

UNIVERSITY  
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The University of Maryland Public Policy Review is a student-run journal published at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy. UMPPR holds itself to the highest standards of academic quality and legitimacy while furthering discourse on relevant policy issues. The School of Public Policy is home to an impressive student body that produces high-quality academic content every semester. The UMPPR provides a platform for students to showcase their work and to highlight university, state-wide, regional, national, and global policy issues.

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# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND PUBLIC POLICY REVIEW

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# Letter from an Editor

Continuing where the inaugural publication of the University of Maryland Public Policy Review (UMPPR) commenced in 2017, this second volume is a culmination of efforts by last year's original contributors and exceptional individuals that ensured that the journal continues to grow from its nascency in an effort to best showcase student pieces that are relevant for policy discussion and formulation at present, and in the future.

This edition opens with two commentaries on globalization, a subject that is both topical and often polarizing. Matthew Regan explains to us how globalization is nothing new, although our understandings of it may be, with his op-ed, "Eternal Recurrence: The "Future" of Globalization." Nick Henninger displays globalization through the lens of remittances and their implications for global economic growth in his short piece, "A Vested Interest in Home: The Role of Remittances in Countering Globalization and Out-Migration."

UMPPR is fortunate to have had several faculty within the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland eager to contribute to and assist with this publication. Through her piece, "Lack of Hope in America: The High Costs of Being Poor in a Rich Land," Dr. Carol Graham provides us with fascinating research and analysis regarding economic equality and well-being, subjects to which her work has made extensive contributions. And Dr. Jaganath Sankaran provides pertinent advice for both new and experienced students of public policy in his piece, "Survival Tips for a Public Policy Scholar."

The rigor of the School's International Security and Economic Policy specialization track shines through with the first three full articles of this publication, which offer substantive research and analysis of U.S. foreign policy. Lauren Helinski explores answers to the question, "What Should the U.S. Do About Opium in Afghanistan?" In, "The Obama Administration and the Crimea Crisis", Rachael Gosnell extracts lessons for future policymakers. And, in "Full-Scale Versus Airstrike-Focused Strategies in U.S. Foreign Military Interventions," Connor Lee utilizes several historical cases to compare and contrast different U.S. military intervention approaches.

Moving on, Rachel Vinciguerra, through her piece, “A Model of International Mentorship: Benefits, Challenges, and Trends Revealed in Pen Pal Letters from a Haitian Girls’ Empowerment Program,” explores a new model of international empowerment. And, finally, through his piece, “Trends in Federal IT Spending and Operational Satisfaction in the U.S. Federal Government FY15,” Jeremy R. Waldron analyzes the relationship between U.S. federal IT spending and employee and customer satisfaction.

The Journal would not have been possible without the research, analysis, and presentation of contributing students. On behalf of my fellow editors, I thank this year’s student authors for allowing us to collaborate with them and share their work with the policy community. We look forward to the rich discussion the articles included in this publication generate among thought leaders at all levels, and we are honored to have been a part of the process.

Best Regards,

Eric Larger

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# Eternal Recurrence: The "Future" of Globalization

By Matthew R.G. Regan

Globalization is one of those words that keeps people up at night. Library shelves are brimming with tomes decrying the impending doom globalization will bring or promoting the golden age it will usher in. Our social media feeds and newspaper editorial pages are littered with screeds and think-pieces, the impassioned pleas of activists, and the soothing speeches of technocrats. We worry about how we can thrive in a world that is “hot, flat, and crowded”<sup>1</sup>—whether we will be able to manage the “globalization paradox.”<sup>2</sup> And yet, if we pause for a moment of historical reflection, we might find that globalization is a phenomenon much more familiar than its media coverage often makes it seem.

Globalization is nothing new. In fact, one could argue that globalization is the least-new thing about our twenty-first-century lives. The first chapter of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, published four months before the signing of the *Declaration of Independence*, describes the complex network of global actors that participate in the construction of a simple woolen coat worn by poor workmen. Without global commerce and worldwide networks, Smith argues, “the very meanest person in a civilized country could not be provided, even according to what we very falsely imagine, the easy and simple manner in which he is commonly accommodated.”<sup>3</sup> And yet, even Smith's example is a relatively recent illustration of the phenomenon. A thousand years before, Viking trading networks

brought goods from across Europe, Africa, and even South Asia to places like Helgo, Sweden. A thousand years prior still, the trans-Eurasian trade of silk and other precious commodities linked towns and populations that were thousands of miles apart. Meanwhile, in the Americas, the cultures of the Hopewell tradition, in what would one day be called the Midwest, established trade links to the Rockies, the Atlantic, the Arctic, the Gulf of Mexico, and possibly even Central America. And by no means is this complex global interaction a distinctly human process. In many ways, the history of life itself—the development, flourishing, and extinction of numberless species—is a series of local interactions that set off global consequences. The Great Oxygenation Event, which took place more than two billion years ago when oxygen-producing microbes literally changed the composition of the planet's atmosphere, might be the most dramatic episode in the history of “globalization” (or, at least, the most dramatic episode that we currently know of).

And yet, globalization still seems something new, scary, and thoroughly modern. Even if “globalization” is merely another example of the global interdependence that has existed since before the appearance of life itself, there seems no genuine solace in that fact. The realization that globalized interactions have been shaping human history since well before the time of our grandparents' grandparents' grandparents does little to dull its oh-so-



familiar stings: the shuttering of factories in industrial heartlands and the opening of others in faraway places, the moving of people and their customs from their ancestral homelands to brave new worlds, the replacing of old familiar things with uncomfortable innovations. No doubt, when chili peppers were first brought to Southeast Asia and tomatoes to Italy (both originally from the New World and neither much before 1500—think about that the next time you're enjoying a slice of pizza or a spicy spoonful of sambal), the populist agitators of the day rallied against the destruction of tradition and the introduction of strange foreign ways. But this time still somehow seems different.

One obvious answer, of course, is that this time globalization is happening to *us*. Lived experiences are always more powerful than historical accounts. And although we can certainly imagine ourselves in the shoes of others, watching someone else get hurt is never quite the same as getting hurt ourselves. Previous generations surely suffered at the hands of globalization, sometimes in ways that make our worries about globalization seem almost trivial. The integration of the Americas into the trading networks of the so-called Old World brought the devastation of pandemic disease, the radical restructuring of regional dynamics, and in some places, even the near-liquidation of local populations. According to this view, we (those of us who live in places that have historically benefited from the last few centuries of global dynamics) are merely realizing that the sword of global interdependence cuts both ways and doesn't necessarily provide certain places and peoples with unlimited benefits, especially when those benefits come at the expense of others.

I, however, am not entirely convinced by this interpretation. Surely, people have

been affected, for good and for ill, by the forces of global interdependence for millennia, but until recently, interdependence's unwitting subjects did not have all the tools at their disposal to view its influence in such detail. Historically, the vast majority of those affected by global interdependence never saw much beyond the landscapes that surrounded their birthplaces. The Batak farmers of the Sumatran interior, growing camphor trees for trade across Asia, most likely never saw the Chinese, Indian, Khmer, or Arab city-dwellers who purchased their produce. Only a fraction of them would have ever even met the Malay traders who served as their intermediaries. Even the most widely traveled and well-read members of the social elite could not have seen what we can see by simply turning on the TV news or scrolling through the unending sputter of our Facebook feeds. The great change of the late -twentieth and early -twenty-first centuries, then, was the ability to see grasp the dynamics of our ever-interdependent world at an understandable scale. Whereas in the past, only those situated on the coast or along the great trade roads could see the mechanisms of global trade in action, today we see those mechanisms scurrying past us in trucks and trains, and even soaring above our heads. Instead of spending months or years moving across distances, we now traverse the globe in hours. Distances that once seemed vast are now far less so. And even if we stay at home, advances in telecommunications means we can view video of people and events continents away, and even interact with them in real time.

Our modern pre-occupation with globalization, then, does not come from an increase in global interdependence, but a growing understanding of this interdependence. If previous generations did have something that we lack, it was the ability to carry on their lives as if it they were

truly isolated and independent. It was the comforting but ultimately unrealistic idea that one's sphere of influence and responsibility ended at one's own front gate.

Where, then, does this leave us? As David Crocker reminds us, "Regardless of how globalization—its characters, causes, and consequences—is understood, [we] should evaluate it ethically."<sup>4</sup> Globalization may provide us with many interesting avenues of study, but most critical among these is question of globalization directly affects current lives and the lives of future generations. In a world where global interactions are deeply entrenched, we cannot rest comfortably in the solace of the "distant" and the "foreign." The cookies we munch on with our afternoon coffee are directly related to deforestation in Indonesia. The clothes we wear on our backs are inexorably tied to the living conditions of workers in Bangladesh. The smartphones we carry in our pockets are the products of cobalt mines in central Africa, assembly plants in China, warehouses in Kentucky, and stores in

Greenbelt. Our ancestors, recent and distant, may have enjoyed a world as globalized as our own. But our generation is the first in history to possess widespread knowledge of the immense networks that span our world—knowledge of how even our simplest actions impact people we will never meet. As creatures of habit, we may not figure out how to best use this knowledge for years to come. But, if the history of our planet and the power of interdependence teach us anything, it is that, like it or not, we are all stuck here together.

Just like the first sailors who ventured from the predictability of the coastline into the open sea, we find ourselves in the midst of a vast ocean. Through observation and deliberation, trial and error, consideration and re-examination, we can navigate the currents of globalization that dictate our movements, and we can even learn to use them to travel to new and unknown lands. Or, we can rage against these currents, exert everything we have against them in a futile show of will, and nevertheless sink. The choice is ours.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Friedman, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution—and How It Can Renew America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008).

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<sup>3</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (1776; London: Methuen & Co., Ltd, 1905), available online at the Liberty Fund's

*Library of Economics and Liberty*,  
<http://www.econlib.org/library/Smith/smWNCover.html>, I.1.11.

<sup>4</sup> David A. Crocker, *The Ethics of Global Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 380. Crocker's original text has "development ethics" in the place of my "we", but I contend that the spirit of Crocker's argument is that all who seriously consider the effects and implications of global development must, in at least a small way, consider themselves development ethicists.

# A Vested Interest in Home: The Role of Remittances in Countering Globalization and Out-Migration

By Nick Henninger

Worldwide remittance flows to developing countries exceeded \$429 billion in 2016, triple the \$143 billion in official development aid sent to those same countries.<sup>1,2</sup> These small international money transfers from one family member to another rank just behind foreign direct investment and portfolio capital in terms of aggregate inflows to developing countries. However, unlike FDI and portfolio capital, remittances provide unparalleled stability in macroeconomic headwinds, are distributed more evenly across the society, and can be countercyclical.<sup>3</sup>

As such, remittances can help developing nations counter many of the problems associated with globalization and out-migration, if supported by sound government policy, private partnerships, and rational economic thinking. These inflows of capital can revive latent domestic demand, provide current account stability, ease difficult credit conditions, support those left behind by trade liberalization, and decrease the net losses associated with brain drain and the flight capital it takes along.<sup>4</sup> A better understanding of the ability of remittances to sustain economic growth will be crucial in the decades to come as low-income countries become more and more depleted of their human capital (fifteen countries have greater than 30 percent of their college-educated citizens living abroad).<sup>5</sup> More importantly, remittance funds must be

targeted towards diversified investments in health, education, entrepreneurship, and long-term savings. These changes will maximize human capital impact and provide the savings necessary for growth.

## Low-Cost, Countercyclical, Progressive

Through remittances, the winnings of a few are shared by many. Twenty-nine countries received greater than 10 percent of their annual GDP by way of remittances in 2014; top remittance receivers are a heterogeneous group of countries - large and small across four continents.<sup>6</sup> As an example, 19.9 percent of households in Honduras received remittances from abroad in 2012, with the average monthly remittance transfer (\$326.80) being nearly twice the 40th percentile of Honduran households' monthly income (\$177.25).<sup>7</sup> In this manner, for less than one week's pay at minimum wage, a U.S.-based remittance sender can double or triple their Honduran family's income. As such, remittances are *relatively low-cost* to the sender. The largest source of deadweight loss, transmission fees, will be discussed in the next section.

Remittances are inherently based in feelings of familial connectedness, duty, or altruism held by the sender, and thus either remain steady or increase in times of economic distress.<sup>8</sup> Recent research in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has shown that remittances have a

negative relationship with economic and political risk indexes.<sup>9</sup> In this way, remittances can be *countercyclical* so long as employment in the sending country is not harmed by global economic conditions. The financial crisis of 2007-2010 did decrease remittances from the US and Western Europe; more recently, low oil prices have slowed remittances from Russia, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf States.<sup>10</sup> Still, aggregate global remittances are notable for their stability and steady growth over time.<sup>11</sup>

While the first members of the community to work abroad are typically the wealthiest, in time they develop pathways for other members of the community to join them. This process is called chain migration.<sup>12</sup> Once the initial risk decreases, migration becomes more equally distributed among the social classes of the sending country. As home country GNI per capita or family income increases, remittance sending goes down.<sup>13</sup> Thus, taking the medium-term view, remittances can be *progressive*.

Taken together, these three benefits *can* result in the receiving communities enjoying a higher general standard of living over time. According to the World Bank, a 10 percent increase in remittance payments can result in as much as a 3.5 percent decrease in the receiving nation's poverty rate. Remittances are credited with reducing the poverty rate in Bangladesh by 6 percent, in Ghana by 5 percent, and in Uganda by 11 percent.<sup>14</sup> The relationship between remittances and poverty alleviation is hotly-debated, with the discussion centered around the role of remittances in increasing human capital investment.

### **Remittances as a Human Capital Investment Tool**

While the international development community debates the merits of

unconditional versus conditional cash transfers, remittances provide a fascinating link between the two. Funds from remittances are given without formal guidelines, instead coming with a web of informal expectations that can affect both the size of gifts and their impact.<sup>15</sup> In an age of increased communication, senders are better able to communicate their wishes for the use of the money.<sup>16</sup> According to the Migration Policy Institute, “families spend remittances disproportionately on human-capital building areas, compared to how they spend other forms of income.<sup>17</sup>” Investing in human capital (especially healthcare, education, and entrepreneurship) can maximize the per-dollar impact of remittances for both the receiving family and the home economy.

### ***Health***

Almost half of remittance senders listed healthcare costs as the primary reason for their payments.<sup>18</sup> A study by the German Institute for the Study of Labor found that remittances helped balance out the differences in access to healthcare services between those who had health insurance and those who did not. The study found that while 6 pesos of every 100 pesos earned by the typical Mexican family was spent on healthcare, 18 pesos out of 100 were spent on healthcare when funds came by way of remittance.<sup>19</sup> Remittances have been associated with higher birth weights and decreased child mortality.<sup>20 21</sup> Spending money received by way of remittances in this manner decreases the need to take out typically high-interest loans to pay for medical services.

### ***Education***

In several studies, remittances have been linked with higher school attendance and higher graduation rates. A study of remittance-receiving families in Lebanon,

Jordan, and Syria found that remittances led to higher rates of school attendance and increased schooling of girls.<sup>22</sup> A similar study in Oaxaca, Mexico found that remittances significantly increased the aspiration of school completion for children born to mothers with a below-average educational background.<sup>23</sup> Research done in Moldova shows a 33 percent higher chance of completing tertiary education if the student is from a remittance-receiving family. In Eritrea, a positive relationship was found between spending on education and the percentage of income derived from remittances.<sup>24</sup>

### ***Entrepreneurship***

Immigration and remittances are linked with increased levels of entrepreneurship due to the higher access to credit that it affords. Remittances provide a de facto “safety net” for persons in developing nations to take the risks necessary for starting an entrepreneurial venture.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, returning migrants often bring back a host of skills and experiences that empower the creation of entrepreneurial start-ups.<sup>26</sup> All of these factors contribute towards growing nascent or non-existent entrepreneurial ecosystems into places where successful start-ups can be born; however, this process relies upon a basic level of macroeconomic and political stability that many migrant-sending countries do not experience.

### **Potential Negative Effects**

While remittances have many benefits, downsides remain. Research from Mexico has shown that remittances may decrease labor force participation.<sup>27</sup> While this has the positive effect of raising wages across the board,<sup>28</sup> it will decrease both aggregate production and corporate profitability. Additionally, inflows of capital can artificially appreciate the domestic

currency, crowding out a country’s ability to export goods in a form of remittance-based “Dutch Disease.”<sup>29</sup> For some, the ability to send money home and remain connected with their family while staying abroad, makes this decision to leave home that much easier.

### **Solutions for Maximum Impact**

While remittances have had a positive impact on reducing poverty in the short-term, it is important that they are not used simply as a financial “Band-Aid.” The way in which these funds are invested determines their effectiveness. While the field is large and complex, a few suggestions on reforming remittances that may help improve human development outcomes have been listed below:

#### ***1. Improve Data & Monitoring to Better Understand Remittance Patterns***

For policy makers to better track and understand the remittance system, sufficient data must be available. In past years, remittance figures (and thus GDP figures) for many nations have increased substantially; large portions of these changes are due to improved data monitoring rather than higher remittance payments. Remittances are typically underreported both on the giving and the receiving sides; by some estimates only 1/3 of actual remittances are declared in a household survey.<sup>30</sup> Gathering better data is the first step to assessing and streamlining impact.

#### ***2. Lower Transaction Costs through Increased Competition***

The average cost to transfer money overseas is around 7.45 percent of the principal.<sup>31</sup> These costs vary greatly depending on the country and the channel of transmission, with a range of 2.5 percent to as high as 26 percent. For example, the cost

to send money from the United States to Ecuador is 3.7 percent of the principal, whereas the cost to send money from the United States to Thailand is 14.1 percent.<sup>32</sup> This cost of sending money both shrinks and distorts the remittance market. The market shrinks as senders are less likely to send money when the cost is prohibitively high. The market is distorted because senders may choose to send fewer, larger payments to their relations if there is a flat fee associated with each transaction.

At the L'Aquila G8 conference in 2008, the G8 countries pledged to reduce the cost of remittance transactions by one-half. The Sustainable Development Goals set a further goal of bringing these costs to less than 3 percent. However, the problem stems more from a lack of competition. Despite numerous start-ups creating online money transfer platforms with an average cost of 2.87 percent, brick-and-mortar (banks, Western Union, MoneyGram) still dominates.<sup>33</sup> Governments must focus on welcoming mobile-based competition to the market.

### ***3. Provide More Direct Means for Savings & Investment***

To leverage the funds being sent through the remittance system, it is crucial that receiving countries have mechanisms in place wherein recipients can save and invest their money. According to the World Bank, 38 percent of the world's adults, nearly two billion individuals, lack access to basic financial services.<sup>34</sup> Governments should work to increase the amount of competition in the local banking sector by subsidizing the creation of new banks, particularly those who will cater to rural populations and to the poor.

Additionally, governments should increase the number of savings programs available to their citizens, and to advertise these programs at the locations where

money is distributed. Before a recipient leaves the pick-up location, they should have the opportunity to place some or all of their funds in a savings program. Additionally, money senders should be able to earmark specific funds to be put into savings programs before the money arrives.

### ***4. Create Community Investment Funds to Benefit the Wider Community***

To benefit the wider community, governments should help to create local community investment funds. These funds could receive contributions from remittance senders and channel them towards local non-governmental or religious agencies working towards social justice and economic empowerment. Remittance givers would have the opportunity to opt-in to these payments in addition to their normal payments to relations.

Connecting a diaspora with local NGOs on the ground has proven to be hugely beneficial in a variety of countries.<sup>35</sup> By empowering these civil service organizations, the diaspora will feel more closely connected with their community at large.

### ***5. Utilize Remittances as a Foreign Aid Distribution Mechanism***

One area in which remittances could be used to dramatically improve the lives of the world's poor would be through linking them with development aid. In many developing nations, political authorities use their power over aid distribution for rent seeking, vote buying, and other illegitimate purposes. Rather than sending aid money through faulty government systems, foreign nations can support the improvement of human capital and economic well-being by subsidizing existing lines of connection from their nation to these most unstable nations. A "reverse-tax" could be added to

any remittance sent to a specified list of countries, on a percentage basis. This would both increase the total amount of funds received by the family and incentivize the sender to give a higher level of principal.

### **Conclusion**

Remittances are a tremendous tool for integral human development in the era of rapid globalization, mass migration of labor, and increasing inequality among and within

nations. When used effectively, these transfers can help to counter the extreme human capital depletion taking place in low-income countries and provide greater equality of opportunity regardless of one's birthplace. It is time for creative new ideas to enter the marketplace. Remittances - gifts of love and communal bonding, could also become gifts of empowerment and greater human potential.



## End Notes

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# Lack of Hope in America: The High Costs of Being Poor in a Rich Land

By Carol Graham

The U.S. is as divided as it has ever been. The simplest marker, which has been a topic of discussion among economists for many years, is the stark increase in inequality of both income *and* opportunity. A number of studies provide compelling evidence that the long-held belief that high levels of inequality in the U.S. signal future opportunity is no longer true. Chetty et. al. (2017) find that the percentage of children who are able to rise above the income levels of their parents has fallen dramatically—from 90% for cohorts born in 1940 to 50% for those born in 1980. Yet technical discussions among economists based on metrics like Gini coefficients do not seem to resonate in public debates.

Divisions in the U.S. extend beyond the income arena in ways that are particularly worrisome. In my new book, *Happiness for All? Unequal Hopes and Lives in Pursuit of the American Dream*, I document trends in inequality from the perspective of well-being, analyzing standard metrics and exploring how these metrics relate to non-economic aspects of welfare, such as happiness, stress, anger, and, most importantly, hope.

Hope is a crucial factor that drives people's willingness to invest in the future. My early research on well-being highlights the particular importance of hope for people

with less means, for whom making investments in the future requires greater sacrifices (Graham et al., 2004). In addition to a widening opportunity gap, the prosperity gap in the U.S. has led to growing disparities in beliefs, hopes, and aspirations. Those who are left behind economically are the least hopeful, and they are the least likely to invest in their futures.

There are, indeed, two Americas. Those at the top of the income distribution, including the upper middle class, increasingly lead separate lives. And the barriers to reaching the upper class are very real, if not explicit (Reeves, 2017). Those at the top have high levels of hope for the future, and they make investments in their own and their children's health, education, and general knowledge. Those at the bottom, however, have much lower levels of hope and tend to live day to day, consumed with daily struggles, high levels of stress, and poor health.

The differences across these two Americas are demonstrated by a variety of markers, ranging from education levels and job quality to marriage and incarceration rates to life expectancy. Indeed, the starkest evidence of the growing gap in faith in the future is the marked increase in premature deaths, which are driven largely but not solely by an increase in preventable deaths

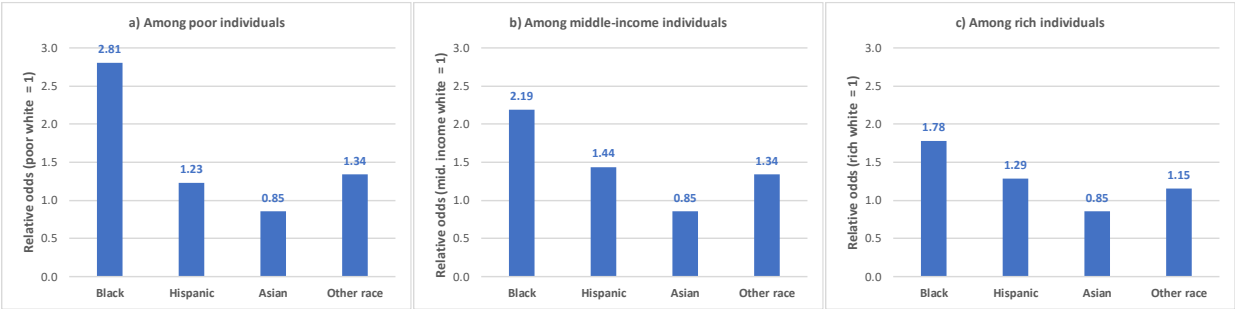
(such as via suicide and drug over-dose) among middle-aged, uneducated whites, as described by Anne Case and Angus Deaton (2017).

The differences between these two Americas are even illustrated in common language. Common words in wealthy America reflect investments in health, knowledge acquisition, and the future: iPads, foam rollers, baby joggers, cameras, exotic travel destinations such as Machu Picchu. The words that are common in poor America—hell, stress, diabetes, guns, video games, fad diets—reflect short-time

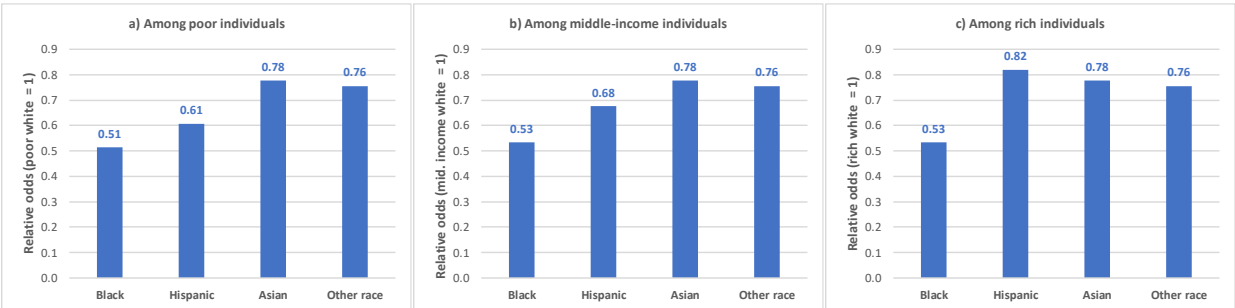
horizons, struggles, and a lack of hope (Leonhardt, 2015).

Using detailed Gallup data, we find stark differences across people, races, and places in the U.S. Poor minorities are much more hopeful than poor whites. Poor blacks are three times more likely to be a point higher on the ten-point optimism scale than are poor whites, while Hispanics are about one-and-a-half times more likely than poor whites. Poor blacks are also half as likely to experience stress on a daily basis, a significant marker of ill-being, while poor Hispanics are about two-thirds as likely.

**Figure 1: Odds of being on a higher level of optimism, by race group (relative to white), within each income group**



**Figure 2: Odds of experiencing stress, by race group (relative to white), within each income group**



These differences across race have multiple explanations. One important explanation is that, despite substantial obstacles, minorities have been gradually narrowing the gaps with whites, at least in terms of education and life expectancy. Minorities are also more likely to compare themselves with parents who were worse off than they are, while blue-collar whites are more likely to compare themselves with parents who were better off—a trend that has been increasing over the past decade, as Andrew Cherlin of Johns Hopkins University finds. By 2016, 26% of non-Hispanic whites reported to be worse off than their parents, compared to only 16% and 14% of blacks and Hispanics, respectively. Cherlin (2016) also finds that those individuals who report being worse off than their parents are unhappier with their lives and less likely to trust others.

Psychological research points to higher levels of resilience among minorities compared to whites. Dr. Shervin Assari and colleagues (2016) find that blacks and Hispanics are much less likely to report depression or commit suicide in the face of negative shocks than are whites. Our research suggests an aging effect. While younger blacks, particularly males, are more likely to be angry than their white counterparts, older blacks are significantly less likely to be angry than whites.

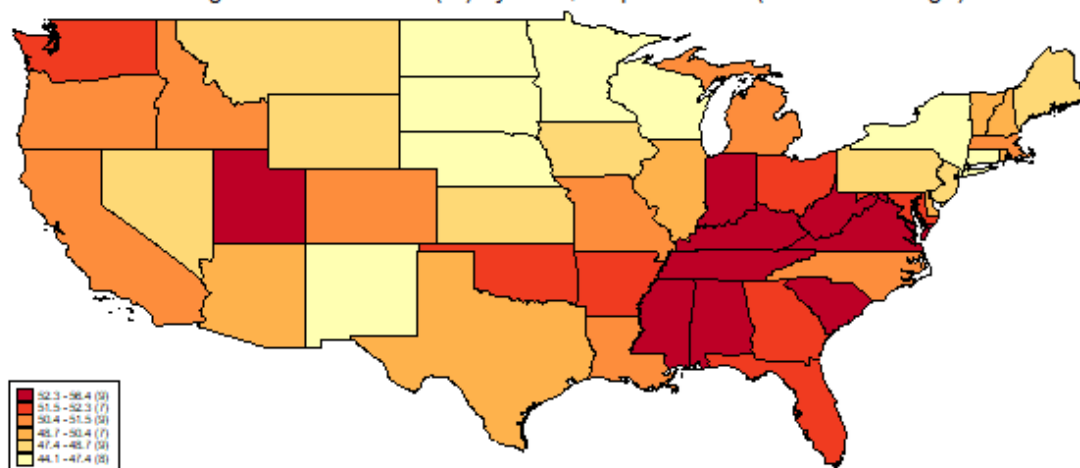
More generally, urban places are more hopeful than are rural ones, and places with greater diversity are more hopeful than those with less diversity. Sergio Pinto and I (2017) find that these more hopeful places are also healthier, with more people who exercise and less who smoke, for example. In contrast,

we also find that less hopeful places tend to have higher rates of “deaths of despair”—incidents of premature mortality driven by suicide or addiction.

These differences reflect across a range of interrelated trends, with uneducated whites again representing the most striking disparities compared to minorities. Reported pain, which is a gateway to both opioid addiction and suicide, is higher among whites than among blacks and highest among rural whites. Due to the injuries related to many blue-collar jobs, reported pain is associated with reliance on disability insurance, for which rates have increased for men in recent decades from just under 3 percent of the working age population to almost 5 percent. Premature mortality has increased dramatically for uneducated whites, particularly those in rural areas and small towns, compared to their black and Hispanic counterparts. A recent study from Tufts University finds that civic participation of all kinds is much lower in rural areas—areas that tend to have far more limited access broadband internet (Kawashi-Ginsberg and Sullivan, 2017). Maps of these rural-urban trends closely mirror political divisions, voting patterns, and even consumption of alternative sources of news.

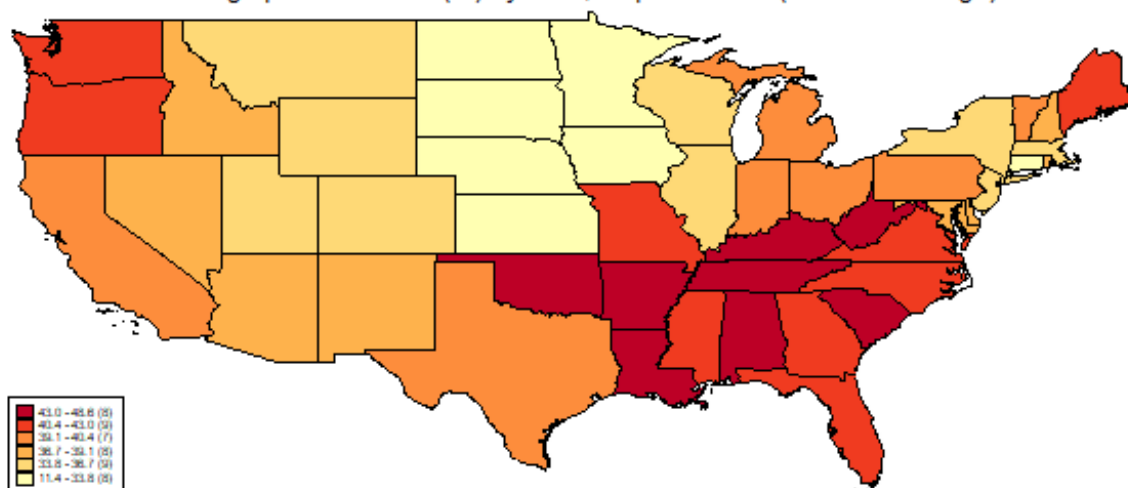
The visuals below depict rough geographic regularities based on state averages in the distribution of stress, reported pain, reliance on disability insurance, and premature mortality among poor white respondents—the cohort demonstrating the starkest signs of despair. Our econometric analysis discussed above identifies the specific role that lack of hope plays in this vicious circle.

Average stress incidence (%) by state, for poor whites (2010-15 average)

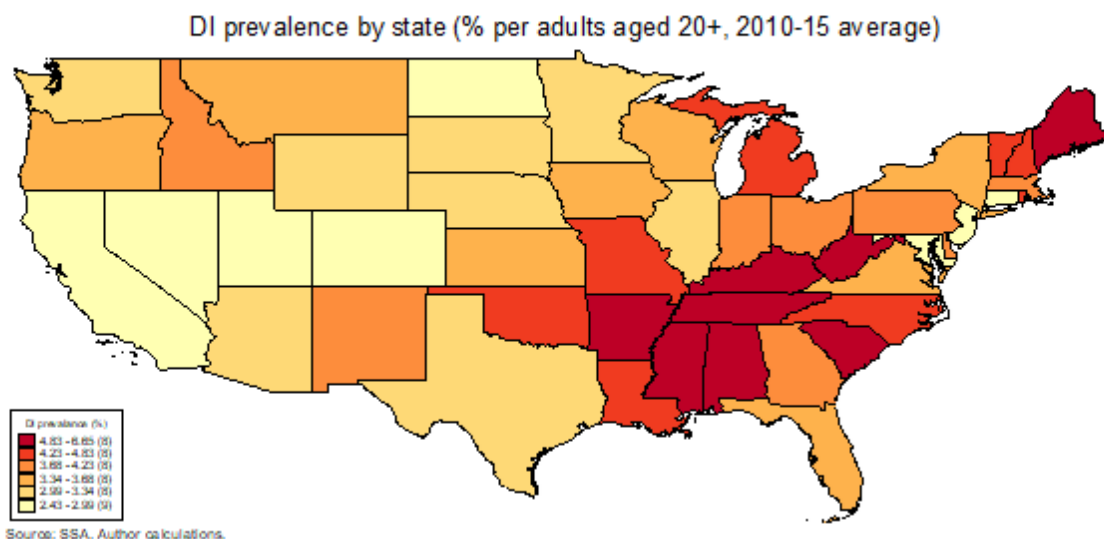


Source: Gallup Healthways. Author calculations.

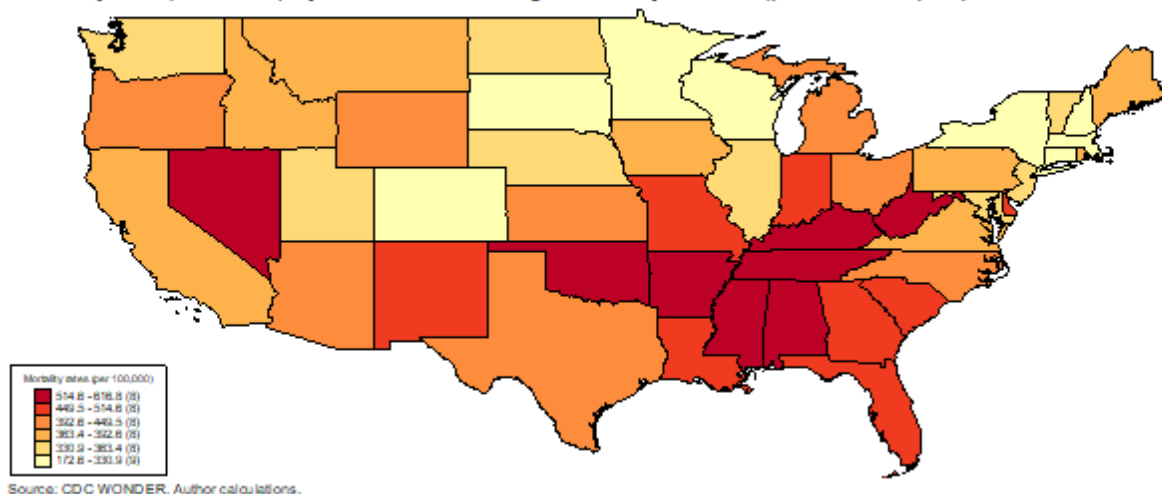
Average pain incidence (%) by state, for poor whites (2010-15 average)



Source: Gallup Healthways. Author calculations.



Mortality rate (all-cause) by state, for whites aged 45-54 years old (per 100,000 people, 2010-2015 average)



Unfortunately, widespread desperation and its negative manifestations cannot be eliminated with a simple solution. In a political cycle that hinges on daily crises and scandals, solutions are even less conceivable. The proposals generated by the current administration, which are limited to

across-the-board cuts in social programs, demonstrate a lack of creative thinking about how these programs can be integrated into the solution. In the short-run, solutions will likely come from piecemeal and bottom-up efforts emanating from individual communities with local support.

A few major, longer-term policy changes, however, are evident. To begin with, while the broader economic factors that lead to higher rates of “deaths of despair” may be more difficult to tackle, the all-too-readily-available supply of opioids and other addictive drugs *is* an issue that policymakers can productively address. Another key policy area to be reexamined, which I highlight in the book, is safety-net policy. For example, food stamps tend to stigmatize recipients, and programs that provide cash assistance for the non-working poor have been shrinking, particularly in Republican states. Given that the 15% of prime-age males are out of the labor force—a statistic that is projected to grow to 25% by the mid-century—another approach is clearly necessary.

The technological displacement of low-skilled jobs is a trend that is here to stay and an issue that is not unique to the United States. Addressing this issue will require longer-term solutions, such as education and incentives that provide young people in economic deserts the tools to move to new

jobs. Older Americans who are out of the labor force face a greater challenge. Well-being research offers some lessons, such as the benefits of volunteering, participating in community activities, and other ways of avoiding the isolation and despair that accompanies unemployment.

Finally, restoring hope is not impossible. As a start, this entails reaching out to those in distress with positive strategies for the future. Experimental research, such as that by Hall and Shafir (2014) and Haushofer and Fehr (2014), shows that simple interventions that introduce sources of hope to the poor and vulnerable can alter behavior and lead to better future outcomes (Hall et al., 2014; Haushofer and Fehr, 2014). The alternative is for desperation to yield even more support for politicians who foster division, exclusion, and an impossible return to the past. The associated turmoil, as recent elections and events in both the U.S. and the U.K. demonstrate, is counter-productive for all and particularly devastating for the most vulnerable.<sup>1</sup>



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# Survival Tips for a Public Policy Scholar

Dr. Jaganath Sankaran

In my stint as an academic researcher, I have picked up on a number of practical tips and useful lessons. They range from the trivial “always spell check” to the complicated “in a 3D plot always relatively scale the axis.” It also includes life lesson stories like the stuff I talk about below. I will admit right away that I don’t always adhere to these tips and lessons. In fact, most of the time, I start to appreciate these tips only after things turn out not the way I had hoped. However, these have been extremely useful to me over the years. I have always benefited when I use them diligently. So, I am sharing some and hope they will be valuable.

## **The “*My Mama Likes It*” Factor**

A few years ago when I was a student at the Aerospace Engineering department at the University of Maryland, I heard a very interesting story. Now, I have no idea if this story is true or not. I have not been able to validate it. However, the professor who told me this is exceedingly smart. I would like to think he read it somewhere and was trying to tell me something useful. The story goes something like this:

A young and ambitious rocket scientist was working on the Saturn and Atlas rocket programs in the 1960s. These rocket programs were led by Wernher von Braun, the

German missile scientist. Apparently, the young scientist and a few of his peers had been recently recruited. Among the many challenging scientific issues they faced, one was particularly vexing. Why did Wernher von Braun insist that these giant rockets have fins at the tail end? It made very little aerodynamic sense. These giant rockets were not meant to be making turns and dives in the atmosphere. They go straight up for a while to outer space, then get pulled down by gravity on a ballistic path back to earth and finally plunk down.

The young rocket scientist, after trying very hard to find a technical rationale for von Braun’s insistence on tail fins, comes up empty. He finally goes to von Braun and asks: “Sir, why do you insist on tail fins on these rockets? They seem to serve no valuable scientific purpose.”- von Braun smiles at the young scientist and replies with a thick accent: “Because *my mama likes it.*” And so, the Saturn and Atlas rockets continued to have

useless fins because Wernher von Braun thought his mother believed rockets should always have fins at the tail end.

Over the years, I have come to immensely appreciate the underlying message in the story. Not all policy recommendations have scientific explanations or rationale. Some policy decisions are just quirky. Others are plainly political. You may hate the notion that policy choices are not rational, but many times that's how it is. Unfortunately, I still struggle with identifying and accepting this upfront. Usually, it takes me three to four agonizing trials before I accept that the reason the logic of a policy choice still eludes me is not that I got the math wrong, but it's because math (or statistics) and linear logic have nothing to do with it. It will do a lot of good for a public policy scholar to keep this in mind.

### **Goddamm'it. It Is Policy**

In the world of nuclear non-proliferation and arms control, the most common refrain I hear against change is: "*Goddamm'it. It Is Policy.*" In other words, we have been doing things this way for a long time, what makes you think you have a better idea? This response annoys me beyond measure. It appears to me to be both lazy and arrogant. To be fair, I am not opposed to the idea that some things don't need to be changed. I also agree with the argument that one needs to understand the reasons for decisions made before embarking on changing it. However, in most instances, when the "*it is policy*" argument is made, it is just rhetoric dispensed without understanding and logic. There is rarely a follow-on explanation.

For a while, when this refrain was thrown at me, I used to argue back. I would start by making the case why things are different now and then provide arguments for why change might be a net plus. But I rarely succeeded. After one such disappointing experience, I recounted it to John Steinbruner, the former Director of the Center of the International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM) and my dissertation supervisor. John in his uniquely calm fashion imparted a great lesson to me. He told me that in his many years of working in the Beltway policy community one of his biggest challenges was to shift the burden of proof to the other side of the argument. He pointed out that as a rule of thumb whoever gets to bear the burden of proof loses the policy argument. In essence, he suggested that rather than rebut my way through the "*it is policy*" argument, I should challenge the premise. This advice has proven extremely valuable to me over the years. So, these days when someone glibly says "*it is policy*" and I am confident whoever is saying it aims to dismiss me lightly, I respond with "*so was imperialism and apartheid. What's your point?*" Of course, I do this without being too smart or cocky about it. For a milder version, I suppose one could, for instance, point out that it was once China's policy to enforce a universal one-child rule and it was once India's policy to promote a socialist political economy. Both policy choices were once seen as wise decisions, but are now dismissed as anachronistic and inefficient. Either way, the response I use works for me quite often. Many times, I end up forcing a dialogue with the other party.

### **The Six-Year-Old Rule**

Public Policy issues, whether they are health, fiscal, social, or national security related, are often complex and vague.

Additionally, analysts tend to find that not all required information is available or accessible. It is these characteristics that make policy studies very interesting to me. As an academic, I tend to take a deep dive into an issue, evaluating its many facets and then propose solutions. When I am doing this, I always find that my arguments and recommendations make great sense in my head. However, other scholars don't always agree. At times, it is embarrassingly obvious in hindsight that I had significant gaps in my reasoning.

One of the best ways I have discovered to avert such an outcome is to self-enforce some variant of the "six-year-old rule." The rule is: "If you can't explain it to a six-year-old, you don't understand it yourself." Albert Einstein made up this rule. Or, maybe it was Richard Feynman. No one seems to know for sure.

Of course, I don't always go about talking to six-year-olds about nuclear

warfare. Although, I tried it once and it proved quite demanding. My version of the rule has two parts. First, I try and explain all the nuances of my argument on a cue card using only arrow diagrams. If I can't do this, then I don't understand the issue. Second, I talk to some close colleagues and pitch my idea without being too worried about looking naïve. Invariably, when I do this, I get better results. Students of public policy should always stress-test their arguments before making them formally either in a classroom setting or professionally.

In conclusion, it is always valuable to remind oneself that policy decisions are often made with incomplete, and at times incorrect, information. Policymakers can only hope to obtain the best available information and analysis, subject it to critical examination, and make a reasoned decision within the time available.

# What Should the U.S. Do About Opium In Afghanistan?

By Lauren Helinski

In August of 2017, President Donald Trump announced a new strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia. While the Trump administration has not released specific plans, the strategy involves sending more troops and providing more security assistance funding to help wrest the country from a persistent insurgency led by the Taliban and terrorist organizations like the Islamic State (ISIS) and al Qaeda, which now control or claim as much as a third of Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> The new strategy also aims to make the Afghan government stable and self-sufficient by supporting economic development, government reform, and a political process for peace.

This announcement has also reinvigorated the debate around opium and drug trafficking in Afghanistan, which is closely intertwined with security, counterinsurgency, economic development, rule of law, and governance. Afghanistan produces about 80 percent of the world's illicit opiates, according to the U.S. Department of State.<sup>2</sup> Opiates, such as morphine and heroin, are derived from the opium poppy, which is cultivated widely albeit illegally in Afghanistan. In fact, Afghanistan reached a record-high level of opium cultivation in 2017—a 63-percent increase from 2016 levels and a 46-percent increase from the previous 2014 record.<sup>3</sup> This comes at a time when the United States is also suffering from a domestic opioid epidemic. Despite the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) estimation that only five percent of opiates in the United States originate from Afghanistan,

lawmakers and the public often conflate the domestic opioid epidemic with the rise in opium cultivation in Afghanistan.<sup>4</sup>

Globally, opium presents a threat to public health and finances organized crime. In Afghanistan, opium also represents a lucrative source of income for the Taliban. Indeed, President Trump's new strategy granted General John W. Nicholson, Commander of the NATO Resolute Support Mission and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, the authority to target insurgent revenue streams. In November of 2017, the United States carried out its first counternarcotics airstrikes, which targeted opium labs and narcotics storage facilities.<sup>5</sup> As of December, the airstrikes had reportedly destroyed 25 narcotics labs.<sup>6</sup>

Given recent developments, the United States may be inclined to revive a hardline strategy to destroy opium crops and drug labs in the hopes of solving multiple problems with one swift measure. However, while there is an undeniable allure in the simplicity of targeting Afghanistan's opium, this exact strategy has proven to be ineffective, if not counterproductive. Indeed, the United States has sixteen years of experience and investment in Afghanistan upon which to build a new strategy. According to the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), the U.S. Government has appropriated a total of \$122 billion for the reconstruction of Afghanistan since 2002.<sup>7</sup> Of this total, \$8.7 billion has been spent on counternarcotics efforts.<sup>8</sup>

Experience suggests that the opium problem is as much a result of the issues

with which it is frequently associated—such as poverty, corruption, and the insurgency—as it is a cause of these issues. Eliminating opium production will not solve all of Afghanistan’s problems. However, counternarcotics policy still has a role to play in reconstruction efforts and will help the U.S. pursue its overall strategy for Afghanistan, which encompasses security, self-sufficiency, and economic development goals.

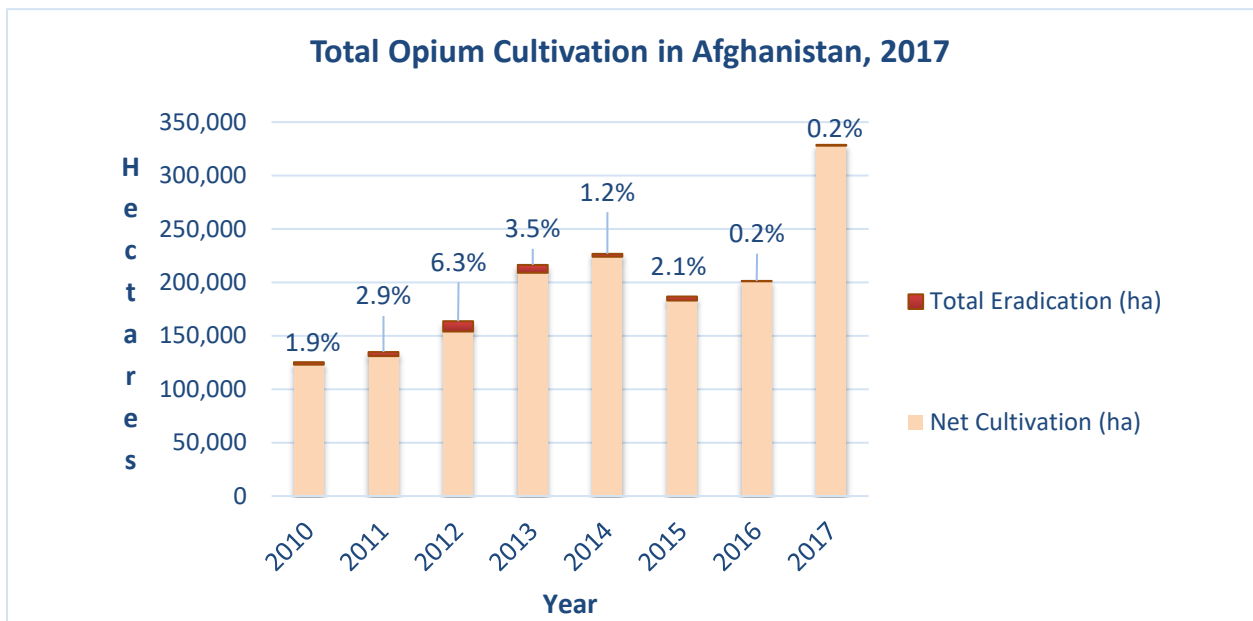
The lead agency for U.S. counternarcotics is the State Department’s Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). The INL is currently developing a new counternarcotics strategy for Afghanistan, which has been on hold since 2015, and which was further delayed by the change in administration.<sup>9</sup> This paper will explore and analyze several case studies in U.S. counternarcotics strategy in Afghanistan, many of which highlight INL-led initiatives, and provide policy recommendations to inform forthcoming INL strategy.

This paper will present evidence to support the suspension of certain elements of the current INL strategy and call for increased action and funding for others. INL should resist any renewed interest in hardline policies, such as opium crop eradication, recognize the limited utility of interdiction, or the seizing of opium and destruction of opium labs, and instead focus on approaches that, at the least, do no harm. The best approach to counternarcotics in Afghanistan will focus more on systemic rule of law, good governance, creating viable economic alternatives, and on basic security, rather than solely targeting opium. This approach will work to overturn those features of the overall environment that make opium a good choice for farmers and allow insurgents and corrupt politicians to profit from its cultivation. A certain level of opium cultivation and production should be tolerated in the short term.

## **The Current Opium Situation in Afghanistan**

Since the United States concluded its combat mission in Afghanistan in 2014 and transitioned to a support role, popular attention on Afghanistan has waned. Similarly, the priority status of counternarcotics policy with respect to the U.S. agenda in Afghanistan has declined significantly. The reconstruction effort and, more specifically, counternarcotics initiatives, have produced uneven success, and Afghanistan remains a fragile state. In a 2014 testimony to Congress, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction John Sopko warned that, without continued assistance, Afghanistan was at risk of becoming a “narco-criminal state.”<sup>10</sup> Despite this warning, the Department of State’s Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) has experienced funding reductions and, as a result, reduced its presence in Afghanistan.

Since 2002, cultivation and overall opium production has, in fact, increased in Afghanistan. Cultivation is highest in the Helmand, Kandahar, and Badghis provinces, where either the presence of the Taliban or a lack of government resources have limited the Afghan government’s ability to enforce prohibition. While there was a seemingly promising reduction in overall opium production in 2015, production levels increased again in 2016. According to an annual survey conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics, a total of 328,000 hectares were cultivated in 2017, while only 750 hectares were eradicated.<sup>11</sup> Opium poppy eradication decreased by 91 percent



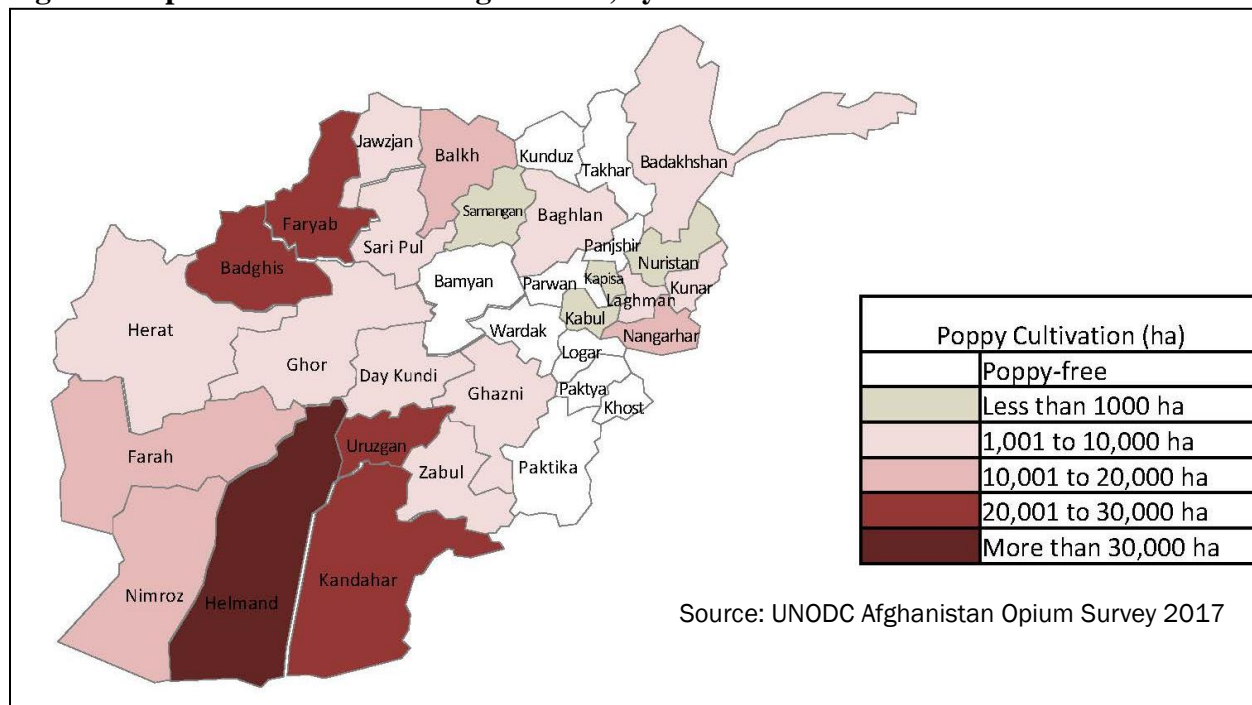
**Figure 1: Source: UNODC Opium Surveys, 2010-2017**

Percentages show the proportion of opium poppy area that was eradicated.

between 2015 and 2016, due primarily to the deteriorating security situation in the country (see Figure 1, above). Eradication rates remained low in 2017. Area under cultivation increased, as did yield and production. In some regions, where the climate permits, improved farming methods and a new seed strain have allowed opium farmers to grow more than one season of crops on the same land each year.<sup>12</sup> In 2017, the total farm gate value of opium, or the price that farmers received, was \$1.4 billion—about 7 percent of Afghanistan’s estimated GDP.<sup>13</sup>

Afghanistan continues to suffer from a persistent insurgency. Today, the Taliban and other armed groups control almost 35 percent of the country, especially rural areas.<sup>14</sup> Although the link between Taliban presence and opium production is uncertain, most opium production today occurs in the Helmand and Kandahar provinces, in the southern part of Afghanistan, which have been and remain Taliban strongholds, as evidenced in Figure 2. In addition to security problems, Afghanistan also suffers from corruption, poverty, and high rates of drug addiction. The country ranks 169 of 176 countries on Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index, an annual publication ranking countries from least to most corrupt.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 1: Opium Cultivation in Afghanistan, by Province**



With a per capita GDP of \$594, Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world.<sup>16</sup> In addition, Afghanistan exhibits some of the highest substance abuse rates in the world. Based on surveys conducted across rural and urban areas, the Afghan government estimates that 4.9 percent of the general population and 8.5 percent of adults use opioids.<sup>17</sup>

Despite a growing problem with domestic drug abuse, most of Afghanistan's opium is exported. According to the UNODC, most of the heroin and opiates produced in Afghanistan are consumed in Europe and Russia, with roughly 5 percent of these drug products reaching the United States. U.S. agencies, including the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), believe that the heroin consumed in the United States primarily originates from Mexico and Colombia.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the drugs trafficked from Afghanistan present a marginal public health threat to the United States.

While experts and policymakers often use decreased opium cultivation as an indicator of success, the threat posed by the crop itself should not be overstated. Widespread opium cultivation signifies poor security, corruption, and weak rule of law, all of which may be a bigger threat to Afghanistan and U.S. interests than the drug trade.

### **Why farmers choose to grow opium**

The opium industry, while illegal, is an important element of the Afghan economy. Opium poppy is the most important cash crop in Afghanistan, and the crop is attractive not only because of its high value. Opium poppy is inexpensive to plant, requires little skill to grow and harvest, and is relatively resistant to pests. In addition, raw opium transports easily and without spoiling. Furthermore, opium poppy survives on little water, produces multiple harvests per year, and can be double-cropped or interspersed between other crops in the same land area. And, opium poppy is



a labor-intensive—rather than capital-intensive—crop. Opium provides seasonal employment to laborers for weeding and harvesting, which requires scoring individual seed pods and later collecting the sap that oozes out and dries. Poor farmers and landless individuals, who provide labor or participate in sharecropping, tend to be the most dependent on opium production. Crop eradication is administered unevenly across the country. Depending on the area, farmers may pay bribes or protection money to Afghan National Police, the Afghan Local Police, or the Taliban to preserve their crops. Both corrupt officials and the Taliban have an interest in maintaining and taxing, rather than destroying, the valuable opium trade.

Rural households do not decide to cultivate opium based purely on “profit maximization,” but must also consider risk, survival, the political situation, and a range of other farm and non-farm economic activities.<sup>19</sup> In the Afghan sharecropping system, experts estimate that 30 percent of revenues go to landowners, 10 percent to taxes, and 15–25 percent to seasonal harvesters or laborers. Many poor growers, in need of immediate income, sell their crop in advance at rates around half of the harvest price.<sup>20</sup> This advance cash sale is part of a traditional credit system known as *salaam*, in which opium often plays an important role in determining a person’s general creditworthiness.<sup>21</sup> Sharecroppers receive around half of the remaining revenue.

Wealthier households, which are not dependent on the opium crop, are able to store harvested opium sap and sell it after harvest time, when prices are high.<sup>22</sup> The harvested opium sap is stored as dried cakes or sold to traders and traffickers for chemical processing into derivatives such as morphine base or heroin. Most processing is done in Afghanistan, and the derivatives are trafficked across the border for international

sale. Most trafficking routes run through Herat Province in western Afghanistan to Iran or through Faizabad Province in the north to Tajikistan, Pakistan, or China.

While opium cultivation may be a reasonable and generally lucrative economic decision for individual farmers, the dependence on opium has negative effects on Afghanistan’s long-term development. Repeated mono-cropping is depleting nutrients in the soil. Cultivation in former desert areas, which requires the use of deep tube wells for irrigation, is straining water resources.<sup>23</sup> Opium also generates an inflow of cash from surrounding areas, resulting in a localized form of “Dutch Disease,” which refers to the local appreciation of land, labor, and goods prices. This distorts the economy in areas of heavy cultivation and discourages economic diversification or producing crops and goods other than opium.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, researchers David Mansfield and Paul Fishstein note that the rent of land in areas of high opium cultivation is elevated to the point that sharecroppers or those renting the land cannot afford to plant legal crops.<sup>25</sup>

## **INL Counternarcotics Strategy and Programming in Afghanistan**

Since 2001, the U.S. government has pursued a “Five Pillar” approach to counternarcotics in Afghanistan. These five pillars include 1) eradication, 2) alternative livelihood programs (ALPs), or alternative development (AD), 3) interdiction and law enforcement, 4) justice reform, and 5) public information.<sup>26</sup> Many U.S.-funded programs covered multiple pillars, and many reconstruction and security projects outside of INL have, indeed, included counternarcotics goals. More recently, the INL also began to fund drug treatment and prevention programs. Historically, policymakers have not prioritized these strategies equally, and until 2009, the U.S.

approach to combating the global opium and heroin trades has often emphasized supply reduction and has particularly relied on either funding or directly administering eradication and interdiction efforts.

Globally, INL attempts to address the problem of illicit drugs through both supply and demand reduction. Supply and demand reduction strategies include institutional development, or capacity building, drug prevention and treatment, eradication, and interdiction. The INL's current strategy in Afghanistan can be broken down into the following elements:

**Crop Eradication:** INL encourages and creates incentives for the Afghan government to destroy opium poppy crops through, for example, manual methods like plowing. Eradication strategies not only aim to decrease the overall supply of opium derivatives (opiates), but to deter future opium cultivation by making it riskier and less attractive to farmers.

**Interdiction:** Interdiction is a law enforcement approach that focuses on seizing and destroying the harvested opium sap, its derivatives, precursor chemicals used in processing, and processing facilities. INL works with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to build capacity within the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan to conduct interdiction.<sup>27</sup>

**Alternative Development:** Also known as Alternative Livelihood Programs (ALP), these programs aim to provide farmers and laborers with alternatives to opium poppy cultivation and are primarily administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which coordinates with INL in all counternarcotics activities.

**Law Enforcement and Justice Reform:** Law enforcement and justice reform supports capacity-building programs to assist the Afghan government in prosecuting cases and enhancing the rule of law.

**Public Awareness Campaigns:** Often deployed in tandem with other strategies, these community engagement campaigns seek to explain counternarcotics programs and incentives to the public. In addition, these campaigns seek to increase the negative stigma of opium and heroin.

**Demand Reduction:** The most recent addition to counternarcotics programming, this approach supports drug use prevention through education and rehabilitation or treatment for drug users in Afghanistan.

Most of INL's funding to date has gone into the first three approaches. In addition to the agencies named above, the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) have supported or complemented INL efforts.

### **Current INL Activities in Afghanistan**

Current INL policies align generally with Afghanistan's 2015 National Drug Action Plan (NDAP). The NDAP pursues three interrelated goals: decrease cultivation of opium, decrease production and trafficking of opiates, and reduce demand for illicit drugs by increasing access to treatment.<sup>28</sup> Since 2008, INL has spent \$27.7 million on capacity-building activities for the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN). INL currently provides about \$26 million per year to support the National Interdiction Unit and the Sensitive Investigative Unit, which are part of the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan.<sup>29</sup>

INL also supports the UNODC's annual opium survey in Afghanistan, as well as the recently announced UNODC Boost Alternative Development Intervention through Licit Livelihoods (BADILL) project, which INL has already provided \$20 million in obligated funds.<sup>30</sup> Currently, neither INL nor any other U.S. agency participates directly in eradication activities in Afghanistan. However, INL continues to fund a Governor-Led Eradication Program.

Since 2007, INL's alternative development portfolio has comprised only the Good Performers Initiative, which will be discussed later in this paper, and the \$17.8 million Community-Based Agriculture and Rural Development program, which is administered by UNODC and the UN Development Programme.<sup>31</sup>

### **Historical Overview: Afghanistan's Opium Problem Since 2001**

Opium production in Afghanistan did not become widespread until the years of the civil war, which began in the 1970s, when *Mujahideen* rebel groups, some of which were supported by the CIA through Pakistani intermediaries, fought to eject the Soviet Union and the Soviet-backed Communist central government from Afghanistan. The fighting continued until the Soviets withdrew in 1989. Opium was used as a cash crop then just as it is today. Opium production continued under the Taliban, which assumed control of Afghanistan in 1996 after years of civil war. Afghanistan was frequently referred to as a "narco-state" by the international community because the Taliban permitted and taxed the crop.<sup>32</sup>

For reasons that are still under debate, the Taliban banned opium cultivation nationwide in 2001. Beyond the stated moral basis, some argue that the ban was a political move to make Afghanistan eligible for development aid.<sup>33</sup> Others believe that the move may have been an attempt to manipulate the price of opium, thus raising the value of opium stockpiles held by the Taliban. Indeed, opium prices increased significantly under the ban, and the Taliban and opium traders continued to stockpile harvests.<sup>34</sup>

Whatever the motivation, the political costs of imposing the ban were high. As the Taliban's control over the provinces waned, farmers began planting again. The Northern Alliance, which opposed Taliban rule,

avored opium production, and the ban shifted popular support in their favor. The Taliban ended the ban in September 2001.<sup>35</sup> Soon after, the United States and its coalition partners invaded Afghanistan to topple the Taliban regime for harboring Osama bin Laden and the terrorist group al-Qaeda, which had planned the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

While opium was a consideration for early U.S.-led reconstruction efforts (housed under the International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF) in Afghanistan after 2001, it did not become a U.S. priority until much later.

Originally, the United Kingdom assumed the lead role for counternarcotics in the reconstruction effort. One of the first moves was helping the Afghanistan transitional government establish the Counternarcotics Directorate (CND) in 2002. Motivated by the prospect of curbing domestic heroin use, the U.K. made an optimistic pledge to reduce opium cultivation in Afghanistan by 70 percent over five years.<sup>36</sup> One of these earlier efforts was a compensated eradication program that took place during the 2002–2003 growing season. The program was unsuccessful; the money intended to compensate farmers for voluntary opium crop eradication was given to local administrators who, for the most part, simply pocketed the funds while also accepting bribes to turn a blind eye to opium activity. The funding quickly ran out.<sup>37</sup>

Counternarcotics initiatives were, for the most part, separate from other military operations. Official Defense Department policy did not allow U.S. forces to specifically target drug production facilities or pursue drug traffickers. However, forces could seize and destroy drugs and drug facilities they encountered during routine stability or counterterrorism operations.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, NATO/ISAF agreements allowed U.S. forces to target traffickers and

facilities linked to Taliban and insurgent elements.<sup>39</sup>

The INL and DOD facilitated DEA efforts to assist with investigations and prosecutions. Particularly, the agencies arranged for agents and experts to travel and work in Afghanistan. The DEA first established a presence in Afghanistan in 2002 and expanded it significantly in 2003. Foreign Advisory and Support Teams (FAST) provided guidance to the Afghan National Interdiction Unit (NIU) and helped conduct investigations.<sup>40</sup>

In 2004, there was a spike in poppy cultivation, and experts began to identify a stronger link between drugs and the insurgency as well as drugs and international terrorism. The term “narco-terrorism,” while not new, became more widespread in international discussions about the Taliban and al-Qaeda. In 2004, UNODC executive director Antonio Maria Costa equated fighting drug trafficking with fighting terrorism.<sup>41</sup> DEA officials also supported this linkage, although there were no specific numbers available to establish how much the Taliban or al-Qaeda profited from opium.<sup>42</sup>

Linking opium to broader security concerns paved the way for increased U.S. counternarcotics funding and attention. The Afghan Counternarcotics Directorate was elevated to the cabinet level, becoming the Ministry of Counternarcotics. USAID began implementing Alternative Livelihood Programs (ALPs) designed to provide poppy farmers with the support and incentives to switch to licit crops, such as wheat. In 2005, with assistance from the United States and other donors, Afghanistan created the Criminal Justice Task Force (CJTF) to target trafficking and drug-related crimes.<sup>43</sup>

At the same time, the United States was participating in a large counternarcotics and security-assistance effort in the Americas, entitled Plan Colombia, which aimed to eliminate coca production and aid

the Colombian government in fighting insurgent groups. Inspired by the apparent success of Plan Colombia and worried about widespread opium cultivation in Afghanistan, INL leaders started to push for aggressive eradication programs, including the aerial spraying of herbicides.<sup>44</sup> However, in 2005 Afghan President Hamid Karzai refused to allow aerial spraying, and this initiative was largely abandoned.<sup>45</sup> Manual eradication programs, which usually involve the use of tractors to plow over poppy plants, continued across the country, often in tandem with security operations. The U.S. experience in Colombia was still fresh in the mind of policy specialists and politicians, and this shaped the counternarcotics programs in Afghanistan. For example, policemen from the Afghan National Interdiction Unit (NIU) went to Colombia to train.<sup>46</sup> William Wood, who previously served as Ambassador to Colombia, became the Ambassador to Afghanistan in 2007 and revived the proposals for aerial spraying.

With the end of the Bush Administration and the beginning of the Obama Administration in 2009, the United States began to favor alternative livelihood programs over aggressive eradication. Indeed, Richard Holbrooke, U.S. Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, announced in June 2009 that the United States would no longer conduct eradication and would shift funding to alternative livelihoods programs and interdiction.<sup>47</sup> In 2010, this shift was formally connected to a “whole of government” approach to counterinsurgency goals in Afghanistan.<sup>48</sup> While the United States no longer participated directly in eradication, it continued funding Afghan-administered eradication programs.

At the same time, the U.S. military became increasingly involved in counternarcotics initiatives to combat the perceived narcotics-insurgency nexus. In

2009, with funding from INL, Afghanistan opened the Counternarcotics Justice Center (CNJC), which now houses the CJTF and the Counternarcotics Tribunal and detention center.<sup>49</sup> The Departments of State and Justice provided funding for these centers, which were intended to serve as a model within the justice system. The United States established the Afghanistan Threat Finance Cell (ATFC), an interagency fusion cell between the DEA, DOD, and Treasury to disrupt the “narcotics-insurgency-corruption nexus.”<sup>50</sup>

In 2012, the United States began to transition security responsibilities to the Afghan government in anticipation of a 2016 withdrawal of U.S. and international forces from Afghanistan.<sup>51</sup> Today, the United States plays a supporting role, meaning that it only assists the Afghan government and does not conduct activities independently. Most of the U.S. military bases in Afghanistan have closed. In 2015,

the INL closed its operations at Kandahar Airfield, which had served as its primary operating base. The INL still supports the Ministry of Counternarcotics (MCN) and other Afghan-led counternarcotics initiatives.

### **Analysis of Select INL Counternarcotics Programs**

The following section compares four well-known counternarcotics programs, which represent experience in several of INL’s primary approaches to the opium problem and collaboration with other U.S. agencies. Interdiction, as an approach, is not represented in the case studies, as it is and has been carried out primarily by Afghan law enforcement bodies, with ongoing support by INL, DEA, and DOD, and is structured and funded differently from the approaches covered in this section.

**Figure 2: Summary of Case Studies**

<b>Program and Value</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Effects on Opium</b>	<b>Other Effects</b>
<b>Governor-Led Eradication (GLE)</b>  \$6.9 million <sup>52</sup>	2002–Present	Reimbursement for Eradication	Short-term decrease within areas of government control, shift in cultivation to uncontrolled areas. Long term effects unclear.	Has created political turmoil.
<b>Poppy Eradication Force (PEF)</b>  \$695.3 million <sup>53</sup>	2004–2009	Eradication, supported by security force and INL Air Wing	Immediate decrease: 9,946 total hectares eradicated. Long term effects unclear	Increased violence, alienated population. Led to elimination of direct eradication programs.
<b>Good Performer's Initiative (GPI)</b>  \$126.3 million <sup>54</sup>	2007–2016 (suspended)	Alternative Development for no-poppy or low-poppy areas	Ineffective at reducing cultivation	Development funds used mainly in cities or towns. Little effect on rural welfare or crop choices.
<b>Helmand Food Zone Program (HFZ)</b>  \$56 million in multinational funding <sup>55</sup>	2008–2012	Alternative Development, Public Information, and Eradication	Short-term decrease opium in fertile zone, increase opium in desert. Long-term resurgence in both areas.	Established orchard crops in fertile zone. Many gains lost without ISAF presence.

### **Case Study: Governor-Led Eradication (GLE) in Nangarhar**

The Governor-Led Eradication (GLE) program is a direct assistance program that began in 2002 and remains active. Under the program, the INL reimburses provincial governors \$250 per

every UNODC-verified hectare of eradicated poppy.<sup>56</sup>

While the GLE is comparatively small in terms of funding, the program has influenced governors, who oversee individual provinces, to impose bans and eradication measures on their constituents. The most notable instance of a governor-led ban, encouraged by GLE, took place in

Nangarhar under then-governor Gul Aga Sherzai. Between 2007 and 2010, Nangarhar was widely deemed a success story; the province, which had been one of the top opium-producing provinces in Afghanistan, achieved “poppy-free” status during these three years.<sup>57</sup>

Field researchers, most notably David Mansfield, believe that the success of this ban rested on a delicate political balance that governor Sherzai was able to strike between his constituents and the international community. Sherzai, who had governed Kandahar in the 1990’s, and who later returned to Afghanistan to become the governor of Nangarhar, was known as a political “strongman,” if not a warlord.<sup>58</sup> As with most opium bans in Afghanistan, it took a significant effort and threats of force, particularly in the form of eradication, to get villagers and elders to heed the ban. Yet, neither the GLE program nor other development initiatives provided sufficient agricultural inputs to mitigate the economic loss of opium. With the strong incentives toward opium production and Sherzai’s tenuous grip on control over the province, the ban began to unravel, and Nangarhar began producing opium again in 2013.<sup>59</sup>

In Afghanistan, where the government’s grasp on power is weak, encouraging opium bans can lead to further political instability. These incentives encourage governors to enforce unpopular bans in already insecure and unstable environments, exposing rural citizens to economic shocks and political disorder.<sup>60</sup>

The process of eradication, which typically requires the use of tractors and other machinery by government personnel, is dangerous. Personnel are often injured or killed in their line of work. In a 2013 report, the DOD conceded that GLE had not proved to decrease insurgent funding, but had instead served to shift cultivation to areas outside of government control.<sup>61</sup>

Additionally, corruption within the Afghan government often meant that farmers were able to pay bribes to avoid eradication.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, while the United States can verify via the UNODC annual opium survey that eradication has taken place, it cannot confirm whether it was carried out fairly and without consideration for bribes or political or familial connections.

The GLE program continues today, but at lower funding levels. While INL has obligated and disbursed \$6.9 million since 2002, the GLE program currently makes up only 2 percent of INL’s overall annual budget for Afghanistan.<sup>63</sup>

### **Case Study: Poppy Eradication Force (PEF)**

The Poppy Eradication Force (PEF), which operated between 2004 and 2009, was essentially a militarized force controlled by the Afghan Ministry of Interior and financed by the INL. The PEF received intelligence support from the U.K. and often accompanied larger military operations. The PEF comprised Afghan police and personnel, INL personnel, and INL-led private contractors, most notably Dyncorp, which had previously worked on eradication programs in Colombia. These operations were very large, involving long convoys of vehicles and support from the INL Special Air Wing, the operation of which INL also contracted to DynCorp. The PEF would begin operations during the beginning of opium season in Lashkar Gah in Helmand, in the South, and work its way north following the change in season.<sup>64</sup>

The PEF was a central-government led initiative originally intended to supplement the GLE program in case governors needed help with eradication. In practice, the PEF often operated in areas where there were no alternative development programs in place and where there were no good alternatives to poppy. The INL did not provide compensation to

farmers whose crops it eradicated. At the time, USAID was the primary agency working on development but tried to avoid working with eradication programs. While the PEF worked to eradicate poppy, the Taliban was providing poppy seeds and often put down payments on harvests—a common practice for opium traders. Compared to the Taliban, the Afghan government and the coalition forces were not offering such an attractive deal.<sup>65</sup>

Farmers and their Taliban protectors fought back against the destruction of poppy fields. This necessitated the militarized nature of the PEF and, at the same time, led to more violence. In 2006, given the problems encountered in the PEF program, the INL began to shift back to governor-led initiatives as the primary eradication measure.<sup>66</sup> The PEF operations and the Special Air Wing would cost a total of \$695.3 million, eradicating a total of 9,946 hectares at an average cost of \$73,608 per hectare.<sup>67</sup>

In 2009, Richard Holbrooke blamed U.S. poppy eradication programs, especially the Poppy Eradication Force (PEF), for the “failure” of counternarcotics in Afghanistan—stating that it had the effect of bolstering the insurgency and undermining stability goals.<sup>68</sup> Instead of helping earn popular support for U.S. forces and the Afghan government, eradication programs frequently hurt already-poor farmers and alienated rural populations. A RAND study published in 2015 found little evidence that eradication, as a blanket policy, convinced farmers to switch to other crops.<sup>69</sup> In addition, eradication carried out in areas that were not under government control generally served to alienate those populations, primarily because farmers could not receive compensation or alternatives to opium cultivation. Given the experiences of the PEF, many experts argue

that eradication should only be carried out in areas that the government firmly controls.<sup>70</sup>

### **Case Study: Good Performers Initiative (GPI)**

The Good Performer’s Initiative (GPI) began in 2007 and ended in 2016. The program rewarded provinces with little or no poppy cultivation with funding for development projects. Local communities and the Ministry of Counternarcotics negotiated the specifics of each development project. The program sought to provide an incentive for the community to collectively decide to cease opium cultivation.<sup>71</sup> While the GPI is no longer approving new projects, it continues to fund previously-approved projects and remains one of two INL direct assistance initiatives, through which money is transferred directly to the Afghan government.

The Afghan government, including local governors, have discretion over GPI development funds and have used them for a broad range of economic and infrastructure projects. Examples include schools, health clinics, gymnasiums, and irrigation canals. In many ways, the GPI resembles an alternative development program. However, it also encourages governors to engage in eradication in exchange for aid. As polling data indicates, less than 1 percent of farmers considered receiving aid or assistance as a primary reason for halting opium farming. Instead, farmers were more influenced by punitive measures, such as eradication, which could destroy a season’s crops and eliminate an important source of income.<sup>72</sup> Thus, the GPI-financed projects may have more to do with the preference of governors and local politicians than rural communities. Indeed, there were some reports of governors attempting to influence the results of the UNODC opium survey, which determined GPI eligibility.<sup>73</sup>

The INL suspended the GPI in April 2015, then valued at \$143 million, because



the Ministry of Counter Narcotics was no longer able to administer the program.<sup>74</sup> INL recently deemed the GPI program ineffective at reducing opium cultivation. The GPI has funded 262 completed projects to date, while 24 projects remain ongoing. The 286 total projects are worth about \$126 million.<sup>75</sup> The only follow-on program currently planned for GPI is the UNODC-implemented BADILL program.

### **Case Study: Helmand Food Zone Program (HFZ)**

The Helmand Food Zone (HFZ), active between 2008 and 2012, was an Afghan government initiative that combined ALP, public information, and eradication. The ALP component was funded by USAID and the governments of U.K. and Denmark. INL funded the eradication component through the GLE and PEF programs.<sup>76</sup>

The HFZ program targeted low-income farmers in a specific fertile region along the Helmand River, which comprised the “food zone” of the program. The HFZ provided high-quality seed and technical assistance in return for farmers’ signed pledges not to grow poppy.<sup>77</sup> Eradication was carried out against non-compliant farmers, generally in the spring, in time to plant licit replacement crops. The HFZ, under former Governor Mangal, cooperated with the PEF on eradication in the wider province while PEF operations tended to focus on areas along the outside edge of the food zone.<sup>78</sup> The HFZ also benefited from a heavy presence of ISAF coalition forces.

The public information component aimed to explain to locals, via radio, television, pamphlets, and billboards, details of the HFZ program, its incentives, and the risk of eradication. The program intentionally targeted tribal elders, or *shuras* (councils). This campaign was like other INL campaigns in that it included a moral argument against opium production. While the Islamic faith, to which most Afghans

adhere, prohibits the consumption of intoxicants, moral appeals have not been strong enough to reduce cultivation.

Eradication peaked in Helmand in 2009 at 4,119 hectares under the combined efforts of GLE and PEF, although eradication efforts averaged around 2,000 hectares per year through 2012.<sup>79</sup> However, eradication was dangerous; over the life of the program, there were 300 casualties, 139 of which were deaths, due primarily to attacks on eradication teams by locals and others trying to protect opium crops.<sup>80</sup>

Under the HFZ, total poppy cultivation in Helmand fell from 103,590 hectares in 2008 to 63,307 hectares in 2011, according to the UNODC.<sup>81</sup> The program showed contemporaneous success, especially within the fertile zone, where many farmers established long-term vine and orchard crops. However, poppy production increased in areas just outside of this zone. By 2013, increased poppy production outside the fertile zone had completely negated the gains achieved within the fertile zone.<sup>82</sup> Affordable well-drilling services allowed farmers to cultivate former desert areas into poppy fields.<sup>83</sup> After the HFZ program ended in 2012 and ISAF presence diminished, poppy cultivation increased in by 34 percent in Helmand province and by 50 percent in the food zone.<sup>84</sup> In 2017, Helmand province had the highest amount of area under poppy cultivation in Afghanistan.

USAID is currently funding a Kandahar Food Zone program, which focuses solely on alternative livelihood development, infrastructure rehabilitation, and capacity building within the Afghan government. The program has no eradication components or stipulations.<sup>85</sup> A midterm evaluation of the project reported mixed results in curbing opium cultivation and suggested that without eradication, which the Afghan government threatened but

rarely or never conducted, the disincentives for growing opium were not strong enough.<sup>86</sup>

### **Why isn't this working? Parsing out Elements**

The previous section outlined several examples of the pitfalls of counternarcotics programs. The next section will look at the overall counternarcotics strategy for Afghanistan to determine whether the failures of counternarcotics stem primarily from poor planning and implementation or from an inherently flawed strategy. Without addressing these issues, it will be difficult to develop programs with concrete goals and realistic timelines. Developing a new response will require assessing just how much of a threat opium poses to Afghanistan and the international community.

### **Supply and Demand: Economics and the Global Market for Heroin**

Economic approaches to drug control generally bolster and reaffirm the experiences of counternarcotics in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan—a country that suffers from significant corruption—interdiction may have served to vertically integrate the drug economy and strengthen criminal organizations, leaving only those with connections in government.<sup>87</sup> It has also driven up the price of opium, which increases revenue for criminals and insurgents.<sup>88</sup> As a result of unstable conditions in Afghanistan, particularly the lack of stable governance, Afghanistan is the lowest-cost producer of heroin globally and will likely remain so unless and until a crisis creates similar conditions elsewhere.<sup>89</sup>

A body of academic research casts doubt on the effectiveness of supply-side measures, which seek to eliminate drug production or trafficking, on reducing drug use. A 1994 RAND study found that providing drug treatment to cocaine users, a demand-side approach, was 10 times more

effective at reducing drug abuse than interdiction and 23 times more effective than coca eradication in source countries. Some researchers argue that because heroin is more addictive than cocaine, it is reasonable to assume that demand may also be relatively inelastic with respect to price and that supply side measures will be equally ineffective at raising prices enough to reduce demand.<sup>90</sup> Another study has produced evidence that this is true at least for heroin addicts, if not more casual users, who tend to be the biggest consumers of heroin.<sup>91</sup> Other experts argue that while heroin demand is somewhat elastic, supply side methods do not reliably increase drug prices enough to affect consumer behavior.<sup>92</sup>

Several policy studies that highlight the failures of international supply-side approaches to counternarcotics in Afghanistan argue for approaching the illegal drug problem from the demand side instead. Specifically, the shortcomings of counternarcotics policy are used to support a case for legalization or decriminalization of heroin use, particularly in consumer countries.<sup>93</sup> However, there is limited statistical evidence to assess either approach, and the political capital required for such a dramatic change in drug law is limited. The United States and the UN continue to advocate strict prohibition and are unlikely to change course.

The impact of reducing opium cultivation in Afghanistan on heroin use globally would be relatively small unless opium was eliminated quickly and completely. Otherwise, production would likely start up in a nearby country, potentially Tajikistan, to meet demand. Based on this body of literature, seeking to eliminate opium in Afghanistan will not reliably or significantly affect the world heroin trade and abuse problem.

## **The Narcotics and the Terrorism or Insurgency “Nexus”**

Program reports by both the INL and the DOD admit that interdiction and eradication efforts have not significantly affected income for the Taliban, meaning that the efforts have failed in one of their primary aims.<sup>94</sup> Yet, counternarcotics programs may not be a fitting response to an insurgency, even if the insurgency clearly benefits from narcotics.

Years ago, the Taliban began moving away from its ideological foundations and became more of a profit-seeking, criminal organization.<sup>95</sup> It is widely accepted that the Taliban generates significant revenue by instituting a tax on the opium harvest, generally a 10-percent tax, opportunistically taxing opium labs within their territory, and taking advantage of other encounters as opium and opiates move throughout the country and eventually cross the border.<sup>96</sup> The DOD calculates the effect of the current air interdiction campaign on Taliban revenues based on a DEA estimate that the Taliban takes a 20-percent cut from drug trafficking organizations.<sup>97</sup> As for the Taliban’s total profits, the UN Security Council estimated in 2012 that the Taliban generates \$100 to \$155 million each year—about a quarter of the organization’s annual income—from the illicit drug trade.<sup>98</sup> 2017 DOD estimates suggest that opium provides the majority of the Taliban’s revenue, but the agency has not provided a specific ratio or total.<sup>99</sup>

As is inherent in most insurgencies, the Taliban also competes with the Afghan government for popular support in a contest to out-govern the legitimate Afghan government. There are conflicting accounts of if or how much the Taliban influences farmers to grow poppy over other crops. However, most accounts seem to indicate that the influence is largely based on positive incentives, not force or coercion.<sup>100</sup>

Protecting poppies—and livelihoods—from eradication is a means of gaining popular support.<sup>101</sup> When the United States was directly assisting eradication, U.S. strategists hoped that eradication could be targeted and timed to have the smallest effect on the local economy, affecting only the Taliban and pushing them to rely on predatory income-generation activities, like kidnapping and ransom, and alienate the populous against them.<sup>102</sup> Yet, as was shown in the case studies section, this did not always play out in the field. Even with large numbers of ISAF forces present, development programs in place, and active eradication and interdiction taking place, the Taliban were able to persist.

Today, given the insecurity in many Afghan provinces and the limited capacity of Afghan law enforcement, it is hard to see how it might be possible to destroy or subvert enough of the large and active opium trade as a primary step in defeating the Taliban. Eliminating poppy cultivation entirely would hurt the Taliban financially, but it might not be a fatal blow. Indeed, insurgents and terrorists often switch to other activities, such as illegal logging, mining, or trafficking of other goods.<sup>103</sup> The Taliban currently profits from illegal mining and mineral smuggling, particularly the mining and smuggling of lapis lazuli.<sup>104</sup> However, whether these alternatives would prove as lucrative as opium is uncertain. Lastly, it must be noted that the Taliban can levy taxes on any economic activity, including economic development programs, in areas it controls.<sup>105</sup> In sum, the Taliban’s income sources are diverse enough that it could adapt to sharp reductions in opium revenue by switching to other activities.

As for the connection between international terrorism and opium, there is a lack of publicly-available evidence to support any direct, operational alliance between drug traffickers and international

terrorists in Afghanistan.<sup>106</sup> While the threat that the Taliban poses to stability in Afghanistan should not be downplayed, the Taliban's reliance on opium as a funding source seems to be exaggerated. When this conceptual link is broken, the risk of changing the current INL counternarcotics strategy becomes more acceptable. Attempting quick and sizable decreases in opium production has sometimes come at the expense of broader development.<sup>107</sup>

### **Assessing Policy Options**

Over the past several years, three unconventional policy options have been repeatedly proposed for Afghanistan, including legalizing the crop to produce medicine, buying up the entire opium crop each season, or creating a subsidy to elevate the price of licit crops to make them competitive with opium. These options are unlikely to prove successful. Producing licit opium would pit Afghanistan against more developed countries like Turkey and Australia, which enjoy a significant comparative advantage in the market. Regulating licit production or subsidizing other crops would require capacity that the Afghan government does not have. Buying up the crop would create perverse incentives that would increase the value of opium and lead to more production in the medium- to long-term. The following options are the most feasible and most likely to support the broader U.S. strategy in Afghanistan.

### **Eliminate INL counternarcotics in Afghanistan**

If counternarcotics programming in Afghanistan has so far failed to produce any measurable success, and if most of the opium exported from Afghanistan is consumed in Europe, Russia, and Iran, then eliminating the programs entirely would not result in any major public health or security concern to the United States.

This option may save money and minimize the U.S. presence overseas, but it may also give the appearance of defeat. Doing nothing about the opium problem simply looks bad. It may also be unpopular with members of Congress, who may feel compelled to act on the opioid epidemic in the United States. Even if congressional and executive support for this strategy is unlikely, the proposal still serves as a useful counterfactual. The elimination of current U.S. funding for counternarcotics will not result in an explosion of opium poppy cultivation. Indeed, cultivation is already spiking. Nor will the elimination of counternarcotics funding result in the Afghan government's collapse. There is room to expand INL's current course while eliminating the ineffective elements of its strategy. To be sure, the Department of State could continue to condone Afghan-led counternarcotics programs without providing any significant financial support.

### **Increase focus on law and justice, especially money laundering and financial crimes**

Interdiction within Afghanistan often aims at easier targets, such as low-level traffickers who lack political connections or resources to pay bribes. Prosecution of senior government officials in corruption, drug trafficking, or money laundering cases is very rare. Afghanistan's ability to process even routine cases remains limited. A SIGAR audit published in 2009 showed that the detention facilities at the Counter Narcotics Justice Center (CNJC) reached capacity shortly after opening.<sup>108</sup> According to a 2017 survey by the NGO Integrity Watch Afghanistan, Afghan citizens view the judiciary as the most corrupt institution in Afghanistan.<sup>109</sup>

Afghan interdiction efforts and money-laundering investigations are suffering from low funding levels for U.S. law enforcement assistance. Domestic laws

and regulations are generally lax, especially with respect to banking, and the Afghan central bank has limited capacity for core functions.<sup>110</sup> Interdiction often focuses on dismantling, or at least hampering, traffickers and criminal organizations and seizing drugs before they are trafficked. Despite the earlier-discussed difficulties of impacting the illicit market, the approach still offers benefits. Namely, conducting investigations and prosecuting criminals builds capacity within the Afghan government to implement laws. This same capacity is needed to eventually tackle other important issues like corruption within the Afghan government.

In an assessment of the Afghanistan regime's performance against the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Forty Recommendations, which set forth a strategy to fight money laundering, terrorist financing, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the IMF found that while Afghanistan has made progress toward creating a functioning legal regime, much remains to be done. Lax regulations with respect to corporate ownership and banking make money laundering relatively easy, while limited capacity and funding hamper the Afghan government's ability to investigate financial crimes.<sup>111</sup> The collapse of Kabul Bank in 2010 and the ensuing scandal exposed the weakness of and deep-seated corruption within the regulatory system. The owners of Kabul Bank, many of whom represented the political elite, diverted and stole roughly \$935 million worth of assets.<sup>112</sup>

Afghanistan adopted an Anti-Money Laundering (AML) law in 2014 and made significant progress toward creating an AML/CFT strategy in 2017. However, the government still has significant trouble supervising and regulating banks and other financial institutions.<sup>113</sup> In addition, most of the money generated by the narcotics trade

is never circulated within the Afghan economy. Instead, it is laundered through Dubai and other countries.<sup>114</sup>

The INL could play a larger role in assisting capacity-building and financial crimes investigations, which are notoriously labor- and resource-intensive. Money laundering cases often span multiple countries, corporate entities, and time periods. While Afghanistan and the United States cooperate on individual investigations, there is no mutual legal assistance treaty or a bilateral extradition treaty in place.<sup>115</sup> Extradition treaties are usually difficult to negotiate, especially given the difference in penal codes between the United States and other countries. For example, capital punishment has been a consistent roadblock.<sup>116</sup> However, mutual legal assistance primarily involves exchanging information, and as such may be easier to achieve than an extradition treaty while providing great benefits to Afghan law enforcement.

### **Improve process for counternarcotics, increase funding**

Improved benchmarking, goal setting, and oversight have a significant role to play in future INL programs. One element will be moving away from using hectares of opium cultivation or eradication as measures of success. Program management improvements will not be effective if the strategy and aims of a program are misguided or suboptimal. This paper has shown that social, political, and economic conditions in Afghanistan and the inherent features of the global heroin trade—not funding restrictions or poor program implementation—are the primary issues. Thus, management improvements and funding increases will only be effective if the INL revises its foundational goals and strategies.

## **Seek cooperation with Iran or Russia on trafficking and drug use**

About 40 percent of the opiates leaving Afghanistan are trafficked through Iran, either for domestic consumption or for transit to Russia and Europe.<sup>117</sup> Both Russia and Iran have criticized the United States for its failures to halt opium production in Afghanistan. While Iran and Russia heavily favor eradication in Afghanistan, there is room for the United States to shift the focus to cooperating on interdiction, law enforcement, and demand-side measures. However, each country views the issue of drug use and treatment very differently, and a consensus on any approach will be difficult.

In Iran, the use of opium and a heroin product called “crack,” or “kerack,” has been labeled as an epidemic, and the Iranian government estimates that 2 million of its 75 million citizens are addicted.<sup>118</sup> While Iran strictly enforces drug laws and levies harsh sentences on traffickers and dealers, it allows drug users to seek treatment without risking criminal prosecution. Detox, treatment (methadone, naltrexone, etc.), and counseling services are available at affordable prices. Yet, rates of relapse remain high.<sup>119</sup>

Russia consumes the largest volume of Afghan-produced opium. Russian officials estimate that almost 6 percent of the total population is addicted to drugs or uses drugs regularly. However, addiction treatment options in Russia are severely limited. Methadone treatment is not permitted. Indeed, Russia sees drug use as a moral issue and treats drug users much the same as drug dealers and traffickers.<sup>120</sup> Russia is also an important transit country in the international drug trade; criminal organizations move money and heroin through Russia and Russian-controlled territories. Police and officials often accept

bribes in exchange for ignoring smuggling or dealing.<sup>121</sup>

Russia-Afghanistan relations have improved slightly over recent years, and Russia now provides some development aid to Afghanistan.<sup>122</sup> Russia is primarily concerned with the international threat posed by the Islamic State (IS) and drug trafficking organizations across Central Asia, which Russia does not conflate with the Taliban. Instead, Russian experts believe that negotiating with the Taliban to bring peace may also solve the drug problem.<sup>123</sup>

Despite these constraints and differing viewpoints, there are mutual interests that the United States can build upon with Russia and Iran. Combating financial crimes may be a starting point. While arguing for changes in domestic drug treatment policy in Russia is bold, if not futile, and agreeing on an approach to peace talks with the Taliban may be contentious, both Russia and Iran have already made commitments to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an intergovernmental initiative to combat financial crimes and terrorist financing. Russia became a member in 2003, and Iran made a commitment to join in 2016.

Formulating a cooperative response to the opium problem with either of these countries will be a challenge. However, without engagement, each country will continue to advocate for its own interests in Afghanistan, and their actions may run counter to U.S. approaches. As with U.S. lawmakers, politicians in Iran and Russia will need to be convinced that eradication and strong-arm approaches simply do not work, and that current and future U.S. strategy is based on sound evidence and years of trial-and-error in Afghanistan.

### Comparative Analysis of Policy Options

U.S. policymakers have a range of options for future counternarcotics funding for INL, which are summarized and compared against U.S. goals in Figure 4.

New strategies must be informed by previous experience, in which almost every logical option to eliminate or reduce opium production has failed.

**Figure 3: Cross-Comparison of Policy Options and U.S. Goals**

<b>Policy Option</b>	<b>Goal 1: Decrease Afghanistan Opium Production</b>	<b>Goal 2: Improve Security / COIN</b>	<b>Goal 3: U.S. Political Support</b>	<b>Goal 4: Rule of Law in Afghanistan</b>	<b>Goal 5: Public Health in Afghanistan</b>
<b>Continue current funding and strategy (status quo)</b>	Likely no effect	No effect	Favorable	Harm, current levels insufficient	No effect
<b>Increase funding for current strategy</b>	Likely no effect	May improve	Potentially favorable	Risk of increased corruption	No effect
<b>Eliminate GLE, maintain other approaches</b>	Long-term decrease	Improve	Favorable	Improve	No effect
<b>Abandon all counter-narcotics programming</b>	Increase in short term	Harm	Unlikely to garner support	Harm	Harm
<b>Successfully engage Russia and Iran</b>	Unknown	Improve	Little to no U.S. funding required, only political capital	Improve	Unknown
<b>Increase funding for Law Enforcement</b>	Short-term: no effect Long-term: decrease	Improve	No automatic support, but not unlikely	Improve	No effect
<b>Increase Addiction Treatment, Prevention</b>	Decrease only if stigma around production increases	Likely no effect	Favorable	Will build Ministry of Public Health capacity	Improve

As shown in Figure 4, none of the current options for INL will produce significant short-term reductions in opium production or opium supply in Afghanistan. Engaging Iran and Russia will cost only political capital, and the two countries would ideally assist Afghanistan in a way that complements U.S. efforts. Other counternarcotics support has the effect of improving the capacity of the Afghan government to provide reliable services to its people—capacity that is essential in a situation where an insurgency violently contests legitimate rule.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the prior analysis, the set of options presented below will best allow the United States to pursue its overall strategy in Afghanistan:

**Eliminate the Governor Led Eradication (GLE) Program.** While the GLE is only a small item on the INL budget, the program's elimination will signal a comprehensive shift to alternative approaches. INL should ensure that any future successor to the Good Performers Initiative (GPI) does not focus primarily on eradication.

**Increase funding for law enforcement and other Rule of Law initiatives,** as administered by INL, USAID, DEA, and other agencies. Focusing on the judicial process helps develop capacity to bring even difficult cases to court and increases the capacity of institutions to uphold the law. Law enforcement should aim to target government corruption and high-level traffickers by building strong cases.

**Continue to support addiction treatment and prevention in Afghanistan,** aim to improve public health, and seek to expand the capacity of the Ministry of Public Health. This, like every facet of the reconstruction effort, is a large and difficult task that will, at best, produce slow and steady progress.

**Engage Russia and Iran to develop cooperative approaches to the opium problem.** Managing the differences of opinion and viewpoints on the drug problem will be difficult, but if any cooperative approach could be developed, especially on the demand side, this may have significant effects on the international drug market with limited financial input from the United States.

**Continue current levels of funding for Alternative Development,** as these programs will help counteract the potentially harmful effects and collateral damage of the new air interdiction campaign and the increased fighting between Afghan government forces and insurgents. **Funding and support for eradication should be eliminated for the time being.** Eradication can only work in areas with security, good governance, and relatively low corruption—none of which are reliably present anywhere in Afghanistan.

Admittedly, success in this approach may be harder to measure than with previous approaches. There is no simple metric for good governance. Eradication and interdiction have a fundamental appeal to policymakers in that they can produce immediate and tangible results. Governments worldwide publicize drug busts and provide the number of kilograms seized or the hectares of illicit crops destroyed. While this may be good for public relations, the preceding analysis in this paper has shown that focusing on these policies in the context of Afghanistan has been expensive and has often had the unintended consequence of undermining governance and counterinsurgency campaigns. Farmers in Afghanistan are still choosing to cultivate opium poppy, and Afghanistan still produces most of the world's supply of opiates. Current policies have not cut off funding for the insurgency to any noticeable extent.



As for the global opium problem, it is unlikely that the United States, even with increased funding and a herculean effort, can wipe out opium entirely from Afghanistan in the foreseeable future. If there is a demand for heroin and other opiates, and if poor farmers stand to profit the most from opium as opposed to licit crops, production will continue. The experience in Afghanistan shows that while eradication and interdiction can produce short-term reductions in supply, these effects

will not have lasting and reliable impacts on the international drug market. Alternative development programs, if well-developed and well-executed, can affect change over the medium- to long-term. As Afghanistan improves its governance and law enforcement capabilities and achieves a modest level of development that offers economic alternatives, opium production will decrease. The best solutions, for now, are ones that have little to do with the opium itself.

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# The Obama Administration and the Crimea Crisis

By Rachael Gosnell

The post-Soviet era has been marked by significant political, economic, and military tensions between Russia and Ukraine. Throughout the 1990s in particular, both nations attempted to maximize their gains while searching for a new identity. Domestic instability, lack of democratic institutions, and ongoing economic and political conflicts set Ukraine and Russia on a collision course that culminated in the annexation of Crimea. The Euromaidan movement, named for the sympathies of the protestors who had gathered at the Maidan square in Kyiv, erupted in protest over the refusal of Russian-backed Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich to sign a pending European Union Association Agreement. The Euromaidan protests drew a swift reaction from the Russian Federation. Russian President Vladimir Putin seized upon the opportunity and rapidly dispatched troops into the Crimean Peninsula and eastern Ukraine.

The Obama Administration faced a difficult dilemma of how to best respond to the escalating crisis. This paper will examine the decision-making process of issuing three Executive Orders and significant US economic sanctions targeted at Russia while providing robust economic assistance to Ukraine. It will also examine the Obama Administration's attempts at building a consensus for action within the

international community, particularly with the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies as well as the diplomatic and military concerns throughout that process. While the Administration was largely effective at building consensus, it failed to ultimately achieve the goal of restoring Crimea to Ukraine.

## Turbulent Past

Ukraine's transition in the post-Soviet world has been tumultuous. The country has grappled with the dilemma of, choosing between allegiance to Moscow or reorienting West. To understand the complexities of the Ukraine-Russia relationship, particularly in reference to Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, it is imperative to first understand the history of the two countries. In determining appropriate actions to take in response to the Russian annexation of Crimea, the foreign-policy team of the Obama Administration was first compelled to take into consideration the region's complicated past. As such, this paper will provide an overview of the key elements of this turbulent history before examining the deliberations and decisions of the Obama Administration in handling the Crimean crisis.

At the NATO Bucharest Summit in April 2008, Russian President Vladimir Putin allegedly remarked to President Bush, "You don't understand, George, that Ukraine is not even a state.

What is Ukraine? Part of its territories is Eastern Europe, but the greater part is a gift from us.” (Marson) His remarks appeared to be a harbinger of what would come and also reflect the confused identity of the Ukrainian state and people. Ukrainian, Russian, and Belarusian cultures all trace their foundations to the Kyevan Rus, an early empire consisting of land from present day Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. While the first Slavic state reached its peak by the early 11<sup>th</sup> century with a vibrant trade in Europe and with the Byzantine Empire, it was unable to ward off the Mongol conquests (Kubicek 26). By the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the lands of the empire had been absorbed by neighboring powers of Poland and Lithuania. Yet there continued to be unrest while under these powers; Ukrainian hero Bohdan Khmelnytsky led an uprising against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the mid-seventeenth century that would give rise to a new Ukrainian state (Doroshenko 231).

Seeking an ally in the region, Khmelnytsky pledged allegiance to the Russian Tsar in the 1654 Treaty of Pereiaslav, in exchange for military protection (Kubicek 41). War between Russia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth resulted in internal Ukrainian divisions, with the lands in the east falling under Russian imperial control much earlier than those to the west of the Dnieper River. A small portion of the west, the region Galicia, was acquired by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – this region would remain outside of the Russian empire until absorbed by the USSR after World War II (Kubicek .66).

Eastern Ukraine emerged as an economically powerful region under

Catharine the Great, with abundant coal and iron deposits. The Tsar made attempts to ban the Ukrainian language in favor of Russian to solidify regional influence, but rural parts of the country continued to follow Ukrainian cultural traditions (Conant). A division within Ukraine emerged; western Ukraine was under the shifting control of European powers and tended to be more Ukrainian speaking with heavier Catholic influences, while the east was mostly Russian speaking and Orthodox. These divisions account in part for the modern-day differences in allegiances, following similar fault lines (Oliker 4).

Following the rise of the Bolsheviks and communist revolution of 1917, much of Ukraine experienced a brutal civil war before becoming a Soviet Republic in the early 1920s. Though initial Soviet policy permitted Ukrainian to remain the official state language, the 1930s witnessed a shift to russification. Under Stalin, Ukrainians faced a massive famine that resulted in the death of at least four to five million (some sources suggest as high as seven million) during the 1930s (Ellman 841). Russians were subsequently sent to repopulate the East following the massive losses. These ‘imported’ citizens generally had few ties to the region and lacked knowledge of Ukrainian language or cultures, giving rise to even greater Russian influence in the eastern part of the country.

The Ukrainian territory expanded westward following the 1939 invasion of Poland by Germany and the USSR, but Ukraine soon found itself under Nazi occupation as alliances shifted. An insurgent army fought for Ukrainian independence from both the Germans and Soviets during World War II and Ukrainians suffered extensive casualties,

estimated to be as many as eight million soldiers and civilians (Kubicek 111). More than 200,000 Crimean Tatars were deported to Siberia and Central Asia by Stalin after accusations of collaborating with Nazis in 1944. Defeat of the Nazis resulted in a conclusive annexation of western Ukrainian territory by the Soviets in 1945. The Ukraine Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) became a founding member of the United Nations and an integral part of the Soviet Union due to the tremendous agricultural and mineral resources of the state. In an unusual move, Soviet Premier Nikita Kruschchev transferred the Crimean Peninsula to Ukraine as a gift in 1954 – a controversial move at the time and one that would establish the eventual basis for the Crimea annexation by the Putin government (Kubicek 113).

While a covert opposition to Soviet rule was present in Ukraine throughout the Cold War, it was largely unsuccessful until the protests of 1990 brought an end to the Soviet backed government of Vitaliy Masol. On 19 November 1990, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) and Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (RSFSR) signed the *Treaty on the Basic Principles of Relations between the Russian Federation of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Ukrainian SSR*, fostering the development of ‘good neighborly relations.’ (Sorokowski 319)

### An Independent Ukraine

A 1991 Ukrainian referendum yielded a 90% vote in favor of independence from the dissolving USSR, establishing a new Ukrainian nation on 1 January 1992. The state was founded with democratic aspirations, but would be plagued with corruption and dissent regarding the future of the new nation.

In December 1991, *The Commonwealth of Independent States Agreement* addressed territorial integrity of member states, declaring that “the high contracting parties recognize and respect one another’s territorial integrity and the inviolability of existing borders within the commonwealth” (Garnett 58) and seemingly required recognition of Ukrainian borders conditional to membership in the CIS security institution. The *Treaty between Ukraine and the Russian Federation for the Further Development of International Relations* further shaped interstate relations and was signed in Dagomys on 23 June 1992. Of note, following the Ukrainian declaration of independence, Vladimir Lukin, then Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Foreign Economic Relations of the Russian Federation (and later Russian ambassador to the US) presented a draft resolution calling for the annulment of the 1954 resolution which placed Crimea under Ukraine’s control. Though the resolution failed to achieve significant support due to the larger debate over the division of the Black Sea Fleet, it would serve as an indicator of the future desires of Russia to reincorporate the peninsula (Zaborsky).

A pressing concern emerged over the large nuclear stockpiles that Ukraine hosted as part of the Soviet Union. Concerns of nuclear proliferation led the United States and Great Britain to arrange a deal with Russia and Ukraine to eliminate the Ukrainian nuclear weapons stockpile – which was large enough to earn the nation the brief ranking of third largest global nuclear power. The 5 December 1994 Budapest Memorandum established a transfer of all nuclear arms from Ukraine to Russia,



in exchange for the US, UK, and Russia reaffirming “their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine.” (Budapest Memorandum 3). This agreement further reiterated the commitment to the principles of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Final Act and to refrain from economic coercion designed to “subordinate to their own interest the exercise by Ukraine of the rights inherent in its sovereignty and thus to secure advantages of any kind.” (Budapest Memorandum 3)

The democratic constitution and Ukrainian currency, hryvna, were both adopted in 1996. Yet Ukraine-Russia relations remained tense, particularly over concern for the Black Sea Fleet and Crimea. Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma remarked, “Not everyone in Russia has so far learned to perceive Ukraine as a sovereign state” in December 1996 (Kuchma 2). Intense negotiations finally led to signing of the *Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation* in Kyiv on 31 May 1997, which reiterated “close historic ties and the relationship of friendship and cooperation between the peoples of Ukraine and Russia.” This Friendship Treaty, stemming from nearly six years of negotiations, was to remain in effect for ten years, with an automatic renewal option at ten-year increments if neither party submitted a written request for termination. Article 2 of the Treaty highlighted the need to “respect each other’s territorial integrity, and confirm the inviolability of the borders existing between them.” (Sorokowski 329)

Ukraine and Russia further signed three treaties in 1997 that

determined the status of the Black Sea Fleet. While Moscow received most of the warships, it agreed to pay Ukraine \$526M in compensation. Ukraine would permit the leasing of Crimean naval facilities to Russia’s fleet for an annual fee of \$97M, renewed in 2010 with an expiration date of 2042. Admiral Viktor Kravchenko, Commander of the Ukrainian Navy at the time, explained that while Russia would gain control over all of Sevastopol’s four principal bays, the Black Sea Fleet would only maintain exclusive use of three bays for the duration of the lease (Kravchenko 4). This agreement further permitted stationing up to 25,000 troops in Crimea, though with specific stipulations that they must “respect sovereignty of Ukraine, honor its legislation and preclude interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine.” (Kimball)

On 9 July 1997, President Leonid Kuchma joined NATO leaders in Madrid to sign the *Charter on a Distinctive NATO-Ukraine Partnership*. While not accession to NATO, Ukraine sought to solidify its identity as a European state. Pro-Western parties within the country urged for further cooperation with the West, particularly economic ties with the European Union. President Kuchma declared that Ukraine sought “to integrate into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures, to establish gradually a special partnership with the European Union and NATO.” (Shcherbak 6) Russia issued a swift rebuke to the prospect of Ukraine ever joining NATO, even as it agreed to establish the Russia-NATO Council.

### Conflicted Identity

Ukraine continued to struggle with its identity and relationships with both the East and West. Election fraud in

the 2004 presidential race sparked a massive popular protest over the election of Viktor Yanukovich, favored by the corrupt elite and East, rather than the pro-democracy candidate Viktor Yushenko. Nonpartisan exit polls had given Yushenko a significant lead, with 52% compared to Yanukovich's 43% (Karatnycky). The official declaration of Yanukovich's victory launched the Orange Revolution and Yushenko was ultimately declared the winner after a second run-off. The victory symbolized new democratic and pro-West reforms for Ukraine, though they were never truly realized. Corruption, a stagnated economy, and weak governance remained as barriers. Ukrainian political elite balanced the desire for normalized relations with Russia with the economic benefits of closer ties with the European Union. In 2010, Yanukovich defeated Yulia Tymoshenko (48.95% to 45.57%) to regain his leadership of the country; Tymoshenko was soon imprisoned on dubious charges. Political tensions within the country began to build and Ukraine's sudden withdrawal from the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement in November 2013 – due to pressure from Russia – launched the Euromaidan movement (Larrabee 1). Protests and violence spread, primarily in western and central Ukraine, with hundreds of thousands of protestors in Kyiv.

The Obama Administration carefully watched the Euromaidan protests, with an eye in particular on the Russian reaction, given their strong support of Yanukovich. In late January and early February 2014, Secretary of State John Kerry and Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland traveled to Europe to discuss global issues, and the Ukraine crisis was their top priority.

Kerry and Nuland met with counterparts in Berlin on January 31st before attending the Munich Security Conference. In early February, Nuland traveled to Kyiv to meet with government officials, opposition leaders, members of civil society, and business leaders, seeking to encourage agreement on a new government while planning for Ukraine's future. The Secretary of State's Office of the Spokesperson noted the goal was also to fulfill "the aspirations of the Ukrainian people for democracy, respect for human rights, European integration and economic growth" ("Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland Travel")

The Obama Administration continued to encourage the de-escalation of tensions in Ukraine, seeking a "peaceful, non-violent solution" to Ukraine's political crisis (Harf). Deputy Secretary of State William Burns, along with representatives from the Department of the Treasury and the National Economic Council, arranged to travel to Kyiv on 25-26<sup>th</sup> of February to further reiterate the need for free and fair presidential elections and critical reforms necessary to "restore Ukraine's political and economic health." ("Deputy Secretary of State William Burns Travels") This latter focus was the mission of the Department of the Treasury and NEC representatives, who also met their counterparts from the EU and IMF to determine the necessary financial support for the new government while it sought to reform the economy. The goal was a "Ukraine that is democratic, sovereign, prosperous and free to choose its own future." ("Deputy Secretary of State William Burns Travels")

Realizing that escalating protests and violence would be insurmountable,

Yanukovich fled to Russia on 25 February 2014. A new government, under interim President Olexander Turchynov and acting Prime Minister Arseny Yatseniuk, was appointed until elections could be held in May 2014. Russia refused to recognize this new government, fearing its potential for a more pro-West approach. As Zbigniew Brzezinski once noted, “without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire” (Brzezinski 46). Given the deep history and political, economic, and military tensions between Russia and Ukraine, Russia seized upon the opportunity to further exert influence and attempted to shift Ukraine from its increasingly pro-Western stance. Putin quickly recognized that the turmoil presented a chance to bring Crimea, and possibly eastern Ukraine, back into the Russian sphere of influence (Treisman 47).

### Crimean Annexation

Given its historical and military importance to Russia – and the Russian view that Crimea had been inappropriately given to Ukraine in 1954 – Russia was determined to regain control over the peninsula. Further, Russia soon demonstrated that it was willing to engage in a new, hybrid warfare to achieve its aims. While eastern Ukraine experienced an influx of Russian separatists, Crimea provided a particularly compelling target to the Russians. Crimean voters had only barely (54%) supported Ukrainian independence in the December 1991 referendum (Zaborsky). The Crimean parliament had attempted to declare its independence on 5 May 1992, voting the next day for dual citizenship with Russia. Diplomatic maneuvering from Kyiv resulted in a compromise with the

adoption of the *Act on Division of Powers Between Authorities of Ukraine and Republic of Crimea*, granting some autonomy on social and economic policies (Zaborsky). While tensions between Crimea and Kyiv had deescalated since the approval of autonomous status to Crimea, Russians took advantage of the previous discontent and seized the opportunity to reclaim the peninsula amidst fears over Crimea’s future and, most importantly, the Black Sea Fleet based at leased facilities in Sevastapol.

Following the unrest stoked by the Euromaidan protests and subsequent collapse of the Yanukovich government, the Crimean Peninsula was quickly flooded with Russian-speaking military men. Though the Putin regime initially denied Russian involvement, suggesting instead that they were local defense militias, the men were generally accepted to be Russian reservists with some active Russian elite special forces, known locally as *zelonyye chelovechki* (green men) or *zelonyye lyudishki* (little green men) (Haines). Crimea was effectively cut off from Ukraine by these pro-Russian soldiers and Spatsnaz units, who then took over the Supreme Council of Crimea, i.e. the Crimean Parliament (Galeotti, 4).

### Western Response

The Russian involvement was alarming to US and European leaders. Secretary of State John Kerry and Assistant Secretary Nuland travelled to Kyiv on 4 March to meet with senior representatives of the interim Ukrainian government, leaders of the Ukrainian Parliament (Rada), and members of civil society. Secretary Kerry reaffirmed the United States’ support for “Ukrainian sovereignty, independence, territorial

integrity, and the right of the Ukrainian people to determine their own future, without outside interference or provocation.” (Psaki) Kerry then traveled to Paris on 5 March to host a meeting with United Kingdom Foreign Secretary, William Hague, and Ukrainian Acting Foreign Minister, Andriy Deschchysia to discuss the Budapest Memorandum. The Memorandum, responsible for Ukraine relinquishing its massive stockpile of Soviet nuclear weapons, had established obligations for the signatories to refrain from the “threat or use of force against Ukraine’s territorial integrity” (Budapest Memorandum). It further mandated that the US, UK, and Russia would consult fellow signatories if a situation arose which questioned the Memorandum commitments.

The Paris meeting demonstrated the Obama Administration’s commitment to the Memorandum and Russia was extended an invitation to attend. Yet the State Department was unsuccessful and expressed frustration when the Russian Federation declined to attend (“US/UK/Ukraine Press Statement”). The meeting instead focused on the steps necessary to restore Ukraine’s territorial integrity, calling for Russia to meet with Ukraine as the Budapest Memorandum bound them to do, though also advising that direct talks be facilitated by the international community. Secretary Kerry called for the deployment of international observers in Ukraine to address concerns of irregular forces, military activity, and fair treatment of all Ukrainians (State Department, 5 March 2014). These recommendations were in line with the Obama Administration’s goals for the region. While avoiding direct involvement, Obama and Kerry

recognized the need to demonstrate support to Ukraine in the light of suspected Russian intervention.

Intelligence reports confirmed the suspicions of increasing Russian involvement, particularly in Crimea. The State Department sought to highlight the false narrative being woven by Russia in an unconventional manner. They released a Top Ten list of “President Putin’s Fiction.” The battle of strategic communications had commenced. The State Department released a fact sheet which noted, “As Russia spins a false narrative to justify its illegal actions in Ukraine, the world has not seen such startling Russian fiction since Dostoyevsky wrote, ‘The formula ‘two times two equals five’ is not without its attractions’” (“US/UK/Ukraine Press Statement”). The statement launched into the ten most incredulous Russian claims, with an attempt at debunking each. Four of these were directly aimed at Russian actions in Crimea. US concerns were clearly rising over Russian intent for the peninsula.

The Obama Administration worked closely with allies on the Hill to keep them apprised of developments. On 5 March, Senator Coats (D-IN) introduced Senate Resolution 370, to support the territorial integrity of Ukraine and condemn Russian military aggression in Ukraine. The Resolution addressed known intelligence and reaffirmed commitment to President Obama’s actions, stating:

*Whereas, on February 26-27, 2014, armed men in unmarked military uniforms seized key strategic objects in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in Ukraine, including the building of the Crimean Parliament and airports; Whereas as of March 4, 2014, the Government of Ukraine confirms*

*that there are approximately 16,000 Russian troops occupying Crimea;*

*Whereas, on February 28, 2014, President Barack Obama stated that the United States is “deeply concerned by reports of military movements taken by the Russian Federation inside of Ukraine” and that it “would be a clear violation of Russia’s commitment to respect the independence and sovereignty and borders of Ukraine, and of international law;”* (Senate Resolution 370, 113<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session)

The bill further declared that armed force of the “Russian Federation have violated Ukrainian sovereignty, violated international law, threatened the stability of Ukraine and the European continent, and compelled the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to meet in emergency session.” It reiterated the intention to work with the President to respond “forcefully to the outrageous and dangerous misbehavior of the Government of the Russian Federation.” (Senate Resolution 370, 113<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session) It further resolved to strongly condemn the military incursion into Crimea, work urgently with the President to identify economic sanctions, formally expel Russia from the G-8, suspension of the Russia-NATO Council and expulsion of Russian military and diplomatic representation to NATO, work with OSCE to ensure appropriate monitors deployed to Ukraine, and urged the President to consider down-grading diplomatic representation with the Russian Federation. The bill was widely supported and co-sponsored by ten Senators, including Senators McCain and Graham; it was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations and guided US diplomatic efforts (Senate

Resolution 370, 113<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session).

On 6 March 2014, the Russian backed Crimean Parliament voted to join Russia despite the rising pressure from the international community. Though a referendum was set for ten days later, it became clear that Moscow was heavily involved in the announcement; the referendum would merely be a formality. The White House worked in close coordination with European allies – an important demonstration of resolve – to develop both sanctions and an aid package for Kyiv. The European Union quickly condemned Russian actions as illegal and support Ukraine’s territorial integrity. However, initial actions against Moscow were weaker than expected due to political pressure from economies that were interconnected with Russia, particularly because of their dependence on Russian oil and gas. Yet the EU warned of tougher steps if Russia did not comply.

The US had a stronger bargaining position than the Europeans, at least economically. President Obama held a one-hour phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin the same day, urging a diplomatic solution (de Carbonnel & Baker). Though this was the second phone call within a week, it had little effect on Putin’s ambitions (Swaine). President Obama opted to take bolder steps against Russia, issuing Executive Order 13660 on 6 March 2014. In a speech delivered that day, he declared, “I am confident that we are moving forward together, united in our determination to oppose actions that violate international law and to support the government and people of Ukraine.” He further stated that the “proposed referendum on the future of Crimea would violate the Ukrainian constitution

and violate international law.” (Obama ‘Statement by the President on Ukraine’) In both his statement and his signing of Executive Order 13660, the President clearly communicated a message of solidarity with European allies and adherence to the principles of international law. Yet he was also intent on providing the Russian Federation with an ability to de-escalate, given the tensions between Russia and the West were higher than at any point since the end of the Cold War.

Citing the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701), the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601), section 212f of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (8 U.S.C. 1182(f)), and section 301 of Title 3, United States Code, Executive Order 13660 stated:

I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, find that the actions and policies of persons including persons who have asserted governmental authority in the Crimean region without the authorization of the Government of Ukraine that undermine democratic processes and institutions in Ukraine; threaten its peace, security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and contribute to the misappropriation of its assets, constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, and I hereby declare a national emergency to deal with that threat.

President Obama ordered several immediate actions, to include: Section 1 – blocking property and interests that are in the United States and held by those persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury in consultation with the Secretary of State that were “responsible for or complicit in, or... engaged in...any of the following”:

(i) to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have engaged in, directly or indirectly, any of the following:

- (A) actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions in Ukraine;
- (B) actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, stability, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of Ukraine; or
- (C) misappropriation of state assets of Ukraine or of an economically significant entity in Ukraine;

(ii) to have asserted governmental authority over any part or region of Ukraine without the authorization of the Government of Ukraine;

(iii) to be a leader of an entity that has, or whose members have, engaged in any activity described in subsection (a)(i) or (a)(ii) of this section or of an entity whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to this order;

(iv) to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material,

or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of,  
any activity described in subsection (a)(i) or (a)(ii) of this section or  
any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to this order; or

(v) to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to this order.

Section 2 suspended unrestricted immigrant and nonimmigrant entry into the United States of persons meeting criteria in the above subsection 1a. Section 3 prohibited donations of the type specified in the IEEPA Section 203b(2) (50 U.S.C. 1702(b)(2); recognizing that such donations would impair the ability to deal with the national emergency declared. Section 4 detailed additional prohibitions, such as making any “contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of any person” pursuant to section 1. Section 5 prohibited any transaction attempting to evade or avoid any of the provisions. While Section 6 provided basic definitions, Section 7 addressed those “persons whose property and interests in property are blocked...who might have a constitutional presence in the United States” would not receive prior notification due to the instantaneous nature of transferring funds. Section 8 authorized the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of

State, to take actions necessary to carry out the Executive Order. Section 9 authorized the submission of reports to Congress by the Secretary of the Treasury (Executive Order 13660).

To reaffirm their support, the Senate passed *Senate Resolution 378 Condemning Illegal Russian Aggression in Ukraine* on 11 March. Introduced by Senator Durbin and co-sponsored by 32 Senators, the resolution adopted harsher language than Senate Resolution 370, remarking upon Russia’s “history of bullying neighboring countries in an attempt to rebuild Russian dominance on its borders” referencing the Georgia incursions in 2008, coercion of Yanukovych to compel him not to sign the EU Agreement, threats to Ukraine gas supply (including halting supplies in 2006 and 2009), and incursion of Russian forces into Ukraine and Crimea in early 2014. The resolution drew attention to Russia’s treaty violations, specifically the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, 1997 Friendship Treaty, 1975 Helsinki Final Act, and United Nations Charter Article 2. The Senate resolved to condemn the seizure of Crimea, demanding the immediate withdrawal of forces not permitted under Treaty agreements, and further urged the President to “use all appropriate economic elements...in coordination with United States allies... to strengthen the Ukrainian economy and protect the independence, sovereignty, and territorial and economic integrity of Ukraine” as well as appropriate economic and diplomatic measures, to include sanctions. It reiterated previous calls to suspend Russia from both the G-8 and military and diplomatic representation in NATO. Yet it held short of calling for military assistance, instead, supporting “enhanced security

cooperation with, and security assistance to, states in Central and Eastern Europe, including Ukraine” (Senate Resolution 378, 113 Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session).

President Obama had received full backing from the Senate in his actions against Russia. Congressional leaders agreed that a diplomatic and economic solution would be the best approach, rather than risk a military escalation. In an effort to demonstrate support and commitment to the Executive Order, Acting Ukrainian Prime Minister Yatsenyuk was invited to Washington (“Remarks by President Obama and Ukraine Prime Minister”). During the visit on 12 March, the Administration focused on specific steps to provide immediate assistance and reaffirm the Strategic Partnership. In terms of assistance, the Obama administration announced a multi-faceted approach. Congress was being engaged for a \$1 billion loan and immediate assistance. The Department of Defense would hold bilateral defense consultations in Kyiv to provide assistance to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, particularly focusing on Humanitarian Assistance. While initially troops and weapons were viewed as too volatile to send, for fear of provoking Russia, the DoD announced the provision of Meals Ready to Eat to Ukraine – a small but necessary step for a Ukrainian army struggling to address significant logistical challenges. However, the lack of substantial assistance was frustrating to the pro-Western Ukrainians.

In support of the EO, the Department of Commerce organized a US-Ukraine Business Summit to facilitate US capital investment in Ukraine as well as developing, along with the State Department, the

Innovation Council to accelerate entrepreneurship and advance legal infrastructure for innovation in Ukraine. Senior Commerce leaders would further travel to Kyiv to build relationships. The US Trade Representative’s Office, in addition to supporting the Innovation Council, would address barriers to trade and investment in an effort to boost the investment climate. The Special Envoy for International Energy Affairs, Carlos Pascual, scheduled a meeting in Kyiv for the Energy Security Working Group. Finally, to augment the multilateral approach, the Department of State announced a significant increase in the exchange programs authorized for Ukrainian students and young leaders (“Increased US Cooperation with Ukraine”).

Meanwhile, the leaders of Europe demonstrated solidarity with the Obama Administration. The lack of response from Russia was alarming; the leaders of the G-7 (excluding Russia) made a joint announcement on 12 March, calling on the Russian Federation to “cease all efforts to change the status of Crimea contrary to Ukrainian law and in violation of international law.” It further stipulated that any referendum would not be legally recognized due to the manner in which it was called and the ‘intimidating’ presence of Russian troops. The statement announced a Russian annexation of Crimea would violate: the United Nations Charter; Russia’s commitments under the Helsinki Final Act; obligations under the 1997 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership; Russia-Ukraine 1997 basing agreement; and commitments of the Budapest Memorandum. It further called on Russia to de-escalate in Crimea and other parts of Ukraine, urging the resolution of the crisis through the



diplomatic processes (“Remarks by President Obama and Ukraine Prime Minister”) This announcement was of particular interest due to the solidarity of the G-7 leaders and the strong wording towards the Russian Federation actions. European leaders had previously been hesitant to take strong actions due to the economic ties with Russia. This statement made it clear that the West was united against the Russian actions. Secretary of State Kerry was dispatched to London on 14 March to engage in discussions with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. With the referendum looming, the Obama Administration attempted to further pressure Russia to de-escalate the Crimean situation, though with little success. The Crimean referendum of 17 March had an unusually high turnout rate – more than 80% - with an almost unanimous vote of 97% in favor of joining Russia. The United States and European partners in Brussels immediately decried the referendum as invalid due to both the illegal pretext under which it was called, but also for the rampant anomalies in the vote. Evidence was emerging that ballots arrived pre-marked in many cities; in other areas the figures published for voter turnout far exceeded the population (Bellinger).

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman travelled to Kyiv the following week to engage with senior Ukrainian officials and representatives of civil society to reaffirm strong support for Ukraine, its sovereignty, and territorial integrity (“Under Secretary for Political Affairs Wendy R. Sherman Travels”). The US then affirmed concerns for the Ukrainian crisis at the United Nations’ 25th Session of the Human Rights

Council which was held on 28 March, highlighting the situation as one of seven global concerns (“Key U.S. Outcomes”). Yet the Russians were refusing to acknowledge the rebukes of the international community. Putin had carefully assessed the situation and continued to press forward with his goals. The referendum played well into his hand, causing an alarm within the Obama Administration.

The White House noted that the referendum was in violation of Ukraine’s constitution and took place in “an environment of coercion.” (“Background Briefing by Senior Administration Officials on Ukraine”) It saw little choice but to take additional steps to impose costs on Russia. The Administration designated additional individuals cited for their involvement in Crimea that would fall into the sanctions imposed. A new Executive Order was signed that expanded the sanctions, now authorizing sanctions to be placed on “Russian officials, entities operating in the arms sector in Russia, and any individuals who provide material support to senior officials of the Russian government.” (“Background Briefing by Senior Administration Officials on Ukraine”)

The new Executive Order created three new authorities with the ability to target these groups; the intent was to impact the Russian government cronies who were believed to be instrumental in the annexation. The EO listed seven Russian government officials. Any assets that they had within US jurisdiction were immediately frozen and US persons were prohibited from engaging in business with them. The seven were carefully selected for impact, influence, and power. Notably, this list included Putin’s presidential aide, his

advisor, state Duma deputies, and the head of the Federation Council (Executive Order 13661). Treasury further added four names to the original list of sanctions: Crimea-based separatist leaders Sergey Aksyonov and Vladimir Kostantinov; Viktor Medvedchuk, leader of Ukrainian Choice; and former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich (“Background Briefing by Senior Administration Officials on Ukraine”).

This second round of sanctions, authorized by Executive Order 13661, was closely coordinated with European allies. The EU released their list of sanctions against twenty-one people the following day, with significant overlap. The Vice President was sent to Europe that evening to meet with NATO allies with a message of reassurance and support, particularly for those allies who were most concerned about Russian aggression, the Baltic States. Vice President Biden engaged with leaders of Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The President announced that he would travel to Europe the following week to engage with leaders and demonstrate a “solemn commitment to our collective defense.” (“Background Briefing by Senior Administration Officials on Ukraine.”) The Administration further focused on political and economic support for Ukraine – military support continued to be off the table due to the potential for inadvertent escalation with Russia. Efforts instead focused on negotiations with the International Monetary Fund for economic assistance to Ukraine and on OSCE support for political monitoring, police training, and support for the presidential election in May.

With the Ukraine situation not improving, it was quickly decided to further expand the sanctions by issuing a

third Executive Order, 13662, on 20th March. The latest EO expanded the list of sanction to twenty officials, closer to the EU list of twenty-one. This again included senior Russian government officials and cronies wielding significant power and resources within the Russian system. It further included a bank known for providing services to senior Russian government officials, called Bank Rossiya. Accounts for many of the individuals on the sanctions list were held at Bank Rossiya, the seventeenth largest in Russia with about \$10 billion in assets (“Background Briefing by Senior Administration Officials on Ukraine”). The bank was an attractive choice due to the number of cronies holding accounts there as well as the numerous correspondent accounts which included both US dollar accounts and those in Europe. This third EO provided the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, further authority to designate sectors of the Russian economy for additional sanctions (Executive Order 13662).

This third Presidential Executive Order – with a greater extension into Putin’s inner circle – reflected the evolving view of the Obama Administration as to how to resolve the crisis. The Crimean crisis posed a delicate situation. Miscalculation or inadvertent escalation could have triggered a military response from Russia. NATO allies, particularly in Eastern Europe, were warily watching the Russian actions in Crimea and simultaneously observing the United States. It was imperative that the US respond swiftly and decisively to reassure partners in NATO and the EU. It was understood that such a response would have economic costs. The bilateral relationship with Russia –

already tenuous despite the significant Administration efforts to ‘reset’ relations – would undoubtedly suffer. Trade and commercial discussions were cancelled, as were G-8 preparatory meetings. Bilateral military cooperation, exchanges, and exercises were also cancelled.

But areas remained where the Administration hoped that cooperation with Russia would continue. Cooperating in areas of mutual benefit was viewed as important to ensure the protection of US interests, as well as to leave open a path to build trust and relationships. However, cooperation was limited only to previously formalized agreements that would have had significant negative consequences for both sides had they not continued. Chief among these was removal of chemical weapons from Syria. Russia had brokered the deal and was thus, heavily invested. The ‘redline’ incident had been an embarrassing one for the Obama Administration; failure of the Russians to ensure the completion of the chemical weapons deal would have affected all of the involved parties. The Iran deal was another area where cooperation remained through the P5+1. Russian interests were also best served by avoiding nuclear proliferation in the region. Though these two areas signified potential areas of continuing cooperation, they remained a stark contrast to the otherwise near total cessation of relations between the Russian and American governments.

### Consequences

This severe limitation of relations extended to economic activity between the two countries as well. With the initial threat of sanctions followed quickly by the imposition of increasingly strong

measures, Russia experienced an immediate economic impact. From 20 February to 17 March, the Russian stock market declined nearly 15%, with the ruble depreciating nearly three percent against the dollar (World Bank - Russia). The Administration concluded that costs could be imposed on Russia – and that it was necessary to do so – because the Russians had far more to lose politically and economically than the United States did. While there was a concern that an economic toll on Russia could have global implications, it was determined that the Russian economy was “far more vulnerable” than the global economy (“Background Briefing by Senior Administration Officials on Ukraine”). Europeans had united against the Russian actions and the UN Security Council was largely on the side of the US. At a mid-March United Nations vote to declare the Crimean referendum illegal, thirteen countries voted in favor of the US position. China merely abstained, breaking from the normal support of Russia on the UNSC (United Nations News Centre).

Initial indicators were positive for the Obama Administration on several levels. The international community had largely rallied around Ukraine – or at least had not come to the aid of Russia. The EU and US were united in the economic sanctions, despite some popular protests in Europe by populations who benefited from trading with Russians. Domestic support, both in Washington and with the greater population, was generally in favor of the Administration’s actions to press Russia. It was largely believed that continued multilateral efforts would achieve results.

The US Navy sent a destroyer to the Black Sea soon after the referendum;

while not as a show of force (the 1936 Montreaux Convention mandates ships sailing through the Bosphorus Straits and the Dardanelles must receive permission well in advance of the actual transit). The arrival of the USS TRUXTUN (DDG-103) to the Black Sea was a powerful symbol of US presence. Yet the President avoided further escalating the conflict by refraining from significant US or NATO military involvement. While military advice and consultation was provided through the NATO-Ukraine Council, and the Pentagon supplied limited non-lethal support. There was a concerted effort to focus on an economic solution rather than a military one. The NATO Alliance, while not called upon to provide any form of military assistance, reaffirmed its commitment to member nations and began to increase exercises to improve interoperability. Newer NATO members in Eastern Europe – particularly the Baltic States – asked for and received additional military assistance in the form of exercises, advisors, and the deployment of additional NATO troops.

The economic sanctions had impacted Russia, without question. But economic analysis indicates the bulk of Russia's depreciation – the ruble lost 50% of its value against the dollar in the aftermath of the conflict – could be attributed to the decline of oil prices (Dreger, et al). Russia's GDP peaked in 2013 at just over \$2 trillion and dropped to \$1.2 trillion by May 2016, entering a deep recession in 2015. The Russian economy is now about one-fifteenth the size of the US economy, at 1.5 percent of global GDP, though it is impossible to assign a specific amount of decline to sanctions (Kotkin 3). Prior to economic sanctions, the EU was Russia's most important economic partner, purchasing

52% of all Russian exports in 2012 and accounting for 42% of its imports (Oliker 11). If economic sanctions remain through 2017, the quarter-to-quarter real GDP is predicted to contract to nineteen percent over the next two years (Tuzova 140). Inflation in Russia reached 15.5% in 2015 after 7.8% in 2014 (CIA – Russia). Further, Russia is also responsible for supporting the Crimean economy. For instance, Russia now covers pensions for elderly Crimeans, estimated to cost \$1 billion annually (Oliker 14). With much of its revenue driven by tourism and hosting the Black Sea Fleets, Crimea has faced serious economic challenges as the tourism trade has dwindled. Ukraine has restricted trade with the peninsula, causing a rise of prices for basic necessities such as food. Supplies must be transported in from Russia, further rising costs.

Ukraine, on the other hand, has been boosted by extensive international economic assistance. The IMF assistance package of March 2014 was valued at \$14-18 billion. The country has made significant progress on reforms to improve rule of law and democratic processes while reducing corruption. Yet the Russian occupation and ongoing dispute in eastern Ukraine has undeniably hurt economic growth; the economy contracted by 6.8% in 2014 and 10.5% in 2015. Inflation was 12.1% in 2014 and a staggering 48.7% in 2015. Trade with Russia, previously the largest partner, dropped precipitously. Even in 2015, Russia still accounted for 12.7% of Ukrainian exports (CIA – Ukraine). However, the Obama Administration worked closely with the EU to offer assistance; the EU-Ukraine Deep and Free Trade Area took affect 1 January 2016, which is boosting the economy.

This agreement has allowed both EU and Ukraine to open their markets, expanding upon the 2014 Association Agreement and allowing for mutual trade and investment. The EU is Ukraine's largest trading partner, with EU exports to Ukraine totaling 13.9 billion euros and Ukrainian exports to the EU totaling 12.7 billion euros in 2015 (European Commission - Trade).

The Obama Administration faced a difficult challenge with the Euromaidan protests, which escalated to depose the democratically elected leader and sent him fleeing into exile. The historical ties and realities of Russia's 'near abroad' policy ensured that Putin would take an opportunistic approach to Ukraine and Crimea. While it is clear that Putin does not recognize the existence of a Ukrainian nation separate from Russia, his actions in Crimea were further motivated by the desire to reestablish Russia's great power status and solidify its sphere of influence over the near-abroad (Kotkin 4). Moscow's immediate actions to send troops into Ukraine and illegally seize Crimea necessitated a swift rebuke from the United States and the international community. Yet the Administration was constrained from executing a full range of diplomatic tools given the concerns of escalating a military crisis. While the Administration reiterated strong support for democratic ideals, rule of law, and the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine, it stopped well short of military action in order to prevent further escalation. Russia had a vested interest in preventing a pro-Western government from being installed in Ukraine or ceding Crimea; the West was not willing to risk a military conflict over the region. With military options removed, the

White House sought diplomatic and economic tools to uphold Ukrainian sovereignty. The Obama Administration was able to develop significant support for the three Executive Orders condemning Russia's actions, both on the Hill and abroad. European Union and NATO allies rallied around Ukraine and worked together with the President's team on developing appropriate responses. Significant economic assistance was offered to Ukraine by the US, IMF, and European Union. Russia suffered significant economic losses, though likely magnified by the declining price of oil. Putin did not annex further territory in Ukraine or elsewhere in the region.

While the Executive Orders and subsequent economic sanctions against Russia may have halted further Russian action, they ultimately were unsuccessful in restoring the Crimean Peninsula to Ukrainian control. Russia has firmly assumed control over Crimea and it is increasingly unlikely that the region will be returned to Ukraine. Further, Russian-backed separatists – heavily supported by Russia – remain active in a low-level conflict in eastern Ukraine. Despite significant negotiation attempts on the part of the OSCE, there appears to be no immediate resolution to the fighting in Eastern Ukraine.

Examining the impact of economic sanctions against Russia for the illegal annexation of Crimea may offer insights on the effectiveness of applying sanctions to achieve a political goal. The sanctions imposed reflected both a realization of liberalist ideals, in an effort to enforce international norms, and realist concerns for a zero-sum security dilemma. The first three sanctions to be imposed were designed to minimize harm to the broader

population of innocents, instead of targeting Putin's inner circle. While recent literature suggests that targeted sanctions may be more effective without harming innocents, the application of targeted sanctions in this case proved to be ineffective (Hufbauer). Given the lack on impact of the previous three rounds of sanctions, comprehensive sanctions were later enacted in December 2014 that prohibited transactions with the Crimean region (Executive Order 13685).

It can be recommended that future sanctions be applied decisively and uniformly from the outset. In the case of Crimea, increasingly restrictive rounds of sanctions were issued periodically rather than a singular wide-sweeping initial sanction. The indecisive application may have contributed to Putin's decision to remain committed to Crimea due to a perception of a lower cost. While targeted sanctions lessen the costs imposed upon innocents, there remains a risk of overall ineffectiveness

due to a perception of limited impact. Further, even targeted sanctions can impose unintentional costs on innocents, as seen in Crimea with the ripple effects of economic consequences. Despite the ultimate failure of sanctions to coerce the return of Crimea, there were some notable successes. The application of multilateral sanctions by the US and EU marked an agreement in the international community to hold Russia responsible for its illegal annexation. This demonstration of resolve may have prevented further incursions by the Kremlin and sends a powerful message to other countries contemplating similar actions. The Obama Administration's decision to apply economic sanctions was a deliberate choice to impose a cost on Moscow for a violation of international norms. While not successful in achieving stated objectives, the sanctions were a powerful message that may serve to prevent future violations of sovereignty.

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# Full-Scale Versus Airstrike-Focused Strategies in U.S. Foreign Military Interventions

By Connor Lee

**T**his paper compares two distinct U.S. international military intervention strategies. The first, a full-scale intervention, entails using the full power of the U.S. military to achieve objectives swiftly and efficiently. The second, an airstrike-focused approach, limits boots on the ground and utilizes U.S. air power to achieve strategic ends.

I use a combination of historical examples to extrapolate the definitions of both full-scale and airstrike-focused interventions. I then apply these definitions to four case study analyses—two cases of interstate war and two of counterterrorism.

The case studies—Iraq in 2003, Afghanistan in 2001, Libya in 2011, and drone strikes in Pakistan and Yemen since 2002—all demonstrate different types of interventions with differing strategic objectives and short and long-term outcomes. The analysis compares the strategic ends in each case with the stated objectives of policymakers both before and during the interventions. I draw on the lessons learned in each case to formulate my central findings and recommendations.

These findings lead to two central recommendations for the policymakers on the U.S. National Security Council. First, avoid *strategic mismatch*—that is, improperly correlating means with ends outside the scope of those means. As the case studies in this paper demonstrate, neither of the two intervention strategies is

more likely than the other to lead to a democratic and peaceful post-conflict society. Other factors, including the ability and willingness of the host nation to be an active participant in reconstruction efforts, determine post-war success.

The NSC should view airstrikes as the primary military option and the full-scale approach as secondary. Airstrike-focused approaches are often equally capable and more practical than full-scale interventions. Airstrikes have proven effective in both interstate war and counterterrorism operations. They are less likely to create domestic political backlash, granting policymakers greater latitude of implementation.

## Introduction

Since the late 1800s, foreign military interventions have played an important role in U.S. foreign policy. This trend has continued to the present day, with substantial U.S. involvement in over ten countries since the late 1990s. These countries, which include former Yugoslavia, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Somalia and Haiti, have each seen different levels of American military power. Some, like Afghanistan and Iraq, have experienced what most would call “full-scale” interventions, complete with ground troops occupying territory and the utilization of significant military resources from all U.S. services to achieve the stated goal.

Others, including Yugoslavia, Pakistan, Yemen, and most recently Syria, have evoked a more limited approach, with some special operations troops or a relatively small conventional force on the ground but the main military offensives from the air.

The National Security Council (NSC) is the principle forum by which the President of the United States consults key advisers when making decisions concerning international security and foreign policy. The NSC therefore shapes the overarching strategy of the U.S. military, including force posture and the extent of any given intervention, taking into account a multitude of domestic and international factors.

The success of each of the past interventions in both the short and long-terms varies dramatically; many would consider the air-based campaign in Yugoslavia to be a relative success, while the long-term outcomes of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, despite the initial success in ousting Saddam Hussein from power, is largely seen as a foreign policy failure. Many factors determine the ultimate decisions made by the President and his advisers. Nevertheless, policymakers must think strategically in terms of the ends they hope to achieve and the means by which they hope to achieve them.

Therefore, in terms of U.S. military interventions, policymakers should ask the following question: what strategy is most effective for the stated end goal? This paper will evaluate two different strategies, analyzing their effectiveness in different scenarios in the hope of providing recommendations to policymakers regarding which route to take.

The first possible strategic choice is a full-scale military intervention in the spirit of the war in Vietnam, or the invasion of Panama. This choice, while often politically unappealing in today's world, directs the maximum force in the shortest time. On the other hand, policymakers could opt for what

this paper will refer to as an "airstrike approach," in which strategic bombing and strike sorties (military vernacular for flying missions), possibly including the use of remotely piloted aircraft (RPAs), eliminate targets in hopes of achieving the desired effect.

When defining these two positions it becomes important to avoid setting up a false dichotomy, in which one strategy cannot contain elements of the other; and so, this paper's definition of an "airstrike approach" will encompass strategies which also use limited ground forces. Examples include the interventions in Yugoslavia (in 1999) and Libya (in 2011), in which relatively small ground forces supplemented air power. Moreover, a full-scale approach will always utilize air resources throughout the campaign—never are U.S. ground troops deployed today without some form of air support. The question of which strategy to employ is exceedingly complex and requires a full analysis in order to recommend the best course of action to high-level U.S. decision-makers on the NSC.

Another important distinction arises when comparing these two strategies; that is, what is the difference between counterterrorism and interstate war, and how do U.S. approaches reflect these differences? This paper will explore case studies in each of these two categories, comparing interventions in interstate war in Iraq (in 2003) and Libya (in 2011) to counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen from the early 2000s through the present day. In order to determine the effectiveness of the different approaches taken in different cases, both the short and long-term outcomes of the interventions will be compared against the stated policy objectives before and during the intervention.

This paper will draw from historical information, government publications, and interviews. Publications by the government,

including speeches and military-produced reports on conflicts will give perspectives on what practices were used and how policymakers choose between different policy options to achieve their desired ends. Interviews with current military members and policymakers will shed light on modern thinking on the subject and provide insight into which of the lessons learned have persisted through to today. After comparing the counterterrorism and interstate case studies both to one another and across the divide, the paper will turn to implementation in the Trump Administration and the hybrid case of the Islamic State, which could be considered a mix of both counter-terrorism and inter-state warfare.

Lastly, just as important as outlining what this paper will do is defining what it will not. It will not raise the question of whether or not the United States should intervene in a conflict. This analysis is only valid once U.S. decision-makers affirmatively take steps to intervene. Moreover, this paper will not define the normative questions of what the end goals of the intervention should have been; rather, it will evaluate the strategy and goals as described at the time of the intervention, and will only use hindsight to comment on the consequences of U.S. military action. It will also not touch on the numerous smaller intervention forces the United States currently has deployed all over the world. These forces are often made up of special operations soldiers leading “train, advise and assist” missions for local governments who are fighting terrorist organizations or other U.S. enemies in their homelands. While this is a distinct and important type of military intervention, it is outside the scope of this specific paper.

### **The Policy Problem in Context**

In October of 2015, White House correspondent for USA TODAY Gregory

Korte produced a detailed account of the “16 times [President] Obama said there would be no boots on the ground in Syria”<sup>1</sup>. This report came at a time when the President first announced the deployment of fifty special operations troops to Syria to serve an advisory role—a qualifier that the White House used to reassure the American people of the continuation of the “no boots on the ground” policy. President Obama employed this “boots on the ground” language in an attempt to differentiate between current U.S. military operations, like those in Syria, and the past wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In a statement before meeting with congressional leaders on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013, Obama proclaimed, “The key point that I want to emphasize to the American people [is this]: The military plan that has been developed by our Joint Chiefs, and that I believe is appropriate, is proportional. It is limited. It does not involve boots on the ground. This is not Iraq, and this is not Afghanistan”<sup>2</sup>. He echoed similar sentiments throughout his presidency, largely with the goal of calming the American public about the extent of U.S. military involvement abroad following two long, drawn-out wars that left many people hesitant to support yet another increase in operations in the region. In the place of more traditional military operations and deployments, the United States has employed airstrike-focused strategies multiple times in recent years, specifically in Libya, Syria, and in the fight against the Islamic State.

This pushback against deploying ground troops in hostile areas reflects public opinion on the matter. According to Gallup polls, more Americans opposed than supported the deployment of more troops to Afghanistan in 2009<sup>3</sup>. In 2011, 72 percent of Americans favored President Obama’s troop withdrawal plan in Afghanistan<sup>4</sup>, and in 2014 more Americans viewed the Afghanistan war as a mistake than those who did not. This same poll found that 54

percent of Americans also viewed the 2003 Iraq War as a mistake. By contrast, only nine percent believed the Afghanistan War to be a mistake at the outset in 2001, and only 23 percent saw the Iraq War as a mistake in 2003<sup>5</sup>. In 2014, 60 percent of Americans opposed sending ground troops into combat operations against ISIS forces in Iraq or Syria<sup>6</sup>. This gradual shift in opinion on America's most recent large-scale conflict correlated with a growing skepticism of entering yet another war. When making foreign policy decisions, especially about whether to deploy troops to hostile areas, presidents and their advisers are constantly weighing the opinions of the public on international security strategies. Obama's remarks indicate that the emphasis on the lack of boots on the ground in Syria directly reflected the opinion of the electorate during his presidency. This, coupled with Obama's unwillingness to commit significant military resources to what he saw as a no-win situation, led him to pursue a limited strategy in Syria.

## **Using History to Define the Broad Policy Options**

### **Full-Scale Intervention**

Full-scale conventional operations generally involve all of the U.S. military services taking and occupying territory and striking the enemy from the sea, land and air with the goal of winning a decisive victory. The Vietnam War and the Invasion of Panama are each examples of the United States launching conventional, full-scale military interventions post-WWII. These examples can be used to formulate a working definition of a "conventional" military intervention and what it generally entails. It quickly becomes evident through study of these conflicts that each of them, while full-scale, was also limited in its own way. Vietnam was limited by an

unwillingness to deploy nuclear weapons as a part of the war strategy, while Panama was limited by the focus on small counterinsurgent forces rather than large troop deployments. While these cases may have operated under fewer limitations than airstrike-only approaches, it is important to recognize that none have utilized truly limitless applications of force.

The Vietnam conflict started with a significant subset of limitations before eventually expanding to a more full-scale conflict. President Kennedy was initially partial to the idea of fighting an "unconventional war" against guerilla forces, providing just enough special operations forces and advisors necessary to cut out the insurgency, thereby staying away from a full-blown deployment of ground forces<sup>7</sup>. But the Joint Chiefs of Staff were wary of entering another conflict with limited available means—many felt that the limitation on nuclear weaponry and other military means in Korea hamstrung U.S. effectiveness. So, seeking a foreign policy success in his presidency and wanting to deter communist expansion, President Kennedy authorized the deployment of advisers, arms, helicopters, planes, and 23 thousand troops to Vietnam by November of 1963—thereby demarking the Vietnam conflict as a full-scale intervention<sup>8</sup>. President Johnson, facing continued pressure from the Joint Chiefs and given a broad mandate to expand the conflict by the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, deployed even more troops to the theatre. The old strategy of annihilation returned, and by 1966 the United States had 235,000 American troops deployed in country, a number that then doubled within the year<sup>9</sup>. These troops combined with large-scale air power and naval offensives in attempts to push back Vietcong forces over the course of the conflict. While the unwillingness to resort to nuclear war still limited American military capacity, and even though the initial

intervention was of a more limited scope, the United States eventually deployed a significant portion of its available military force in Vietnam.

Operation Just Cause in Panama is a useful case to contribute to the definition of “conventional” interventions as it differs from Vietnam. While not nearly on the scale of Vietnam, Operation Just Cause utilized the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps in synchronization, including special operations soldiers within each branch, to overwhelm Panamanian forces. The operation in total involved over 22,000 U.S. troops and 300 aircraft, and ended with less than 500 total casualties on all sides<sup>10</sup>. Using the power of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, Army General Maxwell Thurman approved Lieutenant General Carl Stiner to command the joint task force in Panama. Within days, U.S. forces secured the U.S. embassy in Panama City, captured the Panamanian Defense Force (PDF) headquarters, and cornered Dictator Manuel Noriega in a Vatican mission in which he sought refuge.

The cases of Vietnam and Panama present a picture of what a full-scale military intervention may look like. Full-scale is not synonymous with limitless—each conflict since the end of the Second World War has experienced different limitations. Furthermore, full-scale does not have to mean the use of the full U.S. military capacity. In Panama, more force would have simply been unnecessary in such a small theater. However, full-scale conventional operations generally involve each of the branches of the U.S. military utilizing sea, land and air power in order to win a decisive victory.

### **Airstrike-Focused Strategy**

While a seemingly narrow expression, an “airstrike-only” approach can in fact encompass a wide range of policy options. From the quick, 12-hour strike against specific targets in Libya in 1986 as a

response to terrorism, to the effective coercive effects of airpower against Serbian forces in Kosovo to halt an ethnic cleansing campaign, to the targeted RPA strikes against insurgents in Pakistan and Yemen, air power has been tasked to do many different things. In some cases, such as the 2011 intervention in Libya, the U.S. deployed a small number of ground troops to supplement the bombing campaigns. While not a strict air-only strategy, this paper still considers such an approach to fall under the airstrike grouping. Likewise, many of the strikes in Pakistan and Yemen are either coordinated by or in direct support of ground special operations forces or U.S. paramilitary forces—very seldom are U.S. munitions dropped without some level of ground involvement. However, the absence of large numbers of ground forces on the offensive or occupying territory distinguishes this strategic option from the more conventional, full-scale approaches discussed prior.

Libya has been the subject of two major bombing operations, the first in 1986 and the second in 2011—both of which targeted the regime of Muammar Gaddafi. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1986, the Reagan administration launched Operation El Dorado Canyon in retaliation for what was perceived as state-sponsored terrorism on the part of Libya (eleven days earlier Libyan agents

detonated an IED in Berlin, killing three and injuring hundreds more)<sup>11</sup>. This operation included more than 100 planes from the U.S. Navy and Air Force, and over the course of twelve minutes they dropped sixty tons of munitions on the capitol of Tripoli and the second-biggest city, Benghazi<sup>12</sup>. Catching the Libyan defenses by surprise, the strikes hit military barracks and bases, a military training facility, an airfield, and a residential compound (although not where Gaddafi was staying that night). This is an example of how quickly an airstrike-only strategy can

be implemented. In less than one day (not including the extensive planning and preparation phases inherent to any military offensive), U.S. planes took out a significant amount of Libyan infrastructure, sending the message that state-sponsored terrorism would not be tolerated.

The 1999 bombing of former Yugoslavia serves as another example from which to build a working definition of what an airstrike intervention can entail. In 1998, Serbian forces killed more than 1,500 Kosovar Albanians and forced the displacement of 400,000 people. This crisis captured the attention of the international community, and in April 1999 the North Atlantic Council and the U.S. Government announced the objectives of stopping military action and ending violence and oppression in the region, as well as the safe return of all refugees and displaced persons<sup>13</sup>. In March, NATO—led by U.S. forces—launched an air campaign named Operation Allied Force with the goal of halting the humanitarian catastrophe. The Alliance flew airstrikes for 78 days, flying more than 38,000 sorties without a single military fatality<sup>14</sup>. Following diplomatic efforts by Russia and the EU in June, Yugoslav forces withdrew from Kosovo and the air campaign ended. Yugoslavia accepted the principles of the NATO political solution, including the rapid withdrawal of military and police forces in the region. The intervention in Kosovo is one of the most successful air-only campaigns in recent history, with no U.S. troops in combat operations on the ground and a successful halting of a severe humanitarian crisis.

The U.S. airstrikes in Pakistan from 2004 onwards and in Yemen beginning in 2002 illustrate a different strategic use of an airstrike-only approach—one focused on combatting terrorism and insurgencies. According to the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), the U.S.

military has utilized remotely-piloted aircraft (RPA) in Pakistan for four distinct reasons: supporting U.S. forces on the Afghan-Pakistani border, directly attacking Taliban and other insurgent forces near the border, striking insurgent and terrorist leaders and training camps in Waziristan, Pakistan, and supporting Pakistani forces in strikes against the Taliban in Pakistan<sup>15</sup>. CSIS authors Anthony Cordesman and Marissa Allison claim that these attacks are quite restrained, with only 175 strikes between 2004 and 2010, and an insurgent-to-civilian death ratio of 1490 to 104 from 2006 to 2010<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, the 77 strikes in 2010 killed 18 senior insurgent leaders, nine of whom had direct links to al-Qaeda. While unclassified data on Yemen is harder find, RPA strikes have been used in generally the same capacity in the country since the early 2000s, killing hundreds of militants with minimal—yet not insignificant—collateral damage. Most recently, the United States confirmed 32 RPA strikes in Yemen during 2016, resulting in over 100 deaths<sup>17</sup>. While the cases of Pakistan and Yemen are much different than the two interventions in Libya, they are additional examples of the use of air power along to achieve strategic ends.

Although advocates for the effectiveness of airpower have been outspoken since the end of the First World War, airstrikes did not stand on their own as a viable war strategy until fairly recently. Libya, Yugoslavia, Pakistan and Yemen are some of the main conflicts in which U.S. policymakers have opted for a strategy focused on the use of airstrikes over conventional military operations. Drawing out the similarities between these cases can assist in developing a working definition of this paper's second policy option.

## Specifying the Problem

We have defined two distinct groups of approaches, but now comes the more important question—which is most appropriate, and when? The U.S. possesses an immense amount of military strength and incredible capabilities to inflict harm on others—and it has for some time. But, generally, using all available force all at once has never really been a viable policy prescription; when thinking strategically, in terms of the end goals of a U.S. foreign military intervention, the complete destruction of economic and industrial sectors would be detrimental to the successful creation of a post-conflict state. Even in Vietnam, some cities were bombed to rubble while others were designated as off-limits because of their cultural or institutional significance. Moreover, public opinion and international support (or lack thereof) plays an important role in the practicality of launching a foreign military intervention. And so, the question of how much force to use quickly becomes complicated with many factors pushing and pulling on the minds of those tasked with making the decisions. The next section will explore this idea through a few pertinent case studies in U.S. international intervention history. Decision-makers in each of the cases had different strategic mindsets and objectives, whether it was counterterrorism, regime change, humanitarian assistance, or some combination thereof; they each made different decisions about the use of military force in light of those values and of the current political climate. This paper will critique the effectiveness of those choices, informing future policymakers on similar decisions they will face in the future.

## Evaluating the Options through Case Analysis

### Framework of Analysis

Each case analysis will focus on the strategic choices of policymakers. They will be outlined as follows:

- 1) Succinct background and motivation for initiating a foreign military intervention
- 2) The strategic goals of policymakers
- 3) The policy environment surrounding the decision, including domestic public opinion and amount of international support
- 4) The implementation of the specific strategy
- 5) The short and long-term outcomes of the intervention
- 6) Overall lessons learned for future policy considerations

### U.S. Full-Scale Interventions

The following two cases will examine the U.S. full-scale interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, both of which started under President George W. Bush. Iraq serves as an example of an interstate war, and the objectives of the invasion differ significantly from the counterterrorism operations led by the United States in Afghanistan following the attack on the World Trade Center. Using examples in the past two decades ensures that any lessons learned will have relevancy to today's policymakers, especially with the United States still involved in middle-eastern conflict to this day. While both interventions achieved initial success in terms of military achievements, the lasting impacts tell a different story. Interstate War: 2003 Invasion of Iraq

Background: After the First Gulf War in 1990 and 1991, in which U.S. and coalition fighters successfully drove the invading Iraqi Army from Kuwait, the



United Nations implemented economic sanctions against Iraq in order to hinder its potential development of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. UN inspections in the mid-1990s uncovered prohibited technologies and weapons, and Iraqi authorities continuously defied the UN and interfered with inspections. This led to President Bill Clinton's decision in 1998 to bomb several Iraqi military installations to thwart Iraqi weapons programs; these bombings coincided with the end of UN inspections in the country<sup>18</sup>.

In 2002, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1441, demanding that Iraq admit inspectors and comply with all previous limitations on their weapons programs<sup>19</sup>. In March of 2003, citing the alleged Iraqi government's possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) as well as America's increased vulnerability to possible state-sponsored terrorism by the Saddam Hussein regime, President Bush issued an ultimatum to the Iraqi President and demanded he leave within 48 hours. When Saddam refused, U.S. and allied forces launched an attack on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

Strategic Goals: As mentioned above, President Bush cited multiple goals for the invasion of Iraq. At the Washington Hilton Hotel on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the President spoke to the American Enterprise Institute concerning his vision for the future of the country<sup>20</sup>. He began by citing the September 11<sup>th</sup> terror attack, claiming that in light of that attack, the United States "must look at security in a new way . . . The dangers of our time must be confronted actively and forcefully, before we see them again in our skies and in our cities . . . We will not allow the triumph of hatred and violence in the affairs of men." President Bush went on to cite Saddam Hussein "building and hiding weapons that could enable him to dominate the Middle East and intimidate the civilized world," as well as

his close ties to terrorist organizations, as principles America must oppose. He claimed that "the safety of the American people depends on ending this direct and growing threat," and cited the importance of a "free and peaceful Iraq" to transform the Middle East. Parsing through the President's speech, it is possible to draw out the main, far-reaching strategic goals of U.S. intervention.

- 1) Disallow the buildup and hiding of weapons by Saddam Hussein, and topple his regime
  - a. Discontinue the Iraqi government's support of terrorist organizations
- 2) Transform the Middle East through a future Iraq that is free and peaceful
  - a. Liberate the Iraqi people
  - b. Rebuild Iraq, establish democratic values

Policy Environment: Unlike U.S. military actions in Afghanistan, which garnered widespread support both domestically and internationally, the buildup to the Iraq War was much different. The leaders of France, Germany, Russia, and others objected to the invasion. Compared to the 98-0 vote in the Senate and 420-1 vote in the House in September of 2001 authorizing force in Afghanistan, the October 2002 vote only gathered 77 and 296 votes in the Senate and the House, respectively<sup>21</sup>. Regardless, these votes still indicate approval in Congress, and President Bush was at the time still enjoying high public approval ratings due to his widely-applauded response to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. The President seized this momentum and decided to move forward with the full-scale invasion despite moderate pushback both at home and abroad. As the war progressed, public opinion gradually shifted against the U.S. presence in Iraq, in turn putting more and more pressure on the Bush, and later the Obama, administrations.

Implementation: On March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003, allied forces began the intervention with strikes on military targets from their ready position at the southern border. These included airstrikes and precision-guided missiles from U.S. Navy warships. Within days, U.S. forces invaded Iraq from Kuwait in the south. On April 9<sup>th</sup>, American forces took control of Baghdad, effectively collapsing Saddam Hussein's rule. American forces also joined with Kurdish fighters to seize Kirkuk, Mosul and Tikrit. Major combat ended on May 1<sup>st</sup>, and Saddam Hussein was captured on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2003. On June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2004, American authorities transferred sovereignty of Iraq over to new leaders after the de-Ba'athification of the former government.

As successful as the initial military operations were, the situation quickly deteriorated. Insurgent groups, still loyal to the old Saddam regime, controlled parts of central Iraq. Intense battles for Fallujah and other cities drove the U.S. death toll to over 2,000 by October of 2005<sup>22</sup>. In late 2006, the Iraq Study Group chaired by former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker issued a report that found the situation in Iraq to be "grave and deteriorating"<sup>23</sup>. In 2007, President Bush announced "The Surge," which increased the number of U.S. troops in Iraq by 20,000 and caused a significant drop in violence<sup>24</sup>. This decrease correlated with a change in tactics, with U.S. forces shifting to a more traditional counterinsurgency strategy and partnering with local security and military forces. While U.S. officials tried to negotiate to keep several thousand soldiers in Iraq after 2011, the discussions fell through and forces officially left on December 15<sup>th</sup> of that year<sup>25</sup>.

Outcomes: In January of 2005, Iraqi citizens turned out for the country's first free election in 50 years, and in December they cast ballots to elect Parliamentary leaders. In March of 2010, Iraqis again voted for

parliament in large numbers<sup>26</sup>. However, after the U.S. withdrawal, the unity government faced disarray. In 2012, Sunni Muslims staged mass rallies across the countries over marginalization by the Shia-led government. In the following years, an Islamist surge took over the country and violence escalated, and much of 2015 was spent in an offensive against the growing Islamic State insurgency. The fight continues to this day.

Lessons Learned: U.S. forces quickly and efficiently deposed Saddam Hussein and toppled his government—thereby achieving the first of the strategic objectives<sup>27</sup>. This reflects the might of the U.S. military when called upon to exercise one of its core competencies (in this case, specifically the abilities of the U.S. Army). And, initially, Iraq did seem liberated, with multiple open and free elections and the reinstitution of self-rule from 2005 through 2011. However, long-term peace in Iraq and the greater Middle East has yet to be realized. In retrospect, it was naïve to hope that a quick, full-scale military intervention—which significantly damaged Iraqi infrastructure and eliminated a 30-year-old government—would create an ideal environment for the establishment of lasting and peaceful democratic institutions. Even after the success of the 2011 surge, U.S. reconstruction efforts were unable to ensure the long-term realization of a fair and durable Iraqi State. Counterterrorism: 2001-Present War in Afghanistan

Background: In 1999, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1267, linking al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan as terrorist entities. Then, the events on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 represented the most significant terrorist attack in the history of the United States. The next day, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1368 condemning the attacks and recognizing the right of individual and

collective self-defense<sup>28</sup>, and NATO Allies invoked Article 5 for the first time in history. The U.S. Congress passed an almost unanimous joint resolution in both the House and Senate a week later authorizing the use of force against those responsible for the attacks, and Operation Enduring Freedom began with bombing of Taliban forces on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001<sup>29</sup>.

Strategic Goals: At President George W. Bush's joint session to Congress on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2001, he stated that America would "direct every resource at our command . . . to the disruption and to the defeat of the global terror network"<sup>30</sup>. This represents the first phase of the intervention: the toppling of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the group that provided sanctuary for al-Qaeda. But President Bush went beyond just destroying the al-Qaeda terror network—he foresaw the second phase of the war consisting of fully defeating the Taliban militarily and rebuilding the Afghan state<sup>31</sup>.

These two goals occupied the U.S. military mission through the end of the Bush Presidency. However, with the changing of leadership from President Bush to President Obama, the overall strategy in Afghanistan also changed. On March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Obama spoke at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building and outlined his new strategy for Afghanistan. Recognizing the sacrifice that had been made by so many U.S. soldiers and families, he wanted to ensure that the American people knew why fighting continued. He claimed that, "If the Afghan government falls to the Taliban—or allows al-Qaeda to go unchallenged—that country will again be a base for terrorists who want to kill as many of our people as they possibly can"<sup>32</sup>. He continued, "So I want the American people to understand that we have a clear and focused goal: to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return to either country in the future." President Obama's speech indicated a shift to a more

classic counterinsurgency strategy, as seen in Iraq during the surge years. This strategy persisted through 2014. Coupled with fighting the insurgency, Obama saw investing in the future as inextricably linked to lasting peace and development in the region, continuing the goal of the Bush administration of long-term assistance to the Afghan State and people.

Policy Environment: After the 2001 attacks, the U.S. electorate, members of Congress, and the international community strongly supported taking military action against al-Qaeda in Afghanistan<sup>33</sup>. The nation came together in a way seldom before seen and granted the President the latitude to address the situation as he and his advisers saw fit. However, as the invasion went on, the American people became increasingly wary of the growing casualty count and the lack of measurable progress. While President Bush had hoped for a less-prolonged war, troops were still in conflict by the end of his 8-year term.

The public opinion surrounding an increased troop presence in Afghanistan—something President Obama's top military advisers pushed for in early 2009—was not nearly as favorable as when President Bush launched the initial offensives. A Gallup poll in September of 2009 indicated that 41 percent of Americans favored sending more U.S. troops to Afghanistan while 50 percent opposed the decision<sup>34</sup>. But Obama, riding a wave of popularity as a newly-elected President, took decisive action and granted the request for additional troops to accompany those already there. NATO countries also continued their efforts in Afghanistan, representing the international interest in combatting terrorism and standing up the Afghan government.

Implementation: The first step in President Bush's strategy—overthrowing the Taliban regime—started with a CIA team working with anti-Taliban allies in the area. This was soon followed by a targeted

ground and air campaign started against the Taliban. Coordinating with the Northern Alliance—a group of Afghani warlords opposed to Taliban rule—U.S. and British troops took over the Taliban hub of Kandahar on December 6<sup>th</sup>, marking the end of their rule in the region. As enemy forces retreated, the UN conference in Bonn, Germany worked to establish tribal leader Hamid Karzai as interim leader of the country. 2003 marked the entrance of other allied troops in the war, including those from Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, and Norway<sup>35</sup>.

After the removal of the Taliban, the international community focused on reconstruction of the Afghan state and nation-building efforts in the country, all while continuing to fight the insurgency. Over the next eight years, Congress appropriated over \$38 billion in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to the Afghan government and aid programs<sup>36</sup>. However, by 2009 Taliban resurgence was nearly complete, and President Obama sent an additional 17,000 troops to the region in order to implement a counterinsurgency strategy in the spirit of the Iraq surge. The fighters tried to protect civilians from Taliban attacks, train local fighters to combat Taliban militants, and enable the Afghan government to lead security efforts. Obama sent yet another 30,000 troops to complete his surge implementation in December of 2009. The next five years were marked with extreme difficulties, as Karzai's government was largely uncooperative and rejected increased meddling by U.S. troops and officials. The U.S. and NATO forces announced the end of military operations in 2014, although some troops remain in a training capacity to this day.

Outcomes: Initially, the war seemed to have been won relatively easily. The Taliban had been ousted (the first strategic goal), and on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003, U.S. Secretary

of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced the end of “major combat” in Afghanistan<sup>37</sup>. Afghan elections were held in October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004, giving Karzai a five-year presidential term. Unfortunately, the two other goals—rebuilding the Afghan state and defeating the Taliban militarily—were never realized. Afghanistan did have democratic elections, but in 2010 Karzai was in talks to ally his government with the Taliban—the group the United States had been fighting against for nearly a decade. Today the Taliban is still prospering in Afghanistan, and ongoing training efforts are keeping small numbers of U.S. troops on the ground. Airstrikes against insurgent groups also continue, both in Afghanistan and Pakistan—a region that will be discussed at length in the next section.

Lessons Learned: Just as in Iraq in 2003, the full-scale (albeit limited) U.S. invasion of Afghanistan produced quick results—U.S. and allied forces ousted the Taliban from power and helped establish democratic elections. But, again like Iraq, the long-term outlook is not nearly as bright. This serves as a second example of how a full-scale invasion will not automatically bring about regime change or successfully influence the establishment of democratic institutions. In fact, over time the presence of U.S. troops heightened tensions with Afghan authorities and increased the likelihood of a renewed allegiance with the Taliban. The long-term outcomes of establishing democracy and rebuilding a war-torn state after a full-scale intervention seem difficult at best—and impossible at worst.

## **U.S. Airstrike-Focused Interventions**

Over the last few decades, U.S. policymakers have realized and reacted to the difficulties of full-scale interventions—both in terms of political feasibility and likelihood of long-term success. Therefore,

they have been more willing to take an airstrike-approach—avoiding large numbers of U.S. troops on the ground but still strategically coercing or eliminating the enemy through air power and precision-guided munitions. Two cases show this approach in light of different strategies: the 2011 interstate intervention in Libya in which U.S. and allied forces joined to oppose the Gaddafi regime, and the continued airstrikes against terrorist organizations in Pakistan and Yemen with the goal of disrupting terrorist networks. As in the previous section, recent case studies provide pertinent lessons learned to policymakers.

#### Interstate War: 2011 Intervention in Libya

Background: Like the 1986 intervention in Libya, the 2011 airstrike campaign was in response to atrocities committed by the Muammar Gadhafi regime. In February 2011, a protest in Benghazi, a city in eastern Libya, against Gadhafi was met with violent repression, and government forces killed dozens of protesters in a few days<sup>38</sup>. Demonstrations began sweeping the country, and the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1970, imposing an arms embargo on the country in response to the concern about human rights violations<sup>39</sup>. Two months later, in March, the Council adopted resolution 1973, condemning the “gross and systematic violation of human rights, including arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture and summary executions”<sup>40</sup>. This led to the initiation of Operation Odyssey Dawn, conducted by a multinational coalition headed by the United States.

Strategic Goals: Operation Odyssey Dawn had three distinct components. First, allies would enforce an arms embargo in the Mediterranean Sea to prevent the transfer of arms or other materials to Libyan fighters. Second, allies would enforce a no-fly zone

to prevent the bombing of civilian targets by the Libyan government. And third, allied air and naval strikes would attack military forces that threatened civilians and populated areas<sup>41</sup>. While initially the goals did not include removing the Gadhafi regime, and consisted of just ensuring its withdrawal of all military and para-military forces to bases, Gadhafi’s refusal contributed to the fourth goal: deposing the 42-year ruler and his government from power. Lastly, just as policymakers had hoped for the emergence of peaceful, democratic governments in Iraq and Afghanistan, Western leaders hoped the intervention would knock down barriers for the Libyan people, enabling them to live in a free and peaceful state after the conclusion of the fighting.

Policy Environment: Initially, the American public supported the war, with 47 percent approving of U.S. military actions in Libya versus 37 percent disapproving in May of 2011<sup>42</sup>. A month later, these numbers had nearly flipped, with 39 percent and 46 percent approving and disapproving, respectively. The Libyan operation also came at the same time as President Obama’s announcement of troop withdrawals from Afghanistan, showing his sensitivity to domestic pressure in international decision-making. However, paltry support at home was not paralleled internationally, and the Libyan intervention consisted of a multilateral effort against the widely-condemned Libyan government. Throughout the process, the Alliance consulted closely with the UN, the League of Arab States, and other international partners. This international effort allowed the U.S. military, through NATO, to fully exercise its airpower strategy.

Implementation: The three phases of the above strategy—arms embargo, no-fly zone, and protection of civilians—commenced in late March, 2011. Approximately 8,000 troops deployed to the

area, supporting the over 260 air assets and 21 naval assets that took part in the fighting. All told, U.S. and allied Air Forces flew over 26,500 sorties, destroying over 5,900 military targets. The arms embargo covered around 61,000 nautical miles and denied eleven ships because of the risks the cargo presented to the civilian population. NATO forces de-conflicted over 2,500 air, ground and maritime movements into Libya, and NATO maritime assets directly aided the rescue of over 600 migrants in distress at sea<sup>43</sup>. Rebel Libyan forces captured and killed Muammar Gaddafi on October 20th, and operations ended in the same month<sup>44</sup>.

Outcomes: As seen in the implementation section above, the mission was an initial success. Colonel Gadhafi's regime ended, and the humanitarian crisis in the country came to a halt. The operation lasted just seven months, and allies experienced very few casualties or losses. Militarily, the NATO-led coalition was able to achieve all stated objectives. George Washington University International Affairs Professor Marc Lynch argued that the mission was largely successful, claiming "the NATO intervention *did* save Libya's protestors from a near-certain bloodbath in Benghazi. It *did* help Libyans free themselves . . . *did* inspire Arab democracy protestors across the region . . . and it *did not* result in an unpopular, long-term American military occupation"<sup>45</sup>. However, the aftermath is widely criticized as a foreign policy failure. In a Fox News interview on April 11<sup>th</sup> 2016, President Obama cited his failure "to plan for the day after" the ousting of Gadhafi as the worst mistake of his 8-year term<sup>46</sup>. In the three years following the intervention, Libya became a place that attracted terrorists, pumped out illegal arms and drugs and destabilized its neighbors<sup>47</sup>. Many scholars argue that, while the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan did too much, the Libyan operation did too little, not assisting in the

set up any type of viable governance or state structure after the fighting ceased<sup>48</sup>. In 2012, Islamist militants killed the US ambassador and three other Americans in a terrorist attack in Benghazi, and in 2014 civil war officially broke out between the "Libyan National Army" and militant Islamist groups in the country. Through today, fighting continues between pro-government forces and Islamic State militants, who have taken over multiple Libyan cities and ports.

Lessons Learned: The outcomes in this case are eerily similar to those in Iraq and Afghanistan, despite a very different strategic approach. Just as in Iraq, Islamic State militants in Libya have wreaked havoc on peoples' lives, the economic and institutional infrastructure, and on any hopes of establishing a secure state. And yet, the United States and its allies, through an airstrike approach, quickly and fairly easily achieved the initial goals of the military intervention, ousting the old regime and ending the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

Counterterrorism: 2001-Present  
Counterterrorism Operations in  
Pakistan and Yemen

Background: Following the attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>, the United States needed to hunt down and eliminate an enemy that it had little to no prior experience against. While full-scale interventions in Afghanistan and later in Iraq served the purpose of fighting against groups that harbored terrorists or against governments who supported them, going after terrorist networks themselves has proven to be much more difficult. This is due in part to their small size, mobility, and knowledge of their surroundings. Beginning in 2002, Remotely-Piloted Aircraft (RPAs, also known as "drones") in Pakistan and Yemen played a significant role in identifying and tracking members of al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The CIA and U.S. special operations forces utilized the technology as a means of destabilizing these networks.

Policy Environment: As discussed in the section on Afghanistan, the American people, Congress, and the international community initially fully supported hunting down terrorists, almost by any means necessary. An important note about drone strikes is that since the operations are generally small and specifically targeted, without the loss of American life, their implementation does not affect public opinion as much as a full-scale intervention, or even a manned airstrike operation would. When President Obama took office, he placed a greater emphasis on drone strikes—in part because he saw them as more successful tools in reaching his strategic goals, but also because they provided a much less inflammatory approach than deploying more boots on the ground in hostile areas.

Strategic Goals: The strategic goals of drone strikes in each of the two countries are fairly straightforward: disrupt and eliminate terrorist networks, specifically those that threaten the United States. Under the umbrella of this main goal lie a few others: limit civilian and U.S. casualties, strike targets outside of normal military operating areas (technically no troops deploy to Pakistan, only to the Afghan-Pakistani border), and collect intelligence for national security.

Implementation: According to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, a nonprofit news organization based in London, the U.S. military has executed 425 drone strikes in Pakistan from 2004 to the present. These strikes killed between 2,500 and 4,000 people, with 16-25 percent of them being civilians<sup>49</sup>. In Yemen, the U.S. drones have struck approximately 150 times between 2002 and the present, killing between 600 and 900 people and between 60 and 100 civilians. These numbers are hard to specifically verify, but they indicate a significant airstrike campaign against terrorist targets in these countries, at times

accepting civilian casualties as collateral damage.

Outcomes: As hard as it is to find and analyze data concerning the prevalence of drone strikes in these countries, it is even more difficult to determine the outcomes and whether or not the strategic goals have been reached by the nearly 600 strikes over the past 15 years. According to Michael Hayden, former Director of the NSA and Director of the CIA, “The Program is not perfect. No military program is. But here is the bottom line: it works . . . [it] has been the most precise and effective application of firepower in the history of armed conflict”<sup>50</sup>. He advocates for drone strikes as a proportional and highly discriminate response to terrorism, and argues for their ability to hinder terrorist networks, thereby preventing them from targeting U.S. troops on the American homeland.

Daniel Byman, senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, argued for the effectiveness of drone strikes in June 2013. He writes that “drones have done their job remarkably well: by killing key leaders and denying terrorists sanctuaries in Pakistan, Yemen, and, to a lesser degree, Somalia, drones have devastated al Qaeda and associated anti-American militant groups”<sup>51</sup>. Byman also points out the positives of drone strikes from a financial and collateral damage perspective, continuing, “they have done so at little financial cost, at no risk to U.S. forces, and with fewer civilian casualties than many alternative methods would have caused.” Although Byman recognizes that critics remain skeptical, he sees them as a necessary instrument of U.S. counterterrorism operations.

Others have different opinions; and unfortunately, with a lack of hard information on what exactly drone strikes have prevented and what the real outcomes are, opinions are what we have to rely on in order to analyze the effectiveness of drone

strikes. James Downie, opinion editor for The Washington Post, wrote a piece in May 2016 entitled, “Obama’s drone war is a shameful part of his legacy”<sup>52</sup>. He starts, “Although drones may be quite good at killing people (even if not always the intended targets), it’s not clear that they are an effective tool in the war on terrorism.” Killing terrorists, rather than capturing them, limits the amount of actionable intelligence available to deter future terrorist plots. Downie continues into the legal and constitutional questions surrounding drone strikes, citing leaked documents that show how easy it is for an innocent civilian to be added to the U.S. government’s terrorist database.

The data provided by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, as listed above, show that drone strikes have indeed eliminated many terrorist targets over the past fifteen years. Whether or not all of those people should have been labeled as such is a separate, normative issue. However, the strategic goal of taking out targets with limited collateral damage—many fewer civilians died by drone strikes than did in the full-scale interventions of Iraq and Afghanistan—has been achieved. Even without knowing the direct effect these strikes had on preventing attacks on the United States, they are at least effective at achieving their military objectives (eliminating terrorists with limited collateral damage).

Lessons Learned: If the goal is to kill terrorists without committing large amounts of military resources, drones may be the best way forward. One of the main reasons the Bush and Obama administrations were able to employ drone strikes was the program’s covertness—since Americans are not dying, the public is not as concerned about concentrating pressure against an administration to stop the approach. The secretive nature of drones allows policymakers to extend drone wars longer

than would be politically feasible with American troops on the ground. While drone strikes may not be effective for large-scale operations, like regime-change, they can strike precisely and quietly in remote areas of the world.

## **Conclusion, Recommendations, and Implementation**

When deciding which military strategy to implement, the policymakers on the NSC must think strategically. Strategic discussions should start by defining the ends that the Council hopes to achieve, and only once the ends have been established should the discussion shift to the ways and means that can contribute to those ends.

In comparing full-scale to airstrike-focused interventions, we are comparing two broad yet distinct military means. The wars in Vietnam and Panama each provide examples of full-scale military interventions, in which the full might of the U.S. military served as the means to reach the stated strategic ends. In the interventions in Libya in 1986, Yugoslavia, Pakistan and Yemen, U.S. policymakers chose to rely upon airstrikes as the means while limiting the number of troops in ground combat. The case studies of Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya in 2011 and Pakistan/Yemen demonstrate both successes and failures resulting from each of the two approaches.

Full-scale interventions can lead to quick and effective strategic achievements, especially when the goal is regime change. In Iraq, U.S. forces quickly advanced and seized Baghdad, toppling and eventually capturing leader Saddam Hussein. In Afghanistan, U.S. troops forced the Taliban from power, achieving the first of President Bush’s objectives in just months. However, long-term success proved unattainable in both cases. Bush saw Iraq as an opportunity for democratization in the Middle East, an example that other countries in the region



could follow. Unfortunately, corruption flourished within the post-war Iraqi government, and the repression of Sunnis by Shia leadership contributed to widespread animosity, in turn fueling the rise of the Islamic State. To date, Iraqi forces are still fighting with ISIS fighters to regain control of the country.

President Bush held a similar vision for a peaceful and free post-conflict situation in Afghanistan, and yet today the security and political conditions are far from ideal. The Taliban is alive and well, having come out of hiding as the United States and its allies have withdrawn forces over the last five years. Captain A. J. Glubzinski of the U.S. Army was twice deployed to Afghanistan as a military intelligence officer trying to combat Taliban insurgencies. According to him, “Unfortunately, most insurgent networks have the ability to ‘go black’ for a period of time, emerging when the deterrent threat is lower.” This is exactly what the Taliban have done, showing the difficulty of fighting terrorism with full-scale military interventions that often have set end dates. A well-organized insurgent network can outlast the threat, sometimes waiting decades to reemerge once the danger of direct violence subsides.

Airstrike-focused strategies, specifically as implemented in the Libyan intervention in 2011 and the counterterrorism operations in Pakistan and Yemen since the early 2000s, have also resulted in mixed success. In Libya, the NATO coalition only needed six months and 5,000 allied ground troops to halt the humanitarian crisis and topple the Gaddafi regime. But the achievement was short-lived, as a lack of a NATO post-conflict implementation plan coupled with widespread political strife within the country contributed to its destabilization. Today the Libyan government is in a fight against Islamic State insurgents and the region is far from the pre-war vision of a free post-

conflict state. In Pakistan and Yemen, government reports indicate that drone strikes have successfully targeted terrorist networks while limiting collateral damage. However, it is impossible to precisely measure the deterrent effects of these strikes, and the host nations are no closer to eliminating terrorist safe-havens within their borders.

From these findings, I urge the members of the NSC to consider the following two recommendations when making strategic choices with regards to potential U.S. foreign military interventions. Avoid Strategic Mismatch

In three of the four case studies, U.S. policymakers set the goal of long-term democratization. In Iraq and Afghanistan, full-scale approaches failed to lead to this outcome. The United States attempted to avoid making these same mistakes in Libya in 2011, opting for an airstrike strategy with the goal of allowing the Libyan people to take ownership of their own post-conflict state rather than assigning U.S. forces the task of establishing a democracy. This also failed. These cases demonstrate a phenomenon I label *strategic mismatch*<sup>53</sup>, in which policymakers improperly connect military means to strategic ends that are in fact largely independent of the amount of applied force.

In an interview with Colonel Chris Hickey of the U.S. Army, he argued that a plan which includes “a seemingly unreasonably large commitment of military forces and reconstruction funds” has the possibility of ensuring a “better peace” after war. He cited post-World War II Germany and Japan, as well as former Yugoslavia, as cases in which the United States followed war with “a well-resourced and well-planned effort to establish a . . . politically legitimate government with sustainable and effective security forces.”

However, Colonel Hickey also emphasized the importance of implementing

such a plan in “a willing and able host nation”—a requirement that I believe is more important than the amount of force the United States chooses to apply. Germany and Japan could each rely on pre-war institutional knowledge, as well as widespread buy-in (and to some extent homogenization) throughout their societies, as foundations upon which to build successful post-war nations. Yugoslavia also had functioning state institutions in place before the conflict that were left largely intact for post-war use.

Even if the United States was willing to commit Colonel Hickey’s “seemingly unreasonably large” force to future interventions, that alone would not guarantee a successful post-intervention rebuilding effort. Therefore, I urge the members of the NSC to avoid ascribing one of the two strategic choices as better or worse for achieving the ends of democratization or of building a peaceful post-conflict nation—neither approach is more or less likely to bring about those ends by itself.

#### Airstrike-Focused Approaches are Often Equally Capable and More Practical

The U.S. military has proven capable of enacting regime change and halting humanitarian crises through the use of both full-scale (in Iraq) and airstrike-focused (in Yugoslavia and Libya) approaches. Airstrike-interventions, with less U.S. troops on the ground in direct combat, are also much less likely to create domestic political backlash. As discussed prior, neither of these approaches will guarantee the long-term stability of a country. Therefore, unless the members of the NSC are confident that the country in which the United States will intervene has the capacity and desire to create a stable post-intervention society, I

recommend that policymakers pursue airstrike-focused interventions in interstate wars. Ideally these interventions are planned and executed multilaterally with international support, both on the ground and through the air (like in Libya in 2011).

In combatting counterterrorism, airstrikes provide the most appropriate means for fighting long-term wars of deterrence against ever-transforming insurgent organizations. The intervention in Afghanistan demonstrates the difficulty of using a full-scale approach to eliminate terrorist networks. Not only can they easily hide and mobilize elsewhere, new organizations seem to develop as quickly as old ones disappear. Captain Glubzinski shared his perspective on the effectiveness of airstrikes against terrorist organizations:

“Can aerial targeting defeat an insurgency? No. Can it make it more difficult for insurgencies to adapt and accomplish their missions? Yes. In targeting insurgencies, we are trying to affect the psychology of the organization and its ability to recruit. We're hoping to create fear among potential recruits, deterring them from joining the organization based on the dangers of joining they've observed.”

Airstrikes are the best means available for creating fear among the potential recruits of terrorist organizations. Moreover, because the American public and Congress seems less concerned with ongoing drone strikes in regions like Pakistan and Yemen, terrorist organizations cannot rely on waiting out an offensive that could potentially continue as long as is necessary.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the United States Air Force, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

## End Notes

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# A Model of International Mentorship: Benefits, Challenges, and Trends Revealed in Pen Pal Letters from a Haitian Girls' Empowerment Program

By Rachel Vinciguerra

The Fi Ki Fò (“strong girl”) empowerment program in Les Cayes, Haiti is a unique case study of an international mentorship program utilizing a pen pal model. One component of the Fi Ki Fò program is a pen pal letter exchange between 17 teen girls in Haiti and 17 young professional women in the United States who serve as their mentors. Neither mentorship nor letter correspondence are groundbreaking when considered separately. Mentorship is a common component of many programs working with vulnerable populations because it aids the mentee in the development of a social network and a number of other resources to which the mentor may have insight or access. Letter correspondence is, similarly, a common component of programs focused on an exchange of ideas across cultures. Generally, letter correspondence takes the form of a peer-to-peer relationship which most often allows young people to learn about another culture and draw comparisons with their own through letter writing. The Fi Ki Fò program is unique in that it has merged the frameworks of mentorship and international correspondence to create a new model of international empowerment.

In the summer of 2017, an evaluation of the Fi Ki Fò program was conducted to gain

insight into program processes and outputs. What follows are the results and analyses of the international mentorship component of the program. This particular area of the evaluation included a comparison of surveys completed by both Haitian teens and U.S. women: calling for both qualitative, descriptive responses and quantitative responses in the form of Likert scales; thematic coding of mentee’s pen pal letter content over a two-year period; and the analysis of change in self-esteem based on longitudinal data collected with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). Some of the findings are promising as participants indicated that they developed meaningful relationships and received useful advice from their mentors throughout the process. The letter coding also revealed an increasing frequency of teen girls reporting that they felt supported by others. Both of these results are an encouraging reflection of the possibilities of this unique international mentorship model.

Other findings point to areas where the program can be strengthened. The data for the evaluation was collected between the start of the program in September 2015 through May 2017. This period includes the devastating disaster, Hurricane Matthew, which passed through southern Haiti on

October 4, 2016. Mentee's pen pal letters were grouped into three time periods for coding: two periods before Hurricane Matthew and one after. RSES scores were conducted at similar intervals: two before the hurricane and one after. As such, a comparison between the first two groups of letters and the third reflects the girls' personal reactions to the disaster. The RSES scores, confirmed by themes of increased worry and anxiety in the third group of letters, also show quantitatively that girls' self-esteem decreased in the third and final measurement (post-Hurricane Matthew). Though the decline was not statistically significant, these findings are powerful insight into the girls' experiences of the hurricane as well as a case for understanding potential challenges for which this particular international mentorship program should prepare, especially by considering how the program can directly strengthen or reinforce girls' self-esteem broadly and in times of crisis.

What follows herein is a brief summary of related studies of self-esteem, mentorship, and letter correspondences in other contexts; an overview of the Fi Ki Fò program as it operates in Haiti; and a presentation of the research methodology for the relevant components of the evaluation. Afterwards, the results of the evaluation are presented, followed by a discussion of the findings and their limitations, and concluding thoughts.

## **Related Studies**

### *Self-Esteem in Girls' Empowerment Programs*

Self-esteem has been extensively researched in the context of youth programs.<sup>1</sup> Research has shown that higher self-esteem is correlated with improved outcomes in a variety of areas including academics, health, and well-being.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, many

programs, including youth programs, incorporate improved self-esteem as a goal. This goal is even more crucial for youth considered "at-risk" as organizations often hope that focusing on improving self-esteem will subsequently improve outcomes in other areas.

In one girls' empowerment initiative related to self-esteem, the Ishraq program provided safe, educational spaces for out-of-school girls in rural Upper Egypt where girls could play and learn.<sup>3</sup> The program conducted baseline (2009) and endline (2011) surveys with girls and their families to evaluate impact. Although the program showed improvement in literacy, reproductive health knowledge, and sports, it did not show significant changes in empowerment, self-esteem, or perception indicators.<sup>4</sup> The researchers comment that while some of the short-term goals were achieved, the program did not move the needle on more systemic gender inequalities in that two-year period. In this respect, measuring self-esteem, empowerment, and community perceptions overtime is crucial to understanding the potential correlation between program impact and systemic changes in perceptions of self and of gender-equality.

In other girls' empowerment programs, self-esteem is identified as an important tool to reach goals, yet it is not included within the objectives of the program and thus goes unmeasured or under-measured upon evaluation. For example, in an evaluation of a reproductive health program in rural Ethiopia, curriculum was provided to married adolescent girls and their husbands that explicitly focused on communication, self-esteem, and health, however, the research study only measured outcomes in terms of the functional changes in household responsibilities and family planning based on an interview questionnaire.<sup>5</sup> The

questions asked largely focused on the husbands' perceptions and changes in behavior from the perspective of the wife and did not include any explicit or proxy self-esteem measures on women's perceptions of themselves. Thus, any changes in women's self-esteem in this case remain unknown. It is critical to measure changes in self-esteem over time in girls' empowerment programs with broader objectives to best understand the mechanisms through which programs develop girls' self-esteem contribute to desired impacts. This is especially true in programs like this which identify increasing self-esteem as a method to achieve broader program goals.

Very little research exists on self-esteem instrument use in Haiti. One qualitative study, however, utilized a translated Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) in Haiti to understand the relationship between self-esteem and the ways young Haitian women seek care for sexually transmitted infections (STIs).<sup>6</sup> The RSES includes 10 statements to which participants respond using a Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Some statements are positive and some are negative. Based on a scoring guide (from 0 to 3 points for each response), participants receive a score between 0 and 30 on a scale. Scores below 15 indicate low self-esteem, scores from 15-25 indicate healthy self-esteem, and scores above 25 indicate high self-esteem.

The rationale for choosing the RSES in the study of Haitian women was the high internal reliability (based on Cronbach's Alpha and principal component loadings) across 28 languages and 53 nations and the fact that it is the most commonly used measure of global self-esteem.<sup>7</sup> The biggest obstacle was translating the scale for equivalent meaning in Haitian Creole. For

this study, researchers worked with STI specialists and nurses to translate the scale and triangulated their findings with the qualitative data collections of interviews with the women. For this reason, the Fi Ki Fò program evaluation utilized the same RSES method and triangulated findings with the qualitatively coded letters written by program participants.

#### *Mentorship Programs for Girls*

Most pertinent to the Fi Ki Fò program is mentorship research concerning female dyads and cross-cultural mentorship program outcomes. Some research has applied lessons learned from U.S. mentorship programs—which tend to focus on one-on-one, in-person, academic or professional partnerships—to other countries including New Zealand,<sup>8</sup> Israel,<sup>9</sup> and England.<sup>10,11</sup> The research on international pen pal relationships focuses on peer relationships, rather than mentorships, thus it has limited applications to this program.<sup>12</sup>

Some research shows that boys and girls have different mentorship needs because they experience different psychosocial development.<sup>13</sup> Thus, many mentorship programs separate male and female dyads: male dyads focus more on activities while female dyads focus on relationship building. A qualitative study conducted in 2009 with 12 female dyads found that the partners identified three related processes they experienced in their program: (1) emotional support (2) skills and confidence through collaboration and (3) companionship that relieved daily stress.<sup>14</sup> Though this gender difference is commonly implemented in existing mentorship programs, some research also suggests it is an oversimplification to divide mentorships in this way, as both genders may benefit from



relationship building and instrumental support.<sup>15</sup>

Cross-cultural mentorships within the U.S. have also been studied. A meta-analysis of mentorship programs did not find that race or ethnicity was statistically significant in terms of mentorship success.<sup>16</sup> Additional studies on this subject describe more nuanced effects on perceived mentorship outcomes.<sup>17</sup> One study of mentorship in STEM fields showed that although matching on race and gender were not significant indicators of academic success, those who were matched with mentors of the same race and gender did report receiving more help and felt the match on race and gender were important.<sup>18</sup>

One of the few studies of local mentorship in a developing country qualitatively showed that in a Kenyan women's religious organization, mentorship from other Kenyan women was useful for mentees to develop careers and receiving emotional support.<sup>19</sup> An upcoming multi-country evaluation study of the Creating Opportunities through Mentorship, Parental Involvement and Safe Spaces (COMPASS) program will hopefully provide some additional insight on the role of local-level mentorship across developing countries. The evaluation will make cross-country comparisons of how these programs influence girls' quality of life.<sup>20</sup>

### **Fi Ki Fò Program Background**

Pwoje Espwa (Project Hope) residential care facility in Les Cayes, Haiti was founded in 1998. A U.S.-funding organization called Free the Kids supports the care facility financially. Pwoje Espwa began as a nonprofit organization providing housing, food, and education to a dozen boys living on the streets in Les Cayes. Over time they expanded to provide more boys with more services including: healthcare, mental health

support, team sports, and vocational training. Pwoje Espwa provides residential services for both orphans and vulnerable children whose families are unable to fully support them. This support has also extended to provide education to hundreds more children in the surrounding community who continue to live with their families.

For the first nine years, Pwoje Espwa did not accept girls into residential programming because it did not feel it could appropriately accommodate them. In 2007, girls were admitted as residents for the first time mostly because Espwa's newly acquired, larger property provided space for them to live separately from the boys. Despite the inclusion of girls as residents on the new property, disparity remained between boys and girls in terms of education and access to opportunities both because of Espwa's historic development focusing primarily of the needs of boys as well as existing gender inequalities in Haiti. As of 2014, there were still many opportunities available to the boys (e.g., soccer, internships, summer classes) from which girls were excluded.

The Fi Ki Fò ("strong girl") program began at Pwoje Espwa in September 2015 in response to this disparity. The program combines international mentorship, skills training, local role models, and practical experiences to empower teen girls at Pwoje Espwa to become fearless authors of their own lives. Fi Ki Fò was created to fill the void for girls' programming which existed at the time by helping to prepare girls for life after residential care. The program seeks to influence systemic gender inequality by shifting local perceptions of girls' capabilities and creating a more equitable environment for women and girls at Pwoje Espwa. This overarching program impact has not yet been evaluated; the development

of a measurement tool of local perceptions will be led by program participants ideally in the next program cycle.

*Program Component: Letter Writing with U.S. Mentors*

The following results and analysis focus on one particular facet of the Fi Ki Fò program: international mentorship relationships. To provide individualized attention, support, and encouragement, each teen participant in Haiti is paired with a mentor (a young adult woman in the U.S.) with whom they correspond monthly, sending one letter and receiving a second letter each month. Mentors selected for the pen pal component for the first two cohorts of girls have a prior connection to Espwa usually through a volunteer experience.

**Fi Ki Fò Program Evaluation Methodology**

A formative evaluation of the Fi Ki Fò program, including the mentorship component, was conducted January-June 2017 to offer feedback to administrators and stakeholders of the program by identifying and analyzing successful components as well as those which could be improved since the program began in September 2015. The feedback from this evaluation will be implemented for the next program cycle beginning in September 2017.

The evaluation utilized a multi-faceted approach to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from observations, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and existing program records. The majority of data collected came directly from program staff and participants. These data were then triangulated, in most cases, with program records to create a more complete picture of outcomes.

The international mentorship aspect of the program, in particular, was evaluated using three main methodologies:

1. Survey data collected from pen pals in the U.S. and Haiti
2. Thematic coding of Haitian girls' letters over the course of program involvement
3. RSES scores for girls over the course of the program

***Survey Data***

Pen Pal surveys were distributed to all U.S. mentors (n=17) and Haiti pen pals (n=17). 15 Haiti pen pals and 13 U.S. mentors completed the surveys. The surveys for Haiti pen pals included 17 statements ranked on a 5-point Likert Scale from Disagree to Agree. Sample statements include: "I think writing letters with my pen pal benefits me" and "My pen pal understands me." The surveys for U.S. mentors included the same 17 statements worded toward them and two additional statements: "I think my pen pal has improved in their writing throughout this process" and "I think my pen-pal has become more confident throughout this process." These Likert Scale responses produced summary quantitative statistics for comparison. Additionally, both surveys asked for narrative responses to the following questions: "What are the best parts of having a pen pal?" and "What are the challenges of having a pen pal?"

***Thematic Coding of Letters***

The Haiti pen pal letters were divided roughly into three time periods which approximately equal counts of letters exchanged: September-November 2014,

January 2015-October 2015, and December 2016-May 2017. The third time period includes the months after Hurricane Matthew hit Les Cayes in October 2016. There was a gap in letter writing between the winter holiday in December 2015 and November 2016 for a number of reasons including: first, administrative constraints for regular letter writing in spring 2016, summer vacation from Espwa when some girls returned home to families and the program takes a recess, and then Hurricane Matthew in October 2016—the aftermath of which prevented letter exchange due to limited internet and electricity access and limited staff capacity as they responded to disaster needs.

The Haiti pen pals' letters were coded in these three periods using open-coding which allows the content of the letters to dictate the identification of relevant themes. After letters were coded, aggregates of each theme were summarized across the three periods to identify relevant changes. It is important to note that changes in most themes between the first two periods and the third period could be caused by any number of factors in addition to Hurricane Matthew. However, increased frequency of “anxiety” and “worry” specifically were all related to the statements girls made about the hurricane.

### ***Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale Scores***

The self-esteem of the girls was the only part of this program evaluation that sought to measure impact by using a quasi-control group to compare trends overtime. Self-esteem could not be measured through a randomized control trial in which girls could be randomly selected to receive treatment

through program participation. All 17 girls living at Pwoje Espwa were enrolled in the program, thus there are no girls unenrolled who qualify for the program.

A quasi-control group was established to compare girls change in self-esteem overtime. The quasi-control group is made up of 38 randomly selected girls in the same age groups (12-18) who attend school at Pwoje Espwa but do not live on the property. These girls live with their families in the Les Cayes community and attend the same school at the Espwa girls. Because of this design, the comparative results cannot independently indicate causation between the program and girls' self-esteem. There are likely significant factors that differ between the Fi Ki Fò girls and those in the quasi-control group in addition to program participation. It is somewhat unlikely that changes in the Fi Ki Fò girls would have impacted girls in the quasi-control group through school interactions because of the size of the school (over 1,000 students attend school on property) as well as the disparity in grade levels and classes. Nevertheless, diffusion cannot be ruled out as a limitation of this method. Finally, the sample size of program girls is limited compared to the quasi-control group which affects the power of the quantitative test.

This element of the study does, however, illustrates differences in self-esteem between these two groups, though it does not independently explain the reason why those differences exist.

### ***Limitations***

There are a few important limitations to the following results and observations. First, the

assessment of writing skill improvement provided by U.S. mentors is limited because letters are translated into the recipient's respective language (with the exception of a few U.S. participants who write and receive letters in Haitian Creole). This means there is a possibility that writing skills improvement could be a reflection on translations rather than letter content. Second, the letter content analysis was not a randomized trial and the program does not exist in a vacuum which means that the thematic changes in letter content cannot necessarily be attributed to the international mentorship component of the program as other factors in the girls' environment, such as formal education, surely played a role as well. Finally, the self-esteem comparison between the program group and a quasi-control group has a limited sample size and, of course, lacks the statistical rigor of a randomized control trial. A randomized control trial was impossible in this case because all girls eligible for the Fi Ki Fò program (living at Espwa between ages 14 and 18) were already enrolled. The quasi-control group is not a perfect match for girls in the program because members of the quasi-control group live with their families outside the Espwa property and attend school at Espwa. There are undoubtedly multiple factors which differentiate them from girls living at Espwa and enrolled in the program. As such, the statistical comparisons between the two groups simply provide an illustration of the differences between these two groups without assuming to prove causation.

## Results

<i>Surveys:</i>	<i>Summary</i>	<i>Statistics</i>
The pen pal surveys distributed to U.S. mentors and Haiti pen pals	revealed a number of items on which there was complete consensus. The average response to each statement, ranked on a Likert scale, is presented in Table 1 for both U.S. and Haiti pen pals. Of 13 U.S. mentors and 15 Haiti pen pals who completed the survey, all agreed or strongly agreed that writing letters benefits them, all felt well-matched with their pen pal, all enjoyed reading letters, and all felt that letter topics were important to them. All of the Haiti pen pals agreed or strongly agreed they were honest in their letters, all felt their pen pal gave them relevant advice, and all felt that being a part of the program made them more confident. The surveys also revealed that most Haiti pen pals (73%) thought too few letters were exchanged. All Haiti pen pals agreed or strongly agreed that their U.S. mentor understood them, though the U.S. mentors did not unanimously agree that they understood or felt understood by their pen pal (8 out of 13 U.S. mentors agreed or strongly agreed that they understood their pen pal, 9 out of 13 agreed or strongly agreed that their pen pal understands them). The qualitative findings in Table 2 reflect this discrepancy with U.S. mentors citing differences in understanding as the greatest challenge of the program and the majority of Haiti pen pals indicating no problems. All Haiti pen pals felt the program developed their writing skills and 10 out of 13 U.S. mentors confirmed they also felt their pen pals' writing abilities had increased through the program.	

Table 1: Summary Statistics of Pen Pal Surveys

Statement	Mean (Haiti Pen Pals)	Mean (U.S. Pen Pals)
I understood the goal of writing letters.	4.65	4.84
I think we wrote too many letters.	3.06	1.46
I think we write too few letters.	3.88	3.15
I thought the quantity of letters was good.	4.35	3.61
I thought <u>me</u> and my pen-pal were a good match.	4.88	4.62
I think writing letters with my pen-pal will benefit me.	4.76	4.62
If I have questions I can get help.	4.18	4.69
My pen-pal understands me.	4.65	3.77
I enjoyed reading my pen-pal letters.	4.94	4.92
I am honest with my pen-pal.	4.82	4.46
I think my pen pal is honest with me.	4.64	4.00
We write letters about things that are important to me.	4.71	4.00
My pen-pal gives me good advice.	4.94	4.38
My pen-pal asks me good questions.	4.76	3.23
My pen-pal values me as a Fi Ki Fò.	4.88	Na
Being a pen-pal made me more confident.	4.82	4
Being a pen-pal makes me better at writing.	4.71	3.92

\*Statements were rated on a Likert Scale from

1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

\*\*The final two statements for US pen-pals were phrased,

"I think my pen-pal has become more confident." and

"I think my pen-pal has improved in their writing."

### Surveys: Qualitative Findings

On both pen pal surveys there was a place to discuss the greatest benefits and challenges of letter-writing. A summary of those responses and frequencies is presented in a Table 2. The results are consistent with research on at least two other cross-cultural, peer-to-peer pen pal programs which found that some of greatest benefits were "increased exchanged of knowledge," "developing friendships," "critical thinking skills" in one case;<sup>21</sup> and "understanding and comparing cultures," "language," and "connections" in the other.<sup>22</sup> Fi Ki Fò letter exchanges are unique because they follow an international mentorship model rather

than a peer relationship model. Additionally, the focus of letters is on shared life experiences rather than language learning. Nonetheless, the program demonstrates some similar beneficial outcomes with peer relationship models, especially from the perspective of U.S. mentors. Interestingly, Haiti pen pals identified some additional benefits outside of those highlighted in the peer pen pal programs. Benefits like "getting help/advice," "mutual respect," and "ability to discuss problems" all point more closely to the mentorship element of the letter exchange.

**Table 2: Benefits and Challenges of Pen Pal Program Component based on Qualitative Survey Responses**

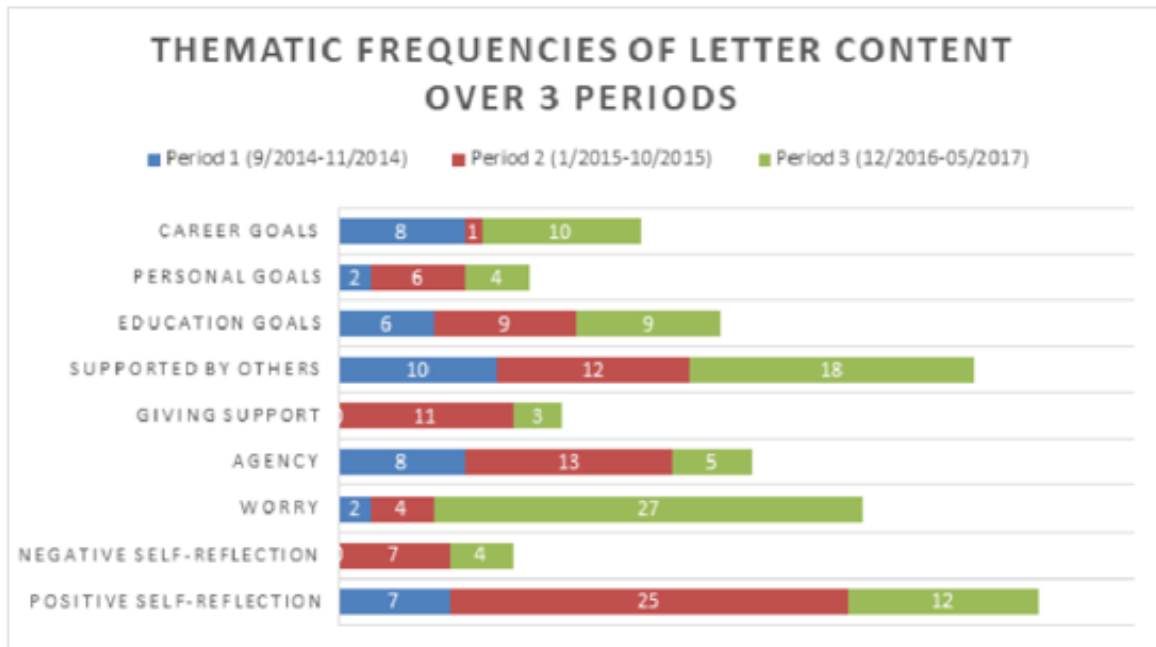
	Greatest Benefits	Frequency	Greatest Challenges	Frequency
U.S. Pen Pals	Maintaining connections	7/13	Language barriers	5/13
	Shared experiences	4/13	Depth of responses limits conversations	7/13
	Critical thinking (on both sides)	3/13	Length of time between letters complicates maintaining relevant ongoing conversations	4/13
	Self-reflection	5/13		
Haiti Pen Pals	Getting help/advice	7/15	None	7/15
	Mutual Respect	4/15	Lack of motivation between me and my pen pal	1/15
	Good Questions	3/15	Some questions about school were difficult	1/15
	Able to discuss problems	2/15		

### *Letter*

Hurricane Matthew is a complicating factor in understanding how the girls have changed over the course of the program. As seen in Figure 1, some topics were found in girls' letters with increasing frequency over all three periods: notably "feeling supported by others" (150% increase between second and third period) and "worry" (600% increase between the second and third period). The spike in frequency of girls expressing worry in the third period is related to Hurricane Matthew as most girls were expressing concern for their families, friends, and Espwa in their letters. It is impossible to say if some other topics may have increased in the third period had it not been for the hurricane. For example, "personal goals" and "educational goals" were mentioned with increasing frequency from the first to second period as were "agency" and "positive self-reflection," but they dropped off in frequency in the third period. An additional item of note is that increased negative self-reflections may also be a sign that girls feel a higher level of trust with

### *Trends*

their mentors and are comfortable sharing weaknesses and challenges openly which may not necessary correlate with increased negative self-perception. Recent research on patterns of self-disclosure in both peer and mentor relationships suggest that self-disclosure can be a "social-commitment device" in such relationships both within and across cultures.<sup>23</sup> Another study exploring self-disclosure in peer mentoring relationships found that a higher quantity of self-disclosure and more frequent disclosure of emotions correlated with stronger relationships and often resulted in peers providing advice and reciprocating with their own self-disclosure: a pattern also reflected in the Fi Ki Fò letter exchanges.<sup>24</sup> Thus, increased self-disclosure of any kind (i.e. worry, negative self-reflection, positive self-reflection) is likely also an indicator of the natural development of a close relationship. This does not necessarily contradict the finding in the RSES scores that girls' self-esteem decreased in the third period, it merely offers an additional explanation for increased negative self-reflections in the letters.



### *Self Esteem Trends*

When comparing the quasi-control group from the school to girls living at Espwa pre-program, there is a distinction between the two. The girls in the school increase in self-esteem progressively from ages 12 to 18 compared to the girls at Espwa pre-program who experienced lower self-esteem scores from ages 14 to 19 and never reached the same level of healthy self-esteem as the girls from the school. It is important to note the number of girls in the Espwa sample is limited because it is made up of program girls' baseline self-esteem scores before they entered the program.



Figure 2: Control Group Self-Esteem Scores  
Sample size: 12-13 yr (n=4), 14 (n=5), 15 (n=11), 16 (n=8), 17 to 18 yr (n=10)

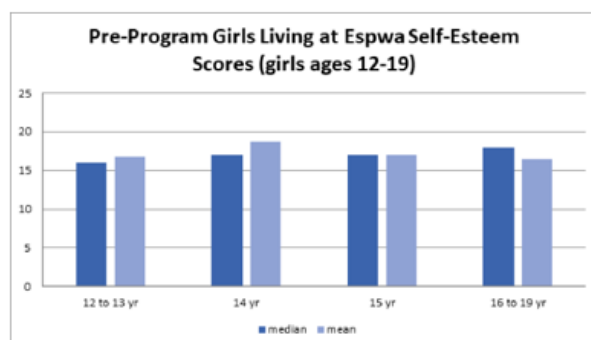


Figure 3: Pre-Program Girls Self-Esteem Scores  
Sample size: 12-13 yr (n=7), 14 (n=3), 15 (n=2), 16-19 (n=4)

In addition to RSES scores, demographic information was collected of both groups including: participation in program, age, grade, and number of siblings (see Table 3). Each of these demographics was regressed on self-esteem scores. In summary, most of the demographics did not have a statistically significant effect on the RSES at the .05 level. Years in the program was the only statistically significant predictor of RSES likely based on the lower levels of self-esteem with which girls entered the program that remained stagnant throughout program participation. By comparison, the control group with 0 years of program participation had and maintained higher levels of self-esteem over time. For program participants, after spending time in the program there was no statistically significant change in self-esteem (see Table 4). In a paired-t-test with the first cohort of girls' self-esteem scores before and after the hurricane, there is also no statistically significant difference, though girls' RSES scores declined at the final measurement (see Table 5). In fact, all girls except for one decreased in self-esteem after Hurricane Matthew (see Table 6). While this decrease in RSES scores was not statistically significant, the near universality of self-esteem decline is worth mentioning,

especially considering the increasing frequency of "worry" in girls' letters during the same period, after the hurricane.

**Table 3.** Regression Results for Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scores, RSES (standard deviations from the mean)

Years in Program*	-2.43 (1.12)
Age at Test	.23 (.31)
Grade in School	.38 (.35)
Espwa or Non-Espwa (1 or 0)	2.71 (2.42)
Siblings	.17 (.15)
Date of RSES Test	.01 (.01)
R-Squared	.1653
No. Observations	84

Standard errors are reported in parentheses.  
\*Indicates significance at the 95% level, meaning

## Discussion

The evaluation of the international mentorship component of the Fi Ki Fò program demonstrated that meaningful connections have been established between U.S. mentors and Haiti pen pals. Among the greatest benefits of the pen pal program girls cited were receiving advice, mutual respect, and opportunities for questions and discussion, themes that are consistent with research on benefits of national mentorship programs. This finding is powerful in this particular context, because the majority of the mentorship relationship throughout the program year is maintained through letter-writing rather than in-person meetings or activities. This suggests that some of the benefits of traditional mentorship programs can be maintained using the pen pal model.



**Table 4.** t-test Results Comparing Pre-Program and Post/During Program RSES Scores

RSES	n	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-crit	df	p-value
Pre-Program	16	17.06	3.60	.42	2.01	47	.67
Post/During Program	33	16.55	4.07				

**Table 5.** t-test Results Comparing RSES Scores September 2016 and March 2017 (pre- and post- Hurricane Matthew)

RSES	n	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-crit	df	p-value
RSES 09/2016	15	17.6	4.26	.78	1.76	14	.22
RSES 03/2017	15	16.8	3.47				

**Table 6.** RSES Scores Change Overtime for First Cohort of Individual Participants

Observatio n ID	Dec 201 5	May 2016	Sep 2016	Mar 2017
A	17	21	20	16
B	22	15	17	12
C	16	24	5	12
D	21	19	*	22
E	17	15	22	16
F	9	14	18	17
G	12	15	*	16
H	15	12	18	11
J	19	12	9	*
K	*	17	21	17

\*missing data point; RSES <15 = low self-esteem,  
RSES 15-25 = healthy self-esteem, RSES >25=high self-esteem;  
each row represents an individual participant

There is also some evidence, based on self-assessments of program participants and corroborations from mentors, that the program has improved girls' writing skills. This is a more traditional positive impact seen in peer-to-peer letter writing that appears to hold in the Fi Ki Fò case.

In terms of content analysis, the findings suggest that girls wrote increasingly to their pen pal over time about support they received from people around them. It is difficult to say what caused this change: perhaps they felt more empowered to seek

support and perhaps they had the context to recognize existing networks of support because of the program. In either case, this environment could foster their success and increasing sense of self-worth in years to come.

Hurricane Matthew complicates the data to some extent as it precludes our knowledge of whether girls might have continued to discuss their goals or their agency with increasing frequency in the absence of the hurricane. Regardless, the results show girls were comfortable sharing their anxieties and worries with their mentors. Perhaps this is because they felt a sense of mutual respect with their mentor or because they expected their mentors could provide good advice in that time of difficulty (both benefits of the program that girls indicated in the survey). In either case, the self-esteem surveys show that girls almost ubiquitously declined in self-esteem between the final two periods (September 2015 and March 2017) on either side of the hurricane. Though this decline was not statistically significant, it is worthy

of attention since the decline in RSES scores was universal.

It seems this international mentorship model is significant in the lives of the program participants based on their own assessments of this aspect of the program and the content of their letters. Therefore, there may be opportunities, highlighted in the recommendations below, to utilize this model for strategic pursuit of related program goals such as increasing girls' self-esteem. Though mentorship and international letter correspondences are common in programs working with young women, Fi Ki Fò is a unique case study of the possibilities of international mentorship within a pen pal framework.

### **Concluding Thoughts/Recommendations**

Based on the results and discussion above, and taking into account the limitations of this study, suggested areas for internal program improvement are as follows.

- 1. Implement letter prompts to increase self-esteem.** Research suggests that self-esteem is related to a person's sense of agency and ability to face difficult situations.<sup>25</sup> In order to foster self-esteem, letter prompts should encourage girls to be agents of change. One way to do this is to prompt girls to offer advice to their U.S. mentors. The girls indicated they value advice given by their mentors and including the girls in that exchange may empower them through their support of others. Over the course of the program, girls have already increased their reflections on supportive people in their lives and the people they support. This alone does not seem to correlate with increased self-esteem, but continued letter prompts focused on social

support may be a contributing factor for girls to recognize and reflect on their resources and agency.

- 2. Involve U.S. mentors in ongoing monitoring and informal coding of letters.** In a meta-analysis of 55 youth mentoring programs in the

U. S., one study concluded that mentoring programs had only a small benefit for program participants.<sup>26</sup> The positive impact was greatly increased when evidence-based practices and monitoring and evaluation procedures were utilized within the programs. Although coding two years of letters for the purposes of a formative program evaluation can provide a summary of useful information for program improvement, it may be too late to address issues as they arise. For example, in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, program administrators did not have access to aggregated data for letter content which might have helped inform subsequent letter prompts and conversations in the months that followed. One way to incorporate monitoring procedures into the pen pal component of the program is for U.S. mentors to submit a form after each letter they receive. The form could ask such questions as: Does your pen pal mention supporting someone else in their letter? Does your pen pal mention feeling agency to make a change about something in her life that she does not like? Does your pen pal express worry or concern about something in their life? As well as asking for frequency of each expression. These yes or no questions and frequencies coupled with space to briefly explain content

could provide a way to integrate letter monitoring and real-time analysis of changes one pen pal or the group of pen pals experience over time. This information would ideally be inputted into a central database and would be accessible by staff. The ongoing monitoring of letter content could then guide future letter prompts and program designs, allowing the program to be quickly responsive to trends.

3. **Consider program response to natural disasters.** The effect of Hurricane Matthew on the girls is highlighted in this evaluation. The self-esteem scores and letters showed that girls decreased in self-esteem after the hurricane (based on RSES scores) and were increasingly worried about those they cared about (based on letter coding). With this knowledge, it would be beneficial for program coordinators to consider, ahead of an emergency, how they can facilitate the girls' responses to a situation like this in a way that fosters their continued sense of agency. Perhaps it would be useful for mentors to receive training or education around the effect of disasters on young women in particular and what strategies can be utilized when conversing with

someone who has just experienced a major shock in their community. This could allow U.S. mentors to step more confidently into their role as they reflect with their mentee and encourage them to process and react to the situation in a way that is best for them.

Although it is a small program on the scale of international development initiatives for girls' empowerment, the Fi Ki Fò program participants have provided rich records of their experiences through the data to begin to understand some of the benefits, challenges, and trends of an international mentorship program. The results of the evaluation suggest that, in this particular case, an international mentorship program maintained some of the traditional benefits of both cross-cultural letter exchanges (including improved writing skills and the formation of meaningful relationships) and mentorship (including a greater sense of social support both from the mentor and through the recognition of supports in girls' immediate environment). Furthermore, the evaluation produced revealing information about the impact of Hurricane Matthew on girls' self-esteem, sense of worry, and social support. Each of these factors will allow program administrators to make improvements in this program for the coming years.

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# Trends in Federal IT Spending and Operational Satisfaction in the U.S. Federal Government FY 15

By Jeremy R. Waldron

Technology in an organization, particularly in information technology (IT), is associated with greater speed, efficiency, and simplicity in operations. New, technologically driven improvement in these three domains of operations should result in happier employees, due to simplified duties, and satisfied customers, due to better products and faster service. It is no surprise that there is much talk about technology in government, in the form of “E-Governance,” because we traditionally consider government to be slow and inefficient, and therefore, ripe for IT overhaul. The U.S. federal government has made sustained “pushes” in IT investment, particularly during the Obama administration. Each agency has differing structures of IT investment, which enables analysis of how those structures relate to satisfaction. This paper analyzes the IT financing structure of U.S. federal government agencies and how that structure evidences differing IT strategies. The paper goes on to analyze the relationship between amount and type of IT spending and employee and customer satisfaction.

## Background: Government IT

The archetype of government is slow, inefficient, with bureaucrats still running operating systems from the last decade. This description, at times, can be quite accurate. In 2013, reports emerged during the Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA) scandal stating that the sheer weight of all the backlogged paper files threatened to compromise the structural integrity of the

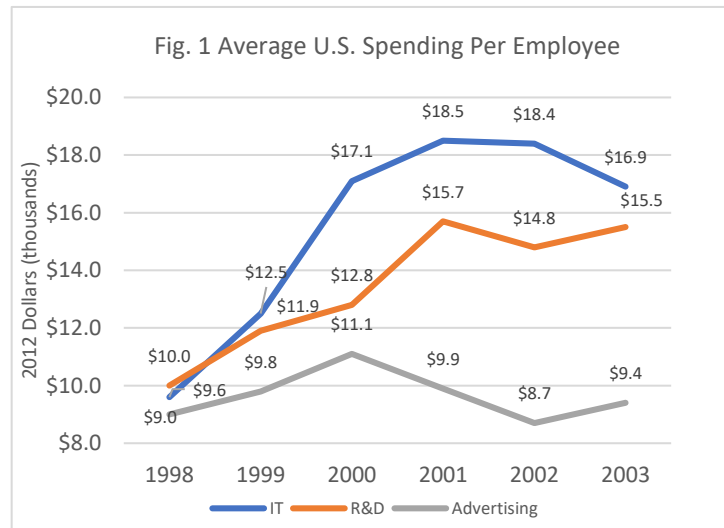
floor where they were stored.<sup>1</sup> In an age of digitization and automation, it is hard to imagine such a story.

Government may have a complicated history with IT, as many high-profile failures, such as the VA scandal or botched ACA marketplace rollout would suggest. However, standing in defying contrast is the achievement of the Internet itself, which was an extension of ARPANET. In fact, the history of IT governance is filled with caveats. Sometimes IT errors are management or leadership errors. Sometimes a legacy system is sufficient for operations and superior to more complex, and thereby, vulnerable systems. It is accurate to say there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to government. Therefore, it is worth taking a more nuanced approach to how the government approaches IT, noting where it has used IT to blaze ahead, and where failure to manage an IT system led it to fall behind.

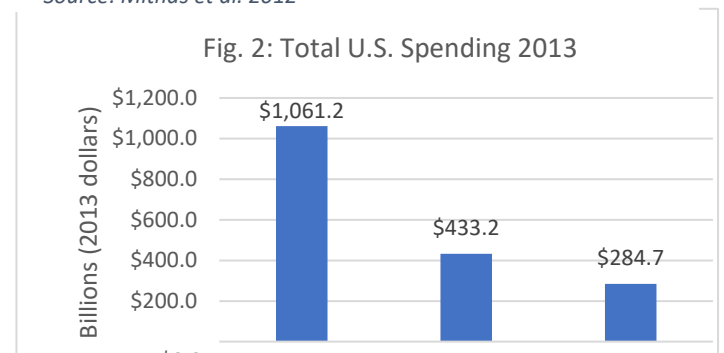
While more modern, networked information systems have been around for several decades, it is only recently that IT has become standardized as a must-have for any organization, joining the ranks of HR and finance departments. In 1999, IT spending per employee surpassed the spending of traditional R&D and advertising and continued to outstrip gross spending on these sectors (see Figures 1 and 2). This marks wide-scale adoption by the private sector.

Therefore, the U.S. Federal Government did not arrive so late to the game. Three years later Congress passed the E-Government Act of 2002, which established a Chief Information Officer for the federal government and pushed agencies to digitize their interactions with the public to bring government services online.<sup>2</sup>

Four years later, *Time* magazine named “us” as “Person of the Year,” marking the age of the social network and Web 2.0. Yet again, three years later, (and one year before Mark Zuckerberg was awarded “Person of the Year”) the federal government took a major IT step at the start of the Obama administration. The president campaigned heavily on increasing IT in all aspects of government, earning his platform the nickname of “Government 2.0.”<sup>3</sup> In 2009, he signed the Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government, which ordered agencies to pursue innovations that connect government to the people and make government more accessible and transparent.<sup>4</sup> In 2011, the administration pushed for increased cloud usage in operations, and in 2014, the Digital



Source: Mithas et al. 2012



Sources: Fox 2014; OECD 2017; Levesque et al. 2015, Census Bureau 2012.

Accountability and Transparency Act required accounting of all IT projects.<sup>5</sup>

Today, there are over 80,000 federal IT employees, making up around 3.4% of the federal workforce. That number is close to the global IT expenditure of 3.2% to 4.4%.<sup>6</sup> With \$80.4 billion spent on IT in 2015, the government spends on average \$39,162 per employee.<sup>7</sup> Recent reports put federal IT spending per-employee at around four times as much as the average in the private sector.<sup>8</sup>

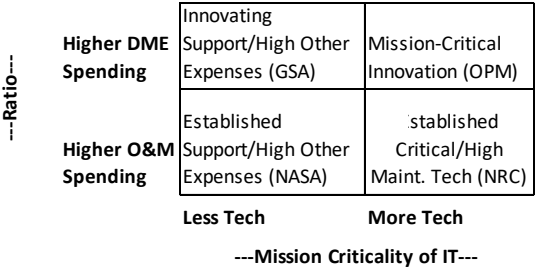
The Obama administration made clear the importance of IT for the citizenry by advocating universal broadband and supporting emerging technology. The administration also highlighted the importance in governance, through the

Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government, the main platform of his e-government agenda, and Change.gov.<sup>9</sup> With all this money, it is worth examining its impacts. With a rich federal database, we can analyze IT investments. The rest of this paper will analyze the federal bureaucracy’s patterns of IT investments, as defined by the federal government (see Appendix A), as well as analyze the impacts of federal IT spending.

**Description of IT Spending by Agency**

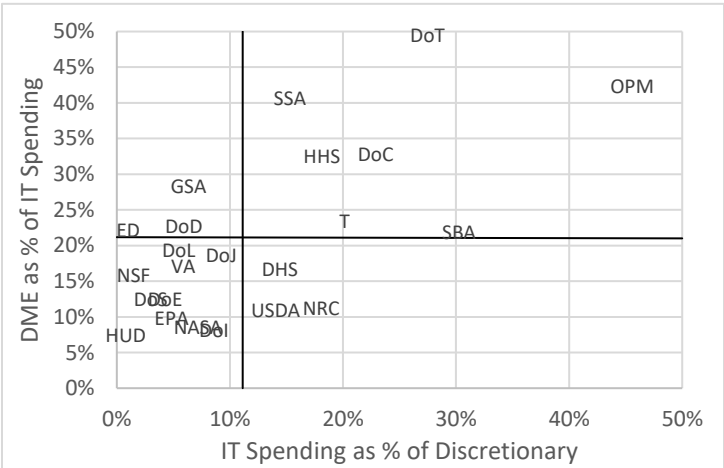
Due to the 2009 Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government and the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014, government spending on IT investments is well-documented and well-classified. In 2009, the government launched the federal IT Dashboard, which today tracks information on over 7,000 IT investments via collection from agency CIOs.<sup>10</sup> The database has breakdowns of spending through a variety of classifications. Of interest is the differences between Development Modernization Enhancement (DME) spending and Operation and Maintenance (O&M) spending. DME spending is spending on developing or acquiring new or significantly upgrading old IT products, software, hardware, and capabilities. O&M spending is the amount spent to maintain current IT systems. Due to legacy systems in government, much of federal IT spending is used to maintain outdated systems.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 1 Typography by Spending Amount and Proportion



By relating FY2015 DME and O&M spending patterns to the overall size of an agency, we can get a sense of whether an agency is innovating vs. established and the mission criticality of IT (See Figure 1). On average for every dollar spent on O&M, \$0.30 is spent on DME, and 21% of all IT spending on average goes to DME.<sup>12</sup> These ratios can be interpreted through the ratio of IT operations/maintenance and development/acquisition in other sectors, as well as between agencies. Figure 2 shows the relationship between DME and O&M spending. The quadrants are created by taking the averages for both variables.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 2: IT Investment as a Proportion of FY15 Discretionary Funding by Type of IT Investment and Agency



Many departments accumulate around the bottom-left quadrant. This is not just due to



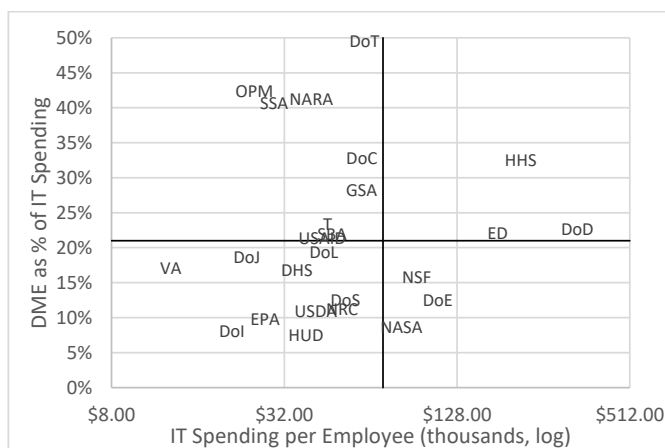
outliers like the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which developed its IT to be the central HR processing entity for the entire federal workforce, but due to the broad aspects of the category. An agency may be more O&M and low-tech spending for several reasons. First may be that the spending for other major expenses outstrip IT. For instance, much of the Department of Defense's (DoD) spending is on military personnel salary, maintenance of weapons systems, and procurement of high-expense weapons systems, which counter-balances the substantial IT spending.<sup>14</sup> In other cases, the agency is heavily grant or subsidy oriented. For instance, 84% of the FY2015 budget for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is in housing grants and subsidies.<sup>15</sup> There can also be agencies that may have routines, which use old technology that works effectively, as with high-reliability need or factory style systems. While no specific agency comes to mind, individual operations, such as old nuclear weapon's systems are an example.<sup>16</sup> Finally, there are agencies that are underutilizing IT based on the mission of the agency, the high use case of information technology, and low spending on IT as a proportion of overall budget. The Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) is an agency that has a dismal IT budget compared to its spending.

Another way of looking at this typology is through IT spending per employee, as shown in Figure 3. This controls for majority-grant departments, such as HUD and focuses magnitude relatively close to operational size.

Studying the two figures, we can see there are some departments that stand out. The Department of Transportation (DoT) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) are consistently among the top in

terms of IT spending and innovation as a proportion of operations. For the DoT, the largest expense is the development of a new air traffic control system. Creating a modern enterprise infrastructure for Medicaid management is the major expense for DHHS, apparently one of the largest IT investments in the government.<sup>17 18</sup> One program represents development of an IT product as a service, while the other is IT for E-Governance and enterprise.

*Figure 3: Average IT Investment Per FY15 Employee by Type of IT Investment and Agency*



For other agencies, the picture becomes less clear. This is mostly due to the issues stated previously for low relative spending, higher O&M agencies. Further, there are discrepancies between analyzing at the employee level versus the discretionary budget level, resulting sometimes in drastic shifts, as is the case with OPM having among the highest IT spending as a percentage of discretionary budget, but among the lowest IT spending overall. Some of this is due to the degree of mission use case of new IT to each organization. For instance, highly routinized organizations, like the Social Security Administration, may not need upgrades. For others, the formation

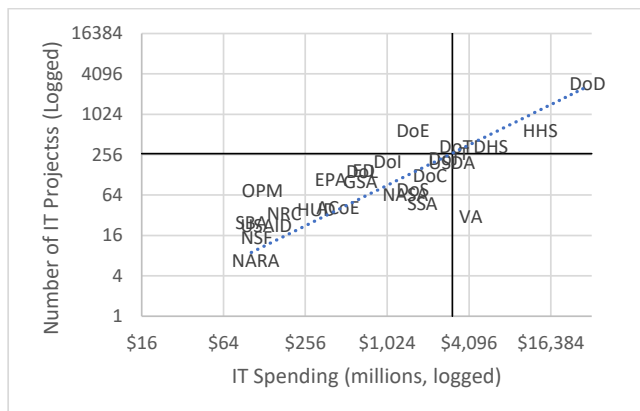
of ratios, being a function of three variables (employee count, overall IT budget, and DME budget) makes it difficult to assess what the ratios are telling us.

Perhaps then, it is worth looking at magnitudes of IT investment to gauge so-called “overhaul” and “big push” IT projects and to gauge who regularly has high cost IT operations. Specifically, one could look at the top 100 IT projects in the federal government to get a sense of where IT brainpower and money in the federal government concentrates. Figures 3, 4, and 5 give a sense of the proportion of top IT investments by all investments, DME, and O&M respectively.

In these cases, DoD and DHHS outstrip all other agencies in big project spending, whether DME or O&M. The Treasury Department (T), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Social Security Administration (SSA), Department of Agriculture (USDA), and DoT are also key IT agencies, however, their relative standing changes on whether the analysis is done by O&M or DME.

Finally, we can look at one last ratio: the amount of spending per IT project. This gives a sense of how vast the IT portfolio is, and the average spent on each investment. Figure 7 shows this relationship, with items below the trendline being above average in terms of dollars per project, and above the trendline being less than average amount of IT spending per project.

Figure 7: Relationship Between Allocated FY15 IT Investments and Number of Investments



From this chart, we get a sense of magnitude and “big pushes” versus systematic, decentralized IT. The VA seems to have more of a “big push,” which makes sense given the scandal. The Department of Energy, on the other hand, seems to have many decentralized projects with a decent amount of money given to each, although below average for an IT budget that size. The rest of the agencies can be analyzed similarly.

The above describes a complex and varied picture of federal government operations and IT expenditures. However, it is worth exploring if those expenditures have any relationship to outcomes.

## Analysis of IT Spending on Outcomes

In the private sector, it is much easier to study the positive effects of IT spending. IT in business has two main goals: be a source and driver of growth and revenue, or a reducer of costs. This yields easy analysis, as there are well-defined quantitative

Figure 4: Proportion of Top 100 IT Investments

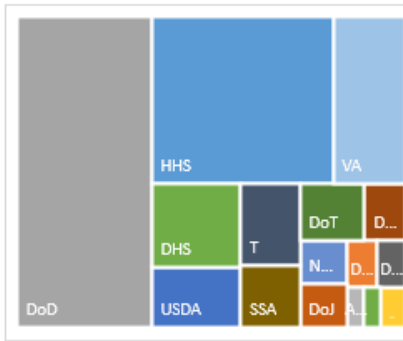


Figure 5: Proportion of Top 100 DME Investments

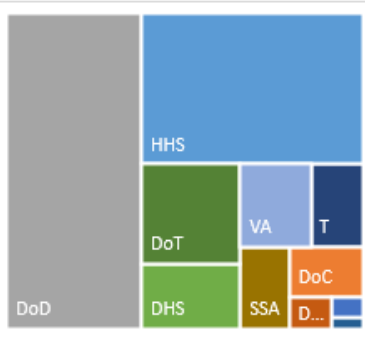
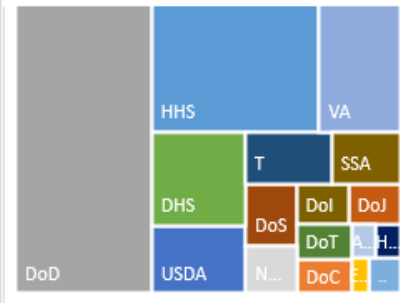


Figure 6: Proportion of Top 100 O&M Investments



outcomes that we can assess. In government, however, the goals of IT spending are more difficult to analyze. It is hard to measure the output of government because there is no supply and demand or profit to be had, but instead goods that cannot be measured at market price since they are public goods.

Therefore, there needs to be analogues, proxies, and substitutes. Growth and revenue implies more people are demanding your product, meaning they are happier with what you have to offer. Customer service ratings of agencies can serve as a substitute.<sup>19</sup> This also works with the post-90's "customer oriented" view of governance and public management.<sup>20</sup> In 2007, BearingPoint, an IT consulting firm, conducted a study that found that e-governance increases approval from citizens, so it stands to reason that an effect can be seen.<sup>21</sup>

Cost reduction implies efficiency, which maximizes the goal of the organization, which is often profit. Government IT investments are similarly related in terms of goals, as IT projects are contracted and budgeted with specific criteria. Therefore, the approval rating (0-5) of an IT project by the CIO in relation to the project's intended purpose is an adequate substitute for operational cost. Taking the average will give a sense of the efficacy of the total IT

portfolio in achieving policymakers and public manager's objectives.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, as a middle ground, employee satisfaction is a comprehensive dataset and can be used as an intermediary between the revenue and cost analogues. There are many factors that contribute to employee satisfaction including feeling like you are doing right by the public because they appreciate you (which means high customer service), and that the job does not seem tedious, annoying, or inefficient (operation cost).<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the dataset is rich, making it useful to test hypotheses.

The first hypothesis is the most obvious. One would assume that with higher overall IT spending as a percent of operations, we would observe higher customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, goals being met, and higher employee satisfaction. Specifically, we will use spending per personnel as a benchmark because it is more indicative of operation size. Figures 9, 10, and 11 show the correlation between average IT expenditure per employee and average CIO project rating, employee satisfaction, and customer satisfaction respectively.

Figure 9: IT Spending per Employee and Average CIO Investment Evaluation

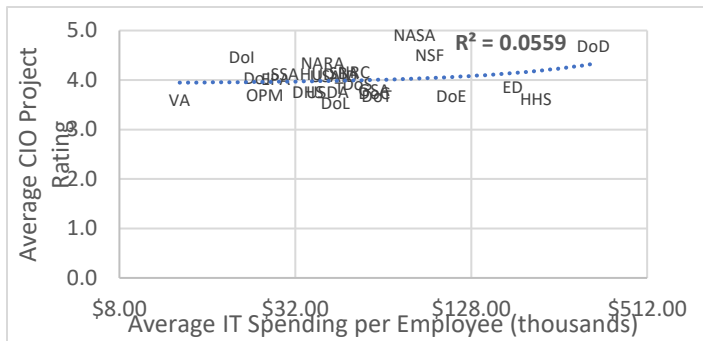


Figure 10: IT Spending per Employee and Employee Satisfaction

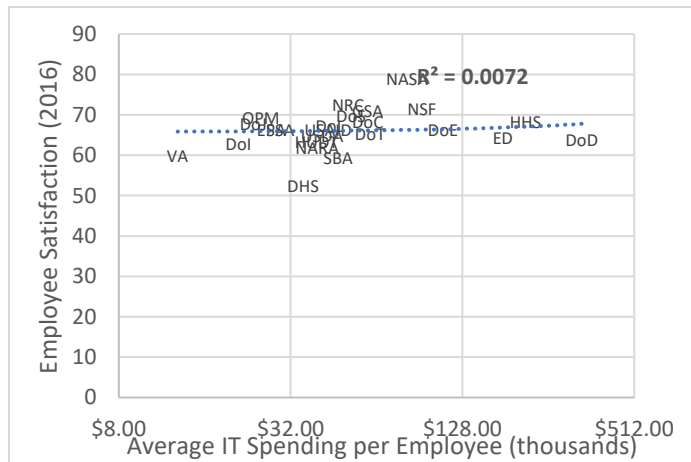
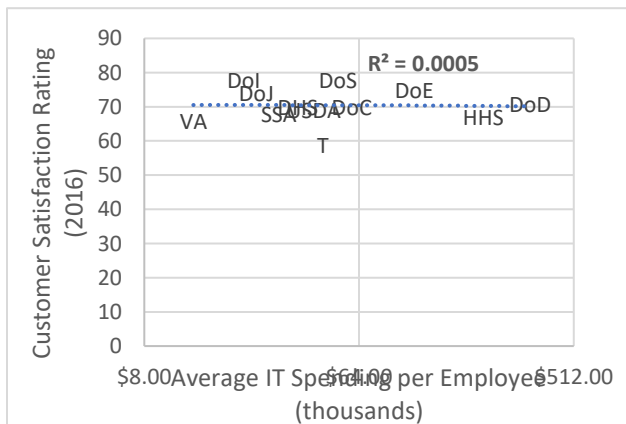


Figure 11: IT Spending per Employee and Customer Satisfaction



The results show no relationship between average IT investment and the three outcomes. Removing outliers did not affect the correlation coefficients enough to report, and in fact, the remaining distribution still had equal randomness as data points were removed. Running the same analysis, except using IT expenditure as a percent of discretionary funding, yielded similar results. The only exception is IT expenditure as percent of discretionary funding and customer satisfaction, which had an  $R^2=0.4$ . Oddly enough, this regression was *negative*, in that the more of the budget that went to IT, the *less* satisfied customers were. However, methodologically, this may be due to the fewer data points inflating  $R^2$ . Figure 12 shows this relationship.

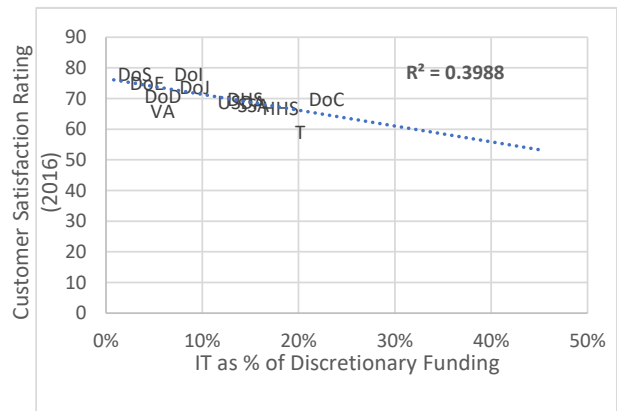
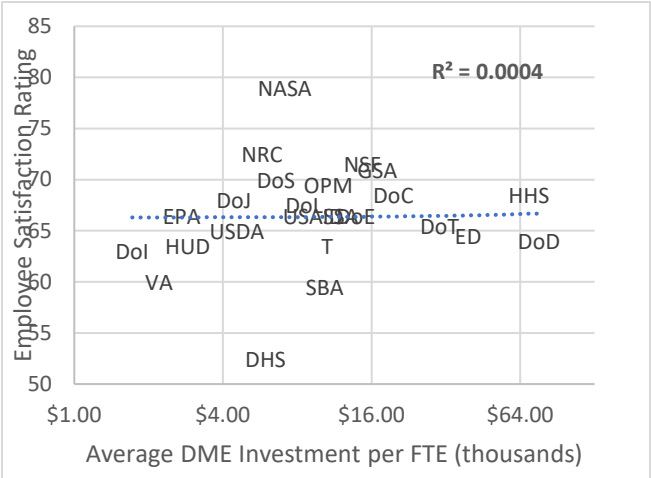


Figure 12: IT Share of Discretionary FY15 Funding and Customer Satisfaction

Perhaps, more innovative IT spending would be beneficial for employees and customers. Employees may get frustrated with legacy systems and a large investment of DME could help boost morale by showing “finally, we’re doing something new,” as well as reduce the amount of daily grind.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, customer should be able to notice faster and easier access to government services. On the other hand, for the customer and employee, learning new systems may *decrease* morale because it requires a transformational change, which often serves as a stress point a workforce.

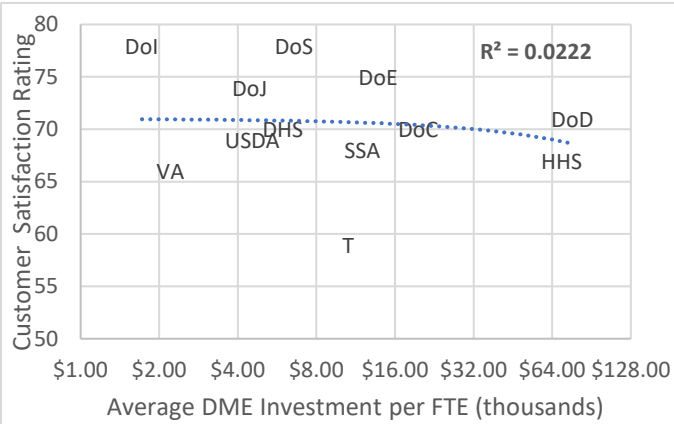
Figures 13 and 14 examine these relationships in terms of DME dollars per employee.

Figure 13: Employee Satisfaction and Average DME



Spending per Employee FY15

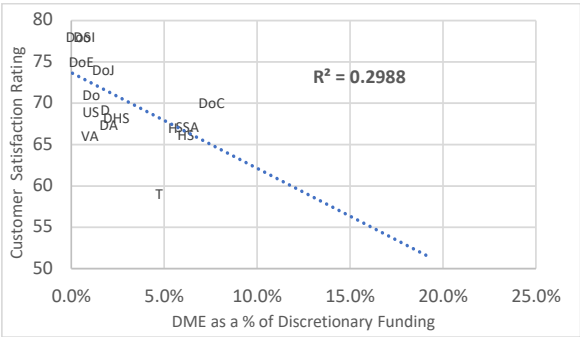
Figure 14: Customer Satisfaction and Average DME  
Spending per Employee FY15



Once again, we find no relationship between DME, the development of new capabilities spending, and employee or customer satisfaction. Evaluating agencies by percent of discretionary funding given to DME yields similar results. There is no significant relationship with employee satisfaction, but some small relationship with customer satisfaction. Given the similarity with the previous analysis, we cannot say this

result is due to throwing money at the problem. Figure 15 shows this relationship.

Figure 15: Relationship of DME as % of Discretionary Spending and Customer Satisfaction



There is one final hypothesis that will be examined in this paper. Instead of looking at IT spending, which is not a measure of how well the IT portfolio is performing, we can look at CIO investment ratings, which is the satisfaction of IT programs by the head administrator based on performance goals. If the IT portfolio accomplishes its stated goals, we can assume IT is operational, functioning, and satisfactory. We can then see if more satisfactory IT portfolios lead to happy employees and customers. Figures 16 and 17 will examine this relationship.

Figure 16: Average CIO IT Investment Ratings and Employee Satisfaction

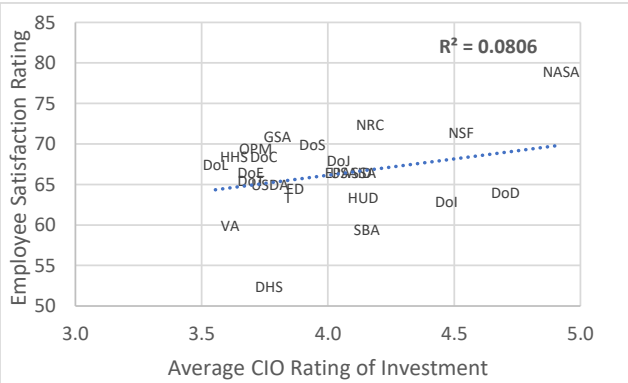
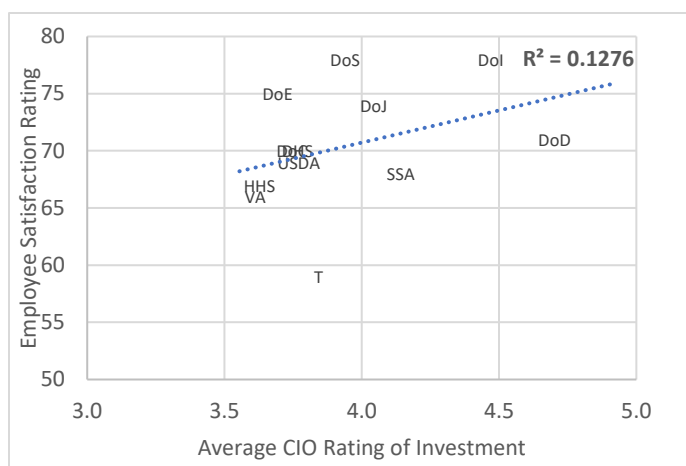


Figure 17: Average CIO IT Investment Ratings and Customer Satisfaction



We find that there is no relationship between average CIO investment rating and employee satisfaction. Lastly, there is barely any relationship between CIO investment ratings and customer satisfaction, at least not any relationship significant enough from which to draw conclusions.

## Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Agencies vary on their usage of IT. Some agencies find that IT is very heavily related to their operations, while others use it as a low form of support. Furthermore, expenditures on IT are primarily related to operations and maintenance of current systems, although some agencies are more innovative and develop new programs. Federal IT spending per employee is very high compared to the private sector, even when comparing development-only IT. It is hard to get a concrete sense of IT in the government, not just because the level of analysis changes conclusions about agencies, but also because granularity is needed to assess all spending. For instance, is high O&M spending due to maintaining obsolete tech, or is it due to a large state-of-the-art system such as an air traffic control network?

Is government IT acquisition much less efficient than the private sector quadrupling spending per employee with little extra result? These are questions left unanswered by this paper.

It is surprising to find that there is next-to-no relationship between satisfaction by CIOs, employees, and customers, regardless of IT spending as a percent of operations, as well as capability of the IT portfolio. There may be several reasons for this. Some are methodological: breaking out expenditures by operations or enterprise versus benefit can help more directly analyze efficacy of IT in operations. Another issue may be due to this being a one-year picture, which is subject to spurts in funding. Smoothing out this analysis using a three-year average may help present a clearer picture. Lastly, not having a large, established dataset for customer satisfaction leads to a less clear picture.

However, it is more likely that there are many factors that affect customer satisfaction and morale that are exogenous to an analysis of IT spending. For instance, IT spending has little effect on the culture clashes that result from throwing dozens of organizations together into one agency, such as the case with DHS. IT may have little effect on the political demonizing of the Department of Education (ED) and the Environmental Protection Agency. Moreover, IT may not explain the creative and collaborative culture at NASA that earns it such high satisfaction. Nor can it explain how people's love for our national parks makes citizens like the Department of the Interior. Therefore, the issue of satisfaction may be structural. While IT expenditures in government have gone up for years, support and trust in government has gone down.<sup>25</sup>

This is not to say that IT spending in government does not have real positive

impact. OPM's USAJobs has saved the federal government money and the Paperwork Reduction Act has saved millions of dollars and trees. Approval of bureaucracies may be exogenous to the public benefit received, just as it is hard to feel increased life expectancy, lower world violence, and more peace of modern times.<sup>26</sup>

Making government IT more visible and accessible to the public, may help. The Federal Agency Customer Experience Act (currently in the Senate) would help grow IT and e-governance. This bill, among other changes, will allow the collection of customer experience data for federal agencies.<sup>27</sup> Such legislation can help individuals get access to critical services by

improving experience and flow through the customer pipeline. It will also further subsequent studies on the topic of customer satisfaction.

It is logical to say that IT makes firms more efficient. In some agencies, such as the VA, IT could revolutionize the agency and save lives. It is just a matter of getting enough funding, enough buy-in, and enough competence to lead transformational IT change. However the government decides to innovate and grow into the mid-21st century, it needs to develop a long-view. The systems developed should be open to plug-ins and flexible to prevent legacy infrastructure costs from spiraling out of control. This would soak up resources that could be used for more efficient customer-oriented systems.



## Appendix A: Federal Definition of information technology

“Information technology’ means any services or equipment, or interconnected system(s) or subsystem(s) of equipment, that are used in the automatic acquisition, storage, analysis, evaluation, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information by the agency. For purposes of this definition, such services or equipment is used by an agency if used by the agency directly or is used by a contractor under a contract with the agency that requires its use; or to a significant extent, its use in the performance of a service or the furnishing of a product. The term ‘information technology’ includes computers, ancillary equipment (including imaging peripherals, input, output, and storage devices necessary for security and surveillance), peripheral equipment designed to be controlled by the central processing unit of a computer, software, firmware and similar procedures, services (including cloud computing and help-desk services or other professional services which support any point of the life cycle of the equipment or service), and related resources. The term ‘information technology’ does not include any equipment that is acquired by a contractor incidental to a contract which does not require its use.”

-(40 U.S.C. § 11101)



Appendix B. Data

Agency	Abbrv.	Spending	Spending	IT Total FY15 (m)				IT Spending	Disc. Budget (bn)	FTEs	Average CIO Rating per IT Project	Employee Satisfaction	Customer Satisfaction
		on O&M FY15	on DME FY15		DME Projects	O&M Projects*	O&M Projects*	2016 (millions)					
Department of Agriculture	USDA	2719.7	337.4	3057.1	197	122	197	\$3,418.0	\$21,750.0	74133	3.8	65	69
Department of Commerce	DoC	1413.0	693.7	2106.6	129	76	118	\$2,312.4	\$9,200.0	35345	3.7	68.5	70
Department of Defense	DoD	23489.7	6924.6	30414.3	2988	737	2983	\$30,780.2	\$514,100.0	90639	4.7	64	71
Department of Education	ED	534.5	152.4	686.9	153	122	156	\$1,966.2	\$68,000.0	3875	3.9	64.5	
Department of Energy	DoE	1387.5	200.2	1587.7	601	202	575	\$1,121.1	\$37,185.0	14495	3.7	66.5	75
Department of Health and Human Services	HHS	9194.5	4443.2	13637.7	591	350	595	\$688.6	\$75,200.0	63996	3.6	68.5	67
Department of Homeland Security	DHS	4920.1	994.1	5914.2	341	95	330	\$425.1	\$41,000.0	167058	3.8	52.5	70
Department of Housing and Urban Development	HUD	284.7	23.2	308.0	39	18	36	\$710.2	\$38,600.0	8084	4.1	63.5	
Department of Justice	DoJ	2150.5	496.3	2646.8	225	136	226	\$12,566.0	\$28,700.0	111713	4.0	68	74
Department of Labor	DoL	537.3	129.8	667.1	147	58	137	\$6,203.5	\$12,180.0	15176	3.6	67.5	
Department of State	DoS	1378.5	198.4	1576.8	78	62	67	\$341.6	\$52,680.0	30226	3.9	70	78
Department of the Interior	DoI	947.6	84.3	1031.9	208	90	212	\$1,654.5	\$12,016.0	49083	4.5	63	78
Department of the Treasury	T	2886.6	883.1	3769.7	267	129	297	\$2,699.1	\$18,700.0	83302	3.8	63.5	59
Department of Transportation	DoT	1653.2	1627.5	3280.7	349	198	306	\$3,507.2	\$11,939.0	53922	3.7	65.5	
Department of Veterans Affairs	VA	3479.3	720.2	4199.5	31	21	32	\$153.3	\$71,400.0	326498	3.6	60	66
Environmental Protection Agency	EPA	355.0	39.1	394.1	111	66	109	\$3,939.8	\$8,139.0	14366	4.0	66.5	
General Services Administration	GSA	465.3	184.3	649.6	104	77	110	\$4,403.4	\$10,200.0	10906	3.8	71	
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA	1265.2	120.5	1385.7	67	24	68	\$1,361.3	\$19,300.0	16906	4.9	79	
National Archives and Records Administration	NARA	64.8	45.6	110.4	7	5	7	\$1,501.3		2777	4.4	62	
National Science Foundation	NSF	93.9	17.7	111.6	15	12	11	\$151.4	\$7,500.0	1207	4.5	71.5	
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	NRC	158.5	20.2	178.8	34	24	35	\$435.7	\$990.0	3516	4.2	72.5	
Office of Personnel Management	OPM	71.4	52.6	124.0	77	32	70	\$107.7	\$272.0	4922	3.7	69.5	
Small Business Administration	SBA	80.0	22.5	102.5	25	9	26	\$102.4	\$338.6	2179	4.2	59.5	
Social Security Administration	SSA	1103.0	758.6	1861.6	48	37	40	\$713.8	\$12,160.0	63177	4.1	66.5	68
U.S. Agency for International Development	USAID	103.3	28.2	131.5	23	18	21	\$147.0		3034	4.1	66.5	
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	ACoE	440.7	3.3	444.0	42	7	43	\$95.1			4.4		

## End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> (Tobia, 2013)
- <sup>2</sup> (GPO, 2002)
- <sup>3</sup> (Stone, 2008)
- <sup>4</sup> (Office of the Executive of the United States, 2009)
- <sup>5</sup> (CIO Council, 2017)
- <sup>6</sup> Given global IT spending in 2016 was \$3.5 trillion, and total world output in 2015 was \$107.5 trillion PPP and \$78.3 trillion nominal.
- <sup>7</sup> Calculated using 2015 IT investment data and September 2015 OPM data.
- <sup>8</sup> (Walker, 2016)
- <sup>9</sup> (On The Issues, 2017) (Regalado, 2013) (Executive Office of the United States, 2009) (Weinberger, 2009) (Konkel, Assessing the Obama Administration's Tech Legacy, 2016)
- <sup>10</sup> (IT Dashboard, 2017)
- <sup>11</sup> (Konkel, TICKING TIME BOMB?' CONGRESS PROBES OBSOLETE FEDERAL TECH, 2016) (House Oversight Committee, 2016)
- <sup>12</sup> Found using 2015 Actual Spending.
- <sup>13</sup> Compares 2016 Discretionary Budget with 2015 Actual IT Budget, leading to an apples and oranges issue. Discretionary budget information was not found for NARA, USAID, and USACE. Averages can be affected by single-year projects. Future study should include a 3-year moving-average to smooth out "big IT push" skews and would breakout the percent of discretionary budget given to overhead and operations.
- <sup>14</sup> (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/ Chief Financial Officer, 2014)
- <sup>15</sup> (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014)
- <sup>16</sup> (Konkel, TICKING TIME BOMB?' CONGRESS PROBES OBSOLETE FEDERAL TECH, 2016)
- <sup>17</sup> (McKinney, 2017)
- <sup>18</sup> (IT Dashboard, 2017)
- <sup>19</sup> This will use the American Customer Satisfaction Index 2016. Many departments are excluded in the index. Data is one year later than FY15 to examine delayed effects. (American Customer Service Index, 2017)
- <sup>20</sup> (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992)
- <sup>21</sup> (Lunceford, 2007)
- <sup>22</sup> This will use CIO Evaluation 2016 data from IT Dashboard. Data is one year later than FY15 to examine delayed effects. (IT Dashboard, 2017)
- <sup>23</sup> This will use the average of 2016's Federal Employee Engagement and Global Satisfaction Index. Data is one year later than FY15 to examine

delayed effects. (Office of Personnel Management, 2017)

<sup>24</sup> We exclude O&M and satisfaction from this study because of the nature of O&M being maintenance of the status quo. Positive psychology would theorize that the status quo would not have an affective effect (Brickman, Coates, & Janoff-Bulman, 1978).

<sup>25</sup> (Gallup, 2017)

<sup>26</sup> (Pinker, 2011) (E Diener et al., 2006)

<sup>27</sup> (Konkel, BILL PRIORITIZES FEDERAL CUSTOMER SERVICE—AND CUTS SOME RED TAPE, 2017)

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