New Approaches
to Nonstate Armed Actors

EDITED BY

KENNETH H. WILLIAMS

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This book documents a panel from the 64th Annual Conference of the Middle East Institute. The views expressed in it are solely those of the commentators. The Middle East Institute does not take positions on Middle East policy, and Marine Corps University Press is an entity of the U.S. government.

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Introduction

Kenneth H. Williams

For as long as governments have existed, groups have been forming to oppose them. Some of these organizations choose to take up arms against their rulers. While some of the resulting rebellions are quickly crushed, others reach the level of "revolution" or "civil war." In certain instances, the insurgents maintain the fight for years, even decades, leaving the state in ongoing turmoil. A few groups, with al-Qaeda as a prominent recent example, exist not in opposition to a particular state, but to a philosophy or way of life and transcend national borders in their reach. Others, such as drug cartels or pirates, are driven by economic motives.

The twenty-first century has brought newly emerging insurgent or terrorist groups that are often more sophisticated than their predecessors,[1] with a few, such as Hezbollah and Hamas, sponsored (to some degree) by a foreign government (Iran). Hamas has institutionalized to the point of winning elections and providing government services in Gaza, but it is still classified as a terrorist organization by many, including the United States and the European Union.[2] With countries such as Pakistan, the international community struggles with how to deal with the

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1 See, for example, William Rosenau, "Understanding Insurgent Intelligence Operations," *Marine Corps University Journal* 2 (Spring 2011): 1–32.

2 See U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," September 15, 2011, http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm; Council of the European Union, "EU Terrorist List/Regime," http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/fight-against-terrorism/documents/eu-terrorist-listregime.aspx?lang=en.

apparent complicity of a sovereign government, or at least elements of it, in the activities of groups such as al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and related organizations.

The following presentations are from a panel at the Middle East Institute's 64th Annual Conference, held on November 4, 2010, in Washington, D.C.[3] Although the focus of the conference itself was on the Middle East, this panel discussion ranged beyond the region and reflected research on nonstate armed groups from around the world.

Mitchell B. Reiss, in fact, had studied five conflicts from across the globe for his latest work, four of which were/are long-running: the United Kingdom and the Irish Republican Army (IRA); Spain and the Basque group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA); Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers); the U.S. military and the Sunni insurgency in Iraq; and Israel and Hamas. During his time as special envoy for the United States for the Northern Ireland peace process (2003–2007), Reiss found that very little had been written to capture the experiences of diplomats and others who had worked to establish negotiating channels with terrorists. When he transitioned to the academic world, he began working on this topic and recently published *Negotiating with Evil: When to Talk to Terrorists*.[4]

Reiss focused in his presentation on the question of whether to negotiate with "terrorists," and if so, how? He offered four lessons from his research on engagement with insurgents, noting that the established group or country must demonstrate its resolve; it has to develop its intelligence resources; it needs to identify a viable leader or central group among the nonstate actors with whom to negotiate; and it must have patience. On the last point, Reiss emphasized that efforts at engagement may take years, possibly decades, citing in particular the

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3 For the full proceedings of the conference, see Kenneth H. Williams, ed., *Rethinking a Middle East in Transition* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2011).

4 Mitchell B. Reiss, *Negotiating with Evil: When to Talk to Terrorists* (New York: Open Road Integrated Media, 2010).

British government's multi-decade and ultimately successful work with the IRA.

David Kilcullen discussed the challenges inherent when an international power intervenes in a fragile state, which may be home to multiple groups of violent nonstate actors. Like Reiss, he spoke from extensive personal experience, having served as a senior counterinsurgency advisor to General David H. Petraeus in Iraq and as chief counterterrorism strategist at the U.S. Department of State. He currently runs Caerus Associates, which seeks to enable sustainable change in conflict-affected environments.

Kilcullen advocated for "bottom-up, community-based peace building" rather than "top-down security operations" by international groups, with a focus on "enabling civil society to solve its own problems." He cited examples—some successful, some not—in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Sudan. He also referenced events in Somalia and the Balkans. Kilcullen acknowledged the need for a military role in providing a relatively secure environment in which civil society can prosper but stated that it should be a "very limited, carefully targeted role."[5]

Robert Malley, who held national security positions in the Clinton administration, including special assistant to the president for Arab–Israeli affairs (1998–2001), is currently Middle East and North Africa program director for the International Crisis Group. With his research focus on the Middle East, Malley in his presentation looked primarily at Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon to address the question of what the objectives of the United States and other countries should be when dealing with nonstate actors. He argued that questions about whether the interested countries should talk with these groups have diverted attention from what should be the key point: whether the efforts of the international community at countering or containing

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5 For further development of Kilcullen's arguments, see his books *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), and *Counterinsurgency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

these organizations are being successful. By nearly all measures, they have not been. Malley suggested that there should be more middle ground on the spectrum between direct negotiations and complete isolation. He also reiterated Reiss's point that many nonstate actor groups do not have leaders with the experience and control for them to be viable negotiating partners with the international powers.[6]

Peter R. Neumann, who has published several books on terrorism and is director of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, highlighted findings from his study of de-radicalization and disengagement programs in 15 countries.[7] Most are operated in prisons. He listed several attributes of programs generally thought to have been successful, including a diversity of approaches; credible trainers; and emphasis on transition of the de-radicalized back into society, guided by commitments and incentives. A major caveat, according to Neumann, is that de-radicalization programs "cannot really be studied in isolation of the conflicts in which they are being implemented," and without understanding the progression of those conflicts. As an example, he argued that the de-radicalization program in Iraq in 2007–8 that is generally described as successful would have produced different and likely less positive results in 2005. According

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6 Malley's International Crisis Group page includes links to his recent articles (http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/about/staff/field/mena/robert-malley.aspx). For an extended interview with Malley about 2011 events in the Middle East, see "What The Arab Spring Means For Israel And Palestine," *Fresh Air*, June 16, 2011, http://www.npr.org/2011/06/16/136860807/a-west-bank-democracy-push-may-be-game-changer.

7 Peter R. Neumann, *Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries* (London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2010; online at http://icsr.info/publications/papers/1277699166 PrisonsandTerrorismRadicalisationandDeradicalisationin15Countries.pdf). Neumann's other publications include *Old and New Terrorism: Late Modernity, Globalization, and the Transformation of Political Violence* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2009); *Joining al-Qaeda: Jihadist Recruitment in Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2008); (with M. L. R. Smith), *The Strategy of Terrorism: How it Works, Why It Fails* (New York: Routledge, 2007); *Britain's Long War: British Strategy in the Northern Ireland Conflict, 1969–98* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); and *IRA*: *Langer Weg zum Frieden* (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1999).

to Neumann, the change in circumstances in the country and the conflict in the intervening years made a substantial difference.

The question-and-answer session, which was moderated by journalist and author Roger Hardy, is also included in this book. There was much discussion during it of the Taliban and al-Qaeda, particularly of potential efforts to negotiate with the Taliban. Questions ranged over a variety of nonstate groups, from Hezbollah and Hamas to Mexican drug cartels.

Although much has happened in the months between November 2010 and the publication of this book, the topics addressed remain pertinent. In fact, more nonstate actors have taken up arms in the broader Middle East during the "Arab Spring" and its aftermath. Al-Qaeda is in a state of transition after the death of Osama bin Laden in May 2011.[8] The activities of the Mexican drug cartels and Somali pirates continue to expand. And the need to find ways to confront, counter, and engage these nonstate groups remains.

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Editorial Note

All chapters in this book were originally oral presentations, most delivered with no prepared script. The talks have been transcribed and lightly edited for publication, but they still retain the flavor of spoken presentations. False starts have been silently omitted, as have introductory and concluding words of thanks to the audience and the Middle East Institute. Annotation has been added where speakers have referenced specific publications or documents and to clarify points in the text. Full footnoted referencing of the many events mentioned by the speakers is beyond the scope of this work. Readers are encouraged to consult the publications by the speakers that are listed under their biographies in the "Contributors" section.

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8 For a recent overview of the organization and its activities, see Norman Cigar and Stephanie E. Kramer, *Al-Qaida after Ten Years of War: A Global Perspective of Successes, Failures, and Prospects* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2011).

In the discussion section, only a few of the audience questioners were identifiable, so the names are not given. Moderator interjections and guidance not directly related to the subject matter have also been omitted.

Negotiating with Terrorists

Mitchell B. Reiss

Terrorism trends indicate an arrow that points upward in the coming years. It is increasingly likely that the threats will increase. This statement is based on anecdotal evidence, the analysis by counterterrorism experts, and governmental reports and studies.

There will be more terrorist groups. They will have more places to gather and scheme, in the so-called "stateless zones," according to the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] terminology. They will have access to more lethal weaponry.

There is also a demographic youth bulge across the Middle East that is likely to feed into some of the existing pathologies there. More than 60 percent of the people of this region are under the age of 25. It is likely that at least some of these–if it is only a small minority, it really doesn't matter–but some of these young men in particular will be attracted to militant extremism.

So the policy question, from an American perspective at least, is can we kill or capture all of these terrorists? The answer, of course, is probably not. Then that leads very quickly to another question: can we talk with some of them who may have local or more limited grievances? There is some supportive data out there, by RAND and by Audrey Cronin and others, that 40 percent of all terrorist groups end by renouncing vio-

lence and joining a political process—four out of ten.[1] From the field, we hear from General [David H.] Petraeus, who is very fond of repeatedly saying we can't kill or capture our way out of industrial-strength insurgencies. So that means we may have to talk.

Is that a new approach to dealing with armed nonstate actors? Well, not really. It is as old as the founding of our country. Three of our Founding Fathers, our first three presidents, actually cut deals with the Barbary pirates. We passed legislation in Congress to pay them $2 million a year in tribute so they would not attack our merchant ships. But it certainly is a controversial policy, especially in the United States, to talk with these groups, to "negotiate with evil."

There are also many associated questions. When do you do that? Who do you talk to? How do you structure a conversation with these people? Do you fight and talk at the same time? That is not just an issue for governments; that is also an issue for terrorist groups. Do they decide to maintain the armed struggle while they are sitting down with government officials?

Do you structure the talks in secret? Almost invariably, governments do this, but then there is a moment when the talks need to come out of the shadows and into the light. The former head of MI5, Baroness Eliza Manningham-Buller, has said that is the most dangerous moment for governments. When you transition from secret to public talks, you lose control of a lot of these negotiations; you are being held hostage to other members of the terrorist group who may not be so enthusiastic, or may not even know that the leadership was talking to the government. You also have domestic constituencies, including the security and police forces, who may be less enthusiastic about it. Of course you

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1 See Ben Connable and Martin C. Libicki, *How Insurgencies End* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010; online at http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2010/ RAND_MG965.pdf); Angel Rabasa, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Jeremy J. Ghez, and Christopher Boucek, *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010; online at http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG1053.pdf); Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

have the families of the victims, which is always a very emotional pull on the heartstrings, especially when magnified by the media.

Then there is another question: Is the person you are talking to a reliable partner? Terrorist groups are not monolithic. They have different views and opinions. Is the person you're talking to the "right" person?

There are few good answers to these questions. When I posed them when I was serving at the State Department a few years ago, I wasn't able to get a whole lot of very good answers to these and other questions as I was starting to embark on my job as special envoy to the Northern Ireland peace process. A search of the open literature also didn't help me very much. We know that there has been an awful lot of government experience over the years having these types of engagements, but most of them have been in the shadows; very few have been memorialized. The information and the knowledge hasn't been captured—until now, and here's where I shill my book. It is called *Negotiating with Evil: When to Talk to Terrorists*.[2] It is the product of the past three years of my traveling around the world talking to counterterrorism experts, government ministers, military officials, negotiators, and former terrorists to try to see if we could get some lessons from the experiences that clearly are out there, so that government policy makers will have a little bit of guidance going forward when they ask themselves these same questions.

I looked at four states that governments engaged: the UK [United Kingdom] and the IRA [Irish Republican Army]; Spain and the Basque terrorist group ETA [Euskadi Ta Askatasuna]; Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers; and the U.S. military and the Sunni tribes [in Iraq]. Then I looked at one government that has decided not to engage with a group it labels terrorist: Israel and Hamas. Actually, as many of you know, that relationship between Israel and Hamas is much more complicated than simply a blanket policy of never negotiate.

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2 Mitchell B. Reiss, *Negotiating with Evil: When to Talk to Terrorists* (New York: Open Road Integrated Media, 2010).

There were a wealth of lessons from each of these case studies, and there were many more questions that came up. But I did think that there were some transcendent lessons that might be useful to share that also will be applicable more broadly across the Middle East and elsewhere. I want to talk about four very briefly.

The first is that a negotiation with these groups is "war by other means." You either have to defeat them militarily on the battlefield, wherever that might be, or you have to demonstrate the resolve at least not to lose for as long as it takes. You have to eliminate hope that they can fight their way, bomb their way, terrorize their way to victory. In the UK, that took 15 to 20 years. It was only in the mid-1980s that the IRA leadership started rethinking its approach. I had a revealing conversation with [Sinn Féin president] Gerry Adams about this in which he told me, when we were focusing on exactly this period, "Dialogue is essential. The alternative is war forever. We were not prepared to do that." Until you have that mind-set, you're not going to be able to get any farther with any of these negotiations.

I also saw in the research on the Tamil Tigers that [Velupillai] Prabhakaran, the leader of the Tamil Tigers, would call timeouts periodically when he was under financial strain or military strain from the government. We saw this even in the case of Hamas and Sheikh [Ahmed] Yassin. If you look at the timing of the *hudna* [truce] that he suggested to the Israelis, it was after a particularly intense military, financial, and political campaign by Israel to go after Hamas's senior leadership that these would bubble up.

The second lesson is the role of intelligence. That sounds obvious; you have to have a first-rate intelligence service or else you are out of luck. But what surprised me most about the research was that governments are very slow to mobilize their resources to adequately deal with these types of threats. Often they don't have the language skills. More fre-

quently—and this was a surprise—they don't have the legislation domestically in order to get themselves organized. There are bureaucratic overlaps and rivalries. It took the Brits about 15 years, and it was only during [Prime Minister Margaret H.] Thatcher's watch that this got fixed. One MI5 official called it a dog's breakfast of rival security entities that were playing in Northern Ireland. She sent a retired head of MI6, Maurice Oldfield, up there to rationalize it and get it fixed, but it took a while.

In Spain after [Francisco] Franco, they didn't have the domestic legislation in place, so they did something that is tempting for many governments: they went off book. They used extrajudicial means. They formed a group called GAL [Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación] that engaged in illegal assassinations of about three dozen suspected ETA members in both Spain and France.

With the United States in Iraq, initially, the emphasis of our intelligence community was on finding the WMD [weapons of mass destruction]. We had 1,400 personnel in Iraq in 2003 focused primarily on finding the WMD, not on talking to insurgents or understanding what the grievances were. I think we paid a price for that. We also had a lack of linguists as well.

The third lesson is that you need a partner for peace. What a great euphemism: we need a partner for peace. We hear it all the time. In fact, that's not quite right. You need a particular type of partner, one that is exceedingly rare to find, somebody with the skill sets that are needed. They have to have credibility among their comrades. Often that person will have "blood on his hands" in order to demonstrate to the other hard men that he's got credibility. That person also has to have the imagination to envision a different way forward for the organization. He has to have physical and moral courage, and he also has to have the charisma and leadership to be able to bring his group out of

the jungle, out of the mountains, out of the streets, and into a political process that eventually will result in peace, or at least conflict mediation.

I thought of calling the book, instead of *Negotiating with Evil, In Search of Gerry Adams*. As you look around the world, there are very few terrorist groups that have that charismatic leadership, that imagination, that physical and moral courage that Adams demonstrated in Northern Ireland. If you don't have that, you are not going to get very far in the negotiation.

The United States was extremely fortunate in Iraq, in Anbar Province, in finding—by happenstance, as it turns out—a young tribal elder called Abdul Sattar Abu Risha. He was found by accident. It wasn't clear that he was the man who was going to lead the Anbar Awakening. He came from a fairly disreputable tribe. There are some wonderful stories in the book about how the other Sunni sheikhs viewed Abu Risha. Again, without somebody like that, we were really going to be in even worse shape than we were at the time.

The fourth lesson I want to leave you with is patience. Patience isn't just a virtue, it's a strategic advantage. Governments have to realize when they engage with these groups that it is not just going to take months or years. It may take decades. You have to understand that going in. It is always going to take longer to negotiate with these groups than you anticipate. For one thing, terrorist groups aren't terribly sophisticated. You have to educate them, you have to coach them up. You have to explain to them some of the other things that they may not be aware of, since they have been hunkered down either in the jungle or the mountains for many years. They need to be able to understand your perspective and your constraints as well. This happened with the Sri Lankans. The Tamil Tiger negotiators weren't very good and really hampered the government over the years.

To go back to the IRA, their first meeting with the Brits in 1972 was almost like an episode of *Keystone Kops*, [with] lots of amateur mistakes, things that they wanted the Brits to do that were almost laughable in retrospect. I laid these out to [former IRA leader] Martin McGuinness last year and said, how could you guys do this? Martin told me, "I was only 22 at the time." That's exactly right. Nobody in the IRA had engaged in this type of negotiation for over 50 years, since Michael Collins. Martin is a very smart guy, and he's a very good public official today,[3] but he was only 22. The other guys were in their early twenties as well. They had no experience. So you have to be very patient.

What goes along with that is that these groups have very shallow talent pools. There aren't a lot of people who can actually represent the group. In addition to that one leader, they don't have a very deep bench. So the idea that you are going to put a grand bargain on the table and hope that you can tie up all the loose ends—security, diplomatic, economic, reconstitution, transition, integration—the idea that you're going to do that all at once is laughable. They can't. They are just not built for that. They don't have that ability.

These are some of the lessons that I have learned over the last three years. I think some of them are applicable. Hopefully, they will provide some guidance to policy makers going forward, and hopefully, they will be able to help us bring peace and justice to some of these conflicts around the world.

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3 At the time of publication, McGuinness is deputy first minister of Northern Ireland.

State versus Nonstate Interventions in Fragile States

David Kilcullen

I run a little company called Caerus Associates. We spend a lot of time working in fragile states around the world. We work on a lot of alternative energy, peace building, and community-based development work. What I want to do in this presentation is share some tentative observations from our current work on the issue of state versus nonstate interventions in fragile states. I am fairly liberally interpreting the panel topic of new thinking about nonstate armed groups.

When the international community intervenes in complex emergencies in fragile states, the response tends to have four key characteristics that you see repeated again and again, whether you are talking about nation-states intervening or international organizations intervening. First, it tends to be state-based. It tends to focus on government. It tends to be top-down. It focuses on the central government. It tends to be very focused on institutions, creating effective ones, or at least shoring up existing institutions of some kind–a central government structure. And it tends to be security-oriented, which tends to make it exclusive. We tend to go into an environment with the agenda of building institutions of a central state which the international community can recognize. People who have a different agenda tend to be classified as "enemy." They tend to be excluded from the process. So we often find ourselves engaging in conflict.

But what we have found in our work, and what I previously found in field research over about 20 years or so, with insurgents and terrorist groups mainly in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, is that in conditions of state collapse, fragility, and complex emergencies, political authority actually tends to ebb away from the very institutions that the international community is trying to set up. Political power flows from central to regional and then to local groups. It flows away from civilian leaders to people with weapons. And it flows away from the formal institutions of the state to informal setups and institutions at the community level.

The international community prefers to work with centralized authority—state institutions led by civilian or at least nonarmed actors. The reality in these environments tends to be that political power has diffused to the local level, to community-based armed groups. That creates a conundrum. We come in with an approach that is very well suited to stable environments and very well reflects international norms, but it is badly suited to the actual power realities of the environments where we intervene, where the real power and the ability to resolve conflict or the ability to perpetuate violence seemingly endlessly does not actually lie with the people we are engaging with, but rather with nonstate local community groups, rather than the institutions of a central state. The result is often more chaos and even more violence over time.

Let me give you three examples. The first is Iraq. Ambassador [Mitchell B.] Reiss just spoke very accurately about what happened in Anbar [Province] during the Awakening, but if you go back in the period of our intervention in Iraq to 2003, there was an extremely awkward period where military commanders, civilian officials, and a variety of other people wanted to engage with the very same tribes that put the Awakening together several years later. They wanted to engage with the same community groups that even then were already turning against al-Qaeda and some of the radical groups. But they were specifically

banned from doing that by the Coalition Provisional Authority [CPA] under Ambassador [L. Paul] Bremer. CPA policy was not to engage with nonstate actors, not to engage with community leaders, and not to work with the tribes. In fact, the Awakening in Anbar was the fifth awakening, the fifth attempt by the tribes to turn against al-Qaeda. On the previous four attempts, we let them hang, and they were slaughtered, because our policy was not to work with nonstate groups.

In Afghanistan since 2001, we have seen a very similar situation. The international community, through the Bonn process, centralized political authority in the hands of somebody—President Hamid Karzai—who was too weak to exercise that authority on his own. So he had to make a series of deals with important players and actors within the Afghan political structure, which led to the fact that, on the one hand, we've got an Afghan government which on paper is the most centralized in the world, but on the other hand doesn't do much actual governing, because it can't.

One particularly good illustration of why this is a problem is in the rule-of-law sector. We went in, rewrote the Afghans' legal code for them, built a supreme court building in Kabul, started training judges and prosecutors, and [began] building from the top down a state institution of courts, prosecutors, and so on. The Taliban came in at the local level with mobile courts several months after we arrived and ate our lunch at the local level. They are now effectively administering rule of law across large parts of the south and east of the country through informal, community-based processes, while the institutions of the central state have yet to catch up.

But I think the classic example is neither Iraq nor Afghanistan, but actually Somalia. You may remember that in 1992 after the collapse of the [Mohamed] Siad Barre regime and the famine, the international community intervened in Somalia with a classic top-down, state-focused,

international community-led effort. You know, "You little natives get out of the way while us white guys tell you how this is going to be. We're going to back up the big democracy truck, unpack progress, and everything is going to be fine." The result has been a near-total failure.

In the north of the country during the same time frame, the same ethnic groups following the same state collapse, the same famine, and the same civil war went ahead and did things their own way with a bottom-up process that wasn't a process of security enforcement; it was a process of peace building. The clans got together in 1992–93 and made local-level peace deals. In 1993–94, those local-level peace deals resulted in regional charters. By the end of 1994, there was a provisional government in place, acting not only without the support of the international community, but in fact against active opposition from the international community, including the United Nations at times. This year, they went through their third peaceful presidential transition of power. They have a functioning court system, police, a functioning economy, and trade unions. All the institutions have emerged that one might expect, but they emerged bottom-up from the community rather than being imposed top-down by international actors.

That is only one of a number of examples where we have seen a much better outcome result from bottom-up, community-based peace building rather than top-down security operations by the international community. I think that has led to some new thinking in the way we deal with these groups. The Sons of Iraq, the Sahwa, the Awakening during the surge in Iraq, was just one example whereby creating a partnership with local communities could transform a security environment, not by imposing security, but by building peace, which then led to security.

In Afghanistan, there is a program called the village stability operation, sometimes known as the village security operation, which has been mischaracterized as a local police program. It is actually a community-

based governance program where local community *shuras* (councils) get together and work on issues having to do with securing and feeding and sustaining their own local area. It works very closely with the community development council model, which is again not a state-based model and not focused on an exclusive security process, but focused on bottom-up peace building.

Going back to Africa briefly, the Office of Transitional Initiatives [OTI], which is one of USAID's most important innovations over the last 20 years—invented in 1994 to deal with the situation in the Balkans—has been extremely important in what we have done in Afghanistan and Iraq. But I want to take you to one example of the sorts of interventions that we can do that may be a little more effective than turning up with 20,000 Marines and trying to solve the security problem.

In late July 2005, there was a helicopter crash in southern Sudan. A helicopter belonging to President [Yoweri K.] Museveni of Uganda crashed and killed, as part of the crash, the vice president of independent South Sudan, John Garang. That incident resulted in three days of major rioting across Sudan. At least 150 people were killed, more than 2,000 people were arrested. There was a large amount of communal violence across the south and center of the country. A peace deal which had just been put in place to resolve 21 years of civil war was very much in jeopardy. It was a situation somewhat analogous to the airline crash in Rwanda that led to major conflict in 1994.

How was that major conflict averted in the case of Sudan? It was averted because John Garang's widow [Rebecca Garang] got onto a radio and broadcast to the community of southern Sudan: "Hey guys, this was an accident, relax." The community calmed down, a lot of the violence went away. How did John Garang's widow get onto a radio? Because OTI had put in an extremely limited, small-footprint, carefully targeted intervention of creating local-level radio stations so that peo-

ple could communicate with each other across southern Sudan. No big institutions, no troops, no large aid programs, just a mechanism which allowed people who were already making peace among themselves to communicate that peace process to each other. That very small-scale, largely unknown aid intervention in southern Sudan averted in July–August 2005 a similar situation to what may have happened in Rwanda.

So limited, targeted intervention that focuses on enabling civil society to solve its own problems seems to be something that works better than the traditional international community intervention. That is just what we are seeing in the field right now. It is changing some of the ways that we do business. I think what we are starting to see is new thinking about posture, about how to create the right posture to allow local civil society to fulfill that function of local-level peace building, about what is the right military posture, the right governance posture, the right trade posture, the right foreign assistance posture, and so on, to enable civil society to engage in bottom-up, community-led peace building that is inclusive rather than exclusive.

There is a military role in that. Some of the people in these environments will not negotiate and just need to be taken out of the picture. That's OK, but it's a very limited, carefully targeted role, just like all the other aspects of international community intervention.

On the whole, I think we are coming to the view, which may perhaps be entirely obvious to people in this room but hasn't always been policy in places like the World Bank or NATO or the U.S. government, that we need to be adopting the least intrusive, least expensive approach focusing on processes rather than structures, focusing on communities and not just on governments, and trying to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

What Are Our Objectives with Nonstate Actors?

Robert Malley

When we are talking about armed nonstate actors—and in the region of the world that I work on, the focus is really on Hamas and Hezbollah— the question that people always ask, and the issue about which people get very quickly polarized (and I have been caught up in that debate) is, shall we talk to them or not? Should the United States talk to Hamas and Hezbollah?

I want to put that question to the side. I think that question has done more to pollute the debate, to divert attention from what the real issues are, than it has been a productive line of inquiry. That should be the end point—what we should do, whether we should talk to them. The first question should be to analyze where they come from, to analyze whether our policies so far have been successful in dealing with them and achieving our own self-proclaimed objectives, and if not, then let's look at alternatives.

I think there has been a confusion of means and ends and a rush to judge the means—should we talk to them—rather than the ends: what are our objectives when it comes to these nonstate armed actors? Again, I will focus mainly on those two because they have become so much of a part of the political debate here.

The first question is whether, measured by the United States's own self-proclaimed yardstick, our policies toward Hamas and Hezbollah have been successful. What have been the objectives? The objectives have been to weaken those movements. When it comes to Hamas in Gaza, the objective has been in some cases to defeat them militarily. The objective has been to get them to change their ideological posture, to accept the Quartet[1] conditions. When it comes to Hezbollah in Lebanon, the objective has been to disarm them.

On one issue after another—I don't think we really need to go down the list—but on virtually all of these standards, all of these measurements, I think the conclusion is relatively noncontroversial: we have not succeeded. Hamas may be less popular today, but it is firmly entrenched in Gaza. It has not accepted, and is not closer to accepting, the Quartet conditions. It acts as a constant factor in the negotiations, making it harder to reach an agreement, and making it harder for President [Mahmoud] Abbas to move forward, knowing that he has a powerful constituency that has powerful resonance among Palestinians, and Arabs more generally, and is looking and stirring behind his back. Hezbollah is no closer to being disarmed; in fact, it is probably more powerful today than it has ever been in its history, not just in terms of its weapons, but in its ability to paralyze the political process and the institutions in Lebanon. On issue after issue, whether it was the goal of making them change their worldview, whether it is the goal of weakening their hold in Gaza or their power in Lebanon, whether it is the goal of strengthening their opponents—Fatah in the Palestinian case, or March 14 Alliance in Lebanon—it is very hard to see in what way the policy has been successful.

That is the starting point for me. The starting point shouldn't be should we talk to them, in which case all these other issues come up. The starting point should be whether so far—again, judged by what the [George

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1 The Quartet on the Middle East, often referred to simply as the Quartet, includes the United States, the United Nations, the European Union, and Russia.

W.] Bush administration and now to some extent the [Barack H.] Obama administration have stated as their objectives—whether the policy of isolation, marginalization, attempts to disarm, or attempts to dislodge have been successful. I think the answer is pretty clearly "no."

So let's take that as a starting point. Now let me offer a series of observations about these two movements, but even more broadly, about nonstate armed actors in the Middle East, to try to reach a conclusion about what might be alternative approaches to them.

The first observation is the fact that these movements over the past decade have become much more powerful, much more influential. Armed nonstate actors are nothing new to the Middle East. For those who have followed the history of Lebanon, this really looks like an old story. But there is something new about them because in the old days, they were far more extensions of—proxies of—established states and established regimes. What seems to have changed is that these have become much more holistic. They have much deeper national roots. They are acting often in conjunction with other states, but not on behalf of other states, and they have a much greater ability to appeal to their own local constituencies, not simply through the military option they offer, but through the social services that they provide, through charitable institutions, through a more holistic approach to their links to society. That is a change that is a function in part of the decreasing power of the central state, about which we just heard something, and their ability to make up for the deficiencies of that central state. So that is observation number one, an increase in power, but also a change in their role in their domestic societies and their ability to act independently of others.

The second observation is that these cases, Hamas and Hezbollah, but also to some extent the Sadrist movement in Iraq (another case that we

have studied at the International Crisis Group),[2] all three movements have prospered precisely in societies that have an open wound, an unresolved question that polarizes domestic constituencies in those countries. Either questions about the nature of society—that's certainly the case in Lebanon and is the case in Iraq as well—or a question of their relationship with a third party, also the case of Lebanon vis-à-vis Israel and Lebanon vis-à-vis Syria, the case of the Palestinians vis-à-vis Israel. With all these cases, you have an unresolved, unaddressed, existential issue which divides the polity and in which the nonstate actor takes one side against the others.

These are also cases—and all three have this in common as well—where a certain constituency, if not all people in those entities, feel a security threat that the state is not able to address. Again, this was certainly the case in Lebanon. The experience of the Shi'ite community at the hands of Israel is one that is very profoundly entrenched in the psyche of Shi'ites and other Lebanese as well. It certainly was the case in Iraq, and it is the case in Palestine as well, where the Palestinian Authority, for all its achievements in some areas, has been singularly inept at protecting Palestinians from Israel. That of course feeds and fuels the desire and aspiration to have an organization that can defend and provide the kind of defenses that the central authority—or in the case of the Palestinians, the nonstate authority—can provide.

The third observation, which is also a common trait of these three cases, is that these are the cases in which the U.S. has invested most heavily, particularly after 2000, to shape the polity, to in some cases accelerate the holding of elections, and has been generally most invested. That certainly is the case with Iraq, with the invasion. It was the case in

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2 See "Iraq's Muqtada al-Sadr: Spoiler or Stabiliser?" International Crisis Group, Middle East Report No. 55, July 11, 2006, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/ Iraq%20Syria%20Lebanon/Iraq/55_iraq_s_muqtada_al_sadr_spoiler_or_stabiliser.ashx; "Iraq's Civil War, the Sadrists and the Surge," International Crisis Group, Middle East Report No. 72, February 7, 2008, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/ Iraq%20Syria%20Lebanon/Iraq/72_iraq_s_civil_war_the_sadrists_and_the_surge.ashx.

Lebanon after 2005, where the U.S. very powerfully tried to go in and take sides in domestic struggles and take sides with one against the other, and try to shape Lebanon in a certain way. It's the case in Palestine to this day, really triggered by the elections in 2006, elections which the United States had been promoting. But again, in all these cases, it is interesting to see that where the U.S. has been deeply involved in trying to structure and shape society and the polity in a certain way, these nonstate armed actors have prospered and flourished, in part by playing off against this polarization of us against them. Of course in their case, the "us" is very different from the "us" that President Bush had in mind.

The fourth observation, which is in many ways a consequence of what I just said, and the deep-rootedness of these movements in their own societies: military means to defeat them have not worked. It didn't work in the case of Hamas, whether it was Fatah and the Palestinian Authority that was going after it in Gaza or in Israel's war of 2008. It certainly hasn't worked in Lebanon, either, the war of 2006. In all of these cases, military means at best haven't worked, at worst have backfired, and in some cases have strengthened the hold of the entities that these military operations were designed to defeat.

The fifth observation is that one of the tools that the U.S. and others have used to try to diminish the influence and the resonance of these movements is by providing assistance to their opponents. A lot of the assistance has gone to the Palestinian Authority, to President Abbas, and support has gone to March 14. To a large extent, I think that misses the point. To say it quite crudely, President Abbas suffers from many things and faces many problems. One problem he doesn't face in the eyes of his own people is a perception that he is insufficiently supported by the United States. That is not why many Palestinians are questioning the legitimacy of the leadership, and there are a whole host of questions. But the notion that by giving more assistance to President Abbas

somehow we can neutralize the perception that the current Palestinian leadership is too indebted to the West and not autonomous enough in its decision making seems, to me, misguided. So in a way, the more the U.S. pumps aid into the hands of those whom these movements are opposing, it may help them in some ways, but it also validates the narrative that Hezbollah and Hamas and others want to propagate, that the ones they are fighting are stooges of the West. So I think it's really a double-edged sword to keep in mind.

The sixth and final observation is that these movements feed on the underlying grievances that I mentioned earlier, these unresolved, core existential issues, and at the same time these issues can't be resolved if they are excluded. Just to take the two cases of the Palestinians and the Lebanese—and there may be disagreement on this—but my strong conviction is that it is going to be very difficult, if not impossible, to truly resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict if we don't address the question of Hamas, for all kinds of reasons having to do with the fact that they control Gaza; the fact that the Palestinian movement is divided to an extent that I don't think any liberation movement has been divided and been able to reach an agreement by negotiating with its foe; and the legitimacy question that is hanging over the leadership in Ramallah. For all these questions, it reduces President Abbas's maneuvering room, and it makes it more possible for spoilers to step into the fray.

So the notion that you can move the peace process without addressing the question of Hamas seems to me to be an illusion. That is why the logic that I hear—which David Makovsky put forward earlier and which you hear all the time—let's move the peace process first, and then we'll find a way, Hamas will be confronting the dilemma of whether to join a process that's popular or oppose it—I don't think you will ever get there. Hamas has many tools and has shown time and again that it has the tools to sabotage, prevent, and simply to spoil a process from which it would be not just absent but of which it would be a target.

The same of course goes in Lebanon. The notion that one could have a stable government in Lebanon by excluding the most powerful representative of the most numerous constituency in Lebanon seems to me to be profoundly misguided. I think we have seen it. I think the Lebanese have paid the price for some of the illusions that the West had that they could build Lebanon by excluding a party that is not just a party, it is really the embodiment at this point of the Shi'ite constituency.

So for that reason, we are caught in this dilemma of how do you address these underlying grievances, which fuel the power of these movements, at the same time that you need to bring these movements, somehow, into the game if you want to be able to fully address those issues.

So we come to the question with which I began: what then? What are the options? What can we do if the policies of the past have failed and if we are confronting what is a major and significant factor, at least in those two contexts? Drawing from what I just said, I think the first rule is what not to do. The notion that you could marginalize, ignore, exclude, or try to defeat militarily, I think we need to put those options aside because they simply have not worked. We, the United States, don't have the means to accomplish them, and the people in the region cannot live with the consequences of our unsuccessfully trying to do so. It is just too costly for them.

I don't think the debate should be reduced to the question of whether we talk to them or not. I think Mitchell Reiss gave a presentation about different contexts where it may work or not. We talk to some, we don't talk to others. In some cases it may be premature, in some cases it may be futile, in some cases it may be counterproductive or too costly politically. We are in a very political city, and we know the cost sometimes of doing things. Even if they might be wise diplomatically, they may simply be too costly politically.

But it is a very reductionist view to believe that either you talk to them or you stay where we are today. There are a whole host of other instruments in our toolbox, from encouraging third parties to talk to them, but in an authorized channel, not the kind of talks that take place today—and of which I'm a part—where we talk to Hamas and Hezbollah and both sides get frustrated. Their side gets frustrated because we have nothing to offer, and we get frustrated because they are not giving us anything in return. So it becomes a bit of the dialogue of the dead. You need to think more about empowering third parties.

In the case of Hamas, it means not necessarily the U.S. talking to Hamas, but changing its attitude, its whole mind-set, when it comes to Palestinian reconciliation—to stop seeing it as an obstacle to peace, but rather as one of the preconditions for peace, which is to find a way to re-stitch the Palestinian national movement. It means changing our approach toward Gaza. It is not simply a humanitarian question, it is a political question. The humanitarian disaster in Gaza came about for political reasons, and it will be resolved when we reach a different political conclusion. It has to do with how we are prepared to deal with Hamas in Gaza.

In the case of Hezbollah, which I think is far more complex, far more complicated, for a whole host of reasons, I think it entails maybe not talking to Hezbollah—that may come later—but finding a different way to engage with Syria and at the very least not repeating the mistake of 2008, where the administration seemed, or at least March 14 in Lebanon seemed to believe that we would come to their assistance if they were in a confrontation with Hezbollah. As it turned out, they were left out there to dry, and we were not able to do anything to help them.

In conclusion, there are two thoughts I want to leave with you. The first is that I think we have to escape the dual illusion that has too often

handcuffed our policy: the belief that engagement is the ultimate reward that the United States can offer its foes, which is only the flip side of that other dangerous illusion, which is that isolation is a decisive penalty that we can inflict upon them. I think we need to escape both those ends of the spectrum.

One last thought. Mr. Reiss said something that I think is very important. Many of these movements don't have the experience, they don't have the wherewithal to really engage in the kind of talks we're talking about. They need training. I will just bring to your attention the fact that one of the things I think is extremely damaging: we have a law on the books here which prevents anyone not simply from giving money to terrorist groups, which I can understand, but from providing any form of material assistance, which the Supreme Court and the administrations have interpreted as including assistance in trying to train them in negotiations or train them in nonviolent means of resistance, or talk to them to give them advice about how to move from violence to non-violence, or accepting the Quartet principles.[3] We are not allowed to do that. I think that is a profound irony, a profound disservice to the people in the region, and to ourselves.

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3 See *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project*, 130 S.Ct. 2705 (2010), http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/09pdf/08-1498.pdf.

De-radicalization and Disengagement Programs

Peter R. Neumann

This topic is one that has captured the imagination of policy makers from Riyadh to Washington, D.C., to the extent that some believe they have found the silver bullet in the fight against insurgents and terrorists, and that is de-radicalization and disengagement programs. For those of you who do not know what I am talking about, de-radicalization or disengagement programs are in essence rehabilitation programs. They happen usually in prisons. They target insurgents and terrorists who have been captured, trying to convince these people to abandon armed force. They help them reintegrate into society.

The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence did a study on the effectiveness and the functioning of these programs.[1] We studied eight of them. Not all of our case studies were in the Middle East, but the majority were. There are some countries, such as Singapore and the Philippines, outside of the Middle East who are running these programs, but the majority of countries who are running programs are based in the Middle East. Our sample included arguably the most sophisticated program, the one in Saudi Arabia that

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1 Peter R. Neumann, *Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries* (London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2010; online at http://icsr.info/publications/papers/1277699166 PrisonsandTerrorismRadicalisationandDeradicalisationin15Countries.pdf).

many of you will have heard about, and arguably the least sophisticated and least successful program, the one that was running in Yemen until about five years ago. Here is an overview of what we found.

First, we looked at how these programs work. What are the core elements? What are the key underlying dynamics? In other words, if any of you wanted to construct a de-radicalization program, what kinds of things would you have to include in order to make it work? We believe that there are five ingredients, five key elements that are part of every successful and good de-radicalization program.

The first is a mix of different kinds of programming. You will have to have some sort of religious and ideological re-education, deconstructing key concepts that have been misunderstood, arguably, and reconstructing them in a more productive way in the minds of the participant. But typically, some of the good programs are combining the religious and ideological re-education with vocational training, offering the subjects not just a re-education about Islam, but also some of the skills that will provide them with the opportunity to make a living after they have been released.

The second ingredient is comprised of what we call credible interlocutors. These are people who look after prisoners throughout the duration of the program. They have to know their stuff, obviously. They need to be respected by the prisoners, either because of their religious knowledge or because, as in the case of the Philippines, for example, they are former insurgents themselves. In either case, what is really important about the people who are interacting with prisoners is that they have the ability to relate to these people. In Saudi Arabia, for example, even if you are an incredible authority on Islam, you will not be allowed to interact with prisoners unless you have proven your ability to establish what they call "brotherly relationships," to relate to people and their needs.

The third ingredient is that good programs are all focused on prisoners' transition from prison back into society. From day one, they will in essence start preparing prisoners for the day of their release, on the one hand by providing them with skills, but also, and importantly, by reestablishing the links to their families, which many of them had lost when it became obvious that they were engaged in armed violence. In fact, in the case of Saudi Arabia, for example, many of their families abandoned them. Family reconciliation, therefore, is incredibly important because it means on the day they will be released from prison, there is a positive influence waiting outside the prison walls, rather than a negative one.

That leads to the fourth ingredient, which is, more broadly speaking, that all good programs are about locking people into commitments. They are about increasing the social, material, and psychological costs of going back to insurgency. So it doesn't stop with family reconciliation, which is just one layer of commitment. Tribal reconciliation is almost as important. Saudi tribes will have to vouch for prisoners' good behavior. In Saudi, but also in other cases, prisoners are provided with jobs, apartments, cars, and in some cases they are provided with the ultimate commitment, namely a wife. All of this is about making sure that when they are released from prison, they have so much to lose that it would be almost irrational to go back to terrorism and insurgency. You would lose your family, your tribe would be against you, the security services would be chasing you once more, you would lose your wife, your apartment, your job, and your car. That is a lot to give up, and that is exactly the point of the program.

The final ingredient involves material incentives. I have mentioned some of these already. Material incentives are arguably the most controversial aspect of these programs because it looks like you are rewarding people for engaging in terrorism. Yet they are important, but they are not decisive on their own. In fact, all the programs which we have

studied have relied to some extent on money and material incentives. But those that relied on money and material incentives alone were largely unsuccessful. Money and material incentives only work if they are part of that broader idea of creating commitments and locking people into obligations that they find hard to get out of. Money and material incentives are not likely to be successful if deployed on their own, as they were, more or less, in the Philippines.

So there you have it, five ingredients: a mix of programming, credible interlocutors, a focus on reintegration and aftercare, creating multiple commitments, and material incentives as part of a strategy to create commitment. So you can go off and do your own program now. Good luck.

Before you do so, however, I want to give you two warnings, which may also come back to the point of these programs being a silver bullet, which I believe they are not. The first point is that de-radicalization programs cannot really be studied in isolation of the conflicts in which they are being implemented. A lot of people are now studying these programs and trying to find metrics—in Washington, it's all about metrics all the time—as to what makes these programs successful. I think it is fatally flawed to look at these programs in isolation from the sort of social and political environment in which they are being implemented.

Take Iraq, for example. Most people believe that the program that was run in Iraq in 2007–8 was a big success. Undoubtedly—and David [Kilcullen] knows more about this than I do—perhaps it was. But I would also argue that the very same program that was run in

Iraq in 2007–8—the exact same program, using the exact same measures—would have produced different outcomes had it been run in 2005. The reason is, of course, that the political situation in Iraq was completely different. In 2005, Iraq was on the brink of civil war, insurgency was gaining momentum, Sunni tribes were still opposed to the American presence. People would have been sent back into hostile communities. In 2007–8, the situation had been turned around and people were being sent back into communities that were actually supporting the effort that was going on as part of the program. So the exact same program implemented in the same country at a different point in time would have produced a different outcome. Political momentum plays an important role.

My final point relates to this one. It is quite clear that these programs, however good and sophisticated they are as programs, are not a solution in and by themselves. A de-radicalization program cannot solve a conflict, and it would be foolish to think so. Such programs are not a substitute for other means of conflict resolution. They always need to be embedded in a wider strategy. They need to be combined also with sometimes harder and perhaps more traditional counterterrorism and counterinsurgency measures. I am saying this not because I think you are naïve, but because I am hearing that a lot in my own continent in Europe and at the United Nations—people speaking about these programs as a substitute to some of the more traditional counterinsurgency measures. That is why in my own country, in Germany, people were so enthusiastic to give money for the emerging program in Afghanistan, because they see it as a substitute for sending more troops. But it is not. De-rad programs make a difference, but they rarely make a difference on their own. They have to be

sophisticated and well-constructed, but they also need political momentum, and they need to be embedded in a wider strategy. Just having a program is necessary, but very rarely is it sufficient.

Discussion of New Approaches to Nonstate Armed Actors

Moderated by Roger Hardy

Question: I'd like to ask about something that has not been addressed yet: the criminalization of the nonstate actors. We have seen in a number of different settings—from Latin America with the FARC and Sendero Luminoso, in the case of Afghanistan with a whole plethora of the insurgency groups, including Taliban—an increasing reliance on participation in international drug trafficking, weapons trafficking, money laundering, and things like that. This is somewhat changing the character of the insurgencies. I'd like to hear perspectives on dealing with that dimension of this growing problem.

David Kilcullen: One of the things that can happen to an insurgency as it degrades—this happened in Northern Ireland, it certainly has happened in other insurgencies—is that it can turn into a criminal network. We also see examples such as Mexico, where some people were very quick to say that we're dealing with an insurgency, even though the motivations are primarily criminal and economic rather than political and ideological. So I think it's fairly clear in the field that there's an overlap between criminal behavior and the behavior of politically motivated groups like insurgents or terrorists.

Leaving aside the legal issues for a second, I think it's very important that we avoid criminalizing behavior unless we absolutely have to. Once you go down a certain path—for example, UN listing as a terror-

ist organization—a lot of the options that are open to you to deal with and resolve these problems go away. So there are times, obviously, when you're dealing with an out-and-out criminal group that is economically motivated, there are other times when you do need to criminalize behavior. But if you can avoid it, it's usually better, in my view.

Mitchell B. Reiss: I think you have the problem at both ends, actually. As David suggested, with a lot of these terrorist groups, they spill over into criminal activity to fund themselves. They are a hybrid at times. That certainly has been the case with many that we know of. But also from a governmental perspective, it is almost a philosophical question. Do they see this through a counterterrorism frame, or do they see it through a law enforcement frame? I think it's fair to say that the [George W.] Bush administration saw it more from a counterterrorism angle and the [Barack H.] Obama administration more from a law enforcement angle. That is going to create all sorts of consequences in terms of the tools that are available to you and some of the approaches that might be available.

What makes it difficult is that some of these terrorist groups are both. We haven't yet developed, in my opinion, a hybrid system from a governmental perspective as to how to deal with some of these threats out there. There has been talk about national security courts. There is a very good book by Benjamin Wittes at the Brookings Institution, I think the best book on the subject, calling for a hybrid approach.[1] So it's both the facts on the ground, but also from a governmental perspective what frame you view it, is going to have very important policy consequences.

Question: My question is the big, obvious question out there, with great implications for our policy makers. There is a lot of discussion about engaging with the Taliban. Since we have a panel of experts, what advice would you give to policy makers were they to pursue that

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1 Benjamin Wittes, *Law and the Long War: The Future of Justice in the Age of Terror* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008).

course? What obstacles should they expect, and how can they best achieve a solution?

Kilcullen: It depends on what you mean by Taliban, and it depends what you mean by engaging. There have been a lot of programs to engage with local-level fighters in Afghanistan, some of which have been quite successful. Most recently, about three weeks ago, 200 fighters reconciled with the government in Herat Province (they actually came from Helmand). There have been a number of other incidents throughout the summer of lower-level leaders and smaller groups putting their weapons down and rejoining the political process.

I've had conversations with tribal elders who have said to me that between 5 and 10 percent of the people we are fighting are committed ideologically in some way to the Quetta Shura, and that the other 90 to 95 percent are reconcilable under certain circumstances. I think that's very true, but I think that you have got to recognize that although the vast majority of successful counterinsurgencies end in a negotiated solution—something like 80 percent—you have to be negotiating from a position of strength. That's not where we are right now in Afghanistan at the moment, although we are getting there militarily.

The other issue is that there have been hundreds of deals struck with the Taliban over the years. Very few of those deals have lasted more than a few days or weeks. As Ambassador Reiss pointed out, having a viable interlocutor or a viable partner in negotiations is critically important. I'm not sure that we could put our finger precisely on who would be a reliable interlocutor for the Taliban right now. It's so disruptive a group, and so fragmented, that any number of people could plausibly put themselves forward to negotiate. But it would be very difficult to believe that that negotiation would result in an outcome that would stick.

A final point would be that one of the things you can do when you target a terrorist group is not only disrupt it, but also shape it for negotiations; identify the people that are most willing to negotiate and deal with their rivals in order to strengthen the possibility of a peaceful outcome.

Roger Hardy: I'm going to give you guys a chance to come back on issues of your own choice. I'd like to keep the pace going a bit. Let's take three questions at a time and see if that works better.

Question: In addition to the various approaches you mentioned regarding nonstate armed groups, what about the disruptions of weapons and money to these groups? Based on your research, doesn't it make it easier, then, to bring them to the negotiating table? Specifically regarding Hezbollah, we see today that Hezbollah has lost in popularity. They have been losing elections, national elections, even lately the local elections. We have seen more challengers in their areas. Of course they have been isolated even by the Arab world, not just by the U.S. So if Hezbollah does not have the hundreds of millions of money coming out from Iran, and the weapons, wouldn't it make it easier for them to recognize the Lebanese legitimate institutions, to come to the negotiating tables, to be more willing to negotiate?

Question: My question is to Mr. Reiss. You mentioned that the success of General [David H.] Petraeus in Iraq was achieved after finding [Sheikh Abdul Sattar] Abu Risha, who unified the tribes against al-Qaeda. Do you think that if he doesn't find an Abu Risha in Afghanistan, then there will be no success?

Question: Mitchell Reiss mentioned that with the passage of time, there could be even more terrorists or militants. This war has been going on for the past full decade. Isn't it time that those people who are involved in mediating, educating them, bringing them to the mainstream, do they need to review their approach? With the passage of

time, there is more resistance, the number is increasing. Nobody can claim when this thing will be brought to closure.

Robert Malley: I have several comments on your question on Hezbollah. I think clearly if the international community could stop the flow of money and weapons, it would weaken Hezbollah. That was the goal of [United Nations] Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701.[2] And look where we are. You won't be able to deal with it if you can't address the question of Syria, which brings us back to the earlier panel and the whole question of the peace process. So yes, as an objective, but since 2006, if anything, the trends have been in the other direction.

You say Hezbollah has been weakened. We could debate the extent to which it has been weakened. I think the Shi'ite community, from my experience—and you may have more—has an ambivalent relationship. They are dissatisfied with parts of Hezbollah's performance, its ideology. They may not espouse its very close relationship to Iran. So it may have anger, may have frustration, may have some dissent, but it has no alternative. I think the Shi'ite community for now is very much united behind Hezbollah. Hezbollah hasn't been losing elections; it wins the elections in the Shi'ite community. The rest, yes, you are right, in the last elections, General [Michel N.] Aoun and others may not have done quite as well. But Hezbollah has no real rival for the loyalty of its constituency.

So I don't think we can expect them to be weakened in any significant way. One has to take a more comprehensive view. It does come back to the question of Syria. It ultimately comes back to the question of Iran, and those are bigger issues that the United States needs to tackle.

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2 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559, adopted on September 2, 2004, reiterated "strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized borders" (http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/498/92/ PDF/ N0449892.pdf). United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, adopted on August 11, 2006, called for "a full cessation of hostilities," particularly those instigated by Hezbollah, and reiterated support for the provisions of all previous resolutions, including 1559 (http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/ 465/03/ PDF/N0646503.pdf).

Reiss: Let me talk about Abdul Sattar [Abu Risha]. A couple years ago, David Rose wrote an article in *Vanity Fair* in which he said that the United States missed this wonderful opportunity to actually end the insurgency in 2004–5 because we refused to talk to a number of Anbari sheikhs who were camped out in Amman, Jordan.[3] They had been telling us that they could turn off the insurgency like a faucet, and if only we would support them, give them arms and money, all of our problems would go away. One of the things that the chapter [in my book] on the Anbar Awakening does is to investigate that pretty thoroughly and discredit that whole idea. Those guys did not possess the qualities that you need—for one thing, they were not even in the country—that Abdul Sattar had.

So if he didn't exist, the cliché is that we would have had to invent him. But the problem is we couldn't invent him. So it's not clear that the Awakening would have survived without his courage and his leadership. But there were a whole host of other factors. He was a necessary but not sufficient condition. We could not have succeeded without [Abu Musab al-] Zarqawi overreaching and ratcheting up the violence to medieval levels, which so alienated the other Sunni tribes. Generals [Raymond T.] Odierno and Petraeus revised the strategy, and the "surge" had a big impact. So there were a number of factors. Abdul Sattar was absolutely crucial, but he wasn't the only one.

In terms of the gentleman suggesting that we change our approach, I think the whole conceit of my writing the book was to try to get us to talk, in a more adult and responsible fashion, about having governments reach out to some of these nonstate actors. It is almost toxic in the United States, it is the third rail of politics to think that we are going to be talking to a whole bunch of people that really have done some pretty evil and despicable things. But the reality is that from time to time, it may make sense to do so. What the book aims to do is try to figure out when it is in our national interest, when it is not, be able to

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3 David Rose, "Heads in the Sand," *Vanity Fair*, May 2009 (online at http://www.vanityfair.com/politics /features/2009/05/iraqi-insurgents200905).

distinguish problems like we saw with Iran–Contra, but also try to identify opportunities in the future.[4]

The good news, I suppose, if you want to say a silver lining, is that there will be more opportunities for governments to make these decisions, to have these decision points in the future. Hopefully, they will be able to make them wisely.

Kilcullen: I agree very much with that. I would just add the comment that one of the big factors in 2007 was that we had finally sufficient troop density and sufficient people out on the ground to protect people that turned against al-Qaeda. Many people had tried to do that before, and the consequences were fairly brutal. I think that was one of the major differences, as the ambassador pointed out.[5]

Question: Can you please shed some light on the difference between Taliban and al-Qaeda? Didn't we support the Taliban while they were fighting the Soviet Union? Now they are fighting against us. This can happen in any other situation, a similar situation. Talking with them and supporting them can be taken as hypocrisy on our behalf.

Question: My question is about Hamas and current thinking that there was some opportunity at the time of the political process they engaged in, and the election that brought them to the Palestinian Legislative Council. Is there any kind of rethinking of that history and its aftermath, and thinking that maybe there was an opportunity to engage in a political way, given the process that has led to the election? And whether the demands of the Quartet[6] could have been brought to bear in a different way?

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4 Mitchell B. Reiss, *Negotiating with Evil: When to Talk to Terrorists* (New York: Open Road Integrated Media, 2010).

5 See David Kilcullen, "Reading Anbar," *American Interest*, September–October 2010, 94–98.

6 The Quartet on the Middle East, often referred to simply as the Quartet, includes the United States, the United Nations, the European Union, and Russia.

Question: With respect to Afghanistan, it doesn't seem like there's anybody that represents the entire insurgency. It's so fragmented. Would we be better off negotiating with insurgents at a local level? Is there something we can do to address individual, local community issues, and the grievances they have? Would that be a better strategy?

Hardy: Peter, for you experts and scholars, is it possible to disentangle the Taliban from al-Qaeda? Are they fish and fowl, or kindred spirits?

Peter R. Neumann: I think I'll leave that to David because he's the authority on this. But what I can say is that it seems very clear to me that there are three tests for whether there's a point in engaging with insurgents or terrorists or not.

The first test is, are they actually interested in engaging with us? Are they at a point in their military campaign where they believe they cannot win by military force alone, but at a point where they believe that engaging in compromise and engagement is actually more beneficial to them than to continue fighting? When we talk about engaging with terrorists, a lot of people who are enthusiastic about that always only ask, "Are we ready to engage?" But we also have to ask, "Are our opponents and adversaries ready to engage?"

The second test seems to be—and this draws on what David said about the Taliban—are the people that we are talking to actually capable of implementing any emerging peace agreement? That is incredibly difficult when you are dealing with a diffuse actor like the Taliban, which does not have clear command and control. The great thing about the IRA [Irish Republican Army] was that we knew that Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, over a period of time, would be able to bring their entire organization with them. That was the great advantage that we don't necessarily have with the Taliban or with al-Qaeda.

The third test is, are these groups geographically confined? The endgame in most of these engagement processes is to integrate them into some kind of political system. When you have a transnational actor like al-Qaeda, which is spread all over the world and based in no particular country, it is incredibly difficult to have an endgame that is based on integrating them in some kind of governance.

So I would always apply these three tests. Do they match yours, Mitch?

Reiss: Peter is absolutely right on this. The book goes on at some length to talk about these, using the case studies as evidence. But let's try to cycle back for a second about whether it makes sense to talk to the Taliban. From an American perspective right now, if you just take the four elements that I highlighted you need to have:

• Are we defeating the Taliban on the battlefield or at least eroding their hope that they can be ultimately successful? I think David has already said that that probably isn't true.

• Do we have sufficient intel assets to be able to peer into this group? Again, we have heard that they are not monolithic, they are splintered, [with] different leadership. Mullah [Mohammed] Omar is over the border [in Pakistan]; it's unclear how much he controls. Probably not the sort of intel assets we need in order to really prepare for negotiation.

• Do we have a partner for peace? Again, unclear whether we do or not.

• Do we have the patience to sustain the effort on the ground in order to deliver that hopelessness to them and also to sustain a diplomatic engagement that may last for many years? It's unclear whether the American people really have the stomach for that.

There are also other actors. We haven't monopolized the diplomatic process yet. Many governments are talking to the Taliban. It must be confusing for them. They are getting different messages all the time at different levels, from Afghanistan, from Pakistan, from us, from the Saudis, and from others.

Finally, you don't have to take my word for it; the head of the CIA [Leon E. Panetta] twice in the last week has been quoted as saying that he sees no evidence that the Taliban are really genuine about negotiating with us at this time.

Hardy: David, al-Qaeda was in Afghanistan in the 1990s. Are they in Afghanistan now?

Kilcullen: There is certainly some al-Qaeda presence in Afghanistan now, but it's very small numbers. We often hear a discussion about how we need to prevent al-Qaeda from moving back into Afghanistan if we were to leave. I think it's highly unlikely that they would abandon a very effective safe haven in Pakistan to go to Afghanistan. I think that's a little bit of a red herring.

I think where al-Qaeda comes into the issue in Afghanistan is that we care about the Taliban because they make Afghanistan unstable. We care about Afghanistan being unstable because it's part of a broader regional pattern of instability that includes Pakistan, and in Pakistan we have over a hundred nuclear weapons, a fragile state, and al-Qaeda headquarters. So that's where it comes in. It's a sort of second- or third-order effect of failure in Afghanistan, that we would see a potential state collapse and access to nuclear weapons on the part of al-Qaeda. But I think in terms of day by day, it's not such a critical issue on the ground in Afghanistan.

I would just offer a comment also on Mitchell's point. One of the things that can happen—and it happened to us in Iraq, but I would

argue it happened to us by accident—is you can get into a situation where you've got a virtuous circle, where the better you target and kill the irreconcilable minority, the more willing everybody else is to reconcile with you. And the better the deal you offer to everybody else, the more isolated the last few irreconcilables become, so you can actually accelerate a process of movement toward peace by the way you both negotiate and target at the same time. That is certainly what happened in 2007–8 in Iraq, and it is certainly being talked about as something that we might try to do in Afghanistan right now. My only concern would be, I was there, I was part of the planning process in Iraq, [and] I'm not quite sure we know how we did it in Iraq. So I'm not sure we can pull it off again.

Malley: I think there were two moments, when it comes to Hamas, that were moments where we could have gone in a different direction. One was elections in 2006, which were immediately followed by the Quartet conditions, and the other was the sort of Mecca agreement made in 2007, which was accompanied by a decision by many—including by many Palestinians—that the best thing to do was to thwart it and to ensure that it wouldn't last long. There is a lot of debate about it in Europe. I know many European officials who now question the choices they made back then. I don't know that there's that much here, but I think certainly in Europe and in the United Nations and elsewhere, people are wondering whether it was the right approach. I want to suggest a few quick things about it.

I think it was costly after 2006 in terms of the message of support for democracy, and I think it was costly in terms of our being able to influence Hamas, which was, divided may be too strong a word, but there was a trend that was more interested in politics, and one that had opposed participation in elections for a long time and then finally acquiesced or lost that debate. I think that because of the choices that were made after 2006 and 2007, it has hardened a certain view within

Hamas, and of course it has given democracy a bad name in quite a few places around the region.

I don't want to sound naïve. I don't know whether if one were to change policy toward Hamas—and again, it doesn't necessarily mean talking to them, though it could—I'm not sure Hamas could change in a way that people would like them to change. What I do know is that what has been done so far has not put them to the test. The Quartet conditions are conditions that no official in Hamas could even come close to thinking of accepting because they go to the core of the ideology rather than to the more nuanced area of practice. I always thought that is what we should have done. The conditions we should have put are a real cease-fire in the West Bank and Gaza and acceptance of a process or endorsing President [Mahmoud] Abbas's ability to negotiate on behalf of all Palestinians, and then to put an agreement to referendum, and to acquiesce in the outcome of that referendum. That seemed to me to be more logical; both more meaningful in some ways, and a harder test for Hamas to turn down. It would have created tensions within the movement. By putting the three conditions that the Quartet put, which may make sense theoretically, we spared them the need to come to terms with their own views.

Question: David Kilcullen, I totally agreed with your presentation. I thought it excellently set out the need for a carefully targeted military posture that would encourage bottom-up peace. I'd like to invite you to say a bit about the economic posture that needs to be adopted as well. I'm thinking mainly of Afghanistan, but I think it's widely applicable. Foreign aid can enormously reduce the incentives for peace, both because it artificially promotes some communities at the expense of others, and because it actually can be seen as, in a strange way, a reward for continued conflict, for as long as it's seen as tied to a crisis which when it ends, so does the foreign aid. I'd like to invite you to add a little point on that.

Question: Mr. Kilcullen, in an ideal scenario where we start to engage from the bottom up or community-based level, what would be the role of the military, and how would they support this type of engagement?

Hardy: You don't all have to make final remarks, but it's your chance to make them. Peter, do you want to add anything?

Neumann: I'm fine.

Hardy: Rob?

Malley: Just one thing, on a very interesting intervention I heard today from the other panelists. I think the message I get is what Mitchell Reiss said earlier. I think we need to demystify this question. There may be cases where different approaches are necessary, but to demystify it, turn it less into the toxic issue it has become, particularly in the cases that I have worked on, but I'm sure it's true in others as well. Any shift in our current policy—which I believe is failing, at least in the two instances I work on most—any shift is a betrayal of our principles, any shift is a betrayal of our allies. I think there are many different ways we could go about it which would be better for us and better for them.

Kilcullen: I don't have any follow-up remarks, but I might just answer those two questions. In terms of economic posture, there is a lot of research out there, ranging from Dambisa Moyo, a Kenyan World Bank economist, through Bill Easterly, Paul Collier, various other people, suggesting that aid often does have a destabilizing effect.[7] In fact, any influx of cash into an underdeveloped economy is likely to have a desta-bilizing effect, regardless of the origin. I think what we found in places like Afghanistan and Iraq is that community-based investments, such as, for example, the World Bank's National Solidarity Program in

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7 Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is Another Way for Africa* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009); William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006); Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Afghanistan, have done a lot better than large-scale international donor programs.

But I would even tend to suggest that we move out of the concept of aid to a broader concept of aid, trade, and investment, where investing in private-sector new company formation at the local level seems to be much more effective in generating ownership with communities. There are a lot of examples where we give people a power plant and the Taliban come along and blow it up because it's a symbol of the government. If you sell it to them, the Taliban aren't going to blow it up, and if they try, the locals are going to fight them. It is a completely different model. But you have to do that in a fair trade way which works with communities on a good basis.

In fact, one of the most important roles of the international assistance programs is to provide economic support to allow Western businesses to do deals in these areas with some guarantee of some kind of return, and in a way that isn't punitive toward the interests of local peoples. So it is sort of upstream pricing support and regulatory support that we can provide. Lots of other things to say about that; it's a whole other topic.

In terms of military posture, I think the most important thing the military can do to enable this kind of thing is to stay the hell out of these situations. If you do go in, then I think you need to think about yourself in terms of dealing with instability rather than dealing with enemies. You need to approach the problem of instability as the problem rather than try to identify individual actors and kill them, and sort of assume if I just kill this guy, the problem of instability is going to go away. It doesn't really work like that.

You need to take a posture where you say, all right, there are 300 problems in this district. It's Afghanistan or Iraq, so probably 90 percent of them can't be fixed, and they certainly can't be fixed by some dude

who doesn't even come from here, so let's triage down to problems that are actually creating instability, that are actually being exploited by violent actors, that we can do something about in a meaningful time frame with the resources we have available. You usually find one or two carefully focused, limited interventions that have a much better result. I mean, if you went into Kentucky and tried to disarm the population, you'd probably have some significant problems. You go into Anbar and try to do that, the result is history.

Reiss: I think it's very important for policy makers to have some humility. I was down at CENTCOM[8] doing some research, talking to a very senior official there who was speaking glowingly of all the progress that was taking place in Afghanistan. After about 15 or 20 minutes of this, he stopped and wanted my reaction. I said, "I certainly hope you're right, but you've got to remember, we've been working on the D.C. school system for 30 years." We just have to be a little bit more modest in terms of what we think we can accomplish, especially in foreign cultures, foreign societies, people whose languages we don't speak and whose ways we don't understand.

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8 U.S. Central Command, the joint command that oversees U.S. military interests in the Middle East and Central Asia, is based at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida.

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New Approaches to Nonstate Armed Actors

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Contributors

Negotiating with Terrorists
Mitchell B. Reiss

State vs. Nonstate Interventions in Fragile States
David Kilcullen

What are Our Objectives with Nonstate Actors?
Robert Malley

De-radicalization and Disengagement Programs
Peter R. Neumann

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