PERSPECTIVES
ON GLOBAL ISSUES

Fall 2016 Vol XII

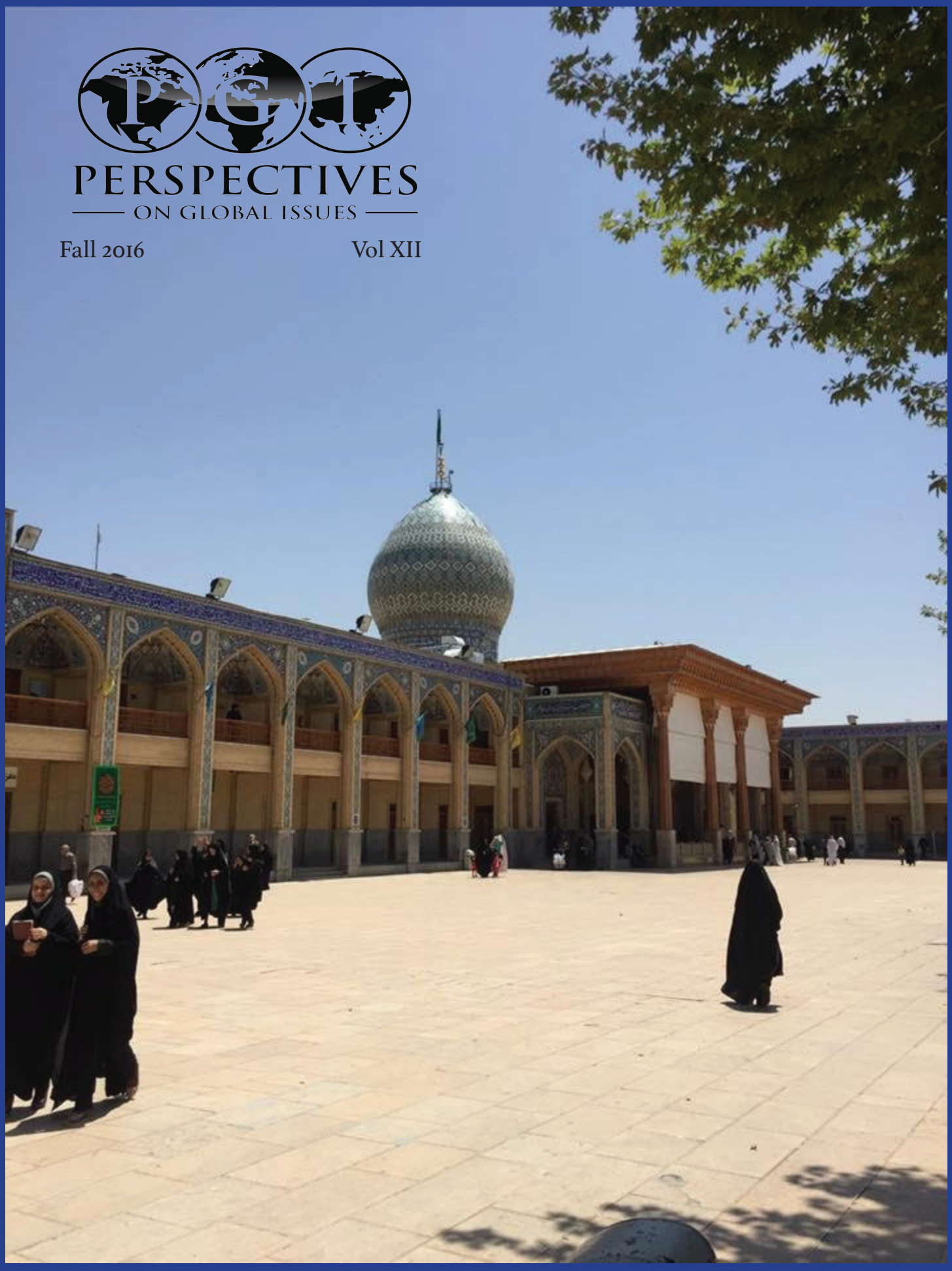


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Photo: Stevin Azo Michels, Osaka, 2016

PERSPECTIVES
ON GLOBAL ISSUES

The Center for Global Affairs at New York University's School of Professional Studies educates and inspires students to become global citizens capable of identifying and implementing solutions to pressing global challenges. Its flagship is the Master of Science in Global Affairs (MSGA) program.

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Front Cover, Iran, by Andy Laub, 2016
Back Cover, Kyoto, Japan, by Stevin Azo Michels, 2016

Letter From the Editor

I once saw an art project in the NYC subways where different artists produced ad size pieces that were distributed around the subway cars as real ads. One of them had this bright orange background with a picture of four US generals and lines of words written across it without spaces. It was difficult to read, but it was a passage about General John W. Vessey Jr, Former Chariman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and ends with a quote of his:

"Words DO mean something."

Donald Trump is the new President of the United States and his often puzzling public and private words reverberate with uncertainty on both the national and international stages. There is reaction and retrenchment, vilifying of the 'other', and plain old general misunderstanding. To quote General John W. Vessey Jr again albeit this time woefully out of context:

"What the HELL is going on?"

The world grows seemingly more opposing, while there is still general agreement that there are 'two sides to every story.' But as I am personally wont to say in general conversation, "It's not a dichotomy, it's a continuum." Increasingly, it seems, we need to be reminded of that staunch reality.

Julia Wilton opens our installment positing whether our response to counterterrorism is all wrong. This cycle provides for little thoughtful reflection. Liza Kane-Hartnett deconstructs Russia's Nationalistic bent. She illustrates how Putin harnesses that energy into seemingly endless support for him and the country's direction. As other nationalistic leaders follow suit, for example Turkey's Erdogan, her treatise reminds of the pitfalls of perpetuating a cycle of endless conflict.

The US is in retreat from the Middle East and Stephen Barry forays into what this power vacuum will beget. Will Russia or Turkiey rush in, or will the Middle East states be left to sort things out among themselves?

Elsewhere PGI discusses definitions and word meanings. Stevin Azo Michels and Aishwarya Gupta provide linguistic analyses on Cyberwar and Boko Haram whle dichotomies on gender are deconstructed in articles by DeLaine Mayer and Akhil Ramesh.

Our issues closes with two papers written during 2016's CGA's Global Field Intensive to Japan. Both take an unflinching view of the fate of nuclear energy in Japan and of the Tokyo Electrical Power Company. Yuval Bacal explores the history of the Fukushima nuclear accident while Stevin Azo Michels suggests a possible future pivot to renewable energy.

And so my simple answer to General Vessey is that, with this issue, PGI hopes to try to make sense of it all. We, hopefully, make continuums out of a few of life's dichotomies.

With utmost regard,

Stevin Azo Michels

Editor in Chief

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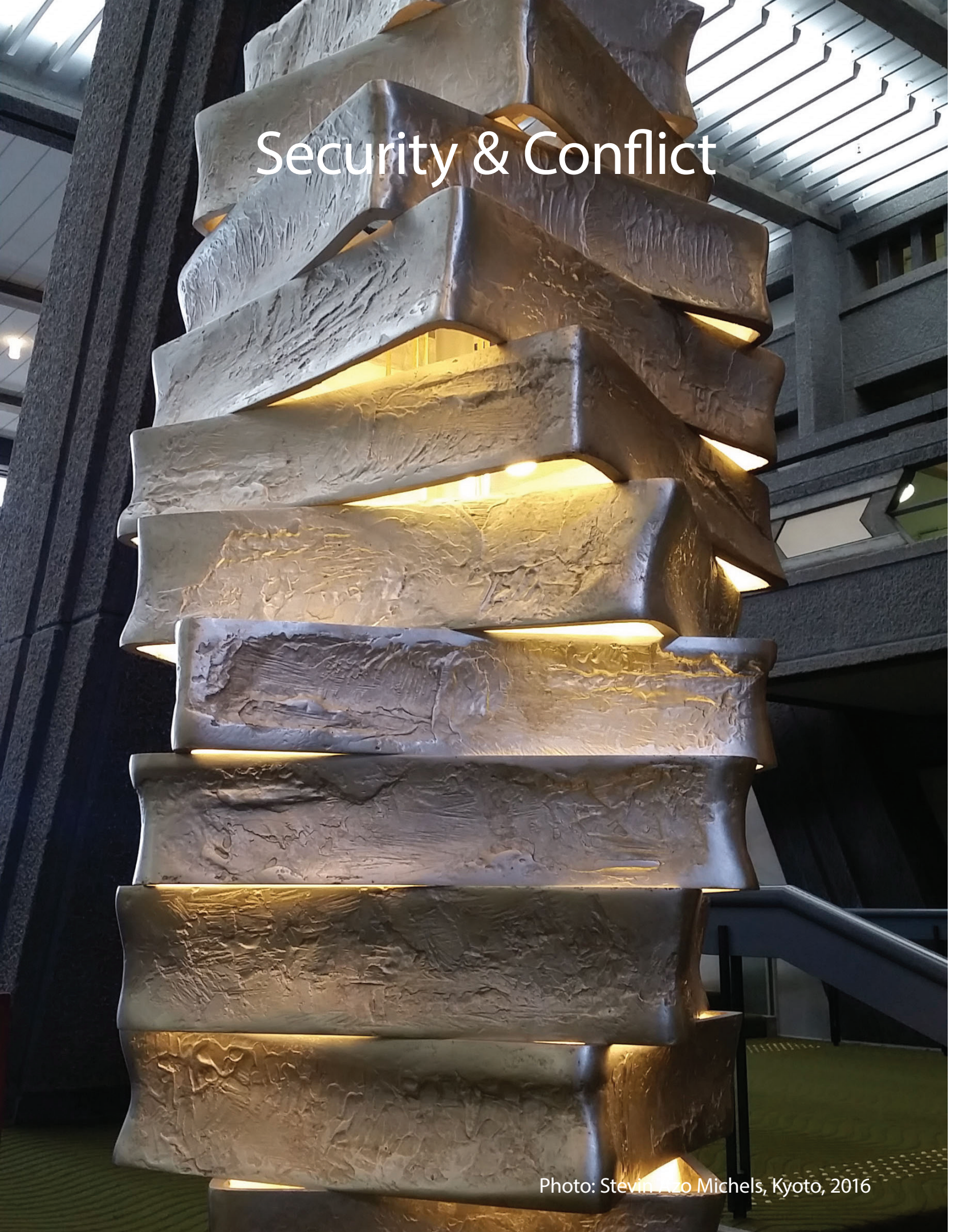

Photo: Stevin Azo Michels, Kyoto, 2016

The Unstable Threat of 'Counterproductive Counterterrorism'

Julia Wilton

Since September 11, 2001 (9/11), not a day goes by that citizens of the Western world are not plagued with tales of 'violent extremism,' 'terrorism,' and the threat that they pose to Western society. With the advent of brutal new extremist groups such as the Islamic State (IS), this focus on violent extremism and terrorism only becomes more and more heightened by the day. Despite the widespread attention to these subjects, shockingly little attention has been paid to the balance between the United States' responses to these threats and the real severity that these threats pose to both the international system as well as to the United States itself.

Despite the widespread attention to these subjects, shockingly little attention has been paid to the balance between the United States' responses to these threats and the real severity that these threats pose to both the international system as well as to the United States itself.

Through the examination of both 'hard' responses to international terrorist threats abroad as well as the examination of 'soft' countering violent extremism (CVE) responses domestically, this paper will argue that uninformed, under-researched responses to overstated security threats ultimately pose more of a threat to both national and transnational security than threats of extremism themselves.

In order to properly illustrate this argument, the paper will first delve into a brief examination of the threat past responses to extremism pose. It will then examine what I will henceforth refer to as the 'severity paradox': whether it is the threats of violent extremism or terrorism, for instance, that drive these problematic responses, or whether these responses are garnered by public rhetoric that stems from the sensationalization of the threat that violent extremism poses to today's world. It will then move

to address why the threat of under-researched and uninformed responses to security threats is a threat in and of itself, and why it is something that must be paid closer attention to, both in the US, and in the measures the US employs in combatting violent extremism abroad. It will do so through the brief examination of case studies including the role that the 2003 'War on Terror' played in the rise of the Islamic State, as well as the role the usage of drone strikes in Yemen played in contributing to the climate of instability and violence that remains present in the region today. The paper will then address the kinds of responses governments, namely the US government, has taken in an effort to combat these kinds of problematic responses, mainly focusing on the CVE strategies that the US has employed both domestically and internationally in an effort to divert away from 'reactionary' policy. Finally, the paper will provide conclusions and recommendations as to how actors, namely the US, should proceed forward in the kinds of responses that are taken to combat the threats of violent extremism and terrorism worldwide.

Defining the Threat of "Counterproductive Counterterrorism"

With the advent of new security threats like the Islamic State, counterterrorism measures have risen to the forefront of governmental agendas and public discourse. Since the 'War on Terror' began in 2003, it can be argued that measures aimed at addressing terrorism, to date, have been inherently 'reactive.' These 'reactive' policies have been all-too focused on the short-term, and have largely involved the "mobilization of security forces immediately following a terrorist attack," rather than strategic long-term responses to the ongoing threats of violent extremism and terrorism (Powers). 'Counterproductive counterterrorism' refers to the threat that these kind of inadequate 'reactive' responses to violent extremism and terrorism work to reinforce the contextual status quo, thus effectively undermining the campaign to mitigate the threat of violent extremism and terrorism and, in fact, heightening it further. It illuminates the paradox that "responding to perceived threats within the framework of security creates [and perpetuates] insecurity {Kessler and Daase, 59)." As stated by Borgu, "terrorism evolves in reaction to the counterterrorist measures taken against it…and countering policies can effectively drive terrorists to become more daring, innovative, desperate and resourceful (Borgu, 59)."

'Counterproductive counterterrorism' is a threat that must be taken seriously now and in the future, because if more mistakes are made, it is possible that many world crises will only be exacerbated further rather than mitigated and contained.

Measuring the Threat of 'Counterproductive Counterterrorism': The Severity Paradox

Perhaps one of the greatest concerns underlying the threat of 'counterproductive counterterrorism' is the idea that these kinds of flawed, reactive responses are not, in fact, even warranted in the first place. This introduces what I refer to as the 'severity paradox': the idea that the imagined and perceived severity of a threat is greater than the threat is in reality. This is certainly the case surrounding the topics of violent extremism and terrorism. Between politicians drumming up public support for already-existing counterterrorism efforts and the fear mongering exacerbated by the mass media, terrorism has become a greatly inflated threat.

Since 9/11, "Americans have been deluged with warnings, predictions, and images of terror catastrophes (Lustick, 4)." These kinds of warnings and coverage has led to our allowance of "fears and anxieties" to "drive our policies," rather than letting our policies reflect the realities of the situation as they stand (Lustick, 20). According to a Pew Research Center study, the incessant media coverage of violent extremism and terror attacks have led the American public to see these as two of the biggest threats to US national security. In August 2014, 71% of surveyed Americans saw Islamic extremist groups like Al Qaeda as being the top American security threat. This number was closely followed by the threat of the Islamic militant group in Iraq & Syria, known as ISIS, with 67% of surveyed Americans indicating it as being the second biggest threat to American security. As a result, in order to justify the public's disproportionate reaction to the threat of terrorism, policymakers have poured trillions of dollars into counterterrorism programming, much of which has been largely unsuccessful at addressing the causes of terrorist activity in the first place.

This inflated understanding of the threat that violent extremism and terrorism pose, however, are dangerously overstated. Applying standard techniques and "using extensive data sets about terrorism that have been generated over the last decades, it can be determined that the chances an American will perish at the hands of a terrorist a terrorist present rates at 1 in 3.5 million per year, which is well in the range of what risk analysts hold to be "acceptable risk."" This calls into direct question the necessity of the kinds of responses that have been pursued, and highlights the need to re-think

Top Security Threats: Al Qaeda, ISIS, Iran, N. Korea

% saying each is a "major threat" to the U.S. ...

November 2013	%	August 2014	%
Islamic extremist groups like al Qaeda	75	Islamic extremist groups like al Qaeda	71
Cyber-attacks from other countries	70	The Islamic militant group in Iraq & Syria, known as ISIS	67
Iran's nuclear program	68	Iran's nuclear program	59
N. Korea's nuclear program	67	N. Korea's nuclear program	57
China's emergence as a world power	54	Growing tension between Russia and its neighbors	53
Global climate change	45	The rapid spread of infectious diseases from country to country	52
Economic problems in the EU	37	China's emergence as a world power	48
Growing authoritarianism in Russia	32	Global climate change	48
		The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians	48

Survey conducted August 20-24, 2014. "Cyber-attacks from other countries," "Economic problems in EU" not asked in current survey.

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counterterrorism strategies in the future. The question thus becomes how to ensure balance and proportionality between a threat and the response to it, in this case, by ensuring that governments "try and avoid over-reaction."

> Since the 'War on Terror' began in 2003, it can be argued that measures aimed at addressing terrorism, to date, have been inherently 'reactive.'

'Counterproductive Counterterrorism' in Practice

Operation Iraqi Freedom and the 'War on Terror'

It is no secret that George W. Bush's 2003 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' was a direct response to the terrorist attacks of September 11. After the deployment of millions of troops, the spending of $1.7 trillion by the US Treasury Department, and 189,000 direct war deaths (not including the hundreds of thousands that died due to war-related hardships), the overarching 'goals' of the war that were outlined at the outset still had not been met. In fact, the US presence in Iraq arguably did more harm than good.

Instead of "leading the country toward a mature understanding of the truly limited dimensions of the terrvorist threat, and relegating Al Qaeda and its ilk to the dustbin of history into which they were headed before our response to 9/11 saved them…the larger judo move of using our own strength against us was to exploit our passionate patriotism…to catapult us into a war in Iraq that directly served Al Qaeda's propaganda and recruitment interests, while destroying America's prestige abroad." In pursuing this misguided and inherently reactive response to a not-yet fully understood threat, innumerable mistakes were made. Once the authoritarian government led by Saddam Hussein was toppled, a power vacuum was created. This "empty political space" only worked to perpetuate the conditions of instability that already existed, and in doing so, was "filled with extremists" such as the IS, for instance, who materialized in part due to the sustained occupation of Iraq by the US. Their "mix of extreme religious beliefs and military skill is the outcome of the war in Iraq since the US invasion of 2003," which provided them with a new battlefield wherein they would be able to fight and flourish.

In light of this reactive approach, the US has effectively helped itself in the creation of "enemies that did not exist before George W. Bush's mistaken invasion of Iraq in 2003," and has fostered an acute degree of mistrust towards the US and the West that is being echoed and utilized by extremist groups like the IS as a kind of rallying call to feed their propaganda machine. While it is unclear whether a different response to 9/11 would have changed much, what has been made abundantly clear is that had the US chosen another approach, the threat of the IS would not be as acute today.

The Use of Drone Strikes in Yemen

Given the negative externalities of using reactive militaristic thinking to combat a largely unknown

threat in Iraq, one may have thought that the U.S. would have made some different choices when pursuing strategies elsewhere in the future. Since 2002, the U.S. has been conducting a series of covert drone strikes in Yemen in an effort to kill top Al Qaeda and terrorist officials residing within the country. In a 2013 address at the National Defense University, President Obama promised that "before any U.S. drone strike, there must be near-certainty that no civilians will be killed or injured." This promise, however, has not been kept.

In a 2003 address at the National Defense University, President Obama promised that "before any U.S. drone strike, there must be a near-certainty that no civilians will be killed or injured". The promise, however, has not been kept.

According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in 2014 alone, as many as 40 Yemeni civilians were killed by drone strikes. According to "figures maintained by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism's Drone War program, as many as 101 civilians have been killed by confirmed drone strikes in Yemen, plus 26 to 61 others killed by "possible extra drone strikes."" These strikes have led to a flurry of chaos in an already unstable country, a country that is now up in arms about the effects of US drone strikes on civilian targets. Testimonies in a report entitled "Death by Drone: Civilian Harm Caused by U.S. Targeted Killings in Yemen," provide "credible evidence that U.S. airstrikes have killed and injured Yemeni citizens," evidence that the US has yet to officially acknowledge and publicly make up for in the form of some kind of compensation. Victims of the "nine US airstrikes blame both the Yemeni government and the US for their loss. They said that such strikes would not solve the terrorism problem, but would only help Al Qaeda by generating outrage and a desire for revenge directed against the US and Yemeni governments." This statement was echoed by General James E. Cartwright, the former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who said, "We're seeing that blowback…if you're trying to kill your way to a solution, no matter how precise you are, you're going to upset people even if they're not targeted." Similarly, Robert Grenier, Former head of the CIA's Counter-

terrorism Center from 2004-2006, questions "how many Yemenis may be moved in the future to violent extremism in reaction to carelessly targeted missile strikes, and how many Yemeni militants with strictly local agendas will become dedicated enemies of the West in response to US military actions against them."

Like Iraq, much of this failure boils down to the lack of intelligence gathering on the part of the US before becoming active participants in armed conflict. According to Gregory Johnson, author of "The Last Refuge: Yemen, Al Qaeda, and America's War in Arabia," the US "doesn't seem to have good human intelligence in Yemen. It's essentially bombing and hoping, which is neither sustainable nor wise." This showcases an undeniable weakness of US policy through the continued use of "do first, ask questions later" strategy – a reactive strategy that, once again, will only work to undermine the US in the long run through the corrosion of the stability and legitimacy of local governments, the deepening of Anti-American sentiment and the creation of new recruits for extremist networks aiming to overthrow these governments.

Responses to Reactive 'Counterproductive Counterterrorism' Strategies

In a departure from short-term 'reactive' strategies to 'proactive' long-term strategies, Western countries, including the U.S., have shifted their attention from offensive counterterrorism to preventive counterterrorism. This shift has resulted in the creation of both domestic and internationally aimed CVE strategies, strategies that rely more substantively on the practice of 'soft' power rather than the pursuit of 'hard' power. While the concept of CVE itself is an "inherently amorphous term," it can be "described as measures aimed at preventing individuals from radicalizing and reversing the process of those who have already radicalized."

In 2011, the Government of the United States (GoUS) advanced the 'Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States' (SIP). SIP is a domestically-based large-scale planning document with three major objectives: (1) To enhance federal community engagement efforts related to CVE, (2) To develop greater government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism, and (3) To Counter violent extremist propaganda. While the SIP CVE strategy has the ability to become a comprehensive plan, it suffers from similar weaknesses that the reactive hard power approaches aforementioned do: the problem of halfway American intervention.

In many ways, the adoption of CVE in the US has been likened to an embrace of a "new overarching framework for a continued pursuit of the 'war on terror.'" CVE programs to date have focused on

"a series of isolated programs and episodic outreach efforts that are disjointed and underfunded." Among the key weaknesses of current CVE programs are: (1) A lack of funding and understaffing of CVE program offices, (2) A lack of coordination between agencies both nationally and locally, (3) A dangerous narrow focus on Islamist extremism, and (4) Continued resistance from Muslim communities.

Additionally, while CVE is meant to be a 'soft power' approach to counterterrorism, "governments have not always used soft power softly to nurture relationships, build trust, and define shared objectives with community interlocutors. In other words, despite the rhetoric of partnership, actors in civil society have often felt to be the subjects of CVE measures." Despite its impressive growth as a proactive response mechanism, "CVE has struggled to establish a clear and compelling field; has evolved into a catch-all category that lacks precision and focus; reflects problematic assumptions about the conditions that promote violent extremism; and has not been able to draw clear boundaries that distinguish CVE programs from those of other, well-established fields, such as development and poverty alleviation, governance and democratization, and education."

These weaknesses allude to the broken American strategy system; despite the trillions of dollars lost on waging unnecessary wars in complex environments, policymakers are still unable to fully commit to the support and implementation of important CVE strategies. In only meeting these needs halfway, the US is setting itself up for failure – a failure that perpetuates the existing mistake of 'counterproductive counterterrorism' and will have unintended consequences that will have to be dealt with in the long run.

Moving Towards 'Productive Counterterrorism'

In order to move past the problem of halfway American intervention and towards sustainable strategies of engagement both at home and abroad in the future, there needs to be an overhaul of current counterterrorism efforts.

On January 1, 2016, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon launched a new plan of action aimed at the prevention of violent extremism. This plan "outlines a holistic approach that goes beyond conventional security-focused counterterrorism measures…and instead focuses on a broad spectrum of preventive strategies including conflict resolution, promoting critical thinking in education, and providing youth with employment opportunities and other possible alternatives to violence." While this plan will, inevitably, take states time to implement nationally, it is a step in the right direction, and should be used as a guide as to how to proceed forward towards 'productive counterterrorism.' Until an entire overhaul can be completed, the US should make significant improvements to its current CVE strategies.

> For one, there is a dire need for an increase in intelligence both domestically and internationally prior to deployment of any strategy- reactive or proactive.

For one, there is a dire need for an increase in intelligence both domestically and internationally prior to the deployment of any one strategy – reactive or proactive. As showcased by the examples of Iraq and Yemen, a lack of intelligence and understanding of situations on the ground has led to an American overreaction that has, in turn, only worked to further destabilize these countries, effectively creating more of a threat to American national security in the long run. Similarly, under-researched domestic CVE strategies have led to the alienation of certain religious groups and organizations, and are only contributing to the rise of anti-American sentiment among those groups. In order to fix this and ensure informed decision making in the future, ongoing investments in gathering and analyzing data need to be both sustained and increased, both domestically and internationally.

Secondly, it is necessary that all counterterrorism strategies, now and into the future, are equipped with a realistic and foreseeable end goal that is informed by and based off of concrete intelligence. While it is unlikely that we will be seeing the decisive end to reactive counterterrorism efforts anytime soon, at the very least, future reactive counterterrorism efforts should be both rooted in reality and have a desired end in sight. Without a goal, we end up in prolonged occupation situations like that of Iraq in 2003, and only work to destabilize the status quo even further.

Lastly, in order to achieve the set-out end goals, it is necessary that the US commit to monitoring and evaluating current approaches to counterterrorism to see where money is being wasted, and contribute these wasted dollars to the full funding of counterterrorism programs in order to ensure that they are able to operate with full force, as opposed to the aforementioned versions of 'halfway intervention.' Since 9/11, the US defense budget has "increased by 250% without anyone in government seriously trying to figure out where the overlaps and waste were." If questions were raised and evaluations were completed, wasted funds could be contributed to longer-term durable solutions to the problem of counterterrorism – solutions that, with a foreseeable end goal, do not work to undermine the security of the US in the way that past responses have.

Concluding Thoughts

In moving from the threat of 'counterproductive counterterrorism' techniques towards sustainable, long-term, and productive alternatives, much reflection needs to be done. The US needs to first question how much of a threat violent extremism and terrorism really are today, and how many situations the US should be actively involved in. Whenever we do act, after a careful analysis, we need to make sure that we are removing more enemies than we are creating through our action, because as we've seen time and time again, sometimes it's our involvement in situations we were never implicated in in the first place that breeds the kind of instability and extremism that we so fear. In moving forward, as Henry Kissinger aptly states, "we should not engage in international conflicts if, at the beginning, we cannot describe an end, and if we're not willing to sustain the effort needed to achieve that end.

Photo: Stevin Azo Michels, Tokyo, 2016

What Constitutes Cyberwar?

Stevin Azo Michels

Carl von Clausewitz's definition of war requires potential or real violence, compellence, and political goals (RID). Cyberwar and cyberwarfare can include one or all of these elements. Stuxnet, for example, possessed all three; it affected Iranian enrichment by inhibiting their cetrifuges in an effort to compel Iran to adopt a non-nuclear stance. This paper utilizes the definition of 'war' provided by Merriam-Webster:

1. "An organized effort by a government or other large organization to stop or defeat something that is viewed as dangerous or bad", and

2. "A struggle or competition between opposing forces or for a particular end".

War, however, is not merely tanks and human soldiers fighting for property and geography at the loss of human life. It includes the use of electronic cyber methodologies and can affect security, economic, political, and civil issues (Bernik 67). Cyberwar is but one tool in a government's arsenal. It can be used to fight for hearts and minds over ideologies

and beliefs.

This paper also uses the following definition for 'cyberwar' from Oxford: 1. "The use of computer technology to disrupt the activities of a state or organization, especially the deliberate attacking of information systems for strategic or military purposes". Bernik suggests active cyberwarfare can include IT support of kinetic warfare, electronic information used during war, asymmetric warfare in cyberspace, and 'parallel warfare to create proper psychological conditions' (Bernik 85).

The world has already seen multilateral cyberwar engaged against Estonia in 2007 and the Stuxnet attack against Iran (Liff 401). It seems likely these will continue to increase as the world becomes more technically adept at using them. President Obama had to publically announce that the cyber attacks on SONY did not constitute an 'act of war' in order to quell discussion of whether the US would retaliate against North Korea (Holland and Chiacu). The US and China defined parameters for cyber attacks agreeing not to steal each other's trade secrets while allowing for spying and the stealing military secrets (Austin). Further, a non-state actor, the on-line group Anonymous, declared cyberwar on the burgeoning state actor ISIS following the Paris terror attacks (Krol and Murgia).

This paper will identify the categories of significant potential threats, real and imagined, and then discuss some ways the US can defend and counter these attacks. It will close by assessing the potential future scenario for cyberwarfare in the landscapes of conflict and power politics.

Significant Threats: Real and Imagined

Security and Existential Threats

There are threats to security via various methodologies like website vandalism; Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) ; intrusions ; and infiltrations . Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs), e.g. Stuxnet, add additional customization and maliciousness (Valeriano and Maness 34-5). This includes all operatus using Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) which perform auto monitoring and control, such as lighting systems, elevators, ATMS, 911 dispatch, gas stations, and ground and air traffic control systems (Goodman 21-2).

One real security target is the US electrical power grid. In Lights Out, Ted Koppel describes a future where the grid has been decimated by cyberwarfare. In a letter to Ed Markey, chair of the Commission on Energy and Commerce, in support of Grid Reliability and Infrastructure Defense Act Koppel states "virtually all of our civilian critical infrastructure- including telecom, water, sanitation, transport, and healthcare – depends on the electrical grid (Koppel 15)." If any one of those targets were successfully attacked, it would cause great harm. As a group, it could cause mass death and destruction.

Other major targets are financial, governmental, and military institutions. Kaspersky Lab announced in February of this year a cyber robbery of over $300 million from 100 banks in over 30 countries (Sanger and Perlroth). Attacks on the government and military rose dramatically in 2014, both being vulnerable due to their built-in security 'backdoors' (The Rise of the Hacker). Cindy Cohn, Executive Director of the privacy advocacy group Electronic Frontier Foundation, suggests that backdoors are more likely be used for unlawful purposes like the funding of non-state sponsored terrorism (Tucker).

Admiral Winnefield Jr, vice-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at a recent Cyber Security Summit, outlined the tradeoffs between security and intelligence gathering via security weaknesses like backdoors (Schneier). In some cases, it is useful to be secure, but

in others, one can affect weak aspects of an opponent's security system. Cryptosense, a French firm, has found at least one flaw in a security module used in a modern weapon system capable of doing just that (Hacking the hackers). Foreign state-sponsored agents and non-state agents have also found these weak points and have hacked into US systems before (Johnston).

Threats to Privacy and Liberty

Beyond existential threats, there is concern for US privacy and liberty. Koppel warns his readers that civil libertarians' main concern is privacy issues without a deeper understanding that cyber threats can affect our liberties (Koppel 70). But in the security versus privacy discussion, what's the difference between Google and the government collection your personal info? Google users willingly, or perhaps more accurately unwittingly, sign away their right to collect and sell any and all information about them. Free internet services like Google, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. are free because they sell the user data (Goodman 55). The government ostensibly collects personal information to use in case of a cyber threat (Koppel 230). But for every low-level security risk nipped in the bud by US security forces, there are high-profile cases of the US drawing the wrong conclusion. Take the reaction to the British tourists who posted on Twitter they were coming to 'destroy America.' The government greeted them at the borde, refused to acknowledge the intended slang meaning which is to 'come party' and the pair were deported after almost a day in captivity (Hartley-Parkinson).

Fear of Big Brother and 1984-style governmental surveillance and abuse of the information collected still exists. For example, the US government is being called to question in regard to the use of Stingrays, a cell-phone tracking technology nicknamed after a popular model. The device poses as a cellphone tower to collect location information of nearby wanted targets (Waddell).

In addition to internet and government groups collecting your data, there are also huge conglomerates connecting all these pieces of information. There are legal data brokers most people have never heard of, for example, Acxiom Corporation collects data on over 95% of all US households (Goodman 66). Perhaps the bigger threat is that these data collections are then vulnerable to theft by non-US actors, or to exposure via insiders like Edward Snowden.

The Dark Web

Among the legal innovations being used for more odious purpose is The Onion Router, aka TOR (Dingledine, Mathewson, and Syverson). Originally created for the US Naval Research Laboratory in 2004 to hide internet locations for military reasons, it is a free re-routing system. It is now also used for things like the buying and selling of weapons, drugs, and child pornography. It's legal, free, and readily available on the internet via normal and legitimate download sites likes CNET.

Using software routing systems like this, the Syrian Electronic Army was able to pose as the Associated Press and post a tweet about an explosion at the White House during which President Obama had been injured. Within minutes the stock markets lost $136 billion (Goodman 319). This did not officially constitute an act of war, but it does denote the ability of actors to enact war-like activities using cyber tactics.

In a meeting in September 2015, Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves accused the Federal Security Bureau of making deals with cyber criminals and terrorists using these tools allowing them to exist on Russian soil while sharing secrets with the

Russian government if they agree to stay away from harming the Commonwealth of Independent States (Modern World). These actors use cyber capabilities created to increase security in one area and to create security threats in another.

Further, a non-state actor, the on-line group Anonymous, declared cyberwar on the burgeoning state actor ISIS following the Paris terror attacks (Krol and Murgia).

Fear Mongering to Create Security Policy

Amidst these discussions are governmental claims that blanket data collection is essential to national security. They use fear-mongering to try to get the populace to acquiesce to seemingly 'un-American' levels of data collection, ironically, the same levels or less than is willingly handed over to private companies like Google. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has warned of a coming 'cyber-Pearl Harbor' (Bumiller and Shanker). Other government figures threaten of a coming 'cyber 9/11' (Silber and Garrie).

Following the Paris attacks, there came a media blitz warning that encrypted devices and software programs like WhatsApp are true scourges to security. The narrative is how the ability for these networks to communicate in the dark and without notice makes it impossible for government security to preemptively act on any potentially harmful internet 'chatter' and keep society safe from harm. Some outright blame encrypted information for the terrorist attacks although as of today, there is no direct link.

Michael Morell, former deputy director of the CIA and current CBS news contributor, is one of those who says he expects to find they were using encrypted devices. He suggests a public debate about privacy about the tools needed to combat this threat. This threat is two-fold.

One is the actual threat to security by the inability to detect terrorists in our midst. In this vein, the French President said he wanted the law expanded to give authorities new powers to match the modern day threats posed by technology (Castillo). Amidst these rallying cries to les citoyens, both in the US and abroad, in regard to encrypted data, there are two important elements to consider. First, Osama Bin Laden was captured because his human courier gave up his location. Second, several terrorist attacks, similar to those in Paris, happened prior to the advent of the devices being vilified in the press. Therefore, the Paris attacks cannot be blamed on encrypted devices alone.

The New York, Madrid, and London attacks happened more due to the sheer impossibility of countering every possible attack and scenario than to the type of device and encryption used for the sharing of information in their planning. While the collection of larger swathes of data may or may not be a good idea, it may also not impact the ability of terrorists to conduct business off the grid. One year ago, research from the PEW Research Center found that Americans were more worried about how their private information would be used by private companies than by the government (Madden). The current discourse regarding encryption may seek to

exploit that lull in favor of more security measures against the enemy.

The Threat of Ideology and (Dis)Information

The second threat is the use of opportunistic fear to create a perceived need for imposing on civil liberties to maintain these American freedoms. These are similar to the tactics used to railroad the public post-9/11 into adopting the government practices later exposed by the Edward Snowden leaks. There is a very real threat of an overreaction (Hasian, Lawson, and McFarlane 144, 180). It is also used by propaganda machines like RT (Russia Today)—Russia's multi-language global-news channel—and internet trolls to create confusion and to funnel public discourse.

There is a war of ideology being waged via the internet through a freer exchange of ideas and dialogue. But as cyberwar can also be an attack on the way people think and act, propaganda can also be seen as an arm of warfare. For example, Russia's use of disinformation has been very successful. Following the downing of Malaysia Flight MH17 in Ukraine last year, residents in Estonia expressed a loss of faith in reports from both sides (Pomerantsev).

I experienced similar phenomena in Moscow during the unrest in Eastern Ukraine. After watching reports from both the BBC and RT, I truly questioned what to believe. Both seemed to be so one-sided, yet plausible, as to question the other opposing view. In terms of that 'pause to question' being able to disrupt the activities of a state, it was enough to diminish, however momentarily, my steadfast support of western media. JM Berger, writing in the Atlantic, disagrees that the war of ideas is as important as wars won 'in the material world.' But in a period when the US finds itself reluctant to put 'boots on the ground' because of a lack of public support, this is a new and nefarious turn in the art of waging war (Berger).

Non-State Actors

Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is a non-state actor, and a current and future threat. Anonymous, a cyber non-state actor, has declared war on ISIS. Anonymous has brought DDoS cyber attacks against ISIS and has reportedly taken down thousands of suspected ISIS Twitter accounts. They claim they will "unite humanity" in order to weaken the group (Krol, and Murgia). They have not been successful. One potential problem is the misidentification of the actions by an anonymous group. False actions taken covertly in a high profile manner could easily result in a negative impression of the original group that would be difficult to deny. Opponents will exploit that weakness.

This is one reason why the Russian propaganda process of utilizing multiple alternative narratives is so successful. Rumors, especially plausible, salacious, and anonymous ones, are quickly spread and difficult to rebut (Koppel 80). Some do not see Anonymous as a friendly actor. For instance, the UK Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) has launched DDoS attacks against Anonymous in the past (Goodman 28). Thus Anonymous could easily become a thorn rather than a tool.

Humans, You Are The Weakest Link

The weakest link in the system is evidenced in the way computer geeks describe user tech-support issues: PICNIC, meaning problem in chair, not in computer. The elements of greed, stupidity, and anger, of those working in security all fall into this potentially threatening category. No amount of software protection can fully provide or account for human fault or weakness.

Ways to Protect

As with any sort of threat, existential or non-existential, there are three major response vehicles: Deterrence, Defense, and Offense (Valeriano and Maness 220). The US can deter attacks on its infrastructure or weaken societal bonds through pre-emptive and preventative strikes against its enemies. When these threats become known, the US should prepare for inevitable retaliatory actions.

Deterrence

This includes public demonstrations of warding off attacks, but as soon as these are revealed, the enemy is also aware of the capabilities and will then work to directly circumvent them. One methodology is to 'play dead,' the method shown in the film The Imitation Game. In the film, Allied WWII Forces created a de-encryption device to use against the Nazis but used it only sparingly so as to not make the enemy know of its existence. This resulted in death and destruction of property, but was considered necessary in the name of the greater good.

Deception is also an important deterrent. It can be made to seem that attacks on the most important targets are impossible. If some of the targets are known or 'discovered' to be red herrings, those with limited resources may not waste them knowing of a lesser chance of success (Singer and Friedman, 2014:103). Unfortunately, the assailant only needs to find a weak link that unhinges others. Therefore, each portion of the chain must be protected. Deterrence that falls short in identifying attackers is problematic, impacting both the threat and ability to retaliate (Valeriano and Maness 47).

Restraints on both sides already exist to inhibit an initial attack. These include the ability to reproduce weapons for retaliation purposes once they are exposed, potential blowback from the use of these new weapons, collateral damage to oneself, and the potential hard to one's own citizens (Valeriano and Maness 9). Therefore, we have not seen more destructive use of cyberwarfare resulting in death, nor more use of nuclear, chemical or biological warfare, or other weapons of mass destruction. But attacks are inevitable and for that we must strategically prepare both defensively and offensively.

Defense

Former New York City (NYC) mayor Rudy Guilliani said "the more you prepare, the better off you are going to be, even if you haven't quite anticipated the thing that happens" (Koppel 235)" While NYC had not envisioned the attacks on the World Trade Center, it had prepared for biological, chemical, and other terrorists attacks. Drills, like subway-attack drills, do help prepare for these future events. Further, 'targeted reprisal' is a real issue, and for any offensive attack, retaliation should be expected (Valeriano and Maness, 224).

The best offense is sometimes having an excellent defense and the US should strengthen the ability to defend the software and hardware infrastructure in the national interest. Criminals perpetually update to the latest emerging technologies in their modus operandi. The US government must follow suit (Goodman 1). This includes fire walls, stronger encryptions, and the ability to un-encrypt opposition messages. The Defense One Summit in 2015 suggested reducing the overall number of Department of Defense (DoD) network firewalls and strengthening the network from attacks (In Review 4). Terrorists and state actors are constantly looking to defeat any new defenses so it is essential to never let one's guard down (Good Tech, Bad tech). Since human users are the weakest list, ongoing user education regarding proper methodologies to employ is

One can hope that the Trump will take heed and promote the US, not as a militaristic bully, but one a gentle giant who attracts rather than demands.

also essential, but, there is no real state of readiness (Bernik 139).

An Economist article called The Cost of Immaturity enumerated three pertinent preparations:

1. "Threat intelligence" to determine identity and rationale of potential attackers.

In the war against militant ideology, the US must reject the calls to round up refugees, assign them numbers, and put them into internment camps. America must open its borders to individuals who need safe haven as it has done in the past. To resist these calls of intolerance and xenophobia, the US needs to continue its long tradition of very public and open discussions based on difference. It might mean Civil War just as easily as it might result in a million-man march. It means open and frank discussions. It might entail living with a few less personal freedoms, but it shouldn't mean the tightening of border controls and the arrest of illegal migrants (Schwatrz).

2. "Penetration testing" using hackers to preemptively reveal security weaknesses;.Hackathons and contests like the XPRIZE for cyber security utilize and recognize home-grown talent and reward nationalistic pride (Goodman 388). Data will be lost if we are not more resilient (Valeriano and Maness 221). Governmental, military, and financial information should be spread across multiple locations. The power grid can be compartmentalized so an attack will only be partially successful. Compartmentalization, similar to the way terrorist cells are organized, will minimize the secrets any one person could steal. There is no golden panacea. There isn't a perfect record of our past, nor will there be one in the future.

3. "Identity assurance" to look at more expansive methods of controlling access.

Examples of identity assurance include biometrics, like fingerprint, eyeball, or facial scans (Good Tech, Bad tech). The DoD is moving away from passwords, which can be hacked, and is moving to credential based authentication keys (Ravindranath). Estonia provides a good example. Since the 2007 attacks, Estonia is at the forefront of cyber security. Each citizen has a digital identity to reduce fraud and identity theft, using it to "sign and encrypt documents, access government services, and conduct e-commerce" (How to back Up a Country).

If one of ISIS' goals in the current war with the West was to change the landscape of the way life is led, that battle has already been won. Life has changed in the form of increased security, but ISIS have not won the war. The US should continue its full resolve for a life of liberty and justice. The world expects the US to act with benevolence and to show that face to the world.

Offense

The US must practice good cyber hygiene (Goodman 368). This means good protection and also to work clandestinely to disrupt enemy ability to attack US computer infrastructures. One of the

more difficult challenges will be to establish rules and legality of cyber warfare before it occurs further. But, we are not clairvoyant; we cannot always see the resultant collateral damage.

The US must continue to form mutually beneficial partnerships with allies that can share information in regard to international threats. There should be continual dialog regarding difference in an effort to understand different mindsets that are not necessarily opposing. The United States and France now share more intelligence information that allows "our personnel to pass threat information, including on [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] ISIL, to our French partners even more quickly" (Shear and Baker).

Given the proper environment and situation, people can find themselves believing things previously thought antithetical (see Stockholm Syndrome). It should also be unremarkable that the disenfranchised and impressionable can come to a conclusion that self-sacrifice for a cause is just. "The Islamic State's recruiting propaganda must be countered with a much larger, more focused effort to discredit it and replace it with traditional Islamic values" (Fournier). An example is a website called "Haqiqah" that refutes ISIS propaganda and shows young Muslims the proper teachings of Islam (Toppings).

Compellence and Future Landscape of Conflict

Compellence is a final strategy promoting the democratic ideal, forcing action to adopt egalitarian principles. The US still needs to assuage the damage done internationally by the Iraq War in 2003. Obama's overly placid response, while an essential pendulum swing, has been somewhat of an overreaction. One can hope that Trump will take heed and promote the US, not as a militaristic bully, but as a gentle giant who attracts rather than demands. Building friends and allies, perhaps even with Russia, who will be less likely to either attack us or allow those within their boundaries to do so.

A state must act with honor. In France, this would mean acting as if the words Liberty, Equality, and Brotherhood truly mean something. It should not mean the establishment of banlieues full of foreign refugees and immigrants whose lifestyles differ of those around them and who are shunned by 'true Parisians.' In the United States, it means to embody the words of the Pledge of Allegiance and to embrace the melting pot of cultures and nationalities, living together as one indivisible nation and with a system that accords liberty and justice for all.

There are very real threats to national security via cyberwar and warfare, and some of these cannot be ameliorated. But, the defensive, offensive, and preventative actions outlined should act to diminish and reduce these threats and promote democratic ideals for a better-interrelated world of tomorrow.

Photo: Stevin Azo Michels, Kyoto, 2016

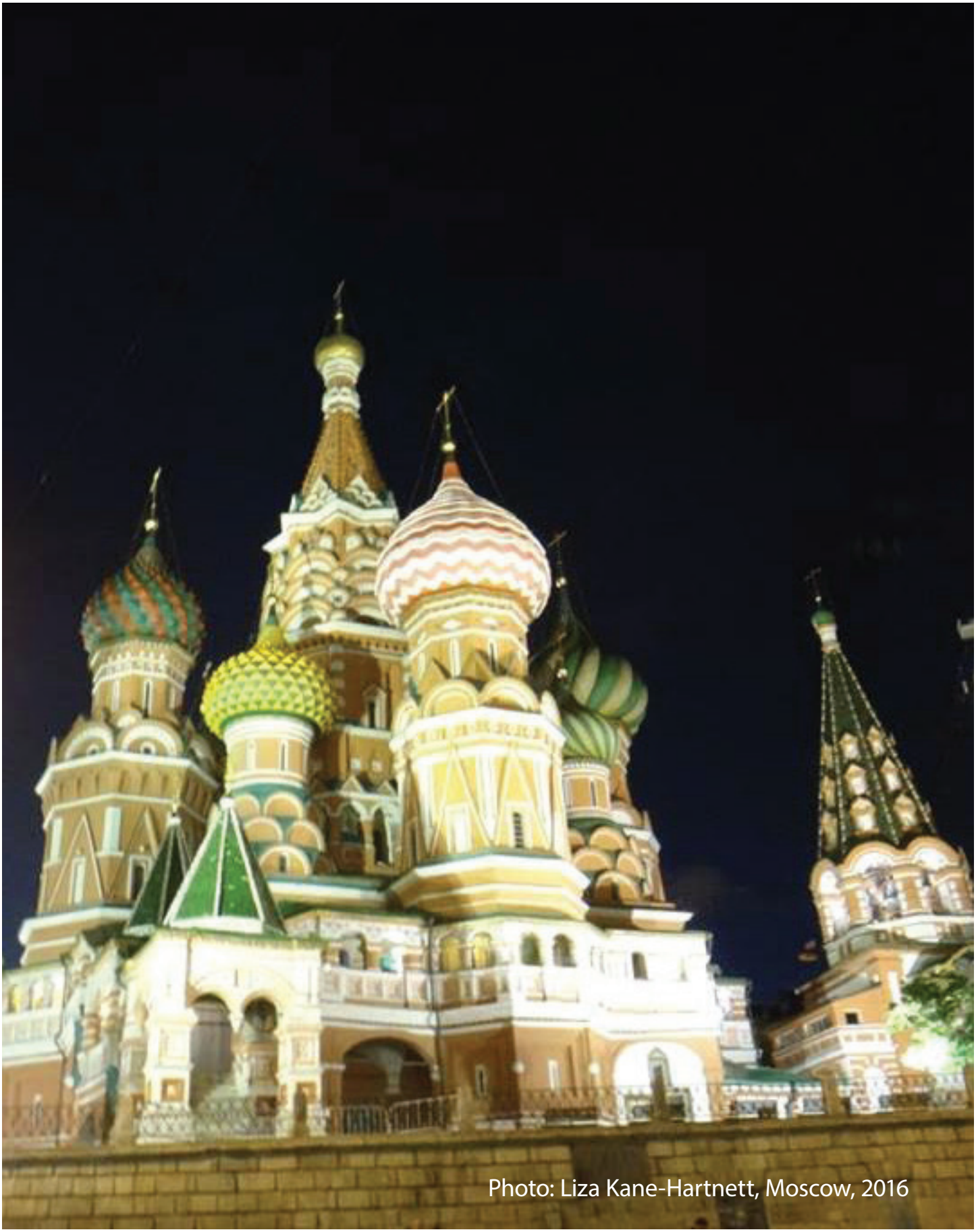

Photo: Liza Kane-Hartnett, Moscow, 2016

Putin's Russia: Constructing Nationalism & Institutionalizing Confrontation

Liza Kane-Hartnett

Historically considered a great power, Russia's global influence was greatly weakened by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Beyond the devaluation of Russian political capital, the fall of the Soviet Union also left a vacuum in ideology, national mission and identity. President Vladimir Putin has effectively filled this void, first by providing Russians with stability and improved living standards after the chaotic 1990s, and since regaining the presidency in 2012, reestablishing Russia as a global power. This is seen in the 2014 annexation of Crimea, the ongoing war in Donbass, and existing operations in the Syrian war, among others. Putin's current term has revived a sense of nationalism that focuses on reasserting Russian global interests and military might, and combating domestic and foreign 'threats' to the nation. This paper will argue that the brand of nationalism developed and promoted by President Putin has made the Kremlin dependent on a confrontational foreign policy. Using both primary research gathered through briefings, interviews in Moscow and online, and secondary evidence, the paper will first explore how current Russian nationalism has been crafted and harnessed for the use of the state, and will then discuss the relationship of reliance that has formed between nationalism and the Kremlin's foreign policy.

Constructing Nationalism

Since returning to the presidency in 2012, Vladimir Putin has utilized Russia's sociopolitical traditions and all powers of the state to promote himself as both the personification and savior of Russia. While he was greatly revered and considered a patriot in his first two terms in office, his governance was less confrontational in regards to both domestic and foreign policies. The change occurred for a complex set of issues, among them Mr. Putin's belief that integration and 'playing nice' with the West was a failure, that any assimilation into the international community would be at the sacrifice of Russian interests and for the benefit of the U.S. (Dr. Dmitri Trenin). Of equal importance were the protests of December 2011 – May 2012, the largest civic demonstrations in the country since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Worried about the protests, which were against Mr. Putin's announcement that he would run for a third presidential term and allegations of fraud in parliamentary elections, the Kremlin sought consolidation of Russian society. In response, Mr. Putin passed a series of laws aimed at reducing popular movements, limiting foreign influence and freedom of civil society organizations, and tightening control over the media. These laws included increasing penalties for protesting, limiting the percentage of foreign ownership of media companies, and labeling civil society organizations that receive funding from international sources as foreign

agents and/or undesirable organizations, banning many Western NGOs and think tanks. In addition to legal pressures, media members in Moscow state that the hostile attitude toward media that could be deemed critical or foreign influenced creates an environment of self-censorship in which news editors are often reluctant to publish a story that may produce a reaction from the Kremlin (Multiple Western news correspondents). The lack of independent news media, with the exception of subscriber-driven TV Rain, which also hesitates to publish critical reports on the government in order to continue their fragile operations, facilitates a culture that, in general, only hears what President Putin wants them to (Briefing at TV Rain). A National Public Radio (NPR) news correspondent based in Moscow concurs with this point, calling the Kremlin "masters of manipulation," and stressing that the current system is just an extension of the Soviet propaganda machine (Interview with NPR correspondent). This domination of the media coupled with the aforementioned legal measures have been used to stamp out dissent and further legitimize the regime and its policies through the perpetuation of national narratives and myths.

To reinforce his rule, President Putin exploits Russian traditions, values and historical tendencies through the propagation of narratives and myths that promote hardline nationalism. Without an apparent ideology or grand strategy, he pragmatically selects pieces of Russia's cultural heritage, from the Russian Orthodox Church, to the tsarist era and Stalinist Soviet period, to support the Kremlin's current interests. This is demonstrated in the Kremlin's relationship with the Church, which is viewed as both the "bastion of true Christian and moral values," and an extension of the State (Representative of U.S. Embassy in Moscow). Andrei Kolesnikov of the Carnegie Moscow Center argues that the Church is a partner is promoting the Kremlin's perspective, "the Russian Orthodox Church has become one of the leading broadcasters of an isolationist," policy track (Andrei Kolesnikov 20). This alliance bolsters the regime's credibility as going against the State can be seen as not only a political sin but also a moral sin. The Kremlin also utilizes the traditional power structure of vertical leadership in which one man runs the show in order to bolster President Putin's status. This is not to say that Russia is predisposed to autocratic leadership, but rather that the tradition of a strong leader is in "the DNA of the country," and that an all-powerful tsar can be comforting in times of duress. A USA Today correspondent based in Moscow argues that this is the case in Russia, stating that absent a true national identity, the desire for traditional values such as the vertical power structure grows (Interview with USA Today correspondent). This yearning for tradition and the 'glory days' of Russia is not lost on Mr. Putin who places himself within the long line of Russian tsars, serving as a "reflection of the hopes and expectations of Russian society," (Nikolay Petrov). By ruling as a tsar, Mr. Putin aligns himself with the glory of the Russian empire, places himself above day-to-day politics, and presents himself as the defender of the nation.

Foremost among the narratives propagated by the state is the concept of an ongoing external threat that must be defended against. The fear of an external enemy is common throughout Russia's history, and is drawn upon once again to create support for the state. Today's threat stems from the West, and more specifically the United States. The U.S. is viewed as having abandoned Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union, encroached upon their borders through NATO expansion, and infringed upon their sphere of interests. These charges are well supported and since Mr. Putin has been president have become a key irritant to Russia as it seeks to return to the status of a global power. Mr. Putin has used the presidency and his dominance of the media to promote the narrative of U.S. infringement of Rus-

sian sovereignty and assert that Russian interests cannot be violated. This is a dominant aspect of the Kremlin's rhetoric and can be seen in statements regarding NATO, flybys of U.S. military vessels and media coverage of both the annexation of Crimea and the ongoing war in Donbass. An Australian diplomat based in Moscow spoke to the Russian notion that Crimea would become a U.S. naval base and a part of NATO without Russian support (Australian diplomat). Additionally, an editor from The Moscow Times described how prior to the invasion of Donbass, Russian propaganda in Ukraine fomented discontent by playing on the historical importance of the region and the treatment of Russians within the country (Interview with editor of The Moscow Times). While the West criticizes Mr. Putin's actions in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, it often overlooks the Russian perspective– the historical and ethnic ties between the territories. This viewpoint, while obviously not unanimous, is seen in public opinion polls and was witnessed throughout the interviews held in Moscow. Political analyst Vladimir Frolov reasoned that everybody likes to feel good about his or her country and most believe that Crimea is part of the greater Russian world (Vladimir Frolov).

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A USA Today correspondent followed a similar line while speaking about Ukraine, explaining that Russians look to the people in Donbass and see relatives and brothers, people who are part of the Russian world, despite being beyond their borders (Interview with USA Today correspondent). Despite this statement, most Russian believe the current borders are sufficient, with Crimea part of the nation, and do not desire more territory. However, Russian ties to the region and the state-dominated media coverage on the issue make the U.S. look like an aggressor and Western sanctions on Russia look unjustified, just another example of U.S. intrusion. This external threat, whether real or perceived, is fed to the Russian people constantly and is key to fostering a 'us against them' sense of nationalism.

The product of the Kremlin's propaganda and Mr. Putin's pragmatic use of nationalism and traditionalism is a stable and secure state. A state that's populace is happy with the leader – as of June 2016, Putin's approval rating was 81 percent, but not the party –the United Russia Party's popularity rating in July 2016 was 39 percent. The dichotomy between the adoration of Mr. Putin and distrust of actual governance institutions has encouraged a sense of general apathy toward politics; however, the public is still excitable by national events such as the 'reunification' of Crimea (Levada-Center). Though trouble may be simmering underneath due to a poor economy and slowly declining living standards – albeit not dramatically – on the surface one can get a sense of the exceptionalism that the Kremlin is trying to promote. Nevertheless, the construction of Russia's current strand of nationalism has far reaching implications as it corresponds to foreign policy. Given his control of Russia's politics and society, President Putin has been able to foster a sense of nationalism that not only supports his confrontational foreign

policy, but also perpetuates it.

Institutionalizing Confrontation

Despite high approval ratings and the sense of nationalism that has been cultivated among everyday Russians, President Putin is afraid of his people. His fears stems not only from the protests of 2011-2012, but also from a stagnating economy, a rise in labor unrest, the upcoming Duma elections, a deep seated mistrust of the West, and realist view of international relations that assumes the U.S. is always meddling (Mark Galeotti, "The Kremlin's Theatre"). Mr. Putin channels this fear to consolidate his power by appearing as the savior of Russia through the use of a confrontational foreign policy against the external threat hurled from the West. The use of aggressive foreign policy to distract from domestic circumstances and demonize critics as knowing or unknowing agents of the West has created a feedback loop in which the Kremlin relies on conflict. Though in general Russians do not prioritize foreign policy and are mostly apathetic, an editor at The Moscow Times, highlights that foreign policy is returning to the forefront of national discussion and prestige (Interview with editor of The Moscow Times). This dichotomy is central to Mr. Putin's balancing act of utilizing foreign policy to mobilize domestic support, while keeping the populous people apathetic enough to provide distance from any failures. Frolov speaks to this point and discusses a "reluctance to abandon," the adventurist foreign policy as it is a useful tool, both domestically and internationally (Vladimir Frovlov). This relationship has led to an institutionalization of confrontation by Mr. Putin that has acted as a force of political mobilization.

In the domestic realm, a confrontational foreign policy has a number of uses. Foremost among them is that it reestablishes the need for Putin's authority. Given that President Putin sourced his initial legitimacy from providing security and stability in the face of chaos, it is believed that he continues to be a strong leader in times of turmoil. By depicting Russia as isolated in a conflicted world, the Kremlin mobilizes nationalist sentiment that calls for a singular leader that personifies Russia, such as Mr. Putin. The Australian diplomat speaks to this reinforcing cycle and its impact on the Russia opposition by conveying the widespread belief among Russians that there will be a time for political opposition, but not now, not when President Putin is acting in our interests against outside threats (Australian diplomat). Further, the presence of an external threat and lack of desire among a critical mass for true opposition works to justify the restrictive domestic policies against media, civil society organizations, and demonstrations that Mr. Putin has put forward since his 2012 return to the presidency. This relationship has turned into a "vicious cycle" in which

This relationship has turned into a "vicious cycle" in which Mr. Putin builds a sense of nationalism founded on fear and harvests it with the support of the people.

Mr. Putin builds a sense of nationalism founded on fear and harvests it with the support of the people (Mark Galeotti briefing). With no sustainable political institutions, organic national ideology, or appetite to withstand comprehensive economic reform, Putin's only real tool to mobilize the people behind him is an aggressive foreign policy that places Russian interests at the forefront; the foreign policy that he has groomed the people to expect from a strong and capable leader.

While President Putin's confrontational foreign policy successfully mobilizes support for his rule and policies domestically, it also helps him achieve one of his main goals on the international stage – Russia's return to prominence. Mr. Putin is a realist when it comes to international relations; he seems "to have internalized a Manichean, zero-sum sense of his relationship with the West," and through his foreign policy has tried to use every opportunity to serve as a spoiler to Western ambitions in pursuit of Russian interests (Mark Galeotti, "No, Russia"). This has in some ways changed the calculus in international relations, as Russia's actions are often a departure from the traditional rulebook (Interview with editor of The Moscow Times). In the short-term this has been successful in helping Mr. Putin reach his targets, as it has been able to punch above its weight in international affairs, particularly in forcing Russia to the negotiation table on issues concerning both Iran and Syria. Russian actions in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine have, on the other hand, resulted in negative consequences such as Western sanctions and being suspended from G8. However, given Mr. Putin's control over Russian media and parts of society, the repercussions are often viewed as an extension of Western aggression rather than as a result of Russian actions. The constant state of confrontation between Russia and the West creates a dangerous precedent with Mr. Putin encouraged to continue his aggression by the nationalism he helped to foster. While Mr. Putin has found utility in the rally around the flag effect, it also raises the question of what to do to drive support in absence of military victories. For instance, withdrawal from Eastern Ukraine is difficult, as the Kremlin has used much energy to justify the excursion under the flag of nationalism and great lengths to hide the casualties that a retreat now would appear weak, and diminish the expectations that Mr. Putin has built both at home and abroad. An editor at BNE concurs with this assessment, stating, "he can't back down on Ukraine," it would make him appear a "junior player in geopolitics," (BNE editor). This general outlook has encouraged actions such as those in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, and has further motivated the Kremlin to embrace the outsider role and continue a policy of confrontation against its perceived threats.

Conclusion

President Putin is encouraged to continue his policies of confrontation by his own personal interests, which he aligns with Russian national interests, as well as the sense of nationalism among the people. This has led the Kremlin to "focus on propaganda and adventurism abroad," opposed to the necessary institutional reforms that could benefit Russians at home (Michael Rochlitz). This tactic appears to be working so far as nationalism is successfully "used to facilitate, justify, and perpetuate all of the aggressive foreign policy moves," (U.S. Embassy representative) Using a confrontational foreign policy as a main source of legitimacy is a precarious arrangement as it sets an expectation for conflict and discourages the signs of weakness that stem from retreat. This is a cycle that is not expected to break for the remainder of President Putin's term; however, it would be the most beneficial for all if Russia was able to withdraw from its conflict while saving face and return to a business as usual relationship with the West.

Photo: Wikimedia

Geo-Politics of the Middle East: Conflict and Cooperation

Stephen Barry

As internal divisions and divided visions paralyze the United States' ability to dictate global order, we have witnessed a rise in regional conflicts based around competition for local dominance. This is most evident in the Middle East where, after years of playing regional referee, the United States is pursuing a less prominent role. The shift comes from a realignment of American priorities due in part to America's shale revolution which has put the United States on a path to energy independence, lessening the necessity of Middle Eastern oil imports. As the United States pivots its resources elsewhere, a power vacuum has been left in its wake. The contested place of regional hegemon in the Middle East has resulted in a series of proxy wars between two coalitions, one led by Saudi Arabia and the other, Iran. This article will analyze the Middle East through the strategies and incentives of the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, followed by an overview of current proxy wars in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq. The article will then discuss what this means for the future of the region, and conclude with policy options for the United States.

Interests and Incentives

The American withdrawal from the Middle East comes as the United States recalibrates its diplomatic interests and priorities. The United States' role in the region was previously driven by the necessity of oil from Gulf States, led by Saudi Arabia, and the special relationship the United States shared with Israel. However, these diplomatic partnerships have been declining for a series of reasons. A decade of massive military operations without concrete success has come at a cost: America's standing in the world, the national treasury, and a war-weary public opposed to interventionist strategy. Hopes for an indigenous Middle East liberalization died with the failure of the Arab Spring. These events premeditated Washington's changing calculus for bringing stability to the region. Rather than commit to a grand operation involving combat forces on the ground, the administration has favored the role of sponsoring proxy fighters while simultaneously working to consolidate and develop new strategic partnerships. The Obama Administration reached out to Iran in the form of the nuclear deal, with the intention of involving the rogue state in dialogue to help stabilize the region as well as forestall its development of nuclear weapons. However, in doing so Washington alienated its traditional allies in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia and Israel. Relations with Riyadh have also been disrupted by the changing dynamics of the oil relationship. Net imports for oil have sharply dropped in recent years, minimizing the market relationship between the two nations, while the US shale revolution is pushing America to outpace Saudi Arabia in crude production (Simon &

Stevenson, 2-10).

With political liberalization and oil imports becoming less important to U.S. concerns, America's stake in the Middle East is driven primarily by counterterrorism strategies and the containment of radical ideologies and jihadists. In downsizing its role in the Middle East, the United States has pushed a patchwork agenda to achieve short-term stability, without developing a comprehensive long-term plan. As part of this short-term strategy, the United States has gently nudged Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council towards greater independence and autonomy for solving their own conflicts while supporting them through strategic intelligence and arms deals (Goldenberg & Dalton, 59-66). With Iran, the United States has sought to deter the country from 'rogue state' actions through the nuclear deal, pulling Iran closer to the fold of liberal institutions, and limiting its ability to act unilaterally. Additionally, as part of the deal, Iran was removed from the U.S. list of government sponsors of terrorism, much to the chagrin of the Gulf States (Goldenberg & Dalton). By pursuing solutions independent of one another, the United States has indirectly facilitated greater insecurity and conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

The modern dispute between Saudi Arabia and Iran dates back to the Iranian Revolution in 1979 when the American-backed president, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, was ousted in favor of Shi'ite clergy. Both Iran and Saudi Arabia have heavy theocratic elements woven into their government. In Iran, the legitimacy of the government is determined by a council of Shi'ite mullahs. In Saudi Arabia, the government's legitimacy is tied to its political alliance with Wahhabism, a sect of Sunni Islam. While the feud between these is due in part to sectarian ideologies, at the heart of the issues are geopolitical interests. Saudi Arabia's historical ties with the United States made it an enemy of the new Iranian theocracy.

Tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran are at an all-time high. Both nations are oil producers and have leveraged their natural resources for political ends. Saudi Arabia and Iran belong to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), a cartel in which Saudi Arabia is the de facto leader. However, while they have worked together in the past when it is of mutual interest, their oil concerns have also been a point of tension. The current oil market is experiencing a severe glut due in part to the emergence of American shale oil, leading to low prices. However both nations have incentives for continuing to produce. It is the Saudis' hope that by flooding the market they can price out high cost producers such as the United States (Graeber). This policy of high production runs against the ambitions of Iran, which seeks economic gains through oil revenue. Iran has recently reentered the oil market after the lifting of economic sanctions as a compromise of the nuclear agreement. Keen to get its production back online after years of being frozen, Iran is unwilling to make a cut. Although a production cut would raise prices and thus help both nations, by acting only in self-interest the two have created a prisoner's dilemma in the modern oil market.

The current oil market is experiencing a severe glut due in part to the emergence of American shale oil, leading to low prices.

In addition to a battle for market share, the two countries are also waging proxy wars in Yemen, Syria, and Iraq that further fuel and prolong conflicts in these countries. The rivalry was further enflamed this year when Saudi Arabia executed Nimr al-Nimr, a popular Shi'ite cleric known for his heavy criticism of Saudi Arabia's treatment of its Shi'ite minority. In response to this execution, protestors in Tehran set fire to the Saudi Embassy, heating up the cold war between the two nations. Following these events, Saudi Arabia cut diplomatic ties with Tehran, asking Iranian delegates to leave the country within 48 hours (Kennedy). These events have brought the rival nations to an incredibly strained point in the relationship, while the United States has failed to pacify this friction.

From the perspective of Saudi Arabia, the American withdrawal amounts to a level of betrayal (Goldenberg & Dalton, 63). With the United States as its ally, Saudi Arabia has enjoyed de facto dominance of the Gulf and a more secure position vis-à-vis Iran in the Middle East. However recent developments have complicated the Saudis' position and put them at odds with Washington. While offering security assurances in the form of intelligence and arms, Washington's negotiations with Iran have led Riyadh to question the West's commitment to their security. This, in addition to America's let-it-play-out response to the ouster of Mubarak in Egypt, has led Saudi Arabia to stake out their security through increasingly unilateral choices without the consent of the United States, financially supporting pro-Sunni militant cells in unstable environments (Goldenberg & Dalton, 60).

Saudi Arabia's strategy is driven by two types of security concerns: Internal and external. Internally, this involves containing unrest from the marginalized Shia minority and solidifying power after a series of shakeups in the line of succession to the throne. Saudi Arabia's military has been predominantly trained not for waging a foreign war, but rather towards maintaining stability within the kingdom (Goldenberg & Dalton, 63). Externally, this strategy has been to shore up alliances with other Gulf nations and to align itself diplomatically and militarily against Iran. Iran, in gaining concessions to develop its own nuclear energy, has Saudi Arabia increasingly worried about the potential for an Iranian nuclear bomb. Despite the deal laying out details specifically to delay any break out capacity, Saudis has found themselves in a position where they see a necessity in combatting Iranian growth, economically and politically. The rebalancing of power, to the Saudis, is a zero-sum game and comes at the cost of Saudi interests and favors the Iranian theocracy. Furthermore, in the eyes of Riyadh, Iran is not simply an opportunist as many in Washington believe, but rather a primary contributor to conflict (Goldenberg & Dalton, 61).

Iran, in contrast, is experiencing a regional resurgence. With the nuclear deal removing sanctions and allowing Iran to rebuild its financial coffers as well as offering Iran a level of legitimacy in the international community it has not known since the revolution, Iran has several opportunities before it. In this regard, Iran's strategy can be defined by the objective of expanding its own sphere of political influence. Iran seeks to accomplish this through multiple means, namely providing funds, weapons, and support to fellow Shia institutions and militias as well as countering the objectives of Saudi Arabia and the United States within the region. This strategy has played out differently in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. While Washington and Tehran have historically experienced friction in their interactions, the nascent success of the nuclear deal demonstrates an openness on both sides to negotiation. Iran is pursuing its geopolitical objectives in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, at times working in coordination with the interests of

the United States and other times opposed.

Proxy Warfare

At the time of this writing, the three primary conflict zones in the Middle East—Syria, Iran, and Yemen—involve the role of sponsors and proxy fighters. Proxy warfare is defined as [a war] "in which states (or sponsors) aid and abet non-state proxies involved in a conflict against a common adversary" (Hughes). As discussed above, all three conflict realms in the Middle East threaten to be prolonged by the presence of foreign sponsors, predominantly Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United States.

There are essentially three notable objectives of proxy warfare: coercion, disruption, and transformation. (Hughes). In the context of proxy wars, coercion should be understood as a means of supporting an insurgent group to put pressure on the ruling body and coerce it into a certain course of action. The second objective, disruption, is a sponsorship of a foreign power motivated by the aim of weakening an enemy state or engaging its military forces as a means of depleting their resources. In the modern Middle East, Iran's policy of support for Houthi rebels can be seen as a form of disruptive sponsorship, engaging Saudi Arabia via proxy and leveraging power to undermine the Saudis' political and military will. The third form of proxy-warfare sponsorship is transformative, meaning that the objective of the sponsor state is to develop and arrange a political transition within the target state. Here, the United States and Saudi Arabia's strategy within Syria can be seen as transformative, seeking to support rebel groups in the hopes of ousting Bashar al-Assad and his government.

While proxy wars may at times be considered an asset for sponsor states due to their relatively low level of resource investment, they are not without their consequences. As evidenced by the United States in its support of the mujahedeen against Russia, supporting non-state actors carries the possibility of blow-back down the line. Additionally, there are consequences for the state in which the conflict is waged. In the case of Syria, outside sponsorship has had the effect of exacerbating factionalism amongst rebel groups, undermining the objective of the rebellion as a whole (Hughes). There is also the question of what the consequences may be of sending support to groups not properly vetted or of weapons falling into the arms of the ISIS.

Syria

A quick overview of the Syrian civil war is necessary to understand the roles that Iran and Saudi Arabia play. The conflict has its roots in the Arab Spring, in which the political unrest of the region spilled over into Syria's borders. In response to protestors, the Alawite government of Bashar al-Assad began a violent crackdown. This violence in turn escalated the conflict into a country-wide civil war.

From the onset, Iran has sided with the Syrian government. Bashar al-Assad belongs to the Alawite religion, a subsect of Shia Islam. The two nations also have historical ties stemming from a mutual interest in thwarting the objectives of the United States and Israel. Since the war began, Tehran has sent financial aid, military advisors, equipment, and arms (Goodarzi). Iran has made it clear in negotiations toward peace that they consider punitive action towards the Assad regime a nonstarter. Iran's support for the regime also stems from its desire to counter the influence of radical Sunni groups such as ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, which has exploited and thrived in the chaos of the war and the disorganization of rebel groups.

Saudi Arabia, by contrast, has sought to arm and fund rebel groups in the hopes of dismantling the Assad regime and undermining Iranian power.

Here, U.S. interests and Saudi ambitions diverge. (Simon & Stevenson). From the perspective of Saudis and in line with their grand strategy of mitigating Iranian influence, the greatest priority is bringing down the Alawite regime. As such, the Saudis have pushed for arming the rebel groups, equipping them with heavier artillery so they are better suited to fight. The United States, by contrast, has a legitimate fear of American weaponry falling into the hands of more extremist sects, and thus has been devoting more resources towards vetting the rebels in hopes of supporting only the more moderate groups. The United States' primary interest is in bringing regional stability, and thus from the perspective of the United States a negotiated settlement is a preferred outcome. As evidence of their willingness to compromise, while the United States has stated it is necessary that Bashar al-Assad step down, they have not pushed as heavily for punitive measures as Saudi Arabia. (Simon & Stevenson).

In the context of proxy wars, coercion should be understood as a means of supporting an insurgent group to put pressure on the ruling body and coerce it into a certain course of action.

Yemen

Yemen, unlike many of its Gulf contemporaries, is an incredibly impoverished country and is marked by structural instability. The roots of the recent civil war trace back to a separatist movement by the Houthis, an ethnic group that adheres to a Shia sect known as Zaydism. The Houthis have made several pushes to break from the traditional Yemeni government, initiating violence in 2004 and opposing the regime since the 1990s. While not inherently sectarian, the war has taken on a Shia/Sunni split since the involvement of Saudi Arabia and Iran (BBC Yemen).

Saudi Arabia has for several years helped finance the government in the interest of preserving stability on its southern border. However, economic uncertainties and the Arab Spring movements have pumped fresh blood into the conflict. In 2014, Houthi rebels swept the capital of Sana'a, forcing the Saudi-backed president to flee the country and take refuge in the Sunni kingdom. Saudi Arabia sees the conflict as the fault of Iran, whom they believe to be a primary instigator in the war. The conflict has become a chief priority for the kingdom, especially since a series of raids by the rebels came dangerously close to the Saudi border. Saudi Arabia has led a coalition of air strikes against Houthi targets, using intensive military power in the hopes of pushing back against the victories Houthis have had and undermining any future marginal gains. In this pursuit, Saudi Arabia has been using unrestrained military power. In particular, there have been accusations from Human Rights groups that the kingdom has been using cluster bombs in residential areas (Human Rights Watch).

From the perspective of the United States, intervention in Yemen is part of the larger American strategy of containing terrorist elements. The fractured state that Yemen has been in for the past two decades has allowed it to be a fertile breeding ground for terrorist groups, in particular Al-Qaida in the

Arab Peninsula (AQAP). The United States' involvement in the conflict has been through direct drone strikes on targets perceived to be a threat to American interests, and through the supply of weapons, logistical support, and intelligence to Saudi Arabia. To this end, it should be noted that despite American intentions, the fracturing of the Yemeni state by Saudi Arabia's actions, may be benefiting AQAP.

Although Saudi Arabia has defined Yemen's conflict in sectarian terms, this is not the complete truth of the matter. While the Houthis do belong under the greater umbrella of Shia Islam, their objectives are not based on religious beliefs and they show an openness to working with Sunni groups. Iran's involvement has simply been facilitating and exacerbating the conflict (Milani). Saudi Arabia has tried to frame Iran as one of the primary instigators of the war, but in truth Iran's interests are more opportunistic than anything else. At minimum, Iran has invested its soft power in the conflict, and arms as well, though this is in dispute (Milani). Iran has no direct economic or strong strategic purpose in Yemen; rather, in supplying the Houthis it is simply following the line of its grand strategy to promote its own sphere of influence and undermine that of Saudi Arabia and the United States (Milani).

Iraq

Since the American invasion in 2003, Iraq has been torn asunder. After the execution of Saddam Hussein and the ouster of his ministers and former government members, Iraq held democratic elections. In these elections, the long-suppressed majority of Shia Muslims voted in Shia leadership under al-Maliki. There is a perception amongst Iraqi Sunnis that the al-Maliki government engaged in systematic discrimination against their interests (Al-Qarawee). Despite U.S. attempts to steer the nation otherwise, many of the disenfranchised Sunnis went on to join rebel insurgent groups and extremist factions, some of which developed into insurgent groups such as ISIS. Now Iraq is experiencing heavy warfare, with the Shia government, ISIS, and the Kurdish fighters vying for territorial control and caught in a web of conflict. Realizing its own responsibility in the factors that led to the present conflict, the United States is one of the nations most heavily invested in a stable Iraq. Even with ambitions of minimizing an American presence in the Middle East, the United States has sent military advisors as well as weapons, heavy armory, and other resources to the Iraqi government to help fight ISIS.

In the power vacuum initially left by the United States' withdrawal, Iran has eagerly sought to fill the void. With a neighboring border and strong cultural and religious ties, in the post-Saddam Hussein era Iran and Iraq made for natural allies, especially now that the government is Shia-led. Despite the competing interests of Iran and the United States, they share a common enemy in the form of ISIS. To cement its position of influence in Iraq, Iran has invested heavily in the country (Everett & Jameson). In particular, it has been working to develop a series of electric power plants in the Iraqi south. (Everett & Jameson). As is in line with its grand strategy, Tehran is using a soft power approach to pull Baghdad into the Iranian sphere of influence and weaken U.S. connections.

There are a series of possibilities as to how the situation could develop in the Middle East. The greatest emerging threat, in terms of U.S. interests, is that further instability in the region leads to the expansion of jihadist ideologies and a chaotic environment in which various groups can incubate and develop into insurgencies and terrorist organizations that threaten the security of the U.S. homeland. Studies have shown that civil wars with outside intervention tend to last longer (Regan). With that in mind,

there is the possibility that the wars in Yemen, Syria, and Iraq could continue on for some time. Al-Qaida has already developed a stronghold in Yemen, and ISIS has claimed territory in Iraq and Syria. In order to minimize the potential of these groups to grow, the United States must bring about an end to these conflicts and ensure that these nations do not become failed states. America has demonstrated a willingness to ally based on geopolitical strategic necessity, partnering with Shias in Iraq and Sunnis in Syria and Yemen. The question then is: What is the best means to bring about an end to these conflicts in the Middle East? Civil war termination is usually the result of a decisive military victory or a negotiated settlement. With that in mind, the United States should devise and implement a two-pronged comprehensive strategy, one in which short term stability is maintained, and one in which a pathway to long term security is assured.

Policy Recommendations

The best means for the United States to achieve these goals is to orchestrate a negotiated settlement between the principal financiers of the Sunni-Shia conflicts in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Additionally, given America's perceived bias, it will likely be necessary to involve Russia on behalf of Tehran to ensure all parties feel they have fair leverage. To end the series of proxy wars, a grand compromise must be established. In essence, this would require Iran foregoing its support for the Houthi rebels as well as recalling Revolutionary Guard Corps stationed in Syria in exchange for Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states rescinding their support for the rebel groups as well. While both sets of rebel groups would likely protest this withdrawal of support and seek means to continue to fight without outside support, these provisions would quickly dry their resources and permit an environment for the government to take control in both Yemen and Syria. In relinquishing support for rebellions, this would free up Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the United States to direct their resources towards fighting ISIS, the only common enemy the three nations hold. The benefits of this scenario are that it would allow an end to much of the conflict that has been fomenting instability in the region. To ensure that this deal is followed through, the United States would likely need to supply significant financial support to Iran and Saudi Arabia. The lasting peace between Egypt and Israel gives credence to this possibility. In this scenario there would likely be strong opposition from Israel, rebel groups, and a segment of hardline members of each domestic population. The settlement would need to involve developing plans for Iraq, in particular how the nation can be salvaged after years of divisive war. Northern Kurds would likely press for an independent Kurdish state, which Iran would likely oppose. A solution to this could be an expansion of power for the autonomous governing entity, within the larger compilation of a unified Iraq. Russia will likely push for greater influence in Middle Eastern affairs, but like the United States, it derives greater benefit from a calmer Middle East and by taking the role of a negotiating party, it can display the achievement of the deal's success to leverage greater legitimacy as an international power broker. The end of the primary conflicts in the region promises the opportunity to lay down the foundations for a lasting peace.

Using this agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran as a platform, the United States may then try and oversee the establishment of a Middle Eastern institution, built with the intention of creating an atmosphere for dialogue and communication between all member countries. The creation of this liberal institution would also provide a venue for Middle Eastern nations to discuss their competing interests, establishing a groundwork that can allow the regional leaders to maintain control without the

omnipresent role of the United States. It is in the interest of Middle Eastern nations, even Israel and Saudi Arabia who have traditionally relied very heavily on U.S. support, to have America take a diminished role in the region. It is also in America's interest, so it may better leverage its short term strategies of counterterrorism with the grand strategy of maintaining political influence in the Asian sphere. While the idea of a firmly grounded international institution controlling the turbulent Middle East may strike some as an unrealistically optimistic outcome, when geopolitical interests align there lies potential. Traditional institutions of the region, such as OPEC, have demonstrated that coordination and efficacy are possible when incentives are properly laid out. The United States should work towards creating pathways and offering economic subsidies to see that these incentives are created for a multilateral institution. The greatest challenge in this endeavor is opening up diplomatic channels between Tehran and Riyadh while also ensuring that Israel participates. However, if the United States can leverage its political position, in conjunction with Moscow, toward this institution, it can be achieved. In creating this structure, member nations can discuss issues of oil and scarce resources, as well as conflict resolution, without committing to war.

Developing a sustainable institution in the Middle East is not without its obstacles and detractors. As an alternative, some would propose a different means of ensuring peace between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Following the Cold War logic of deterrence, some scholars have advocated for arming both Saudi Arabia and Iran with nuclear weapons. This proposition is in line with the ideology of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) and that as self-interested actors, neither nation would commit to war for fear of retaliation. While the role of nuclear weapons helped keep the United States and Russia from direct confrontation, it did little to prevent the series of proxy wars that defined the Cold War. Thus, there is little reason to believe nuclear armament would prevent Iran and Saudi Arabia from continuing to engage in supplying opposing rebel forces. Furthermore, Israel stakes much of its security on being the only nuclear power in the region. Arming two states that it regards as not simply competitors but threats to its survival would likely instigate Israel to play the role of spoiler. In the past, Israel has demonstrated its willingness to take preemptive strikes against neighboring nations it saw as a threat, and has threatened to do so in the future (Volsky). In addition to this, the United States should not encourage any actions that undermine the International Agreement on Nuclear Non-Proliferations Treaty. In the case of a nuclear Middle East, it would take only one instance of a state jumping the gun to trigger global cataclysmic events.

It is in the interest of Middle Eastern nations, even Israel and Saudi Arabia who have traditionally relied very heavily on U.S. support, to have America take a diminished role in the region.

Conclusion

The current instability in the Middle East stems from a series of proxy wars in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq, propelled and exacerbated by the conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Recent events, such as the execution of Nimr al-Nimr, have created further ruptures in the relationship between Tehran and Riyadh. While the United States' strategic interests in the region have narrowed due to the development of shale oil, facilitating a lesser need for Middle Eastern oil, the United States is still a major stakeholder in the region; these interests come from its commitments in Iraq and Israel as well as quelling the potential of terrorist groups and insurgencies set on attacking the homeland. It is imperative for the United States to create a comprehensive grand strategy for bringing stability to the Middle East. In the short term, this requires orchestrating a negotiated settlement to end the civil wars in Syria and Yemen, while focusing resources on eliminating the threat of ISIS. This negotiated settlement must involve all the relevant actors in the region, and developing compromises between the major parties to establish ceasefires and peace. This negotiated settlement should focus on several objectives: Reducing the relationship between sponsor-state and proxy fighters, engaging structural reforms to domestic governmental institutions, and the establishment of peace and reconciliation councils to reduce post-war conflict and tensions between rival sectarian groups. All parties should agree to respect the sovereignty of the former conflict states, and withdraw support from proxy fighter groups. To ensure that this peace holds, the United States should dedicate financial resources to developing a multilateral institution in the region, in which Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Iran have places at the table. The design of this institution could be mirrored to that of the United Nations, including that of the role of a security council staffed by Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia as permanent members with veto powers. This institution should also function and highlight the potential for economic growth within cooperation as a means of attracting support from party groups. In practical terms, to bring this institution into being, the United States must pledge foreign aid comparable to what it donates to Israel, Palestine, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. To help bring parties into agreement on the development of the Middle Eastern Institution, the United State should leverage all of its geo-political capabilities, including the threat to withdraw support for Middle Eastern nations that refuse. While the realities of a complex conflict environment make such an institution unlikely, an institution of this magnitude would enable dialogue without the necessity of war, and help mitigate current and future conflict.

Photo: Stevin Azo Michels, Kyoto, 2016

Photo: Wikimedia

Etymology of Boko Haram

Aishwarya Gupta

While Boko Haram is known for their many insurgent attacks and caliphate attempt in Nigeria, not many know about the origins of their name. Boko Haram is the colloquial name for the Islamic insurgent group in Northern Nigeria founded in 2002. It is called Sunnah lid-Da'wati wal-Jih□d, which means "People Committed to the Prophet's Teachings for Propagation and Jihad" in Arabic. Most people have come to believe that the word boko is a rough translation of "Western education" or a term borrowed from the English word "book". Recent studies have offered a new spectrum to the meaning of boko by equating it with the word Hausa word for "fake". Yet the idea that the Hausa translation of the word connotes a literal meaning is not widely accepted within the Hausa speaking population in Africa. In fact, many have a rejected the idea that the word boko has a basis or even a true meaning in Hausa. At the same time, there are several cultural and historical connotations of the word boko, which imply a deeper historical connection that lends the word its meaning. In the end, the term boko emulates a long-standing struggle with Western education, which has both linguistic and historical roots.

The first mention of the word boko in a Hausa dictionary came from the dictionary of George Percy Bargery, published in 1934, which cites eleven distinct meanings of the word boko relating them most closely to fraud or inauthenticity (Paul Newman). But the eleventh definition in Bargery's dictionary reads "(Eng.) Book" implying that it may be a loanword from the English language Bargery 5). George Bargery, who was an Anglican minister and a professor at the University of London where he taught Hausa, worked extensively in Northern Nigeria through the entirety of the British colonial rule in the country. He was not a linguist in the modern sense of the word, but his approach to learning the language was largely empirical. He learned and successfully transcribed the Hausa language by "Ask[ing] a Hausa". The author of his obituary reminisces that, "…He was much less happy with abstract terms, many of which he tended to misequate with one another," while he treated the more common words with less detail. Not to say that this statement makes his dictionary completely inaccurate, but it does raise some doubts on how reliable this definition is. Prior to 1934, the word boko did not seem to exist. However, other dictionaries such as Gregory Robinson's of 1899, raise several doubts concerning Bargery's definition, since not only was Bargery not a linguist, but he also did not take into account the different dialects of Hausa that existed or the dialect within which the word was used, if at all.

Paul Newman in his dictionary defines the word boko as "1. Western Education. 2. Latin alphabet (esp. as contrasted with the Arabic alphabet for writing Hausa). 3. Non-Secular. 4. Fraud, trick." He refutes the idea that boko is an English loanword for the word book. Newman offers linguistic evidence to show that the phonetics and the existence of the word littafi, which means book in Hausa, suggest that it cannot be a loanword. His basis for using the word fraud as being the closest definition of boko as used in "Boko Haram" is that boko was used in reference Western education, when the Western institutions were termed karatun boko, which came to mean 'any reading or writing not associated with Islam'. The concept of karatun boko, according to Newman, has its historical roots in the idea that when the British protectorate introduced Western education to the Hausa people, they viewed it as an attempt to undermine the highly revered Koranic learning. Since Western education lacked the substance that Koranic education taught, people came to associate Western education as deceptive or fraudulent and inimical to Islamic teachings lending this meaning to the word.

The speculation over the meaning of the phrase Boko Haram has infiltrated the field of linguistics, history and politics and has come to represent an ideology, not just a textbook definition.

Before the words fraudulent or fake were associated with Western education, they were used in reference with the idea of the 'fake bride' or amaryar boko. The fake bride has its roots in a cultural phe-

nomenon, where when a bride was getting married, there would be a 'fake' or decoy bride, who would ride on a horse with her family to her new home, while the real bride would be secretly taken by a few women to her new home. While Newman has become the foremost authority in claiming that the word does have its origins in the Hausa language, some have attempted to challenge this claim. Victor Manfredi, a scholar from Boston University, is one of the few people who has openly critiqued Newman's stance on the etymology of the word boko. According to Manfredi, boko does not have its roots in Hausa and might actually be related to the word 'book', suggesting there may have been an intermediary language that could have played a part in this connection. While he is unable to prove this theory, he goes to great lengths to show that the modern definition of boko is more "a matter of political ideology" as opposed to a dictionary definition.

Attempting to take into account the authority of academics discounts one of the primary sources of defining the phrase Boko Haram - the definition as the Hausa speaking population in Nigeria understand it. While academics such as Newman offer a strictly academic perspective to the meaning of boko, the attempts of people on the ground to define Boko Haram should not be dismissed. The President of the American University of Nigeria, Margee Ensign, has asserted that locals who speak the language are unaware of the meaning of the phrase. Even though her comments predate Paul Newman's study, the idea that locals are still grappling with a way to define Boko Haram indicates that its meaning is not just a matter of linguistics. Despite her numerous interactions with Hausa speaking people, Ensign, is unable to determine the meaning. Then how is it that the boko in Boko Haram should be defined? The speculation over the meaning of the phrase Boko Haram has infiltrated the field of linguistics, history and politics and has come to represent an ideology, not just a textbook definition.

Historically, Western education in Northern Nigeria was not just viewed as 'bad' from the point of view of the Muslim majority, but also from the point of view of the British colonial government. In 1900, when Northern Nigeria became a British protectorate, the Muslim elites grew wary of the Christian missionaries and their educational enterprises. In a move to foster support from the elite and aristocrats, the British government banned missionary activities in Northern Nigeria. After having seen how Western education arms the intellectuals against the colonial government, the British government sought to marginalize this phenomenon by prohibiting Western education in the Muslim dominated region of Northern Nigeria. At the same time, Muslim rulers and clerics feared that Western education would "undermine their authority, dishonor the legacy of this history of Muslim revival, and spread practices offensive to widely held beliefs about Muslim piety." While the seed against Western education was planted as a result of political fears and ambitions, the Northern part of Nigeria remained Muslim, while the Southern portion of the country had allowed Christianity to permeate the region. Consequently, in the northern Hausa speaking parts of Northern Nigeria, the word boko, was ascribed to the popular rejection of Western education. It was most widely used in describing the education system, where it is assumed by many that it comes from the Hausa word for "mimetic costume," highlighting the inconsistencies of the Western education system with the Islamic beliefs of the people. The fear of Western beliefs and culture permeating and undermining Islamic beliefs led many people to adopt an ideological and theological opposition to Western education or boko, as they called it.

Boko Haram's intellectual roots were a result of a constant struggle with economic disparity,

which took on a religious spectrum in the 1960s after Nigerian independence. Prior to the establishment of Boko Haram, the messianic sect Maitatsine emerged in the northern city of Kano in 1979-1980. The movement gained traction under the auspices of Muhammad Marwa, who demonized the government and was largely anti-establishment. The Maitatsine presence grew well into the 1990s when there was a strong push to establish an Islamic state or at the very least adopt some aspects of Shari'a law. Essentially, this was a revival of sorts, pushing many people to join the cause in this push for propagating Islam and suppressing Western education, which was increasingly being seen a complete contrast to Islamic beliefs. As the presence of the Maitatsine dwindled down towards the middle of the 1990s, many Islamic sects began to appear attempting to espouse the same beliefs as the Maitatsine. The running theme against Western education had long been associated with radical Islamic activities in Nigeria, but at the onset of the 21st century, the derogatory term for Western education, boko, was going to be part of a larger fundamental Islamist movement.

The word lent itself to the growing insurgency in Northern Nigeria after a brief spat between the founder of Boko Haram, Muhammad Yusuf and the famous imam, Ja'far Mahmoud Adam, who publicly denounced the movement. Muhammad Yusuf began a radical movement discouraging people from engaging in any activities related to the Nigerian government, whether it was working in it or being taught by it. Ja'far Mahmoud Adam, a popular Islamic cleric in Northern Nigeria, who was perhaps, "…Troubled, and maybe embarrassed, by the extremist preaching of his former student and associate," sought to distance himself from Yusuf. In an attempt to do so, he published a recorded speech titled 'Boko da aikan gwamnati ba haramun ba ne' with the intent of propagating the plausibility of studying and working in governmental institutions. The followers of Yusuf used the title of this speech to come up with their slogan to contrast their opposing positions by assessing that boko is haram. Hence, the compound term Boko Haram was the ascription given to this insurrectionary movement. Once Yusuf was expelled from Mahmoud Adam's Mosque in 2002, he founded a mosque in Northeast Nigeria, which would serve as a school for people who were going to abandon Western educational institutions as a result of his philosophy. Yusuf may have been radical in his belief, but his followers did not resorted to extreme violence until 2009, after Yusuf was killed and Abubakar Shekau took over. During Yusuf's interrogation, he made the claim that "certain Western knowledge is bad", when his interrogators accused him of being a hypocrite for using Western technology. This ideology has been officially and unofficially associated with the term Boko Haram.

> Boko, as a definitive term, mocks the teachings Western educational institutions and connotes the historical struggle between Islam and Western education.

Yusuf continued his demonization of Western

education in an effort to gain a strong foothold amongst the Muslim community. In an interview, he explicitly stated, "There are prominent Islamic preachers who have seen and understood that the present Western-style education is mixed with issues that run contrary to our beliefs in Islam….If it runs contrary to the teachings of Allah, we reject it. We also reject the theory of Darwinism." With such scathing statements, the name of the group serves the purpose of encapsulating these beliefs.. Lexicographers and linguists will continue to argue the origins and semantics of the word. The fact remains, however, that boko has come to mean Western education in the most derogatory sense. Boko, as a definitive term, mocks the teachings Western educational institutions and connotes the historical struggle between Islam and Western education.

Despite the name being a constant reminder of the history and strife faced by the nation, the inherent economic and political struggles that resulted in the rise of this group are apparent to this day. After coming to terms with the departure of the British colonial government, the economic disparity between Northern and Southern Nigeria was the order of the day. According to scholars and historians such as Moses Ochonu, Western education is not the problem, but the answer to the country's economic issues. According to many historians, people who preach against Western education have not reaped the benefits of it. The problem on the ground is perpetuated by a lack of economic opportunity. Many people, especially the youth, succumb to their economic strife and join militant groups like Boko Haram. Economic expansion and diversification, alongside education might be able to keep youth from falling into the hands of this insurgent group. But it is important to bear in mind that education in the Western world often differs quite distinctly and can be a source of resistance in non-Western countries, especially ones with a rich colonial history. The etymology and history of Boko Haram indicate a much deeper problem, one that confronts the underlying issues with western education. While Boko Haram is only one of many insurgent movements across the world that has taken a hold of the mindshare of disenfranchised communities, its ideology ndicates a crucial push factor exploited by many extremist groups, i.e. the entrenched and complex nature of western education and values vis-à-vis traditional and indigenous ones. As long as the two continue to remain in conflict, it will be more difficult to combat the root causes of extremism. Understanding some of the etymological and historical roots of these insurgent groups can help by underscoring the factors that help propagate the radical ideologies put forth by extremist organizations.

The problem on the ground is perpetuated by a lack of economic opportunity.

Gender

Photo: Stevin Azo Michels, Tokyo, 2016

Photo: Flood G, Flickr, 2011

Women of Iran

Akhil Ramesh

Women as Chattel

Blowing hot and cold would be the modern regressive Iran. Iran's notoriety on the global stage can be attributed to its development of nuclear arsenal and its long-standing animosity toward Israel. But much is not said about its human rights violations and regressive policies that veil chauvinistic men from their insecurities through the tactful interpretation of the one religious text they follow word to word. Iran after the revolution of 1979 renamed itself to the Islamic Republic of Iran, adding one word to the entirety of its constitution, 'Islamic' and thereby changing its course of direction toward the 7th century.

The constitution written after the revolution states:

"Through the creation of Islamic social infrastructures, all the elements of humanity that served the multifaceted foreign exploitation shall regain their true identity and human rights. As a part of this process, it is only natural that women should benefit from a particularly large augmentation of their rights, because of the greater oppression that they suffered under the old regime.

The family is the fundamental unit of society and the main center for the growth and edification of human being. Compatibility with respect to belief and ideal, which provides the primary basis for man's development and growth, is the main consideration in the establishment of a family. It is the duty of the Islamic government to provide the necessary facilities for the attainment of this goal. This view of the family unit delivers woman from being regarded as an object or instrument in the service of promoting consumerism and exploitation. Not only does woman recover thereby her momentous and precious function of motherhood, rearing of ideologically committed human beings, she also assumes a pioneering social role and becomes the fellow struggler of man in all vital areas of life. Given the weighty responsibilities that woman thus assumes, she is accorded in Islam great value and nobility." (IranChamber.com)

Words like "augmentation" and "nobility" create a mirage of women's empowerment in the new constitution, when their freedom, in reality, is curbed.

National Hijab Day – July 11

In the 21st century, people are celebrating freedom and love, whereas people of the 7th century celebrate chastity. Moral police patrol the streets to make sure 'celebration' goes on as planned and ordained by the 'supreme' leader. The ones who fail to abide by the dictum are slapped with fines, or are literally slapped. In Iran, moral policing especially

affects those at the bottom of the proverbial pyramid who are struggling to make ends meet. It is worthwhile noting that women of Northern Tehran do not face the same lashes as the women of the interiors of Iran. Women of the Urbanised capital city go about with their coloured and spa drenched hair (Hakakian), without their Rusari (the headscarf worn by women) and Manteau (the long overcoat worn over a dress) . It cannot be interpreted as a silent rebellion as much as it is an economic shield from the guardian council.

The Silent Rebellion

It has been proved by these rebellious women that empowerment of women and sharia law need not be exclusive.

The practice of Sigheh or Motaa (Saul) a system of temporary marriage, usually for a few hours where the woman is the sole property of her husband and is obligated to satisfy the sexual needs of her husband with total submission has been used by men to quench their twisted needs. This type of marriage is often viewed by the non-religious population of Iran as legalised prostitution. 'Wife for an hour' entitles the man to his wife's property and it is often used by married men and the woman who loses her property is blamed for being the victim. Victim blaming is a common practice by the clergy to uphold the law for only half the population.

My Stealthy Freedom campaign, started by a Iranian New Yorker Masih Alinejad, questioned the idea of hijab. The campaign has spread like wildfire among Millennials in Iran and abroad. This campaign somewhat resembles the HeForShe campaign, without with the glitz and glamour of Hollywood.

Such Campaigns initiate the debate among the youth of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Women at Work

Saudi Arabia and Iran are often painted broadly with the same brush. In relative terms, Iran could be viewed as a more advanced society than Saudi Arabia. Women make up 65% of the Iranian student population at colleges and universities, while in Saudi Arabia women are often not allowed to take up higher education. Women can drive cars and even run cab services in Iran while in Saudi Arabia it is illegal.

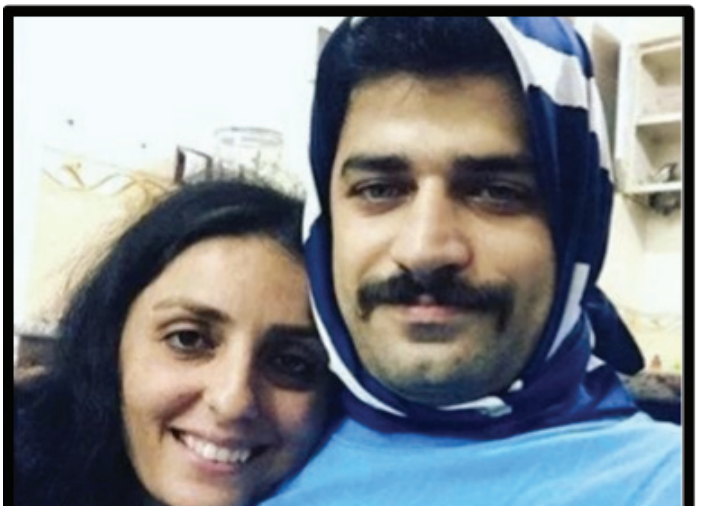
Women in Iran still have many academic limitations. They are not granted admission into engineering and technology programs. Women are not allowed to take up jobs that are high in demand. "Men only" qualifications for jobs eliminate a large

number of opportunities for women, and in fact, only 11% of the workforce is female (Darvishpour) It is believed by religious leaders that financial independence and autonomy gives rise to deviance among women. The rationale often used by the clerics behind such measures is preservation of Iranian culture and not ceding to western cultural invasions.

In 2015 the practice of white marriages was a topic of discussion among the religious elite. This practice of couples living together wihtout vows among the millennials of Iran gave the Islamic clergy an incentive to push for further bans and reforms. The Comprehensive Population and Family Plan was a bill that was passed in the parliament reducing the working hours of women. It enforces the ideology of the supreme leader Ali Khamenei that the primary role of women is to raise children. The plans that have passed through parliament would have to pass through the guardian council as well, to take effect. If these policies go through it would essentially confine the 4 million women of the Iranian workforce to their bedrooms and kitchens.

In the Iranian Parliament, representation of women has not increased even though the number of women in parliament has increased. The women in parliament echo the guardian council or change the human rights topic citing the need to deal with 'other' pressing issues. There are now 18 female parliamentarians, which is a meagre 3% (Celizic) of the parliamentary body.

In a country like the Islamic Republic of Iran it would not be wise nor prudent to set optimistic goals for women's empowerment. Goals have to be realistic, taking into account the dynamics on the ground, recognizing coexistence of the empowerment of women along with the Sharia law. 'Western ideals' cannot be used to further the debate. Change has to come from within. In the words of the late Ayatollah Rouhollah Khomeini "preserving the state is the most important". If the preservation of the state requires flexing certain Sharia Laws, the Islamic republic could be the epicentre of conservative women's rights movement.



Note: All photographs were provided by the author

Disassembling Binaries in IR's Core

DeLaine Mayer

How has traditional International Relations adapted to global trends, and in what ways could Queer Theory open IR up to new interpretations of global events? What core concepts in IR are unstable, how does Queer Theory seek to queer those concepts, and what can IR gain from the process?

Given new global trends including the rise of nonstate actors, expansion of borders through trade, and greater emphasis on human rights, International Relations (IR) is ripe for a reexamination of the discipline's conceptual cores. Queer Theory is a developing field of theory that can contribute to traditional IR by reframing traditional IR concepts in a number of significant ways. Markus Thiel, in LGBT Politics, Queer Theory, and International Relations writes, "[Queer Theory contests] prevalent dualistic binaries in mainstream IR, such as state/system, modern liberalism/premodern homophobia, West/Rest, etc." By undertaking the queering, or disassembling, of the binaries on which IR is built, IR theorists can focus on more flexible interpretations of changing trends and political predictions, and respond with more inclusive understanding of global processes.

Consider the traditional basis for sovereignty within IR's state-centric core. The definition of the state is predicated by several distinct binaries: borders (Our Land/Your Land), legalized conceptions of nationality (Citizen/Foreigner), and security (National Security/Insecurity Caused by Others.) These binaries have been historically significant for upholding states' geopolitical ambitions. A centralized government controlling spaces identified through territorial borders, then, could, at least in part, define sovereignty. This in turn grants a population a legalized nationality and offers state-sponsored security. However, these conceptual binaries have grown weak in the face of the major global issues of the 21st century, especially the global refugee crisis, climate change, and digital technology and cybernetics. Further, the rise of nonstate actors, a universalization of human rights, and expansion of borders through free trade threatens IR's traditional state system. Thiel writes, "Political tensions in the 'real world' should prompt the queer IR theorist to question established conceptions of governance." For the remainder of this paper, I will examine the three aforementioned binaries I believe are crucial to traditional IRs definitions of statehood and sovereignty and identify how IR stands to benefit from a queering of its core tenants.

Borders (Our Land/Your Land) as a conceptual and physical state marking have conveyed sovereignty in two ways. "Internal sovereignty means that the government exercises jurisdiction over the people in a given territory. External sovereignty confers on states and governments the right to represent

the national population in international transactions and negotiations." Increasingly, however, groups are able to transcend the traditional state role and represent themselves nationally, be it as part of a broader social movement for legal and political rights, like feminist or LGBTIQ movements supported or led by NGOs, or as decentralized networks seeking to replace the state system altogether, like ISIS. Traditional borders signify less in a digital world, and as human behavior is increasingly expressed through digital forms, traditional notions of sovereignty dissolve. Power in the 21st century is as rooted in information as it is to physical territory. Traditional IR theories on states gaining comparative advantage over its neighbors or regional states dealing with a would-be hegemon to balance power are complicated by the existence and accessibility of the Internet. The spread of digital social platforms, that are accessible to rural farmers and sophisticated hacktivists alike presents a digitized democratic landscape unimaginable just a few decades ago. This technological democratization, along with universalized human rights standards, coincides with issues of nationality and identity, as well.

The construction of nationality within a state produces the Citizen/Foreigner binary. Nationalism, incubated in "bounded, exclusionary communities," enables the state to grant certain rights to the Citizen that it does not grant the Foreigner. Nationalism justifies violence against the Foreigner for the good of the Citizen, and nationalism-expressed-as-oppression justifies violence against citizens who do not conform to state-expected norms or desires. However, globalized conceptions of human rights, and access to global platforms for dialogue and action, force an adjustment in what traditional IR can explain about state responsibility and responsiveness. Thiel writes, "The emergence of numerous Western-organized NGOs, but also locally hybrid-

However, the conceptual binaries have grown weak in the face of the major global issues of the 21st century, especially the global refugee crisis, climate change, and digital technology and cybernetics.

ized LGBT movements with the significant publicity they generate – be it positive or negative – pluralizes transnational politics to a previously unknown degree, and chips away at the centrality of the state in regulating and protecting its citizens." Citizens and Foreigners have more opportunities than ever to find shared interests and ways of identifying that are not based on nationality.

Despite many similarities, people and states express fear and insecurity oftentimes through violence. Although traditional IR is well-versed in power and war, security in IR focuses on harm to the state rather than state failure to respond to violence of marginalized groups. Further, to Cynthia Weber, traditional IR would consider structural systems that perpetuate inequality or violence of disempowered communities, too "low-theory." However, many of today's conflicts have deep roots in sectarianism, poverty, and unequal access to resource and oppor-

tunities – all issues that fall into the too low-theory for IR category. The sheer number of civil wars, not interstate wars, in the 21st century should give traditional IR theorists pause, however. Queering security studies in IR would lead to a more holistic, inclusive understanding of what it means for individuals and communities to feel secure, and what local, national, and global predictions and solutions are available.

By accepting the disassembly of IR's conceptual cores' binaries, IR is opened up to new forms of thinking about statehood in a universalizing system. Queer Theory's goal is not to overhaul traditional IR but to create a more reflexive theoretical system within which to understand and predict global behavior, and encourage more inclusive methodologies for identifying what actors matter and are represented in global theory.

Photo: Stevin Azo Michels, Kyoto, 2016

Japan: Energy

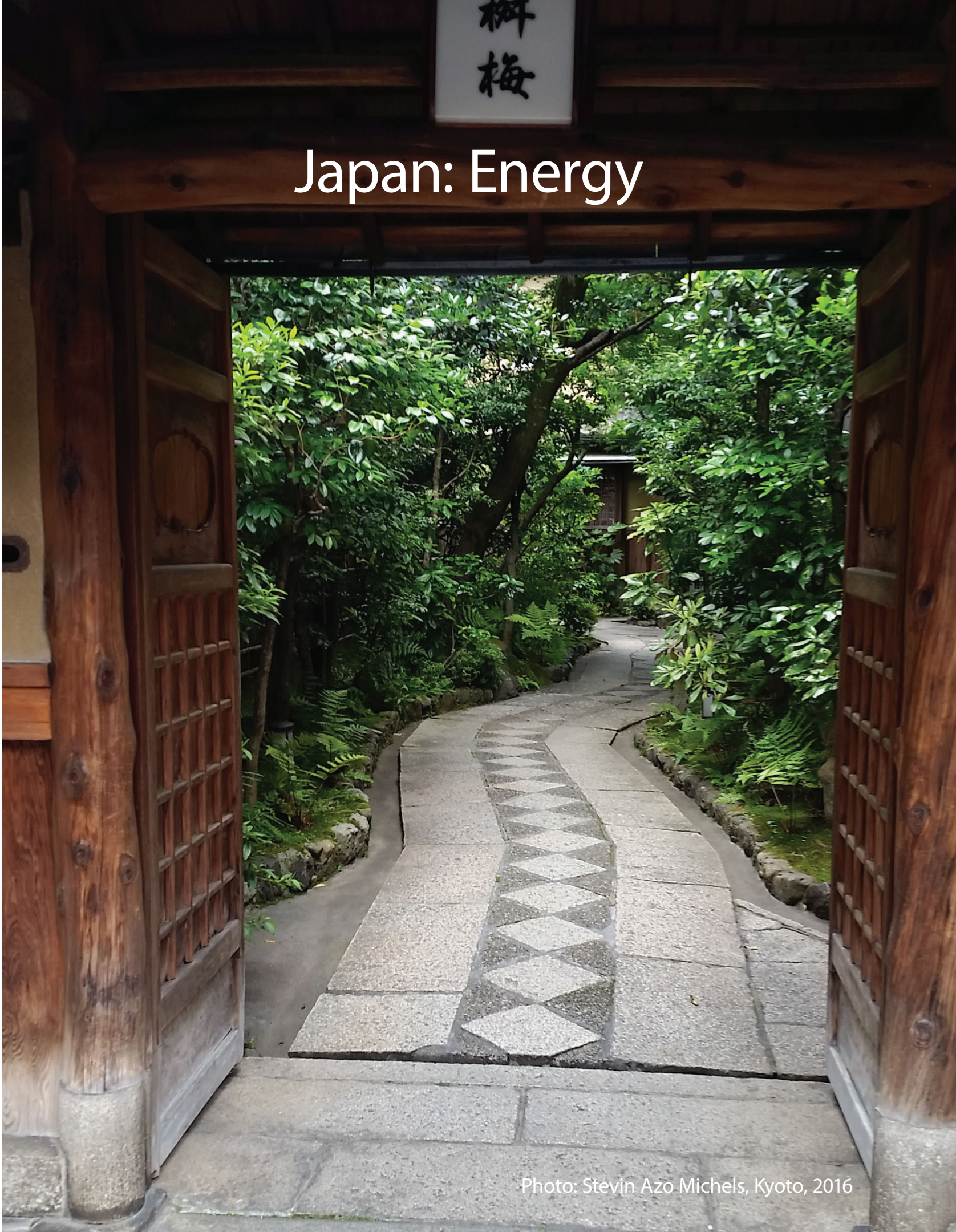


Photo: Stevin Azo Michels, Kyoto, 2016

Photo: Stevin Azo Michels, Kyoto, 2016

A Path without Accountability TEPCO and the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Accident

Yuval Bacal

3/11 has become a synonym in Japan for the day of the 9.0 Great East Japan Earthquake, the following devastating tsunami and the nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant. The natural disasters caused a majority of the destruction, claiming the lives of 16,000 people and displacing hundreds of thousands more. But it was the nuclear accident that has had a lasting impact on Japan's political and societal priorities and policies, especially in the energy landscape.

Most pointed a finger at the company operating the nuclear power plant, the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO). Much has been said on the collusive nature it adopted in its operations, especially with regulators, leading up to the malfunctioning of reactors in a nuclear station. This article adds to the discussion on TEPCO's role by looking at an issue not cohesively addressed: how its behavior contradicts the principles of a sustainable corporate strategy. It serves the best interests of a company – and its shareholders – to expand its perspective beyond short-term gains to include long-term broad scopes, adaptability, transparency and accountability (Lavarenne, Shwageraus and Weightman 275). The following sections illustrate how TEPCO betrayed these principles before, during and even after the nuclear accident, and, more importantly, how this affects Japan's broader energy policy.

Before: Leading Up to the Meltdown

In his introductory remarks for The Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission (NAIIC) Report, submitted to the Diet in 2012, the Commission's chairman Dr. Kiyoshi Kurokawa "painfully admitted" that the nuclear accident "was a disaster 'Made in Japan'" (NAIIC 9). His wish was to emphasize the cultural characteristics in Japanese society, which include an obedient tendency, group conformity, reluctance to question authority, and a devotion to organizational identities (NAIIC 9). These attributes are not limited to the utilities industry, but with its distinct structure of regional monopolies, the foundations were laid for a lacking resiliency and responsiveness during the Fukushima Daiichi disaster. .

The report, like many other critics over the past 5 years, described the condition of the Japanese nuclear industry in the decades preceding the accident as one of regulatory capture. Society's benefits and safety are best achieved when private operators, public regulators and independent opinion shapers, like academic scholars, balance each other's interests and actions. Yet under regulatory capture, all parties have instead aligned under a single priority, in this instance the unstoppable operation of Japan's nuclear reactors (NAIIC 43). The report even suggests collusion, beyond the clear lack of

governance, as a source for the accident (NAIIC 9).

Consequently, while both TEPCO and the government's regulatory agencies were aware for years that probable dangers do exist beyond the scope of existing resilience measures, none felt the pressure to act upon it. TEPCO was slow to take any measure that would hinder operational activities, and regulators failed to impose stricter standards on it. In fact, fearing that by taking actions to adjust the Fukushima Daiichi's infrastructure, the company would provide ammunition to future lawsuits – TEPCO aggressively opposed any new regulations. Whereas each time it had to negotiate with the government, the latter consistently complied (IBT Staff Report). TEPCO's logic, as will be further detailed below, was wrong. Deliberate lack of action is the reason it is now being sued in court.

While directing a considerable part of the blame on TEPCO – including a call for its reform – the language of the NAIIC report seems to emphasize that the conformity of the regulators allowed the corporation to pursue such behavior. Nevertheless, the report includes a tacit implication, perhaps unintended, that TEPCO's actions depicted what is expected from a company seeking to maximize its shareholders' interests under regulatory pressures. This is a point too many critics overlook. Every company, and especially one in a capital-intensive industry investing in decades-long assets, serves its interests best by incorporating long-term strategies and risk assessments, and not only through an uncompromised approach for undisrupted operations.

One independent report commissioned after the nuclear accident discusses the effect of a long established "twisted myth - a belief in the 'absolute safety' of nuclear power" (Funabashi and Kitazawa 13-14) dating back to the emergence of Japan's nuclear industry. When the country decided to venture into nuclear power generation, it faced a strong opposition based on memories and sentiments related to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The only way to appease such opposing forces was to constantly project how the industry was unconditionally secure. Therefore, even when TEPCO became aware of updated scientific findings and technological innovations for improved safety, it did very little to act upon them. The company and its management feared that taking action might serve as an admission that existing measures did not guarantee the absolute safety as promised. "In this way," the report concludes, "power companies found themselves caught in their own trap" (Funabashi and Kitazawa 14).

Yet again, from a sustainable business strategy perspective, the logic should have been the opposite. When a company recognizes new weaknesses or threats to its operations, the response should not

The report even suggests collusion, beyond the clear lack of governance, as a source for the accident.

is true especially in recent decades when overall global demand for transparency has been on the rise (Esty and Winston). It especially doesn't justify corrupt behavior and cover-up mentality – which TEPCO slowly embraced. In 2002, for instance, it was found to have repeatedly lied about safety data concerning cracks in its nuclear reactors (Pilling). And to this day it is reluctant to submit documentation from the days of the nuclear accident, tending to only comply with court decrees (Hamada).

Similarly troubling was the lack of support from the managerial levels. Neither chairman nor president were present at the head office for the first 20 hours after the tsunami – and while their claims that it was difficult to get back to Tokyo from their locations as transportation systems were down might be understandable; they were also unavailable for communication with the head office in the first few hours of the crisis that were highly sensitive (Funabashi and Kitazawa 11). Technical support as well was not provided from the head office to the on-site team (NAIIC 42).

> Therefore, even when TEPCO became aware of updated scientific findings and technological innovations for improved safety, it did very little to act upon them.

During: March 2011

TEPCO's performance on the first days following the Great East Japan Earthquake reveals another level of incompetence and unpreparedness that had nothing to do with public image: the lack of updated, coherent manuals for the on-site employees attempting to contain the disaster's consequences (NAIIC 33). The company's operating procedures were last updated in 1994, and did not include all the scenarios recognized through the years as probable – including the complete loss of power in a nuclear plant, as the original phase leading to the meltdown had been. The workers on the scene were distracted by multiple deteriorations in the different units of the power plant, which only exacerbated the need for systematic guidebooks appropriate for the management of a sensitive site (Funabashi and Kitazawa 12).

By the time TEPCO's management had finally settled itself to coordinate the disaster response, its actions depicted a clear relinquishing of responsibility for the situation. The NAIIC report (42) ascertains: "Rather than make strong decisions and clearly communicating them to the government, TEPCO insinuated what it thought the government wanted and therefore failed to convey the reality on the ground". This, in turn, worsened the overall mitigation efforts as the government, including the prime minister, were the ones making the decisions despite lacking technical knowledge and miscommunicated information as opposed to TEPCO (IBT Staff Report).

Public communications were also quick to shed responsibility for the accident. TEPCO was very quick in announcing that the cause of the incident was only the tsunami, and not the earthquake. The reason for this claim was to blame the accident on "the unexpected", thus avoiding blame. Yet it is a counterproductive tactic for a corporation to feverishly shed off even the slightest responsibility during grand-scale events of such measure, especially when a claim loses ground under scrutiny. The NAIIC not only found that there is a possibility that the earthquake did damage some of the safety systems in Fukushima, but also that TEPCO and the regulators had been warned back in 2006 about the expected probability of a tsunami as high as the one to hit the facility in 2011 (NAIIC 16-17; IBT Staff Report).

Furthermore, in the early days of the crisis, TEPCO's President instructed his staff not to use the term "core meltdown" when describing the situation. This was while three separate explosions happened in the power plant and hundreds of thousands of citizens were evacuated from the region – including a contemplation to evacuate all employees from the plant which, had it been carried out, would have lost what was at least achieved. The company officially admitted there were core meltdowns only in May 2011. Yet it took over five more years and a court injunction to reveal the issuing of such an instruction. Even today, after the numerous changes the company went through, it is still reluctant to disclose information pertaining to its performance during the accident (NewsBank).

After: Five Years in the Aftermath

A lot has happened in the Fukushima prefecture and in Japan's energy landscape in the five years since the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. A first of its kind Reconstruction Agency was established by the government, major legislative changes carried out an intensive reform in the nation's electricity markets, and a renewed emphasis on energy efficient products are a few examples (Masuda 2016). TEPCO's ownership went through a significant change as well, when a government-budgeted fund gained a majority share in the company's ownership (TEPCO, "Stock Information"). Nonetheless public trust in TEPCO is still lacking – and the company's demeanor is still not helpful.

TEPCO was very quick to announce that the cause of the accident was only the tsunami, and not the earthquake.

As has been mentioned earlier, TEPCO continues in its opposition for transparency when it comes to its role in the Fukushima nuclear meltdown. In August 2015 the company was forced by a judge's decree to disclose a 2008 internal memorandum intended to warn managers of a need "to raise precautions against an unprecedented nuclear catastrophe" (Hamada). Even after replacing its executive management, the company still obstructs

any notion of accountability to its previous deeds. In a statement included in TEPCO's annual report for fiscal year 2015, addressed to shareholders and investors, there is a section titled "Achieving Both 'Accountability' and 'Competitiveness'" (TEPCO, "Company Profile" 26-27) . While it discusses responsibilities required for the success of current and future ventures, it does not discuss the past. In fact, aside from the section's title, the word "accountability" is not included in the statement at all.

It is understandable why the government took a majority ownership in the corporation in the aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident. In March 2011, TEPCO supplied 29 percent of Japan's electricity to over 26 million households and 2 million businesses (Pilling). Such a fundamental service could not have been left to dissipate by letting the capital's regional monopoly to collapse. Conversely, through a majority ownership the government could not only impose institutional changes within the company, but could also make an example of it as part of the national reforms in the energy markets. For instance, on April 2016 TEPCO had s

plit itself into a holding company – Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, which maintains all power generation through nuclear, renewables and hydro – and three subsidiaries: TEPCO Fuel & Power, TEPCO Power Grid, and Tokyo Energy Partner (Retail). This split is in preparation for the future unbundling of the electricity market, making TEPCO the only utility company to take such measures to date (Moody's).

That being said, having effectively received a government bail-out could discourage the understanding of the importance of corporate accountability. TEPCO remains to date the largest utility company in Japan servicing almost exclusively the nation's largest metropolitan area. There is a risk now of a false sense of confidence against any chance of bankruptcy: the company might not feel the need to regain the public's trust, and any unexpected costs, in the worst case, would be covered by the government.

This is true, for example, when it comes to lawsuits. Without getting much attention, there is a slow trend of class actions filed against TEPCO by Tohoku residents affected by the nuclear accident. To date, there are at least 20 different lawsuits brought by more than 10,000 plaintiffs, seeking restitution for being displaced and exposed to risk, including radiation. Some even seek to prove negligence in addition to the harm inflicted upon them (Hamada; Broder 613-614). In March 2016, the judges of the biggest class action, representing 3,900 people, made the first onsite visit by a judicial entity in Fukushima. All were required to wear full protective gear ("Judges Clad").

> The natural disasters caused a majority of the destruction, claiming the lives of 16,000 people and displacing hundreds of thousands more.

Especially notable is a current $1 Billion class action lawsuit filed in the United States by sailors

who served on the USS Ronald Reagan during the days of the accident. At the time, they were called to assist in the evacuation and containment of the contaminated areas, at the behest of the Japanese. According to the plaintiffs, TEPCO and the Japanese government downplayed the information passed to the United States and as a result exposed up to 70,000 Americans to dangerous radiation. Even though the sailors could not sue the Japanese government, they were able to divert their attention towards TEPCO (Freeman).

This brings to mind again the issue of serving the best interests of shareholders, even if the majority share is owned by the government now. In the weeks after the nuclear accident, TEPCO's stock fell by 80 percent. With some variations over the past five years, it still holds a similar value today as it did five years ago. This entire time no dividends were issued at all (TEPCO, "Annual Reports"). How then did TEPCO's behavior before, during and after March 2011 serve shareholders and their interest? And more importantly, why don't these shareholders require an accountable a approach from their executive management?

Conclusion

When the scale of the nuclear meltdown in Fukushima Daiichi became evident, people started comparing TEPCO to Lehman Brothers. Dominated by a too-big-to-fail mentality, there was a reliance on government backing should anything go wrong. A few weeks later, stock traders were contemplating whether Japan's largest utility company would follow a path similar to that of BP or perhaps to that of Enron (Pilling). This is not a list any company should want to be a part of.

Eventually, a different path awaited TEPCO as the government bought a majority share of its ownership. The implications on the question of accountability are twofold: first, corporate governance could still be neglected, as examples in this article have shown. Second, TEPCO's path is now intermingled with Japan's energy policy decision-making. Just as TEPCO is now used to set an example in preparation for the reforms in the country's electricity markets; so should efforts concentrate on creating a new corporate culture in the industry – a culture of sustainable long-term strategies, transparency and accountability.

When the scale of of the nuclear meltdown in Fukushima Daiichi became evident, people started comparing TEPCO to Lehman Brothers.

Photo: Stevin Azo Michels, Somewhere between Tokyo and Osaka, 2016

The Future of Japan's Energy Landscape: Nuclear Will Secede to Renewables

Stevin Azo Michels

Japan's vision of a nuclear-powered, energy-independent future changed on 11 March 2011. On that date, Japan experienced the magnitude 9.0 Tohoku earthquake, triggering the massive tsunami which is credited with starting the nuclear meltdown disaster at the Fukushima nuclear power plant (Steffen).

I.

A mere 3 days later, Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) estimated that 55 percent of the fuel rod assemblies in Reactor No. 1 and 25 percent of those in reactor No. 3 were damaged. They would then wait 2 months to publically declare that they were 'damaged' (Bernish). It would then be five more years before they would admit a meltdown had in fact taken place (Squassoni and Sekiguchi).

Fukushima was not a natural accident, it was a man-made disaster (Agence France-Presse, Tanaka). Decisions on where and how the reactors were built contributed to their failure. TEPCO knew

of tsunami dangers from 2006. They knew they needed upgrades to withstand earthquakes and that they had no viable evacuation plans (Kurokawa).

In addition, the government and TEPCO lied both during and after the accident about their culpability. 140,000 people within 20-30 kilometers sheltered in place rather than evacuate (Squassoni and Sekiguchi). As a result, Japan's population is distrustful of the government, TEPCO, and nuclear power (Agence France-Presse).

II.

Prior to Fukushima, Japan relied on nuclear power for about 30% of its energy needs (McCurry 2016). Of the 43 reactors, the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) has cleared 4, but only 2 are running (Amaha). Japan now needs to import about 84% of its energy requirements (Nuclear Power in Japan). Many in the government still expect nuclear to provide at least a portion of the nation's energy in the near future, albeit possibly from fewer reactors (Nuclear Power in Japan).

The electric companies would also like to restart the reactors, mainly for economic reasons. The dormant reactors are lost assets and the financial outlay to replace the energy nuclear once provided is extreme. In addition, some of the cheaper replacement technologies, e.g. coal, are less environmentally friendly and make Japan too reliant on outside actors. As a result, there is a crescendo of voices within the governmental and energy communities calling for the restart of the plants.

There are many impeding factors in reopening TEPCO, however. The first is public distrust. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and TEPCO have been caught lying to the public and trying to cover up information. TEPCO President Naomi Hirose has even stated publicaly at a press conference, "I would say it was a cover up. It's extremely regrettable" (Bernish). The decision to restart rests in the hands of the local prefectures, meaning this negative public sentiment can sway the votes of elected officials.

A second issue is the relative age of the plants. Many are approaching the end of their initial length of service mandates. Prior to Fukushima, reactors were licensed for 40 years and tightened and those eligible for extensions now require substantial improvements (Nuclear Power in Japan). Opposition figures are using this as a tactic to slow or limit the reactors getting approval to restart.

Pending court cases have restricted plants from reopening. In March 2016, the Kansai Electric Takahama reactors No. 3 and 4, previously deemed safe to reopen, were taken off-line by court order using the strict post-Fukushima rules. Litigious actions emphasize the absence of comprehensive plans for evacuation and also for spent fuel rods (Squassoni and Sekiguchi). The potential for this action has

> Fukushima was not a natural accident,
> it was a man-made disaster.

has created a self-imposed limit of prefectures trying to restart. (Agence France-Presse).

Still, some government agencies remain hopeful. They describe the 'atomic-life' of memories and the propensity for humans to eventually forgive and forget. They expect the tide against nuclear power will eventually turn. The government certainly has good reason to believe this. Japan is the only country to have had atomic weapons used against them at a loss of over 100,000 lives (Nuclear Power in Japan). Despite this they were able to use media campaigns, and the aforementioned forgetfulness, to change an attitude of nuclear as an evil force of war to one of nuclear energy being a benevolent and safe method for powering a growing and electricity-thirsty nation. Given the current dependence on expensive outside sources for energy, expectations are that economics will eventually outweigh this negative sentiment.

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and the propensity for humans to eventually forgive and forget.
They expect the tide against nuclear power will eventually turn.

Some think there will be a quick return to nuclear power. Yohei Ogino, of METI, thinks nuclear energy is indispensable for Japan's future. He feels what is needed is both an educated public, and an increase in safety by the NRA, to change perception. He also noted the 7 years needed to start a wind farm compared to the zero years necessary for other energy sources like coal and nuclear (Ogino).

Some discount the environmental concerns. "The Abe administration is very close to big industry and the power monopolies and they have very low ambitions in terms of climate change policy," Tetsunari Iida, director of the Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies in Tokyo said (McCurry, 2015).

Finally, others, like Nobuo Tanaka, President of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and former Executive Director of the International Energy Agency, think it's all about a mix. He sees LNG, hydrogen, carbon capture, renewables, nuclear, and energy efficiency playing a role in Japan's future (Tanaka). Tanaka did however state unequivocally "If we don't have nuclear, it is a disaster for energy security." Kent Miura of METI also thinks that while nuclear is needed and that they will be restarted, he also foresees renewables providing up to 22-24% of the mix (Miura).

III.

The Paris Agreement brought 195 countries to the table to curb greenhouse emissions highlighting diminishing the use of coal (Boersma and VanDeveer, 2016). But, pragmatism sometimes beats environment. And for now, Japan has mostly supplanted nuclear with coal and LNG.

Coal produces 40% of the world's power and employs millions worldwide. It is abundant and cheap (Boersma and VanDeveer, 2016). It also

contains ash which is radioactive and toxic, contaminates the water table, destroys habitats, and produces greenhouse gases (Boersma and VanDeveer, 2016). Greenpeace and the Kiko Network, two environmental groups, suggest Japan's plan to build new coal power plants near Tokyo and Osaka will result in tens of thousands of premature deaths (McCurry 2016).

Japan's turn to LNG means it currently buys 35% of the 250 million ton global market (Negishi, 2016). Initially, they paid a hefty price tag. But being the world's largest LNG importer, Japan has recently been able to leverage its interactions. They have negotiated both new pricing schemes and the ability to resell surpluses. For example, Jera Co., a venture between Tokyo and Chubu Electric Power Companies, will be reselling to France's Electricitie de France (Negishi, 2016). But, market volatility is projected. The future of LNG, and Japan's reliance on foreign suppliers, mean its future as a reliable energy source is far from certain. So what options remain?

Japan has several options, but each is mired in consequences. Now that the Iranian sanctions have been lifted, Japan could double its Iranian crude imports, but this still embroils Japan in the currently volatile Middle East politics (Daiss). They could also shift their dependence on Middle East oil and LNG to more cooperation with Russia and China (Toichi). Tokyo Gas, for example, wants a Russian pipeline (Amaha).This relationship is complicated by the territorial disputes in Japan's Northern Territories and any further dependence with China shifts the power dynamic and affects the Japan/ China dispute over the South China Sea (Chilcoat).

Dr. Kiyoshi Kurokawa, former Chairman of The National Diet of Japan Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission, thinks Japan is not embracing renewables (Kurokawa). But, while Prime Minister Abe is promoting a return to nuclear energy, his government is also, quietly but pragmatically, promoting renewable energy like solar, wind, and hydrogen. Kyocera is building the world's largest solar plant on a Chiba prefecture reservoir. It will be capable of powering about 5,000 households and is scheduled for 2018 completion (Vaughan). Some government agencies, including the Ministry of Environment (MoE), research institutes at corporations like Mitsubishi, and METI power-mix member Kikkawa Takeo, suggest renewables could exceed 30% of Japan's energy mix by 2030 (Dewit). These renewables could include hydroelectric, solar, wind, combined heat and power (CHP), and the use of energy storage systems (Thorpe, 177).

While Prime Minister Abe is promoting a return to nuclear energy, his government is also, quietly but pragmatically, promoting renewable energy like solar, wind, and hydrogen.

Tatsuo Masuda, Visiting Professor, NUCB Graduate School; Member of the Board, SOC Corporation; and World Economic Forum Global Agenda

Council Member, called for a strategy beyond LNG, but described several obstacles to renewables. For example, only a few of Japan's coasts are suitable for wind turbines. In addition, attempts to utilize geothermal energy will affect the hot springs industry. There is also both a mindset of politicians to follow the will of their financial supporters in addition to a weak grass roots movement in support of renewables. He further noted that the "media is often not neutral", that "they can be manipulated" by advertising fees (Matsuda).

A February 2015 poll by Mizuho Information & Research Institute of Japan asked whether one would use nuclear power if costs were the same or less than current costs. 67% said "yes" and 32% said 'no'. This contrasts with polls by the media and a 2012 news media survey found over 94% of the most popular media were antinuclear (Nuclear Power in Japan).

Another issue is start up costs and the ability of companies to monetize. Why spend billions on new technology when cheap coal or abundant LNG can utilize existing modes? Further, if households can produce their own energy, and in some cases sell it back to the electric companies, there can be little incentive for electric companies to invest and promote renewables (Amaha). Aileen Smith of Green Action also accuses the utilities of 'saving grid space for nuclear' thereby blocking the ability for renewables to grow (McCurry, 2015). Agencies, both private and public, are also sometimes reluctant to commit to renewables because of the high up-front costs (Thorpe, 178).

IV.

Hisayo Takada, climate and energy campaigner at Greenpeace Japan, has said it is obvious that Japan should not "....keep spending money on something that is old and has no future," and should " invest in something new and watch it grow.... (McCurry, 2015)." Kimiko Hirata, international director of Kiko Network, said "Japan needs to give renewables priority access to the grid and stop wasting resources trying to restart nuclear plants and expanding dirty coal (McCurry, 2016)."

Renewables, as in many other locations around the world, have had difficulty gaining traction. One part of the problem is lack of reliability: solar power only produces energy when the sun shines and wind turbines turn only when there is a breeze. However, this variable output can be alleviated with the use of energy storage (Siohansi, 114). Used in conjunction, these dual technologies, renewables and storage, can provide a steady power stream needed by modern Japanese society. And, it can return Japan to a path of energy independence.

Japan needs to give renewables priority access to the grid and stop wasting resources trying to restart nuclear plants and expanding dirty coal.

James Simms, Forbes Contributor and former President and Board of Director member of The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan, noted the collusion

of the Japanese government and the nuclear industry is similar to that of Washington and Wall Street (Simms). Indeed, there seems to be a never-ending torrent of pro-nuclear dialogue coming from Japanese governmental agencies, energy industry officials, and the media. But, with the negative forces keeping nuclear from retaking the stage, the econom ically-volatile and environmentally-unfriendly use of coal and LNG, and the desperate need to regain-some semblance of energy independence including a policy target of 25 percent self-sufficiency, Japan simply must embrace renewables. Even after Hiroshima and Nagasaka, Japan was once able to change the public's opinion towards nuclear benevolence. It can now foment public opinion to fully embrace the investment in renewables.

Photo: Stevin Azo Michels, Kyoto, 2016

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