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LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A CONTEMPORARY COUNTER-ASYMMETRIC STRATEGY

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JCSP 41

PCEMI 41

Master of Defence Studies

Maîtrise en études de la défense

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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE – COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
JCSP 41 – PCEMI 41
2014 – 2015

MASTER OF DEFENCE STUDIES – MAÎTRISE EN ÉTUDES DE LA DÉFENSE

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ASYMMETRIC STRATEGY**

By Maj F.G. Rock

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, there has been a marked increase in the prevalence of asymmetric strategies among adversarial state and non-state actors. Western conventional, technological, and economic superiority are an obvious contributor to this phenomenon however, they are not the only factors to consider. Equally, if not more, important is the perception by adversarial forces that Western nations lack the organizational and/or intellectual preparedness to counter this form of threat.

Through a detailed analysis of several existing asymmetric strategies, this study aims to demonstrate that the fundamental elements of an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy include an institutionalized multidimensional approach, intellectual flexibility and diversity, and a blend of Western conventional and asymmetric advantages.

INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly complex and globalized world, many state and non-state actors have adopted security strategies aimed at generating and leveraging asymmetries that exist between themselves and their current and potential foes. Asymmetric strategies, such as China's *Unrestricted Warfare* and Iran's *Mosaic Defence*, aim to generate an advantageous position over an adversary by attacking them in non-traditional ways using all means available including both military and non-military resources. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a non-state actor, has smartly and deliberately applied a similar innovative strategy to secure and now control vast swaths of Syrian and Iraqi territory.

In its simplest form, the term asymmetry is defined as a lack of symmetry or more specifically, a lack of equality or equivalence between parts or aspects of something.¹ From a military perspective, 'asymmetry' is often grouped with the terms 'warfare' or 'threat' and understood to describe a conflict between nations or groups possessing unequal military capabilities resulting from one force employing new capabilities that the opposing force does not perceive or understand, conventional capabilities that counter or overmatch the capabilities of its opponents, or capabilities that represent totally new methods of attack or defence – or any combination thereof.² In military vernacular, terms such as Counterinsurgency (commonly referred to as COIN), terrorism, and cyber-attack are common to definitions of both asymmetric threats and warfare however, they are not all-inclusive of what a modern definition of these two terms should entail.

¹ Oxford Online Dictionary, "Definition - Asymmetry," accessed 02 February 2015, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/asymmetry>.

² Ike Skelton, "America's Frontier Wars: Lessons for Asymmetric Conflicts," *Military Review* 94, no. 4 (July-August 2014): 78.

The most recent version of the Canadian Armed Forces *Future Security Environment* document replaces the traditionally understood definition of asymmetric threats by defining them as those threats emanating from the potential use of dissimilar means or methods to circumvent or negate an opponent's strengths while exploiting their weaknesses to obtain a disproportionate result.³ Unlike the traditional military definition, this definition accounts for the inclusion of non-military means or actions as key elements of an asymmetric strategy. The *Instruments of National Power* – Diplomacy, Informational, Military, and Economics (DIME)⁴ – are becoming increasingly common elements of current asymmetric strategies. Instead of focusing on the defeat of an adversary's military, DIME based asymmetric strategies are aimed at creating or exploiting weaknesses in the Political, Military, Economic, Social, Informational, and Infrastructural (PMESII) dimensions. In short, asymmetric strategies aim to defeat an adversary using integrated multidimensional attacks on almost every aspect of PMESII to achieve physical and psychological victory.

Elements of DIME are present in the asymmetric strategies of state actors, such as China and Iran, and non-state actors such as ISIS. For the purpose of simplicity, when describing these and similar entities broadly, this paper will use the term 'red-actors' and may also use the term 'blue-actors' to describe Western equivalents. Furthermore, for the purposes of this paper, red-actor asymmetric strategies may be referred to as 360° strategies, a term that is gaining significant traction among academics studying the subject. Common to red-actor asymmetric strategies is that DIME actions are employed as a means to attack vulnerabilities not appreciated

³ Department of National Defence, A-FD-005-001/AF-003, *The Future Security Environment: 2013-2040* (Winnipeg, MB: 17 Wing Winnipeg Publishing Office, 2014), 141.

⁴ Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-000/FP-001, Canadian Forces Joint Publication 01 (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2011), 2-1; The instruments of national power are a US Army concept that advocates for the use of all four elements of DIME as part of a nation's strategy; Source: Department of Defense. Field Manual 3-0, Operations (Fort Leavenworth: Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate, 2008).

by the ‘target’ (blue-actor) or victim in order to capitalize on the victim’s limited preparation against specific threats.⁵ Through careful observation and examination of Western interventions, many red-actors have identified exploitable weaknesses and established the conditions necessary to provide them with an advantage in the achievement of their strategic goals. These observations have identified a reliance on technology and the use of conventional means, such as military force and economic sanctions. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, they have identified a lack of intellectual preparation on the part of Western nations to deal with asymmetric threats.

To defend against such a threat will require Western nations to devote the same level of intellectual energy to the defeat of asymmetric threats as has traditionally been devoted to the mastery of conventional warfare. The proliferation of asymmetric strategies indicates that these approaches can no longer be considered secondary or peripheral to conventional threats.⁶ This does not mean however, that asymmetric capabilities can be improved at the expense of their conventional opposite; the complexity of today’s security environment requires blue-actors to be prepared for both ends of the operational spectrum, as on-going operations in the Ukraine and Iraq/Syria demonstrate.

Recognizing their conventional military and economic inferiority to Western nations, many red-actors are discarding conventional military based strategies and both selecting and employing asymmetrically based alternatives to support and achieve their strategic goals. In order to safeguard against and counter the rise in asymmetric strategies among red-actors, what

⁵ Bruce W. Bennett, Christopher P. Twomey and Gregory F. Treverton, *What are Asymmetric Strategies?* (Washington, DC: The RAND Corporation, 1999), 3.

⁶ Melissa Applegate, *Preparing for Asymmetry: As seen through the Lens of Joint Vision 2020* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2001), 2.

elements are essential to the development of an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy necessary to defend Canada?

In order to fully understand the problem that asymmetric strategies pose, several existing asymmetric strategies will be examined as case studies. The case studies will focus on China, Iran, and ISIS. These particular red-actors were selected because they represent both state and non-state actors and also represent a major power (China), a regional power (Iran), and non-state innovator (ISIS) that have either developed, accepted and/or are currently employing an asymmetric strategy.

To begin, a discussion on China's *Unrestricted Warfare* strategy will demonstrate that it is centered on their ambition to nullify Western conventional military and economic superiority by conducting future wars in non-war, or non-military, spheres using all means available to affect all areas of life of the countries involved.⁷ Following this, Iran's *Mosaic Defence* strategy will be examined. Despite being heavily centered on military capabilities, primarily defensive in nature, and based on the deterrence of perceived adversaries⁸ instead of offensive war, the strategy focuses on multi-dimensional asymmetric operations aimed at disrupting similar dimensions as *Unrestricted Warfare*. The last asymmetric strategy case study will focus on ISIS. As a non-state actor, they lack full access and control of the instruments of national power however, the organization has been extremely effective at employing non-military means to create and capitalize on asymmetries in order to influence its operating environment and achieve its goals.

⁷ Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, trans. Central Intelligence Agency, Foreign Broadcast Information Service (Beijing, China: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999), 169; Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare: China's Master Plan to Destroy America* (Panama City, Panama: Pan American Publishing Company, 2002), 144-145.

⁸ Micheal Connell, "Iran's Military Doctrine," United States Institute of Peace, accessed 11 February 2015, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/irans-military-doctrine>.

Using the asymmetric strategy case studies as a backdrop, the paper will examine and identify the fundamental reasons behind the adoption of this form of strategy by red-actors. Through identification of the motivating factors, the paper aims to identify what Western nations, like Canada, can do to counter and/or defend against this emerging form of threat. The analysis will also aim to identify consistencies in terms of the concepts and principles associated with each individual strategy in order to highlight vulnerabilities and areas for improvement.

Following this, the 'Western mindset,' in terms of organizational and intellectual preparedness, will factor into the discussion and ultimately contribute to key recommendations concerning what specific elements are essential to the formulation of an effective counter-asymmetric strategy. To support this formulation, the paradoxical and poorly integrated nature of current Canadian foreign policy will be examined with the intention of identifying inconsistencies that have the potential to result in vulnerabilities and an asymmetric advantage for red-actors. Domestically, policies such as diaspora diplomacy and both inter and intra-departmental integration will also be examined. Finally, discussion concerning existing capabilities and national security deficiencies, such as cyber security, will be factored into the analysis. Using the vulnerabilities identified by the individual case studies, the examination of Canada's foreign and domestic policies, and the identified capability related deficiencies, several areas of improvement that have the potential to immediately better the situation will be discussed.

CHAPTER 1: CHINA – *UNRESTRICTED WARFARE* CASE STUDY

Unrestricted Warfare, written by two Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) senior Air Force colonels and published in 1999, theorizes that as a result of Western military domination, China must implement and rely on an asymmetric strategy in order to generate an advantageous position and defeat their adversaries in future wars. To accomplish this, the strategy endorses the use of all means available at all levels and across all PMESII dimensions. Under this strategy, if one were to ask "Where is the battlefield?" the answer would be: "Everywhere."⁹ Simply put, the strategy contained within *Unrestricted Warfare* is exactly what the name implies, unrestricted.

The analysis of this strategy will begin by defining the fundamental reasons that have prompted China to consider the adoption of a 360° strategy in order to achieve its strategic goals. Following this, in order to fully understand its application, several key concepts and principles will be discussed. Additionally, several real-world examples will demonstrate its potential effectiveness and lead to a discussion on how this strategy may be applied against Western nations such as Canada. It should be noted that although the strategy is aimed specifically at defeating the United States (US), who China views as the sole existing global superpower and its primary potential threat, it can also be applied to other nations that China may view as an adversary.

In a final introductory note, although the analysis that follows indicates that Chinese strategists have been following this strategy very closely, it is important to highlight the fact that

⁹ Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare: China's Master Plan to Destroy America*, 32.; Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 43; Although they have slightly different titles, both of these texts are the same FBIS (CIA) translation of the original text as written by the authors. The newer version contains an introduction by Al Santoli, the editor of the prestigious China Reform Monitor, and is missing approximately 100 pages. The latter is the fully translated text. For the purposes of this paper they be considered identical except when citing from the missing pages.

Unrestricted Warfare is an ‘experimental’ work, not an officially accepted and implemented Chinese strategy, whose institutional significance in the Chinese approach to war remains the subject of ongoing debate.¹⁰ Notwithstanding this point, the concepts discussed within this particular strategy make this case study an important contributor to the definition of what an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy entails.

Why *Unrestricted Warfare*?

With the largest conventional military force in the world, estimated today to be composed of 2.8 million soldiers, sailors and airmen,¹¹ what compelled the authors of *Unrestricted Warfare* to discard the traditionally accepted military based conventional approach to warfare and advocate for such an asymmetrically based strategy? The authors theorize that significant advances in technology, increased globalization, the diffusion of power beyond the nation-state, and increased modern weapons capabilities have all combined to create a new context for conflict.¹² A portion of this theory originates from the authors’ observations concerning the rapidity with which US forces defeated Iraq during the 1991 Gulf War and their own personal experience in dealing with the US as an adversary during the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis. These two conflicts demonstrated that the US is clearly, and likely to remain for some time, the undisputed hegemon of military capability and power. As a result of US and, by de facto, Western military dominance, the authors advocate that the new principles of war are no longer ‘using armed force to compel the enemy to submit to one’s will’ but rather are ‘using all means, including armed force and non-armed force, military and non-military, lethal and non-lethal

¹⁰ Tony Corn, "Peaceful Rise through Unrestricted Warfare: Grand Strategy with Chinese Characteristics," *Small Wars Journal* (June 2010): 3, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/449-corn.pdf>.

¹¹ Bates Gill and Michael O'Hanlon, "China's Hollow Military," *The National Interest*, no. 56 (Summer 1999): 56.

¹² Dean Cheng, "Unrestricted Warfare: Review Essay II," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 123.

means to compel the enemy to accept one's interests'.¹³ In addition to the acceptance of Western military dominance, increased economic integration-based globalization has created the conditions necessary to wage war without military force, resulting in exploitable vulnerabilities and a declining capacity for Western states to levy constraints and limits on red-actors.¹⁴

In addition to these realizations, the Chinese mindset as it relates to war is also a contributing factor in the development of *Unrestricted Warfare*. Although it is the oldest military strategy book known to man, the *Art of War*, written by the "Chinese grand master of military strategy" Sun Tzu, is an important contributor to the current Chinese indirect approach to warfare. In the book, Sun Tzu describes warfare, from its preparation to execution and termination as first and foremost a contest of wisdom, where the use of force should only be considered as a secondary measure. To preserve the vital interests of the state without the use of force, the *Art of War* places great emphasis on both strategy and stratagems – "artifices or tricks employed to deceive and outwit an enemy."¹⁵ This concept explains why within Chinese diplomatic and defence communities there is a popular saying that relates to the Chinese way of war and its difference to that of the West: the Chinese place heavy emphasis on strategy and stratagems whereas the West relies more on overwhelming force and advanced capabilities.¹⁶ This same mentality is expressed by Lao Tzu, another classical Chinese strategist who, like Sun Tzu, advocated for the use of the indirect approach in warfare.¹⁷ From a Chinese perspective, this

¹³ Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 7.

¹⁴ Nan Li, *Unrestricted Warfare and Chinese Military Strategy*, RSIS Commentaries 022 (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2002), 1.

¹⁵ David Lai, *Learning from the Stones: A Go Approach to Mastering China's Strategic Concept*, Shi (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2004), 1-4; Merriam Webster, "Definition - Stratagem," accessed 16 February 2015, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stratagem>; First quote on page 1, second on page 4, third on page 3;

¹⁶ Lai, *Learning from the Stones: A Go Approach to Mastering China's Strategic Concept*, Shi, 3.

¹⁷ Lionel Giles, *The Sayings of Lao Tzu*, v10.11, 18. Available at <http://www.philaletheians.co.uk>. This document is a translation of a compilation of Lao Tzu's sayings from the following book: John Murray, *The Wisdom of the East Series*, ed. J.L. Cranmer-Byng, (London, UK: 1905).

asymmetry in Western and Chinese approaches to warfare is the key to success in future conflicts. Recognizing its military inferiority to the US and Western coalitions, *Unrestricted Warfare* calls for the use of wisdom to develop advanced and detailed strategies and stratagems to capitalize on asymmetries and secure victory by out-thinking the adversary.

The authors' observations and theories, in conjunction with the Chinese mindset, led to the creation of a strategy based on the premise that the arena of war has expanded beyond the traditionally accepted bounds of conventional warfare to now encompass the political, economic, diplomatic, cultural, and psychological spheres, in addition to the land, sea, air, space, and electronics spheres.¹⁸ Furthermore, according to the strategy, the tactics discussed are not restricted by local or international laws, or by national ethics and morals.¹⁹ In essence, the strategy identifies all PMESII dimensions as possible areas of attack regardless of legal, moral, or ethical boundaries. In order to fully understand how China can apply the *Unrestricted Warfare* strategy, an understanding of several of its key concepts and principles is necessary.

¹⁸ Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare: China's Master Plan to Destroy America*, 144.

¹⁹ Jason Heeg, *Chinese Imperialism in 2013: Application of Unrestricted Warfare of the Legitimate use of the Economic Instrument of National Power?* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2013), 2-3; Robert J. Bunker, "Unrestricted Warfare: Review Essay I," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 114.

Concepts and Principles

Among the most important concepts associated with this strategy is the concept of ‘beyond-limits combined warfare’. This concept is based on the authors’ postulations that in today’s interdependent world, the significance of traditionally accepted boundaries are relative. When considering the meaning of ‘beyond-limits’, it is important to note that it does not imply that there are absolutely no limits to a situation. Instead, it refers to the expansion of ‘limited’ which, according to the strategy, is to go beyond the intrinsic boundaries of a certain area or direction, and to combine opportunities and means in more areas or directions, in order to achieve a set objective.²⁰ In simple terms, when dealing with a nation’s militaristic aggression for example, it is possible to transcend relative boundaries and combine any number of the forms of warfare described in *Unrestricted Warfare*.

As a result of this transcendence, the strategy suggests that in order to achieve political objectives, non-military ways and means can be employed as weapons to conduct warfare. Described in *Unrestricted Warfare* as ‘new concepts of weapons’, this theory differs significantly from the Western approach to conflict that typically involves ‘weapons of new concepts’ or the application of technological innovation to develop and secure advanced capabilities.²¹ This distinction between Chinese and Western definitions of what constitutes a weapon not only lends credibility to the aforementioned Chinese adage but, has resulted in the identification of several new forms of warfare specific to this strategy.

The new forms of warfare include, but are not limited to: diplomatic warfare (through alliance building and diplomatic bargaining and deception); economic warfare (through trade, aid, and sanctions); financial warfare (through stock speculation and currency devaluation or

²⁰ Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare: China's Master Plan to Destroy America*, 154-155.

²¹ Li, *Unrestricted Warfare and Chinese Military Strategy*, 2.

forgery); cyber warfare (through hacking and virus attacks); media and information warfare (through media management and control of information); network warfare (through disrupting critical infrastructure such as electricity grids, traffic dispatching, financial transactions, telephone communications, and mass media networks); cultural warfare (the influence of cultural bias through the imposition of one's own cultural viewpoints); and technological warfare (through the creation of monopolies on vital technologies that can be used in both peace and wartime). In addition to the new forms of warfare described above, *Unrestricted Warfare* also describes resources warfare, environmental warfare, intelligence warfare, psychological warfare, terrorism, and crimes such as counterfeiting, smuggling, hostage taking, and assassination.²² It is important to note that these new forms of warfare can be used independently or in combination to transcend the relative boundaries of modern warfare. Although this list falls short in defining all of the new forms of warfare described in the strategy, it adequately sets the stage for the discussion on its actual and potential applications.

Unrestricted Warfare in Practice

As previously stated, China has not accepted the strategy presented in *Unrestricted Warfare* as its official strategy however; China does currently employ several of the new forms of warfare presented therein. To analyze the actual application of the concepts and principles associated with the strategy, China's ambition to reconstitute Taiwan using their involvement in Latin America and the Caribbean will be examined. The analysis will demonstrate that China's actions in this region are directly aligned with the principles of economic warfare.

Since 1945, the Chinese leadership has considered Taiwan to be Chinese territory. For as many years China has pursued unification however, their desire to take Taiwan whole and intact

²² Li, *Unrestricted Warfare and Chinese Military Strategy*, 2; Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare: China's Master Plan to Destroy America*, xii; Quote sourced from both documents.

has stopped them from using force to achieve their objective. Rather than go to war over unification, Chinese leaders have pursued higher-value interests, including cross-Strait social and economic integration.²³ In addition to this, China has aggressively pursued economic and diplomatic relations with nations that have traditionally supported and accepted Taiwan's position as an independent state. Notwithstanding China's economic and resource-related imperatives, China's outreach into Latin America and the Caribbean incorporates the political dynamic of trying to separate Taiwan from its remaining diplomatic relationships. To accomplish this and further its territorial claim over Taiwan, for decades China has cleverly attempted to make acknowledgement of their "one China" policy a condition for receiving Chinese investment and assistance. Although China's primary interest in the region appears to be resource driven, it is also likely that their additional goal is to isolate Taiwan by luring the twelve remaining governments that maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan to shift their diplomatic recognition to China. As a result of China's dynamic economic growth, it has effectively 'outbid' Taiwan in courting several governments within the region and has been successful in nullifying at least four previous Taiwanese diplomatic relationships.²⁴ In essence, this approach enables China to achieve two goals in a single effort; bolster resource availability and undermine Taiwan's independence. China is following a similar methodology in both Africa and the Pacific region and achieving comparable results. China's involvement in this region is clearly in-line with the principles presented in *Unrestricted Warfare*. Specifically, this example demonstrates

²³ Robert S. Ross, "Navigating the Taiwan Strait," *International Security* 27, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 54; Lai, *Learning from the Stones: A Go Approach to Mastering China's Strategic Concept*, Shi, 23; First and third quote on page 54 of Ross.

²⁴ Congressional Research Service, *China's Foreign Policy and "Soft Power" in South America, Asia, and Africa* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2008), 5-6, 16; First quote on page 5, second on page 16, third on page 6; It is important to note that this loss of diplomatic relationships occurred between 2005-2008. Further data could not be found to identify other losses as a result of Chinese economic expansion. The twelve Latin American and Caribbean nations that diplomatically support Taiwan are: Belize, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

how they are effectively using economic warfare to secure diplomatic recognition and support for their position concerning their territorial claim over Taiwan.

In addition to increased Chinese diplomatic recognition, the increased economic and social integration between Taiwan and China has the potential to challenge Taipei's autonomy and provide the Chinese with a potentially potent instrument of influence over the island.²⁵ Over the last several decades, China has sought to increase economic integration with Taiwan resulting in a strong Taiwanese economic dependence on the mainland. Between the first quarter of 2003 and 2013 for example, total cross-Strait trade increased from US\$ 17.29 billion to US\$ 51.44 billion respectively;²⁶ a three-fold increase. Additionally, as a result of China's high demand economy and available employment, there has been a noticeable migration of Taiwanese workers to the mainland, including business executives, high-tech gurus, and workers with high-demand skills.²⁷ By integrating Taiwanese workers into their work force, China is facilitating social and cultural integration with Taiwan. In doing so, China is using its economic position to conduct limited cultural warfare to establish the conditions necessary for a peaceful and willing transition to a unified China. In a final point, should peaceful unification fail, notwithstanding an intervention by the US and Western allies, China could apply some of the more nefarious aspects of economic warfare. With Taiwan so dependent on China for its economic stability, sanctions or the cancellation of economically beneficial trade arrangements may have the clout to finally force unification. There is no doubt that such a move would be countered by Western sanctions however, China's broad array of non-Western economic partners in Latin American and the

²⁵ Abraham M. Denmark and Richard Fontaine, *Taiwan's Gamble: The Cross-Strait Rapprochement and its Implications for U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: Center for New American Security, 2009), 1.

²⁶ Lai, *Learning from the Stones: A Go Approach to Mastering China's Strategic Concept*, Shi, 24; Ministry of Commerce, People's Republic of China, "Statistics of Mainland-Taiwan Trade and Investment in January-March 2013," accessed 22 February 2015, <http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/article/statistic/lanmubb/hkmacaotaiwan/201305/20130500128055.shtml>. First figure quoted from Mainland Affairs Council, Executive Yuan, 07 August 2003, second figure from website.

²⁷ Lai, *Learning from the Stones: A Go Approach to Mastering China's Strategic Concept*, Shi, 23.

Caribbean, Africa, and the Pacific may negate or render those sanctions less-effective than anticipated. The presented evidence clearly demonstrates that in its quest to reintegrate Taiwan, China has in fact employed some of the new forms of warfare and positively contributed to the achievement of a longstanding strategic goal.

Unrestricted Warfare and Canada

Could China use any of these tactics against Western nations like Canada, and if so which ones? The truth is that, much like Taiwan, China is already employing some of the new forms of warfare against Canada and concurrently setting the conditions necessary to enable the application of other forms in the future. Due to the limited size of this chapter, the discussion concerning current employment will focus on cyber warfare, whereas network, cultural, and financial warfare will be the center of discussion concerning future applications.

For well over a decade China has been conducting cyber warfare related activities against Canada. In fact, since hacking into the computer networks of Canadian telecommunications giant Nortel in 2000, Chinese hackers have successfully continued to engage in a long line of cyber espionage operations that are still ongoing today, and even include the successful cyber-penetration of computer networks belonging to the Department of National Defence and the Government of Canada in 2011.²⁸ Furthermore, in recent years, Chinese hackers allegedly targeted law firms to derail the takeover bid by BHP Billiton Ltd. for Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, an effort aimed at promoting China's own interests in acquiring the natural resources.²⁹ These examples unquestionably demonstrate that China has been conducting cyber warfare operations against Canada for several years. More importantly, through the use of cyber

²⁸ Johnathan Racicot, "The Past, Present, and Future of Chinese Cyber Operations," *Canadian Military Journal* 14, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 32.

²⁹ Angela Gendron and Martin Rudner, *Assessing Cyber Threats to Canadian Infrastructure* (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Security Intelligence Service, 2012), 29.

warfare, China has been able to secure proprietary information, sensitive documents, and even influence decisions in its favour.

Given China's success in the application of cyber warfare, it can be deduced that a logical corollary application will be that of network warfare. Although cyber warfare currently appears to be the priority for China, it does not discount other possible targets within the cyber domain. For example, future targets might include systems responsible for the management of critical infrastructure, such as water pumps, thermal plants, electric grids,³⁰ traffic dispatching, and telephone communications. In addition to cyber related warfare, China could leverage the existing Chinese-Canadian diaspora community through the use of cultural warfare. Understanding the strong sense of shared identity and attachment to China that most overseas Chinese have,³¹ China could influence their diaspora communities to lobby or even elect governments that are sympathetic to the ambitions of the Chinese mainland. In Canada, where partisan politics are very common, China's ability to influence its diaspora of approximately 1.49 million people³² may have significant implications. In British Columbia for example, the 464,805 Chinese-Canadian citizens constitute just over ten percent of the province's total population.³³ In addition to these two forms of warfare, through foreign direct investment by State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), China has established the conditions necessary to disrupt the Canadian economy via financial and/or economic warfare. While getting in with an oil giant like CNOOC Ltd. may be welcomed by investors, the reality is that China strictly governs its SOEs

³⁰ Racicot, *The Past, Present, and Future of Chinese Cyber Operations*, 32.

³¹ Martin Jacques, "As China's Power Grows, the Diaspora Starts to Flex its Worldwide Muscle," *The Guardian*, June 11, 2008, accessed 22 February 2015; These same feelings (among Chinese diasporas) tend to override regional and political differences.

³² Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, "Population by Ethnic Origin by Province," accessed 23 February 2015, <http://www.asiapacific.ca/statistics/population/population-2006-and-2011-census/population-ethnic-origin-province>.

³³ Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, "Population by Ethnic Origin by Province," accessed 23 February 2015; Economics and Statistics Branch, Newfoundland & Labrador Statistics Agency, *Annual Estimates of Population for Canada, Provinces, and Territories, from July 1, 1971 to July 1, 2014*, Statistics Canada, 2014), 1.

and expects them to carry out the government's strategic goals.³⁴ If China decided to subvert the Canadian economy to assist it in achieving a goal, the large number of Chinese SOEs with investments in Canada would be expected to facilitate it. Although only three new forms of warfare were discussed as potential future asymmetric threats to Canada, China could use any number of the previously described forms individually or in combination to attack. Canada's actions to counter these possibilities will be discussed in a later chapter.

Conclusion

The presented case study identified that, from a Chinese perspective and as a result of the 'new context for conflict', an asymmetric or 360° strategy is necessary for China to achieve success in future wars against the US and its Western allies. The ancient teachings of the Chinese grand master of strategy, Sun Tzu, adapted to account for modern times played an important role in the creation of the *Unrestricted Warfare* strategy. The discussion examined several key concepts and principles of the strategy including the concept of 'beyond limits combined warfare' and 'weapons of new concepts', the latter of which is the catalyst behind the creation of several new forms of warfare.

Although *Unrestricted Warfare* is not an officially accepted Chinese strategy, the presented evidence demonstrates that China is in fact employing some of the new forms of warfare to achieve its strategic goals. To demonstrate this point, this portion of the discussion focused on China's use of economic warfare to secure diplomatic support for its "one China" policy and its application of cyber warfare to penetrate computer networks to secure proprietary information, sensitive documents, and influence decisions in its favour. Finally, a short

³⁴ Wendy Dobson, "China's State Owned Enterprises and Canada's FDI Policy," *School of Public Policy Research Papers* 7, no. 10 (March 2014): 6. One such example occurred on 25 February 2013 when CNOOC Ltd, a Chinese state-owned oil giant, purchased Nexen, a Canadian owned oil and gas company based in Calgary, Alberta.

discussion concerning potential future applications of the new forms of warfare revealed several areas within which Canada may be vulnerable to a Chinese attack in the future.

CHAPTER 2: IRAN – *MOSAIC DEFENCE* CASE STUDY

In 2005, General Mohammad Ali Aziz Jafari, then a sub-level commander in the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), theorized and unveiled *Mosaic Defence*, an asymmetrically based defence strategy reliant on interlocking layers of capability and designed for flexibility.³⁵ In 2007, when General Jafari assumed the role of Chief Commander of the IRGC, his brainchild – *Mosaic Defence* – was published and implemented as Iran’s official defence strategy. It is important to note that although General Jafari is often credited with the actual adoption of the *Mosaic Defence* strategy, Iran has spent almost three decades progressively integrating and employing asymmetric strategies to achieve its national goals.

As a result of its official implementation, both the IRGC and Iran’s conventional forces have undergone significant changes over the last several years and transitioned into a force poised to fight conventionally focused adversaries’ using unconventional means. In addition, these reforms uniquely establish Iran as one of the first nation-states, and red-actors, to codify an asymmetrically based ‘unrestricted warfare’ strategy as their official defence strategy.³⁶ For clarity, Iran’s ‘unrestricted warfare’ strategy should not be considered equivalent to China’s *Unrestricted Warfare* strategy however, as this chapter will demonstrate, there are many similarities.

The *Mosaic Defence* strategy case study will begin by defining the fundamental reasons that have prompted Iran to develop and adopt an asymmetric strategy in order to achieve its national security goals. Following this, key concepts and principles will be discussed in order to fully understand the components and application of the strategy. Several doctrinal tactics and

³⁵ Center for Strategic & International Studies, *The Evolution of Iran's Military Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2013), 2.

³⁶ Anonymous, "Iran's Mosaic Doctrine - an Unrestricted Army," *The Arkenstone - Pakistan Defense*, accessed 25 February 2015, <http://thearkenstone.blogspot.ca/2010/03/irans-mosaic-doctrine-unrestricted-army.html>.

capabilities associated with the strategy, such as naval swarming attacks and the use of proxies, will also be examined and lead to a discussion on how the elements of this strategy may be applied against Western nations such as Canada.

In a final introductory note, it should be noted that unlike China's *Unrestricted Warfare*, which advocates for the application of offensive and defensive operations using all means available at all levels and across all PMESII dimensions, Iran's strategy is centered heavily on military capabilities, is primarily defensive in nature, and based on the deterrence of perceived adversaries³⁷ instead of offensive warfare. In addition, the strategy also incorporates a 'forward defence' component that involves the use of elements such as proxies and sleeper cells to strike at an adversary's strategic depth. Lastly, limited information concerning the *Mosaic Defence* strategy has been published to date. As such, the reasons, concepts, principles, and applications described within this chapter are based on expert strategist observations, analysis, and opinions of what is known of the strategy.

Why *Mosaic Defence*?

Similar to *Unrestricted Warfare*, Iran's *Mosaic Defence* strategy was created and adopted to counter the US who Iran views as its greatest threat. In fact, much of the strategy has drawn significant doctrinal inspiration from China due to an Iranian perception that China has been able to effectively balance itself against the US³⁸ through the use of asymmetric means. In addition, the increased friction between Iran and its Middle Eastern neighbours, as well as escalating tensions between itself and Israel, have been a significant catalyst of Iran's doctrinal shift. Similar to the Chinese approach, in the creation of its own 360° strategy, Iran has made exceptional use of observations collected throughout the analysis of several modern operations,

³⁷ Connell, *Iran's Military Doctrine*, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/irans-military-doctrine>.

³⁸ Center for Strategic & International Studies, *The Evolution of Iran's Military Doctrine*, 1.

including its own war with Iraq from 1980-1988. From a modern operations perspective, the strategy encapsulates lessons drawn from Iranian observations of recent Western backed operations such as Operations *Desert Storm* and *Iraqi Freedom* (both Iraq) as well as *Enduring Freedom* (Afghanistan). Lastly, the strategy also incorporates lessons learned and tactics employed by Hezbollah, a well-known proxy of the Islamic Republic, during its 2006 conflict with Israel in southern Lebanon.³⁹ By analyzing these conflicts, Iran has identified that Western forces have demonstrated significant weakness when fighting against irregular forces. Furthermore, the weakness extends to the Western scientific community's conceptual grasp and theoretical understanding of such forces.⁴⁰

In addition to the aforementioned, a significant contributor to the creation and adoption of the *Mosaic Defence* strategy is an Iranian acceptance that despite its ambitions, it is not a dominant regional military power⁴¹ and, perhaps more importantly, that it is desperately outmatched conventionally⁴² in comparison to its known and perceived adversaries. As a result of its analysis of the situation, Iran sees itself in a position of weakness vis-à-vis many of its likely adversaries, and therefore has elected to define success as effectively thwarting its adversaries' goals.⁴³ To accomplish this objective, Iran has taken stock of its significant military assets and capabilities, decentralized its military, begun the procurement of new weapon systems, and developed ingenious tactics and doctrine to enable the effective execution of

³⁹ Robert Tilford, "Iranian Wargames Emphasizes "Asymmetrical Warfare Tactics", *The Examiner*, January 08, 2012, accessed 03 March 2015; Center for Strategic & International Studies, *The Evolution of Iran's Military Doctrine*, 1; First quote (Iran-Iraq War) and last (2006 Hezbollah) from Tilford, Middle quote (Western Operations) from Center for Strategic & International Studies.

⁴⁰ Pierre Pahlavi, "Guerre irrégulière et analyse institutionnelle : Le cas de la stratégie asymétrique des Gardiens de la Révolution en Iran," *Études Internationales* 42, no. 4 (2011): 473.

⁴¹ Anthony H. Cordesman and Martin Kleiber, *Iran's Military Forces and War Fighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007), 1.

⁴² Anonymous, *Iran's Mosaic Doctrine - an Unrestricted Army*, accessed 26 February 2015.

⁴³ Center for Strategic & International Studies, *The Evolution of Iran's Military Doctrine*, 1.

defensive warfare and improve its asymmetric warfare capabilities.⁴⁴ In sum, for Iran, the adoption of an asymmetric based strategy is the best way to take advantage of its strengths and compensate for its lack of brute conventional power.

From a defensive warfare perspective, Iran hopes to avoid protracted tactical engagements and enforce a protracted war that will result in human and material costs so unpalatable that an invader would be compelled to abandon their objectives and withdraw.⁴⁵ To achieve this, *Mosaic Defence* focuses on the application of asymmetric warfare tactics via military means to establish an advantageous position over an adversary within a targeted domain. This last point highlights an important distinction between the Iranian and Chinese approaches to asymmetric warfare. Where China, as a great power, enjoys full access to the instruments of national power and openly uses all means available to create and capitalize on asymmetries, Iran, as a regional power with significant economic woes and instability, primarily employs the strength of its military instrument to influence targeted PMESII domains. This last statement is not meant to infer that Iran relies uniquely on its military instrument of national power; the regime is well known for its use of religion, media, diaspora and cultural diplomacy, and the leverage offered by its abundant hydrocarbon resources.

The analysis has revealed that the creation and adoption of the *Mosaic Defence* strategy has as much to do with an outward looking observant Iran as it does with an inward looking self-analyzing Iran. That is to say the strategy's development and implementation is the result of an Iranian acceptance of its position within the global power hierarchy, observations related to past and on-going conflicts, an assessment of their own strengths and weaknesses, and an evaluation

⁴⁴ Cordesman and Kleiber, *Iran's Military Forces and War Fighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf*, 1; Center for Strategic & International Studies, *The Evolution of Iran's Military Doctrine*, 1; Citation is a combination of both sources.

⁴⁵ Frederic Wehrey et al., *Dangerous but Not Omnipotent: Exploring the Reach and Limitations of Iranian Power in the Middle East* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2009), 54.

of their current and expected future capabilities. In order to fully understand how Iran would apply the *Mosaic Defence* strategy, an understanding of several of its key concepts and principles is necessary.

Concepts and Principles

The *Mosaic Defence* strategy was designed to defend Iranian territory and to deter perceived adversaries from attacking and/or attempting an invasion of the homeland. Paramount to the successful application of this defence strategy is deterrence. In the conduct of deterrence operations, the strategy emphasizes the use of rhetoric, exaggeration, ambiguity, and obfuscation about Iran's ability to exact a prohibitive cost from its potential aggressors, especially the US and its Western and regional allies.⁴⁶ This point highlights the application of the forward defence component of the *Mosaic Defence* strategy. In simple terms, Iran aims to dissuade would be attackers by convincing them that an attack would be extremely costly in terms of the loss of human and/or material resources. This has been reinforced by frequent declarations that in its response to any attack, Iran will escalate, by targeting third parties and extra-regional targets and prolong the conflict so as to increase the costs on the aggressor.⁴⁷ Any examination of Iranian deterrence would not be complete without a mention of how its nuclear program has been factored into its strategy. It is in fact Iran's reliance on deterrence coupled with the acknowledgement of its conventional military inferiority that provides Iran the impetus to seek nuclear weapons.⁴⁸ Considering these two factors, it should come as no surprise that Iran seeks nuclear weapons because the threat of nuclear reprisal is widely accepted and considered as the ultimate deterrent.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 40-41; First quote on page 40.

⁴⁷ Shahrām Chubin, *Command and Control in a Nuclear Armed Iran*, Proliferation Papers 45 (Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales, 2013), 15.

⁴⁸ Wehrey et al., *Dangerous but Not Omnipotent: Exploring the Reach and Limitations of Iranian Power in the Middle East*, 41.

Understanding and accepting its conventional military inferiority in comparison to Western forces, should rhetorical deterrence fail, Iran would rely heavily on the application of asymmetric warfare tactics to enact its retribution and to defend the homeland. In fact, if the US, or any Western nation for that matter, were to attack the Islamic Republic, Iran has stated that it would not hesitate to employ asymmetric warfare tactics in order to increase casualty rates and negatively impact the economies and psyches of its adversary.⁴⁹

Much like *Unrestricted Warfare*, Iran's asymmetric strategy encapsulates both traditionally accepted forms of asymmetric warfare and several 'new forms of warfare' such as media and information warfare, political warfare, economic warfare, cyber warfare, extortion, and psychological operations.⁵⁰ Furthermore, *Mosaic Defence* advocates for the application of asymmetric warfare using proxies, such as Hezbollah, sleeper cells, and terrorists supported by the Iranian Quds Force, a sub-section of the IRGC who's traditional role has been to cultivate and support terrorists abroad.⁵¹ In today's context, the Quds Force now appears to be actively supporting both counter- insurgents and insurgents as demonstrated by their actions in Syria/Iraq and Yemen respectively. Finally, both the IRGC and the Iranian conventional military forces have undergone significant changes in order to optimise their ability to employ asymmetric warfare tactics whether in defence of the homeland or in the conduct of external operations. Most importantly, the tactics have been designed specifically with both the strengths of the Iranian forces and weaknesses of its perceived adversaries' in mind. With a general understanding of the

⁴⁹ Michael V. Rienzi, "Iran's Response to a U.S. Attack," *Small Wars Journal* (February 2012): 2.

⁵⁰ Wehrey et al., *Dangerous but Not Omnipotent: Exploring the Reach and Limitations of Iranian Power in the Middle East*, xix; Rienzi, *Iran's Response to a U.S. Attack*, 3, 8; Center for Strategic & International Studies, *The Evolution of Iran's Military Doctrine*, 1; First quote (information and media) in Wehrey, second quote (political, economic) on page 8 and (cyber warfare and extortion) on page 3 of Rienzi, and third quote (psychological operations) on page 1 of Center for Strategic & International Studies.

⁵¹ U.S. State Department, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2010," accessed 08 March 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2010/170260.htm>; Page number unknown, unable to download complete PDF. Link is relative to Chapter 3 of the document and is the source of the quote.

concepts and principles associated with the *Mosaic Defence* strategy, the actual and potential applications of the strategy can now be examined.

Mosaic Defence in Practice

Since the implementation of the *Mosaic Defence* strategy, no nation has openly attacked nor attempted to invade Iran's territory. With this in mind, the discussion concerning the practical application of the strategy will focus on several examples of Iranian deterrence operations. Following this, an examination of both the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy (IRIN) and the IRGC Navy (IRGCN) including their tactics will be conducted in order to identify what Western nations may face in the event of an attack on Iran.

In the application of deterrence operations, Iran combines, but does not limit itself to, official statements, well-publicized parades, set-piece exercises and shows of force, as well as tests of newly acquired advanced weapon systems, such as intermediate-range ballistic missiles.⁵² To the international audience, grandiose official statements by high-ranking Iranian officials have come to be expected. For example, in June 2008, a representative of Ayatollah Khamenei – the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran – announced that should the US or Israel attack Iran, “Tel Aviv and the US fleet in the Persian Gulf would be targets that would be set on fire in Iran's crushing response”.⁵³ This very bold official statement by a high-ranking Iranian official, clearly demonstrates the use of rhetoric, exaggeration, and ambiguity to foster deterrence. Additionally, Iranian naval assets regularly conduct exercises within the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz that occasionally include the test firing of new weaponry, such as anti-ship cruise missiles or torpedoes. Most importantly, Iranian officials frequently release media

⁵² Wehrey et al., *Dangerous but Not Omnipotent: Exploring the Reach and Limitations of Iranian Power in the Middle East*, 41.

⁵³ Al-Arabiya News - Anonymous, "Iran Vows to Set Tel Aviv "on Fire" if Attacked," *Al Arabiya*, July 08, 2008, accessed 08 March 2015.

photographs or video of these exercises and weapons events.⁵⁴ Given that any significant attack on Iran would most certainly involve the use of the Strait of Hormuz by Western naval forces, these media releases are clearly aimed at deterring the US and its Western allies. In combination with grandiose official statements, this example clearly demonstrates the Iranian application of media and information warfare to achieve deterrence. Finally, the threat of reprisal by nuclear attack cannot be overlooked when discussing Iranian deterrence operations. Testament to the success of Iran's overall deterrence program, aside from Stuxnet – the computer worm that reportedly ruined almost one fifth of Iran's nuclear centrifuges in 2010⁵⁵ – the US, its Western allies, and Israel, have not physically attacked Iran since the adoption of the *Mosaic Defence* strategy. Instead they have opted to resolve their concerns about Iran's nuclear program in a more peaceful manner through the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, diplomacy, and various sanctions, a move that some fear may have allowed Iran enough time to complete the work necessary to possess its first nuclear weapon by the end of 2015.⁵⁶

As previously mentioned, to date, Iran is yet to release a copy of the *Mosaic Defence* strategy for public scrutiny. This fact, in conjunction with the lack of actual evidence demonstrating the tactics employed by Iran during an attack against it, makes an examination of their asymmetric strategy rather challenging. Currently, the vast majority of what is known about *Mosaic Defence* has been gleaned from the very mechanisms that Iran employs in the conduct of deterrence operations, such as official statements, exercises, and weapons tests.

⁵⁴ Office of Naval Intelligence, *Iran's Naval Forces: From Guerilla Warfare to a Modern Naval Strategy* (Suitland, MD: Office of Naval Intelligence (U.S.), 2009), 21.

⁵⁵ William J. Broad, John Markoff and David E. Sanger, "Israeli Test on Worm Called Crucial in Iran Nuclear Delay," *The New York Times*, January 15, 2011, accessed 03 March 2015.

⁵⁶ Peter Roell, *Iran: Foreign and Security Policy Aspects* (Berlin, Germany: Institute for Strategic, Political, Security, and Economic Consultancy, 2010), 2.

The most openly advertised and discussed component of the strategy is that which is assigned to the IRIN and IRGCN. This is likely because Iranian planners are confident that any large-scale attack against the homeland will certainly involve the use of US and Western naval assets as well as the very narrow Strait of Hormuz. Furthermore, the IRGCN has significant experience in the application of asymmetric naval warfare tactics from its experience in the Iran-Iraq war and has expended considerable effort to modernize them.⁵⁷ These factors indicate that in the event of an attack, Iran plans to fight asymmetrically at sea using hit and run attacks with sea and land-launched anti-ship cruise missiles, mini-submarines, and suicide boats,⁵⁸ as well as both massed and dispersed swarming attacks.⁵⁹ In addition to attacking naval forces, Iran can also be expected to attack commercial shipping and/or attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz in order to disrupt the global economy. On a daily basis hundreds of internationally bound crude carriers and cargo ships⁶⁰ pass through the Strait of Hormuz carrying more than 40 percent of the world's internationally traded oil, approximately 17 million barrels per day or 20 percent of world oil demand.⁶¹ The potential threat to the global economy was exemplified in 2008 when General Jafari claimed that Iran would "impose controls on shipping in the vital Gulf oil route if

⁵⁷ Anton Minkov, *What Happens After an Israeli Attack? Exploring Iranian Decision-Making and Retaliatory Options. Letter-Report (LR212-042)* (Ottawa: Defence Research and Development Canada, Center for Operational Research and Analysis, 2012), 8.

⁵⁸ Michael Cummings and Eric Cummings, "The Costs of War with Iran: An Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield," *Small Wars Journal* (August 2012): 5, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-costs-of-war-with-iran-an-intelligence-preparation-of-the-battlefield>.

⁵⁹ Fariborz Haghshenass, *Iran's Doctrine of Asymmetric Naval Warfare*, Policy Watch 1179 (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2006), 1; Swarming tactics involve the use of light, mobile forces with substantial striking power, capable of rapidly concentrating to attack an enemy from multiple directions and then rapidly dispersing. For more on swarming tactics see: www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/views/iran-doctrine-of-asymmetric-naval-warfare.

⁶⁰ Fariborz Haghshenass, *Iran's Asymmetric Naval Warfare*, Policy Focus 87 (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2008), 7.

⁶¹ Simon Henderson, *Energy in Danger: Iran, Oil, and the West*, Policy Focus 83 (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2008), ix, 1; First quote on page ix, second quote on page 1.

attacked.”⁶² Furthermore, in January 2012, following an announcement that the European Union was considering an embargo against Iranian crude imports, Iran threatened to completely close the Strait.⁶³ An Iranian decision to close the Strait would not be taken easily; closing it would have a tremendously negative impact on the Iranian economy as well as global economies.⁶⁴ These two examples not only demonstrate Iranian deterrence operations but also foreshadow Iran’s actions in the event of an attack against it. More importantly, Iranian threats concerning the wholesale closure of the Strait and the threat of naval action against commercial shipping demonstrate Iran’s use of media and information warfare as well as its willingness to employ economic warfare.

Mosaic Defence and Canada

Notwithstanding any impact to the Canadian economy from an Iranian closure of the Strait of Hormuz, what other tactics relative to *Mosaic Defence* could Iran employ against Canada? Similar to the Chinese approach, Iran is already employing some forms of asymmetric warfare against Canada however, unlike the Chinese approach, Iran’s efforts are more so directed towards the establishment of the capacities necessary to enable the application of other forms of asymmetric warfare in the future. The discussion concerning the actual and potential employment of tactics associated with the strategy will focus on cyber warfare, the use of proxies, and sleeper cells.

Traditionally, Iran’s objective within the cyber domain has been to erect a defensive ‘electronic curtain’ aimed at isolating its population from the World Wide Web⁶⁵ and protecting itself from external agencies attempting to probe the regime. Since the adoption of the *Mosaic*

⁶² Reuters Factbox, "Strait of Hormuz," Reuters, accessed 11 March 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/09/us-iran-oil-hormuz-facts-idUSTRE8081BX20120109>.

⁶³ Julian Borger, "EU Agrees Iran Oil Embargo," *The Guardian*, January 04, 2012, accessed March 11, 2015.

⁶⁴ Office of Naval Intelligence, *Iran's Naval Forces: From Guerilla Warfare to a Modern Naval Strategy*, 3.

⁶⁵ Ilan Berman, "Cyberwar and Iranian Strategy," *Defence Dossier*, no. 4 (August 2012): 12.

Defence strategy however, Iran appears to have shifted from a defensive to an offensive posture in terms of its approach to cyberspace.⁶⁶ As a result, Iran currently views cyber warfare as an effective tool to inflict significant damage on a militarily and technologically superior adversary.⁶⁷ An important component of this doctrinal shift has been the creation of a ‘cyber army’.⁶⁸ Linked to the IRGC, the ‘cyber army’ is responsible for the execution of attacks on sites and entities out of favour with the Iranian regime, including social networking sites and search engines.⁶⁹ In a display of its offensive cyber warfare capabilities, in September 2012, the group successfully attacked a number of financial institutions in the US, including sites belonging to the Bank of America, Morgan Chase, and CitiGroup. With this newly demonstrated capability in mind, it is not unreasonable to believe that if hostilities were to escalate between Iran and the West, Iran would launch cyber-attacks against critical US and Western infrastructure including power generation stations, financial institutions, and transportation systems.⁷⁰ These examples all demonstrate the forward defence component of *Mosaic Defence* and unquestionably demonstrate that since its adoption, Iran has taken significant steps to develop and implement the capabilities necessary to employ cyber warfare against its actual and perceived adversaries.

Iran has enjoyed a long track record of successfully employing proxies to achieve state goals. As such, it should come as no surprise that proxies are an essential component of *Mosaic Defence*. To Iran, the use of proxies is considered a ‘peripheral strategy’ intended to give strategic depth to homeland defence and, through the forward defence component of its strategy,

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶⁷ Gabi Siboni and Sami Kronenfeld, "Iran's Cyber Warfare," *Institute for National Security Studies Insight* 375 (15 October 2012): 2.

⁶⁸ Berman, *Cyberwar and Iranian Strategy*, 14.

⁶⁹ Siboni and Kronenfeld, *Iran's Cyber Warfare*, 2; Berman, *Cyberwar and Iranian Strategy*, 14; Link to IRGC from Siboni, rest from Berman.

⁷⁰ Siboni and Kronenfeld, *Iran's Cyber Warfare*, 2-3; First quote (financial institutions) on page 3, second quote (infrastructure) on page 2.

provide the regime the capability to take the fight deep into an adversary's camp.⁷¹ Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran has been responsible for countless terrorist plots either directly through regime agents or indirectly through proxies such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and Al-Qaeda.⁷² Most recently, under the command of General Qassem Suleimani, commander of the Iranian Al-Quds Brigade, Iranian proxies, including Hezbollah and several Iraqi Shiite militias, are currently being employed to fight against ISIS in both Iraq and Syria.⁷³ These proxies are determined to retain influence over what Iran calls its 'strategic extension,' Syria,⁷⁴ and to safeguard Iranian interests in the Shiite crescent. Furthermore, the concept of forward defence is clearly demonstrated by the current Iranian support to Shiite Houthis' fighting in Yemen. Lastly, it is not inconceivable that proxy forces could also be used to carry out attacks against Western homelands and interests abroad in the event of a future conflict.⁷⁵

In addition to the use of proxies, *Mosaic Defence* calls for the employment of sleeper cells. Embedded within Western societies, sleeper cells remain dormant, living like regular members of society until activated to carry out terrorist attacks. In January 2012, US intelligence revealed that Iran has been actively establishing sleeper cells designed to attack US and allied interests in the event of war. Additionally, for several years, Canada's intelligence service has warned of the Iranian embassy's efforts to threaten and blackmail some of the approximately

⁷¹ Wehrey et al., *Dangerous but Not Omnipotent: Exploring the Reach and Limitations of Iranian Power in the Middle East*, xviii.

⁷² Ryan Mauro, "Iranian Support for Terrorism," The Clarion Project, accessed 12 March 2015, 8-10, www.clarionproject.org/sites/default/files/Iranian-Support-For-Terrorism.pdf; First quote on page 10, second quote on page 8.

⁷³ Avi Issacharoff, "After Losing 1,000 Men in Syria, Hezbollah Builds 'Security Zone'," *The Times of Israel*, October 31, 2014, accessed March 12, 2015; Staff Writer, "Report: Iran Building 'New Hezbollah' in Syria," *Al Arabiya*, November 05, 2014, accessed March 12, 2014.

⁷⁴ Alan Salehzadeh, "Iran's Domestic and Foreign Policies," *National Defence University Working Papers* 49, no. 4 (2013): 23.

⁷⁵ Alireza Nader, "The Revolutionary Guards," accessed 12 March 2015, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/revolutionary-guards>.

100,000 Iranians living in Canada to cooperate with the regime.⁷⁶ Diaspora cooperation could include either/both passive and active roles in constructive or destructive capacities.

Constructively, Iranian diaspora's could be employed to actively influence receiver nation foreign policies. Meanwhile, from a destructive perspective, those that 'cooperate' could be called upon to carry out Iranian sanctioned bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations on Canadian soil.⁷⁷ Although only three forms of asymmetric warfare relevant to *Mosaic Defence* were discussed, it is critical to understand that Iran could employ any number of the various forms available to them in an attack against Canada.

Conclusion

The presented case study identified that from an Iranian perspective, the *Mosaic Defence* strategy is necessary in order for Iran to counter its greatest perceived threat, the US. The analysis also demonstrated that the strategy could be applied against America's Western allies and Israel. The adoption of this asymmetrically based strategy is the result of an Iranian acceptance of its position within the global power hierarchy, several contemporary post-conflict observations, an assessment of their own and their adversaries' strengths and weaknesses, and an evaluation of their current and future capabilities. Unique to the Iranian 360° strategy is its heavy reliance on military capabilities, its primarily defensive focus, and its significant emphasis on deterrence. Lastly, Iran's regional power status coupled with its economic woes and instability, are a significant factor in their decision to rely on their military instrument of national power to influence targeted PMESII domains.

⁷⁶ Brian Stewart, "Did Intelligence Fears Prompt Canada to Cut Iran Ties?" *CBC News*, September 11, 2012, accessed March 12, 2015

⁷⁷ Yossi Shain and Aharon Barth, "Diasporas and International Relations Theory," *International Organization* 57, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 459; Stewart, *Did Intelligence Fears Prompt Canada to Cut Iran Ties?*, accessed March 12, 2015; First part of quote from Shain and Barth, second part from Stewart.

The analysis of the *Mosaic Defence* strategy revealed that Iran has actively been employing media and information warfare to conduct deterrence operations and to warn Western nations about the actions they will take should they be attacked. Using the IRIN and IRGCN, Iran will not only use advanced asymmetric warfare tactics and state of the art weapon systems to attack naval forces, they will also attack commercial shipping within the Strait of Hormuz; effectively waging economic warfare. Additionally, a discussion concerning the Iranian application of cyber warfare, proxies, and sleeper cells, revealed several areas within which Canada may be vulnerable to attack in the future. Most importantly, in combination, these points clearly demonstrate that *Mosaic Defence* is in fact a 360° strategy similar in logic to China's *Unrestricted Warfare*. In terms of capabilities however, Iran's strategy falls short in comparison to the Chinese counterpart. Regardless, *Mosaic Defence*, much like *Unrestricted Warfare*, both significantly challenge Western conventional military and economic superiority. Finally, it is worth restating that limited information concerning this strategy has been published to date. Resultantly, the concepts and principles as well as the potential applications are largely based on expert strategist analysis of what information has been gleaned from official Iranian statements and demonstrations.

CHAPTER 3: ISIS – THE NON-STATE INNOVATOR CASE STUDY

With the analysis of a great power (China) and regional power (Iran) complete, in order to fully understand the extent of asymmetrical challengers to Western security, the focus of the paper will now shift to the non-state innovator (ISIS).

In June 2014, in an efficient, well-publicized military campaign marked by the retreat of terrified US trained Iraqi soldiers, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a Sunni jihadist group, seized control of a substantial portion of Iraq's sovereign territory.⁷⁸ In addition to this seized portion of Iraq, ISIS previously seized and now controls approximately one third of neighbouring Syria. In total, the group's territorial control now spans an area approximately the size of Great Britain. As a non-state red-actor, with limited access and control over resources in comparison to those of a nation state,⁷⁹ how did ISIS manage to make such significant territorial gains in such a short period of time? Through the application of well-designed 360° strategy, similar in terms of logic to those of China and Iran, the group effectively employed military and non-military means to create and capitalize on asymmetries in order to influence its operating environment and achieve its definitive goal; the reestablishment of an Islamic Caliphate.⁸⁰

Similar to the Chinese and Iranian case studies, the non-state innovator case study will examine and define the fundamental reasons that have prompted ISIS to develop and adopt the strategy it has. In addition, several key concepts and principles associated with the group's approach will be discussed in order to fully understand the components and application of their strategy. Several tactics and capabilities associated with the strategy will also be examined and

⁷⁸ J. M. Berger and Jessica Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2015), 4.

⁷⁹ Juan Castillo, "Cultural Irregular Warfare: The Crossroads between Strategic Culture and Non-Kinetic Strategies Employed by Non-State Actors," *Canadian Military Journal* 12, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 18.

⁸⁰ Elliot Friedland, *Special Report: The Islamic State* (Washington DC: The Clarion Project, 2014), 21; A Caliphate is a system of government considered by believers to be a divinely sanctioned religious monarchy that invests power in the hands of the caliph, who has the sole authority to declare jihad and to interpret Islamic texts.

lead to a discussion on how the elements of their approach can be, and are being, applied to achieve the organizations goals and what impact they may have on Western nations like Canada.

In a final note, it should be recognized that since its creation ISIS has renamed itself several times. Its most recent renaming occurred on June 30th, 2014 when, after its announcement concerning the reestablishment of the Caliphate, the group declared itself ‘the Islamic State’ (IS). In addition, although not an exhaustive list, the group – an off-shoot of al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) – has been known as the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and by the Arabic acronym ‘Daesh’ or ‘Da’esh.’ In order to not legitimize the group’s declaration of an Islamic Caliphate however,⁸¹ they are still commonly referred to as ISIS or ISIL in Western circles. For the purposes of this chapter, and throughout the rest of this paper, the group will be referred to as ISIS except in cases where an alternate name is important to the point being argued.

Why has ISIS selected this strategy?

Similar to the Chinese and Iranian strategies, ISIS’s strategy incorporates tactics derived from the observation of past conflicts, especially those involving jihadist elements. That is to say, in this particular case, the observations are more specific to jihadist successes and failures than analytical of adversary tactics however, the group’s understanding of the lack of Western organizational and intellectual capacity to deal with this brand of threat is also considered. ISIS emerged from the mind of Abu Musab al Zarqawi, a Jordanian thug-turned-terrorist who emphasized and advocated for a particularly brutal and sectarian approach to the execution of jihad. Much of Zarqawi’s inspiration came from an important jihadi text written in 2004 titled *Idarat al Tawahhush*, or in English, *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage Through Which the Ummah Will Pass*. Attributed to an al Qaeda division devoted to research and

⁸¹ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*, 8.

analysis, the text is a compilation of lessons learned from previous jihadist failures, as well as an advancement in thinking about the movement's future direction. In addition to this text, Zarqawi was also significantly influenced by *A Call to a Global Islamic Resistance*, a 1,600-page book written by Abu Musab al Suri, a well-known jihadi ideologue.⁸²

ISIS's ultimate goal is the establishment and maintenance of an Islamic Caliphate. This end state is not uncommon among Islamic extremist organizations however, unlike the masses who believe that the time is not yet right for such a declaration,⁸³ ISIS believed that in June 2014 the time could not have been better. The group saw the existing Sunni-Shiite divide in Iraq and Syria as an excellent opportunity to apply its violent sectarian execution of jihad and exacerbate the situation. Furthermore, with the intention of invigorating, mobilizing, and gaining support from Sunnis writ large, ISIS actively endeavored to portray Shiite dominated governments, such as Bashar al Assad's Alawi-led government in Syria and Nouri al Malaki's Shiite-led government in Iraq, as oppressors of Sunni populations. Through these two distinct lines of operation ISIS aimed to widen the Sunni-Shiite divide and encourage an increasingly violent civil war that legitimizes the need to establish an independent Sunni dominated state. Given their current scope of operations and future intentions, it is perhaps more realistic to describe ISIS's main objective as the establishment of a 'civilization war' more so than a civil war.

From an international perspective, it can be argued that the group's portrayal of itself as a brutally violent jihadist movement is intended to dissuade international intervention within the region and especially within Iraq and Syria however; ISIS's selection of this particular component of their strategy is actually meant to accomplish the exact opposite and more. Through the demonstration of extreme brutality, such as beheadings and actions that are against

⁸² *Ibid.*, 13, 23-24; First quote on page 13, second quote on page 23.

⁸³ Friedland, *Special Report: The Islamic State*, 12.

Western ideals, including the oppression of free speech and freedom of religion, ISIS intends to draw the US, and its Western allies, into a series of protracted conflicts that will last for decades and ultimately destroy their image of invincibility.⁸⁴ Furthermore, using this same propaganda campaign, ISIS intends to mobilize the proverbial ‘Arab street’ in order to recruit new fighters and supporters.⁸⁵ Combined, these two points highlight the multifaceted nature of ISIS’s propaganda campaign and, perhaps more importantly, validate its application of a 360° strategy.

These last two paragraphs highlight an important distinction between the two previously discussed 360° strategies and ISIS’s; most notably ISIS’s advocacy for, and depiction of, extreme brutality versus the antecedents less violent approaches. Despite this distinction however, ISIS’s strategy is nonetheless aimed at nullifying Western conventional military and economic superiority through the application of a multifaceted 360° approach.

Concepts and Principles

In its online English-language magazine entitled *Dabiq*, ISIS describes its grand strategy as predicated upon the application of military force to establish physical control before political and religious authority are attained.⁸⁶ In the execution of its grand strategy, ISIS has systematically followed a five step process, designed by Zarqawi, consisting of *hijrah* (emigration), *jama’ah* (congregate), destabilize *taghut* (tyrants), *tamkin* (consolidation), and *khilafah* (Caliphate).⁸⁷ Furthermore, throughout this process, the organization has consistently

⁸⁴ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*, 23.

⁸⁵ Multiple lectures and discussions, Social Media and Cyber-Influence, Centre for National Security Studies, Canadian Forces College, Toronto, ON, 09-10 April 2015, authors interpretation following discussion with Dr. Pierre Pahlavi, Canadian Forces College.

⁸⁶ Jessica D. Lewis, *Middle East Security Report 21, the Islamic State: A Counter-Strategy for a Counter-State* (Washington, DC: The Institute for the Study of War, 2014), 10.; Harleen K. Gambhir, *Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2014), 1.

⁸⁷ The Dabiq Team (exact author unknown), "The Return of Khilafah," *Dabiq*, July 05, 2014 (Ramadan 1435), 38; Like many articles in *Dabiq*, the author is not indicated. Additionally, publication date is often difficult to find as

relied on the application of the stages of jihadist struggle outlined in *The Management of Savagery*. These stages include *Disruption and Exhaustion* where a terrorist group damages the economy of enemy powers and demoralizes their population through attack and propaganda; *Management of Savagery*, a phase of violent resistance with an emphasis on carrying out acts of highly visible violence, intended to send a message to both allies and enemies, and; *Empowerment* which sees the establishment of regions controlled by jihadists which can subsequently grow and unite toward the goal of re-creating the Caliphate.⁸⁸ Based on ISIS's June 30th Caliphate declaration, it is clear that the group believes that they have reached the final step of their strategy, at least as it applies to Iraq and Syria.

In the application of the aforementioned process, ISIS has placed significant emphasis on its military strategy, internal policy, communications strategy, and governance however, due to space constraints, only the group's military and communications strategies will be discussed. Militarily, ISIS's operations can generally be divided into two lines of operation: first, mass casualty urban attacks that target Shiites, Alawi Muslims, and other minority groups, and second, a concerted campaign of attrition against military opponents' capabilities and morale.⁸⁹ From a communications perspective, the effective use of social media and exploitation of international media attention is of significant importance to ISIS's strategy. Its importance is highlighted by the fact that the group communicates in multiple languages and has several central media departments that are actively involved in the production of propaganda like *Dabiq*, media

ISIS has elected to publish the magazine in the Islamic hijri calendar; Charles Lister, *Profiling the Islamic State* (Doha, Qatar: Brookings Doha Center, 2014), 30.

⁸⁸ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*, 23; Stephen Ulph, "New Online Book Lays Out Al-Qaeda's Military Strategy," *Terrorism Focus* 2, no. 6 (16 March 2005): available at www.jamestown.org; The exert concerning *The Management of Savagery* is Berger and Stern's interpretation of Ulph's analysis of the text.

⁸⁹ Lister, *Profiling the Islamic State*, 17-18; First quote on 17; In the last year, ISIS has indiscriminately targeted multiple ethnic groups including those listed as well as Yazidis, Kurds, and most recently Christians (February 2015-present).

messaging, and on social media.⁹⁰ Both individually and combined, the group's military and communications strategies validate that, similar to China and Iran, ISIS has adopted and is employing a multidimensional 360° strategy.

Finally, similar to the previous two case studies, ISIS's strategy also encapsulates both traditionally accepted forms of asymmetric warfare and several 'new forms of warfare' identified by the Chinese including media and information warfare, political warfare, social warfare, economic warfare, cultural warfare, cyber warfare, and extortion. Furthermore, the group has also established sleeper cells and called on Western jihadists to conduct 'lone wolf attacks' as described in *A Call to a Global Islamic Resistance*.⁹¹

ISISs Strategy in Practice

Before discussing the application of the group's strategy it is important to note that according to *Dabiq*, the first three steps of Zarqawi's plan, namely emigration, congregate, and destabilize tyrants, were completed when AQI rebranded itself ISI in 2010.⁹² Despite this statement, the linear step-by-step nature of the plan,⁹³ and more importantly the group's 2015 declaration concerning the reestablishment of the Caliphate (step five), all five steps are still being executed today. This indicates that Zarqawi's plan is not in fact linear, but instead circular allowing for infinite iterations of the process to achieve the group's ultimate goal – a global Caliphate or world domination.⁹⁴ With this in mind, the discussion concerning the practical

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 25-25; First quote on page 24.

⁹¹ The ISIS Study Group, "Sweedish Cartoonist Targeted in Denmark Shooting - Europe in Serious Trouble," accessed 03 April 2015, <http://isisstudygroup.com/?tag=sleeper-cells>; Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*, 24; The term 'lone wolf' from Berger (page 316, footnote 59) connotes someone acting without direct connections to a terrorist group. However, the phrase is commonly, if misleadingly, used to refer to people who act individually or in small cells with minimal support from a terrorist group.

⁹² Gambhir, *Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State*, 8; The Dabiq Team (exact author unknown), *The Return of Khilafah*, 36-38.

⁹³ The Dabiq Team (exact author unknown), *The Return of Khilafah*, 38; This particular page graphically demonstrates the step-by-step linear nature of the strategy.

⁹⁴ Friedland, *Special Report: The Islamic State*, 15.

application of ISIS's strategy will focus on how the group employs extreme violence as well as its communications strategy to manipulate support from the global Muslim population.

Extreme brutality plays a key role in ISIS's strategy however, it is most prevalent within steps three and four, destabilize tyrants and consolidation respectively. During step three, the group aims to break down state boundaries and generate the conditions for civil war.⁹⁵ Testament to their success, over the last several years, ISIS has expanded considerably in Iraq and Syria through a deliberate and methodical strategy aimed at stoking sectarian conflict by brutally attacking Shiites, exploiting political weakness, and exerting efficient and brutal military power.⁹⁶ Recently, several Islamist groups from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria, pledged allegiance⁹⁷ to ISIS indicating that the group's ideology is expanding and so too may its territory. Although *Dabiq* claims this step to be complete, the above example and graphics shared on social media highlight ISIS's expansionist intentions and indicate that Jordan and Saudi Arabia are their next targets.⁹⁸ Collectively these examples demonstrate both the realization of the final stage of jihadist struggle (*Empowerment*) and the application of political and social warfare as well as validate the theory that ISIS's strategy is circular. Most importantly, they demonstrate a comparable asymmetric logic in terms of multidimensional integration to both the Chinese and Iranian 360° strategies.

During the consolidation phase, *Dabiq* explains that operations are conducted in order to pave the way for the claiming of territory.⁹⁹ Throughout its territory grab in Iraq and Syria, ISIS unquestionably demonstrated extreme brutality. For example, in August 2014 following the

⁹⁵ Lewis, *Middle East Security Report 21, the Islamic State: A Counter-Strategy for a Counter-State*, 11.

⁹⁶ Lister, *Profiling the Islamic State*, 30.

⁹⁷ The Dabiq Team (exact author unknown), "Wilayat Khurasan and the Bay'at from Qawqaz," *Dabiq*, n.d. (Rabi' Al-Akir 1436), 34; The Associated Press, "ISIS Accepts Boko Haram Pledge, Says would-be Recruits can Go to Nigeria," *CBC News*, March 13, 2015, accessed 01 April 2015.

⁹⁸ Friedland, *Special Report: The Islamic State*, 14-15.

⁹⁹ The Dabiq Team (exact author unknown), *The Return of Khilafah*, 38.

seizure of the Tabqa airbase in Syria, the group is known to have executed some 250 captured soldiers in the surrounding desert.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, in November 2014 near Hit, Iraq, the Iraqi Government reported that ISIS executed 322 members of a Sunni tribe known for their fighting skill and opposed to the group's ideology. Most shockingly, this particular mass killing included the execution of women and children from the tribe.¹⁰¹ These examples clearly demonstrate that within the territory they have claimed, the group has made use of public brutality to convey its authority over areas of control, to show its strength, and to threaten any individuals, groups, or states that challenge its ideology.¹⁰² Furthermore, these examples also validate the group's use of several stages of jihadist struggle described above, namely *Disruption and Exhaustion* and *Management of Savagery*. There is no question that the use and depiction of violence are among the most important elements of ISIS's strategy¹⁰³ however, aside from public displays of violence, what other tools does ISIS use to depict its violent jihadi actions and spread its ideology?

Among Islamic extremist organizations, ISIS has demonstrated the most understanding, projected the most power, and shown the most innovation with technology and media.¹⁰⁴ This fact has been consistently demonstrated throughout the group's evolution and especially in support of step one of its strategy; emigration. Prior to the reestablishment of the Caliphate, and

¹⁰⁰ Dan Bloom, "Marched to their Deaths: Sickening ISIS Slaughter Continues as 250 Soldiers Captured at Syrian Airbase are Stripped then Led to the Desert for Mass Execution," *The Daily Mail*, August 28, 2014, accessed 02 April 2015.

¹⁰¹ Odai Sadik and Steve Almasy, "ISIS Kills 300 Members of Sunni Tribe, Iraqi Government Says," *CNN*, November 04, 2014, accessed 02 April 2015.

¹⁰² Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, *Rule of Terror: Living Under ISIS in Syria* (n.p, United Nations, 2014), 2.

¹⁰³ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*, 24.

¹⁰⁴ Heather Marie Vitale and James M. Keagle, "A Time to Tweet, as Well as Time to Kill: ISIS's Projection of Power in Iraq and Syria," *Defense Horizons*, no. 77 (October 2014): 1 <http://inss.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/defensehorizon/DH-77.pdf>; Multiple lectures and discussions, Social Media and Cyber-Influence, Centre for National Security Studies, Canadian Forces College, Toronto, ON, 09-10 April 2015, authors interpretation; This conference was run using Chatham Rules; as such no particular lecturer is cited. The above citation is the interpretation, by the author of this paper, of several lectures and discussions that occurred during the conference.

to this day, the group uses social media as its main recruiting tool. To ensure it reaches as many would-be recruits as possible, ISIS employs multiple social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Ask.fm.¹⁰⁵ In fact, until August 2014, ISIS outperformed all other militant groups using Twitter.¹⁰⁶ Since June 2015, ISIS has expanded both its media and social media related activities as well as its call for Muslims and supporters to emigrate to the Caliphate. In the first edition of *Dabiq* for example, the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, encourages doctors, engineers, scholars, and specialists to emigrate. This same message is reiterated in the second issue with the amplification to bring one's entire family; parents, siblings, spouses, and children. Lastly, in the third issue, a ten page feature encouraging emigration¹⁰⁷ not only demonstrates the group's use of media and information warfare but, also validates the non-linearity of their strategy. There is no doubt that ISIS has effectively used media and social media to entice recruits and encourage emigration.

Operations during the consolidation phase of ISIS's strategy are heavily reliant on media and social media resources. The group has demonstrated a masterful understanding of propaganda and social media use, producing a multidimensional global campaign across multiple platforms. As with Twitter, ISIS uses YouTube and other video sharing platforms to spread visual and often brutally violent graphic messages aimed at instilling fear in its enemies and invigorating its supporters.¹⁰⁸ Just prior to its assault on Northern Iraq for example, ISIS released the fourth installment of its propaganda video series, entitled *The Clanging of the Swords*, which

¹⁰⁵ Vitale and Keagle, *A Time to Tweet, as Well as Time to Kill: ISIS's Projection of Power in Iraq and Syria*, 8-11; First quote on page 11.

¹⁰⁶ Dan Friedman, "Twitter Stepping Up Suspensions of ISIS-Affiliated Accounts: Experts," *New York Daily News*, August 17, 2014, accessed April 02, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ The Dabiq Team (exact author unknown), *The Return of Khilafah*, 11; The Dabiq Team (exact author unknown), "The Flood," *Dabiq*, n.d. (Ramadan 1435), 3; The Dabiq Team (exact author unknown), "Hijrah from Hypocrisy to Sincerity," *Dabiq*, n.d. (Shawwal 1435), 25-34.

¹⁰⁸ Vitale and Keagle, *A Time to Tweet, as Well as Time to Kill: ISIS's Projection of Power in Iraq and Syria*, 1, 9; First quote on page 1, second quote from page 9.

depicted the mass execution of previously captured Iraqi soldiers. When ISIS reached Mosul several weeks later, many Iraqi troops defending the city turned and ran. Some Western analysts and many ISIS supporters credit the timely release of this video for inspiring the fear that resulted in the retreat.¹⁰⁹ The previously discussed mass execution of Syrian soldiers at Tabqa airbase was likely produced with similar intentions.

In a final point, ISIS also uses video sharing platforms to spread ‘happier’ forms of propaganda showing the Caliphate as a safe haven where good Muslims can bring their families, settle, and enjoy the life they deserve.¹¹⁰ Often overlooked by the West, this softer component of their strategy is aimed at reaching out and securing support from the global Muslim population; a form of Islamic State diaspora. Despite not having a true diaspora by definition, this ‘diaspora’ engagement component of their strategy is comparable to both the Chinese and Iranian strategies.

The above examples demonstrate the efficacy of ISIS’s media and social media based propaganda campaigns as well as validate the group’s use of the principles associated with the *Management of Savagery*. Through the effective application of media and information warfare, ISIS has been able to distribute its messages, both positive and negative, to manipulate its enemies as well as its ‘diaspora.’ Lastly, the group has demonstrated similar asymmetric logic as other, more advanced red-actors.

ISIS’s Strategy and Canada

From the discussion above, it is clear that the use and depiction of extreme violence are central to ISIS’s strategy. Given this fact, what purpose do these two elements serve in the application of the group’s strategy in Western nations like Canada? To examine this question,

¹⁰⁹ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*, 165.

¹¹⁰ Multiple lectures and discussions, Social Media and Cyber-Influence, Centre for National Security Studies, Canadian Forces College, Toronto, ON, 09-10 April 2015, authors interpretation; The above citation is the interpretation of a lecture by the author of this paper.

the discussion that follows will focus on how the group uses violence in conjunction with its communications strategy to instill fear and submission among blue-actors, provoke intervention, and recruit foreign fighters.

Earlier in this chapter, it was argued that through the portrayal of extreme brutality, ISIS intends to draw Western nations into a series of protracted conflicts that will ultimately weaken them, open them to attack, and increase popular support for the group's jihad. To accomplish this objective, ISIS employs a highly effective propaganda machine that churns out chilling videos of beheadings and mass killings that terrorize its enemies and energize its support base. In fact, it can be argued that the manipulation of fear through the application of the concepts relevant to the *Management of Savagery* is perhaps the group's most potent tool.¹¹¹ ISIS has released countless high-quality online videos depicting the brutal beheadings of their captives; typically journalists, aid workers, or soldiers from opposition states. These gruesome videos have included both individual and mass executions such as that of James Foley, the American journalist, in August 2014 and the mass execution of Syrian pilots in November 2014 respectively.¹¹² Testament to the success of this online video campaign, atrocities being reported via social media from within Iraq and Syria, and the group's declared expansionist ambitions, ISIS has successfully drawn 62 nations into a coalition led by the US.¹¹³

Notwithstanding what was previously discussed concerning the use of media and social media to encourage support and emigration to the Caliphate, another critically important outcome of this phase of the group's strategy is the recruitment of foreign fighters; an aspect of

¹¹¹ Micheal Eisenstadt, "Defeating ISIS: A Strategy for a Resilient Adversary and an Intractable Conflict," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, no. 20 (November 2014): 4; Both quotes on page 4.

¹¹² The Associated Press, "Grisly ISIS Video Showing at Least a Dozen Beheadings Ends with Claim that U.S. Aid Worker Peter Kassig is Dead," *The National Post*, last modified January 24, 2015, accessed April 03, 2015.

¹¹³ Sebastian Payne, "What the 60-Plus Members of the Anti-Islamic State are Doing," *The Washington Post*, September 25, 2014, accessed April 03, 2015; It is important to note that all 62 nations are not participating in direct combat operations. The State Department reported that the coalition includes those allies actively participating in combat operations against ISIS while others are offering delivery services and some are providing humanitarian aid.

ISIS's strategy very similar in logic to its Chinese and Iranian counterparts. Although a substantial portion of ISIS's foreign recruitment strategy is geared towards securing new fighters to directly support the Caliphate, common to all three strategies is the development of a diaspora based foreign support network poised to carry out kinetic and non-kinetic actions in support of the state. As important as the aforementioned gruesome videos are to provoking Western nations, they are equally, if not more important to ISIS's marketing, manipulation, and recruitment campaigns.¹¹⁴ In fact, the vast majority of ISIS's propaganda and messaging have been disproportionately slanted towards foreign fighters, both in content and target audience.¹¹⁵

Testament to the positive impact that these videos have had on recruitment, between November 2014 and February 2015, the estimated total number of foreign fighters within ISIS's ranks increased from 16,000 to 20,000. Within that same three month period, the total number of Western foreign fighters increased by 700, rising from 2,700 to 3,400.¹¹⁶ Social media has also played an important role in the group's foreign fighter recruitment campaign. Unlike other groups' jihadist messages, which are typically only provided through official channels and by designated leaders, ISIS allows its fighters and supporters to individually contribute to the group's campaign via social media. Through applications such as Instagram, Twitter, and Ask.fm, foreign fighters narrate personal stories and provide details of their daily lives. This 'democratization of messaging' has proven highly effective, ultimately improving the sincerity of the recruitment message because it comes from a fighter on the battlefield instead of an isolated leader.¹¹⁷ Undoubtedly, through the depiction of extreme violence and social media

¹¹⁴ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*, 3.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹¹⁶ Robert Windrem, "ISIS by the Numbers: Foreign Fighter Total Keeps Growing," *NBC News*, February 28, 2015, accessed 04 April 2015.

¹¹⁷ Vitale and Keagle, *A Time to Tweet, as Well as Time to Kill: ISIS's Projection of Power in Iraq and Syria*, 7-8; First quote on page 7.

messaging, ISIS has bolstered its numbers and successfully recruited many thousands of foreign fighters.

Conclusion

The presented non-state innovator case study identified that ISIS's strategy, the brainchild of Abu Musab al Zarqawi, was spawned from keen observation and several jihadi texts including *The Management of Savagery* and *A Call to Global Islamic Resistance*. In the application of its strategy, the case study identified that ISIS has used extreme violence to effectively stoke sectarian conflict, exploit political weakness, and exert its particularly brutal form of military power. It further identified how the group has innovatively and effectively used media and social media to project its ideological beliefs, promote emigration to the Caliphate, and terrorize its enemies while energizing its 'diaspora.' From a Western perspective, the case study revealed how ISIS has used the depiction of extreme violence via media and social media to instill fear, provoke Western intervention, and recruit foreign fighters. Finally, throughout the application of its strategy, unquestionably the group has effectively employed the stages of jihadist struggle outlined in *The Management of Savagery*.

Similar to the previous case studies, the analysis determined that ISIS's strategy is founded on observations from previous conflicts – albeit more so from a jihadist perspective, – has a significant diaspora engagement aspect, and is based on the application of several 'new forms of warfare' such as political, social, and media and information warfare. In combination, the level of multidimensional integration and asymmetric logic demonstrated by ISIS is consistent with the Chinese and Iranian 360° strategies. As such, it merits the same designation and consideration in terms of threat to Western security as do its red-actor counterparts.

In a final concluding point, the analysis throughout the case study identified that, despite statements by ISIS, the group continues to execute each step of its strategy due to its expansionist objectives. This validates the theory that ISIS's strategy is not in fact linear, as designed by Zarqawi and depicted in *Dabiq*, but is instead circular, allowing for infinite iterations of the process as the group endeavours to achieve its ultimate goal – the establishment of a global Caliphate.

CHAPTER 4: THE ASYMMETRIC STRATEGY PHENOMENON – THE WEST’S ROLE

From the analysis presented in the three previous case studies, it is clear that red-actors are actively endeavouring to leverage existing asymmetries between themselves and their actual and/or perceived adversaries. In addition, these same state and non-state actors are not only working to create new asymmetries but, also combining multiple asymmetric approaches in order to nullify the West’s technological and economic superiority, thereby establishing the conditions necessary to achieve their individual strategic goals. Just as there are two sides to every coin, so too are there two sides to the apparent increase in the prevalence of asymmetric strategies among red-actors. That is to say that the role of blue-actors cannot be discounted as a significant contributor to this phenomenon.

The presented analogy raises important questions worthy of analysis in the determination of the conditions that have led to the increase in the adoption of asymmetric strategies among red-actors. For example, what roles have Western governments and societies played in the realization of this phenomenon? In addition, what conditions have led red-actors to develop and adopt DIME based multidimensional strategies aimed at creating and/or exploiting weaknesses within Western PMESII dimensions?

In order to address these questions, this chapter will focus on determining and analysing the factors that have both enabled and encouraged red-actors to discard conventional military based strategies and adopt asymmetrically based alternatives. If the presented analogy is true, then the apparent rise in the prevalence of asymmetric strategies has as much to do with red-actor observations and ingenuity, as they have to do with the lack of Western organizational and intellectual preparedness to deal with them. As such, for the remainder of this chapter, the discussion will focus on Western organizational and intellectual preparedness with the objective

of identifying what essential components comprise an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy necessary to defend Canada.

Organizational Preparedness

In order to examine Western organizational preparedness, it is first important to understand why red-actors believe that within this realm the West is vulnerable. From the presented case studies, red-actors appear to derive their motivation to develop and implement asymmetric strategies based on two consistent themes. First, there is a common perception among red-actors that the West has a tendency to rely on what has worked for them in the past; namely their economic, technological, and military superiority. Second, despite the West's intentions concerning 'Whole of Government' approaches, as of yet, Western nations have failed to institutionalize a truly integrated multidimensional approach that would enable them to counter asymmetric strategies.

The Western reliance on 'tried and tested solutions' is directly linked to the development and adoption of asymmetric strategies by red-actors. To highlight this point consider the military institution, which receives constant criticism for its continual preparation to fight the last war. The reasons for doing so are understandable; military institutions are generally conservative in nature and abhorrent to change as a result of the comfort and logic associated with the maintenance of doctrine, equipment, tactics, and procedures, all of which have proven successful in previous combat operations.¹¹⁸ Given the track record of success, the relative technological and conventional military dominance enjoyed by the West, and the significant degree of risk associated with change, the described institutional reluctance appears, at first glance, to be justified. It is important to remember however, that in all three case studies the development of

¹¹⁸ Bernd Horn, "Complexity Squared: Operating in the Future Battlespace," *Canadian Military Journal* 4, no. 3 (Autumn 2003): 7.

each actor's asymmetric strategy is closely linked to observations and lessons learned from previous operations involving Western forces. The lack of change in the application of technologically dominated conventional military tactics by Western nations has encouraged the development of strategies that aim to offset the air, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and other technological advantages that have previously made this approach so successful.¹¹⁹ Iran's plan, if attacked, to disperse its military forces and blend them into society, Hezbollah's success against Israel in the 2006 conflict in southern Lebanon, as well as ISIS's emphasis on conducting urban operations are all examples of red-actor efforts to negate the technological and conventional military superiority of Western foes.

Just as red-actor asymmetric strategies are not limited to military and asymmetric warfare tactics; neither is the development of these strategies limited to individual DIME elements. The presented case studies identified that central to each red-actor strategy is the combination of individual asymmetric approaches into a focused multidimensional approach that aims to nullify the conventional military and economic superiority that Western nations possess. It is indeed this multidimensional approach that aims to capitalize on the lack of Western organizational preparedness within traditionally ignored PMESII dimensions such as Information, Social, and Infrastructure. This is because, from the perspective of red-actors, despite significant verbal and written political discourse among Western nations concerning the need for an aptly named 'Whole of Government' approach, little has actually been accomplished in terms of institutionalising an integrated strategy that combines the multiple instruments of national power to effect all PMESII dimensions.

¹¹⁹ Ike Skelton, "America's Frontier Wars: Lessons for Asymmetric Conflicts," *Military Review* 94, no. 4 (July-August 2014): 80.

This fact is exemplified by the paradoxical nature of Canadian policies as they relate to China. On one hand, the Government has expanded the nation's economic relationship with China, while on the other they have experienced significant difficulty in advancing Canadian foreign policy objectives such as international rule of law, democracy, human rights and religious freedom. In 2007, Jason Kenney, now the Minister of National Defence, stated that in his opinion "Canada can trade with China without sacrificing our strong belief in human rights."¹²⁰ There is no question that this is true; Canadian sentiments concerning human rights are unaffected by economic trade with China but, what about advancing Canadian foreign policy objectives in China?

This struggle to strike the right balance between the promotion of trade and investment with China and security and human rights agendas demonstrates a lack of integration between governmental departments.¹²¹

In addition, the recent Social Media and Cyber-Influence Conference, held at the Centre for National Security Studies, demonstrated that an equivalent lack of integration exists between Canadian governmental departments and their sub-organizations. Several academic and defence professional lecturers discussed this very problem, identifying that from a Canadian perspective, departments and sub-organizations tend to work in 'silos,' demonstrating minimal to no integration whatsoever. Furthermore, the lectures also identified that the level of integration only

¹²⁰ Charles Burton, "Canada's China Policy Under the Harper Government," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 21, no. 1 (30 January 2015): 49; Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, "Canada's Foreign Policy," accessed 22 April 2015, <http://www.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/index.aspx?lang=eng>; First and third quote from Burton pages 1 and 5 respectively, second quote from DFATD website.

¹²¹ Burton, *Canada's China Policy Under the Harper Government*, 45.

worsens when considering the relationship between government departments and private sector firms.¹²²

Without an institutionalized multidimensional strategy, the individual instruments of national power work in isolation from one another and are not integrated to formulate what Basil Liddell Hart refers to as a Grand Strategy. In a revised edition of his book, *Strategy*, Liddell Hart explains that the role of Grand Strategy, or higher strategy, is to coordinate and direct all the resources of a nation, or band of nations, towards the attainment of the political object of a particular war.¹²³ It is important to note that in the traditional context, Grand Strategies are considered limited to Great Powers or Great Alliances.¹²⁴ To address this issue, many scholars have developed a more contemporary definition that describes Grand Strategy as a multidimensional strategy designed to achieve an actor's long-term goals by improving their security and increasing their relative power.¹²⁵ Understanding that Liddell Hart's Grand Strategy theory is limited as described above, and taking into account the many similarities between the traditional and contemporary understanding of the term, it can be argued that 'Whole of Government' approaches, or 360° strategies, are in fact synonymous with Grand Strategy because at their core, they refer to the same thing – the use of all means available to achieve the strategic objectives of state and non-state actors.¹²⁶ As such, for the remainder of this paper,

¹²² Multiple lectures and discussions, Social Media and Cyber-Influence, Centre for National Security Studies, Canadian Forces College, Toronto, ON, 09-10 April 2015, authors interpretation. The above citation is the interpretation, by the author of this paper, of several lectures and discussions that occurred during the conference.

¹²³ B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, Revised ed. (New York, NY: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), 335-336.

¹²⁴ J. L. Granatstein, *Can Canada have a Grand Strategy?* (Canadian Forces College, Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, 2011), 1.

¹²⁵ Joseph Fouche, "Rethinking Security: Basil Liddell-Hart, Grand Strategy, and Modern Grand Strategy," accessed 12 April 2015, <http://rethinkingsecurity.typepad.com/rethinkingsecurity/2010/08/basil-liddell-hart-grand-strategy-and-modern-grand-strategy.html>; Scholars include Edward Luttwak, Paul Kennedy, William Murray, and MacGregor Knox (same source).

¹²⁶ Note that the contemporary description of Grand Strategy refers to 'actors.' The previous case studies certainly identify that red-actors are applying the contemporary understanding of the Grand Strategy.

Grand Strategy should be understood in its modern context inclusive of the aforementioned synonymous relationship.

In a discussion concerning Grand Strategy as it relates to Canada, Senator Hugh Segal once described the “vital requirement for Canada to develop a ‘grand strategy for a small country’ that integrates military, diplomatic, and foreign aid instruments...into real plans and models that maximize the ability of each to engage constructively on Canada’s behalf, and that enhance the leverage of a combined application where appropriate and helpful.” While not inclusive of all of the instruments of national power, Segal clearly understood the value of the ‘Whole of Government’ approach in the achievement of a ‘small country’s grand strategy’ however, this approach is not yet something that Canada has been able to execute.¹²⁷ Although this statement is specific to Canada, it can be applied to many other Western nations with equal validity. As a result of a lack of organizational preparedness, Canada and many other Western nations have exposed vulnerabilities that red-actors are actively seeking to target through the application of their 360° strategies.

The discussion concerning the organizational preparedness of Western nations has identified several important points. First, common to China’s superpower ambitions, Iran’s desire to be a regional power, and ISIS’s ambition to re-establish and expand an Islamic Caliphate, is that all three actors have unquestionably developed multidimensional 360° strategies geared towards enabling them to sidestep Western conventional military and economic superiority and more importantly, take advantage of the lack of Western organizational preparedness to prevent them from doing so. Second, by relying on ‘tried and tested solutions,’ red-actors have been able to observe and categorize the Western approach to various challenges and have developed their strategies to negate Western military, technological, and economic

¹²⁷ Granatstein, *Can Canada have a Grand Strategy?*, 2-3.

superiority. Third, as a result of the lack of an organizationally based ‘Whole of Government’ approach, red-actors have optimized their 360° strategies to create vulnerabilities and place Western nations on the defensive; effectively forcing them to play catch-up in several PMESII dimensions. Finally, and most importantly, the discussion has identified that a key component of an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy necessary to defend Canada is the institutionalization of an integrated multidimensional or ‘Whole of Government’ approach that serves to accomplish the nations Grand Strategy.

Intellectual Preparedness

Over the last several decades the prevalence of asymmetric strategies has increased significantly, appearing in recent years to have taken on an almost exponential rise in popularity. There are several contributing factors that have led to this increase however, among the most important, and often the least discussed, is the lack of intellectual preparedness among Western nations. From a red-actor perspective, the common premise is that asymmetric logic is not an integral part of Western governmental or societal thought processes.

Chief among the reasons for this lack of intellectual preparation is a lack of threat appreciation. It is the lack of appreciation for certain types of threats that result in asymmetries. This is because most unappreciated threats are asymmetric in nature. In fact, the asymmetric character of such threats contributes to their not being appreciated.¹²⁸ This lack of threat appreciation results from the fact that, to the West, asymmetric threats do not fall within the category of what constitutes a legitimate threat. These threats are less kinetic, less direct, and less immediate and therefore, based on Western actions to counter them, less important to deal with. Together, these two points indicate a lack of intellectual appreciation for asymmetric threats and validate the red-actor belief that blue-actors are ill prepared to counter them. In order to examine

¹²⁸ Bennett, Twomey and Treverton, *What are Asymmetric Strategies?*, 2.

the contribution of Western intellectual preparedness as it relates to the rise in asymmetric strategies among red-actors, the Western mindset will now be examined from both a cultural and technological perspective.

There is a tendency among Western nations to confront the challenge of asymmetric warfare without a proper recognition or understanding of their own cultural biases. An appreciation for the fact that other civilizations may look at conflict from a fundamentally different perspective is something that is not only foreign to the West but, wholly counter-intuitive.¹²⁹ Among Western nations for example, the contemporary understanding of conflict is impregnated with ‘the Western paradigm of war’: the confrontation between states sharing equivalent cultural and ideological concepts. This understanding however, is nothing more than an ethnocentric and simplistic vision of warfare and one that reflects imperfectly the reality and restraints of contemporary conflict.¹³⁰ To highlight this point, consider the concept of *jus in bello* (just conduct in war). This branch of international law defines how a war should be fought once it begins; it is based on customary law, recognized practices of war, treaty laws, and is supported by the Geneva Conventions.¹³¹ These same concepts are what drive the Western mindset; the belief that future wars will follow a highly stylized and ritualized form of warfare and be fought by soldiers vaccinated with Western moral and behavioural codes.¹³²

In contrast, consider the asymmetric strategy case studies presented earlier in this paper. The Chinese and Iranian strategies both advocate for the use of what *Unrestricted Warfare* terms

¹²⁹ Charles J. Dunlap Jr, "Preliminary Observations: Asymmetrical Warfare and the Western Mindset," in *Challenging the United States Symmetrically and Asymmetrically: Can the United States be Defeated?*, ed. Llyod J. Matthews, 1st ed. (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 1998), 4.

¹³⁰ Joseph Henrotin and Tanguy Struye de Swielande, "Ontological-Cultural Asymmetry and the Relevance of Grand Strategies," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 7, no. 2 (April 2015): 10, <http://jmss.synergiesprairies.ca/jmss/index.php/jmss/article/view/182>.

¹³¹ Karma Nabulsi, "Jus Ad Bellum/Jus in Bello," accessed 13 April 2015, <http://www.crimesofwar.org/a-z-guide/jus-ad-bellum-jus-in-bello/>.

¹³² Ralph Peters, "The New Warrior Class," *Parameters* 24, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 20.

‘new forms of warfare’ including, but not limited to, economic and diplomatic warfare as well as terrorism, kidnaping, and assassinations. Meanwhile, in the execution of its strategy, ISIS regularly demonstrates the application of the latter grouping and other equally brutal ‘new forms.’ For any person who possesses even a basic understanding of the Geneva Conventions, there is little doubt that the presented red-actor 360° strategies are not based on the principles associated with *jus in bello*. The assumption that future wars will be fought against enemies that follow and respect Western cultural norms is clearly incorrect. Regardless of this fact however, across the spectrum of conflict, the actors of Western industrialized democracies will still be expected to uphold the principles and values that are fundamental to their societies.¹³³ These last two points highlight the main reason why red-actors have selected the strategies they have; Western intellectual rigidity concerning future warfare has left the West vulnerable to unappreciated alternate forms of warfare. In addition, Western obtuseness concerning the mindset of adversaries has been allowed to permeate the West’s strategic thinking,¹³⁴ resulting in an advantage for non-culturally aligned forces to capitalize on. Finally, this same obtuseness contributes to the lack of appropriate threat appreciation described earlier, and ultimately leaves Western nations prone to asymmetric vulnerability.

Another tendency among Western nations is to confront the asymmetric warfare challenge using a technologically based approach. This tendency is highlighted by the technocentric approach taken by Israel in its 2006 conflict against Hezbollah and Hamas¹³⁵ and more recently by US-led coalition actions to fight ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Given the clear relationship between cultural biases and the selection of asymmetric strategies by red-actors, why do Western

¹³³ Horn, *Complexity Squared: Operating in the Future Battlespace*, 9.

¹³⁴ Peters, *The New Warrior Class*, 4.

¹³⁵ Avi Kober, “The Israel Defense Forces in the Second Lebanon War: Why the Poor Performance?” *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 31, no. 1 (February 2008): 17-18.

nations choose to approach this challenge from a technological perspective? For the better part of the 20th century, technological advancement offered fighting forces unparalleled dominance over the battlespace. In due course, faith in the efficacy of technology and scientific methodology invaded Western thinking about warfare. Uncontested Western military dominance, enabled by technology, has served to reinforce intellectually the idea that technology can offer the same dominance today and in the future. As a result, the Western mindset tends to see all difficulties, including the complex challenges associated with contemporary war, as technical problems that can be solved with engineering solutions.¹³⁶ Similar to organizational preparedness, red-actors have observed the Western technological dependence and developed their strategies to counter and nullify the advantage that technology has traditionally offered. Of course, war does present technical problems but, it is not itself one. It is instead, and always has been, a contest of human wills that transcends the logic of the physical sciences.¹³⁷ Historical success has encouraged blue-actors to rely on technology however; the contemporary battlespace is not the same as its historical antecedent. Western nations must intellectually rationalize this fact and distance themselves from their tendency to rely so heavily on technology. That is not to say that technology should be abandoned wholesale, quite the opposite actually. Technology always has and will continue to offer significant advantage to its master however, the West must not allow technology to blind it to the fact that modern war remains, as already noted, a contest of human wills.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Dunlap Jr, *Preliminary Observations: Asymmetrical Warfare and the Western Mindset*, 2-3; First quote on page 2, second quoted in Michael Howard, *War in European History*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1976), 116-135, third quoted in Robert N. Ellithorpe, *Warfare in Transition? American Military Culture Prepares for the Information Age*, presented to the Biennial International Conference of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, Baltimore, MD, 1997.

¹³⁷ Dunlap Jr, *Preliminary Observations: Asymmetrical Warfare and the Western Mindset*, 3.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

Similar to the discussion concerning organizational preparedness, the examination of Western intellectual preparedness has identified several important points. Chief among them is the fact that Western intellectual rigidity concerning future warfare has left the West vulnerable to unappreciated alternate forms of warfare. From an intellectual standpoint, this has resulted from a combination of two factors. First, the Western understanding of contemporary conflict is heavily biased towards Western cultural and ideological beliefs, resulting in an ethnocentric and simplistic view of warfare that is far from reality. Second, the lack of appreciation for the mindset of adversaries in Western strategic calculation has left the West prone to asymmetric vulnerability. The discussion also identified that Western nations must reduce their reliance on technology as well as intellectually rationalize its role and limits when confronting asymmetric challenges. Finally, and most importantly, the analysis identified that a key component to an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy necessary to defend Canada is to discard the intellectual rigidity that plagues Western approaches to contemporary and future warfare.

The West's Role Defined

At the start of this chapter, the two-sided coin analogy was presented as a lead in to the analysis of what role blue-actors have played in the apparent increase in the prevalence of asymmetric strategies among red-actors. The analysis throughout this chapter indicates that the rise in popularity described above is directly linked to the perceived lack of Western organizational and intellectual preparedness to deal with asymmetrical threats. Furthermore, it was determined that an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy should be based organizationally on a 'Whole of Government' approach that views each problem uniquely instead of using 'tried and tested solutions'. Meanwhile, intellectually, the strategy must be intellectually flexible, cognizant of the roles and limits of technology, and incorporate the

culturally distinct perspective of red-actors. In the next chapter, based on the findings above, the elements of an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy will be examined and expanded upon. In addition, several observations made throughout the paper will be discussed in greater detail.

CHAPTER 5: THE ELEMENTS OF AN APPROPRIATE COUNTER-ASYMMETRIC STRATEGY

In the previous chapter, the rise in popularity of asymmetric strategies among red-actors was directly linked to the lack of organizational and intellectual preparedness on the part of Western nations. With the causative analysis complete, the focus of the paper will now shift to an examination of what Western nations, like Canada, can learn from the current situation that can contribute to the formulation of an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy.

Levelling the Playing Field

The discussion in the previous chapter revealed that from an organizational preparedness perspective, the Western reliance on 'tried and tested solutions' in combination with a lack of ability to advance and implement the concept of 'Whole of Government' approach, has resulted in the West being ill prepared to counter existing asymmetric strategies and placed them on the defensive with respect to several red-actors. Meanwhile from an intellectual preparedness perspective, the analysis revealed that the West must alter their intellectually rigid approach to contemporary and future warfare and adopt a less technologically dependent and more culturally and ideologically diverse approach to asymmetric challenges. These findings indicate that the solution, or at least part of it, is to level the proverbial 'playing field' by adopting a strategy similar to red-actors; in short, a strategy that incorporates asymmetric elements. This strategy would aim to employ asymmetrical targeting against adversary intellectual and organizational domains, instead of the typical, predictable, conventional approach applied by Western nations in order to reduce or reverse the asymmetric advantage that red-actors currently enjoy, put them on the defensive, and in-turn force them off balance.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ David L. Grange, "Asymmetric Warfare: Old Method, New Concern," National Strategy Forum Review, (Winter 2000): 4, available at <http://www.nationalstrategy.com/nsr/v10n2Winter00/100202.htm>.

With the above conclusion in mind, what are the essential components of an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy necessary to turn the odds in favour of Western nations like Canada? First, from an organizational perspective, the institutionalization of an integrated DIME based 'Whole of Government' approach is necessary. This strategy should aim to influence adversary PMESII dimensions both individually and in combination in order to realize a nation's Grand Strategy, or in Canada's case its "grand strategy for a small country." Second, in order to counter the challenges posed by red-actor asymmetric approaches, a re-alignment of the way Western strategic leaders think and plan is required.¹⁴⁰ The technological dependence and intellectual rigidity that currently plagues the Western approach to the challenges presented by asymmetric strategies must be rejected for one that incorporates the culturally distinct perspective of red-actors. Before proceeding, it is worth restating that although the adoption of a strategy that incorporates asymmetric elements is likely part of solution, it is not the whole solution. The same conventional capabilities that have contributed to the rise in prevalence of asymmetric strategies can also be used to offset their effectiveness. As such, the incorporation of technologically advanced conventional means also forms part of the solution.

In recent years, Western militaries and academics, such as Stephen Biddle and Frank Hofmann, have debated and authored considerable literature concerning a strategy that has come to be known as 'hybrid warfare.' As a strategy, hybrid warfare calls for the simultaneous coordinated employment of multiple forms of warfare including conventional capabilities and irregular tactics and formations as one means in a more or less comprehensive strategy to

¹⁴⁰ Thomas J. Williams, "Strategic Leader Readiness and Competencies for Asymmetric Warfare," *Parameters* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 21; Quoted in Peters, *The New Warrior Class*, 21.

achieve a political end.¹⁴¹ From a Western perspective, this particular definition is problematic; irregular forces, such as paramilitary and non-state actors, acting outside of the control of the state is unlikely.¹⁴² Of course, this problem is rectified if ‘irregular forces’ is understood to mean non-conventional forces inclusive of non-military means. Another problematic aspect of the current definition is its myopic focus on the military dimension and tactical level war fighting. As the previous chapter demonstrated, an effective counter-asymmetric strategy transcends the military domain, calling for the use of all means available, both military and non-military. As such, the wholesale adoption of hybrid warfare, as it is currently defined, is not the solution however; several of its concepts and principles, such as the blending of conventional and asymmetric advantages, should be factored into the West’s counter-asymmetric strategy.

An effective counter-strategy requires knowledge of the adversary’s sources of power that allow him to act and factor continuously into his strategic calculus.¹⁴³ In addition, it is necessary to accept the fact that the occidental culture of zero death, the minimization of collateral damage, respect for laws, moral restraint, and strict rules of engagement are typical of modern Western society¹⁴⁴ and are not universally accepted. Through the creation and application of asymmetric strategies aimed at Western intellectual and organizational domains, red-actors have very adeptly gained a positional advantage. The presented analysis has demonstrated that the West can reverse this advantage by adopting a similar, albeit not identical

¹⁴¹ Frank G. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, (Arlington: The Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007), 14; Neil Chuka, Jean Francois Born, DRDC-RDDC-2014-R43, *Hybrid Warfare: Implications for CAF Force Development* (Ottawa: Defence Research and Development Canada, 2014), 2.

¹⁴² Chuka and Born, *Hybrid Warfare: Implications for CAF Force Development*, 2.

¹⁴³ Lewis, *Middle East Security Report 21, the Islamic State: A Counter-Strategy for a Counter-State*, 16; Although this citation is taken from a report on ISIS, this sentence is applicable to the creation of any counter-strategy.

¹⁴⁴ Henrotin and Struye de Swielande, Ontological-Cultural Asymmetry and the Relevance of Grand Strategies, 10; Quoted in Zygmunt Bauman, "Wars of the Globalization Era," *European Journal of Social Theory* 4, no. 1 (February 2001): 25-27.

approach.¹⁴⁵ The strategy should aim to target adversary organizational and intellectual domains while simultaneously strengthening the Western equivalents. It should do so by incorporating the concepts and principles associated with red-actor asymmetric strategies while leveraging the West's conventional strengths and respecting both Western and adversary cultural norms, values, and perspectives. Until the technologically oriented and ethnocentric Western mindset is altered, red-actors will continue to benefit from the advantages offered by their 360° strategies.

Additional Observations

The implementation of the major conclusions suggested above will require significant effort on the part of Western Governments and societies. Undoubtedly, changes to governmental structures and societal norms are not going to occur overnight, over the course of a week, or even a year. There are however, several steps that can be taken in the near term that can immediately improve the situation. The main purpose of the discussion that follows is to highlight several areas for improvement that have the potential to either reduce the efficacy of existing asymmetric strategies or prevent future capitalization of asymmetry on the part of red-actors. It should be noted that what follows is not the 'solution' to the problem but a consciously limited, due to space restrictions, short discussion concerning several consistent observations, made throughout this paper, where improvements are possible.

Policy. Based on the increase in the prevalence of asymmetric strategies, when considering the adoption of a new or modification of an existing policy, it is critical that governments review the policy details in order to ensure that the 'new policy' will not result in an asymmetric advantage for red-actors. As was discussed in the *Unrestricted Warfare* case study, through the Government of Canada's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy, China has established the conditions necessary to disrupt the Canadian economy via financial and/or

¹⁴⁵ Grange, *Asymmetric Warfare: Old Method, New Concern*, 5.

economic warfare; two ‘new forms of warfare’ that their strategy advocates the use of. It is important to remember that China expects its SOEs to carry out the government’s strategic goals, which, in the application of unrestricted warfare could include economic subversion. This is not to say that FDI should not be allowed in Canada but, perhaps limits should be placed on this type of investment when the investment firms are strictly governed State Owned Enterprises (SOEs). In sum, the adoption of new policies and the modification of existing policies must be considered from a red-actor perspective. Furthermore, in the near term the alignment of paradoxical Canadian policies, such as Canada’s foreign policy approach to China, as well as the alignment of individual governmental departments, their sub-organizations, and private sector partners could positively influence the current situation.

In addition, Western nations should adopt coherent and attainable political and strategic goals and pursue them consistently to completion. Common to all three red-actor case studies, and many other red-actor strategies, is an organizational focus geared towards the achievement of the particular actors Grand Strategy. In contrast, Western nations tend to lack an equivalent focus due to fluctuating political will and undefined strategic ambitions. The decade long Canadian mission in Afghanistan highlights this point. Despite what could be argued to be Canada’s best attempt at employing a ‘Whole of Government’ approach to date, the 2008 Manley Report observed that Canadian efforts were not supported by a common strategic objective necessary for the mission to succeed.¹⁴⁶ Strategic focus facilitates organizational integration and legitimises the use of all means available to accomplish one’s strategic objectives. Although the implementation of a ‘Whole of Government’ approach may take

¹⁴⁶ Dean D. Tremblay and Pierre Pahlavi, “Une stratégie à demi-mot et à demi-mesures: L’expérience du Canada dans le Sud de l’Afghanistan,” *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains* 2, no. 250 (2013): Abstract (English version).

significant time and effort, unwavering political will based on clearly defined strategic goals¹⁴⁷ in the form of a Canadian Grand Strategy would certainly serve to focus governmental departments and act as a catalyst to the development and institutionalization of a true ‘Whole of Government’ approach.

Cyber Security. As demonstrated by the case studies, cyber-attack and capabilities play an important role in red-actor asymmetric strategies. Furthermore, cyber-attack could be expanded in the future to include network-attacks aimed at crippling Western critical infrastructure and services.¹⁴⁸ In Canada, given the rapid changes in information and communications technologies, existing defences will not be enough to ensure the integrity and availability of information systems nor prevent critical infrastructure from being destroyed or shut down. Apart from stimulating investment in defensive technologies, the approach to this problem should entail a proactive cyber security initiative to prevent rather than react to attacks, have greater emphasis on combatting cyber exploitation, and prevent the theft of intellectual property through cyber espionage.¹⁴⁹ Although *Canada’s Cyber Security Strategy*, released in 2010, aims to accomplish these goals and others,¹⁵⁰ current Canadian investments in cyber security are not on par with the strategy’s ambitions; totalling just \$155 million dollars spread over five years ending in 2016. In comparison to the US, who spent \$15 billion dollars on cyber security related projects and activities in 2012 alone,¹⁵¹ the Canadian response is rather underwhelming. To improve the situation, Canada cannot continue to abide by the kind of

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 79; Translation by author of this paper.

¹⁴⁸ Racicot, *The Past, Present, and Future of Chinese Cyber Operations*, 32; Siboni and Kronenfeld, *Iran's Cyber Warfare*, 1-2.

¹⁴⁹ Gendron and Rudner, *Assessing Cyber Threats to Canadian Infrastructure*, 43; Both quotes on page 43.

¹⁵⁰ Public Safety Canada, *Canada’s Cyber Security Strategy: For a Stronger and More Prosperous Canada* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2010), 1, 5-7.

¹⁵¹ Alexander Moens, Seychelle Cushing, and Alan W. Dowd, *Cyber Security Challenges for Canada and the United States* (Vancouver: The Fraser Institute, 2015), 19.

reactive and defensive stance that has long characterized protective cyber security¹⁵² and should invest in offensive cyber technologies and adopt/employ offensive cyber capabilities. The old adage – ‘the key to a strong offence is a good defence’ – does not apply in cyberspace; a strong offence and a strong defence are both critically important to effective cyber security and the reduction of the current asymmetric delta that red-actors aim to exploit.

Social Media Resources. Although the case study concerning ISIS contains a majority of the discussion relevant to the use of social media resources in the application of an asymmetric strategy, both the Chinese and Iranian strategies also advocate for its use. Additionally, many other red-actors have integrated the use of social media resources into their own asymmetric strategies. As Anthony Seboyer pointed out during a recent lecture at the Centre for National Security Studies, Russia demonstrated significant use of social media and cyber resources during the execution of their asymmetric campaign to annex Crimea.¹⁵³ The low-cost, high-value nature of social media exploitation makes it an incredibly appealing platform from which to conduct asymmetric warfare.

Despite the obvious negative effects that red-actors are trying to achieve via this resource, presently within the Western world, social media is, for the most part unregulated. This is the result of concerns that regulation is synonymous with governmental intervention of free speech. Concerns about social media such as privacy, data protection, hate speech, incitement, and of course extremist recruitment are, as they should be, on the rise resulting in increased calls for regulation.¹⁵⁴ At its core, the argument concerning the regulation of social media is really a

¹⁵² Gendron and Rudner, *Assessing Cyber Threats to Canadian Infrastructure*, 40.

¹⁵³ Anthony Seboyer, *Social Media and Cyber-Influence*, Centre for National Security Studies, Canadian Forces College, Toronto, ON, 09 April 2015, with permission; Jill Dougherty, *Everyone Lies: The Ukraine Conflict and Russia's Media Transformation*, Discussion Paper 88 (n.p.: Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics, and Public Policy – Harvard Kennedy School, 2014), 2.

¹⁵⁴ Yik Chan Chin, *Regulating Social Media: Regulating Life (and Lives)* (n.p.: RJR 33 Online, 2013), 2. Available at http://journalism.hkbu.edu.hk/doc/Regulating_social-Media.pdf.

societal struggle to rationalize the balance between liberty (free speech) and security (regulation). An appropriate solution that balances these two crucially important factors without compromising Western societal norms must be determined. The solution will likely require some level of social media regulation to safeguard security while simultaneously supporting the liberty that Western society was founded on. Additionally, as a result of the inexpensive, enduring nature, and influential power of social media, it behoves Western nations to develop capabilities in this realm: an endeavour that requires the engagement and recruitment of the so-called 'digital generation.'¹⁵⁵

Diaspora Diplomacy. A recent study entitled *American Diaspora Diplomacy* suggests that collaborative diaspora diplomacy can be used to increase mutual respect, commitment, and trust across government, civil society, and the private sector.¹⁵⁶ From a counter-asymmetric warfare perspective, it can be argued that it can also be used to reduce or nullify the effects of red-actors seeking to engage and secure the support of their diaspora communities living abroad. The *Unrestricted Warfare* and *Mosaic Defence* case studies demonstrated that both strategies advocate the use of cultural warfare to leverage existing diaspora's in order to carry out kinetic and non-kinetic actions in support of the State's objectives. Furthermore, ISIS's strategy to encourage emigration to the Caliphate and recruit foreign fighters has an unquestionable diaspora engagement aspect to it.

What can Canada, a nation with extensive cultural diversity and significant red-actor diaspora populations, do to minimize the manipulation of diaspora communities on its soil?

¹⁵⁵ Seboyer, *Social Media and Cyber-Influence*, with permission.

¹⁵⁶ Deborah Lee Trent, *American Diaspora Diplomacy: US Foreign Policy and Lebanese Americans* (The Hague, NL: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 2012), 48.

Canada should begin by creating and implementing an official diaspora engagement policy.¹⁵⁷

The existing ad hoc ‘policy’ focuses on social, financial, and cultural initiatives aimed solely at improving Canada’s global image, increasing trade and economic investment, and securing votes at home via “partisan pandering to different ethnic communities.”¹⁵⁸ Notwithstanding the positive influence that the aforementioned initiatives can have on preventing manipulation of diasporas in Canada, an official diaspora engagement policy should not be limited as described above and should include engagement efforts aimed at improving collective security.

Furthermore, the incorporation of initiatives aimed directly at reinforcing national cohesion by fostering societal and cultural integration should be an integral part of any engagement strategy.

To accomplish this, the policy must consider each diaspora’s unique set of needs and capabilities based on their historical experience and the present realities of their countries of origin.¹⁵⁹

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter identified that in order to reduce or reverse the effects of red-actor asymmetric strategies, the West must alter its technologically and ethnocentric mindset. The analysis concluded that this could be accomplished by adopting a strategy that targets adversary organizational and intellectual domains and concurrently strengthens Western equivalents. To strengthen the Western organizational domain, a ‘Whole of Government’ approach should be adopted that leverages the concepts and principles of red-actor asymmetric strategies as well as the West’s conventional strengths. From an intellectual perspective, the strategy must consider Western cultural biases and incorporate the culturally distinct perspective

¹⁵⁷ Hila Olyan and Phoebe Smith, *Diasporas: A Policy Review Prepared for the Privy Council Office* (Ottawa, Canada: Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, 2011), 6.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁵⁹ Dovelyn Rannveig Agunias and Kathleen Newland, “The Elements of a Road Map for Diaspora Engagement,” in *Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development: A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners in Home and Host Countries* (n.p: International Organization for Migration, 2012), 25.

of red-actors. The second part of the chapter identified several areas for improvement including policy, cyber security, social media resources, and cultural or diaspora diplomacy. Although not an all-inclusive listing of improvement opportunities, these particular areas were consistent throughout the red-actor case studies and as such received additional attention.

CONCLUSION

In order to safeguard against, and counter, the rise in asymmetric strategies among red-actors, this paper examined the asymmetric strategies of China, Iran, and ISIS. In doing so, the paper endeavoured to define what elements are essential to the development of an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy necessary to defend Canada.

The 360° strategy examination, in the form of individual case studies, revealed a common asymmetric logic and fundamental reasoning behind the adoption of this type of approach by red-actors. The case studies determined that central to red-actor logic and decision cycles is an ambition to nullify Western conventional military, technological, and economic superiority, as well as a perception that blue-actors lack the organizational and intellectual preparedness to counter asymmetric threats. As a result, 360° strategies aim to target blue-actors within non-traditional and unexpected PMESII dimensions using an integrated multidimensional approach. To safeguard against and counter this form of threat, the analysis concluded that an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy should aim to reverse or neutralize the advantages of 360° strategies by adopting a similar, albeit distinguishable approach.¹⁶⁰ This strategy should target adversary organizational and intellectual domains, incorporate some of the concepts and principles associated with red-actor asymmetric strategies, and simultaneously endeavour to strengthen the Western organizational and intellectual equivalents.

To accomplish these strategy goals, the paper identified that from an organizational perspective, the institutionalization of an integrated and multidimensional DIME based ‘Whole of Government’ approach aimed at influencing adversary PMESII dimensions, both individually and in combination, is necessary. The paper also identified that from an intellectual perspective, the formulation of such a strategy will require a re-alignment of the way Western strategic

¹⁶⁰ Grange, *Asymmetric Warfare: Old Method, New Concern*, 5.

leaders think and plan.¹⁶¹ In essence, strategists must learn to reject the current technological dependence and intellectual rigidity that plagues the West's approach to asymmetric challenges for one that incorporates the culturally distinct perspective of red-actors. Finally, the paper identified that as important as the adoption of asymmetric capabilities are to an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy, they are only part of the solution. A suitable blend of conventional and asymmetric advantages, similar to the concept of hybrid warfare should, just like blue and red-actor cultural norms, values, and perspectives, be factored into any appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy.

The major conclusions of this paper will require significant time and effort to transition from theory to implementation. In the near term however, the paper identified several areas where improvements, that have the potential to ameliorate the situation, are possible. In terms of Canadian policy, respect for and consideration of red-actor perspectives on new and existing policies should be adopted as a standard practice. Furthermore, the alignment of paradoxical policies and contradictory messaging from individual governmental departments, sub-organizations, and private sector partners could serve to positively influence the situation. Most importantly, the definition of a Grand Strategy, or a 'grand strategy for a small country,' based on unwavering political will would serve to focus governmental departments and act as a catalyst to the development and institutionalization of a true 'Whole of Government' approach. From a cyber-security perspective, in order to reduce the current asymmetric delta that red-actors aim to exploit, Canada should invest in and adopt/employ offensive cyber technologies and capabilities. Furthermore, the traditionally reactive approach to Canadian cyber security should be replaced by a more proactive alternative, aimed at stopping attacks before they begin. In terms of social

¹⁶¹ Williams, *Strategic Leader Readiness and Competencies for Asymmetric Warfare*, 21; Quoted in Peters, *The New Warrior Class*, 21.

media, the paper identified that a societal rationalization of the balance between liberty (free speech) and security (regulation) is necessary. As the discussion pointed out, an appropriate solution that balances these two crucially important factors without compromising societal norms must be determined. Consideration should also be given to the engagement and recruitment of the ‘digital generation.’ Another area for improvement that has the potential to ameliorate the situation in the short term is the creation and implementation of an official diaspora engagement policy that incorporates initiatives aimed directly at enhancing collective security and reinforcing national cohesion through societal and cultural integration.

This paper endeavoured to cover as wide of an array of discussion topics pertinent to asymmetric strategies as possible however; there are still many other areas that merit research attention. Without transcribing an exhaustive list, the multiple ‘new forms of warfare,’ described in the *Unrestricted Warfare* case study and elaborated on throughout this paper, offer some insight into the breadth of available research topics. With the discussed asymmetric logic in mind, each of these ‘new forms of warfare’ could stand to be studied individually and in combination with others. In addition, notwithstanding what was discussed concerning the effects of policy, cyber security, social media resources, and diaspora diplomacy, each of these topics could be studied in greater depth. Additional research topics related to asymmetric strategies may include the process of radicalization, factors contributing to the recruitment of foreign fighters, strategic leader readiness and qualities, and analysis concerning the development of a Canadian Grand Strategy.

As discussed in the introduction to this paper, the proliferation of asymmetric strategies among red-actors indicates that these approaches can no longer be considered secondary or

peripheral to conventional threats.¹⁶² Through the adoption of an appropriate counter-asymmetric strategy that incorporates an institutionalized multidimensional approach, encourages intellectual flexibility and diversity, and blends both conventional and asymmetric advantages, Western nations, like Canada, can reduce or reverse the asymmetric advantage that red-actors currently enjoy, put them on the defensive, and in-turn force them off balance.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Applegate, *Preparing for Asymmetry: As seen through the Lens of Joint Vision 2020*, 2.

¹⁶³ Grange, *Asymmetric Warfare: Old Method, New Concern*, 4.

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