

Editor **Efraim Inbar**

*Democracies  
and  
Small Wars*

BESA Studies in International Security



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# DEMOCRACIES AND SMALL WARS

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# Democracies and Small Wars

*Editor*

EFRAIM INBAR



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# Introduction

## EFRAIM INBAR

Since the end of the Cold War, large-scale conventional conflict and nuclear war have become a more remote possibility for Western democracies. In the twenty-first century, most democracies are prosperous and technologically advanced, which makes them also relatively powerful, as well as status quo powers. The main security challenges of contemporary Western democracies are small wars, often called low-intensity conflicts. India is probably the only exception, having to face also the imminent challenge of large-scale conventional war with its neighbors, and even the possibility of escalation to a nuclear exchange. The growing disparities in technological and economic capabilities in the world lead to numerous asymmetries in military power, which are likely to increase the incidence of small wars, the classic 'poor man's war',<sup>1</sup> in case of unresolved conflict.<sup>2</sup>

Small wars—a term originally used by the British to categorize their colonial campaigns<sup>3</sup>—combine several distinct characteristics.<sup>4</sup> These conflicts are asymmetric, due to a gap in the discernible power of the opponents. Such engagements fall into the category of limited war, since at least one side of the armed conflict employs only a part of its total military power. Obviously, the British campaign against the Mau Mau in Kenya, or the French in Indo-China, were secondary theaters for the Western powers, which consumed only a part of their military forces. It is usually the stronger part that places limits on resources committed to deal with the security challenge posed by the weaker protagonist.

The military strategy chosen is an additional criterion for identifying small wars. Generally, the weaker side adopts a military strategy of attrition because it lacks sufficient military muscle to force a battle decision (a strategy of annihilation) on its stronger opponent.<sup>5</sup> In the absence of sufficient conventional might to coerce the opponent into accepting its political program, the insurgents employ attrition that is designed to exhaust their enemies over time. Such a military strategy stresses the cumulative effect to be obtained during the course of a prolonged sequence of intermittent military actions, none of which alone can be regarded as decisive in the attainment of political objectives. Guerrillas, terrorists, insurgents all employ such long-term strategies. On the part of the state, too, the typical form of fighting is characterized by the use of small military units, often in a low-profile mode in terms of the media coverage, due to topographical and political circumstances. Therefore, wars of attrition take more time and are often termed protracted conflict. Examples of such multi-year struggles include the Chechens against Russia, the Hizbullah in the Israeli security zone in Southern Lebanon, or the Mizo people against the Indian state.

Generally, political high stakes, rather than incremental changes in the political or strategic environment motivate at least one side to the discord in a small war. The Viet Cong fought for regime change in South Vietnam and for unification. The Palestinian radical Muslims advocate a protracted struggle to attain the demise of the state of Israel. The IRA's goal is replacing British rule in North Ireland with the sovereignty of the Irish Republic. The far-reaching goals contribute to the length of the conflict, as compromise is more difficult, and at times seems inconceivable since the conflict often takes a zero-sum game form. Indeed, small wars usually do not end with a political compromise, but with the political defeat of one side, which takes place only after a lengthy and bloody struggle. It took Turkey over a decade to subdue the PKK, and only the capture of its leader Abdullah Öcalan and the emergence of an unsupportive regional context, in which obtaining outside support for the PKK became extremely difficult, put an end to the PKK insurgency. Only after many years of US combat in Vietnam did the American society reach a stage of war weariness that led to the realization that the price for achieving American goals in Vietnam was too high and to the political ripeness of the highest echelons to accept defeat (which was packaged as peace accords).

Small wars have additional characteristics. Absence of an easily identifiable front line is one such feature, which hinders the capability of a conventionally trained army to respond effectively. Similarly problematic for the military, as well as the political level, is the fact that insurgencies have no clear chronological beginning. They emerge rather than erupt, making the societal transition to a war routine lengthier and more difficult. There are many examples of delays in recognizing the emerging challenge resulting in unnecessary postponements in crafting the appropriate military and political response. Despite the omnipresence of small wars, military establishments still prepare mostly for large-scale conventional war. As several essays in this volume document, more often than not they are ill prepared to meet the exigencies of small wars in terms of structure, equipment and training.

Is the type of regime a variable of consequence in this type of conflict? The literature in international relations on democracies at war is voluminous. According to the democratic peace theory, democratic states do not fight each other, although they do get involved no less in wars than non-democratic states.<sup>6</sup> Many studies have shown that democracies divert more resources to wage war and have better chances to emerge victorious. They seem even to suffer fewer casualties than closed societies.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, they enjoy advantages in terms of the quality of the manpower at their disposal.<sup>8</sup> Another issue covered by the literature is the democracies' advantage over other regimes in making credible commitments, which is relevant to deterrence, escalation and the level of international cooperation.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, democracies fighting small wars have attracted much less attention in the literature.

This is the focus of this volume and all essays address—in one way or another—the challenges faced by democracies in the conduct of small wars. By their nature, democracies clearly have greater constraints than autocratic regimes on their freedom of action as they have to meet constitutional, legal and moral criteria in their use of force, and particularly so regarding the management of small wars. There are limits on the ruthlessness to which democracies can recur in subduing their enemies. The relatively slower decision-making processes, due to a less centralized system than in autocracies

reduces the amount of flexibility required for waging small wars. Democratic political processes, including engaging in war, also require a certain amount of transparency, which is invariably at the expense of the military operational needs for secrecy. Unquestionably, democracies pay a certain price in combat effectiveness for maintaining their values. When the threat perception is high, as in large-scale conventional wars, the willingness to bend the democratic rules is correspondingly greater. In contrast, many of the small wars are often characterized by a debate over their importance or over the magnitude of the threat posed to the democratic state, which can impose difficulties in conducting small wars. Indeed, the record of democracies in this respect is mixed. As noted by the literature, they are able to recruit better manpower and enjoy technological superiority over their adversaries. Western democracies are nowadays richer and also have better extractive mechanisms to finance increasingly expensive campaigns. Yet democracies are handicapped in their fighting capacity by lack of social cohesion. A large public consensus is a necessary condition for developing the staying power in protracted armed conflicts. These motifs are clearly addressed in this collection, which brings a number of case studies showing how democracies have won small wars.

The first part of this volume deals with several issues in a comparative perspective. In the first contribution, Avi Kober initially discusses the nature of post-modern low-intensity conflicts. Subsequently, he addresses the question of the effectiveness of Western democracies in coping with the challenges posed by this reality. The author claims that as a result of a change in values within Western democratic societies, the conduct of small wars by Western democracies has become significantly constrained by the need to manage such conflicts morally and in a manner which is less costly primarily in terms of casualties. Kober asserts that although the insurgents can muster the new technological capabilities as a force multiplier, the mightier Western democracies can use their technological superiority for conducting small wars, both with greater efficiency and at less human cost on both sides, thus being able to win such wars despite their protracted nature and the heavy societal and political constraints imposed on democratic states.

The second essay, by Stuart A. Cohen, analyzes civil-military relations in small wars. He argues that the dynamics small wars lend themselves to result in more tensions in the civil-military sphere than in conventional large-scale engagements. The gradual manner in which small wars make their appearance allows for differences in threat perceptions between the military and the politicians, while their protracted nature and the inability of the army to achieve quick victories undermine the trust between the generals and their political masters. Moreover, the fuzziness of the missions required for dealing with the small war challenges exacerbates the likelihood of civil-military tensions and their intensity. Cohen's comparative study shows that long-term coordination between the military and political levels has been the exception rather than the rule. This is a bad omen for democracies in future small-scale conflicts.

In the next essay, Ron Schleifer focuses on a neglected aspect, of considerable strategic importance, particularly in small wars—psychological warfare. He analyzes the vulnerabilities of democracies to the psychological warfare conducted by the insurgents who exploit the creeping nature of the conflict, the gradual gearing of a democratic society towards a war psychology, the need for the emergence of a new mix of values in tune both with the conduct of war, as well as with the pluralist values of the domestic

political arena. Schleifer goes on to focus on the messages disseminated by the insurgents and points out the reluctance of democracies to engage in psychological operations. In the last part of his essay, the author suggests ways to improve the performance of democracies in the area of psychological warfare. Educating the public about the part psychological warfare plays in small wars, changing the attitudes toward psychological operations and building an appropriate organizational network could alleviate the problems democracies suffer from as a result of their built-in vulnerabilities, and eventually could bring victory.

Jonathan Fox examines the influence of regime as well as the end of the Cold War on the intensity of ethnic conflict from 1985 to 1998 using a quantitative approach (and data from the 'Minorities at Risk' dataset). As expected, the results show that nearly all violent ethnic conflicts are small wars. However, breaking down small wars into different sub-categories, according to the level of violence, shows that terrorism is the most common form of ethnic conflict in democratic states, and guerrilla warfare and local rebellions are more common in autocratic states. The data indicates also that violent conflicts are of longer duration in democracies than in other regimes. Ethnic conflict in those states that democratized between 1984 and 1994 exhibited features similar to autocracies during the 1980s, but by the late 1990s ethnic conflict in these states was more similar to those in democracies. The end of the Cold War is associated with a temporary rise in ethnic conflict during the early 1990s in autocracies and democratizing states and a drop in ethnic conflict in democracies. Furthermore, there was no disproportional rise or fall in religious or civilizational conflict during this period, which puts Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' theory in question.

The second part of this collection looks at several case studies. The first contribution deals with the United States. In an American-dominated world, with no real competition on the horizon, it is the democratic hegemonic power that will engage most in small wars. Thomas G. Mahnken analyzes the American way of war and how suitable it is for this type of challenge. At the strategic level, the US includes a preference for waging wars for far-reaching political objectives with direct strategies. Recent conflicts have also shown an increased concern over casualties, particularly on the part of the military. At the operational level, it favors an industrial approach to war that puts a premium on firepower. At the tactical level, it emphasizes advanced technology, precision, air power, and special operations forces. While some features of the American way of war comport well with the requirements of small wars, others conflict with the needs of such conflicts. It remains to be seen how the US, the hegemonic power, will adapt to the small war requirements. The future of the international system may depend on it.

The largest democracy in the world, India, still faces many security challenges. In his essay, Sankaran Kalyanaraman focuses on India's treatment of the Naga, Mizo and Kashmiri insurgencies. The overall political concept in India's armed struggle against insurgents was nation building, which attempted to integrate the insurgents into the Indian political system. This dictated determination, much patience in gaining control over the insurgents' territories and great military restraint, that is, refraining from using heavy weapons and air power. The military policies were accompanied by a continuous effort to win the minds and hearts of the civilian population. The Indian governments were astute politically to exploit intra-insurgent conflicts to strengthen the government grip over the disputed territories.

The following essay, by (ümit Özda and Ersel Aydmh, analyzes the stages the Turkish state went through until it succeeded in defeating the PKK separatist terror. The authors identify five challenges that determined the success of the Turkish state's dealings with the PKK between 1974 and 2000:

1. The diagnosing of the nature and the scope of the PKK threat;
2. The coordination of relations between the Turkish security establishment and the political level;
3. The adaption of the Turkish armed forces to fight small wars;
4. The winning of popular support; and
5. Coping with international and regional support for the PKK.

The essay shows the ways in which each of these challenges were perceived and managed over time. It then explores the turning points in the successful management of the armed conflict, as well as identifying the interactions among the various challenges and their relevance to the ultimate results of the conflict. The authors point out that in the absence of a comprehensive political plan to tackle the issue of the Kurdish minority in Turkey, the military victory may only postpone the need to resolve the problem.

In the next essay, André Gerolymatos analyzes the failure of three communist efforts to gain control of a fledgling democracy, Greece, in the period between 1943 and 1949. The communists miscalculated in all three rounds, ultimately resorting to civil war rather than accepting a political compromise. One important factor in their failure was their inability to maintain a consistent policy during this period. Another factor was the limited appeal of the communists within Greece. They failed to attract a mass following, particularly in the towns and cities, while most of the support came from the left-wing resistance, the disgruntled Slavic minorities in Northern Greece and the Greek refugees from Asia Minor. Finally, the communist leadership was not attuned enough to the international environment, which placed constraints on the armed struggle and eventually put an end to critical foreign support and to the availability of safe sanctuaries.

Steven R. David analyzes the Israeli policy of targeted killing during the current Israeli-Palestinian confrontation. The author suggests that the effectiveness of this policy is unclear. While there is evidence that targeted killing has hindered the capability of terrorist organizations by eliminating skilled operatives, by keeping bomb makers and bombers on the run, by deterring would-be suicide bombers, and by minimizing bad publicity, targeted killing has not, however, protected the Israeli public from terrorist attacks as a record number of Israelis have been killed at the same time targeted killings have reached unprecedented levels. Moreover, targeted killing has provoked murderous retaliations, burned informers, diverted intelligence agencies from more pressing threats, provoked international condemnation, and created martyrs. Nevertheless, David finds targeted killing to serve Israel's interests, as it focuses on the actual perpetrators of terrorism while minimizing harm to innocents. It also provides a sense of revenge to an Israeli public that demands a response, as well as providing retribution against those who otherwise would go unpunished. Moreover, it is the least objectionable response to terror attacks, and it is estimated that over the long term the policy will erode the effectiveness

of the terror infrastructure. The author ends by making suggestions on how Israel can make this policy more palatable both to Israeli and international public opinion.

Jonathan Stevenson addresses the situation in Northern Ireland, where the British democracy has tried to channel the grievances of the Irish nationalists, which were expressed also in terrorist activities, to the negotiating table. The author documents the strategy adopted by Sinn Féin to exploit, partly by using force, the vulnerabilities of a democratic regime, and the significant inroads they made. Britain was successful in lowering gradually the level of violence of the militant Irish wing by displaying democratic responsiveness to many of its demands. However, Britain cannot go along with the radical vision of the future held by the Irish extremists, which means that the conflict will continue and the British democracy will have to learn to manage it.

Hillel Frisch, in the concluding essay, addresses the question of the effectiveness of the Palestinians in playing the Israeli democratic card. He analyzes whether Palestinians perceived Israel's democratic regime as an important characteristic in its own right, and how they tried to take advantage of this in order to achieve their objectives. Despite initial disinterest, the Palestinians placed increasing importance on the dynamics of Israeli democracy in achieving their goal, especially after the historic Likud electoral success in 1977. However, capitalizing on these presumed advantages presented by Israeli democracy as a means of reducing Israeli consensus and legitimacy resulted in strains in Palestinian society, which manifested themselves in the conflict between two paradigms: the paradigm of the bullets-reflecting the PLO's deep roots and commitment to terrorist violence and catharsis ideologies; and the paradigm of the ballots, that reached its peak in the present Israeli-Palestinian confrontation. Arafat's adoption of the paradigm of the bullets in September 2000 seriously hurt the Palestinians, who seem to be learning the hard way that Israeli democracy was a two-edged sword—at times wielded to their advantage, lately to their disadvantage.

Democracies fighting small wars and the ongoing limited war Israel is involved in against the Palestinians were naturally important subjects of inquiry for think tanks in Israel. In light of the importance of the subject, the Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University together with the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs in New York convened an international conference in June 2002 to debate the many aspects of democracies and small wars. The main purpose of the proceedings was to enhance the intellectual baggage needed for such campaigns. This collection of essays is the outgrowth of this stimulating intellectual exercise that involved academics from various parts of the world, as well as practitioners in government and in the military.

Several organizations joined in this venture. Many thanks are due to the Sarah and Simha Lainer Chair in Democracy and Civility and the Ihel Foundation at Bar-Ilan University, the United States Information Agency and the History Department of the Israel Defense Force, which showed interest in the conference and lent it financial support.

My colleagues Stuart A. Cohen, Avi Kober and Shmuel Sandler provided important advice in refining the conceptual structure of the conference. The BESA staff worked assiduously as ever to secure the success of the conference and to produce this collection. I am grateful to Elisheva Brown, in particular, for her unreserved devotion and her keen editorial eye. This endeavor benefited from her patient but meticulous approach. The

trust and friendship of Mustafa Aydın and Ümit Özdağ are most appreciated. Finally, my deep gratitude is to the contributors to this volume who put up with successive demands for revisions and worked hard to meet the requirements of the editor, his staff and the deadline. I learned a lot from them and I hope that this will also be the reaction of our readers.

## NOTES

1. Ian F.W.Becket, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. ix.
2. Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), pp. 206–8.
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## Part I

# Democracies and Small Wars in Comparative Perspective



# Western Democracies in Low Intensity Conflict: Some Postmodern Aspects

AVI KOBER

Western democracies have been engaged in small wars and low intensity conflicts (LICs) fairly extensively since World War II. During the Cold War they found themselves involved in struggles against groups and organizations for national liberation in Asia and Africa. They have also faced LICs in the framework of East—West rivalry, when Soviet-sponsored insurgency was directed against them. In the post-Cold War era, by contrast, they have been coping with LIC challenges stemming from the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and from the blend of ethnic aspirations and religious extremism.

As one can tell from the names given by Western democracies to sub-conventional conflicts during the Cold War era—‘LICs’ by Americans, ‘small wars’ by the British, or ‘current security’ by Israelis—there has been a tendency to understate their significance. Despite their pervasiveness, importance, sometimes quite sophisticated nature, and devastating results for the weaker side’s people,<sup>1</sup> they have usually been perceived of as being low-stake, less intense conflicts—sometimes even quite primitive—in comparison with traditional, symmetrical, inter-state high intensity conflicts (HICs).<sup>2</sup> As such, they have required neither national mobilization nor an extensive commitment of resources.<sup>3</sup> Some of these characteristics seem to have changed in the aftermath of the Cold War.

This essay will point to changes that constitute significant departures from modern characteristics of LICs. The new face of LICs is referred to as ‘postmodern LICs’. The term does not characterize LICs of our time in general. It applies to the relatively few LICs in which Western democracies have been involved since the 1980s, and has so far been typical of two countries in particular—the US and Israel. It is irrelevant to most non-Western democracies and to most of their opponents. Postmodern LICs have in recent years been referred to in the literature from five main angles, either separately or in combination: political, strategic, technological, sociological, and economical.<sup>4</sup> While the theoretical discussion has been limited in scope, one can find many studies that focus on empirical case studies. Although most of the studies have reflected a Western democratic perspective, they did not focus on the triangle of Western democracies—postmodern war—LICs. This article undertakes to analyze some aspects of this triangle and to address two main questions. First, what is the nature of postmodern LIC reality? Second, how effective can Western democracies be in coping with the challenges posed by this reality? The main argument is that as a result of a change in values in Western democratic societies, the conduct of LICs by Western democracies has become significantly constrained by the need to manage such conflicts morally and in a less costly manner.

Although technology has become a force multiplier for the weak, the stronger Western democracy can mobilize its technological edge for conducting LICs both effectively and at less cost, thus being able to sustain such conflicts despite their protracted nature.

The first part of the article will characterize postmodern LIC reality and the challenges it has produced. The second part will try to explain why and how Western democracies can cope with these challenges.

### THE FACE OF POSTMODERN LICs

In the post-Cold War era, a new, expanded approach to security has emerged. Threats are now originating on the domestic, rather than the external scene, and their nature is comprehensive, rather than military. Given the nature of the new threats, the response entails non-military, as well as military dimensions. The commitment to protect the well-being of the individual has replaced the commitment to assure the well-being of the state.<sup>5</sup> All these trends in the phenomenon of LICs will be discussed below. This new LIC reality manifests itself at both the systemic and the unit levels. As many LICs are nowadays internal conflicts, the systemic level also refers to sub-state players.

#### *The Systemic Level*

*Challenges.* In the past, it made sense to distinguish between conventional, unconventional, and sub-conventional low intensity conflicts. Nowadays, the capability of terrorists to demoralize entire societies and the availability of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to non-state actors,<sup>6</sup> in combination with the salience of personal safety (for reasons discussed below) have aggravated the threats stemming from LICs and blurred the traditional border between different types of conflicts and threats.

In the US, LICs are still conceptually associated with a third-grade category of conflicts, representing a significantly lesser challenge than both first-grade-global existential threats—and second grade—intermediate threats such as a Gulf War-like challenge.<sup>7</sup> In 1994, US Defense Secretary William Perry distinguished between situations involving ‘vital’ national interests that require a readiness to risk military action; ‘important but not vital’ interests, where force should be used more selectively; and ‘humanitarian’ interests, where force should be used only if needed to deal with a catastrophe.<sup>8</sup> The worldwide war on terrorism that the US declared following September 11, however, meant that it was now practically treating the apparent third-grade challenge as if it were a first-grade one. The reason for this is obviously the fact that the terrorists have brought the war to American soil.

Israelis have traditionally considered ‘current security’ threats—their name for guerrilla or terrorist activities conducted against their military or civilians—a minor challenge relative to the ‘basic security’ threats posed by the regular armies of the Arab states.<sup>9</sup> But as early as ten years before the end of the Cold War, this distinction began to erode. Four examples appear to testify to this erosion. First, in the early 1980s, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon reintroduced new *casi belli* to Israeli defense policy, including, for the first time, a tacit *casus belli* that for many in Israel related to ‘current security’ threats—insurgency from neighboring countries.<sup>10</sup> In 1986, Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir

reacted to an attempt made by a Syria-dispatched Abu Nidal operative to place a bomb on an El Al plane leaving London's Heathrow Airport for Tel Aviv,<sup>11</sup> by declaring that, had the aircraft been exploded, Israel might have launched a war against Syria.<sup>12</sup> In 1995, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin declared, for the first time, that, for Israel, terrorism represented a 'strategic threat'.<sup>13</sup> Finally, in the midst of a wave of Palestinian suicide bombers against Israeli citizens in 2002, Israeli Chief-of-Staff Shaul Mofaz said that, for Israel, the conflict was 'an existential war',<sup>14</sup> while Prime Minister Sharon declared that Defensive Shield Operation against Palestinian terrorism in March/April 2002 was 'over our home'.<sup>15</sup>

*Missions.* In postmodern LICs, it is often difficult to distinguish between traditional military challenges, on the one hand, and crime, which needs to be treated by law enforcement forces, on the other. Postmodern terrorism, in particular, all too often resembles criminal activity. Both organized crime groups and politically-motivated insurgents could adopt terror strategies or tactics—the first in order to maximize profits, the latter to produce a political outcome. In light of this ambiguity, postmodern LIC has sometimes been referred to as Gray-Area War. The term stands for a situation that 'involves an enemy...that seeks primarily profit, but which has political overtones and a substantially greater capability for strategic planning and the conduct of armed conflict than traditional criminal groups'.<sup>16</sup> The process wherein the distinction between military and police operations has blurred is no novelty—one of its typical expressions has been narco-terrorism<sup>17</sup>—but it has intensified in the postmodern era.

In the post-Cold War era a new, postmodern concept of missions has emerged which has blended the defense of the homeland with missions such as humanitarian operations, drug enforcement, or coping with ecological degradation, leading to an increasing convergence between non-military and military missions.<sup>18</sup> The forces involved in such missions, too, have been characterized by a blend of military and non-military means and methods. A good example of this effect is the concept of Operations Other Than War (OOTW), which appeared in the US Army's doctrine in the early 1990s. It confuses traditional missions fulfilled by the military, such as 'support for insurgencies and counterinsurgencies', typical of modern LICs, and missions that do not require any combat, ranging from 'support to US, state and local governments, disaster relief, nation assistance, and drug interdiction to peacekeeping, noncombatant evacuation, and peace enforcement'.<sup>19</sup> The latter have not deserved to be included in the framework of the conservative, modern approach to LICs. True, LICs in which no significant combat ensued already took place during the Cold War, as was demonstrated by the American intervention in the Dominican Republic (1965), Grenada (1983), and Panama (1989); or the Soviet intervention in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968). However, LICs involving a very limited use of force, if any at all, might be even more typical of a transitional period from conflict to peace, such as the post-Cold War era. Examples include the American interagency involvement in El Salvador (1989), the American intervention in Haiti (1995), the multi-national operation in Somalia (1992), the American relief operation in Northern Iraq (1991), or NATO's intervention in the civil war in Bosnia. They may become a pattern in areas undergoing a transition to peace, such as the Middle East. Challenges that might characterize such a period include, for instance,

various violations of agreements, attempts to bring deadlocked negotiations back on track by a use of limited force, civil uprising, or support for friendly regimes in jeopardy.<sup>20</sup>

*Players.* Walter Laqueur depicted postmodern terrorism, *inter alia*, as one carried out by weird individuals, such as the technology-hating Unabomber.<sup>21</sup> Yet, this is not the only change that has taken place in postmodern LICs as far as players are concerned. One of the most interesting new phenomena concerns the increasing role played by the media in such conflicts. As Moskos and others have pointed out,<sup>22</sup> the media has become more independent and has lowered its dependence on governmental or military authorities for fulfilling its mission. This is true for obtaining information as well as for being at the scene of hostilities. When intervention in LICs (generally an undesirable option for Western democracies), took place (for example, in Somalia, Haiti, or Bosnia), the media often were already independently based on the scene long before the interventionary force arrived, and had also become logistically self-supportive. As such, they have become an indispensable and valuable information source for the military about the political, societal, and military situations in the country where the troops are to operate.

The 'CNN effect' has also intensified with the growing independence of the media. Whereas in the past the government usually initiated agendas, now often governments respond to the initiatives of the media. One of the assets at the media's disposal is commercial remote sensing. Bomb damage assessments, for example, are now subject to technical analysis and debate by NGOs and news media. Thus, as with the internet and other advanced information technologies, commercial satellite imagery challenges the ability of state authorities in Western democracies to maintain control of policy debates, in general, and in LIC situations in particular.<sup>23</sup>

Transnational terrorism, which consists of members from different countries that perform their terrorist attacks in different geographical areas, and is not confined to any particular state but is rather frontier-less, and transcends state and ethnic boundaries, like Al Qaeda, is no novelty.<sup>24</sup> However, during the 1960s and 1970s only leftist groups were associated with transnational terrorism, whereas today transnational terrorist groups seem to be religious.

*Capabilities.* For many years, so as to compensate for its military-technological inferiority, it was common that the weak side in LIC situations had no alternative but to use an attrition strategy, in which it could demonstrate a higher tolerance of societal cost.<sup>25</sup> The weak are no longer technologically backward, however. They, too, can today exploit hitherto untried technologies, such as WMDs and Information Warfare (IW). As has been pointed out, the September 11 terrorist attacks constituted a new kind of challenge, integrating three different and older forms of political violence: terrorism, political suicide, and mass destruction.<sup>26</sup> WMDs are threatening mostly when in the hands of insurgents such as religious extremists or terrorists driven by ideologies even more aberrant than before.<sup>27</sup> Threats that do not stem from a government are very difficult to deter.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the behavior of insurgents can hardly be predicted. As these problems have already been fairly extensively addressed in the literature, the focus here will be on IW.

Information has become central for conflict management, both in HICs and LICs. Mainstream thought on IW has stressed the need for information superiority in general and obtaining dominance in battlefield knowledge (DBK) in particular.<sup>29</sup> Should

developments in the field of information warfare, as part of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), make it possible to bypass any physical, operational confrontation between armed forces, this would constitute a revolution in the conduct of war.<sup>30</sup> Causing the collapse of the enemy's civil and military systems by hitting information centers of gravity could be considered the realization of Sun Tzu's and Liddell Hart's dream 'to subdue the enemy without fighting', or 'to produce a decision without any serious fighting'.<sup>31</sup>

The current situation is one wherein Western democracies, in general, and the US in particular, enjoy technological supremacy over their enemies. But this might also prove to be a disadvantage. Given the dialectic nature of technological developments throughout the history of war, technological, organizational, and doctrinal counter-measures are likely to be taken not only by states and regular forces but also by sub-state players and irregular forces.<sup>32</sup> Western democracies provide the enemy with centers of gravity, which are relatively easy to hit by simple means. For example, 95 percent of US military communications are conducted through commercial lines.<sup>33</sup> Their open political and social systems make it easier to obtain information that could be used against them. By using IW means, insurgents can, for example, carry out propaganda campaigns, raise funds, or assault Western democracies' information centers, rather than confront them face-to-face. Info-insurgents do not need to be physically present at the scene of action, but can rather act from a long distance—hundreds, or even thousands, of miles away. They are likely to enjoy 'a reasonable degree of command and control from a laptop computer with a satellite modem and web cam situated anywhere in the world, with their transmissions encrypted and bounced throughout the web in order to complicate tracing'.<sup>34</sup> For example, before September 11, Osama bin Laden was using the internet to communicate with his underground network.<sup>35</sup>

Insurgents have long realized that LICs are largely determined by their success in finding external allies. They therefore have strong incentives to win the support of as many international players as possible. Building such a coalition electronically, via the internet, is a sophisticated option at the weak's disposal, as was fairly successfully applied in the 1990s by the Zapatistas in southern Mexico in their struggle against the Mexican government and army. Instead of fighting in the traditional manner, they used the internet to disseminate information about violence applied against them by the government and managed to gain the support of left-wing and human-rights groups in the West.<sup>36</sup>

Hacking, that is, penetrating and disrupting a system, is yet another IW tactic available to insurgents.<sup>37</sup> internet fundamentalists—Super-Empowered Angry Men, as Thomas Friedman has called them—might reject Western values and be faithful to a fundamentalist lifestyle. But, at the same time, they can use Western technology against the West and inflict greater damage than they were able to cause in the past. Examples include the Tamil separatists' attack on the Sri Lankan embassy in Washington in 1998 via the internet, whereby they flooded the embassy with bomb threats and junk e-mail.<sup>38</sup>

Another postmodern IW means, which could also be used by insurgents, is Electronic Civil Disobedience. Modern civil disobedience has usually taken the form of street protests or on-the-ground disruptions and disturbance of urban infrastructure, as practiced by Gandhi against the British in India or by the Palestinians against both the British and the Israelis in different periods and contexts. Postmodern civil disobedience, on the other hand, is about applying such tactics to the internet, with the internet

infrastructure becoming both a means for communication and a site for direct action. Although such activity would most probably serve those who do not aim at threatening the legitimate government, let alone toppling the regime, it might open possibilities for groups struggling for national liberation or revolution.<sup>39</sup>

### *The Unit Level*

*Value Change.* Throughout the twentieth century, and particularly in the post-World War II era, the concept of 'national security' dominated the field of security. Its centrality was based on the premise that the nation-state was the dominant actor in the international system, and that it enjoyed a monopoly over the defense of its territory and citizens. National interests and the pursuit of national capabilities so as to defend the state and achieve its national goals were basic motives, and the individual was expected to serve his country whenever needed. This, too, has changed, however. Western democracies now set the individual and his personal safety before the collective interest, tending to reject heroism and the notion of sacrificing oneself for one's nation,<sup>40</sup> especially in cases where the stakes are not sufficiently high, as is typical of many LICs.<sup>41</sup> This value change has coincided with enhanced terrorist capabilities and has severely been affected by it. Terrorist activities, in particular, have brought violence to citizens' homes. And, although they would generally not be capable of significantly endangering the Western democracies' national security, let alone its survival, they might challenge the personal safety of its citizens, thereby demoralizing them. This explains why terrorist threats now require the use of unprecedented counter-measures.

One of the impacts of the centrality of personal safety, on the one hand, and the great damage terrorism can inflict on the citizens of Western democracies, on the other, could be erosion of the foundation upon which the social contract and the nation-state have been founded—the belief in the state's ability to provide for the security of its citizens. In the age of globalization, many nation-states, particularly Western democracies, have been losing the monopoly over economic and social interactions, with control of these activities being taken over by individuals and the private sector.<sup>42</sup> Monopoly over the use of force, however, is something that the Western nation-state is still trying to preserve. One of the ways of maintaining this monopoly is by proving to its citizens that it can effectively protect them from both foreign and domestic threats. But how can Western democracies convince their citizens that they can live up to these expectations when LICs all too often expose the anachronistic role borders now play as a barrier between states and their enemies?

Another expression of the value change is the shattering of the monolithic definition of the enemy. Western democracies perceived of their enemies as monolithic political entities, whether a state or a sub-state player. In recent years, Western democracies have started relating to wars as resulting from the evilness in the enemy's political leadership, rather than its people or its military. If one regards the enemy in terms of its leadership, rather than its armed forces or society, then we can conclude that the people, and even the military, are the victims of their leadership.<sup>43</sup> This applies to LICs as well. If the enemy is Milosevic, Aided, or Arafat, then the center of gravity should be the enemy's

leadership, making the killing of civilians, and sometimes even armed men, an illegitimate act.

*Civil-Military Relations.*<sup>44</sup> States in general and Western democracies in particular believe in the subordination of the military forces to the political echelon. In HICs, political control over the conduct of war is usually exercised across the entire levels-of-war pyramid, from the upper, grand-strategic level all the way down via strategy and the operational level to tactics. In the postmodern era, particularly in LIC situations, this chain of command has been shattered, as a result of a combination of societal-political constraints, on the one hand, and technological capabilities, on the other. Given the particular sensitivities and vulnerabilities of Western democracies involved in LICs and the existence of unprecedented effective information sources and means of command and control at the political leadership's disposal, the political echelon often finds itself directly interfering in tactical matters. This bypassing of the strategic and operational levels is a manifestation of the 'tacticization of grand-strategy'. The immediate interference on the part of the US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the 1989 American invasion of Panama, after having seen on television that American troops had entered the residence of the Nicaraguan ambassador to Panama, illustrates the new reality.<sup>45</sup> The tactical echelon is becoming more sensitive to the political repercussions of its activity, incorporating political considerations in its tactic-related decisions. Officers engaged in LICs are becoming soldier-statesmen rather than combat leaders. This accounts for the 'grand-strategization of tactics' phenomenon.<sup>46</sup> Illustration of the new postmodern command-and-control reality was given in a meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Sharon and a group of Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) colonels. In this meeting, Sharon referred to what he thought had become characteristic of the new Israeli officer engaged in LIC in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. 'As a young officer, whenever I met with politicians, I spoke tactics, and they spoke strategy. With you, I speak tactics, while you speak strategy', he complained.<sup>47</sup>

#### CAN WESTERN DEMOCRACIES CONDUCT LICs MORALLY, EFFECTIVELY, AND AT LESS COST?

It has become common knowledge that, despite their peace-loving nature, once Western democracies have been induced, however reluctantly, to wage a just war, they will be prepared to sacrifice a great deal in the effort to win it. As Machiavelli and Tocqueville observed long ago, democracies can be very resilient and efficient in war.<sup>48</sup> The reverse, however, is equally true. Western democracies try to avoid wars they do not think they can win, and attempt to win quickly wars in which they are already engaged.<sup>49</sup> Although it is true that casualties alone do not undermine public support,<sup>50</sup> Western democratic societies are less inclined to pay a high price in wars in which their stakes are not sufficiently high, and their threshold of cost absorption in war tends to decline over time.<sup>51</sup> The public is more supportive of the use of force to restrain aggressors, but less supportive of the use of force directed at internal political change within another country.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, many LICs fall into these categories, which explains why post-Cold War Western democracies have lost much of their incentive to be involved—let alone intervene—in LICs, except in extreme cases.<sup>53</sup> Political leaders in Western

democracies are usually aware of and affected by the above, both when considering the initiation of war and while conducting war.<sup>54</sup> Their decision to ultimately involve their countries in LICs has, in some cases, been affected by the general belief that today's LICs could be conducted more effectively and that they have become less dangerous to fight.<sup>55</sup> This is where the technology-bent post-heroic warfare, counter-networked insurgency measures, and inter-agency and inter-service cooperation and other means come into the picture, helping in conducting LICs more morally and effectively, as well as at less cost. Coping successfully with postmodern challenges could help stop the erosion of the faith of the citizens of Western democracies in their governments and states.

### *Waging Post-Heroic Wars*

Western democracies can either be direct parties to LIC or intervene in LICs waged between other parties. The second possibility leaves more room for discretion for Western democracies regarding the wisdom of becoming engaged in such a conflict. And indeed, dilemmas of intervention in LICs have extensively been discussed in the literature of the 1990s. In the US, reservations regarding intervention seem to originate in three different points of view. The conservative view claims that intervention in LICs had better be avoided so as to enable the adversaries to 'burn themselves out and establish the preconditions for a lasting settlement'.<sup>56</sup> A softer stand warns that intervention on humanitarian grounds might turn into a political puzzle with no easy solution.<sup>57</sup>

Others point to the immorality of foreign intervention, arguing, though, that it could be ethically permissible only when aimed at preventing great suffering.<sup>58</sup>

If a Western democracy, however, finds itself fighting in a LIC, and provided that it enjoys technological superiority over the enemy, it would nowadays most probably turn to a 'post-heroic' pattern of conflict management, which has two basic rules: first and foremost, one is not allowed to get killed; second, one is not allowed to kill, at least not civilians.<sup>59</sup> Although post-heroic warfare could easily be presented as a very inefficient way of conducting war, when it comes to LICs, one should not disregard its positive aspects. Contrary to the belief that LICs must become unpopular with society and, therefore, be unsustainable,<sup>60</sup> a post-heroic player would try to avoid committing ground forces, instead using precision-guided fire in place of maneuvering on the ground. By doing so, it would be able to inflict damage on enemy forces or infrastructure while minimizing casualties for its own troops and enemy civilians. The US Army Field Manual of 1993 assumed that, alongside the expectation of seeing a decisive victory achieved by US troops, it is the public's loss-aversion that determines its attitude towards the military operations.<sup>61</sup> And, indeed, this seems to have affected US operations in Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Except for Somalia, where the intervention got rough after 18 soldiers were killed, basically, because the perceived stakes were extremely low, post-heroic warfare seems to have worked out quite well. It turned out to be amenable for the Israelis in their LICs too.

The IDF demonstrated early signs of adopting rule number one of post-heroic warfare (don't get killed) as early as the late 1970s. When Defense Minister Ezer Weizman approved the 1978 Litani Operation, he instructed Chief-of-Staff Mordechai Gur that '[it] should be conducted very carefully. Ten Fatah [fighters] are not worth even the hand of



one of our soldiers. The more lives of our guys we can save, the better.'<sup>62</sup> A few years later, Chief-of-Staff Ehud Barak explained why in its operations in Southern Lebanon, Israel preferred using massive fire instead of maneuvering forces on the ground. During the 1993 Operation Accountability he stressed that '[during the operation] only one Israeli soldier was killed, whereas the Hizballah suffered heavy damage'.<sup>63</sup> A senior commander elaborated during the operation: 'the less casualties we suffer on our side, the more successful we consider the operation to be.... We have methods by which we can inflict intolerable damage on the other side while minimizing the casualties on our side.'<sup>64</sup> In 1999, Chief-of-Staff Shaul Mofaz revealed that the IDF was now leaning on air activity against the Hizballah, rather than activities on the ground, so as to reduce casualties.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, Israel managed to maintain its presence in Lebanon for more than 20 years, as the number of soldiers killed in battle—some 25 a year—was sustainable. Since the mid-1990s, Research and Development (R&D) units in the Israeli Defense Ministry have been focusing on developing technologies to be used in LICs, whose main purpose was to increase the combat effectiveness of Israeli troops, while reducing casualties for the troops and for civilians on both sides.<sup>66</sup>

One of the problems in conducting post-heroic LICs stems from the fact that post-heroic strategy, like any other strategy, is interactive in nature. The success for the stronger side in adopting post-heroic strategy will largely depend on the reaction of its enemy. Will the other side 'cooperate' with the nature of the warfare being waged against it, or will it rather stick to a heroic pattern and even compel the stronger Western democracies to abandon the post-heroic pattern? As a result of the enemy's refusal to cooperate with postmodern norms, one may find Western democracies abiding only by post-heroic warfare's first rule. In the American war in Afghanistan, the level of civilian fatalities was greater than in the 1999 Kosovo War. Through December 10, 2001, the total numbers of attack sorties and weapons expended in Operation Enduring Freedom were far less than those in the 1999 Balkans campaign, Operation Allied Force, yet the casualty rates were higher than in Kosovo. According to one source, at least 500 civilians were killed in the Kosovo war by the NATO bombardment. In Afghanistan, the bombing campaign appears to have claimed 1,000–3,500 civilian lives.<sup>67</sup> This happened despite the fact that nearly 60 percent of the 14,000 missiles, bombs, and other pieces of ordnance were precision-guided—steered to their targets by laser beams or satellites—as compared to less than ten percent of the bombs expended in the 1991 Gulf War.<sup>68</sup>

The Israelis found themselves in a similar situation. Prime Minister Sharon, in the midst of a wave of suicide attacks against Israeli civilians in February-March 2002, said: 'In the current situation, it's either them or us.... We are at war and our backs are against the wall.'<sup>69</sup> Then, Israel launched a large-scale operation against the Palestinian Authority's security establishment and against Palestinian guerrilla infrastructure, and entered Palestinian cities and rural areas. Operation Defensive Shield inflicted many casualties on the Palestinian side, including civilians. Before the operations started, Ze'ev Schiff, a senior Israeli journalist, anticipated that Israel would abandon the imposed self-restraint. He wrote:

It seems that the day is approaching in the terrible war that is developing here, when anyone who comes to destroy Israeli families, including children and babies,

will have to consider that Israel will harm his family, and not only his property.... It is already clear that damaging property is not enough, because those who would not build one house for their refugee brothers are willing to build a new house for the martyr's family after he kills Israelis. Now, with Palestinian terror cutting down entire families, perhaps the voices calling for physically harming the families of the suicide terrorists will drown out the voices that reject this idea out of hand as unethical.<sup>70</sup>

This did not happen. The Israeli fighting tactics during Operation Defensive Shield were 'gentle', compared with US tactics in Afghanistan, let alone the Russian tactics against Chechnya, and were compatible with post-heroic values. Instead of using artillery or fighter-bombers, which would have flattened whole neighborhoods in the Palestinian refugee camps, which had become home to guerrillas and terrorists, the IDF chose to target the selected individuals, trying to spare the lives of non-combatants. Attack helicopters swapped their rockets for TOW missiles, which caused less collateral damage. As a result of these self-imposed restrictions, the IDF suffered more casualties than expected.<sup>71</sup>

*Non-lethal and Less-lethal Weapons.* Technological means other than PGMs (precision-guided munitions) at the strong Western democracies' disposal, enabling them to conduct post-heroic warfare, are non-lethal and less-lethal weapons. Modern war means killing people. Non-lethal weapons constitute quite the opposite logic: they are supposed to kill as few as possible. Non-lethal and less-lethal weapons (which can sometimes kill) stand for a variety of technologies—electromagnetic, acoustic, biotechnical, chemical, mechanical, optical, etc.—that could be used in the framework of both HICs and LICs, and by both civil and military agencies.<sup>72</sup> Should new non-lethal and less-lethal technologies become operational, Western democracies, which all too often find themselves torn by moral and legal dilemmas when engaged in LICs, might have a sword that cuts almost without wounding or killing, thus combining morality and effectiveness.

Since the end of the Cold War, the number of peace operations and humanitarian-assistance contingencies that US troops have been committed to has increased exponentially. In these types of operations, the troops have been told to try limiting civilian and non-combatant casualties.<sup>73</sup> When the IDF found itself constrained by moral dilemmas when confronting unarmed civilians during the first and second *intifadas*, it developed and used non-lethal and less-lethal weapons. During the 1987 *intifada*, Israel invented riot-control equipment, such as a gravel-spraying vehicle and a helicopter-dropped net. According to the Head of the International Law Branch of the IDF, 'We [Israelis] are now trying to develop new systems which will...be effective at longer ranges...keep[ing] the people away and therefore also prevent[ing] them coming within effective ranges of live-fire weapons'.<sup>74</sup> In the chapter dealing with 'Methods for Dispersing Demonstrations', the Israeli engagement regulations state that, 'The use of such means will be done in a gradual manner, with the goal being to disperse the violent riot without causing loss of life and serious bodily injury'. They also provide that, 'In every case, the commander will thoroughly consider whether it would be proper to employ the means for dispersing demonstrations, considering the severity of the violent riot and the circumstances of the event'. The regulations delineate a number of means for dispersing

demonstrations, such that ‘the passage from one stage to the next will be done only if the previous stage did not lead to the ending of the violent riot’.<sup>75</sup> Paradoxically, one negative outcome of the existence of non-lethal or less-lethal weapons could be greater war proneness, as a result of war becoming less dangerous and less costly.

### *Countering Networked Insurgency*

The vulnerabilities entailed in the high development of Western democracies are obvious. On the other hand, the decentralized nature of their societies and economies seems to make them more flexible and immune against networked insurgents. Also, much more sophisticated IW tools, such as internet mapping methods, could be used by the intelligence agencies of Western democracies to locate potential and actual terrorist groups.<sup>76</sup> Among the missions of the newly established Pentagon-based Information Awareness Office (IAO) is supplying federal officials with instant analysis on what is being written on e-mail and said on phones all over the US. The IAO belongs to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the ancestor of which, ARPA, invented the internet. Another new DARPA agency is the Information Exploitation Office (IEO), the mission of which is to supply similarly instant analysis about overseas enemy targets and guiding smart weaponry to these targets by employing computerized sensor networks.<sup>77</sup> The IAO, in particular, could be used for combating terrorism.<sup>78</sup>

### *Coping with Gray-Area War*

Fighting a Gray-Area War requires a high level of inter-agency and inter-service cooperation, particularly if mechanisms blending networks and hierarchies are adopted, aiming at combining and coordinating mixes of military, police, and intelligence components. This requires participants to overcome institutional affiliations and loyalties to their hierarchies, and identify with and act in the interests of the inter-agency or inter-service network. For example, coordination between the CIA, the FBI, and the DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency) and other intelligence and law-enforcement agencies in the US needs improvement.<sup>79</sup> One of the ways that has been offered by experts to cope with both networked opponents and Gray-Area War is in developing network/hierarchy hybrids like those taking shape in the corporate world.<sup>80</sup>

### *The False Promise of ‘Soft Power’*

Finally, a word of criticism must be noted against what could be considered a neo-liberal post-modern recipe for achieving desired outcomes in conflicts, both HICs and LICs. Neo-liberal institutionalists have long advocated cooperation between players and the establishment of international institutions as a means of influencing the preferences of others in such directions that will enhance stability in the international system. In the post-Cold War era they seem to have found fertile ground for such ideas, taking their alternative approach to neo-realism yet further by paying great respect to so-called soft power, that is the ability to achieve objectives through attraction rather than coercion. They consider ‘soft power’ a substitute for costly traditional economic or military

resources, believing that by making democracy and free markets more attractive, Western democracies could increase their capability to prevent and resolve conflicts in general, and post-Cold War LICs in particular.<sup>81</sup> This seems to be a false promise. First, the adherents of soft power tend to forget that it can be effective only when accompanied by coercion, as in the case of the Soviet Union, which tried to proliferate its ideology during the Cold War. Second, one can hardly believe that ideas attractive to enlightened, Western democratic, open societies would appeal to most Third World or Second Tier countries, where LICs usually take place.

## CONCLUSION

Not many Western democracies are currently engaged in LICs as direct adversaries. Israel *vis-à-vis* Hizballah and the Palestinians, the US against Al Qaeda and other Islamic extremist organizations and, on occasion, the Spanish government against ETA or the British *vis-à-vis* Catholic terrorists in Northern Ireland—are among the few cases left. For other Western democracies, LICs have been reduced to a mere intervention dilemma.

Neither the negative connotation LICs have earned throughout the years, nor the aforementioned postmodern challenges should imply that LICs would invariably end to the detriment of Western democracies. This is not only true for modern LICs, but also for postmodern ones. The first thing required of Western democracies engaged in LICs is to understand the new LIC reality and adapt to the new environment (postmodern LIC reality that Western democracies have been facing and coping with is summarized in Table 1).

The combination of value change and the emergence of new technological capabilities have affected the balance between weak and strong. Technology now has enormous impact on the management of postmodern LICs. Whereas in the past it used to be associated with destructive power used by the strong, today it can serve as a force multiplier for the weak as well. At the same time, however, it enables the strong Western democracies to conduct LICs under heavy social and political constraints, particularly by using precision munitions and means of protection with the aim of minimizing casualties on both sides. The success of the political leadership in Western democracies usually affects its chances of gaining legitimacy—both domestic and external—for becoming involved in LICs and sustaining the involvement over the course of such conflicts, which are usually protracted.

Among the aspects remaining to be improved are a combined and coordinated military, police, and intelligence inter-agency activity, to be applied against networked insurgency and in Gray-Area War. A more realistic attitude towards the role played by the media in postmodern LICs would be beneficial, too. As the media have their own sources of information, Western democracies had better come to terms with them in a way that respects the right of the public to be informed, without necessarily jeopardizing the war effort.

The rise of amorphous, transnational terrorist networks does not signal the end of an age when terrorism could be viewed as largely a state-based problem. The benefits these groups derive from states, which allow them freedom of action in their territory or

TABLE 1 WESTERN DEMOCRACIES (WDs) IN POST-MODERN LICs

	Modern	Post-Modern
<b>The Face of LICs</b>		
<i>The systemic level</i>		
<i>Challenges</i>	second-grade; conventional	upgraded; distinction between sub-conventional and unconventional blurred
<i>Missions</i>	of military nature	convergence between non-military and military missions
<i>Players</i>	national, sub-national, trans-national	also individuals, and the media as an independent player
<i>Force multipliers for the weak</i>	societal cost-tolerance	also technology (WMD, IW)
<i>The unit level</i>		
<i>The notion of security</i>	‘national security’	salience of ‘personal safety’
<i>Definition of the enemy</i>	monolithic	distinction between evil leaders and the people as victims
<i>Civil–military relations</i>		soldier-statesmen; statesmen interfering in tactics
<b>WDs in LICs</b>		
<i>Policy</i>	heroic	post-heroic
<i>Weapons</i>	lethal	more emphasis on non-lethal and less-lethal weapons

provide them with assistance makes ending state-sponsored terrorism a central element in any strategy to fight terrorism.

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## Why do they Quarrel? Civil–Military Tensions in LIC Situations

STUART A. COHEN

It is generally considered axiomatic that one of the essential prerequisites for the successful conduct of war is a high degree of dialectic co-operation between the political and military echelons of supreme command. Made explicit by Clausewitz,<sup>1</sup> this need has in modern literature been accepted as a *sine qua non*, by both academic observers and military practitioners alike. As Marshall Foch is reported to have once reminded Clemenceau: ‘War, like peace, is not a duality but an integer. It does not call for a military compartment here and a civilian compartment there. The two are closely combined.’<sup>2</sup>

Rarely does practice conform to theory. If anything, the history of modern warfare, especially, seems to be one of almost unremitting tension between generals and their nominal political masters. This phenomenon not only cuts across conventional divides between regimes of different political complexions, incorporating dictatorships as well as democracies. For our present purposes, more significant is the observation that political-military tension likewise spans different categories of warfare. Far from being restricted to high-intensity situations of conventional conflict, it also encompasses the modes of more limited and counterinsurgency military activity for which the French coined the term ‘*guerre révolutionnaire*’ and which in Anglo-Saxon parlance is less elegantly defined as ‘low intensity conflict’ (LIC).<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it is in the latter situation that the phenomenon seems to be most emphatic and prevalent.

This state of affairs entails a paradox. On the one hand, because they are embedded in a socio-political context that directly shapes and constrains their nature, LICs are known to place an especially high premium on the need for civil-military co-ordination. Altogether, indeed, counterinsurgency operations do not readily lend themselves to neat division into discrete levels of conflict. An action at the lowest tactical level can have far-reaching operational and even strategic consequences. Indeed, if the test of whether there is a political dimension is rigidly applied, every patrol is potentially conducted at the ‘operational’ level because the conduct of an individual soldier, amplified by the media, can become an international issue very quickly.<sup>4</sup>

Hence, it is generally accepted, this category of conflict mandates that ‘special means... be devised to coordinate and integrate military forces with political and non-military agencies of government’.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless (and herein lies the paradox), it is precisely in LIC situations that political interests and military preferences seem so infrequently to coincide—so much so that even the very definition of what might constitute a counterinsurgency ‘victory’ is often open to dispute.<sup>6</sup> That being the case, the soldiers and statesmen engaged in counterinsurgency campaigns best resemble participants in a three-legged

race: even when declaring themselves to be on the same side and headed in the same general direction, the pair of runners seem constantly to be out of step and in danger of tripping each other up.

The body of this essay seeks to account for that circumstance. Before proceeding to the main argument, however, one methodological note is in order. The most prominent examples of political-military tension in circumstances of LIC relate to the modern experience of the major Western powers, notably France, Britain and the United States. But it would be incorrect to assume from any such cursory checklist that the malaise has been confined solely to the Great Powers of the contemporary democratic world. Civil-military tensions in circumstances of modern LIC in fact have a lengthy pedigree, stretching back to the early nineteenth century. What is more, they have also—in more recent times—likewise affected even minor democratic powers.

One cluster of examples is provided by the discords that plagued India's efforts to suppress insurgencies in Manipur and Tripura in the late 1970s and, during the following two decades, to combat Sikh rebels in the Punjab, Tamil guerrillas in Sri Lanka, and the Naga, Mizo and Kashmiri separatists in the north-eastern sector of the sub-continent.<sup>7</sup> Another instance is provided by the differences of perspective evident between the Ankara government and senior Turkish army officers in the mid-1980s with respect to the PKK.<sup>8</sup> Equally instructive, finally, has been Israel's protracted and varied experience of managing LIC warfare.<sup>9</sup> Although relations between the IDF high command and senior politicians in Israel have generally been characterized by an overall ambience of 'partnership',<sup>10</sup> the two sides have frequently clashed over both the substance and purpose of their response to the various low-intensity attacks that have intermittently impinged upon their country's security landscape. These differences were stark with respect to the policy of 'reprisals' during the early 1950s,<sup>11</sup> and equally acerbic (and far more public) during the first *intifada* (1987–93).<sup>12</sup> A similar pattern of controversy more recently emerged in the round of Palestinian-Israeli clashes that erupted in September 2000. Indeed, on one now notorious occasion, the Minister of Defense, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, publicly voiced the opinion that action unilaterally taken by the Chief of the IDF General Staff Major-General Shaul Mofaz in October 2001 warranted consideration of calling for the latter's resignation.<sup>13</sup>

It is tempting to attribute the reasons for civil-military dissension of that order to 'background' circumstances, of so comprehensive a nature that they could be deemed pertinent to all types of conflict situations, high intensity as well as low. At that level of analysis, two variables stand out as primary candidates for attention in any individual case. One is the degree to which the divergent attitudes towards the conduct of the conflict evinced by politicians and soldiers might be affected by prior differences in their professional backgrounds, affiliations and interests—which are often themselves compounded by the sort of idiosyncratic clashes of temperament and personal ambition that bedevil inter-personal relations in any sphere of public action.<sup>14</sup>

A second 'general' variable consists of the extent to which those differences might be further compounded and accentuated by the modern revolution in communications technology. As Eliot Cohen has shown, by enabling politicians to exercise 'micro-management', this revolution has enticed them to exercise more direct control over even the most specific of military actions.<sup>15</sup> From the perspective of civil-military relations this has been a mixed blessing. The ease with which politicians (especially if they themselves

possess a senior military record) can now dictate the tempo and even substance of action has done nothing to facilitate the calibration of political aims and military means.<sup>16</sup> If anything, quite the opposite is the case. As much is graphically illustrated by accounts of relations between General Westmorland and the Johnson administration during the Vietnam War and between General Schwarzkopf and the Bush administration during Desert Storm. In both cases, the opportunity for micro-management allowed politicians to impinge more easily on professional military autonomy and thereby expanded yet further possible areas of civil-military friction.<sup>17</sup>

Given the prevalence of such tendencies, whether or not the context of any particular conflict is one of high or low intensity could be regarded as almost incidental. They constitute a recipe for political-military discord that virtually assures its eruption—whatever the specifics of the particular mode of force employed. To put matters another way, the high incidence of civil-military dissonance in LICs could be designated a statistical quirk, which might owe far more to the sheer numerical preponderance of those conflicts in the modern and postmodern world than to any intrinsic attribute that those conflicts may themselves possess.<sup>18</sup>

This essay posits an alternative view. Indeed, fundamental to its argument is the hypothesis that the peculiarity of low intensity conflicts does provide an explanation for both the frequency and intensity of the domestic political-military dissensions which they generate. The pages that follow shall, first, identify those characteristics of low intensity conflicts here considered most relevant to an understanding of civil-military relations in wartime. Thereafter, the essay will examine the possible salience of those characteristics and analyze their theoretical implications.

Students of LICs have itemized several ways in which they differ from general or unlimited conventional wars. Loren Thompson, for instance, emphasizes the absence of an easily identifiable ‘front line area’ in which engagements take place, whilst Martin Van Creveld notes (in addition) the asymmetric composition of the insurgents and their opponents as well as the relatively low technological level of the weapons employed.<sup>19</sup> Without disputing these observations, the present essay posits that three other distinguishing characteristics of LICs seem even more pertinent to the analysis of civil-military relations in counterinsurgency situations.

The first relates to the manner in which LICs make their appearance. More often than not, insurgencies emerge rather than erupt. Indeed, so much is this so that only in retrospect—and even then not always—is it at all possible to identify the specific events that can be said to have clearly marked their ‘outbreak’. Generally, LICs tend to creep up incrementally on defending states, whose leaders do not appreciate either the scope or character of the war they are called upon to conduct until the conflict is itself well advanced.

To this must be added, secondly, the fact that LICs tend to be protracted affairs. Indeed their instigators usually intend them to be so. Appreciating that the imbalance of conventional forces precludes the adoption of what Hans Delbruck termed a strategy of ‘annihilation’, insurgents deliberately opt for one of ‘attrition’.<sup>20</sup> The impact that they intend to achieve is cumulative, not immediate. They envisage ultimate victory as the culmination of an aggregate effect, to be attained as much by undermining the willingness of the government’s domestic society to continue the fight as by weakening the ability of

its forces to do so. Hence, their principal weapon, certainly in the earliest stages of the insurrection, is that of patience, pithily expressed in the motto of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA), *Tiocfaidh ar la* ('Our Day Will Come').

In turn, this choice of strategy often compels the defending side to behave in a similar fashion. Much as counterinsurgent forces might wish to get the job over in a short time, circumstances invariably compel them to adapt their own operations to the style dictated by the enemy and—above all—to recognize the need for patience. True, there have been some notable exceptions to this rule, and several modern LIC campaigns have been remarkably short.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, in general it remains true to say, in the words of Edward Geary Lansdale, that 'People's wars are not for fighters with short attention spans'.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, there is the singular nature of LIC operations. In recent years, it has become fashionable to encapsulate this feature either by reviving the term 'small war',<sup>23</sup> or by employing the alternative designation of 'half war' (in the West) or 'local war' (in Soviet parlance).<sup>24</sup> Whichever the case, the intention is the same: to emphasize that these are conflicts waged against a foe whom the defending army ranks as subsidiary to its principal putative enemy (or enemies) and in a region that it considers peripheral to what it expects to be its main theater(s) of operation.<sup>25</sup> As will be seen, both of these characteristics of LIC operations do certainly impinge on civil-military relations, generating friction between local commands and metropolitan governments that reflect their different perspectives and priorities.

Even so, however, the terms 'small' or 'half' war are incomplete. What they fail to convey is that LICs are also—perhaps above all—'fuzzy' wars, in which the conventional dividing lines between the two sides of the civilian and military interface are especially nebulous. That, it has been argued, is why conventional armies do not like to fight them. Psychologically, they resist the notion that the instruments and doctrines in which they have invested so much time and effort might be inappropriate to the mission at hand. Moreover, in intellectual and organizational terms, they are ill-equipped to undertake the scale of adaptation that LICs demand.<sup>26</sup> These constraints did not, of course, restrain the *Wehrmacht* from resorting to ruthless measures of repression in response to partisan attacks throughout Nazi-dominated Europe during World War II. Neither, more recently, did they prevent the Iraqi army from both employing chemical weapons against the Kurds and decimating the Marsh Arabs in southern Mesopotamia. But notwithstanding the suggestion that 'overkill' on such scales constitutes a critical criterion for counterinsurgency success,<sup>27</sup> liberal democracies have (for various reasons) desisted from imitating such behavior. As a rule, they appreciate that their operations must often be essentially constabulary in form, designed as much to maintain law and order and administrative stability as to destroy an enemy.<sup>28</sup> Significantly, the British army's contemporary campaign in Northern Ireland is not officially designated a 'counterinsurgency' war. Rather, its official rubric is Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA).

Only by thus combining political-civilian carrots with selectively administered police and military sticks can defending governments hope to suppress subversion and—more importantly—to regain and retain the allegiance of the populations which the subversion has sought to incite. General Harkins, head of the US Mission to South Vietnam,

notoriously ignored this precept when claiming, in September 1962, that what was required to defeat the Viet Cong within three years were Three Ms'—men, money and material. Far more apposite was the guideline laid down a decade earlier by General Sir Gerald Templer, Britain's High Commissioner and Director of Operations in Malaya, who from the first insisted that The answer [to insurrection] lies not in pouring more soldiers into the jungle but rests in the hearts and minds of the Malayan people'.<sup>29</sup>

Necessarily, the three characteristics of LICs noted above do not constitute neatly segregated areas. The manner in which such conflicts originate, their tendency to be protracted and the general fuzziness of the missions required to deal with them are all facets of LICs that interact with each other. In so doing they—together—create a single and integrated context, in which the effects of one of the characteristics merges with those of another. That said, each can nevertheless be seen to produce specific effects on the civil-military equation that deserve individual attention.

### THE APPEARANCE OF LICs

Probably the most important consequence of the tendency of LICs to emerge rather than to erupt is that they allow for fairly extended situations of ambiguity, in which neither the existence of a threat to national security, nor the consequent need for a radical response, is at all clear cut. After all, in LICs (as opposed to conventional warfare), initial hostilities will rarely have been preceded by the sort of intensive diplomatic exchanges that might have signaled a brewing 'crisis'. Neither will the initial skirmishes be of the scope that might warrant immediate classification as an act of unmistakable aggression, requiring the mobilization and utilization of counter-force on a large scale.

Rather, in their earliest stages, LICs leave considerable room for conflicting interpretations—as much as to their possible direction as to their underlying causes.

Under those conditions, distance from the theater of operations can delineate one possible axis of dissension. Here, the rule of thumb seems pretty straightforward: persons on the spot generally exhibit greater sensitivity to the dimensions of the putative insurgency threat than do those in the metropolis. To this can be added the observation that such discrepancies are likely to become even more stark when—as is often the case in post-colonial LIC situations—the government forces are operating in defense of a 'settler' civilian population living in the disaffected areas. It must be emphasized that the physical proximity of military garrisons and settler communities does not, of itself, guarantee a harmony of their *political* views and ambitions.<sup>30</sup> But it can forge a shared affinity of perceptions of more specific relevance to tactical assessments of the current situation. The salience of this latter circumstance cannot be underestimated. Aware that their own views are buttressed by settler opinion (and knowing, in some cases, that the settlers can constitute a political lobby of some weight), local military commanders are more likely than might otherwise be the case to articulate their fears about the severity of the insurgency that they confront.<sup>31</sup> With the constraint of isolation removed, commanders feel freer to express opinions with which at least some of the political elite might disagree. The civil-military dissensions thus generated can also be aggravated by temporal factors. This is because the incremental manner in which LICs emerge also allows for a time lag between the responses of military personnel (local and central alike) and those of

politicians. Confronted with signs of insurrection, soldiers are apt to be fairly quick to advocate recourse to the military measures that they deem required for its suppression. Politicians, by contrast, are in this respect more tardy. On receipt of reports of a 'rebellion', their almost instinctive immediate reaction is to accuse the military of exaggerating the extent of the problem.<sup>32</sup>

Initial reactions on the part of Israeli politicians, and especially Yitzchak Rabin (then minister of defense) to the outbreak of the first *intifada* in December 1987 present a striking illustration of this phenomenon. On receipt of news of the first outbreaks of violence, Yitzchak Rabin reportedly ignored the advice of the CO Southern Command, General Yitzchak Mordechai, to cut short his visit to the United States. For several days thereafter, 'the prevailing assessment was that [the riots] did not constitute an uprising and that order would be restored shortly'.<sup>33</sup> But even the British, who possess considerably more experience with what they once termed 'revolts against the Crown', regularly succumbed to the same error of judgement. As Bowyer Bell has shown, time and again the first response of ministers and officials in London to news of colonial insurrections, both before and after World War II, was to dismiss—virtually out of hand—the possibility that they might be the outgrowth of deep and widespread political support, and as such precursors of far more serious fighting.<sup>34</sup> Instead, they preferred to blame the 'troubles' (a term whose use itself speaks volumes for their attitude of mind) on small groups who, as for instance in the case of Sinn Féin in 1919, they described as transient, militarily insignificant and nothing more than 'the latest in a seemingly endless string of secret societies'.<sup>35</sup> In the latter case, the British government in fact deliberated over the use of force in Ireland for 18 months before eventually committing the British army to the task. Even then, it has been found that:

the Government never defined the conflict, and the issue was obscured by attempts to distinguish between war and insurrection...The Government remained unwilling even to admit that a rebellion existed which had to be countered by military methods.<sup>36</sup>

This seems to be a recurring pattern. Thus, in 1948, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the British Colonial Office argued that the current violence in Malaya was little more than 'a revival of the gangsterism with which he had been familiar in pre-war Penang'.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Dutch authorities initially regarded outbreaks of violence in the East Indies in 1945 to be 'a political aberration: the work of Japanese intriguers and Indonesian collaborators who had manipulated the gullible masses through propaganda and terrorism'.<sup>38</sup> Notwithstanding the nationalist dissension that they had already experienced elsewhere in the Maghreb (Tunisia and Morocco), the French similarly refused to recognize that the first outbreaks of violence in Algeria during the early 1950s portended anything more than an increase in criminal activities perpetrated by *fellagha* (outlaws).<sup>39</sup> Finally, and as has recently been emphasized: 'When the first attacks were made by the PKK, the politicians of the Turkish government [likewise] generally underestimated their significance, and labeled the PKK a "handful of bandits"'.<sup>40</sup>

The enormous area that this sort of reaction allows for civil-military friction, especially at subsequent stages of the government's LIC campaign, is easily observed. Indeed, although



individual conditions vary, a recurrent pattern of mutual recriminations is readily apparent.<sup>41</sup> Soldiers complain that if only the politicians had responded in proper fashion to their initial warnings and provided the troops with resources and political direction required to act with firmness at the first sign of trouble, they could have nipped unrest in the bud and so saved more lives in the long run.<sup>42</sup> For their part, politicians rest their case on different grounds. Attributing the gradual escalation of the insurgency to basic military incompetence, they accuse the soldiers of seeking to hide their own professional errors behind a smokescreen of ever-increasing demands for quantities of men and resources which neither domestic society nor the domestic economy can reasonably be expected to meet.<sup>43</sup>

A symptomatic illustration of the way in which such differences of view can be expressed is provided by the amount of time that often elapses before metropolitan governments succumb to military pressure to declare 'a state of emergency' in disaffected areas. The British government, for instance, refused to make such an announcement in Cyprus until as late as November 1955 and in Central Africa until the spring of 1959. During the same decade, successive French governments went one better. Writing in bitter retrospect, General Navarre (commander of French forces in Vietnam in the mid-1950s), attributed his defeat there to the fact that the politicians of the Fourth Republic 'never dared let the country know that there was a war on in Indo-China'.<sup>44</sup> His accusation applied with equal effect to subsequent political attitudes towards Algeria. Even though the French National Assembly did declare a state of emergency in Algeria on March 31, 1955 the French government throughout assiduously refused to categorize the *guerre sale* as anything other than 'the maintenance of order'; officially, it did not even constitute a 'campaign'.<sup>45</sup> One consequence—not at all incidental to the personnel involved—was that the *Croix de Guerre* could not be awarded to soldiers who served in this campaign. Instead, a new decoration, the *Médaille de la Valeur Militaire*, had to be struck.

It is perhaps tempting to attribute the length of time that politicians take to respond to calls for military counterinsurgency measures to their notorious reluctance to acknowledge past mistakes. After all, it might be argued, to concede to military demands for the allocation of more men and material is ultimately to admit to some previous political and/or administrative failure in the region of conflict, and thus to run the risk of public opprobrium. But much though this factor might occasionally account for some displays of political complacency toward early signs of LICs, it does not seem to tell the entire story. Equally salient, it seems, is a supplementary *structural* consideration, and one that relates more directly to the very nature of this type of conflict. Precisely because the outbreaks of LICs are not at all clear cut, they inevitably seem—in their initial stages—to be far less pressing than the vast majority of other matters (a category that includes domestic concerns) that vie for politicians' immediate attention.

Here too the contrast with large-scale conventional wars is relevant. As Andrew Mack long ago pointed out, in the latter circumstances, the prosecution of the conflict takes automatic primacy above all other goals. To put matters at their most stark, the question of 'guns versus butter' simply does not arise. However, where insurrections are perceived as nothing more than momentary local disturbances, they cannot be expected automatically to pre-empt 'other goals pursued by factions within government bureaucracies or other groups pursuing interests which compete for resources'.<sup>46</sup> Since—

in their early stages—insurgencies are defined as only minor irritants, they make no immediate or even urgent claims to be placed at the top of a crowded political agenda. This is one plausible explanation for the tardiness with which the British government under Edward Heath reacted to the outbreak of violence in Northern Ireland in 1970. Throughout their first two years in office, the prime minister and his cabinet were primarily concerned with ending the miners' strike and getting Britain into the EEC. Not until March 1972, by which time almost 400 lives had been lost, did Heath take the bull by the horns and decide to impose 'direct rule' on Northern Ireland from Westminster.<sup>47</sup> For the same reason, they do not warrant the diversion of budgets and troops which politicians have already earmarked for other purposes. Military appeals to the contrary are consequently treated with disdain. Typical, in this respect, are the initial reactions voiced within the British Colonial Office to one such appeal almost two years after the outbreak of violence in Cyprus. 'We can assume' minuted a London official at the end of 1955, 'that Sir Robert Armitage [the British Governor of Cyprus] is satisfied that the police and military available on the island are sufficient to quell any riots on a scale that can at present be considered even remotely possible. He would, I am sure, let us know at once if he had any doubts on that score.'<sup>48</sup>

#### THE PROTRACTED NATURE OF LICs

Of course, the longer the insurgency drags on, the less such views become viable. Nevertheless, the likelihood of military-political friction does not necessarily diminish with the passage of time. On the contrary, that possibility seems to be if anything further exacerbated by the protracted nature of LICs, which is here identified as the second of their salient characteristics. In part, the friction might reflect sheer frustration at the military's inability to quash the insurgency and thus bring the entire business to a satisfactory and swift close. This feeling can infect both sides. Governments that have over time invested vast amounts of national treasure in building and maintaining armed forces understandably begin to lose trust in the generals who seem incapable of giving an appropriate return on public investment by defeating opponents who dispose of far less sophisticated weaponry. How, they ask, has all that money been spent over the years? And what guarantee is there that the additional funds that they are now expected to pour into the campaign will be put to any better use? For their part, soldiers look askance at politicians (and their publics) who apparently refuse to recognize that the topographical and tactical circumstances unique to this type of warfare preclude the sort of 'quick fix' often dictated by electoral timetables.<sup>49</sup> With the relations between the two parties thus poisoned, it is hardly surprising that tempers become frayed and that mutual recriminations abound.

In protracted *conventional* wars (of which the two World Wars are prime examples) such difficulties have often been moderated by the government's announcement of a set of clearly defined and coherent war aims. In the broadest sense, of course, the purpose of such declarations is to lay down the political objectives of the fighting. But they also fulfil two ancillary functions, both of which are especially relevant to the present context. The first may be defined as *operational*: announcements of war aims provide an overall strategic framework for the conduct of military operations—and ultimately their termination. In so

doing, they facilitate (albeit not necessarily guarantee) the sustained synchronization of military means and political ends. But to this must be added, secondly, a *societal* purpose that affects far deeper layers of civil-military relations. Pronouncements of the war's aims—especially when they are regularly enunciated in a style of which Winston Churchill was so obviously a master—help to maintain societal approval for its continued prosecution, even over extended periods of time. By thus generating public support, they constitute vehicles for the mobilization of a dimension of strategy now generally deemed essential for the success of all military campaigns, and one that—it has been found—usually provides democracies with their most decisive soldiering advantages.<sup>50</sup>

### *The Operational Dimension of Protracted Conflict*

It is characteristic of LICs that neither of these purposes is usually fulfilled. On the contrary, the longer this type of conflict persists, the further they seem to be from attainment. This is certainly true, firstly, at the *operational* level. Even the record of British counterinsurgency campaigns (which, in this respect, is generally considered by far the most respectable) reveals that long-term political-military coordination has been the exception rather than the rule. Although famously attained during the 'confrontation' in Malaysia, it was noticeably absent during the LIC campaigns in Palestine, Kenya, Cyprus, Aden and, most recently, Northern Ireland.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, each of these instances gave rise to military complaints that the Army's mandate was too volatile to permit the enunciation of consistent mission goals. Often, the political aims of the campaigns were subject to modification—and sometimes to complete reversal—in mid-course, with the result that the Army was left with no clear purpose other than to 'hold the ring' until some form of political settlement could be attained.<sup>52</sup>

This situation is further aggravated by the invariable tendency of politicians in LIC situations to deny their generals even tactical autonomy over military matters that the latter usually consider exclusively service preserves. Indeed, the more protracted the LIC becomes, the more restricted the military's freedom of operational maneuver tends to be.<sup>53</sup> Always sensitive to the fact that even seemingly minor actions can have enormous strategic consequences, especially when subjected to the glare of media attention, political echelons seek to keep their options open. Consequently, they wish to keep their generals on an especially tight leash. One method by which they attempt to do so is by practicing micro-management to an exceptional degree.

As is well known, this latter tendency reached something of an apogee during the Vietnam War, when (according to General Westmorland), 'President Johnson allegedly boasted on one occasion that "they can't even bomb an outhouse without my approval"'.<sup>54</sup> But that was by no means an isolated case. Jonathan Shimshoni's study of Israel's 'reprisal raids' during the 1950s, for instance, indicates that virtually every decision with respect to the timing, extent and length of IDF action against the *fedayeen* was similarly made centrally and at a high level, usually in the Cabinet, with a depressing effect on the field commanders.<sup>55</sup> Such was also the case during the second *intifada*, when all 'non regular military activities' had to be authorized by a 'kitchen Cabinet' of ten ministers headed by Prime Minister Sharon.<sup>56</sup> Likewise, it was William Whitelaw, appointed Britain's Secretary of State for Northern Ireland after the imposition of Direct Rule in May 1972,

who insisted—much to military displeasure—that the army would henceforth have to reduce the number of its patrols, refrain from ‘hot pursuit’ into Catholic areas of Belfast, and respect certain ‘no go’ areas.<sup>57</sup>

Situations such as these really leave the military authorities with only two choices. One is to live from day to day, adapting their operational measures to what they perceive to be the short-term dictates of political necessity. (Generally speaking, this was the response of the American military during the Vietnam conflict.) The other is to constitute themselves into a political lobby, whose avowed purpose is to overcome what generals perceive to be the ‘irresolution’ of one faction of politicians and to bolster the resolve of others.

From the perspective of civil-military relations, neither of these options is at all satisfactory. The first—constant operational adaptation to frequent changes in political tack—constitutes a self-evident violation of standard military procedure. Indeed, if practiced too often it is bound to become a virtual invitation to a seemingly interminable series of small-scale skirmishes between politicians and generals, with the former complaining that the troops exceeded the bounds of their brief and the latter arguing that such briefs hardly ever coincided with military realities. (The back-biting of this sort that so often characterized American civil-military relations during the Vietnam era has also been evident in relations between the IDF and the Israeli government in the current round of Jewish–Palestinian fighting.) The second option—for the military to play at politics—can, if anything, prove to be still more disastrous. At the very least, it runs the risk of the politicization of the army, a phenomenon that itself ranks as one of the most serious of all threats to internal military cohesion.<sup>58</sup> The fissiparous effects to which it can give rise were clearly evident during the Algerian war, of which the French army was itself perhaps the most obvious institutional victim. As Alistaire Horne points out, ‘If the *sale guerre* had turned its French army pupils into superb warriors, it had, however, also made them highly political animals’.<sup>59</sup>

### *The Societal Dimension of Protracted Conflict*

Equally evident are the debilitating effects that the absence of clearly defined political purposes can exert on the *societal* dimension of civil-military relations. Recent research indicates that here, too, the time factor injected into the conflict by its protraction, can be critical. In the initial stages of a conflict—even one conducted in previously unfamiliar or marginal regions of the world—it is certainly possible to discern a ‘rally round the flag effect’, manifest in the degree to which public support for the campaign increases once troops actually engage in fighting.<sup>60</sup> But this measure of support is by its nature a wasting asset that can soon dissipate. Indeed, it is virtually certain to do so once casualties begin to mount, which is bound to be the case the longer the fighting lasts. In his influential study of Korea and Vietnam, John Mueller emphasized what he termed the ‘logarithm’ of casualties, pointing out that it was the *cumulative* impact of deaths in battle that swayed American public opinion against those conflicts far more than their absolute level.<sup>61</sup> And even though many of the details of Mueller’s analysis have recently been queried,<sup>62</sup> the brunt of his argument remains convincing. By sending a signal that the war is not going well, and indeed has not been going well for some time, casualties increase public sensitivity to the war and generate calls (echoed by the politicians) for a change in course.

It has been calculated that even in conventional conflicts, when war aims are most likely to be clearly defined, such considerations can seriously limit the ability of democracies to engage in prolonged conflicts.<sup>63</sup> In LIC situations, precisely because they are more often waged in the absence of a clear set of political criteria for military success, the constraints thus imposed would seem to be even more pertinent. Conventional wisdom now generally accepts the contention that American public opposition to the Vietnam war was not so much stimulated by the sum total of casualties, whether cumulative or marginal, but by the popular feeling that such losses were being incurred for no apparent strategic purpose.<sup>64</sup> The same is true of the atmosphere that eventually characterized Israeli public opinion during the latter stages of the IDF's war in southern Lebanon in the late 1990s.<sup>65</sup> In both cases, the absence of an evident light at the end of the tunnel proved to be less debilitating than did the sense that there existed no agreed public definition as to how the end of the tunnel was itself to be defined.

These circumstances do not only corrode the possibility of appropriate political-military co-ordination. At a deeper level, and yet more substantially, they also create deep psychological and cultural rifts between the entire military establishment and the society whose interests it is morally and legally bound to defend and promote. Conscious that they no longer enjoy the public and political backing that they feel that they have a right to expect, soldiers accuse civil society as a whole (a category that can encompass some of their own military leaders as well as politicians) of desertion and pusillanimity. For its part, civilian society suspects the military of adopting and promoting a set of values from which many, perhaps most, citizens feel increasingly divorced. Thus, in the United States during the 1970s, professional officers returning from Vietnam were seared by the experience of public repudiation by large segments of society, including the intellectual elite. Not only (many felt) was appreciation for the heroism and technical competence of the American military lacking; but returning veterans also found themselves pilloried as mass murderers and incompetents. This criticism and abuse, which was a far cry from the enormous measures of popularity and respect they had enjoyed in earlier conflicts, created a psychological sense of isolation, expressed in the feeling that military and civilian society were living in two different worlds.<sup>66</sup>

Again, reflections of the same feeling permeated the IDF during the 1990s, generating a sense that it was in fact having to conduct a campaign on its domestic front as well as against its nominal enemies. It is doubtful whether the resultant state of civil-military relations in Israel truly deserves depiction as one of 'crisis'.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, a novel sense of estrangement was certainly apparent. This feeling was poignantly expressed in October 1996, when the then chief of the IDF General Staff, Major-General Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, delivered an emotional eulogy on the first anniversary of Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin's assassination.

How far we are, O Captain, from the days when a military uniform was a source of pride and self-respect.... Non-service in *Tzahal* [the Hebrew acronym for the IDF] no longer constitutes a stigma, and voluntarism, the act of giving out of a wish to contribute, no longer receives the respect it deserves.<sup>68</sup>

## THE 'FUZZY' NATURE OF LIC OPERATIONS

Finally, attention must be turned to what has here been termed the 'fuzzy' nature of LIC operations, and the way in which this characteristic further exacerbates civil-military relations during their course.

For the troops most closely engaged in LICs, surely the most obtrusively 'fuzzy' feature of counterinsurgency operations is the indeterminate nature of much of the local population with whom they come into contact. Innocent bystanders are not easily distinguishable from actual and potential foes, especially since the latter may well also include categories of persons, such as women and children, who in situations of conventional warfare would almost automatically qualify as 'non combatants'. As is well known, ambivalent situations such as these pose virtually insurmountable moral and legal predicaments which not even the most carefully drafted ethical codes and/or rules of engagement can altogether solve.<sup>69</sup> Hence, when confronted with the need to make snap decisions in ambivalent situations (should they open fire on an ambulance that might be transporting explosives?), individual soldiers will often simply have to make their own assessment of what action to take.<sup>70</sup>

These difficulties are compounded by an entirely different facet of LIC operations—the fact that they are invariably conducted by small units. In purely tactical terms, this makes good military sense. Guerrilla warfare is, at root, 'dispersed warfare',<sup>71</sup> and it has long been fundamental to LIC operational thinking that insurgencies are best fought by small units rather than by large formations. This axiom spans virtually the entire course of all modern LIC activity, a chronology that stretches from the experience of the US army in the second Seminole war of 1835–42,<sup>72</sup> rightdown to the revisions introduced into the force structures and tactics of the British army in Malaya, the Indian army in the 1970s, the Turkish army in the 1980s and the IDF in the late 1990s.<sup>73</sup> Failure to assimilate this lesson has invariably been considered a cause of defeat; conversely, its successful application has been regarded as a reason for success.

What also has to be recognized, however, is the downside of this situation. Notwithstanding the opportunities for micro-management noted above, operations undertaken by small and often isolated units are not amenable to the same degree of centralized command and control as is common in large-scale actions. Rather, in LICs much of the responsibility for formulating and taking decisions rests with the immediate commander on the spot, who very rarely has the time to consult with his superiors along a conventional chain of command.<sup>74</sup> But, precisely because of the small size of the unit involved, this person is invariably no more than a junior officer—and often no more than an NCO. As such, he will invariably have been issued with only a general idea of his mission's overall purpose and can hardly be expected to fit the particular firefight in which he finds himself into a larger and more complex picture. From a political perspective, this can be a recipe for disaster. Once again, one need look no further than the record of recent Israeli operations in the Palestinian theater to appreciate how disproportionate can be the diplomatic consequences of what by other criteria are really 'minor' incidents.

Under these circumstances, the sociological complexion and composition of the unit involved necessarily becomes a critical variable. Are the forces involved in the mission conscripts, reservists, or long-term professional troops? Which of these structures is the

more likely to be adept at meeting the demands that the 'fuzzy' circumstances of counterinsurgency operations impose? The answers are not altogether clear cut. One detailed analysis of the performance of the Somerset Light Infantry during Britain's successful Malaysian campaign during the 1950s, for instance, indicates that: 'The average National Serviceman [conscript] was of *superior* [my emphasis] calibre to his Regular counterpart.'<sup>75</sup> But this may have been an exceptional case. By and large, the LIC literature tends to intimate a preference for professional forces, and has returned a virtually unanimous verdict (voiced by Richard Gabriel on the basis of Israel's experiences in Lebanon during the 1980s), that: 'Conscript armies are simply not very good for conducting sustained low-intensity operations.'<sup>76</sup>

Three considerations apparently justify that view. First, troops enlisted under extended terms of contract can more easily acclimatize themselves to unfamiliar terrain. As professionals, they experience less difficulty in overcoming the problems of operational adjustment encountered by armies as different as Cardwell's experimental short-service British regiments first tested in the Zulu War of 1879 and the assorted IDF troops initially dispatched to suppress the first *intifada* in 1987.<sup>77</sup> Secondly, and for similar reasons, longterm contract forces likewise avoid the organizational malaise suffered (for example) by the American army in Vietnam, where the need to rotate conscripts into and out of the theater of operations generated a degree of unit turbulence that contradicted all military logic.<sup>78</sup>

But to these two arguments against employing conscript forces on LIC missions must be added a third set of considerations that is more specifically societal in thrust. As the French discovered once Guy Mollet permitted the dispatch of conscripts to Algeria in 1956, a non-professional force is most likely to bring awareness of the difficulties of the war more intimately to domestic public attention and—in a reverse process—thus to infect the troops at the front with whatever signs of demoralization might be apparent in the rear. Moreover, and as the Soviet experience in Afghanistan also demonstrated,<sup>79</sup> even non-democratic states that rely on armed forces composed principally of conscripts and reservists are likely to find themselves under greater political pressure to 'bring the boys home' from a protracted counterinsurgency mission—even if this means settling for a draw in purely military terms (as did Israel *vis-à-vis* the *Hizbullah* in southern Lebanon in May 2000).<sup>80</sup>

Perhaps it is their sensitivity to such pitfalls, and the desire to circumvent them, that explains why in many cases governments engaged in LICs prefer to entrust many of their counterinsurgency missions to what are generically termed 'special forces'—that is, high-quality units that are especially formed and trained in order to undertake the sort of sensitive missions that LICs demand. Democracies have shown themselves just as eager to employ such instruments as have dictatorships. Thus, the United States made extensive use of special forces in Vietnam, as did the French in Indo-China and Algeria, the Dutch in the East Indies, the British in Malaysia, Oman, Bornea, Aden, the Radfan, and Northern Ireland, the Turks against the PKK, and the Israelis in their campaigns against both the *fedayeen* in the 1950s and other Palestinian groups in the 1990s. In each case, the object was clearly to resort to units of force at once more flexible and less cumbersome than conventional troops, and hence more appropriate to the terms of the conflict imposed by enemy tactics.

In strictly operational terms, this decision certainly seems to have been justified. Experience has confirmed that, precisely because of their nonconventional structures, special forces have indeed generally found it easier than the usual military formations to adapt to the requirements of 'nonconventional' and even 'sub-conventional' activities.<sup>81</sup> Especially is this so because of the emphasis that they place on leadership and initiative by junior officers, as opposed to reliance on directives issued by central commands.<sup>82</sup> That is not to say, however, that the resort to such units has proved a similarly advantageous recipe for the moderation of the sort of civil-military tensions to which the 'fuzzy' nature of LICs give rise. If anything, they sometimes seem to exacerbate them.

Mainly, this is because of the tendency of special forces to bend (and sometimes altogether violate) the conventional rules of war. Raised to deal with extraordinary situations, and placed in what by 'normal' military standards are especially complex situations, special forces often seem to behave as though they are altogether licensed to employ extraordinary methods in order to accomplish their tasks.<sup>83</sup> Hence the allegations (ultimately investigated in 1968—over 20 years after the event) that the Corps of Netherlands Special Troops had committed excesses in Indonesia in the period 1945–50,<sup>84</sup> that British Royal Marine Commandos and SAS 'counter-gangs' ambushed innocents in Malaysia and Kenya,<sup>85</sup> that the French paratroops commanded by colonels Trenquier and Massu regularly resorted to torture in Algeria,<sup>86</sup> and that the American Green Berets abused prisoners and non-combatants in Vietnam.<sup>87</sup> More recently, it has been charged that both Israeli special forces operating in the occupied territories and the British SAS in Northern Ireland have adopted methods that prioritized a policy of 'shoot to kill' over one that demanded a minimum use of force.<sup>88</sup>

Whether or not such charges of 'atrocities' are indeed well founded is in most instances impossible to prove or disprove. As Eliot Cohen points out, 'the tight, near-familial ties between soldiers in elite units' act as a particularly forceful restraint against members of special forces reporting whatever misdemeanors might have been committed.<sup>89</sup> In many respects the question might in any case be beside the point. From the perspective of the present essay, more salient is the fact that, by virtue of their publication and (again) the media attention that in democracies they have inevitably aroused, the operations and activities undertaken by special forces have always tended to open up yet another area of civil-military tension. In British military history, as much was illustrated as early as the uproar occasioned by the Amritsar massacre of 1919 and the 'Farran case' in Palestine in 1947.<sup>90</sup> Both experiences showed that, faced with the public uproar generated by allegations of 'war crimes', few politicians are prepared to go out on a limb and insist, *a priori*, that military actions undertaken by special forces are unquestionably legal and proper. Most will take refuge in assertions that the accusations have to be thoroughly investigated by the appropriate judicial authorities and, if proven, result in the punishment of the guilty parties. For their part, the troops involved tend to regard this reaction as symptomatic of the degree to which politicians might altogether be prepared to leave soldiers out on a limb when the going gets rough.



## CONCLUSIONS

Even though civil-military dissension is certainly not *exclusive* to situations of low-intensity conflict, the phenomenon does certainly appear to be particularly pronounced in counterinsurgency situations. This essay has suggested that the reasons are to be found in the specific characteristics of LIC conflicts, arguing that it is those characteristics which seem to exacerbate both the likelihood of civil-military tensions and their intensity. Three such characteristics have been singled out for particular attention: the manner in which LICs originate; their tendency to be protracted; and the fuzziness of the missions required to deal with them. What remains, however, is for this taxonomy to be tested in relation to a greater range of individual case studies than limitations of space here allow. Hopefully, such studies will suggest a mechanism for assessing the relative weight of each of these characteristics and, hence, their individual responsibility for the phenomenon at large.

## NOTES

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1. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 605–7.
2. Cited in Alistair Horne, *The French Army and Politics, 1870–1970* (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 44.
3. Whether or not this term might also include wars generated by violent *domestic* political disputes and conflicts that result from such non-conventional threats to security as terrorism and illegal narcotics trafficking is discussed in Alan Stephens, ‘The Transformation of “Low Intensity” Conflict’, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring 1994), pp. 143–61.
4. Gavin Bulloch, ‘Military Doctrine and Counterinsurgency: A British Perspective’, *Parameters*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (July 1996), p. 6.
5. The *locus classicus* for this view has become: Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peace-Keeping* (London: Faber & Faber, 1972), especially ch. 3, ‘Civil Military Relations’, pp. 49–65, which discusses and contrasts the French and British ‘models’ of such co-ordination. See also Samuel Huntington, ‘Introduction’, in Franklin M. Osanka (ed.), *Modern Guerrilla Warfare: Fighting Communist Guerrilla Movements, 1941–1961* (New York: The Free Press, 1962), p. xvi; Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1966), pp. 50–58; and G. Davidson Smith, *Combatting Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 245–9.
6. As Bulloch correctly points out, in LIC situations the desired aim of the government often falls short of ‘victory’ as understood by generals trained to think in a strictly military context and setting. Bulloch, ‘Military Doctrine and Counterinsurgency’, p. 3.
7. Rajesh Rajagopalan, ‘“Restoring Normalcy”: The Evolution of the Indian Army’s Counterinsurgency Doctrine’, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 2000), pp. 44–68; and Sankaran Kalyanaraman, ‘The Indian Way in Counterinsurgency’, this volume.

8. Ümit Özda and Ersel Aydmh, 'Winning a Low Intensity Conflict: Drawing Lessons from the Turkish Case', this volume.
9. See Stuart A. Cohen and Efraim Inbar, 'Varieties of Counter-Insurgency Activities: Israel's Military Operations Against the Palestinians', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring 1991), pp. 41–60.
10. Yehuda Ben-Meir, *Civil–Military Relations in Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).
11. See Zaki Shalom, *Policy in the Shadow of Controversy: Israel's Current Security Policy, 1949–1956* (Tel-Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publications, 1996) [in Hebrew], especially pp. 55–69, 109–11; David Tal, *Israel's Current Security Doctrine: Sources and Development, 1949–1956* (Beer-Sheba: Ben-Gurion University Press, 1998) [in Hebrew], pp. 82–6, 139–44, 150–51.
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15. For a survey of these developments, see Eliot A. Cohen, 'Technology and Supreme Command', in Cohen, *Democratic Societies and their Armed Forces*, pp. 89–106.
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27. Gil Merom, 'Strategic Power in Small Wars: The Unnoticed Foundation of Success', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Autumn 1998), pp. 38–63.
28. For Turkish recognition of the need for this approach *vis-à-vis* the Kurds, see William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 286–7; Nur Bilge Criss, 'The Nature of PKK Terrorism in Turkey', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1995), pp. 17–38.
29. Both quotes are taken from Bulloch, 'Military Doctrine and Counterinsurgency', pp. 4–16.
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34. J. Bowyer Bell, 'Revolts Against the Crown: The British Response to Imperial Insurgencies', *Parameters*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1974), pp. 31–46.
35. Cited in Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919–60* (New York: St. Martin's, 1990), p. 65.
36. Charles Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland, 1919–1921: The Development of Political and Military Policies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 40.
37. A.J. Stockwell, 'A Widespread and Long-Concocted Plot to Overthrow Government in Malaya? The Origins of the Malayan Emergency', in Holland, *Emergencies and Disorder*, p. 67.
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40. Özda and Aydmh, 'Winning a Low Intensity Conflict'.
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# Democracies, Limited War and Psychological Operations

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Before and during any war the government going to war must address three main target audiences: home, enemy (both military and civilians) and neutrals. For democracies, the most important audience is the home audience. As the state faces the danger of a coming war, the government has to persuade its citizens that the danger is imminent and therefore they must alter their personal and societal priorities. The citizen is called to risk his fortunes, future, and—in the extreme case—to sacrifice his life as well. Governments that fail to go through this process, namely, to explain to their citizens ‘why we fight’,<sup>1</sup> will find it very difficult to win the war. This principle applies primarily to democracies, but authoritarian regimes also need a modicum of social support. The second target audience is the enemy. The appeals are directed towards making the enemy realize that their efforts are in vain, that fighting will cause them a great tragedy and, all in all, that they are bound to fail. The third target audience is the neutrals. The purpose is to align them with one’s own side or at least to dissuade them from supporting the enemy’s cause.

This initially non-violent persuasion, when it is performed on a strategic level, is called Psychological Operations or PSYOP, a term that became popular during the Vietnam War.<sup>2</sup> PSYOP’s popularity is growing in our increasingly communicative world, where access to means of message dissemination is becoming vastly easier and quicker than it has ever been.<sup>3</sup>

During small wars, insurgent groups, who engage in military action against the state, adroitly use PSYOP. They employ PSYOP more willingly than democratic states since they do not have the same compunctions as democracies regarding its use, and they are more creative and innovative, usually displaying also great organizational flexibility. Possessing these qualities, they can cause democracies considerable damage.

This article discusses the vulnerabilities of democracies to PSYOP. It also advocates promoting PSYOP, namely, the use of information and non-violent persuasive measures as a means to aid democracies in defending themselves more efficiently in cases of small and protracted wars.

## DEMOCRACY’S VULNERABILITIES IN SMALL WARS

Democracies are vulnerable to PSYOP in four main aspects: the duration of the conflict (‘time element’), the psychological transformation towards war (‘mix of values’), the population’s state of mind (‘uncertainty’), and the domestic political arena.

*The Time Element*

In conventional warfare the protagonists seek a decisive victory in as short a period of time as possible or as long as their resources allow. In limited war, the weaker side, since it has access to limited resources only, substitutes *matériel* and manpower with long duration of military activity, surprise attacks and self-sufficiency. This time element plays a major role in enabling insurgents using limited warfare to defeat a democracy.<sup>4</sup>

Democracy's weak point is its need for social cohesion and for popular support. These are generally maintained through education and public relations campaigns. Limited warfare is often initially abhorrent to the general population, so the insurgents try to induce the government to overreact to small-scale violent attacks against the security services or infrastructure. Such seeming disproportionate violence undermines social cohesion, and as the violence and counterviolence spiral upwards, the circle of supporters of the insurgency grows—the object of it all being to force the eventual capitulation of the regime. Success is dependent not on a quick victory, but on the opposite—what is euphemistically called ‘salami tactics’, in which a long series of minor achievements accumulate over time into a major achievement. Each small victory in itself is not very harmful or costly in terms of enemy lives or infrastructure, and only a long-term survey reveals the damage done to the state—by which time it is usually too late to turn back the clock.

The insurgents have to be very careful in fine-tuning the damage inflicted. They do not want their military action to be too large and painful, as that would aid the government in declaring war against them before they are ready to engage in a conventional war. The September 11 attack is an outstanding exception, which can be explained either by non-rational thinking on the part of the attackers, or on a miscalculation of American determination to become entangled in a war in far-away Afghanistan.

An authoritarian regime faced with small rebel attacks tends to react by escalating the conflict immediately into a large-scale campaign, where the rebels are at a disadvantage. Such an escalation results in a heavy toll of civilian casualties among the insurgents, at least at the beginning, as the government tries to impress the rebels with its determination. When the first *intifada* broke out in the Gaza Strip on December 8, 1987 it included both sides of Rafah, a Palestinian town divided between Israel and Egypt. Egypt sent a small detachment, which machine-gunned the demonstrating crowd, killing 23 people, thus ending the demonstrations on the Egyptian side.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, Israel reacted initially in a limited way, gradually escalating its response. It took Israel three years and over 1,000 dead, mostly Palestinians, to quell the uprising on the other side of the border.<sup>6</sup>

As opposed to the authoritarian conduct, an embattled democracy relies on the education of the public on national issues, free flow of information and popular agreement. This process is difficult to maintain over a protracted conflict unless, of course, the danger is imminent. Democracies resist the urge to counterattack rebels indiscriminately on a large scale. Rather, they attempt to control the situation using local police forces or small military units, and often fall prey to the insurgents' strategy. A democracy is also more prone to internal criticism on the financial costs of war, in the long run, if unable to justify them. The case of the US struggle against Al Qaeda is a useful example. Since September 2001, when patriotic fervor ran high, there has been a growing



call for caution. The death of hundreds of Taliban captives, which has been openly questioned in the US,<sup>7</sup> indicates that although the criticism might very well be the result of a Saudi-originated public relations campaign, the fact that within a year these voices have received public attention attests to the limited amount of time a democracy can maintain a popular patriotic mood.

### *The Changing Mix of Values in Wartime*

In times of peace or relative peace, a democracy consciously allows freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of information and other rights, out of the conviction that bestowing those rights will best serve its citizens and the polity. Yet these rights may affect national security in a negative way during war. Therefore, in such times, democracies may temporarily suspend or limit those rights. Such steps are perceived as legitimate by the citizens, at a time when a sacrifice is called for, as the utmost effort needs to be invested in order to win the war, and continual full exercise of those rights might put an extra burden on the government in conduct of war, which in turn will harm the war effort.

In small wars, where usually there is no formal declaration of war, the governments find it difficult to make a transition to wartime values. For example, censorship in all its forms will hardly have the legitimacy to operate. A democracy is particularly vulnerable if the insurgents utilize the absence of censorship to fuel popular sentiment. Not much material has been written on this extremely subversive technique. There were accusations in Israel against the protest movement, 'Four Mothers', which campaigned in favor of a unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon, that some of their finances came from mysterious sources abroad.<sup>8</sup>

The unavoidable tension, between the right of free access to information and fear of what the enemy intelligence might learn, will hamper the government's efforts to disseminate a unified message. Even more important, in a limited war there will be less of the self-censorship that politicians and bureaucrats impose upon themselves during a conventional war, temporarily suspending their personal struggle for political survival.

### *Uncertainty*

Whilst the insurgents may issue a public declaration that proclaims a war against the state, they are often disregarded due to the small size of their organization or the small amount of damage caused by their military actions. Large bureaucracies have difficulties reading ambiguous or weak signals. Not only is a declaration of war required under international law (in itself a very important factor in building legitimacy for the war), but it serves as a point in time where the government in a democracy turns to its people and issues demands for their support and sacrifice. This sacrifice encompasses the psychological changeover that the average citizen is asked to undergo to accommodate the needs of the war machine. Since war that entails killing is an ugly matter, a democratic society has to undergo a metamorphosis in order to harness its mental and physical resources to the needs of war. After indoctrination of the benefits of civil rights and the brotherhood of man, the government must transform ordinary people into able killers, and get their families'

support for this process. A society at war must also undergo a period of shortage and high taxes (called 'War Bonds'), and temporarily a suspension of some civil rights. In order to gain support for such a state of affairs, the state has to show the imminence of apparent danger. An enemy declaration of war constitutes such an opportunity to declare a state of emergency in order to impress upon the citizens the severity of the situation.<sup>9</sup>

This transformation is more easily achieved when a war is officially declared. At such times, nations generally unite; patriotic feelings run high—and this psychological factor has a great impact on what follows. Such was the case in the US after Pearl Harbor. When there is no such awesome moment of declaring a turning point in history, the undeclared war has to be conducted using the army and the security forces, but without this extremely important popular support. In short, without a clear psychological atmosphere of war the state will face difficulties in mobilizing the entire society to the war effort. The public naturally objects to the diversion of economic resources from consumption to defense expenditures, and the political leaders might pay the political price for fighting an unpopular war, which was initially perceived as a nuisance. By vacillating between various possible reactions, the people's determination and resistance capability are eroded over time.

In a state of semi-war, the democratic society is in a state of uncertainty. A partial draft, as opposed to the full-scale mobilization characteristic of a conventional war, may elicit a sense of discrimination and bitterness as time goes on, and hamper the war effort in the long run. Under such circumstances, pacifist messages would begin to catch the attention of the public, and grass-roots organizations begin to appear, asking difficult questions. This trend intensifies when military casualties are brought home from the battlefields. There may also be uncertainty regarding the justification of the military action. Militarily, the state might be stronger in the initial stages and the insurgents might exploit that fact to show the unfairness of the struggle. This justification is essential to the interests of the democracy in respect of societal conscription. Whereas in a situation where society—especially in a democracy but to a certain extent also in authoritarian regimes as well—perceives the war to be just, the media, the intellectuals, labor unions, etc. all join in voluntarily to support the war effort. The conduct of small wars usually lacks this conviction on the part of the whole society.

The government should also be aware that the insurgents might turn a (conventional) military defeat into a political victory. This was the case of the FLN in Algeria, against the French, and what the US faced in the Tet offensive by the Viet Cong in Vietnam.<sup>10</sup> Another case in point is the battle of Karameh in Jordan in 1968, between Israel and Palestinian and Jordanian forces. The battle was militarily a defeat to the Palestinians, but they presented the heavy Israeli losses as a Palestinian victory, 'the first after the 1967 defeat'. It went on to become a political victory as PLO prestige rose in the Arab world. Such was the case of the urban warfare in Jenin in April 2002. Despite the use of close-quarters combat techniques by the IDF in routing out Palestinian terrorists, in order to avoid civilian casualties, the Palestinians exploited the Israeli-imposed media closure to accuse Israel of committing a massacre against the civilian population.

As the conflict intensifies, the insurgents usually suggest their own alternative for a 'solution' to the dire situation—one that will incidentally suit their purposes. This might strike a responsive cord among the targeted society. If the insurgents present their desired

solution in terms that minimize their own interests and also as beneficial to their opponent, it has a chance of acceptance. The Israeli/Palestinian and Israeli/Hizbullah conflicts are cases in point. The Palestinians have effectively used the slogan 'the occupation corrupts', thereby persuading Israelis that their presence in the West Bank and Gaza is against their own interests.

If the insurgents possess a certain amount of creativity and ingenuity, certainly demonstrated by the Palestinians and the Hizbullah versus Israel, they can greatly enhance their effectiveness. They can deliver messages using inexpensive resources that lower morale, drive a wedge between segments of the enemy's society and greatly enhance the impact of their small military operations. For instance, from a modest beginning in 1984, the Kurdish insurgents (PKK) became a serious challenge to the Turkish government.<sup>11</sup>

### *Exploitation of Domestic Politics*

Democracies are vulnerable also in their political domestic arena. It is well understood that the political level is the prime target of the contender. The military moves are merely a means towards attaining the political goal. The insurgents penetrate their opponent's political system in various ways. The oldest technique is the communist mechanism of a front organization.<sup>12</sup> One has to recruit people who sincerely identify with the contender's cause and recruit them to the cause, wittingly or otherwise. Another option is to set up a political party which, although it does not conceal its long-term goals, nevertheless declares itself to consist of law-abiding citizens who distance themselves from violence of every kind. Such is the case of parties like the Sinn Fein in Ireland,<sup>13</sup> and the Herri Batasuna, a radical Basque party (closely affiliated with ETA) in Spain.<sup>14</sup> Sinn Fein presents itself as a political movement with no connections to the militant IRA. There are not many who take this at face value, but the British argument in favor of going along with this fiction maintains that such an arrangement might channel the energies of militant Irishmen into a political framework, possibly saving lives and encouraging a political solution to the 'Irish Problem'.<sup>15</sup>

Parties like Sinn Fein are adroit at walking the political tightrope between national ambitions and legal constraints. They are free to further propagate their cause and increase their circle of supporters. However, they have to be extremely careful in judging the reaction of the government and the public regarding their political tactics (demonstrations that deteriorate into clashes, protest acts such as flag burning, etc.). Such parties must have exceptionally good political intelligence and tools to gauge trends in public opinion. Such parties try to obtain their information—overtly or otherwise—from supporters within the ranks of the government. These supporters might be tempted, for example, by ethnic affiliation, a sense of adventure, or simple, old-fashioned lures like worldly gain.

The Basque Herri Batasuna, for instance, displays similarity to the Sinn Fein and even maintains strong ties with it.<sup>16</sup> Yet it did not evaluate the situation carefully enough; it pulled the rope slightly too hard, and ended up being outlawed in Spain.<sup>17</sup> Similar in this respect are some Arab parties in Israel, whose subversive elements, linked to Palestinian insurgent groups within the Palestinian Authority, have become the focus of closer Israeli security scrutiny than in the past.

So far we have seen that a democracy is at a disadvantage when fighting a small war—both militarily and politically. Even when a democracy seeks to counter the messages spread by the insurgents, it faces various difficulties. For one, democratic governments are comparatively short-lived as elections bring in new governments. Each government rises by promising the voters that it will solve the conflict, by approaching the subject from a different angle and political perspective. This means essentially that the messages will vary from one administration to another, while the insurgents can pursue the same propaganda line consistently over time.

A democracy is even further impaired due to the fact that a pluralistic entity tends to speak in many voices. While the insurgents have a small steering committee that determines the messages to be delivered, democracies operate through many organizations, which are not always well coordinated. Bureaucratic rivalry and conflicting interests, an integral part of any democratic government, contribute to the profusion of differing messages issued. At best, a democratic government can control its national security organizations, but even then it may find it difficult to control the content of the public comments made by high-ranking security officials.

### *The Insurgents' PSYOP*

Insurgents will strive to present every phase of the conflict as a separate issue by focusing the public eye on one issue at a time. This tactic aims at diverting the attention from realizing the insurgent's long-term strategic goals. This is what the Hizbullah is doing versus Israel: first the demand to pull out of South Lebanon, followed by a territorial demand to pull out from a religious site and, nowadays, the installation of a small water pump in the Wazani River (a Jordan River tributary). The insurgents aspire to direct public debate to questions such as what could have happened if the enemy hadn't done such-and-such, was the reaction of the government disproportionate and, in the case of casualties, how the unnecessary killing could have been prevented.

In order to direct the public discourse within a democratic polity, the insurgents use standard techniques of media manipulation. They cultivate supportive journalists and reject critical ones; they supply dramatic images collected during battle (a skill developed most efficiently by the Hizbullah in South Lebanon). Often they orchestrate pseudo-events. The official Turkish Foreign Ministry's website recounts an incident in which a German film company shot a pro-PKK film allegedly showing the harsh reality of the Kurds, and their resort to violence through lack of alternative. The film turned out to be shot in Greece and played by actors of Albanian origin.<sup>18</sup> In another case, Israeli intelligence showed a film of a staged Palestinian burial procession. The insurgents might provide an 'exclusive' interview with a leader, preferably in his hideout, etc.<sup>19</sup> The overall purpose is to drive a wedge between various segments within the enemy target audience, and to create doubt and insecurity towards the justness of the cause—a major PSYOP goal.

*Messages*

The messages that the insurgents direct towards their target audience include themes of morality, futility of war, and the utter waste of lives and infrastructure. These messages are meant to undermine the military measures the state would undertake in a number of ways. They are designed to instill guilt within enemy ranks, and to make the enemy soldier pause and contemplate on the sanctity of life, and away from the machine of war. The Serbs employed this technique during the NATO bombing campaign in 1999: Serb students sent e-mail messages containing details of the casualties caused by the air attacks to the families of American pilots that were deployed in the Balkans.<sup>20</sup>

The insurgents tailor messages to the neutral target audience to undermine support for their enemy by presenting the enemy's cause as illegitimate, unjust and inhuman. Sometimes, messages backfire when ill suited to a designated audience. Messages conveying strength may alarm the government and messages conveying weakness may deter the prospective volunteers.

The Palestinians successfully broadcast their denouncement of Israeli responsibility for the Sabra and Shatilla massacre in 1982.<sup>21</sup> The FLN did the same about French abuses in Algeria during the early 1960s. The British, in the First World War—a conventional war—were successful as well in demonizing the Germans.<sup>22</sup> Once the war is delegitimized, the state is forced to operate on a smaller scale and to take maximum precautions to avoid injuries to its soldiers and non-combatants—thus harming military efforts. This is a particular vulnerability of a democracy, since while in conventional wartime one's own military casualties are accepted even in large numbers, and to a certain extent civilian casualties are also taken for granted, in limited war they can very easily be presented as unnecessary and futile.<sup>23</sup>

The army is often put in a very awkward position: trying to operate according to military doctrine but without casualties. This is an almost impossible task and it is bound to cause the army to operate only where it is safe rather than where it is necessary.<sup>24</sup> The resulting spiral of military failures can be enhanced by messages issued by the insurgents on the hopelessness of the situation, and by their popularization of convenient 'truisms' such as 'there is no military solution to the problem—only a political one'. Messages of this sort proved extremely effective in the Hizbullah's successful campaign to oust Israel from Southern Lebanon.

The insurgents could highlight the moral perspective and present their casualties to the media. Death and destruction receive much attention in democracies due to the sensitivity to the loss of life regardless of the fact that the victims are the 'enemy'.

*Delegitimizing the Leadership*

In times of conventional war people tend to set aside their political differences and, despite reservations, unite behind their leaders. This lesson was learned during the Second World War when the effectiveness of PSYOP messages were pre-tested on German POWs.<sup>25</sup> In a small war this might not be the case. Beside delegitimizing the countermeasures taken by the army, the insurgents attempt to delegitimize also the political leadership. Criticism that is hushed during conventional war regarding the

personal ethics and motives of the political leadership is allowed to be voiced in cases of a small war. Such was the case in Peru, whose president, Alberto Fujimori, was roundly accused of corruption by the Peruvian Tupac Amaru.<sup>26</sup> In Egypt the Muslim radicals attack the corruption of Egyptian elites frequently. The insurgents do not hesitate to leak to the press any embarrassing information, regarding past negotiations or personal conduct, extramarital affairs, etc.

#### *Dissemination*

The hardest part of PSYOP is the delivery of messages to the enemy. Armies fighting conventional wars in the past century grappled with the problem and came up with a myriad of creative solutions. The main problem is that both sides realize that in time of war their overt messages are taken (if they manage to cross the technical obstacles placed by both sides such as jamming) with more than a grain of salt. Enemy messages are regarded as 'propaganda', while one's own messages are regarded as 'information'. In the First World War the Germans developed a principle for action in order to overcome this obstacle: in order to prevent their messages from being disregarded or ridiculed by the enemy soldiers (namely, the French in the trenches) they produced a newspaper, *Gazette des Ardennes*, composed of messages that had, in addition to their morale-lowering content, news relevant to the French soldier, such as information on the well-being of French POWs.<sup>27</sup>

The dissemination of messages by insurgents among hostile audiences in a democracy during a state of small wars is much easier than in conventional war. The insurgents have access to the media in a democracy if they know (and most certainly do) the basic rules of media management. Democracies permit open competition in covering the news. The news gathering organizations and their personnel perceive themselves to be committed to their profession and its ethics, rather than to the political interests of their countries. The increasing demand for visual news has eroded the lines between patriotism and professionalism, a trend that came to a head with Peter Arnett's broadcasting from Baghdad during the 1991 Gulf War.<sup>28</sup> If the insurgents can provide visual, dramatic and timely information, the media—international and local—are likely to purchase the material and broadcast it. The media dismisses the accusations of treason to various degrees, stressing its impartial professional ethics. Current US military-media relations in Afghanistan seem to show a different attitude, yet this is the exception rather than the rule. It is primarily due to the enormous scale of casualties that America suffered on September 11, and to the high perception of threat that America feels.

The bottom line is that the media has an insatiable need for interesting material, and various violent political movements have even gone so far as to orchestrate events for the sake of the media. In effect it does not take much. Whereas in the past the Soviets were projecting their force through the May 1 parades, nowadays the insurgents wave guns, wear ski masks and burn flags. In the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict we can see such presentations carried to greater extremes. During the *intifada* uprising of 1987 the Palestinian 'shock committees' held parades while brandishing swords, axes and sometimes guns. More recently, the Palestinian Authority had a live transmission of an execution by firing squad. These are exciting images and the media cannot resist

broadcasting them. As mentioned above, such messages can be mixed. Most Palestinians perceive these visuals as a sign of national determination, while most Israelis find them repulsive, reinforcing the image of Palestinian 'barbarity'.

The Israeli experience in its confrontations with the Hizbullah shows that the latter knew how to handle the media very well indeed. Hizbullah overcame the immanent difficulty of neutralizing the enemy audience's suspicion by actually subordinating military considerations to the visual output of its attacks. What determined the success of an action was not merely the real military achievement, that is the number of Israeli soldiers killed or the invasion of an Israeli fortified position, but the 'quality' of visual footage shot at the action. This footage would be aired on their television station, *Al Manar*, with the competing Israeli television stations rebroadcasting the material. The Israelis watched, in a mixture of disgust and fascination, scenes of their boys entering an ambush, stepping on a mine or being attacked in their fortified bases in Southern Lebanon.

To its home audience, insurgents deliver messages that call for the demonization of the enemy, strengthening the need for sacrifice, and future gains that would follow the victory.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, they make sure to produce victories, however small, which are essential for morale and for gathering support. Such has been the practice of the IRA since 1969. Every minor jailbreak or killing of a British soldier was presented as a forerunner of the collapse of the British system. Whenever a 'hard' target (British soldiers or policemen) was not available, the definition of a target was broadened to include 'collaborators', such as the person who supplied the Coca-Cola machine in the British barracks.<sup>30</sup> The technique of transferring the guilt ('our violence is your fault') was also applied by the IRA.<sup>31</sup> The famous hunger strikes of Bobby Sands were used by the IRA to portray him as a martyr and to try to gain the moral upper hand.<sup>32</sup>

## WHAT DEMOCRACIES CAN DO TO DEFEND THEMSELVES

### *Educate the Public*

First and foremost, democracies should acquaint their citizens with the practice of small wars and the PSYOP campaign conducted against a democracy. The citizens should be presented with the expected progression of events, and be acquainted with the various options of military and political action. Protracted small wars need public support and it is up to the democratic governments to secure it. In order to convince the public of the dangers involved in losing the war, the government could outline the consequences of the attainment by the insurgents of their long-term aspirations. A survey of past successes in small wars refutes the argument that democracies are not successful in fighting insurgencies.

### *Change of Attitude to PSYOP*

PSYOP is an effective tool when properly employed, not only in conventional war but also in small wars. Democracies should realize also that the insurgents are not the only ones who can benefit from the use of PSYOP methods. PSYOP has a lower cost both in terms

of money and, more importantly, in human lives. It is moral because it seeks to invoke surrender rather than the death of the enemy. All these advantages are particularly attractive to democracies and yet democracies have often abstained from using PSYOP, employing it only reluctantly during conventional wars, and dismantling the PSYOP organization, which was painstakingly assembled, in a matter of weeks, once the war is over. Democracies should change their attitude towards PSYOP and realize that PSYOP (the linguistic inheritor of 'propaganda') is not a dirty word. It can be used well within the confines of democratic values. PSYOP is not necessarily about lying and dissemination of falsehoods. On the contrary, one of the foundations of PSYOP conduct is the maintenance of credibility, which is best achieved by not resorting to lies, since credibility, achieved through painstaking efforts, would suffer long-term damage by one exposed lie.

The insurgents may sometimes be more lax with the truth to achieve a major blow to the enemy's image. They are less likely to resist exploiting an opportunity their opponent had presented. Such an example was Arafat's allegation that Israel's flag is the incarnation of its annexation desires.<sup>33</sup> Such offensive techniques can either be explained away by the whims of a leader or as part of a planned strategy. Often such allegations are delivered through a front organization that is not associated with the contender in order to bypass the credibility problem.

Democracies are not always cognizant of the dangers entailed in the insurgents' PSYOP. They often fail to note that the methods of PSYOP are quite unchanging. This would facilitate anticipation and countering attempts designed to destabilize them. Therefore, democracies should learn PSYOP methods, adapt them and use them against their opponents.

### *Creating the Organizational Response*

Democracies need to direct research as well as proper budgets in addition to the need to master new techniques of PSYOP. This will enable them to anticipate enemy persuasion moves and plan countercampaigns. One basic step to overcome revulsion from PSYOP is to find a new terminology for the word, something along the lines of 'Strategic Information' (STRINFO). The next step would be to market it within the state bureaucracy and political bodies to make sure it gets the proper resources and attention by decision-making bodies. An organization in charge of STRINFO is a basic need for a democracy engaged in war. Such an organization should run a series of war games where PSYOP is a major factor in forecasting both insurgents' moves and messages. Scenarios written and played out would include the tool of PSYOP as an inseparable part of the solutions the government might take. This forecast might suggest options and preventive measures that might limit the options of future insurgents. In many instances a new doctrine would have to be written. Journalists, anthropologists and political scientists side by side with the veteran military, secret, and police services have to be mobilized to assure creation of the best messages and coordination among the various government agencies. Lastly, the STRINFO agency has to struggle to have its output seriously considered in the state's political and security decisions in the struggle against insurgents. This is not an easy task because it is unlikely that their persuasion efforts will be able to produce quick results.



## CONCLUSION

Democracies should learn to employ the tool of STRINFO (PSYOP) to aid them in the struggle against insurgencies. STRINFO has a low cost in terms of resources, and is moral since it saves lives. The use of STRINFO is not contradictory to democratic values. Democracies should re-acquaint themselves with this tool, and use it. It is important to foresee the moves and messages the insurgents are likely to employ and to pre-empt or counter them accordingly. This requires much intra-state marketing effort because STRINFO is still largely associated with Joseph Goebbels and the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda. A crucial step is to find a new terminology for persuasion in wartime. Democracies that fight insurgencies should educate their population that limited war is of long duration and detail the moves and messages the insurgents are likely to use. This will take the sting out of many measures the insurgents wish to use. The democracies should rid themselves of the guilt they feel in using STRINFO because their enemies do not feel the same way. Moreover, the establishment of a special governmental agency in charge of STRINFO is a must for any democracy at war.

## NOTES

1. The title of the famous film series Frank Capra was asked to direct between 1942 and 1945 explaining to the American home audience the purposes of the war.
2. For the history and evolution of the terminology, including the term 'propaganda' and other associated terms, see W.E.Dougherty and Morris Janowitz, *A Psychological Warfare Casebook* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1958); J.Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973); Alexander George, *Propaganda Analysis: A Study of Inferences made from Nazi Propaganda in the Second World War* (Evanston, IL: Ron Peterson & Co., 1959); W.E.Dougherty, 'History of PSYOP Terminology', in Ron D.Mclaurin (ed.), *Military Propaganda: Psychological Warfare and Operations* (New York: Praeger, 1982), pp. 257–8. Also, Philip M.Taylor's foreword to Robert Cole, *International Encyclopedia of Propaganda* (Chicago, IL: Fitzroy and Dirborn Publishers, 1998), pp. xix–xxiii.
3. A detailed manual is produced by the US Army, and a number of official versions are available on the internet. FM 33–1-1 Psychological Operations Techniques and Procedures, Headquarters Department of the Army, Washington DC.
4. A vast literature was written during the 1970s regarding insurgencies in light of the Cold War's 'fighting by proxy', especially in Vietnam and later in Africa and South America. A notable example was by Frank Kitson, who used his experience in the British Army to criticize his military contemporaries' hostility towards PSYOP. Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peace-Keeping* (London: Faber, 1971).
5. Interview with Brigadier General Zeev Livneh in TV documentary, *In Search of Solid Ground-The Intifada Through Israeli Eyes*, PBS (Jan. 1990), producer: Steve Brand for Kunhard Productions and RLP Inc.
6. See, Efraim Inbar, 'Israel's Small Wars: The Military Reaction to the Intifada', *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Fall 1991), pp. 29–50.
7. 'US General Backs Probe of Reported Afghan Mass Graves'; [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com), Aug. 25, 2002.
8. The registrar of tax-exempt associations in Israel is considering revoking their status for lack of sufficient documentation regarding their financial status. As a result, further delivery of

- funds from the EU were withheld. Interview with the journalist D.Bedin, Jerusalem, Sept. 2002.
9. Disregarding, of course, the fact that by then it might be too late for that country to defend itself.
  10. P.Braestrup, *Big Story: How the American Press and TV Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977).
  11. For the PKK challenge, see Ümit Özda and Ersel Aydmh, 'Winning a Low Intensity Conflict: Drawing Lessons from the Turkish Case', in this volume.
  12. During the Cold War the KGB allegedly financed US and European 'peace' movements. A Senate committee looked into this issue and published some reports on the matter. See *Active Measures: A Report on the Substance and Process of Anti US Disinformation and Propaganda Campaigns* (USIA, The US Department of State, 1992); see also, Richard H.Shulz and Roy Goodson, *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* (Washington DC: Pergamon Brassey's, 1984), pp. 113–25.
  13. William D.Montalbano, 'Sinn Fein Goes to Peace Talks, Says it is Independent of IRA', *LA Times*, Sept. 16, 2002, p. 2.
  14. Yonah Alexander, *ETA: Profile of a Terrorist Group* (New York: Transnational, 2001) p. 8; Paddy Woodworth, *Dirty War Clean Hands: ETA the GAL and Spanish Democracy* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), p. 129.
  15. What Cynthia L.Irvin calls 'to engage the ballot as well as the bullet'. Cynthia L.Irvin, *Militant Nationalism: Between Movement and Party in Ireland and the Basque Country* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. xi.
  16. *Ibid.*, p. x.
  17. E.Daly, 'Spain: Bill on Banning Parties Approved', *New York Times*, June 26, 2002, p. 11.
  18. See [www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ac/acf/acfl/pkkfilm.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ac/acf/acfl/pkkfilm.htm).
  19. A favored technique of the Zapatistas in Mexico.
  20. W.Schwartz, *Unrestricted War*; [www.infowar.com](http://www.infowar.com).
  21. The Christian Phalangists, Israel's allies at the time, broke into the two Beirut Palestinian refugee camps, killing dozens of civilians. An Israeli investigating commission was set up by the Knesset, and Ariel Sharon, then Defence Minister, was found guilty of negligence and was forced to resign. The Palestinians successfully campaigned to link the massacre to Sharon personally and to the IDF. For the extent of the campaign, see F.P.Lamb (ed.), *Reason Not the Need: Eyewitness Chronicles of Israel's War in Lebanon* (Nottingham: Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, 1984), pp. 537–631.
  22. The case of the *Lusitania*, an ocean liner which was sunk by the German navy. The British duplicated a German medal minted by a private mint and distributed it in the US together with a leaflet denouncing Germans as monsters. This was a small part in a large demonization campaign. Philip M.Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: War Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Nuclear Age* (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1990), p. 168.
  23. For example, the furor in Israel over the death of 11 Palestinian children who were killed during a raid on the chief Hamas terrorist in Gaza. G.Levi, 'Targeted Killing', *Ha'aretz*, Aug. 2, 2002.
  24. On the eve of an expected Israeli raid of the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian factions embark on a fear-inducing campaign, in which they describe the measures they are undertaking in order to inflict casualties on the Israeli soldiers. These include descriptions of booby traps, mines, etc. For example, R.Dunn, 'Israelis Dump Plans for Army Raid on Gaza', *Herald* (Australia), May 13, 2002.

25. Germans were critical about the war, the party and the army—but not about Hitler. Daniel Lerner, *Psychological Warfare against Nazi Germany: The Skyewar Campaign—D-Day to VE Day* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1949), p. 178.
26. See <http://burn.ucs.d.edu/~ats/MRTA/march-2001.htm>.
27. Charles Roetter, *Psychological Warfare* (London: Batsford, 1974), p. 97.
28. W.V.Kennedy, *The Military and the Media: Why The Press Cannot be Trusted to Cover a War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993) p. 22.
29. Maurice Tugwell, 'Terrorism and Propaganda—Problem and Response', in Paul Wilkinson and Alasdair M.Stewart (eds.), *Contemporary Research on Terrorism* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), pp. 409–18.
30. J.Bowyer Bell, *IRA: Tactics and Targets* (Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1990), p. 32.
31. For detailed analysis of the Provisional IRA, see Joanne Wright, *Terrorist Propaganda: The Red Army Faction and the Provisional IRA 1968–86* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1990), pp. 89–101.
32. On the famous hunger strike of Sands and his nine companions, see T.P.Coogan, *The IRA* (New York: Palgrave, St Martin's Press, revised edn. 2002), pp. 494–501.
33. The Israeli flag has two blue stripes modeled on the traditional prayer shawl. Arafat has alleged that the two blue stripes symbolize the Israeli desire to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates. See also, Danny Rubenstein, *The Mystery of Arafat* (South Royalton, VA: Stretforth Press, 1995), p. 3.

# **Trends in Low Intensity Ethnic Conflict in Democratic States in the Post-Cold War Era: A Large N Study**

JONATHAN FOX

This study is intended to examine the influence of regime as well as the end of the Cold War on the intensity of ethnic conflict using data from the Minorities at Risk (MAR) dataset. While it is the norm to discuss the issues at hand before proceeding to the findings, one finding of this study is so profound that it colors the entire study and, therefore, must be stated at the outset. Few of the ethnic conflicts examined in this study reach levels higher than low intensity conflict. That is, when ethnic conflict is violent, it almost always takes the form of low intensity conflict. Very few of the cases reach a level of violence beyond guerrilla warfare, which is considered a form of low intensity conflict. Also, many of the few cases that reach the highest level of conflict coded in the MAR data 'protracted civil war' are considered by most also to be low intensity conflicts.

Given this, the focus here is on which types of low intensity conflict are more common under which type of regime. The three categories analyzed here are terrorism, guerrilla war (which includes localized rebellions), and protracted civil war. More specifically, this study focuses on two questions. First, are there any differences in the type of conflict that occurs under different regimes? Second, if such differences exist, were they influenced by the end of the Cold War?

## **REGIME TYPE AND CONFLICT**

While the focus of this study is on democratic states, it is not possible to understand the trends that occur within democratic states without a comparison with other types of state. As ethnic conflicts can be caused and influenced by a wide range of factors, of which regime type is only one, it is not possible to ascertain whether any trends in ethnic conflicts found within democracies are unique to democracies, or influenced at all by regime type, without a comparison with non-democratic states.

The nature of ethnic conflict is clearly different in democracies and autocratic states. The generally accepted wisdom has it that democratic states are better able to deal with ethnic demands than are autocracies because they have institutions that are designed to allow grievances to be heard and addressed through a number of channels. They are also better at designing the means for coping with major ethnic cleavages in society through power-sharing arrangements and coalition politics.<sup>1</sup>

However, violent conflict does occur in democracies because the peaceful conflict resolution methods available to democracies do not always work. In a democratic setting, a group is unlikely to engage in collective violence as long as peaceful methods are

believed to have a good chance of fulfilling the group's demands. It is only when the democratic mechanisms have failed or it is believed that they will be ineffective that violence occurs.<sup>2</sup>

Democracies are, in particular, vulnerable to low intensity conflict for several reasons. First, many of the world's democracies are powerful states and their challengers are relatively weak. Thus, challengers turn to low intensity conflict because that is all that they are capable of accomplishing. This creates an interesting dynamic where the existence of the democracies themselves is rarely threatened by these small wars, but the insurgents see their very existence riding on the conflict. Thus, the challengers often will have considerably more resolve than will the democratic governments. Consequently, losses and setbacks may deter the powerful democratic state but not its weak challengers and, as a result, the challengers may often succeed.<sup>3</sup> Second, strong actors often have inflated expectations of success which, when not forthcoming in a relatively short time, can result in domestic pressure to end the conflict. Thus democracies are more vulnerable to domestic pressure to end a conflict.<sup>4</sup> Third, one of the few decisive strategies against guerrilla warfare and terrorism is barbaric repression by the state, an option that is not in line with democratic ideals and likely to result in opposition within the polity.

Given all of this, it is clear that there are structural pressures on both increasing and decreasing the duration of ethnic conflicts in democracies. It is unclear which are stronger; thus an important additional question analyzed here is whether ethnic conflicts in democracies last longer than ethnic conflicts in other types of regime.

In addition to democracies and autocracies, another category of states must be addressed—democratizing states in transition between democracy and autocracy. Conflict is likely to rise in such states for three major reasons. First, regime changes are inherently unstable in that they change the status quo.<sup>5</sup> The political and economic pie is being divided anew. This inevitably causes conflict by many groups seeking to increase or retain their advantages under the new system. Second, democratization creates new freedoms that allow groups to mobilize to address grievances and demands that it had not been possible to address in the past.<sup>6</sup> Third, at the same time as groups are making more demands on the state, the state generally has fewer resources to meet them.<sup>7</sup> Thus, democratization can cause a volatile mix of increased demands for a shrinking pie. Furthermore, several empirical studies show that minorities in those states in transition to democracy engage in the highest level of conflict behavior.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, in all, we would expect several trends. First, ethnic conflict in democracies should be less intense than elsewhere, but whether it lasts longer or not in democracies is uncertain, based on this survey of the literature. Second, conflict in general and more violent types of conflict in particular should be more common in autocratic states. Third, periods of transition towards democracy should be associated with rises in the level of conflict in general.

#### PREDICTIONS REGARDING THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

Predictions regarding the nature of conflict in the post-Cold War era revolve around the debate over Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' thesis.<sup>9</sup> He argues that whereas during the Cold War world conflict revolved around the ideological conflict between the

Western and Communist blocs, in the post-Cold War era most conflicts will be between civilizations. Huntington divides the world into eight major civilizations: Western, Confucian/Sinic, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and 'possibly' African.<sup>10</sup>

This prediction has two implications for this study. First, it implies that after the end of the Cold War, cultural conflicts that had been repressed by the East-West rivalry should increase. This would mean an increase in the extent of all types of conflict, as well as the escalation of conflicts from less violent types to more violent types. Second, all of these civilizations as defined by Huntington, save one, include religion in their definition and some seem to be wholly defined by religion.<sup>11</sup> This implies that religious conflict in particular should increase.

There is ample support in the literature for the argument that religion is linked to conflict. Religion is posited to influence most forms of conflict. Henderson demonstrates a quantitative link between religion and international conflict.<sup>12</sup> Fox and Rummel similarly demonstrate a quantitative link between religion and ethnic conflict.<sup>13</sup> Little shows religion to be a source of discrimination, one of the major causes of domestic conflict.<sup>14</sup> Religious ideologies have been linked to justifications for genocide and ethnic cleansing.<sup>15</sup> Some go as far as to argue that violence is an integral element of religion.<sup>16</sup> Christianity, under some circumstances, has been linked to intolerant attitudes.<sup>17</sup> Christian fundamentalism in the US has been shown to provoke negative reactions against it.<sup>18</sup>

Religion is, in particular, often linked to terrorism which, among other things, is a form of low intensity conflict. Drake includes religion as one of many sources of the ideologies, which are used to define terrorists' political aims.<sup>19</sup> Juergensmeyer similarly notes, 'What is distinctive about the international terrorism of the 1980s and 1990s is this combination of politics and religion'.<sup>20</sup> Hoffman and Rapoport take this one step further and argue that religion and nationalism have been the only major justifications for terror this century and that before the advent of nationalism, religion was the only justification.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, religious terrorism is often posited to be qualitatively different from other types of terrorism with both higher levels of violence and the greater willingness of religious terrorists to die in the name of their causes.<sup>22</sup> Finally, religion can play the opposite role and encourage peace and conflict resolution.<sup>23</sup>

Many dispute that civilizational/religious tensions elicit conflict in the post-Cold War era, and argue that the end of the Cold War has little impact on the nature of conflict. Rather, those factors that caused conflicts in the past will continue to do so in the future, particularly *realpolitik* and nationalism.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, many argue that Huntington's civilizations are divided, and conflict within civilizations will be more common than conflict between them.<sup>25</sup> These arguments imply that the end of the Cold War has a marginal influence on the extent of both low-and high intensity conflict.

Another school of thought claims that rather than rising or staying at the same levels, conflict will decrease in the post-Cold War era because the world is becoming more integrated and interdependent. Accordingly, factors like economic interdependence, communications, and world integration will lead to a world civilization, which will rise above conflicts.<sup>26</sup> This argument implies that the level of conflict, both high-and low intensity, should decrease in the post-Cold War era.

It is important to note that this brief description of the debate over Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' thesis is but a small summary of elements of what was perhaps the most voluminous debate in international relations during the 1990s. The purpose of the discussion of this debate is to highlight the three contradictory predictions that exist with regard to the nature of conflict in the post-Cold War era. First, that conflict will increase. Second, that it will stay the same. Third, that it will decrease. One of the purposes of this study is to determine which of these predictions is true, especially with regard to low intensity conflict.<sup>27</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

This study asks whether regime influences the types of low intensity conflicts, which occur within a state, as well as assesses whether the end of the Cold War has influenced the relationship between regime and conflict. The analysis relies on the MAR dataset, which contains information on 275 active ethnic conflicts between 1985 and 1998.<sup>28</sup> The unit of analysis in the MAR dataset is the minority group within a state. For each of the 275 cases there is a minority and a majority group. Thus, the same majority group and the same minority may appear several times in the dataset. What is unique to each case is that the same pair of majority and minority groups does not appear more than once. Thus, for example, the Kurdish minority is coded separately for Turkey, Iraq, and Iran. Similarly, Iran contains several minorities in addition to its Kurdish minority, each of which are coded separately.

It is important to recognize that the 275 ethnic minorities contained in the MAR dataset constitute only a fraction of the 5,000 or so ethnic minorities existing worldwide.<sup>29</sup> These minorities were selected for analysis by the Minorities at Risk project because they are most likely to be politically active, based on two criteria, one of which is sufficient for the group to be included in the dataset. The first criteria is whether 'the group collectively suffers, or benefits from, systematic discriminatory treatment *vis-à-vis* other groups in the state'.<sup>30</sup> The second criterion is whether 'the group was the focus of political mobilization and action in defense or promotion of its self-defined interests'.<sup>31</sup>

This study assesses one independent variable, whether a conflict is low-or high intensity. It is based on a more detailed rebellion variable (on the scale of 0 to 7) in the MAR dataset,<sup>32</sup> and coded for the purposes of this study on the following scale:

0. No Conflict (coded originally as 0).
1. Terrorism (coded originally as 1 to 2).
2. Local Rebellions and Guerrilla Warfare (coded originally as 3 to 6).
3. Protracted Civil Wars (coded originally as 7).

The most serious occurrence in any given year for a particular ethnic group is coded as the level of rebellion for each year from 1985 to 1998. For this reason this study focuses on these years.

An additional variable was created for this study to measure the duration of these conflicts. Since the yearly data on rebellion is only available from 1985 to 1998 this

variable focuses on these years. Thus, conflicts that began before 1985 are still coded as beginning in 1985 and conflicts that continued in 1998 are considered to have ended in 1998. While this is clearly an imperfect way to measure, it is the best that can be done given the limitations of the available data. The variable measures consecutive years of conflict. If a conflict waned for one year then immediately resumed, it is not considered to have ended. However, a gap of two years is sufficient to consider the conflict ended. In cases where there was more than one outbreak of violence, the longer outbreak was coded.

States in this study are placed in one of three categories: democratic, autocratic, or democratizing states. This categorization is based on a democracy variable included in the MAR dataset, which was originally taken from the Polity dataset. It measures the level of a state's institutional democracy on a scale of 0 to 10 based on the following factors:

- Competitiveness of political participation;
- Competitiveness of executive recruitment;
- Openness of executive recruitment; and
- Constraints on the chief executive.

(A list of states with ethnic minorities included in this study and whether they are democratic, autocratic, or democratizing can be found in Appendix A.<sup>33</sup>)

It is worth note that there is also a variable measuring autocracy from the Polity dataset available in the MAR dataset, which is constructed from the same components as the democracy variable with the addition of a measure for regulation of political participation, and also ranges from 0 to 10 but with 10 being the most autocratic. The democracy variable was chosen for this study because the variables are very similar (the correlation between the two variables in 1994 is -0.868,  $p < 0.001$ ). Other studies have used combinations of the autocracy and democracy variables, adding the two results in an inaccurate variable. For instance, a state which scored 10 on the democracy variable and a 0 on the autocracy variable would have the same score of 10 as a state which scored a 10 on the autocracy variable and a 0 on the democracy variable. Subtracting the two creates a variable that ranges from -10 to 10 but is statistically nearly identical to the democracy variable (the correlation between the autocracy minus democracy and the democracy variable in 1994 is -0.974,  $p < 0.001$ ).

First, this study assesses the extent of terrorism, guerrilla war, and protracted civil war between 1985 and 1998 for the entire dataset. Second, it assesses the extent of these types of conflict between 1985 and 1998 for democracies, autocracies, and democratizing states separately. Third, it asks what causes the changes over time in the extent of these types of conflict. Two potential explanations in particular are examined, whether the changes are due to religion or to civilizational conflict. That is, we assess whether the changes over time occur in particular in religious conflicts or in civilizational conflicts.

The religion variable simply measures whether the two groups in the conflict belong to the same religion or not. Groups belonging to different denominations of the same religion are considered to be of different religions. The civilizational variable measures whether the groups belong to different civilizations as defined by Huntington's theory.<sup>34</sup>



## DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

It is important to establish first the breakdown of cases in this study, which examines 275 ethnic minorities in 115 states. As noted above, since the unit of analysis is an ethnic minority within a state, some states have multiple minorities living within them and others have no minorities that meet the MAR criteria for being politically active. Of these minorities, 68 live in 30 established democracies, 59 live in 31 democratizing states, and 148 live in 54 autocratic states.

As stated at the outset of this study, few cases in the MAR data ever reach a level of violence higher than guerrilla warfare. The few cases that do are listed in [Table 1](#). The vast majority of these protracted civil wars are low intensity conflicts with only Afghanistan between 1996 and 1998, Azerbaijan between 1990 and 1995 and the Russian rebellion in Georgia between 1992 and 1993 being the exceptions. For simplicity's sake, all these conflicts will be referred to in this study as protracted civil wars. Be that as it may, at no time during this period were there more than 13 current protracted civil wars and overall, only three percent of the ethnic conflict in the MAR dataset reaches this level between 1985 and 1998.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, as measured in years of conflict, only 13 percent of these protracted civil wars are high intensity conflict. Thus, nearly all ethnic conflict (more than 99.5 percent) can be classified as low intensity conflict.

[Figure 1](#) examines the extent of terrorism, guerrilla warfare, and protracted civil war between 1985 and 1998. The results show two trends. First, the most common type of ethnic conflict is guerrilla warfare, the least common is protracted civil war, and terrorism falls between the two. This is consistent throughout the period covered by this study. Second, there was a rise in all types of conflict with the end of the Cold War, but this rise was a temporary one. The number of protracted civil wars ranged from 6 to 9 during the 1980s, rose to as high as 13 in 1992, and dropped to 8 or 9 in the mid-to late 1990s. Minorities using terrorism ranged between 19 and 21 during the 1980s, rose to a peak of 27 in 1994 and dropped back to 19 by 1998. The number of guerrilla wars ranged between 33 and 35 until 1989, peaked at 49 in 1990 but dropped to 29 by 1998. Thus, in the short term the end of the Cold War caused a rise in conflict, but less than a decade later ethnic conflict was at its previous levels.

[Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5](#) examine ethnic conflict rates in the more specific contexts of democracies, autocracies, and democratizing states between 1985 and 1998. [Figure 2](#) examines the trends in democratic states. The results show that while like the rest of the world, protracted civil war is the least common form of conflict, unlike the rest of the world the most common form is terrorism, and not guerrilla warfare, except in 1996 and 1997. A closer examination of this trend shows that this short-term rise in guerrilla warfare in democracies is mostly due to an increase of instability and conflict by several ethnic groups in a single democratic state—India—and we therefore eliminated this from the analysis and represent the data for democracies in [Figure 3](#). These adjusted results show a very clear trend that protracted civil war and guerrilla warfare are rare in democracies and most violent ethnic conflicts under this type of regime take the form of terrorism. Furthermore, the end of the Cold War saw a substantial drop in the level of terrorism by ethnic minorities in democracies. While there were as many as 14 ethnic minorities in democracies using terrorism in a single year during the 1980s, this number dropped to 5

TABLE 1 PROTRACTED CIVIL WARS BETWEEN 1985 AND 1998

Country	Group	Years in which Conflict reached Level of Protracted Civil War
Afghanistan	Hazaras	1996–98
	Tajiks	1985–92, 1996–98*
	Uzbeks	1985–92, 1996–98*
Angola	Ovimbudu	1985–94
Azerbaijan	Armenians	1990–95*
Bosnia	Croats	1992–95
	Muslims	1995
	Serbs	1992–95
Croatia	Serbs	1991–95
Dem. Rep. Congo	Hutus	1996–97
	Tutsis	1996–97
	Afars	1992–94
Djibouti	Abkhazians	1992–93, 1998
Georgia	Russians	1992–93*
	Kurds	1985, 1987, 1991
Iraq	Shi'i	1991
Lebanon	Druze	1985, 1989
Morocco	Saharawi	1985–90
Russia	Chechens	1994
Rwanda	Hutus	1998
	Tutsis	1994
Somalia	Issac	1988–90
Sri Lanka	Sri Lankan Tamils	1985–91, 1990–98
Sudan	Southerners	1991–98
Turkey	Kurds	1991–98
Uganda	Acholi	1998
	Baganda	1985–86

*Note:* \* High-intensity conflict (in Afghanistan this applies only to the 1996–98 period).

by 1998. Also, the temporary rise in conflict that was found in the examination of all states does not manifest itself in this examination of long-term democratic states. Thus, conflicts in long-term democratic states mostly take the form of terrorist conflicts and the end of the Cold War is associated with a drop in even this type of conflict.

The indigenous groups in Bolivia and Columbia are good examples of the typical groups in stable democracies that engaged in violence. They engaged in terrorism during the 1980s and mid-1990s but by 1998 had stopped engaging in violent conflict. However, some groups, like the Basques in France and the Catholics in Northern Ireland, engaged in terrorism throughout the period covered in this study. Others like the African Americans in the United States and the French speakers in Canada are representative of the majority of groups (36 out of 68) in stable democracies that engaged in no organized violence at all.

FIGURE 1 NUMBER OF ETHNIC CONFLICTS, 1985–98 (ALL CASES)

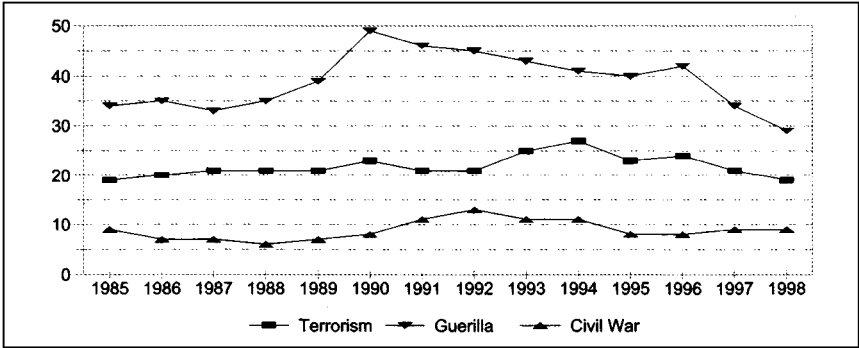


FIGURE 2

NUMBER OF ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN LONG-TERM DEMOCRACIES, 1985–98

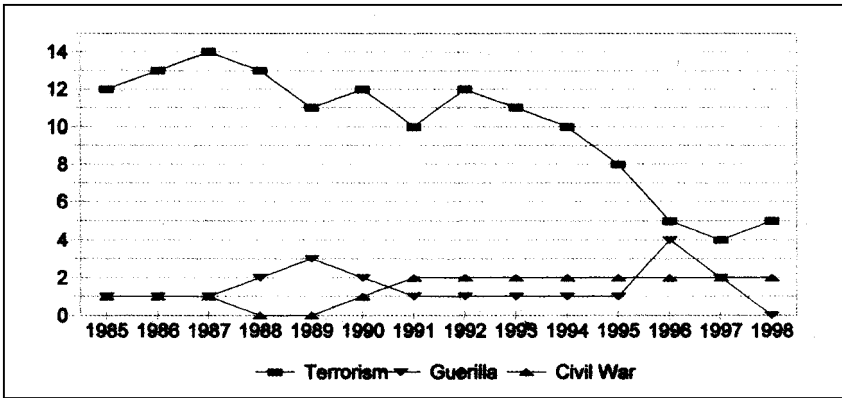


Figure 4 analyses the extent of ethnic conflict in autocratic states between 1985 and 1998. The results show that while terrorism and protracted civil war occur in these states, by far the most common type of conflict is guerrilla warfare. Guerrilla warfare rose temporarily with the end of the Cold War. During the 1980s between 24 and 26 minorities in autocratic states engaged in guerrilla warfare in any given year. Guerrilla warfare in these states peaked at 32 in 1990, but dropped to 21 by 1998. Civil wars in these states rose from a level of 6 to 8 during the 1980s to a peak of 11 in 1992 and dropped to 7 by 1998. Terrorism, however, seems to have risen more permanently from a level of 4 to 5 during the 1980s, peaking at 14 in 1996 and remaining as high as 9 in 1998. Thus, ethnic conflict in autocratic states partially conforms to the general trend of a temporary rise in conflict with the end of the Cold War, with the one exception being terrorism.

Many of the ethnic groups in Burma, especially the Karens, Shans and Mons, are typical of autocratic states, engaging in guerrilla warfare throughout the period covered in this study. The East Timorese in Indonesia are representative of those groups that de-escalated

FIGURE 3

NUMBER OF ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN LONG-TERM DEMOCRACIES OTHER THAN INDIA, 1985–98

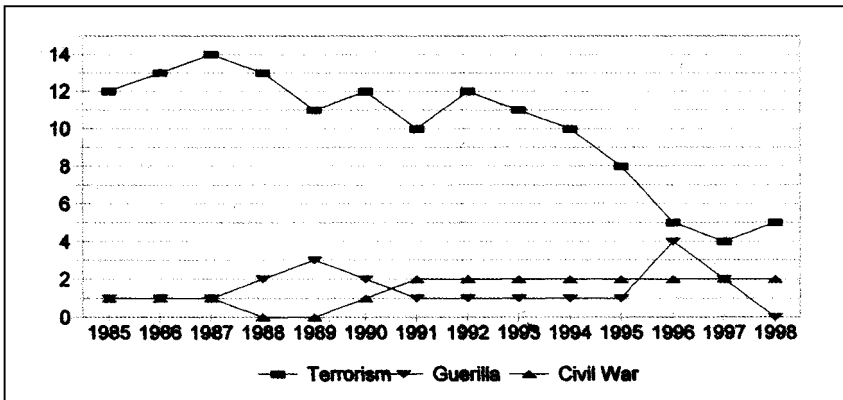
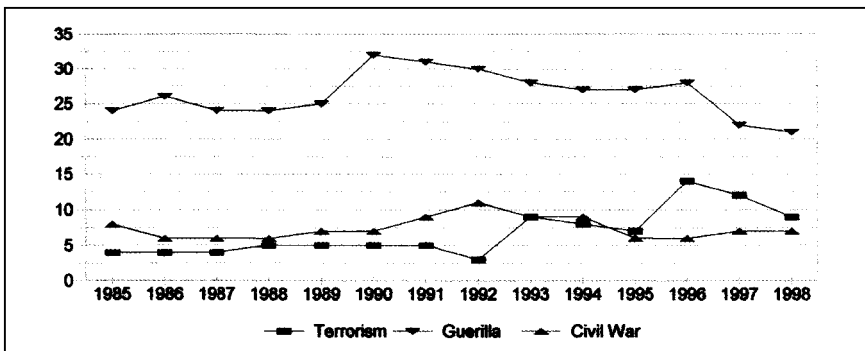


FIGURE 4

NUMBER OF ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN AUTOCRATIC STATES, 1985–98

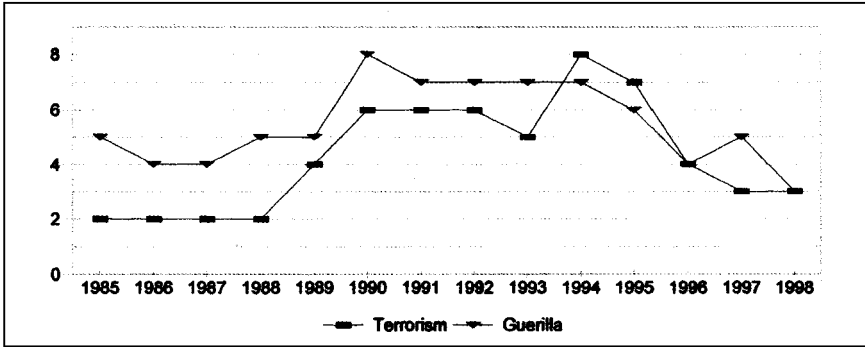


from guerrilla warfare to terrorism by 1988. The Chechen and Ingush in Russia are representative of those groups that escalated from no conflict in the 1980s to violent conflict in the 1990s. The Kurds in Iran are representative of those groups that ceased violent conflict by the late 1990s. Finally, the Chinese minorities in Indonesia and Malaysia are typical of nearly half (70 out of 148) of the minorities in autocratic states and engaged in no organized violent conflict between 1985 and 1998.

Figure 5 examines the extent of ethnic conflict in democratizing states between 1985 and 1998. There are three striking trends in this table. First, there are no occurrences of protracted civil war. Second, while until 1993, guerrilla warfare is clearly the most common type of conflict, from 1994 on, guerrilla warfare and terrorism are about as common as each other. Third, there is a steep rise in conflict with the end of the Cold War, followed by a drop to previous levels by 1998. From 1985 to 1988 the overall number of violent

FIGURE 5

NUMBER OF ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN DEMOCRATIZING STATES, 1985–98



conflicts ranges from 6 to 7. They peak at 15 in 1994 and drop to 6 by 1998. This, combined with the finding that by 1998 a greater proportion of conflicts were terrorist conflicts, as opposed to the more violent guerrilla conflicts, shows that the rise in conflict in these countries was temporary and the 1998 levels of conflict are even lower than those of the mid-1980s. This is consistent with what we would expect in states making the transition from autocracy to democracy. In the 1980s, these states exhibited conflict properties similar to autocracies with guerrilla warfare being most the common form of conflict. By 1998 terrorism was becoming more common, as is the case with democracies.

The minorities in Moldova are most typical of those minorities that engaged in violence in democratizing states. They began violent conflict in 1990 but stopped by 1998. Others like the Muslim Moro minority in the Philippines engaged in violent conflict throughout this period. However, most minorities (37 out of 59) in democratizing states, including those in the Czech Republic and Estonia, engaged in no organized violence.

Table 2 analyzes the extent to which conflicts escalated and de-escalated by 1998 controlling for regime type, Huntington's civilizations, and religion. 1988 was chosen as the year for comparison because it was the last year before major changes in the extent of ethnic conflict began to occur. The results show that while conflict dropped in democracies and democratizing states, it remained about the same in autocracies. Both religious and non-religious conflicts deescalated. However, while non-civilizational conflicts de-escalated, civilizational conflicts escalated slightly. However, this escalation is not nearly as high as what we would expect if, as Huntington believes, civilizations will be the primary basis for conflict in the post-Cold War era. Thus, in nearly all categories examined here, there is not significant long-term escalation of conflict with the end of the Cold War, and in many of them, as well as overall, there is a de-escalation of ethnic conflict.

Table 2 also examines the duration of conflicts controlling for democracy, religion and civilization. This examination includes the mean duration of conflict for those minorities that engaged in violent conflict as well as the mean duration of conflict for all groups,

TABLE 2

CHANGES IN LEVELS OF CONFLICT, 1988 TO 1998

Control Variable	Value of Control Variable	Escalation			Mean Duration	
		De-escalation	Same	Escalated	Only in Cases of Violent Conflict	All Cases
All Cases		38	205	32	7.19	3.46
Democracy	Stable Democracy	11	50	7	8.19	3.91
	Democratizing	5	51	3	6.14	2.29
	Autocracy	22	104	22	7.08	3.73
Religion	Same Religion	20	108	17	6.92	3.48
	Different Religion or Denomination	18	97	15	7.53	3.44
Clash of Civilizations	No	27	124	19	7.12	3.82
	Yes	11	81	13	7.33	2.91

including those that did not engage in violent conflict between 1985 and 1998. When controlling for regime type, conflicts last longest in democracies and finish quickest in democratizing states, with the duration of conflicts in autocratic states falling between the other two. Religious conflicts last longer than non-religious ones, but only when examining cases where violent conflicts occurred. Finally, civilizational conflicts finish quicker, but this is only true when examining all cases.

### CONCLUSIONS

This study examines the extent and intensity of ethnic conflict between 1985 and 1998 controlling for regime type, religion, and Huntington's concept of civilizations. Perhaps the most important finding is that nearly all ethnic conflict is of low intensity. The few outbreaks of high intensity conflict are rare exceptions. Thus, studies of the causes and dynamics of low intensity conflict, as well as strategies for solving them are applicable to nearly all manifestations of violent ethnic conflict.

However, there is considerable variation in the types of low intensity conflict that occur under different types of regime. The lion's share of violent ethnic conflict in democratic states takes the form of terrorism. In contrast, in autocratic states most violent ethnic conflict takes the form of guerrilla warfare and local rebellions. Also, protracted civil wars, while rare in general, are considerably rarer in democratic states than they are in autocratic ones. On the other hand, violent ethnic conflicts tend to last longer in democratic states than they do in autocratic ones. The democratizing states in this study exhibited traits similar to autocratic states in 1985 but by 1998 the conflict dynamics in these states appeared to be changing to be more in line with the dynamics found in democratic states.

There are two factors that can explain this contrast between autocratic and democratic states. First, stable democracies tend to be powerful, developed states and their challengers relatively weak. Thus, there are often no places that state power cannot reach, making guerrilla warfare difficult. Furthermore, guerrilla warfare tends to be more feasible when the guerrillas have the support of a foreign state that is willing to provide or sell arms and training. A powerful state is more able to deter these supporters. This explains why violent ethnic conflict in democracies generally takes the form of terrorism.

Second, while democracies, as noted earlier in this study, may be better at dealing with ethnic grievances than are autocracies, they are worse at ending violent conflicts. Autocracies are freer to use repressive tactics to quell violent opposition, while democracies are often hampered by moral concerns. Also, if a conflict becomes violent in a democracy, this generally means that the peaceful options available to address the grievances that caused the conflict did not work. Thus, violent conflicts in democracies are more likely to involve intractable issues. This explains why violent conflicts last longer in democracies.

The influence of the end of the Cold War also differed between regime types. In democracies conflict simply dropped. In autocracies and democratizing states it rose temporarily but then dropped by the late 1990s, with this trend being stronger in democratizing states. The temporary rise in both autocracies and democratizing states can be explained by a temporary instability caused by the change in the international regime. That this trend was stronger in democratizing states can be explained by the instability caused by domestic regime change.

This leaves us with the question of why democracies did not experience a similar temporary rise in violent ethnic conflict. One potential answer is that these countries are inherently stable but the Cold War itself was a cause of instability in these states. As part of the Cold War the Soviet Bloc often supported opposition movements in democratic states. With the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, this source of agitation no longer existed, resulting in a drop in conflict.

This finding is inconsistent with Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' argument. If he were correct there would have been a permanent escalation of conflict, especially between ethnic groups of different civilizations. While there was a very slight escalation of this type of conflict between 1988 and 1998, it was nowhere near the level of escalation one would expect if this type of conflict were the new basis of conflict in the post-Cold War era.

Religious conflicts, which have also been receiving more attention of late, also conformed to the general pattern of de-escalation. However, unlike Huntington's theory, this does not disprove the assertion that religion is an important element of ethnic conflict. Those who make this assertion generally assert that it has always been an important element of ethnic conflict so the end of the Cold War should not have any disproportional influence on religious conflicts.

Be that as it may, the findings regarding democracies show that there is a need for further research on the relationship between regime type and low intensity conflict. For instance, are the findings here also true of non-ethnic conflict? Also, these findings show a need to explore facts rather than paradigms when seeking information on the dynamics of low intensity conflicts. Clearly any study using Huntington's paradigm would have

## APPENDIX A

## STATES IN THE 1985–98 SAMPLE

Stable Democratic	Democratizing*	Autocratic	
Argentina	Albania	Afghanistan	Lebanon
Australia	Bangladesh	Algeria	Morocco
Bolivia	Belarus	Angola	Malaysia
Botswana	Bulgaria	Azerbaijan	Mauritania
Canada	Brazil	Bahrain	Mexico
Colombia	Chile	Bhutan	Nigeria
Costa Rica	Czech Republic	Bosnia	Peru**
Cyprus	Estonia	Burma	Romania
Ecuador	Guyana	Burundi	Russia
El Salvador	Hungary	Cameroon	Rwanda
Fiji	Kyrgyzstan	Cambodia	Saudi Arabia
France	Latvia	Chad	Senegal
Germany	Lithuania	China	Sierra Leone
Greece	Macedonia	Croatia	Singapore
Honduras	Madagascar	Congo Dem. Rep.	Somalia
India	Mali	Dominican Rep.**	Sudan
Israel	Moldova	Djibouti	Syria
Italy	Namibia	Egypt	Tajikistan
Japan	Nicaragua	Eritrea	Togo
New Zealand	Niger	Ethiopia	Uganda
Nordic	Pakistan	Georgia	Uzbekistan
Papua New Guinea	Panama	Ghana	Vietnam
South Africa	Paraguay	Guatemala	Yugoslavia
Spain	Philippines	Guinea	Zimbabwe
Sri Lanka	Slovakia	Indonesia	
Turkey	S. Korea	Iran	
UK	Taiwan	Iraq	
USA	Thailand	Jordan	
Venezuela	Turkmenistan	Kazakhstan	
	Ukraine	Kenya	
	Zambia	Laos	

Notes'. \* Based on changes in regime between 1984 and 1994.

\*\* States which became autocratic between 1984 and 1994.

unacceptably colored the views of the researcher and possibly obscured the patterns of conflict discovered in this study. Finally, this study shows that low intensity conflict itself should be a major topic of future research as it is, by far, the most common form of violent ethnic conflict.

## NOTES

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  28. A copy of the MAR dataset as well as an explanation of all the variables contained in it is available at the project's website at [www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar](http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar). For a further discussion and analysis of the data, see Gurr, *Minorities at Risk*; Ted R. Gurr, *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000).
  29. Gurr, *Minorities at Risk*, pp. 5–7.
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  31. *Ibid.*, p. 7. There has been some criticism of the MAR3 dataset based on its inclusion only of groups that meet the above criteria. For example, James D. Fearon, and David D. Latin have criticized the MAR data on grounds of selection bias, 'A Cross-Sectional Study of Large-Scale Ethnic Violence in the Postwar Period', unpublished paper, Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, Sept. 30, 1997; Gurr, *Peoples Versus States*, pp. 10–12, addresses these criticisms. First, it can be argued that 'the project's roster of groups is not "complete"... Therefore ...the study includes some groups that are in the zone of indeterminacy...and new groups are added from time to time, based on suggestions by users and information from our Web searches.' Given that the project has been in existence since the mid-1980s and has received considerable attention, it is fair to argue that this process has led to a fairly accurate list of the groups, which meet the criteria described above. Second, it can be argued that the study focuses only on those groups engaged in collective action and ignores those groups that are more 'politically quiescent'. Gurr, *Peoples Versus States*, pp. 12–13, argues that 'This criticism is misplaced because the Minority project's principal objective is to identify and analyze only the groups that meet its criteria for political significance, that is, differential treatment and political action.' The presence of either of these factors means, for the purpose of this study, that a conflict is taking place. Conversely, it is hard to argue that if these factors are not present that any conflict is occurring. Thus, it is argued here that the MAR data contains a reasonably accurate list of all instances of ethnic conflict. This means that while the MAR data does not address the treatment of all minorities in all places, it does accurately represent the treatment of all politically significant ethnic minorities.
  32. The coding of the rebellion variable in the MAR dataset:

0. None.
  1. Political banditry, sporadic terrorism.
  2. Campaigns of terrorism.
  3. Local rebellions: armed attempts to seize power in a locale. If they prove to be the opening round in what becomes a protracted guerrilla or civil war during the year being coded, code the latter rather than local rebellion. Code declarations of independence by a minority-controlled regional government here.
  4. Small-scale guerrilla activity. [Small-scale guerrilla activity has all these three traits: fewer than 1,000 armed fighters; sporadic armed attacks (less than six reported per year); and attacks in a small part of the area occupied by the group, or in one or two other locales).]
  5. Intermediate-scale guerrilla activity. [Intermediate-scale guerrilla activity has one or two of the defining traits of large-scale activity and one or two of the defining traits of small-scale activity.]
  6. Large-scale guerrilla activity. [Large-scale guerrilla activity has all these traits: more than 1,000 armed fighters; frequent armed attacks (more than six reported per year); and attacks affecting large part of the area occupied by group.]
  7. Protracted civil war, fought by rebel military with base areas.
- 33 . The MAR dataset contains codings for this variable once every five years, with the relevant codings for the purposes of this study being those for 1984, 1989, and 1994. For the purposes of this study, democratic states are those states that are coded 6 or higher on the democracy scale for all three codings. Autocratic states are those that are coded 5 or lower for all three codings. Democratizing states are those that were autocratic in 1984 but by 1994 were coded as democratic. It should be noted that in four cases, democratic states became autocratic ones, but none of these cases involved violent ethnic conflict between 1985 and 1998 (see Appendix A). For more details and reliability tests on this variable, see Keith Jagers and Ted R. Gurr, 'Tracking Democracy's Third Wave with the Polity III Data', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (1995), pp. 469-82.
- 34 . Both of these variables are supplemental to the MAR dataset and can be found in Dataset 2 of Jonathan Fox, 'Civilizations Data for Use with the Minorities at Risk Dataset', which is available at [www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/links.html](http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/links.html).
- 35 . The figure of three percent was reached by adding the total number of years minorities were involved in protracted civil wars (117) by the number of groups multiplied by the number of years covered by the data (275 \* 14).

## Part II

### Case Studies

# The American Way of War in the Twenty-first Century

THOMAS G. MAHNKEN

The notion that there is a connection between a society and its style of warfare has a long and distinguished pedigree. In his history of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides records that the leaders of Sparta and Athens, Archidamus and Pericles, linked the capabilities of their military to the constitution of their state.<sup>1</sup> Writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, Sir Julian Corbett drew a distinction between the German or ‘continental’ and British or ‘maritime’ schools of strategic thought, with the former focusing on war between land powers and the latter on a conflict between a sea power and a land power.<sup>2</sup> Basil H. Liddell-Hart refined Corbett’s argument, noting that Britain had historically followed a distinctive approach to war by avoiding large commitments on land and using sea power to bring economic pressure to bear against its adversaries.<sup>3</sup>

A nation’s way of war flows from its geography and society and reflects its comparative advantage. It represents an approach that a given state has found successful in the past. While not immutable, it tends to evolve slowly. It is no coincidence, for example, that Britain has historically favored sea power and indirect strategies, or that it has traditionally eschewed the maintenance of a large army. Israel’s lack of geographic depth, its small but educated population relative to its neighbors, and technological skill have produced a strategic culture that emphasizes strategic preemption, offensive operations, initiative and—increasingly—advanced technology.<sup>4</sup>

The notion of a distinct American way of war is inextricably linked to Russell Weigley’s book of the same name.<sup>5</sup> In it, Weigley argues that since the American Civil War the US armed forces have pursued a unique approach to combat, one favoring wars of annihilation through the lavish use of fire-power. In his formulation, its main characteristics include aggressiveness at all levels of warfare, a quest for decisive battles, and a desire to employ maximum effort. By contrast, the American military has been uncomfortable waging war with constrained means for limited or ambiguous objectives.

While influential, such a view has not gone unchallenged. Critics have argued that the US armed forces have in fact favored strategies of attrition over annihilation. They also note that the United States has throughout its history pursued a much wider range of strategies than Weigley’s formulation indicates, including deterrence and wars for limited aims.<sup>6</sup> They also point out that the US military has a rich tradition of fighting small wars and insurgencies. Indeed, one author recently argued that this tradition represents an alternative American way of war.<sup>7</sup>

To be useful, any description of an 'American way of war' must encompass a broad range of strategic circumstances. The United States has fought a wide variety of conflicts throughout its history. These have included not only wars for far-reaching political objectives, such as the Civil War (at least for the federal government) and the two World Wars, but also wars for limited aims, such as the Mexican, Spanish-American, Korean, Vietnam, and the 1991 Gulf wars. Similarly, it has undertaken not only high intensity conventional conflicts, but also counter-insurgency campaigns. It has also fought for a broad spectrum of interests. During the Civil War, the existence of the United States was literally at stake, and in World War II, its cardinal national interests were under severe attack. Similarly, the stakes in the current war against Islamic extremism are quite high. During the 1990s, by contrast, the United States conducted a series of small wars in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo for interests that were at best secondary.

While there are many elements of continuity with Weigley's traditional conception of the American way of war, particularly at the strategic and operational levels, the experience of the past decade has also witnessed significant changes in the way the US armed forces fight. At the strategic level, the US military retains its historical preference for far-reaching political objectives and direct strategies. However, recent conflicts have also shown an increased concern over casualties, particularly on the part of the military. At the operational level, the military continues to favor fire-power over maneuver. It is at the tactical level where the greatest change is apparent in the US military's emphasis upon advanced technology, precision, air power, and special operations forces.

### THE STRATEGIC LEVEL OF WAR

The United States has demonstrated a distinct set of preferences at the strategic level of war. The first is a strong and long-standing predilection for waging war for far-reaching political objectives.<sup>8</sup> During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln and General Ulysses S. Grant fought to defeat utterly the Confederacy. During World War I, General John J. Pershing, the commander of the American Expeditionary Force, favored a policy of unconditional surrender towards imperial Germany even as President Woodrow Wilson sought a negotiated end to the conflict.<sup>9</sup> In World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his commanders were of one mind that the war must lead to the overthrow of the German, Japanese, and Italian governments that had started the war. In the current war against Al Qaeda and its supporters there is no sentiment for anything approaching a negotiated settlement.

Just as Americans have preferred a fight to the finish, so too have they been uncomfortable with wars fought for limited political aims. In both the Korean and Vietnam wars American military leaders were cool to the idea of fighting merely to restore or maintain the status quo. Indeed, General Douglas MacArthur likened anything short of total victory over communist forces on the Korean peninsula to 'appeasement'.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the standard explanation of American failure in Vietnam—and the one most popular among US military officers—is that the US military would have won the war were it not for civilian interference.<sup>11</sup>

Related to the desire to wage war for far-reaching political objectives is a tendency to demonize America's adversaries. Such a view is the product of US history: during the

twentieth century the United States fought a series of despotic regimes, from Hitler's Germany and Kim Il-Sung's North Korea to Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia. However, there is a clear tension between the need to rally the public in support of the use of force and the need to pursue limited aims. Political leaders who have demonized America's adversaries have often faced a backlash when the United States then did not continue the war to the finish. Advisors to President George H.W. Bush, for example, bridled at his comparisons of Saddam Hussein to Adolf Hitler, fearing that it would complicate the conduct of the Gulf War.<sup>12</sup> And the United States has encountered difficulty when it has fought adversaries who at least appear less than demonic. While Ho Chi Minh presided over a brutal communist government, North Vietnamese propaganda and American opponents of the war in Vietnam were able to portray him as a kindly 'Uncle Ho', or even a latter-day George Washington. The United States is thus fortunate to have in the war against Al Qaeda an adversary such as Osama bin Ladin, a man who viscerally hates the United States and all it stands for.

A second tendency has been a preference for the direct approach to strategy over the indirect. The US military has throughout its history sought to close with and destroy the enemy at the earliest opportunity. As one British author has put it, 'Americans have favored the quest for swift victory through the hazards of decisive battle rather than the slower approach of maritime encirclement'.<sup>13</sup> There is perhaps no better illustration of this tendency than the debate over strategy between the American and British governments during World War II. The US military, led by Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, sought to concentrate forces for a cross-channel invasion at the earliest possible time. The British, by contrast, sought to encircle Axis-controlled Europe, allowing the Soviets to attrite German forces while the Allies carried out a strategic bombing campaign and unconventional warfare in occupied Europe, postponing the invasion until it would be little more than a *coup de grace*.<sup>14</sup>

A third, more recent, and more ambiguous tendency has been a seeming American reluctance to incur casualties. The conventional wisdom is that the American public is very sensitive to losses, particularly in cases where the stakes are low, such as humanitarian operations or peacekeeping missions. Moreover, many argue that the willingness of the American public to sustain casualties has declined significantly since the end of the Cold War.<sup>15</sup>

In fact, the phenomenon of casualty aversion defies such a neat formulation. In many ways, a reluctance to put American troops in harm's way was a logical response to the circumstances of the 1990s. Throughout that decade the United States fought wars for interests that were secondary, even tertiary. The low stakes involved in Somalia made it perfectly rational to withdraw after the death of 18 American servicemen during the Battle of Mogadishu. Moreover, the US advantage in air power has allowed it to use force effectively without putting a large number of American lives at risk. NATO's air campaign over Kosovo was, after all, able to achieve the alliance's political objectives short of the introduction of ground forces. In such circumstances it made little sense to put American lives at risk unnecessarily.

But there is clearly more to it than that. Recent research appears to show that the military leadership and civilian decision makers are more casualty averse than the American public.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the US military has consistently sought to reduce casualties.



The so-called Powell Doctrine emphasizes the use of overwhelming force against US adversaries not due to political or strategic imperatives, but because of the belief that it will bring victory sooner while producing fewer US casualties. Similarly, the military leadership has been one of the primary advocates of 'force protection' measures to reduce the risk to US forces. It is notable, for example, that two of the three criteria General Wesley Clark established to measure the effectiveness of Operation Allied Force, NATO's air war over Serbia, involved protecting allied forces rather than compelling Milosevic to quit Kosovo.<sup>17</sup>

Ironically, the military's concern over casualties appears to be stronger and more persistent than that of its civilian masters. For example, there is no evidence that the US political leadership established the level of US casualties as a criterion for the success of the campaign against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. However, it appears that the military's concern over casualties played a major role in shaping the campaign's conduct. Indeed, at least one observer has attributed the seeming unwillingness of US Central Command to commit large numbers of US ground forces to the Battle of Tora Bora to the military leadership's concern over casualties.<sup>18</sup>

The tension between force protection and military effectiveness is most acute in America's conduct of small wars and peacekeeping. Success in these operations often hinges on the ability of military forces to interact closely with the local population. Such an approach conflicts, however, with the desire to protect troops from attack. For example, European military officers have privately complained that US force protection measures have interfered with peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. Indeed, American troops have earned the nickname 'teenage mutant ninja turtles' because of the fact that US force protection measures required them to wear their helmets and full body armor, even in low-threat situations.

Real or not, the notion that the United States is casualty averse has become fixed in the mind of both allies and adversaries. US allies have expressed concern that US sensitivity to fatalities will constrain future military operations. As a senior British officer recently wrote, 'in future conflicts, the United Kingdom will have to work within, or possibly around, the constraints imposed by this American aversion to casualties'.<sup>19</sup> Chinese defense analysts see American casualty sensitivity as a weakness that can be exploited.<sup>20</sup> However, this may prove to be a dangerous misperception. Indeed, the idea that the United States has a glass jaw is hardly new. Allies and adversaries should remind themselves of the United States' demonstrated ability to endure hardship and suffer punishment. They should recall not only the US government's response to the Beirut barracks bombing and the Battle of Mogadishu, but also its reaction to the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and the World Trade Center and Pentagon in September 2001.

Thus we see that the American way of war has primarily shaped—and been shaped by—wars against large, capable adversaries: the Confederacy during the American Civil War, Wilhelmine Germany during World War I, Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany during World War II, and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. In some ways this approach to combat suits small wars: it is much easier, for example, to defeat a small power through a direct strategy than a great power, as the 1989 US invasion of Panama demonstrates. In its quest for quick, decisive victory at low cost, however, the American way of war is not well

suited to the realities of long-term commitments such as peace-enforcement and nation-building.

### THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF WAR

At the operational level, the US military has historically favored an industrial approach to war. Logistics played a key role in US success in most of the large wars that it has fought. During World War II, for example, the United States provided almost two-thirds of all Allied military equipment: 297,000 aircraft, 193,000 artillery pieces, 86,000 tanks, 2 million trucks, 8,800 naval vessels, and 87,000 landing craft. In its first year in the war, the United States out-produced the entire Axis in aircraft, tanks, and heavy guns.<sup>21</sup> During the 1991 Gulf War, US strategic airlift assets alone moved 500,000 people and 540,000 tons of cargo—and only five percent of the *matériel* the United States employed in the war moved by air.<sup>22</sup> Over the past decade, the United States has demonstrated the ability to organize and deploy large forces worldwide on short notice. Even peacekeeping operations such as Bosnia and Kosovo have involved considerable logistical support.

One characteristic that flows from the industrial approach is the lavish use of fire-power. Contemporary accounts of the Battle of Mogadishu focused upon the fact that 18 American servicemen lost their lives and 83 were wounded. Less remarked upon was the fact that at least 500 Somalis were killed and 1,000 wounded in the same engagement.<sup>23</sup> During the campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan US air forces delivered some 22,000 bombs—including some 12,500 precision-guided munitions (PGMs)—in support of US Special Forces and the Northern Alliance.<sup>24</sup>

An intensive fire-power approach to war makes sense, at least from a certain point of view. The United States can certainly afford the expenditure of resources to conduct such an approach. Moreover, fire-power often saves American lives. However, the Vietnam War showed how a reliance on fire power could prove dysfunctional in a counter-insurgency campaign. The lavish use of artillery and air power was irrelevant to the main problem of the war: how to cut the communist insurgency off from its base of popular support. If anything, the destruction caused by the strategy increased support for the communists.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, the lavish use of American fire-power in Afghanistan threatens to weaken support for the United States—support that is vital to ensure the viability of the government of Afghanistan and reduce support for the Taliban.

America's traditional reliance upon fire-power highlights the tension between operational and strategic effectiveness. US forces have been highly effective at the operational level in recent small wars in Panama, Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan. However, this very fact has often created the perception of the United States as a bully. Fighting in Panama City during the 1989 invasion of Panama killed several hundred Panamanian civilians, a fact that some have used to portray the United States as inhuman. In Bosnia and Kosovo, Milosevic tried to use NATO mistakes to build support for his regime. Similarly the fractious nature of Afghanistan's society has created opportunities for enemies of the United States to assert that strikes on Taliban supporters were in fact attacks on innocents.

## THE TACTICAL LEVEL OF WAR

While America's conduct of recent wars has been marked by considerable continuity at the strategic and operational levels, it has seen greater novelty at the tactical level. Perhaps the most pronounced trend is the United States' growing reliance on high-technology weapons. In recent wars the United States has displayed absolute dominance in technology associated with war on land, at sea, and in the air. Since the 1991 Gulf War a growing number of US defense analysts, government officials, and military officers have argued that the growth and diffusion of stealth, precision, and information technology will drastically alter the character and conduct of future wars, yielding a revolution in military affairs (RMA).<sup>26</sup> Transforming the US armed forces to exploit the information revolution has been an explicit goal of the Department of Defense since the mid-1990s.<sup>27</sup>

This was not always the case, of course. During World War I, American troops marched into battle with equipment that was inferior to that of both allies and adversaries. And while the United States enjoyed technological superiority in some areas during World War II, most visibly in the development of atomic weapons, in other areas (most notably armor) the US military made do with demonstrably inferior weapons, relying instead upon its industrial might to produce more weapons than the Axis could destroy. It was the war-winning role of American technology in World War II—combined with the need to counter the quantitative superiority of Soviet forces shortly thereafter—that cemented a style of warfare that placed a premium on having a technological edge over potential foes. In Vietnam the United States counted upon air power and airmobile ground forces to give it an advantage over the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong. Indeed, at a tactical level it did give the US armed forces a great advantage. Unfortunately for the United States, wars are fought but not won at the tactical level.

Advanced technology has represented a more pronounced US advantage in recent wars. During the 1991 Gulf War, for example, US M1A1 *Abrams* tanks, together with armored vehicles equipped with TOW anti-tank guided weapons such as the Army's M2/3 *Bradley* Fighting Vehicle and the Marine Corps's Light Armored Vehicle, possessed a range advantage over the T-2s employed by the Iraqi Republican Guards. Moreover, their infrared sights allowed gunners to target Iraqi tanks at night or in sand storms, situations in which Iraqi tank crews were essentially blind.<sup>28</sup>

The combination of stealth and precision-guided munitions has given US air forces the ability to strike adversaries from the air with near impunity. During the 1991 Gulf War, the United States lost only 27 fixed-wing aircraft to enemy action.<sup>29</sup> The United States has flown more than 250,000 sorties over the northern and southern no-fly zones of Iraq in the years that have followed, but without incurring a loss. During Operation Allied Force, the Serbs launched more than 800 surface-to-air missiles at NATO aircraft but were only able to shoot down two and damage three.<sup>30</sup> And the United States did not lose a single fixed-wing aircraft during the campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan.

America's technological capabilities now outstrip those of its closest allies. The gap is most pronounced in cutting-edge areas of warfare associated with the emerging RMA, such as precision strike, command and control, and intelligence. While British aircraft, for example, flew more than 1,000 strike missions during Operation Allied Force, three-

quarters of the munitions they dropped were unguided. Even though European aircraft sometimes flew half of the alliance's strike sorties during that conflict, the United States often had to supply them with PGMs. Only the United States and Great Britain possess the *Tomahawk* land-attack cruise missile, which allowed NATO to strike high-value targets in all types of weather without risking pilots' lives. The US also has a considerable advantage over both allies and adversaries in the use of space for communication and intelligence.

American officers clearly believe that new technology, doctrine, and organizations can give the United States an edge on the battlefield. A recent survey of US officers found that 85 percent predicted that military forces employing new combat methods will enjoy a substantial edge over those that do not, while three-quarters agreed that new ways of war will give the US armed forces dominance over the full spectrum of potential adversaries. Most believed that new combat methods would make it easier for the United States to use force to achieve decisive battlefield victories with substantially reduced risk of casualties. And many felt that new technologies would substantially reduce the duration of future conflicts.<sup>31</sup>

Foreign observers tend to depreciate America's reliance on advanced technology. Colin Gray, for example, has characterized the 'machine-mindedness' of the US defense community as 'astrategic'.<sup>32</sup> However, there is no logical reason why emphasis on technology should produce poor strategy. Indeed, allies' complaints about America's emphasis on technology often smack of jealousy. Yet there is a danger of overconfidence. The aforementioned survey found that the vast majority of officers are highly confident in the ability of the United States to protect its bases, forces, and information networks against attack. Only nine percent believed that future adversaries would be able to use ballistic or cruise missiles to destroy fixed infrastructure, such as ports, airfields, and logistical sites, while only 12 percent believed that they would be able to attack carrier battle groups. And only 15 percent believed that they would be able to deny the United States the use of information networks.

One manifestation of the US armed forces' growing reliance on advanced technology is the fact that the use of PGMs has now become routine. Precision weapons saw their debut in World War II and were used extensively in the final phases of the Vietnam War. However, their use was restricted to high-value targets. Moreover, the primitive state of guidance and sensor technology restricted their effectiveness. Over the past decade, however, the use of PGMs has increased markedly. During the Gulf War, eight percent of munitions the United States expended were precision-guided. During the air war over Kosovo, PGMs made up 35 percent of the ordnance expended. By contrast 57 percent of the ordnance dropped on Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom was precision-guided.<sup>33</sup> As PGMs have become more ubiquitous, the range of targets against which they have been employed has expanded. During the 1991 Gulf War, the use of precision-guided munitions was restricted to high-value targets. In the campaign in Afghanistan, by contrast, they were routinely used to strike trucks, caves, and even troop concentrations.

A second tactical trend is an emphasis on air over ground operations. While commentators have tended to see this as a novelty, it has deep roots. It is worth remembering that the United States and Great Britain were the only two major powers to embrace strategic bombing prior to World War II. And strategic bombing played an

important role in the United States' conduct of World War II, and in Korea, and Vietnam. Still, it was the decisive role air power played in the 1991 Gulf War that marked a turning point in America's use of air power. Coalition air attack dismantled Iraq's sophisticated air defense network within a matter of days. Air strikes shut down the Iraqi electrical grid, oil refineries, and most of the telephone and communications system. Moreover, air strikes destroyed nearly a quarter of Iraqi armor in the Kuwait theater of operations, with frontline units suffering even more damage. Air power disrupted Iraqi logistics and immobilized the Iraqi army. While a ground attack was necessary to expel the Iraqi army from Kuwait, the air campaign made the operation nearly effortless.<sup>34</sup>

Air power also appeared to be uniquely suited to the types of wars that the United States waged in the 1990s—wars for limited aims fought with partial means for marginal interests. As Eliot A. Cohen put it, 'air power is an unusually seductive form of military strength, in part because, like modern courtship, it appears to offer gratification without commitment',<sup>35</sup> Air power played an important role in Bosnia and in Kosovo. However, air power's main limitation is that it produces a relatively narrow range of strategic effects. While air power played a vital role in the campaign to oust the Taliban and Al Qaeda from Afghanistan, for example, it will play much more of a supporting role in future operations in that country.

The United States has proved less willing to employ ground forces in the last decade. To the extent that it has, it has emphasized elite forces, such as special operations forces. While US Special Forces, such as the Army's Green Berets, Navy SEALs, and Air Force Combat Controllers, clearly played a well-publicized role during the campaign against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, American Special Forces have been an important component of the prosecution of most recent conflicts. Army, Navy, and Air Force special operations forces played an important role in US military operations in Panama during Operation Just Cause. And the operations of Task Force Ranger—composed of members of the US Army's 75th Ranger Regiment as well as special operations forces—in Somalia in 1993 are well known.

Special operations forces aside, US ground forces have traditionally been organized, trained, and equipped for high intensity contingencies. While lethal, US armored and mechanized forces are heavy, hard to deploy, and require massive logistical support. In response to the US Army's perceived failure to deploy forces rapidly to the Balkans in 1999, Army Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki, launched an effort to reconfigure the Army into a more mobile yet lethal force. In October 1999, he announced a goal of transforming the Army into a medium-weight force capable of deploying a 5,000-man brigade anywhere in the world within 96 hours. As he put it, 'We must provide early-entry forces that can operate jointly, without access to fixed forward bases, but we still need the power to slug it out and win decisively'.<sup>36</sup> He designated two brigades at Fort Lewis, Washington as test beds for exploring new concepts and organizations. These units have traded in their tracked M1A1 *Abrams* tanks and M2 *Bradley* fighting vehicles for wheeled infantry fighting vehicles. They are also examining innovative new tactics and organizations. This initiative promises an army with greater utility in small wars.

But organization and equipment are only part of the equation. The Army and Marine Corps must also adapt their doctrine to small wars. While both services have a rich heritage of waging war against lesser adversaries, institutional interest in such missions is

mixed. For example, while the Marine Corps has made military operations in urban terrain a focus of its experimentation, training, and doctrine development, the Army has been less enthusiastic.

### THE AMERICAN WAY OF WAR AND THE FUTURE

The American way of war is nothing more than a reflection of the United States' enduring comparative advantage. While it emphasizes those areas in which the US armed forces have traditionally excelled, its tenets may not be useful in any given conflict. Indeed, the American way of war proved supremely dysfunctional in the Vietnam War.

The United States will remain the most powerful state in the world for the foreseeable future. As a result, the US armed forces will need to pay attention to the requirements of small wars as well as missions that in an earlier age would have fallen under the heading of imperial policing. At the same time, they will need to prepare for the possibility of a high intensity conflict against a capable adversary. Indeed, balancing the very different capabilities required to confront near- and far-term threats is one of the central challenges that US defense planners face.

The global war against Al Qaeda and other Islamic radical groups further complicates this equation. In some ways such a struggle exists comfortably within the framework of the American way of war. In particular, the conflict with Al Qaeda fits America's propensity for far-reaching political objectives as well as its penchant for crusades against evil. Similarly, advanced technology may give the United States advantages against future foes, albeit in novel ways. Throughout much of history, for example, operations at night and in forbidding climate and terrain have favored the weaker side. In the 1991 Gulf War and again in Afghanistan, the United States' technological advantage allowed it to operate in ways that its adversaries did not expect. During the Gulf War, for example, use of the Global Positioning System for precision navigation allowed the US military units to traverse trackless desert while Iraqi forces remained largely road-bound. In that war and again in the campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, the United States' advantage in night-vision allowed it to operate freely at night when its adversaries could not.

In other ways, however, success in future conflicts will likely demand modes of operation that differ significantly from America's strategic traditions. First, while a direct strategy carried the day against the Taliban in Afghanistan, it is doubtful that such an approach will work in the future. Overthrowing governments that harbor terrorists is likely to be a favored option only in a small number of cases. Instead, the United States will have to use cooperation with local officials, law enforcement methods, and covert operations to root out terrorists. Second, America's traditional reliance on fire-power intensive strategies may prove counter-productive in a conflict in which maintaining some level of popular support is necessary. Finally, the US military may need to develop new areas of competency, such as those associated with nation building. In other cases, it may need to bolster existing ones, such as Special Forces. Over time these changes may alter considerably our notion of what the American way of war is.

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## The Indian Way in Counterinsurgency

SANKARAN KALYANARAMAN

A significant feature of the post-Cold War era has been the relative decline in the frequency of large-scale inter-state conventional wars. Wars between/ among major powers, conventional or otherwise, are also unlikely at least over the next decade or more.<sup>1</sup> Conflicts, however, have continued to haunt the nonWestern world especially, but largely below the conventional threshold. These have been referred to by many terms, low intensity conflict (LIC) being only one. LIC is not a new phenomenon and history is witness to its repeated occurrence through the ages. Conflicts of this type acquired prominence at the turn of the nineteenth century during the Napoleonic Wars. The harassing tactics used by Spanish and Portuguese *guerrilleros*—from which term ‘guerrilla warfare’ is derived—against French forces in the Iberian Peninsula were debilitating enough to make Napoleon refer to the problem as the ‘Spanish Ulcer’.<sup>2</sup>

Since then, guerrilla warfare has been an integral element in the study of war. Both Clausewitz and Jomini analyzed it in the context of national uprisings against an invading army.<sup>3</sup> Though Marx and Engels did not foresee any great potential for this form of warfare, mid-nineteenth century Polish and Italian revolutionaries conceived it as an essential tool for attaining national liberation and unification.<sup>4</sup> Charles Callwell subsumed guerrilla warfare in his concept of ‘Small Wars’—European colonial campaigns against disorganized forces in Asia and Africa.<sup>5</sup> And in the course of the twentieth century, guerrilla war became an integral element in the various articulations on how to bring about a communist revolution.<sup>6</sup>

The term low intensity conflict originated in the United States in the aftermath of the Vietnam debacle, which was followed in quick succession by the overthrow of several US-backed regimes in the non-Western world. US official description of LIC in the early 1980s was ‘deliberately broad and ambiguous’ enough to include drug interdiction in Bolivia, occupation of Beirut, invasion of Grenada and the 1986 air strikes on Libya, apart from a whole range of covert political and psychological operations variously described as ‘special operations’, ‘special activities’, and ‘unconventional warfare’.<sup>7</sup> With the United States emerging—to use former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright’s phrase—as the ‘indispensable power’ at the end of the Cold War, Washington’s involvement in various parts of the world attained wider dimensions. This resulted in the articulation of the concept of ‘Operations Other Than War’ (OOTW). OOTW, however, confuses traditional military functions such as support for insurgencies and counterinsurgency operations, and missions that do not require any combat like ‘support to US, state and

local governments, disaster relief, nation assistance, drug interdiction ...peace-keeping, non-combatant evacuation, and peace enforcement'.<sup>8</sup>

### WHAT CONSTITUTES LIC FOR INDIA?

But what constitutes LIC for a superpower like the United States cannot be so for a regional power like India. India's external security problem is defined by the conventional and nuclear threats emanating from China and Pakistan. Though there have been articulations about India's aspiration to play the role of a subcontinental hegemon, its ability to do so seems as yet limited. Of course, India has played a key role in several peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the United Nations. But none of these can be described in power political terms.

India is a multicultural country that is populated by a number of ethnic, racial and religious groups. Since independence, the Indian state's single biggest challenge has been to integrate these groups into a single national framework. Problems in this regard have largely been along the periphery, populated by people belonging to different racial and/or religious stock and drawing sustenance from the country's neighbors. The various insurgency movements that the Indian state has had to face include: communist revolutionary movements in the southern and eastern regions (Andhra Pradesh and Bihar); groups demanding secession or greater autonomy in the north east; a terrorist movement demanding separation in Punjab; and a separatist movement in Jammu and Kashmir which in recent years has developed links to other religiously motivated terrorist groups elsewhere.

In the early 1990s, the Indian Army had envisioned three kinds of LIC operations. These included: counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations, peacekeeping operations like the one it undertook in Sri Lanka, and peacetime contingency operations like the one conducted in Maldives.<sup>9</sup> In recent years, peacekeeping operations and peacetime contingency operations have been abandoned from the menu of the Indian Army's LIC. In their place, Army deployment for restoring peace in the context of civil disorder has been introduced.<sup>10</sup> So far, however, there has never been occasion for the Indian Army to use anything but its sheer presence and the occasional 'whiff of grapeshot' to bring such situations under control. The wisdom underlying this inclusion is therefore questionable. For the foreseeable future, LIC in the Indian context would involve only counterinsurgency operations against armed groups fighting for secession or greater political autonomy as well as countering terrorist activities associated with these.

India has had to conduct counterinsurgency operations from the very first decade of its existence as a modern nation state. It has approached this task from the perspective of nation building, which is rooted in the understanding that socio-economic/political grievances, and the alienation that these lead to, lie at the root of insurgencies. Of course, there is a military element involved; but it is not the only aspect. Curbing insurgent activity is seen as paving the way for other non-military measures designed to integrate the disaffected populace within the democratic national framework.

This essay focuses on the Naga, Mizo and Kashmiri insurgencies. The Naga insurgency is the first that the Indian state had to contend with. Though successfully contained and despite a political settlement reached in the mid-1970s, a faction of the rebels continued a

low-key insurgency thereafter until a cease-fire came into being in 1997. The Mizo insurgency is the first to be successfully brought to a peaceful end by the Indian state. In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, the insurgency has become a complicated affair owing to the involvement of external actors—Pakistan and the various international terrorist outfits—and its transformation into a *jihad*.

## BACKGROUND TO THE INSURGENCIES

The northeastern part of India is populated by a rich variety of peoples. Most are of Mongoloid stock and had migrated to this part of the world in the past few centuries. Before British colonization, this region was a gateway of commerce and culture linking the Indian heartland with East and South East Asia. British encounter with these tribal peoples in the nineteenth century, whose socio-economic/political organization was still considerably underdeveloped, convinced Raj officials that the latter should be safeguarded from the depredations of the modern world. At the same time, they wanted to avoid the frequent conflicts generated by the operations of land speculators and the spread of tea gardens into territories that had traditionally fallen within the tribal sphere. The Raj enacted the Inner Line Regulation of 1873 for these twin purposes, which left the administration of territories beyond its limits to the tribal peoples themselves.<sup>11</sup> But there was also a corresponding Outer Line, which demarcated the external limits of the Raj's political frontier.<sup>12</sup>

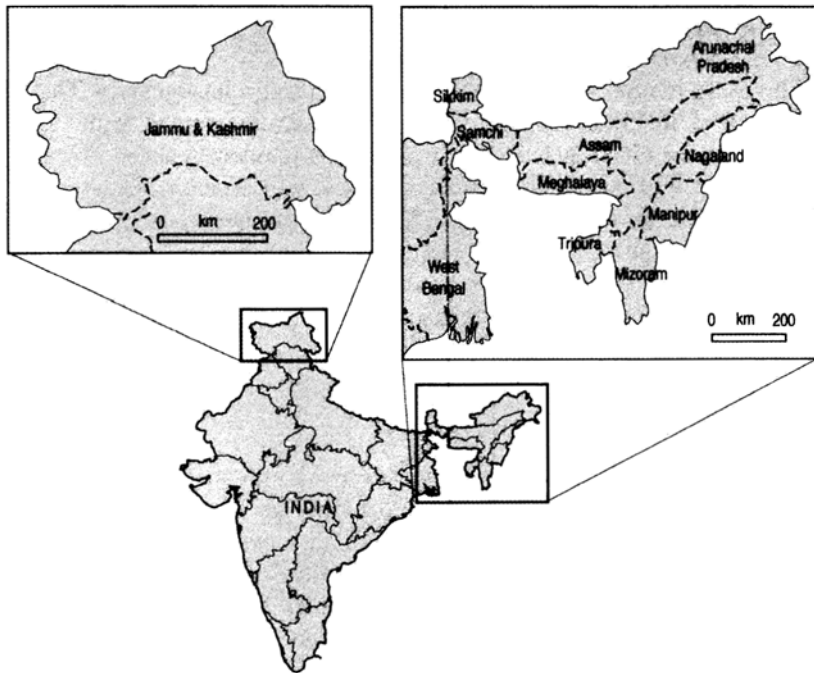
Though well intentioned, the Inner Line rule prevented the anti-colonial nationalist movement from striking roots in this part of the country. Even after India attained independence, this region continued to be physically isolated from the Indian mainland. This was a direct result of Partition and the carving up of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), which stood athwart the Indian mainland and this region. The northeast's major arteries of communications were severed and the region lost its traditional markets and the entrepôt of Chittagong. Since 1947, the region has been virtually landlocked, connected to the rest of India through a narrow 20-kilometer wide land corridor—see Figure 1. Less than one percent of the northeast's external boundaries are contiguous with the rest of India.<sup>13</sup>

When the British departure became imminent, sections among these tribal peoples—bolstered by the success of the movement for a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent—began to raise demands for separation from independent India. A major factor that had contributed to the growth of political consciousness among these peoples was the two World Wars. Nagas and Mizos were recruited by the British to serve in the Labour Corps during the Great War. The resultant exposure led to the percolation of ideas of nationalism within these societies. Japanese invasion of this region during the Second World War and the significant role that the Nagas especially played in assisting the British military effort contributed to a further increase in national consciousness.<sup>14</sup>

As Indian independence neared, Naga political aspirations began to be articulated by the Naga National Council (NNC), which had been formed in 1946. Its initial demand was the grant of local autonomy within the state of Assam, to which the Naga Hills were administratively attached. But this changed soon thereafter to non-inclusion within the Indian Union. The NNC declared independence on the eve of British departure. In the

FIGURE 1

## THEATERS OF COUNTERINSURGENCY



initial years after Indian independence, the NNC limited itself to political action: the organization of a plebiscite in 1951 and the boycott of the first general elections held the next year. Gradually, however, the movement turned to violence. In September 1954, Angami Zapu Phizo, the NNC leader, announced the formation of the Federal Government of Nagaland. Independent India's first separatist insurgency had begun.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike the Nagas, the Mizos did not assert their independence at the time of the British departure. They merely demanded autonomy within Assam, special financial assistance and adequate representation in the bureaucracy. But the administrative attachment to Assam soon began to generate problems. Adequate finances were not forthcoming to relieve the economic difficulties caused by the loss of traditional lines of communications through, and markets in, East Pakistan. The Assam legislature's decision to make Assamese the official language of the state in 1960 caused considerable anxiety about preserving Mizo identity and culture. Finally, the Assam government's failure to take precautionary measures against, and promptly respond to, the famine that erupted at this time proved to be the last straw. 1960 saw the formation of the Mizo National Famine Front, which soon transformed itself into the Mizo National Front (MNF) and began advocating secession. After completing its preparations for an armed struggle over the next couple of years, the MNF launched an insurrection at midnight on February 28-March 1, 1966.<sup>16</sup>

The case of Jammu and Kashmir is quite different. At the time of the British departure, Kashmiri leaders wanted to remain independent. It was Pakistan's attempt through covert military means to gain control of the state that forced the Kashmiri leaders—both the Maharaja and the popular leader Sheikh Abdullah—to accede to the Indian Union. Pakistan's persistent claims and attempts to slice the state off subsequently led to strict control by a constantly worried New Delhi, over the political dispensation within Jammu and Kashmir. This led to the whittling down of the autonomy originally granted to the state and repeated central interventions in local politics, including the holding of fraudulent elections. Growing popular resentment eventually led to the insurgency in the late 1980s.<sup>17</sup> In subsequent years, Pakistan began to funnel 'graduates of the Afghan war' into Jammu and Kashmir, and emphasized the religious dimension of the conflict, thus transforming a local insurgency into a transnational *jihad*.<sup>18</sup>

### THE INDIAN APPROACH TO COUNTERING INSURGENCIES

Independent India's policies, both domestic and foreign, were profoundly influenced by the philosophy of its first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru evinced a keen interest in the affairs of the tribal peoples. But he had strong reservations about the British policy of keeping the region isolated from the rest of the country. He believed that the government must endeavor to promote the development of an Indian national consciousness among the peoples of the region.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, he did not want them 'to be swamped by people from other parts of the country' and preferred granting 'as much freedom and autonomy as possible so that they can live their own lives according to their own customs and desires'.<sup>20</sup> When the Naga insurgency broke out and the Indian Army had to be called in to deal with the situation, Nehru laid down clear instructions forbidding punitive actions and insisting that force be used as sparingly as possible. He reminded the Army leadership that the Nagas were fellow-countrymen who had to be won over and not simply suppressed.<sup>21</sup>

These views were also shared by Indira Gandhi, who was subsequently at the helm of the country's affairs for more than a decade. When meandering negotiations with the Naga leadership coupled with rebel terrorist actions forced one exasperated member of parliament to suggest a time schedule for the peace talks as well as a concrete military plan to deal with the rebels, she quipped that the government was not dealing with machines but with people 'who are our sisters and brothers, who belong to India'. The aim of the negotiations was to win over people that were on the other side.<sup>22</sup>

Given such an attitude, the Indian state perforce did not foresee a purely military solution to insurgencies. It clearly recognized the need for combining military operations with social, economic and political measures designed to win the hearts and minds of the disaffected populace. Over the years, even the Indian Army has come to recognize the validity of this approach. Its concept of counterinsurgency operations, for example, is not based on victory or defeat. In its view, insurgency is not just a military problem, and a lasting solution essentially lies in correcting the imbalances on the political and socio-economic planes. Military means are, however, essential to push the rebels towards a negotiated settlement.<sup>23</sup>

*Application of Military Force*

The basic parameters of military operations for dealing with irregulars can be said to have remained largely unchanged for centuries. A twelfth century account by the Welsh scholar, Giraldus Cambrensis, advised England's king to effectively subjugate the rebellious Welsh:

a people who with a collected force will not openly attack the enemy, nor wait to be besieged in castles, is not to be overcome at the first onset, but to be worn down by prudent delays and patience. Let [the prince] divide their strength, and by bribes and promises endeavor to stir up one against the other....let not only the marshes, but also the interior part of the country be strongly fortified...[and supplies] strictly interdicted... [And] when the severity of winter approaches...and the mountains no longer afford hope of pasturage... let a body of light-armed infantry penetrate into their woody and mountainous retreats, and let these troops be supported and relieved by others... Nor can it be overcome without the above precautions, nor without great danger and loss of men.<sup>24</sup>

A significant factor that influenced the Indian Army's counterinsurgency operations is the political leadership's understanding that the rebels are fellow citizens who have to be won over. These views percolated down the Army hierarchy. An Order of the Day issued in 1955 by the then Chief of Army Staff to the troops being dispatched to the Naga Hills brings this out quite clearly:

You must remember that all the people of the area in which you are operating are fellow-Indians...and the very fact that they are different and yet part of India is a reflection of India's greatness. Some of these people are misguided and have taken to arms against their own people, and are disrupting the peace of this area. You are to protect the mass of the people from these disruptive elements. You are not there to fight the people in the area, but to protect them. You are fighting only those who threaten the people and who are a danger to the lives and properties of the people. You must, therefore, do everything possible to win their confidence and respect and to help them feel that they belong to India.<sup>25</sup>

These instructions were further reinforced among combat units at the operational level. Operational orders set out a clear distinction between 'hostiles' and ordinary citizens. While rebel camps, hideouts and ammunition dumps were to be destroyed and the rebels themselves apprehended or liquidated, common citizens were to be informed about the aims and ideals of the government. Troops were threatened with severe disciplinary action for offences against the civilian population. In addition, the Indian Army also refrained from employing heavy weapons and firepower. For example, the Air Force was employed only once during the initial weeks of the Mizo insurgency; that too because the rebel forces—composed mainly of former soldiers—began their insurrection with a classic military campaign designed to obtain control over the Mizo Hills. Once they were denied this objective, the use of the Air Force was discontinued.<sup>26</sup> Neither has the Indian

Army used tanks, artillery guns, heavy guns, medium machine guns, etc. in its counterinsurgency operations.<sup>27</sup>

This, of course, does not mean that the Army leadership accepted the political prescriptions on the use of minimum force without demur. There was indeed some initial resistance, though the need for restraint was eventually accepted.<sup>28</sup> Neither did these restrictions lead to an unblemished record in terms of high-handedness or excesses on the part of troops on the ground.<sup>29</sup>

The Army's initial understanding of insurgencies partly evolved out of a reading of Mao Tse-tung's articulations as well as the British approach to counterinsurgency in Malaya. A fundamental lesson that it derived from these was the need to isolate guerrillas from the population and the imperative of exercising control over the latter since it was understood that the insurgents not only needed popular support, but also depended upon the common people for food, information, recruits and freedom of movement. Drawing upon the British innovation in Malaya, the Indian Army adopted a scheme to resettle villages both in the Naga and Mizo Hills. The grouping scheme in the Naga Hills began in early 1957, but was soon stopped following complaints from moderate Naga leaders as well as due to logistical difficulties. A subsequent attempt to restart the scheme in 1963 also could not be carried through.<sup>30</sup> But village regrouping was implemented with vigor in the Mizo Hills. By 1972, 102 group centers had been established, which accommodated 240,000 people—more than 80 percent of the Mizo Hills' population of 285,000. The third phase of the scheme was quietly shelved, following a directive from the Assam High Court.<sup>31</sup>

'Cordon-and-search operations' was the other method employed to isolate guerrillas from the general population. These were conducted both randomly as well as when specific information was received about the presence of rebels in particular villages. Identifying and arresting guerrillas, gathering intelligence, searching for weapons, and conducting nationalist propaganda among the people, were the aims of these operations.<sup>32</sup>

Other elements that make up the Indian Army's counterinsurgency operations are: dominating the area through deployment in a grid system; protecting convoys and lines of communication; seeking out militants through search-and-destroy or cordon-and-search operations; and maintaining superiority of forces *vis-à-vis* the insurgents.<sup>33</sup>

Area domination is a major element in the Indian Army's counterinsurgency operations. Since the area of operations was invariably large and the opposing rebel force generally unknown, domination involved the establishment of posts and the exercise of control over the surrounding areas through constant patrolling. Each battalion (roughly 800 troops) is assigned responsibility for an area comprising between five and seven square kilometers in which to establish three sub-sectors controlled by a company each. The latter, made up of roughly 150 soldiers, establish posts to suit the requirements depending upon the number of villages, terrain, available cover, communications and the intelligence set-up. At the company level, since patrols and operations are carried out continuously to attain area domination, troops are divided into three groups. As one group sallies forth on a patrol, a second protects the post, while the third trains for operations.<sup>34</sup>

Area domination also involves holding all urban centers. This required extended lines of communications and the Army was forced to employ a great number of troops to protect

these vulnerable supply routes. Platoons (roughly 30 soldiers) were distributed along the entire length of major roads. Their task was to patrol the area between individual posts and ensure the absence of rebel raiding parties, especially on days when convoys were scheduled. An additional measure undertaken was the sending out of 'road protection parties' on 'road-clearing' operations to sanitize the routes before running convoys.<sup>35</sup>

The Indian Army also lays emphasis on maintaining superior forces *vis-à-vis* the insurgents at all times. This generally meant that the counterinsurgent forces should be two or three times greater in number than a normal rebel group. Since rebel hit-and-run tactics did not permit the quick provision of assistance to units under assault, the units had to be sufficiently strong to repulse any rebel concentration on their own. Since all units, whether deployed in jungle posts or on patrol, were subject to insurgent attack, units were generally of company size.<sup>36</sup> The only exception to this pattern is road-clearing operations, which are mostly conducted with platoon strength.<sup>37</sup>

In the initial years of its counterinsurgency operations, the Indian Army rarely used small groups of Special Forces either to ferret out and/or neutralize rebels from their hideouts and camps. Operations at this time were confined to the northeast, where the major handicap was non-availability of adequate knowledge about the region.<sup>38</sup> Subsequently, in Jammu and Kashmir however, the Indian Army has been using Special Forces to combat the insurgency. Commandos of the National Security Guard, Marine Commandos and the Special Operations Group of the Jammu and Kashmir Police are also being employed for this purpose. Special Forces units are generally employed on specific missions where real-time intelligence is available. At times, they also carry out path-finding and search-and-destroy missions. In addition, they are also used as advance units to contain adverse situations spinning out of control in areas where trouble erupts suddenly.<sup>39</sup>

#### *Non-Military Measures*

Military victory alone—whether in conventional wars or counterinsurgency operations—is insufficient to attain a decisive victory. In his essay 'When are Wars Decisive?' Michael Howard has pointed out that in these times of total war and popular mobilization 'military victories do not themselves determine the outcome of wars; they only provide political opportunities for the victors—and even these opportunities are likely to be limited by circumstances beyond their control'.<sup>40</sup>

Apart from operational victory, two other considerations determine the decisiveness of military operations.<sup>41</sup> First, the vanquished must be deprived of all external support in reversing the military verdict. Second, a government must be found in the defeated country 'that is able and willing to take responsibility for enforcing the peace terms on its compatriots'. Howard further affirms that the difficulty with regard to the second of these considerations will be 'in direct ratio to the harshness of the terms that the defeated power is being required to accept'.<sup>42</sup>

Howard's analysis is equally applicable to insurgencies. In the Indian case, all insurgent activity drew, and continues to draw, sustenance from the country's neighbors. Both the Naga and Mizo insurgents were trained, armed and/or based in erstwhile East Pakistan, the tribal regions of Burma (now Myanmar) and China. This condition was alleviated to an



extent in the aftermath of the rebirth of East Pakistan as independent Bangladesh in December 1971, as well as by increased co-operation between the Indian and Burmese governments in controlling movements across their porous borders. In fact, it was the loss of their bases in East Pakistan and the growing restrictions on free movement in and out of Burma and through Burmese territory to China that forced many Naga and Mizo rebels to give up their struggle in the 1970s.<sup>43</sup> In the case of the current insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir as well, both local insurgents and terrorists infiltrating from outside are still trained and operate out of Pakistan.<sup>44</sup> Till the ousting of the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan also served as a base, training ground and armory for Kashmiri insurgents and terrorists waging *jihad* to liberate Kashmir. In this context, after the December 13, 2001 terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament, India mobilized its armed forces and threatened to initiate hostilities against Pakistan to stop its involvement.<sup>45</sup> Although President Musharraf has repeatedly affirmed since January 2002 that Pakistani territory is no longer being used for the export of terrorists into India,<sup>46</sup> it is not clear whether this would be stopped permanently.

As India has repeatedly found, forging a mutually acceptable political settlement with the rebels is a long haul marked by many failures and half-successes. More than diplomatic skill, what is at premium is the willingness to make an offer that the other side could not refuse. It has been the consistent position of successive Indian governments that they would be willing to concede rebel political demands as long as these did not involve any further break-up of the country. Successive governments have even affirmed that they are willing to consider amending the Constitution in order to grant greater autonomy within the Indian Union as part of a political settlement.

Prime Minister Vajpayee has indicated as much through his statements that the framework for talks with the Kashmiri rebels could be envisaged within the scope of *insaniyat*—meaning ‘humanity’.<sup>47</sup> This, of course, does not mean that the rebel demand for ‘independence’, or alternatively, a merger with Pakistan, would even be considered. Similarly, in the 1960s, at the fourth round of talks between the Naga rebel leaders, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had stated that a political settlement need not necessarily be limited to the framework of the Indian Constitution, and that instead it could be within the scope of the Indian Union.<sup>48</sup>

Post-independence, no Indian leader can ever countenance a further dismemberment of the country, especially after the disaster that was the 1947 Partition. Yet, they have displayed remarkable sensitivity towards the question of preserving and safeguarding the identity of especially the tribal peoples. In fact, it is precisely to preserve and promote tribal interests that the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution was designed, which provides greater autonomy to the tribal areas, considerable control to the tribal peoples over their own affairs as well as protection of their land and customs.<sup>49</sup> And when this proved subsequently insufficient to satisfy the aspirations of these peoples, New Delhi agreed to the suggestions of moderate local leaders to establish the states of Nagaland and Mizoram within the Indian Union.<sup>50</sup> J.H. Hutton—anthropologist and a long-time Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills in the days of the Raj—stated:

It seems to me that by the formation of the State of Nagaland, protected as it is by clauses in the Constitution of India, the Nagas have in fact got more than might have been expected or even desired—complete internal home rule financed by the Indian Government...<sup>51</sup>

Nagaland's total population is a little over 1.2 million and that of Mizoram about 690,000.<sup>52</sup> These figures are lower than the average number of voters, let alone the population, in numerous electoral constituencies in the rest of the country.<sup>53</sup> This brings into question the economic viability of establishing these separate states, with their associated top-heavy bureaucratic and governmental machinery. In addition, these states have very limited capacity to generate revenues. Not many industries are located in their territories, and economic activity is largely limited to agriculture and handicrafts. As a result, governments in these states raise only meager revenues through sales tax, registration fee, entertainment tax, etc. Most of their revenue is in the form of grants, loans and shares of central taxes devolved on them by New Delhi.<sup>54</sup>

Since the mid-1970s, Nagaland and Mizoram have been among the highest recipients of per capita public expenditure on development in the country. Development funds made available to these states are between 400 and 500 percent greater than those provided to other states of the Union. All this expenditure has gone a long way in improving the socio-economic conditions of the people living in these states.<sup>55</sup> These statistics demonstrate one aspect of the Indian state's approach to countering insurgencies: integrating formerly peripheral regions within the national socio-economic/political framework.

A more cynical explanation could also be offered, in that the pouring in of huge amounts of funds into these states was aimed at softening up the people with easy money. As one Indian official reportedly put it, 'they will become too comfortable to fight in the jungle again'.<sup>56</sup> In Nagaland, for example, the easy availability of money has led to social tensions and drug and alcohol abuse. It has also created a new elite, comprising politicians, businessmen, bureaucrats and police officials—people best placed to acquire and utilize these funds. These constitute an 'interest group' for maintaining links with the Indian Union.<sup>57</sup>

Another element in the Indian state's approach to tackling insurgencies is the encouragement offered to national political parties to establish their presence in rebel-affected regions.<sup>58</sup> In the initial decades after independence, national parties had generally refrained from any serious political activity in the northeastern states for fear of causing resentment and accusations of cultural domination. But in the 1970s, Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister and leader of the Congress Party, decided to use electoral politics as a vehicle for ethnic accommodation in the northeast. In 1974, the Mizo Union, a moderate local party which was sidelined after the rise of the MNF, was induced to merge with the Congress Party. The measure of the Congress' acceptability to the Mizos at this stage can be gauged from the fact that it became the rallying point for all those who had by then deserted the MNF.<sup>59</sup> Similarly in Nagaland, the Congress Party absorbed the Naga National Organization (NNO) in May 1976.<sup>60</sup>

The Indian government has also been quick to exploit splits or factional struggles in the rebel camp. Contacts are established with disillusioned rebel leaders, who are then either encouraged to take on their former comrades militarily or else accommodated within the

political system. In Jammu and Kashmir, moderates among the separatists are being encouraged to give up the armed struggle and contest elections.<sup>61</sup> Earlier in Nagaland, rivalry between NNC leaders was exploited to wean away some belonging to the Sema tribe. They subsequently formed the Revolutionary Government of Nagaland in 1968, which resulted in an internecine war between the rebels.<sup>62</sup>

### CURRENT STATUS OF THE INSURGENCIES

By the mid-1970s, the stage had been set for the restoration of peace in Nagaland and Mizoram. The rebels had been dealt a grave blow by the loss of their bases in East Pakistan and their access routes to Burma and thence into China. Many subsequently surrendered and were accommodated within the Indian political and security establishments.<sup>63</sup> Consequent to the Indian Army's role in liberating Bangladesh, Indian prestige and might were at their height. On the internal front, moderate political leaders—satisfied by the grant of statehood or of Union Territory status—had begun to play in the electoral arena. National political parties had finally made inroads into these states and were increasingly accepted by the locals. To top it all, huge amounts of money were coming in to jump-start socio-economic development.

Peace talks with the political wing of the NNC led to the Shillong Accord of November 1975. Phizo's brother, Keviyallay, signed the agreement committing the NNC to surrender all weapons and abide by the Indian Constitution.<sup>64</sup> This was, however, seen as a betrayal of the cause by a section of the rebels who were at that time returning from China. Led by Thuingaleng Muivah and Isak Chisi Swu, this group subsequently constituted itself as the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). It later split into two factions. At present, a cease-fire is in place between the Indian government and these groups.<sup>65</sup> Successive Indian prime ministers have met the two Naga leaders over the last few years and several rounds of talks have taken place between the latter and representatives of the Indian government. Both the clamor for peace within Nagaland and the seeming impossibility of the task of attaining independence seems to be impelling the NSCN leadership to arrive at a mutually acceptable accommodation with the Indian government.<sup>66</sup>

In the case of Mizoram, MNF leader Laldenga had begun to realize the futility of his position immediately after the loss of his base in East Pakistan. Three groups of rebels surrendered *en masse* in 1975. By that time, Laldenga had established contact with Indian officials and reached New Delhi. In the following year, a peace accord was signed, under which the MNF agreed to end the insurgency, surrender all arms and accept a political settlement within the framework of the Indian Constitution. But Laldenga could not convince the rest of his followers of the sagacity of this move—without endangering his own predominant position in the MNF—for another decade. A final agreement was signed only in June 1986. The Indian government agreed to upgrade Mizoram from its status as Union Territory to that of a fully fledged state of the Indian Union.<sup>67</sup>

In Jammu and Kashmir, Indian military pressure combined with the inability of the rebels—despite accretion to their strength in the form of war-hardened fighters from Afghanistan and Pakistan—to make any progress towards their goal has led to considerable disillusionment among them. This has been more so since the September 11,

2001 events, which affected a sea change in the attitude of the international community towards terrorism. Even before this, a peace constituency had formed among indigenous Kashmiri insurgents, which included several top rebel commanders of the Hizbul Mujahideen (the principal indigenous insurgent outfit). Contacts between these rebel leaders and Indian officials eventually led to the July 2000 announcement by Abdul Majid Dar, the operations chief of the Hizbul Mujahideen, of a unilateral three-month cease-fire. But pressures emanating from Pakistani officials and *jihadi* forces in Pakistan led to the withdrawal of this cease-fire after just two weeks.<sup>68</sup>

In May 2002, Majid Dar and a few other top pro-peace leaders were expelled from the Hizb, indicating a process of churning within the rebel camp. Given the existing state of flux in Jammu and Kashmir and the complications associated with Pakistan's involvement, the Indian government is gingerly feeling its way forward. It has announced its resolve to hold 'free and fair' elections to the state legislature due in September 2002. Though a dialogue process with indigenous separatist groups is necessary for a peaceful resolution of the insurgency, India is bound to be chary in this regard because of the leverage that these groups have sought to gain by playing the Pakistan and 'Kashmir is a disputed territory' cards. Severing this link between Kashmiri separatist groups and Pakistan and stopping the latter from exporting its nationals and other *jihadis* into Jammu and Kashmir are two contingencies upon which depends a final resolution of the insurgency.

## CONCLUSION

Modern states have sufficient force at their disposal to crush any insurgency. India is no exception in this regard. Yet the most distinctive feature of the Indian way in countering insurgency has been the deliberate restraint exercised in the use of military force. The Indian state has demonstrated such restraint even in the face of direct external involvement in the insurgencies directed against it. This is evident from the Indian response over the last decade to Pakistan's involvement and encouragement to international terrorist activities in Kashmir. Even at the time of the Pakistani intrusions in Kargil in the summer of 1999, India exercised remarkable restraint in its use of military force despite the fact that the fighting took place in one of the most difficult terrains. And though its military has been in a state of mobilization for war since December 2001, India has continued to demonstrate its resolve not to take precipitate action, provided Islamabad wound down its involvement in cross-border terrorist activities.

India has had one of the longest experiences in countering insurgencies and a unique one at that. The unique nature of this experience arises from the Indian perception of the causes underlying these insurgencies. India essentially sees and responds to insurgencies within its frontiers as challenges to the project of nation building. And it is this perception that has determined the Indian way in counterinsurgency.

## NOTES

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1. For an interesting debate on this aspect, see Michael Mandelbaum, 'Is Major War Obsolete?', *Survival*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Winter 1998–99), pp. 20–38, and the responses to his articulation in *Survival*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Summer 1999), pp. 139–52.
2. Cited in Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1975), p. 147.
3. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 479–83. For a summary of Jomini's views, see Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, p. 164 ff.
4. For a summary of the views of mid-nineteenth century revolutionaries, see Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 1986), pp. 142–5, 130–37.
5. Charles E. Callwell, *Small Wars: A Tactical Textbook for Imperial Soldiers* (London: Greenhill Books, 1990).
6. V.I. Lenin, 'Guerrilla Warfare', in Walter Laqueur, *The Guerrilla Reader: A Historical Anthology* (London: Wildwood House, 1978), pp. 172–8; Mao Tse-tung and Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, translated and with Introduction by Samuel B. Griffith (London: Cassell, 1961); General Vo Nguyen Giap, *Banner of People's War: The Party's Military Line* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970); Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1961).
7. Michael T. Klare and Peter Kornbluh, *Low Intensity Warfare: Counterinsurgency, Proinsurgency and Antiterrorism in the Eighties* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), pp. 7–9.
8. This point has been made by Avi Kober, 'Low-intensity Conflicts: Why the Gap Between Theory and Practise?', *Defense & Security Analysis*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (March 2002), p. 17.
9. Discussions with Lieutenant General Y.M. Bammi (Retd.), former Director General of Assam Rifles—the major outfit that deals with counterinsurgency operations in the northeast. The Indian military's role in Sri Lanka was initially envisaged only as a peace-keeping operation under the auspices of an agreement signed by the Governments of India and Sri Lanka. But later, when the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) refused to abide by the terms of this agreement, which it never signed in the first place, the Indian military began counterinsurgency operations against the LTTE. The Maldives operation involved preventing Sri Lankan Tamil guerrillas from seizing control of the Maldives Islands.
10. These are the only LIC operations that the Indian Army has envisioned so far. See *Fundamentals, Doctrine and Concepts: Indian Army* (Simla: HQ ARTRAC, Aug. 1998), pp. 57–60.
11. The regulation laid down rules for trade and acquisition of lands beyond the Inner Line. It also prevented British subjects and foreigners alike from venturing into these tribal territories without official permission. Verrier Elwin, *Nagaland* (Shillong: P. Dutta, 1961), pp. 43–4.
12. B.G. Verghese, *India's Northeast Resurgent: Ethnicity, Insurgency, Governance, Development* (Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1996), p. 19.
13. The remainder is made up of international borders with Nepal, Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Verghese, *India's Northeast Resurgent*, pp. 1–2.
14. Verghese, *India's Northeast Resurgent*, pp. 85, 137.
15. A good account of the origins and course of the Naga insurgency can be found in Nirmal Nibedon, *Nagaland: The Night of the Guerrillas* (New Delhi: Lancers Publishers, 1978). For two recent brief and concise treatments, see Udayon Misra, *The Periphery Strikes Back: Challenges to the Nation-State in Assam and Nagaland* (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2000), pp. 14–43; and Sushil K. Pillai, 'Anatomy of an Insurgency: Ethnicity and Identity in Nagaland', *Faultlines*, Vol. 3 (Nov. 1999), pp. 39–78.

16. For a detailed account on the Mizo insurgency, see Nirmal Nibedon, *Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade* (New Delhi: Lancers, 1980).
17. See, for example, Balraj Puri, *Kashmir Towards Insurgency* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1993); and Sten Widmalm, 'The Rise and Fall of Democracy in Jammu and Kashmir', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 37, No. 11 (Nov. 1997), pp. 1005–30. There are other interpretations as well. For the role of institutional factors and the actions of the power elite, see Sumit Ganguly, 'The Prospects of War and Peace', and Ashutosh Varshney, 'Three Compromised Nationalisms: Why Kashmir Has Been a Problem', in Raju G.C.Thomas, *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992). Sumit Ganguly has also explored another aspect—the combination of political mobilization and deinstitutionalization—as a factor in the onset of the insurgency in Kashmir; for this see his *Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace* (New Delhi: Foundation Books, 1997).
18. Jessica Stern, 'Pakistan's Jihad Culture', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 6 (Nov.–Dec. 2000), p. 118.
19. One of his letters to the Chief Minister of Assam, wherein he discussed the insurgency in the Naga Hills, is rather revealing in this regard. He wrote: 'We must not judge them as we would others who are undoubtedly part of India. The Nagas have no such background or sensation and we have to create that sensation among them by our goodwill and treatment.' The letter is reproduced in Sanjoy Hazarika, *Strangers of the Mist: Tales of War and Peace from India's Northeast* (New Delhi: Viking, 1994), p. 360.
20. Cited in Elwin, *Nagaland*, p. 45.
21. Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography, Vol. 2, 1947–1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 212.
22. Cited in M.Aram, *Peace in Nagaland: Eight Year Story—1964–1972* (New Delhi: ArnoldHeinemann [India] Publishers, 1974), p. 191.
23. Discussions with Lieutenant General Y.M. Bammi (Retd.).
24. Cited in Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, pp. 80–81.
25. Reprinted in B.B.Kumar, *Re-organization of North-East India: Facts and Documents* (New Delhi: Omsons Publishers, 1996), p. 29.
26. See Nibedon, *Mizoram*, pp. 78–9.
27. Discussions with Brigadier Devinder Singh, Indian Army.
28. Rajesh Rajagopalan, "'Restoring Normalcy": The Evolution of the Indian Army's Counterinsurgency Doctrine', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 2000), pp. 49–50.
29. For details on the human rights violations during the Indian Army counterinsurgency operations in Nagaland, see Luingham Luithui and Nandita Haksar, *Nagaland File: A Question of Human Rights* (New Delhi: Lancer International, 1984).
30. D.R.Mankekar, *On the Slippery Slope in Nagaland* (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1967), p. 62.
31. Vijendra Singh Jafa, 'Counterinsurgency Warfare: The Use & Abuse of Military Force', *Faultlines*, Vol. 3 (Nov. 1999), pp. 117–18.
32. Rajagopalan, 'Restoring Normalcy', p. 51.
33. Discussions with Brigadier S.P. Sinha (Retd); also see Rajagopalan, 'Restoring Normalcy', pp. 50–57.
34. Discussions with Lieutenant General Y.M. Bammi.
35. Rajagopalan, 'Restoring Normalcy', pp. 51–2.
36. Discussions with Brigadier Sinha.
37. Rajagopalan, 'Restoring Normalcy', p. 53.
38. Discussions with Brigadier Singh.

39. Bhashyam Kasturi, 'Role of Special Forces in Internal Security Management', *Indian Defence Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Jan.–March 1999), p. 54.
40. Michael Howard, 'When are Wars Decisive?', *Survival*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Spring 1999), p. 129.
41. . Howard has drawn these considerations from Brian Bond's excellent study on the evolution of the conception of victory. See Brian Bond, *The Pursuit of Victory: From Napoleon to Saddam Hussein* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 61.
42. Howard, 'When are Wars Decisive?', p. 134.
43. See Prakash Singh, *Nagaland* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1972), pp. 118–45; Nibedon, *Nagaland, passim*. On the Mizo rebel connection with Pakistan and China, see Nibedon, *Mizoram, passim* and for a synoptic view, J.V.Hluna, 'Mizo National Front (MNF): Relations with Foreign Powers', in R.N.Prasad, *Autonomy Movements in Mizoram* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1994), pp. 189–202.
44. For an account on the ratio between Kashmiri insurgents and international terrorists operating in Jammu and Kashmir, see Sumantra Bose, 'Kashmir at the Crossroads: Problems and Possibilities', *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (March 2001), pp. 51–2. The fact that even the US officials now acknowledge Pakistani involvement in training and equipping terrorists operating in Kashmir was clear in Secretary of State Colin Powell's statement on June 11, 2002 when he stated that President Musharraf had assured the United States that terrorist infiltration into India would cease and that it would be followed by 'other activities that had to do with the dismantling of the camps that led to the capacity to conduct these kinds of operations'. Cited in Sridhar Krishnaswami, 'Musharraf has promised to dismantle terrorist camps', *The Hindu* (New Delhi), June 12, 2002. Also see Stern, 'Pakistan's Jihad Culture', p. 116.
45. Indian demands on Pakistan included 'stopping cross-border infiltration of terrorists; and the closure of facilities, training camps, arms supply routes, funding channels, and all direct and indirect assistance to terrorists operating from Pakistani soil'. For the articulation of these points by the Indian Home Minister during a press conference see Sridhar Krishnaswami, 'Bush expects Musharraf to take all steps against terrorism', *The Hindu* (New Delhi), Jan. 11, 2002.
46. See the texts of his speeches on Jan. 12, 2002 and May 27, 2002 at [www.pak.gov.pk/public/President\\_address.htm](http://www.pak.gov.pk/public/President_address.htm) and [www.pak.gov.pk/public/presidentaddress-27-5-2002.htm](http://www.pak.gov.pk/public/presidentaddress-27-5-2002.htm).
47. See, for example, his statement in Parliament on Dec. 20, 2000; it can be viewed at [www.indianembassy.org/special/cabinet/Primeminister/pm\\_id\\_2000.htm](http://www.indianembassy.org/special/cabinet/Primeminister/pm_id_2000.htm).
48. Cited in Nibedon, *Nagaland*, p. 158.
49. Elwin, *Nagaland*, pp. 41–2.
50. This was carried out in two steps. At first, a new administrative unit called the Naga Hills–Tuensang Area was established in 1957, which was subsequently upgraded into a fully fledged state of the Union in 1963. As for the Mizo Hills, this administrative unit was first upgraded to Union Territory status in 1972 and then made into a fully fledged state of the Union after the peace agreement was signed with the MNF in 1986.
51. Cited in Prakash Singh, *Nagaland*, p. 115.
52. See <http://nagaland.net.in> and <http://mizoram.net.in>. According to the provisional figures from the 2001 Census, the total population of Mizoram is a little over 890,000.
53. According to one study, the average total population that one Indian Member of Parliament represented in the mid-1990s is more than 1.7 million, and the average number of voters represented is slightly more than 1.09 million. Cited by Imtiaz Ahmed, 'Globalization, State and Political Process in South Asia', in Abdur Rob Khan, *Globalization*

- and *Non-Traditional Security in South Asia* (Colombo: Academic Press, Dhaka/Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, 2001), p. 40.
54. For example, Nagaland's total budget provision for 1999–2000 was Rs. 1,781.53 crores. Out of the total receipts of Rs. 1,582.77 crores, the state government raised only Rs. 85.15 crores. In contrast, the money devolved to it by the central government in New Delhi was Rs. 1,244.55 crores. Comparable figures are available for Mizoram as well. These figures have been cited from <http://nagaland.nic.in> and Government of Nagaland, *Comptroller and Auditor General Report 2000* (New Delhi), p. xiv. In Indian usage, one crore equals 100 million; one US dollar fetches about 50 Indian rupees.
  55. The number of primary, middle and high schools in Mizoram increased from 283 in 1947 to 1,565 in 1988. Medical facilities were expanded by about 200 percent between 1947 and 1972. Vijendra Singh Jafa, 'Mizoram: Contours of Non-military Intervention', *Faultlines*, Vol. 4 (Feb. 2000), pp. 74–6.
  56. Cited in Hazarika, *Strangers of the Mist*, p. 241.
  57. Lalmachhuana, 'Some Aspects of Mizoram Economy and Prospects of Development', in T. Mathew, *Tribal Economy of Northeastern Region* (Gauhati: Spectrum Publications, 1981), p. 176.
  58. Donald L. Horowitz has identified five possible aims for an electoral system 'that is to be harnessed to the goal of ethnic accommodation'. These are: 1. Fragment the support of one or more ethnic groups, especially that of a majority, to prevent it from attaining permanent domination. 2. Induce especially a majority ethnic group to adopt a moderate approach towards another group and engage in inter-ethnic bargaining. 3. Encourage the formation of multi-ethnic coalitions. 4. Preserve a measure of multipolar balance among several groups to prevent bifurcation and the permanent exclusion of the resulting minority. 5. Reduce the disparity between the number of votes cast and the seats won, so as to reduce the possibility of a minority group gaining a majority of seats on its own. See his *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), p. 632.
  59. Jafa, 'Mizoram: Contours of Non-military Intervention', pp. 80–81.
  60. Nibedon, *Nagaland*, p. 344.
  61. Abdul Ghani Lone, a known moderate political leader, was assassinated in the summer of 2002 for indicating his willingness to consider participating in the forthcoming elections in September 2002. About the same time, Abdul Majid Dar and a few other rebel leaders were expelled from the rebel insurgent group Hizbul Mujahideen for advocating discontinuance of the armed struggle and conducting political negotiations with the Indian government.
  62. Nibedon, *Nagaland*, pp. 150 ff.
  63. A breakaway faction of the rebels led by Scato Swu and 'General' Zuheto had surrendered with some 1,500 men in August 1972. Swu later became a member of the Indian parliament, while Zuheto and his fighters were absorbed into the Indian Border Security Force. Verghese, *India's Northeast Resurgent*, p. 94.
  64. For the full text of the agreement, see S. Guru Dev, *Anatomy of Revolt in the North East India* (New Delhi: Lancers Books, 1996), pp. 138–9.
  65. The ceasefire with the dominant faction—the NSCN (I–M)—has been in place since July 1997; the other faction—NSCN (K)—was also brought into the ceasefire framework in 2001. For a reproduction of the text of a recent joint statement issued by the NSCN (I–M) and the Indian government, see Kuldip Nayar, 'Pushing the Naga Peace Process Forward', *Indian Express* (New Delhi), Aug. 28, 2001.
  66. See for example, the two-part piece by Sanjoy Hazarika in *Indian Express*, May 4 and 5, 2001; and the op-ed piece by B.G. Verghese, 'Pilgrim's Progress: Domino Effect of a Naga Settlement', *Times of India* (New Delhi), April 4, 2002.



67. For the full text of the agreement, see Dev, *Anatomy of Revolt in the North East India*, pp. 133–6.
68. Praveen Swami, 'Dialogue with the Hizb: Light in the Tunnel, but is it Dawn or Sunset?', *Faultlines*, Vol. 6 (Aug. 2000), pp. 2–4.

## Winning a Low Intensity Conflict: Drawing Lessons from the Turkish Case

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Terms such as ‘unconventional warfare’ and ‘small wars’, which were used extensively during the Cold War era, began to be replaced in the late 1980s with the term low intensity conflict (LIC), particularly by American scholars and practitioners. Since the literature around the characteristics of LIC is still growing, it has not yet reached the stage of a well-developed and accepted terminology.

Discussions about LIC have often suffered because of a tendency to define the very concept by what it is not: conventional or nuclear war. Those attempts at definition are often criticized for being excessively broad and inclusive, and ultimately, therefore, considered as not useful for comprehensive generalizations and conceptualizations. This study of a very significant case of LIC, that of the approximately 20-year long struggle between the Turkish state and the Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK), is an attempt to contribute to the database about LICs in a manner that may suggest routes for further conceptualization and, eventually, a more comprehensive understanding of what is certain to be the dominant form of conflict for years to come.

On the basis of the following discussion of LIC, this article considers the Turkish/PKK struggle a ‘typical’ LIC and therefore an important case for the general study of LICs. On the one side we have the second largest army in NATO, one with long-standing traditions, highly trained and disciplined in the art of conventional warfare, and on the other we have the PKK, a classic example of the irregular combatant. Not only had the PKK leadership and militants fully absorbed the theory and practice of organized violence, they also had extreme familiarity with the battle terrain, excellent training and indoctrination, and highly extensive and effective international state support both within and outside the region.

This article identifies five challenges as having been crucial to the success and/or failure of the Turkish state’s dealings with the PKK in the 1974–2000 period:

1. Diagnosing the nature, scope, and capacities of the PKK insurgency;
2. Coordinating relations between the Turkish security establishment and the politicians;
3. Transforming and adapting the Turkish armed forces to an unconventional form of warfare;
4. Winning democratic popular support; and
5. Coping with international and regional support for the PKK.

Following a discussion of how LIC has been defined, the essay offers a brief background to some of the proposed challenges. The remainder of the piece explores the challenges themselves. Specifically, by giving chronological examples of key events and decisions, we will show the changes that were made over time in the ways in which each of the challenges were perceived and managed. By doing this we are able to suggest possible turning points, from unsuccessful to successful management, as well as identifying relations between the various challenges and the possible relevance of these interactions on the ultimate results of the conflict.

### *Identifying Low Intensity Conflict*

One important reason for some of the definitional confusion about LICs stems from the fact that a wide variety of what can be considered as 'forms of LICs' may occur, either simultaneously or at different times. Some of these are termed counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, peacekeeping operations, and peacetime contingency operations. These can be either offensive or defensive.<sup>1</sup>

Among the types of conflict considered offensive, insurgencies are a revolt or riot against a legitimate government of a state by citizens of that state. These citizens create an organization in order to overthrow the existing regime or destroy the territorial integrity of the state, and do this without the support of external forces. The instruments of insurgencies against the ruling state are most frequently terrorism and guerrilla warfare, which can itself be further divided according to the circumstances of its origin, that is whether it is a spontaneous uprising of the people or whether it derives its main support from other countries or states.<sup>2</sup> Guerrilla warfare pits the weak against the strong, and generally constitutes an example of military-strategic asymmetry.<sup>3</sup> Guerrilla warfare is rarely decisive militarily, but it can serve as a prelude to conventional warfare.<sup>4</sup>

Terrorism encapsulates the use of violence by non-military or irregular groups for political purposes against civilian and/or military/security personnel and facilities. If the terrorist acts are supported by a state as a part of its foreign policy, terrorism can be considered an offensive LIC operation. Offensive forms of LICs include peacemaking operations, which aim to reestablish peace through the use of military force or the threat of military force. Peacemaking operations take place either before a peacekeeping operation or following one that failed.<sup>5</sup>

Counterinsurgency is defined broadly as a 'defensive' operation undertaken by a government in order to try and defeat an insurgency, through the use of military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and/or civic actions.<sup>6</sup> Aid-to-Civil power is a term more common in the British literature, and is used to describe a situation in which the challenge to a regime is not serious enough to be classified as an insurgency, but control by anti-terrorist operations alone is not possible. Thus the armed forces are required to assist the police in facing the challenge. In this kind of operation, civil power has primacy, and operations are conducted under the auspices of domestic law. Foreign Internal Defense (FID) is a term used primarily in the US military establishment to describe military assistance programs aiming to strengthen friendly countries' defense capabilities, particularly during LIC.

Another defensive operation is combating terrorism, which seeks to protect installations, units, and individuals from the threat of terrorists. Peacekeeping operations are military operations designed to maintain a peace that has already been achieved through diplomatic efforts. A peacekeeping force supervises and implements a negotiated truce to which the combatant parties have agreed. Finally, Peacetime Contingency Operations (PCO) are defined as 'politically sensitive military activities normally characterized by short-term, rapid projections or deployment of forces in conditions short of war which complement political and informational initiative'.<sup>7</sup> PCOs encompass a variety of operation types, some of which may fall under the offensive or defensive heading:

- a) Shows of force and demonstrations;
- b) Noncombatant evacuation operations;
- c) Rescue and recovery operations;
- d) Strike raids;
- e) Unconventional warfare;
- f) Peacemaking operations;
- g) Security assistance surges.

In the Turkish/PKK case we can see both offensive and defensive LIC forms. In the early years of the conflict, from roughly 1979 to 1986, we see growing rural terrorism and guerrilla activities, and consequent counter-terrorism policy on the part of the state. Following the 1985 lifting of martial law in the southeastern region of Turkey, the army moved into a support role that could fall under the category of 'aid to civil power'. By 1992–93, the conflict could be characterized as an insurgency, with the corresponding counterinsurgency and counterterrorist efforts on the part of the state.

Several common aspects exist in all LIC situations. First, armies have difficulties fighting a LIC. Armies are trained to fight armies, and are not usually well prepared in terms of force structure, weapons, equipment, or strategy, to wage this type of conflict. Fighting LICs requires special forces, or training in the techniques of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism. Second, the political aspect of LICs is crucial. In a conventional war all the elements of national power are present to support the military, whereas in a LIC the military is only one of the elements in the political, economic, cultural and social campaign. In other words, in a LIC the ultimate aim is political rather than military in nature. The political level sets political targets, which are realized with military support. Thus a LIC requires the determination, dedication, and political acumen of both the politicians and military leaders. Finally, LICs are not short-term struggles, rather they are conflicts of attrition. Quick victories are virtually impossible, and commitment to a protracted effort is required. Meeting this requirement is often a greater challenge for a democratic state than for the irregular combatant, for example, a terrorist organization, since over time it becomes more difficult for the former to relocate resources for the struggle and to persuade public opinion to sustain casualties.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Two of the challenges identified in the struggle against the PKK require background discussion: coordination between the political and military levels, and the PKK's international support. It is important to note that civil-military relations in Turkey do have a fairly unique character. Full subordination of the soldiers to the politicians has never occurred, and the military realm has not only remained relatively autonomous from the political one, but has also appeared quite determined, in periods of military interventions, to try and counterbalance any civilian attempts at expanding their own sphere of influence. The primary reasoning and justification behind the military's resilient autonomy seems to be based on a widespread understanding that there are so many internal cleavages and external security challenges facing Turkey that an ultimate guardian is needed to prevent the final collapse of the country. The 'incompetent' and 'fragmented' political figures and parties are seen as unable to fulfill this role, due to their seemingly shortsighted seeking of political interests.

This understanding and possibly its manipulation has led not only to a bifurcated state system in which the military enjoys a certain institutional autonomy, but also to a *de facto* situation in which the military is automatically given full responsibility to deal with issues categorized under the rubric of national security. Although this was certainly the case at the end of the actual combat period against the PKK, the outset of the clash presented a shift in the usual structure of Turkish civil-military relations, due both to democratic expansion and to the unusual civilian leadership of Turgut Özal, Turkish prime minister and later president. Özal generally resisted leaving the PKK issue solely to the military, allowing for a clash between civilian political response and the security approach of the military. After Özal's death in 1993, the pattern returned to a more traditional one of full military control over the situation with complete budgetary backing of the politicians. Interestingly, the delay in taking command in the early years of the insurgency gave the military time to learn about the PKK, the type of combat that was to be involved, and to prepare a suitable response. One could even argue that in the early years the army was unwilling to accept immediate full responsibility for managing the PKK situation.

The second challenge requiring some background discussion is the international support for the PKK, which has taken on two main forms: state-sponsored support and transnational support through non-governmental organizations (NGOs). State-sponsored support has generally been embedded in geopolitical concerns. NGO efforts, on the other hand, have largely been linked to the increasing awareness in Europe and the United States of human rights and democratization, and have often been the result of the politically active Kurdish diaspora in Europe.

The transnational nature of the Kurdish issue—the dispersion of the Kurdish population in the Middle East, divided among neighboring countries—has turned the issue into a factor for conflict as well as for cooperation. At times, states which share this 'problem' have felt the need to cooperate to counter the unwelcome possibility of an independent Kurdish state. For example, during the period of uncertainty after the Gulf War of 1991, several trilateral meetings took place between Iran, Turkey and Syria, emphasizing a regional commitment to maintaining Iraq's territorial integrity.<sup>8</sup>

However, the cooperative mode has been overshadowed by a conflict: Iraq, Iran and Syria have rarely refrained from playing the 'Kurdish card' against each other and, in particular, against Turkey. These three countries have benefited from having much smaller Kurdish populations than Turkey, and also from being able to adopt very harsh military measures against any domestic Kurdish insurgency.

The three have also not been blind to the obvious rise in Turkish power on three fronts: economic, with the creation of the Southeastern Anatolian Project (GAP); strategic, *vis-à-vis* Central Asia and the Caucasus after the Soviet collapse; and military, as a US ally and via Turkish-Israeli cooperation. Finding it difficult to balance the growing might of the rising regional power, Turkey, the three neighbors have often felt the need to play the Kurdish hand. Similarly, Turkey's location at the meeting point of Eurasia, the Middle East and Europe, has often bred additional friction, leading to further international support for the PKK from Greece and Russia.

Turkish attempts to counter Kurdish political efforts abroad were rarely successful, thereby creating extra pressure for the Turkish government and its security forces. Most of these political efforts stem from Europe, while pro-PKK elements in the United States generally failed to rally public support to a degree that they could influence US policy making.<sup>9</sup>

European growing awareness of the Kurdish issue and, eventually, sympathy for the PKK peaked in the late 1980s, with the release of pictures of the 1988 chemical attacks on a Kurdish town in Northern Iraq. Support deteriorated around 1994, primarily due to a series of violent and illegal demonstrations staged by the PKK in Germany. Despite the new image of the Kurd as a violent figure rather than a victim, it was too late for the Europeans to drop the Kurdish issue because it had by then become a European problem.<sup>10</sup>

For Turkish state officials, the Europeanization of the Kurdish issue created greater pressures. First, many politicians clearly did not want Turkey to have a bad relationship with Europe, since it was trying to become a member of the European Union. Europe also represented Turkey's single largest trading partner, and was home to 3 million Turkish citizens. The Turkish armed forces also felt pressure from Europe, as they were forbidden from using European-acquired weapons in their combat with the PKK. While the military conflict ended, the PKK's European network remained intact, and still constitutes a key player in the future development of the Kurdish issue.

### THE PKK'S EARLY YEARS

The PKK was established in Ankara in 1974 by a group of communist students of Kurdish descent. Their leader, Abdullah Öcalan, the son of a peasant family from the southeastern city of Anırfa, was at the time a student of political science at the University of Ankara.

Initially, the PKK was a small, insignificant terrorist organization and did not play an important role in the Turkish radical left political scene. The PKK members were called *Apocular*, or the followers of 'Apo'—a nickname for Abdullah Öcalan. The Apocu movement was not the only Kurdish political activity in Turkey in the 1970s, but it managed to distinguish itself as the most violent one. While other communist Kurdish organizations were targeting the Turkish state, the Apocu movement initially opted to

attack and destroy its own political rivals.<sup>11</sup> By the late 1970s, the PKK began also attacking the members of the traditional political elite of southeastern Turkey, of Kurdish origin, who were loyal to the Turkish state and therefore seen as agents of 'imperialism and internal colonialism'.<sup>12</sup> The attacks on the members of the most powerful groups in the region aimed to impress the local people with their fearlessness. Moreover, by gradually fomenting strife between various Kurdish tribes, they were able to gain supporters (by supporting one side or another in these intertribal clashes), and in general to terrify the rest.

According to Turkish police records, by 1980 the PKK had killed a large number of people, approximately 350. In that relatively short time, the PKK was able to become one of the most important Kurdish organizations. It had created dedicated militant cadres and had gained supporters in southeastern Turkey. As a result of its attacks against the tribes, the socio-political strength and legitimacy of the tribal system had begun to erode. For a short time, the PKK was also able to control some local administrative bodies. Most importantly, the PKK had demonstrated that it was able to challenge state authority.

## THE CHALLENGES

### *Turkish Miscalculations: Late 1970s-1985*

In terms of the first of the challenges, correctly diagnosing the significance of the threat, by the start of the 1980s, the Turkish state had largely failed. By not targeting Turkish interests in the early years, the PKK was able to accomplish their goals without receiving significant scrutiny by the Turkish security establishment. Öcalan has described the 1973–78 period of the PKK as a time for ideological education and the creation of an avantgarde leadership; the 1978–80 period as one for testing the political line of the party; and the 1980–84 period as a time for retreat and preparation for the struggle to come. By hiding from the government in the early years, the PKK was able to accomplish these goals without interference from the Turkish state. Thus, although the Turkish intelligence services were certainly aware of the PKK's presence at the time in the southeast region, they were tactically taken by surprise when the direct attacks finally came in 1984.<sup>13</sup> The failure of diagnosis continued around 1985, when the PKK's unsuccessful performance led the Turkish army into an unwarranted state of confidence that they were winning the struggle.

At the PKK's second party congress, held in Syria in August 1982, the party officially decided to begin an insurrection in Turkey. Öcalan felt that the necessary conditions for guerrilla warfare were all in evidence: a vast land/fighting space, a rural underdeveloped population, and inadequate state communications and transportation. The duration of the struggle was projected by Öcalan to last well after the year 2000, by which time the PKK was expected to have become strong enough to establish a conventional army to destroy the Turkish army in southeastern Turkey.<sup>14</sup>

At that time, the loss of Baghdad's control over Northern Iraq due to the Iran–Iraq war (1980–88) not only provided an area for retreat for the PKK, but also the overall strategic conflicts between the regional countries and Turkey gave the PKK leadership an

additional card to use in its struggle. Öcalan knew that he could benefit from exploiting regional animosities and by playing the regional states against each other. These included not just Iraq, Iran, and Syria—all of whom had strategic problems with Turkey—but also Greece and Southern Cyprus, and the Soviet Union, which throughout the Cold War supported subversive movements in NATO countries. Between 1979 and 1982 in particular, the PKK benefited tremendously from its contacts with Syrian intelligence, which was supported and infiltrated by the Soviets. In Northern Iraq, the PKK was able to work in harmony in this period with the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), while Syria and Lebanon offered training grounds for PKK militants. For its part, Ankara sought to address the international factor in part by signing a treaty with Baghdad, granting Turkey the right to enter ten kilometers within Iraqi territory and to perform operations there. Many politicians and military planners failed, however, to grasp the importance of a guerrilla group's rear bases in a low intensity conflict, and thus, in the years 1983–88, Ankara did not make adequate use of its right to cross-border operations. When such operations took place, the goal was not to crush the rear bases of the PKK, but simply to appease Turkish public opinion.

By spring 1986, two additional international factors helped the PKK to infiltrate Turkey further. The first was the Turkish–Greek dispute in the Aegean, following which two elite commando brigades of the Turkish Armed Forces, the most effective military units against the PKK's infiltration from Iraq and Iran, were dispatched to the Aegean.<sup>15</sup> Second, the Turkish security forces wrongly assumed that the PKK militants would continue to use only the Iraqi border to penetrate into Turkey, and did not attach enough importance to setting up security along the Iranian border. In return for Iranian support, the PKK shared intelligence it gathered on Turkey with Tehran, and avoided establishing contacts with (and thereby breeding revolutionary movements among) the Iranian Kurdish population. Iran also made sure to stipulate that the PKK carry out its attacks at least 50 kilometers away from the Iranian border, and thereby limited Ankara's ability to directly accuse its neighbor of aiding the PKK.

At that time, the PKK was able to take advantage of its own small size to outwit the comparably massive and powerful Turkish military and state intelligence structure. By observing total secrecy in all of their organizational activity, by being highly mobile and restricting themselves to action primarily at night, the approximately 200 PKK militants of the early 1980s were able to avoid being located.<sup>16</sup> The first direct attacks on Erzurum and Emdinli in 1984 surprised the Turkish army, which transferred elite commando units into the region, but these too found it impossible to locate any PKK members.

Although the operations of the early 1980s were often successful (probably due to an unbroken chain of command achieved thanks to the fact that the region was under martial law), they also indicated many shortcomings of the armed forces. The number of security forces was not enough to control the region and protect each village. Intelligence gathering was inadequate. Communication facilities and the transportation system were inefficient, and did not allow Turkish security forces to arrive at remote villages and protect residents from PKK attacks or harassment. Adequate equipment was lacking. While conventional sweeps with helicopters were made after each PKK attack, these were mostly ineffective. For example, technical limitations of the Turkish helicopters made it impossible to carry out such sweeps at night. Most importantly perhaps, the armed forces



were not yet prepared at the doctrinal level to think of their task in terms of low intensity conflict, and thus their strategies were not suitable for fighting a modern guerrilla war. While they recruited anti-guerrilla teams from the police, and set up new anti-PKK training for the gendarmerie and army, these measures were all taken without a sustainable and comprehensive strategy. Instead, the army sought to address the obvious shortcomings by reactivating the Temporary Village Guard system (TVG) of the 1920s and 1930s, which had then been initiated to give peasants the opportunity to protect themselves against gangs. Nevertheless, the village guards in the 1980s were ill-armed, ill-trained and, subsequently, easy prey for the PKK.<sup>17</sup>

While the army failed to formulate a grand strategy, the gaps between the security establishment and the politicians, in understanding the situation, widened. When the first attacks were made by the PKK, the politicians of the Turkish government generally underestimated their significance, and labeled the PKK as a 'handful of bandits'. This minimalist approach slowed down the Turkish security forces' preparation for the task at hand.<sup>18</sup>

The PKK was somewhat less successful in the early years in the fourth challenge area—winning popular support. While PKK militants scanned the southeast to recruit local supporters and to find suitable places for guerrilla bases, they were largely met with resistance. Öcalan also admitted this failure on various occasions. Whilst the Turkish Kurds did not support the PKK for the most part, the local people also did not show any strong resistance, as long as the PKK did not cause any direct trouble.<sup>19</sup> Following the PKK's attacks on Eruh and emdinli and the security forces' response, however, the attitude of the local people toward the PKK changed radically. Though previously ignored or regarded as common outlaws, PKK militants were now seen as playing with fire by attacking the state's authority, and thus their presence became more threatening to the common people. Ankara's harsh response increased this perception, eliciting popular opposition to the PKK. In some cases they gave information about PKK militants' whereabouts to the Turkish security forces, in other cases they themselves arrested or even killed PKK members.<sup>20</sup> The establishment of the rather ineffective Village Guard system nevertheless became a symbol for the PKK, who saw the guards as a sign of the people's readiness to support Ankara. When the PKK launched their 'spring offensive' in March 1985, all three operations were unsuccessful, in part because of the organization's inexperience, but also due to the lack of popular support.

### *1985–90: A Strengthened PKK*

Recognizing the importance of gathering popular support, the PKK established in March 1985 a political arm (the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan, or ERNK) to manage mass activities,<sup>21</sup> press meetings, intelligence collection, party security activities, and financial and fundraising assets.<sup>22</sup> By 1986, the struggle for societal support was officially on. The PKK leadership decided to begin attacks on those villages that were loyal to the Turkish state, in an effort to 'isolate the enemy from the people'.<sup>23</sup> The logic of killing the peasants is depicted by strategy master Sun Tzu, as 'kill one, frighten tens of thousands'.<sup>24</sup> Öcalan argued that by attacking 'soft targets' like peasants, village leaders, and teachers, he could show the people that the Turkish state was not able to protect its own citizens or

supporters. Moreover, by frightening the people, the PKK aimed to cut the flow of information to the Turkish security forces. The PKK also initiated abduction of young people forcing them to join the PKK: the so-called 'recruitment law'. The PKK leadership felt that this would serve the immediate purpose of enlarging the ranks of members, and would also ultimately increase public support by making the people accomplices to the PKK's actions.<sup>25</sup> Although the families of the kidnapped recruits were initially angered, they would eventually provide food, shelter, and clothing to the militants. When their sons were killed by the Turkish security forces, the families and often entire tribes would become PKK supporters.<sup>26</sup> By 1988 the PKK had succeeded in increasing its numbers significantly, though far from its expectations. As Öcalan would later complain, 'we look at the practices in many countries and see that the guerrilla began with 300 people and the number rose to 10,000 in two years. We too began with 300 people but we are now only 500 strong.'<sup>27</sup>

On the other side, Ankara continued to fail to realize that low intensity conflicts are to a large extent propaganda wars, and that a significant portion of the battle is over the hearts and minds of the people. Moreover, it did not even recognize its own advantage in this arena. It neglected to explain and justify its own position both domestically and abroad, and later would discover that this would prove a very costly mistake. Moreover, Ankara made the crucial mistake of repeatedly declaring that the PKK was destroyed. Each time the PKK then staged a spectacular counterattack on civilian targets, the government forces would lose credibility while the PKK would gain prestige by demonstrating its resistance to the powerful Turkish army.

As the second half of the 1980s progressed, Ankara continued to have problems due to the conflicting perspectives of the security establishment and the politicians to the problem. In 1987, as a result of gradual democratization, the Turkish parliament ended the martial law, which had been declared over the southeast in 1978, and instead declared a state of emergency in ten southeastern provinces. The army units that had been in actual combat with the PKK during the time of martial law were pulled out of combat, and replaced with new gendarmerie units who were lacking combat experience. During the transition between martial law and the state of emergency, the security forces experienced many setbacks. One reason was that as the PKK began to attack more frequently, the military targets were put under psychological pressure. The main aim of the commanders at this point became a defensive one of trying to stop and, primarily, avoid the attacks. The extra security measures included closing down some gendarmerie stations, halting night-time operations, and leaving smaller villages virtually on their own—at the mercy of the PKK. Another reason was that the hierarchy under the 'state of emergency' was complicated, with bureaucratic requirements that further hampered the Turkish military's ability to react promptly. Perhaps most importantly, the establishment of the state of emergency revealed the politicians' misunderstanding of the nature of the conflict. By openly limiting the use of its military against the PKK, Ankara did not heed the argument that a military campaign is doomed to failure when 'the anti-guerrilla side puts a low value on defeating the guerrillas and does not commit its full resources to the struggle'.<sup>28</sup>

By 1988, in the wake of the Iran—Iraq War, the Iraqi army was pushing north to occupy the territory along the Turkish—Iraqi border, forcing tens of thousands of

refugees, including many Iraqi-Kurdish militants, to flee from the area. Baghdad sought permission from Turkey to pursue these Kurdish militants onto Turkish territory, but Ankara refused permission, and instead gave protection to the Kurdish refugees.<sup>29</sup> Unspoken Turkish concerns that Baghdad would cross into Turkey in pursuit of KDP fighters prevented Ankara from renewing their own 'hot pursuit' agreement with Baghdad. Officially, the reason given for this decision was that Iraq had now reestablished control over Northern Iraq and that Turkey had no need to stage cross-border operations.<sup>30</sup> The result of this decision was that the territory along the Turkish—Iraqi border became a PKK sanctuary, supported by the Iraqi forces. After a long period of cooperation with Turkey, Baghdad switched to support the PKK.<sup>31</sup>

The PKK's objectives in 1988 were to supplement the guerrilla war by moving gradually into mobile war. The goals of this stage were defined as annihilating enemy manpower and conquering land. The main type of tactical operations were ambushes on security patrols, raids on gendarmerie guardhouses, sabotage against factories and transportation facilities, assassination of civil and military people, destroying schools, and killing teachers.<sup>32</sup>

The PKK also began to question its policy of village massacres, as they seemed to backfire in the quest to gain public support. While sharply reducing the number of the village raids and killings, Öcalan also sought to clear the PKK of some responsibility for the attacks, by attempting to shift the blame to local groups.<sup>33</sup> By 1989 the PKK had succeeded in gaining greater support of some of the Kurdish population.<sup>34</sup> By 1990 Öcalan ordered not only the complete cessation of all village massacres,<sup>35</sup> but also offered a general amnesty to village guard members who were ready to give up their arms and cooperate with the PKK.<sup>36</sup> These efforts had considerable effect, as witnessed by the beginning of demonstrations against security forces,<sup>37</sup> which the PKK referred to as 'Serdilhan', or the Kurdish *intifada*.

The causes of this shift in local public opinion were not only due to the PKK's own policies. Turkish security forces engaging in the pursuit of PKK members were understandably suspicious of the villagers in areas known to be supportive of the PKK, therefore villagers were often given rough treatment as if they were all PKK supporters. This behavior caused alienation between the people and the security forces, and growing numbers of young people turned to the PKK. The volunteer recruits' motives varied: some joined in order to enhance their personal fortunes, others were Kurdish nationalists.<sup>38</sup>

### *1991–92: A Gradual Turn of the Tide*

The end of the 1991 Gulf War gave yet another boost to the PKK, as they were able to capture new areas and stocks of weapons in Northern Iraq. Moreover, while the Iraqi intelligence service benefited from the information it received from the PKK, the latter was supplied with weaponry, including rockets and mortars, from Baghdad.<sup>39</sup> The PKK also received a new form of assistance from their Syrian backers, when the Syrian government began encouraging their own Kurdish citizens to join the military wing of the PKK. As an enticement to join the PKK, Syrian Kurds were exempt from military service in the Syrian army. As a result of this policy, the percentage of Syrian Kurds in the PKK ranks rose to 30 percent in the early 1990s.<sup>40</sup> In general, the PKK ranks were swelling at

a rapid pace, and by the spring of 1991, the number of armed militants was estimated at nearly 12,000.

In 1991, the Turkish armed forces seemed very rigid, in many ways, in terms of their continued use of conventional warfare tactics and slow adaptation to LIC. In what was still a primarily defensive attitude, the Turkish military expended most of its energies on protecting its poorly armed gendarmerie units.<sup>41</sup> This included planting defensive minefields around the guardhouses, and supporting each guardhouse with a tank and artillery team. Despite initial resistance by the Turkish General Staff,<sup>42</sup> heavy artillery units were finally added in order to bombard attacking PKK units while reserve troops were sent out to surround them.

In the spring of 1991, however, the General Staff announced that the army would be adopting a battlefield domination concept in their fight against the PKK. In other words, the armed forces would be taking a more decisive involvement in the fight, using its numerical superiority to try to reestablish control of the field. Accordingly, some army units were reorganized and trained for counterinsurgency, and labeled as 'internal security battalions'.<sup>43</sup> These battalions were mobile groups, whose main task was to block and annihilate any PKK units that penetrated into their patrol areas. The true impact of these special battalions would not be observed, however, until two years later, in the spring of 1993.

Another military change in 1991 was the resumption of cross-border operations into Northern Iraq. Ankara was determined to put an end to the sanctuary that the PKK had enjoyed in Northern Iraq since 1988. In the fall of 1991 it began a series of raids against PKK strongholds there. A five-kilometer-wide security zone was set up along the Turkish—Iraqi border, and was to be jointly patrolled by Barzani's KDP and Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) forces, both of whom wanted to reduce the PKK political influence. In addition, Ankara began to create an intelligence network in Northern Iraq. Various units of the Turkish security and intelligence forces settled in the Northern Iraqi cities of Dokuk, Zakho, Arbil, and Salah-al-Din.

The Turkish escalation began causing some complications for the PKK. On the organizational side, the PKK was faced with a lack of proper commanders for its growing battalions. While it was a relatively easy task to lead groups of five or a dozen men, it was a much more complex job to lead units of hundreds. Moreover, the PKK engaged in open combat a fully fledged army that could put together joint operations and air force without themselves having air or artillery support. The growth of the PKK units also meant that secrecy could no longer be maintained. The movements of large groups could be detected in advance, and they were made vulnerable to air raids by the Turkish airforce or to attack helicopters. Increased wireless communication between the various PKK units also made them vulnerable to signal intelligence.

Despite these problems, the PKK's relentless attacks along the border often resulted in heavy Turkish losses. The security forces' still primarily defensive posture allowed the PKK units to operate freely in the region, including blocking traffic between the cities in the southeast. In Ankara, the politicians had grown pessimistic about the state's chances to win against the insurgents, and looked for ways of establishing contacts with the PKK.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, the Turkish security bureaucracy and the armed forces were still resisting any form of compromise with the PKK. The traditional characteristics of Turkish

public opinion—patriotic and statist—tipped the balance firmly in favor of the security forces. While public support among the local populations of the southeast played a crucial role in the actual battle between the PKK and the security forces, the winning of Turkish societal support as a whole was crucial in the struggle between the security establishment and the politicians in terms of the large-scale management of the entire issue.

On the frontlines, the Turkish armed forces were gradually taking a more aggressive stance. 1992 saw even larger cross-border operations into Iraq. Nevertheless, the PKK was still dominant in large areas of the southeastern countryside. Then Öcalan felt that it was possible to mobilize the people of the region against the Turkish state and lead them into a full-scale war. He was confident about the extent of public support for the PKK, and envisioned the combination of the PKK's continuous attacks with mass demonstrations and riots in order to secure concessions from Ankara. The PKK applied this combination in several small southeastern cities in March 1992 in an attempt to take the cities under PKK control. After a few days of heavy clashes in four cities, the security forces succeeded in maintaining control, gaining a powerful psychological boost. Increasingly offensive, the Turkish security forces immediately launched ground and aerial 'mopping-up' operations in areas under PKK control, and successive military operations along the border.

By the fall of 1992, Öcalan was aware of the sensitive psychological balance that had been reached in the war, and sought to break Ankara's will to fight by shocking the Turkish political system with the full occupation of a small city or town. Yet, Turkish security forces did not provide the PKK with any more opportunities to attack the towns again, restricting the PKK to continuing attacks on gendarmerie guardhouses. A major attack by 500 PKK militants on guardhouses in the emdinli–Derecik region was launched to raise spirits on the PKK side, but the Turks' use of Super Cobra helicopters allowed them to parry the attack,<sup>45</sup> and to kill 174 PKK fighters.<sup>46</sup> The PKK suffered heavier losses in subsequent attacks. Ultimately, the increasingly intensive usage of helicopters proved to be a major factor in the PKK's military defeat.<sup>47</sup> With ever growing confidence and resolve, the Turkish army launched its largest cross-border operation into Northern Iraq on October 12, 1992. 15,000 soldiers, supported by tanks, helicopters, and air force, took part in the fierce clashes along the border. Rather than retreat from the border region and harass the Turkish troops by raids, ambushes or sabotage, the PKK units fought a conventional-style war with the Turkish army, and in turn suffered heavy losses.<sup>48</sup> These losses have been attributed to the Turks' use of tanks and also to better Turkish intelligence, which allowed precise air bombings. The PKK also lost much of its infrastructure in Northern Iraq as a result of this operation. Supply and ammunition depots were destroyed, tons of food caches were captured, and perhaps most importantly, their already shaken state of mind was dealt a heavy blow.

The Turkish decision-makers finally did recognize the importance of having public opinion on their side, and so they recruited the mainstream media for help. The media began to voice their support for the new war policy. In addition, pro-PKK publications were banned. Stronger and more effective measures were taken to cut off the PKK's main source of revenue—drug smuggling. And, at the request of the government, the Turkish armed forces for the first time became engaged in the struggle at their full capacity.

In response to Ankara's total war policy, the PKK resumed its attacks on soft targets, killing teachers, state officials, and those Kurds who were openly loyal to the Turkish

state. It also increased its attacks on construction machinery, communication systems, irrigation systems, and power plants, systematically working to regain control along the Turkish—Iraqi border. While some 2,000 PKK militants were able to settle back along the border, their attacks on the gendarmerie stations became less effective. Having lost the ability to launch large-scale attacks with 300–500 men, the PKK returned to small unit tactics. By this time the PKK's military units also received substantial support from the political and armed activities of the ERNK.<sup>49</sup> Under its new initiative and mandate, the Turkish security forces began operations in the city centers to crush the ERNK network. Large numbers of activists were arrested, and those who resisted were killed. ERNK's ability to organize the people dropped sharply.

### *1993–95: Turkey Gains the Upper Hand*

Due in part to a temporary warming in Turkish relations with Syria and Iran at the end of the Gulf War,<sup>50</sup> the PKK declared a cease-fire from mid-March to mid-April 1993. While Ankara did not officially recognize it, the Turkish government did order the armed forces to limit their military operations. Meanwhile, the government continued to think in terms of political reforms. One month later, however, a group of PKK members killed 33 unarmed Turkish soldiers near the city of Bingöl. The assault elicited a strong reaction in public opinion and in the government, reducing support for reforms. As result, the government opted instead for total war against terrorism.

As a part of the 'total war concept', the Turkish army officially changed its threat perception in August 1993. Where formerly the number one threat to Turkish security had been Greece, it officially became the internal one posed by the PKK.<sup>51</sup> Accordingly, the forces of Turkey's second army division, based in Malatya, were reinforced. New special troops were established, and the structure of the Turkish army changed from division-based to a corps-brigade-battalion structure for rapid response.<sup>52</sup> Aerial reconnaissance was stressed, and the army developed a two-step strategy to hinder the PKK's night operations. Better optical devices were distributed to the security units, and equipment was purchased to enable wintertime operations. A new program, the 'sergeant with tenure' initiative, increased the ratio of experienced personnel among the security force ranks, and were very important in achieving the military's goals in the 1990s. In terms of strategy, the armed forces began adapting anti-guerrilla tactics. Security forces laid ambushes, patrolled the mountains and, in a sense, lived and fought like the PKK members themselves. They also began to pursue relentlessly the PKK fighters after each attack.

In addition to shifts in the threat perception, equipment and tactics, the armed forces' overall strategy of 'battlefield domination' began to be applied more effectively. Gradually it became almost impossible for PKK militants to move without being detected. Extensive sweep operations were initiated, keeping the PKK fighters in a permanent state of run and hide, leading to psychological and physical exhaustion. Pinpoint operations against PKK strongholds were also implemented, and with the help of electronic devices, the army regained control over the border region and could prevent the PKK militants from penetrating Turkey.<sup>53</sup>

In early 1995, Turkish troops continued their aggressive stance and entered Northern Iraq with 35,000 soldiers, making it the largest of the cross-border operations. While the PKK drew on the lessons from 1992 and avoided fighting conventional battles, the Turkish army nevertheless succeeded in occupying the entire border region and destroying the PKK's camps before retreating. Due to Western pressures, however, Ankara was forced to abandon a plan to keep some of its troops in Northern Iraq.<sup>54</sup>

In light of the new Turkish strategy, Öcalan was forced to review his own strategy. As a good student of guerrilla warfare, he understood that 'if the weaker side is unable to develop regular forces and if the enemy is relentless in its pursuit of the conflict, the weaker side will eventually be overwhelmed'.<sup>55</sup> In order to prolong the war, therefore, the PKK leadership widened the battle zone, and also began a strategy of hit and run, while giving priority to political activities.

In addition to the military and diplomatic struggles, both sides in the PKK/Turkish conflict continued to fight for public support in the region as well. Turkish tactical intelligence advanced during this period due in part to improving relations with the local people, who were weary of the clashes in the region. Support for the PKK had also declined locally because the group was unable to protect its supporters. Ankara was now fully aware that popular support was crucial to win this kind of war, and was determined to make the gaining and retention of local public support one of the most important components of the new anti-guerrilla strategy. Aware that the PKK relied on the villages for recruits, food, and intelligence, the Turkish security forces began, on the one hand, to evacuate villages that were either supporters of, or threatened by, the PKK.<sup>56</sup> Curfews were placed on other villages, and still others were put under permanent observation. Food supplies to the PKK were cut. On the other hand, those villagers who were loyal to Ankara were encouraged to join the Village Guards, the ranks of which had grown to nearly 80,000 by the second half of the 1990s. At the same time, security forces began distributing medical supplies to local peasants and, working with civil administrations, sought to solve local grievances. Amnesty was offered to those who deserted the PKK, and many of them then joined the security forces, bringing with them extremely valuable information about the PKK network. By the mid-1990s, mass riots against the security forces had ceased, and the security forces were able to regain full control of the cities and towns.

### *1996–98: Winning the Military Conflict*

By March 1994, the shift of defensive/offensive postures between the two warring parties was complete. The PKK's third Congress stated that it was time to 'stage all-out war in response to the enemy's all-out war of destruction'.<sup>57</sup> Öcalan spoke of the inevitability that the struggle would now be escalated, and claimed that the 'entire country' would become a battlefield. He directed members of the ERNK to organize attacks against targets in the cities. He sought to halt the distribution of Turkish media in the southeast, to stop the activities of political parties, and to attack various soft targets such as teachers.<sup>58</sup> While the PKK continued to lose the war in the countryside, it sought to shift its power to the cities. With armed militants beginning propaganda campaigns in the central Anatolian and Black Sea regions of Turkey, a Kurdish Parliament in Exile was set

up in Europe in early 1995. The former move was aimed at diverting Turkish security forces from the southeast, thereby relieving some of the pressure on the PKK militants. The latter move caused many diplomatic troubles for Ankara in the second half of the 1990s.

1995 was the last year of intensive clashes between the security forces and the PKK. In 1996, with recruits down to a minimum, the PKK turned to suicide terrorism.<sup>59</sup> Due to increased security measures, their efforts in this arena were largely unsuccessful, as were their attacks on tourism centers. At the same time, Turkish security forces continued with successful raids on PKK strongholds along the Iraqi border, thereby denying the PKK the chance to reorganize or to regain any initiative. The last attack of the PKK was launched from Northern Iraq on December 29, 1996. Turkey responded by sending a brigade-size force into Northern Iraq. A couple of months later, the Turkish army succeeded in taking complete control of Northern Iraq. By the fall of 1997, Turkish troops withdrew, leaving behind 1,000 soldiers to protect a security zone. This expansion of control into the heartland of the insurgents was the ultimate indication of the shift towards an offensive posturing of the Turkish army.

Although the PKK continued its efforts to enlarge the area of engagement as much as possible by the summer of 1998, security forces had succeeded in wiping out all PKK ranks from the Black Sea area, and reducing to just a handful those in Central Anatolia. The Turkish security forces captured the PKK's second-in-command, emdin Sakik in April 1998, and Öcalan himself a year later, destroying even the top echelons of the PKK hierarchy. By mid-1998, Öcalan admitted military defeat.<sup>60</sup>

A positive development at international level was the official announcement in early 1996 of a Turkish-Israeli strategic partnership.<sup>61</sup> Although the two countries had cooperated ever since the 1950s, military intelligence relations intensified immediately after the official announcement. Although there is no clear evidence that the Israeli intelligence services helped Turkish intelligence in combating the PKK, the alliance at least put Damascus under pressure and made it more cooperative.

As the military conflict with the PKK drew to a close, the Turkish military decided it was time to try and cut off the PKK's foreign support once and for all. In July 1998, the commander of the Turkish land forces criticized Syria severely and demanded that Damascus stop its support for the PKK.<sup>62</sup> As the Turkish-Syrian crisis mounted, Turkey dispatched large military contingents to the Turkish—Syrian border to back up its harsh rhetoric. The Syrian leadership was finally forced to end its support for the PKK. The Syrian government forced Öcalan to leave Syria, and later signed an agreement in which it admitted its role in PKK terror, and declared itself ready to end support for the organization.<sup>63</sup> After a brief stay in Moscow, Öcalan was forced to leave there as well, finally seeking refuge in Nairobi, where he was ultimately captured by Turkish special agents. The PKK leader was returned to Turkey, where he was tried and sentenced to death, a decision which, due to recent parliamentary changes has been commuted to life imprisonment. Meanwhile, virtually all remaining armed PKK units have fled Turkish territory for Iran and Iraq. The Turkish military achieved victory in this low intensity conflict.



## CONCLUSION

This account has shown several factors, which can explain the shifts in positions and in combating strategies over the course of this LIC. It seems, however, that the primary turning point came in 1992 when the Turkish state finally identified the PKK challenge as the number one threat not only to the territorial integrity of the country but also to Turkey's very existence as a nation state and republic. This declaration carried with it a determination to end such an attack on the Turkish nation state at all costs. This new formulation of the national security concept also meant that a total national mobilization for countering the PKK had to emerge. This mobilization was *de facto* led by the Turkish army, which at this point—conscious that it had both an open credit line and the full backing of the national will—increased its commitment to the counterinsurgency effort to the fullest.

It seems that such overarching energy and confidence at first affected the first adjustment of the army into the conditions of a LIC, making it possible for the security forces to gain the psychological upper hand. Even more importantly, it enabled the military to develop a shared understanding from the most senior general to the simplest foot soldier, that a transition from a defensive to an offensive role was truly taking place. This mobilization of spirit and adoption of an all-out war mentality, accompanied by increasingly visible military successes, had an automatic spillover effect on the other major factors, such as dealing with international support for the PKK. Only a general backed by such a full national commitment could have felt secure enough to threaten Syria to end its support for the PKK, and only such a national commitment could make the threats credible.

Such a high degree of national commitment in the army was in turn highly influential in galvanizing the national/military counterinsurgency potential, so much so that the transition from an aid-to-civil power stage to a more comprehensive counterinsurgency stage, was able to take place even without the adoption of new laws or regulations. Instead, the necessary legal and regulatory changes were in fact implemented after the carrying out of the relevant counterinsurgency moves. It can be argued that this fast-track process served a purpose of its own, in that the existing national will was not given the chance to wane over the course of lengthy procedures and debates about new laws.<sup>64</sup>

Is a military victory such as the Turkish a final solution to a low intensity conflict? Most likely not. It is virtually impossible to win a LIC without great national consensus about the political goal, something that has been absent in the Turkish case since the conflict began. This consensus included the Turkish political and military elite as well as public opinion about all the major characteristics of this problem, including ethno-sociological and political dimensions. Military operations constituted only one of the major elements—together with political and sociological responses.

It has become even more obvious in this case that it is impossible to defeat a LIC without developing political and psychological strategies to address the demands of insurgents and their internal and external supporters. In other words, military operations are not enough if you cannot win the fight in the minds of the insurgents or, more importantly, in the minds of the insurgents' supporters. In the Turkish case, despite the capturing of the PKK leader and a substantive military victory over its combatants, PKK elements continue to hold a significant amount of political initiative. All recent

developments in Turkish membership proceedings with the European Union have proved this: Turkey's abolishment of the death penalty, which saved the PKK leader from execution; and recognizing the Kurdish language and educational needs, for example. Ultimately what has been lacking in the Turkish case has been a carefully prepared comprehensive political plan for dealing with the Kurdish issue. In such a project, admittedly difficult to achieve, the military dimension would have constituted only a necessary stage to serve political goals. It now looks as though the Turkish military victory has ultimately not delivered much in terms of putting closure to the overall conflict. Rather, it may mean only a postponement of the problem, if not even an inevitable political defeat.

## NOTES

1. Vance C. Bateman, 'The Role of Tactical Air Power in Low Intensity Conflict', *Air Power Journal*, Vol. 5 (Spring 1991), p. 73. See also, J.A. Robbs, *Low Intensity Conflict: A War by Any Other Name* (Quantico, VA: Command and Staff College, Education Center, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 1988).
2. Charles W. Thayer, *Guerilla* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. xvi.
3. Steven Metz, 'Strategic Asymmetry', *Military Review*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (2001), p. 26.
4. It has been argued that the case of the Viet Cong cannot, for example, be considered a case of successful guerrilla warfare against the Americans. Success should be attributed, rather, to the North Vietnamese Army, which successfully fought a conventional warfare with the use of guerrilla tactics by some of its units among the Viet Cong. Richard D. Downie, *Learning from Conflict: The US Military in Vietnam, El Salvador, and the Drug War* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1998).
5. Robbs, *Low Intensity Conflict*, p. 72.
6. Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, March 23, 1994.
7. US Military Regulation FM 100-20/AFP 3-20.
8. For more details, see Kemal Kiriçi and Gareth Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-State Ethnic Conflict* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997), p. 167.
9. The leading Kurdish activist in Europe, Kendal Nezan, speaking at a conference in Washington, criticized the inability of Turkish Kurds in the US to plead their case more effectively. 'The Kurds: Search for Identity', American University, April 17-18, 2000.
10. This was vividly seen in the words of the German Foreign Minister Fischer, speaking in Ankara in 1999, who said that the Kurdish problem belonged to Germany as well.
11. Their attacks were mainly against the Revolutionary Unity of the People, Liberation of the People, Revolutionary Democratic Cultural Association, Tekosin, and the National Liberation of Kurdistan. By the late 1970s they also began attacking members of the Turkish right wing and state officials. Some radical leftist Turkish organizations also became targets of the PKK in the late 1970s. The PKK could arguably be considered the most aggressive organization on the Turkish political scene in the 1970s, with the main focus of its attacks being on the Kurdish organizations—feudal and otherwise.
12. David McDowall, *The Kurds: Minority Rights Group* (London: Public Interest Publishers, 1991), p. 2.

13. For a discussion of tactical surprise, see Michael Handel, 'Intelligence and the Problem of Strategic Surprise', in Douglas Dearth and Royal Goodden (eds.), *Strategic Intelligence: Theory and Application* (Washington DC: Defense Intelligence Agency, Joint Military Intelligence Training Center, 2nd edn. 1995), pp. 213–63.
14. 'Historical Background and Development', at: [www.access.ch/tuerkei/GRUPF/Studies/Studies1.htm](http://www.access.ch/tuerkei/GRUPF/Studies/Studies1.htm), Jan. 20, 2000.
15. Ali Nihat Özcan, 'Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri ve PKK', unpublished paper, Ankara, 2000.
16. This number doubled shortly after 1983 with the establishment of PKK camps in Northern Iraq, including the Lolan Camp on the Turkish-Iran-Iraq border.
17. Ay e Güne -Ayata and Sencer Ayata, 'Ethnicity and Security Problems in Turkey', in Lenore G. Martin (ed.), *New Frontiers in Middle East Security* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), p. 135.
18. Nur Bilge Criss, 'The Nature of PKK Terrorism in Turkey', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1995), p. 20.
19. Ümit Özda , *Kuzey Irak, Türkiye ve PKK: Bir Gayri Nizami Sava in Anatomisi* (Ankara: ASAM, 1994), p. 36.
20. Cemil Bayık, *Parti Tarihi* (Damascus: PKK's Publishing, 1994), p. 92.
21. The aim of the ERNK has largely been to organize mass support for the armed forces of the PKK. *Partimizin Kitlesel Karakteri ve Cephe*, PKK's secret document seized by Turkish security forces, 1988.
22. The PKK relied heavily on drug smuggling and trafficking for revenue. smet mset, *The PKK: A Report on Separatist Violence* (Ankara: Turkish Daily News, 1992), pp. 207–17. Also, in a report by the British National Service it is stated that the PKK's income in 1993 from drug smuggling was DM 56 million. See also the report, 'International Narcotic Control Strategy', US Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotic Matters, 1992. The PKK has also been found to have close links with the Medellin Cartel. Ali Köknar, 'The Turkish Connection, Combating NBC Materials and Narcotics Smuggling', *Journal of Counter Terrorism and International Security*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Summer 1997).
23. The concept was outlined theoretically in *Serxwebûn*, Feb. 1983, p. 14.
24. Richard Clutterbuck, *Terrorism and Guerilla Warfare* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 143.
25. Özda , *Kuzey Irak, Türkiye ve PKK*, p. 96.
26. Criss, 'The Nature of PKK Terrorism in Turkey', p. 20.
27. Abdullah Öcalan, *Parti Önderli inin Ocak çözümlemeleri* (Damascus: PKK's Publishing, 1989), p. 170.
28. Samuel Huntington, 'Guerrilla Warfare in Theory and Practice', in Franklin Mark Osanka (ed.), *Modern Guerrilla Warfare: Fighting Communist Guerrilla Movements, 1941–1961* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), p. xvi.
29. Baskın Oran, *'Kalkık Horoz', çekiç Güç ve Kürt Devleti* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayinlari, 1996), p. 38.
30. Various interpretations of these events can be found. According to one scholar, Ankara did ask Baghdad to renew the agreement, but Iraq refused. Süha Bêlûkba i, *Türkiye ve Yakınmdaki Ortado u* (Ankara: Di Politikası Enstitüsü Yayınlaroi, 1994), p. 92.
31. Phoebe Marr, 'Turkey and Iraq', in Henri J. Barkey (ed.), *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), p. 45.
32. Between 1987–88 the PKK destroyed some 137 schools, which they considered as instruments of Ankara's assimilationist policy. Chris Kutschera, 'Mad Dreams of Independence: The Kurds of Turkey and the PKK', *Middle East Report* (July–Aug. 1994), p. 6.
33. *Yolda Abdullah Öcalan'in Yorumları* (Damascus: PKK's Publishing, 1996).

34. In March 1989 the PKK had supporters in local politics. It supported 18 mayoral candidates in Mardin, ten in Siirt, three in Hakkari, and ten in Tunceli. John Rees, 'Third World Communists May Yet Rule', *Orbis*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Fall 1992), p. 10.
35. According to at least one critic of the PKK, the group did not actually halt all killings of peasants at this time. As late as July 1991, nine civilians were murdered by the PKK in the village of Harmancik. Facts on File, *World News Digest*, July 18, 1991.
36. Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1997), p. 49.
37. Sami Kohen, 'Separatist Rebels Step up War of Liberation Against Turks', *Middle East Times*, March 27, 1990.
38. Martin van Bruinessen's assessment of the PKK's rise in the 1980s is an objective one. He maintains that throughout the 1980–85 period the PKK grew 'not least because it was treated as the most dangerous enemy of public order and because the pro-government popular press gave it much coverage. Civilian and military authorities during this period repeatedly stressed that the state was strong rather than, for instance, the just and benevolent protector of its citizens. By placing so much emphasis on strength, they implicitly announced the PKK, with its cult of violence and proven ability to survive all final blows that the army delivered, was the only serious alternative.' 'Shifting National and Ethnic Identities: The Kurds in Turkey and the European Diaspora', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (April 1998), p. 46.
39. *New York Times*, Oct. 20, 1991 and *Associated Press*, Oct. 21, 1991.
40. *Turkish Probe*, Nov. 17, 1992, p. 5.
41. The cantonments were built in the 1930s for the primary purpose of preventing smuggling, and were thus unable to resist full-scale PKK attacks. Furthermore, the gendarmerie soldiers guarding them were poorly armed and trained, and often took heavy casualties when attacked.
42. Mehmet Ali Kılıçlı, *Güneydoğu Dünyası Ülkümlü Çatışma* (Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 1996), p. 163. The Turkish General Staff first resisted the idea of sending artillery because it was assessed as a tool of conventional warfare.
43. Authors' interview with a Turkish Army General who was the commander of all units in the conflict zone, Ankara, Feb. 26, 2002.
44. President Özal voiced the possibility that Turkey could discuss the idea of a federation as a solution to the conflict.
45. . When the conflict began in earnest in 1984, the Turkish army aviation unit had 85 UH-1 helicopters, and 40 of them were dispatched to the conflict region. The army purchased ten new UH-1 helicopters between 1984 and 1989, and ten more between 1989 and 1993. From 1989 onwards, between 50–60 UH-1 were flying in the region. Of these, however, only three were armed with X/M-G3 and 2.75 rocket systems, and none were armored. Moreover, none were able to fly at night. In 1990, the security forces got the first AH-1 Super Cobra helicopters. Three were immediately dispatched to the emergency region in early 1991. In 1993 six AH-1 Cobras were purchased and four were sent to the region, and in 1994, five AH-1 W Super Cobras were purchased and three were sent to the region.
46. *Economist*, Vol. 325, No. 7780, Oct. 10, 1992.
47. Authors' formal and informal interviews with various security personnel from the region reveal a general consensus on this point.
48. Some Turkish sources report over 1,400 PKK militants being killed in the course of the operation, while Kurdish sources put the loss at only about 100. Though the disparity in these numbers cannot be denied, there is little question that this was a very significant hit against the PKK. Smet Maset, 'Beyond Operation PKK', *Turkish Probe*, Nov. 17, 1992, p. 5.

49. ERNK members could force business people to close their shops as demonstrations of PKK support. They organized mass demonstrations against the security forces, and put women and children on the frontline of riots.
50. The rapprochement was brought about by shared fears that the US, France and England were supporting the establishment of an independent Kurdish state. As a result, a protocol between the three countries was signed in late 1993, according to which Syria banned all PKK activities on Syrian territory. The cooperation between the three states broke down not long after, however, when Turkey attended the Dublin conference on Middle East Peace, and was therefore seen to be in the camp of the Americans and British. For more on the issue, see H.J.Agha and A.S.Khalidi, *Syria and Iran: Rivalry and Cooperation* (London: Pinter, 1995).
51. Turkish Chief of Staff, General Do an Güre , stated that, 'As far as the strategic concepts are concerned, I have changed the priorities of the Turkish Armed Forces *vis-à-vis* the possible threats. I now say that the question of internal threat is the first priority.' See Stephen H. Button, 'Turkey Struggles with Kurdish Separatism', *Military Review*, Vol. 75, No. 1 (Dec. 1995-Jan./Feb. 1996), p. 76.
52. The army forces were increased to 160,000, making the total number of security forces (including village guards, gendarme, police forces) exceed 300,000. Fire support was also strengthened to enhance the army's long-range firepower and restrict the PKK's mobility. Heavy cannon and artillery units were dispatched to the southeast, and all divisions of the army became armored.
53. Ki lali, *Güneydo u Dü ük Yo unluklu Çati ma*, p. 159.
54. Alan Makovsky, 'Turkey Merits US Backing as it Hunts Terrorists', *Christian Science Monitor*, April 18, 1995, p. 19–20.
55. Huntington, 'Guerrilla Warfare in Theory and Practice', p. xviii.
56. While there are only speculations about the total number of refugees from these evacuations, numbers range between 1.7 to 3 million. UNHCR, Background Paper on Refugees, September 1994 (UNHCR/CDR-Ref World Database). According to official data of the Turkish state, 2,253 villages were evacuated by the security forces.
57. Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 49.
58. More than ten teachers were killed in 1994, and 124 since 1984.
59. The first attack occurred in June, and caused the death of nine Turkish soldiers. Facts on File, *World News Digest*, July 11, 1996. For more information about suicide terrorism in Turkey in general, see Do u Ergil, 'Suicide Terrorism in Turkey', *Civil Wars*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring 2000), pp. 37–55.
60. MED-TV, July 15, 1998.
61. Efraim Inbar, *Israeli-Turkish Entente* (London: King's College Mediterranean Programme, 2001).
62. His actual words were, 'by supporting the bandit Apo, the Syrians have confronted us with the plague of terrorism. Turkey has made the necessary efforts for good relations. If Turkey does not receive any response to its efforts, it will have the right to take all appropriate measures. We have no more patience.' Robert Olson, 'Syria-Turkey Relations Since the Gulf War: Kurds and Water', *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (May 1997), p. 105.
63. *Anadolu News Agency*, Oct. 21, 1998.
64. In private talks with commanders of the transition era, it was confirmed that the laws of the time did not support the high degree of autonomy they used in designing and carrying out their tactics and strategies. They argue that if they had waited for the laws to change, they would not have been able to finish the job.

# Greek Democracy on Trial: From Insurgency to Civil War, 1943–49

ANDRE GEROLYMATOS

During and immediately after the Second World War, Greece suffered three serious challenges from communist insurgencies. In each case the communists enjoyed certain military advantages while the traditional political system was in disarray; yet they failed to seize power. Historians of the Greek Civil War have defined these communist revolts as the three rounds (October 1943–February 1944, December 1944–February 1945 and March 1946–August 1949), each round representing a distinct phase of a single conflict.<sup>1</sup> The three rounds, however, must be presented chronologically since collectively they represent a consistent effort by the Greek Communist Party (KKE) to impose a political outcome by violent means.

The aim of this essay is to analyze the causes of the insurgency and to demonstrate how and why each of the attempts was unsuccessful. Remarkably, the KKE repeated the same mistakes in all three rounds, ultimately resorting to civil war rather than accepting a political compromise. One factor in the failure was the inability of the KKE to maintain a consistent policy, from the period of the (German-Italian) Axis occupation (April 1941) to liberation (October 1944). The other factor was the inability of the communists to attract a mass following in Greek society, particularly in the towns and cities.<sup>2</sup> The KKE's support came from members of the left-wing resistance and disproportionately from the disgruntled Slavic minorities in northern Greece and the Greek refugees from Asia Minor.<sup>3</sup> This ethnic composition hampered the attempts of the KKE to establish itself as the main political force in Greece.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

During the 1935–46 period, Greece was in a state of revolution. No political group or organization could claim constitutional legitimacy. King George II had assumed the throne in 1935 as a result of a fraudulent plebiscite and hence ruled unconstitutionally. From 1936 to 1941, Greece was ruled by the dictator Ioannis Metaxas, a former general and a strong advocate for the Greek monarchy. He imposed an authoritarian regime with the support of King George II. When Greece fell under Axis domination in 1941, the Greek king and most of the government, along with a few units of the armed forces, escaped to Britain and established a government-in-exile. The Greek government-in-exile, despite some modifications, remained a direct offshoot of the Metaxas dictatorship, which itself had usurped power in August 1936. Consequently, from 1935 until the relatively

unfettered election in March 1946, not one body in Greece or abroad could claim lawfully to speak on behalf of the Greek nation.

Because of the revolutionary environment, as well as the exigencies of occupation, the Greek political field was vulnerable to any organization whose numerical strength (and military ability to impose its will) qualified its leadership to claim representation of the Greek people. The communists tried to gain political control already during the Axis occupation. The KKE established and controlled EAM (the National Liberation Front), the mass-based resistance organization during the occupation, as well as its military wing ELAS (National Popular Liberation Army).<sup>4</sup> The power vacuum within the Greek political system which was created by the German occupation, allowed EAM-ELAS to assume a leadership role.

Equally compelling for the future of Greek society in the post-occupation period was the bitter legacy of political division and civil strife left by the occupation. The democratic institutions, which had existed before the establishment of the Metaxas regime in 1936, were further eroded by the war, leaving the constitutional future of Greece in doubt. The resistance forces, while fighting the Axis, also advocated a political agenda for the post-war period.

A critical external element of the immediate post-war situation that affected Greece (but unknown to the Greek protagonists) was the so-called 'Percentages Agreement' reached by Churchill and Stalin during Churchill's visit to Moscow on October 9, 1944 that essentially attempted to divide the Balkans into British and the Soviet spheres of influence. The agreement was supposed to be in effect only for the duration of the war. The limited duration was intended to allay American concerns over the creation of permanent British and Soviet spheres of influence in the Balkans. Accordingly, it was agreed that the British would get 90 percent of Greece and the Soviets ten percent; in Romania, respectively 90 percent and ten percent; Yugoslavia and Hungary 50 percent each; and Bulgaria 25 and 75 percent, respectively.<sup>5</sup> Remarkably, the KKE leadership only became aware of the 'Percentages Agreement' in the 1950s. In July 1944, the message from the Soviets to EAM-ELAS through the KKE was to join the coalition government (May 24, 1944), headed by George Papandreou, which included delegates from all political factions in occupied Greece. In August, the KKE agreed to send six EAM members to the new Government, which on the 27th of the same month became a Government of National Unity that now represented all political parties, factions and resistance groups in and outside Greece.

The communists consistently (1923–49) misjudged the force of nationalism in Greek society and the latent fears of the Greek public with respect to real or imagined Balkan irredentism. The Greek communist leadership was divided between those who accepted the Moscow line, regardless of its consequences to Greek national issues, and those who espoused a Greek-centered communist policy that reflected national interests. From its inception, the KKE leadership gravitated between variations of these two poles. The traditional hard-line communist dogma was typified by the General Secretary of the party, Nikos Zachariades, who remained a staunch Stalinist, while the other, more pragmatic and nationalist line, was represented by George Siantos during the resistance phase, and Markos Vaphiades, commander of the insurgent forces from 1945 to the spring of 1949.<sup>6</sup> Zachariades was jailed in 1936 by the Metaxas dictatorship and was sent in 1941 to

Dachau by the Germans. He was succeeded by George Siantos, the KKE secretary, who advocated a 'political path', aiming at securing power through legitimate means. It was Siantos's 'soft' policy and appeal to nationalist sentiment that enabled the KKE to establish and control the EAM-ELAS. When Zachariades returned to Greece in 1945, he marginalized Siantos and, with the dismissal of Vaphiades in 1949, the cleavage in the party was terminated, at least temporarily.

In the long run, the KKE misjudged the role of external factors, such as the inability of the Soviet Union to provide military and diplomatic support for their cause, while Britain, later followed by the United States (since the 1947 Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan), successfully propped up the Greek governments. The continual divisions within the KKE, which spawned serious flaws in the communists' foreign policy and strategy, further compounded these shortcomings. The KKE not only underestimated the impact of the British and American roles in Greece, but also failed to appreciate the power politics of the communist bloc in the Balkans. Consequently, when Stalin and Tito quarreled in 1948, the KKE remained loyal to the Soviet dictator, and Tito closed the Yugoslav border to the Greek insurgents—dooming the insurgents to failure without safe havens and bases in Yugoslavia. The political debacle of supporting Stalin as opposed to Tito also exposed the fatal flaw in the KKE's military strategy. The insurgents did not understand, or at the very least appreciate, the critical role of logistics in maintaining conventional forces in the field. As long as they limited their efforts to guerrilla tactics, rudimentary supply lines were sufficient but once they switched to a conventional battle, it proved impossible to match the National Army in firepower and numbers.

The main cleavages of Greek society during the occupation were the monarchy—whether the king of Greece should be permitted to return or the institution abolished; the demobilization of the resistance forces; and punishment of the wartime collaborators. After liberation, the monarchy issue symbolized for the left the continuing failure of post-war Greek governments to bring all the wartime collaborators to trial and a perceived willingness on behalf of these regimes to reestablish an authoritative system of government. These issues brought about a protracted communist insurgency.

#### THE FIRST ROUND OF THE GREEK CIVIL WAR (OCTOBER 1943–FEBRUARY 1944)

The immediate cause of the first round of the insurgency was the chaos created by the German occupation, which presented an opportunity to the Greek communists to dominate the leadership of the left-wing resistance and subsume the major issues of political discontent within their political platform.

During the occupation, most people assumed that the mass based EAM and its military wing ELAS represented progressive and liberal elements along with the communists.<sup>7</sup> Many Greek professional officers joined the ranks of ELAS to fight the Axis and some remained ignorant, until almost liberation, that the leadership of EAM-ELAS was practically synonymous with the KKE. During the early development of the Greek resistance (1941–42), the political and military leadership in Britain, with the exception of some of the directorates of the British intelligence community, assumed that EAM-ELAS was hostile to the return of the Greek monarch, but remained ignorant of the communist



hold over these organizations. Even when this became apparent in August 1943, the British wartime Special Operations Executive (SOE), charged with instigating resistance in occupied Europe, continued to support EAM-ELAS because of its numerical strength and potential for fighting the Axis, despite the existence of other resistance organizations.

Indeed, SOE's support increased the credibility of EAM-ELAS and enhanced its popularity. This gave the Greek communists a unique political advantage and one that created the possibility that they could assume power after the war, or at the very least do so incrementally. However, this possibility was predicated on either the liberation of the Balkans by the Red Army or, if that were not possible, the domination of the country by EAM-ELAS when the Axis pulled out. To bring this about, it was imperative that EAM-ELAS absorb or destroy all the other resistance organizations in the cities and mountains. The leadership of EAM-ELAS assumed that if the Red Army did not liberate the Balkans, the British would. Under such circumstances, it was necessary for EAM-ELAS to fill the vacuum left by the Germans and present the allies with a *fait accompli*. At least that was the perception of the British, the Greek government-in-exile, as well as the resistance groups opposed to EAM-ELAS.

The Allied landings in Italy and Sicily in the summer of 1943 convinced the leaders of the Greek resistance that liberation was imminent. In August 1943, a delegation from each of the major resistance organizations was clandestinely brought to Cairo by the British in the hope of cobbling together a broad-based government of national unity. During the discussions, the EAM-ELAS representatives overreached their demands and the talks ended abruptly. The delegates returned to Greece convinced that an allied invasion of Greece was in the works but the KKE was also convinced that the Anglo-American forces would install a right-wing government along with the monarchy. The KKE leadership then decided to unite all the resistance groups by force and upon liberation dominate the country.

The EAM-ELAS effort to take over the resistance inaugurated the first round of the Greek Civil War. To accomplish this ELAS had to destroy or incorporate all the guerrilla bands in occupied Greece, particularly its main rival, the staunchly republican EDES (National Democratic League). However, EDES survived because the British were able to provide the organization with arms and money, which enabled EDES to secure new recruits. By so merely surviving, EDES effectively denied EAM-ELAS, and by extension the KKE, the advantage of representing all the resistance forces at liberation. Tactically, the larger ELAS forces proved vulnerable to attacks by the smaller, highly mobile units of EDES. ELAS, as would be the case in the next two rounds, was hampered by supply problems made even more difficult by the fact that Greece was still occupied by the German army. The modest size of the EDES units, on the other hand, made it easier for the British to equip them with adequate weapons, thus increasing their firepower to compensate for their numerical inferiority. The small EDES units were able to avoid battles against overwhelming ELAS forces and choose their own ground when they decided to engage.

During the course of the crisis, EAM-ELAS tried to balance two irreconcilable policies: advocacy of popular democracy and the rule of force. No doubt, most of the rank and file of EAM-ELAS assumed that the fratricidal conflict engulfing the resistance movement was waged for the lofty ideal of the former, and only few understood that the first round was simply a grab for power by the KKE to dominate post-war Greece.<sup>8</sup> Despite the failure of

the first round, by the time of liberation (October 1944), the communists were, at best, preparing to deny the Greek government-in-exile and the British control of Greece and, at worst, planning to monopolize the political reconstruction of the country.<sup>9</sup>

The first round ended, in part, through British intervention and because both sides were exhausted. Hostilities were terminated with the conclusion of the Plaka Agreement in February 1944.

## THE SECOND ROUND (DECEMBER 1944-FEBRUARY 1945)

Liberation brought about a temporary period of euphoria, but it was short lived due to the economic crisis that had resulted from the occupation. Hyper inflation, food shortages, and the near-total destruction of communications between the cities and the countryside had paralyzed Greece. The situation was aggravated by the failure of the newly established Government of National Unity (August 27, 1944) to address the immediate issues of the organization of a new army (the Greek National Army) and the demobilization of the guerrilla forces. In fact, the government had to accomplish this with only limited control over Athens, Thessaloniki, and a few large towns; the rest of the country was effectively controlled by EAM-ELAS. Underlying these problems were the future of the monarchy and the disposition of the collaborators.

For the leadership of EAM-ELAS, which maintained a large and well-equipped force, the road to renewed conflict with the new Greek regime was only a matter of time. What was not clear was whether they could achieve power through political means or by the sheer force of arms. They suspected that the post-war government leaders had no intention of sharing power with the left and that they were bent on reestablishing the pre-war political and social status quo. These ambitions and fears that had already brought about the spectacle of a civil war during the occupation (the first round in October 1943) would lead to a new conflict in December 1944. In this respect, the 'December Uprising', as the second round is referred to, was a continuation of the war between EAM-ELAS and the forces of the right.<sup>10</sup> However, this time the battle took place in the streets and suburbs of Athens and involved the British army.

The KKE, unable to secure support from the Soviet Union,<sup>11</sup> had little recourse but to accept the formation of the Government of National Unity. Under pressure from the Soviets, the KKE, through EAM, had joined the government but a significant number of its leaders remained committed to seizing power by revolution. In the absence of a credible and effective military force, the Government of National Unity had to rely on political compromise and trying to outmaneuver the left in order to attempt to govern the country, at least until the government was able to create new military and security forces, which would enable it to establish its authority throughout Greece. Paramount to this policy was the continuing problem of demobilizing ELAS, which could challenge and even topple the new regime.<sup>12</sup>

In the short term, both EAM-ELAS and the Government of National Unity were forced to co-exist and to use political pressure to impose their respective agendas on post-war Greece. The outcome led to an uneasy truce that was maintained for almost two months while each side continued to interpret the actions of the other as provocations. For its

part, the Government of National Unity along with the British were convinced, even before the liberation, that EAM-ELAS intended to use force and transform Greece into a communist state.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, the Government of National Unity devoted considerable time and effort to the organization of a new army and the elimination of guerrilla forces.<sup>14</sup> To achieve these aims quickly George Papandreou, the prime minister, was forced to rehabilitate many officers who had close affiliation to the monarchy and others who had served in the notorious Security Battalions that cooperated with the Germans during the occupation. On the other hand, Papandreou made every effort to exclude most officers who were members of ELAS regardless of their political loyalties before the occupation.<sup>15</sup> This policy, as well as the urgency by which the government pressed for the demobilization of the EAM-ELAS forces, created an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and hostility. The leadership of EAM-ELAS obstructed the demobilization of its forces in order not to lose its political leverage and be at the mercy of the right.

Another factor in the developments was the role of the British forces that entered Greece after the Germans began their evacuation. Initially, the British sent a small force.<sup>16</sup> The total number of British forces that entered Greece upon liberation did not exceed 10,000 officers and men.<sup>17</sup> British hopes for a smooth transition from occupation to a post-war Greece were based on several factors. First, the fact that George Papandreou headed a government of National Unity, which included ministers from EAM; second, the agreement of George II to remain in exile until a plebiscite determined the fate of the monarchy; third, the fact that EAM-ELAS had signed the Caserta Agreement on September 28, 1944 which placed all Allied and guerrilla forces under the operational command of a British General, Ronald Scobie; and fourth, the Churchill-Stalin 'Percentages Agreement' essentially guaranteed, at the very least, Soviet neutrality in the event of an attempted takeover of Greece by EAM-ELAS.

Despite these factors, by early November, it was becoming evident to the British that a confrontation with EAM-ELAS was unavoidable. Winston Churchill commented, 'I fully expect a clash with EAM and we must not shrink from it, provided the ground is well chosen'.<sup>18</sup> On November 8, Churchill telegraphed General Maitland Wilson, the Commander-in-Chief in the Middle East, and Reginald Leeper, the British Ambassador to Athens, requesting urgent reinforcements to be sent to Greece. The British troops were instructed, 'to support law and order, even by shooting if necessary'.<sup>19</sup> On November 15, General Wilson reported the 'Communists seemed likely soon to bring matters to a head'. However, General Scobie was ill-prepared for a military confrontation with ELAS. Throughout October and mid-November British forces were concentrated in Athens, Patras, and a few other cities. Little effort was made to maintain secure communications with Piraeus, and the airfield outside Athens. Because of this deployment, the British forces (even before the outbreak of hostilities) were virtually besieged. The rest of Greece, with the exception of Epirus, the Drama areas, and a few of the islands, were under the control of ELAS.

ELAS, on the other hand, enjoyed the strategic advantage of controlling most of mainland Greece. By the end of November, the ELAS order of battle was based on approximately 49,000 officers and men deployed in 11 divisions and a regiment of cavalry, as well as a small makeshift navy.<sup>20</sup> In addition, ELAS maintained a reserve of almost 45,000 men and women of whom 22,000 to 23,150 were based in Athens. These latter

forces were designated as the 1st ELAS Army Corps. The majority of the rank and file of this unit was of uneven quality, but at least 6,000 were armed with rifles and another 3,000 carried revolvers and pistols. Many of these troops had attained considerable experience in urban guerrilla warfare in the last phase of the occupation.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the initial advantages held by EAM-ELAS, the leadership failed to exploit the strategic and tactical superiority of its forces. Even before the outbreak of hostilities, George Siantos, the acting General Secretary of the KKE and the dominant figure in EAM-ELAS, was determined to control events by himself. For that purpose he divided the political leadership of the KKE and the Central Committee of EAM from ELAS.<sup>22</sup> He also evacuated the KKE party headquarters from Athens to Hashia, in Northern Attica, and ordered the General Headquarters of ELAS in Lamia to direct its efforts against EDES in Epirus, thus diverting three valuable divisions from the potential field of battle to a secondary theater of operations.

As a result, Siantos separated ELAS proper from the reserve units that constituted the 1st Army Corps in Athens, which was the force that would participate in the main battle. According to the memoirs of Spiros Kotsakis, commander of the 1st Corps, this unit was separate and distinct from ELAS proper. The commander and all the officers were members of the Communist Party and had direct responsibility for the Athens region.<sup>23</sup> In effect, these changes effectively made Siantos the overall commander of ELAS, and for the duration of the hostilities he directed all military operations from the headquarters of the ELAS 1st Army Corps in Athens.

In the meantime, ELAS pressed its offensive against the agencies of the Greek Government and captured 22 out of 25 police stations, several government buildings, as well as control over the road from Athens to Piraeus and the port itself. After only a few days of fighting, the British and the handful of Greek government forces were virtually besieged in a small area in the center of the city.<sup>24</sup> The military situation, however, turned against ELAS from December 13. First, ELAS failed to seize all of Athens quickly. The few days that were anticipated by Siantos had turned into weeks. Secondly, on December 12, ELAS troops fired on the British and by December 15 a new British field commander, General John Hawksworth, had arrived with reinforcements that totaled nearly 50,000 men and turned the tide of battle against ELAS. The KKE guerrilla units were no match for a well-led regular army. The only hope of victory for the KKE was for ELAS to have captured Athens immediately. Once this failed, the British had time to increase and concentrate their forces and defeat the guerrillas. ELAS, for its part, lacked the manpower and logistical support to defend fixed positions. The advantage of guerrilla units lies in mobility and surprise. The attempt by ELAS to engage in positional warfare forced the guerrillas on the defensive, thus giving the British the opportunity to isolate and destroy the insurgents.

In early January 1945, ELAS was in full retreat and eight days later an armistice was signed, which took effect on the night of January 14–15—the Varkiza Agreement. Under its terms, ELAS had to disband and surrender its weapons, but the infrastructure of the KKE and of EAM-ELAS remained. What saved ELAS from total destruction was not the benevolence of Britain and the Greek government, but the situation on the Western front. On December 16 the Germans surprised the Allies with a counter-offensive in the Ardennes and Hawksworth was informed that he could not expect any more

reinforcements. From a strictly military perspective, ELAS was defeated. However, EAM-ELAS was not destroyed as an organization. Even by December 16, ELAS still controlled three-quarters of Greece and had managed to withdraw its headquarters safely to Trikkala. The Greek and British forces had won the battle of Athens but by failing to pursue their victory to its ultimate conclusion simply set the stage for the next round of the insurgency in 1946. Equally significant was that the survival of EAM-ELAS hindered any meaningful reconciliation. In the interim period (1945–46), Greece was plagued by continuing economic chaos and political uncertainty. Until the Greek governments could organize and deploy a well equipped and well trained army as well as security forces, the British provided the bulk of military forces, which were only reduced in stages and as late as 1948, British troops were still to be found in Greece.<sup>25</sup>

### THE THIRD ROUND OF THE GREEK CIVIL WAR (MARCH 1946-AUGUST 1949)

The last round of the insurgency, the most prolonged and destructive one, evolved out of the left's response to the reign of 'white terror', which was implemented by extreme right-wing groups in response to the insurgency of the second round (December 1944).<sup>26</sup> In addition, the inability of the government to contain the persecution of the left steered many from its ranks to the KKE.

The backdrop for the complex machinations of the communists and right-wing extremists was the unending economic and political upheaval aggravated by violence. In the cities and towns, old scores were settled by resorting to murder and beatings. In the countryside, left-wing bands had once again sprung up or had never ended their guerrilla activities. The regions outside Athens and large towns served as miniature battlefields as government forces attempted to establish a semblance of law and order. However, as soon as they left an area, it fell back under the control of the tyranny of either the left- or right-wing banditti (made up of some ex-guerrillas and criminal elements). The imprisonment of thousands of EAM-ELAS members after the December Uprising further complicated the ongoing political crisis. By 1945, the prisons held over 60,000 inmates, many of whom never faced formal charges or trial. The new Sophoulis Government (which replaced Papandreou's regime) declared a political amnesty in early 1946 and released some of the 60,000 incarcerated leftists, but thousands more remained in prison. Some of these men and women were guilty of terrorist acts; most were simply innocent bystanders with leftist credentials. Regardless, of their political proclivities prior to incarceration, prison experience served to convert them into staunch supporters of the KKE. Indeed, the uneven and politically motivated system of justice was one of the best recruiting mechanisms for the communists and greatly contributed towards the inevitable slide towards another civil war.

Although there is no precise date for the outbreak of the third and final round of the civil war, most historians agree that by late spring 1946 communist-led bands, which were made up of former ELAS personnel, had taken to the mountains and begun attacking police and military targets. In response to the escalating lawlessness and deterioration of security, the Greek government turned all counterinsurgency operations to the army: the failure of the police and gendarmerie to deal with the ongoing crisis clearly indicated that

matters had gone beyond civilian control and the government now faced a potential civil war.

The army for its part was unable to crush the insurgents quickly, while the communist bands, by their very survival, claimed cheap victories. The new Greek army and its commanders lacked experience in dealing with guerrilla warfare. Greek officers who had remained loyal to the Greek government-in-exile during the occupation had either sat out the war or joined the Greek forces in the Middle East. In both cases, these officers had been trained in conventional warfare only. In addition, many of the higher-ranking officers were former republicans who had been dismissed for their role in the military coups of the 1930s.<sup>27</sup>

This problem was further compounded by the low morale of the conscripts, many of whom deserted at the first opportunity. In fairness to the general staff, the Greek Army only existed on paper in January 1946 and the few units that could be organized were hastily deployed in July 1946. The battle of Athens was fought, for the most part, by the British along with poorly equipped National Guard units (composed of part-time and older soldiers). Many of these soldiers could not report for duty because large parts of Greece as well as Athens were under the control of ELAS. The battle-hardened Rimini Brigade and the Sacred Battalion were the only regular troops to take part in the December Uprising. According to the official history of the Greek army (which was only made available after 1998), most of the new recruits were considered to be communists or sympathetic to the left; also many of the new units had been infiltrated by KKE cadres and could not be trusted.<sup>28</sup>

Under these circumstances, the Greek General Staff attempted to deal with the insurgency by creating defense perimeters around major cities and towns, leaving most of the countryside to the KKE bands. Another tactic was to rehabilitate officers and men who had fought in the Nazi controlled Security Battalions as well as employing extreme right-wing groups who had acquired experience in dealing with guerrilla forces during the occupation. However, these officers and men lacked initiative and could not influence the overall strategy of the Greek high command. Their presence only served to harden feelings against the Greek Government since even moderates could not stomach the use of quislings in policing the Greek countryside. Meanwhile, the General Staff and Government were determined to purge the officer corps and the conscripts of communist sympathizers. Hundreds of officers who had served with ELAS before and after the December Uprising were removed. They, along with several thousand conscripts, were confined to the prison island of Makronisos or placed in labor battalions.<sup>29</sup>

Unfortunately, this approach to counterinsurgency left the Greek army tied down in static defense positions and exposed to the hit-and-run tactics of the communist forces. The ensuing military quagmire forced the Greek High Command to rely even more on paramilitary units and parapolice forces, whose actions in the field were marked by incidents of banditry and revenge killings. The General Staff also constituted self-defense units in towns and villages by simply providing rudimentary training in arms and leaving these hapless forces to fend for themselves against the better-trained and equipped communist bands. These tactics yielded negligible results, except for the limited information gathering that the self-defense units provided to the army and gendarmerie.<sup>30</sup> Occasionally, the local defense units exceeded their authority to settle old scores and in

some cases expropriated the property of left-wing sympathizers. These actions along with the chronic lawlessness and banditry that had traditionally afflicted the mountainous regions of Greece were further compounded by the thousands of disbanded guerrillas. Regardless of their left-or right-wing credentials, these guerrillas had become a blight on the local villages.

By the beginning of July 1946, the situation had deteriorated significantly enough for the government to introduce new legislation against brigandage. In the same year, the government passed the Security Act to protect all citizens, but this was directed mainly against the left and accelerated the number of arrests and executions. By November 1946, the reign of terror implemented by right-wing bands had led to 780 killed, 5,677 wounded, 28,450 tortured and 70,528 arrested. In 1947, as a result of the new security legislation, in a matter of days (between July 9–14) 7,000 leftists were arrested in Athens and another 10,000 in the rest of the country. On August 30, 24 executions took place in a single day, bringing the number to 462 since the Security Act had become law. However, this did not deter the KKE from maintaining extensive clandestine networks of informants, sabotage groups, assassination squads, propaganda units and even mine-laying operations in Greek harbors during the course of the civil war. The Democratic Army, the new name for the communist insurgents since October 1946, also indulged in excesses and was responsible for thousands of executions, kidnappings and torture and in a last desperate measure the abduction of children. Whenever the Democratic Army was forced to retreat from occupied areas, it often took along thousands of children without their parents. The KKE argued that they were rescuing the children from the misery of war, but the government claimed, usually with considerable justification, that they had been kidnapped. By the end of the war, approximately 28,000 children had been taken out of Greece and only 10,000 were eventually returned.<sup>31</sup>

The initial strategy of the KKE was to isolate Macedonia, Greece's northern province, and use it as a staging ground to continue the war in the rest of the country. Until they could accomplish this, they had to rely on Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania, all under communist rule, for logistical support, bases of operations and safe havens for retreat after engaging the National Army. To a great extent, Yugoslavia carried the main burden of supplying the insurgents as well as providing staging areas for the Democratic Army's hit-and-run tactics. Part of this strategy also included the use of Macedonia as a resource region to sustain the Democratic Army in the field. The insurgents often requisitioned much food and livestock at the expense of the villagers. These expropriations and the forced recruitment of young men and women caused severe shortages of both foodstuffs and manpower in the region. Koliopoulos argues that 'these were not the actions of persecuted and desperate men: they were part of a drive to force the authorities to their knees by destroying the productive capacity of the region and drive all who could bear arms into the mountains'.<sup>32</sup> These acts, combined with the negative accounts of deserters and government propaganda, eroded support for the KKE.

The choice of Macedonia also had the advantage of securing easy access to supplies from Yugoslavia and Bulgaria and a steady stream of Slavo-Macedonian recruits, as well as moral and material support from the residents of the region who had come as refugees from Asia Minor. The Slavic element in the Greek north was generally hostile to the Greek authorities and believed that they could secure an independent Macedonian state or merge

with the Macedonian Republic of Yugoslavia if the KKE won the war. In 1924, the KKE had accepted the notion of a separate Macedonian nationality and state, but at the Six Party Congress in 1935, Zachariades changed the KKE's policy to support 'complete equality for the minorities'.<sup>33</sup> Although this blurred the Macedonian issue and offered a plausible strategy for the KKE, the earlier decision haunted the KKE as most Greeks found the idea of surrendering Greek territory abhorrent. Consequently, the Slavo-Macedonian membership in the Democratic Army tended to underscore government propaganda that the KKE not only represented external interests but was itself substantially foreign.

The Democratic Army averaged approximately 20,000 men and women while the National Army continued to expand and reached 132,000 men in the last year of the conflict.<sup>34</sup> According to American sources, in order for the insurgents to sustain 20,000 men and women in the field it was necessary to replace the force three and a half times. In terms of the quantity of manpower, the ranks of the Democratic Army swelled in 1946–47, at the expense of the National Army, which lost conscripts to the insurgents. However, in the long run this was not a big loss since many of these recruits were raised from the older pre-war classes and proved unsuitable for counterinsurgency operations.<sup>35</sup> From 1947–49, the National Army was able to replace the lower quality recruits with men who were younger, better trained and much healthier. The Democratic Army, on the other hand, had to rely on older deserters and conscripted peasants who fled at the first opportunity. Over the three years of the third round, the age and quality of the Democratic Army's rank and file deteriorated significantly. Meanwhile, throughout 1948 and 1949, the Greek Army slowly gained the upper hand in fighting the insurgents, especially after the aid Greece received from the US as a result of the Truman Doctrine (March 1947).<sup>36</sup>

In 1949, the Democratic Army switched from guerrilla tactics to conventional battles with disastrous consequences. The change from small mobile units of insurgents striking at the National Army over a broad area was one of the consequences of the Tito-Stalin split in 1948 and one that sealed the fate of the insurgents. Nikos Zachariades, General Secretary of the KKE, despite the Democratic Army's critical reliance on Yugoslavia, continued to support the Moscow line and required a quick victory before Tito could cut off the Greek communist forces. Markos Vaphiades, the commander-in-chief of the Democratic Army, was the architect of the strategy of using widespread insurgent mobile warfare to disperse and wear down the National Army before a decisive final strike. Vaphiades lost to Zachariades and was dismissed, along with a large number of former ELAS commanders. As a result, the Democratic Army in the last year of the war was directed by ideologue Stalinists who had little or no military experience, leading the insurgents to defeat.

## CONCLUSION

The notion of the inevitability of insurgents to succeed against democracies has been colored by the failure of the United States in Vietnam and Cuba, the French in Algeria, the British in Palestine, India, Cyprus, and parts of Africa, as well as a host of other post-colonial conflicts throughout the world. These types of insurgency erupted as a reaction to



colonial hegemony or in response to direct foreign intervention. At the same time, there are notable exceptions. The British were successful in Burma and in Northern Ireland, and that success was based on the efficient and skillful use of military power. The Greek Civil War also represents a Greek as well as an American victory against insurgency. It was evident during the occupation and in the immediate post-war period that most Greeks were reluctant to accept communism. For this reason the KKE went to great lengths to mask its communist program by working through front organizations. Many people joined EAM and ELAS because this offered an opportunity to fight the Axis. Few, beyond the issue of the monarchy and just punishment for collaborators, subscribed to the ideological tenets of the KKE.

What emerges from the actions of the KKE, in all three attempts, is not so much an outright bid by the communists to seize power, but the use of a malleable policy with no binding agenda save the ultimate objective of achieving control of the Greek state in stages. This gave the communists the advantage of an elastic response to new circumstances and the subsuming of issues that appealed to the entire spectrum of the center-left.

In the first round (October 1943–February 1944), the communists could not achieve their goal of controlling all resistance groups and dominating the country at liberation because the British were able to supply and quickly re-equip the opponents of ELAS. Also, the ‘Percentages Agreement’ and the arrival of British forces in October 1944, left the KKE isolated and with no prospect of Soviet military or diplomatic support. The communists failed in the second round (December 1944–February 1945) because the British intervened directly and defeated the insurgents. Although ELAS enjoyed numerical superiority, the KKE leadership only committed part of their forces in the December Uprising and thus lost the opportunity of capturing Athens and controlling all of Greece or dictating the composition of a communist dominated government. At the same time, by forcing the Greek king to accept the outcome of a referendum on the issue of the monarchy, the Greek government removed a major plank from the left’s political agenda. Consequently, EAM-ELAS’ slogans of popular democracy rang hollow after the December Uprising in 1944, while the third round (March 1946–August 1949) exposed the authoritarian element inherent in the policies of the KKE.

The creation of the Democratic Army and the end of references to ELAS was a clear signal that the KKE stood on its own and had to secure mass appeal. The first recruits included those persecuted by the extreme right and a large number of Greek soldiers who deserted the Greek army. Most, however, did not so much support the KKE’s program but were seeking refuge from the ‘white terror’ and also to escape military service. Once they could secure a return to civilian life without reprisals, thousands abandoned the Democratic Army. The Democratic Army also included among its rank and file a disproportionate number of Greece’s Slavic minority in the north as well as conscripted peasants, who weakened it in the long run.

Although the insurgents held the initiative for almost three years, it was limited to the mountain and rural areas of Greece. Despite initial success, the Democratic Army failed to secure a single large town. Without control over cities, and especially over Athens, the insurgency had nowhere to go. The hit-and-run tactics offered a succession of quick victories, but collectively or individually they were not decisive. A greater effort by the

Democratic Army to bring to battle the government forces and to inflict on them major defeats would have required maintaining substantial units in the field. In fact, when this became the strategy of the KKE in 1949, the Democratic Army was decisively beaten. The KKE and its communist Balkan allies could not overcome the problem of providing logistical support for an extended period. In the field, the Democratic Army continued to rely on Greek villages and small towns for supplies until the National Army began to depopulate these places or was in a position to sever the insurgent units from their supply of food as well as manpower.

The last consideration, and perhaps the most significant, is that the KKE and its policies had never appealed to Greek society in the urban centers, while the insurgents never quite secured the support of rural Greece. Although some have argued that the Democratic Army was defeated by the superior firepower of the National Army (thanks to British and American support) and Tito's closing of Yugoslavia's territory to the Greek insurgents, the fact remains that the communists failed to establish a popular following. Most Greeks did not subscribe to the program of the left once it became clear that it meant giving credence to the KKE. The tragedy of the Greek Civil War is that eventually the left not only shared power but dominated the Greek political scene from the 1980s to the new millennium and did so without the KKE.

## NOTES

1. The communists, however, reject the phrase. For a detailed description of the first round, see Christopher M. Woodhouse, *The Apple of Discord: A Survey of Greek Politics in Their International Setting* (London: Hutchinson, 1948). A more recent account can be found in Hagen Fleischer, *Stema kai Svastika: H Ellada tis Katochis kai tis Adistasis*, Vol. 2 (Athens: Papazisis, 1995). For the second round see, John O. Iatrides, *Revolt in Athens: The Greek Communist Second Round, 1944–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972) and for the left-wing perspective, Heinz Richter, *British Intervention in Greece: From Varkiza to Civil War, February 1945 to August 1946*, translated by Marion Sarafis (London: Merlin Press, 1986).
2. Precise figures for all election results have not survived but usually support ranged from approximately 1.5 percent (14,000 votes) to five percent (90,000 votes). The KKE was the successor to the Socialist Party of Greece founded in 1918. In 1924, the party changed its name to the Communist Party of Greece and was admitted to the Comintern. In the 1920 election, the KKE polled 100,000 votes, but did not secure any seats in the Greek parliament. In 1923, the number of communist voters dropped to 20,000 but rose to 26,000 in 1926 capturing ten seats in Parliament. In 1932 they won 58,000 (with ten seats in Parliament), in 1933 and 1935 they rose again to 90,000 (but did not elect any deputies) and in the last election in 1936, before the dictatorship, they secured 73,000 with 15 in Parliament. Christopher M. Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941–1949* (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1976), pp. 10–15.
3. These people had been part of an exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey after the peace settlement between the two countries in 1922. A large number ended up in Northern Greece, Macedonia and Thrace and many gravitated to left-wing parties and the KKE.

4. EAM represented a coalition of republican left-wing parties, which in addition to the KKE, included the Socialist Party of Greece, the Union of Popular Democracy, the Agrarian Party of Greece and the United Socialist Party of Greece. EAM was controlled by a 25-member central committee with representatives from each of the political parties and from the various EAM subsidiary organizations. The KKE, however, carefully controlled these ancillary agencies to maintain a majority in the Central Committee of EAM. For the details of the EAM setup see Iatrides, *Revolt in Athens*, p. 22.
5. Winston Churchill, *The Second World War: Triumph and Tragedy*, Vol. 6 (London: Cassell, 1953), pp. 196–7; Martin Gilbert, *The Road to Victory: Winston Churchill 1941–1945*, Vol. 7 (London: William Heinemann, 1986), pp. 992–1000.
6. The Comintern appointed Zachariades in 1931. From its foundation the KKE was divided between the Kutvies (the nickname of those trained at the Communist University of Eastern Peoples in the Soviet Union) and Hadjis (those who had made the pilgrimage to Moscow and had been exposed to Communist indoctrination) on one side and the Greek nationalists on the other.
7. On this, see Fleischer, *Stema kai Svastika*, Vol. 2, pp. 68–71 and Iatrides, *Revolt in Athens*, p. 22.
8. The establishment of PEEA (Political Committee of National Liberation) by the KKE was ‘to coordinate and conduct, with all the means and all forces in Greece and from the side of our allies, the struggle against the occupiers’, *Keimena tis Ethnikis Andistasis* (Athens: Sychroni Epochi, 1981), Vol. 2, pp. 15–17. The PEEA was not, ostensibly, to function as a government but merely as an administrative body in ‘Free Greece’. The British and the Greek government-in-exile, however, took the creation of PEEA as a move by the KKE to establish its own provisional government. Peter Stavrakis (*Moscow and Greek Communism, 1944–1949* [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989], p. 16) has pointed out that, ‘through PEEA, the KKE could attempt to force its way into the government-in-exile and gain a predominant position; or, it could go its own way and declare itself the legitimate government of Greece.’
9. On the motives of EAM and the KKE leadership with respect to the post-war situation, see Fleischer, *Stema kai Svastika*, Vol. 2, ch. 2. The detailed study of Gregory Pharakos, Vol. 2: *Mystiki Ekthesi [1946] kai Ala Dokoumenta* (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2000) also includes the publication of the previously secret report of Theodoros Makridis, commissioned by Siantos in September 1944 to appraise the possibilities for the takeover of Athens and the surrounding region of Attica by ELAS.
10. For lack of a better term, ‘new right’ serves as a convenient description of the forces that opposed and feared the KKE, EAM-ELAS, and the left in general. Also see Andre Gerolymatos, ‘The Battle of Athens: Strategy and Tactics’, *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Summer 1996), p. 45, for an analysis of this segment of Greek society.
11. For a discussion on the possible role of the Soviet government on the decision by EAM-ELAS and the KKE to join the Government of National Unity, see Lars Baerentzen, ‘The Arrival of the Soviet Mission in July 1944 and KKE Policy: A Study of Chronology’, *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. 13, Nos. 3–4 (Fall–Winter 1966), pp. 77–111 and Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism*, *passim*.
12. On October 31, 1944, the Papandreou government proclaimed that the resistance had ended, and on November 1 it announced that all guerrilla forces and resistance organizations as well as the civil police forces would be disbanded. A National Guard and new army would replace these organizations, the government declared. The KKE actually attempted to recruit volunteers for the National Guard and army from the ranks of ELAS. Iatrides, *Revolt in Athens*, p. 156.

13. Andre Gerolymatos, *Guerrilla Warfare and Espionage* (New York: Pella Publishing Company, 1992), p. 334. Churchill, in particular, held the conviction that the KKE would use EAM-ELAS in order to seize power, Gilbert, *The Road to Victory: Winston Churchill 1941–1945*, p. 882.
14. Concurrent with this policy the British army embarked on a covert program to provide protection and assist in the gradual rehabilitation of the various quisling military and paramilitary personnel into the Greek army and police forces. Gerolymatos, *Guerrilla Warfare and Espionage*, p. 334.
15. See, Andre Gerolymatos, 'The Security Battalions and the Civil War', *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Spring 1985), pp. 17–27; 'The Role of Greek Officer Corps in the Resistance', *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Fall 1984), pp. 69–79; also Thanos Veremis and Andre Gerolymatos, 'The Military as a Sociopolitical Force in Greece, 1940–49', *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Winter 1991), pp. 12–17.
16. Edgar O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War, 1944–1949* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 87.
17. By the end of October, as EAM's agitation escalated, the British increased their forces to 22, 600 troops, five air squadrons, and began the transfer of two more divisions and the Greek Rimini Brigade from Italy to Greece. John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. VI, 'Oct. 1944–Aug. 1945' (London: HMSO, 1956), p. 61.
18. Gilbert, *The Road to Victory*, p. 1056.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Stefanos Sarafis, *ELAS: Greek Resistance Army* (London: Merlin, 1980), p. 402, lists the strength of ELAS as 5,240 officers and 43,000 men for a total of 48,940.
21. Spyros Kotsakis, *Eisphora: sto Chroniko tis Katochis kai tis Ethnikis Andistasis stin Athena* (Athens: Sygchroni Epochi, 1986), p. 236.
22. Gerolymatos, 'The Battle of Athens', p. 46.
23. Kotsakis, *Eisphora*, p. 244.
24. O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War*, pp. 98–9.
25. On August 5, 1947 the British Government announced the formal withdrawal of its forces.
26. For a recent analysis on the causes of the third round see, Giorgios Margarites, *Istoria tou Emphyliou Polemou, 1946–1949* (Athens: Vivliograma Ekdosis, 2000), Vol. 1, p. 211. On the causes of the Greek Civil War, as provided by the left in the late 1970s and 1990s, see Philippos Iliou, in *Augi*, from Dec. 2 to Jan. 23, 1979–80 and in *Andi* Vol. 694, Sept. 17, 1999.
27. When General Nicholas Plastiras became premier in 1945 he reinstated many of his former republican associates in the armed forces. These men had little combat experience and were an impediment to the advancement of younger and better-trained officers. Report by the Minister of Defense, P.Mavromichaelis, in *Archia Emphyliou Polemou*, Geniko Epiteleio Stratou, Diephnisi Istorias Stratou (Athens: Ekdosi Diephnisi Istorias Stratou 1998), pp. 64–5 [hereafter cited as Report by the Minister of Defense].
28. Report by the Minister of Defense, p. 65.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
30. The defense units numbered 50,000 by the middle of 1949 (British Foreign Office, FO 371/72239 R 2032/G).
31. Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece*, p. 209. Another important factor, which worked against the insurgents, was the execution of 3,516 civilians and 731 killed by mines, *Seventh Report to Congress on Assistance to Greece and Turkey for the Period Ending 31 March 1949* (Harry S. Truman Library, Department of State, 1949).
32. John S.Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek Macedonia* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), p. 254.

33. This remained the KKE's slogan during the period of resistance and civil war, but briefly changed back to supporting a united and independent Macedonia in January 1949 because the Democratic Army desperately needed to recruit Slavo-Macedonians and Slavo-Bulgarians. *KKE Episima Keimena, 1945–1949*, Vols. 5–6 (Athens: Ekdosi tou KKE [Esoterikou], 1973–87); Haris Vlavianos, 'The Greek Communist Party Under Siege', in Robin Higham and Thanos Veremis (eds.), *Aspects of Greece, 1936–40: The Metaxas Dictatorship* (Athens: ELIAMEP—The Speros Basil Vryonis Center for the Study of Hellenism, 1993), pp. 193–226. Figures on the ethnic make-up of the Democratic Army are not precise. In 1948, the Slavo-Macedonians numbered 11,000, about half the strength of the Democratic Army and in 1949 rose to 14,000 representing about two-thirds of its strength (see Koliopoulos, p. 262, n. 63).
34. Figures for the Communist forces during the third round are imprecise and often contested. On the order of battle and strength of the Democratic Army see, Charles R. Shrader, *The Withered Wine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945–1949* (London: Praeger, 1999), p. 110 and appendix A. There is general agreement on the numbers and disposition of the National Army, see Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece*, and O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War*, *passim*.
35. *Seventh Report to Congress on Assistance to Greece and Turkey*.
36. The role of the United States in the Greek Civil War was critical and to a great extent decisive. However, it is treated separately in numerous studies, one of which is Howard Jones, *A New Kind of War: America's Global Strategy and the Truman Doctrine in Greece* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

# Fatal Choices: Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing

STEVEN R.DAVID

Israel has openly pursued a policy of targeted killing since the inception of the second *intifada* in September 2000. The Israelis have identified, located and then killed alleged Palestinian terrorists with helicopter gunships, fighter aircraft, tanks, car bombs, booby traps and bullets. Dozens of Palestinians have been killed, prompting international condemnation, domestic soul searching and bloody retaliation. Given its controversial nature and obvious costs, it is worth considering whether this policy is worth pursuing. Why has Israel embarked on a policy of targeted killings? Has the policy been effective in reducing Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians? Are targeted killings permitted by Israeli and international law? Is it moral? Most important, is the policy of targeted killing in the Israeli national interest?

The answers to these questions are of critical importance. For Israel, it is necessary to know whether its policy of targeted killings is pragmatically and ethically justified. If it is, it makes sense for Israel to continue or even expand this approach. If there are serious shortcomings, they need to be highlighted so that the policy can be modified or discarded. For countries other than Israel, and especially the United States, assessing the worth of targeted killings is hardly less significant. Ever since September 11, much of the world, with the United States in the lead, has sought ways to counter terrorism. If the Israelis have embarked upon a successful approach, it makes sense to emulate them. If Israeli policy is fundamentally flawed, however, better to understand that now, especially when voices demanding that terrorists be hunted down and killed have grown so loud. Either way, learning from the Israeli experience is central to those seeking to combat the threat from terrorism.

I argue that the policy of targeted killing is in Israel's interests and, subject to certain guidelines, should be retained. I argue this despite my conclusion that targeted killing has not appreciably diminished the costs of terrorist attacks and may have even increased them. Targeted killing is effective, however, in providing retribution and revenge for a population under siege and may, over the long term, help create conditions for a more secure Israel. So long as Israel's adversaries target innocent civilians as a prime goal of their military operations, Jerusalem will have little choice but to continue this practice.

This essay is in five parts. After defining targeting killing, I discuss the Israeli use of this practice from Biblical times to the present. I then consider the effectiveness of this policy in reducing Palestinian terrorism. Next, the legal and normative considerations of targeted killing are examined. An exposition of the advantages of targeted killing follows.

I conclude with some general recommendations for improving the implementation of this policy.

### DEFINITION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Targeted killing is the intentional slaying of a specific individual or group of individuals undertaken with explicit governmental approval. It is not 'assassination' for three reasons. First, assassination typically has a pejorative connotation of 'murder by treacherous means'. Whether the Israeli killing of alleged Palestinian terrorists is 'treacherous' or not is a debatable proposition that should not be assumed *a priori* by employing loaded terms such as assassination. Second, assassination usually refers to the killing of senior political officials. For the most part—though not exclusively—Israel has focused on killing Palestinian terrorists and those who plan the actual attacks. Finally, Israel itself does not use the term 'assassination', but instead prefers 'targeted thwarting' or 'interceptions'.<sup>1</sup> While it is not necessary to accept Israeli terminology for its actions, neither does it make sense to accept the terminology of its critics. Targeted killing accurately refers to what the Israelis actually do, with a minimum of semantic baggage implying approval or disapproval of their actions.

The practice of targeted killing by Israel is not new. The Bible offers many examples of murders undertaken to advance the political interests of the killer.<sup>2</sup> King David, for example, ordered the killing of the head of his army because he feared his ambitions. In the post-Biblical period, the Zealots of Massada fame freely killed opponents, Jews and non-Jews alike, in a failed effort to defeat the Roman occupiers. Underground Jewish groups in the period before Israeli independence such as the Hagana, Irgun and Lehi often cited Biblical and ancient historical examples to justify their own practices of targeted killing. These groups had little compunction about eliminating individuals who supported the British occupation of Palestine. A few of the victims were prominent political figures, such as the mediator Count Bernadotte. Most, however, were fellow Jews suspected of being informers.<sup>3</sup> Some of the leaders of these groups, such as Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, assumed leadership positions in modern Israel. They did so having sanctioned targeted killings in the past and perhaps with the belief that this policy helped them achieve their aims.

From its independence in 1948 to the present, Israel has used the policy of targeted killings to advance its interests. When the intensity of the Arab-Israeli conflict was high, especially if the main antagonists were the Palestinians, the number of targeted killings rose. At times of relative peace, such as just after the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords in 1993, targeted killings dropped. While the numbers may fluctuate, this practice has never totally disappeared. Exact figures are difficult to come by, because the Israelis usually do not publicly acknowledge responsibility for a specific killing. Nevertheless, in most cases it is clear who is responsible. Israeli attacks are characterized by their professionalism, efforts to minimize innocent casualties, and (occasionally) the sophistication of the weapons used (for example, helicopter gunships and F-16 fighters). The identity of the target also provides a strong indication of Israeli responsibility. The Israeli government will usually refuse to comment on attacks they mount (except where Israeli involvement

is obvious) but will emphatically deny responsibility for operations undertaken by others. In many cases, Israeli sources will unofficially admit to being behind specific attacks.

The persistence of the Israeli policy of targeted killing can be seen from a brief historical overview. Examples of targeted killings provided are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive. In the 1950s, Israel focused its targeted killings on efforts to *halt fedayeen* attacks from Egypt. Two senior Egyptian military intelligence officials in charge of *fedayeen* operations were killed by mail bombs sent by Israeli intelligence.<sup>4</sup> In the 1960s, Israel's policies of targeted killings had another key success when mail bombs were again sent, this time to German scientists developing missiles capable of reaching Israel from Nasser's Egypt. The bombs, sent to the scientists and their families, convinced the scientists to return to Germany, bringing about an end to the missile program.<sup>5</sup> The administration of the territories following Israel's victory in the 1967 war and an increase in Palestinian terror operations dramatically increased the use of targeted killings by Israel. General Ariel Sharon commanded an anti-terror detachment in 1971 that attempted to eliminate Palestinian militants from Gaza. Often posing as Arab civilians or guerrillas, Sharon's unit killed 104 Palestinians and arrested 742 others.<sup>6</sup> The slaughter of 11 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics galvanized the policy of targeted killing as no previous event had done. Israel established 'Committee X' chaired by Prime Minister Golda Meir and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan. The Committee oversaw a mission in which agents of the Israeli foreign intelligence service, the Mossad, systematically hunted down and killed the Black September members responsible for the Olympic massacre. Beginning in October 1972, the killings continued over the next year, resulting in 13 deaths. A Moroccan busboy killed by mistake in Lillehammer, Norway slowed but did not stop the Israeli effort.<sup>7</sup> Israel's war with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) escalated in April 1973 when three of its leaders were killed in separate apartments in Beirut. Ehud Barak, the future prime minister, led the successful operation.

The 1980s saw Israel attempt to kill two Palestinian leaders, one of which was successful. The failed effort occurred following the Israeli intervention in Lebanon in the spring of 1982, when Israel tried several times to kill PLO leader Yasir Arafat. Despite the use of booby-trapped cars and air attacks, Arafat was able to escape unscathed. An Israeli sniper reportedly had Arafat in his sights during the PLO's withdrawal from Beirut, but he was not given the order to shoot in view of the presence of American and other diplomats at the farewell ceremony.<sup>8</sup> In February 2002, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon lamented that Israel had not killed Arafat in Lebanon when it had the chance to do so. Israeli efforts proved more successful in killing Arafat's second-in-command, Abu Jihad (Khalil el-Wazir) by an Israeli hit squad in Tunisia in the spring of 1988. The decision to kill Abu Jihad stemmed from his planning of several terrorist activities against Israel, including the bloody hijacking of an Israeli bus in March 1988. More important, the Israelis saw Abu Jihad as an irreplaceable leader who held the PLO together and was key to the success of the first Arab *intifada*. Ehud Barak reportedly planned the joint Army/Mossad raid that killed Abu Jihad, drawing on his 1973 Beirut experience.<sup>9</sup>

Three major efforts at targeted killing took place in the 1990s, one successful, one a failure, and one achieving mixed results. The successful operation killed Palestinian Islamic Jihad head, Fathi Shikaki, in Malta in October 1995. No competent successor emerged to replace Shikaki, producing disarray in Islamic Jihad. The organization limped



along for several years, unable to mount any serious attacks against Israeli interests.<sup>10</sup> The mixed outcome stemmed from the January 1996 killing of Yahya Ayyash, known as 'the engineer', in Gaza. Ayyash was killed while speaking on a mobile telephone that had been booby-trapped by the Israeli domestic intelligence agency (Shin Bet). Ayyash had been one of Hamas' most skilled and prolific bomb makers whose handiwork proved critical to many terror attacks against Israel. Although Jerusalem succeeded in removing a key figure from Hamas, Ayyash's death also unleashed four suicide bus bombings in the next two months, killing more than 50 Israelis. Finally, in an embarrassing, almost comic episode, the Israelis failed to kill Khaled Meshal, the chief of Hamas' political bureau in Amman, in September 1997. Two Mossad agents succeeded in poisoning Meshal, but were captured by Jordanian authorities before they could leave Jordan. In order to secure the return of the two operatives, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed to provide the antidote for the poison (thus bringing about Meshal's recovery) and released Hamas' founder, Sheik Ahmed Yassin from an Israeli prison. As a result of this episode, Israel damaged its relations with Jordan, a friendly Arab country, and infuriated Canada when it was revealed that the Mossad agents had used Canadian passports. Most important perhaps, the aura of invincibility and shrewdness that surrounded Mossad had been badly compromised.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Targeted Killings During the Second Intifada*

A wave of targeted killing began in November 2000 as an outgrowth of the second Palestinian *intifada*. Following the failure of the Camp David accords in the summer of 2000 and Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount in late September, the Palestinians unleashed a violent revolt against Israel. Unlike the first *intifada*, in which the ratio of Palestinians to Jews killed was roughly 25 to one, in the second *intifada* a well-armed Palestinian force, making free use of suicide bombers, reduced that proportion to three to one.<sup>12</sup> Israel responded to these increasingly lethal attacks with military incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas, increased use of checkpoints to control Palestinian movements, and a dramatic rise in the slaying of Palestinian militants.

In one sense, there was nothing new about Israel's policy of targeted killing during the second *intifada*. As indicated above, Israel has pursued targeted killings throughout its history. What was new was the scale of the effort—never have so many militants been killed in such a short space of time. Also new were some of the tactics, particularly the use of helicopter gunships to execute individuals. Because of the extent of the campaign and the obvious use of Israeli military assets, the Israeli government has been forced to acknowledge its role in targeted killings to a much greater extent than previously, although it still refuses to routinely claim responsibility for its operations.<sup>13</sup>

Several high-ranking Palestinians have been killed during the second *intifada*. They include the head of the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Abu Ali Mustafa, the Secretary-General of the PFLP, Mustafa Zibri, and one of the leaders of the Tanzim movement, Raed al-Karmi. Most of those killed, however, were mid-level fighters, important enough to disrupt a terrorist cell but not so important as to provoke murderous retaliation. The targets of the attack usually knew they were being sought. Israel identified them through its intelligence apparatus and through collaborators. The

Israelis claim they only target those who are on their way to a terrorist attack or are actively planning one. During the early months of the second *intifada*, when the Israelis were having talks with the Palestinian Authority (PA), they would hand over a list of suspected terrorists to the PA. If the PA did not arrest the individuals, Israel killed them.<sup>14</sup> Once talks broke down with the PA in the spring of 2002, it is not clear if the Israelis attempted to provide a list for the Palestinians before taking action.

#### HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE POLICY OF TARGETED KILLING?

There is no question that Israel's policy of targeted killing has hurt the capability of its Arab adversaries to prosecute attacks against Israel. Terrorism is essentially an offensive action, making counteroffensive actions such as targeted killing an especially effective response. It is exceedingly difficult for Israel to defend itself from terror attacks or to deter terror attacks by Palestinians. In terms of defense, there are literally tens of thousands of targets in Israel for Palestinian terrorists. Power stations, government bureaus, bus depots, airports, skyscrapers, open-air markets and sport stadiums—the list is endless. It is impossible to defend them all, especially against a determined adversary that can choose the time and place of attack. Although, as discussed below, some level of deterrence of terrorism is achievable, dissuading potential terrorists is not easy when they are eager to die for their cause. In such situations, the best response to terrorism is to go on a counteroffensive, that is, to eliminate the terrorist threat *before* it can be launched. One of the most successful means of eliminating terrorists before they can strike is the policy of targeted killing.<sup>15</sup>

As alluded to above, Israel has achieved some notable triumphs from its policy of targeted killing. In the 1950s, terrorist infiltration from Egypt lessened as a result of the killing of Egyptian intelligence officers in charge of the operation. In the 1960s, Nasser's plan to build ballistic missiles capable of reaching Israel collapsed when his German scientists fled in the wake of Israeli mail bomb attacks. Black September was all but destroyed as a functioning terrorist organization in the 1970s, following the Israeli campaign to avenge the Munich massacre. The 1995 Israeli assassination of Islamic Jihad leader Shikaki in Malta undermined the effectiveness of this group for several years, as successors struggled over policy and power.<sup>16</sup>

Several other benefits of Israel's policy of targeted killing became apparent from its heightened practice during the second *intifada*. First, targeted killings have impeded the effectiveness of Palestinian terrorist organizations where leadership, planning, and tactical skills are confined to a few key individuals. There are a limited number of people who have the technical ability to make bombs and plan attacks. If these people are eliminated, the ability to mount attacks is reduced. Some evidence that targeted killings have reduced the performance of Palestinian operations. The large number of intercepted suicide bombers (Israelis estimate they stop over 80 percent of attempts) and poorly planned attacks (for example, suicide bombers who appear with wires sticking out of their bag or detonations that occur with little loss of life) indicates that there are problems either with the organization of the operations or those available to carry them out.<sup>17</sup> There are individual leaders whose charisma and organizational skills keep a group together. If they

are eliminated, they are not easily replaced.<sup>18</sup> Shikaki of the Islamic Jihad falls into this category.

Another clear benefit of targeted killing is keeping would-be bombers and bomb makers on the run. When the Israelis informed the Palestinian Authority who they were after, this information was often passed to the targeted individuals so that they knew they were being hunted. Some voluntarily chose to place themselves in Palestinian custody to avoid being slain. The threat they posed to Israel was consequently diminished. There are numerous accounts of others on the 'hit' list taking precautions against being killed such as sleeping in a different location every night and not letting others know of their whereabouts.<sup>19</sup> Even for those Palestinians who have not been told they are being hunted, the very possibility they might be targeted is likely to cause a change in behavior. Time and effort taken to avoid Israeli dragnets are time and effort not taken to plan or carry out operations against Israel.

Targeted killing also acts as a deterrent. In one sense, it appears virtually impossible to deter people willing and even eager to lose their life. But behind every suicide bomber are others who might not be as ready for martyrdom. The large number of Palestinian commanders who surrendered meekly to Israeli forces during the large-scale military incursions in the spring of 2002 lends support to the notion that many senior officials do not wish to die for their cause. It is also reasonable to assume that there are skilled, capable Palestinians who do not engage in terrorist operations for fear of Israeli reprisals. Most important, there is strong evidence that the policy of targeted killing hurts Palestinian organizations to the extent to which they are willing to alter their behavior. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon met three Palestinian leaders (though not Yasir Arafat) on January 30, 2002. When Sharon asked the Palestinians what they wanted from him, first on their list was an end to targeted killings.<sup>20</sup> Islamic Jihad and Hamas agreed to refrain from launching attacks in pre-1967 Israel in December 2001 so long as Israel refrained from killing its leaders. Although the cease-fire eventually broke down, their willingness to abide by the cease-fire, even temporarily, indicates the deterrent power of targeted killing.

Targeted killing is popular with the Israeli public. A poll published by *Ma'ariv* in July 2001 found that 90 percent of the Israeli public supported the policy. There appears to be a near-universal belief that targeted killing represents an appropriate response to the terror attacks that afflict the population. No other Israeli policy, including incursions into Palestinian territory, arrests of militants, the erection of a wall, or forced transfer of Palestinians from the territories to neighboring Arab countries enjoys the support received by targeted killing. Since the approval spans the Israeli body politic, it is well received by a coalition government representing diverse Israeli views. Democracies follow public opinion and targeted killing is a policy that has never lost favor with the Israeli electorate.

Targeted killing has also proved effective in the battle for public relations throughout the world. Although Israel has been criticized in the media for slaying Palestinian militants, the criticism has been far less than that directed at other policies. When, for example, Israel attacks Palestinian cities, there is no lack of coverage of the innocent deaths that result or the widespread suffering imposed on a mostly non-combatant society. Targeted killings, at least, focus on specific adversaries who mean Israel harm. That there is rarely television coverage of the actual operation is another benefit.<sup>21</sup>

In sum, the policy of targeted killing has prevented some attacks against Israel, weakened the effectiveness of terrorist organizations, kept potential bomb makers on the run, deterred terrorist operations, gained the support of an overwhelming percentage of the Israeli population, and done so while largely avoiding the sharp glare of publicity. It has not prevented all acts of terrorism, nor can it. But as part of a larger array of policies, including blockades, checkpoints, and incursions, it is seen to be a successful response to an intolerable threat.

### *The Limited Effectiveness of Targeted Killing*

There are also strong arguments that targeted killing is an ineffective and even harmful policy for Israel to follow. No compelling evidence exists that targeted killing has reduced the terrorist threat against Israel. By May 2002, after 18 months of targeted killings carried out on an unprecedented scale, the number of Israeli victims of Palestinian terror had reached an all-time high of nearly 500. It is, of course, always possible to assert that the number of Israeli deaths would have been even greater if not for the targeted killing. But this is an unfalsifiable proposition that is based more on faith than on reasoned analysis.

It is not difficult to understand why targeted killing has not been effective in stopping terrorism. Political entities promoting terror against Israel such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Palestinian Authority are very decentralized. They are made up of many cells, the destruction of some having little or no impact on others. Moreover, the number of young men (and women) who are willing and eager to be suicide bombers appears to be virtually limitless. Kiting these wannabe martyrs with primitive bombs capable of wreaking murderous assaults appears to be relatively easy—at least within the capability of many Palestinians that Israelis have not yet killed. No greater evidence of the failure of Israeli policy exists than the dramatic escalation of terrorist attacks and Israeli casualties in the first half of 2002, after more than a year of targeted killings.

A much stronger case can be made that targeted killing actually increases the number of Israelis killed, by provoking retaliation, than it saves lives by eliminating key terrorists. Four examples of targeted killing that produced a murderous response are especially compelling. First, as mentioned above, the Israeli killing of 'the engineer' Yehiya Ayash in January 1996 provoked four retaliatory suicide bombings of buses, killing more than 50 Israelis. Second, the first-ever killing of an Israeli cabinet minister occurred in October 2001, when members of the PFLP killed Rehavam Ze'evi. The PFLP stated it killed Ze'evi in retaliation for the Israeli killing of its leader, Mustafa Zibri, two months earlier. Third, the January 2002 targeted killing of Tanzim leader, Raed al-Karmi ended a cease-fire declared by Yasir Arafat the previous month. During that tenuous cease-fire, the violence of the *intifada* had been reduced to its lowest point since its inception. Following the slaying of Karmi, however, the Palestinians unleashed an unprecedented wave of suicide bombers, killing large numbers of Israelis. Both Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti and senior Israeli military officers agreed that Karmi's killing transformed a situation of relative calm into one of murderous violence. Even more important, Karmi's death reportedly caused the Al-Aksa Brigades—a secular group owing allegiance to Fatah—to engage in suicide bombings. Previously, only Islamic Jihad and Hamas employed this

weapon. The result was record casualties among Israelis combined with the added complication of having to confront women suicide bombers (which Islamic Jihad and Hamas have not employed) as well as men.<sup>22</sup> Finally, the Israeli killing of Hamas leader, Sheik Salah Shehade, in July 2002, derailed what many believed to be promising negotiations. Only days before Shehade's death, Israel had been engaged in serious talks with Palestinian leaders. The Palestinians put forth a proposal that called for a cease-fire and Palestinian promises to provide for Israeli security in exchange for an Israeli withdrawal from West Bank cities. The Palestinians also pledged, 'From this moment forward, we will end attacks on innocent, noncombatant men, women and children'. It is impossible to know whether these talks would have amounted to anything because the Israeli killing of Shehade (and 14 innocent civilians) derailed the negotiations, after which renewed violence (including a suicide bombing attack on Hebrew University) quickly followed.<sup>23</sup>

Targeted killing also hurts Israeli interests by removing current adversaries who may prove to be useful negotiating partners in the future. One of the vexing problems confronting Israeli decision-makers is the absence of any credible alternatives to the failed leadership of Yasir Arafat. This problem exists mostly because of the corrupt and dysfunctional politics of the Palestinian Authority. But Israeli actions, particularly its policy of targeted killing, have also contributed to this situation. When Israel killed Arafat's second-in-command, Abu Jihad, in 1988, it eliminated not only an individual behind several bloody operations, but also someone on the right wing of the PLO who many saw as a pragmatist capable of making peaceful compromises. As Ezer Weizman, then a member of the Israeli cabinet, remarked referring to Abu Jihad's killing, 'We are trying to find Palestinians to talk to us. We are trying to get the US to bring the two sides together. I don't think the assassination contributes to this. Liquidating individuals will not advance the peace process.'<sup>24</sup> Reported Israeli efforts to kill Marwan Barghouti fall into the same trap. Barghouti, who was taken prisoner in April 2002 in a major military sweep, supposedly was marked for execution. Only a mistake in communications resulted in his being imprisoned instead. Barghouti is widely considered as a reasonable alternative to Arafat. Like virtually every potential successor to Arafat, however, Barghouti has been implicated in terrorist acts against Israelis, hence the reported decision to have him killed. If Israel kills everyone who has been involved in terrorism, however, there will be no one left with any standing among the Palestinians with whom to negotiate. When targeted killing eliminates those who can potentially arrange a settlement, Israeli interests are severely damaged.

The policy of targeted killing also hurts Israel's security by damaging the effectiveness of its intelligence organizations. By diverting scarce resources away from the collection and analysis of intelligence on the threat posed by adversarial states, Israel runs the risk of paying less attention to existential threats in order to combat critical but less than vital challenges to its security. Following the Munich Olympics massacre, Israel focused much of the attention of its intelligence services on tracking down and killing the perpetrators. This effort may have led, in part, to diverting Israel's attention away from the growing threat posed by Egypt and Syria, which led to Israel being caught by surprise at the outbreak of the October 1973 war.<sup>25</sup> Even where the effect is not so dramatic, targeted killing can hurt Israel's ability to gather critical intelligence. Locating and killing key Palestinian terrorists requires timely intelligence, much of which can only be supplied by

informers. Given that a limited number of people will know the whereabouts of the targets, it will not be difficult to isolate those who have collaborated with Israel. Increasing reports of informers being killed during the second *intifada*, with their bodies publicly displayed, may partly be a result of their identities becoming known as a result of the targeted killing policy.<sup>26</sup>

Israel's policy of targeted killing has produced worldwide condemnation. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan repeatedly urged Israel to end targeted killings, saying it violates international law and undermines efforts at achieving a Middle East peace. In the United States, Secretary of State Colin Powell has also condemned the policy, declaring at one point, 'We continue to express our distress and opposition to these kinds of targeted killings and we will continue to do so'.<sup>27</sup> While serving as American Ambassador to Israel, Martin Indyk provided a harsh criticism of targeted killing on Israeli television saying, The United States government is very clearly on the record as against targeted assassinations. They are extrajudicial killings, and we do not support that.<sup>28</sup>

The European Union and, of course, the Arab states, have also been vocal in their condemnation of Israel for killing Palestinian militants. Although the criticism from the United States abated somewhat in the aftermath of the September 11 terror attacks, Israel nonetheless faces continuing international disapproval as a result of following this policy. This is especially the case when, as often happens, innocent Palestinians are killed in the course of Israeli operations. The July 2002 slaying of Hamas leader Shehada provoked especially harsh criticism—including from the United States—since 14 innocent bystanders (nine of whom were children) also died in the bombing attack. In its struggle for worldwide support, there is little question that the policy of targeted killing hurts Israel's standing.

Selectively killing Palestinian terrorists enhances the effectiveness of Palestinian attacks by encouraging new recruits for suicide bombings. Each time the Israelis kill a would-be suicide bomber or Palestinian official, a 'martyr' is created. Palestinian organizations feverishly publicize and romanticize the victims by putting on lavish funeral processions and displaying the 'martyr's' pictures. At these funerals, it is common to see dozens of young men (and women) pledging their willingness to become suicide bombers. Some of this, undoubtedly, is just for show. But as the spike in suicide bombings beginning in early 2002 attests, the supply of suicide bombers does appear to have grown.

Inasmuch as becoming a victim of an Israeli targeted killing has become a badge of honor among Palestinians, when the Israelis slay an alleged terrorist they unwittingly enhance the popularity of the organization to which he or she belonged. Many of the targets of Israel's attacks have come from Hamas and Islamic Jihad. These organizations then exploit their casualties in a manner designed to curry support among the Palestinian people. With public opinion polls showing skyrocketing approval of these groups, their efforts appear to be succeeding. In an effort to compete with Hamas and Jihad's success, Arafat's organizations dramatically stepped up their own terrorist attacks in 2002. A competition developed as to which group could launch the most costly attacks against Israel. The policy of targeted killing, by affording prestige to those planning and committing these attacks, has encouraged that which it most seeks to deter.

The Israeli policy of targeted killing has also enhanced cooperation among Palestinian groups. Islamic Jihad, Hamas and the Palestinian Authority have long been at odds with

one another. Nothing, however, unites adversaries like a common enemy. At the funeral of the PFLP's Mustafa Zibri, leaders of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Palestinian Authority put aside their many differences and joined together in a spirit of anti-Israeli unity. The common fear of being victims of Israeli attack may have the unintended consequence of promoting cooperation among Israel's enemies who otherwise would find it difficult to work together.<sup>29</sup>

The case against targeted killing on pragmatic grounds is compelling. Targeted killings have provoked murderous retaliations, eliminated individuals who might have become pragmatic negotiators for peace, diverted the resources of intelligence agencies away from existential threats, 'burned' informers, generated international condemnation, recruited new volunteers for terrorist acts, enhanced the standing of organizations whose leaders have been marked for death, and promoted the unity of groups confronting Israel. Israel has secured some real benefits from this policy. But taken as a whole, targeted killing, especially in the second *intifada*, has not thus far enhanced the security of Israel, and probably has cost more Israeli lives than it has saved.

### NORMATIVE AND LEGAL ISSUES

Norms are broad guidelines of behavior that are largely followed by states and other actors. There is no established norm against targeted killing, but there is one against assassination. Although I have argued there is a substantial difference between the two concepts, they are related in public perceptions. Understanding the difficulty Israel has had in justifying the practice of targeted killing stems, in part, from the norm against assassination. More important, continued Israeli employment of targeted killing can work to erode that norm, with negative consequences for Israel and the world community.

The norm against assassination is relatively recent. Before the seventeenth century, assassination was a normal means of states doing business, similar to diplomacy and war. Statesmen, philosophers, and even the Catholic Church approved of the practice as a means for states to pursue their interests while limiting harm done to innocents.<sup>30</sup> Support for assassination dropped precipitously, however, in the 1600s. Both in terms of rhetoric and practice, assassination became frowned upon. The norm against assassination became so strong, that even as odious a character as Hitler was not seen as a legitimate target by the British who deemed any effort to kill him 'unsportsmanlike'.<sup>31</sup>

What changed? According to Ward Thomas, who has done some of the best work in this area, norms stem not only from moral considerations, but also from the interests of the great powers. Moral concerns regarding assassination existed before the seventeenth century, but as long as assassination served the interests of the major states, they were not enough to support a norm against its practice. The rise of the sovereign state and the mass army in the mid-1600s, however, changed the thinking about the acceptability of assassination. By limiting 'legitimate' conflict to clashes of large military forces, the leaders of the great powers established rules of the game that maximized their advantages while sidelining the weaker states that did not have mass armies with which to compete. Similarly, the norm against assassination protected leaders of great powers by depriving the weak of an instrument that allowed them to threaten those leaders. As long as there was general agreement that the way to resolve violent conflicts was through conventional

war and that assassination was unacceptable, the hierarchy of the international system and the interests of the leaders of the major powers would be preserved.<sup>32</sup>

The reasons for the emergence of the norm against assassination illustrate some of the costs Israel could be expected to bear if the norm is eroded. Assassination is a weapon of the weak. It benefits those with limited resources, but with fanatical devotion to a cause. In other words, it plays to Palestinian strengths. So long as conventional military operations hold sway, Israel is in an unassailable position. Its use of multi-million dollar sophisticated jet fighters and modern tanks manned by trained crews makes it the strongest power in the Middle East. But when the arena switches to the world of assassination, young men and women armed with a couple of hundred dollars worth of explosives eager to achieve martyrdom are able to inflict grievous harm on Israel that Arab armies cannot match. Insofar as Israel erodes the norm of assassination, it transforms the rules of conflict in a manner that benefits its most fervent adversaries.

It is of course true that norms do not determine behavior. Terrorists, almost by definition, are not constrained by established norms. The long history of plane hijackings and other murderous attacks against innocent civilians by terrorists throughout the world is brutal testimony of their willingness to violate established codes of conduct. In confronting this challenge, states have also had to depart from usual norms. Terrorists typically do not appear in identifiable uniforms or hold clear swaths of territory, making conventional responses to their threats all but impossible. In so far as Israel (and other states) make war on terror, traditional norms of combat will have to be eroded no matter what the long-term implications may be.

Nevertheless, when a major regional power and democracy such as Israel openly proclaims its right to pursue a policy of targeted killing, it helps to create a new standard of behavior that may work to its and other states detriment. Norms may not be determinative, but neither are they irrelevant. Rather than simply disregarding norms because they interfere with its war on terror, Israel needs to act in a way that preserves its right of self-defense without bringing about future harm to itself and to the international community.

### *Law and Targeted Killing*

The policy of targeted killing is fully consistent with Jewish and Israeli law, and is in accordance with most interpretations of international law as well. Regarding Jewish law, the 'Rodef' injunction that appears in the Bible (Exodus 22:1) makes it abundantly clear that if someone is coming to kill you, you are obligated to kill them first. This obligation applies not only for one's protection, but for the defense of one's community as well. As such, killing a terrorist before he can act is not only permitted by Jewish law, it is *required*.<sup>33</sup>

Israeli law is a bit more problematic, but here too the legality of targeted killing is not in much doubt. It is true that Israel does not allow capital punishment for its citizens. It is also true that Israel's Basic Law (the closest Israel comes to a constitution) guarantees that, 'There shall be no violation of the life, body or dignity of any person as such'. However, the Basic Law does allow these rights to be suspended, 'by a law befitting the values of the State of Israel, enacted for a proper purpose, and to an extent no greater than is required, by a regulation enacted by virtue of express authorization in such law'.<sup>34</sup> Israeli law has



allowed for just such a suspension. The Judge Advocate General of the Israeli Defense Forces has issued three conditions under which targeted killing can take place. Before suspected terrorists are killed the Palestinian Authority must first ignore appeals for their arrest, the Israelis must conclude that they would be unable to arrest the individuals themselves, and the killing must be done to prevent an imminent or future terrorist attack—not for revenge or retribution. The Israeli High Court supported these conditions in a strongly worded opinion that rejected petitions calling for an end to targeted killing. Provided these conditions are followed, targeted killing is clearly consistent with Israeli law.<sup>35</sup>

As for international law, the situation is more complicated. Both international treaty and customary law outlaw assassination. The 1937 Convention for the Prevention and Repression of Terrorism and the 1973 New York Convention are prominent examples of efforts undertaken to formally codify the illegality of assassination. Customary prohibitions against assassination have been even more influential than written law. The notion that assassination is not an accepted practice of statecraft became prominent with the writings of Hugo Grotius and Emmerich de Vattel in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The prohibition against assassination was strengthened in the mid-1970s following congressional investigations into activities by American intelligence agencies. The Church and Pike Committee investigations were especially outraged by Central Intelligence Agency efforts to assassinate several world leaders including Patrice Lumumba of the Congo and Cuba's Fidel Castro. The Committee hearings led to the establishment of an Executive Order stating that, 'No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States Government shall engage in or conspire to engage in, assassination'. This Executive Order has been reaffirmed by each succeeding American president. Although pertaining only to the United States, given America's leading role in the world, the Executive Order contributed to the general agreement that assassination is unacceptable.<sup>36</sup>

There is a clear consensus that assassination violates international law. Nevertheless, as already discussed, there are strong reasons to believe that the Israeli policy of targeted killing is not the same as assassination. The Director of the Center for National Security Law and the University of Virginia Law School, John Norton Moore, explains, 'If one is lawfully engaged in armed hostility, it is not "assassination" to target individuals who are combatants'. An American military lawyer, Charles J. Duncan agrees, 'Contrary to popular belief, neither international law nor US domestic law prohibits the killing of those directing armed forces in war. Nations have the right under international law to use force against terrorists.'<sup>37</sup>

There are two points of ambiguity in the Israeli case regarding its adherence to international law. First, is whether Israel is actually at war with the Palestinians. As the head of the international law branch of the Israeli army's legal division remarked, 'International law actually only recognizes two situations: peace or war. But life isn't as simple. Israel is not at war since war is between two armies or two states and the Palestinians have neither. But since Israel is in armed conflict with Palestinians, you are allowed to target combatants.'<sup>38</sup> If Israel is in 'armed conflict' with the Palestinians, that is tantamount to war, and in war, Israel has every right to target those combatants it believes are its enemy. Just as a soldier will feel no compunction about firing on an

opposing army in wartime before they attack, so Israel is legally justified in pre-emptively killing terrorists regardless of whether they have attacked Israel. War—or armed conflict—is a legal license to kill opponents whether it is targeted killing or more traditional combat.

The second area of ambiguity rests in whether Israel is using ‘treacherous’ means when it kills suspected terrorists. For many, ‘assassination’ is murder by treacherous means, and so *how* one is killed is as, or even more, important than *who* is killed in determining whether the ban on assassination applies. As former American Secretary of Defense, Casper Weinberger, notes, ‘Thus it is considered lawful in warfare for a skilled and daring soldier (perhaps a Delta Force commando) to steal into the enemy’s camp and enter the general’s tent and kill him. But it would be a forbidden assassination if someone disguised as the general’s doctor was admitted to his tent, and then killed him.’<sup>39</sup> The issue of what constitutes ‘treacherous’ killing is not just semantics. The United States had little trouble justifying its efforts to kill Khadaffi in 1986 or Osama bin Laden in 1998 using bombs and cruise missiles. Precisely because they were military operations and not carried out under false pretenses, the ban against assassination did not apply. It is true that the Israelis have used deception in some of their killings. There are reports that Israelis have disguised themselves as women or Arabs to facilitate getting their target. What distinguishes the killings in the second *intifada* from the past, however, is precisely the open and military nature of the attacks. The use of helicopter gunships or F-16s to kill suspected terrorists, for example, fits much more the conventional modes of warfare than it does the shadowy, deceitful world that characterizes assassinations. International lawyers may disapprove of Israel’s actions, but few would argue that it violates the ban on assassination.

### THE ADVANTAGES OF TARGETED KILLINGS

Thus far, the case for targeted killing appears weak. While it may disrupt and deter some attacks, this policy has likely provoked far more killings of Israeli civilians than it has saved lives. As one of the few Western democracies that openly proclaim the right to commit extra-judicial killings, Israel has been criticized by the United States, its Arab neighbors, the international community and the United Nations. While it may be technically legal, the policy has helped erode the norm against assassination, thus endangering the lives of world leaders while empowering the weak and fanatic. Based on its past record and likely future impact, there seemingly is little basis to continue this failed approach.

And yet, the policy of targeted killing makes sense for Israel for five reasons. First, is the question of morality. Yes, there is widespread agreement that targeted killing raises disturbing moral issues. After all, Israel is killing individuals without any trial or due process. Innocent people are sometimes killed in these operations. It offends our sense of moral sensibility when government officials are reduced to the role of hit squads, as if they were part of some Mafia-like organization. The bedrock of Western democracy established by philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke is limited government. How can that principle reconcile itself with a government that deprives people of their life without proper judicial proceedings? The moral squeamishness that the policy entails is demonstrated by the reluctance that Israel manifests when it refuses to comment on various killings for which it is clearly responsible. Israel may defend its right

in the abstract to pursue a policy of targeted killing, but clearly the specifics of doing so are not something with which it is comfortable.

Its qualms notwithstanding, Israel's policy of targeted killing rests on an unassailable moral foundation. 'Just War' tradition from the time of Saint Augustine to the present has emphasized the need for armed conflict to be discriminate and proportionate in the pursuit of legitimate ends for the use of force to be moral.<sup>40</sup> There is no question that the policy of targeted killing meets these criteria. Targeted killing is discriminatory in that it focuses exclusively on one's adversaries. Civilian casualties and collateral damage are minimized. It is proportionate in that only enough force is used to accomplish the task. Targeted killing does not employ large numbers of troops, bombers, artillery and other means that can leave in their wake far more destruction than they prevent. And targeted killing serves a legitimate end by striking at those who threaten the lives of innocents. Since the policy is applied against those on their way to terrorist attacks or those who make such attacks possible, targeted killing enables Israel to protect its civilians by eliminating those who would murder them. Far from being morally questionable, it would be difficult to come up with an approach in warfare that rests on stronger moral ground.

Targeted killing also serves Israel's interests because it affords the Israeli public a sense of revenge. Revenge is seen by many as a destructive and even evil motivation that should be avoided at all costs. This explains the Israeli High Court decision to prohibit targeted killings in the name of vengeance. But revenge is also a natural desire by an individual or society for obtaining justice when other means are not available. Achieving revenge can bring about a sense of fulfillment and justice for people who believe they have been wronged. Failing to achieve revenge can lead to despair, frustration and anger. Politically, this can lead to the downfall of governments unwilling or unable to avenge attacks on its people. More fundamentally, withstanding repeated attacks without responding can lead to a sense of impotence and malaise that ultimately weakens a society's ability to protect itself. Revenge becomes problematic when there are no guidelines for how to act and against whom. If there is too much space for arbitrary retaliation, revenge can indeed get out of hand and become disruptive. That is why states regulate and oversee the exercise of revenge. For domestic infractions, revenge is realized through the rule of law. In the international realm, revenge is pursued through foreign policy, ranging from diplomatic rebukes to war.<sup>41</sup>

Israel's use of targeted killing is a form of state-sanctioned revenge. Since the government decides on who is to be killed according to established criteria, the issue of arbitrary retaliation is resolved. Because the killers of Israeli civilians are themselves killed, the desire for revenge from both families of the victims and society at large is met. Anger at the government is dissipated as the perpetrators of terror receive the same punishment as their victims.

Retribution is an even more powerful justification for the Israeli policy of targeted killing. Retribution, in its purest sense, has no utilitarian component. It is not motivated by vengeance. Even if the victims do not care about the offense committed or are opposed to punishing the aggressors, punishment nevertheless must be carried out. Nor is retribution motivated by deterrence or a need to satisfy the demands of an aggrieved population. If it can be shown that deterrence will not be enhanced by retaliation or that the community has no wish to strike back, retribution still demands the punishment of the

guilty. Retribution is driven by the belief that offenders need to be punished because such punishment is warranted. This concept of 'just deserts' is compellingly put forward by the theorist Michael Moore who writes, 'Retributivism is the view that punishment is justified by the moral culpability of those who receive it. A retributivist punishes because, and only because the offender deserves it.'<sup>42</sup>

Israel's policy of targeted killing, stripped of its utilitarian contributions, is retribution, plain and simple. Palestinian suicide bombers seek out the most innocent of Israeli civilians—old men, women, children and infants—and attempt to kill as many of them as they can. Stopping these operations before they can inflict their horrific harm is of obvious importance and provides some of the justification for targeted killings. But what of those who plan the attacks, arm the bombers and send them on their way? How are they to be punished? The Palestinian Authority is unwilling or unable to arrest the perpetrators, many of whom are PA officials. Who, then, aside from the Israelis will provide the just deserts to these terrorists? Even if the policy of targeted killing does not reduce Israeli casualties, even if it increases them, such a policy is justified because it is only through this approach that the terrorists get what they inflict on others—a violent death.

Public opinion polls support the vengeful and retributive goals of targeted killing. In the United States, for example, 65 percent of Americans polled supported assassinations in the Middle East, even though 40 percent said such actions would *increase* the likelihood that more attacks would be carried out against the United States (only 28 percent said assassinations would decrease attacks against Americans). Similarly, only 19 percent of Israelis polled said targeted killing has decreased terrorism while 32 percent said it has done the opposite (37 percent believe it has had no effect on terrorism).<sup>43</sup> And yet, more than 70 percent of Israelis (in this poll) supported the policy of targeted killing. In both the United States and Israel, therefore, there is a shared belief that targeted killing (or assassinations) will not enhance security, will in fact hurt security, and yet should be carried out. Although the polls do not ask the question directly, the desire for revenge and/or retribution appears to be stronger than the quest for security.

Aside from revenge and retribution, targeted killing supports Israel's interests because among the possible responses Israel can mount against terrorism, it is the least worst option. As discussed, Israel has responded to Palestinian terror in several ways, all of which have major drawbacks. Checkpoints humiliate and inconvenience large numbers of the Palestinian population, producing resentment and seething hatred. Israeli raids to arrest militants result in civilian casualties. For both of these responses, innocent Palestinians are hurt in the effort to get at the guilty. Not only is this morally repugnant, it also plants the seeds for future terrorism.

Major incursions into Palestinian territory to root out the terrorist infrastructure have been especially controversial. In the spring of 2002, the Israelis carried out two massive interventions producing thunderous international condemnation. Following the Israeli incursion of early March 2002, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan sent a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon that was sharply critical of Israel's actions. The message of the letter, however, seems to suggest that more discrete, focused actions (such as targeted killing) would be preferable to the policy of mass intervention that Israel had undertaken. As the letter says:

In the process (of incursions) hundreds of innocent non-combatant civilians—men, women, and children—have been injured or killed and many buildings and homes have been damaged and destroyed...Israel is fully entitled to defend itself against terror... It is incumbent on all parties to take urgent steps to de-escalate the level of violence. Israel should contribute to this effort by ensuring that the I.D.F. uses only weapons and methods that minimize the danger to the lives and property of Palestinian civilians, in conformity with its humanitarian obligations...<sup>44</sup>

Targeted killing is clearly a policy that 'uses weapons and methods that minimize the danger to the lives and property of Palestinian civilians'. Similarly, the *New York Times*, which led against targeted killings, seemed to endorse the policy when confronted with Israeli military incursions. As a March 14, 2002 editorial stated:

Israel must cut way back in its use of military force as Washington urges, and direct its actions against suspected terrorists rather than against the broader Palestinian civilian population. Its current methods are causing great civilian suffering and unnecessary humiliation. With Palestinian police failing to make arrests, Israel is justified in sending its own forces after specific terrorist suspects.<sup>45</sup>

A stronger defense of targeted killing would be very difficult to find.

The far greater Israeli intervention into the West Bank following the March 28 Passover massacre produced even more international opposition. This intervention saw a massive call-up of Israeli reserves as key Palestinian cities including Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, and Bethlehem were attacked in an effort to destroy terrorism at its roots. However legitimate the intentions may have been, the operation produced casualties in the hundreds (including the death of 23 Israeli soldiers) and widespread destruction of civilian areas. Both sides acknowledged that innocents were killed, though they differed greatly on the numbers. Inevitably, the Israeli action provoked harsh international criticism to the point where only the United States stood by Israel and even American support was called into question. The European Union, for the first time, threatened sanctions against Israel. Public opinion polls revealed greater support for Palestinians than Israelis in such countries as France, Italy and Britain. The UN envoy to the Middle East, Terje Roed-Larsen, an architect of the Oslo Accords, called the destruction wrought by the Israeli army, 'morally repugnant', and declared that 'combating terrorism does not give a blank cheque to kill civilians'. The Israelis found themselves defying President Bush's order to withdraw their troops, 'without delay' while American officials, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, William J. Burns, and Secretary of State Colin Powell, criticized Israeli actions.

The Israeli incursions harmed non-combatant Palestinians to a far greater degree than the policy of targeted killing. They also produced much more intense condemnation of Israel throughout the world. It is not the purpose of this essay to assess whether such operations were nonetheless justified. What is clear, however, is that Israel must pay a large price to carry them out. Over the long term, a policy of targeted killing may offer Jerusalem the same benefits and far less cost.

As this review of Israeli policies suggests, it is not enough to oppose Jerusalem's policy of targeted killing. Critics of this approach need to provide an alternative. Aside from anti-Israeli extremists and pacifists, few counsel Israel to simply endure suicide-bombing attacks and do nothing. The question then becomes what for Israel is the correct response to terrorism. For hawks, Israeli incursions into Palestinian areas are attractive options, though not so much to replace targeted killings as to supplement them. For Israel's legion of international critics, there are precious few suggestions for how Israel should combat terrorism, only condemnation of whatever armed response Israel undertakes. As we have seen, targeted killing may achieve international approval in retrospect not so much for what the policy has achieved, but rather because it is less objectionable than the alternatives. Although not a ringing endorsement, targeted killing may survive because it is indeed the last bad choice for a state confronted with the threat of terrorism.

Finally, it is worth briefly revisiting the question of effectiveness of targeted killing. I have argued that there has been no clear benefit from this approach as record numbers of Israeli civilians have been killed in terror attacks at the same time that targeted killings have also reached unprecedented levels. But the absence of a short-or even medium-term benefit does not mean that targeted killings will not, over the long haul, eventually undermine the infrastructure of terror constructed by the Palestinians. As noted above, leaders of Palestinian organizations have acknowledged that the slaying of their leaders and operatives has hurt them and that they are prepared to modify or cease attacks against Israeli civilians if Israel would suspend its practice of targeted killings. Over time, the relentless elimination of the foot soldiers and planners of terrorism may well have an impact that is not discernible at present. It is far too early to declare targeted killing an ineffective or failed policy.

## CONCLUSION

The policy of targeted killing is in Israel's interest. Terrorists on their way to operations against Israeli civilians are intercepted before they unleash their assault. Bomb makers and commanders are eliminated, with skilled replacements not always available. Enemies spend time trying to survive rather than planning attacks and potential recruits are discouraged from offering their support. Targeted killing signals to the Israeli people, adversaries of Israel, and the world at large that those who seek to kill the innocent in an effort to spread fear for political purposes will pay the ultimate penalty. Revenge is achieved for horrific acts, thus helping mollify a restive Israeli population and enabling the government to remain in power. Revenge also carries with it the hope of deterrence, the notion that over time Palestinians will calculate that the costs of terrorist actions against Israel will not be worth the benefits. Targeted killing provides retribution. Given the Palestinian Authority's inability or unwillingness to punish terrorists, the task of rendering justice to those who attack innocent civilians falls into the hands of the Israelis. It is true that targeted killing provokes murderous retaliation, exposes informers, and uses scarce intelligence resources. But given the range of options open to the Israeli government to respond to terror, it remains the most effective and least morally problematic policy for Israel to follow.

There is little doubt that Israel will continue to pursue targeted killing, raising the question of how this policy can be improved. I suggest four improvements, all designed to make certain that the benefits of targeted killing are not overwhelmed by the very real dangers that such a policy can bring about. First, Israel should be open and unapologetic about its pursuit of targeted killings. Targeted killing is a legitimate and moral response to terrorist attacks. There is no need for Israel to evade responsibility for carrying out this policy, especially when Israeli involvement is obvious. Denial or refusal to comment leaves Jerusalem open to the charge that it is behaving improperly or has something to hide. Neither is the case and Israel should not behave as if it were.

Second, Israel needs to make sure that its pursuit of targeted killing does not degenerate into lawlessness and savagery that makes it undistinguishable from the threat it seeks to counter. The guidelines that Israel has already instituted for targeted killing need to be strengthened and be the subject of open debate. Along with the directive that targeted killing should be carried out only against combatants on their way to committing terrorist acts or who are known to be behind them, Israel must also do more to ensure that decisions on actual killings are overseen by elected officials. As a democracy, Israel needs to entrust the monumental decisions on who to kill to those who are responsible to the Israeli people.

Third, Israel must refrain from killing political leaders. Granted, the distinction between political leaders and those who plan terrorist attacks is at best ambiguous and at times non-existent. Nevertheless, for the norm against assassination to survive—a norm that Israel needs as much as any state—a distinction must be drawn between political leaders and combatants. Just as the Israeli government has announced it will not kill Yasir Arafat, despite his active backing of terrorist operations, so too must it avoid the targeting of lesser leaders provided their main activities are political. The killing of Palestinian leaders such as Abu Jihad and Abu Ali Mustafa must stop.

Finally, Israel needs to announce publicly that the policy of targeted killing is a temporary expedient while it is engaged in armed conflict with Palestinians. Israel must unambiguously declare that if a Palestinian Authority emerges that makes peace with Israel, and proves itself capable and willing to curb terrorism, targeted killing will stop. Targeted killing makes sense and is justifiable only as a weapon of war. Once that war is over, the policy must end.

Targeted killing is an unsavory practice for an unsavory time. It can never take the place of a political settlement, which is the only solution to the terror that confronts Israel. Until such a settlement is achieved, however, targeted killing stands out as a measured response to a horrific threat. It is distinctly attractive because it focuses on the actual perpetrators of terror, while largely sparing the innocent. For a dangerous region in an imperfect world, the policy of targeted killing must remain a necessary evil.

## NOTES

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6. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
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## Exploiting Democracy: The IRA's Tactical Cease-Fire

JONATHAN STEVENSON

In their recent book *Democracies at War*, Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam make the interesting argument that democracies tend to win wars against other states.<sup>1</sup> They offer two main reasons for this. First, political accountability constrains democratic governments to engage in only those wars that they are likely to win. Second, the value placed on individuality in democratic societies produces more inventive and capable soldiers. These factors do not militate so neatly in favor of democracies—such as the United Kingdom—when their adversaries are sub-sovereign terrorist insurgencies. In that situation, wars are never a matter of choice but rather of survival, and the resilience and determination of even the best military and political leaders may be matched by the persistence and fanaticism of their terrorist counterparts. The British experience with Northern Irish terrorists demonstrates that the threat of violence affords terrorists an asymmetrical advantage over a democratically controlled military by virtue of the emotional trauma that the threat visits on the general population. Even in the hopeful event of a viable peace process, a democratic state can ideally contain that threat but cannot expect to eliminate it.

The institutions of democracy itself—such as access to electoral politics and due process of law—create pluralism, transparency and equity that can translate into vulnerability. While these features constitute a kind of ‘soft power’ through which democracies can tame destabilizing indigenous forces, equally they afford enemies of the state tactical opportunities that would not exist under an illiberal regime to advance their causes. But one of the characteristics of a democracy is that it rejects *not* being a democracy as a valid alternative. So the paramount issue is how a state can best balance its ideals and its security, so as to minimize the extent to which terrorists can use the tools of democracy against it.

In the context of the Northern Irish peace process, the United Kingdom has only a mixed record in this regard. Recently, in fact, it has been dismal.<sup>2</sup> Yet that same peace process is held up worldwide as a major success story in conflict resolution. Thus, those states engaged in such conflicts with terrorist groups would be fully justified in wondering whether the Northern Irish peace process is really working, where it has gone wrong, whether the British have really solved the problem of domestic terrorism, and if so at what price.

## DEMOCRACY'S INROADS

The answers to those questions start with another question: why did the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) cease-fire materialize in 1994? The biggest reason is probably that modern British democracy had substantially redressed most of the IRA's ground-level grievances. In 1969, when the latest incarnation of 'the troubles' really began, Catholics in Northern Ireland, a 35 percent minority, remained subject to systematic discrimination and political marginalization by a Protestant-dominated devolved parliament informally known as 'Stormont', which the 1922 partition of Ireland had validated. This circumstance led to Catholic civil rights protests, public disorder, and finally tit-for-tat terrorism mainly by the IRA and the IRA's Protestant counterparts, known generally as loyalist paramilitaries.<sup>3</sup> The IRA developed the position that Catholics could be protected only if Ireland were united and the British ejected; loyalists insisted that Northern Ireland retain British sovereignty.

Under direct rule, however, Sinn Féin, the IRA's political wing, was made legal and encouraged to participate in the democratic process, and housing, employment and civil rights reform markedly improved the lot of Catholics. But neither the IRA nor the far larger contingent of non-violent Irish nationalists abandoned the goal of a united Ireland. Violence continued for over 25 years and claimed the lives of about 3,500 people—mostly innocent civilians. Nevertheless, the combination of effective counterterrorism and enlightened direct rule weakened the IRA's argument for 'physical force' as a means to a united Ireland. Persistent British and unionist resistance to IRA terrorism convinced even hard-line IRA men that they could not win a strictly military struggle: Northern Ireland would not become Britain's Algeria. Accordingly, in 1986 the republican movement adopted the so-called 'Armalite and ballot-box' approach. More selective terrorism was supplemented with straightforward politicking, which to many made Sinn Féin the IRA's acceptable public identity and its president, Gerry Adams, the movement's more agreeable face.<sup>4</sup> The IRA's unilateral cease-fire in August 1994 did break down dramatically in February 1996 with the IRA's bombing of Canary Wharf, but was reinstated in July 1997 and has roughly held since then.

Six weeks after the 1994 IRA cease-fire, the loyalist paramilitaries followed with a cease-fire of their own. Over the next four years, the level of violence remained much lower than it had been in the previous 25. In September 1997, Sinn Féin was included in multiparty talks mediated by former US Senator George Mitchell. In April 1998, they resulted, quite improbably, in the Belfast Agreement (also known as the Good Friday Agreement), which provides for a devolved power-sharing government in Northern Ireland and sub-sovereign cross-border agencies jointly run by the Northern Ireland assembly and the Irish parliament. Over the next two years, all terrorist prisoners were to be released. The Irish Republic would renounce its territorial claim to Northern Ireland. The Agreement was approved on May 22 in simultaneous referenda in Northern Ireland (by 71 percent) and the Irish Republic (by 94 percent).

## DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AS A REVOLUTIONARY TACTIC

If the soft power of democracy helped tame the IRA, however, the IRA was also able to turn mature democracy to its tactical advantage both before and after the republican movement decided to commit fully to a political strategy. The fundamental reason is very simple: the threat of terrorist violence is a power multiplier in a democracy; it enables whatever group wields it to punch considerably more than its electoral weight. After the IRA tried to kill Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in Brighton in 1984, she negotiated with the Republic of Ireland the Anglo-Irish Agreement, signed in November 1985. Technically, it gave the Irish Republic only a decorative consultative role in Northern Irish governance. In retrospect, however, the agreement clearly reflected a critical weakening of British resolve to defend Ulster unionism against Irish nationalism. Thatcher effectively abridged British sovereignty, if only symbolically, on account of pressure from an armed minority faction from a minor territory that had attempted to murder her.

More broadly, the IRA's manipulation of the judiciary, in particular, has produced a fallacy of moral equivalence, when state counterterrorist actions that result in fatalities are equated with the illegal actions of the terrorists themselves. In 1995, the European Court of Human Rights, acting on a petition filed by republican lawyers, ruled that British Special Air Service (SAS) commandos illegally used excessive force when they killed three unarmed IRA operatives in Gibraltar in 1988 as they attempted to escape capture. There was no dispute as to the activity taking place by the operatives: conducting reconnaissance for a bombing attack on British forces. Republicans also pressed for and got a special inquest into a 1987 incident in Loughgall in which the SAS ambushed eight armed IRA men who were trying to blow up a police station and shot them all dead. Republicans condemn these episodes as instances of an illegal 'shoot-to-kill' policy. Yet the terrorists themselves carry out precisely such a policy. This is a common occurrence in Arab and sometimes European rhetoric about the Middle East conflict: Israelis are as bad as the terrorists they oppose.

Obviously the state's descent to the terrorists' level of intentionally targeting innocent civilians cannot be endorsed, and some counterterrorist operations do result in excesses and civilian casualties. But, generally, the state conduct, of which those sympathetic with terrorists complain, falls far short of the conduct of the terrorists themselves. Their employment of high-profile legal proceedings to showcase alleged abuses, however, tends to diminish moral distinctions in the public mind. In another extra-agreement carrot designed to appease the IRA, a current judicial inquiry into 'Bloody Sunday' of 1972—when British soldiers shot dead 13 unarmed Catholic civilians and one IRA man in Londonderry—is spending millions of pounds to impose blame on state villains as terrorists are let out of jail and never pressed to admit to any wrongdoing on their part. This double standard has inevitably translated into political gains, not least among suggestible and naive Irish-Americans seduced by romantic imagery.

Even before the 1994 cease-fire, the IRA exploited democracy. But after August 1994, the IRA refused to genuinely embrace democracy. Instead, its superficial commitment to a non-violent political process was tactical rather than strategic: it still will not publicly relinquish violence as a future means of constitutional change. Furthermore, the IRA's

non-violent vocation is expedient rather than philosophical: neither the IRA nor Sinn Fein has ever apologized or taken full responsibility for the ritual murder of hundreds of people. These points are nicely illustrated by the IRA's Canary Wharf bombing of February 1996. This operation occurred 17 months into the peace process, and was premised on the refusal of Prime Minister John Major's Conservative government to convene multi-party negotiations without an IRA renunciation of violence. The IRA cease-fire was not reinstated until July 1997—about six weeks after the British Labour Party swept to power and Tony Blair became Prime Minister. Whereas the Tories had consistently supported the union throughout Northern Ireland's existence, the Labour Party had encouraged the voluntary unification of Ireland. Indeed, it is probable that the July 1997 cease-fire has substantially endured for almost five years mainly because Labour has stayed in power during that period. A principled republican conversion to noncoercive means is a fiction.

Nevertheless, the IRA and Sinn Fein have received public credit for 'walking the walk and talking the talk' of peaceful politics. Agreeably enough, they enjoyed political approval for ostensible reform. Whereas Sinn Fein's popular support had peaked at ten-12 percent before 1994, by the time the Belfast Agreement was signed it stood at about 18 percent. This increase improved conditions for agreement in several ways. First, it affirmed Sinn Fein's ambitious political agenda, which entailed political advancement in the Irish Republic as well as Northern Ireland, so as to encircle unionism. Second, it engendered greater confidence among the non-violent parties—unionists, the British government and the Irish government, as well as the United States as 'honest broker'—that the republican conversion was worthwhile to the movement and therefore sustainable. Thus, to make the Belfast Agreement possible, each side was able to make painful political compromises. The Irish Republic dropped the territorial claim on Northern Ireland from its national constitution. The republicans, at least temporarily, agreed to abide by the wishes of Northern Ireland's Protestant majority and to participate in a devolved form of British government. Perhaps most wrenchingly of all, the British and the unionists allowed all terrorist prisoners to be summarily released.<sup>5</sup>

The other dividend, however, was the powerful British fear of a republican backslide to violence—a fear that could be manipulated to republican advantage, and a far less salutary phenomenon. During the three years following the signing of the Belfast Agreement, Sinn Fein's backing in Northern Ireland increased to roughly 24 percent of the electorate. Still republicans refused to forswear a return to the armed struggle. In the calculations of republican leaders, there was no need to do so: the erstwhile IRA's targets would remain relieved that they were not being bombed or shot at regardless of any declaration that the war was over. Moreover, republicans believed, preserving the salience of the distinctly undemocratic threat of retrogression to terrorism might move some of those targets to accord republicans advantages that were vastly disproportionate to their electoral power. Sinn Fein is only the third or fourth largest party in a discrete part of the United Kingdom that contains less than three percent of the country's total population. Only four members of Parliament (out of 659 in total) are from Sinn Fein, and they do not participate in national government. Yet, as one journalist has noted, the IRA's threat of violence 'makes the British government dance'.<sup>6</sup> If healthy democracy promoted the completion of a

formal negotiated agreement, the limits of democracy have also encouraged the corruption of that agreement's implementation.

The prospect of the IRA's return to bombing London has induced the Labour Party to follow a Northern Irish policy that can arguably be characterized as appeasement. While paying lip service to the objective of disarmament—often called 'decommissioning' in the Northern Irish context—Downing Street tried to get republicans to disarm with concessions on police reform and demilitarization that were highly problematic for unionists. Blair never took a harder line, even though there was one readily available. For example, he could have levied threats that the cross-border bodies would cease to operate or that police reforms would be held in abeyance unless weapons were handed over. Instead, Blair has repeatedly cut Sinn Féin extra slack. Though the Belfast Agreement pledged its signatories to complete paramilitary disarmament by May 2000, when that deadline arrived the goalpost was simply moved to May 2001; the deadline has now been put off through legislation until 2007. Meanwhile, in casting any prospective collapse of the Belfast Agreement as an unalloyed catastrophe and refusing to entertain any 'Plan B', Blair implicitly blackmailed unionists with the specter of renewed IRA terrorism and intensified the unionist suspicion that he would never keep his pre-Agreement pledge to enforce decommissioning. The June 2001 unionist electoral choices—favoring anti-Agreement over pro-Agreement candidates—can be interpreted as a protest vote over a government policy that carries the IRA threat. Recent instability in the loyalist cease-fire and heightened dissident loyalist violence appear to be similarly motivated. There were, of course, vigorous protests against such placation from the opposition Conservative Party and from unionists. But Labour holds such an unassailable majority in the House of Commons—410 of 659 seats—that these protests had little political moment. Blair's iron grip on the Labour Party itself has made intramural debate on Northern Ireland virtually non-existent.

After the arrests in Colombia of three IRA men for training the anti-American Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in August 2001 and in the wake of the September 11 attacks, any American tolerance for terrorism in general and IRA coyness on decommissioning in particular evaporated. Washington privately made it clear to Sinn Féin that republicans would enjoy no diplomatic support from the United States unless the IRA made positive steps towards disarmament.<sup>7</sup> This combination of internal crisis and diplomatic pressure allowed Blair to press harder for disarmament, and produced a small, secretive decommissioning gesture on October 23, 2001. Even so, Blair's soft approach has left London with little room to maneuver. Goalposts that apply to republicans have wheels. But now that the IRA has forfeited a delicate sufficiency of weapons, republicans are sure to accuse the British government of 'moving the goalposts' at the other end of the field unless it delivers on its promises of accelerated police reform and demilitarization. Unionists expect these processes to involve an equitable give-and-take on weapons. But the IRA expects to trade operationally meaningless disarmament tokens for major government and unionist concessions on matters outside the remit of the Belfast Agreement. In early April 2002, for example, the IRA forfeited another suspicion of weaponry—apparently the *quid pro quo* for a Labour Party pledge to give about 200 IRA fugitives blanket amnesty. Amnesty is not mentioned in the Agreement. In any event, the dynamics whereby the IRA is politically compensated for doing the minimum in terms of

disarmament ensure that the IRA will remain one of the best-armed terrorist groups in the world.

### SINN FEIN'S OTHER THREE POLITICAL FRONTS

In Northern Ireland itself, the IRA's latent threat of violence has yielded republicans special treatment. In particular, super-majority and consensus requirements in the devolved assembly effectively accord disproportionate power to nationalists, and nationalists' allocation of seats on the assembly's ruling executive exceeds their share of the general population. These exceptional features of the political arrangements in Northern Ireland distort pure democracy, but many would concede that such power-sharing artifacts are necessary for stability in a historically divided society. It is also worth observing that the IRA's willingness to participate in a devolved government under British sovereignty—thus tacitly conceding the legitimacy of the British state in Northern Ireland—did represent a radical departure from its historical position and was no doubt ideologically painful. At the same time, it is also clear that the IRA coldly calculated the benefits that would flow from that concession. Chief among these were leverage over the Labour Party in Britain; a freer hand to rally financial and diplomatic support in the United States; and a higher political trajectory in southern Irish politics. All three benefits have involved the exploitation of democracy in one form or another, all three have been realized, and all three are functionally connected.

Following a policy that began when hunger-striker Bobby Sands ran for Parliament in 1981, Sinn Fein candidates stand for British parliamentary elections but do not take their seats because they refuse to take the oath of allegiance to the Queen required of MPs and in any case object to participating in British national government. Yet despite this institutional contempt for Westminster, the standing threat of IRA violence made a democratic body capitulate to the demands of Sinn Fein, which brazenly requested the full parliamentary financial privileges and the use of House of Commons offices and facilities. Blair complied, putting through special legislation according the four Sinn Fein MPs offices and over \$600,000 in annual expense allowances in December 2001.<sup>8</sup> In addition, while British political parties are prohibited from raising money overseas, Parliament made Sinn Fein the lone exception. This dispensation left intact the republican movement's primary source of revenue for both military procurement and political support: the United States.

Before the peace process began, Sinn Fein and the IRA were unable to garner much direct political support from prominent US politicians. They were also consigned to raising money mainly at grassroots level through the bar-room collection boxes of the Irish Northern Aid Committee, or 'Noraid'. Because Noraid was suspected of facilitating weapons purchases, and is presumed to support the IRA directly, its contributions came mainly from naive and impressionable Irish-Americans lacking a full picture of the situation in Northern Ireland; more knowledgeable members of that community tended to avoid close involvement. The Provisional IRA's cease-fire and political cooperation ensured that it would be removed from the US State Department's list of proscribed terrorist organizations. This made politicians (like Senator Edward Kennedy and Congressmen Peter King and Benjamin Gilman) more inclined to provide overt support

to the republican movement. It also eased Sinn Fein's use of liberal political fundraising laws to register its legal charity 'Friends of Sinn Fein'. This organization was free of Noraid's gun-running stigma, and attracted support from wealthy businessmen. During the first year following the 1994 cease-fire, Friends of Sinn Fein took in well over 1 million dollars. While contributions have diminished since September 11, Sinn Fein is now the best-funded political party in Ireland thanks largely to its American connections.

This political war chest, in turn, is bankrolling Sinn Fein's aggressive campaign to increase its representation in the Irish parliament, in which it won an unprecedented five seats in the May 2002 national elections. This ambitious all-Ireland political agenda has blunted accusations by anti-Agreement republicans (such as the Real IRA) that the republican movement is merely settling for a partitionist solution. In this way, these monies may have served a useful stabilizing purpose. Sinn Fein, however, cheats in elections. The party has used an Irish democratic oddity to try to bolster its standing. Under the Irish Constitution, Northern Irish citizens are also considered citizens of the Irish Republic. Consequently, before the May 2002 elections, Sinn Fein importuned its Northern Irish supporters to establish addresses in the south through friends or relatives, register to vote, and cast their votes for Sinn Fein. The party may have also engaged in the illegal practice known as 'personation', whereby Sinn Fein backers assume the identities of registered voters and cast an extra vote and potentially disqualify the actual registered voter.<sup>9</sup> The message is clear: republicans, by their revolutionary nature, believe that the justness of their cause trumps the constraints of democracy. While they may pay lip-service to those constraints and rhetorically accept them, they will play by the rules only when it is to their advantage.

Ironically, the coordinated and synergistic use of different democracies to promote a united Ireland effectively allows Sinn Fein to recruit an extra territorial constituency that increases its political power in Northern Ireland itself. More generally, IRA/Sinn Fein's manipulation of democracy wherever it is encountered tends to confirm the tactical character of the IRA cease-fire. The IRA's adherence to a non-violent agenda was and remains contingent on political conditions it deems favorable. A number of developments could change the IRA's assessment, and send it back to terrorism. First, Conservatives in Britain could sweep to power and take a harder line against republican temporizing. In the Irish Republic, the opposition Fine Gael party, which is more sympathetic with unionists than the Fianna Fail party currently in government, could make political gains against the currently dominant Fianna Fail. This would dim republican prospects for an all-Ireland unification push, for which they have been trying to enlist Dublin's aid, and render the republicans' all-Ireland encirclement strategy more difficult to execute. Finally, irrespective of its peripheral political achievements, the Belfast Agreement requires that a majority of Northern Irish voters approve unification. In effect, any such approval would require (at the very least) a Catholic majority in Northern Ireland. The 'demographic time bomb' on which republicans are relying for ultimate victory could fizzle out. While the Catholic share of Northern Ireland's population has been increasing, Catholic and Protestant birthrates appear to be converging. Moreover, there is firm evidence that up to 20 percent of Catholics favor the union with Britain. Some polls put that figure as high as one-third.



Despite its minimalist nods towards peace, evidence has mounted that the IRA remains on a war footing, and wishes to have extra-territorial military as well as political reach. On St Patrick's Day, March 17, 2002 the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Special Branch headquarters in East Belfast was broken into, and sensitive intelligence files were stolen, including those concerning informants against the IRA. The Provisional IRA may have been involved.<sup>10</sup> Then, in April, police uncovered a 'hit list' of senior British and Northern Irish officials in West Belfast. Also in April, Russian security services informed British military intelligence that the Provisionals had purchased at least 20 sophisticated AN-94 armor-piercing assault rifles from Russian sources in fall 2001.<sup>11</sup> This demonstrates the intentional and cynical operational emptiness of the decommissioning gestures: as the IRA puts old weapons 'beyond use', they are simply replaced with newer and more effective ones. There is also some evidence that the appearance of reasonableness that the IRA now enjoys in the British—Irish context—facilitated by Blair's see-no-evil approach—has emboldened it to undertake provocations elsewhere. In April 2002, a report to Congress by the State Department's Office of Counterterrorism substantiated suspicions that, in direct contravention of American security interests, up to 15 Provisional IRA men had joined Iranian, Cuban and possibly Basque terrorists in Colombia between 1998 and 2001, and trained the FARC in urban terror techniques, including the use of secondary explosives and homemade mortars—both IRA innovations. Palestinian pipe bombs found in the West Bank appear to be of IRA design, and Palestinian snipers are suspected of having been trained by the IRA. Gerry Adams' refusal to testify before Congress on the IRA's Colombian connection indicates that, against the chilling effect of September 11, his instinct is to reinforce his terrorist credentials rather than distance himself from hard-liners. This is further evidence of the provisional nature of the IRA cease-fire.

The internationalization of a peace process can generate political momentum towards the resolution of the conflict. But it can also attenuate the connection between the real stakeholders in peace—the local players—and the political process itself. Once that occurs, the outside actors have placed their prestige on the line, and often become preoccupied with getting an agreement—any agreement—just as often at the expense of equity. After the agreement is obtained, the priority becomes its preservation rather than its proper implementation or law enforcement. In the case of Northern Ireland, this has meant British tolerance for non-compliance with legal requirements and broader principles of civil democracy.

#### NORTHERN IRELAND IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The Northern Irish peace process, though fraught and tenuous, must be judged a qualified success in that it has ratcheted down the level of violence and established a reasonably durable framework for political dialogue. The reasons for this are illustrated by the comparison between the IRA and other insurgents around the world.

Salient differences separate the Northern Irish situation from Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the IRA has fought mainly for a change in sovereignty in an existing state, Palestinian armed groups have agitated for their own state on certain highly problematic terms. Israel is also in a tough neighborhood and acutely concerned about its strategic

tenitorial security, whereas Britain has no comparable worry. Further, most Palestinians seem to support armed insurgency in one form or another, when most Northern Irish Catholics condemned the IRA's 'armed struggle' and 'physical-force tradition'. And although the idiom of Anglo—Irish relations has decisively shifted from the military to the political, the Middle East's idiom is still predominantly military.<sup>12</sup>

There is one overarching similarity between the conflicts, however. Both the IRA and the Palestinians consider their endeavors to be open-ended and inter-generational. If the cause isn't fulfilled now, it must be passed down to others to be carried forward. This means that any cease-fire or apparent political conversion is likely to be merely tactical. If Sinn Féin's political fortunes turn downward, the next generation of republicans will probably consider starting up 'the troubles' again. Likewise, since the Oslo process did not yield a result that satisfied Arafat, he elected to allow insurgency and terrorism to re-assert themselves, since for many Palestinians, and Arabs in general, 'Israel is an intrusion in "holy" Arab territory. The territorial compromises proposed by Israel and American mediators are viewed as amputations of their cultural and theological patrimony.'<sup>13</sup>

Likewise, republicans regard the compromises to sovereignty proposed by Great Britain and unionists as abortions of their national birthright. *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA) terrorists view the substantial autonomy that the Spanish government has granted to the Basques as similarly derisory, and even though Corsica is the most subsidized and least taxed region of France and has considerable autonomy, residual separatist violence persists.<sup>14</sup>

Irish republicans accepted less than what they ultimately want in Belfast when the Palestinians refused to accept the same at Camp David or Taba not because republicans are more reasonable or timid, but because they have less political room to maneuver. With popular Palestinian sentiment on its side and the moral backing of the entire Arab world, the Palestinian Authority (PA) is far more difficult to outflank politically than is Sinn Féin/IRA. While the British and unionists can democratically deny the republicans a united Ireland, Israel cannot democratically deny the Palestinians a homeland. Thus, republicans exploited democracy in full awareness of the constraints that this same democracy imposed on the movement. They did so to advance what started as an undemocratic agenda. ETA attempted to emulate the IRA in declaring a cease-fire in September 1998. Spain, however, was less willing than Britain to budge, foreclosing the possibility of the independent Basque state that ETA demands. Accordingly, ETA ended its cease-fire after 14 months and returned to terrorism at an accelerated pace, confirming the entirely pragmatic and amoral nature of the motivation for its cease-fire.<sup>15</sup> The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (the Tamil Tigers) have observed a number of cease-fires during the brutal 20-year-old civil conflict in Sri Lanka, but have used them more to regroup and re-arm than to negotiate in good faith for a political solution. A bilateral cease-fire and tentative peace process have recently taken hold there mainly due to a global crackdown on external support for the Tamil Tigers and, as in Northern Ireland, the potential availability of political space for compromise short of sovereign change.<sup>16</sup>

Such revelations of opportunism in the machinations of terrorist groups are not reasons to condemn peace processes. Rather, they should simply serve as admonitions to their interlocutors that such groups do have ulterior motives and will adhere to a non-violent agenda only to the extent that they believe doing so will serve their political objective.

Generally, this is the way democracies ought to apprehend their insurgents. In Northern Ireland, this kind of strategem has led to a fairly virtuous result: non-violent politics was a democratic alternative to terrorism for Irish nationalists, and the IRA had a strong interest in dominating that scene via Sinn Féin as a means of increasing its popular appeal at home and winning diplomatic support from the United States.

### LESSONS

Gerry Adams decided to explore the opportunities available from non-violent democratic politics to fulfill his objectives. Adams found the relative merits of politics more attractive. Why? It has nothing to do with superior morality. On one hand, the IRA had no substantial outside military support, and rather little diplomatic support save for that of the United States and Ireland on a highly conditional basis. On the other hand, Adams' constituents, unlike Arafat's, lived in the very state that they opposed. This made it easy for them to infiltrate the politics. Even in that realm, their goal remained subversion. Irish republicans still had an advantage: while their adversaries remained strictly subject to the requirements of democratic institutions, the IRA's continuing threat of violence afforded it disproportionate strength.

More broadly, an inter-generational view of the conflict reinforces the latent threat of terrorism and leaves open the possibility that agreed-upon political arrangements will be voided when the opportunity presents itself. In the short term, cutting a deal and reducing the level of violence has worked to the IRA's clear advantage: British forces have been drawn down; former terrorists have appeared statesmen; under the aegis of the Belfast Agreement terrorists have been released wholesale from prison; and a united Ireland has certainly slipped no farther away.<sup>17</sup> From the standpoint of unionists and the British government, the IRA's relative quiescence over a five-year period has also raised the political barriers to its returning to violence. The truth is that the Northern Irish peace process has been a qualified success. Democracy has not defeated terrorism, nor has terrorism defeated democracy; rather, each has manipulated the other in equal measure.

### NOTES

1. Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam, *Democracies at War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).
2. See generally, Jonathan Stevenson, 'The Long Spoons of Ulster', *National Interest*, No. 68 (Summer 2002), pp. 89–100.
3. In Northern Ireland, Protestants now constitute about 58 percent of the population, Catholics about 42 percent. Virtually all Protestants are 'unionists', which means they support the union with Britain; the vast majority of Catholics are 'nationalists', meaning they wish the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to unite and become one nation. Unionists who have practiced or endorsed terrorist violence in order to preserve the union are generally called 'loyalists'. Nationalists who have used or supported terrorism to try to effect Irish unification are known as 'republicans'.
4. There are two other key reasons. For one, the Cold War ended, and British ministers conceded that Northern Ireland no longer had any economic or strategic importance to

Great Britain. This boosted the confidence of nationalists, and generated momentum toward a new political dispensation for Northern Ireland. Finally, there was the personal factor: Gerry Adams evolved from a West Belfast bartender and IRA leader into an ambitious political figure, singularly articulate and charismatic among republicans. He was no longer satisfied to be a pariah, and sought worldly power. Implicit American guarantees of support enabled Adams to convince the larger republican movement that a unilateral cease-fire would yield political dividends that continued terrorism could not.

5. Several pre-existing realities reinforced the parties' confidence: a military stalemate; Sinn Fein's tentative political success in Northern Ireland; good bilateral relations between the two 'mother countries'; and, not least, the well-entrenched observance of the rule of law in each of those countries (particularly Britain, whose sovereignty Northern Ireland retained).
6. Lionel Shriver, 'The Ian and Gerry Show', *Wall Street Journal Europe*, June 14, 2001, p. 8.
7. See, for example, Toby Harnden, 'IRA Acted After Bush Warning on Terrorism', *Daily Telegraph*, Oct. 25, 2001, p. 9.
8. On April 30, 2002, the House of Lords voted to bar Sinn Fein permanently from its premises or facilities. The British government, however, is seeking to have this ruling overturned by the House of Commons.
9. Sinn Fein has widely employed this practice as well as intimidation and postal fraud in Northern Ireland. In the June 2001 British parliamentary election for the Fermanagh and South Tyrone seat, Sinn Fein candidate Michelle Gildener defeated Ulster Unionist Party candidate James Cooper by 53 votes in a race that unionists challenged in court as being tainted by all three practices. The court found that while there were breaches of election laws, they did not affect the result.
10. Rosie Cowan, 'Republicans Held Over Raid at Castlereagh', *Guardian*, April 1, 2002, p. 7.
11. Brian Brady, 'Super-rifle Threat to Good Friday Agreement', *Scotland on Sunday*, April 21, 2002, p. 19.
12. See Jonathan Stevenson, 'Peace in Northern Ireland: Why Now?', *Foreign Policy*, No. 112 (Fall 1998), p. 49.
13. Henry Kissinger, 'The Peace Paradox', *Washington Post*, Dec. 4, 2000, p. A24.
14. See Jonathan Stevenson, 'Keeping Europe's Terrorists at Bay', *Wall Street Journal Europe*, Dec. 3, 1999, p. 8.
15. See generally Paddy Woodworth, 'Why Do They Kill? The Basque Conflict in Spain', *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 2001), pp. 1–12. See also Jonathan Stevenson, 'Basques and Northern Irish: Different Problems', *Wall Street Journal Europe*, Sept. 23, 1998, p. 10.
16. See, for example, *Strategic Survey 2001/2002* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the IISS, 2002), pp. 225–6.
17. See Jonathan Stevenson, 'Irreversible Peace in Northern Ireland?', *Survival*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Autumn 2000), p. 20.

## **Between Bullets and Ballots: The Palestinians and Israeli Democracy**

HILLEL FRISCH

A strategy combining bullets with ballots—fighting the enemy by military means while simultaneously gnawing at the enemy’s center politically—should have come naturally to the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). After all, the PLO emerged as a liberation movement only two years after the victory of the National Liberation Front (FLN) against the French in Algeria in 1962. The FLN victory over France gave birth to a political truism (albeit whose veracity can be debated). It stated the following: even though national movements might be militarily defeated in battle, they win the war through politics. The Algerian insurgents were roundly defeated militarily but were politically successful in ousting the French and establishing an independent state—an achievement the PLO has yet to realize. According to most accounts, the FLN’s political success stemmed from two sources, international support for its cause; and perhaps more importantly, the support it received and the divisions it caused within France itself. Arguably, both the support and the internal threat the Algerian issue posed would have been inconceivable had not France been a democracy.

This essay tries to analyze whether Palestinians perceived Israel’s democracy is an important characteristic in its own right (an independent variable), and if so, how they tried to take advantage of democracy’s characteristics in order to help achieve their objectives. Finally, it attempts to assess how effective they were in playing the democratic card. The essay makes three central claims:

1. That despite initial disinterest, the Palestinians placed increasing importance on the dynamics of Israeli democracy in achieving their goal. The Likud Party’s electoral victory in 1977 caused as much a watershed in Palestinian thinking on Israeli society as it did in Israel. The transformation of the Israeli political system from a party dominant to a close two-party race offered the PLO an opportunity to woo the Israeli left to its side and eventually to wring concessions from almost each succeeding government.
2. That capitalizing on the presumed advantages presented by Israeli democracy, mainly by reducing Israeli consensus and legitimacy, resulted in a debate between two paradigms, the paradigm of the bullets and the paradigm of the ballots. Armed struggle, reflecting the PLO’s roots and commitment to violence and catharsis ideologies; and by contrast, the paradigm of the ballots, that reached its peak in the present Israeli-Palestinian confrontation. Yassir Arafat’s adoption of the paradigm of the bullets hurt

the Palestinians grievously. They learned the hard way that Israeli democracy was a two-edged sword—at times wielded to their advantage, lately to their disadvantage.

3. That this was due in part to the failure of the Palestinians to recognize the importance of some features of the democratic regime in achieving their goals. They had not studied in a rigorous manner the relationship between regime type and strategy that would inform them under what conditions Israeli democracy benefits their cause and under what conditions it does not.

Broadly, the essay addresses these issues in chronological order, not for the sake of clarity but because these issues crystallized in three distinct periods. The first part attempts to explain why the Palestinians concentrated their efforts regarding Israel on military means alone between 1964 and 1974, despite the important lesson gleaned from Algeria. The second part, focusing on the years 1977–92, shows how the ballot paradigm came to prevail. The ballot strategy addressed two audiences—Israel’s Arab citizens and the Israeli electorate as a whole and persisted up to 1996. The violence over the tunnel opening along the Temple Mount in September 1996 and the present wave of violence that began in the end of September 2000, often called the al-Aqsa *intifada*, is the subject of the third part. It is in this period, more so than the previous two that the struggle between the two paradigms—ballots or bullets—came to the fore.

#### 1964–74: BULLETS NOT BALLOTS

Palestinians should have been doubly attuned to the importance of the type of regime prevailing in Israel following the lessons learned from the Algerian experience. A well-known book, *Masirat Filastin*, written in the same year the PLO was founded by Naji Alush, a Palestinian journalist and later member of the PLO, compared the Palestinian confrontation with Israel with that the Algerians faced against the French. Alush came to the conclusion that even though political gains will be achieved eventually, the armed struggle against Israel would be infinitely more difficult for the Palestinians than it was for the Algerians.<sup>1</sup>

Yet the Palestinians, even if cognizant of the importance of Israel’s internal politics on the future course of the struggle, were hardly in a position to capitalize on this knowledge. After all, their stated goal was not decolonization—forcing the withdrawal of an empire from the territory they sought to control, but pocide—the destruction of the Jewish State altogether. Operating on that platform so forcefully stated in the 1964 covenant and even more accentuated in the 1968 version, the PLO was hardly in a position or interested in engaging even left-wing Zionist politicians.<sup>2</sup> And being committed to armed struggle, they were also hardly in a political mood that would facilitate theorizing over the potentialities of struggle against a democracy.

The Palestinians chose instead to place their hopes in terrorism and armed struggle. The most ambitious was Arafat’s decision to traverse the Jordan River and set up base in the West Bank. The guerrilla strategy of Fatah, PLO’s military faction, possessed advantages over a strategy of mobilizing groups within the West Bank to political agitation in the form of strikes, demonstration and rallies. Also, in guerrilla warfare Fatah faced little internal competition. Had Arafat chosen a strategy of political mobilization he would

have had to compete with existing, though weak, political parties in the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the Arab world looked to guerrilla action for salvation after the defeat of the Arab states in the Six-Day War. Finally, guerrilla warfare fostered the military expertise not only needed to fight the enemy but also useful for prevailing over indigenous rivals. The PLO's use of armed struggle, at that time at least, was above all aimed to secure a monopoly right over representing the Palestinian cause.

This national liberation model, however, did not serve either Arafat or Fatah well. They had overlooked the power and determination of the Israeli nation-state. It has been estimated that Israeli forces captured 1,000 guerrillas and killed 200 more between the time Arafat moved to the West Bank and his escape back to Jordan four months later.<sup>4</sup> In 1968, for example, only 33 of a total of 1,320 recorded military incidents that took place in the West Bank could be linked to Palestinian guerrilla activities. The same was true of casualties. While military announcements released by the various PLO factions claimed responsibility for the deaths of 2,618 Israelis in 1968,<sup>5</sup> they in fact killed only 69 Israelis.<sup>6</sup> Such a palpable lack of success eventually generated a credibility crisis within the Palestinian resistance movement. Despite the revolutionary, anti-state sentiment that spread throughout the Arab world after the 1967 war, the fact remains that even at the height of the Palestinian armed struggle's popularity, military conflict essentially remained an inter-state phenomenon.

Though ideologically the PLO was totally committed to armed struggle during this period, nevertheless its research institutions showed a high degree of interest in Israel, perhaps because the Palestinians realized that at some point they would have to come to engage Israel in political dialogue. Thus, the PLO's Center of Research (Markaz al-Abhath) published Sabri Jiryis' *Arabs in Israel* in 1967, the first book published on the subject. Jiryis, a law graduate from Hebrew University, who left Israel in 1971, eventually became the director of the Center of Research, significantly increasing the Research Center's focus on Israel and Israeli Palestinian affairs.<sup>7</sup> The PLO Research Center along with the independent Center of Palestine Studies also published ample studies and analyses of Israel's internal political scene. Readers should have become quite familiar with even the minute details of Israeli politics. Ostensibly, the studies were aimed at showing the fissures within Israeli society that presumably gave hope to the readers that this very strong garrison state would disintegrate if not imminently, at least in the near distant future. However, waiting for Israel to self-destruct does not explain why both institutions covered Israel's numerous political parties.<sup>8</sup>

Yet even when armed conflict essentially failed, the PLO sought to redress the political deficit by concentrating mainly on diplomacy in the regional and international arenas rather than focusing on Israel and taking advantage of its democratic regime to create a wedge between left and right. Indeed, while the PLO was scoring victories in the regional and international arenas in 1973–74, it avoided violence considerably. The PLO renewed efforts to organize violence in the West Bank in 1975–76 after a reversal of political fortunes that included its disastrous involvement in Lebanon's internecine war during these years and a subsequent conflict with Syria in which the Syrians sided with the Lebanese Phalange.<sup>9</sup>

It was only when neither diplomacy nor armed struggle yielded political results that the PLO in the later 1970s began to seriously contemplate the ballot paradigm—swaying the

minds first of Israel's Arab citizens and then of the Israeli electorate as a whole. The policy, however, was never more than a handmaiden to Palestinian diplomacy culminating in the signing of the September 1993 Declaration of Principles on the White House lawn.

### THE BALLOTS PARADIGM

The feasibility of mobilizing Israel's Arab citizens, at first to violence and then as a political lobby on behalf of the PLO crystallized after Land Day on March 30, 1976. The day of violence in which Israeli police killed six Israeli Arabs in the Galilee who protested against large-scale expropriation of Arab land considerably exceeded the intensity of violence of even the most violent demonstrations until that time in the West Bank. Rakah, the New Communist List, who drew most of its votes from Israel's Arab citizens, and the institutions it effectively created, such as the Committee for the Defense of Arab Lands, played a dominant role in the organization of the demonstrations.<sup>10</sup> Up to that point, the PLO considered Israel's Arab citizens to be meek bystanders in the Israeli—Arab and Palestinian conflict. At first, the PLO hoped that Israeli Arabs would increasingly participate in acts of violence against the state. As a statement by the Central Council of the PLO in August 1977 made clear, Palestinians every where, including Israeli Arabs, were all one people led by the PLO and played the same role:

The council has the highest appreciation of the heroic role played in the struggle of the masses of our people and the national leaderships in Galilee, the Triangle, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Neither the role, identity, or in fact, affiliation with the PLO of Palestinians within Israel seemed to be any different from Palestinians across the green line.<sup>11</sup>

In fact the situation was slightly more complicated. The dramatic ascension of the Likud government to power in 1977 and the results of the 1977 general elections, led the PLO to abandon its revolutionary expectations regarding Israel's Arab citizens and focus almost exclusively on their electoral potential.

In the 1977 general elections, 51 percent of Israeli Arab voters cast their ballots for the anti-Zionist Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE), which Rakah, the New Communist Party, effectively controlled. Ironically, while Israeli analysts thought the results confirmed that Israeli Arabs were treading a path of inexorable radicalization, the PLO was becoming slowly aware of the importance of Israeli Arabs as participants within the system rather than as fighters against it.<sup>12</sup> The PLO became involved politically in an Israeli electoral campaign for the first time when it urged Arab voters to vote for the DFPE in 1981.<sup>13</sup> At the same time it continued to support radical extra-parliamentary groups within Israel, such as Abna al-Balad (Sons of the Village).

However, in the 1981 general elections the majority of Israeli Arabs failed to respond to the PLO by voting for the DFPE and instead voted overwhelmingly for Zionist parties.<sup>14</sup> The DFPE's share of the Arab Israeli vote dropped by one-third from 50 to 33 percent, while the vote for Labor and other Zionist parties among Israeli Arabs increased accordingly.



Likud's ascension to power provided another lesson of the electoral potential of Israeli Arabs. The mobilization of state resources behind a massive settlement drive in the West Bank threatened the PLO in the long term by potentially depriving it of an historic homeland to which it could potentially return. The PLO must have noticed that allocations for settlement dropped by 80 percent during the unity government years of 1984–90 compared to levels of expenditure by Likud administrations, which preceded and succeeded the unity government years.<sup>15</sup> Since it was a commitment to massive settlement which most clearly distinguished the Likud from Labor, it was only natural that the PLO began to look for ways to mobilize on behalf of a Labor-led government rather than to mobilize against the state.

Even though by 1984, getting rid of the Likud emerged as a top priority in PLO strategy, it was still not prepared to turn to the Jewish electorate directly, and still preferred to continue fortifying the emergence of an Arab lobby as a poor substitute. At these elections, the PLO did not endorse the DFPE, but the newly formed Progressive List for Peace (PLP). The growing salience of Palestinian identity that was far more prominent in the ideology and symbols of the PLP than in those of the DFPE gave the former an electoral advantage.<sup>16</sup> The PLO hoped that the PLP, with a more radical Palestinian image and message, would encourage both Israeli Arabs who formerly boycotted the elections and young potential first-time voters to cast their vote on its behalf and thus expand the Arab voting bloc beyond what the DFPE could attract. An Arab electoral bloc would at least force the Likud into a partnership with Labor. Labor, the PLO reasoned, would then act to slow down the settlement drive. It still refrained from endorsing mainstream (Zionist) parties, which did not meet the PLO's minimalist platform—a Palestinian state in the occupied territories.<sup>17</sup>

By the 1988 elections, the PLO was motivated more to facilitate a shift to the left in the Jewish electorate in the hope of achieving major concessions, principally withdrawal and statehood, rather than to decrease specifically the harmful long-term effects of settlement. The PLO for the first time called upon Jewish Israelis 'to vote for peace' rather than specifically urging them to vote for parties that were committed to the creation of a Palestinian state.<sup>18</sup> It is hard to tell whether the endorsement included Labor along with Mapam, the veteran socialist Zionist party in the Israeli political arena, and the Citizens Rights Movement (CRM-Ratz), both of which supported a peaceful solution on the basis of Palestinian self-determination. To further confuse matters, two weeks prior to his endorsement, Arafat presumably told Bruno Kreisky, the former Austrian Prime Minister, that he preferred a Likud victory because at least it was an enemy that showed its true face.<sup>19</sup>

The PLO also urged Israeli Arabs to refrain from boycotting the elections. The PLO employed other channels to explain that this meant, as far as Israeli Arabs were concerned, voting for Arab parties.<sup>20</sup> PLO policy then rested on two foundations:

1. Institutionalizing the Arab electoral bloc both as means of influencing the elections; and
2. Trying to persuade, in veiled tones, the Israeli Jewish public to vote 'for peace', which in effect meant an endorsement of the Zionist left and left-of-center parties.

*The 1992 Elections: Disengagement as Involvement*

Scoring points for the Palestinian movement on the basis of Israeli ballots became a critical issue in the 1992 elections as the PLO desperately hoped for a Labor victory. Almost for the first time since the establishment of the PLO, it possessed almost no military or violent option. Not only had the PLO sided with the wrong side in the Gulf war, which had weakened the PLO considerably, leaving the organization in a vulnerable regional and international position, the war also seriously weakened the *intifada* that began in December 1987. Internationally, a 'peace process' that began in the Madrid Conference in October 1991 and later moved to Washington, was based on terms Palestinians considered unfavorable to achieving their goals. Within Israel, the Islamists had made substantial gains in the 1989 local council elections among Israeli Arabs, while in the West Bank and Gaza the Islamist Hamas was increasingly taking the lead in its opposition to Israeli rule. The Islamists also challenged PLO's primacy in Palestinian politics. Finally, the Likud after the dissolution of the national unity government promoted once again an aggressive settlement drive in 1990–91, rendering any delay in the peace process potentially fateful for the PLO. A strategy of ballots in Israel's elections also seemed highly feasible. Israel's Arab citizens, committed to a two-state solution, represented 15 percent of potential voters, a critical sector in the Israeli electorate whose Jewish majority was almost equally divided between left and right. Moreover, wooing even a few Jewish voters could make a critical difference.

Yet what was that strategy to be? Mahmud 'Abbas, the architect of the Oslo Declaration of Principles (DoP) on the Palestinian side spelled out the elements of this strategy in his book *The Road to Oslo*. His revelations concerning PLO involvement later caused a minor political crisis when Binyamin Netanyahu, the leader of the Likud, made it known to the Israeli public on January 8, 1995.<sup>21</sup> Netanyahu publicized the most controversial aspect of PLO strategy—the presumed agreement between the Israeli Labor Party and the PLO to coordinate moves in order to assure a Labor victory. Both Ephraim Sneh, former Head of the Civilian Administration in the West Bank, and subsequently Minister of Health, and Sa'id Kan'an, his Palestinian interlocutor, had denied that the objective of their meeting on April 3, 1992 in Nablus was to arrive at such an agreement.<sup>22</sup>

Not all Palestinians within the PLO agreed with this meddling approach. Ziad Abu Zayyad, a veteran PLO activist and journalist, wrote an article on Palestinian strategy regarding the 1992 elections in *Shu'un Filastiniyya* in which he called on the PLO to avoid taking sides openly to prevent the Likud from exploiting this.<sup>23</sup> He urged the PLO to refrain from violent acts for fear that it will bring the Jewish electorate to support the Likud, and of course, to do the utmost to convince the Arab leadership within Israel to form a unified Arab party.<sup>24</sup> This was the second article to appear in the prestigious policy journal that specifically addressed the role the PLO and Palestinians in the territories should play in the coming elections. Zayyad's approach won the day. The Palestinians refrained from attacks within Israel and refrained from any official endorsement for Labor lest Jewish voters react by voting for the Likud.<sup>25</sup>

The PLO did, however, continue to meddle in Israeli Arab affairs in an attempt to forge a united list between the PLP and the Arab Democratic Party (ADP). The ADP

party had been formed in 1988, soon after the outbreak of the *intifada* by a former Labor MK.<sup>26</sup> During two meetings in Cairo, Mahmud 'Abbas, with the aid of prominent Egyptian officials, attempted to create a united list between the two parties, to reach an agreement over surplus votes with the DFPE, and to persuade the Islamic Movement to refrain from boycotting the elections.<sup>27</sup> When these efforts failed, Mahmud 'Abbas presumably pressured the PLP to withdraw from the electoral race after placing the blame for failure to create a united list on its leader. Members of the Palestinian delegation to the Washington peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians were quoted making similar remarks, which they later strenuously denied.<sup>28</sup> However, one week later another Arab newspaper attributed the same request to Faisal Al-Husayni, the Palestinian leader based in East Jerusalem who headed the coordinating committee of the Palestinian peace delegation to the Washington peace talks. According to the PLP leader, the coalition of three dovish Zionist parties led by Labor attempted to pressure him to join the ADP list.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, the PLO boycotted the sixth round of peace talks in Washington three weeks before the 1992 elections, in an attempt to embarrass the Likud and create the impression that only Labor could achieve a breakthrough in the negotiations. Abu Zayyad had articulated this position in the opening remarks of his article:

Some see that the continuation of the peace process during this period will enable the Likud to claim that it is able to continue building settlements and occupy [the territories] while at the same time negotiate peace. This will reflect positively on Likud chances of scoring an electoral victory in the coming Israeli elections...For this reason the peace process must be stopped to expose the face of the Likud in the Israeli street.<sup>30</sup>

Nabil Sha'th, the chief 'shadow' negotiator in the Washington peace talks hoped that boycotting the talks would make Israelis recognize that a vote for the Likud would jeopardize the peace process and ultimately the 10 billion US loan guarantees President George Bush promised to Israel after the Gulf War.<sup>31</sup>

#### *Assessing the Ballot Strategy*

Ostensibly, the PLO's ballot strategy bore fruit. The five Arab Members of Knesset assured the Labor–Meretz coalition its 61 mandates thus obstructing any possibility of creating a religious-nationalist coalition. Yitzhak Rabin, the new Prime Minister, could now conduct a foreign policy relatively unconstrained. Just over one year later, Arafat signed the Declaration of Principles on the White House lawn.<sup>32</sup>

The relationship between the policy the PLO adopted regarding Israeli elections and the outcome was, however, spurious if not entirely coincidental. It is also doubtful whether the PLO succeeded in swaying Jewish voters to vote for Labor and other parties advocating concessions to the Palestinians. Paradoxically, even in an era in which the PLO adopted the ballot strategy most, it was still bullets, the first *intifada*, that was probably more influential in swaying the Israeli electorate towards the left than were PLO strategies to woo Israeli voters and politicians.<sup>33</sup> Recall that the PLO backed Iraq during its conquest of Kuwait—hardly a position that could increase the organization's credibility

amongst Israeli voters. It was not then the 'pull' of the PLO that produced changes in orientation to Israeli rule and settlement in the West Bank and Gaza as much as it was the 'push' or the negative impact of controlling over 2 million rebellious Palestinians that swayed (Jewish) public opinion in Israel.

Even the strategy's influence on the Israeli Arab electorate was marginal. Since 1977, predominantly Arab parties have all sought PLO endorsement. Though Arab voters have sometimes voted the way the PLO wanted them to vote it does not seem to have been out of consideration of the PLO's official positions. After all, the Arab voters did not heed the PLO's calls for a unified list, no surplus agreement between the parties was signed and thus only five Members of Knesset, one-third lower than the average number of Arab MKs in the previous decade, were elected.

What was true of the 1992 elections was true of the PLO's influence over the Arab electorate covering all elections between 1977–92. The PLO could have theoretically influenced voting patterns in three ways:

1. By increasing Arab participation in the voting process;
2. By encouraging voting for non-Zionist parties as opposed to Jewish parties; and
3. By affecting patterns of voting within specifically Arab parties.

An analysis of data of Israeli election results between 1977–92 reveals no clear relationship between PLO positions and voter participation rates.<sup>34</sup> Only among the 'nationalists', the approximately one-third of the potential electorate who vote for Arab parties, does the PLO seem to influence voting.

#### BACK TO BULLETS: THE TUNNEL INCIDENT THROUGH CONFLICT 2000

After the September 1993 DoP, it seemed that the ballot paradigm would prevail in PLO calculations. The PLO, however, on at least three counts, demonstrated its continued commitment to the bullets' paradigm. First, Arafat kept insisting on wearing his uniform—a sign that the Palestinian entity still endorsed the liberation of territory through armed struggle if necessary. Second, the faction he led, Fatah, refused to become a political party based on the same reasoning even though its members contested elections. Finally, the PLO flaunted the agreements it signed by increasing its security forces to levels well beyond those permitted. Nevertheless, there were many signs that the Palestinians felt they could achieve their objectives through both diplomacy and intensive interaction with Israeli politicians and parties.

The 1996 general elections represented a serious setback for the PLO's ballots' strategy. These elections introduced the direct vote for Prime Minister. Even though Israel's Arab citizens voted overwhelmingly for Shimon Peres, the Labor candidate (94.8 percent for Peres, 5.2 percent for Likud's Binyamin Netanyahu) and the vast majority voted for 'peace parties' (67.6 percent of the Arab vote), Netanyahu, nevertheless, became Israel's new Prime Minister.<sup>35</sup>

Nor was the subsequent electoral race in 1999 more comforting from the Palestinian perspective. Ostensibly, it should have been, as subsequent Arab voting patterns in the

national elections show hardly any difference from the previous elections held in 1996:69. 8 percent of Arab voters voted for the non-Zionist Arab or predominantly Arab parties and for Ehud Barak, the successful Labor candidate.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, Palestinians feared him. The Palestinian leadership was caught on the horns of a dilemma. The interim agreement was approaching its stipulated end on May 4, 1999—two weeks before the elections. Many Palestinians feared that if Arafat were to let it pass and fail to announce the establishment of the Palestinian state, Netanyahu would successfully take the credit for preventing a Palestinian unilateral declaration of independence and lowering Palestinian expectations. This claim would prove his chances of securing another term of office. Just as in 1981 the Palestinians feared that a Likud victory would intensify a settlement drive to the point of no return, so in 1999, Palestinians were fearful that Netanyahu would initiate a renewed settlement drive that would make it impossible for Israel to concede territory. The fears were magnified by the prospects of 1) a lame-duck American presidency and 2) fast approaching American presidential elections. Presidential elections tended to distract Americans from international affairs to reflect on domestic issues but also bring to bear the clout of the vaunted American Jewish lobby, which Palestinians perceived to serve Israeli government policy blindly.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, the Palestinians feared that if Arafat did declare a Palestinian state on May 4, it would hurt Barak's chances of winning. Yet even then, Palestinians reasoned, a Barak victory was problematic. No longer encumbered by an interim period to achieve final negotiations, Barak would be in a position to continue low-scale but no less effective creeping settlement activities for which Labor governments in the past were well known.<sup>38</sup>

A strong minority amongst the Palestinian elite claimed that there was no dilemma to begin with; that in the event of a Netanyahu victory, the Americans would stop any settlement drive and force him to the negotiating table quicker than they would Barak.<sup>39</sup> But even amongst the majority, who reasoned that Netanyahu was definitely worse, they felt that it was better to confront Israel, declare the Palestinian state (and by implication declare the Oslo peace process null and void) rather than continue the interim period indefinitely as Israel continues settlement.<sup>40</sup>

It was this group that formed the clear majority in the central committee of the PLO, that convened in the end of April 1999 in Gaza to debate this amongst other issues.<sup>41</sup> May 5 passed by without a declaration and without serious incidents, the Palestinian Authority (PA) sticking to its formal neutrality concerning the elections. The Palestinians were clearly hurt by raising the issue of Palestinian statehood and then failing to go through with their threat. When the PA tried orchestrating a 'day of rage' against Israeli settlement soon after May 5, it discovered that just as the leadership was not willing to run risks neither was the Palestinian man-in-the-street in the West Bank and Gaza. Several hundred rather than the anticipated tens of thousands showed up at the pre-designated border checkpoints.

Even Barak's victory did not offer much of a palliative to the Palestinians' despondency.<sup>42</sup> The Arab and Palestinian press (whose locus has switched from Jerusalem to Ramallah since the establishment of the PA) had followed the campaign with unprecedented attention;<sup>43</sup> for the first time it followed Israeli media practice of devoting a special section to Israeli election news and commentary. With such extensive coverage,

it was impossible that Barak's hawkish past, either his participation in cross-border operations as a young officer in a crack unit against the PLO in Lebanon, or his opposition to the ratification of Oslo II Agreement, would go unnoticed. Barak was described, quite accurately, as Rabin without Peres—that is, a pre-Oslo Rabin, who would prefer almost at all costs to settle the inter-state conflict with Syria at the expense of dealing with the Palestinians. The second option would mean giving up territory Israelis considered the historic homeland of the Jewish people. Palestinian commentators pointed out, as did the Israeli press, that Barak kept the doves of the party—Yossi Beilin and Shlomo Ben-Ami—out of sight during the election campaign. They reasoned that even with Barak relations between Palestinians and Israelis would deteriorate before any progress could be made. Reactions to Barak after the elections were even more pessimistic. Barak was perceived as being motivated by the four 'no's—no to a Palestinian Jerusalem, no to the dismantling of the settlements, no to a return to the June 4 borders and no to the physical return of Palestinian refugees.<sup>44</sup> Little wonder that Palestinian commentators counseled to take a long breath and prepare for *intifada* before peace was to prevail.

In between the two elections, a week of intensive violence between Palestinian and Israeli forces took place in September 1996 surrounding the opening of a tourist tunnel that runs across the Western Wall of the Temple Mount. The PA felt that its opening reflected a flagrant change in the status quo in east Jerusalem, which in the DoP had been left as a final status issue. More extreme Palestinians regarded this move as an attempt to undermine the physical foundations of the Temple Mount altogether. The week of violence resulted in the death of 13 Israeli soldiers compared to approximately 35 Palestinian casualties—a ratio significantly different from previous confrontations in which the ratio was almost ten to one in Israel's favor. Not only was there growing symmetry but it served as a precedent for many Palestinians that violence could yield political dividends. For the first time, a Likud Prime Minister yielded control to the PA of over most of Hebron in the West Bank with the signing of the Hebron Protocol in January 1997.

So little success at the ballots and so many gains using bullets were bound to encourage a debate as to whether the Palestinians should pursue a mixed strategy of ballots and bullets simultaneously. Their formal commitment to the Oslo process ruled out a reversion to the strategy of bullets exclusively. *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya* devoted two articles reflecting conflicting opinions. According to Mamduh Nufal, an advisor to Arafat, the PLO had to continue its ballot strategy.<sup>45</sup> Munir Shafiq, a PLO founder and returnee to the faith, argues that it called for both.<sup>46</sup>

Nufal was soon to agree with Shafiq. The proof seemed to lie in Netanyahu's decision in January 1997 to withdraw from Hebron and to sign the Wye River Memorandum in October 1998, in which Netanyahu agreed to transfer 13.1 percent of Judea and Samaria to exclusive Palestinian control. Then Barak succeeded to the post with further concessions offered at Camp David in July 2000.

Ostensibly, the Palestinian strategy during the *intifada* that broke out in October 2000 should have reflected this mixture of ballots and bullets. Instead, Yassir Arafat sided with the bullets paradigm and armed struggle by backing the alliance between Fatah, which he heads, with the Hamas and the Jihad.<sup>47</sup> Both tactical moves were part of a broader strategy, based on the Lebanese model, that Palestinian violence alone could decimate the occupation, force the withdrawal of Israeli troops, and lead to the establishment of the

Palestinian state.<sup>48</sup> At that point, the Palestinians would be in a far stronger position to negotiate the most difficult final-status issues—Jerusalem and the refugee problem. On the tactical level this meant that many members of the security forces, particularly from Force 17 and Military Intelligence took part in operations conducted by the Fatah's al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades.<sup>49</sup>

Many of Arafat's close associates, however, opposed his strategy vociferously. Senior PLO officials (Abu Mazin and Sa'ib Ariqat), advisors like Nufal, and strong-men like Jibril Rajub and Muhammad Dahlan, the respective heads of Preventive Security in the West Bank and Gaza, feared that such a strategy of escalation could result in an Israeli reaction that would threaten the PA altogether.<sup>50</sup> This is why tensions developed between Rajub's Preventive Security and Fatah even though many of the security forces were 'seconded' to the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades during the course of present wave of violence. Tensions came out into the open in April 2002 after Rajub's forces in their headquarters in Bituniya, near Ramallah, surrendered to the Israeli forces, handing over 23 detainees, including 16 Fatah members.<sup>51</sup> Relations between the Brigades and Dahlan, though not as strained, were hardly good either. In response to a question whether some unwanted martyrdom operations were carried out in the past, he responded, 'we are in the process of organizing all these internal matters. I do not want to go into details... There is a persistent necessity to rehabilitate the Fatah movement which has been accommodating all sorts of unwelcome intruders.'<sup>52</sup>

Bolstering their ranks, at least on this specific point, were many Palestinian academics and professionals. In a roundtable of four distinguished Palestinian analysts in April 2001, including two of them opposed to Oslo, all four pleaded to readopt the strategy of the ballots by linking forces once again with the Israeli left. Their major objective was to bring down the national unity government, headed by Likud leader Ariel Sharon.<sup>53</sup> In the words of one of the analysts:

Recall that the Israelis united twice. Once over Iraq, then over the knife during the killings in October 1992. There is no way out of the present situation if there will not be a fissure in what is called the National Unity government in Israel, meaning drawing away part of the Labor Party so that the Sharon government can not continue and new elections can be held.<sup>54</sup>

Arafat heeded the call only faintly when he instructed Yasser Abd al-Rabu, one of his major negotiators in the summer of 2002 to rebuild the links with Israel's left. But he was not willing to budge on the major staple upon which such an alliance could be based—forbidding the suicide bombings and guerrilla attacks within the Green line.

By April 2002, after Israel's massive foray into the West Bank, it became clear that the revolutionaries and Arafat at their head lost out. According to Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu Mazin), one of those who opposed the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades' strategy, Israel had by May 2002 succeeded in imprisoning 'thousands of Fatah activists', including its leader Marwan Barghuthi, largely due to its reoccupation of the West Bank.<sup>55</sup> The movement paid an especially heavy price when Israeli forces reoccupied Jenin and Nablus, its refugee camps and surrounding villages, most of which were traditional Fatah strongholds. This is perhaps why certain segments in Fatah in the summer of 2002 had attempted to little avail

to convince the Islamic Movements to agree to a truce.<sup>56</sup> The killing of Salah Shahada, the leader of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military arm of the Hamas, in an aerial attack that killed 16 civilians along with him, effectively terminated these discussions.<sup>57</sup>

To be fair to Arafat, the pressure from below impaired his vision. Israel was not attacking the Palestinians on the periphery as they did in the early part of the *intifada* but increasingly in the Palestinian center—areas under full PA jurisdiction. Of course Israel claimed that this was only a response to Palestinian terrorist tactics. But politics is not a matter of fairness but of strategy and circumstance. Arafat's strategy of the bullets was roundly defeated in two ways: politically, when the divisions within the Palestinian camp deepened at a time consensus in the form of a national unity government prevailed in Israel, and militarily, through the Protective Shield offensive. The mopping up operations since then are weakening him considerably domestically as Israel rounds up what Palestinians believe to be their freedom fighters while Arafat's security forces submissively withdraw to places of refuge predetermined and coordinated with the Israelis.

### CONCLUSION

The truism made popular with the Algerian victory over the French should have alerted the PLO to the presumed importance of taking into consideration Israel's democratic regime when formulating a strategy against it. The PLO was inhibited from thinking along these lines because of its strategy of destroying the Jewish state. This changed in the 1970s and radically so in the 1980s when the PLO realized how important the type of government in power and the pace of settlement in the territories is. At first, the PLO mobilized the Arab vote within the Knesset to reduce votes to the Zionist parties in general but to the right in particular. Finally, in 1992 the PLO endorsed voting for all parties whose platforms stressed the need to make peace with the Palestinians. In 1992, this strategy seemed to yield handsome dividends.

In 1996, the strategy of the ballots was once again supplemented with a strategy of bullets. The Palestinians felt that both yielded rewards. The first because it led to frequent falls of governments—a development that indicated the growing weakness of the Israeli state and the Hebron and Wye River agreements which yielded territorial concessions from even a Likud government. Throughout the 1980s and even more so in the 1990s the idea basically was that Israeli democracy facilitated the Palestinian cause. The paradigm of the ballot was creating Israeli disunity without seriously impairing Palestinian unity.

In the present *intifada*, Arafat viewed these two paradigms as being mutually exclusive. Those championing the ballots paradigm, who basically argued that a popular less lethal *intifada* more similar to the first, would bring about fissures within Israel and major concessions in their wake, and the supporters of the bullets paradigm, who eventually prevailed when Arafat began supporting the Fatah-Islamic alliance over the vociferous opposition of the 'statists' such as Rajub, Dahlan and the PA negotiators. Arafat and Fatah claimed that only the bullets paradigm inspired by the Lebanese experience would work. Israelis would make concessions only when sufficiently hurt in the shopping malls, markets, and on the roads in the territories.

Ironically, the champions of the bullets paradigm are probably theoretically and comparatively right in that the democratic nature of the regime in and of itself is not an



independent variable of consequence in dictating the success or failure of insurgencies. After all in the 1930s the French and British, both democracies, were effective imperialists and colonizers who defeated numerous insurgencies in the 1930s. The Arab Palestinian rebellion and the Syrian resurrection at much the same time are two examples in the immediate area, but there were numerous examples elsewhere. A generation later both democratic imperial powers decolonized with alacrity. Changing norms and calculations of gains versus costs were probably behind the differences in behavior of these imperial democracies. The revolutionaries were wrong, however, in thinking that the bullet paradigm was necessarily better. The difference between Israel and the receding Western empires may lie in the fact that Israel can not withdraw 'outre-mer'. Events since Protective Shield as well as the experience of the imperial powers in the 1930s prove, however, that once democracies decide to fight, they are effective in ways surprising to non-democratic contenders and challengers.<sup>58</sup> Democracies then may not only be the best form of government around but the best government to wage wars against insurgencies. Even Fatah is heading towards this conclusion as it takes up the case for internal reform and begins the long road back to the paradigm of the ballots until the older terrorist urges haunt it once again.

## NOTES

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# Abstracts

## **Western Democracies in Low Intensity Conflict: Some Postmodern Aspects**

AVI KOBER

The essay addresses two main questions. First, what is the nature of postmodern low intensity conflict (LIC) reality? Second, how effective can Western democracies be in coping with the challenges posed by this reality? The main argument is that as a result of a change in values in Western democratic societies, the conduct of LICs by Western democracies has become significantly constrained by the need to manage such conflicts morally and in a less costly manner. Although technology has become a force multiplier for the weak, the stronger Western democracies can mobilize its technological edge for conducting LICs both effectively and at less cost, thus being able to sustain such conflicts despite their protracted nature.

## **Why do they Quarrel? Civil–Military Tensions in LIC Situations**

STUART A. COHEN

Because low intensity conflicts (LICs) are embedded in a socio-political context that directly shapes and constrains their nature, they are known to place an especially high premium on the need for civil-military co-ordination. Nevertheless (and herein lies a paradox), it is precisely in LIC situations that political interests and military preferences seem so infrequently to coincide—as much at the level of local command as at the apex of the decision-making pyramid. This essay notes three characteristics of LICs that might account for that situation: their tendency to emerge rather than erupt; the fact that LICs are invariably protracted conflicts; and the ‘fuzzy’ nature of most counterinsurgency operations. Drawing on examples from a variety of LIC contexts (appertaining to the experience of minor as well as major democratic powers in the modern world), the essay analyzes the way in which each of these three characteristics has contributed to exacerbate tensions between soldiers and their nominal political masters.

## **Democracies, Limited War and Psychological Operations**

RON SCHLEIFER

Democracies generally abstain from using psychological operations (PSYOP) as they perceive propaganda to be a totalitarian political tool. Whilst in (conventional) war they use it reluctantly, in small wars they hardly make use of it at all. The nature of small wars makes their handling more difficult for a democracy because it does not undergo the psychological process of mobilization. In contrast, the insurgents make vast use of PSYOP as they realize that the media can be easily exploited through the public's thirst for information. This essay outlines the weakness of democracies in their handling of the struggle over the hearts and minds of the public and proposes changes within democracies to employ effectively psychological warfare.

## **Trends in Low Intensity Ethnic Conflict in Democratic States in the Post-Cold War Era: A Large N Study**

JONATHAN FOX

This study examines the influence of regime as well as the end of the Cold War on the intensity of ethnic conflict from 1985 to 1998 using data from the Minorities at Risk (MAR) dataset. The results show that nearly all violent ethnic conflicts are low intensity conflicts. However, different types of low intensity conflict are more common under different types of regimes. Terrorism is the most common form of ethnic conflict in democratic states and guerrilla warfare, and local rebellions are more common in autocratic states, but violent conflicts lasted longer in democracies. Ethnic conflict in those states that democratized between 1984 and 1994 exhibited properties similar to autocracies during the 1980s, but by the late 1990s ethnic conflict in these states was more similar to that in democracies. The end of the Cold War is associated with a temporary rise in ethnic conflict during the early 1990s in autocracies and democratizing states and a drop in ethnic conflict in democracies. Furthermore, there was no disproportional rise or fall in religious or civilizational conflict during this period, which questions Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' theory.

## **The American Way of War in the Twenty-first Century**

THOMAS G. MAHNKEN

The American way of war is a reflection of the United States' enduring comparative advantage. At the strategic level, it includes a preference for waging wars for far-reaching political objectives with direct strategies. Recent conflicts have also shown an increased concern over casualties, particularly on the part of the military. At the operational level, it favors an industrial approach to war that puts a premium on fire-power. At the tactical level, it emphasizes advanced technology, precision, air power, and special operations forces. While some features of the American way of war comport well with the requirements of small wars, others conflict with the needs of such conflicts.

**The Indian Way in Counterinsurgency**  
SANKARAN KALYANARAMAN

The Indian state has had one of the longest experiences in countering insurgencies. This essay deals with the Naga, Mizo and Kashmiri insurgencies. The Indian response has been determined by the understanding that insurgencies arise because of popular grievances on the social, economic and political planes. Thus they essentially constitute challenges to its project of nation building. While rebel activities are curbed by the application of military force, they are complemented by action on the political, social and economic planes to integrate the disenchanted populace within the national mainstream.

**Winning a Low Intensity Conflict: Drawing Lessons from  
the Turkish Case**

ÜM T ÖZDA and ERSEL AYDINLI

This essay examines how the Turkish state was able to achieve a military victory in what can be defined as more than 15 years of low intensity conflict against ethnic separatist terror. The study identifies five challenges as having been crucial to the success and/or failure of the Turkish state's dealings with the PKK between the years 1974 and 2000: 1) diagnosing the nature, scope, and capacities of the situation and the PKK organization; 2) coordinating relations between the Turkish security establishment and the politicians; 3) transforming and adapting the Turkish armed forces to an unconventional form of warfare; 4) winning popular support; and 5) coping with international and regional support for the PKK. By giving chronological examples of key events and decisions, the essay shows the changes that were made over time in the ways in which each of these challenges were perceived and managed. It then attempts to locate possible turning points from unsuccessful to successful management, as well as identifying relations between the various challenges and the possible relevance of these interrelations on the ultimate results of the conflict.

**Greek Democracy on Trial: From Insurgency to Civil War,  
1943–49**

ANDRÉ GEROLYMATOS

The aim of this essay is to analyze the causes of three communist efforts to gain control of Greece between 1943–49 and to demonstrate how and why each of the attempts was unsuccessful. The communists miscalculated in all three rounds, ultimately resorting to civil war rather than accepting a political compromise. One factor in the failure was their inability to maintain a consistent policy during this period. Another factor was the inability of the communists to attract a mass following, particularly in the towns and cities. Finally, the communist leadership was not attuned enough to the international environment, which placed constraints on the armed struggle and eventually put an end to critical foreign support and to the availability of safe sanctuaries.

### **Fatal Choices: Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing**

STEVEN R. DAVID

This essay analyzes the Israeli policy of targeted killing during the current Israeli–Palestinian confrontation and suggests that the effectiveness of this policy is unclear. While there is evidence that targeted killing has hurt the capability of terrorist organization, it has not, however, protected the Israeli public from terrorist attack, as a record number of Israelis have been killed at the same time targeted killings have reached unprecedented levels. Nevertheless, the author presents five reasons which show that targeted killing serves Israel's interests: it focuses on the actual perpetrators of terrorism while minimizing harm to innocents and provides a sense of revenge and retribution against the attackers. Moreover, it is believed to be a tool in eroding terrorist infrastructure over time, and is the least objectionable response available to terror attacks. The author ends by making suggestions for improving the policy to make it more palatable both to Israeli and international public opinion.

### **Exploiting Democracy: The IRA's Tactical Cease-Fire**

JONATHAN STEVENSON

The IRA's cease-fire and the entry of Sinn Féin, its political wing, into mainstream democratic politics merely constitute new tactics in the IRA's quest for a united Ireland. The IRA's fallback position remains terrorist violence, and this threat affords republicans disproportionate political strength. But the republicans' engagement in a democratic peace process, however cynical, has substantially reduced the level of violence in Northern Ireland. The IRA's relative quiescence has also raised the political barriers to its returning to violence. The truth is that the Northern Irish peace process has been a qualified success. Democracy has not defeated terrorism, nor has terrorism defeated democracy; rather, each has manipulated the other in equal measure.

### **Between Bullets and Ballots: The Palestinians and Israeli**

**Democracy**

HILLEL FRISCH

This essay tries to analyze whether Palestinians perceived Israel's democratic regime as an important characteristic in its own right, how they tried to take advantage of this fact in order to help achieve their objectives, and how effective they were in playing the democratic card. Despite initial disinterest, the Palestinians placed increasing importance on the dynamics of Israeli democracy in achieving their goal. However, capitalizing on these presumed advantages presented by Israeli democracy as a means of reducing Israeli consensus and legitimacy resulted in similar strains in Palestinian society. The strains manifested themselves in the conflict between two paradigms: the paradigm of the bullets, reflecting the PLO's deep roots and commitment to terrorist and catharsis ideologies; and the paradigm of the ballots, that reached its peak in the present Israeli–Palestinian confrontation. Arafat's adoption of the paradigm of the bullets grievously hurt



the Palestinians, who learned the hard way that Israeli democracy was a two-edged sword—at times wielded to their advantage, lately to their disadvantage.

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