

# MCU Journal

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## From the Editors

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During the past two decades, the U.S. government infrastructure has ground to a halt for a variety of reasons, particularly due to deficit reductions, military spending, health care, and overall party-line budget disagreements, but even more recently on border security and immigration. Regardless of party politics and the daily administrative drama in the White House, how does one of the wealthiest countries in the world prepare for the impact of making war and defending peace within these economic and political constraints? Authors for this issue of *MCU Journal* address the economics of defense and how those costs impact nations.

Aside from the economic costs the United States bears for its defense, the articles in the Spring issue of *MCU Journal* will demonstrate there are other costs and unique limitations faced by America and other nation-states. For example, smaller nations such as Oman must rely on technologically advanced allies for their defense support. Long-term political costs also may apply to these nations, as James Lockhart's article on the Central Intelligence Agency's intervention in Chilean politics discusses. There are also other ways to wage "war" that are discussed in this issue; for example, looking to the past, President Thomas Jefferson attempted to wage a trade war against Great Britain and France to maintain U.S. trade neutrality and, looking to the present and future, governments must address the real costs of cyberwar. Finally, we must consider the political and diplomatic costs associated with U.S. servicemembers and their work in foreign states, but also the relationship repair they must rely on to keep the peace.

For most militarized nations, the activities to support defense and well-equipped armed forces requires access to resources and a significant amount of capital investment. A country's military expenditures are largely determined by internal and external political forces—whether it is at war, maintaining a force structure necessary to defend against a threatening adversary, or attempting to build alliances through financial support. Outside a time of conflict, a nation will spend substantial sums to maintain their military capability. These costs

cannot be solely focused on the Services but all expenditures on current personnel, military and civil retirement pensions of military personnel, social services for personnel and their families, operations and maintenance procurement, military research and development, military construction, and military aid or sales of military equipment to donor countries and allies.

In the United States, defense spending has fluctuated significantly, depending on the circumstances. For fiscal year 2019, total U.S. government spending for defense, including military defense, veterans affairs, and foreign policy, was budgeted at \$951.5 billion, where military spending accounted for \$688.6 billion, veterans spending \$199.6 billion, and foreign policy and foreign aid spending \$63.3 billion. Historically, the United States has spent very little on defense in peacetime, typically about 1 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). That standard changed dramatically after World War II and the United States faced a global contest against another superpower Communist nation, the Soviet Union, that kept defense spending high and never fell to less than 3.6 percent of GDP during the Cold War. At the height of the Cold War, defense spending spiked to 6.8 percent GDP but fell consistently until 2000 to about half of the 1985 levels. After the attacks on 11 September 2001, the Global War on Terrorism would see those levels rise again to 5 percent by 2008 to support the surge in Iraq.<sup>1</sup>

Foreign aid is another economic cost incurred in defense expenditures—both military and economic. The concept of foreign aid began during World War I, when the United States contributed up to 6 percent of GDP to the war in Europe. The program was reinvigorated during World War II by the implementation of “Lend-Lease,” also known as the Lend Lease Act, peaking at 5 percent of GDP in 1945, which allowed President Franklin D. Roosevelt to authorize the shipment of weapons to Great Britain. The Marshall Plan and the Korean War would keep foreign aid at or above 2 percent of GDP; finally, assistance to nations fighting the Soviet threat kept foreign aid above 1.4 percent of GDP throughout the 1950s. Since 1962, federal budget data has differentiated between economic and military aid and shows a sharp decline from 1 percent of GDP down to 0.4 percent of GDP by 1970. During the 1970s and 1980s, foreign aid held constant around 0.4 percent; however, by 1985, foreign aid had declined to approximately 0.2 percent of GDP. Jumping forward to the 2010s, foreign aid increased to 0.3 percent of GDP, but it is expected to decline to less than 0.2 percent of GDP by 2020. Whether this regression is a reaction to the “America first” movement remains to be seen.<sup>2</sup> These constant changes illustrate the economic instability that can affect defense spending and implementation during different political environments.

Nation-states must consider the nonmonetary costs felt by the individuals and families who support such efforts. Should financial costs be the primary

consideration for a country when it considers the “costs” of warfare or supporting peace efforts? The Department of Veterans Affairs reports that extended participation in military operations plays a role in the overall “health” of U.S. servicemembers and the nation as a whole. American servicemembers who participate in multiple deployments are more likely to experience and suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, poor emotional and physical health, addiction, suicide, divorce, disrupted personal finances and bankruptcy, homelessness, and disassociation from family and friends.<sup>3</sup> This reality shows that, in addition to the multitude of costs for the nation-state in terms of finances, there are also personal costs to individuals who serve in the armed forces. The collection of articles that follows serves only as an introduction to this wide-ranging topic and offers a brief look at historical and contemporary forays into the economics of defense that will likely play out in the near future.

The remainder of the journal includes a selection of review essays and book reviews that continues our focus on defense spending but also highlights continuing challenges in national security and international relations. The coming year will be busy for the *MCU Journal* editors as we work to provide articles on a diverse range of topics relevant to the study of militaries and defense. The upcoming Fall 2019 issue opens a debate on great power competition and how the U.S. military, particularly the Marine Corps, might fare in the face of peer competition, soft/hard power plays, and the changing character of war. We are also accepting submissions for the Spring 2020 *MCU Journal* on innovation and future war, particularly plans and theories for future warfare, the potential or planned advances in technology, how the Services envision or plan for it, and key nation-states’ future war strategies. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on these topics and to your future participation. Join the conversation on the MC UPress Facebook and Twitter pages or communicate with us via email at [MCU\\_Press@usmcu.edu](mailto:MCU_Press@usmcu.edu).

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## Notes

1. Robert Higgs, *U.S. Military Spending in the Cold War Era: Opportunity Costs, Foreign Crises, and Domestic Constraints*, Policy Analysis No. 114 (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 1988); and Christopher Chantrell, “Defense Spending,” U.S. Government Spending, 2019.
2. Chantrell, “Defense Spending.”
3. “Post-Deployment Health,” Office of Research & Development, Department of Veterans Affairs, 13 August 2018; *VA Research on Gulf War Veterans* (Washington, DC: Department of Veterans Affairs, 2016); and *VA Research on Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans* (Washington, DC: Department of Veterans Affairs, 2016).





# The Cost of Being In-between War, Peace, and Trade Management in Jefferson's Second Administration, 1805–9

Patrick Callaway

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**Abstract:** The United States found itself in a precarious position in the first years of the nineteenth century. As a neutral power on the sidelines of an expanding European war, the circumstances provided both opportunity and danger for the new nation. This article argues that Thomas Jefferson's use of American trade as a negotiating tool in international diplomacy to secure a particular vision of neutral rights during his second administration (1805–9) created a number of domestic consequences. The effects of his international policies had the unexpected outcome of fundamentally questioning the Jeffersonian political economy's underpinnings of limited federal powers and a government structure supported by customs duties rather than onerous internal taxation. Declining government revenues and increasing domestic opposition led to the end of the embargo, while Jefferson's international vision of neutral rights remained unfulfilled.

**Keywords:** Thomas Jefferson, Embargo Act (1807), Albert Gallatin, Jeffersonian political economy, smuggling, customs

**P**resident Thomas Jefferson's second term opened in 1805 with optimism. Domestic peace was accompanied by economic prosperity. The Napoleonic Wars in Europe created opportunities as neutral merchants for Americans throughout the Atlantic world. Four years later, it was clear that 1805 was the start of a transition for the United States. The war in Europe

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intensified and evolved into an economic struggle between continental power France and naval power Great Britain. The United States was caught in between these two powers, with severe consequences for American political policy and economy. Jefferson's responses to these new circumstances exacerbated these complications. The embargo of 1807 attempted to compel changes in British and French trade laws by reviving the successful boycott strategy of the 1760s and early 1770s against British colonial policy. In theory, denying access to American exports would pressure domestic interests in those countries to advocate for the changes in trade laws that the U.S. government could not find through negotiation. Thus, the embargo was designed to be a moderate measure, balancing the desire to preserve peace while advancing the national interest in a time of conflict. However, a combination of American financial distress and domestic opposition to the embargo made Jefferson's position in between war and peace unsustainable. The cost of this effort was not only monetary. Efforts to enforce the embargo extracted a terrible cost in domestic discord and, perhaps most importantly, limited the ability of the U.S. government to use trade restrictions as a viable tool of diplomacy.

In his second inaugural address in March 1805, Jefferson noted with satisfaction that the United States "endeavored to cultivate the friendship of all nations . . . and cherished mutual interests and intercourse on fair and equal terms."<sup>1</sup> Peace and trade abroad supported Jefferson's domestic agenda as well. The scourge of internal taxes could be avoided through a combination of frugality and revenues derived from taxes placed on imports, which were "paid cheerfully by those who can afford to add foreign luxuries to domestic comforts."<sup>2</sup> The address encapsulated the Jeffersonian ideal, which rested on two basic premises. First, that the true strength of the new American republic laid in the yeoman farmer; those who tilled the soil to provide a self-sufficient livelihood for them and their family. The second, but less remembered premise, was that the surplus agricultural production of the United States could be exchanged with the rest of the Atlantic world, both as a benefit to agriculture but also to provide customs revenue to the federal coffers. The result was the reduction or elimination of internal taxation—as well as the bureaucratic structure required to support internal taxation.

Studies of Jeffersonian political economy, such as Drew R. McCoy's *The Elusive Republic* and Doron S. Ben-Atar's *The Origins of Jeffersonian Commercial Policy and Diplomacy* draw attention to the philosophical debate among Jeffersonians over the appropriate relationship between the economy, foreign trade, and the republic.<sup>3</sup> Superficially, this appeared to be a stable system that benefited everyone: American farmers and merchants profited from access to foreign markets, the American treasury benefited from the expanding customs revenues, and even British merchants benefited from access to American consum-

ers. The changing geopolitical circumstances, however, destabilized this system.

The primary point of conflict between the United States and Great Britain in 1805 was not about American exports, but rather the carrying trade. The carrying trade, which denoted the produce of a belligerent power being transported under the flag of a neutral nation, allowed American traders to ship commodities from the French West Indies to Europe. If the goods were first landed in the United States, they would be “naturalized” as American goods. This is known as the “broken voyage” rule. As French power expanded in continental Europe and British naval power destroyed the capacity of France to maintain a presence at sea, economic warfare between the two powers was inevitable. In July 1805, a British court ruled in the *Essex* decision that the broken voyage rule that allowed for the American carrying trade between France and the rest of the world was illegal.<sup>4</sup>

For James Stephens, a British writer with extensive connections to the British government and Admiralty, the neutral trade with France was a violation of Britain’s rights as a belligerent power. The exact rules governing neutral trade during the early nineteenth century were unclear and were often interpreted and reinterpreted depending on the changing circumstances. Stephens argued that American trade between France and French colonies in the Caribbean was an illegal breach of Britain’s blockade because it was illegal for American ships to conduct that trade in peacetime. Known as “the rule of ’56,” this unilateral policy attempted to manage neutral trade based on a broad application of policy rather than the actual content of each ship’s cargo. In Stephens’s analysis, American trade with France was really French trade hidden behind the neutral flag of the United States. Earlier wars between France and Great Britain saw British sea power transfer French colonial holdings from an asset to an expensive liability. American interference allowed France to enjoy the benefits of a colonial empire without paying to sustain a navy or merchant marine. Therefore, according to Stephens, Britain was justified in interdicting neutral trade with France as a means of prosecuting the war by starving the French treasury of funds.<sup>5</sup>

An analysis of the actual content of trade goods lends support to Stephens’s accusations. A majority of exports from the United States to Great Britain were agricultural products and other produce of the United States. However, the vast majority of U.S. exports to France and the rest of continental Europe consisted of foreign products transported by American shipping.<sup>6</sup> The conflation of American produce and the carrying trade provoked criticism in the United States as well as in Great Britain. The carrying trade, according to the American pamphleteer known by the pseudonym Columella, was positively dangerous to Americans. In 1806, Columella wrote that “there are foul vices growing and flourishing among us, and they deserve to be vigorously struck at. Those who, by their unlawful procedures . . . have implicated their country in a dispute with

which the community in general has not immediate concern, except the dread that its consequences may be generally ruinous.”<sup>7</sup> In essence, tying together domestic- and foreign-sourced commerce threatened to embroil the entire United States in a conflict for the benefit of a small handful of merchants.

The U.S. government provided an entirely different analysis of the question. In a response to *War in Disguise*, Secretary of State James Madison wrote that neutral trade should not be interfered with because neutrals form “a trade auxiliary to his prosperity and his revenue” by “liberating his naval facilities for war.” Not only was American trade beneficial for Great Britain, Madison’s interpretation of the ill-defined international laws governing neutral trade did not allow for a belligerent power to interdict that trade unless the vessel was carrying instruments of war or was entering into a besieged port. Any further control of trade between a neutral and a belligerent power was illegal, and British efforts to redefine belligerent and neutral rights to constrain American carrying trade to serve British interests were illegitimate.<sup>8</sup> In Madison’s interpretation, international law protected international trade except in cases of a strict blockade of individual enemy ports and a narrow definition of contraband. Trade interdiction should be a case by case system of management rather than a broad statement of general policy as advocated by Stephens. The broad statement of principle was underlain by a vested interest in liberal trade laws. Congressman Timothy Pitkin of Connecticut drew on treasury records for his 1817 book, *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States*. In his calculations, the average value of exports for American-produced goods from 1805 to 1807 amounted to \$44.8 million while the reexport of foreign-produced goods averaged \$57.7 million during the same time period.<sup>9</sup>

The *Essex* decision in 1805 and the theoretical arguments between James Stephens and James Madison signaled a fundamental intellectual shift in the treatment of neutral trade in wartime. Jefferson’s hostility toward British trade policies and desire to promote American economic interests resulted in the first of several laws that attempted to use economic policy to influence British treatment of the United States in 1806. In that year, Congress passed a limited nonimportation act against British trade. However, this act only controlled the importation of a few goods of little consequence and did not take effect until November 1807. In addition, British colonial imports were excluded from the act.<sup>10</sup> These half measures were overtaken by changes in Europe as Napoleonic expansion in Europe and the growing superiority of the Royal Navy combined to dramatically change the nature of the Napoleonic Wars.

Napoleon Bonaparte’s Berlin Decree in November 1806 marked the beginning of systemic economic warfare between France and Great Britain. From 1793 to 1806, the relative balance of naval power between Britain and France, as well as the existence of other neutral trading partners, limited interference

with U.S. trade; however, the intensifying war left the United States and its trade interests vulnerable to the larger powers even as the federal government attempted to assert American commercial rights. The declaration of economic warfare officially inaugurated a regime of reciprocal measures by Britain and France designed to bankrupt their enemy and thus destroy their fiscal capacity to conduct war. Under the terms of the decree, Great Britain was declared blockaded, all ships and goods from Britain or its colonies were subject to seizure, and any trading vessel that called on a port within the British Empire was refused access to any continental market under French control.<sup>11</sup> In reprisal, the British government issued the Orders in Council of January 1807, under which the whole of Europe was declared blockaded unless trade was undertaken by British merchant ships. Under Napoleon's decrees, any neutral merchant vessel obeying British regulations could be seized under French law. Under British law, any merchant vessel obeying French regulations could be seized by the Royal Navy. The competing trade restrictions created a precarious position for the United States and increased tensions with both Britain and Napoleonic Europe.

The impressment crisis provided the foundation for a new course in American diplomacy. Britain asserted the right to stop and search U.S. merchant ships for deserters from the Royal Navy. This practice caused consternation in the United States, even among those who otherwise supported trade with Britain and opposed Jefferson politically. A memorial from the New Haven Chamber of Commerce was typical for most New England port cities and merchant interests. The chamber expressed outrage at British interference with American trade and "the unwarrantable impressment of seamen" and expressed the willingness of the chamber to support "every measure of government calculated to accomplish this important object."<sup>12</sup> In June 1807, the HMS *Leopard* (1790) caused an international scandal by firing on the USS *Chesapeake* (1799) in an effort to recover four British deserters. Three men were killed and 16 wounded and all four alleged deserters were taken aboard the *Leopard*.<sup>13</sup> The outrage on both sides caused Britain to disavow the action and return the three surviving sailors, but the incident soured Anglo-American relations at a critical time. President Jefferson had concluded that the limited nonimportation law was an ineffective tool to influence British or French policies on trade restrictions, neutral rights, or impressments, and the *Leopard* incident gave him the political capital to call for a new approach.

Firing on the *Chesapeake* could have been considered an act of war. Despite public outrage, Jefferson decided on a more moderate course of action. The Embargo Act of 1807 reflected Jefferson's belief that the importance of American trade to the European belligerents would cause a change in trade policy if that trade was threatened. Under the terms of the embargo, the United States

would not engage in foreign trade until its rights as a neutral power were respected by Britain and France. An embargo was a moderate step that avoided—at least temporarily—the possibility of open war.<sup>14</sup> In theory, depriving the British Royal Navy of American naval stores, the British West Indies of American provisions, and the French the products of the carrying trade would change the policies that restricted American trade opportunities.<sup>15</sup>

Potentially, the embargo could have been a pragmatic response to a volatile situation. Although the American public may have supported a declaration of war, the means to pursue war were lacking. The possibility of war in 1807 drew attention to the inability of the U.S. government to pay for a potential war with Britain. In the fall of 1807, Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin informed Congress that the only way a war could be funded was through loans and investment in government securities by capitalists whose money would be idle under the embargo law.<sup>16</sup> The United States lacked an adequate system of internal taxation to support conflict in the absence of substantial private investments into the war effort. Therefore, the embargo was a safer policy than war.

Jefferson's policy was a combination of the memories of the successful boycotts against British colonial trade management in the 1760s and 1770s. Popular action against colonial taxation policies, such as the Stamp Act in 1765, caused changes in British policy based on the negative effect on the British economy due to the lack of American markets. Jefferson's viewpoints on the political power of economic policies were influenced by this background. As the historian Doron Ben-Atar notes, the embargo was the "culmination of Jefferson's long-held commercial views" that "American commerce could be used as an instrument for forcing the belligerent nations to do America justice and to respect the republic's honor." In this assessment, the Embargo Act was the product of a genuine ideological stance that saw little value in merchants in general and of British merchants in particular.<sup>17</sup>

In his 1807 *Report on the State of Finances*, Treasury Secretary Gallatin clarified the basic principles of Jeffersonian Republican fiscal policy. In all circumstances, sufficient revenue must be collected to fund the peacetime establishment, pay interest on existing debt, and the interest on any debt sustained as a result of war expenses. Further, loans were preferable to increased taxation in the case of extraordinary expenses, as loans were the product of accumulated capital rather than a burden on citizens. Under this theory, the need for revenue to cover interest payments would grow as a potential war progressed. Gallatin expressed hope that "loans to a reasonable amount may be obtained on eligible terms."<sup>18</sup> Gallatin's report reflects a hope based on a hypothetical course of action rather than an existing system of finance.

Satisfaction on questions of interference with American trade in Europe was not forthcoming from Great Britain or France. Subsequent British Orders

in Council in November and December 1807 prohibited all neutral trade with Europe unless the vessel first entered a British port.<sup>19</sup> Napoleon's first Milan Decree of November 1807 further stipulated that British goods on any vessel, or the cargo of any vessel that stopped at a British port trading with Europe, should be confiscated as contraband.<sup>20</sup> The second Milan Decree the next month stipulated that any trading vessel that submitted to British inspection on the high seas, visited Britain, or paid any British duties were declared British property for purposes of French law.<sup>21</sup> In essence, by the end of 1807, the combined actions of the two major European powers effectively made neutral trade illegal. Whether American pressure would be adequate to compel a change in these circumstances was unproven.

Many British merchants noted the public benefits of accommodating American demands. Alexander Baring, a prominent merchant and banker with close ties to Philadelphia's banking community, noted that the true beneficiary of increased American trade with Europe was actually Great Britain. The trade surplus Britain had with the United States covered the trade deficit with other trading partners. Even more importantly, the trade surplus enabled Great Britain to sustain the war effort against Napoleon:

I [Baring] have shewn, that, even supposing the cordial cooperation of America in the execution of the Orders in council, there would be a diminution of our receipts from the continent of four or five millions sterling. The moderate state of our foreign exchanges for some time past, shews how much we want this large aid, which our American connection indirectly afforded. . . . In this manner we have paid to a considerable extent, for the support of our fleets and armies in the Mediterranean and the Baltic, and by sending our manufactures to America; a circumstance which must be easily understood by those who know the effect of the general circulation of exchanges, and that bills are frequently drawn in Paris, or Madrid, whilst the real transaction in merchandize, which gave rise to them may have taken place in Russia or in India.<sup>22</sup>

Baring's argument echoes that of Jefferson. The value of American trade to the British economy—and therefore the British war effort—was of such importance that concessions on the Orders in Council would ultimately benefit Great Britain. In addition, the actual source of the trade surplus was resources drawn out of Europe via neutral American trade. Thus, every exchange not only contributed to the British economy but also diminished Napoleon's resources at the same time.

While British merchants criticized British policies, Americans reacted with

outrage toward Jefferson. The Boston Chamber of Commerce supported protests against impressment by the Royal Navy and also warned that “the habits of the country so long and firmly established, could not be suddenly changed, without producing consequences the most distressing and destructive.”<sup>23</sup> Boston’s opposition to trade restrictions was typical for New England port cities that relied on foreign trade for economic survival. The goal was the protection for trade, not an embargo of undefined duration.

The total embargo transformed an international political dispute on neutral trade regulations into a *de facto* referendum on Jefferson’s scheme of political economy and on the strength of the federal government. The cost of the embargo was not just monetary. The American authorities’ efforts to enforce the embargo failed. Even the introduction of extraordinary measures, including the use of military force, had little effect.<sup>24</sup> In a perverse twist of fate, the Jeffersonians found themselves in a similar position as the British government during the boycotts of the 1760s and 1770s. Coercing an unwilling population to participate in economically self-destructive behaviors did not work. Efforts to compel obedience to the law only made the situation worse as open defiance became the norm.

From the first debates in Congress, there was a healthy skepticism that the law could or should actually be enforced. Enforcement of the Embargo Act was almost impossible due to the lack of an internal road network and the reliance on sea communications to transport goods for domestic markets. The original incarnation of the law did not function as designed, so the Jefferson administration continuously modified the law as gaps in the embargo policy manifested themselves. In one modification, Jefferson attempted to enforce the embargo by inserting a provision into the law requiring the masters of all vessels clearing American ports to post a bond equal to double the value of the vessel and cargo.<sup>25</sup> A new provision added to the law in January 1808 stipulated that all fishing vessels leaving port were required to post a bond amounting to four times the value of the vessel and cargo to ensure that the ship would not enter a foreign harbor. These measures proved to be inadequate.

The practical problems of enforcement did not hinder Congress from enacting even more stringent regulations. An April 1808 addition to the law mandated that any vessel leaving an American harbor must load all cargo under the supervision of revenue officers. A further requirement was imposed on all masters and mates of trading ships to provide proof to the customs service at their port of embarkation that the cargo had been landed in an American port within four months.<sup>26</sup> The period was later reduced to two months, and provisions were added in January 1809 to allow the president to employ military force to uphold the embargo and to suppress any riots against the trade laws, to seize any ships, carts, and goods if there was “the intent to export . . . or with



the intent in any other manner to evade the acts [the Embargo Acts] to which this is a supplement” and empowering customs officials to refuse to allow any goods to be loaded on a trading vessel if in their judgment “there is an intention to violate the embargo.”<sup>27</sup>

The statutes reinforcing the Embargo Act represented another transfer of virtually unchallenged power to the federal bureaucracy. Prosecution for violating the embargo and the confiscation of private property was now possible based on the opinion of customs officials about what a citizen might do rather than proof of any crime. Realistically, there were difficulties for this scheme. As Gautham Rao’s book *National Duties* persuasively argues, seaborne commerce was aided by a malleable customs enforcement structure that favored merchant interests rather than national policies restricting trade. The customs houses functioned as a negotiated space between merchants and federal officials, rendering customs collections a cooperative rather than adversarial relationship.<sup>28</sup> Even if the appropriate enabling legislation existed, a reliable enforcement mechanism for the unpopular law through the customary civilian legal structure did not exist.

Ineffectual enforcement, domestic opposition, and the lack of apparent effect on British or French policies created three challenges for Jefferson’s embargo. Even more serious was the effect of the law on the nation’s fiscal condition. Income from customs duties provided approximately 96 percent of government revenues in fiscal year (FY) 1807.<sup>29</sup> Treasury Secretary Gallatin’s December 1808 report to Congress noted that “if the embargo and suspension of commerce shall be continued, the revenue arising from commerce will, in a short time, entirely disappear.”<sup>30</sup> From FY 1808 to FY 1809, federal tax revenues fell by more than 50 percent, and a budget surplus of \$7 million became a deficit of \$2.5 million.<sup>31</sup> This loss would be unsustainable unless a radically new and politically unsustainable program of internal taxation was created to fund government operations.

President Jefferson’s eighth annual address to Congress in November 1808 signaled the end of the embargo. Although neither Great Britain nor France rescinded the trade regulations that led to the embargo, Jefferson attempted to claim that the benefits of the law outweighed the costs. The experiment failed to extract concessions from foreign powers, but the protection offered to American seamen from impressment and property from seizure was an adequate repayment for the privations caused by the law.<sup>32</sup> In essence, this protection was bought at the price of idling a lucrative sector of the American economy, capital resources, and widespread unemployment for laborers in a multitude of trade-related occupations. Historians have been far less kind in their assessment of Jefferson. The embargo’s actual impact on France and Great Britain was negligible. As a practical matter, the Royal Navy already succeeded in interdicting

direct trade between France and its colonies; according to historian Bradford Perkins, Napoleon saw little value in the produce of the few remaining colonies. In Britain, the embargo caused a rise in the price of grain and caused disruption in a few minor elements of the economy, such as linen production, but the ultimate victim of the American embargo was the United States.<sup>33</sup> According to Douglass C. North, the embargo caused a “collapse in domestic prices and wide spread unemployment.”<sup>34</sup> According to Reginald Horsman, the Embargo Act “shattered American trade and finances, created bitter internal opposition, and left no possibility of stepping up the pressure on Great Britain by further escalation of the economic measures.”<sup>35</sup> The subsequent failure of more incremental trade restrictions from 1809 through the start of the War of 1812 outline the post-embargo difficulties of using economic pressure as a tool of international diplomacy without causing even greater harm to the United States.

Jefferson’s second administration managed foreign policy, domestic interests, and trade between multiple competing pressures with few obvious answers and no easy solutions. The United States was trapped as a neutral trading power between France and Great Britain as the Napoleonic Wars transitioned from a classical eighteenth-century conception of limited war to a long-reaching system of economic warfare between two contending world powers. The legislation succeeded in preserving the peace at a time when war was a possible outcome of the *Chesapeake-Leopard* incident. The potential costs of that conflict are unknowable. The policy attempted to create an ideal solution for multiple problems; however, the law’s effectiveness was hamstrung by popular resistance and the need for customs revenues required to sustain Jefferson’s conception of domestic political economy. The moderate policy extracted its own costs, not only in treasure but also in internal dissent and the lesson that American trade legislation was not an effective tool for international diplomacy.

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## Notes

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# How Effective Are Covert Operations?

## The CIA's Intervention in Chile, 1964–73

James Lockhart, PhD

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**Abstract:** This article reassesses the effectiveness of the CIA's interventions in Chilean elections from 1964 to 1973. The author finds that these covert operations were not decisive and were no more than modestly effective. Rather, a pattern of shifting coalitions on the ground in Chile better explains the electoral outcomes that occurred during these years. This suggests that these findings might offer insight into our conversations about Russian intervention in American presidential elections in 2016, thus contributing to ongoing discussions on applied history, politics, and policy making.

**Keywords:** security and intelligence studies, covert operations, influence campaigns, President Eduardo Frei, President Salvador Allende, Chilean coup of 1973, Augusto Pinochet dictatorship, Latin America, Cold War

As it was becoming clear that the Russian government attempted to influence the U.S. presidential elections in 2016, Chilean-American novelist Ariel Dorfman savored the moment, citing the irony “at the sight of Americans squirming in indignation at the spectacle of their democracy subjected to foreign interference.” The United States “cannot in good faith decry what has been done to its decent citizens until it is ready to face what it did so often to the equally decent citizens of other nations.” Yet, Dorfman shared the Americans’ concerns. No one should have their leaders chosen by “someone in a remote room abroad. . . . Nothing warrants that citizens anywhere

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should have their destiny manipulated by forces outside the land they inhabit.”<sup>1</sup>

Dorfman was comparing Moscow’s intervention in American elections in 2016 to Washington’s intervention in Chilean elections in 1970. He emphasized U.S. influence over Chilean agency while connecting the intervention in 1970 to Plan Cochayuyo (Seaweed), Vice Admiral José Toribio Merino’s operation that overthrew Chilean president Salvador Allende in 1973. Merino was the commanding officer of PRIZONA (Primera Zona Naval), Chilean fleet headquarters at Valparaíso. After two stormy meetings with Allende and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Raúl Montero in Santiago on 5 and 7 September 1973, Merino revised Plan Cochayuyo, which he had drafted earlier that year as the navy’s contingency plan to restore security in the event the government declared a state of emergency, transforming it into a plan for a coup d’état. Then, on the morning of 11 September, with Chief of Staff General Augusto Pinochet and acting commander of the Chilean Air Force General Gustavo Leigh’s cooperation, he assumed command of the navy and ordered the execution of the operation. They prevailed by 2000 that evening. When Dorfman reminded Americans of “the many crimes the C.I.A. [Central Intelligence Agency] had been committing, [and] the multiple ways in which it had destroyed democracy elsewhere” during the Cold War, he was merely reciting key elements of a well-known narrative that has attributed this coup to the U.S. intelligence community since the 1970s.<sup>2</sup>

Novelist Gabriel García Márquez, attorney Thomas Hauser, and Hollywood filmmaker Costa-Gavras articulated this narrative, which found its ultimate expression in *Missing*, a movie starring Jack Lemmon and Sissy Spacek, between the mid-1970s and early 1980s. According to them, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), using the U.S. ambassador in Santiago, MILGROUP (the U.S. military’s advisory group in Valparaíso), and the UNITAS (Latin for unity) exercises off the Chilean coast as cover, perpetrated the coup and killed Allende. They had an American citizen detained, tortured, and murdered to cover it up.<sup>3</sup>

As these accusations may suggest, the contextualization and writing of Chile’s Cold War history has been bitterly contested ever since. Although many moderated their language and tone in the decades that followed, the narrative and the literature that it produced remain centered on these allegations. Historians Simon Collier, William F. Sater, and Tanya Harmer characterized it as “axe-grinding” and “a narrow historiography of blame” as late as 2011.<sup>4</sup>

This narrative was dominating the research agenda and the production of knowledge on Chile’s Cold War experience by the early 1990s. Political scientist Paul E. Sigmund challenged it, pointing out the importance of accounting for Chilean politics and history, to little avail. As he observed,

Ask an educated American what he or she knows about Chile,

and you are likely to get a response that alludes to the U.S.'s role in overthrowing a Marxist regime in 1973 and in "proping up" a brutal dictatorship that followed. If that person has seen the film *Missing*, you may even get a reference to the murder of Charles Horman "because he knew too much" about that role.<sup>5</sup>

This conversation became calmer, less emotional, and more open to exploring the multifaceted nature of the coup and the subsequent Pinochet dictatorship in the 2000s. New archives opened, allowing for a more international Cold War history. Also, the British government detained Pinochet for human rights crimes in 1998. The general had granted himself immunity before stepping down from power and was not likely to have been prosecuted in Chile. The William J. "Bill" Clinton administration cooperated with this, ordering a massive declassification of government documents relating to the coup and the dictatorship's use of state-sponsored terrorism, although London released Pinochet, who had aged a great deal and was showing signs of dementia—or so his lawyers argued.<sup>6</sup>

This notwithstanding, historians still tend to defer to the above-described narrative and its charges while attributing the coup to American intelligence services. According to international relations historian Jonathan Haslam, "The United States would prepare the ground and do everything short of seizing power themselves. The coup would be effected from the Pentagon, using DIA and naval intelligence working with and through the Chilean armed forces." In Mark Atwood Lawrence's estimation, although the Allende administration was overthrown "partly under the weight of its own tactical blunders. . . . The [Richard M.] Nixon administration bears primary responsibility for fomenting the coup." Historian Lubna Z. Qureshi insists that "Washington directed this sordid drama." Stephen G. Rabe, following Haslam, wrote that Deputy Director of Central Intelligence Lieutenant General Vernon A. Walters traveled to Santiago, set up shop in a downtown hotel that overlooked the presidential palace, and coordinated the Chilean armed forces' communications, presumably acting as forward observer. Thus, historians still tend to maintain that President Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger "took credit for destroying the constitutional regime of Salvador Allende."<sup>7</sup>

Some historians cited this narrative not as a research agenda but rather as a point of departure. Jody Pavilack, who explored Chile's Cold War history in the 1940s, explicitly rejected "the myth of smooth, peaceful Chilean democracy up to 1973." Chilean history was actually quite jagged. Kristian Gustafson concluded that the narrative exaggerated the CIA's role and effectiveness while commenting that Chilean armed forces did not need American assistance to

conceive and carry out the coup. Harmer, who included Brazilian and Cuban intervention in an increasingly global inter-American Cold War history, found that

Chileans were the key determiners of their country's foreign relations and its future rather than being passive bystanders viewing—and being affected by—the actions of outsiders . . . it was Chilean military leaders who launched the coup with the help of sympathetic Brazilian friends, not the United States. And our effort to understand why they did inevitably leads us back to Cuban involvement in Chile and Latin America.<sup>8</sup>

These interpretations have drawn both praise and pushback. Harmer's interest in Havana led a concerned scholar to ask her "whether my researching the details of Cuba's role in Chile meant that I thought the United States was justified in destabilizing Chilean democracy." Parts of the narrative remain so deeply entrenched in our history that they have become impregnable—for example, accusations about the execution or assassination of Allende. Chilean authorities have conducted three autopsies since 1973. The last one, performed in 2011, assembled an international team of experts, including a ballistics specialist from Scotland Yard. These examinations all produced the same result: Allende, tragically, took his own life. Yet, suspicions that the coup's perpetrators merely staged his suicide and that authorities have lied to conceal it persist—even after the Chilean Supreme Court closed the case in 2014.<sup>9</sup>

This article contributes to these new trends. It moves beyond what historian Sally Marks has called "the world according to Washington" to reassess the effectiveness of the agency's interventions in Chilean elections in September 1964, September 1970, and March 1973. This matters because many seem to accept Nixon and Kissinger's words at face value while taking the CIA's effectiveness for granted—some even attribute a godlike omnipotence to it. But if the agency were as effective as these critics imagined, then Fidel Castro ought to have been assassinated, the Bay of Pigs should have reversed the Cuban Revolution, President Eduardo Frei would have inaugurated a Christian Democratic dynasty in Chile, the Phoenix program ought to have eradicated the Vietcong in South Vietnam, Allende should never have been elected *or* inaugurated, and it would not have taken a decade to locate and kill Osama bin Laden.<sup>10</sup>

The article does not evaluate Plan Cochayuyo, the coup. Cochayuyo remains a Chilean, not an American, operation. This point remains true regardless of whether it pleased Nixon and Kissinger or whether the CIA knew about it. Of course, the agency knew about it—so did the Soviet Union's Committee for State Security (KGB, Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti) and other foreign intelligence services. But taking pleasure from something, and knowing



about it and reporting on it, are one thing, while actually doing it is another. Further, regardless of whose operation the coup was, it was not an attempt to influence an election. Thus, it falls outside of this article's agenda.<sup>11</sup>

The author finds that a pattern of shifting coalitions better explains electoral outcomes in Chile than the CIA's covert operations do. Chileans' political leanings remained relatively stable in the 1960s and early 1970s, but their political parties' tactical alignments and positioning changed from election to election. This rise and fall of coalitions—not the agency's operations—remains the ball that we should keep our eye on. The author also finds that the CIA's operations were most effective when they backed successful coalitions and other prevailing currents in politics and public opinion, whose results would likely have been similar even had the agency not intervened. Its operations were least effective when they opposed these coalitions or when they tried to impose outcomes that were more convenient for the United States than for key institutions, groups, and individuals on the ground in Chile.

This suggests that covert operations meant to influence elections—no matter how powerful the government or intelligence service that runs them, no matter how well conceived, lavishly funded, or carefully implemented they may be—do not determine the results. These operations certainly remain relevant to any comprehensive explanation, but their contribution remains modest. Dorfman fails to consider this and consequently overstates their effectiveness in both the Chilean past and the American present. Nevertheless, his piece offers an opportunity to reevaluate the agency's activities in Chile while rethinking our assumptions and beliefs about the effectiveness of covert intervention in elections in general. This might give us some insight into our evolving impressions and perceptions about the still murky relationship between Russian intervention and the victory of President Donald J. Trump in 2016.

This article also reveals some of the costs and liabilities that have followed the CIA's covert operations. When the Senate attributed the operations in Chile to the John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Richard Nixon administrations, it exposed the American government as one that disregarded its commitments to nonintervention whenever it pleased. This matters because policy makers tend to present the United States as the leader of “an inexorably expanding cooperative order of states observing common rules and norms, embracing liberal economic systems, forswearing territorial conquest, respecting national sovereignty, and adopting participatory and democratic systems of governance” that some historians trace back to the Peace of Westphalia. Washington's use of covert operations during the Cold War eroded its credibility in this regard. This has complicated the conduct of foreign relations, even decades later. It has rendered Americans vulnerable to Dorfman and others' “whataboutism” whenever Russian intervention is brought up, which distracts and prevents us

from confronting the security problems that the Vladimir Putin regime presents. These issues, including the above narrative, have manifested repeatedly at home and abroad.<sup>12</sup>

For example, in 2003, when the George W. Bush administration attempted to justify its decision to invade Iraq, a student asked Secretary of State Colin L. Powell how the president could argue for action against Saddam Hussein in Baghdad for violating international agreements when previous administrations had

staged a coup in Chile . . . despite the wishes of the Chilean populace against the coup, and in support—and the populace in support of the democratically elected President Salvador Allende, the CIA, regardless, supported the coup of Augusto Pinochet and that resulted in mass deaths.<sup>13</sup>

More than a decade later, Chileans asked President Barack H. Obama to apologize for the coup.<sup>14</sup>

### **September 1964: The Election of Eduardo Frei**

The Dwight D. Eisenhower administration overthrew President Jacobo Árbenz in Guatemala in 1954, partly for anti-Communist motives. But neither the United States nor the Soviet Union approached Latin America as an active and sustained Cold War theater until after the Cuban Revolution in 1959. Washington led the creation of the Inter-American Development Bank, helped launch the Alliance for Progress and such successive aid programs as the Peace Corps and the Ronald W. Reagan administration's Caribbean Basin Initiative, and oversaw counterinsurgency and covert operations from the late 1950s until Nicaraguans voted the Sandinistas out of office as the Cold War was winding down in 1990.

The Kennedy administration encountered Chilean senator Eduardo Frei in this context. Frei's center-left Christian Democratic Party (PDC, Partido Demócrata Cristiano) had become the most influential one in Chile by the early 1960s. Christian Democrats had collaborated with Radicals, Socialists, and others to expand citizenship and voting rights while reforming their country's multiparty democracy in the late 1950s and early 1960s. They helped the Communist Party of Chile (PCCh, Partido Comunista de Chile) return to legal, aboveground politics—the party had been driven underground by the Gabriel González Videla administration in 1948. They did this to prevent Conservatives and Liberals—particularly landowners, who had controlled peasant voting since independence—from continuing to exercise a de facto veto over Chilean legislation and reform.

Christian Democrats offered a center-left, reformist alternative to Con-

servatives, Liberals, and Radicals' status quo on the right, and Socialists and Communists' Marxist-Leninist program on the far left. Frei promised land redistribution, investment in housing and education, and "promoción popular," or the inclusion of marginalized people from rural labor to shantytown dwellers and women. He premised this "Revolution in Liberty" on his belief that his party could win enough of the electorate's loyalty to guarantee Christian Democratic governance into the future.<sup>15</sup>

The Kennedy administration noticed Frei in spring 1962. He was in the United States for a forum at Georgetown University to discuss his party's politics and its views on the Alliance for Progress. He continued this discussion at Columbia University in New York. He chatted with Kennedy aide Ralph A. Dungan back in Washington on his way home.<sup>16</sup>

It remains well-known that the Johnson administration supported Frei in Chile's presidential elections two years later, in September 1964, and that Frei won 55.6 percent of the vote; Allende garnered 38.6 percent; and Julio Durán came in a distant third with 5 percent. Dungan coordinated this action from the National Security Council (NSC), where he directed the CIA to employ the same methods it had used in Italy in 1947. The NSC distributed about \$2.6 million to Frei's campaign, while spending another \$3 million against Allende.<sup>17</sup>

For two reasons, this influence campaign has always seemed more effective than it really was. First, the Johnson administration approached Chile and the rest of Latin America very ambitiously, and the amounts it spent for Frei and against Allende totaled in the millions. Second, some government sources, such as the Senate's Church Committee (formally the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities), dozens of Hollywood films, and a stream of sensational press coverage and journalistic accounts, have cultivated an unreal mystique about the agency's capabilities and impact since the 1970s. So, perhaps it seemed intuitive to look no further than Washington's financial contributions and conclude that Allende and his coalition were defeated because "they had been badly outspent by the Christian Democrats, the U.S. embassy, and the CIA."<sup>18</sup>

Johnson officials were caught up in this mystique too. Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) John A. McCone speculated that "without the large-scale covert support provided for the campaign, Frei would have gained, at most, a bare plurality." Then he added, as an afterthought, that "the voters, themselves, in Chile deserved some commendation" as well.<sup>19</sup>

But when we examine the formation and politics of the coalitions that competed in these presidential elections, it becomes clear that Frei's advantage accrued from the conservative establishment's longstanding dread of Marxism and a special congressional election in Curicó in early 1964. The results of this election frightened Conservatives and Liberals. And it was this scare—not

American advice, propaganda, or money—that motivated these two parties to throw their weight behind the Frei campaign that March.

When Socialist Deputy Oscar Naranjo Jara, who represented Curicó, died in office in December 1963, Chileans approached the election to replace him as a kind of plebiscite that would predict the upcoming presidential contest, which remained a three-way race. Conservatives, Liberals, and Radicals had united under the Democratic Front of Chile coalition on the right. Christian Democrats running alone occupied the center-left. And Allende's Frente de Acción Popular (FRAP) coalition of Communists, Socialists, and others represented the far left. The Democratic Front's leaders assured themselves, based on previous performance, that they controlled around one-half the vote. They believed that their candidate, Rodolfo Ramírez, would prevail against FRAP nominee Oscar Naranjo Arias, the deceased deputy's son. In fact, Naranjo received 39 percent of the vote and won the election. Ramírez took 33 percent, and the Christian Democrats 28 percent. This led to the collapse of the Democratic Front.<sup>20</sup> Conservatives and Liberals hastily realigned their parties behind Christian Democrats as the lesser of two evils. They attempted to moderate Frei's platform as the price of their support. But he refused to concede anything to them.

Frei's confidence came from many sources, mostly from his feeling that he was on the right side of history and his understanding that Conservatives and Liberals had nowhere else to go. Frei was also aware that, in the aftermath of Curicó, the Johnson administration had decided to back his campaign. In Curicó, as the Department of State's Chilean desk officer, Ralph W. Richardson, phrased it, "our 'decision' to swing behind Frei was made for us." Washington still preferred the U.S.-friendly Democratic Front, but it had disintegrated. Radicals were increasingly perceived as opportunists by Chilean voters and were unable to bring themselves to support Christian Democrats, who they perceived as too pro-Roman Catholic Church for their liking. The United States could, however, because Christian Democrats' criticism of liberal capitalism notwithstanding, they remained interested in the alliance, they were anti-Communist, and that sufficed.<sup>21</sup>

Frei lost no time asking the American embassy to give his campaign \$1 million. He could have continued on his own budget of approximately \$100,000 per month without it. But with it, he would be able to spend about \$300,000 per month and press his post-Curicó advantage. Dungan's task force sent \$750,000.<sup>22</sup>

The agency passed this money to Frei for the next six months, during which he complained that somewhere in the pipeline someone was letting it slip that the United States was backing him. He thought the embassy's "activities had been well handled in this regard and implied that he saw no reason why discreet

contacts between Embassy and select PDC leaders should not continue,” but he wanted the embassy to help him prevent these leaks. He also asked the embassy for any information it might have that he could use against Allende.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, the CIA helped Frei press his post-Curicó advantage. Frei knew this, and he welcomed it, thanking the embassy for “its discretion and cooperation.” This, however, did not decide the election’s outcome. Frei’s advantage remained in his coalition and the “red scare” that held it together. Indeed, it seems impossible to imagine any other plausible result. Christian Democrats remained Chile’s largest single party at the time. Their Conservative and Liberal partners allowed them to nearly double the votes they could count on—totaling at least 50 percent of Chilean voters—based on partisan loyalty and indigenous anti-Communism alone.<sup>24</sup>

This became clear when Frei’s coalition fell apart and the Christian Democratic Party returned to its pre-Curicó strength in the mid- to late 1960s. Conservatives and Liberals bolted to reinvent themselves as the National Party in 1966. Then the PDC’s left wing splintered, renaming itself the Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitaria (MAPU), which joined Allende’s Unidad Popular coalition in 1969. Not even \$1 billion in Alliance funds during the next six years could prevent this.

Meanwhile, Frei appointed Senator Radomiro Tomic his ambassador to the United States. The new ambassador traveled to Washington in October 1964. As he clarified to his counterparts in the Department of State, Curicó had simplified and transformed what had been a three-way race into a “choice between Frei’s democratic reform program and the Marxist alternative offered by Allende.”<sup>25</sup>

## **September 1970: The Election and Inauguration of Salvador Allende**

Chilean society had become polarized and unstable by the time the next presidential elections were held in September 1970. By then, the Alliance for Progress had lost momentum and Chile and the rest of Latin America had become peripheral in Washington. This was because Nixon and Kissinger did not share Kennedy and Johnson’s prioritization of the region’s security and development. Henry Kissinger made this clear to his CIA briefers during the transition when he stopped their presentation on Panama and asked them why they were even bringing it up. He clarified that “our attention, the attention of Mr. Nixon and myself, is going to be centered on the Soviet Union and Western Europe.”<sup>26</sup>

Following the appearance of the antiwar movement in the United States and the *Ramparts* (a West Coast periodical) scandal, where an outraged student officer of the National Student Association exposed the agency’s covert financing of it and other student groups in 1967, the Johnson and Nixon admin-

istrations let their predecessors' covert practices in funding foreign elections, cultural fronts, and press outlets lag. In the aftermath of this scandal, the CIA became risk-averse to a point of absurdity "that was carried to its logical conclusion when headquarters ordered the termination of a productive agent who had thoughtlessly enrolled in a night course," as one case officer complained. In this atmosphere, Senator J. William Fulbright (D-AR), who chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and knew about the agency's involvement in Frei's election, warned DCI Richard M. Helms that "if I catch you trying to upset the Chilean election, I will get up on the Senate floor and blow the operation."<sup>27</sup>

Washington was already cautious about covert operations in Chile. In October 1969, Brigadier General Roberto Viaux, commander of the 1st Division of the Chilean Army, and backed by many officers and soldiers throughout the country, attempted to overthrow the Frei administration, or at least force Frei to change his defense policy while replacing the minister and the high command. The uprising, known as the Tacnazo, after the regimental headquarters where it occurred, reflected widespread concern within the professional officer corps about Frei's policies, his emphasis on civic action programs, and the perceived neglect of conventional military readiness. Further, officers, noncommissioned officers, and their families remained unhappy with the administration, the minister of defense, and the high command for failing to keep their agreement to deal with the pay and benefits problems, as they had promised in May 1968. Army pay and benefits had failed to keep up with inflation for more than a decade, leaving officers and soldiers in need of second jobs while still serving and impoverishing them in retirement.

The Tacnazo fizzled within a day, but it rattled the Frei administration and shook up the Ministry of Defense and the high command. Complicating matters, the *Washington Post* quoted an unattributed source who had bragged that the CIA "was aware of the situation for six weeks" the day after Viaux's movement agreed to lay down its arms. This alarmed the administration. Foreign Minister Juan Gabriel Valdés and the Foreign Ministry's Patricio Silva and Eduardo Palma went so far as to suggest that the United States had been responsible for it.<sup>28</sup>

Ambassador Edward M. Korry and Deputy Chief of Mission Harry W. Shlaudeman denied this, reminding Frei and Valdés that their friendship toward the administration was too well established for any of its officials to entertain such notions. In public, Frei accepted these denials, but privately, he and his inner circle were shocked and unsure what to think. This increased Korry's wariness about intervening in Chilean elections. But the ambassador need not have worried. In Washington, the Nixon administration declined to back any candidate in 1970.<sup>29</sup>

Through 1970, former president Jorge Alessandri Rodríguez campaigned as an independent who despised politics. He enjoyed the National Party's support on the right and many middle-class professionals as well. He expected to win a plurality by more than 100,000 votes and then use those votes to prevail in the constitutionally mandated congressional runoff that would follow. Ambassador Tomic, representing Christian Democrats, ran to the left of the Frei administration. And Allende, who led the Unidad Popular coalition, campaigned on the far left on a platform that promised to bring about a peaceful revolution. Washington authorized a spoiling operation against Allende, but nothing else.

That July, Nixon asked Kissinger to define their options should Allende win, which most observers considered possible but unlikely. The NSC proposed four options the following month. The United States could seek a *modus vivendi* with Allende. It might adopt a cool, correct, and restrained posture toward him in public while opposing him in private. It could try to isolate him. Or, if Allende were deemed a threat, it might attempt to overthrow him. The NSC preferred the restrained posture toward Allende for its flexibility while warning that overthrowing him entailed the highest risk. Kissinger deferred further discussion on these recommendations the day he received them. Ambassador Korry's reporting, which contained a stream of agitated commentary from Santiago, had distracted him.<sup>30</sup>

It was in this environment that, on 4 September, Allende won an unexpected plurality of 36.6 percent, surprising his own coalition and Alessandri, who followed him with 34.9 percent while Tomic trailed with 27.8 percent. Since Alessandri declined to concede, the Chilean Congress would decide between the top two candidates—who remained separated by only 40,000 votes, making anything possible during the runoff—on 24 October. This generated, among other things, six weeks of confusion, backroom negotiations, and improvised covert operations and coup plotting, as all eyes turned toward Alessandri, Frei, Chief of Staff General René Schneider, Major General Carlos Prats (who also served in the high command), and Brigadier General Viaux, who had led the Tacnazo and been sent into retirement afterward.<sup>31</sup>

Alessandri and those who voted for him desperately wanted to deny the presidency to Allende. But Alessandri did not see how he could take office, having come in second. He could accomplish this by making himself available to win the runoff while clarifying that he would resign the office immediately. This would prompt a new election in which Frei could run. Attorney Pablo Rodríguez and other Alessandri supporters hoped that this might galvanize anti-Communists as Curicó had in 1964, and that Chileans would see the election as a choice between freedom and Communism and vote accordingly. After

all, Allende had only garnered 36.6 percent, leaving 63.4 percent of voters ready to be unified against him on an anti-Communist unity ticket, if such a coalition could be put together.<sup>32</sup>

Frei's position seems to remain largely redacted from the declassified American record today. But Ambassador Korry's confidential conversations with Christian Democrats, the CIA's reporting from Santiago, and General Schneider and Major General Prats's impressions suggest that the president wanted the Chilean Army to intervene to ensure that Alessandri's scenario unfolded. In no case should Allende win, even if it meant that the military seized power—either by accepting key positions in the outgoing administration under one pretext or another, and then using these positions to stage an *autogolpe*, or coup from within, or by moving more directly to do so against the government with Frei's tacit approval. The president seems to have wanted this to happen without ordering it, thereby affording him plausible deniability and a clear conscience.<sup>33</sup>

Generals Schneider and Prats had been attempting, and failing, to reestablish civilian-dominated civil-military relations and respect for the chain of command within an agitated and politicized professional officer corps since the Tacnazo. They met on 5 September, agreeing that the election would end in one of four ways. First, Christian Democrats could vote for Alessandri in the runoff, almost certainly triggering civil war. Second, Allende might strike a deal with Christian Democrats, promising to respect the constitutional order in exchange for their votes in the runoff. A protracted conflict between the executive branch, under Allende's control, and the legislative and judicial branches, in National and Christian Democratic hands, would follow. Third, Allende could refuse to compromise with Christian Democrats and force his way into power on the strength of his plurality of 40,000 votes. Schneider thought that this would produce a proletarian dictatorship and an anti-Communist reaction, likely spearheaded by elements from within the military. Fourth, Viaux, who remained active in Chilean politics, might try to seize power before the runoff, which would probably drag the country into civil war.<sup>34</sup>

Schneider and Prats agreed that they should keep the army out of this mess, which civilian politicians had made and should clean up on their own. Their best course of action was to protect the existing constitutional order, bolster their institution's professionalism, and restore military discipline. They explained this to their subordinates, hoping to inoculate them against Viaux, who they suspected, rightly, it turned out, was already approaching key officers to identify those who would back him in a coup.<sup>35</sup>

That same day, Schneider and Prats joined a larger group of ranking officers from the other services in a private meeting in commander of the air force general Carlos Guerraty's home. Those in attendance included Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Fernando Porta; General Vicente Huerta, director



of the *Carabineros*, Chile's national police force; and Brigadier General Camilo Valenzuela, in command of the army's garrison in Santiago. Valenzuela's unit would assume direct control of the capital in the event of a declared state of emergency. According to Guerraty, who summarized the gathering to a CIA informant, these officers sounded each other out on the possibility of organizing a coup. They talked about forming a military cabinet, removing Frei to a third country, then calling for new elections. Schneider opposed this, Prats and others remained silent, and the meeting ended inconclusively.<sup>36</sup>

Valenzuela, who had taken the lead in this meeting, saw Viaux the following day, on 6 September. Afterward, he asked the U.S. Army attaché, Colonel Paul M. Wimert, to solicit Ambassador Korry's views on the discussion at Guerraty's residence, to see whether the ambassador might be willing to use his influence with Frei to persuade him to at least passively acquiesce to this nascent plan. Korry sent word to Valenzuela that he was "very satisfied" to learn that these officers had reached the same conclusions he had with respect to what an Allende administration would mean. Korry insisted that these were his personal views and not Washington's, when he advised the Department of State that the situation was more or less stalemated, with Frei looking for the generals to move on their own while the generals waited for Frei to give the order.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, as General Schneider predicted, Allende took the initiative, negotiating an understanding with Christian Democrats. He would guarantee the constitutional order in exchange for their votes in the runoff, which would put him over the top. He also reached out to the military. Frei had given service commanders permission to brief Alessandri and Allende's campaigns on routine defense matters, as was customary during transitions. These conversations typically related to budgetary requirements and other prosaic matters. Alessandri's people, who already had experience in government, passed on these meetings, but Allende took advantage of them to make his case to the armed forces.

Allende reserved the right to appoint ministers of defense and their deputies and to name service commanders as well. But he promised not to politicize the professional officer corps, bypass the chain of command, or interfere with promotions. He would also respect existing military assistance agreements. Generals Schneider and Prats, both anticipating that they would be among those soon retired, accepted Allende's assurances while encouraging their subordinates to do so too.

Allende also spoke to Admiral Porta, Vice Admiral Raúl Montero, Rear Admiral José Toribio Merino, and others in the navy. Allende's campaign had perhaps distressed these officers the most, as he had promised to withdraw from the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Defense Board, and to break all military relations with the United States, from the Rio Pact (or Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance) to UNITAS, thereby

revising Chile's Cold War position, which, in their view, would weaken the navy and, consequently, national security. They also worried that Allende might create people's militias—he was already using a Cuban-trained protection detail rather than the police, who he dismissed as bourgeois puppets—and use them to subject the navy to party discipline.<sup>38</sup>

Allende reassured these admirals that his administration would respect the navy's wishes. Chile would remain within the Western community of nations and the OAS while maintaining its existing relationships with the United States, from whom the navy was currently purchasing seven warships. This satisfied Porta, who shared Schneider's position that the armed services should remain focused on national security, internal order, and institutional integrity while leaving politics to politicians.

In Washington, the NSC was as surprised as everyone by the results of 4 September, since the latest polls had indicated an Alessandri victory. But the NSC's specialist in Latin America, Viron P. Vaky, and others on the staff remained unperturbed. Vaky summarized the intelligence community's views at the time. The United States had "no vital interests within Chile. . . . The world military balance of power would not be significantly altered." Allende's election "would represent a definite psychological set-back to the U.S. and a definite psychological advance for the Marxist idea. . . . There would be tangible economic losses." Still, Allende did not threaten American national security.<sup>39</sup>

Although Ambassador Korry had seen "very little possibility of a duly-elected and inaugurated Allende being overthrown" in the NSC's contingency planning before the elections, he believed it might be possible to influence the runoff, perhaps by bribery. The CIA cited "ample precedent for the purchase of congressional favors" and estimated that if Alessandri came in first and Allende a close second, it could probably pay off enough Chilean legislators to ensure that the balance remained in Alessandri's favor. But these bribes could only buttress "courses of action upon which Chileans themselves have already decided to embark" and would therefore play no more than an ancillary role. At the same time, the agency warned the NSC that, were Allende to come in first, even by a slight margin, "popular forces rallying to his support may soon prove to be overpowering."<sup>40</sup>

When the NSC met after the election, on 8 September, Kissinger set these earlier discussions aside, and asked Ambassador Korry and Chief of Station Henry D. Hecksher to determine whether an American-backed coup to preempt the runoff would succeed. They replied that such action remained "impossible" and "nonexistent." Korry explained that he was still exchanging views with Christian Democrats in the administration and Congress on the maneuver that could lead to a new election, but the CIA characterized this maneuver as "a very long shot."<sup>41</sup>

The NSC talked about this again on 14 September, deciding to concentrate its efforts on the maneuver, which it was calling “the Frei reelection gambit.” Korry and Hecksher were to approach key Christian Democrats and Chilean military officers and tell them that, if they carried this out, the United States would support them. As Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson put it in Korry’s instructions, Washington was ordering Korry to stay on the safe side of a blurry line: “We do not want you to get out in front and we do not want you to ‘take over.’ Yet we do not want their will to flag for lack of support.”<sup>42</sup>

Johnson had chosen his words carefully. Secretary of State William P. Rogers and the NSC’s Vaky were concerned about Ambassador Korry’s behavior. Rogers told Kissinger that Korry’s messages seemed “frenetic and somewhat irrational.” Vaky speculated that the ambassador was “under too much stress, almost hysterical.” He feared that he was exceeding his instructions, that he had probably committed the administration to courses of action it had not yet duly considered or authorized, and he wanted to rein him in.<sup>43</sup>

From his position at the NSC, Vaky fought a rearguard action during the next several weeks. He wanted to direct Kissinger’s attention back to practical and realistic policy making—“to stop mucking around.” “We stand vulnerable,” he warned, “to the charge that we did not reach policy decisions through the reasoned NSC system of examination of the situation and alternatives on which we have prided ourselves.” Vaky implored Kissinger to reach “*a policy decision . . . and a controlled implementation of that decision.*”<sup>44</sup>

Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Charles A. Meyer brought this up in one NSC meeting, and Kissinger shot it down:

[Nixon] had no intention of conceding before the 24th [of October]; on the contrary, he wanted no stone left unturned . . . [Kissinger] went on to note the inevitable contrast of [Nixon’s] advising heads of state in Europe of the absolute undesirability of an Allende regime in Chile while back home the bureaucracy performed a slow gavotte over what our posture should be.<sup>45</sup>

Nixon’s perceptions seemed to have been partly derived from Ambassador Korry’s reporting. The president underlined several sentences in the ambassador’s first post-election cable: “We have been living with a corpse in our midst for some time and its name is Chile. . . . Chileans like to die peacefully with their mouths open. . . . The political right depend upon the economic right” before pronouncing it “an excellent perceptive job of analysis.” By the following week, Nixon was comparing Chile to Czechoslovakia and Cuba.<sup>46</sup>

Other advice came to Nixon’s increasingly flustered White House. Donald

M. Kendall, a campaign contributor who occasionally offered unsolicited foreign policy advice, brought Chilean publisher Agustín Edwards to Washington on 14 September. Kendall, Edwards, and an unlisted Chilean associate had breakfast with Kissinger and Attorney General John N. Mitchell before being debriefed by DCI Helms. Both Kissinger and Helms cited Edwards when explaining the president's outburst that followed.<sup>47</sup>

The declassified record remains redacted and only contains part of what Edwards and his associate said. They described the political dispositions of the commanders of the Chilean armed forces while outlining each of the services' states of readiness. General Schneider and Admiral Porta would not act outside of constitutional procedures, but all of the other commanders wanted to block Allende's inauguration. Brigadier General Valenzuela was prepared to back Major General Prats as Schneider's successor, provided the latter was given an honorable exit. He was even ready to move alone, if necessary. Edwards clearly wanted Nixon's support for a coup, and he thought it should be "a serious effort" rather than one led by Brigadier General Viaux "or some other nut." Edwards implored to Nixon that there was just too much at stake to rely wholly on the Frei reelection gambit.<sup>48</sup>

Nixon summoned Kissinger, Attorney General Mitchell, and DCI Helms to his office the next day. He directed the CIA to instigate a military coup in Chile regardless of the cost. He told him to do this outside of the NSC system, which normally vetted covert operations, and without the Department of State, Ambassador Korry, or the embassy's knowledge. Kissinger later characterized this as "a passionate desire, unfocused and born of frustration, to do 'something'," suggesting that no one who knew the president would have taken these instructions seriously.<sup>49</sup>

Helms took exception to that:

I do not consider myself to have been an unwary or even casual recipient of instructions by the President from behind his desk in the Oval Office. President Nixon had ordered me to instigate a military coup in Chile. . . . By what superior judgment was I to leave the White House and then decide that the President did not mean what he had just said?<sup>50</sup>

Thus, Helms formed a task force, codenamed Project FUBELT, to carry out this directive the following day. FUBELT was a task force of one—Chief of Station Rio de Janeiro David Atlee Philips, who returned to Langley, Virginia, working and sleeping in Deputy Director for Plans (DDP) Thomas H. Karamessines's offices for its duration, from 16 September to 3 November 1970. Phillips, the agency's director of Latin American operations, William V. Broe, and DDP Karamessines reported to Kissinger and his assistant, Brigadier

General Alexander M. Haig, who subjected them to “just constant, constant. . . . Just continual pressure.” The case officers at the CIA’s Santiago Station objected that they had been given an impossible mission. But they duly combed the professional officer corps, as ordered. Using Edwards’s intelligence and Colonel Wimert’s contacts, they found Brigadier Generals Viaux and Valenzuela.<sup>51</sup>

Viaux and Valenzuela had already sought each other out. They agreed that they could not permit “the enthronement of communism in Chile.” They believed that key members of the administration, including the minister of interior, Minister of Defense Sergio Ossa, and the minister of economy were passively encouraging them to act, and they counted on the support of a larger group of sympathetic officers.<sup>52</sup>

As Viaux lamented, however, “the problem of the chief of staff remained.” General Schneider would not support any extraconstitutional move. Viaux and Valenzuela’s group tried to change his mind, but he refused even to listen to them, prompting one frustrated conspirator to remark to an agency informant that the plotters did not need American advice or money—they needed “a general with balls.”<sup>53</sup>

Viaux reached out to Major General Prats via an intermediary, asking for a private meeting. Prats flatly turned the intermediary down: “Nothing personal, but I have never shared his [Viaux] views, which I consider offensive to the army. If he wants to discuss some plot to change the election’s results, I will be obligated to report it. If he wants to talk about some other, non-political business, he can come to my office.” Viaux sent word back that there must have been a misunderstanding and dropped it.<sup>54</sup>

Around this time, on the evening of 6 October, Minister of Defense Ossa approached Ambassador Korry, asking whether the Nixon administration supported Brigadier Generals Valenzuela and Viaux. There remain many ways to interpret this, and current redactions in the declassified record render it inconclusive, but Frei may have been using Ossa to sound Korry out while deciding whether he should cross the Rubicon with Valenzuela and Viaux. If so, Korry discouraged Frei. He said that he spoke for the United States in all things in Chile, and that he opposed Valenzuela and Viaux’s conspiracy. Then he instructed Chief of Station Hecksher to break contact with the two generals, explaining that it would look better if Washington were “totally surprised by whatever might develop.” Kissinger belayed this, but he could not retract what Korry had told Ossa at what might have been a pivotal moment.<sup>55</sup>

It became clear to everyone but Ambassador Korry that the Frei reelection gambit was not going anywhere, while at the same time everyone involved but Nixon and Kissinger concluded that neither the CIA nor Brigadier Generals Viaux and Valenzuela were positioned to preempt the runoff by mid-

October. Indeed, Viaux and Valenzuela had shaken the agency's confidence by requesting external arms drops as part of, in Chief of Station Hecksher's view, an ill-conceived coup attempt that would fail, expose the U.S. involvement, and strengthen Allende's position.<sup>56</sup>

At CIA headquarters in Langley, the leadership understood that Brigadier General Viaux was planning to abduct General Schneider on his own but found it improbable and quite reckless. Further, Brigadier General Valenzuela and the others' will appeared to be slackening. Viaux alone seemed to hope that Valenzuela, Major General Prats, and the others would fall in behind him and that all would end well. This was not enough.

DDP Karamessines took Viaux's plan to Kissinger and Haig at the White House on 15 October, finally persuading them that it would not only fail but worsen the situation. As Kissinger told Nixon later that evening, "I saw Karamessines today. That looks hopeless. I turned it off. Nothing would be worse than an abortive coup." He still wanted to keep Valenzuela and Viaux in reserve, so he directed the agency to instruct them to preserve their assets and wait for a better moment.<sup>57</sup>

Viaux ignored these instructions. As the Church Committee would later observe, "American officials had exaggerated notions about their ability to control the actions of coup leaders. . . . Events demonstrated that the United States had no such power." This was one of those events. How did it unfold?<sup>58</sup>

Frei had relieved Admiral Porta earlier that day, on 15 October, citing the admiral's meetings with Allende as the reason. He named Admiral Hugo Tirado, who was friendly to Valenzuela and Viaux's plotting, as the new chief of naval operations. As the DIA speculated, this "may have made the navy more likely to participate in a coup." Valenzuela and Viaux approached Santiago Station again, asking for a handful of untraceable submachine guns and teargas canisters on Saturday evening, 17 October. This puzzled Karamessines, Broe, and Philips, who were unaware of these breaking developments. They urgently queried, "What happened between morning 17 October and evening 17 October to change [redacted] from despondency to measured optimism? Who exactly is involved in coup attempt? Who are leaders and which units will support them?"<sup>59</sup>

The answer was that Valenzuela, Viaux, and the others had come together in high spirits after Tirado's promotion. They could now count on all service commanders except Schneider. They agreed to execute Viaux's plan forthwith; they would abduct Schneider. General Huerta's *Carabineros* would "reveal" several leftist arms caches around Santiago, while Viaux alerted Chileans to the Communist danger that was upon them. Frei would declare a state of emergency and mobilize the capital's garrison, which remained under Valenzuela. Once this happened, Tirado would form a military government. Then the president

would leave the country, Valenzuela would release Schneider, presenting him with a fait accompli, to which he would acquiesce, and new elections would follow.<sup>60</sup>

Valenzuela insisted that someone other than Chilean soldiers grab Schneider. It was too much for him to consent to a military operation directed against a sitting chief of staff. Viaux was ready for this. He had recruited Juan Diego Dávila, Luis Gallardo, Jaime Melgoza, and other civilians from the Alessandri campaign. These men had no military or police training. Melgoza had driven buses and sold cars, but he presented himself as a martial arts expert who could do the job. The handful of others had similar backgrounds.

Brigadier General Viaux instructed Gallardo's people to execute the plan late on 17 October. They would take Schneider to "a place only Dávila and I knew about." Then "a message would be sent to Frei, in the name of an imaginary organization, demanding that he designate a military cabinet as a condition of the general's release." They had handguns, chloroform, and pepper. They expected everything to be completed in a smooth 48 hours.<sup>61</sup>

Brigadier General Valenzuela arranged a dinner on the pretext of celebrating General Schneider's one-year anniversary as chief of staff on Monday evening, 19 October, thus luring him to his official residence in Las Condes. Valenzuela would ensure that the party ended around 0100 and that Schneider left alone. General Huerta would redirect the police's patrol cars away from the neighborhood, leaving him unprotected.<sup>62</sup>

Gallardo waited outside the residence at the correct time, but the events did not go as planned. Although Schneider had arrived in his official Mercedes, he drove home in his private car, which had been parked elsewhere. Gallardo was watching the official vehicle, so he never saw the general leave that night. Gallardo improvised another plan the following day, but none of his people had a car that could keep up with Schneider's Mercedes, and it failed.

Brigadier General Viaux met Gallardo again, possibly passing submachine guns and teargas from the CIA to them, which they might have acquired from Colonel Wimert on Wednesday evening, 21 October. They assembled a larger force, consisting of approximately 20 cars. These vehicles would create the appearance of a traffic jam the following morning, forcing General Schneider's car onto a side street near Américo Vespucio and Martín de Zamora. Then one of them would crash into the Mercedes while three or four others surrounded it. Melgoza would disable the general's driver, a corporal, "with a karate chop," while the others used sledgehammers to intimidate and take him.<sup>63</sup>

The plan proved a catastrophic failure in the execution on Thursday morning, 22 October. Schneider was not intimidated, and he resisted. One of Gallardo's people shot him before the others panicked and scattered. The general died in a military hospital three days later. Frei declared a state of emergency while

Minister of Defense Ossa, Major General Prats, and the other service commanders denounced the attack, promising swift justice. Prats placed army units on alert throughout the nation, describing “a general feeling of indignation, not only for the seriousness [of] such an attack against our respected superior and colleague represented, but because it was also an attack against the army itself.” When he asked Brigadier General Valenzuela, who had assumed operational control of all forces in the capital, for a situation report, he found him demoralized and uncommunicative.<sup>64</sup>

Brigadier General Viaux, however, believed that his moment had finally come. Nixon, Kissinger, and everyone following these events in Langley leaned forward to see what would happen next. They were all disappointed. Chief of Station Hecksher rejected Viaux’s frantic request that he and Ambassador Korry tell Frei that this had been a Communist move, and Valenzuela would not even take his calls. One of the assailants was reportedly in hiding and offering to name everyone involved. These names included high-ranking government and military officials who had promised “that if Schneider was kidnapped there would be a coup,” but who had failed to follow through and were “desperately trying to find a way to prevent public revelation of their involvement.” Allende was elected days later. The CIA found “no indications that Valenzuela’s or Viaux’s group are planning a coup” after he was inaugurated. It was over, except for the courts-martial.<sup>65</sup>

Many have reconstructed and analyzed the part that the agency’s covert operations played in the events surrounding the election and inauguration of Allende. Most failed to recognize these operations for the series of failures that they were. First, Nixon directed the CIA to spoil Allende’s victory, which failed when he won a plurality. Next, Nixon, Kissinger, and Ambassador Korry explored the Frei reelection gambit, only to find, as the NSC’s Vaky phrased it, that “Korry is grabbing at straws, but each one breaks when he grabs it. . . . We are kidding ourselves to believe that there are any more gambits that can work.” Then the president ordered the agency to instigate a coup to preempt the congressional runoff, which failed as well. These failures occurred, not as intelligence failures, but rather because no covert operation, no matter how well conceived, funded, or implemented, was capable of deciding these issues.<sup>66</sup>

But coalition politics in Chile could. Ambassador Tomic was not a viable successor to Frei in 1970 because the Christian-Democratic-Conservative-Liberal coalition that had elected Frei had fallen apart—indeed, given the policy differences that divided the PDC, on the one hand, and Conservatives and Liberals, on the other, particularly on land reform, this coalition may have been destined to fail. Tomic was not only unable to form a new coalition with other influential parties, but he failed to keep Christian Democrats—who had



left, center-left, and center-right factions by the late 1960s—together as well. Leftist Christian Democrats splintered and joined Allende's Unidad Popular, strengthening it at the PDC's expense. The Unidad Popular adroitly exploited this situation and won the election, even if only barely. Allende reached out to Tomic and those Christian Democrats who were already inclined to back him in the runoff, and they negotiated constitutional guarantees in exchange for the PDC's support. Once they shook hands on this agreement, the electoral outcome was beyond the reach of Nixon, Kissinger, and the CIA, no matter how they might have approached it.

### **March 1973: Midterm Congressional Elections**

In November 1970, Nixon and Kissinger decided to adopt the NSC's option of a cool, correct, and restrained posture toward the Allende government in public while opposing it in private. They would covertly support opposition parties, back publisher Edwards and other anti-Communist voices in the Chilean press, and try to complicate or harass Allende's ability to consolidate his position and implement his program. They would welcome a coup should one occur. But by that November, Nixon and Kissinger had given up on the idea that they themselves could produce one. The agency closed down Project FUBELT, and Santiago Station and the defense attachés assigned to the embassy returned to passive intelligence collection, liaison, and reporting.<sup>67</sup>

The next round of CIA covert operations were intended to influence the midterm congressional elections in March 1973. By then, General Schneider's scenario of a protracted conflict between the executive branch, under Allende's control, and the legislative and judicial branches, in the opposition's hands, had materialized. This conflict was aggravated by Allende's rhetoric and policies, particularly his Escuela Nacional Unificada initiative, which would have increased government direction of primary and secondary education while imposing, some feared, a Marxist-Leninist curriculum. This helped bring Christian Democrats and Nationalists into the Confederación de la Democracia (CODE), an anti-Communist and antigovernment coalition. Partisans from the upper, middle, and working classes, including copper miners, truck drivers, women, and Patria y Libertad (Fatherland and Liberty), which explicitly targeted the military and pressed it to overthrow the government, had been protesting and staging strikes in an increasingly chaotic nation for months.

CODE approached the congressional elections as an opportunity to gain the two-thirds majority it needed to impeach Allende, or at least to tie him down with legislation and hearings. The Unidad Popular hoped to bolster the government's legitimacy and reinvigorate its program by winning the parliamentary majority that the peaceful road to socialism required. Washington supported CODE and Moscow supported Unidad Popular. The NSC contributed

approximately \$1.6 million and the Politburo around \$100,000—a 16 to 1 difference. Both the CIA and KGB's operations attempted to improve their coalition's position while dividing and weakening the other side. Both endeavored to influence public opinion inside and outside of Chile. Both claimed moderate success but nevertheless failed to achieve their objectives. CODE reaffirmed its 55 percent majority (nearly identical to the outcome of the presidential elections in 1964, the last time these parties ran together), but fell short of the larger majority it wanted. Unidad Popular took about 44 percent—an increase when measured against the presidential elections of 1970, but a decrease from its performance in the municipal elections in 1971—and its parliamentary majority continued to elude it.<sup>68</sup>

These results disappointed some and frustrated others. From CODE's perspective, these elections represented the exhaustion of the constitutional means of removing Allende. Tensions and talk of mutinies and civil war increased. When an armored regiment rose on its own to overthrow the government that June, the president's naval attaché was gunned down in July, and large numbers of army officers and their wives forced General Prats's resignation in August, it became clear to many that something had to give.

Prats had been the first to understand this. He was serving the Allende administration as minister of the interior while still chief of staff of the army that March. After the election, he advised the president that the situation had become untenable. Allende could either reconcile his differences with CODE as a whole, or perhaps reach an understanding with or possibly build a new governing coalition that included Christian Democrats, which required substantial compromise either way. Or he could choose to continue taking a confrontational, maximalist route from his increasingly isolated position. If he chose the former, the service commanders might be able to remain in the cabinet long enough to help broker a deal between Unidad Popular and the PDC, but they would have to withdraw should he choose the latter. Prats also informed Allende that the professional officer corps was becoming even more agitated in response to the administration's talk of acquiring Soviet weapons and military advisors. They were signaling that "Chile remained outside of the Soviet sphere of influence," and that they would not accept any kind of dependency relationship with Moscow.<sup>69</sup>

Allende promised to consider it, but he never got around to it. A wedge drove Prats and the other service commanders, on the one hand, and their subordinates, on the other, apart during the following months. Prats continued trying to reason with Allende, but found him "swimming in a sea of illusions" until the end. All of this and more made the coup that came six months later more likely. Although the CIA and the rest of the intelligence community saw it coming and closely reported on it, it was a Chilean, not an American,

**Table 1.** Chilean elections in 1964, 1970, and 1973

Election	Far left	Center left (percent of vote)	Right
Curicó, March 1964	FRAP 39	PDC 28	FD 33
President, September 1964	FRAP 38.6	PDC 55.6	
President, September 1970	UP 36.6	PDC 27.8	PN 34.9
Congress, March 1973	UP 44	CODE 55	

Notes: FRAP = Frente de Acción Popular; PDC = Christian Democratic Party; FD = Democratic Front of Chile; UP = Unidad Popular; PN = National Party; and CODE = Confederación de la Democracia.

Source: courtesy of the author

operation. This does not absolve the Nixon administration or the intelligence community from involvement and partial responsibility. As the agency has acknowledged: “Although [the] CIA did not instigate the coup that ended Allende’s government on 11 September 1973, it was aware of coup-plotting by the military, had ongoing intelligence collection relationships with some plotters, and—because CIA did not discourage the takeover and had sought to instigate a coup in 1970—probably appeared to condone it.”<sup>70</sup>

## Conclusion

Table 1 summarizes the elections this article has discussed. There remain several ways to interpret these results, and this article does not offer the final word. Reading these outcomes and using Curicó as the baseline, where no known foreign intervention occurred, shows that Chileans’ political leanings remained relatively stable from 1964 to 1973. Their circumstances, however, changed, and it was primarily their political parties’ tactical alignments, positioning, and repositioning in response to these changes, not the CIA’s covert operations and propaganda, that account for their voting behavior and these outcomes.

Chilean anti-Communists maintained a stable majority of about 55 percent of the vote when they formed coalitions together in September 1964 and March 1973. If we combine the center left and right into a hypothetical other-than-Marxist bloc, as some of Alessandri’s partisans, particularly Patria y Libertad’s Rodríguez and American officials like Kissinger did, then this anti-Communist majority peaked at 61 percent, with no U.S. intervention or backing, in March 1964, and 63 percent in September 1970. We could also group the far left and center left together to challenge this, to show that more than 60 percent preferred one form or another of accelerated leftward governance in these same two elections.

Chilean Marxist-Leninists—Communists, Socialists, and those smaller

parties that joined them—remained a stable and determined minority that consistently received from 36 to 44 percent of the vote, both without the CIA's anti-Communist propaganda operations, in March 1964, and in spite of them, in September 1964, September 1970, and March 1973. This remains consistent with global trends in the twentieth century. As historian Odd Arne Westad has explained, Marxists “never constituted more than small groups, but they had an influence far greater than their numbers. What characterized them were to a large extent the intensity of their beliefs and their fundamental internationalism.”<sup>71</sup>

If the agency's covert operations remained no more than modestly effective in influencing Chilean elections, and if these operations entailed the kinds of costs and liabilities listed in the introduction, then why did the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations use them? They did so partly because they often failed to understand the nature, particularly the limitations, costs, and liabilities of intelligence operations, and they sometimes directed the CIA to perform unreasonable tasks, such as Nixon's order that DCI Helms somehow push a button to instigate an instant coup in Chile in September 1970. As DCI Walter Bedell Smith and a few other professional intelligence officers tried to warn administrations and the Pentagon from the Korean War forward, there was “a high degree of wishful thinking and unreality . . . as to what could be accomplished by special operations” in Washington. Also, it seems that, with the stakes as high as they were in the developing world, the American government played every card in the deck, as Nixon did when he told Helms to spare no effort in Chile even if there were only a 1 in 10 chance it would succeed. This seems understandable. However, presidents and policy makers would be well advised to better familiarize themselves with covert operations' limitations and long-term costs and liabilities, all of which tend to outweigh any short-term benefits they might achieve, before instructing the agency to execute them in the future.<sup>72</sup>

How might this discussion help us better appreciate the effectiveness of Russia's intervention in American politics today? Moscow has been running collection efforts and covert operations in the United States and Latin America since World War II, as the cases of Aldrich H. Ames (former CIA), Robert P. Hanssen (former FBI), and Maria Butina (Russian gun-rights activist and spy) reconfirm. Former KGB officers Lieutenant General Nikolai S. Leonov and Major General Oleg D. Kalugin have acknowledged that they had to confront the same issues their counterparts in the CIA did, at least during the Cold War. That is, they were never able to create public opinion out of whole cloth or to impose results from Moscow that were not already happening, or inclined to occur, on the ground wherever they were operating.<sup>73</sup>

Today, the Putin regime continues in its attempts to exacerbate confusion

and division in the United States and Europe with the ultimate objective of weakening the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which Moscow seems to deem necessary to maximize its own security. This may seem formidable, particularly when an exotic new vocabulary, such as cyberoperations and hybrid warfare, comes into play, but the above limitations likely remain. And if this remains true, then our best course of action would be to clean our own house to resolve our own disagreements and problems on the ground at the national, state, and local levels. We should continue to draw attention to Russia's covert operations through imaginative counterintelligence and painstaking law-enforcement investigations, but we must concentrate our efforts on denying Moscow anything to exploit. Thus, the problem and solution, in Chile during the Cold War and in America today, lies in these nations themselves and not in Dorfman's outside forces working from remote rooms abroad. Indeed, blaming these external forces remains, as Harvard Law's Yochai Benkler has phrased it, a cop-out.<sup>74</sup>

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55. Jessup, "Minutes of the Meeting of the 40 Committee, 6 October 1970"; and Korry to Johnson, 6 October 1970, in *FRUS, 1969–1976*, vol. XXI, document 136. Approximately two weeks earlier, Kissinger and the CIA had sent an emissary to promise Frei "that he will have twice the amount he had for the 1964 election and also that military aid will continue. [The emissary] is also to assure Frei that, if Frei makes the effort and it fails, we will help Frei to get himself resettled overseas if that is what he chooses to do." The effect of this message on Frei remains unrecorded or redacted from the declassified record today, assuming that it was even delivered. Ossa's approach to Korry may have represented Frei's attempt to reconfirm these promises while seeking further reassurance. See Thomas Karamessines, "Chile—22 September 1970," 22 September 1970, in *FRUS, 1969–1976*, vol. XXI, document 112.



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## Defense Sales and British Security Assistance to Oman, 1975–81

Nikolas Gardner, PhD

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**Abstract:** This article examines the evolving security relationship between Britain and Oman from the final stages of the Dhofar conflict until the early 1980s. This period is significant because it saw the continuation of British military assistance in the absence of a compelling security threat. The article illustrates the tensions that emerged between the two states as the sultan of Oman attempted to increase his control over defense policy, while the British struggled to balance the economic benefits of continued arms sales to Oman with the costs and risks of ongoing military support to an increasingly assertive leader. By resolving these tensions, however, the two states effectively laid the foundation for a relationship that remains strong today.

**Keywords:** Britain, Oman, Dhofar, security assistance

In November 2018, British defence secretary Gavin Williamson announced the establishment of a joint training base in Oman. Following military exercises involving 5,500 British and more than 70,000 Omani personnel, the announcement heralded the longevity and stability of military ties between the two states. As Williamson explained: “Our relationship with Oman is built on centuries of cooperation and we are cementing that long into the future with the development of our new joint base.”<sup>1</sup> But Anglo-Omani ties were not al-

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ways so robust. As part of its withdrawal from “East of Suez” in 1971, Britain abandoned its military bases in the Middle East and rescinded its security guarantees to local rulers in the Gulf of Oman. The growth of a Communist-backed insurgency in the Dhofar region forced the British to make an exception in Oman. Following the defeat of the insurgents in late 1975, however, the rationale for a continued military presence in Oman diminished considerably, particularly given ongoing British military commitments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and in Northern Ireland, as well as significant cuts to defense spending. Yet, British forces never left Oman entirely. Hundreds of personnel seconded from the British Army, the Royal Navy, and the Royal Air Force remained in Oman into the 1980s. British officers commanded the Sultan of Oman’s Land Forces (SOLF), the Sultan of Oman’s Navy (SON), and the Sultan of Oman’s Air Force (SOAF) throughout the 1980s, and even today a British major general serves as an advisor to the armed forces and their commander in chief, Sultan Qaboos bin Said al-Said.

A growing body of scholarship examines British relations with Oman in the 1970s. Much of it, however, focuses on the Dhofar conflict, often in an attempt to explain the reasons for the defeat of the insurgents.<sup>2</sup> Those studies that examine Anglo-Omani relations more broadly also tend to treat the end of the Dhofar insurgency as the culmination of British assistance to Oman.<sup>3</sup> To understand the persistence of Anglo-Omani military ties for decades afterward, however, it is essential to examine the relationship between the two states both during the Dhofar conflict and in its aftermath. This article examines the evolving Anglo-Omani security relationship from the final stages of the Dhofar War through the early 1980s. This period is significant not only because it saw the SOLF acquire and develop the capability to operate advanced weapons, such as naval vessels and fighter aircraft, but also because it saw a shift in the relative economic circumstances of the two states. While Britain faced high inflation and labor unrest, Oman enjoyed an influx of oil wealth. This emboldened the young sultan, encouraging him to strengthen his military capabilities and assert his own control over them. At the same time, these circumstances encouraged the British to consider the economic benefits alongside the military and political costs of their relationship with the sultan.

### **A British Puppet?: Sultan Qaboos’s Relations with Britain, 1970–75**

Sultan Qaboos would not have become ruler of Oman in July 1970 without British support. Frustrated with the inability of his father, Sultan Said bin Taimur, to contain the Communist-backed insurgency in Dhofar, British officers in Oman supported a coup that replaced Sultan Said with his son.<sup>4</sup> Educated in England and trained at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, the

29-year-old Qaboos proved more amenable than his father to British advice. Supported by hundreds of British military personnel, including a Special Air Services (SAS) team, Qaboos initiated a multipronged campaign that included military operations, civil development projects, and negotiations with tribal leaders in Dhofar. Loan service personnel (LSP) seconded from the British armed forces directed the conduct of the war in Dhofar. The commander of the Omani Army was a British major general who held the title of commander of the Sultan's Armed Forces (CSAF). In this position, he had authority over the commanders of the navy and air force, who were also senior British officers. All served the sultan while they were in Oman, but they were ultimately loyal to Britain. Oman also received assistance from Jordan, India, Pakistan, and particularly Iran, but within the SOLE, most positions requiring technical expertise and virtually all command positions were held by British LSP.<sup>5</sup>

British support notwithstanding, Qaboos was no puppet. Even before he became sultan, he expressed strong opinions that were not always consistent with British views. According to John Townshend, who later served as an economic advisor to the sultan, Qaboos was openly critical of his father during the final years of Said's rule, "so much that a message had to be sent to him discreetly informing him that not all expatriates shared his views about his father."<sup>6</sup> After coming to power, Qaboos moved quickly to assert his independence from the British. In August 1970, senior British military officers, diplomats, and business leaders formed an "interim advisory council" to oversee the transition of power from father to son. They also invited Qaboos's uncle, Sayyid Assad bin Tariq al-Said, to return from exile in West Germany and become the first prime minister of Oman.<sup>7</sup> Qaboos, however, was unwilling to share power with Tariq, an advocate of constitutional monarchy. By the end of 1971, Qaboos had pressured his uncle into resigning.<sup>8</sup>

The sultan also assembled an alternative team of advisors largely independent of British influence. A key figure in this coterie was Timothy W. Landon, a British intelligence officer who became the sultan's equerry, or aide-de-camp. Landon, who had attended the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst with Qaboos, resigned from the British Army at the rank of captain following the coup in 1970, and actively distanced himself from British authorities afterward. According to a British profile written later in the 1970s: "Landon had fully identified himself with Oman. His attitude towards Britain is coloured by the fact that he wishes to prove to the Omanis that he is one of them, and he is suspicious of possible British attempts to manipulate affairs in the Sultanate."<sup>9</sup> Even if Landon had sought British advice, senior leaders dismissed his value as an intermediary. In November 1971, Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas-Home directed the British ambassador to Oman, Donald Hawley, to avoid communicating significant information through Landon, dismissing him as "inexpe-

rienced in political and diplomatic matters (and probably does not want to get involved) and your advice might get innocently distorted in transmission.”<sup>10</sup> As a result, Qaboos and Landon were able to recruit a team of advisors with little, if any, British input. This team included American and Middle Eastern business people as well as influential political figures such as Robert B. Anderson, a former secretary of the U.S. Department of the Treasury and assistant secretary of defense under President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

### **The Expansion of the Sultan’s Armed Forces**

These advisors played an important role in helping the sultan establish relations with regional leaders and organizations such as the Arab League.<sup>11</sup> They also provided advice regarding defense procurement that was not always consistent with the views of British commanders in Oman or the British Ministry of Defence (MOD). In 1973, with Omani revenues increasing significantly as a result of rising global oil prices, the sultan had declared his interest in purchasing an integrated air defense system (IADS) consisting of radar, surface-to-air missile systems, and at least a dozen fighter aircraft. At his request, a team from the MOD conducted a study “to define an air defence system for Oman.” With a potential cost of £70 million, the project would clearly benefit the ailing British defense industry. Nonetheless, the MOD study concluded that the threat posed to Oman by the air force of the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen—its principal enemy at the time—did not justify the cost of the system. Moreover, the aircraft that Oman proposed to buy, the Anglo-French SEPECAT Jaguar, was better suited for air-to-ground attack than air defense missions. Possession of such a capability, British defense officials concluded, might in fact embolden the sultan, encouraging him to engage in offensive operations against his neighbor.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the British Army and Royal Air Force expressed concern that the necessity of training Omanis in the operation and maintenance of the system would require the deployment of hundreds of additional British military personnel to Oman. The sale of Rapiers missile systems to Oman would also delay the production of similar equipment already ordered by the MOD to fulfill Britain’s commitment to NATO. Such a delay, the British feared, “must inevitably affect adversely our standing in the alliance.”<sup>13</sup>

The sultan, however, was not content simply to accept British advice. Presented with a memorandum recommending against the acquisition of an air defense system, Qaboos began soliciting offers from France and the United States.<sup>14</sup> The sultan’s willingness to explore other options raised British concerns about losing influence in Oman. A 1974 MOD report speculated that “an influx of Frenchmen (or Pakistanis) on the scale that might be required for a French air defense system could reduce British influence in SAF [sultan’s armed forces] and might in the worst case lead to CSAF’s own position being

undermined.”<sup>15</sup> This possibility added to existing British fears of losing credibility with Oman and its neighbors. In June 1974, the minister of state for foreign and commonwealth affairs, David Ennals, contended in a letter to his MOD counterpart, William Rogers, that if Britain failed to offer an IADS to Qaboos, “the Sultan and his allies, notably Saudi Arabia and Iran, would undoubtedly think that we were holding out on Oman, reviving the suspicions that our interest really lies in prolonging the war.” Conversely, he also suggested that Iran in particular might interpret British reluctance to provide the equipment as a sign that it was preparing to withdraw from Oman, leaving the shah’s regime with full responsibility for the war in Dhofar.<sup>16</sup>

Economic factors also favored the sale. While the primary purpose of Britain’s intervention in the Dhofar conflict was to maintain the stability of the gulf region, the British recognized that Oman and its neighbors constituted a potentially lucrative market for defense sales. As the British defense attaché in the Oman capital of Muscat observed in late 1972: “While in world market terms sales to Oman may be relatively small, SAF is going to expand, the Iranians and Jordanians are here, listening to users’ quoted opinions which filter on to other Gulf states and further [*sic*] afield still.” Thus, he continued, “it is in our interests to redouble our sales efforts despite the small orders, when so many are watching and listening from neighboring countries.”<sup>17</sup> The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil embargo and the ensuing increase in global oil prices in late 1973 reinforced arguments in favor of arms sales to the Middle East. Even the MOD, which opposed the diversion of British resources away from its NATO commitments, recognized in 1974 that

the inevitable increase in the UK [United Kingdom] balance of payments deficit caused by higher oil prices makes it all the more urgent that exports should be increased and oil producing countries constitute an obvious market. It is therefore, in strictly commercial terms, in our interests to secure as much of the arms business in Oman as is within our capability against increasing activity by the French and possibly the US.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, in the spring of 1974, British officials abandoned their reservations of the previous year and convinced the sultan to purchase a package of British radar, 12 Anglo-French-made SEPECAT Jaguar fighter aircraft, along with the British Rapier antiaircraft missile system.<sup>19</sup>

Installing the air defense system was a significant undertaking that lasted until 1979. The British Ministry of Defence attempted to minimize its commitment of personnel to these tasks, encouraging the companies involved to rely on contractors. These were often former Royal Air Force (RAF) personnel working for Airwork Services Limited, a British company that had long provided air-

craft maintenance and support services to the RAF and partner air forces in the Middle East. Contractors were largely responsible for installing the new system. Among British expatriates in Oman, the IADS was jokingly referred to as an acronym for “it’s all double shifts.”<sup>20</sup> The number of Airwork personnel in Oman almost doubled, from 260 in November 1974 to “nearly 500” one year later.<sup>21</sup>

The expansion of the Omani Air Force that accompanied the acquisition of the new system also required the continued commitment of RAF personnel and resources. Omanis underwent training at a series of newly established schools that provided instruction in most of the functions of a modern air force. These schools included a technical training institute, an aircrew initial training school, and a flight training school.<sup>22</sup> Prior to attending one of these schools, SOAF officer candidates were sent to the UK, where they completed an officer training course at the RAF officer cadet training unit. Prospective pilots remained in the UK where they received aviation medicine training as well as initial flight training on piston-engine aircraft, before returning to the flight training school in Oman where they were trained to fly fighter or transport aircraft.<sup>23</sup> Air Vice Marshal Erik Bennett, the British commander of the SOAF, insisted on LSP rather than contract officers in the training role, partly because they usually had more recent experience than retired RAF personnel, but also because of what he viewed as their superior motivation. Bennett described the flight training school as “the cornerstone of the Omanization policy and its graduates must receive the best training available. This can only be provided by RAF personnel with a career before them; the example which the instructors set is at least as important as the tuition they give.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, the cadre of LSP in Oman remained relatively stable throughout the second half of the 1970s, with approximately 30 RAF officers serving in senior command and staff positions, flying aircraft, and training Omani officers.

Royal Navy personnel also supported the expansion of the Sultan of Oman’s Navy. As late as 1977, the SON consisted of three fast patrol boats, two old Dutch minesweepers, two auxiliary vessels, and a royal yacht. But the acquisition of four more fast patrol boats along with a landing craft effectively doubled its size by 1979.<sup>25</sup> As was the case in the air force, expansion on this scale required extensive foreign assistance. While the sultan aimed to “Omanize” all three services, training Omanis to fill the officer corps of the army, air force, and navy, few had the necessary education and technical skills to become officers. Given that the country’s secondary education system had only been developed in the 1970s, this is not surprising. Nevertheless, it meant that the navy faced severe officer shortages as it expanded. Oman was not solely dependent on the British for training, as the SON was able to send cadets to the Pakistani naval academy. Most of these cadets, however, were apparently forced to withdraw due to inadequate English skills.<sup>26</sup> Thus, even in 1979, the British ambassador

to Oman, James Treadwell, reported that the officer designated to be the first Omani commander of the SON (CSON) “is still only a Sub Lt [lieutenant] putting in his service with the Royal Navy and having trouble with his maths.”<sup>27</sup>

In the context of cuts to the British defense budget, supporting the expansion of the navy constituted a burden. But the Royal Navy recognized that providing personnel to train Omanis and command the sultan’s expanding fleet directly benefited the British defense industry. As Commodore Peter M. Stanford explained in a 1979 report: “The Navy Department attaches considerable importance to maintaining the Navy’s high reputation in Oman, not least in the context of defence sales, in which field in Oman it enjoys a virtual monopoly. CSON’s request for additional LSP is therefore viewed sympathetically.”<sup>28</sup> The number of British naval officers in Oman was always smaller than the contingent of RAF officers supporting SOAF. In early 1980, for example, there were only 9 LSP serving in the SON compared to 29 in the SOAF.<sup>29</sup> Given the lack of qualified Omanis, however, the British estimated that expatriate officers would be required “well into the 1990s.” It proved difficult to find former Royal Navy officers to work as contractors. In 1980, the British CSON, Commodore Harry Mucklow, complained that “in the absence of more attractive terms of service we are still losing well-qualified men (who can find better terms elsewhere) and there is a minimal response to our advertisements for the categories of officer whose qualifications and experience we need.” Mucklow therefore requested permission “to increase the proportion of UK LSP to the extent that becomes necessary to ensure SON’s level of effectiveness.”<sup>30</sup>

### **Sultan Qaboos, the British, and Control of the Armed Forces, 1976–81**

British officers were not required simply for their technical knowledge or tactical experience. Given its expansion during the 1970s, the Sultan’s Armed Forces also required senior leaders experienced in financial management and strategic-level decision making. The war in Dhofar had already led to a significant expansion of the armed forces. From 1971 to 1975, the force grew in size from 6,000 to 17,000 personnel, with costs for training, base construction, and supplies rising accordingly. The decision to purchase a state-of-the-art air defense system and several new naval vessels meant that Omani defense spending continued to increase even as the war was subsiding. Thus, the defense budget rose from \$144 million (U.S.) in 1971 to \$645 million, more than 40 percent of Oman’s gross national product, in 1975. As the armed forces acquired components of the air defense system in 1976, the defense budget would rise even further, to nearly \$753 million.<sup>31</sup>

While Oman’s expanding defense budget resulted in part from the sultan’s decision to purchase the air defense system, Qaboos also attributed it to un-



checked spending by the British officers commanding his armed forces. The sultan was at least partly correct. Although Qaboos served as commander in chief of the armed forces, the CSAF and the service commanders acted more as advisors than subordinates. One observer described the relationship between the young Qaboos and Major General Timothy M. Creasey, the CSAF during 1972–75, as “more Father and Son than General and Ruler.”<sup>32</sup> Individuals such as Timothy Landon may have provided an alternative source of advice, but they had relatively little influence over the senior British officers who ultimately served the government. There is no evidence to suggest that these officers made financial decisions carelessly. Nonetheless, their overriding concern up to late 1975 was to win the war in Dhofar. In addition to the purchase of ammunition and supplies necessary to sustain ongoing military operations, this required the expansion of the armed forces and the purchase of expensive hardware, including naval vessels, transport aircraft, and helicopters.

As the conflict drew to a close, therefore, the sultan moved to establish greater control over military spending by restructuring the armed forces. In 1976, he created a new position of director general of the Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Defense, reporting directly to the sultan. The following year, Qabobos abolished the position of CSAF and placed the three armed services—the Sultan of Oman’s Land Force, the Sultan of Oman’s Navy, and the Sultan of Oman’s Air Force—under the control of a joint staff.<sup>33</sup> The director general, the chairman of the joint staff, and most employees at the Ministry of Defense were British; but rather than loan service personnel seconded from the British armed forces, they were contractors who served the sultan directly. Under this new structure, the British commanders of the separate services reported to the sultan through the director general, who controlled all expenditures. This enabled Qaboos to limit military spending. In 1977, the defense budget decreased to \$661 million, approximately 31.5 percent of Oman’s gross national product. By 1979, it had diminished to \$555 million, or 23 percent of gross national product.<sup>34</sup> According to a British civilian employed in the Ministry of Defense in the late 1970s, the arrival of the director general “marked a period when building plans submitted by military units and services were constantly rejected or sent back to the originators for modification as a recognized delaying tactic.”<sup>35</sup>

Senior British officers, however, resented the new arrangement, and not just because it reined in their spending. The director general, a retired British foreign service officer named Robert Browning, did not have military experience, a financial management background, or any significant knowledge of Oman.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, he did not hesitate to exercise his authority, blocking expenditures while lecturing military officers and diplomats alike about their lack of respect for the sultan and his Omani advisors. As one diplomat commented: “There is something bizarre in being told, by a former member of the Foreign

Service who has been in the Arab world scarcely 3 weeks that the British have been insensitive and are unpopular but all that is going to change.”<sup>37</sup> The other British contractors at the Ministry of Defense had more military experience than Browning, but the service commanders resented taking direction from ex-military personnel who were “well-passed [*sic*] retirement age, and judged not to be in the mainstream of current British or any other modern military doctrine.”<sup>38</sup> Even the chairman of the joint staff, retired Brigadier General Peter T. Thwaites, who had commanded the Muscat Regiment as a serving British officer until 1971, earned little respect. A 1978 report by the British defense attaché in Muscat noted that “Thwaites is attempting to establish himself as a pseudo CDS [chief of the defense staff], but does not have the ability of character to do so.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, while restructuring the military chain of command helped limit defense spending, it brought to the fore tensions between British loan service personnel and contractors, each of whom served different masters.

Even before the reorganization of the armed forces into separate services, a February 1977 report referred to “in-fighting” between British advisors to the sultan, with the director general and the chairman of the joint staff on one side and the ambassador and the British service commanders on the other.<sup>40</sup> The issues at stake went well beyond the defense budget. In late 1977, the chairman of the joint staff developed a plan to use military force to occupy disputed territory claimed by both Oman and the neighboring United Arab Emirates (UAE). Given that British loan service officers also served in the UAE, the involvement of British personnel in the Omani operation had potentially embarrassing implications for the United Kingdom.<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, the British commander of the SOLF was able to dissuade the sultan from initiating the operation. On several occasions in 1978, however, Omani forces deployed along the disputed border. In one case, the sultan’s advisors developed a plan to launch airstrikes against targets in the UAE based on erroneous reports that mistook routine Emirati exercises for an imminent military action.<sup>42</sup> British officers complained about the poor guidance that the sultan received from advisors such as Landon and Thwaites. As the defense attaché commented in 1978:

Those in positions of authority do not have the training, ability or experience to draw the correct conclusions from the information which they are given. Furthermore, the advice (and very considerable experience) of the Loan Service Commanders is not sought, and even when it is given it is usually not heeded. The results have been close to disaster on a number of occasions, and it has only been the good sense of CSOLF, after consultation with HMG [Her Majesty’s Government], that has kept the Omanis on the rails.<sup>43</sup>

These manufactured crises apparently reminded the sultan of the benefits of British LSP, who were not only experienced but also able to offer relatively objective advice. Robert Browning left Oman in 1979 after a short stint of three years as director general of the Ministry of Defense. In a candid letter to an American advisor to the sultan, he admitted that he had taken the job for financial reasons and complained bitterly that he had received an end-of-service gratuity of only \$300,000 upon his departure; an “injustice” that he attributed to the fact that he had threatened—in jest—to write a book about his experiences in Oman.<sup>44</sup> Peter Thwaites remained as chairman of the joint staff until 1981, but afterward the sultan requested that a serving British officer take on the new position of chief of the defense staff, with authority over all three Omani armed services. The sultan’s choice for the post was General Timothy Creasey, who had served as commander of the Sultan’s Armed Forces and as an advisor to the sultan from 1972 to 1975. In a meeting with British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, however, Qaboos made clear that “he attached great importance to General Creasey’s being, and being seen to be, on the Active List of the British Army both on his appointment and throughout his tour of duty as a loan service officer in Oman.”<sup>45</sup> Creasey was already employed as commander in chief of UK land forces, but Thatcher agreed to return him to Oman in an effort to increase British influence over Oman’s defense policy. This was particularly important given that the British recognized that training the Sultan’s Armed Forces to operate its newly acquired equipment would keep loan service personnel in Oman for at least the rest of the decade.

The sultan may have had several different motives for his change of heart. He may have believed that the presence of a respected, senior British officer at the head of the armed forces would prevent the emergence of an Omani officer who might become a rival for power. He also likely saw Creasey as a symbol of his continued alliance with Britain, an important consideration given the increasing regional instability associated with the Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War. The fact that he chose Creasey, a senior commander with whom he had previously had a relationship “more Father and Son than General and Ruler” suggests that the sultan also had come to recognize the value of independent and, if necessary, dissenting advice. Creasey’s return reestablished the precedent of a current British general officer serving as advisor to the sultan’s armed forces, a policy that remains today.

## **Conclusion**

British security assistance to Oman began well before the Dhofar conflict, and it continues today. The period from 1975 to 1981 is important, however, because it saw the continuation of military ties between the two states in the absence of a clear threat to Oman. In fact, the British hoped to end their military role in

Oman as soon as practically possible following the defeat of the Dhofar insurgency. Economic considerations figured prominently in decisions to prolong this military presence. Enjoying an influx of oil revenue, Sultan Qaboos sought to expand and modernize his armed forces. British military advisors attempted to dissuade him; but when Qaboos declared his intention to seek other suppliers, the British government, facing economic troubles at home, agreed to support the sultan's purchases of British military and naval equipment by providing loan service personnel well after the Dhofar conflict had ended. Britain was not motivated solely by financial considerations. A principal reason for British security assistance to Oman was, and still is, an interest in maintaining national and regional stability. Nonetheless, the prospect of significant defense sales was an important contributor to the British decision to remain in Oman at a time when internal and external threats appeared to be subsiding.

It is unlikely that the sultan's only aim was to expand his arsenal. Just as valuable as aircraft or naval vessels was the presence of the British military and naval personnel that accompanied them. To borrow a term from the strategist Richard P. Rumelt, Qaboos discovered *hidden power* in his relationship with Britain, leveraging his newfound wealth to convince the financially strapped British to extend their security assistance efforts despite the end of the conflict in Dhofar.<sup>46</sup> The continued British assistance helped the sultan deter both internal and external threats to his rule. Assertive but inexperienced, Qaboos occasionally miscalculated in his efforts to manage his economic and military resources. In his attempt to strengthen his control over defense strategy and procurement decisions, he sidelined the experienced British loan service personnel who had provided valuable assistance during the Dhofar conflict. Ultimately, however, he realized the benefits of their advice and presence in Oman. The emergence of new threats, as well as subsequent purchases of British defense equipment, have justified continued British assistance since the 1980s. Nonetheless, the ongoing Anglo-Omani security relationship owes much to the decisions made and lessons learned in the 1970s and early 1980s.

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## Notes

1. "UK Cements Position in Gulf with Joint Base in Oman," Ministry of Defence, 5 November 2018.
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13. “Proposed Sale of Rapier to Oman,” NA, FCO 8/2235; and “British Military Assistance to Oman,” 20 February 1974, NA, FCO 8/2234.
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17. “Annual Report for 1972, by Defence Attaché, Muscat,” NA, FCO 8/2022.
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36. Murly-Gotto, "From War to Peace," 19.
37. D. E. Tatham to I. T. M. Lucas, 28 February 1976, NA, DEFE 11/899.
38. Murly-Gotto, "From War to Peace," 32.
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41. J. Treadwell to FCO, 12 December 1977, NA, AIR 8/2795.
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## **(Mis)use of Weapons** CERP in the Afghan Surge

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**Abstract:** The Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) was initially a mechanism for spending captured Iraqi funds to relieve urgent humanitarian need in the early phase of the Iraq War. It evolved to include American funding and a broader mandate to assist the emerging counterinsurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. Empowering frontline military forces to distribute money in an attempt to shape the environment was an innovation, but the absence of best practices and guidelines until much later in the wars, as well as a widespread lack of understanding of the economics of development, continuity, or useful metrics, hampered CERP in achieving its goals. Increased CERP funds were an element of the new strategy for Afghanistan advanced by the Barack H. Obama administration. The flawed premise of the surge, combined with a lack of military expertise in economic aid and Afghan culture, led to an outcome in which billions of dollars, spent with the best of intentions, hampered development and in some cases strengthened the insurgency.

**Keywords:** counterinsurgency, Commander's Emergency Response Program, CERP, military change, stabilization, pacification, development, hearts-and-minds counterinsurgency.

**T**he Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) was from its inception a product of contingency designed to use funds to assist the military in its interactions with Iraqis. During the initial phase of the invasion of Iraq, a cache of funds worth almost \$1 billion was found on the

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property of an official in the just-toppled government. At the same time, it rapidly became clear that the occupying army was in the midst of a population that was somewhat hostile to it and sliding into anarchy, in which even basic services such as garbage removal and infrastructure were crumbling.<sup>1</sup> CERP evolved as a way to use these funds to support the fight against the nascent insurgency, indirectly through meeting urgent local needs, and directly through using funds and programs to isolate insurgents and win popular support. The program persisted with the support of U.S. funds. During the Afghan surge, CERP was widely implemented in Afghanistan, where a few isolated successes were outweighed by instances in which CERP increased violence and prevented other, better-qualified agencies than the military from implementing development programs. A flawed understanding of Afghan culture, the local economy, and the nature of the conflict combined with perverse incentives for the local commanders who administered the funds, lack of expertise in the military for economic development, and an absence of continuity that led to an outcome in which billions of dollars, spent with the best of intentions, hampered development and strengthened the insurgency.

### **Origins of CERP**

On 30 April 2003, President George W. Bush provided guidance in a memorandum to the secretary of defense that formerly state- or regime-owned property could be seized and either held, sold, or reallocated for the benefit of the Iraqi people. Further clarification from Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz advised L. Paul Bremer, the administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), that the authority to use such property was to be delegated to the Department of Defense (DOD) “to assist the Iraqi people and support the reconstruction of Iraq.”<sup>2</sup> From the very beginning of the CERP program, it was designed to use resources—originally from within Iraq itself—to help Iraqis and the reconstruction effort, and this role was explicitly delegated to the military, rather than the civilian-led Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA).

On 19 June 2003, *Fragmentary Order 89 to Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) OPOD 03-036* provided more specific guidance for how seized property could be used, translating the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) decision through the Joint Staff and United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), to the formation directing U.S. military efforts in Iraq at the time. It identified CERP funds for financial management improvements, restoration in the rule of law, investment in governance initiatives, and the purchase and repair of equipment necessary for infrastructure. More broadly, it noted that humanitarian assistance was a tool for increasing security cooperation, enhancing military access and influence, and generating goodwill. Also



in this memorandum was the first official use of the term *Commander's Emergency Response Program*.<sup>3</sup> The program was designed to minimize bureaucratic obstacles to the rapid funding of small projects to meet humanitarian needs and support the counterinsurgency at the most local level possible. Because the security environment limited the ability of civilian U.S. government and non-governmental organization (NGO) aid personnel to operate outside of secured areas, decision making for CERP began, and remained, in the military's hands.<sup>4</sup>

The use of money for postwar development is neither new nor particular to Iraq and Afghanistan. Similarly, the use of money, security- and infrastructure-enhancing projects, and public works for the sake of employment in a counterinsurgency was not particularly innovative. The major shift that took place, sparked by the presidential memorandum of 30 April 2003, was the assignment of very granular development and humanitarian spending efforts to the military, and the responsibility CERP gave to military officers in theater.

## **Development and Pacification in History**

Writing in 1965, Charles Wolf points out that even half a century ago, the conventional wisdom on guerrilla movements and insurgencies was that international politics, military capability, and external assistance were permissive but not sufficient factors in a successful action against the government. The essential element, rather, was considered to be hostility toward and mistrust of the government, combined with support for and commitment to the insurgents. Governments could therefore achieve success by winning the support of the population. Wolf's crucial point is "to connect a particular program with the kind of behavior the government wants to promote among the people."<sup>5</sup> Rewarding villages that support the government, while providing protection for cooperating rural areas, is essential for creating the right incentives, but it should be done in a manner that reduces the ability of the insurgent to secure the inputs they need at acceptable cost. Additionally, the best projects are those that "strengthen or expand the instruments available to the government for obtaining information and controlling insurgent logistics."<sup>6</sup> This includes infrastructure and agricultural development but also the creation of relationships that will provide information about insurgents, their supporters, and their enemies.

When adjusted for inflation, the dollar cost of reconstruction and assistance activities in Iraq until 2006 was comparable to the cost of such activities in postwar Germany and Japan. There were, however, major differences in the scope and nature of the activities in the 1940s compared to those in Iraq after the invasion. First, CERP funds, in particular the resources that were directly allocated in relatively small amounts by soldiers working with Iraqi locals, made up on average 5 percent of all U.S. assistance in Iraq prior to the surge.<sup>7</sup> The

remainder of the funds, as with all assistance for Germany and Japan, was allocated at a much higher level, either theater command centers or Washington, DC. Another significant difference, and relevant to the degree of interaction between U.S. forces and the population, was that in postwar Germany and Japan, funding was provided by occupying forces, but administration and contracting were done by locals. In Iraq, however, where civil society was nowhere near the level of Germany and Japan in the immediate postwar phase, U.S. personnel were more closely involved at every level.<sup>8</sup>

In the 2002 *National Security Strategy* (NSS), development was for the first time enshrined as a coequal element of American security as part of the “3 Ds” of development, defense, and diplomacy.<sup>9</sup> The unclassified 2003 *Joint Operations Concepts* paper, following on the 2002 NSS, made reference to the importance of opening societies to make them less hospitable to threats to the United States by developing their democratic infrastructure as well as their economies.<sup>10</sup> It also emphasizes the importance of developing a holistic understanding of the “area of interest,” which includes their economy.<sup>11</sup> The emphasis of the document remains on military operations, though, with economic activity the domain of interagency relationships. In 2005, *DOD Directive 3000.05* developed guidelines on how to conduct “Department of Defense activities that support U.S. Government plans for stabilization, security, reconstruction and transition operations, which lead to sustainable peace while advancing U.S. interests.”<sup>12</sup> This document puts the development of infrastructure, the promotion of the rule of law and civil society, and the development of a market economy on par with security force assistance and combat operations in support of a COIN.

The 2008 edition of *Stability Operations*, Field Manual (FM) 3-07, encoded the relationship between economic development and the military’s support for such development as a tool of warfighting. *Stability Operations* links the legitimacy of the host nation (the cornerstone of stability operations) with its ability to exercise sovereignty and limit the reach of government: meeting the infrastructure, governance, and social service needs of the population without inhibiting a market economy and the health of private property and businesses.<sup>13</sup> The 2008 NSS also makes a glancing mention of economic development, emphasizing that both the killing of terrorists and the training of local security forces will amount to little without addressing local grievances and creating government and development programs.<sup>14</sup> The *National Military Strategy* published in 2011 draws only marginally closer to the question of how the military should concern itself with economic development in zones of conflict, stating that counterterrorism is unproductive by itself in the long term, and it must be complemented by the development of local government legitimacy, including economic development, governance, and rule of law—which the U.S. military must support.<sup>15</sup> While economic development as a complement to political and

irregular warfare had long been supported by some members of the national security community, its administration—as compared with support for its administration—had remained since the John F. Kennedy administration the concern of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Department of State, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), rather than the military.<sup>16</sup>

### **Development and CERP after 11 September 2001**

The use of financial assistance to shape the fight in Afghanistan began almost immediately after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 (9/11), and it had earlier antecedents. In an adumbration of the events of the twenty-first century, U.S. policy in the 1980s was to put pressure on the major ideological threat of the age by providing money and arms to local actors who would advance American interests in Afghanistan. In another parallel to subsequent wars, when the Soviet Union fell and the immediate goal of the policy had been achieved, the United States withdrew its funding and attention from Afghanistan, with little concern for the eventual consequences of the mujahideen they had empowered there.<sup>17</sup> During the preparation for the initial invasion and the invasion itself, the CIA and U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) funneled cash directly to the Northern Alliance warlords who were considered reliable opponents of the Taliban, both to act as a U.S. proxy and to provide local knowledge.<sup>18</sup> While the distribution of resources in this phase was carried out by the military and paramilitary CIA, rather than out of the Department of State at a higher level as in the past, the emphasis was not on development or capacity building but rather on equipping or more blatantly purchasing allies, with minimal concern for long-term governance or stability.<sup>19</sup>

From its inception, the CERP program—originally disbursing seized assets in Iraq only—represented a new activity for U.S. military personnel. Previously, commanders in theater had no discretionary funds to apply to their missions. Resources, whether in the form of personnel, equipment, or logistics, are the responsibility of higher headquarters, the DOD, and in some cases Congress. Further, most officers, unless they have at some point been assigned to billets involving acquisitions and procurement, have almost no background in the investment of capital to achieve short- or long-term results, beyond the extent to which they are responsible for administering budgets associated with their units or commands, which typically involves less decision making about spending and more oversight. This was a new sphere of responsibility for which the great majority of U.S. military personnel had no formal training or experience.<sup>20</sup>

Initially, CERP was perceived as a political and military success in Iraq.<sup>21</sup> From the summer of 2003, the dichotomy between the nominal purpose of the program—emergency response—and its activities, which increasingly included

development of security forces and industrial investment, grew. Nonetheless, when then-Major General David H. Petraeus, who at the time was commander of the Army's 101st Airborne Division, told Ambassador L. Paul Bremer that "money is ammunition and . . . we didn't have much."<sup>22</sup> Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) funds began to flow to supplement CERP. As the rules and goals for spending CPA funds, which were provided by the U.S. government, were different from those around disbursing captured Iraqi funds, this resulted in a certain blurring of lines and responsibilities. Nonetheless, by October, Congress had authorized an additional \$180 million for CERP.<sup>23</sup> This level of funding would increase to a peak of almost \$1.3 billion in 2008.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Results of CERP in Iraq**

The validity of the concept underlying CERP—that military officers in daily contact with Iraqis could rapidly and appropriately provide cash assistance to meet urgent, humanitarian, or development needs, and that doing so would pacify the region—was questioned early on, despite political popularity of the program. An analysis of classified data on SIGACTS (significant actions, which include action against U.S. and Coalition forces, as well as against Iraqi civilians and Iraqi security forces) found that there was no meaningful correlation between SIGACTS and either the number of CERP initiatives or the dollars spent under CERP in a given region.<sup>25</sup> A more granular study found that while CERP spending had a slight negative correlation with violence for small dollar projects, overall the correlation was slightly positive, and strongly so in regions with more active conflict. The different effects of small and large CERP investments has been attributed both to the more immediate nature of small investments (a villager may not immediately see or benefit from a bridge being rebuilt at great expense but will immediately notice less sewage in the streets) as well as the tendency of large projects to become a kind of spoils over which local factions will fight.<sup>26</sup>

A study published in 2009 on CERP in al-Tameem Province, in northeastern Iraq, showed that between early 2004 and mid-2009, the effects of CERP were at best mixed with respect to pacification, violence, and crime. An Army officer involved in administering the program in 2006 drew upon several data sets to look for relationships between the number and size of CERP reconstruction disbursements only (not other forms of CERP spending) and COIN outcomes. The results—albeit limited to one province—were in some ways contradictory. The best predictor for successful use of CERP funds, the study found, was to allocate funds according to the metrics *deserve*—in which villages were more likely to hold positive attitudes toward the host government and intervening power, and were more likely to provide information to the counterinsurgents, scored higher—and *message resonance*—in which village/project combinations

that were more likely to be noticed by villagers, more likely to be communicated to nearby villages due to proximity and traffic patterns, and more likely to be communicated more broadly through the province due to media presence and activity, scored higher. This runs counter to the conventional wisdom of the role of development aid in a COIN, and counter to much practice, in which need (the degree to which the lives of Iraqis would be improved, and the number of Iraqis whose lives would be improved) guided much of the decision making about development spending.<sup>27</sup>

This suggests that the name of the program under which CERP was grouped—money as a weapons system—was particularly apt. However, the dual purposes for which CERP was initially authorized—to relieve urgent humanitarian need and to support the tactical and campaign level needs of the counterinsurgency—might in fact be in tension with each other. Within the parameters of the al-Tameem study, spending to reward and incentivize support for and cooperation with the counterinsurgency yielded less violence, while spending to meet humanitarian need increased violence to a small degree.

In Iraq, the attempt to use CERP and other forms of military-led investment in developing the market and supporting the creation of new businesses had at best mixed results. While even CERP proponents understood that the military was not designed to carry out economic development, the security situation prohibited much involvement by the civilian agencies that were better suited to the mission. This dependence on the military, however, came with a built-in problem: the lack of partnerships and funding sources for the transition to the end of the U.S. mission. To the extent that CERP and other programs achieved their desired goals in the short term, the fact that they were intrinsically military meant that successes rarely lasted longer than the active engagement of U.S. forces, and were sometimes limited to the duration of a unit rotation.<sup>28</sup>

The ability of CERP spending to contribute to the stability and legitimacy of a government that reflected general Western mores about accountability and transparency was also fundamentally flawed, according to an Army lawyer who oversaw elements of the program in Baghdad in 2008:

CERP should not be used in cultures already fraught with corruption. While using U.S. appropriated funds as “mad money” to essentially buy the loyalty of local populations may work in some situations, it may also simply add to the corruption in countries where fraud is deeply imbedded in the culture. If a country is already susceptible to corruption, loyalty payments made in exchange for a cessation of violence may have limited effectiveness. Both Iraq and Afghanistan already rely on international assistance to combat fraud: CERP is inconsistent with these efforts.<sup>29</sup>

As to the significant issue of whether CERP was of immediate utility to the counterinsurgency as a tool for reducing violence, the evidence from Iraq prior to the Afghan surge was at best mixed. A quantitative analysis of CERP spending and SIGACTs concluded that a reduction in violence was most clear during the surge, when it was impossible to attribute this decrease with any clarity to the CERP program or for that matter to any other single factor. The study also noted that the reduction in violence was greatest in regions that had been the most violent and were therefore the focus of disproportionate attention from many programs, including CERP. It also concluded that some of the reduction in violence was the result of reclassifying some incidents as “criminal violence” as locals fought over CERP resources.<sup>30</sup> This study also found that any analysis that used SIGACTs as the dependent variable was useful only to the degree that the datasets used were complete, and that reporting of SIGACTs dropped as hostilities increased, due to increased operational tempo.<sup>31</sup>

Another study that applied an epidemiological model to the effects of CERP on SIGACTs found that no meaningful conclusions could be drawn without first determining if the region in question had a high or low propensity toward violence prior to the initiation of CERP project funding.<sup>32</sup> A survey of battalion commanders who had disbursed CERP funds in Iraq showed that between 30 and 40 percent viewed reductions in violence as the prime measure of effectiveness of a CERP project, and showed no consensus as to whether the program was generally successful by this metric, with one respondent calling the idea “nonsensical.”<sup>33</sup> Additionally, the employment of CERP funds by commanders changed with the increased troop levels of the surge, as an increasing proportion of units chose to limit their use of money as a weapons system (MAAWS).<sup>34</sup> The very mixed results from CERP and MAAWS spending in Iraq, though, did little to shape the use of these programs in the Afghan surge.

### **CERP Accelerates in Afghanistan**

Much of the difficulty intrinsic to CERP was known and discussed before the Afghan surge. Work published more recently was not available to decision makers then, but it is even more pessimistic about the possibility that heavily resourcing and expanding the CERP program in Afghanistan could yield the desired results. A study examining CERP and violence in 227 Afghan districts between 2005 and 2009 found that, after accounting for annual, seasonal, and district-specific variation, there was no significant relationship between CERP projects and violence. Where smaller studies have found relationships between project size and the social climate of the district—and the ability of CERP to influence violence—this larger study points out that the “averaging out” effect of projects when the whole is considered suggests “either that reconstruction work is unrelated to violence or that programming bears on the insurgency in

ways unaccounted for by the hearts and minds perspective, such that an ambiguous average masks underlying opposing causal forces.”<sup>35</sup>

By the end of 2009, more than \$1.6 billion in CERP funds had been allocated to Afghanistan, increasing almost every year from the \$30 million of funding in 2004 to more than \$550 million in 2009.<sup>36</sup> Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were the primary organization through which CERP funding flowed in Afghanistan, and civilians made up just 3 percent of U.S. PRT personnel.<sup>37</sup> Auditors noted a range of concerns in the execution of the program there, and in the summer of 2009 representatives from the Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General, the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), and the Department of the Army met to agree to stricter oversight and coordination of CERP projects, as well as the addition of project managers to PRTs to reduce the burden of administering the program.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Afghan Surge and a New Strategy for Afghanistan**

At the end of 2009, change was coming to the war in Afghanistan. In opposition to the Republican candidate for president, Senator John McCain (R-AZ), who believed the United States could fight and win in both Iraq and Afghanistan, then-candidate Barack Obama (D-IL) believed that continued involvement in Iraq was something of a sunk cost fallacy, and that by drawing down efforts in Iraq, the United States could do what was necessary in Afghanistan. He said, “[A]s President, I will make the fight against al Qaeda and the Taliban the top priority that it should be. This is a war that we have to win.”<sup>39</sup> To that end, he pledged in July 2008 that he would send two more U.S. brigades to Afghanistan, seek increased NATO participation both in quantity and quality, and direct an additional \$1 billion in annual assistance for nonmilitary purposes, particularly for creating a viable economy in Afghanistan.

Much of the first year of Obama’s administration, with respect to national security, was dedicated to reviewing the war in Afghanistan. This phase was characterized by increasing tensions between the military and the administration in which the president suspected the military of leaking information to manipulate his policies, and the military suspected the president of disregarding their advice.<sup>40</sup> During 2009, Obama’s initial distrust of General Stanley A. McChrystal’s request for 40,000 more troops softened, and he considered a steep increase in troop levels and resourcing for a short but intense effort. President Hamid Karzai won the August 2009 election, but the process was tainted by fraud, and his credibility with the Afghan public was low. As the Taliban made steady gains during the 2009 fighting season, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates increasingly made the case for an Afghan surge, similar to the Iraqi surge then seen as the high point of the U.S. war in Iraq.<sup>41</sup>

Despite Obama's initial reluctance to buy in to the conclusions and recommendations in McChrystal's strategic review, this document, and the president's reaction to it, helped shape the official strategy for the Afghan surge and what followed. In May 2009, Secretary of Defense Gates and Obama replaced General David D. McKiernan, an armor officer who had played an integral role in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, with General McChrystal.<sup>42</sup> His strategic review, appropriately enough given its purpose and issuing body, was mostly concerned with military issues, and primarily the shift to a population-centric model of fighting over the attrition-based model whose remnants still lingered when he replaced McKiernan. The body count as a metric of effectiveness was formally revoked by General McChrystal.<sup>43</sup> The overwhelming emphasis of the review was the risk of not allocating enough resources and misunderstanding the Afghanistan fight. From the opening pages, McChrystal warns that "the overall situation is deteriorating," and that while increased resources would not by themselves ensure victory, "under-resourcing could lose it."<sup>44</sup> Using the language of resources and risk familiar to operational art and campaign planning, McChrystal emphasized that the risk of losing Afghanistan was greater than had been appreciated.

During 2009, the Obama administration shaped a strategy informed in many ways by McChrystal's review, as well as the politics of the moment. While the Iraq surge had been initiated by an unpopular president in the context of an unpopular war, Obama enjoyed broad support early in his first term, and Afghanistan was still widely perceived as a war of self-defense, and the more legitimate part of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Obama's primary political challenge was navigating between the two main camps within his administration, who advocated for different and incompatible strategies. Secretary of Defense Gates, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were broadly in favor of a strategy that emphasized the defeat of al-Qaeda and the Taliban, in the context of a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy that would lead to a stable Afghanistan. This strategy required a substantial troop commitment, and a conclusion tied to the achievement of these goals, rather than a set timetable for withdrawal. The competing approach was advocated by Vice President Joe Biden, Special Representative to the President for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard C. Holbrooke, and U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl W. Eikenberry. This camp sought the destruction of al-Qaeda but not necessarily the Taliban, were skeptical about both the possibility of stabilizing Afghanistan and sustained American support for such an effort, and argued for a counterterrorism effort limited in scope, time, and troop levels.<sup>45</sup>

The strategy adopted by the Obama administration in late 2009 attempted in some ways to split the difference between population-centric counterinsurgency and counterterrorism. Where COIN in Iraq had become abbreviated as



“clear, hold, build,” the Afghan strategy was to “clear, hold, build, transfer.”<sup>46</sup> In a somewhat contradictory fashion, the plan both tied the withdrawal of U.S. troops to the accomplishment of goals, while also declaring a drawdown beginning in July 2011.<sup>47</sup> The rapid increase in troop levels designed to defeat al-Qaeda while disrupting the Taliban would pave the way for a more civilian-intensive effort to develop the country’s social and economic infrastructure alongside a training mission designed to expand Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) capacity. In this understanding, the provision of security and governance was both the means and the end of counterinsurgency in Afghanistan.<sup>48</sup>

The strategy also promised particular attention to the role of Pakistan in the insurgency in Afghanistan, acknowledging the criticism made by the Government Accounting Office (inter alia) that there had yet to be a comprehensive plan to address the role played by Pakistan in permitting a safe haven for al-Qaeda in the frontier region Pakistan shared with Afghanistan.<sup>49</sup> The pacification and reconstruction, with paired military and civilian surges, were the principal pillars of a counterinsurgency, although the result would be to deny terrorists a safe haven in Afghanistan. The increased pressure on Pakistan to crack down on the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the North-West Frontier Province, as well as targeting killings by U.S. forces in those regions, were pillars of a counterterrorism mission, although the result would be to deny supplies, reinforcements, and support to the insurgency within Afghanistan.<sup>50</sup> Inasmuch as the strategy Obama announced in December 2009 was an attempt to reconcile two largely separate approaches to the problem, it was possible for the counterinsurgency and counterterrorism missions to reinforce each other. In this sense, the selection of General McChrystal was apt. While endorsing counterinsurgency, he had established himself by transforming the use of SOF in counterterrorism in Iraq, although he was characterized by one observer as seeing effective COIN in Afghanistan largely “as a route to effective counterterrorism.”<sup>51</sup>

While the rhetoric of COIN had been in use in Afghanistan prior to 2009, the review requested by Obama made clear that in practice, the operational culture of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) had not embraced it, in part due to the intrinsic difficulty of developing cultural fluency in a place with such different (and diverse) languages and customs, and in part due to the unconventional nature of a counterinsurgency. Not all troop-contributing nations embraced COIN as a strategy, further complicating a coherent ISAF plan.<sup>52</sup> ANSF needed to be dramatically expanded both in number and in effectiveness, an undertaking that would require higher troops levels, as training and fighting had to take place simultaneously.<sup>53</sup> Another major threat was political and social. As Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) institutions were weak or nonexistent, Afghan society was plagued by “the un-

punished abuse of power by corrupt officials and power-brokers, a widespread sense of political disenfranchisement, and a longstanding lack of economic opportunity. ISAF errors have further compounded the problem.”<sup>54</sup> Defeating the insurgent groups was necessary but insufficient for success without addressing the structural and institutional weaknesses of Afghan society.

The review did not explicitly mention economic development, as logistics and funding were national level responsibilities, and the provision of such resources to ISAF was a political issue in each contributing state, but it hinted at it pervasively. In the ISAF mission statement, governance and socioeconomic development are linked, and the strategic review expands on these connections.<sup>55</sup> The long-term viability of the Afghan government and its security forces rested on legitimacy and capability as well as the ability to support itself from the taxes it could raise from its own economy and trade.<sup>56</sup> A major driver of disenfranchisement and resentment among the local population, which led some to join the insurgency and more to lend it explicit or tacit support, was the chronic unemployment in the region, exacerbated by the concurrent attempts to curtail the opium industry.<sup>57</sup> While the new COIN approach McChrystal articulated would seek to minimize civilian casualties and damage to civilian property, when Coalition forces caused such losses, appropriate compensation was vital not only for political purposes but also to mitigate the economic harm done to families and communities by casualties and destruction.<sup>58</sup> CERP funds were ultimately used as means toward all these ends in Afghanistan.

## **Campaign Planning and COIN**

The assumptions on which the COIN of the Afghan surge was built were derived, by 2009, not only from historical insurgencies and the efforts to contain them but from Iraq and the early years of Afghanistan as well. The Western understanding of counterinsurgency had generally converged upon legitimacy as the key to a host government that could rule through something other than brute force.<sup>59</sup> Another body of literature argues that Western states fail at counterinsurgency because they are reluctant to resort to the levels of coercion and violence necessary to subdue an insurgency.<sup>60</sup> However, this approach was never seriously considered in either theater of the GWOT.<sup>61</sup> One mechanism for building legitimacy, and the approach reflected in most doctrine, is in the provision of public service and good governance. Equally important to how the state governs, though, particularly in regions with sharply drawn and contested lines based on ethnicity, heredity, or religion, is who governs.<sup>62</sup>

American COIN, implicitly and perhaps unconsciously building on colonial counterinsurgency efforts, is based on an almost teleological drive to rational, liberal democracy as the form of government with the most legitimacy, and which delivers the best governance. Such governments involve accountability

to the electorate, representation at all levels, and economic growth.<sup>63</sup> This approach to COIN imputes or imposes Western standards of legitimacy to local political traditions to which such standards are alien. Built into this model, particularly as it was applied in Iraq and Afghanistan, are three assumptions. First, that economic development increases the stability of a region. Second, that the provision of aid, particularly aid that drives economic development, can help win “hearts and minds” and thus increase support for, or at least acceptance of, the host government and the intervening power. Third, that the increased capacity of the central government to provide services and maintain economic development will build legitimacy and stability.<sup>64</sup> These assumptions remain unsupported by empirical evidence.<sup>65</sup>

Regarding Afghanistan in particular, much of the literature arguing for poverty as a root cause of conflict seemed in the early twenty-first century to be borne out, with humanitarian assistance and economic development as logical cures.<sup>66</sup> The deep and complex nature of intertribal relationships and the strength of tribal affiliations in Afghanistan, while exploited by the Taliban and local warlords, were often underestimated or ignored by ISAF forces.<sup>67</sup> While studies of violence and poverty often emphasize the importance of context in shaping how the two phenomena reinforce each other, social factors were often discounted in the counterinsurgency planning for Afghanistan, and “in 2006 and 2007 the combination of the extension of governance, the extension of Afghan security force presence and the application of development assistance were viewed as both necessary and sufficient for stabilization to occur.”<sup>68</sup>

These assumptions are an implicit part of the documents outlining the strategic framework for Afghanistan in the first Obama administration. The initial *United States Government Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan* (or ICMCP), published in August 2009, identifies 11 COIN “Transformative Effects.” Designed to avoid stovepipes between lines of effort, civilian and military sectors, and community, provincial, and national levels, the plan does not relegate aid or development to any particular transformative effect. However, there are roles for MAAWS and CERP funds in many of the 11 categories. “Expansion of Accountable and Transparent Governance” includes expansion of health and education coverage; “Creating Sustainable Jobs for Population Centers and Corridors” includes municipal development of electricity, sanitation, and transportation infrastructure; “Agricultural Opportunity and Market Access” is almost entirely concerned with both the direct provision of assistance for the agricultural sector and the development of Afghan capacity to sustain this sector; “Countering the Nexus of Insurgency, Narcotics, Corruption and Crime” includes developing prison and detention facilities so they are both secure and humane; and “Community and Government-led Reintegration” (of low- and medium-level Taliban members) includes en-

hanced economic assistance for communities willing to reintegrate Taliban fighters. When addressing resources, the ICMCP specifically mandates pushing funding down to the lowest possible operational level, and using in particular CERP or Economic Support Fund (ESF) programs based on funding criteria.<sup>69</sup>

In a note to Congress in June 2015, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reiterated the critical importance of economic development to counter-insurgency during the Afghan surge. “[P]overty and widespread unemployment in population centers are exploited by insurgent and criminal elements for recruitment,” it warned, and reported that the highest reconstruction priority in Afghanistan in 2010 was job creation in agriculture.<sup>70</sup> CERP was singled out as a source of funding both for humanitarian relief and for reconstruction needs, as part of the discussion of economic stabilization—even as the office noted the need for oversight to ensure that funds were used effectively. This included ensuring that the Afghan government would ultimately take responsibility for development and that civilian and military development efforts be coordinated.

The revised ICMCP in 2011 was in most respects similar to the original document. One of its planning assumptions is that “GIRoA continues to improve revenue collection abilities, leading to greater self-sufficiency” and that it establishes a solid economy as the key to transferring power to the Afghan government, not simply to prevent the disenfranchisement that the insurgency exploited.<sup>71</sup> The 11 Transformative Effects are updated to 13 Campaign Objectives, which are grouped into categories relevant to security, governance, development, and cross-cutting (i.e., those that cut across two or three different categories). In this sense, economic assistance and development are less broadly emphasized than in the earlier version of the plan. The clear priority of the 2011 plan is transition. Metrics for evaluating progress are featured for each objective, and few of them involve U.S. funding at the local level. Neither CERP nor any other MAAWS program are mentioned.

## **The Americanization of the War in Afghanistan**

Prior to 2009, the poor coordination between combat and development activities was due in part to the different preferences of the participant states, as well as the lack of expertise on the part of the military at the latter mission. Additionally, they lacked sufficient security to permit civilian agencies with more expertise in humanitarian and development activity to conduct these activities—a chronic lack of resources from 2001 to 2009 and a lack of unity of effort and command, which meant that success at the tactical level were often not knitted together to achieve larger strategic purposes.<sup>72</sup> The “Americanization” of the war announced in 2009 by Obama and implemented in 2010 and onward muted the influence of different national preferences and command control challenges to coordinate the many types of activity necessary to achieve the political goal

of stabilizing Afghanistan and then withdrawing. The surge of military and civilian personnel for the first time provided adequate resources to carry out these missions.<sup>73</sup>

The ISAF campaign plan released publicly in January 2010 reinforced these themes.<sup>74</sup> While economic development is mentioned only obliquely, its role in the overall campaign plan is well-defined. It is clearly not the primary focus of the military effort, but neither is it ignored. Lack of economic opportunity is described as an element of the weakness of the GIRoA, which is portrayed in the briefing as the major obstacle to the implementation of the new U.S. strategy (which now included a definite, if frequently moving, departure date). In the context of expanding Taliban influence and more frequent kinetic events, population protection and stronger ANSF are paired with improved governance and development as the goal underlying military operations. Socioeconomic development was a distinct enumerated line of effort, with the operational objectives of increasing revenues for the GIRoA, enhancing infrastructure, and increasing employment and economic activity, with the recognition that a stable and sustainable Afghan government required these attributes.<sup>75</sup> The most direct military implications of this line of effort for ISAF was the creation of sufficient security for economic activity to thrive, as well as the connection of economic corridors to allow reliable intra-Afghanistan trade and exports.<sup>76</sup>

Many NATO states, particularly Germany and the United Kingdom, increased funding for development efforts in support of this new campaign plan, although often through their own national agencies rather than through multinational or direct ISAF efforts.<sup>77</sup> As U.S. humanitarian and development spending increased under the Obama administration, USAID provided more than \$2 billion per year to assist development in Afghanistan, with the goal of providing half through Afghan government agencies. CERP funding—the portion directly administered by the U.S. military—peaked at \$501 million in FY 2009, decreased slightly in 2010 and 2011, fell to \$104 million in FY 2012, then to \$38 million in 2013, and dwindled to insignificant (by DOD standards) levels in the years since.<sup>78</sup>

## **The Logic of CERP in Afghanistan**

This influx in funds, matched by a troop surge and civilian surge, was designed to reverse the momentum in Afghanistan, which even official reports described as a struggle that might easily be lost. It was built on a set of assumptions, derived from the history of COIN and from experiences in Iraq, about the relationships between intervening powers, insurgents, host governments, and the local population in contested regions. The first official publication of doctrine in the twenty-first century to address counterinsurgency, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, FM 3-07.22, described the will of the people as the center of gravity

of an insurgency. Along with calls to minimize the use of force around the host nation population, it includes the development of infrastructure and a strong host nation economy as vital parts of the civil-military aspect of a COIN.<sup>79</sup> *Counterinsurgency*, FM 3-24, replaced *Counterinsurgency Operations* two years later and included economic development in its discussion of the causes of, and solutions to, insurgencies.<sup>80</sup>

*Counterinsurgency* recognizes that a range of groups, including insurgents, multinational corporations, and NGOs, as well as intervening powers through both civilian and military programs, engage in economic development, while acknowledging that even civil affairs personnel, trained to carry out stabilization and development missions, lack deep knowledge of the topic.<sup>81</sup> Notably, it characterizes economic development on the part of the counterinsurgents as part of a “middle stage.” Using a medical metaphor, the first mandate is to stop the bleeding, which involves combat and information operations, as well as population protection. Continuing this analogy, economic and infrastructure development can only take place during the recovery phase, with economic responsibilities being transitioned to the host government in the outpatient care phase.<sup>82</sup> The logic of development in COIN is stated succinctly in *Counterinsurgency*:

Without a viable economy and employment opportunities, the public is likely to pursue false promises offered by insurgents. Sometimes insurgents foster the conditions keeping the economy stagnant. Insurgencies attempt to exploit a lack of employment or job opportunities to gain active and passive support for their cause and ultimately undermine the government’s legitimacy. Unemployed males of military age may join the insurgency to provide for their families. Hiring these people for public works projects or a local civil defense corps can remove the economic incentive to join the insurgency.<sup>83</sup>

A more practical publication designed to guide the use of money in shaping the counterinsurgency environment was released by the Center for Army Lessons Learned in 2009, under the imprimatur of the commandant of the U.S. Army Financial Management School (*Counterinsurgency* was signed by Lieutenant Generals David Petraeus and James F. Amos). Ensuring that the subtle interdependencies of economic activity, social unrest, and governmental legitimacy would not obscure this handbook’s point, it was titled *Commander’s Guide to Money as a Weapons System: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, and the term *money as a weapons system*, or MAAWS, already in use in Iraq, became ubiquitous in the efforts in Afghanistan that were ramping up.<sup>84</sup> Many programs other than CERP fell under the umbrella of MAAWS, and this handbook was

designed to guide company-, battalion-, and brigade-level commanders as well as noncommissioned officers in the use of these funding sources, not simply CERP.

There were signs that CERP might not be achieving either its development or its COIN goals in Iraq well before the publication of the MAAWS handbook and the substantial investment of CERP and other MAAWS funds in Afghanistan during the Afghan surge. Accounts of PRT teams that worked with CERP noted a lack of direction and a marginal return on investment that benefited fewer Iraqis than intended and exacerbated existing tribal hostilities and instability.<sup>85</sup> The lack of central control or oversight—in some ways a desirable attribute to allow rapid and local response—also allowed funds to be used for unintended and sometimes frivolous projects, as CERP became the funding source of choice for works far beyond its mandate due to its streamlined processes, and receipts and documentation were often incomplete or entirely missing.<sup>86</sup>

### **CERP in Implementation in Afghanistan**

The quarterly reports released by SIGAR during the Afghan surge document not only the changes in funding and disbursements but also changes to the guidelines around the uses to which CERP funds could be put. These reports illustrate the extent to which CERP spending drifted from its original constraints and purpose. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 directs that the military not engage in development of construction projects that would typically fall under the jurisdiction of USAID or the Department of State, both of which had other funding streams substantially larger than CERP. It also stipulated that priority be given to projects of less than \$500,000 and prohibits the use of CERP funds to provide goods, services, or direct funds to national armies; guard forces; border, policy, or civil defense forces; infrastructure protection forces; or intelligence forces in support of other security or defense forces.<sup>87</sup>

Despite these unambiguous prohibitions, it soon became clear that, particularly for higher cost, high visibility infrastructure works, there was little purpose in committing funds without some assurance that the project would not become a target for insurgent attacks. The SIGAR report from the first quarter of 2010 noted a request to use CERP funds to provide security at the Kajaki Dam Hydropower Plant, a necessary development to provide reliable electricity to the particularly violent Kandahar and Helmand regions.<sup>88</sup> Beyond security, the ability of a future independent Afghan government to maintain a project caused SIGAR-led audits to criticize CERP spending that put funds in jeopardy, and in some cases to redirect resources to non-Afghan agencies, as when 92 percent of the funds dedicated to infrastructure in Laghman Province

were considered at risk due to the inability of Afghan provincial authorities to maintain or operate them.<sup>89</sup>

Without exception, each SIGAR quarterly report between 2010 and 2013 mentions the importance of increased oversight, audits, and monitoring to ensure project completion, the appropriateness of project funding, and the technical quality of large infrastructure projects in particular. These reports also note mission creep, both in what is funded and where the funds go. In the second quarter of 2010, SIGAR reported that when local contractors could not fulfill project requirements, CERP funds were suballocated to other organizations, including elements of the U.S. Army, despite the clear prohibition of CERP funds going to U.S. forces or agencies.<sup>90</sup> The lack of coordination between military and civilian efforts also was noted by the inspector general, who reported in the third quarter of 2010 that, while a process existed to harmonize USAID and CERP projects at the provincial and national level, in practice, USAID did not participate in this process and often did not even notify local authorities of their development projects, while only 4 of 26 audited CERP programs documented coordination with an Afghan authority.<sup>91</sup>

New reporting requirements were instituted in early 2011 for high-cost projects, reflecting concerns that “DoD was using CERP to fund large scale projects to support its counter-insurgency strategy rather than for the original purpose—to implement small-scale projects to enable military commanders to meet the urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction needs within their areas of responsibility.”<sup>92</sup> In other words, where CERP was intended to be used at the battalion level or below as a tactical tool to achieve campaign goals, DOD was increasingly using it at the theater or combatant commander level to achieve strategic goals. Though projects spending more than \$500,000 made up fewer than 3 percent of CERP projects by count, they consumed two-thirds of CERP funds in 2009. Although the proportion of large CERP projects decreased, usually staying below 1 percent of the total number of CERP-funded projects, the proportion of CERP dollars these projects consumed remained high.

In addition to tighter reporting around high-cost projects, the 2011 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) created a new fund, the Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund (AIF), to enable DOD to fund large infrastructure projects with more technical expertise and oversight than CERP could provide, with the caveat that such projects must be agreed upon by the Department of Defense and the Department of State.<sup>93</sup> However, the tactical expediency of CERP funding, combined with a lack of incentives to choose AIF over CERP when it was a better programmatic fit, attenuated the change in spending patterns that AIF was meant to create. Despite this new fund, and the reiterated desire that CERP funds be used on a small scale to relieve pressing humanitarian needs or threats to the counterinsurgency mission, by late 2011 CERP funds



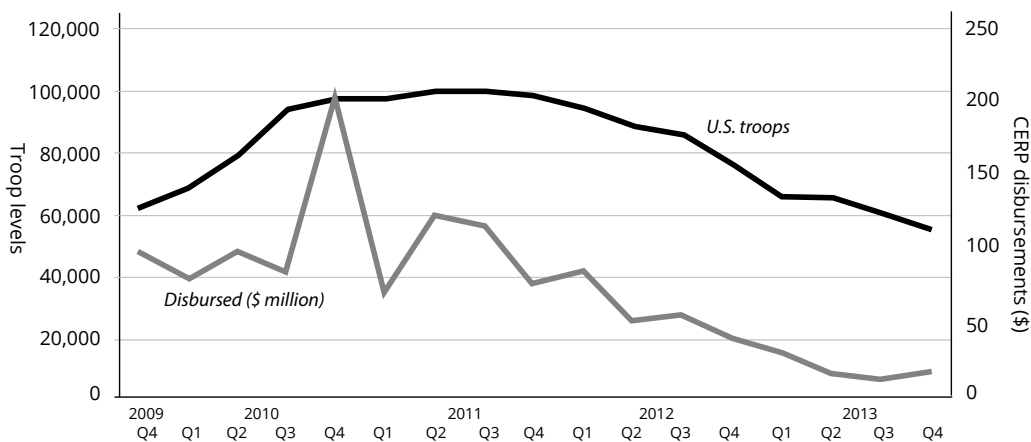
had been committed to construct an additional 1,600 kilometers of roads in Afghanistan.<sup>94</sup>

As the Afghan surge drew down, increasing scrutiny revealed serious problems with even the humanitarian and comparatively low-cost projects for which CERP had been intended. A SIGAR inspection in 2013 revealed that a medical clinic in Kabul Province that was to be built in 2011 for less than \$200,000 was built to entirely different (and inferior) specifications and was never intended to operate as a clinic.<sup>95</sup> A similar small hospital funded at more than \$500,000 for Parwan Province lacked equipment and infrastructure specified in the construction contract. This made it unable to deliver care during an inspection in summer 2012, when auditors recommended that payment be withheld until the missing components of the hospital were constructed and in working order. In October 2012, payment was delivered, despite a November inspection confirming that no improvements had been made. While the contractor was barred from bidding on anymore CERP or MAAWS projects, the funds were neither returned nor was the building able to provide services.<sup>96</sup>

The mismanagement, lack of oversight, and waste of resources documented in the SIGAR reports were not unique to CERP. Other funding streams, some administered by DOD (e.g., Afghan Security Forces Fund), some administered by the Department of State, and others by different governments and NGOs, experienced similar problems. Many of these programs, particularly the ASFF and ESE, as well as the assorted counternarcotics programs, dealt with significantly higher budgets. What is particular to CERP is that it was the sole program designed to be allocated, disbursed, and to some extent overseen by military personnel who interacted with the local Afghan population. Its purpose was to provide rapid relief to humanitarian concerns that would first come to the attention of military forces, as well as to serve as a nonlethal fires system to be used in support of the military elements of the counterinsurgency. The sharp drop-off of CERP disbursements illustrated in figure 1 was partly a function of the drawdown of troops after the surge promised in the first year of Obama's administration and partly a function of the increased funding levels for other programs. These newly increased lines of funding took over major infrastructure investments, as did the Afghan government as it assumed some of the funding and administration roles carried out by the U.S. military under CERP.<sup>97</sup>

In the years prior to the Afghan surge, most CERP spending was concentrated in regions along the border with Pakistan. Between 2010 and 2013, this shifted, with spending increasing in the south, throughout the country in areas characterized by current or historical military activity, and in areas with greater population density and economic development. Patterns of CERP spending by type also shifted. During and after the surge, agricultural spending increased

**Figure 1.** CERP disbursements and U.S. troop levels during the Afghan surge, by quarter



Source: Heidi M. Peters et al., Department of Defense Contractor and Troop Levels in Iraq and Afghanistan: 2007–2016; dollar figures from the SIGAR Quarterly Reports to Congress, 2010–13.

both with respect to number of projects and level of funding. Battle damage payments increased to more than a quarter of all projects by number as a result of intensified fighting, but as the amount of each payment was trivial for such a large budget, the percentage of funds used for this purpose remained very small. High-cost projects in electricity, education, and health care increased with the surge, even as the number of projects in those areas remained the same or even decreased. Transportation spending levels decreased but remained the highest proportion of CERP dollars during the surge period. Urgent humanitarian projects decreased during the surge, both as a percentage of projects and as a percentage of CERP dollars. The ability of outliers to distort statistics is illustrated by the fact that the spike in electricity funding from CERP budgets is attributable to a single project: a dam in Kandahar that cost \$100 million. While the use of CERP funds for such projects was not within the parameters established by Congress, and was consistently the subject of criticism from SIGAR and other agencies, small projects (<\$5,000) made up 86 percent of all projects, while big ticket projects (>\$500,000), while consuming in some years 70 percent of the CERP budget, were usually less than 1 percent of projects.<sup>98</sup>

Mapping the regions in which CERP projects had direct effects, regions in which Coalition forces had been active in the previous and current years using battlefield reporting systems, and a range of geographical indicators (population, satellite imaging of lights at night indicating development, and patterns of vegetation indicating agricultural activity) showed that CERP activity was greater in areas in which these indicators were high. Factors linked with low-

er CERP activity include low road density, distance from major roads, and very rugged terrain.<sup>99</sup> An important note about the limitations of the data from which these relationships were derived is that they reflect CERP obligations, not disbursements, and do not reflect whether the projects were completed to specification or indeed at all. Since a portion of CERP obligations were never disbursed, and a nontrivial number of projects are known not to have been completed or have not been recorded as complete or not, these figures are a better reflection of where commanders sought to use CERP funds than of the delivered results of CERP project spending.

## **Effects of CERP**

A Rand project that conducted anonymous interviews with 197 U.S. service-members—primarily Marines and SOF, despite the majority of CERP projects being carried out through conventional Army units—found patterns in CERP spending and perceived effectiveness that are slightly at odds with the mandate and some of the other research on CERP in Afghanistan. Notably, while all legislation and guidelines forbade the use of CERP funds for security forces, Army, Marine, and SOF respondents consistently reported doing so, either through *quid pro quos* for local security personnel or by labeling the payments as support (security) for critical infrastructure, which put the payments under the infrastructure column in reports.<sup>100</sup> When asked to evaluate the outcomes of CERP projects with which they had been involved, respondents in the aggregate seem to echo the ambivalence of research on CERP results. An important caveat is that respondents were given criteria for identifying outcomes as successful or unsuccessful, and they were merely asked if, in their opinion, results had been “successful,” “unsuccessful,” “unintended positive,” or “unintended negative.”

Agriculture, economic development, and local freedom of movement activities were generally considered successful. Local rapport, local security, and governance were considered successful by the greatest margins. This suggests that the “hearts and minds by governance” theory of COIN was being advanced. Health care and education CERP projects were viewed with ambivalence by respondents, as were intelligence gathering, ISAF security, and ISAF freedom of movement activities, which suggests that neither of the two ostensible purposes of CERP—relief of urgent humanitarian need and supporting the immediate needs of the COIN—were advanced in the view of the forces implementing the program. And corruption and local tensions were both rated as unintended negative project outcomes.<sup>101</sup> These critical appraisals of the effects of CERP come from a group that, by a large margin, believed CERP had helped their overall mission, with 90 percent of Army respondents, 80 percent of SOF respondents, and 60 percent of Marine respondents agreeing with the statement that CERP had helped them achieve their mission.<sup>102</sup>

On the question of whether CERP reduced violence during the Afghan surge, the consensus of studies shows that it did so only under very particular circumstances, and that in other circumstances it had the opposite effect. The Rand study found that localized CERP efforts (within one district) were correlated with long-term decreases in enemy engagements, but with only marginal statistical significance. Further, it found that CERP activity is “functioning as a proxy for the application of counterinsurgency effort” and that it is impossible to separate positive security outcomes in regions with high CERP activity from the increase in intelligence gathering, higher military presence, and non-CERP development activities that were also higher in these regions.<sup>103</sup>

A comparison of two streams of Department of State development funds and CERP finds that, early in the surge, small CERP payments contingent on certain actions by local authorities, and particularly on the provision of intelligence, were correlated with a reduction in violence. In addressing how CERP was less effective in Afghanistan than it had been in Iraq, this study also makes the case that the conditions directing CERP funding was met less often in Afghanistan than it had been in Iraq. Further, the broader extent of corruption and the weaker institutions in Afghanistan meant that CERP funds were less likely to be translated into services that benefited the population, and thus that dollars spent or projects funded was a much less useful metric than physical outputs or Afghans helped by the projects. The weaker institutions and culture of corruption in Afghanistan also helps explain why high-dollar projects in which both nominally friendly contractors and bureaucrats as well as insurgents perceived more opportunities to bleed off funds for themselves had negative effects on both governance and violence.<sup>104</sup>

A mixed methods study of CERP funding during the Afghan surge relied on interviews with career Army civil affairs officers who had administered CERP and been involved in development in other theaters, as well as a particularly granular database of more than 100,000 insurgent-initiated events in Afghanistan between 2011 and 2013, and the creation of the CERP database. This work found that the mean level of violence in Afghanistan in this interval was 13.4 violent events per month per 100,000 people. A \$1 increase in small CERP projects (<\$50,000) per capita was associated with a reduction of about eight events per month per 100,000 people, an almost 60 percent reduction. A \$1 increase in large CERP projects (>\$50,000) per capita was associated with an increase of one event per month per 100,000 people. The results suggest that “since large CERP spending exceeded small CERP by a factor of four on a per capita basis—and at times by an order of magnitude—large CERP projects were non-productive, or even counter-productive, and at great cost.”<sup>105</sup> The mechanism responsible for this difference, the author hypothesizes based upon the qualitative interviews, is twofold. First, smaller projects required significant-

ly fewer signatures from up the chain of command and thus were implemented in a timelier manner. Second, smaller projects involved more direct negotiation between civil affairs officers and the local authorities in the area in which the CERP project took place, during which the exchange of information, sometimes explicitly required but sometimes an organic part of the negotiations, enabled counterinsurgents to increase security and improve both force and population protection.

Another study of variation in CERP and violence differentiated projects by the degree to which territory had been secured by progovernment military forces, whether ISAF or ANSF. Using weekly CERP spending and insurgent attacks involving bombings and live fire, this work finds that CERP spending in secured regions reduced bombings, attacks against Coalition troops, and improvised explosive device (IED) placements. When a region is no longer actively contested, then, the hearts and minds theory of counterinsurgency as expressed in CERP appears to solidify or even increase COIN gains. In contested areas, humanitarian CERP projects had no effect on insurgent violence, whereas development projects related to security or governance “massively increase insurgent violence.”<sup>106</sup> This corresponds with the guidance from *Counterinsurgency* that development aid is most useful after the “first aid” phase of conflict, in other words while active fighting is no longer ongoing. The finding that local levels of pacification shape the ability of development to reduce violence also has implications for the “three block war” theory of twenty-first century warfare, which envisions counterforce, counterinsurgent, and humanitarian efforts being carried out simultaneously and in close proximity to each other.<sup>107</sup>

Consistent with the studies that looked only at CERP in Afghanistan or a portion of Afghanistan, the meta-analysis found that development funding reduced violence only in very specific circumstances, such as when it was carried out in areas that were already pacified, when it was carried out in conjunction with significantly increased troop levels, when it did not present a strategic threat to insurgents, or when it was funded at levels low enough not to create particularly attractive spoils for insurgents. Across a range of countries and conflicts, the development programs most strongly linked with reductions in violence took place in stable areas with relatively strong institutions, two factors lacking from the great majority of Afghanistan CERP projects.<sup>108</sup>

The development and governance effects of CERP also range from weakly positive to strongly negative, to the extent that rigorous conclusions cannot be drawn at all. A 2018 audit of CERP activities between 2009 and 2013 found that project tracking and accountability was lacking. While many projects documented the goals for funds disbursed, none of the medium- or large-dollar projects in the audit (64 medium-dollar projects and 45 high-dollar projects) reported on the achievement of these goals. One hundred percent of small-

dollar CERP disbursements met this requirement, but since this was recorded at the time funds transferred, this does not represent a dramatic increase in diligence for small projects.<sup>109</sup> CERP standard operating procedures during this interval required “a focus on measurable effects to meet urgent humanitarian needs and COIN objectives,” although the nature of the reporting requirements and the threshold for various reporting requirements shifted during and after the surge.<sup>110</sup> The audit concluded that DOD did not consistently assess whether CERP projects achieved their stated goals or whether CERP as a whole assisted in carrying out U.S. strategy.<sup>111</sup> When cataloging how CERP documentation was missing or incomplete, the audit also implicitly makes clear that it is difficult for an external body to comprehensively assess after the fact whether CERP succeeded on its own terms or in advancing the broader Afghanistan strategy of stabilizing the country, building the capacity for self-governance, and then transferring authority to Afghan governance.

Despite the absence of complete records on the parameters, goals, timelines, and ultimate status of CERP projects, a number of assessments exist that were done by government agencies and external researchers on the effects of CERP development, COIN, and the Afghan surge. While there are tactical and isolated successes in these studies, the general verdict is that CERP was a tactic that was usually executed poorly. It was an example of military-directed development in support of the hearts and minds theory of COIN, which was the approach selected to achieve the ultimate strategic goal of a stable and sovereign Afghan government that would deny safe haven to those who would attack the United States and the West. The flaws in the CERP program highlighted that it supported a campaign plan based on unsubstantiated assumptions in the service of a strategy that was not achievable. It is also notable that reviews of the Afghan surge written earlier in the 2010s, when the effort was ongoing, are more optimistic and favorable than those written after troop levels were drawn down to around 10,000 at the conclusion of Operation Enduring Freedom.

A Congressional Research Service overview of the Afghanistan war in early 2011 found that “micro-level” spending, and particularly CERP, tended to be allocated in two ways, both of which were flawed. Projects selected by the military often failed to consider the full context of the problem and thus were less useful than intended, such as when clinics were funded in regions with no medical staff to operate them or plans to provide medical staff. Sometimes, as when a well-digging project provided more benefit to one tribe than another, the ensuing disruption to the status quo increased hostilities both among Afghan groups and toward the Coalition. When commanders sought to avoid such pitfalls by consulting with local authorities and village elders to allocate CERP funds, they benefited from an enhanced perception of competence for local governance, but the priorities set through such consultations often reflect-

ed the interests of local power groups, rather than humanitarian needs or the needs of the counterinsurgents.<sup>112</sup>

At the national level, the extensive use of foreign funds to provide everything from clean water to transportation to security forces may have been intrinsically antithetical to the strategic goal of a sovereign and stable Afghanistan. In 2009, up to 95 percent of the Afghan budget (at all levels of government) and development spending came from foreign assistance, a share that does not include NATO or ISAF spending on military activities, and which declined only slightly in the ensuing four years. This perpetuated a dependent relationship between the Afghan government and Coalition states for funding and also for legitimacy and perceived (and actual) autonomy, running counter to the official goal of creating a sustainable and legitimate democratic Afghan government.<sup>113</sup> While aware of this problem, NATO faced two unpalatable options: assisting the Afghan government to take more direct responsibility for development, governance, and security, knowing that such a course of action would result in markedly worse outcomes, particularly in the short term; or maintaining its role in funding and overseeing these functions, knowing that this would hinder the development of meaningful Afghan capabilities. In general, Coalition states and the U.S. military, in particular, opted for the latter until the drawdown of forces mandated the former, with the transition to a particularly unprepared Afghan government.<sup>114</sup>

An economist working for the Afghan government saw a similar disconnect between the ostensible goals of spending in support of the Afghan strategy and actual development spending. Many programs seemed more concerned with demonstrating that they were disbursing tremendous amounts of money through numerous projects than they were with the nature of the projects funded or with their completion. Further, rather than an economy more attuned with local culture, resources, and sustainability, this aid was shaping an economy dependent on very high imports, financed by oil pipelines. One assessment showed that “the emphasis is not on meeting the basic needs of the majority of Afghanistan’s population, like food, healthcare, education, etc., but on encouraging trade that only benefits the elite and foreigners.”<sup>115</sup> The relative ineffectiveness of CERP activities in building agricultural, trade, and social service capacity was a part of this failure.

Perhaps the final word on the outcomes of U.S. stabilization and development efforts in Afghanistan, and particularly those carried out by the military, should go to SIGAR, which judges these efforts to have “mostly failed.” Political factors in Washington, DC, caused the Afghan surge and efforts that followed to be placed under time constraints that created unrealistic expectations, based on the United States greatly overestimating “its ability to build and reform government institutions in Afghanistan.” After transition, the services and se-

curity provided by official Afghan institutions “could not compete with a resurgent Taliban as it filled the void in newly vacated territory.” In practice, money spent—not numbers of Afghans assisted, projects seen through to completion, economic growth, or reductions in corruption—was the metric by which U.S. military and civilian staff were judged. These infusions of cash increased corruption and often increased conflict. Despite the inherently political nature of stabilization and development,

the military consistently determined priorities and chose to focus on the most insecure districts first. These areas were often perpetually insecure and had to be cleared of insurgents again and again. Civilian agencies, particularly USAID, were compelled to establish stabilization programs in fiercely contested areas that were not ready for them.<sup>116</sup>

### **Explaining the Disconnect between Policy and Tactics**

The initial policy guiding U.S. intervention in Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11 was set out in President George W. Bush’s speech on 7 October 2001, in which he declared a range of financial, diplomatic, and military actions to prevent al-Qaeda from engaging in further attacks on the United States.<sup>117</sup> Beyond the decision to fight al-Qaeda and the Taliban, the broader goal of the Bush administration in the immediate wake of the attacks was to focus on possible sponsors of terror worldwide on the grounds that the next 9/11 would likely not come from al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. “A strategic response to 9/11,” according to a cabinet official, “would have to take account of the threat from other terrorist groups—Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia, Lebanese Hezbollah, various Africa-based groups—and state sponsors beyond Afghanistan, especially those that pursued weapons of mass destruction. We would need to determine what action—military or otherwise—to take against which targets, and on what timetable.”<sup>118</sup> While the military maintained a presence continuously from the initial invasion of Afghanistan, in May 2003, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld announced that major combat operations in Afghanistan were over.

The *National Security Strategy* of 2006 laid out what would remain in various forms, with the overarching goal and rationale for the U.S. and ISAF mission in Afghanistan to focus on “the best way to provide enduring security for the American people” and “create a world of democratic, well-governed states that can meet the needs of their citizens and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system.”<sup>119</sup> The 2006 NSS announced that the people of Afghanistan had replaced tyranny with democracy and ratified a constitution. But the institutions of democracy beyond elections and legislatures also were emphasized as essential to spreading democracy to make the world safer. The



strategy also reveals the Iraq emphasis of the White House and the Department of Defense in 2006. While several pages are devoted to plans for Iraq, including elements of counterinsurgency (without using that term), only one brief paragraph prescribes the approach to Afghanistan:

In Afghanistan, the successes already won must be consolidated. A few years ago, Afghanistan was condemned to a pre-modern nightmare. Now it has held two successful free elections and is a staunch ally in the war on terror. Much work remains, however, and the Afghan people deserve the support of the United States and the entire international community.<sup>120</sup>

President Obama campaigned in part on concluding what was widely seen as illegitimate war in Iraq while intensifying efforts to win the “good war” in Afghanistan. During his inaugural address, he promised that the United States would “responsibly leave Iraq to its people and forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan.”<sup>121</sup> The policy of the Obama government was to ensure that Afghanistan would not serve as a safe haven or operating base for terrorists again while minimizing both the extent and the duration of American presence there.<sup>122</sup> The strategy for enacting this policy was a period of brief but intense presence and activity by American military and civilians, complemented by Coalition forces, which would develop and then transition power to Afghan civil and military institutions. The operational approach to supporting this strategy was to combine counterterrorism with population-centric counterinsurgency, largely following General McChrystal’s guidance as laid out in his 2009 strategic review.<sup>123</sup> CERP was a tactical innovation intended to play a crucial role in this campaign.

As SIGAR’s lessons learned report states, these efforts were largely failures on every level. The United States still has a military presence in Afghanistan, and the same general who sought to plan a rapid and satisfactory conclusion to the U.S. effort there recently advocated maintaining a force in Afghanistan indefinitely to “muddle along.”<sup>124</sup> Far from being defeated or rehabilitated, the Taliban is resurgent and is set to act as a spoiler in the next round of Afghan elections.<sup>125</sup> The policy and strategy developed by both the Bush and Obama administrations have clearly failed.

The inability to tie tactical actions—traditional lethal events as well as more nonlethal tactics such as CERP—to strategic goals is a different question related to why the Afghanistan policies and strategies have failed. Tactics have been used successfully to advance a strategy that proved ultimately unsuccessful, but that is not the case with counterinsurgency tactics in Afghanistan. The assumptions embedded in the strategy of Afghanistan, though, are interlinked with many of the flaws in the campaign plan and in the tactics of counterinsurgency,

so to understand why tactical innovation did not yield strategic success, the nature of the strategy and campaign plan is essential.

The strategy chosen to transform Afghanistan into a sovereign and sustainable state that would not support or provide refuge to terrorist organizations was to develop and transition power to a democratic government, largely in the model of the Western conception of a state, but with some concessions to Afghanistan's history and culture (e.g., making it officially an Islamic state). There are two general schools of post-World War II American thought about the nature of governance in other countries and how it influences American safety and influence. One, articulated by Daniel Patrick Moynihan in 1974 while evoking Woodrow Wilson, and later largely subsumed by so-called neoconservatives after the Cold War, argued that self-determination and democracy (which were conflated) were not only moral imperatives but intrinsically safer for citizens of those countries as well as for the United States.<sup>126</sup>

President Franklin D. Roosevelt most famously articulated the counterargument when he endorsed support for Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza as "our son of a bitch," on the grounds that excessive concern with the internal character of other states interfered with the relationships between states and could provoke conflict and disorder.<sup>127</sup> Jeane Kirkpatrick advanced a version of this argument, advocating for limited engagement with and support of autocrats as and when this was congruent with U.S. interests, with the potential to gradually convert autocracies into more democratic states through slow influence.<sup>128</sup> The strategy under Bush and Obama committed wholesale to the former vision and saw the creation of a democratic and representative Afghanistan—grading on a curve with respect to religious freedom, although notably not with regard to women's suffrage—as the key to eliminating safe haven for terrorists there.

As well as rejecting a long-standing strain of American realism, this concept ignored a different approach to promoting stability. Sociologist Amitai Etzioni argues that a state's preference for violence or persuasion in pursuit of its goals, rather than whether it is secular or religious or democratic or autocratic, is "the fault line that defines the clash of moral cultures and power in the post-Cold-War era."<sup>129</sup> At the micro level, U.S. and ISAF forces often did interact and cooperate with local tribal councils; at the national level, the strategy for Afghanistan was always the creation of a liberal, representative, and moderately secular democracy based on elements of the American civic religion. The American civic religion is the ideal that Americans have a teleological view of history in which everyone prefers a reasonably secular and liberal democracy, rather than upon any empirical basis for believing this to be the best course for achieving American policy goals.<sup>130</sup>

That strategy being set, the next question was which operational approach to adopt to achieve this end; a question taken seriously for the first time when

McChrystal and the Obama administration set out to assess the state of the war in Afghanistan early in 2009. Prior to the Afghan surge, major activities in the region were generally limited to counterterrorism, security force assistance, and development. The nature of the Coalition complicated the first two. The Provincial Reconstruction Team had evolved as the primary structure of NATO efforts in large part because many NATO troop contributing nations were reluctant to engage in or directly support counterterrorism efforts and had limited capability to partner with local forces for security assistance.<sup>131</sup>

While the strategic assessment and later plans included elements of counterterrorism and attempts to grapple with the role of Pakistan in the insurgency, the Obama administration converged on population-centric counterinsurgency, combined with a flexible schedule for withdrawal, as the model for campaign planning.<sup>132</sup> The target for troop withdrawal was a nod to political necessity in Washington, DC, but it undermined the COIN from the start; a quantitative analysis of third-party or expeditionary counterinsurgencies, as compared to those in which the counterinsurgents considered the contested region part of their sovereign territory, as with the British in Northern Ireland or the French in Algeria, found legitimacy, information, and resolve to be the three strongest predictors of success. Accordingly, declaring withdrawal to be a goal tied to a date and not a response to strategic accomplishments signals poor resolve.<sup>133</sup>

For those advocating hearts-and-minds COIN in Afghanistan in 2009, its failures in Iraq should have been considered. While touted as a turning point in the war, during which a handful of visionaries armed with a new philosophy snatched victory from the jaws of defeat, the verdict with a decade of hindsight is more mixed—and even at the time, many within the U.S. military and outside it were questioning the assumptions and results of the surge.<sup>134</sup> The collapse of the Sunni insurgency coincided with the surge, and may have been accelerated by it, but signs of its decline existed long before the new doctrine was put into effect in 2007.<sup>135</sup> Shifting tribal relationships, an aggressive counterterrorism strategy, the physical separation of sectarian opponents, even exhaustion after years of civil war have all been cited as factors that played a role.<sup>136</sup> A case can be made that increasing sectarian killings at the hands of Jaysh al-Mahdi and other Shi'a militant groups did as much to push the Sunni toward cooperation with the counterinsurgency as the hearts and minds approach did to pull them toward cooperation.<sup>137</sup>

While the doctrine and leadership changed markedly, actual practice did not in Iraq during and after the surge. As early as mid-2003, the U.S. Army had shifted from major combat operations to the activities that comprise counterinsurgency, although the term was not used at the time. Despite the rhetoric of hearts and minds that spread from 2006 on, the day-to-day tactical activities of ground forces in Iraq did not change significantly between 2005 and 2007.<sup>138</sup>

Arguably the single most important influence of the burgeoning number of books, theories, and experts around population-centric COIN was preemptively to foreclose on all other operational approaches to the strategic goals in Iraq. Comparing COIN theorists with early airpower theorists, who both believed their approach to war would accomplish strategic goals through direct engagement with the people and bypassing hostile armies, Gian P. Gentile argues that the passion for hearts-and-minds COIN prevented the military from considering whether approaches other than COIN might yield acceptable results in Iraq or whether approaches to COIN other than hearts and minds. These were derived from successful counterinsurgencies and not the hagiographies of their practitioners and might be a more appropriate means to ending the conflict in Iraq.<sup>139</sup>

Despite these very real problems in the theory and practice of population-centric COIN in Iraq and earlier, it was determined—alongside a counterterrorism campaign and a largely notional engagement with Pakistan to curb material support and deny refuge to the insurgents—to be the operational approach for the Afghan surge. That this decision was based on flawed assumptions, and in the service of a strategy similarly based on ideological rather than pragmatic factors, is a separate matter from how well the U.S. military executed tactics in support of this operational approach. It is possible for good tactics to be harnessed to poor strategy. With respect to CERP in the Afghan surge, that was not the case. Spending was haphazard, carried out in such a way that tracking its influence accurately was almost impossible and, where the effects can be determined in hindsight, responsible for more corruption, waste, and conflict than for delivering services, improving security, and thus helping to build legitimacy for national, provincial, or local Afghan governance.

Later analysis of Afghanistan, and prior study of development and violence in other regions, indicated that development aid was most effective in already pacified areas, and in fact counterproductive in more violent areas. While phrased differently, *Counterinsurgency* grasped this, describing development as something that happened only after “first aid”—the quelling of active violence. Where insurgents were still active and violence still frequent, hearts-and-minds COIN was more likely to be effective when coordinated with active counterterrorism, or “hard COIN,” with a focus on increasing security infrastructure and combat operations against insurgents, as in Panjwayi District in Kandahar in 2012–13.<sup>140</sup> In practice, despite the discussion of a civilian surge, the military’s numbers, resources, and ability to operate in heavily contested areas meant that it often set the priorities for engagement, including the use of CERP funds, and according to the logic of more traditional military operations, this meant addressing the greatest threats (the most violent or contested regions) first.<sup>141</sup> In the absence of guidance about how development funds were most likely to

yield the desired effects, this was defensible, but it contributed to the failure of spending to achieve the campaign's goals.

With the blessing of commanders much higher up than the field grade officers who disbursed almost all the small-dollar project funds, CERP resources were often directed to purposes for which they had been discouraged or forbidden by policy. All the SIGAR quarterly audits express concern or frustration with the number of high-dollar, long-term development projects funded by CERP. In many cases, this was due to expedience, since CERP funds were delivered more rapidly and with less paperwork than were resources from the programs that more properly would have funded multiyear, multimillion-dollar infrastructure projects. While the use of CERP funds to pay for military, police, or security personnel, equipment, and ammunition was forbidden, in practice, CERP was used to arm locals, ostensibly as guards for infrastructure, and thus under infrastructure line items in budgets. The combination of expensive projects, a large pool of potential spoils, and the need to hire locals as security forces to protect the projects and related resources proved particularly likely to increase violence and corruption.<sup>142</sup>

## **Conclusion: Firing for Effect without Firing for Range**

The military's advantage over civilian agencies and workers in spending money for development resulted in what one analyst describes as the "securitization of aid," with the understanding of development and humanitarian aid as a tool for the military (MAAWS) stripped of the lessons aid workers had learned about the effects of intervention on local economies and cultures, tribal politics, and existing tensions.<sup>143</sup> Some military personnel grasped this, and they made the case that the military could best use CERP as a nonlethal fires system. One veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars argued that using CERP and similar programs explicitly to help the counterinsurgency, with humanitarian and development benefits as possible externalities but not the driving purposes, would have avoided the gradual creep of CERP to include public works never within its aegis, as well as avoiding unsuitable timelines for the military.<sup>144</sup> Throughout the wars, though, the program remained dedicated to humanitarian and development ends, as well as support of the COIN. Even a more literal reading of MAAWS, too, feeds into a targeting-based view of operations that assumes clear causality at the tactical level, and that the accomplishment of a series of tasks would lead to the desired outcomes, without reference either to the inherent ambiguity of social effects or to the complex factors causing the problem to be solved.

While ongoing exchanges between civil affairs officers disbursing funds and the local authorities may have contributed significantly to a reduction in

violence through the exchange of information that was an explicit or implicit condition of CERP funds, or an incidental aspect of the negotiations, this mechanism was poorly understood at the time, particularly by the troops who most often provided small payments but were not trained in civil affairs. “Drive through” CERP grants, in which the ostensible goals of modest infrastructure improvement or economic development might be the same as those in which more sustained relationships existed, provided neither the incentive nor the opportunity to transfer useful information to U.S. forces.<sup>145</sup>

These tasks were not, to put it mildly, those for which U.S. soldiers and Marines had been trained prior to 9/11 and for some time after it. According to former vice chief of staff of the Army General John M. Keane, the institution deliberately purged itself “of everything that dealt with irregular warfare or counterinsurgency,” except some SOF capabilities in those domains.<sup>146</sup> If COIN is armed social work, as it has been described, then the skills necessary are more related to those of a constabulary force than a military with no such tradition, but also with an added dimension of linguistic, cultural, and sociological skills. Soldiers and Marines with similar training and skills did and do exist, but they are generally confined to civil affairs, an occupation traditionally undervalued and under-resourced.<sup>147</sup>

Coupled with the absence of development expertise was a set of incentives around CERP that rewarded behaviors that had little to do with increasing security and development or supporting COIN. While a number of lines of effort and priorities were identified at different stages of the Afghan surge, these criteria were much less relevant to how commanders were evaluated on their use of CERP than simpler and less informative metrics. One Afghan government worker commented to an American soldier: “In Vietnam, they were measuring success of operations in the number that are killed. In Afghanistan, it is how many schools you are building and how much you spent. This is better, but [just] as wrong. What you need to measure is . . . the impact of what you’ve done[.]”<sup>148</sup> To ask these questions, though, a different and less tactically focused culture is needed. The impact of schools without teachers, or of schools in a region where local authorities would not permit children to attend, was minimal, as was the impact of clinic buildings that lacked electricity, plumbing, or qualified staff, phenomena that arose often with CERP projects. Another important effect of CERP seldom measured was the negative externality of preventing or undermining relief and development efforts by civilian and international NGOs. The ease with which the military used CERP funds often crowded out efforts by USAID, UN organizations, the Red Cross/Red Crescent, and others, who might have taken longer to obtain funding but had substantially more expertise with development in what one study of CERP in Iraq referred to as “reconstruction fratricide.”<sup>149</sup>

Not only was the impact (positive and negative) of CERP a metric missing from the evaluation of units and commanders disbursing CERP funds, but a more crude metric actively drove behavior that ran contrary to the campaign goals: “Money spent was often the metric of success.”<sup>150</sup> When units were evaluated on how well they had achieved the governance goals of the mission, the only indicator used until 2011 was total funds spent under CERP, which rewarded disbursements without regard to how and why they were made or whether the projects were completed.<sup>151</sup> At the individual level, the amount of CERP money transferred to locals was “strongly considered in evaluations for promotion.”<sup>152</sup>

While tactics can be well executed in the service of the wrong operational approach, in this case, the series of misconceptions within which CERP was nested suggest that the wrong strategy and the wrong operational approach may have ensured tactical failure at winning hearts and minds. By adopting a “strategy of tactics,” mandating the operational and tactical approach from the top down rather than establishing strategic goals and freeing campaign planners and tactical units to determine how best to achieve them, population-centric COIN created an “intellectual straitjacket” that limited forces in Afghanistan to a narrow set of tools.<sup>153</sup> In the case of CERP, the military lacked the training, incentives, support, or expertise to use money as an effective weapon.

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## Cyber's Cost

### The Potential Price Tag of a Targeted "Trust Attack"

Ian T. Brown

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**Abstract:** In 2015, Chinese hackers breached the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and stole sensitive information on millions of federal employees. This article speculates how the Chinese government might use this information to construct a tailored cyberattack designed to paralyze an American military response to aggression in the South China Sea. This includes an assessment of potential second- and third-order economic impacts of such a cyberattack.

**Keywords:** cyber, cyberattack, China, South China Sea, trust attack, Office of Personnel Management, hack, OPM

*What is the quickest way you can destroy an organization? . . .  
Mistrust and discord.*

- Colonel John Boyd<sup>1</sup>

**T**he cyberattack—both real and imagined—has come a long way since Matthew Broderick nearly caused World War III with a 1,200 bit-per-second modem and rotary phone in 1983.<sup>2</sup> In the fictional realm, Broderick's duel with the War Operation Plan Response computer has given way

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to the infrastructure “fire sale” from *Live Free or Die Hard* and, most recently, the multilayered sabotage of everything from GPS to stealth fighters in the book *Ghost Fleet*.<sup>3</sup> The real world has seen cyber surprises only a step removed from fantasy, with various actors disrupting civil networks and infrastructure, subverting military research projects, and using preparatory cyber fires as a precursor to physical military activity.<sup>4</sup>

However, even as authors, screenwriters, and policy makers grapple with the potential fallout from cyber vulnerabilities in the physical realm—the blinding of sensors, the degradation of communications networks, or deliberate infrastructure malfunctions—modern cyberattacks are increasingly aiming at the adversary’s less tangible mental and moral capabilities. The starkest example of this can be seen in Russia’s interference in the 2016 American presidential election, which significantly damaged those intangibles—faith in social and traditional media, transparency in political campaigning, even confidence in the integrity of the election results themselves—that will take a long time to repair.<sup>5</sup>

This author had these ideas in mind, along with Boyd’s words about the best way to destroy an organization, while participating in a working group hosted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) on the topic of surprise in great power conflict.<sup>6</sup> The author expanded on this topic in a later article by envisioning a hypothetical “trust attack” directed against Department of Defense (DOD) personnel as the opening salvo to conventional military operations.<sup>7</sup> In their valuable article on the subject, Neal A. Pollard, Adam Segal, and Matthew G. Devost defined a cyber *trust attack* as seeking to make “an individual . . . lose faith both in the specific computer systems and in the institutions and values that rely on those networks.”<sup>8</sup> The author’s initial examination of cyberwar specifically targeting American servicemembers focused on the immediate mental and moral impact of such a strike. Yet, that type of attack also would likely have significant economic repercussions, both on the individual warfighter and those institutions used to target them. Indeed, a cyber adversary could deliberately include fiscal fallout as a secondary target. The economic damage of a trust attack might both heighten the confusion across the DOD and delay an effective response, acting as a feedback loop to exacerbate the mental and moral impact of the initial strike. This article will first explore the mental and moral aspects of a cyber trust attack, and then examine how the second- and third-order economic effects would magnify the impact of the initial strike.

## Envisioning a Chinese Trust Attack

The author’s initial hypothetical and fictional vignette or scenario—entitled “Assassin’s Mace”—is appended to CSIS’s final report.<sup>9</sup> “Assassin’s Mace” envisions how China might seek to exploit its 2015 hack of the United States

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) database in conjunction with a wider military operation.<sup>10</sup> By the time OPM security engineers detected the intrusion, hackers had enjoyed access to the OPM records—including millions of background checks, personnel files, and digital fingerprints—for almost a year. The OPM hack was by no means the first large-scale breach of a protected database, but it was unique in two aspects.<sup>11</sup> First, these records contain by far the most detailed personal information yet accessed by a cyber intruder; second, the hackers have not yet attempted traditional data exploitation by a widespread ransoming of the data back to the agency or selling it to third parties.<sup>12</sup> These facts suggest that the hackers have plans for the data beyond a quick payday. A widespread trust attack on DOD personnel would be one of the few things that could justify sitting on a goldmine of exploitable data. Moreover, knowing that it could only exploit this information for so long before American countermeasures came into play, the author believes this implied the Chinese government would want to attack as many targets as possible at once, generate maximum confusion, and then use that window of confusion to quickly achieve goals it could not otherwise achieve with a smaller attack. “Assassin’s Mace” imagines a Chinese cyberattack using the sensitive and detailed OPM records—not to disrupt or degrade American military or intelligence systems—but rather to spread fear, mistrust, and discord among the men and women in uniform who operate those systems. During such a strike, hackers would lock out medical records, wipe away financial information, manipulate social media, and spread lies and half-truths about personal misconduct.

How might China shape such an attack? First, it is difficult to understate the value of the records China stole. Background investigations, personnel files, digital fingerprint images, former addresses, phone numbers, Social Security numbers, lists of family members, dependents, and friends: these are all nuggets of unique information—and frequently the answer to security questions—that a motivated attacker could turn into keys unlocking virtually any digital account owned by the targeted individual or group. An intruder seeking to impersonate another person could not ask for a more comprehensive data set.

Second, a concerted attack exploiting OPM data would avoid patterns making it obvious that an attack was happening. “Assassin’s Mace” incorporates many variations. Navy sailors at a strategic port in Japan would find their families’ bank accounts emptied.<sup>13</sup> Others would receive death threats on their Twitter feeds, with hackers adding further confusion by posing as third parties.<sup>14</sup> “Assassin’s Mace” even imagines military spouses having intimate photographs blasted across social media and this was before the latest revelation of military-sourced revenge porn.<sup>15</sup> Illustrating how effective even a single hacker can be, one man using a phishing scheme managed to hack the login credentials of 250 celebrities to access their most intimate photos.<sup>16</sup> A dedicated team of cyber



intruders with the wealth of OPM records at their fingertips would find their phishing expeditions much simpler, and they would be able to harm people who are vital to national security.

An attacker could wreak further havoc by locking out digital medical records with ransomware, as North Korea allegedly did in the WannaCry episode in 2017.<sup>17</sup> That intrusion alone canceled surgical operations and delayed appointments across the entirety of Britain's National Health Service (NHS). Medical hackers could also steal private records and threaten to sell the material on the dark web.<sup>18</sup> A few well-publicized penetrations of personal devices belonging to senior officials—such as the hack of former White House chief of staff John F. Kelly's cell phone—could spread further fear.<sup>19</sup>

These efforts would strike at the individual level. But as Boyd explained, the overall goal is destroying the cohesion of the organization. Thus, an attacker could combine individual confusion with undermining key trusted leadership. The best way to do this is to mix lies with the truth. Unfortunately, scandals such as Marines United, Fat Leonard, and other harassment claims have already sown mistrust in the public mind and among the ranks.<sup>20</sup> It is entirely possible to envision China's People's Liberation Army Strategic Support Force using personal information from OPM records to gain access to the accounts of senior leaders and hijacking them to plant and spread incriminating material.<sup>21</sup>

An adept cyber competitor also might seek to weaken America's alliances. "Assassin's Mace" describes the viral dissemination of a YouTube video showing American servicemembers stationed on Okinawa sexually assaulting local citizens. Uniformed Americans have a dark history of sexual misconduct on the island, and the U.S. military's presence there is fraught with other tensions.<sup>22</sup> Using bots, trolls, voice clones, artificial intelligence, and generative adversarial networks, China could create fake videos to turn the Okinawan population and Japanese government against America.<sup>23</sup> Such *deepfake* videos—which use parallel artificial intelligence algorithms available in the public domain to match and swap photographed facial expressions from source pictures onto a different target body—have been used to create increasingly realistic pornographic videos.<sup>24</sup> Again, exploiting personal information from OPM records, it does not strain credulity to imagine Chinese hackers accessing a servicemember's personal social media images, deepfaking and posting an explosive video, and then letting mistrust and confusion poison the relationship.

## The Price Tag

The original "Assassin's Mace" vignette ends at this point, with China's cyber onslaught against DOD personnel disrupting their personal lives, poisoning command relationships, and corrupting key alliances to keep the American military from responding effectively to any follow-on conventional action by Chi-

na in the South Pacific. Yet, the history of recent hacking operations—as will be highlighted below—has often included a significant economic component, both in the immediate aftermath of a breach and in the days and weeks that followed, as impacted organizations and the public gained awareness of the attack's scope. This would inevitably hold true in the case of a broad trust attack; indeed, a shrewd, experienced cyber adversary such as the Chinese government would likely count on the financial fallout to act as a feedback loop for the original attack. This feedback loop would cause cascading second- and third-order effects, amplifying the impact of the initial attack and further disrupting the United States' ability to respond to any conventional Chinese military aggression.

Real-world attacks provide a useful benchmark for gauging potential fiscal damages from the hypothetical breaches described in the previous pages. As of 2017, the OPM hack had already cost the U.S. government more than \$1 billion, with much of that cost coming from identity theft protection offered to the 21 million federal employees affected.<sup>25</sup> That cost could balloon further, as this summer American legislators proposed a bill that would provide the victims lifetime identity protection, past the currently approved 2026 expiration date.<sup>26</sup> Multiply that initial \$1 billion price tag across the lifetimes of 21 million federal workers, and even with some age variation among affected employees, the cost alone of lifelong identity monitoring could easily exceed hundreds of billions of dollars. A future trust attack against those federal employees exposed by the OPM hack, along with their dependents, would have additional costs in nongovernmental identity protection and in potential lawsuits filed against federal agencies.

Examples of these costs in other real-world examples include the 2006 hack of TJX Companies, which cost the company and affected banks and insurers more than \$200 million in litigation and insurance payouts; the 2011 breach of Sony PlayStation Network cost the company \$15 million in lawsuits, on top of the \$171 million lost during the month the gaming network was down. In the same year, RSA Security was hacked and forced to pay \$66 million in remediation; and in 2014, when hackers exposed the financial information of 56 million Home Depot customers, the company paid out \$161 million in lawsuits and insurance.<sup>27</sup> It does not stretch credulity to imagine an explosion of lawsuits filed against the government were its employees to discover that, once again, the agency charged with safeguarding sensitive personal information had failed them.

Cyberattacks targeting more intimate data repositories, such as social media and medical records, also have caused extensive economic loss. The WannaCry ransomware breach cited above cost the NHS almost \$100 million in rescheduled medical procedures and repairs to the NHS information technology net-

work.<sup>28</sup> Globally, WannaCry cost affected countries more than \$8 billion, and a similar ransomware attack called NotPetya generated another \$850 million in losses in 2017.<sup>29</sup> Stunning as these numbers are, they came from relatively limited target sets; a recent exercise that simulated the deep breach of a cloud-based service—capable of striking a high volume of targets—resulted in an estimated loss of more than \$53 billion.<sup>30</sup>

When investigators determined that data provided by Facebook to the firm Cambridge Analytica had then been improperly shared with third parties to influence political advertising during the 2016 presidential election, Facebook rapidly lost more than \$42 billion in its market value.<sup>31</sup> While recovering from this scandal, Facebook admitted later in 2018 to another hack that exposed more than 30 million users to the loss of personal information including names, phone numbers, and birth dates: precisely the type of sensitive data a malign actor could use to penetrate financial accounts.<sup>32</sup> The breach of John Kelly's cell phone raises the specter of a cyberattacker using what appears to be a valid social media account from a supposedly secure personal electronic device to induce market chaos.

Recent history offers several examples of what social media screeds from prominent American political leaders can do to financial markets. The world saw two instances of this in December 2018 alone. Early in the month, President Donald Trump's tweet about being a "Tariff Man" raised uncertainty about a trade deal that the United States and China had just reached; the stock indexes most likely to be affected by that deal lost between 3–4 percent of their value almost immediately.<sup>33</sup> Only a few weeks later, another tweet from the president criticizing the chairman of the Federal Reserve was rapidly followed by 2–3 percent losses across stocks on Wall Street.<sup>34</sup> Stock markets have always been vulnerable to the volatility of emotion and perception, and an attacker able to access the private media accounts of prominent political leaders would likely seek to exploit that in a widespread cyberstrike.

The evidence above details some of the second-order economic damage a hacker using data gleaned from the OPM database could inflict. Yet, there are third-order effects apart from these that would act as amplifying feedback loops, spreading the chaos and disorder beyond the immediate confines of vulnerable federal employees. OPM victims would merely become vectors for market instabilities that could affect any American invested in the stock of large corporations. And again, history has already provided ample evidence of these companies' susceptibility to cyberwar. The Yahoo breach of 2013–14 knocked \$350 million off the company's value when it was put up for sale; the hack Target experienced in 2013 caused the resignation of the business's chief information officer and chief executive officer, along with a loss of \$162 million; and the Uber breach of 2016 cost the company a staggering \$20 billion loss in

market valuation.<sup>35</sup> In 2018, when Bloomberg News reported that China had potentially inserted compromised microchips into both Apple and Amazon devices, each company rapidly lost 5 percent of its market value despite vehement denials of any such intrusions.<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, while the author discussed the potential diplomatic impact of faked videos used to drive a wedge between the United States and key allies, an attacker could tailor a fiscal component to their fakery as well. Commercial advertisers would not run the risk of their ads popping up next to videos showing sexual violence by American servicemembers against local civilians. Companies would likely pull their digital advertisements, precisely as several major corporations pulled marketing dollars from YouTube in 2017 after learning their ads ran next to several violent extremist videos in a boycott that cost Google millions.<sup>37</sup> Taken together, these historical trends paint a disturbing picture of what might happen following a broad-based cyberattack targeting victims of the OPM breach. The financial instability following such a breach would rapidly extend beyond the immediate victims and their families. Simultaneous market losses hitting America's largest corporations—Amazon, Google, Apple, Facebook, and others—would crush the investment portfolios of virtually every American citizen. DOD personnel might be grappling with the mental and moral fallout of a targeted strike that stretched beyond the economic realm, but the American population as a whole would suddenly find itself caring far more deeply about the turmoil within its borders than the actions of an adversary overseas.

## **The Fallout**

Cyber penetrations are rarely permanent; over time, experts usually find them and can often trace them with confidence to a particular group or country. Investigators would doubtless discover the truth eventually; but the point of such an attack, when combined with myriad other cyberstrikes, is to sow enough mistrust and discord that the organization's focus turns inward to deal with its own internal friction. A widespread, coordinated, and deep cyberbreach leveraged against American servicemembers could undermine individual and organizational morale to the point that the entire Department of Defense would be obligated to take an operational pause to sort out fact from fiction and let servicemembers get their lives back in order. This pause also would be in addition to the broader national disorders and delays caused by such a massive destabilization of financial markets. In the past, when facing a sufficiently severe problem, defense leaders have implemented wide-reaching pauses.<sup>38</sup> Individual commands also often execute stand-downs to address critical nonoperational problems, such as sexual assault or substance abuse.<sup>39</sup> Even if DOD leaders did not execute a formal operational pause, the functional effect would be the same:

individuals and units would turn their focus inward to deal with the myriad crises caused by simultaneous widespread cyberattacks.

China could potentially exploit the formal pause and overall national distraction to flood the South China Sea with conventional forces and pursue long-held national goals, be that securing economic supremacy across southeast Asia's waterways or isolating Taiwan. A surprise cyberattack targeting the personal lives of American servicemembers would enjoy the dual benefit of not requiring detectable physical preparations and making moot the question of how effective China's antiaccess/area denial and antistealth capabilities really are in combat.<sup>40</sup> Even just a few days of confusion would be enough for conventional Chinese forces to radically alter the balance of power in the South Pacific.

It is not impossible for organizations to recover from severe cyberattacks. Facebook took only two months for its market value to recover the \$134 billion lost in the Cambridge Analytica data scandal; Marriott International offered customers identity monitoring and passport replacement costs following the years-long breach of its reservation database.<sup>41</sup> And one can always buy a new smartphone. Cohesion, morale, and fighting spirit, on the other hand, have no monitoring software, product replacement plan, or easily recoverable market value. A pervasive surprise cyberstrike, targeting those things closest to home for servicemembers, could—without firing a single bullet—have a devastating impact on the American military's ability to rapidly deploy, and it would generate lingering fear and mistrust even after counter-cyber efforts revealed the truth. Even if U.S. warfighters prove unexpectedly resilient, a market recovery two months after the fact does not offset the chaos caused by a rapid, short-term market destabilization that would paralyze an immediate American response to sudden Chinese military aggression.

## **Not Just a Hypothetical**

There are historical precedents for a widespread cyberattack used either to significantly disrupt an adversary's government as a goal in itself or as a prelude to military action. Russia preceded its invasions of Georgia, Crimea, and Ukraine with a variety of cyberoperations.<sup>42</sup> Aside from OPM, adversarial hackers have breached other American government agencies, such as the National Security Agency and the U.S. Department of State.<sup>43</sup> And the National Health Service attack in Britain demonstrated how hostile organizations can exploit personal information—in this case, medical records. The aforementioned hypotheticals differ only in degree from capabilities attackers already have. And the Chinese government, with its purloined OPM data, enjoys an access key that other entities, such as Russia, did not.

This author used the OPM hack as a starting point, but Russia's activities in the 2016 election provided a practical template for how a potential Chinese

attack might play out. That attack targeted trust and other intangibles, such as faith in the U.S. political system. Russian operatives directed their attack against a few target sets—social media channels, a political party’s computer systems—and executed it with comparatively modest resources.<sup>44</sup>

Yet, Russia’s trust attack did not fully exploit this method’s potential. As noted in the official intelligence community assessment, Russia spread confusion and mistrust as apparent ends in themselves: “Russia’s goals were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process . . . [to] apply lessons learned . . . to future influence efforts worldwide, including against US allies and their election processes.”<sup>45</sup> Russia seemed satisfied with spreading confusion and mistrust where it could get easy access, such as social media and badly protected private networks. Russian hackers did not penetrate more hardened networks in the financial or defense sectors, possibly because they did not see the need, but more likely because they did not have an exploitable access point. Moreover, Russia did not capitalize on the confusion achieved in the United States as an opportunity to pursue national objectives requiring a direct confrontation with America.

China, on the other hand, has both the opportunity and need for a maximized trust attack. The opportunity lies in possessing exploitable information that Russia lacked: the OPM database. Its need stems from the fact that any robust pursuit of national objectives in the South China Sea and against Taiwan would put it in direct conflict with American interests.<sup>46</sup> While China has generally eschewed direct confrontation in recent years, the United States should not dismiss the possibility that China’s leaders might think they could come out ahead in a direct confrontation in their virtual backyard, especially in the wake of a debilitating trust attack against the American military and national economy.

## Conclusion

As Mark F. Cancian noted in the final CSIS report, the United States is particularly vulnerable to the surprise attack today because many of its discussions about conflict display a disturbing hubris. “Senior officials,” Cancian notes, “have repeatedly made claims that the U.S. military is not just the best in the world but the best the world has ever known. As with Greek heroes of legend and literature, hubris can lead to downfall.”<sup>47</sup> The American military might enjoy an unmatched level of funding and equipment, but it could all be rendered moot by a cyberattack that bypassed the military’s physical superiority to disrupt its moral capacity to fight. Moreover, as the historical data in this article has shown, American companies remain susceptible to costly data breaches, and America’s financial markets regularly suffer in the aftermath. And it seems any assumption by the public that the federal government, at least, has learned some

lessons from the OPM hack is misplaced: as of the end of 2018, OPM still has not implemented many key recommendations from the Government Accountability Office on securing its data, including the continued use of passwords that hackers compromised in the original 2015 breach.<sup>48</sup>

This inactivity implies that, despite lip service and congressional hearings to the contrary, America's senior politicians, bureaucrats, and military leaders remain insouciant about the threat posed to the United States by a catastrophic cyberattack capable of incapacitating its military and paralyzing the economic lifeblood of the country.<sup>49</sup> This author believes that, to the contrary, the many real-life events described above suggest that a competent adversary armed with the right information could indeed aim such an attack against the United States and its armed forces. China has shown itself to be a competent and shrewd competitor in many arenas, but particularly in its theft of the treasure trove of OPM data. Such data is precisely the type of key a competent adversary could use to devastating effect, if it so chose. This author believes that the fact China has, to date, chosen not to use the data suggests it is waiting for a moment when it will maximize the advantages it can gain from it. The American government needs to heed the hard lessons it has already endured in disruptive practice runs such as the OPM hack and 2016 election; those may be the last warnings it gets before an opponent initiates an attack sufficiently catastrophic that it truly alters the balance of power in a region critical to America's interests.

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## Notes

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# The Budget and Acquisition Challenges of Implementing *Strong, Secure, Engaged*

J. Craig Stone, PhD

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**Abstract:** In June 2017, the Canadian government issued a new defense policy titled *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*. The policy is designed to indicate Canadian defense priorities during a 20-year horizon with increases in both defense spending and the size of the military. Since its release, commentary on the policy has varied across the spectrum, ranging from positive support to very negative criticism. Now more than a year later, the discussion focuses on the status of implementation based on the 20-year program articulated in the policy. This article highlights two specific aspects of the policy: the budget and acquisition challenges of its implementation. The article reviews the broad context and intentions of the policy, reviews the budget challenges followed by the acquisition challenges associated with implementing the policy, and concludes by arguing that it is much too early in a 20-year implementation time line to be negative about the future prospects.

**Keywords:** defense budgeting, defense acquisition, procurement, defense policy, Canada

In June 2017, the Canadian government issued a new defense policy called *Strong, Secure, Engaged*.<sup>1</sup> The policy was issued after significant consultation with allies, members of parliament, interest groups, and the Canadian public. The policy is presented as one that “offers clear direction on Canadian

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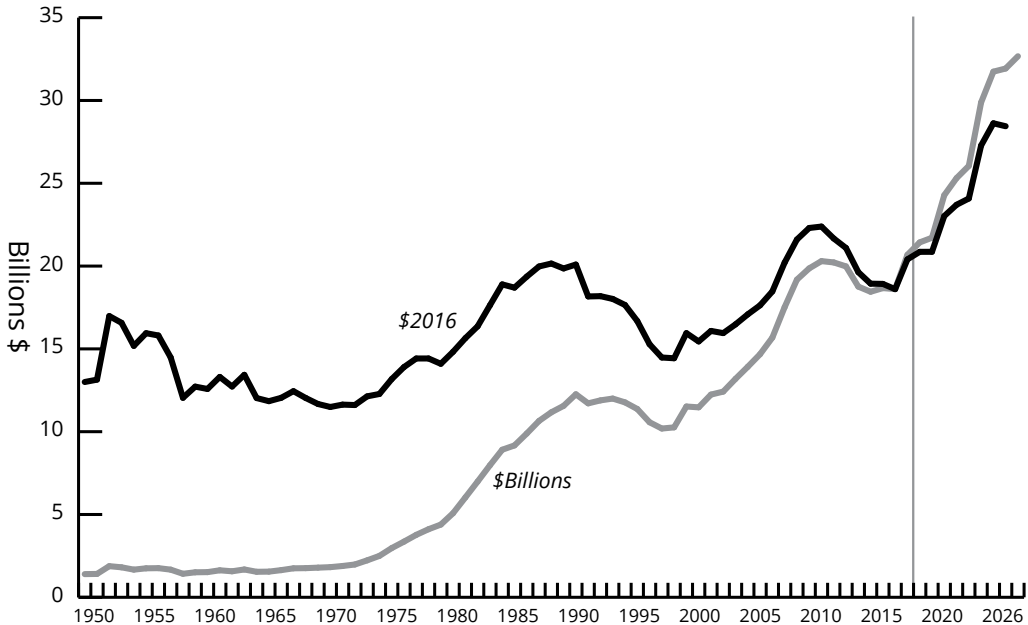
defence priorities on a 20-year horizon. It increases the size of the Canadian Armed Forces, affirms Canada's unwavering commitment to its long-standing alliances and partnerships, and provides vital new investments to ensure our women and men in uniform have the modern tools they need to succeed in—and return home safely from—operations.”<sup>2</sup> Since its release, commentary on the policy has varied, ranging from positive support to very negative criticism.

Now, more than a year later, the discussion focuses on where implementation is currently for the 20-year program articulated in the policy. The intent of this article is to highlight two specific aspects of the policy: the budget challenges of implementing *Strong, Secure, Engaged* (SSE) and the acquisition challenges of implementing SSE. A separate but related issue is the intended sequencing of implementation. The article will first review the broad context and intentions of the policy and then present some of the criticisms that have been identified more recently. Next, the article will review the budget challenges, followed by the acquisition challenges associated with implementing the policy, and conclude by arguing that it is much too early in the implementation process to be negative about the future prospects.

### ***Strong, Secure, Engaged***

The new defense policy is a significant policy statement by the government. SSE provides a commitment to grow the budget on a cash basis from \$18.9 billion in 2016–17 to \$32.7 billion in 2026–27.<sup>3</sup> SSE indicates that the policy is rigorously costed, transparent, and fully funded.<sup>4</sup> This is a 70 percent increase in the budget in the next 10 years. As Eugene Lang has observed, the government did not campaign on increasing defense spending and “the coalition of voters that elected the Trudeau Liberals was not calling for an increase in military spending.”<sup>5</sup> The Liberal Party, lead by Justin Trudeau, defeated then-prime minister Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party in the fall election of 2015. As the leader of the Liberal Party, Justin Trudeau campaigned on growing the middle class and on increasing spending for more traditional social policy issues such as education and health care. The only significant references to defense were that he would not buy the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II and that he would return to United Nations peacekeeping missions. Upon election, the new government committed to launching a defense policy review. This was consistent with past practices for Canada when ruling parties change. New governments have generally conducted defense policy reviews and issued a defense policy document.

The growth in funding for SSE is even more significant when one acknowledges that Canadian governments have generally not significantly increased defense spending when running deficits. Typically, when revenue shrinks and deficits increase, defense spending is reduced to help return to a balanced

**Figure 1.** Canadian defense expenditures, 1950–2025 (billions)

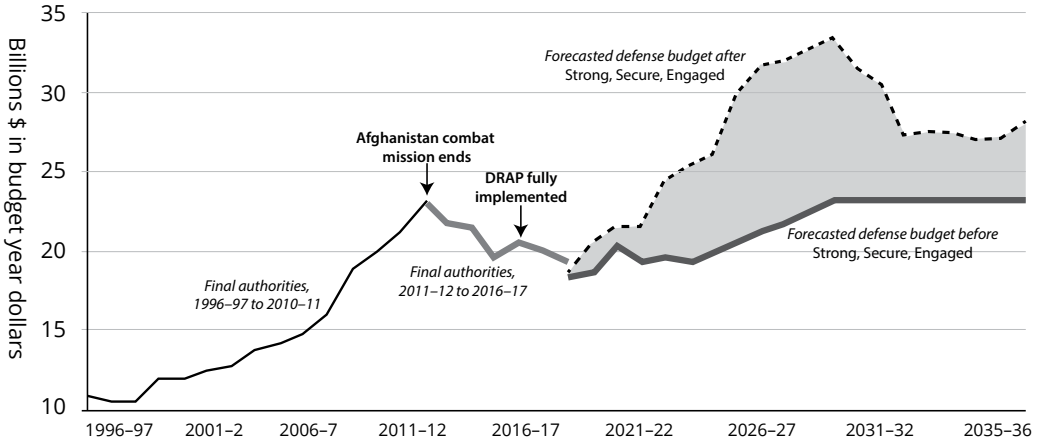
Source: *Public Accounts of Canada and Strong, Secure, Engaged*

budget. SSE breaks with this tradition. The defense budget is growing while the government runs a deficit with no immediate plan to return to a balanced budget.

Figure 1 shows historical defense spending in Canada with the projected spending that is articulated in SSE. SSE suggests significant budget increases on a cash basis out to FY 2026–27. Figure 2 provides the budget forecast that is advocated in SSE and shows an expected decrease of almost \$5 billion a year in funding post 2026–27, “reflecting the completion of major capital projects” that are expected between 2017 and 2027.<sup>6</sup> The assumption is that, once the large capital investments are made between 2017 and 2027, defense will then be recapitalized and will not require as much money to sustain whatever missions and tasks the government is asking them to fulfill. The difficulty with this notion is that no one can predict the security environment and subsequent military capabilities that will be required that far into the future.

More importantly, the government has clarified the funding allocations between accrual and cash allocations so that “the management and planning of capital assets will be on a purely accrual basis.”<sup>7</sup> This is a significant improvement over the previous system that had two separate capital budgets governed by different rules—one was accrual and the other was a modified cash basis.<sup>8</sup> The government has indicated that it will allocate an additional \$48.9 billion during the next 20 years on an accrual basis with \$33.8 billion allocated to

**Figure 2.** Actual and forecasted defense budget (cash basis)



Note: DRAP = deficit reduction action plan.

Source: Strong, Secure, Engaged, 98

**Table 1.** Defense funding (millions)

Fiscal year	Accrual basis	Cash basis	Fiscal year	Accrual basis	Cash basis
2016-17	\$17,148	\$18,908	2022-23	\$20,870	\$26,048
2017-18	\$17,174	\$20,683	2023-24	\$22,092	\$29,879
2018-19	\$17,636	\$21,428	2024-25	\$23,278	\$31,741
2019-20	\$18,677	\$21,714	2025-26	\$23,899	\$31,931
2020-21	\$19,464	\$24,276	2026-27	\$24,551	\$32,673
2021-22	\$20,015	\$23,315			
		<b>Accrual basis</b>		<b>Cash basis</b>	
<b>10-year total</b>		\$207,654		\$265,688	
<b>20-year total</b>		\$497,012		\$553,003	

Source: Strong, Secure, Engaged, 43

capital assets and \$15.1 billion allocated to operating requirements.<sup>9</sup> Table 1 provides the funding identified in SSE for both cash and accrual during the next 20 years.

Although there are a number of significant policy issues in SSE, what is of concern for this discussion are the budget and acquisition issues. SSE clarifies a considerable number of capability initiatives, and it indicates that forecasted funding for the next 20 years will be \$497 billion on an accrual basis and \$553 billion on a cash basis.<sup>10</sup> This is a significant allocation of money for the government, particularly because they did not campaign on increasing the defense budget. Nevertheless, there have been several criticisms both when the policy was first released and more recently as the first-year anniversary of its release has passed.

Criticisms related to the budget generally address whether the promised funding will actually happen and whether the Department of National Defence (DND) is actually capable of spending the money. Three specific issues are relevant to the first broad area of criticism on whether the promised funding will actually happen: the dependability of funding, the state of the economy and the business cycle, and whether the numbers really add up.

### **Is the Money Really Available Long Term?**

A review of past Canadian defense policies illustrates that governments will often blame or imply blame to the previous government for what ails the Canadian DND and then promise long-term, stable funding only to alter the course when the circumstances change. For example, the 1987 defense policy referenced “decades of neglect and a significant commitment capability gap,” implying the previous government had not provided the requisite funding to defense.<sup>11</sup> The 2008 defense strategy indicated that “through stable and predictable defence funding, the Canada First Defence Strategy provides the planning certainty required to allow the Government to continue rebuilding the Canadian Forces into the state-of-the-art military that Canada needs and deserves.”<sup>12</sup> Again, the implication was that the previous government had failed to provide adequate funding.

The current government’s SSE indicates “that it is the most rigorously costed ever developed and fully funded.”<sup>13</sup> The reality is that these promises are generally overtaken by events and the promised long-term funding never happens. The promised increases in the 2008 *Canada First Defence Strategy* never really happened because the financial crisis of 2008–9 led to a \$2.5 billion reduction in defense funding. When Canadian governments face fiscal challenges, defense funding is often reduced because it is the largest portion of discretionary spending. A separate but related issue is whether it is realistic to expect a defense policy to last 20 years without being changed—and the answer is no. That is not to imply that senior leaders do not appreciate this fact—they do, but they also realize that this is the policy today that they need to implement, and they will deal with adjustments along the way as they occur.

Complicating this generalized observation about resource constraints, the Canadian economy is likely approaching the end of its current business cycle if past experience is considered.<sup>14</sup> Gross domestic product (GDP) and employment has been growing since the last downturn in the Canadian economy after the financial crises in 2008–9. The current trade uncertainty that exists globally, including whether the recent North American trade agreement is actually ratified and the broader global challenges based on U.S. priorities, adds to the uncertainty and increases the likelihood that growth in the Canadian economy will be at a slower pace. The government’s most recent budget in February 2018

indicates that planning for the fiscal environment based on average private sector forecasts will be 2.2 percent for 2018 and less than 2.0 percent from 2019 to 2022. Their fall update remains consistent with this planning forecast and is a reduction from their planning in the 2017 budget that was utilized for the development of the SSE.<sup>15</sup>

The last criticism is how dependable the government’s numbers are, particularly because they have claimed it is the most rigorously costed defense policy ever released. *Rigorously costed* means that a number of different organizations have agreed to the expected costs for the defense policy. It might very well be rigorously costed, but the government’s percentage of GDP data does not add up. The author notes that the government’s own projected growth data in its 2017 budget would have allocated 1.4 percent of GDP on defense at \$35 billion versus \$32.7 billion, a difference of slightly more than \$2 billion. More recent 2018 budget documents indicate that GDP will be \$20 billion larger in 2022 than expected in 2017, so 1.4 percent of GDP will be even larger. Although the intention is not to make a case for establishing defense budgets based on GDP, the focus on GDP is important in the context of SSE because the government also has changed how it is defining defense expenditures.<sup>16</sup> SSE indicates that the government is going to include other expenditures that are allowed under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) definition but have not been part of Canadian reporting prior to this year. What that implies is that the data in table 2 can be interpreted differently depending on what line in the table you want to focus on. Spending on defense will actually decrease to 0.79 percent of GDP and individuals will need to have confidence the table’s “Changes to Defense Policy” line, which indicates a spending increase of 0.43 percent of GDP, will actually come to fruition to achieve the 1.4 percent of GDP level.<sup>17</sup>

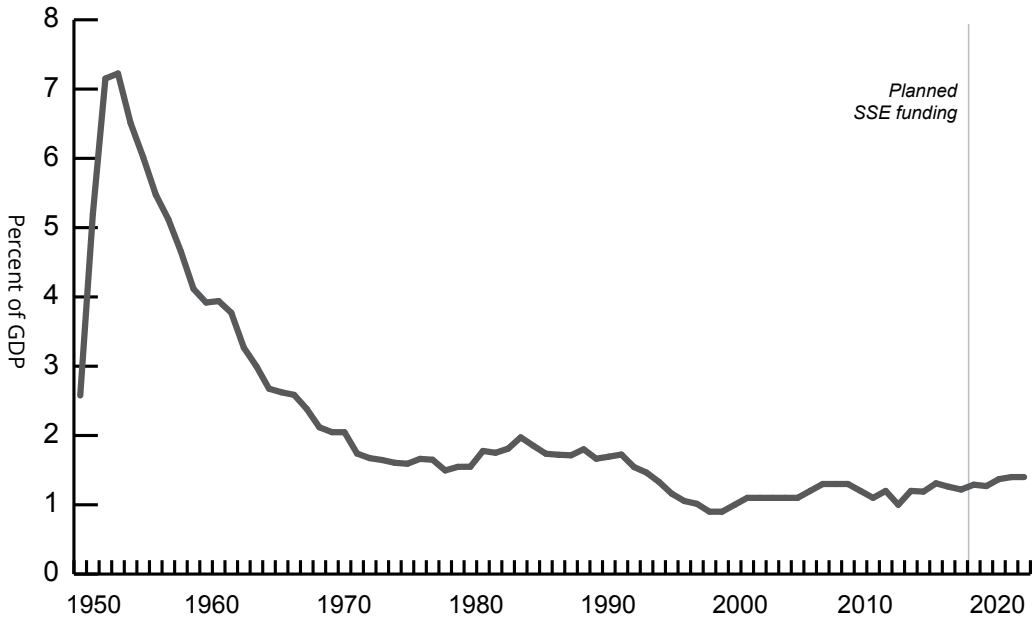
There is nothing fundamentally wrong with the government articulating spending data in accordance with the NATO definition. It does not meet the targeted 2 percent of GDP agreed to by NATO nations, but it does meet the 20 percent of defense spending target for investment in capital equipment. Never-

**Table 2.** Forecasted defense spending as a percentage of GDP (cash basis)

	2016–17	2018–19	2020–21	2022–23	2024–25
National defense spending	0.97	0.98	0.91	0.85	0.79
Defense spending: other departments	0.22	0.22	0.19	0.18	0.17
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1.19</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>0.97</b>
Changes to defense policy	0	0.06	0.19	0.24	0.43
<b>Forecasted defense spending</b>	<b>1.19</b>	<b>1.26</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>1.23</b>	<b>1.4</b>
Major equipment as a percentage of defense spending	10.84	19.77	21.83	23.15	32.17

Source: Strong, Secure, Engaged, table 2, 46



**Figure 3.** Canadian defense expenditures as a share of GDP (%), 1950–2025

Source: *Public Accounts of Canada, Department of Finance Fiscal Reference tables, and Strong, Secure, Engaged*

theless, Canadians need to realize that not all this significant growth in defense spending as a percentage of GDP is actually going to the Canadian Armed Forces.

Of note, the 2 percent target is likely never to be achieved in the Canadian context. Figure 3 shows defense spending as a percentage of GDP from 1950 out to the forecasted growth in 2025. Canadian defense spending has not been at 2 percent since the early 1970s. In discussing what 2 percent of GDP might look like in terms of growth over time to reach that target, the author noted that the defense budget in 2016 would have needed to be approximately \$40 billion rather than the \$18.66 billion it was.<sup>18</sup> The author also considered growing the budget to 2 percent of GDP using increments of 0.1 percent or 0.05 percent per year over time with 2 percent being achieved in 2026 or 2036, depending on the growth option selected. That translated to a defense budget of \$46 billion in 2026 if growth is 0.1 percent a year and \$56.9 billion by 2036. Absent a global war, the Canadian public would likely not support these levels of defense expenditures. Even Canada's lengthy engagement in Afghanistan with people in harm's way did not lead to the government increasing defense spending to 2 percent of GDP.

Despite the concerns mentioned above, the increases articulated in the SSE are substantial and must be viewed as an opportunity moving forward. The government has provided policy guidance, formulated a funding plan, and the

money is currently available. DND and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) need to plan on it being available, which leads to the second area of criticism—can they actually spend the increase in funding?

### **Can the Department of National Defence Actually Spend the Money?**

Criticism in this area deals with whether the DND can hire the people with needed skills required to implement the SSE and whether the DND can move the acquisition and capability projects identified in SSE in a timely manner to match when the funding is available in the government's fiscal framework.

Ross Fetterly notes that the “five primary challenges within Defence in implementing the direction in the 2017 Defence Policy are personnel, experience, sustaining defence as a government funding challenge, support from other government departments and addressing the long-standing legacy of underfunding capital equipment procurement,” and then goes on to note that “the vexing issue of enduring military and civilian vacant positions needs to be addressed.”<sup>19</sup> The CAF has had difficulty in recent years with recruiting the number of individuals required to match attrition rates and now must also grow the force size by 3,500 to include such specialties as space and cyber, two areas where the private sector offers significantly more money.

Different but equally challenging issues exist for the civilian workforce. Recent reductions in the number of public servants as part of the previous government's deficit reduction action plan (DRAP) have created gaps in the experience level for people to manage complex major capital acquisitions. DND is dealing with this issue, as are other government departments, but it takes time to provide the necessary education and experiential opportunities. In addition, the significant number of initiatives in SSE will create external challenges within the federal system with the other departments that are major players in the acquisition system.<sup>20</sup> As Fetterly notes, similar increases in public servants within the three key departments will “also be required in order to develop the enlarged internal capacity to support the defence capital equipment program on a sustained basis.”<sup>21</sup>

Without resolving the personnel issues, improving the speed and effectiveness of the actual acquisition process will be difficult. This is a recognized issue and SSE highlights that the priority in the early years of implementation will focus on workforce issues, both military and civilian. Unlike previous defense policy documents that began with a chapter on the international or global context, the first chapter of SSE begins with a focus on people and the global security environment is found in chapter 4.<sup>22</sup> In the 111 new initiatives listed in SSE, the first 28 deal with people issues, while a number of the remaining 83

have people aspects that will influence implementation.<sup>23</sup> For example, “grow and professionalize the defence procurement workforce . . . the addition of new procurement specialists and enhanced training and professional accreditation for defence procurement personnel” is one of the initiatives listed under Improving Defense Procurement but is a personnel-related issue.<sup>24</sup>

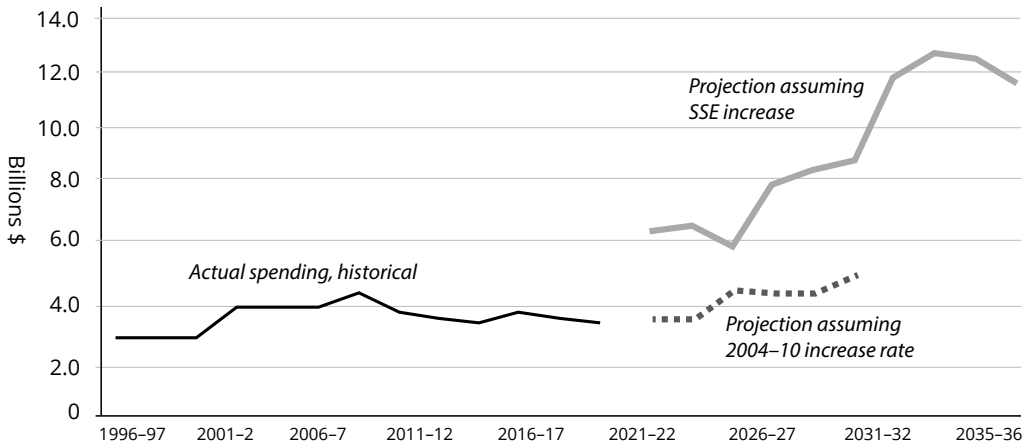
### **Can Acquisition Plans Be Achieved?**

Much has been written about improving the procurement process, and defense procurement reforms have been the subject of reports and studies for decades, including among many of our traditional allies. For example, Bernard Gray in his October 2009 review for the United Kingdom’s secretary of state for defense noted that the problem of “Acquisition Reform, as it is generally known, is a subject only about five minutes younger than the acquisition of military equipment itself.”<sup>25</sup> Ross Fetterly’s study of acquisition reforms in other nations begins with a reference to Stephen V. Reeves and his observation that “during the past 50 years, defense acquisition reform panels, studies, reviews, and commissions occurred with such frequency that they could virtually provide lifetime employment.”<sup>26</sup> Many of Canada’s allies have conducted reviews of their procurement processes and implemented reforms. Unfortunately, most of its allies remain in the same position as Canada in terms of not achieving the speed and effectiveness they would like to achieve with military procurement. It is not the intention to discuss procurement reform here because much has already been written on this subject but rather to deal with a couple of specific challenges as it relates to implementing SSE.<sup>27</sup>

In the context of acquisition challenges, the macro-level critique has been the inability of DND to actually spend the money that has been allocated for major acquisitions. David Perry’s *Strong, Secure, Engaged So Far* notes that capital spending is falling well short of the planned spending in SSE, with the 2018–19 main estimates identifying \$3.7 billion for capital. This is well short of the \$6.6 billion identified in SSE.<sup>28</sup> Importantly, Perry makes the point that DND increased its capital spending by 60 percent during Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan and that a similar increase now during a peacetime environment would still not achieve the level of funding identified in SSE.<sup>29</sup> Figure 4 demonstrates the challenge emphasized by Perry. The requirement to move a significant number of large capital investment projects also highlights the importance of getting the people issues, which includes the number of people and also their qualifications and skill sets, sorted out first.

An additional complicating factor is that the initiatives outlined in SSE to improve the process are incremental in nature and only really apply to DND and not the other departments involved in the process. Initiatives 94 through

**Figure 4.** Projected capital spending under SSE compared to a projection assuming spending increases at the same rate as between 2005–6 and 2010–11



Source: Strong, Secure, Engaged So Far, 8

100 are designed “to streamline defence procurement, better meet the needs of the military, and deliver projects in a more timely manner.”<sup>30</sup> These are summarized by Perry as:

reducing project development and approval timelines by at least 50 percent; increasing DND’s delegated contracting authority to \$5 million by 2018; increasing transparency with defense associations; providing regular project updates; growing and professionalizing the procurement workforce; incentivizing Canadian research and development; and ensuring procurement adheres to environmental standards.<sup>31</sup>

As Eugene Lang notes, most of these “are holdovers from the 2014 Defence Procurement Strategy of the previous government” and “suggests it [DND] sees the responsibility for defence procurement problems lying largely outside its domain and inside the realms of the other departments involved in the process.”<sup>32</sup> Although this may be more critical than required, since there are problems in the other departments as well, Lang’s broader point that the other departments “face no pressure to improve or streamline their part of the process to help DND spend its capital” is true.<sup>33</sup> Until the prime minister actually tells the ministers that they need to care and the deputy ministers have supporting DND as part of the performance bonuses, there will be no incentive for a whole-of-government priority for implementing all of the initiatives in SSE. It is up to DND to lead this process and make it happen.<sup>34</sup>

## Conclusion

Despite the criticism that exists about where DND is with the implementation of SSE, this can also be considered a very positive time to be in Canadian defense. SSE has actually prioritized people first and has a stated intention to get both the numbers of people and the skill sets and qualifications sorted out so that it can actually get on with all of the other initiatives articulated in SSE. Capital spending will remain a challenge but changes within the internal governance process, a more deliberate focus on business analytics and measurable performance criteria, combined with more top down direction on what to prioritize when will help. It remains early in the implementation process, particularly when one considers that only a limited number of people inside the department had any knowledge of SSE until it was released to the public, and it is a 20-year plan. Consequently, much of this time has been spent with staff getting familiar with all of the initiatives and developing the plans for implementation and approval by the leadership. A more valid assessment of the future longevity of SSE will be required in the coming year as the government moves into an election cycle and wants to start making decisions and force the bureaucracy to keep up.

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## Notes

1. *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence, 2017), hereafter SSE.
2. SSE, 11.
3. All values are in Canadian dollars unless otherwise indicated.
4. SSE, 11.
5. Eugene Lang, *Use It or Lose It: SSE and DND's Chronic Underspending Problem* (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2018), 1. The Liberal Party defeated Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party in fall 2015.
6. SSE, 98. See figure 2 of actual and forecasted defense budget spending on a cash basis in SSE.
7. SSE, 43–44. This is a significant improvement from the previous system that had two separate capital budgets governed by different rules. One was accrual and the other was a modified cash basis. A more detailed discussion on the differences between accrual and cash accounting practices is outside of the scope of this article. For more information on the subject, the reader should see LtCol Ross Fetterly and Maj Richard Groves, *Accrual Accounting and Budgeting in Defence* (Kingston, ON: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 2008). For a line definition of the differences between accrual and cash accounting as it relates to an example for buying a ship, see SSE, 99–100.
8. See David Perry, *Following the Funding in Strong, Secure, Engaged* (Calgary, AB: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2018).
9. SSE, 44.
10. SSE, 43.
11. *Challenge and Commitment: A Defence Policy for Canada* (Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence, 1987), 43.
12. *Canada First Defence Strategy* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2008), 3.
13. SSE, 11.
14. For a discussion of Canada's business cycles and definitions, see Philip Cross and Phil-

- lippe Bergevin, *Turning Points: Business Cycles in Canada since 1926*, Commentary no. 366 (Toronto: C. D. Howe Institute, 2012).
15. *Equality + Growth: A Strong Middle Class* (Ottawa, ON: Department of Finance, 2018), 300.
  16. There is no economic reason to establish a defense budget as a percentage of GDP. It does not provide any indication of actual military capability. It is a useful measure that compares how much a burden a nation is putting on its citizens in relation to other nations. The focus on percentage of GDP in SSE is more likely a function of President Donald J. Trump's call for NATO nations to meet the target of 2 percent and the particular way he has done that, combined with other Canada-U.S. relationship issues.
  17. SSE, 46. The data in table 2 captures some of the actual table 2 data from SSE. The actual SSE table 2 contains yearly defense spending data from FY 2007–8 to FY 2024–25.
  18. J. Craig Stone, *Growing the Defence Budget: What Would Two Percent of GDP Look Like?* (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2017), 4.
  19. Ross Fetterly, *Implementing Strong, Secure, Engaged: The Challenges Ahead* (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2018), 6, 7. Fetterly also has dealt with the personnel issue more directly in *The Importance of People in Defence* (Calgary, AB: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2018) as has Lindsay Rodman in *Modernizing the Military Personnel System: Lessons from the Force of the Future* (Calgary, AB: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2018).
  20. Although there can be any number of federal departments involved in a procurement, the major players are Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; Public Services and Procurement Canada; and the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.
  21. Fetterly, *Implementing Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 7.
  22. For example, the 2008 *Canada First Defence Strategy* began with the “strategic environment”; the 2005 policy statement began with “the international security environment at the beginning of the 21st century”; the 1994 policy statement began with “international environment”; and the 1987 policy began with “the international environment.” It is also important for the reader to realize that in Canada the fundamental roles of the Canadian Armed Forces have not changed since the end of World War Two—every defense policy document has articulated roles that basically say the Canadian Armed Forces are to defend Canada, defend North America, and do something by choice such as NATO and the UN.
  23. See annex D of SSE, which summarizes the list of 111 initiatives in the policy. SSE, 106–13.
  24. SSE, 75. Note the summary of initiatives at annex D actually indicates 60 procurement specialists rather than an addition of new procurement specialists on p. 75.
  25. Bernard Gray, *Review of Acquisition for the Secretary of State for Defence: An Independent Report* (London: Bernard Gray, 2009), 15.
  26. LtCol Stephen V. Reeves (USA), *The Ghosts of Acquisition Reform: Past, Present and Future* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1996), 25, quoted in Ross Fetterly, *Defence Procurement Reform in Other Nations* (Kingston, ON: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 2009), 3.
  27. For example, Fetterly's study on *Defence Procurement Reform in Other Nations* covers the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia; and Stone's *Improving the Acquisition Process in Canada* deals with the Canadian system.
  28. David Perry, *Strong, Secure, Engaged So Far* (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2018), 6–7.
  29. Perry, *Strong, Secure, Engaged So Far*, 7. The significance of this in terms of procurement during Canada's engagement in Afghanistan is that sole source procurements were the norm due to the operational urgency of the requirement. Competitive processes are the norm now and that involves many other players and balancing multiple requirements, particularly economic benefits to Canadian industry.
  30. SSE, 75.

31. Perry, *Following the Funding in Strong, Secure Engaged*, 10.
32. Eugene Lang, *Use It or Lose It: SSE and DND's Chronic Underspending Problem* (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2018), 3. A discussion on the Defence Procurement Strategy is available from J. Craig Stone, *Implementing the Defence Procurement Strategy: Is It Working?* (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2016).
33. Lang, *Use It or Lose It*, 3.
34. Although beyond the scope of this article, there are multiple departments inside the Canadian government that may be involved with a military procurement depending on the nature of the procurement. Three departments, including Defence; Public Services and Procurement Canada; and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada are the main departments and their respective ministers have legal obligations with respect to procurement that may not be consistent with the priorities for defense.

# Relationship Repair Strategies for the Military Professional

## The Impact of Cultural Differences on Expectations and Applications

Lauren Mackenzie, PhD, and Kristin Post

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**Abstract:** Decades of scholarship and various academic disciplines have underscored the importance of effective intercultural collaboration for the military professional. Although the skills devoted to relationship building have remained a prominent component of the professional military education and training toolkit, far less attention has been paid to the process of *mending* relationships, or relationship repair strategies, and the political or diplomatic cost to the Services should they fail. This article addresses cultural variation in relationship repair by reviewing the academic literature and analyzing themes surrounding effective restorative actions in military contexts, particularly advise and assist missions. The article concludes with considerations for training and education applications.

**Keywords:** relationship repair, culture, military training and education, apology, self-construal

**T**hough not nearly as concrete as the budgetary costs of making war and peace as discussed previously, the relevance of relationship repair research is as timely as ever for the military professional. As many who have spent more than a decade immersed in the counterinsurgency environment are well aware, relationship *building* has remained a prominent component of the mil-

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itary training and education toolkit. With the exception of very few scholars, however, far less attention has been paid to the process of *mending* relationships or, as referred to here, relationship repair strategies.<sup>1</sup> Such strategies include, but are not limited to, offers of compensation, accounts, denials, apologies, and demonstrations of concern.<sup>2</sup> Although the average person has likely employed these strategies in an attempt to recover from negative interactions in both personal and professional contexts, the role that cultural differences can play on how such strategies are constructed and interpreted may not be as familiar.

This article addresses the impact of culture on relationship repair strategies and is organized into three sections—each with an eye toward both academic scholarship and military application. First, the authors introduce examples from the field provided by Marines who have participated in qualitative research projects conducted by Marine Corps University’s Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL), Translational Research Group. The next section reviews the relationship repair literature with a specific focus on self-construal (how people define or make meaning of themselves) as a key consideration for military professionals. Regardless of rank or military occupational specialty, communicating with individuals from diverse backgrounds with different worldviews is inevitable in today’s military. It has been well documented across multiple decades of scholarship and various academic disciplines that such interactions are prone to misunderstanding—very often as a result of a culturally informed *expectation violation* of some kind.<sup>3</sup> The article thus concludes by arguing that as a frequently needed (yet largely overlooked) consideration for effective communication, the impact of cultural variation on relationship repair strategies should be included in military training and education.

So we were always ready for putting fires out. And that was really quick—with the team, if someone messed up, the next guy would go repair it as best they can. [When I offended someone,] they said go apologize so I had to go apologize, and I had to throw the mercy of myself toward him, like “I’m so sorry” and that fixed that. And he understood that Marines just act differently.

~ Marine Corps gunnery sergeant<sup>4</sup>

## **Culture, Communication, and Relationship Repair in Advise and Assist Missions**

The literature on relationship repair is frequently drawn from laboratory experiments with undergraduate students or is otherwise derived from environments that are starkly different from the military experience. For this article, the authors draw from interviews with infantry Marines who were partnered

with foreign military counterparts as part of their mission.<sup>5</sup> Any given military partnership is different, of course, and may be impacted by a number of variables, such as the availability of financial and educational resources in the host nation, host nation level of exposure to Western culture, and the length of the deployment, among others. However, the daily routine is often similar, and certain Marines may interact with their partners on a daily, if not hourly, basis. This frequency of interaction, along with the Marine Corps' imperative to accomplish the mission, raises the stakes for relationship maintenance over time.

These missions, especially those that were completely immersive, where the Marines "live with the guys, and sleep next to them, and patrol with them" can be challenging.<sup>6</sup> Invariably, Marines will be experiencing a new environment, where sensory information, such as smells, sounds, and sights are different. Furthermore, cultural norms in the host nation may include differing attitudes toward personal space, work and leisure, or decision-making authority. Cross-cultural research suggests that communicators cannot necessarily rely on their usual mental schemas when constructing or interpreting a response in a culturally complex environment. For example, use of space and touch that is intended to communicate connection can be interpreted as romantic, or eye movement that is intended to communicate uncertainty can be interpreted as deceptive.<sup>7</sup> These are contextual and environmental factors—and, at times, incongruities—that can impact a Marines' ability to build or maintain positive relationships.<sup>8</sup>

Cultural complexities are evident in the following interaction that a Marine corporal described after returning from a deployment to a Middle Eastern country that involved training the national military forces.<sup>9</sup> According to the corporal, one day a Marine was standing at the periphery of a classroom, observing a fellow Marine instructor. While the class was in progress, some of the trainees got up to approach the Marine who was observing. The corporal recounts what happened,

and he just turned his back. Just like, "yeah, no." Just looked away. They took it as a big insult saying "hey [the Marines] don't want to be here, they don't want to train us." Even though there was a Marine [conducting the] training, they just saw that Marine that wasn't [responsive].<sup>10</sup>

Though the corporal considered this a "minor incident," the Marines took active steps to recover, such as talking to the partner military officers and explaining that it was important for the trainees to pay attention during the lesson and ask questions afterward. When addressing this incident with the foreign officers first, the Marines were leveraging a status hierarchy that is common to militaries, but is uncommon in the civilian world, and thus rarely addressed in

academic literature. The corporal and their fellow Marines instinctively repaired the relationship in this instance, and it is argued that if a bank of examples such as this were to be created and included in existing training and education modules, military personnel will be better prepared for handling encounters of a similar nature.

While the former example indicates what Marines did after rapport was lost, the next example portrays how a Marine sergeant avoids conflict in the first place, by creating a variety of behavioral explanations to understand why a Saudi Arabian lieutenant appeared resistant to advice on the training range.<sup>11</sup> When the sergeant saw the junior Saudi officer making an error, they wanted to assist. The Marine was aware that the cultural context demanded different communication norms, so they did not address the error using the same direct way of speaking they would have with a junior Marine. In other words, they tried to explain the technique without saying, “You’re doing this wrong.” The Marine was working with a non-Arab interpreter from Sudan who spoke Arabic. As the interpreter translated, the Marine sensed the Saudi officer was ignoring them. Even though their frustration was mounting, the sergeant formed a few mental guesses as to why the interaction was not going well.

In their military, you’re either a sergeant, or you’re a lieutenant, or you’re nobody. I was a sergeant, so I was trying to help him out, but I didn’t know if it was an enlisted/officer thing or the race thing with the Sudanese [interpreter], so I kind of just said my piece, said what I had to say. And I really, really wanted to try and drive the point home because he wasn’t listening, but I had to back off and let it go. If he wants to get his soldiers killed, then that’s on him. That was hard.<sup>12</sup>

The sergeant demonstrates an awareness of how status differences may have been at play but also the ultimate cost should that difference be ignored. He identified that the rank difference between them and the Saudi officer may have been a source of trouble, and considered how ethnic pride and hearing professional advice from a foreign-born interpreter may have contributed to the officer’s discontent. It is impossible to know the actual reason for the communication breakdown, but the end result was that the sergeant regulated their own behavior to prevent further trouble.

Edward Hall, the founder of the field of intercultural communication, describes how overcoming deeply embedded cultural norms and values can be almost insurmountable. He writes, “For him to have understood me would have meant re-organizing [*sic*] his thinking . . . giving up his intellectual ballast, and few people are willing to risk such a radical move.”<sup>13</sup> The sergeant understood that the Saudi officer was possibly too rigid in his thinking to accept the

Marine's advice, so they backed off from their own desired end state rather than create additional friction and increase the risk or cost associated with the failed interaction. In this example, the Marine demonstrates perspective taking, an important cross-cultural skill. It should be noted that an individual's ability to practice perspective taking, or the "ability to see things from another point of view," is informed by their self-construal, or how a person defines oneself—typically through the lens of an independent or relational identity, which in turn can impact how certain repair strategies are interpreted.<sup>14</sup> The sergeant's understanding of identity factors, such as the Saudi officer's military and social status, is a first step. Later in this article, the role of self-construal in the relationship repair process will be introduced as an added step servicemembers should consider when preparing for and engaging in culturally complex interactions.

### **Relationship Repair Literature**

Broadly speaking, the research suggests that effective restorative actions can predict prosocial outcomes, such as forgiveness.<sup>15</sup> For military personnel invested in maintaining or restoring professional relationships, it is important to consider how such research findings can be put into practice. By no means does this article intend to dismiss the complexity of human behavior and relationships, however, and the authors recognize that a variety of factors can impact the effectiveness of relationship repair strategies, such as the timing and severity of the violation, length of the relationship, and the perceived intention.<sup>16</sup> The study of relationship repair has occurred at both the individual and organizational levels with a focus on levels of relational closeness and the multifaceted construct of "trust."<sup>17</sup> For example, researchers have examined how BP executives attempted to repair relationships between the organization and its members after the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>18</sup> A model devoted to the stages of relationship repair proposed by Kimberly McCarthy focuses on the environmental factors, characteristics of the relationship, sincerity of appeal, elapsed time, and reconciliation tactics that, taken together, integrate the processes of trust repair, relationship repair, and forgiveness.<sup>19</sup>

There is general agreement among researchers that the likelihood of repair increases if a violation is perceived as outside of one's control.<sup>20</sup> Take, for example, the divergent perceptions of how time is used and perceived across military cultures. While American Marines may see time as controlled, planned, and productive, many of the interviewees the authors spoke with found that their Middle Eastern counterparts viewed time much less rigidly, often perceiving schedules as suggestions.<sup>21</sup> Marines who train foreign forces are challenged when their foreign partner is less willing to engage in training for the length of time that the Marines have scheduled. A corporal explains that "we had to do

our job, but we had to consider how they were organized for their beliefs and behavior patterns. Like prayer time. Training starts after that. Also, they would take breaks whenever. If they were tired, they would take a break.”<sup>22</sup> Although attitudes toward time often lead to friction, it may reduce frustration for Marines in such situations if they can temporarily suspend their own expectations surrounding time to think about the factors out of their counterparts’ control (e.g., family or religious obligations, lack of reliable transportation, etc.) that could be contributing to their behavior.

In addition, research by Ryan Fehr and Michael J. Gelfand emphasizes that restorative actions are most effective when the violator articulates an awareness of the negative consequences or costs as a result of the transgression.<sup>23</sup> This is highlighted by a Marine sergeant who was on a deployment, instructing a land navigation class to host nation forces, when they realized that some of the students were cheating. The sergeant explained, “I was a little frustrated, it wasn’t their first lie.” The sergeant and the rest of the Marines were bothered by what seemed like laziness. However, they asked the interpreter about it, and found out that “they had been doing the same things for 18 months. That’s the same as if we had done SOI [School of Infantry] for 1.5 years. Boredom set in.”<sup>24</sup> After the Marine takes the time to suspend judgment and practice some perspective taking in this scenario, they came to the realization that they might have misinterpreted the behavior. They are then able to restore the potential damage of that incorrect assumption by articulating a potential negative consequence of being asked to do the same thing repeatedly (boredom) and form a more complete understanding of why some of the host forces had cheated.

Of the various restorative tactics (e.g., showing concern, compensation, expression of regret, etc.), apologies have received by far the most attention by researchers. Fehr and Gelfand have noted that “as a method of conflict resolution, apologies have perhaps never been as popular as they are today.”<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, scholars continue to grapple with such questions as: What does an apology really mean? Is it an admission of guilt, regret, or responsibility? Who and what is an apology for? Does the apology positively or negatively impact the overall cost of the incident?

Apologies have been examined across contexts and academic disciplines.<sup>26</sup> A relatively small pool of scholars has focused particularly on cross-cultural differences in apologies, such as cultural differences in the function and meaning of apologies between the United States and Japan, while others have called for “apology diplomacy.”<sup>27</sup> Hong Ren and Barbara Gray have examined the impact of culture on the effectiveness of relationship repair, and offer a model of effective relationship restoration that addresses the challenge of overcoming the “one size fits all” approach offered in previous studies.<sup>28</sup>

For the purposes of this article, the authors focus on one aspect of cultural

difference they argue can help military professionals develop a “broader repertoire of responses that match the types of relationship violations and the culturally appropriate restoration behaviors of their various subordinates.”<sup>29</sup> Emphasis is placed on the impact of self-construal on relationship repair; specifically, Fehr and Gelfand’s study examining the connection between self-perception and apologies, and their finding that transgressors are most successful when their apology message is aligned with the listener’s self-construal.<sup>30</sup> There are two main reasons the authors of this article emphasize self-construal: first, it is a consideration that is observable and actionable for the military professional; second, it is an attempt to extend beyond Geert Hofstede’s well-known cultural dimensions (drawn from his work with IBM employees), such as individualism-collectivism and high-low power distance, which are present in Marine training and education materials.<sup>31</sup> The authors want to augment the number of options from which military personnel choose when recovering from a negative interaction. Before introducing ways in which this applies to military training and education, a brief summary of the scholarship devoted to self-construal is presented.

## Self-Construal

The importance of knowing your audience is nothing new but becomes especially important in an intercultural interaction where the speaker must focus not only on what they want to say but also on the array of cultural variables that can impact what the listener is understanding. In other words, the communication process runs more smoothly when communicators have an awareness of the factors that can impede the alignment of the intention of a message with its interpretation.<sup>32</sup> One such factor is self-construal. The role of self-construal becomes decidedly more pronounced during the relationship repair process, when culturally variant worldviews have the potential to impact how messages are interpreted.

Self-construal was first introduced by Hazel R. Markus and Shinobu Kitayama and, as stated in a more recent literature review by Susan E. Cross, Erin E. Hardin, and Berna Gercek-Swing, is typically defined as how the individual views oneself in relation to others.<sup>33</sup> The impact of self-construal on intercultural communication has been noted in studies conducted worldwide and is most often described at the relational, collective, and interdependent levels.<sup>34</sup> For example, when a person who identifies as having a *relational* self-construal asks themselves, “Who am I?,” the answer is more likely to revolve around their primary relationships (e.g., daughter, boyfriend, sister, brother, etc.). When a person who identifies as having an *independent* self-construal asks themselves, “Who am I?,” the answer is more likely to reflect individual achievements (e.g., nurse,

graduate student, football player, etc.) and internal disposition (e.g., smart, outgoing, etc.). When a person who identifies as having a *collective* self-construal asks themselves, “Who am I?,” the answer is more likely to center on group categorizations (e.g., U.S. Marine, sorority member, etc.).

In the Fehr and Gelfand article mentioned above, the authors argue that efforts to repair a relationship are more likely to succeed when the violator attempts to align the apology with the victim’s self-construal. They examined independent, relational, and collective self-construals and drew from the self-verification theory that suggests individuals act more favorably toward messages that verify their own self-conceptualization.<sup>35</sup> They presented three messaging tactics: acknowledging violated rules/norms (shifting emphasis away from the one-on-one offense and placing the violation within the larger context from which such rules/norms derive) if the listener identifies as having a collective self-construal; displaying empathy (demonstrating an understanding of the victim’s perspective) if the listener identifies as having a relational self-construal; and offering compensation (making an effort to restore equity) if the listener identifies as having an independent self-construal.

In the Marine corporal’s “he just turned his back” example referenced earlier, the restorative action they described aligned with collective self-construal. When the Marines took restorative actions, they did not focus on the rude body language by the individual Marine, but rather on the larger context of polite classroom behavior. However, military personnel should exercise caution before applying these relational concepts as if they are discrete and operate independently of one another. In actual cross-cultural environments, many of these concepts overlap and exist concurrently. In some ways, the academic tendency to match a restorative action with a self-construal type oversimplifies the murkiness and complexity of actual interactions, further negatively impacting the incident. In the training example referenced above, the Marine sergeant identified more than one reason that their counterpart ignored them. The exercise of identifying which *one* was most salient was futile. The tactic instead was to modify their behavior, since it was the only factor over which they had control. Likewise, if a Marine is mentally preparing for a repair strategy of some kind in a future interaction, the self-construal typology is not useful in prescribing a single restorative action. Rather, its utility lies in reminding Marines that there are different types of self-construal impacting how messages are constructed and interpreted.

The next example from the field portrays how a unit engaged multiple restorative actions simultaneously. A Marine gunnery sergeant recalls yelling at a lower-ranking foreign military counterpart who responded “no” to an order.<sup>36</sup> The gunnery sergeant admits “that word broke me,” so they lost their temper

and “stormed out.” The gunnery sergeant understood immediately that their actions might have far-reaching implications, due to the nature of social networks in a culture where *wasta*, or social capital, is important.<sup>37</sup> They explain further, Who does that guy know? Does he have the type of *wasta* that could [speaker cuts himself off, continues] . . . he might know a senator, or someone who’s [high] up in command, and I just created an international incident that could possibly harm diplomacy [between the two countries]. So that was really big that we tried to fix it.<sup>38</sup>

The gunnery sergeant and their unit employed strategies to accommodate different types of victim self-construal. First, the gunnery sergeant immediately told their captain what had happened. The captain then left with an interpreter to find the foreign serviceperson and offered an explanation and an apology. The next day, the gunnery sergeant followed up with a personal apology as well.

Interestingly, in this interview, the gunnery sergeant’s description of what the captain might have said aligns with the three types of self-construal in relation to the Marines’ culture: collective (“[my gunny] was told to do something by [their] colonel”), relational (“they are under pressure from me”), and individual (“they are so sorry for what they did”). From the gunnery sergeant’s perspective, the relationship with the foreign partner was restored. This multi-pronged approach may have contributed to relationship repair. That said, it is less important to determine which *one* of these strategies was the best for this situation. Rather, having a variety of strategies available is likely to increase success when attempting to repair a relationship.

## **Military Training and Education Applications**

As an inevitable aspect of a “people business” such as the U.S. Marine Corps, relationship repair strategies must be addressed in military training or education on a wide scale. Yet, when it comes to including yet another topic in military curricula, the content cannot have academic merit alone; it must also be operationally relevant. The authors, who work within CAOCL, have identified the theme of relationship repair in their post-deployment research interviews, indicating that there is a link between the success (or failure) of Marine operations and some of the findings from the academic literature. When Marines discuss relationship repair, they do not use the academic vocabulary, but rather they describe errors they made, what they and their fellow Marines did to fix the issue, and what impact the incident had on their relationships, most frequently with military counterparts. Since Marines are already employing effective restorative



actions, the process now incorporates these vignettes—with supplemental notes describing how such actions align with findings from the scholarly literature to help Marines better understand why they did or did not work—into CAOCL’s training and education efforts.

It should be noted that this kind of content is applicable across a diverse set of organizations and course content. Instruction devoted to relationship repair is beneficial across the range of military operations and is not limited to the obvious culturally related missions of security cooperation, humanitarian assistance, intelligence activities, civil-military operations, and special operations. For example, relationship repair content can be integrated into military training or education curriculum topics devoted to:

- leadership;
- key leader engagements;
- embassy and individual augmentee duty;
- working with interpreters; and
- planning and operating in joint, interagency, and multinational environments.

Furthermore, relationship repair strategies and applications can be integrated into discussions devoted to metacognition, critical thinking, and decision making. For restorative actions to be effective, the servicemember must be able to analyze among the possible range of options and decide which are the most likely to produce the desired outcome.

Priming students with an overview of relationship repair strategies (e.g., types, variables that impact effectiveness, and cultural differences surrounding expectations of appropriateness) can enhance practical applications and exercises involving role players, regardless of cultural context. As of this writing, CAOCL has begun to develop resources to fill the instructional gap and is carrying out four instructional lines of effort: (1) faculty development brownbag sessions; (2) the incorporation of a module devoted to relationship repair into several of its culture-specific training classes (e.g., in a brief on Iran, “trouble recovery” is now introduced alongside a discussion about the importance of *wasta* and building relationships); (3) the 2018 publication of the *Culture General Guidebook for Military Professionals*, designed for both the military professional and curriculum developers; and (4) Red Teaming and Culture, Conflict & Creativity graduate-level residence courses at the Marine Corps Command & Staff College, which include a component on culturally variant relationship repair strategies.<sup>39</sup> These resources are designed to expand the educational tool kit servicemembers can use to manage difficult interactions.

## Conclusion

Like many professionals working in diverse teams, servicemembers will almost certainly need to recover from a misstep at one time or another and minimize the political or diplomatic cost of the situation on themselves or the Service. Although the quotations throughout this article come from enlisted Marines, the need for awareness surrounding cultural variation in repair strategies applies regardless of rank or branch of Service. There are well-publicized accounts of attempted restorative actions by senior military leaders during the past decade (e.g., General John R. Allen's apology to the people of Afghanistan) that illustrate this reality.<sup>40</sup>

This article presents an overview of the research devoted to relationship repair and identified several strategies that Marines, often intuitively, have put into practice. Some types of repair strategies are fairly well-known, such as the apology. However, a cultural consideration such as self-construal and its role in relationship repair may not be as familiar. If military training and education curricula were to address relationship repair, it may increase students' awareness that more than one choice is available (and perhaps useful) in a given situation, and a broadening effect may be achieved.<sup>41</sup>

The good news is that many military advisors, including those described in this article, are already employing relationship repair strategies and preparing others to do the same. A Marine Corps gunnery sergeant acknowledges:

If I had five Marines and I had to prepare them to go over and do the job I do, I'd roleplay constantly on different scenarios. From not wanting to train-getting upset-you offended me-how do you fix it, and what would you do . . . because we had a problem [when] we offended one of them once.<sup>42</sup>

The current article adds to this Marine's point by arguing that, although many servicemembers may understand the value of relationship repair, they may not have considered how its effectiveness is impacted by cultural differences or the overall cost of those interactions on the operation. Taking the time to provide military personnel with a wider variety of options for managing culturally complex interactions can lead to an increased communication resourcefulness capability—a quality inherent to effective leadership.

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## Notes

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  5. The research team typically conducts opportunistic interviews with small units in a training environment where the highest ranking officer in the vicinity is a lieutenant. Thus, enlisted Marines make up the majority of the population with prior deployment experience, and therefore the majority of the quotations used in this article.
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37. Another translation of this Arabic word is “clout.” Since the inception of the global war on terrorism, *wasta* is a commonly used term by the American military. Gunnery sergeant interview.
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## **International Relations in a State of Flux Rising Powers, New Challenges**

José de Arimatéia da Cruz, PhD

*Rising Powers and Foreign Policy Revisionism: Understanding BRICS Identity and Behavior Through Time.* By Cameron G. Thies and Mark David Nieman. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017. Pp. 216. \$70.00 (hardcover).

*China's Asian Dream: Empire Building Along the New Silk Road.* By Tom Miller. London: ZED Books, 2017. Pp. 256. \$95.00 (hardcover); \$25.00 (paperback).

*North Korea and Nuclear Weapons: Entering the New Era of Deterrence.* Edited by Sung Chull Kim and Michael D. Cohen. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017. Pp. 236. \$64.95 (hardcover); \$32.95 (paperback and e-book).

*Preventive Engagement: How America Can Avoid War, Stay Strong, and Keep the Peace.* By Paul B. Stares. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. Pp. 344. \$35.00 (hardcover); \$26.00 (paperback); \$25.99 (e-book).

On the night of 25 December 1991, something extraordinary happened to the international system. At midnight, the flag of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was lowered from its flagpole and replaced with the flag of the Russian Federation. Political commentators and pundits were quick to announce the “end of history” and the end of all “ism,” except liberalism and the triumph of democracy.<sup>1</sup> Besides this extraordinary historical event, something else happened. The division of the world between the East and West came to an end and the United States was heralded as the lonely superpower. That was almost

three decades ago. Today, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, the international system is once again undergoing major transformations. Russia, a once dismantled empire, is again exercising its political and military muscles not only within its sphere of influence but also in the Middle East and Latin America.

China was once considered a backward agrarian society, but after Deng Xiaoping's introduction of socialism with Chinese characteristics in 1978, is today collecting the benefits of that historical initiative. China is now an emerging power, which the United States will have to confront in the future given its ambitions to become a superpower. China is determined to take its place as a modern world power. In addition to facing the rise of new powers within the international systems, nation-states must also deal with the rise of nonstate actors, such as insurgencies, warlords, transnational organized criminal organizations (TOCs), and terrorism. The four books here under review address the rising challenges the new international system presents to the United States and what the United States can do to avoid war, stay strong, and keep the peace under this complex and interdependent new system.

Not a day goes by without news regarding China's rise and its implications for the study of and peace of the international system. While most analysts see China's rise as a threat to other nations' national interests, China's leadership see China's rise as "its natural, rightful and historical position as the greatest power in Asia."<sup>2</sup> China's new foreign policy orientation under the leadership of Xi Jinping is based on its philosophy of the "Chinese Dream." According to this philosophical orientation, the Chinese Dream is closely associated with military strength, economic prosperity, and diplomatic recognition. The Chinese Dream philosophy is an attempt by the Chinese leadership to overcome its long standing as a "lonely power."<sup>3</sup> China is actively pursuing an aggressive foreign policy toward its neighbors. However, this new foreign policy orientation, according to China's leadership, is not a hegemonic attempt to impose its will on neighbors. As Xi Jinping has expressed, China's proactive foreign policy aims to work more closely with other countries.<sup>4</sup> However, Tom Miller argues that China's new foreign policy philosophy is an attempt to "create a web of informal alliances lubricated by Chinese cash."<sup>5</sup>

In addition to strengthening its military capability, China also is flexing its economic muscles in Asia, where most of its trading partners are located. The One Belt, One Road or the "New Silk Road" is one of China's attempts to provide an economic boost to the region while minimizing the influence of the United States and Japan within the region. As Miller points out, "the initiative describes two largely ambitious projects to improve connectivity in Asia and beyond."<sup>6</sup> The "Silk Road Economic Belt" is an ambitious undertaking. This project envisions the creation of an economic corridor stretching across Central Asia to the Middle East and Europe, while the "21st Century Maritime Silk

Road” will encourage investment in new ports and trade routes through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean.<sup>7</sup> According to Tom Miller, the Belt and Road Initiative will form a network of trading routes influenced by the competing demands of geography, commerce, and geopolitics.<sup>8</sup> The initiatives are driven by China’s attempt to protect its national security, economic well-being, and financial considerations.<sup>9</sup> China’s two policy banks—China Development Bank and the Export-Import (Exim) Bank of China—are also at the forefront of promoting the Chinese Dream by establishing a diplomacy centered around building infrastructure to improve connectivity with neighboring countries.<sup>10</sup>

The Chinese Dream’s foreign and economic policy toward Central Asia is raising some concerns. While countries within the region welcome China’s investment, since it will improve its transport links and helps unlock its vast mineral wealth, a new regional conflict could be boiling as China’s investment means less Russian influence with its traditional allies. Again, as Miller succinctly argues, “China and Russia claim to be strategic partners; but as China’s leverage in Central Asia grows, there is potential for the traditional rivalry between the two countries to re-ignite.”<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, China’s economic diplomacy “is to create a modern tribute system, with all roads literally leading to Beijing.”<sup>12</sup> The leader of China, Xi Jinping, according to Tom Miller, sees the Belt and Road as a practical step toward realizing the strategic goal of national rejuvenation—the Chinese Dream—and thereby securing his own political legacy.<sup>13</sup>

The Chinese Dream must be placed within a historical context to have a clear appreciation for China’s efforts to rise to the top of the economic and political ladder. The Chinese Dream philosophy is influenced by its “century of national humiliation.”<sup>14</sup> This period, from 1839 to 1949, was one in which China was invaded and humiliated by colonial powers, especially England. As Xi Jinping pointed out, China is determined to no longer be a country that can be pushed around; therefore, the ability to defend itself and shape its own identity and destiny are at the heart of the Chinese Dream.<sup>15</sup> However, China claims that it has no imperial ambitions. The Chinese Dream is also influenced by Deng Xiaoping Theory, which holds that diplomacy must serve the greater goal of domestic development.<sup>16</sup> Xi Jinping sees the Chinese Dream philosophy directly tied to China’s resurgence in the world stage as a great power.<sup>17</sup> China’s peaceful rise is a central goal to create a peaceful and stable international environment for its development.<sup>18</sup> China’s new foreign policy orientation is also guided by the notion that the world of the twenty-first century is a multipolar world rather than bipolar (i.e., United States and Soviets) or unipolar (i.e., the United States). Therefore, the new realities and complexities facing this brave new world will require China to take its proper place at the chessboard of diplomacy along with the United States as a coequal partner rather than an emerging or middle power.



The Chinese Dream is also driven by its so-called string of pearls policy. This string of pearls, whether real or imaginary by Indian authorities, rose to the level of paranoia when a People's Liberation Army Navy submarine docked at a Chinese-owned container port in Sri Lanka in September 2014. Indian authorities saw this incident as an indication of China's strategic ambitions within the region as China deepens cooperation with India's neighbors: Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Maldives, and Pakistan.<sup>19</sup> The term *string of pearls* first appeared in a report issued by Booz Allen Hamilton, a government contractor. In its report, Booz Allen Hamilton claimed that "China is creating a network of ports to protect the sea lanes through which the bulk of its oil imports pass, especially in maritime choke points such as the Straits of Malacca and Hormuz."<sup>20</sup> Indian authorities have grown even more worried about the string of pearls ideal since Xi Jinping's announcement of a plan to build a Maritime Silk Road.<sup>21</sup> As Miller points out, the Maritime Silk Road is all about building infrastructure, boosting transport efficiency, and creating new trade routes.<sup>22</sup>

It is important to keep things in perspective when it comes to Indo-Sino relations. While India may see the string of pearls as a threat to its national security, together both nations have a population of 2.7 billion—approaching 40 percent of the global total—and a gross domestic product exceeding U.S. \$13 trillion. Therefore, given that the two nations are highly economically interdependent, the likelihood of going to war is diminished due to the potential devastation to either economy. As Kanti Bajpai, an expert on China-India relations at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore has stated, "the string of pearls doesn't really exist, but the Indian Navy really does believe in it. It's almost making the risk come true. If India deploys a naval strategy in that way, you can expect China to respond—making it into a reality."<sup>23</sup> In the final analysis, China's long-term goals are to tie its neighbors' prosperity to its own advancement. The Chinese government calls this strategy "a community of common destiny."<sup>24</sup> As Xi Jinping has pointed out, stating an often-repeated quote supposedly attributed to Napoleon, that when China wakes, it will "shake the world." However, "the lion has already awakened. But it is a peaceful, amiable and civilized lion."<sup>25</sup>

Another sovereign country challenging the new post-Cold War system status quo and the new standing of the United States is North Korea. Sung Chull Kim and Michael D. Cohen's book *Entering the New Era of Deterrence: North Korea and Nuclear Weapons* is the byproduct of a roundtable section at the International Studies Association annual meeting in Toronto in March 2014 about the nuclear challenges posed by North Korea. As explained in the book, the world is going to have to live with a nuclear North Korea. The future nuclear challenges associated with North Korea will not only be nonproliferation and denuclearization but also nuclear deterrence, extended nuclear deterrence, and

arms control.<sup>26</sup> As Victor Cha points out, “every North Korean provocation for the past thirty years has been followed within about six months by a period of dialogue and negotiations whereby Pyongyang has gained some concession from Washington and/or Seoul.”<sup>27</sup> In fact, North Korea’s nuclear weapons represent a clear and present danger to the United States and its allies. Pyongyang is the first strategic nuclear power not a member of the United Nations Security Council’s Permanent 5 (P5)—China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States—and Pyongyang is hostile to the United States.<sup>28</sup> North Korea’s nuclear weapons give the so-called Hermit Kingdom a leverage against the United States and allows it to avoid the Thucydides’s Trap that “the strong do what they will while the weak suffer as they must.”<sup>29</sup>

As Michael D. Cohen and Sung Chull Kim argue, “Pyongyang’s long-standing inferiority to Washington, its deep hostility and mistrust in the face of an armed conflict that has never been formally ended, its international if not regional isolation, and its inclusion in the axis-of-evil speech with a regime that was subsequently toppled have all arguably vindicated North Korea’s reliance on nuclear weapons.”<sup>30</sup> Given the fact that North Korea will not give up its nuclear weapons in the near future, what are the options for the United States and the rest of the world? One option may be to track the North Korean nuclear weapons program so an early attack or launch of nuclear weapons by the regime could be deterred.

While the pursuit of a carrot and stick policy may be an option on the table, it clearly has shown that the North Korean regime is willing to sacrifice its entire population if any country attempts to undermine its regime’s legitimacy and the survival of the Kim dynasty. The North Korean regime stated that “the goal of nuclear armament is to deter an attack from the United States . . . because South Korea shelters under the US nuclear umbrella, that state is the first target upon which North Korea wants to demonstrate the credibility of its immediate nuclear threat.”<sup>31</sup> North Korea’s nuclear position also is dictated by the Gaddafi effect. Muammar al-Gaddafi was the notorious leader of Libya. Under Gaddafi, Libya developed its nuclear program. However, under pressure from Western allies, especially the United States, Libya relinquished its nuclear weapons. Immediately following the announcement of ending its nuclear program, Libya was attacked and Gaddafi was killed by rebel forces. Kim Jung-un and his regime do not want to become another victim of great power politics. Therefore, North Korea practices a “tyranny of the weak” approach in which “a small power maneuvers to shape the structure of its relations with its neighbors.”<sup>32</sup>

Given North Korea’s standing in the international system as a weak power vis-à-vis the United States and other superpowers, what does North Korea have to gain for its nuclear stand? The authors of *Entering the New Era of Deterrence* explain that North Korea appears to have employed its nuclear program as a

bargaining instrument for two reasons. First, diplomacy allowed North Korea to protect and enhance its emerging nuclear program during a critical period of development. Second, Kim Jung-un's regime survival came to depend on extorting concessions from foreign governments to sustain the military and political elite.<sup>33</sup> North Korea's nuclear program is also based on its so-called *byeon-gjin* strategy—meaning a strategy aimed at both economic development and the building of nuclear weapons simultaneously.<sup>34</sup>

North Korea sees nuclear weapons as a leverage in its diplomatic dealings with the United States. North Korea's behavior should be examined in light of the stability/instability paradox. According to this paradox, the possession of nuclear weapons helps maintain strategic stability but then allows the possibility of provocative behavior at lower levels because nuclear weapons provide a shield that makes escalation unlikely.<sup>35</sup> North Korea is notorious for engaging in the stability/instability paradox with the United States and the P5 members. How should the United States and its allies respond to North Korea's provocations? Again, the authors of *Entering the New Era of Deterrence* suggest a strategy of patience. According to this strategic patience, the United States must continue to apply economic and political pressure on North Korea to induce denuclearization while fortifying strategic deterrence and discouraging lower-level provocations.<sup>36</sup> North Korea has just celebrated its 70th anniversary. On display during its military parade were thousands of foot soldiers and tanks in a well-synchronized march. Missing from such a display of power was the typical intercontinental ballistic missiles, which are capable of reaching the continental United States. What Kim Jung-un continues to show to the United States and the rest of the world is that deterrence against his rogue regime works to prevent war but not much else.<sup>37</sup>

In the new post-Cold War international system, the lone superpower, the United States, is also being challenged by traditional actors, such as China and Russia, but also by rising middle power states, such as Brazil, India, and South Africa. What are the implications for the United States? Cameron G. Thies and Mark David Nieman's book *Rising Powers and Foreign Policy Revisionism* explores the phenomenon of emerging or rising powers. Their objective is to understand this new phenomenon in light of the power alliances and conflicts. Does the rising of a middle power challenging the status quo increase the possibility of conflict or might other factors constrain emerging power behavior?<sup>38</sup> While not clearly defining what an emerging power or rising power is, the authors nonetheless present some characteristics of an emerging power or rising power. For example, Thies and Nieman argue that "all emerging powers seem to be assumed to be rising in material power and social status such that one day they might well be great powers. They are also not traditional middle powers."<sup>39</sup> The emerging powers examined by Thies and Nieman are "semiperipheral, in-

egalitarian, recently democratized, or still autocracies that have a great deal of regional influence. Emerging powers are thus almost always regional powers . . . they are ardent defenders of state sovereignty.”<sup>40</sup> Brazil, South Africa, and India certainly fit into that category. In fact, Brazil is an ardent defender of the right to noninterference in the internal affairs of another nation regardless of the current political situation within it.

Thies and Nieman’s *Rising Powers and Foreign Policy Revisionism* argues that there is no clear consensus about the expectations for Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) as emerging powers.<sup>41</sup> To a certain extent that should not be a surprise. After all, Brazil does not see itself as an emerging power with hegemonic ambitions. Brazil, similar to China’s stand, sees itself as a member of the developing world or emerging world attempting to change the rules of the game while being an active and cooperative player. In their book, Thies and Nieman find that both Russian and Chinese foreign policy since the end of the Cold War “has sought primarily to restore their global power status through social mobility, competition, and creativity.”<sup>42</sup> Guiding their research project, Thies and Nieman developed two competing hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 states that identities and behavior change purely as a function of growth in material capabilities. Therefore, the authors expect sharp breaks in identities and behavior change during rising periods among the BRICS. Hypothesis 2 states that identities and behavior change more gradually in response to a variety of domestic and international factors but not solely in response to power.<sup>43</sup>

Thies and Nieman see the international system as a social system, thus combining material and social dimensions in their theoretical approach. Their theoretical approach combines qualitative and quantitative empirical analysis while also grounded in role theory. Role theory, according to Thies and Nieman, includes “properties of both agents and structures and thus nicely tie together structural international relations theory and foreign policy analysis.”<sup>44</sup> In their final analysis, Thies and Nieman find that there is no evidence to suggest that BRICS identities or behaviors are knee-jerk responses to rising power. As they argued, “individual BRICS certainly may begin to act as they think a rising power or great power should act, but this may be mostly symbolic.”<sup>45</sup> Thies and Nieman also found that “economic engagement is the best policy tool to reduce the potential for observed conflict of any kind with emerging powers.”<sup>46</sup> In a highly interconnected economic system, going to war is a privilege that only failed states can afford.

Given the rising challenges to the new international system and to the United States, what can America do to avoid war, stay strong, and keep the peace under this complex and interdependent new system? Paul B. Stares provides an answer in his book *Preventive Engagement: How America Can Avoid War, Stay Strong, and Keep the Peace*. According to Stares, to remain the preeminent global

power, the United States must avoid costly conflicts that drain its resources and distract its leadership from addressing pressing domestic priorities. The United States thus must adopt a more forward-looking and preventive approach to managing foreign policy challenges. Stares also sees the international system undergoing tremendous changes and the prospects of a more peaceful world seems less likely in the future.

There are several reasons for such a pessimistic view of the future. First, the post–Cold War international system has become more conflictual due to the growing geopolitical friction among the major powers. Second, the end of the Cold War and the beginning of globalization has not brought the world closer, but rather there seems to be a deteriorating security outlook in several regions of the world that also poses a growing risk to the United States. Finally, the end of the Cold War and the implosion of the Soviet Union in 1991 has created a world that is more armed than ever, due in part to the proliferation of weapons that once were under its control, coupled with the rise of armed nonstate actors.<sup>47</sup> The neorealist political scientist Kenneth N. Waltz theorized that the most stable time in international security was the bipolar Cold War era. Waltz rationalized that during that time both the Soviet Union as well as the United States were equals in terms of levels of power, therefore resulting in a stalemate, making direct conflict between the two superpowers less likely.<sup>48</sup> However, if conflicts did take place it would be a war of proxy where the Soviets and the United States would come to the rescue of its satellites or allies in the struggle for influence. The post–Cold War international system has changed dramatically. As Richard N. Haass explains, “the world is not to be confused with Las Vegas: what happens somewhere rarely remains there.”<sup>49</sup> According to Stares, “without the United States as a credible underwriter of global peace and security, and with no other power visible on the horizon that is capable or committed to shouldering this burden, the very international order that it has expended so much effort to build could start to unravel with potentially very dangerous consequences.”<sup>50</sup>

How the United States responds to those new challenges will dictate the future of the post–Cold War international system and ultimately its status as the sole superpower. Stares argues that the United States should adopt a comprehensive preventive strategy to manage the risks of a more turbulent world so as to lessen the likelihood that it will be increasingly confronted and potentially overwhelmed with excruciating and hugely consequential choices about the use of military force.<sup>51</sup> Preventive engagement stipulates three preventive actions that are mutually reinforcing to each other. The first level of preventive action entails actively promoting conditions generally understood to be conducive to peace and stability both within and between states. This type of preventive action is called conflict-risk reduction. The second level of preventive action is

the deliberate measures to avert an extant dispute or source of tension from erupting into a violent conflict. This is called conflict or crisis prevention. The third and final level of preventive action is conflict mitigation. *Conflict mitigation* involves taking the necessary actions to prevent a conflict to erupt into something beyond a nation's control and de-escalate a dispute after parties have resorted to the use of force.<sup>52</sup>

According to Paul Stares, preventive engagement requires that the United States pick its battles wisely so it is not drawn into potentially costly military quandaries without an exit strategy. Once the United States evaluates its options, it should pick a policy orientation that maximizes its gains and minimizes its losses. In other words, the United States must have the strategic or preventive foresight, "a process that draws on forecasting and risk assessment techniques commonly used by public policy practitioners in other areas as well as by many private businesses to evaluate how the future might unfold for good or bad."<sup>53</sup> Preventive foresight involves three strategic steps. First, U.S. government officials and leaders must understand triggering contingencies for their military engagement. Stares argues that the U.S. government and its military are more likely to engage in a strategic conflict when "sentiments of fear, honor, and interest all come into play simultaneously."<sup>54</sup> Second, the United States must assess the likelihood of potential triggering contingencies. The U.S. government, its military, and its intelligence community must be able to assess when, where, and how generic triggers could unfold into major triggers for a generalized conflict. Finally, the U.S. government and its armed forces must evaluate the impact and consequences of plausible triggering contingencies.<sup>55</sup> In the final analysis, the United States should, according to Stares, adopt a deliberate preventive strategy to manage the risks of a more turbulent world before they manifest themselves in ways that confront America with difficult and potentially very costly choices about the use of military force to maintain international order in a chaotic post-Cold War international system.

The post-Cold War international system is presenting itself as a challenge to the international community. While the world is becoming more globalized, at the same time it is becoming more regionalized and fragmented. Rising powers are actively searching for their proper place within the community of nations to the point of challenging the traditional holders of power. To believe that ignoring problems will make them go away is simplistic and naïve. Geographic boundaries still exist—a hallmark of international law and sovereignty—but the nation-state is more porous than ever, given the advancement in technology, especially the rise of the internet. Also, in the future, war will not be waged by armies but by groups who we currently describe as terrorists, guerrillas, bandits, and robbers, but who will undoubtedly hit on more formal titles to describe themselves, such as cyber warriors or cyber mercenaries.<sup>56</sup> The four

books reviewed here present a very complex world for the twenty-first century, and their predictions and observations must be closely examined by government officials and policy makers. Ignore it at your peril.

## Notes

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3. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 11.
4. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 11.
5. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 11.
6. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 12.
7. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 12.
8. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 31.
9. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 31–32.
10. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 13.
11. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 14.
12. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 18.
13. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 33.
14. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 8.
15. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 17.
16. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 25.
17. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 28.
18. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 27.
19. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 166.
20. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 167.
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22. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 173.
23. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 180.
24. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 240.
25. Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 245.
26. Sung Chull Kim and Michael D. Cohen, eds., *Entering the New Era of Deterrence: North Korea and Nuclear Weapons* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017), 3.
27. Kim and Cohen, *Entering the New Era of Deterrence*, 5.
28. Kim and Cohen, *Entering the New Era of Deterrence*, 5.
29. The term *Hermit Kingdom* refers to any country, organization, or society that intentionally separates itself, either metaphorically or physically, from the rest of the world. Kim and Cohen, *Entering the New Era of Deterrence*, 6.
30. Kim and Cohen, *Entering the New Era of Deterrence*, 7.
31. Kim and Cohen, *Entering the New Era of Deterrence*, 32.
32. Kim and Cohen, *Entering the New Era of Deterrence*, 49.
33. Kim and Cohen, *Entering the New Era of Deterrence*, 74.
34. Kim and Cohen, *Entering the New Era of Deterrence*, 114.
35. Kim and Cohen, *Entering the New Era of Deterrence*, 130.
36. Kim and Cohen, *Entering the New Era of Deterrence*, 138.
37. Kim and Cohen, *Entering the New Era of Deterrence*, 197.
38. Cameron G. Thies and Mark David Nieman, *Rising Powers and Foreign Policy Revisionism: Understanding BRICS Identity and Behavior Through Time* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 3.
39. Thies and Nieman, *Rising Powers and Foreign Policy Revisionism*, 6.
40. Thies and Nieman, *Rising Powers and Foreign Policy Revisionism*, 6.
41. Thies and Nieman, *Rising Powers and Foreign Policy Revisionism*, 13.

42. Thies and Nieman, *Rising Powers and Foreign Policy Revisionism*, 13.
43. Thies and Nieman, *Rising Powers and Foreign Policy Revisionism*, 15.
44. Thies and Nieman, *Rising Powers and Foreign Policy Revisionism*, 14.
45. Thies and Nieman, *Rising Powers and Foreign Policy Revisionism*, 173.
46. Thies and Nieman, *Rising Powers and Foreign Policy Revisionism*, 169.
47. Paul B. Stares, *Preventive Engagement: How America Can Avoid War, Stay Strong, and Keep the Peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 3–8.
48. Natasha Ezrow, *Global Politics and Violent Non-State Actors* (Los Angeles: Sage Publishing, 2017), 42.
49. Richard Haass, *A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Older Order* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017), 226.
50. Stares, *Preventive Engagement*, 2.
51. Stares, *Preventive Engagement*, 2.
52. Stares, *Preventive Engagement*, 18–19.
53. Stares, *Preventive Engagement*, 31.
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## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Armageddon and Paranoia: The Nuclear Confrontation since 1945.* By Rodric Braithwaite. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 512. \$34.95 (hardcover).

Human beings are never going to forget how to make atomic weapons. Could we have avoided learning the secret in the first place? Those who built the bombs that ended World War II did not think so. They knew where their path was leading, but they found themselves driven forward by the nature of science itself. The path led backward as well as forward, after all: Enrico Fermi, Niels Bohr, Albert Einstein, Ernest Rutherford, and Marie Curie—the bomb was not really a secret at all, just another puzzle in a line stretching back to Sir Isaac Newton and Galileo Galilei. If they had not solved it, someone else would have, and in the midst of world war that was not a chance a sensible person should take.

Rodrick Braithwaite, as with his readers, has lived in the shadow of the bomb. His book surveys the history of its development and use, with a view to understanding “what the scientists, the weapons designers, the military men, the officials, and the politicians thought they were doing” (p. 4). For the most part, it turns out they thought they were doing what was necessary, despite an often vivid appreciation of the incongruity of their situation. Braithwaite’s interest is in those charged with creating and controlling weapons that only make sense if you never use them. Although he knows perfectly well that there have always been those who have thought nuclear wars can be won, he spends almost no time exploring why they have thought so. There is little here about either *Armageddon* or *paranoia*. The real themes are bewilderment and frustration.

Braithwaite is a retired diplomat, whose distinguished career made him an eyewitness to the dissolution of the Soviet Union as the United Kingdom’s ambassador to Moscow (1988–92). His familiarity with Russian sources stands him in good stead, as does his willingness to accept that Soviet leaders were less blindly aggressive, and more genuinely fearful, than their Western counterparts were prepared to acknowledge. Yet, the present subject is not one that affords

much scope for local knowledge and cultural insight, of the kind that distinguished his remarkable account of Russia's war in Afghanistan, *Afghantsy: The Russians in Afghanistan, 1979–89*. This is not a book that will surprise anyone already familiar with the history of the Cold War, while those who have struggled to master the arcana of nuclear strategy may find Braithwaite's impatient treatment disconcerting. It is true enough, as he says, that nuclear strategists never did escape "confusion and contradiction" (p. 134). However, the same might be said of the German General Staff in 1914, or of American counter-insurgency specialists to this day. Nuclear strategy is not distinguished by its incongruity, but by the calamitous nature of the consequences that follow when things go wrong, as they are bound to do.

On this latter point, Braithwaite displays a sure and determined hand. If the fission bombs that fell on Japan in 1945 might (barely) be recognizable as weapons, their thermonuclear descendants were not. Once these were mounted on ballistic missiles, the psychological pull of worst-case scenarios became overwhelming among policy makers. So too (fortunately) did the visceral fear that even a single nuclear explosion could portend the end of civilization, if not of life itself. Braithwaite's treatment of these matters is somewhat repetitive, but this is arguably a reflection of reality: those charged with the care of nuclear weapons are always driven to look for ways to escape their baleful consequences—make them smaller, bigger, more accurate, make more, make fewer—only to find themselves in the same box where they started. Jean-Paul Sartre and Franz Kafka do not appear in Braithwaite's index, but they might have.

Those looking for a general introduction to the place of nuclear weapons in the Cold War will find this a useful book, balanced in its sympathies and dispassionate to a fault. Braithwaite begins by declaring an interest in what people are thinking, but he tends to take actions and explanations at something like face value. This is not a book for those seeking psychological penetration of the kind offered elsewhere, such as in Michael S. Sherry's study of the bombing in World War II in *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon*.

Nor does it consider nuclear weapons outside the framing of great power confrontation during the Cold War. Britain's nuclear program comes in for brief discussion, but those of other, lesser nuclear powers are passed over in near silence. Yet, if you want to know what kinds of thinking leads people to embrace the bomb, the history of nuclear weapons in such countries as China, Israel, and Pakistan deserve (at a minimum) equal consideration with that of civil defense or nuclear accidents, both of which get chapters to themselves. Braithwaite concludes that, in the wake of Cold War's unwinding, the nuclear "sword of Damocles remained suspended, though by a stouter thread" (p. 403). This is not convincing as an argument; although, it may be the best we can

hope for in practice. Given that we cannot forget how to make the weapons, it remains important to remember why they can never be used.

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*Burdens of War: Creating the United States Veterans Health System.* By Jessica L. Adler. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017. Pp. 368. \$49.95 (hardcover and e-book).

Veterans' activism has frequently changed the course of American history. In the post–Civil War era, the Grand Army of the Republic was a major political force. More than a hundred years later, Vietnam War veteran activists forced the U.S. government to acknowledge the health costs of Agent Orange and pushed for reconciliation between the United States and Vietnam. Similar to these cohorts of veterans, World War I era veterans shaped the American government. In *Burdens of War: Creating the United States Veterans Health System*, Florida International University history professor Jessica Adler details how veteran activists fought for access to health care and contributed to the creation of the U.S. veteran health system. Using records from the Army War College's U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, the Otis Historical Archives at the National Museum of Health and Medicine, the National Archives, and veterans' organizations, she describes how ideas about the government's obligation to veterans and concerns about costs directly shaped veterans' care. She successfully captures a diverse collection of veteran voices in such a way to deliver a compelling policy history of the Veterans' Bureau.

The first part of the book delineates how progressive ideology shaped the initial plans to care for returning veterans. Progressive thinkers, according to Adler, believed that soldiers were employees of the state. As such, the government was obligated to help these warrior employees if they were hurt on the job. The end goal of care was rehabilitation so veterans could rejoin the workforce quickly. This chapter would have been improved with wider reflection on the lessons learned from the Civil War era veteran pension system. As Beth Linker showed in *War's Waste: Rehabilitation in World War I America*, trying to avoid the heavy costs of a new generation of pensioners also motivated these reformers. Further, more extensive coverage of how Civil War and Spanish-American War veterans were cared for would have underscored why the change in care for World War I veterans was so significant.

The next chapter deals with tensions related to eligibility for care and race. Adler captures the debate politicians and administrators had over whether veterans who were ill before deployment should be given health care benefits to cover those conditions. Ideas about who was worthy would be a continuing issue from 1917 into the 1930s. She also devotes part of the chapter to discussing how segregation shaped the experience of African American veterans and nurses.

In chapter three, Adler illustrates the haphazard way veterans care was transferred out of the military and into the U.S. Public Health Service and the Bureau of War Risk Insurance. After describing it as a “makeshift system,” Adler details the frustration many veterans felt in regard to long lines to pick up their medication or get care (p. 92). Here and elsewhere in the book, Adler shows that it was not foreordained that veterans would receive care regardless of their service record. Veterans and their allies had to fight for their health benefits.

The following chapter covers veterans’ activism closely. Adler provides insight into the foundation of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). Using records from the Cincinnati Museum Center and the DAV Headquarters, she identifies the motives of Robert S. Marx, the Disabled American Veterans’ first spokesman. How he made the case for another major veterans’ organization is a highlight of the book.

The creation of the Veterans’ Bureau, the expansion of its reach, and the choices of Director Charles R. Forbes and his successor, Frank T. Hines, make up the next chapter. Here, Adler does an admirable job clarifying why politicians and administrators supported the Veterans’ Bureau. She deftly deals with the contributions and scandals of Charles Forbes. Her analysis of Frank Hines’s efforts to expand the bureau is helpful in making sense of the early history of the Veterans’ Bureau.

In the chapter that follows, Adler brings in more veteran voices. She pays heed to the different ways veterans saw the government and how they assessed the government’s obligation to care for their needs. Adler pays respect to the diversity of veterans’ opinions. They are not one undifferentiated mass. She captures the frustration some veterans experienced when dealing with review boards that determined the extent of the health assistance they were entitled to. She also pays specific attention to African American and women veteran experiences. Last, she pushes to see how the Veterans’ Bureau fit within a network of charities and social assistance groups. Her book would have been improved if she brought those groups in earlier as it would have showed the reader the options wounded veterans had.

Adler ends the book by looking at opposition to veterans’ care in the 1930s. She highlights how doctor groups opposed the Veterans’ Bureau. She explains why President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a proponent of social spending, vetoed

bills that strengthened veteran health services. She concludes that the programs that provided assistance to veterans survived because they were supported by a “powerful and apparently worthy interest group,” which were organized veterans and their families, who made compelling demands on the government (p. 251).

There’s much to recommend this book. Adler integrates veterans’ voices into her evidence and claims. Doing so humanizes her study. It balances out the policy-driven aspects of the book. Her handling of the motives of political leaders and administrators clarifies her argument. It is easy to identify what drove advocates and critics of the veteran health care system as it grew over the 1920s and 1930s. Finally, Adler respects the diversity of veteran experiences. She includes African Americans and women in her narrative. She covers the arguments of veterans who opposed government help. Given these strengths, Adler’s book makes a great contribution to understanding the history of veterans in America in the twentieth century.

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*Captured Peace: Elites and Peacebuilding in El Salvador.* By Christine J. Wade. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2016. Pp. 304. \$69.95 (hardcover); \$34.95 (paperback).

Lately, El Salvador has been the focus of news in the United States as the current administration announced the end of the temporary protective status (TPS) for Salvadorians residing in the country. This measure would affect approximately 200,000 Salvadorans, forcing them to return to their country of origin, which Christine Wade describes as “one of Central America’s most unequal and violent societies” (p. 1). Deep social divisions within the Salvadoran population were the cause and also the consequence of the 1980s civil war that concluded with the 1992 Chapultepec Peace Accords. Only in 1992, and for the first time in the country’s history, were the armed forces placed under civilian control. Despite this auspicious development, Wade explains that “millions of Salvadorans still live in poverty” and that “more Salvadorans have left the country since the end of the war than during it” (p. 3). *Captured Peace* examines the way in which peacekeeping in post-conflict Salvadoran society has been relegated as a goal by elites who have “captured” peace. This concept, introduced by Melissa Labonte, refers to the seizure of power by certain interest groups as well as their strategies for the continued advancement of their agenda. *Captured Peace* consists of six chapters.

In the first chapter, the author provides a detailed historical account of El Salvador from colonial times to the present. While she pays special attention to the formation and strategies of El Salvador's elites, at times, it is difficult to follow if Wade is discussing military or civilian governments. This confusion, in part, stems from the fact that for most of the twentieth century the Salvadoran military served to protect the elites' interests, harshly repressing peasants and protesters. Of particular importance in this chapter is the exploration of American aid from the late 1970s to early 1990s that sought to facilitate the fight against the leftist guerrillas.

The concept of "captured peace" is the subject of chapter two. Wade describes the United Nations' participation in establishing conversations in the late 1980s between members of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front and the government of El Salvador that led to the signing of the Chapultepec Accords in 1992. Here, the author closely analyzes the accords and assesses their implementation under the supervision of the United Nations Mission in El Salvador, particularly in the areas of human rights, security and policing, and socioeconomic reforms. The discussion of the limits experienced by the truth commission and the amnesty approved by President Alfredo Cristiani is significant, for it presents the far-reaching consequences of these acts, which contributed to shape the peace process in favor of the Salvadoran elites. To illustrate this point, Wade refers to the lawsuits that were carried out in the United States against some of the members of El Salvador's military, who were accused of human-rights violations, as well as the challenges that the mostly rural population faced when attempting to participate in the 1994 elections.

Chapter 3 provides an exhaustive explanation of the electoral system in El Salvador as well as the role of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal that is in charge of overseeing elections. To make the case that "capture resulted in the politicization of many of the country's institutions," Wade looks at the different institutions: the Executive Power, the Legislative Assembly, and the Judiciary in El Salvador and their evolution since the accords of 1992 (p. 72). In this chapter, Wade's involvement as an international observer and her interviews of voters contribute to present a unique firsthand view of the electoral development in El Salvador. In addition, the author examines the different political parties, their stance toward unions, the role of the Salvadoran state, and the 2004 and 2009 elections.

Chapter 4 clearly illustrates the implications of captured peace with the examination of the economic policies implemented since the early 1990s by the four different Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA) administrations. Wade states, "Arena's application of the neoliberal model has been a detriment to sustainable peace in El Salvador" (p. 117). The reasons for this, according to Wade, are the failure to diminish social inequality and create a more inclusive

society as well as benefit the different social classes. Her discussion of the different ARENA administrations is supported by a wealth of economic data. It is commendable that the author looks at the different social actors and addresses topics such as privatization, remittances, corruption, and taxation.

Chapter 5 deals with the social impact of the neoliberal economic policies as Wade examines migration, crime, and social exclusion in postwar El Salvador. She does an excellent job of tracing the implications to Salvadoran migration, mainly to the United States. Her explanations about TPS, remittances, deportations, and sanctuary cities illustrate an important aspect of American-Salvadoran relations that have revolved around a refusal on the part of the United States to grant asylum to Salvadoran migrants, the third largest group of Latino immigrants in the United States. The causes and consequences of violence in El Salvador are also surveyed as well as the youth gangs, organized crime and trafficking, and death squads. Wade also examines the policies about crime during the different administrations, the role of civil society, the Catholic church, and nongovernmental organizations in the building of postwar Salvadoran civil society.

The final chapter presents the author's conclusions about captured peace. While emphasizing the peacebuilding process, the failure to establish socially inclusive economic policies and the ARENA's incumbency greatly limited the social impact of the peace process in El Salvador.

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*Our Germans: Project Paperclip and the National Security State.* By Brian E. Crim. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. Pp. 264. \$39.95 (hardcover).

With *Our Germans*, Brian Crim revisits a storied chapter of American military history—the controversial and not-too-secret roundup of leading German scientists to serve the burgeoning American national security apparatus after World War II, known as Project Paperclip. Crim argues that, through their significant influence on American technological development, these former Nazi specialists also played a compelling role in the definition of American national security philosophy, specifically relating to the perception of the Soviet Union as an adversary in the early and ensuing Cold War (pp. 4–7). Furthermore, by examining the various positions of American officials regarding Project Paperclip—both for and against—Crim asserts that the operation serves as an

“excellent microcosm” to explore the conflicting worldviews at play during the construction of the American national security state (p. 6). As it becomes clear, Project Paperclip’s proponents were able to blunt the force of immigration law and other statutes in pursuit of securing Nazi Germany’s technological expertise, even in the face of legitimate concerns regarding the scientists’ complicity in Nazi war crimes. Crim dryly observes that “big science” (a postwar phenomenon due in part to the influence of these very scientists) “knows no ideology” (p. 12). He could have clarified, “no ideology but power.”

Crim’s purposes in writing *Our Germans* are multifaceted. He highlights that much of the literature on Project Paperclip is “reductive and oversimplified” and frequently politicized—outrage over the U.S. government’s deception of bringing Nazi war criminals into the country is as counterproductive as blindly praising the technological achievements these scientists facilitated (pp. 5, 16). Instead, Crim means to restore “balance” to both the official record as well as the historiography by examining the “highly contentious origins and legacy” of Project Paperclip and exploring the integration of German scientists into the nascent national security state that emerged during the first decade of the Cold War. Project Paperclip was not “evil,” Crim argues, but it does challenge narratives emphasizing “American exceptionalism” and “our professed idealism,” highlighting a “lack of accountability” during the Cold War and beyond (pp. 3, 16). Add to this the recent release of extensive records relating to Nazi war crimes and the Japanese Imperial Government, and such a study is timely (pp. 3, 6).

Crim’s exploration of these themes is centered around five interrelated topics that form the basis of each chapter, respectively: the background and motivations of key Project Paperclip scientists, the process of obtaining and integrating Nazi science into the burgeoning American military-industrial complex, inter-service and bureaucratic rivalry relating to Project Paperclip, the influence of Paperclip administrators on perceptions of the Soviet threat during the first decade of the Cold War, and the “maturation” of the military-industrial complex and continual involvement of the Paperclip scientists through the 1950s (pp. 3–5). Crim’s use of Project Paperclip as a microcosm for examining divergent philosophies on the emergence of the national security state highlights conflicting perspectives on the developing military-industrial complex and confirms his description of Paperclip as a contentious issue for American officials, both at the time and later on. Concern over becoming a “garrison state” was countered by the desire for military and technological superiority, which led many to overlook and absolve the Nazi pasts of Paperclip scientists (pp. 6–12, 17–18, 25, 41–50). As a result, the Paperclip scientists were able to exert an enormous influence on the development of the American military-industrial complex and spur compelling technological growth, even to the point of fa-



cilitating the transition of the Army Air Forces into an independent Air Force (pp. 66, 85).

By and large, Crim outlines each of the above areas successfully, with the exception of inter-Service rivalry, at least in the most common sense. Crim does a better job exploring the debate between the State Department and Executive Branch regarding Paperclip's legality, risk, and scope than any competition between military branches (pp. 86–118). He does, however, examine the exploitation of German scientists by the Allies and the Soviet Union, highlighting efforts by the French that frustrated American officials almost as much as Soviet exploitation activities (pp. 79–85, 119–49). Soviet parallels to Project Paperclip, and the subsequent technological achievements they claimed, such as the successful launch of *Sputnik I* in 1957, galvanized proponents of the Paperclip program and helped to define the Soviet Union as a formidable adversary worthy of dedicated American intelligence, research, and technological development (pp. 138–51, 184–85). As the early Cold War progressed through the 1950s, Project Paperclip scientists and the military-industrial complex they supported continued to become increasingly integrated with American social, political, and economic life (pp. 151–57).

Well researched and persuasively presented, Crim's work highlights the controversial nature of Project Paperclip and its relatively unhindered assimilation into the American social, economic, and governmental fabric, arguably to the detriment of American democratic values. Crim's use of personnel records and investigation reports, Federal Bureau of Investigation files, military documents, and State Department reports and memoranda successfully supports examination of the German scientists' backgrounds, military applications, security concerns, and legitimate opposition to Project Paperclip. Through his exploration of this contentious Cold War episode, Crim succeeds in bringing attention to the complex history of America's national security apparatus and the relevance of such issues as accountability—valuable and timely.

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*Peacemakers: American Leadership and the End of Genocide in the Balkans.* By James W. Pardew. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018. Pp. 424. \$39.95 (hardcover and e-book.)

James Pardew's *Peacemakers: American Leadership and the End of Genocide in the Balkans* chronicles 13 years of peacemaking efforts in the conflict-plagued Bal-

kans region from the mid-1990s through 2008. In this account of the events, negotiators, national leaders, and their decisions to end the war in Bosnia, resolve the struggles in Kosovo, and prevent war from breaking out in Macedonia, it is the commitment of the United States and neighboring nations as brokers of peace that enables a divisive area to find a roadmap to stability. The author, a retired U.S. Army colonel, civilian leader of the Balkans Task Force in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and later ambassador to Bulgaria, relies on the journals he kept during this period and guides the reader through the negotiating rooms that dealt with the various crises in the Balkans. Pardew argues that American negotiating leadership and the international community's willingness to bring pressure on the regional players allowed for a resolution to the deadly "clash of gods, of history, of national identity, of idealism, and of shameless ambition" (p. 6). Beyond providing this play-by-play of events, Pardew also fulfills his goal of identifying common themes and techniques needed for negotiation, namely the importance of middlemen and the use of leverage.

Pardew is at his best in his account of ending the war in Bosnia, the implementation of peace, and the critical roles that the go-betweens performed in bringing parties to the negotiating table and successfully closing a peace deal. Following the genocide of more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica, Serbia (now Bosnia and Herzegovina), in 1995, U.S. intervention picked up speed through the mediator Richard Holbrooke. Pardew traveled with Holbrooke's team as they utilized government aircraft to crisscross the Balkans to parties lodged in different capitals. His journals offer not only invaluable observations regarding the negotiating process but also provide characterization to the major players involved, such as Serbian president Slobodan Milošević. But it is Holbrooke who steals the show. He utilized U.S. power and varying moods of his personality as he enticed, charmed, bullied, manipulated, and pressured to reach a decision (p. 136). When the Bozniaks wavered on agreeing to a cease-fire in favor of revenge and continued military setbacks for the Serbs, Holbrooke remained hell-bent on getting the required signatures to bring the deal to completion. Pardew comments that the "close" is the most difficult part of the negotiating process, and that diplomats rely on momentum as well as a degree of willingness by all involved parties to reach a settlement. In the end, the United States, led by Holbrooke, major European players, and Russia worked to bring Serbs, Croats, and Bozniaks into agreement (albeit at the 11th hour) in Dayton, Ohio, and end the war in Bosnia.

Agreeing to peace on paper is one thing, but negotiators and brokers of peace must be willing to use forcible leverage to keep all parties in line and truly implement peace. As a former military officer, Pardew recognizes the role that military aid and armed force can have for supporting newly emerging nations and their young leaders as well as keeping aggressive nations at bay. In Bosnia

and Herzegovina after the Dayton Accords (General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina), for example, the United States utilized leverage through military hardware and funding for the young nation to satisfy American interests. During the war, Bosnian Muslims received aid and allied foreign fighters from across the Muslim world. The presence of these mujahideen, particularly those with ties to Iran, concerned U.S. authorities. As the Train and Equip Program team worked in Bosnia to bolster defense forces, American representatives dangled monies and hardware in front of Bosnian leaders, offering the assistance only if ties with Iran were cut and the mujahideen removed. Leverage worked, as Bosnia neither became a haven for radical Muslims nor did a war of revenge break out. Pardew brings this integration of Bosnia into Western Europe full circle, as he notes in 2013 how a contingent of the Bosnian Army joined North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces in Afghanistan (p. 192).

NATO's role and implementation of leverage in the Balkans is inescapable in Pardew's account. It is clearly seen with the situation in Kosovo, where again the murder of more than 40 civilians in January 1999 brought the West into action. Pardew describes Milošević as much more unwilling to negotiate and work with the West to resolve the problems in Kosovo compared to Bosnia, and that he risked becoming embroiled in an international conflict and fighting NATO. U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright did not shrink from leveraging force to find peace: "diplomacy must be reinforced by the credible threat of force in Kosovo if it were to succeed in ending the violence" (p. 224). NATO airstrikes in Kosovo and Serbia followed, and with the expulsion of Serbian security forces, Pardew draws the conclusion that Serbia could no longer assert sovereignty over the region. Indeed, Kosovo gained independence less than 10 years later.

*Peacemakers* is an important firsthand account in sifting through and understanding the key nations, ethnic groups, religious faiths, and permeable borders that make up the Balkans and the region's struggle to find peace. While significant reliance is made on the author's journals and memory, and room for further research to develop the interests of all the nations and groups involved is available, Pardew has a valuable story to tell from one who spoke directly with national leaders, reviewed documents and treaties, and observed the consumption of cigars and drinks that aided in hammering out agreements among those involved. It is clear that the United States took the key leadership role in bringing peace to the Balkans and that the middlemen on the ground understood their need to put aside personal differences to find balance in expectations and respect from all parties. For a region that has known only war and changing rulers, borders, religions, and populations, peace can appear as an unfamiliar reality. Peace in the Balkans may be idealistic according to Pardew, but he firmly

believes it has the chance to fundamentally change Southeast Europe for the better.

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*Modern Snipers.* By Leigh Neville. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2016. Pp. 304. \$28.00 (hardcover); \$19.60 (e-book).

“One shot, one kill.” It is the unofficial motto of the sniper—master shooters who can deliver precision fire on a battlefield from unseen vantage points and across vast distances. They are force multipliers; single soldiers or small teams able to make an outsized impact in nearly any theater of war. Snipers, like special operations forces, are steeped in myth and mystery, aided by colorful and often embellished treatments by Hollywood movies. Leigh Neville’s *Modern Snipers* dispels the myths and offers readers a thorough, and at times technical, overview of the deadly art of precision shooting.

Neville begins by providing a historical overview of snipers and their use by armed forces from the eighteenth century to present. It is a brief yet useful chapter, highlighting the successes of snipers from around the world, including World War II Germany and Soviet Union. The chapter sets the tone for the rest of the book in two important ways. First, it demonstrates and reinforces the universality of the sniper as an effective and often misunderstood instrument of warfare. Rather than focus solely on snipers from one country, Neville explores the use of snipers from both sides of a conflict throughout the book, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of the evolution of modern sniping. Second, it introduces the reader to subjects detailed in the rest of the book—explorations of sniping in different contexts, including Afghanistan, Iraq (including the use of snipers by the insurgency), and law enforcement. This creates a more robust understanding of when and how snipers have been employed successfully, including how modern snipers have adapted to different operational environments.

Neville follows up the historical overview with an in-depth examination of modern sniping, focusing on the various approaches to training and employment of snipers by a multitude of countries, including the United States, Australia, Canada, France, and Germany. It is a chapter that will likely divide readers. For those interested in the finer details of training regiments and the technical aspects of rifles, ammunition, and shooting, it is perhaps the most purely informative chapter of the book. Anyone unfamiliar with terminology

or technical aspects of shooting, such as ammunition calibers or *minute of angle*, will find a readily accessible introduction. For other readers looking for a more narrative approach, the chapter will likely be repetitive and at times tedious. The chapter can read like a catalogue of facts, and while understanding the different approaches or details can be useful, Neville never really answers the always important “so what?” question. Without a more analytical treatment, the minutiae are likely to discourage less dedicated readers.

To be clear, however, this is more a criticism of execution than it is of intent. These are important details, and ones not found in other popular books, such as Chris Martin’s *Modern American Snipers: From the Legend to The Reaper—On the Battlefield with Special Operations Snipers* (2015). Indeed, this lack of other resources becomes clear as Neville reaches for anecdotes and references to flesh out his cataloging of training regiments. This leaves Neville leaning heavily on single sources, such as Australian Army master sniper Nathan Vinson. It would have been far more effective if Neville had interviewed current or former practitioners who could provide the insights Neville is unable to provide. While it is clear throughout the book that he did indeed conduct interviews (with the final chapter being an interview with former U.S. Delta Force sniper John McPhee), their use feels thin and somewhat scattered, which seems a missed opportunity that robs the book of some of its potential.

Both casual and dedicated readers of military history are likely to find the greatest contribution in the later chapters, which provide engaging and detailed accounts of how snipers have been employed in various modern battlespaces, particularly Afghanistan and Iraq. Again, Neville’s exploration of the experiences of a variety of militaries is its greatest strength. It is not a book about the American experience or the Australian experience, but the *sniper* experience. In this regard, Neville is extremely effective at focusing on applying the lessons outlined in earlier chapters, resulting in a book about *sniping* rather than simply *snipers*. How did the different approaches to the craft impact the experiences of different snipers when operating in novel or difficult environments, such as shooting either up or down at targets in the mountains of Afghanistan? What were the creative solutions snipers in the field employed to deal with those realities? These are questions Neville answers, weaving anecdotal narrative with recorded fact and technical detail. He even illustrates how these challenges translate to changes in the use of snipers by law enforcement, demonstrating how common techniques and approaches change according to the context in which they are applied.

The final chapter, detailing modern equipment—both rifles and supplementary equipment such as range finders—will be interesting and useful for those interested in the technical details of sniping, but it is ultimately just an index of popularly used gear. One of the most interesting additions to the book

is the aforementioned interview with sniper John McPhee, included as an appendix. It feels far too short and focused on McPhee's opinions on technical preferences (e.g., which caliber is most effective and why), but it is engaging and entertaining in part because it provides the sort of insights missing from the chapter detailed above. Indeed, its inclusion draws attention to the lack of similar insight throughout the book. In an era where there are so many former practitioners in the public space, either as authors of their own books (e.g., Brandon Webb, Nicholas Irving, and Jody Mitic) or as firearms trainers with considerable social media followings (e.g., McPhee, Kyle Defoor, Tim Kennedy, and Jim Smith), finding willing interview subjects could not have been a major obstacle for an established author like Neville.

Overall, *Modern Snipers* provides readers with not just an understanding of how snipers are, and have been, employed in recent and ongoing conflicts, but of the actual skills required by modern snipers. This is an important and often overlooked component. Imparting an understanding of the tremendous technical skill required to deliver precision at distance, or under difficult environmental conditions—be it a crowded market, a hot desert, or angled shots from mountaintops—and the training that hones those skills, Neville paints a detailed picture previously only available to those with firearms experience. Despite its occasionally repetitive nature and analytical shortcomings, *Modern Snipers* is an important contribution to modern military literature and is of value to both seasoned and casual readers of military history.

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*Unlikely Ally: How the Military Fights Climate Change and Protects the Environment.* By Marilyn Berlin Snell. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 2018. Pp. 208. \$28.00 (hardcover); \$9.99 (e-book)

Military conflict often makes for strange alliances. At the height of World War II, the United States and Great Britain allied with the Soviet Union to defeat the Axis powers. During the war in Vietnam, noted Cold War president Richard M. Nixon traveled to China, hoping to reduce their support for the North Vietnamese. Similarly, today global climate change and threats to military bases and personnel have created an alliance between two seemingly different groups: the United States military and environmental activists.

In her book *Unlikely Ally: How the Military Fights Climate Change and Pro-*

*tects the Environment*, Marilyn Berlin Snell shows the methods through which military installations across California are trying to lessen their environmental impact and become carbon neutral and energy independent. These actions, seemingly contrarian for a military force, are meant to safeguard national security and protect servicemembers overseas. Examining three different military branches at six different installations, *Unlikely Ally* illustrates the necessity of environmental stewardship as a means of protecting the nation.

In 2011, a power failure stopped the energy supply at San Diego's Marine Corps Air Station Miramar and Camp Pendleton. The power failure was not caused by a hostile nation, such as China, or a hostile organization, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. It was caused by a civilian technician who made several mistakes unintentionally. Though power was restored within a day, and backup generators kept power from being lost entirely, crucial infrastructure including the water supply were disrupted. The cost of the power failure was in the millions for the military, and greater for the overall California area.

The event highlighted a weakness that the military already strove to resolve: military dependence on fossil fuel. Overseas, the consequences were even more evident, as attacks on fuel supply convoys killed servicemembers routinely. These factors led the Marine Corps to identify renewable energy as a priority, while engaging in a two-front war. This strategy was echoed by other branches of the U.S. military, including the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Snell's book dedicates one chapter to six military installations that dot the California landscape. Other than being Department of Defense land, the areas have relatively little in common on the surface. One of the bases belongs to the Army, two are naval, and three belong to the Marine Corps. Fort Irwin National Training Center in northern San Bernardino County, which belongs to the Army, is so isolated that its connection to the California electrical grid is described as an extension cord. By contrast, the Marine base at Miramar is so linked to San Diego that military leadership and city planners routinely meet. Some are inland, some are on the coast, and Naval Auxiliary Landing Field San Clemente is on an island north of San Diego. Though Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake is a military facility north of Los Angeles, it is staffed primarily by researchers, not active duty servicemembers.

Regardless of their geographic disposition, common threads link these installations. Not only do they engage in environmental conservation and renewable energy practices, they find many of the efforts helpful in protecting their bases from disruption, saving the military money, and improving the quality of life for the servicemembers who call them home. Installing solar panels saves the military money previously spent on petroleum, and if used overseas, would reduce the number of refueling convoys, potentially saving the lives of servicemembers. In doing so, military leaders understand that environmental stew-

ardship and national security are not contradictory priorities; rather, they are supplemental to one another. Though there are setbacks, overall the military's commitment to sustainability makes their bases more secure, helps reduce their dependence on external energy sources, such as petroleum and the electrical grid, and allows training to continue without interruption.

*Unlikely Ally* highlights a portion of a larger cultural shift underway throughout the military. In 2014, a military report stated that climate change could harm national security by causing fragile states with limited resources to collapse, creating more natural disasters, and flooding military installations. As a result, every Geographic Combatant Command began to examine how climate change could affect their operations, ranging from humanitarian operations in Africa to increased naval presence in the Arctic. In light of understanding the damage posed to the United States, the military reacted to climate change, integrating it into threat assessments throughout the world.

Throughout the book, Snell reminds the reader that climate change has been on the Department of Defense's radar for more than a decade, and that the military understands how shifts in temperature can affect threats across the world. As such, the military is uniquely poised to make great strides in climate change prevention over the next decade.

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## ERRATA

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### **Pushing the Limits of Range**

*Long-range Amphibious Operations*

by Steven Yeadon

The article “Pushing the Limits of Range: Long-range Amphibious Operations” in the Fall 2018 issue of *Marine Corps University Journal* used reputable sources to report on the technical abilities of HIMARS, but some of that information has proven to be incorrect. Upon further research, it was discovered there were some discrepancies in the available sources.

The M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) has multiple, contradictory, publicly available weights listed by journalistic sources, including those reported by U.S. government websites. The most common weight quoted is 12 tons or 24,000 pounds for the weapon system. However, the United States Army Acquisition Support Center lists the curb weight of the HIMARS as 29,800 pounds and its combat weight as 35,800 pounds. If the higher weight values are correct, then this means that the Sikorsky CH-53K King Stallion could not transport a combat weight HIMARS 110 nautical miles in hot and high-altitude conditions. However, the article assumes that the King Stallion can transport a HIMARS 110 nautical miles in such conditions, and the fire support provided by the HIMARS is an important aspect of the amphibious air assault proposed by the author.

If the higher weight values are correct for the HIMARS, the author now advocates for two possible methods of incorporating HIMARS into long-range amphibious operations. First, the HIMARS and its resupply vehicles can be brought by surface lift from long-range using high water speed hovercraft, such as the Textron Systems Landing Craft, Air Cushion or Ship-to-Shore

Connector. The disadvantage of this approach is that it ties up valuable and vulnerable hovercraft for the transport of the HIMARS and its resupply vehicles in contrast to carrying Abrams main battle tanks, amphibious assault vehicles (AAVs), or BAE Amphibious Combat Vehicle 1.1s. Second, and experimentally, to incorporate the HIMARS into a long-range air assault from an amphibious task force possessing King Stallions, the author proposes that a curb weight HIMARS and a launch box with the vehicle's crew be separately transported by King Stallions to the amphibious objective area. The HIMARS is designed to load launch boxes placed on the ground. The disadvantages to this are that it leaves the HIMARS and crew vulnerable to enemy fire support while loading the HIMARS at the landing zone. Additionally, the curb weight of the HIMARS is a few hundred pounds heavier than the LAV-25 variant of the light armored vehicle. While LAV variants are identified by the U.S. military as being capable of transporting 110 nautical miles in hot and high-altitude conditions by the King Stallion, the combat radius of the King Stallion may still be decreased by this heavy payload.

*The digital version of this issue of the journal, can be found at  
<https://usmcu.edu/mcupress>.*