# War Powers---CKS

# AFF---War Powers

## 1AC – Warpowers

### ADV---Instability

#### Advantage one is Instability:

#### US military presence in the Middle East is increasing now but raises concerns about transparency and accountability.

**Turse 19** [Nick, MA in history from Rutgers University and his doctorate in sociomedical sciences from the Columbia University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences “More U.S. Commandos are Fighting Invisible wars in the Middle East,” The Intercept, https://theintercept.com/2019/09/25/special-operations-command-military-middle-east/, 9/25/19] TDI

The percentage of commandos deployed to the Middle East is on the rise, according to new statistics provided to The Intercept by U.S. Special Operations Command. On average, more than 4,000 Special Operations forces — Navy SEALs, Army Green Berets, and Marine Corps Raiders among them — are deployed to the region each week, more than anywhere else in the world. The increase comes at a time when the United States is apparently planning a troop drawdown in Afghanistan, despite a peace agreement with the Taliban having fallen apart. It also coincides with President Donald Trump’s announcements that the Islamic State has been defeated and that the U.S. is “rapidly pulling out of Syria.” Gone are the military surges that brought tens of thousands of conventional U.S. forces to Iraq and Afghanistan. Gone, too, is the faddish fixation with counterinsurgency, rehabilitated from the Vietnam War dustbin (only to be deep-sixed again) and the military’s “government in a box” pipe dreams. Today, American warfare is increasingly typified by a reliance on Special Operations Forces, private contractors, local proxies working with and for the military and CIA, and air power. These low-visibility forces make greater secrecy and less accountability more likely for U.S. military actions in the Middle East, said Daphne Eviatar, director of the Security with Human Rights program at Amnesty International USA, who views the growing reliance on commandos as both predictable and troubling. “Already we’re not getting answers to basic questions, like who the U.S. has killed and why it hasn’t better protected civilians, and the more the U.S. role is turned over to Special Operations Forces, the CIA, or contractors, the less information the government is going to provide,” Eviatar told The Intercept. “One has to wonder if that isn’t the reason they’re apparently shifting these roles to secret agents whose actions and their consequences the government isn’t required to disclose.” While more than 80 percent of America’s commandos deployed oversees were stationed in the greater Middle East — an area the military defines as stretching from Northeast Africa to Central and South Asia — at the beginning of the decade, the number fell to just over 50 percent in 2017. Since then, however, deployments to the region have been increasing. This year, 62 percent of elite forces serving abroad have been involved in the multiple military efforts being carried out across the Central Command, or CENTCOM, area of operations, including Operation Inherent Resolve, which is aimed at defeating ISIS, also known as Daesh, in Iraq and Syria; Operation Freedom’s Sentinel, the U.S. effort in Afghanistan, which includes counterterrorism missions and support of allied Afghan forces; and Operation Yukon Journey, which supports Saudi Arabia and its partners in their fight against Yemen’s Houthi rebels. “The forces that have the best capabilities and are trained and educated for these kinds of counterterrorism and irregular warfare activities, including training foreign countries’ forces, are U.S. Special Operations forces,” said Seth G. Jones, a scholar at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and former senior adviser to U.S. Special Operations Command. This special ops increase in the CENTCOM area of operations comes as senior White House advisers have reportedly proposed expanding the CIA’s presence in Afghanistan. At the same time, the number of private contractors in the region is also on the rise. At the end of the Obama administration, there were officially 42,592 contractor personnel in the greater Middle East, including 25,197 in Afghanistan. Today, according to CENTCOM statistics, there are 53,359 deployed in the region, 27,457 of whom are serving in the Afghan War. The number of contractors in Afghanistan is almost double that of U.S. military personnel there, which currently stands at about 14,000. Jones, a former adviser to the commanding general of American Special Operations forces in Afghanistan, said that the number of contractors may rise with a drawdown of troops, but believes using them to train, advise, and assist Afghan partner forces is a mistake. “I think it’s too risky. The benefits are heavily outweighed by a lot of different costs,” he told The Intercept. “They are often motivated by profits rather than completing the mission, the quality of trainers is extremely varied, and their performance in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq has been deeply mixed at best.” The combination of increased numbers of commandos, CIA operatives, and contractors suggests a “light footprint” model of warfare, variations of which have been previously employed by the U.S. in Afghanistan. Victory, however, has remained elusive. “We have been hitting our Enemy harder than at any time in the last ten years!” Trump tweeted recently. While the Taliban is at its strongest since the American invasion of 2001 and now controls or holds sway in about half the country, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan did find that U.S. forces and their Afghan and international allies had killed more civilians than the Taliban this year. And according to an Inspector General’s report, despite unilateral and partnered missions by U.S. Special Operations Forces to “eliminate” the local branch of ISIS, “the terrorist group will remain an enduring threat in Afghanistan, even if the Afghan government and the Taliban reach a political settlement.” The U.S. military’s assessment of the situation in Syria is also at odds with Trump’s pronouncements that ISIS has been “100 percent” defeated. Operation Inherent Resolve “continues to maintain a presence in Syria and Iraq as part of our mission to achieve the enduring defeat of Daesh,” U.S. Army Col. Myles B. Caggins III, a spokesperson for Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve, told The Intercept. In fact, an Inspector General’s report notes that “ISIS likely retains between 14,000 and 18,000 ‘members’ in Iraq and Syria, including up to 3,000 foreigners.” While the U.S. now maintains only what it terms a “residual force in northeastern Syria and around a desert garrison near the Jordanian border,” elite U.S. forces appear to be digging in. During the spring and early summer, American special operators increased their “training, equipping, and reinforcing” of local allies to strengthen their ability to conduct counterinsurgency operations.

#### Biden is exercising his presidential power to engage in daily bombings in the Middle East, which Congress condemned illegal.

**Benjamin 21 -** [(Medea, Medea Benjamin is an American political activist who was the co-founder of Code Pink with Jodie Evans and others. Along with activist and author Kevin Danaher, she created the fair trade advocacy group Global Exchange. Benjamin was the Green Party candidate in California in 2000 for the United States Senate.) “Trump and Biden's secret bombing wars: One thing that hasn't changed’’ 2021/03/05 https://www.salon.com/2021/03/05/trump-and-bidens-secret-bombing-wars-one-thing-that-hasnt-changed/] TDI

**On Feb. 25, President Biden ordered U.S. air forces to drop** seven **500-pound bombs on Iraqi forces in Syria,** reportedly killing 22 people. The U.S. airstrike has predictably failed to halt rocket attacks on deeply unpopular U.S. bases in Iraq, which the Iraqi National Assembly passed a resolution to close over a year ago. The Western media reported the U.S. airstrike as an isolated and exceptional incident, and there has been significant blowback from the U.S. public, Congress and the world community, condemning the strikes as illegal and a dangerous escalation of yet another Middle East conflict. But unbeknownst to many Americans, the U.S. military and its allies are engaged in bombing and killing people in other countries on a daily basis. The U.S. and its allies have dropped more than 326,000 bombs and missiles on people in other countries since 2001 (see table below), including more than 152,000 in Iraq and Syria. That's an average of 46 bombs and missiles per day, day in day out, year in year out, for nearly 20 years. In 2019, the last year for which we have fairly complete records, the average was 42 bombs and missiles per day, including 20 per day in Afghanistan alone. So, if those seven 500-pound bombs were the only bombs the U.S. and its allies dropped on Feb. 25, it would have been an unusually quiet day for U.S. and allied air forces, and for their enemies and victims on the ground, compared to an average day in 2019 or most of the past 20 years. On the other hand, if the unrelenting U.S. air assault on countries across the greater Middle East finally began to diminish over the past year, this bombing may have been an unusual spike in violence. But which of these was it, and how would we know? We don't know, because our government doesn't want us to. From January 2004 until February 2020, the U.S. military kept track of how many bombs and missiles it dropped on Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, and published those figures in regular, monthly Airpower Summaries, which were readily available to journalists and the public. But in March 2020, the Trump administration abruptly stopped publishing U.S. Airpower Summaries, and the Biden administration has so far not published any either. As with the human casualties and mass destruction that these hundreds of thousands of airstrikes cause, the U.S. and international media only report on a tiny fraction of them. Without regular U.S. Airpower Summaries, comprehensive databases of airstrikes in other war zones and serious mortality studies in the countries involved, the American public and the world are left almost completely in the dark about the death and destruction our country's leaders keep wreaking in our name. The disappearance of Airpower Summaries has made it impossible to get a clear picture of the current scale of U.S. airstrikes. Here are up-to-date figures on U.S. and allied airstrikes, from 2001 to the present, highlighting the secrecy in which they have abruptly been shrouded for the past year: These figures are based on U.S. Airpower Summaries for Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria; the Bureau of Investigative Journalism's count of drone strikes in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen; the Yemen Data Project's count of Saudi-led airstrikes in Yemen; the New America Foundation's database of foreign airstrikes in Libya; and other published statistics. Figures for 2021 are only through January. There are several categories of airstrikes that are not included in this table, meaning that the true numbers of airstrikes are certainly higher. These include: Helicopter strikes: Military Times published an article in February 2017 titled, "The U.S. military's stats on deadly airstrikes are wrong. Thousands have gone unreported." The largest pool of airstrikes not included in U.S. Airpower Summaries are strikes by attack helicopters. The U.S. Army told the authors its helicopters had conducted 456 otherwise unreported airstrikes in Afghanistan in 2016. The authors explained that the non-reporting of helicopter strikes has been consistent throughout the post-9/11 wars, and they still did not know how many actual missiles were fired in those 456 attacks in Afghanistan in the one year they investigated. AC-130 gunships: The airstrike that destroyed the Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, in 2015 was not conducted with bombs or missiles, but by a Lockheed-Boeing AC-130 gunship. These machines of mass destruction, usually manned by U.S. Air Force special operations forces, are designed to circle a target on the ground, pouring howitzer shells and cannon fire into it, often until it is completely destroyed. The U.S. has used AC-130s in **Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia and Syria.** Strafing runs: U.S. Airpower Summaries for 2004-2007 included a note that their tally of "strikes with munitions dropped ... does not include 20mm and 30mm cannon or rockets." But the 30mm cannons on A-10 Warthogs and other ground attack planes are powerful weapons, originally designed to destroy Soviet tanks. A-10s fire 65 depleted uranium shells per second to blanket an area with deadly and indiscriminate fire, but that does not count as a "weapons release" in U.S. Airpower Summaries. "Counter-insurgency" and "counter-terrorism" operations in other parts of the world. The United States formed a military coalition with 11 West African countries in 2005, and now has a drone base in Niger, but we have not found a database of U.S. and allied air strikes in that region, or in the Philippines, Latin America or elsewhere. It was clearly no coincidence that Trump stopped publishing Airpower Summaries right after the February 2020 U.S. withdrawal agreement with the Taliban, reinforcing the false impression that the war in Afghanistan was over. In fact, U.S. bombing resumed after only an 11-day pause. As our table shows, 2018 and 2019 were back-to-back record years for U.S. airstrikes in Afghanistan. But how about 2020? Without the official records, we don't know whether the withdrawal agreement led to a serious reduction in airstrikes or not. President Biden has foolishly tried to use airstrikes in Syria as "leverage" with Iran, instead of simply rejoining the Iran nuclear agreement as he promised during the election campaign. Biden is likewise trailing along in Trump's footsteps by shrouding U.S. airstrikes in the secrecy that Trump used to obscure his failure to "end the endless wars." It is entirely possible that the highly publicized Feb. 25 airstrikes, like Trump's April 2017 missile strikes on Syria, were a diversion from much heavier, but largely unreported, U.S. bombing already under way elsewhere, in that case the frightful destruction of Mosul, Iraq's former second city. The only way Biden can reassure the American public that he is not using Trump's wall of secrecy to continue America's devastating air wars, notably in Afghanistan, is to end this secrecy now, and resume the publication of complete and accurate U.S. Airpower Summaries. Biden cannot restore the world's respect for American leadership, or the American public's support for our foreign policy, by piling more lies, secrets and atrocities on top of those he has inherited. If he keeps trying to do so, he might well find himself following in Trump's footsteps in yet another way: as the failed, one-term president of a destructive and declining empire.

#### **The American military is refusing to disclose information on the use of drones and lethal airstrikes which Congress relies on, stirring doubts about transparency.**

**Degrandpre & Snow ‘17** [Andrew Degrandpre, deputy national security editor. Before joining The Washington Post in 2017, he spent 12 years with the Military Times group of publications, leaving as senior editor and Pentagon bureau chief. His investigative project “Task Force Violent: The Unforgiven” received the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation's award for distinguished reporting on national defense. As managing editor of Marine Corps Times, he led an investigation into abuse-of-power claims involving the Marine Corps’ top general and exposed efforts to ban the newspaper from military convenience stores, Shawn Snow, specialist in the political and military developments, 2-5-2017, "The U.S. military's stats on deadly airstrikes are wrong. Thousands have gone unreported," Military Times, https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2017/02/05/the-u-s-military-s-stats-on-deadly-airstrikes-are-wrong-thousands-have-gone-unreported/] TDI

The American military has failed to publicly disclose potentially thousands of lethal airstrikes conducted over several years in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan, a Military Times investigation has revealed. The enormous data gap raises serious doubts about transparency in reported progress against the Islamic State, al-Qaida and the Taliban, and calls into question the accuracy of other Defense Department disclosures documenting everything from costs to casualty counts. In 2016 alone, U.S. combat aircraft conducted at least 456 airstrikes in Afghanistan that were not recorded as part of an open-source database maintained by the U.S. Air Force, information relied on by Congress, American allies, military analysts, academic researchers, the media and independent watchdog groups to assess each war's expense, manpower requirements and human toll. Those airstrikes were carried out by attack helicopters and armed drones operated by the U.S. Army, metrics quietly excluded from otherwise comprehensive monthly summaries, published online for years, detailing American military activity in all three theaters. Most alarming is the prospect this data has been incomplete since the war on terrorism began in October 2001. If that is the case, it would fundamentally undermine confidence in much of what the Pentagon has disclosed about its prosecution of these wars, prompt critics to call into question whether the military sought to mislead the American public, and cast doubt on the competency with which other vital data collection is being performed and publicized. Those other key metrics include American combat casualties, taxpayer expense and the military's overall progress in degrading enemy capabilities. U.S. Central Command, which oversees military activity in all three war zones, indicated it is unable to determine how far back the Army’s numbers have been excluded from these airpower summaries. Officials there would not address several detailed questions submitted by Military Times, and they were unable to provide a full listing of annual airstrikes conducted by each of the Defense Department's four military services. "It is really weird. We don’t track the number of strikes from Apaches, for example" said a U.S. military official with knowledge of CENTCOM's data collection and reporting practices. The official, who spoke to Military Times on the condition of anonymity to freely discuss internal procedures, was referring to AH-64 Apache attack helicopters, which the Army has used prolifically in combat over the last 15 years, most recently in support of American allies battling the Islamic State. "I can tell you, unequivocally, we are not trying to hide the number of strikes," the official said. "That is just the way it has been tracked in the past. That’s what it’s always been." It’s a significant discrepancy, though, and one for which the full scope remains unclear. Airstrikes, according to definitions established and followed by members of U.S.-led coalitions, can involve fighters and other jets, attack helicopters and drones, and they can include any combination of munitions. A single airstrike can be carried out by multiple aircraft on multiple targets, and use multiple bombs, missiles, rockets and machine gun rounds. It can include combat sorties with predefined targets and attacks carried out during the course of close air support operations. The Army views things differently, though. "It seems to me the collection or distribution of airstrike data is not an Army Title 10 responsibility," a senior Army official told Military Times on the condition of anonymity. Title 10 of the U.S. Code sets the laws that dictate the military services' roles, responsibilities and missions. "This responsibility should lie with the operational or combatant commander. Additionally, Apaches for example, conduct close combat attacks as a maneuver element supporting a ground force in contact with the enemy. I would not consider this in the category of 'airstrike.' " The Air Force's open-source database includes all such missions as part of its airstrike totals. The media and others have depended on these figures for years with the understanding they are a comprehensive rollup of all American and coalition activity. And while the data has been cited in countless reports — from newspaper articles to academic research to analytics provided to lawmakers — no one from the military ever has come forward to clarify that it is wholly incomplete. As recently as December, an Air Force official told Military Times that its monthly airpower summary of activity in Iraq and Syria specifically represents the entire U.S.-led coalition "as a whole, which is all 20-nations and the U.S. branches." It’s unclear whether this statement was intentionally misleading, or simply indicative of widespread internal ignorance, confusion or indifference about what’s contained in this data. Regardless, it does include airstrikes conducted by the U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps — but not the Army. Financial implications, if any, are unclear. The Pentagon discloses its top-line expenditures for each of these ongoing military operations, but that data is not readily broken down by the number of sorties flown by specific U.S. aircraft and the amount of munitions they deploy. Consider, though, that Apache helicopters can carry a variety of weapons, including Hellfire missiles with a per-unit cost of $99,600, according to figures maintained by AeroWeb, a defense marketing intelligence firm that closely tracks international defense acquisition. Such record keeping is no trivial matter. Even federal agencies routinely reference these airstrike figures in reports designed to influence Congress. Military Times’ investigation discovered multiple instances in which an inspector general drew significant conclusions, briefed to high ranking government officials working in the State Department and leading members of Congress, from open-source airstrike data. The omission of Army strike data is one of multiple errors, discrepancies and shortcomings, raising questions about the validity of policies and methods used by the U.S. military to compile and disseminate information about its worldwide operations. For example, a 2015 report to Congress by the inspectors general for the Defense Department, State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development highlighted the open-source airpower tallies for operations against the Islamic State. At some point after the report was published and briefed to lawmakers on Capitol Hill, the Air Force revised the data on which the IGs’ work was based, in some cases adding more than 100 weapons releases for a given month. And while the Air Force notes that revisions do happen occasionally, in this instance they were significant — and occurred after the information was provided to Congress. Another discrepancy: Though it claims to use the Air Force airstrike data, the Defense Department’s public summary of operations in Iraq and Syria, current as of Jan. 31, fails to account for nearly 6,000 strikes dating to 2014, when the air campaign against ISIS began. The most recent Air Force summary counts 23,740 coalition airstrikes through 2016. Meanwhile, the Defense Department's website lists 17,861 through Jan. 31. The Pentagon routinely cites these figures when updating the media on its operations against the Islamic State and al-Qaida affiliates in Iraq and Syria. In this screen grab of the Defense Department's website, taken Saturday, Feb. 4, officials have tallied 17,861 coalition airstrikes through Jan. 31. That's nearly 5,900 fewer than the Air Force's tally through the end of December 2016. There also appear to be separate policies in place regulating the specificity of information that may be publicly disclosed. Citing policy, military officials in the U.S. and in Baghdad refuse to identify the type of American warplanes that conduct individual airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, nor will they provide a breakdown of activity by individual service components. It’s another story entirely in Afghanistan, where U.S. military officials, in response to questions from Military Times, volunteered the previously undisclosed Army airstrike data for 2016, even identifying the four types of Army aircraft providing lethal air support there. Navy Capt. William Salvin, a spokesman for U.S. forces in Afghanistan, said that in addition to Apaches, there are armed UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters and MQ-1 Gray Eagles, which are drones. Initially, Salvin indicated the Army's RQ-7 Shadow drones also are armed, but he later corrected that statement. Salvin also explained that the airstrikes conducted there — 1,071 total for last year, not 615 as the Air Force reports in its open-source database — are further classified by three categories: self defense, counter terror and strategic effects, which may be required when senior commanders believe U.S. firepower could help turn the tide in regions deemed vital to Afghanistan's broader stability. "We’re just trying to be transparent here," said Army Brig. Gen. Charles Cleveland, the top spokesman for Operation Resolute Support, which includes the American military’s ongoing effort to train and advise the Afghan army and air force. A separate, smaller operation in Afghanistan, called Freedom’s Sentinel, involves U.S.-led counter-terrorism efforts against al-Qaida and its numerous affiliates in the region. "What you’re talking about is a larger policy decision that would likely start at OSD," Cleveland said when asked whether these reports should become all inclusive. OSD stands for the Office of the Secretary of Defense. "It’s probably larger than a CENTCOM policy decision. What you’re talking about is a global laydown because there are strikes in AFRICOM." U.S. Africa Command oversees many of the military’s most secretive counter-terror operations throughout the continent, to include Somalia and Libya. Those tallies are not routinely disclosed either. Cleveland emphasized, too, that the United States’ air campaign in Afghanistan is part of a greater effort, now in its 16th year, to mentor, support and protect the Afghan military with hopes it will be able to independently provide the country’s security. "The overall concept of airstrikes," the general said, "from anybody, is a small part of a larger mission." It remains unclear why the Army is unique in excluding its airstrike figures from these broader summaries and reports. Reached Saturday, a spokesman for Army headquarters in Washington declined to comment, saying he was unable to research the matter on short notice. The U.S. military official who spoke on the condition of anonymity said it’s because Army aircraft flown in war zones don’t fall under the Air Force chain of command responsible for publishing these monthly summaries. Still, that does not answer why the Army does not disclose its airstrike data. Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, a research and advocacy organization, called transparency essential to military accountability. That requires "honest reporting to the public," Roth said. "Security may at times require secrecy," he added, "but embarrassment or political sensitivity never should. Facts regarding the number of airstrikes and their civilian toll should always be disclosed promptly and faithfully so the public, aided by human rights workers and journalists, can scrutinize military operations being conducted in their name."

#### Biden doubled down in Syria and Iraq---the lack of congressional approval ensures violent interventions and emboldens terrorists.

Guyer 23 [(Jonathan, Jonathan Guyer covers foreign policy, national security, and global affairs for Vox. From 2019 to 2021, he worked at the American Prospect, where as managing editor he reported on Biden’s and Trump's foreign policy teams. His accountability stories have won top prizes from the Society of American Business Editors and Writers, Society of Professional Journalists, and Military Reporters and Editors Association.) “Why are there still American troops in Syria?’’ 2023/05/15 https://www.vox.com/world-politics/2023/6/15/23669622/syria-900-us-troops-forever-war-isis-assad] TDI

Call it a forever war. US troops are fighting ISIS in Syria. But Congress hasn’t approved it, the public hardly knows about it, and it’s not clear under what conditions the US would leave. Americans tend to only be reminded of the 900 US troops and hundreds of contractors stationed there when they came under attack, often from militants who have Iran’s support, or when there is a mishap — like this week. In northeast Syria on Sunday, 22 US soldiers from an elite commando unit were injured in a helicopter’s “hard landing” due to a technical issue, according to the Pentagon. More broadly this spring, US bases have been coming under attack from Iranian-backed groups, with the potential for the US troops there to be drawn into a broader conflict. The US is in Syria to curb the terrorist group Islamic State or ISIS, in a region that is semi-autonomous and run by the Syrian Democratic Forces, a Kurdish group. Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said that troops are needed because “if you completely ignore and turn your back, then you’re setting the conditions for a resurgence.” But experts say that the US troops there are not building toward a sustainable outcome, and that resisting ISIS has become the pretext for a perpetual US presence. “It’s a strategy that just makes no sense,” says Robert Ford, who served as US ambassador to Syria from 2011 to 2014. “The real way forward is not leaving 900 troops to play whack-a-mole in eastern Syria.” Ford explains that the American mission to secure the outright defeat of ISIS is impossible. The 900 troops in the northeast of Syria and the US garrison at al-Tanf cannot stop a low level of recruitment into ISIS ranks. “So we can bomb some and we can kill some, but they’ll always replace the people that they lose,” he told me. “This is a classic forever war.” Why the US is in Syria The Biden administration says its Syria policy is working. “I take objection to the notion of a forever war,” a senior Pentagon official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told me. “US forces are present on the ground focused on only one mission, and that is the enduring defeat of ISIS.” Yet the risk of the conflict expanding persists. The US and Iranian-backed forces keep coming into conflict in Syria. On March 23, an Iranian-backed group sent a drone to a US-led coalition base near the northeastern Syrian city of Hasakah. The drone self-destructed and killed an American civilian working as a mechanic on the base, and injured five US servicepeople and another contractor. In response, Biden ordered strikes against three targets connected to Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, who then retaliated further the next day. That tit-for-tat shows that Syria is where all of the US’s muddled policies toward the Middle East collide. The US began supporting Syrian rebels soon after the country’s civil war broke out in 2011. President Barack Obama sent Americans to train those rebels to fight ISIS in neighboring countries. (ISIS’s rise was a spillover effect of the now-20-year-old US invasion of Iraq, and compounded by the effects of the Syrian civil war). As part of that campaign, the US partnered with Kurdish fighters from a semi-autonomous enclave, and to this day supports them, much to the anger of the US’s NATO ally Turkey. Meanwhile, the US’s close partner Israel bombs Syrian sites without acknowledgment, and Russia is supporting the Syrian regime. The core US interest here is making sure that ISIS cannot launch attacks on the US or Europe. As of now, it cannot. ISIS’s capacity is “significantly degraded,” according to Department of Defense Inspector General reports. The terrorist group in 2019 was “territorially defeated” and it is “unable to threaten regional security and Coalition homelands,” meaning the US interest here has largely been accomplished. But the mission is also impossible insofar that new ISIS fighters are still being recruited, and the US military alone simply cannot address what’s much more than a military problem. One of the complicating factors keeping the US in Syria is the temporary camps in al-Hol, Syria, where about 50,000 people reside. The site has for decades been a refuge for displaced persons, and is nominally run by US-backed fighters. Today many residents are believed to be family members of ISIS. Residents aren’t free to leave, and al-Hol represents a significant legal and humanitarian challenge. “It’s approaching conditions that amount to de facto detention under international human rights law, but it’s importantly not a detention center, because no one there has been accused of or charged with a crime,” says Mara Revkin of Duke Law School, who has visited the camps as part of her research. Few countries in Europe want to repatriate their residents from other countries and neither do Middle Eastern countries, so tens of thousands of people are caught in between. The security situation is already precarious after several ISIS jailbreaks. ISIS has threatened to attack al-Hol. The Syrian Democratic Forces also maintain several prisons of ISIS fighters and would have a hard time overseeing those detention facilities and camps without US support. Meanwhile, more than a decade since he brutalized peaceful protests against his regime and officiated over the country’s ongoing civil war, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is still in power. He is without question a war criminal, and is effectively being welcomed back into the Arab government fold. All of this has led to inertia. In 2019, President Donald Trump announced that the US would withdraw from Syria. But lawmakers, military leaders, and many in the media called it a betrayal, and Trump ultimately changed his mind. Biden’s team initially reviewed its Syria policy, though it’s difficult to parse out any shifts. “I don’t think that there is much reason to believe that America remaining longer there is somehow positioning us for an exit on better terms, or it’s going to leave Syria in a shape that’s more favorable to US interests,” Sam Heller, a researcher with Century International, told me. “The lowest effort option in Syria is to just continue on autopilot.” And Syrian civilians are among those suffering the most. Is this an illegal war? The legal basis for the US in Syria remains sketchy, and members of Congress want more clarity. In a March hearing, Rep. Sara Jacobs (D-CA) asked about the need for a formal authorization from Congress permitting US troops there. The Biden administration has told Congress that the “83 separate times” since 2021 that the US in Iraq and Syria has come under Iranian-backed militias’ attacks were “too episodic to constitute the kind of ongoing and continuing hostilities that would trigger Congress’s constitutional war powers,” according to Jacobs. At a certain point, 83 episodes starts to sound like a trend. So she asked Milley about why the conflict doesn’t merit more congressional oversight. But Milley, the country’s top uniformed general, dodged the question. “I’m not a constitutional lawyer on those issues,” he said. He emphasized that Iran wants to push the US out of Syria and said the mission is worthwhile. The legal and strategic rationale makes the conditions under which the US would depart murky. US troops are there under a 2001 authorization of military force that Congress passed in the days after the September 11 attacks to counter al-Qaeda. The Obama administration had determined that ISIS is a successor to al-Qaeda. The senior US defense official told me that the government of Iraq sent a letter to the UN in 2014 requesting US and international help in response to the terrorist threat from Syria. Meanwhile, the justification for counter-strikes against Iranian-backed groups falls under the Constitution’s Article 2 as a form of self-defense. Experts say it’s an overly broad interpretation. “The Biden administration has relied, in my view, very problematically on its claimed inherent constitutional authority,” says Katherine Ebright of the Brennan Center. What next for the US in Syria The Biden administration has doubled down on maintaining US troops in Syria. “The US has no intent to withdraw in the near future,” the senior Pentagon official told me. “We successfully pushed ISIS out of the territory it once held, but there are still ISIS members in Iraq and Syria, and we have more work to do.” Nine-hundred troops, Biden’s team argues, is a light footprint and shows that the US has learned from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that a large garrison occupation is a liability. But they are still in harm’s way, and it’s not something Congress has approved. “There’s just no exit,” Simone Ledeen, a former senior Defense Department official from the Trump administration, told me. “We can’t just stay there indefinitely, with no strategic end-state. It’s untenable.”

#### The US’s deployment of secret forces in the Middle East for “counterterrorism” lacks any transparency to understand their intentions but has lacked any positive empirical basis.

**Turse 17** [(Nick, Nick Turse has an MA in history from Rutgers University and his doctorate in sociomedical sciences from the Columbia University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences) “The Rise of America’s Secret Wars,” Truthdig, https://www.truthdig.com/articles/rise-americas-secret-wars/, 12/18/17] TDI

“We know they are hiding in the ungoverned spaces [and that] Daesh is still trying to regenerate,” Air Force Maj. Gen. Eric Hill, the commander of Special Operations Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve said recently. “We’ll stay here and support the [Iraqi security forces] until no longer needed.” “We don’t know exactly where we’re at in the world, militarily, and what we’re doing,” said Senator Lindsey Graham, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, in October. That was in the wake of the combat deaths of four members of the Special Operations forces in the West African nation of Niger. Graham and other senators expressed shock about the deployment, but the global sweep of America’s most elite forces is, at best, an open secret. Earlier this year before that same Senate committee—though Graham was not in attendance—General Raymond Thomas, the chief of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), offered some clues about the planetwide reach of America’s most elite troops. “We operate and fight in every corner of the world,” he boasted. “Rather than a mere ‘break-glass-in-case-of-war’ force, we are now proactively engaged across the ‘battle space’ of the Geographic Combatant Commands… providing key integrating and enabling capabilities to support their campaigns and operations.” In 2017, U.S. Special Operations forces, including Navy SEALs and Army Green Berets, deployed to 149 countries around the world, according to figures provided to *TomDispatch* by U.S. Special Operations Command. That’s about 75 percent of the nations on the planet and represents a jump from the 138 countries that saw such deployments in 2016 under the Obama administration. It’s also a jump of nearly 150 percent from the last days of George W. Bush’s White House. This record-setting number of deployments comes as American commandos are battling a plethora of terror groups in quasi-wars that stretch from Africa and the Middle East to Asia. “Most Americans would be amazed to learn that U.S. Special Operations Forces have been deployed to three quarters of the nations on the planet,” observes William Hartung, the director of the Arms and Security Project at the Center for International Policy. “There is little or no transparency as to what they are doing in these countries and whether their efforts are promoting security or provoking further tension and conflict.” Growth Opportunity “Since 9/11, we expanded the size of our force by almost 75 percent in order to take on mission-sets that are likely to endure,” SOCOM’s Thomas told the Senate Armed Services Committee in May. Since 2001, from the pace of operations to their geographic sweep, the activities of U.S. Special Operations forces (SOF) have, in fact, grown in every conceivable way. On any given day, about 8,000 special operators—from a command numbering roughly 70,000—are deployed in approximately 80 countries. “The increase in the use of Special Forces since 9/11 was part of what was then referred to as the Global War on Terror as a way to keep the United States active militarily in areas beyond its two main wars, Iraq and Afghanistan,” Hartung told TomDispatch. “The even heavier reliance on Special Forces during the Obama years was part of a strategy of what I think of as ‘politically sustainable warfare,’ in which the deployment of tens of thousands of troops to a few key theaters of war was replaced by a ‘lighter footprint’ in more places, using drones, arms sales and training, and Special Forces.” The Trump White House has attacked Barack Obama’s legacy on nearly all fronts. It has undercut, renounced, or reversed actions of his ranging from trade pacts to financial and environmental regulations to rules that shielded transgender employees from workplace discrimination. When it comes to Special Operations forces, however, the Trump administration has embraced their use in the style of the former president, while upping the ante even further. President Trump has also provided military commanders greater authority to launch attacks in quasi-war zones like Yemen and Somalia. According to Micah Zenko, a national security expert and Whitehead Senior Fellow at the think tank Chatham House, those forces conducted five times as many lethal counterterrorism missions in such non-battlefield countries in the Trump administration’s first six months in office as they did during Obama’s final six months. A Wide World of War U.S. commandos specialize in 12 core skills, from “unconventional warfare” (helping to stoke insurgencies and regime change) to “foreign internal defense” (supporting allies’ efforts to guard themselves against terrorism, insurgencies, and coups). Counterterrorism—fighting what SOCOM calls violent extremist organizations or VEOs—is, however, the specialty America’s commandos have become best known for in the post-9/11 era. In the spring of 2002, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, SOCOM chief General Charles Holland touted efforts to “improve SOF capabilities to prosecute unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense programs to better support friends and allies. The value of these programs, demonstrated in the Afghanistan campaign,” he said, “can be particularly useful in stabilizing countries and regions vulnerable to terrorist infiltration.” Over the last decade and a half, however, there’s been little evidence America’s commandos have excelled at “stabilizing countries and regions vulnerable to terrorist infiltration.” This was reflected in General Thomas’s May testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee. “The threat posed by VEOs remains the highest priority for USSOCOM in both focus and effort,” he explained. However, unlike Holland who highlighted only one country—Afghanistan—where special operators were battling militants in 2002, Thomas listed a panoply of terrorist hot spots bedeviling America’s commandos a decade and a half later. “Special Operations Forces,” he said, “are the main effort, or major supporting effort for U.S. VEO-focused operations in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, across the Sahel of Africa, the Philippines, and Central/South America—essentially, everywhere Al Qaeda (AQ) and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are to be found.” Officially, there are about 5,300 U.S. troops in Iraq. (The real figure is thought to be higher.) Significant numbers of them are special operators training and advising Iraqi government forces and Kurdish troops. Elite U.S. forces have also played a crucial role in Iraq’s recent offensive against the militants of the Islamic State, providing artillery and airpower, including SOCOM’s AC-130W Stinger II gunships with 105mm cannons that allow them to serve as flying howitzers. In that campaign, Special Operations forces were “thrust into a new role of coordinating fire support,” wrote Linda Robinson, a senior international policy analyst with the RAND Corporation who spent seven weeks in Iraq, Syria, and neighboring countries earlier this year. “This fire support is even more important to the Syrian Democratic Forces, a far more lightly armed irregular force which constitutes the major ground force fighting ISIS in Syria.” Special Operations forces have, in fact, played a key role in the war effort in Syria, too. While American commandos have been killed in battle there, Kurdish and Arab proxies — known as the Syrian Democratic Forces — have done the lion’s share of the fighting and dying to take back much of the territory once held by the Islamic State. SOCOM’s Thomas spoke about this in surprisingly frank terms at a security conference in Aspen, Colorado, this summer. “We’re right now inside the capital of [ISIS’s] caliphate at Raqqa [Syria]. We’ll have that back soon with our proxies, a surrogate force of 50,000 people that are working for us and doing our bidding,” he said. “So two and a half years of fighting this fight with our surrogates, they’ve lost thousands, we’ve only lost two service members. Two is too many, but it’s, you know, a relief that we haven’t had the kind of losses that we’ve had elsewhere.” This year, U.S. special operators were killed in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, and the Sahelian nations of Niger and Mali (although reports indicate that a Green Beret who died in that country was likely strangled by U.S. Navy SEALs). In Libya, SEALs recently kidnapped a suspect in the 2012 attacks in Benghazi that killed four Americans, including Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens. In the Philippines, U.S. Special Forces joined the months-long battle to recapture Marawi City after it was taken by Islamist militants earlier this year. And even this growing list of counterterror hotspots is only a fraction of the story. In Africa, the countries singled out by Thomas—Somalia, Libya, and those in the Sahel—are just a handful of the nations to which American commandos were deployed in 2017. As recently reported at *Vice News*, U.S. Special Operations forces were active in at least 33 nations across the continent, with troops heavily concentrated in and around countries now home to a growing number of what the Pentagon’s Africa Center for Strategic Studies calls “active militant Islamist groups.” While Defense Department spokeswoman Major Audricia Harris would not provide details on the range of operations being carried out by the elite forces, it’s known that they run the gamut from conducting security assessments at U.S. embassies to combat operations. Data provided by SOCOM also reveals a special ops presence in 33 European countries this year. “Outside of Russia and Belarus we train with virtually every country in Europe either bilaterally or through various multinational events,” Major Michael Weisman, a spokesman for U.S. Special Operations Command Europe, told *TomDispatch*. For the past two years, in fact, the U.S. has maintained a Special Operations contingent in almost every nation on Russia’s western border. “[W]e’ve had persistent presence in every country—every NATO country and others on the border with Russia doing phenomenal things with our allies, helping them prepare for their threats,” said SOCOM’s Thomas, mentioning the Baltic states as well as Romania, Poland, Ukraine, and Georgia by name. These activities represent, in the words of General Charles Cleveland, chief of U.S. Army Special Operations Command from 2012 to 2015 and now the senior mentor to the Army War College, “undeclared campaigns” by commandos. Weisman, however, balked at that particular language. “U.S. Special Operations forces have been deployed persistently and at the invitation of our allies in the Baltic States and Poland since 2014 as part of the broader U.S. European Command and Department of Defense European Deterrence Initiative,” he told *TomDispatch*. “The persistent presence of U.S. SOF alongside our Allies sends a clear message of U.S. commitment to our allies and the defense of our NATO Alliance.” Asia is also a crucial region for America’s elite forces. In addition to Iran and Russia, SOCOM’s Thomas singled out China and North Korea as nations that are “becoming more aggressive in challenging U.S. interests and partners through the use of asymmetric means that often fall below the threshold of conventional conflict.” He went on to say that the “ability of our special operators to conduct low-visibility special warfare operations in politically sensitive environments make them uniquely suited to counter the malign activities of our adversaries in this domain.” U.S.-North Korean saber rattling has brought increased attention to Special Forces Detachment Korea (SFDK), the longest serving U.S. Special Forces unit in the world. It would, of course, be called into action should a war ever break out on the peninsula. In such a conflict, U.S. and South Korean elite forces would unite under the umbrella of the Combined Unconventional Warfare Task Force. In March, commandos — including, according to some reports, members of the Army’s Delta Force and the Navy’s SEAL Team 6—took part in Foal Eagle, a training exercise, alongside conventional U.S. forces and their South Korean counterparts. U.S. special operators also were involved in training exercises and operations elsewhere across Asia and the Pacific. In June, in Okinawa, Japan, for example, airmen from the 17th Special Operations Squadron (17th SOS) carried out their annual (and oddly spelled) “Day of the Jakal,” the launch of five Air Force Special Operations MC-130J Commando II aircraft to practice, according to a military news release, “airdrops, aircraft landings, and rapid infiltration and exfiltration of equipment.” According to Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Dube of the 17th SOS, “It shows how we can meet the emerging mission sets for both SOCKOR [Special Operations Command Korea] and SOCPAC [Special Operations Command Pacific] out here in the Pacific theater.” At about the same time, members of the Air Force’s 353rd Special Operations Group carried out Teak Jet, a joint combined exchange training, or JCET, mission meant to improve military coordination between U.S. and Japanese forces. In June and July, intelligence analysts from the Air Force’s 353rd Special Operations Group took part in Talisman Saber, a biennial military training exercise conducted in various locations across Australia. More for War The steady rise in the number of elite operators, missions, and foreign deployments since 9/11 appears in no danger of ending, despite years of worries by think-tank experts and special ops supporters about the effects of such a high operations tempo on these troops. “Most SOF units are employed to their sustainable limit,” General Thomas said earlier this year. “Despite growing demand for SOF, we must prioritize the sourcing of these demands as we face a rapidly changing security environment.” Yet the number of deployments still grew to a record 149 nations in 2017. (During the Obama years, deployments reached 147 in 2015.) At a recent conference on special operations held in Washington, D.C., influential members of the Senate and House armed services committees acknowledged that there were growing strains on the force. “I do worry about overuse of SOF,” said House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry, a Republican. One solution offered by both Jack Reed, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Republican Senator Joni Ernst, a combat veteran who served in Iraq, was to bulk up Special Operations Command yet more. “We have to increase numbers and resources,” Reed insisted. This desire to expand Special Operations further comes at a moment when senators like Lindsey Graham continue to acknowledge how remarkably clueless they are about where those elite forces are deployed and what exactly they are doing in far-flung corners of the globe. Experts point out just how dangerous further expansion could be, given the proliferation of terror groups and battle zones since 9/11 and the dangers of unforeseen blowback as a result of low-profile special ops missions. “Almost by definition, the dizzying number of deployments undertaken by U.S. Special Operations forces in recent years would be hard to track. But few in Congress seem to be even making the effort,” said William Hartung. “This is a colossal mistake if one is concerned about reining in the globe-spanning U.S. military strategy of the post-9/11 era, which has caused more harm than good and done little to curb terrorism.” However, with special ops deployments rising above Bush and Obama administration levels to record-setting heights and the Trump administration embracing the use of commandos in quasi-wars in places like Somalia and Yemen, there appears to be little interest in the White House or on Capitol Hill in reining in the geographic scope and sweep of America’s most secretive troops. And the results, say experts, may be dire. “While the retreat from large ‘boots on the ground’ wars like the Bush administration’s intervention in Iraq is welcome,” said Hartung, “the proliferation of Special Operations forces is a dangerous alternative, given the prospects of getting the United States further embroiled in complex overseas conflicts.”

#### ISIS resurgence is existential.

Target ’23 [Target Media Platform; independent communication platform emphasizing Middle East issues. May 2, 2023; “Leaked documents reveal ISIS resurgence attempts”; https://targetplatform.net/en/?p=2133] TDI

Confidential US documents shared by a reserve Air Force technician in online chat groups reveal the efforts of ISIS to resurrect. According to classified documents leaked by young Air Force technician Jack Teixera, ISIS is using Afghanistan to plan its attacks. At the same time, it continues to carry out its most wicked acts, such as planning terrorist attacks, especially in Europe, while trying to regain its chemical weapons capacity. In its report on the leaked documents, the Washington Post also states that Afghanistan has become a coordination zone for the Islamic State to plan attacks in Europe and Asia.

According to intelligence, ISIS had the intention to attack places such as embassies, churches, business centers, and the FIFA World Cup tournament that took place in Qatar last summer. The report of the Washington Post also marks that the documents reveal ISIS’ persistent efforts to gain expertise in creating chemical weapons. Last year, the United Nations Investigative Team for Accountability of ISIS (UNITAD) revealed that the Islamic State used chemical weapons in Iraq. It filed the findings that ISIS used chemical weapons in the areas it controlled in Iraq and Syria between 2014 and 2019. The newly leaked assessments indicate that the terrorist organization is aiming to provide specialty again.

The top-secret statement reads: “ISIS has been developing a cost-effective model for external operations that relies on resources from outside Afghanistan, operatives in target countries, and extensive facilitation networks. The model will likely enable ISIS to overcome obstacles – such as competent security services – and reduce some plot timelines, minimizing disruption opportunities.” Last month, the commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM), General Michael “Erik” Kurilla, also publicly announced that the Islamic State Khorasan (ISIS-K), the Afghan branch of the Islamic State, could launch attacks against US interests outside Afghanistan in less than six months.

#### Special operations create instability across the globe.

**Turse 14** [Nick, associate editor of TomDispatch.com and the winner of a 2009 Ridenhour Prize for Reportorial Distinction as well as a James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism. His work has appeared in the Los Angeles Times, the Nation, In These Times, and regularly at TomDispatch. Turse is currently a fellow at New York University's Center for the United States and the Cold War, January 16, Tomgram: Nick Turse, Secret Wars and Black Ops Blowback, http://www.dailykos.com/story/2014/01/16/1270073/-Tomgram-Nick-Turse-Secret-Wars-and-Black-Ops-Blowback]

Last year, Special Operations Command chief Admiral William McRaven explained his vision for special ops globalization. In a statement to the House Armed Services Committee, he said: “USSOCOM is enhancing its global network of SOF to support our interagency and international partners in order to gain expanded situational awareness of emerging threats and opportunities. The network enables small, persistent presence in critical locations, and facilitates engagement where necessary or appropriate...” While that “presence” may be small, the reach and influence of those Special Operations forces are another matter. The 12% jump in national deployments -- from 120 to 134 -- during McRaven’s tenure reflects his desire to put boots on the ground just about everywhere on Earth. SOCOM will not name the nations involved, citing host nation sensitivities and the safety of American personnel, but the deployments we do know about shed at least some light on the full range of missions being carried out by America’s secret military. Last April and May, **for instance**, Special Ops **personnel** **took part in training exercises in** **Djibouti**, **Malawi**, and the **Seychelles** Islands in the **Indian Ocean**. In June, U.S. Navy SEALs joined **Iraqi**, **Jordanian**, **Lebanese**, and other allied **Mideast forces** for irregular warfare simulations in Aqaba, Jordan. The next month, Green Berets traveled to **Trinidad and Tobago** to carry out small unit tactical exercises with local forces. In August, Green Berets conducted explosives training with **Honduran** sailors. In September, according to media reports, U.S. Special Operations forces joined elite troops from the 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations -- **Indonesia**, **Malaysia**, **the Philippines**, **Singapore**, **Thailand**, **Brunei**, **Vietnam**, **Laos**, **Myanmar (Burma), and Cambodia** -- as well as their counterparts from Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, China, India, and Russia for a US-Indonesian joint-funded coun­terterrorism exercise held at a training center in Sentul, West Java. In October, elite **U.S.** troops carried out **commando raids in** **Libya** **and** **Somalia**, kidnapping a terror suspect in the former nation while SEALs killed at least one militant in the latter before being driven off under fire. In November, Special Ops troops conducted humanitarian operations in the Philippines to aid survivors of Typhoon Haiyan. **The next month**, members of the 352nd Special Operations Group conducted a **training exercise involving** approximately 130 airmen and six aircraft at an airbase in England and Navy SEALs were wounded while undertaking an evacuation mission in **South Sudan**. **Green Berets then rang in the new year** with a January 1st combat mission alongside elite Afghan troops in Bahlozi village **in** **Kandahar** province. Deployments in 134 countries, however, turn out not to be expansive enough for SOCOM. In November 2013, the command announced that it was seeking to identify industry partners who could, under SOCOM’s Trans Regional Web Initiative, potentially “develop new websites tailored to foreign audiences.” These would join an existing global network of 10 propaganda websites, run by various combatant commands and made to look like legitimate news outlets, including CentralAsiaOnline.com, Sabahi which targets the Horn of Africa; an effort aimed at the Middle East known as Al-Shorfa.com; and another targeting Latin America called Infosurhoy.com. SOCOM’s push into cyberspace is mirrored by a concerted effort of the command to embed itself ever more deeply inside the Beltway. “I have folks in every agency here in Washington, D.C. -- from the CIA, to the FBI, to the National Security Agency, to the National Geospatial Agency, to the Defense Intelligence Agency,” SOCOM chief Admiral McRaven said during a panel discussion at Washington’s Wilson Center last year. Speaking at the Ronald Reagan Library in November, he put the number of departments and agencies where SOCOM is now entrenched at 38. **134 Chances for Blowback** Although elected in 2008 by many who saw him as an antiwar candidate, President Obama has proved to be a decidedly hawkish commander-in-chief whose policies have already produced notable instances of what in CIA trade-speak has long been called blowback. While the Obama administration oversaw a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq (negotiated by his predecessor), as well as a drawdown of U.S. forces in Afghanistan (after a major military surge in that country), the president has presided over a ramping up of the U.S. military presence in Africa, a reinvigoration of efforts in Latin America, and tough talk about a rebalancing or “pivot to Asia” (even if it has amounted to little as of yet). The White House has also overseen an exponential expansion of America’s drone war. While President Bush launched 51 such strikes, President Obama haspresided over 330, according to research by the London-based Bureau of Investigative Journalism. Last year, alone, the U.S. also engaged in combat operations in Afghanistan, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen. Recent revelations from National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden have demonstrated the tremendous breadth and global reach of U.S. electronic surveillance during the Obama years. And deep in the shadows, Special Operations forces are now annually deployed to **more than double** the number of nations as at the end of Bush’s tenure. In recent years, however, the unintended consequences of U.S. military operations have helped to **sow outrage** and discontent, setting whole regions aflame. More than 10 years after America’s “mission accomplished” moment, seven years after its much vaunted surge, the Iraq that America helped make is in flames. A country with no al-Qaeda presence before the U.S. invasion and a government opposed to America’s enemies in Tehran now has a central government aligned with Iran and two cities flying al-Qaeda flags. A more recent U.S. military intervention to aid the ouster of Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi helped send neighboring Mali, a U.S.-supported bulwark against regional terrorism, into a downward spiral, saw a coup there carried out by a U.S.-trained officer, ultimately led to a bloody terror attack on an Algerian gas plant, and helped to unleash nothing short of a terror diaspora in the region. And today **South Sudan** -- a nation the U.S. shepherded into being, has supported economically and militarily (despite its reliance on child soldiers), and **has used as a hush-hush base** for Special Operations forces -- is being **torn apart by violence and sliding toward civil war.** The Obama presidency has seen the U.S. military’s elite tactical forces increasingly used in an attempt to achieve strategic goals. **But** with Special Operations missions kept **under tight wraps**, Americans have little understanding of where their troops are deployed, what exactly they are doing, or what the consequences might be down the road. As retired Army Colonel Andrew Bacevich, professor of history and international relations at Boston University, has noted, the utilization of Special Operations forces during the Obama years has **decreased military accountability**, strengthened the **“imperial presidency,”** and set the stage for a **war without end**. “In short,” he wrote at TomDispatch, “handing war to the special operators severs an already too tenuous link between war and politics; it becomes war for its own sake.” Secret ops by secret forces have a nasty tendency to produce **unintended, unforeseen, and completely disastrous consequences**. New Yorkers will remember well the end result of clandestine U.S. support for Islamic militants against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan during the 1980s: 9/11. Strangely enough, those at the other primary attack site that day, the Pentagon, seem not to have learned the obvious lessons from this lethal blowback. Even today in Afghanistan and Pakistan, more than 12 years after the U.S. invaded the former and almost 10 years after it began conducting covert attacks in the latter, the U.S. is still dealing with that Cold War-era fallout: with, for instance, CIA drones conducting missile strikes against an organization (the Haqqani network) that, in the 1980s, the Agency supplied with missiles. Without a clear picture of where the military’s covert forces are operating and what they are doing, Americans may not even recognize the consequences of and **blowback** from our expanding secret wars as they wash over the world. **But if history is any guide,** **they will be felt** -- **from Southwest Asia to the Mahgreb, the Middle East to Central Africa,** and, perhaps eventually, in the United States as well. In his blueprint for the future, SOCOM 2020, Admiral McRaven has touted the globalization of U.S. special ops as a means to “project power, promote stability, and prevent conflict.” Last year, SOCOM may have done just the opposite in 134 places.

#### The plan prevents forever wars that will extend to next generation technology.

Ian **Hurd**, Professor of Political Science @ Northwestern, **’19**, "If I Had a Rocket-Launcher: Self-Defense and Forever War in International Law," Houston Law Review 56, no. 4 (2019): 821-840

Second, **self-defense law** today **helps sustain the contemporary practice of small-scale and pervasive military operations. Drone attacks**, **targeted killings**, **and more have come to mark a new form of war in which the enemy is a dispersed group of people, the battlefield is anywhere on the globe**, and the goal is to defeat those who seek to undermine the state. Harold Koh has described this as **the "Forever War"** because it describes military operations that are unbounded by battlefield limits, time, or realistic win conditions. He fears that the United States may be moving toward this state of affairs and is particularly concerned that American military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere, as well as "such related topics as torture, Guantnamo, and drones," 71 are all legally part of a war with "al Qaeda and associated forces." The legal implication, arising from Congress's enactment of the Authorization to Use Military Force from Congress in 2001,72 is that the United States can target any person anywhere in the world on the grounds of self-defense if that person can be understood as in line with the anti-American ideas of al Qaeda. **The policy implication, as Rosa Brooks and others explain, is that a constant state of war is the new normal.** 73 The United States has entered a legal formulation in which its attacks against any person anywhere in the world are lawful as long as the United States believes that the person poses an imminent threat**. The "battlefield" is wherever the enemy happens to be, and the "enemy" is anyone who the United States understands as a threat to its security. "War" ends when all such people are killed**. Its victory conditions are impossible, and its battlefield is unlimited. Its foundation is the international law of self-defense understood as the pursuit of national security against outside threats. Stephen Walt explored this fact **in Afghanistan, where "by 2016 the United States seemed trapped in a war it could neither win nor leave,"** and **the only certainty was the continuation of military destruction with costs to all sides**.74 Finally, the net effect is that **state violence is today lawful under a much broader set of circumstances and with more agency on the part of governments than was imagined by the Charter**. This is not far from the world of the 1890s and the Hague Conferences, of which one observer remarked at the time, "[T]he convention ... leaves the Powers free to declare war at their pleasure, provided only that the pretext be capable of formulation."75 The many degrees of freedom for lawful war today serves the interests of strong governments but is likely worse for the people against whom that violence is directed. In this sense, **the main function of the rule is not "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war"**76 **as the U.N. Charter would have it but instead to provide a path for governments to attack their enemies around the world**. This would probably not be a surprise to Bruce Cockburn on the Mexican hilltop in 1983.

#### Next generation war is faster, more deadly, and more likely than 20th century territorial incursion. Unhinged self-defense plunges the earth into endless war.

Brooks 14 – Rosa, Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center. ( “Duck-Rabbits and Drones: Legal Indeterminacy in the War on Terror” 25 Stanford. L. & Pol'y Rev. 301-316 (2014)) RMT

All of this has institutional consequences as well as legal consequences. As our national leaders frequently remind us, the United States now faces a wide range of unconventional, asymmetric threats from an ever-changing enemy who will try to fight us in ways not traditionally recognizable as warfare. The enemy’s weapons, we are told, will range from suicide bombs and cyberattacks to economic warfare and bio-engineered viruses. If this is so, then anything that helps us counter the enemy’s activities can also be construed as part of warfare, and as appropriate activities for the U.S. military. 31 As our understanding of what constitutes warfare expands, our understanding of what constitutes the appropriate role of the U.S. military has expanded correspondingly. Today, the U.S. military engages in everything from spying and Internet data collection to health care, economic development, and governance reform programs. But this in turn means that we lose any clarity about what a military is for, and what, if anything, makes it distinct from other institutions. In the post-9/11 world, what is it that distinguishes the military from the intelligence community (which has itself become increasingly paramilitary in its structure and activities since 9/11)? What distinguishes the military from the State Department or USAID? When intelligence agencies carry out drone strikes and the military collects cell phone metadata of U.S. citizens and operates agricultural reform programs in Afghanistan, do we have any basis at all for drawing lines between “civilian” and “military” tasks and institutions? What will this blurring of institutional lines mean for the military itself, and for its role in domestic politics? How do we make sense of—and apply—notions of civilian control of the military when the military’s role and mission has become so blurred? It’s possible, of course, that many of these changes would have occurred even without 9/11 and the unique constellation of personalities and ideologies that made up the Bush Administration. After all, the 9/11 attacks didn’t come out of nowhere: the technological and political shifts that enabled them had been decades in the making. Indeed, a small number of scholars and military thinkers had begun to speculate about the changing nature of warfare well before 9/11. In 1999, for instance, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, both colonels in China’s People’s Liberation Army, published a slender little book called Unrestricted Warfare. 32 Historically, wrote Qiao and Wang, “the three indispensable ‘hardware’ elements of any war” have been “soldiers, weapons and a battlefield.”33 But, they warned, humanity is on the verge of an era in which all these elements will be transformed beyond recognition: in this brave new world, soldiers will be computer hackers, financiers, terrorists, drug smugglers, and agents of private corporations as well as members of organized state militaries, and weapons will range from “airplanes, cannons, poison gas, bombs [and] biochemical agents” to “computer viruses, net browsers, and financial derivative tools.”34 Soon, warned Qiao and Wang, warfare will “transcend[] all boundaries and limits . . . . [T]he battlefield will be everywhere . . . [and] all the boundaries lying between the two worlds of war and non-war, of military and non-military, will be totally destroyed.” In consequence, “visible national boundaries, invisible internet space, international law, national law, behavioral norms, and ethical principles [will] have absolutely no restraining effects.”35 Outside of some narrow military and intelligence circles, Unrestricted Warfare attracted very little attention at the time of its publication. Today, it looks prophetic. As Qiao and Wang warned, when the boundaries between war and nonwar, military and non-military have eroded, both law and morality begin to lose their force. The boundaries between war and non-war are no less vital for being socially constructed, for if we can’t figure out whether or not there’s a war—or where the war is located, or who’s a combatant in that war and who’s a civilian—we have no way of deciding whether, where, or to whom the law of war applies. Yet if we can’t figure out what rules apply, we lose any principled basis for making the most vital decisions a democracy can make: what is the appropriate sphere for the military? When can lethal force be used inside the borders of a foreign country? Which communications and activities can be monitored, and which should be free of government eavesdropping? What matters can the courts decide, and what matters should be beyond the scope of judicial review? When can a government have “secret laws,” and when must government decisions and their basis be submitted to public scrutiny? Who can be imprisoned, for how long, and with what degree, if any, of due process? Who is a duck, and who is a rabbit? Ultimately: Who lives, and who dies?

#### JSOC troops are ineffective and worsen perception of US presence in the Middle East.

**Priest and Arkin 11** [(Dana, Dana Priest is an investigative reporter with a BA in politics from the University of California at Santa Cruz who has worked for 30 years at The Washington Post and won two Pulitzer Prizes. William, William M. Arkin is an American political commentator, best-selling author, journalist, activist, blogger, and former United States Army soldier who has previously served as a military affairs analyst for the Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post, and The New York Times.) “‘Top Secret America’: A look at the military’s Joint Special Operations Command,” https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/top-secret-america-a-look-at-the-militarys-joint-special-operations-command/2011/08/30/gIQAvYuAxJ\_story.html, Washington Post, 9/3/11] TDI

The CIA’s armed drones and paramilitary forces have killed dozens of al-Qaeda leaders and thousands of its foot soldiers. But there is another mysterious organization that has killed even more of America’s enemies in the decade since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. CIA operatives have imprisoned and interrogated nearly 100 suspected terrorists in their former secret prisons around the world, but troops from this other secret organization have imprisoned and interrogated 10 times as many, holding them in jails that it alone controls in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since 9/11, this secretive group of men (and a few women) has grown tenfold while sustaining a level of obscurity that not even the CIA has managed. “We’re the dark matter. We’re the force that orders the universe but can’t be seen,” a strapping Navy SEAL, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said in describing his unit. The SEALs are just part of the U.S. military’s Joint Special Operations Command, known by the acronym JSOC, which has grown from a rarely used hostage rescue team into America’s secret army. When members of this elite force killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in May, JSOC leaders celebrated not just the success of the mission but also how few people knew their command, based in Fayetteville, N.C., even existed. This article, adapted from a chapter of the newly released "Top Secret America: The Rise of the New American Security State," by Washington Post reporters Dana Priest and William M. Arkin, chronicles JSOC's spectacular rise, much of which has not been publicly disclosed before. Two presidents and three secretaries of defense routinely have asked JSOC to mount intelligence-gathering missions and lethal raids, mostly in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in countries with which the United States was not at war, including Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia, the Philippines, Nigeria and Syria. “The CIA doesn’t have the size or the authority to do some of the things we can do,” said one JSOC operator. The president has given JSOC the rare authority to select individuals for its kill list — and then to kill, rather than capture, them. Critics charge that this individual man-hunting mission amounts to assassination, a practice prohibited by U.S. law. JSOC’s list is not usually coordinated with the CIA, which maintains a similar but shorter roster of names. Created in 1980 but reinvented in recent years, JSOC has grown from 1,800 troops prior to 9/11 to as many as 25,000, a number that fluctuates according to its mission. It has its own intelligence division, its own drones and reconnaissance planes, even its own dedicated satellites. It also has its own cyberwarriors, who, on Sept. 11, 2008, shut down every jihadist Web site they knew. Obscurity has been one of the unit’s hallmarks. When JSOC officers are working in civilian government agencies or U.S. embassies abroad, which they do often, they dispense with uniforms, unlike their other military comrades. In combat, they wear no name or rank identifiers. They have hidden behind various nicknames: the Secret Army of Northern Virginia, Task Force Green, Task Force 11, Task Force 121. JSOC leaders almost never speak in public. They have no unclassified Web site. Despite the secrecy, JSOC is not permitted to carry out covert action as the CIA can. Covert action, in which the U.S. role is to be kept hidden, requires a presidential finding and congressional notification. Many national security officials, however, say JSOC’s operations are so similar to the CIA’s that they amount to covert action. The unit takes its orders directly from the president or the secretary of defense and is managed and overseen by a military-only chain of command. Under President George W. Bush, JSOC’s operations were rarely briefed to Congress in advance — and usually not afterward — because government lawyers considered them to be “traditional military activities” not requiring such notification. President Obama has taken the same legal view, but he has insisted that JSOC’s sensitive missions be briefed to select congressional leaders. **Lethal force** JSOC’s first overseas mission in 1980, Operation Eagle Claw, was an attempted rescue of diplomats held hostage by Iranian students at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. It ended in a helicopter collision in the desert and the death of eight team members. The unit’s extreme secrecy also made conventional military commanders distrustful and, as a consequence, it was rarely used during conflicts. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, smarting from the CIA’s ability to move first into Afghanistan and frustrated by the Army’s slowness, pumped new life into the organization. JSOC’s core includes the Army’s Delta Force, the Navy’s SEAL Team 6, the Air Force’s 24th Special Tactics Squadron, and the Army’s 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment and 75th Ranger Regiment. The lethality of JSOC was demonstrated in the December 2001 mountain battle at Tora Bora. Although bin Laden and many of his followers eventually escaped across the border into Pakistan, an Army history said that on the nights of Dec. 13 and 14, JSOC killed so many enemy forces that “dead bodies of al-Qaeda fighters were carted off the field the next day” by the truckload. It also made mistakes. On July 1, 2002, in what the Rand Corp. labeled “the single most serious errant attack of the entire war,” a JSOC reconnaissance team hunting Taliban came under attack and an AC-130 gunship fired upon six sites in the village of Kakarak. The estimates of civilian deaths ranged from 48 to hundreds. The “wedding party incident,” as it became known because a wedding party was among the targets accidentally hit, convinced many Afghans that U.S. forces disregarded the lives of civilians. Nevertheless, on Sept. 16, 2003, Rumsfeld signed an executive order cementing JSOC as the center of the counterterrorism universe. It listed 15 countries and the activities permitted under various scenarios, and it gave the preapprovals required to carry them out. In Iraq and Afghanistan, lethal action against al-Qaeda was granted without additional approval. In the other countries — among them Algeria, Iran, Malaysia, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia and Syria — JSOC forces needed the tacit approval from the country involved or at least a sign-off from higher up on the American chain of command. In the Philippines, for example, JSOC could undertake psychological operations to confuse or trap al-Qaeda operatives, but it needed approval from the White House for lethal action. To attack targets in Somalia required approval from at least the secretary of defense, while attacks in Pakistan and Syria needed presidential sign-off. In the fall of 2003, JSOC got a new commander who would turn the organization into arguably the most effective weapon in the U.S. counterterrorism arsenal. From his perch as vice director of operations on the Joint Staff, Brig. Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal had come to believe there was an aversion to decision making at the top of government. No one wanted to be wrong, so they asked more questions or added more layers to the process. The new emphasis on interagency cooperation also meant meetings were bigger and longer. Any one of a multitude of agencies could stifle action until it was too late. McChrystal believed he had “to slip out of the grip” of Washington’s suffocating bureaucracy, he told associates. He moved his headquarters to Balad Air Base, 45 miles northeast of Baghdad, and worked inside an old concrete airplane hangar with three connecting command centers: one to fight al-Qaeda’s affiliate in Iraq, one for the fight against Shiite extremists in the country and a third for himself, so he could oversee all operations. He coaxed the other intelligence agencies to help him out — the CIA presence grew to 100, the FBI and National Security Agency to a combined 80. He won their loyalty by exposing the guts of his operation to everyone involved. “The more people you shared your problem with, the better you’d do in solving it,” he would say. McChrystal installed a simple, PC-based common desktop and portal where troops could post documents, conduct chats, tap into the intelligence available on any target — pictures, biometrics, transcripts, intelligence reports — and follow the message traffic of commanders in the midst of operations. Then he gave access to it to JSOC’s bureaucratic rivals: the CIA, NSA, FBI and others. He also began salting every national security agency in Washington with his top commandos. In all, he deployed 75 officers to Washington agencies and 100 more around the world. They rotated every four months so none would become disconnected from combat. Some thought of the liaisons as spies for an organization that was already too important. But those suspicions did little to derail JSOC or McChrystal. Stories spread that he ate just one meal and ran 10 miles every day. He looked the part, with his taut face, intense eyes and thin physique. A sign inside the wire at Balad said it all: “17 5 2.” Seventeen hours for work, five hours for sleep, two hours for eating and exercise. McChrystal’s legendary work ethic mixed well with his Scotch Irish exuberance and common-man demeanor. He viewed beer calls with subordinates as an important bonding exercise. He made people call him by his first name. He seemed almost naively trusting. (This trait would become McChrystal’s undoing in 2010, after he was promoted to commander of forces in Afghanistan. He and members of his inner circle made what were seen as inappropriate comments about their civilian leaders in the presence of a Rolling Stone reporter. McChrystal offered to resign, and Obama quickly accepted.) **Harnessing technology** The Iraqi insurgency’s reliance on modern technology also gave tech-savvy JSOC and its partners, particularly the National Security Agency, an advantage. The NSA learned to locate all electronic signals in Iraq. “We just had a field day,” said a senior JSOC commander, speaking on the condition of anonymity to describe secret operations. One innovation was called the Electronic Divining Rod, a sensor worn by commandos that could detect the location of a particular cellphone. The beeping grew louder as a soldier with the device got closer to the person carrying a targeted phone. Killing the enemy was the easy part, JSOC commanders said; finding him was the hard part. But thanks to Roy Apseloff, director of the National Media Exploitation Center, the U.S. government’s agency for analyzing documents captured by the military and intelligence community, JSOC’s intelligence collection improved dramatically. Apseloff offered to lend McChrystal his small staff, based in Fairfax, to examine items captured in raids. Apseloff’s team downloaded the contents of thumb drives, cellphones and locked or damaged computers to extract names, phone numbers, messages and images. Then they processed and stored that data, linking it to other information that might help analysts find not just one more bad guy but an entire network of them. The major challenge was how to find the gems in the trash quickly enough to be useful. The key was more bandwidth, the electronic pipeline that carried such information as e-mail and telephone calls around the world. Luckily for the military and JSOC, the attacks of 2001 coincided with an unrelated development: the dot-com bust. It created a glut in commercial satellite capacity, and the military bought up much of it. Within a year after McChrystal’s arrival, JSOC had linked 65 stations around the world to enable viewers to participate in the twice-daily, 45-minute video teleconferences that he held. By 2006, JSOC had increased its bandwidth capability by 100 times in three years, according to senior leaders. The other challenge JSOC faced was a human one: Ill-trained interrogators had little information about individual detainees and didn’t know what questions to ask or how to effectively ask them. Worse, some members of the JSOC’s Task Force 121 were beating prisoners. Even before the Army’s Abu Ghraib prison photos began circulating in 2004, a confidential report warned that some JSOC interrogators were assaulting prisoners and hiding them in secret facilities. JSOC troops also detained mothers, wives and daughters when the men in a house they were looking for were not at home. The report warned these detentions and other massive sweep operations were counterproductive to winning Iraqi support. An investigation of JSOC detention facilities in Iraq during a four-month period in 2004 found that interrogators gave some prisoners only bread and water, in one case for 17 days. Other prisoners were locked up in cells so cramped they could not stand up or lie down while their captors played loud music to disrupt sleep. Still others were stripped, drenched with cold water and then interrogated in air-conditioned rooms or outside in the cold. Eventually, 34 JSOC task force soldiers were disciplined in five cases over a one-year period beginning in 2003. McChrystal ordered his intelligence chief, Michael Flynn, to professionalize the interrogation system. By the summer of 2005, JSOC’s interrogation booths at Balad sat around the corner from the large warren of rooms where specialists mined thumb drives, computers, cellphones, documents to use during interrogations. Paper maps were torn down from the walls and replaced with flat-panel screens and sophisticated computerized maps. Detainees willing to cooperate were taught how to use a mouse to fly around their virtual neighborhoods to help identify potential targets. JSOC had to use the rules laid out in the Army Field Manual to interrogate detainees. But its interrogators were — and still are — permitted to keep them segregated from other prisoners and to hold them, with the proper approvals from superiors and in some case from Defense Department lawyers, for up to 90 days before they have to be transferred into the regular military prison population. The new interrogation system also included an FBI and judicial team that collected evidence needed for trial by the Iraqi Central Criminal Court in Baghdad. From early 2005 to early 2007, the teams sent more than 2,000 individuals to trial, said senior military officials. **Body counts** Al-Qaeda used the U.S. invasion of Iraq as a call to arms to terrorists and recruits throughout the Middle East who flooded in from Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Saudi Arabia — as many as 200 of them a month at the high point. By the end of 2005, a shocking picture emerged: Iraq was rife with semiautonomous al-Qaeda networks. Al-Qaeda had divided Iraq into sections and put a provincial commander in charge of each. These commanders further divided their territory into districts and put someone in charge of each of those, too, according to military officials. There were city leaders within those areas and cells within each city. There were leaders for foreign fighters, for finance and for communications, too. By the spring of 2006, using the expanded bandwidth and constant surveillance by unmanned aircraft, JSOC executed a series of raids, known as Operation Arcadia, in which it collected and analyzed 662 hours of full-motion video shot over 17 days. The raid netted 92 compact discs and barrels full of documents, leading to another round of raids at 14 locations. Those hits yielded hard drives, thumb drives and a basement stacked with 704 compact discs, including copies of a sophisticated al-Qaeda marketing campaign. Operation Arcadia led, on June 7, 2006, to the death of the al-Qaeda leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, when JSOC directed an airstrike that killed him. JSOC’s lethality was evident in its body counts: In 2008, in Afghanistan alone, JSOC commandos struck 550 targets and killed roughly a thousand people, officials said. In 2009, they executed 464 operations and killed 400 to 500 enemy forces. As Iraq descended into chaos in the summer of 2005, JSOC conducted 300 raids a month. More than 50 percent of JSOC Army Delta Force commandos now have Purple Hearts. The most intense Iraqi raids reminded McChrystal of Lawrence of Arabia’s description of “rings of sorrow,” the emotional toll casualties take on small groups of warriors. Greatly influenced by T.E. Lawrence’s life story, McChrystal thought of his JSOC troops as modern-day tribal forces: dependent upon one another for kinship and survival. If killing were all that winning wars was about, the book on JSOC would be written. But no war in modern times is ever won simply by killing enough of the enemy. Even in an era of precision weaponry, accidents happen that create huge political setbacks. Every JSOC raid that also wounded or killed civilians, or destroyed a home or someone’s livelihood, became a source of grievance so deep that the counterproductive effects, still unfolding, are difficult to calculate. JSOC’s success in targeting the right homes, businesses and individuals was only ever about 50 percent, according to two senior commanders. They considered this rate a good one. “Sometimes our actions were counterproductive,” McChrystal said in an interview. “We would say, ‘We need to go in and kill this guy,’ but just the effects of our kinetic action did something negative and they [the conventional army forces that occupied much of the country] were left to clean up the mess.” In 2008, Bush also briefly sent JSOC into Pakistan. To soothe the worries of U.S. Ambassador Anne Patterson about the mounting civilian deaths from JSOC raids in other countries, commandos brought her a Predator console so she could witness a raid in real time. Because of public outcry in Pakistan, U.S. officials canceled the mission after only three raids. The CIA has continued to conduct drone strikes there.

#### Removing executive power is key to preventing endless war

CVA 21 [concerned veterans of America, We are resolved that it is our sacred duty to stand as one in defense of the fundamental ideals of liberty that are the soil from which opportunity for prosperity grows. “HOW CAN WE END OUR ENDLESS WARS? REPEALING OUTDATED AUMFS IS A GOOD START.” How can we end our endless wars? Repealing outdated AUMFs is a good start. - Concerned Veterans for America (cv4a.org) 06.23.21

Last week, the House of Representatives voted to repeal the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force. The bill, introduced by Rep. Barbara Lee, had support on both sides of the aisle, including a bipartisan group of cosponsors. The White House has also suggested support for a repeal, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced the Senate would take up a vote on repeal after the House, though Senate efforts have slowed down. This support from the White House and Congress is setting a course for finally reviewing this outdated war authorization. The 2002 AUMF was passed leading up to the war in Iraq and gave broad authority to President George W. Bush to “defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq.” But nearly 20 years of endless war and four presidents later, that expansive AUMF is still in place. And it’s not the only one. We’re watching and waiting to find out if Congress will finally repeal this outdated authorization. In the meantime, here are five things you need to know about current AUMFs and congressional war powers. 1. Decisions about war and peace are meant to be in the hands of Congress, not the president. Article I of the Constitution assigns Congress the responsibility to declare war. The president makes a case to Congress for why war is necessary, but Congress is charged with voting on and authorizing war. The Founders gave this power to Congress on purpose. They knew that the Executive Branch was most prone to entering war and that such important decisions should be in the hands of the Legislative Branch, which represents the citizens who pay war’s costs. But contrary to this vision, the United States has not formally declared war since World War II. 2. Outside of formal declarations of war, Congress passes Authorizations for the Use of Military Force to formally allow the president to conduct military actions within a certain scope. If the president and/or Congress do not want to engage in a declared war, AUMFs provide another way to use military force. These resolutions allow the president to direct military actions outside of a formal war declaration but within the scope of an authorization passed by Congress. The Persian Gulf War, Afghanistan War, Iraq War, have all taken place under AUMFs. 3. Four long-obsolete AUMFs are still “active” and could possibly be used for future military operations. The 1991, 2001, and 2002 AUMFs are all still technically open or in use, despite their being outdated. The 1957 AUMF was passed to combat communism in the Middle East during the Cold War. The 1991 AUMF was passed to authorize the Gulf War. The 2001 AUMF was signed in the days following September 11 to authorize retaliation against al-Qaida and the Taliban. The 2002 AUMF allowed the invasion of Iraq. In all four cases, the AUMFs were kept active after original goals were met. They feature vague language about their scope with no defined sunset dates. Leaving these authorizations in place runs the risk that future presidents could use their existence as a loophole to start a new war without securing congressional approval first. 4. The 2001 AUMF has been used to justify actions 41 times in 19 countries (so far). Such broad language in current AUMFs gives the president expansive authority to conduct military action without needing to go to Congress first. The 2001 AUMF is a prime example. Though it was meant as a response to 9/11, the vague language of the 2001 AUMF has allowed it to be used far beyond its original scope. For example, the AUMF has been used to authorize operations in Yemen, Georgia, Djibouti, Iraq, the Philippines, and other countries, none of which were involved in 9/11. A Congressional Research Service report found the 2001 AUMF was invoked 41 times to justify action in 19 countries since its passage—far beyond what the legislators who voted for it could have imagined. 5. The vast majority of Congress has never voted on an AUMF. Only a small number of serving members of Congress have been in office long enough to have voted on any of the existing AUMFs. Of the more than 500 current members of the House and Senate, only 28 voted on the 1991 AUMF, 86 on the 2001 AUMF, and 89 on the 2002 AUMF. At the most, around 16 percent of Congress has voted on any use of force authorization. Congress is not meeting its responsibility to make difficult decisions about war and military engagement. Congress has neglected its duty to vote on military engagements, choosing instead to give the president broad authority to carry out unchecked actions. Congress should respect the courage of service members willing to put themselves at risk on America’s behalf by having the courage to formally vote whether to send them into conflict. CVA Executive Director Nate Anderson had this to say about the latest move to repeal the 2002 AUMF: For too long the American people’s voice on matters of war and peace – deciding when and why we send our troops into harm’s way – has been absent. Debating and authorizing military action is one of Congress’ most solemn duties and repealing the outdated 2002 AUMF is a step toward Congress reasserting itself in this important role. Repealing the 2002 AUMF is only a start to fixing our approach to foreign policy and ending our nation’s endless wars. The next steps should be repealing the obsolete 1957 and 1991 AUMFs. Congress should also repeal the 2001 AUMF, which authorizes most of current U.S. military engagements, and reform the process for future authorizations to better reflect our current security challenges.

### Plan

#### The United States ought to substantially reduce its illegal military presence in the West Asia-North Africa region.

### ADV---War Powers

#### Advantage two is War Powers:

#### Military presence has led U.S. forces into unauthorized hostilities alongside foreign partners.

Ebright 22 - [Katherine, Katherine Yon Ebright serves as counsel with the Brennan Center’s Liberty & National Security Program, where she focuses on war powers and the constitutional separation of powers. She received an AB in social studies from Harvard College and a JD from Columbia Law School.) “secret wars” 2022/11/03 https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/secret-war 11-3-2022]TDI

Afghanistan, Iraq, maybe Libya. If you asked the average American where the United States has been at war in the past two decades, you would likely get this short list. But this list is wrong — off by at least 17 countries in which the United States has engaged in armed conflict through ground forces, proxy forces, or air strikes.footnote1\_d5fkygb1 For members of the public, the full extent of U.S. war-making is unknown. Investigative journalists and human rights advocates have cobbled together a rough picture of where the military has used force, but they rely on sources whose information is often incomplete, belated, or speculative. There is only so much one can learn about the United States’ military footprint from trawling Purple Heart ceremonies, speaking with retired military personnel, and monitoring social media for reports of civilian harm.footnote2\_9erbhq72 Congress’s understanding of U.S. war-making is often no better than the public record. The Department of Defense provides congressionally mandated disclosures and updates to only a small number of legislative offices. Sometimes, it altogether fails to comply with reporting requirements, leaving members of Congress uninformed about when, where, and against whom the military uses force. After U.S. forces took casualties in Niger in 2017, for example, lawmakers were taken aback by the very presence of U.S. forces in the country.footnote3\_df4p3yf3 Without access to such basic information, Congress is unable to perform necessary oversight. It is not just the public and Congress who are out of the loop. The Department of Defense’s diplomatic counterparts in the Department of State also struggle to understand and gain insight into the reach of U.S. hostilities. Where congressional oversight falters, so too does oversight within the executive branch. This proliferation of secret war is a relatively recent phenomenon, and it is undemocratic and dangerous. The conduct of undisclosed hostilities in unreported countries contravenes our constitutional design. It invites military escalation that is unforeseeable to the public, to Congress, and even to the diplomats charged with managing U.S. foreign relations. And it risks poorly conceived, counterproductive operations with runaway costs, in terms of both dollars and civilian lives. So how did we get here? Two sources of the government’s ability to wage war in secret are already the subject of much discussion. The first is the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), which was enacted in the wake of the September 11 attacks. Notwithstanding the limitations in its text, the 2001 AUMF has been stretched by four successive administrations to cover a broad assortment of terrorist groups, the full list of which the executive branch long withheld from Congress and still withholds from the public. The second is the covert action statute, an authority for secret, unattributed, and primarily CIA-led operations that can involve the use of force.footnote4\_paphlyu4 Despite a series of Cold War–era executive orders that prohibit assassinations, the covert action statute has been used throughout the war on terror to conduct drone strikes outside areas of active hostilities. But there is a third class of statutory authorities that enable undisclosed hostilities yet have received little public attention: security cooperation authorities. Congress enacted these provisions in the years following September 11 to allow U.S. forces to work through and with foreign partners. One of them, now codified at 10 U.S.C. § 333, permits the Department of Defense to train and equip foreign forces anywhere in the world. Another, now codified at 10 U.S.C. § 127e, authorizes the Department of Defense to provide “support” to foreign forces, paramilitaries, and private individuals who are in turn “supporting” U.S. counterterrorism operations. While training and support may sound benign, these authorities have been used beyond their intended purpose. Section 333 programs have resulted in U.S. forces pursuing their partners’ adversaries under a strained interpretation of constitutional self-defense. Section 127e programs have allowed the United States to develop and control proxy forces that fight on behalf of and sometimes alongside U.S. forces. In short, these programs have enabled or been used as a springboard for hostilities. The public and even most of Congress is unaware of the nature and scope of these programs. The Department of Defense has given little indication of how it interprets §§ 333 and 127e, how it decides which § 333 partner forces to defend, and where it conducts § 127e programs. When U.S. forces operating under these authorities direct or engage in combat, the Department of Defense often declines to inform Congress and the public, reasoning that the incident was too minor to trigger statutory reporting requirements. Notwithstanding the challenges Congress has faced in overseeing activities under §§ 333 and 127e, Congress recently expanded the Department of Defense’s security cooperation authorities. Section 1202 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2018 largely mirrors § 127e, but instead of supporting U.S. counterterrorism efforts, the partner forces it covers are intended to support U.S. “irregular warfare operations” against “rogue states,” such as Iran or North Korea, or “near-peers,” such as Russia and China. Far beyond the bounds of the war on terror, § 1202 may be used to engage in low-level conflict with powerful, even nuclear, states. Through these security cooperation provisions, the Department of Defense, not Congress, decides when and where the United States counters terrorist groups and even state adversaries. Moreover, by determining that “episodic” confrontations and “irregular” warfare do not amount to “hostilities,” the Department of Defense has avoided notification and reporting requirements, leaving Congress and the public in the dark.footnote5\_cip6yz75 This report delves into the legal frameworks for conducting and overseeing security cooperation and identifies how those frameworks have inaugurated the modern era of secret war. It draws on public reporting and materials prepared by the Departments of Defense and State, as well as interviews with administration officials, congressional staffers, and journalists. Part I provides a brief history and overview of constitutional war powers and congressional oversight of the military; part II analyzes the suite of authorities under which security cooperation takes place; and part III identifies the constitutional defects of this secret war-making and proposes reforms to increase transparency and prevent abuse.

#### Executive discretion is terminally unsustainable – “withdrawals” are a legal evasion for “advise-and-assist” positions that continue involvement AND increase escalation risk through strategic ambiguity in the Middle East and North Africa.

Jacob Silverman 21, Jacob Silverman is a staff writer at The New Republic and the author of Terms of Service: Social Media and the Price of Constant Connection, July 28, 2021, “The Forever Wars Aren’t Ending. They’re Just Being Rebranded.” The New Republic, https://newrepublic.com/article/163088/forever-wars-arent-ending-theyre-just-rebranded, nihara

After 18 years of illegal warfare, corruption, and untold numbers of innocent people killed or made into refugees, the U.S. combat mission in Iraq will be declared finished—for the third time. Sort of. This week, President Joe Biden said that the United States is “not going to be, by the end of the year, in a combat mission” in Iraq. The 2,500 U.S. soldiers officially staged there—almost certainly an undercount, as military leaders tend to fudge deployment numbers and reorganize troops under intelligence authorities or noncombat roles so as to disguise the scale of our overseas footprint—will be moving on. But they won’t necessarily be going home, or even leaving the region. The change in status, while pleasing to anti-war advocates and to Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al Kadhimi, who met with Biden this week, is mostly a distinction without a difference. The U.S. will be moving into an “advise-and-assist role,” as it’s euphemistically described, providing many of the same services it does now. According to ABC News, “the change in mission is more of a semantic one, and the number of U.S. troops in Iraq will not dramatically differ as they shift their emphasis to training and assisting.” U.S. soldiers will be doing “the exact same things they’re already doing, just fewer doing it,” said Wesley Morgan, author of a book about America’s war in Afghanistan. The forever wars don’t seem to end, they just molt into their next iteration, as assets are shuffled around, missions rebranded, and local allies reassured that we are there to “advise and assist” for as long as is needed. Relying heavily on special forces, intelligence resources, contractors, and unmatched air power, the U.S. continues to be involved in conflicts in Syria, Somalia, Libya, Niger, and other undeclared war zones. In Africa alone, the U.S. has at least 29 military bases and participates in operations against Islamic State sympathizers and other jihadist groups in a number of countries, particularly in West Africa. Earlier this year, making good on a campaign promise, Biden claimed that the U.S. would stop providing “offensive assistance” to the vicious war prosecuted by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates—with British and American help—in Yemen. We still don’t know if anything has changed, and the U.S. continues to help enforce a devastating blockade of a key port in a country where millions face hunger. Prolonging a process that was begun under Donald Trump, the U.S. hasn’t so much folded its cards in these conflicts as it has reshuffled the deck. Biden has positioned himself as a reluctant peacemaker—so reluctant that he sometimes brushes off questions about Afghanistan because they aren’t “happy.” But in practice, he appears to be a pliant imperial overseer. In moving to reestablish the relationships and treaties Trump trashed, while rebranding U.S. involvement in various conflicts, Biden’s foreign policy looks much like a return to the muscular liberalism of the Obama era, which gave us the Islamic State and humanitarian disasters in Yemen, Libya, and elsewhere. Any reports that the forever wars are ending miss what is really happening in U.S. foreign policy. Consider America’s pullout from Afghanistan, which has featured quietly dramatic scenes of fleets of vehicles abandoned at Bagram Airbase and reports of the Taliban capturing district after district. Even in that conflict, there’s little sense that the U.S. is about to abandon its foundering efforts to create a functional democracy in a country wracked by generations of war and outside meddling. Rather than fully exit the region, the U.S. reportedly has been considering repositioning its military assets to surrounding Central Asian countries, including possibly leasing Russian military bases in places like Tajikistan. U.S. forces have also continued launching airstrikes against the Taliban to try to aid the teetering Afghan government and to provide cover for foreign forces set to leave the country. (The Taliban, for its part, promised “consequences” for the U.S. violating its agreement to pull out of Afghanistan fully by August 31.) The U.S. has similarly promised, in the words of Gen. Kenneth McKenzie Jr., to provide “intelligence sharing and advising and assisting through security consultations at the strategic level” to the Afghan government—for as long as that government lasts in the face of growing Taliban assaults. American military operations seem to be continuing in Syria and Somalia, as well. Trump expressed interest in ending U.S. involvement in Somalia, but according to some reports, U.S. forces were mostly relocated to Kenya and other regional bases, essentially “commuting to work,” as described by Air Force Magazine. Following a six-month respite, the Biden administration resumed airstrikes in Somalia, leading several Democratic senators to demand an explanation. “I have received no information suggesting that these strikes are necessary to protect any U.S. personnel and would need to understand, if this is so, why they are occurring,” said Senator Tim Kaine. The same could be said about much of the last 20 years of America’s wars of choice. In Syria, the U.S. has carved out a small “buffer zone” in the east of the country, where Green Berets train and assist Syrian Democratic Forces in their battle against remnants of the Islamic State, and other U.S. assets provide air support. Although their presence is probably illegal, and occurred without any congressional debate, the mission will go on. “I don’t anticipate any changes right now to the mission or the footprint in Syria,” an anonymous official told Politico on Tuesday. More detailed information about the U.S. mission in Syria, including photos, videos, and other friendly propaganda, can be found on Twitter, where a U.S. spokesman provides regular updates with the hashtag #defeatdaesh (Daesh being a derogatory Arabic term for the Islamic State). The U.S.-led coalition “is committed to supporting the #SDF to combat terrorism & ensure a long-term stability in NE Syria,” said spokesman Col. Wayne Marotto this week. In both Iraq and Syria, U.S. officials say, American soldiers no longer participate in raids or kick down doors. They merely do everything else a long-term counterinsurgency campaign requires. This shift to more hazily described assistance roles is supposed to reflect a maturation and evolution of a global war on terror. But they’re also a way of keeping U.S. forces engaged in the region without visibly occupying it. This strategy also allows the U.S. to amp up involvement any time an Iranian-sponsored militia manages to lob some missiles a U.S. base in Iraq or Syria. As Marotto, the coalition spokesman, recently said, “The U.S./Coalition has the inherent right to self-defense. Force protection remains the highest priority of the @Coalition.” It’s a measure of how distorted our forever-war logic has become. Why keep U.S. soldiers parked at regional bases without any combat role, just so they can be targets for militia drone strikes that may then demand an escalating response? These soldiers and contractors wouldn’t require force protection if they were returned home. According to The Washington Post, President Biden is trying “to end the post-9/11 era.” From Afghanistan to Iraq to Guantánamo, where a prisoner was recently released after years of confinement and no criminal charges, Biden claims to be turning the page, reorienting toward security threats emanating from China and Russia. This new eagerness to wave sabers in the general direction of Beijing would be concerning on its own. But it also highlights how ending America’s decades-long imperial drift will take far more than rearranging some military deployments. It will require a complete reimagining of how to engage with a world that has been cynically reduced to a global battlefield populated with endless threats. It requires admitting that we live in a country mostly safe from external enemies, with only a marginal risk of terrorism. For 20 years, our political and military leaders and foreign policy establishment have claimed otherwise. Judging by Biden’s latest decisions—as well as the hysterically overwrought reactions of old neocon hands like George W. Bush and Lindsey Graham, who would be content to occupy Afghanistan for another generation—our elites are still not ready to admit the obvious: We lost these wars, and the only way to expiate our failure is to go home.

#### The plan forces the Executive to recalibrate the military and gives oversight needed by Congress.

**Brussels 22** – [Washington Brussels, 26 October 2022, "Stop Fighting Blind: Better Use-of-Force Oversight in the U.S. Congress," No Publication, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/united-states/006-stop-fighting-blind-better-use-force-oversight-us-congress>] TDI

As for specific measures, the executive branch should make a public commitment to better **facilitate** congressional **oversight in matters of war and peace**. Maximalist positions on secrecy and privilege may be attractive to executive branch officials in terms of maintaining operational flexibility or keeping embarrassing information out of public view, but they will not generate the kind of scrutiny and accountability that will likely be necessary to wind down or recalibrate the U.S. wars launched after the 2001 terrorist attacks, in line with President Biden’s stated aims. As a first step in this direction, the Biden administration should publicly release the full list of groups with which it considers the U.S. to be at war under the 2001 AUMF. The Obama administration undertook this transparency measure in 2016, but neither the Trump nor the Biden administration has replicated it.176 The administration should also publicly disclose the factual and legal bases upon which the executive branch deemed these groups to be within the scope of the 2001 war authorization. **Further, the executive branch should drop its claims of legal privilege with respect to information relating to the use of force** – whether based on vaguely defined **executive privilege,** or other “confidentiality interests”, or (in some cases) classification. The Biden administration should release to Congress and the public such use-of-force documents as the 2017 legal memo relating to airstrikes in Syria and the Justice Department’s Soleimani legal opinion, as well as State Department documents relating to arms sales and civilian casualties in Yemen previously requested by members of Congress. Redactions on the basis of classified information should be kept to a minimum. For its part, while Congress should welcome any commitment to make additional disclosures from the executive branch, it should also prepare for the possibility that the executive branch will continue to be less than forthcoming with information about matters of war and peace. If the latter is true, members should adopt a much more serious approach to eliciting information than they have in the past. First, congressional committees should more routinely hold closed-door, transcribed briefings and interviews before conducting public hearings. However paradoxically, conducting oversight in private as an initial matter may lead to greater public transparency. By first conducting briefings in private, members of Congress are deprived of the opportunity to perform for the television cameras, including by scoring points for partisan gain.177 Out of the spotlight, members of Congress are more likely to focus on their substantive responsibilities and less likely to grandstand.178 Members and staff could work with outside experts to develop lines of questioning intended to elicit information for these closed-door sessions, with interviews transcribed and (if classification permits) released to the public. Subsequent public hearings could then be used to draw public attention to the issues under scrutiny – and give members a chance to make their soundbites for television – but substantive fact finding would have been undertaken beforehand.179 Secondly, Congress should place greater emphasis on securing from the executive branch the underlying documents and legal analyses pertaining to the use of force as opposed to mandating additional reports. Whereas the executive branch may simply treat a reporting requirement as an invitation to tell Congress a carefully crafted story of its own choosing, internal executive branch materials are more likely to reveal the unvarnished reality of U.S. war-making and the legal theories justifying it. Civil society and advocacy organisations may have a role to play in at least revealing the existence of some of this material though Freedom of Information Act requests, as the Protect Democracy Project did regarding the Trump administration’s legal justification for attacking Syria in 2017. Thirdly, Congress should be prepared to resort to more aggressive tactics when needed to obtain information from a recalcitrant executive branch. To this end, members of Congress should seek commitments from executive branch officials, either orally during hearings or in writing that their departments or agencies will provide the requested information. Congress should also make greater use of the forcing function of confirmations, briefings and hearings to press executive branch officials to relinquish requested documents. In 2014, for example, Senators Mark Udall, a Democrat from Colorado, and Rand Paul, a Republican from Kentucky, were able to overcome executive branch claims of legal privilege by blocking a vote on one of President Barack Obama’s judicial nominations. By this means, they extracted an executive branch memo on U.S. targeted killings.180 In important cases that involve extreme intransigence, Congress should consider more frequent recourse to funding restrictions on the executive branch triggered by non-compliance with requests for information.181 In late 2021, Congress deployed such funding restrictions to compel the Pentagon to take certain actions related to mitigating civilian casualties: Section 1048 of the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2022 restricted the release of funds needed to run the Office of the Secretary of Defense until fifteen days after the Pentagon released a civilian harm policy that it had failed to produce, in spite of a legal requirement to do so.182 Although they might contest the constitutionality of such funding restrictions, according to a former congressional staffer, executive branch officials would likely be wary of defying them outright given federal laws that create criminal exposure for government officials who spend unappropriated funds – ie, money that Congress has not given them.183 Fourthly, Congress should take greater advantage of outside expertise to scrutinise the information that the executive branch does make available to it. A disadvantage hampering Congress vis-à-vis the executive branch is the number of staff working on a particular issue and the subject matter expertise of congressional staff relative to their executive branch counterparts. Ideally, Congress would level the playing field by hiring more experienced staff, but the increased funding this approach would require may not be politically viable. Another way for Congress to better equip itself with analysis is through greater crowdsourcing of oversight, including by leveraging the expertise of scholars and analysts outside government. Congress should take greater advantage of these outside sources of expertise by improving timely, public access to unclassified congressional testimony, reports and correspondence with the executive branch. Finally, Congress should use the tools at its disposal to reinforce intra-executive branch oversight. It should require inter-agency concurrence for military programs that implicate geopolitical issues. For example, it should work to better ensure that advise-and-assist missions conducted in connection with 127e fiscal authority get adequate scrutiny from both the State and Defense Departments. These programs have too often been the gateway to outright U.S. participation in hostilities; they should be subject to concurrence of the secretary of state, not simply that of the relevant chief of mission. That said, these programs should not be permitted to morph into combat missions without affirmative congressional authorisation – a safeguard that can best be imposed by amending the AUMF so that it cannot be used as a post hoc legal justification for mission creep.

#### A more transparent DoD would increase democratic checks and balances while increasing congressional oversight.

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One of the most striking features of the current security cooperation regime is how little anyone outside the Penta-gon and the White House knows about U.S. programs with partner forces, particularly programs under §§ 127e and 1202. The Department of Defense’s intense secrecy regarding these programs and the hostilities they involve or enable has frustrated Congress’s checks and balances on the executive branch’s use of the military. And it has prevented any semblance of public accountability. Congress should address these transparency shortfalls by increasing congressional and public access to key information on security cooperation. Congress has both legislative and non-legislative avenues for improving its own oversight of security cooperation programs. With respect to the former, Congress should reform the notiﬁcation provisions for §§ 333, 127e,and 1202 to ensure that the relevant committees receive information sufﬁcient to assess whether U.S. forces intend to conduct or are otherwise likely to end up in hostilities. At a minimum, this would require the Department of Defense to provide information on (1) where U.S. forces plan to deploy, and where potential adversaries operate, within a country; (2) the identities of all potential U.S. and partner force adversaries in a country, including whether such adversaries are covered by an authorization for use of military force; (3) whether applicable EXOR Dspermit U.S. forces to engage in combat against these potential adversaries, and on what legal bases; (4) whether the envisioned partner forces are currently or imminently engaged in hostilities with these potential adversaries; (5)whether the envisioned partner forces are or will be designated as eligible for collective self-defense; and (6) the risks identiﬁed in programmatic monitoring and evaluation. This information should be made available to Congress before U.S. forces launch a program. To oversee ongoing programs, Congress should expand the reporting provisions in §§ 333, 127e, and 1202 to 25Brennan Center for Justice Secret War include whether (1) U.S. forces have engaged in combat;(2) partner forces have engaged in combat, including combat directed by U.S. forces; (3) the legal authorities, including EXORDs, have changed in the area; and (4) the previously identiﬁed programmatic risks have material-ized or changed. Congress should also expand the brief-ing and notiﬁcation regimes for sensitive and signiﬁcant military operations, such that they capture information on all activities that involve or rise to the level of a use of force. Finally, Congress should modify the monitoring and evaluation regime in § 383 to ensure that it covers activities under §§ 127e and 1202, addresses war powers concerns, and regularly updates Congress on whether the Department of Defense’s programs are safe, cost-effective, and meeting articulable benchmarks. These reporting, brieﬁng, and notiﬁcation regimes should provide information not only to the congressional defense committees but also to the foreign affairs committees. Unauthorized hostilities, or the risk of them, are at the core of the foreign affairs committees’ jurisdiction. Any action under the War Powers Resolution or any amendment to the authorizations for use of military force must originate with the foreign affairs committees. As long as these committees are left in the dark, Congress will not be fully empowered to respond to the Department of Defense’s uses and misuses of its authorities. Beyond legislative action, Congress can act internally to improve its security cooperation oversight. To start, the House should align its practices regarding access to sensitive compartmented information with the Senate’s. In late2021, the Senate announced that each member would be allowed at least one personal staffer with SCI access.299 On the Senate side, this was a crucial step toward staffers being able to view §§ 127e and 1202 reports and notiﬁcations. Until the House expands SCI access for its members‘ staffers, §§ 127e and 1202 reports and notiﬁcations will continue to be out of reach. Relatedly, both the House and Senate should set the expectation that staffers on the congressional defense committees will inform the relevant member ofﬁces when the Department of Defense submits §§ 333, 127e, and 1202 materials. Even if personal staffers cannot view these materials themselves for lack of SCI access, they can recommend that their members go to the committee ofﬁce to view them. Notwithstanding the heavy classiﬁcation of many security cooperation notiﬁcations and reports, the public — and staffers without SCI access — should have access to at least some information regarding security cooperation activities. At a minimum, the public should be told where, against whom, and under what authorities U.S. forces are engaged in hostilities through or with partners. The public should also be told how costly these hostilities are, in terms of not only dollars but also lives lost by U.S. soldiers, partner forces, and civilians. Finally, the public needs to know which partner forces the Department of Defense reserves the right to defend, potentially deepening U.S. involvement in foreign conﬂicts. Without this information, Americans cannot understand the scope or risks of the wars carried out under these authorities, much less make demands of their representatives regarding them. Lastly, Congress should revive the transparency principles enshrined in the Constitution’s Two-Year Clause by taking decisive action when the Department of Defense unduly delays or withholds required reports. The 2022NDAA establishes a model for doing just this: § 1048 of that law withheld 25 percent of the Department of Defense’s operation and maintenance budget until the department submitted two overdue reports, one on EXORDs and another on civilian casualties.300 Congress should continue to use this kind of mechanism to obtain overdue reports. Moreover, it can and should consider preemptively withholding funds to incentivize the Department of Defense’s timely submission of reports. Simply put, the lack of transparency on security cooperation is undemocratic and dangerous. Congressional over-sight is sorely needed, particularly as the Department of Defense pivots to great power competition and conducting irregular warfare against nuclear states. The danger of these programs leading to unauthorized hostilities and military escalation will only continue until Congress and the public can secure greater transparency

#### Expansive presidential war powers enmesh the US in military conflicts without congressional approval. That causes great power competition that escalates to nuclear.

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If U.S. forces are not at war in Africa, why have they launched a steady stream of airstrikes in Somalia in recent months? Why have U.S. forces ended up in firefights in countries ranging from Mali to Tunisia to Kenya? Why were four U.S. servicemembers killed in Niger in 2017, as they conducted a kill-or-capture mission with their Nigerien partners? The reality is that Department of Defense-led security cooperation — work “by, with, and through” foreign partners — has led to U.S. forces engaging in combat across the globe. Some of these hostilities have involved groups covered by the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), as interpreted by the executive branch to permit the use of force against al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and also their “associated forces.” But some of the hostilities stemming from security cooperation have involved groups like Boko Haram in Cameroon and Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, neither of which has been publicly identified as an associated force covered by the AUMF. In such cases, working with partner forces has enmeshed the United States in military conflicts never approved by Congress. As I explain in the Brennan Center for Justice’s newest report, Secret War: How the U.S. Uses Partnerships and Proxy Forces to Wage War Under the Radar, the Department of Defense has leveraged three overbroad and poorly overseen security cooperation authorities — 10 U.S.C. § 333, 10 U.S.C. § 127e, and § 1202 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2018 — to take the reins on U.S. war-making and subvert the constitutional balance of powers. Background: The Shifting Balance of War Powers By its text, the Constitution gives Congress the power to declare war and create, fund, and regulate the military. The Constitution also requires Congress to oversee military affairs with particular scrutiny and regularity, so as to prevent the dangers of a military inclined to “exceed the proper limits.” Barring circumstances in which the president must use force to “repel sudden attacks” on U.S. territory or persons, the Constitution affords the president no authority to make war without congressional authorization. In the words of President James Madison, “the executive has no right, in any case to decide the question, whether there is or is not cause for declaring war.” The president’s sole right is “the right of convening and informing Congress.” Since the beginning of the Cold War and increasingly so since 9/11, the executive branch has strayed from this constitutionally established balance of war powers. Executive branch lawyers have issued legal opinions claiming an expansive presidential prerogative to use force without congressional authorization. They have interpreted statutory authorities in ways that defy apparent textual limitations. And they have argued that certain hostilities, which are sufficiently “episodic,” can be concealed from rather than reported to Congress — despite the disclosure requirements of the 1973 War Powers Resolution, which was enacted during the Vietnam War to curb unauthorized uses of force. The result is the modern phenomenon of secret war: U.S. military operations that are unauthorized by Congress and unknown to many of its members, let alone the public. Two specific sources of authority for secret war are already the subject of much discussion: the 2001 AUMF, which four successive presidents have stretched far beyond its text and even Congress’s knowledge, and the covert action statute, which has enabled the CIA to undertake kinetic operations. A third source, however, has slipped under the radar. As I explain in Secret War, the Department of Defense’s security cooperation authorities — most notably §§ 333, 127e, and 1202 — have allowed U.S. forces to train, equip, and pay salaries to foreign partners. By building relationships with the partners of its choosing, and then claiming an expansive right to “defend” its partners or even command them into combat, the Department of Defense has assumed the power to pursue the adversaries that it wants, where it wants, without congressional authorization. And when the Department of Defense uses force through or on behalf of its partners, it rarely informs key decision-makers in Congress or members of the public. 10 U.S.C. § 333: The Global Train-and-Equip Authority Commonly known as the global train-and-equip authority, 10 U.S.C. § 333 allows the Department of Defense to transfer military equipment, service that equipment, and train partners on how to use it. The authority is nonoperational, meaning that these activities all take place on a base. Nevertheless, U.S. forces deployed to run § 333 programs can end up in combat. The executive branch’s broad reading of constitutional self-defense — the president’s authority to use defensive force without prior congressional approval — has the potential to transform nonoperational train‑and-equip programs into active engagements with adversaries. By establishing training bases in volatile parts of the Philippines and then invoking “unit self‑defense,” or the right to protect U.S. forces in the vicinity, the Department of Defense engaged in combat not only against Abu Sayyaf, a terrorist organization, but also against local separatist groups. In Somalia, U.S. forces deployed to train part of the Somali National Army invoked “collective self-defense,” or a highly contested power to protect foreign partners without congressional approval, to launch airstrikes against al‑Shabaab forces even before the group was recognized as a legitimate target under the 2001 AUMF. Nothing in § 333 prevents the Department of Defense from setting up camp in the “hotbed” of terrorist activity or pairing with partner forces who will predictably come under attack. Furthermore, nothing in § 333 prevents U.S. forces deployed for a train-and-equip program from leaving base if the Department of Defense has issued an “execute order” (EXORD) allowing them to conduct operations. This is precisely what happened in Niger in 2017, when a team of Green Berets and their Nigerien trainees were ambushed while conducting a kill-or-capture mission. Although the soldiers were in Niger on a § 333 assignment, a capacious EXORD — described to me by a former Department of Defense official as “kind of pursuant to the [2001] AUMF” — allowed them to pursue unspecified terrorist targets. Congressional leaders were taken aback by the ambush, shocked that the U.S. forces Department of Defense officials said were deployed “in a train and advise role” were also conducting risky operations. At the time, Congress did not have a full list of the Department of Defense’s EXORDs. It still doesn’t, despite having enacted a law requiring the Department of Defense to disclose such a list. 10 U.S.C. § 127e: The Counterterrorism Proxy Force Authority Unlike § 333, 10 U.S.C. § 127e is an explicitly operational authority. It allows U.S. forces to provide “support” to foreign partners who in turn are “supporting” authorized U.S. counterterrorism operations. Nowhere in the statute is the support that U.S. forces can give or receive defined. But in practice, U.S. forces have provided their § 127e partners with salaries, on top of the standard training and equipment. Particularly when these partners are on an American payroll, U.S. forces can exercise “operational control” over them; these partners can be directed into combat or assigned non‑kinetic missions to achieve U.S. military objectives. In other words, § 127e partners are proxy forces, commanded by the Department of Defense. The Department of Defense has run § 127e programs in a staggering array of African and Asian countries, the breadth of which far exceeds known activity under the 2001 AUMF: Afghanistan, Cameroon, Egypt, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen, as well as a yet‑undisclosed country in the Asia-Pacific region. According to public reporting and my conversations with former and current Department of Defense officials, U.S. forces directed their § 127e partners in a number of these countries to pursue groups that have never been disclosed as lawful targets under the AUMF, such as Boko Haram, the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, and the Islamic State – Sinai Province. (As I discuss elsewhere, it is far from clear that the AUMF automatically covers the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria’s geographically diffuse affiliates. Al-Qaeda’s affiliates, like al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, had to be separately identified as lawful targets.) This seemingly unauthorized combat raises the possibility that § 127e, which on its face only provides additional resources for otherwise authorized counterterrorism operations, has been used as its own authorization for use of military force through partners — or has served as a means of implementing dubious interpretations of the 2001 AUMF and constitutional self-defense. The legal justifications for § 127e programs, and even the full extent of the hostilities conducted through § 127e partners, are unknown. Information on § 127e programs and the combat they involve is highly classified and rarely shared with congressional decision-makers on the foreign affairs committees, who are responsible for matters of war and peace. And the lawmakers who are read into these programs — members of the congressional defense committees — have publicly questioned how forthcoming the Department of Defense has been about its § 127e activity. In interviews, staffers supporting these lawmakers sharply criticized the adequacy of the Department’s disclosures. The public, of course, is told nothing. Section 1202: The “Irregular Warfare” Proxy Force Authority Section 1202 of the NDAA for FY 2018 is a recently enacted authority that mirrors § 127e, allowing U.S. forces to provide support to foreign partners who are supporting U.S. “irregular warfare” operations. Designed with an eye toward great-power competition, § 1202 enables the creation and command of proxy forces to counter “near-peers” like Russia and China, as well as “rogue states” like Iran and North Korea. This new authority should raise even more concern than §§ 333 and 127e — despite the fact that the Department of Defense officials I spoke with were unaware of any § 1202 program involving combat. According to one official, all of the Department of Defense’s § 1202 programs as of mid-2022 were geared toward information warfare and intelligence‑gathering. But that could change. The same official noted that each of the programs, several of which targeted Russia, was based on a theory of constitutional self-defense. Those theories could support low-level combat, just as they have in the Philippines and Somalia. This time, though, the combat could be against a nuclear state, not a regional terrorist group. Congress is poorly positioned to stop expansive or dangerous uses of § 1202. As with § 127e, key leaders in Congress receive sparse information about § 1202 programs. Aside from the president’s good judgment, little stands in the way of the Department of Defense directing proxies into combat against, say, Russian separatists in Eastern Europe or Iran-backed militias. Looking Forward Department of Defense-led security cooperation, particularly under §§ 333, 127e, and 1202, is in dire need of reform and effective oversight. Congress should consider repealing these broad authorities and instead providing individualized authorization for work with foreign partners, as it has done in enacting programs like the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative and the Indo‑Pacific Maritime Security Initiative. If §§ 333, 127e, and 1202 remain on the books, Congress should ensure that it has a role in approving individual programs or at least ensuring that programs do not involve or lead to unauthorized hostilities. Congress should also revamp the notification and reporting regimes relevant to §§ 333, 127e, and 1202, to ensure that it has a clear and regularly updated understanding of where U.S. forces are, who they are working with, and whether there is a risk that they will end up in combat, directly or through proxies. Secret War details these and other reforms. Security cooperation as a means of pursuing U.S. military objectives is likely to become even more common in the future. The White House’s just-released National Security Strategy promises to “increase cooperation and support to trusted partners” in the counterterrorism context and to “redouble our efforts to deepen our cooperation with like‑minded partners” in the great-power context. The Department of Defense’s National Defense Strategy, published last week, has an entire section entitled “Anchoring Our Strategy in Allies and Partners and Advancing Regional Goals.” Congress and the public cannot afford to delay a serious reassessment of the Department of Defense’s security cooperation authorities. The longer we wait, the more likely it is that the executive branch will involve U.S. forces in conflicts that are unauthorized and unnecessary, and that carry a dangerous risk of escalation.

#### **The US’s encouragement of proxy conflicts failed to accomplish their strategic goals and destabilized regional wars, but an economic paradigm directed towards humanitarian aid and conflict prevention under congressional oversight solves.**

Stark ’20 [Alexandra Stark, senior researcher for the political reform program at New America, 8-7-2020, "Give Up on Proxy Wars in the Middle East," Foreign Policy, https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/08/07/united-states-give-up-on-proxy-wars-middle-east/] TDI

Despite their policy differences, the successive administrations of U.S. Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump have all struggled to balance the United States’ expansive security objectives in the Middle East with the limited resources available to pursue them. Their maximalist policy goals aimed not just to mitigate the risk of a terrorist attack on U.S. soil, but to eradicate al Qaeda and the Islamic State wherever local branches took root; not just to push back against Iran’s influence in key strategic locations, but to place so much pressure on the Iranian regime that it would crumble, or at the very least dramatically alter its regional foreign policy. But at the same time, successive U.S. administrations knew it was politically untenable to use maximal resources in pursuit of these objectives. After the disastrous intervention in Iraq, putting American boots on the ground—and thereby risking casualties and a quagmire—became politically untenable. As a result, U.S. policymakers have sought to split the difference. While it has worn various titles over the years, such as “by, with, and through,” the approach is more or less the same: Empower local actors—via support from U.S. special operations forces, training, arms transfers, intelligence sharing, and so forth—to fight the wars that Americans cannot or don’t want to fight themselves. In the Middle East, it has meant arming proxy actors in some places, such as Syria, and empowering security partners to do so or intervene directly in others, such as Yemen and Libya. But these proxy wars have not accomplished U.S. strategic goals—in some cases, they have even done the opposite. Advocates who criticize U.S. policy in the broader Middle East region have tended to focus on “ending endless wars.” This is a critical step, but U.S. policy must go beyond ending these wars. The proxy approach to Middle East conflicts has failed. It’s time to focus on a new strategy centered on major investments in development and diplomacy. This will help ensure that wars do not simply start up again in a revised form and pull the United States back in. My research has found that U.S. security partners in the region, particularly the Persian Gulf monarchies, already understand the shortcomings of their own proxy-war approaches. As the Arab Spring toppled governments across the region in 2011, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia saw the instability as an opportunity to gain regional influence by replacing opponents with friendlier regimes. However, rather than achieving quick victories in Libya and Syria as they had hoped, these states found themselves sucked into complex quagmires without hope for outright victory. Instead, regional proxy sponsors have transformed localized conflicts into destabilizing regional wars that spill across borders. They have contributed to massive levels of human displacement, with significant impacts on the domestic politics of countries where refugees arrive. Libya, where former leader Muammar al-Qaddafi’s regime has been replaced by years of fighting, is a case in point. In 2014, Khalifa Haftar, an autocratic warlord supported by Russia, the UAE, Egypt, and others, launched an offensive against the Tripoli-based U.N.-recognized government, which in turn is supported by Turkey and Qatar (and, theoretically, the United States). Haftar has refused to engage in negotiations in good faith—at least until his forces suffered significant setbacks in recent months. While intervening countries have periodically called for a cease-fire, Turkey, the UAE, and Egypt are all poised to deepen their involvement in Libya and intensify their regional rivalries. In Libya and elsewhere, proxy warfare has been destructive to U.S. strategic goals of limiting the influence of Iran and defeating terrorist groups. Instead, it has had complex political, economic, and social effects which will make these conflicts last longer, while drawing U.S. security partners into conflicts that make them less secure. This approach has not even allowed successive U.S. administrations to pull back from the region. Instead, the United States has been drawn into several conflicts, from returning to Iraq in 2014 after the rise of the Islamic State to providing military logistical support to the Saudi-led coalition intervening in Yemen. In Yemen, the Houthis have gone from an insurgent group receiving minimal military support from Iran to lobbing ballistic missiles (with a design based on Iran’s Qiam missile) at Riyadh. At the same time, the conflict has provided a potent breeding ground for al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Indeed, the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen has reportedly cut secret deals with al Qaeda fighters, while U.S. arms sold to Saudi Arabia and the UAE have ended up in the hands of these fighters. And this does not begin to account for the humanitarian fallout from these conflicts, which will have long-lasting and unpredictable consequences. The U.S. government cannot inoculate itself from the resulting problems of instability, terrorism, and a level of societal polarization that may be past the point of no return; nor can it hope to simply contain these conflicts within failed states without spillover effects. Faced with this legacy of failure, the United States should abandon its split-the-difference approach and begin a completely different kind of engagement, centered on diplomatic leadership. My research shows that when the United States has used its leverage in the past, it has been able to restrain regional countries’ interventions in civil wars and shape their preferences for ending the war. During Egypt’s intervention in Yemen in the 1960s, for instance, the administrations of Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson were able to restrain Saudi Arabia from intervening more directly through a combination of military assurances and threats to cut U.S. assistance. The U.S. government should use the resources at its disposal to pressure local actors and third party interveners to come to the table and engage in good-faith negotiations to end proxy wars. During the current war in Yemen, U.S. pressure has successfully shaped the Saudi-led coalition’s behavior at key moments. The Obama administration was reportedly able to deter the UAE from initiating a ground operation to capture Hodeida, while phone calls from Secretary of Defense James Mattis to Riyadh and Abu Dhabi helped seal the 2018 Stockholm Agreement—a partial peace accord for Yemen. However, U.S. officials in both the Obama and Trump administration officials did not place the kind of sustained pressure on the Saudi-led coalition that could have led to a negotiated settlement, largely in order to avoid damaging the United States’ bilateral relationships with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. At the same time, policymakers will need to abandon the idea that the United States can exert leverage in contexts where it has very little. In Syria, the idea of retaining “leverage” over the outcome has been trotted out repeatedly by strategists and analysts to justify keeping a small number of U.S. forces in northeast Syria, yet it is unclear what such leverage has achieved. After investing five years in supporting Kurdish-led forces in Syria as a hedge against Russian and Iranian influence, Trump’s mercurial policy reversals in late 2019 led Kurdish forces to seek an alliance with the Assad regime due to a Turkish incursion in northeast Syrian territory long held by opposition forces—with calamitous results for civilians. Where the United States has relatively little military leverage, it can still use economic tools to achieve more limited policy objectives. Where the United States has relatively little military leverage, it can still use economic tools to achieve more limited policy objectives. In Syria, the Trump administration has zeroed out reconstruction aid, claiming that it would only provide support for the Assad regime. But as Steven Heydemann has pointed out, donor states and institutions can manage reconstruction funds by “insulating [reconstruction aid] programs from the Assad regime—developing channels to fund and implement reconstruction that are not subject to the authority of the regime and prevent its participation in such activities,” by working directly with Syrian local councils and nongovernmental organizations that are independently vetted. And while U.S. sanctions are intended to force the Assad regime to make concessions or even to topple the regime itself, they are far more likely to further entrench the regime while punishing the Syrian people by devastating the economy and forcing Syrians to become increasingly reliant on the regime for their economic survival. With respect to foreign aid, the United States has long taken a military-first approach to the region. A recent Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED) report shows that the trend in securitizing U.S. foreign assistance in the Middle East over past decades continues in the 2021 budget request: More than 80 percent of the total is security-related, while democracy assistance represents just under 3 percent. The proposal would slash U.S. assistance to countries in conflict, including Syria and Iraq—for the second year in a row, the proposal contains no bilateral aid to Syria. Instead of focusing on narrowly defined strategic aims, economic aid to the region should be oriented toward meeting immediate humanitarian needs, as well as long-term economic development that creates opportunities and opens paths to prosperity for the people of the region. To take one example, the U.S. aid that Egypt receives for foreign military financing—which facilitates the purchase of U.S. arms, training, and services—far outweighs the amount of economic aid it receives. Both Democratic and Republican administrations have waived human rights conditions on this funding, even as Egypt has descended deeper into repressive autocracy under President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi’s rule. As the POMED report demonstrates, 2021 bilateral assistance to the West Bank and Gaza is completely oriented around coercing Palestinian leadership to agree to the Trump peace plan, instead of addressing dire humanitarian needs. The next administration should condition economic aid to repressive regimes like Sisi’s, while decreasing overall levels of military aid in favor of aid that promotes economic opportunity and supports local peace and conflict prevention efforts. A Middle East policy that is built around promoting human well-being rather than more narrowly defined security aims will be critical to ensuring that proxy wars end for good. Research shows that civil conflict is more likely in states that have recently experienced poverty, poor governance, political instability, and institutional weakness, factors that are themselves very often the effects of wars. In other words, conflict begets conflict. If the international community fails to implement measures to prevent the recurrence of conflict, civil wars will continue to provide opportunities for proxy interventions. The United States should also reassess and fundamentally reform its relationships with regional security partners, such as Saudi Arabia, which consider U.S. security assistance a given. Instead, the United States should condition its continued support for these partners on ending proxy interventions, engaging in constructive diplomacy, and addressing human rights issues at home, as Daniel Benaim has suggested. This does not mean that these autocracies will become liberal democracies overnight. But U.S. leverage—including arms sales, security assistance, and training—can play an important role in changing these autocracies’ behavior towards their own citizens and in the broader region. Finally, the United States can continue to maintain its current counterterrorism policies with vastly increased oversight. Transparency and careful use of standardized metrics to measure the efficacy of this approach can prevent the limitless expansion of this set of tactics and promote pivoting to alternative approaches if one is not working, instead of investing in more of the same. A Congress that exerts its oversight authority over U.S. security assistance programs can play a critical role. And these partnerships should not be seen as a panacea to defeat terrorist organizations around the world. Rather, policymakers and the public must identify the trade-offs we are willing to make when it comes to our counterterrorism policies. Even with large increases in investments in aid and diplomacy, this approach will be cheaper than Washington’s current Middle East strategy—and more effective.

## 1AR---ADV---Stability

### 1AR---AT: Terror Turn

#### Weapons belonging to covert US miliary forces are stolen by terrorists, increasing the threat of terrorism.

**Turse 3/30** [(Nick, Nick Turse is “Thieves Rip Off U.S. Weapons as Shadow War in Syria Escalates,” The Intercept, https://theintercept.com/2023/03/30/weapons-theft-syria-iraq/, 3/30/23) TDI

Thieves have made off with hundreds of thousands of dollars in artillery equipment, unspecified “weapons systems,” and specialized ammunition meant for U.S. forces in Syria and Iraq, according to exclusive documents obtained by The Intercept. The thefts, which occurred on, or in transit to, far-flung U.S. outposts in the region, remain unsolved. They are just the latest evidence of a persistent problem that has allowed enemy forces from ISIS in Iraq to the Taliban in Afghanistan to arm themselves — and even kill Americans and their foreign partners — at U.S. taxpayer expense. The previously unreported thefts illuminate America’s shadow wars in the region, where a U.S. contractor was killed and six other Americans were wounded last week in a suicide drone assault on a U.S. base in northeast Syria. The kamikaze airstrike on the outpost known as RLZ was one of roughly 80 attacks on American bases in Iraq and Syria since January 2021 that the U.S. has blamed on Iranian proxy groups. President Joe Biden ordered retaliatory airstrikes in response to the latest attack “in order to protect and defend the safety of our personnel.” The thefts and losses uncovered by The Intercept are just the latest weapons accountability woes to afflict the U.S. military in Iraq and Syria. A 2020 audit by the Pentagon’s inspector general found that Special Operations Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve, the main unit that works with America’s Syrian allies, did not properly account for $715.8 million of equipment purchased for those local surrogates. Losses of weapons and ammunition are exceptionally significant — and the military has taken pains to prevent them. When the U.S. withdrew forces from an outpost near Kobani, Syria, in 2019, it conducted airstrikes on ammunition that was left behind. The military also destroyed equipment and ammunition during the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. Nevertheless, groups like Amnesty International and Conflict Armament Research have found, for example, that a substantial portion of the Islamic State group’s arsenal was composed of U.S.-made or U.S.-purchased weapons and ammunition captured, stolen, or otherwise obtained from the Iraqi Army and Syrian fighters. The criminal investigations files, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, reveal evidence of at least four significant thefts and one loss of U.S. equipment — roughly $200,000 worth — in Iraq and Syria between 2020 and 2022, including 40mm high-explosive grenades stolen from U.S. Special Forces. Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve, which oversees America’s war in Iraq and Syria, does not even know the extent of the problem. “This is shocking and tragic,” said Stephanie Savell, the co-director of the Costs of War Project at Brown University’s Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs. “These stolen weapons will circulate and intensify political and illicit violence and make it more lethal, as we’ve seen happen in other wars and conflicts.” Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve, which oversees America’s war in Iraq and Syria, does not even know the extent of the problem. The task force has no record of any thefts from U.S. forces, said a spokesperson. “[W]e do not have the requested information,” Capt. Kevin T. Livingston, CJTF-OIR’s director of public affairs told The Intercept when asked if any weapons, ammunition, or equipment were stolen in the last five years. U.S. troops are ostensibly deployed to Iraq and Syria — alongside Iraqi Security Forces, Kurdish troops, and Syrian surrogates — to defeat ISIS, but they also increasingly fight Iran-backed militia groups in a legally murky sideshow war. Americans operate on bases where anonymity is sometimes the norm and local partners such as the Syrian Democratic Forces, a U.S.-backed Kurdish-led group, are not always trusted. With little outside oversight or unembedded coverage of American operations, information about these conflicts is largely limited to dubious statements by U.S. commanders, military press releases, and officially sanctioned reporting. The criminal investigation files obtained by The Intercept offer a rare, unvarnished glimpse at how the U.S. wars in Iraq and Syria are actually fought. Sometime in late 2020 or early 2021, according to the files, “multiple specialized field artillery tools and equipment” were stolen from a military vehicle while being transported to Erbil Air Base in northern Iraq. When the truck arrived at the outpost in that country’s Kurdistan region, U.S. personnel found it was missing gear valued at $87,335.35. “All probative leads were exhausted,” according to the investigation file. No suspects were identified. In February 2021, 400 armor-piercing rounds and 42 40mm “High-Explosive Dual Purpose” grenades, which are “capable of penetrating three inches of steel,” according to the Army, were stolen from a Special Forces ammunition supply at Mission Support Site Green Village in northeast Syria. A criminal investigation found “negligent ammunition handling and accountability practices” allowed “unknown person(s) to … pilfer the ammunition,” which was valued at $3,624.64. Sometime in July or August 2021, “five weapons systems” valued at a total of $48,115 were stolen while being transported via “ground convoy” from Mission Support Site Conoco — a base not far from Green Village — to RLZ, Syria. The weapons were taken from a shipping container. No witnesses were found nor were any leads developed. Last January, according to the documents, thieves broke into a shipping container en route to Erbil Air Base in Iraq and stole more than $57,000 worth of unspecified military equipment and personal items. Four months later, approximately 2,100 full metal jacket rounds that can pierce body armor and three boxes of unspecified “repair parts” were loaded onto a Blackhawk helicopter at Al Asad Air Base in Iraq and flown to Erbil Air Base, where they were supposedly provided to personnel from a unit called Task Force Attack. That unit, however, claimed that they never received the ammunition, kicking off the investigation. About a month later, Task Force Attack personnel allegedly located a crate containing 1,680 rounds of the missing ammunition, but the records do not account for the remainder of the bullets and parts. In all but the last case, Army criminal investigators determined that there was probable cause to charge those responsible with larceny of government property or government weapons — if they could only find the thieves. The 2020 Pentagon inspector general report that detailed improper accounting for more than $700 million in equipment bought for America’s Syrian partners found that Special Operations forces did not “maintain comprehensive lists of all equipment purchased and received.” Another unit, the 1st Theater Sustainment Command, improperly stored weapons such as machine guns and grenade launchers, according to the audit. Both units “left thousands of … weapons and sensitive equipment items vulnerable to loss or theft.” Because of sloppy record keeping and security measures, 1st TSC could not even “determine whether items were lost or stolen.” Losses of arms and ammunition have been a persistent problem for the Pentagon. By the mid-2010s, the U.S. had already lost track of hundreds of thousands of guns in Afghanistan and Iraq according to research led by Iain Overton of Action on Armed Violence, a London-based charity. U.S. troops left behind $7 billion worth of military equipment in Afghanistan. Even before the U.S. defeat in Afghanistan, the Taliban had captured significant quantities of American weaponry. When U.S. troops withdrew in 2021, they left behind $7 billion worth of military equipment. The results have sometimes been disastrous. From Afghanistan to Iraq, these U.S.-supplied weapons were turned on U.S. allies and likely even on American troops. “Every single one of these weapons that will be provided to our partner forces will be accounted for and pointed at #ISIS,” CJTF-OIR pledged in a 2017 tweet. But CJTF-OIR does not seem to have any information about the thefts, let alone a certainty that American weapons and ammunition stolen between 2020 to 2022 have not been turned on U.S. forces or their partners. The U.S. military has a long history of cover-ups regarding weapons losses. A 2021 Associated Press investigation found that “at least 1,900 U.S. military firearms were lost or stolen during the 2010s, with some resurfacing in violent crimes” and that the “U.S. Army has hidden or downplayed the extent to which its firearms disappear, significantly understating losses and thefts … [a] pattern of secrecy and suppression [that] dates back nearly a decade.” CJTF-OIR’s lack of records and transparency make it impossible to know how often U.S. weapons have been lost or stolen in Syria and Iraq and if those arms have been used against U.S. troops or their allies, but Savell of the Costs of War Project fears history will repeat itself. “More people will be injured and killed as a result,” she said of the thefts documented in the criminal investigation files. “This is yet another reverberating consequence of having U.S. military operations in so many overseas locations.”

#### Security assistance solves.

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The Department of Defense and Congress are perfectly capable of working together in this manner. In 2015, Congress created the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative to allow the Department of Defense to provide training and equipment to Ukrainian forces on top of that permitted by § 333.292 And in 2021, Congress adopted a law encouraging the Department of Defense to start § 333 programs focused on cybersecurity in Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia.293 Having Congress legislate on individual programs, as it has done in these cases, would ensure that Congress understands and controls where U.S. forces are deployed, who they work with, and whether and against whom they engage in combat.

#### Terror threat is overexaggerated, but costs are undervalued.

**Glaser 19** – [John Glaser, 12-10-2019, "High Anxiety: How Washington’s Exaggerated Sense of Danger Harms Us All," Cato Institute, <https://www.cato.org/study/high-anxiety-how-washingtons-exaggerated-sense-danger-harms-us-all>]

The traumatic 9/11 attacks shocked national security decisionmakers who became convinced that America was in for a series of such attacks on that scale—and that unprecedented measures were necessary to thwart them. The understandable alarmism led to credulous treatment of virtually any threat from raw intelligence and, collectively, a gross overestimate of the number of active al Qaeda operatives in the country. “The want of actionable intelligence combined with a knowledge of what might happen,” wrote Jack Goldsmith, a legal adviser at the Department of Defense at the time, “produced an aggressive, panicked attitude that assumed the worst about threats.”

Resources in defense, intelligence, and law enforcement were redirected to focus on terrorism, and Congress authorized a flood of new funds to expand existing counterterrorism capacities. It turned out to be an overreaction. Applying standard cost‐​benefit risk analysis, John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart calculated that in order to justify the annual post‑9/​11 homeland security expenditures of about $75 billion, “there would have to have been 300 attacks like the Boston Marathon bombing each year.” While some terrorist plots were certainly thwarted in these years, the intense focus and vast expenditures on counterterrorism cannot possibly have foiled a Boston Marathon‐​size attack that, in the absence of such security measures, would have occurred nearly every single day.

Disproportionate fear of terrorism also drove threat inflation on more conventional concerns, most notably toward Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. The latter was unrelated to the former, a key fact that many advocates for war worked diligently to obscure. The case for war against Iraq rested on flimsy claims that Baghdad not only possessed weapons of mass destruction but was poised to use them against the United States and its allies, likely in coordination with millenarian jihadist terrorists. Administration officials repeatedly suggested in high‐​profile public comments that failure to act soon could result in mushroom clouds erupting over American cities. To accept these alarmist claims, one had to view Hussein as undeterrable and irrational in the extreme—suicidal even—which did not accord with his history. At times, the Bush administration’s misdirection when it came to Iraq’s al Qaeda ties bordered on outright deception. For example, on December 9, 2001, Vice President Dick Cheney on NBC’s Meet the Press pointed to “a report that’s been pretty well confirmed” that 9/11 lead hijacker Mohammed Atta had met with Iraqi intelligence officials in Prague several months before the attacks. In fact, the CIA had concluded that no such meeting had occurred. Bush administration officials also propagated unsubstantiated claims from Iraqi defectors that al Qaeda terrorists had practiced airplane hijackings at a training camp near the Iraqi city of Salman Pak. At the time, information from the Defense Intelligence Agency that disputed such claims was suppressed. In 2006, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence concluded that there were “no credible reports since the war” to substantiate pre‐​war claims of al Qaeda training camps in Iraq.

Another case of phony evidence being used to hype the Iraqi threat was Powell’s speech before the United Nations on February 4, 2003, in which he alleged that Iraq had an active chemical‐​weapons program that it was concealing from the prying eyes of international inspectors. As with the claims of Saddam’s links to 9/11, however, these allegations proved false.

The case for war against Iraq was created to mislead the American people. This often the considered judgments involved hyping the threat and politicizing or circumventing of intelligence professionals and regional experts. “We were being asked to do things and make sure that that justification [Iraq’s possession of weapons of mass destruction] was out there,” explains John Brennan, then deputy director of the CIA. Veteran CIA analyst Paul Pillar agrees that “a policy decision clearly had been made” and that intelligence was expected “to support that decision.”

Voices on the outside also stoked public fear. A letter organized by Bill Kristol and Robert Kagan’s Project for a New American Century asserted that “Iraq has harbored terrorists … and it maintains links to the al Qaeda network.… If we do not move against Saddam Hussein and his regime,” the letter continued, “the damage our Israeli friends and we have suffered until now may someday appear but a prelude to much greater horrors.”

We cannot know what horrors Saddam Hussein might have cooked up had he remained in power, but we do know the costs incurred—so far—from the war that toppled him: over 4,400 U.S. military and Department of Defense civilians killed and nearly 32,000 wounded. American taxpayers have spent more than $2 trillion, and the war’s final tally, including disability payments to veterans and their families over the next several decades, could eventually rise to $6 trillion. Proponents’ estimates of these costs had been low by at least two orders of magnitude. Meanwhile, estimates of the number of Iraqis killed range well into the hundreds of thousands.

**Zero risk of nuclear terrorism – terrorist groups *can’t* acquire *plutonium* or *implosion weapons***

Weiss 15 [Leonard Weiss 15, visiting scholar at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University and member of the National Advisory Board of the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, 3-2015, “On fear and nuclear terrorism,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Vol. 71, No. 2, p. 75-87, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0096340215571909] TDI

Manufacturing a nuclear weapon. To accomplish this, a terrorist group would have to obtain an appropriate amount of one of the two most popular materials for nuclear weapons, highly enriched uranium (HEU) or plutonium separated from fuel used in a production reactor or a power reactor. Weapon-grade plutonium is found in weapon manufacturing facilities in nuclear weapon states and is **very highly protected** until it is inserted in a weapon. Reactor-grade plutonium, although still capable of being weaponized, is less protected, and in that sense is a more attractive target for a terrorist, especially since it has been produced and stored in prodigious quantities in a number of nuclear weapon states and non-weapon states, particularly Japan. But terrorist use of plutonium for a nuclear explosive device would require the construction of **an implosion weapon**, requiring the fashioning of an appropriate explosive lens of TNT, a notoriously difficult technical problem. And if a high nuclear yield (much greater than 1 kiloton) is desired, the use of reactor-grade plutonium would require a still more sophisticated design. Moreover, if the plutonium is only available through chemical separation from some (presumably stolen) spent fuel rods, additional technical complications present themselves. There is at least one study showing that a small team of people with the appropriate technical skills and equipment could, in principle, build a plutonium-based nuclear explosive device (Mark et al., 1986). But even if one discounts the high probability that the plan would be discovered at some stage (missing plutonium or spent fuel rods would put the authorities and intelligence operations under high alert), translating this into a real-world situation suggests an **extremely low probability** of technical success. **More likely**, according to one well-known weapon designer,4 would be the death of the person or persons in the attempt to build the device. There is the possibility of an insider threat; in one example, a team of people working at a reactor or reprocessing site could conspire to steal some material and try to hide the diversion as MUF (materials unaccounted for) within the nuclear safeguards system. But this scenario would require intimate knowledge of the materials accounting system on which safeguards in that state are based and **adds another layer of complexity** to an operation with **low probability of success**..

## 1AR---ADV---War Powers

### 1AR---AT: War Powers Good

#### Biden flexibility causes extinction AND overstretch – it’s unsustainable – escalates global hotspots – the Middle East, Africa – AND, causes great power war with China AND Russia

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Hard as it is to believe in this time of record pandemic deaths, insurrection, and an unprecedented encore impeachment, Joe Biden is now officially at the helm of the US war machine. He is, in other words, the fourth president to oversee America’s unending and unsuccessful post-9/11 military campaigns. In terms of active US combat, that’s only happened once before, in the Philippines, America’s second-longest (if often forgotten) overseas combat campaign.

Yet that conflict was limited to a single Pacific archipelago. Biden inherits a global war—and burgeoning new Cold War —spanning four continents and a military mired in active operations in dozens of countries, combat in some 14 of them, and bombing in at least seven. That sort of scope has been standard fare for American presidents for almost two decades now. Still, while this country’s post-9/11 war presidents have more in common than their partisan divisions might suggest, distinctions do matter, especially at a time when the White House almost unilaterally drives foreign policy.

So, what can we expect from Commander in Chief Biden? In other words, what’s the forecast for US service members who have invested their lives and limbs in future conflict, as well as for the speculators in the military-industrial complex and anxious foreigners in the countries still engulfed in America’s war on terror who usually stand to lose it all?

Many Trumpsters, and some libertarians, foresee disaster: that the man who, as a leading senator facilitated and cheered on the disastrous Iraq War, will surely escalate American adventurism abroad. On the other hand, establishment Democrats and most liberals, who are desperately (and understandably) relieved to see Donald Trump go, find that prediction preposterous. Clearly, Biden must have learned from past mistakes, changed his tune, and should responsibly bring US wars to a close, even if at a time still to be determined.

In a sense, both may prove right—and in another sense, both wrong. The guess of this long-time war-watcher (and one-time war fighter) reading the tea leaves: Expect Biden to both eschew big new wars and avoid fully ending existing ones. At the margins (think Iran), he may improve matters some; in certain rather risky areas (Russian relations, for instance), he could worsen them; but in most cases (the rest of the Greater Middle East, Africa, and China), he’s likely to remain squarely on the status-quo spectrum. And mind you, there’s nothing reassuring about that.

It hardly requires clairvoyance to offer such guesswork. That’s because Biden basically is who he says he is and who he’s always been, and the man’s simply never been transformational. One need look no further than his long and generally interventionist past record or the nature of his current national-security picks to know that the safe money is on more of the same. Whether the issues are war, race, crime, or economics, Uncle Joe has made a career of bending with the prevailing political winds and it’s unlikely this old dog can truly learn any new tricks. Furthermore, he’s filled his foreign policy squad with Obama-Clinton retreads, a number of whom were architects of—if not the initial Iraq and Afghan debacles—then disasters in Libya, Syria, West Africa, Yemen, and the Afghan surge of 2009. In other words, Biden is putting the former arsonists in charge of the forever-war fire brigade.

There’s further reason to fear that he may even reject Trump’s “If Obama was for it, I’m against it” brand of war-on-terror policy-making and thereby reverse The Donald’s very late, very modest troop withdrawals in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia. Yet even if this new old hand of a president evades potentially existential escalation with nuclear Russia or China and offers only an Obama reboot when it comes to persistent low-intensity warfare, what he does will still matter—most of all to the global citizens who are too often its victims. So, here’s a brief region-by-region flyover tour of what Joe’s squad may have in store for both the world and the American military sent to police that world.

THE MIDDLE EAST: OLD PRESCRIPTIONS FOR OLD BUSINESS

It’s increasingly clear that Washington’s legacy wars in the Greater Middle East—Iraq and Afghanistan, in particular—are generally no longer on the public’s radar. Enter an elected old man who’s charged with handling old business that, at least to most civilians, is old news. Odds are that Biden’s ancient tricks will amount to safe bets in a region that past US policies essentially destroyed. Joe is likely to take a middle path in the region between large-scale military intervention of the Bush or Obama kind and more prudent full-scale withdrawal.

As a result, such wars will probably drag on just below the threshold of American public awareness, while avoiding Pentagon or partisan charges that his version of cutting-and-running endangered US security. The prospect of “victory” won’t even factor into the equation (after all, Biden’s squad members aren’t stupid), but political survival certainly will. Here’s what such a Biden-era future might then look like in a few such sub-theaters.

The war in Afghanistan is hopeless and has long been failing by every one of the US military’s own measurable metrics, so much so that the Pentagon and the Kabul government classified them all as secret information a few years back. Actually dealing with the Taliban and swiftly exiting a disastrous war likely to lead to a disastrous future with Washington’s tail between its legs is, in fact, the only remaining option. The question is when and how many more Americans will kill or be killed in that “graveyard of empires” before the United States accepts the inevitable. Toward the end of his tenure, Trump signaled a serious, if cynical, intent to so. And since Trump was by definition a monster and the other team’s monsters can’t even occasionally be right, a coalition of establishment Democrats and Lincoln-esque Republicans (and Pentagon officials) decided that the war must indeed go on. That culminated in last July’s obscenity in which Congress officially withheld the funds necessary to end it. As vice president, Biden was better than most in his Afghan War skepticism, but his incoming advisers weren’t, and Joe’s nothing if not politically malleable. Besides, since Trump didn’t pull enough troops out faintly fast enough or render the withdrawal irreversible over Pentagon objections, expect a trademark Biden hedge here.

Syria has always been a boondoggle, with the justifications for America’s peculiar military presence there constantly shifting from pressuring the regime of Bashar al-Assad, to fighting the Islamic State, to backing the Kurds, to balancing Iran and Russia in the region, to (in Trump’s case) securing that country’s meager oil supplies. As with so much else, there’s a troubling possibility that, in the Biden years, personnel once again may become destiny. Many of the new president’s advisers were bullish on Syrian intervention in the Obama years, even wanting to take it further and topple Assad. Furthermore, when it comes time for them to convince Biden to agree to stay put in Syria, there’s a dangerous existing mix of motives to do just that: the emotive sympathy for the Kurds of known gut-player Joe; his susceptibility to revived Islamic State (ISIS) fear-mongering; and perceptions of a toughness-testing proxy contest with Russia.

When it comes to Iran, expect Biden to be better than the Iran-phobic Trump administration, but to stay shackled “inside the box.” First of all, despite Joe’s long-expressed desire to reenter the Obama-era nuclear deal with Iran that Trump so disastrously pulled out of, doing so may prove harder than he thinks. After all, why should Tehran trust a political basket case of a negotiating partner prone to significant partisan policy-pendulum swings, especially given the way Washington has waged nearly 70 years of interventions against Iran’s politicians and people? In addition, Trump left Biden the Trojan horse of Tehran’s hardliners, empowered by dint of The Donald’s pugnacious policies. If the new president wishes to really undercut Iranian intransigence and fortify the moderates there, he should go big and be transformational—in other words, see Obama’s tension-thawing nuclear deal and raise it with the carrot of full-blown diplomatic and economic normalization. Unfortunately, status-quo Joe has never been a transformational type.

KEEP AN EYE ON AFRICA

Though it garners far less public interest than the US military’s long-favored Middle Eastern playground, Africa figures significantly in the minds of those at the Pentagon, in the Capitol, and in Washington’s influential think tanks. For interventionist hawks, including liberal ones, that continent has been both a petri dish and a proving ground for the development of a limited power-projection paradigm of drones, Special Operations forces, military advisers, local proxies, and clandestine intelligence missions.

It mattered little that over eight years of the Obama administration—from Libya to the West African Sahel to the Horn of East Africa—the war on terror proved, at best, problematic indeed, and even worse in the Trump years. There remains a worrisome possibility that the Biden posse might prove amenable yet again to the alarmism of US Africa Command (AFRICOM) about the rebirth of ISIS and the spread of other Al Qaeda–inked groups there, bolstered by fear-mongering nonsense masquerading as sophisticated scholarship from West Point’s Combating Terrorism Center, and the Pentagon’s perennial promises of low-investment, low-risk, and high-reward opportunities on the continent. So, a savvy betting man might place chips on a Biden escalation in West Africa’s Sahel and the Horn of East Africa, even if for different reasons.

American Special Forces and military advisors have been in and out of the remote borderlands between Mali and Niger since at least 2004 and these days seem there to stay. The French seized and suppressed sections of the Sahel region beginning in 1892, and, despite granting nominal independence to those countries in 1960, were back by 2013 and have been stuck in their own forever wars there ever since. American War on Terror(izing) and French neocolonizing have only inflamed regional resistance movements, increased violence, and lent local grievances an Islamist resonance. Recently, France’s lead role there has truly begun to disintegrate—with five of its troops killed in just the first few days of 2021 and allegations that it had bombed another wedding party. (Already such a War on Terror cliché!)

Don’t be surprised if French President Emmanuel Macron asks for help and Biden agrees to bail him out. Despite their obvious age gap, Joe and Emmanuel could prove the newest and best of chums. (What’s a few hundred extra troops between friends?)

Especially since Obama-era Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her then-favored errand boy, incoming national security adviser Jake Sullivan, could be said to have founded the current coalition of jihadis in Mali and Niger. That’s because when the two of them championed a heavy-handed regime-change intervention against Libyan autocrat Moammar El-Gadhafi in 2011, thousands of his Tuareg fighters blew back into that region in a big way with more than just the clothes on their backs. They streamed from post-Gadhafi Libya into their Sahel homelands loaded with arms and anger. It’s no accident, in other words, that Mali’s latest round of insurgency kicked off in 2012. Now, Sullivan might push new boss Biden to attempt to clean up his old mess.

#### Congress is key to prevent China’s rise.

Goldgeier 18 [James M. Goldgeier is a Visiting Senior Fellow at CFR, The Unconstrained Presidency: Checks and Balances Eroded Long Before Trump, August 14, https://www.cfr.org/article/unconstrained-presidency-checks-and-balances-eroded-long-trump]

In reality, the problem goes well beyond Trump, and even beyond the well-documented trend of increasing presidential power. Constraints on the president—not just from Congress but also from the bureaucracy, allies, and international institutions—have been eroding for decades. Constraints are like muscles: once atrophied, they require bulking up before the competitor can get back in the game. Trump did not create the freedom of action he is now routinely displaying. He has merely revealed just how difficult it is to prevent it.

In Congress, the combination of declining foreign policy expertise among members and increasing political polarization has reduced the ability of legislators to supervise the executive branch even if they had the appetite to do so. The bureaucracy, meanwhile, has lost its incentive to cultivate and wield expertise as decision-making has become centralized in the White House and congressional action and oversight on foreign policy have declined. And U.S. allies, for their part, have become less able to check the president’s foreign policies as the alliances have become ensnared in U.S. partisan politics. Similarly, the post–Cold War era has frequently seen presidents circumvent international institutions.

Going forward, any attempts to stem the growth of presidential power will have to confront not just the damage done by Trump but also the deeper problem that damage has exposed: that the bodies charged with constraining presidential power have been steadily losing both their willingness and their capacity to rein in presidents. Many have written eloquently, particularly since 9/11, about the need for checks on presidential power. But the reality is that Congress is in no shape to reclaim its role in foreign policy—and neither are the other traditional sources of constraint on U.S. presidents. It may take a major shock, such as the rise of China, to reboot the system.

#### Legislative constraints enhance deterrence.

Max Waxman 14, J.D. from Yale law, professor of Law and the faculty chair of the National Security Law Program at Columbia School of Law, “The Power to Threaten War,” The Yale Law Journal, vol. 123, p.1626-1691

Part II also shows, however, that congressional influence operates more robustly—and in different ways—than usually supposed in legal debates about war powers to shape strategic decision-making. It also shows that these mechanisms of congressional influence can enhance the potency of threats. This Article thus fits into a broader scholarly debate now raging about the extent to which the modern President is meaningfully constrained by law, and in what ways.20 Recent political science scholarship suggests that Congress already exerts constraining influences on presidential decisions to threaten force, even without resorting to binding legislative actions.21 Moreover, credibility of signals is critical to effective threats of force. Whereas it often used to be assumed that institutional checks on executive discretion undermined democracies’ ability to threaten military force credibly, some recent political science scholarship also offers reasons to expect that congressional constraints can actually bolster the credibility of U.S. threats.

As a prescriptive matter, Part II also shows that examining threatened force and the credibility requirements for its effectiveness calls into question—and may ultimately upend—many orthodoxies concerning the policy advantages and risks attendant to various allocations of legal war powers, including proposed reforms.23 Although the President faces no significant and direct legal limits on his power to threaten force, the President’s flexibility to later use force indirectly affects decision-making about threatening it, with major implications for securing peace or dragging the United States into conflicts. Moreover, allocations of legal powers affect potential conflicts not only because they may constrain U.S. actions but also because they may send signals and shape other states’ (including adversaries’) expectations of U.S. actions.24 That is, most analysis of war powers is inward-looking, focused on audiences internal to the U.S. government and polity, but thinking about threatened force prompts us to look outward, at how law affects external perceptions among adversaries and allies. Here, extant political science and studies of American strategy offer few clear conclusions, but they point the way toward more sophisticated and realistic policy assessment of legal doctrine and proposed reform.

More generally, as explained in Part III, analysis of threatened force and war powers exposes an underappreciated relationship between constitutional doctrine and grand strategy. Instead of proposing a permanent, functionally optimal allocation of legal powers, as legal scholars are often tempted to do, this Article in the end denies the tenability of any such claim. Having identified new spaces of war and peace powers that legal scholars need to take account of in understanding how those powers are really exercised, this Article also highlights the extent to which any normative account of the proper distribution of authority over this area depends on many matters that cannot be predicted in advance or expected to remain constant.25 It concludes that the allocation of constitutional war powers is—and should be—geopolitically and strategically contingent. The actual and effective balance between presidential and congressional powers over war and peace in practice necessarily depends on shifting assumptions and policy choices about how best to secure U.S. interests against potential threats.

#### Congress is asserting authority now which thumps the link, but only oversight solves nuclear war.

Fuchs 18 [Michael, senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, and a former deputy assistant secretary of state for east Asian and Pacific affairs. 4-24. “When it comes to foreign policy, Congress must rein Trump in.” https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/24/foreign-policy-congress-trump]

In 2017, the chairman of the senate foreign relations committee, Bob Corker, called the White House an “adult daycare center” because of the immature behavior of President Donald Trump. With the risks of conflict around the world rising, it’s time for Congress to step up and provide adult supervision for the White House to keep the US safe. It is an understatement to say that Trump’s foreign policy so far has been erratic and deeply dangerous. Trump appears intent on ripping up the diplomatic deal preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. He has threatened war with nuclear North Korea. He has attempted to ban refugees and Muslims from coming to the US. He has embraced the authoritarian leaders of Russia and China as friends. The list goes on. And yet, the US president has extensive power to craft and implement foreign policy. The constitution provides the president with tremendous authority, but the decades-long atrophy of Congress’s role as a coequal branch in executing US foreign policy has ceded even more power to the president. The president now has the ability to start wars anywhere in the world, and to use nuclear weapons on a moment’s notice. As historian Arthur Schlesinger wrote in his classic, The Imperial Presidency: “What began as emergency powers temporarily confided to presidents soon hardened into authority claimed by presidents as constitutionally inherent in the presidential office: thus the imperial presidency.” There is a robust, longstanding debate about the balance between legislative and executive branch powers on foreign policy. After Schlesinger first wrote about the imperial presidency, Congress attempted to re-establish its authority through the War Powers Act, imposing a number of requirements on the president’s ability to send troops into battle. And while the extent of Congress’s role on foreign policy has ebbed and flowed ever since, especially since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 the power of the president to wage war and conduct foreign policy with few constraints has continued to grow. Which brings us to today. Trump sitting in the Oval Office, sending out early morning tweets threatening war – without even the consultation of his cabinet and with no strategy in place – has raised the stakes on reining in the imperial presidency. It would seem difficult to expect a Republican-controlled Congress to impose genuine constraints on a Republican president. And yet, on a few important occasions during Trump’s tenure, Congress has rejected actions by Trump that would have undermined national security: Congress forced Trump to approve new sanctions on Russia with veto-proof majorities; so far Congress has rejected Trump’s attempts to gut the budgets of the state department and USAid; and, to date, Congress has not taken Trump’s bait on the Iran deal by passing legislation that would sink it. But these are the exceptions to the norm of this Congress’ continued acquiescence to the executive branch on foreign policy – even bad foreign policy. If there were ever a time for Congress to reassert itself on foreign policy, this is it. First, Congress must use its legislative authority and power of the purse to force the administration to adopt reasonable policies. As the world faces the gravest crisis of forcibly displaced people since the second world war, Congress must provide funding and support for refugees and humanitarian assistance. Congress must pass legislation to protect special counsel Robert Mueller and the investigation into collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. And Congress must continue to provide robust funding to the state department and USAid. Second, Congress must hold regular, high-profile hearings that call senior administration officials to testify on the main threats confronting the US – and call them back regularly to provide updates on policy. From responding to Russian aggression to US policy on Syria to the status of North Korea policy, Congress must now play a leading role in keeping the administration honest. And third – and most importantly – Congress must reassert its authority as a coequal branch of government in matters of war and peace. Today, the US is fighting conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, and beyond. The recent US military strikes on Syria – which could have resulted in escalation with Russia and Iran – did not have congressional approval. It is the responsibility of Congress to vote on any new US military intervention to ensure that it has the support of the people’s representatives. Whether or not one believes Congress would realistically constrain a president of the same party, there is precedent. In 1966 Democratic Senator J William Fulbright held a series of public hearings on the conduct of the Vietnam war being waged by a president – Lyndon Johnson – of his own party, which helped spark a national debate. From Vietnam to Iraq, the US has rushed into disastrous wars with limited congressional debate and quick acquiescence. Today, America faces the prospect of major conflict – with North Korea, Iran, Syria, Russia, China and more. With Donald Trump in the White House, there is no room for error. Congress must begin to act before it’s too late.

## 1AR---T---Military Presence

### 1AR---Counter-Interp

#### Counter-Interp.

Department of Defense ’17 – DOD INSTRUCTION 3000.12 MANAGEMENT OF U.S. GLOBAL DEFENSE POSTURE (GDP), May 8, 2017. https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/300012p.pdf. TDI

3.1. OVERVIEW OF GLOBAL DEFENSE POSTURE. a. Foreign and overseas posture is the fundamental enabler of U.S. defense activities and military operations overseas and is also central to defining and communicating U.S. strategic interests to allies, partners, and adversaries. b. The DoD recognizes three interdependent posture elements used to define, plan for, and assess U.S. foreign and overseas military presence: forces, footprints, and agreements. Each interdependent posture element may be enabled by contractors or contracted support and posture planning may optimize forces, footprint, and agreements with contracted support, when appropriate. c. The GDP process, which enables DoD Component input and informs senior-leader decisions in a timely manner, is structured and synchronized with the planning, programming, budgeting, and execution process. The GDP process also informs the development of key planning documents and the resolution of policy-significant posture issues.

#### Forces.

Department of Defense ’17 – DOD INSTRUCTION 3000.12 MANAGEMENT OF U.S. GLOBAL DEFENSE POSTURE (GDP), May 8, 2017. https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/300012p.pdf. TDI

forces. Forward-stationed or rotationally deployed forces, U.S. military capabilities, equipment, and units (assigned or allocated).

#### Footprint.

Department of Defense ’17 – DOD INSTRUCTION 3000.12 MANAGEMENT OF U.S. GLOBAL DEFENSE POSTURE (GDP), May 8, 2017. https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/300012p.pdf. TDI

footprint. A network of U.S. foreign and overseas locations, infrastructure, facilities, land, and pre-positioned equipment.

#### Agreement.

Department of Defense ’17 – DOD INSTRUCTION 3000.12 MANAGEMENT OF U.S. GLOBAL DEFENSE POSTURE (GDP), May 8, 2017. https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/300012p.pdf. TDI

agreement. A series of treaties, access, transit, support, and status-protection agreements and arrangements with allies and partners that set the terms regarding the U.S. military’s presence within the territory of the host country, as agreed to with the host government

### 1AR---Covert

#### Military presence includes covert military operations.

The Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential 7/21 [UIA, <http://encyclopedia.uia.org/en/problem/foreign-military-presence>, 7/21/23] TDI

Foreign military presence

Name(s):

Extra-territorial military bases and intelligence centres

Erosion of national sovereignty by foreign military presence

Nature

The presence of a foreign military power in a country may take the form of access to and use of military facilities (usually in the form of a military, paramilitary or clandestine base), or the actual presence of organized units of military personnel in foreign countries, or the deployment and permanent activity of fleets outside their own territorial waters. The military presence of the great powers in foreign territories is part of the mutual confrontation between the two opposing military and political blocs. In some cases they also serve to prevent political changes which are undesirable to the deploying country. The host country may have no jurisdiction over the military base and little control over the military or clandestine personnel in the country.

Incidence

It is estimated that more than 20 countries maintain military forces and bases abroad. Among these, the USA, USSR, UK and France hold dominant roles, both in numbers of military forces and naval presence, and impact on the world's military balance and strategic planning. It is recognized that many bases also exist for use by big powers in wartime, under secret agreements, in which no foreign troops are deployed in peacetime. Covert (legal) and clandestine (illegal) presences of fighters, trainers, technical advisers, equipment maintainers, or military and civilian intelligence agents, evade the communication networks of the host country, whether pro- or anti-government, in order to pursue their own purposes. For example, the USA interventions in Latin America are frequently covert, and its base in Panama for many years served as the springboard for interventions to the south.

## 1AR---DA---Democracy

### 1AR---Democracy Bad

#### Democracy causes global war.

Chiba ’21 [Daina and Erik Gartzke; February 19; Associate Professor of Political Science in the Department of Government and Public Administration at the University of Macau, Ph.D in Political Science from Rice University, LL.M in Jurisprudence and International Relations from Hitotsubashi University; Professor of Political Science at the University of California, San Diego, PhD in Political Science from the University of Iowa; Office of Naval Research, “Make Two Democracies and Call Me in the Morning: Endogenous Regime Type and the Democratic Peace,” p. 1-44]

The democratic peace—the observation that democracies are less likely to fight each other than are other pairings of states—is one of the most widely acknowledged empirical regularities in international relations. Prominent scholars have even characterized the relationship as an empirical law (Levy 1988; Gleditsch 1992). The discovery of a special peace in liberal dyads stimulated enormous scholarly debate and led to, or reinforced, a number of policy initiatives by various governments and international organizations. Although a broad consensus has emerged among researchers regarding the empirical correlation between joint democracy and peace, disagreement remains as to its logical foundations. Numerous theories have been proposed to account for how democracy produces peace, if only dyadically (e.g., Russett 1993; Rummel 1996; Doyle 1997; Schultz 2001).

At the same time, peace appears likely to foster or maintain democracy (Thompson 1996; James, Solberg, andWolfson 1999). A vast swath of research in political science and economics proposes explanations for the origins of liberal government involving variables such as economic development (Lipset 1959; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Przeworski et al. 2000; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Epstein et al. 2006) and inequality (Boix 2003), political interests (Downs 1957; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003), power hierarchies (Moore 1966; Lake 2009), third party inducements (Pevehouse 2005) or impositions (Peceny 1995; Meernik 1996), geography (Gleditsch 2002b), and natural resource endowments (Ross 2001), to list just a few examples. Each of these putative causes of democracy is also associated with various explanations for international conflict. Indeed, some as yet poorly defined set of canonical factors may contribute both to democracy and to peace, making it look as if the two variables are directly related, even if possibly they are not.

We seek to contribute to this literature, not by proposing yet another theory to explain how democracy vanquishes war, but by estimating the causal effect of joint democracy on the probability of militarized disputes using a quasi-experimental research design. We begin by noting that some of the common causes of democracy and peace may be unobservable, generating an endogenous relationship between the two. Theories of democracy and explanations for peace are at a formative state; it is not possible to utilize detailed, validated and widely accepted models of each of these processes to assess their interaction. Indeed, to a remarkable degree democracy and peace each remain poorly understood and weakly accounted for empirically, despite their central roles in international politics. We address the risk of spurious correlation by applying an instrumental variables approach. Having taken into account possible endogeneity between democracy and peace, we find that joint democracy does not have an independent pacifying effect on interstate conflict. Instead, our findings show that democratic countries are more likely to attack other democracies than are non-democracies. Our results call into question the large body of theory that has been proposed to account for the apparent pacifism of democratic dyads.

#### Democracy makes disease control impossible.

Zhou ’21 [Zhifa and Pan Qu; July 2021; Associate Professor at the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University; Postgraduate at the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University; Philosophy Study, “The Root Cause of the Failure of American COVID-19 Governance Based on the Criticism of Liberal Democracy from Error-Tolerant Democracy,” vol. 11]

Introduction

Whether liberal democracy contributed to the COVID-19 governance was a hot topic in 2020 (“Democracy and Rise of Authoritarianism in COVID-19 World”, 2020). At the end of January, 2020, when COVID-19 witnessed the lockdown of Wuhan City, the West generally agreed that China lacked freedom of speech and the inertia of a rigid bureaucratic structure, and the national censorship system kept the whistle blower Dr. Wenliang Li silent, which led to the disease out of control (Mérieau, 2020). Democracies’ confidence mainly came from Amartya Sen’s research on the famine. Sen (1999) has claimed that no substantial famine has ever occurred in any independent and democratic country with a relatively free press and there is no exception to this rule. Citizens in democracies can expect governments to be more candid, transparent, and responsible in dealing with all kinds of crises, which authoritarian countries usually cannot (Berengaut, 2020; Bollyky & Kickbusch, 2020). So Steve Bloomfield (2020) has regarded that if China had a free press and transparent government, the pandemic could be brought under control before the outbreak. In conclusion, freedom plus democracy equals the COVID-19 antidote according to Western standards, although Wilson and Wisongye have found that social media rumors can exploit the right to freedom of speech and erode people’s health benefits (New York Times, 2021; Bollyky & Kickbusch, 2020). However, since March, 2020, with Western democracies seriously affected by COVID-19, their superiority of the political system has begun to expose its untrue and fatal defects. Especially when Wuhan began to lift its blockade on April 8, 2020 (People.cn, 2020), scholars and journalists began to question whether democracies had the ability to deal with the crisis better than China (Mérieau, 2020). Liberal democracy in the United States has not proved that it is more conducive to the COVID-19 governance than authoritarianism since 2020. From a global perspective, not only do most democracies fail to contain the spread of COVID-19, but almost all of the 10 most affected countries are liberal democracies (Coronavirus Resource Center, 2021). Their policy responses have a poor effect in reducing the death toll in early stages of the crisis, as shown that democratic political institutions may be at a disadvantage in responding quickly to COVID-19 (Cepaluni, Dorsch, & Branyiczki, 2020). More surprising is that the COVID-19 pandemic is so serious in the United States, yet no government officials have been removed from office because of their inactivity in fighting against the corona-virus. People doubt whether American accountability mechanism is still working. However, two impeachments against President Trump indicate that it seems to function quite well (Valenta & Valenta, 2017; Herb, Raju, Fox, & Mattingly, 2021). The direct loss to the United States caused by Russiagate and incitement of insurrection is far less than the pain caused by the failure of the COVID-19 governance, but no any official in the United States is responsible for it. If it again faces infectious diseases similar to COVID-19, will it repeat this unprecedented tragedy? Can liberal democracy and the separation and balance of powers push American president to act more aggressively? Error-tolerantism explains that the fundamental reason for the failure of American COVID-19 governance is a serious misunderstanding of the concept of freedom (Zhou, 2018; 2019; Zhou, Tan, & Liu, 2020). Liberalism has witnessed a rare scene: In the context of COVID-19, the president, governors, magistrates, and the public (Emery, Schwebke, & Park, 2020; Sullum, 2020; Behrmann, 2020; Kenton, 2020; Strano, 2020) have severe misunderstanding of freedom that cost more than American 600,000 lives (Coronavirus Resource Center, 2021).

In response to the above phenomenon, error-tolerantism as the development of liberalism defines liberty from a new perspective and shows a stronger explanatory power than liberalism (Zhou et al., 2020). The right paradigm of error-tolerantism, the right to be wrong (right to trial and error) as an original right and mutual empowerment theory, instead of natural rights theory and social contract theory, divides liberty into the right to liberty in innovative fields, right to be wrong as an original right, and the right to be right in non-innovative fields as sub-rights. The lockdown of Wuhan means that Chinese government has excised the power to be wrong as an original power, but the West criticized it with the right to liberty at the level of sub-rights, which is the first error in understanding liberty during American COVID-19 governance; after Wuhan effectively controlled COVID-19, its governance has transformed from an innovative field to a non-innovative one. Then, liberties in non-innovative fields as the sub-rights level, such as wearing face masks, keeping social distancing, showing health codes, are formed definitely (Zhou et al., 2020). However, wearing masks has been regarded as a sign of political oppression rather than a simple hygienic measure by the United States (Kahanel, 2021). Since liberalism has a major misunderstanding of the concept of liberty, liberal democracy based on the philosophy of liberalism should be deeply reflected or even reconstructed, and it is very reasonable for error-tolerant democracy constructed based on error-tolerantism to explore the defects of liberal democracy in American COVID-19 governance. Therefore, we first review scholars’ relevant research on American democracy and the COVID-19 governance, and then based on the theory of error-tolerant democracy, discuss the defects of liberal democracy and American political system that are unable to cope with the crisis of the century.

#### Future pandemics are inevitable---extinction.

Boyd ’21 [Matt and Nick Wilson; April 22; Research Director at Adapt Research, PhD in Philosophy of Evolution and Cognition from the Victoria University of Wellington, BA from Massey University; Research Professor in the Department of Public Health at the University of Otago; Risk Analysis, “Optimizing Island Refuges Against Global Catastrophic and Existential Biological Threats: Priorities and Preparations,” vol. 41]

1 Introduction

Our world is vulnerable to global catastrophic risks (GCRs) or existential risks (Bostrom, 2019; Ord, 2020). GCRs are so disastrous because they affect one or more systems critical to humanity, and spread to affect the entire planet (Avin et al., 2018). Existential risks threaten to eliminate humanity or permanently curtail its potential (Ord, 2020). Some of these risks are natural, for example asteroid or comet impact, supervolcanic eruption, naturally occurring pandemic, or various cosmic events (Bostrom & Cirkovic, 2008; Ord, 2020). Many others are the result of human activities, for example nuclear war, anthropogenic climate change, nonaligned artificial intelligence, engineered biological threats, geoengineering, or inescapable totalitarianism (Bostrom & Cirkovic, 2008; Ord, 2020).

There are three phases to an existential catastrophe: origin, scale up, and reaching every last human (Cotton-Barratt, Daniel, & Sandberg, 2020). Following any near miss, there would be a period where recovery of humanity's long-term potential may or may not be realized (Baum et al., 2019). Failure to anticipate or mitigate these threats risks undesirable trajectories for human civilization (Baum et al., 2019).

In addition to the present generation's obvious self-interest in continuing to exist, the perspective of long-termism suggests that humanity ought to mitigate these risks due to the potential immense value of future human generations (Beckstead, 2013), a desire to see aspects of the human project continue across time and perhaps the universe (Bostrom, 2003; Scheffler, 2013), and the potential cosmic significance of preserving intelligent life on Earth (Ord, 2020). A number of philosophical defenses of long-termism have been published (Beckstead, 2013; Greaves & MacAskill, 2019). Importantly, these long-term outcomes are largely under human control because most of the risk is probably anthropogenic (Beard & Torres, 2020; Ord, 2020).

1.1 Mitigating Existential Threats

It is too simplistic to think of existential risks as mere causes that are followed by a sequence of effects. We should think of risks as the product of hazards, vulnerabilities, and exposures (Liu, Lauta, & Maas, 2018). Hazards are the precipitating cause of a catastrophe, vulnerabilities are the inability of critical systems to withstand hazards, and exposures are the features of human society that turn this system damage into harm to populations (Beard & Torres, 2020). Mitigation of existential threats involves preventing their emergence, responding if the threat spreads, and building resilience so the threat does not lead to the death of every last human or leave humanity with permanently curtailed prospects (Cotton-Barratt et al., 2020). After a threat has passed, there may also be a series of limiters that might prevent the reemergence of a flourishing humanity (Baum et al., 2019). One such limiting factor could be the loss of technological society and know-how.

In order to achieve immunity from existential threat, humanity will need a period where it preserves its potential and protects itself from risks (Ord, 2020). Various methods have been proposed to address vulnerabilities and hence shift the probability of existential risk. These suggestions include: improved international focus, governance, and cooperation such as through the United Nations (Boyd & Wilson, 2020), imitating existing frameworks such as the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction (Avin et al., 2018), achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Cernev & Fenner, 2020), or extreme surveillance for threats (Bostrom, 2019). Toby Ord lists 38 specific measures across eight existential threats, and an additional 12 avenues to explore that address risks in general terms (Ord, 2020).

1.2 Biological Threats

Pandemic viruses with high case fatality could potentially infect a majority of the population. Deliberate biological events (DBEs) have occurred before (Millet & Snyder-Beattie, 2017a), will likely occur again, and could pose a threat to humans as great as nuclear war (Kosal, 2020). New technologies such as artificial intelligence could amplify biothreats in a number of ways (O'Brien & Nelson, 2020). These risks are increased because the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has no verification system (Dando, 2016), and has been violated in the past (Gronvall, 2018). It would only take one unanticipated or accidental event for a bioweapon (or laboratory accident) to become a catastrophic threat. The U.S. National Academies of Sciences specifically warns against synthetic biology and xenobiology (Gomez-Tatay & Hernandez-Andreu, 2019) and it is argued that a state-sponsored bioweapon attack is the greatest current threat (Sandberg & Nelson, 2020). See the Supporting Information for further details on biological threats. Global preparedness through the One Health approach, global health security projects, and the need to integrate health and the GCR field (Millet & Snyder-Beattie, 2017b) are important. But as the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, there may be important overlooked aspects or misunderstood risks that could make any suite of general preparation inadequate. Therefore, last lines of defense may be required, such as refuges.

### 1AR---Link

#### Democracy promotion through military presence is a farce.

**Hoffman 22** - Jon Hoffman, 12-20-2022, "A Shaky Foundation," Cato Institute, <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/shaky-foundation>

Western support for **autocracy in the Middle East is not new**. Imperial and colonial powers drew the map of the modern Middle East, fragmenting the region and keeping its governments dependent on external support.9 European colonialists—especially following World War I and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire—imposed largely artificial territorial boundaries. At the same time, they also created and buttressed authoritarian regimes and institutions that “persisted in the post‐​dependence period and were used to maintain control over populations, such as the military and bureaucracy.”10 Following World War II, European dominance in the Middle East gave way to elites from a rising America who, as one leading scholar put it, “saw themselves as successors to the Pax Britannica” and began “rearranging the remnants of the old European empires into an American‐​styled world order.”11

As the Cold War accelerated, Washington and Moscow competed for regional influence and client states, worsening regional conflicts and undermining attempts at democracy.12 During this period, the United States focused on opposing communism, securing the region’s oil supplies and trade routes, and protecting Israel. In pursuit of these objectives, Washington built strong relationships with various autocratic actors in the Middle East, whom they increasingly perceived as the best guarantors of their interests. Although the objective of combatting communism disappeared following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States continued to foster divisions in the region, and the other two objectives—oil and Israel—remained essentially the same.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Washington embarked on a grand strategy rooted in primacy, and the Middle East became ground zero for the broader liberal hegemonic project.13 In attempting to preserve the status quo, the United States has co‐​opted regional authoritarian states through a series of patron‐​client networks.14

The United States dramatically increased its military involvement in the region when it undertook two wars in Iraq (1991 and 2003) and the Global War on Terror following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Beyond its unparalleled military dominance in the Middle East, American planners provided substantial amounts of advanced weaponry, intelligence support, and diplomatic cover to partner governments in the region.

As the threat of transnational terrorism overwhelmed other objectives, these governments seized the opportunity to present themselves as the only forces capable of countering threats from the region, exploiting American misconceptions of Islam and neglecting how the policies pursued by these governments served to manufacture many of the region’s grievances.15 When the Arab uprisings erupted in 2011 and threatened to dislodge the autocrats upon which the United States had rooted its regional policy, Washington viewed the prospect of political change—specifically in contexts where its partners were threatened—as a threat to American interests. The U.S. government has sought a return to the status quo ever since, using both direct and indirect means of counterrevolution.16

Postwar state collapse in places such as Syria, Yemen, and Libya—coupled with the emergence of ISIS—further solidified America’s autocracy‐​centered approach to the Middle East. When former president Donald Trump took office in in 2017, he doubled down on the two foundational pillars of Middle East policy and sought to more formally merge them via the so‐​called “Abraham Accords.”17 The Biden administration’s approach to the region has likewise been one of continuity as opposed to change.

## 1AR---DA---Primacy

### 1AR---Heg Bad

#### Primacy is unsustainable. American exceptionalism ensures aggression, ecological damage and guarantees a strong Russia-Sino alliance. China’s multilateral archive is preferable, and their authors are funded by the MIC.

Aslan 22 [Halil Kürşad Aslan graduated from the METU Department of Political Science and Public Administration in 1994. He completed his master's program with a thesis at Marmara University in 1999 and received his master's degree in Political History and International Relations. He received his PhD from the Department of Political Science at Kent State University in Ohio, USA in 2011. Dr. Aslan, who was an assistant professor at Eskişehir University between 2011-2015, has been giving lectures in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Istanbul Medipol University since 2015. Dr. Aslan's main research areas are international political economy, foreign policy and global politics.  “Has China Won? The Chinese Challenge to American Primacy, Diplomacy & Statecraft”(2022), 33:1, 206-207, DOI: 10.1080/09592296.2022.2041818] gordon

There are several interpretations of the Sino-American rivalry and predictions about the emerging new world order, including from Graham Allison, John Mearsheimer, and Steven Walt amongst others. Kishore Mahbubani adds to the discussion by setting out a general outline of the rivalry and relative strengths and weaknesses of the two countries. According to him, the United States has five strategic advantages: individual empowerment as a land of opportunity, access to humanity’s ‘best and brightest’, the best universities – intellectual ecosystems – strong political institutions, and membership of Western civilization. After the Cold War, the United States followed a policy of Liberal Hegemony in keeping with the notion of ‘American Exceptionalism’, which supposes that Americans have a moral obligation to lead the world. Under the Liberal Hegemony, Washington was expected to defend individual freedom, democratic governance, and market-based economies. Now the policies associated with the Liberal Hegemony stand less well regarded. Critics highlight the United States’ excessive share of global security burdens, misguided American policies of regime change and social engineering in the Middle East, and the expansion of the European Union [EU] and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation towards the backyard of Russia that caused Moscow to take a more aggressive stance and develop closer relations with Beijing. The mistakes associated with the Liberal Hegemony and hyper-globalisation contributed to anti-Americanism and the rise of extreme parties in Austria and elsewhere. Mahbubani maintains that Great Powers throughout history have always been wrong ‘to assume that they were invulnerable’ (p.73). False beliefs shared by the American public prevent the structural reform of the country’s political system, with some domestic pressure groups exploiting these beliefs or myths. Democratically elected governments should be adaptable; however, the United States is becoming less democratic and more like a plutocracy with the rich disproportionately powerful. It would be wise for America to decrease its military spending as it already has enough weapons to destroy China. Washington could redirect these resources to alternative areas such as investment in infrastructure, education, health, research and development, training for the unemployed, and job creation. The most important figure defining the defence industry as a potential danger for democratic societies was President Dwight Eisenhower, a former soldier. Defence companies as part of the military-industrial complex exaggerate the risks around the world and drive the United States to undertake unnecessary adventures. As described by John Mearsheimer, America emerged as the most powerful country by the end of the Cold War; and with the support of the foreign policy establishment during the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations, the Liberal Hegemony policy remained intact. Despite general opinion in the United States favouring restraint, American elites used three strategies to manipulate the public: threat inflation, exaggerating the benefits of global American leadership, and concealing the costs of hegemony. Those responsible have always avoided culpability for their mistakes. In fact, Donald Trump’s surprise election was the result of dissatisfaction with the incompetence of the preceding three presidents. He successfully capitalized on public discontent towards hyper-globalisation and the burdens of the Liberal Hegemony. Strategic think tanks, generously funded by the military-industrial complex, have overstated foreign dangers, and the United States wasted nearly $5 trillion on wars. Meanwhile, China has focused successfully on using the strategies adopted by a weaker military Power engaged in asymmetric warfare. Another United States weakness, according to Mahbubani, is that American society is no longer exemplary and just. Losing its material and moral superiority, it finds itself stratified along class lines. The American belief is that China is authoritarian and its political system unsustainable. However, there are millions of successful entrepreneurs in China, and the people trust their government as confirmed by independent surveys. With the largest middle class in the world, it possesses the most disciplined and rigorous government and recruits only the best graduates. Whilst Trump decided to pull the United States out of the Paris Agreement in 2017, China, by contrast, ‘has emerged as the first country in the world to proclaim the goal of developing an “ecological civilization”’ (p.142). Although the United States has often intervened in the affairs of other states, Beijing does not have any regime export programme. These characteristics demonstrate the superiority China’s morality and governance. Moreover, the United States won the Cold War not on its own but with its partners in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Yet Washington has offended and alienated its friends. American attitudes are deeply troubling to European allies. When EU members announced that they would consider using Huawei equipment with 5 G telecommunication networks, the Trump Administration reacted harshly. Another example of American arrogance is the weaponisation of the dollar, which many countries use as a reserve currency because they trust the United States. However, this trust has begun to erode because the United States has used the dollar’s reserve currency status as a weapon against other countries. With their banks fined for their use of the dollar in cross-border payments, France, Germany, and Britain set up an alternative channel – INSTEX – for non-dollar trade with Iran to avert American sanctions. Now China is building a new multilateral architecture, including the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Belt and Road Initiative. In this fluent book, Mahbubani has drawn on the perspectives of leading scholars whilst adding a unique flavour based on his diplomatic and academic experience.

#### Russia-China axis.

Hooper ’22 — Cynthia; associate professor of Russian History and the head of Russian and Eastern European Studies. She is a specialist on Russian media and disinformation strategy, advising businesses and publishing in the Washington Post, Newsweek, theconversation.com, and Fortune Magazine, among others. She received her PhD from Princeton University and BA from Harvard University and has served as a fellow at Harvard’s Davis Center and the Woodrow Wilson Institute. April 20, 2022; “In search of a new world order, Russia and China team up to push Ukraine propaganda”; *TheBulletin*; <https://thebulletin.org/2022/04/in-search-of-a-new-world-order-russia-and-china-team-up-to-push-ukraine-propaganda/>; //CYang

The war in Ukraine is not only about the future of Ukraine. Both Russian and US leaders are making it increasingly clear that the brutal fight for territorial control inside the former Soviet republic is but part of a larger superpower struggle that will determine a new balance of power around the world.

In Iowa to talk about strategies for containing the soaring price of gas, US President Joe Biden termed Russian leader Vladimir Putin a “dictator” who is committing “genocide.” This came a mere two weeks after Biden distressed many of his own staffers by going off-script to invoke god in a call for Putin to be removed from power. Meanwhile, in an interview with Kremlin-controlled television channel Russia-24, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov announced that one of the goals of his country’s so-called “special military operation” in Ukraine was to “end the US quest to dominate the world.”

“What we have here is a war between the US and Russia,” warned University of Chicago Professor John Mearsheimer in a YouTube discussion on April 8. True or not, the power of this idea is one factor in explaining how Putin has been able to shore up domestic public support, with his March approval rating at an alleged 83 percent. “The [Russian] state media skillfully direct the people’s discontent towards the West,” commented one Russian journalist opposed to the war, in an interview with a German foundation.

This determination to “just blame Washington” may sound nothing short of pathetic to many US citizens. But Russia’s media strategists do not seem to care. Instead, they are choosing to pivot their attention away from their Western rivals to focus more on winning new audiences in the former Western colonies and developing countries that comprise the so-called “Global South.” In so doing, the Kremlin is partnering with its most powerful ally. Although there are potential competitors for influence in Africa and elsewhere, these days China and Russia have joined together to promote the idea that the United States is to blame for the Ukraine crisis and its consequences. And they are deploying a variety of tools to get this message across, including cultivating local anti-Western social media “influencers” across Africa, partnering on stories with specific grassroots media organizations, and employing for-pay spam services to tweet examples of US racism and hypocrisy.

This campaign is drawing on a deep reservoir of resentment among former colonies towards wealthier, formerly imperialist NATO countries. And it is succeeding in keeping a significant number of the world’s countries, if not actively on Russia’s side, at least reluctant to wholeheartedly endorse “Team USA.”

Russia and China against the West. Inside Russia, the government has banned journalists from using the term “war” to refer to its military actions in Ukraine, flatly denying that its soldiers have attacked civilians or committed atrocities such as those documented in the town of Bucha. Yet its leaders, from Putin on down, accuse the United States of launching an “economic war” against Russia by imposing sanctions; an “information war” designed to deliberately discredit the actions of Moscow’s armed forces; and a “war of Russophobia” aimed at persecuting Russians abroad and destroying Russian culture.

It’s through this lens that Russian media makers hope people both at home and in developing countries around the world will view the conflict in Ukraine, as a story of a persecuted nation determined to stand up for its interests in the face of US bullying.

And many in China seem to see things the same way.

In diplomatic meetings and state media stories, Chinese establishment figures are siding with Russia on issues like its false allegations of US-led biological weapons research in Ukraine and its criticisms of post-1991 NATO expansion. “NATO has already messed up Europe, stop trying to mess up Asia and mess up the whole world,” proclaimed Chinese diplomat Liu Xiaoming in an angry April post on Twitter.

When Russia’s Lavrov travelled to Beijing late last month to meet with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, he took the opportunity to direct attention away from news of Russian military losses, casting the Ukraine “conflict” (not “war”) as an opportune moment for China and Russia to challenge past decades of US global leadership. The two countries, he said, planned to work to bring together all nations similarly dissatisfied with “Western hegemony” and, with them, create a new “multipolar, just, democratic world order.” A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Wang Wenbin, enthused, “Our striving for peace has no limits, our upholding of security has no limits, our opposition towards hegemony has no limits,”

#### Extinction.

Williams ’22 — Ian; former foreign correspondent for Channel 4 News and NBC, and author of Every Breath You Take: China’s New Tyranny. January 28, 2022; “The dangerous alliance between Russia and China”; *Spectator*; <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-dangerous-alliance-between-russia-and-china>; //CYang

The growing alliance between Russia and China is something we shouldn’t lose sleep over, their long history of mutual suspicion runs too deep – or so we are told. Such a view is too complacent by half. China and Russia’s mutual hostility towards the West and their opportunism also run deep. And even if their burgeoning alliance is a marriage of convenience, it is still a very dangerous one.

As Russia has massed more than 100,000 troops near the Ukrainian border, the nightmare for western strategists is that Vladimir Putin’s actions are being coordinated with those of Xi Jinping in and around the Taiwan Strait, where China’s military intimidation of Taiwan has reached new levels of intensity. Last Sunday, Taiwan reported the largest incursion for several months by Chinese fighter jets into its air defence zone. Western military analysts have been anxiously toggling between spy satellites covering the two regions, convinced that at the very least that Xi Jinping is carefully watching the West’s reaction to events in Ukraine as he calibrates his own actions towards Taiwan.

Moscow and Beijing have been quick to support each other’s strategic priorities. Xi has backed Russia’s demand that Ukraine should never join Nato, and also Moscow’s military intervention in Kazakhstan. Russia, long ambiguous towards Taiwan, has now firmly stated that it regards the island as part of China.

This week the Russian and Chinese navies conducted exercises in the Arabian Sea – only the latest in a series of joint military drills that have become more frequent, more complex and more geographically spread. They are seeking to learn from each other’s tactics and procedures, helped by the fact Russia is a big supplier to China of advanced weapons, including fighter jets and missile systems. The Russians also have a less tangible, but highly valuable asset to pass on: the combat experience that the PLA lacks, with Russian troops having fought in wars from Georgia and Chechnya to Ukraine and Syria.

The drills appear to be going beyond symbolic shows of camaraderie, and are increasingly aimed at coordinating command and control and enhancing battlefield interoperability. In August last year, some 13,000 troops and hundreds of aircraft, drones, artillery pieces, antiaircraft batteries and armoured vehicles took part in a drill in north-west China. Two months later, Chinese and Russian warships, including destroyers, frigates, a refuelling vessel and missile-tracking ship, sailed through the 12-mile wide Strait of Tsugaru separating Japan’s northern island of Hokkaido from its main island of Honshu. It was part of a four-day joint exercise that was greeted with particular alarm in Washington and Tokyo.

It is true that China does not have formal allies in the western sense. It does not fit with Beijing’s sense of its own centrality, which is incompatible with an alliance system that might require obligations, commitments and a degree of equity. But it does have a hierarchy of partnerships, of which Russia sits at the top – the relationship is designated as a ‘comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for the new era’.

#### Environments fast, causes extinction, and turns all other impacts---transitioning from democracy is key.

Malm ’20 [Samuel; August 11; M.A. from Uppsala University, Disciplinary Domain of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts, Department of Philosophy; Digitala Vetenskapliga Arkivet, “Does Climate Change Justify a Global Epistocracy?” p. 44]

Climate change’s negative impact on humans is hardly something up for questioning. The World Health Organization believes that between 2030 and 2050 the effects of climate change will be an additional of 250 000 deaths every year; due to diarrhoea, malaria, heat stress and malnutrition.1 Accordingly, we can expect millions of deaths to occur, and the increased frequency of natural disasters will push the expected death toll even further. Additionally, the rising sea levels, and other environmental consequences, will cause an unprecedented flow of climate refugees towards areas that still are unaffected by the change. If we thought the impact was huge from the people fleeing the Syrian civil war, or the present corona pandemic, we should expect the climate disaster to be countless times larger. The pressure on societies and intergovernmental organisations will become tremendous, and we would be naïve if we did not expect this pressure to create additional suffering and death. What is then the cause of climate change? It is the result of anthropogenic acts, i.e., it is our current way of living that is causing the heating of the planet. Like a greenhouse, our planet is becoming hotter by the way that carbon dioxide traps more heat in the atmosphere, and by consequent increase the global average temperature. Additionally, it sets off other reactions that add positive feedback to the warming, e.g., creation of water vapour or the reduction of ice caps.

Now, this paper does not intend to demonstrate the truth of these claims, and if the reader is still sceptical about climate change, and its anthropogenic cause, numerous sources can justify and explain these facts better, for instance, rapports from IPCC. 2 Accordingly, I will assume these facts to be true, and that climate change will cause a state of affairs that contains a great deal of suffering and death; besides the possibility of civilisational destruction or human extinction. Thus, the circumstances are dire. So, let us summarise these detrimental effects into a single claim. Here it is:

State Of Affairs No Reduction: A state of affairs where climate change causes tens of millions of deaths, countless instances of additional human suffering, and the possibility of causing a collapse of human life as we know it.

This is what I will take as the effect of doing nothing to halt climate change. This then begs the question: If our current behaviour has such terrible consequences, why have we not implemented policies that prevent climate change?

1.2 What is the nature of the problem?

There are two ways to answer this question: we can give a historical description of how the issue has been misconstrued by interests that have a lot to gain from the status quo or, that we are dealing with a special type of problem that is particularly difficult for us to confront.3 In this paper I will only deal with the second dimension. Additionally, we can divide this dimension into two groups: first, we can describe how humans, by their very nature, are poorly endowed to deal with such problems as climate change, secondly, that the problem of climate change is what sociologists call a “wicked problem”. I will discuss the first aspect later on when describing psychological barriers. Now, I want to address characterising climate change as a wicked problem.

During the ozone depletion, discovered in the late seventies, the world’s states quickly came together and implemented the Wien protocol in 1985; a protocol that set down some policies for protecting the ozone layer. Subsequently, in 1987 the Montreal Protocol was implemented, that resulted in the complete removal of the chemical substances that created the ozone depletion.4 Why have we not seen the same collective action towards climate change? Well, first, we must clarify that in the case of the ozone depletion, the solution was much easier to implement; it took the removal of a few ozone-depleting substances. However, solving the problem of climate change is much more wicked (supposedly) and is said to fall under a specific type of problem posited by Horst Rittel in the late 1960s; wicked problems.5 These are deep problems that do not present you with a clear solution. Now, my initial definition of the problem seems to fly against this deepness, i.e., I have claimed there is a clear solution. However, those that see it as a wicked problem would contend that my definition is only one way to conceptualise the problem, and that there is a spectrum of definitions that seem more or less correct. What does this mean? Dale Jameison describes this well:

“There are many different ways of conceptualising the problem of climate change, each of which finds different resources relevant to its solution and counts different response as success and failures. If the problem is fundamentally one of global governance, then new agreements and institutions are what are needed. If the problem is market failure, then carbon taxes or a cap and trade system is what is required. If the problem is primarily a technological failure, then we need an Apollo program for clean energy or perhaps geoengineering. If climate change is just the latest way for the global rich to exploit the global poor, then the time has come for a global struggle for justice. This problem of multiple frames is characteristic of what are called “wicked problems.” And wicked problems are extremely difficult for political systems to address successfully.”6

I understand the appeal to find all these different ways to conceptualise the problem of climate change. However, I do believe we are doing ourselves a disfavour if we explain the lack of action in preventing climate change, and by consequent justify this inaction, by appealing to this problem of multiple frames. We should ask why it is of benefit to consider all these multiple frames when trying to stop climate change? I take it that the answer to this is our desire for finding the most accurate conceptualisation of the problem so that we can implement the most optimal solution. I believe this is wrong. At its core, we know the solution to the problem (reduce greenhouse gases) and we should accept the risk that we will implement a sub-optimal solution. Waiting around for the most accurate conceptualisation of the problem is counterintuitive, especially when we contemplate the risk it entails. The goal should not be too solve this problem of multiple frames by, for instance, taking steps to secure a unanimous acceptance of some particular framing of the problem, and by consequent enact the most optimal solution to climate change. Setting this as our aim is just to promote even more inaction; we need to accept a sub-optimal solution. I believe this desire to find the optimal solution which does not entail people having to accept a reduction in their current standard (no one gets elected by promising to reduce economic growth and causing other detrimental effects on their electorate) better explains our inaction then characterising climate change as a wicked problem. As Broome writes: “the economics and politics of climate change has concentrated on finding the best solution to the problem of climate change.”7 Meaning that we are looking for a solution without sacrifice — and by consequent choose business as usual.

Nevertheless, I believe we should not put too much importance on the wickedness of the problem. We know what it takes, and our technological achievements are well-equipped to deal with the problem (since it also has created the problem). Implementing some policies that reduce greenhouse gases is better, even if they are sub-optimal, then postponing taking any preventive measures.

Nevertheless, before closing this section, there is one more aspect of the problem of climate change that we ought to face; the need for immediate action. This aspect is of high importance, and we should not take it lightly; even though it fills a short space in this paper. Climate change has been going on for a long time, and year by year we increase the yearly outpour of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, e.g., the last year (2019) we increase the outpour even more.8 Additionally, we are taking a risk when we do not know what positive feedback we are potentially setting off by not reducing the outpour. Accordingly, we need to accept the fact that the problem of climate change has the character of demanding our immediate action.

1.3 Clarifications

Before turning to the argumentation for this paper’s thesis, some clarifications are necessary. One of these is the role of “political authority”. When I argue that we have good reasons to prefer an epistocracy, I am arguing that we ought to accept the epistocratic method as the political authority and that this authority is legitimate, i.e., it has some moral justification for establishing a normative relation between it (political authority) and the subjects. There are several conceptual accounts of “political authority”, and I will use the right to rule account. This account portrays a more morally robust account of the relation between an authority and a subject. It essentially describes a kind of ideal political community where a deeper moral connection is present. 9 I believe this is what we think of when trying to evaluate the legitimacy that a political system, as in a state, have in coercing a population, and the subjects have a moral duty to obey the authority. This will be the conceptual definition of political authority. It has a moral right to rule and coerce people into obeying its political system of institutions that regulate the behaviour of its subjects and set out the course for where the political entity is heading, i.e., which state of affairs we realise in the future.

2. Introducing the Solution

In this section, I will demonstrate why we ought to accept The Solution as a true normative claim, i.e., why we ought to take political action to prevent State Of Affairs No Reduction from coming into existence.10 Here is the claim:

The Solution: Reduce the global outpour of greenhouse gases to a level that has an excellent chance of causing the avoidance of State Of Affairs No Reduction.

One helpful way to characterise the normativity of The Solution is as a navigational problem. Where do we want our global society to be heading? I believe we can characterise the possible directions as a binary choice between The Solution and Not-The Solution. The second option I describe as follows:

Not-The Solution: Continue the outpour of greenhouse gases with the consequences that State Of Affairs No Reduction has an excellent chance of being actualised.

Now, even though The Solution contains multiple ways to get implemented, they all share the same normative content of causing a reduction of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.11 Accordingly, it is this goal, and how it dictates the changes needed in our global institutions that are of such vital importance. By contrast, Not-The Solution shares the same normative content of taking no action that will prevent State Of Affairs No Reduction. Given this binary choice, I believe our intuition tells us that we ought to choose The Solution. What could speak in favour of Not-The Solution? Is there some option of Not-The Solution that we have a better reason to prefer? Maybe someone would contend that the uncertainty that surrounds climate change gives us good reasons to postpone taking any action, or, that other goals are much more important. Now, before addressing these concerns, perhaps our intuition becomes stronger (that we ought to choose The Solution) if I provide some scenario that could work as an intuition pump. Here is such a scenario:

*The Bus Ride*: So, picture, if you will, a bus that is on a direct course towards a large tree that will cause a great deal of suffering and death upon impact. Inside, the people are busy doing whatever they see fit, spending their time to make the bus ride as comfortable and meaningful as possible. However, there is a group of scientists that have analysed and investigated the devastating effect of this course, and that they need to perform some necessary action to avoid the tree. Perhaps they all need to drop what they are doing and give up some of their time jolting the bus enough so that the bus will miss the tree.

Accordingly, the world is the bus, the people on the bus is the world’s population, and the jolting of the bus is The Solution.12 I believe our intuition tells us that we ought to perform the necessary actions in order to prevent the bus from hitting the tree. What could possibly be more pressing? Do we have good reasons to do something else? Is the uncertainty of how bad the impact will be, and when it will occur, good reasons to not start jolting the bus?

Weighing different values against each other is tricky, and there are many scenarios where it is contentious if we should promote, for instance, equality or liberty. Some could argue that we ought to increase economic prosperity since it will maximise well-being for all humans; others will argue that securing peace takes priority; social justice; or environmental concerns. However, whatever we see as the road to the common good the implementation of The Solution is superior in its importance, because it secures that there will be a ground to put the road on. We will certainly not have social harmony in a state of affairs where climate disaster is present; the economy will suffer the consequences of the climatic impact on everything from production to transfer, and we have good reasons to believe conflict and tension will arise when the situation gets worse.

Now, perhaps some could say that it is immoral to demand that people make sacrifices to reduce greenhouse gases. I believe this is wrong. The implementation of The Solution will not demand a tremendous amount of hardship for the effect world population.13 Like Peter Singer’s case where we should sacrifice our clothes in order to save a child from drowning in a pond, we ought to sacrifice some niceties in order to save ourselves, and future generation from State Of Affairs No Reduction.14 Accordingly, the sacrifices necessary do not entail some morally questionable acts, i.e., reduce the level of greenhouse gases by killing off a portion of humans. I am talking about, for example, having to reduce flying to a necessary minimum, or, pay more in taxes so we can develop, and build, the technology that reduces the outpour of greenhouse gases, e.g., solar panels. Furthermore, it is the affluent world that will have to bear the biggest load of these necessary sacrifices. Especially, since the cause of climate change comes from the increased material standard enjoyed by people in affluent countries. They should, by consequent, accept the moral responsibility to combat the harm this wealth is causing, and going to cause. Or, put differently, the economic prosperity that has created this wealth is the cause of the climatic change, and the cost of emitting greenhouse gases has been an externality unaccounted for by either the consumers or the producers (a Pareto sub-optimal state of affairs). Additionally, it is common-sensical that if one group have very few resources, and another group has an abundance of resources, we should not solve a common problem by removing the few resources from the first group. The harm created by the amount of resources in the prosperous group should yield a good reason for them, bearing the bigger load.

Additionally, we should also accept that since anthropogenic acts cause State Of Affairs No Reduction, it leaves us with an additional moral reason to implement The Solution (leaving aside just the badness of State Of Affairs No Reduction). We bear the responsibilities of our actions, and these actions will harm countless future human beings.15 Even if we do not bear the responsibility of stopping climate change individually, we should not prevent our institutions from being reshaped in a way that solves the problem of climate change. I would even contend, if we are living in a democracy, we have a moral duty to use our political power (vote), so we take the necessary steps to implement something like The Solution.16 (Perhaps, this could also be interpreted as a reason for restricting universal suffrage (the democratic process) and justify an global epistocracy.) Possibly, in a counterfactual world where a non-anthropogenic event will cause a similar type of harm (for instance an impact by a meteorite), it could be argued that we have no responsibility to prevent this event since we are not the actors that create this event. I believe this is a weak argument for not preventing the impact from the meteorite. However, in the case of climate change that argumentation is not available since we are responsible for it.

One final thing is that The Solution is hardly a discriminatory or biased policy. Certainly, different groups will be affected differentially by the policy, and, as have been said, the affluent part of the world should bear the biggest load. However, the policy itself places no higher importance on any person or group. Satisfying, what Vandamme calls, a quality of (substantive) impartiality: “understood in a moral and substantive sense, as a property of public policies and of a political order, can be simply defined as not favouring some groups or individuals over others for morally arbitrary reasons.”17

2.1 Uncertainty of Climate Change

What then about uncertainty and the effect it has on the normativity of The Solution? Perhaps, someone would argue that since there is still uncertainty in the range of negative impact that climate change will have, and the lack of knowledge when things will start to get truly harmful, we can delay making any decision until the facts are in. I believe this is wrong. As Broome writes: “If you can costlessly delay a decision till all the information is in, you should delay it. But when delay itself is risky, it is not a sensible remark.”18 Choosing Not-The Solution and thus gamble in the hope that it will not have the consequence of suffering and death in order to avoid making a sub-optimal decision, that in hindsight is evaluated as unnecessary is, I believe, immoral and irrational.19 Accordingly, in the same way that it is rational to invest in a fire extinguisher, in case a fire starts in your house, it is rational to invest in the removal of the possibility of a climate disaster in the future. Why is this? I believe that Expected Value Theory is a good guide to adopt when facing uncertainty. Broome summarises this theory nicely:

“When the quantitative outcome of some process is uncertain, the expectation of the outcome is calculated as follows. Take each of the possible values of the outcome and multiply each by the probability of its occurring. Add up all of these products. The sum is the expectation. It is just a weighted average outcome, where the weights are the probabilities.”20

Even if it is a very small probability that climate change will have civilisational ending results, the great badness that this state of affairs constitutes should warrant our immediate action to avoid this scenario. Perhaps, there could be a case for not implementing The Solution if it would demand a large number of sacrifices, and by delaying this implementation we could remove additional uncertainty. For instance, what if people in The Bus Ride had to kill fifty per cent of the passengers, by throwing them off the bus, in order to avoid the tree. Certainly, given this tremendous sacrifice an argument could be had why we should delay implementing necessary precautions. However, even though the aggregation, of the small sacrifices every individual has to make, could become large, it does not constitute this tremendous sacrifice in The Bus Ride. The small sacrifices everyone have to make is easily overshadowed by the badness of State Of Affairs No Reduction. Accordingly, I still take it that we have better reasons to prefer The Solution than Not-The Solution even though climate change will always be immersed in uncertainty. We only have one opportunity to run this experiment, so we should not gamble with the outcome.

Nevertheless, I will not try and persuade the reader more of the badness of State Of Affairs No Reduction and that we ought to implement the Solution. Possibly, the discussion of the next section will bear some support for the accuracy of The Solution.

3. The Answer

What we then must ask ourselves is: Which process for collective decision-making do we have reasons to believe will successfully implement The Solution? We could start with an unhelpful answer: The method that has the best chance to implement The Solution. Which method is this then? Here we get to the core of this paper’s thesis. I will call the answer to this question simply: The Answer. Here it is:

The Answer: Given that we ought to implement The Solution, and by consequent avoid State Of Affairs No Reduction, we have better reasons to prefer some form of global epistocracy, than a global democracy.

# NEG---War Powers

## DA---Democracy

### 1NC---DA---Democracy

#### Biden is promoting democracy in the Middle East but consistent military presence is key.

Talei 21[(Rafiah Al Talei, Rafiah Al Talei is the editor-in-chief for Sada in Carnegie’s Middle East Program) “The Dilemma of U.S. Democracy and Human Rights Promotion in the Middle East,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/84632>, 5-27-2021] TDI

The Biden administration’s plans to support democracy and human rights in the Middle East are well underway according to a spokesperson of the United States National Security Council,1 who said that the Unites States has begun to strongly encourage democratic reform in the Middle East through communication to the public regarding human rights violations and abuses of the rule of law. For example, the United States was among signatories of the joint statement issued by members of the UN Human Rights Council, which called on Egypt to improve its human rights policies and procedures. The Biden administration has also expressed deep concern regarding human rights conditions in Iraq and has called on all Iraqi forces to respect relevant provisions of international law. According to the official, the Biden administration does not yet have a comprehensive plan regarding all human rights issues in the region, but it strives to evaluate the situation of each country independently. The U.S. attempt to revive discourse on democratization raises questions regarding values and standards and how they will be balanced against long-standing strategic interests in relations with Arab governments. The United States faces two problems regarding the credibility of its proposal to promote democracy in the region: its policies on regional issues, such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and its bias in favor of ruling elites. NEW ADMINISTRATION, DIFFERENT POLICIES? The cynicism many Arabs have regarding U.S. policies toward the Middle East clouded the cautious optimism that some expressed upon Biden’s electoral victory. This cynicism has unfortunately been confirmed by the strident U.S. defense of Israel and its “right to defend itself” to the extent of blocking a UN Security Council statement calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, where Israeli use of excessive force led to the death of 230 civilians. Though several Arab states have signed normalization agreements with Israel, the United Arab Emirates being a case in point, an overwhelming majority of the Arab public disapproves of this form of diplomatic recognition. For many Arabs, these normalization agreements are not only seemingly in opposition to the Palestinian cause, but they also undermine one of the key incentives for Israel to end its occupation of Palestine. Additionally, the agreements allow Israel to continue building settlements that violate Palestinian rights. The 2019-2020 Arab Opinion Index, which examined public opinion regarding attitudes towards the Palestine issue across 13 Arab countries, showed that 88 percent of Arabs disapprove of recognition of Israel by their home countries, whereas only 6 percent support it. Half of those who supported recognition of Israel responded that it should be conditioned on the establishment of a free and independent Palestinian state. According to the survey, 66 percent of the Arab public considers Israel and the United States (a combined total) the two countries that pose the largest threat to security in the Arab world. Eighty nine percent of Arabs believe that Israel alone poses the greatest threat to the security and stability of the region. Gulf public opinion, as surveyed in the Arab Opinion Index, had one of the highest percentages of respondents who considered the Palestinian cause as an issue for all Arabs, despite the recent push for normalization with Israel in the region. When it came to the fight against terrorism, 17 percent of surveyed Arabs suggested that resolving the Palestinian cause would be the number one solution for combating terrorism in the region, while 15 percent suggested ending foreign intervention and 12 percent said that supporting democracy would help in fighting terrorism in the region. When asked to examine specific U.S. foreign policy areas, the vast majority of Arabs had a negative outlook on the U.S. policies towards Palestine (81 percent), Syria (77 percent), Yemen (74 percent), and Libya (70 percent). The Biden administration would be remiss to disregard these numbers when evaluating plans to promote democracy in the region. The statistics demonstrated the degree to which Arabs doubt the United States’ reliability as a credible and fair partner who is determined to take a more balanced position in the region. FAILURE IN THE FIRST HUMAN RIGHTS TEST President Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken have repeatedly stressed that advancing democratic norms and fundamental human rights “will be at the center of U.S. foreign policy” in all the countries of the Middle East, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. According to the administration’s official statement, the United States encourages all of its partners to make every effort to improve the way they treat their citizens and has taken steps to investigate and address human rights violations committed by Saudi Arabia. The investigation inspected both internal and external violations and the administration expressed concern over the arrests and ill-treatment of human rights advocates in the Kingdom, especially women activists. In a statement released on February 26, 2021, titled “Accountability for the Murder of Jamal Khashoggi,” Blinken announced a visa restriction policy named after the prominent Saudi journalist and dissident. The ban targeted 76 Saudi citizens believed to have been directly involved in serious counter dissident activities or suspected of involvement in the murder of Khashoggi. President Biden, in a phone conversation with King Salman of Saudi Arabia, affirmed “the importance the United States places on universal human rights and rule of law” and “noted positively” the release of several Saudi activists, including prominent Saudi women’s rights activist, Loujain al-Hathloul. The conversation seemingly closed the discussion of the murder of Khashoggi between the two governments, as no public reference has been made to the role of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in this flagrant violation of human rights. Even the U.S. State Department's human rights report, despite its strong and comprehensive coverage of the violations in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries, did not name Bin Salman in conjunction with the "killing of Khashoggi." The Biden administration’s decision to forgo direct sanctions on the Crown Prince reinforces the belief that many Arabs have that the United States has no scruples in granting immunity to perpetrators of human rights violations if they are members of the ruling elite and royal families. The United States continues to fail the test of impartiality when it comes to its strategic partners in the region. ARAB SPRING REVOLUTIONS AND DEMOCRACY PROMOTION The 2011 Arab Spring protesters aspired to create more democratic societies where people’s voices were heard, an aspiration still pursued by democratic human rights activists who question the U.S. plan to support democratization and human rights in the Middle East and believe that the real test for Washington comes when this ideal clashes with American interests in the region. In the 2019-2020 Arab Opinion Index, 89 percent of the surveyed participants viewed democracy positively. An average of 39 percent defined democracy as safeguarding citizens’ political and civil liberties, 20 percent viewed it as the guarantee of equality and justice for citizens, 12 percent affirmed the participation and institutional aspect of a democratic system (circulation of power, separation, and control between authorities), and the majority rejected the statement that their society is not prepared to practice democracy. Although 79 percent of Arab public opinion considers a democratic system to be the most appropriate for their countries, the ruling elite in many Arab countries still oppress, imprison, and exile those who demand it. Autocratic regimes continue to justify their repressive practices; however, with the idea that Arab people are not yet ready to practice democracy, pointing to the negative repercussions of the Arab Spring in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. In assessin

g citizens’ views on the 2011 Arab uprising, however, 58 percent consider the uprisings to have been positive. This percentage from the 2019-2020 poll is the highest ever since the question was first included in the 2012-2013 survey. Furthermore, 51 percent of Arab citizens stated that they would accept an electoral victory that resulted in a rise to power of a political party with which they disagreed, while 43 percent stated that they would not. These statistics clearly show that the majority of Arab people support democracy and that they might even encourage and support an American plan to promote democracy as a solid political base for their governments. If the Biden administration is serious about pushing this plan, it must adopt a new strategy that does not rely solely on the support of long-term autocratic allies. The Unites States should attempt to create a strong new network of allies, who represent civil society and advocate for individual and public freedoms under the rule of law. The time has passed for paying lip service to democratic ideals and human rights in the Middle East; signing joint statements and expressing concerns over human rights violations is no longer good enough. It is time for this administration to review its positions and policies on key Arab issues and conflicts, and work to build new strategic partnerships that are not limited to ruling elites and royal families.

#### US withdrawal has been linked with a steady increase in authoritarian governments.

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During this period of democratic decline, checks on abuse of power and human rights violations have eroded. In the decades after World War II, the United Nations and other international institutions promoted the notion of fundamental rights, and democracies offered support—however unevenly—in their domestic and foreign policies as they strove to create an open international system built on shared resistance to totalitarianism. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, leaders of countries in transition felt compelled to publicly embrace the same ideals in order to win acceptance in the international community, even if their commitment was only skin deep. Governments that relied on external economic or military support had to stage at least superficially credible elections and respect some institutional checks on their power, among other concessions, to maintain their good standing. For much of the 21st century, however, democracy’s opponents have labored persistently to dismantle this international order and the restraints it imposed on their ambitions. The fruits of their exertions are now apparent. The leaders of China, Russia, and other dictatorships have succeeded in shifting global incentives, jeopardizing the consensus that democracy is the only viable path to prosperity and security, while encouraging more authoritarian approaches to governance. Countries in every region of the world have been captured by authoritarian rulers in recent years. In 2021 alone, Nicaragua’s incumbent president won a new term in a tightly orchestrated election after his security forces arrested opposition candidates and deregistered civil society organizations. Sudan’s generals seized power once again, reversing democratic progress made after the 2019 ouster of former dictator Omar al-Bashir. And as the United States abruptly withdrew its military from Afghanistan, the elected government in Kabul collapsed and gave way to the Taliban, returning the country to a system that is diametrically opposed to democracy, pluralism, and equality. At the same time, democracies are being harmed from within by illiberal forces, including unscrupulous politicians willing to corrupt and shatter the very institutions that brought them to power. This was arguably most visible last year in the United States, where rioters stormed the Capitol on January 6 as part of an organized attempt to overturn the results of the presidential election. But freely elected leaders from Brazil to India have also taken or threatened a variety of antidemocratic actions, and the resulting breakdown in shared values among democracies has led to a weakening of these values on the international stage. It is now impossible to ignore the damage to democracy’s foundations and reputation. The regimes of China, Russia, and other authoritarian countries have gained enormous power in the international system, and freer countries have seen their established norms challenged and fractured. The current state of global freedom should raise alarm among all who value their own rights and those of their fellow human beings. To reverse the decline, democratic governments need to strengthen domestic laws and institutions while taking bold, coordinated action to support the struggle for democracy around the world. In less free countries, democrats must unite to resist the encroachment of unchecked power and work toward expanding freedom for all individuals. Only global solidarity among democracy’s defenders can successfully counter the combined aggression of its adversaries.

#### Covert military presence promotes democracy.

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Covert action is generally understood as state activity to influence conditions abroad where it is intended that the role of the sponsor will neither be apparent nor acknowledged publicly. 1 From Russian interference in the 2016 and 2020 US presidential elections to American support for Syrian rebel groups, covert action has featured prominently in recent international security dis- course. As the United States debates the merits of covert action against Iran, and covert compe- tition with China, critics fear that it is back on the agenda.2 The impact of covert action, and intelligence more generally, on international relations is under-theorised.3 Evaluating the success of covert action, especially intangible influence 1We use a broad definition to take into account the contested nature and scope of unacknowledged state interventions in a variety of contexts. Nevertheless, our definition reflects a tendency in the academic debate to conceive of covert action through the US prism. Title 50 § 3093 of the US Code defines it as ‘an activity or activities of the United States Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad, where it is intended that the role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly’. For further discussion of the definition of covert action, see Len Scott, ‘Secret intelligence, covert action and clandestine diplomacy’, Intelligence and National Security, 19:2 (2004), pp. 322–41. On the constructed and evolving nature of intelligence practices more broadly, see Hager Ben Jaffel, Alvina Hoffmann, Oliver Kearns, and Sebastian Larsson, ‘Collective discussion: Toward critical approaches to intelli- gence as a social phenomenon’, International Political Sociology, 14:3 (2020), pp. 323–44. Covert action has long been a controversial tool of international relations. However, there is remarkably little public understanding about whether it works and, more fundamentally, about what constitutes suc- cess in this shadowy arena of state activity. This article distills competing criteria of success and examines how covert actions become perceived as successes. We develop a conceptual model of covert action success as a social construct and illustrate it through the case of ‘the golden age of CIA operations’. The socially constructed nature of success has important implications not just for evaluating covert actions but also for using, and defending against, them. Operations, poses significant challenges – something that even those with full access to classified records agree.4 Nonetheless, such challenges, including how to isolate agency and measure effects, do not prevent observers from labelling particular operations as successes or failures.5 Under-theorisation poses a significant intellectual and policy problem. Failing to recognise the subjective nature of judgements when evaluating actions can lead to unrealistic expectations about what covert action can – and cannot – achieve as a policy option. Overestimating the ‘hid- den hand’ can lead to conspiracism about foreign actors, undermine trust in democratic institu- tions, and provide a convenient scapegoat for domestic divisions. At the same time, ‘success’ in covert action can today be publicly contested as never before. The advent of new information and communication technologies and consequent proliferation of narratives about foreign policy events allow citizens to scrutinise and debate policy decisions, including covert action past and present, in myriad ways.6 As scholars of policy evaluation note, ‘claims of policy success and counterclaims of policy failure have become a key currency of political competition’.7 Put simply, it is imperative to interrogate the dynamics of ‘success’ when debating the use of covert action. Our argument here is as follows. First, under-theorisation creates confusion about what con- stitutes success. Second, covert action is elusive – and not just because of secrecy. It is difficult to contain conceptually and analytically. As a consequence, perceptions are equally, if not more, important than actual outcomes and impact. Either way, outcomes and impact are constructed and continually debated by researchers, journalists, practitioners, and policymakers. Success is neither binary nor exogenous to covert action. A successful covert action is one that has been labelled a success by salient observers – and that label has stuck. Interestingly, both sponsor and target have incentives to collude in the construction of success. To advance our argument, this article deconstructs covert action success. It begins by critically reviewing ‘success’ in the existing literature before developing an intersubjective model to dem- onstrate that success is multidimensional, interpreted, and constructed through discourse. We then offer a definition of success that draws out, and makes coherent, diverse existing assump- tions, before applying this to a case study of the CIA’s ‘golden age’ of covert action. The consensual definition of covert action highlights two key criteria. Covert actions are an instrument of foreign policy (they seek to influence events abroad) and the sponsor is unapparent or unacknowledged.8 Research on covert action tends to focus on three broad types of activities presented according to their degree of violence: propaganda; political action, such as funneling money to a political party or fomenting riots; and paramilitary action, from training insurgent groups to assassination. Not all states use covert action, and those that do conceive of this practice in different ways. The US measures’ to cover a broader spectrum of overt and covert activities, and have more readily embraced implausible deniability.10 Although far more restrained, the British similarly blur the boundaries between covert action and routine foreign policy as well as between intelligence cover- age and so-called ‘effects’.11 French practitioners do not use the term covert but talk about action clandestine, and their dedicated unit – Service Action – specialises in paramilitary operations.12 These linguistic and organisational variations reveal that government officials conceive of a rela- tively common set of practices differently. Like definitions of covert actions, knowledge of the operations themselves is in many ways socially constructed. The US approach has dominated scholarly research and affected common understandings of covert action. This has led to an exaggerated importance of plausible deniabil- ity, too stark a divide between overt and covert activity, and, when dipicted through the media, to a simplistic conception of covert actions as discrete operations with clear beginnings and ends. In reality, in countries where US covert actions pursued regime change during the Cold War, internal dissent coexisted with external covert sponsorship making it difficult to isolate the covert action and its impact. Covert action often complements larger overt state action, and it is mislead- ing to narrowly focus on the former in analysis. In fact, a guiding principle of CIA covert action is that, to be effective, it must harness existing conditions in a target and must be accompanied by broader US diplomatic effort. As a result, covert action and its parameters are difficult to contain analytically.13 This is problematic because how scholars define covert action and its parameters impacts upon how they evaluate its effects and success. Armed with more historical evidence than ever before, International Relations scholars are increasingly examining the role of covert action as a form of state intervention. They interrogate, among other matters, the causes and conduct of covert regime change,14 the role of secrecy in foreign policy and statecraft,15 and the relationship between covert action and democratic norms.16 Despite such progress, the literature offers little explicit investigation of a fundamental question: how to define success? One means used to assess – or more often demonstrate – success is through counting outputs. For propaganda operations, this includes the number of articles surreptitiously placed in foreign news- papers; for political action, the amount of bribery undertaken; and for paramilitary action, the num- ber of terrorists killed by drone strikes. Practitioners, often trying to quantify success in order to attract more funding, tend to use this approach. For example, the Reagan White House evaluated covert action against the Soviets primarily by monitoring distribution of propaganda material.17 These outputs offer a limited understanding of success; they struggle to account for the impact achieved. Relying on them achieves little beyond allowing those conducting the covert action to claim success. Intelligence scholars working on covert action think carefully about how to ensure success. The literature offers important insights into factors that improve chances of success,18 whether covert action can be just,19 and how to ensure effective oversight of covert actions.20 Much of this discussion involves checklists to ensure success rather than breaking down what constitutes success in the first place. Instead, success is implicit in an amorphous range of indicators. These include legality, alignment with national security interests and foreign policy objectives and values, whether covert action is appropriately funded, reasonable probability of success, whether methods are commensurate with objectives, whether local actors have input on outcomes, and whether intelligence officials have properly assessed the risks involved.21 These checklists are important – especially at the operational level – and speak to various dimensions of success and their political ramifications. However, they are under-theorised: rest- ing on implicit assumptions of success and struggling to reveal or explain how it is constructed. The relationship between some indicators (such as legality and vague notions of ‘values’) and suc- cess is not explicit, while other indicators (such as the probability of success or consequences of failure) rest on assumptions of success and failure that are not explicitly defined leaving a circular argument. Perhaps most importantly, these checklists lie in tension with the more explicit, ration- alist, and narrow understanding of success that most scholars eventually fall back on: whether, as the CIA’s chief historian, David Robarge, put it, covert action accomplished the policy objectives it was intended to help implement.22 However, this is itself problematic in so far as it captures only a slice of the many other aspects linked to success, such as legality and values, implicitly underpinning the covert action checklists. It further assumes a rational state that defines clear and measurable policy objectives and links them to covert actions before conducting them. A recent quantitative turn advances the rationalist approach to measuring outcomes against objectives further.23 These studies offer useful findings that can then inform judgements of suc- cess. They ask important questions about the longer-term consequences of covert action, even if those consequences are empirically narrow (such as impact on levels of democracy or occurrence of militarised conflict).24 However, they too suffer limitations not least in treating the initial suc- cess or failure of each covert action in a binary manner from which longer-term effects are then derived, and in making assumptions about objectives, temporal parameters, and agency of each How can we reconcile covert war between democracies with normative theories of the democratic peace? An established body of literature in international relations holds that democracies do not use force against each other, in large part due to the liberal norms and values shared by democratic publics (Doyle 1986; Russett 1994). Yet a recent wave of research on secrecy in the field1 shows the relatively high frequency with which democracies engage in the covert use of force against one another. For example, the United States successfully overthrew many other democracies including Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), British Guiana (1961-71), Brazil (1964), the Congo (1960)) and Chile (1970-73), tried and failed to do so twice (Indonesia (1954-58) and Syria (1956- 57)), and employed covert tactics to influence the results of foreign democratic elections sixteen times from 1947-1989 (O’Rourke 2018, 94). Moreover, such practices are not confined to the Cold-War era, as covert interventions have occurred frequently since then.2 This literature not only demonstrates the enduring relevance of covert action, but also raises fundamental questions about the role that norms play in shaping democratic publics’ preferences about the use of force. On the one hand, critics argue that the frequency of these interventions reveals that democratic citizens have not truly in- ternalized liberal norms of non-violence against other democratic states. For some, this constitutes evidence against the normative democratic peace;3 for others, it constitutes evidence against the democratic peace altogether.4 On the other hand, proponents argue that the covertness of these interventions constitutes supportive evidence for their theory: leaders carry out these interventions covertly precisely to escape the watchful eye of the public, who have internalized liberal norms of non-violence against other democratic states.5 In this sense it should not be surprising that many of the founding figures of covert operations in American foreign policy were also among the deepest skeptics of public opinion. As head of the Policy Planning Staff, for example, George Kennan argued that the public simply did not have the stomach for covert action (Gaddis 2011, 294). After all, the very nature of government secrecy violates liberal norms about transparency and accountability. Central to these accounts, then, are a set of assumptions about the content of the public’s preferences: that democratic citizens have internalized liberal norms vis-a`-vis other democracies, that they oppose the use of covert action, and that they especially dis- approve of covert action against fellow democracies. We show here that these assumptions are wrong. Even if leaders conduct illiberal policies covertly to escape public opprobrium, the mass public has fewer qualms about covert action than normative theories of the democratic peace would suggest. Further, even if the public espouses liberal norms, their commitment to these norms flounder when policies are conducted in secret. Moreover, even though the public cares about transparency, some segments of it care less than others. Indeed, even those who value transparency the most still wrestle with a trade-off between this normative commitment and the instrumental benefits they perceive covert actions to hold. Finally, our findings suggest that leaders may pursue covert operations against democracies due to the belief that the public will be more likely to support them if their actions are revealed, and that they are correct in this assessment (Russett 1994). We reach these conclusions using an original survey experiment that enables us to uncover public preferences about the use of force against democracies, to explore the extent to which these opinions shift when the military mission is conducted covertly, and to probe the underlying mechanisms. Our experimental set-up also allows us to disentangle whether public opinion about covert action is driven by the content of the activity versus the secrecy of the activity. For example, in Kennan’s statement above, did he mean that the public dislikes a lack of transparency or a particular type of behavior that the public would imagine would be taken covertly (e.g. assassinating leaders)? Our results suggest that, consistent with prior experimental studies, Americans are reluctant to attack fellow liberal democracies. However, we find an increase in public support for identical missions against liberal democracies when they are carried out covertly. Employing a series of nonparametric causal mediation models and structural topic models analyzing how participants discuss covert interventions, we observe that the bump in public approval for covert missions is attributable to pragmatic considerations, such as the perceived cost of the mission and its likelihood of success, rather than concerns about morality or reputation. Yet we also find that many participants strongly value transparency, and show how they struggle with whether to prioritize this normative commitment versus countervailing instrumental considerations. Our paper makes both empirical and theoretical contributions. Empirically, our experimental approach allows us to overcome the endogeneity concerns inherent in the use of observational data.6 Military operations may be conducted haphazardly (Edelstein 2008; Rapport 2015), but are not undertaken randomly, making it hard to isolate the causal effects of interest. If the purpose of covert intervention is to escape the prying eyes of the mass public, it is unsurprising that a paucity of data exists on support for covert war, which we would need to adjudicate between competing theoretical expectations about what publics want. Moreover, the role of regime type is inherently intertwined with many other variables such as common interests (Gowa 2011), political ideology (Owen 2010), and the likelihood of being an ally or trading partner (Geipi and Griesdorf 2001). Our approach allows us to clearly separate the effects of these confounding variables. Additionally, we depart from existing experimental work on the democratic peace by distinguishing between overt and covert uses of force. Doing so allows us test whether the apparent public reluctance to support force against other democracies is due to the public nature of the action or the use of force itself.7 Our experiment thus provides well- identified results that help explain why American leaders often choose to pursue covert military operations against fellow democracies, a task that is particularly important in light of recent work emphasizing the salient role of public opinion in leaders’ foreign policy decision-making (Tomz, Weeks, and Yarhi-Milo 2020). Finally, this study has implications for the role of norms in international relations more broadly. We find consistent evidence that norms against attacking other de- mocracies exist, but also that they break down in certain situations. Specifically, we identify covert settings (Carson 2016; Carson and Yarhi-Milo 2017) as an important area in which these norms flounder. At the same time, we also reveal the outward bounds of covert action. Our results indicate that when norms against attacking de- mocracies are no longer at stake – such as when the target is a dictatorship – the covert sphere ceases to be preferable for conducting military missions. Moreover, we demonstrate that norms of transparency often clash with norms of a democratic peace, as we discuss further subsequently. We therefore identity a more nuanced and con- textual understanding about how norms shape public opinion (Herrmann and Shannon 2001). In what follows, we develop and empirically test a theory of public support for covert operations. Since most analyses of covert force are conducted in the context of the democratic peace, we begin by situating our theory within this literature. We then discuss the factors that may drive public preferences toward the overt and covert use of force. Next, we describe our experimental design and present our results, along with evidence of the mechanisms driving our findings. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our study, especially for debates about the use of force more broadly, along with directions for future research. The Democratic Peace and the Role of Public Opinion In its most basic form, the dyadic democratic peace thesis posits that democratic states rarely go to war with one another. Two strands of this literature exist, which attribute this phenomenon to different mechanisms: the normative and the structural. In this paper, we focus on the normative mechanism, whereby democratic societies venerate liberal norms of non-violent conflict resolution and respect for individual autonomy, which their citizens externalize in their interactions with other democracies.8 In this sense, the normative democratic peace rests on public opinion, based on citizens’ moral reluctance to, as Tomz and Weeks (p. 2) put it: “...overturn policies that the citizens of other democracies have chosen freely. Coercively interfering with another democracy would, by this argument, count as an illegitimate assault on the freedom and self-determination of individuals. In contrast, democratic publics might have fewer moral qualms about using force to reverse the will of a dictator who has imposed foreign and domestic policies without popular consent.” Because democratic publics perceive fellow democracies as less threatening, they resist forceful intervention against other democracies (Owen 2000; Hayes 2012). They also limit leaders’ abilities to do so, since democratic leaders must mobilize public opinion in order to use force. Thus, “insofar as elites’ foreign policy decisions are constrained by public preferences, mass opinion helps to maintain the democratic peace” (Johns and Davies 2012, 5). Despite the plethora of evidence suggesting the existence of a democratic peace, opponents of this thesis have pointed to an important empirical anomaly: if democratic countries do not use military force against one another, what explains democracies’covert use of military force against other democracies? Indeed, the observation that democratic countries do so appears to pose a particularly strong challenge to the normative explanation of the democratic peace, as it indicates a failure on the part of democracies both to respect the autonomy of other democracies and to resort to non- violent means of conflict resolution (Downes and Lilley 2010; Kim 2005; James and Mitchell 1995; O’Rourke 2018; Reiter and Stam 2002).9 However, proponents of the normative democratic peace have raised several counter-arguments to the claim that covert war against democracies poses an important challenge to the theory. First, they argue that target states of these covert actions are not truly liberal democracies. Instead, target states may be “anocracies” (Russett 1994), or simply not “well-established liberal democracies” (Doyle 1986). Second, even when using covert actions against other true democracies, these states “did not fight in an organized fashion” (Russett 1994, 123), because soldiers of the democratic state did not participate in any direct combat on the ground, thereby generating little risk of ca- sualties. Finally, these scholars counter that covert intervention by democracies actually constitutes evidence in favor of the normative argument because leaders of democratic regimes chose to act covertly due to the normative constraints imposed by their publics (Starr 1997, 158).10 In sum, the literature on the normative democratic peace has emphasized the link between public preferences and inter-democratic overt peace, while also using these same public preferences to explain the prevalence of inter-democratic covert war. This inconsistency exists in part because the content of these public preferences are rarely directly explored. We know little regarding how the public thinks about the covert use of force in general, or how public preferences about force shift when military missions are conducted covertly. Without these micro-foundations and scope conditions, it is difficult to tell whether decisions to use force against democracies using covert means allow leaders to avoid the public eye. We also do not know whether leaders correctly anticipate that doing so will be consistent with the public’s preferences. Liberal Norms and Interventions Our central aim in this paper is to identify the precise function of liberal norms in theories of the democratic peace, and the extent to which these norms are followed when compliance is unobserved by others. Prior work suggests that leaders make decisions about whether to choose covert or overt operations based on their assessments of the public’s likely reaction (Kim 2002; O’Rourke 2018; Gibbs 1995). If leaders conduct covert operations against democracies to try to escape public opprobrium, as proponents of the normative democratic peace theory argue, would they be correct in this assessment? Or, would leaders be right to anticipate that the public is amenable to covert operations against democracies? More generally, how and when do liberal norms shape opinions about military intervention? 240 Journal of Conflict Resolution 67(2-3) Normative Concerns One possibility is that citizens are motivated almost entirely by institutionalized normative concerns that guide their behavior across situations. Normative accounts of the democratic peace hold that the internalization of democratic norms, such as respect for individual freedoms and non-violent conflict resolution with like-minded countries, reduces democratic publics’ willingness to support military operations against fellow liberal democracies. Citizens in democracies may believe that disputes should be handled peacefully, and that citizens in other democracies believe this too, and thus do not support war against fellow democratic regimes. Citizens in democracies may also have shared interests, and therefore think that their disputes can and should be resolved peacefully (Russett and Oneal 2001). Similarly, these dynamics could also be driven by concerns about rights and values. For instance, a shared commitment to liberal norms may make citizens favor more peaceful conflict resolution with other liberal states. Or, citizens may believe that it is morally repugnant to attack fellow democracies or liberal societies. Doing so could undermine democratic values; for example, if the leader of another country were democratically elected, overthrowing that leader would represent an affront to liberal democratic principles. Especially if those societies respect human rights, such an intervention could undermine rights and should not be favored by the democratic public (Donnelly 1995). Liberal norms may also play a role in determining support for covert versus overt operations, for two reasons. First, if liberal norms are both institutionalized and in- ternalized, the level of public support for military operations against other liberal democracies should be low regardless of whether the international community can observe compliance with them. Because citizens would feel that maintaining peace with other liberal democracies is the right thing to do, the visibility of the operation to outside actors would not make them feel otherwise. Next, the preference for the liberal norm of transparency may influence citizens’ views. Transparency is fundamental to democracy, as a clear and open political system along with free speech and press underpin liberal democratic societies (Dahl 1991). Some have argued that transparency allows democracies to ascertain other democ- racies’ types and therefore avoid fighting each other (De Mesquita and Lalman 1992), contributing to the democratic peace. Citizens in a liberal democracy might therefore oppose the covert use of force due to its secretive and non-democratic nature, and their belief that liberal democracies should behave in a transparent manner with other liberal democracies. Covert operations may be seen as corrupt, and indeed, covert action is often presumed to be illegal simply because of its secretive nature (Reisman and Baker 1992). Thus, this logic expects citizens to oppose both covert and overt military in- terventions against other liberal democracies, and to maintain more negative assess- ments of covert operations against democracies than against dictatorships. Another possible pathway linking norms regarding the use of force against liberal democracies to support for such operations is the fear – real or perceived – that publicly Carnegie et al. 241 violating a shared norm could induce a hypocrisy cost. Recent work shows that the public values the international community’s opinion and cares about their state’s reputation in many settings (Brutger and Kertzer 2018), especially for compliance with international norms and laws (Tomz 2008). Public opinion in liberal democracies might therefore be shaped by expectations about what others think. In this account, the norm of not using military force against liberal democracies would be upheld in visible arenas because the state could be sanctioned otherwise. However, when the use of force is moved into the covert realm, violators can no longer “be named and shamed” for breaking the norm (O’Rourke 2018; Poznansky 2020, 41-2). Citizens of a liberal democracy thus might favor an intervention against another liberal democracy, but fear allegations of applying a double standard by promoting liberal democracies around the world, yet attacking those same countries once they pose a threat. As a result, citizens in such democracies may seek to conduct these missions in secret. Indeed, as Poznansky (2020) shows, concerns about hypocrisy costs have led US decision-makers during the Cold War and beyond to conduct military interventions covertly. Citizens guided by this logic should thus be against attacking liberal democracies overtly, but should be more likely to support such an operation if it is conducted in secret.

#### Extinction from great power war.

Buhl ’21 [Marie; July 28; Fellow at Effective Altruism; Rethink Priorities, “Towards a Longtermist Framework for Evaluating Democracy-Related Interventions,” <https://rethinkpriorities.org/publications/towards-a-longtermist-framework-for-evaluating-democracy-related-interventions>]

2.1 Reducing great power conflict

What is this potential intermediate goal?

Reducing the probability of conflict between major powers - e.g., China and the USA.

What are some ways great power conflict might affect the long-term future?

Existential risk reduction and trajectory change: Great power conflict is often seen as an existential risk factor. That is, it increases the probability of existential catastrophes indirectly rather than directly. This operates through multiple mechanisms - for instance, great power conflict might increase the probability of an AI arms race, make nuclear war more likely, or make global co-operation on various existential risks harder[9]. Thus, reducing the likelihood of great power conflict could reduce existential risk. Additionally, conflict between great powers could alter the global hegemony, changing humanity's long-run trajectory. Whether this is positive or negative depends on the particular trajectory change.

What are some ways democracy might affect great power conflict?

Democracies have historically engaged in war less often than non-democracies. This may be mere correlation (e.g., it may be confounded by GDP). But proponents of democratic peace theory argue that the correlation is in fact causal. Below, we briefly overview some possible, speculative ways in which various features of liberal democracy might indeed reduce the likelihood of war.

Competitive democracy, responsiveness, participation and accuracy: Leaders in countries high in these features must follow the demands of voters more closely, in order to be re-elected. That increases the influence of public opinion on policy decisions, such as in decisions on conflict. Therefore, if voters are more averse to war than leaders are, increasing competitive democracy, responsiveness, participation, and accuracy would, all else equal, make war (including great power conflict) less likely. Conversely, if voters are more inclined towards war than leaders are, increasing these features would, all else being equal, make war more likely. Whilst we tentatively believe that voters are more aversive to war than leaders are, there are likely also other causal mechanisms taking place[10]. Thus, we only weakly suggest that increasing these features is positive for reducing great power conflict.

Liberalism: Democratic peace theory and liberal peace theory are used somewhat interchangeably. Perhaps what really makes democracies less likely to go to war is their liberal nature, rather than anything about voting in particular. Specifically, norms around resolving differences through deliberation, pluralism, and a respect for alternative viewpoints may prevent disagreement escalating to violence. Such norms could ultimately make war and great power conflict less likely.

Inclusion: Countries low in inclusion will likely focus primarily on their own country's citizens (the decision-making group) before others (the wider affected group). This would increase nationalistic sentiment. In contrast, highly inclusive societies are likely to be more conducive to a cosmopolitan mindset. Nationalistic countries would also be more likely to go to war with other countries, compared to cosmopolitan societies. Thus, increasing inclusion will probably decrease the chance of great power conflict.

## DA---Primacy

### 1NC---DA---Primacy

#### Light-footprint operations insulate planners from domestic risks of intervention and preserve resources to balance against China.

Biegon & Watts ’22 – [Rubrick Biegon, Lecturer in International Relations in the School of Politics and IR at the University of Kent & Tom F. A. Watts (2022) Remote Warfare and the Retooling of American Primacy, Geopolitics, 27:3, 948-971, DOI: 10.1080/14650045.2020.1850442] TDI

For the ORG, remote warfare ‘describes approaches to combat that do not require the deployment of large numbers of your own ground troops’ (Knowles and Watson 2018a, 2). Despite some qualifications (see Knowles and Watson 2018a, 2–3), this definition lacks precision and fails to fully capture the logics underpinning the use of remote warfare. Nevertheless, in the emerging policy debates on remote warfare, the ORG helped illuminate the ways in which Western policymakers could use various modalities of remote intervention to generate political distance in security management practices. Echoing a distinction central to Patrick Porter’s (2015) research on the importance of distance in international security, ORG researchers noted that ‘the “remote” in “remote warfare” speaks more to strategic than physical distance’ (Knowles and Watson 2018a, 3). Although remote technology can increase the physical distance between an intervening agent and the site of the use of force, it does not, echoing Porter, ‘necessarily shrink strategic space, the ability to project power across the earth affordably against resistance’ (2015, 8). Strategic space is a contested arena in which the agency of the intervening state clashes with the resistance of the actor targeted for the use of force. It is measured not only in terms of costs in blood, treasure, and diplomatic fallout, but ‘the political will to incur those costs’ (Porter 2015, 8–9). By increasing the physical distance between American ground forces and the spaces and places of their intervention, remote warfare can compress strategic distance by reducing the costs involved with overseas intervention. Often cloaked in secrecy, these ‘light-footprint’ operations help insulate defence planners from some of the domestic risks of intervention, including with respect to oversight and public debate (Knowles and Watson 2018a, 20–3, 2018b). This contributes to a ‘paradox’, as argued by Demmers and Gould (2020) – with military intervention becoming more remote and ‘sanitised’, ostensibly, ‘it becomes uncared for, and even ceases to be defined as war’. Synthesising the two existing pockets of remote warfare literature, we offer a novel definition of remote warfare, as a strategy of security management combining multiple ‘remote’ modalities of military intervention to generate physical and political forms of distance between an intervening agent and the sites(s) of the use of force. When taken together, the words ‘remote’ and ‘warfare’ make a significant contribution to the analytical terrain, which is greater than allusions to remote-controlled drones and other constitutive tools. The noun ‘warfare’ is qualified by the adjective ‘remote’ precisely to imply that, for its architects, the violence of war-fighting (and its sociopolitical impact) is to be geographically and politically ‘distanced’ from the state that said planners are nominally responsible for defending (Krieg and Rickli 2019). This spatial dimension is crucial in strategic terms, even if it is only implied in official discourse. Remote warfare is about maintaining and, where possible, extending practices of coercive statecraft, providing new pathways for US military interventionism. The tools of remote warfare are embedded in a strategic logic that rests on geopolitical premises – that coercive violence can be ‘distanced’ so as to minimise the negative implications of continued interventionism, both to facilitate coercive statecraft and sustain the United States’ dominant power-position in international politics. Our focus on the strategic drivers of remote warfare positions our understanding of the phenomenon within the wider debate, offering a critical view that distinguishes our analysis from existing accounts of the geopolitics of American power. In the critical tradition initiated by Ó Tuathail and Agnew, geopolitics is ‘the study of the spatialization of international politics by core powers and hegemonic states’ (1992, 192). As emphasised by Dalby, at the core of critical geopolitics is the ‘necessity to engage with the spatial framing of politics and the geographical tropes used in security, defence and foreign policy thinking’ (2008, 415). This subsequently engenders a close consideration of strategy, which is, among other things, an attempt to order geographies of power for the benefit of the dominant actor (see for example, Agnew 2005; Dalby 2007, 2009). As we can now examine, recent scholarship on the geopolitics of American power has tended to gloss over the intentionality of the US qua national actor, often obscuring the planning that has gone into the use of remote modalities of intervention. The scholarship on the phenomenon of remote warfare encompasses a variety of competing and adjacent terms, with particular emphasis on networks (Niva 2013), light-footprints (Goldsmith and Waxman 2016), shadows (Waldman 2018, 182, 199), grey zones (Gregory 2011a, 241–2), hybrids (Hoffman 2009) and assemblages (Demmers and Gould 2018; Moore and Walker 2016). Demmers and Gould, for instance, have identified a trend towards ‘flexible, open-ended, “pop-up” military interventions, supported by remote technology and reliant on local partnerships and private contractors, through which (coalitions of) parties aim to promote and protect interest’. What they term ‘liquid warfare’ is ‘temporally open-ended and event-ful, as well as spatially dispersed and mobile’ (Demmers and Gould 2018, 366). The remoteness that constitutes this newfound fluidity is possible because of advancements in satellites, cyber, robotics and information technology more broadly. The fluidity of the approach speaks to its flexibility for those seeking new ways of intervening in foreign conflicts, whether for purposes of counterterrorism or geopolitical manoeuvring, at a time when Western publics are less willing to countenance this type of interventionist policy. The notion of liquidity, as with the emphasis on networks, can obscure the centrality of American agency to this story. The technologies that facilitate remote warfare were developed to realise a geostrategic vision of international politics in which Washington continues to police the periphery while preserving its power resources vis-à-vis strategic competitors like China.

#### Covert presence is key to primacy. Fewer resources, economic costs, and more third-party collaboration. Covert operations are perceived positively by the public and adversaries.

**Kertzer 23** - Carnegie, A., Kertzer, J. D., & Yarhi-Milo, Carnegie is from the Department of Political Science, Columbia University, Kertzer is from the Harvard University, Cambridge, and Milo is from the Department of Political Science, Columbia University, New York. (2023). Democratic Peace and Covert Military Force: An Experimental Test. Journal of Conflict Resolution, 67(2–3), 235–265. https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027221116289

While the two mechanisms above focus on the role of norms in affecting public support for military missions against liberal democracies, citizens’ preferences over the nature of the operation could also be shaped by instrumental calculations. These might include concerns about the operation’s human and financial costs, the risk of retaliation, and the likelihood of its success (Reisman and Baker 1992, 14). We consider each in turn.

First, human and financial costs could shape the public’s views of military operations, as citizens’ support for war — and the incumbents responsible — plummets as battlefield fatalities mount (Mueller 1973; Eichenberg, Stoll, and Lebo 2006; Karol and Miguel 2007; Kertzer 2016) and the financial cost of the war increases. Both the total amount of money spent (Geys 2010) and the type of financial burden (Flores-Macías and Kreps 2016) negatively impact public opinion, particularly due to extensive media attention. These factors are especially important for our purposes because both fighting and losing wars are thought to be costlier for democracies (De Mesquita et al. 1999), which mobilize more resources from their economies (Lake 1992) and are thus more selective about the wars they fight (Reiter and Stam 2002). Additionally, covert operations may demand fewer resources since politicians have incentives to minimize personnel and equipment to avoid the operation’s detection, and may result in fewer casualties (O’Rourke 2018).11 The more soldiers die in war, the greater the likelihood that the operation will be discovered. Finally, covert conduct may decrease the post-intervention military and economic costs associated with governing the target country, as the covert nature of the operation allows them to avoid those responsibilities (O’Rourke 2018). Therefore, the public may believe that covert operations are less costly and so be more willing to engage in covert warfare against other democracies.

A second factor that might influence citizens’ views regarding military operations is the operations’ likely impact on retaliation, which is shaped by both regime type and the operation’s level of secrecy. The democratic peace literature expects that citizens of liberal democracies view other democracies as less threatening than non-democratic regimes because these citizens share their liberal norms and thus will not attack them. Publics in democracies are more difficult to mobilize and thus more effectively restrain their leaders, minimizing the danger of retaliation (Owen 2000). Moreover, whether an operation is conducted secretly could influence the perceived threat of retaliation since acting covertly provides plausible deniability to an aggressor, obscuring its identity. Many covert operations involve collaborations with third-parties that are well positioned to take the blame if the operation fails, thereby further decreasing the target’s ability to gauge who orchestrated the operation.12 Indeed, reviews of the decision-making processes that took place prior to American covert operations claim that fear of retaliation was a significant factor shaping U.S. leaders’ choices to act covertly (O’Rourke 2018; Prados 2011). Secrecy may thus reduce the perceived threat of retaliation regardless of whether the target is a democracy or a dictatorship.

Third, the public may show stronger support for successful operations (Feaver, Gelpi, and Reifler 2005), and regime type and the level of transparency both influence the likelihood of success. The same factors that make wars less costly for democracies, described previously, also lead democracies to win more wars (O’Rourke 2018). Clandestine wars in particular tend to be more successful against liberal democracies since leaders in attacked liberal democracies are accountable to larger public selectorates and may thus be compelled to fight harder to remain in office. Liberal democracies can thus marshal greater resources to counter the operations, devoting more effort to the mission. A covert operation, by contrast, can challenge the regime without detection, allowing leaders to reach a bargain without incurring audience costs (O’Rourke 2018). Moreover, even if covert operations fail at higher rates than overt operations (O’Rourke 2018, 53), citizens may not know or believe this to be true. If citizens care primarily about the efficacy of the operation, and believe that covert operations are more likely to be successful, we should observe that conducting an operation in a covert manner increases the U.S. public’s support for the mission against liberal democracies.

Untangling these mechanisms is critical for understanding leaders’ decision calculus. If the normative mechanism is operative, and leaders correctly anticipate this, they may attack democracies covertly to avoid public opprobrium. However, if hypocrisy costs guide public opinion, and leaders know this, then leaders may opt to attack democracies in secret in line with the public’s preferences. If instrumental factors govern public opinion, such that the public believes that covert operations are less costly, less likely to result in retaliation, or more successful, leaders may not rely on public opinion in deciding whether to use secrecy. Since leaders have more information than the public, they may assess a given potential operation on these dimensions and select their actions accordingly since they may understand that ultimately the public cares about the end result.

#### Collapse of unipolarity causes extinction via transition wars.

Michael Beckley 18. Professor of political science at Tufts. *Unrivaled: Why America Will Remain the World’s Sole Superpower*. Cornell University Press.

The story of world politics is often told as a game of thrones in which a rotating cast of great powers battles for top-dog status. According to researchers led by Graham Allison at Harvard, there have been sixteen cases in the past ﬁve hundred years when a rising power challenged a ruling power. 3 Twelve of these cases ended in carnage. One can quibble with Allison’s case selection, but the basic pattern is clear: hegemonic rivalry has sparked a catastrophic war every forty years on average for the past half millennium.

The emergence of unipolarity in 1991 has put this cycle of hegemonic competition on hold. Obviously wars and security competition still occur in today’s unipolar world—in fact, as I explain later, unipolarity has made certain types of asymmetric conﬂict more likely—but none of these conﬂicts have the global scope or generational length of a hegemonic rivalry.

To appreciate this point, just consider the Cold War—one of the four “peaceful” cases of hegemonic rivalry identiﬁed by Allison’s study. Although the two superpowers never went to war, they divided the world into rival camps, waged proxy wars that killed millions of people, and pushed each other to the brink of nuclear Armageddon. For forty-ﬁve years, World War III and human extinction were nontrivial possibilities.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, by contrast, the United States has not faced a hegemonic rival, and the world, though far from perfect, has been more peaceful and prosperous than ever before.

Just look at the numbers. From 1400 to 1991, the rate of war deaths worldwide hovered between 5 and 10 deaths per 100,000 people and spiked to 200 deaths per 100,000 during major wars. 4 After 1991, however, war death rates dropped to 0.5 deaths per 100,000 people and have stayed there ever since. Interstate wars have disappeared almost entirely, and the number of civil wars has declined by more than 30 percent. 5 Meanwhile, the global economy has quadrupled in size, creating more wealth between 1991 and 2018 than in all prior human history combined. 6

What explains this unprecedented outbreak of peace and prosperity? Some scholars attribute it to advances in communications technology, from the printing press to the telegraph to the Internet, which supposedly spread empathy around the globe and caused entire nations to place a higher value on human life. 7

Such explanations are appealing, because they play on our natural desire to believe in human progress, but are they convincing? Did humans suddenly become 10 to 20 times less violent and cruel in 1991? Are we orders of magnitude more noble and kind than our grandparents? Has social media made us more empathetic? Of course not, which is why the dramatic decline in warfare after 1991 is better explained by geopolitics than sociology. 8

The collapse of the Soviet Union not only ended the Cold War and related proxy ﬁghting, it also opened up large swathes of the world to democracy, international commerce, and peacekeeping forces—all of which surged after 1991 and further dampened conﬂict. 9 Faced with overwhelming U.S. economic and military might, most countries have decided to work within the American-led liberal order rather than ﬁght to overturn it. 10 As of 2018, nearly seventy countries have joined the U.S. alliance network—a Kantian community in which war is unthinkable—and even the two main challengers to this community, China and Russia, begrudgingly participate in the institutions of the liberal order (e.g., the UN, the WTO, the IMF, World Bank, and the G-20), engage in commerce with the United States and its allies, and contribute to international peacekeeping missions. 11 History may not have ended in 1991, but it clearly changed in profound ways—and mostly for the better.

#### Independently, nuclear war. Escalation control and limiting the risk of large-scale wars serve as the primary motivations for covert operations.

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I argue that escalation control and a shared desire to limit war can motivate covert intervention up front, collusion by major powers that detect it, and official non-acknowledgment if it is widely exposed. Since World War I, large-scale escalation of war has become unacceptably costly, yet leader control of the escalation process has been simultaneously weakened. While a range of factors influence the escalation potential for war, my theory focuses on two specific escalation-control problems: constraints created by domestic hawks and misunderstandings among adversaries about the value of limited war. My theory claims that backstaging military intervention allows rival leaders to insulate themselves and one another from domestic hawkish constraints. In addition, embracing the backstage communicates shared interest in keeping war limited. This basic relationship provides a unifying logic for the initial decision to intervene covertly, a detector’s decision to collude after detection, and an intervener’s continuing nonacknowledgment of a widely exposed intervention. THE CHALLENGE OF ESCALATION CONTROL In general, war escalation is the expansion in scale or scope of violence. What I refer to as “large-scale escalation” is when a local conflict expands to a regional or global level with at least one major power’s participation. Industrialized warfare is ruinous to cautious and reckless states alike. As I develop in chapter 3, World War I made clear that mechanized warfare using industrial-era innovations produced astounding levels of violence. The advent of nuclear weaponry only exacerbated this. As a result, leaders and governments seek to control the pathways to large-scale escalation. Cautious governments hoping to preserve the status quo will tend to see entanglement in a regional or global conflict as gravely damaging. Yet even risk-acceptant states with revisionist goals will find escalation dangerous. The current debate about China and the United States demonstrates this dynamic. Even if China is risk acceptant and revisionist in East Asia, a regional war involving Japan, Korea, and/or the United States could inflict fatal damage on the Communist Party’s hold on power, dislocate the Chinese economy, and risk a military humiliation harmful to long-term security. Even if more modest forms of “escalation” are tolerable or even useful, large-scale escalation is strategically counterproductive for major powers in the modern era. Techniques for building and maintaining control over the escalation process are therefore appealing. In Clausewitzian terms, war tends toward escalation but can be limited if leaders can impose political purpose.17 Two threats to control are especially relevant. First, domestic politics can undermine escalation control. When one or both sides of a rivalry face strong nationalist pressure, leaders can have little choice but to push forward a tit-for-tat escalation process. While dovish and hawkish sentiment varies, managing hawkish pressure is an especially pressing problem during crises in which a major power has interests. Literatures on domestic rally-roundthe-flag effects, nationalism and hypernationalism, audience costs, and the nature of limited war all point to the way mobilization of elites and masses can make restraint during a crisis or war very costly.18 Moreover, this holds across regime type. Elite or mass criticism in a single-party authoritarian regime can constrain a head of state’s options, especially during an ongoing crisis.19 The second escalation-control problem is between heads of state. It is a product of the complexity of communicating under anarchy, specifically regarding interest in limited war. As Schelling first developed, adversaries seeking to compete while bounding conflict face numerous challenges in accurately and intelligibly expressing their goals.20 This applies to both resolve and restraint. Most important is the temptation to see an adversary in pessimistic terms, especially when they transgress limits during a war. Accurately understanding one another, however, is essential to controlling escalation because limited war takes two to tango.21 Escalation control requires identifying “salient thresholds,” such as political borders, which allow both sides to show that they are able and willing to localize war.22 Either side failing to indicate a degree of resolve and restraint can lead to misunderstanding that fuels tit-for-tat escalation. This book posits that how states intervene and how detectors react affect these two escalation problems. In general, each intervention by an outside power raises questions about the continued viability of limits. Nonintervention by outside powers is itself one of the “salient thresholds” that can bound war. Not all interventions are alike, however. An intervention that is a public spectacle (i.e., overt) tends to exacerbate these two escalation control problems; hawkish domestic constraints become sharper and an adversary tends to see a provocation and infer the absence of restraint. Placing an intervention on the backstage, however, does the opposite, preserving escalation control. On the one hand, covertly crossing the salient threshold of foreign entry reduces the inflammation of domestic hawkish constraints in responding states. Such hawks may not be aware of the entry and will be less able to mobilize pressure to escalate. The absence of official acknowledgment, moreover, can reduce the degree to which an intervention is seen as a provocation. On the other hand, covertness communicates a balanced message. Using a low profile provides a legible and credible indicator of both resolve and restraint. Yet a covert intervention is still an intervention. It also shows an adversary that the intervener is serious about its interests and will give observable (to the adversary) assistance to a local client. This blend of moderate resolve and moderate restraint can be ideally suited to producing the shared understanding that is key to controlling escalation and limiting war.23

## CP---Advantage

### 1NC---CP---Oversight

#### The United States ought to

#### ---provide committees more staffing flexibility

#### ---provide access to high-quality technical expertise

#### ---require conferences to draft agreements at least three days before conference agreement is complete

#### That solves congressional oversight and avoids.

Guenov 18 [Tressa Guenov & Tommy Ross 18. Guenov served most recently as Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs and was a professional staff member on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence; Ross served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Security Cooperation at the Pentagon and was the senior defense and intelligence adviser to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. 3-9-2018. "At a Crossroads, Part I: How Congress Can Find Its Way Back to Effective Defense Oversight." War on the Rocks. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/03/at-a-crossroads-part-i-how-congress-can-find-its-way-back-to-effective-defense-oversight/>] TDI

Congress must begin to resource its defense committees sufficiently — or at least provide committees more staffing flexibility to be able to ramp up as needed. This can be done for relatively little money. To put it in perspective, congressional negotiators just reached a deal to increase the Defense Department’s 2018 budget by $80 billion; just 1 percent of this increase would fund the operations of both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees for nearly three years. In concert with this agreement to lift budgetary caps, Congress should ensure that some additional funds are devoted to bolstering staff across its own committees and creating more flexibility to recruit, compensate, and retain staff according to oversight requirements. In addition, defense committees should examine how to get more out of fellowship programs that bring executive branch and non-governmental experts to Congress for short-duration appointments. Such programs could be used to substantially enhance committees’ technical expertise, but rarely are fully utilized. Committees also need access to high-quality, nonpartisan technical expertise to support their examination of increasingly complex acquisitions. Congress once maintained an independent technical support arm exactly for such purposes; It would do well to reestablish this critical function. If planned carefully, the revived technical support arm could also help mitigate staff size, gaps in subject-matter expertise, and retention challenges. Open the Doors The defense committees also continue to fall short on another key oversight element: transparency. Overseers must weigh the legitimately sensitive and classified information that is part of their business with the democratic imperative to keep citizens informed of, and consenting to, defense policy decisions. Transparency is essential to avoiding the “embarrassing, crippling ignorance” of which Wilson warned. Yet for many years, a number of committee proceedings have been biased towards secrecy. The Senate Armed Services Committee, for example, continues to keep its marathon mark-up hearing closed to the public, ostensibly due to concerns about classification, even while its House counterpart and the defense appropriation committee hold open mark-ups. With public concerns about the lack of government transparency heightened and the public’s confidence in Congress at all-time lows, opening the Senate markup would be a small but important signal on the integrity of the process. As Sen. Claire McCaskill, who has moved for years to open these mark-ups to the public, has argued, “The public deserves to be able to witness, understand and scrutinize the positions being advocated and the decisions being made by their elected leaders regarding the over half a trillion dollar defense budget.” Far more important — and far more opaque — than mark-ups, however, is the conference process, where House and Senate versions of the defense authorization bill are reconciled into a final conference report. Virtually the entire conference agreement is negotiated privately between staffs of the committee leaders in each chamber. Committee members — including the actual conferees, whose role is almost entirely symbolic — often are left ignorant of how key issues have been settled until the last minute, when the completed conference agreement is delivered to them for signature. The executive branch, with a major stake in the outcomes, is largely a bystander as well. During conference, amendments passed on the House and Senate floor can be jettisoned without explanation. For example, in 2013, Sen. Dianne Feinstein gained support from two-thirds of the Senate for an amendment to the bill clarifying that American citizens could not be subject to indefinite military detention. Yet the amendment was “mysteriously stripped” from the final bill by the conference committee despite its bipartisan support, with neither a conference committee process nor a vote. In other cases, entirely new legislative concepts are invented from whole cloth and provisions that may be odious to certain committee members are jammed into the final package, without members’ input or knowledge. This obscurity is deeply problematic for democratic governance. It shields individual members from accountability for provisions in the final agreement to which they grant their consent. Moreover, the process has become so inscrutable that members of the public — and even the executive branch — have few avenues to impact outcomes. A first step to make conference negotiations more transparent would be to allow conferees to see draft agreements at least three days before the conference agreement is completed, and for conferees to be able to offer amendments to that language when the change is cosponsored by at least one conferee of the opposite chamber. This would require conferees to assert their rights against the committee leaders’ preference for the path of least resistance, since leaders are unlikely to take on a more complex conference process without a clear demand from rank-and-file members.

## ADV---Stability

### 1NC---AT: Forever Wars

#### No forever wars. Biden is shifting to restraint now.

**Silverman 21** - Jacob Silverman is a contributing editor at The New Republic and the author of Terms of Service: Social Media and the Price of Constant Connection." Does Biden Want Less War or Just War With More Rules?, 3-5-2021 ," New Republic, <https://newrepublic.com/article/161614/biden-aumf-close-gitmo-war-powers>

A clandestine airstrike here, a little diplomacy there, a wink and a nudge to America’s favorite Saudi failson dictator, and some paeans to democratic accountability at home—President Joe Biden’s foreign policy is taking shape. If you believe the soothing platitudes emanating from the new administration, this will be a restrained, rule-bound presidency overseen by steady-handed bureaucrats who will wind down our “forever wars”—a term Biden himself has deployed—and try to avoid new conflicts.

This week, The New York Times reported that Biden’s team was reviewing the rules governing secret drone strikes and commando raids that were developed during the Obama administration, and loosened under Trump’s presidency. That same day, Senators Tim Kaine and Todd Young introduced a bipartisan bill to repeal the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force—which authorized the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq—and another that was passed before the first Gulf War in 1991. Two days later, as if in response, Politico published a statement from Biden’s press secretary Jen Psaki promising to repeal the Iraq AUMF and the post-9/11 AUMF that has helped provide legal ballast to two decades of global warfare. According to Psaki, Biden wants to “ensure that the authorizations for the use of military force currently on the books are replaced with a narrow and specific framework that will ensure we can protect Americans from terrorist threats while ending the forever wars.” For good measure, the administration will re-embark on the forever quest to perhaps, one day soon, close the U.S. military prison at Guantánamo Bay.

In a sign that the administration is nothing if not a vertically integrated political messaging operation, Secretary of State Tony Blinken took a break from denouncing investigations into Israeli apartheid this week to promise that the United States is done with regime change. “We will not promote democracy through costly military interventions or attempting to overthrow authoritarian regimes by force,” said Blinken. “We have tried these tactics in the past. However well intentioned, they have not worked.”

#### Endless wars are intellectual laziness.

**Wood 20** - Dakota Wood who served America for two decades in the U.S. Marine Corps, is the Senior Research Fellow for Defense Programs., 11-2-2020, "The Myth of Endless Wars," Heritage Foundation, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/the-myth-endless-wars>

Endless war” and “forever wars” are both terms that are casually used to characterize U.S. military operations abroad. These characterizations appeal strongly to **audiences inclined to oppose military operations, but the use of these expressions imply intellectual laziness**. People who use them typically toss them out without addressing either why the military is engaged in the action or the potential consequences of ending the operation prematurely. To be sure, overseas operations that continue for years warrant regular scrutiny. After all, there should be a compelling reason Americans are put into harm’s way. Moreover, the public that is paying for those operations has a right to know whether their taxes are being effectively used toward a worthwhile purpose. These days, the term “endless wars” is being employed more as political sloganeering than as a serious critique of continued U.S. involvement in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Somalia. Yet, in every case, these countries, their circumstances, the threats to U.S. interests involved, and the larger geopolitical story that shapes policy toward each are unique. Military power can be essential to either stopping violence or preventing its imminent use. The United States has dispatched military forces to deal with numerous situations for which diplomatic solutions were not possible ever since the United States became a world power.

In the aftermath of World War II, U.S. forces remained in Germany and in Japan: first to maintain law-and-order and to help with the alleviation of suffering within the war-torn populations while the respective governments got their acts together; then to assist the re-establishment of security forces and to help rebuild the diplomatic and economic institutions that would lead to profoundly close and important relations with the U.S. In Germany, U.S. forces remained to work in concert with the West German military as the nucleus of the new North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), established to counter the expansion of the Soviet Union into Western Europe. Without a substantial U.S. military presence on the continent, the Soviets would have swept through the remaining half of Europe it did not already control at the close of World War II. In Japan, while the U.S. military was initially postured to perform a function similar to that in Germany, its presence enabled the United States to lead a multinational response to North Korea’s invasion of South Korea. Remaining in South Korea has preserved peace on the peninsula, and staying in both Japan and South Korea has enabled the United States to shape a geopolitical-economic environment that has benefitted not only the United States but all of the countries have gained much from free trade and representative governments. One can easily make the argument that keeping U.S. forces in Germany or Japan, for example, long after the end of World War II or the collapse of the Soviet Union should come to an end. After all, the original reason for stationing troops there is no longer relevant. But the world evolves; new actors rise; old players fall by the wayside; new technologies make new things possible; and economic relationships, security conditions and balances of power can change dramatically. Consequently, the reason for remaining someplace can change as conditions change. This does not invalidate or contradict the physical reality of the force in place; it just acknowledges that things change, the force that is there continues to have value but for a different purpose, and that the United States has enduring interests that must always be addressed.

Take Afghanistan. The U.S. military was deployed to the country in response to Al Qaeda’s 9/11 terror attacks on America. The operation began with a few thousand troops. The force grew to one hundred thousand in 2011 when President Barack Obama ordered a surge to defeat Taliban forces shielding Al Qaeda. Since then, force levels declined to roughly ten thousand in 2015, rose to fourteen thousand in 2018, have declined again to eighty-six hundred, and are expected to shrink once more to as few as four thousand or lower by the end of 2020. Over this period, the mission of U.S. forces changed from going after Al Qaeda to combatting Taliban forces standing in the way, to supporting the building of the Afghanistan military, to a dual-mission of advising Afghanistan forces while supporting a counter-terrorism mission. The very presence of these U.S. military forces, even as small as a few thousand out of nearly 1.4 million in the active military component, has enabled the United States to maintain awareness in a country bounded by Iran, Russia, China, and Pakistan and to help shape the strategic environment to suit U.S. interests.

Indeed, this is not some “endless war” as some claim, but a shift in U.S. military posture that accounts for changes in the security and diplomatic environments, national policy objectives, and the efforts of enemy elements and their sponsors as they pose threats to the United States and its interests. Similar situations exist in Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and elsewhere. In Iraq, U.S. forces numbering a few thousand (down from a high of 170,000 in 2007) now assist that country in dealing with the remnants of ISIS. In Syria, a few hundred troops remain, dealing with ragtag elements of ISIS and supporting Syrian freedom fighters to ensure U.S. interests are protected and that America has at least some ability to influence events. All told, only a tiny smidgeon of America’s 2.1 million active and reserve uniformed military is engaged abroad in active operations. Yet America reaps enormous benefits from having those troops on the ground.

Rather than complain about endless wars, it would be more helpful for critics of American engagement to explain how the United States would be better served absent the investment of less than 1 percent of its force in combating the country’s enemies and better enabling its partners to do so on its behalf. Unlike the sports field when an athlete suffers an injury, the world does not “take a knee” while the United States dithers about what it wants to do. The real danger to U.S. security and economic interests is not the sustained employment of relatively small forces that inform its understanding of key regions and enable the United States to shape the course of events to its favor, but the irresponsible withdrawal of such forces without considering the context and potential consequences. Further reduction of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, for instance, may be the wisest course of action if the perceived benefit is greater than the risk when all factors are taken into consideration. But that’s a different decision process than simplistically complaining about using the tools the United States has available to further its interests.

#### US military interventions promote liberal norms.

**Toft 23** - Kushi, S., & Toft, M. D. Sidita Kushi, Department of Political Science, Bridgewater State University and Toft, Fletcher School, Tufts University University, Medford, MA, USA (2023). Introducing the Military Intervention Project: A New Dataset on US Military Interventions, 1776–2019. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *67*(4), 752–779. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027221117546> TDI

Military intervention project also incorporates several factors that allow us to test liberal alternatives to realist explanations (Deudney and Ikenberry 1999). From the liberal perspective, foreign military interventions reflect international moral obligations, especially for democratic states (Lischer 2005; Walker and Pearson 2007; Herbert 2005: 30). Such liberal perspectives have become more commonplace since the end of the Cold War, advancing the stance that states — absent vital security interests — are justified and even expected to launch multilateral military interventions abroad in response to humanitarian catastrophes (Talentino 2005; Hoffmann 1996; Walzer 1977). Moreover, democratic governments are likely to export liberal values through multilateral humanitarian military interventions (Lebovic 2004; Doyle 1997; Russett 1994). With a greater focus on international institutions, liberals also view interdependence as a key factor in state behavior. Indeed, some studies show that interdependence reduces the likelihood of interstate force, especially when a large portion of states’ trading is intra-industrial (Kinne 2012; Peterson and Thies 2012). Yet in situations of trade asymmetries and export similarities, the use of force between trade partners increases (Gartzke and Westerwinter 2016; Chatagnier and Kavakli 2017).

A leading constructivist account of state behavior, Finnemore (2003) contends that neither realist nor liberal models of international relations account for observable trends of military intervention. Realism fails to explain the evolution of the full range of intervention, from unilateral debt-collecting military missions to humanitarian multilateral missions, which do not match changes in polarity or power distribution of the interstate system. Liberalism is also ill-equipped to explain how illiberal, non-democratic states tend to follow similar norms regarding intervention behavior (Finnemore 2003: 52-56). Furthermore, idealist or normative perspectives cannot account for the lack of intervention during the Rwandan genocide. Ultimately, constructivists see norms of human rights — though often co-opted and abused — encapsulated by the Responsibility to Protect as driving US military interventions in regions of internal violence (Choi and James 2016). Thus, any empirical assessment of US military interventions must also include ample human rights and institutional context (Lyon and Dolan 2007).

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### 1NC---Turn---Terrorism

#### US leaders effectively working with Libyan militias to counter terror despite ISIS and al Queda activity.

**Wilson – 23** – Wilson Center, Chartered by Congress, the Wilson Center provides nonpartisan counsel and insights on global affairs to policymakers through deep research, impartial analysis, and independent scholarship in 2019, the Wilson Center was named the #1 regional studies think tank in the world. March 28, 3-28-2023 BS, "U.S. Report: ISIS and al Qaeda Threats," Wilson Center, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/us-report-isis-and-al-qaeda-threats-0> TDI

ISIS and al Qaeda were “resilient and active” terrorist threats, according to the State Department’s Country Reports on Terrorism 2021. ISIS and its affiliates—particularly in Africa and Afghanistan—waged a “large-scale terrorism campaign” despite pressure from the United States and local partners. Al Qaeda and its branches in the Middle East and Africa were “quite capable of inflicting damage” on U.S. allies and interests. The two organizations posed the greatest terrorist threats in the Middle East along with Iran and its proxy militias.

**ISIS was unable to control territory and suffered leadership losses**. But it conducted attacks across Syria and Iraq. ISIS also sought to recruit new members and restore its territorial caliphate. More than 10,000 ISIS members were held in detention facilities in northeast Syria, and some 70,000 family members of fighters were in humanitarian camps. ISIS branches remained active in Iraq, Syria, the Arabian Peninsula, Libya, the Sinai Peninsula, Tunisia, and Yemen.

Al Qaeda and its affiliates posed an “enduring threat” to the United States and its allies. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) operated “in the seams between the various parties to Yemen’s civil war,” the State Department reported. Despite leadership losses, al Qaeda “remained a resilient adversary.” It sought to rebuild capabilities and preserve safe havens in the region, particularly in Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. The following are excerpts from the State Department’s Country Reports on Terrorism 2021.

Overview: Libyan government officials continued to work with U.S. counterparts to combat terrorism, although fractured security institutions limited direct cooperation. Following the failure of the self-styled Libyan National Army’s (LNA’s) military assault on western Libya in 2019-20, UN-facilitated talks selected a new nominally unified interim executive authority, the Government of National Unity (GNU), in March, with a mandate to lead the country to national elections, which were ultimately postponed.

Despite the political uncertainty, terrorist groups such as ISIS and al-Qa’ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) have been unable to significantly regroup. While **terrorist groups control no territory in Libya** and are significantly degraded in terms of numbers and capacity, they remain a threat. Elements of the GNU are reliable and willing U.S. counterterrorism partners, although the GNU’s capacity to eliminate terrorist safe havens, counter terrorist financing, deter the flow of FTFs, and ensure effective counterproliferation efforts across Libya’s territory was limited. The LNA countered terrorism in the East and South of the country, but its counterterrorism gains were limited to areas under its direct control.

#### Covert military presence emboldens terrorists in the Middle East.

Zenko 18[Micah, Zenko worked at [Harvard University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_University)'s [Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belfer_Center_for_Science_and_International_Affairs) from 2003 to 2008,[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micah_Zenko#cite_note-cfrmicahzenko-2) first as a research assistant to [Graham T. Allison](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graham_T._Allison) from 2003 to 2006, and a research associate on the Project on Managing The Atom from 2006 to 2008.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micah_Zenko#cite_note-belfercenterbio-3) He also worked at the [Brookings Institution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brookings_Institution), the [Congressional Research Service](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congressional_Research_Service), and [United States Department of State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Department_of_State)'s [Office of Policy Planning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Policy_Planning_Staff_%28United_States%29).[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micah_Zenko#cite_note-cfrmicahzenko-2) He was a Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations until 2017.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micah_Zenko#cite_note-cfrmicahzenko-2) He has published articles in [The Atlantic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Atlantic),[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micah_Zenko#cite_note-theatlanticmicahzenko-4) [The Guardian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Guardian),[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micah_Zenko#cite_note-theguardianmicahzenko-5) [Foreign Policy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_Policy),[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micah_Zenko#cite_note-foreignpolicymicahzenko-6) and [Business Insider](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_Insider), “US Military Policy in the Middle East An Appraisal,” Chatham House, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2018-10-18-us-military-policy-middle-east-zenko.pdf>, Oct 2018, TDI]

The Pentagon defines security cooperation as, ‘interactions with foreign security establishments to build security relationships that promote specific United States security interests, develop allied and partner nation military and security capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide U.S forces with peacetime and contingency access to allied and partner nations.’80 Until recently, it was unknown how many of these programmes existed. A 2013 RAND Corporation study estimated that the US government was engaged in 165 security cooperation programmes directed by 184 separate legislative authorities.81 A separate 2017 Government Accountability Office investigation determined that there are 194 security cooperation programmes.82 US security cooperation programmes provide support for military operations conducted by allies and partners in the region. These routine activities range from educating and training regional military officers on basic tactics, techniques and procedures, to serving as a co-combatant in Middle East wars by providing the essential support to allow regional militaries to conduct and sustain high-intensity combat operations.83 These security cooperation programmes demonstrate the breadth of capacity- building and partnership-enhancing activities that are undertaken all the time. In the absence of such programmes and the clear benefit that they provide to regional governments, US military access to these territories would be severely constrained. For 2017 over 75,000 students from 154 countries participated in some training activities... including training in tactical combat skills, English-language instruction, civil–military relations, maritime security, and the law of armed conflict and human right. Over several decades, these programmes include extensive US military training programmes with Middle East countries. The State Department publishes a congressionally-mandated report every two years detailing the ongoing and planned training for foreign militaries. This includes training in tactical combat skills, English-language instruction, civil–military relations, maritime security, and the law of armed conflict and human rights. For 2017, the last year for which there are comprehensive data, over 75,000 students from 154 countries participated in some training activities.84 For the Middle East countries covered in this paper, the 9,007 officers shown in Figure 3 received US military training. 80 Department of Defense (2016), ‘DoD Directive 5132.03: DoD Policy and Responsibilities Relating to Security Cooperation’, 29 December 2016, https://open.defense.gov/portals/23/Documents/foreignasst/DoDD\_513203\_on\_Security\_Cooperation.pdf (accessed 23 Aug. 2018). 81 Moroney, J. D. P., Thaler, D. E. and Hagler J. (2013), ‘Security Cooperation Database’, Appendix A, in Review of Security Cooperation Mechanisms Combatant Commands Utilize to Build Partner Capacity, Washington, D.C.: Rand Corporation, 2013. 82 US Government Accountability Office (2017), ‘Building Partner Capacity: Inventory of Department of Defense Security Cooperation and Department of State Security Assistance Efforts’, 24 March 2017, https://www.gao.gov/assets/690/683682.pdf (accessed 23 Aug. 2018). 83 Undoubtedly, additional security cooperation initiatives are never reported, but have a material impact on shaping options and outcomes in the region. For example, in March 2003, 18 months before the Iraq War began, every time CENTCOM conducted a military exercise in the region, it would send in more troops than were required, and then leave them behind to support the regime change effort. See, DeLong, M. (2007), A General Speaks Out: The Truth About the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, St. Paul, MN: MBI Publishing, p. 71. 84 US State Department and US Department of Defense (2018), Foreign Military Training Report: Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017, Joint Report to Congress, Volume 1, https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/275295.pdf (accessed 24 Sep. 2018). 21 | Chatham House US Military Policy in the Middle East: An Appraisal Figure 3: Numbers of officers receiving US training, 2017 5,000 4,500 4,000 3,500 3,000 2,500 2,000 1,500 1,000 500 0 Source: US State Department and US Department of Defense (2018), Foreign Military Training Report: Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017, Joint Report to Congress, Volume 1, 2018. In addition to these military-to-military training and education programmes, the US provides a range of further security cooperation support for Middle East militaries that conduct their own combat operations. For example, successive administrations have provided extensive operational support to Israel during several of its recent military campaigns. Such as when, five days into its 34-day war against Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006, the Israeli Air Force ran out of precision-guided munitions, the Bush administration approved an expedited resupply of those bombs, as well as 5,000-pound bunker buster bombs, anti-armour missiles and jet fuel.85 In a further example, since 2007, the US and Turkey have cooperated in the city of Ankara, which processes US-supplied overhead surveillance and intelligence analysis that is used for Turkish airstrikes against forces associated with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) – a State Department-designated foreign terrorist organization – located in northern Iraq. Similarly, at Al Dhafra Air Base, US and Emirati military personnel staff a joint planning cell where the US shares targeting and intelligence information that the UAE uses in bombing operations against ISIS.86 The decisions by the Obama and Trump administrations, since March 2015, to back Saudi-led bombing campaigns against suspected Houthi fighters in Yemen have been far more consequential. This support has included in-air refuelling, combat search and rescue for downed pilots, and intelligence analysis (including at one time up to 45 analysts) to assist in the development and refinement of targets. Moreover, US defence contractors provide much of the training, advice and logistical assistance that allows the Royal Saudi air, naval and land forces to operate. One representative example is S&K Aerospace, which, in September 2017, was awarded a six- year contract worth $560 million to provide logistical support for the Saudi Air Force fleet 85 Cloud, D. S. and Cooper, H. (2006), ‘U.S. Speeds up Bomb Delivery for the Israelis’, New York Times, 22 July 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/22/world/middleeast/22military.html (accessed 23 Aug. 2018); Cloud, D. S. (2006), ‘Israel Asks U.S. to Ship Rockets with a Wide Blast’, New York Times, 11 August 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/11/world/middleeast/11military. html?rref=collection%2Fbyline%2Fdavid-s.-cloud&action=click&contentCollection=undefined&region=stream&module=stream\_ unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=202&pgtype=collection (accessed 23 Aug. 2018). 86 Chandrasekaran (2014), ‘In the UAE, the United States has a Quiet, Potent Ally Nicknamed “Little Sparta”’. Lebanon Saudi Arabia UAE Kuwait Jordan Qatar Egypt Iraq Israel Oman Bahrain Yemen Iran Syria Turkey 22 | Chatham House US Military Policy in the Middle East: An Appraisal of F-15Es, the workhorse of the kingdom’s strikes in Yemen.87 The bombing campaign in Yemen has been unusual for contemporary conflicts employing advanced weaponry for its relatively indiscriminate nature and high numbers of civilian casualties.88 Finally, the most expensive, lethal and politically consequential component of US security cooperation with the Middle East is exports of weapons and munitions. US arms export policy has remained consistent over the past three decades and can essentially be defined as: support the defence of allies and partners; enhance regional security; assure the interoperability between the US military and partners; and provide high-paying jobs for American workers – US aerospace and defence exports support more than 1.4 million jobs.89 In April 2018, the Trump administration announced a series of executive orders and initiatives to streamline the interagency review process, push weapons sales and actively promote the sale of armed drones (overturning an Obama administration policy).90 President Trump also reversed Obama’s suspension of attack aircraft sales to Bahrain and sales of precision- guided munitions to Saudi Arabia. Subsequently, the first year of Trump’s presidency saw an 8 per cent year-on-year increase in the total value of US weapons sold worldwide in 2017 – rising from $76 billion to $82 billion – with the Middle East once again the top regional recipient.91 There are several reliable data sources for tracking weapons sales, including from non-profits, such as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), in addition to government sources such as the State Department and the Congressional Research Service.92 Though their estimates differ slightly, by every measure imaginable, for the past two decades the US has been the largest weapons exporter to the Middle East and the wider world. Indeed, for the period between 2013 and 2017, 49 per cent of all global US weapons exports by value were shipped to Middle East countries.93 In 2017, the US sold $52 billion worth of weapons to the region, far ahead of suppliers in Western Europe, Russia or China.94 The majority of those sales went to Saudi Arabia, a country that has ramped up its defence spending over the past decade – even surpassing Russia to be the third highest global defence spender in 2016. US Military Policy in the Middle East: An Appraisal From 2000–09, the US agreed to $17.3 billion in weapons sales to Saudi Arabia. Since the start of 2010, sales to Saudi Arabia have reached $136 billion.95 Table 1: Military sales over time – US weapons exports to Middle East (in millions) Country 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 Bahrain 2 Iraq 281 Israel 663 Jordan 32 Kuwait – Lebanon – Oman 71 Qatar – Saudi Arabia 248 Syria rebels\* – Turkey 49 UAE 677 – 68 – – 60 311 343 397 340 255 134 41 59 107 65 15 6 24 38 39 1 37 36 22 52 16 10 – 31 21 2 2 – 38 35 280 – 150 280 – 244 358 397 394 607 – – – – – 21 11 333 1,009 363 394 153 863 923 1,063 – 15 285 791 121 252 53 58 681 311 5 36 468 – – 385 1,411 1,759 – – 1,109 320 542 814 – 11 – 4 898 506 529 515 81 127 165 55 27 56 127 87 595 496 1,796 3,425 – 1 201 94 779 499 – – Yemen 5 – – 12 – 4 Iran –––––––––– Total 2,028 1,418 1,029 2,271 3,182 2,564 4,675 4,752 5,198 5,865 \* No data for Syria. Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2017), SIPRI Yearbook 2017: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security, https://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2017 (accessed 23 Aug. 2018); Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2017), SIPRI Importer/ Exporter TIV Tables, https://sipri.org/databases/armstransfers (accessed 11 Sep. 2018). US weapons exports to the region are not simply the various physical weapons platforms or bombs. The exports include sustained military-to-military relationships over the entire life cycle of those weapons, such as training and simulations at test ranges in the US or in the region, upgrades of avionics and sensors, logistical support, joint exercises with US pilots, and intelligence and targeting support when those weapons are used in combat. Regional militaries buy US weapons not simply to integrate them into their own armed forces, but also for the much closer political and military relationship that comes with them. In turn, the US sells these weapons to earn money and support high-paying jobs, but also to promote interoperability between US and regional armed forces, and to sustain close relations with Middle East governments that support US military access. Informal US–Middle East security cooperation programmes The revolving door between military service and the defence industry has become well-established in recent years.96 In 2004–08, 80 per cent of retired three and four-star generals took jobs with defence contractors or consultancies.97 Over the next three years, some 70 per cent of retired general officers 95 Blanchard, C. M. (2017), ‘Saudi Arabia: Background and U.S. Relations’, Congressional Research Service, 22 November 2017, pp. 21–22, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33533.pdf (accessed 23 Aug. 2018). 96 Adams, G. (1982), The Politics of Defense Contracting: The Iron Triangle, Piscataway, New Jersey: Transaction Books. 97 Bender, B. (2010), ‘From the Pentagon to the Private Sector’, Boston Globe, 26 December 2010, http://archive.boston.com/news/nation/ washington/articles/2010/12/26/defense\_firms\_lure\_retired\_generals/ (accessed 23 Aug. 2018). 24 | Chatham House US Military Policy in the Middle East: An Appraisal took such jobs.98 Many of these positions are with military contracting firms that provide training and advice for Middle East military and security services, or directly for those services. Most of these retired generals were deployed to the region during their active-duty careers, developed relations through shared professional military education (PME) courses or military-to-military engagements, and commanded US forces in the region. The applicable federal laws and Pentagon directives are remarkably permissive in the freedom allowed to retired officers to serve regional militaries as advisers or even as officers. In an interview with the author, a chief executive officer of a northern Virginia-based contracting firm that places retired officers into advisory and formal officer roles with Persian Gulf militaries noted, ‘[Gulf military] officers pass through the PME schools in the United States, and they’ve all worked alongside our guys at some point in the past 15 years. There is already a shared doctrine, vernacular, and relationships, so naturally they’re looking for trusted and familiar faces. We broker that connection, making certain we obey all applicable American and Gulf state laws.’ This executive also freely admitted that if the retired officers did not agree with the status quo policy or advance the Gulf government’s interests with their active-duty peers, they would not be hired in the first place.99 One prominent exemplar of this phenomenon is former Marine General James Mattis, who retired as the commander of CENTCOM in 2013. Six months after stepping down, he joined the board of directors of General Dynamics (a prominent manufacturer of command and control and intelligence networks, land-attack missiles and land warfare support systems), where he served until January 2017. While at General Dynamics, from 4 June 2015 until 6 August 2016, he was also an unpaid military adviser to the UAE.100 According to one UAE official, Mattis visited the country from time to time to provide advice, adding, ‘He was and still is a trusted friend and he would come over to maintain the relationship.’101 At present, James Mattis is the US secretary of defense and his relations in the region are considered an asset for performing this role. Other notable cases of retired general officers serving in such roles include retired General James Jones, former commandant of the Marine Corps and later Obama’s national security adviser. In 2015, he was paid to speak on behalf of Mujahideen-e Khalq (MEK), which is an anti-Iranian regime dissident group that the US previously designated as a foreign terrorist organization. At the same time, he also worked at Ironhand Security LLC with the Saudi Ministry of Defence.102 Former CENTCOM General commander Anthony Zinni has similarly been paid to speak on behalf of the MEK, while also serving in executive positions with DynCorp and BAE Systems.103 In addition, retired Major General Thomas Moore, Jr was the chief of staff and deputy commander of CENTCOM in 2008, and later a senior consultant for Stark Aerospace Business Development based in Israel.104 US Military Policy in the Middle East: An Appraisal. Beyond prominent former generals and admirals, an unknown number of retired officers work directly for regional militaries and security agencies. Moreover, many military education and research institutions developed by Gulf and Middle East countries are led, staffed and/or run by retired US military officers. Stephen Toumajan, who retired from the US Army as a lieutenant colonel in 2007, is a relevant example of this phenomenon. Soon after leaving the Army, Toumajan began advising the UAE, and was appointed to the rank of a two-star general within the UAE military itself.105 As an Emirati government website proclaims, ‘H. E. Major General Staff Pilot Stephen Toumajan is the Commander and Senior Aviation Advisor for the Joint Aviation Command (JAC)’, which is ‘responsible for the combat readiness and execution of all aviation missions and training for UAE forces and numerous Foreign Military Sales.’106 Highlighting the continued close relations with the US that these retired officers engender, an October 2017 DOD video shows Toumajan commanding UAE forces that have been deployed to the Fort Irwin National Training Center in California, which is the US Army’s premier training facility.107 Similarly, the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center detailed above was led for over two years, from 2012 to 2014, by Frank Toney, a retired US Army brigadier general. It is difficult to definitively assess the impact that these retired officers have on the development and implementation of US military policy in the Middle East and on regional security services. According to the CEO cited above, retired American officers serve as a backchannel to their active-duty peers through whom they relay the concerns of regional political leaders and defence ministries.108 The retired officers also help to sustain the relationships forged between the US military and regional militaries by being candid and honest with their regional partners in a way that active-duty officers cannot be. But, perhaps most importantly, these retired officers, now with economic incentives, further intensify the widely-accepted norm within the Pentagon – as well as on Capitol Hill – that US military personnel must remain deployed in large numbers in the Middle East.109 Furthermore, US military presence in the Middle East can only continue with predictable access to the region, which is enhanced by maintaining personal and professional relationships with host-nation governments and government officials. This revolving door is both an enabler and manifestation of US military policy in the region. US Military Policy in the Middle East: An Appraisal 5. Military Policy Objectives in the Middle East To determine the success of US policy in the region requires identifying specific US objectives. Those considered in this section are based primarily upon Pentagon strategy documents, the CENTCOM annual posture statement (released around March every year), and speeches and congressional testimony given by Pentagon officials. This analytical approach assumes that when government officials claim they are attempting to achieve something, they are being sincere and that those statements reflect America’s actual policy objectives. The US employs other elements of national power in the Middle East, for example through diplomatic or economic policy, but these efforts are overwhelmingly marshalled in support of the overall military operation, or supplanted by the actions of military forces themselves. Thus, this section focuses on military policy in the region, because non-military approaches – for better or worse – inevitably take a back seat. The following four strategic objectives have been consistently expressed by civilian and military officials as the reason and purpose for the US military’s various postures in the Middle East, over the past two decades. There are several other underlying and attendant goals, but these four objectives best summarize the motives of the US. First, the presence of the US military enhances regional security overall and reduces political instability within Middle East governments. This strategic objective has not been achieved, in large part because the 2003 US-led invasion and subsequent military occupation of Iraq engendered a massive Sunni-dominated insurgency, remnants of which became the primary fighting force of ISIS. By 2017, nearly one-third (31 per cent) of the 49 ongoing conflicts in the world – defined as those with at least 25 battlefield deaths – involved ISIS.110 In total, the ill-fated decision to invade Iraq has led – directly and indirectly – to more than one million deaths, with another 7.6 million people displaced by the war.111 In addition, close to 4,500 US active-duty, National Guard and reserve members died fighting in Iraq, while more than 1,500 Pentagon contractors were killed supporting the war effort – approximately one-third of whom were American citizens.112 The direct financial cost to the US for the invasion, occupation and reconstruction of Iraq is in excess of $825 billion.113 Most recently, enhancing Middle East security has focused on restraining what Pentagon officials refer to as Iran’s ‘malign influence’ in the region – meaning Tehran’s promotion and support for proxy forces and sectarian-aligned political movements in Syria, Iraq, Bahrain and elsewhere. According US Military Policy in the Middle East: An Appraisal to CENTCOM, the US military has failed to restrain Iran, with the military command’s most recent posture statement declaring flatly, ‘We have not seen any improvement in Iran’s behavior’ since the Iran nuclear deal was signed in July 2015.114 This is a core mission of CENTCOM, which the command itself acknowledges has not been successful. Certainly, Iran has taken advantage of the chaos and instability caused by US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the US-backed air campaign against Houthi forces in Yemen since 2015, and close support of the US for the Sunni minority monarchy that represses and rules a majority Shia population in Bahrain. The pursuit of America’s interests in the region, combined with the US military’s infrastructure needs, has allowed Iran to expand its reach and influence outside of its borders; in effect, enabling rather than restraining Iranian power. The US military’s ability to reduce political instability in the region has been decidedly mixed. A 2017 study of US military training programmes conducted from 1970 to 2009 found that countries receiving such training were twice as likely to experience a military-backed coup attempt as countries with no comparable training.115 Indeed, the region has recently experienced prominent successful or attempted military coups in Egypt (2013) and Turkey (2016). But, the more consequential impact on political stability stems from the presence of US troops. A 2018 RAND study found that there is no association between US forward deployed troop presence and increased state repression, within the countries where those troops are deployed.116 However, US forces become associated and implicated by local populations with their governments’ repression. Of the 15 countries covered in this study where troops are stationed, only Israel is considered ‘free’, and Kuwait, Jordan and Lebanon are ‘partly free’.117 Meanwhile, all the countries – to varying degrees – rely heavily upon internal security and military forces to consolidate and maintain political control. Most US fatalities from terrorism since 9/11 are the result of attacks perpetrated by non-networked terrorists resident in the United States, or acts that have directly targeted Americans living and working in the very countries where the US has intervened to prevent or destroy so-called safe havens. Second, US military presence prevents the emergence of safe havens from which transnational terrorist organizations can operate and plan attacks. This objective is based upon an unquestioned assumption repeated by national security officials since 9/11: terrorists need a safe haven from which to plan and conduct terrorist attacks. In reality, this is not the case as can be determined by assessing the source of attacks against Americans.118 Between 9/11 and the end of 2016 (the last year for which there are data), 440 US citizens were killed in terrorist attacks, 184 of whom were killed inside the United States by self-motivated ‘lone wolves’ – 104 by Islamic jihadists, 72 by far right extremists and eight by black separatists. In addition, more than 200 Americans died in acts of terrorism while US Military Policy in the Middle East: An Appraisal in Iraq or Afghanistan.119 In other words, most US fatalities from terrorism since 9/11 are the result of attacks perpetrated by non-networked terrorists resident in the United States, or acts that have directly targeted Americans living and working in the very countries where the US has intervened to prevent or destroy so-called safe havens. Moreover, keeping US ground troops in the region increases the likelihood of anti-American terrorism. As international relations scholar Alexander Braithwaite determined in his study on recent overseas stationing of foreign military: ‘the deployment of troops overseas increases the likelihood of transnational terrorist attacks against the global interests of the deploying state.’120 In short, troops maintained in foreign countries to prevent terrorism actually increase the probability that those troops’ home countries and global interests will experience terrorism. Another predominant US military tactic is the use of airstrikes, which have had mixed results in reducing terrorist safe havens and threats in the Middle East. On the one hand, the four-year extensive bombing campaign – in coordination with ground forces – against ISIS succeeded in reducing the amount of territory it controls in Iraq and Syria by more than 80 per cent.121 The campaign has seen the estimated number of ISIS fighters in both countries shrink from as many as 31,500 in 2014 to 15,000 in 2016, the last year for which there are data.122 On the other hand, between 2010 and 2016, despite more than 300 US airstrikes in Yemen that have killed approximately 1,000 people, AQAP membership has grown from ‘several hundred’ to ‘up to four thousand’, according to the State Department’s annual terrorism report.123 Of those 300-plus strikes, more than 120 occurred in 2016; in December 2017, CENTCOM acknowledged that ISIS in Yemen, ‘doubled in size over the past year’.124 It is clear that without being partnered with forces on the ground with the capacity to capture and control territory, airstrikes alone cannot reduce the scope of terrorist threats and may, in fact, exacerbate them. The third objective of the US military presence in the Middle East is to assure the free flow of oil and natural gas to and from the region. Since Jimmy Carter first dubbed this a ‘vital national interest’, the US military has generally been successful in contributing to the achievement of this strategic objective. The outcome of the 1987–88 Tanker Wars demonstrates that the US military has the naval capabilities and flexibility to diminish the impact of Iran’s unconventional tactics in halting oil shipments. In the past decade, and as recently as in July 2018, Iranian officials have intermittently threatened – either directly or indirectly – to close the Strait of Hormuz to shipping.125 These threats are credible as Iran has the capacity to stop oil shipments transiting through the strait for several months with its current US Military Policy in the Middle East: An Appraisal arsenal of anti-ship cruise missiles and naval mines.126 The fact that Iran’s threats to block the Strait of Hormuz has never caused a sustained increase in the price of oil is due to the energy market’s belief that US military forces could rapidly clear naval mines and fully defend tankers shipping oil and natural gas.127 Fourth, the US military presence will build the capacity of regional militaries so they can defend and secure their own sovereign territory. Since Dwight D. Eisenhower complained to two US generals in 1959 that European governments were ‘making a sucker out of Uncle Sam’, every US president has sought to induce or compel regional governments to take more responsibility for their own security.128 This includes maintaining a professional officer corps, fielding combat-ready forces, buying advanced weaponry and deterring or defeating threats to each country’s sovereignty and national interests. This form of security cooperation is highly consequential, as a 2014 RAND study found that US security cooperation correlates with a reduction in the political fragility of host nations.129 Another RAND study has found that building effective capacity depends primarily on the recipient military having the absorptive capacity to plan and manage cooperative activities, and assuring the support is aligned with host nation needs.130 While the US military has assisted in building the capacity of local militaries to defeat internal threats, the region has continued to see numerous cross-border strikes, limited interventions and outright invasions. Unsolicited violations of state sovereignty of countries that have benefitted from US security cooperation in just the past 15 years include: Iran into Iraq; Iraq into Kuwait; Turkey into northern Iraq; Israel into Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon; Lebanon into Israel; Saudi Arabia into Bahrain; Yemen into Saudi Arabia; and Syria into Lebanon, to name but a few examples. Border security and territorial integrity are the only places military training and equipping efforts can be realistically evaluated in practice. Based upon the consistent cross-border attacks and invasions, the capacity of regional militaries remains wholly insufficient and underdeveloped.

#### US Militarism in Africa exacerbates Terrorism – that turns the case.

Schmidt 20 [(Elizabeth Schmidt, Elizabeth Schmidt is professor emeritus of history at Loyola University Maryland and the author of six books about Africa,) “LESSONS FROM AFRICA: MILITARY INTERVENTION FAILS TO COUNTER TERRORISM,” Foreign Policy in Focus, https://fpif.org/lessons-from-africa-military-intervention-fails-to-counter-terrorism/, 3-26-2020] TDI

Late last year, President Trump provoked a furor when he declared his intent to withdraw some 1,400 US troops from West Africa, where he claimed they had quelled the terrorist threat. He sparked a similar firestorm when he announced that the U.S. would (eventually) pull 14,000 troops from Afghanistan, where they were engaged in an 18-year conflict against other violent extremists.

Critics included congressional Democrats, Republican stalwarts, and members of the U.S. military, intelligence, and diplomatic establishments, as well mainstream media pundits, international allies, and even some political progressives.

Establishment figures claimed that the battle against violent extremism was far from over and that U.S. military leadership was critical to victory. They pointed to ongoing insurgencies in the African countries of Mali and Nigeria in the Western Sahel and Somalia and Sudan in the Horn. Other progressives countered that U.S. policies have been ill-conceived and counterproductive — and that foreign military intervention has exacerbated the crises.

The establishment debate misses the point. Mainstream critics haggle over how many troops are needed, which nations should supply them, and where they should be deployed. The real question is whether present counterterrorism strategies are effective — and if not, what policies should be implemented instead.

Evidence from Africa makes it clear that military solutions do not work, and prescriptions imposed from above and outside often fail. Local initiatives that address underlying grievances have been more effective. But their impact will be limited without fundamental social, economic, and political change. To effectively counter violent extremism, the U.S. must withdraw support for the corrupt and repressive governments that foster discontent and assist local endeavors that address the people’s needs.

The disagreement between mainstream and progressive critics in the U.S. is rooted in fundamentally different visions of the role of the United States in the world community. Most establishment intellectuals embrace the notion of American exceptionalism, arguing that the United States is a unique force for good in the world, and to fulfill its mission, it must maintain its position at the helm of the global order.

Proponents of this view ordinarily promote military solutions, as well as economic development and (sometimes) democracy. Progressives, in contrast, reject this sanguine characterization of U.S. actions and denounce the policies that have led to endless war. To resolve the current crisis, the United States and its partners must fundamentally shift their perspective and alter their approach. Continuing on the present path will only result in greater mayhem.

Current U.S. Africa policy, developed during the Cold War, was conceived by leaders and proponents of the U.S. military-industrial complex. Marked by militarism and misunderstanding, it has failed to identify the factors that undermine human security and offered wrong-headed solutions that often exacerbate the problem. The post-9/11 war on terror has led to particularly grievous results.

Military Solutions Don’t Work

Contrary to common misconceptions, religion and ethnicity are not the root causes of African conflicts.

Rather, the sources are deep structural inequalities — poverty, underdevelopment, and political repression — and the devastating impact of climate change. Governmental neglect and the drying up of Lake Chad ignited the Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria; the expanding desert in western Sudan has pitted herders against farmers in the struggle for water and usable land; and the destruction of the fishing industry by foreign trawlers led to piracy off the coast of Somalia.

Where do we start? First, we need to determine what does not work.

Counterterrorism operations, whether conducted by the U.S. or its allies, have been catastrophic. Intervention in the Sahel exemplifies the problem. In Mali and Nigeria, government actions in insurgent areas, and externally directed drone and missile strikes, have killed countless unarmed civilians. Such actions have increased local support for insurgent forces. Military successes have generally been short-lived, as violent extremists have regrouped and shifted their focus to unprotected civilians.

Local governments backed by the United States and its allies rarely address the structural problems that triggered the conflicts. As a result, local populations, neglected by their governments, have turned to extremist groups for income, basic services, and protection. Peace agreements, imposed from above and outside, fail to give voice to affected populations and jihadi organizations have been denied a seat at the table, even though they are critical parties to the conflicts. Not surprisingly, most of the accords have collapsed.

Foreign intervention in the Horn of Africa has had similar results. In Somalia, the intensification of US airstrikes has stimulated increased extremist activity and a corresponding refocus on civilian targets. Abuses by unaccountable regimes and foreign troops have generated a popular backlash, and externally brokered peace accords that excluded local voices have resulted in a succession of failed governments.

## ADV---War Powers

### 1NC---Congress Fails

#### Congress doesn’t have the power to replace executive war making.

Campbell 19[Clark H, United States Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corp, “Congress – In – Chief: Congressional Options to Compel Presidential War-Making,” American University National Security Law Brief, digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1110&context=nslb, 2019, TDI]

More problems await Congress in an attempt to compel presidential action through judicial process. The political question doctrine, ministerial law requirement, and requirements for standing make a lawsuit against the President an uphill battle. Even if Congress succeeds in a suit against the President, the judgment won could be unenforceable for the reasons discussed below. i. Political question doctrine First, the Judiciary may never accept a case based on the President declining to make war, in part because political questions are eschewed by the courts.82 The courts will find that a political question exists when six factors are met.83 The Court in Baker held that a political question involves (1) a commitment of the issue to another branch by the Constitution;84 (2) an inability to apply judicial standards to the question;8 1 (3) the need for an initial policy determination, not appropriate to be made by the Court;86 (4) disrespect to another branch of government if a decision were made;8 (5) a need to follow political decisions that have already been made;88 and (6) the potential for confusion and embarrassment if multiple branches of government gave differing guidance on an issue.89 The Court distinguished political cases, which involve political rights or repercussions, from political questions.0 Some areas of presidential action, such as foreign relations, were thought to always present political questions, thus outside the purview of the courts.91 However, foreign affairs are not exclusively a political question, and the Supreme Court determined that those areas may sometimes involve questions subject to judicial determination. 2 On the other hand, compelling a President to make war is a situation so dearly fitting in the six factors for a political question93 that the courts may choose to avoid it completely. 4 ii. Ministerial law requirement The second problem for a lawsuit against the President is the need to pass a sufficiently ministerial law as to be enforceable by the courts. A law that removes enough discretion from the President to be ministerial would likely be considered unconstitutional, for reasons discussed in Part VII of this article. 6 But the very creation of such a law would itself be difficult. The Supreme Court decided that even when the President made only the final act in a long string of directed actions, that duty was not ministerial 7 If a law were not sufficiently ministerial, leaving any discretion to the executive, the President would be immune from suit in performing that duty.98 The difficulty involved in creating a ministerial duty to make war makes the prospect of suing the President unlikely. iii. Requirement of standing Courts only have the jurisdiction to decide cases brought by litigants who have suffered some actual injury and whose claims are meant to be addressed under the law.99 In Campbellv. Clinton,100the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit found that a group of congressmen did not have standing to sue the President 01 for committing U.S. forces to Yugoslavia without congressional authorization. 02 Congress sought a declaration from the court that the President had acted beyond the confines of the law.103 Instead of reaching a decision on the merits of the case, the court held that the congressmen did not have standing to bring the suit.1 04 Part of the court's reasoning was based on the myriad political tools available to Congress to restrain the President. 1 5 The congressmen brought the suit because they had been frustrated in their attempts to use those tools to restrain the President effectively.106 The court held that unless a President acted in a way that nullified congressional votes, legislators should use the political means available to influence the President.1 07 Although Congress in Clinton was seeking to restrain the 2019] CONGRESS IN CHIEF President, similar arguments can be made when Congress seeks to compel presidential action. The availability of political means may result in a lack of standing for congressional efforts to compel the President by recourse to the Judiciary. iv. Presidential indifference Assuming there is recourse through the courts, the Judiciary may be unable to enforce any judgment against the President.. The Supreme Court made this clear in Johnson: "[s]uppose the bill filed, and the injunction prayed for allowed. If the President refuses obedience, it is needless to observe that the court is without power to enforce its process." ' The Court relies on the Executive to enforce its decisions, and this has resulted in a lack of obedience to Court decisions in the past.19

#### Bipartisan legislation is incompetent for crises---the executive branch takes up that mantle.

**Richard 22** – [Pierce Jr, Richard J, 10-22-22, "How Should the Supreme Court Respond to the Combination of Political Polarity, Legislative Impotence, and Executive Branch Overreach?." *PENN STATE LAW REVIEW* 127: 3.] TDI

Political polarity has led to legislative impotence.1 Decades ago, when a president saw the need to take major steps to address a problem, he proposed a legislative solution and then engaged in hard bargaining with the leaders of both parties in the House and Senate. That bargaining process led to bipartisan compromises that were reflected in legislation. For instance, the Administrative Procedure Act and the Clean Air Act were both enacted unanimously after lengthy negotiations between the White House and the leaders of both political parties in the House and Senate.

Those days are gone. Today, bi-partisan legislation is rare. When such legislation is proposed by members, the leaders of both parties usually oppose it. Occasionally, negotiated bi-partisan legislation emerges in contexts in which Congress can confer tangible benefits on every congressional district, e.g., the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act,3 which paved the way for increased government spending in every congressional district. But bi-partisan legislation that addresses policy issues appears impossible to enact. Any member of Congress— regardless of party affiliation—who urges or supports compromise is likely to be punished by party leaders and defeated in a primary by an uncompromising adherent to the views of their party’s base. Legislative impotence creates an environment in which a president who sees a need to take major actions to address a problem receives the same advice from his political advisors on every occasion. They advise that it would be a waste of time and energy to propose a legislative approach to solving the problem. They offer this static, albeit well supported, advice regardless of whether the problem is a massive influx of immigrants at the southern border, a banking crisis, a pandemic, or climate change. That advice leaves the president with a choice between two unattractive options: do nothing or take unilateral action. In many cases, the president believes that the problem is so serious that he must take unilateral action, either directly—by issuing an executive order—or indirectly—by instructing the relevant agency to act. The president’s legal advisors then tell him that the only statutory authority he or an agency can use to support such unilateral actions is a broadly worded statute that was enacted 30 to 80 years ago, long before Congress was even aware of the problem. The legal advisors will also inform the president that there is a significant risk that a court will block the action that he believes to be imperative to address the problem effectively. That well-supported legal advice makes the president’s choice between doing nothing effective to address the problem or taking legally fragile unilateral action more difficult. In many cases, however, the president will decide that the problem is so serious that he will take his chances in court rather than allow the problem to persist and grow because of the government’s failure to act. As soon as the president takes the essential, unilateral action to address the problem, political polarity manifests itself in another form. The president’s actions produce a firestorm of criticism from the leaders of the opposing party.

One subset of those leaders—typically, state attorneys general—immediately file a motion for the issuance of a nationwide preliminary injunction in federal court. If granted, the nationwide injunction bars the executive branch from taking the enjoined, unilateral action during the multi-year process required to obtain a final judicial resolution of the dispute. In most cases, permissive jurisdiction and venue rules provide the state attorneys general the opportunity to choose which of the hundreds of district judges will rule on their preliminary injunction motion. Unsurprisingly, they choose a district judge who is most likely to be sympathetic to their views and hostile to the views underlying the executive action. Notably, in the 2007 case of Massachusetts v. EPA, the Supreme Court softened the standing requirements for states seeking to challenge an executive action, rendering such challenges easier to launch.4

#### Especially true in the context of interventions.

Brian 22 - Cox, Brian, New York Times, Law of War, and Congressional Overreach in U.S. Military Operations (October 24, 2022). Available at SSRN: [https://ssrn.com/abstract=4257101](https://ssrn.com/abstract%3D4257101) or [http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4257101](https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4257101)

One day before the correspondence examined in the previous section was addressed to Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, nearly the same collection of civil society groups published a letter to select lawmakers requesting “urgent congressional oversight of U.S. civilian harm policies and adherence to international humanitarian law.” Like the letter directed to Secretary Austin, the dispatch to Congress relies on “New York Times reporting” to establish the parameters of the apparent problems that require assertive legislative intervention. Reporting involving “the 2019 Baghuz strike and the alleged cover-up of a possible war crime,” for example, purportedly has “raised serious concerns about the U.S. military’s commitment to accountability and adherence to international law, including the duty to investigate possible war crimes and hold responsible individuals to account.” Likewise, media coverage involving the Kabul drone strike reportedly is part of a persistent “failure to implement lessons learned from twenty years of repeated civilian harm without meaningful investigations, acknowledgement, or accountability.”

The critical assessment of the narratives presented in recent high-profile media coverage involving U.S. military combat operations that is the primary focus of the present inquiry and upon which the coalition of civil society advocates relies need not be recounted in full here. For current purposes, the call to action reflected in this dispatch to Congress is of primary importance. According to the institutional signatories, “Over the years, many of our organizations have worked to engage the Department of Defense to improve its policies for preventing civilian harm and investigating, acknowledging, and providing compensation and amends for harm when it occurs.” After chronicling a number of such endeavors, the letter laments, “Despite years of good-faith engagement, we have seen little to no progress on implementing many of these recommendations.” Following a number of specific requests offered to the various congressional committees of which the recipients are members, the letter claims, “Accountability and transparency are foundational to democratic governance and legitimacy, and the protection of civilians is a moral, ethical, legal, and humanitarian imperative.” Due to the systemic deficiencies in DoD practice purportedly enumerated by the letter, the signatories implore the recipient lawmakers “to take urgent action to prevent and address civilian harm.” This letter directed to the chair and ranking member of both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, then, makes much the same case as the correspondence examined above directed to Secretary Austin and President Biden regarding apparent persistent and systemic deficiencies in the manner in which the U.S. military conducts combat operations and accounts for them afterward.

A perceptible change in tack for this letter directed to lawmakers, though, is an appeal to Congress to force the military, through legislation, to adopt suggestions perennially issued by civil society advocates to the executive branch given that “years of good-faith engagement” have now yielded “little to no progress on implementing many of these recommendations.” What is missing from this appeal for assertive intervention by Congress is an accounting of why the Department of Defense has remained persistently reluctant to adopt these “reform” measures presented by civil society groups, advocates, and activists. As the section immediately above examines, the persistent reluctance demonstrated by military officials is attributable in large part to the divergence in priorities and strategic objectives that exists between the Department of Defense and civil society groups. While a non-governmental organization such as CIVIC may prioritize holding armed actors “accountable for preventing and addressing civilian harm,” (emphasis added) or groups such as PAX may declare that “protection of civilians living in conflict is at the heart of our work” such that the organization seeks to “enable civilians to hold security actors to account,” defense organizations such as U.S. European Command must persistently be prepared “to fight alongside Allies and partners to prevail in any conflict.” If “years of good-faith engagement” with the military by civil society groups have yielded “little to no progress on implementing many” of the recommendations presented to the Department of Defense, this is largely a function of the divergence in strategic objectives that exists and will inherently persist as between the military and civil society advocates. While civil society groups and advocates contribute to distortions in public opinion generated by biased and ill-informed high-profile media reporting and then engage in a campaign of lawscaping to take advantage of the scandal and outrage created thereby, practitioners within the military continue to apply doctrinal provisions of law and policy during targeting operations in support of strategic priorities and while making determinations related to accountability after mishaps that lead to incidental damage do occur. This dynamic is not reflected in the letter presented by the coalition of civil society advocates to the leadership of the House and Senate Armed Services Committee. Unfortunately for the continued capability of the Department of Defense to carry out the assigned mission to “deter war and ensure our nation’s security,” an appreciable proportion of the 535 lawmakers elected to Congress appear to be either incapable of recognizing, or disinclined to recognize, this dynamic and its impact on the advocacy that is directed toward them and on their resultant legislative endeavors.

### 1NC---Turn---War Powers

#### Congressional leadership veers away from liberal internationalism – limits on presidential resources spills over and deck international cooperation.

Milner 15 [Helen V. Milner is the B.C. Forbes Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University and the director of the Niehaus Center for Globalization and Governance at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School, "Sailing the Water's Edge: The Domestic Politics of American Foreign Policy", 2015, Princeton University Press, ProjectMuse]

As Brooks, Ikenberry, and Wohlforth maintain, “Since the end of World War II, the United States has pursued a single grand strategy: deep engagement. In an effort to protect its security and prosperity, the country has promoted a liberal economic order and established close defense ties with partners in Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East. . . . The details of U.S. foreign policy have differed from administration to administration . . . , but for over 60 years, every president has agreed on the fundamental decision to remain deeply engaged in the world.”31 We also find strong support for this claim in our research.32 But a number of recent studies have argued that the United States may turn its back on its longtime strategy of liberal internationalism.33 Some have argued that increased partisanship may lead to a declining internationalist orientation.34

According to our analysis, the United States is likely to remain internationally engaged as long as the president can play an important role in shaping US foreign policy. Should the president’s role in setting foreign policy diminish while that of Congress increases, American foreign policy might veer away from liberal internationalism. Instead, US foreign policy could be replaced by domestic ideological and distributive struggles and an unwillingness to let the president take advantage of US resources when shaping foreign policy. This domestic battle could translate into an inability of the United States to engage and to negotiate successfully on the international stage, and an overreliance on military tools. International cooperation requires that the US government be able to credibly represent the United States in international negotiations, to be able to make commitments to use (or not use) certain policy instruments, and to implement the agreements reached. Congressional resistance to climate change agreements and to regional trade agreements recently shows the domestic constraints that can block American engagement globally and hinder US leadership abroad.35 As distributive and ideological conflicts rise around foreign policy, these steps become more difficult for a president. As the two-level game logic points out, domestic politics can play a large role in fostering or preventing international cooperation.36

#### Flexible executive power solves terrorism, rogue states, and WMD prolif — new legal checks are existentially dangerous

John Yoo 17, J.D. from Yale, Emanuel Heller Professor of Law and director of the Korea Law Center, the California Constitution Center, and the Law School’s Program in Public Law and Policy, "Trump’s Syria Strike Was Constitutional", National Review, https://www.nationalreview.com/2017/04/trump-syria-strike-constitutional-presidents-have-broad-war-powers/

Our Constitution has succeeded because it favors swift presidential action in war, later checked by Congress’s funding power. If a president continues to wage war without congressional authorization, as in Libya, Kosovo, or Korea, it is only because Congress has chosen not to exercise its easy check. We should not confuse a desire to escape political responsibility for a defect in the Constitution. A radical change in the system for making war might appease critics of presidential power. But it could also seriously threaten American national security. In order to forestall another 9/11 attack, or take advantage of a window of opportunity to strike terrorists or rogue nations, the executive branch needs flexibility. It is not hard to think of situations where congressional consent cannot be obtained in time to act. Time for congressional deliberation, which can lead to passivity and isolation and not smarter decisions, will come at the price of speed and secrecy. The Constitution creates a presidency that can respond forcefully to prevent serious threats to our national security. Presidents can take the initiative, and Congress can use its funding power to check presidents. Instead of demanding a legalistic process to begin war, the Framers left war to politics. As we confront the new challenges of terrorism, rogue nations, and WMD proliferation, now is not the time to introduce sweeping, untested changes in the way we make war.

#### Executive flex is best for security decisions.

Gonzales 15 (Alberto R, former U.S. attorney general and current dean at Belmont University College of Law, “ADVISING THE PRESIDENT: THE GROWING SCOPE OF EXECUTIVE POWER TO PROTECT AMERICA.” Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy, vol. 38, issue 2) DB

III. THE 21ST CENTURY FRAMEWORK OF SEPARATION OF POWERS¶ When reflecting on the proper framework today for executive branch authority in the area of national security, I am influenced in part by what I see as an evolving standard of selfdefense. Historically, under the Caroline case, force can be used in self-defense in response to an attack or in anticipation of an imminent threat.202 Of course, since the formulation of the doctrine of self-defense, the gravity of the threats has grown significantly. During the Bush Administration, lawyers debated a subtle but important shift in the factors argued to use to selfdefense. Given the grave harm from a successful nuclear, biological or chemical attack, we concluded it would be unnecessary to wait for a gun to be cocked and pointed at our heads before taking preventative action.203 If we have knowledge of a serious and legitimate threat, and if the enemy has already demonstrated an intent and capability to hurt American interests, then given the gravity of the potential harm, the United States is legally entitled to use force in self-defense.204 Having the wisdom and judgment to make the right decision in such situations is not enough. The decision-maker must be able to do so quickly. For these reasons, I continue to believe that the President remains in the best position to make national security decisions, particularly those involving self-defense. Any effective framework must recognize this new reality.¶ What are the objectives of a workable framework? The executive needs flexibility to respond quickly and effectively to national security threats. I refer to it as a presumption of legality or validity based on necessity. It is not identical to the presumption of validity in the context of patents, nor is it a conclusive presumption or rule of evidence; it is a permissive presumption. This presumption would be limited to the national security context and exist only with respect to decisions by the President, but would not apply when government action affects the rights of American citizens. This presumption is an acknowledgement that the President is best able, because of expertise, experience, and intelligence capabilities, to initially assess and respond to a national security threat. Finally, this presumption of validity already exists in practice and is supported by precedent.h

#### Prefer agility to any single scenario – threats change so fast that the only structural check is adaptive response

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THIS BOOK is intended to help readers better understand the national security issues facing the United States today and offer the general outline of a strategy for dealing with them. National security policy—both making it and debating it — is harder today because the issues that are involved are more numerous and varied. The problem of the day can change at a moment's notice. Yesterday, it might have been proliferation; today, terrorism; tomorrow, hostile regional powers. Threats are also more likely to be intertwined—proliferators use the same networks as narco-traffickers, narco-traffickers support terrorists, and terrorists align themselves with regional powers. Yet, as worrisome as these immediate concerns may be, the long-term challenges are even harder to deal with, and the stakes are higher. Whereas the main Cold War threat — the Soviet Union — was brittle, most of the potential adversaries and challengers America now faces are resilient. In at least one dimension where the Soviets were weak (economic efficiency, public morale, or leadership), the new threats are strong. They are going to be with us for a long time. As a result, we need to reconsider how we think about national security. The most important task for U.S. national security today is simply to retain the strategic advantage. This term, from the world of military doctrine, refers to the overall ability of a nation to control, or at least influence, the course of events.1 When you hold the strategic advantage, situations unfold in your favor, and each round ends so that you are in an advantageous position for the next. When you do not hold the strategic advantage, they do not. As national goals go, “keeping the strategic advantage” may not have the idealistic ring of “making the world safe for democracy” and does not sound as decisively macho as “maintaining American hegemony.” But keeping the strategic advantage is critical, because it is essential for just about everything else America hopes to achieve — promoting freedom, protecting the homeland, defending its values, preserving peace, and so on. The Changing Threat If one needs proof of this new, dynamic environment, consider the recent record. A search of the media during the past fifteen years suggests that there were at least a dozen or so events that were considered at one time or another the most pressing national security problem facing the United States — and thus the organizing concept for U.S. national security. What is most interesting is how varied and different the issues were, and how many different sets of players they involved — and how each was replaced in turn by a different issue and a cast of characters that seemed, at least for the moment, even more pressing. They included, roughly in chronological order, • regional conflicts — like Desert Storm — involving the threat of war between conventional armies; • stabilizing “failed states” like Somalia, where government broke down in toto; • staying economically competitive with Japan; • integrating Russia into the international community after the fall of communism and controlling the nuclear weapons it inherited from the Soviet Union; • dealing with “rogue states,” unruly nations like North Korea that engage in trafficking and proliferation as a matter of national policy; • combating international crime, like the scandal involving the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, or imports of illegal drugs; • strengthening international institutions for trade as countries in Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America adopted market economies; • responding to ethnic conflicts and civil wars triggered by the reemergence of culture as a political force in the “clash of civilizations”; • providing relief to millions of people affected by natural catastrophes like earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, droughts, and the spread of HIV/AIDS and malaria; • combating terrorism driven by sectarian or religious extremism; • grassroots activism on a global scale, ranging from the campaign to ban land mines to antiglobalization hoodlums and environmentalist crazies; • border security and illegal immigration; • the worldwide ripple effects of currency fluctuations and the collapse of confidence in complex financial securities; and • for at least one fleeting moment, the safety of toys imported from China. There is some overlap in this list, and one might want to group some of the events differently or add others. The important point, however, is that when you look at these problems and how they evolved during the past fifteen years, you do not see a single lesson or organizing principle on which to base U.S. strategy. Another way to see the dynamic nature of today's national security challenges is to consider the annual threat briefing the U.S. intelligence community has given Congress during the past decade. These briefings are essentially a snapshot of what U.S. officials worry most about. If one briefing is a snapshot, then several put together back to back provide a movie, showing how views have evolved.2 Figure 1 summarizes these assessments for every other year between 1996 and 2006. It shows when a particular threat first appeared, its rise and fall in the rankings, and in some cases how it fell off the chart completely. So, in 1995, when the public briefing first became a regular affair, the threat at the very top of the list was North Korea. This likely reflected the crisis that had occurred the preceding year, when Pyongyang seemed determined to develop nuclear weapons, Bill Clinton's administration seemed ready to use military action to prevent this, and the affair was defused by an agreement brokered by Jimmy Carter. Russia and China ranked high as threats in the early years, but by the end of the decade they sometimes did not even make the list. Proliferation has always been high in the listings, although the particular countries of greatest concern have varied. Terrorism made its first appearance in 1998, rose to first place after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and remains there today. The Balkans appeared and disappeared in the middle to late 1990s. A few of the entries today seem quaint and overstated. Catastrophic threats to information systems like an “electronic Pearl Harbor” and the “Y2K problem” entered the list in 1998 but disappeared after 2001. (Apparently, after people saw an airliner crash into a Manhattan skyscraper, the possible loss of their Quicken files seemed a lot less urgent.) Iraq first appeared in the briefing as a regional threat in 1997 and was still high on the list a decade later—though, of course, the Iraqi problem in the early years (suspected weapons of mass destruction) was very different from the later one (an insurgency and internationalized civil war). All this is why the United States needs agility. It not only must be able to refocus its resources repeatedly; it needs to do this faster than an adversary can focus its own resources.