former Tsarist army officers who wished to destroy the Bolsheviks. There are few better examples of the confused and contradictory situation in the Caucasus of 1918 than Christian Russian officers volunteering to serve in a Turkish Islamic Army to defeat primarily Armenian Bolshevik forces loyal to Moscow. At the onset, the Army of Islam had approximately 10,000 troops.⁷¹ On 10 July 1918, the Ottoman Army of Islam was directed to seize Baku.

At the end of July, the Ottoman force had pushed the Red Army back into the outskirts of Baku itself. It appeared that the city was doomed. Only 400 soldiers manned the outer defenses.⁷² Armenian leaders began negotiations to surrender. On 25 July 1918, rebelling against Bolshevik authority, opposing parties overwhelmingly voted to seek British aide.

British Policymakers Debate

British policymakers were unsure whether Dunsterforce should, in fact, deploy to Baku. Discussions and debate ensued on the wisdom of such a move. As mentioned, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) had earlier instructed Dunsterville not to proceed to the Caucasus. In the interim, representatives from political elements in Baku had traveled to Persia to confer with Dunsterville and his staff. As early as 21 April 1918 an Armenian Doctor representing the Armenian National Council had discussed the possibility of collaborating with the British in Baku. Dunsterville had also held similar secret discussions with the Socialist Revolutionaries, undoubtedly encouraging their subsequent revolt against the Bolsheviks.⁷³

The Defense

Developments in the Caucasus convinced Dunsterville that it was both possible and crucial to defend Baku. He quickly dispatched the small combat forces available to alter the balance in Baku. By 14 September 1918, the embattled port of Baku could no longer resist. A fierce struggle raged between British troops and the Ottoman Army of Islam for control of the southern ridges that dominated the city. The elegant metropolis built by oil wealth on the Caspian Sea was about to fall to the Ottomans.⁷⁴

Dunsterville had ordered the city's evacuation. Under cover of the approaching darkness, Dunsterville hoped to save the remaining British forces and equipment. The Ottomans were dangerously close to the city center. Moreover, the British were allied with a disparate group of indigenous revolutionary forces that would view any withdrawal as a betrayal.

Dunsterville gave the order to secretly begin the retrograde at 2000; with the North Staffords given the unenviable task of holding the ridge until 2100 to allow their comrades an opportunity to board ships lying at anchor alongside the city quays. Sick and wounded were boarded first. Guards stationed themselves discretely at key intersections in the city and reinforced the entrances to the pier. British troops began marching back under the shadows of the baroque buildings, scarred by shellfire, standing as broken testaments to Baku's glory days.⁷⁵ Three lights on the mast of the British flagship served as a beacon to any individual soldiers who found themselves separated from their units in the chaos of night urban combat.⁷⁶

Conclusion

Ultimately, Dunsterforce was able to achieve its military objective to delay the capture of Baku's oil fields by the Central Powers and stabilize the security situation in Northwest Persia. Conversely, it failed to achieve its larger political objectives to strengthen the ethnic groups in Caucasia in order to deny the strategic region to both the Ottomans and Bolsheviks. Its successes were due to the coordinated and skillful use of all elements of British military and national power, no matter how inadequate such actual military power was. Yet, there are limits to what skill alone can achieve and those limits were revealed during the operation. The scant troops available, conflicting guidance from higher headquarters, lackluster will of indigenous forces, and immense complexity of the operating environment ensured that Dunsterforce did not achieve all the lofty goals envisioned by the British political leaders in London and Delhi.

The issues faced by Dunsterville and his men should not surprise veterans of America's most recent wars. Since 11 September 2001, the United States has faced numerous setbacks, as well as outright failures, in its efforts to establish capable local security forces. The indigenous forces of today face issues with "poor leadership, a lack of will, and the need to function in the face of intractable political problems" that would sound similar to members of Dunsterforce.⁷⁷

The United States is not the first to be seduced by the siren song of having proxies fight our wars for us. Nor will we be the last. In 1918, the British Army was committed to the climactic struggle on the Western Front and exhausted from years of bloodletting. There were no troops left to defeat the Ottoman offensive in the Caucasus. As such, British policy makers envisioned deploying a small group of elite soldiers to organize the resistance of ethnic groups in the Caucasus to contain the Ottomans.

The daring and resourcefulness of Dunsterforce could not completely overcome the tyranny of the principles of war. The task force lacked the mass necessary to defeat the enemy alone and Dunsterville was unable to establish unity of command over the disparate groups he needed to mobilize. Riven by conflicting

ethnic loyalties, and opposing political agendas, these local forces highlight the complex human terrain in which Dunsterforce was required to operate.

Yet the requirement for the US military to operate in complex environments against, and with, multiple actors with diverse interests will continue. As a result, much can be learned from the operations of Dunsterforce in the Caucasus in 1918.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

Notes

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17. A. J. Barker, *The Bastard War: The Mesopotamian Campaign of 1914-1918* (New York: Dial Press, 1967), 329.
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19. Moberly, *Operations in Persia 1914-1918*, 270.
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52. General Offley Shore commanded the British mission in Tiflis prior to Colonel Pike. Pike would be killed in Vladikavkaz, far forward of Dunsterforce in mysterious circumstances on 15 August 1918.
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Chapter 5
Courting Cuba: America's Girl-Next Door; Eurasia's Distant Beauty
Dr. Prisco Hernández

Cuba, forcibly disjoined from its unnatural connection with Spain and incapable of self-support, can gravitate only toward the North American Union, which, by the same law of nature can not cast her off from its bosom.

John Quincy Adams¹

Three cultures, at least, have been superimposed to constitute the Cuban – Spanish, African and Chinese.

Severo Sarduy²

¡Viva Cuba Libre! ¡Patria o muerte! ¡Venceremos!

Traditional revolutionary slogan favored
by Fidel Castro³

We struggle against imperialism, not in order to die, but to draw on all of our potential, to lose as little as possible, and later to win more, so as to be a victor and make communism triumph.

Nikita Khrushchev⁴

The history of the United States and Cuba encompass revolution and conflict. It is time, now, for us to leave the past behind. It is time for us to look forward to the future together.

Barack Obama⁵

A Tropical Beauty and her Troika of Suitors

Cuba is a beautiful island. Not only does it enjoy a mild tropical climate moderated by fresh northeasterly trade winds and warm Caribbean Sea currents, it combines majestic mountains with rolling hills and fertile coastal plains verdant with tropical greenery. Called by many “The Pearl of the Antilles,” Cuba has been lauded by patriotic writers and romantic poets and is now celebrated by supporters of the ecological green revolution. It is also large – for an island. Along its east-west axis Cuba extends for over 780 miles and exceeds 100 miles at its widest point.⁶ Currently, Cuba has a population of over eleven million people. In size and population, it is larger than all other islands in the Caribbean and is also larger than most Central American republics.⁷ But, most significantly, the island has been blessed (or cursed) with an enviable geo-strategic position in the Western Hemisphere. Cuba lies just about ninety miles south of the Florida Keys and is the largest island in the Antilles – the archipelago that extends in a southeasterly arc to the coast of Venezuela.

During the Age of Sail, vessels tended to follow a natural path of navigation set by wind and current. Spanish ships sailing from Europe and Africa entered the Caribbean from the east, often reaching Puerto Rico or one of the Lesser Antilles. After visiting the ports of the Spanish Main, they would stop at Havana for rest and refitting. From there, they followed the Gulf Stream current to the mid-northern latitudes where they would find the westerly winds that would propel them back to Europe. Navigation in the opposite

direction was possible; but difficult. The coming of the steamship allowed more flexibility in sailing patterns; but it did not alter the basic strategic realities established by geographical position.

Cuba commands the Strait of Florida – the western passage between the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic. It also dominates the chokepoint between the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea as well as the important passage between Cuba and Haiti. As an island, Cuba enjoys a measure of independence and physical protection from events in the surrounding continental landmasses; but it is only a short airplane ride away from most North, Central, and South American capitals. In short, as Robert Kaplan points out, even in a “flat world,” geography still matters; and Cuba is, indeed, in an enviable strategic location.⁸ Because of the island’s geographic proximity, and its own expansionist tendencies, the United States has exerted enormous influence over Cuban affairs from the very beginning of their common history. On the other hand, as land powers rooted in the Eurasian landmass and intensely preoccupied with their own security, China and Russia have been late-comers to the game. Nonetheless, as we shall see, China provided Cuba with a small but significant influx of workers at a critical juncture in her history; and Russia, under the Soviet government, provided the Cuban revolutionary government a state sponsor powerful enough to ward off the United States and supplied the resources it needed to survive the American embargo.

Today, the Cold War has receded into the past, and the world’s sole superpower is being hard-pressed on all fronts by an emerging multi-polar world shaped by forces that are largely outside the control of traditional nation-states. Old alliances are being challenged or redirected; new ones are being forged, and a new international equilibrium is yet to be found. In this context, both China and Russia are seeking to establish or re-establish a strategic footprint in the Western Hemisphere – if only as a counter to the growing presence and focus of the United States in the Asia-Pacific Region. Given these historical developments and the continued validity of geostrategic realities, it is obvious why Cuba has acquired such a troika of suitors. To understand how this came about, and how the situation may develop in the future, we must review Cuba’s historical trajectory in some detail in the context of these three players.

Once Upon a Time – The Legacy of a Colonial Past

The United States and Cuba are close geographical neighbors. They also share a long history of parallel development. Both nations began as colonies of emerging European powers in the Age of Discovery – Great Britain and Spain respectively. Both societies developed in the context of the colonial experience, in which economic affairs were regulated for the benefit of the “mother country,” and both were forever marked by centuries of African slavery. But, if Cuba was a traditional colony in the context of the wider Spanish Empire in the Americas, the United States was born as an experiment in republican democracy out of a heterogeneous collection of disparate colonial governments. North American colonists rebelled against royal authority inspired by the ideals of the European Enlightenment and gained their independence from Great Britain through revolutionary war. In the nineteenth century, the Cuban people fought two wars for independence from Spain.⁹ However, they obtained their freedom from Spain only when the United States intervened in the struggle. Despite these similarities in the colonial histories of the United States and Cuba, the differences between the goals of British as opposed to Spanish colonists and the respective political and economic policies of the colonizing powers have long been compared by historians and used to explain the differences in the development of the new independent nations.¹⁰

The United States developed into the world’s foremost power less than two centuries after its formation. As such, it soon dominated the Greater Caribbean Area.¹¹ Even though Cuba is the largest and most populated island in the Caribbean, it too came under the political and economic domination of the United States.

This relationship of dependency was accentuated after American troops occupied Cuba in 1898 following its capture in the Spanish-American War. From that point on, the United States has acted as the sole colonial power in the Greater Caribbean.¹² In its bilateral relationship with Cuba, the actions taken by the United States' government, though mostly benevolent by the standards of other colonial powers, were taken mostly to advance the interests of American policymakers, businessmen, and investors.¹³ In general terms, as long as American business interests have been allowed free reign and profitable arrangements, and as long as Cuban governments have not contradicted US foreign policy, relations have been good. However, Cuba's subordination to its northern neighbor was made plain through the passing of the Platt Amendment of 1902. This legislation, which was forced upon the Cuban government as a condition to its "independence," essentially dictated that Cuban foreign policy had to follow the US lead and reserved the right of the United States to intervene militarily to ensure "stability" in Cuba, as well as assuring the permanent leasing of land around Guantánamo Bay for use as a US military base, clearly indicated Cuba's status as a *de facto* colony of the United States throughout the better part of the 20th century.¹⁴ This arrangement led to repeated military and political intervention in Cuba's internal affairs. Even though the amendment was modified in 1934 to reflect Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy," Cuba's subordination had been assured by this time through numerous other agreements and a record of intervention.

While not as old, intense, and pervasive as American influence, Chinese people and culture too, have had a modest, but significant, impact on Cuban history. As early as the 1808, in response to growing political pressure from abolitionist groups, the British government prohibited the slave trade throughout its empire. Not content with this development, the abolitionist movement targeted slavery at its source in Africa and the British Navy succeeded in shutting down slave-trading networks by interdicting slaving ships from other nations. By the end of the 1830s, slavery had disappeared from all the British colonies. In the United States, the southern states rebelled against the union in a bloody war fought primarily to preserve their "peculiar institution" of agricultural slavery. However, with the *Emancipation Proclamation* and the end of the American Civil War in 1865, slavery was eliminated in the United States. The abolition of slavery in the United States eliminated a major world market. Nonetheless, slavery remained legal in the last two remaining Spanish colonies – Cuba and Puerto Rico – as well as in the Empire of Brazil. However, abolitionist pressures were at work in Spain as well, particularly among the liberal delegates to the *Cortes*. Thus, the Spanish monarchy, seeing the writing on the wall, abolished slavery in Cuba by royal decree in 1880 – even though its sugar industry relied primarily on slave labor.¹⁵

Slaveholders had long complained that existing slaves did not reproduce themselves fast enough to meet the demand and "breeding workers" was a considerable drain of capital. Therefore, to meet the sugar industry's needs, resourceful British capitalists developed an empire-wide system of exporting indentured laborers from India, China, and the East Indies to their own imperial possessions as well as other third party countries. These unskilled laborers, known as "coolies," agreed to work for a pittance and a chance to better themselves in a new environment after the expiration of their contract. Thus began the first large-scale Chinese immigration to Cuba to the tune of well over 150,000 between the years 1847 and 1874.¹⁶ Chinese laborers, although poorly educated, were aware of their meager rights under the indenture contract and often won legal battles affirming their limited rights. Some were able to rise from their servitude into the mainstream of society. Indeed, during the Cuban wars of independence many politically aware *chinos* joined the racially mixed rebel army. Since the rebel soldiers were called *mambises* the Chinese rebels became known as *chinos mambises*. These *chinos mambises* fought side by side with their white, mulatto, and black comrades. Some of them rose to command large formations and distinguished themselves in action.

One, José Bu, was given the right to be considered a presidential candidate in a future free Cuba. Cuban freedom-fighter Gonzalo de Quesada famously wrote: “There has never been a Chinese Cuban deserter, nor a Chinese Cuban traitor.”¹⁷

Responding to increasing international and domestic pressures, the Spanish government finally abolished African slavery in Cuba in 1884. As a result, there ensued an immediate labor crisis in Cuba’s dominant industry. Although many former slaves agreed to continue their industrial agricultural work as free peasant laborers, others wanted nothing to do with labor that reminded them of their former servitude. More compliant workers were needed and the proven solution was to import indentured workers in much greater numbers. This triggered an even larger wave of Chinese immigration to Cuba. Thus, many thousands of Chinese ended up in Cuba as unskilled workers in the sugar cane fields.¹⁸ But many Chinese laborers developed dreams of their own. After dutifully serving their terms of indenture – usually set at eight years – their entrepreneurial talent flourished in their new environment.¹⁹ Many opened food stalls, which later became restaurants, others became shopkeepers and ran their own import and export businesses using the long and complicated Chinese lines of communication through family and friends. By the mid-20th century, Havana had a flourishing Chinatown – the largest in the region. It is important to note that although Chinese people and, to a lesser extent, Chinese culture has had a significant impact on Cuba, this is not true of China as a country and as a government; that is, it has not been true until recently, as we shall see.

The Game Changes – A New Suitor Enters the Ball

With the rise of Fidel Castro and the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the bilateral relationship between the United States and Cuba changed from one of economic and political dominance by the controlling partner to one of bitter antagonism. America’s fears of Cuban support for communist subversion in the hemisphere and elsewhere led the United States’ government to implement and support aggressive counterrevolutionary policies against Cuba. These in turn pushed Castro squarely into the Soviet orbit – if only for self-preservation. As Castro bluntly put it: “What the imperialists cannot forgive, is that we have made a socialist revolution right under the very nose of the United States.”²⁰ Castro’s implementation of a socialist state based on Marxist-Leninist principles and strategic alliance with the Soviet Union defined Cuba as an enemy of the United States. Repeated attempts by US backed agents to assassinate Castro, the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the polarized atmosphere of the Cold War were some of the more salient events and factors that have colored the relationship between Cuba and the United States to the present day.

At the height of the Cold War, Cuba was not only a mere irritant to the United States; it became a real thorn in the side of American policymakers. Castro brilliantly exploited his anti-colonial and Marxist credentials to simultaneously side with the Soviet Bloc and to become a leading voice in the Non-Aligned Nations’ movement.²¹ Just as the United States became involved in the Vietnam War to support “democracy,” Cuba sent military advisors, troops, and supplies to support populist revolutionary movements – primarily in Africa, but also in Central and South America. Castro’s avowed aim was to “export the revolution” and to assist wars of national liberation against imperial powers.²² Thus, even as his regime became more dictatorial and his policies more aligned with Marxist dogma, Castro enjoyed the support of leading intellectuals and leaders of newly-independent nations throughout the world.²³

With the end of the Vietnam War and the onset of détente in the 1970s tensions between the United States and Cuba relaxed somewhat. But in 1980, as many as 125,000 Cubans, many of them political prisoners, but also, mental patients and criminals, boarded a makeshift flotilla and left Cuba for the United

States. They left with the acquiescence of the Cuban government since Castro took the opportunity to rid himself of troublesome dissidents. Castro labeled the exodus as a gesture of openness that would allow Cubans to leave if they wanted to do so, but the United States saw it as an unwanted dump of marginal people on its shores.²⁴ The Mariel boatlift, a few exchanges of political prisoners and dissidents, and some cultural exchanges have punctuated the bilateral relationship from time to time. But the implacable hatred harbored against Fidel Castro and his communist regime by the Cuban community in Miami and elsewhere became a significant force in American politics which has successfully lobbied to maintain a hard line against the Castro government for the better part of 50 years. Long ago, José Martí, the father figure of the Cuban struggle for sovereignty had warned that:

The United States is totally ignorant of the culture and history of her southern neighbors, and this, combined with the ever increasing phenomenon regarded euphemistically as ‘pioneer spirit’, augured badly for future relations between the Americas.²⁵

Martí’s vision has served as a warning to Cuban nationalists ever since.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the ensuing economic crisis in 1992 removed the economic foundations from the Castro regime. This led him to declare a “Special Period” of economic austerity focused on making Cuba basically self-sufficient. This goal was barely achieved at the cost of great sacrifices and rationing. During this crisis, Cuban exiles and influential people in the US government believed that without the support of the Soviet Union and with the apparent demise of Marxist-Leninist ideology worldwide, Castro’s regime would soon collapse. However, this did not happen. Castro was able to obtain help from other countries such as Mexico, which used the opportunity to emphasize its independence from the United States, and Spain, whose socialist government wanted to stress historical ties to the island. In addition, Castro was able to once again use his immense charisma to appeal to the sense of pride and patriotism of the Cuban people.²⁶ Later developments include the rise of Hugo Chávez in 1998 as president of Venezuela. His populist movement, which Chávez called *Bolivarismo*, appealed to the patriotic sentiments of the masses by using the figure of Latin America’s revolutionary hero in its struggle for independence. Chávez supplemented this historical connection with a large dose of personality cult in the tradition of *caudillismo* and a heavy dose of anti-Americanism. To bolster his position as a “strong man,” he forged an alliance of convenience with Castro in an anti-American bloc that would also include Evo Morales, president of Bolivia. Even though Chávez died in 2013, his policies and orientation toward Cuba are still in place under his hand-picked successor Nicolás Maduro. Lately, as Russia has increasingly re-defined itself as an emerging world power under the authoritarian leadership of Vladimir Putin, Moscow has sought to mend its frayed relationship with Havana.²⁷

At the dawn of the 21st century, a new era seemed in the offing as Fidel Castro’s health declined rapidly. After some hesitation, Fidel yielded to the demands of a debilitating illness and handed over the reins of power to his brother Raúl and a younger generation of party officials.²⁸ Most recently, Pope Francis, the first Roman Catholic Pope from Latin America, used his diplomatic skills to engineer a rapprochement between Havana and Washington that has led to the re-establishment of official diplomatic relationships and the opening of embassies in Washington and Havana in July of 2015. A few months later, in February of 2016, the Pope once again travelled to Cuba where he met briefly with the Patriarch of Moscow – the first such meeting between the leader of the Catholic Church and the Orthodox prelate. Raúl Castro has certainly bolstered his international prestige by acting as host for such a significant diplomatic meeting. Finally, President Obama himself accompanied by his family flew to Havana to meet with Raúl Castro and

engage in an unprecedented round of activities which included a baseball game between the Cuban National Team and the Tampa Bay Rays professional baseball team from the United States.²⁹ This visit was largely the effort of an unpopular president under attack by a hostile Congress to somehow make permanent the new opening with Cuba. However, despite these bold moves, old wounds continue to fester and memories are long among both, the old revolutionary fighters, and the members of the Cuban community in exile. Any further progress must be made in this context and must take into account how various themes resonate among domestic constituencies in both countries.

What Can I Do For You? – Economic Development in Cuba

Today, after more than half a century of bitter antagonism, invasion, embargo, assassination attempts, political skirmishes at the United Nations, and periods of heated rhetorical exchanges, the United States and Cuba, stand on the brink of a radical re-definition in their relationship. Whether or not this new relationship will be more cordial, effective, and productive remains to be seen. In addition, the “New World Order” that has developed since the end of the Cold War has seen the rise of China as an economic power which has become a major player in the Western Hemisphere for the first time in its history. A new Post-Soviet Russia too, now intensely nationalist and intent on re-establishing itself as a world power under a new “autocratic-democracy” led by Vladimir Putin, is aggressively seeking to re-establish herself as Cuba’s principal patron.³⁰ Both China and Russia see a friendly relationship with Cuba as an important counterbalance to American hegemony elsewhere.³¹

Taking the current strategic context into account, let us now examine how the economic needs of Cuba could play a significant part of the evolving diplomatic realignments. The current situation is in such state of flux that anyone foolish enough to attempt to predict the future would surely be disappointed. At of this writing, President Obama’s administration has entered its final year and has to deal with a hostile Congress. Despite the recent diplomatic breakthrough, all Republican presidential candidates appear to be against the lifting of the trade embargo as are most members of Congress. This means that any progress in the bilateral relationship will depend solely on the unilateral actions of President Obama as he uses his executive powers to establish his legacy.³²

In Cuba, despite many expedient measures that have moved toward liberalizing the strict state-controlled socialist regime, the Marxist-Leninist ideology remains strong and the governance is securely in the hands of the communist party.³³ The measures taken by Fidel Castro and continued by Raul have aimed at producing enough economic growth and security to avoid a major crisis, but have not given additional impetus to the state-controlled centralized economy. Cuba is far from becoming the economic dynamo that, officially communist but *de facto laissez faire*, China has become. The old Cuban revolutionaries may see Marxism as their only hope for maintaining an independent Cuba against renewed domination by the United States.³⁴ Despite this climate of political mistrust, economic realities will likely tend to push the reluctant antagonists into new relationships.

It is important to remember that Cuba has never had a healthy economy characterized by a variety of products and a balance between the various sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, exports, and imports. In colonial times, the Cuban economy served the needs of the mother country by exporting agricultural products. In the age of sail, tropical hardwoods provided the Havana shipworks with some of the best timber in the world for Spain’s naval fleet.³⁵ By the mid-19th century the production of sugar through slave labor was the dominant economic activity. Other sectors, such as manufacturing, trade, and

finance remained undeveloped and supplied limited local needs only. Reliance on slave labor and later on indentured labor by large numbers of disenfranchised people exacerbated class and economic divisions.

Takeover by the United States did not alter this reality; only now, profits flowed to the coffers of American investors rather than Spanish ones. Following the Cuban-Spanish-American War (1895-1898), and even more so, the Great War (1914-1918), the United States emerged as an assertive power on the world stage. Its aggressive capitalism allowed American industry and commerce to overtake and displace the old European colonial powers which had also suffered much more intensely from the war. This economic dynamism ushered in an era of unprecedented wealth in the United States. However, domestic legislation by a narrow interest group imposed a prohibition on the production and consumption of alcoholic beverages (1920-1933). This puritanical measure put a damper on the hedonistic spirit of the jazz-age. Resourceful as always, wealthy Americans soon discovered a convenient tropical playground where they could continue their lifestyle with appropriate adult beverages in Havana.

Following the meltdown in sugar prices of the late 1920s, the Great Depression (1929-1939), and the lean years of World War II (1939-1945), the Cuban sugar industry could no longer compete favorably in world markets, and investors were looking for other sources of profit. This was a dark period for Cuba.³⁶ However, the American economic boom that followed World War II made foreign tourism a real possibility not only for the wealthy, but also for most Americans. With its proximity to the United States, Cuban and American entrepreneurs were quick to exploit the island as a convenient tourist destination. Havana became touted as a tropical paradise literally next door to the United States. Unfortunately, this was also the period when powerful illegal actors, including notorious mafia dons such as Santo Trafficante and Meyer Lansky, entered into cozy agreements with the corrupt autocratic government of Batista and controlled large segments of both the legal and illegal economy in Cuba.³⁷

Energizing New Relationships

Perhaps more than any other factor, Cuba's need for cheap and reliable energy may yet provide the most significant impulse for negotiation and political rapprochement. Before the revolution, Cuban oil was refined by American-owned oil companies which were nationalized by Castro. Later, the Soviet Union supplied Cuba with oil at greatly subsidized prices. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, only an extreme appeal to patriotic self-sacrifice, severe state control of information, and Castro's legendary charisma enabled Cuba to endure the difficulties of its Special Period. In time, imports from sympathetic countries and the emergence of a strong partnership with the Bolivarian government of Venezuela helped stabilize and improve the situation. However, Chavez's Bolivarian system has resulted in the meltdown of the Venezuelan economy. Cronyism, corruption, graft, and wasteful expenditures have continued to plague Venezuela under Chavez's successor, Maduro. The fall in world oil prices has further aggravated the problem. Today, the Cuban government is seeking to become more self-sufficient by exploring for oil in Cuban waters and attempting to develop alternative sources of energy.

Cuban officials have awarded numerous exclusive contracts to foreign companies to allow them to explore offshore oil deposits. However, the promise remains elusive because even as some deposits have been found, the deposits have proven difficult to exploit economically because of their low grade and also because of the difficulties of extracting oil in deep waters. Other Cuban officials and scientists are looking to more sustainable and environmentally friendly options such as wind energy farms. The prevailing northeasterly winds provide a steady potential source for wind power and Cuba is making some progress in this area. As usual, the American trade embargo has thus far prohibited US firms for making deals with

Cuba. Thus, European and Canadian companies have been the main beneficiaries of Cuba's desire for new energy sources. By 2011 China became Cuba's number two trading partner after Venezuela.³⁸ Brazil has also greatly increased investments and joint ventures in Cuba. None of this plays to the US economic and political benefit.

Another significant player is Russia. Towards the end of its political life, the Soviet Union reduced its subsidies for Cuban sugar and its economic aid. This was a principal cause of the difficulties Cuba endured during its Special Period. However, under Vladimir Putin, Russia is attempting to attain its former high status as an international player and power broker. Indeed, the Russian national petroleum company, Gazprom, has leased large areas of the Cuban continental shelf for oil exploration. European companies too are taking advantage of the lack of US competitors to gain an entry into future Cuban energy markets. For example, Havana Energy, a joint venture between a British energy company and the Cuban government, is taking a leading role in providing Cuba with "clean energy."³⁹

Building on the new opening toward Cuba, the Obama administration has initiated what could be a significant re-alignment in the bilateral relationship since 1959.⁴⁰ The challenge is to solidify the diplomatic gains and offer a steady path to the future. If this seems to most observers a positive path, it is still deeply resented in some quarters; mostly in the Second Cuba – Miami. While many Cuban exiles and their descendants are now willing to put the past to rest and look toward the future, there is a small, but influential and politically connected minority that insists in living in the days of the Cold War and will have nothing to do with Cuba until both the Castros and communism are gone.

Flirting with Others – Tourism: Past, Present, and Future

Another sector which will probably rise in importance in the near future is the tourism industry. As we have seen, Cuba was at the forefront of the invention of tropical island tourism as an escapist fantasy for northerners. As mentioned above, the first era of tourism occurred in the 1920s as well-heeled North American flappers and dandies danced the night away while sipping their favorite drinks in Havana during the Prohibition Era. This was the era of the luxury hotel and the swanky Cuban Latin jazz clubs. It was also the time when dictatorial and corrupt right-wing governments began to dominate Cuban political life. During the Great Depression, a favorable exchange rate and geographical proximity assured that Cuba remained a destination of choice for the affluent. After World War Two, the rise of mass tourism led to the "Ugly American" stereotype as Havana became the Mafia-owned playground for entertainment stars, the international jet set, and celebrities.⁴¹ All this excess was duly condemned and shut down by puritanical Cuban revolutionaries. But, money-making schemes and escapist fantasies are hard to kill.

Surreptitiously, and almost clandestinely, tourism began to develop again in Cuba. It was first tolerated and then encouraged within governmentally set limits in order to obtain foreign currency and stimulate a stagnant economy. The end of the Cold War encouraged Europeans and Canadians, who had been less antagonistic, to visit Cuba as tourists. At the time of this writing tourism is the second most important economic sector in Cuba. Tourists flock to Cuba not only from Europe and Canada but increasingly from as far away as Japan and China as well. The recent thawing of tensions between the United States and Cuba is already having an impact in the tourism industry.⁴² As the object of all this attention, Cuba can play hard to get. Indeed, at first Fidel and now Raúl Castro, their survival instincts honed by years of political maneuvering, combine a robust strain of socialist idealism with an infighter's pragmatism. Thus, they have managed to keep both the American Nimrod and the Soviet Bear at bay; they can surely be expected to keep the more distant Chinese Dragon at arms' length.⁴³

Inevitably, the rise of tourism will bring to the fore the traditional concerns about this activity. All the concomitant businesses that cater to the tourist's desire for exotic experiences and hedonistic pleasure have re-surfaced in Cuba.⁴⁴ Prostitution, gambling, and high prices for luxury services have flourished in parallel with state-controlled or state-permitted tourism services. Perhaps more than any other place in the world, Cuba has had long experience with the effects of unregulated tourism development. Thus two perennial questions remain: Is tourism good for the local economy; and, is tourism an economic drain that benefits primarily foreign investors?⁴⁵ As Julia Sweig astutely observes:

Seen in historical perspective, the resurgence of tourism was certainly necessary economically but also deeply ironic. After all, in the 1960s, the revolution had sought to wipe tourism off the map, seeing the industry as an outpost of the American mob and a disparaging sign of the island's neocolonial status.⁴⁶

As with the other sectors of the economy, it seems that at this juncture, Cuba will have to rely on tourism to jump start its economy. The real question is, how well will the government manage?

Church Marriage?

One of the most interesting aspects of recent developments in Cuban international affairs is the role played by Pope Francis, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church. Although the Roman Catholic Church concerns itself primarily with spiritual matters, its seat, Vatican City, is also the smallest state in the world. As such, the Church has a diplomatic corps and plays a role in world affairs totally disproportionate to its size and material power.⁴⁷

The Vatican and the Catholic Church have been engaged with Cuba since its beginning as a Spanish colony. Indeed, one of Spain's leading motivations for colonial expansion was the desire to win souls for Christ. As in other Latin American countries, the Church tended to side with the status quo and conservative politics. This was primarily because the Spanish Church was completely intertwined with the monarchic state. In addition, revolutionary movements have tended to derive their ideology from secular humanism and have spoken against the traditional privileged classes – including the Church. The position of the Church vis-à-vis the Cuban was initially one of guarded optimism. However, once Castro declared the socialist character of the revolution and his own beliefs as Marxist-Leninist, the Church could never support this because it could never support atheistic materialism. Soon after taking power, Castro deported many members of the Catholic clergy as counterrevolutionaries and nationalized Church property. This led to his public excommunication by Pope John XXIII. Nonetheless, during the 1960s and the 1970s, many progressive Latin American priests and religious men and women, inspired in some ways by decolonization movements, popular demands for democracy and social justice, and the renewal of the Church in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, began taking the side of the poor and the downtrodden who were suffering under repressive and corrupt right wing dictatorships – often supported by the US. At the same time some of these clerics became sympathetic to the social reforms implemented by Castro in Cuba.

The social activism of Catholic clergy and laity was strengthened by the emergence of the Theology of Liberation, a progressive intellectual movement which encouraged the downtrodden to demand justice in the here and now. The social justice movement was embraced at two important conferences of Latin American bishops at Puebla, Mexico, Medellín Colombia, and Aparecida, Brazil. But not all Catholics embraced a progressive social agenda and expressed a “preferential option for the poor” – a phrase that later incorporated in official Church doctrine.⁴⁸ Powerful prelates and conservative theologians either supported

the status quo or their words were used by others to support continued repression of popular movements. Some critics, both inside and outside the Church, accused her of becoming too tied to worldly concerns; others accused clergymen of becoming allied to communist movements. John Paul II, who was elected pope in 1978, emerged as a towering figure in this climate of turmoil within the Church. While remaining sympathetic to the plight of the poor, Pope John Paul II was a staunch anti-communist and had little sympathy for those who would dilute or distort the core spiritual message of the gospel. On the one hand, he believed in political engagement – as demonstrated by his backing of the Solidarity labor movement in his native Poland; on the other hand, he cracked down on what he perceived as serious theological deviations proposed by Liberation Theologians.

In Cuba, Fidel Castro initially purged his government of devout Catholics and followed the Marxist-Leninist proscription of organized religion from public life. From his school days, Fidel himself has maintained a certain appreciation for the Jesuits pursuit of intellectual excellence and their concern with social justice – although he became a materialist and did not share their faith. However, Castro is pragmatist at core. He understood the profound roots that the Catholic faith has in Cuba, and the need to co-opt devout Catholics into his political program. Thus, in 1985 Fidel agreed to a series of interviews which would focus on the topic of socialist revolution and religion. His interlocutor was Frei Betto, a Brazilian Dominican friar and social activist. These interviews were later published in book form and translated into many languages.⁴⁹ In 1992 Fidel Castro declared that the Cuban state was no longer atheist, but merely a secular state. He also permitted practicing Catholics to become members of the Communist Party.

Not to be outdone by left-wing clerics and liberation theologians, Pope John Paul II included Cuba as a destination for his world-wide pastoral trips in 1998. Although this did not signal the beginning of the end of the Castro regime, it did announce a new opening for both Cuba and the Church. Castro benefitted from a new international legitimacy and the Church benefitted by gaining concessions and greater freedoms from the Cuban government. John Paul II's successor, Pope Benedict XVI, continued his predecessor's policy of constructive engagement and also visited Cuba in 2012, where he too celebrated mass. Both popes called for greater respect for individual rights, particularly, the right to worship freely, and both have called for an end to the American embargo.

From his very first day in office, Pope Francis has focused on the social aspects of the Christian message and has become the leading global moral voice calling for peace, social justice, and reconciliation among nations. He has confounded critics from the left and from the right by speaking forcefully for positions which are central to Christian doctrine but which cut across conventional political categories – particularly in the United States. In the pope's view, governments are to serve their people; not people their governments. Traditional calculations based on self-interest and *Realpolitik* must be put aside for the good of the people – especially the downtrodden and powerless in society. In particular, Francis has denounced the new secularist dogma of an unconstrained amoral free market as the solution to all the world's problems.⁵⁰ This has upset many of the world's elites who are beholden to the tenets of neo-liberalism and have personal vested interests in its dominance. The pope's prophetic defense of the individual human person and the common good has provided the moral basis for his diplomacy.⁵¹ As a former Argentinian bishop and a Jesuit, Francis is keenly aware of the massive social inequalities caused by repressive right-wing governments. In general terms, his policy vis-à-vis Cuba continues and expands those of his predecessors – calling on Cuba to afford greater individual rights and on the US to end the embargo. However, despite the pope's assertive proclamations from his moral pulpit, it came as a surprise to many political observers when both

President Barack Obama and President Raúl Castro openly acknowledged his role as effective broker for a new opening between their long-estranged nations.⁵²

The first meeting by a serving US president and a Cuban head of state occurred on April 10, 2015 at the Summit of the Americas held in Panama City, Panama. Both leaders were cordial and expressed a willingness to move forward to a more productive bilateral relationship.⁵³ This high-level personal diplomacy has continued, mediated, by the Vatican. As a fellow Latin American with a passion for social justice, Pope Francis continued his predecessors' engagement with Havana, but added a deeper, more personal connection. He arranged for a visit to Cuba in order to meet Kirill, the Patriarch of Moscow and senior bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church. This marked the first time that the head of the Roman Catholic Church met with the Orthodox Patriarch face-to-face since the split between Catholics and Orthodox in 1054.⁵⁴ At the same time, the presence of Kirill in Havana may be seen as an attempt by Russia to strengthen a frayed relationship between Havana and Moscow through the use of “soft power” by tending to the small community of Orthodox faithful in the island. As is becoming clear, the Russian government is intent on restoring the old alliance between Church and state characteristic of czarist Russia – an alliance that Vladimir Putin is keen on reviving.⁵⁵

The most recent result of the new rapprochement between the United States and Cuba was the visit by President Obama to Havana in March 2016. This was a sign that the president is working to make the new opening permanent through personal diplomacy and executive directives despite continued opposition by a hostile Congress and the usual special interest groups. A fitting symbol for this new opening was the celebration of the “juego amistoso” (the friendly game) between the Tampa Bay Rays and the *Selección de Beisbol de Cuba*. Baseball has strong roots in Cuba that predate the American occupation. It is Cuba's national sport, just as much as it is America's national pastime. During the Carter years, the Baltimore Orioles had played two such games before the door to better relations was closed in the wake of the Reagan Presidency and the Mariel boatlift crisis.⁵⁶ This time, perhaps the timing will be better. Unfortunately, much depends on what promises to be the most divisive and chaotic presidential election in recent US history. Perhaps for this reason, President Obama would like to solidify his legacy in history as the president who definitively opened the door to Cuba.

Winning Cuba's Hand – What Could American Policy Makers Learn from the Past?

As we have seen, the history of Cuban-American relationships has been a history of political dominance and one-sided economic exploitation by the United States followed by a collusion of business interests and political cronyism which was violently replaced by radical revolution and one-party communist rule. At first, some Cuban elites benefited, as well as American businessmen and members of the criminal underworld. This was done either directly, through military intervention or the control of Cuban internal affairs; or indirectly, through the promotion and protection of American economic special interests. To counter American neocolonialism, Cuban nationalists have often adopted an anti-American attitude. As new conditions arise, it is important that both parties make an effort to discard some of the resentment and attitudes of the past if a more constructive relationship is to come.

This is particularly important for American politicians and policymakers who have a hard time accepting political and social structures that differ from the American model.⁵⁷ As the proverbial “800 pound gorilla” in the neighborhood, the United States must shoulder the burden of making credible good-will gestures. Common logic seems to indicate that the bilateral relationship will only turn for the better if the United States truly recognizes Cuban independence and autonomy not only grudgingly – but in good faith.

This probably means that it must accept the following tenants as the underpinnings of a new relationship: 1) Recognize and cooperate with a communist government; 2) Cooperate in bilateral and regional issues where both nations have common interests; and 3) Normalize trade and economic exchanges while avoiding the resurgence of economic colonialism under the guise of opening free markets. Let us examine these requirements in turn.

While recognizing and cooperating with a communist government may be anathema in some American and Cuban-American ideological circles, there are plenty of precedents for this. Even at the height of the Cold War, the United States maintained full diplomatic contacts with the Soviet Union and made an opening to China. Today, China is one of the largest trading partners of the United States and it is still a one-party communist government. Vietnam, a stoutly communist country, and the only enemy against which the United States fought a protracted war during the Cold War Era (and lost), is now a strong trading partner and a country with security cooperation agreements with the United States. Furthermore, many close NATO allies have been or are presently governed by socialist governments and pose no threat to the United States. Thus, in the post-Cold War Era, when the United States has little to fear from Cuba, it would be logical to ask whether a reestablishment of full relations between the United States and Cuba makes sense. Apart from the moral arguments which have been advanced against the embargo by the members of the United Nations, it is fair to ask whether this obdurate attitude is detrimental to the United States.⁵⁸ As we have seen, particularly as it pertains to energy development, the gap will be filled by other players such as European nations and, less benignly, by a resurgent Russia or an expansionist China seeking to retain or gain a foothold in the Western Hemisphere.

Because of their geographic proximity, the United States and Cuba share certain common interests. Among these are the desire to mitigate and ameliorate transnational problems such as the drug trade, human trafficking, and environmental crises produced by climate change.⁵⁹ Evidence for Fidel Castro's involvement in the drug trade is mixed. It is likely that at the height of the Cold War, Castro assisted guerrilla movements such as the FARC that derived much of their income from drug trafficking.⁶⁰ He also may have seen the drug trade as a way to weaken American society. However, Fidel and his circle are personally opposed to drug abuse and see it as a by-product of capitalist decadence. In addition, they are fully aware that the formation of drug cartels and the existence of drug trafficking networks pose a serious threat to the stability of any national government. Currently, the Cuban government and police are seen as one of the less corrupt in the area and drug traffickers avoid Cuban waters.⁶¹ Cuba has formal anti-drug cooperation agreements with 32 other nations; but not yet with the United States. Nonetheless, despite official hostility between the United States and Cuba, there has been and continues to be some active cooperation between the two government.⁶²

The Cuban government has also been consistent in its opposition to prostitution, gambling, and other forms of human exploitation.⁶³ One of its claims of success is that it rid Cuban society of the rampant immorality of the sex trade that flourished under Batista. Thus, it is likely to cooperate in international initiatives against this modern form of slavery.

The other issue, mitigating the effects of climate, is now an internationally recognized global priority. Strangely, significant sectors and influential members of the American public, mostly aligned with the Republican Party, question the validity of scientific findings and deny the existence of a crisis.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, reality cannot be denied forever. Sooner or later, the United States will be forced to cooperate and even lead efforts to mitigate the effects of global climate change. These three issues, interdicting drug trafficking,

combating human trafficking, and mitigating the effects of climate change require transnational cooperation – particularly between close neighbors such as the United States and Cuba.

The third imperative for an improved bilateral relationship is to avoid a resurgence of economic colonialism. This is probably the most difficult goal and probably the one that requires the most restraint from both political and economic players in the United States. In practical terms what this means is that the United States must exert self-restraint and avoid putting pressure on Cuban leaders to gain unfair advantages for business so that, once again, Cuba would become an American economic colony. This is particularly difficult since the American political system is an adversarial system in which groups and individuals lobby and use money as a weapon to gain influence over politicians and to shape laws in accordance with their vested interests. It would take an unusual greatness of spirit and a true sense of selfless service to avoid this pitfall. These virtues are not much in evidence under the dominance of the neoliberal economy that prevails today. What is more, these virtues would have to be exercised not only for the common benefit, but also for the long-term success of the Cuban-American relationship. Given the level of self-interest, ideological partisanship and distrust in the current American political discourse and praxis, this indeed, is a daunting challenge.

Conclusion

As we have seen, Cuba cannot escape its strategic destiny. A large island with a population of over 11 million people in a strategically dominant position in the middle of the Western Hemisphere, Cuba has been coveted as a colony or strategic partner by Spain, the United States, the Soviet Union, and now Russia and China as well. Cubans have been keenly aware of the dangers and potential benefits of their situation. Throughout the years, patriotic Cubans have desired and fought for autonomy and independence from domination by foreign powers. Others have sought accommodation with those powers, often in exchange for personal benefits for themselves and their associates. Powerful political and economic interests in both Cuba and the United States colluded for many years to foster a climate of repression and corruption which guaranteed them a privileged position and economic gain. The repression and exploitation of these right-wing dictatorships led to the violent Cuban Revolution and the institution of a communist dictatorship by Fidel Castro. The Cuban Revolution marked a sea change not only for the bilateral relationship between Cuba and the United States, but also deeply affected political alignments throughout the Western Hemisphere and gave the Soviet Union a strategic foothold next to the United States throughout the Cold War years.

For over 50 years, the continued survival of a communist government in Cuba and the effects of the Cuban Revolution have colored the bilateral relationship as attitudes on both sides hardened and then thawed in unpredictable cycles following the rhythms of both international and domestic politics. Occasionally, both sides have initiated moves toward a more open relationship, but in each case, the new opening has been closed as a result of political events, most of which were external to the bilateral relationship, but which, nevertheless have had great impact on it. This was particularly the case in the United States, where electoral politics and tensions between the executive and legislative branches of government have played a hand in derailing major diplomatic initiatives. But it was also true when the Soviet Union took made unilateral decisions that profoundly affected Cuba with little or no consultation with the Cuban government. Naturally, the subordination of Cuban affairs to almost anything that happens in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, or Europe, by the leading powers of the world has not been well-received in Havana. Add to this the political activism of the Cuban exile community, and you have a recipe for stagnation and continued

acrimony. Recently, both Russia and China have re-engaged with Cuba in order to gain or re-gain a strategic foothold or listening post at the very door of the United States. Russia, under Putin, is actively courting Cuba by offering many commercial advantages, subsidies, and encouraging the renewal of cultural ties. China is seeking to gain a permanent presence in Cuba as part of its unique combination of economic expansion and soft power that it can use as a cloak intelligence activities next to the United States and as a balance to the US presence in the South China Sea.

Thus, Cuba stands at a historical crossroads. Having maintained its independence for more than half a century, it has enjoyed some success in education, health care, and basic services under Fidel Castro's unique brand of communism at the expense of personal and political freedom for its citizens. Under increasing economic and social pressures, the Cuban government under Raúl Castro is working toward a pragmatic accommodation to these pressures while attempting to preserve most of the social gains, the social ideology of the revolution, and Cuban autonomy from foreign domination.

It is in this climate of impending change that the United States, led by a president intent on leaving a long-lasting legacy, is unilaterally attempting to normalize relations with Cuba. At the same time, Russia, led by a president that wants to be taken seriously as a world power and offer an alternative center of power to the United States, is seeking to re-establish his presence in Cuba. China, propelled by its economic expansion, is searching for new markets and intends to spread its influence across the world. Friendly relations with Cuba offer China a great alternative to counterbalance what it perceives as US encroachment on its hegemony over East Asia and interference in its internal affairs in the matter of Taiwan. Thus, as the United States seeks to win the hand of the girl next door, the two Eurasian powers look longingly at the distant beauty and court her with gifts and enticing offers. What will result from all this courting in five years; in ten years? I would caution that under the present circumstances, any prediction is bound to be off the mark. What is evident is that the long years of the Castro regime are near the end and that change is sure to come. It would be a good thing for both the American and Cuban peoples if politicians on both sides of the Florida Strait, and on both sides of the dividing alley in the US Congress, would take advice from Pope Francis and bear in mind that they should not aspire to self-aggrandizement and narrow-minded agendas but that they should use the power of political office for the good of the people. At least this is our sincere hope.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

Notes

1. Richard Gott, *Cuba: A New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), Appendix A.
2. Tan Chee-Beng, *Routledge Handbook of the Chinese Diaspora* (London: Routledge, 2013), 97.
3. Alex von Tunzelmann, *Red Heat: Conspiracy, Murder, and the Cold War in the Caribbean* (New York: Henry Holt, 2011), 220.
4. Public Broadcasting Service, *Letter from Nikita Khrushchev to Fidel Castro*, 30 October 1962, accessed 31 January 2017, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/jfk-defendcuba/>.
5. The White House, *Remarks by President Obama to the People of Cuba*, 22 March 2016, accessed 27 January 2017, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/03/22/remarks-president-obama-people-cuba>.
6. By area, Cuba is the 17th largest island in the world.
7. The sole exception is Nicaragua, which at 49,000 square miles is larger than Cuba at 42,426.
8. The notion that “the world is flat” is explored in a book of the same title by Thomas L. Friedman. Robert D. Kaplan takes issue with the idea that modern communications technologies have eliminated the role of geography. Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat* (New York: Picador, 2005). Robert D. Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map tells us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate* (New York: Random House, 2012).
9. The First Cuban War of Independence lasted ten years. It ended in a negotiated settlement. The Second War of Cuban Independence (1895-1898) became known in the United States as the Spanish-American War. Intervention by the United States assured Cuban Independence from Spain but placed Cuba under the political and economic hegemony of the United States. Cuban democracy was crippled at birth and there followed several corrupt right-wing dictatorships which only ended with the victory of the left-wing revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro in 1959.
10. J.H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2006.
11. For our purposes, the Greater Caribbean is the region that includes the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and all the islands and continental coastlines of South, Central, and North America from French Guiana to Florida and the Bahamas.
12. It is important to note that, historically, most US leaders and the general public have been reluctant to admit that the United States has been, and continues to be, a colonial power. This image is not congruent with the national mythology of its origins and development as the champion of freedom. Therefore, the United States has used numerous other names to commonwealths, etc. Less transparently, it has propped up and supported client dictators and governments while maintaining the illusion of national sovereignty in the affected countries.
13. For a comprehensive and balanced view of United States policies toward Latin America see Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of US Policy toward Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1998.
14. Clifford L. Staten, *The History of Cuba* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 42.
15. It was a Puerto Rican sugar planter turned abolitionist, Julio Vizcarrondo, who, after freeing his own slaves, moved to Spain and founded the *Sociedad Abolicionista Española* in Madrid in 1864 with branches in other major cities. His lobbying resulted in a motion at the Spanish Cortes seconded by Antonio María Fabié, who declared that: “The war in the United States is finished and, it being finished, slavery on the whole American continent can be taken as finished.” Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440-1870* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1997), 781.
16. Cuban historian Julio Le Riverend calculates that around 150,000 Chinese arrived in Cuba between 1847 and 1874. Mauro García Triana and Pedro Eng Herrera, *The Chinese in Cuba 1847-Now* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), xxxiv.
17. Evelyn Hu-DeHart, “Indispensable Enemy or Convenient Scapegoat? A Critical Examination of Sinophobia in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1870s to 1930s,” *The Chinese in Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. by Walton Look Lai and Chee Beng Tan (Boston: Brill, 2010), 74.

18. “In Cuba, because of the massive and tightly managed contract labor system, Chinese migrants remained in agricultural work on the plantations until the 1880s, the last contingent of coolies working off the remaining years of their eight-year contracts.” Hu-DeHart, “Indispensable Enemy or Convenient Scapegoat?” 71.

19. “By the early 20th century, Chinese everywhere in the Caribbean had seemingly gone into their own businesses as merchants and shopkeepers.” Hu-DeHart, “Indispensable Enemy or Convenient Scapegoat?” 71.

20. Alex von Tunzelman, *Red Heat: Conspiracy, Murder, and the Cold War in the Caribbean*, (New York: Henry Holt, 2011), 216.

21. Fidel Castro has been a frequent speaker at Non-Aligned Nations conferences and served as president of this body from 2006-2008. When he had to step down because of illness, his brother Raúl succeeded him as president until 2009.

22. For a concise synopsis of these activities see Julia E. Sweig, *Cuba: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 107-112.

23. Castro received visits by Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, went fishing with Ernest Hemingway, and befriended Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez.

24. Mauricio Ferré, then mayor of Miami, told a TV reporter as he watched the arriving Cubans: “Fidel has just flushed his toilet on us.” Saul Landau, “Fidel and The Prince,” *Counter Punch*, accessed 17 March 2016, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2003/09/05/fidel-and-the-prince/>.

25. John Kirk, “José Martí and the United States: A Further Interpretation,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 9 No. 2 (November 1977): 275-290, 283.

26. Cuban historians at the University of Havana see the special period as a triumph for the ideals of the Cuban Revolution despite the enormous economic pressures exerted against it. Sergio Guerra Vilaboy and Oscar Loyola Vega, *Cuba: Una Historia* (Havana: Ocean Sur, 2015).

27. “Russia has quietly reached an agreement with Cuba to reopen a Soviet-era spy base on America’s doorstep, amid souring relations between Moscow and Washington. The deal to reopen the signals intelligence facility in Lourdes, south of Havana, was agreed in principle during President Vladimir Putin’s visit to the island as part of a Latin American tour last week, according to the newspaper *Kommersant*. Opened in 1967, the Lourdes facility was the Soviet Union’s largest foreign base, a mere 155 miles from the US coast. It employed up to 3,000 military and intelligence personnel to intercept a wide array of American telephone and radio communications, but Putin announced its closure in 2001 because it was too expensive – Russia had been paying \$200m (£117m) a year in rent – and in response to US demands. After Putin visited Cuba on Friday, the Kremlin press service said the president had forgiven 90% of Cuba’s unpaid Soviet-era debts, which totalled \$32bn (£18.6bn) – a concession that now appears to be tied to the agreement to reopen the base.” Alec Luhn, “Russia to reopen spy base in Cuba as relations with US continue to sour,” *The Guardian*, 16 July 2014, accessed 15 March 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/16/russia-reopening-spy-base-cuba-us-relations-sour>.

28. Sweig, *Cuba*, 207-280

29. “Charting a New Course on Cuba,” The official website of The White House, accessed 12 April, 2016, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/foreign-policy/cuba>.

30. I believe that the compound term “autocratic-democracy,” is probably best descriptive of the way the Russian Federation has operated ever since Vladimir Putin has effectively held the reins of power. He has held executive power as continuously since December of 1999; acting either as president, elected president (three times), and prime minister twice under his hand-picked choice for president.

31. Sweig, *Cuba*, 251.

32. This is also the view expressed by Julia Sweig. “In the second term, only President Obama himself will be able to cut through this thicket. With a series of unilateral steps requiring neither approval by the US Congress or negotiations with the government of Cuba, the president can use his executive authority to substantially overhaul American policy toward Cuba and cement for his own legacy I the Americas the reputation as a courageous and visionary president, a stance he campaigned on in 2012.” Sweig, *Cuba*, 270-271.

33. Sweig, *Cuba*, 223.

34. “Any program of economic liberalization would not be undertaken in a way that fundamentally threatens the state’s ability to provide critical social services like health, education, and pensions – key legacies and tangible sources of the regime’s legitimacy.” Sweig, *Cuba*, 224-225.

35. “Havana, which in the period 1700-1740 already had built the surprisingly large number of 33 *navíos* of between 52 and 70 guns, became the largest builder of *navíos* for the Spanish Navy during the 18th century. A total of 74 of the *Armada Española’s* 227 *navíos* of the century were built in the distant but cost-competitive Havana *astillero real*.” John D. Harbron, *Trafalgar and the Spanish Navy: The Spanish Experience of Sea Power* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 35.

36. This roller coaster ride in sugar prices took investors and producers from “The Dance of the Millions” to a headlong crash. Hugh Thomas, *Cuba or the Pursuit of Freedom*, rev. ed. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), chapters 46-47.

37. The “golden age” of the Mafia in Havana is chronicled in sordid detail in T.J. English, *Havana Nocturne: How the Mob Owned Cuba and then lost it to the Revolution* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001).

38. Sweig, *Cuba*, 251.

39. “Havana Energy is a team of British energy professionals from different fields. Havana Energy has a variety of strategic partners from different sectors: Gilbert Gilkes & Gordon and Reactor Energies. Havana Energy also has as a principal shareholder Esencia Group, an organisation that has been working in Cuba for over six years and has a fully staffed office in Havana. We are a renewable energy company focused on the Cuban Energy Sector. In partnership with the Cuban Government under their ‘Energy Revolution’ initiative we aim to develop clean decentralized low carbon electricity for the people of Cuba.” “About the company,” Havana Energy homepage, accessed 22 February, 2016, <http://www.havana-energy.com/about/>.

40. “The Obama administration has approved the first US factory in Cuba in more than half a century, allowing a two-man company from Alabama to build a plant assembling as many as 1,000 small tractors a year for sale to private farmers in Cuba [...] The \$5-million (US) to \$10-million plant would be the first significant US business investment on Cuban soil since Fidel Castro took power in 1959 and nationalized billions of dollars of US corporate and private property. That confiscation provoked a US embargo on Cuba that prohibited virtually all forms of commerce and fined non-US companies millions of dollars for doing business with the island country. Michael Weissenstein, “US approves first factory in Cuba since 1959,” *Globe and Mail, Toronto*, accessed 22 February, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/international-business/us-business/us-approves-first-factory-in-cuba-since-1959/article28761433/>.

41. The “Ugly American” is the title given to a satirical photograph of a brash and crass American tourist in Havana taken by Cuban photographer Constantino Arias. The photograph became an icon of everything that is vulgar, materialistic, and exploitative when rich self-centered tourists descend on an impoverished country.

42. “Cuba received a record 3.52 million visitors last year, up 17.4 percent from 2014. American visits rose 77 percent to 161,000, not counting hundreds of thousands of Cuban-Americans. Industry experts are concerned the island will be unable to absorb an even greater expected surge when scheduled US commercial airline and ferry services are due to start this year.” “Cuba’s tourism industry put to the test,” *Deutsche Welle*, accessed 23 February, 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/cubas-tourism-industry-put-to-the-test/a-19049455>.

43. In his insightful poem “To Teddy Roosevelt,” Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío, famously compared the United States to Nimrod – the legendary biblical hunter.

44. “Cuba watchers and scholars are by now very familiar with the Cuban term *jinetera/o* used to refer to a prostitute working tourist zones. The term can be translated as ‘jockey’ or ‘horseback rider,’ with obvious sexual and economic connotations involved in ‘riding’ the tourist.” Nadine Fernández, “Back to the Future? Women, Race, and Tourism in Cuba,” Kemala Kempadoo, ed., *Sun, Sex, and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 81.

45. Seen in historical perspective, the resurgence of tourism was certainly necessary economically but also deeply ironic. After all, in the 1960s, the revolution had sought to wipe tourism off the map, seeing the industry as

an outpost of the American mob and a disparaging sign of the island's neocolonial status. Julia E. Sweig, *Cuba: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 135-136.

46. Sweig, *Cuba*, 135-136.

47. "Astonishingly persistent, Enlightenment prejudice has remained amply manifest in the contemporary professional analysis of foreign affairs. Policymakers, diplomats, and scholars who are ready to over-interpret economic causality, who are apt to dissect social differentiations most finely, and who will minutely categorize political affiliations are still in the habit of disregarding the role of religion, religious institutions, and religious motivations in explaining politics and conflict, and even in reporting their concrete modalities. Equally, the role of religious leaders, religious institutions, and religiously motivated lay figures in conflict resolution has also been disregarded – or treated as a marginal phenomenon hardly worth noting. Edward Luttwak, "The Missing Dimension," Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, eds., *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 9-10.

48. The term "preferential option for the poor" was used by Pedro Arrupe, the Jesuit General from 1965 to 1983. Although at first it was contested, the term was later incorporated in official Church documents such as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine*.

49. Frei Betto, *Fidel and Religion: Castro talks on Revolution and Religion with Frei Betto* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987).

50. Pope Francis, "Laudato Si Encyclical," access 24 February 2016, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

51. Francis has played a facilitating role in the secret negotiations that led to the resumption of diplomatic ties between the US and Cuba on July 20, our correspondent said. Francis wrote a personal appeal to Presidents Barack Obama and Raul Castro and hosted their delegations at a secret meeting at the Vatican last year to seal a deal after 18 months of closed-door negotiations. Since then, the two leaders have reopened embassies in each other's countries, held a personal meeting and at least two phone calls and launched a process aimed at normalizing ties in fields ranging from trade to tourism to telecommunications. "Pope backs US-Cuba reconciliation," *Al-Jazeera News Service*, accessed 24 February 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/09/visiting-cuba-pope-francis-reconciliation-150920061249362.html>.

52. In an exclusive interview, Ortega revealed to CNN that when the Pope and Obama met at the Vatican for the first time in March 2014, the Pope lobbied the US President to lift sanctions on Cuba. "The Pope brought Cuba up," Ortega said. "Cuba's role in Latin America, and how it was important not just for Cuba but all of Latin America, that the detrimental economic measures be lifted." Obama, the Cardinal said, surprised the Pope by agreeing with his harsh critique of US policy. "The President's response was very clear," Ortega said. "That these measures were very old, made before his birth and that he wished to change them. This encouraged the Pope." Obama more than shared the Pope's desire to change course on Cuba – he had already taken action to dismantle the United States' five-decades-old policy of isolation. Patrick Oppmann, "Pope Francis heads to Cuba after months of secret diplomacy," CNN, accessed 24 February 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/18/world/pope-francis-cuba-diplomacy/>.

53. Bill Chapell, "President Obama, Raul Castro Shake Hands, Chat at Summit of The Americas," *NPR*, April 10, 2015, accessed, 14 April 2016, <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/04/10/398763564/president-obama-spoke-to-castro-by-phone-leaders-may-meet-today>.

54. Tom Gjelten, "Pope Francis Meets Head Of Russian Orthodox Church In Havana," 12 February 2016, accessed 14 April, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/2016/02/12/466584938/pope-francis-meets-head-of-russian-orthodox-church-in-havana>.

55. "The head of the church, Patriarch Kirill, was granted residence in the Kremlin, the elaborate historic fortress in Moscow and seat of the Russian government, late last year, and he openly supported Vladimir Putin, who won a third term as president in March." Marc Bennetts, "In Putin's Russia, little separation between church and state," *The Washington Times*, Monday, 13 August 2012, accessed 14 April 2016, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/aug/13/putin-russia-little-separation-church-state/>.

56. “The Orioles won it in the top of the 11th when designated hitter Harold Baines lined a single to center that scored Will Clark with the winning run.” [Note: the Orioles won 3-2.] Richard Justice, “Orioles Leave Cuba with a Win,” *The Washington Post*, 29 March 1999, accessed 14 April 2016, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/sports/orioles/daily/march99/29/os29.htm>.

57. This persistent tendency is rooted in the idea of American exceptionalism, a belief in “freedom” as a generic and unqualified good, and the so-called global triumph of market capitalism that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union.

58. “27 October 2015 – In a near unanimous vote, the 193-member United Nations General Assembly today adopted a resolution renewing its call for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba, while also acknowledging the restoration, after nearly 50 years, of diplomatic relations between the two countries.” The only two nations to vote against the resolution were the United States and Israel.” UN News Centre, “UN General Assembly renews long-standing call for end to US embargo against Cuba,” accessed 22 February 2016, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52391#.VstqLMLouM8>.

59. Prisco Hernández, “Tres problemas estratégicos que requieren soluciones hemisféricas,” *Air & Space Power Journal – Espanol*, accessed 22 February 2016, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/afri/aspj/apjinternational/apj-s/2008/2tri08/hernandez.htm>.

60. Rens Lee, “Cuba, Drugs, and US-Cuban Relations,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, April 2009, accessed 29 December 2015, www.fpri.org/articles.2009/04/cuba-drugs-and-us-cuba-relations.

61. The 2015 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Cuba 56 out of 177 countries. By comparison Italy scored 61 and both Argentina and India 76. Evidently, Cuba has a lower level of than most of the other countries in the Caribbean and Central America, but higher than most of the countries in the Western world. China, the United States’ largest trading partner ranked 83. Significantly, Bolivarist Venezuela ranks near the bottom at 158. “Corruption Perceptions Index 2015,” Transparency International, accessed 22 February 2016, <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015>.

62. Sarah Rainsford, “Cuba and the US find Common Ground in War on Drugs,” *BBC News*, 8 September 2012, accessed 29 December 2015, www.bbc.com/news.world-latin-america-19528416.

63. The prevalence of gambling, prostitution, and money laundering connected with these activities were some of the vices condemned by the Cuban Revolution. Ironically, the burgeoning tourism industry has seen the resurgence of all of these activities again in Cuba.

64. “Anyone who follows US political debates on the environment knows that Republican politicians overwhelmingly oppose any action to limit emissions of greenhouse gases, and that the great majority reject the scientific consensus on climate change. Last year PolitiFact could find only eight Republicans in Congress, out of 278 in the caucus, who had made on-the-record comments accepting the reality of man-made global warming. And most of the contenders for the Republican presidential nomination are solidly in the anti-science camp. What people may not realize, however, is how extraordinary the GOP’s wall of denial is, both in the US context and on the global scene.” Paul Krugman, “Republicans’ Climate Change Denial Denial,” *The New York Times*, 4 December 2015, accessed 22 February 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/04/opinion/republicans-climate-change-denial-denial.html>.

Chapter 6

In the Shadow of Destruction: How Nuclear Weapons Underwrite Russia's Global Strategy

Colonel Lee G. Gentile, Jr.

I want to remind you that Russia is one of the leading nuclear powers.¹

– Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation

Introduction

In the wake of Russia's aggression and newfound assertiveness in Eurasia, political and strategic discussion has focused on Russia's use of conventional and non-conventional forces in order to advance its national interests. The Kremlin's ability to intervene and risk a conventional battle with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), however, rests on Russia's 7,300 warhead nuclear arsenal. This "nuclear coercion" strategy has allowed the Kremlin to protect their vital interests, achieve strategic objectives, and expand their influence while countering the West's global, precision-strike capability and limiting international response. In order to understand the Kremlin's nuclear coercion strategy, one must understand Russian strategic culture and nuclear theory, which is rooted in Soviet history. By examining the Cold War, Soviet strategic thought, and the Western policies and actions that were effective in changing Soviet nuclear policy and strategy, one can develop options for shaping future Russian policy and strategy.

Defining Nuclear Coercion

Russian nuclear threats have been labeled many ways: nuclear blackmail, nuclear bullying, information warfare, and hybrid warfare.² Whether it is overt threats to use tactical nuclear weapons, placing strategic rocket forces on alert, incursions into territorial airspace and waters by nuclear capable submarines and bombers, or "accidentally" showing secret plans detailing a newly developed nuclear torpedo system, the goal is to force the international community to accept the expansion of Russian influence throughout Eurasia.³ With more than 7,300 nuclear warheads in its arsenal, international leaders cannot overlook Russian threats.⁴ In fact, every time the international community conducts a show of force or solidarity, Russia responds with a nuclear show of force in order to coerce world leaders to accept Russian demands.⁵ For the purposes of this chapter, nuclear coercion is defined as a government's overt or covert threat to use strategic and/or non-strategic nuclear weapons to force regional and international leaders to accept changes in the political and economic landscape, and limit the international response to one's actions.

Soviet Nuclear Theory

In order to understand Russia's nuclear coercion strategy, one must recognize the differences between Russian and Western cultural beliefs regarding nuclear weapons. As with all cultural issues, entrenched values and beliefs are the result of different experiences, perceptions, and influences. By reviewing Soviet nuclear theory and its development throughout the Cold War, one can begin to understand current Russian nuclear culture. Since US nuclear capabilities and theory influenced Soviet nuclear thinking, US theory must be evaluated in order to understand how the Soviets responded.⁶ However, one must use caution in mirror imaging Soviet thinking and Western thinking. Although the strategies and doctrine appear very similar, there are nuanced language differences; political and strategic interests; and cultural beliefs that lead to critical differences.

Despite their alliance in the Second World War, Western leaders and Soviet leaders distrusted each other. As the war ended and each side solidified its sphere of influence throughout Europe, distrust increased. As distrust increased, fear of subversion, coercion, and invasion increased (both within NATO and the USSR), which sparked the Cold War arms race. Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, the West focused on European economic rehabilitation. Since there was little money available to build and maintain a large conventional force that could match the five-million-man Soviet Army, the US chose to rely on its nuclear force to deter a Soviet invasion of Europe.⁷ This strategy, which was labeled the “First Offset” by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel in 2014, threatened a nuclear strike in order to “convince” the Kremlin that fighting another world war was not beneficial to the Soviet Union.⁸

Recently declassified Soviet papers, articles, and meeting minutes indicate that the Soviet leadership had no intention of invading Europe.⁹ However, their experiences from the First and Second World Wars sowed fears that the West would invade the Russian homeland if the USSR appeared militarily weak.¹⁰ These fears turned to paranoia as Soviet leaders started to believe that the West would employ its nuclear weapons preemptively in order to decapitate the communist leadership.¹¹ Therefore, the Soviets developed and tested a nuclear device in 1949 in order to counter the West’s advantage.

Armed with nuclear weapons (although not fully capable until the late 1960s), a robust propaganda campaign, and a large conventional force, the Soviet Union believed that they had gained strategic parity with the West.¹² The West responded by revising its nuclear weapons policy. In 1954, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles unveiled the Eisenhower Administration’s *New Look Policy*. *New Look* focused on maintaining a smaller, more-capable, forward-deployed, conventional force that was reinforced by the massive retaliatory power of nuclear weapons.¹³ This drove the development of a “credible” nuclear arsenal to complement the West’s conventional capabilities in order to deter a Soviet attack in Europe and contain the spread of communism.¹⁴

However, the perceived “massive retaliation” policy furthered Soviet fears of Western aggression. The root cause was a translation problem. The Russian word for deterrence, *sderzhivaniye*, is also the Russian word for containment. Therefore, Soviet leaders believed that Western deterrent actions were offensive not defensive, and were designed to “compel” Soviet leaders to accept Western political demands.¹⁵ Because the USSR lacked a credible nuclear capability and strategic deterrent, their response to Western “compellence” was twofold. First, Soviet leaders launched a robust propaganda campaign to hide their strategic disadvantage. Second, Soviet leaders directed the military industrial complex to develop a robust intercontinental nuclear ballistic missile (ICBM) capability. This strategy attempted, without success, to compel Western leaders to withdraw from West Berlin and cease their “imperial” political objectives.

Although massive retaliation underpinned US nuclear policy during the early 1950s, Western strategists realized that massive retaliation would not deter the Soviet Union and its communist allies from spreading their ideology, or pursuing objectives that did not threaten the vital national interests of Western nations. This led to the development of graduated deterrence theory, which was adopted as US policy in 1957. Graduated deterrence surmised that tactical nuclear weapons could be used against military targets, instead of large population centers, providing the West with options to defeat a Soviet-backed conventional attack without triggering a global nuclear war. This theory unseated the long-standing belief that nuclear weapons were an all-or-nothing option, opening the door for US policy makers to expand nuclear war theory in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁶ No longer constrained to massive retaliation, strategists developed three sub-theories; counter-force, damage limiting, and assured destruction.¹⁷

Counter-force theory proposed the use of nuclear weapons against the enemy's military forces, not the civilian population. Counter-force advocates argued that the US and NATO could employ small, non-strategic nuclear weapons in order to neutralize a numerically superior Soviet conventional attack. Theorists believed that it was possible to employ nuclear weapons without starting a nuclear holocaust if the weapons were only used against fielded forces, not Soviet population or industrial centers. The key assumption was that the Soviet Union would not risk complete destruction unless its survival was threatened. In essence, counter-force was the offensive aspect of US nuclear war fighting strategy. However, it was later abandoned because the risk of escalation to all-out nuclear war was extremely high.

Damage limiting theory focused on limiting the impact of an enemy nuclear attack on the US populace. This was the defensive aspect of US nuclear war fighting strategy, and included countermeasures such as bomb shelters, distributed industrial and military infrastructure, and Nike missile defense sites. Due to the destabilizing nature of these capabilities, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara abandoned most of the programs in the mid-1960s, opting for the more stabilizing effects of Mutually Assured Destruction. However, President Ronald Reagan reinvigorated damage limiting theory in the 1980s with the introduction of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), commonly referred to as *Star Wars*, and continues today with the ongoing development of ballistic missile defense technology.

Assured destruction concluded that the US must maintain a massive nuclear arsenal capable of surviving a nuclear attack and the ability to retaliate with enough weapons to destroy the attacker. Ultimately, this theory believed that a reasonable actor would never initiate a nuclear war because they would also be destroyed. In the mid-1960s, Secretary of Defense McNamara realized that assured destruction was driving the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons that the Soviets considered "First Strike" weapons. Because of the destabilizing effect, Secretary McNamara eliminated the upgrade programs and adopted Mutually Assured Destruction (strategic nuclear parity) as the official US nuclear policy until President Reagan unveiled SDI in the 1980s.

As such, throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, Western nuclear theory evolved to include ideas about nuclear war fighting, both offensive and defensive, as well as deterrence. Unsurprisingly, the Soviet Union had similar debates regarding nuclear weapons theory.¹⁸ Like the West, Soviet policy makers understood that all-out nuclear war would lead to the end of civilization. However, the Soviets believed that would only occur if the existence of one of the superpowers was threatened, similar to counter-force theorists. This theory rested on the US population's response to casualties in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Soviet nuclear theorists surmised that the West's aversion to casualties would permit the use of non-strategic nuclear weapons in limited conflicts if Soviet conventional forces failed, or as a preemptive measure to stop an impending attack. Unlike the West, who relied on game theory to mathematically predict the outcome of a nuclear conflict, Soviet strategists focused on the political and popular will to conclude that a limited nuclear strike would not start a global nuclear war.¹⁹ This belief permeated the Kremlin until 1977 when Brezhnev delivered the "Tula Line" speech, which outlined the new Soviet leader's fears that a nuclear war was not winnable. Although most of the Soviet leaders in the 1980s and 1990s also believed that nuclear war was unwinnable, there were factions within the military-industrial complex that continued to view tactical nuclear employment against the enemy's forces as a viable option to ending a conflict with the West because of our reservations about casualties.

Understanding Russian Nuclear Coercion

Since nuclear coercion is a high-stakes poker match, one may ask “What does the Kremlin hope to achieve?” Simply put, Russian leaders want to limit the expansion and influence of NATO, create a buffer between Russia and NATO, re-establish its influence in former Soviet states, and return to being a regional and global power.²⁰ These goals have been consistent among the Russian leaders since the fall of the Soviet Union.²¹

But why does the Kremlin use nuclear weapons as its coercive tool? The answer is the West’s global, precision-strike capability. Once the Soviets developed non-strategic nuclear weapons, they were able to quickly offset the benefits that graduated deterrence offered Western strategists and re-establish their strategic parity with the West. This forced the West to pursue a different approach for the “Second Offset,” global precision conventional strike.²² The increased focus on developing technologically-advanced, conventional weapons resulted in the development of weapons such as the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile, GPS and laser guided munitions, targeting pods, and advanced aircraft systems to degrade and defeat enemy air defenses. Therefore, modern US strategic thought is grounded in the idea of global, precision strike under the umbrella of nuclear deterrence.

Conversely, today’s Russian leaders developed a different conclusion. Advancements in Western weapon systems in the 1970s and 1980s drove the Soviet military industrial complex to develop similar capabilities. Destructive Soviet economic policies throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, coupled with the Cold War arms race and massive buildup of conventional forces along the Iron Curtain, destroyed the Soviet economy and ultimately the Soviet Union itself.²³ Since a majority of the current Russian leaders, including Mr. Putin, served in the military and KGB during the final decade of the Soviet Union, they learned the dangers associated with attempting to maintain conventional parity with the West. Additionally, they witnessed the US and NATO deter Soviet plans with a smaller conventional force that was supported by a massive nuclear strike capability. These experiences shaped the views of today’s Russian leaders and define two of their top priorities: reviving their economy and deterring a surprise attack.²⁴

Per the 2015 Russian Federation National Security Strategy, protecting the state includes protection of the economy. Because of US “global strike” capability and two large armies along its borders, with a combined 1.4 million-man NATO military force to the west and a 2.3 million-man Chinese army to the south, the Kremlin would be forced to increase defense spending to unsustainable levels if it were to attempt to counter the threat conventionally. The realization that a large, technologically-advanced, conventional force is costly and places extraordinary strain on the economy helps to explain why the Kremlin is using its nuclear arsenal as a strategic reserve to protect its smaller conventional force while relying on unconventional and asymmetric methods to secure national interests.²⁵

Although the Kremlin is concerned about the Russian economy, it is paranoid about a surprise attack from NATO or the US.²⁶ This fear, which stems from the German invasion of western Russia during Operation Barbarossa and has been reinforced by US and NATO operations in the Caucasus and the Middle East, influences the Kremlin’s perception of world events and drives their reaction. Much like their Soviet counterparts during Khrushchev’s reign, Russian leaders rely on nuclear “saber rattling” any time they perceive that Russian interests are being threatened, such as the expansion of NATO or the deployment of missile defense assets to Europe.

When viewed from the Russian standpoint, these fears are understandable. Considering that NATO was created to counter the expansion of the Soviet Union, it is not surprising that the Kremlin views expansion as a threat.²⁷ Every time a former Soviet state is incorporated into NATO, the buffer shrinks. Without that physical buffer, Western military forces move closer to Moscow, eliminating the Kremlin's ability to trade space for time. Similarly, missile defense erodes the Kremlin's most powerful strategic and political weapons, its nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles. From the Kremlin's perspective, the West is willing to attack any "disruptive" country that lacks nuclear capability in order to "force its political will" on international and regional affairs. Therefore, the Russian leadership views its nuclear weapons as its most important political tool because they would have limited to no ability to affect regional and international affairs without them. As foreign as these fears may sound, reverse the roles. Imagine that the Cold War had ended differently, with the Soviet Union surviving and NATO collapsing. Would US leaders accept the incorporation of Mexico or Canada into the Warsaw Pact, or the deployment of ballistic missile defenses to the Americas? The Cuban Missile Crisis suggests that they would not.

As such, actions to incorporate Georgia into NATO triggered the 2008 Russian invasion of South Ossetia and the Kremlin's first use of nuclear coercion. The 2000 Russian Federation Military Doctrine stated:

The Russian Federation keeps the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear arms and other WMD against it or its allies, and in response to a large-scale aggression with the use of conventional arms in situations critical for the national security of the Russian Federation.²⁸

This overt threat to use nuclear weapons during a conventional war deterred the West from employing its global, precision-strike capability; forced the international community to limit its response to the conflict; and helped the Kremlin determine the West's red line for triggering a military response. In essence, the Georgian conflict taught the Kremlin that it could achieve limited objectives with military force without being attacked because international leaders had to consider the risk of a nuclear response.²⁹

Furthermore, this calculus was evident during the opening stages of the Ukrainian Conflict. Putin's willingness to place strategic forces on alert, conduct nuclear exercises, and overtly threaten a nuclear strike against any country that intervened, confounded the West's response.³⁰ Additionally, using nuclear coercion to prevent a third-party intervention in these localized, limited conflicts, allowed the Kremlin to accept a higher risk to its conventional and unconventional forces. Russian conventional forces pale in comparison to their Soviet predecessors. Unlike Soviet leaders who had the ability to mass over a half million soldiers on the European border, Mr. Putin is struggling to deploy fifty thousand soldiers to the Ukrainian border and has little to no strategic reserves.³¹ Yet, he achieved his goals because he used his massive nuclear arsenal to deter the West from intervening in Ukraine and overpowering his conventional forces.³²

The threat of a Russian nuclear strike, even a limited one, is certainly a cause for concern throughout Europe and has most undoubtedly influenced NATO's response. Russia's "nuclear coercion" strategy is disturbing because most Western leaders view nuclear weapons as strategically defensive tools, and although their offensive employment is often presented as an option, it is quietly placed on the shelf. As President Obama stated in a recent article:

Even as the United States maintains a safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal to deter any adversary and ensure the security of our allies, I've reduced the number and role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy.³³

This highlights that Western leaders do not view nuclear weapons as offensive tools. However, the Kremlin does not see it the same way. In the eyes of Mr. Putin and his cronies, nuclear weapons give them the ability to shape the strategic environment in their favor, much like their Soviet predecessors, and they overtly express their intent to use them if necessary.³⁴

Countering a Strategy of Nuclear Coercion

Coercion, regardless of the method, is simply the act of holding a more valuable article at risk.³⁵ If Russia did not have a large nuclear arsenal it would not be able to place NATO interests at risk and the West would most likely have employed military forces to stop Russian aggression in Eurasia. In order to counter this strategy, the West must make it clear that using any type of nuclear weapons to advance Russian interests is counterproductive. The West has done this by isolating Russia diplomatically and economically; however, there are several countries that do not support the West and have maintained, and even strengthened, their ties with the Kremlin. Although the West should not cease these efforts, policy makers and strategists must clarify the military aspect of the counter-nuclear-coercion strategy so that Kremlin realizes that their nuclear-coercion strategy places Russian interests at risk, without inciting the fears of Russian leaders. This will require a fine balance between strength and understanding in order to convince the Kremlin to cease its aggression without cornering the bear and provoking it to fight.

Since the Soviet Union developed nuclear weapons in 1949, US policy makers have attempted to counter the Soviets' and Russians' ability to use nuclear weapons to achieve political objectives. This led to an arms race that created thermonuclear warheads, faster and more lethal delivery vehicles, and stockpiles that assured an overwhelming retaliatory strike capability. Additionally, the US crafted various nuclear survival and warfighting theories in order to contain Soviet political actions. Despite all of these efforts, no technological or doctrinal advancement has been as successful as SDI. SDI scared the Soviets because it threatened to neutralize their numeric superiority in nuclear warheads and ICBMs, which would have eliminated their nuclear arsenal's coercive ability and negated their strategic parity with the West. Since President Reagan announced his vision for SDI, every Soviet and Russian president has loudly and repeatedly expressed displeasure with the program, and taken every step possible to discredit the program and prevent its advancement and deployment.³⁶ Therefore, ballistic and cruise missile defense must be the foundation of the West's counter-coercion strategy. At a minimum, these efforts should include the further development of defensive systems and the establishment of expeditionary operating locations.

Because the Russians perceive that non-strategic nuclear weapons can be employed without escalating to total war, the West must counter with the overt message that "non-strategic" nuclear attacks will not achieve the Kremlin's objectives. Although the redeployment of non-strategic nuclear weapons to NATO bases was an important signal, it is not a clear and unambiguous message to the Kremlin. Mr. Putin and his cronies must continually be told that the employment of non-strategic nuclear weapons is a "red line" and that the West will not escalate the conflict but will respond in kind.

Even though history shows that missile defense and nuclear weapons parity affected Soviet behavior, Western leaders must use caution when discussing these issues. There must be a consistent message from Western civilian and military leaders to their Russian counterparts regarding the dangers of the miscalculation associated with nuclear threats and a nuclear standoff. However, the West must also convey that continued nuclear coercion will draw a response from the West with respect to missile defense and non-strategic nuclear weapons, and highlight that the Kremlin would be solely responsible for any Western actions. During the recent European Command Change of Command, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter deftly stated:

Moscow's nuclear saber-rattling raises troubling questions about Russia's leader's commitments to strategic stability, their respect for norms against the use of nuclear weapons, and whether they respect the profound caution that nuclear-age leaders showed with regard to the brandishing of nuclear weapons... In response, the United States is taking a strong and balanced approach to address Russia's aggression. We are strengthening our capabilities, our posture, our investments, our plans and our allies and partners, all without closing the door to working with Russia, where our interests align. And we will continue to make clear that Russia's aggressive actions only serve to further its isolation and unite our alliance... Much of the progress we've made together since the end of the Cold War we accomplished with Russia. Let me repeat that. Not in spite of Russia, not against Russia, not without Russia, but with it.³⁷

Some may say that this policy will lead to another Cold War and continued confrontation with Russia. This is possible, but only if the West reacts without first engaging politically. If Western leaders engage the Kremlin and Russian military leaders, it is possible to develop a shared understanding of the situation before it leads to a stalemate. Without dialogue, the risk of another Cold War and possible nuclear confrontation is high. However, if leaders at all levels are willing to have open and honest conversations about their concerns and the path that this confrontation is taking, it is possible to reduce tensions without pursuing actions that the Kremlin will view as threatening.

Conclusions

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Russian leaders, particularly Mr. Putin, have desired to reestablish their place amongst the regional and global powers, and counter the influence of the West in Russia's near abroad without going to war with the West. Faced with demographic and economic challenges, the Kremlin has devised a strategy to employ small, highly-trained, well-equipped conventional and non-conventional forces under the umbrella of nuclear coercion. Nuclear weapons allow Russian leaders to defy international norms, risk their conventional forces, and accept high casualty rates while preventing Western intervention. Given the West's current belief that nuclear weapons are a strategic deterrent, this concept is difficult to reconcile. Yet, overt statements from Russian leaders indicate that the use of non-strategic nuclear weapons is a viable option in certain strategic situations, including conventional wars.

Nuclear threats have restrained Western leaders and complicated the development of a comprehensive counter-strategy. Since the start of the Ukrainian Conflict, the West has taken several steps to contain Russian aggression. NATO and the US have conducted multiple exercises as a show of force, including Swift Response 15, the largest airborne drill since the end of the Cold War; stood up a quick reaction force that provides the ability to rapidly deploy 50,000 troops; and established multiple stockpiles throughout Europe.³⁸ However, Russian nuclear coercion limits the use of ground forces to dislodge Russian forces; the risk of a nuclear attack cannot be disregarded.

Although the West's strategy must rely on diplomatic and economic power to stem the Kremlin's strategy, the military and informational aspects must also be strong. Sanctions have had a significant impact on the Russian economy (slashing the value of the ruble nearly 50 percent), but the depression was short lived. The Kremlin was able to stabilize the economy by reinvigorating internal markets and establishing trade with countries that opposed the sanctions.³⁹ Unfortunately this has bolstered Mr. Putin's domestic approval ratings and allowed him to continue to recapitalize his conventional and strategic forces.

As history reveals, the only Western strategy that was capable of deterring Soviet nuclear policy was the SDI. Therefore, in order to bolster the West's counter-coercion strategy, Western political and military leaders should follow Secretary of Defense Carter's lead and continue to convey to their Russian counterparts that the continued use of nuclear threats will be met with improvements to ballistic and cruise missile defenses, a continued build-up of conventional weaponry and forces in across Europe, and a proportional nuclear response.⁴⁰ Because Russian culture views military power as its most important and influential diplomatic tool, the West must clearly communicate the military consequences of the Kremlin's nuclear coercive strategy in order to prevent the continued expansion of Russian influence throughout Eurasia.⁴¹

We must not forget, though, that NATO also has nuclear potential at its disposal, which together with its conventional forces and anti-missile defense capabilities constitutes the deterrence power of the Alliance. – Stanisław Koziej, former head of Poland's National Security Bureau⁴²

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

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Chapter 7

Ukraine's Hidden Battlefield

Robert Kurz

In May of 2016, I had the opportunity to travel to Kiev, Ukraine, for one week. My intent was to engage with the people, understand their perspectives, and, along with my colleagues, learn as much as possible in a very short time. My hope was that this brief trip would be the first of several journeys to the country and its neighbors, where I could observe the impact of the conflict in eastern Ukraine on the region.

Roughly two years earlier in neighboring Romania, I watched with amazement as local and international news showed Maidan unfolding into long, massive protests in Kiev's Independence Square. By February 22, 2014, Ukrainian President Yanukovich fled the country and Ukraine's parliament began to select a new cabinet. Russia's President Putin – known for being an opportunist – quickly used these developments as a pretext for Russia to exert its own interests. In less than a month, it annexed Crimea, and by April, pro-Russian separatists had begun taking over government buildings in eastern Ukraine's Kharkiv, Donetsk and Luhansk regions.¹

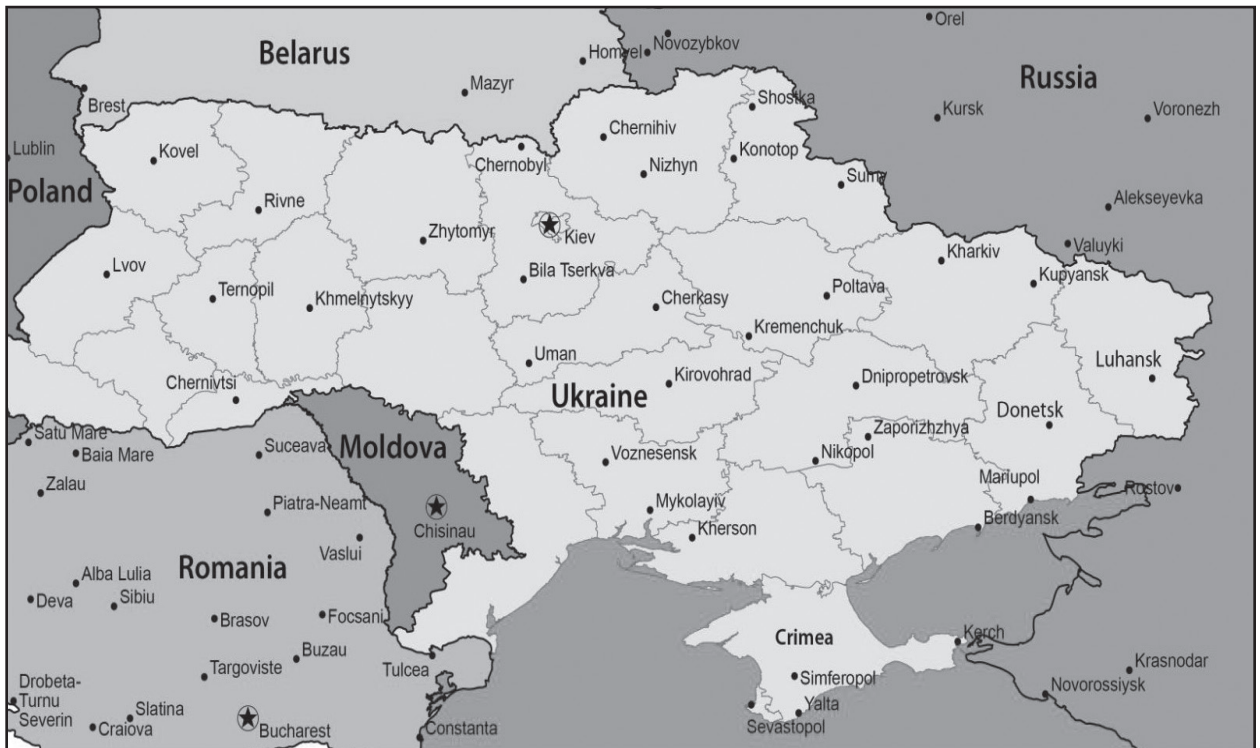


Figure 7.1 Map of Ukraine and region, 30 August 2016. Map courtesy of the Foreign Military Studies Office.

Today, even one-week visitors like me quickly assess that Kiev is, by most appearances, more stable than in 2014, but fraught with serious challenges. To say the least, it faces political turbulence over corruption, Russia's occupation of Crimea, and a volatile eastern Ukraine, where over 9,000 people have died in the conflict with little or no resolution from the Minsk Agreements. These topics – corruption, Crimea, and

the military conflict – are so palpable in Ukraine that they continually dominate the international media as well as thousands of analyses of what will happen next. Yet my visit revealed to me a hidden battlefield in Ukraine, one on which victory is measured by the effects of a quiet and penetrating influence that can alter the subconscious of the people as well as the outcome of most other battles. This battlefield is about a fight for persuasion and identity. While it is not new to conflict or war, its digital context is far-reaching and Russia has the initiative. Based largely on my observations and discussions with Ukrainian civilians and officials, this paper provides a brief, one-week snapshot of Ukraine’s hidden battlefield on which Russia employs indirect methods to accomplish its objectives.

Throughout my week in Kiev, Ukrainians repeatedly used the term “Russian Propaganda” as they described their country’s current challenges. In an initial discussion, a senior military official spent considerable effort explaining how Ukraine’s current conflict is technically an “artillery war.” Yet, to my surprise, he ended his long explanation with a brief, succinct divergence from his artillery discourse. He said that in this conflict “Russian propaganda was the main instrument of power,” that this propaganda was “at its highest,” and that it “splits Ukraine in half.” The official’s final statements were my entree into understanding the quieter – yet more pervasive and powerful – battle that Ukraine faces today.

A separate group of Ukrainians, on the subject of current security challenges, also prioritized Russian propaganda as a top issue for their country. Their research organized Russian influence into four major methods. The first is “Cultural Invasion,” where Russia uses its diaspora, language, entertainment, books, social networks, and the Moscow Orthodox Church to grow and leverage its influence in target areas. Dr. Mahir Ibrahimov, a cultural and language expert on this trip who lived, served and worked in the region for over 40 years, provided insight on this topic. He noted that for Ukraine, this might be one of the most difficult forms of Russian propaganda to distinguish, given the two countries’ interwoven histories and cultures.² The group called the second method “Historical Distortion.” They explained that Russia uses its vast array of connections in Ukrainian society to teach and reflect on key historical developments along misleading, anti-Western and pro-Russian themes. They identified the third method as “Centralized Media,” whereby Russia promotes its views by monopolizing or manipulating television, radio, and printed products inside Ukraine and elsewhere, in multiple languages. The fourth method is Russia’s “Information and Psychological Operations.” In Ukraine’s current conflict with pro-Russian separatists, this includes cell phone text messages, embedded journalists, social networks, and symbols such as the Cross of St. George, the Russian Federation colors, or the Great Patriotic War cult.

These methods seem to reflect some of the messages provided in an issue of Russia’s *Bulletin of the Academy of Military Science*. In his early 2015 article, Russian General-Lieutenant A. V. Kartapalov examined changes in the nature of armed struggle and what is described as “new-type” war.³ Kartapalov explained that conflicts now have a more protracted character and use indirect actions that have achieved results through demoralizing the enemy and inflicting damage on him without the use of force. The general includes a chart outlining a Russian view of this “new-type” war, wherein the initial stages are “Pressuring the Enemy Politically, Economically, Informationally and Psychologically;” “Disorienting the Political and Military Leadership of the State-Victim;” and “Spreading Dissatisfaction among the Population.”⁴ These initial stages are distinctly “indirect” methods of achieving goals in a “state-victim,” and can be used with or without the employment of force. While Kartapalov refers to US actions as examples of this “new-type” war, his explanation of the concept actually appears to coincide with Ukrainian observations, and is a well-written blueprint for Russia’s involvement in Ukraine to date. The graphic below reflects Kartapalov’s “new-type” war.⁵

Methods and Ways of Conducting a New-Type of War

Achieving Goals in New-Type Warfare in Combination with the Employment of Military Force or without it.
Set of Indirect Actions (“Hybrid Methods”)

Pressuring the Enemy Politically,
Economically, Informationally,
and Psychologically

Disorienting the Political and
Military Leadership of the State-
Victim. Spreading Dissatisfaction
among the Population

Preparing Armed Opposition
Detachments and Sending Them
to the Conflict Region

Intensifying Diplomatic Pressure and Propaganda to the World Community

Covertly Deploying and Employing Special Operations Forces, Cyber Attacks and Software Effects,
Conducting Reconnaissance and Subversive Acts on a Large Scale, Supporting the Internal Opposition,
and Employing New Weapon Systems

Shifting to Classical Methods of Waging War, Using Various Types of Weapons
in Combination with Large-Scale Information Effects

Seizing Enemy Territory with the Simultaneous
Action against (destruction of) Forces and Targets to
the Entire Depth of His Territory

Employing Precision Weapons on a Large Scale,
Extensively Using Special Operations Forces, Robotic
Complexes, and Weapons Based on NPP

Liquidating Centers of Resistance with the Help of Artillery and Air Strikes, Delivering Precision Weapons Strikes,
and Landing of Assault Forces. Clearing Out the Territory using Ground Forces.

Establishing Full Control over the State-Victim.

Figure 7.2 Methods and Ways of Conducting a New-Type of War. Graphic courtesy of the Foreign Military Studies Office.

I briefly shared with these Ukrainians my understanding of “new-type” war, wherein a state initially uses indirect methods of “pressuring,” “disorienting,” and “spreading dissatisfaction” – without force – to achieve its goals in a target population.⁶ In response, the Ukrainians described a recent, historical pattern of Russian propaganda in their country that clearly utilized these methods to facilitate Moscow’s interests and objectives. They explained that Russian propaganda in Ukraine distinctly rose and then dropped in 2004 relative to the Orange Revolution and spiked again in 2007 relative to the Russia-Ukraine gas disputes. In the summer of 2013, Russian propaganda ramped up again, paralleling then-Ukrainian

President Yanukovich's efforts to squelch dissent by taking control of the press. Based on my subsequent observations and discussions throughout the week, Russian propaganda and other influences in Ukraine have only intensified since that time, to include the aftermath of Maidan, the annexation of Crimea, and the ongoing separatist conflict . . . and have become a battlefield all their own.

I discovered a second theme in my discussions with Ukrainians, one that likely dominates Ukraine's hidden battlefield and is consistent with Kartapalov's explanation of indirect methods. Ukrainians in Kiev frequently emphasized their challenge in countering Russia's penetrating and often secretive presence and influence in multiple, critical sectors of Ukrainian society. Given the two countries' substantially intertwined history, it is no surprise that Russia has longstanding connections throughout Ukraine. Seventeen percent of Ukraine's population identifies as ethnic Russians, and thirty percent claim Russian as their mother tongue.⁷ Coupled with strong, historic business and cultural ties, the environment is optimal for the more powerful of the two countries to leverage heavy influence on the other. One of Ukraine's sectors that is most vulnerable to Russian influence is its media. In a discussion with a seasoned media expert, I learned how Russia is increasingly manipulating its connections to Ukraine's news industry to intensify anti-government sentiment in Kiev. The media spokesman explained that Russia's Main Intelligence Directorate (*Glavnoye razvedyvatel'noye upravleniye-GRU*) contacts Russian-backed journalists in Ukraine and tells them to arrive at a designated site before an unexpected, controversial incident begins there. Once the affair is underway, these journalists are the first to report – on local, national and international media – a pro-Russian view of the development, or that the Kiev government is to blame. The expert also explained that Russia is responsible for most of the country's cyber-attacks, including measures to sway Ukrainians or, as in Ukraine's post-Maidan elections, to actually shut down government systems. Coupled with its manipulation of Ukraine's broadcast media, these two can form an integrated and credible narrative detrimental to Ukraine's interests and political legitimacy. Russia's influence is clearly prevalent within Ukraine's news industry if it can provide both the catalyst for and coverage of powerful, politicized events.

Ukrainians described another sector of their society in which Russia has had an increasingly polarizing influence: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The two patriarchates in Ukraine – the Moscow Patriarchate and the Kiev Patriarchate (which split from the former in 1992) – claim to represent the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. A Ukrainian military officer told me that the two components of the Church had peacefully co-existed in his country until 2014, when the Moscow Patriarchate began overtly supporting Russia's actions in both Crimea and eastern Ukraine. The officer explained that the public had expected both components, in their efforts to represent the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, to come to the aid of Ukrainian casualties and their families. Instead, the Moscow Patriarchate distanced itself from the Ukrainian people for political reasons; this angered many Ukrainians enough to leave that church. Meanwhile, the Kiev Patriarchate has made a concentrated effort to help in the crisis, supporting first the protesters during the Maidan revolution – when it opened the doors of its Mikhailovsky Monastery as a safe haven and later as a hospital – and now the Ukrainian soldiers fighting against Russian-backed separatists. In a related press article, Kiev Patriarchate Archbishop Yevstratii Zoria stated that “Moscow is using its influence over Ukraine in the church as an instrument of hybrid warfare against Ukraine.”⁸ The article described how tensions between the two churches got so bad in 2015 that in one incident, a priest from the Moscow Patriarchate church stabbed a priest from the Kiev Patriarchate, allegedly shouting “For Russ! For the Orthodox faith!”⁹ Russia's ability to dis-unify the Ukrainian Orthodox Church hits deeply within Ukraine's society and exemplifies “new-type” war's indirect methods of “pressuring,” “disorienting,” and “spreading dissatisfaction,” without force.¹⁰ About 65 percent of Ukrainians are members of the Orthodox Church, totaling about 27.8 million people.¹¹

Russia's influence within Ukraine's media and religious sectors is powerful, but its penetration of the country's front lines has had a demoralizing and divisive effect on soldiers and officers. The military's challenges on the conventional battlefield are being supplemented with what multiple Ukrainian officers describe as Russian threats internal to their units. On the front lines of eastern Ukraine, there has been a trend of Ukrainian soldiers receiving threatening texts on their mobile phones. Such texts are from unknown sources who address the soldiers by name, inform them that they are being watched exactly where they sit or stand, and warn them to stop fighting and to leave their unit. I learned that, in some cases, the texts included pictures of the soldier's family within the past 24-48 hours. These threats have caused absences and defections on the front lines, and have exacerbated Ukrainian commanders' ability to retain loyalty and personnel strength in their units.

Ukrainian military commanders' internal challenges also included their own staffs. On more than one occasion, military officers shared that, due to a concern over Russian influence, there is often only a fragile, cautious trust in officers both up and down their chain of command. One official explained that some commanders on the front line learned to limit information to their staffs, withhold critical data to the last minute, or even provide their staffs with false locations initially – in order to reduce the risk of their operational plans being shared with separatists before their mission began. This level of Russian intelligence and influence within Ukraine's defense community has a tangible and debilitating effect on its military, yet it is accomplished by indirect methods of war including social media and insider threats.

The issue of trust vis-à-vis military actions in Ukraine extends to the international level as well. During my week in Kiev, I learned that Ukraine has very little trust in two of the key organizations intended to ensure adherence to the Minsk Agreements and the inherent ceasefires. Many Ukrainians do not trust the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), mandated to observe and report on Ukraine's security situation including alleged Agreement violations, as it does not have a “no neighbors” policy. This means that Russia has been able to participate in the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine. Russia currently has the fourth largest staff out of 45 countries participating in the SMM, following the United States, United Kingdom, and Romania.¹² Moreover, the OSCE is a member of the Joint Control Commission (JCC) – mandated to clarify and resolve on-the-ground disputes related to the Minsk Agreements – along with authorities from the Ukrainian government and the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics.¹³ Based on my discussions in Kiev, there are up to 50 Russian officers affiliated with the JCC, and Ukrainians refer to it as the “Second Russian Invasion.” From Ukraine's perspective, the presence of Russian personnel in both the OSCE and the JCC only multiplies Russia's capability to employ very influential, indirect methods to achieve its goals in their country.

This snapshot of Ukraine, its conflict, and perspectives from Kiev leads to a series of important facts and inferences. Ukraine is battling a strong and enduring undercurrent of Russian influence within its borders that is powerful enough to impact the outcome of this crisis. Russia owns the initiative in the conflict, and it can choose to escalate or de-escalate it using indirect, non-force methods designed to pressure, disorient and spread dissatisfaction within Ukraine's populace and leadership. Russia is concentrating this “new-type” approach in Ukraine's media sector, its Orthodox Church, and its defense community, with the intent to weaken public unity, debilitate key institutions, create social division, and discredit the Ukrainian government. On the front line, Russian intelligence and influence is integrated and ubiquitous throughout the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of Ukraine's military, making both horizontal and vertical coordination risky and cumbersome. Moreover, from Ukraine's perspective, Russia has a powerful presence within the international entities tasked with stabilizing the east Ukraine conflict, and is capable

of leveraging the monitoring functions and relevant political decisions to its favor. All of this comprises a battlefield largely unseen by most observers of the conflict, and it extends to nearly every feature on Ukraine's map.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

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Chapter 8
Countering Russian Revanchism:
US and Western Options to Thwart the Bear
Gustav Otto

The role of Russia on the international stage is changing, and confounding America and its allies. Accusations of irrationality are unfounded. On the contrary, President Vladimir Putin is very rational, and his goals include cementing his position as the leader of Russia, and securing his legacy whenever he leaves. His goals include the re-establishment of Russia as a global power; a new and improved nation with powerful regional hegemony; a pseudo-capitalistic society to feed his oligarchy of kleptocrats; and to be able to influence events around the globe. The Russian desire to return to power and prestige is as linked to regaining physical territory as it is to diplomatic prowess.

Simply put this is Russian Revanchism. To the chagrin of the US and the West, Putin's military and information machines consistently work more effectively to thwart Western attempts to reign in or dissuade Russia's behavior. The US and the West have options. These options require a better understanding of the challenges posed by Putin, a medium and long-term strategy of deterrence, and combination of appeasement plus persuasion. They will also require commitment from a whole-of-government America working in better regional and bilateral coordination with our partners, particularly the Baltic nations and Europe.

To understand Putin's rationale, we must look at the culture of Russia shaped by their history. Only then may we develop an appreciative context to counter Putin with a well-crafted American and international communication strategy. The nuances include: how Putin may see the world, how Russians see the world, and how the two see themselves. Further, it requires that we understand how the narratives feed each other, and then how the narratives propel them in their current direction. As we discuss in the Professional Military Education realm, this transcends the Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic (DIME). It gets to the heart of understanding climate and culture of a foreign region, country, and its leaders – sometimes we refer to this as the DIME+C. The DIME+C is not the ultimate evaluative framework, rather, one with a clear nexus in this anthology, allowing for the development of improved options. This chapter will consider the use of DIME+C to evaluate Russian Revanchism, and conclude with some possible considerations for options by the US and the West. There is no perfect evaluative framework for such complex, possibly chaotic, international challenges. The importance of culture cannot be overstated in this case.

The United States and its Western allies were surprised by the Russian invasion of the Republic of Georgia in April 2008. At the same time, the West wasn't sure if Putin would later concede his presidency. He did, but only after he arranged for his protégé to serve as a place holder and advance Putin's bidding until he could return to the post. Putin's puppet, Dmitry Medvedev, sustained but failed to advance Russian Revanchism before Putin could return to the office of the Russian Presidency. Completely rational, his efforts to coalesce power under the presidency, house power, and wealth in his native territories and regain former Soviet centers of gravity continued. Since August 2014, Russia sought to violently disrupt international order and violate international law and treaties by again violating the sovereignty of other countries, criminally seizing former Soviet territory masked by claims of protecting the rights of ethnic Russians. This behavior suggests a greater appetite for annexations that might serve the economic demands of Russia, and stoke President Putin's narcissism. Further, Russia's modus operandi the second time around hid behind what the West describes as "covert actions," and what historical Russian and Soviet Doctrine refer to as

“active measures.” This crass behavior on the international stage left the US and West paralyzed, unable to construct beneficial responses to counter Russian Revanchism. Putin is winning, at least for now. He is winning the game he set out to play, and the West fails to recognize it.

First, we must understand President Putin’s motivations and vulnerabilities. They stem from domestic, regional, and international forces. They are rooted in deep communist history. They are grounded in economics, diplomacy, and information. For example, Russians generally support him or acquiesce on issues of foreign policy. Many refrain from public skepticism for fear of retribution, particularly in light of government controlled media. The domestic political environment permits a dynamic and unscrupulous behavior abroad, allowing Putin to cement domestic and international gains over time; or achieve a stalemate in frozen conflicts like Syria. Russian exceptionalism becomes a self-congratulating cycle thanks to Putin and his media machine, while they advance three narratives:

Savior of Europe. A 60-year-old notion feeds a nationalistic fervor, and was exploited since Stalin, through Khrushchev and Putin today.¹ The important role Russia and the USSR played in countering Hitler in World War II can’t be denied. The perpetual disruption caused by an overzealous Russia, clinging to an idealized and revisionist past, threatens the collective development by not only Russia, but the former soviet states and the rest of Europe. Russia could better sustain its reputation as the “Savior of Europe” by integrating into the civil society modeled by the Baltics for example, allowing all the boats to rise.

Fortress Russia. A perennial theme used by Russia for over a century, and successfully used by other nations including Nazi Germany. Essentially a robust nationalism policy, this notion evokes a strong state often led by an iron-fisted central figure or tight group of same-minded figures.² In Russia’s case, an attempt to prop up a crumbling ruble during historic lows in petrol and increasingly effective sanctions are matched by efforts to prohibit capital flight and stifle media oversight and criticism of Russian elites.³ Putin seeks to capitalize on this strategy and narrative at home and abroad. From keeping the Russian well-to-dos from leaving Russia, to partnering with China to leverage capital into cash, building virtual walls to keep Russians in and the rest of the world out.⁴ This seems more of an effort to control who Russia and Russians engage with, rather than to completely fence them off from the rest of the world.⁵ The risk Putin faces with this policy is aggravating those who put him in power in the first place – the oligarchs and elite who either sponsored him or feared him enough to support him.

Good Czar. Trying to re-shape and manipulate an age-old myth about a patriarch whose good heart connected with his subjects, Putin continues to enjoy artificially high ratings at home. While there’s little to no evidence the common people of Russia are benefiting from his leadership, Putin’s domestic information machine continues to roll out misleading information and suppress dissent. Staged pictures of Putin and government activities reflect a handsome, powerful, and fashionable leader lordling above others, or basking in the limelight as we witnessed in Sochi or Paris. Much of this is the natural selection by any sovereign; however, it is highly choreographed in Russia to buoy perceptions about the current president. One article accurately states “Centuries-old servitude to the czar meant a confiscation of body and will and mind, but in exchange it elevated the soul and conferred a righteous purpose on existence.”⁶ Reinforced by his grasp on Russian media, and by his heavy-handed control of the intelligence and security services, Putin’s notion of the Good Czar remains strong.

A variety of definitions for rational exist. At the strategic level, I define rationale as deliberate, methodic, and consistent. In this manner, we can evaluate heads of state and other national and international entities based on their behavior. This definition allows for a consideration of their motivations, an appreciation for

what drives them; even answering why they may make decisions or hold a certain perception. For a complicated leader like Vladimir Putin, understanding how he views things and why he might make certain decisions is critical. With all of this, we can deduce the “why” behind some of his actions.

A clear desire to see Russia returned to the position of superpower, and no longer the cast off, red-headed step child of Europe are among Putin’s top priorities. During his career as an intelligence officer, Putin rose to positions of power because he was capable, and he subsequently advanced the national agenda in his own way. Not unlike segments of American society who long for the days of old, so too, Putin feels the pangs of nostalgia and recognizes the possible opportunity in returning Russia to a better recognized position on the international stage. He misses the glory days of his earlier years – despite the fact the Soviet Union collapsed due to severe mismanagement, decayed infrastructure, and a yearning to join the 20th century by so many of its people. No wonder they long for “the good old days” when people cowered in the shadows when confronted by the *Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti* (KGB), *Sluzhba vneshney razvedki* (SVR), *Federal’naya Agenstvo Pravitel’svennoy Svayazi i Informatsii* (FAPSI), or *Glavnoye razvedyvatel’noye upravleniye* (GRU). Those days are returning thanks to President Putin. The difference this time is his unwillingness to hide behind politics, instead opting for meat-cleaver tactics, over surgical ones. Putin is acting overtly instead of covertly or surreptitiously, as in the past.

The difference between the tactics the world witnessed in the Cold War and today is subject to two issues. The first is the global connectivity thanks to the internet, and ability to travel around the world with little notice. The second, understanding the first, is a lack of cohesion or consensus in the EU, NATO, and the US. This is compounded by a willingness to hide, plainly, behind the thinnest of veils of “plausible deniability.” In other words, Putin flaunts his less-than-covert support of Russian Separatists in Ukraine, insisting the Russian troops are on leave, and volunteered to help their cousins on the other side of a sovereign nation’s borders. He does this because no one, so far, has given him a reason not to.

Another aspect of Putin’s rationale is domestic, or the internal context. The perpetual uncertainty of domestic popular support, despite the perceived iron-grip by Putin and his new machine, surely commands much of his time. The bread lines are growing. A fragile middle-class born following the Cold War asks themselves why they supported this return to a Stalinesque lifestyle, fissures become visible to the trained eye.⁷ For those of us who live outside of Russia, we see more of the international stage; we do not see the behind-the-scenes activities propping up domestic institutions from jobs programs, to law enforcement (loosely defined), and growing discontent over staple scarcity. The middle and upper class societies offer both a threat and an opportunity for Putin, as much as for the West and the US. The middle class of Russia today has little memory of what communist poverty really was. Most enjoy the fruits of their parents’ efforts to provide good education and encourage them to find jobs in a legitimate market-based economy. As such, they developed a common-sense approach to rule of law, the power of supply and demand, and the importance of trade equity. Similarly, the upper class was able to capitalize on these trends, ahead of the middle class. The upper class needed to develop new capital markets at home to support their burgeoning industrial growth. Nowhere is this more apparent than the consumption of designer fashion and services catering to middle and upper class bourgeois. As many in these two classes grew their income, their lives changed in fairly honest ways, they may soon feel the pressure of the domestic downturn. They will become increasingly vulnerable as the ruble weakens and the purchasing power at home erodes. Are the West and the US poised to take advantage of this, or will we miss another opportunity?

Understanding the culture, messages, and rationale behind Russian behavior drives questions about what the West should do. Before embarking in this direction, it is important to consider the very real impact of economics. In Russia, due to the weak ruble, skyrocketing inflation, and rock-bottom petrol prices, the purchasing power of Russia is near historic lows. The 2014 petroleum deal struck between Russia and China was a liquidation sale, where Putin felt the initial pinches of a petrol glut, and the need to gain cash in the short term.⁸ Another struggling domestic market driven by international commerce is the unique yet faltering Russian military industrial complex (MIC).⁹ At a time when its maritime prowess in the Pacific and Atlantic is crucial, along with a growing niche demand for modern naval production, the Russian shipbuilding crisis threatens its weak maritime industry with bankruptcy. These factors, combined with mundane, yet slowly effective sanctions, continue to press Putin domestically, and prevent fiscal expenditures abroad.

Despite a handicapped military machine, Putin deploys modern forces in places along the Ukrainian border and in Syria. The turnout of new main battle tanks (MBT) along the Ukrainian border, including the confirmed presence of advanced T-72s and T-80 MBTs, suggest Putin is willing to gamble on a weak NATO.¹⁰ The last few months witnessed new Russian materials in Syria with the arrival of advanced intelligence and surveillance platforms, along with tweaked radar, guidance, and electro-optical systems.¹¹ Despite a fragile ceasefire negotiated in February 2016, Russia is surely still supporting the regime through active measures, irregular warfare, and with conventional advisors and equipment. Will these have a negative impact on the Russian economy? Perhaps. For countries and non-state actors in the market for new equipment or services, it may serve as a tremendous marketing ploy – one that may pay off in the short run for Putin.

The cliché, “perceptions are realities” applies in fullness to this scenario. Expansion of NATO and the economic pressures of the European Union is a real and perceived threat to a country. It is also a pressure for Putin as a communist Russian heir, who’s accustomed to having compliant buffer states for 100 years. Putin fears the West’s economic bloc will undermine any of their organic revenues, and pressure the regional petrol giant to lower prices and further conform on Euro-terms, rather than Russia’s. A consolidated European military, for example, threatens the already weak Russian MIC. To the east, in China and beyond, is a full awareness that while China and Asia must deal with Russia, there remains a deep mistrust and disdain. The clash of cultures could even find other venues, or create new frozen conflicts.

Possible Conflict Points.

In hindsight, and considering the above, the Republic of Georgia’s invasion by Russia is easier to understand. Likewise, the Ukrainian seizures, particularly in light of the former Soviet MIC in Eastern Ukraine, can be appreciated better. Where might other conflicts be festering? Some point to Chechnya. While possible, this domestic conflict appears to be a simmer and on the proverbial back burner. Unless there’s an uprising by new or revived militants, Chechnya will probably remain static. The battles will continue in the Ukraine, though in large part to keep the US and West on edge, and the region destabilized. There’s no apparent indication Russia seeks more territorial gains in the Ukraine. Other external possibilities will likely focus on one of two areas: the first where “Russian peoples” are gathered, and the second where Russian headway across the DIME+C might be gained. Two possible near-term scenarios, among many, exist.

Narva, Estonia. This small border town of mostly ethnic and Russian speaking peoples is the third largest city in Estonia, and offers major trade benefits akin to a free economic zone. The porous borders allow for good exchange of goods and services, particularly for grey and black market activities. The transshipment of wealth is important to both nations.¹² Further, Estonia already bore the brunt of Russian aggression

in the 2007 cyber-attack during Putin's first reign.¹³ Russia believes it coerced Estonia into a submissive state. Estonia believes they have bolstered their own security, but live in the shadow of a Russian aggressor.¹⁴ The small size, proximity, and malleable local population would make for fast and easy annexation, further roiling the West, and destabilizing Estonia. This scenario challenges NATO and Article V mutual protection. Are the NATO allies willing to wage war over a violation like this? Is Putin willing to risk it? If yes to these, are they willing to escalate hostilities?

Similarly, the northern portion of Kazakhstan offers another easy annexation point. The area to be victimized by Russia in this satellite state could be the biggest territorial gain for Russia yet. The northern reaches of Kazakhstan are ripe for this kind of incursion. The Kazakhs have no desire to rile Russia, and are already one of the few members to join the Eurasian Economic Union. Kazakhstan offers the possibility of a peaceful annexation or acquiescence, to a military one.¹⁵ While this seems more far-fetched than an annexation of Narva, it would allow for a more comprehensive buffer purchase on Russia's part.¹⁶ In Putin's calculus, it has even lower ranking in the West's mind than the Baltics, yet reinforces his desire to keep the West on edge. The long-standing relationship with Kazakhstan, though functional, still finds its leaders worried about Putin, and their possible strategic longings for buffer spaces.

Balancing an understanding of Putin and Russian perceived threats and longing to return to days of old are a textbook exercise in cognitive dissonance. History is replete with "anything but" examples. In this case many behaviors suggest Putin and Russia are pursuing an "anything but the US or anything but the European Union" approach. While this may appeal to Putin and his supporters, the strategic failure of this approach will be the lack of a deliberate and explicit desired outcomes. This often leads to a slippery slope or death spiral in national strategies; the unintended agreement to terms not otherwise-consistent with national interests. Where national pride and personal ego (arguably narcissism) collide, the negative effects of an "anything-but" strategy are compounded. The US is best to look at ways to give Putin some credit, some honor and maneuver room, while forcing him towards more and better compliance.

Tactics versus strategy – don't confuse the two. Mr. Putin and his advisors do not and that is key. In this case, tactics are the short term, battlefield activities used by a country. Putin and Russia can pursue military activities in places like Syria, the Ukraine or a dozen other frozen conflicts. It can also be economic activities like shoring up the ruble, or turning down a supply of petrol in a saturated market. On the other hand, strategy focuses on the long term, and seeks to re-establish Russian regional hegemony, stymie perceived Western (US and NATO) containment, and grow their economic and diplomatic power. These lines blur naturally, and it is for this reason an insistence on understanding the distinction and the importance of having a national strategy *deliberately* designed to advance one's own national interests.

What to call it? Who cares! As this chapter opened, I labeled Russian behavior as special measures, akin to covert action. Others will talk about sabotage, subversion, information warfare, hybrid or asymmetric warfare. All could be right, and it does not matter. In fact, I suspect all *are* right, and it is a combination thereof. It is Russian Revanchism. Never mind what we call it, what can the US and the West do about it? Focusing on different approaches, understanding the rationale, culture and myth that surrounds Russia and its chief instigator, paired with some creative thinking allows for some new approaches.

There are some important points to think about, as we move forward in our assessment of current events while preparing a US National Strategy or at least some options nested in such a strategy. For example, there remains a strong voice suggesting Russia's economy and Putin's hold on it are weak. Perhaps in an American, even Western mind, the people of Russia, despite a rising middle and upper class, are tougher

and more resilient than we give them credit for. Mirror imaging in this case must be avoided. Russians are generally able to absorb more economic adversity than we in the West care to admit. Trying to get rid of Putin probably isn't the answer either, as history suggests he will be replaced by someone not-too-different.¹⁷ We need look no further than the lineage of his predecessors, or we can look at the case studies of Iraq or Libya. Knocking the king off his throne is nice in fairy tales, but doesn't seem to work in the real world. With the 2018 Russian presidential elections, watch for a fourth-term bid by Putin, then look for possible changes to allow more.

How to start thinking about it – be deviant and do not forget the old ways. The key is creating a strategy of one's own, not an “anything but” strategy as Russia appears to have. It will be reactive to a degree, but should focus on putting Putin off balance, without becoming too defensive. The last thing anyone wants is to back the bear into a corner. The US and the West need to determine what they want Russia to look like, how they want it to behave and if they care if Vladimir Putin is president. Curt answers are easy to come by, though often misleading, as evidenced in the 2016 presidential debates in America. The devilish details in developing a coherent strategy considering the unending mix of outcomes can be paralyzing. On the international stage, and looking at timelines coinciding with US presidential terms (a political reality in the US) probably is a good starting point. The key is to be consistent with our values, yet pursue some options we haven't tried, or haven't tried well. It will be hard to surprise Putin, yet he can be reasonable if we decide that's what we want.

Instead of a golden strategy that converts Russia into a modern social democracy, responsive to its population and serving as a role model on the international stage, start with something realistic.¹⁸ First start with an eight-year set of goals based on something the US can help shape. For example, we might want to allay the fears of Russia about Western containment. How might we go about this? Simple answers of diplomacy fall short, and must include specific activities like offering transparency, accountability and consistency. There is room for this in negotiations on any of the frozen conflicts the US, the West and Russia are involved in. We're doing this with Iran, and we have a long history of doing it with Russia and the Soviet Union. In an international give-to-get relationship, having firm lines, clear objectives, and well-crafted messages is key. One notion might be a bigger role with Iran, Syria or even Turkey. A cautionary note: though not a fan of win-lose relationships, there must be an understanding that some countries may suffer as a result of our actions.

A strategy of partial withdrawal from Syria or the Ukraine may actually allow for better future negotiations. The springtime drawdown of Russia from Syria allowed negotiation space for Putin, and even Assad. It ceded contentious spaces to Russia for making the first moves, and allowed them more time and diplomatic maneuver room for future moves. For example, what if the US decided that what was lost in Ukraine isn't worth expending more efforts for? Would the US be willing to further backtrack with a post-Cold War ally? How would this be perceived by other allies? What might the US do to guard against further Russian exploitation? While we might distance ourselves from Erdogan and his policies, we do not want to abandon a key ally like Turkey. How might we work with all parties to give Russia some recognition, while correcting their belligerence? Is this even possible? Note how Russia and Israel, Russia and Afghanistan, among others, have warmed as the US relations with these have chilled; this kind of activity can harm long-standing relationships, and must be weighed before a new strategy pursued.

Another possible strategy option for the US would be to seek to dethrone Putin, in hopes of a more cooperative successor. Rather than Iraq-like military ousting, the US and the West could drive a cohesive

information, economic and diplomatic campaign helping Putin's supporters choose a new leader. The possible backlash, of course, is a steeled Putin who uses such an aggressive stand against us, and finds even more legitimate rises in his domestic popularity. This strategy seems to have fits of starts and stops by the US and several others in the West. Putin is a master at navigating these kinds of threats, and almost seems to invite them, knowing this is a game he excels at. An anti-Putin campaign probably isn't what the US and the West really want. Rather, it is to minimize new aggression and mitigate behaviors to date.

A third possible strategy is the "do nothing" strategy, or more accurately, do not do anything more – be content with the status quo. There is little to be gained at present by advancing one agenda over another. On the strategic front, a do nothing approach is a real one. This may not be ideal. In the meantime, Ukraine suffers. Syrians suffer. China prospers. Russians get hungrier. A do nothing strategy only works when you know *why* you choose to do nothing, and if you methodically set up triggers to alert you when a change is required. For example, Putin is rational and he isn't weak... yet. However, the recent economic turmoil, the frailty of the petrol industry, and a struggling domestic agriculture may eventually force him to address some of these issues. Bread lines in Russia are growing and shelves are becoming barer. We should be ready to strike when that time comes, and it is coming. It might mean the US and the West choose to stay the course, and work together on what those tripwires are, and what to do about them when they are crossed. No easy task, one example might be Russian escalation in Ukraine. Another might be Russian re-invasion of Georgia, or another cyber-attack on Estonia. These are the plans that should be considered now, so our reaction when they do occur is less painful. The previously mentioned conflict possibilities in Estonia and Kazakhstan should also be considered and planned for.

Each of these three broad strategies needs to focus on just a few big action words. The US should seek to *appease*, *persuade*, and *deter*. If the US and the West sought to offer an olive branch to Putin as proof of willingness to move forward under an appeasement strategy, it could ease his fears of Western containment. Then other efforts under a persuasion strategy could be used as a way to entice Russia to work more closely with the West, particularly where there's clear gain for each. Finally, there must be an omnipresent, clear, yet soft voice of deterrence to hold a line. For example, on the sovereignty front with Ukraine, consider an appeasement strategy where we agree (*just this once*) that possession is nine tenths of the law, and we reluctantly concede their territorial gains. The stipulation is it cannot happen again, not in a year, not in eight years. The threats need not be stipulated, but they must be clearly implied. The reality is, as Ukraine has learned the hard way, it is hard to stick to non-binding agreements of this nature beyond a president's term limit.

The persuasion part of the strategy is more of the status quo. The US and West continue sanctions, yet add clarity to expected behavior, tied to explicit tactical activity, accompanied by monitoring. This allows for more clear communication in deed and word over time. Of import is the wording and ubiquity of the message. To date, Putin has controlled the media space in part because he acts faster, and in part because he's muddied and muddled the message by offering false information. A robust messaging effort, backed by a persistent thrust on the diplomatic and economic fronts, will be essential. For example, speaking about specific travel restrictions of named Russians is a good first step; however, the list of next steps with names must be present. If a ratcheting up or down is to take place, then the US and the West name those people in advance. This tactic directly supports the persuasion strategy and can serve as a carrot or stick depending on one's perspective.

The deterrence message is different. More than the previous two, it requires the US and the West to take an accurate inventory of their interests and project them forward. In this case it needs to set clear, unambiguous lines that will not be crossed. For example, sovereignty violations happen, but not repeatedly and not usually by 10 kilometers. A violation of a partner's sovereignty can be guarded by radar as well as with anti-aircraft missiles. Stationing tanks and planes on either side are clear signs of ill-intent, not defense. The placement of the first without the second is a manageable circumstance if the US and the West are prepared to block advances by Russia on short notice. Consider a clear violation of any Baltic nations' sovereignty. Advanced western radars and intelligence assets can confirm this in real-time. If the US and the West are prepared to staunch such aggression with next steps, then deterrence exists. It should be stated and telegraphed by easily observed military activities. If accompanied by security assistance efforts in materials, training and modernization, this too deters additional Russian aggression.

None of these options is foolproof or easy. They require repeated and deep definition of the issues, and creative, whole-of-government solutions. There is a real monetary and diplomatic cost. Part of this endeavor is a better understanding of Putin and Russian national interests in light of its president. As the US and the West wrestle with what they want Russia to look like, they would be well served to pursue a tiered strategy of appeasement, persuasion, and deterrence without seeking to escalate already bloody friction points. This will be a good opportunity for the next president of the United States to work on, and will surely be a festering wound when he takes office.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

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Section 2:

Rise of Sub-State Actors: Environmental, Socio-Cultural and Religious Aspects of the Operational Environment

Chapter 9
Why Climate Change is an Issue of National Security
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Introduction

The 2010 National Security Strategy of the United States affirms that,

The danger from climate change is real, urgent, and severe. The change wrought by a warming planet will lead to new conflicts over refugees and resources; new suffering from drought and famine; catastrophic natural disasters; and the degradation of land across the globe.¹

The strategy goes on to say that the United States goal must be to, “Promote dignity by meeting basic human needs.”²

The impacts of Climate Change include: global warming of both the atmosphere and the oceans, sea level rise, increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather, changes in amounts and patterns of precipitation, loss of ice and snow cover, acidification of the oceans, and more. Climate change is much more than just the increases of average air temperature. Each of these changes has a significant impact on human security, most directly by denying people their basic human needs. The summative impacts of multiple climate impacts will be devastating for many parts of the world and large numbers of people, mostly in the developing nations. Addressing these human security threats require whole of government solutions and a level of international cooperation yet to be achieved in our world. Failing to address these issues as a global community will yield catastrophic consequences that no nation acting individually can avoid, no matter how powerful.

The overall purpose of this paper is to assist the reader in understanding how climate change has become a threat to the national security of all nations and to discuss in strategic terms what actions nations must take in order to address the threats posed by climate change. The paper purports that climate change impacts are seen across the political, economic, and social structure of a nation, and therefore require whole of government efforts to address.³ The paper utilizes the data and analyses from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 5th Assessment Report (AR5) to document the science of climate change.⁴ It will not address the climate change denier argument that the observed climate change is all naturally caused. The overwhelming scientific evidence now available establishes that a significant amount of climate change is the direct result of human activity and specifically the discharge of massive quantities of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere; this data has made the climate denier argument ridiculous to even discuss. The paper will establish the linkage between critical impacts of climate change and human security, as reflected in the statements from the US National Security Strategy above. The paper will conclude with some general ideas on how the United States should respond immediately to the risks posed by climate change. A US perspective is taken on the assumption that the US must become a leader in a global climate change effort for such a movement to be successful. It is its obligation as a world power and also justified because much of the climate change seen today is being driven by the results of its voracious appetite for fossil fuels over the last 175 years.

This discussion starts with recognition that, for modern governments, the primary purpose of military forces is to secure and maintain peace for their nations. Peace in this context is not simply the absence of war, but the maintenance of geopolitical stability, which underpins the basic human security. Threats may come from conditions inside the nation or may be caused by pressures from outside its borders. Climate change is creating both internal and external threats for most countries and these threats are growing. For example, the United States recently released a comprehensive analysis of the expected impacts of climate change within the United States.⁵ The report identifies that there are serious consequences from climate change which will impact all aspects of American life. Unfortunately, this report almost exclusively examines only internal risks while omitting external considerations of climate change that can impact national security. An important goal of this paper is help the public appreciate the relationship between their national security and the exterior threats posed by climate change, even when these threats seem far distant from US borders. To accomplish this goal, the paper will discuss the general nature of the problem which is an environmental security issue. It will then provide a brief background in the science of climate change. The paper will next analyze how the impacts of climate change becomes threats to peace and security in the world. Finally, the concluding comments forecast what actions are necessary to adapt to the most immediate consequences climate change, while mitigating and then reducing the future impacts climate change.

Environmental Security Defined

The foundational concept underpinning all environmental security studies is that there are anthropogenically driven changes occurring in the natural environment of such a magnitude that they are creating threats to human security and long term damage to the earth. Researchers over the past 50 years have analyzed the degradation of the land, air, and water caused by human activity and concluded that these changes threaten the environmental security of people and nations.⁶ In 1986, Norman Myers described the concept of environmental security succinctly when he wrote, “national security is not just about fighting forces and weaponry. It relates to watersheds, croplands, forests, genetic resources, climate and other factors that rarely figure in the minds of military experts and political leaders.”⁷

As studies in environmental security progressed, many definitions were proposed, which added to the confusion about what the term really means. This author in writing *Understanding International Environmental Security: A Strategic Military Perspective*, found more than 30 different definitions for environmental security in the academic literature.⁸ For a short time in the mid-1990s there was even an official US Department of Defense (DOD) definition of environmental security and a Deputy Assistant Secretary level position in within the DOD staff. This proliferation of definitions for environmental security make it important to define as it is being applied in this discussion. Environmental security refers to human driven changes to the environmental conditions of an area of such a magnitude that they have the potential to destabilize or make a country or a region less secure primarily by denying people the ability to sustain their basic human needs. Examples of environmental security issues include: water scarcity caused by increased demand and overuse; loss of arable lands from poor agricultural practices; and climate change caused by large increases in the greenhouse gases discharged to the atmosphere. Climate Change is presently the “headline” environmental security issue across the globe and rightfully so based on the extreme threats it poses on a world scale. However, other environmental issues are severe and immediate for many locations in the world. For example, the Director of National Intelligence recently published an analysis that identified water scarcity as a very significant threat to US security based on its expected impacts around the world in the next 20 years.⁹ Evidence today supports this finding. The World Health Organization estimates that

nearly 1 million people per year die each year while billions become sick from polluted drinking water.¹⁰ This is nothing new or unexpected to early environmental security scholars such as Norman Myers.

Environmental security at its most fundamental ideal is a recognition that for many of the world's burgeoning population, life is a daily struggle to obtain their basic human needs of water, food, energy, and maintain their health. Without their basic human needs met, people are driven to find other ways to survive. They can move, seek resources from others (peacefully or otherwise), or stay in place and hope for a better tomorrow. All of these options represent security risks for the affected people, their neighbors and the global community. Based on this very brief effort to present a basic understanding of the concepts of environmental security it is now possible to better understand how climate change becomes a security threat with global impact.

Climate Change

Climate is nothing more than the expected weather in a specific place and time each year. Climate describes the average conditions calculated from the historical records of past weather. Climate change absolutely has a natural component driven by variations in the many factors that produce climate, mostly related to the levels of sun's energy impacting the Earth. There are also natural environmental occurrences such as volcanoes that can change weather and alter climate for short periods. However, these natural changes mostly manifest themselves over long time periods. A primary variable in the climate equation is the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the Earth's lower atmosphere. These gases absorb heat energy that is emitted from the Earth's surface, serving as a blanket to keep the Earth not too cold or not too warm. There is a direct correlation between atmospheric concentration of GHGs and the temperature of the Earth. Global Climate Change is now confirmed to be driven over the past 170 years by a large increase in GHGs in the atmosphere with an accompanying increase in atmospheric temperatures and other effects. The IPCC AR5 reports that total GHGs in the atmosphere have not been at present levels for at least 800,000 years.¹¹ Overall, the 2,200 pages of scientific data of the 5th Assessment Report brings the scientists from all over the world participating in the IPCC to the conclusion that a large component (more than 50 percent) of climate change is being caused by increased levels of GHGs in our atmosphere. Further, the impacts of climate change will continue to worsen unless we greatly reduce the amount of GHGs released in the future. It is further documented that GHGs have a significant residence time in the atmosphere which means we will continue to see an increases in climate change impacts at least till 2050, even with significant reductions in emissions. The major changes seen in our climate include: warming of the air and the oceans, sea level rise, increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather, changes in amounts and temporal patterns of precipitation, loss of ice and snow cover, increased rates of drying at the Earth's surface.

A case study helps bring the issues of climate change into better focus, particularly when that case study impacts almost half of the world's population. Figure 1 depicts the area of the world included in the Tibetan Plateau watershed. This area of South Asia contains seven of the major rivers of the world and is home to more than 3.2 billion people. These seven major rivers form from the snow and ice stored on the Tibetan Plateau. Climate change is having a major impact on the watershed in this region today and this impact is expected to continue into the next century (2099+), primarily by reducing the amount of storage in the system. Superimposed on the map in Figure 1 are the different climate change impacts being observed across the region. The area is warming; sea level rise impacts lowland residences, the food cycle, and freshwater resources; extreme weather is a greater threat to more people in both frequency and magnitude; floods and drought are increasing in severity, and there is increased drying in large areas of croplands which reduces

food production. At the center of mass of all these threats sits Bangladesh, a nation of 175 million people, many of whom live in the marginal lowlands of the rivers and coast. One estimate concludes that up to 35 million people will be displaced in Bangladesh by 2050 because of the cumulative impacts of climate change.¹² Bangladesh is truly ground zero for the worst expected from climate change, but represents the potential risks posed to 3 billion of their neighbors.

The largest impact across the entire region may come from the dramatic the losses of ice and snow storage and how this effects the storage and release of water within the Tibetan watershed. The Tibetan Plateau over history has served as a superb natural water resource management system. It stores water as ice and snow in the winter and releases with some regularity over the warmer periods of summer. The summative impacts of changes in water storage as ice, changes in rates and amounts of rainfall, and increased drying, are predicted to produce dire consequences in water availability for this region. Water is already an issue stressing existing poor relations between several of these countries. China in particular is thirsty for more water for arid regions of western China, while at the same time Pakistan, India and others need water to support the basic needs of expanding populations. The global implications are reflected in both the magnitude of the population impacted and by recognizing that this region includes three of the world's largest military powers each possessing nuclear weapons. Overall, the loss of dependable water supplies in seven major rivers is a serious threat to peace and stability in this region with spillover consequences on a world scale.

A second serious impact for the region is from the combined effects of sea level rise and extreme weather events, particularly typhoons, which are common for this region. More than half of the 3-plus billion people of this region live near the coast. If extreme weather becomes more frequent and of higher intensity as climate change science predicts, many more people will be at risk. There is the immediate risk of loss of life and damage to infrastructure from the storm strike. Just as dangerous is the impact of disease, which follows disaster because of contaminated food and water. This is a major threat to the coastal and river valley populations of Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Burma, and Vietnam. The scale of the refugee population generated and the human crises created could overwhelm the world's capacity to respond.

This discussion is not to predict that the impacts of climate change will result in large-scale conflict in this region. Most researchers hesitate to directly link climate change to even small wars. The most popular terminology is that climate change is a "threat multiplier" to existing security concerns. It does show that the potential for mass migrations, disease, famine, and other consequences is greatly increased as the impacts of climate change increase over time.

Environmental Security Analysis of Climate Change

To this point in the discussion, examining the history of environmental security studies has established that there is a causal linkage between critical environmental issues and national security/defense. It has further been demonstrated that climate change is a major environmental security threat which manifests worldwide consequences. This now supports the need to develop a security threat analysis of the major drivers of climate change. This is done by applying a defense and security lenses to the climate change data provided in the IPCC 5th Assessment Report.¹³ It must be recognized that this is a qualitative analytic approach, which is heavily based (or biased) on professional defense experience.¹⁴ This expert experience is informed by reviews of after action reports (AARs) of military operations, historical accounts from previous US military actions such as humanitarian missions, and the scholarly research in the field of security studies and climate change.

The IPCC reports provide more than sufficient data to conduct a strategic assessment of the security threats posed by climate change. From a defense intelligence standpoint, the IPCC AR5 represents a tremendous source of well-researched intelligence data. The challenge is to collect the pieces to the puzzle from the three major working group reports and assemble them into a coherent picture. The IPCC has not ignored the idea that climate change generates security concerns, but has rightfully focused on the broader issues of defining the most probable climate changes and then describing the direct impacts these changes will produce, globally and regionally. There are sections of AR5, such as the Human Security Chapter of Working Group II (WGII) report, which directly relate to security and defense, but in general, this paper draws from all parts of the IPCC AR5 for its data.¹⁵

Table 1 presents a summary of one approach to link the major climate change drivers to their human impacts and then correlate them to the defense and security threats that result for each major climate change driver.¹⁶ Column 1 presents the climate change impacts with the most immediate impacts on human security. Included in the column is representative data from the IPCC AR5 WGI report showing both the changes that have already occurred and the climate changes predicted based on a range of future GHG emissions scenarios. The next step in this security threat analysis is to identify the key human impacts of each climate driver. This information is derived from several places within the IPCC AR5 report and has been collated into Column 2 of Table 1. To complete the process judgment is applied to the climate change impacts of Column 2 in order to assess the implications on the military and defense sectors. Column 3 has been constructed by the author based on military experience from: 1) responding to natural and manmade disasters; 2) operations in support of mass migrations and large refugee populations; 3) conducting security operations in areas of conflict, and 4) other missions which offer challenges similar to what can be expected from military responses to climate change. These types of operations may not present precisely the same challenges, but they represent a “best guess” of what the future might look like based on past experience with “military operations other than war.” One point of concern from this analysis arises when considering the relative scale of past operations compared to the range of emerging threats from climate change shown in the Table. Our historical operations data comes from responses to disasters such as the 2011 tsunami in Japan; cyclones in India and Bangladesh; hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes and floods around the world; droughts in Sudan; the 1994 refugee relief mission in Rwanda; and more. These missions were of limited scale and generally of short duration. The scale of disasters that could result from even the moderate estimates of future impacts of climate would far exceed, in numbers of affected people and duration, any previous military operations short of major wars.

In examining Column 3 of Figure 9.1 on the following page, the major security/defense implications of climate change can be summarized as:

- Direct threats to human health from disease and other acute (heat related) injury
- Mass migrations of people driven by water and food security issues, disease, or threats of or direct conflict
- Loss of food production and arable lands for people who do not or are unable to migrate
- Increased rate and intensity of natural disasters producing death, destruction of critical infrastructure, and the epidemic to pandemic disease that can follow major disasters.
- Large-scale and continuing logistics humanitarian support to people impacted by the cumulative impacts of climate change.
- Peacekeeping operations in failed or fragile states suffering the impacts of climate change.
- Conflict over resource scarcities generated by climate change.¹⁷

Climate-Related Driver	Key Impacts	Security and Defense Impact
Temperature warming: 0.85 ° C in 2012, 1.0 – 3.7 °C by 2100 (WGI, SPM-3)	Increase of disease (vector and water-borne), stress on water resources, loss of arable lands, reduced food production, increase in salinity, degrading of coral reefs, loss of fish stock and livelihoods	Increase of humanitarian support missions, refugee support, medical resources to respond to epidemic disease, potential for conflict
Extreme temperature: highest in Asia, Europe, Australia, (WGI, SPM-15, 23)	Increased mortality and health and well-being issues, stress water resources, reduced crop production	Medical logistics support, increase of humanitarian support missions, security operations (ops) and potential for conflict
Drying trend: global, highest in mid-latitudes (WGI,SPM-23)	Food security threats, water resource stress,	Support migrations, humanitarian ops, potential for conflict.
Extreme precipitation: highest in mid-latitudes and wet tropics by 2100. (WGI, SPM-16)	Flood damage to infrastructure, loss of life, increased infectious and vector borne disease	Increase of humanitarian support missions, large-scale logistics support, medical ops in respond to epidemic disease, security ops.
Precipitation: More in the high latitudes and at the equator. Drier in mid-latitudes and sub-tropics (WGI, SPM-17)	Water resource stress, loss of arable land, public health issues, water quality degradation	Increase of humanitarian support missions, logistics support, medical support to respond to epidemic disease, security ops, potential for conflict, engineering support.
Snow and ice cover: Ice – 15 -85 % reduction by 2100. Snow- 7-25 % loss by 2100 (WGI, SPM-17)	Loss of snow and ice stresses water resources, increased rate of warming, flooding and droughts	Increase of humanitarian support missions, large-scale logistics support, medical resources to respond to epidemic disease, border security ops.
Damaging cyclone: most likely in Western North Pacific and North Atlantic, (WGI, SPM-23)	Loss of life and property damage, extreme flooding, increased disease following disaster	Increase of humanitarian support missions, security ops, engineering reconstruction support, disaster medical relief, logistics support
Sea level: 0.19 M in 2010, 0.4-.63 by 2100 (WGI, SPM-18)	Flooding/property damage, loss of coastal and island settlements, reduced food production, water quality damage	Refugee support, large scale logistics support, security ops,

Figure 9.1 Major Impacts of Climate Change. Graphic created by the author; table references specific sections in the AR 5 Summary for Policy Makers, 2014.

Several additional factors must be considered to fully understand the impacts of climate change in any particular country or region. AR5 emphasizes that the actual impacts of climate change will be unevenly distributed across the globe. A key to security risk analysis is assessing the ability of communities of people and governments to adapt to or mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change. It is fair to conclude that many small nations of the world are not capable of adapting to large-scale climate change threats. Going further, the most vulnerable (failed states) nations will not be able to defend themselves from even moderate impacts without considerable assistance. In summary, defense and security issues are most likely in those countries unable to adapt and mitigate the major effects of climate change, and it is at this point that climate change becomes a defense and security issue.

Conclusions and Final Thoughts

The evidence that climate change will impact peace and security in the world is irrefutable. From the US perspective, these impacts will have both internal and external components. From a national defense standpoint, the external impacts are the greatest threats. In the near-term it will be the ability to adapt to the climate impacts which will determine the magnitude of the security threats. The metric defining the level of the security impact of climate change will be in the increased human suffering in the world. In the long-term, the impacts will be determined by our ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and thus limit the direst of consequences. The most probable and damaging impacts of climate change are those that put the largest number of people at risk to meet their basic human needs. Based on this analysis they are in order:

- Loss of sustainable food production for many regions and for many people of the world.
- Reduction of sufficient potable water to support basic human needs.
- Increased epidemic disease from polluted water, with disease following natural disaster and famine.
- Increased number, intensity, and areas impacted by natural disasters.
- Loss of living space caused by sea level rise and changes in ecosystems.

The message that the governments must take away from this assessment is:

- While there is no national defense solution to climate change, the risks posed by climate change represent threats to the security of all nations. Developed nations of the world must recognize that assisting the nations and people most at risk from climate change is in their critical national security interest.¹⁸ This help needs to come in two forms, 1) Acting to reduce GHG emissions in order to mitigate the long-term adverse effects of climate change, and 2) Providing assistance to the people and nations who are most affected by climate impacts. The 21st Council of Participants (COP 21) of the United Nations Climate Summit recently met and signed an agreement that would move the world toward a solution. The 195 nations signing this agreement must now return home to develop and implement strategies that will lead to a solution to immediately slow and eventually reversing climate change.
- Climate change must remain a component of national security policy for all nations. The goals for COP 21 are not reached until at least 2100 and there are going to be significant impacts still to address in the next decades.¹⁹
- Existing processes for conducting security analysis are excellent tools for nations to apply in understanding how to respond to climate change.

The goal for this paper was to help the reader understand more about climate change and specifically how climate change relates to peace and security in the world, today and tomorrow. It establishes the value of the science in IPCC AR5. National security organizations spend large amounts of money to collect intelligence information of all types in efforts to identify threats and develop strategies for defense. The defense community has never been “given” a body of scientific intelligence as well studied as the data and analysis presented in the IPCC reports. This evidence presents a most clear and urgent call to action for the defense sector, but more, for all governments of the world- Deal with climate change now or suffer the impacts for decades to come.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

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Chapter 10

Political Islam: History, Geopolitical Implications, Cultural, Psychological and Religious Aspects of Life and Death

Dr. Mahir J. Ibrahimov

Imagine that you are a soldier or civilian in a combat situation: having left your family and home, you find a unifying identity in the support system of your Army buddies. You are them and they are you. Then suddenly, one of them is shot right next to you; you know that it could have been you. You reach out to hold the dead body in your arms. You feel utterly helpless. Your last resort is take the little hope that you have and try to reach above to the heavens – assuming that there is some kind of supreme power that is listening – and beg for your fellow soldier’s life. You want justice and mercy. Then you suddenly listen to the most deafening silence – no response. A gruesome fear overcomes you as you think about who may be next. Suddenly, the question of the meaning of life hits your soul, with the fearsome option that there may be no meaning. John Paul Sartre, the genius of existentialist literature and philosophy, observed, “Life is absurd, and the fact that it is absurd is also absurd.” But when one embraces the body of a fallen soldier or loved one in a civilian life, one feels divine-like grace and the type of suffering only depicted in art, music, and deep religious poetry. Indeed, death is the most essential specter of all living beings, and it is especially felt at the death of others. In a sense, we do die more than one time.¹

The story of my experience in Iraq and other wars is universal.

In the case of Iraq, it consisted of a rainbow of different societal and tribal complexities.

The story is not narrated by a chaplain or a poet and I was more than a psychological observer of our Divine Comedy; it required the understanding of both Islamic and Western cultures, feeling the existential passions and world views of the Iraqis in-depth, but it also required understanding Western professionalism as well as Western mentality. In order to really comprehend socio-cultural, religious and geopolitical realities to take the right and timely decisions in indigenous operating environment, you have to have a combination of training, education and professional and well as life experiences which would give you the highest level of intellectuality-wisdom.

It does significantly help to achieve that level if you have tasted the sweetness and the bitterness of life. For example, despite the painful Soviet experience in Afghanistan, it is not surprising it had taken the US time to refine its training to understand indigenous cultures and other aspects of foreign societies. Translating a Russian proverb, I can put it this way: “You cannot learn from others’ mistakes; you only really learn from your own mistakes.”²

Cultural and Psychological Perception of Death in Different Cultures as a Living Specter of Life

This chapter delves into a universal idea that applies to all humanity: the semi-conscious fear that death is the most living reality of life. We especially feel the reality of death in our encounters with the death of others. The more friends and loved ones die, sometimes in our arms, the more we reach out to the silent sky and heavens for explanations. As living human beings, our immediate feelings of well-being, strength, and peace in our souls depends on our interpersonal ties to others. In war, we hope for security and support, and we reach out to our comrades for connection. Even when we feel this joy of togetherness, when we realize that we are not alone in a war, there is still the subconscious specter of death that proves to be the most alive

potential reality to cut across our desperate existences. When it hits our bodies, we are troubled in two ways. The first thought: How close am I to death? The second thought: the part of me that was my body has died forever, and I am no longer what I was. The combination of me and my support system has died; I am left alive to drink the sorrow. This feeling of shock and despair is experienced by any whose mother has died. We know that no one talks to us the way our mother does. She was so close to us that we never imagined a world without her, and after her death we never feel the same. This chapter takes the reader into the very complex being under the specter of death: dying each time a body dies, being shaken in the very core of our existence by the remembrance of sweet lives lost forever, and finally, there comes the courageous and desperate effort of hanging on to life and the desire to go on.

These are the common perceptions of “Death” and “Life” but closer to the Western culture and mentality. In other cultures, those perceptions could differ by religious or ethnic traditions.

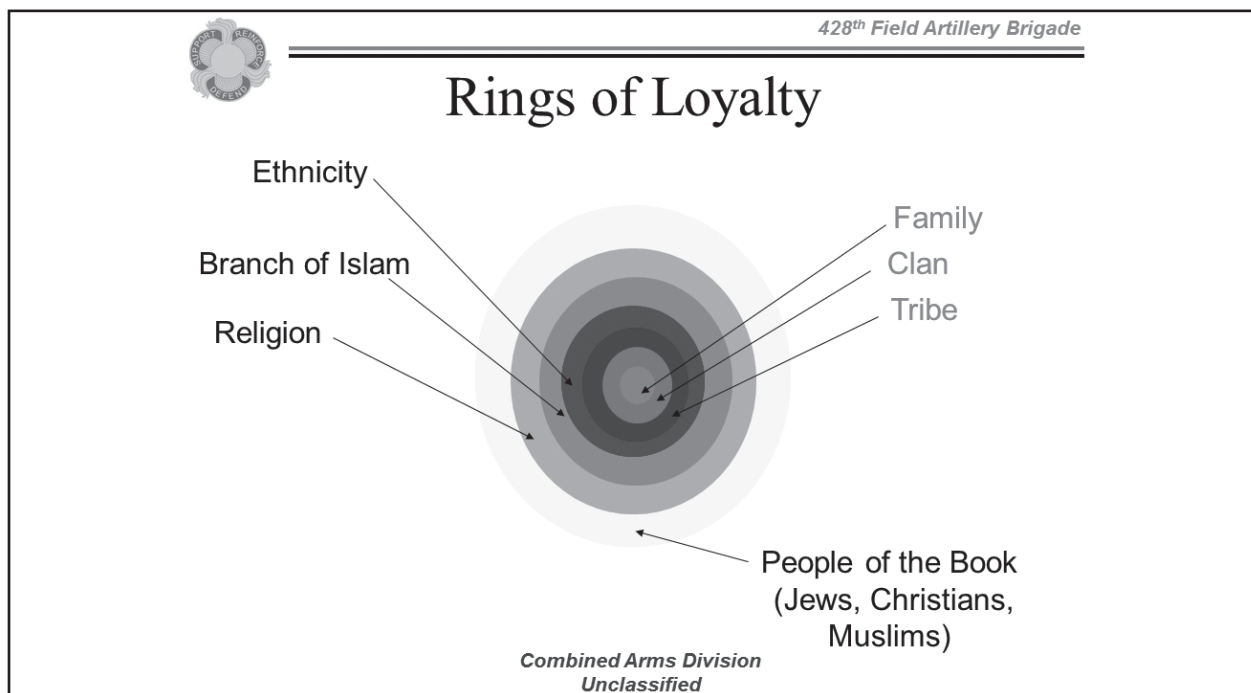


Figure 10.1. Rings of Loyalty. Graphic created by the author.

Is There Presently a Clash of Religions, Cultures or Even Civilizations?

Iraq and Afghanistan made a majority of Americans aware of the specter of encountering the demographical political dynamic of what may be called “Global Islam.” This reality is the second vital aspect we would like to consider in this chapter. According to the Pew Research Center,

At the projected rate of 1.5% for the period from 2010 to 2030, the Muslim population will make 26.4% of the world’s total projected population of 8.3 billion in 2030. The world’s Muslim population is expected to increase by about 35% in the next 20 years, rising from 1.6 billion in 2010 to 2.2 billion by 2030. This growth is expected to take place not only in countries with a predominately Muslim population, but also in America, Europe, and Asia.³

A remarkable feature is that Muslims occupy some of the most strategically important lands, such as the Suez Canal, ancient Mesopotamia, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. In addition, much of world's petroleum, minerals, and raw materials are available in countries that are predominately Muslim. In light of this data, it is essential for the United States' survival to eventually make Muslims our partners in trade. In addition, The People's Republic of China's (PRC) economy is rapidly growing, often dominating markets that were open to Western exports before. China's economic, trade, military and strategic rapprochement with Russia and some other countries of Asia and Western Hemisphere adds to this concern. The United States cannot compete with China having a hostile relationship with Muslim countries. Also, while PRC is focusing on selling more to markets that were previously devoted to Western products, much of the USA's resources are being spent on wars or emerging regional and global conflicts.



Figure 10.2. Muslim Prayer. Photo by Dustin Senger, US Army. Published in *Fires Bulletin*, http://sill-www.army.mil/firesbulletin/2011/interactive/July-August/JUL_AUG_2011_web.pdf.

The Potentially Catastrophic Agenda of Endless Conflicts

Since 2001, the cost of the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and other related operations has been significant. Civilian and military deaths are estimated at 370,000 as of August 2016. In addition to casualties, there has been psychological damage to the veterans and families of the American military. No price can be placed on these wounds. The economic cost of the wars through 2016 is \$4.79 trillion and counting as of September 2016.⁴



Figure 10.3. Muslims Praying. Photo by Senior Airmen Daryl Knee, US Air Force. Published in *Fires Bulletin*, http://sill-www.army.mil/firesbulletin/2011/interactive/July-August/JUL_AUG_2011_web.pdf.

Another major dimension of wars with countries of Muslim majority population is the decrease in America's popularity with the Muslim world and the opportunity for America's enemies to use the armed conflict to rally the Muslim masses against the US. In the long run, Muslims' perception of America will be very essential for our future trade and economic relations with Muslims who reside in China, Russia, and other countries. That factor will be one of the most important in the years and decades to come.

This is why Samuel Huntington's concept of the Clash of Civilizations is flawed. Huntington, in his important and controversial book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, suggests the thesis of the increasing threat of violence arising from renewed conflicts between countries and cultures that base their traditions on religious faith. This argument also examines the growing influence of a handful of major cultures in current struggles across the globe. Huntington warned that policymakers should be mindful of this development when they interfere in other nations' affairs. As indicated above, the integration of trade and economic relationships are critical for all countries, regardless of their faith and cultures.⁵

The Problem of Insurgency and Terrorism

First, we need to define the "insurgency" and "terrorism." Are they the same? The first term is defined as "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict."⁶ According to the Department of Defense (DOD) definition, terrorism is, "the unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs, to instill fear and coerce governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are usually political."⁷

In the case of Iraq, there were mostly three kinds of terrorist and insurgency groups operating: supporters of the former Baath regime of Saddam Hussein, local insurgents representing different competing groups, and “international fighters” coming mainly from Syria, Iran and other Arab and Muslim countries. The Islamic concept *Umma* which refers to the “Islamic brotherhood or community” without borders, seemed to be having a practical implication in Iraq. According to the Islamic interpretation of that definition, if your Muslim brother is in danger, no matter where you are, you need to come for rescue. As we know, Islam through Koran and its Islamic Law “Fikh” can be very broadly and flexibly interpreted, and it can be used for different political purposes or agendas. In some cases when Islam is being deliberately exploited by some leaders for their political purposes, others can sincerely believe in religious principles and choose to fight to achieve them. This last case is more dangerous and difficult to defeat, because in certain historical circumstances it can attract many followers locally, and internationally as well.

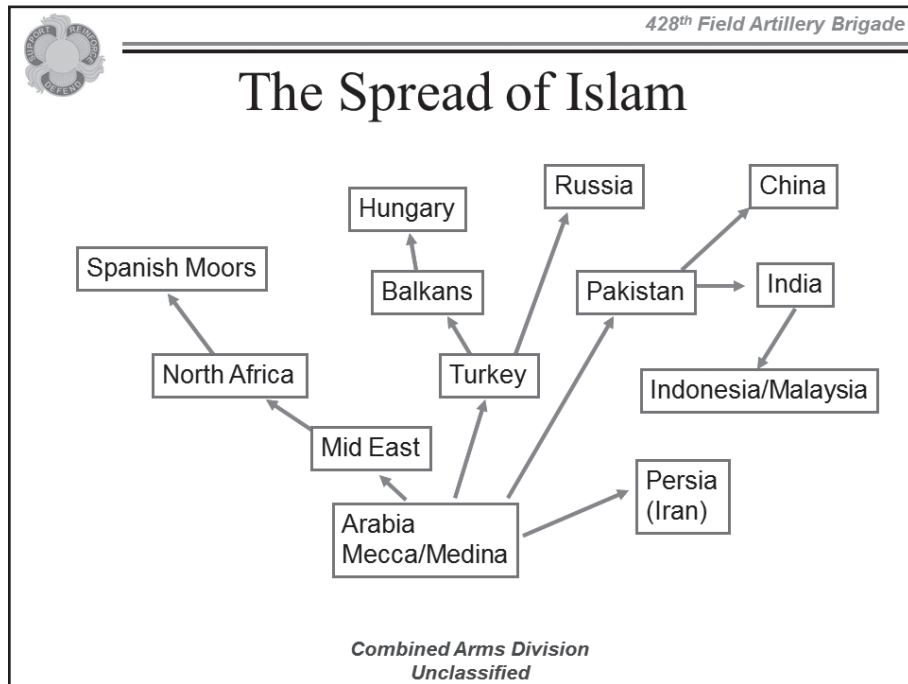


Figure 10.4. Spread of Islam. Graphic created by the author.

A clear example of the latter case was the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the highest Shiite spiritual leader in the 1970s, the leader of the Islamic revolution, and the founder of the Islamic state in Iran. From his exile in Paris, he directed the Iranian Islamic revolution which led to the defeat of the government of the pro-Western Iranian Shah, the late Reza Pahlavi. As in the case of Iran, where the followers of the Islamic revolution saw Western-style democracy as a real danger to their identity and culture, Islam has become a shield and ideology of protection against this factor among many groups and organizations operating in Iraq and the Middle East as a whole. This Islamic ideology is mainly typical of the last two groups mentioned, while the group, which mainly consisted of the former members of the Baath party, was more nationalistic and secular, and their struggle was mainly aimed at regaining their lost political power and influence. The main purpose of these organizations was to achieve the withdrawal of all foreign forces, mainly American

– the leading power in Iraq – because they regarded those forces as a “foreign invasion of their lands” and a “conspiracy of great powers.”

The kidnappings, mortar and rocket attacks, car explosions, ambushes, etc., were carried out for that purpose. However, there are also many groups that are simply criminal in nature. They use kidnappings and other methods for commercial gain. They have nothing to do with the political or ideological struggle; rather, they found in these activities some kind of lucrative business for their personal enrichment. Sometimes they use the names of known terrorist or insurgent organizations as a cover.

Islamist terrorist groups have evolved yet again in Syria and Iraq in the form of the group known as the Islamic State, also identified as ISIS, ISIL or IGIL. Some traditional American allies are already talking with Moscow about how to deal with the Islamic State in a process that is forcing the US to revisit its policies in the region. A 2016 report from the Congressional Research Service stated,

The Islamic State still controls large areas of northeastern and central Syria, from which it continues to launch assaults on forces opposed to and aligned with the government of President Bashar al Assad. Meanwhile, fighting elsewhere pits government forces and their foreign allies against a range of anti-government insurgents, some of whom have received limited US assistance. Russian military intervention in support of Assad poses a direct challenge to US goals in Syria, and is raising new questions about the future of the conflict and US strategy.⁸

By February 2014, US Director of National Intelligence (DNI) James Clapper estimated the strength of the insurgency in Syria at “somewhere between 75,000 or 80,000 or up to 110,000 to 115,000 insurgents,” who were then-organized “into more than 1,500 groups of widely varying political leanings.”⁹ Among these forces are violent extremist groups such as Jabhat al Nusra and the Islamic State organization. According to US officials, from early 2011 through 2015, more than 25,000 foreign fighters from more than 100 countries, including at least 4,500 fighters from “Western countries,” may have travelled to Syria as part of a trend that is “unprecedented” relative to other conflicts involving foreign recruits.

Cultural and Historical Aspects of “Political Islam”: Implications for Regional and Global Geo-Politics

To understand the increased role of the “Islamic factor” in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere, including the rise of ISIS, we need to make a quick historical tour and analysis of its role in international relations. This “factor” has attracted the attention of American and Western experts of contemporary Islam.

Islam has become a significant political phenomenon, not only in the internal political and social life of traditionally Islamic countries since the 1950s, but in international relations as well.

The “Islamic Revivalism” of the 1970s and 1980s mainly consisted of three components: the Islamic revolution in Iran, events in and around Afghanistan, and the subsequent activation of the Muslim organizations and movements around the world. That period also witnessed the first signs of unification of some anti-Western regimes in the Middle East. These events have significantly changed the character of international relationships between the traditionally Muslim world and the West.

The West had to deal with a group of countries in which foreign policy was coordinated and integrated on a religious basis. Moreover, they had their international organizations partially or entirely based on the religious principals, such as: Organization of Islamic conference (OIC), The League of Arab Countries

(LAC), The Regional Union of Development (RUD), Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Islamic Bank of Development (IBD) and others.

According to the traditional perception of the “Islamic factor” by US and Western experts of Islam the technological and social progress would have inevitably led to the replacement of the religious views by the secular ones.

In general, they ultimately expected secularization to prevail in the traditionally Muslim societies. The reality has refuted such an approach and compelled the Western researchers of Islam to acknowledge the erroneousness of that policy. They also realized that the emergence of Colonel Muammar Kaddafi in Libya with his “third world theory” and the Islamic Revolution in Iran were not the coincidence of circumstances, but a result of the natural historical process. The essence of that process consisted of the appropriate psychological, socio-political and economic structure of the world outlook which was taking shape during the centuries in this geopolitical area. Islam has become an integral part of this process as a “way of life.” The Islamic ideology has actually adapted to these realities. Thus Islam, traditional values, and culture merged together to make “Islamic civilization.” So, religion as the ideological support of Islamic societies has always been a protector for people in different circumstances, in terms of their political, social, and economic lives, and especially in their relationships with other countries. Islam has always been a kind of banner and factor of consolidation of various strata of society. At the same time, exploring the vitality of this religion and the socio-cultural and historical aspects of its relationships with the West, some of the Western scholars emphasize the diversity of the Islamic resurgence or its revivalism. Those scholars say that it would be a mistake to consider a hostile, monolithic Islam as a unified phenomenon.¹⁰ Some Western scholars also agree that Islamic revivalism is not theoretically and politically a unified movement, because there are significant differences among the Islamic organizations in their agendas on variety of issues.¹¹

The vitality and “revivalism” of Islam can be explained through the following factors: nationalism, the peculiarity of Islamic mentality, centuries-old cultural heritage and legacy, the politicization of Islam, the modernization of Islam, the activation of the Islamic factor in international relations, and the role of the Western cultural influence.

- 1) *Nationalism.* Western colonizing governments have always considered the unity of the world of Islam, “Pan-Islamism,” a potential threat to their geo-political and economic interests. Inspired by the ideas of Sayyed Jamal-ad-Din al-Afghani and Sultan Abdul Hamid, deliberations on the world unity of Muslims, and the union and solidarity of the Turks and Arabs in the Ottoman Empire, prevented the in-roads of Western values and ideals in the critical and strategic region of the Middle East. The infusion of the ideas of nationalism and the awakening of national sentiments among the Arabs and Turks was aimed at preventing this Islamic Unity (Umma) not only between the countries but within them as well. A lasting heritage of this policy left by Western colonization can clearly be seen at present in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and other countries with a boiling potential of conflict.
- 2) *The peculiarity of Islamic mentality which has taken root in these countries.* The following factors have historically affected Islamic mentality:
 - a. Similar to the other two so called World or monotheistic religions, Islam is an integral combination of secular and spiritual aspects. Islam is not only a faith but “the way of life.” One

of the reasons is that Islam from the very beginning emerged as a religion aimed to become a state religion initially being a religion of a community. In the community (Umma), headed by Prophet Muhammed, Islam was playing a role of an ideology as well. Members of the community became co-members of the same religious beliefs. Islam (The Koran, Sharia, Fiqh (Islamic law), etc., elaborate and set the rules and regulations not only for outer life but the whole style of Muslim's everyday life, traditions, laws, principal of law and moral. This aspect has historically shaped the Muslim mentality with a greater affiliation to the Muslim religion.

- b. Traditions of flexible symbolic-allegorical interpretations of Islam and the Koran enabled the Islamic theologians to interpret Surahs from the Koran per the changing geopolitical realities, their local political agendas, etc.
- 3) *Cultural Legacy of Islamic Ideology.* Centuries-old cultural heritage and legacy being formed within the Islamic ideology has served to legitimize and reinforce Islamic revivalism on an organic level of cultural and national identity.
- 4) *Politicization of Islam.* During the transformation of the Ottoman Empire over the 19th and 20th centuries and Western colonial expansion, Muslim political movements were contained by the Ottoman government's Islamist ideology and whose ideas fueled a new kind of nationalist-religious ideology. After the post-colonial period in traditionally Muslim countries, the search for the best socio-economic and ideological models ultimately led to the phenomenon in the end of 1970s which was called by the Western scholars "Politicization of Islam" and its "Revivalism." The core of these phenomena were three events: 1) the Islamic revolution in Iran; 2) the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and; 3) activation of Muslim organizations around the world.
- 5) *Modernization of Islam.* Modernists of the past such as Afghani and Mohammed Abdo failed to modernize Islam because they could not adapt it and interpret it per existing realities and needs of their societies during that historical period. It led to the increase of the influence of the Traditionalists such as the Salafi Sunni movement of Islam. If the interpretations of Islam opened the way for political visions in which Islam and democracy have become mutually supportive and adaptable to changing global realities and accessible within a particular indigenous culture, then we could possibly witness constructive modernization of religion.
- 6) *Activation of the "Islamic factor."* The "Islamic factor" has influenced and in turn become influenced by international relations and the role of the Western cultural influence in shaping the reactions of Muslim peoples in relation to these acculturative influences.

One of the reasons for the vitality and "revivalism" of Islam can be explained through centuries-old cultural heritage and legacy being formed within the Islamic ideology, which led to the politicization of Islam and the activation of the Islamic factor in international relations.

The first "post-colonial stage," when the representatives of big business circles dominated in power, has been characterized by a "passion" for the modernization of social structure and the stimulation of capitalist and quasi-socialist methods of economic management. Therefore, an "imitation" of Western political models and ideas of governance was taking place.

The second stage in the development of Islamic countries took place during the 1970s and was coined by Western experts as “Islamic Revivalism.” This was a short period of time during which significant changes in the socio-economic and political life of Muslim countries took place. As a result, “the Islamic factor” started to play a significant role in international politics.

From the 1940s to the 1960s, the traditionally Muslim countries – which had just gained their political independence – inherited weak economic and ideological systems and were mainly characterized by a great degree of passivity. During this time, there was a search for optimal options of national development, in order for them to overcome the backwardness of their economies and the difficult legacy of their feudal and half-feudal relations. However, there were many difficulties and challenges along the way, particularly in the sphere of ideology.

Given the perception of Islam that has persisted throughout the end of the 19th century, it is obvious that the type of reform that Jamal Ad-Din Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and their followers tried to enact could not fully adapt Islam to the requirements of the new realities. This particular circumstance did not allow the Islamic groups to formulate the concepts of social development during the long post-colonial period of time. This is why the Western and American models of economic, political and military development were attractive to the leading Muslim countries until the mid-1950s. But the process of developing the national ideology took place in the Islamic societies in the 1950s and 1960s in each of the Muslim countries in varying forms and different degrees of intensity. Islam was at the center of the modernization process. The Modernist Movement took place until the end of the 1960s. Modernists’ efforts were aimed at revising the interpretations of the religious dogmas and conceptions, so as to adapt them to the demands of the present time. They hoped to combine the ideology of “Contemporary Islam” with the elements of traditionalism and reformism. Moreover, some of them believed that Islamic theory did not have the necessary ideological potential to provide for all spheres of the state, public, and family lives. In connection to this, there were strong tendencies in the official ideology of the Muslim countries to limit the use of Islam by the spheres of education, culture, and ethics. In opposition to the Modernists, there were the Traditionalists, who consolidated their efforts and leaned on the poor and unsatisfied segments of the populations. They came out in defense of the preservation and expansion of Islamic theory in the Muslim countries, desiring it to be a dominant ideology. During the latter part of the 1970s, and during the course of this struggle between the Modernists and Traditionalists, a new political stage emerged: “Islamic Revivalism.” “Islamic Revivalism” was not only the result of the mentioned struggle, but mainly the result of significant changes that took place in the political, economic, social, and ideological spheres of the Muslim countries.

The supporters of “Islamic Revivalism” have been gradually taking the initiative. When the Islamic countries have completed the process of strengthening their national sovereignty and reached a certain level of socio-economic transformations, the qualitative change of the tendency began to take place in the policy of reforming Islam. This change was characterized by a weakening of the Modernists’ influence in the political and philosophical lives of the Islamic societies, and an increase in the demand of some kind of different, alternative, and more national ideology based on Islam and diametrically opposed to the democratic capitalist system and the Western conception of “freedom” and “liberalism.”

The increased role of the “Islamic factor” in Iraq and elsewhere and its regional global implications have attracted the attention of experts of contemporary Islam. Islam has become a significant political phenomenon, not only in the internal political and social life of traditionally Islamic countries since the 1950s, but in international relations as well. As discussed earlier, the “Islamic Revivalism” of the 1970s and 1980s

mainly consisted of three components: Islamic revolution in Iran, events in and around Afghanistan, and activation of the Muslim organizations and movements around the world. That period also witnessed the first signs of unification of some anti-Western regimes in the Middle East. These events have significantly changed the character of international relationships between the traditionally Muslim world and the West. A combination of historical, socio-economic, cultural factors and processes in the Muslim countries continued to shape ideological aspects of their relationships with the West. The West has also been undergoing its own modification and adjustments to those relationships, also being influenced by changes taking place in the Muslim world. To a certain extent, we can witness not only Western stimuli towards the Muslim world but also the processes taking place in the traditionally Muslim countries affecting the geo-political, socio-economic and domestic political dynamics of the West.

Two historical ideological movements of Islamic political thought mainly shaped the current state of Political Islam. In combination with other socio-cultural and political factors, they led to its revivalism, which has also undergone changes over time. The concept of reformist Jamal Ad-Din Al-Afghani and Salafi traditionalist school of Hassan Al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, has created a combined model of more adaptable and effective socio-economic, political, cultural and militant Islamic organizations which are currently active in the region. The same Muslim Brotherhood has gained a significant social base in Egypt, and it is believed that it became one of the main political players in Egypt after the recent events in that country. Another example is Hezbollah, the Party of God in Lebanon, which enjoys a wide popularity among certain strata of population in that country and the region as well. It conducts social and political activities as well as having a military wing. Through social activities, it has gained support among the certain populace in the country. With its staunch anti-Israeli stance, it gained a wide regional reputation. The same can be applied to Hamas (Enthusiasm) in the Palestinian territories.

The factors listed above, as well as the failure of supporters of a Western way of development to formulate their position intellectually, the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan, and the subsequent demise of the Soviet Union, had all created a favorable ground for the next stage in ‘Islamic Revivalism’ – this time aimed at the West and its democratic institutions based upon “liberalism,” “freedom,” “initiative” and “individual opportunity.” The events of 9/11 in the US represented the culmination of that stage of “Islamic Revivalism.”

Additional factors accounting for the contemporary increase of anti-Western sentiment in Muslim communities are the outdated legal and security institutions that do not allow effective measures against radicals in Europe and other societies, where such radicals openly regard “liberal democracy” as “haram” (forbidden by God). Legal and security institutions need to be updated in such a way that the relevant and necessary security measures at the time of the war against terrorists and radicals would not indirectly affect ordinary Muslims, by unnecessary profiling, etc., otherwise such anachronistic laws create a favorable ground to recruit them by radicals.

There are four main schools of Sunni Islam: Hanbali, Hanafi, Shafi’i, and Maliki. Together, they comprise a significant majority of Muslims. Beyond that, the Salafi (Arabic for “predecessors”) movement, under the leadership of Syrian Rashid Rida (1865-1935) followed the activities of Muhammad Abduh and steadily moved towards the type of fundamentalism that later prevailed after the failure of “Modernization” and “Westernization” in the Muslim societies. The Wahhabi sect, named after the 18th-century thinker Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and inspired by 13th-century Syrian theologian Ibn Taymiyyah, is part of the broader Salafi movement.

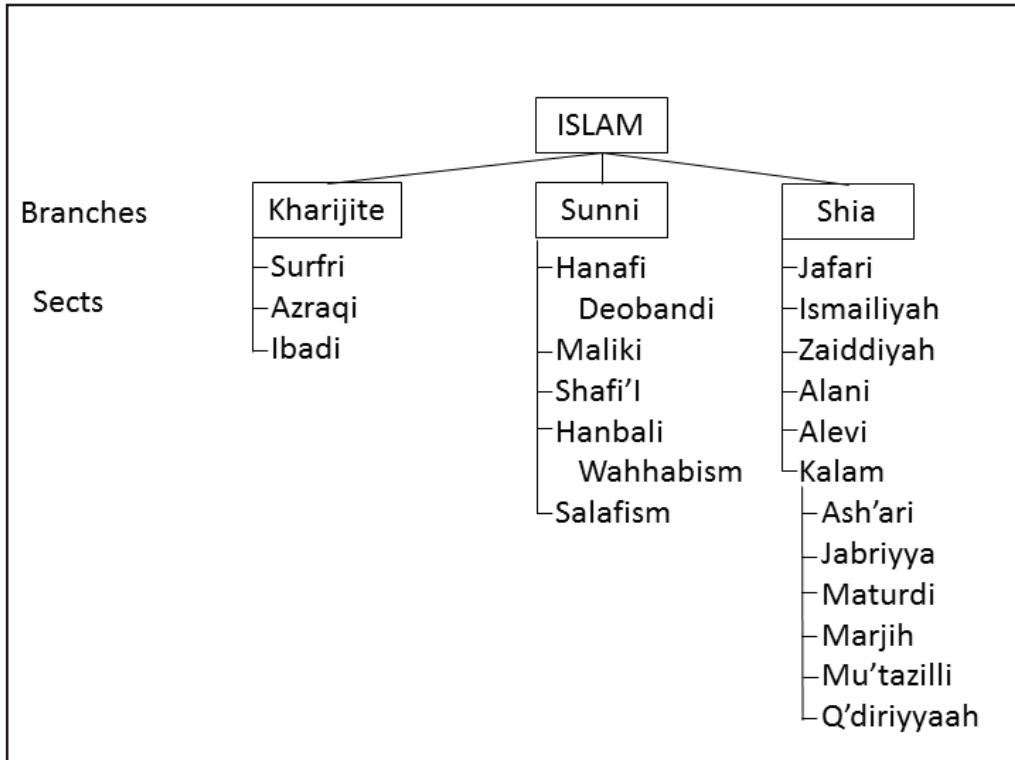


Figure 10.5. Branches and Schools of Islam. Graphic created by the author.

The Salafi movement rejects many mainstream “innovative” Islamic traditions in favor of a “pure” Islam. Organizations such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, (The Party of Liberation), Al-Qaida (the raising base), Hamas (enthusiasm), Islamic Jihad (the Holy War), and al-Ikhwan al-Muslimeen (Muslim Brotherhood) share the same kind of ideology with different political agendas.

Europe is now beginning to realize the dangers of alienating its Muslim population. Because of insufficient immigration systems (of which the latest refugee crises was an indicator) and the lack of meaningful and active roles for Muslim residents in the economic, social, and political lives of their respective countries of residence, they are becoming a favorable ground for radical recruitment.

Multiculturalism of the European societies would be an effective mechanism to prevent the radicalization of the Islamic community. Ironically, the situations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya and elsewhere were helping the radical Islamist groups to recruit new members. They justified this as a “war against Muslims.”

It is becoming increasingly clear that the only way for the West to prevent the spread of militant Islam is to win the hearts and minds of Muslims. Muslims should become equal members of the Multicultural Western societies. In that case, the “Western Conspiracy” theory against the Muslim societies would lose its ground.

Turkey is a clear example of such alienation. Turkey is an important ally and the only traditionally Muslim member of NATO. It is also strategically located next to Iraq and other Muslim countries, including

Iran, Afghanistan and the Muslim republics of the former USSR. The failure to accept Turkey to the European Union has further alienated the country and created a favorable atmosphere for radical Islamic trends. The radicals can explore the concept of “Christian West Conspiracy” against “Muslim Turkey.” In fact, anti-Western and anti-American sentiments in Turkey are currently at a record high.

The traditionally Muslim republics of the former USSR, such as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan are also going to be very important for the global geopolitics during the next decades to come. The earlier bloody revolt and regime change in Kyrgyzstan, a small former Soviet Central Asian Republic, which hosted and then halted the contract for the major US Manas Air Base for military operations in Afghanistan, caused a lot of concern among US officials at the time. Statements of some leaders of the new interim government of that country had clearly indicated that the lease would not be extended after its expiration.¹²

There are also clear signs that Azerbaijan, which has been increasingly looking towards the West and US since the demise of the USSR for economic and strategic partnership, is beginning to gradually leave the Western sphere of influence and getting increasingly closer to Russia in its economic, military, and strategic relationships.¹³

The above clearly indicate that the wrong message and a lack of relevant engagement by the West could create the same kind of challenges in that part of the world which the West is presently facing in the Middle East.

The war on terrorism and insurgency once again emphasizes the importance of cultural awareness. Even the simple cultural differences between the traditionally Muslim countries and the West play a significant role in the long run. In turn, those differences and misunderstandings could potentially deepen the traditional perception that all the troubles come from the “Christian West,” with its “conspiracy theories:” the traditional Arab concept of “you” and “us.”

Among other challenges that the West will have to face include the fact that many Arab and non-Arab Muslims see the current wave of terrorism as a clash of civilizations, and some actions of the West in the Middle East and elsewhere as a “hidden agenda” and a “conspiracy” against their cultural and historical identity. This notion is widespread on the grassroots level in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other predominantly Muslim countries. The military presence of the Western countries in the region strengthens that belief. Muslims frequently refer to what they feel is the West’s one-sided support of Israel. Al-Qaida and leaders of other terrorist and insurgency organizations accuse the US of supporting dictatorships in Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and they use this notion as another recruitment tool. Finally, the flexibility of Islam and the Koran gives different Muslim leaders and politicians the opportunity to interpret various aspects of international politics and social life in accordance with their political agendas.

The present war with terror and insurgency is multi-polar. We are dealing with diverse targets with different cultures, political agendas, and strategies. The Cold War, bipolar approach was effective against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact because it was a single ideological entity. The same approach in the current war on terrorism would make many Muslims believe that the West, the US in particular, is engaged in a war against Islam. Many radicals and some Muslims see Western democracy based on the so-called “new liberalism,” “freedom,” “initiative,” and “opportunity” at the individual level as a threat to their cultural values and identity.

We need to be clear and specific on how we define our language. This is the war against violent extremism, regardless of a particular religion. This is not a war against terrorism (too vague) or Islam as a whole (too sensitive and a strategically disastrous approach).

It is important to possess knowledge on the history, socio-cultural nuances, and customs of the targeted audience, if we want to win its hearts and minds. To achieve that goal, we need to actively engage the local population, analyze its behavior, isolate the radicals, and avoid alienating the majority of Muslims, because they are potential allies.

It is important to know and understand the actions of the enemy, their political agendas, their strategic goals, and their social support.¹⁴

Planning and conducting effective strategic communication measures using all of the above factors and utilizing all available technologies are vital for the success of the mission. Finally, it is also crucial that there are sufficient immigration systems and that Muslim residents are active in the economic, social, and political lives of their countries of residence.

Possible Strategic Implications of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars

Osama bin Laden authored two *fatwas* (religious statements) in August 1996 and February 1998. Bin Laden's 1996 *fatwa* was entitled "Declaration of War Against the Americans" and contained an overt call for violence against America for stationing troops near Islamic holy sites in Saudi Arabia. The 1998 *fatwa* encouraged further active violence against the Americans and Jews and was published by the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders.¹⁵

The leaders of terrorist organizations have indicated that they carefully planned to bait the US into becoming involved in Afghanistan and Iraq. Bin Laden, in his open address to the American people, credited the "holy warriors" that he fought with against the Soviets in Afghanistan two decades ago with having "bled Russia for 10 years, until it went bankrupt and was forced to withdraw in defeat." He added, "we are continuing this policy of bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy."¹⁶

The fact is it was not only the "holy warriors" in Afghanistan who brought about the collapse of the Soviet Union. There was a combination of internal and external political, economic and geopolitical factors. In addition, the US, China and some regional countries' support of the Afghan fighters contributed to the loss of the Afghan War and has ultimately led to the demise of the former USSR.

The Iraq and Afghanistan wars are likely the last US overseas wars employing a large conventional force on the ground. Based on socio-economic and geopolitical considerations; the likely possibility that, by the end of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, the United States will no longer be a sole superpower; the gradual and steady fall of the US dollar; and a huge US budget deficit, the colossal and unexpected expenses of the wars would contribute to this outcome.¹⁷

It is becoming increasingly clear that it is not possible to completely defeat insurgency and terrorism. Their cells can be destroyed and financial support can be cut off. However, other similar kinds of organizations will emerge in their place unless the roots and geopolitical reasons causing the insurgency and terrorism are resolved.

One of the fundamental issues which has regional and global implications for Eurasia, Middle East, South-West and Central Asia is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict which requires a more balanced policy. As

a part of the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be the creation of the two states: Israel and Palestine.

The futures of Iraq and Afghanistan should be decided by the people of these countries, with the help of the international community and international organizations. Otherwise, the unilateral involvement of other countries will always be perceived as an interference, and it would further alienate those countries, thus creating a basis for insurgency.

As for the Iraqi, Afghan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechen, Abkhaz, Ossetian, and Ukrainian situations, a clear distinction should be made between the insurgents and terrorists, as they vary in their agendas and political purposes. It is very important to define those differences. The only way to achieve that objective is a deep and comprehensive knowledge of socio-cultural and historical considerations of the region.

Given all these factors, the next few decades will most likely see the US lose its sole grip on world affairs, and new major global and regional powers will emerge.¹⁸ One of the likely candidates is China, which has successfully managed to modify its political and economic systems to the requirements of the present time. In the new era, the most effective factors of influence are going to be socio-economic, cultural, and political rather than military means. India, Brazil, and Iran could be other candidates of rapidly growing regional powers.

Russia could be potentially another example, but with more limited resources compared to China. It's been trying to leverage a blend of socio-economic, military and non-conventional military capabilities in the so called "Grey Zone" such as: Information Operations (IO), Electronic Warfare (EW), Cyber, etc. Expansionist policy towards the former Soviet satellites will continue at the same time as movement toward rapprochements with major global and regional powers such as China, Iran, Brazil, India, South Africa and others. Examples of formed alliances such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Eurasian Customs Union and others are seen as equivalents to NATO, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other Western-led International organizations.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

Notes

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Chapter 11

The Syria, and Syrians, I Knew

Gary Hobin

Introduction

Between 1992 and 1995, I was fortunate to spend several years working as a Foreign Service Officer for the US State Department. Two of those years found me working as a consular officer at the US Embassy in Damascus. I had previously served in the Middle East as an Army officer, and was reasonably fluent in Arabic; my language skills, and my status as a diplomat, gave me access to certain segments of Syrian society beyond that which might have been available to American tourists, business people, or even political leaders who traveled in the region.

Most of my social and professional contacts would have to be characterized as “middle class” or even “upper middle class;” most were Sunnis. Among those contacts were members of a Damascene family that had been dispossessed by the government of Hafez Assad from their family home, in order to make that home a museum to Syrian culture. Another of my contacts was a successful small businessman who ran a small specialty shop in the central business district, not far from the medieval market – the Souk. These contacts, and others, are the basis on which I can make some tentative characterization of Syria and the Syrians I knew. Without question, the sample set is too small to make these observations conclusive. Equally, some observations are likely skewed by a natural reluctance on the part of people living under an authoritarian government to discuss topics that could land them in jail or worse. Given these limitations, however, these are my characterization of the Syrians I knew: they focused on the business at hand, regardless of what it might be; one of their measures of success was having sufficient disposable wealth to escape from Syria, if only for a brief vacation, and visit places with greater personal freedom; they placed their trust in a close cohort of friends with whom they had shared formative experiences; they viewed the then-current government of Hafez Assad with mild disdain, as an undeniable fact with which they must live, but about which they could do little. None of these characterizations may be particularly insightful, but they may help humanize a population increasingly portrayed as either perpetrators of evil or helpless victims in main-stream media.

Syria and the people of Syria have undergone seriously tough times for the past few years. Since 2011, international news media have been replete with stories of disasters: civil warfare, a massive refugee crisis, destruction of cultural icons. From the news stories, one might believe that Syrians are either irreconcilable revenge seekers or abject victims. They are both, and neither. For the majority, they are people caught in the midst of events they can neither control nor, I suspect, fully understand.

I lived and traveled extensively in Syria, both as an officer in the US Army and later as an American diplomat assigned to the US Embassy in Damascus. As such, I became familiar with many places that have been mentioned prominently in the news of the past few years: Deir az-Zour, the Euphrates valley, Palmyra, Aleppo, Derra, and, of course, Damascus. I worked with a number of Syrian nationals and socialized with a number of Damascus businessmen. Most of these contacts were, to be honest, from the ranks of middle- and upper-middle class families. They were comfortable, if not wealthy. Most were Sunni Muslims. As such, my contacts were not a representative cross-section of Syria’s population; they were a microcosm of one of its multiple segments.

Given the relatively small size of the sample, and the admittedly small section of the socio-economic puzzle that constitutes Syrian society, this essay must be very impressionistic in nature. Others, with different contacts, will likely argue that this is not at all representative of Syria as a whole. True enough, but it is a portrayal of one segment of Syria's population, taken at one period in its tumultuous history.

The Businessman

One of my social contacts was a Damascus shop owner. His establishment was a small specialty shop, located on a side street in a mixed residential and commercial district adjacent to one of Damascus' main modern shopping areas, not in the traditional Souk (market). The shop doubled as the meeting place for the shop owner and his cohort. The group who met there on a recurring basis numbered between six and twelve men depending on the evening; they ranged in age from roughly 50 down to the mid-20s. Some were related, but most were linked not by blood but by a common experience: they had attended college at the same time or served in the Army together. I had been introduced to the group by an American diplomat who was being reassigned; the group members accepted me as a worthy replacement, perhaps because I spoke Arabic in a somewhat limited manner.

Our evenings generally began around 8 PM with drinking tea or soda as various members of the group arrived at the shop over a period of about an hour or so. After everyone who was expected had arrived, we would head out for dinner, at a restaurant usually but on a few occasions at someone's home. There, the conversation would continue, usually accompanied by drinks.

Talk normally centered on local business, on family members' activities, or on plans for the future (on the order of where the next vacation would be). Rarely, if ever, did anyone raise a significant political topic, unless that topic was safely directed at some exterior event: something from Europe, or the United States, for example.

There was one notable exception to this unspoken rule against talking politics, however. On 21 January 1994, Bassel, the eldest son of President Hafez al-Assad died in an automobile wreck. The next time the group met, there was (as I recall) some guarded talk about the incident: all knew that Bassel had been groomed to succeed his father and the muted speculation concerned "what next?"

Raphael Patai, in *The Arab Mind*, discussed the value of group cohesion in a generalized Arab society that laid claim to Bedouin ideals. Group cohesion, based on kinship, was a necessary defense against a hostile environment.¹ The Damascus businessman and his friendship group exhibited the same group cohesion, but in their urban environment, kinship ties, while remaining important, appear to have been supplemented with ties developed from a common experience. In the case of the businessman's cohort, the common experience seems to have been schooling and military service. I met similar groups, linked as much by common experience as kinship, in Jordan and Egypt; these social groups seemed to provide a sense of unity in the face of potentially threatening outsiders.

The Lady

Among the folks I knew in Damascus was a lady from a formerly prominent family. According to mutual friends, sometime after the Ba'athist Party came to power, the family's home had been expropriated by the government to become a museum. The family had been given a few days to vacate; whether there was any compensation never entered into the narrative. The Lady was well-educated, articulate, and very

competent. Her attire and demeanor both gave evidence of her secular outlook, which was supported by her business professionalism.

The Lady seemed to have no difficulty navigating through the mazes of Syrian government bureaucracies. She appeared to have had contacts in many of the ministries, offices, and agencies with which we had to do business. I never asked, and therefore have no idea if these contacts were through family members or otherwise, but the contacts always seemed to have the right amount of influence to achieve the desired outcome.

As with the members of the Businessman's cohort, the Lady and her colleagues seemed to avoid overt discussion of political topics. Nuances of expression, however, provided some indications. Although the Lady never criticized the Syrian government, nor did she ever voice a complaint in my hearing, she likely resented its heavy-handed authoritarianism. I mentioned, one day, that I had run into some well-armed, tracksuit-wearing men while out walking my dog in the neighborhood of my apartment. These individuals loudly insisted that I walk on the other side of the street. After a brief protest, I complied (my mother didn't raise any stupid children). The Lady smiled grimly, and acknowledged my story with a phrase that translated roughly as "welcome to Damascus."

It was clear to me that the Lady accepted the situation; it was also clear that she harbored some – perhaps considerable – resentment. Whether that resentment would ever become more vocal was something I could not determine.

The Gold Merchant

Every Westerner I knew in Damascus had a favorite shopkeeper in the Gold Souk; I had mine. This gentleman operated a small establishment to which I had been referred early in my residence. As I experienced with many other merchants in Damascus and elsewhere in the Arab world, this gentleman was never in a hurry to conclude a transaction; in fact, he seemed to enjoy the company and conversation as much as, or more than, the commercial exchange. One might describe this a clever marketing, I suppose, for it did engender a sense of loyalty to the shop.

On several occasions, I was visiting this particular shop when a non-resident Western tourist stopped in to purchase something. My gold merchant friend would put down his tea, and excuse himself to greet the new customer. The new customer would generally go directly to the point of his visit: "How much for this item?" The merchant would offer a price, the shopper would either accept it or thank the shop keeper and leave. No conversation, no interaction. The gold merchant returned to his tea and we resumed our conversation. As he once told me, "There is more to doing business than doing business; there are relationships."

The level of trust between the merchant and his repeat customers had to be significant. He often offered them the opportunity to take a piece of jewelry home, to try it on for a while and after that, bring it back or conclude the purchase. Of course, he knew I worked at the US Embassy, and that should I default on a purchase, he had recourse; but this was not equally true of others from among his customers. The significant factor in this was most likely the mutual respect between – and mutual reputations – of merchant and customer. I suspect that a customer who defaulted on an item, regardless of financial consequences, would have had his reputation tarnished with merchants throughout the gold souk – and probably beyond.

To illustrate this: another merchant with whom I established a relationship was a seller of carpets in the souk. He would allow his repeat customers to rummage freely through stacks of folded carpets in his back room storage area – quite an adventure in and of itself – while he dealt with casual customers (or drank tea

with others) in the front. He, too would routinely suggest that we take a carpet home and live with it for a while before buying. After several visits – and an occasional purchase – he confided in me that he was disappointed with a member of the diplomatic corps from another embassy, who, he said, routinely took carpets home “to try out” before a diplomatic affair, and brought them back shortly thereafter. One such carpet, he offered, came back stained with spilled wine. The reputation of this particular diplomat was, I suspect, equally stained.

I have subsequently wondered if the tale were substantially true, or an object lesson he used for those who might be tempted to take advantage of that particular merchant’s good will.

Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Damascus

Damascus has had a vibrant Christian community for centuries – from the beginning of the Christian era, in fact. One of my routine business contacts was with a member of the Syrian Christian community; she had been educated in Syrian schools that retained the French-influenced curriculum from the Mandate period. Under the French Mandate, Christians in Syria as well as Lebanon seem to have been favored as being more culturally aligned with the attitudes of the Mandatory Powers. After independence, the French-educated Christian community had more of the political skills and experience needed to maintain a working government.

Based on media reporting from the past few years, it appears that influential members of the Syrian Christian community have chosen to align themselves with the minority Alawite-led regime of Bashar al-Assad, with the explanation that they see their interests better protected by the Alawites, rather than risking the potential restrictions of a hypothetical Syrian government led by members of the Sunni majority. This seems to indicate a degree of inter-faith friction between Christians and Sunnis, something for which my experience provides no evidence. During my residence in Damascus, Christians and Muslims (mostly Sunni) celebrated the same holidays: Christmas and Easter as well as Ramadan and the Muslim Eid holidays. Muslims and Christians worked in the same offices, attended the same events, laughed at the same jokes.

Admittedly, none of my contacts at that time, with one exception, seemed to have been especially fervent adherents to their respective traditions. The one exception was the father of a family living in an adjacent apartment building in my neighborhood. The gentleman asked me on several occasions why I did not convert to Islam; my frequent response was that I felt it necessary to maintain the faith of my fathers and grandfathers – which seemed to satisfy him.

With that exception, however, I can recall nothing that indicated underlying tension between the Muslim and Christian communities.

Not surprisingly, the same was not true of the Damascus Jewish community, which remained in place, if shrinking, when I was there. The Jewish community occupied a small part of Damascus, a walled residential and commercial quarter that I visited with the US Ambassador on several occasions. We visited the Rabbi, chatted in Arabic, shared tea and cakes, and discussed the ways of the world, just as we had with Syrian Muslim and Druze leaders at other times. The only significant difference I noticed was that when the Rabbi escorted us to the gate and stepped through into the surrounding community to see us off, he removed his yarmulke.

It would be foolish to assume that in this act, the Rabbi thought he was no longer known to the surrounding Muslim community; he was an easily recognizable figure. More probably, he simply took the action to remove a potential irritant to bystanders.

Who are the Druze?

Early on in my residency as a Foreign Service Officer at US Embassy Damascus, the Consul took several of us south to visit one of the leading figures of Jebel Druze. The Druze villages are located about 50 miles south of Damascus, adjacent to the border with Jordan and Israel. The Druze have resided in that area at least since the time of the Ottoman Empire; they have a reputation of being a warrior society.

The sheikh we visited spoke of his fighting against both the French and “the Syrians” as a younger man. He proudly displayed photographs of himself and his brothers from that period, about fifty years prior to our visit. Although he was a peaceful farmer, raising and selling fruits and vegetables to Damascus and the surrounding areas, he gave the impression of severe independence. Having fought against the French and the central government before, he spoke of being prepared to repeat the adventure if needed.

How much of that was putting the adventures of his youth into a more pleasurable context is impossible to tell, but it does indicate, at least potentially, some of the challenges with which any central government in Syria has to contend.

The Damascus Streets

Damascus has been a commercial and cultural center of the Levant for several thousand years; it remained that, certainly, until the beginning of the current troubles. Among my contacts, the highest aspiration seemed to have been to own a shop somewhere. From an historical perspective, this would seem to continue a trend that began in the pre-history of the region. A parallel trend would seem to be that of avoiding the attention of an unfriendly bureaucracy.

The gold merchant, like other merchants with whom I had built relationships, was constantly seeking means to reduce or avoid local governmental interference in his business. This could be interpreted as simply a way to maximize profits and minimize taxes, but also seemed to be the means by which Damascus merchants pushed back against an authoritarian government’s bureaucracy. In paying for my purchases, for example, he would often suggest that I send a check to a bank account in the United States in the name of one of his relatives. My understanding was that with no local financial transaction, there could be no government taxation.

Regardless of how many people might be seen on the streets or in local shops, my continuing memory is that there seemed to be few people over the age of about 12 smiling. Kids playing in the park, smiling and laughing; young adults walking through the parks or on the streets with few if any smiles. Perhaps I am over-emphasizing this, but to see that many very serious-looking faces among young adults struck me as odd. One could draw multiple conclusions from this, but none would have much validity without additional research. The impression of these unsmiling faces, however, was one of oppression: they had little to smile about.

Who Worked for Whom?

One of the working assumptions for most Americans working abroad, especially for those having official positions, is that among the foreign nationals employed, at least one and probably more are working as well for the host government. This was true both when I was overseas with the US military and with the

State Department: one of the host government's conditions for a local national to work for the Americans was a periodic report on just what we Americans were up to.

This assumption is not as paranoid as it may appear. It is commonly understood that American attachés at an embassy, for example, are collecting information about the country to which they are accredited, and the host country similarly is collecting information about the Americans. In Damascus, we simply assumed that one or more of our Syrian national employees – and perhaps all of them – rendered periodic reports to the government Intelligence Directorate on what we were doing, who we met, and what we reported to our government.

And in Conclusion . . .

I spent three years living in Jordan, with travels in Syria; two years living in Damascus; and another few years as a staff officer with keeping abreast of the news from the region as my portfolio. My current position as a faculty member allows me to indulge in my avocation of continuing study of Syrian and the surrounding region. Reading about and seeing pictures of what is happening in Syria is painful; I would like to think my friends and contacts are all safe, and preferably outside the country, but I have no way of knowing. In truth, I cannot be sure which of the many “sides” any of them favor. What I do know is that Syria and the Syrians I knew deserve a better fate than that they now experience.

A few lines from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* may summarize this essay:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.²

My intention was to sketch some of the Syrians I knew at a time when the country was reasonably calm, if not reasonably democratic. My Syrian friends were hospitable, competent, and relatively easy-going in their interactions with one particular American. If in this essay, I have conveyed this impression, then perhaps it is not “a tale told by an idiot . . . signifying nothing.”

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

Notes

1. Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind* (New York: Hatherleigh Press, 2002), Chapter V.
2. William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene V.

Chapter 12

Prosecuting Radical Islam

Colonel (Ret) Nathan Slate

The world news is all abuzz about destroying ISIS and eradicating radical Islam. Some television pundits and would-be presidential candidates describe the process as simply finding and killing the most visible members of the movement. However, Radical Islam will not be going away anytime soon. Hatred, resentment, and revanchist ambition will be with us always. The question is, in a global community, how do we enforce the rule of law? The leaders of the world, both secular and religious, need to be working together to properly address the criminal behavior we broadly refer to as “Radical Islam.”

Worldwide, we need to agree upon the Rules of Engagement for addressing criminal, religious subversion. What are the parameters that give us the right to intervene, make arrests, or use deadly force? Where Islam is concerned, when jihadist activity manifests itself as criminal behavior, it must be called what it is. When I served in Iraq, the Iraqis who supported us wondered why we referred to the murders and robberies in Iraq as an “insurgency.” They wondered why we allowed “the criminals” to label their behavior as an act of war based upon transmogrifying the teachings of the Koran. The Iraqis thought we were ennobling what was simply criminal behavior by any educated Islamic standard.

The Iraqis understood that self-centered political ambition, criminal designs, and long-held hatred would always hide behind the basest interpretation of the Koran. They resented that these “criminals and politicians” were branding their religion and pretending to speak for all of them. The Iraqis found our willingness to accept these optics as surprisingly naive.

We need to dispense with the noble titles and address the behaviors. If they are committing murder, they are murderers. It will not be as easy to recruit young people to the league of murderers, as it is to an insurgency, a caliphate, or jihad. As they said in the villages of Iraq, “We will know them by their acts.”

We must be prepared to address the egregious behaviors with the appropriate level of international power. There is much agreement around the world. Islamic extremism is a curse upon the followers of Islam as well. Focusing upon the behaviors, we can work together to enforce the enlightened rule of law, that law shared by educated followers of all religions that protects the sacredness of life itself. The effort to control radical, religious extremism (today it is Islam, tomorrow possibly another faith) must be a shared effort.

There should be an international organization created to work together to shape the parameters of reasonable thinking concerning this matter. We must ensure we do not aggrandize crime. We must be willing to hold accountable the hatemongers. This is particularly true where education is concerned. For example, the Wahhabi influence in Saudi Arabia engenders generations of religious conflict with their madrassa schools. Religious education is one thing, religious education that encourages violence and crime is another. Governments must be willing to address these challenges transparently. There is probably no area more important than education. This is true in America as well. We must understand the cultures we are dealing with. Having made that point, every culture must be held accountable for a baseline of civil behavior.

The internet is a key player in this debate. Much hateful rhetoric and criminal recruitment takes place over this medium. Internationally, we must keep an eye on this and shape it at every opportunity. By shaping, I mean participate in the dialogue. We must determine what the messages are that properly represent

America and the civil world. We must have more than pop culture and Coca-Cola. Real time must be spent determining what reflects the human (and humane) baseline. Responsible use of the internet is key.

Education, in terms of understanding religions and each other, will make a positive difference. Espousing global values – that address the worth of human life and encourage religious tolerance – will make a difference. The world must see that criminal behavior, even when shrouded in religious aggrandizement, is not acceptable and will be prosecuted as the crime manifested.

What must America do? First, we have to accept that our fractured approach to addressing radical Islam has failed. We must take a broader look at foreign policy. Simply looking at issues through an economic and political lens will not work. We must address the moral implications as well. Taking down a government without the commitment to stay with them during the rebuilding process is simply unacceptable. The world sees this self-serving approach as criminal behavior. We should, too.

If our aim is to steadfastly treat others as we feel justice would dictate, we will enter armed conflict very thoughtfully. Our policy and strategy must match our commitment to fair play. Moreover, they must be consistent. Inconsistencies in this arena make us look like liars to the rest of the world. Worst of all, sometimes this type of inconsistency makes us liars. Just look at the commitments we made to the Iraqi people who supported us following the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. After our withdrawal, the civil injustice and the rise of ISIS led to the death of scores of thousands of good Iraqi people who took us at our word.

Finding and holding the moral high ground in international affairs is a challenge. However, it can be done. America's commitment to Europe following WWII, or South Korea following the Korean War, are examples of steadfast commitment to the moral high ground. If we want to wage war on the cheap, prostituting our military and our allies in the process, we should expect very bad outcomes.

America must stop judging the world by our culture. We continue to expect people in other parts of the world with vastly different frames of reference to assess our words and actions in the American context. This is naive at best. Cultural awareness is a necessity in this arena.

In contemporary America, one must wonder if a moral litmus test is possible. Our people seem so very fractured along political, social, and religious lines. Our Congress cannot even pass a budget. We debate over every conceivable issue without reaching any common ground. Nonetheless, if we are to stand up to moral infidelity around the world (this time we are addressing radical Islam), we must agree upon certain shared commitments. If we cannot agree upon the sanctity of life and the right to the pursuit of happiness, we have strayed too far from our national foundation. A country without moral identification should be very circumspect about leading the world.

Although our political parties fight over many domestic issues, they must discipline themselves to work together for national and global security. Prudent measures to ensure our security at home, and the advancement of peace around the world, must have primacy over political hubris. We simply must not behave like the factions and forces we work to contain.

In the short term, what might a course of action look like? A simple template follows:

1. Create a global coalition for direct action, as George H. Bush did during the first Gulf War. As well as Britain, Germany and France, include Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Lead this global coalition in partitioning and strangling ISIS in Syria. Completely destroy the notion of a physical state. When ISIS is destroyed, leverage the UN to come up with borders for Syria that

represent the affected parties. Correct for our past failings and ensure Iraq has a government that will represent all of its people and not simply lead to the next civil war.

2. Openly pursue a global coalition of religious moderates. It will require an international campaign to address the hateful messages being sent into cyber space all over the planet. It is not enough to find the messages and messengers, we must have an Information Operations (IO) plan that works. The proper messages need to be sent to young people around the world. Saudi Arabia must be a leader in shutting down the schools of hatred endorsed by Wahhabis. Egypt, as a longtime leader of the Islamic people, must continue to pressure religious leaders to address the criminal behaviors they have seemingly turned their back on. The leaders of the Islamic world must commit to addressing the rogue element of their culture.
3. We must expand our intelligence gathering and look for opportunities to share intelligence related to radical Islam more broadly. As we improve our cyber defense, we must ensure our global partners are increasing their capability as well.
4. We should create a special international court (made up of the coalition participants) to address the issue of religious crime. Each act must be addressed based upon its merit. Felonious behavior must be codified as such. Crimes against man should likewise be fully prosecuted in a public forum.

Having expunged the physical state of ISIS, the next hurdle will be the rudiments of radical Islam. Some sects lend themselves to radicalization more readily than others. Wahhabism is a case in point. Twelver Shiism is another. While taking direct action against the criminal elements, moderates in each of these faiths, and across Islam, must be communicated with. No one suffers more from the effects of radical behavior/criminal behavior, than they do. Their support is key in reducing the number of incidents going forward.

Radical Islam must be addressed even handedly. Criminal behavior must be addressed with the needed force. Shaping operations revolve around IO. We must leverage what we have in common. The center of gravity here is the nature of divinity. When the religious/cultural players agree that the nature of divinity is kind and loving (as they usually do), common ground can be found. When one of the parties believes in a hateful god with revanchist ambitions, common ground will be difficult to find. In this case, the rule of law and the rules of engagement apply.

Criminal behavior must not benefit from religious epitaphs. It must be met with the requisite force to preserve the rule of law. If the offending party does not respect the rule of law, or the rules of common decency, their behaviors will identify them. When their behaviors cross the legal norms of the civilized world, the civilized world – all faiths – must respond with shared commitment. The war on radicalism is a long war. The seeds of criminal ambition have been fed by religious manipulation across recorded history. We must organize for the long fight, both in terms of the physical war and the psychological war. We must never forget that terrorism is the spread of fear, and fear is an emotion. No one can control our emotions but ourselves.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

Section 3:
Military Applications of Culture and Language in the Operational Environment

Chapter 13
Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy:
The Global Front Within the Context of the Home Front
Dr. Tseggai Isaac

Introduction

After the terrorist attack on the United States on 11 September 2001, the military posture of the United States was at a crossroads. Events developed that necessitated reconsiderations of “strategic, operational and tactical” policies and practices. “Operational experiences in Somalia, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq have highlighted critical gaps in the Army capability to influence and operate effectively within different cultures for extended periods of time.”¹ Even before the “gaps in the Army capability” were identified, the combat practices of the armed forces were considered ready for in depth study and revision.² It became clear to policy makers that the 21st century provided new challenges. Critical among these challenges are that cultural and linguistic competency skills needed to be developed in order to equip the Soldier with effective means of accomplishing his duties; and to apply aspects of “soft power” that reflect the positive attributes of the United States.³

Recent events throughout the world that demanded the active attention of the United States have highlighted the essential values of cultural understanding and language proficiency. The combat phase is dynamic, unpredictable and hurried. It is driven by the “kinetic” properties of conflict where speed, enduring energy, and smart application of hitting power do not lend themselves to the calm deliberations of negotiation, conciliation, rehabilitation and the ensuring lasting peace. In order to be successful, the Soldier needs to be conversant in foreign languages, and comfortable with the cultures of his interlocutors at the front line. Along these lines, the Army issued the *Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy* (ACFLS) as a guideline for the training and development of the Soldiers’ communication and interactive skills.

This chapter will:

- Review the Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy (ACFLS).
- Describe the collegial cooperation between the first Culture and Foreign Language Advisors (CFLAs).
- Summarize the background used for the ACFLS, especially the global and historical contexts in which foreign language and cultural outreaches by American defense and diplomatic organizations
- Summarize the various cultural and language programs that were launched as specific missions of the joint services in general and the Army in particular.
- Focus on the concept of Reciprocity of Cultures. Other societies can gain benefits as they interact with the American Soldier in ways that the Soldier will be so self-assured of American values that he/she will enthusiastically, boldly, and unabashedly vouch for, and reinforce, the organic and authentic values of the American political culture of freedom and liberty. These are scarce in the vast landscape where deployments of varying intensity will dictate the Soldier’s presence. Bending, twisting, elasticizing, and deeming the straight lines of democratic freedom to appear tolerant to those totalitarian and intolerant values

that countenance massive human rights abuses is un-American in the traditional and authentic sense of America.

The Strategy

The rationale for being a Soldier is the inevitability of war. For that reason, the Soldier is always at the ready for combat. Preparation for war, conducting war, and assessment of the war's outcome in order to prepare for the inevitable war of tomorrow occupy the warrior's professional life. In the post-conflict phase when the Soldier is evaluating the outcomes of the last war, part of his time is occupied to rebuild, rehabilitate, and reconstruct the human and material resources that were destroyed by war. At that phase, the Soldier is a participant in the civilian task of carrying out multiple tasks of "governance, economic and infrastructure reconstruction, conflict resolution among host societies, negotiation and mediation."⁴

Psychologically, the post-conflict phase is also delicate as it requires attitude readjustment. The Soldier is acclimated to fight, win, and hold his grounds without tempering down his fighting posture. As a conqueror, the grounds to which his victories have brought him are filled with adversaries with multifaceted psychological, political, social, and anthropological characteristics. The Soldier himself is psychologically prepared to apply potent power. Reconditioning him to decelerate the inertia of fighting and tone him down to a less than fighting attitude requires a tall task of pedagogical input in the realms of cultural and linguistic training. The ACFLS was written and distributed to give guidelines to the military organizations of the United States as a tool for developing the Soldiers' skills to the task of peace making and peace keeping. The task for administering the training was delegated to the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). A total of 16 TRADOC-affiliated organizations and Centers of Excellence were directed to implement the strategy.

Before the strategy was formally announced, General William Wallace, Commanding General of the United Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), approved a memorandum on 4 December 2008 instructing the Centers of Excellence to conduct preliminary steps towards implementing the strategy. General Wallace's order instructed all officers enrolled in the Basic Officer Leader Course III (BOLC III) and the Captains Career Course (CCC) to write a short research paper addressing a country in a specific region. The purpose of the paper was to acquaint the officers with specific countries' cultural, ethno-linguistic, history, and political systems. An additional task included in General Wallace's directive was for the Centers of Excellence to hire Cultural and Foreign Language Advisors (CFLAs). These were to be individuals with intellectual and scholarship capability and experience to provide insight in the selection, coordination, and implementation of relevant language and cultural "focus and emphasis."

The strategy's objectives were to introduce topics on cultural and linguistic training at NCO and Captains levels for the purpose of augmenting combat skill with the essentials of interpersonal and communicative skills. "Today's full spectrum operations require adaptable foreign language and cultural capabilities to be fully successful."⁵ This was to begin during unit training at the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) stage, where language and cultural topics regarding other societies are to be introduced. This stage is the general awareness level where a sense of universal perspectives is drilled into the thinking of the Soldier. The other component of the strategy is the US Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS) path, where officers will be trained to acquire cultural and language training to remedy the inadequacies that were recently discovered. The strategy instructs that the instructional plan will be designed to sharpen the acuity of the Soldier's sense of awareness. The instructional endeavor will also ensure that the Soldier will think of cultures and languages as determinant components of his or her entire mission. These attributes will make

the Soldier sensitive not only to the parochial and provincial perspective of his own culture, but also to the global and universal environment. The focus should aim at identifying the proper “blend” of culture and foreign language so that Army units engaged in pacification, stabilization, and reconciliation roles will not be impaired by the inadequacy of cultural and linguistic capabilities.

In order to achieve the right “blend” of culture and language, the instructional task was tailored to follow two paths: 1) the career development path, in which dedication to a long-range learning objectives will guarantee a cohort of cultural and language experts through the entire hierarchy of the armed services; and 2) the pre-deployment path where “rudimentary” language and cultural requirements are adequate for intermediation in current and transitory encounters. The strategy leaves no doubt that the Soldier as a Warrior and as a member of his unit and his organizational hierarchy up to the highest ranks, must be acclimated to the essential values of cultural and language competencies.

Collegiality as a Value Enhancing Leverage

About eight months after I was hired, I and three other Army Culture and Foreign Language Advisors (ACFLAs) were instructed by the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Headquarters to visit Dr. Mahir Ibrahimov at the Fires Center of Excellence, Fort Sill. Dr. Ibrahimov was the first to be hired among the 12 subsequent ACFLAs at the Fires Center. While visiting Dr. Ibrahimov, we made all efforts to observe his operation and learn from him as he shared his experience in the implementation. We noticed that Dr. Ibrahimov was effective in making his division firmly grounded at the administrative and functional levels of the center. There was horizontal awareness of his work across divisions with reciprocal and complementary cooperation and fulfillments of objectives. He was also vertically integrated to the directorate of the Fires Center of Excellence occupying his office to the proximities of the Center’s Commandant from where he was able to radiate his plans to the whole Center.

The ACFLAs agreed to adapt, as much as possible, what we learned from the Fires Center and from Dr. Ibrahimov. Our visit gave us a possible template that we could use as we apply our task at our respective Centers of Excellence. Like most organizations, the Fires Center of Excellence and others, such as the Maneuver and Support Center for Excellence, have their unique functional attributes. Even though the essential values of culture and language awareness are the same, the invisible extenuating circumstances, personalities, temperaments, and office cultures are bound to influence the applications of tasks and performance outcomes. We toured the center, participated in panel sessions, made presentations, and gained insight and confidence that we could apply Dr. Ibrahimov’s approach at our centers in ways that fit our specific circumstances. At subsequent conferences and meetings where the ACFLAs and supervisors gathered subsequent to our visit, it became apparent that our activities were synchronized and harmonized in ways that became apparent even among our respective supervisors who mentioned to us of the similarities of our implementation approaches.

In May 2011, the TRADOC Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy (ACFLS) Executive ORDER (EXORD) was published designating CAC as the lead for the entire C&FL program. The Fort Sill approach being effective in demonstrating collaboration, training, and proven instructional outcomes, Dr. Ibrahimov, the architect of that approach, was transferred to CAC as the Army’s Senior Culture and Foreign Language Advisor (and since 2013 as a Program Manager) to assume the task of implementation of the strategy. CAC and the newly established Culture and Language Management Office were tasked with assuming authorities, administering resources, conducting oversights, and fulfilling the implementation of Culture and Foreign Language (C&FL) programs.

According to Dr. Ibrahimov's account, the repositioning of the strategy and recasting its identifying features as well as to the administrative restructuring was evolutionary. In June 2011, the Army C&FL stakeholders Working Group developed key tasks for CAC at Fort Leavenworth, KS, DLI at Monterey, CA, and TCC at Fort Huachuca, AZ for inclusion into the CAC C&FL EXORD. In October 2011, CAC CFL Implementation Guidance was published. In November 2011, ACFLS implementation was briefed as part of prepare the Army Forum governance, and the TRADOC Commander approved it as the way ahead. In August 2013, CAC Leader Development and Education (LD&E) Language, Regional Expertise and Culture (LREC) Management Office (LRECMO) was established.

The Historical Context for Cultural and Foreign Language Strategy

In global affairs, the post-conflict period is a time for evaluation and recalibration of material and human resources. The end of the Cold War showed characteristics of post war rearrangements and readjusting to a situation where the competition between the Super Powers was to be replaced by a new way of thinking and acting. Global and regional crises that erupted in the 1990s were particularly unique, because they revealed the painstakingly and studiously organized terrorist groups were gaining visibility in the Middle East from where they sent foot soldiers to conduct terrorist acts. These are not super powers; they are phantom-like terrorist groups whose methods of fighting are flexible and unpredictable. The steady rise in their terrorist acts targeting American interests and personnel highlighted the need for the study of language and culture. The new challenges became war of ideas, faith, and of strategic and tactical wisdom that were already in the Army's archives and toolkits, if only to reactivate and employ them in their historical and institutional contexts.

The study of culture and language is not new to the United States diplomatic and defense establishments. In the immediate years of the Second World War, the United States embarked on public diplomacy campaigns. The world was ripe for a new global strategy that must combine potent killing power with the requisites of diplomatic outreaches to new frontiers and new territorial states. The former European colonies in Africa, Asia and the Middle East were liberated from colonial rule. At the same time, the Eastern European countries were entering a period of communist domination by the USSR. In order to prevent the spread of communism, the United States took the lead in augmenting its strategic and tactical arsenal and honing its diplomatic, public relations, and propaganda resources to enjoin the battle of ideas. Even though the West's strategic platform was centralized in NATO, the United States loomed larger than the rest in authoring the new order of strategic affairs. The West's security needs became reliant on American brain and purse power to provide the scientific and material factors of defense. The doctrines of deterrence, balance of power and containment were cultivated at American research and educational institutions testifying the powers of democratic ideals in inspiring prolific minds.

The foreign policy element of the balance of power was articulated in the doctrines of deterrence and containment of the imminent communist aggression. In order to lend legitimacy and credibility to its ideals throughout the world, the United States and its allies relied on the authentic and veritable values of freedom and liberty. The Third World countries emerging from the oppressive system of colonialism were ripe for cultural and ideological outreach and the State and Defense departments, in various ways and means undertook this mission.

On March 1947, the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) was created to offer training to diplomats while at the same time opening its doors to military officers and civil servants. The institute published handbooks on several languages that were adaptable to distance education and in-house training. In 1948, the Marshall

Plan was announced by the United States to rebuild Europe after the devastation of the Second World War. The plan was for the rehabilitation of the industrial, political, and institutional sector of the West European countries. The idea of “culture” was a sensitive topic as to avoid being perceived by America’s adversaries as if the United States was promoting “cultural imperialism.” The guidelines for the expenditures of the plan’s budget left no doubt that the United States was not retreating from promulgating the ideals of democracy – freedom and liberty. It was not hard to understand that the critical aim of the Marshall Plan was the rebuilding of democratic ideals in contradistinction to the aggressive campaigns by the USSR to spread communism.

In his 1949 inaugural address, President Truman announced the Four Points program to spread technical and industrial skills to the “underdeveloped countries” and to share the ideals of democratic governance. President Truman declared,

Democracy alone can supply the vitalizing force to stir the peoples of the world into triumphant action, not only against their human oppressors, but also against their ancient enemies – hunger, misery, and despair. On the basis of these four major courses of action we hope to help create the conditions that will lead eventually to personal freedom and happiness for all mankind.⁶

In 1961, President Kennedy announced the creation of the Peace Corps as youth vanguards to assist Third World countries in the rudiments of technical and literacy development. In the same year, President Kennedy created the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) “to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient democratic societies to realize their potential.”⁷

The Defense Language Institute (DLI) was consolidated in its current form in 1961 to provide foreign language training to the armed services. DLI is designed to provide language training that can be mastered at a fast pace through drill and reinforcement practices. In terms of cultural and language popularization, the Voice of America (VOA) and the United States Information Service (USIS) were effective and proven information and influence outlets that were highly effective in spreading messages from the point of view of liberty and freedom. The information campaigns in various languages were accompanied by cultural programs that included music and editorial segments sharing American culture as rooted in participatory politics, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly and individual rights. The United States established military bases in the Middle East, Northeast Africa, Europe, and Asia. America’s visibility and influence was spread instilling a sense of admiration and envy as well as providing opportunities for a wise application of cultural and linguistic influences. After the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, the Johnson, Nixon and Ford Administrations spent their tenures preoccupied with race riots, civil rights marches, Vietnam, and other major domestic challenges.

The Carter Administration concluded its term trying to deal with the radical Iranian Revolution. The administration found itself confounded by the invasion of the American Embassy in Tehran, and the subsequent hostage taking by Iranian mobs. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan pushed the Carter Administration to align itself with the Afghan Mujahidin in order to counter Soviet aggression. Some Mujahidin leaders would later become leaders of Al Qaeda. The progressive rise of terrorist activities intensified during the 1980s, and the civilian nature of their targets involves a mix of policing far removed from the combat posture. Even though the Warsaw Pact as a global adversary to the West was removed by the power of ideas, the political horizon was fraught with newer challenges. The democratic aspirations of those societies that toiled under Soviet communism were under direct threats from homegrown tyrants with selfish ambitions.

The dictators in the formerly Soviet Republics proved to be antithetical to the liberating values of democratization. Equally determined to reject the uplifting values of democratization were Islamic zealots bent on terrorism. Islamic terrorists such as al Qaeda opposed democracy as a Western ideology and a threat to their vision of a universally empowered Caliphate State.

By 1991, the United States and its NATO allies were left as the only global powers with their democratic values and their diplomatic, military, and ideological fundamentals intact. The United States and NATO fought the Cold War against communism partly by waging a war of ideas and cultural values. They overcame without resorting to war.

The climax of the war of ideas came in the mid-1980s when the Reagan administration's display of American values of liberty and freedom were emphasized by President Reagan in a manner that was captivating to audiences. In his address to the British Parliament on 8 June 1982, President Reagan spoke of the cultural values of democracy as universal and adaptable to all cultures. He stated:

While we must be cautious about forcing the pace of change, we must not hesitate to declare our ultimate objectives and to take concrete actions to move toward them. We must be staunch in our conviction that freedom is not the sole prerogative of a lucky few, but the inalienable and universal right of all human beings. So states the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which, among other things, guarantees free elections. The objective I propose is quite simple to state: to foster the infrastructure of democracy, the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities, which allows a people to choose their own way to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means. This is not cultural imperialism, it is providing the means for genuine self-determination and protection for diversity. Democracy already flourishes in countries with very different cultures and historical experiences. It would be cultural condescension, or worse, to say that any people prefer dictatorship to democracy.⁸

The Reagan administration mixed diplomacy and "soft power" in ways that accented the cultural attributes of democratic systems. The administration further embarked on dominating the airwaves by mobilizing an array of sophisticated media outlets and by increasing expenditures on public diplomacy. USIS increased its programs and took the lead in blanketing the global airwaves with messages that emphasized the benefits of democratic values in free societies. The Voice of America's Radio Free Europe, Radio Marti, Radio to Eastern Europe, Asia, and special broadcasts in many African, Asian, and Arabic languages became popular throughout the world as millions listened to the broadcast contents that included cultural and political messages in many of their languages. The cumulative effect of the Cold War arms race, diplomatic negotiations, and cultural warfare took their toll on the communist system. In 1985, President Gorbachev was pressured to call for the *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) programs of reassessment of the Soviet system. His hope was to rehabilitate the failed Soviet system, promote socialism as an alternative system to democracy, and aim for an energetic and formidable communist states as competitors to Western liberalism. President Gorbachev's programs of restructuring and openness did not succeed. They resulted in his removal from office and the disintegration of the USSR in 1991.

Once President Gorbachev announced his reform programs, the former members of the USSR withdrew their membership, declared their own political programs, and became independent of the bond that tied them to the Soviet totalitarian system. The bipolar system that was marked by the arms race, the battle of ideas, and the promotion of the cultural values of liberal ideology in the West and the communist ideology in the

East crumbled. The United States and its NATO allies were left intact. The American political historian Francis Fukuyama described these episodes in his book, arguing that the cultural values that come out of the democratic governance were destined to prevail. Fukuyama contended that the totalitarian system's destiny of failure was sure irrespective of the massive efforts the communist regimes spent to hide the disastrous consequences of totalitarianism.⁹

The United States wanted to spread its influence and to show to the skeptical world that it was committed to use its military and diplomatic institutions for peace building, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and rebuilding the shattered lives of post-colonial states that were in need of massive assistance. The United States did not seek reciprocal economic commitment on the part of the post-colonial African, Asian, and South American states. They were poverty-stricken and had little to offer, but needed material assistance as well as good will gestures to provide them with the option of democratization.

The historical context described above gave impetus to the institutional context that cemented the Army's operational routines. The factors that defeated the communist system of the Warsaw Pact were the routines of democracy deeply embedded in American institutions. It is not chauvinistic to vouch for institutional superiority as a stark contrast to alternative institutions whose values, beliefs, and attitudes do not embrace those values stated by President Reagan. Organizations become institutions when they are part of the indispensable administrative resources without which national progress and survival cannot be assured.

The Institutional Context as an Instructional and Training Base

The Army's organizational history and operational experiences provide a pedagogical treasure trove from which instructors can build resource foundations for dynamic, creative and adaptive thinking. The outcomes of any instructional and training content with respect to culture and foreign language education will be effective if fidelity to the Army's institutional contexts are integrated to the tasks of instruction and training. For instructional purposes, the operational routines of the Army can be categorized into two functional categories:

- Battle operations where tactical and strategic details are harmonized to smoothness of well-coordinated actions internalized as guides for actionable decisions, and
- Institutional attributes by which administrative routines had reached the highest level of their original or traditional rationalization.

The United States Army in its traditional purposes is a template of institutionalization in the broad expanses of American officialdom. The Army's genesis and the birth of the United States as a sovereign state are inseparably intertwined. The liberation of the Thirteen Colonies and the creation of the American Republic were a revolutionary phenomenon unseen in their contemporaneous world since the aborted English Revolution of 1648. The 1776 American Revolution was birthed, nurtured, and morphed to a democratic system entirely shepherded by the Continental Army of the United States. General George Washington and the Continental Congress set the pattern of blending a democratic and civilian government with authority vested in the office of a civilian president as the Commander in Chief of the United States Armed Services. The principles that gave rise to the American Republic were purposed for making freedom a universal reality.

The intellectual power and the statesmanship of the Founders stand as timeless national legacies in the formation of a people-centered government. The intent was to form a democratic state rooted on the

principles of Natural Rights. These principles are adaptable for the purpose of democratic governance in many parts of the world, with few religious exceptions.¹⁰ They can be part of the essential components of cultural instruction and training. Publicizing and expanding their geographical reach as aspirations of societies that yearn for democratization is positive outreach. There are no societies with perfect governing systems. There are differences between imperfect democratic systems that struggle to fulfill democratic aspiration and those that struggle to keep their peoples enslaved. When there was a will to fight for freedom, justice, and equality democratic imperfections were made whole in evolutionary phases. The democratic values that inspired freedom proved resilient. The will and the initiatives that eliminated antidemocratic resistances can serve to popularize aspirations for freedom in other lands.

The American Armed Services, as defenders of a Republic with the attributes of unmistakable super power status, are capable in the identification of adversarial threats. They possess the technological and analytical wherewithal to decipher the deadly designs of regular and irregular adversaries. The land, air, and sea power with which they are equipped are formed to deter and inflict crippling attacks against would be aggressors. The professional Soldier does not hunger for civilian power, because civilian power compared to military service is inglorious, expendable, mundane, corruptible, and shortsighted.¹¹

The highest levels of rationalization that can be usefully integrated into teaching and training objectives are measurable in qualitative and quantitative outcomes. Both quantitative and qualitative outcomes share common approaches: identification of problems, analysis of options, and prioritization of action. The Army's critical intents of maximization of utility in its functional categories and its qualitative and quantitative outcomes are aspects of its institutional context. When an organization and its missions, objectives, and its functional identity are rooted deeply into the system of governance, it reaches a level of institutionalization.

The concept of institutionalization as described by Samuel Huntington refers to the ability of institutions to earn their legitimacy by becoming a perfect fit for the tasks that necessitated their creation. Institutional fitness is shown first by the way institutions increase their capabilities to perform specialized and multifaceted tasks with the highest degree of their expected outcome. Second, they accomplish their goals and objectives by their autonomous grounding in the rules, principles, and guidelines that were defined to guarantee their viability and which formalized their integral role as indispensable parts of the governance system. Institutions that are autonomous are character-strong; they resist political or sectional (religious, ethnic, ideological, etc.) pressures or influences. They are masters of their own identity. Their internal rules, guidelines, and administrative structure inspire their decisions. They are also persistent, enduring, and timeless. Presidents, legislators, and officials at high places in the various sectors of society do change from time to time, but institutionalized institutions remain fixed, unchanging, and fanatically dedicated to the principles that caused their creation.¹²

The institutional context discussed above positioned the United States Army as an institutional bastion with multiple tasks that blurred the distinct lines between military and civilian responsibilities. Its strides and sprints are long and swift supported by the most up-to-date technological and scientific resources. It has long arms that at times managed to disquiet friends, infuriate adversaries, and bring dread to outlaws, terrorists, and rogue regimes. Due to these attributes, there are tendencies among critics and adversaries to highlight those disquieting and infuriating incidents and attribute to the United States Army misplaced characterizations. The following section addresses the institutional contexts that had shaped the US Army's cultural orientation in the global arena. The primary reason for bringing to the fore the institutional context is to highlight the scientific attributes of American defense institutions that have molded Army culture and

the need to highlight their openness. The rationale for their being is to maximize institutional incorruptibility and guarantee victory at the war front.

Cultural Application at the Global Front

As the search for effective cultural and language instruction progresses, looking at the experiences of American institutions and integrating them as important elements of the cultural and linguistic instructional packages can offer rich lessons. American institutions, the process of their modernization, their adaptability in balancing the vital requisites of modernization and limits of personal liberty, provide lessons that can be emulated in the technicalities that are essential for military engagement. Above that, situations will dictate to the Soldier that his profession is, in large part, incompatible with the professional mandates of evangelists and humanitarian idealists. The purpose and the component makeup of the Services are to heed President Kennedy's call when he said: "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."¹³ This challenge is to be found in the analysis of the institutional contexts that we can employ to enrich the pedagogical, training, and administrative components of cultural and language studies.

The post-September 2001 events can be cited as examples of the unique and peculiar challenges that the Middle East and the Islamic world represent to the American Soldier. Issues of tolerance, respect for the rule of law, and respect of human rights, and accountability of professional duties are indispensable components of the professional Soldier. They are the bedrock foundation of the Soldier's political values and ideals, subservient to no other values of lesser precedence, or inferior to no other beliefs, values and ideals. The tendency to formulate cultural and linguistic instructional resources will be effective if instructional materials are arranged and presented for universal appeal instead of for regional and particularized circumstances.

Some Pitfalls in Cultural and Language Applications in the Post-Cold War System

In the immediate years after the 2003 Iraqi War ended, the Army was confronted with reevaluating the outcome of the war. Some operational pitfalls and errors such as the Abu Ghraib incidents caused soul-searching over missteps that were episodic, but did not fit the historical and institutional contexts defined above. Events that climaxed in the 21st century with respect to military affairs had begun to evolve at the conclusion of the 20th century.

The end of the Cold War introduced new challenges that needed to be handled with means and methods that are effective for combating terrorism. Before the United States and its NATO allies could make the essential transition to the unipolar features of the global system that had just emerged, two new challenges developed that required new thinking for action. These challenges were Desert Storm and Desert Shield, and terrorist acts by non-state actors who became active and deadly, because their very nature was formless, random, and elusive until they inflicted significant damage, mostly against civilian targets.

Desert Storm and Desert Shield were launched to defend the Gulf Arab states and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and to liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion. Operation Iraqi Freedom of March 2003 followed Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and the combined interplay of these military engagements triggered the need to review the outcome and attempt to learn lessons that may be helpful in future engagements. US Army field manuals added new dimensions to the strategic security environment by assuming that combat operations would occur in the midst of civilian spaces.

Previously, Army forces sought to separate civilians from the battlefield before engaging and destroying enemies and seizing terrain. While the Army recognizes the enduring requirements to fight and win, it also recognizes that noncombatants are frequently part of the terrain and their support is a principal determinant of success in future conflicts. Soldiers will consistently operate in and among the people, conducting operations in an environment fundamentally human in character. Soldiers' actions exert a most powerful influence on the population, with final success or failure of an operation often resting on the perceptions of the people.¹⁴

The Iraq and Kuwait border crisis came to the surface when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990 and attempted to absorb it as part of Iraq. Desert Shield and Desert Storm were launched to confront Saddam, defend the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Arab states, to liberate Kuwait, and to restore the Kuwaiti state institutions that were disbanded when Saddam invaded the country. The mission was accomplished effectively without any doubt as to its operation and termination.

Operation Restore Hope, intended to clear the way for humanitarian aid to the war-weary Somali people, was launched in December 1992. Its intended objectives were aborted, restoring neither peace nor hope for Somalia, because contingents of al Qaeda fighters who were making beachheads into East Africa linked with Somali fundamentalists, later to be known as the Union of Islamic Court.¹⁵ In February 1993, the first terrorist attack on the World Trade Center took place when the terrorist Ramzi Yousef masterminded the bombing that killed 6 and injured over 1000 people. This attack was a foretaste for the September 11, 2001 attack, but policy makers and intelligence establishments did not capitalize on the signals and hard facts that they had at their disposal telling them that the World Trade Center was marked for destruction by al Qaeda terrorists.¹⁶

At first glance, the World Trade Center attack by al Qaeda was thought of as a work of a rogue and elusive non-state entity. Steadily, al Qaeda was able to increase its visibility by bringing recruits from the vast pool of the Islamic world's youths who found themselves disillusioned and disfranchised under dictatorships. The al Qaeda leadership mobilized foot soldiers, organized affiliates, and quietly gained supporters in donors from the Arab States awash in petrodollar wealth. Al Qaeda, as a well-organized terrorist entity, gained popularity among fundamentalist Islamic enclaves throughout the Middle East, Europe, North America, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa.

Al Qaeda's cataclysmic act of terrorism took place on 7 August 1998 when its units in East Africa bombed the American Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar Es Salam, Tanzania. This incident catapulted al Qaeda to a powerful global player with unprecedented fame for a terrorist organization. Its popularity spread throughout the Islamic world; and the popularity of Osama bin Laden was lifted up as a heroic Islamic warrior among the youths in such countries as Pakistan, Gulf States, Saudi Arabia, North Africa and Indonesia, among others. Al Qaeda terrorist ambitions reached to eschatological proportions as the concept of jihad in its summoning calls took the meaning of "holy struggle" against "crusaders." This act revealed that al Qaeda's capacity to motivate disaffected Arab youths and its ability to awaken latent feelings of hatred against the West were underestimated by intelligence services in the West and the United States.

From the strategic and operational perspectives, there were opportunities to cripple and deliver serious damage to al Qaeda and its affiliated organizations. The United States Congress found that there was actionable intelligence material at the hands of intelligence units before the September 11 events, indicating that the types of terrorist attack that took place on that day were about to come.¹⁷ A congressional Joint Inquiry Committee reported that the intelligence services, even when they had information about al Qaeda threat

against the United States, were not prepared due to the fragmented and disconnected means of information sharing among agencies such as the CIA and the FBI. The Joint Inquiry Committee stated:

Rather than having a galvanizing effect, however, the Joint Inquiry record reveals that the Intelligence Community continued to be fragmented without a comprehensive strategy for combating Bin Laden. The record also shows that the DCI [Director of Central Intelligence] was either unable or unwilling to enforce consistent priorities and marshal resources across the Community. Evidence of fragmented Intelligence Community can be found in the limited disintegration of DCI declarations. The Community as a whole had only a limited awareness of the Statement.¹⁸

In the Middle East, al Qaeda was not perceived as a local nuisance any more. Its units were mercilessly hunted by Saddam Hussein and it was a real threat to the Saudi royal family. It was hosted and supported by the Afghan Taliban, and sheltered and tolerated by Pakistan. The Saudi's alliance with the West infuriated Osama Bin Laden and, in the eyes of his followers, diminished the legitimacy of the Saudi royal family as custodians of the Holy sites of Islam. The more al Qaeda remained unchallenged and able to mount attacks, its dogged determination to attack the West continued.

After the September 11 attack on the United States, al Qaeda's status was elevated among Islamic radicals in the Islamic world. Al Qaeda transformed its reputation as a global terrorist enterprise, expanding its reach in the Middle East and North and East Africa. The terrorist group that was so much hated by the non-ideological countries of the Middle East loomed large, but creating an effective plan of action to eliminate the organization lacked focus of action. In his State of the Union Address of 29 January 2002, President Bush focused on Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as comprising an "axis of evil" that must be confronted to redress the implied threat they represented and the support that Iraq must have extended to terrorists. President Bush's speech, from the realists' perspectives of foreign policy theorists, fits the category of "misperception" or "diversion theory."¹⁹ Was the president conflating the September 11 attack to fit a broad agenda that he set for his administration to fulfill to invade Iraq, or were there real facts that his administration could bring to the table to implicate Iraq? Was he diverting attention away from the al Qaeda culprits? What influence will his policies have on the Army's policy and strategic choices? Irrespective of the detailed answers embedded in each of these questions, the broad implication of the President's address and impending policy objectives had the element of blurring the lines of active combat in a formal war setting and the challenges of informal, non-state actors whose terrorist methods are indecipherable and unpredictable.

During the immediate two years after the September 11 terrorist attack on the United States, the political climate was filled with anger against the terrorists. First the terrorist attack and the urgency for an immediate retaliation gained popular support, but assigning guilt and focusing all energies on bringing the criminals to justice was hotly disputed. Locating and capturing the al Qaeda leadership and its supporters in ways that delivered retributive justice became a difficult task.

The US and its allies launched Operation Enduring Freedom to dislodge the Taliban from Afghanistan and apprehend bin Laden and his insurgent forces in the process of defeating the Taliban. The operation was successful in overthrowing the Taliban, but the apparent inability of coalition forces to trap and capture the al Qaeda leadership left the operation's objectives unfulfilled. Al Qaeda was crippled, but, as long as Osama Bin Laden was at large, the psychological effect on those who idolized him and rejoiced about his terrorist accomplishments was a morale boost and hope for further attacks. Bin Laden's survival at the

lowest point of his organization's life represented a triumph for those who celebrated the rationale for his terrorist agenda.

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in March 2003, three years after September 11, appeared to have been motivated by the purpose of continuing the unfinished business of Desert Shield and Desert Storm rather than redressing the criminality of September 11. In view of the fact that Saddam was a mortal foe of al Qaeda affiliates in his country and a remorseless exterminator of religious fundamentalists, the decision to attack Iraq was criticized as a misplaced priority rather than a legitimate retaliation against al Qaeda.

The combined interplay of these military engagements plunged the United States Army into fighting wars that it won quickly and with relatively light casualties. The after effects of the wars combined with the growth of terrorist acts exposed the Army to situations where the need for cultural and linguistic competencies are of high importance.

The outcomes of Desert Shield and Desert Storm were clear cut victory for the United States and for its allies. The outcome was a testimony to the exquisite integration of diplomatic, strategic, operational, and tactical objectives of the White House, Department of Defense, and the United States Central Command under General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Jr. The combined forces that removed Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait achieved their victorious objectives and settled on a "reset" posture to take stock and scope the operational and tactical horizon that await them.²⁰

Less than ten years after the end of Desert Storm, OIF as a military operation was successful, but the reconstruction phase of Iraq proved difficult and costly. The reconstruction of Iraq, which had started with positive expectations, soured. Paul Bremer as the head of the Provisional Coalition Authority (PCA) was tasked to reconstruct and repair Iraqi institutions and infrastructure. At the beginning of his tenure, he was unable to stabilize Iraq. The CPA's efforts were sabotaged by the Iraqi cultural factors that were unleashed at the end of the war after they had been submerged by the preponderant authority and ironfisted cruelty of Saddam Hussein. Ethnic, religious, civil and political societies embarked on seeking their fragmented interests. The state of Iraq as a governing and administrative entity fell apart into decentralized factions. Bremer's "De-Baathification" project undercut his own expectations. Baathists needed to be incorporated into the promise of liberated political atmosphere. The idea that they were unwilling *subjects* of Saddam Hussein who like all Iraqis yearned for freedom was not considered by the reconstruction organizations established by Mr. Bremer. He sidestepped the Baathists who could have taken on the task of pacification under the CPA's supervision and guidance. Instead, the CPA relied on factional groups who were eager to cooperate for personal and group benefits instead of contributing to the rebuilding of the Iraqi State and rehabilitating the ruined country. OIF from the tactical and operational perspective was an undisputed success. From the strategic perspective, it was costly, ruinous, and its after-effects had serious consequences for the military.

The American armed forces who ensured the defeat, capture and execution of Saddam Hussein had to engage in the realm of civilian rehabilitation, infrastructure reconstruction, and mediation in the highly fragmented and bitterly hostile Iraqi environment. Whereas in the realm of operations they would be engaged in the task of pacification, in the CPA controlled environment, they had to function if not as subordinate functionaries of that authority, at least as compelled helpers to the American civilians under Mr. Bremer's authority, whose task included negotiation, mediation, and reconciliation among the various religious and ethnic forces. Negotiation and mediation as a tasks of civilian authorities are a social construct far removed from the task of pacification. It is also important to note that mediation, reconstruction and rehabilitation

as tasks of civilian authorities are undertaken by the dictates of the pen. Pacification as a task for the Army has elements of active enforcement and is undertaken by the dictates of the scepter. Under the CPA, a new, unexpected, and deceptively subtle mindset developed. Events that exploded in the cities and towns requiring American forces or contractors to intervene or mediate were judged for their effectiveness on the basis that cultural factors were used to determine their outcome. At times when the Army is not in active combat mode, its readiness to exercise force and dictate calm and quietude can lead to successful outcomes. The Army in such circumstances with such outcomes may be credited for effective cultural understanding. It can also be judged as failing in its cultural competence when casualties are heavy and the ground rules for measuring cultural competence are, by design and caprice, compromised due to the propaganda and ill will of adversaries and naysayers.

Culture and Language Program at the Maneuver and Support Center of Excellence (MS-CoE)

The above contextual analysis serves as an instructional legacy and the storehouse for cultural and language training. The legacy gives the Army a claim to the institutionalization of its instructional mandates as existing ever since the United States abandoned its isolationist policy and embarked on projecting global power after 1935. In this case, institutionalization is the ability of organizations to have acquired permanent legitimacy in dispensing their mandate. Ever since the Second World War, the Department of Defense had institutionalized cultural and language training and expertise as essential components of the combined armed forces of the United States. Taking this into account, the vast resources accumulated for many years yield rich material for learning. The CFLA can find the historical, global, and institutional contexts from where to draw instructional and training resources.

As a Cultural and Foreign Language Advisor, I started thinking about ways that I could maximize my effectiveness to have visible impact. First, I took the above context as guidelines for intellectual sources that I could incorporate into reading lists for Soldiers. This was very effective as the Soldiers' feedback showed. They enjoyed the reading sources' relevance to their duties and professional interests.

Second, I made myself aware of three challenges. The effective CFLFA can only be successful if he understands the center's organizational and functional components. He or she must have clear understanding of the patterns of work and work hard to gain visibility, in as much as possible, preferably, without disrupting the existing comfort of the departments' already loaded schedules and tasks. Having a flexible schedule, non-intrusive, but useful plan of implementation was a critical determining factor.

The CFLA's usefulness is dependent in his or her ability to demonstrate their worth to the center and to the Soldier's mission of acquiring cultural and linguistic skills. It is critical that he or she be ready to give correct, grounded, verifiable, and relevant answers to questions and requests for suggestions that will come their way. The strategy emphasizes for the CFLA to set a foundation for an effective outreach within the center. This means cultivating proper and productive relationship with the captains and majors who have direct role in the instructional administration. A high level of dedication, a great deal of time and energy in search of media and written resources that would expedite and maximize learning are indispensable. Emphasizing the importance of mastery of the essential skills of cultural and language awareness as integral parts of the military aptitude of the Soldier are at the heart of the strategy tasking the CFLA to accomplish.

Third, culture and language awareness are, by nature, about global as well as home-front values. The global areas of study as areas of operations are Africa, Asia, Europe, South and Latin America and the

multiple crisis-ridden Middle Eastern countries. The events of the Cold War were fought without declaration of war or resorting to skirmish of any type of violence. The elements of soft power that the United States displayed in its national culture and democratic values were instrumental in the unravelling of the USSR.

In relation to soft power, I emphasized that Hollywood culture is not American culture. Hollywood culture is commercial culture using freedom of expression for pecuniary returns. American culture is rooted in the concepts of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution to include the Bill of Rights and all the amendments. The reason for the United States remaining as the last man standing tall and secure was because of its predictable political outcomes that are based on regular elections, and smooth transfer of power. American political culture, ever since Madison defined the standards of its flexibility to allow pluralism to flourish, was embraced and nurtured maximum freedom rooted on the principles of republicanism.²¹ The democratic liberal political culture at all levels of society is regimented to follow constitutional and statutory rules. The governmental system as an element of national power is managed, guided, and controlled by the people who empower their legislative representatives as delegates and trustees to deliberate on their behalf. The moment the legislators betray the peoples' trust, the people reject the incumbents and replace them with new legislators. The civilian role of the United States Army at the Executive level as defined in Article II is to serve as a creative activist and a visionary administrative branch of government. The Commander in Chief of the United States Armed Forces is the Head of State and Head of Government. Jefferson during the Louisiana Purchase, Monroe in the declaration of the Monroe Doctrine, Lincoln's affirmative and authoritative role during the Civil War, in addition to FDR, Nixon, and Reagan, embody the Army's administrative capacity at the civilian level. The first president of the United States, George Washington, was the Commanding General of the Continental Army that grasped the banner of freedom and independence from the adversary. The president's power as a Commander in Chief is civilianized, but the essence of the presidential authority is demonstrated only when the Army renders its advisory role to which the president can endorse or reject. The Founders never were willing to encourage an authoritarian presidency or give any chance for rationalizing or justifying a zealous Army that sought to displace the civilian government that the Founders wanted.

The American political system stands in stark contrast to the authoritarian and totalitarian systems that exist in the 21st century in addition to today's Russia, China, Cuba, North Korea, Iran, and the theocratic states of oil rich countries such as Saudi Arabia. In totalitarian systems the state is hostage to the overpowering domination of the cult personality or the totalitarian party. The democratic alternative offers freedom and liberty, as President Reagan's speech to the British Parliament showed. Circumstances and professional rules may not permit for the Soldier to be a political activist. In cultural terms, just as the Soldier is instructed to exercise cultural sensitivities at their area of operation, it seems proper for the Soldiers not to hide their cultural values as reflections of the democratic culture and system for which they fight and die.

Conclusion

For the CFLA to be an effective implementer of the task assigned, it is imperative to provide guidance in ways that help sharpen the focus of the training. Identifying the historical, global and domestic factors that necessitated the launch of the strategy can assist the CFLA in having a firm foundation for intellectual focus and a broad perspective in aiming for effective implementations. The strategy specifies that the application of the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, and political science to those cultural topics as most relevant to each of the disciplines. Acquiring knowledge and training activities on topics covering these disciplines, and making the concepts adaptable to specific country or regions' historical, social, and

political developments are useful. Social organizations, such as youth organizations, gender, professional, clan, and religious organizations fit better when analyzed from the point of view of sociology. Sociology can clarify class distinctions, socio-economic status, and obviate the lines that distinctively separate categories of regional and national divides. Political structures define how political power is allocated among political and bureaucratic organizations. It defines the hierarchy of power and the division of labor with respect to policies. They are amenable to political analysis. Political functions identify official actors and their center of gravity in terms of their political influence. The policy outcomes are results of political functions. Who benefits from those policy outcomes, why, and who is deprived and why, are better identified by looking at structures and their attendant functions.

Definition of culture in its organic and native forms is better explained through the application of anthropological methods. The evolution of language, human relationships such as age transition, marriages, births, adulthood, old age and death mostly fall under the topic of anthropology. The Soldier's mission, purpose, and training being heavily influenced by global, historical, and institutional contexts, I argue that influences on culture are better suited when analyzed from the perspective of these contexts. This can be done by sharpening the focus by providing relevant reading sources on sociological, political, and anthropological topics and subjects. The lodestar in this endeavor is the American experience of the past, its successes and its challenges.

The soldier learns culture to fulfill his or her larger technical and tactical challenges in preparation for deployment. Culture in this sense is instrumental, equivalent to the sidearm – effective at a close and intimate range. I feel the training is more effective if it instructs the soldier how to meet the family, the village, the township and elaborate on the myriads of issues dealing with religion, ethnicity, tribal divisions and economic and political problems. These need to be factored and detailed to the specificities of military mission.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

Notes

1. US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), *Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1 December 2009): ii.
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3. Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009).
4. TRADOC, *Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy*, iii.
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6. Harry S. Truman Inaugural Address, 20 January 1949, accessed 12 February 2016, <http://www.inaugural.senate.gov/swearing-in/event/harry-s-truman-1949>.
7. United States Agency for Aid and Development, accessed 30 December 2016, <https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are-history>.
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9. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Avon Books, 2006).
10. The religious exceptions such as Islam do embrace Natural Rights, but differ from Locke's concept of Liberalism and democratic governance. See: Tsegai Isaac, *The Third World in Global Perspective: A Journey from Hope to Despair* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2015): chapter 3.
11. See, Representative Jim Marshall's exchange with his father, Major General Robert C. Marshall where the son informs the General that he is running for Congress and the misgivings that the General expressed forcing his son to explain that politics for the son who has already demonstrated valor in Vietnam is just as honorable as "charging a machine gun," See, Suzanne C. Nelsen and Don M. Snider, *American Civil Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in A New Era* (Baltimore., MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2009): ix,
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17. House of Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. *Report of the Joint Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack of September 11, 2001*, accessed 15 February 2016, https://fas.org/irp/congress/2002_rpt/911rept.pdf, 236.
18. *Report of the Joint Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack of September 11, 2001*, 236.
19. Levy, S. Levy, "Diversion Theory of War: A Critique," in *Handbook of War Studies*, Manus I. Midlarsky, ed. (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989): 257-259.
20. Mr. Bremer's eight-month tenure as the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) did not go well. The task was too big, the "strategic plan" flawed, and time too short for implantation, evaluation, reformulation of the strategic plan's details. Paul Martin, "Paul Bremer on Iraq, ten years on: 'We made major strategic mistakes. But I still think Iraqis are far better off'," accessed 15 February 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/paul-bremer-on-iraq-ten-years-on-we-made-major-strategic-mistakes-but-i-still-think-iraqis-are-far-8539767.html>.

Chapter 14

Cultural Considerations, Regional Expertise and Skill Building in the Operational Environment (OE)

Dr. Mahir J. Ibrahimov

In this chapter we will consider cultural challenges in the Operational Environment and negotiating in indigenous cultures, both of which add new dimensions to military's missions in Eurasia and elsewhere. Operating in a Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) environment requires a new more sophisticated set of skills that are very different than those required by traditional war fighting. This new dimension is essential for winning hearts and minds of the populace of regions and countries which are of strategic importance to the US and its allies. Before we consider the cultural considerations in negotiations, the factors which influence them in indigenous operating environment, we need to give some definitions of the cultural and related aspects.

First, what are negotiations?

Negotiation and mediation as competency involves having a fundamental understanding of when negotiation is needed and how to conduct a negotiation in diverse situations to resolve conflict. This competency also includes an understanding of how to facilitate negotiation among others (mediation).¹

Negotiations are a process in which two or more parties try to come to a mutually acceptable and beneficial common consensus through a process of interaction and communication utilizing different techniques and methods.

What are the main elements of International Negotiation?

- 1) The players and the situation
- 2) Styles of decision making
- 3) National characters
- 4) Cross cultural aspect
- 5) Interpreters and translators.

In a cross-cultural setting, we need to consider cultural factors impacting the negotiation process, including different historical, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, possible emotional perceptions, political systems, and their socio-cultural origins.

In addition to the definition above, the Army's Culture and foreign language Strategy defines *Culture* as "the set of distinctive features of a society or group, including but not limited to values, beliefs, and norms, that ties together members of that society or group and that drive action and behavior."²

Other relevant definitions include: *Cultural Knowledge* – a familiarization with cultural characteristics, history, values, belief systems, and behaviors of another ethnic or religious group; *Cultural Awareness* – sensitivity and understanding of another ethnic or religious group, including an appreciation for their attitudes, values and beliefs; *Cultural Sensitivity* – knowledge and appreciation of the cultural differences as well as similarities; *Culturally Appropriate* – adaptability to cultural differences and similarities, and effectiveness in translating it into action; *Cross-Cultural Competence (3C)* – a set of knowledge, skills, and attributes that enables Soldiers to adapt effectively in any environment. It can develop over time through

experience, but can be accelerated by principled learning methods. 3C enables negotiation and persuasion; mediation and conflict resolution; leadership and influence; cultural evaluation, synthesis, and predictive analysis during staff planning; and other abilities that pertain to a specific geographic area.

Another major component of the culture development program is *Regional Competence*. This concept is defined as a set of knowledge, skills, and attributes related to a particular country, region, organization, or social group, which enables effective adaptation to that specific culture. Additional characteristics include awareness of the historical, political, cultural (including linguistic and religious), sociological (including demographic), economic, and geographic dimensions of a foreign country, global region, or other specific culture.³

Foreign language and culture proficiency help to avoid possible misinterpretations, especially when it comes to proverbs, idioms, and other cultural nuances. Misinterpretations might negatively affect the outcome of the negotiations and the entire military and other missions. Lessons learned have shown that the very lack of cultural knowledge, education, and exposure usually leads to misinterpretations and misunderstandings.

My experiences throughout the years in different cultural settings point to that pattern. For example, during a negotiation a Middle Eastern delegation member used the following Arabic proverb, “*min kasratil mallahin gariqat as safina.*” During the discussion, the interpreter literally translated the meaning as, “there were too many sailors on the boat and it sank,” when in reality it should have been translated as “too many cooks in the kitchen.” Because the interpreter did not have a clear sense of the Western cultural realities, he could not deliver the nuances of one culture into another.

Another example when literal translations can cause confusion comes from past negotiations between Western oil companies in the former Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan. An Azeri member of the delegation used the popular Turkic proverb or idiom, “*manim gozum sandan su ichmir,*” which actually means, “I am suspicious of you or I do not trust you.” The interpreter on the scene translated the proverb literally to mean, “My eye does not drink water from you.” It needless to say how much confusion that interpretation caused.

In another incident which took place in Moscow in the 1980s, a Russian negotiator used a very popular Russian traditional saying, “*vipyem na pososhok*” while addressing the departing Western delegation. This saying is usually used by Russians to wish each other “safe travel.” Once said, everyone would normally sit for a moment, raise their shots of vodka, drink, and wish everyone a safe trip. However, this phrase is very difficult to translate word for word. The interpreter struggled and could not give an English equivalent. Because the meaning was not clear, the Western delegation was not entirely sure of what was actually said.

In all three cases, the culturally and linguistically incorrect interpretations caused major confusion and even laughter and were not obviously helpful for the outcome of the negotiations. The experiences show that misinterpretations, either deliberate or accidental due to ignorance of cultural, linguistic, political, ethnic or tribal affiliations, can cause miscommunication.

Phase I: Pre-Negotiation. *Cross-cultural negotiation* training is an especially important element of the *pre-negotiation phase*. Negotiators must understand cultural etiquettes as well as cross cultural differences in negotiation styles and techniques when dealing with a partner in an indigenous culture. In a cross-cultural setting all leaders need to consider cultural factors impacting the negotiation process, which can include different historical, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, possible emotional perceptions, political systems, and their socio-cultural origins.

During the actual *Negotiation* phase, cross-cultural training is no less important to accomplish the desired outcome of the mission.⁴

Phase II: Negotiation. During this phase, your cross-cultural training is no less important. Some cultures adopt direct, simple methods of communication, while others prefer indirect, more complex methods. Middle Eastern cultures fall into the latter category. *When communicating with Arabs, pay attention to body language, eye movement and hand gestures.* Any negotiation should begin with greetings.

In the Middle East, negotiators usually prefer longer, less formal sessions, insist on addressing counterparts by their titles, and are given to expressing philosophical statements that are often more important to the negotiation process than the technical issues of the problem. In an indigenous culture it is extremely important to be culturally sensitive and to show your respect and understanding of the culture of the negotiating partner.

When communicating with Arabs, the negotiator should pay attention to body language, eye movements, and hand gestures. The knowledge of the following basics can be helpful:

- Shake hands with the right hand and use the left hand to grasp the other person's elbow as a sign of respect.
- In close, friendly relationship, a hug and a kiss placed on both cheeks upon greeting are a normal occurrence – if the Arab initiates it.
- Placing a hand on the heart with a slight bow is a sign of respect while greeting a person.
- If a Middle Easterner touches you it is a positive sign, it means that he likes you (not a sign of homosexuality).
- Rise to show respect when a respected or elderly person enters the room.
- You will be on the safer side if you always rise while greeting people.
- Usage of common Arab greetings, however few, such as “*As Salam Aleykum*,” (“Peace be with you”) accompanied with or instead of “hello” are very much appreciated. See Figure 14.1 on the following page.

Each culture also has contrasting views of negotiating. Gaining an appreciation for the contrasting views is vital. Goals reflect the purpose or intent of the parties in a negotiation. In business, American negotiators typically regard the signing of a contract between the differing parties as their primary goal. They consider the contract a binding agreement that outlines the roles, rights, and obligations of each party. Americans prefer detailed contracts that anticipate all possible circumstances. These agreements or contracts are usually binding and not subject to further negotiation or debate. This is known as the “Western Tradition of Legalism.”

However, Middle Eastern negotiators tend to begin negotiations by establishing general principles that become the framework on which to build an agreement. They usually seek sustainable relationships rather than contracts and prefer to leave things vague. This is known as the “Middle Eastern Relationship of Trust.” Middle Easterners prefer an agreement in the form of general principles rather than detailed rules. They regard an agreement as being relatively flexible and symbolic of the relationship established, rather than a binding legal document.

Gesture	Meaning
Palm of the right hand on the chest, bowing the head a little and closing one's eyes.	Thank You.
A quick snap of the head upwards with an accompanying click of the tongue.	No.
Placing the right hand or its forefinger on the tip of the nose.	It's in my head to accomplish.
Grasping the chin with the thumb side of the right fist is a sign of wisdom.	I am thinking.
Holding fingers in a pear shaped configuration with the tips pointing up moving the hand up and down.	Wait a little bit.
Right hand out, palm down, with fingers brought toward oneself in a clawing motion.	Calling someone to come.

Figure 14.1 Appropriate Gestures and Body Language. Graphic created by the author.

Other “Dos” and “Don’ts” cultural basics during the negotiation process are extremely helpful as well.

DO	DO NOT
Speak slowly using short sentences; speak in the first person.	Rush right to the point of the business.
Start conversation with small general talk and pleasantries, such as “How are you?” and then follow the Arab’s conversational lead.	Move away from the Arab negotiator if he gets too close to you during the negotiations.
Talk to an Arab as an equal partner.	Try to convert a Muslim to your faith.
Place your feet flat on the floor (if you are sitting in a chair) or fold them under you (if you are sitting on the floor.)	Talk about religion or politics.
Maintain eye contact.	
Address the most elderly and senior in the room.	
Take Notes.	

Figure 14.2 Basic Dos and Don’ts During the Negotiation Process. Graphic created by the author.

A Western negotiating team typically organizes itself using a deductive process. Essentially, the group will organize in culturally specific ways that reflect and affect how the group makes decisions. A negotiating team usually will have a designated leader who appears to have complete authority to decide all matters. See Figure 3.

An Arab negotiating team typically uses the inductive process. In the Middle East, a hidden authority rests with the group, and decision making often occurs through consensus. Thus, negotiating teams may be relatively large due to the greater number of personnel thought to be necessary to the decision making process.

In Arab and Middle Eastern cultures, “saving face” is strategically important. Face has to do with a person’s reputation and the respect in which others hold him. In negotiation, although compromises are reached, they must be done in a manner that allows the Arab partner to maintain dignity or prestige and not appear weak. To an American, losing face may be embarrassing, but to an Arab, it is devastating. Losing face is the ultimate disgrace, and an Arab will go to almost any length to avoid it. US leaders must keep the concept of “face” in mind when conducting negotiations in the Middle East. Failure to do so could freeze or kill a negotiation. Face and the allied concepts of honor and shame are important in the Middle East.

There are other aspects of culture to consider with respect to negotiations. Some cultures are more risk averse than others. In general, Middle Easterners seek to avoid uncertainty. This proclivity affects their willingness to take risks in a negotiation. Different cultures also have different views about the appropriateness of displaying emotions. Arab negotiators, in a high-context culture, are more likely to display emotions than Americans. However, in Afghanistan, specifically in the Pashto culture, displays of emotion such as impatience, anger, etc. are considered signs of weakness. Finally, in addition to attaching high importance to creating bonds of friendship and trust between negotiators, Arabs believe it is imperative that negotiating partners respect each other’s honor and dignity.

Phase III: Post-negotiation. End negotiations with a strong stance. Once objectives have been achieved, summarize what has been agreed to and confirm the key points. Do not allow the negotiating partners to do so, this places them in power. Use common courtesy and tact in an effort to not offend the partners. Try not to rush or push; it might postpone or kill the agreement. It’s important to maintain control of the negotiation throughout the entire process, including the closing.

Negotiating is a way of life in Arab cultures. Apply these cultural and negotiation strategies and any mission will reap the benefits.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

Notes

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2. Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1 December 2009), 3.
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4. Mahir Ibrahimov, "Operational Culture in the US Army: The Fires Center of Excellence Culture and Foreign Language Strategy Sets the Standard for the Rest of TRADOC," *Army Fires Bulletin*, January-February 2011. Headquarters, Department of the Army, "Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy," 1 December 2009; Mahir Ibrahimov, "Cross-Cultural Negotiations/Skill Building in an Operational Environment," *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin (MIPB)*, April/June 2011.

Chapter 15

Orthodoxy, Ukraine and the Symphonia between the Church and Society

CH (MAJ) Seth H. George

Introduction

Oftentimes the study of religion is limited to the study of transcendent matters, yet the broader study of religion can shed light on how people view their identity and what they actually do. In light of this, one might say the EuroMaidan Protests and the historic ringing of the St. Michael church bell on November 2013 was an exclamation point on how many Ukrainians came to view themselves, and in particular how the churches came to view themselves collectively.¹ Therefore, the purpose here is to describe how the trend for Ukrainian churches to identify with society rather than with the government has developed into a particular concept that is not only distinctly Ukrainian, but are also more viable than the Russian Orthodox ideas of church and state which is currently being utilized by President Putin's conception of the "Russky Mir" or Russian World.

Ukraine contains one of the most diverse religious landscapes within Eastern Europe. It comprises the Russian Orthodox Church, the Greek Catholic Church and Protestant Baptist, Pentecostal, and Lutheran Churches, and several other Christian denominations. Jewish and Islamic communities are historic and significant communities as well. After the Ukrainian independence of 1991, questions among the larger churches could be summarized as, "What will religious freedom look like for our church?" Naturally, the expectations were varied and complicated, but for the sake of simplicity the scope here will be limited to the main branches of Christianity. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarch (UOC-MP) represents 26.1 percent of the population.² Their spiritual center is Moscow and they assumed they would be an established and state sanctioned church. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kiev Patriarch (UOC-KP) represents 50-4 percent of the population and had hopes of being an establishment church based on the independence of Ukraine. It is a Kiev-centric church, with its own Patriarch, rather than a Moscow-centric church. The UOC-KP also has a standing request to be granted autocephalous (autonomous) status from the Moscow Patriarch and to be canonically recognized as such by the international community of Eastern Orthodox churches. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) comprises 7.2 percent of the population. It is independent and has never had any expectation of being an establishment church. The idea of an autocephalous church has been around since the 1920s, but was unable to gain traction until Ukraine became independent. The current manifestation of this movement is in some ways indicative of their Patriarch, Filaret Denisenko and his independent character. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UCGC) or Uniate Church makes up eight percent of the population and suffered greatly under communism. One of their expectations since independence, other than freedom from persecution, was to receive their church properties back which had been taken and re-appropriated for Russian Orthodox Churches or other venues. Protestants, and particularly Pentecostals, have basically wanted freedom from government interference in order to evangelize and grow.

The 1994 Constitution in article 35 clearly stated what the relationship between the state and the churches would be: The Church and religious organizations in Ukraine are separated from the State, and the school – from the Church. No religion shall be recognized by the State as mandatory.³

This political reality primarily affected the expectations of the UOC-MP and UOC-KP. Because there would be no official status, the "competition" between the two main branches of Orthodoxy for

establishment status was a moot point and as a result they have both needed to re-frame their identity. The identity of the UAOC was never contingent on official status to begin with, and focused on their own organization and growth. But because of the EuroMaidan Protests, the UAOC now enjoys a certain relevancy and could be viewed as pathfinders to religious identity among the Orthodox within Ukraine because of their independence and distance from the traditional levers of political power.

The Uniate Church has a mixed cultural composition. Historically, the priests were the intellectual representatives of the people and in this sense were keepers of the culture as well as keepers of the faith. Over the last several centuries the governing authorities of the state were typically comprised of foreign leadership.⁴ Because of the changing politics of competing powers, Ukraine was commonly known as “The Ukraine,” which is literally translated “The Frontier” or “The Boundary.” While under the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Union of Brest was signed in 1595 by Orthodox bishops and the Metropolitan of Kiev, who pledged allegiance to the Vatican but retained Eastern Orthodox rites and practices. Those who disagreed with this union or “Uniate” arrangement formally aligned themselves under the Moscow Patriarch, who viewed the Uniate church as a tool of Rome to convert Orthodox believers to Catholicism. Once the Austro-Hungarian Empire replaced the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Uniate church became known as the Greek Catholic Church and was given status as Roman Catholic. In recent centuries, Ukraine has been under Russian and Soviet rule and subject to the suspicions of the Russian Orthodox Church for being agents of the Vatican to “convert” the Orthodox and for collaborating with the Germans during World War II. As a result of this history, the culture and expectations of the priests have been tied to the churches and to the people and not to the changing governing authorities, not the least of which was the oppressive Soviet regime.⁵ This tradition of being “of” and “for” the people was on full display during the EuroMaidan Protests. When the Minister of Culture ordered the Greek Catholic priests to stop protesting, Monsignor Shevchuk refused and published a letter stating that it was their constitutional right to protest. He also presented his case before the media, displayed the letter from the Minister of Culture and publicly stated that “The shepherds should have the scent of the flock, and because the people were in the streets, so were we.”⁶

It is important to note that while protests drew huge numbers of people from central and western Ukraine, and to a lesser extent eastern Ukraine, it was initially a gathering to voice support for closer economic ties to the European Union. Once President Victor Yanukovich bowed to the political pressure of President Putin, the gatherings took on the traditional nature of protests and a cause which pulled together various church leaders from the Greek Catholic and protestant pastors. The Ukrainian Orthodox ministers were slower to appear, but once the violence occurred they were among the people as well, showing solidarity with the Greek Catholic priests and other pastors. As a collective group of ministers, they stepped in between the protestors and the police, erected tent chapels for services, prayers, blessings, ministry to the injured, and funerary services for those killed. Jewish and Muslim leaders also provided support, showing a unified front that extended beyond Christianity to the broader religious community. Maidan was not used as an opportunity by the Greek Catholic Church or the Protestants to compete with the Orthodox churches for either government or popular support. And certainly, support for the protests was not uniform. There were UOC-MP priests and parishioners who disagreed with the protests and some government officials who maintained their support for the government despite their church affiliations. For example, an Assemblies of God minister sided with the government even though thousands of Protestants protested. Nevertheless, as a rule, the trend from the major religious groups was a commitment to identify with society rather to identify with the state. Maidan and the support for the new government after Victor Yanukovich fled revealed an understanding among church leaders, and particularly among Orthodox church leaders, that a societal church

rather than a state church was the new normal and that the old assumptions or hopes for an establishment status was no longer a pressing concern.

This new realization or trend may have simply been that: a trend or an ecumenical movement that emerged for a specific time for a specific need. However, the annexation of Crimea and violence in the Donbass region not only confirmed the value of a societal church, but has encouraged and even accelerated the thought process of what Maidan meant as the ideas of Putin's Russian World became evident. After the annexation of Crimea, the Russian Orthodox Church was established as the State Church and all other faith groups were required to register.⁷ The conflict in the Donbass, at times, has taken on a religious dimension from the perspective of some priests who viewed the conflict in apocalyptic terms by attempting to portray Greek Catholic ambitions as linked to the Anti-Christ. Reports of violence against non-Russian Orthodox priests and nuns has been reported.⁸ As a result of these events, Orthodox members of the UOC-MP are leaving the church and joining the UOC-KP or UAOC. In some cases, entire congregations are leaving even if the priest is still loyal to UOC-MP.⁹ In order to stem the tide, one metropolitan of the UOC-MP has stated that congregations are not required to include prayers for Patriarch Kirill in their liturgies.¹⁰

The reality of a growing and independent UOC-KP and a UAOC, and the dissatisfaction of UOC-MP members, has the potential to challenge the traditional status of the Moscow Patriarchy as the spiritual leader in the region, if not in the wider international Orthodox community. In terms of sheer numbers, nearly one third of all Russian Orthodox members live in Ukraine; the reality that many are leaving the UOC-MP in order to join congregations that are seeking an autonomous status such as the UAOC or seeking international Orthodox recognition for the Kiev Patriarchy could have long-term implications for the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchy. Patriarch Kirill is faced with the challenge of how to slow or even reverse this trend, but the challenge is complicated in three ways: first, by Putin's aggression in Ukraine; second, the Moscow Patriarchy's relationship with the Russian government; and third, the development of an ecumenical concept loosely referred to as the "Church of Kiev" and rise of a conversation among Ukrainian Orthodox churchmen referred to as the symphony of church and society. These three issues will be described below.

Putin's Aggression in Ukraine

The annexation of Crimea and the separatist movement in eastern Ukraine has done little to engender fond feelings among the Ukrainian Orthodox Church members for Putin, let alone for Patriarch Kirill, who has been presenting his own version of the Russian World (that I will refer to here as the Russian Orthodox World). Kirill's view is based upon a spiritual and historical perspective that Russia's values have developed with its Orthodox heritage. This is traced through key events such as the conversion of Prince Vladimir in 988 and the "Baptism of Rus" in Kiev, the fall of Constantinople (the second Rome) and the rise of its successor Moscow as the "Third Rome." Although Moscow's exclusive rights to the Orthodox heritage over Kiev is dubious, the narrative revolves around a historical point of Christian identity that has been retold in church lore for years. Patriarch Kirill has tapped into this particular view of history to shore up support for the idea that spiritual shepherding by the Moscow Patriarchy is necessary, since Europe has turned from traditional Orthodox and Christian values.¹¹ But Putin's view of the Russian World not only incorporates Orthodoxy as an essential element, but extends beyond spiritual oversight to providing security for Russians. He views this as a holy duty and has therefore sought to leverage the sympathies of ethnic and linguistic ties of Russians abroad.¹² The expansion of NATO and the movement of former Soviet states towards NATO has led Putin to view growth of the Russian World as a necessity and a guard against further western encroachment.¹³ The values of the Russian Orthodox Church and its historical roots in the

region provide a natural opportunity to leverage support for the Russian World. However, the annexation of Crimea and the presumption that Russian military support given to the separatist movement in the Donbass has created angst and hostility among many, and because of this, Patriarch Kirill, and more importantly the institution of the Moscow Patriarchy, may lose significant standing. Rather than the church being viewed as a source of cultural and religious stability in the face of an agnostic and secular West, Kirill is being suspiciously viewed as part of the problem because of his relationship with President Putin in various meetings, conversations and worship services.

The Moscow Patriarchy's Relationship with Putin and the Russian Government

For the sake of argument, it is important to set aside the speculation that Putin is merely using religion as a new ideology to replace communism, and to consider for a moment the possibility that Putin is entering the church as a Russian Orthodox communicant by conviction, and that Kirill has a responsibility to be a priest to Putin, just as any priest would be to any communicant member. However, since Kirill is the Patriarch and Putin is the President, the impact of this relationship has the potential to have far-reaching consequences and create optics that are subject to interpretation. Whatever Kirill's personal choices are in shaping this relationship, his public persona is bound to Putin and the Russian state. This relationship has been mutually beneficial for the church and the state as of late, but the recent political unrest and violent turn of events makes one wonder if Kirill is realizing that this relationship is jeopardizing what is left of unity among Russian Orthodox Church members in Ukraine, and whether he is jeopardizing the traditional and scriptural relationship between the Orthodox Church and state.¹⁴

Christian theology and thought maintains that churches are to be distinct from governing authorities. The Orthodox Church is no different in this regard, and yet it is bound to the state by its role of being a “confessor” to those who govern in the sense of calling on authorities to enjoin good and forbid evil.¹⁵ Maintaining the balance of its distinctiveness and its confessional role came to be known in Russia as the *symphonia*. It is both a technical term used by churchmen and scholars, as well as a metaphor used to describe the ideal balance between the two institutions. As an ideal, the church recognized that the balance can never be fully achieved due to the fallen and sinful state of the world, and a brief history of applying the concept reveals that the pursuit of the ideal has always been a struggle. Since the church is also subject to the fallen condition of the world, it has sometimes given into ambition and attempted to dominate its temporal authorities. Therefore, Peter the Great created the Holy Synod which placed the church under his authority.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the *symphonia* was still held as an ideal even during the early days of Bolshevik revolution and persecution, if only to express how dangerous the state could be without any restraint. The German invasion during World War II forced Stalin to summon Russian Orthodox priests, who then called upon the people to fulfill the sacred duty of defending Russia. This was done through radio addresses and by sending priests into the ranks of Russian soldiers to bless them. Thus, for pragmatic reasons a sort of Soviet Symphonia was permitted between the communist party and the Russian Orthodox Church. The dissolution of the USSR and the renewed freedom of worship in Russia opened up new opportunities for the church to regain its public position as the establishment church. However, the hardships suffered under communism and the laissez-faire approach to freedom in the 1990s which saw an explosion of all sorts of vices, western ideas of capitalism and even Protestant church missions created a sense of political and social instability. The re-emergence of the Russian Orthodox Church as a source of Russian resiliency and moral stability have led many to feel that being Orthodox was not only necessary, but very much a part of being Russian. Putin's participation in worship services has contributed to this perception, giving the church a new-found

sense of confidence which it has openly embraced as the most recent version of the *symphonia*. Patriarch Kirill appears to embrace this relationship, but instead of pursuing the more theologically principled role of being a confessor to the state – which offers rebuke along with praise – Kirill and the Orthodox leadership have used their influence not only to limit the growth of Protestant Churches through bureaucratic means, but to request the right to review legislation coming out of the Duma. By doing so the church, intentionally or not, is accepting the state’s position that the role of the church is to provide spiritual security against the encroaching culture of the west, be it religious or secular in nature.¹⁷

Thus, from the perspective of Ukrainian citizens and Orthodox Church members, Kirill and the Russian Orthodox leadership appear to be politically tied to Putin. The establishment of the Russian Orthodox Church as the official church in Crimea is an overt implementation of Putin’s Russian World, as is the Russian claim that the violence in eastern Ukraine is strictly a separatist movement that happens to be culturally Russian. To complicate matters further, Kirill chose to declare with Pope Francis that the churches in Ukraine should not contribute to the violence in Ukraine, but remain neutral; which is nearly impossible, if neutrality means giving in to the separatists.¹⁸ Although the benefits and opportunities for the institution of the Russian Patriarchy in relationship to the Russian President have been substantial over the last twenty years, these opportunities may ultimately prove to be Patriarch Kirill’s “Golden Handcuffs,” as the Orthodox Churches in Ukraine realize that the spiritual benefits enjoyed in Moscow do not result in benefits to be enjoyed in Donetsk.

The Church of Kiev

Perhaps the greatest obstacle facing Patriarch Kirill is the trend suggesting that the Russian Orthodox ideal of a *symphonia* of church and state is dated and not a model Ukrainian Orthodox Christians are interested in pursuing. The conversation among some churchmen revolves around the new idea of the *symphonia* between church and society, and by the larger community of Christian and religious leaders it is the idea of an ecumenical Church of Kiev.¹⁹ These ideas and concepts are indications that the demonstration of church unity displayed during Maidan was more than a protest against a specific set of circumstances, but have crystalized into a vision of cooperation. When one considers that the autocephalous movement among the Orthodox is not dependent upon the state sanction of Ukraine, it is even less inclined to believe that a formal connection with Moscow has any real benefits, especially since the eastern part of Ukraine is in a state of war and the Patriarch has taken a position of neutrality. This factor, combined with statements from some Orthodox churchmen that Greek Orthodox priests have historically maintained a *symphonia* with local authorities, provides social support for the idea of moving in a different direction from Moscow.²⁰ There are also indications that the Ukrainian Orthodox and Greek Catholics are developing their own spiritual and historical narrative that could directly compete with that of the Russian Orthodox Church. It has been argued that church not only originated in Kiev and that it was the first church to suffer the split between Rome and Constantinople in 1054, but that the current concept of the Church of Kiev is the cure.²¹ Time will tell if this develops further, but in the meantime the ecumenical nature of Protestants, such as the Lutherans and to a certain extent younger middle class and socially and politically mobile Pentecostals and Baptists, also tends to give the vision of a *symphonia* between church and society additional plausibility.

Attempts to understand and clarify movements within the religious and cultural spaces are not without complications, but when one steps back and considers the potential of this new construction of the *symphonia*, it has an inherent attractiveness for three reasons. First, such an arrangement maintains the theological necessity for churches to be distinct from the state and keeps the church in its position as “confessors” to the

government. The visible and central role of priests and pastors serving as ministers of peace in the midst of violence at Maidan was a tangible demonstration of this position. Second, the majority of Ukrainians do not attend church regularly, so keeping religion away from the levers of power, and especially Russian political influence, is agreeable to the population. Furthermore, the mitigation of Moscow's soft power through the Russian Orthodox Church influence in favor of Kiev's influence makes this even more socially palatable. And finally, the forced registration of minority faith groups in Crimea and the emergence of militia-like groups in the Donbass region not only makes this new ideal of a symphony between church and society a political imperative, it makes the old symphony of church and state decidedly unattractive.

Conclusion

These three factors are all working against both the traditional place of the Moscow Patriarchy and its future influence. This leads some to speculate that the formal splitting of the Russian Orthodox Church, if not part of the disintegration of the Russian Orthodox World, may soon take place. The ecumenical declarations that religious leaders across the Ukraine are signing is at odds with Kirill's wishes, not to mention the reality that church members are voting with their feet and joining other bodies of fellowship besides the UOC-MP.²² What is lacking is international confirmation of the Ukrainian autocephalous movement among the Orthodox community, and yet that may soon happen. In June of 2016, the Pan-Orthodox Council met after fifty years of preparation.²³ It was one of the first major gatherings of the international community of Orthodox churches in over a thousand years, and though its purpose was not to establish creeds, it was meeting to confirm Orthodox consensus over certain pastoral matters. The agenda was established forty years ago, and because of the relatively recent and sensitive question of the UOC-KP, Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople tabled the request because of the procedural and political difficulties in granting the UOC-KP autocephalous status without the support of Patriarch Kirill.²⁴ Yet even with this concession, the Russian Orthodox Church pulled out of the conference at the last minute on the pretense that last minute procedural changes would jeopardize true Orthodox consensus.²⁵ This action raised the question of ethno-phyletism, i.e., has the Russian Orthodox Church slipped taken matters of the nation to be more important than that of Christianity?²⁶

Nevertheless, the ideas and informal conversations concerning Ukraine's autocephalous status took place among the hallways at the Pan Orthodox Council. These conversations will continue to grow as the Orthodox community considers what might be the best arrangement for the health and wellbeing of the church. Would it be better to leave the prestige of the Moscow Patriarchy in place due to its size? Would the health of the church be better served by granting the UOC-KP the same type of autocephalous status that the Russian Orthodox Church in America has? Considering the fact that at least some Ukrainian Orthodox Priests are coming from ex-patriots or converts who have grown up in the US and Canada and therefore have virtually no experiential ties to Russia, it seems as if the idea may gain wider international support. Furthermore, absence of Russian Orthodox bishops at the council had the effect of leaving the status of Patriarch Bartholomew as first among peers intact, giving the UOC-KP at key ally for their cause. If Patriarch Bartholomew pushes the UOC-KP request forward in the future, it will be a blow to Kirill and to his perspective on the Russian Orthodox World.

However the church conversations and politics develop, Patriarch Kirill is faced with the reality that ideas of the *symphonia* of church and society and the Church of Kiev are a powerful draw among his own communicants. Moscow and its pilgrimage sites may always hold a special place in the hearts of the Orthodox faithful, but as the world grows smaller by means of travel, social media, and migration, the

relationships any given Orthodox congregation may have will increase, which may mean two things in the end for Moscow. First, it may ultimately be that the Moscow Patriarchy as an institution must reframe its identity among the international community of Orthodox believers and Christians as a whole. Secondly, it may also need to reframe its understanding of the *symphonia* between church in state in a more classically Orthodox role as a confessor to the Russian state rather than in this contemporary configuration as a partner with the Russian State. This is of course is easier said than done, because such a position does not always gain favor from the state. After all, to conclude with a Biblical analogy, Ahab accepted the fact that Elijah was around his court, but he rarely liked what Elijah actually said.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

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Chapter 16

The Army's Approach to Culture and Language Applications

Dr. Mahir J. Ibrahimov

Introduction

The Strategic Landpower White Paper was published by a combined Army, Marine Corps, and SOCOM Strategic Landpower Task Force (SLTF) that stood up in late 2012. The SLTF's objective was to integrate the psychological or "human domain" aspects of conflict into military thinking and planning. The White Paper states that to accomplish all of the ten primary missions of the US Armed Forces as articulated in the 2012 Defense Planning Guidance, leaders must influence people, "be they government and military leaders or groups within a population, as their core strategic focus." Operations in the human domain provide a unique capability to preclude and deter conflict through shaping operations that leverage partners and populations to enhance local and regional stability."¹

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 3126.01A, *Language and Regional Expertise Capability Identification and Planning*, provides the latest guidance for the identification and evaluation of proficiency for foreign language, regional expertise and cultural competencies. The Instruction identifies 12 regional expertise and cultural competencies and clusters them into 3 proficiency levels: core, leader/influence, and regional/ technical. The Guidance outlines the proficiency standards for four elements within the Army as shown in Figure 16.1. below:

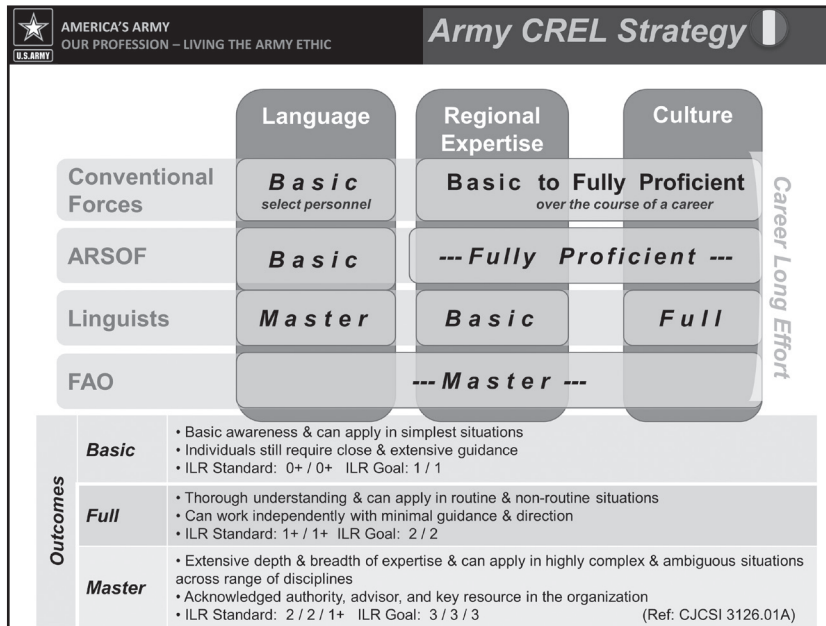


Figure 16.1 LREC Standards Across the Total Army. Graphic created by the author. ²

The October 2015 Army Culture, Regional Expertise and Language (CREL) draft Strategy depicts the means to assess CREL competencies in individuals and capabilities in units to justify resourcing and guide requirements for training, education, and experience in Figure 16.2 below.

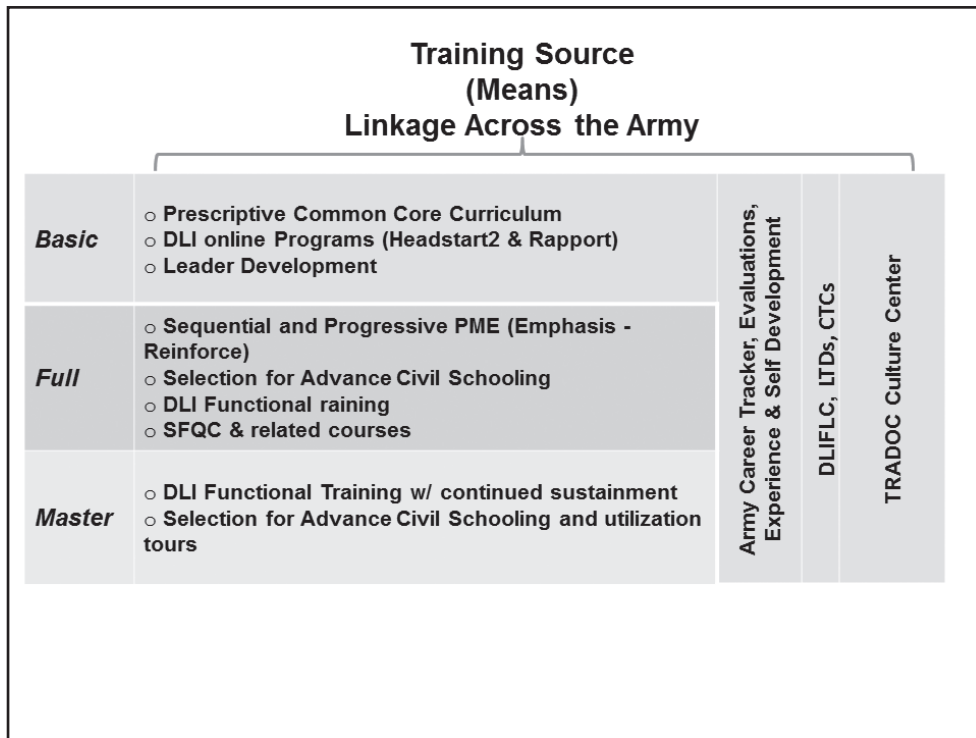


Figure 16.2 Training Source (Means) Linkage Across the Army. Graphic created by the author from the 2016 draft CREL Strategy.

Soldiers and leaders must possess a sufficient level of cross-cultural and regional competence to effectively accomplish duties at their assigned level, and to have the cognitive, interpersonal, and cultural skills necessary to make sound judgments in these complex environments.

The Centers of Excellence (CoEs)/Schools will leverage the capabilities at their disposal to establish the initial foundational training and education for leaders to be able to competently and confidently lead Soldiers. This includes the introduction and development of a basic awareness in languages, regional expertise, and cross-cultural competence.

Training and Education Approach

TRADOC Pamphlet 525-8-2 affirms the “requirement for Soldiers to possess a broad foundation of learning to better prepare them to meet future challenges across the spectrum of conflict.”³

Two of these challenges are culture and language.

In order to build and sustain an Army with the right blend of culture and foreign language capabilities to facilitate unified land operations, we must leverage existing professional military education (PME) programs, organizational and functional training, and continuous lifelong learning capabilities through a

combination of education, training and experiential opportunities to attain a level of understanding and expertise, at Full Proficiency Level and Master's Proficiency Level expertise.

As the Army determines how to best continue implementing the Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy (ACFLS) and future CREL Strategy, we can continue leveraging the current Leader Development Strategy that serves as a base for our existing instruction within our CoEs and in the growth of our leaders.⁴ Cross-cultural training and education should build on the foundation of an individual's existing leader attributes which in turn reinforces the core leader competencies of leading others, developing oneself, and achieving results.

For the CoEs and Army University Culture, Regional Expertise and Language Management Office (CRELMO), the development of cultural and regional awareness and/or understanding at the Basic to Full Proficiency level will be the principal objective. Introduction to a foreign language (basic phrases and elemental proficiency) is a supporting effort. In order to achieve a higher level of cultural understanding, expertise, or language proficiency, individuals will need to leverage other PME, civilian education, and self-development programs.

Taking a descriptive path for implementation, TRADOC and the Combined Arms Center (CAC) Schools and Centers will incorporate the following learning outcomes in their education and training programs with terminal and enabling objectives and assessments that can clearly be tracked back to these outcomes:

Outcome One (Character).

Demonstrate interaction and cross-cultural communication skills in order to effectively engage and understand people within their environments. Demonstrate a level of cultural awareness that includes a positive openness to other people, an understanding of prevailing values, beliefs, behaviors and customs, and a desire to learn more about cultures and languages. This includes an introduction to a language that supports current military operations with the intent to promote additional study through self-development at the institution, at home-station or at an academic university.

Outcome Two (Presence).

Demonstrate communication, influence and negotiation skills essential for leaders to effectively operate in a JIM environment. Leverage the knowledge gained by challenging students to employ skills to deal with ambiguous and complex situations, to regulate one's own behavior, and to use interpersonal abilities to deal with people from one's own or other cultures. This includes an understanding and ability to engage other joint and allied military personnel, and host country indigenous leaders with a moderate level of confidence.

Outcome Three (Intellect).

Demonstrate a familiarization in a geographic region of current operational significance. Leverage critical thinking and cognitive skills through organizing information that supports cultural self-awareness. Depending on level of leader development PME, expand cross-cultural competence skills by gaining an awareness or understanding of a geographic area that highlights the implications of a region's economic, religious, legal, governmental, political and infrastructural features, and of sensitivities regarding gender, race, ethnicity, local observances and local perception of the US and its allies. Apply relevant planning considerations, terms, factors, concepts and geographic information to mission planning and in the conduct of operations. This includes leveraging other TRADOC and DOD schools, partnerships with universities and

academia, gaming technology, and opportunities that stress students' ability to concisely and persuasively speak and write, engage in discussions, and employ cognitive reasoning and thinking skills.

CoEs/Schools Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy (ACFLS) and future Army CREL Strategy (ACRELS) Implementation

CAC was assigned the lead in implementing the ACFLS in 2011 within all TRADOC organizations. As part of this implementation, CRELMO is working to integrate ACFLS/ACRELS learning objectives into existing programs of instruction (POIs) using internal resources/assets at the CoEs and other Army educational institutions using the basic collaborative schema as depicted in Figure 16.3 below:

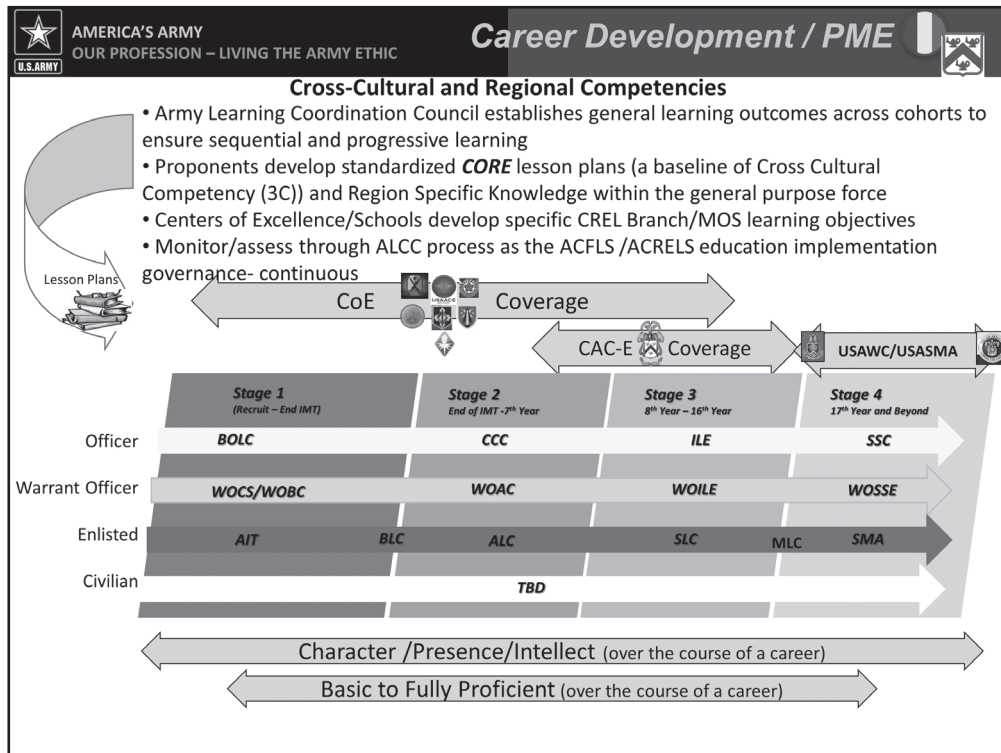


Figure 16.3 CJCSI 3126.01A Proficiency Levels and Corresponding ALDS Leader Attributes. Graphic created by the author and published in *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin* (MIPB).

Core lesson plans based on Army Learning Coordination Council approved General Learning Outcomes (GLOs) are provided to Initial Military Training (IMT) Command, Cadet Command, CoEs, Command and General Staff College, and the US Army Sergeants Major Academy for integration into applicable POIs by cohort or other appropriate applications.

Training developers at CoEs and schools further refine resource and curriculum requirements based on specific branch/military occupational specialty. The CRELMO along with TRADOC/CAC QA offices provides quality assurance/quality control for integrated plans to ensure standardization and synchronization.

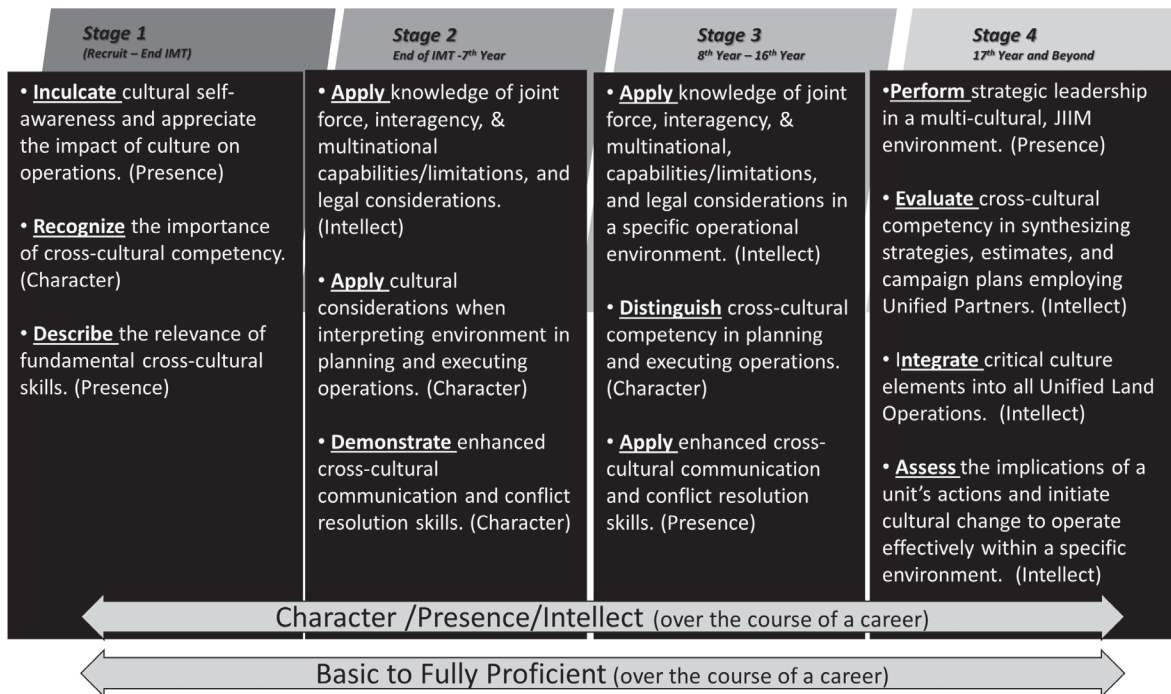


Figure 16.4 Cross Cultural Competencies, General Learning Outcomes across Cohorts. Graphic created by the author.


The Army Research Institute (ARI) assists in the implementation with research and as a resource for materials and analytic tools as well as access to and collaboration with others of similar interests. CoE instructors will use a variety of learning-enabled training, education and self-development techniques to teach students attending IMT and PME courses at station. Cultural instruction may be prescriptive, integrated into other training objectives, or as reinforcement through the use of self-paced learning tools or as research for presentations and writing requirements.

Instructional Methodology

Facilitated instruction.

Classroom instruction will include instructor-led discussions and facilitated problem-centered exercises to assist students in understanding basic cultural awareness as well as relevant and challenging scenarios that they may encounter in their unit and/or during a deployment. Facilitated learning will focus on initiative, critical thinking and accountability for their actions. Small group instructors will receive cultural training assistance to enable them to better present information, lead discussions, and facilitate problem-centered

exercises. The instruction will leverage blending learning resources, augmented by professional reading requirements, self-paced technology-delivered instruction, and research outside the classroom.



AMERICA'S ARMY
OUR PROFESSION – LIVING THE ARMY ETHIC

CREL Assessment

Measure of Success

CJCSI 3126.01A Proficiency Levels corresponding with ACFLS targeted proficiency levels/ALDS Leader Attributes

Measure of Effectiveness

- **Character.** Demonstrate interaction and cross-cultural communications skills in order to effectively engage and understand people and their environment.
- **Presence.** Demonstrate communication, influence and negotiation skills essential for leaders to effectively operate in a JIMM environment.
- **Intellect.** Demonstrate a familiarization in a geographic region of current operational significance. In order to achieve this outcome an individual must leverage critical thinking and cognitive skills through organizing information that supports cultural self-awareness

Measure of Performance

Basic proficiency

- 1) Demonstrates a basic awareness of concepts and processes
- 2) Applies the competency in the simplest situations
- 3) Individuals operating at this level of proficiency require close and extensive guidance

Fully proficient


- 1) Demonstrates thorough understanding of core concepts and processes
- 2) Applies the competency in routine and non-routine situations
- 3) Individuals operating at this level of proficiency work independently with minimal guidance and direction

Master

- 1) Demonstrates extensive depth and breadth of expertise in advanced concepts and processes
- 2) Applies the competency in highly complex and ambiguous situations within and across disciplines
- 3) Individuals operating at this level of proficiency serve as an acknowledged authority, advisor, & key resource across the agency


8

Figure 16.5 CREL Assessment. Graphic created by the author.



AMERICA'S ARMY
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Army Leader Development Strategy



CREL Expectations

	LT	CPT	MAJ	LTC	COL
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent in extending influence across cultural boundaries • Uses rudimentary foreign language skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved through Rosetta Stone online training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent in cross-cultural influence • Elementary language proficiency; able to satisfy minimum operational requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved through self development and home station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent coordinator and collaborator across JIMM organizations • Elementary language proficiency; can initiate and maintain conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved through self development and home station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent in coordinating across JIMM entities at the national strategic level • Elementary language proficiency; can initiate and maintain conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved through self development and home station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent in coordinating across JIMM entities at the geo-political level • Elementary language proficiency; can initiate and maintain conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved through self development and home station
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands influence of culture and the fundamentals of mission command and what is expected of individual initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a "culture of engagement" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved through additional academic support • Advanced culture, language & information skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved through additional academic support, self development, and home station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays judgment and agility in planning tactical operations in JIMM context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved through combination of military experience and professional military education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgment and innovation in application of design principles to operational art in JIMM context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and maintains insight regarding geo-political environment • Achieved through additional education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgment and innovation in application of design principles to military art at the strategic and geopolitical levels in a JIMM context
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident in JIMM capabilities in small unit operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved through multiple tours and additional training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident of JIMM capabilities at the operational level • Understands how to apply JIMM capabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates mastery of FSO and ability to leverage JIMM capabilities to achieve operational objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident operating in a JIMM environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies culture, language, and information thru actions, words and pictures
Desired End-state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident in cultural and foreign language skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved through combination of experience (deployments), self development, and home station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident of cultural, language and information skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved through a combination of experience (deployments), more advanced and consistent self development, and home station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert at applying culture, language and information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved through additional training and education • Capable to serve in a JIMM capacity on a TT, S-TT, IA, Joint or Multi-National Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert at applying culture, language and information through interpersonal skills and being culturally astute within other cultures 	

Figure 16.6 CREL Expectations. Graphic created by the author.



 AMERICA'S ARMY OUR PROFESSION – LIVING THE ARMY ETHIC						Army Leader Development Strategy					
CREL Expectations											
	CPL/SGT	S5G	SFC	MSG/1SG	SGM/CSM						
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved through common core training to obtain TRADOC required Cultural Awareness level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know how to integrate available JIIM capabilities into mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common core training with continuing self development, encouraging additional CA and FL training 								
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the importance of culture and language and their impact on tactical operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agile enough to move effectively through other cultures Achieved through institution, self development, and home station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue common core training and self development, with academic support, encouraging additional CA and FL training 								
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual and Virtual experience Achieved through deployments, role play scenarios, simulations, virtual reality... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to employ JIIM capabilities in support of tactical mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued actual and virtual experience Achieved through deployments, role play scenarios, simulations, virtual reality... 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate and synchronize combined arms ops with allied and coalition forces 						

Figure 16.7 CREL Expectations (Continued). Graphic created by the author.

Web-enabled Instruction, Simulations and Gaming.

The TRADOC Culture Center (TCC) within the Intelligence CoE, the Marine Corps University, Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), and Near East and South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University and others all have a variety of online instructional material that is available for instructor use. As other culture and foreign language AVATAR and interactive simulation programs become available, they will be evaluated and leveraged as educational tools to augment classroom, independent study instruction and self-development opportunities.

Role-playing and Key Leader Engagement (KLE) Scenarios.

Instructors will leverage the knowledge gained by challenging students to employ their interpersonal skills as part of in-class role-playing practical exercises and formal key leader engagement opportunities. The KLE scenarios will require an individual(s) to use an interpreter to engage other coalition military/police members and host country indigenous leaders in order to address a particular problem. Ideally, this engagement should use mock-up facilities and capstone field exercises to reinforce the learning objectives and provide each student with feedback through an after-action review. Both role-playing exercises and the KLEs will result in constructive feedback to the individual.

Academic Lectures and Seminar Panels.

Outside speakers and panels offer broader regional perspectives and expertise into the institution. They are crucial to a balanced education and training approach to expand on concepts and provide an alternative to institutional instruction and facilitation. CRELMO in collaboration with academic institutions, think tanks, CGSC and others will continue its regular panel discussions across the Army on topics of operational and strategic importance to the U.S. It will also continue supporting the related studies and research with its available subject matter expertise such as the Army's "Russian New Generation Warfare" study among others. CRELMO will also continue attending conferences and seminars with guest speaking engagements across DoD and civilian institutions.

Leveraging International Student Populations.

Where appropriate, US students will receive country and cultural briefs from their fellow international students and assigned liaison officers during the resident courses. Programs such as "*Know Your World*" assist students in better understanding the culture and geo-political significance of the countries from which their classmates come and further expand the student's awareness of other cultures.

Analytical Writing.

To address the need to develop critical thinking and improve written communication capabilities in our leaders, analytical papers should be a required assessment of students. Papers should address a cultural or geo-political topic of military operational significance to the US

Professional Reading Program.

A critical component of our leadership development and cultural awareness efforts includes a professional reading program (professional reading list will be located on the CRELMO web-site).

Culture and Foreign Language Resource Centers are established in some CoE libraries and need to be established in others.

Students need to be provided access to computers, cultural resources, and professional reading material to facilitate research, learning, and language proficiency. The Army's CRELMO website contains cultural awareness and foreign language resources, DLIFLC resources, information on past lectures, foreign languages guides, and other significant links.

The Army Culture and Foreign Language Resource Center will be established as part of the US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library at Fort Leavenworth.

Pre-deployment Training.

Culture and Foreign Language (CFL) standards for pre-deployment training (PDT) have been delineated for both Iraq and Afghanistan. CFL PDT resourcing has been provided to DLIFLC and executed through its MTTs, LTDs, and via online CFL training programs (*Rapport, Headstart2*).

Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF)

In the face of Army-wide resourcing challenges, PDT efforts will be focused on providing the most efficient and cost effective means to meet DA directed PDT standards and to assist FORSCOM in the identification and resourcing of PDT for RAF.⁵

These are US Army units tasked to train and mentor partner nation security forces in support of US National Security Strategy. RAF is the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army's vision for providing combatant commanders with versatile, responsive, and consistently available Army forces. RAF will meet combatant commanders' requirements for units and capabilities to support operational missions, bilateral and multilateral military exercises, and theater security cooperation activities.

Beginning in March 2013, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division (2/1ID), stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas, began supporting the US Africa Command's security cooperation and partnering requirements. 2/1ID was undergoing training at the Combat Training Center before embarking on specialized Language, Regional Expertise and Cultural training. Once training was complete, teams of Soldiers from the brigade deployed to multiple African countries to engage in partnering and training events, and to support bilateral and multinational military exercises.

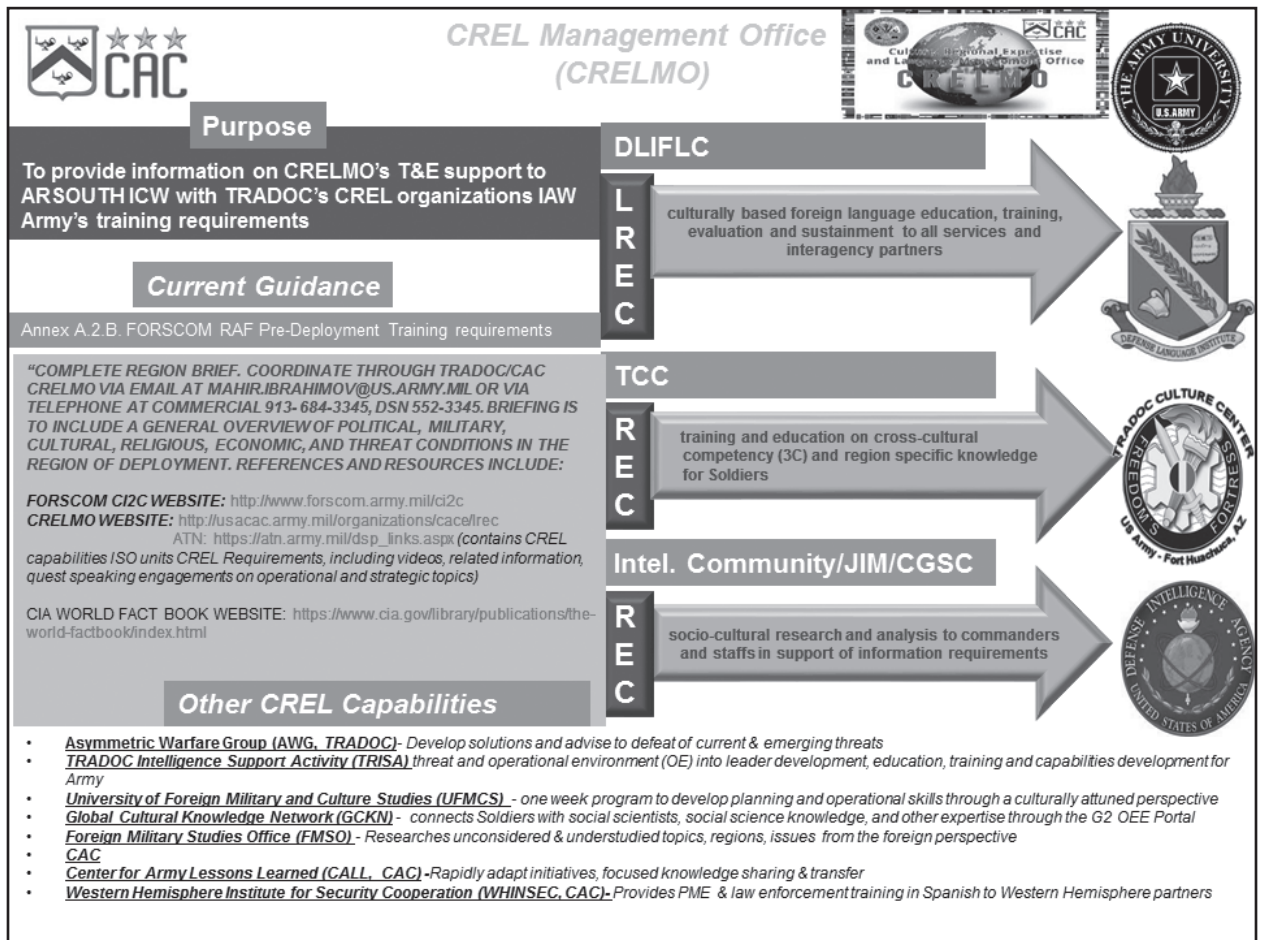


Figure 16.8 CREL Operational Support. Graphic created by the author.

RAF Implementation Concept

The process of implementation of the full RAF concept will take several years. The initial priority was to begin alignment of Corps and Divisions in FY 2013. The Army plans to formally establish the alignment of I Corps to US Pacific Command, III Corps to US Central Command, and XVIII Corps to the Global Response Force. In addition, Army started to align divisions to US Southern Command, US Northern Command, US European Command, and US Africa Command. The Army is also aligning brigades to support theater requirements for PACOM, EUCOM and AFRICOM.

The CRELMO creates a sustainable advantage for regionally aligned forces in any combination of indigenous cultures by providing training and education tools that enhance Professional Military Education, Pre-Deployment and Functional Training. Culture, Regional Expertise and Language (CREL) is a critical strategic security concept to prepare globally responsive and regionally aligned forces that work with a variety of partners including host nation militaries and populations to execute our Prevent, Shape and Win strategic role. In conjunction with its subordinate organizations, CRELMO provides daily management oversight in directing, synchronizing, integrating the Army's Culture, Regional Expertise, and Language capabilities and requirements.⁶

Army University CRELMO is assisting FORSCOM and HQDA in determining the required culture, regional expertise, and language proficiency requirements for the RAF Soldiers/leaders to function within their cultural operational environment and for the RAF to attain unified land operations competency. The required resources are coordinated with relevant TRADOC CREL organizations.

Coordination of the ACFLS/ACRELS implementation is being accomplished through the Army Learning Coordination Council's (ALCC) three-tier process, specifically through the ALCC Soldier *Competency Panel 3: Cultural and JIM Competence*. This panel is made up of ACFL and Joint, Inter-organizational, Multinational (JIM) subject matter experts from TRADOC schools, centers, and colleges. Panel objectives include:

- Ensuring that ACFL learning outcomes are progressive and sequential along each continuum.
- Monitoring alignment of PME courses' terminal learning objectives (TLOs) with the ACFL learning outcomes endorsed by the ALCC.
- Identifying and resolving gaps or redundancies in ACFL training along the career continuums as well as within the operating force.
- Ensuring that learning outcomes are assessed and reported through the ALCC Working Group to commandants and commanders sitting on the ALCC.⁷

CRELMO briefed the Prepare Army Forum on 2 November 2011. The TRADOC Commander approved the "*Expand the Culture and Foreign language Training*" initiative as the way ahead for the Army Culture and Language Program (ACFLP).⁸ The brief was based on the implementation concept approved by the CAC CG in the Culture and Foreign Language (CFL) Operations Order and Implementation Guidance.⁹

CREL Governance and Integration

Army University CRELMO manages the CFL/CREL Enterprise by leveraging, synchronizing, and coordinating with the leads of relevant stakeholders in support of the training, Leadership and Education, and Doctrine support requirements. Our intent is to replicate the ALCC educational governance model for

the CREL Management Governance. The CRELMO CREL Working Group is established to tackle various CREL related tasks including CREL in PME assessment across TRADOC, Culture and Regional Expertise assessment tools among others. One of the major tasks is to connect the Ends, Means, and Ways to be able to effectively manage and implement the ACFLS/ACRELS. Existing Army governance forums such as the Training General Officer Steering Committee (TGOSC), Army Language and Culture Enterprise (ALCE), Army Learning Coordination Council (ALCC), and Army Profession Leader Development Forum (APLDF) need to be fully leveraged to achieve the Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy (ACFLS)/ future Army Culture, Regional Expertise and Language Strategy (ACRELS) and National Security Strategy (NSS) objectives for an Army with culturally competent leaders and culturally aware Soldiers to Prevent, Shape, and Win within an increasingly complex operational environment.

The APLDF addresses overarching issues in support of Army requirements/initiatives. The ALCE specifically addresses the holistic assessment of implementation and CREL requirements across the DOT-MLPF domain. ALCE derived requirements are subsequently worked through the APLDF or TGOSC as appropriate to address training, leadership and education and materiel issues. The APLDF also specifically addresses policy issues required to implement the strategy. The ALCC addresses the integration of learning outcomes across all cohorts to ensure sequential and progressive learning in support of Army requirements.

The CRELMO and CREL WG can play at least an initial role in support of TRADOC to a fully integrated approach to connect the enterprise in order to span the boundaries between generating and operating capabilities. This is a necessary step until the Army identifies an overarching proponent, which would integrate those capabilities to insure their most effective support of military operations.

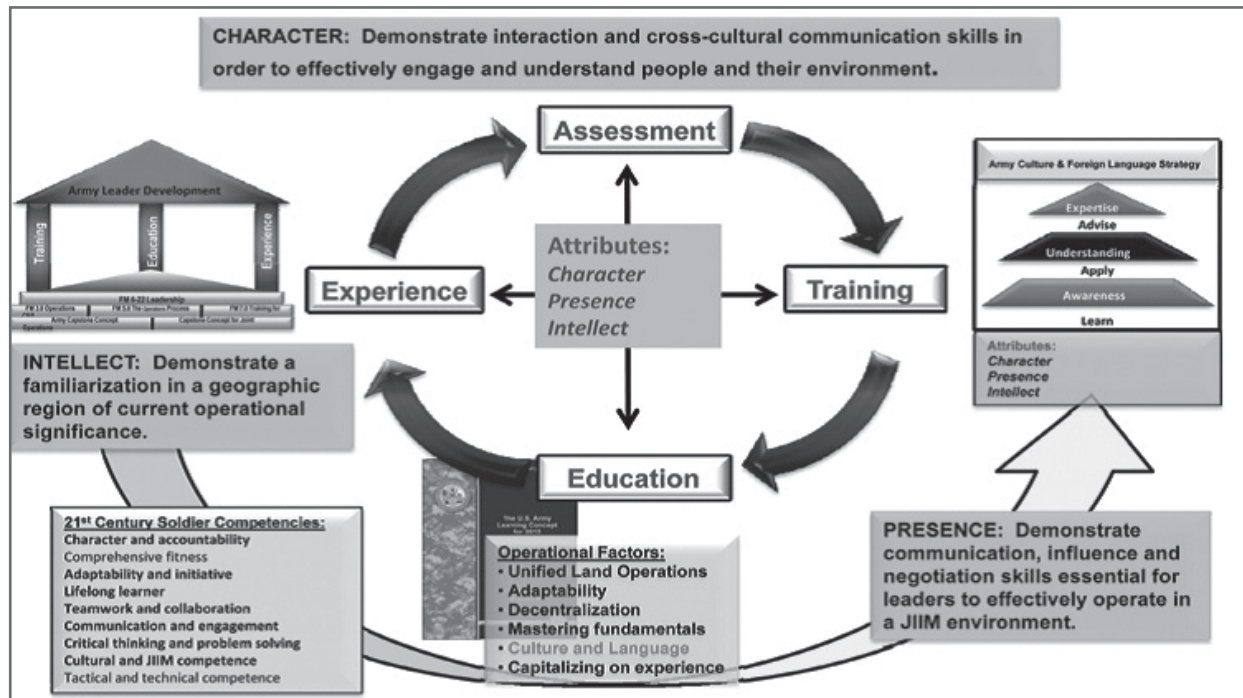


Figure 16.9 CREL Implementation Approach. Graphic created from the 2016 Draft CREL Strategy.

Operational Culture and Language: The Fort Sill Experience

The Culture and Foreign Language Program began at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in 2009 with this author hired as the first culture and foreign language adviser, based on a 2008 directive by then Training and Doctrine Command Commander General William Wallace. In the next two years, the Fort Sill program unfolded and was so successful that accreditors suggested it become a model for the rest of the Army. The culture and foreign language advisor moved to Fort Leavenworth in 2011, when CAC began taking over the role of the Army's Culture and Foreign Language Program. Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) published Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy (ACFLS) Executive Order (EXORD) which put CAC and the newly established Culture and Language Management Office in charge of entire program authority, resources, oversight and implementation in 2011.

The Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy, released in 2009, highlighted operational experiences in Somalia, the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq with having critical gaps in the Army capability to influence and operate effectively within different cultures for extended periods of time.¹⁰ In an effort to develop adaptive, agile and culturally astute leaders with the right blend of culture and foreign language capabilities, the Fires Center of Excellence's (FCoE) Joint and Combined Fires University (JCFU) was leading the way with its implementation of a Cultural and Foreign Language Program (CFLP) assisted by the first TRADOC Cultural and Foreign Language Advisor as the head of the CFLP at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.¹¹

Changing our teaching paradigms required new ideas and the ability to go beyond providing Soldiers and leaders a rudimentary foundation in foreign culture and language familiarization. Traditionally, cultural training tended to be overly simplistic and lacked a context for cultural understanding. The curriculum which was developed by FCoE CFLP helped Soldiers and leaders develop critical thinking skills needed to understand how culture might influence the outcome of an operation. A holistic approach to cultural training which was created at Fort Sill in 2009-2010 was being looked at closely by TRADOC for other installations to emulate. *Becoming aware of cultural dynamics is a difficult task because culture is based on experiences, values, behaviors, beliefs and norms.* In many cases, Soldiers may experience a foreign culture for the first time during a deployment, and as a result may inadvertently be disrespectful. Cultural awareness training would help overcome the "culture shock," and give Soldiers the ability to adjust to an indigenous culture as quickly as possible to get the mission done.

When developing a comprehensive program, Fort Sill Culture and Foreign language program determined that three cultural competency levels (cultural awareness, understanding and expertise) must be included. These competency levels were included in all courses taught by the JCFU, the FCoE Noncommissioned Officers Academy and in other leadership courses attended by officers and warrant officers to overcome cultural ignorance. (See Figure 16.X for leader attributes which in turn reinforces the core leader competencies of leading others, developing oneself and achieving results.)

At the US Army Field Artillery School (USAFAS) and US Army Air Defense Artillery School (USAA-DAS), the development of cultural awareness and/or understanding was the principal objective; and introduction to a foreign language (basic phrases and elemental proficiency) was a supporting effort. In order to achieve a higher level of cultural understanding/ expertise or language proficiency, individuals needed to leverage other PME, civilian education and self-development programs.

Character. A leader of character internalizes the Army Values, lives by our Professional Military Ethic, reflects the Warrior Ethos and displays empathy towards Soldiers, families, and those people affected by the unit's actions. Competence places an individual in the position to lead; character makes him or her an effective leader.

Presence. A leader of presence has credibility, exudes confidence and builds trust. Presence is conveyed through actions, appearance, demeanor, and words.

Intellect. A leader of intellect has the conceptual capability to understand complex situations, determine what needs to be done and interact with others to get it done. Leaders must have the ability to reason, to think critically and creatively, to anticipate consequences, and to solve problems.

Figure 16.10 Leader Attributes. Graphic created from the 2016 Draft CREL Strategy.

Execution of Training

In order to achieve the above goal, the FCoE CFLP was incorporating the relevant learning objectives and associated tasks in its IMT and follow-on leader development PME courses.

The Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC), the NCO Warrior Leader Course, the NCO Advanced Leader Course, the Captains Career Course, the Warrant Officer Basic Course, the Warrant Officer Advanced Course, and the NCO Senior Leader Course have all been revised to contain specific approaches appropriate to each level in order for leaders to attain specific knowledge on culture and foreign language expectations. It is important to note, as designed the training places more emphasis on attaining cultural knowledge (big C), with some emphasis on learning foreign languages (little L).

Learning Objective 1 (Character): Demonstrate interaction and cross-cultural communications skills in order to effectively engage and understand people and their environment.

Demonstrate a level of cultural awareness that includes a positive openness to other people, an understanding of prevailing values, beliefs, behaviors and customs, and a desire to learn more about cultures and language. This includes an introduction to a language that supports current military operations with the intent to promote additional study through self-development at the institution, at home station or at an academic university.

Learning Objective 2 (Presence): Demonstrate communication, influence and negotiation skills essential for leaders to effectively operate in a JIM environment.

Leverage the knowledge gained by challenging students to employ skills to deal with ambiguous and complex situations, to regulate one's own behavior and to use the interpersonal abilities to deal with people from one's own or other cultures. This includes an understanding and ability to engage other joint and allied military personnel, and host country indigenous leaders with a moderate level of confidence.

Learning Objective 3 (Intellect): Demonstrate a familiarization in a geographic region of current operational significance.

Leverage critical thinking and cognitive skills through organizing information that supports cultural self-awareness. Depending on level of leader development professional military education, expand cross-cultural competence skills by gaining an awareness or understanding of a geographic area that highlights the implications of a region's economic, religious, legal, governmental, political and infrastructural features, and of sensitivities regarding gender, race, ethnicity, local observances and local perception of the US and its allies.

Apply relevant planning to considerations, terms, factors, concepts and geographic information to mission planning and in the conduct of operations. This includes leveraging other TRADOC and DOD schools, partnerships with universities and academia, gaming technology and opportunities that stress students' ability to concisely and persuasively speak and write, to engage in discussions, and employ cognitive reasoning and thinking skills.

Cultural expertise

Advanced level of cross-cultural competence in a specific geographic area. Generally entails some degree of proficiency in a language; skills that enable effective cross-cultural persuasion, negotiation, conflict resolution, influence or leadership; and an understanding of the most salient historic and present-day regional structural and cultural factors of a specific geographic area.

Cultural understanding

Well-developed cross-cultural competence in a specific region. Able to anticipate the implications of culture and apply relevant terms, factors, concepts and regional information to tasks and missions. Familiar with a specific region's economic, religious, legal, governmental, political and infrastructural features, and aware of regional sensitivities regarding gender, race, ethnicity, local observances and local perception of the US and its allies.

Cultural awareness

Minimal level of regional competence necessary to perform assigned tasks in a specific geographic area; able to describe key culture terms, factors and concepts. Basic understanding of how foreign culture might affect the planning and conduct of operations.¹²

Partnerships and Cooperation

Fort Sill CFLP established partnerships and cooperation with local universities and other military institutions. Cameron University, Oklahoma University and Oklahoma State University faculties conducted regular seminars for Fires professionals on topics of operational importance.

Past topics have included: *Central Asia: Modernity and Geopolitics in the Stans, The Cultural and Linguistic Patterns in the Middle East and Projections for Iraq, Who Will Lead? The United States, the European Union, China, and the Global Diffusion of Power, The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism, US Strategic Options in Afghanistan, Iran and US Strategy, Russia: A Declining Superpower Reclaiming its Throne? Future strategic topics are related to Russia, Iran and the Middle East.*

These seminars have led to an increased understanding by Fort Sill students of cultural aspects and geopolitical trends, their impacts on the contemporary operational environment. Fort Sill CFLP was

working on attracting more academic support to enhance ongoing education and training so they can be better prepared to operate in the joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational environments that they might be deployed in the future.

Partnerships to enhance training have also been formed with TRADOC Culture Center and US Army Intelligence Center of Excellence both located at Fort Huachuca, Arizona; the Marine Corps University at Quantico, Virginia; the Defense Language Institute (DLI) Foreign Language Center at the Presidio in Monterey, California, and the East and South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at National Defense University.

The Culture and Foreign Language Advisor was also regularly conducting seminars with students attending the Fires Support Coordinator Course, Warrant Officer Instructional Branch, Field Artillery and Air Defense Artillery Captains Career Course. He also conducted specific or generalized pre-deployment training upon request. He has also been conducting train-the-trainer sessions for small group leaders, new cultural awareness instructors and new TRADOC cultural advisors. He has also made arrangements for allied international students and FCoE liaison officers to conduct regular briefs on their respective countries for additional knowledge.

Cultural Simulation

Items in FCoE Cultural and Foreign Language Program’s arsenal included a “Cultural Awareness and Language Training Package,” which was a portable training option for Soldiers that included several foreign language CDs, a cultural awareness scenario-based game called “Army 360,” language flash cards and field-expedient smart books allocated from the Defense Language Institute for troops’ use. (See Figure 16.11, Cultural Awareness and Language Training Package.)

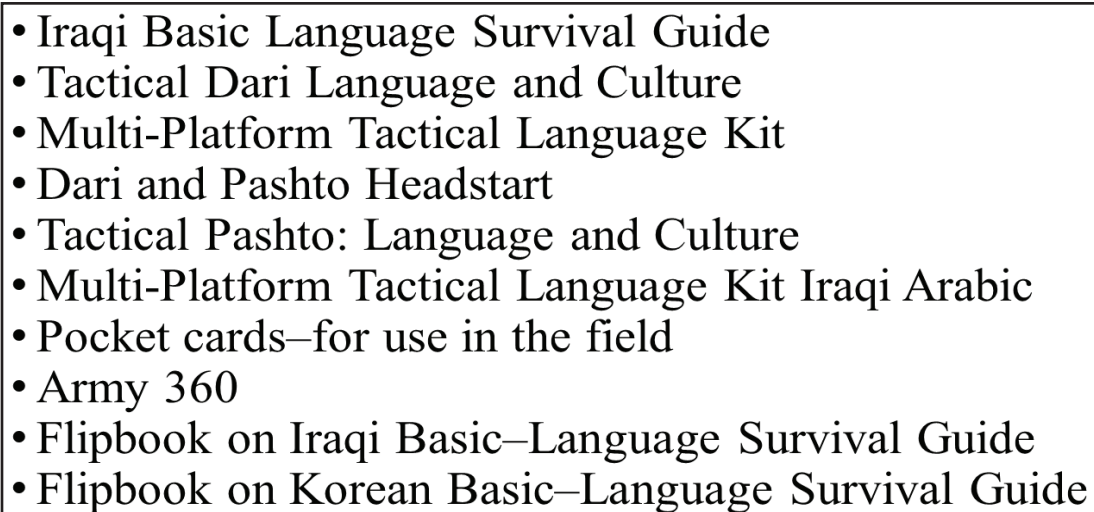
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- Iraqi Basic Language Survival Guide
 - Tactical Dari Language and Culture
 - Multi-Platform Tactical Language Kit
 - Dari and Pashto Headstart
 - Tactical Pashto: Language and Culture
 - Multi-Platform Tactical Language Kit Iraqi Arabic
 - Pocket cards—for use in the field
 - Army 360
 - Flipbook on Iraqi Basic–Language Survival Guide
 - Flipbook on Korean Basic–Language Survival Guide

Figure 16.11 Cultural Awareness and Language Training Package. Graphic created by the author.

“Army 360” as a virtual simulation application that enabled students to immerse themselves in true-to-life scenarios in order to broaden their experience in dealing with other cultures. They got to practice intuitive decision making abilities in a mock environment before facing the real-life culture dilemmas.

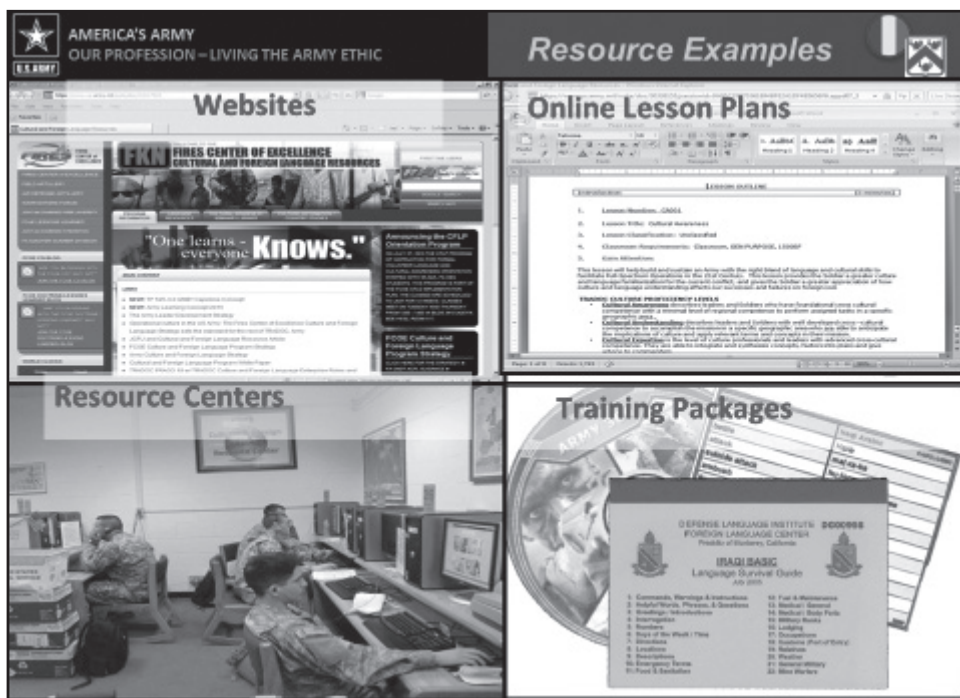


Figure 16.12 FCoE Culture and Foreign Language Resource examples. All graphics created by the author.

A Culture and Foreign Language Resource Center in the Morris Swett Technical library was also established, where students had access to computers for self-paced training, various cultural awareness books and numerous other applicable digital (to include Rosetta Stone) and traditional learning resources. These resources were available to captains, BOLC B attendees, NCOES and warrant officer students to prepare cultural research papers which were a mandatory requirement in each of their respective training. BOLC B students were eligible to receive certificates after completing four to eight hours of language training. The FCoE CFLP identified five operationally important languages for training: Dari, Pashto (Afghanistan), Iraqi Arabic, Korean, and Russian. A comprehensive reading list was also available at the resource center that included books on areas that were strategically and operationally important to Army operations.

A dedicated FCoE CFLP resource page was also available by logging onto FKN. The site contained an abundance of cultural awareness and foreign language knowledge, information on past seminars, information on the program, media coverage of the events, foreign languages guides, links to DLI, Foreign Language Center resources, as well as the CIA Fact Book. The list and site were constantly being updated and upgraded.

The FCoE CFLP also launched an all-volunteer language and cultural awareness orientation class/pilot program. It was a 12-week language course that was conducted by a native Arabic speaker. The first session was attended by 46 volunteer students from FA/ADA CCC and WOES. FCoE CFLP has also identified a Dari or Pashto instructor (Afghanistan) to launch a similar 12-week program in the future.

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Example of Captains Career Course (CCC)

Learning Objectives 1 (Character)	Learning Objectives 2 (Presence)	Learning Objective 3 (Intellect)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess cultural perspectives and values different from one's own; compare differences and sensitivities in order to modify one's behavior, practices and language, and operate in a multi-cultural environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cross-cultural skills building ○ Cultural influence and military operations ○ ISD briefs "Know Your World" Apply cross-cultural communication skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Army 360 Cultural Trainer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop communication skills that enable effective cross-cultural persuasion, negotiation, conflict resolution or influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local University media training ○ Cross-cultural negotiations Apply communications skills during cross-cultural negotiations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Role-play exercises ○ Key Leader Engagement exercise Develop confidence in learning and applying language skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction to a language through Rapport/Headstart 2 software ○ Additional language training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply culturally relevant terms, factors, concepts and regional information in the development of mission plans and orders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Insurgency overview and theory ○ Pattern and social network analysis and PE ○ COIN IPB and planning Assess and describe the effect that culture has on military operations specific to countries or regions of operational significance to the US <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SWOT analysis country brief ○ Writing requirement: Analytical paper ○ Analytical paper presentation / discussion ○ CoE CFLP Lecture Series ○ Professional reading program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prescriptive [P] Reinforced / Integrated [R/I] Professional Development [PD] – optional 		

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Figure 16.13 Cultural Awareness Lesson Plan. Screenshot of US Army Fires Center of Excellence Lesson Plan by Dr. Mahir Ibrahimov; example of Captains Career Course (CCC) Culture and Foreign Language Training.

In an era of persistent conflict, the Army is going to continue to send Soldiers into a region about which they have little knowledge and almost no cultural connection. We expect from them to interact safely and efficiently with military and civilian in and among indigenous cultures.

Providing Soldiers with these cultural and linguistic backgrounds was critical. FCoE CFLP intent was by providing culture and language training to ensure the Fires professionals success – no matter what corner of the globe they happen to deploy.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

Notes

1. General Raymond Odierno, General James Amos and Admiral William McRaven, *Strategic Landpower White Paper*, 6 May 2013, accessed 9 August 2016, <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/FrontPageContent/Docs/Strategic%20Landpower%20White%20Paper.pdf>.
2. While CJCSI 3126.01A standards actually apply just to regional expertise and cultural understanding, the October, 2015 Army Culture, Regional Expertise and Language (CREL) Strategy draft (p.11) extends the use of those categories to language proficiency. Further language proficiency details by interagency language roundtable levels are found in Annexes A, B, C, and D. of the October 2015 draft CREL Strategy.
3. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *CJCSI 3126.01A Annexes A, B, C, and D: Draft LREC Strategy* (Washington: Joint Chiefs of Staff, March 2014).
4. US Army Training and Doctrine Command, *TR Pam 525-8-2: The US Army Learning Concept for 2015* (Fort Monroe, VA: Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command, 2011). See also, Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1 December 2009).
5. Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1 December 2009); Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS) 2013; See also, Mahir Ibrahimov, "Operational Culture in the U.S. Army: The Fires Center of Excellence Culture and Foreign Language Strategy Sets the Standard for the Rest of TRADOC," *Army Fires Bulletin*, January-February 2011.
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Conclusion

Dr. Mahir J. Ibrahimov

The operational challenges in Eurasia, Middle East, Southwest and Central Asia are extreme; the strategic regional and global implications for all of Eurasia are profound.

US policy makers and military leadership must understand and use the socio-cultural lessons learned from Roman and Ottoman empires as well as British and Soviet history in the region; and, at the same time understand the strategic effects operations may have in the region in order to achieve success. This calls for military leaders and Soldiers to acquire a sophisticated set of skills that are different from the Cold War era. Leaders and Soldiers must understand the context of the factors influencing the JIM operational environment.

They must act within the contexts they find themselves, always assessing and adapting their actions based on the interactions and circumstances of the enemy and environment. The military must be able to fluidly transition from one type of operation to another based upon the assessed circumstances while consolidating operational opportunities with the strategic enterprise.

This is particularly important in a new Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) construct, which is one of the top priorities of the US National Security, particularly the Department of Defense and Services.¹

The world has approached a very dangerous point of tension with multiple regional and global threats and conflicting interests. If the current trends of the regional and global geopolitics continue, the world would potentially see another major global conflict during the next 5 to 10 years. The world powers need to act responsibly and apply all their influence and joint efforts to avoid such a scenario, which could be potentially disastrous for the entire mankind.

Without exaggeration, one can say that understanding the cultures, history and mentality of other countries and regions will be the core of the right policies and related decisions.

[The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.]

Notes

1. General Ray Odierno, "Regionally Aligned Forces: A New Model for Building Partnerships," *Army Live*, accessed 20 December 2015, <http://armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2012/03/aligned-forces/>.

About the Authors

Dr. Joseph (Geoff) Babb



Dr. Joseph G. D. (Geoff) Babb is a retired US Army Special Forces Lieutenant Colonel currently serving as a Supervisory Associate Professor at the US Army's Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Dr. Babb holds a BA from Bowdoin College, a MPA from Clark University, a MA in East Asian Languages and Cultures and a Ph.D. in History from the University of Kansas. Dr. Babb was trained by the US Army as a China Foreign Area Officer and conducted his in-country training in Hong Kong and Beijing. He served in Washington DC at the Defense Intelligence Agency and on the Joint Staff. He was the Senior China Analyst and Deputy Director of Current Intelligence at US Pacific Command as well as the Northeast Asia

Desk Officer at US Army, Pacific. His last active military tour of duty was at Fort Leavenworth as the Chief of the Strategic Studies Division in the Department of Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Operations. Mr. Babb has authored several articles on counterinsurgency operations, China security issues, and Asian affairs. He was a contributing author in *The Savage Wars of Peace: Toward a New Paradigm in Peace Operations* and in the *Asian Security Handbook: Terrorism and the New Security Environment* published in 2005. He also contributed a chapter on the American military role in China in *Through the Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Lens: Perspectives on the Operational Environment* in 2015. Dr. Babb's latest project is a Counterinsurgency Curriculum Workshop conducted under the auspices of NATO's Partnership for Peace Consortium in conjunction with the US European Command's Marshall Center with sessions in Estonia, Hungary, Germany, and France.

Colonel Lee G. Gentile, Jr.



Colonel Lee G. Gentile, Jr. is a career Air Force pilot with more than 3,000 hours in fighter and trainer aircraft. He is a graduate of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, the Naval War College, and the School of Advanced Military Studies. Colonel Gentile is currently serving as the Director of the Air Force Element and the senior Air Force representative at the US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Dr. Prisco Hernández



Dr. Prisco Hernández currently serves as Associate Professor at the Directorate of Graduate Degree Programs of the US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He has served as a member of the CGSC faculty for more than 11 years. He has directed more than 50 master's theses. Dr. Hernández is also visiting professor on the faculty of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation in Columbus, Georgia, where he implemented the master's degree program in Spanish in 2011. In addition, he served as Directing Staff for the Canadian Army Command and Staff College, Kingston, Ontario. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a Masters from Indiana University-Bloomington, and a Bachelor in Arts from the University of Puerto Rico. Dr. Hernández has published more than 20 articles in professional and scholarly journals, numerous book reviews, opinion pieces and encyclopedia entries, in both English and Spanish. He has presented two papers at Society for Military History annual meetings in 2011 and 2014. His research interests include the War of Granada (1482-1492), the Italian Wars of the late 15th and early 16th-century, the colonial Caribbean, problems in ethics and warfare, and the relationships between religion, war, and the military profession. Dr. Hernández retired from the Army after serving twenty-eight years as an officer in the Army National Guard, on Active Duty, and in the US Army Reserve. He is a veteran of the War in Afghanistan.

Mr. Gary Hobin



Mr. Gary Hobin is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Operations at the US Army Command and General Staff College. Mr. Hobin is a retired Army infantry officer. As ROTC graduate of Dartmouth College, he earned a Master's degree from the University of Chicago. While on active duty, he trained as an Army Foreign Area Officer specializing in the Middle East, and spent several years in the region. After retiring from the Army, he became a US diplomat, with duty assignments in Syria and Saudi Arabia. He has been a faculty member at the Command and General Staff College since 2003.

Amb. (Ret) Richard E. Hoagland



Ambassador Richard E. Hoagland was US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, October 2013-August 2015. Before returning to Washington in September 2013, Ambassador Hoagland spent a decade in South and Central Asia. He was US Deputy Ambassador to Pakistan (2011-2013), US Ambassador to Kazakhstan (2008-2011), and US Ambassador to Tajikistan (2003-2006). He also served as US Charge d'affaires to Turkmenistan (2007-2008). Prior to his diplomatic assignments in Central Asia, Ambassador Hoagland was Director of the Office of Caucasus and Central Asian Affairs in the Bureau of Europe and Eurasian Affairs, Department of State (2001-2003). In that position, he wrote and negotiated four of the key bilateral documents defining the Central Asian states' enhanced relationship with the United States in the aftermath of 9/11. His earlier foreign assignments

included Russia where he was Press Spokesman for the US Embassy (1995-1998). During the course of his career, he received multiple Presidential Performance Awards, State Department Meritorious and Superior Honor Awards, as well as the Distinguished Honor Award. Born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Ambassador Hoagland completed his graduate degrees at the University of Virginia and earned a certificate in French from the University of Grenoble, France. Before joining the Foreign Service in 1985, Ambassador Hoagland taught English as a foreign language in the then-Zaire (1974-1976) and African literature at the University of Virginia's Carter-Woodson Institute of African and Afro-American Studies.

Dr. Mahir J. Ibrahimov



Dr. Ibrahimov is the Program Manager of the US Army Culture, Regional Expertise/Language Management Office (CRELMO). He was previously the Army's Senior Culture and Foreign Language Advisor. As the first Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Culture and Foreign Language Advisor, he received the Commander's Award for Civilian Service at Fort Sill for establishing the CFL Program there (TRADOC/CAC recognized it as the Army wide model). Dr. Ibrahimov served in the Soviet Army and witnessed the break-up of the Soviet Union. He has served as a Chief Expert of the USSR League of Scientific/Industrial Associations and was a Senior Middle East Expert of the USSR Red Cross. As a former senior diplomat, he helped

to open the first embassy of Azerbaijan in Washington, DC. Dr. Ibrahimov was Vice President of the first American University in Azerbaijan and President of the non-profit U.S. Corporation on education, culture and economics. He was a professor at the American University in Washington, DC and served as a senior consultant for a number of American multinational companies. Dr. Ibrahimov instructed US diplomats in languages and cultures at the Department of State and provided vital assistance as a multi-lingual cultural adviser to US forces during OIF II. He became the subject of a Defense Department newsreel, "Jack of All Languages." It was another combat experience, which Dr. Ibrahimov has also witnessed first-hand.

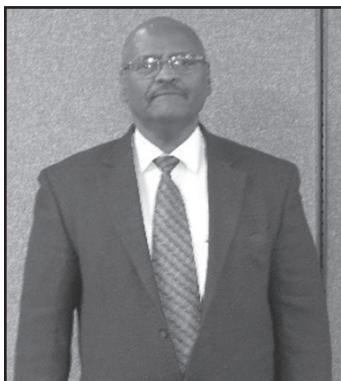
Dr. Ibrahimov has been tasked to support the TRADOC-directed, ARCIC-led CSA tasker "Russian New Generation Warfare" Study. As part of the study he has recently traveled to Ukraine and provided follow-on recommendations. He is also leading (with a group of scholars) a related publication project on the region. The CRELMO Program Manager, along with senior State Department representatives, was invited as a

keynote speaker at the Commander's Conference on 17-18 May at Fort Bragg hosted by LTG Townsend to provide insight into ISIS, and the situation in Syria and Russian policies in the Middle East and the Former USSR. By name request, Dr. Ibrahimov also attended the "Russian Engagement in the Gray Zone Symposium" at the invitation of MG Linder, Special Operations CoE CG in Washington, DC, on 19-20 October 2016. Participants included military leadership, US Department of State senior representatives, distinguished scholars, research institutes, practitioners and other interested parties who were brought together from across the nation to discuss Russia's role in today's Gray Zone environment. Dr. Ibrahimov was one of the main presenters at the first Round Table Discussion titled "What is the Importance of Understanding Russian Power Projection and Statecraft and how does it Shape Russian New Generation Warfare?" He was asked to share his expertise and past experiences related to Eurasia in application to the Grey Zone OE and its implications for regional and global geopolitics. The Symposium was well-received and attended. Participants emphasized that, most importantly, it was a timely event. He was also invited by name request to present at the 4ID Fires Symposium on 14-15 DEC 2016 on "Operations-Decisive Action with regards to Russian Doctrine." This are just examples of many other previous and upcoming high-level speaking engagements of Dr. Ibrahimov by name request.

Dr. Ibrahimov specializes in the cultural issues, socio-economics and geopolitics of the former Soviet Republics, south-west and central Asia and the Middle East. He is the author of "*Invitation to Rain: A Story of the Road Taken towards Freedom*," "*Life Looking Death in the EYE*," and the forthcoming book "*Cultural Perspectives, Geopolitics & Energy Security of Eurasia: Is the Next Global Conflict Imminent?*" among numerous other publications, including those in foreign languages.

He is fluent in five languages and versed in many cultures.

Dr. Tseggai Isaac



Dr. Tseggai Isaac was born in Eritrea, East Africa. He came to the United States in 1972 as a student. He finished his undergraduate studies at Olivet Nazarene University located in Kankakee, Illinois majoring in History. Subsequently, he pursued his graduate studies earning PhD degree In Political Science from the University of Missouri- Columbia. Dr. Isaac is a tenured faculty member at the Missouri University of Science and Technology – Rolla, in the Department of History and Political Science. He currently teaches Political Science courses at MS&T and was teaching there for the last 25 years. In 2009- 2011, Dr. Isaac served as a Cultural and Foreign Language Advisor at the Maneuver and Support Center of Excellence. As a Cultural and Foreign Language Advisor, he taught *US Army Captains Career Course (CCC) Common Core*, and the BOLIC I Cultural Awareness classes. He also

participated in Field Exercises, class observations, and provided cultural input based on those observations and participations. While at the MSCoE, from time to time, Dr. Isaac completed written analytical briefs regarding contemporary developments to the Commanding General, General Gregory Martin, to the Director of Doctrine and Training, COL John McClellan, Mr. David Dunstedter, Technical Supervisor, and Mr. John Arata, Chief G-3 Training. During his tenure as a CFLA, Dr. Isaac also produced general and a peer reviewed articles, among others, *Faith and Culture in the Middle East: Roads to Peace or Catalysts for Crisis*, *Journal of Homeland Security*, and an article for the *Military Police Intelligence Bulletin* titled "*Cultural Awareness in the Army: Harnessing the Disciplines*". The *Journal of Homeland Security* is

issued by the Institute of Justice and International Studies of the University of Central Missouri. Dr. Isaac's books include: *African Civilization in the 21st Century: A Study of Cultures* with Andrew Targowski, *The Third World in Global Perspective: A Journey from Hope to Despair*, and *American Government from the Perspective of Leaders, Lawgivers, Policymakers, and Oracles*. Dr. Isaac lives in Columbia, MO with his wife of 34 years. They have 5 grown children and 2 grandchildren.

Dr. W. Chris King



Dr. W. Chris King Brigadier General, US Army (retired) serves as the Dean, US Army Command and General Staff College. Dr King (1949) received his Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering in 1988 and currently serves as the Chief Academic Officer for the United States Army's Command and General Staff College. The College has a 125 years tradition of educating military officers on national security and the art of war. Dr King directs a college faculty of over 400 people organized into five separate schools, all with the mission of developing army leaders for service to the nation. After many environmental engineering assignments with the US Army domestically and in Europe, in 1991 he was deployed as the Officer in Charge of the Southwest Asia Health Risk Assessment Team to determine health risks to US troops exposed to the smoke from the Kuwait oil fires and to support the restoration of Kuwait. For

this he won the American Academy of Environmental Engineering Honor Award.

In 1994 Dr King was assigned to the Army Chief of Staff's crisis action team for the Rwanda relief mission as the medical operations planner and assigned to the deploying headquarters for Operation Support Hope assisting in the humanitarian and relief work for the refugees in Rwanda and its neighbouring countries. In 1998, then Colonel King was appointed Professor and Head of the Department of Geography and Environmental Engineering at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York. In 2005 he helped develop the new Afghanistan Military Army. As a specialist in hazardous waste management, he advises NATO on the clean-up of military hazardous wastes and the restoration of closed military facilities in East Europe. Dr King has authored many articles, reports and two books, the most recent being "Understanding International Security: A Strategic Military Perspective".

He retired in 2006 after 32 years of active service at the rank of Brigadier General, having received the Distinguished Service Medal as his highest military award.

Mr. Robert W. Kurz



Mr. Robert Kurz currently serves as a Central and Eastern European analyst and the Research Production Manager for the Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Organized in the US Army Training and Doctrine Command under the TRADOC G2, FMSO conducts unclassified research of foreign perspectives on defense and security issues important for understanding environments in which the US military operates. Robert has served at FMSO for more than 11 years, and his research and collaborative projects have taken him to numerous locations to include Egypt, Germany, the Baltic States, Romania and Ukraine. Robert also served as a West Africa and Balkans Senior Analyst at the US European Command (USEUCOM) Joint Intelligence Operations Center Europe (JIOCEUR) Analytic Center (JAC) at R.A.F. Molesworth, United Kingdom, for over eight years. At the JAC, Robert

was selected to lead several analytical forums in allied nations, which helped prepare him for FMSO's foreign perspective research mission. In addition to his Army Civilian capacity, Robert is also a US Army Reserve Military Intelligence (MI) officer assigned to USEUCOM, where he serves as a Lieutenant Colonel in support of USEUCOM J2. Robert has served as a Reserve officer throughout the USEUCOM Theater for over twenty years with multiple periods of active duty, including Operation Iraqi Freedom and, more recently, six months in Romania.

Major Roland P. Minez



MAJ Roland Minez grew up overseas. He received his commission in 2004 from the United States Military Academy as an Infantry Officer. Upon graduation, he served as an executive officer in the 2d Cavalry Regiment and a rifle platoon leader in the 4th Stryker Brigade, 2d Infantry Division. From 2007-2008, he deployed to Iraq where he served first as a platoon leader and later was responsible for coordinating the Sunni Tribal resistance groups fighting Al Qaeda in Diyala Province. Roland subsequently served as the operations officer and doctrine analyst at the Stryker WarFighter Forum. In 2010, Roland was the Army Attaché in Algiers, Algeria and then a Joint Plans Officer at the Counter-Drug Task Force in Key West, Florida. In 2011, Roland joined the United States Foreign Service. From 2011-2013, he served as the

vice-consul in Mumbai, India. In 2014, he was a narcotics affairs officer at the US Embassy in Mexico City, Mexico. His personal interests include mountaineering, cycling, and the study of history. He speaks French and Spanish and has a Masters in International Relations. He is married to his better half, Elizabeth originally from the Netherlands. They have a 2-year-old daughter named Marie and a newborn named Julia.

Assignment after CGSC: Political Officer at the Consulate General, Erbil Iraq.

Mr. Gustav Otto



Mr. Gus Otto is the Defense Intelligence Chair at the Command and General Staff College, and the DIA Representative to the Combined Arms Center/Army University. A leader for 30+ years, and throughout his 18-year career in Human and Counterintelligence, Gus has been with the DIA since 1998 in and out of uniform. His many assignments and deployments exposed him to senior policy and decision makers, and combat operations around the globe. He left that world in 2010 when he became the first DIA Chair to what is now the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security & Resource Strategy (formerly ICAF), one of six war colleges which allowed him to teach across NDU on his leadership, nation building and reconstruction, and AF-PAK portfolios. Gus remains an executive leadership student and advisor on

multiple fronts across government, industry and academia.

Gus was an active duty Air Force officer for 12 years and retired following eight more in the reserves. Before government service, he worked in the entertainment and academic industries for seven years. Gus holds a BA in International Affairs from the University of Cincinnati and an MS in National Security Strategy from the National War College. He's working on his PhD in Ethical & Creative Leadership at the Union Institute.

Colonel (Ret) Nathan K. Slate (Nate)



COL (R) Nathan (Nate) K. Slate was commissioned a Lieutenant of Field Artillery following his graduation from Officer Candidate School in December, 1978. He has held command positions overseas and in the United States.

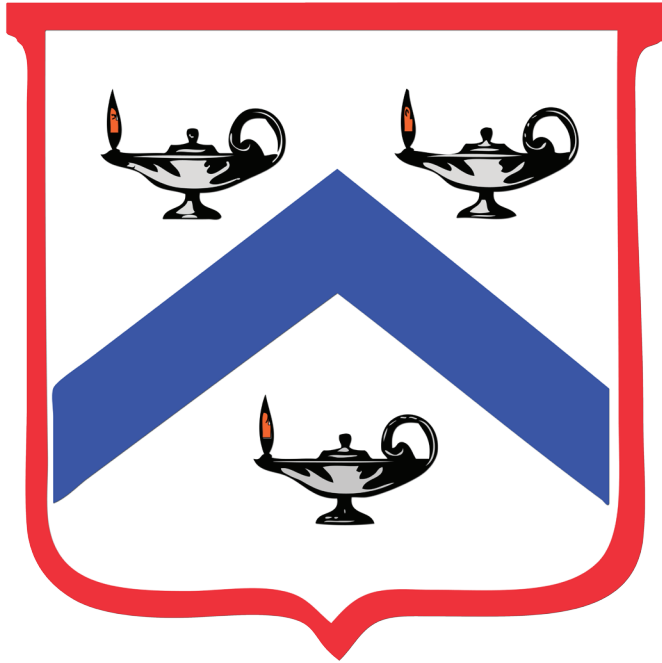
Upon completion of the Field Artillery Basic Course, he served in the 74th USAFAD in Lechfeld, Germany. While there, he served as an M&A Team Commander from October 1981 to October 1982. Subsequent to his return to the states and graduation from the Field Artillery Advanced Course, he commanded Charlie Battery, 3d Battalion, 8th Field Artillery at Fort Bragg, North Carolina from December 1985 to June 1987. From July 1997 to July 1999, he commanded the 3d Battalion, 18th Field Artillery (Steel Professionals) at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. From June 2002 to June 2004, he commanded the 17th Field Artillery Brigade (Thunderbolt Brigade) at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. COL Slate commanded the 17th

Field Artillery Brigade during its 12-month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF I).

COL Slate's other assignments include: Executive Officer, 5-41 Field Artillery, Schweinfurt, Germany; Observer Controller, CMTC, Hohenfels, Germany; Executive Officer, 212th Field Artillery Brigade, Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Chief of Staff, IIIrd Armored Corps Artillery, Fort Sill, Oklahoma; and, Deputy Commanding Officer, IIIrd Armored Corps Artillery, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. COL Slate's last assignment on active duty was to the Joint Staff in Washington, DC where he served as the Chief of the Joint Exercise Division.

COL Slate holds a Bachelor's Degree from VA TECH, a Master's Degree from Central Michigan University, and a Master's Degree from the Naval War College. He is a graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island. COL Slate's awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (with Oak Leaf Cluster),

the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (with three Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Commendation Medal (with four Oak Leaf Clusters), the Combat Action Badge, the Parachutist's Badge, the Army Staff Badge, and the Joint Staff Badge. COL (R) Nathan K. Slate, a native of southwestern Virginia, is married to the former Lisa Ann Spradlin of Stuart, Virginia. They have two daughters: Lauren and Heather. He currently resides in Lawton, Oklahoma, where he serves as the Site Manager and a Marketing Manager for NGTS. Nate serves in the community on the board of the Lawton-Ft. Sill (LFS) Chamber of Commerce and the Lawton Economic Development Cooperation. Nate serves as the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) State President for Oklahoma. His additional duty is chair of the AUSA Soldier/Family Council. He also serves as an advisor to Operation Homefront Oklahoma/Texas/Arkansas. Nate was recently appointed to the Cameron University Foundation Board of Directors.



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