SITREP

When is it permissible?

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From the Editor's Desk

As the situation in Sri Lanka continues to unwind, the Sri Lankan Tamil Tiger diaspora in Toronto has brought the tragedy of this civil war into our city streets in the hopes that the World community will intervene and stop the Sri Lankan government from duly exercising its right and responsibility to deal with this insurgent terrorist group.

Recognizing the threat in the western border regions, Pakistan has been conducting a major offensive against the Taliban to prevent the fall of Islamabad. Increasingly the Indo-Asian region, armed with nuclear weapons–Pakistan, India, China, and developing capabilities–Iran, is gaining the focus of the international security community.

In this issue, John Thompson explores the interesting and compelling argument about how to deal with terrorists. Is it right to use violence outside of the law against domestic terrorism, and if so, what are the advantages and what are the potential penalties?

Stewart and Bokhari examine declining security in Pakistan and the threat posed by Al Qaeda to Saudi interests in Pakistan caused by Saudi ideological attacks that undercut the legitimacy and ideological appeal of jihadism.

In our ongoing discussion of strategy, Richard Maltz makes the case for a practical, accessible epistemology that can be consciously invoked by anyone, at any time, to help address practical, real-world, day-to-day challenges.

The Defence Studies Committee is always receptive to new members. If you wish to pursue defence and security issues in greater depth, consider joining us.

Sincerely,

Colonel (ret'd) Chris Corrigan
Editor and Chair Defence Studies Committee

Extra-legality in Counter-terror

by John Thompson

Almost every aspect of our responses to terrorism is subjected to inquiry and dissection these days—except one. Is it right to use violence outside of the law against domestic terrorism, and if so, what are the advantages and what are the potential penalties?

It is somewhat disturbing to think about the various euphemisms and evasions that have been employed to cover something ugly over the past century. While 'special action' was a deliberate misdirection employed for a lot of Maoist, Nazi and Soviet atrocities, 'extralegal' at least infers that something is outside of the law and is therefore questionable… and that questions won't always be answered.

In the sense of counter-terrorism, extralegal normally implies actions and responses that might not be legal—and one should remember that ethics, morality and legality are not invariably synonymous. The famous Israeli pursuit and assassination of the architects of the 1972 Munich massacre of their Olympic athletes was not legal in the Western European states where the murderers were hunted and slain. Nor could it be said that the actions of the Israeli hunters were always (or even mostly) ethical. Was this campaign a moral act? Certainly! An outrageous evil was avenged and a measure of justice was achieved.

In counter-terrorism, extralegal actions have a long history, but very little of it seems to be adequately documented; which is not surprising. This essay has been contemplated for a long time (about seven years) and reflects some suspicions that the author formed nineteen years ago; but which have largely proved nigh-impossible to research. Much of what is here—particularly about events in Ulster—reflects a few tidbits and scraps gathered here and there; and these simply cannot make a conclusive argument.

In Canada's experience there is the notorious barn-burning incident in May 1972, in which members of the

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RCMP Security Service attempted to set a barn on fire to prevent an apparent meeting between members of the FLQ and the Black Panthers. The act was illegal—a wiretap warrant for the meeting had been disallowed and if the meeting could be cancelled, perhaps the next one could be taped. Moreover, the attempted barn-burning was incompetently executed: Diesel oil doesn't catch fire very easily, whereas if the offending officer had used gasoline or even just touched a match to straw, things might have turned out quite differently. This was one of a number of incidents that occurred during the 1970s, and which eventually resulted in the McDonald Inquiry into the service and the eventual creation of CSIS.

It is common sense that extralegal responses to terrorism are hazardous —particularly in a functioning democracy, which must be based on the rule of law. If resort is made to the domestic use of force outside of a legal framework, it should only be entrusted to the most disciplined and intelligent of police and military personnel; and if documented evidence of the existence of such acts even appears, somebody up the chain of command had better be prepared to face the consequences. To do otherwise is to invite the authorities of the state engaged in counterterrorism to concede much of their moral advantage, and will certainly tempt them into becoming as monstrous as the terrorists they oppose. One can only use domestic extralegal methods at their peril.

Moreover, few terrorist groups even rate consideration for extralegal responses. When a group is domestic, small, and ineffectual in technique; they can be easily countered within the framework of conventional police work and the legal system. For example, the Animal Liberation Front has made less than a dozen murder attempts in 30 years and its cells tend to be self-recruited, self-taught and self-financed. Using extraordinary measures against them would be entirely unnecessary. The RCMP Security Service's actions against the FLQ in the early 1970s seemed vital at the time as Canada had little experience with sustained terrorism before the 1970 October Crisis. But as subsequent experience has taught us, the FLQ was relatively minor compared to the Babbar Khalsa or al

Qaeda. Other situations are different and some threats are truly dire.

Ulster

The latest round of 'The Troubles' began in August 1969 when rioting in Ulster moved away from civil rights issues toward the more familiar Irish tradition of religious/nationalist factionalism. Almost 38 years passed before the implementation of a power-sharing government in Ulster that involved both Gerry Adams and Ian Paisley in May 2007. The history between these dates is long, complicated, and turbulent. However, three things remain clear:

1) The ultimate risk in Ulster was of an eruption of general civil conflict between the populations backing the Provisional Wing of the IRA (and its Marxist/Nationalist cause, occasionally wrapped in a Catholic cloth); and the Protestant paramilitaries. Preventing this from happening was the reason behind the deployment of the British Army into Ulster in the first place.

2) The Provos were experts at terrorism–having a long tradition to draw on and some unique skill sets. They did succeed in assassinating a close relative of the Queen (Earl Mountbatten, along with several of his friends and family members); nearly killed two British Prime Ministers with a superbly designed time bomb and a giant improvised mortar; introduced the car bomb to Europe; and were using sophisticated weaponry when most European terrorists were still trying to master pipebombs and pistols.

3) The British were determined to keep the conflict confined to the British Isles–if not just in Ulster itself—and to limit the ability of the IRA to destabilize larger sections of society. The British government always had at least one pipeline open to the Provisional Wing of the IRA in a bid to keep the group and the attendant conflict within reasonable limits. One illustration of the conventions that arose between the British and the terrorists was a code word that the Provos gave when phoning in a bomb threat to indicate that the threat was real, and that the IRA was indeed responsible for it.

The IRA made occasional attempts to escalate the conflict, expand it outside of the British Isles and to attack high value targets, but the British sharply curbed them. Several incidents are a matter of public record. On May 8th, 1987 eight leading members of the East Tyrone Brigade of the IRA launched the latest in a series of bombings designed to eliminate the presence of security forces near South Armagh. However, twenty-four SAS troopers were lurking in ambush as they delivered their attack on a police station and all eight were repeatedly shot (receiving about 60 rounds apiece). Similar tactics were used on several other occasions—most notably in Gibraltar in March 1988 when another three members of the IRA were repeatedly

shot dead. At the time, they were planning a car bombing against the British garrison there as part of repeated attempts to commit terror on British troops who had been rotated out of Ulster.

Military behaviour like this brings out the usual viewing-with-alarm and hand-wringing from the expected quarters. Military personnel repeatedly shooting 'civilian' terrorists seems excessively brutal especially to those who expect reactions to terror to remain entirely within the purview of the police and courts. It should be pointed out that the Provisionals also felt horrified by these incidents. The normal career path for an IRA man was to eventually be caught, tried (and to grandstand from the prisoners' dock) and be honorably jailed as a hero of the cause. The idea that a group of highly skilled soldiers might someday be waiting to pump 60 bullets into you alone is unsettling; especially if you realize that there will no hope of escape, no refuge, no chance of surrender, nor any real possibility of fighting back against such an attack.

On the other hand, the IRA did eventually stop delivering truck bombs to isolated police stations, and stopped trying to kill British soldiers who had been rotated out of Northern Ireland. Violence, as Clausewitz points out, is a message in itself. In such a manner, it would seem that the British helped manage the IRA to keep the conflict within tolerable limits.

Despite the best attempts of numerous critics, portraying these ambushes by the SAS as being extralegal failed to achieve much condemnation; homicide is not invariably murder. However, did British troops or police sometimes act entirely outside of the law during the Ulster conflict? If they did, nobody has been able to prove it, nor will such proof ever likely be forthcoming.

Yet the IRA had many weapons that they never really used, or employed only once or twice. Some of these were weapons that were finally 'decommissioned' after much delay in 2005. Essentially the Provos had refused to be seen handing weapons over to the authorities, as that would look like they actually accepted defeat and were surrendering. Eventually, to save face, a compromise was reached whereby their more interesting weapons were destroyed by the Provisionals in front of independent witnesses (a Catholic priest, a Protestant minister and three members of the International Independent Commission on Decommissioning). Among these were three tons of Semtex, seven SAM-7 anti-aircraft missiles, RPG-7 anti-tank rockets, over 20 machineguns including heavy DShK Soviet models, and a thousand rifles; apparently including at least one Barrett .50 caliber sniper rifle.

There is a story about the latter and no proof whatsoever to back it up. It is offered as a theory that might explain

Pakistan: A Bogus Threat and The Bigger Picture

by Scott Stewart and Kamran Bokhari

On March 5, the Saudi Embassy in Islamabad reportedly received threatening e-mails warning of attacks on Saudi interests in Pakistan. According to English-language Pakistani newspaper The Nation, the e-mails purportedly were sent by al Qaeda and threatened attacks on targets such as the Saudi Embassy and Saudi airline facilities in Pakistan.

When we heard the reports of this threat, our initial reaction was to dismiss it. While al Qaeda has sometimes made vague threats before executing an attack, it does not provide a list of precise targets in advance. Prior to the June 2008 bombing of the Danish Embassy in Islamabad, al Qaeda leaders repeatedly threatened to attack European (and Danish) targets in retaliation for a series of cartoons published in Denmark in 2005 that satirized the Prophet Mohammed. When the issue was reignited in early 2008 with the release of a film critical of Islam called "Fitna," by Dutch parliamentarian Geert Wilders, Osama bin Laden himself issued a statement in March 2008 in which he threatened strikes against European targets in retaliation. However, in all of these threats, al Qaeda never specified that it was going to strike the Danish Embassy in Islamabad. In addition to being out of character for al Qaeda, it is foolish to issue such a specific threat if one really wants to strike a target.

While we were able to discount the most recent e-mail threat reportedly sent to the Saudi Embassy in Islamabad, it generated a robust discussion among our analytical staff about Saudi counterterrorism and anti-jihadist activities in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the large number of threatening statements senior al Qaeda members have made against the Saudis and the very real possibility of an attack against Saudi interests in Pakistan.

Threats Against the Saudis

Beginning with some of bin Laden's early public writings, such as his August 1996 "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places," al Qaeda leaders have spoken harshly against the Saudi royal family. Bin Laden and others have accused the Saudis of collaboration with the "Zionist-Crusaders alliance" that bin Laden claimed was using military force to impose "iniquity and injustice" on the people of Islam.

However, the verbal threats directed against the Saudi royal family have escalated in recent years in the wake of a string of attacks launched inside Saudi Arabia by the Saudi al Qaeda franchise in 2003 and 2004, and as the Saudi government has conducted an aggressive campaign to crush the Saudi franchise and combat the wider phenomenon of jihadism.

In fact, it is rare to see any statement from a senior al Qaeda leader that does not condemn the Saudi government specifically or in more general terms. In a July 28, 2008, video message, al Qaeda ideologue Abu Yahya al-Libi called on Muslims to act quickly and decisively to kill the Saudi king, reminding them that "killing this reckless tyrant, who has declared himself the chief imam of atheism, will be one of the greatest qurubat" (an act of devotion bringing man closer to God). In a May 2008 message, al-Libi also had urged Saudi clerics to lead uprisings against the Saudi monarchy similar to the July 2007 uprisings at the Red Mosque in Islamabad. Al-Libi never mentioned Saudi King Abdullah by name in that message, preferring to call him the "lunatic apostate" because of the king's call for a dialogue among Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Commenting on this interfaith dialogue in the July 2008 message, al-Libi also said, "By God, if you don't resist heroically against this wanton tyrant ... the day will come when church bells will ring in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula."

In March 2008, al Qaeda No. 2 Ayman al-Zawahiri said the Saudi monarchy was part of a "satanic alliance" formed by the United States and Israel to blockade the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. In a January 2009 message, al-Zawahiri said: "Oh lions of Islam everywhere, the leaders of Muslim countries are the guards of the American-Zionist interests. They are the ones who have given up Palestine and recognized Israel ... Abdallah Bin Abd-al-Aziz has invented the interfaith dialogue and met Peres in New York, paving the way for the complete recognition of Israel." Al-Zawahiri continued, "Thwart the efforts of those traitors by striking the interests of the enemies of Islam." In a February 2009 audio statement, al-Zawahiri declared, "The Muslim nation must, with all its energy and skills, move to remove these corrupt, corrupting and traitorous rulers."

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After a January 2009 video by jihadists in Yemen announcing the formation of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, al-Zawahiri proclaimed in a February statement that the new organization "is the awakening, which aims to liberate the Arabian Peninsula from the Crusader invaders and their treacherous agents. It is escalating and flourishing, with God's help and guidance, despite all the campaigns of repression, misleading, and deception, and despite all the obstacles, difficulties and hindrances."

Focus on the Saudis

All these threats raise an obvious question: Why is al Qaeda so fixated on the Saudis? One obvious reason is that, since the launching of a disastrous offensive by the Saudi al Qaeda node, the Saudi government—which previously had turned a blind eye to many of al Qaeda's activities—has launched a full-court press against the organization. Al-Zawahiri acknowledged this in a December 2005 message entitled "Impediments to Jihad," in which he said the Saudi franchise in the kingdom had been defeated by collaborators. The Saudi offensive against al Qaeda also played a significant part in the Anbar Awakening in Iraq. Saudi cajoling (and money) helped persuade Iraqi tribal leaders to cooperate with the coalition forces.

One way the Saudis have really hurt al Qaeda is by damaging its ability to raise funds. For example, in March 2008, the top Saudi cleric, Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul-Aziz bin Abdullah al-Sheikh, cautioned Saudis against giving money to charities or organizations that finance "evil groups" who are known for harming Islam and its followers—a clear reference to al Qaeda and other jihadist organizations. We have repeatedly seen appeals for more funds for the jihad, and in a Jan. 14, 2009, message by bin Laden, he noted that the jihadists were under financial "distress" and that it was the duty of the Muslim *ummah* to support the jihadists "with all their soul and money."

Perhaps one of the greatest threats the Saudis pose to al Qaeda is the threat to its ideological base. As STRATFOR has long argued, there are two different battlespaces in the war against jihadism—the physical and the ideological. For an ideological organization such as al Qaeda that preaches persecution and martyrdom, losses on the physical battlefield are expected and glorified. The biggest threat to the jihadists, therefore, is not a Hellfire missile being dropped on their heads, but an ideological broadside that undercuts their legitimacy and ideological appeal.

Many Saudi clerics have condemned jihadism as a "deviance from Islam." Even prominent Saudi clerics who have criticized the Saudi government, such as Salman al-Awdah, have sent open letters to bin Laden condemning violence against innocents and claiming that al Qaeda was hurting Muslim charities through its purported ties to them.

The sting of the ideological attacks is being felt. In a May 2008 speech, al-Libi addressed the ideological assault when he said, "and because they knew that the key to their success in this plan of theirs is to turn the people away from jihad and mujahidin and to eliminate them militarily and intellectually." Al-Libi recognized that without new recruits and funding, the jihad will wither on the vine.

In addition to financial and ideological threats against the organization, the Saudi assault has also gone after al Qaeda where it lives—in Pakistan.

Deep Connections

Saudi Arabia has long had a strong relationship with Pakistan, based on shared perspectives toward regional and international matters. A key common sphere of influence for the two sides over the past four decades has been Afghanistan. This close Saudi-Pakistani relationship was well-illustrated by the pairing up of Saudi petrodollar wealth with Pakistani logistics (along with U.S. weapons and intelligence) to support the Islamist uprising that followed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

After the Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Saudis and the Pakistanis continued to cooperate. Even though the world at large refused to accept the Taliban regime after it took power in 1996, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates recognized the Taliban as the legitimate rulers of Afghanistan. (These three were the only countries to do so.) However, while enjoying support from Riyadh and Islamabad, the Taliban also established relations with the transnational jihadist forces led by al Qaeda.

The Saudi and Pakistani relationship with the Taliban was shattered by the events of 9/11. In spite of aggressive negotiations with the Taliban, neither the Saudis nor the Pakistanis could convince Mullah Omar to surrender bin Laden and the al Qaeda leadership to the Americans. Because of this, the two countries were forced to end their overt relationship with the Taliban as the Americans invaded Afghanistan, though they obviously have maintained some contact with members of the Taliban leadership.

The U.S. response to 9/11 placed the Saudis and the Pakistanis into a very difficult position, where they were forced to fight jihadists on one hand and try to maintain control and influence over them on the other. As previously discussed, the Saudis possessed the resources to effectively clamp down on the al Qaeda franchise in the kingdom, but Pakistan, which is weaker both financially and politically—and which has become the center of the jihadist universe on the physical battlefield—has been hit much harder by the U.S.-jihadist war.

This situation, along with the ground reality in Afghanistan, has forced the United States to begin working

The Epistemology of Strategy

by Richard Maltz

The Editor thanks the author, a frequent contributor to SITREP, for this article which is based on a paper delivered to the XX Annual Strategy Conference on 17 April, 2009 at the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

"If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles."
—*Sun Tzu, Military Theorist and Philosopher*

I. Introduction

Epistemology is the "theory of knowledge". It is that branch of philosophy that explores and illuminates the origins, nature, methods, and limits of human thought, perception, knowledge, understanding, and learning. In this paper, I am going to tie Epistemology to the subject of Strategy, which I herein define as the science or art of combining and employing the means of war in designing, planning, and directing large military movements and operations in support of Grand-Strategy or Policy. I hope to demonstrate that sound Epistemology necessarily resides at the center of sound Strategy; and that the latter is impossible without the former. I will conclude with a brief discussion of how, in my view, this subject impinges on that of "Defense Transformation" broadly.

I have sought to express these matters in ways that both demonstrate their practical implications to the common warfighter, and which are readily accessible and comprehensible. I will demonstrate the relevance and criticality of this subject to warfighting; and I will try to make this discussion easy to understand and simple to apply in practice.

I regard this subject as being tremendously and profoundly important, but widely neglected, and only just now starting to emerge into our professional military consciousness. I will try to make the case for a practical, accessible Epistemology that can be consciously invoked by anyone, at any time, to help address practical, real-world, day-to-day challenges. It is my hope that if I present this case well, I may facilitate the practical routine application of this, and other branches of philosophy, in engagement, conflict, and warfighting.

"Our Central Challenge in adapting to the demands of the Twenty-First Century will be epistemological in nature."

II. Discussion

As we progress through this subject, we must come to grips with the challenge of "paradigmatic" change. Paradigmatic change is contrasted with the more commonly-understood incremental, topical, or transitory change in that it involves a comprehensive, fundamental, and relatively lasting change to the "paradigm", or basic understanding of the broad nature and order of things. Reality can change without our being aware of it; but the paradigm is how we appreciate and make sense of that reality. It is the expression of our thinking on the subject. It is therefore inherently and fundamentally epistemological in nature.

Our paradigms of engagement, conflict, and war, are steadily and speedily growing more complex and indistinct. We are moving increasingly away from predominantly mechanistic, kinetic, and pyrotechnic solutions to those that require us to take account of the complexities of the environment, its inhabitants, our adversaries, and most important, ourselves. Because we are concerned with their behaviors, we must undertake a deeper appreciation for the nuances of perception and motivation of all the parties concerned in real or potential conflict. This is both our greatest weakness and our greatest opportunity. One could argue, and I do argue, that whichever power achieves effective mastery of this dimension of human interaction first and most profoundly will likely be the next global hegemon.

The question of epistemology in strategy is a very broad one, inasmuch as all aspects of military activity, including Strategy, involve perception, thought, and knowledge. This includes every aspect of Policy, Culture, Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, and even Facilities (PCDOTMLPF). This applies at all levels of war (indeed, all levels of human activity); but seems to apply more as one goes up the continuum of conflict toward Strategy and Policy, where strictly technical and mechanical concerns hold less sway.

Epistemology guides everything that we do (beyond the physically reflexive). Since we normally invoke Epistemology without any conscious knowledge of it, our work

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and productivity (to include combat effectiveness, which is a form of productivity) usually suffer. I offer my own experience as an example. I spent five of the past eight years as a Military Concept Developer. During that time, I had to contend with many "half-baked" ideas, and even entire "concepts", prominent concepts, and "Joint Operating Concepts", that contained no "Central Idea". In one instance, in the case of the "Major Combat Operations" Joint Operating Concept, I watched the original writing team of several retired senior officers from every branch of Service draft several dozen of pages of "boilerplate" for six weeks before the government lead thought to ask for an actual idea to animate the concept. In the absence of any sense of Epistemology, no one thought an idea to be important. To this day, in place of ideas, most military concepts contain lists of desired attributes or capabilities. Absent appreciation for and consciousness of Epistemology, few can tell the difference between an idea and a checklist.

I tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade my chain of command that our problems were due primarily to poor Epistemology. In response, my boss asked me, "How often does anyone use Epistemology anyway?" I explained to him that everyone uses epistemology, all of the time, but usually unconsciously, and therefore usually badly. He came to grasp this; but we both despaired of ever getting higher echelons to understand. Consequently, "Concept Development" remained generally half-baked, often offering limited value to warfighters; and it continues to enjoy a poor reputation among those whom it serves.

Indirect awareness of the importance of Epistemology is growing however; facilitated, in my view, by the setbacks and frustrations that we have experienced overseas in the past several years, which has shaken our complacency. Indications of recent progress can be found in several quarters, including the deployment of "Human Terrain Teams" in theater, myriad "Strategic Communications" initiatives, and many new programs throughout the services based on "Human-Centricity", "Human-Design", the "Human-Dimension", etc. where previously, it was thought that steel on target could solve any problem. Recently, General James Mattis, the US Joint Forces Command Commander, spoke of three principle imperatives: 1. "The character of war has changed—not its nature, which remains brutal and about *bending the enemy's will*"; 2. "To transform a military, **you must** start by clearly *identifying the problem you want to fix*."; and 3. "Building trust and harmonious teams among coalition members who are comfortable with surprise and the "uncertain" is the metric officers will be measured by." It is worth noting that all of these are epistemological in nature.

One might legitimately ask, "As long as we are drifting toward addressing epistemological issues anyway, what benefit derives from calling them that or even being aware of their epistemological nature?" This strikes at the core of my thesis. I would answer that the reasons for doing so lie in the blood and treasure that we expend wastefully or fruitlessly, while we gradually come to recognize the importance of these key issues. If, instead of slowly and episodically backing into our appreciation of these challenges, at great cost over several years, we instead approached them systemically from the outset with a consciously, deliberately, and coherently epistemological perspective, we could reach the same destinations much sooner and at much less human and material cost. I would go further, and suggest that we are still wastefully floundering about in a process of backward reasoning based solely and slowly on empirical experience, trial, and much error. There is still much blood and treasure that may be spared if we, even now, take the shortcut of an explicitly epistemological approach to identifying and addressing our challenges. In sum, taking a systemic, epistemological approach to problem-solving is much more effective, efficient, and economical than are any alternative approaches. This, I maintain, is the essence of strategizing.

"In some ways it was like the debate of a group of savages as to how to extract a screw from a piece of wood. Accustomed only to nails, they had made one effort to pull out the screw by main force, and now that it had failed they were devising methods of applying more force still, of obtaining more efficient pincers, of using levers and fulcrums so that more men could bring their strength to bear. They could hardly be blamed for not guessing that by rotating the screw it would come out after the exertion of far less effort; it would be a notion so different from anything they had ever encountered that they would laugh at the man who suggested it."
— C.S. Forester, 'The General'

Epistemology permeates and animates every aspect of Strategy

III. Analysis

In spite of the fact that Epistemology touches everything that we do, limitations of space prohibit me from exploring these relationships more fully here. Accordingly, I will focus on what I regard as the most salient issues relating to the Epistemology of Strategy: Vision; The Cognitive Domain; and Culture, Productivity, and Combat Effectiveness.

The United States does not really do strategy. Rather, it tends to jump straight from policy to

operations and tactics.

— *Colin Gray, Irregular Warfare:*
One Nature, Many Characters, 2007

A. Vision. Strategy is a function of leadership; and leadership is based, most fundamentally, on vision, which, residing in the mind, is an epistemological function. Hence, Strategy itself is predominantly epistemological. It is a process of visualizing, solving problems based on that visualizing, visualizing how others, notably the adversary(ies) are also visualizing, how they will likely solve problems based on their visualizing, and how their visualizing and solutions can be rolled into our visualizing so that we may take proper account of how they will likely act in the course of our broader problem-solving. This should, of course, take proper account of their attempting to visualize our visualization and consequent actions, in endless layers and permutations. It is an inherently cognitive, and therefore inherently epistemological, function.

In all organizations, there are people with authority to make decisions on investments of time, money, and effort to be expended on achieving desired outcomes. These decisions must be based on something. A visionary decision-maker will envision the actual starting point, the desired end-point, and the means of getting from the first to the second; and will then design, plan, decide, and act in accordance with that vision. The soundness of their designs, plans, decisions, and actions will be largely determined by the soundness of their vision.

Very few people in general, or decision-makers in particular, are naturally visionary; and vision is not something that can be taught. Vision is not a function of intelligence, education, training, technical abilities, or virtue, labor, or dedication. It is an innate and ineffable quality, derived from undetermined sources. It may be honed where it already exists; but it cannot be created. Many people (possibly most) are so bereft of vision that they are often incapable of recognizing a good idea or a sound solution even when it is presented to them. They are without any relevant frames of reference; in effect, stumbling in the dark. Many do not even grasp the idea of vision.

In the absence of vision, decision-makers must exercise their responsibilities to plan and decide through other means, struggling to make decisions based on other factors. In order to justify their decisions, to themselves and to others, they must establish a decision-making framework based on considerations that seem reasonable. This framework is usually built upon "objective" criteria that the decision-maker believes (or hopes) are relevant to the decision(s) to be made. These criteria, in order to be deemed objective, must be widely understood, and must generally be quantifiable. They usually include factors such as: money, time, manpower, credentials, consensus, etc. Inasmuch as these criteria are selected based on personal predilection and cultural norms; by a decision-maker who, absent vision, has little if any understanding of the true issues at hand; their relevance to any particular decision is generally random; and any belief that their relevance is more than random could usually be characterized as "superstition".

Accordingly, most decision-makers make most of their decisions based upon such supposedly objective factors. This may make sense when dealing with simple, linear problems; but will likely be utterly irrelevant in deciding other values, where complexity and non-linearity impinge. Ultimately therefore, because of the scarcity of vision, most decisions end up being based on superstition, and necessarily yield random outcomes, few of them favorable or desired, even if they have generally come to be expected and tolerated. This creates tremendous institutional friction and waste, and explains why it usually requires so much to produce so little. This is sometimes known as "bureaucratic inertia" or "red tape".

This begs the question of how and why we (as a society, perhaps as a species) select and appoint decision-makers so routinely bereft of the single most important prerequisite for decision (and by extension, for leadership): vision. I think this is attributable to multiple complementary factors; chief among them the fact that decision-makers without vision are appointed to positions of decision-making authority by decisions of other decision-making authorities similarly without vision, in reflexive acts of self-replication buttressed by objective criteria in the form of formal credentials similarly awarded based on other objective criteria similarly generally selected in the absence of any vision. This is a spiral of "the blind leading (and appointing) the blind".

Given the friction and waste generated by this method of allocating decision-making authority, and the increasingly competitive nature of the world as a whole, it behooves us to explore ways of making better decisions more reliably. This means finding ways to systemically identify individuals with sound vision, and to invest them with decision-making authority everywhere where we deem decisions to be important. This is likely to be the catalyst of the "Transformation" that we so ardently seek, the source of our (or, if we are not serious or careful, someone else's) next "Revolution in Military Affairs". These things must be derived from our ability to better harness natural human resources; they cannot be derived from contrivances based on machines or processes.

The war was fought on many fronts. At that time the
most important one was American public opinion.

Military power is not the decisive factor in war. Human beings! Human beings are the decisive factor.

*— General Vo Nguyen Giap,
former NVA CinC, on the Tet Offensive*

B. The Nature and Importance of the Cognitive Domain. The "Cognitive Domain" is where perception, emotion, thought, decision, and will reside. It is intrinsically and completely epistemological. It is distinct from the "Physical Domain" where physical interaction occurs (such as killing people and blowing things up); and from the "Information Domain" where data is transmitted. These domains influence each other however; and the cognitive domain is shaped by its appreciation of what it observes in those domains.

The Cognitive Domain incorporates the Psychological and Sociological (or Cultural). These exist on multiple levels at the same time, extending from the individual (the Psychological), through various layers of group identity, consciousness, and affiliation, from the family thru the highest level of overarching identity - nationality, ethnicity, religion (the Sociological).

Culture is the most direct and powerful influence on human behavior, including in war. To the extent that these levels reflect layers of shared values, beliefs, and customs, they can be called cultures. These cultures therefore exist in multiple levels within each person and group of people. They define "frames of reference" through which everything perceived is understood; they similarly constitute the most direct and powerful driver of human behavior at every level. Culture is the key to influencing behavior; and it can only be reached in the Cognitive Domain. Conflict and war are contests of will in the Cognitive Domain. Human conflict, to include war, is at its essence, a social activity; it is a contest of wills between two or more parties. Accordingly, decision in conflict (outcomes), and decisions made during conflict, and the will or lack of will to act, all reside in the Cognitive Domain.

The Cognitive Domain lies at the center of conflict and war. All strategy, design, planning, decision, and execution in the physical and information domains should therefore have desired outcomes in the Cognitive Domain as both their goals, and points of departure. Because outcomes in conflict and war are determined in the Cognitive Domain, the physical and information domains must be subordinated to it. Focusing all operations toward achieving outcomes where they are determined is more direct, and therefore the more effective, efficient, and economical than otherwise. Failure to do so, by attempting to achieve decision in the physical or information domains (our traditional approach to conflict and war) is often ineffective, and ultimately successful or not, is usually hugely wasteful.

The Cognitive Domain touches everybody, all the time. Target audiences for operations focused on the Cognitive Domain may include any combination of one's own forces (this is normally called morale), adversary forces, allied forces, neutral forces, populations and leaders in the area(s) of operations, the adversary polity or leadership, allied polities and leadership, neutral polities and leadership, and one's own polity and leadership (and anyone else you can think of).

The Cognitive Domain encompasses many critical aspects of conflict and war at different levels. At the highest and most fundamental level, there is the issue of "National Iconography" (some people call this "brand"). What do people think of us? Are they favorably or unfavorably disposed toward us at a visceral level. Related to this is the issue of "Narrative". What policies are we trying to promote or obstruct? As policies exist on many levels, so must the narratives that accompany them. The relationships between greater and lesser policies/narratives are fractal in nature, with each supporting, or providing a framework, for those above or below it. Examples of widely-recognized operations in the Cognitive Domain include Propaganda, Subversion, Psychological Operations, and "Strategic Communication".

"Political Warfare" is the best model for achieving victory in the Cognitive Domain. The best practical model of the effective fusion of all efforts in every sphere, dimension, and domain in support of achieving desired outcomes in the Cognitive Domain is that of Political Warfare, as practiced by Leon Trotsky during the Russian Civil War. The body of theory on this subject composed by Italian Communist Antonio Gramsci in the 1920's, is very instructive.

"Fifth Generation Warfare". The approaches theorized by Gramsci and practiced by Trotsky were further refined with great success by various Communist forces during the first and second Vietnam Wars, and by Arab insurgents in the Algerian War of Independence. Then, as earlier, combat operations in the theater of battle were incidental; the true center of gravity of operations was in the polities of the states involved. Outcomes were determined in the minds of decision-makers far distant, in Paris and Washington, DC; even when events on the ground suggested an opposite direction. Some theoreticians now call this approach Fifth Generation Warfare.

Every war … is a struggle between two or more learning institutions … the course of events is shaped, even determined, by which side learns fastest and adapts more quickly.

C. Culture, Productivity, Combat-Effectiveness: Learning and Adapting Under Pressure. Emergent (indeed, all) behaviors are most directly determined by culture. The culture of warfighting determines if, and how, a warfighter decides to lift his weapon and place himself in harm's way. It also determines what a warfighter sees, hears, tastes, smells, feels, and thinks in response to any stimulus, individually and in groups. It does this to a greater degree than does anything else. Any stimulus that we try to convey in order to foster Shared Understanding will have meaning only in the context of the disparate frames of reference through which it must pass within the minds of those recipients. The same image, viewed by 100 people, may mean 100 very different things to them, unless we focus on how to shape their frames of reference to increase their predisposition to attain Shared Understanding. Shared "Warfighting Culture" must therefore be the ultimate key to Shared Understanding in the operating environment.

At each level, disparate lower-level cultures must be reconciled so that a common vision can be pursued at that level, in support of the vision at a higher level. The common culture formed at each level can be viewed as an overlay in relationship to subordinate cultures. With an adequate cultural overlay, each decision-maker will intuitively understand what their colleagues are likely to infer from the same information; and will similarly intuit their colleagues' likely responses, permitting "instinctive" "self-synchronization".

The practice of attempting to substitute the Situational Understanding of rear command elements for those of forward commanders is very old. During the First World War, it was called "Chateau Generalship". Now, some call it "Network-Centric Warfare". It has never worked as expected because it is based on techno-centric fallacies that do not adequately take into account immutable aspects of warfighting and warfighters, and the primacy of warfighting culture, not machines, in determining actions in battle. It resembles other age-old techno-centric delusions that continually disappoint, such as the notions that: airpower alone can reliably win wars; precision-engagement will destroy all threats; or elaborate Intelligence, Surveillance, & Reconnaissance will eliminate ambiguity, uncertainty, and deception from the operating environment. Our enduring infatuation with such promises illustrates the philosophical and theoretical poverty of our efforts in general; and deprives otherwise usually expert planning and execution of context, and sound "trajectory" along which to plan and execute, leading to random outcomes, and *the systemic predisposition to expend infinite resources without any assurance of achieving desired outcomes.*

Shared Understanding consists of multiple elements. Many reduce these to "Connectivity". Connectivity however manifests itself in two ways: "Technical" and "Perceptual". Technical Connectivity is the material network of sensor and communication grids that link users through mechanical and electronic means to acquire and share information. Perceptual Connectivity is a network of shared frames of reference within users themselves that enables them to make sense of the information transmitted and to intuitively understand what other users will infer therefrom. In the absence of reliable technical connections, it can help bridge gaps in communications through logical assumptions based on shared perspectives. Of the two types of connectivity, the Perceptual is superior. In its absence, the Technical Connectivity conveys only empty symbols, not meaning; but in the absence of the technical connectivity, perceptual connectivity can go a long way toward facilitating shared understanding and self-synchronization, even with very little data. Our culture embraces and invests heavily in Technical Connectivity; but cannot be bothered with the imponderables associated with Perceptual Connectivity. This too is a model for investing vast treasures in projects that can't deliver promised outcomes.

Building shared frames of reference is a daunting challenge; but success in doing so is not unprecedented. It requires a high level of socialization among the persons and forces involved. W. Edwards Deming's "Theory of 'Profound Knowledge'" illuminates the challenges here. An example of successfully implementing this in a warfighting organization can be drawn from the Prussian "Scharnhorst Reforms" of 1808. There, Gerhard von Scharnhorst, applying lessons learned before and during the Napoleonic Wars, set in motion a process that culminated in 1917 under Erich Von Ludendorff as "Stormtroop Tactics", later evolving into the "Blitzkrieg". This was later emulated with great success by the Israel Defense Force; and our own Marine Corps has been assimilating it since the 1980's under the name, "Maneuver Warfare Doctrine". At their core, all of these are "Post-Industrial-Age", "Third-Generation" techniques of warfighting that focus on strong shared cultural overlays as a means of consciously, systemically, and routinely unleashing latent human creativity, stimulating desired emergent behaviors, and facilitating self-synchronization, even in the absence of direct guidance and assured communication.

If I had only 60 minutes to save the world, I would spend 59 minutes defining the problem, and one minute in solving it.

— Albert Einstein, Physicist and Philosopher

*The needs of 'The Long War' will define
'Defense Transformation.'*

IV. Conclusion: Epistemology and Defense Transformation

An appreciation of Strategy as inherently epistemological is itself revolutionary and "Transformational". How we might best apply this appreciation to shaping useful defense transformation is the subject of this section.

According to DoD policy, to remain viable, the Armed Forces of the US, the Dept. of Defense, and the Defense Community must "Transform". The nature of that Transformation however, is far from clear. The late Admiral Arthur Cebrowski, the former Director of the DoD's Office of Force Transformation stated that "transformation is ultimately about — new values, new attitudes, and new beliefs and how those are expressed in the behavior of people and institutions … nations, states, and others who wage war, do so in ways appropriate to their culture and values." This suggests that transformation must be primarily cultural, linked to society's evolution from the Industrial-Age to an as yet undefined Post-Industrial-Age based on "Human-Centricity". This, in turn, requires a new appreciation of productivity, such as is reflected in the words of W. Edwards Deming: "Long-term commitment to new learning and new philosophy is required of any management that seeks transformation … (that) can only be accomplished by man, not by hardware." Transformation is widely confused with mere change, and is usually misconceived as primarily technological in nature. Until these mistakes are corrected, we will never succeed in achieving lasting and practical advances. How might genuine and useful transformation be best achieved throughout our Defense Community? I would suggest that, of all its myriad attributes, it would likely possess the following key properties:

A. It will be bounded by three overarching aspects:

- *A Framework of: Continuous Global Shaping,*
- *A Focus on: the Cognitive Domain, and*
- *A Foundation of: a Third Generation (Post-Industrial-Age) Warfighting Culture*

The "Framework" of Continuous Global Shaping is not explicitly epistemological; but I suggest that it provides necessary structure and context for the other two aspects.

B. It will be informed by the necessary foundations of all cognitive enterprise: *History, Theory, and Philosophy*. These are essential to provide context and the foundation for "designing" a sound "trajectory" along which planning and execution can be conducted to desired effect.

C. It will be designed to be oriented outward, toward the adversary, the environment, and the mission (as op-posed to inward, toward perpetuating and replicating itself); and to systemically stimulate desired Emergent Behaviors, notably: *Synergy, Adaptability, and Opportunism.*

D. Every element of this effort will be consciously focused on enhancing the three transcendent values for any enterprise, enhanced: *Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Economy.*

This is a coherent structure for Defense Transformation. It incorporates Strategy and Epistem-ology in a useful synergy. It is "descriptive" rather than "prescriptive". I have focused on what Transformation should be, as opposed to how to achieve it. There are many scholarly works on the latter, notably by Trevor Dupuy, Edward Luttwak, Martin Van Creveld, Williamson Murray, Douglas Macgregor, & Donald Vandergriff. Such prescription is beyond the scope of this paper.

*There is nothing more practical than a
sound philosophy.* ✦

*The views expressed are those of the author and do not
necessarily reflect the views of the Institute
or its members*

Dear Editor

I'm afraid that in his Letter to the Editor in Issue #2, Commodore Baugniet missed the point of the article "Hamas and the Arab States".

But, first a quick comment on balanced reporting. When an article, be it a newsletter or a newspaper, has a byline then the author is writing from their viewpoint. This normally means that they have taken a position and therefore the article's presentation may not be balanced!

This is not; I repeat not an article about Hamas and Israel. There was no criticism of Israeli action and therefore there was no requirement for a balance between the conduct of Hamas against Israel, and vice versa. In the first paragraph the authors have set the stage for the balance of the article. Part of that stage setting was the reporting of casualty figures.

The remainder of the article answers the question that was in my mind at the time these events were unfolding. That is, when the Gaza Strip is being subjected to military onslaught and Israel is surrounded by Arab states, why is the Arab League not protesting very loudly about this turn of events? The authors have answered my question.

Regards,

Bob Sears, Major (ret'd)
Royal Niagara Military Institute

on a political strategy to bring closure to the U.S.-jihadist war that involves negotiating with the Taliban if they part ways with al Qaeda and the transnational jihadists.

Hence the recent visit by Taliban officials to Saudi Arabia and the trips made by Riyadh's intelligence chief, Prince Muqrin bin Abdel-Aziz, to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Saudi monarch, King Abdullah, is also rumored to be personally involved behind the scenes in efforts to pressure Taliban leaders to break free from al Qaeda. But as in the past, the Saudis need help from their allies in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, and here is where they are running into problems. A weak and threatened Pakistani state means that before working with the Pakistanis on the Afghan Taliban, Riyadh has to help Pakistan combat its own Taliban problem, which the Saudis currently are attempting. The Saudis obviously have much to offer the Pakistanis, in terms of both cash and experience. They also have the religious cachet that other Pakistan allies, such as the Americans and the British, lack, giving them the ability to broach ideological subjects. However, as is the case with the Afghan Taliban, the Saudis will have to get the Pakistani Taliban to part ways with al Qaeda and are working hard to drive a wedge between Pakistani militants and their foreign guests.

These efforts to divide the Taliban from the global jihadists are happening not only during the plush, Saudi-sponsored trips for Taliban members to conduct Hajj and Umrah in the kingdom. Following a strategy similar to what they did in Iraq, the Saudis and their agents are meeting with Taliban commanders on the ground in Pakistan and Afghanistan to twist arms and offer cash. They also are coordinating very closely with the Pakistani and Afghan authorities who are leading the campaign against the jihadists. For example, Rehman Malik, the Pakistani adviser to the prime minister on the interior (Pakistan's de facto terrorism czar), traveled to Saudi Arabia in January at the invitation of Saudi Interior Minister Prince Naif bin Abdul-Aziz to discuss improving counterterrorism cooperation between the two countries. Many of the 85 most-wanted militants on the list recently released by the Saudi government are believed to be in Pakistan, and the Saudis are working with Malik and the Pakistanis to arrest those militants and return them to Saudi Arabia.

A Clear and Present Danger

Bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, et al., are well aware of these Saudi moves, which they see as a threat to their very existence. When asked in a November 2008 interview what he thought of the Saudi efforts to mediate between Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the Taliban, al-Zawahiri re-sponded that the Saudi efforts pointed out "the historical role of saboteur played by the House of Saud in ruining the causes of the Muslim ummah, and how they represent the agents whom the Crusader West uses to disperse the ummah's energy."

The al Qaeda leadership has nowhere to go if circumstances become untenable for them in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Caught between U.S., Pakistani and Saudi forces, the last thing al Qaeda wants is to lose local support from the Taliban. In other words, Pakistan is their final battleground, and any threat to their continued haven in Pakistan poses a clear and present danger to the organization—especially if the Saudis can play a pivotal role in persuading the Taliban in Afghanistan also to turn against them.

Leveraging its successes against the al Qaeda franchises in Saudi Arabia and Iraq, Riyadh also is working closely with governments to combat the jihadists in places like Yemen as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is, in effect, a global Saudi campaign against jihadism, and we believe al Qaeda has no choice but to attempt to derail the Saudi effort in Pakistan and Afghanistan. There is not much al Qaeda can do to counter Saudi financial tools, but the militant group is in a position to hit back hard on the ideological front in order to counter any Saudi attempt to moderate and rehabilitate jihadists. As noted above, we have seen al Qaeda launch a sustained stream of ideological attacks in an attempt to undercut the Islamic credentials of the Saudi monarch and the Saudi clerical establishment.

Another avenue that al Qaeda can take to interfere with the Saudi charm offensive is to strike Saudi targets—not only to punish the Saudis, but also to try to drive a wedge between the Saudis and the Pakistanis. Al Qaeda's military capabilities have been greatly degraded since 2001, and with the remnant of its Saudi franchise fleeing to Yemen, it likely has very little ability to make a meaningful strike inside the kingdom. However, the one place where the al Qaeda core has shown the ability to strike in recent years is Pakistan. Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, the group's operational commander in Afghanistan and Pakistan, has claimed responsibility for the bombing of the Danish Embassy in Islamabad and for the assassination of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and we have no reason to doubt his claims.

Also, an attack against a diplomatic mission in Pakistan that represents a regime considered an enemy of the jihadists is not unprecedented. In addition to the Danish Embassy bombing and several attacks against U.S. diplomatic facilities and personnel in Pakistan, al Qaeda also bombed the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad in November 1995. According to al-Zawahiri, the Egyptian Embassy was targeted because it "was not only running a campaign for chasing Arabs in Pakistan but also spying on the Arab

why some of these heavier weapons were never used.

A Barrett .50 caliber sniper rifle fires the same cartridge as the M2 Browning heavy machine gun—a weapon of deserved fame for many decades. A .50 caliber bullet fired from a similar rifle by a Canadian soldier set the world record for a long distance sniper kill—2,430 metres—in Afghanistan in 2002. While not shooting nearly that far, apparently an IRA sniper on the Irish side of the border had killed a British sentry a kilometer away in South Armagh (.50 caliber bullets are not stopped by most sets of body armor, either). Letting the Provos use a sniper rifle that could fire at such distances from across a national border had the potential to be another unmanageable problem for the conflict; and according to the anecdote, there were quiet words exchanged in Whitehall (the seat of the British civil service), in a quiet base in Herefordshire (home to the SAS) and quiet words to some members of the same regiment in Ulster.

The end result was allegedly that the suspected sniper was kidnapped from his front porch early one morning (possibly from a residence in the Republic of Ireland), subjected to a hasty interrogation in the back of a car to confirm that he was the sniper, and then his corpse was dumped into a ditch in South Armagh. In any event, whether the story is true or not, the Barrett .50 caliber rifle did not reappear in active use after its initial debut.

Spain

There is a long history of Basque separatism arising out of northeastern Spain, and the Basque terrorist group *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) is but the latest of these—albeit with a Marxist Leninist twist. Formed in 1959, ETA was soon based in France as Francisco Franco's Spain was an authoritarian police state at heart. In the 1960s, as the Franco regime mellowed, ETA made occasional forays into Spain itself, making a few minor attacks. During this time, the French authorities were tolerant of ETA's presence, believing they could play a role in undermining the Spanish regime.

Everything changed after Franco's death in November 1975. Franco had cleared the way for the royal heir, Juan Carlos de Bourbon, to ascend the Spanish throne and the monarch then spent the next three years managing a transition to a constitutional monarchy, and generally overseeing the emergence of the prosperous democracy that Spain is today. However, two groups rapidly emerged to oppose these changes: GRAPO (a small and highly delusional group of violent Maoists that still endures) and ETA. The Basque Marxists did everything they could to fill the transitional period with violence, and were soon killing dozens of people every year—particularly through a series of spectacular assassinations.

In Spain, the tradition of democracy was fragile, and the country was unused to terrorism after the long strictly enforced quiet of the Franco regime in the Post-War years. Given ETA's growing outrages and its safe sanctuary areas in France, it was perhaps inevitable that extralegal action would begin. In 1983, *Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberacion* (GAL) began the first of a series of attacks on ETA members and supporters—real or supposed. Over the next four years, some 27 killings occurred inside both Spain and France. Some of the killers were, or had been, Spanish National Police members; others were hired from the French and Portuguese underworlds.

In 1987, the story about GAL began to leak out and apparently the group was functioning with the tacit approval of the governing Spanish Socialist-Worker's Party (PSOE) and the Prime Minister. While this latter allegation has not been proven, it was subsequently determined that GAL was funded and seemingly directed by a handful senior police officers, members of the Interior Ministry, and some PSOE members.

The Spanish government had no choice but to try and convict those leaders of GAL that came to its attention. Having made a sacrifice to the Law, Spain's new institutions survived the scandal. The net results of GAL's campaign have been hard to accurately assess. On the debit side, the existence of GAL has been a bloody shirt that ETA members and Spanish Marxists still wave whenever possible—though after twenty years, nobody else pays much attention to this anymore.

On the other hand, in 1986 voices of Basque moderation started to express opposition to ETA, and the pace of the terrorist group's operations fell off and it has never again been as deadly as it was before GAL began to kill its members. In January 1988, ETA even agreed to a ceasefire for the first time. Additionally, seemingly stung by GAL activities on its soil, the French began to deny automatic sanctuary to ETA members, and started to cooperate with the Spanish in reducing the overall effectiveness of the Basque terrorists.

The Punjab

Too many Westerners habitually under-estimate the size and complexity of India. A rough and boisterous democracy that is finally starting to reach towards its true potentials; India also far exceeds all of Europe and North America combined in terms of population. Moreover, it has numerous ethno-cultural-linguistic fault-lines contained within it. Since independence and partition in 1947, the challenge for India has always been to remain intact. To allow any major secession movement to succeed is to risk

collapsing into myriad squabbling mini-states.

Of the regional secessionist challenges that have appeared in India, perhaps the most severe they have yet endured came from the Sikhs of the Punjab along the frontier with Pakistan. The Sikhs are a talented minority (being gifted soldiers and merchants) who are concentrated in the Punjab region. They also once had a kingdom of their own, and it was inevitable that a secessionist movement would someday appear.

As it was, the circumstances that finally ignited a full blown campaign of terrorism inside the Punjab were complicated and the Indian government was certainly not blameless… particularly after violently quelling one group that had lodged itself in the Golden Temple of Amritsar in 1984. This had the effect of a bucket of gasoline splashed on a smoldering fire.

To further condense a convoluted history that has plenty of blame to assign to all parties; the main thrust of the insurgency in the Punjab eventually settled on the Babbar Khalsa. This group, like so many other militants in so many other situations, not only waged war against the authorities, but also sought to impose its interpretations of proper behaviour on the community it claimed to be championing. A similar pattern emerged among the Sikh immigrant communities elsewhere in the World with similar results: The Sikh unity that arose after the Golden Temple incident was replaced with internal quarreling between militants and moderates. This slowly had the effect of turning Sikh against Sikh; which in combination with a number of hard-nosed government measures (often far harsher than any Western government would dare contemplate); eventually tipped the balance against the insurgents—but only after other events in later years.

Among the many features of the Indian government's response to the Punjabi insurgency was the suspension of several fundamental rights (including *habeas corpus*), uninvestigated allegations of torture by police and jailors, and summary detentions of suspected supporters of the Sikh militants. This did little to quell the insurgency, and Sikh terrorists were gaining in expertise and audacity—with a growing number of high profile attacks matched to an escalating body count. The worst year for the conflict was 1991, in which some 3,300 people died in the Punjab. At this point, several developments coincided.

While the Indian response to the insurgency was already quite strict, the Punjab was declared to be a 'disturbed area' under India's 1983 *Disturbed Areas Act*; and direct Presidential rule was imposed. This gave police and security forces even broader powers. Worse still for the Babbar Khalsa and other Sikh insurgents was a threat that backfired on them: They had begun to target the families of police officers both in the Punjab and in neighboring states; but this gave the police personal incentives for even more ruthlessness and a number of high-profile disappearances soon ensued.

As always, it can be difficult for police to find terrorists but it much easier to find their supporters. These can include lawyers, activists who conceal their efforts behind a "human rights" façade (like many supporters of the Tamil Tigers or the Jihad do today), businessmen, and a variety of others. A number of activists who were suspected—often flimsily—of being supporters of the Babbar Khalsa soon joined the swelling ranks of the disappeared. Moreover, many more suspects reported being brutally tortured than had heretofore been the case, and a number of 'shot-while-escaping' or 'died–while-resisting-arrest episodes occurred. Later, it transpired that at least 2,097 suspected terrorists and supporters were cremated (often clumsily, as almost half would be partly or fully identified later).

The net effect of this reaction was that the back of the insurgency was broken—and the threat dwindled throughout the 1990s. Draconian laws and measures were slowly withdrawn, although reports of disappearances and other abuses continued for years. A measure of stability returned to the Punjab accompanied by a growing prosperity; but the stability was strained somewhat by continued efforts by supporters and families of those who disappeared to get a measure of accountability and a slow rear-guard action by Indian police and security officials to inhibit this process. Yet the majority of Punjabis seem to have accepted the results without much complaint… either there was a broad acceptance of the necessity of harsh action for national survival, or else standards of expected conduct from Indian authorities remain low. As India slowly becomes a more prosperous and vibrant democracy, it remains to be seen if the legacy of the counter-terror campaign in the Punjab will attract much attention.

Observations: Outside of the UK, Spain and India, there are other examples of the use of extralegal measures in counter-terrorism—many of which were excessive, unnecessary and brutalizing. One need only look at Uruguay and Argentina in the 1970s, or El Salvador and Sri Lanka in the 1980s for bad examples. As has been seen so often in Latin America and elsewhere, death squads have a habit of running away with themselves (or might be swiftly mimicked by less capable personnel), which quickly brings things to the point where it is impossible to differentiate between the terrorists and the police or military. When such occurs, consequences may include the collapse of the moral authority of governments and their institutions, escalating insurgencies, economies sapped by sanctions, and the ruin of national reputations.

Yet the UK, Spain and India escaped these penalties, why?

Firstly, in these three countries extralegal measures do not seem to have been undertaken lightly. Neither Britain nor Spain used them immediately, nor did India unleash the full force of its police and security forces until seven years after the Khalsa insurgency became critical. A country that employs such measures immediately is little different from the terrorists who challenge it.

If extralegal action is to be undertaken, it had best be conducted by highly disciplined and specialized personnel (such as the British SAS Regiment) under limited and exact circumstances. This was not so true for the GAL, far less so for India —which perhaps gives the added bonus that there is no real history of extra-legality in Ulster to research, nor any conclusive proof that these did, in fact, occur (although plenty of seemingly debatable military tactics and intelligence techniques were also employed). There were eight trials and a set of inquiries in Spain about the GAL, and judicial inquiries in India.

If the British did have extralegal operations running against the IRA, these must have been confined to active members of the terrorist group itself. Police in India and the GAL went after members of front-organizations too—lawyers, spokespeople, money conduits, and "human rights activists" (one should remember that many front organizations have such self-styled activists who work to confuse the issue and create complexities for the society that the terrorists have targeted). While vital to the needs of a terrorist group, personnel belonging to front organizations often tend not to be directly involved in facilitating terrorist acts, and are more likely to be immediately missed.

Democratic societies demand accountability: If the press and the supporters of an internal terrorist campaign can generate a judicial inquiry that uncovers the existence of an extralegal program, somebody is going to have to answer for it—with jail time. A cabinet minister or senior civil servant who encourages such a campaign had best be prepared to fall on his sword. The Spanish, at least, got caught, and various officials paid the appropriate penalties. It remains to be seen if this will happen in India; although many years have elapsed since the worst offences of the Punjabi counter-insurgency campaign, the law in some democratic societies can have a long memory.

Additionally, as might be true in India particularly, the public could be prepared to accept the existence of extralegal activities, provided that they see these as a lesser evil than either the terrorists themselves, or what might transpire if the terrorists actually win. Principle does not trump necessity when survival is concerned: Thuggish behaviour by police and security forces that kill a couple of thousand people might well be implicitly preferable for most to the risk of a conflict that kills people in their tens of thousands or more.

The argument that extralegal killings have not been all that decisive is weak. Whatever the British and the Spanish did, the Provisional Wing of the IRA and the Basque ETA stayed within 'tolerable' limits that allowed a whole variety of other means to be successful. After seven years of growing violence in the Punjab, the Babbar Khalsa movement was rapidly quelled by the crackdown and has ebbed away since 1992.

For those with a strong moral objection to violence, two analogies come to mind. When inoculating people against a disease, sometimes the vaccine is itself derived from a weakened or attenuated version of the virus the shot is designed to protect against. When confronting a powerful forest fire or grass fire, sometimes it is necessary to use deliberately set back-fires to contain it.

Maturity sometimes means deliberately not noticing small things, but being ready to intervene if they get out of hand. Even the most scrupulously honest know that little white lies are often necessary for smoothing over life's awkward moments; contributing a couple of hundred dollars to a politician's campaign fund is a wholesome aspect of democratic participation, while slipping a hundred thousand into his unofficial retirement fund isn't. A police officer who accepts the occasional coffee from a storeowner on her beat may be maintaining relationships that are necessary to her task, which is not true of the one taking regular payments from drug dealers. Absolute limits on behaviour are usually nonsensical.

Finally, there are many who argue that the whole of counter-terrorism efforts can be confined to cops and courtrooms, and that no extraordinary measures are ever necessary. Perhaps a dose of practicality and a little more maturity about the use of force would be useful. ❧

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute or its members

Mujahedeen."

Based on the totality of these circumstances—Saudi activities against al Qaeda in South Asia and elsewhere, the al Qaeda perception of the Saudis as a threat and al Qaeda's operational ability in Pakistan—we believe there is a very real threat that Saudi interests in Pakistan might be attacked in the near future. ❧

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