REPORT OF THE FIRST HLMG
ACADEMIC COUNCIL SYMPOSIUM

How Democracies Can Win Against Terror-Armies

Observations on the Challenge of Contemporary Warfare in the Middle East and Beyond

HIGH LEVEL MILITARY GROUP

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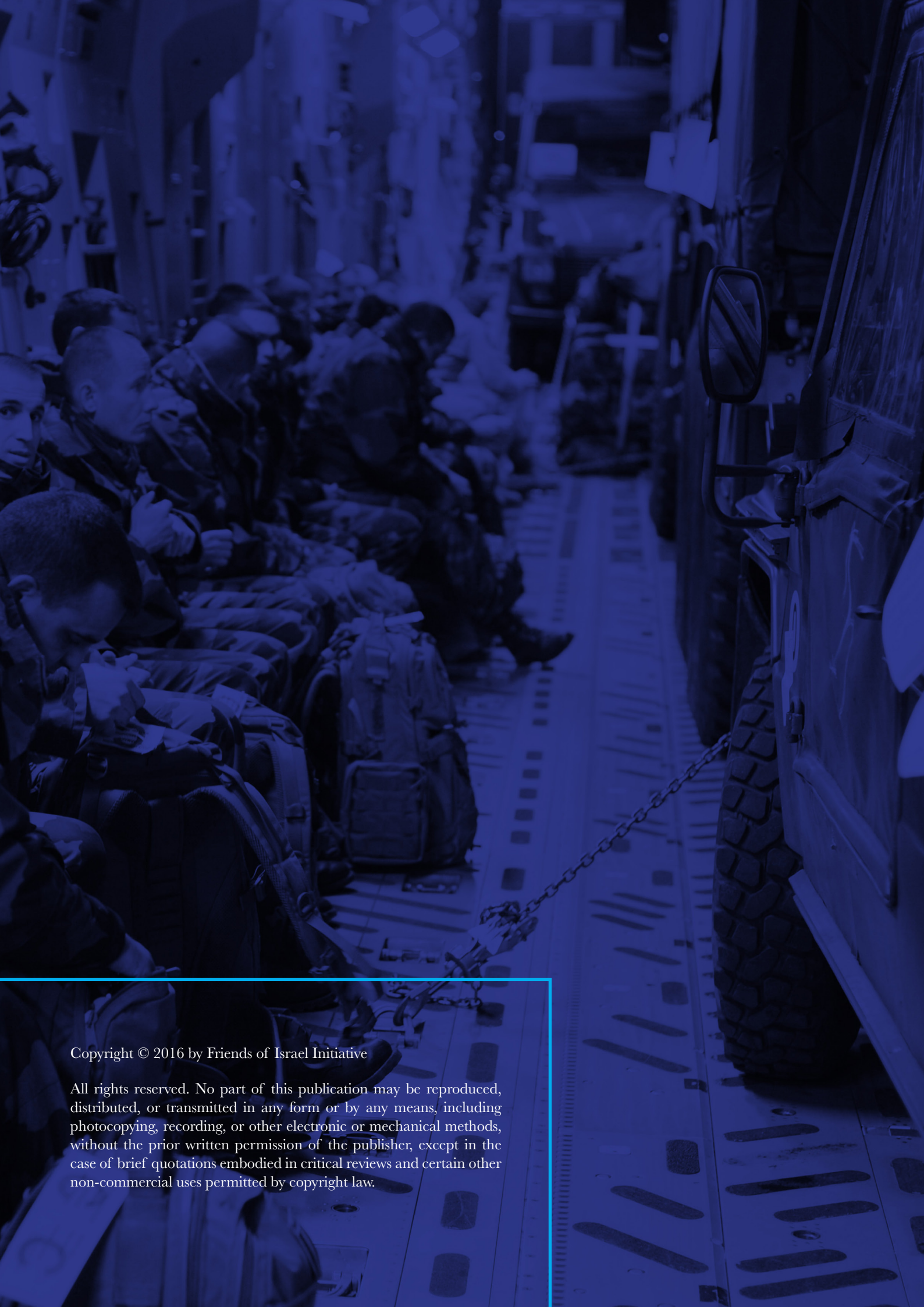

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FOREWORD

Israel, the West, and the Rest

Warfare is an evolving human phenomenon. As such, over time the West has developed what we can describe as the "Western way of war". At bottom, this amounts to a concept where war must be fought either in self-defense or to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe; furthermore, war not only has to be just and legitimate, it must be conducted in a way where the horror, suffering and destruction that are inherent in warfare must be avoided. Modern technology has nurtured a vision of a virtual war of utmost precision, with zero casualties as a goal. Neither killing the enemy, nor to be killed in action appears to be acceptable anymore, particularly when civilians are affected.

Unfortunately such a clean and bloodless form of warfare only exists in the collective imagination of the West. This is all the more the case where traditional armies are confronted by irregular forces that do not abide by any moral code of war or subject themselves to any legal framework. Our recent experience in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the new uneasily defined conflicts such as in Eastern Ukraine or the slaughter in civil wars like Syria, are instructive in this regard and ought to give us serious pause for thought.

The Friends of Israel Initiative is not a security and defense think-tank. But as an organization that demands fair treatment of the State of Israel in global political debate, we know acutely how the West has for years disregarded the battlefield experience of Israel on account of being ill-at-ease with the conditions under which the Israeli Defense Forces have had to act, which did not fit in the mold of warfare we would like to fight: densely populated areas with enemies who deliberately hide among civilians there, widespread use of civilians as human shields, terror acts, abuse of non-military installations for strategic gain, intensive use of social media for misinformation, and the abuse of international institutions and legal conventions. In short, war as the ruthless, nasty and brutal activity that the West is so uncomfortable with.

FoII strongly believes that Israel´s unparallelled experience and lessons learnt in this context will serve to illustrate what our own nations should expect in the use of armed forces in future conflicts. Gen Sherman once famously said that "war is hell", and it remains so. Israel has been at war since it was born, and its enemies have used every conceivable approach to attain their abiding goal: the elimination of the Jewish State. From State armies to individuals with knives and ramming their cars; from open field engagements to tunnel ambushes; from infiltrators to drones.

Our nations' armies have experienced the brutal reality of non-Western ways of war in Afghanistan and Iraq. More likely than not, they will face worse conditions in future scenarios. These will be difficult conflicts, in which Israel simply cannot be disregarded as an example from which to gain valuable insight to prepare for the shape of things to come. Therein lies the reason FoII is willing to sponsor the sort of reflections on these new realities, as are included in this publication, where top experts share and debate visions of what is to come. Our hope is that all nations who share the values of democracy and tolerance will benefit.

Rafael L. Bardají
Director, Friends of Israel Initiative

FRIENDS OF ISRAEL INITIATIVE

About the High Level Military Group and Academic Council

The High Level Military Group (HLMG) aims to add a professional military and legal element to debates about warfare in the 21st Century. The HLMG was formed in early 2015 with an initial mandate to examine Israel's conduct of the 2014 Gaza Conflict, in the context of a larger project seeking to address the implications for warfare where democratic nations are engaged in fighting enemies who disregard the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) but exploit our own nations' adherence to LOAC for their gain. It is comprised of top-level practitioners from democratic nations whose expertise covers the entire gamut of the conduct of warfare and who are intimately familiar with the battlefield scenarios, operational and legal imperatives, and military and humanitarian duties. Its initial report considered the 2014 Gaza Conflict, and further HLMG reports have offered a contextual assessment of military campaigns conducted against terrorist adversaries, and the relevancy of the 'Home Front' challenges faced by Israel to the West's fight against terrorism.[1]

Given the broad relevancy of this type of warfare to all democratic nations in our current era, the High Level Military Group considered it essential to ground its specific reports and wider work in a broader academic framework. To this end earlier this year it invited leading relevant thinkers to join its new HLMG Academic Council an convene for an initial wide ranging discussion to consider trends in the development of warfare, the effect these are having on professional militaries, and the implications of these challenges for militaries and policymakers in democratic nations. This paper aims to offer a broader understanding of modern conflict, and highlight the implications for policy-making. To aid democratic nations in their ongoing effort to succeed in times of conflict, the observations of that discussion are detailed in this report.

1 "An Assessment of the 2014 Gaza Conflict", High Level Military Group, October 2015. Available for download at http://www.high-level-military-group.org/pdf/hlmg-assessment-2014-gaza-conflict.pdf; and, "Our Military Forces' Struggle Against Lawless, Media Savvy Terrorist Adversaries: A Comparative Study", High Level Military Group, February 2016. Available for download at http://www.high-level-military-group.org/pdf/hlmg-lawless-media-savvy-terrorist-adversaries.pdf; and, forthcoming report by the High Level Home Front Group.

INAUGURAL ESSAY

The Challenge of Hybrid Warfare Today

Max Boot

Guerrilla warfare is as ancient as the human race.2 Since the dawn of time small groups of fighters devoid of uniforms or formal military structures have engaged in hit-and-run raids that are the essence of what came to be known in the 19th century as "guerrilla warfare," a term first used during the Spanish resistance against Napoleon (1808-1814). In the past two centuries guerrilla wars have been transformed into insurgencies by the addition of the three P's--politics, the press, and public opinion--to the mix. Those were not factors of concern to tribal fighters who were illiterate and apolitical. The Sioux fighting the American army in the Trans-Mississippi West in the second half of the 19th century, for example, did not try to influence public opinion to convince Congress to end the war. Neither did the Zulus fighting the British Empire in southern Africa at approximately the same time.

The turning point—one of the first conflicts decided by the force of public opinion—was the American Revolution. Notwithstanding the military setbacks they had suffered at Saratoga and Yorktown, the British might eventually have been able to restore control had not a parliamentary revolt in 1782 forced the downfall of Lord North's Tory ministry and the rise of a Whig government dedicated to negotiating an end to the conflict. A few decades later the Greek rebels of the 1820s benefited from public opinion in the West, where philhellenes rallied their governments to oppose Ottoman abuses. A similar strategy would be pursued by many rebels in the future, from the Cubans opposing Spanish rule in the 1890s to the Algerians opposing French rule in the 1950s and Hezbollah opposing Israeli power since the 1980s.

A spectacular vindication of this approach occurred during the Vietnam War, when the United States was defeated not because it had lost on the battlefield but because public opinion at home had turned against the war. The same thing has been occurring more recently in Iraq and Afghanistan; in both countries, the U.S. has given up battlefield gains because it did not have the political will to see the conflicts through.

2 For the historical background, see Max Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present* (New York: Liveright, 2013).

Public Opinion

The rise of popular opinion as a force to be reckoned with has also accounted for the rise of terrorism. While assassins have been active throughout history, there were few organized terrorist groups before the 19th century, two exceptions being the Sicarii ("dagger men") of the 1st century, who opposed Roman rule of Judea, and the Nizari Ismailis (a Shiite sect better known as the Assassins), who opposed various Muslim states in Iran and Syria from the 11th to the 13th centuries. Then, suddenly, in the second half of the 19th century, there was a proliferation of terrorist groups such as the Nihilists, Anarchists, and Fenians. Why this burst of terrorism, whose causes have changed but which has remained a constant ever since? Part of the answer may be found in the development of more portable weaponry such as dynamite and breach-loading pistols. But much of explanation resides in the spread of mass media and mass education. Terrorism was defined by the Anarchists as "propaganda by the deed" and prior to the rise of mass media catering to a literate readership, there was no effective way for terrorists to get their message out. That cultural transformation occurred in the 19th century with the rise of mass-circulation newspapers and magazines and has continued ever since with the rise of radio, television, and now the Internet as media of communications. Terrorists have been masters at utilizing all of these technologies.

The spread of democracy has also made public opinion a more important battlefield for insurgents of all types. There was not much point in influencing the public in ancient times when the public had no voice in the decisions made by their leaders. But with the spread of democracy, the public is increasingly influential—and hence susceptible to manipulation by sophisticated insurgents. The importance of public sentiment in a democracy and the existence of a free press means that liberal states are easier to manipulate than illiberal ones. Vladimir Putin or Xi Jinping can control the information that their populace sees; Barack Obama or Angela Merkel cannot.

Although the causation is certainly debatable, there is a good case to be made that the growing importance of public opinion helps to account for the growing success of insurgencies in the modern era. In 2013 I published a book called *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present Day* (from which this paper is drawn). In an appendix I included a data set of all insurgencies since 1775—443 in all. What this revealed is that out of all these conflicts the insurgents succeeded 25.5% of the time while incumbents prevailed 63.6%. However in the post-1945 era the win rate for insurgents has gone up to 40.3% while counterinsurgents won 50.8% of the time (the remaining conflicts were a draw). No doubt the continuing spread of ever-more destructive weaponry has contributed to the shifting fortunes of insurgents—once upon a time rebels in the Third World fought Western armies with spears and rusty flintlocks, whereas today there is no corner of the world so remote that every young man does not have access to an RPG and AK-47. But the bigger part of the explanation lies in the growing ability of insurgents to harness public opinion in their favor—as Islamic State, among others, is attempting to do at this very minute.

This is an essential background to understanding the significance of the case studies that HLMG has compiled on conflicts in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Iraq, Mali, Colombia, and Pakistan. In all these cases a Western democratic counterinsurgent (the U.S., U.K., Israel, France, Colombia, Germany) has battled against an illiberal foe (the Taliban, Hezbollah, Al Qaeda in Iraq, the Mahdi Army, FARC, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, the Haqqani Network, TTP). And in each case the insurgents have attempted to manipulate the casualty aversion of the Western powers—an aversion to both suffering casualties themselves and inflicting casualties on others—for their own benefit. While the insurgents routinely ignore the Law of Armed Conflict by refusing to wear uniforms, by fighting from schools and mosques, and by deliberately killing civilians, the counterinsurgents by and large scrupulously observe the norms of "civilized warfare" by trying to limit collateral damage. When the counterinsurgents make a mistake, as they inevitably do, and bomb a hospital or wedding party, the insurgents try to turn this to their advantage with a media and diplomatic offensive—and even with attempts to employ international law against the counterinsurgents. To take but one example of many, recall how the French NGO Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) accused U.S. forces of a "war crime" in October 2015 for bombing an MSF-operated hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, during a battle with the Taliban even though there was no evidence that the attack was intentional.[3] This type of warfare, playing out in the realm of public opinion and international law, would have been quite literally unimaginable in centuries past but today it is a routine part of unconventional warfare, which is to say of warfare, period, because almost all wars today are unconventional.

3 http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/29/politics/u-s-airstrike-hospital-afghanistan-investigation/

Western Reponses

While the general trends are clear, how the West should respond is not. There are wildly differing reactions to these dilemmas. Such suggest that the West should simply abstain from fighting protracted insurgencies—that it should stick to short conventional conflicts within its comfort zones.[4] A related school of thought holds that the West needs to drop its self-imposed restraints and employ a scorched earth strategy against insurgents.[5] A more mainstream view, held by many within the military services, is that Western countries simply need to get better at fighting the "battle of the narrative," but if so, how?[6] In particular how should the West react to the rise of "lawfare," i.e. attempts to employ international tribunals to punish its soldiers and thus deter effective military action in the future?[7] The overarching question we must confront is whether it is possible for the West to win these conflicts and if so under what conditions?

The sense of the High-Level Military Group, after extensive research and discussion, is that, while these kinds of conflicts are extraordinarily difficult to win (indeed, as shall see, the very possibility and definition of "victory" remains contentious), there is no way for the West to simply opt out of them.

It's true that the threat of conventional conflict has hardly disappeared. Indeed, with the growing military buildups in Russia and China[8], and with the increasingly assertive behavior of both countries, the probability of conventional conflict is higher today than at any time since the end of the Cold War. Even Israel faces, in Hezbollah, the most potent and conventional potential adversary it has confronted since the 1973 Yom Kippur War—one that is armed with well over 100,000 rockets and missiles and that deploys a well-trained light-infantry force with extensive combat experience in Syria.[9] It thus stands to reason that Western militaries need to prepare for conventional conflicts—which requires procuring, among other weapons, armored vehicles, ships, and aircraft, and training for their use in large, combined-arms exercises.

But while conventional conflict remains a very real threat in the future, unconventional warfare is a clear and present danger *right now*. Indeed all Western states are fighting a war against terrorism on a daily basis. The urgency of winning that conflict has been made clear by recent attacks in, inter alia, Paris, Brussels, Nice, San Bernardino, Orlando, and St. Cloud, Minnesota. All of these attacks have been either inspired or directed by the Islamic State of Syria and Iraq, which, despite the battlefield losses it has suffered in 2016, remains the most potent terrorist group in history, one that is in control of a substantial territory stretching across the Syria-Iraq border and that fields at least 20,000 fighters from many nations.[10]

While ISIS has now supplanted Al Qaeda as the terrorist group most feared in the West, it is salutary to recall that both groups are only part of a much larger trend that will not disappear even if they are defeated. Since 1979—the year of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, the siege of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by Salafist fanatics, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan—Islamist groups have posed the dominant terrorist threat not only to Muslim societies but also to Western societies, especially those with significant Muslim populations. Secular terrorist groups such as the IRA, the Red Army Faction, and PLO have been largely supplanted by Islamist groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah, Khataib Hezbollah, the Taliban, the Pakistani Taliban, the Haqqani Network, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Al Shabaab, Boko Haram, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Jemaah Islamiyah, and many others. Many of the Sunni terror groups are loosely bound by oaths of allegiance to the two mega-terror networks, Al Qaeda and Islamic State; the Shiite terror groups are usually controlled far more directly by the Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Whatever the fortunes of individual groups, the imperative among a small but significant number of young Muslim men to wage violent jihad to create Islamist societies—aided and abetted in some cases by countries such as Iran, Qatar, and Pakistan, in other cases by large non-state organizations, or by wealthy individuals in the Gulf State and other countries--is likely to remain strong for decades to come. In some ways our current situation could be analogized to the threat of communism, another long war which the West was forced to fight in one form or another

4 Gian Gentile, *Wrong Turn: America's Deadly Embrace of Counterinsurgency* (New York: New Press, 2013).
5 Ralph Peters, "Don't Catch—Kill," *New York Post*, June 24, 2008.
6 Ralph O. Baker, "Information Operations: From Good to Great," *Military Review*, July-August 2011.
7 The Lawfare blog (lawfareblog.com) provides a perceptive running commentary on this issue.
8 See, e.g., Robert Wall, "Big Spending on Warplanes Spurs Aerial Arms Race," The Wall Street Journal, September 26, 2016.
9 Willy Stern, "Missiles Everywhere: The Next Israeli-Hezbollah Conflict Will Be Awful," *The Weekly Standard,* June 20, 2016.
10 Ashley Kirk, "Iraq and Syria: How many foreign fighters are fighting for ISIL?" *The Daily Telegraph*, March 24, 2016.

from the establishment of a Bolshevik regime in Russia in 1917 until its dissolution in 1991. Sadly, all indications are that in the continuum of conflict against violent Islamism, we are still closer to 1917 than to 1991.

There was some hope that the Arab Spring of 2011-2012 would provide a peaceful alternative to express discontent within the stagnant societies of the Middle East, but only Tunisia saw the establishment of a democratic government, and even that has not prevented Tunisia from becoming one of the main exporters of manpower to Islamic State.[11] Elsewhere in the Middle East—specifically in Libya and Syria—the revolutions of the Arab Spring created civil wars and a breakdown of governmental authority that has only left a vacuum in which terrorist groups can flourish. Even the West is vulnerable, particularly countries such as Britain, France, Belgium and Germany, that have large, largely unassimilated populations of first- and second-generation Muslim immigrants.[12]

Israel, of course, faces a unique danger among democratic nations: On its northern frontier it confronts the Hezbollah-dominated Lebanon; on its western frontier the Hamas-dominated Gaza Strip; and in the east, the Palestinian Authority-run West Bank. That the Palestinian Authority is the least-threatening of its neighbors, despite the financial and moral support it provides for terrorist attacks in Israel, is telling. On top of everything else, Israel has a far larger Muslim population in per capita terms than do countries such as France and Belgium; some 20% of the Israeli population, or 1.6 million people, is of Arab origin.[13] And while most Israeli Arabs are loyal citizens, and some even serve in Israel's military and security forces, they are potentially ripe for radicalization, especially given the fact that their communal leaders do not recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State.

Meanwhile the prevalence of insurgency in the modern world has led at least one non-Islamic state—Russia—to adopt similar methods in advancing its interests. In Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, among other countries, Russia has infiltrated plainclothes intelligence and military operatives known as "little green men" while backing nominally independent separatist movements that seek closer ties with Russia.[14] This strategy has already resulted in the annexation of Crimea by Russia and its dominance in much of eastern Ukraine (Donetsk and Lugansk) as well as in regions of Moldovoa (Transnistria) and Georgia (South Ossetia and Abkhazia). There are now significant concerns in NATO that Russia may be in the early stages of pursuing a similar, "hybrid war" offensive against the Baltic Republics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania). Given the success that Russia has had with this low-intensity strategy so far, we are likely to see such methods employed in the future, and not just by Russia.

Defining Victory

The West, therefore, does not have the option of focusing solely on the kind of warfare preferred by its professional military forces, which would much rather fight mirror-image rivals than terrorists and guerrillas who do not abide by the laws and norms of "civilized" warfare. But if the West is to fight such conflicts, what should it do to maximize its chances of success?

To begin to answer that question, we must ask how to define "victory" in this type of warfare? Clearly such conflicts will seldom if ever see the signing of formal instruments of surrender—we should not expect to see Islamist leaders voluntarily boarding the USS *Missouri* to end their war as Japanese representatives did in 1945. A negotiated end to the conflict—of the kind that occurred in El Salvador and Nicaragua and may now be occurring in Colombia—is scarcely more plausible: Islamist fanatics who think they are pursuing Allah's will are different from politically motivated insurgents who could engage in political compromise. That does not mean there is absolutely no room for negotiation in such conflicts: Even Israel has engaged in deals with groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah to swap prisoners and has reached de facto understandings with them to refrain from active hostilities during periods where the modus vivendi holds between the adversaries.[15] The U.S., for its part, has swapped prisoners with the Taliban and Iran, reached a nuclear arms-control deal with Iran, and attempted (so far unsuccessfully) to jumpstart negotiations with the Afghan Taliban. But whatever the wisdom of such moves—and they all come with a significant cost in

11 Yaroslav Trofimov, "How Tunisia Became a Top Source of ISIS Recruits," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 25, 2016.

12 As of 2010, there were 4.8 million Muslims in Germany (5.8% of the total population), 4.7 million in France (7.5%), 2.9 million in the United Kingdom (4.8%), 630,000 in Belgium (5.9%). However the European country with the largest Muslim population is Russia—it has 14 million Muslims (10% of the population). See Conrad Hackett, "Five Facts About the Muslim Population in Europe," Pew Research Center, July 19, 2016.

13 "Latest Population Statistics for Israel (Updated May 2016)," Jewish Virtual Library. http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/newpop.html

14 Steven Pifer, "Watch Out for Little Green Men," Brookings Institution, July 7, 2014.

15 Barak Ravid, et al., "Israel, Hamas Reach Gilad Shalit Prisoner Exchange Deal, Officials Say," *Haaretz*, October 11, 2011.

encouraging aggression and reducing deterrence—they remain unthinkable when it comes to the most extreme groups such as Islamic State and Al Qaeda. Individual members of those groups can be induced to surrender or defect, but it is unlikely that such organizations as a whole will ever willingly give up their armed struggle.

Does this, therefore, mean that to fight them is to become bogged down in an "unwinnable" war? Not at all. It simply means that instead of seeking unconditional surrender the West needs to pursue more realistic goals such as reducing the terrorist threat to a nuisance level and increasing the amount of territory under the control of friendly and responsible regimes and therefore unavailable for use as terrorist safe havens. A good tactical model of what can be accomplished can be seen in Iraq during the "surge" in 2007-2008.[16] The success of U.S.-led counterinsurgency efforts greatly reduced the threat from Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and liberated much of the Sunni Triangle from its grip. Violence fell by more than 90% and Iraqi politics began to function in a way that it never had before or since. That temporary tactical success might have been converted into long-term strategic success were it not for the unfortunate American troop pullout in 2011. The resulting power vacuum gave free rein to Iranian-backed Shiite sectarians led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. His persecution of prominent Sunnis triggered a fierce reaction from the Sunni community, which, in combination with the outbreak of the Syrian civil war that year, allowed AQI to arise again as the Islamic State of Syria and Iraq. But Iraq's post-2011 descent into the abyss of sectarian warfare does not diminish the very real achievements of "the surge" or negate the power of its example.

Significantly, "the surge" did not succeed through the force of arms alone. There was, to be sure, a significant military component to the operations: the number of insurgents caught or killed soared during 2007-2008. Of critical importance was the decision by the senior U.S. commanders, General David Petraeus and Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, to move U.S. forces out of their large, fortified Forward Operating Bases on the outskirts of Iraq's cities and into smaller outposts located in population centers. The 24/7 presence of troops in Iraqi neighborhoods allowed them to win the confidence of the people and to gain the intelligence they needed to identify and target insurgents without engaging in counterproductive roundups of young men, which would only create more anger for the insurgents to harness. But the military operations of the surge would not have succeeded had not U.S. commanders done so much to foster an Anbar Awakening of Sunnis turning against Al Qaeda in Iraq. Eventually some 100,000 Sunni men would join the Sons of Iraq, a U.S.-funded and –organized militia loosely affiliated with the government of Iraq. Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker had considerable success in pressuring Prime Minister Maliki to engage in outreach to these Sunnis and offering them assurances that they would be given a share of power if they turned against Al Qaeda.

The experience of Iraq confirms two aphorisms enunciated by Field Marshal Gerald Templer during the Malayan "Emergency" (1948-1960): "The shooting side of the business is only 25% of the trouble, and other 75% lies in getting the people of this country behind us," he said, and "The answer lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people."[17] What Templer was stressing—and what all successful counterinsurgents have realized—is that "war among the people" is fundamentally a governance contest between the government and the rebels. Whoever does a better job of securing the population will win the war. This might seem to be an elementary insight, but it stands in opposition to the predilection of more conventional commanders, such as General William Westmoreland in Vietnam, to fight a war of attrition in the vain hope that the government's forces can kill insurgents faster than they can be replaced.[18] More often that not, this strategy has only created lots of civilian casualties and more recruits for the insurgents' camp.

This is not to suggest that "scorched earth" strategies can never succeed. They can and they have—but only under rare conditions. Russia, for example, has managed to pacify the breakaway province of Chechnya while killing more than 100,000 people out of a prewar population of one million.[19] Sri Lanka pursued a similarly bloodthirsty and successful strategy against the Tamil Tigers, as did Algeria in the 1990s against an Islamist uprising. Yet it is significant that Russia failed in Afghanistan during the 1980s in spite of its willingness to kill a million people and force another five million to flee the country.[20] The Nazis had no more success in pacifying the Balkans during World War II in spite of their willingness to carry out every conceivable atrocity. More recently, Moammar Qaddafi and

16 Peter R. Mansoor, *The Surge: My Journey With General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

17 Boot, *War Made New,* op. cit., p. 385.

18 Lewis Sorley, *Westmoreland: The General Who Lost Vietnam* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011).

19 Ibid., p. 514.

20 Ibid., p. 493.

Bashar Assad tried to put down rebellions through brute force and only triggered civil wars that led Qaddafi to lose his life and Assad to lose control over much of his country. It turns out that fire-and-sword strategies can work only if (1) the counterinsurgents are able to isolate the battlefield, preventing the insurgents from being resupplied, (2) if they can prevent intensive media coverage of government atrocities, and (3) if they have a certain degree of legitimacy to govern. In Chechnya, for example, Russia did not just bomb and torture. It has also installed a puppet regime under Ramzan Kadyrav, a former militia leader who once fought against Moscow's rule and has made great efforts to woo Muslim support for his regime.[21] It helps, too, that Chechnya has been a part of Russia since the mid-19th century, giving its attempts to impose its authority there greater legitimacy than in Afghanistan, which has never been a part of Russia. If these conditions are not met—if a counterinsurgent attempts to use unadulterated brutality to put down a rebellion without cutting off the rebels from outside support or making any attempt to win popular support—the result is likely to be simply to strengthen the insurgency. This is especially the case if the insurgents enjoy cross-border sanctuary, as many of the Syrian rebels do today (in Turkey and Jordan), or as the Afghan mujahideen did in the 1980s (in Pakistan).

For better or worse, the battles that the West is waging against Islamic extremists today—whether on its home soil or in places such as the Gaza Strip, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan—are not susceptible to a scorched-earth solution. And even if it were technically feasible to simply kill such a high percentage of the population that the rest effectively surrenders, it would not be morally or politically practicable for liberal democracies to emulate the behavior of history's most depraved dictatorships.

It must be admitted that dictatorships do have a certain advantage in waging such conflicts because they are, by definition, not susceptible to popular opinion turning against the conflict after suffering heavy casualties. In the Second Vietnam War, for example, Hanoi lost hundreds of thousands, even millions, of its soldiers and civilians without shaking its commitment to unify the country under its rule. By contrast, America's will was broken by the loss of 58,000 soldiers. This is a lesson that the West's enemies have taken to heart. All insurgent groups fighting Western militaries today hope to emulate the Vietcong's success by inflicting so much punishment that the counterinsurgents will be forced to withdraw. This strategy was vindicated by the bombings of the Madrid train system in 2004, which convinced Spain to pull its troops out of Iraq.[22] The punishment inflicted by the Taliban has also convinced Washington to significantly reduce its own troop commitment in Afghanistan, allowing the Taliban to stage a resurgence after losing their grip on Helmand and Kandahar Provinces during the U.S. surge from 2009 to 2012. But it has hardly become impossible for Western democracies to wage successful counterinsurgencies, as seen by examples ranging from Colombia's war against FARC to Britain's war against the IRA and Israel's wars against Hamas, Hezbollah, the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigade, and other terror groups.

Whether democracies or dictatorships, all counterinsurgents have a natural advantage fighting on their home turf. In its early days, the PLO, for example, imagined that it could vanquish Israel as FLN insurgents in Algeria had vanquished the French and the Vietminh and Vietcong had vanquished the French and Americans, respectively. But there was a crucial difference: Israelis had no place else to go; unlike the French colons in Algeria or the American troops in Vietnam, they could not simply decide to stop fighting and go home. Israel was and is their home. They had to fight and prevail or face the prospect of either dying or being driven from their homes. Thus Israel has shown more staying power than its Arab adversaries ever imagined. The Colombian government, similarly, has had a "home court" advantage fighting FARC, as has Britain with the IRA, Spain with the ETA, Germany with the Baader-Meinhof Gang, Jordan with the PLO in the 1970s, Algeria with the MIA/GIA, Sri Lanka with the Tamil Tigers, El Salvador with the FMLN, Egypt with Al Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood, etc. The hardest counterinsurgency of all is for a democratic power to fight an "away" game, as the United States has done in, inter alia, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan or Israel has done in Lebanon (1982-2000, 2006). Any power going into such a war should be fully aware of the dangers, and seek to mitigate them to the greatest extent possible.

This makes the option of fighting through proxy forces especially attractive, as the U.S. did in Afghanistan in the fall of 2001 by allying with the Northern Alliance or more recently by with YPG Kurdish rebels in Syria and with the security forces of Iraq and Afghanistan. But relying on proxies brings its own set of problems because their interests are usually not exactly aligned with those of their sponsors. The Northern Alliance in Afghanistan has been intent on protecting the interests of Hazaras, Turkmen, Tajiks, Uzbeks—the ethnic groups of northern Afghanistan—rather than on building a true democracy, thus undermining Kabul's efforts to reach out to Pashtuns, concentrated

21 Thomas Grove, "How Chechnya's President Ramzan Kadyrov Bends Social Media to His Will," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 26, 2016.

22 James Phillips, "Spain's Retreat After the Madrid Bombings Rewards Terrorism," The Heritage Foundation, March 16, 2004.

in the south and east, which constitute the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan and the one from which the Taliban draw their support.[23] The YPG has been more intent on establishing a new Kurdish state in northern Syria, known as Rojava, than on defeating Islamic State.[24] The Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq have been more intent on spreading Shiite hegemony than on creating a multi-ethnic polity that can attract the support of Sunnis.[25] The military in Mali was more intent on creating a military dictatorship than on fighting the Turegs.[26] And so forth. Such examples can be multiplied endlessly. It is for this reason—because they cannot always count on reliable proxies--that sometimes, no matter how daunting the obstacles, Western powers have to take a more direct hand in fighting insurgents abroad, as the U.S. did, for example, after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

In such operations, a light footprint is always to be preferred if possible—with the American campaign in Afghanistan in the fall of 2001, utilizing a few hundred CIA and Special Operations personnel to topple the Taliban, being a model of the kind. But sometimes a light footprint is not enough; a few hundred American covert operatives could help to topple the Taliban but could not create a government capable of resisting a Taliban comeback. Likewise in Iraq, the American invasion in the spring of 2003 shattered the Saddam Hussein regime so completely that it left a vacuum of power which U.S. forces had to fill or else allow violent extremists to rule the day.

The Primacy of Politics

No matter the size of the force that is employed, any power engaged in counterinsurgency must remember the fundamental Clausewitzian lesson about the primacy of politics. The emphasis must be not on killing insurgents but on establishing governmental institutions that can win the allegiance of the population—as Field Marshal Templer did so brilliantly in Malaya by promising its people eventual independence if they would first cooperate with the British to defeat the Marxist Malayan Races Liberation Army. This is not easy to do now that colonialism has gone out of style—Western powers generally have to bolster local governments instead of simply sending their proconsuls to rule (although there has been a role for international proconsuls in the postwar transitions in Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor and Iraq).

Western states naturally have a predilection for supporting democracy but ineffectual governments created by a vote along sectarian lines, hobbled by massive corruption and unrestrained by a free press, strong legislature or independent judiciary hardly constitute true democracies. This is not an argument for supporting autocracies, which come with their own problems, including a tendency toward corruption and unaccountability. But it is an argument for a clear-eyed recognition that the key criterion of governmental effectiveness is not necessarily whether a regime is dictatorial or democratic but whether it is minimally responsive to the needs of the people and free of debilitating corruption and cronyism. One of the most effective ways for Western states to ultimately defeat Islamist movements is to sometimes do more to help foster more stable, effective, and responsible governments in the lands where terrorists seek freedom to maneuver. And that in turn means being more open on occasion to the "nation-building" mission which has become anathema in so much of the West because it has become unfairly associated with American occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. In truth, nation-building is usually undertaken by small-scale diplomatic, military and NGO missions, rather than by hundreds of thousands of troops. It is more often an alternative, rather than an accompaniment, to military occupation: Only if nation-building fails does it become necessary for direct military action to prevent a terrorist takeover.

Western powers need to build up their capacity to assist host-nation security forces; this will probably require creating dedicated advisory organizations of the kind that General Mark Milley, US Army Chief of Staff, is now exploring.[27] But experience from Mali to Iraq has shown that even the best security-force advising is insufficient. A military force, however tactically proficient, cannot be effective if it is under the orders of a corrupt, illegitimate, sectarian government. The corruption that occurred in the Iraqi Security Forces after the American exit in 2011 made it possible for relatively small numbers of ISIS fighters to rout much larger Iraqi troop contingents from Ramadi, Mosul, and other cities in 2014. In a similar vein, the American training of the Malian armed forces produced scant returns when in 2012 the army mutinied and overthrew the civilian president, thus creating a vacuum in northern Mali which was filled by the Tuaregs in alliance with Ansar al Dine, Al Qaeda in the Islamic

23 Abdul Basit, "The Coming Political Crisis in Afghanistan," *The Diplomat*, September 23, 2016.
24 Joshua Keating, "Why Obama May Arm the Kurds in Syria Against Turkey's Wishes," *Slate*, September 21, 2016.
25 Sulome Anderson, "We Do Not Need America's Support," *Foreign Policy*, September 25, 2016.
26 Craig Whitlock, "Leader of Mali Military Coup Trained in U.S.," *Washington Post,* March 24, 2012.
27 Sydney J. Freeberg Jr., "Army Mulls Train & Advise Brigades: Gen Milley," *Breaking Defense*, December 14, 2015.

Maghreb, and other Islamist terrorist groups. Yet Western states devote far fewer resources to bolstering host-nation governance than they do to training security forces. It makes sense to put more effort into general nation-building, focused not just on strengthening military forces but also police forces, the judiciary, tax collection, border control, and other basic attributes of governance. Too often the U.S. and other Western governments have spent aid money indiscriminately without demanding much by way of measurable achievements. While the aid mission is a valuable one, it should be transitioned in greater part to private-sector charities, while the U.S., U.K. France, Germany and other Western governments focus their aid spending not just on relieving suffering but also, and principally, on fostering responsible self-government in impoverished countries. The United States could retool the US Agency for International Development to focus on this mission in 40-50 strategically important countries rather than on fostering amorphous development for its own sake across the entire world.[28] Western nations need to focus less on demonstrating good intentions with their aid spending and more on delivering tangible results.

Closely related to the imperative to promote better governance is the imperative to be more effective in waging information warfare and political warfare so as to counter insurgent attempts to influence public opinion. Insurgents have become especially skilled in the jujitsu move of turning counterinsurgents' strength against them by exploiting public revulsion at images of civilian suffering supposedly caused by military action. Hamas and Hezbollah have become so effective at this black art that they can count on stopping any Israeli offensive after just a few weeks by marshaling—in some cases, manufacturing—revulsion against civilian casualties caused by IDF action. Usually lost is the larger context: namely that Israeli forces take great care, as the HLMG has documented, to avoid collateral damage but there is no way to avoid harming civilians entirely when terrorists hide in civilian areas and even operate out of schools and hospitals in violation of the Laws of Armed Conflict. Israel has become better at getting out its side of the story through social media.[29] But it and other Western combatants can do still more to fight terrorists more effectively on the information battlefield, which in modern warfare is often more important than the actual physical battlefront. Western militaries must, of course, be careful in issuing Rules of Engagement which minimize the likelihood of harm to non-combatants, but they should not go so far as to hamper their own forces in carrying out effective military action.

At the same time, Western governments must more aggressively engage in the "battle of the narrative." In particular, they must do a better job of explaining the steps they taken to comply with the Laws of Armed Conflict, and hold their enemies accountable in the court of public opinion for their failure to follow suit. All soldiers must be indoctrinated not just in the proper way to behave on the battlefield but also on the proper way to explain their behavior via social media and traditional media; the US Marine Corp's "strategic corporal" has to be brought into the Internet age where an offensive photo on Facebook or Instagram can sabotage months of military gains on the ground. Just as it would be helpful to have dedicated nation-building agencies, so too it makes sense to have dedicated information-warfare agencies such as the old US Information Agency, which was merged into the State Department in 1999.

The U.S. has paid a cost in the War on Terrorism for not having such a specialized capability. Since 2001, the State Department has beefed up its Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Office, and it has tried to take the lead in countering terrorist messaging. But its efforts have suffered from rapid turnover among leaders and staff and numerous changes of mission and name. The undersecretaries of state for public affairs served an average of only 500 days in office between 1999 and 2011, half of the tenure of the undersecretaries for political affairs.[30] And in 2016, President Obama renamed the State Department's Center for Strategic Counter-Terrorism Communications as the Global Engagement Center, giving it a new mission and yet another new leader.[31] An independent advisory panel found that frequent changes of leadership and mission have hobbled efforts to compete with groups such as Islamic State in the sphere of "messaging." Will McCants, a well-respected terrorism expert at the Brookings Institution, told the Washington Post that the U.S. counter-messaging operation "in disarray"—"Among those involved in messaging efforts, McCants said, 'morale is low, and they're not getting any clarity from the top about what they're supposed to be doing.'"[32]

28 Max Boot and Michael Miklaucic, "Reconfiguring USAID for Nation Building," Council on Foreign Relations, Policy Innovation Memorandum, June 2016.

29 Marc Tracey, "In Defense of Israeli Forces' Social Media Propaganda," *The New Republic*, November 16, 2002.

30 Helle Dalle, "The State Department's Revolving Door of Public Diplomacy," *The Daily Signal*, May 8, 2013.

31 http://www.state.gov/r/gec/

32 Greg Miller, "Panel Casts Doubt on U.S. Propaganda Efforts Against ISIS," *Washington Post*, December 2, 2015.

Rather than improvising within existing institutions, there is an argument for creating a modern version of the World War II-era Political Warfare Executive in order to compete with Iran, Russia, Qatar, Islamic State, the Muslim Brotherhood, and other entities, both state and non-state, which seek to spread their influence by suborning political processes and supporting political proxies in target countries. Whatever the bureaucratic structure this mission takes, there is clearly a need for more continuity, determination, and resources in competing with the West's enemies in this subterranean struggle for political influence.[33]

In sum, because Western governments cannot avoid counterinsurgency warfare, they must do a more effective job of waging it, in particular by applying more thought and resources to the non-kinetic aspects of such warfare. It is precisely in these areas that groups such as Hezbollah, ISIS and the Taliban have excelled, even as their tactical military performance continues to lag far behind those of the best Western military forces. There is no quick or magical fix to this problem; it does, however, require concentrated thought and effort if Western states are to avoid the trap of winning battles and losing wars. Islamist insurgents can be defeated, and they will be defeated, but in order to defeat them Western states will have to fight smarter. That includes explaining to the Western publics, as a core part of the HLMG mission attempts to do, that such conflicts will be protracted under the best of circumstances, that their forces will sometimes kill civilians despite all precautions to the contrary, and that no rapid victories are likely to be forthcoming.

33 Max Boot and Michael Doran, "Political Warfare," Council on Foreign Relations, June 2013.

INAUGURAL SYMPOSIUM

Executive Summary of the First Symposium of the HLMG Academic Advisory Council

Washington, DC, June 2016

HLMG Academic Advisory Council

1. Assessment of the Strategic Context

The coming years will be defined by kinetic conflicts with media savvy terrorist groups that straddle the line delineating states from non-state actors. Traditional 'war on war' confrontations, in which both sides' forces resemble those of their rival in terms of size, structure and tactics, will likely account for a minority of conflicts in the 21st century. In the contemporary era, unconventional warfare will prove increasingly dominant, and all modern conflicts will possess an irregular dimension. Decisive victories will become increasingly elusive, with battlefield successes resulting in circumstances and situations from which it is neither easy nor simple to disengage militarily. The development of this environment will require political and military leaders to reassess and adjust their existing perceptions of conflict, to ensure that their armed forces are orientated towards defeating new enemies in new conditions.

The shift in modern warfare away from traditional interstate conflict will not automatically negate the ability to achieve real and tangible increases in security through the deployment of military force. Indeed, the failure to do so will increase the direct consequences to domestic publics. The current era of warfare contains a significant challenge to the home front, as demonstrated by the attacks on Paris and Brussels in the last twelve months, which can only partially be addressed at home. Instead, an investment of time, effort and resources will be needed to defeat terrorist organizations abroad militarily and improve circumstances in regions of the world where terrorist safe havens are either present or likely to emerge. Shoring up countries that are at risk of becoming the next stronghold for radicalism, due to deteriorations in internal stability and security conditions, will be a priority.

2. The Nature of Contemporary Threats

The most pressing threat to the security of democracies is that posed by terrorist organizations that expound a radical form of Islam. Many of these are gaining strength through the prosecution of insurgency campaigns against weak states within North Africa, the greater Middle East, and South Asia. Shaping political realities and outcomes is fundamental to the operations of all of these groups, and is highlighted by the fact that many of them place as great an emphasis on public opinion as upon altering realities on the battlefield. Often their attacks are stage-managed operations intended to produce newsworthy headlines that will affect public opinion both internationally, and within their area of operation. This approach is deliberately asymmetric in nature, standing in contrast to the approach of democratically accountable militaries, which tend to adopt a more limited focus on tactical successes. This asymmetry affords radical groups a comparative advantage by allowing them to offset losses inflicted by conventionally superior forces. Such an approach advances their position in two respects. Firstly, it burnishes their appeal within local communities by allowing them to proclaim military prowess, something that aids with terrorist recruitment. Secondly, it depresses public support for military operations amongst domestic populations in democratic countries.

The fundamentally political nature of radical terrorist organizations has been significantly underrated. These groups exhibit a shrewd and developed media savvy. This means that it would be wrong to regard any terrorist attack as an isolated incident that can be detached from a broader effort to advance political change. Instead, analytical assessments of such attacks and in particular their effectiveness, should be viewed through the prism of politics, public opinion, and propaganda.

Maximizing collateral damage is at the heart of terrorists' strategy to defeat conventionally superior military forces. Terrorist groups are fully versed in the political benefits that can be derived from the negative media attention that attends the loss of civilian life. By striking from densely populated areas and using human shields, terrorist groups enjoy a first-mover advantage, benefit from civilian casualties caused by military retaliation due to their propaganda value, and succeed in evading punitive action by prompting excessive caution in professional militaries, which are liable to engage in forms of self-deterrence when employing force in populated areas. Groups like ISIS, and in particular Hamas and Hizballah are extremely well versed in the desire of democracies to reduce civilian casualties, and are ruthless in their attempt to exploit their compliance with the Laws of Armed Conflict for strategic gain. The latter two have significant experience deploying this playbook against Israel's forces.

This strategy has had a major impact upon professional militaries, which have adopted unprecedented measures to minimize civilian casualties. Political considerations increasingly circumscribe military freedom of action when planning and executing battlefield operations, due to the fear of hostile media reactions associated with collateral damage and the resultant electoral impact. Indeed, the problem has become one of democratic nations' militaries now routinely engaging in self-imposed restrictions that go well beyond what is required of them under the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC).

3. Denying Terrorists Territory

Key to denying terrorist group safe havens is to make sufficently long-term commitments in terms of military deployments and, where necessary, state-building. Key is to defeat terrorist groups comprehensively in terms of the battlefield and ability to exert force, and then to ensure that they are 'out-governed' by more conducive forces. This is particularly relevant where terrorist groups engage in proto-state activities. In addition to brute force and fear, terrorist insurgencies generally sustain their support in the wider population on the basis of governance issues, meaning that they will always enjoy greater success in areas where core grievances remain unaddressed, no matter how effective a military effort to defeat them is brought to bear. This means that to be successful in the current era, democratic nations waging warfare will often be required to account in their campaigns for the necessity to close so-called 'governance gaps' in states that are either ungoverned or mis-governed. This is a particular problem in the fight against Islamist terrorism across the globe. Bolstering governments that are seen as legitimate by residents of the territory in which they exercise authority, and ensuring they have the means to effectively assert control in the face of Islamist insurgency, will be in the national security interest of democratic nations, leading at times to difficult moral quandaries about alliance relationships where the interests of democratic and non-democratic actors overlap.

In particular, this means that denying opportunities to terrorist groups will require establishing robust security forces controlled by the central authority in a given country, to a high degree of capability and professionalism. Embedding

foreign military personnel alongside local partners in order to strengthen security structures and military operating procedures through training offers the most effective way to do this. Yet such action comes with significant challenges as a plethora of recent and more distant conflicts show. In many cases however, 'enabling and enhancing' local forces does not offer a sufficient solution by which military deployments and kinetic engagements can be avoided. The political nature of conflicts with insurgent and terrorist groups also elevates the importance of 'being seen to win', something that cannot be achieved indirectly through local partners.

4. The Urgency of Political Warfare and Information Operations

Professional military forces now operate in a more contested media environment than at any moment in historical memory. This development has opened space for terrorist groups and insurgent forces to advance their strategic goals through social media, new media sources, and willing or unwittingly complicit actors in democratic nations, all of which allow for the dissemination of a flawed narrative, detrimental to mission objectives. The information warfare efforts of terrorist groups have often proven more far-reaching and sophisticated than those advanced by the governments of democratic nations. The ability of professional militaries to continue to win on the battlefield whilst losing in the realm of information warfare should not be assumed. As such this arena represents one of the most serious challenges today.

As such, extensive and wide-ranging information operations are a legitimate dimension of current conflicts with radical and terrorist groups. In particular, there is a pressing need for the dissemination of expert analysis of military conflicts in real time in order to influence domestic and international public opinion. Moving quickly to 'grab the narrative' in the current conflict environment is necessary to prevent it being seized by competing, often malicious actors. Public diplomacy efforts must advance the interests and perspectives of democratic governments by bolstering domestic support for their efforts, and portraying a more accurate picture of terrorist organizations, their methods of operation and the realities of the modern battlefield.

New approaches can help to achieve this outcome. Ensuring that all relevant active service personnel are trained to act as 'strategic corporals', capable of grasping the importance of perception and public relations, is vital, though such efforts have to be carefully balanced with military operational needs. Concerted outreach to social media and other technology organizations, in order to educate them on the way the norms they set are likely to be manipulated by adversaries, can hinder the efforts of terrorist actors to advance their narratives. So too potentially can engaging in much broader use of 'embedded reporting' within professional militaries, not only on the front line, but at all levels within the chain of command. Increased openness, transparency and access can help to win and maintain public support for military operations, whilst failure to adequately provide access generally incentivizes traditional media outlets to turn to hostile or unreliable sources for commentary and analysis.

5. Providing Greater Legal Certainty to Professional Militaries

Military forces need to adhere to the Laws of Armed Conflict meticulously, and address shortcomings quickly whenever they are discovered. Yet tolerance for casualties and legitimate collateral damage has collapsed in recent years, due to intense media coverage of specific errors, a misguided public perception that civilian casualties are now avoidable due to the development of precision weapons, and the fact that domestic debates on these issues in democratic nations tend to be led by individuals who are highly critical of military operations.

Debate in this area is on a negative glidepath. Professional military forces face the prospect of becoming increasingly hamstrung, unable to achieve missions of vital national security interest despite possessing the capabilities to do so. Without a reversal of existing trends, they will increasingly find themselves in an unfavorable position. Reviewing or revising the Law on Armed Conflict would likely exacerbate current trends by encouraging existing definitions to be expanded. Instead, governments must set out the exact limitations on the use of military force, and uphold those definitions irrespective of future changes in the geopolitical or global media environment. This approach would help bring an end to an increasingly fluid situation in which Rules of Engagement (ROEs) are progressively restricted.

In addition, it is vital more is done to explain to domestic publics what limitations are imposed upon armed forces by the Law on Armed Conflict, especially in environments in which their country is not engaged in a confrontation against an existential threat. Domestic populations tend to assume that restrictions are far broader than they actually are, and that they vary according to the scale of the threat being confronted. This has steadily eroded armed forces'

ability to operate effectively. Democratic governments must move to end this trend, and in particular take action to halt incremental moves to apply domestic human rights legislation to actions taken on the battlefield, a trend already having a highly problematic effect on military planning and operations.

All of these steps are necessary to bring an end to the situation in which armed forces engage in excessive self-restraint out of an abundance of caution. Greater clarity and certainty is a necessitous step in the effort to better prepare militaries for future conflict scenarios.

6. Managing Domestic Political Expectations

Domestic publics have increasingly come to expect swift military campaigns that result in decisive victories, something that cannot easily be secured in the current strategic environment. Though rhetorical proclamations that nations are 'at war' are necessary for the purposes of mobilization, they further this tension by generating unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved against terror-armies and other radical groups, and in what timeframe. Governments must thus make every effort to bolster public support for sustaining long term military engagements without giving expectations of swift or decisive victory. They must also stress the connection between overseas military operations and the maintenance of domestic security. These goals can be achieved by setting limited and achievable goals at the outset of military campaigns, and engaging in intense public diplomacy efforts aimed at explaining why particular operations are being conducted, what their desired outcomes are, and what their duration is likely to be.

Full Record of the First Symposium of the HLMG Academic Advisory Council

Washington, DC, June 2016

HLMG Academic Advisory Council

Participants:

John Baird [Participant 1]
Max Boot [Participant 2]
Gary Anderson [Participant 3]
Dr. Kalev Sepp [Participant 4]
General David Deptula [Participant 5]
John Nagl [Participant 6]
Mary Habeck [Participant 7]
Bruno Tertrais [Participant 8]
Patrick Keller [Participant 9]
Colonel Richard Kemp [Participant 10]
Kori Shake [Participant 11]
Brigadier General Yossi Kuperwasser [Participant 12]
Rafael Bardají [Chairman]
Davis Lewin [Moderator]
Timothy Stafford [Rapporteur]

Opening Remarks

Rafael Bardají opened the meeting, and explained his role as the Director of the Friends of Israel (FOI) Initiative. He outlined his background as Spain's former National Security Advisor, a role that meant he was a 'specialist in generalities', and had devoted his career to military and defense issues. He was very pleased that the FOI had sponsored this meeting on modern warfare, and urged the group to spend the day thinking how best to fight current wars when facing new enemies in new conditions. He highlighted the participation of Yossi Kuperwasser and Richard Kemp, and drew attention to the work they had done previously in assessing operation Protective Edge, and noted that copies of their final report34 were available. He noted that despite the strengths of the report itself, it had become clear during the research and writing period that it was insufficient to produce an operational report in a vacuum., and that additional work needed to be done to offer context. As a result, a second report considering several separate theaters of operations had also been commissioned, to which Bruno Tertrais had contributed35. He noted that the report considered a range of different states and actors facing common challenges, and highlighted the the kinetic operations undertaken by the Colombian military against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the operations undertaken by Australian armed forces during the occupation of Iraq. In addition, Mr. Bardají drew attention to a third report that was in the process of being drafted, which would comprise the findings of a twelve-nation delegation of police and FBI officials that had visited Israel in the previous week to consider the 'home front' dimension, and thanked Yossi Kuperwasser for taking part.

Mr. Bardají stressed that the purpose of the meeting was to produce ideas for a strategic report, which would contain broader thoughts for dissemination ahead of the 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw (July 8th-9th). This report would be a longer report considering how contemporaries armies should see, think and act. He then handed over to the Moderator Davis Lewin to provide more information about the day.

Mr Lewin stressed that it was a privilege to work with such fine minds, and stressed that he only wanted to offer brief remarks. He noted that the first stage of the FOI's current activity had been to engage in fact-finding, the second to offer a contextual assessment, and the third to consider the 'home front' challenges faced by Israel. The fourth phase, which would be considered today, was to offer a broader understanding of modern conflict and highlight the implications for policy-making. He suggested that there were two key issues that needed to be addressed, which would require the group to 'swat two flies in one go'. The first was to identify the specific threat to Israel and the constituent challenges. The second was to identify the broader challenges that were being confronted by all Western countries and their militaries. By way of illustration, he drew the group's attention to a piece in the previous day's Wall Street Journal36 that highlighted the frustrations of US military officials forced to determine when it was appropriate to engage lethal force when confronting Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. He noted that these challenges were comparable to those faced by Israeli offcials during the 2014 Gaza conflict, where legal advisers were often being consulted whilst military airstrikes were pending. He noted that Col. Kemp and General Deptula had both been very prominent on the challenges generated by these developments. He posed twos specific questions which he hoped that the collective discussions of the group would serve to answer:

1) *1) 'How did we get here', and what does it mean for Western militaries?, and;*
2) *What should be the 'political ask' that individuals and organizations in the broader foreign and defense policy community put to policy-makers?*

Mr Lewin acknowledged that the agenda would prove somewhat like a war plan in that it wouldn't survive first contact, but he drew the participants' attention to it nonetheless. He noted that Max Boot would lead the first discussion, which would new challenges to Western militaries and how they arose, and seek to provide answers to the questions distributed in advance[37]. The second discussion would be initiated by David Deptula and Richard Kemp, who would provide a military and operation perspective. Finally, the third discussion would be led by John Baird and Rafael Bardají, who would address the political implications of themes identified in the first two sessions.

34 "An Assessment of the 2014 Gaza Conflict", High Level Military Group, October 2015. Available for download at http://www.high-level-military-group.org/pdf/hlmg-assessment-2014-gaza-conflict.pdf

35 "Our Military Forces' Struggle Against Lawless, Media Savvy Terrorist Adversaries: A Comparative Study", High Level Military Group, February 2016. Available for download at http://www.high-level-military-group.org/pdf/hlmg-lawless-media-savvy-terrorist-adversaries.pdf

36 "Afghan War Rules Leave U.S. Troops Wondering When It's OK to Shoot", Michael Phillips, Wall Street Journal, June 20th 2016. Available at: http://www.wsj.com/articles/afghan-war-rules-leave-u-s-troops-wondering-when-its-ok-to-shoot-1466435019

37 See sheet.

Mr Lewin noted that Timothy Stafford would be taking notes and producing a report of the discussion complete with recommendations, which would feed into the NATO summit as a strategic report. In addition, he noted that Max Boot had already agreed to write a longer paper based in part upon the group's discussions, highlighting how new challenges had emerged, how those challenges manifested themselves with respect to Israel as compared to the West, and what political consequences could be derived from those assessments, together with a separate consideration of why debate on these issues tends to be led by those who are highly critical of military actions Israel and others have undertaken.

Mr Lewin invited Richard Kemp and David Deptula to discuss the outcomes of their the fact-finding trip to Israel that had led to the first HLMG report[38], and to provide a summary of HLMG's work more generally.

Mr Kemp said that the key issue to address was that Israel's involvement in the recent Gaza conflict had generated huge criticism in the international community. He noted that when the US engaged in military conflicts, it tended to do so alongside allies, which meant that the nature of their military operations tended to be compared with one another. With respect to Israel, that was rarely the case, meaning that there were few points of reference for those assessing the nature of its campaigns. Accordingly, it was vital to have case studies of comparable conflicts for comparison. He further noted that the adversaries of Israel tended to fight from positions that were located within the civilian population, using human shields. He stressed that Israel's enemies were well aware of its desire to reduce civilian casualties, and were fully aware of the Laws of Armed Conflict (LOAC), which they sought to exploit to the fullest extent. At the heart of the issues to be considered was a comparison of how various militaries confront this reality. He noted that Israel's record in this regard was favorable when compared to that of others. He further noted that when US/UK-led coalition forces were fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, they were fighting for the interests and influence of their respective states. By contrast, Israel's recent conflicts were all directly adjacent to its own borders, defending its own people and facing the prospect of its survival as a state being jeopardized in case of defeat, when there would normally be an inherent willingness to accept greater civilian casualties in pursuit of military objectives. In conclusion, he noted that the key question raised by the report39 was how it was possible that Western militaries had progressed from a point where it was acceptable to use two nuclear weapons in order to achieve victory to a contemporary situation in which it was deemed politically unacceptable to name the enemy, [a reference to the Obama administration's refusal to use the words 'radical islamic terrorism' in public speeches and documents].

General Deptula highlighted the significance of the trip, stating that the research that had been undertaken was 'enormously applicable' to the kind of warfare that was proceeding today, especially that being undertaken by coalition forces against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). He further noted that as a result of the steps taken by Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to reduce civilian casualties during operation Protective Edge in 2014, many of the tactical steps it had taken had been incorporated into Western military operations against ISIS. For instance, airstrikes undertaken by coalition forces also engaged in 'tapping on roofs40' using hard charges, as well as providing explicit warnings to civilian populations in advance of air strikes that military operations were due to begin. He noted that it was very likely that the UN Human Rights Council may soon be taking steps designed to require militaries to adopt this practice in future.

Mr. Deptula also noted that enemy forces were continually trying to 'get inside' the psyche of Western militaries in order to undermine offensive operations. He stressed that the inability of Western military forces to deal with ISIS effectively has led to Western terrorist attacks, with the US government paralyzed in dealing with information operations, a weapon adversaries were increasingly seeking to deploy. Accordingly, studying the 2014 campaign had produced insights that were highly applicable in the contemporary era.

Mr Lewin thanked Mr Kemp and Mr Deptula for their comments, and asked Max Boot to set out the context for the High Level Military Group's work by addressing the question of how Western militaries could achieve decisive success given that they were fighting against enemies that don't respect the LOAC.

38 "An Assessment of the 2014 Gaza Conflict"

39 Ibid.

40 In the margins of the meeting, this term was described in greater detail. During the 2014 operations in Gaza, Israel would drop five pound charges that resulted in small explosions around the designated target site. These charges would result in small explosions, attracting the attention of occupants in nearby buildings in the hope that it would encourage them to flee the area in advance of an upcoming airstrike.

Session 1

The Nature of Hybrid Warfare Today

Mr Boot began by noting that he was intimidated speaking to this group, and that he always felt that way when addressing gatherings of individuals who were capable of distinguishing between guerrillas and gorillas. He noted that those around the table possessed a high level of sophistication and that he was familiar with many from their writing and research.

Mr Boot suggested that at the risk of stating the obvious, it was worth noting that unconventional or hybrid warfare had changed tremendously over previous centuries. He further noted that conventional conflicts that feature 'war on war', in which both sides's forces resembled those of their rival in terms of size, structure and tactics, accounted for a minority of conflicts overall. Moreover, in the contemporary era, unconventional warfare was dominant, with all modern conflicts possessing an irregular calibre. What he referred to as the "Three Ps" - politics, public opinion, and propaganda, were not an issue for the Mongol hordes or the Sioux indians, which despite being very capable warriors, did not have turn public opinion in their favor in order to be successful. He underscored the fact that ISIS, al-Qaeda, and the Taliban, as well as Hamas and Hezbollah, would all be easier adversaries to defeat were they limited to conducting hit-and-run operations in isolation from the media. If there were no international media, public opinion or NGOs aware of their cause, it would be possible for western militaries to engage in the 'Roman' way of war. At the same time, he noted that Roman forces themselves tended to be more successful when it offered 'bread and circus', namely, benefits that dissipated opposition and opportunity to mount resistance. So even in antiquity, Counter-insurgency operations (COIN) were not limited to single-minded killing of adversaries. Nevertheless, Counter-insurgents could afford to be more ruthless, in large part because insurgents were isolated from external sources of support, as was true in the case of the Sioux and the Zulus. By contrast, changes in technology since the mid 19th century, namely cheaply produced magazines, radio, television, and the internet, had transformed warfare in addition to business and society. As a result, insurgents had come to place as big an emphasis on changing public opinion as they did changing the realities on the actual battlefield. Indeed, he noted that many insurgent operations were now stage-managed to produce newsworthy headlines that would affect public opinion, even if they produced no real battlefield success. Mr Boot suggested that that had been true since the rise of Anarchists, who had used propaganda and terror attacks to draw attention to their cause.

Mr Boot drew the group's attention to the fact that Western liberal democracies were at a disadvantage when confronting this kind of conflict, and that as a result, insurgents had begun to win a higher percentage of battles. He warned that there was a tendency to overestimate the power of insurgencies, highlighting the fact that most were ultimately overcome. An extensive analytical focus on Castro, Mao and the Viet Cong served to obscure the fact that their campaigns were the exception, not the rule. At the same time, he reiterated that the overall trend line was that of greater success, and drew the group's attention to his book "Invisible Armies[41]", which offered additional background to the work of the HLMG by way of case studies. He noted that counter-insurgents tended to find themselves 'in the same boat' despite their differences, in that the find themselves fighting media-savvy adversaries who know how to use the infliction of casualties to gain the favor of public opinion. As a result, they cause over-caution in Western militaries, who tend to be wary of employing force. He stressed that while it was right to emphasize precision when targeting, the Wall Street Journal article cited by Mr Lewin demonstrated the extent to which military rules of engagement had become an centrally important issue. He recalled the difficulties encountered by US General Stanley McChrystal as Commander in Chief of the International Security Assistance force in Afghanistan, when insurgents contested freedom of action by turning public opinion against operations, and forcing a 'pre-emptive crouch' amongst uniformed personnel who were afraid of negative headlines that might result from mistakes such as the accidental targeting of a school, hospital or wedding party. This, he noted, was an effective strategy, as it increased the the likelihood that the insurgents themselves would ultimately prevail.

41 Boot, Max. "Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present". 2013 https://www.amazon.com/Invisible-Armies-History-Guerrilla-Warfare/dp/0871406888

Mr Boot said an awareness of these realities raised many questions, all of which were difficult and to which there were few great answers. Firstly, how to respond to these challenges in the conflicts that Western militaries have to fight today? He noted that there were simple answers, such as "Avoid COIN", and stick to conventional conflicts that offer clean and quick 'in and out' options, such as the Six Day War and the Gulf War, both of which tended to be viewed as 'exemplars'. Yet he noted that both examples were not that quick in nature: the first because it led to the West Bank and Gaza Strip occupations, and the second because it led to a permanent US military role in Iraq that has persisted ever since. In each case, victories had established situations from which it was not that easy or simple to disengage, and in those occasions when disengagement was attempted, as it was in Iraq post-2011, the consequences had been catastrophic. At the same time, he noted that the US had not engaged in Syria at all, and that the situation had developed in broadly the same way.

He outlined what he referred to as the 'Ralph Peters' view, which he acknowledged might now be renamed the 'Donald Trump' view, which was to forget restraint altogether, which he noted was another answer that failed to meet the issues that were faced. Even counter-insurgencies that are prepared to kill everyone, such as the Azeris of Baku [in 1918] or the resistance to the Soviets in Afghanistan [in the 1980s], only succeed when other dimensions are in place as well, including the ability to isolate the battlefield and deny insurgents institutional support, as in the case of Sri Lanka's destruction of the Tamil Tigers and and Russia's crushing of dissent in Chechnya. Even then, there were instances in which the very same approach had been attempted but had failed, as in the case Col. Gaddafi's attempt to hold on to power in Libya, and President Assad's prosecution of the war in Syria. In each case, the insurgents had been able to rally outside support, ensuring that brute force suppression failed. Mr Boot said that if one accepted that these were the only two options then the situation could indeed be rendered in such a way as to lend itself to straight-forwarded solutions. However, if one accepted that insurgencies could neither be wished away nor crushed with absolute force, then difficult questions remained. He noted that in Colombia, the Uribe and Santos administrations had had tremendous success against entrenched insurgencies. The same was true of the United Kingdom in its battles with the Irish Republican Army (IRA), in El Salvador, with the US 'surge' in Iraq between 2006 and 2008, and with respect to Israel in its effort to put down the second intifada. The lesson to be learned was that it could be done, but that to do so correctly is hard. In the case of Columbia and Israel, both states enjoyed 'home court advantage' by fighting on their own territory. The challenges became much harder for the French, British and Americans when they had tried to conduct successful counter-insurgency operations overseas, most recently in Iraq and Afghanistan. The result had been a continuing threat from jihadists that had manifested itself in Orlando, Paris and London, but which drew its inspiration from overseas, and which cast itself as the victim in order to gain support from circles within the West.

Mr Boot said that many people had proven 'unwittingly complicit' by ignoring their atrocities, and that no nation had yet found a suitable means of addressing this. He spoke of talking to commanders who engaged in much 'hand wringing' and caution whilst simultaneously wondering "why can't we do better?". This, he noted, was a non-stop lament dating back to the Boer War, and which had consumed much military attention throughout the 20th century. In addition, he noted the laments of Western soldiers who wondered "why we aren't using proper warfare?" in order to win. Mr Boot noted that removing those frustrations alone would not be enough, but that the frustrations themselves were indicative of difficulties that were a big part of the overall challenge. Mr Boot ended by posing two general questions to the group: "How do you change that state of affairs?, and; "Can we keep loosing in the realm of information warfare whilst still winning the overall battle?".

Rafael Bardají thanked Mr Boot for his remarks, and stated that he had already failed in his 'primary mission' as Chairman by failing to ask each of the participants to introduce themselves to the other members of the group, which they proceeded to do.

Mr Lewin posed a follow up question to the group, asking them to, in three or four 'controversial sentences' outline whether they felt that it was still possible to win a war of the kind Mr Boot had described.

Mary Habeck said that it was still possible, and that one only had to look at the success stories such as El Salvador, Colombia, and the UK vis-a-vis the IRA, to see that states needed to have 'staying power' if they were to stand a chance of prevailing. She stressed that in some instances that required 'staying' for decades, as the US had in Germany and Asia after the Second World War, and in Korea after the Korean war. Accordingly, there was a correlation with conventional wars, in that a long term security commitment was needed in order to establish stable government. If counter-insurgents succeed in 'out-governing' the the side, they are able to succeed, because insurgencies are ultimately about governance issues. Ms Habeck suggested that all of what was under discussion

favored standing up local governments, as the failure of governance was what created insurgencies, meaning that the creation of it solved them. Military victories, by contrast, are ephemeral. For instance, the new insurgency in Iraq gathered pace as soon as the US departed. So the question to be answered is what Western militaries can do to prevent countries becoming breeding grounds for terrorists, and that in instances in which states in the Islamic world that is not governed or is misgoverned, effort needed to be undertaken to 'close gaps'.

Mr Deptula asked if this definition permitted deviation from democracy to dictatorship, if it brought stable governance. Ms Habeck suggested that it did not, as quasi-democratic states such as contemporary Iraq had been proven to be non-functional. She made allowance for structurally stable states that were illiberal in nature, but reiterated the point that structurally stable liberal democracies were the best.

John Nagl noted that Mr Boot had said that victory was possible but that it was really hard. Yet he stressed that if Western nations and forces believed that they could create a better outcome then the one they faced then they were not wrong to to try to do so, especially when there was no choice due to the scale of the interests involved but accept that it was a generational challenge to building host nation security forces. He concluded that and that thus far the United States had proven unwilling to do so, but that the only solution was to have US personnel embedded with local partner as a means of strengthening security and defending governing structures. He acknowledged that the model did not allow for a decisive victory, but suggested that was sustainable.

Mr Lewin asked how it was at all possible to think that a generational commitment that could could ultimately encompass any number of countries in the 'Islamic Crescent' referred to by Ms Habeck could be 'sold' politically

Mary Habeck agreed with the points that had been made by Max Boot and John Nagl, and stressed that the term 'decisive' in 'decisive victory' needed to be defined. She stressed that it was possible for nations to get a geopolitical and security outcome which served their needs without a 'decisive' World War Two style finish, and that stable governance was the key. What was harder to conceptualize was what that itself looked like. In some instances, it could be 'the support of the people' irrespective of regime type, and drew attention to the case of Morocco, in which Arab spring style protests had failed to gain any major traction. This stood in opposition to the situation in Egypt and Libya, where despite commanding very impressive security forces and a determination to employ them in order to stay in power, popular will had been sufficient to force Mubarak and Gaddafi from office. A similar situation was at play in Syria. Ms Habeck stressed that ultimately, it was not a question of dictatorships vs democracies but of legitimate governance, as perceived by the people themselves. She made a comparison with the current Republican nomination process, highlighting that he might still be stripped of the Presidential nomination by party insiders who don't see his selection as legitimate.

In terms of whether one could ever secure a stable result in terms of governing legitimacy, Ms Habeck said that it was possible, but that it took decades, especially if a civil war or insurgency had to be be defeated alongside state-building efforts. She made reference to the chaos that had engulfed Iraq in the years that followed the Obama administration's decision to withdraw US forces in an abrupt manner in 2011, and suggested that there would have been similar disruption if the United States had adopted a similar policy with respect to Bosnia. She noted that US forces were still based in the region, and had they been withdrawn, they only would have had to return at a later date.

Bruno Tertrais suggested that there was a symbolic problem, in that Western governments felt compelled to tell their publics that they were 'at war', which created expectations of decisive victories. This had proven to be a major dilemma. Mr ertrais acknowledged that there were reasons for proceeding in this fashion, most notably for mobilization purposes. Yet he wondered how that effect could be garnered without simultaneously generating unrealistic expectations of what could be achieved, and the timeframe in which it could be achieved.

Patrick Keller said that this was a long term management challenge, but the correct approach was not to 'sell' the public that particular vision. Instead, he argued that the appropriate approach was to proceed incrementally. By way of example, he noted that Harry Truman's enunciation of the 'Truman Doctrine' began with specific reference to resisting communist subversion in Greece and Turkey, shunning any sweeping references to any form of global campaign even though it subsequently congealed into that approach.

He agreed with Max Boot that islamic insurgents had benefitted from new media skills, but also noted that they also maintained a tendency to engage in counter-productive actions, such as beheadings, violence, and other atrocities

carried out against civilians. He suggested that this level of violence needed to be publicly highlighted, and used by Western governments in order to deny such groups support.

Kori Shake stressed that the difference between Israel and the US and their Western countries was the 'home and away' dimension highlighted by Max Boot. She noted that Israel's challenge was to persuade other nations to embrace its perspective of the conflicts in which it was engaged. By contrast, the challenge, primarily for the US, was to persuade its own population. She noted that it was possible, and that president Bush had succeeded in doing so during the final two years of his second term when he decided to insert more ground troops into Iraq and adopt General Petraeus' counter-insurgency strategy, known as the 'Surge'. On that occasion he had managed to stabilize public opinion, and fend off the opposition of a recalcitrant Congress. Ms Shake stressed that it was by no means a law of gravity that there could never be sustained support for lengthy military operations, only that it required the investment of political leadership. In addition, she noted that American political leaders are forced to engage in political theatre, which tends to undermine efforts to persuade the public. For instance, she suggested that politicians had helped create an image in the mind of the public that nation-building was an indulgence, by failing to convince people that overseas operations were central to the security of the United States. She concluded by saying that when engaged in stability operations, the US needed to stay committed until it had changed the social dynamics of the areas in which it was operating.

Yossi Kuperwasser returned the discussion to the question of 'decisive victories'. He noted that Israel's experience had taught it that there was a difference between the two. 'Victory' involved achieving stated goals, and was attained when the country succeeded in securing them. 'Decisive' meant something else entirely, because it assumed that the enemy was no longer standing at the end of the conflict. He noted that there was lots of debate in Israel about what 'Victory' was worth if it wasn't decisive, and said he tended to explain it as being akin to Israel's efforts to end the Second Intifada. It was not possible to 'solve' or 'decide' the issues that had prompted the uptick in attacks, but it had been possible to identify specific goals and achieve them individually. An example was that Israel had sought to "create a situation in which the other side is deterred from haranguing us for a long period of time". He also noted that a particular goal was persuading Palestinians to cease engaging in suicide attacks, a limited goal that had been achieved by 2005.

Gary Anderson highlighted the Malaysian insurgency, noting that there had never been a victory, and had only come to a formal end when a bureaucrat decided that it wasn't happening anymore. In his experience, all insurgencies were ultimately local in nature. If things are going well in Abu Ghraib [the administrative district, not the detention facility], with trash collections happening as they should and goods reaching the market, the incentives for engaging in violence are very low.

Yossi Kuperwasser did not agree, and argued that to understand insurgencies one had to go back to themes of stability. The purpose of engaging in insurgencies, for those who did so, was to 'change the world order', a vision much grander than the one characterized by local grievances. In the Israeli context, he noted that this meant eliminating the Israeli state. He said there was a danger in setting up a local-based argument that led to overconfidence that insurgencies could be brought to an end, when the reality was that they were always likely to flare up again so long as the core grievance remained. He said that he had spent three years in Colombia, immediately after the Second Intifada had ended, and that the fundamental shift in Bogota's mentality had been to grasp the fundamental changes it needed to make in order to get to where we are today. Unless the Government, Counter-insurgent or status quo force is able to convince a vast majority of those seeking to overturn the status quo or world order, no major progress could be expected. In short it does not matter how many guerrillas were killed, as it does how many people choose to bring their grievance to the official authorities rather than resorting to going outside of the established system.

Mr Kuperwasser, in reference to islamic terrorism, said that the fundamental question that had yet to be resolved was "what should be the role of Islam in world politics?". Winning a decisive war on that front would be the hardest task of all, as only 20% of the struggle could be affected by actual shooting'. The remainder of the battle - the 80%, was about outsmarting the other side in order to turn their public opinion against them, in this case, the public opinion of the insurgents and those they move amongst. In this dynamic, proving that you were more peaceful was likely to be ineffective. Instead, it was necessary to prove that you were more just and smarter. Mr Kuperwasser made reference to Iron dome, and noted that installing the system had been smart because it had ensured that Israel was protected. This in turn generated respect from adversaries and those likely to support them.

Winning in the '80%' arena was agreed to be very difficult. Mr Kuperwasser said that when trying to win the backing of constituents, it was always necessary to overcome the voices of those commentates who frame how society thinks about the battle itself, as these voices tended to offer the 'other side' a significant measure of legitimacy. He noted that the difference between Israel and the United States was that when Israel was engaged in conflict, those commentators tended to become less vocal, whereas in the US, they tend to become more vocal, leading to political disagreements. Amongst the press, elites, those in academia, and the political leadership, here was always a danger that many would consider the arguments of the other side and conclude 'there's something in it'. This represented a major problem for the West.

Mary Habeck expounded on this point, noting that the public discourse in times of conflict tended to be that it was necessary to fight, and she dew attention to the extent to which the American people supported military operations in the weeks and months after the September 11th attacks, when there was a string sense amongst the public that 'we have to do something'. In that period, 80-95% of the public supported US military operations in Afghanistan. The key split was between elites and teh academy, and mainstream public opinion. She noted that whilst 80% of people in this category wanted the US to 'do more', they wee possessed with a progressive vision, which committed them to denying anything military at all in terms of response. Ms Habeck said that there was a post-Kantian belief in many parts of academia and elite life that the world was heading towards a world governed by non-violence, and that there were very few who rejected this view despite evidence to the contrary. For those with these opinions, the main cleavage in world affairs was between 'the oppressors and the oppressed' and that those who fell into the latter category deserved what was coming to them. She stressed that people like this tended to enjoy the notion that they were complex, yet in reality their framework for understanding the world was remarkably basic. It was a classic tale of the good, righteous elect contesting against 'the evil' - which was a neo-Marxist view - and that the former were arbiters of the decision as to who was oppressed and who was an oppressor. Ms Habeck said that challenging this view would be a generational struggle, as any facts that could be presented would always be reinterpreted. For instance, she noted how Israel had made the transition from 'oppressed' to 'oppressor' over a period of decades, something she suggested was tied to guilt associated with the Mandate era. Ms Habeck said that the good news was that the US public had yet to buy into this way of thinking, and that they had instead concluded that elites do not serve their interests well. Yet conveying that point to a larger audience would require what Ms Habeck called 'a big megaphone'.

Ms Habeck stressed that the current situation was more contested than it had been in the last 1940s, when elites and non-elites alike saw the rise of communism as a major challenge that needed sweeping action to overcome. The change had come in the 1970s, when elites embraced the view that neo-Marxism was appropriate for all circumstances, and that the problems of the Middle East were the fault of US foreign policy, culminating in the September 11th attacks. Ms Habeck said this was the default view of many members of the Yale faculty, including Paul Kennedy, where she had worked for many years.

John Baird said he wasn't sure how Ms Habeck had survived at Yale. He said that the same dimension was present in Canadian society, and that it was a bigger cleavage than the traditional 'left-right' split. With respect to Mr Kuperwasser's points, he said that the reason Israel hadn't been attacked in a large-scale conventional way is because of the way its armed forces performed in 1967 and 1973. By contrast, the lack of a decisive victory in the 2006 war with Hezbollah forces in Lebanon had sent a message, because it was the first time that Israel had not ended a conflict with a decisive victory. He suggested that if the aim was to prevent enemies from harassing it, Israel had to prepare to respond to attacks in a manner that enabled it to win in an unquestioned manner. At the same time, he recognized that Israel was operating in a completely different environment. Because it was on the 'front line', it was subjected to repeated missile attacks that its population were keen to stop, and at the same time, the Prime Minister of Israel is in a completely different position in that he didn't carry the survival of the country on his shoulders every time military considerations were in play.

Mr Baird noted that most people were not capable of grasping this distinction, especially when they engaged in discussions relating to the 'proportional' use of force. Instead, they reverted to the traditional 'oppressed vs oppressor' framework identified by Mary Habeck. He recalled his first ever trip to Ramallah, and informed the group that having never seen it before he expected something more akin to a large refugee camp due to the way his perceptions had ben shaped in advance. Instead, he said that he found all the hallmarks of a developed society, including car dealerships, office blocks, high rise apartment buildings. He concluded that promoting the 'oppressed

vs. oppressors‘ dynamic was in the fundamental interest of the Palestinians, as it was the primary means by which they garnered international support.

Mr Kuperwasser said that last week he was overlooking a refugee complex near Ramallah, with a group of Europeans, and their first question was to ask “where is the camp?” because they expected to find tents.

John Baird said that this was indeed the case, and that most people expected to find something resembling the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan, not a developed urban centre. He suggested that for the Palestinians, insurgency was something to conduct from civilian population centers - with buildings containing the family room, the bedroom, and the rocket room. He said that when Palestinians engaged in attack they were engaging in a win-win practice, because the rocket would either 1) result in a direct strike; 2) strike fear or terror into the minds of Israelis even if it was unsuccessful, or 3) result in civilian casualties when Israel responded, which could then be utilized for propaganda purposes. Indeed, more senior Palestinian fighters encouraged this practice. Mr Baird concluded by noting that his worst experience was discovering the Palestinian refugee camps outside of Damascus, and learning that despite Palestinians being regularly killed their, the Palestinian Authority and Mahmoud Abbas didn’t want to admit them as refugees as to do so would be to lose the ‘oppressed‘ card.

David Deptula said that what was important was so far, the discussion had focused on actions and considerations, which mixed everything together. He said that one of the challenges was to divide first order principles up front. He had been struck by the comment of Ms Habeck that the best approach was to secure stable and legitimate governance. He asked when the last time it was that this reference had been included in any definition of the US National Security interest. He suggested that during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan the US had achieved stable governance by December of 2001, having driven the Taliban from power and installed a a new Government. He suggested that the US had then deviated by trying to introduce measures that were designed to transform a thirteenth century society into a Western democracy. He said that such efforts might form part of an overall approach to create stable governance, but that it might not have been worth it, and that few had gone out of their way to question whether it had been worth it and start a discussion.

Ms Habeck said she agreed with the broad thrust of Mr Deptula’s comments, but that from her perspective the US had not done enough to nation-build in Afghanistan, rather than having done too little. She said hat the US had not been committed to construction a functional state, and that Secretary Rumsfeld had shown no interest in building a stable government, which had allowed the Taliban to seep back into the power structures of the country from 2005 onwards. She said that general McChrystal, from 2009 onwards, had warned that there was a danger that the Taliban would take over and achieve the successes that they have subsequently gone on to achieve. Indeed, Rumsfeld had been hugely opposed to state building, preferring instead to focus on kinetic operations. She said that if the US had simply left Afghanistan in 2001, the Taliban would have come back in exactly the same way Al-Qaeda in Iraq reconstituted itself as ISIS and reclaimed large portions of Sunni Iraq following the US withdrawal in 2011.

Patrick Keller said that the ‘home and away‘ argument was a longstanding one, and was really a pseudo-answer, because it suggested that the way to proceed was to ‘let others do the job for you’. This approach, sometimes referred to as ‘enable and enhance’, was currently at play in Iraq, with the US providing weapons to the Kurdish Peshmerga so that it did not have to insert ground forces of its own. He made reference to NATO operations in Libya, and said that the lesson to be drawn was that though it was a beneficial thing to recruit local partners, doing so could never be a substitute for using your own capabilities. Trying to let others do the job for you in its entirety never resulted in the core aims of the mission being fulfilled. He concluded by echoing what Mary Habeck had said about public elites and said that the same dynamic was at work in Germany - the only difference being that both the German public and German elites would be inclined to agree with the Yale faculty.

Kori Shake said she disagreed with David Deptula’s suggestion that the failure of ambitious objectives was inevitable. She said that that sometimes proved to be the case, especially in instances where there simply weren’t sufficient resources to deploy. Yet she stressed that if you both possessed them an committed them, you could produce a better outcome. She encouraged the group to engage in a counter-factual, by supposing that the US had opted not to place as much faith as it did in the centralized government of Hamid Karzai between the years 2001 and 2009, and instead created regional or local structures instead of always preferring a form of centralization that led to corruption and a ‘winner takes all‘ style of politics. She noted that during Operation Provide Comfort in 1991, the US had sought to create a broad base of local leaders amongst Kurdish Iraqis.

David Deptula said that he had not been suggesting that any particular option was better than another, only that the US needed to do a better job of discussing why it was getting engaged overseas and what the desired outcome was before it acted. He said lots of effort had been spent over the last decade discussing what the US should or should not have done, with very little attention paid to ways in which the US could better plan ahead. He said that came back to the fundamental distinction between the US and Israel. In the case of the former, the rationale was always clear. In the case of the latter, it was not.

Davis Lewin said that Max Boot's book showed how important Public Opinion was in determining the outcome in battles such as this. Israel's example is an extreme one, but there were similarities with other states. He said that he had encountered a litany of depressed UK military analysts who believed that not enough support was being provided to help win military operations that need to be won. He said that they tended to tell him that the main battle was with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), which did not think that it was its role to help win information operations. For instance, he said that there were people working on the Russia desk who were still having to persuade colleagues that the FCO had a role in shaping public opinion on Russia's recent military operations.

Bruno Tertrais said that he wanted to respond to the points Kori Shake had made on counterfactuals. He said that all of those in the group had had lengthy conversations with those who believed that interventions had created the current problems the West now faced and had not solved anything. He said that he had found that introducing counter-factuals had proven very effective, as it had helped people to see current issues differently. For instance, he said that he regularly drew attention to the fact that failing to remove Saddam would have meant he would have been in place during the Arab Spring, something that would have likely made Iraq a worse warzone than it was today. Liewise, on Libya, he had regularly had to push back against those who said that by 'breaking' the country, NATO had caused the migration crisis.

John Baird said that it was important to remind people that Libya was 'broken' before the intervention.

Mr Tertrais agreed, saying that in March 2011, just before the intervention, Libya was well and truly broken. Because of this, there was a case to be made in asserting counter-factuals in the case of Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, and Syria, as all of these states had been in a deteriorating condition before intervention. Using counter-factuals helped, not only as a rhetorical device, but in influencing the debate. This was not to say that the West had done everything right.

Davis Lewin said that a number of conversations needed to be had, and opinions changed. He said that Facebook and Youtube needed to be persuaded that the 'rules of the game' had to change and that government entities needed to be more forceful in identifying content that promoted radicalism. In addition, he cited conversations he had had with Minister Gilad Erdan, who had told him that building a coalition to address incitement was essential to preventing the recent outbreak of stabbing attacks within Israel.

Mary Habeck said that the leadership of Facebook was incredibly influenced by the oppressed/oppressor' dynamic. She said that in the US, the palestinians were seen as oppressed, whereas ISIS was seen as the oppressors. With respect to Al-Qada, elites were still to make up their mind. She noted that most elite commentary within America still failed to make the distinction between Salafists and Muslims, and that that was the discussion to focus on. She said that in the conversations she'd had, there had been some movement in opinion when she had raised explicitly the oppressed vs. oppressor dynamic and forced those who embraced it to justify why certain groups were on one side and certain groups on the other. With respect to academia, which she said was absorbed by these discussions, there was an inability to critique the model, especially amongst Professors who failed to encourage critical thinking. This segment of opinion had been trained to think in that way without ever being explict about it.

Kori Shake said that the 'glitterati' of Silicon valley had a tendency to think that they were morally superior because they tended to think that they were 'changing the world'. They may be changing it, but they were not being held accountable for the consequences. She sad that that was beginning to change, and the recent dispute involving Peter Thiel and Gawker which had focused on the clandestine funding of lawsuits was a break from the past. In addition, there was scope to discuss these issues with [Facebok CEO] Mark Zuckerburg, especially if you framed the issue in terms of establishing rules by way of creating norms of behavior. For instance, she said that thebest way to proceed would be to explain "here are the norms you're setting, and this is how I'd proceed if I were an adversary". Yet she concluded by saying that it was an uphill battle, as demonstrated by the recent dispute concerning Apple's refusal to unlock an iPhone for the FBI.

Davis Lewin raised a question that was frequently discussed in Israel, which related to the cyber domain. He asked if it was better to allow radical groups to use social media sites because it gave additional opportunities for monitoring, or if it was better to have law enforcement agencies take down such information so that it could not be used for incitement purposes.

Kori Shake said that it depended on what 'it' is. If it was operational in nature, such as a document detailing how to conduct an assassination then it had to be taken down. If by contrast, it was 'chatter' then it was better to allow it to remain so that it could be monitored. If it were taken down, the conversations would only happen in a different forum that would be harder to monitor.

Yossi Kuperwasser said that the West had self-empowered terrorists by putting itself in a position where many organizations, without critical processes, were allowed to define the debate. Organizations like the New York Times, the Guardian, and Ha'aretz, had moved into this space, not just Facebook. They had succeeded in framing the discussions which was the main battlefield.

Mr Lewin said that one had to know how to reframe the discussion, because the public would always have the discussion framed for them rather than doing so themselves. He noted that the Israel-Palestine conflict had been reframed constantly. The other option was to not change perceptions. Facebook would agree not to host calls to violence or quotes to that effect, but it would always remain a platform on which the constant drumbeat of oppressed vs oppressor would reign. The question was what was necessary for those who believe in the world order because they believe in that world order due to its values, not just because it is in their self interest. he concluded by highlighting the fact that Karl Rove had recently engaged in a twitter feed in which he'd provided minute by minute updates of what had happened on 9/11, and drew the groups attention to the fact that just fifteen years ago there had been no twitter. Technology had moved on so quickly that governments were failing to keep up.

Bruno Tertrais said that for the HLMG, when the next conflict happened, whether it was in Gaza or involving Hezbollah, they ought to have some convening tool or establish a task force that allowed them to provide an expert point of that could be disseminated in real time in order to influence public opinion. He strongly encouraged finding a way to including the IDF in this venture during the next crisis.

John Baird said that during the 2014 conflict, the IDF had finally stepped up their communications effort, and that there had been a huge change since 2009.

Bruo Tertrais said that the real challenge was providing 'hard core' analysis that appears as neutral as possible. In that vein he praised the HLMG's recent report[42].

John Nagl said that said it helped that General Petraeus had written the COIN Field Manual highlighting the importance of information operations, and made further reference to the '80%' of the struggle that was was not primarily led by the military. He bemoaned the disbanding of the US Information Agency at the end of the Cold War, and said that there was now no dedicated agency that could operate in the 'decisive lie of operations'. He suggested that the role could be filled by an NGO or a government entity, or an organization working undercover.

David Deptula said that this had been tried during Rumsfeld's tenure as US Defense Secretary with the establishment of the Office of Strategic Communications.

Kori Shake said that the fact that this was part of the Pentagon was not helpful, as only an independent body or one perceived to be independent could hope to be seen as authoritative.

David Deptula agreed, but said that someone had to do it, and that the then Director of the Office of Strategic Communications had been killed by leaks. He said that part of the problem was that the US would never have a major role in this area due to First Amendment concerns, but that some solution needed to be found so that truth could be deployed as a weapon.

Davis Lewin said that with respect to governments there were two problems in that firstly, there was concern as to whether information operations were a legitimate thing to be involved with, and secondly, they tended to get the message wrong even once they'd overcome these concerns.

42 "Our Military Forces' Struggle Against Lawless, Media Savvy Terrorist Adversaries".

Mary Habeck said that it went beyond information warfare as a policy proposal, to include the fact that political warfare was a lost skillset. She stressed the importance of countering anti-American and anti-Israeli attitudes, and agreed that the dis-establishment of USIA had been a big mistake. She said the challenge went beyond trying to place a positive interpretation of Western societies, and that the real challenge was interceding effectively in what had become a civil war within the Muslim world. She said that all US adversaries had found a way to play in this space effectively, with Putin sponsoring anti-EU protests, China managing information effectively, and Iran extending its reach with its Quds force. The US used to be just as effective in tis regard, bankrolling Christian Democrat parties and sponsoring Ramparts Magazine, but that these efforts had fallen away in the wake of the Church Committee, and had never been re-established. She said that these efforts were complimentary to nation building, and was working on a piece for the Council on Foreign Relations assessing the role USAID could play in being a nation building organization which helped to establish legitimate governance. These two efforts - nation building and political warfare - were key to success.

Davis Lewin said that in the UK, aid used for national interest purposes was almost never seen as acceptable in elite circles.

Mary Habeck added that USIA had had its own problems too, and had been captured by elite opinion, resulting in it pushing a view of the US that would never have found a domestic consensus. There was always a danger that institutions succumbed to such forces.

John Baird said that in his time as Canadian Foreign Minister, he had felt that the foreign aid organization had had its own foreign policy.

Mary Habeck said that in her time a the National Security Council in 2008, these had all been problems, but that the biggest had been that there had never been sufficient attention devoted to defining the enemy, which had created 'definitional confusion' as a result. She said that the US was good at some things, but it was woeful when it came to questions of religion, and that any reference to Islam were set aside so that the connection between radicalism and religion didn't need to be addressed. She said that this argument needed to be settled first. She confirmed that if Trump was elected and decided to assert that religion was the fundamental cause of terrorism there would be 100% resistance from academy, the bureaucracy, and public opinion, and that elite opinion would rally to the view that terrorism had nothing to do with Islam. She said that this was a major problem as you couldn't establish a decades-long policy without very broad agreement. She expressed her own opinion, which was that terrorism was 'partly' to do with Islam, and that insurgents were were trying to get believers to agree that Salafism had the concerns of the community at heart. She warned that there was a danger of confirming that view as being legitimate if it was lent credence.

Davis Lewin asked a separate question, which related to battlefield operations, asking the group to comment on the benefits of reporters being embedded with troops.

Kori Shake said that it was a good idea. Over time, it improved the quality of military operations, and creates a sympathy for the troops themselves amongst those reporting on them which was a good thing. In addition, the only way to bring credibility to reporting was to have independent voices embedded, even if they were hostile to the mission itself which had been true of he New York Times. It was, she said, the best possible way to influence journalism.

Rafael Bardají said that Saudis had an advantage in having no embedded reporters in Yemen.

Kori Shake said that that may be true, but that it wasn't possible to behave that way if you were a free society. The same rules did not apply, as Western countries needed to win the support of their own people. She noted that, in part because it didn't feel it needed to, Saudi Arabia had not established a domestic narrative that it was winning.

Gary Anderson said that Trump had proven a master at shaping the media narrative, as he had figured out ways of getting inside the Washington Post and New York Times news cycles, thus influencing the OODA [Observe, Orient, Decide Act] loop. He'd thus been able to shape the context of the Presidential race.

John Nagl Agred with Kori Shake on embedding reporters, and had encounted them personally in trips with Max Boot. He also praised US military intelligence trips in which experts were afforded the opportunity to visit areas in which the military was operating.

Mary Habeck said that there were two lines of operation that were under-resourced, information operations and political warfare. She said that it was a mistake to refer to nation-building when what really mattered was 'state building', as a means to bringing about legitimate governance. Yet much more needed to be done on political information warfare, which was difficult to say because it played very badly in democracies.

Max Boot agreed, saying that nation-building had replaced state-building in many government documents.

Patrick Keller said that Governments always fight to control narratives within their own society, and without embedding, civilians would be likely to turn to NGOs to get their information.

Yossi Kuperwasser said that embedding was important, but that it was also important to control who was embedded, as it was naive to think that journalists were simply reporting. Instead, they were propagating their own point of view, something that was easier in the US as there were a wide variety of opinions. He stressed that that was less true in Israel. He noted that in the Mohammed al Durrah case, an Arab stringer had reported on the incident despite not being present.

John Baird said that in order to sustain a military campaign you needed the media's buy-in. He said that during a visit to Afghanistan he had slept alongside deployed troops, and whilst he though that he had had respect for them before, it was nothing compared to how he felt afterwards. Personal connections affected you. He said that the Harper government had been seen as secretive and manipulative by the press, and had sought to address this during the Libya campaign by holding a weekly briefing. In the end, the press had simply stopped coming. He added that the way the first Bush administration had conducted press briefings during the Gulf War had been brilliant, and that the challenge for Israel was that its enemies were at war '24/7'. This meant that Israel needed to step up its efforts in a big way, as there was never going to be any other body that would defend the painful consequences of military action, such as the death of a child. Yet it needed to be stressed that in circumstances there had been, for example, three leaflet drops in advance of the airstrike, which was in response to seventeen separate rocket attacks. There needed to be a much more competitive approach to public relations. Mr Baird added that Israel was not always a good spokesman for Israel, and that Netanyahu and Lieberman did not come across as sympathetic figures. This was perhaps odd given that Netanyahu was regarded as excellent at managing public relations during the Gulf War.

David Deptula said that the media would always try to tell a story, with or without the information you give them. He said it was hard for Western Governments to persuade their own people of the importance of what they were doing.

John Baird added that the uniformed military was always trusted more than politicians or other civilians.

Dr. Kalev Sepp said that in the war in El Salvador there had been almost no reporters, and that the US embassy had had to send a letter of protest to CNN because their one reporter had been married to a Sandinista psychological operations officer. He said that in the absence of reporters, news outlets tended to work through blogs, and work on the basis that 'the first thing read is the truth'.

Gary Anderson said that currently, everyone was a reporter.

David Deptula added that this was true, and that for most, it didn't mater if they were accurate or not.

Yossi Kuperwasser added that whilst this was true, mainstream media remained key. During Operation Protective Edge, the larger big television outlets were still more powerful in terms of shaping public opinion than blogs or content carried on social media. He said that many mainstream outlets were uninterested in incitement, but were keen to do stories on settlements. He added that the media 'had a dog in this fight', and that he dog was their worldview. He noted that British media had dismissed the Arab Spring protests until the suddenly realized how prominent they were.

Session 2

Constituent Challenges: What Western Militaries Require to Win

David Deptula began the session by drawing the groups attention to the questions provided, which he said were insightful. He said he hoped that his opening remarks helped to answer some of them.

He began by questioning whether politics had become more important than it use to be, a suggestion he rejected on the basis that it had always been important. He acknowledged that what had changed was the extent to which it had extended its reach into the contemporary battlespace due to modern telecommunications. He made reference to his involvement with targeting during the Gulf War, and said that no one had sought to interfere until the infamous strike on an air raid bunker. After that there had been some oversight, but prior to that there had been no restrictions. Afterward there came word from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that all air strikes in the Baghdad area needed to be approved in advance. He added that the Russian Foreign Minister had subsequently said that Saddam's reaction to that specific incident was to reassess the Americans' intentions, and consider them to be more serious than he had expected, which was ironic as it proved the point at which the US began to curtail its operations. Mr Deptula compared this experience with Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan a decade later, and said that there had been 'a 180 degree change' in the previous decade. On that occasion, a four-star general at US Central Command, and sometimes a civilian official in Washington, needed to be contacted in order to gain approval for the use of airstrikes. This was a far cry from the Gulf War, when Norman Schwarzkof had made it a disciplinary offense to discuss operational details with figures in Washington.

Mr Deptula reiterated the extent to which there had been a complete change in outlook over the ten year period between those two campaigns. He told the group an anecdote, describing a situation in 2001 when the US had been using 'daisy cutters' during the battle for control of Mazar-i-Sharif. These were weapons that were literally pushed out of the back of C-130 transport planes. Tommy Franks, the general leading the attack, had called him and told him that Secretary Powell had wanted to be certain that that there would be no negative reaction from the press should the use of the weapon result in collateral damage. He was asked to redirect the weapon in such a way that it prevented any major loss of civilian life. Ultimately, the weapon was dropped near Dostum's forces, who were based in a valley blocked by the Taliban. The weapon was finally used some 4km away from his forces, and was so ineffective that he and his forces were unsure if it had even been used at all.

Mr Deptula said that the question that needed to be address was how the West and Israel respond to the new situation, in which political considerations were increasingly

'showing up' in the battlefield to the detriment of the success of the campaign itself. One of the challenges to be addressed was working out what, precisely, needed to be achieved, and how. He said that lawfare and a media that did not report accurately were all issues that were coming into play, and that until a decision was made on how to deal with them, the West and Israel would continue to be 'outfoxed' by enemies who strive to 'play' the media in such a way as to serve their ends.

Mr Deptula moved the conversation to the issue of remotely piloted aircraft, and lamented the fact that these had come to be referred to as 'drones' even though it was now too late to reshape the description. He said that the implication, in the minds of the public, was that such aircraft were causing indiscriminate damage and destruction, when the reality was that the reverse was true. He noted that there was no more precise a weapon, nor one with more political oversight because multiple people could monitor the flight path before signing off on the use of lethal force. He said he that the US Government's unwillingness to engage in the information space had led to flawed public assessments.

Mr Deptula said that the Israeli Defense Forces and others were now imposing restraints upon themselves that

were far in excess of those required by the LOAC, due to their concern about the media reaction. He said that the campaign against ISIS had been woefully slow to get started, highlighting the fact that major operations only began in September of 2015 when the initial decision had been authorized in 2014. He drew teh groups attention to the fact that ISIS had been able to benefit from oil wealth because military officials had repeatedly delayed targeting infrastructure and supply lines for fear of civilian casualties. He said that some discussions had focus on whether trucks taking the oil to market could be targeted because the drivers were innocent, a threshold he considered to be ridiculous. He said that it had taken the US fifteen months to come up with a workable strategy, and that in the intervening period ISIS had successfully pumped over $700 million in oil wealth. He said that the excess concern about the potential media response to the use of military force had proven self-defeating. He went on to say that the US Government had now begun to adopt many of the same techniques that the Israelis had used during the 2014 Gaza campaign. There was a danger that these restrictions would soon become the norm, reiterating his concern that the UN Human Rights Commission would seek to push for a prohibition on the use of arms from aircraft. He concluded by saying that managing information was important, and that this may require certain forms of censorship.

Richard Kemp told the group that the West was engaged in a fight against Islamic Jihadists. Max Boot had said that the too ends of the spectrum were either not intervening in overseas operations or simply trying to kill all the adversaries possible, and said he placed himself closer to the latter on the spectrum. He agreed that it was important to limit military operations to fighting wars of necessity rather than wars of choice, but that the maximum possible use of offensive force was necessary in order to bring about decisive victory, making allowance for the competing interpretations of 'decisive' provided by others. He said that halfhearted military campaigns were not enough, and drew attention to UK operations in Helmand Province, where there had not been enough people to protect the force itself, let alone make an effort to change the country or region.

Mr Kemp said that the number one issue was the need to sustain political will to prosecute campaigns in the face of political setbacks, and framed political will both in terms of the need to persuade domestic populations as well as other countries of the need to fight and win. That required being very clear about what forces were fighting about and why. He said that operations in Helmand were deemed by the British public, and explained by the UK Government to be a form of humanitarian aid. To many, it seemed like the role of UK forces was to engage in a humanitarian mission and improve womens' rights, and only subsequently 'have a go at the Taliban', a situation brought about by political timidity. He agreed with what Mary Habeck had said, namely that political leaders too often found themselves embracing the views of those who described themselves as 'the oppressed'. He added that Western generals also deserved blame, as they frequently proved to be more political than the politicians. Bizarrely, in the UK it was often the FCO that would prove more bullish than the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD), or the generals. He attributed this development to the post-Korean War years, when the militaries' ranks came to be filled with with very few military officers who had been involved in conflict. He made reference to the discussion about openness and transparency, but cited Churchill's quote that in war time, truth must be protected by a "bodyguard of lies". More restrictions on information had to be put in place in an age of iPhones and potentially indiscreet soldiers, and this required military forces to be less transparent when necessary.

Mr Kemp said that modern warfare was increasingly difficult to conduct, and that the Russians had proven more adept with their use of hybrid warfare. He said that Western nations needed to consider their own form of actions in this category, so that military operations would look more like intelligence operations in future. He said that he favored embedding media because there was a degree of 'Stockholm syndrome' at play, with the reporters coming to rely upon the soldiers who protected them which made them more receptive to the mission as a whole. However, he said that access had to be controlled, with reporters chosen very carefully.

Mr Kemp added that warfare was about psychologically defeating the enemy, but that to do that you had to physically destroy him first. In addition, one had to be seen to have defeated one's enemies, and that doing so discreetly was not effective. He noted that the reason ISIS had been so effective was because it had been seen to have 'taken on the West'. Accordingly, it was the responsibility of the West to 'smash them' rather than relying on the Kurds to do it. He said this was also true with regard to the enemy's civilian population. There was currently too much focus on hearts and minds, and not enough recognition that in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, civilians were more likely to stand with the strongest party. He also said dismissed the suggestion that killing civilians during operations was a major recruiting tool for terrorists, insisting that it was wiser to impose high penalties upon those who chose to take human shields when necessary, otherwise it risked becoming ingrained as a tactic. Mr Kemp said that it was right that Western nations continue to abide by the laws or armed conflict, but that it would be an enormous

mistake to allow the application of Human Rights Legislation to soldiers on the battlefield, and suggested that if that were done he himself would be at risk of prosecution. He went on to say that it had been a big mistake for the UK to join the International Criminal Court, and that the UK armed forces were currently facing approximately 1,500 investigations for murder, rape or torture. This level of pressure undermined the morale of fighting forces, and exposes weaknesses. Lastly, with respect to political warfare, he suggested that the group consider the political warfare executive forged by the UK during the Second World War which had defended the UK's position and attacked the enemy's. He said that when the West achieved successes it needed to be able to claim them, and that the MoD should have done more to draw attention to the fact that it was killing enemy forces at a ratio of 100:1 in recent conflicts, something that was never publicized. He said the failure to do so created the perception that UK military forces were loosing.

Dr. Kalev Sepp said hat the defense analysis program at his school [The Naval Postgraduate School] students were required to study the 1943 creation of the political warfare executive. He drew the group's attention to the work of Bradley Strawser, an expert in ethics and remote killing, and stressed that the higher moral point was that such weapons better safeguarded one's own military personnel. He added that with manned aircraft there was a shorter targeting timeline, which increased the chances of making mistakes due to hasty decision-making.

Bruo Tertrais added one complicating factor to all of these discussions, which was Russia. He said that had become an active and willing player in the Levant, where it had been both ruthless and efficient, and that this approach played very well with a segment of European public opinion. There was currently no counterweight to the Russian government, in that Russian public opinion did not express a great deal of interest in whether a hospital was accidentally bombed in Syria, because the broader and more fundamental assessment was that "Putin's got balls". Mr Tertrais said that he too tended to fall on the 'kill them all' side of the spectrum, and yet he had to acknowledge that the Russian concert in Palmyra had been a masterstroke of public relations, particularly from a Russian perspective. From a Western standpoint, it was hard to work out why Russia had gotten so far ahead in terms of information warfare.

Mary Habeck said that it was right that in conflicts with terrorists Western governments resort to the use of the military rather than law enforcement agencies. She said that those inclined to support all aspects of the human rights agenda wanted the latter, and that their aim was to force a change. She added, in reference to Max Boot's opening comments, that what was really being proposed [by the group] was a war of attrition. Yet she stressed that there were feasibility limits, in that you really did have to kill large numbers of people and displace huge numbers in addition if that was your policy. She said that that was possible for the Russians, who had done just that in the Caucasus, where the Russians had killed large numbers of people and forced the rest into Turkey. She said that large scale killings of minorities had essentially created the Uzbek of Afghanistan through exile, and that the Russians had also pushed large numbers of Pashtun into Pakistan during the 1980s. She concluded by saying that it was possible to make counter-insurgency style problems go away if you were prepared to crush the civilian population within which the insurgents operated and force the majority to relocate into a neighboring territory.

Max Boot noted that this policy only worked if the group had no external support from which they could draw support and then return.

Ms Habeck said that there were other issues too, and that these meant such a policy would not work for the West given that it only created new problems in addition to humanitarian concerns. She said that the only alternative was an effective, population-centric counter-insurgency strategy as it was the only effective approach that accorded with Western values.

In addition, Ms Habeck said that the question of irregular warfare required the group to determine what it was actually dealing with. This was a terminological problem. She said she used Websters dictionary to define irregular warfare as being "any form of warfare that is not regular". She said that this was the best definition, because everyone had a fairly clear idea of what regular warfare was.

Davsi Lewin asked if this was true, and said that reading Max Boot's book left him with competing assessments and interpretations.

Mary Habeck believed it was the case, and said that it was quite clear, whether one looked at the religious wars of the 18th century, the American War of Independence, the Napoleonic wars, it was quite easy to determine which

were regular and which weren't. She went on to highlight the fact that two-thirds of the War of Independence had been fought in an irregular fashion.

Kori Shake said that she agreed with that, but that the West was loosing the argument, and better historical case studies and improved definitions wouldn't help. She said that there was a parallel wit nuclear deterrence, in that when big questions needed ti be answered, the US had engaged Catholic Bishops and ethical experts for, quite literally, moral support. She said that the legal arguments were sound, and so were the policies, but that the main question was how the US should address the 'social fabric', in which public opinion was shaped. What was needed was the support of pastors, imams, Hollywood actresses and persuasive interlocutors.

Gary Anderson said that with respect to information operations, the advent of social media meant there were more opportunities. He noted that there were now opportunities for domestic police forces, despite recent scandals made widely known due to the proliferation cameras, to use body cameras that enabled them to highlight the good work that the do. Thus, when a police officer did really good work, the images could be quickly dispatched to an information cell so that the police cold 'grab the narrative' quickly before people could claim that anything was being hidden. He said that soldiers, like police officers, needed to become 'strategic corporals'.

Yossi Kuperwasser said that when talking about the political echelons becoming more involved, it was important to remember that it had always been like that even if it now seemed more complicated. It was always for the politicians to describe what they wanted with clarity, and the role of armed forces to secure those outcomes at the lowest possible cost. He stressed that their prize would always be legitimacy, and sometimes that would mean accepting a poorer tactical result, perhaps even a loss, in order to secure a legitimate outcome. He mad reference to an incident in 2004 when Israeli forces had acquired actionable intelligence hat the entire leadership of Hamas would be meeting in one of the lower floors of a particular apartment building. Striking the meeting would have entailed the use of force in a highly populated area, and would have resulted in significant civilian casualties. Ariel Sharon, who Mr Kuperwasser reminded the group was hardly a 'vegetarian' when it came to the use of force, allowed a seemingly endless debate as to the merits and demerits of acting. The result was a bizarre compromise that said that intelligence must show that the the Hamas meeting was taking place on the third floor, [as anything else would require destruction of more floors leading to more casualties] and that smaller explosive be used. Ultimately the attack was unsuccessful in large part because of these restrictions, but it was legitimate in the eyes of the political class, and it satisfied the government which could proclaim "we attacked Hamas", meaning that everyone could benefit in some way. Mr Kuperwasser said the incident underscored the fact that military forces would always have to adjust their goals to political level requirements, and keep those conditions and restrictions in mind when fighting. He stressed that the primary political consideration would always be the desire to have zero military casualties on one's own side. He said that historically, this had led to the use of the air force as that kept down casualty figures, even though collateral damage was a continuing concern. He said that that problem had now gotten worse, as adversaries were moving underground and taking human shields.

Davis Lewin asked if anyone had anything else to add about new technology, especially any new advantages that could be brought about because of it.

Gary Anderson said that in the late 1990s, particularly after the 'Black Hawk Down' incident in Somalia, US marines had known that they would increasingly be forced to engage in hybrid or asymmetric operations. A number of officials, including himself, had been looking for both lethal and non-lethal options to improve operational strength, including energy directed weapons to bring about heat prostration. Also considered were micro and nano systems that could infiltrate the enemy area and 'gunk up his weapons'. All of these things were considered feasible, and yet the US still did not possess them today. There had been too much of a focus on lethal weapons, in large part because non-lethal weapons had been attacked by opponents who said that such unconventional techniques could be construed to be forms of torture. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was one such organization that had expressed such a concern. Now, the ICRC opposes the Iraqi battle to liberate Fallujah, where conventional forces are being deployed in a large scale because it is simply easier to kill people. The takeaway was that policy battles needed to be fought more effectively.

Yossi Kuperwasser said that Russia and China's viewed these kinds of discussions as irrelevant, and to raise them in Moscow and Beijing was to be treated like you had arrived from another planet. It was the West which had an interest in pressing for rules in wartime because such rules reflected its values. Yet there was only so much that could be done, as Russia was not interested in co-operating and neither was the third world. He noted that the ICC's

attempt to judge African dictators for warcrimes had had limited effect, because the countries of Africa simply didn't believe in the value of such trials. He said that if the West wanted to 'rule the world' it would have to follow its values and not those of Russia.

Bruno Tertrais added his view that Russian military action in the field had a direct impact upon the way Western militaries approached jihadis and terrorism.

Davis Lewin noted that a former Dutch Foreign Minister had once said that the Russians and the Chinese couldn't wait for the West to formalize more stringent laws on armed conflict, as such a step would bind their hands on cyber issues. He asked the group to comment on the LOAC, whether they were still fit for purpose, and what the group shoul say about the issue.

David Deptula had a specific concern, which was that the media pandered to polarizing extremes. His perspective was that it was right to adhere to the LOAC, as it was to the benefit of the West, but that at present, freedom of action was being circumscribed by a move to exceed these rules. The polarization and disaffection of the military was a genuine concern, because not only did military officers know that they had to follow political orders, but they also want them to be fulfilled through success, something that was not happening at present. For instance, there was widespread acceptance in most militaries that the emphasis on zero casualties and intolerance for deaths in action had made it harder to be effective. He cited teh fact that in 2016, an airstrike against an ISIS bank had proven hugely effective in weakening the organization. Yet he stressed that there were six ISIS banks, and that the recommendation - rejected due to fears of civilian casualties - had been to hit all six simultaneously. There would always be some concerns about collateral damage, but a better balance needed to be struck between achieving the mission and avoiding a media backlash for using 'excessive force' to do so. Mr Deptula concluded by saying more needed to be done to clarify exactly what the laws of armed conflict are.

John Nagl added that more also needed to be done to demonstrate just how much contempt enemies and adversaries showed for for such principles. He noted that US enemies kill millions on purpose, whereas casualties caused by the US are inadvertent and orders of magnitude less in number. When the US killed civilians, it apologized. When ISIS did it, it celebrated. He stressed that it took a long time to build up legitimacy, and because of that the US needed to follow the LOAC meticulously and move to fix errors and mistakes immediately whenever it fell short.

Mary Habeck said that the casualties issue was really interesting. She cited work by Peter Feaver which stressed that it became a major political issue when there was a perception that the war was being lost, and that lives were therefore being lost for "no good cause". If the war was being fought and won, the public by and large accepted the sacrifice, a view that had also been confirmed in research by Jim Madison and the RAND Corporation. She said that progressives tended not to understand military issues, and that every war was, for them, a reprise of the Vietnam conflict - 'a war that can't be won' - and that the best thing to do therefore was avoid them. Thsi view was supplemented by the belief that nuclear weapos made it impossible to win a regular war. She said that these views betrayed very little exposure to military history, and cited the fact that K through 12 education in the US no longer taught military history. She said that of 400 students she'd interacted with at Yale, there was almost no exposure to it. She added that those running the United States also had very little exposure to military issues. They simply wanted the issue to go away. She cited a quote routinely used by Susan Rice [originally used by Martin Luther King], which is that "the arc of history bends towards justice". This view of human progress meant figures in the administration were completely stumped by bad or evil actors, and that senior US officials now referred to the middle ages when seeking comparisons with ISIS. She noted that John Kerry had made a reference to '19th century' behavior when addressing aggressive states, which suggested he had simply chosen to ignore the worst moments of the 20th century. Ms Habeck concluded that every country need to educate and train its leadership in military history.

John Baird added that with respect to Israel, people tended to 'talk around' the issue. He noted that when Israel had bombed a hospital Secretary Kerry condemned it. His recommendation was that these issues needed to be confronted in a head on fashion: "Yes, it was a command and control facility, and yes there were 87 casualties, and yes, we factored in the risk of collateral damage when we authorized the strike". He noted that Colonel Gaddafi would sleep in tunnels underneath hotels where Western media was staying, and travelled around Libya in an ambulance. This was in addition to planting bodies of dead people at sites that had been bombed. He said that the media could smell fear, but what took them aback was confidence, and that openness and honesty could help you achieve that. Mr Baird added that the public were ahead of elites in this regard, as in Canada, there was almost no toleration of casualties at the elite level, and that he suspected that this was the direction things were moving in

in both the US and France.Yossi Kuperwasser said that the problem was not that the public were against collateral damage, but when it happened for no justifiable reason - when targets were struck in error. Today, Governments accepted that by apologizing, as Israel had been required to do on a number of occasions.

John Baird added that risk aversion now permeated all dimensions of the public sector. He recalled his time as a minister responsible for infrastructure, and that he had launched 23,000 separate stimulus projects. Of these, 35 had not been completed according to plan. Yet he would have done exactly the same thing again. He said that his response had been to concede mistakes up front, because if you did that the media couldn't beat it out of you. In Israel's 2006 operations in southern Lebanon that had not been the case, and Israel had failed that test as a result.

Mary Habeck said there was some hope that the rise of Trump would finally give the US a good media by restoring the desire to oversee and report on failings.

Bruno Tertaris said that it was time to ask the governments of the West to set out what their limits were with regard to military operations, and recalled a recent documentary called the Heavy Water War [focusing on the effort to destroy the Nazi's emergent nuclear efforts at the Norwegian location of Vemork], which had entailed the sinking of a public ferry. He said that such actions should not be lamented, and that it was time that government's be required to explain what the LOAC is, and to explain how they function in an environment in which the country does not face existential risks.

Davis Lewin asked the group to consider issues relating to detention, and targeted killing, noting that one member of the HLMG (Pierre-Richard Prosper) had been intimately involved with these issues during his time in the US government.

Max Boot said that he had been struck by a New York Times article on terrorists that had considered their actions prior to attacking in Paris, Orlando, etc. He noted that many had not broken the law as they had not been formally conspiring. The issue had a bearing on how one addresses emerging threats, and whether preventative detention was now required. He wondered how it was possible to maintain freedoms of speech and not move to intercept threats when the individuals in question were using those freedoms to listen to the speeches of Anwar al-Awlaki and propagate jihad.

David Deptula said better technology was needed, as well as better co-ordination, so that when an individual triggered a series of tripwires they could be quickly identified as a threat. He noted that there was a history to islamic terrorism, and that certain steps - such as purchasing an assault rifle - was a signal that should be flagged up.

Gary Anderson asked the group to 'give war a chance', saying that if the United States declared war against ISIS, a lot of these issues would fall within the Sedition Act. Guantanamo would become a prisoner of war camp, and that this would help address the legal reluctance.

David Deptula said that in World War Two the US had had the power to censor what citizens were able to see, hear and say.

Yossi Kuperwasser said that 50% of muslims supported radical islam, and that 8% were supportive of ISIS, which is to say that they believed those ideas should be enforced now, through force. That was far too big a pool, and therefore the focus needed to be on finding the 0.05% who were really capable of committing violence. He also agreed with David Deptula's point about utilizing technology.

Kori Shake said practicality had to be an issue, noting that Japanese internment in World War Two proved possible in California because there were few Japanese, and completely impossible in Hawai'i because the numbers were simply too high.

Davis Lewin added that in the UK, it had proven difficult just to award GCHQ the powers it needed to fulfill its mission.

John Baird said that this was the era of radical islam, not facism or communism, and that President Obama couldn't call it what it was, let alone fight it. So long as the West refused to declare war on it, it would fail to love up t previous generations. He noted that many countries in the Arab world - Egypt, Jordan, and the UAE could be much stronger partners if the West would take a lead.

Mary Habeck said that she was writing a paper on the indicators of radicalism - which al-Qaeda called recruitment - which would highlight 25 key markers. She said that the 50% figure used by Mr Kuperwasser was far too high, and that the emphasis needed to be on individuals.

Davis Lewin said that the problem was far worse than just individuals, and that to distinguish between radical islamists and terrorists was to make an irrelevant disparity. Yet he drew the groups attention back to the question of whether the LOAC was outdated or irrelevant.

Patrick Keller added a European context, noting that most on the continent did not see radical islam as a global challenge on the scale of communism, and added that many did not even regard communism as a challenge of that scale during the Cold War. To Mr Lewin's point about GCHQ and information, he said that Europeans were happy to allow Goggle to have their information, but were far less comfortable allowing governments to infringe upon their privacy, especially the US. He said that John Nagl was right that teh LOAC must be followed but not exceeded, but added that complications wold arise given that much would have to be done clandestinely.

David Deptula reiterated that nothing should be done to exceed the restrictions imposed by the LOAC, and wondered why that couldn't be acknowledged secretly rather than publicly He said that a key problem was that Western states acknowledged things publicly with explanations, and others didn't.

Patrick Keller said that there were gray-zones, and that in those cases it would help to have a clear public position to avoid public opposition.

David Deptula recommended a 'Showtime' series of television interviews with former CIA directors, in which they were split 50/50 on this issue.

Rafael Bardají was not in favor of reversing adherence to the LOAC, as less freedom would result. Yet he said that killing a civilian should not result in the trial of a soldier. He said that the perception of the LOAC was that it was broader than it actually was, and that to revisit the issue would actually make it worse because new restrictions would be added.

Richard Kemp agreed, saying the question of how prisoners are handled would be dramatically altered if the LOAC were re-opened.

Yossi Kuperwasser said that adversaries put Western and Israeli military forces in a hard position, and that human shields were usually around valuable targets. He said that knowing what the collateral damage justified was difficult as the enemy would tend to put disproportional numbers of human shields in order to exceed its value. Yet to try to ignore numbers would be to put the LOAC in play. In Fallujah, ISIS has forced 80 thousand people into the desert where they may die in response to the Iraqi attack. Knowing that, was it worth it? He added that it was better to stick to the LOAC, and if 200 people are going to die in collateral damage, then you had to call off the attack.

John Baird said it was a judgment call and it depended upon proportionality.

Yossi Kuperwasser said that ether way, you would end up before a judge in the end.

John Baird agreed, but added that that was only the case in Israel.

Davis Lewin asked the group for their thoughts on international action against combatants, and the role of 'ambulance chasing' lawyers.

Yossi Kuperwasser said that such lawsuits shouldn't happen. What differed the West from others were their robust internal judicial systems, and use of courts-martial proceedings

There was no need for the ICC which was built for those that had no such system.

Davis Lewin said his question related to the way domestic legal systems were being utilized by enemies, not the ICC

Bruno Tertrais added that the number one concern in France was the rise of domestic lawsuits. The ICC was not the concern.

Richard Kemp added that the ICC was moving to press for domestic lawsuits to be brought.

Bruno Tertrais acknowledged this, but said that 99% of domestic suits had no ICC connection.

Richard Kemp stated that the primary concern was that governments were being forced to carry out investigations to avoid the ICC carrying out its own investigations.

John Baird said that the US should never put its troops before an ICC court.

Kori Shake said that there was no way that an argument could be won in favor of ending the ICC. What could be done was to persuade people that using domestic rule swas a wiser approach.

John Baird said that it was quite clear that Palestinians wanted to use the ICC to limit ISrael's freedom of action.

David Deptula said that steps needed to be taken to deny the legitimacy of these lawsuits.

Yossi Kuperwasser said that nothing should be done to deviate from the fact that it was very important that military organizations behave properly.

Session 3

The Political and Policy Implications: What Do Political Leaders Have to Understand?

Davis Lewin said that this was the most important session in terms of what the group was able to produce, as the participants would be advising the FOI what the implications of the discussions were and what the 'political asks' should be, and what recommendations to put forward. What was it, in short, that political leaders needed to understand?

John Baird said that the policy environment had changed considerably, and that the challenge was ensuring that military forces received sustained support for their actions. He stressed that there was a new isolationism in the US, with Obama having ended the Bush 'surge' in Iraq. He noted that individuals like William F. Connolly were changing the terms of debate, and made reference to the fact that the phrase "Afghan detainees" was always used in Canada rather than "captured Taliban who killed our soldiers". He said that most in the international community share Western values, but that most international institutions are morally bankrupt. Worse still, they were populated by weak and timid leaders. Elites were also a big problem. The concept of "political correctness" had led to figures like Trump, who gained popularity from slaying sacred cows. He said that there were some commentators who said, after teh killing of Osama Bin LAden, that President Obama had broken international law and should instead have sought Bin Laden's extradition. He said that this level of elite discussion was immeasurably removed from everyday life, and that the people he had represented in Canada couldn't have cared less whether Canadian forces tortured let alone whether Afghan partners did. He said that the LOAC meant nothing to the average person, who only thought in terms of right and wrong, and decided on matters based on whether it seemed reasonable.

Regarding Israel, he said that people looked at it through the prism of their own motive. For the media, Israel was always to be portrayed as as mean-spirited and heavy handed. Such people 'urged prayer at the alter of weakness', always urging calm and moderation. He resembled it to domestic politics, noting that Conservatives who cut spending are individuals who lack compassion, whereas liberals who do so are making 'difficult choices'.

Mr Baird added that the public wanted instant gratification, and that they had received this in the Gulf War with a quick victory, and most of the costs borne by the Gulf States. Yet this was a rarity, and Mr Baird doubted whether the public would have the capacity to sustain a World War Two style mobilization today.

He said that moral relativism was increasing, especially with regard to Israel. He recalled arguing with colleagues in 2006 and 2014 during the conflict with Hezbollah and Hamas that it was almost imposisble to pin down the point at which Israel was allowed to defend itself, even if one went through counter-factuals such as guaranteeing free entry into the state and handing back all land currently in dispute. He added that there was no substitute for strong political will, and that in 2016 there was not much of that. He noted that with respect to NATO, Canada spends 0.9% of its GDP on defense, had lost 150 people in Afghanistan, and taken part in Libya. Other countries had also put troops into Afghanistan but with such tight restrictions they were unable to leave their base. He said that ultimately these were no difficult decisions, and that Mr Netanyahu was not necessarily well liked, but he had become respected because he was a strong leader.

Rafael Bardají said that discussing this issue from a Spanish perspective was always difficult. He noted that Spain tended to think of grand strategy as something the French do, expeditionary operations as something the British do, and high intensity conflict something the Americans do, which leaves nothing for them. Indeed, the last major high intensity conflict Spanish forces were involved in in large numbers was the Spanish Civil War. He added that he liked Mary Habeck's suggestion that military history needed to be returned to the school curriculum, and that he would like it if political leaders were required to pass such a test, because no European political leader had spent time in the armed forces. Mr Bardají said that military advice was not getting through, and that there was a lack of understanding about what is sensible, and what can be expected from state policy. He also said that military chiefs of staff were the most cautious in clear combat scenarios. He said that Spain's only secret was that it had been invaded in 2002 by Morocco [due to the occupation of islands] and that the Chief of Staff's recommendation at the time

had been to take the mater to the UN. This reflected the dynamics of Europe, where discussions served as a means to evade action, and diffuse responsibility to the global level. One asset of a group like the HLMG is that it has the capacity to educate the political leadership.

Mr Bardají said that in some cases, people are reasonable. Whenever he had to brief the Spanish Prime Minister about using force, he would always raise six questions: Is victory possible?; what are the likely casualties?; what is the likely collateral damage?; who are our allies?; what is public opinion? and; Do we have to do this or will someone else do it? Europe has lost a willingness to take a risk, and has decided to muddle through. We don't want to win, because to win decisively would require deploying forces that are beyond our political capacity to control. How can this situation be reversed?

Yossi Kuperwasser said that there was a danger in that this policy encouraged radicals to believe that they could win, something that seemed to be vindicated by the event sin Brussels, Paris, Boston and Orlando. He wondered how many more such incidents there would have to be before attitudes changed.

Mr Bardají stressed that attitudes could change, and noted that the Pais attacks had forced Hollande to declare that France was at war - fifteen years after France had criticized President Bush for saying exactly the same in response to the September 11th attacks.

Yossi Kuperwasser said that if people in positions of leadership didn't do anything in response there would be a much more radical domestic policy as new attitudes would take over. Saying "there's nothing we can do" wouldn't be enough.

Mr Bardají stressed that Europe remained more resilient than we had thought, and that the primary change had been felt in different attitudes towards immigration.

Gary Anderson said that 'another 9/11' event would get people re-engaged. The West had become so helpless that it had become the new normal, with a far lower tolerance for the use of force, For Israel, the concern should be growing anti-semitism and anti-zionism in the United States' jewish community. The sense of support was eroding and it was not clear what the solution was.

Yossi Kuperwasser said that he had addressed this issue in a recent publication entitled "same idea, new cloak"[43].

Kori Shake said that there was a tendency to treat public attitudes as if they were freight trains out of control, when the reality was that projects on assessing public attitudes showed that things were far more complex. The public was an eminently unwinnable constituency on the use of force because people were extraordinarily ignorant on numbers when it came to defense, and their judgment was really bad unless experts 'walked them through' the issues. She said that elites were not in fact the problem, and that the reality was that political leaders chose to hide behind a perceived weakness (casualty sensitivity) to do what they wanted. Yet all research showed that if the public believed that the mission was worth it, and they feel that the Government knows what its doing, then they were inclined to offer support deployments. She said that at present, the White House was hiding behind the [public opinion] numbers in order to pursue its chosen course of action.

Patrick Keller said that the German example was illustrative. There had been over 50 casualties in Afghanistan, and yet coalition after coalition had backed the mission. The question he had is why weak political leaders kept rising when there was a public appetite for people such as Schmidt and Adenauer. His conclusion was that people of that type were destroyed by the media.

Brun Tertrais wondered if there was a German exception, because the strong and decisive seemed to be rising across Europe.

Mr Keller said that was not necessarily true as demonstrated by Francois Hollande. Yet when he described France as being at war he went to the EU. He added that Cameron was not a strong leader either. He asked Mr Lewin who the recommendations were for so that the group could be more specific. Mr Lewin said that it was for the NATO summit which was a good get out of jail card given its breadth. He hoped that the group could help provide 'the next paragraph in the New York times after the idiotic one', and that required establishing a common denominator of

43 Available here: http://isgap.org/flashpoint/antisemitism-and-anti-zionism-same-idea-new-cloak/

key themes. Mr Bardají added that his speciality was special operations, which meant he liked sitting with political leaders in small groups and trying to convey key points. Mr Keller said that the key problem with the upcoming NATO summit was that it would be eared to the future, focusing on possible upcoming conflicts with Russia in the east, rather than the current problems that were at issue.

Gary Anderson added that prevention was a key dimension, because it was easier to shore up an unstable government than try to rebuild one. Iraq and Afghanistan had been huge problems because of this. He picked up on themes Max Boot had highlighted, and said NATO should be thinking about shoring up countries that were at risk of becoming the next ISIS stronghold. USAID was not the way to do it, as the organization doesn't stress accountability, and is instead a manager of funds. he said that it was better to look at the augmentative systems such as the system use to build Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan which had actually done things on the ground, experimenting and then sticking with something when it works. The real successes had come because there was no doctrine. He acknowledged that Iraq and Afghanistan "are what they are", but said there were many potential Iraqs and Afghanistans that needed to be addressed.

Mary Habeck emphasized transforming USAID, and have fewer offices within it to ensure that things got done.

Yossi Kuperwasser said that for Nato, it would help to have an Israeli office there, as it would re-emphasize Nato's support for Israel, and re-emphasize ties. He also said that HLMG and FOI should think of ways to ensue that Israel contributed to the security of the West, especially how to fight against terrorism on the home front. He added that it was important to emphasize assisting elements in the muslim world that wanted to fight terrorism, and said that this would now be an uphill battle as many now saw NATO as collaborating with Iran. Pragmatic Sunni groups needed support, and planning needed t be done so that there were operational possibilities when patience is lost. He noted the 51 state department employees who had written to Secretary Kerry urging a different US policy in Syria, and said that if elite opinion had begun to change then there was an all-consuming need to make clear what the war in Syria was about, which was o fight radical islamic terrorism - not for something the West did, but because of what the West stands for. To its adversaries, the West was satan, and ISIS rejected the view that life n earth is important. It was vital that the West be seen to defend itself.

Gary Anderson said that Americans were slow learners, and noted that the Syria debate still remained on removing Assad, which raised the question of what would be done when he did fall from power?

John Nagl agreed with Gary Anderson and regarding NATO, asked what the militaries of alliance members were doing organizationally to recreate lost capability and capacity, with military, police being recruited as governmental advisers. The US especially needs and increased advising capability, and political and military leaders can provide this. Yet it was an operational capacity that the US hadn't built.

Bruno Tertrais added that the case to be made for the West to engage with ISrael now, even though the moment is difficult due to dislike for Netanyahu and Lieberman. There were issues that needed a fresh perspective, including 1) Palestine, 2) Turkey - which Mr Tertrais said had re-opened the idea that there needed to be an Israel peace process because of ISIS/Daesh. Again, he added the importance of capacity building, and said Israel could play a part providing political sensitivities could be disconnected from urgent challenges, and that the Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Co-operation Initiative could both serve as a foundation.

Patrick Keller said that both initiative swere virtually dead, and had gone nowhere. What was needed now was a better partnership program.

Rafael Bardají said it was important to strengthen ties with pragmatic regimes, and urge dialogue with the GCC. Bruno Tertrais said that the Saudis were more interested in NATO ties after the Iranian nuclear deal.

Davis Lewin asked what the appropriate venue was for efforts to persuade political leaders - whether it was at NATO, or if there needed to be an effort to reprise the Concert of Democracies.

Mary Habeck said that the push had to be everywhere possible, as the more you repeat your message, the more likely it is to get out. Patrick Keller said that the product had to be designed accordingly. Yossi Kuperwasser stressed ensuring that HLMG was mentioned in some way to ensue that the organization's profile was raised.

Kori Shake said she liked Mr Tertrais' idea of a virtual posse, in which experts would provide advice and commentary on the legal and ethical performance of armies. Such a move would allow experts to play to heir strengths and take things up in their own time.

Bruno Tertrais said that he had mentioned it for the next war, but was open to a Facebook or Twitter account that could feed in ideas to a central point on the core issues. That way there would be a recognizable, identifiable group, and there would be ways to make use of that.

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Rafael Bardají concluded the days sessions by saying that he wanted to offer more opportunities for further meetings, and follow up. It was very helpful to have all the participants play an advisory role, and that the HLMG was focusing on far more than just Gaza now. He hoped to have something more structured than a one day workshop in future and would put together a firm proposal from the FOI side.

Davis Lewin thanked Max Boot for recommending many of the participants, and drew attention to the fact that Mr Boot would be writing a paper that would offer background, as well as feed into a strategic report, which would in turn be summarized in a three-page summary of this event. He added that the HLMG was keen to commission more papers, and that he was very keen Mr Tertrais' idea of a more formal group. He added that there was already the HLMG, and the Home Front group, but that he hoped to establish a working third group that would be an academic/policy council with a level of participation that was dependent upon interest and comfort.

Rafael Bardají thanked everyone again for coming, and said he would be in touch. He added that he was confident that with everyone's help there would certainly be a decisive victory in the near future.

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Annex A:

HLMG Letter to NATO Leaders

Following the inaugural symposium of the HLMG Academic Council, The Hon Jose Maria Aznar, Chairman of the Friends of Israel Initiative that sponsors the High Level Military Group, wrote to the Secretary General of NATO and the leaders of NATO countries to share the findings, including a version of the executive summary of discussions printed above.

Here follows a reproduction of his letter.

José María Aznar
Chairman

FRIENDS OF ISRAEL INITIATIVE

11th July 2016

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of The High Level Military Group (HLMG), a project of Friends of Israel Initiative, which consists of former senior military leaders and officials from NATO and other democratic countries' militaries. The HLMG was formed in early 2015 with a mandate to address the implications for Western militaries of fighting enemies who disregard the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) whilst exploiting our own nations' adherence to them.

On the wake of the 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw, I wanted to take this opportunity to send you a summary of preliminary findings of the HLMG's work as relevant to NATO.

We do celebrate all the agreements reached by the allies in Warsaw as expressed in the final communique. Crucial in this matter is that at a time of renewed 'traditional' challenges that NATO must rise to in Eastern Europe given concerns about Russia, the Alliance must today additionally be able to accommodate and adjust its outlook, including its Strategic Concept, to account for the reality of Western warfare against enemies who use hybrid concepts of terrorism in conjunction with more traditional armed forces structures - chiefly among them Islamic State. These enemies, which include other groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas and similar terrorist organizations across the globe, proficiently manipulate our and their own publics' outlook, and have no regard for the rules governing warfare, abusing them to their advantage. In order to confront and defeat the challenge of these new enemies abusing our own moral codes against us, new thinking will need to be embraced.

The HLMG's work has progressed in five stages. We published the most comprehensive study into the 2014 Gaza Conflict, concluding that Israel had fought a highly capable campaign, full of innovation aimed at the protection of the civilian life that Hamas hid behind. A second, comparative report broadened this examination out to operations by other democratic nations' militaries against hybrid terrorist-armies and similar actors, utilizing a groundbreaking methodology to compare these conflicts. Two reports, on the impact of the home front of this new type of warfare, as studied in Israel, and on the historical, strategic and technological context of current conflicts are currently being finalized, before we will issue a major strategic study early next year to tie together our findings.

In our preliminary conclusions for your consideration, I wish to stress that NATO members must engage in serious discussions on two key fronts:

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Chairman

FRIENDS OF ISRAEL INITIATIVE

First, these new types of conflict, as seen in the Middle East and Afghanistan, are difficult to fight and public opinion is of unprecedented importance in them, both in-theatre and on the home front. NATO members must find new ways to bolster public support for the military action we are currently undertaking, and for the operations we are likely to be required to initiate in future. Our adversaries seek to seize media narratives and influence our domestic opinion for their own gains. They have shown adeptness and success while NATO member machineries have been slow to respond. Our efforts are likely to prove ineffective unless more is done at the highest level to actively lead on countering our enemies in this global battle for public opinion.

Second, we are concerned about the state of the battlefields. The HLMG is unique in being comprised of senior military leaders from NATO countries with the plethora of experience required to properly assess military conflicts. Our work has shown that the debate around the Laws of Armed Conflict is of crucial importance now. The terrorist groups against which Western nations are posed deliberately conduct their operations under the cover of civilian populations, which our moral code, and good strategy, seeks to protect. They are adept at manipulating any restrictions NATO members place upon their armed forces, making it vital to ensure that military capabilities not be adversely affected by self-deterrence. Questions around the restrictions on Western militaries as a result of rules of engagement over and above the requirements of International Law should be a matter of serious debate. Both NATO armies and allies such as Israel have experienced the difficulties of fighting enemies who abuse LOAC, and addressed these challenges in innovative ways. We must always make sure that the balance of morality and battlefield needs does not impede necessary victories. These conflicts are global and no less serious than those of former eras. Victory is a more diffuse concept in them, but no less important.

Further universal themes that have emerged from our discussions follow in the memo attached. It is vital that NATO members plan for the potential of a long term campaign. NATO members need to set aside resources - political and military - to ensure that no opportunities exist for Islamist or other terrorist groups and irregular armies to establish themselves as permanent proto-states, threatening global stability and Western security. NATO must ensure a leading role for the Alliance in the fight for stability and security in the face of these new challenges to our collective security.

I look forward to a successful implementation of all measures agreed during the summit, and commend the work of the HLMG to you in the hope that it will contribute to that reality.

Yours sincerely,

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HIGH LEVEL MILITARY GROUP

How Democracies Can Win Against Terror-Armies

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