



Antecedents of Organizational Sophistication in Violent Non-State Actors

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Agenda for Today's Talk

- Who We Are
- Indicators of Organizational Sophistication in VNSAs
- Leadership for the Extremism and Dangerous for Innovative Results (LEADIR) Project
- Application to VNSAs in CENTCOM AOR
- Conclusions and Benefits for Planners



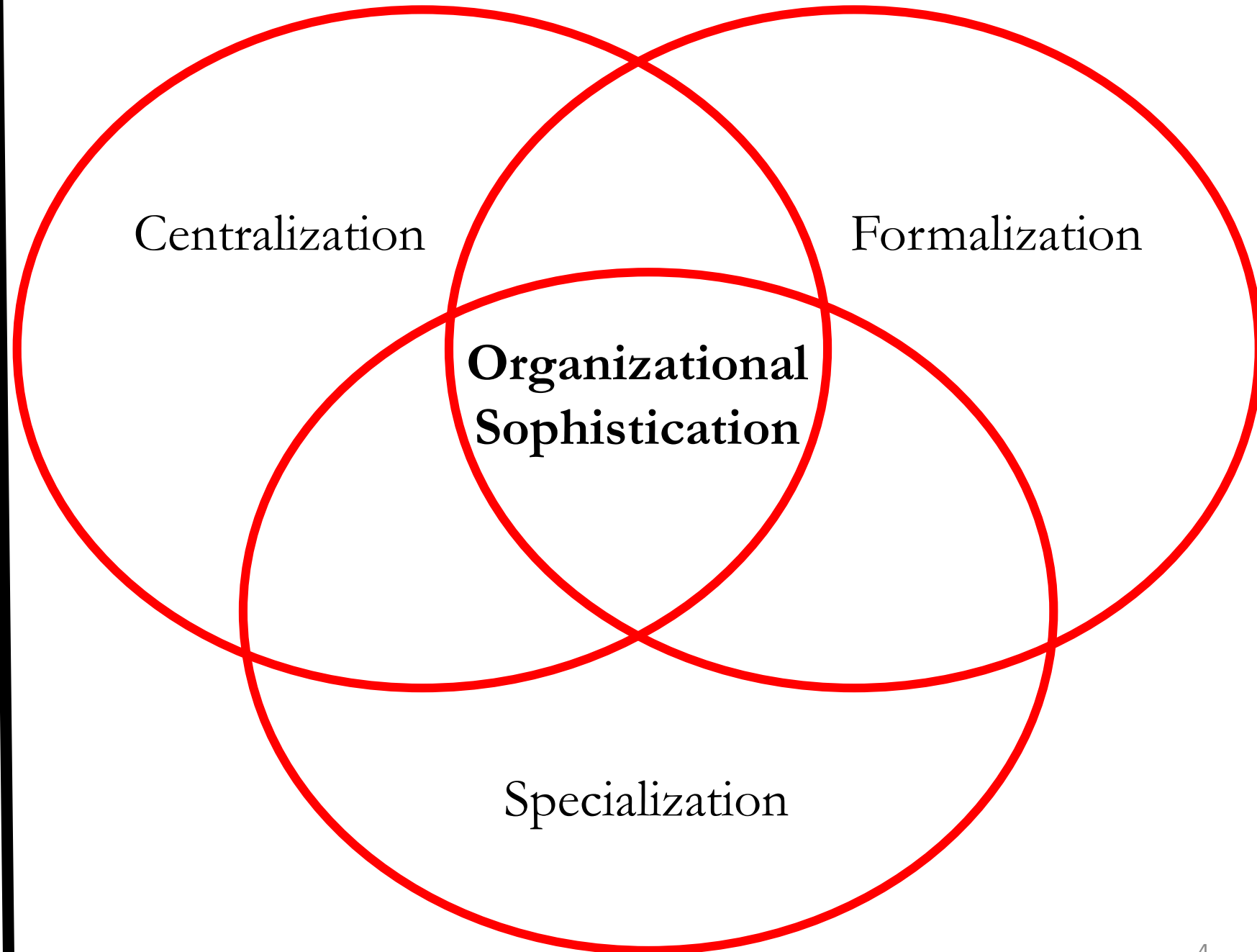
The Center for Collaboration Science

- Interdisciplinary Research Center Examining All Forms of Collaboration
- Radicalization and Violent Extremism (RAVE) Division
- DoD University Affiliated Research Center (UARC) and DHS Center of Excellence Performer





What is Organizational Sophistication?





Why Organizational Sophistication Matters

As Organizational Sophistication **increases** so too does the VNSAs’:

- Aptitude for complex operations and tactics
- Organizational capital
- Capacity for innovation

Organizational Dimension	Indicators	Advantages
Centralization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchical agenda-setting • Top-management-team • Operational autonomy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined goals • Resource management
Formalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Titles that codify functions • Uniforms signaling tenure • Application process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased accountability • Efficient decision-making • Institutional memory
Specialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse organizational activities • Distinctions between sub-units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise • Cross-functional collaboration

DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP & VIOLENT ORGANIZATIONS:

L.E.A.D.I.R.

LEADERSHIP OF THE EXTREME AND DANGEROUS
FOR INNOVATIVE RESULTS

280 Violent Non-State Actors

Open Source Data Collection

Coding Scheme for
Historically Verified
Organizational Information



Measuring Organizational Sophistication

Organizational Dimension

Indicators

Mean (SD)

Centralization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of Leadership (0-1) • Top-Down Command-and-Control (1-5) • Territorial Control (0-1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .84 (.39) • 3.43 (1.12) • .32 (.47)
Formalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Training (0-1) • Combat Training (0-1) • Ideological Training (0-1) • Uniforms(0-1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .37 (.49) • .65 (.48) • .40 (.49) • .51 (.50)
Specialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep-Level Diversity (1-5) • Departmentalization (1-5) • Services (0-1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.41 (1.25) • 2.94 (1.18) • .25 (.44)

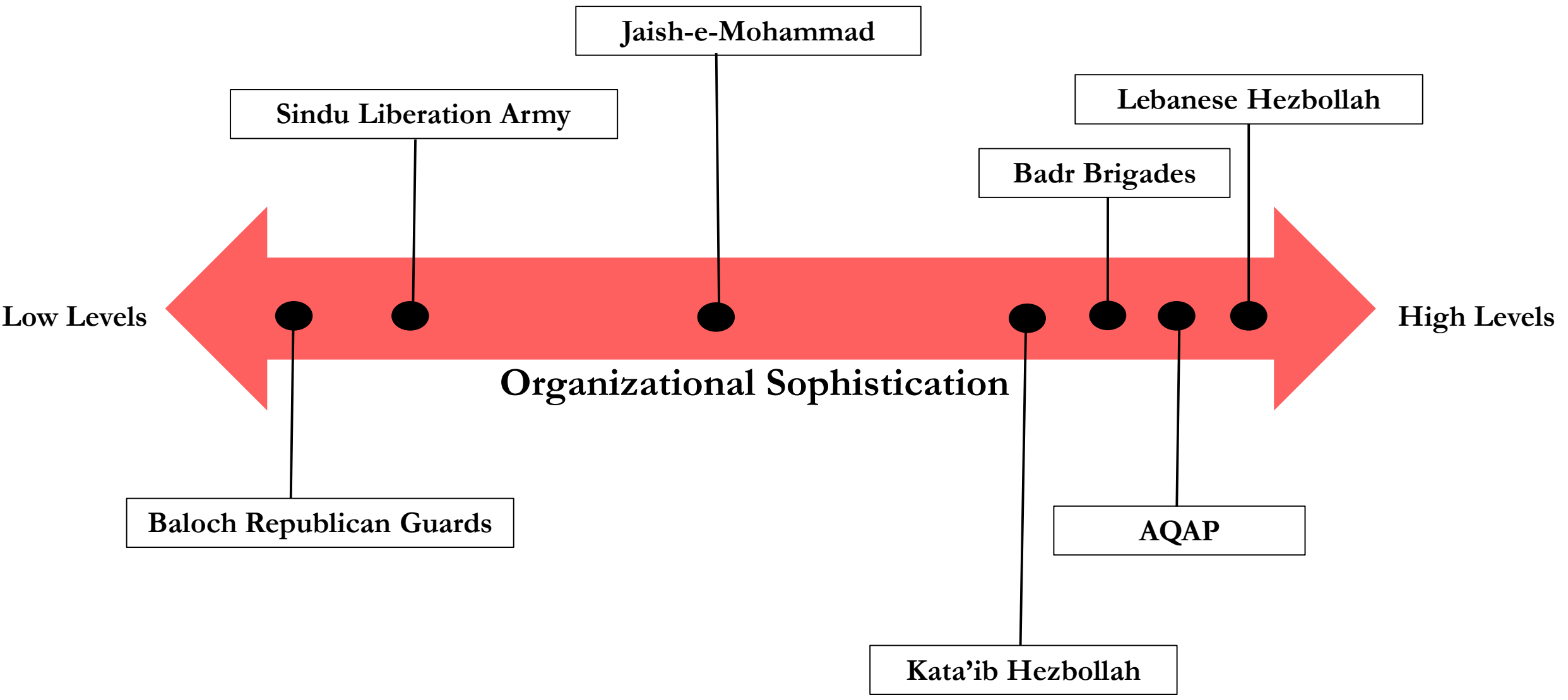




US Central Command Area of Responsibility

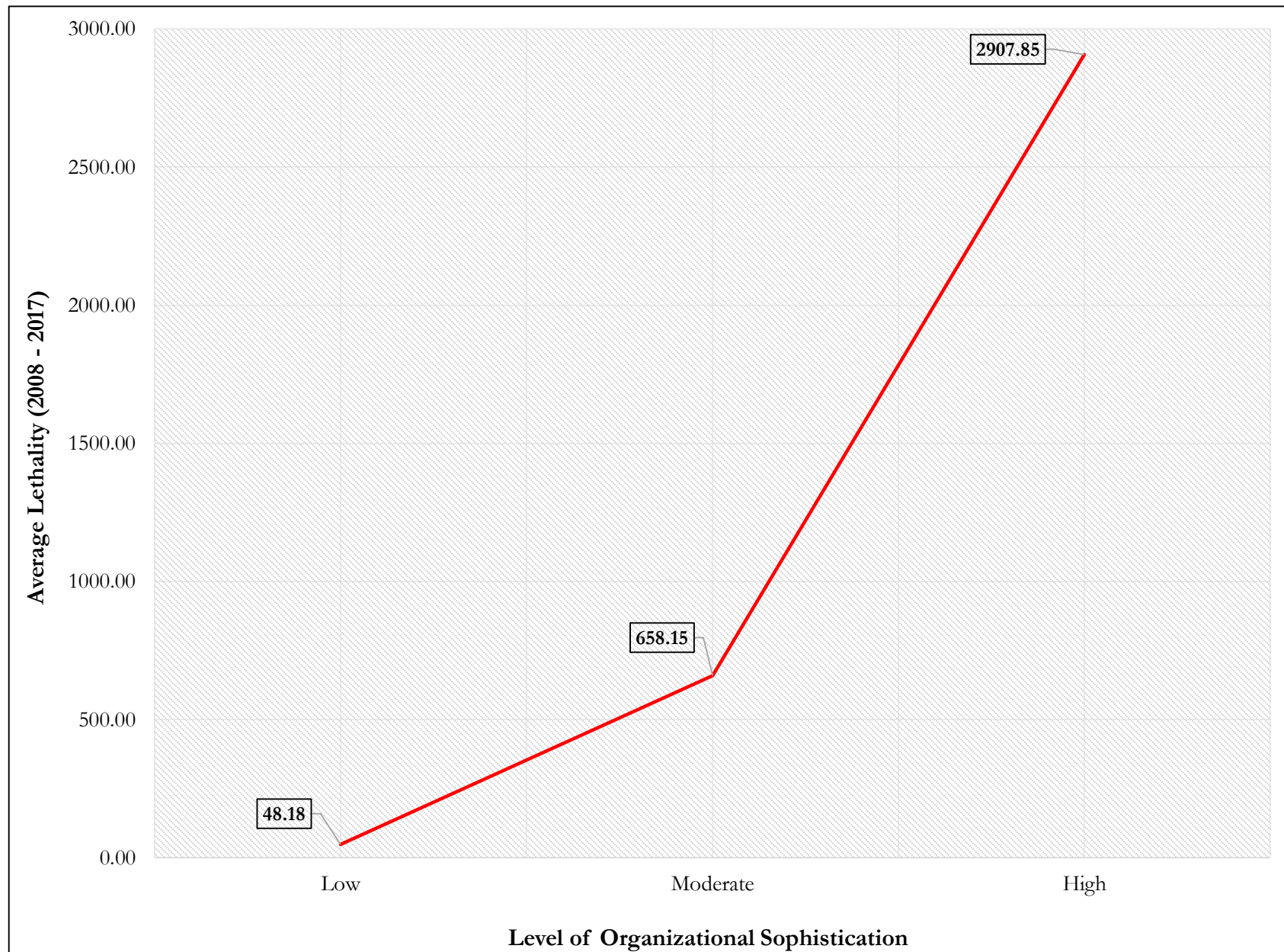


*Adopted from centcom.mil/area-of-responsibility



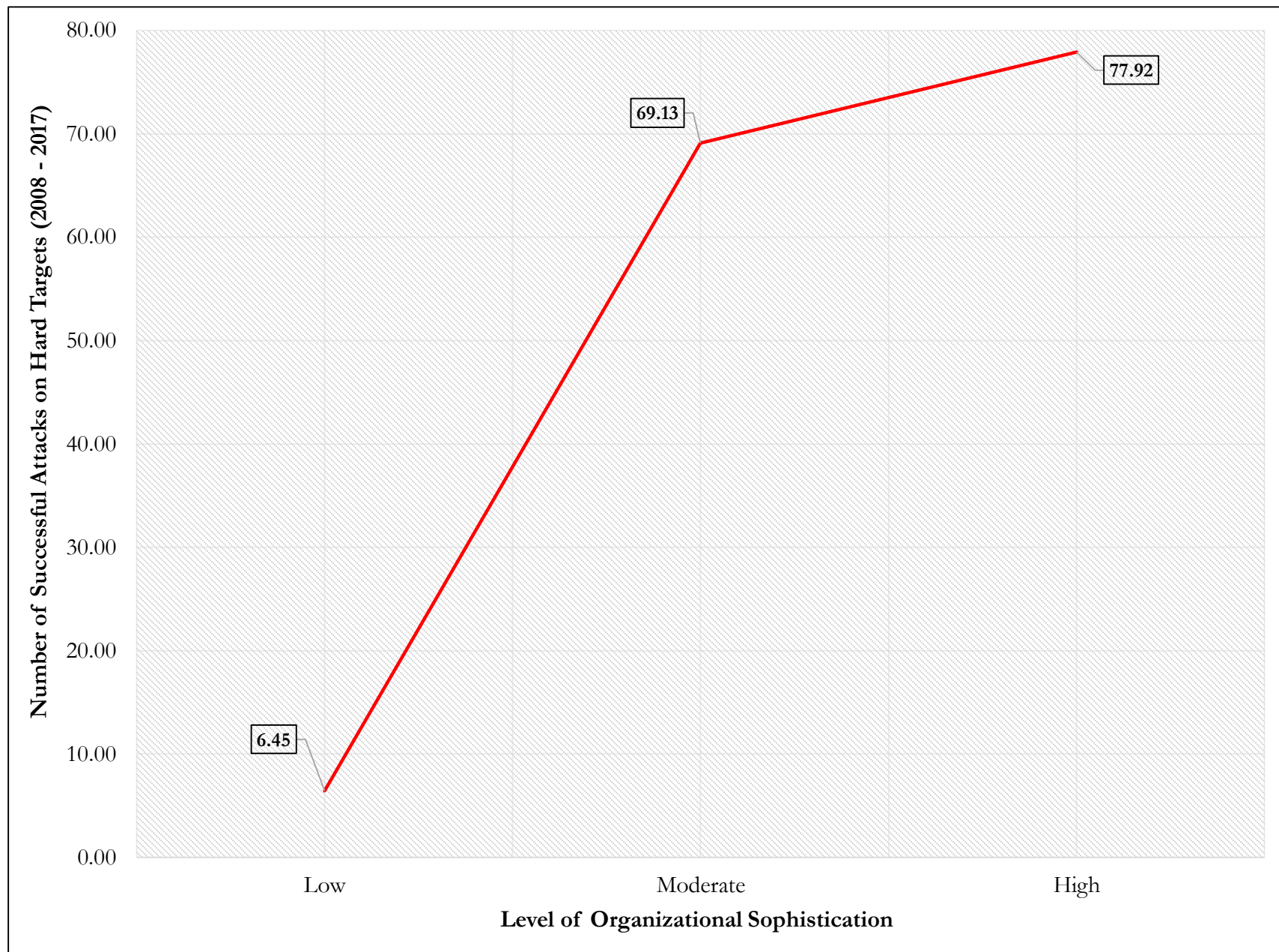


Organizational Sophistication and Lethality



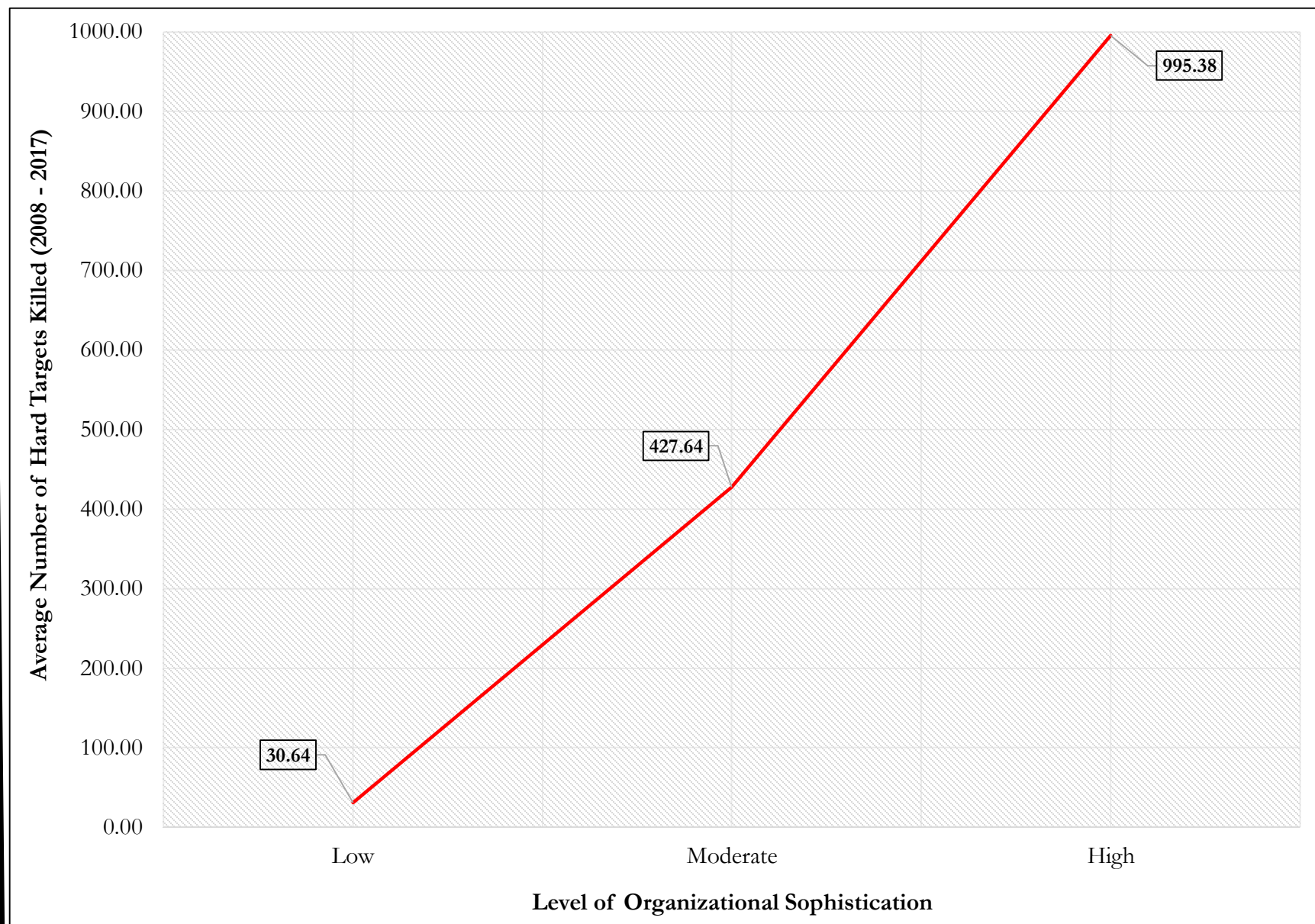


Organizational Sophistication and Successful Attacks on Hard Targets



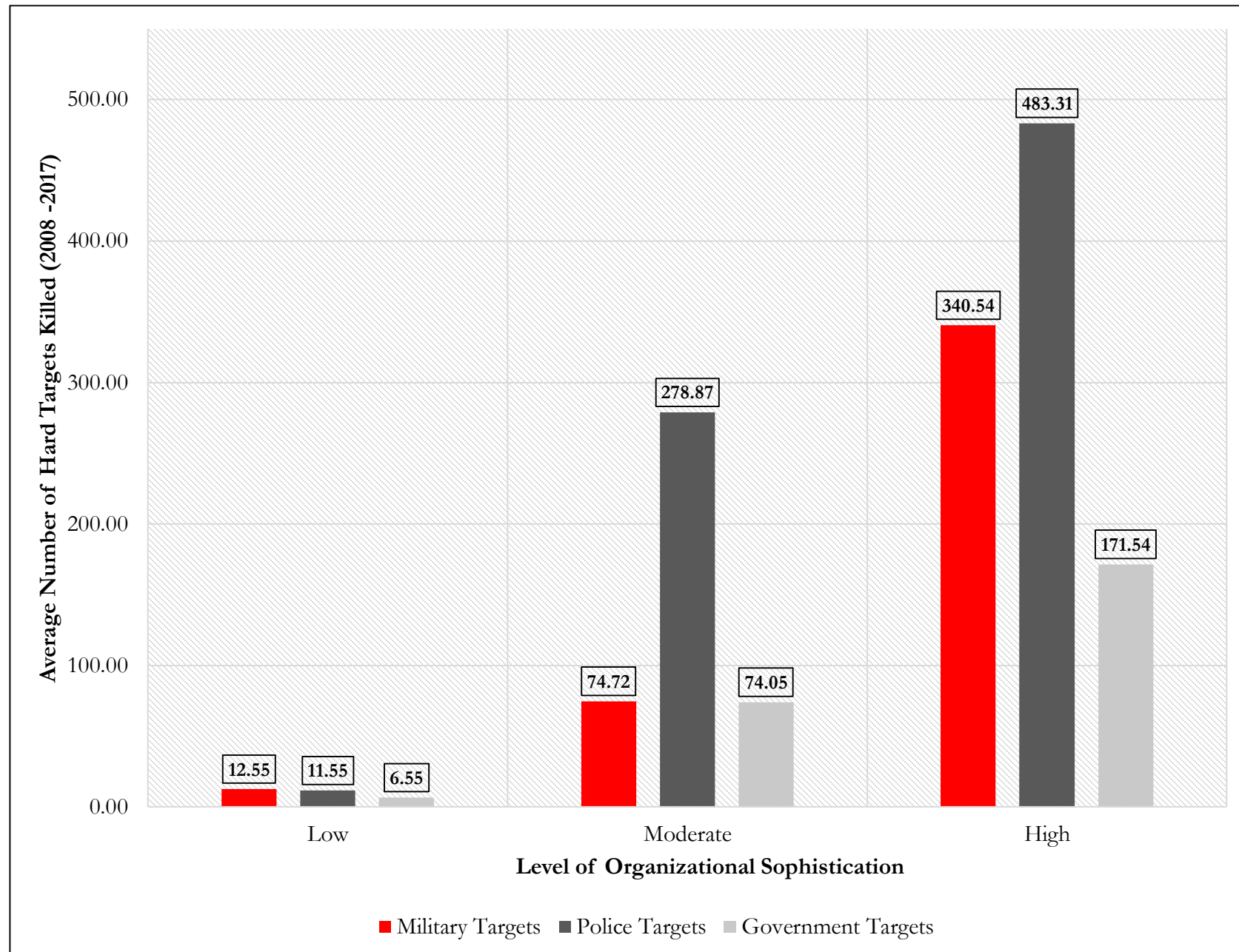


Organizational Sophistication and Lethality on Hard Targets (General)





Organizational Sophistication and Lethality on Hard Targets (by Target Type)





Three Main Findings

- ❖ Organizational Sophistication is an Observable Construct in VNSAs
- ❖ Organizational Sophistication is Linked to Increasingly Complex Violence
- ❖ Practical Way of Examining Capabilities in VNSAs

Example Indicator Checklist of Organizational Sophistication

Indicator Questions	Yes/No
Does the VNSA have a clearly defined leader?	
Does the VNSA control territory?	
Does the VNSA engage in combat training?	
Do members of the VNSA wear uniforms?	



Benefits to Planners

- ❖ Inform Potential Capabilities of Emerging Threats
- ❖ Anticipate Target Selection Based on VNNSA's Organizational Sophistication
- ❖ Provide Additional Tool for Prioritization and Resource Allocation in Fiscally Constrained Environment



Thank You

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Recent Works Supporting SMA Effort

Ligon, G.S. & Logan, M.K. (2019). Organizational and leadership consolidation and fragmentation in the AFPAK region.

Logan, M.K. & Ligon, G.S. (2019). Using organizational sophistication to predict influence from violent non-state actors.***

Logan, M.K., Ligon, G.S., & Zimmerman, L (2019). Influential violent extremist organizational partners of Iran.

Logan, M.K., Zimmerman, L., Parker, B., & Ligon, G.S. (2019). Terrorism in the Philippines and its influence on Great Powers.

Zimmerman, L., Logan, M.K., & Ligon, G.S. (2019). Violent non-state actors and the Kashmir conflict.



Organizational Sophistication & Additional Organizational Characteristics

Organizational Sophistication*

Organizational Age	.35, $p < .01$
Organizational Size	.53, $p < .01$
State Sponsorship	.30, $p < .05$
Illicit Funding Streams	.36, $p < .01$