



**R3 Question #2: How does Da'esh's transition to insurgency manifest itself, and what actions should the Coalition take to minimize their ability to maintain either military effectiveness or popular support?**

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## Executive Summary

The self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) or Da'esh, as the group has become known, transition to insurgency is underway. They may not see it like this since Iraq and Syria are struggling with their own sovereignty and trying to restructure governance to support the basic necessities of the populations.

Daniel Serwer of Johns Hopkins University says we can already see this manifesting “in overt terrorist attacks, which are already frequent, as well as more covert intimidation.” IS is conducting suicide, IED and infrastructure attacks daily. The group will continue to be active in organized crime activities - protection rackets, smuggling of oil and antiquities, kidnapping for ransom, and violent intimidation – against any effort to restore law and order. “Daesh will not fold its tent. It may even spawn a new organization to carry on its campaign for the caliphate and seek to embed with other less brutal Salafists,” says Serwer.

In light of the possibility that U.S. backed Iraqi and Peshmerga forces are pushing IS out of its territory in Iraq and beginning to tackle some locations in Syria, Harith Al-Qarawee, professor at Brandeis University, says, “ISIS insurgents who will survive the Mosul battle will return to underground insurgency and seek to secure safe passages between Iraq and Syria.” He and other experts agree that there must be an effective intelligence effort in urban centers to keep abreast of any movements IS may make if another gap in security and governance should open up. Renad Mansour, an expert at Chatham House, reminds us they IS will continue, even underground to “make sure that Iraq's political elite are unable to come up with a political solution,” so if a political solution is not found, IS will use this as a reason to resurface. The last U.S. Ambassador to Syria, Ambassador Robert Ford, and Elie Abouaoun, at USIP, feel that in order to prevent this from happening, “a genuine and organic national reconciliation effort” must commence by investing in political reconciliation initiatives that combine both top-down and bottom-up approach and include a regional dialogue between Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

SMEs agree that IS will not disappear. They will most likely go into hiding with sleeper cells in Iraqi and Syrian cities. Many may also remain silent in other Western countries looking for future opportunities to act. Noted anthropologist Scott Atran believes IS “will retreat to its pre-Caliphate tactics, as they did during the Iraqi surge, when they lost 60-80% of their foot soldiers and more than a dozen high-value targets each month for 15 consecutive months, yet still survived with a strong enough organization to seize the initiative in the chaos of the Syrian Civil War and roar back along the old oil-for-smuggling routes that Sunni Arab tribesmen and Saddam loyalists.” Randa Slim of the Middle East Institute states that, “there will be post-ISIS territorial and ideological challenges. On the territorial side of the equation, given the range of actors involved in the Mosul fight, there will be increasing stakes, post-liberation, of competing territorial claims between Baghdad and Erbil but also among different ethnic groups. She continues, “Kirkuk is likely to be a major point of competition in the future and will complicate the relationship between Erbil and Baghdad” and losing territory will undermine ISIS's caliphate narrative.”

All agree that the Iraqi leadership must find a way to bring the Sunni population into the political decision making by cultivating local leaders who have legitimacy and credibility. Sunni groups, that are particularly fragmented, must contribute to reconstruction of liberated territories and participate in security, police and military, to ensure that their grievances are met. These grievances are rooted in divisions that are embedded by continued attacks on their communities by IS, who are dividing Sunnis as well as Sunnis and Shia populations, and Shia forces perceived to be targeting not only Iraqi Sunnis, but

all Sunnis as a proxy for Iran.

Many “IS members are Iraqis,” says Bilal Wahab of the Washington Institute, who were brutally coerced to join IS or had little economic choice, they too should be a focus for immediate reintegration into society to help quell animosities perpetuated in this conflict. Remember, says Altran, “many of the leaders of the Sunni Arab militia in Mosul supported IS at the outset (as “The Revolution” - al Thawra - to win back Iraq from Shia control) and turned against IS when they encourage Sunni to go against Sunni. “Military action and humanitarian assistance are critical, but they are mostly addressing the symptoms, and need to be supplemented by civilian initiatives” says United States Institute of Peace expert Sarhang Hamasaeed. In Diane Maye’s words, “An important element of denying regrowth is to use targeting in conjunction with a broader movement to engage the population against the terrorist network.” In other words, take advantage of an IS retreat by rebuilding and improving the livelihoods of people. That is the main IS deterrent.

Bilal Wahab, Washington Institute, encourages coalition members to take into account several lessons from the past when planning next steps. First, “If grievances continue—mass arrests, kidnappings and economic sidelining, insurgency will remain legitimate in the eyes of the population” and second, “cash speaks louder than ideology, be it foreign funds pouring into Iraq, or Sunni politicians funneling money into violent groups to gain leverage in Baghdad. Finally, “in addition to sectarianism, a chronic malaise of Iraq’s security forces is corruption and has impunity.” This must be addressed immediately. Trust in security forces is the only way populations will support and report ongoing IS activities.

## SME Inputs

Elie Abouaoun, USIP

2. How does Da'esh's transition to insurgency manifest itself, and what actions should the Coalition take to minimize their ability to maintain either military effectiveness or popular support?

In the absence of a genuine and organic national reconciliation effort, there is very little that can be done to curb down the efforts of transitioning ISIS fighters/cells to an insurgency mode. The only way to reverse the situation is to invest heavily in a political reconciliation initiative that combines both top-down and bottom-up approaches that goes hand in hand with a regional dialogue between Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia. This is where the international pressure on regional powers should focus.

Harith al-Qarawee, Brandeis

Most likely, ISIS insurgents who will survive the Mosul battle will return to underground insurgency and seek to secure safe passages between Iraq and Syria. Some will remain hiding in the cities waiting for a better moment to operate, and others will operate in orchards and desert areas. It is important to install effective intelligence system in the urban centers, accompanied by a strategy appealing to the locals. Crucial in this effort is to convince locals that terrorists will not return again and their defeat is final, which requires rapid efforts to normalize situation in those areas. Also, important to make sure that security forces tasked with securing those cities will have the confidence of locals. This is why staffing them with personnel from same areas and finding working frameworks of cooperation with Iraqi military is crucial. At the same time, it is important to avoid the repetition of having people with double loyalties inside security forces. This requires establishing an effective mechanism for vetting and clearance before appointing any person in security forces.

## Omar Al-Shahery, RAND

Da'esh is the dominant militant group in the Sunni areas of Iraq as well in Syria; that said, it is by no means the only militant group, nor the only group antagonizing the central government in Iraq. Most Sunnis in Iraq and Syria are extremely motivated to push back on the Iranian – Shia Arab influence in these two countries.

Moreover, while most of the non-Da'esh groups have not antagonized the West, some see the West acting upon two increasingly variable standards when it comes to Iraq and Syria. They see the West supporting Iraq's democracy that enables the Shia (as an alleged majority), and omitting the same practice in Syria, or at least being lightly motivated when providing such support. This perception is extremely strong with the Iraqi Sunnis and could be enough motive that opposition to the central government might take the form of an insurgency. We should remember that Da'esh is unlike any other insurgency with the exception that it holds an unmatched resentment to the West, and people of other faiths.

If the motivations to oppose the central government for groups that are dissatisfied with Da'esh within the Sunni areas are identified, and possibly neutralized as a first step, new counter Da'esh groups or political structures might emerge powerful enough to ensure Da'esh displacement. The US and even local authorities in Iraq should see to empower such groups and consolidate a solution or a political contract that ensures the sustainability of an initial fragile peace. The political popular momentum against Da'esh might just have a chance to prevail.

The most potentially effective approach to sustain Da'esh displacement is to identify potentially capable leaders who have local public support and improve their governance craftsmanship. The success of such individuals (given the proper support) will be based on their skills, the support they get and above all on legitimizing their leadership, a process that will require the decentralization of security, justice and services.

The second step, which is equally hard, is improving the livelihood in areas that are liberated from Da'esh. The main economic activities in areas that are, or have been, under Da'esh control have deteriorated to a point that has resulted in a different awful reality, far worse than before. Reports from Da'esh controlled areas indicate that infrastructure, industries, services and agriculture are all paralyzed or destroyed. People in Da'esh controlled areas are mostly surviving on boiled wheat alone, and they're running out. Such devastation, if not reversed, will certainly ignite or catalyze armed opposition.

More important than all that is the lack of vision with regards to how areas that are liberated from Da'esh are going to be governed. One potentially effective way is implementing some form of decentralization. That said, Sunnis lack political maturity and leadership despite the fact that they possess, or have the ability to implement, what is potentially the most effective bureaucracy in the country. Moreover, putting any form of decentralization into effect would require a natural resources sharing legislation, something the Iraqi parliament has failed to pass since 2007<sup>1</sup>. One thing worth mentioning is that the Iraqi government is not keen on decentralization and granting any sort of autonomy to Sunni areas, and Sunnis themselves are divided on that matter as well. Sunnis perceive the Iraqi government's efforts at reconciliation as an effort to coerce Sunnis to accept the de-facto Shia

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<sup>1</sup> The Iraqi Hydrocarbons Law

political hegemony, one they feel is based on a false claim of majority. Another initiative that hasn't yet been implemented is addressing the lack of funding or will to rehabilitate and rebuild the highly damaged former Da'esh held areas. The initiative was announced by the Prime Minister, and it was planned to start in Fallujah, yet no significant improvement has yet been seen on the ground.

Dr. Scott Atran, ARTIS

My guess is that ISIS simply will retreat to its pre-Caliphate tactics (as during the Iraqi surge when they lost 60-80% of their foot soldiers and more than a dozen high-value targets each month for 15 consecutive months, yet still survived with a strong enough organization to seize the initiative in the chaos of the Syrian Civil War and roar back along the old oil-for-smuggling routes that Sunni Arab tribesmen and Saddam loyalists knew so well and rapidly gained control of). They are likely to try to build more sleeper cells inside big cities in Syria and Iraq (and Europe), but especially in recently liberated Sunni areas. ISIS will lose the state but not necessarily the cities (unless, like Ramadi and à la Grozny, they are flattened and gutted). The surviving leadership will rethink and revise the way it built alliances with communities, especially with local tribes, and likely to attempt to offer more power to tribal leaders instead of marginalizing them. And as long as Shia forces are perceived to be a danger to the Sunni Arabs, that strategy will work if the insurgents make costly displays of willingness to cooperate with the tribesmen.

The primary short-term goal of the Sunnis in post-ISIS is to wrangle from the gov't less presence of central security forces in their cities, and more independence. It is unlikely that the gov't will give more than lip service to the demand, and the Sunni know it and will plan for that.

But the major circumstance that continues to destabilize the Sunni territories and keep open future possibilities for insurgency to flourish is the internal fragmentation of the Sunni political community and the extreme animosity within and between their factions and tribes. Indeed, many of the leaders of the Sunni Arab militia we talked to on the Mosul front supported ISIS at the outset (as "The Revolution" - al Thawra - to win back Iraq from Shia control) and turned against ISIS only when ISIS encouraged other members of the same or different tribes to seize the possession of the sheikhs who eventually joined the coalition. We witnessed ISIS and anti-ISIS from the same tribal segments and villages fighting one another, and their likely will be a bloody reckoning (as is already occurring in places). ISIS and other local insurgent groups can always find people to host them in such an environment.

Amb. Robert S. Ford, MEI

ISIS will target recruitment on disenfranchised. For example, tribes and clans targeted by Popular Mobilization, Shia and Sunni, because those tribes & clans had members who supported ISIS. ISIS will also assassinate security and political figures to promote insecurity and fear. To gain popular support, those tribes/clans that had helped ISIS instead must help the Iraqi authorities and the Coalition against ISIS and that can only happen if they sense there is a possibility of justice and reconciliation.

Sarhang Hamasaeed, USIP

Obviously, losing territory does not mean the end of Da'esh. They already execute all kinds of attacks in Baghdad, and liberated areas through suicide bombers (human or vehicle borne) or a small group of fighters. These attacks signal their continued presence, and cause significant casualties and damages. The more they strike in Shia communities and the PMF the higher the risk of triggering retaliatory action by the PMF, which could help with pushing the Sunni population in the direction of violence through Da'esh or otherwise.

Continued training to increase the capacity of Iraqi security and intelligence institution would help with disrupting plans, and preventing attacks, which would help with minimizing the sparks/triggers of Sunni-Shia violence. Further, providing technical capacity to the Iraqi police and security forces to bridge relations with the communities they are to serve could help with minimizing the existing distrust. The Iraqi police and security forces would find themselves in places where tensions will exist for many reasons: continuation of political competition, continued Da'esh and/or PMF attacks, tribal fights, public protests against corruption and lack of services, etc. The Iraqi security forces would benefit from community policing and conflict resolution techniques to manage issues with a conflict-sensitivity lens.

To reduce popular support for Da'esh or any other anti-Iraqi Government force, the non-military grievances of the Iraqi Sunnis should be addressed. Military action and humanitarian assistance are critical, but they are mostly addressing the symptoms, and need to be supplemented by civilian initiatives.

# Da'esh Degradation: Attacking Two Organizational Nodes to Reduce Military Capability and Popular Support

Gina Scott Ligon, Ph.D. and Michael Logan, M.A.  
University of Nebraska Omaha

While Da'esh has built an organizational structure that is somewhat resilient to traditional leader decapitation and other kinetic exogenous shocks, understanding the organizational structure and leadership decision making functions have potential for degradation of the organization. Specifically, one element of military capability resides in the Security and Intelligence Council (SIC). Identifying the key leaders in this group throughout the Provinces will reduce the central leadership's capacity for command and control, as these individuals also serve as the central couriers between the Provinces and the Top Management Team. Second, one organizational weak point the group has resides in its inability to decouple the military from the administrative control in the positions of the Governor<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, these regional leaders are responsible for either city or provincial commands, and have authority over both military and civil administration in their geographic area of responsibility. There are implications for this decision-making structure that can diminish popular support of Da'esh in regions it controls. In the following section, we will provide an overview of how the mission of Da'esh drives its form. Next, we will discuss two organizational nodes **(1) SIC, and (2) Governorship** that, if targeted, are central to Da'esh military capability and popular support<sup>3</sup>.

## Brief Overview of Da'esh Mission and Organizational Structure

From a review of leader speeches<sup>4</sup>, the dataset of Aymenn Tamimi<sup>5</sup>, a review of the primary training doctrine<sup>6</sup>, and other archival material provided by Aaron Zelin<sup>7</sup>, we have identified a four-part mission of Da'esh: 1) establish and maintain the Caliphate (essentially providing Da'esh ideological jurisdiction to redefine Islamic Law to fit its strategic objectives), 2) build an Islamic State (and all the administration that comes with it), 3) engage in sustained and barbarically escalating violence, and 4) perpetuate the narrative of an imminent apocalypse. To support this multi-pronged mission, the Da'esh organization—similar to the training doctrine and digital narrative<sup>8</sup> that regales it—is bifurcated around its puritanical, extremist religious intolerance and the prioritization of the ambitions that differentiate it. While many of its administrative offices were in place since 2006, the organization has been structured in a way for maximum resilience since 2010. The Da'esh Top Management Team operates in a matrix structure, or an organization with complex command system characterized by multiple lines of authority<sup>9</sup>.

Some senior leaders occupy more than one role, and most lines of authority are more advisory and theoretical than punitive or directive in nature. The structure is echoed throughout the regional provinces, which allows for a resilient, autonomously staffed organization. The compartmentalization of Da'esh

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<sup>2</sup> UNCLASS reports by the Novetta group have specified the individuals who most likely fill these roles.

<sup>3</sup> On December 19, Ligon briefs the SMA network on the organizational structures of Da'esh that have garnered the most popular support from tribal elites and the populace at large.

<sup>4</sup> Pelletier, I., Lundmark, L., Gardner, R., Ligon, G.S., & Kilinc, R. (2015). Why ISIS Messaging Resonates, *Studies of Conflict and Terrorism Journal*.

<sup>5</sup> Aymenn Tamimi has the largest open source website of Da'esh primary documents.

<sup>6</sup> Jacob Olidort (2016) published a RAND report detailing the Da'esh educational system.

<sup>7</sup> Jihadology.net

<sup>8</sup> Derrick, D.C., Sporer, K., Church, S., & Ligon, G.S. (in press). A cyber profile of the Islamic State. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict Journal*.

<sup>9</sup> Davis and Lawrence (1977) seminal work on the matrix organization.



means that it can sustain significant human capital loss in one theater without much impact on adjacent regions nor the top management team. Because the broad strategic objectives are already outlined and internalized by members (see mission areas 1-4 above), and the structure is in place to support this mission, its implementation can be unambiguously executed by local leaders who will continue to work toward the strategic objectives even if their superior dies or is captured<sup>10</sup>.

The decentralization of the execution of the strategic mission allows for greater customization of the mission to fit the needs and demands of a local populace and key elites. Similar to counter-intelligence work done by the KGB operatives who trained the former Baathists<sup>11</sup>, Da'esh began each of its campaigns by intelligence gathering on key elites (e.g., powerful local tribal leaders, armed groups, influential families) and marking them for either cooperation or elimination. This can take the form of identifying vices, such as infringements of Sharia (e.g., homosexuality, alcohol or drug use), or inducements (e.g., money or power) of these elites. This has another benefit in that the leadership of Da'esh is behind the scenes, particularly in Syria where locals are already weary of oppressive outsiders, and the implementation of the strategic objectives of Da'esh is implemented by local elites who are either committed or simply compliant to Da'esh. This structure, similar to a franchise organization, allows for firewalls between regional leaders where integration is loose and interdependence is minimal.

#### **Two Organizational Nodes of Vulnerability**

***Security and Intelligence Council: The Communication Backbone.*** While regional provinces are relatively isolated from each other, directives from the Central leadership team and Caliph still need to be communicated. There is much evidence of coordination and collaboration within Da'esh and across these regional boundaries<sup>12</sup>. In a review of several members of Da'esh leadership<sup>13</sup>, it was noted that one group of leaders in particular served as a communication node across the Provinces. The SIC, modeled after Saddam Hussein's intelligence services, is a small, nimble organization that does initial intelligence work leading up to Da'esh taking a region (as described above, SIC identifies elites' vices or virtues to be used for later influence of them) as well as provides security to the top management team of Da'esh. Similar to functions in State Military Structures, the SIC is central to the counter-intelligence (CI) mission and function of Da'esh, ensuring that plots to overthrow the central leadership are undermined. In addition, the SIC oversees communications to ensure that the top management team a) has direct knowledge of potential plots, and b) can deliver critical messages across geographic boundaries. Some evidence exists that wives are used in this communication mechanism, but always in direct relation to members of the SIC<sup>14</sup>. Implications from a military capability of this structure are as follows. First, geographic leaders are almost entirely dependent on these individuals for information from central leadership. While the autonomous fief-like structure of the provinces allows for resilience from leader decapitation at the regional level, it also creates a dependency on the SIC members for information and strategic direction. Second, given the role these individuals play in creating alliances with tribal elites and local leaders via blackmail and traditional CI work, their elimination or capture would likely reduce their influence in the region to some degree, as many of the tribal leaders appear to be aligned based on compliance to deter personal loss versus commitment to the cause<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Orton, 2016

<sup>11</sup> Weiss and Hassan (2015) identified the Baathist influence internal to Da'esh.

<sup>12</sup> For a review of Da'esh Collaboration, please see the SMA talk by Ligon in June of 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Kyle Orton's UNCLASS work on Da'esh leader profiles provides much evidence about SIC functions

<sup>14</sup> Yousseff & Harris (2015) described the roles of wives in ISIS in their story in the *Daily Beast*.

<sup>15</sup> Foerstl, K., Azadegan, A., Leppelt, T., & Hartmann, E. (2015). Drivers of supplier sustainability: Moving beyond compliance to commitment. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 51(1), 67-92.

**Governorship: Unwieldy Organizational Dependencies.** One benefit that local populations have described about Da’esh is their capacity to provide basic services and maintain order where government services—particularly in Syria—have failed<sup>16</sup>. A central key to this governance is the imposition of civil administration security forces who investigate transgressions and mete public punishment as a deterrent. One benefit of their presence is the distribution of resources in a more equitable, predictable manner. In addition, they are charged with enforcing rulings from the Central Office for Investigating Grievances<sup>17</sup>, which allows for mediation among the local population members about issues such as land disputes, theft, and other criminal acts. Thus, the Hisbah, while deemed the “religious police” by popular media, also serve an important role in delivering on the promise of governance on which Da’esh depends.

Here is where the problem lies: the Hisbah fall under the civil authority of the Governor of a given regional area, but so do the military commanders. Thus, if a field military leader has expended an undesirable amount of his front-line fighters (as was the case in Raqqa during summer of 2016), the Governor can and will activate the Hisbah to join the military fighting units. The Hisbah can act as civil criminal justice professionals under one “title authority” directed by the governor, and then be activated to serve as front line military fighters when needed. When we first began examining Da’esh, we thought this rotation among military and administrative units allowed for greater collaboration, reduced siloes and other organizational benefits—and it did during times of steady state. However, under concerted attack by the Coalition, this “rotational” organizational structure has a significant limitation. As the Hisbah “changes assignment” to military roles, the governance function they afforded to their regional home station is also diminished. In Raqqa, specifically during June and July 2014, reports of civil unrest and inability to govern effectively may have been a direct result of this organizational structure deficit.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Given the question posed for this effort, we have two recommendations flowing from our analysis of Da’esh organizational vulnerabilities. First, identify members of the SIC. They provide multiple related military capabilities, most importantly the flexible capacity for Command and Control from strategic decision makers and collaboration across the regional mini-organizations. Second, draw the Hisbah into fights in key areas. The conflict of interest that the Governors will face when pressed militarily will ultimately result in lack of control and deterrence of civil crimes in the communities in which Da’esh still holds and degrade residual support from the local populace it governs.

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<sup>16</sup> A 2014 report by the Institute for the Study of War describes ISIS’ capacity to govern in Raqqa, al-Bab, and Manbij

<sup>17</sup> As described in Issue 1 of *Rumiyah*, the online English Da’esh publication

Renad Mansour, Chathamhouse

Daesh will treat its loss in Mosul as a test from God. They will then go underground, and use the insurgency to make sure that Iraq's political elite are unable to come up with a political solution - without this, the grounds may be ripe for a return.

Diane L. Maye, Ph.D. , Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Western powers routinely use the advantages of superior airpower, battlefield intelligence, and precision strikes to target terrorist organizations. Oftentimes, however, terrorist organizations are more like a hydra, and quickly regenerate a new head after an attack. **An important element of denying regrowth is to use targeting in conjunction with a broader movement to engage the population against the terrorist network.** Because Mosul is under siege and the population sees that Daesh is losing territory, the momentum is now with Iraqi Special Operations and coalition forces. For instance, pockets of dissenters have been filtering information on Daesh to Iraqi Special Forces. As Daesh loses momentum, the coalition needs to capitalize on the opportunity to hold ground and rebuild the city.

Spencer Meredith, NDU

“Daesh and the Ladybugs”

How can the Coalition and Iraq quiet the discontent among self-selecting, anti-status quo norm entrepreneurs and supporters? Should those with power seek to eliminate those sources of discontent, if that is even possible, or would redirection yield better results for the disaffected themselves, not to mention the Iraqi community as a whole? Rather than either exclusively, the Coalition needs to find and support “ladybugs” as part of the larger effort in Iraq.

If farming is an appropriate metaphor for influence operations, capacity building, and democratic governance, it can certainly apply to Iraq. At the start, the soil requires nutrients where not already fertile, and Iraq does have the resources needed to reinvigorate political reconciliation.

1) *The clear presence of negative alternatives* (“fertilizer”) – principally, sectarian violence as a means of bringing justice and establishing political order within a narrower/non-national context. This does not need to mean everyone or even a critical mass of the masses directly opposes violence, as justice and honor-driven violence can often resonate deeply among any violated people groups, as found in Iraq and beyond. Rather, like the Donbass in Eastern Ukraine, the writing is clear to see that going that route does not bring lasting goods (peace, stability) despite the promises of victory.

2) *Motivated domestic change agents*, who, when given resources, have proven their ability to mobilize populations around a variety of goals and methods (“farmers”). Some goals certainly have deep anchor points in anti-Iraq/anti-West beliefs, with equally long and durable chains bound with a multitude of interlocking identities and interests. However, the presence of these change agents bodes well for Coalition and Iraqi efforts because society accepts the presence of this kind of social mobilization, which may allow for rebranding of the concept and practice along more beneficial lines. In other words, the pattern exists for any to use with the right message and results.

3) *Effective weeding mechanisms are available*, despite the profusion of violent anti-status quo groups and actors (“dandelions”) spread broadly because of their ease of messaging and low nutrient requirements from whatever soil they encounter. Practically speaking, the key then is to find and support the friends of the reconciliation process (“ladybugs”), rather than douse the ground with herbicides, which ends up harming the healthy seedlings. To push the analogy, ladybugs eat the aphids that would otherwise consume healthy plants and give dandelions space to grow in their place. Thus, when combined with nutrient replenishment activities and good seeds (as discussed in the answer to question 1), “ladybugs” help healthy plants grow and push out the weeds. This can be an effective long-term strategy for denying openings for Daesh to recruit and find resonance with its message in Iraq. Finding these social groups and personnel is not as difficult as it may seem – they are the ones that neither actively support either side, nor turn away from the needs of the day. As a result, this otherwise neutral part of society is not by nature marginalized or politicized; they are simply pursuing stability. Their pursuit of livelihood, often at the local level, is the key factor leading them to participate in a responsive government.

(This answer is meant to step outside the regular modes of analysis and show an example of messaging that uses familiar imagery applied to political, economic, and social contexts. It also presents an alternative to the four limited archetypes of the RAND summary of options – “Rolling Back the Islamic State” December 2016 – a study that misses the role of local change agents in its scenarios.)

## Summary Articles<sup>18</sup>

Vera Mironova

International Security Fellow

Harvard Kennedy School's Belfour Center

Baghdad will have to manage increased tensions at the local level, both between different ethnic and religious communities and within the particular groups that constitute them. Once ISIS-held territories are liberated, the vacuum will encourage more groups to jostle for power and thus generating more violence.

Consider the case of Suleiman Bek, a medium-sized town near the border between Diyala and Salah ad Din Governorates that was recaptured from ISIS in the second half of 2014 by Iraqi Kurdish fighters and Shiite militiamen. Nearly two years after the area's liberation, armed Shiite groups are still preventing many of the Sunni civilians who fled the fighting from returning to their homes, leaving them to languish in camps for the internally displaced. "I followed all required procedures to return people to their homes, but at the end of the day I could not make the militias comply with the Iraqi government's regulations," Taleb Muhamed, a director of the sub-district, told us. The local government's impotence reflects a broader dynamic in Iraq: Baghdad's reliance on Shiite militias has allowed those groups to gain undue power.

As for Iraq's Shiite Arabs, like Mosul's Sunni Arabs, they are represented by a variety of armed groups that receive support from different sources, chiefly Iran and the Iraqi government. The struggle among them has already produced violence in territories liberated from ISIS.

That Iraq will build a strong and united military to resolve these problems seems unlikely, thanks in part to Baghdad's dependence on Shiite militias. Yet so long as Iraq's central government lacks the power to enforce order on its own, the country will be prime territory for nonstate armed groups. That is troubling, since the more armed groups appear in Iraq, the harder it will be to bring the country's competing factions to the table to reach political solutions to their problems.

Prisons holding detainees are another concern. According to Human Rights Watch, over the past two years, more than 9,000 have been sent to jail on ISIS-related charges, and most of them are housed in Iraqi Kurdistan because of its relatively tighter security. It might seem like good news that so many terrorists have been taken off the battlefield, but the number of prisoners is becoming a serious problem, especially as Iraqi and Western forces push deeper into ISIS' territory<sup>19</sup> and make even more arrests. The vast number of inmates is putting enormous pressure on Iraq's and Kurdistan's<sup>20</sup> economies and criminal justice systems and may create a whole new set of ISIS threats.

Long-term ISIS inmates are all housed together; moreover, they are free to interact with short-term ISIS prisoners as well as with people incarcerated for crimes unrelated to terrorism. "All the terror-related prisoners are in one section of Muaskar Salam," Burhan told me. "They interact with one another within

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<sup>18</sup> This is a summary of two of Ms. Mironova's articles on Foreign Affairs.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iraq/2016-12-01/overlo>;

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iraq/2016-11-03/iraq-a>

<sup>19</sup> ] <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/isis-revolutionary-state>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iraq/2015-09-22/iraq-pieces>

the section, but in common spaces of the prison, like the prison's only mosque, they also interact with prisoners [detained] on non-terrorism charges.”

Not attending to Iraq's prison problem could hurt the fight against ISIS and facilitate the mobilization of terrorist groups in the future.

[Daniel Serwer, Johns Hopkins University](#)

Daesh's transition to insurgency manifests itself in overt terrorist attacks, which are already frequent, as well as more covert intimidation. Daesh is especially expert at suicide and IED attacks. But you can expect it also to be active in organized crime activities like protection rackets, smuggling of oil and antiquities, kidnapping for ransom, and violent intimidation, especially against security forces or political leaders who show determination to restore law and order. While its popular appeal will be reduced due to defeat, Daesh will not fold its tent. It may even spawn a new organization to carry on its campaign for the caliphate and seek to embed with other less brutal Salafists.

The main factor in minimizing Daesh's ability to maintain military effectiveness *is* to limit their popular support, by reducing grievances and increasing benefits that come from cooperation with Iraqi government authorities, including the provincial governors and councils. Most reconstruction to date has been emergency repairs, conducted mainly through UNDP. Little or no compensation has been paid. The governors and provincial councils lack a reliable and sufficient flow of resources to make them major players in the reconstruction process. Providing them with resources is problematic, as it increases the probability of corruption, but it is also vital to enabling them to bring the Sunni population to accept Baghdad's authority.

Randa Slim, MEI

There will be post-ISIS territorial and ideological challenges. On the territorial side of the equation, given the range of actors involved in the Mosul fight, there will be increasing stakes, post-liberation, of competing territorial claims between Baghdad and Erbil but also among different ethnic groups. Kirkuk is likely to be a major point of competition in the future and will complicate the relationship between Erbil and Baghdad. On the ideological side of the equation, losing territory will go a long way in undermining ISIS's caliphate narrative. The coalition must push Baghdad to avoid imposing collective punishment on Sunni Arabs and not cast an entire community as sharing the intolerant and murderous ideology of a few among them. The worst outcome is the onset of permanent victim mentality among the Sunni and lingering feelings of marginalization and exclusion. Sunnis must be brought back into the state. Cultivating local leaders, including some tribal leaders who have legitimacy and credibility in these communities and can make these arguments to their constituents, is an essential next step. Sunni regionals must be brought into the post-ISIS liberation compact, including stemming recruitment efforts by Jihadi groups, and contributing toward reconstruction of liberated territories.

## Bilal Wahab, Washington Institute

Despite the presence of foreign fighters, the majority of Da'esh members are Iraqi nationals. As such, Iraq's young men will weigh in their options. Having a stake in governance, power and the economy would blunt the urge of resurfacing as insurgents. This is the lesson we learned from the Surge and Sons of Iraq. However, if grievances continue—mass arrests, kidnappings and economic sidelining, insurgency will remain legitimate in the eyes of the population. Another lesson learned from the Surge is that cash speaks louder than ideology, be it foreign funds pouring into Iraq, or Sunni politicians funneling money into violent groups to gain leverage in Baghdad. In addition to sectarianism, a chronic malaise of Iraq's security forces is corruption and impunity. Corruption breeds mistrust. No surprise that some polls carried out in Mosul after Da'esh incursion linked initial popular support for the terror group to accountability, albeit brutal and inhumane. As its security and intelligence officials are quick to admit, the better security of the Kurdish region hinges on public trust and support and willingness to report any suspicious activities.

## Dr. Craig Whiteside, Naval Postgraduate School

I'll push back on the question, acknowledging that I understand the intent. ISIL is already fighting an insurgency (Maoist Ph2) in many places of Iraq and Syria outside of areas where it maintains territorial control (i.e. Ph3). In other places, it is (Ph1) merely building and maintaining organizational capability to eventually surge into open guerilla warfare. These transitions are hard to discern and after 2014 there isn't a time or place that ISIL isn't conducting revolutionary warfare in all three phases somewhere in the AO. Mao wrote that these concepts are fluid and location/condition dependent, meaning different phases of progress can happen in different locations - simultaneously.

There are places in the ERV and Diyala province that Da'esh is already back in Phase 2 activities, whereas in Mosul you will see the group (assuming its elements are defeated in the city proper) slowly regress back into Ph2 mobile warfare before collapsing into Phase 1 reorganization and reconsolidation – most likely by recruiting and infiltrating new sleeper/ clandestine cells. This is assuming that they don't have an organizational collapse due to a high % of leader losses (if this happens, look for other Salafi groups to surge to pick off the best and brightest).

The coalition can monitor areas outside of the Mosul fight carefully for signs of activity (assassinations, extortion activity, IEDs, mortar strikes, etc.) in Sunni areas that demonstrate ISIL capability and the possibility of controlling territory in the future. In other areas (say Baghdad), ISIL interests will be focused simply on terrorist acts as a way to tie down resources, fill propaganda stats, and demoralize the IG/ISF/population. Once these patterns are understood, look for their resumption in and around Mosul to determine the success ISIL might have in their infiltration back into the fabric of the population in the future.

Three steps can be taken to limit/mitigate this future success in Ph1 (building/maintain):

- 1) Political – while there is little chance the IG will be able to present a reconciliation package acceptable to its Shia hardliners (who view most Sunnis as complicit in the return of ISIL), this issue is a bit of a red herring. Sunni provinces have been run in the past by Sunni leadership just like the Kurds have run



Kurdistan. The problem is that this leadership has been seen as tainted and illegitimate, and corrupt. There is evidence (open source) that Nujaifi was implicated in captured IS documents as a bribery target for their extortion network. CENTCOM could stop worrying a bit about the macro level (too hard to do) and focus on helping build local (and legitimate) Sunni governance of the multi-ethnic (but Sunni dominated) province of Ninewa and other Sunni provinces. This is how IS does it and they were successful in getting buy in by a Sunni population disinterested by their local political leadership and disdainful of their national government. Our attitude last time was that this was Iraqi business. That wasn't a productive attitude for long term stability.

2) Economic: since IS has experience in the underground economy in Mosul, any real governance has to address controlling and monitoring illicit networks of trade. IS domination of this is what made past governance almost impossible at the local level. Our focus on kinetic activities (or lack thereof) in the past blinded us to how important this area was. There is a need for assistance to the local government in the form of a counter-mafia task force, using U.S. Treasury tools to peel back some of the fog here.

3) Intelligence: the Iraqis need help identifying the IS network and piecing together who were the IS collaborators and sleeper cells that had to rise up and openly administer the "state" after 2014. Now that it has collapsed, there is a great opportunity to put this picture together using captured documents and a shared intelligence function that makes sure that innocents aren't kept in prison and recruited by IS, and hard core killers released (as happened regularly from 2007-2012) because of a lack of knowledge of who they really are (example – Abu Ali al Anbari) and what they did in the organization. It is not an exaggeration to say that the difficult piece ahead is not in Mosul or Raqqa; the future of ISIL is already in the prisons since 50k IS members are already dead, along with scores of key leaders. There is quite a bit of research that demonstrates that almost any ISIL figure out there spent time in our prison camps already. It would be wise to avoid this mistake again.

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## Biographies



### **Dr. Elie Abouaoun**

Dr. Elie Abouaoun is the director of Middle East Programs with the Center for Middle East and Africa at the U.S. Institute of Peace. Elie served until recently as a senior program officer for the Middle East and North Africa programs and the acting director for North Africa programs. Previously, he held the position of Executive Director at the Arab Human Rights Fund after an assignment as a Senior Program Officer at the U.S. Institute of Peace – Iraq program.

Prior to 2011, Dr. Abouaoun managed the Iraq program of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and worked as the program coordinator for Ockenden International-Iraq. He is a senior trainer and consultant with several local, regional and international organizations on topics such as human rights, program development/management, displacement and relief, capacity development, Euro Mediterranean cooperation; and is a member of the pool of trainers of the Council of Europe since 2000. Dr. Abouaoun regularly contributes to publications related to the above mentioned topics. In 2001, he was appointed a member of the Reference Group established by the Directorate of Education-Council of Europe to supervise the drafting of COMPASS, a manual for human rights education. He further supervised the adaptation and the translation of COMPASS into Arabic and its subsequent diffusion in the Arab region in 2003. He regularly writes articles for the French speaking Lebanese daily newspaper L'Orient du Jour as well other publications in the Arab region. He is a visiting lecturer at Notre Dame University-Lebanon on the subjects of human rights, civil society, advocacy and at Saint Joseph University-Lebanon on the subjects of human rights and citizenship. Dr. Abouaoun serves as a member of the Board of Directors of several organizations in the Arab region.

## **Dr. Harith Al-Qarawee**

Fellow at the Crown Center for Middle East Studies-Brandeis University

Former fellow at Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies-Harvard University.

Member of the Future of Iraq's Task Force- Atlantic Council

Member of Middle East Strategy Task Force (MEST) – Working group on Religion and Identity - Atlantic Council – (2015).

Writing a book manuscript on Shi'a religious authority in Iraq and its relationship with Iran. Writing commentaries and briefs on the Middle East, with special focus on post-ISIS Iraq. Briefing US government institutions on political developments in the Middle East.

## **Omar Al-Shahery**

Experienced Consultant, Chief of Party, analyst and international leader, with a 20-year record of success, including more than 15 years of supervisory and leadership experience with multinational and national-level organizations including Aktis Strategy, RAND Corporation, Iraqi Ministry of Defense, and Coalition Provisional Authority, in providing liaison with a broad range of clients and stakeholders up to the Presidential and Prime Minister level in the Middle East, United States, and Africa on policy-level and nation-building level decisions relating to democratization, educational, and defense programs, military systems, future force structure and doctrine, and national military strategy.

Held the position of Chief of Party in North Africa during his tenure in Aktis Strategy. Former Analyst at the RAND Corporation. Prior to joining RAND, he served as the Deputy Director General of the Iraqi Defense Intelligence and Military Security.

Graduated with an MC/MPA from Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Currently a PhD candidate in Engineering and Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon University.

## Scott Atran, ARTIS

Scott Atran received his B.A. and Ph.D. in anthropology from Columbia University (and an M.A. in social relations from Johns Hopkins). He is tenured as Research Director in Anthropology at France's National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), Institut Jean Nicod – Ecole Normale Supérieure, in Paris. He is a founding fellow of the Centre for Resolution of Intractable Conflict, Harris Manchester College, and Department of Politics and International Relations and School of Social Anthropology, University of Oxford. Scott also holds positions as Research Professor of Public Policy and Psychology, University of Michigan; and he is Director of Research, ARTIS Research.

Previously, Scott was assistant to Dr. Margaret Mead at the American Museum of Natural History; Coordinator "Animal and Human Communication Program," Royaumont Center for a Science of Man, Paris (Jacques Monod, Dir.); member of the Conseil Scientifique, Laboratoire d'Ethnobiologie-Biogéographie, Museum National D'Histoire Naturelle, Paris; Visiting Lecturer, Dept. Social Anthropology, Cambridge Univ.; Chargé de Conférence, Collège International de Philosophie; member of the Centre de Recherche en Epistémologie Appliquée, Ecole Polytechnique, Paris; Visiting Prof., Truman Institute, Hebrew Univ., Jerusalem; Leverhulme Distinguished Visiting Prof. of Anthropology, Univ. of London-Goldsmiths.; Presidential Scholar, John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Scott has experimented extensively on the ways scientists and ordinary people categorize and reason about nature, on the cognitive and evolutionary psychology of religion, and on the limits of rational choice in political and cultural conflict. He has repeatedly briefed NATO, HMG and members of the U.S. Congress and the National Security Council staff at the White House on the Devoted Actor versus the Rational Actor in Managing World Conflict, on the Comparative Anatomy and Evolution of Global Network Terrorism, and on Pathways to and from Violent Extremism. He has addressed the United Nations Security Council on problems of youth and violent extremism and currently serves in advisory capacity to the Security Council and Secretary General on combatting terrorism and on ways to implement UN Resolution 2250 to engage and empower youth in the promotion of peace. He has been engaged in conflict negotiations in the Middle East, and in the establishment of indigenously managed forest reserves for Native American peoples.

Scott is a recurrent contributor to *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* and *Foreign Policy*, as well as to professional journals such as *Science*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, and *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. His publications include *Cognitive Foundations of Natural History: Towards an Anthropology of Science* (Cambridge Univ. Press), *In Gods We Trust: The Evolutionary Landscape of Religion* (Oxford Univ. Press), *The Native Mind and the Cultural Construction of Nature* (MIT Press, with Doug Medin), and *Talking to the Enemy: Violent Extremism, Sacred Values, and What It Means to Be Human* (Penguin). His work and life have been spotlighted around the world on television and radio and in the popular and scientific press, including feature and cover stories of the New York Times Magazine, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Nature and Science News.



### **Amb. Robert S Ford**

Robert S Ford is currently a Senior Fellow at the Middle East Institute in Washington where he writes about developments in the Levant and North Africa. Mr. Ford in 2014 retired from the U.S. Foreign Service after serving as the U.S. Ambassador to Syria from 2011 to 2014. In this role Mr. Ford was the State Department lead on Syria, proposing and implementing policy and developing common strategies with European and Middle Eastern allies to try to resolve the Syria conflict. Prior to this, Mr. Ford was the Deputy U.S. Ambassador to Iraq from 2008 to 2010, and also served from 2006 until 2008 as the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, where he boosted bilateral education and rule of law cooperation. Ford served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Bahrain from 2001 until 2004, and Political Counselor to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad from 2004 until 2006 during the tumultuous establishment of the new, permanent Iraqi government. In 2014 he received the Secretary's Service Award, the U.S. State Department's highest honor. He also received in April 2012 from the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston the annual Profile in Courage Award for his stout defense of human rights in Syria. He has appeared on CNN, PBS, Fox, MSNBC, NPR, the BBC and Arabic news networks as well as in the *New York Times* and *Foreign Policy*.

### **Education**

B.A. in international studies, Johns Hopkins University; M.A. in Middle East studies and economics, Johns Hopkins SAIS; Advanced Arabic studies, American University of Cairo

### **Regions of Expertise**

Syria, Iraq, North Africa

### **Issues of Expertise**

US foreign policy, economic and political development, Islamist movements

### **Languages**

Arabic, French



### **Sarhang Hamasaeed**

Sarhang Hamasaeed is a senior program officer for the Middle-East and North Africa Programs at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP). He joined USIP in February 2011 and works on program management, organizational development, and monitoring and evaluation. His areas of focus include political and policy analysis, conflict analysis, dialogue processes, reconciliation and post-conflict stabilization, and ethnic and religious minorities. He writes, gives media interviews to international media, and is featured on events and briefings on Iraq, Syria, and the Middle East. He provided analysis to NPR, Voice of America, Al-Jazeera America, Fox News Al-Hurra TV, Radio Sawa, Kurdistan TV, Kurdsat TV, Rudaw, Al-Iraqiya TV, NRT TV, Skynews Arabia, the Washington Times, PBS, and CCTV. He is a member on the Task Force on the Future of Iraq, and was member of the Rebuilding Societies Working Group under the Middle East Strategy Taskforce, both initiatives by the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East. He regularly gives a lecture at the Foreign Service Institute on ISIL and Challenges to Governance in Iraq.

Hamasaeed has more than 15 years of strategy, management, and monitoring and evaluation experience in governmental, nongovernmental, private sector, and media organizations. As a deputy director general at the Council of Ministers of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq (2008-2009), Hamasaeed managed strategic government modernization initiatives through information technology with the goal of helping improve governance and service delivery. As a program manager for the Research Triangle Institute International (2003-2004), he managed civic engagement and local democratic governance programs in Iraq. Hamasaeed has worked as a planning and relations manager at Kurdistan Save the Children (1997-2002). Hamasaeed has also worked for the Los Angeles Times and other international media organizations. He holds a Master's degree in International Development Policy from Duke University (2007) and is a Fulbright alumnus.



### **Dr. Gina Ligon**

Dr. Gina Ligon is an Associate Professor of Management and Collaboration Science at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She received her PhD in Industrial and Organizational Psychology with a Minor in Measurement and Statistics from the University of Oklahoma. She is a member of the National Consortium of Studies of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). Since arriving at UNO, she has been awarded over \$3,000,000 in National Security-related grants and contracts. She currently is the Principal Investigator on a grant from Department of Homeland Security (DHS) examining the leadership and performance of transnational Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs,) and is the originator of the *Leadership of the Extreme and Dangerous for Innovative Results* (LEADIR) database. Her research interests include profiling leaders from afar, violent ideological groups, expertise and leadership development, and collaboration management. Prior to joining UNO, she was a faculty member at Villanova University in the Department of Psychology. She also worked in St. Louis as a management consultant with the firm Psychological Associates. She has won the Best Paper award from the Center for Creative Leadership and *The Leadership Quarterly Journal*, the Dean's Merit for Outstanding Research, and the NSRI Team and Leadership awards. She has published over 50 peer-reviewed publications in the areas of leadership, innovation, and violent groups, and she is the incoming editor to the academic journal *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*.

### **Michael Logan**

Michael Logan is a second-year doctoral student in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska Omaha. He holds a master's degree in criminal justice from Radford University and a bachelor's degree in criminology from Lynchburg College. His research interests focus on leadership and performance of violent extremist organizations (VEOs), individual-level risk factors for participation in violent extremism, and far-left extremism more broadly. Michael has worked on projects funded by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the National Consortium of Studies of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). Michael is currently working alongside Dr. Gina Ligon on the *Leadership of the Extreme and Dangerous for Innovation Results* (LEADIR) database on research that explores markers of malevolent creativity and attack innovation of VEOs.



**Renad Mansour**

Since 2008, Renad has held research and teaching positions focusing on issues of comparative politics and international relations in the Middle East. His research at Chatham House explores the situation of Iraq in transition and the dilemmas posed by state-building. Prior to joining Chatham House, Renad was an El-Erian fellow at the Carnegie Middle East Centre, where he examined Iraq, Iran and Kurdish affairs. Renad is also a research fellow at the Cambridge Security Initiative based at Cambridge University and from 2013, he held positions as lecturer of International Studies and supervisor at the faculty of politics, also at Cambridge University. Renad has been a senior research fellow at the Iraq Institute for Strategic Studies in Beirut since 2011 and was adviser to the Kurdistan Regional Government Civil Society Ministry between 2008 and 2010. He received his PhD from Pembroke College, Cambridge.





### **Dr. Diane L. Maye**

Dr. Diane Maye is an Assistant Professor of Homeland Security and Global Conflict Studies at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida and an affiliated faculty member at George Mason University's Center for Narrative and Conflict Resolution. She also served as a Visiting Professor of Political Science at John Cabot University in Rome, Italy. Diane earned a Ph.D. in Political Science from George Mason University; her dissertation focuses on Iraqi political alignments and alliances after the fall of the Ba'ath party. Diane has taught undergraduate level courses in International Relations, Comparative Politics, Homeland Security, American Foreign Policy, Terrorism and Counterterrorism Analysis, Beginner Arabic, and Political Islam. Her major research interests include: security issues in the Middle East and U.S. defense policy. Diane has published several scholarly works and has appeared in online and scholarly mediums including: *The Digest of Middle East Studies*, *The Journal of Terrorism Research*, *The National Interest*, *Radio Algeria*, *The Bridge*, *Business Insider*, *Small Wars Journal*, *Military One*, *In Homeland Security*, and the *New York Daily News*.

Prior to her work in academia, Diane served as an officer in the United States Air Force and worked in the defense industry. Upon leaving the Air Force, Diane worked for an Italian-U.S. defense company managing projects in foreign military sales, proposal development, and the execution of large international communications and physical security projects for military customers. During the Iraq war, she worked for Multi-National Force-Iraq in Baghdad, managing over 400 bilingual, bicultural advisors to the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Department of Defense. She has done freelance business consulting for European, South American, and Middle Eastern clients interested in security and defense procurement, and is currently the official representative of MD Helicopters in Iraq. Diane is a member of the Military Writers Guild, an associate editor for *The Bridge*, and a member of the Terrorism Research Analysis Consortium. She is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy and the Naval Postgraduate School.

### **Dr. Clark McCauley**

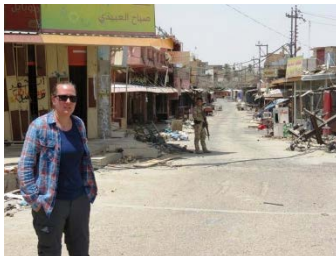
Clark McCauley (B.S. Biology, Providence College, 1965; Ph.D. Social Psychology, University of Pennsylvania, 1970) is a Professor of Psychology and co-director of the Solomon Asch Center for Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict at Bryn Mawr College. His research interests include the psychology of group identification, group dynamics and intergroup conflict, and the psychological foundations of ethnic conflict and genocide. He is founding editor of the journal *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict: Pathways toward Terrorism and Genocide*.

### **Dr. Spencer B. Meredith III,**

Dr. Spencer B. Meredith III, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Joint Special Operations Master of Arts program for the College of International Security Affairs at the National Defense University. After completing his doctorate in Government and Foreign Affairs at the University of Virginia in 2003, he served as a Fulbright Scholar in the Caucasus in 2007 working on conflict resolution, and has focused on related issues in Eastern Ukraine for several years. He has also served as a subject matter expert for several DOS public diplomacy programs in South and East Asia dealing with the role of religion and democracy in US foreign policy.

His areas of expertise include democratization and conflict resolution in Russian, Eastern European and Middle Eastern politics. Most recently, he has been working with USASOC on several projects related to comprehensive deterrence, narratives and resistance typologies, and non-violent UW in the Gray Zone. His publications include research on democratic development and international nuclear safety agreements (*Nuclear Energy and International Cooperation: Closing the World's Most Dangerous Reactors*), as well as articles in scholarly journals ranging from *Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, to *Central European Political Science Review*. He has also published in professional journals related to UW, SOF more broadly, and the future operating environment, with articles in *InterAgency Journal*, *Special Warfare*, *Foreign Policy Journal*, and the peer-reviewed *Special Operations Journal*. He is currently participating in SOCOM SMAs on Intellectual Motivators of Insurgency and a Russian ICONS simulation.

### **Ms. Vera Mironova**



I am a Pre-Doctoral Research Fellow with the [Belfer Center's International Security Program](#) and a PhD candidate in the [Political Science Department](#) at the [University of Maryland](#). My research explores individual level behavior in conflict environments. I am interested in how violence affects individual attitudes and decision making. I conducted field work in active conflict zones (Yemen, Iraq, Ukraine, and Palestinian territories) and post-conflict regions: Balkans (Bosnia, Kosovo, and Croatia), Africa (DR Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi), Central Asia (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan), and Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan). others. Also, I am a contributor to the [Political Violence @ a Glance](#) blog.



## Daniel Serwer

Professor Daniel Serwer (Ph.D., Princeton) directs the Conflict Management Program at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. He is also a Senior Fellow at its Center for Transatlantic Relations and affiliated as a Scholar with the Middle East Institute. His current interests focus on the civilian instruments needed to protect U.S. national security as well as transition and state-building in the Middle East, North Africa and the Balkans. His *Righting the Balance: How You Can Help Protect America* was published in November 2013 by Potomac Books.

Formerly vice president for centers of peacebuilding innovation at the United States Institute of Peace, he led teams there working on rule of law, religion, economics, media, technology, security sector governance and gender. He was also vice president for peace and stability operations at USIP, where he led its peacebuilding work in Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan and the Balkans and served as Executive Director of the Hamilton/Baker Iraq Study Group. Serwer has worked on preventing interethnic and sectarian conflict in Iraq and has facilitated dialogue between Serbs and Albanians in the Balkans.

As a minister-counselor at the U.S. Department of State, Serwer directed the European office of intelligence and research and served as U.S. special envoy and coordinator for the Bosnian Federation, mediating between Croats and Muslims and negotiating the first agreement reached at the Dayton peace talks. From 1990 to 1993, he was deputy chief of mission and chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Rome, leading a major diplomatic mission through the end of the Cold War and the first Gulf War.

Serwer holds a Ph.D. and M.A. from Princeton University, an M.S. from the University of Chicago, and a B.A. from Haverford College. He speaks Italian, French and Portuguese, as well as beginning Arabic.

Serwer blogs at [www.peacefare.net](http://www.peacefare.net) and tweets @DanielSerwer



**Randa Slim**

Randa Slim is Director of the Track II Dialogues initiative at The Middle East Institute and a non-resident fellow at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced & International Studies (SAIS) Foreign Policy Institute . A former vice president of the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue, Slim has been a senior program advisor at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, a guest scholar at the United States Institute of Peace, a program director at Resolve, Inc, and a program officer at the Kettering Foundation. A long-term practitioner of Track II dialogue and peace-building processes in the Middle East and Central Asia, she is the author of several studies, research reports, book chapters, and articles on conflict management, post-conflict peacebuilding, and Middle East politics.

#### Education

B.S. at the American University of Beirut; M.A. at the American University of Beirut; Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina Languages Arabic, French Countries of Expertise Syria, Iraq, Lebanon Issues of Expertise Peacebuilding, Peacemaking, Negotiation, Track II Dialogue, Democratization, Post-Conflict Reconciliation

### **Dr. Bilal Wahab**

Bilal Wahab is a Soref fellow at The Washington Institute, where he focuses on governance in the Iraqi Kurdish region and in Iraq as a whole. He has taught at the American University of Iraq in Sulaimani, where he established the Center for Development and Natural Resources, a research program on oil and development. He earned his Ph.D. from George Mason University; his M.A. from American University, where he was among the first Iraqis awarded a Fulbright scholarship; and his B.A. from Salahaddin University in Erbil. Along with numerous scholarly articles, he has written extensively in the Arabic and Kurdish media.



**Dr. Craig Whiteside**

Dr. Craig Whiteside is an Associate Professor at the Naval War College Monterey, California where he teaches national security affairs to military officers as part of their professional military education. He is a senior associate with the Center on Irregular Warfare and Armed Groups at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island and a fellow at the International Centre for Counter-terrorism – the Hague. Whiteside's current research focuses on the doctrinal influences on the leadership of the so-called Islamic State movement and its evolving strategies. He has a PhD in Political Science from Washington State University and is a former U.S. Army officer with combat experience. His recent publications on the Islamic State can be found [here](#).