

Applications of Modern Special Warfare in the Middle East and Beyond

By: Kevin M. Miller

The Middle East: Bugged Down, or Free at Last?

The crossroads of the global oil trade lay principally in a tiny strip of water called the Persian Gulf. Here no less than eight(8) countries Iraq, Kuwait, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain; export their highly prized light sweet crude through this small channel of water. And though most are friendly countries, one; Iran, is an outright enemy of the United States. With Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons possibly coming to a head in the near future, the safety and reliability of this pristine waterway comes into question. And with the straits of Hormuz separating the Arabian Peninsula and Iran by just fifteen miles it becomes all the more urgent to guarantee the safety of the resources which run through it. In short, a strategic answer is needed to address the amount of resources emanating throughout the region.

Action should be taken before a crisis breaks out in the region that would disrupt global oil supplies and place a heavy burden not just on the U.S. economy but the global economy as a whole. The options are few. The Syrian civil war which is entering its fourth year of indefinite strife and has claimed in excess of 100,000 lives through both conventional and chemical weaponry. This situation (Syria) on its face may not seem like the most prudent place for America to flex its military might, after all Iraq is Syria's next door neighbor. Syria also has competing factions in it who are all vying for a stake in a post Bashar al-Assad Syria. These

parties include the Al-Nusra front, a hard line Islamist faction that is de facto Al-Qaeda branded; the Kurdish peoples of the North who already enjoy a level of autonomy which they have not seen during any of the Assad's reign; and the Free Syrian Army numbering (if you believe reports) up to 80,000 strong. There are also the Al-Assad supporters or ultra royalist as I like to call them that are the Baath party of Syria, and at their most hardcore are Fedayeen, and Hezbollah willing to become human shields to protect the al-Assad family, and Damascus at all cost, not the most welcoming of situations. Add in the fact that ISIS or Islamic State of Iraq, and Syria are well defined militarily and taking over swaths of Iraq and Syria including Mosul. This may seem like a desperate situation that perhaps America should not stick its nose into considering the brutality of the Iraq war, it is these very things that cause me to suggest that the stakes are simply too high for not only the future of peace and stability in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), but also the energy security of the United States and its allies, and it's not without precedent. However if we are to ameliorate this environment then we need to turn not to our conventional army, using conventional tactics, but instead apply the lessons earned from our experiences in Iraq, and use more specialized warfare, if we are to be successful in such an endeavor.

Iraq War 1991:

In 1991 George H. W. Bush was president of the United States and Saddam Hussein had just invaded Kuwait taking control of 1/5th of all the known oil resources in the world. George H.

W. Bush wanted to act immediately, unilaterally, and without congressional approval but showing juris prudence he consulted with congress before successfully repulsing Sadaam's invasion of Kuwait, a U.S. ally in the region. Iraq is invaded but Sadaam is not toppled signaling a policy of deterrence rather than regime change. The war was over in less than 100 days with minimal casualties. However in a sign of miscommunication between the northern Iraqi Kurdish community and the United States an uprising is began with the hopes of establishing a unified autonomous Kurdish state. The U.S. withdraws and Sadaam gases his own people(the Kurds) in one of the worst chemical weapons attacks of the latter half of the 20th century. This act does not go unnoticed by the congress of the United States, as the Kurds to the north, and Shiites to the south are soon thereafter, through an act of congress, protected from Sadaam by a no-fly zone. The invasion of Iraq, at this time is the joint warfare, in the classical sense, at its best. The use of new precision weapons, and communications capabilities make the Iraqi army sitting ducks for the U.S. forces. When they do finally decide to invade there is an overwhelming sense of dread by the Iraqi's as they are confronted by U.S. forces whom are better equipped, and better trained than they are. The war last less than 90 days, and fewer than 100 American fighting men and women are killed throughout the entire operation, from start to finish. The invasion represents a case of when special warfare was not only needed, but also not practiced. This is a situation where the U.S. determined not to repeat the mistakes of Vietnam, overwhelms the enemy with a superiority in the number of ground combat forces, logistics, strategy, and technology.

Iraq War 2003:

After the attacks on the world trade center on 9/11 Afghanistan is soon thereafter invaded by the United States toppling the government of the Taliban and sending the perpetrator of those heinous acts Osama Bin Laden fleeing to Tora bora. In the 2003 State of the Union address to congress, then President George W. Bush; singles out Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as an “Axis of Evil”. Soon thereafter Iraq is again invaded with this time the main goal of preventing Sadaam Hussein from using weapons of mass destruction against the U.S. or any of its allies. Regime change is also one of the goals and is completed in a matter of weeks after the start of the war in March 20th 2003. The oil ministry is captured relatively quickly in the outbreak of war by American and coalition forces and soon the southern Iraqi oil fields resume energy production for Iraq though not at full capacity. Ominously though soon after the toppling of Sadaam an al-Qaeda led Iranian backed insurgency begins in earnest for what would last a total of eight years. Some would say that it still continues under the banner of a group calling itself al-Qaeda in Iraq. This war along with the still lingering war in Afghanistan would sap much needed blood and treasure from the United States with very little to show for it. Until May 2011 when Osama bin Laden (OBL) is finally killed in a compound outside of Abbotabad, Pakistan that he shared with his immediate family. It should be noted that several positive things came out of Iraq as well: a brutal dictator was executed along with his sons ending a reign which stretched across several decades. The Iraqi people were finally able to choose their own leaders in a representative democracy. And two key important things happen in the world of oil transit, two pipelines were built which stretched from the oil rich cities in the north of both Kirkuk and Mosul. These pipelines would extend to in the case of Mosul; Jordan and a port city in Israel, and the Kirkuk

pipeline stretched to a port city in Turkey. Both of these pipelines end at the Mediterranean coast avoiding Syria completely.

These events however never would've transpired if the United States had already been adept at Special Warfare. The key to Special Warfare in my opinion is not placing such projects in a large bureaucracy such as the Pentagon, and Department of Defense, but rather allowing for a more ideas oriented environment such as the CIA to handle the reigns of such specialized warfare. It worked in Afghanistan in the 1980's, the stinger missile program that propped up the Mujahideen against the soviet occupiers, and worked later on in Afghanistan(JAWBREAKERS), and Iraq(DBROCKSTARS). In the case of Afghanistan and the JAWBREAKERS, the U.S. needed a plan to attack Afghanistan, dispel the Taliban, and kill Osama bin Laden shortly after the attacks of 9/11. The U.S. military was unprepared to deal with the problem immediately as they had no plans for how to invade Afghanistan, However George Tenet at the CIA did. It was Gary Schroen who was the point man for the CIA as they parachuted into Afghanistan in the fall of 2001 with Army Rangers and other special forces. They then hooked up with the Northern alliance, north of Kabul, and proceed to eject the Taliban from power with the help of U.S. Air Force airstrikes. The entire capitulation period lasted less than 30 days. However though the battle for Kabul was won the war against the Taliban, which would rage for more than a decade, and the hunt for Osama bin Laden, which would last for almost a decade was not over.

Conversely what can be learned from the JAWBREAKERS missions is that a plan to overthrow a relatively unsophisticated government, which lacks technological know how and is not rigidly in control of the governing lands in question, the results are an unmitigated success. However securing the peace, and nation building on a scale that requires tens of thousands of troops and a

commitment in years; such endeavors are perhaps best left to a large occupying force that the Pentagon and uniformed military can provide. Additionally the hunt to find and kill Osama bin Laden was begun and ended by the CIA coupled with paramilitary forces in SOCOM. So then when approaching a large endeavor be aware that the toppling of a government, and the capture and kill of regime forces is very Special Warfare centric, while the larger nation building and winning of the peace is perhaps a task too far for such expeditionary forces.

The DBROCKSTARS of Iraq were another example of what can happen when Special Warfare is practiced. The DBROCKSTARS were a secret paramilitary outfit that the CIA created in mid 2002 an order to gather information on Iraqi formations, and key logistical, and regime targets. Information that could then be used to degrade and destroy Sadaam Hussein's will to fight. This secret program which was run from the Northern Kurdish territories also recruited young men of fighting age to rise up against the regime once the U.S. had invaded, paving the way for U.S. Airborne Rangers, and tank brigades which could then invade from the Turkey in the North(something which eventually, due to strategic considerations didn't happen). The DBROCKSTARS were also tasked, shortly before the start of the war, with pinpointing Sadaam so that a precision airstrike could be carried out to take out the dictator, an order to possibly prevent further bloodshed from taking place. The results of the DBROCKSTARS program seem to be mixed. On the one hand There was hardly any violence either before, during or after the initial invasion of Iraq, as compared to the rest of the country. So then on that accord the DBROCKSTARS were entirely successful in creating Kurdish bulwark that and ally that the U.S. could depend on. Also a nice reprieve for coalition forces was the targeting information of key logistical buildings and ministries that would, when attacked, would cripple the regime and

prevent it from acting with haste during the invasion of Iraq. However the targeting of Sadaam Hussein before the war was wholly unsuccessful, as evidenced by the subsequent capture of Sadaam in Tikrit, his trial, and eventual hanging. Also after the U.S. withdrew from Iraq in 2011 only to be drawn back in with the emergence of ISIS, the Kurds were not willing partners who could be linked up with, in any lasting manner in the still ongoing campaign to defeat ISIS, and were even of a terrorist bent that necessitated the U.S. actually seeking to actively kill them at the behest of Turkey, a regional, and NATO ally. All of this points to the limitations of Special Warfare. It can be used to great effect given the right circumstances. However developing lasting bonds with the people's that you help in any given situation can be difficult to exploit the longer the nation goes without their cooperation on any significant level. From DBROCKSTARS the lesson is clear then, The success of DBROCKSTARS was wholly dependent on the size and scope of the operation. When asked to coordinate and identify regime elements it was almost wholly successful. But when the scope of the mission expanded such as ending the warfare with a coup de grâce, or providing lasting bonds that could withstand the war effort and beyond, the results are less spectacular.

Syrian War (2011-)

In Syria the "Arab Spring" began to take hold in early 2011 initially as peaceful protest. However soon after a deadly crackdown the mostly Sunni majority took up arms against the Alawite Shiite ruling minority and began to fight back. This back and forth continues to this day

and as of the writing of September 2013 there is an agreement between al-Assad ally Russia, and the United States to compile and eventually destroy all of Syria's accounted for chemical stockpiles. The United States has introduced a resolution at the U.N. which would "Hold Syria to account" should the weapons not be destroyed by mid 2014 as per scheduled. This agreement does not and should not be construed as an out for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad who has murdered tens of thousands of his own countrymen using conventional and chemical weapons. And as Secretary General Ban Ki Moon was quoted as saying, Assad should be "Held Accountable" for these monstrous acts. Also on the agenda it seems that Iran has initiated a charm offensive and has suggested that talks over a cease fire could possibly take place between Syria and the free Syrian army (FSA) in Geneva, Switzerland.

ISIS (2011-): An Opportunity to Apply Modern Special Warfare

ISIS is particularly dangerous since they are anti-Western and have filled up the space that al-Nusra and the al-Assad regime have vacated in the north of Syria. They do not recognize modern borders, hence the incursion into Iraq, and they are brutal, slaughtering what is thought to be tens of thousands of christians, and muslims in their brutal campaign of terror. The logical question is what to do about these heretical Islamic fundamentalist. I've offered some advice previously which I'll share now.

Now that the President has committed in excess of three thousand advisers to Iraq, an order to quell the insurgency in the north of Iraq, and Syria, being spearheaded by ISIS, it seems prudent to have an over arching vision of what is possible in Iraq and indeed Syria in our quest to prevent ISIS from blitzing into Iraq anymore. And marginalize the factional offshoot of al-Qaeda an order to make it as unappealing as possible to future would-be terrorist.

The Iraqi military should be prepared with the help of American military advisers to repel the once rapidly advancing enemy with all the esprit d'corps and tenacity that any other military in the world would possess. The first and main objective for the advisers should be to build this confidence and send ISIS back to the hinterlands of Syria; indeed this is already taking place. The Iraqi army can only go so far in defeating ISIS since they're not expected to cross the border into Syria an order to continue the fight. However as a milestone objective the Iraqi army should be capable of securing the border with Syria and rooting out any ISIS intelligence figures which may have remained in Iraq once the insurgency has been defeated, as far as they're concerned.

The role for the military advisers does not end their though since they must now embed with Kurdish Peshmerga forces in the north of Iraq an order to continue the fight into Syria. The Kurds already have a natural base of operations in Northeastern Syria that they can draw from to recruit some of their more hardened warriors who are also more familiar with the tactics of ISIS. Since the beginning of the war in Syria, and the inception of groups such as the Free Syrian Army, and ISIS, the Kurds in Northeastern Syria have been fighting for their own semi-

autonomous region in Syria. Since ISIS has over run them I'm sure that they have a bone to pick with ISIS and would be more than eager to settle the score once and for all.

Once the advisers link up with the Kurds and continue the fight into northern Syria the goal should be to inflict as many casualties on ISIS as possible not only to whittle them down, but to stop them from having the cachet to easily recruit and replenish their ranks. This begins with denying them access to oil fields in Iraq and Syria, and killing the main leadership including their leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Air strikes will play a vital role in not only fighting ISIS but also patrolling the badlands which exist on the Syrian, Iraqi Border for possible terroristic elements. It should also not be ruled out that if intelligence comes in indicating where al-Baghdadi (ISIS' de facto leader) is it should not be taken lightly and we should strike with as much force as necessary in order to eliminate the threat.

ISIS is a potent force and should not be taken lightly but as quickly as they have gained territory, so too can they be rolled back to their original position at worst, and extinguished altogether.

By forcing the rebels to come out of their secure positions we open them up for key airstrikes by both the Iraqi's and Americans. Also it seems prudent to free up resources to make sure that the route, be it by air, or land is truly secure and free should evacuations become necessary. All roads coming from Syria in Ninawa province should be sealed off and the dam near Buhayrat al

Mawsil should be secured to make sure that no havoc is done as ISIS tries to initiate a counter offensive from Mosul. The road to Mosul is not straightforward and may require a bit of outside the box thinking in order to defeat ISIS in Mosul with minimal casualties. The road to Mosul for the Iraqi Army seems more and more likely to involve not only Syria but Turkey as well, as the map shows. If we are to defeat ISIS in northern Iraq the coup de grace will require a deft tactical hand with a strategic focus. We cannot allow ourselves to show our hand in Ninawa province until the very last moment, while simultaneously circumvallating Mosul for what will perhaps be the final showdown in Iraq, and the most trying trial by fire for both the Iraqi Army and Kurdish Peshmerga forces. This in my estimation is the supremest form of modern Special Warfare.

If ever there were a time for reflection it would be at this crucial time. Though granted ISIS is not entirely defeated in Iraq, they are on the run. And with Syria now looming as a possible battlefield it is appropriate to take a breather from what has just happened, recollect our thoughts, and move forward from there. However it's also wise to perhaps decide not to pursue ISIS into Syria either partially or wholly, if that is the said path that the President chooses to take. If the President chooses to assist Iraqi forces in their fight against ISIS into Syria the inevitable question is what will America's role be, almost assuredly airstrikes, but what about boots on the ground?

With ISIS in peril and al-Baghdadi injured it only makes sense to take the fight to them. This is true. But also it is true that we would be entering Syria as uninvited and unwanted guest of a regime that we once contemplated airstrikes against. And also with Ar-Raqqa being the unofficial

capital of ISIS it seems to make sense that we would then be fighting them on battlefields that are wholly familiar to them while unique to us.

ISIS is in desperate straits right now if the rumors of al-Baghdadi's injuries are true, then it seems that his health is the paramount concern of them at this point. I liken al-Baghdadi to the khanate in the 13th century: if al-Baghdadi dies the whole enterprise will be in jeopardy since he is their leader and figure head, so if he were to die I could envision a sort of splitting of the khanate into smaller fiefdoms and these would in turn fight one another to exhaustion. But make no mistake about it al-Baghdadi dead represents a ceasing of all hostilities against the Iraqis and Kurds since he is their main strategist and tactician, and also the group's main fundraising and recruitment draw. Without a doubt without him there is no longer an ISIS as we know them today. This is why his death should be the main objective of U.S. and Kurdish/Iraqi forces in Syria.

Also there should be a discussion about ISIS and what type of weaponry they have. After all for all we know al-Baghdadi could have chemical weaponry and be making Ar-Raqqa his last stand, much akin to Adolf Hitler in Berlin. Except for in this instance it would be one last release of Saran nerve agent that kills not only him, but the good soldiers that have him surrounded and would hope to see his reign come to an end.

Terror could also come from the sky. As uninvited guest in Bashar al-Assad's country, the idea of him bombing or dog fighting our forces is a very real predicament. It would behoove the Iraqi's as well as the U.S. if we could get assurances from the Syrian regime that they will not be malevolent proprietor's while we are in northern Syria finishing off ISIS.

As to the idea of the U.S. personally assisting the fight against ISIS with “boots on the ground” I personally wouldn't recommend it if only since that would entail a lot of moving around of pieces which would waste precious time. Why wait to kill al-Baghdadi when the Iraqi's along with American military advisers can do it all by themselves, with airstrikes in tow of course. If it does come down to sending in boots to help the Iraqi's annihilate ISIS it would to me seem more prudent to send in mercenaries from America. This would prevent a heavy military footprint and also it would allow for us to be engaged in the fighting without the risk to our professional military soldiers.

If it comes to a point where al-Baghdadi closes ranks around his self in Ar-Raqqa or any other city in Syria while he attempts to convalesce it would be prudent to siege the town rather than trying to take it outright. This is because it would be difficult for military intelligence to crack that nut, if you will, considering the fierce loyalty that he inspires. What makes more sense is to starve them out of their fortress' and frustrate all plans that they hatch to try and get out of the city with al-Baghdadi in tow an order to live to fight another day.

To defeat ISIS our number one objective should be to kill al-Baghdadi. I cannot stress enough how important he is to this particular enterprise and what his death will mean for them. Simply put they cannot and will not function without him thus negating the need for a heavy footprint in the region and rather having the threat implode upon itself triggered by the price of oil. With Oil hovering around \$44 a barrel and as reported by CNN the town of Kobani back fully in Kurdish hands, it's easy to see a path forward from here. The fact that ISIS, who derives most of their income from oil revenue would have to deal with a black market price of \$10-\$20 per barrel of

oil extracted, that in itself is enough to box the in the organizations ambitions and possibly see the top leadership implode from the bottom up. I don't think that I can stress this enough: if ISIS were to lose their confidence in al-Baghdadi and he were to be eliminated by us or someone in the organization, this would spell the end of ISIS as we now know them today, a blow akin to the death of Osama Bin Laden for al-Qaeda and extremist everywhere.

Modern Special Warfare: A Notional Response to Conditions on the Ground

With the monopoly of force comes the strengthening of the institutions that make a state stable and its people safe and diligent. Without this monopoly there can be no reconciliation or peace within a state that has failed. With this in mind I approach the situation in Syria casting a wary eye. At this juncture I see the Assad regime, and the lack of control that they have over large swaths of Syria. This disheartens, and frankly frightens me. When I see the forces at play in these lawless parts of Syria (Al-Qaeda, Free Syrian Army, Islamic State) I again take pause at what it is that should happen in Syria. But alas with the American engagement in the situation not only in Syria, but Iraq as well, I begin to see a coherent strategy that can (if executed right) bind up the wounds of the Middle East for the time being if not for the foreseeable future.

The first situation to me that needs to be resolved is the ongoing chaos in Iraq. We have two failed states already in the form of Syria, and Yemen in the region. The last thing that we want to do is provide for another failed state in Iraq, this would be unacceptable. My instincts tell me that we should begin rolling back ISIS in Iraq by cutting off supply lines to the two main

cities that they have occupied in Iraq, namely Mosul, and Ramadi. By circumvallating the cities and then choking them off we can avoid large scale military and civilian casualties.

By supplying weaponry directly to the Kurds in the north and training and equipping Iraqi Sunni tribes who would then take the fight to the Islamic state we can ensure that the frontiers are safe and protected from ISIS spilling over into Iraq. One wild card is the unpredictability of the Iranians and their sponsored militias. Since we are in direct contact with the Iranians at the highest levels of both governments then it seems prudent to me to at least get on the record an official position from the Iranians about their plans for what would happen if the Syrian regime were to collapse tomorrow and what do they ultimately want from their dysfunctional neighbors. If they want peace on their borders then this would be a worthwhile pursuit. However if they show by their actions that they intend on piecing back together a form of the Persian empire this I think would be dangerous. So long as they're fighting ISIS in Iraq for peace, this I think should be encouraged. But a by proxy of bringing peace to Iraq would mean additional influence in a Shiite dominated government in Baghdad could lead to one more friendly nation for Iran and one less friendly nation for America in the region. Not to mention the reshuffling of strategic priorities countries friendly with the United States in the region (Israel, Saudi Arabia, etc.). So then by exerting influence in Iraq, America can influence the outcome of regional relations between Iran and its neighbors, while simultaneously denying Iran predominant influence in the affairs of its neighbors, something they desperately want.

When Syria is viewed through the lens of a country dominated by ISIS the picture becomes less clear in my opinion. However when Syria is viewed through the lens of a nation once dominated by the government in Damascus that now has rebel outfits running loose through its countryside though it is a semi functioning failed state, the situation becomes a lot more manageable. The methodology which should be taken with Syria is to treat it as a state which has already failed and so should be treated as such. Which means the first thing to do is to re-monopolize the use of force in the country. In my opinion ISIS is in its last death throes in Syria and so will be the first part of Syria, namely ar-Raqqa and its sphere of influence which will allow for a vacuum to be created. The United States needs to be ready for this eventuality and we cannot simply allow for another power vacuum to be created in Syria without having a say in its outcome. This is why I see arming the Kurds directly as one of the most important things that the United States can do to regain peace in Iraq and Syria. For Syria this manifest *ipso facto* reality means that the U.S. can and must do what the government in Damascus either cannot do, or chooses not to do which is providing a peaceful, functioning state for its current, former, and future inhabitants. This can't be done by the Kurds alone and the president has for the time being ruled out American troops.

In Jordan the U.S. is training troops from the Free Syrian Army to establish a free Syrian State. This effort should be heavily promoted and accelerated by the administration. These forces in my opinion are the last great hope to prevent Syria from becoming a dead zone that has violence begetting violence in an unending cycle, akin to the European dark ages. It seems prudent to me that once we have ISIS on the ropes and confined to their only respite(ar-Raqqa),

we should take prudent steps such as establishing a no fly zone which will get tighter and tighter around ISIS as they lose ground and also provide air support for FSA forces and Kurdish Militias in the north of the country. When ISIS finally does dissolve we will be prepared with a solid ground game and air support for these forces which will allow for large swaths of Syria to have order, and the Rule of law established through a monopolization of force.

When encountering Syria it should be noted that again we don't know the exact trajectory of Iranian forces on the ground in terms of what their objectives for Syria are. I believe that this situation though can be resolved through the deployment of United Nations Peacekeeping personnel in Syria which will allow for a change in the calculus for the Iranians when it comes to order, and the rule of law in Syria and the perceived state of *posse comitatus* that currently exist in Syria for not only them but the world as well.

In fact in a paper entitled "The ISIS Defense in Iraq and Syria: Countering an Adaptive Enemy" by Jessica Lewis McFate. The author stipulates in the paper that:

"The only way to defeat ISIS, which is necessary for U.S. national security, is to guarantee a ground force that will occupy, secure, and rebuild Syria, and Iraq to a lesser extent. More limited solutions are insufficient to shape ground conditions that promote stability and reduce the opportunity for groups like ISIS to remain.

The U.S. is not a suitable unilateral occupying force in 2015 because anti-U.S. sentiment in these countries has risen to staggering levels.

Iran is also not suitable or capable, as demonstrated by its inability to help the Assad regime win its war in Syria, its tactical inability to clear ISIS from Tikrit in Iraq, its state sponsorship of terrorism, and its strategic objectives to destroy other states in the region.

The Arab coalition currently fighting the Houthis in Yemen is likewise unsuitable, given the likelihood that it would also condone persecution of minority Shi'a populations; it is also incapable, given what little its current air campaign in Yemen has accomplished as of April 2015. The Arab coalition is also risky because it treats Iraq and Syria as battle grounds for a sectarian war against Iran instead of unified state-building missions that are necessary to defeat ISIS and al-Qaeda. U.S. leadership is therefore essential.

Partnership is also essential, because the U.S. is no longer a legitimate ally in the eyes of many populations in the region.”¹

This is why allowing U.N. peace keepers in Syria is so important it's the only organization that has the legitimacy of the Arab world to go into Syria and impose peace and it's an organization that once mandated will have the force of U.N. Security Council Sanction that even the Iranians will have to accept.

By not allowing Sanction of force or safe haven for ISIS in Syria we can begin to turn the tables on this vicious group of murderers that wish to see anarchy for the world. By the use of

¹ Jessica Lewis McFate, The ISIS Defense in Iraq and Syria: Countering an Adaptive Enemy, <http://understandingwar.org/report/isis-defense-iraq-and-syria-countering-adaptive-enemy#sthash.QMs22Rt2.dpuf>.

men on the ground and American planes in the skies we can create the type of lasting peace that the Syrian people desire.

Once Iraq and Syria have been resolved I feel that the United States should allow its allies to devote resources to the function of restoring peace in Yemen and denying safe haven to Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. I've already gone over the various options that we have in this contested land in a previous paper. Needless to say the peace process must work itself out however the *stakes* must be held principally by the Saudi government and not the Houthis as the situation now exist. Only then will the negotiating table be a likely rejoinder for the Houthis and their grievances. However the Houthis will not come to the negotiating table unless they feel that the Saudis have something that they want to negotiate for namely a peaceful place to call home. And though the Saudis were using airstrikes to exact their demands, everyone knows that you can only accomplish so much from the air before you have to go in on the ground and secure territory. It seems likely that this is what the Saudis will have to do in Yemen an order to convince the Houthis that they need to go to the negotiating table an order to sue for peace. By first taking a contingent of the Saudi forces and landing them in Aden the Saudis should be able to draw away from the capital a lot of the forces currently guarding Sana'a. Then by taking Road two and blitzing down the west coast of Yemen from Saudi Arabia you should be able to secure the west coast which is the heartland of Houthi activity. By doing these two things alone you would have spread the Houthis thin and secured most major transport ports for allies (Egypt, U.S. etc.). The next thing to be executed is the invasion of Sana'a. By moving forces to al-Radah via land and using it as a jump off point into Sana'a the Saudis can accomplish most of what they want in the country from there. Also by parachuting men into the northern enclave of Sana'a just

as tanks from al-Radah co-opt them on the ground the airport in Sana'a is an objective that can be completed and from their supplies can be flown in directly into Sana'a for the battle of Sana'a and beyond.

The state of play in current political paradigms has shifted dramatically when speaking about geo-politics and national security. Recently it was announced that the Cameroonian vice Prime Minister's wife had been kidnapped by Boko Haram. this is a return to old world order geo political climate where for instance in the 80's impoverished Mafioso's in Italy would kidnap rich Italian and foreign nationals and demand a ransom payment for their safe return. Or when Jet liners were routinely hijacked an order to demand ransom or cause political chaos. This is a byproduct of the Bin Ladenism of terroristic acts as well as the pervasive Russian influence in conflicts around the world via arm sales and military training.

One way to define Bin Ladenism is to take the attacks of 9/11 for example. For you see by attacking the U.S. homeland in such a spectacular fashion the bar then became raised for more and more spectacular ways of harming the U.S. and its allies. Think 3/11 in Spain, the attempted shoe and underwear bombers and so on and so forth. Since the death of Bin Laden and with the rise of even more radical strains of Islam (if that's possible) the world has seen terrorist organizations become influence peddlers in the form of cold hard cash. This makes sense, since by having large cash reserves you can declare yourselves to be the true defenders of Jihad, and Islamic fundamentalism. This is evident in recent Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's brash video of earlier this year, ISIS fighters declaring an Islamic state, and Boko Haram kidnapping girls and selling them into slavery.

This odd turn of events should not go unnoticed. We should be extra vigilant in this new paradigm with our diplomats and senior officials in the government. But we should also seek to make sure that influential individuals in the private sector are protected from kidnapping or worse when flying overseas to potentially hazardous locales. This should come in the form of travel alerts and overseas embassy closings if and when we suspect that a terrorist group may be plotting harm to any overseas westerners.

By taking into account all of the things that I have mentioned previously in this paper concerning Syria, Iraq, and Yemen a coherent strategy becomes a viable alternative to the lack of strategy and policy drift apparent currently in the administration's handling of the wars in the Middle East. If ever there were a time for reflection it would be at this crucial time. Though granted ISIS is not entirely defeated in Iraq, they are on the run. And with Syria now looming as a possible battlefield it is appropriate to take a breather from what has just happened, recollect our thoughts, and move forward from there. However it's also wise to perhaps decide not to pursue ISIS into Syria either partially or wholly, if that is the said path that the President chooses to take. If the President chooses to assist Iraqi forces in their fight against ISIS into Syria the inevitable question is what will America's role be, almost assuredly airstrikes, but what about boots on the ground?

With ISIS in peril and al-Baghdadi injured it only makes sense to take the fight to them. This is true. But also it is true that we would be entering Syria as uninvited and unwanted guest

of a regime that we once contemplated airstrikes against. And also with Ar-Raqqa being the *de facto* of ISIS it seems to make sense that we would then be fighting them on battlefields that are wholly familiar to them while unique to us.

ISIS is in desperate straits right now if the rumors of al-Baghdadi's injuries are true, then it seems that his health is the paramount concern of them at this point. I liken al-Baghdadi to the khanate in the 13th century: if al-Baghdadi dies the whole enterprise will be in jeopardy since he is their leader and figure head, so if he were to die I could envision a sort of splitting of the khanate into smaller fiefdoms and these would in turn fight one another to exhaustion. But make no mistake about it al-Baghdadi dead represents a ceasing of all hostilities against the Iraqis and Kurds since he is their main strategist and tactician, and also the group's main fundraising and recruitment draw. Without a doubt without him there is no longer an ISIS as we know them today. This is why his death should be the main objective of U.S. and Kurdish/Iraqi forces in Syria.

Also there should be a discussion about ISIS and what type of weaponry they have. After all for all we know al-Baghdadi could have chemical weaponry and be making Ar-Raqqa his last stand, much akin to Adolf Hitler in Berlin. Except for in this instance it would be one last release of Saran nerve agent that kills not only him, but the good soldiers that have him surrounded and would hope to see his reign come to an end.

Terror could also come from the sky. As uninvited guest in Bashar al-Assad's country, the idea of him bombing or dog fighting our forces is a very real predicament. It would behoove the

Iraqi's as well as the U.S. if we could get assurances from the Syrian regime that they will not be malevolent proprietor's while we are in northern Syria finishing off ISIS.

As to the idea of the U.S. personally assisting the fight against ISIS with "boots on the ground" I personally wouldn't recommend it if only since that would entail a lot of moving around of pieces which would waste precious time. Why wait to kill al-Baghdadi when the Iraqi's along with American military advisers can do it all by themselves, with airstrikes in tow of course. If it comes to a point where al-Baghdadi closes ranks around his self in Ar-Raqqa or any other city in Syria while he attempts to convalesce it would be prudent to siege the town rather than trying to take it outright. This is because it would be difficult for military intelligence to crack that nut, if you will, considering the fierce loyalty that he inspires. What makes more sense is to starve them out of their hidey holes and frustrate all plans that they hatch to try and get out of the city with al-Baghdadi in tow an order to live to fight another day.

To defeat ISIS our number one objective should be to kill al-Baghdadi. I cannot stress enough how important he is to this particular enterprise and what his death will mean for them. Simply put they cannot and will not function without him thus negating the need for a heavy footprint in the region and rather having the threat implode upon itself.

The Periphery: The Rise of Binladenism

The state of play in current political paradigms has shifted dramatically when speaking about geo-politics and national security. In July 2014 it was announced that the Cameroonian vice

Prime Minister's wife had been kidnapped by Boko Haram. this is a return to old world order geo-political climate where for instance in the 80's impoverished Mafioso's in Italy would kidnap rich Italian and foreign nationals and demand a ransom payment for their safe return. Or when Jet liners were routinely hijacked an order to demand ransom or cause political chaos. This is a byproduct of the Bin Ladenism of terroristic acts as well as the pervasive Russian influence in conflicts around the world via arm sales and military training.

One way to define Bin Ladenism is to take the attacks of 9/11 for example. For you see by attacking the U.S. homeland in such a spectacular fashion the bar then became raised for more and more spectacular ways of harming the U.S. and its allies. Think 3/11 in Spain, the attempted shoe and underwear bombers and so on and so forth. Since the death of Bin Laden and with the rise of even more radical strains of Islam (if that's possible) the world has seen terrorist organizations become influence peddlers in the form of cold hard cash. This makes since, since by having large cash reserves you can declare yourselves to be the true defenders of Jihad, and Islamic fundamentalism. This is evident in recent Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's brash video of earlier this year, ISIS fighters declaring an Islamic state, and Boko Haram kidnapping girls and selling them into slavery.

This odd turn of events should not go unnoticed. We should be extra vigilant in this new paradigm with our diplomats and senior officials in the government. But we should also seek to make sure that influential individuals in the private sector are protected from kidnapping or worse when flying overseas to potentially hazardous locales. This should come in the form of

travel alerts and overseas embassy closings if and when we suspect that a terrorist group may be plotting harm to any overseas westerners.

The current paradigm has seen Boko Haram slaughter over 2,000 people in their native Nigeria and again kidnap tens of people in northern Cameroon. This particular form of what I like to refer to as Bin Ladenism has morphed over to the current situation in Yemen. We have seen the kidnapping of the President of Yemen's chief of staff. And a storming and eventual takeover (read: Coup) of the presidential palace. And though the situation seems to be resolved with the demand for changes to the constitution by Shiite militia men exacted, the president has once again regained power in the country in an imbroglio which has lasted since at least September 2014.

When I look at these incidents I'm reminded of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and how they released a video tape of their new leader surrounded by many terrorist that ended up only getting them killed in the long run as U.S. airstrikes were carried out soon thereafter. As I looked at the al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) propaganda tape I like most of the civilized world couldn't help but question the inane insanity of the enemy that we seem to find ourselves dealing with. While viewing the video from AQAP I thought of what I was able (like most of us) to feel, the shift in paradigm that occurred in the months and years immediately following Osama bin Laden's death (OBL). OBL was the unabashedly, unquestioned head of a organization that was more top down and structured than any of us in the West could've imagined. So when I saw video of al Qaeda's second in command, Nasir al-

Wuhayshi talking and hugging the al Qaeda devoted I couldn't help but begin to compare the two. First of all if there's anything analyst have learned during the intermittent time between OBL's death and the apparent crowning of an al Qaeda crown prince it's that this top down organization is not a hydra that will multiply the more we try to disassemble it. Not only can it be disassembled but it can be disassembled permanently. And although Al Qaeda core has inspired many spin off groups (al-Shabaab) and lone wolves (think the 2013 Boston marathon bombings), these tactics or organizations have their drawbacks too.

When OBL died he took with him the expertise and wherewithal of a hardened battlefield soldier. He also took with him the propensity to learn from the enemy and react accordingly. Hence the lack of focus in Al-Qaeda core insomuch as what operations should be carried out, what battlefields are worthy of spilt blood, etc. Now that the Al Qaeda spin off groups have populated the world stage and have been relatively contained. It has become somewhat vogue to assume that these groups will (including AQAP), once decapitated, simply persist without proper leadership. Do not be fooled by this inference. In fact if anything groups in Arabia, and Africa are led by strongmen who control tightly managed, top down organizations that have nebulous at best associations with al-Qaeda core and who usually have the most money out of all of the purveyors surrounding them. In other words once the strongman has been killed off the core of the terrorist group usually fractures permanently into disparate collectives that usually never see the world stage again; if they ever did in the first place. Two: fighting insurgent groups such as the LRA, Boko Haram, and al-Shabaab in Africa here and now is a good thing. It's good for our allies in the region(s) it's good for the United States, and if its good for the United States it's

usually good for the rest of the world. The idea that AQAP can exist without money or any of the other sinews of war is a ridiculous argument on its face. That is not to say that we shouldn't treat them as the existential threat that they are, but we should take care to think smartly about what it is we're dealing with. Too often just like LRA, just like Al-Shabaab were dealing with a moneyed man who has the where withal, but more than that the organizational charisma necessary to rally the requisite amount of followers to their cause. I would posit that this too is true for AQAP and their backers, once the money is drained from an organization like this, that organization ceases to be a potent factor. This is proof that there is no transnational cabal that connects all the guerilla insurgent groups in Africa (or Asia for that matter) to one another or even to outside proprietors.

America: Trade as a tool of peace and weapon of war

Webster's Dictionary defines the Doha Development Agenda as a "round of trade talks aimed at helping developing countries whose exportable goods are heavily concentrated among agricultural products develop their international trade." The Doha Development Agenda is a trade agreement that could revolutionize the way the world works as we know it. The Doha round or DDA is a trade liberalization agreement that once passed will provide an open and free market for the agricultural products of developing nations. The Doha Development Agenda (DDA) is a complex trade agreement that needs to be passed because it will allow for developing countries to trade with not only each other, but developed countries as well as in a free trade

zone. The DDA is a trade liberalization round that if passed will allow for freer trade throughout the WTO. The Doha Development Agenda is beneficial for the countries involved, and the world as well. The WTO is composed of 150 different countries across 6 continents. The United States and emerging markets such as China have benefited from WTO membership.

NAFTA came into effect in January of 1994 bringing freer trade throughout the region. And Mexican and American relations have improved since the inception of NAFTA. U.S. annual incomes are \$1 trillion higher, or \$9,000 per household, due to trade liberalization since 1945.

²The World Trade Organization was founded in 1947, today with its 150 members the WTO covers all regions of the world looking to expand by two dozen other countries as they seek to join. NAFTA is an increasingly powerful trading bloc. NAFTA has contributed proportionally to the per capita GDP's of the trade bloc members as well as the GDP's of the countries that they trade with. According to the WTO website "U.S. exports of services have doubled over the past 12 years, generating a \$72 billion surplus in 2006 on exports of \$414 billion." Together the NAFTA countries are the largest trading bloc in the entire world.³

Free Market reforms affect the world throughout not just the participating countries. World trade fell by 70 percent in the early 1930s; throwing tens of millions out of work, deepening the Great Depression, and fuelling the political tensions that helped give rise to World War II. Before the WTO high tariff laws were passed like the Smoot-Hawley which restricted trade and led to the polarized world of World War II. Today one in three acres in the U.S. is

² The Doha Round, http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/dda_e.htm, Date accessed: 6/22/2010

³ Ibid 1

planted for export. Since the 1990s, freer trade has helped raise U.S. national economic output by nearly 50 percent, and, over the same period, the U.S. economy added nearly 20 million jobs.⁴

Trade barriers in the developing world are substantial so removing them could have a cumulative effect. This is why Doha needs to be ratified immediately. According to the WTO website “Dismantling government barriers to trade allows individuals access to the world’s supermarket for food, clothing, and other manufactured goods...”, And furthermore, “Empirically, expanded trade has been essential to economic growth and wealth for both developed and developing countries.”⁵ This is especially true for African countries, as well as South East Asian countries. By allowing these countries to trade without tariffs inhibiting their growth between one another, this will allow for the reestablishment of the Silk Road. With no tariffs and a high volume of durable goods and commodities being traded that means that critical issues like Africa’s lack of affordable and consistent power would become moot points. While at the same time allowing for more money to flow freely between the two continents giving much needed development assistance to Africa (which happens to be the least developed inhabitable continent in the world). In fact Tony Blair’s Blair Commission on Africa says that “Raising Africa’s share of world trade from 2% to 3% would provide export revenues of \$70 billion, nearly three times the amount that sub-Saharan Africa receives from global aid donors.”⁶ By convincing African countries to remove their tariffs, there would be a boom in much needed export revenue in Africa on a scale that no aid program has provided thus far.

⁴ Ibid 2

⁵ Ibid 3

⁶ Blair Commission for Africa, <http://www.commissionforafrica.info/2010-report>, Tony Blair, accessed 6/22/2010

At issue for the majority of the African countries in question is the fact that their income is mostly derived from tariffs. This makes an economic as well as psychological barrier to preventing these countries from agreeing to the DDA. This is probably the most crucial issue that hasn't been addressed by the western countries like the U.S. that are adamant about the DDA becoming a reality. One solution is that perhaps by partially subsidizing the sub-Saharan African countries that use these tariffs for revenue, with aid, we would be able to convince them to perhaps adopt the DDA protocols fully without exception.

By allowing for trade barriers such as tariffs to be abolished in the countries that need it the most is what Doha is all about Doha is a trade agreement that once ratified will allow for greater opportunities to those countries that have the greatest to gain. African, Middle Eastern, and South East Asian countries are all regions that would benefit from the Doha Development Agenda to become international law and I believe they should sign onto the agreement immediately.

When the President met with African leaders last year I thought that it was an exceptionally important to tee up the Doha round as it is important to the region, and can be incorporated into the wider world. The Doha Development Agenda (DDA) is a multilateral trade regime which once implemented will free many developing nations from tariff ridden import-export policies and instead replace them with a free trade regime that will allow for countries as diverse as Kenya, Qatar, and Malaysia to trade with one another regardless of former barriers to trade which impeded prosperity.

The Doha agreement is of special importance to Africa as many countries rely on tariffs as a main source of revenue for the state. However with Doha implemented these states would no longer receive monies from tariffs but instead would derive most of their state revenue from taxable commerce from the businesses which would be created by freeing up trade. The Blair Commission on Africa has indicated through their own research that “Raising Africa’s share of world trade from 2% to 3% would provide export revenues of \$70 billion, nearly three times the amount that sub-Saharan Africa receives from global aid donors.”⁷ This is not a small amount of revenue generated for these countries, and with Africa set to be the bread basket of the world, this trade deal figures prominently for Africa. To see the possible success for Africa one need look no further than the United States. In the 1930’s the Republican Party was one made up mostly of isolationist. However once high tariff laws like Smoot-Hawley were repealed the United States began to come out of the depression and after World War Two the United States stood alone as far and away the richest most powerful country on the face of the Earth.⁸ It’s no wonder then that the World Trade Organization (WTO) labels the loosening of free trade policies as one of the number one factors for how well a country will grow in the future.⁹ No wonder the Bush administration tried though to no avail to get DDA ratified on several occasions.

Doha is particularly important now since by allowing trade to flow freely between the DDA countries the resource curse can once and for all be broken and revenues can diversify and increase. This will lead to greater opportunity for the countries involved (particularly African

⁷ Ibid, Tony Blair

⁸ Wikipedia.com, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smoot%E2%80%93Hawley_Tariff_Act, Accessed 6/22/2010

⁹ Doha Round, <http://www.wto.org/english/tratope/ddae/ddae.htm>, Date accessed: 6/22/2010

countries. One byproduct of healthy economies that is oft overlooked is a decrease in radical fundamentalism, be it Muslim or otherwise. These are the dividends of peace, and free, and fair markets. If the United States hopes to one day be rid of radical Islam then securing a viable and peaceful future for not only Africa, but the Middle East should be a priority.

The Periphery: Iranian Nuclear Program: Where we've been, where we are, where were going

If there was ever a time that Special Warfare was ever used to effectuate a diplomatic resolution, the case of the Iranian Nuclear program and its Possible Military Dimensions is a prime example of how this could and should be done. It should be noted by me that I'm not privy to everything that was done to make this deal a reality, and even if I did I would most certainly not share here with you today, however I would like to look back on some of the history of this diplomatic process, and at the end I give what I think is a pretty fair assessment of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action's highlights, abstaining from giving a critical analysis of whether I think the deal will actually be carried out(though as of this date it has indeed been going as planned). The Iran episode as of the writing of this paper, in terms of the Possible Military Dimensions of the Iranian nuclear program, may be coming to a fitful resolution. For my part I have been live blogging the results of the meetings between the Iranians, and the P5 + 1. Below I talk about the

possible outcomes of the Geneva meetings, and then talk about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) Agreement, which was agreed to in Switzerland July 14th, 2015. As of the writing of this paper the United Nations has agreed to the JCPOA agreement, however the U.S. congress is still holding hearings on the particulars of the agreement. Below is a quick run through of Geneva, and then I take the time to point out some of the good marks I believe are present in the agreement. :

Now that the permanent members of the Security Council (U.S., China, U.K., Russia, France) plus Germany (P5+1), have gotten Iran to renounce all nuclear objectives in Vienna it seems that it is incumbent of the United States to state in detail to not only the U.S., but also the world the exact breadth and scope that the Iranians went to conceal and covertly develop weapons of mass destruction. By keeping the public at least partially informed of the negotiations there and the implications thereof the administration was able to exert the maximum amount of pressure on the Iranians and their (now defunct) undoubted quest for nuclear weapons. The Iranians have been dealt a crushing blow for the past decade by way of sanctions. To the point where their economy is so crippled that they are unable to refine their own oil, and when leaving Iran, Iranian assets such as airlines are unable to refuel due to the scope of sanctions. This is the pressure the Security Council as well as unilaterally, the U.S. and its partners had placed on Iran. The new Iranian President, the Western educated Hassan Rouhani (who is still directed by the Supreme Leader Khomeini) has been offered a window of opportunity in the easing of sanctions that will now permit the Iranians to rejoin the world community.

The terms are lenient and correspond with only one aspect of their internal politics; the ceasing of production and subsequent enrichment of not only uranium but plutonium at the various nuclear facilities scattered throughout the country. The Iranians by the sheer amount of pressure placed on them by the U.S. and our allies was be enough of a stick to the Iranians that they decided to peacefully dismantle their nuclear program, completely, and allow for nuclear inspectors from not only the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but also inspectors from the U.S. to verify dismantlement. Else they faced the possibility of tactical nuclear strikes at various facilities in Iran related to their nuclear program. For the Israelis the choice was clear. The anti-Semitic regime in Iran was not to be able to get anywhere even close to acquiring nuclear weapons. Erstwhile in Washington the main objective of protecting its regional partners and preventing a region wide arms race were, and remain the foundations of American foreign policy over the last twenty plus years.

If we are to prepare a world for our children, and children's' children that is safe and free from the type of threats in not only Iran but North Korea as well, then the time is now to begin that long and arduous task ahead of us an order to protect the civility and comity which right now exist between nations.

Benjamin Netanyahu had expressed his disgust with the JCPoA, reportedly, and urged the U.S. to reject the deal outright. And though the Israeli sentiment hasn't changed, and the deal has been subsequently agreed to and implemented. Israeli was rewarded handsomely for its acquiescence with new advanced Joint Strike Fighters, and subsequent construction of one of the most advanced missile shields in the world.

The choice is Iran's and Iran's alone. They must understand that this is not the beginning of a process but rather an end to a very long and convoluted dispute. The talks in Vienna were meant to end the conversation over Iran's nuclear program, not prolong a process that in their minds may just be beginning. The past decade has revealed that stability is only attained when the U.S. speaks not only to its friends but to its enemies as well. In the case of Iran, this is especially true. The agreement with Iran, for the U.S., represent the ending culmination of a process that has taken at least six presidents to conclude. Again, the choice going forward is Iran's, and Iran's alone.

On the 17th of July 2015, an agreement was reached by the P5+1 powers with the Islamic Republic of Iran to curtail their nuclear program through the JCPOA agreement which was signed onto by both Nations, and the U.N. Security Council. The following are a couple of positive things which I think came out of the agreement and that are likely to prevent the manufacture of nuclear weapons by the Islamic State of Iran.

- **The reconfiguration of the IR-40 Heavy Water Production Plant (HWPP):** The reconfiguration of the IR-40 Heavy Water Production Plant (HWPP) or the Arak HWPP, is a very positive step in my estimation. By Iran being forced to for one totally scrap the main enrichment component of the plant by removing the enrichment components. Or destroying them with injections of epoxy resin, leaving it's only further use for Isotope research, this plant which will be the only Heavy water plant that Iran will have will allow for peaceful research with a non-weaponized component. When the reconfiguration of the plant is complete this will make it that much harder for the Iranians to backslide

and will allow for the International community to have its trust built up about the Iranians intentions going forward.

- **Various parts of other plants are to be stored in Hall B of the Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant under IAEA continuous monitoring.** This is also positive since the removal of weaponized components of the Plants and the continuous monitoring of these items will allow for verification and further safeguarding by the IAEA of anything which could be misconstrued for a weaponized function of the former Possible Military Dimensions (PMD) of the Iran nuclear program.
- **The Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant:** Natanz will be the only plant that will have fuel enrichment capabilities for R&D purposes, and will be neutered to be de-weaponized with all weaponization materials stored in Hall B of the Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant under IAEA continuous monitoring. This means not Fordow, not Parchin, or any other fuel enrichment plant (FEP) will have fuel enrichment capabilities for at least 15 years guaranteeing a severe limiting of the amount of nuclear related sites which will have the hallmarks of R&D for the purposes of nuclear fuel enrichment.
- **Most sanctions are equipped with a snapback mechanism for 15 years which doesn't require a U.N. vote.** The ability to have the sanctions come back into place is a powerful one since by having this available to them the United States can further leverage future negotiations concerning the PMD of the Iranian nuclear program. Also in the event that a situation arises that requires the Dispute Resolution Mechanism the U.S. should worse

come to worse can rely on their own judgment an order to determine whether or not Iran is compliant with the JCPoA

- **A Robust and fair system for logging complaints and settling unresolved issues:** The Dispute Resolution Mechanism guarantees that the games that Sadaam Hussein played with the world before the Iraq War in 2003 cannot be played this time against the backdrop of possible nuclear war. By agreeing before hand as to what conflict resolution will look like the powers involved have guaranteed that any sort of chicanery by the Iranians will be short lived and will lead to nothing but the snap back of sanctions, or even the specter of war.
- **Iran will have the ability, once the implementation period has begun, and the requisite sanctions have been lifted, to be able to participate in all facets of the world economy including purchasing commercial western airplanes, and banking in Europe.** I think this is an important aspect of the agreement since it allows for Iran to participate in the western economy and they can then begin to become suffused with western ideas and customs in the Iranian government and amongst the Iranian people. This will mean that if Iran does indeed decide to backslide that they will be unable to extricate themselves from the world economy as quickly as they may have thought that they would be able to. Also this will prevent them from attempting to backslide in the first place since they will have panoply of reasons manifest in front of them not to even attempt.

- **The U.S. and E.U. countries will participate with Iran on a raft of nuclear related R&D. Also Iranians will now be able to study nuclear science in the west including the United States.** By intertwining the R&D of Iran with western countries on a whole host of subjects ranging from isotope, and cancer research, to fusion technologies, I think this is a positive step since as I said earlier this will allow for the Iranians to be comfortable with the idea of cooperating with the west and will intertwine them so to the point that they will not want to backslide on the agreement making the likelihood that less probable.
- **Iran will no longer, under threat of sanction, has the ability to acquire software used for nuclear weapons construction.** Under the JCPoA Iran cannot acquire ballistics modeling software an order to be used for the exclusive purpose of building a nuclear bomb. The sanction speaks for itself – Iran can longer model explosions with certain software under the JCPoA for any reason whatsoever.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is not a perfect document in terms of concessions from the Iranians but it is a far broader and wide reaching document than some of the skeptics would care to admit. I believe that by pursuing this plan of action we can ultimately win the day which is why I felt, at the time, compelled to support this line of reasoning.

Dark Minerals and Their Role in the Middle East and the World

Recently in the news there has been reports about how much black market oil is circulating in the global oil markets that is coming from the Islamic State. Indeed the amount of oil coming from them is substantial. And just recently a senior U.S. administration official confirmed that in excess of \$500 million dollars worth of oil has made it from the Syrian battlefields and into the hands of global consumers. He goes on to stipulate that the oil mostly flows southward to President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus, and up to Turkey. However this is only one of the sources of cheap black market oil that is making its way into the hands of consumers. These dark source minerals seem to be having a huge impact on the price of oil on international commodities indices around the world, particularly in the United States.

The amount of oil that has made its way into the hands of American consumers by way of fracking in the upper plains states cannot be understated. It had completely flipped the equation regarding the amount of oil that the United States consumes versus how much it imports, to a net positive for the United States. The idea that the United States would be a major oil producer was something that could not have been foreseen just five years ago. At that time there was an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and it was uncertain what the future of oil would be in the equation of the United States going forward. The series of unfortunate events surrounding that accident have given way to new technologies which have opened up new sources of fossil fuels. This new way of extracting has had a deleterious effect on the major oil companies stock prices, as well as the price of gasoline in the country, a net positive for the consumer and small businesses. And, in addition, the idea that dark minerals is not a problem in the United States is simply not true. In 2008 the Department of the Interior, Minerals Management Agency had several employees

implicated in an access for funds investigation. And also the administration, recently, was forced to reevaluate its policy with oil export to Mexico after U.S. oil companies found a loophole that allowed them to bypass laws that effectively ban all oil exports from the United States. These are just a fraction of the many cases that the Department of Interior, and the Department of Energy investigate every year in the United States involving the violation of U.S. trade laws.

Russia has since the late eighteenth hundreds been a major payer in the hunt, extraction, and consumption of oil in the world. There is no surprise then when it is alleged that there is a lot of cronyism involving today's Russian oil tzars and their liquid gold. This should come as no surprise then that the people who control Rosneft, Russia's largest oil and gas company. Have side deals and back doors that they transfer huge sums of oil from the Russian oil fields to illicit traders who no doubt have dubious intentions for their product, while making a quick buck. This too is a major downward pressure on the price of oil throughout the world.

In the Middle East oil and power go hand in hand. With OPEC as its major conduit. The amount of oil OPEC, a major oil cartel distributes has been steadily above stated goals for at least the last year alone. This means that though there is an influx in the amount of oil available in the world, and the cartels main goal is to manipulate the price of oil for its members. OPEC, due to political pressures, as well as monumental deals such as the Iranian JCPOA, have not caused the member states to decrease supply for the market. Even though countries such as Saudi Arabia, and Qatar now have dwindling supplies of Reserve currency in their treasuries. These

actions have had a net downward pressure on international oil markets as well leading to lower prices at the pump, and smaller profit margins for the large oil companies.

The idea that the energy markets will rebound from the glut of oil in the world is a complete fallacy. Traders who hope to get an edge in these markets by playing them long will be in for a rude awakening when earnings are announced. Even trying to pare your losses with short term options trading tactics could see your wallet take a severe blow. And the coming energy revolution which will take even more profits from the big energy companies will only make things worse. In short there is no known end to the precipitous fall in the price of oil and it seems as though that will never be abated so long as the amount of oil both legitimate and dark continues to flood the zone.

Oil and Natural Gas as a Tool of American Modern Special Warfare

With America now awash in oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) a new era in commercial oil exports should commence. For you see while we may be able to supply our own oil and natural gas the need is greater in Europe where a growing international threat in an ever more recalcitrant Russia looms. This has forced us for the first time in a long time to be a net exporter of energy.

The plan should involve both oil, and gas pipelines to the East Coast of the United States from Keystone XL an order to then transport oil and gas to Europe through shipping lanes. The

new oil pipeline for Europe should run contiguously with the proposed Trans Canada gas pipeline which runs from Calgary, Alberta, to Portland, Maine, and hooking up with Keystone XL in North Dakota on the way. This will deplete our ability to subsist on our own oil supplies but in this new and dangerous paradigm it is essential that we take care of our closest friends and NATO allies. This is important not only for the sake of simply providing, but providing for the sake of peace and tranquility on the European continent, in the pursuit of deterring Russian aggression there.

At the same time that we are shoring up Europe's oil and LNG supplies we should also be exploring alternative oil sources besides Russia from Asia, for Europe. One such alternative is the extension to the Azeri-Turkmen Trans Caspian gas pipeline from Turkmenistan. This pipeline once extended and coupled with the Nabucco gas pipeline will strike at the heart of Eastern Europe and provide much needed oil and gas relief that the continent desperately needs.

In short the oil and gas situation with Russia is untenable given the current geo political conditions, and circumstances which should be ameliorated with oil and gas from the U.S. and Canada, while a concomitant gas pipeline is built in the trans-Caspian region from Turkmenistan to Eastern Europe. These projects don't have much time left on their schedule given the facts that we are already halfway through summer. The countenance of our leaders should be to prevent Russian imperial ambitions in Europe at any and all cost so as to dissuade any future unnecessary bloodshed. By coming together and building the bonds of trust that we have known so well with Europe and now with Central Asia we can assure that the Russian federation doesn't become once again the Soviet empire.

ISIL: Practitioners of Irregular Warfare: A Brief Primer

If ever there were an irregular army that was deemed appropriate to study in the context of advanced special warfare, that army would have to be The Islamic State of Iraq and The Levant , or simply ISIL. The only real analogue to cite in the West that would help to adequately equate the forces of ISIL to a comparable enemy we need look no further than Ghengis Khan, and his Mongols. In the Middle East now much like in the 12th century a menacing force has risen up. However instead of the Mongols and Ghengis Khan, the enemy is Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and a potent force of loyal radical Islamic extremist who call themselves the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant(ISIL). And though culturally, and ethnically these two forces may be very different. Their style of conducting warfare appear to be very similar. From ISIL mimicking the Mongols style of conducting war, and even taking over some of the same territory in much the same fashion that the mongols did, to the administration of these conquered “provinces” and the chain of command as it has been elucidated from their leader; al-Baghdadi.

The medieval Mongol warrior often rode on horseback with a composite bow as weapon and light armor on. With Iron studs were used to reinforce the cloth and leather.¹⁰ In a very modern contrast in comparison ISIS fighters usually do not have well fortified vehicles, often opting for extremely light weight non military vehicles such as Japanese manufactured sedans, and pickup trucks. This is to maximize efficiency of speed. And the similarities don't end their. though their

¹⁰ D Nicolle, V Shpakovsky, Osprey Series of Books: Kalka River 1223: Ghengis Khan's Mongols Invade Russia, Date Unknown

street fighting usually consist of Improvised Explosive Devices, and Rocket Propelled Grenades, their open area fighting styles are very similar consisting of riding on horseback, or pickup truck in the case of ISIS, and using a weapon(usually a heavy machine gun or anti-aircraft gun), that they will then fire either behind them, or to the left and right of them, while a second mounted driver, takes care never to drive in a straight line. The Mongols were known to have the capability to acquire large masses of contiguous land in a short amount of time. ISIS too has proven that they have the capability to acquire large amounts of land, and hold it in a relatively short amount of time.

Much like ISIS the Mongols were masters of psychological warfare. And much like ISIS when news of a Mongol advance reached the ears of their intended target. It struck such fear that surrender was almost inevitable.¹¹ As it has been noted by many critics of ISIS, the capture and subsequent decapitation of any and all enemies is also a fearsome tactic that has been explored in depth here in the West. Particularly when it involves western civilians, or military personnel. Figures such as “Jihadi John” have been much critiqued and though the tactic has been far and away criticized, in Europe and elsewhere in the West, this only speaks to the success that such a public relations coup has been able to attain.

If we are to defeat ISIL now and in the future, it would be a good idea to study their battlefield tactics and propaganda exploits, an order to better learn how to counter such a threat not only

¹¹ D Nicolle, V Shpakovsky, Osprey Series of Books: Kalka River 1223: Ghengis Khan's Mongols Invade Russia, Date Unknown

from them, but also future irregular armies that we may encounter on the battlefield, not only in the Middle East, but the rest of the world as well.

Designing Competent Saudi Special Warfare Units: An Aside

Recently in an article for Forbes.com Magazine, it was reported that Saudi Arabia as part of its Saudi Vision 2030 would strive to wean the country off its “addiction” to oil.¹² It was also announced, through Saudi Vision 2030 that Prince Mohamed bin Salman al Saud intended to develop an indigenous capability to design military hardware for the country, and also to export these technologies to partners and allies.¹³ This new Military Industrial Complex would presumably supply the bulk of the 98% of the arms they export, and that the Kingdom currently conducts. Such a path is viable however they will it is foreseen be required to spend a loft sum on building such an enterprise. This new industry will be partially privatized it has been reported and will be partially funded by the Saudis from the proceeds from the diversifying of Saudi Aramco. These are great ambitions and considering the neighborhood that the Saudis occupy it is in their interest for these things and more to come to fruition sooner rather than later.

One important topic however that should be redressed by the Saudis is the scale and competency of their armed forces. The Saudis are currently one of the largest militaries in the Middle East.

¹² Ellen R. Wald “Saudi Arabia’s Surprising New Military Goals”, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ellenwald/2016/04/27/saudi-arabias-surprising-new-military-goals/#38f1b34a3ac9> Accessed: 4/29/16

¹³ Ibid Wald

However their skill and scope pale in comparison to the scale and scope of the Israeli military, or the Iranian military, one of their principal rivals. This creates a conundrum for the Saudis that they are only now beginning to redress. The Saudis are close to the Americans, and though relations have been frosty since the conclusion of the Iranian Nuclear Agreement, this relationship has endured similar hardships before. But for all this cosiness the Saudis will never be able to supplant the relationship that the Israelis have with America. This is why the balance of military trade between the three countries will never benefit the Saudis. This creates an almost inevitable split from the United States at least if only to fulfill the necessary arrangements for the procurement of weapons systems from Russia, or perhaps more likely, India. It's these reasons and more that the Saudis, who desire a positive balance with the threat of Iranian expansionism in the region, will seek to obviate the Iranian threat through indigenous Military Industrial Complex fomenting.

As for the competency of these armed forces, this is a serious matter that will require a concerted effort by the Saudis to further them along in the aggregate of eliminating the threat of Iranian influence in the Middle East. The recent war in Yemen has demonstrated that the Saudis are forced to throw far more resources, manpower, and élan into their military objectives, than similar states do in order to complete the intended mission. Whether this is the bombing of areas populated by civilians, resulting in disastrous public relations; the lack of wanting to use proper equipment to complete the mission; the inability to defeat the enemy and hold terrain; or the lack of competent Generals to conduct the war. These are all by proxy symptoms of a lack of leadership, planning, and foresight by the Monarchy to achieve the optimal conclusion when

dealing with military affairs. This is a serious issue that will require years of training of soldiers, nurturing of leadership, and at the end of day treasure spent; an order to build and sustain a competent professional fighting force.

One model that perhaps the Kingdom can emulate is the Saadam Hussein Iraqi, or North Korean models, ironically. When Kim Jong-Un came into power the special forces consisted of a main Pyongyang capital cadre, the Dear Leader(s) (as he's called) body guard who could be entrusted with prepping for sojourns around the country, and abroad. This has changed under Un's leadership. He now has several layers of protection from so called "special" forces that he relies upon to provide safety for the capital. But he also has expanded upon the idea of special forces, no longer relying upon them for purely defensive purposes, but also indoctrinating many thousands more of North Koreans who now form special demolitions brigades, including cyber, but also land, sea, and air special warfare brigades too. This "personal" army approach, allows for Un to release the reigns of the defense of the country to his hand picked, groomed generals. While he can conduct raids, and sabotage operations with his handpicked "special" forces that will allow him to, should the need arise, escape harm so that he may live to fight another day while his special forces protect him and the continuity of leadership, as well as fight the imperialist to the death. Likewise the Saudis can learn from these tactics and apply them to their strategic planning, and tactical alike. For instance perhaps their can be a larger contingent of royal guardsmen that the Saudis use to perpetuate their rule. While at the same time the Saudi royal guard can act as the tip of the spear when it comes to initiating assaults in foreign lands, or when the needs arises, and they are required to provide the first line of defense if the Kingdom

were to ever be assaulted. As for Saadam Hussein and the Iraqi Fedayeen their can be no doubt as to the veracity and the lengths Sadaam's royal guard were willing to go an order to protect him from U.S. forces both in the 2003 Iraq War, as well as the 1991 Gulf War. And as recent as 2014 Chemical Ali; Sadaam's General who was most proficient at gassing Iraqi Kurds, and Iranian cities in the 80's and 90's was still mounting a campaign of terror in the mountains surrounding Tikrit, Sadaam's Iraqi hometown. Even though Sadaam himself had been captured Christmas Eve, 2003, and subsequently hanged in November of 2006. His bloody reign of terror against Coalition forces, and the Iraqi people came to an end when American troops happened upon his rocky enclave killing him in the ensuing firefight. I bring this up simply to illustrate the lengths that soldiers whose loyalty to the regime supersedes everything else in their lives. This is a lesson which was learned some years ago by Napoleon who summed it up neatly when he stated "A soldier will fight long and hard for a bit of colored ribbon."

Conclusion

Ultimately it will be up to the United States to gauge not only how effective do they want their Special Warfare units to be, but how plentiful they should be as well. Throughout this paper several examples of Special Warfare have been presented throughout its duration for your perusal. It will be incumbent upon the next administration to remain true to the empirical evidence presented which overwhelmingly establishes Special Warfare as the preeminent form of warfare for the foreseeable future. And while it may be true that Special Warfare practitioners will not win outright every war. It has become obvious though the dearth of evidence that their

presence on the battlefield is enduring, and they should be expected to contribute to many more missions not only for the United States armed forces. But for the many countries abroad big, and small, savory and likewise that recognize the important and unique role that special warfare operators play. Whether it be the preservation of freedoms and national security challenges, which the United States uses them for. Or the specialized desire to have competent forces who can be controlled directly by the leadership for the continuity of leadership, or the harrying of enemy troops, which more unsavory regimes look to them for. These brave fighting forces will be some of the most important contributors in this centuries warfare. And though there are some whom question the authenticity of such forces. There is not a night that goes by that I don't thank God that there are brave men and women who seek nothing but my good nights rest, day and night, and wear the armor of God, and the flag of freedom.