

Green Workshop Objectives

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Context

We are considering many different frameworks, models, and metaphors to better understand and characterize the interconnected and interdependent features of the global environment (“Green”) in the context of the terrorism/counterterrorism dynamic. We are concerned with how Blue (i.e., the United States and its like-minded partners) and Red (i.e., those who take up arms against Blue) interact within Green. We ultimately want to understand where we, as Blue, may identify, explore, and exploit opportunities to our strategic advantage and diminish the opportunity space for Red.

Other workshops in this series independently examined these sub-systems (Blue and Red), and our aim is to synthesize all three understandings (inclusive of Green) in one document. Our goal—within the resulting synthesis paper at the conclusion of the workshop series—is to map out the major relevant systems and cultures that connect and influence Green, Blue, and Red so we may identify and suggest topics worthy of further study and exploration by counterterrorism (CT) net assessments.

Purpose of the Workshop

Our goal for the Green workshop is to gain a systems-based¹ understanding of the Green “ecosystem” now and over the next 10 years, how these actors and phenomena interact, and how they influence Red and Blue sub-systems. The actors and communities in these sub-systems may represent individuals, groups, institutions, or even countries. Phenomena and forces in these sub-systems may represent natural disasters, climate change, and food shortages.

Using complex systems² perspectives to characterize the global environment requires new patterns of thinking to move beyond industrial-age formulations for analyzing political-military balances. Complexity has to do with the relationships among parts or components of systems. In some cases, the correlations are strong and in others weaker. We want to focus on the connections where strong interdependencies may lead to changes across the entire system, resulting in positive or negative impacts on Red or Blue. We surmise that understanding change in these global, regional, and local systems is a key dynamic driving our terrorism/counterterrorism problem set.

¹ Understanding how things, regarded as systems, influence one another within a whole. In nature, systems thinking examples include ecosystems in which various elements such as air, water, movement, plants, and animals work together to survive or perish. In organizations, systems consist of people, structures, and processes that work together to make an organization “healthy” or “unhealthy”, available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Systems_thinking.

² Consisting of many diverse and autonomous but interrelated and interdependent components or parts linked through many (dense) interconnections, available at: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/complex-system.html#ixzz3MGACzmgV>.

What we are asking of you

From your unique perspective, we want you to identify and describe the systems that impact your domain of expertise, as well as the major drivers of change and forces of continuity within those systems. We want to understand how these different systems, drivers, and forces interact with one another and their environment to affect the collective attributes and behaviors of the system.

Ultimately, we want to bound the Green domain a bit by drawing out those forces and actors that are perceived to have the strongest causal relationships to “Red” system behavior (phenomena of violent instability and terrorism) and to the “Blue” system of global prosperity and security (i.e., the United States). An outcome of this workshop will be a greater understanding of the dynamic nature and character of Green that we can apply to our CT net assessments.

Expected Outcomes from the Workshop

At the conclusion of this workshop, we hope to have captured in raw form the most salient factors, influences, and relationships or interactions in Green that warrant further exploration in the conduct of counterterrorism net assessments. We will have identified the major systems that characterize each domain of expertise represented at the Workshop. We will have identified key actors and phenomena within these systems, along with emerging factors and developments under way or that are very plausible facing us today and for the next 10 years. We will have a list of the most important factors to understand that probably have the greatest strategic effects or impacts on the Green ecosystem in which both Blue and Red coevolve and coexist, and how these elements interact and influence change in Blue and Red. Finally, we hope to have a working list of plausible environmental conditions that create opportunities for Blue and hinder Red in accomplishing their strategic interests.

Structure of the Workshop

A series of questions will be used by the facilitator to drive the discussion over the course of the next 2.5 days. Please refer to the agenda in your binder for a time-based schedule. Day 1 is geared toward identification and characterization of different systems and their interconnectedness; Day 2 is focused on frameworks, models, and metaphors that help to characterize and elicit understanding of the complex interactions and relationships within and among these systems; and Day 3 is concerned with bounding the Workshop to the terrorism/counterterrorism dynamic.

Day 1

Goal of the session: Identify the major systems within your domain of expertise. Identify the interconnectedness, interdependence, and complexity of interactions and relationships within each system. Articulate how best to understand these systems through the introduction of frameworks, models, and metaphors.

Morning discussion

- How do you identify and define relevant systems relevant to your domain of expertise?

- In other words, how does your domain of expertise view the world, through what lens? As an economic system? A political system? A collection of cultural communities? An ecosystem? A complex adaptive system?
- What is the explanatory power of your preferred perspective and how does it translate to understanding other parts of the world?
- Who are the key players in your system? Why do they matter?
 - How do you define and characterize the properties and behaviors of the key actors within these systems, and how they interact and influence one another?
- What are the forces and drivers of change and continuity in each of these systems that create opportunities for conflict or cooperation?
- What risk (uncertainties) are inherent in each of these systems? How do practitioners in your domain of expertise reduce risks, leverage opportunities, and mitigate threats within these systems?
 - What frameworks, models, or metaphors do you use to create and test hypotheses?
- How do you see the dynamics in the systems you've described unfolding and evolving in the next 10 years?

Day 2

Goal of the session: Identify the interconnectedness, interdependence, and complexity of interactions and relationships among each system described on Day 1. Describe the actors in each system in terms of Blue, Red, and Green. Identify models to better understand, characterize, and possibly visualize these dynamics and their effects.

- Any alibis from Day 1?
- *Review the papers from the Read-Aheads.* How does your domain of expertise most readily agree with which concept(s)? Ecosystem? Cultural community? Complex Adaptive System? All three? Explain.
- What frameworks, models, and metaphors are better suited to understand, characterize, and visualize the dynamics of the system or paradigm you've shared?
- How do you identify and characterize the interconnectedness, interdependence, and complexity of interactions and relationships among each system described on Day 1?
 - How can we best visualize and model these relationships and their effects?

- We've traditionally called actors (such as polities and communities) with shared values and interests as "Blue" or "Red". Who might be characterized as Blue or Red in the system you've described?
 - Are there other constructs that better describe your system or paradigm than Blue, Red, or Green?
- Do the actors and phenomena within and among the systems discussed thus far seem to favor Blue or Red?

Day 3 (half day)

Goal of the session: Bound the discussion by the terrorism/counterterrorism dynamic.

- Any alibis from Day 2?
- Based on the frameworks, models, and metaphors discussed thus far in the workshop, what do you think has the most impact on violent instability (i.e., the conditions that may lead to terrorism behaviors)?
- Are there things that Blue or Red actors can do to alter Green to its advantage?
 - In other words, where are there potential leverage points to intervene in the system, to alter the dynamics and rate of change?
 - In other words, where do we have influence within Green to impact systemic changes?
- What have we missed or not talked about?

Conclude workshop and complete evaluations. Thank you for your participation!