



## Crafty Bastards<sup>®</sup> Perspectives March 18, 2015

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### Interview with COL Derek Harvey<sup>1</sup>

March 17, 2015

*Effective counterterrorism (CT) analysis must go beyond the national level and delve into the sub-national level to illuminate the ethnic, geographic, and religious divides that may provide identification of emerging threats and opportunities for mitigation. A blanket approach to regions and preexisting borders is no longer effective due to the disintegration of boundaries ushered in by globalization, and, conversely, local and longstanding tribal and/or cultural connections.*

- People need a future down the road not determined by identity. The Middle East's overriding themes, besides demographics and governance, are the broader conflicts within Islam: disagreement over the role of religion within the government; the conflict of sectarian, local, ethnic, and tribal identity (not just Shia versus Sunni); and the competition among *jihadis* to prove who is more Islamic.
- Violent non-state actors are complex organisms, not homogenous groups, with many differences. Understanding culture and putting on the Red hat to look at the world through their prism requires an eclectic team of analysts to collect and synthesize divisions and identify opportunities for leverage and engagement within parts of the whole.
- Articulating a narrative of resistance, capitalizing on regime neglect, and highlighting a (real or perceived) lack of distribution of resources are commonly used by groups who turn violent.

*The current national-level approach provides analysis that is effective when dealing government to government, but may miss the mark when looking at non-state actors. The present approach is to understand the world as the US interacting with other governments as allies or enemies.*

- At a national level, indicators for areas ripe for violence to emerge include low levels of political inclusion, economic well-being, and government legitimacy.
- The biggest differentiator of determining where violence could take root is the level of legitimacy and effectiveness. Countries whose governments are perceived to have a comparatively high level of legitimacy are less likely to have violent movement emerge.

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<sup>1</sup> See the Biographic Information section for background about the interviewee.



- Governments need to provide legitimate governance, education opportunities, infrastructure, and reliable delivery of an adequate level of services to keep populations satisfied.

*The two-to-10 year time horizon may see new threats emerge from currently semi-stable countries that have increasingly thriving criminal networks, which could pose a threat to the US in the long term if they expand across borders.* Indicators for emerging threats in these currently quiet areas include:

- Increasing tensions, including outright demonstrations, such as the Tunisian street vendor who set himself on fire in protest, igniting the Arab Spring;
- Oppressive regimes, such as in Venezuela;
- Extensive criminal networks with which current terrorist groups or disaffected local groups could cooperate, for example in many parts of Central and South America;
- Less-than-capable governments, societies fractured along ethnic lines, and the growth of sub-nationalism, including in Eastern Europe and Spain;
- Increasing awareness of and the ability to mobilize due to globalization;
- Separatist movements in California and Alaska and increasing racial tensions in places like Ferguson, Missouri;
- Continuing and increasing tensions between urban vs. rural and modernizing vs. fundamentalist.

*Openings exist for the US to shift its CT strategy to include current conditions on the ground and utilize pre-existing networks to provide insight into the impending partnerships and emergence of Red groups throughout the international system.* Tailoring opportunities and resources effectively and executing with partners on the ground are essential. Additionally, the threat of or actual use of force is sometimes the only language understood by certain groups.

- Analysts must have enough knowledge and openness to understand the motivations, fears, and concerns driving people to join terrorist groups. Some seek power, others are afraid, some are just following the culture, and some are ideological.
- Every situation is different, and frequently the US and its allies try to superimpose their perspectives on others. A more effective way is to work with NGOs and on-the-ground contacts in the target country to intervene and influence while preserving the use of force to secure our interests.
- Blue's current fear of acting like a superpower may be doing a global disservice. Inaction allows threats to grow. Blue doesn't always cause Red to flourish - Red will always react, and regimes will continue to blame the US whether there is involvement or not.
- The fact that Iran and other countries no longer fear us may have negative consequences in the future.
- The fear of second- and third-order consequences is paralyzing the US and allowing for substantial missed opportunities. Inaction also has unintended consequences.



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### Biographic Information

Professor and Co-Director of the Global Initiative for Civil Society and Conflict, University of South Florida

Harvey retired from the U.S. Army as a colonel in 2006 after 26 years of service as an intelligence officer and Middle East Foreign Area Officer. Prior to joining DIA as a civilian in early 2006, COL Harvey was the Senior Analyst for Iraq, Joint Staff Directorate for Intelligence, from November 2004 to December 2005. Previously, he was Chief, Commander's Assessments and Initiatives Group/Senior Intelligence Analyst for MNF-Iraq and "Red Cell" Team Chief for Combined Joint Task Force-7 in Iraq. He also participated in the Joint Strategic Assessment Team established by Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus to assess the situation in Iraq and to develop their combined campaign plan. Mr. Harvey is credited by some sources for predicting the insurgency in Iraq and the defeat of al-Qa'ida in Iraq in early 2007.

### Publications/Speeches/Media

COL Harvey gives frequent interviews on *PBS News Hour* and other news outlets.