JEMEAA

The Air Force Journal of European, Middle Eastern, and African Affairs

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The US Air Force Journal of European, Middle-Eastern, and African Affairs (JEMEAA)

Welcome to *JEMEAA*, an Air University (AU) quarterly scholarly publication.

The *JEMEAA* already has a long, rich history. Even before the founding of the US Air Force, AU initiated the *Air University Quarterly Review* in 1947 as a professional publication in the highest sense of the word—one that would reflect the best professional thought concerning global concepts and doctrines of air strategy and tactics. Since its inauguration, the journal has also appeared under the titles *Air University Review*, *Airpower Journal*, *Aerospace Power Journal*, and, currently, the *Air & Space Power Journal* (*ASPJ*)

JEMEAA is the continuation of that tradition. *ASPJ* in French (*ASPJ–F*) was launched in 2005, targeting an audience of 29 countries with French as the official language. Four years later, in 2009, *ASPJ–F* became the *Air & Space Power Journal–Africa and Francophonie* (*ASPJ-A&F*). *ASPJ–A&F* grew into a forum for the dissemination of original research and review articles in numerous areas, refereed by subject-matter experts. Each issue appeared in print and online, including contributions in both English and French. The journal is read in 185 countries, 1,015 academic institutions, 292 think tanks in 42 countries, 667 institutes, government agencies, armed and security forces, and so forth.

With this issue, *ASPJ–A&F* becomes *JEMEAA*, a multidisciplinary peer-reviewed journal cutting across both the social sciences and airpower operational art and strategy. The mission of *JEMEAA* is to explore significant issues and serve as a vehicle for the intellectual enrichment of its readers. In addition, *JEMEAA*'s electronic version will allow our readers to discuss articles with other subscribers from around the world and view updated topics. Free from the constraints of conventional printing, *JEMEAA* is able to publish more articles, add new sections, and quickly adapt the journal to our reader's needs. (You can subscribe here or by contacting the editor directly. We will safeguard your email address and send you short quarterly messages announcing the posting of the new issue.)

JEMEAA welcomes contributions from researchers, scholars, policy makers, practitioners, and informed observers on topics such as airpower operational art and strategy, security issues, civil-military relations, leadership, and so forth. Articles should take existing theories and concepts in a new direction or bring a novel perspective to current literature.

In "The Air Force, Grand Strategy, and National Security: Toward a Better Understanding of Airpower's Enduring Utility," Prof. Robert Ehlers addresses the waxing and waning for almost 70 years of the calls for an end to the independent US Air Force and the absorption of its component parts into the other military services. However, during the past 15 years, attacks on the utility of the Air Force—and thus its retention as an independent service—have become increasingly strident. This article takes an opposing view based on the continuing utility of airpower across the entire range of American grand strategic aims and supporting policy efforts. Although Ehlers discusses the importance of airpower as part of a balanced combined-arms force in conventional wars and its often-overlooked effectiveness in other kinds of armed conflicts, the article focuses on how the Air Force and the many assets it employs have proven particularly effective in helping policy makers achieve strategic aims short of armed conflict. This relatively little-discussed dimension of the service's contributions to our country's security and prosperity—and those of key allies and associates—takes center stage and gives the reader a different and better appreciation of the wide range of air (and space) capabilities that the independent Air Force brings to bear. By viewing these capabilities and their employment through a broader lens that includes but goes far beyond war, and in which war is properly situated as the very last policy option, we develop a deeper, more nuanced understanding of both the Air Force and airpower as enduring assets of great importance. Granted, no service—including the Air Force—has approached perfection in either wartime operations or those short of war, but the Air Force has more than proven its worth along with the other services.

Air operations are increasingly executed by coalition forces. In "The Trilateral Strategic Initiative: A Primer for Developing Future Airpower Cooperation," Col Peter Goldfein and Wing Cdr André Adamson present the concept of the Trilateral Strategic Initiative (TSI) and its objective of furthering trilateral cooperation. The authors argue that the TSI and its steering group are a compelling model for improving the coherence of international airpower. The initiative reflects the vision of the air force chiefs of the United States, France, and United Kingdom to increase trust and integration among their services and to advocate for airpower. In the absence of a bureaucratic framework, the TSI is steered by collaboration among the strategic thinking cells of each service's air staff, which includes officers from all three nations. Together, they identify the means to improve interoperability. They also debate airpower concepts to feed the thinking of senior leaders and to spawn cooperation at operational levels. The article considers the historical and cultural convergences among the three air forces as well as countervailing tendencies that allow the initiative to fully realize its potential as an enabler of the

trilateral development and employment of airpower. The authors also note the role of the initiative in informing debate within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Finally, they consider the applicability of this approach for broader cooperation, including its place in a joint context.

In "The European Union (EU) as a Model for its Neighbors From Dream to Nightmare?" Prof. Geoffrey Harris postulates that the EU is facing serious challenges to its legitimacy, attractiveness and normative power, just as instability and threats to its stability and security are growing in its neighborhood. The problems of the eurozone created tensions between the member states. Harris argues that Russian revisionism has not met with a durable collective response. Revolution and war in the Middle East and North Africa left Europe apparently unable to influence events or handle the consequent humanitarian crisis with any conviction. The ideal of European integration has in fact faced increasing internal challenges since the time of the Maastricht Treaty, and the attempt to establish a peaceful neighborhood has failed in the decade since the last EU enlargement. How far do the deepening problems reflect a failure of leadership, or should the EU now abandon its image as a model for others and concentrate on its internal security and avoid trying to resolve the problems of others? In the decades after 1989 the European idea was attractive, waves of enlargement followed, and a neighborhood policy based on values and common interests was tried and failed. Harris ponders if the EU should now choose consolidation and self-defense over deepening and widening of the integration process.

Although rhetorically cordial as ever, the relationship between the United States and Israel underwent key changes in recent years, according to Dr. Khalil Marrar. In "Allies in Flux: American Policy after the Arab Spring," he argues that with the Obama administration's "pivot to Asia," the "Arab-Spring-turned-Winter," and geopolitical challenges from Russia and China in their respective zones of influence, the United States' commitments to Israel and other Middle East allies—most notably Saudi Arabia and Egypt—have necessarily evolved under scrutiny and in light of changes in the global and regional strategic terrain. Furthermore, even though American policy remains susceptible to influence from a variety of domestic lobbying and public opinion pressures, international forces have once again proven preeminent in the ultimate American approach to world affairs. Dr. Marrar examines how changes in the prevailing order have trumped America's commitments to its Middle East allies, most notably Israel, and traces how those alterations supersede and influence domestic politics surrounding foreign-policy decision making in the United States. This approach warrants a larger study, but the author focuses on the effects of the Arab Spring and Winter

on the American policy calculus in the Middle East and the subsequent impact on political pressure groups representing Arab and Muslim-American interests.

The level of interests, level of resources, and strategic culture all factor into explaining the differences and similarities between military operations by France and the United States in Africa, contends Prof. Stephen Burgess in "Military Intervention in Africa: French and US Approaches Compared." While both constructivist and realist perspectives are necessary for comparative analysis, the argument in this article is that strategic culture and attitudes towards risk, as well as the differences in perceived spheres of influence, are more insightful than the realist perspective in explaining the different ways that France and the United States chose to intervene in Africa. The Powell Doctrine and casualty and risk aversion explain why the United States is less willing to intervene directly militarily in Africa; however, the relatively lower level of US interests in Africa as compared with Southwest Asia must also be taken into account. In addition, the US military has an organizational culture of winning, while the French military is accustomed to messy outcomes, which also explains the differences in interventionism. The prepositioning of French forces in Northwest Africa increases the likelihood that they will be used in operations. The prepositioning of US forces in Djibouti has not led to direct military intervention in Somalia, even as the capital and country were on the verge of falling to violent extremists. However, the extensive use of US special forces in Somalia and Northwest Africa has begun a process of convergence with the French military posture.

In "Air Mobility Challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa," Maj Ryan McCaughan, USAF, analyzes the challenges associated with an airlift in sub-Saharan Africa, how the United States and partners have attempted to address these issues in the past, and why those attempts have been insufficient. A qualitative research methodology has been utilized to show that the status-quo model of support has proven insufficient and expensive and only through a comprehensive, coordinated approach, which aligns the efforts of the United States, the African Union, US industry, capable African partners, and other interested Western nations, will this problem finally be resolved.

Rémy M. Mauduit, Editor
Journal of European, Middle-Eastern, and African Affairs
Maxwell AFB, Alabama

The Air Force, Grand Strategy, and National Security

Toward a Better Understanding of Airpower's Enduring Utility

Robert Ehlers, PhD

For nearly 70 years, calls for an end to the independent Air Force and the absorption of its component parts into the other services have waxed and waned. During the past 15 years, however, attacks on the utility of the Air Force, and thus its retention as an independent service, have become increasingly strident. Robert M. Farley's latest call for an end to the Air Force is just one of many, if perhaps the most well known. His arguments have changed little from those he made in 2008 and remain just as unconvincing.[1]

The reasoning for abolishing the Air Force and incorporating its equipment and personnel into the other services inevitably evokes the time-worn claim that the Air Force is the only service that cannot be decisive in its own right and therefore is a "supporting" service in the most basic sense of the word. The Army, by contrast, is the decisive service in any war that requires Americans to close with and defeat the enemy. The Navy keeps open our sea lines of communication and thus ensures logistical superiority for our troops on the ground. It also shows the flag and exerts pressure through freedom-of-navigation operations. The Marine Corps is a vital service that must not be pulled apart because it gives the United States a capability to deliver elite assault infantry and supporting air, armor, artillery, and other assets worldwide with very little warning. The Air Force, we often hear, is simply an adjunct whose missions support these more fundamental and important activities. According to this school of thought, the other services could very easily incorporate the various roles, missions, equipment, and personnel of a dismembered Air Force. Inconvenient cases in which airpower has made grand-strategic impacts of its own, and sometimes on its own, do not find their way into these lines of argument. The Berlin airlift, for instance, could and should have been an Army—or perhaps a Navy—operation according to the detractors' line of reasoning. However, anyone who understands the immense complexity of planning, executing, and coordinating a combined air effort of such massive proportions with the Royal Air Force recognizes the deep flaws in this argument. This effort, which literally fed and heated the inhabitants of West Berlin and kept the city out of Russia's orbit, underscored the fact that properly employing airpower demands the same kinds of domain-specific expertise necessary in the other ser-

vices. This single example also puts to rest the false dichotomies created by those who champion the "supported" and "supporting" services rationale in which the Air Force is inevitably in the "supporting" role. Such claims ultimately fail to address what the Air Force really *does* for American national security, why it is uniquely capable in this capacity and across the range of mission sets it has honed for as many as 100 years, and why dismembering it and dividing its assets among the other services will produce a series of cascading effects that would prove as troublesome in operations short of war as they would catastrophic during major military conflicts.

Rather than engaging in what currently passes for debate regarding the continuing utility of and need for an independent Air Force, it is time to address the question of the service's utility from the perspective of grand strategy, policy formulation and execution, and American national-security outcomes, particularly efforts to achieve strategic aims short of war. As theorists from Carl von Clausewitz to Sun Tzu remind us with some urgency, war—or in a more general sense, armed conflict—is the very last policy resort.[2] Effective grand strategies seek to attain objectives short of war or, if war is necessary, at the lowest possible cost in blood and treasure. Further, they pursue continuing advantage and, in cases in which war occurs, the "better peace" that B. H. Liddell Hart says we must have once the fighting ends.[3] This approach and these theorists' ideas will give us much clearer insights into whether or not the Air Force has paid its way as an independent service engaged in the protection of the republic and its citizens or whether, as critics assert, it has had its day and should now stand down.

The ultimate yardstick by which we must measure any military service's utility is the degree to which it supports grand-strategic and subordinate policy efforts and thus, by extension, how well it contributes to the safety and prosperity of the American people. Clausewitz reminds us that "the political [policy] object—the original motive for the war [conflict]—will thus determine both the military [or other] objective to be reached and the amount of effort it requires."[4] We must read this admonition within our own context if we are to make sense of it—hence the bracketed words within the original quotation. In questions of orchestrating grand strategy and supporting policy efforts to maintain a continuing advantage over our adversaries, many national objectives fall short of the threshold of armed conflict—or at least should do so. Clausewitz focused on war not because he thought that resolving issues short of war was impractical. In fact, his work is brimming with cautions against going to war unless realizing a policy objective is otherwise impossible and with reminders that the objective must be of vital importance if one is to consider war. As he warns us, "The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to

establish . . . the kind of war upon which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature."[5] This trivalent warning concerns pondering whether or not to go to war at all, understanding why we are doing so if it appears unavoidable, and developing a realistic set of strategy and policy objectives that do not change based on the whims or misunderstandings of politicians and military commanders. If we can reach an objective short of war and if the country can employ a proper combination of assets to attain this end, then doing so is far preferable to resorting to armed conflict—and this scenario is precisely where airpower in general and the Air Force in particular have been particularly effective.

The product of a Continental power that had no navy to speak of and obviously no air force, Clausewitz discussed this range of issues, from coercion to war, within his own historical and geographic context. However, he would be the first to tell us to discuss them *within our own context*, which includes *an Air Force ideally suited to achieving strategy and policy objectives short of war or to making its sister services dramatically more effective within it*. The Berlin airlift is thus a useful reminder—and just one of many—that airpower has the capacity, when used expertly and in proper orchestration with other instruments of power, to deliver grand-strategic results. Nobody referred to the Air Force as the "supported" service while it orchestrated this crucial victory in 1948–49, but it was in fact "supported." That is, as long as we allow ourselves to think of the employment of the military services and the other instruments of power in this truncated fashion, then one service or instrument is invariably "supported" and the others invariably "supporting" for the duration of a given conflict. This kind of shallow reasoning has produced many policy and military failures and will very likely, and sadly, produce many more.

In its most basic sense, then, grand strategy is the process by which policy makers determine how to gain and maintain a continuing advantage over competitors, adversaries, and enemies. Policy is the collection of activities designed to attain grand-strategic objectives. The various instruments of power, including our military, are—at least in theory—employed in the most effective possible combinations with one another to achieve policy objectives and, by extension, strategic ones. Within this process, which, Clausewitz reminds us, is simple in the abstract but difficult in execution, the Air Force has played its role with varying levels of success, as have the other services.[6] Additionally, the Air Force has done more than its fair share in securing the "better peace" that Liddell-Hart reminds us should be the paramount concern whenever we go to war or engage in any policy effort short of war.[7] What matters here is the proper coordination of our various national assets, often in concert with those of other countries, to ensure the re-

public's security and prosperity. These dynamic and sometimes unlooked-for serendipitous *interactions* among the services, between the military and other instruments of power, and between American and allied or coalition efforts (*Wechselwirkungen,* as Clausewitz refers to these interactions of strategic consequence) often account for the difference between success and failure.[8] Among other objectives, this article seeks to highlight ways in which the number, richness, and effectiveness of these interactions would be fundamentally weakened and in fact impoverished by the disestablishment of the Air Force.

The United States was among the first great "airgoing" countries and is now the last of them to have an independent air force capable of producing strategy and policy outcomes in conjunction with the other services and instruments of national power or on its own. Despite personnel and equipment drawdowns, the Air Force retains an exceptionally potent capability. When used creatively and with proper attention paid to its abilities and limitations as they relate to realizing national objectives, airpower can still alter an adversary's decision calculus. Further, it can give allies and associates everything from a major military edge to protection, reassurance, and extensive humanitarian aid on very short notice. Finally, the Air Force has the unique capabilities to project substantial lethal or nonlethal power anywhere on the planet, independent of any other services or instruments of power, within hours in the relatively rare instances when doing so proves necessary.

Colin Gray notes astutely that "debates over the past and future of air power more often than not address both ancient and irrelevant questions. . . . The air force must be independent of army and navy service cultures for the elementary reason that fighting in, for, and from the sky is a unique activity."[9] It is an activity that has produced exceptionally lethal and nimble capabilities that render judgments about airpower based on its misuses rather than its proper ones either unsound or tenuous. Gray's chapters on airpower in his groundbreaking work *Explorations in Strategy* remain highly relevant and useful today, 18 years after their publication in 1998. So do his additional insights in *Modern Strategy*, which appeared a year later. In fact, if Gray were to rework these chapters now, many of the detailed observations would likely change in keeping with the rapidly shifting contextual realities of the twenty-first century, but his major arguments would almost certainly remain the same. Further, they would be just as relevant for public servants charged with understanding how and why an independent Air Force makes major and unique contributions to our national security that could not be replicated merely by shifting personnel and equipment into the other services. Gray's focus on both the "logic" of grand strategy, which he views as unchanging, and on its "grammar" (the instruments of power and processes used to obtain strategic ends, which are changing increasingly rapidly over time) gives us a criti-

cal set of lenses through which to view the utility of airpower. Further, they help us understand why airpower belongs within an independent service whose practitioners are expert (if imperfect) in its employment, just as practitioners in the other services are expert (if equally imperfect) in the contextually and operationally effective use of assets under their control.[10]

Although Gray would be the first to tell us that his work deals primarily with war and the unique contributions of the various services and domain-specific capabilities within this arena, he also gives us many insights into understanding the potentially important or even central role of airpower in *all* strategy and supporting policy efforts, whether at the level of armed conflict or short of it. This latter category, in particular, requires much more emphasis than scholars have given it to date. Airpower is an indispensable member of the combined-arms team in conventional war. Examples throughout World War II, the early stages of the Korean War, the 1972 Spring Offensive in Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm, Israel's uses of airpower in its wars with the Arab states, and many other examples make this fact crystal clear. Armies win faster and with much lower casualties when capable airmen, exercising direct control over air assets, work with ground and naval commanders (who retain direct control over their assets) to maximize combined-arms effects. These are all clear matters of historical record, holding just as true today despite the changing character of certain forms of armed conflict in the current century.

However, the story too often not told in the grand narrative of airpower's utility and suitability to remain concentrated largely within a separate military service is the one involving air operations in a myriad of national-security problems short of war. Just as Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines are best suited to employ force within their own domains and in a given context, so Airmen are uniquely capable of employing their domain-specific assets across a wide range of strategy goals and policy requirements. This problem is the most basic one with the works of Clausewitz and Gray, which do not discount the importance of achieving strategic objectives short of war but which also concentrate almost entirely on war itself rather than the myriad policy efforts short of it. Consequently, one must place certain of Gray's statements, such as "The Land Matters Most," firmly into context.[11] It very clearly matters most when a military must take and hold ground to help attain strategic and supporting policy objectives, but it matters much less if no need exists to take and hold ground. Similarly, although the Navy exerts a powerful role short of war with freedom-of-navigation and show-of-force operations, among others, it is not *the*, or even *a*, decisive force in major conventional war. However, that service may be so in various conflicts and crises short of war. Whether we consider Seventh Fleet operations off of Taiwan to deter Mao Zedong's army from invading,

the Navy's principal role in the blockade during and after the Cuban missile crisis, its vital role in escorting shipping during the "tanker wars" of the 1980s with Iran, and its power-balancing efforts in dozens of other instances, the service has often proven that the land does not always matter most. So has the Air Force.

Even in certain kinds of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations, land power is not sufficient to do the job. The first phase of the war in Afghanistan (2001–2) was almost entirely a special forces, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and airpower effort to enable the Northern Alliance to take decisive action against the Taliban. The land may have mattered most in the end, but it would have mattered very little without the Northern Alliance. Furthermore, the costs of a major US and International Security Assistance Force ground effort *without* the Northern Alliance to play the role of surrogate army and a major air presence to hammer successive Taliban defensive positions would have been much slower, costlier, and bloodier for the Army and Marines. The subsequent phase of the Afghanistan War and the Iraq War further serves to remind us that ground forces may not matter very much in terms of positive outcomes when the strategic objectives set for them are impossible to achieve or when policy makers forfeit any strategic advantage they may have gained—or both. Building a functioning democracy—or any kind of centralized government, for that matter—has always been a Sisyphean task in Afghanistan, and the people who inhabit the cobbled-together state we call Iraq have never known true democracy or even wanted it. And so ground power could not deliver—not because our troops were not outstanding but because our policy makers were not. A shallow thinker might point to the Army's and Marines' major armed conflicts during the period of the independent Air Force's existence—Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Afghanistan, and Iraq—and conclude that they have had one win, one tie, and three losses, and that they are therefore not effective. To carry this nonsensical argument to its extreme, one might then make the case that it is time to disband one or both services, combine them, or reshape them radically to make them more responsive to national-security crises. However, this line of (un)reasoning overlooks the many instances when the Army and Marines played vitally important roles in conflicts short of war, the most obvious being deterrence along the inner-German border. Only slightly less noteworthy is the very successful deterrent action on the Korean Peninsula since the armistice was signed in 1953. In both cases, potential aggressors chose not to attack or still are not doing so. American ground forces, simply by their presence and will, formed a key foundation for the hugely positive changes in governance and economic growth in these critical regions of the world. Air and naval power played their own vital roles in these and many other cases of deterrence that led to major grand-strategic successes. To argue that any one service or

instrument of power was uniquely useful (or useless) in these kinds of efforts is misguided. Instruments of power respond to policy makers' guidance, and they are either more or less effective in nearly direct proportion to the soundness of the policies they support. The Air Force is far from unique here.

Even when one removes armed conflict from the mix of national-security efforts in which airpower plays major roles, the list of its contributions remains long and weighty in terms of what it actually *does* to support American strategy and policy. The first and most important of these qualities is the coercive power it exercises as a result of its range, speed, and lethality. This capability, of course, is entirely independent of the nuclear-security assets the Air Force brings to the table. No other service has the insight, expertise, or seven decades of practical experience engaging in the support of deterrence or compellance—as Thomas Schelling and others used these terms in their works—over continental and global ranges.[12] The very existence of an extraordinarily agile, flexible, and lethal air capability makes the United States unique in the world. Accordingly, Colin Gray asserts that America is an airpower nation to a greater degree than any other.[13] Geography, military and economic power, and the requirement for policy flexibility, given American commitments in the world, all reinforce this basic truth. Whether policy makers are tempted to misuse these uniquely American capabilities—and they often have done so as a result of either innocent or willful ignorance and egocentrism—is not the fault of Airmen or airpower any more than the improper and rash commitment of ground or naval forces is the fault of Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines. Nor does it constitute any sort of valid argument for disestablishing the Air Force and giving its component parts to the other services.

A related and equally important—and distinctive—airpower function is the provision of rapid reassurance and support to allies around the globe. The age of state rivalries and interstate conflict is far from over, as recent Russian actions in Estonia, Georgia, and—most recently—Ukraine make abundantly clear. Vladimir Putin's constant employment of his instruments of power, bluff, bravado, and a masterful deception effort against the United States and European Union remind us that states and state power persist and that both are highly consequential. The forward deployment of air assets to Saudi Arabia immediately after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, to countries in Eastern Europe after various Russian provocations, along the Asia-Pacific Rim to counter Chinese provocations in the South China Sea, and to South Korea and Japan as a reminder that neither North Korea nor China has anything like a free hand on the peninsula or in the region, are just the most obvious of dozens of such examples. Whether or not the rapid deployment of airpower or even the threat of it has averted armed conflicts is open to argument. The question is also irrelevant. Airpower is ideally suited to operating

alongside and in effective combinations with other instruments of power specifically to ensure that nobody decides to risk war. Once again, the paradox of airpower's strategic efficacy is clear. It is extraordinarily lethal during military operations, but airpower's greatest benefit to American national security and that of its allies is simply its presence and firm employment as a means of warning adversaries and enemies that they will pay a heavy price for armed aggression.

A third unique characteristic of airpower at the level of grand strategy and in crises short of armed conflict is its ability to gain and maintain air superiority or simply to assert it by arriving in place and, having done so, to deter potential opponents from taking actions they otherwise would have taken. One such example was the period following Desert Storm, when no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq prevented Saddam Hussein from exacting the full measure and kind of revenge he preferred on the Kurds and Shia Arabs. The no-fly zones were far from perfect. Saddam managed to kill Kurds and particularly Shia the old-fashioned way—on the ground and in his many prisons. However, the United Nations resolutions and the policy makers' will to minimize the abuse of these peoples—and to keep Saddam from moving his army without threat—came together to place severe restrictions on what he was actually able and willing to do, not only to peoples within his own borders but also to those in neighboring countries. Additionally, the impracticability (from many perspectives) of sending the Army and Marines in yet again to establish and enforce long-term "no-drive zones" left just one military service with the range of capabilities and expertise to do the job. Similarly, although far from perfect and in some cases not entirely effective, no-fly zones over Bosnia ultimately led to Operation Decisive Force, an air-ground operation coordinated with Croat and Bosnian Muslim troops that forced the Bosnian Serbs and their backers to stop the fighting.[14]

The ability of airpower, along with that of space power, to collect a massive amount of intelligence has also played an absolutely crucial role far beyond the bounds of armed conflicts. The unceasing, dangerous, and highly effective aerial reconnaissance missions around the periphery of the Soviet Union (and over it) told policy makers a great deal about the Russians' capabilities and occasionally about their intent. Increasingly, signals intelligence intercepts told us that their capability and will to continue the long confrontation with the United States were decreasing by the early 1980s—a set of insights that President Reagan used with great skill as he and his staff worked with key allies to craft a final push designed to bring about the collapse of the USSR. Reagan's attacks on the "Evil Empire" and his famous statement "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall" were much more than mere sound bites. Rather, they were implements for fomenting the uprisings in Eastern Europe that played such a central role in the collapse of the Soviet

Union. As this drama proceeded, huge quantities of intelligence delivered by aircraft and satellites—along with new weapons programs such as the B-2 bomber, Peacekeeper ICBM, and Pershing II intermediate-range ballistic missile, as well as dramatically improved Army–Air Force jointness with a new blueprint for war (AirLand Battle)—played an important collective role in convincing the Russians that they had lost and needed to take another path.

Air intelligence gave the Kennedy administration its first indications that the Russians had deployed SS-4 medium-range ballistic missiles and nuclear warheads to Cuba. Subsequent intelligence reports gave the president and his Executive Committee the detailed situational awareness they needed to deal with Khrushchev from a position of firmness but also restraint—an approach that allowed for a major grand-strategic victory, the avoidance of what could have been a nuclear conflict, and innovations such as a hotline to ensure the availability of an open communications channel between US and Russian heads of state to avert any further crises of this magnitude or the major armed conflicts that might come in their wake. Military chiefs called for a massive air strike on Russian missiles and other assets followed by a ground invasion of Cuba, but Kennedy chose a wiser course—one informed in large part by air intelligence.

Air and space intelligence capabilities developed over the past century have resulted in an immensely complex set of structural and procedural skills and insights that simply cannot be replicated by moving them from one service to another. Of all the services, the Air Force focuses most heavily on grand-strategic and military-strategic intelligence although it is equally adept at the operational and tactical levels. No other service can perform these missions, and the time it would take to get them to these levels of proficiency—if in fact they were to arrive at all—would be decades, not months or years. The Army considers its remotely piloted vehicles organic to specific units (much as it did with aircraft during the interwar years and early phases of World War II) and thus keeps two-thirds of them out of the fight at any given time rather than leaving them forward and mating them with specialists from incoming units. Although doing so has its advantages in terms of tactical responsiveness, it also leaves far too much of the fleet idle.[15] This situation raises the question about whether or not the Army would make proper use of major airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets at higher levels of strategy and policy to help avert armed conflicts rather than support troops on the ground once wars are already under way. By definition, the former is preferable to the latter in nearly every case. The Navy and Marines have effective ISR capabilities of their own, but they also tend to reside at the operational and tactical levels and thus concentrate on delivering

actionable intelligence during armed conflicts rather than before they begin in an effort to avert them.

Perhaps the least remarked but most persistent and diplomatically important aspect of airpower is its ability to project humanitarian relief into the furthest corners of the earth. Something that has attracted little notice is the fact that Air Force humanitarian operations, in concert with important but often "supporting" efforts by the other services, have saved a very minimum of 40 million people since the creation of this independent service in 1947.[16] These efforts have been of varying strategic importance. Some, such as the Berlin airlift, have served vital national interests in very direct and unusually effective ways. Others, such as periodic tsunami-relief efforts in Bangladesh, make no clear contribution to US interests on their own but in concert with the many other humanitarian operations that occur either in parallel with or in temporal proximity to these kinds of missions. Although it is impossible to gauge with precision the long-term diplomatic advantages and improved perceptions of the United States that such operations convey, no one who has served overseas and discussed the favorable impact of these humanitarian efforts on those on the receiving side—whether "average" people, military officers, or policy makers—can come away with anything other than a clear understanding of the quiet, strong, and largely beneficial effects these operations have over time and space.

Unfortunately, even these missions can change in character and thus in their objectives right out from under the military, as the Somalia misadventure underscores. The mission shifted from feeding starving Somalis to pursuing warlords and building a state structure where none had ever existed, Siad Barre's short-lived simulacrum of a state notwithstanding. Given the extraordinarily restrictive rules of engagement in place for this effort and its fundamental impossibility in light of the contextual and cultural realities of Somali clan-based structures and loyalties, neither air-mobility aircraft nor fighters nor the then brand-new remotely piloted vehicles could have made a difference. Nor could a carrier battle group, a Marine expeditionary unit, or an Army Ranger battalion (the latter case tragically clear in this instance). As with any other instrument of power, the Air Force is only as effective as the policy makers who send it off to perform various policy efforts.

Even though space and cyberspace are parts of the larger Air Force mission (the former is very largely planned, executed, and monitored by Air Force personnel), their contributions matter only in terms of the ways in which expertise and mission requirements come together. Regarding space power expertise, the Air Force has led the effort since the very beginnings of the space age and continues to do so. The cumulative expertise thus developed is neither easy to replace nor likely

to be so by other services, with the same degree of proficiency, should they take control of this mission. All services have limits regarding how many mission sets they can take on before beginning to lose focus on the most important ones and thus suffering a reduced level of aggregate effectiveness in mission performance.

Perhaps the cyber arena proves this point more clearly than anything else as a result of its ubiquitous presence (or, paradoxically, its nonpresence in terms of physical domains), the evident inability to find it a home, and continuing questions and problems regarding how best to apportion authorities for wartime activities and those in conflicts short of war. Similar arguments surrounded air and space capabilities as they emerged and matured. Each has found a good, if not a perfect, home in the Air Force in the century and half century, respectively, since coming into being. Cyber will also find a home although it is not at all clear that it will do so in the Air Force. In fact, it is not even clear that cyber should find a home there, considering how much the contextual factors at play with cyber differ from those involved in the ultimate placement of air and space power within the Air Force. Any claim that a new "war-fighting" capability must by definition reside with the newest service should be viewed with great skepticism. It made sense for air and space assets, but the case for cyber assets is nowhere near as clear. Nor is it likely to be, even with the passage of time. In fact, the opposite may well be the case, leading to an independent Cyber Force or operational control of this (non)domain by the National Security Agency through the direct control of the executive branch. Time will tell, but at this point any effort to argue that cyber is a capability uniquely matched to Air Force talents and Airmen's insights is doomed to failure, as are any attempts to pry the service away from its obvious roles and unique skill sets in air and space.

Unfortunately, cyber has given critics of the independent Air Force additional ammunition if only because the newness of cyber allows them to argue in extremes about *all* Air Force roles and missions even though "extremist" theories of airpower (Giulio Douhet and Hugh Trenchard after World War I and the most extreme of the "bomber barons" during World War II) have long resided in Gray's "ancient and irrelevant" category. This tendency to discuss things in extremes without ever arriving at an understanding of how airpower (and everything else) works in the real world, rather than in an abstract one, is fatal to any argument. Clausewitz's entire opening chapter in *On War* deals with absolute war and why, in the abstract world, all armed conflicts would inevitably gravitate to the greatest possible levels of effort and violence. However, he moves from there to the antithesis of this position—no war at all—and then arrives at a synthesis in which war assumes its real characteristics rather than its absolute ones. This Hegelian logic, so central to any kind of effective analysis, is missing from attacks on Air Force

independence. These inevitably set forth outdated ideas about the air weapon as the primary means for arguing that because airpower never achieved the early claims set forth for it by key theorists, it has therefore failed, by this test alone, to merit independent status within a separate service. Seeking a useful synthesis within which to judge airpower's efficacy within an independent service and as part of a combined-arms team would be a much more useful effort, but it is as of yet a relatively rare one.[17] Some individuals have leveled charges that the Air Force clings to a "vision of warfare that does not, despite tremendous investment, meet the defense needs of the United States."[18] As it turns out, this "vision" is what came to be called strategic bombing during World War II—a concept long since abandoned by the Air Force and policy makers. Efforts to define the service according to these outmoded concepts and to argue from there that, by extension, it has no relevance to today's grand-strategic and policy contexts are untenable.

One particularly telling example of this tendency is the argument that heavy bombers built during the Cold War, from the B-46 to the B-2, were not useful because they were never utilized for their intended purpose.[19] Clearly, this assertion is not valid, given that their use in a nuclear exchange would have constituted the most egregious failure of strategy. These weapon systems were built more to be present than to be used—although they were quite capable of performing their wartime missions if called upon to do so. This was the peculiar logic of the Cold War—namely, that transparency about one's strength was the most effective deterrent to any temptation the other side might have to use its own nuclear-armed assets or even its major conventional ones, for that matter. Viewed in this light, the development and fielding of postwar heavy bombers were part of a major grand-strategic success and made clear the centrality of the Air Force to deterrence—and compellance—during the Cold War, and to the eventual American victory in that conflict. The even greater irony here is that the very aircraft said to be of no use because they were not employed in combat during the Cold War have evolved into new roles and missions in which they have flown in combat with great effect. Ask any Northern Alliance soldier about the utility of heavy bombers and the Global Positioning System–guided Joint Direct Attack Munition in the fall of 2001, and he will tell you without pause that they broke the Taliban's back along every major defensive position and allowed for its rapid dispersal, along with al-Qaeda Prime, in coordination with a surrogate ground force, CIA operatives, and special forces. Put simply, context changes, and inherently agile and flexible services such as the Air Force do best in such environments. Judged by any measure, the independent Air Force has proven its ability to change with the times and to engage emerging enemies and adversaries in new, ingenious ways in concert with the other services and the other instruments of power.

As various events referenced earlier make equally clear, we must also be constantly on our guard when arguments about disbanding the Air Force turn to the topic of temptations that policy makers have to employ such an agile and "easy" service and its inherent capabilities. It is simply wrong to assert that Airmen and their machines are to blame for strategy and policy failures because policy makers sometimes turn to them for an "easy solution" that is neither easy nor a solution but a palliative. Poor policy choices and unsound judgment at the level of national leadership do not constitute grounds for disbanding either the Air Force or any other service. Misuse of the Army and Marines in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan by policy makers as well as general officers does not render them irrelevant ipso facto. They were simply used for misguided policy ends and in some cases by officers who wanted to prove that their service was still the most important one. Air Force officers have sometimes made the same moral and professional errors, but one should not confuse cause and effect any more than one should use it to ascribe irrelevance to an entire branch of the armed forces. If, as Colin Gray says, "the strategic world is perennially beset with salespersons for this or that magical elixir," then we must be watchful, both for this tendency and its opposite number—the devaluation of a specific kind of national power based on equally faulty reasoning.[20] Similarly, one should pay very close attention to his argument that "strategic effect is unavoidable, which is to say that means and ends will conduct a strategic discourse whether or not a polity has [or supports] an explicit strategy (in the sense of plan)."[21]

A final and important point regarding the putative wisdom of disestablishing the Air Force and moving its assets to the other services is to consider the levels and kinds of emphasis they currently place on their air components and the inherent limitations of these instruments. The Army's Aviation Branch is comprised largely of warrant officers, is seen entirely as a supporting service at the tactical level, and is far below the traditional combat-arms branches in terms of overall emphasis as well as the promotion prospects for officers in the branch. Anyone who has served a full career and has worked with these officers understands the inherent and major problems that this state of affairs poses for the development of any broader view regarding airpower (and space power), much less the proper implementation of assets in support of this broader view. It is not suited, by temperament, training, or level of emphasis to take on the massive and complex range of Air Force roles and missions, particularly regarding those focused on matters at the levels of strategy and policy.

The Marine air-ground task forces and subordinate units, though self-contained with organic air assets, are concerned entirely with the support of Marine combat operations at the tactical level and very rarely look beyond that objective. During

Desert Storm, even after the coalition had air supremacy, Marine expeditionary force commanders continually found ways not to release their aircraft for the larger effort *before the start of ground operations* to undermine the Iraqi army's logistical support and its ability to mass and maneuver. The Marine general officers' mind-set was understandably concerned with direct support of their Marines on the ground. However, with no Iraqi attacks possible, given the coalition's air supremacy—especially after the annihilation of two Iraqi armored divisions largely from the air during the Battle of Khafji—the wisest use of aircraft lay in the destruction of Iraq's logistical, communications, and other vital war-making and force-sustainment capabilities. Despite these frictions, once the ground war began, the Marines had all of their aircraft back and in direct support of leathernecks on the ground.[22] The joint force air component commander process worked very effectively, if nowhere near perfectly, despite challenges along the way.

Finally, the Navy's aviation component, though highly capable, has severe range and payload limitations. During the first phase of the Afghanistan War, Navy aircraft required three or sometimes four aerial refuelings by Air Force tankers on ingress to *and* egress from their targets. Shows of force and short-term, short-range strike capabilities are exceptionally useful in various contexts, but they are worlds away from Air Force mission sets and capabilities. They simply cannot deliver the constant presence or weight of effort that Air Force assets bring to bear, whether in the strike, ISR, refueling, mobility, or communications roles, among others.

None of these three services is suited by habits of mind, experience, or capabilities to take on the huge range of missions the Air Force performs to support strategy and policy as well as operations and tactics. When these services do engage in air operations that have strategic effects, they almost invariably rely on Air Force expertise and assets to help them close the deal. It is of the utmost importance to note that every one of these services can and does support strategy and policy efforts to achieve national-security objectives short of war, as does the Air Force. They do so in their own ways, with their own habits of mind, with their own roles and missions, and with various limitations that only the other services, employed within a truly effective combined-arms effort, can offset. Perhaps it is time to address once again how this combined-arms dynamic, the larger interactions between the military and other instruments of power to create an even greater combined-effects dynamic, and American coordination and interaction with its allies and associates all come together to help realize strategic aims short of war, rather than expending inordinate amounts of mental energy on discrediting the utility of one service or another in ways both decontextualized and intellectually truncated.[23]

It is well past time to begin assessing the value of various instruments of power, including the military and its services, in a much wider context than just the prosecution of armed conflict. Indeed, an effective grand strategy ideally should allow the United States to maintain a continuing advantage over enemies, adversaries, and competitors alike without fighting. This objective is not entirely possible in the real world but is feasible to a greater or lesser degree depending upon how effectively and realistically policy makers develop strategic aims and supporting policy actions and how they employ instruments of national power to attain them. In this sense, Airmen and the independent Air Force have proven repeatedly, regardless of their shortcomings in certain instances, that airpower gives policy makers a tremendous level of flexibility to achieve strategic aims short of war. In fact, they have used it toward this end more often than they have used it in violent ways—often as a panacea for their own lack of strategic insight. The employment of transport aircraft during the Berlin airlift; the presence of—but, thankfully, the nonemployment of—nuclear-armed bombers and missiles during the Cold War to deter the Soviet Union; the combination of effective photoreconnaissance and policy making during the Cuban missile crisis; the arrival of a C-141 at Ben-Gurion Airport every 45 minutes during the Yom Kippur (October) War in order to level the playing field and force a truce; the delivery of humanitarian aid all over the world to people who often understand and appreciate America's efforts in this regard; and the proper use of airpower during the Persian Gulf War to starve the Iraqi army of supplies and make its defeat easier for the ground forces are all cases in point.

Whether achieving American strategic aims short of war or making wars far less costly, these uses of airpower remind us that every service contributes to attaining strategic aims. The issue of overriding importance here is not the putative utility of the various services but whether or not policy makers and commanders use them within the proper context and in the proper ways. When one approaches this question of Air Force independence from the level of strategy and policy, the evidence is clear. Without an independent Air Force led by Airmen who understand the full range of capabilities and limitations associated with the assets under their control, any strategic discourse involving airpower will be more problematic. Consequently, its employment will likely prove far less effective than it could be, and our national security will suffer. Inflicting this kind of wound on ourselves by disestablishing the Air Force, or otherwise constraining a broader and deeper understanding of airpower's contributions to strategy and policy, would be the worst kind of folly.

Robert Ehlers, PhD

The author is a professor of security studies at Angelo State University in San Angelo, Texas. From 2010 to 2013, he served as director of the Center for Security Studies and chair of the Department of Security Studies and Criminal Justice, leading a 17-person team in the development of bachelor's and master's degrees across four key national-security disciplines: culture and regional studies, homeland security, intelligence, and criminal justice. A retired US Air Force colonel, former professor of airpower history at the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, and former associate professor of history at the Air Force Academy, Dr. Ehlers earned his bachelor's degree in international studies from Ohio State University in 1986 and a master's degree in history from the University of Florida in 1992; he later returned to Ohio State to complete his doctorate in history in 2005. Dr. Ehlers is the author of *Targeting the Third Reich: Air Intelligence and the Allied Bombing Campaigns* (2009) and *The Mediterranean Air War: Airpower and Allied Victory in World War II* (2015), both part of the University Press of Kansas's Modern War Studies series.

Notes

1. Robert M. Farley, *Grounded: The Case for Abolishing the United States Air Force* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2014). He began this line of argument in an earlier article "Abolish the Air Force," *American Prospect*, 22 October 2007, http://prospect.org/. A critique of it by this author marked a step in what has now become a continuing debate. See "Retain the Air Force, Abolish Anti-jointness," *Wright Stuff* 3, no. 16 (4 September 2008): 1–10.

2. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 92–94, 581, 586, 605–7; and Sun Tzu, *The Illustrated Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 115. Although Sun Tzu tells the reader directly that the greatest acme of skill is not to win 100 battles but to defeat one's enemy without fighting, Clausewitz gives us more indirect but frequent thoughts about this issue. *On War* is concerned with how best to conduct a war once the decision to do so is made, but he reminds us that war is to be conducted "when inevitable" and only after very careful consideration. War is the extension of policy by other means—what human beings do only after diplomatic and other efforts to achieve strategic aims short of war fail to have the desired effect.

3. B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Praeger, 1968), 366.

4. Clausewitz, *On War*, 81. The words in brackets have been added to emphasize that Clausewitz's dictum applies with equal force in conflicts short of war.

5. Ibid., 88.

6. Clausewitz wrote that "everything in strategy is very simple, but that does mean that everything is very easy." Ibid., 178. He was referring to military strategy, as we would call it today, but the principle extends with even greater force to grand strategy, which involves both an overarching set of enduring strategic aims and supporting policy efforts, including—among many others and by no means the primus inter pares—war.

7. Liddell-Hart, *Strategy*, 366.

8. Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 7. Auflage (Hamburg: Nikol Verlag, 2014). The term *Wechselwirkungen* ("interactions") is everywhere in the German edition of *On War* and first appears during Clausewitz's discussion, using the Hegelian dialectic, of the differences between absolute war (war in the abstract) and real war (war as it is within the constraints imposed by a myriad of factors). See pp. 30–36.

9. Colin S. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy* (London: Praeger, 1998), 55, 56.

10. Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999), 270–71.

11. Ibid., 212.

12. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966). The author introduces the concept of coercion, which includes deterrence and compellance, on pp. 2–3. He refers to all three terms frequently throughout the remainder of the book. Deterrence involves using the threat of force to keep an adversary from doing something while compellance forces him to do so. Bernard Brodie also discusses these concepts in his classic work *Strategy in the Missile Age* (Princeton University Press, 1959).

13. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy*, 83–84.

14. See Col Robert C. Owen, ed., *Deliberate Force: A Case Study in Effective Air Campaigning* (Maxwell AFB AL: Air University Press, 2000).

15. Maj David R. Buchanan, USAF, "Joint Doctrine for Unmanned Aircraft Systems: The Air Force *and* the Army Hold the Key to Success," student paper (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 3 May 2010), 10–11, http://www.dtic.mil/. See also Sandra I. Erwin, "Air Force to Army: There Are Better Ways to Deploy Surveillance Aircraft," *National Defense*, January 2010, http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/. The rebuttals after the article fall short precisely because they do not mention the major inefficiencies and consequent reduction in aggregate effectiveness brought on by the deployment and redeployment of remotely piloted vehicles with a dedicated unit rather than their continuous employment in-theater, either with the arrival of new cadres to operate them or with remote operation from outside the theater—or a combination of the two. For Army training issues, see Brendan McGarry, "US Army Mulls Merging Drone Training after Scathing Audit," *DefenseTech*, 5 June 2015, http://defensetech.org/.

16. It is impossible to know with precision how many people the Air Force and other services have saved from starvation and illness, but the 1992–94 Somalia mission alone saved well over a million while operations to feed the Kurds from 1991 to 1994 saved at least 400,000. The delivery of water-purification machines to Rwanda after the genocide there saved at least another million, and probably more, from cholera and other waterborne diseases, and food deliveries averted mass starvation. The Berlin airlift prevented starvation in West Berlin although the total number who would have died is open to debate. Airlift and ground-based operations in China between the end of World War II and the Communist takeover in 1949 saved several million people from starvation. Before this aid arrived, an estimated 10,000 per day were dying of starvation as a result of the Japanese expropriation of rice crops. Along with major deliveries of food, medical teams have saved many people in thousands of missions across the globe. The delivery vehicles are generally Air Force aircraft although the relief and medical parties are very often joint in nature and work with allies and associates. The author's estimate of 40 million is based on a review of every documented and accessible humanitarian effort since 1945.

17. See Robert Ehlers, *Targeting the Third Reich: Air Intelligence and the Allied Bombing Campaigns* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009); and Ehlers, *The Mediterranean Air War: Airpower and Allied Victory in World War II* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015). Both books offer insight into the importance of approaching airpower's utility within a nuanced grand-strategic, policy, military-strategic, operational, and combined-arms/combined-effects framework.

18. Farley, *Grounded*, 1.

19. Ibid., 105–6.

20. Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 7.

21. Ibid., 16.

22. For an excellent analysis of the Marine Corps's resistance to truly joint and properly phased air operations and the Navy's resistance to the same principles, see Mason Carpenter, "Joint Operations in the Gulf War: An Allison Analysis" (thesis, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell AFB, AL, June 1994). Although such concerns are normal, context matters. The Iraqis' inability to mount any kind of offensive action, particularly after their disaster at the Battle of Khafji, made clear both the opportunity to use all available air assets to attack Iraqi logistics and ground formations and the need to do so in order to maximize the effectiveness of ground operations and minimize casualties once the ground phase of the war began.

23. For a discussion of combined-effects power as a more holistic and effective concept than combined-arms operations, see Ervin J. Rokke, Thomas A. Drohan, and Terry C. Pierce, "Combined Effects Power," *Joint Force Quarterly* 73 (2nd Quarter 2014): 26–31, http://ndupress.ndu.edu/.

The Trilateral Strategic Initiative

A Primer for Developing Future Airpower Cooperation

Col Peter Goldfein, United States Air Force
Wing Cdr André Adamson, Royal Air Force, PhD

Since the rudimentary deconfliction measures of the First World War, the US Air Force, Royal Air Force, and French Air Force have developed their ability to conduct coordinated air operations, a practice they have further refined since the end of the Cold War. Interoperability—the effective integration of planning and execution during coalition operations—is now a critical factor for success. Specific to air operations, the importance of interoperability has consistently been identified during North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) actions in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Libya, as well as ongoing coalition efforts in Iraq, Syria, and sub-Saharan Africa. Although each campaign has highlighted specific challenges for the three air forces, they have also demonstrated the potential of airpower integration. Thus, even though all three nations reserve their prerogative to act autonomously, a coalition effort seems a likely response to future crises.

Current doctrine and future strategy also confirm the importance of a coalition approach to air operations.[1] Broadly speaking, coalition operations offer some tangible advantages. Specifically, political resilience, strategic reach, and individual niche capabilities are better employed when air forces combine capacity. The identification of common objectives makes national efforts more closely aligned and coherent. Additionally, responding collectively at short notice is increasingly important to national leadership; consequently, success depends upon the constant monitoring of and investment in interoperability, even for the closest of allies. Operations act as a catalyst to integration (through sheer necessity), but difficulties that emerge during complex multinational operations point to the need to preempt those frictions by raising the baseline of trust and interoperability ahead of the next operation. The effort demands clearly articulated political intent, the identification of common objectives, and the necessary resources to develop a trust-based, effective partnership.

The Trilateral Strategic Initiative (TSI) provides one such framework. The initiative had its origins in the personal relationships among the three air force chiefs who articulated their initial vision via a letter of intent in 2011 and signed a TSI charter in 2013, which not only outlines both intent and objectives but also designates a steering group. Three pillars of strategic importance lie at the heart of the initiative: increasing trust, improving interoperability, and advocating for airpower.

Together, they set conditions for the more effective employment of airpower. Oversight of the initiative is the responsibility of the Trilateral Strategic Steering Group (TSSG), composed of senior officers from the three nations, serving in trinational teams placed in strategic posts close to the chiefs. This arrangement maximizes their effectiveness in areas of trilateral interest.[2] The TSI is now in its third generation of trilateral chiefs who are equally supportive of the initiative, and a new version of the charter was recently signed at the Royal International Air Tattoo, United Kingdom, in July 2015.

To better understand the potential of this initiative and its steering group as a model for advancing international cooperation, one must explore the elements that make it a viable proposition for the constituent air forces. Doing so requires consideration of the initiative's defining characteristics, the means chosen by the steering group to develop it, and the challenges that the initiative faces to achieve its goals.

Natural Convergences and Characteristics of the TSI Model

The US, French, and Royal air forces have strong historic and cultural ties; moreover, each has played a predominant role in developing and employing airpower as an instrument of national security. The core values of integrity, service, and excellence permeate these countries' military cultures, which also have been shaped by a historic record demonstrating a consistent political appetite to employ airpower in support of national and international interests.

Existing and emerging crises have brought about a convergence of many national security objectives for the United States, France, and United Kingdom. Further, contextual reality, simultaneous multinational global operations, the diversity of threats to collective security, and an environment of increasing financial scrutiny continue to support a more compelling case for cooperation. At the same time, each of the three air forces has confronted the issues of maintaining readiness while remaining committed to expeditionary operations and wide-scale modernization. Such centripetal forces, therefore, have reinforced the need for "burden sharing" and have highlighted the value of effective military cooperation. All of these factors validate the chiefs' vision of shared operational efficiency.

As for the characteristics of the TSI that help define its potential to progress under this vision, two in particular stand out. First, the exchange of senior officers who make up the steering group offers a small-scale but enduring framework to build trust and improve interoperability at the strategic level of each air force. Granted, the crucible of a multinational air campaign or even a complex exercise normally results in improved trust and interoperability among international participants. However, without a permanent framework designed to capitalize on progress, any advances risk being overlooked in subsequent efforts. Although not

designed as a "lessons learned" mechanism, the TSI does give each air staff a mandate to promote an agenda of improving international cooperation, and its multinational steering group includes action officers charged with that responsibility. Second, the fact that the TSSG operates without the cumbersome bureaucracy commonly associated with a formal alliance or coalition gives it the liberty to creatively pursue the chiefs' vision within the limits of its resources and to be innovative in its approach.

The convergence of values, as well as historic and current context, combined with national and organizational goals across the three air forces, helps explain the "why" behind the TSI, and the defining characteristics of its steering group help clarify the parameters of their mission. The "how"—the means employed under the initiative to realize its ambition—clearly need to be consistent with these parameters in order to sustain the tangible progress towards fulfilling the vision of the three service chiefs.

Means

The establishment in each air staff of a cadre of international officers responsible for driving trilateral cooperation at the highest level of each air force, itself a manifestation of trust, is a central pillar of delivering this vision. As with any exchange of international officers, incumbents quickly recognize the limitations of a purely national view, and their perspectives are necessarily broadened by their wider exposure. Although tactical-level exchange officers are rightly focused on developing tactics, techniques, and procedures, the individuals on this strategic exchange cross-pollinate ideas and concepts that directly influence the employment of airpower. In turn, having privileged access to the air force chiefs, they are well placed to influence the thinking of senior leaders.

The approach adopted by the steering group is a relatively simple one: it identifies impediments to airpower's interoperability and presents solutions involving trilateral cooperation. The basis of the chosen model is ongoing collaboration among the elements of the steering group in each air force, creating opportunities for an informal exchange of ideas and for the sharing and debating of concepts (flavored by the perspective of each air staff) designed to feed the thinking of senior leaders. By maintaining an understanding of ongoing bilateral initiatives among the three air forces and an awareness of their institutional and operational priorities, the steering group can identify areas most likely of interest for trilateral cooperation. The desired results are not predicated upon placing any one nation in a lead role; rather, given the open-ended nature of the initiative, the interoperability and trust it seeks to build could support any number of cooperative constructs well adapted to a variety of operational requirements. To prime this model, each

air force must select officers for this type of exchange who are well suited profes-sionally and personally for the demands of duty at the strategic level of an air staff and who possess additional traits necessary to collaborate and advance a trilateral agenda while serving abroad. To inform its own internal discussions, the TSSG has brought together subject-matter experts and has hosted a number of forums on a rotational basis, reflecting the service chiefs' specific priorities or deriving from major lessons identified during combined operations. Previous subjects have included combined crisis response, command and control, operational readiness, air advocacy, and national approaches to regional tensions. The formats have in-cluded workshops, planning exercises that address particular scenarios, academic seminars on airpower topics, and broad analyses. Generally, TSI activity also in-corporates civilians, academics, and members of think tanks who make recom-mendations that will have the most impact not only on modifying reflexes and shaping behaviors but also on improving trust. The subsequent publication of trilateral results is intended to influence broader, higher-level national debate.

By steadily developing the network of officers and civilian airpower profession-als associated with the TSI, efforts to institutionalize this collegiate approach are gaining traction. In Europe, trilateral cooperation has taken root among the three air operations centers, initiated through a series of exercises called Tonnerre-Lightning, launched in 2013 to conduct combined air command and control and to incorporate live sorties under progressively more complex scenarios.[3] With its imperative to maximize the output of trilateral exercises, the combined air staff continually identifies opportunities to integrate collective aims into the exercise calendar. This aspect of the trilateral relationship has been reinforced by quarterly video teleconferences among air operations chiefs of the three air forces and by a new operational trilateral charter that they signed in March 2015.[4]

The trilateral exercise hosted by the US Air Force's Air Combat Command at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, in December 2015 is another excellent example of cooperation. US F-22 Raptor, French Rafale, and UK Typhoon aircraft oper-ated together for two weeks at Langley to develop and better integrate their niche capabilities. This type of initiative, which seeks to prepare our combat forces prior to a complex conflict, concentrated on generating a disproportionate operational advantage. Other, equally pertinent opportunities for trilateral cooperation exist. An infrastructure-protection exercise held at the Avon Park auxiliary field in Florida in 2015 highlighted how this sort of cooperation can extend beyond air-craft participation. Security forces from each air force sought to protect and de-fend an air base by utilizing shared resources and objectives. The exercise provided an excellent basis for future operational integration among support mechanisms for air operations.

Efforts conducted under the TSI also contribute to more effective and credible air advocacy. Each of the air chiefs recognizes the priority of preparing airmen to positively influence joint and national decision makers. The most recent trilateral workshop, conducted in Washington, DC, in March 2015, was tailored to crafting a more refined, targeted trilateral airpower narrative. Furthermore, by contributing to the development of airpower, other allies can benefit from the TSI acting as a "trailblazer" or an intellectual catalyst. Results of TSI-sponsored activities have already informed ongoing debates within NATO and in the headquarters of allied air forces. The initiative can have a continuing role as a body representing the position of the three most capable air forces in the alliance on a broad range of airpower determinants. The seventh TSI workshop, to be held in France in 2016, will address potential convergences among the three air forces' visions of future airpower employment. Moreover, it will shape recommendations for areas of emphasis in the trilateral relationship, which can complement a wider NATO study on the future of joint airpower in the alliance.

Intrinsic Challenges

Just as trilateral progress requires continuous effort, so does it demand perseverance in overcoming a variety of challenges. Fulfilling the trilateral vision of the chiefs calls for stamina, patience, and a deep cultural understanding of the three air forces so they can reach a mutually agreeable position. The steering group's independence from organizational bureaucracy, a sort of blessing from which it derives a substantial degree of freedom of action, can equally be viewed as a curse when it comes to implementing trilateral activities.[5] The streamlined nature of the model, which empowers a small group of senior officers to creatively advance their service chiefs' vision, helps minimize implementation costs to each service. It sits on the opposite end of the spectrum from treaty-based military cooperation, created to respond to higher and more complex political objectives that require significant investment across the joint military staffs of participating allies into the oversight of cooperative objectives. Although the trilateral steering group is easier to implement than a treaty-based military hierarchy, its independence from organizational oversight means that the group cannot act as an empowered executive staff entity. Rather, it relies on initiative and creativity to overcome friction, and—given the limited degree of direct leverage that the steering group can exert on senior decision and policy makers—it must make the most effective use of its time and manpower.

At the practical level, a common impediment to cooperation is simply a lack of technical interoperability. Incompatibility of communication, information, and computer systems has a significant effect on effective integration. Coupled with

the commercial sensitivities associated with procurement and open competition within the defense sector, such incompatibility makes industrial collaboration an even more complex issue. Therefore, new approaches to defense procurement may need to innovate; it is even conceivable that trilateral interoperability could become a contracted requirement in the future. Equally, in the conduct of air operations, trilateral activities will be inherently more complex than either national or bilateral alternatives and, at least initially, will demand more time to plan. To be addressed effectively, matters such as information exchange, security caveats, and intelligence sharing will call for considerable effort and trust. A central aspect of this shift is the willingness to exchange sensitive information. That is, building trust and confidence will depend upon moving from the principle of a "need to know," which underpins many protocols related to information security, towards a "need to share" in the context of multinational operations. The TSI facilitates this principle by promoting among the partner nations an open exchange of concepts and doctrine that can propagate into wider, more accepted practices. A lack of language proficiency can also reinforce technical and procedural barriers. During a recent combined joint expeditionary force exercise between the United Kingdom and France, for example, translation and communication issues were identified as one of the major impediments to timely and accurate decision making in the combined headquarters.

However, the predominant strategic impediment to trilateral activity is cultural. Despite historic links and an increasingly rich operational capital to draw on, vested national interests and "national reflexes" can still offer a reassuring alternative to the inevitable friction and uncertainties associated with multinational operations. Even with shared NATO doctrine, defense policy and ambition are not identical and reflect the capacities and priorities of each nation. The US-UK "special relationship," however defined, is woven into the cultural fabric of generations of military and political classes in the United Kingdom.[6] This kinship greatly facilitates cooperation between the two countries' air forces but is insufficient in itself to ensure an equally coherent trilateral relationship. Similarly, the principle of strategic autonomy is a sine qua non to France's defense policy and continues to define many aspects of its military culture.[7] Work under the TSI, therefore, must honestly acknowledge these differences and identify and exploit opportunities in each bilateral relationship to better align behaviors at a trilateral level.[8]

Furthermore, practical realities within each air force demand that a preponderance of the effort focus on national priorities. The inevitable consequence for most airmen is an infrequent exposure to their international counterparts, which in turn reinforces cultural reflexes towards national solutions when a country faces the need to employ airpower. Activities sponsored under the trilateral initiative are

designed to expose participants to the potential of multinational operations and seek to readjust their reflexes for national responses towards a more trilateral perspective. The model must also confront limitations associated with any single-service initiative, given that many issues of interest to the three air forces inevitably have joint equities. If the TSI is to address those issues, exposure to the joint level will be necessary, and—in the absence of parallel trilateral initiatives outside the air domain—solutions for particular matters must be sought on a case-by-case basis.

Finally, the dynamic and cyclic nature of national politics presents a challenge to continuity. The TSI's ambition to continuously improve integration is vulnerable to political cycles—a nation's appetite for foreign intervention can change on short notice. Moreover, the level of priority afforded to defense and security concerns in national dialogues can have a profound effect on the sustainment of military partnerships. To remain insulated from these dynamics, cooperative initiatives such as the TSI must constantly prove their value. Thus, ambition should be tempered accordingly. The TSI was never intended to become the basis for an executive body in each air staff; rather, it serves as a framework designed to inspire activities to strengthen personal relationships, develop mutual understanding, and build confidence.

Consequently, even though the initiative offers a common vision for high-level trilateral cooperation, technical challenges, cultural dynamics, and national priorities will inevitably act as a drag on the rate of progress. Faced with these issues, the three countries will find that results are often difficult to quantify and must be validated against more pragmatic criteria. In this context, incremental gains and gradual progress pursued under the TSI meet the spirit of the chiefs' vision and reflect the relatively informal nature of the steering group they established to pilot the initiative.

Conclusion

Although not a unique approach, the TSI and the steering group responsible for its implementation represent an original and potentially innovative model for exploring common ground and improving coherence in the development and employment of airpower. Each nation offers a different perspective on how to employ air and space capabilities, but the TSI seeks to refine the combined capabilities of the three air forces to respond as a team to rapidly emerging crises. By implementing a valuable forum for strategic communication and coordination, these air forces can identify and address operational impediments, establish greater cohesion, and explore the frontiers of trilateral cooperation.

As for the chosen means to implement the initiative, one finds an elegant approach in the establishment of a multinational steering group cross-pollinated at

the strategic level of the three air staffs, which collaborates and sponsors trilateral activities, free from bureaucratic oversight but equally limited in its executive role. Its simplicity differs significantly from more formalized and more ambitious cooperative models such as the NATO command structure and the framework created in the French and UK military staffs to advance political objectives of the Lancaster House treaty. In this sense, the group meets the chiefs' intent to advance their vision while respecting the practical realities confronting each air staff and its capacities to confront cultural barriers and practical challenges. The success of the TSSG depends on cultivating a community of participants in its trilateral activities and widening the number of individuals exposed to the results of its debates.

As this model gains traction, some questions inevitably arise concerning the broader utility of such an agreement: what, for example, might its applicability be for land and maritime forces or within a joint construct among the United States, United Kingdom, and France? These aspects could broaden trilateral cooperation to build trust and advance interoperability across a wider spectrum of military operations. Are there other international trilateral groupings that might benefit from a similar initiative of their own, based on its own logic, such as that of regional cooperation? Responses to these types of questions could depend on exposure and evaluation of this trilateral initiative beyond the three participating air forces.

The future success of trilateral efforts under this model hinges on several factors: sustained political intent, the highest levels of support within each air force, and continued evidence of advancement towards objectives. This progress is anticipated on multiple fronts in 2016, in collateral activities subsequent to the December 2015 trilateral exercise at Langley Air Force Base, in the continuation of the Tonnerre-Lightning exercise series in Europe, and directly from the forthcoming TSSG workshop in France. The strategic context demands these types of efforts from close allies, and ongoing operations are sure to reinforce this requirement. The TSI model is a valuable tool in meeting that need.

Col Peter Goldfein, United States Air Force

Colonel Goldfein is a command pilot with extensive operational experience in both Air Mobility Command and Air Force Special Operations Command. He has completed NATO staff tours at the Joint Warfare Center and in the command group at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe. Since 2013 he has been the USAF exchange officer to the French Air Staff, serving in the strategy division.

Wing Cdr André Adamson, Royal Air Force, PhD

Wing Commander Adamson is a flight operations officer who has earned his master's and doctorate degrees in war studies from King's College London. He has operational experience in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Mali, and has completed assignments in Germany and Canada. Since 2014 he has been the RAF exchange officer to the French Air Staff, serving in the strategy division.

Notes

1. Joint Doctrine Publication 0-30, *UK Air and Space Doctrine*, July 2013, 2-5–2-6; Joint Concept Note 3/12, *Future Air and Space Operating Concept*, September 2012, 1-12–1-13; Department of the Air Force, *USAF Strategic Master Plan* (Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force, May 2015), 28–29, 34–35; and Ministère de la Défense, *Livre Blanc: Défense et Sécurité Nationale* (Paris: Ministère de la Défense, 2013), 21.

2. The US Air Force hosts UK and French officers in its Strategic Studies Group (HAF/SSG); the French Air Force hosts US and UK officers in its Plans Bureau, Strategic Studies Division; and the Royal Air Force hosts US and French officers in its Air Staff, International and Engagement Division.

3. The three centers include the 603rd Air and Space Operations Center at Ramstein Air Base, Germany; the UK joint force air component commander at RAF High Wycombe, England; and the French Centre National des Opérations Aériennes at Lyon Mont-Verdun Air Base, France.

4. An agreement between the US Air Force's Third Air Force commander, the Royal Air Force's commander of operations, and the French Air Force's commander of air defense and air operations, the document creates a framework for multiple trilateral working groups designed to improve interoperability, specifically in the planning and conduct of air operations.

5. This independence could be contrasted with the proliferation of bilateral responsibilities assigned to officers in the military staffs of France and the United Kingdom as a result of the 2010 Lancaster House Treaty on Defense and Security Cooperation, a binding agreement designed to significantly improve defense and security cooperation between the two allies. Implementation has resulted in well-developed plans at the joint and single-service level to field a combined joint expeditionary force, providing a scalable asset up to two brigades in strength with an associated naval task group and air expeditionary wing. Of necessity, this approach demands general officer engagement at multiple staff levels and a commitment to training and regular exercises.

6. The US Air Force and Royal Air Force benefit from a privileged level of information sharing that underpins a robust officer exchange program and a tradition of high-level bilateral training. Though somewhat mirrored in the post–Lancaster House Treaty growth of UK-French cooperation, this sharing still outbalances similar US Air Force programs with the French Air Force.

7. Ministère de la Défense, *Livre Blanc*, 19–22.

8. Bilateral relationships include those provided under the United Kingdom–France Lancaster House Treaty and from increasing US-French cooperation in Africa.

The European Union as a Model for its Neighbors

From Dream to Nightmare?

Geoffrey Harris[**]

Europe's Mission: a Force for Peace?

The European Union (EU) quite rightly presents itself and is perceived in many ways the world's greatest and most successful peacebuilding project. Its early development coincided with the aftermath of years of war and genocide, the common experience which inspired the establishment of the United Nations and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The UDHR was adopted during the same year as the Congress of Europe took place in The Hague.

At this Congress a "Message to Europeans" was adopted stating:

> Europe's mission is clear. It is to unite her peoples' in accordance with their genius of diversity and with the conditions of modern community life, and so open the way towards organised freedom for which the world is seeking. It is to revive her inventive powers for the greater protection and respect of the rights and duties of the individual of which, in spite of all her mistakes, Europe is still the greatest exponent. Human dignity is Europe's finest achievement, freedom her true strength. Both are at stake in our struggle.

> The union of our continent is now needed not only for the salvation of the liberties we have won, but also for the extension of their benefits to all mankind. Upon this union depend Europe's destiny and the world's peace.[1]

Almost 70 years later, the EU clearly faces internal challenges—ongoing economic and financial crises in several member states, threats to its unity and falling popular support challenge its effectiveness and legitimacy at a time in which it also finds itself surrounded by zones of extreme violence and conflict. The basic values of freedom, justice and the rule of law, which characterise any liberal democracy and are at the core of the EU foreign policy, are not only challenged by revisionist Russia but even by some of the 28 national leaders.

[**]The views expressed in this paper are entirely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Parliament

European countries also face the constant threat of terrorist attacks from those who explicitly reject the basic Judeo-Christian values which underpin universal conceptions of human rights. These attacks also originate from inside the EU with inspiration from a terrorist group, the Islamic State, whose strength has only grown since the Arab Spring began in 2011.

Time to Soft-pedal on European Values?

Recognising the enormity of the challenges the president of the European Commission seemed to suggest that the EU should reassess the place of values in its basic mission. At a press conference held on 14 January 2016, *The Guardian* reported that Jean-Claude Juncker, European Commission (EC) president, struck

> . . . a pessimistic note about the multiple crises facing the EU, ranging from terrorism to the future of Ukraine and the continent's ability to deal with refugees fleeing chaos and war in the Middle East and Africa. Europe was "running the risk of major reputational damage worldwide" because of its failure to tackle the refugee crisis, he said. "We are the richest continent in the world. . . now we appear as the weakest part."

Juncker said this record meant the EU had to be more modest when it talked to other countries about good governance. *"Less arrogance and more performance —I think that has got to be our watchword for the future."*[2] Such a statement appears to confirm a crisis of confidence at the heart of the EU leadership. In the weeks following this statement events in Syria led to the arrival inside the EU of thousands of more refugees. These events have highlighted the connections between the Syrian tragedy and the strategic weakening of Europe and, some now argue, the West in general. Russia not only paid close attention to but also, in effect, fueled this course of events. The spread of instability fits perfectly with Russia's goal of seeking dominance by exploiting the hesitations and contradictions of those it identifies as adversaries.

The events in Syria come at a time when the EU is in the process of re-considering sanctions on Russia following its annexation of the Crimea and ongoing destabilization of Ukraine. Turkey, NATO member, and the largest and longest standing EU candidate country has seemed close to war with Russia at a time when its record on democracy and human rights has been increasingly tarnished.

Europe Should Be More *Realistic*?

If the president of the EC is right, does this mean that the EU should put less emphasis on values both in external relations and even within the Union itself?

This seems to be the view adopted by Jan Techau of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who calls for a renovation of the European project and fore-sees that:

> . . . the EU will be a lot more realpolitik-driven. . . . Realpolitik here means that the EU will be a union less of values and more of transactional politics. It will be less idealistic and more functional. . . . Europeans will find out that ironically, by toning down their values rhetoric among themselves and by accepting a larger variety of approaches within their integrated club, they will be more effective at preserving the core of their values in the age of political globalization. So I predict a Europe in which values will be handled closer to the lowest common denominator than to the great ideals that Europe wants to stand for. This will be a source of never-ending tension, but it will prove less costly than becoming divided over maximalist morals only to lose out in the harsh world of political globalization.[3]

At the beginning of 2016, this seems to be a widely-held point of view and comes at a time when one EU prime minister, Viktor Orban of Hungary, accuses another, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, of "moral *imperialism*."[4] This was not only a rejection of criticism over his authoritarian tendencies and anti-immigration policies but a neat way of reversing the arguments and somehow blaming the German leader for her commitment to open borders and a humane response to the deepening refugee crisis.

Putin's Alternative Vision

Vladimir Putin, the president of the Russian Federation, seems to be immune from such nagging self-doubt apparent in the remarks of President Juncker. Despite the economic crisis at home and uncertain results from military adventures abroad, he insists not only that America should abandon its exceptionalist pretensions, but also that, along with Europe, it should drop the illusion that its values and model of society have anything to offer to others. In fact, he sees things quite differently and has done so for some time. Addressing the UN General Assembly on 28 September 2015, he launched what is clearly a direct ideological challenge.[5]

Taking the 1940s as his starting point and emphasising the stability provided by the Yalta system, he argued that:

> We all know that after the end of the Cold War the world was left with one center of dominance, and those who found themselves at the top of the pyramid were tempted to think that, since they are so powerful and exceptional, they know best what needs to be done and thus they don't

need to reckon with the UN, which, instead of rubber-stamping the decisions they need, often stands in their way. . . we consider any attempts to undermine the legitimacy of the United Nations as extremely dangerous. They may result in the collapse of the entire architecture of international relations, and then indeed there will be no rules left except for the rule of force. The world will be dominated by selfishness rather than collective effort, by dictate rather than equality and liberty, and instead of truly independent states we will have protectorates controlled from outside. . . . Nations shouldn't be forced to all conform to the same development model that somebody has declared the only appropriate one.

We should all remember the lessons of the past. For example, we remember examples from our Soviet past, when the Soviet Union exported social experiments, pushing for changes in other countries for ideological reasons, and this often led to tragic consequences and caused degradation instead of progress.

It seems, however, that instead of learning from other people's mistakes, some prefer to repeat them and continue to export revolutions, only now these are "democratic" revolutions. Just look at the situation in the Middle East and Northern Africa already mentioned by the previous speaker. Of course, political and social problems have been piling up for a long time in this region, and people there wanted change. But what was the actual outcome? Instead of bringing about reforms, aggressive intervention rashly destroyed government institutions and the local way of life. Instead of democracy and progress, there is now violence, poverty, social disasters and total disregard for human rights, including even the right to life.

I'm urged to ask those who created this situation: do you at least realize now what you've done? But I'm afraid that this question will remain unanswered because they have never abandoned their policy, which is based on arrogance, exceptionalism, and impunity.

It is interesting to note that President Juncker seemed, albeit implicitly, to accept the charge of arrogance by the West which President Putin denounced. Like his Chinese ally, President Putin likes to insist upon national sovereignty as the basis of international order and stability but his willingness to violate international law and national sovereignty is contradicted by his efforts to counter what he sees as Western interference in his neighborhood. Military action in Georgia in 2008 was an early example of his ability to seize the initiative as he did again in Ukraine in 2013.

It is clear that EU leaders did not take the measure of the challenge they face, and even now there are those who prefer dialogue to confrontation. In the past decade, there was a collective failure of European leaders to anticipate the possible reaction of Russia to an effort to establish a closer relationship with its neighbors. Descriptions of such a misjudgment range from inexplicable to catastrophic. Apart from public statements of concern about the EU Eastern Partnership by Russian leaders, the events in 2008 should have provided a warning. In the spring of that year, a NATO summit in Bucharest held out the prospect of NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia. In August 2008, Russia went to war with Georgia. In fact, at the time, Western relations with Russia were good enough for President Putin to address the NATO summit. In doing so, he explained that NATO membership for these countries was inconsistent with his country's interests. Earlier, at the 2007 Munich Security Conference, he deliberately avoided politeness, making clear the links between economic relations, political stability and the provocative nature of NATO enlargement. His rejection of the unipolar world at the end of the US President George W. Bush years could not have been clearer.[6]

In Riga in May 2015, the EU and the countries of the Eastern Partnership restated their view that democracy is essential for a closer political and economic association. The fact, however, is that if there is now a ring of fire in place of the ring of friends originally foreseen by the EU Neighborhood Policy (ENP), part of the explanation is that Russia chose to perceive the very nature of the ENP as a threat to its interests and even to the Putin regime. It is the Russian response, rather than the European efforts to advance democracy which explain the current nightmare which Ukraine is living through. If the EU can be faulted, it is in having shown a complete inability to anticipate such a tragic course of events even if the warning signs were evident. European ambitions cannot advance through mere wishful thinking but to abandon them at the first challenge is unlikely to appease its challengers. As Nicholas Bouchet of the GMF put it:[7]

> . . . countering Russia's anti-democratic agenda requires a better understanding of why and how it has been successful in containing and rolling back Western democracy promotion efforts. Three points need to be made in this regard. First, the anti-democratic and illiberal political developments in Russia since the 1990s have gradually amounted to a coherent set of norms. They are not far from forming an ideology, even if one has not been formalized or expressed as such. Second, the argument that Russia's actions are purely geopolitical—rather than ideological—is also flawed. Moscow's domestic norms are closely linked to its policy toward the post-Soviet states and to President Vladimir Putin's vision for Eurasia.

Russia's leadership supports and encourages these norms abroad because it sees this as essential to its survival at home, as well as for driving back general Western influence in the region and rebuilding a Russian geopolitical sphere. Third, the sum total of Russia's actions abroad—however reactive, improvised, or tactical each may be on its own—indicates an embryonic strategy to support and promote non-democratic norms.

European Neighborhood Policy from Naivety to Failure?

Events since the Arab Spring confirm that it would be quite wrong to see Russian revisionism as the only explanation of the fires raging around the EU's neighborhood. In fact, when dealing with its southern neighbors, the EU had until 2011 faced constant criticism for its failure to coherently or systematically treat human rights as a central element of its relations with the countries concerned. The southern neighbors of Europe did not entertain any serious aspirations for EU membership, and yet the Union adopted a set of policy instruments based on its enlargement strategy as developed since the early 1990s. In Article 8(1) of the Treaty on the European Union, the member states pledged that:

> The Union shall develop a special relationship with neighbouring countries, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterised by close and peaceful relations based on cooperation.

In November 2015, the EU presented a review of progress achieved which recognised the limitations of a policy designed in similar terms for very dissimilar countries.[8] It was interpreted as a step towards a more "realistic" approach with more emphasis on interests than values, but this brought the risk of leaving the ENP in a state of "*suspended animation*" or little more than a fig leaf to cover up a strategic retreat in the direction of greater realism as to what can be achieved. Steven Blockmans of the Centre for European Policy Studies put it this way:

> Economically strong and confident about the process that was intended to put the EU on a firm constitutional basis and serve the reunited halves of the continent, the EU set out a policy to "prevent the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours." Yet, in the absence of a clear membership prospect for ENP countries, the EU's demands and prescriptive methods of harmonising legal frameworks and reforming institutions and economies have largely failed to inspire the neighbours, especially those who do not share the Union's values.[9]

The ENP had not managed to tackle the root causes of the protracted conflicts in the region: poverty, lack of education, and unemployment or, as events in Georgia (2008), the Arab uprisings of 2011, the war in Syria and the consequent refugee crisis made it painfully clear it had not offered any real value in terms of conflict prevention or crisis management.

Indeed, the former Commission Director General for Enlargement, Sir Michael Leigh, commented on the recent commission review of ENP in stark terms:

> The review effectively acknowledges that the ENP has failed in its goal of building a ring of well governed states around the EU. Most countries covered by the ENP are more unstable today than they were a decade ago. Violence and instability have, tragically, spilled over into the EU itself, the very risk the ENP was intended to avert. What's more, the ENP was the pretext, if not the cause, of the tense standoff with Russia over Ukraine. It has brought the EU little or no increased influence while complicating efforts to achieve a new strategic balance in Europe.
>
> Today's review recognizes that the ENP's attempt to export the EU's model of society to the Middle East and Eastern Europe has foundered.[10]

It is hard to disagree, but is it convincing or meaningful to argue that the attempt was doomed from the start? As Blockmans argues:

> . . . the Association Agreements (AAs) and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) with the EU, the highest form of contractual relations under the ENP, even ended up inciting violence, as was shown in Ukraine in 2013 after President Yanukovych pulled the plug on the conclusion of the country's AA/DCFTA. In spite of a remarkable pro-EU revolutionary wave that swept out the ancient regime and managed to keep most of the country united in its determination to sign the agreement, the ENP—and in particular the Eastern Partnership—suffered a serious blow as a result of the EU's collective lack of strategic foresight about Russia's belligerence in Crimea and the Donbas.[11]

Certainly, by failing to treat Russia as a genuine partner of both the EU and NATO, the EU and the US failed to anticipate Russia's reaction. Any optimism as to the rapid stabilization of Europe's neighbourhood is hard to justify in the current situation, but to somehow blame the EU for events in any of the countries concerned seems to go beyond analysis and enter the realm of surrender. Strategic failure has certainly resulted from a failure of anticipation, yet the vision at the origin of the ENP cannot be simply abandoned. The basic idea that people should choose their governments, respect human rights, seek economic development and

live in peace and security with neighbours is an idea which Europe has no reason to give up on even in the face of the overt challenge from Russia and the tragic counterrevolutions in many of the countries of the Arab Spring. Being realistic does not mean abandoning basic values, and as Leigh summarises, Europe does need new policies (plural) for its neighbourhood as:

> . . . there will never be a common foreign and security policy, worthy of the name unless the EU manages to act effectively in the part of the world where its potential influence is greatest. Well-designed neighborhood policies would also help to check the growing radicalization of young people within the EU itself…Europe cannot afford inertia when facing challenges of the magnitude of those unleashed by the Arab uprisings and by failed or partial transitions to the East. The EU should move away from high sounding strategies towards well-targeted initiatives with real impact and effectiveness.[12]

In fact, the confirmation of the need for well-targeted initiatives can be seen by the relative success of the EU strategy towards the Balkans. The situation in 2016 in the region is quite different from 20 years ago, and there is no reason to assume in advance that such progress in the right direction cannot be achieved, at least in the Eastern neighborhood. Standing up to pressure from Russia was necessary in Serbia and other countries of the region just as it will have to be about Ukraine, for example. The EU Balkan strategy does, in fact, replicate some of the elements of the original coal and steel community with elements of financial assistance and regional cooperation. Europe's basic message that there is an alternative to war is confirmed by developments in the region where the "pull of Europe's soft power" has proved effective. Ivan Vejvoda of the German Marshall Fund has made this point convincingly.[13]

It is the very success of the EU enlargement strategy that led to many of the problems the Union faces today. Twenty-eight countries with different histories and even geography all signed to the same treaties, but that is clearly an inadequate cement for a political union with explicit aspirations for a common security policy. The success of a peaceful enlargement could not be simply repeated via a neigh-borhood policy establishing a basis for relations with countries which do not have an EU accession perspective. Anyone who believed in that possibility a decade ago has been bitterly disappointed. This is not a reason to abandon Europe's basic message. To do so in a vain attempt to define a single global foreign policy strategy would be particularly inappropriate.

Looking East

As S. Neil McFarlane and Anand Menon see it:[14]

> The EU overestimated the significance of its attractive power in the eastern neighbourhood. It ignored the fact that its political and economic prescriptions cut across established interests of key members of the political elite in Ukraine and Armenia. It also denied itself its major leverage… the firm prospect of accession.

A neighbourhood policy for countries without an EU membership goal or perspective was not necessarily doomed from the start, as real success depended on decisions by the leadership and the peoples of the countries concerned. After 1989, the countries of central and eastern Europe, like Spain, Greece, and Portugal some years earlier, made apparently irreversible changes to establish democracy and the rule of law. Even now the disturbing developments in Hungary and Poland do not presage a return to the era of gulags and mass murder.

Clearly, EU policymakers underestimated the capacity and the will of Russia to contest the space between the Russian Federation and Europe. The region is diverse and densely populated, and EU preferences did not necessarily coincide with those of local leaders. Corruption, old Soviet-era networks, and ethnic issues could be used to counter the overwhelming power of attraction which the new EU members had, at least initially, bought into. Russia could certainly claim deep historical ties to many Eastern Partnership countries. In fact, it had a considerably greater material capacity to influence the policy choices of these states than the EU, which had even discounted or ignored the possibility that its approach would ever be contested, even after President Putin made his views clear. It is, however, unconvincing to somehow blame the EU for ignoring the signs and therefore being somehow responsible for the violent backlash from 2013 onwards. In the opinion of the former German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, the EU's fundamental mistake was its association policy, which meant that Brussels "ignored" Ukraine's deep cultural division between traditionally pro-European western regions and Russia-leaning regions in the east.[15]

That Russia would use soft power and overwhelming military force never seemed to have occurred to the EU, or indeed the United States. It is worth recalling the context of the US-Russia reset announced so optimistically by the Obama Administration. If Brussels misread the signs, especially during the Medvedev presidency, it took its cue from Washington, the global superpower which also saw Europe-wide stability as being in its national security interest.

The Arab Spring

For some, the unfolding events in the Arab world since the rebellion broke out in 2011 could be seen as similar to 1989 in Eastern Europe and the USSR, another triumph for human rights and democracy and a string of defeats for dictatorial regimes. Europe's history of revolution and counterrevolution was ignored. The fact that most of the countries (Syria being a notable exception) had an association with the EU did not seem to make a difference as European institutions welcomed the overthrow of leaders with whom they had been doing all kinds of business for some years. Coming so soon after the evident failure of the invasion of Iraq to advance democracy in the region this seemed like a breakthrough. The idea of the EU being surrounded by a ring of friends seemed within Europe's grasp. In this case, cultural differences combined with differences of geography and history were underestimated. As early as 2011, however, Viilup and Soler had succinctly described the ENP as "a weak response to fast changing realities."[16]

In Eastern Europe, the European model was attractive and based on common history and values with the countries concerned. Mostly the peoples concerned were Christians. Western culture, and the idea of individual freedom was widely admired and not perceived as a threat except to those with a monopoly of power. Indeed, many of the Arab dictators presented themselves as westernized modernizers ready to contribute to stability in their region. In fact, the historical context of the Arab Spring was quite different, and the explosive elements in the opened Pandora's box were as invisible to outsiders, as were the forces leading to the unexpected uprisings in the first place.

Visiting Cairo in March 2011, Jerzy Buzek, the president of the European Parliament, was naturally deeply impressed. A leading member of the Polish Solidarnoscz revolutionary movement, Buzek seemed to feel at home in the atmosphere in Cairo at the time. After meeting the new Egyptian leadership, he said:

> The road to full democracy is long and difficult. I know it from my own experience in Poland, which overthrew its autocratic regime 22 years ago. Egyptians had a first free choice in yesterday's referendum, but the process of constitutional change cannot stop there. People aspire for more. Democracy depends on strong political parties, independent media, and active civil society. It requires a solid legal basis, respect for minorities and a constant fight against corruption. Europe wishes to be a partner in democratic transition. The European Parliament stands ready to provide expertise. It will put pressure on other institutions to offer further steps in assistance and concrete projects.[17]

A few weeks earlier, he expressed the same sincere optimism when he received nongovernmental organizations' representatives from both Tunisia and Egypt.

> When moving away from the old regime, the fight against impunity is a crucial one. Things done in the past and in transition cannot be forgotten. Justice cannot be neglected. Today, we are at the beginning of what might become a renewed partnership between the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean, a partnership that will be based on truly shared values: justice and peace, democracy and freedom. This will be a partnership of the people, by the people and for the people.[18]

Mr. Buzek's words reflected the optimism of the time but even as events evolved rapidly, contradictions emerged, most notably over the possibility of military action in Libya. Even before hostilities ended in that country, France and Italy were struggling to come to terms with an outflow of refugees and were fearing, justly as it turned out, that a bigger exodus was coming. In April 2011, the shape of things to come could already be seen. A Franco-Italian initiative, as reported in The Guardian, "called for accords between the EU and north African countries on repatriating immigrants, a policy certain to spark outrage among human rights groups, the refugee lobby, and more liberal EU governments." Promising strong support for the democratic revolutions sweeping the Maghreb and the Middle East, Sarkozy and Berlusconi added: "In exchange, we have the right to expect from our partner countries a commitment to a rapid and efficacious cooperation with the European Union and its member states in fighting illegal immigration."[19]

Five years later the drift from dream to nightmare (as the former Italian Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi described the situation) is all too evident. At the time the threat of terrorism in Europe, in the context of a much larger than imagined migration into Europe, was not a major concern. Currently, the EU is still having great difficulty in coming to terms with a tide of humanity largely flowing towards Europe from the countries of the Arab Spring. The Islamic State, which was unknown in 2011, now controls almost 300 kilometers of the coast of Libya. Hundreds of thousands of refugees are escaping a horrific situation in Syria, and the EU is providing 3 billion euros in aid to Turkey in the hope that it will help slow down the surge into Europe. In fact, Turkey itself is increasingly unstable, its president seems to be moving in an authoritarian direction, and it is not keen on opening its border to more refugees. This is a human tragedy as well as a political nightmare and is all unfolding at a time when EU countries are looking at ways to slow the tide of refugees.

In the second part of 2011, Poland held the rotating presidency of the EU, and as a country whose own peaceful revolution in the 1980s had been profoundly

influenced by outsiders explicitly promoting democracy, it responded with understandable emotion to the events of the Arab Spring which unfolded in the months leading up to the beginning of its presidency. Even if the historical analogy may well turn out to be overstated, the reaction to the Polish approach seemed logical and understandable. Poland's underground "Solidarnosc" movement had benefitted from under the radar "democracy promotion" assistance, in particular from the US foundations. This was the context for the establishment in 2013 of the European Endowment for Democracy.

In its 2014 Annual Report the EED described its objectives, not just in terms of promoting democracy as such but explained that:

> In the face of closing spaces for democracy and freedom, the democracy support agenda has been brought back into the geopolitical game. EED focuses on local and grassroots needs, the young fledgling and unsupported, who struggle to fight for democracy and reopen these free spaces.

Initially its focus was precisely on the neighbourhood countries, but in 2015 its activities were extended to Russia,[20] it also operates in Central Asia.

Pragmatism, Differentiation Do Not Mean Surrender

It is certainly the case that at moments of dramatic change huge hopes are raised, and false comparisons are adopted which overlook profound differences of history, culture, and geography. To put it simply, Egypt in 2011 was not Poland in 1989. That was the kind of thinking which led from the dream of irreversible change in North Africa and the Middle East in 2011 to the evident nightmare of 2016. Now that this harsh reality is so evident, should the EU simply reduce its ambitions? This seems to be the implicit message from the review of the European Neighborhood Policy launched in Brussels in November 2015.

In the years after 2011, the EU maintained its aspiration of contributing to democracy, the rule of law and good governance. These could be described as the raison d'être of the ENP, but recent indications are that the level of ambition of the ENP is being reduced and that EU leaders seem unaware of the intimate link between achieving these ambitions and having a meaningful security and defence policy. In June 2015, Federica Mogherini announced a yearlong review of a Global Strategy to steer EU external action stating that:

> …it will be essential to work even more closely together at European level and with partners around the globe: "The European Union has all the means to be an influential global player in the future—if it acts together. In a world of incalculable risk and opportunity, crafting effective responses

will hinge on the Union's ability to adjust, react and innovate in partnership with others. We need a common, comprehensive and consistent EU global strategy.[21]

By advancing with the ENP review, Brussels may have missed an opportunity to develop a strategy taking into consideration both the issues of regional *and* global security. By the time the global strategy review is completed in June 2016, it will be clearer than ever that the main threats to European security are on the EUs doorstep.

The End of Ambition?

As Tobias Schumacher put it in January 2016:

> . . . the EU's aspiration to contribute to democratic development, good governance, the rule of law, and the strengthening of human rights in its Southern neighbourhood became more salient. In fact, it provided EU policies towards Europe's Southern periphery with their normative raison d'être.

> The 'new' ENP, presented by EU High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Johannes Hahn in the European Parliament after one year of discussions and four months of unprecedented public consultations, puts an abrupt end to this. While many Arab regimes, after years of either suspicion towards or outright rejection of EU democracy promotion efforts, are overwhelmingly rejoicing at this development, it is a blow for reform actors in the Southern neighbourhood and for anyone who was hoping that the EU was serious with its normative approach. Strictly speaking, the 'new' ENP is a step back when compared to its two predecessors, the revised ENP of 2011 and the original ENP of 2003/2004, as it invariably leads to the substantiation of and thus support for autocratic rule in the EU's Southern neighbourhood.[22]

This abandonment of ambitions risks depriving the EU of its power of attraction and dropping the fundamental purpose of the ENP. By dashing any of the remaining hopes for reform in its region, the inevitable consequence is indeed mass migration by people who have every reason to abandon hope of a better life in their country.

As one former EU official observed:

> The gravity of the situation should encourage Member States to go beyond bland references to "differentiation" and "local ownership" in the

ENP review and to commit themselves to policies better adjusted to current realities.[23]

As Michael Leigh added, many others—Russia, Iran Turkey, China and the Gulf States—are active influences in the EU's neighbourhood. Originally, the EU had reason to believe that after its peaceful enlargement its success in expanding the space of democracy and stability in Europe would flow outwards without any counter movement or backlash. In fact, the whole of Europe's neighbourhood is now the theatre for hard and soft power conflict of global significance. Again, Russian leaders are clear enough. The same Mr. Medvedev with whom the reset took place recently accused the west of moving towards *a new cold war*.[24]

Russia has certainly understood the new situation, and this has not gone unnoticed in Washington. As US Sen John McCain argued, Moscow is using its bombing campaign to add to the flow of people from the Middle East and thus feed divisions in Europe. McCain said Russia's strategy in Syria was to "exacerbate the refugee crisis and use it as a weapon to divide the transatlantic alliance and undermine the European project."[25]

The European Council on Foreign Relations also concluded that:

> The failure to face the facts sooner—deluding ourselves that conflicts as complex as Syria and Libya would somehow burn themselves out without the need for sufficient diplomatic energy from Europe's countries—may mean that EU governments now have to function on the terms of leaders such as Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Vladimir Putin who have taken a more realistic approach to (and in no small way been complicit in) the regional trend towards instability.[26]

In 2003 the EU adopted a security strategy which saw the Balkans rather than the wider neighborhood to the South and East. Just before a major enlargement, it seemed that the ambitious objectives of the 1948 declaration quoted above had been achieved. The document noted that:

> Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. The violence of the first half of the 20th Century has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history. The creation of the European Union has been central to this development. It has transformed the relations between our states, and the lives of our citizens. European countries are committed to dealing peacefully with disputes and to co-operating through common institutions. Over this period, the progressive spread of the rule of law and democracy has seen authoritarian regimes change into

secure, stable and dynamic democracies. Successive enlargements are making a reality of the vision of a united and peaceful continent.

The strategy also recognized that:

It is in the European interest that countries on our borders are well-governed. Neighbors who are engaged in violent conflict, weak states where organised crime flourishes, dysfunctional societies or exploding population growth on its borders all pose problems for Europe. The integration of acceding states increases our security but also brings the EU closer to troubled areas. Our task is to promote a ring of well governed countries to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations.[27]

Referring also to the threats of terrorism, coming particularly from the territory of failed states, the document identified the main risks. The enormity of these risks—their immediacy and proximity so evident in 2016—could barely have been imagined in such an optimistic scenario just 15 years after the end of the Cold War. For this reason, the strategy was short on concrete steps and vague about the nature of future relations with the countries concerned. The ENP similarly has turned out to be good on procedure but weak on substance. The migration crisis which was developing before 2011 is partly the result of this ambiguous low-key approach.

External Sources of an Internal Crisis

Apart from the ideal of spreading its values in its region, there is little doubt that the expectation was that stable modernizing neighbors would reduce the pressures of illegal and legal immigration which have concerned policymakers since the beginning of the century. The current situation is one in which none of these objectives are being achieved, and the consequences for the very existence of the EU are coming into focus.

As Roger Cohen put it in *The New York Times* in February 2016:

The European idea has not been this weak since the march to unity began in the 1950s. Germany is awash in so-called Putinversteher—broadly Putin sympathizers like Schröder—who admire him for his strong assertion of Russian national interests. Michael Naumann, a former minister of culture, told me: "The United States has left us, we are the orphaned kids in the playground, and there's one tough guy, Putin. It's really that simple.[28]

What has described as a nightmare is not going to end soon, and the threat to the unity of the Union is evident. Basic questions as to the identity of Europe and its boundaries have always been avoided precisely because addressing them was bound to prove divisive. The fact that in the same month EU leaders were obliged to postpone discussions on the refugee crisis to spend days and nights on a fruitless search for cosmetic arrangement with the UK is just a sign of the times.

In the Cold War era, basic existential questions could be overlooked. In the years immediately after 1989, the answer seemed easier: the EU would define itself in response to efforts by outsiders to join. In the years since 2000, Putin began to plan a response and to provide serious competition to the EUs vision of itself and of its role in its region. Brussels did not seem to notice. It does now. The Russian president openly mocks European pretensions to spread its values in its region even as Russia discreetly deploys soft power to assist the political forces encouraging the weakening or breakup of the EU. BREXIT would just be a bonus, and even if it does not happen, the UK vote to leave the EU represents a further example of the Union's internal instability.

The refugee crisis has clearly put a huge strain on the whole EU structure but, in fact, whilst the lack of foresight of Europe's leaders can be faulted the crisis affecting Europe results to a substantial extent from the actions of others, not just Assad, other dictators or even the huge pressures for emigration resulting from instability in the whole region. Russia and the United States are still competing in the Middle East just as they are in the eastern neighborhood. America decided, with European acquiescence, to forego the use of hard power to influence the course of events in Syria whilst Russia took an opposite course directly assisting the Assad regime in a way which is likely to increase further the migratory pressures on the EU. That these events create pressures on EU-Turkey relations is a bonus for Russia which is using every opportunity to divide Europeans. The fact that President Barack Obama has chosen not to exercise leadership as a reflex against the interventionism of his predecessor facilitates Putin's grand strategy at a time when the United States and Europe do not have any strategy at all.

Developments in Libya confirm that security challenges in the South are becoming a more significant consideration for NATO. As A German Marshall Fund expert puts it:

> NATO is already moving in this direction at the political and military levels. Minds on both sides of the Atlantic are concentrated on the need for closer cooperation between NATO and the EU. There is now a critical mass of political will for this, and rapid progress might be made if key diplomatic obstacles, including the Cyprus dispute, can be resolved. The

diverse nature of challenges in the south, from territorial defense to issues of development, reform, and human security where the EU's instruments are most relevant, means that closer cooperation between these two leading institutions will be felt first and foremost in the Mediterranean. A division of labor along these lines may well be emerging. If so, the NATO naval mission in the Aegean may be an early test case, with more to come.[29]

The current albeit relative sense of urgency may prove difficult to maintain at a time of extremely sensitive relations with Turkey, both an EU candidate country and a NATO member on the front line of the refugee crisis and close to military conflict with Russia.

Regional Stability Is the Key to European Security

Anand Menon and S. Neil McFarlane have succinctly summarized the harsh reality of the EU today:

> The EU design has turned out to be an ill-adapted institution for the pursuit of interests in the face of geopolitical competition. Coupled with internal divisions and interests the result has been an evident inability to aggregate differing perceptions into a common policy.[30]

In such a large and diverse union, different countries have different priorities whilst all signed up to common texts, treaties and policy declarations. All subscribe the noble goals of the Lisbon Treaty whereby they are committed to work together for peace prosperity and human rights as well as to developing close relations with the neighboring countries. As stated in Article 7a:

> The Union shall develop a special relationship with neighboring countries, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighborliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterized by close and peaceful relations based on cooperation.

With regional instability as the main threat to national security, the response of member states to the rapidly developing but unexpected events on its borders have been demonstrably quite different. Even when decisions have been made, they are not implemented. France and Germany follow different priorities whilst Britain sets an example of introversion on refugee issues whilst like others, it is involved in the military action underway against ISIS. Not all interpret their responsibilities to asylum seekers in the same way. Not all show sensitivity in selling arms to dictatorships. Not all are influenced by religious issues in defining their policies towards migrants and refugees. Not all seem to be as resistant to Putinist

ideas of illiberal democracy. This was not always the case, as even during the Cold War the European Economic Community, as it was then called, could actively promote human rights as a key element of the Helsinki process.

In 2003, Europe's internal divisions had already been on global display as Britain, Spain and the soon to be new EU member states of central and eastern Europe failed to line up behind Franco-German leadership in challenging the decision of the United States and its coalition of allies to invade Iraq without a UN mandate. The invasion provided part of the backdrop to the Arab Spring which produced the destabilizing flow of refugees into Europe. In the same year, the EU could still adopt, however, a new security strategy with an emphasis on soft power as Europe's primary contribution to the promotion of democracy which the United States was ready to advance with hard power.

This difference of perspective underlay attitudes to Russia even before its military adventures in Georgia and Ukraine. As Desmond Dinan noted:

> . . . the new countries generally adopted a harsher approach towards Russia and a friendlier approach towards the United States.[31]

In fact, the Union's unity in implementing sanctions on Russia after its annexation of Crimea has proved quite an achievement. Failure to maintain this unity could provide a further weakening of Europe's ability to influence events in its neighborhood. Even Dinan's description is outdated as Russia has succeeded in splitting the Central Europeans with Hungary developing friendly relations even as the Baltic countries fear that they could be a target of destabilization. Poland shares such concerns even as its leadership adopts elements of the Putin playbook such as limiting media freedom or re-interpreting major historical events. The Baltic countries feel immediately threatened.

Divisions over geopolitical priorities had always been particularly marked in EU policy to Belarus. The decision in early 2016 to re-engage with the Minsk regime will clearly be a test for the new, *realistic,* approach. This will enable, for example, the European Parliament to restart official contacts with the Belarusian Parliament and to set out EU expectations for democratic parliamentary elections in Belarus later this year. In this way, dialogue can signal to Belarus that a democratic election process is a crucial opportunity for engagement with the EU. In the spirit of the European Neighbourhood Policy Review, the EU has stressed the importance of assessing country by country the reality of the situation and demonstrating flexibility. This could enable the EU to become more influential.

Normative Power Europe: Game Over?

At the beginning of this century, while the EU was developing its security strategy and preparing for enlargement, the institutions, civil society, and academia reflected an optimistic view of the Union's potential as a civilian, normative power. As the Iraq invasion failed dramatically in its goal of promoting democracy or spreading stability, Europe was encouraged to see itself as a new kind of global power. At a very minimum, the EU should be a model for others, particularly in its region. What the EU was could, somehow, be more important than its external actions.

This approach was mirrored in the structures and strategy put in place under the leadership of the first EU High Representative, Baroness Catherine Ashton. As the various crises have unfolded, this approach has seemed to be pursued with less conviction. I have written elsewhere that in its current policies on human rights and democracy promotion the EU is now tending to *blow an uncertain trumpet*.[32] The implications of this may be profound.

No Longer the City on the Hill

Throughout the decades after 1989, the United States supported enlargement and the concept of regional the partnership as these processes embodied American hopes that the EU would take the lead in stabilising the former Soviet space. Similarly, after 2011, Washington chose to explicitly *lead from behind* in the Middle East.

With the question of EU membership in at least one country on the table, the existence of the EU is being openly questioned. Leading figures no longer hide their sense of anxiety, and in Washington, the danger of even greater instability is a source of evident anxiety. Sen Benjamin Cardin, the senior Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, wrote recently that:

> As the European Union confronts unprecedented challenges which collectively threaten the future of the European project, the US has an obligation to stand with our friends there in support of the principles that we all share: democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights, economic prosperity and peace and security. The pressures on the union are considerable, but there are measures that the US can take to help. . . . Another alarming trend that has emerged in several countries across the EU is a rising nationalism exacerbated by the migrant crisis. In some countries, governments have embraced a brand of "illiberal democracy" which calls into question the very democratic values of the EU. It is worrying that we have seen an erosion of these principles in some corners of the union. We

should make clear our support for the EU's democratic principles and our opposition to the chorus of illiberal voices in Europe. . . . Russia has also sought to erode support for EU institutions by funding anti-EU political parties, think tanks, NGOs and media voices, using the very strengths of Europe's democratic societies – free press, civil society and open debate — against it. The EU and US should work together on affirmative messaging that clearly and unequivocally states our shared values.[33]

In 2004 Jeremy Rifkin, an American, was so impressed with the EU that he could describe it a bit like a new USA regarding the attractiveness of its model for the rest of the world.

Europe is the new 'city upon a hill.' The world is looking to this grand new experiment in transnational governance, hoping it might provide some needed guidance on where might be heading in a globalizing world. The European Dream, with its emphasis on inclusivity, diversity, quality of life, deep play, universal human rights and the rights of nature, and peace is increasingly attractive to a generation anxious to be globally connected and at the same time locally embedded.[34]

Rifkin wondered whether Europeans were capable of the kind of hope and optimism which inspired and inspires the American dream. He noted a

. . . deep pessimistic edge ingrained in the European persona…. after so many misbegotten experiments and so much carnage over so many centuries of history. Failures can dash hopes. . . . no dream, regardless of how attractive it might be can succeed in an atmosphere clouded by pessimism and cynicism.[35]

Weeks ahead of a referendum in the UK on EU membership with no sign that the refugee crisis is abating or becoming manageable, the divisions and uncertainty are all too evident. Those, inside and outside the EU who dislike or feel threatened by its very existence, see a historic chance to destroy decades of progress. The lessons of history which have underpinned the process of European integration are being forgotten in these new and unexpected circumstances.

The excessive optimism of the 1990s is being replaced by a fashionable so-called *declinism*. As Martin Schulz, the former president of the European Parliament, put it, "Europe's current political generation (is) in danger of squandering the achievements of the EU's founding fathers."[36]

Current circumstances may well lead to a lowering of expectations and a priority for crisis management. The divisive atmosphere in which such crises are to be managed is not one in which any new meaningful global strategy will be easy to

develop and implement. The urgent priority is the stabilization in the face of a maelstrom of clearly momentous and dangerous developments. The refugee crisis merely confirms that basic somewhat dramatic reality. To close the gates, return to introversion, abandon basic values would be to abandon the identity of the EU and possibly the very reason for its existence.

Geoffrey Harris

The author recently ended a 40-year career at the European Parliament. His final posting (2012–16) was as the deputy head of the European Parliament's Liaison Office with the US Congress, based in Washington DC. Until July 2012, he was the head of the Human Rights Unit within the Secretariat General of the European Parliament (Directorate General for external policies).

Before this position, Harris was in charge of interparliamentary relations with countries in Europe from 1992 to 2004. From 1989–1992, he was the diplomatic adviser to the president of Parliament. From 1976–89, he was an official of the centre-left Socialist Group, where he worked on institutional and budgetary affairs, regional policy and issues relating to racism and xenophobia. He is also the author of *The Dark Side Of Europe* (1993) on the subject of right-wing extremism in contemporary Europe.

Harris graduated from the University of Manchester before he earned a master's degree at the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium.

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Allies in Flux

American Policy after the Arab Spring

Khalil Marrar, PhD

Developments of the Arab-Spring-turned-winter brought unprecedented changes to the American approach in the Middle East and North Africa. Most notable is the evolution of relationships with three regional blocks: the Arab states, Iran, and Israel. In regards to each, US policy makers had to reorient themselves to a new and perhaps unfamiliar strategic terrain.[1] As demonstrated previously, although American policy remained susceptible to influences from a variety of domestic lobbying and public opinion pressures both before and after the Arab Spring, regional shifts of that period have proven preeminent for conceptualizing the pursuit of American interests.[2] This article examines how those shifts interacted with American policy.[3] To do so, it addresses the following question: why did the Arab Spring and ensuing winter cause American policy, at its heart, to prioritize rapprochement with Iran and recalibrate alliances with Israel and the Arab states?[4] This question centers on developments that pushed and pulled American strategy in the past and that will anchor the approach to the region in the future.[5]

Regarding the past, for decades, American strategy involved supporting Israel and reassuring the Sunni states against Shiite power in Tehran, Damascus, southern Lebanon, the Persian Gulf area surrounding Iran, and elsewhere in the region. In contrast, after the Arab Spring, the US approach has evolved to become more fluid and less clear cut. Meanwhile, developments in the Middle East and North Africa that brought upheavals and war, rather than being a Western conspiracy as some people feared, have instead presented a great deal to consider for American decision makers for generations to come.[6] Consequently, the emergence of the foreign policy landscape (see table below) has all but overshadowed withdrawals from Iraq and Afghanistan as well as much touted developments that presented more pressing concerns than issues in the Middle East and North Africa. These included the "pivot to Asia" and attempts to counter Russia in Eastern Europe by using the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).[7]

Table. Revolts and outcomes

State	Revolt Year	Regime Change	Territory Intact	Civil War
Afghanistan	2010	O	O	X
Algeria	2010	O	X	O
Bahrain	2011	O	X	O
Djibouti	2011	O	X	O
Egypt	2011	X	O	O
Eritrea	2011	O	X	O
Iran	2009	O	X	O
Iraq	2012	O	O	X
Israel	2011	O	X	O
Jordan	2011	O	X	O
Kuwait	2011	O	X	O
Lebanon	2011	O	O	O
Libya	2011	X	O	X
Mauritania	2011	O	X	O
Morocco	2011	O	X	O
Oman	2011	O	X	O
Palestine	2012	O	O	O
Qatar	2011	O	X	O
Saudi Arabia	2011	O	X	O
Somalia	2011	O	O	O
Sudan	2011	O	O	O
Syria	2011	O	O	X
Tunisia	2010	X	X	O
Turkey	2012	O	X	O
United Arab Emirates	2011	O	X	O
Western Sahara	2011	O	X	O
Yemen	2011	X	O	X
X=Yes	O=No			

Arab-Spring-Turned-Winter

When a 26-year-old produce vendor set himself on fire in Tunis to protest police corruption, no one imagined that such an act of self-immolation would result in revolts that overthrew the government. What happened in Tunisia sparked a series of events that altered the political map of the modern Middle

East and North Africa. Changes in the region broadly affected the Muslim world from Afghanistan to Zanzibar. Although the period before the revolts was marked by neither decent governance nor prosperity, it offered students of the region a fixed orientation by which to assess it, especially given the centrality and durability of the prevailing regimes.[8] Because they ruled for decades with little or no public input, the governments of the Middle East and North Africa were dependable intermediaries for American policy. However, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, reactions to 9/11, including the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, influenced the region in unpredictably irreparable ways.

Similarly, the Arab Spring of the next decade marked a change from which there was no return. In its wake, most people hoped for a world in which they could live freely, even though many of them, particularly in the lawless parts of Syria and Iraq—or Libya and Yemen, for that matter—became mired in a Hobbesian civil war in which life was "nasty, brutish, and short."[9] Dreams sparked by the Arab Spring were undeniable, but its results for far too many individuals continued to be morbid. In that turbulent context, the regimes of the Middle East and North Africa tried to govern. Most of them desperately tried to keep their existence and authority intact, but many failed. Thus, American decisions concerning the region had to take that new reality into consideration, particularly given the trajectory of events as its regimes, both new and old, sought to weather the storms of the Arab Spring.

That trajectory has spared no country. After a brief experiment with democracy, Egypt, the most populous Arab nation, overthrew the Muslim Brotherhood, only to return to a police state more brutal to its people than it was under former president Hosni Mubarak.[10] Indeed, in addition to suspending political freedoms, the government of Abdel Fatah al-Sisi has engaged in murder, torture, and arrest against every segment of Egypt from which it perceived any threat. Such actions included the extrajudicial jailing and killing of Muslim Brotherhood leaders and their supporters as well as a similar crackdown on liberal parties, especially those devoted to the protection of individual rights.[11]

In addition, the al-Sisi government curtailed press freedoms and detained journalists for reporting in a manner inconsistent with state-sanctioned narratives. These actions, although similar to those under any other authoritarian regime, have taken violence and infringements against political mobilization and expression to new heights.[12] In that setting, the United States possessed few options for forcing its ally to respect its people and did little to stop the runaway governance of the regime after the coup. In fact, US military aid to Egypt continued unabated. Even though some critics have decried American behavior as a plot to divide Egyptians while privileging the interests of others in the region, most notably

Israel, no one can deny that the peace treaty between them has been a precondition for American support of military rule.[13]

Although a different case from policy toward Egypt and other states in turmoil, the approach to Syria, despite US policy makers' condemnation of Bashar al-Assad's regime and their demands for its ultimate removal, has stopped short of pursuing that goal. This occurred despite the red lines of the Obama administration against the deployment of chemical weapons and the fact that the regime, through conventional means, has murdered hundreds of thousands of its citizens, causing their displacement by the millions. The simple truth is that American action has opted for leaving Assad in power while targeting groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).[14] Like other militant entities, ISIS has long been classified by the US State Department as a foreign terrorist organization and was believed to pose more immediate dangers to national and regional security.[15]

As was the case in Egypt, the United States, through its initiatives and inaction, acquiesced to the emerging reality, thus contradicting its stated intentions regarding human dignity or ousting Assad—assuming such a stance may have been the only expedient thing to do. Instead, the American approach privileged mediating regional politics through long-established actors and their power centers rather than new parties—whether the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt or the Free Syrian Army—regardless of their track record on rights or repression. State governments received preference, even if they suppressed their people in the face of broad international condemnation. Viewed through the eyes of those living in the Middle East and North Africa, that preference was particularly troubling since in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, many regimes suffered loss in legitimacy and mass defection. Despite those developments, the United States opted for the status quo ante, whether through continuing its assistance to Cairo or dithering on atrocities committed by Damascus.[16]

The American approach to both Egypt and Syria, though unsatisfactory to many people, was understandable in light of Western measures in Libya.[17] As a direct outcome of toppling Mu'ammar Gadhafi, the country morphed into a failed state. When the new regime exerted authority, it suffered from political paralysis under a provisional government hampered by ethnic and clan strife and divided between Tripoli and Benghazi.[18] The previous order under Gadhafi was demolished, thanks in large part to Western military intervention. In effect—and regardless of whether the United States led from the front or from behind—the campaign ultimately ensured that Libya's dictator was viciously killed, only to be replaced by several warlords and their militias who disputed power both in acrimonious elections and with bloody street fighting.

The case of Libya, although rare in terms of Western humanitarian efforts, demonstrated the perils of meddling in the Arab revolts.[19] Gadhafi was far from ideal for Western and especially American interests in the region. However, he did at least present policy makers with a politically stationary, albeit emotionally erratic, interlocutor with whom to deal. This fact was particularly significant not only because Libya bordered a vital American partner in Egypt but also because Tripoli guaranteed the relative security of the Mediterranean coast and the flow of energy produced by the country's vast oil and gas deposits—among some of the largest in Africa.[20] Even though the aftermath of toppling Gadhafi offered Libyans hope and the opportunity to participate in their governance, the new regime proved incapable of providing basic state functions. Moreover, it has failed to uphold a level of safety deemed vital by Western countries and by the United States, not to mention the Libyan people themselves.

Elsewhere in the region, the situation remained tense and subject to the unpredictable changes seen in Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Tunisia. Throughout North Africa, several states have announced reforms aimed at transparency and liberalization that were never earnestly implemented.[21] Further east, the Persian Gulf countries have largely suffocated protests and demands for democracy through a dual approach of providing generous incentives for those consenting or offering allegiance to their regimes and severe punishments for those who did not.[22] In other instances, states like Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon continued to be on the receiving end of tens of thousands of Syrian refugees despite having their own problems with internal discord and popular calls for changes to economic, social, and political conditions. In sum, what were counted as some of the oldest allies in the Middle East and North Africa could no longer be trusted to maintain the established order that much of Western and especially American interests in stability rested on.[23] As the states of the region sought to address the gush of unrest in their midst, they could no longer act as pliable allies willing to please Europe and America for substantial returns but with little or no cost to themselves. Furthermore, as the geopolitical landscape continued to transition after the Arab Spring, an old issue emerged as a direct consequence: relations with Israel and Iran.

Regional Balancing: Past Revisited or "Back to the Future"?[24]

Shortly before the White House and Congress dueled about invitations to the Israeli prime minister, one phrase summarized tensions between Washington and Tel Aviv as American policy evolved toward the region inhabited by Israel: "chicken----." The term is not commonly used in the diplomatic parlance of American statesmen, especially in reference to close allies, but it was reputedly uttered by an anonymous US official to describe Israeli prime minister Benjamin

Netanyahu.[25] The reason for the name calling was not entirely clear. It may have been related to Israel's continued refusal to take military action against Iran unilaterally. Instead, it repeatedly opted for the United States to do its bidding. Although words do not have the significance of actions, few people doubt that the American-Israeli alliance has lacked the luster it had in the past. Moreover, the change in that relationship is not simply a product of the end of the Cold War rivalry that buttressed it. Nor was it the result of a different administration in the White House. Indeed, if it were left up to any American president, especially given congressional pressure, the relationship between Israel and the United States would be as cordial as ever.[26] Hence, on his "stalwart" friendship with Israel, Barack Obama had much in common with his predecessor George W. Bush.[27] Similarly, the eight congresses elected during both presidential terms have maintained that Israel remained a central ally of the United States.[28] Even though such sentiment has always been a crucial element of the American-Israeli relationship, it did not convey changes in US strategy that, in recent years, have gone against what Israel deemed to be in its interests, especially as expressed by its leadership through numerous prime ministers and other Knesset members.[29]

One development which drove that fact was highlighted in a speech by Prime Minister Netanyahu to the United Nations. As Iran presented its new president to the world in the figure of Hassan Rouhani, Israel's prime minister condemned him as a "wolf in sheep's clothing" compared to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's previous president, whom Netanyahu dismissed as a "wolf in wolf's clothing."[30] Despite Netanyahu's alarmist zoological rhetoric, the United States pursued a policy of rapprochement with Iran under President Rouhani that yielded a breakthrough in diplomacy between the two nations for the first time since the Islamic Revolution.[31] White House officials understood that better relations with Iran were valuable despite denunciations of the Islamic Republic and reengagement with it by some key American allies.[32] Further, the United States pursued its interests by talks with Iran, just as those allies faced serious challenges to their security.[33] In Washington policy circles, it became manifest that the view of Iran as the quintessential threat by many Sunni Muslim partners and the Jewish state did not mean that the United States had to ignore its vital concern in reengagement to appease its traditional allies.[34] This was especially pressing given the fact that most of the relationships with those allies were forced to adapt to the overthrow or reconfiguration of their regimes in light of the Arab Spring, as discussed earlier.

For decades prior to the Arab Spring, two factors anchored US strategy in the region.[35] First, numerous presidents and congresses have taken an inimical approach to Iran. Diplomacy with the Islamic Republic occurred through a third party, which frequently involved a Nordic country. Second, in the words of Presi-

dent Obama, Israel has been the "strongest" ally of the United States. Both of those anchors persisted, but they were complicated and even mitigated by an emerging reality: direct negotiations with Iran about its nuclear program. Those negotiations have evolved into a comprehensive discussion about Iran's role in the region and its place in world affairs. They have also brought about a cooldown in the warmth of America's relationship with Israel and the Sunni Arab states, which have remained sworn adversaries of the Islamic Republic. While the regional opposition between Iran and its rivals persisted, Iraq presented a wild card—particularly the American invasion of that country and the toppling of its Sunni regime presided over by Saddam Hussein.[36]

The subsequent nation building that took place in Iraq, though mildly satisfactory to its Shiite majority, unraveled the decades-long US regional strategy. In Baghdad, after civil war and elections swept it into power, the Shiite government closely, but often quietly, allied itself with its counterpart in Tehran.[37] For its part, and with the Baathists out of the way, Iran used the opportunity to throw its newfound power around the Middle East. It assisted Iraq's Shiite majority in consolidating its strength by shutting out minorities—most notably Sunnis, Kurds, and Christians. Iran also supported militant groups like Hezbollah and Hamas against Israel.[38] Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic helped the Assad regime maintain its teetering hold on power in Syria and hastened the overthrow of the American-backed regime in Yemen, which threatened bordering Saudi Arabia and startled the rest of the Gulf States. Along with these activities, Iran was able for years to skirt Western sanctions. On the world stage, it benefited from its relationship with Syria, which, despite experiencing repression and undergoing civil war, maintained its client relationship with Russia.[39] Consequently, Iran received concessions from Russia that, at best, blunted the American-led sanctions and, at worst, made them ineffective, especially in deterring the advance toward an illegal nuclear program.[40]

The result was a comprehensive approach by the Obama administration to engage Iran on three issues: addressing the Islamic Republic's appetite for energy; ruling out military aggression by either the United States or Israel, given compliance with an inspections regime; and, just as importantly, setting it on course toward normalization and full membership in the international community. Those three issues took less than a decade to materialize, but they began to form the basis of the future American-Persian relationship. To arrive at that stage of reconciliation, the Iranians exercised quite a bit of leverage over Washington, especially as it pertained to stability in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and even Afghanistan. Talks with Iran also opened up the potential for a degradation of Syria's alliance with Russia, a key factor in preserving American sway in the region.[41] Along with those goals,

Iran would eliminate the nuclear threat posed to its neighbors and, once and for all, would become a compliant signatory of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Adhering to the treaty would allow for a good degree of peaceful nuclear development to fulfil energy demands by Iran's economy.

In addition, Iranian normalization not only might mean an end to sanctions but also might signal that the country has little to fear from its rivals, particularly in terms of an attack on its nuclear facilities. Through a diplomatic breakthrough, Iran would receive a place to partner on key regional and international issues. Like any other major country in the Middle East, the Islamic Republic would be allowed a wide berth in deciding its own affairs. Indeed, the deal with Iran may herald an end to decades of hostility and potential war with other powers in the region—most notably the United States or Israel—something that the centers of power in Tehran had desired since the founding of the Islamic Republic.[42] Similarly, normalization would present an opportunity for thawing relations with an American archrival that, with its superpower strength and geopolitical influence, had stifled the acceptance of Iran as a country with its own interests in international affairs—not to mention its immediate spheres of influence.

On the other side of the region, talks of a bargain with Iran, regardless of their positive implications for Washington and Tehran, complicated relations between the United States and its traditional allies in the Middle East. Turkey, a substantial member of NATO and a proven ally of the United States, has always maintained some modicum of relations with Iran, but other Middle East allies, with the notable exception of Qatar, viewed any normalization with Tehran as a significant threat to their standing. The American relationship with allies like Saudi Arabia and most other Persian Gulf States, as well as Egypt, Jordan, and especially Israel, had depended on a necessary adoption of their antipathy to Iran. Adversity between the Islamic Republic and the Arab states has a lengthy history, fueled by ideological underpinnings that pitted a revolutionary theocratic Iran against frequently reactionary and highly monarchial or dictatorial secular regimes (except Saudi Arabia, which is a Sunni Arab theocracy mortally opposed to Shiite Persian dominance). Although the latter have been close allies with the United States, a friendship that predated World War II but that thrived after it, the former, after the fall of the Shah and the conclusion of the Islamic Revolution, has been a spoiler to American designs in the region.[43]

Motivations for American-Arab-Israeli cooperation against Iran were multifaceted. However, it would suffice to note that regional authoritarian tendencies, underwritten by the United States at least since the late 1960s and early 1970s, depended on opposing the overthrow of any regime in the region.[44] The Shah's government represented the status quo even though what replaced it was equally

authoritarian. However, the religious and anti-American nature of the Islamic Revolution meant that the United States had to rally its partners against the mullahs in Tehran. Those partners in turn loathed the revolutionary Shiite fervor that swept through Persia, one of the largest and most ancient nations in the world. Consequently, their alliance with the United States was predisposed to counter Iran's revolutionary theocratic passions for their own religious, ideological, and/or political reasons that are too numerous and complex to examine in depth here.[45]

Since 1979 containing Iran was the name of the game for American policy makers. Such containment was the case despite the cost of regional uncertainty engendered by this action. In one crucial example, after the dust of the Islamic Revolution had barely settled, the United States assisted Iraq with an invasion its Persian neighbor. Further, even though Saddam had a lengthy track record for brutality that contradicted American values, the choice between a theocratic anti-American revolution and a secular dictator who kept an open mind to his alliances gave the US leadership a clear path.[46] Hence, during the lengthy and bloody Iran-Iraq war, the United States gave Saddam plenty of material support to assist in his efforts against the Islamic Republic. The war closed with a stalemate that resulted in the death of more than a million men, women, and children, some of whom were killed by weapons of mass destruction; however, both the Baath government and the Iranian clerical leadership survived and went on to create quite a bit of trouble for the stability sought by the United States in the long term. In the short term, however, Washington's alignment with Baghdad realized the goal of checking Iran.

Fast-forwarding to a time decades later reveals that the execution of Saddam eliminated a lynchpin of forces that frustrated American interests in the region. But the power vacuum opened up by toppling his Baath regime in Iraq meant that the country's Shiite majority and their coreligionists in Iran could pursue their interests as never before. Hence, the United States was left with many options, none of them satisfactory to its aims in any decent measure. At worst, to leave Iran unchecked meant a major threat to Israel and the Sunni states because of a nuclear Islamic Republic. At best, it meant unfettered proliferation in the region. Neither scenario satisfied US interests or those of its allies anywhere.[47]

Similarly, military confrontation with Iran to avoid both scenarios, especially in the messy aftermath of invading Afghanistan and Iraq, was an unpalatable position for a war-weary public and its policy makers. Bombing Iran would have brought untold consequences for a region mired in conflict. Along with the repercussions of the Arab Spring, the ensuing war would have had unspecified, unacceptable risks for American interests and those of its allies.[48] Consequently, the only digestible course of action, however bitter, was negotiating with Iran. The Obama administration pursued that approach despite the dire, often loud criti-

cisms it had received from its detractors both at home and abroad.[49] Israel and its domestic supporters in and out of the Washington beltway leveled rebukes. In the region, some Arab allies have quietly charged the American administration with betrayal for talks with Tehran.[50]

American interests, however, have overruled all concerns. Having perceived those interests through the difficulties of another potentially protracted entanglement in the Middle East—as war with Iran certainly would have brought—the Obama administration proceeded cautiously down the diplomatic route. Although the end of that route, no matter the outcome, remained elusive, it was one of the few options left after the costly blunders of other imbroglios in the Middle East and North Africa. Indeed, in what has been dubbed by numerous White House and congressional leaderships as a "very tough neighborhood," American statesmen were left with few options and even fewer partners willing to tackle the tough issues raised by Iran going nuclear.[51]

Regardless of the level of development, including how many centrifuges may be possessed by Tehran, and despite caricatures of bombs pondered by the Israeli government as exhibited by Netanyahu's presentation before the United Nations on the issue (see the figure below), the only remaining option was that of tough diplomacy.[52] That was precisely why the Obama administration engaged with the Rouhani government at the highest levels. Alternatives to talks remained murky at best, but if Iran continued on the nuclear path, it would have left the United States and its allies few choices other than those involving military action.[53] The Iranians knew that well—hence their willingness and even eagerness to engage in talks. Iran had very little to lose, particularly since its nuclear program, despite deafening condemnations to the contrary, remained in relative infancy while its economy suffered under tougher sanctions.[54] The choice for the ruling elite in Tehran was clear: negotiations eliminated the looming threat of an unwinnable war with the West. They also brought their country an opportunity for acceptance by the international community in return for very little—besides giving up on a nuclear program that was far from a credible threat to any country. In fact, Iran's nuclear development worked only to undermine the Islamic Republic domestically and on the world stage, as evidenced by opposition at home and abroad.[55]

Conclusion: Interests and Region in Flux

This article's main argument is that the changing American approach to the Middle East and North Africa has been adjusted to achieve stability and a balance of power between the major regional players, including the Arab states, Iran, and Israel. In the unstable aftermath of the Arab-Spring-turned-winter, losses in legitimacy, authority, and/or territorial integrity meant that traditional allies could

no longer be counted on to be clients of the United States. Moreover, the increasing importance of Iran to regional stability in terms of its influence on Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and Yemen, as well the destabilizing potential of its nuclear aims, meant that a crucial piece of the puzzle to regional stability rested in Tehran.

In response to the evolution of the Middle East and North Africa in the aftermath of the revolts, the United States has arrived at a traditional balancing act in which friends and foes were dealt with in terms of their interests and relationship to American designs. Washington opted for a region in which various power blocks checked one another. It did so despite overt pro-Israel or covert pro-Saudi calls for bombing Iran's nuclear facilities, something that would have unhinged an already unstable region and overwhelmed attempts to attain stability in the world's vital oil heartland and an important land bridge between Europe and the Far East.[56] In a nutshell, diplomacy was the sole antidote to a catastrophic war that surely would have engulfed the region.[57]

At worst, the belief was that talking to Iran would have produced stalled negotiations and a country committed to nuclear weapons, as in the status quo. At best, it would have created a sustainable context for American interests: a region free from the uncertainties of nuclear proliferation and one in which reinforcing sovereignty and stability anchored the intended outcome of the political behaviors of all players involved. A major factor that made the diplomatic option an attractive pursuit is the disruptive power of groups like ISIS, al-Qaeda, and the handful of other terrorist militias which have plagued the region since before 9/11 and have gained further notoriety after the Arab Spring.[58] Those groups have presented serious challenges to states that have long maintained important roles in American hegemony throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

Moreover, as governments in the region changed hands and—especially in the case of Libya and possibly Syria and Iraq as well as Yemen—have experienced state failure, the United States sought an approach that would produce the least amount of damage to established regimes in the region.[59] Thus, it opted for talks with Iran in order to arrive at a point in which stabilizing Syria was a possibility while the security and integrity of Iran's neighbors, most notably Iraq but Afghanistan as well, would be more likely outcomes.[60] Those results were particularly important during an era of drawdowns and withdrawals on the one hand as well as escalation and intensification in many parts of the region on the other hand, both of which formed the bulk of policy during the Obama presidency.[61]

Without bringing Iran to the table, such outcomes would have remained elusive in an approach focused on shunning the Islamic Republic, which commanded a critical position in a region significant for American interests. Despite control of the major issues surrounding Iran, however, the Middle East and North Africa

will never be the same after the events of the Arab Spring and its unfolding consequences. Rather than being a search for an optimal path to realize national interest, American policy has committed itself to a salvage operation in which the rationale has moved away from the pursuit of ideal outcomes to ones that stemmed from more sober decision making. Far from being the sole result of politics inside Washington, catalysts for past and future approaches to the Middle East and North Africa will derive from developments in the region as well.

Khalil Marrar, PhD

The author is a professor of politics and justice studies at Governors State University, Illinois. His research focuses on the intersection of public policy and foreign affairs. The author of *The Arab Lobby and US Foreign Policy: The Two-State Solution* (Routledge, 2010), he is also working on a book entitled *Middle East Conflicts: The Basics*, to be published in 2016 by Routledge. Professor Marrar lectures and researches on Arab and Muslim diaspora, particularly their policy preferences. He also teaches American, global, comparative, and Middle East politics. Special thanks Marvin Bassett, Rémy Mauduit, John Mearsheimer, and Shaiel Ben-Ephraim. The article is dedicated to Mousa Marrar.

Notes

1. Given these changing terrains, American statesmanship may accurately be captured as facing a serious "clash between liberalism and realism." See John J. Mearsheimer's "Introduction" to George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, 60th anniversary expanded ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), x. For an abbreviation by country, see the table in the text of this article.

2. For two instances, see John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007); and Khalil Marrar, *The Arab Lobby and US Foreign Policy: The Two-State Solution* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

3. On the framework of the present analysis, see Michael J. Totten, "Arab Spring or Islamist Winter?," *World Affairs*, January/February 2012, http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/.

4. For a synopsis of the evolution of the relationship with Iran, see James G. Blight et al., *Becoming Enemies: U.S.-Iran Relations and the Iran-Iraq War, 1979–1988* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2012).

5. Quite a bit has been written on this subject. For a nice range, please see Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004); and Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).

6. For an assessment of this position, see Samuel Helfont, "Tariq Ramadan's Arab Winter," *New Republic*, 1 October 2012, http://www.newrepublic.com/. Quite a bit of writing is emerging on this topic. For a couple of examples, see David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas, *The Arab Spring: Change and Resistance in the Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012) for an optimistic hyperbole; and for an Islamophobic diatribe, see Raphael Israeli, *From Arab Spring to Islamic Winter* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2013).

7. For cautionary tales on the issues preceding the "pivot to Asia," see John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014); and Robert Kaplan, *Asia's Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific* (New York: Random House, 2014). On Russia's dealings in Eastern Europe, see Marcel H. Van Herpen, *Putin's Wars: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

8. There is a wide-ranging debate on the difference between the authoritarian tendencies of, say, Turkey and Iran. Regardless of the regime type in question and for the purposes of US policy, conversation about privileging stability over all other concerns—if it ever left at all, particularly under the idealisms of presidents

Bush and Obama—has made a return in decision making. Thus, assessing regimes in world affairs remained a well-established practice that the present work has benefited from. For one instance, see Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell, "Authoritarian Regimes: Stability, Change, and Pathways to Democracy, 1972–2003," *Kellogg Institute*, Working Paper no. 331, November 2006, https://kellogg.nd.edu/.

9. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme & Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiasticall and Civill* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1904), chap. 8. For a modern reading, from Syria in particular, see Daniel Renwick, "Hobbes, Syria and the Importance of Stability," *Palestine Chronicle*, 3 January 2013, http://www.palestinechronicle.com/.

10. Mohamed Younis, "Egyptians See Life Worse Now than before Mubarak's Fall," Gallup Poll, 16 August 2013, http://www.gallup.com/.

11. These actions have been well documented. See Patrick Kingsley, "Worse than the Dictators: Egypt's Leaders Bring Pillars of Freedom Crashing Down," *Guardian*, 26 December 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/.

12. Jennifer Bremer, "Challenges to Governance Reform and Accountability in Egypt," in *Public Administration and Policy in the Middle East*, ed. Alexander R. Dawoody (New York: Springer, 2015), 83–101.

13. For this thesis, see Mazin Qumsiyeh, "Israel and Western Countries Playing the Game of Divide and Conquer in the Middle East," *Al-Jazeerah*, 11 July 2013, http://www.ccun.org/.

14. For a synopsis of the approach of ISIS in particular, see Eric Schmitt, "In Battle to Defang ISIS, U.S. Targets Its Psychology," *New York Times*, 28 December 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/.

15. Justin Sink, "ISIS Threat 'a More Immediate Concern' than Assad, Obama Says," *Hill*, 28 September 2014, http://thehill.com/.

16. This position is consistent with past policy practice. See Fawaz A. Gerges, "The Obama Approach to the Middle East: The End of America's Moment?," *International Affairs* 89, no. 2 (2013): 299–323.

17. See Rami Khouri, "Arab Regime Change Is Best Left to Arabs," *Guardian*, 25 January 2012, http://www.theguardian.com/.

18. "Libya: The Next Failed State," *Economist*, 10 January 2015, http://www.economist.com/.

19. Peter Beaumont, "One Year On: Chaotic Libya Reveals the Perils of Humanitarian Intervention," *Guardian*, 18 February 2012, http://www.theguardian.com/.

20. For a decent assessment of Libyan oil production and its security, see Maher Chmaytelli, "Guard of Libyan Oil Port Calls in Strikes on Islamist Militias," Bloomberg, 30 December 2014, http://www|.bloomberg.com/.

21. Inmaculada Szmolka, "Political Change in North Africa and the Arab Middle East: Constitutional Reforms and Electoral Processes," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (March 2014): 128–48.

22. Zoltan Barany, "Revolt and Resilience in the Arab Kingdoms," *Parameters* 43, no. 2 (2013): 89–101.

23. There is a lively debate on the matter. For a nice take, see F. Gregory Gause III, "Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2011, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/.

24. John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (Summer 1990): 5–56.

25. Tom McCarthy and Dan Roberts, "Kerry Says US Official's ['Chicken----'] Jibe at Netanyahu Was Disgraceful and Damaging," *Guardian*, 30 October 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/.

26. Mearsheimer and Walt, *Israel Lobby*, 5–6. For the partisan nuances of Congress pressuring the White House on Israel and Iran, see Jeremy W. Peters, "G.O.P.'s Invitation to Netanyahu Is Aiding Obama's Cause on Iran," *New York Times*, 28 January 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/.

27. "Obama: Israel's Security Sacrosanct," *Jerusalem Post*, 27 February 2008, http://www.jpost.com/.

28. This point is captured quite nicely by Helene Cooper and Ethan Bronner, "Netanyahu Gives No Ground in Congress Speech," *New York Times*, 24 May 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/.

29. For a summary of those interests, see Benjamin Netanyahu, "PM Netanyahu's Remarks in the Knesset on Iran," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 24 November 2014, http://mfa.gov.il/.

30. Guy Taylor, "Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu: Iran Leader Hassan Rouhani Is a 'Wolf in Sheep's Clothing,'" *Washington Times*, 1 October 2013, http://www.washingtontimes.com/.

31. Jay Solomon and Maria Abi-Habib, "U.S., Iran Relations Move to Détente—Interests Align over Fight against Islamic State, Other Policies," *Wall Street Journal*, 28 October 2014, http://online.wsj.com/.

32. For a response to critics, see "Obama Condemns Critics of Newly Brokered Interim Nuclear Deal with Iran," *Haaretz*, 25 November 2013, http://www.haaretz.com/.

33. Although some individuals, especially political surrogates from the Democratic Party, have proclaimed that American statesmanship operates under a doctrine of a "New Realism," I contend that US foreign policy has been operating under the same old realism in which the least worst option is chosen among, as will be seen below, a bunch of terrible options. See Bill Richardson, "A New Realism: A Realistic and Principled Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2008, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/.

34. This is precisely the cautionary note proposed by think tanks like RAND. See chap. 2, "Sectarianism and Ideology in the Saudi-Iranian Relationship," in Frederic Wehrey et al., *Saudi-Iranian Relations since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. Policy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), 11–43.

35. On the complexities of these two factors, see Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

36. Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of Its Neoconservatives: The Politics of Tehran's Silent Revolution* (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co., 2007), 99–100.

37. This relationship has engendered quite a few unintended consequences in the region. Some are welcome while others are not. See, for instance, David Romano and Mehmet Gurses, eds., *Conflict, Democratization, and the Kurds in the Middle East: Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

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39. For more on the Russo-Syrian alliance, see Roy Allison, "Russia and Syria: Explaining Alignment with a Regime in Crisis," *International Affairs* 89, no. 4 (2013): 795–823.

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Military Intervention in Africa: French and US Approaches Compared

Stephen Burgess, PhD

Recent conflicts in Africa have demonstrated the need for foreign military intervention to prevent violent extremist organizations (VEOs) from expanding their areas of operations and attacking vulnerable states and populations. Since 2013, France has undertaken *direct military intervention*; deploying a force in *Opération Serval* that defeated VEO insurgents in Mali,[1] as well as launching *Opération Barkhane* in the Sahel to monitor and interdict VEOs and armed militants spilling over from Libya's state collapse and Mali's feeble recovery from conflict. In addition, France has trained forces from Chad and other countries that have operated alongside French units in interventions. In contrast, the United States opted for an *indirect military intervention*, establishing the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) in Djibouti in 2002 and spending more than a billion dollars training, equipping, deploying and sustaining African intervention forces mainly for peace enforcement in Somalia in Eastern Africa and training and equipping forces in the Sahel region of West Africa to prevent VEO invasions. The US has also used Special Forces and remotely piloted aircraft (RPAs) to assist in the fight against VEOs without engaging in major combat.

France and the United States have been among the leading countries when it comes to military intervention. This is because of both countries' relatively high level of global interests and high level of military capabilities as well as the willingness of most of their presidents to use military force. However, when context is considered, the nature of French and American military interventions has been quite different, which leads to a number of propositions. First of all, French and US interventions have taken place in different countries where their respective interests have been high. Second, *direct interventions with military force* have occurred in those places where those interests have been attacked or have been judged to be under imminent threat of attack by presidents inclined for various reasons to use force. Direct interventions have not occurred where interests may have been high but where the threat of attack on those interests has been moderate or low. The one exception to this proposition is the US humanitarian intervention in Somalia in 1993; however, the United States has not repeated such an intervention after its 1993 "Black Hawk Down" fiasco in which 18 US service personnel were killed in a mission that was not in the US national interest.[2]

Third, once France or the United States has intervened, other capable countries (including the United States and France) have not intervened but instead have lent support. For instance, France has a base in Djibouti from where it assisted the government of Djibouti in combating rebels in 1999-2001; however, it chose not to intervene in the 2000s to assist in the fight against VEOs in Eastern Africa. Instead, it chose the Sahel, because the threat to its interests there escalated in 2013, placing thousands of French nationals in Mali under threat of capture. It did not intervene in Eastern Africa because its interests there were not under imminent threat of attack and because the United States staged an *indirect military intervention* against VEOs there first by establishing CJTF-HOA in 2002. France instead chose to work through the European Union (EU) to aid the African Union (AU), the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the training of the new Somali military.[3]

The US invested hundreds of millions of dollars in the Pan-Sahel Initiative followed by the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP), including the training and equipping of the security forces of Mali, Niger, and Mauritania.[4] Therefore, it could have been expected that US forces would have intervened in Mali in 2012 or 2013 to assist the beleaguered national military. However, the United States did not intervene in 2012 when jihadists took control of northern Mali and stood by in 2013, while France - which had greater interests that were under attack - intervened. Instead, the United States provided logistical and other support. Evidently, sunk costs were not a great concern in US calculations.

The US *indirectly intervened militarily* when it established CJTF-HOA in Djibouti at Camp Lemonier—a French military base - in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001 and also because Al Qaeda had attacked US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the USS Cole in Yemen in 2000. The declaration of the "Global War on Terror" led to a surge of military activity and to the US Department of Defense (DOD) and US Central Command (CENTCOM) deciding to use CJTF-HOA to work against the Al Qaeda threat to Eastern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula and the growing ties among jihadists. The resources committed to Eastern Africa were smaller than those in Afghanistan - where the 9/11 attacks were planned (and Iraq) - from where attacks were "anticipated". Also, the United States was unwilling to intervene directly in Somalia after the 1993 "Black Hawk Down" fiasco. Instead, the United States first worked with Somali warlords from 2001-2006 against Islamists and from 2006 onwards with Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya against the VEO, Al Shabaab. Even when Al Shabaab was on the verge of taking the Somali capital of Mogadishu from 2007 to 2011, the United States continued to rely upon African forces to save the day.

The timing of intervention is also important to consider. In Africa, France and the United States have intervened only after a crisis has occurred and not with *direct military deployment* to prevent a crisis. France could have intervened in 2012 when jihadists took over northern Mali and prevented them from moving towards the more populated half of the country. However, France only did so in 2013 when the jihadists launched an offensive, moving south towards the capital, Bamako, and threatening French nationals. In comparison, the United States *intervened indirectly* in Eastern Africa and Somalia by setting up CJTF-HOA and sending troops to Djibouti after 9/11 when the Bush administration assumed that Al Qaeda was going to launch more attacks in Eastern Africa and Yemen. When the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) took over most of Somalia in 2006 and became more extreme, the United States indirectly intervened by supporting the Ethiopian invasion in December 2006 and the deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) from 2007 onwards to counter Al Shabaab. In the Sahel, the United States trained and exercised with regional security forces with the aim of preventing a VEO takeover.

France decided to move from modest action to direct military intervention with Serval and, starting in 2014, sustained military action through Barkhane in spite of limited resources. Evidently, there was a change in the calculation of interests in Paris that led to the escalation of military activity. Prior to 2013, France was trying to extricate itself from the business of direct intervention and nation-building in Africa. It was indicative that in 2011, President Nikolas Sarkozy did little after the air campaign in Libya to rebuild the country. In spite of France's determination to draw down and cut costs, it has continued to get sucked into saving some of its former colonies from collapse, with the intervention in Cote d'Ivoire (2002-2014), Mali (2013-2014) and Central African Republic (2014-2016) and the protracted defense of Chad (1986-2014) (*Opération Épervier*). After Serval, France had the chance to resume the process of winding down its military presence in Africa. However, Paris decided to escalate its military intervention in Northwest Africa.[5] France launched Barkhane - an open-ended counter-terrorism mission that covers much of the vast Sahel and Sahara with only 3,500 French Army soldiers backed by French Air Force assets in Ndjamena, Chad and Niamey, Niger. The reversal seems to have occurred because Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the so-called Islamic State (Daesh) increasingly have posed a danger to French interests and to the countries of the Sahel and Maghreb, especially Libya, Niger and Mali. However, France's ambitious counterterrorism (CT) operation holds the danger of mission creep and raises questions about excessive risk-taking.

The US has been content to take an indirect military approach in Africa. The US has far more military resources than France and could have intervened directly in both Somalia and Mali. However, the administration of President George W. Bush decided in 2001 that the epicenter of the struggle against Al Qaeda was in Southwest Asia and not in Africa. The commitment of more than a hundred thousand troops to Afghanistan and Iraq from 2002 to 2014 significantly diminished the ability of the United States to use military force in Africa. Furthermore, VEOs did not appear as a serious threat in Somalia until 2006 and Mali until 2012. US backing for the Ethiopian invasion in December 2006 and AMISOM in 2007 substituted for direct action, especially at the same time as the United States was launching the surge in Iraq. While the United States thinks that Eastern Africa contains greater threats to US national security interests than Northwest Africa, it has not been as important as Afghanistan or Iraq or more recently Syria and Libya with counter Daesh operations. As for Mali and the Sahel, the United States has not deployed forces but has supported operations Serval and Barkhane with logistics and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR). US Africa Command (AFRICOM) is currently focused on attacking Daesh in Libya.

Methodology

This article analyzes why French and US approaches to military intervention in Africa are different and argues that different strategic cultures and interests provide the explanation. The article also appraises similar features in French and US interventions: (1) *direct interventions with military force* occur in places where interests are high and have been attacked or judged to be under imminent threat of attack; they have not occurred where interests may be high but where the threat of attack on those interests has been moderate or low; (2) direct interventions take place after a crisis has occurred and not to prevent one from happening; (3) *indirect military intervention* takes place in locations where interests are moderate and there is a threat of an *eventual* attack; (4) once France or the United States has intervened, that country plays the lead role and other countries cooperate.

There are two theoretical frameworks—realism and constructivism—that are employed in this article to analyze the propositions. First, realism explains direct and indirect military interventions in terms of levels of interest and threats to those interests and the resources available to counteract threats and maintain the status quo. Accordingly, direct military interventions take place where vital interests are under great threat or under attack; and indirect interventions are launched where the threat is not as high and where action is needed to prevent spillover of a conflict.[6]

The realist perspective is that threats to French interests in Northwest Africa are higher than to those of the United States, which explains direct French military intervention there in spite of less military resources. Conversely, threats to US interests in Eastern Africa are higher than those against French interests, which helps to explain indirect US military intervention there. France has had high interests in Northwest Africa since colonial times, which have been under increasing threat of attack from VEOs. While France has comparatively low military resources and is confronting high costs, it has decided to intervene and sustain the intervention because of the level of interests. The realist view is that US indirect intervention in Eastern Africa has occurred because of VEOs in Somali, Yemen and Kenya that threaten US interests.[7] Also, the United States has more military resources to deal with these areas than does France, which has made it possible for US forces to intervene. However, US interests have not been as high as in Southwest Asia and have not been so under threat that it has found it necessary to directly intervene. If US interests in Eastern Africa were higher, it would have been more willing to directly intervene militarily. For example, if bin Laden had stayed in Sudan and had been harbored by the Bashir regime and planned the 9/11 attacks from Sudan, the United States would have attacked Sudan and not Afghanistan. The epicenter of the war on terror would have been in Eastern Africa. As for Northwest Africa, the higher level of resources enabled the United States to expend considerable resources in an area which is not high in the US national interest.

Second, constructivist theory and more specifically strategic culture play a role in explaining the contrast between the tendency of France to directly intervene in Africa with subordinate partners in spite of a limited budget as against the US pattern of indirectly intervening and seeking partners as surrogates when it has massive military and financial resources. Countries and their leaders hold certain beliefs and assumptions and adhere to a strategic culture in taking military action. Strategic culture plays a role in determining whether military interventions are direct or indirect.[8]

Both France and the United States have constructed respective self-conceptualizations over the years and have formed two distinct "strategic cultures" that play a role in shaping the nature of their interventions. French strategic culture and past operations explain why and how France has intervened in Northwest Africa. France has chosen "ways" of intervention, which have achieved significant effects by employing relatively small, mobile military forces in actions that have carried a good degree of risk. In contrast, the United States has been more risk averse in its choice of "ways", which can be traced back to the "Vietnam syndrome" and the "Powell doctrine" which advocated the deployment of overwhelming force if the ends to be achieved were considered to be in the US national inter-

est. The strategic culture proposition is that the United States and French militaries will continue past behavior unless compelled by higher authority or an external shock to do otherwise.[9]

Therefore, the level of interests, level of resources, and strategic culture all factor into explaining the differences and similarities between France and the United States While both perspectives are necessary for comparison, the argument in this article is that the constructivist (strategic culture) perspective and attitude towards risk is more insightful than the realist perspective in explaining the differences between the French and US approaches.

French Military Intervention in Africa

The issue in this section is whether **realism (interests) or constructivism (strategic culture)** provides more of the explanation for why France has launched direct military interventions in Northwest Africa and not in Eastern Africa. A related issue is whether an external shock to French interests or a change in leaders' perspectives caused a change in military intervention from 2013 onwards.[10]

Realism (interests): France has been intervening in Africa since 1830 when it invaded and colonized Algeria. By 1900, it had conquered Northwest Africa, defeating a number of militarily proficient kingdoms in the Sahel. The French established colonial military outposts throughout the Sahel and Sahara and used the Foreign Legion and other forces to put down rebellions against its authority. France created the states of Algeria, Mali, Niger, Chad, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso and considered its colonies to be part of the metropole. French nationals ran the administrations, companies and militaries in its colonies, and this pattern carried over into the post-independence era. From 1960 onwards, France maintained its nationals and companies and military outposts in Northwest Africa, and periodic military interventions in the region in support of regimes were one of the indicators of neo-colonialism. Of particular importance were uranium mining operations in Niger and elsewhere that fueled France's extensive nuclear power industry. France considered Northwest Africa to be in its sphere of influence, and as late as 1994, Paris objected to a visit by a US Secretary of State to Mali.[11]

In Eastern Africa, France established a base in Djibouti in 1894 that provided a way station that connected to French Indochina and to its interests in the Middle East. However, France had little interest in Eastern Africa, except to deter a possible Ethiopian takeover of Djibouti in the 1980s and to help the Djiboutian government counteract attacks by local Djiboutian rebels from 1999 to 2001.

In 1991, France supported the Algerian military when it prevented the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) from taking power after elections. This gave rise to civil war and the eventual emergence of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Alge-

rian violent extremists blamed France for the military coup and attempted to attack French cities and citizens. Thus, AQIM and other VEOs continued to attack French interests into this decade, seizing French citizens in Northwest Africa as hostages for ransom and other actions.[12]

Neo-colonialism finally began to fade away in the late 1990s. Threats to interests were not as great with the end of the Cold War and the containment of Colonel Qadhafi of Libya. In *Opération Turquoise* in 1994, French forces intervened to save a regime that had been responsible for genocide in Rwanda, which gave French neo-colonialism a bad name. In 1997, the death of Michel Foccart, the architect of neo-colonialism and the fall of the French-backed Mobutu regime in Zaire opened the way for a less paternalistic and more multilateral approach. The new French government decided to change course and act more in Africa as part of the European Union (EU). Prime Minister Lionel Jospin undertook the process of transforming France's role in Africa to one of leading EU assistance to Africa and launching a French-led peacekeeping training program - RECAMP.

Even as neo-colonialism faded away, France still was concerned about its interests (citizens and companies) and the sunk costs in its former colonies but chose to act in a more modest and even-handed manner. The 2002 French intervention in Cote d'Ivoire, *Opération Licorne,* did not support the regime of President Laurent Gbagbo but separated the government and rebel forces while a political settlement was being reached over eight years. Also, France led interventions to stop Sudan from taking over Chad in a dispute over war and genocide in Darfur. In 2006, Sudan sent an invasion force of Chadian rebels to seize Ndjamena. France increased the size of its force in Chad and helped the Chadian military fend off the rebels. In 2007, France took the lead in authorizing and leading an EU force (EUROFOR) to provide protection for the regime of President Idriss Déby and tens of thousands of refugees from Darfur.

Strategic culture: While the colonial experience of 1840-1960 helped shape French strategic culture, the Algerian War and massive insurgency of 1954-62 compelled France to formulate and implement a muscular counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy. COIN operations in Algeria included desert and mountain warfare, which required a strategy of "clear and hold" and light mobile forces with extensive ISR and the ability to establish authority after clearing an area. After giving up Algeria in 1962, the struggle in the French defense establishment became one that pitted the "grand strategists" who wanted to make France a major *player* in the Cold War and the "neo-colonials" who wanted to ensure that French forces were capable of defending interests in Africa. Thanks to Colonel Qadhafi of Libya, France was compelled to shape a strategy to defend its former colonies and interests from both irregular and conventional warfare from the late 1970s

until the 1990s. In particular, French interventions in Chad involved a strategy of working with and directing local forces in containing and then rolling back rebel and Libyan invasion forces that operated in some ways like today's VEOs. A series of three operations involved extensive ISR and mobile forces with a large featured role of the French Air Force over a wide desert area, which in many ways laid the groundwork for operations Serval and Barkhane.[13]

In 1978, *Opération Tacaud* was launched with French troops, backed by the French Air Force, supporting the Chadian army and protecting the capital, Ndjamena, from rebel forces. In 1983, France launched its largest intervention since the Algerian war with *Opération Manta* and the dispatch of 3,500 troops to help stop an offensive by forces of an opposition government-in-exile and Libya. French forces imposed a red line which stopped the offensive from advancing beyond the 16th and 15th parallels. In February 1986, Qadhafi launched a new offensive that pushed south of the red line, which led to *Opération Epervier*. The French Air Force attacked the offensive and enemy bases north of the 16th parallel. France sent additional ground forces to create a force of 2,200 that successfully defended Ndjamena and allowed Chadian forces to take back all of its territory, including the Aozou Strip in the far north.[14]

With the end of the Cold War and the fading of the Libyan threat, France decided to maintain the French Air Force base in Ndjamena and a sizable French Army force in Chad. The Ndjamena base became known as its "desert aircraft carrier", and the French Air Force has continued to conduct desert training and exercises from there in cooperation with the French Army and Chadian Army. With the rise of Boko Haram as a threat that was spilling over from Northeastern Nigeria, Ndjamena became a center for the "Lake Chad Initiative" against the VEO which involved France and the bordering states of Chad, Niger and Cameroon.

The principles of prevention and projection helped to define France's strategic culture after the Cold War; prevention was based on the prepositioning of forces and intelligence about unstable situations on the ground.[15] France has been able to achieve projection with rapid reaction forces of 5,000 troops or less in response to flashpoints in Africa. Prepositioning demonstrated that, even as French interests and threats to those interests faded, France's strategic culture became one of continuing to base its forces in Northwest Africa and using them in operations. Thanks to the wars over Chad, Ndjamena became the primary center of French activity in the Sahel and Sahara with *Opération Epervier* continuing until 2014 and being superseded by Barkhane. Prepositioning forces has provided French presidents with the temptation of using them in interventions in which a force of 5,000 troops or less is deemed sufficient, which has often been the case.[16] Prepositioning enabled the projection of forces in defense of the Déby regime in the

face of attacks from rebels from Sudan in 2006 and the launching of Serval and Barkhane. France has prepositioned 1,500 troops in Djibouti from where forces have been deployed outside of Eastern Africa to such places as Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the exception of the COIN operation in Djibouti. In the rest of Eastern Africa and Somalia, in particular, France decided to act via the EU.

France and the United States in Northwest Africa and the "War on Terror": After 9/11, France acquiesced to large-scale US security cooperation programs (PSI and TSCTP) in US security assistance to its former colonies in the Sahel. However, the United States was careful not to tread too heavily in what was considered to be the French sphere of influence. In 2008, President Sarkozy began cutting the defense budget and initiated the process of reducing France's bases in Africa. The plan was to maintain two bases in Dakar, Senegal and Djibouti and to close bases in Ndjamena, Chad and Libreville, Gabon and Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. However, these plans stalled because of the 2011 war in Libya and the spillover of the conflict into the Sahel and continuing civil strife in Côte d'Ivoire and Central African Republic. Thus, until recently, France has been torn between cutting its presence in Africa versus defending what it had played a large part in building. However, the spillover from Libya and VEO takeover of most of Mali has led France to reverse its position and launch Serval and Barkhane.[17]

Interests and Timing: France did not intervene in 2012, because there was no imminent threat to French interests in southern Mali. Also President Francois Hollande was new to office and was weighing options in regard to the use of force. With the VEO offensive in January 2013, President Hollande wanted to lift his public opinion polls by appearing decisive. The French people have traditionally been willing to let its president use force when they have been convinced that that it is necessary. They have not been highly concerned about casualties and have been willing to accept risk if they can be convinced that national interests are at stake. French leaders believed that the VEOs would overrun Bamako, the capital of Mali; take some 5,000 French nationals hostage; and use Mali as a launching ground for attacks against the homeland.[18] Furthermore, France had forces available in its prepositioned sites that could be quickly deployed. The perception of a French sphere of influence backed by military forces is one of the reasons why the United States expected France to intervene in Mali in 2013.[19]

Strategic culture and Barkhane: France's strategic culture has helped to define the operation. France is faced with threats to the homeland and interests in Northwest Africa and wants to contain AQIM and Daesh and interdict them. Barkhane's mission is twofold: support African armed forces in fighting VEOs and help prevent the re-establishment of their sanctuaries and strongholds. French

strategy today focuses on counterterrorism with light forces that combine ISR, strike forces and air power. France avoids nation-building, which it leaves to the UN and other entities. Barkhane features the comprehensive approach involving the United Nations (UN), EU and the AU, which are all supporting the French effort and are involved in the security process, with training and peacekeeping missions. France has also worked closely with its G5 Sahel partners (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso) through its "Enlarged Partnership" process; the G5 is the main body for nations of the Sahel to coordinate their fight against violent extremism. Therefore, French strategic culture is much more multilateral than it was three decades ago, though France still asserts a leading role.[20]

Conclusion: The constructivist perspective explains why France's strategic culture of prevention and projection with prepositioned forces enables it to launch direct military interventions in Northwest Africa when no other country will. France has experience and good ISR in the region and is able to calculate risk and avoid large-scale casualties. In contrast, the realist perspective on French intervention explains *when* France intervenes. The VEO offensive in Mali and threats to French interests led France to launch Serval. The threats to French interests in the Sahel and the homeland caused by state collapse in Libya led France to mount Barkhane. France's strategic culture today is such that Paris is less inclined to intervene than three decades ago and only after threats to its interests have reached the severe level. However, shocks to French interests stemming from the collapse of Libya caused French leaders to reverse course and order a surge of military intervention from 2013 onwards.

US Military Intervention in Africa

This section deals with the extent to which a constructivist perspective on US strategic culture is important in explaining US indirect military intervention in Africa as opposed to a realist approach that focuses on the level of US interests and threats to those interests.

Realism (interests): Threats to US interests since the Cold War rose with the activities of Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda in Sudan from 1991-1996, the 1998 embassy bombings, the 2000 USS Cole bombing and 9/11. As stated earlier, if bin Laden and Al Qaeda had been allowed to stay in Sudan, been harbored by the Bashir regime, and planned the 9/11 attacks from there, the United States would have attacked Sudan and not Afghanistan. The epicenter of threats against US interests and the war on terror would have been in Africa. However, bin Laden and Al Qaeda were forced to move to Afghanistan, and threats to US interests came from Southwest Asia, with Africa as a secondary theater. Since September 11, 2001, defeating Al Qaeda and Daesh and protecting Saudi Arabia and other

Middle East allies have been in US interests, which has led the United States to try to contain the spread of VEO activity in Northwest Africa and to neutralize it in Eastern Africa.[21]

US strategic culture over the past three decades has been defined by the "Powell Doctrine", which defined US interventions as requiring overwhelming force when and where the US national interest was under severe threat. The US direct intervention in Somalia in 1993 unfolded with overwhelming force but without compelling interests, and mission creep led to "Black Hawk Down". The fiasco led to even more risk-averse strategic culture, enshrined in Presidential Decision Directive 25, which effectively ended US participation in UN peace operations in Africa. US risk aversion after Somalia led to the failure to respond to genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Subsequently, the United States apologized for not acting and pledged that it would work to stop future genocide. The failure to stop the genocide in Rwanda and PDD 25 led to the US strategy of developing the "African solutions to African problems" approach in which the United States would lead in training African peacekeeping forces and building partnership capacity (BPC) but would not directly intervene militarily.

An external shock (9/11) and US strategic culture of indirect military intervention in Africa led to CJTF-HOA in Eastern Africa and PSI/TSCTP in Northwest Africa. The US has assisted partners in nation-building in Somalia and the Sahel and has trained and equipped African forces to conduct counter-insurgency operations (COIN). 9/11 and the experience in Afghanistan led to the introduction of US special operations forces (SOF). Today the United States has 700 or so SOF engaged in the struggle against VEOs and building partnerships with African forces.[22] The US has been more willing to use force in Afghanistan from where it was attacked and Iraq from where it assumed that an attack was coming and where forces became embroiled in nation-building. Higher authority in the United States was consumed by the struggle in Southwest Asia and less so in Africa. However, the creation of AFRICOM in 2008 led to a more focused counter-VEO strategy and operations in Africa.

US Strategy and Operations in Eastern Africa: After September 11, 2001, the United States directed more power towards countering VEOs and the ungoverned spaces in and around Somalia. The Bush administration decided that VEOs in Somalia and Eastern Africa posed more of a threat to its interests than did the Sahel and Sahara. The establishment of CJTF-HOA in Djibouti by DOD and CENTCOM enabled US Special Operations Command to undertake operations against Al Qaeda and other extremists in the region. CENTCOM selected Djibouti because of its strategic location between the ungoverned spaces of Somalia and Eastern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Also, Djibouti was chosen because

of the receptivity of the government, which had hosted French forces since independence. Before 2002, the United States had never established a base in Africa, which stands in contrast to more than a century of French bases.

Before 2006, the VEO threat in Somalia and Eastern Africa was not as severe as had been anticipated. Thus, CJTF-HOA shifted its approach and adopted a more indirect and bottom-up "hearts and minds" campaign, which centered on the drilling of wells for Somali pastoralists living in areas adjacent to Somalia, especially in Kenya and Ethiopia.[23] The campaign scored some initial successes but experienced serious setbacks in Ethiopia in 2007 and Kenya in 2009. Also, mistakes were made, including drilling boreholes in areas that caused conflict between clans. CJTF-HOA was forced to reformulate the campaign, which became less focused on Somali pastoralists and relatively less effective in helping to achieve US security goals in the ungoverned spaces of Eastern Africa.[24]

In 2004, the United States began to support the "Transitional Federal Government" of Somalia in the hope of reconstituting the Republic of Somalia, which would eventually be able to counter VEOs and reestablish sovereignty and territoriality. In 2005, the new Assistant Secretary of State for Africa assumed a leading role in the Horn of Africa policy, introducing a more robust strategy of combating violent extremism and reestablishing Somali governance by backing the development of the transitional government into a governing and military force. After the surging Islamic Courts Union (ICU) defeated the US-backed warlords and united South-Central Somalia under its rule and began threatening Ethiopia's Ogaden region, the Bush administration acquiesced to the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in December 2006, and the United States increased military assistance to Ethiopia. The Bush administration also backed the plan of the African Union (AU) to send a peace enforcement force, led by Uganda, to Somalia.

The US Department of State (DOS) led the way in arranging the training and equipping of Ugandan and Burundian African Union forces and the new Somali National Armed Force (SNAF). The DOS Political-Military Affairs office, its Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, and security cooperation officials in embassies in Kampala, Bujumbura, Addis Ababa, and Nairobi engaged with African Union and Somali forces.[25] They organized the training and equipping of Ugandan and Burundian and the SNAF and arranged assistance for their operations in Mogadishu.[26]

The Obama administration continued the peace enforcement and state-building policy for Somalia. By 2011, AMISOM and Somali forces strengthened and scored successes against Al Shabaab. Of particular significance were the August 2011 liberation of Mogadishu and the 2012 Kenyan intervention in Somalia that led to the takeover of the Al Shabaab stronghold of Kismayo and much of the

surrounding province of Jubaland.[27] In 2012, the Federal Republic of Somalia was reconstituted.

The US has spent over a hundred million dollars a year since 2007 on the security enterprise for Somalia and continues to spend over a hundred million dollars each year.[28] Most of the funds have been channeled through the State Department's program for training, equipping and supporting Ugandan and Burundian forces that became the core of AMISOM.[29] The DOD and AFRICOM provided support, with combined exercises and help in training. CJTF-HOA arranged intelligence sharing with AMISOM for defensive purposes. Finally, in April 2013, with the lifting of the arms embargo on Somalia, the United States began arms shipments to the new Somali army.

In sum, the United States and its partners have made considerable progress in rolling back Al Shabaab and securing the ungoverned spaces of Eastern Africa. African Union forces have risen in size from 6,000 in 2010 to over 22,000 today. On a negative note, the Republic of Somalia government of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud started out well, but it soon sank into the same morass of corruption as had previous Somali interim governments. Therefore, the goal of Somali self-sufficiency in security is still years away. Al Shabaab still mounts attacks inside Mogadishu and against AMISOM and Somali forces and is still a major security threat.

US Strategy and Operations in Northwest Africa: In the ungoverned space of the Sahara, US strategy has been more about containing and preventing the southward flow of extremism and has been less coherent and focused than in Eastern Africa. DOD and United States European Command (EUCOM) devised the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) in 2002 in the wake of 9/11 and the Bush administration's concern about ungoverned spaces and weak and failing states and the threats they posed to the United States and its allies in the Global War on Terror.[30] Saharan and Sahelian states were under similar pressures from VEOs as Eastern African states. In particular, the Sahel was vulnerable to militant groups, especially Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

The Bush administration proceeded first with the idea that building military counter-terrorism capacity would be the best places to start in defending the Sahara and Sahel from VEOs; protecting US and EU interests in Algeria, Nigeria and other states; and rolling back militant groups. In the Sahel, it was expected that weak states would be able to develop capabilities to contain threats. Therefore, the United States began funding programs in the Sahel states in 2002 to help build their ability to exercise sovereignty and territoriality and control their borders. From 2002–2004, the US military trained and equipped one rapid-reaction company of about 150 soldiers each, in Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad to

enhance border capabilities against arms smuggling, drug trafficking, and the movement of trans-national VEOs. US Special Forces and EUCOM took the lead in training and exercises. In regard to building capacity to establish governance in the Sahara, the strategy was unclear. For example, Toyota Land Cruisers were provided to Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad in the hope that it would strengthen border control in the vast Saharan Desert. However, there was insufficient follow-up to ensure that the aid had been effective.

By 2005, the Bush administration altered the strategy and launched the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), deciding that building state capacity and government capabilities and winning hearts and minds would be a better way of defending the Sahel from militant groups and preventing the spread of extremism. The United States Agency for International Development (US-AID) and the State Department were given the lead, with EUCOM supporting. The United States funded the TSCTP with $500 million from 2005 to 2010, and funding was extended from 2010 onwards.[31] At the same time, EUCOM and Special Operations Command (SOCOM) launched Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans-Sahara (OEF-TS) to train African forces to counter VEOs. EUCOM also continued to mount Operation Flintlock to jointly exercise US forces with regional forces. In 2008, EUCOM passed control of OEF-TS to AFRICOM.

Under the Obama Administration, it was made clear that development and diplomacy were under the purview of the State Department and USAID and that the TSCTP was primarily their program.[32] The program provided regional university students with useful work skills to better prepare them for the transition between school and the workplace, as well as provide rehabilitation and training opportunities for disenfranchised youth and vulnerable populations. However, there still was no measure to gauge the reduction of extremism.[33]

In 2011, a USAID-sponsored survey found that USAID-funded TSCTP programs in Chad, Niger and Mauritania had diminished the underlying conditions that were leaving at-risk populations vulnerable to extremism. The programs included youth development, former combatant reintegration, and education, as well as rural radio and media programs, peacebuilding and conflict management, and small-scale infrastructure projects like drilling wells and constructing schools. In particular, USAID civic youth programs and TSCTP "peace and tolerance" radio programs were found to significantly reduce youth extremism.[34] Furthermore, it was found that the programs had built local government capacity and the ability to communicate with the youth of the Sahel and implemented the type of capacity and programs necessary to lessen extremism. It has been noted that the types of programs and projects that have been instituted are not complex and could be sustained once the US footprint is lessened.

While the TSCTP was found to help reduce support for violent extremism among youth in the Sahel, this was not the case in the ungoverned spaces of the Sahara (for example, among the Tuareg). Thus, the partnership can be considered a limited success, especially since most of the population lives in Sahel and not in the Sahara. It could be concluded that the TSCTP helped to prevent the southward spread of extremism and that a firewall had been built against extremism in the most populated areas of Sahel. The problem was in the northern Sahel and southern Sahara and how to change attitudes there and roll back extremism. It was problematic for US programs to reach those ungoverned spaces.

The US strategy produced disappointing results in Mali.[35] The relative success of Tuareg and extremist insurgencies showed that the tens of millions of dollars spent had not helped Mali defend itself and exercise territorial control over its northern spaces. He found that in Niger, VEOs remained a threat. In Nigeria, Boko Haram was continuing to conduct frequent mass attacks, which US programs have done little to help stop. In Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Chad, US efforts produced greater capabilities; merged US security and development specialties; and enhanced US security interests to some extent.[36] This was partly due to the relative strength of the regimes and professionalism of the security forces.

In sum, the United States and its partners have made mixed progress in the Sahel and not much progress in the Sahara and suffered severe setbacks with the collapse of the Libyan state and the VEO invasion of Mali.[37] The mixed record is due to a combination of ungoverned spaces in the Sahara and effectiveness of VEOs, as well as Sahelian states' weakness and security forces' limitations. There is a debate over the future of the TSCTP. Some think it should be enhanced with a Joint Task Force-Western Africa. Others think TSCTP should be tightened and more focused on Mali, Niger and Nigeria, especially in countering Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram.[38]

Comparing US Strategy in Eastern Africa and Northwest Africa: A more assertive strategy of indirect intervention supporting offensive forces and attacking militant group leaders partially succeeded in securing an ungoverned space and curbing a violent extremist organization in Eastern Africa, in contrast to the partial failure of a containment approach in the Sahara, which focused on counterterrorism training for regional security forces and countering extremist ideology. In the Sahara, the US containment strategy of supporting regional regimes and providing programs for youth led to some progress in curbing extremism in the Sahel but very limited success in countering militant groups and other violent non-state actors in the Sahara and failure in preventing militant groups from taking over northern Mali in 2012. Since then, VEOs have expanded their activities to other parts of the region. The more assertive strategy in Eastern Africa

led to the expulsion of Al Shabaab from ungoverned urban and some rural spaces and enabled the formation of a Somali government. Also, US forces launched occasional counterterrorist attacks that degraded Al Shabaab's leadership. Thus, the US strategy of neutralization in Somalia and Eastern Africa has achieved greater results than containment in Northwest Africa.

The US strategy of supporting Uganda and the AMISOM and using US counterterrorism attacks reaped a partial victory but did not neutralize Al Shabaab. While the United States has scored successes in Somalia, the Al Qaeda-linked militant group has not been eliminated; it has merely been curbed. Therefore, the assertive approach had an impact but did not achieve victory. Given the failure of US strategy in both Eastern Africa and Sahara to decisively defeat militant groups, it must be concluded that geopolitics, in the form of ungoverned spaces that cannot be controlled by weak regimes, provides a significant part of the explanation. Neither an assertive nor a containment strategy is likely to bring success in decisively countering violent non-state actors in ungoverned spaces. This fits the pattern established in the war against Al Qaeda Central in Pakistan and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen.

The vast size of the Sahara makes it difficult for all eight regional regimes, backed by the US and France, to control. Therefore, it is questionable if the more assertive strategy applied in Somalia and Eastern Africa could work in Mali and the Sahara. The Sahara is a bigger ungoverned space than Eastern Africa and appears to be a more dangerous place, where VEOs and other violent non-state actors can sustain themselves and avoid interdiction. However, it is difficult to definitively conclude that the larger and more ungoverned the space where such actors choose to operate, the more sustainable a dangerous place will be and the more difficult it will be to pacify. One can only conclude that ungoverned spaces create an advantageous condition for such actors to make dangerous places.

The level of success in Eastern Africa can be explained by the level of US national interest and weight of effort, as well as the relatively small ungoverned space. The level of threat to US interests against violent extremism was greater in Eastern Africa than in the Sahara and Sahel. Also, the high degree of salience of Ugandan leaders and the capability of Ugandan forces, backed by other Eastern African forces, was greater than leaders and forces from Sahelian and other West African countries.[39] Comparison of US strategy in Eastern Africa and Sahara demonstrate that the United States is more likely to assertively attack militant groups if those actors are committed to attacking US interests, especially in the Arabian Peninsula, and less likely when they might attack the interests of a less important country or region. The more concentrated threat to US interests and absence of a state in Somalia influenced decision-making regarding Eastern Af-

rica, which led to CJTF-HOA and support for AMISOM, while the more dispersed threat and weak states in the Sahara led to a less intensive approach, which resulted in the PSI and then the TSCTP. The United States was unwilling to intervene in Mali in 2012, because the threat to US interests was low and because the Obama administration was less-inclined to use force than the Bush administration had been.

Conclusion: Constructivism and strategic culture (the Powell Doctrine and casualty aversion) have determined how the United States indirectly intervenes militarily (i.e., establishing a well-defended base and building partnership capacity). Realism and interests have determined the scale of intervention. In Eastern Africa, the threat from Al Shabaab in Somalia and Kenya has led to a large US military presence and CJTF-HOA in Djibouti. However, the threat is not so great as to invite direct military intervention. In contrast, the lower level of threat and the French sphere of influence in Northwestern Africa led the United States to launch PSI and TSCTP but no US military bases. Threats to US interests are greater in Somalia which led to efforts to neutralize Al Shabaab, in contrast to efforts in Northwest Africa to merely contain AQIM, Boko Haram and other VEOs.

Conclusion

The level of interests, level of resources, and strategic culture all factor into explaining the differences and similarities between France and the United States. While both constructivist and realist perspectives are necessary for comparative analysis, the argument in this article is that strategic culture and attitudes towards risk are more insightful than the realist perspective in explaining the different ways that France and the United States chose to intervene in Africa. The Powell Doctrine and casualty and risk aversion explain why the United States is less willing to intervene directly militarily in Africa; however, the relatively lower level of US interests in Africa as compared with Southwest Asia must also be taken into account. Also, the US military has an organizational culture of winning, while the French military is accustomed to messy outcomes, which also explains the differences in interventionism. Prepositioning of French forces in Northwest Africa increases the likelihood that they will be used in operations such as Serval and Barkhane. The prepositioning of US Forces in CJTF-HOA has not led to direct military intervention in Somalia, even as the capital and country were on the verge of falling to Al Shabaab.

In regard to realism, external shocks and spikes in threats to interests determine when both the United States and France intervene. The level of interests explains the similar features in French and US interventions: (1) *direct interventions with military force* occur in places where interests are high and have been attacked as in the case of French interests in Mali. US interests in Mali were not as high as French interests. US interests and threats to their interests have been higher in Somalia and Libya which has led to indirect military intervention and limited intervention by SOF. (2) Direct interventions take place after attacks on vital interests have occurred and not to prevent one from happening. The French doctrine of prevention and projection and the prepositioning of forces still did not lead to a deployment of forces to Mali, even when VEOs had taken over the northern half of the country. However, Barkhane can be considered both a counterterrorist operation and a preventive one. (3) *Indirect military intervention* takes place in locations where interests are moderate and there is a threat of an *eventual* attack on vital interests; this is the case of US military intervention in Eastern Africa. (4) French intervention in Mali and the Sahel and Sahara was not superseded by US intervention; instead, the United States supported France in Serval and Barkhane. The US intervention in Eastern Africa was followed by France leading in EU assistance to AMISOM and the new Somali government.

External shocks to interests caused changes in French and US military interventionism. The collapse of Libya and the VEO invasion of Mali caused France to reverse course from winding down its presence in Northwest Africa to mounting Serval and a protracted counterterrorism intervention in the form of Barkhane. Black Hawk Down caused the United States to abandon direct military intervention in Africa, while the Rwandan genocide led to indirect military intervention. Al Qaeda attacks led to CJTF-HOA, while the threat of attacks from Algerian VEOs who allied with Al Qaeda led to TSCTP.

Stephen Burgess, PhD

Stephen F. Burgess has been Professor of International Security Studies, US Air War College since June 1999. He has published books and numerous articles, book chapters and monographs on African and Asian security issues, Peace and Stability Operations, and Weapons of Mass Destruction. His books include *The United Nations under Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 1992-97* and *South Africa's Weapons of Mass Destruction*. His recent journal articles include "International Assistance Efforts at State-Building in Africa: Are There Alternatives?" *Comparative Strategy*, 36: 2 (June 2017); and "UN and AU Counter-terrorism Norm Acceptance: Comparative Foreign and Security Policies of Uganda and Chad," *Comparative Strategy*, 35, no. 4 (September 2016). He holds a doctorate from Michigan State University (1992) and has been on the faculty at the University of Zambia, University of Zimbabwe, Vanderbilt University, and Hofstra University.

Notes

1. François Heisbourg, "A Surprising Little War: First Lessons of Mali" *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 55, no. 2 (2013): 7-18.

2. A less significant exception was in August 2003, when the United States sent the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit to Liberia for a month in support of the Economic Community of West African States force that was overseeing the removal of Charles Taylor from power.

3. Major General (Ret) Maurice de Langlois, *The comprehensive approach and the European Union: a case study of the Horn of Africa*, Note de recherche stratégique (IRSEM, 2014), 10. See also "EEAS - European External Action Service - European Commission," EEAS - European External Action Service, accessed 19 February 2016, https://eeas.europa.eu/, and "Peace and Security | The Africa-EU Partnership," accessed 19 February 2016, http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/.

4. In contrast to the hundreds of millions of dollars that the United States spent to secure the Sahel, France gave Mali a million dollars to build its police force before 2012.

5. In this article, Northwest Africa refers to an expansive area extending from Central African Republic to Morocco and Libya to Côte d'Ivoire.

6. Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited," *International Security* 25, no. 3 (2001): 128-161.

7. Christopher S. Chivvis, *The French War on Al Qa'ida in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

8. Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998). Christoph O. Meyer, *The Quest for a European Strategic Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). Constructivist theory would explain that France is driven by its civilian and military leadership's self-conceptualization as the guardian of Northwest Africa which is within in its sphere of influence. Strategic culture is defined as the beliefs and assumptions that frame decisions to take military action, as well as preferences for offensive, expansionist or defensive modes of warfare and levels of wartime casualties that would be acceptable.

9. Jan Bachmann, "'Kick down the Door, Clean up the Mess, and Rebuild the House'–The Africa Command and Transformation of the US Military," *Geopolitics* 15, no. 3 (2010): 564-585. More than $300 million a year has been spent on United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) since it became operational in October 2008 in order to a large extent to focus on combating violent extremists in Eastern Africa. In 2011, AFRICOM generated the first of its campaign plans – the "East Africa Campaign Plan" - to deal with Eastern Africa. A West Africa Campaign Plan emerged soon afterwards and dealt with the Sahel. Also, there are proposals to establish a US Joint Task Force West Africa, modeled on CJTF-HOA, which is also funded with more than $300 million per year.

10. Shaun Gregory, "The French Military in Africa: Past and Present," *African Affairs* 99, no. 396 (2000): 435-448.

11. Ibid., 437-438.

12. Frank Foley, *Countering Terrorism in Britain and France: Institutions, Norms and the Shadow of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 25-27.

13. Rachel Utley, "The Sacred Union? French intervention in Lebanon and Chad under François Mitterrand," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 10, no. 3 (1999): 10-17.

14. Ibid.

15. Gregory, "The French Military in Africa," 445-447.

16. Ibid., 446.

17. Chivvis, *The French War on Al Qa'ida in Africa*, 44.

18. Michael Shurkin, *France's War in Mali: Lessons for an Expeditionary Army* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2014).

19. Chivvis, *The French War on Al Qa'ida in Africa*, 44-45.

20. Interactions with and briefings by French military officers, Libreville, Gabon and Yaoundé, Cameroon, March 2015.

21. Interviews with US officials, US Embassy, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and US Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya, June 2012. Interactions with US officials in Uganda and Tanzania, March 2013; Mali, Burkina Faso, and Ghana, March 2014; Cameroon, Gabon and Ethiopia, March 2015; and Rwanda, Kenya and Ethiopia, March 2016.

22. Eliza Griswold, "Can General Linder's Special Operations Forces Stop the Next Terrorist Threat?" *The New York Times*, 13 June 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/; and Bill Knarr, "Matching the Footprint of Governance to the Footprint of Sovereignty," in *The Role of the Global SOF Network in a Resource Constrained Environment*, ed. Chuck Ricks (MacDill AFB: Joint Special Operations University Press, November 2013), 31-40. The role of Special Forces (SOF) has been instrumental in combating violent extremists, especially in Somalia and the Sahara, and will continue to be so if the United States wants to intervene more assertively in resource-constrained environments. In both Eastern Africa and Sahara, good intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) are required to manage the dangerous places.

23. Karsten Friis, "Peacekeeping and Counter-Insurgency: Two of a Kind?" *International Peacekeeping* 17, no. 1 (March 2010): 49-66. This shift happened at a time in which US experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan were leading to adoption of stability operations, which focused on engaging from the bottom-up with local populations in order to mitigate violent extremism.

24. Interviews with US defense officials, US Embassy, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and US Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya, June 2012.

25. Interview with US Somalia expert, US Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya, 12 June 2012.

26. Interviews with Somalia experts at US AFRICOM headquarters, Stuttgart, Germany, 30 May 2012.

27. Ken Menkhaus, "After the Kenyan Intervention," (Washington, DC: Enough Project, January 2012), 1-15. http://www.enoughproject.org/.

28. "Transcript: General Carter Ham Discusses Security Challenges, Opportunities at George Washington University", US Africa Command, 3 December 2012, http://www.africom.mil/.

29. "Senior State Department Official Previewing Conference on Somalia," U.S. Department of State, accessed 20 February 2016, https://2009-2017.state.gov/. From 2008-2011, the United States spent $385 million supporting the African Union Mission.

30. William F. S. Miles, "Deploying Development to Counter Terrorism: Post-9/11 Transformation of US Foreign Aid to Africa," *African Studies Review* 55, no. 3 (December 2012): 27-60.

31. Government Accountability Office, *Combating Terrorism: Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation on Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP)*, Report to the Ranking Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives (Washington DC: Government Accountability Office, July 2008), https://www.gao.gov/. The GAO report found that there was no discernible effect on militant groups and a lack of focus and coherence; these problems have persisted.

32. "Programs and Initiatives," US Department of State, Bureau of Counter-terrorism, https://www.state.gov/.

33. United States Agency for International Development, "Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership," US Foreign Assistance Performance Publication, Fiscal Year 2009, www.state.gov.

34. United States Agency for International Development, *Midterm Evaluation of USAID's Counter-extremism Programming in Africa* (Washington, DC: USAID, 1 Feb 2011), 1-47. www.hsdl.org/?view&did=691725.

35. Miles, 27-60.

36. Ibid.

37. Heisbourg, "A Surprising Little War: First Lessons of Mali," 7-18.

38. Research data collected from meetings during the US Air War College Regional and Cultural Studies program field visit to Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana, 2-13 March 2014. For certain US officials, the TSCTP is "an accounting line" and is rarely mentioned. However, regionally focused USAID officials believe that TSCTP is being taken more seriously, especially since the Al Shabaab attack on the Westgate Mall in

Nairobi, Kenya. One US official commented that the TSCTP is now being accepted as a regional strategy for the Sahara and Sahel.

39. Matt Freear and Cedric de Coning, "Lessons from the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) for Peace Operations in Mali," *Stability: International Journal of Stability and Development* 2, no. 2 (2013): 1-11, https://www.stabilityjournal.org/.

Air Mobility Challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa

Maj Ryan McCaughan, USAF

As the C-130E broke through the uncharacteristic cloud deck that hung above the Ethiopian air base in the city formerly known as Debre Zeyit, about 50 km outside of the capital city Addis Ababa, one must consider the events that brought it here. Less than six years ago this aircraft belonged to the Puerto Rico Air National Guard. Since then it had been retired to the boneyard, selected for inclusion into the excess defense article (EDA) program, and granted to Ethiopia. What followed during the next two years can be characterized as bureaucratic malaise and long stretches of inactivity punctuated by brief periods of intense action followed by more than a year-long process of undergoing programmed depot maintenance at a cost of about $15 million to US taxpayers.

This will be the sole C-130E in the small, diverse fleet of the Ethiopian air force mobility aircraft. The aircraft and associated $24 million support package has been provided through strategic US government initiatives aimed at solving the air mobility challenge in sub-Saharan Africa. The manner air mobility is addressed in Ethiopia is consistent with how it is addressed throughout the continent and, at a cost of millions of dollars per year; has failed to solve the foundational problems of the lack of high-level maintenance options and too few aircraft. For that reason, there has been no appreciable capability growth across the region, despite the expenditure.

Since its inception in 2001, the African Union (AU) has been a forum through which the 54 member states could discuss and resolve significant issues which plague the continent. The AU charter is comprised of the same general ideals, security, freedom, and peace, which can similarly be found in other international organizations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), and the United Nations (UN). Unlike its Western contemporaries, however, the AU possesses a noteworthy capability shortfall that significantly constrains the potentially impactful organization's ability to achieve desired results. Globally, air mobility's role as a force multiplier has been proven, be it in Iraq while preceding military operations to build regional forces, or immediately following a natural disaster such as the 2011 earthquake in Japan, when aid personnel arrived on the ground within 24 hours of the beginning of the crisis.

Sub-Saharan Africa represents a glaring void where the capability is still not adequately reliable. While at strategic, coastal locations, such as Djibouti and Senegal, there is suitable infrastructure, they are strikingly insufficient across the approximately 45 nations that comprise sub-Saharan Africa.[1] This simple truth is particularly problematic due to seemingly constant warfare, habitually poor governance, and natural disasters that demand a need for the capability, arguably more than any other place on earth. The perpetual need to rapidly deploy personnel and resources is vital to averting disasters in this part of the world on an almost annual basis, but despite continuous, expensive attempts, the challenge has not yet been sufficiently addressed.

The UN, NATO, and the United States government (USG), as well as others to some degree, have dedicated funds to the problem of sub-Saharan African air mobility for decades but without a coherent, coordinated effort. For the USG, the answer has evolved around support to the Legacy C-130E/H due to the multitude of aircraft on the continent and availability in the USG inventory. Exact fiscal data allocated to air mobility in this region from all sources is difficult to ascertain, but it certainly totals in the hundreds of millions of dollars in the past decade. Despite routinely celebrating successful military training engagements with regional partners, all this effort and money has yielded the C-130 operationally effective rate of about 30 percent.[2] It is clear the status quo is not working, and neither international or USG money is resolving the fundamental challenges associated with air mobility in sub-Saharan Africa. The efforts of interested parties must be coordinated in a practical, deliberate manner to solve this problem while simultaneously emboldening the AU with the resources required to be a viable force for good on the continent.

The Problem

You will not find it difficult to prove that battles, campaigns, and even wars have been won or lost primarily because of logistics.

– Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower

When it becomes apparent that a response to an African crisis is necessary, the AU must engage in lengthy negotiations with capable regional partners and member states to obtain the use of air mobility resources. Even after obtaining initial lift support, the duration and risk of operations, as well as the priority placed on supporting the operation by the airlift provider, often changes. Vital supply lines become unreliable, and ground commanders are often placed in difficult situations absent food or ammunition. These negotiations must occur at the height of the emergency often causing a loss of the initiative by AU, UN, or friendly forces.[3] Nearly two years after the start of the African Union-United

Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur the force was stagnated at 68 percent of required manning due to a lack of ability to resupply forward deployed troops.[4] It should be self-evident that this has a direct correlation to the success of AU operations and many times their ability to defeat terrorist organizations that routinely threaten the US and Western allies.

The first major peace support operation (PSO) conducted by the AU after its inception occurred in 2003. This mission was initiated to enforce a ceasefire between the Burundi government and rebel groups and was known as the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB).[5] While ultimately AMIB was successful in deploying more than 3,000 peacekeepers and stabilizing about 95 percent of Burundi in order for the UN to assume responsibility, significant limitations were revealed.[6] The AU, recognizing its inability to provide for logistics to support PSOs, turned that responsibility over to the individual nation who, in turn, frequently requested support from outside organizations, such as the US, UN, NATO, or EU. These organizations were critical to providing airlift and logistics support to AMIB.[7] This model of logistics support, in other words, deferring the responsibility to the inflicted nation, became the AU standard operating procedure, and it persists in operations conducted to this day.

The second major AU PSO was the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) in May 2005. This mission was charged with monitoring the ceasefire between north and south Sudan and to provide for security in Darfur. AMIS was mandated to deploy 7,000 peacekeepers within one year and, out of necessity, relied exclusively on NATO for airlift support.[8] This dependence on outsiders resulted in significant delays to troop rotations due to NATO and EU competition for limited air mobility resources. There are important health and welfare repercussions associated with delaying troop rotations as well as food and supply shortages that should not be ignored. A lack of focus on troop welfare naturally leads to misconduct as well as the associated remedial actions that detract from mission focus.[9]

A third major PSO is that of the AU Mission in Somalia established in 2007. This mission is designed to support the transitional federal government with security, humanitarian assistance, stabilization, and reconstruction efforts.[10] While the AU mandate called for the deployment of 8,000 troops as an initial force, only 3,000 were sent due to insufficient transportation and sustainment capacity.[11]

The AU has failed to provide mandated troop levels in Burundi, Sudan, and Somalia, and the costs have been borne by the troops on the ground and the international partners who benefit from AU success. Peacekeepers must be provided with suitable, reliable logistics chains to achieve desired results. The AU has not been able to meet that basic demand absent substantial external support.[12] In 2007, the AU established the goal of being capable of autonomously providing

airlift to support regional objectives. Their vision includes the ability to conduct inter-, as well as intratheater airlift and to also conduct tactical rotary wing operations. Attached to the bold initiative is an exorbitant price tag to fund a variety of aircraft types.[13] Thus far, the costs have proven too much, and any semblance of success has not manifested. Therefore, the AU recognizes this key shortfall and has dedicated a tremendous amount of time and resources in attempts to resolve it. The USG has done so similarly but has invested resources through bilateral means rather than through the multilateral organization charged with executing operations of interest to the USG.

The United States and Sub-Saharan Africa Air Mobility

Over the last several decades, the USG has invested millions of dollars every year to support air mobility capability growth in sub-Saharan Africa. The USG has done this through various State Department and Department of Defense security cooperation and security assistance programs. This financial support has been directed to individual nations to bolster their C-130 maintenance capability.

Additionally, multiple excess defense C-130E/H aircraft have been donated to partner nations. As a cornerstone of air mobility support, the US employs military training teams (MTT) to impart knowledge of maintenance and aircrew operations related to these aircraft. Almost without exception, those MTT engagements return and are hailed as successful, which they largely are. The partner nation capability is certainly increased and much is learned. The success of these individual, tactical level engagements stand in contrast, however, to the overall operationally effective rate of C-130s in sub-Saharan Africa of between 20–30 percent.[14] The tactical level gains achieved with individual nations collide with the strategic reality that:

(1) They do not have enough aircraft to allow one to go into depot maintenance, train effectively, and fly operationally at the same time and,

(2) They have no, reasonable access to a high-level maintenance option. The existing support strategy is failing to achieve any appreciable capability growth with USG dollars and instead supports a continuous, inefficient cycle of disappointment that all but ensures a stymied development.

Expounding on the root causes of each of these shortcomings, maintenance and fleet size, reveals that they are inherently connected. In fact, one does not have to look farther than the mechanisms available to a poor nation to acquire more aircraft, particularly through US EDA programs. The USG, generally speaking and rightfully so, prefers a nation to be capable of supporting their aircraft mechanically before they are granted more. Additionally, the USG desires to see concrete, measurable results from those nations in alignment with USG interests.

When a country does not possess enough aircraft to warrant such results, because they do not possess the maintenance capacity to operate a larger fleet, these results are difficult to achieve. Therefore, the USG will not want to provide EDA aircraft in what is an extremely competitive process. Absent a large enough fleet to warrant it, private enterprises capable of conducting high-level maintenance will not want to invest in a depot level facility on the continent, which is the only way maintenance practices will increase, and the only way the USG will be willing to provide more aircraft. Until regional, governmental partners with similar interests unite contractually with one another as well as industry capable of conducting high-level maintenance, the cycle will not be broken and air mobility in sub-Saharan Africa will remain elusive.
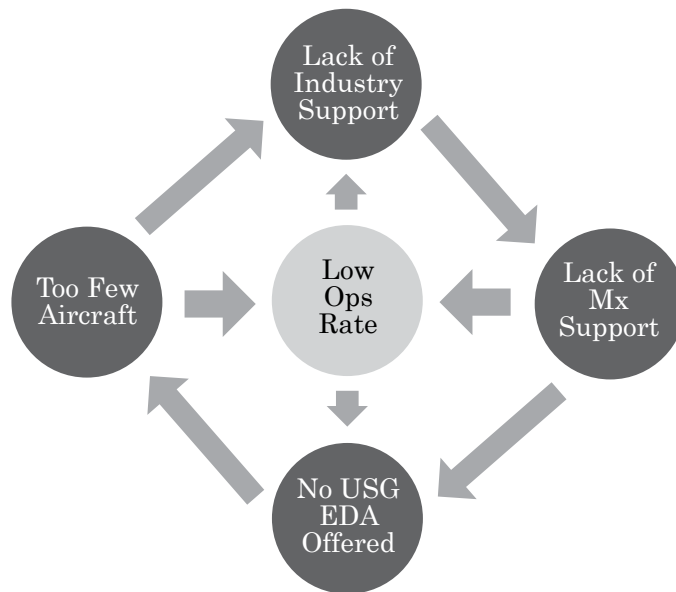
Figure 1. Low operations rate

One must be careful not to equate a specific platform with a capability. Practically, however, it seems evident that the United States has selected the Legacy C-130E/H as the aircraft of choice to support air mobility operations across the continent of Africa. This choice has been made either intentionally or by default and is evidenced by the more than 100 of the venerable workhorses which have been sold or donated to African partners via foreign military sales, direct commercial sales, or EDA programs. While about 60 of those are successfully operated by the more capable North African countries, more than 40 exist in sub-Saharan Africa, and it is among this fleet that the paltry operationally effective rate can be found.

The C-130 is the Answer

This analysis is based on the premise that the C-130 is, in fact, the "right" asset to achieve air mobility objectives in Africa. It is within the interest of the United States to promote the operation of the C-130 in Africa because of capability, availability, and partner nation growth potential. Few would disagree that, in terms of capability provided, the C-130 is right for Africa. Primarily in terms of cargo capacity, flight time, and unimproved surface landing capability, this asset provides the answer for a region so frequently plagued by war and famine enhanced by what has been dubbed the "tyranny of distance." With a range of greater than 1,500 nautical miles, the capacity to carry up to 42,000 pounds of cargo, and ability to be reconfigured to adapt to a variety of mission sets, this is the perfect aircraft for a continent with limited staging locations and a lack of surveyed landing zones which may necessitate a range of 1,000 miles before refueling can occur.[15]

The same simplicity that is boasted by less-sophisticated platforms, limits range and cargo capacity, thereby ignoring major challenges that exist while operating in Africa. The C-130 is the only aircraft in the US inventory that is suitable for operations in Africa yet still not cost prohibitive for fledgling air forces to operate, approximately $5-6 million annual maintenance and sustainment for a C-130H. Without question, the closest competitor to the C-130 in terms of maintaining low operating costs while providing the capability that Africa demands is the C-27. While certainly capable, this platform could not be relied upon to solve the air mobility shortfall in this region without an initial investment that few are interested in making. This choice would ignore the large quantity of C-130s already on the continent, outsource the ability to resupply spare parts to Italy, its manufacturer, and simply not satisfy the next pillar, availability.

The Legacy C-130 has delivered exceptional service to the United States for more than 50 years and is in the process of being replaced by the much more advanced and capable C-130J. This newest variant is an upgrade in almost every area of performance. The entire active duty fleet of Legacy C-130 aircraft has been retired or delivered to their Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard brethren. For this reason, it is safe to assume that within the upcoming years there will be an abundance of these still very capable aircraft available as excess defense articles, specifically the C-130H. In fact, this outcome has already manifested itself with the recent delivery of several Legacy C-130s to the Philippines.[16] Based on aircraft sales and industry projections, about 80 legacy C-130 aircraft will be retired from the US inventory in the next decade.[17] This trend is likely to continue for decades as Reserve and Guard units begin to phase out the battle-tested Legacy Hercules.

As the C-130H divestiture continues, a historic opportunity is presented. At a comparatively low cost to the US taxpayer, a continent can be convinced that the C-130 should be the platform of the future. As the individual economies across Africa continue to develop, and militaries seek to enhance their own capability, they will undoubtedly seek to transition to the more advanced version of what they already know, the C-130J. This natural progression will lead to an entire new generation of economic gains for a major US defense company, Lockheed-Martin, resulting in American jobs. This vision will only be realized, however, if the United States and Lockheed-Martin believe that investment now will result in future opportunity. It is time to take the risk and execute a consolidated, focused venture across Africa in the areas of C-130 maintenance and training.

The Excess Defense Article Program

Efficient use of the Excess Defense Article (EDA) program would be an essential component of any coordinated effort to solve Africa's air mobility challenge. The EDA program is designed so a nation assumes responsibility for an asset "as-is, where-is" and funds all moving, receiving, and repairing costs of the asset.[18] With regards to an aircraft, these costs routinely reach into the tens of millions of dollars, normally due to required depot maintenance. When it is determined that an aircraft will no longer be used by the US Air Force (USAF), the fleet managers and maintenance commanders, prudently, make the determination that the aircraft will no longer receive scheduled maintenance beyond a given date. They do not want to allocate limited resources to an aircraft that will simply be deposited in the USAF boneyard without consideration or interest in alternate courses of action for that airframe. By the time it is determined that the aircraft will be offered via EDA, it is too late to schedule that neglected programmed depot maintenance (PDM). Therefore, the aircraft sits, uncovered, until it is acquired when it immediately has an associated price tag for PDM, an average of around $10 million for a C-130H. How this generally materializes in Africa, however, is that because the USG has a vested interested in a nation possessing an aircraft, and the associated capability it offers, the USG pays for the movement and "make-ready" costs of the asset and not the recipient nation. That cost is significantly higher than if the USG would have maintained the aircraft's original PDM schedule.

It would behoove both the USG and recipient nations to closely scrutinize the EDA program to determine how these costs could be reduced. As part of a comprehensive, African C-130H EDA plan, assets should be identified one to two years in advance. Rather than maintenance simply being neglected, the AU, a recipient nation, or the USG can continue to fund that routine maintenance. Such

an option for a recipient nation would allow them to stake their claim on an aircraft as well as to begin a security cooperation relationship with the investment of their own capital. For the USG's part, continuing to fund the depot maintenance requirements of an aircraft would ultimately reduce those acquisition costs. If the aircraft is transferred to a nation that cannot afford to pay those costs, the USG will have saved money, considering it would pay those costs regardless. If the nation pays those PDM costs, the USG will have saved the recipient nation money. The premise is simply that these aircraft *will* go somewhere and as part of a comprehensive sub-Saharan Africa air mobility strategy, the EDA acquisition costs could be greatly reduced.

Industry Support

While the USG can overcome the challenge of limited aircraft to operate, train, and repair it will require support from private industry to increase the regional knowledge and capability to conduct high-level depot maintenance. Even in Western militaries this high-level maintenance work is conducted by contracted support facilities, operated by the aircraft manufacturer. Currently there is a noticeable absence of such facilities in Africa, despite the presence of more than 100 C-130s on the continent with about half in sub-Saharan Africa. While the aircraft have been present, the money to pay for maintenance has not been.
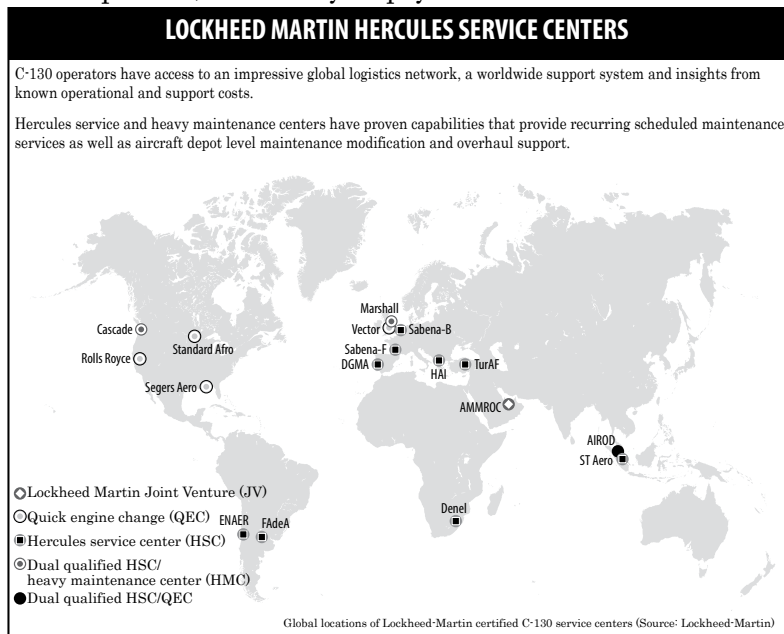
Figure 2. Global Locations of Lockheed Martin Certified C-130 Service Centers (Source: Lockheed Martin)

Industry support to C-130 maintenance operations will grow in proportion to the number of aircraft and investment of capital into the enterprise. The lure of more aircraft, a desire by the AU to select member states to receive aircraft that will be, at least partially, funded by the AU, and then the need of the AU to select one or more strategically located staging sites of those aircraft will inspire individual nations or industries to accept the risk associated with building a depot facility. The previously stated low operationally effective rate of C-130s in sub-Saharan Africa reveals a significant potential opportunity. Accompanied with the much lower cost of manpower across the region, the prospect for a tremendous amount of money to be made exists.

As a business entity, Lockheed Martin must certainly remain aware of the market-share of C-130s for existing depot facilities before creating new ones. The USG can incentivize Lockheed-Martin to support by committing to providing more C-130s, increasing the market, contingent upon the facility development. The potential customers for the new depot facility would be newly received aircraft and those which have previously not undergone depot maintenance at all, thereby, enabling existing depot facilities to sustain their current business tempo. Finally, it should be noted that manpower costs in most sub-Saharan African nations are significantly lower than those in Europe or the United States, which should lower the overall depot maintenance cost making it more achievable for lower income African nations. As has been the case in other regions of the world, industry will ultimately be necessary to solving this air mobility challenge.

NATO's Strategic Airlift Capability

It is an important point that a regional solution to an air mobility challenge and an international organization leading such an enterprise is not unheard of. The Heavy Airlift Wing (HAW) was established in 2008 in Pápa, Hungary by ten NATO countries plus two others to "acquire, manage, support, and operate three Boeing C-17 strategic transport aircraft." This multinational organization operates as a subagency within NATO and, obviously, not all NATO members are HAW members. Membership does, however, remain open should others become interested. The three C-17s are registered and flagged under the host nation of Hungary, but are owned by the 12 Strategic Air Command (SAC) member nations, each owning a portion of the available flight hours. The aircraft are available for use by those nations without preconditions to serve the specific needs of their own national defense, NATO, EU, or UN efforts. They are maintained by civilians through a foreign military sales contractual agreement with Boeing.[19] Currently the organization is commanded by a USAF colonel and is comprised of about 145 multinational maintenance and aircrew personnel derived from its member-states.

The success of the HAW and the overall strategic initiative has been extraordinary at multiple levels. First, operationally, less than a year after receiving their first C-17, SAC flew three separate missions into Haiti following the 2010 earthquake. They delivered humanitarian aid, as well as personnel to the devastated island nation.[20] Additionally, SAC has supported the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan consistently from 2009–2014. Furthermore, this organization is frequently involved in supporting UN operations across Africa, as was the case in 2013 with the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the UN Mission in the Republic of Central Africa in 2015.[21]

While the operational success of SAC is well-documented, the organization's existence also boasts second and third-order effects. The integration of Boeing into the community of Pápa, Hungary offers an opportunity for job creation and economic prosperity to the citizens in that area. The relationship of Boeing is such that the C-17 fleet is provided with on-site maintenance, engineering, and spare parts. Such an integrated role in the community has allowed Boeing to offer scholarships and internships to continue to grow the regional expertise in this field.[22] If emboldened in one or more nations in sub-Saharan Africa, the economic impact of this new industry and contact with a proven, Western company could produce a generation of economic prosperity.

Conclusion

Status quo support to sub-Saharan African air mobility has proven insufficient and expensive. The USG has not realized the results it needs to justify the continued support of individual, bilateral programs without solving the enduring institutional challenges of fleet size and high-level maintenance. Every new crisis in Africa is met with the same daunting task of logistics and air mobility and, frequently, the AU limitations with regards to air mobility becomes the challenge for the USG and Western partners to either solve or accept defeat on issues of national importance, in other words, terrorism, disaster relief, pandemics, etc. The carrot and stick mechanisms exist today for the United States to motivate all actors towards a real solution to this problem.

The USG must view air mobility as a resource of a region, however, and not of a single nation. A comprehensive plan in association with and led by the AU must and can be inspired to action by the unprecedented availability of C-130H aircraft. Capable industry partners must be engaged by the AU and USG to motivate them to grow their depot facilities in Africa, encouraged by the more than 40 current C-130s and promise of more operating there. The AU must determine cost sharing mechanisms with individual member states to share the burden of maintenance and operations of these aircraft. Individual nations can be motivated

by the prestige and access to aircraft that will be theirs should they be selected to stage the aircraft and operate the depot facility. The US is in a position to stimulate an initiative to solve the decades-old problem, but must first adapt existing programs to the strategic realities of providing support to Africa.

Following the characteristic brake squeal of a perfect aircraft touchdown, the Ethiopian C-130E, Tail No. 1564 taxied to park in front of the entourage of US and Ethiopian commanders present for the occasion. The onlookers watched as the front-top hatch opened and, after a brief pause, the Ethiopian lead navigator emerged wearing his US provided, light-green Dave Clark headset and brandishing the Ethiopian flag. The sense of national pride that swelled through the crowd was tangible, and it hung in the air as the lower-ranking maintainers and aircrew present on the fringes of the small crowd began to cheer. The general's chests swelled with pride at the sight. It is clear that our African partners are desperate to provide for their own defense just as partners throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

As the powerful, turbo-prop engines spin to a stop, and the crew entrance door swings open, no one can know how much longer the United States will be involved in supporting this aircraft, or how long Ethiopia will be able to maintain it without reasonable access to a depot facility. Even if they had that access it is unlikely that they could take it "off the line" long enough to allow it to go. NATO was able to overcome intense challenges to solve their regional airlift issues with the creation of the HAW. Ultimately, the African solution will be as different as the nations which comprise the two international organizations. The United States, now more than ever, possesses the ability to motivate action to solve this problem with the retirement of the Legacy C-130. No single person or organization possesses all the answers or abilities to finally develop a solution, but there are certainly several specific actions that the USG can take to align the conversation of all interested parties and change the status quo.

Recommendations

The USG should agree to provide three or more C-130H aircraft to a framework nation in sub-Saharan Africa that is willing to use national funds to create a Lockheed Martin Certified Depot Facility. The framework nation must commit to funding the "make-flight-ready" PDM costs associated with acquiring EDA C-130 aircraft and conducting that maintenance in their new PDM facility. At the national level, they should be motivated to do so because their national funds will remain in-country, albeit their air force will likely be paying their industry. Additionally, the regional economic growth and academic programs that would

follow the introduction of Lockheed Martin should incentivize this framework nation.

The USG should engage with Lockheed Martin to arrange an agreement that US-provided aircraft will utilize the new PDM service center, thereby reducing risk and increasing the market. This action will entice Lockheed Martin to actually support. Additionally, Lockheed Martin may be incentivized by the notion of Africa eventually transitioning to the J-Model C-130 as their national economies develop. Lockheed Martin must determine with which nation and industry they would like to engage. There are multiple reasonable options throughout the continent, like major airlines or capable militaries that already conduct depot maintenance on other platforms.

The AU must develop an innovative funding model to financially support at least a portion of the operational and maintenance costs of the aircraft, thereby purchasing access to the iron when needed. A direct funding model could be used, but also a flight-hour sharing construct should be negotiated between the framework nation, AU, and other capable partners in Africa. Other capable partners should be given the opportunity to assign aircrew and maintenance personnel to the framework nation and to interfly on these aircraft and train alongside their fellow Africans. This would begin to align doctrine and training practices.

AU and the USG should determine strategic locations where they would like aircraft staged in Africa to ensure continental coverage. The USG should negotiate support for training and facility development at those strategic locations to ensure access for American aircraft. This would increase US reach throughout Africa increasing global reach in a difficult region. The USG should develop a model to actually conduct security cooperation activities through the AU. On a case-by-case basis, a transition must be made from bilateral security cooperation to regional or multilateral activities for regional capabilities, like air mobility or intelligence sharing, for example. The EDA program should be closely scrutinized to identify efficiencies which would greatly reduce the cost for recipient nations as well as the United States.

Maj Ryan McCaughan, USAF

The author is deputy chief of the Office of Security Cooperation in the US Embassy, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Previous assignments include assistant director of operations for the 50th Airlift Squadron at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas, and as a combat aviation advisor with the 6th Special Operations Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Florida. He has deployed in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom, New Dawn, Enduring Freedom and Unified Response, accruing more than 190 C-130 combat missions and almost 985 combat flight hours while performing various aeromedical evacuation, distinguished visitor support, airdrop, humanitarian and other forms of airlift operations. Additionally, he aided the Polish air force in establishing their robust Legacy C-130 program. A senior C-130 navigator with more than 2,000 flight hours in the C-130 Models E, H1, H2, and H3, Major McCaughan is a graduate of Squadron Officer School and Air Command and Staff College via correspondence.

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