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**Publication Date**

2014

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
Los Angeles

Dealing with the Devil?

Explaining the Onset of Strategic State-Terrorist Negotiations

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Political Science

by

Siobhan O'Neil

2014

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Dealing with the Devil?

Explaining the Onset of Strategic State-Terrorist Negotiations

by

Siobhan O'Neil

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Arthur Stein, Chair

Statesmen are quick to declare that they will not negotiate with terrorists. Yet, the empirical record demonstrates that, despite statements to the contrary, many states do eventually negotiate with their terrorist challengers. My dissertation examines the circumstances under which states employ strategic negotiations with terrorist groups to resolve violent conflict. I argue that only when faced with a credible and capable adversary and afforded relative freedom of action domestically will states negotiate with terrorists. To test this theory, I use a multi-method approach that incorporates a cross-national study of all known strategic negotiations from 1968-2006 and three within-case studies (Israel, Northern Ireland, and the Philippines). Initial results suggest that negotiations are employed in about 13% of terrorist campaigns, certain types of groups are privileged, and negotiations only occur when statesmen can overcome domestic

obstacles, namely public and veto player opposition. This study seeks to make definitive contributions to both science and society: Its findings will advance the literatures on conflict processes and policymaking, while informing the policy debate on effective counterterrorism strategies, an especially timely contribution given ongoing efforts to negotiate with terrorist groups in Afghanistan, Colombia, and Israel.

The dissertation of Siobhan O'Neil is approved.

Marc Trachtenberg

James DeNardo

Jessica Stern

Arthur Stein, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2014

## Contents

<b><i>Chapter 1 – Introduction</i></b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Key Argument.....	2
1.3 The Study’s Parameters.....	3
1.4 Assumptions.....	15
1.5 Theory.....	18
1.6 Methodology.....	21
1.7 Data Analysis.....	22
1.8 Case Studies.....	29
1.9 Academic and Policy Relevance.....	31
1.10 What Follows.....	32
<b><i>Chapter 2 – Negotiating with Terrorists is Self-Defeating: The Conventional Wisdom and its Critics</i></b> .....	<b>33</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	33
2.2 Normative Arguments.....	36
2.3 Explanatory Arguments.....	39
2.4 Critiques.....	40
2.5 Conclusion.....	57
<b><i>Chapter 3 - The Logic of Negotiating with Terrorist Groups</i></b> .....	<b>59</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	59
3.2 Strategic Environment.....	63
3.3 Domestic Political Environment.....	86
3.4 The Role of Third Parties?.....	115
3.5 Conclusion.....	116
<b><i>Chapter 4 - Israel Case Study</i></b> .....	<b>119</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	119
4.2 History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict & Counterterrorism Responses.....	121
4.3 Strategic Environment.....	172
4.4 Domestic Political Environment.....	193
4.5 Third Party Influence? .....	222
4.6 Conclusion.....	225
<b><i>Chapter 5 – UK Case Study (Northern Ireland)</i></b> .....	<b>228</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	228
5.2 Overview of the Troubles & UK Counterterrorism Policy Responses.....	231
5.3 Strategic Environment.....	278

5.4 Domestic Political Environment.....	302
5.5 Third Party Influence?.....	325
5.6 Conclusion.....	329

***Chapter 6 – The Philippines Case Study.....336***

6.1 Introduction.....	336
6.2 The Moro and Communist Conflicts & Policy Responses.....	339
6.3 Strategic Environment.....	372
6.4 Domestic Political Environment.....	399
6.5 Third Parties?.....	428
6.6 Conclusion.....	432

***Chapter 7 – Conclusion.....437***

7.1 The Puzzle.....	437
7.2 Summary of Findings.....	438
7.3 Case Studies.....	441
7.4 Cross-case Analysis.....	449
7.5 Implications for Academia.....	455
7.6 Future Research.....	456
7.7 Implications for Policy.....	460

**List of Figures**

1. British Public Opinion on Northern Ireland’s Future.....	306
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## Acknowledgements

It is often said that success has many parents. This maxim rings true with regard to my doctoral dissertation.

I owe a sincere debt of gratitude to the members of my dissertation committee, Art Stein, Marc Trachtenberg, Jim DeNardo, and Jessica Stern, who provided thoughtful feedback and continued support. I owe a special thanks to Marc Trachtenberg for his help procuring financial support during a critical time in my studies. The faculty and staff of the UCLA Department of Political Science, particularly Joseph Brown, offered years of academic counseling, instruction, and administrative support, without which I would not have been able to finish this degree.

During my the course of my research and my fieldwork, many people generously gave me their time and I am grateful for their guidance and insight into the topic. I owe sincere thanks to the foundations that helped fund this research, particularly the Institute for Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC), UCLA International Institute, and Bradley Foundation, as well as the Summer Workshop on the Analysis of Military Operations and Strategy (SWAMOS), Summer Institute on Conducting Archival Research (SICAR), UCLA Graduate Research Travel Grant Program, UCLA Graduate Research Mentorship Program, Partners for a Progressive Israel Symposium, and New Era Policy Conference.

My colleagues in the Department and at UCLA volunteered their feedback and shared their camaraderie. A special thanks goes to Hannah Vaughan, Liza Taylor, Gilda Rodríguez for their friendship and encouragement, and to Eric Kramon and Michael Tesler, for their statistics-related support. Thank you to my friends and family – especially my siblings, Jamie, Margot, Rory, Molly and Pat and my LP, Lauren - for



dutifully asking about my dissertation over the last seven years (alas something new to talk about!) and accepting the confines of my student budget when making plans.

Most importantly, this dissertation is dedicated to the two men without whom I would not have been able to finish this degree: My loving husband Simon believed in me and my project, even when I didn't. Without his gentle prodding and feedback, I'm not sure I would have finished this dissertation. My father offered his wide-ranging support over the course of my degree despite his personal misgivings about political scientists.

Lastly, I lost my mother while I was writing this dissertation. I wish she were here to see this day – a PhD and the prospects of getting another adult child off the family phone plan!

## **Biographical Sketch**

Prior to commencing her studies at UCLA, Siobhan O’Neil worked in the security and intelligence fields. In the wake of the September 11th attacks, she worked for the newly created state homeland security agencies in New York and New Jersey, helping state and local governments build their capacity to detect, prevent, and recover from terrorist attacks. She later served as the analyst for domestic security and intelligence at the Congressional Research Service (CRS), identifying emerging threats and evaluating possible policy responses for Congress. During the course of her doctoral studies, Siobhan worked as a research analyst at the RAND Corporation on projects pertaining to counterinsurgency transitions, insurgent motivations, and civil-military coordination during a domestic chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) attacks. Siobhan has an MA in Homeland Security and Defense from the Naval Postgraduate School, an M.Litt. in International Security Studies from the University of St. Andrews, and a BA in Political Science and History from the College of the Holy Cross.

*“Of course, if you want to make peace, you don't talk to your friends.  
You talk to your enemies.”*

*Moshe Dayan<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Dayan, then Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, made the comment when interviewed by Newsweek. Interestingly, the rest of the quote reads, “But the question is whom do we want to make peace with - not just who are our enemies. Now, we want to make peace with all our neighbors - Egypt and Syria and Jordan. And when we say Jordan, that includes Palestinian Arabs who are living on the West Bank... and in the Gaza Strip, with whom we have to live together... But the PLO organization, which is headquartered in Beirut, is a very specific organization - terrorists - and in their Covenant, it's clearly put that their aim and target is to destroy Israel. While we want to make peace with our neighbors, we do not think that a new Palestinian state... would be the right solution.” Even though Dayan recognizes that Israel needs to negotiate with its enemies, he seems to be drawing the line at the PLO. Interview with Foreign Minister Dayan, *Newsweek*, October 17, 1977, available from [<http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/MFADocuments/Yearbook3/Pages/58%20Interview%20with%20Fo reign%20Minister%20Dayan%20in%20Newswe.aspx>].

## Chapter 1

### *Introduction*

#### **1.1 Introduction**

South African President P.W. Botha was often referred to as the “Great Crocodile” for his “irascible belligerence.”<sup>2</sup> Botha’s belligerence was at its zenith in his defense of apartheid, the legal system of racial segregation and subjugation in South Africa. Botha routinely derided the presumed leader of the anti-apartheid movement, the African National Congress (ANC), as a terrorist group and highlighted its connection to communists in order to further discredit it. Botha went beyond trying to vilify and undermine the ANC, he launched “Total Onslaught,” a brutal campaign to crush the anti-apartheid movement, with a particular focus on its leading organization. To this end, Botha authorized military strikes against ANC forces in neighboring countries; systematically murdered anti-apartheid activists; encouraged mass detentions without trial; gave the security forces unprecedented power to suppress opposition at home; and fostered rivalries between Zulu, Xhosa, and other tribes.<sup>3</sup> In the late 1970s, Botha announced that South Africa must “adapt or die” and introduced a series of limited reforms that sought to preserve the pre-eminence of whites in South Africa by allowing minor concessions to other races, but Botha had no intention of allowing blacks to have political power. Likewise, he remained intransigent about compromising with the ANC. In 1985 and 1986, several South African businessmen, professors, and newsmen met with

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<sup>2</sup> Christopher S. Wren, “Ex-Pretoria Leader Seeks Tape of Mandela Talks,” *The New York Times*, November 25, 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph R. Gregory, “P. W. Botha, Defender of Apartheid, Is Dead at 90,” *The New York Times*, November 1, 2006, and “Mandela and Botha: The Crocodile & the Saint,” *The Independent*, November 2, 2006.

ANC officials outside the country. The National Party, however, publically distanced itself from these informal talks and showed no signs of granting concessions to the ANC or the broader anti-apartheid movement.

Behind the scenes, however, Botha had ordered several high ranking officials to reach out to the ANC. Starting in July 1986, Kobie Coetsee, Minister of Justice and Prisons, met with ANC leader Nelson Mandela about prisoner privileges, but talks soon turned to more strategic concerns. In May 1988, Niel Barnard, the head of the National Intelligence Service, began to meet secretly with Mandela at Botha's behest to determine if the ANC was open to a negotiated settlement. After almost three years of secret meetings with a small group of South African officials, Mandela met with Botha on July 5, 1989.<sup>4</sup>

The South African example highlights an interesting puzzle – statesmen regularly issue public promises that they will never negotiate with terrorists. Eventually, however, many of them engage in talks with their terrorist challengers. Under what circumstances should we expect to observe the onset of state-terrorist negotiations over strategic issues?

## **1.2 Key Argument**

This research project examines the circumstances under which states employ strategic negotiations with terrorist groups to resolve violent conflict. The conventional wisdom and literature on the subject have traditionally focused on why states *shouldn't* or *don't* negotiate with terrorist groups, but can't explain when and why they *do*. The

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<sup>4</sup> Botha did not have time – inter-party politics forced his resignation a month later - to make significant headway with Mandela, but his actions opened the door for talks with the ANC. His successor, F. W. de Klerk, embarked on a series of talks with Mandela that eventually led to negotiations between the National Party and the ANC.

empirical evidence suggests that states recurrently negotiate with terrorist groups. This project proffers an integrated theory to explain the onset of state-terrorist negotiations focused on strategic and domestic factors. I argue that only when faced with a credible and capable partner and afforded relative freedom of action domestically will states negotiate with terrorists. To test this theory, I examine cross-national data on all known strategic state-terrorist negotiations from 1968-2006 and three comparative and within-case studies (Israel, Northern Ireland, and the Philippines). This study seeks to make definitive contributions to both science and society: Its findings will advance the literatures on public opinion, conflict processes, and policymaking, while informing the policy debate on effective counterterrorism strategies. This project is especially timely given recent efforts by the US and Afghan officials to negotiate with the Taliban, renewed talks between the Colombian government and FARC, the signing of the settlement between the MILF and the Philippine government, and the breakdown of talks between Fatah and the Israeli government.

### **1.3 The Study's Parameters**

#### **1.3.1 Terrorism**

Before embarking on this study, it is important to define key terms and set the parameters for this project. First, the manner in which terrorism is defined has a significant impact on a study's findings.<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this project, terrorists are

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<sup>5</sup> Studying terrorism as an independent subsection of coercive action is not without controversy. When I defended my prospectus for this project, one of my committee members, James DeNardo, argued that a terrorist group is a rather arbitrary category and suggested that I expand my analysis to include a wide array of coercive actors (e.g. labor unions). He even suggested, with a modicum of jest, that I include children, who frequently use the threat of tantrums to coerce their parents into sweets, toys, or other amusements. The critique that terrorism is an arbitrary category of analysis is well taken. Roberts

defined by their acts, not the nature of the perpetrators or their cause. For an act to be considered terroristic in nature if it must be a politically-motivated violent action – or the threat thereof – directed against civilian targets, but designed to cause fear beyond the immediate victims or targets and coerce a state, population, or institution into a particular response.<sup>6</sup> A terrorist group is one that engages in terrorist acts. That is not to say, however, that the group can't engage in other types of activity as well - be it non-violent or directed at alternate targets. For example, most insurgent groups engage in some terrorist attacks, but few terrorist groups seek direct engagement with the state's military and constitute an insurgency. The distinction - often a blurry one - lays in whether the group seeks to directly engage the military – as compared to civilian targets.

### 1.3.2 Perspective

This project views the onset of state-terrorist negotiations from a state perspective. Although negotiations are a two-way street, requiring acquiesce by both the state and the terrorist group(s) in question, this study is primarily focused on the state policymaking process that leads to the pursuit of negotiations. Certainly, a two-perspective analysis would provide a richer study of the dynamics of state-terrorist

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Brubaker and Frederick Cooper highlight the differences between *categories of practice* – those of “everyday social experience, developed, and deployed by ordinary social actors” – which are to be distinguished from “scientific” and “experience-distant categories used by social analysts” – herein called categories of analysis.<sup>5</sup> A terrorist group is a category of practice, and a messy one at that, with blurry definitional lines and overlap with other types of coercive actors. While there are sound reasons for expanding the analysis to include a wider array of coercive actors, there are problems with doing so. For example, policymakers don't consider those groups to be equivalent, and thus they are not considered together when formulating policy. As a result, policymakers don't enact broad policies that would encompass actors as diverse as terrorist groups, auto unions, and children prone to tantrums. In a way, terrorism as a category of practice has become a *de facto* category of analysis because the former categorization has become so ingrained.

<sup>6</sup> This definition concurs with that used by the RAND Corporation for the data collection efforts, and as such overlaps with the data sources used herein; see [<http://www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/terrorism-incidents/about/definitions.html>].

negotiations, but decision-making within terrorist groups remains sufficiently opaque as to stymie the systematic study of the strategic and internal considerations that impact the process.

### **1.3.3 Negotiations - Ad Hoc v. Strategic**

This project focuses on strategic negotiations. As will be described in Chapter 2, one of the problems with the existing research on state-terrorist negotiations is a lack of differentiation whereby “negotiation” is often used interchangeably with “concession”<sup>7</sup> or any form of communication and discussions of the effects of negotiations on terrorist behavior lump terrorist responses to ad hoc negotiations with their responses to strategic negotiations. Not all types of communication or concessions constitute negotiations. Press statements and unilateral concessions are not akin to negotiations. A negotiation, rather, is a mutual communicative process aimed to settle a dispute.

There are different types of state-terrorist negotiations: Ad hoc – or tactical - negotiations are those that arise as a result of an ongoing coercive action (e.g. negotiations with terrorists who have hijacked a plane). Strategic negotiations are essentially peace processes whereby the state seeks to address some of a terrorist group’s overarching goals in order to end a violent conflict, not a singular coercive act. As Wilkinson notes, “There is a crucial difference between concessions made to terrorists when they are conducting a bombing campaign or holding hostages at gunpoint and concessions made in the context of a peace process designed to bring a permanent end to

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<sup>7</sup> Although other than granting talks – which in some cases can be considered a concession unto itself, no such concessions necessarily have to occur over the course of negotiations.



violence.”<sup>8</sup> An ongoing coercive terrorist attack and a long-term terrorist campaign represent fundamentally different terrorist crises and as such, the negotiations that occur in response to them are drastically different.

Ad hoc and strategic negotiations are distinct in their precipitating conditions, power dynamics, time and concession constraints, and capacity to generate public pressure for action. The state applies very different requirements for granting ad hoc as compared to strategic negotiations. In the former case, the perpetrators need not be particularly capable or credible to force a state to negotiate, they need only have hostages that they are in the position to kill. Hostage-takers need not have a large following, legitimacy, large ranks or sophisticated weaponry. They need only have a few people who can create a situation in which hostages would be killed if a military rescue were mounted. This was the case when Willie Roger Holder and Catherine Marie Kerkow hijacked a Western Airlines flight 701 from Los Angeles in 1972. The two were poor terrorists - Holder spent much of the initial flight smoking pot and consulting astrological charts to sooth his nerves,<sup>9</sup> and he was rattled by any minor deviation from the plan he had laid out. Kerkow was a party girl who somewhat blindly followed her boyfriend’s lead. Yet, with their few resources and poor planning, they were able to take 105 hostages and coerce Western Airlines (with the approval of the US government) into providing them with \$500,000 and a transatlantic aircraft to travel on to Algeria. The requirements for strategic negotiations, however, are much higher. States will not undertake strategic negotiations unless the threat posed by the perpetrators is patent and unlikely to dissipate

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism Versus Democracy: The Liberal State Response*, (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 96.

<sup>9</sup> Brendan I. Koerner, *The Skies Belong to Us: Love and Terror in the Golden Age of Hijacking*, (New York: Crown Publishers, 2013), e-reader edition.

though other means. Only those associated with an enduring, identifiable group(s) and seeking limited, divisible goals will be considered for negotiations over strategic aims.

Coercion plays a different role in precipitating ad hoc and strategic negotiations. In hostage-takings, the perpetrator's coercive power is acute and ongoing. Writing in 1966, Schelling argued "hostages represent the power to hurt in its purest form."<sup>10</sup> In this dynamic, the terrorist group's capacity to exert acute coercive power helps even out the asymmetry of the power balance. Crenshaw argues that when a terrorist group takes hostages, suddenly the state's greater strength and resources, which are central determinants of the longevity and success of a terrorist group's campaign, are no longer an advantage.<sup>11</sup> With a hostage-taking, coercion is exerted until the hostages are released, and as such, it hangs over negotiations. In a terrorist campaign, there are coercive moments that add up to a cumulative coercive pressure, but that atmosphere never comes close to the intensity of an ongoing coercive event like hostage-taking.<sup>12</sup> As such, cumulative coercion does not play the same role in precipitating negotiations or hang over the negotiations in the same manner.

Strategic and ad hoc negotiations come with different opportunities and constraints. For example, domestic public pressure may work in very different ways depending on the type of negotiation at hand. The public may put pressure on the state to concede to ad hoc negotiations and/or grant concessions to the terrorists when citizens' lives hang in the balance in a hostage-taking situation, especially if there is dramatic

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 6.

<sup>11</sup> Martha Crenshaw, "The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a produce of a Strategic Choice," in *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, ed. Walter Reich, (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998), 20.

<sup>12</sup> There is the possibility that a terrorist group party to strategic talks could conduct a hostage-taking concurrent with strategic negotiations and thus coercion could hang over peace talks, but this would constitute a combined event.

media coverage of the event, but a long-term terrorist campaign may not produce the same predilections. International pressure may also vary by terrorist scenario.

Ad hoc and strategic negotiations are suited for different types of concessions. Single terrorist events are essentially tactical operations, which are better suited for short negotiations and quickly delivered and verified demands (i.e. prisoner release, ransom).<sup>13</sup> While terrorists may rhetorically demand independence for their people or the creation of a socialist state when they conduct a hijacking, such strategic goals are complex, contentious, and may require institutional changes, all of which requires a much longer time line for implementation. The terrorist group does not have the time to wait for strategic changes as the longer the crisis goes on the larger the costs to the perpetrators (e.g. security for the hostages) and there is a greater likelihood that the hostages could get sick, escape, or the government could mount a rescue mission. Nor is the state likely to make strategic concessions (e.g. concede land) in the face of one attack. For example, the Red Brigades' strategic goal was to precipitate the destruction of the capitalist Italian state and create a socialist one in its place, whereas the goal of the 1978 Aldo Moro kidnapping was much narrower - win the release of political prisoners about to go on trial<sup>14</sup> and possibly ransom.<sup>15</sup> Even if the Red Brigades hoped that the Moro kidnapping

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<sup>13</sup> It is, however, possible that the demands made by terrorists in these cases are of secondary or equal importance to other goals (e.g. garner publicity, incite government retribution).

<sup>14</sup> R.W. Apple, Jr., "Leftists Kidnap Italian Leader: 5 Guards Killed," *The New York Times*, March 17, 1978.

<sup>15</sup> The communiqués never mention ransom, but the letters the RB allowed Moro write while in captivity do. Henry Tanner, "New Moro Letter Pleads for Exchange of Prisoners," *The New York Times*, April 5, 1978. Interestingly, however, subsequent communiqués from the group did not mention ransom demands. Tanner, "Kidnappers in Italy Report 'Trial' of Moro Under Way," *The New York Times*, March 26, 1978. The fifth such communiqué released on April 10, stated that the group was moving forward in the 'people's trial' of Moro and ruled out secret negotiations with the government for his release. Tanner, "Moro's kidnapers Reject Any 'Secret Negotiations' for His Release," *The New York Times*, April 11, 1978.

might achieve some larger un-stated goals,<sup>16</sup> the group was under no illusion that it could achieve a socialist state with one kidnapping, even when the target was a former Prime Minister and president of the senior political party in the governing coalition.

Furthermore, as compared to ad hoc negotiations, there is less likely to be a large discrepancy between a terrorist group's articulated goals and actual ones in strategic negotiations. Given the political risks of engaging in negotiations with their professed enemy, the attention negotiations deviate from other operations, and the potential for the state to gain valuable intelligence about the group, it is unlikely that terrorists engage in strategic negotiations for reasons other than trying to achieve their core strategic goals.

There are different perceived consequences for ad hoc v. strategic concessions. While the former are "problematic but at times unavoidable," the latter continue to be viewed as "counterproductive and dangerous."<sup>17</sup> This is likely in part due to the nature of ad hoc concessions, which are inherently limited and reversible. Even Paul Pillar, who is sympathetic to a no-negotiation policy, admits that "A concession made in the face of immediate harm need not constitute a reward unless the terrorists were demanding some irreversible act, and there are few of those (even released prisoners can be captured)... the terrorists can be hunted to the ends of the earth and appropriate action taken to ensure that when the books on the incident are closed, it will not count as a reward for terrorism."<sup>18</sup> A good example is the aforementioned hijacking of Western Airlines 701, in

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<sup>16</sup> It is also possible the attack may have also had unstated goals - a symbolic attack on government; unite and incite a larger leftist movement; damage Moro's *Democrazia Cristiana* party; thwart the efforts by *Partito Comunista Italiano* to push through Marxist-light reforms in parliament; or destroy the nascent alliance between the two parties. David Moss, "The Kidnapping and Murder of Aldo Moro," *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 1981.

<sup>17</sup> Harmonie Toros, "Legitimacy and Complexity in Terrorist Conflicts," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 39, No. 4, (2008), 411.

<sup>18</sup> Paul R. Pillar, *Terrorism and US Foreign Policy*, (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), 36.

which Holder and Kerkow received \$500,000 from the airline in exchange for the release of passengers. When the two arrived in Algeria, the Algerian government confiscated the ransom, which it promptly returned to the United States.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, the release of prisoners is similarly “reversible”: An excellent example is Hamas’ spiritual advisor Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, who was released from prison as part of the 1985 Jibril deal,<sup>20</sup> then re-arrested in 1989 and sentenced to life in prison, but subsequently released again as part of the 1997 prisoner exchange following the botched assassination attempt on Hamas’ Khaled Mashal. Instead of attempting to re-arrest Yassin a third time, the IDF attempted to kill him in 2003, and succeeded the next year when it fired a missile at Yassin as he left a mosque in Gaza. Concessions made in strategic negotiations, by comparison, are less likely to be so easily reversed. It would be very difficult and costly to undo an autonomy agreement, or harder yet to disintegrate a newly independent state, especially after it gained international recognition. In expressing his concerns about the Oslo Agreement in 1993, then Defense Minister Ehud Barak worried about the daunting task and political fallout of having to retake parts of the Occupied Territories that would be turned over to the Palestinians in the event that the Agreement fell apart. Populations are unlikely to sit idly by as political rights extended to them by a negotiated settlement are rescinded, raising the risk of a mass uprising.

As Chapter 2 will detail, the conventional wisdom holds that negotiating with a terrorist group is a bad idea because negotiations provide terrorists with legitimacy, make the state look weak, and incite further terrorist violence. Often this broad argument is bolstered with examples about the effects of ad hoc

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<sup>19</sup> Wolfgang Saxon, “Ex-Black Panther Extradited to the US,” *The New York Times*, July 27, 1986.

<sup>20</sup> In 1985, Israel exchanged 1,150 prisoners for three Israeli soldiers held by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC), which was led by Ahmed Jibril.

negotiations over hostages. There are several problems with this line of argumentation, most importantly the conflation of post-hostage-negotiations terrorist behavior with the impact of strategic negotiations. As demonstrated, these are fundamentally different situations and there is no evidence that terrorists respond to ad hoc and strategic negotiations and concessions as a result in the same way. Indeed, logic would suggest that terrorists may respond very differently: If a terrorist group wins limited concessions (e.g. ransom, publicity) for the release of a hostage, and is able to undertake further hostage-takings, it may do so in pursuit of its incremental goals. This is essentially a tactical consideration. If a terrorist group achieves some of its strategic objectives after a long running campaign, it is unlikely that the group will adopt a whole new agenda of unrelated goals and return to combat.<sup>21</sup> Some have suggested that perhaps the group would seek to make further advancements on their original goals – for example return to violence to achieve independence after a negotiated settlement only resulted in sovereignty – which is a possibility, but should not be taken as given. This issue of strategic and ad hoc negotiation effects requires further research and is beyond the purview of this project, but until evidence of similar effects is demonstrated, such similarities should not be assumed.

Recognizing that given the differences in their precipitating conditions, their particular dynamics, and the consequences of concessions associated with them, this project draws a clear distinction between ad hoc and strategic negotiations. The project

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<sup>21</sup> Jessica Stern and Amit Modi disagree, arguing that a group's strategic goals are important – they provide *raison d'être* for action and provide a narrative about collective identity – but they are ultimately endogenous. A group's strategic goals can be altered at will, to maximize a group's resilience. Jessica Stern and Amit Modi, "Producing Terror: Organizational Dynamics of Survival," in *Countering the Financing of Terrorism*, eds. Thomas J. Biersteker and Sue E. Eckert, (New York: Routledge, 2008).

focuses on the latter, and while ad hoc negotiations are occasionally referenced herein, they are not conflated to be one and the same with strategic negotiations. This differentiated approach is one of the innovations of this research project.

#### **1.3.4 The Earnest Pursuit of Negotiations**

There is also a distinction to be made between a state's earnest pursuit of a negotiated settlement and the disingenuous participation in negotiations to achieve other instrumental goals. In the former case, a state will earnestly engage in strategic negotiations only once it comes to believe a negotiated settlement may help end a terrorist campaign and as such, accepts it must make some compromises and provide some concessions to its opponent. There is, however, the possibility that a state could pursue strategic negotiations with a terrorist group and have no interest in compromising or make concessions. Instead, a state may pursue talks for purely tactical purposes. As will become evident by the Israeli and Philippine case studies, states may pursue talks with a terrorist challenger in order to alleviate outside pressure from other states or international organizations. Alternately, states may pursue talks in order to gain intelligence on the terrorist challengers. By publically pursuing talks with a terrorist group (or even suggesting it had) a state may seek to undermine the group's support by painting it as a turncoat. For the purposes of this study, I do not consider the pursuit of negotiations for tactical purposes to constitute a genuine shift in a state's counterterrorism policy. Tactical talks, rather, are likely a continuation of previous counterterrorism models: talks are pursued in order to undermine and destroy the group, rather than address the core grievances and problems that lie at the heart of the conflict. This project

focuses on the factors that facilitate the state's genuine shift towards pursuing for a negotiated settlement with its terrorist challenger.

### **1.3.5 Unilateral Concessions as Negotiations**

This research project is focused on the onset of strategic negotiations with terrorist groups. However, it is always possible for a state to make unilateral concessions without formal negotiations. As documented in Chapter 6, several Philippine presidents unilaterally addressed key grievances of the communist New People's Army (NPA) and the Moro terrorist groups operating in the country's south, while refusing to engage in negotiated process with the group. For example, Ferdinand Marcos embarked on a series of economic development projects in Mindanao, but it was unclear if he did so to address the Moro National Liberation Front's (MILF) grievances, sought to undermine the group's legitimacy and support base, or was trying to alleviate poverty and facilitate growth in general. It is difficult to impute the state's specific motivation in such cases. This is particularly true because terrorist groups may be incentivized to portray government actions as concessions to bolster their own coercive reputations. For example, when Canada pulled its forces from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan in 2014, the Taliban announced it had secured a victory over Canada and forced its troops to retreat across the Atlantic.<sup>22</sup> The Canadian withdrawal was borne largely in domestic politics and did not represent a concession or a Taliban victory. Conversely, it may be the case that states refrained from unilaterally making concessions *because* of pressure by terrorist groups. Indeed, it is likely that

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<sup>22</sup> Murray Brewster, "Taliban Congratulates its Forces on 'Defeat' of Canadians in Afghanistan," *The Toronto Star*, March 14, 2014.



Canadian troops would have withdrawn from Afghanistan - a key Taliban demand - much earlier had it not been for a campaign of violence launched by the Taliban.

There remains the possibility that a state may grant unilateral concessions in an effort to address a terrorist group's core grievances while avoiding domestic obstacles to a negotiations policy and the expected domestic blowback or strategic consequences thought to be associated with negotiations. For example, a state may provide concessions in hopes that doing so will undermine the terrorist group's justification for using violence and reduce support for the group. Further complicating the issue is the possibility that a unilateral concession may actually be the result of a failed negotiating process. As detailed in the Northern Ireland case study, it was long thought that Prime Minister Thatcher had refused to negotiate with Irish republicans during the 1981 hunger strike, but that she had made several unilateral concessions – claimed to have been in the works before the strike – to address the prisoners' grievances after several hunger strikers died. Recently declassified official documents demonstrate that in fact, Thatcher had tried to negotiate with the republican prisoners, but they rebuffed her overtures,<sup>23</sup> and as a result Thatcher made unilateral concessions in hopes of incentivizing the prisoners to end their strike and undermine their narrative. Due to the methodological pitfalls of seeking to isolate unilateral concessions amidst the full range and complexity of state actions, this dissertation focuses solely on instances of strategic negotiations with terrorist groups.

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<sup>23</sup> Owen Bowcott, "Thatcher Cabinet 'Wobbled' Over IRA Hunger Strikes," *The Guardian*, December 30, 2011.

## 1.4 Assumptions

In addition to outlining the parameters for this study, it is also important to acknowledge the assumptions upon which it rests. First, terrorism has always posed a significant, yet peculiar problem for states. Although terrorism does not pose an existential threat to the state, it does threaten governance. A terrorist group is poorly suited to topple a state militarily.<sup>24</sup> In comparison to a state's security forces, terrorist groups tend to be small, poorly trained, and out armed. As such, these types of groups generally avoid direct confrontation with the military. Indeed, by its very nature, terrorism does not seek to bring about political change by defeating a state's military. Rather terrorism – the use of violence, or threat thereof, against civilian targets with the purpose of generating a psychological impact beyond the immediate victims – is intended to generate enough domestic pressure that those in power feel they must enact policy change.

Successful terrorist attacks against non-combatants bring into high relief the state's failure to meet its core obligation – to protect its citizens. When terrorist attacks demonstrate that the state has failed to provide sufficient security, they undermine the legitimacy of those in power. A state's citizens are likely to withdraw their support for a leader who has repeatedly demonstrated that he cannot keep them safe from terrorist attacks. Thus, if state executives wish to maintain their positions, they must protect their citizens. Almost inevitably, state executives in this position turn to a war model of counterterrorism, choosing to use the security forces in a bid to destroy the terrorists rather than other more conciliatory counterterrorism strategies.

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<sup>24</sup> There are occasional exceptions to this rule. For example, Hezbollah is stronger than the Lebanese Army.

Second, states are loath to negotiate with terrorist groups. Regardless of the terrorist crisis scenario at hand, states “prefer combat over the other strategies...” as kinetic operations are consistent with the norm of punishing illegal violence.<sup>25</sup> If, however, terrorist violence continues to persist and states eventually come to realize that they cannot defeat the terrorists militarily, they may have to consider other counterterrorism strategies if the executives want to maintain their positions.

Third, counterterrorism strategies are not assumed to be unidirectional. Herein, the language used to describe changes in counterterrorism policy may at times read as though a state is pivoting from one unitary policy to another, but there is no assumption that states pursue unitary counterterrorism strategies. Indeed, many countries, including Israel over the last 20 years, have been known to pursue mixed counterterrorism strategies that incorporate a wide range of repressive and conciliatory policies.<sup>26</sup> By negotiating a state need not abandon military offensives against the group or discontinue criminal prosecutions for those who have perpetrated terrorist attacks. Rather, for the purposes of this project, my only concern is when negotiations are added to the mix.

Lastly, as with much of the literature on terrorism, I assume that terrorist groups display “a collective rationality.”<sup>27</sup> As DeNardo argues, opposition groups have an array of tactics to choose from and in the event that violent ones are employed it is because they are viewed as having utility.<sup>28</sup> Crenshaw concurs, finding that tactical choices are the result of a “reasonably regularize[d] decision-making procedures” that weigh the group’s

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<sup>25</sup> Dean G. Pruitt, “Negotiating with Terrorists,” *International Negotiation*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2006), 3.

<sup>26</sup> Erica Chenoweth and Laura Dugan – “Rethinking Counterterrorism: Evidence from Israel,” working paper, August 17, 2010, available from [<http://ssrn.com/abstract=1664282>].

<sup>27</sup> For example, see Crenshaw, “The Logic of Terrorism,” 8. For a rationalist perspective, see David A. Lake, “Rational Extremism: Understanding Terrorism in the Twenty-first Century,” *Dialog-IO*, (Spring 2002).

<sup>28</sup> James DeNardo, *Power by Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 242.

preferences and values, and the projected efficacy of the tactic.<sup>29</sup> That is not to say that every decision made by terrorist groups can be understood as directly maximizing one or all of its strategic aims. Terrorist groups, like all organizations, have strategic and more immediate, operational goals, which at times can work at cross-purposes. For example, an ethnonationalist terrorist group may seek to establish its own nation-state, but it also needs to survive, and to do so it must pursue an array of short-term operational goals: fundraise; recruit; shore up morale; garner attention to its cause; perhaps spoil cooperation between other rival groups and the state;<sup>30</sup> even provoke government retribution,<sup>31</sup> and outbid rivals for market share.<sup>32</sup> In some cases, working to achieve short-term goals can undermine progress toward strategic aims. For example, if a group is trying to outbid its rivals, it may divert attention and resources away from its goal of establishing a state, but that does not mean such actions are irrational. I do not go so far as to suggest that terrorists are so concerned with survival that their strategic goals are endogenous and can be readily altered to enhance the group's chances of continuity.<sup>33</sup> Rather I provide an expanded view of rationality that recognizes that terrorists have numerous goals that vary in scope and urgency, and which may, at times, even conflict. I argue that the decisions most terrorist groups make are largely the result of a logical,

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<sup>29</sup> Crenshaw, "The Logic of Terrorism."

<sup>30</sup> Andrew Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence," *International Organization*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Spring 2002), and Stephen John Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2, (Autumn, 1997), and Wendy Pearlman, "Spoiling Inside and Out: Internal Political Contestation and the Middle East Peace Process," *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Winter 2008/09).

<sup>31</sup> While seemingly counterintuitive, government retribution is desired by dissent groups because it almost inevitably entails collateral damage, which can help convince undecided moderates that the state is indeed oppressive and untrustworthy and thus enhance support for the terrorist group. Rui J. P. de Figueiredo, Jr., and Barry R. Weingast, "Vicious Cycles: Endogenous Political Extremism and Political Violence," Working papers, May 2001, available from [<http://faculty.haas.berkeley.edu/rui/m13.04.pdf>].

<sup>32</sup> Mia M. Bloom, "Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 119, No. 1, 2004.

<sup>33</sup> Stern and Modi.

cost-benefit analysis to determine which tactics maximize their utility whether their immediate concerns are short-term and logistical (e.g. institutional survival) or long-term and strategic (e.g. gain independence). This is not a study about terrorist behavior, but I assume that states are not coming under attack by terrorist psychopaths. Despite how it may appear to others, terrorist violence is not senseless. Just like most of us, terrorist groups suffer from information deficits, misread signals, and overestimate their own capacity, all of which lead to suboptimal decision-making. They even act out of emotion on occasion and make decisions out of spite, rage, or jealousy. Yet, there is an arc of rationality through all terrorist campaigns, although some groups may come to be viewed as more rational than others.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, and more importantly given the focus of this research project, I assume an arc of rationality through state behavior as well.

## **1.5 Theory**

As will be argued in Chapter 2, the literature on the subject of state-terrorist negotiations fails to explain when and why states negotiate with terrorist groups. Convention holds that states *shouldn't* negotiate with terrorists because the latter are untrustworthy and negotiations incite further terrorism. Traditionally, scholars concurred or focused on reasons why states *don't* negotiate with terrorists, citing the lack of structural mechanisms to ensure compliance with negotiated settlements. These arguments are problematic: they often rest on questionable assumptions and precarious logic; they suffer from over-aggregation and poor methodological choices; and most importantly, their predictions are contradicted by the empirical record. This study sets out

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<sup>34</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter 3, however, there are differences across terrorist groups. Some terrorist group types demonstrate more pragmatism when it comes to the utility of violence, and as such, they may be seen as more “rational” in comparison to their peers.

to redress this failing and provide a comprehensive theory to explain why and when states negotiate with their terrorist challengers over the latter's strategic aims.

As will be detailed in Chapter 3, this project lays out an integrated theory of state-terrorist negotiations that incorporates both strategic and domestic factors. States - loath to negotiate with terrorists – only consider negotiations if other – often military – counterterrorism strategies fail to defeat the challengers. If a terrorist group endures despite efforts to destroy it and the conflict drags on, and on, a state may come to consider other counterterrorism policy responses. A terrorist group's endurance and prolonged coercive capacity is key to the state's eventual consideration of the potential utility of negotiations. It is at that point that the state – albeit it reluctantly - begins to assess whether its terrorist challenger could be a potential negotiating partner.<sup>35</sup> Three characteristics are likely to signal that a terrorist group has the capability and credibility to negotiate – and subsequently adhere, and enforce compliance, to - a political settlement: size, type, and fractionalization. A large group is more likely to endure long enough for a state to consider a negotiation strategy. Endurance is observable, but size also signals a group's capacity to continue the struggle. Terrorist group type may indicate whether a group's demands are limited and if a group will be willing to eschew violent tactics. Certain terrorist groups are likely to have more limited goals and pragmatic views on the use of violence than others. Lastly, the degree of fractionalization - both within the group and in the broader movement (i.e. market share) – speaks to the terrorist group's control over its members and its market share in the broader movement, and thus its credibility to negotiate on behalf of a cause and its capacity to ensure compliance to a

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<sup>35</sup> The term “partner” should not be interpreted as having a positive connotation; it merely follows that as a terrorist group may be party to a conflict, it may as a result become a participant in its negotiated settlement.

negotiated settlement. From these three characteristics, which are relatively observable in a conflict often shrouded in fog, statesmen are able to make an assessment on the potential utility of negotiating with the terrorist group at hand. Size, type, and fractionalization influence a group's credibility to negotiate on behalf of a cause or population and its capacity to survive the negotiations in tact and ensure adherence to any resulting settlement. Even if state leaders determine there may be value in negotiating with terrorists in an effort to end long-running conflicts, they are unlikely to pursue talks, however, if doing so threatens their position domestically.

A shift towards a negotiation policy is as reliant on domestic factors as it is on strategic ones. State executives will only pursue negotiations if they have the necessary domestic space to maneuver. This largely depends on two factors – the potential opposition of the public and the capacity for other government players to veto preferred policies. Statesmen who face fierce public opposition to negotiations will avoid talks unless they can find a way to mollify or circumvent the public. Depending on the state in question, there are potentially institutional and/or political veto players whose support – or at least their acquiescence – is essential for pursuing negotiations. These two constituencies do not operate in a vacuum, but are very much interrelated. For example, it is possible that public opinion may motivate veto player behavior to support negotiations, just as vocal opposition from key veto players may turn public opinion against talks. The paradigm outlined in Chapter 3 thus views executive changes in counterterrorism policy through the lens of strategic opportunities and domestic constraints. Executives are only expected to pursue negotiations when they face a capable and credible terrorist challenger and they have the freedom to maneuver politically at home.

## 1.6 Methodology

In order to examine the conditions under which statesmen choose to negotiate with terrorists over strategic aims, I employ both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. First, in order to determine the degree to which terrorist conflicts end in strategic negotiations and flush out some of the conditions that may facilitate their onset, I conduct an analysis of state-terrorist negotiations from 1968 to 2006. As detailed in this Chapter, I present summary statistics that provide some insight into strategic conditions that lead to strategic negotiations between states and terrorist groups. Given the limitations of the data – which are detailed later in this Chapter - and the question at hand, applying sophisticated statistical analysis would not allow for greater explanatory leverage on the onset of state-terrorist negotiations. Rather, case studies are better suited for determining the necessary conditions and causal pathways for the onset of state-terrorist negotiations.

This project includes three case studies: Israel (Chapter 4), UK/Northern Ireland (Chapter 5), and the Philippines (Chapter 6). These cases are appropriate tests for the integrated strategic and domestic theory of state-terrorist negotiations because they exhibit both cross-case and within-case variation on the key variables. In the strategic sphere, the governments in each case faced an array of terrorist challengers<sup>36</sup> who varied in size, endurance, type, and fractionalization/market share.<sup>37</sup> At the domestic level of analysis, there is variation across cases with regard to the type of government, number

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<sup>36</sup> The case studies each cover a large number of violent groups, but there are inevitably some very small outfits that are not mentioned because they were too small, inactive, and/or not sufficiently political in nature to necessitate discussion in relation to counterterrorism policymaking.

<sup>37</sup> Several of the groups in question employ a variety of tactics, including targeting military targets. In some cases, these groups could also be classified as insurgent, but they also meet the metric for a terrorist organization.



and type of veto players, and the level of influence public opinion has on policymaking. Taken together the cases provide both geographic and some temporal variation. Each case study draws on archival research, polling data, press reports, memoirs, and interviews with policymakers, security officials, journalists, NGO workers, and academics. In each case, I employ a process tracing approach to examine the counterterrorism policy-making process in order to test my hypotheses. I assess whether a state's shift in counterterrorism policy toward strategic negotiations supports my hypotheses about the necessity of certain strategic and domestic political conditions for the onset of state-terrorist negotiations.

## 1.7 Data Analysis

In order to get a sense of the universe of state-terrorist negotiation cases, I examine a dataset of all known strategic talks from 1968-2006. The dataset draws on two primary data sources: Audrey Kurth Cronin's dataset from *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* and the data used by Martin Libicki and Seth Jones in *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering Al Qaeda*. I started with Audrey Kurth Cronin's dataset of state-terrorist negotiations, the only one of its kind.<sup>38</sup> Cronin's data, however, is problematic: Cronin dropped groups that

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<sup>38</sup> The data is referenced in the appendix "Statistical Analysis of Terrorist Campaigns," of Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009). More information is available at her website [<http://howterrorismends.com/data/>]. The dataset was based data from the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) Terrorist Knowledge Base (TKB). Since then, MIPT has stopped maintaining its Terrorism Knowledge Database and it is no longer accessible to the public. The data has since been migrated over to National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) (see <http://www.start.umd.edu/>).

“did not display sustained organizational capabilities”<sup>39</sup> creating a systematically biased sample and making it difficult to draw conclusions about the causal mechanisms behind negotiations.<sup>40</sup> To correct this bias, I merged the Cronin data (457 groups) with the RAND-MIPT Terrorism Incident database – later known as the Rand Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDTWI), covering 648 groups operating during the years 1968-2006 – the basis for Libicki and Jones data.

To fuse the datasets, I went about eliminating duplicates, including omissions, removing groups that did not meet the definition of terroristic, filling in variables that did not overlap across datasets, and verifying coding choices. To the first end, I removed groups that overlapped datasets or had been double counted within them. There were a number of groups that were essentially listed twice in each dataset because both their political and military wings had separate entries or they were listed under aliases or alternate names.<sup>41</sup> For example, Libicki and Jones included the Revolutionary People’s Front, the political wing, and the People’s Liberation Army, the military wing, of the same group. I also removed a few groups that failed to meet the terroristic definition. For example, I removed El Rukn, which was included in Cronin’s dataset. By all accounts the groups was a street gang; its violence associated with drug dealing, crime, and fights with

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<sup>39</sup> Cronin, [<http://howterrorismends.com/data/>]. With regard to the latter, Cronin dropped cases where groups were associated with only one attack or with a single series of coordinated attacks within a period of several days but no subsequent activity.

<sup>40</sup> Cronin admits as much, but does not appear as concerned about the effect of the bias in drawing conclusions, arguing that the culling of relatively inactive groups “...may have resulted in some skewing of the data toward longer life-spans or stronger trends of negotiation or success, but we judge this approach the fairest and best available... This study therefore draws conclusions about the experiences of durable terrorist organizations.” Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends*, 208.

<sup>41</sup> Again, for reasons of feasibility and consistency of interpretation, each listed group that met the requirements for terrorism was included as an individual group, regardless of any links to another group. The issue of umbrella groups required some extra attention. Originally, umbrella groups were listed separately, perhaps because in their effort to represent and coordinate amongst several terrorist and other contentious political groups, it is possible they could pursue positions and undertake actions that differ from their constituent parts. Only a handful is included in the dataset, but I run the analyses with and without them. For the summary statistics, the umbrella groups were removed.

rival gangs.<sup>42</sup> Also, in the course of my research I came across groups that had been left out by both datasets but met the requirements and I added them in. For example, I added in the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak-Muivah (NSCN); two of its splinter groups had been included, but not the original group. Each dataset had different variables, which required me to go in and backfill non-matching variables.<sup>43</sup>

I examined the coding to ensure the consistent application of metrics and ensure the veracity of coding decisions. I made several changes in this regard: First, there were several cases where I changed the terrorist group type designation as it appeared that groups were incorrectly labeled as “religious” when really they were predominately “ethnonational” in nature.<sup>44</sup> One example of this, which is key for this project, is the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which fought for the rights and autonomy for the Bangsamoro people in the southern Philippines. The RAND/Libicki and Jones data classifies the MNLF as a religious terrorist group, but that classification fails to recognize that the group’s goals represent nationalist ambitions. It is more accurate to classify the

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<sup>42</sup> The one incident related to terrorism occurred in 1985, when the *El Rukn* gang approached the Libyan government and offered to conduct a terrorist campaign in the United States in return for \$2.5 million and asylum. The plot was discovered and thwarted. This group’s offer was more akin to mercenary offer than a politically motivated act. Moreover, the plot was never actualized, and thus the group does not meet the metric of a single terrorist act.

<sup>43</sup> Cronin codes for a variety of variables: lifespan, level of engagement in negotiations over the group’s fundamental aims or strategies, and the extent, if at all, to which the group achieved its strategic aims. Most importantly, Cronin codes for the extent of negotiation with government and whether those negotiations are stable. The Libicki and Jones data accounts for peak group size, group type, area of operation, as well as variables to capture if a group was still fighting or if it had met its end, and why. They assessed the primary reason the group had failed to survive (i.e. policing, splintering, shifted into a political organization, victory, military force.) The Libicki and Jones data has some variables the Cronin dataset does not (e.g. peak strength), and some of the same variables that are more fine-grained (e.g. location – states v. regions in Cronin).

<sup>44</sup> This is a problem with the literature on terrorism, which “typically adopts an undifferentiated and highly exaggerated view of the threat posed by ‘Islamism’, traces a causal link between Islamic doctrine and terrorist violence, attributes religious as opposed to political motives to ‘Islamic terrorists’, fails to differentiate between local political struggles and a global anti-Western movement and assumes that the religious motivations of ‘Islamic terrorism’ rule out all possibilities for dialogue and diplomacy...” Richard Jackson, “The Study of Terrorism After 11 September 2001: Problems, Challenges and Future Developments,” *Political Studies Review*, Vol. 7 (2009), 177.

MNLF as an ethnonationalist group, which is in part, but not entirely, characterized by a common Muslim identity.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, my examination of the negotiation onset variable identified several false negatives - cases where there appears to have been talks with the state but they were not coded as such (e.g. Sudan/Southern Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM) in the early 1990s) and false positives - cases coded as negotiations but where I do not believe there were ever talks (e.g. Cronin lists the GIA in Algeria and Laskar Jihad (LJ) in Indonesia as having engaged in strategic negotiations).<sup>46</sup> I also found examples where tactical negotiations (i.e. limited ceasefires or hostage exchanges) or unilateral ceasefires appear to have been mistaken for strategic talks<sup>47</sup> (e.g. the 1997 unilateral ceasefire declared by some jailed members of Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya's ruling committee).<sup>48</sup> The resulting dataset includes 661 terrorist groups.

### 1.7.1 Findings

Of the 661 terrorist groups operating from 1968 to 2006, 82 cases were subject to strategic negotiations between states and terrorist groups. Over 12% of the time when a state is confronted by a terrorist campaign, it engages in negotiations in an effort to end

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<sup>45</sup> All ethnonationalist groups are bound by a common culture or heritage, which could, but does not have to, include a common religion.

<sup>46</sup> There is no evidence the GIA was involved the AIS-Algerian government talks in 1997 (although a few hundred fighters took advantage of the resulting amnesty) and indeed the group's leadership continued the jihad abandoned by its former allies. See Omar Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 59-60. With regard to LJ, the group was excluded from the February 2002 peace talks with the Indonesian government and refused to abide by the principles of the Malino II Accord. For information about LJ's exclusion, see Scott Cunliffe, Eddie Riyadi, Raimondus Arwalembun, and Hendrik Boli Tobi, "Negotiating Peace in Indonesia," June 2009, [[http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/pdf/Negotiating\\_Peace\\_in\\_Indonesia.pdf](http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/pdf/Negotiating_Peace_in_Indonesia.pdf)]

<sup>47</sup> This is very difficult to determine, as Cronin does not provide back up documentation to justify the coding of the negotiations variable.

<sup>48</sup> The jailed ruling committee members' control over the group was questionable at best and the decision was roundly criticized by others on the ruling committee, like Ayman Zawahiri. There is no evidence the evidence that the ceasefire was the result of negotiations. Eric Rouleau, "Egypt's Islamists Caught in a Bind," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 1998.

the conflict. States, however, do not view all terrorist challengers as equals. Comparing the terrorist groups that were party to negotiations versus those that were not, there are interesting differences in endurance, size, and type, which may suggest something about the qualities states value in terrorist negotiating partners.

The most drastic difference between the negotiating and non-negotiating groups is their endurance. Negotiating groups lasted more than 23 years on average. In reality, the average is higher because 42% of the groups were still active when the dataset cuts off in 2006. Non-negotiating groups, by contrast, had an average lifespan of less than 8 years. Moreover, 29% lasted less than a year. The empirical evidence suggests that terrorist groups that endure longer are more likely to be party to strategic negotiations. This finding may hint at the shift in cost-benefit calculations regarding strategy that both the state and terrorists make as conflicts drag on.

Terrorist group endurance may be related to other group characteristics, namely size and type. Larger terrorist groups last longer. Groups with a peak size of over 10,000 members lasted for more than 24 years on average; whereas, groups with membership under 100, averaged 4 years of duration.<sup>49</sup> Capacity to endure also fluctuates by group type: Whereas leftist groups averaged 8.5 years and religious and right-wing groups both averaged 9.6 years, nationalist groups last longer – at an average of 11.3 years. Moreover, nationalist groups – as compared to other group types - are more likely to last 20 years or more.

Terrorist groups that were party to negotiations tended to be much larger than their non-negotiating comrades. Of the negotiating groups, 24% had peak membership

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<sup>49</sup> In both cases, the average is a bit higher as the dataset cuts off in 2006 and some of the groups, especially among the larger ones, were still active at that time.

estimated in the 10,000s compared to only 2% of non-negotiating groups. Whereas nearly 67% of all negotiating groups have over 1,000 members, only 11% of non-negotiating groups ever grew that large. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of non-negotiating groups never had more than 100 members.

There are also significant differences in the types of groups that are likely to be party to negotiations. Of the state-terrorist negotiation dyads, the groups in question were more likely to be nationalist (55%), compared to 35% of the non-negotiation groups. Negotiating groups were more likely to seek territorial change than non-negotiating groups, which had a higher percentage of those looking to ignite a social revolution – something completely absent from negotiating dyads. The results suggest that states may privilege some terrorist groups over others because their goals and type make them more amenable to reaching a negotiated compromise.

When compared to the data on single coercive events, these findings support the argument that there are significant differences between ad hoc and strategic negotiations. The empirical record suggests that ad hoc negotiations are undertaken far more often than strategic ones. Whereas less than 13% of all terrorist campaigns are subject to strategic negotiations, Edward Mickolus et al. found that from 1968 to 1991, states, many of which have official non-negotiation policies, attempted negotiation in more than half of terrorist hostage-taking incidents.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the data suggests that the requirements for ad hoc negotiations were much lower than those for strategic talks: Among incidents where perpetrators seized hostages or took over a plane or other means of transportation (almost always with hostages) from 1968 to 2002, more than a third of the attacks were

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<sup>50</sup> Edward Mickolus, Todd Sandler, Jean Murdock, and Peter Fleming, “International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events,” (Dunn Loring, VA: Vinyard Software, 2000).

perpetrated by unknown assailants who were never identified as belonging to a particular group or movement.<sup>51</sup> On the contrary, only terrorist groups that were well known – many of them with international recognition and household names – were ever party to strategic negotiations. The differences in the requirements and frequency of negotiation onset across scenarios highlight the possibility that states – and terrorists – view the costs and benefits of ad hoc negotiations very differently from strategic ones.

### **1.7.2 Limitations of the Data**

The analysis of the state-terrorism data sheds some light on the strategic (and, to a lesser degree, domestic) conditions that might influence a country's shift to a negotiation counterterrorism strategy, but there are significant limitations to what we can learn from this cross-country study. Despite efforts to correct the biases in the component datasets, the resulting data likely still suffers from systematic biases.<sup>52</sup> For example, the dataset likely includes false negatives, those cases that have been coded as no negotiations when

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<sup>51</sup> 36.5% of kidnapping, barricade and hostage seizure, aerial hijacking, takeover of non-aerial means of transportation attacks from 1968 to 2002 were perpetrated by unknowns. Edward F. Mickolus, Todd Sandler, Jean M. Murdock, and Peter A. Flemming, *International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE)*, 1968-2002, last updated May 2011.

<sup>52</sup> In addition to biases, there are also problems with the quality of the coding, which should cause pause when interpreting the descriptive statistics. For example, the data suggests that among state-terrorist negotiation dyads, the terrorist groups in question are more likely to be large than those in the non-negotiation dyads, suggesting that something about large groups makes them more likely to negotiate and to be viewed as possible negotiating partners by statesmen. This is an interesting finding that provides some general support for the hypothesis herein, that large groups are better capable of enduring and exerting enough coercion that the state finally comes to consider a negotiation policy. It is important to recognize, however, that the data on terrorist group size is notoriously problematic. The data is coarse – measuring groups as being in the 10s, 100s, 1000s, 10,000s ranges - often based on scant information, and static - it does not allow for changes over time. The problems associated with the terrorist group size data are indicative of more pervasive problems in terrorism datasets. Terrorism is a notoriously difficult subject to study given the clandestine nature of terrorist groups, lack of information and misinformation about terrorist groups, and the security issues involved. Most datasets on terrorism rely on information about terrorist groups and incidents that are covered in the English-speaking press,<sup>52</sup> and as such, small, short-lived obscure groups that operate far away from the Western world aren't regularly included. I made attempts to correct this bias where I could, but it likely persists. While attempts to quantify terrorist activity are noble, the continued biases and questionable coding of the existing terrorism data requires any findings to be viewed with a healthy grain of salt.

in fact talks did occur. Given the sensitivities on both sides regarding talks, it is likely that failed negotiations have been kept secret by statesmen who don't want to incur the wrath of the public or give the opposition means to criticize their leadership in the event that they don't have a settlement to show for it. Likewise, terrorist leaders are likely keen to keep failed talks a secret in order to prevent challenges to their leadership from rivals or purists within their own group and avoid incurring the wrath of their constituents for selling out the cause without winning concessions. The findings herein highlight associations and general patterns that are better explored by case studies, which allow more fine-grained observation and process tracing analysis of the counterterrorism policymaking process.

## **1.8 Case Studies**

This project includes three case studies: Israel (Chapter 4), UK/Northern Ireland (Chapter 5), and the Philippines (Chapter 5). The studies were chosen to maximize within and across case variation on key variables and provide temporal and geographic variation. Chapter 4 details Israeli counterterrorism policymaking from the country's birth until the Oslo process was elevated to the official level in the summer of 1993. This case has already received a lot of attention: previous studies focus largely on the negotiations themselves and their effects, but there is less attention to how the strategic and domestic political conditions interacted to facilitate talks. For this project, I examine Israeli counterterrorism policy towards an array of Palestinian terrorist groups, all of which are nationalist in nature. The terrorist groups examined do, however, vary, especially when it comes to size, endurance, internal fractionalization, and market share.



Those characteristics are related to a group's capacity and credibility, qualities that ultimately influence the Israelis' decision whether or not to pursue negotiations with the group. Like the Northern Ireland case study, Israel provides the opportunity to examine the important role of political veto players in facilitating – but more often, thwarting – negotiations. Given Israeli governments are short-lived, there is significant variation in governing coalitions, which allows for an interesting study of political veto players. Given that political opinion did not play strong roles in British or Philippine counterterrorism policymaking, Israel is an important case because public sentiment on the matter factored heavily into decision-making in the latter years covered by the study.

The Northern Ireland case study described in Chapter 5 focuses on British counterterrorism policy during “the Troubles” - the ethnonationalist conflict in Northern Ireland that devolved into violence in the 1960s and persisted until the late 1990s, and, some would argue, beyond. The case provides for variation with regard to the terrorist threat: a number of republican (Catholic, anti-union, pro-united Ireland) and loyalist paramilitaries (Protestant, pro-union, or in some cases, pro-independence) were active at the time – and with regard to the political parties in power and the types of coalitions (and thus veto players) they faced. As an analysis of the UK governments from Harold Wilson to Tony Blair demonstrates, the key to the shift in UK counterterrorism policy during was the perceived strategic opportunities for negotiating a peaceful settlement and the lack of domestic obstacles to doing so.

Chapter 6 examines two terrorist conflicts in the Philippines. This case allows for variation with regard to strategic variables: The two conflicts are fundamentally different in nature. The communist insurgency is dominated by the New People's Army (NPA),

which seeks to overthrow the government in a Maoist-style people's revolution and replace it with a communist state. The NPA is active throughout most of the country and despite sympathy from part of the waning left, is largely alone in its quest for a violent communist revolution. By contrast, the Moro conflict is concentrated in the country's south – primarily on the island of Mindanao. The Moro nationalist movement is dominated by several strong terrorist groups, but also includes a wealth of civil society and political organizations. Despite some differences in capacity and their brand of nationalism, the Moro groups are united in their quest for a Bangsamoro homeland. The Philippine case is interesting in this regard, as it allows for a comparison of how the government responded to two different conflicts. The Philippine case is worthy of note from a domestic perspective as well: compared to the Northern Ireland or Israeli cases, the Philippine government's counterterrorism policymaking choices were severely impacted by the security establishment, which repeatedly vetoed negotiations with various terrorist groups. Individually and taken together, the case studies provide an interesting test of the integrated strategic and domestic politics theory of counterterrorism policymaking outlined in Chapter 3.

## **1.9 Academic and Policy Relevance**

This project is both timely and relevant to the policy and academic communities. International terrorism is, and will likely remain for the foreseeable future, one of the top threats to US national security. This project seeks to gauge widely held, but previously untested, or poorly tested, assumptions about how terrorist groups make decisions that are the basis for current US foreign policy. Its findings may suggest a reexamination of

current policy is needed in order to effectively combat terrorist violence. From an academic perspective, this project address gaps in the existing scholarly literature on the topic and stands to contribute to the literatures on policymaking and conflict processes.

### **1.10 What Follows**

The rest of the dissertation is laid out as follows - Chapter 2 critiques the conventional wisdom amongst policymakers and the scholarly literature on negotiating with terrorists. Chapter 3 offers an integrated strategic and domestic theory for explaining why and when states shift their counterterrorism policies to include negotiations. Chapter 4 studies the history Palestinian-Israeli conflict from Israel's independence until the Oslo negotiations and demonstrates how talks only became possible once strategic and domestic opportunities aligned. Chapter 5 details the British counterterrorism policymaking process in Northern Ireland in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Chapter 6 examines the Philippine case study and contrasts the government's different policy responses across and within the Moro and communist insurgencies. Chapter 7 provides a comparative analysis of the case studies and provides policy recommendations based on the study's findings.

## Chapter 2

### *Negotiating with Terrorists is Self-Defeating: The Conventional Wisdom and its Critics*

#### 2.1 Introduction

Even the most protracted inter-state conflicts with the most bitter of adversaries are often addressed with negotiations. For example, despite decades of bad blood, threats, and broken promises, the United States continues to negotiate with both North Korea and Iran over their nuclear programs. The rhetoric surrounding terrorist conflicts, however, suggests they don't inspire the same pragmatic approach to strategy.

To say that states are reluctant to negotiate with terrorist groups is a gross understatement: states are *loath* to negotiate with terrorist groups. Terrorism – the illegal use of force and challenge to the state's monopoly on violence - is antithetical to the values of justice and order that states seek to uphold. Beyond values, the fairly sequential quality of state responses to terrorist campaigns creates a 'locked in' effect whereby, in practice, it is difficult to shift towards more conciliatory counterterrorism policies after statesmen have made hard-line public promises never to negotiate in the early days of the terrorist campaign. The perception that terrorists are inherently bad negotiating partners, emboldened, instead of mollified, by concessions also serves to further dissuade states from pursuing negotiations. Even if a state was willing to negotiate with terrorists, it is argued that there are no effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that terrorist groups uphold their end of a negotiated settlement.

Given the reticence of statesmen to negotiate with terrorists, and the apparent obstacles and dire predicted consequences of negotiating with terrorist groups, the

empirical record on the subject is puzzling. Despite statements to the contrary, many states *do* eventually negotiate with their terrorist challengers: from 1968-2006, nearly 13% of all terrorist campaigns were subject to strategic negotiations. The number is likely even higher as some failed negotiations may never be made public. If the conventional wisdom holds that negotiating with terrorists is such a bad idea, why do so many states engage in negotiations?

To better understand the conditions under which a state will pursue strategic negotiations with terrorists, this chapter reviews both the normative arguments largely put forward by policymakers about why states *shouldn't* negotiate with terrorists and the primarily explanatory arguments in the existing scholarly literature on the subject that analyze the reasons states *don't* engage terrorist organizations in strategic talks. I begin by examining the normative arguments, which largely rest on either the assumption that because terrorists engage in evil behavior, they are bad negotiating partners, or the presumption that negotiations are futile, or worse, could have calamitous consequences. First, I consider the conventional wisdom that terrorists are inherently bad negotiating partners who are unable to credibly commit to any political settlements that may arise from negotiations. Second, I then examine the conventional wisdom surrounding the effects of negotiating with terrorists, namely the predictions that negotiations confer legitimacy on terrorists, convince them of their own coercive effectiveness, and demonstrate state weakness. These effects, it is argued, in turn incite terrorist groups to employ further terroristic violence. The aforementioned arguments are examined against the empirical record and evaluated for their logic. I then examine the explanatory theories for why states don't negotiate with terrorist groups. Most of the scholarly literature on the

subject focuses on systemic obstacles to negotiations - that is the insufficient mechanisms to effectively monitor and compel terrorist compliance with negotiated settlements - that render talks imprudent, and thus rare. I then consider a few studies that offer narrow conditions under which these problems can be ameliorated and terrorists may be able to make credible commitments to negotiated settlements.

Ultimately, this chapter concludes that the conventional wisdom on why states shouldn't or don't negotiate with terrorists is of little explanatory value: Contrary to the conventional wisdom that negotiating with terrorists is a bad idea, the empirical record demonstrates that states recurrently negotiate with terrorist groups. The literature on the subject fails to predict this behavior or explain why it occurs. Moreover, many of the arguments as to why states don't negotiate suffer from a lack of differentiation, fail to draw on relevant theories from the wider political science literature, and generally appear to stem from moral indignation rather than sound theoretical and empirical grounding. While the burgeoning critiques of the literature detailed herein highlight some of its deficiencies, they fail to provide a coherent theory to predict the circumstances under which states will negotiate with terrorists. Likewise, the studies that present formal arguments for the limited circumstances under which states will negotiate with terrorist groups are too narrowly focused and as a result they only provide a necessary but insufficient condition for explaining the onset of negotiations. As such, they suffer from the same problem - they fail to provide sufficient explanatory leverage to predict when a state is likely to adopt a negotiations-approach to end a terrorist crisis.

## **2.2 Normative Arguments: States Don't–or Shouldn't–Negotiate with Terrorists**

### **2.2.1 Terrorists Make Bad Negotiating Partners**

One of the oft cited reasons states should avoid negotiating with terrorists is that the latter make poor negotiating partners. Terrorists are inherently untrustworthy; terrorists – people who employ violence against civilians to pursue their own political objectives – are debased criminals who cannot be trusted. They are incapable of negotiating in good faith, as negotiations are rarely in a terrorist organization's best interest: since the resolution of the conflict deals a "death blow" that will disband the organization, terrorist groups only enter into negotiations as a subterfuge to regroup, rearm, and buy time<sup>53</sup> or for "reputational reasons."<sup>54</sup> Nothing good, it is argued, can come out of negotiating with such depraved people.

### **2.2.2 The Presumed Consequences of Negotiations**

#### **2.2.2.1 Negotiations Confer Legitimacy on Terrorist & Demonstrate State Weakness**

Conventional wisdom posits that negotiating with terrorists only legitimizes their tactics, convinces them of their coercive effectiveness, and demonstrates state weakness, all of which serve to incite further terrorist violence. One of the inherent contradictions of terrorism is that most terrorist groups crave legitimacy, yet the tactics they employ cause them to be shunned by would-be supporters and the world at large.<sup>55</sup> Yet, negotiations, it is argued, have the potential to confer legitimacy on the negotiating terrorist group by

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<sup>53</sup> Emanuel Gross, *The Struggle of Democracy Against Terrorism: Lessons from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Israel*, (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 56.

<sup>54</sup> Barbara F. Walter, "Designing Transitions from Civil War: Demobilization, Democratization, and Commitments to Peace," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 1, (Summer 1999), 131.

<sup>55</sup> Daniel Byman, "The Decision to Begin Talks with Terrorists: Lessons for Policymakers," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 29, No. 5 (2006), 406.

elevating them to the position of legitimate representatives of a cause or population.<sup>56</sup> Negotiations are the work of statesmen, and, “Even if talks involve no concessions on the part of a government, by recognizing terrorists as worthy interlocutors they have gained a victory with potential followers and other states.”<sup>57</sup> The thrust of the opposition to negotiations in the literature on legitimacy appears borne out of ethical concerns: By using violence and operating outside the established norms of society, terrorist groups forfeit their legitimacy, and as such, the state should avoid any interactions with the group that may appear to restore it.<sup>58</sup> Thus, it is not that negotiations are unfeasible, but rather they are unethical.<sup>59</sup> The damage of legitimacy conference is not limited to the group in question, but could lead other terrorists and would-be terrorists to believe that violence is a legitimate tool for political expression.

Bending to terrorist coercion to pursue negotiations with a sub-state group signals that a government is weak and damages its reputation. By negotiating, a state’s authority and credibility are diminished.<sup>60</sup> Some have even suggested that negotiations don’t just signal weakness, they actually cause it by destabilizing the state’s political system.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, negotiations will be met with public revulsion as talks elevate criminals to the position of legitimate interlocutors of a cause or a population.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Wilkinson, *Terrorism Versus Democracy*, 80.

<sup>57</sup> Byman, 406.

<sup>58</sup> Paul Gilbert, *Terrorism, Security and Nationality: An Introductory Study in Applied Political Philosophy*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 169.

<sup>59</sup> Jeremy Ginges, “Deterring the Terrorist: A Psychological Evaluation of Different Strategies for Deterring Terrorists,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring 1997), 182.

<sup>60</sup> Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State*, (London: Macmillan, 1977), 129.

<sup>61</sup> Peter R. Neumann, “Negotiating with Terrorists,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 1 (2007), 128.

<sup>62</sup> Wilkinson, *Terrorism Versus Democracy*, 66.



### 2.2.2.2 Negotiations Incite More Terroristic Violence

By conferring legitimacy and weakening the state, negotiations demonstrate that violence “pays.”<sup>63</sup> Concessions signal that terrorism is an effective tool for achieving political goals, which in turn prompts more terroristic violence. Thus almost any concession to a terrorist group will help convince its leaders of their own “coercive effectiveness.”<sup>64</sup> Concessions are viewed by terrorists as evidence that their chances of ‘winning’ vis-à-vis the state are better than previously expected, which in turn encourages them to keep fighting. Indeed, even in the event of a peace process that addresses the group’s key grievances, concessions will inspire some to continue using terroristic methods.<sup>65</sup> Terrorists are likely to attempt increasingly brazen terrorist acts against the state<sup>66</sup> and, it is argued, terrorists may even seek to expand their aims.<sup>67</sup>

The damage caused by negotiations is not limited to the terrorist group in question. Rather, negotiations with any terrorist group undermine the state’s reputation for toughness in the eyes of other aggrieved groups. This claim is akin to reputation theory, which posits that states are willing to bear some initial costs to establish a tough reputation that would help them deter future threats or lower the costs of coercion.<sup>68</sup> Once their tough image is undermined, states have a harder time deterring threats against them.

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<sup>63</sup> Richard Clutterbuck, *Living with Terrorism*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), 141.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Pape, “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (August 2003), 356.

<sup>65</sup> There is also scholarship that predicts the same outcome – negotiations lead to violence – but challenges the causal mechanism at work: suggesting states are unable to credibly commit not to repress disenfranchised groups that may demand concessions in the future, which in turn, incentivizes these groups to act outside the political process and ultimately, leads to higher levels of terroristic violence. Michael G. Findley and Joseph K. Young, “Terrorism, Bargaining, and Credible Commitments” working paper, December 1, 2009 version.

<sup>66</sup> Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State*, 129.

<sup>67</sup> Citing evidence from kidnapping in South America in the 1960s and 1970s. Grant Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics, and Counter-Measures*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 71.

<sup>68</sup> Paul K. Huth, “Reputations and Deterrence: A Theoretical and Empirical Assessment,” *Security Studies*,

In its application to sub-state challenges, research suggests that when faced with secessionist demands, rather than focusing on current costs and capabilities, states focus on the potential for future claims against the government when deciding whether or not to accommodate territorial demands from ethnic groups.<sup>69</sup> States are significantly more likely to reject succession claims when they have numerous, large ethnic groups within their borders and the land they inhabit is strategically valuable, suggesting that states are motivated to maintain a reputation for toughness in order to dissuade future challenges.<sup>70</sup> In the terrorist context, a diminished reputation for toughness is not a localized problem, rather, given the transnational nature of terrorism, any individual state's capitulation to terrorists deals a blow not only to individual government's counterterrorism efforts, but to the larger international community's efforts to delegitimize terrorism as a means for pursuing policy change.<sup>71</sup>

### **2.3 Explanatory Arguments: Lack of Monitoring and Enforcement Mechanisms**

Unlike the normative arguments against negotiating with a terrorist group discussed above, the explanatory arguments in recent scholarship have focused on the systemic forces rather than personal attributes in order to explain why states don't negotiate with terrorists. A terrorist group's incapacity to make credible commitments is exacerbated by the lack of effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure terrorists abide by negotiated settlements. Scholars recognize that establishing credible commitments is

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Vol. 7, Issue 1, (1997), and James E. Alt, Randall L. Calvert, Brian D. Humes, "Reputation and Hegemonic Stability: A Game-Theoretic Analysis," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (Jun., 1988).

<sup>69</sup> Barbara F. Walter, "Building Reputation: Why Governments Fight Some Separatists but Not Others," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 50, No. 2, April 2006.

<sup>70</sup> Walter finds that 94% of the time states reject such claims when there are other large ethnic groups that inhabit strategically valuable land within their borders. *Ibid.*, 319.

<sup>71</sup> Byman, 406-407.

always a problem in disputes regardless of the actors involved, but it is especially problematic in conflicts with violent sub-state groups because the government distrusts the former and expects them to violate their agreements. More importantly, the state is not well positioned to monitor the group itself<sup>72</sup> and third parties lack the means and perceived impartiality to effectively ensure the terrorists comply with the agreement's terms.<sup>73</sup> It is argued that third party monitors are rarely incentivized to stay for long thus any transparency or security they facilitate is temporary and insecurity will eventually return.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, statesmen are often unenthusiastic about third party involvement: they harbor concerns that third party monitoring violates their country's sovereignty, limits the government's actions, and benefits the terrorists, all of which opens the government to international and domestic criticism. Despite these challenges, scholars continually cite third party monitoring as an essential component in producing lasting negotiated settlements.<sup>75</sup>

## 2.4 Critiques

The conventional wisdom and much of the literature on the subject draw the same conclusion – negotiating with terrorists is a bad idea. Although the aforementioned arguments highlight deep-seated concerns among policy officials, not to mention

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<sup>72</sup> While they admit that third party monitoring challenges are not insurmountable, their model operates on the assumption that third parties are ineffective compliance monitors. Andrew Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence," *International Organization*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Spring 2002).

<sup>73</sup> Fen Osler Hampson, "Why Orphaned Peace Settlements Are More Prone to Failure," in *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*, eds. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela R. Aall, (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), 535.

<sup>74</sup> Alexander B. Downes, "The Problem with Negotiated Settlements to Ethnic Civil Wars," *Security Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 4, (2004), 234.

<sup>75</sup> Barbara F. Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization*, Vol. 51, No. 3, (Summer 1997).

ordinary citizens, they are of little explanatory value. There are problems with the very assumptions and logic upon which this body of work rests and the methodologies it employs. Most importantly, the empirical record contradicts the literature's predicted outcomes. States recurrently negotiate with terrorist challengers – certainly over hostages (e.g. over 50% of all hostage crises are subject to negotiations) – but often over strategic political goals as well (e.g. nearly 13% of all terrorist campaigns are subject to strategic negotiations). How then do we explain recurrent behavior that the bulk of the literature on the subject classifies as self-defeating?

#### **2.4.1 Not All Terrorists Make Bad Negotiating Partners**

The argument is frequently made that states can't negotiate with terrorists because the latter are evil, insatiable, or irrational. This argument is problematic for two reasons: First, using the same metric, many of the statesmen that are party to inter-state negotiations could be characterized as evil and insatiable, but states continue to find it in their best interests to engage the former. For example, Winston Churchill was an avowed opponent of Bolshevism who viewed the soviets as practitioners of “bloody and devastating terrorism,”<sup>76</sup> “unreformable creatures of tireless aggression,”<sup>77</sup> yet the UK allied itself with the USSR during the WWII and signed numerous treaties with it in the years following. Just as once-maligned states are able to moderate their behavior (e.g. soften rhetoric, modify aims, refrain from violence)<sup>78</sup> in order to establish enough trust for negotiations, so too can terrorists. Moreover, a terrorist group, like a state, who finds

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<sup>76</sup> David Carlton, *Churchill and the Soviet Union*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 201.

<sup>77</sup> Carlton. “Churchill and the Two ‘Evil Empires,’” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, Vol. 11 (2001), 351.

<sup>78</sup> Stacie Leigh Pettyjohn, *Talking With Terrorists: American Policy toward the PLO, Sinn Féin, and Hamas*, doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia, December 2009, 43-52.

that its reputation fails to convince its rival that it is an adequate negotiating partner, can take actions to enhance the credibility of its commitments (e.g. agreeing to a third party monitor, giving up weapons, going after spoiler factions). Second, evidence suggests that terrorists are rational actors. Scholars have repeatedly found that there is no causal connection between mental illness and terrorism.<sup>79</sup> Studies of Baader-Meinhof in Germany,<sup>80</sup> Italian Red Brigades,<sup>81</sup> FLQ in Quebec,<sup>82</sup> Northern Ireland paramilitaries,<sup>83</sup> and the FLN in Algeria suggest that terrorists are rational actors pursuing political objectives.<sup>84</sup> Terrorists are not crazy; their use of violence can be pragmatic and as such, they are capable of shifting from violent methods to non-violent ones if the latter are viewed as beneficial.

## **2.4.2 The Presumed Consequences of Negotiations**

### **2.4.2.1 Legitimacy Conference?**

The assertion that negotiations confer legitimacy on terrorist groups is problematic because it requires an overly simplistic view of legitimacy and legitimacy conference. Likewise, the anticipated consequences of legitimacy conference may be completely wrong. To the first point, these arguments usually assume that states have legitimacy and therefore the capacity to grant or deny legitimacy to other entities. This

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<sup>79</sup> David Weatherston and Jonathan Moran, "Terrorism and Mental Illness: Is there a Relationship?" *International Journal of Offender Theory and Comparative Criminology*, Vol. 47, No. 6 (2003). This is true with regard to mental illness leading to terrorism, although some studies have examined how being part of a terrorist group could cause mental illness like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

<sup>80</sup> William Rasch, "Psychological Dimensions of Political Terrorism in the Federal Republic of Germany," *International Law and Psychiatry*, Vol. 2, (1979).

<sup>81</sup> Alison Jamieson, *The Heart Attacked: Terrorism and Conflict in the Italian State*, (London: Marian Boyars, 1989).

<sup>82</sup> Gustav Morf, *Terror in Quebec – Cases Studies of the FLQ*, (Toronto: Clark, Irwin and Company, 1970).

<sup>83</sup> H.A. Lyons and H.J. Harbinson, "A Comparison of Political and Non-political Murderers in Northern Ireland 1974-1984," *Medicine, Science, & the Law*, Vol. 26, No. 3, (1986).

<sup>84</sup> Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Jul., 1981).

simplistic notion of legitimacy fails to recognize that legitimacy is a socially constructed designation. Even if a state were able to dole out legitimacy, a questionable premise to start, it would only be able to grant legitimacy on behalf of the state itself.<sup>85</sup> The state has no power to grant the group legitimacy for society at large or for other states.

The assertion that the conferment of legitimacy to a terrorist group will have disastrous effects is rarely accompanied with an explanation. The assumption appears to be that legitimacy is good, and terrorists are bad, so terrorists getting legitimacy is bad. Some have questioned this line of argumentation, suggesting the delegitimation of terrorists is partly responsible for perpetuating terrorist conflicts: "...part of the reason terrorists operate outside the moral norms of society is that they feel alienated from that society so consciously reject it."<sup>86</sup> By denying negotiations, the government tries to signal that terrorism as a tactic is beyond the ethical parameters of society. It simultaneously sends the message that terrorists are societal outcasts, which paradoxically, may further harden the resolve of the terrorists to keep fighting.<sup>87</sup> Legitimacy may be necessary for the terrorist group to transition away from violence. In so far as negotiations confer some legitimacy on negotiating terrorists, they may actually serve to elevate the reputation of the moderate factions of the movement,<sup>88</sup> draw supporters away from spoiler factions, and give former terrorists a legal, non-violent avenue for expression.<sup>89</sup> In conclusion, it

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<sup>85</sup> Toros, 413.

<sup>86</sup> Ginges, 175.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>88</sup> Although it must be noted that purist spoilers try to ensure just the opposite outcome in their efforts to suggest that negotiations demonstrate the lack of legitimacy of the negotiating faction by abandoning the fight.

<sup>89</sup> We should also consider a contrarian argument that by negotiating with the government, a terrorist group may lose legitimacy in the eyes of its base. This could happen in two ways: First, terrorists who negotiate may come to be seen as traitors to the cause or stooges for the state. This could potentially have negative effects on violence if as a result more violent, anti-negotiation factions increase their market share as a result. Second, it is possible that by offering to negotiate, the state is able to undermine one of the real, or at

remains unclear that negotiations are able to confer legitimacy on terrorists groups, and even if they were vehicles for legitimacy conference, such transfers would not necessarily have a negative effect on terrorist group behavior. Indeed, enhancing the legitimacy of a terrorist group may ultimately help reduce its use of violence.

#### 2.4.2.2 State Weakness?

The argument that negotiating with terrorists demonstrates state weakness is often repeated, but it is poorly supported by evidence. When making the claim that negotiating with terrorists demonstrates state weakness, one often cites the Russian experience in Lebanon in the 1980s. An oft-repeated rumor on the diplomatic circuit holds that during a rash of hostage-takings of westerners in Beirut in the 1980s, several Russian hostages were captured. In response, the Russian security services tracked down the families of the hostage-takers and began to send their body parts in the mail to the perpetrators. No other Russians were ever abducted in Lebanon. The veracity of this story is debated,<sup>90</sup> but it is frequently cited in policy circles as evidence that a tough reputation will deter future terrorist attacks. While the British and US did not employ the same draconian response to

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least oft articulated, reasons for using terrorist tactics - the lack of political channels for protest and petition. By openly negotiating with a terrorist group, the state may make it more difficult for the group to continue to justify using violence.

<sup>90</sup> There are debates about whether this event actually happened as described. There are several sources that support the account: According to Barry Davies, in 1985, three Soviet diplomats were taken hostage in Beirut. One man, Arkady Katkov was killed. In response the KGB identified the perpetrators, kidnapped some of their relatives, and then proceeded to send some of the latter's body parts to the hostage-takers. The two remaining Russian hostages were quickly released. Barry Davies, *The Spycraft Manual: The Insider's Guild to Espionage Techniques*, (St. Paul, Zenith Press, 2005), 108. A similar story ran in the *Los Angeles Times* "KGB Reportedly Gave Arab Terrorists a Taste of Brutality to Free Diplomats," *LA Times*, January 7, 1986. Other accounts either fail to mention the means through which the Russian hostages were released or provide an alternate explanation. One media report does not mention the harsh tactics, rather suggesting Soviet connections in the region facilitated the release - Rodaina Kenaan, "Prime Minister Welcomes Release of Soviets," *Associated Press*, Oct. 31, 1985. While the hostage-taking and subsequent release of Russians in Beirut did occur, some have suggested that the origins of the story about counter-torture was *actually fictional* and came from a novel - Geoffrey Archer, *Eagle Trap: Revenge is Not a Possibility, but a Certainty*, (London: Arrow Books, 2004), 189.

hostage-takings, they did have no-concessions policies in the 1980s, which would have earned them a reputation for resolve in the face of coercion. And yet, such policies did not prevent subsequent kidnapping of Britons and Americans in Lebanon.

Moreover, it's unclear if subsequent US policies that included concessions to terrorists (e.g. Iran Contra) led to the United States developing a reputation for weakness among international terrorist groups and that such an estimation exacerbated the latter's use of violence against US targets. Certainly, there is no evidence that concessions to terrorists actually weakened the state. It is true that the revelation of such policies, after they were vehemently denied, hurt the President Reagan's popularity, but they did not weaken the presidency or the state at large.

The aforementioned situations deal with hostage-takings and ad-hoc negotiations and as such, it is unclear if any of the conclusions drawn about their effect are applicable to strategic negotiation scenarios. As highlighted in Chapter 1, strategic and ad hoc negotiations are fundamentally different in their precipitating circumstances, dynamics, and outcomes. Thus even if receiving a ransom in exchange for a hostage convinces a terrorist group of the utility of future hostage-taking operations, it is unclear if engaging in a peace process with one group will cause it to expand its demands or inspire another group to take up arms against the state. The questions raised by the empirical record call into question the long-assumed causal relationship between negotiations and the incitement of further terrorist violence due to a perception of state weakness.



### 2.4.2.3 Inciting Violence?

The axiom that negotiations incite further terrorist violence is problematic for two reasons: First, many of the studies that promote no-negotiation policies suffer from faulty assumptions, a lack of differentiation, and a failure to flesh out the central causal relationship between negotiations and terrorist violence. Second, and most importantly, recent studies draw starkly different conclusions than the no-negotiations literature and provide alternate predicted outcomes for negotiating with terrorists. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, no-negotiation policies may not serve as effective deterrents for future terrorism and there is the potential for negotiations to actually mollify – not exacerbate – terrorist violence.

There are analytical and empirical problems with the arguments for a no-negotiation policy. The suppositions behind non-negotiations protocols are not logically consistent<sup>91</sup> and “do not withstand theoretical scrutiny except in a limited number of contrived cases,”<sup>92</sup> and as such, “pre-committing to a no negotiation policy is rarely an optimal strategy.”<sup>93</sup> Strident non-negotiations positions are ineffective, either because they are regularly defied, fail to recognize differences among terrorists, or because concessions may actually enhance counterterrorism efforts.<sup>94</sup>

When compared to the empirical record, the no-negotiation arguments appear to

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<sup>91</sup> Their conventional assumptions that: (i) the government’s deterrence is sufficient to stop all attacks; (ii) the government’s pledge is fully credible to all; (iii) terrorists only gain from hostage when their demands are met; (iv) there is no uncertainty concerning the costs of hostages to the state; and (v) the state’s costs from making concessions always exceed holding firm. Todd Sandler and Daniel G. Arce, “Terrorism: A Game-Theoretic Approach,” in *Handbook of Defense Economics, Volume 2 – Defense in a Globalized World*, eds. Todd Sandler and Keith Hartley, (Amsterdam: Elsevier B.V., 2007), 806.

<sup>92</sup> Harvey E. Lapan and Todd Sandler, “To Bargain or Not to Bargain: That is the Question,” *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 78, No. 2, (May, 1988), 16.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> David Tucker, “Responding to Terrorism,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 21, Issue 1, (1998), and Steven Poe, “Nations’ Responses to Transnational Hostage Events: An Empirical Evaluation,” *International Interactions* Vol. 14 (1988).

rest on shaky footing. Indeed there are numerous cases of state-terrorist negotiations that defy the doomsday expectations that negotiations incite more violence: for example, negotiations with terrorist groups in Colombia in the 1980s were followed by a decline in terrorism;<sup>95</sup> terrorist violence decreased exponentially after the 1992 peace accord in El Salvador; and many of the Naxalite groups who have negotiated with Indian government officials (and or even talked about the possibility of negotiating with them) have reduced their attacks on the state. Moreover, there is notably little support for the inverse hypothesis - states that enacted official “no negotiations” policies will face less terrorist violence. For example, Turkey’s refusal to negotiate with the PKK from the 1970s to 1990s failed to discourage further violence from the group or dissuade new groups from forming (e.g. Turkish Hezbollah, Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party–Front/Dev Sol).<sup>96</sup> Such examples call into question the assumed relationship between negotiations and terrorist violence.

Some scholars question whether there is *any* direct correlation between negotiations and levels of terroristic violence,<sup>97</sup> causing several to conclude that “...it is not at all clear that refusing to ‘talk to terrorists’ shortens their campaigns any more than entering into negotiations prolongs them.”<sup>98</sup> Several well-known cases highlight the ambiguous relationship between ad hoc negotiations and terrorist violence: for example, the Iran Contra deal, once exposed, did not lead to an increase in terrorist attacks or hostage-taking against the US targets.<sup>99</sup> Beyond having no effect, others argue that

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<sup>95</sup> Tucker, 105.

<sup>96</sup> The Turks only began peace talks with the PKK after 2005.

<sup>97</sup> Tucker.

<sup>98</sup> Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends*, 35.

<sup>99</sup> Tucker, 105.

negotiations may actually facilitate a positive response – they may help reduce terrorist violence.

The arguments that negotiations may actually help reduce terrorist violence range from tactical to strategic. On the tactical end, Tucker argues that negotiations serve as an intelligence gathering opportunity for the state, through which it can improve its understanding of its adversary and ultimately, its capacity for kinetic counterterrorism operations. The Unabomber, for example, would have likely been better understood and potentially caught earlier if his request to have his papers published in the media – a conversation of sorts - had been granted.<sup>100</sup> It is also the case that negotiations may weaken the terrorist group or the larger movement. By sowing fractionalization and infighting, negotiations can ultimately reduce the overall strength of the movement. Employing negotiations in a deliberate effort to weaken the group is not without serious risks: Often the splinter groups that emerge as a result of negotiations are even more violent and extreme in their demands. Whether those splinter factions have the capacity to launch a long running coercive campaign that will increase overall violence levels after negotiations is a serious consideration, but shouldn't be assumed as given.

From a strategic perspective, it has been argued that negotiations have the capacity to mollify terrorist violence, or at least usher a declining terrorist group through their transition away from violent tactics. To the latter point, some scholars argue that negotiations aren't responsible for the decline of the group per se, but they do aid in managing the transition of a violent group in decline.<sup>101</sup> Some are more optimistic about the potential of negotiations to bring about the end of terrorist violence, theorizing that

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends*, 36.

engaging in strategic negotiations with terrorist groups may contribute to either the transformation or the disintegration of the organization.<sup>102</sup> In this regard, negotiations serve as a socializing process that helps expand the worldview and moderate once violent groups that were ghettoized and operating outside society.<sup>103</sup> Even those who worry concessions will encourage future terrorism – at least in the near term - concede that concessions granted in strategic negotiations may have the potential to undermine support for terrorism in the long run.<sup>104</sup>

### **2.4.3 The Lack of Structural Resources for Enforcing a Negotiated Settlement**

The arguments that states are unlikely to pursue negotiations with terrorist groups because there are insufficient mechanisms to monitor and compel the latter's compliance reflect real world concerns, but are – at times – of dubious logic. The obstacles associated with effectively monitoring state-terrorist agreements are largely the same as those used for inter-state agreements. Despite the deficiencies of such resources, states continue to sign agreements with other states, even those that they greatly distrust. For example, the 1982 US-brokered ceasefire between the PLO and Israel was monitored by UNIFIL,<sup>105</sup> a multinational UN peacekeeping force. A similar UN peacekeeping force, UNIIMOG,<sup>106</sup> was created six years later to verify the withdrawal of forces and supervise the ceasefire following the Iran-Iraq war. Additional examples of UN forces used to monitor settlements in asymmetric conflicts include Cambodia and El Salvador, where United

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<sup>102</sup> Peter C. Sederberg, "Conciliation as Counter-Terrorist Strategy," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 32, No. 3, (August 1995).

<sup>103</sup> Jonathan Powell, Presentation to the Council on Foreign Relations, Washington DC, March 20, 2012.

<sup>104</sup> Pape, 356.

<sup>105</sup> United Nations Interim Forces In Lebanon

<sup>106</sup> United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group

Nations forces served to monitor adherence to peace treaties and helped convince terrorist combatants to lay down their arms and adhere to the terms of the settlement. Evidence suggests that third party monitoring can dramatically improve the likelihood the negotiated peace will not break down,<sup>107</sup> particularly because the presence of a third party helps assure the non-state actor that it can adhere to the agreement without risking annihilation at the hands of the state.

The argument that states won't pursue negotiations with terrorist challengers out of concern for their sovereignty or the fleeting benefits provided by a third party monitor are equally problematic. Statesmen may indeed be resistant to third party involvement when it comes to terrorist conflicts because they are concerned such monitoring violates their country's sovereignty, limits the government's actions, and benefits the terrorists, all of which opens the government to international and domestic criticism. Likewise, statesmen claim that in the event of a settlement a third party monitor won't stay long enough for the agreement to become fully entrenched. These are real concerns, but suggesting that they prevent statesmen from pursuing negotiations to end long running conflicts gives too much credit to the long-term thinking of statesmen. Moreover, the empirical record suggests that these concerns do not pose insurmountable obstacles. In the context of civil wars, such concerns do not dissuade combatants from negotiating: Between 1945 and 1999, 31.2% of all civil wars ended in a negotiated settlement.<sup>108</sup> During that period, the likelihood that conflicts would end through negotiations

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<sup>107</sup> Walter, "Designing Transitions from Civil War," 129.

<sup>108</sup> T. David Mason, Martha Crenshaw, Cynthia McClintock, Barbara Walter, "How Political Violence Ends: Paths to Conflict Deescalation and Termination," APSA Task Force on Political Violence and Terrorism – Group 3, paper presented at the 2007 meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, August 22, 2007, available from [<http://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/pvtfhowpoliticalviolenceends.pdf>], accessed on January 13, 2013.

increased, and by the 1990s, 75% of the civil wars ended in negotiated settlement.<sup>109</sup>

These figures represent negotiations that reached a successful agreement, but the rate of negotiation onset was much higher in both cases. Terrorist crises likely operate in the same way; statesmen may cite similar concerns about third party monitors, but they are unlikely to be the reason states don't engage their terrorist challengers in talks.

Ultimately, the literature on state-terrorist negotiations raises interesting potential obstacles, but it fails to explain when we do observe state-terrorist negotiations.

There is a small, burgeoning literature that acknowledges the severity of the impact of the lack of monitoring mechanisms in light of terrorist credibility issues, but finds narrow circumstances in which they can be overcome. According to Bapat, establishing credible commitments from terrorists may be possible if the group in question has a state sponsor.<sup>110</sup> This is somewhat counterintuitive, as state sponsors of terrorism are not often cited as pillars of credibility in the international community. Yet, as Bapat argues, state sponsors can act as a constraint on their terrorist beneficiaries and compel compliance to negotiated agreements in hostage situations. In the event that bargaining occurs, the state sponsor may fear reprisal from the negotiating state and/or its allies, and as such, it may work in support of the settlements terms. State sponsors can monitor their terrorist clients and impose costs when they deviate from their commitments, thus allowing transnational terrorists to establish credibility in negotiations.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Navin A. Bapat, "State Bargaining with Transnational Terrorist Groups," *International Studies Quarterly* (2006) Vol. 50, No. 1.

<sup>111</sup> Bapat's finding is contested: Building off Louise Richardson's typology of terrorist-state sponsor relations, Peter Neumann challenges Bapat's model by arguing that terrorist groups reliant on state support (i.e. Saiqa and PLFP-GC by Syria) may lack the authority to consent to negotiations or commit to concessions in the course of talks. Neumann, 132, and Louise Richardson, "Terrorists as Transnational Actors," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 11, No. 4, (Winter 1999).

A third party may be unnecessary if the parties to a conflict can build credibility in other ways. Ethan Bueno de Mesquita critiques the narrow focus on terrorist group credibility as inappropriate as states also face difficulties making credible commitments to settle conflicts with terrorist groups.<sup>112</sup> Despite these challenges, both negotiating parties can ultimately overcome these obstacles and make credible commitments to negotiated settlements. Given that negotiations usually incite spoiler violence, the moderate terrorist factions involved in negotiations have an opportunity to demonstrate their credibility, while maintaining their bargaining leverage, by assisting the state with its counterterrorism campaign against spoilers. States demonstrate their credibility by providing concessions. When each side demonstrates their credibility to the other, it is possible to establish credible commitments between unlikely negotiating partners.

The small body of literature challenging the conventional wisdom that terrorists cannot credibly commit to negotiated settlements is promising, but it does not provide a sufficient explanation for why states employ negotiations to end long-running terrorist campaigns. Several of these studies explore a sub-set of negotiations and it is unclear if the findings are broadly applicable. For example, Bapat's study is limited to ad hoc negotiations that take place in response to hijackings and as will be discussed in the next section, it is unclear if such findings are relevant to understanding terrorist behavior during peace processes. Bueno de Mesquita's study is focused on establishing credibility after terrorists and the state have engaged in some negotiations. His finding that building trust through concessions by the state and counterterrorism assistance from the terrorists is interesting, but does not necessarily explain why and when states choose to commence

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<sup>112</sup> Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, "Conciliation, Counterterrorism, and Patterns of Terrorist Violence," *International Organization* Vol. 59, (Winter 2005).

negotiations in the first place. Ultimately, these studies only succeed in removing one presumed barrier to state-terrorist negotiations. At most, they highlight means for ameliorating obstacles that prevent negotiations in some cases, but fail to identify the necessary conditions that facilitate a shift in state's counterterrorism policy toward strategic negotiations.

#### **2.4.4 Methods, Assumptions, Differentiation – A Critique**

Why does the literature on negotiating with terrorism appear to get it so wrong? The conflicting predicted outcomes may be the result of poor choices in methodology, assumptions, metrics, and a lack of differentiation. Indeed, much of the recent scholarship on the subject has critiqued the no-negotiations convention on these grounds. First, some studies are based on game theoretic models that have not held up to empirical scrutiny.<sup>113</sup> Game theoretic models are rarely applied empirically, and, on the occasions when they are, the arguments against negotiating with terrorists fail to hold up. Others have serious limitations due to their misguided assumptions about terrorist preferences.<sup>114</sup>

Second, few studies demonstrate the causal link between negotiations and terrorist violence. Studies that claim to demonstrate a rise in terrorist violence following negotiations almost always fail to identify the perpetrator and their motivations. Few studies specify the metrics for measuring violence (e.g. number of attacks, attack fatalities) or explicitly bound the time period for their predictions, making it difficult to

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<sup>113</sup> Pruitt, "Negotiating with Terrorists."

<sup>114</sup> The strategies and payoffs used in game theoretic models of terrorist decision-making are often "defined in an ad hoc manner" and treated as "fixed and known" rather than based on empirical data from past incidents and acknowledged as fluctuating. Utilities usually reflect ranked preferences, rather than true reflections of a group's anticipated payoffs. Ronald D. Fricker, Jr., "Game Theory in an Age of Terrorism: How Can Statisticians Contribute?," in *Statistical Methods in Counterterrorism: Game Theory, Modeling, Syndromic Surveillance, and Biometric Authentication*, eds. A. G. Wilson, Gregory D. Wilson, and David H. Olwell, (New York: Springer, 2005), online edition, 6.



assess any causal relationship. Taken together, these failures make it impossible to explicate the relationship between negotiations and violence. Such an approach fails to differentiate between spasms of violence immediately following talks and a long-term rise in terrorist violence; violence committed by the negotiating group attempting to enhance its bargaining position<sup>115</sup> or spoilers (on either side) seeking to derail talks or damage a negotiated settlement they produced.<sup>116</sup> For example, after failed, disingenuous negotiations and a unilateral autonomy plan pushed by the Philippine Government (described in more detail in Chapter 6), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) returned to violence in 1989. If you only examine MNLF's activity by the number of terrorist attacks, 1989 appears to be the group's most active year to date and one might conclude terrorism had increased. But if you examine the MNLF's activity with regard to the lethality rate, which was 0.5 – drastically lower than the group's previous average of 3.1<sup>117</sup> - it becomes clear that the attacks were largely designed create a stronger

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<sup>115</sup> Negotiations may inspire the negotiating terrorist factions themselves to employ violence in order to influence their bargaining position. For example, the Second Intifada and the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo's mid-talks 1989 offensive can be understood as attempts to improve each group's leverage for future talks. The second intifada, according to the Andrew Kydd and Barbara Walter, can be "best understood as a return to a war of attrition in the wake of a failed peace negotiation; both sides have returned to war in an attempt to wear down the other side and gain leverage for the next round of negotiations. Kydd and Walter, "Sabotaging the Peace," 289. Joaquín Villalobos, the former leader of Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (People's Revolutionary Army) in El Salvador, claims his group's mid-talks 1989 offensive was not, as oft reported, an effort to provoke a peasant revolution, but rather an attempt to provoke UN intervention and push the military to reach a ceasefire in the capital. Joaquín Villalobos, interview by author, October 30, 2011, Toronto.

<sup>116</sup> There is evidence that negotiations often facilitate a split within a revolutionary movement that may cause purists to pursue spoiler violence (James DeNardo, *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985)) aimed at stymieing talks (Stephen John Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2, (Autumn, 1997)) or outbidding moderate rivals (Mia Bloom, "Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 119, No. 1, (Spring, 2004). Nor are the potential alienating effects of spoiler violence considered - For example, there are several cases – notably, Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA) violence in Algeria in the mid to late 1990s and the Real IRA bombing in Omagh in 1998 - where spoiler violence is credited with shifting public opinion firmly against terrorists and causing former allies to disown their once-comrades-in-arms, which ultimately helped reduce terrorist violence over the long term.

<sup>117</sup> START, GTD Data, available from [<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>].

bargaining position and/or persuade the government of the urgency of finding a resolution to the conflict, all the while seeking to avoid fatalities, public backlash, and the incitement of renewed army operations against the group's members. This violence is indicative of a group that wants to come to a settlement, not one that has fully renewed its violent campaign. Differences in metrics matter greatly for identifying the effect of negotiations and whether talking to terrorists is – as argued – a dangerous pursuit.

Third, many studies suffer from a lack of differentiation and use ad hoc negotiations and strategic negotiations interchangeably<sup>118</sup> without acknowledging the significant differences in their precipitating conditions, perceived risks, public reception, suitability to demands, and effects.<sup>119</sup> For example, Wardlaw urges governments to adopt a “policy of no deals or concessions to terrorists’ *political* demands,”<sup>120</sup> but to bolster his argument, cites examples of how non-strategic concessions made in ad hoc negotiations led to dire consequences.<sup>121</sup> These studies fail to recognize the “...crucial difference between concessions made to terrorists when they are conducting a bombing campaign or holding hostages at gunpoint and concessions made in the context of a peace process designed to bring a permanent end to violence.”<sup>122</sup>

The challenges to the conventional wisdom that negotiating with terrorists is a futile or dangerous exercise are important, but they are limited in their contribution.

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<sup>118</sup> Ad hoc negotiations are a response to an ongoing coercive terrorist act (i.e. negotiations in response to a hostage-taking), whereas strategic negotiations are undertaken to manage or resolve a larger, violent conflict (i.e. peace processes).

<sup>119</sup> For example, the nature of ad hoc negotiations lends itself to the granting of short term goals (i.e. the release of prisoners, ransom, etc.), which can be quickly verified by the perpetrators, whereas strategic aims, such as autonomy or an ideological remake of the existing government, require more time and extensive preparations.

<sup>120</sup> Wardlaw, 72.

<sup>121</sup> For example, Wardlaw cites the example of concessions granted to the Revolutionary Movement 8th October (MR-8) to secure the release of Ambassador Charles Burke Elbrick in 1969, which he credits for leading to more kidnappings of diplomats in Brazil and larger demands. Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Wilkinson, *Terrorism Versus Democracy*, 96.

These studies have highlighted many of the deficiencies associated with the no-negotiations literature, but they provide only narrow circumstances under which negotiations might be advantageous, rather than an alternate theory that would provide broad explanatory leverage.

Lastly, the literature on terrorism has historically viewed the phenomenon as sufficiently unique to justify the application of overly narrow delineations of the term and ignore the theoretical overlap with the broader political science literature. In their survey of terrorism literature in 1988, Jongman and Schmid concluded that “Theories in the more rigorous sense of the term, with prognostic power, are nonexistent...”<sup>123</sup> In Silke’s subsequent overview of the field, he concludes that the field continues to “struggl[e] in its efforts to explain terrorism or to provide findings of genuine predictive value.”<sup>124</sup> This is in part because the field was long tied up in definitional debates; with all their energy spent focused on demarcating what terrorism is and is not, few scholars have looked across typologies of violence to see if there are paradigms and theories to be drawn from other literatures. This type of approach has led to the creation of a parochial literature that lacks a strong theoretical basis for the study of terrorism. I am not unsympathetic to the challenge of studying terrorism. Just as terrorism poses a particular problem for states, terrorism poses a significant problem for scholars. That said, a new approach is needed to properly study the onset state-terrorist negotiations.

Terrorism is a unique composite phenomenon: it is both distinct in its use of coercion against civilians to generate psychological effects far beyond its immediate

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<sup>123</sup> Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide To Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories, & Literature*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers), 62. The authors did go on to say that this was akin to the situation in other social sciences.

<sup>124</sup> Andrew Silke, “The Devil you Know: Continuing Problems with Research on Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 13, No. 4, (Winter 2001), 13.

victims in order to influence a government policy and yet shares some similarities with other conflict dynamics – interstate conflict, civil wars, and domestic policymaking, among others. Given the complicated hybrid nature of terrorism, it is often difficult to delineate the parameters of studying how states respond to terrorism. While some aspects of broader scholarship are relevant to the study of terrorism, they cannot be applied wholesale. For example, bargaining theory is one such theory that may have some relevance for explaining terrorism and counterterrorism policymaking: Interstate wars are often viewed as bargaining failures. When a terrorist group emerges to attack, however, it is often the first interaction the group – as an official entity – has had with the state or other opponent. There is no failed bargaining that leads to conflict. Yet bargaining theory may apply on the back end of a terrorist campaign: a terrorist conflict may serve to clarify the strength of the movement and if the campaign goes on long enough, terrorists may win concessions from the state. As bargaining theory demonstrates, there are important insights from the broader political science literature that can be applied to the question at hand, but there are limits to their pertinence.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The conventional wisdom that states don't or shouldn't negotiate with terrorist groups fails to explain the recurring instances where states engage in negotiations with terrorists over the latter's strategic aims. Increasingly, scholars are challenging the assumptions, methods, and predicted outcomes of studies that promote a no-negotiations policy. Some recent studies have even identified specific circumstances under which even the least trustworthy terrorist group can engage in negotiations. Unfortunately, despite

these recent innovations, we still do not sufficiently understand the counterterrorism policymaking process. We do not have the ability to predict when states are likely to shift policies and engage terrorist challengers at the negotiating table. The following chapter seeks to redress this shortcoming by laying out an integrated theory that incorporates both strategic and domestic factors to help us better understand the counterterrorism policymaking process.

## Chapter 3

### *The Logic of Negotiating with Terrorist Groups*

#### 3.1 Introduction

Wars once had definitive outcomes. There were winners and losers. And losers often lost big. For example, the Paraguayan War (1864-1870) left Paraguay the most war-prostrated nation in modern memory. As a result of the war, the government fell and the country was occupied by Brazil and nearly 90% of the male population died from combat, disease, and starvation.<sup>125</sup> Today, however, few wars end in such a decisive victory for one side.

Without decisive military victories, most modern wars end at the bargaining table. The bitterest of enemies sit across from each other and negotiate an end to the conflict. World War I, the Eritrean–Ethiopian War, the Iran-Iraq War all ended with a bargaining process because no side could win militarily. Even civil wars, which have become more common in the last half-century than conflicts waged by major powers, end at the negotiating table despite the animosity between combatants and the difficulty establishing credible commitments from both sides.<sup>126</sup>

Terrorist campaigns, the conventional wisdom holds, don't – or at least shouldn't – end in negotiations. There are fast promises on the campaign trail by would-be statesmen and sharp rhetoric by state executives in office that appear to preclude even the possibility of negotiating with terrorists. Despite the rhetorical obstinacy of statesmen,

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<sup>125</sup> “Paraguay’s awful history: The never-ending war,” *The Economist*, December 22, 2012, 66-68.

<sup>126</sup> In their synthesis of the literature on how civil wars come to an end, Mason et al. cite evidence that 31.2% of all civil wars between 1945 and 1999 ended in a negotiated settlement. The percentage of civil wars that end in a negotiated settlement has grown over that time period: For example, of the civil wars that ended in the 1990s, 75% ended in a negotiated settlement. Mason et al.

the empirical record demonstrates that states *recurrently* negotiate with terrorists. Nearly 13% of all terrorist campaigns from 1968-2006 were subject to strategic negotiations. The real number is likely higher, as some failed negotiations are presumably kept secret.<sup>127</sup> Unfortunately, as the previous chapter highlights, the existing literature on the subject cannot explain when and why states negotiate with terrorists. This chapter seeks to redress this gap.

Not all terrorist conflicts are subject to negotiations. What then are the conditions that lead to their onset? This chapter lays out a theory that combines features of the strategic setting and domestic political considerations to explain the circumstances under which states will negotiate in an effort to end terrorist conflicts. The contribution of this theoretical approach is threefold: First, the literature on the subject of negotiating with terrorists has traditionally focused narrowly on aspects of the strategic environment – namely terrorist credibility - in determining whether a state employs negotiations as a counterterrorism strategy. The literature’s narrow focus on terrorist characteristics for explaining counterterrorism policymaking treats the process as if it occurred in a vacuum, devoid of domestic political influences. This project corrects this damaging omission and balances the influence of strategic factors with domestic political ones. Given the very nature of terrorism – with its focus on civilian targets, often attacked within the state’s own borders, in hopes of garnering publicity and generating a psychological effect beyond the immediate victims - domestic politics are as central to understanding counterterrorism policymaking as strategic considerations. This research project elevates

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<sup>127</sup> For example, when Robert Fowler, the UN Special Envoy for Niger, was charged with bringing the Niger government and the MNJ rebels to the negotiating table, his mission was initially secret in order to avoid embarrassing the Niger government in the event that MNJ refused to negotiate. Robert R. Fowler, *A Season in Hell: My 130 Days in the Sahara with Al Qaeda*, (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2011), 46-47.

domestic political considerations on par with strategic ones in recognition that given terrorism's direct effect on public safety, counterterrorism policy will naturally be a topic of significant domestic interest.

Domestically, the potential for the state to pursue negotiations with a terrorist group in question rests on the opportunities and obstacles created by the domestic political environment. Public opinion and veto players are critical in determining if a state executive has the capacity to create the political space necessary for negotiations. Given the nature of the policy dilemma at hand, certain institutions, namely the security forces, may play a veto role that exceeds their institutionalized powers. Examining these domestic dynamics in concert with the strategic environment provides a more comprehensive lens through which we can better understand the counterterrorism policymaking process, specifically, the shift towards negotiations.

Second, in addition to its failure to examine the domestic political factors behind state-terrorist negotiations, the literature's overly narrow focus on terrorist credibility is misguided and fails to recognize the central strategic driver in determining the onset of negotiations - terrorist capacity. It is terrorist capacity, not credibility, that is key to determining which terrorist groups last long enough to reach a mutually hurting stalemate with the state and as such, which groups will eventually be considered for negotiations. Terrorist credibility, while important, is really a second order consideration – only of importance after a group has endured for a long period of time and a state recognizes other counterterrorism strategies have failed and thus begins to consider the utility of negotiations.



Third, whereas much of the literature on terrorism treats the subject as a unique phenomenon totally divorced from other forms of conflict, this project adopts a conflict comprehensive approach. I recognize that while terrorism is a unique hybrid phenomenon that generates exceptional anxiety and fear, it does share some similarities with other types of coercion and as such, bears some similarities to other types of conflict and policymaking processes that address them. Terrorism, under certain circumstances, can inspire similar policy responses as insurgencies and interstate or civil wars. It is therefore worthwhile to consider the wider world of conflict theories when theorizing about how statesmen understand and address terrorist conflicts. This project draws, where appropriate, upon the literature on inter-state conflict, civil wars, conflict resolution, negotiation, public opinion, and domestic politics.

This chapter introduces a theory to explain how and when negotiations are put on the table in terrorist crises. Herein, I outline an integrated theory that specifies conditions that must be met on both the strategic and domestic fronts for a state to earnestly pursue strategic negotiations with a terrorist group.<sup>128</sup> In the strategic environment, there are three central characteristics of the terrorist group – size/endurance, type and fractionalization/market share – that help predict the onset of negotiations. Given these characteristics are key in determining a group’s capacity to endure and subsequently, its capability to commit; the state will consider them when evaluating the utility of a negotiations strategy. Large, centralized, ethnonationalist groups are better equipped to

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<sup>128</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, conventional wisdom contends that since the resolution of the conflict deals a “death blow” that will disband the terrorist organization, terrorist groups only enter into negotiations as a subterfuge to regroup, rearm, or buy time. Emanuel Gross, *The Struggle of Democracy Against Terrorism: Lessons from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Israel*, (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 56. It should be noted that just as terrorists can enter negotiations for reputational or other disingenuous reasons, so too can states. This chapter focuses on when states employ strategic negotiations in earnest and not as a cover for other operations or a PR move. The subject of disingenuous negotiations is addressed further in the last chapter.

endure and credibly commit to a negotiated settlement than other types of terrorist groups and as such, I expect states to be more willing to negotiate with the former.

### **3.2 Strategic Environment**

When contemplating the strategic environment, a lot of attention has been paid to the role of terrorist credibility, or lack thereof, in explaining why states do, or don't, negotiate with terrorist challengers. Generally, terrorists are not deemed to be credible negotiating partners. They are inherently untrustworthy, and there are few mechanisms to effectively monitor and enforce their compliance with negotiated settlements. Some recent research has found narrow circumstances under which terrorists can enhance their credibility,<sup>129</sup> and thus make negotiations a potential policy option for states under attack. This narrow focus on the role of credibility misses the point. In the strategic realm, capability, not credibility, is key in determining whether a state will entertain the option of employing a negotiations strategy to end a terrorist conflict. Three characteristics are central in signaling both capacity and credibility to the state – size/endurance, type, and fractionalization – and as such will factor heavily in state decision-making.

#### **3.2.1 Credibility v. Capacity**

Terrorist credibility is an endgame consideration, whereas capability is necessary to ensure the game lasts long enough that the state will come to consider negotiations and a terrorist group's ability to credibly commit to a potential political settlement. The

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<sup>129</sup> Terrorists can enhance their credibility in the eyes of the state by 1. modifying their goals or refraining from violence (Pettyjohn) coordinating with the state against spoiler elements (Buena de Mesquita, "Conciliation, Counterterrorism, and Patterns of Terrorist Violence"), or just by virtue of having a state sponsor (Bapat).

centrality of credibility stems from the sequential quality of state responses to terrorist campaigns: At the outset of terrorist campaigns, states are near universal in their refusal to negotiate with their terrorist challengers. This aversion to negotiating with terrorists stems from the power imbalance between combatants and the state's values and biases: Especially at the beginning of a terrorist conflict, there is a clear asymmetry; the state is heavily favored. This imbalance leads statesmen to believe it is feasible and less costly to defeat terrorist challengers by force than through negotiations. Moreover, statesmen find the concept of negotiating with terrorists, at the very least, distasteful, or worse, anathema to their core values. Statesmen view diplomacy as the business of states, the legitimate actors in the international system that play by the same rules and work to uphold general international order and norms upon which the system rests.<sup>130</sup> These biases generate obstacles to a negotiations counterterrorism policy<sup>131</sup> and lead policymakers to "prefer combat over the other strategies..."<sup>132</sup> Retribution and repression are seen as more consistent with the norm of punishing illegal violence than conciliatory counterterrorism approaches.<sup>133</sup> It is only after these offensive strategies, entailing significant resources, fail to bring an end to the sustained terrorist campaign that the conflict will be ripe for resolution and the state will begin to consider a negotiations policy.

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<sup>130</sup> Terrorists, on the other hand, are sub-state actors, criminals trying to upend the international system the state seeks to protect. Carl Miller, "Is it Possible and Preferable to Negotiate with Terrorists?" *Defense Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, (March 2011), 171.

<sup>131</sup> Liz Philipson, *Choosing to Engage: Armed Groups and Peace Processes*, 2005, available from [<http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/engaging-armed-groups-challenge-asymmetries>], accessed on April 1, 2013.

<sup>132</sup> Gregory Miller takes issue with the dichotomous conceptualization of counterterrorism strategies and rather identifies five types of strategies, which are not mutually exclusive: do nothing, conciliation, legal reform, restriction, violence. Gregory D. Miller, "Confronting Terrorisms: Group Motivation and Successful State Policies," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 19, (2007), 332.

<sup>133</sup> Pruitt, "Negotiating with Terrorists," 3.

Terrorist endurance is necessary for a conflict to reach a point where it is ripe for a negotiated resolution. Obviously, terrorist groups that lack endurance will be defeated militarily, implode, or fade away, and the state will not have to consider employing negotiations. For negotiations to occur, however, it is not just endurance, but a group's capacity to coerce that is a necessary condition for the onset of negotiations.

Ripeness theory proffers that only conflicts that reach a mutually hurting stalemate will be ripe for a negotiated resolution.<sup>134</sup> A mutually hurting stalemate is not an objective measure, but rather a state of mutual perception that the conflict is painful, costly, and unwinnable (either militarily or at an acceptable price).<sup>135</sup> While there is no defined metric for ripeness (e.g. fatalities, length of conflict), a significant level of violence needs to be sustained over a long period in order for the state to shift its perception regarding the threat posed by the terrorist group and the potential policy options for ending the crisis. Terrorist groups that can maintain their violent campaigns for decades signal their resolve and capacity to continue their fight, and highlight the ineffectiveness of the counterterrorism strategies employed by the state. The acknowledgement that the terrorist group is willing and able to continue the conflict and the recognition that kinetic counterterrorism approaches are not working are central to the state's assessment that the conflict is unwinnable. Thus, it is terrorist capacity, not

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<sup>134</sup> I. William Zartman argues that when parties to a conflict find themselves "locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory and this deadlock is painful to both of them (although not necessarily in equal degree or for the same reasons), they seek an alternative policy only conflicts that reach a mutually hurting stalemate will be ripe for negotiated resolution..." I. William Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments," *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 1., No. 1, (September 2001). A revision of ripeness theory – readiness theory – postulates that statesmen's alacrity to peacefully negotiate an end to conflict is a function of their motivation to end the conflict – fed by a sense that either the conflict is unwinnable or too costly, and/or pressure from third parties – and optimism that negotiation is an effective approach. Dean G. Pruitt, "Readiness Theory and the Northern Ireland Conflict," *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 50, No.11 (July 2007).

<sup>135</sup> Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives."

credibility, that is central in determining which conflicts will reach a ripe stage<sup>136</sup> and are likely to be subject to strategic negotiations.

Credibility, while important, is a second order concern: A terrorist group may demonstrate credibility early on, but if the group has yet to prove its capacity to endure<sup>137</sup> and to hurt, the state will likely continue to focus on crushing it militarily and negotiations will not be considered as a policy option. Credibility only comes into play when a state is weighing the utility of a negotiations strategy.

Credibility is not an independent characteristic of terrorist groups, but rather it is derived, in large part, from capability. A terrorist threat is not credible if a group does not have the capability to carry it out. Likewise, only capable terrorist groups are likely to generate the level of support that would suggest that they were indeed the legitimate representatives of a cause or population. Capability is thus a necessary, but not sufficient, component of credibility.

Terrorist endurance is central to understanding when states will employ strategic negotiations to end long-running terrorist conflicts. Endurance is important not only because it signals capacity, and thus some level of credibility, but also because it creates a ripe situation that is ready for resolution. Several intrinsic characteristics contribute to a terrorist group's potential to continue its coercion in the future and ability to make credible commitments, to include: size, type, and level of fractionalization.

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<sup>136</sup> States are likely to have different readiness thresholds depending on the capacity of their own institutions, and the preferences of their publics and other domestic actors.

<sup>137</sup> Endurance is a vague term, but it is understood to be more than just longevity. For example, a terrorist group that endures for 20 years but only mounts a handful of sporadic, non-lethal attacks would not be deemed a strong enough to warrant negotiations. Only when terrorist groups maintain robust, violent campaigns over a long period of time will the state begin to consider negotiations as necessary.

### **3.2.1 Terrorist Group Size**

#### **3.2.1.1 Terrorist Group Size & Capacity**

Terrorist group size is strongly correlated with endurance. In order to endure for ten, twenty, thirty years, or more, a group must be large. Size enhances a terrorist group's capacity to survive and coerce its target. Large terrorist groups are better able than small groups to endure attrition, the killing and capturing of their members, and splintering. Size is also important because it determines the frequency and scale of terrorist operations. Research finds that small groups don't have the resources to inflict continued damage against their opponents over an extended period of time.<sup>138</sup> Sustained violence requires not only a lot of operatives, but also an expansive logistics and support network. For example, in Italy in the 1970s and 1980s, only the large terrorist groups were able to conduct sustained campaigns, whereas most small groups had only a single incident associated with them.<sup>139</sup> Thus, a terrorist group needs to be large in size in order to endure long enough for the state to consider employing strategic negotiations.

#### **3.2.2.2 Terrorist Group Size & Credibility**

In addition to contributing to a group's capacity to endure, size can also signal the group's credibility to represent a particular population or cause. When a terrorist group with only 10 members claims to represent a cause or a nation, it is easier for the government to discount the organization as representing only the extreme fringe of society. When a group has thousands or tens of thousands of members and supporters, the

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<sup>138</sup> Christopher Hewitt, "Terrorism and Public Opinion: A Five Country Comparison," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, (1984).

<sup>139</sup> Vittoriofranco Pisano, *The Dynamics of Subversion and Violence in Contemporary Italy*, (Paolo Alto, CA: Hoover Press, 1987), 24-31.

government has a more difficult time selling (let alone believing) the idea that the group doesn't represent a significant fraction of society. Demonstrating that they have a large following, which is responsive to their direction, bolsters terrorist leaders' credibility that they are indeed the legitimate representatives of a large swath of society.

Terrorist groups can demonstrate that they have deep ranks in numerous ways: First, by being able to continue to conduct violent attacks despite attrition demonstrates the depth of the group's membership, especially if those attacks are sophisticated and necessitate extensive support structures. Second, if a terrorist group lives amongst the population it purports to represent the group has at least the tacit, if not the active, support of the community.<sup>140</sup> Third, the terrorist group can engage in a variety of other non-violent actions to demonstrate the extent of their support. For example, in December 2012, Hamas marked its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians took the streets of Gaza to celebrate signaling the significance of Hamas' support and influence. Terrorist groups have also tried to demonstrate their strength by announcing boycotts of elections and either persuading – or intimidating – the population from participating in the polls. For example, ETA called for boycotts in 2000 and 2008 general elections and in 2005, the Tamil Tigers called for a boycott in Sri Lanka's elections.<sup>141</sup> By demonstrating they have a large following beyond their fighting ranks that will head the group's call for a boycott, protest, or violent action, a terrorist group demonstrates that it indeed is the legitimate representative of a sizeable segment of society.

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<sup>140</sup> It is also possible this arrangement could indicate not that the group has the population's support, but that it is strong enough to threaten retaliation against those who undermine its objectives - also an indicator of strength.

<sup>141</sup> Matthew Frankel, *Threaten but Participate: Why Election Boycotts Are a Bad Idea*, Policy Paper Number 19, (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 2010).

### 3.2.3 Terrorist Group Type

Endurance is correlated with size, but also related to group type. The terrorist groups most likely to reach membership in the tens of thousands and last for decades are ethnonationalist groups. There are certainly exceptions, but as demonstrated in the cross-national study detailed in Chapter 1, ethnonationalist groups are able to outlast other types of terrorist groups: on average, the lifespan of a ethnonationalist group is three years longer than other terrorist group types. Given that most groups don't last long – depending on the source, 25%<sup>142</sup> - 90%<sup>143</sup> of all terrorist groups last less than a year – those extra years are key for a conflict to reach a stage where it is ripe for a negotiated solution. Moreover, terrorist group type also influences the state's perception of a terrorist group's potential to credibly commit. Certain types of terrorist groups, namely ethnonational groups, are better suited to make credible commitments because of the nature of their goals and relationship with the population they purport to represent.

#### 3.2.3.1 Terrorist Group Type & Capacity

The inherent capacity of ethnonationalist terrorist groups to reach large sizes and thus endure longer than other terrorist group types is largely due to the nature of the former's goals and benefits of a common culture. Whereas "...extremists rarely attract a political base – except among other extremists. Large groups like the Basque Nation and Liberty...and the IRA have gained support because their causes are so popular among their reference groups. Their methods may be extreme, but their political appeal has a

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<sup>142</sup> An analysis of the data set described in Chapter 4 suggests that only 25% of terrorist groups fail within a year, but that 53% fail within five years.

<sup>143</sup> David Rapoport, "Terrorism," in *Encyclopedia of Government and Politics*, Volume 1, Second Edition, eds. Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan, (London: Routledge, 2004).



broad base.”<sup>144</sup> Ethnonationalist goals (e.g. recognition of, and protection for, a group’s culture; some level of autonomy) reflect the aspirations of significant populations of co-ethnics. Even if co-ethnics abhor the violent tactics used by terrorists and refuse to directly support the terrorist group, their congruent interests create a sufficiently permissible environment wherein the terrorist group can operate. This is not necessarily the case for other terrorist group types.

Religious and ideological groups often have goals that do not harness the same level of support as ethnonationalist aims because they are either too narrow, too grand, or have little chance of realization. For example, Christians may find that they have little in common with Christian terrorists with a narrow anti-abortion focus. Not only does the use of violence conflict with the generally accepted tenets of the faith, but there are a diversity of views on abortion and the level of significance it should garner.

Ethnonationalist goals attract a broad following from co-ethnics (and perhaps beyond) because they are sufficiently broad so as to appeal to a wide swath of people, but not so lofty that they are unattainable. Leftist aims for a worldwide revolution or millennial goals of sparking Armageddon are not as readily realizable (if at all!) as ethnonationalist goals like recognition, autonomy, or even independence. The feasibility of attaining nationalist goals – the promise that the group’s members may see concrete gains in their lifetime – helps inspire co-ethnics to join or assist the group, thus sustaining support over time.

The common culture that binds ethnonationalist groups contributes to the capacity of ethnonationalist terrorist organizations to grow and endure. By representing co-ethnics

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<sup>144</sup> Jonathan R. White, *Terrorism and Homeland Security*, Seventh Edition, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2012), 82.

instead of adherents to an ideology, ethnonationalist terrorist groups enjoy several tactical advantages: Ethnonationalist terrorists can easily identify possible constituents and take advantage of the familial bonds and common language to facilitate communication, recruitment,<sup>145</sup> and logistical support. Ideological, and some religious groups, have a more difficult time. For example, revolutionary leftist organizations do not have “such a clearly defined constituency.”<sup>146</sup> Radical leftists will likely have a more difficult time than co-ethnics identifying like-minded people, communicating, and quickly establishing trust. For example, because of their increasing reliance on the Internet for communications in recent years and the difficulty in verifying potential members’ credentials, police in several countries have been successful in infiltrating violent anti-globalization groups who target international summits.<sup>147</sup> Thus, the nature of the bonds between co-ethnics provide a major advantage to ethnonationalist terrorist groups – as compared to their ideological and strictly religious counterparts – in helping build a solid support base from which to launch a terrorist campaign.

The easy demarcation of ethnonational groups *by the state* helps facilitate sustained support for ethnonationalist terrorists, albeit in a circuitous manner: If a state is able to identify the ethnonationalist group in question from the broader population – but not distinguish the terrorists from civilians within the group - and it pursues a retributive

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<sup>145</sup> In their study of Islamic jihadist networks, Justin Magouirka, Marc Sageman and Scott Atran argue that kinship and friendship bonds are responsible for terrorist recruitment and membership maintenance. While some of the groups examined by Magouirka et al. can be considered ethnonationalist groups, others are more appropriately categorized as religious organizations. While ethnonationalist groups may not be the only group type that is capable of taking advantage of kinship ties, they are advantaged, as far as recruitment and support go, by having multiple, overlapping commonalities that facilitate recruitment (e.g. common language and religion). Justin Magouirka, Scott Atran & Marc Sageman, “Connecting Terrorist Networks,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Volume 31, Issue 1, (2008).

<sup>146</sup> Hewitt, 152.

<sup>147</sup> For example, see Dave Seglins, “G20/G8 summit opponents infiltrated by police,” *CBC News*, June 24, 2011.

policy against the ethnic group at large in hopes of pressuring the terrorist organization to discontinue attacks, it may actually have the opposite effect. Instead of reducing terrorism, repression against the ethnonationalist group at large may radicalize previously un-involved co-ethnics and buoy sympathy and support for the terrorist group.<sup>148</sup> Thus in several different ways, the very nature of their common culture contributes to the capacity of ethnonationalist groups to endure.

### **3.2.3.2 Terrorist Group Type & Credibility**

In addition to enhancing capacity, group type may also impact a terrorist group's credibility with the state. Although credibility is a second-order concern, it becomes important once a conflict has lasted long enough for the state to consider the utility of negotiations. At that point, credibility is an important consideration in the state's calculus about whether negotiations will help quell terrorist violence. Certain terrorist group types – namely ethnonationalist groups – are more likely to demonstrate certain characteristics: a large constituency; multiple divisible goals; and a state-like self-perception that seeks to bolster the international system, not destroy it - which, in the eyes of the state, enhance the capacity of ethnonationalist groups to make credible commitments as compared to their ideologically and religiously motivated comrades.

A state's estimation of a terrorist group's credibility with its followers plays into its calculation whether negotiating with the group will actually reduce violence. First, different terrorist group types derive their legitimacy in different ways: Ethnonationalist terrorist groups derive their legitimacy from the ethnic or national population they claim

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<sup>148</sup> Chenoweth and Dugan.

to represent. By contrast, strictly religious organizations may gain legitimacy from holy texts or divine lineage. Whereas extensive support from co-ethnics signals that the group *is* the legitimate representative of a people, religious credentials on their own will not convince the state that the group has widespread support. Without some direct or implied indication of broad support for a terrorist group (e.g. rallies, or a sustained campaign), the state has difficulty determining the veracity of the group's claim to speak on behalf of a popular cause embraced by a wide swath of society. Moreover, the state needs to assess whether a group has the legitimacy to turn around and sell a negotiated settlement to its followers.

In calculating whether negotiations would facilitate a decline in terroristic violence, a state considers constraints on the group. With ethnonationalist groups, the nature of the relationship between the terrorist organization and the population they represent generates incentives for self-restraint, which helps bolster the credibility of a group's claim that it is capable of adhering to a negotiated settlement. Given that ethnonationalist groups are reliant on their co-ethnics for recruits, financial, and logistical support,<sup>149</sup> they are – to some degree – beholden to the community. An ethnonationalist group cannot engage in actions or promote causes that lack sufficient co-ethnic support, which they rely on for the group's survival, whereas a small leftist organization that has failed to generate a wider appeal or create relationships with the community in which it resides, may be less constrained in its actions as it lacks a constituency that can withdraw its support and discredit it. Thus, the relationship between ethnonationalist terrorist group

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<sup>149</sup> It is also the case that some ethnonationalist groups were also financially reliant on state sponsors, especially during the 1970s and 1980s. While funds from a state sponsor may bring some freedom to maneuver (albeit coupled with new restrictions imposed by the sponsor), the continued need to derive legitimacy from the population it purports to represent ensures the group will not pursue policies that threaten to alienate the support population.

leaders and co-ethnics forces the former to be highly responsive to their population's needs and demands.

In general, the relationship between ethnonationalist terrorist groups and the co-ethnic populations they represent leads them to be more discriminating in their use of violence than other group types,<sup>150</sup> displaying a pragmatic “thinking on the utility of violence”<sup>151</sup> out of concern for alienating their base.<sup>152</sup> For other group types, especially among leftist and strictly religious groups, ideological considerations (e.g. a dedication to revolutionary violence) or a need for expression, redemption, or cleansing<sup>153</sup> may trump a pragmatic approach to determining tactics.<sup>154</sup> Likewise, the restraints on ethnonationalist groups make it difficult for them to enter into agreements they cannot sell to their people. To do so would risk their position, the organization's legitimacy, and possibly even their

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<sup>150</sup> This does not suggest that ethnonationalist groups don't engage in violence. Indeed, many engage in violent acts that we find shocking and may easily surpass our metric for horrific. I am merely arguing that ethnonationalist terrorist groups are restrained to some degree by their co-ethnics and cannot continually push past that group's metric for acceptable behavior before finding themselves without vital support. J. Fine, “Contrasting Secular and Religious Terrorism,” *Middle East Quarterly*, (Winter 2008), and Crenshaw, “How Terrorism Declines,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, (1991).

<sup>151</sup> Neumann, “Negotiating with Terrorists,” 130.

<sup>152</sup> This may influence the level and type of violence meted out by the ethnonationalist groups, which in turn may also impact state's assessment of suitable negotiating partners.

<sup>153</sup> Fanon argues that violence is not only a means to overturning a violent system – colonial regimes – but also a means through which the individual can cleanse himself and find self-respect and redemption. Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 94.

<sup>154</sup> Wilkinson blames Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon – ‘philosophers of terror’ – for creating an “almost mystical view of violence as a noble and morally regenerative force” among revolutionary intellectuals, which contributed to the view held by many leftist terrorist groups operating in the 1970s and 1980s that it was only through violence that their goals might be realized and that their members might re-create themselves. Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 100. Some have likewise argued that Islamist terrorist groups draw on an ideology in which violence represents not a tactical choice but a religious obligation to engage in jihadi violence, (Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 72-73), although this is a hotly debated assertion (Opponents to this view include David Kilcullen, who argues that ideology isn't the driving force behind Islamist terrorist movements. Rather, Kilcullen argues, “People don't get pushed into rebellion by their ideology. They get pulled in by their social networks.” As described by George Packer, “Knowing the Enemy – Can Social Scientists Redefine the War on Terror?” *New Yorker Magazine*, December 18, 2006).

lives.<sup>155</sup> The threat is not theoretical, nor is it limited just to concessions, but possibly to the decision to negotiate at all: For example, in the 1970s and 1980s, at least two ETA leaders, and another leader of the Basque Left, who vocally supported negotiations with the Spanish government were assassinated; several others had attempts on their lives or died under mysterious circumstances.<sup>156</sup> As compared to other terrorist group types, the nature of the client-agent relationship typical of ethnonationalist terrorist groups contributes to their enhanced credibility in the eyes of the state.

Whether a state is willing to make concessions to a terrorist group in negotiations depends largely on its assessment of the group's leaders and their goals. With respect to the latter, the aims of ethnonationalist groups are inherently less threatening to the state than those articulated by other group types. Ethnonationalist goals are usually characterized as multiple, concrete, relatively static, and despite claims to the contrary, divisible in nature (i.e. territory, resources, autonomy).<sup>157</sup> As such, ethnonationalist aims

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<sup>155</sup> My argument that certain terrorist group types are seen as better negotiating partners because of the restraint on their actions imposed by the nature their actor-principle relationship is similar to Charles Kupchan's argument that certain types of states demonstrate "institutionalized restraint," which in turn enhances the likelihood of creating a stable peace in interstate disputes. Kupchan argues that certain types of states had attributes that make them especially well suited to pursuing peace in conflict situations. Governments that accept restraints on their power at home - democratic states and constitutional monarchies - are the most likely to exhibit restraint in their relations with other states. I likewise argue that certain types of terrorist groups, primarily those that are restrained by their principal-agent relationship - namely ethnonationalist groups - demonstrate a similar type of self-restraint that makes them better negotiating partners. Charles A. Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace*, ereader edition, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), loc 263.

<sup>156</sup> Robert P. Clarke, *Negotiating with ETA: Obstacles to Peace in Basque Country, 1975-1988*, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1990), 228.

<sup>157</sup> The indivisibility (or lumpiness) of contested claims is identified as a source of violent conflict. James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 3, (Summer 1995), 390. If a contested item cannot be divided, or divided along desired lines, a settlement will likely be zero-sum in nature, making war is likely to erupt as each side tries to capture the whole item for itself. Claims of indivisibility are often more about symbolic and emotional appeals, which although difficult to compromise, (Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalist Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), are not intractable obstacles to negotiated settlements (David A. Lake, "International Relations Theory and Internal Conflict," *International Studies Review*, Vol. 5, No. 4, (December 2003), 83). Research suggests that linking issues in order to compensate, or making symbolic concessions, (Scot Atran and Robert Axelrod, "In Theory: Reframing Sacred Values,"

represent smaller concessions than the transformational goals expressed by other group types that require the complete restructuring of the state or the total destruction of the international state system.<sup>158</sup> Moreover, ethnonationalist goals are inherently limited. Ethnonationalist goals are well suited to the “politics of pork:” groups fight on behalf of co-ethnics defined by “features not easily chosen or changed by individuals, among which ascriptive criteria such as ethnicity are leading candidates,” thus inherently limiting concessions.<sup>159</sup> Benefits are unlikely to be shared with out-groups and co-ethnics are unlikely to be receptive to new goals that require a renewed campaign of violence if they seem extraneous to their primary cause or unrelated to their identity. Given the nature of their goals, states are likely to view negotiating with ethnonationalist groups as less threatening to their continued existence than other terrorist group types.

In considering negotiations, states assess the credibility of the terrorist group’s leadership. In general, the statesmen-like behavior of ethnonationalist group leaders helps bolster the credibility of their claims that they will not pick up weapons again to fight for new aims. Ethnonationalist leaders are less threatening to states than other types of group leaders because they see themselves as statesmen in waiting and as such, they act like statesmen, often overseeing parallel governments and performing statesmen-like functions within the existing international system (e.g. seeking recognition from international organizations and foreign states). For example, Yasser Arafat wore a military uniform reminiscent of many other state leaders, addressed state delegates at the

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author manuscript published in *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 24, (2008)) for compromise on sacred claims can overcome seemingly intractable conflicts

<sup>158</sup> Louise Richardson, *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat*, (New York: Random House, 2006), 13.

<sup>159</sup> James Fearon, “Why Ethnic Politics and “Pork” Go Together,” paper presented at a MacArthur Foundation-sponsored conference on Ethnic Politics and Democratic Stability, Wilder House, University of Chicago, May 21-23, version dated June 16, 1999, 2.

UN, and was received by diplomats around the world. More than other terrorist types, ethnonationalist terrorist groups crave the legitimacy and status that comes with recognition. A terrorist leader's statesman-like behavior reaffirms that the group wants to be part of the existing international order, not destroy it and thus, appears less threatening to states than other terrorist types.

The same ascriptive characteristics that facilitate ethnonationalist terrorist group capacity enhance the state's perception of the group's credibility to commit to a negotiated settlement. It is not always the case that a state will consider whether to negotiate with one terrorist type over another – although the Philippine case does demonstrate that such a predicament does happen. Rather, the comparison across terrorist group types explains why ethnonationalist terrorist conflicts are subject to negotiations at a much higher rate than ideological, religious, or millenarian ones: Between 1968 and 2006, 17.4% of all ethnonationalist terrorist groups were known parties to negotiations as compared to 12.2% of left-wing groups, 9.5% of right-wing groups, and 4.3% of religious groups. Compared to other terrorist group types, I argue that ethnonationalist groups are better able to generate the capacity necessary to reach a mutually hurting stalemate with state, and thus be considered for possible negotiations. When a conflict reaches this point and a state begins to consider the merits of negotiating with a challenger, the ascriptive characteristics of ethnonationalist groups, and their relationship with co-ethnics, goals, and behavior are viewed by the state as enhancing the likelihood that the group can make credible commitments in negotiations. Thus, group type is a central determinant of both a group's capacity to hurt and its credibility in making commitments.



### 3.2.4 Terrorist Group Fractional Politics

The level of fractionalization within a terrorist group (e.g. the divisions and power distribution within the organization) and across the larger movement of which it is a part (e.g. the number of other terrorist groups that claim to be rightful defenders of the cause and their power distribution) is central to understanding a particular organization's capacity and credibility. Terrorist groups are political interest groups that compete with each other for "political market share."<sup>160</sup> In a dramatic example, interviews with failed suicide bombers in Israel demonstrate that some would-be terrorists go from group to group to compare offers of material benefits and logistical support before aligning themselves with an organization.<sup>161</sup> This example suggests that competition for recruits (especially strategically valuable ones who are willing to be suicide bombers) is fierce amongst rival terrorist groups. Competition can reduce the likelihood that a terrorist group will be party to negotiations because rivalry within the movement reduces an individual terrorist group's capacity to sustain a successful terrorist campaign and its credibility in claiming to be the mantle bearer for a cause.

Almost all terrorist groups are part of a larger movement oriented towards their political goals. Often the emergence of a terrorist group suggests that other parts of the movement are less robust (e.g. political parties, civil society organizations), but still there are likely to be some other actors - violent groups, activists, and organizations – that operate under the movement's umbrella and seek to achieve roughly analogous goals.

Highly centralized organizations that enjoy dominant market share in the larger

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<sup>160</sup> Gordon H. McCormick, "Terrorist Decision Making," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 6 (2003), 488.

<sup>161</sup> Nichole Argo, "Understanding and Defusing Human Bombs: The Palestinian Case and the Pursuit of a Martyrdom Complex," presentation to International Studies Association annual meeting in Montreal, March 17th-20th, 2004, 9.

movement enjoy enhanced capacity to conduct long-running terrorist campaigns, but also the enhanced capacity and credibility necessary, in the eyes of the state, to be an effective partner for peace. Fractionalized movements are less predictable and less likely to abide by negotiated settlements. States earnestly considering negotiations as a counterterrorism strategy will seek to avoid negotiating with highly fractionalized terrorist groups or those that face stiff competition from other organizations, terrorist or otherwise, which also claim to be the leaders of their movement.

#### **3.2.4.1 Terrorist Group Fractional Politics & Capacity**

Both intra- and inter-group fractionalization undermine a terrorist organization's capacity to endure and coerce. It is unlikely that groups that suffer from internal fractionalization; are locked in competition with rival groups; or lack the market share to lead the broader movement that they claim to represent will be able to maximize their capacity to employ coercive violence long enough for the state to consider a negotiations strategy to end the conflict. This is due to two factors: First, a dominant terrorist group faces less competition for resources (e.g. recruits, funds), which makes it easier for the group to endure. Second, a group with few serious challengers is better equipped to survive the criticism that inevitably accompanies negotiations and thus is viewed as a more predictable negotiating partner. Importantly, fractionalization within a movement also threatens a terrorist group's capacity, not only to hurt and endure, but also to make peace. States are likely to view centralized terrorist groups as better able to ensure their members adhere to a negotiated settlement than more fractionalized groups.

Lack of competition ensures better access to potential recruits and funds and allows a group to concentrate on its core goals without being sidelined by intra-movement squabbles. Historically, rivals, such as Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), have competed for recruits, media exposure, and financial contributions.<sup>162</sup> This competition can come to dominate a terrorist group's agenda. For example, whereas the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K), an ethnonationalist group focused on establishing autonomy in the northeast of India, once focused its attacks on the state,<sup>163</sup> it has, since 2001, focused its energy on attacking chief Naga competitor, NSCN-IM, and rival ethnic groups, primarily the Kukis.<sup>164</sup> This strategy has done little to advance the NSCN-K's primary goal. When engrossed in intra-movement competition, a terrorist group is unlikely to be able to sustain a terrorist campaign against its primary target. With its coercive capacity greatly reduced, the state comes to view the group as a nuisance, but not an obstacle to governance, and as such, the group is not considered a possible candidate for negotiations.

Low fractionalization<sup>165</sup> within the movement also reduces the opportunities for

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> NSCN-K broke away from National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) in 1998. The predecessor organization had been active since 1980. START, "NSCN-K", available from [[http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data\\_collections/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=4599](http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=4599)], accessed on January 10, 2012.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Factionalism, however, may be more detrimental to some terrorist group types than others. The degree to which terrorist groups are threatened by parallel organizations depends on the group's goals. Should a group want regime change, i.e. that its leaders would like political power, it is more likely that parallel organizations will be viewed as competitors. If a group seeks to start a Marxist revolution, then parallel organizations are likely viewed as force multipliers rather than competitors. For example, in Greece, there are many different leftist groups (e.g. Revolutionary Struggle, Popular Resistance, Popular Revolutionary Action, Revolutionary Organization 17 November (17N), among others) that share members and conduct operations in solidarity. As they seek to rid Greece of globalizing, colonial, and capitalist influences, rather than political power for themselves, there is less competition between the groups. Ethnonationalist

the state to employ divide and conquer strategies – further delaying the point whereby the state exhausts other counterterrorism strategies and considers the utility of negotiations. Dominant market share enhances a terrorist group’s credibility in its claim that it is the sole legitimate representative of a people or a cause, and limits the policy options available to the state, thus improving the likelihood a conflict will be subject to negotiations.

Market dominance in the movement is essential to a terrorist group’s survival in the event that it does negotiate with the state. When negotiations are revealed to the public, there will inevitably be critics who accuse the organization’s leaders of abandoning the cause. By maintaining dominance in the movement, the organization is better able to survive such assaults and as such, successfully transition the organization away from terrorism. A state negotiating in earnest does not want the organization with which it has just established a bargain to lose control of its membership, to be seized by untested leaders, or to splinter into a series of unpredictable factions. Centralization connotes a level of predictability, which the state highly values given the information deficit associated with terrorist conflicts.

Internal cohesion is equally as important to a terrorist group’s capacity to both punish and to control its membership. A terrorist group that enjoys internal cohesion is less likely to have internal leadership struggles and spawn spoilers. This is one of the most serious impediments to successful negotiations, and as such, the anticipated problems with fractionalization are likely to weigh on the state as it considers the utility of negotiations. Some have suggested that fractionalization is a much greater obstacle to a

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movements, however, often seek political autonomy or representation, which creates competition among movement elites.

peace process than differences in negotiating platform. For example, it has been argued that the sheer diversity and disaggregation of Al Qaeda are bigger obstacles for negotiations than the religious fanaticism attributed to the group as if it were a single entity.<sup>166</sup> Thus states are as likely to consider fractionalization as much as they weigh ideology and the group's goals when considering whether a terrorist organization is capable of negotiating a peace deal. And those groups that are capable of controlling their membership are better able to make credible commitments in negotiations.

#### **3.2.4.2 Terrorist Group Fractional Politics & Credibility**

Low fractionalization in a terrorist group and dominant market share within the larger movement help enhance a terrorist group's credibility that it is indeed the true representative of a cause or people and as such enhance the likelihood that the group, and not a competitor, will be offered negotiations. Low fractionalization in the movement reduces the likelihood that the terrorist group in question will face competition for the mantle of valid interlocutors on behalf of the cause, and as such, there are fewer threats to its legitimacy. This makes it more difficult for the state to identify a viable alternative negotiating partner who is able to make real concessions on behalf of the movement.

When a state considers the utility of a negotiations strategy, low levels of fractionalization in the movement make it more difficult for the state to bypass the terrorist group and choose another organization as a negotiating partner. This is not for a lack of trying. States, loath to negotiate with terrorists, often seek another alternate, preferably non-violent, entity to represent the aggrieved population or cause in order to

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<sup>166</sup> Carl Miller, "Is it Possible and Preferable to Negotiate with Terrorists?" *Defense Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, (March 2011), 164.

sideline the terrorist group.<sup>167</sup> For example, the National Party in South Africa sought to bypass the African National Congress (ANC) by working with a series of tribal chiefs and homeland leaders.<sup>168</sup> As in South Africa, when there was clearly a dominant organization that represents the movement, the state's efforts to bypass that group often backfire when it becomes readily apparent that their alternate partner lacks the legitimacy to negotiate on behalf of the cause or population it claims to represent.

With highly centralized movements dominated by a single terrorist group, it is unlikely that the state will be able to identify an alternate negotiating partner able to make credible concessions necessary to end the conflict.<sup>169</sup> Any party to negotiations needs some level of legitimacy in order to make credible commitments on behalf of the cause or population. Alternate negotiating partners preferred by the state usually lack the support necessary to make real concessions. Without legitimacy, the alternate negotiating partner cannot make even the smallest concessions without being seen by the population as an imposter or a traitor.<sup>170</sup> Moreover, if a group lacks legitimacy, it is poorly positioned to convince the population to adhere to the concessions it promised to the state. The importance of legitimacy was apparent when the Americans and the Israelis sought to

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Daniel Lieberfeld, *Talking With the Enemy: Negotiation and Threat Perception in South Africa and Israel/Palestine*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999), 90.

<sup>169</sup> While a conflict that features a highly fractionalized movement offers the state an array of actors with which to engage, and thus more opportunities to bypass particular groups, it does not represent an auspicious strategic environment for finding a negotiated settlement to the conflict. A highly fractionalized movement may encourage the state to tactically employ negotiations (e.g. to foster intra-movement conflict), but doing so does not represent a sincere effort to negotiate a solution to the conflict and is more likely a continuation of a strategy to undermine, discredit, or destroy them. Even if a state was sincere in its efforts, negotiating with a minor group is unlikely to end the violence, and the prospects for uniting the groups together for comprehensive talks or engaging in numerous parallel tracts in order to end terrorism are bleak. Thus fractionalization may in some cases encourage negotiations with terrorist groups or non-violent rivals of the same movement, but these do not reflect a real shift in counterterrorism policy and/or a sincere effort to find a negotiated settlement to end the conflict.

<sup>170</sup> All terrorist groups, regardless of legitimacy, face criticism if they make concessions to the state in negotiations, but only those with legitimacy have a chance of surviving that condemnation.

bypass Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and negotiate a solution to the Palestinian issue with King Hussein in the 1980s. Hussein, however, proved to be a disappointing negotiating partner because his efforts to shore up his legitimacy with the Palestinians led him to adopt an extremely rigid negotiating position to avoid being labeled as a turncoat by the Palestinian and Arab publics.<sup>171</sup> Low levels of fractionalization within a terrorist group, and across the larger movement of which it is a part, helps reduce competition for resources and challenges to a group's legitimacy – which in turn improves the a group's prospects for endurance and bolster its credibility, strengthening the chances the terrorist group will be invited to negotiate.

### **3.2.5 Strategic Environment Conclusion**

Strategic factors are central to understanding when states employ negotiations in terrorist crises. In many ways, the expectations for state counterterrorism policymaking mirror expectations for how states respond to inter-state conflicts:<sup>172</sup> In both cases, states will only consider negotiations when faced with a capable challenger. In terrorist conflicts, a group's capacity to endure and to coerce is largely determined by, and/or correlated with, its size, type, and fractionalization and market share within the movement. Only those groups that are able to attract enough support to conduct a sustained campaign may reach a mutually hurting stalemate, which forces the state to consider negotiations as a policy option. As a second order concern, a state then weighs

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<sup>171</sup> Pettyjohn, 539.

<sup>172</sup> The differences between counterterrorism and inter-state foreign policy lie principally with the degree of threat: inter-state conflicts may threaten state survival, whereas terrorist crises threaten regime survival. Likewise, these types of conflicts differ in their timelines: The threat posed by a terrorist campaign takes longer to reach the level where it threatens the regime. Another important difference is the degree to which domestic politics impacts the government's capacity to enact counterterrorism policy.

the capacity of its challenger to make concessions and abide by a negotiated settlement. In assessing a group's ability to make credible commitments, the same three factors – size, type, and fractionalization/market share – are important for determining if the group has the legitimacy to survive the upbraiding inevitably sparked by making concessions and cajole its followers to adhere a negotiated settlement without splintering into numerous unpredictable factions. Statesmen will only pursue negotiations when a terrorist group has demonstrated *both* capacity and credibility. As large size, ethnonationalist type, and low levels of fractionalization contribute to a group's capability and credibility, it is expected that the more of these attributes a group has, the more likely a state will eventually come to consider it as an acceptable negotiating partner.

Advantageous strategic conditions for negotiations – having a capable and credible partner – are irrelevant, however, if the domestic political environment precludes employing a negotiations strategy for solving the conflict. Whereas strategic factors determine the potential *utility* of employing negotiations to end a terrorist conflict, the domestic political environment determines the political *viability* of pursuing a negotiations policy. As statesmen are unlikely to risk their positions to pursue negotiations even if strategic conditions are propitious, we can expect to only observe state-terrorist negotiations when *both* the strategic and domestic environments are conducive to talks.



### 3.3 Domestic Political Environment

Traditionally, rationalist approaches to international relations focused on the impact of the strategic environment and structural factors on the outbreak, and resolution, of conflict. Increasingly, however, rationalist theories of war acknowledge that “domestic groups, social ideas, the character of constitutions, economic constraints (sometimes expressed through economic interdependence), historical social tendencies and domestic political pressures play an important, indeed, a pivotal, role in the selection of a grand strategy, and, therefore, in the prospects for international conflict and cooperation.”<sup>173</sup>

The importance of domestic political factors is so significant, argues Putnam, that it deserves equal billing with external considerations in international conflict resolution.<sup>174</sup>

This is certainly the case with terrorist crises.

Terrorism, by its very nature, is an issue of domestic governance. Terrorist attacks bring into high relief the state’s failure to provide the most basic good – security. As such, terrorism undermines the state’s very *raison d’être*. Terrorists target non-combatants, often as they go about their everyday lives. Their attacks are often within the borders of the state they hope to coerce. Terrorist attacks are designed to sow widespread fear and panic and undermine the public’s sense of security. Media coverage of terrorist attacks is disproportionate to the actual threat, thus magnifying the danger posed by the terrorists and intimidating an audience far beyond the immediate victims of the attack. The public is highly responsive to terrorist attacks: Empirical evidence suggests that the public’s concern for terrorism is directly correlated with the frequency and lethality of

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<sup>173</sup> Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, “Beyond Realism: The Study of Grand Strategy,” in *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy*, eds. Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 5.

<sup>174</sup> Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of two-Level Games,” *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3, (Summer 1988).

terrorist attacks.<sup>175</sup> The public looks to their government – not the UN or foreign nations – to prevent and respond to terrorist threat. The inherently domestic nature of terrorism ensures that domestic politics will be a key determinant in how the government crafts a policy response to threat.

The previous section outlined strategic conditions under which states may consider negotiations with terrorists. The overriding assumption behind those conditions is that statesmen do not wish to negotiate with terrorist groups, but on occasion, they find themselves in the position where a conflict has reached a stalemate in which the state is not able to defeat the terrorist group and the terrorist group is not able to achieve its objectives. If the level of stalemate violence continues to undermine the state's capacity to govern, and thus the government's legitimacy, the state is incentivized to consider the utility of negotiations to end a conflict with a foe it cannot defeat outright. Statesmen will not, however, pursue negotiations if doing so poses an equal, or greater, risk of unseating them from power.

Putnam's two-level game metaphor<sup>176</sup> helps explain the integrated nature of domestic politics and bi-lateral negotiations. Negotiations should be viewed as three interrelated game boards whereby negotiators for country A and country B sit at the strategic table, while simultaneously playing on their respective domestic game board with national political officials, heads of bureaucratic agencies, representatives of key interest groups, and the public.<sup>177</sup> Ultimately, "Any player at the international table who is

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<sup>175</sup> For example, see Hewitt, 148-151.

<sup>176</sup> Putnam's two-level game metaphor views bi-lateral negotiations as three interrelated game boards whereby negotiators for country A and country B sit at the strategic table with their terrorist challengers, while simultaneously playing on their respective domestic game board with national political officials, heads of bureaucratic agencies, representatives of key interest groups, and the public. Putnam.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

dissatisfied with the outcome may upset the game board, and conversely, any leader who fails to satisfy his fellow players at the domestic table risks being evicted from his seat.”<sup>178</sup> This is also the case for state-terrorist group negotiations. Just as continued terrorist attacks threaten regime survival, negotiating a bargain with a terrorist foe that goes against strong domestic interests may bring down the regime. There are two general constituencies in the domestic sphere that have the capacity to limit the counterterrorism policy options open to statesmen in the strategic sphere: The public and veto players (both within the government and outside).<sup>179</sup>

### **3.3.1 Public Opinion**

There are some commonalities in how publics view terrorism and their preferences for counterterrorism policy solutions. Despite these common sentiments, there are differences in attitudes and policy preferences across states and regions that are molded by the historical, structural, and cultural factors distinct to each area. These attitudes, however, are not necessarily static; they may change in the face an attack, and are especially prone to shift in response to a long-running, violent terrorist campaign. The factors that influence the formation of public opinion on counterterrorism policy are only important, however, when the public is in a position to actually impact the policymaking process. That capacity to influence statesmen as they consider a negotiations policy varies across states and is largely dependent on state type.

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 434.

<sup>179</sup> The identity of the key veto players and the nature of public influence vary from state to state, due to government structure, regime type, institutional capacity, the nature of the domestic political arena, and culture.

In general, people don't approve of the extrajudicial violence for political expression, that is, they don't like terrorism, and by extension, most terrorists.<sup>180</sup> In the abstract, people don't like the concept of making concessions to terrorists because of their use of violence. Lastly, people expect their government to address terrorist threats and keep them safe. Historical and cultural factors can influence these inherent beliefs, resulting in differences in the baseline preferences across states.

To the first assumption, even if they have some sympathy for a terrorist group's cause, the overwhelming majority of the public disapproves of using violence to advance a political agenda. The target population views terrorists as criminals, who refuse to use existing political channels of expression and protest. As such, treating terrorists who have perpetrated a long string of violent attacks as legitimate bargaining partners is likely to be met with opposition by the population.<sup>181</sup> That said, there are several determinants – war weariness, demographics and culture, the nature of the terrorist crisis at hand and counterterrorism policy priming and partisan cues - that can erode public opposition and make it more palatable to the public to negotiate with terrorist challengers. In the following sections, I examine how each of these factors mediates the expected public response to a negotiations counterterrorism policy.

People around the world expect their governments to protect them from terrorist threats and effectively respond to terrorist attacks.<sup>182</sup> The response to the September 11<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Obviously, there are some terrorist causes that are very popular among certain demographics. Terrorists may be seen by some as freedom fighters and their means may be forgiven as necessary. This is addressed later in the section, but the point I mean to make here is that in the abstract, when asked, most people generally do not like terrorist violence.

<sup>181</sup> Wilkinson, *Terrorism Versus Democracy*, 80.

<sup>182</sup> The public expects the government to protect them, but in the wake of a large attack, public confidence in the government's capacity to protect them has been shown to drop. See Richard L. Berke and Janet Elder, "A National Challenged: The Poll, Survey Shows Doubts Stirring On Terror War," *The New York Times*, October 30, 2001.

attacks is a case in point: the American public roundly criticized the US government for failing to prevent the attacks and expected the government to mount an effective response. The US government reacted by investing billions of dollars in offensive operations against the perpetrators and their allies and defensive measures at home. As any homeland security official can tell you, these measures are as much about allaying fears and mollifying public demands for security, as they are a real attempt to improve the United States' capacity to prevent, respond, and recover from terrorist attacks.

A state's historical experience, composition and culture help shape the public's baseline attitudes toward terrorism and counterterrorism policy preferences. A state's historical experience and norms create action templates – or “generalized expectations about how that nation (through its leaders) will react in certain foreign policy situations.”<sup>183</sup> Survey research suggests that the publics of different states have varying expectations of how their governments will respond to terrorist hostage-takings: Whereas the Japanese place faith in negotiations, the Americans expect their government will refuse to make concessions and may use a military rescue to resolve the situation.<sup>184</sup> Others argue that differences in “national role conception”<sup>185</sup> or “strategic culture”<sup>186</sup> explain differences in policy choices across countries. The United States, for example, is thought to be especially resistant to negotiating with terrorists because of a combination of its superpower status, American exceptionalism, and domestic political forces.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Valerie M. Hudson, “Cultural Expectations of One's Own and Other Nation's Foreign Policy Action Templates,” *Political Psychology*, Vol. 20, No. 4, (1999), 770.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 777.

<sup>185</sup> K. J. Holsti, “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3, (September 1970).

<sup>186</sup> Colin S. Gray, “Comparative Strategic Culture,” *Parameters*, Vol. XIV, No. 4 (Winter 1984), and “Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1, (January 1999).

<sup>187</sup> Pettyjohn, 33.

The demographic make-up of a state influences public views about terrorism and shapes expectations for how the state should conduct counterterrorism policy. If an ethnonationalist terrorist group challenges a state, it is likely that the co-ethnic population in the state will be more sympathetic to the group. For example, empirical evidence from Northern Ireland suggests that Catholics were three times as likely to view the Irish Republican Army (IRA) positively as non-Catholics, and in Spain, Basques were four times more likely to view Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) positively than non-Basques.<sup>188</sup> Thus, in the event that a state's demographics include an especially large sub-group whose cause is represented by a terrorist organization, it is possible there will be a shift in public opinion regarding that specific group, and perhaps on terrorism more generally.

Cultural influences particular to states or regions also influence how the public perceives the terrorist threat and views different counterterrorism policies. Deep-seated values, such as religious conventions for burial, can exert significant influence on counterterrorism policy. For example, Israelis abhor giving in to terrorist demands, but this norm is often trumped by a deep seated cultural aversion to leaving any Israeli in the field, which has led successive Israeli governments to go to extraordinary lengths, endure heavy costs, and risk many lives to free hostages and retrieve the bodies of its fallen soldiers.<sup>189</sup> However, historical experience, demographics, and cultural norms that help form policy preferences do not necessarily make them salient to the policymaking process.

A country's public may overwhelmingly disdain the current counterterrorism strategy, but if there are no repercussions for the executive who ignores public sentiment,

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<sup>188</sup> Hewitt, 153.

<sup>189</sup> Ronen Bergman, "Gilad Shalit and the Rising Price of an Israeli Life," *New York Times Magazine*, November 13, 2011, 34.

those preferences are inconsequential. Research on policymaking in the United States has shown that public opinion matters in both domestic and foreign policymaking,<sup>190</sup> but how it matters is up for debate and the degree to which the public in other countries can actually rebuff a particular counterterrorism policy varies from state to state depending on structural conditions.

A state's principal-client relationship largely determines the degree over which the executive weighs public opinion when making policy decisions. In democracies, the principals (the voting age public) have an institutional check on elected officials; the public can vote state leaders out of power if their choices in the previous term failed to

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<sup>190</sup> In the American context, it was long thought that public opinion as volatile, cyclical, incoherent, and as such, of little import in foreign policymaking (Known widely as the Lippman-Almond Thesis. Ole R. Holsti, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to the Almond-Lippmann Consensus," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (December 1992)), thus giving the President "broad latitude" in crafting foreign policy (Referred to as the "followership model." Philip J. Powelick and Andrew Z. Katz, "Defining the American Public Opinion/Foreign Policy Nexus," *Mershon International Studies Review*, Vol. 42, No.1 (May 1998)). The Vietnam War undermined this belief, even as subsequent research continued to suggest that the American public had a "very thin veneer of factual knowledge about politics, economics, and geography.... treaties, negotiations with other nations, characteristics of weapons systems, foreign leaders and the like" (O. Holsti, 447). Despite continued demonstration of the American citizenry's lack of specific foreign policy knowledge, public opinion in the aggregate has proved to be extremely stable, (Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, "Changes in Americans' Policy Preferences, 1935-1979," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (1982), and "Foreign Policy and the Rational Public," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (June 1988), explicably events-driven and rational (J. E. Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion*. (New York: Wiley, 1973) and "structured in at least moderately coherent ways" (O. Holsti, 448). Public attitudes, it was argued, about foreign policy are as stable as that about domestic attitudes. Christopher H. Achen, "Mass Political Attitudes and the Survey Response," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (December 1975), and Mark Peffley and Jon Hurwitz, "International Events Foreign Policy Beliefs: Public Responses to Changing Soviet-American Relations," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (May, 1992). Politics have reinforced scholarship, reiterating the importance of public opinion in policymaking (There are myriad signs that policymakers do not treat the public's opinions on policy issues as inconsequential: For example, every presidential administration in recent decades has employed public opinion consultants (O. Holsti, 451); the empirical record suggests policymakers have been directly impacted by public opinion in crafting foreign policy (Citing R. C. Hilderbrand, *Power and the people: Executive Management of Public Opinion in Foreign Affairs, 1897-1967*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); foreign policy has proved to be a key issue in predicting voting (John H. Aldrich, John L. Sullivan and Eugene Borgida, "Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting: Do Presidential Candidates 'Waltz Before A Blind Audience?'" *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 83, No. 1 (March 1989)); and policymaking tends to coincide with existing public opinion (Alan D. Monroe, "Consistency between Public Preferences and National Policy Decision," *American Politics Quarterly*, Vol. 7, 1979).

represent public attitudes and preferences. As such, a re-election-seeking politicians must head public opinion should they wish to win votes in the next poll.<sup>191</sup>

Given their near-universal tendency to denounce terrorism and publically promise never to negotiate with terrorists, statesmen may lock themselves into hard-line policies and risk punishment at the polls if they attempt to shift towards a more conciliatory policy. In analogous inter-state conflicts, this locked in effect is blamed not only on public sentiment, but on “audience costs,” which are generated when the reputation-conscious public punishes a state leader for backing down from public threats that “engage the national honor.”<sup>192</sup> Public opinion in terrorist crises may operate much in the same way.<sup>193</sup> The public may punish a state leader who publically declares that he will not negotiate with a terrorist group only to have it come to light that he subsequently engaged in just such negotiations. Public threats against a terrorist group may not preclude employing negotiations to end a terrorist campaign, but they do raise their domestic political cost. Indeed, the drastic, 20-point decline in President Regan’s

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<sup>191</sup> An executive who can’t or won’t seek re-election is not unburdened by political opinion. Established political parties help to ensure the public has the capacity to punish the executive’s party for his a tone def policy choices, leverage that ensures the executive will pay attention to public opinion even in the event that he won’t stand for re-election.

<sup>192</sup> See James D. Fearon, “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (September, 1994), James D. Fearon, “Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands versus Sinking Costs,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (February 1997), Robert F. Trager and Lynn Vavreck, “The Political Costs of Crisis Bargaining: Presidential Rhetoric and the Role of Party,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 55, Issue 3 (July 2011), Michael Tomz, “Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach,” *International Organization*, Vol. 61, Issue 4 (October 2007), and Matthew S. Levendusky and Michael C. Horowitz, “The (Non-) Partisan Logic of Audience Costs,” Paper presented at the 2009 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in Toronto, September 2009.

<sup>193</sup> Terrorist crises are particularly well-suited to generating further public backlash against conciliatory counterterrorism strategies because the nature of terrorist crises almost invariably leads statesmen to issue public threats against the challengers and declarations that the state will not negotiate with terrorists. Even after the conflict has proved impermeable to retribution and deterrence strategies, leaders may feel locked into the hard-line positions they staked out early in the terrorist campaign because they fear the public will punish them at the ballot box if they employ conciliatory counterterrorism measures.



approval rating<sup>194</sup> following the revelation that the US had engaged in a hostages-for-arms deal after repeated public declarations by Reagan that the US would not negotiate with terrorists may be indicative of the potential for audience costs in a terrorist crisis. It is important to note that alternate explanations for the public reaction to the Contra affair abound,<sup>195</sup> and there is no consensus over what drives public opinion on counterterrorism policy, but the prospects of audience costs applying to counterterrorism policy is potentially important given the tendency for political candidates and elected officials to take strong public stances against terrorism that may complicate policymaking down the road. Even if we were to find strong evidence that audience costs do apply to terrorist conflicts that should not suggest that only democratic executives – who it is argued are better able to generate audience costs - should be concerned about their publics’ reactions to their counterterrorism policies.

While autocratic states may not hold regular elections, or free and fair ones for that matter, and regularly poll their citizens regarding their preferences, it is naïve to assume that public opinion doesn’t matter to autocratic rulers. It must be recognized that public opinion is not restricted to up or down ratification at the polls.<sup>196</sup> Public opinion can be expressed and manifest in other ways – demonstrations, media portrayals, social

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<sup>194</sup> In the month before the Iran-Contra scandal broke, 67% of the American public approved of Reagan’s job in office. By the first week of December, Reagan’s approval rating had dropped by 20 points, to 47%, setting a record for largest fall in approval in a month. “Job Performance Ratings for President Reagan,” Roper Center Public Opinion Archives, available from [[http://webapps.ropercenter.uconn.edu/CFIDE/roper/presidential/webroot/presidential\\_rating\\_detail.cfm?allRate=True&presidentName=Reagan#.TzAcbeNrObM](http://webapps.ropercenter.uconn.edu/CFIDE/roper/presidential/webroot/presidential_rating_detail.cfm?allRate=True&presidentName=Reagan#.TzAcbeNrObM)], accessed on February 6, 2012.

<sup>195</sup> The public’s reaction to the Iran-Contra scandal could also signal that the public will punish: lying politicians, incompetent leaders, any conciliatory policies toward terrorists, or specific to this situation, support to the contras. Jon A. Krosnick and Donald R. Kinder, “Altering the Foundations of Support for the President Through Priming,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (June 1990).

<sup>196</sup> Public opinion is often assumed to be represented by “attitudes and vote intentions data,” but, as Shamir and Shikaki argue, public opinion is decidedly more complex, as it includes “behavioral expressions, as well as more tacit normative cues and expectations of future events and developments.” Jacob Shamir and Khalil Shikaki, *Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion: The Public Imperative in the Second Intifada*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 31.

media, and lobbyist organizations, to name a few.<sup>197</sup> When it comes to the consequences of ignoring public opinion, autocrats may actually be more at risk than democrats:

Whereas a democratically-elected leader who ignores public opinion may risk losing his seat, an autocrat who ignores the public risks losing his head.<sup>198</sup> When leaders have not been democratically elected and therefore do not have institutional legitimacy, they need to derive legitimacy from some other source (e.g. divine lineage, ethnic group affiliation). If autocrats derive their legitimacy and consolidate support from ties to an ethnic group, it is likely that they have to be at least somewhat responsive to the opinions of *that* group. Likewise, when large, vocal sections of the population beyond this group rise up, autocratic rulers are often forced to respond in order to prevent their own overthrow.

Thus the autocratic-democratic structural dichotomy may not be useful in understanding how public opinion impacts state executive counterterrorism policymaking.<sup>199</sup> This was exemplified at the Camp David talks in 2000, wherein despite Yasser Arafat's continued efforts to undermine all checks on his power as Palestinian President, leading some to describe the Palestinian Authority under his rule as "a liberalized autocracy,"<sup>200</sup> Arafat was far more affected by Palestinian public opinion than the democratically-elected Israeli Prime Minister who sat across from him at the

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<sup>197</sup> It has been argued that public opinion is more than the opinion polls, voting, and public demonstrations directly observed by the policymaker, but rather can be expressed through the media's portrayal of news stories, lobbying groups, social media, or congressional moods. With regard to the latter, congress was long assumed to vote parochially, although studies have shown that voting on foreign policy and defense issues correlate with ideology not constituency interests. See James M. Lindsay, "Parochialism, Policy, and Constituency Constraints: Congressional Voting on Strategic Weapon Systems," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (November 1990), and Wayne Moyer, "House Voting on Defense: An Ideological Explanation," in *Military Force and American Security*, eds. Bruce M. Russett and Alfred Stephan, (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

<sup>198</sup> Shamir and Shikaki, 32.

<sup>199</sup> As much is argued by Weeks, whose research finds that democracies do not have a significant signaling advantage over autocracies in this regard. Jessica L. Weeks, "Autocratic Audience Costs: Regime Type and Signaling Resolve," *International Organization*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (Winter 2008).

<sup>200</sup> Shamir and Shikaki, 48, quoting Brumberg 2003.

negotiating table at Camp David in 2000.<sup>201</sup> Today, there is a consensus that public opinion matters, yet the debate continues over the determinants of public opinion on particular foreign policy issues,<sup>202</sup> how public opinion manifests itself, and the causal mechanisms through which it influences policymaking. All this is to say, public opinion can matter in autocratic decision-making, but how public opinion is understood by the autocrat and why and when it matters require deeper study.

Even structural differences across government types alter the degree to which public opinion constrains executive policymaking: For example, whereas parliamentary systems create a single chain of delegation from the voters directly to parliament, a presidential system creates multiple, competing popular legitimacies as rival branches (the executive and congress) are both directly elected and can claim popular mandates.<sup>203</sup> Does that mean that parliaments are more responsive to public opinion than presidents? A few limited comparative studies have found quite the opposite: presidential systems with their separation of powers are more “deliberate in their actions,” and, over time, “more reliably responsive to public opinion.”<sup>204</sup> Thus differences in how democracies are organized will shape how the executive considers public opinion during the policymaking process.

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>202</sup> There is a literature that seeks to determine influence of worldview (i.e. isolationist/internationalist, hard-line/accommodationalist, or realist/idealist paradigms) and core values and postures on foreign policy attitudes. See James H. Billington, “Realism and Vision in Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 65, and Eugene R. Wittkopf, “On the Foreign Policy beliefs of the American People: A Critique and Some Evidence,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 30 (1986), and Mark Peffley and Jon Hurwitz, “International Events Foreign Policy Beliefs: Public Responses to Changing Soviet-American Relations,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (May 1992).

<sup>203</sup> Kaare Strom, “Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies,” *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2000).

<sup>204</sup> Christopher Wlezien and Stuard N. Soroka, “Political Institutions and the Opinion-Policy Link,” *West European Politics*, Vol. 35, No. 6 (November 2012), 1413.

Regardless of the system of government, public opinion is not static. Under continued attack, it is likely that public attitudes about terrorism and preferences for how the government responds will change. Conflict-induced war weariness is expected to facilitate a shift in the public's preferences for counterterrorism solutions. Continued violence in the face of punishment and suppression counterterrorism strategies may erode public resistance to negotiations. As not all terrorist crises produce war weariness, public opinion will vary with the terrorist crisis scenario and the intensity of the coercion. Lastly, it is possible that even in the face of public opposition, there are ways for the executive to mediate the public backlash and still pursue negotiations.

### **3.3.1.1 War Weariness**

While the public is naturally disposed to disapprove of providing concessions to terrorists,<sup>205</sup> to include negotiations, the cumulative coercion of a long-running terrorist campaign and alienation from the security forces and politicians responsible for heavy-handed counterterrorism measures, may, over time, facilitate a shift in public opinion. To the first point, as the terrorist conflict rages, attitudes may become hardened or shift. For example, as the conflict drags on, a public that once held strong preferences for punishment and suppression counterterrorism strategies may come to view them as ineffective and support for other policy options may increase.

Not all conflicts will generate war weariness at the same rate, or if at all in some cases. There are likely to be differences across countries. For example, in discussing British public opinion during “the Troubles,” UK officials often describe the British

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<sup>205</sup> Most publics are averse to negotiating with terrorists, but there is a fair amount of variation across countries in this regard. This is discussed later in the chapter.

people as having been somewhat hardened to terrorism and counterterrorism losses, resilience several people attributed to their experience in WWII.<sup>206</sup> Despite some differences across countries, it is clear that a short conflict with few attacks is unlikely to cause war weariness in *any* population. And while the metric is likely to be different for each country, only those significantly violent conflicts that continue year after year, perhaps decade after decade, with no end in sight will generate a level of war weariness necessary to alter the public's cost-benefit calculation about continuing a military-centric strategy and thus consider the utility of a negotiations strategy for ending the conflict.

The shift in public perception brought on by war weariness is significant to counterterrorism policymaking. When public resistance to negotiating with terrorists declines, domestic political space opens up to allow a statesman to maneuver the shift in counterterrorism policy. President Charles de Gaulle's deviation from a military-only strategy to negotiations with the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) in Algeria is an example of how shifts in public opinion can influence counterterrorism policymaking.<sup>207</sup> Whereas in the early years of the conflict, a clear majority of the French people preferred the maintenance of Algeria's departmental status, by early 1959, the majority agreed that it was necessary to grant independence to Algeria<sup>208</sup> and supported negotiations with the FLN.<sup>209</sup> This shift helped create domestic political space for de Gaulle to engage the FLN in negotiations. This type of shift occurs when the public is tired of the death and destruction brought on by the conflict, but also due to a feeling of alienation towards the

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<sup>206</sup> Leon Brittan, interview by author, March 17, 2013, Berlin.

<sup>207</sup> Serge Berstein, *The Republic of de Gaulle 1958-1969*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 36-37.

<sup>208</sup> Citing French public opinion polling, including specifically: "L'Algerie et l'Union Française," *Sondages*, No. 2 (1957), 41 and "Les Debuts de la Ve Republique: L'Opinion en Février 1959," *Sondages*, No. 2 (1959), 36. John Talbott, French Public Opinion and the Algerian War: A Research Note, *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Autumn 1975), 357.

<sup>209</sup> Berstein, 37.

security services that have spent years carrying out the government's suppression and punishment counterterrorism strategies.

Year after year, emergency measures and heavy-handed kinetic operations against terrorists<sup>210</sup> begin to take their toll and the public feels increasingly alienated from the security services trying to protect them.<sup>211</sup> For example, in their efforts to combat the Tupamaros, Montevideo's police, in concert with the Uruguay's armed forces, conducted extensive and repeated house-to-house searches in the city.<sup>212</sup> While well-intentioned, the raids – aimed at locating hostages held by the Tupamaros – were clumsily executed, at all hours of night, and often without the appropriate warrants, and thus, served to create resentment among Montevideo's population without turning up Tupamaros or their victims.<sup>213</sup> Suppression and punishment strategies carry a significant burden for the population and when they fail to put an end to the conflict, public preferences shift and resistance to negotiations erodes. As a result, war weariness helps create the political space necessary for statesmen to shift a state's counterterrorism policy away from repression and punishment strategies and toward negotiations.

### **3.3.1.2 Terrorist Crisis Scenario**

Just as war weariness varies across countries, it also varies by terrorist crisis scenario. The anticipated revulsion against negotiating with terrorists may not materialize

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<sup>210</sup> Arturo Porzecanski, *Uruguay's Tupamaros* (New York: Praeger, 1973), and E. Moxon-Browne, "Alienation: The Case of Catholics in Northern Ireland," *Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 14, No. 1-2 (Spring 1986).

<sup>211</sup> Hewitt finds that only certain sub-populations express significant polarization as a result of the government's policies and these are usually co-ethnics that are impacted by counterterrorism efforts. In revolutionary crises, likewise, those who were impacted were affected, those who weren't were not. So the degree of alienation likely depends on how indiscriminate the government's policies are. Hewitt, 164-166.

<sup>212</sup> For example, in the month of August, 1970, alone, over 20,000 house searches were conducted looking for Tupamaros' kidnap victims. Porzecanski, 56.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

when the state faces a terrorist crisis scenario where the terrorists' coercion is especially acute. As discussed in Chapter 1, there are crucial differences between negotiations granted in response to an ongoing coercive act and a peace process designed to end a terrorist conflict, to include how the public perceives them. The former - ad hoc or tactical negotiations - are a response to an ongoing coercive terrorist act (i.e. hostage-taking), whereas the latter - strategic negotiations - are a strategy to manage or resolve a larger, violent conflict. Strategic negotiations are not necessarily prompted by a specific coercive event, but rather are a final recourse to address a terrorist conflict against which other counterterrorism policies have proved ineffectual.

Ad hoc and strategic negotiations differ in their precipitating conditions, perceived risks, and suitability to demands. Whereas it takes a large, organized group with significant support to maintain a violent terrorist campaign long enough to coax the state into strategic negotiations, the barriers to entry are much lower for ad hoc negotiations. Just a few individuals can carry out the types of attacks that prompt ad hoc negotiations. The perpetrators need not be terribly capable or have an illustrious attack history. They need not have legitimacy or extensive support. The perpetrators only need to be able to create a single coercive situation with lives hanging in the balance and they have a high likelihood of being extended negotiations.<sup>214</sup>

Ad hoc and strategic negotiations carry very different risks for governance: In most cases a hostage-taking does not threaten the government's capacity to govern.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Edward Mickolus et al. found that from 1968 to 1991, states, many of which have official non-negotiation policies, attempted negotiation in more than half of terrorist hostage-taking incidents. Mickolus et al, *International Terrorism*.

<sup>215</sup> There may be exceptions to this rule - many commentators believe that President Carter's handling of the US Embassy hostage crisis in Iran handcuffed the administration, made the President appear inept, and

Yet, a terrorist campaign, if it is sufficiently violent and enduring, can undermine governance to the point that it threatens those in power. Given the greater risk to governance, one would expect higher negotiation rates for long-running terrorist campaigns as compared to a single coercive attack, but that expectation is not reflected in the empirical record. As demonstrated Chapter 1, single coercive attacks are far more likely to result in negotiations (over 50%) than a terrorist campaign (almost 13%). This counterintuitive discrepancy stems from differences in how the costs of concessions and the risks of inaction are perceived by both statesmen and the public.

Ad hoc negotiations carry lower potential concession costs than strategic negotiations. Ad hoc negotiations are a response to an ongoing tactical operation, and as such, are better suited for short negotiations and quickly delivered demands (e.g. prisoner release, ransom).<sup>216</sup> Even those who support no negotiations policies concede that concessions made during single terrorist event are not necessarily harmful to the state. Indeed, “A concession made in the face of an immediate harm need not constitute a reward unless the terrorists were demanding some irreversible act, and there are few of those (even released prisoners can be captured)...[and] the terrorists can be hunted to the ends of the earth and appropriate action taken to ensure that when the books on the incident are closed, it will not count as a reward for terrorism.”<sup>217</sup> Strategic negotiations, however, are thought to carry much larger concession costs. Loss of territory, the erosion of cultural dominance, and power and resource sharing are viewed as greater forfeitures

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led to an open revolt within his party, all of which made it difficult for the administration to push forward its agenda.

<sup>216</sup> While ad hoc negotiations are not well suited to facilitating strategic goals that require heavy investment and lots of time, that may not stop terrorists from demanding them during hostage takings. This does not suggest that they are irrational in their expectations, but rather that such attacks are often accompanied by demands that are of secondary importance to the central goal of the attack (e.g. publicity, incite government retribution).

<sup>217</sup> Pillar, 36.



than a few million dollars in ransom and the release of prisoners, which can potentially be recovered, or in the latter's case, neutralized.

The domestic political risk of negotiating also varies by scenario. Negotiating with terrorists can be risky should it evoke a negative response from the public and/or condemnation from political rivals. In most cultures, the public is generally opposed to negotiations with terrorist groups, but the type of crisis at hand may alter the public's reaction. While long-term terrorist campaigns certainly cause war weariness, it is not inevitable that that weariness will translate into support for negotiations. It is possible that after years of violence, some populations may be bent on revenge rather than open to conciliation. Thus it may be politically risky for a statesman to propose a negotiations policy the public steadfastly opposes.

Hostage crises, however, require a different risk calculation. Negotiations to end a hostage crisis are often viewed as completely distinct from strategic negotiations aimed at ending a terrorist campaign. In Israel, for example, the government and the public do not consider ad hoc negotiations to secure the release of hostages to constitute *negotiating with terrorists*, rather any concessions made during talks are viewed as “humanitarian gestures.”<sup>218</sup> The media coverage of the hostages' plight combined with public appeals by their families makes it difficult to not negotiate for their release. Hostage crises can generate “overwhelming” pressure on the government to negotiate regardless of peacetime preferences.<sup>219</sup> In 2007, when 23 Korean missionaries were abducted in Afghanistan, the Korean public aggressively advocated for negotiations and was quick to react negatively to perceived delays and blunders on the part of the Korean government

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<sup>218</sup> Bergman.

<sup>219</sup> Grant Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics, and Counter-Measures*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 71.

to earn their release.<sup>220</sup> These differences across terrorist scenarios help explain why public opinion is more supportive of granting terrorists negotiations in response to a hostage crisis than to a long running terrorist campaign.

### **3.3.1.3 Mitigating Public Backlash to Negotiations**

While public opinion has the potential to serve as a *de facto* veto on a state executive's pursuit of a conciliatory counterterrorism policy, there are occasionally ways for a statesman to pursue talks even when the public does not support them. In the event that executives can mitigate, or insulate themselves from, public backlash to negotiation policies, they could pursue talks despite a lack of public support. In an ideal world, statesmen would avoid public declarations labeling the group as "terrorist" and "criminal" and avoid specific promises for retribution and justice that would lock them into hard-line counterterrorism policies and make it difficult to garner support for conciliatory policies down the line. Unfortunately, few officials demonstrate such strategic foresight during the early days or years of a terrorist campaign. Moreover, statesmen are incentivized to make such statements in order to strengthen the state's bargaining position vis-à-vis the terrorist group. In the event that executives do not refrain from hard line statements, they must find a way to effectively untie themselves from these positions in the eyes of the public in order to have the domestic room to pursue negotiations. Another important way for statesmen to temper possible backlash and insulate themselves politically is to persuade other political elites to publically support negotiations – or at least refrain from criticizing the strategy – in order not to fan

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<sup>220</sup> Yungwook Kim, "Negotiating with terrorists: The iterated game of the Taliban Korean hostage case," *Public Relations Review*, Vol. 34 (2008), 266.

the fires of public resentment. Given the potential domestic political advantage of levying such criticism, and the ease with which such a message resonates, it is unlikely that the executives in countries with viable oppositions will be able to silence such critiques. In lieu of effectively implementing these two mitigation strategies, it is possible that party cues can mitigate the public's response.

A state executive's reputation and political party can help influence how the public perceives the onset of negotiations with a terrorist challenger. A leader's party is a powerful signal to the public regarding the appropriateness of his/her counterterrorism policy choice.<sup>221</sup> The literature on inter-state conflict is informative here: If a left-leaning executive, who is assumed to be more dovish, takes a heavy-handed, military approach in an inter-state conflict; the leader must have had a good reason. Conversely, when the right-wing executive, who is expected to be more hawkish, stands down from a public threat to employ a conciliatory policy, the public interprets this as the best suited response to the threat.<sup>222</sup> Partisan cues incentivize leaders – once in office - to make

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<sup>221</sup> Beyond partisan cues, the way a statesman frames a crisis or primes the public for a particular course of action may help mitigate public's opposition to its leaders negotiating with terrorists, but it is unclear if such strategies are sufficient in and of themselves to make the political space necessary to pursue negotiations. Framing and priming may not work if the public and particular government veto players are vehemently against negotiations or if the opposition successfully uses the policy as a wedge issue with voters. Bertram I. Spector, "Negotiating with Villains Revisited: Research Note," *International Negotiation*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (2003).

<sup>222</sup> Tyler Cowen and Daniel Sutter find that under assumptions of retrospective voting, only a right-wing president can credibly signal the desirability of a course of action that is deemed left-wing. Tyler Cowen and Daniel Sutter, "Why Only Nixon Could Go to China," *Public Choice*, Vol. 97, Issue 4 (1998). Cukierman and Tommasi find that when a right-wing president, who proposes a policy that is drastically more leftist than the ideological stance of his party, the public is more likely to believe it is an objectively good policy option and not the result of an ideological preference. Alex Cukierman and Mariano Tommasi, "When Does It Take a Nixon to Go to China?" *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (March 1998), 193. Schultz finds that when a dovish government cooperates with a hostile enemy, their policy is considered extreme, but when hawks cooperate they are believed to be moderate. Kenneth A. Shultz, "The Politics of Risking Peace: Do Hawks or Doves Deliver the Olive Branch?" *International Organization*, Vol. 59, No. 1, (Winter, 2005), 5. Chiozza and Choi conclude that domestic constituents assess the credibility of their leaders' choices in conflicts with an eye to their previous conflict behavior (e.g. military experience). Giacomo Chiozza and Ajin Choi, "Guess Who did What: Political Leaders and the Management of Territorial Disputes, 1950-1990," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (2003).

policy against type in crises,<sup>223</sup> particularly with regard to hawkish leaders for whom conciliatory policies may serve as an electoral boon.<sup>224</sup> Indeed, history is replete with concrete examples of partisan cues enhancing the credibility of against-type conciliatory policy choices: Using an inter-state conflict example, Anwar Sadat would not have been able to make peace with Israel had it not been for his own military success in the early stages of the 1973 war, which he frequently referenced in his domestic speeches to remind the Egyptian people that he had been strong enough to “exact a price on the Israelis” before considering peace with them.<sup>225</sup> Terrorist crises are thought to work in a similar way. It is unclear that Ariel Sharon would have been able to forcibly remove thousands of settlers in Gaza as part of the implementation of the Oslo Accords and survive politically without his hawkish credentials. I argue that the only-Nixon-could-go-to-China theory applies to managing the domestic politics of terrorist crises; as such, while it takes a dove to fight a war, it is better for a hawk to offer an olive branch to a terrorist group.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Thus during an interstate crisis in the American context, “Democratic presidents have incentive to fight losing wars that achieve nothing rather than remain out of crises. Republican presidents, by contrast, have strong incentives to stay out of losing wars.” Robert F. Trager and Lynn Vavreck, “The Political Costs of Crisis Bargaining: Presidential Rhetoric and the Role of Party,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 55, Issue 3 (July 2011), 527.

<sup>224</sup> Shultz, “The Politics of Risking Peace,” 5. Schultz suggests that it is not only domestic political factors that incentive a hawk to pursue cooperation, but also strategic factors. The strategic and domestic are interdependent in this case. When trust is low, but the costs of continued conflict are high, then statesmen from parties with hawkish reputations are more likely to engage in negotiations with hostile enemies, and the resulting cooperation is more robust.

<sup>225</sup> When Sadat addressed the Egyptian parliament upon his return he referred to his people as “Ya Sha’ab October” – or “Oh, you people of October” – at least 18 times, which Friedman sees as a clear reference to the Egyptians victories in the early stages of the 1973 war. Thomas L. Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), 89.

<sup>226</sup> It should also be noted that the benefits of against-type policies are not limited to public opinion, but also include spoiler management. When pursuing negotiations with terrorist groups, it appears that a hawkish reputation may insulate the state’s executive from right-wing spoilers within the government. Trager and Vavreck, 531-532. Cukierman and Tommasi find as much: their research suggests the potential for spoilers is often reduced when the president comes from a party that has traditionally opposed the policy he has just enacted. Alex Cukierman and Mariano Tommasi, “When Does It Take a Nixon to Go to China?” *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (March 1998), 193.

The importance of against-type counterterrorism policymaking extends beyond public support: Some research suggests that the potential for spoilers – those “leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it”<sup>227</sup> - is reduced when state leaders come from parties that have traditionally opposed the policy just enacted.<sup>228</sup> The term *spoiler* is often reserved for those terrorist or insurgent factions that oppose negotiations and seek to derail them with violence, but spoilers may also be members of the establishment.<sup>229</sup> More commonly termed “veto players,” there are individual actors and agencies that may thwart the leader’s attempt to shift towards a negotiations-oriented counterterrorism policy.

Public opinion is central to understanding when a statesman is willing to pursue negotiations with a terrorist group to end a violent campaign. In general, people don’t like terrorists and the idea of negotiating with them. That said, preferences vary across countries due to their specific history with terrorism and culture. Preferences are not static, however, and they may change when other counterterrorism strategies fail and a bloody conflict appears as if it will drag on in perpetuity. Only those executives who, at best, enjoy public support – or apathy – for a negotiations policy or, at least, are capable of insulating themselves from public blowback, will pursue negotiations. A consenting public alone, however, will not create sufficient political space for executives to pursue

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<sup>227</sup> Stephen Jon Stedman, “Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes,” *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Autumn 1997), 5.

<sup>228</sup> Cukierman and Tommasi, 193.

<sup>229</sup> Spoilers, it is argued, do not necessarily have to violent either - S.I. Keethaponcalan, “Non-Violent Spoiling: The Janatha Vimukthi Pramuna and the Peace Process in Sri Lanka,” *Journal of History and Social Sciences*, Vol. 1, Issue 1 (July-December 2010), and Christopher Farrington, “Non-Violent Opposition to Peace Processes: Northern Ireland’s Serial Spoilers,” UCD Geary Institute Discussion Paper Series, February 28, 2006.

negotiations, rather they must also have the support – or at least acquiescence – of key veto players.

### 3.3.2 Veto Players

Traditionally, analyses of foreign policymaking treated states as unitary actors that enacted policies designed to “maximiz[e] some objective function.”<sup>230</sup> Current scholarship is more likely to recognize that policy is the outcome of a series of processes whereby numerous actors - each with its own objectives, biases, and constraints – exert influence on the policymaking process. This influence can be unwitting – the product of standard operating procedures and bias<sup>231</sup> – or it can be purposeful – the result of efforts to assert personal or bureaucratic interests.<sup>232</sup> In both cases, not all domestic players have the same capacity to influence policy outcomes. Depending on the institutional power structure of the state and the nature of the problem at hand, certain actors or agencies may have greater control or say in decision-making. Those with the most power - “individual[s] or collective actor[s] whose agreement (by majority rule for collective

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<sup>230</sup> Matthew O. Jackson and Massimo Morelli, “The Reasons for Wars – an Updated Survey,” chapter in Christopher J. Coyne, *Handbook on the Political Economy of War*, (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2009), 48.

<sup>231</sup> Graham Allison’s Organizational Process paradigm represents this concept of unwitting framing by treating the government as if it “consists of a conglomerate of semi-feudal, loosely allied organizations, each with a substantial life of its own.”<sup>231</sup> Each agency, with its own goals, responsibilities, and standard operating procedures (SOPs), works towards a solution in relative independence. Ultimately, a particular policy choice is the result of meta-decision-making process that relies on policy options produced by the standardized decision-making channels of individual agencies. Graham Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (September 1969), 698.

<sup>232</sup> This approach is represented by Graham Allison’s Bureaucratic Politics paradigm, which sees foreign policy choices as the outcome of competition between the heads of bureaucratic agencies. Key government players exert their personal, bureaucratic, and political power to push, pull, compromise and defect thus creating policy outputs that are the product of domestic crisis bargaining. Policy implementation - either as it trickles down through institutional SOPs or as individual agency heads exert their influence on its application - a policy in practice is likely to look very different than the policy that was authorized by the executive. Ibid.

actors) is required for a change in policy”<sup>233</sup> - can act as veto players in counterterrorism policymaking. A state’s leader is not expected to be able to successfully shift toward a negotiations counterterrorism policy if key veto players oppose the strategy.

Which actors and agencies constitute veto players is determined by the system of government: Presidential/chamber systems have institutional veto players (i.e. Congress), whereas parliamentary systems have partisan veto players (i.e. political parties). For example, in the United States, the Congress could withhold funding associated with the President’s preferred counterterrorism policy. Moreover, the bureaucratic agencies entrusted to carry out the policy could essentially veto it through poor implementation. The veto framework, it is argued, can be expanded to include the judiciary, referendums, local governments, and other institutions. The nature and distribution of a state’s veto players determine the likelihood that the status quo will be preserved even when change is needed or desirable (i.e. negotiations will not be employed). The odds of enacting policy change improve when the number of veto players increases, their congruence decreases, and their cohesion increases.<sup>234</sup> Thus, negotiations may only be possible when states have a small number of ideologically cohesive veto players whose positions on negotiations are similar.

### **3.3.2.1 Security Services**

The nature of counterterrorism policymaking and implementation essentially

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<sup>233</sup> George Tsebelis, “Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism and Multipartyism,” *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (July 1995).

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

provides the security forces an intuitional veto.<sup>235</sup> An executive will be unable to successfully pursue negotiations with a terrorist group if the military, or security forces more broadly, opposes them.<sup>236</sup> There are numerous reasons why the military would disagree with a negotiations strategy and several avenues through which it could thwart negotiations.

There are numerous scenarios under which the military would oppose negotiations with terrorists: First, benignly, the organizational biases of militaries may lead to the promotion of offensive military doctrines and the failure to consider conciliatory strategies.<sup>237</sup> Second, the asymmetric power imbalance may convince the security forces that the defeat of the terrorists is inevitable and as such, they see no reason to concede to negotiations. Third, the military may resent any concessions offered to the terrorists who were responsible for the deaths of its soldiers. Fourth, military commanders may see the policy shift as forfeiting their hard won gains against the terrorists, especially if they believe the terrorists will use the respite to rearm and regroup. Lastly, negotiations may spark military opposition out of concern that the security forces' *raison d'être* – or at the very least their influence and budgetary largess - will evaporate as kinetic counterterrorism operations wind down.

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<sup>235</sup> Katharine Chorley's analysis of state efforts to suppress revolutions argues that the military – or security services more broadly - plays the deciding role in state survival. It is not the capacity, but the willingness, of the military to defend the government from revolutionary insurgents that ensures the state will survive. As such, compliant militaries are the key determinant in a state's ability to ward off revolutionary threats. This may hold true for counterterrorism as well – at least as far as offensive counterterrorism strategies are concerned. It is less clear what role they play in conciliatory strategies, although the security services could certainly oppose, undermine, or sabotage negotiations with terrorists they had until recently been told to destroy. Katharine Chorley, *Armies and the Art of Revolution*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

<sup>236</sup> One can consider the military or security forces more broadly when discussing the potential for veto players, but narrow aspects of security forces, such as the national police, cannot alone constitute a true veto player, even though they are directly engaged in counterterrorism. The police force(s) does not constitute the same monolithic, superiorly armed, and politically powerful force as does the military.

<sup>237</sup> Jack Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).



The military holds an *ex ante* veto over the implementation of offensive counterterrorism policies. A noted example – albeit a duplicitous one – is Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird’s refusal carry out President Richard Nixon’s orders to bomb PFLP strongholds in Jordan following a series of skyjackings in 1970.<sup>238</sup> At the time, Laird reported that the weather was not suitable for such an operation thus forcing Nixon to consider other policy options, but later admitted, “the weather was just an excuse. Given America's involvement in Vietnam, he did not want to drag the nation into a new military adventure.”<sup>239</sup> Given that negotiations, as compared to bombing campaigns, don’t rest on military action or fall under the obvious jurisdiction of the military, it would appear that the military would have little influence over a negotiations-oriented counterterrorism policy. But while it may lack a formal institutional veto over conciliatory counterterrorism strategies, the security forces, by their monopoly on the use of force, maintain a *de facto* veto on counterterrorism policymaking.

The military can affect the strategic environment in such a way as to make negotiations with a terrorist group strategically or politically infeasible, or in extreme cases, it can use force to remove the state executive from office – or the threat thereof – to coerce him or her to abandon the pursuit of negotiations. In most countries with strong civilian control over a professional military, the security forces may try to dissuade the executive from pursuing negotiations with a terrorist group. In the event the military’s concerns and objections were ignored, security forces would most likely stand down and do as ordered. If the military wanted to prevent negotiations, however, there are several

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<sup>238</sup> William B. Quandt, *Peace process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967*, Third Edition, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 78.

<sup>239</sup> PBS, *Hijacked: American Experience*, 2005, film transcript available from [<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/hijacked/filmmore/pt.html>], accessed on May 2, 2011.

avenues for it to do so. The security forces could publically denounce the negotiations to fan elite opposition and undermine public support, in hopes of making negotiations so politically costly that the executive abandons them. If it is unwilling to publically criticize the policy or the executive, the military could use more underhanded techniques like leaking classified material to undermine support for the policy. For example, during the negotiations to end the civil war in Cambodia, elements of the US intelligence community were opposed to the negotiations approach advocated by George H. W. Bush's administration and frequently leaked classified intelligence reports about Khmer Rouge military movements to like-minded members of Congress,<sup>240</sup> who in turn excoriated the administration's course of action in hearings and in the press.<sup>241</sup> While they were not successful in this particular case, the Cambodian example highlights the unique position – both in their credibility on defense matters and their access to information - for the security establishment to raise the domestic political costs of negotiations to the point where an executive would be incentivized to abandon them.

Strategically, the military also has the capacity to undermine negotiations and subvert any settlement they produce. For example, the military can engage in kinetic actions against the terrorist group in an effort to undermine the tenuous trust between combatants, thus imperiling negotiations. Such attacks can be used to provoke a violent response from the group, in the hope that renewed violence will erode support for negotiations amongst the public and within the government. The military can also work to undermine any settlement produced by negotiations, either by continuing to move

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<sup>240</sup> Richard H. Solomon, interview by author, April 27, 2012, Washington D.C., and Richard H. Solomon and Stanley Karnow, *Exiting Indochina: U.S. Leadership of the Cambodia Settlement & Normalization with Vietnam*, (Washington D.C.: United Institute of Peace, 2000).

<sup>241</sup> In this particular case, the Bush administration was able to overcome congressional opposition to pursue a negotiated settlement in Cambodia. Solomon and Karnow, *Exiting Indochina*.

against the terrorists who signed it, failing to crack down on spoilers, or by refusing to undertake actions required by the agreement (e.g. establish joint ceasefire monitoring groups, withdraw troops from land relinquished to the terrorist group).

The most important “veto” the security services hold is derived from their monopoly on force, which places them in the unique position of being the only institution that can both ensure the regime will physically survive the conflict and forcibly remove the executive.<sup>242</sup> Compliant militaries are the key determinant in a state’s ability to ward off revolutionary threats.<sup>243</sup> Likewise, the military is the only institution equipped to physically remove the executive from office. In some countries the threat of a coup is explicit and backed by history – if an executive institutes a policy that is offensive to the military establishment, he or she is likely to be overthrown. In other countries, the threat is less explicit. As the Philippine case will highlight, the reliance on the military to stay in power makes it very difficult for state leaders to employ counterterrorism strategies that go against the military’s preferences or threaten the turf and budgets of the security forces. This is especially true in countries with weak institutions. As such, in countries where there are weak institutions and the military is not highly professional and under firm civilian control, executives will seriously consider potential resistance from the security forces before employing negotiations to end a terrorist conflict. Even expected opposition from the military may be enough to convince state leaders that their preferred policy is not worth the anticipated political consequences. In counterterrorism policymaking, the military plays a central role in determining whether negotiations are a viable strategy. The military, however, is not alone and depending on the country in

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<sup>242</sup> When discussing the role of the military in regime survival, I refer only to physical survival, not political survival, the latter of which the military cannot guarantee.

<sup>243</sup> Chorley.

question, there may be several other veto players whose acquiescence is essential for an executive to pursue talks with terrorists.

### **3.3.2.2 Other Veto Players**

Institutional structures determine which other actors and agencies will serve as veto players over an executive's pursuit of a conciliatory counterterrorism strategy. For example, if the law requires treaties to be approved by the legislature, then legislators potentially have an *ex post* veto over a negotiated settlement. Even by signaling their disinclination to approve concessions to terrorists legislators may dissuade an executive from pursuing talks, amounting to a *de facto ex ante* veto. Even without an institutional veto, a government agency or actor that is involved with the implementation of such an agreement will have some leverage over the process. Whether that leverage amounts to an *ex post* veto depends on the particular agency/actor and the country in question. In many cases, partisanship may serve to incentivize government actors to employ their veto if the opposition has an institutional role in the government (e.g. it controls a house of the legislature). Lastly, it should be noted that public opinion may also mitigate the identity and efficacy of veto players: For example, there is some evidence that past US presidential administrations have looked at congressional modes as "the relevant manifestation of public opinion,"<sup>244</sup> which suggests that the president is more sensitive to Congress' position not only because of its institutional veto role, but for its representation of public sentiment. As the Laird example demonstrates, it is possible that certain actors or agencies may see themselves as playing a key role in representing the public, a

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<sup>244</sup> PBS, Hijacked.

worldview that may cause them to fashion themselves as populist veto players protecting the public from the state leader's preferred policy.

While the exact players may vary from country to country, veto players are central to determining the onset of state-terrorist negotiations. State leaders are only expected to pursue negotiations when doing so does not risk their position. Only when *ex ante* veto players support negotiations (or at least acquiesce) and the executive is not dissuaded from pursuing talks by the threat of an *ex post* veto over any settlement they might produce is there is enough domestic political room for the executive to pursue a negotiations policy to end a terrorist conflict.

### **3.3.3 Domestic Political Environment Conclusion**

The domestic political environment is central to understanding when states can transition to a negotiations-oriented counterterrorism strategy. Given the very public and domestic nature of terrorist crises, public opinion acts as a significant force in counterterrorism policymaking. Moreover, given their vested bureaucratic and political interests, other domestic actors may serve as institutional or political veto players that prevent state executives from pursuing their preferred policy course. As such, in order for an executive to pursue negotiations with a terrorist group both the public and potential veto players must be supportive, or at the very least, remain ambivalent or be rendered inconsequential. This is due to the interactive nature of the two: public opposition may incentivize veto players – especially opposition parties in the position to veto policy – to oppose the executive's preferred course of action. Conversely, elite opposition to the policy may stoke public censure. This chapter innovates by considering these domestic

political dynamics in the counterterrorism policymaking process, thus enhancing the explanatory power of the theory to predict when and why states will put negotiations on the table for terrorist crises.

### **3.4 The Role of Third Parties?**

The strategic and domestic factors outlined herein are key determinants in the onset of state-terrorist negotiations. However, other factors can also be seen to play a secondary role in negotiation onset. One such factor present in all three of the case studies included in this project is the role of outside third parties.

Third parties can exert influence over the course of a terrorist conflict in myriad ways: For example, third parties can alter the strategic environment by providing terrorists with weapons and shelter, elevating the group's status, or vouching for the group's capacity to commit to a negotiated outcome. Third parties can generate domestic pressure on a state executive by weighing in on the conflict or criticizing the state's counterterrorism policy. Lastly, third parties can offer incentives to entice the state to begin negotiations with a terrorist group. While third parties can exert significant influence over state counterterrorism policymaking, they are neither a necessary, nor a sufficient condition for the onset of state-terrorist negotiations. As will be made clear in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, third parties may facilitate the process of negotiations with terrorists, when it is already in the state's interest to pursue talks. Conversely, third parties may seek to coerce states to engage in negotiations, but any resulting talks are likely to represent disingenuous stalling tactics rather than genuine negotiations. Ultimately, third parties are unlikely to convince an executive to pursue a peace process

with a terrorist challenger when doing so violates the state's core interests or threatens the executive's position.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter laid out a theoretical framework that models state counterterrorism policymaking as the product of strategic *and* domestic opportunities and constraints. This two-pronged approach provides a more comprehensive paradigm from which to examine state counterterrorism decision-making. I argue that terrorist group endurance, type, and factional politics are key in a state's calculation about its terrorist challenger's capacity and will to keep fighting and its ability to credibly commit to a negotiated settlement, which ultimately influence the state's expected utility from negotiations. Domestic political considerations are at least as important as strategic considerations. I proffer that two key domestic actors – the public and veto players – have the ability to obstruct the state leaders' efforts to employ strategic negotiations as part of their counterterrorism strategy. It is only when state leaders face capable, credible terrorist challengers, and enjoy relative freedom of action domestically, that they will be able and willing to pursue negotiated solutions to terrorist conflicts.

The chapters that follow seek to test this integrated strategic and domestic politics theory of state-terrorist negotiation onset using a series of historical case studies. The three case studies – Israel, Northern Ireland, and the Philippines – are examined through the aforementioned theoretical framework to determine the conditions that facilitate a state's pivot toward negotiations with a terrorist group. The cases offer the opportunity for comparison between and within cases, as states differ in their counterterrorism

responses across time, geography, and governments, and depending on the terrorist group in question. In Chapter 4, the Israeli case highlights the importance of strategic factors like market share. Despite efforts to bypass the PLO, Israel was eventually forced to negotiate with the group because it was the dominant force in the Palestinian national movement and had successfully co-opted all other potential Palestinian interlocutors. Moreover, the Israeli case demonstrates the power of political veto players, which are extremely powerful in the Knesset and made pursuing a negotiations policy impossible from 1977 to 1982.

As Chapter 5 demonstrates, despite concerns about public opinion and veto players, UK governments faced few hard obstacles in crafting counterterrorism policy. Thus it was not political concerns on the mainland that prevented the onset of negotiations with the IRA until 1998, but rather strategic conditions that left successive governments doubtful if the IRA had the potential to be a willing and capable negotiating partner and concerned over whether Protestant spoilers would react to talks by initiating a bloodbath. It was only after these strategic issues were seen as sufficiently resolved that talks with the IRA commenced.

As will be demonstrated by the Philippines case detailed in Chapter 6, successive governments were unable to earnestly pursue negotiations with the Moro insurgents due to the military veto. Only once the security establishment embraced negotiations was there a genuine push toward a negotiated settlement in Mindanao. The Philippine case is interesting from a strategic standpoint as well because successive governments have, despite the NPA's coercive endurance, viewed the communist insurgents as unreliable negotiating partners, whereas the Moro insurgents were seen as more acceptable partners



for peace – suggesting that group type matters significantly. Despite their differences, a common theme runs through each of these cases: The UK, Philippines, and Israeli governments only pursued negotiations when both the strategic and domestic environments were conducive for talks, that is it say, when they faced a capable and credible terrorist challenger and enjoyed freedom to maneuver domestically. Finally, Chapter 7 provides a comparative analysis of the cases herein and examines the policy implications of the study's findings.

## Chapter 4

### *Israel Case Study*

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines Israel's counterterrorism policymaking from the country's independence until 1993, when the Government engaged in secret negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).<sup>245</sup> The conditions that facilitated the onset of Israeli-PLO negotiations are evaluated against the theoretical argument outlined in Chapter 3. Some have argued that Israeli case is distinct from all others,<sup>246</sup> but while Israel does have some unique qualities, there are enough structural similarities to allow for an interesting comparative study with the Northern Ireland and Philippine case studies. Israel is also well-suited as a within case study for testing the integrated theory of state-terrorist negotiation onset because of its variation on both the independent variables and dependent variables. As expected the Israeli government only engaged in earnest, strategic negotiations with Palestinian terrorists when both the strategic and domestic environments were propitious. That is to say, when the opponent in question had come to be viewed as a capable and credible negotiating partner and the domestic political environment allowed the prime minister room to maneuver.

The Israeli case provides enough intra-case variation to allow us to explicate how the Israeli government evaluated its different terrorist challengers as possible negotiating

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<sup>245</sup> It has been argued that talks between Israel and the PLO began as early as 1984. Stephen Cohen, a Canadian academic, established a dialogue with the PLO that year with the purported support of Shin Bet. Despite protestations to the contrary, Shamir was thought to have known of this venture, but claimed it was limited to discussions about Missing in Action (MIA) soldiers. There is not sufficient evidence to support this claim, moreover, given Shamir's stance on the Palestinian question it makes it unlikely that if such a channel was sanctioned by the Israeli government, that it would have been used for strategic purposes. Anthony Wanis-St. John, *Back Channel Negotiation: Secrecy in the Middle East Peace Process*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 31-32.

<sup>246</sup> Uzi Arad, phone interview with author, June 6, 2012.

partners. The variation in the strategic independent variables (i.e. group size, type, and fractionalization) and dependent variables (i.e. negotiations), allow us to determine if the state privileges some terrorist groups over others when considering the utility of a negotiations strategy. As theorized, the Israeli government was influenced by key strategic traits – large size, ethnonationalist type, cohesive structure and significant market share – when determining which groups it would negotiate with. Size, endurance, and type all prove to be important in the Israeli decision to negotiate with the PLO, but market share is demonstrated to be particularly decisive in this determination. Despite years of trying to bypass the PLO, the Israeli government eventually recognized that the group was the undisputed representative of the Palestinian national cause and any negotiated solution with the Palestinians must include the PLO to be viable.

The Israeli case study offers an interesting illustration of how domestic political factors can prevent state executives from pursuing their preferred counterterrorism policies. The theory laid out in Chapter 3 hypothesizes that state executives will not pursue negotiations with a terrorist group – even if strategic factors are favorable - if doing so threatens their position. It is hypothesized that domestic public opinion and key veto players represent the greatest possible threat to an executive’s pursuit of a negotiations counterterrorism strategy. Public opinion, and executive concerns about public opinion, increase over the course of the period in question in Israeli case, and prove to be important factors in how the Oslo backchannel negotiations were conducted. Veto players, however, played a more decisive role. The Israeli case provides an extreme example of the power of political veto players in a parliamentary system, wherein small parties and even individual lawmakers (even from the prime minister’s own party) have

the capacity to prevent the implementation of a prime minister's preferred counterterrorism strategy.

This chapter begins with an overview of the history of terrorism in Israel and the Israeli government's counterterrorism response. The history is divided into five general periods, which were characterized by a distinct combination of strategic opportunities and domestic obstacles for employing state-terrorist negotiations. For each period, I analyze the strategic and domestic environments to determine if negotiations were viewed as propitious and domestically feasible. On the strategic front, each group fighting is assessed to determine whether the Israelis viewed it as a capable and credible opponent. With regard to the domestic environment, I examine the role of public opinion and potential veto players in order to determine if successive prime ministers had the political maneuverability to pursue a negotiations policy. Lastly, I consider the role of third parties in pursuing conciliatory counterterrorism policies.

## **4.2 History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict & Counterterrorism Responses**

### **4.2.1 Period I – 1948-1967: Few Impediments to Talks, Little Reason to Negotiate**

Upon the British announcement that it intended to end its mandate in Palestine on May 15, 1948, and the Jews living in Palestine declared the State of Israel. Almost immediately, the armies of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq invaded. The war lasted for nine months, but the rag tag Jewish forces were able to beat back the advance of the Arab states and eventually captured additional territory.<sup>247</sup> In the fighting and subsequent violence against Palestinian villages, some 700,000 Palestinians fled.

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<sup>247</sup> Territory in the Negev, West Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Galilee. The war is known to Jews as “Milhemet Ha-atzm'ut” or the War of Independence and “al-Nakbah” or the Catastrophe to Palestinians.

Between February and July 1949, the combatants signed armistice agreements, bringing the fighting to an end. In the aftermath of the war, the Arab states claimed whatever spoils they could: Jordan established control over the West Bank and Egypt established control of the Gaza Strip. Control of Jerusalem was split between Israel in the west and Jordan in the east. The stateless weren't as lucky: Despite the passage of UN General Assembly Resolution 194, which established the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes or be compensated by the state of Israel, most of the refugees were unable or unwilling to do so as long as the Israeli regime was in place.<sup>248</sup>

In the years that followed, the Arab states repeatedly promised redemption to the Palestinian refugees. They vowed to wipe out Israel, but they rarely acted on their threats. On the rare occasion when they attempted to initiate hostilities against their new neighbor, there were calamitous results: For example, Gamal Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal in the summer of 1956 and the closing of the Straits of Tiran resulted in unified military action by Israel, France, and the UK and only ended after the US and UN intervened, with no gains made by Egypt. The general lack of action on the part of the Arab states, and the lackluster results on the few occasions when they did act, started to generate the impression amongst the displaced Palestinians that the Arab states were impotent against Israel and its supporters.

That growing feeling of impotence led some Palestinians to circumvent the Arab states and take the plight of the Palestinians into their own hands. In 1959, Yasser Arafat and several other Palestinians in Kuwait founded Harakat al Tahrir al Falastini (the Palestinian Liberation Movement, known by its reverse acronym FATAH, which also

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<sup>248</sup> Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). The new Israeli government adopted a policy that made repatriation of those who did want to return all but impossible.

means ‘conquest’ in Arabic). The group focused its energies on Syria, which proved to be fertile ground for the movement: the country had over 150,000 Palestinian refugees, a number Palestinian groups were operating there at the time, and the *fedayeen*<sup>249</sup> enjoyed explicit and tacit support from the Syrian military and the government, which turned a blind eye to the border raids the former later launched from Syrian territory.<sup>250</sup> The group had 200-300 members and no fighters at that time,<sup>251</sup> but it grew quickly and Fatah began to send recruits to train in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, and Syria,<sup>252</sup> and then once trained, positioned fighters in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon.<sup>253</sup> After several years of recruiting and training, Fatah’s military wing – al Assifa (the Storm) – began raids into Israel from Lebanon and the West Bank in December 1964. The early raids rarely achieved their intended goals, but garnered the group propaganda success. Despite its coordination with Syria and other Arab regimes, Arafat wanted Fatah to be an independent Palestinian movement, not beholden to other Arab states.<sup>254</sup> He initially did not take money from Arab states, rather, he engaged in aggressive small-scale fundraising – going after rich Palestinians living in Kuwait and the Gulf states. That is not to say that Fatah was isolationist, quite the contrary. From the very beginning Arafat and the other founders of Fatah took an international approach: they sent delegates to China, Cuba, and other socialist countries to forge anti-Western cooperation, met with foreign statesmen to

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<sup>249</sup> *Fedayeen* – In Arabic, the term means the “those who sacrifice.” The term has been used in numerous contexts; in the Palestinian one, the term *fedayeen* refers to Palestinian nationalist guerrillas.

<sup>250</sup> Saïd K. Aburish, *Arafat: From Defender to Dictator*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2004), 53-54. In 1963, a faction that was even more sympathetic to the Palestinians overthrew the Syrian government.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>252</sup> Algeria, Iraq and Syria are mentioned by Aburish. Aburish, 55. Jordan and Syria are mentioned by Rubin. Barry Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory? The Politics and History of the PLO*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 7.

<sup>253</sup> Aburish, 55.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

press them for support, and established contacts with other terrorist and revolutionary groups.<sup>255</sup>

What the founders of Fatah had understood in 1959, the Arab states came to recognize in 1964, when at the first Arab summit, Arab leaders acknowledged their inability to challenge Israel militarily. In order to continue the fight without risking another direct military confrontation and avoid the financial burden of continued conflict, the Arab states founded the PLO with the goal of liberating Palestine through armed struggle.<sup>256</sup> The PLO established the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) as its military wing, but the force was “no more than a gesture” as it was under the thumb of its Arab state benefactors, who despite rhetoric to the contrary, had no intention to engage in armed struggle.<sup>257</sup> In truth, the PLO’s founders had no real hope that the PLO would be able to change the status quo, but they wanted to satisfy the Palestinians within their borders, while keeping Palestinian nationalists under control.<sup>258</sup> Indeed, the founding states had conflicting interests with the PLO’s mission: both Egypt and Jordan laid claim to land (Gaza and the West Bank, respectively) claimed by the Palestinians, thus a potential PLO victory would undermine Egyptian and Jordanian territorial objectives.<sup>259</sup> As expected, the Palestinians already fighting had mixed feelings about the PLO, which was intended to operate as an umbrella organization for all the fedayeen groups, although the Arab states had no intention of ceding control of the Organization to them. Moreover,

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>256</sup> Palestine National Charter of 1964, available from [<http://www.un.int/wcm/content/site/palestine/pid/12363>]. The Palestinian National Charter: Resolutions of the Palestine National Council July 1-17, 1968, available from [[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/plocov.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/plocov.asp)].

<sup>257</sup> Aburish., 57.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid, and Jeremy Pressman, “A Brief History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” May 25, 2005, available from [[http://www.polisci.uconn.edu/people/faculty/doc/history\\_pressman.pdf](http://www.polisci.uconn.edu/people/faculty/doc/history_pressman.pdf)], 6.

<sup>259</sup> Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory?* 7-8.

it was soon apparent that the Arab states wanted to use the Palestinian fedayeen to promote their own interests: For example, in 1966, Syria created As-Sa'iqa purportedly to advance the Palestinian national cause, but in reality the group was intended to be a Ba'athist counter to Fatah's growing power, a proxy force to pursue Syrian interests.

Despite this flurry of activity by Fatah and other Palestinian groups, their fedayeen raids and terrorist attacks throughout the 1950s and most of the 1960s did not pose a major security problem for Israel. Most of the Palestinian nationalist groups that emerged before the 1967 war "disappeared almost as quickly as they emerged."<sup>260</sup> The groups that managed to mount violent raids on Israel did not impress Israeli officials, who viewed them as criminal and amateurish.<sup>261</sup> In 1964, when Aharon Yariv took over Aman, the Israel Defense Force's (IDF) Intelligence Branch, the outgoing chief assured him that the Palestinian guerillas "should not cause Israel concern."<sup>262</sup> Indeed, at the time, the Palestinian fedayeen groups were poorly suited to directly take on the IDF. The security forces, unintimidated, worked to systematically "abolish terrorism and uproot it by eliminating the organization's infrastructures and arresting activists in the Gaza Strip and in Judea and Samaria," successfully putting down the inept lot that attacked Israel.<sup>263</sup> The security forces were even less worried about the Jewish terrorism that continued

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<sup>260</sup> Ian Black and Benny Morris, *Israel's Secret Wars: A History of Israel's Intelligence Services*, (New York: Grove Press, 1991), 237.

<sup>261</sup> Michael Hudson, "The Palestinian Arab Resistance Movement: Its Significance in the Middle East Crisis," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Summer, 1969), 292.

<sup>262</sup> Black and Morris, 237.

<sup>263</sup> Boaz Ganor, *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision Makers*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2011), 27.



through the 1950s, but which posed even less of a threat than the Palestinian variety and soon faded away.<sup>264</sup>

In 1967, tensions mounted between Israel and her neighbors, and the clouds of war darkened over the Middle East. The ensuing conflict would have a significant impact on the trajectory of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but at the time, the Palestinian threat was minimal. From independence until the summer of 1967, the Palestinian nationalist movement had been either non-existent, or disorganized and lacking a focal point. The Palestinian fedayeen were an annoyance, but did not constitute a real threat to Israeli security or governance. It was unfathomable that the Israeli government would have even considered negotiating with the burgeoning Fatah or PLO given the threat – or lack thereof – that they posed. If strategic circumstances had been different, the successive Mapai/Alignment governments would have been well-positioned domestically to pursue negotiations. The left dominated all general elections during this period, won a large number of seats, and built relatively stable, left-leaning coalitions, and did not face significant opposition from the right. Public opinion had yet to be polarized, but more importantly, it did not factor heavily into the counterterrorism policymaking process. Domestically, this period offered fewer obstacles to pursuing a conciliatory counterterrorism strategy, but strategically, there was no reason to do so.

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<sup>264</sup> Jewish terrorism during this period was not focused on Palestinian targets. It was related to internal debates in Israeli society. Noemi Gal-or, “Tolerating Terrorism in Israel,” in *Tolerating Terrorism in the West: An International Survey*, edited by Noemi Gal-or, (London: Routledge, 1991), 61.

#### **4.2.2 Period II – 1967-1977: Growing Terrorist Threat, Shifting Domestic Politics**

1967 proved to be a key turning point in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. After its neighbors amassed troops at her borders in early June, Israel launched a preemptive strike that crippled Egypt's air force. Israel pushed back the attacking forces on three fronts and gained territories in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Sinai, and the Golan Heights - tripling its territory and gaining approximately one million Arabs under its control.<sup>265</sup> The war was quick – six days - and ended in a decisive victory, but its effects were widespread and long-lasting.

In the aftermath of the war, the UN Security Council issued Resolution 242, calling for Israel to withdraw its forces from the Occupied Territories.<sup>266</sup> The Israeli cabinet briefly considered an exchange of land for peace with its neighbors,<sup>267</sup> but soon recanted. With the exception of East Jerusalem, which was annexed, the Israelis hoped to keep the local infrastructure in place for everyday governance, but established a military governor, who had total power to establish and administer legislation in the Occupied Territories. Within a year, Israel began establishing settlements in the Territories, in violation of international law, and exacerbating the conflict with the Palestinians.

The Six Day War marked the death of pan-Arabism and re-entrenchment of the nation state system in the Middle East. The War destroyed the myth of Arab military parity with Israel. Secularism was undermined. After almost two decades of putting their faith in Arab states, it had become abundantly clear to Arafat and other Palestinian nationalists that their champions had only paid lip service to Palestinian rights, and any

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<sup>265</sup> Israeli Knesset, "Six Day War," available from [[http://www.knesset.gov.il/lexicon/eng/six\\_days\\_eng.htm](http://www.knesset.gov.il/lexicon/eng/six_days_eng.htm)], accessed on January 23, 2014.

<sup>266</sup> United Nations, "Resolution 242 (1967)," November 22, 1967, available from [<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/7D35E1F729DF491C85256EE700686136>].

<sup>267</sup> Pressman, "A Brief History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict," 7.

efforts on behalf of the Palestinians had been used to “gain domestic legitimacy, further their own interests, and triumph over Arab rivals.”<sup>268</sup> The massive defeat of the Arab armies in 1967 was the last straw, destroying any lingering faith that the “Arab rulers would be the principal instrument of Israel’s destruction.”<sup>269</sup> It was an extremely dark time for Palestinians and the Arab world, and “Only the Palestinian call to resist stood between them and utter despair and self-disgust.”<sup>270</sup>

After two decades in refugee camps, the Palestinians were tired of waiting for the Arab states to get their act together. The Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) – the military wing of the PLO - had been involved in the war and its association with the Arab states condemned it in the eyes of the Palestinians. Fatah, by comparison, had come through the war unscathed, with its independence, membership, and ample finances intact, and as a result, it was suddenly thrust into the leading role in the Palestinian nationalist movement. Support for Fatah surged, and several new Palestinian nationalist groups were established in the wake of the 1967 War: the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PLFP), which spawned the Palestinian Popular Struggle Organization ((PPSO)/Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PPSF)), then the PFLP-General Command, the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP), and the Popular Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PRFLP). Despite their disagreements and rivalries, many of these groups – including the PFLP, DFLP, and PPSF - joined the PLO, giving the impression of some degree of cross-movement coordination and unity.

The proliferation of new guerrilla groups in the late 1960s significantly altered the threat environment for Israel. The new Palestinian groups were more enduring, creative,

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<sup>268</sup> Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory?* 9.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>270</sup> Aburish, 70.

and vicious than their predecessors. They quickly shifted away from fedayeen raids and started going after softer targets and civilians. Innovative attacks - armed attacks on schools, skyjackings - led the Israelis to funnel more resources and attention toward Palestinian terrorism, but the counterterrorism strategy remained essentially the same – a focus on deterrence through retaliation (and increasingly preemption) and containment.<sup>271</sup> Israel's security establishment sought to “deter terrorist organizations from committing terrorist acts by targeting their leaders and activists, including implementing severe reprisals...”<sup>272</sup> and retaliatory attacks on known PLO bastions and training camps. The IDF usually enjoyed success in such missions, but occasionally these attacks provided public relations boons for Fatah and other Palestinian groups. For example, the IDF attack on a Fatah camp in the Jordanian town of Karameh in March 1968, resulted in heavy IDF losses, garnered international publicity for Fatah, and spurred an influx of recruits – apparently 5,000 in under 48 hours.<sup>273</sup> The threat, however, was not emanating from outside Israel alone. After the 1967 War, a million Arabs were suddenly living under Israeli control, forcing the intelligence community to expand and reorient its existing activities to monitor the growing terrorist threat from the Territories.<sup>274</sup>

In 1969, Arafat was elected PLO chairman, solidifying his control over the Organization and the broader Palestinian movement. At that time, the PLO constituted a considerable force and its presence in several Arab states was causing problems for its leadership, particularly in Jordan. In the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Palestinian

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<sup>271</sup> Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, “The Consequences of Counterterrorist Policies in Israel,” in Martha Crenshaw, ed., *The Consequences of Terrorism*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2010), 336.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power and Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 42.

<sup>274</sup> Black and Morris, 236-237.

refugee problem was proving untenable, where refugees comprised 1/3 of the entire population. King Hussein was growing increasingly frustrated with – and threatened by – the PLO’s involvement in Jordanian politics. Hussein had brought Palestinian representatives into the government in hopes of mollifying their aspirations, but the PLO continued to flex its authority by collecting taxes, setting up its own military and customs checkpoints, and refusing to heed the King’s orders not to launch fedayeen raids into Israel. There was even open talk of overthrowing the monarchy. Clashes between the Jordanian army and Palestinian fighters were mounting and there were several failed attempts to assassinate the King. When the PFLP hijacked three planes (two of which were flown to Jordan) in September 1970, Hussein knew his rule could not survive the burgeoning Palestinian state within a state and he imposed martial law and declared war on the PLO. Palestinian offices were destroyed, as were training camps, and three thousand people died in the fighting that ensued. An Egyptian attempt to broker peace failed, and a second attempt was rejected by the PFLP and DFLP. Recognizing that they could no longer operate in Jordan, the PLO leadership moved to Lebanon to regroup.

Jordan’s “Black September” had a huge impact on Fatah and the PLO. In Lebanon, the PLO leadership tried to consolidate its ranks, focusing on the Organization’s survival.<sup>275</sup> Having not learned a lesson in Jordan, the PLO set up a state within a state in Lebanon. The arrival of armed factions who claimed to represent the 100,000 Palestinian refugees already in Lebanon altered the delicate power balance between Shia, Sunni, and Christians in the country. Soon the PLO and its compatriots were using the country as a base for attacks on Israel, but their embroilment in the

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<sup>275</sup> Allon Groth, “The PLO’s Road to Peace: Processes of Decision Making,” Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies (RUSI) Whitehall Paper Series, 1995, 11.

country's civil war distracted them from their primary goals. Moreover, the loss in Jordan and exile to Lebanon started a debate within the Organization about the group's prospects for destroying Israel and winning a Palestinian state by force: Some within the Fatah leadership began to consider the potential for a two state solution with a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>276</sup>

In response to the Jordanian assault on them, Fatah secretly established the Black September Organization (BSO) – initially with the goal of exacting revenge on Hussein – but which would go on to conduct a series of high-profile terrorist attacks including, the massacre of 11 Israeli athletes, coaches, and officials at the Munich Olympics in 1972.<sup>277</sup> It has been argued that the operation in Munich may have happened without Arafat's knowledge, but even if he had known about it, it is unclear that he would have moved to prevent the attack: Arafat's preference for consensus and his unwillingness to control other PLO factions ensured a lack of a coordinated military strategy.<sup>278</sup> This approach to leadership did little to prevent, or at least coordinate, the various PLO factions and rivals from engaging in increasingly spectacular, international, and violent terrorist attacks. The indelible images of the masked perpetrators on the roof of the athlete's dorm in Munich were broadcast around the world, garnering increased attention to the Palestinian issue, but generating scorn for the PLO, which much of the world assumed to be behind the attack. Munich reinforced the dominant feeling in the Israeli government that any peace

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<sup>276</sup> Alain Gresh, *The PLO: The Struggle Within*, (London: Zed Books, 1988), 120.

<sup>277</sup> On September 5, 1972, BSO gunmen breached the Olympic village at the Munich Olympics killing two Israelis and taking another 9 members of the Israeli delegation hostage. Israel's Prime Minister Golda Meir would not negotiate with the terrorists and demanded the Federal Republic of Germany make every effort to rescue the hostages. Sadly, the German's attempt to do so ended in the deaths of all of the hostages and five of the eight hostage-takers, the surviving three hostage-takers were captured. Roi Mandel and Eyal Lehmann, "Protocols from '72 Munich massacre released," *Ynetnews.com Magazine*, August 29, 2012.

<sup>278</sup> Aburish, 102-103 and 124.

efforts – comprehensive or otherwise – should continue to exclude the PLO, a stance that had the effect of escalating the military confrontation between Israel and the group.<sup>279</sup>

The Yom Kippur war in October 1973 furthered two trends that had developed since 1967: First, the Israeli victory and subsequent intransigence on the Occupied Territories further entrenched Israel in the West Bank and Gaza, continuing its security challenges there and flaming Palestinian nationalism.<sup>280</sup> Second, the defeat of Egypt and Syria despite their initial advantage in the conflict only reiterated their infirmity in the eyes of the Palestinians and thus served to further elevate the PLO by comparison. In the wake of the War, the Arab League declared the PLO the sole legitimate representative for the Palestinian Arabs at their annual summit. Later that year, the PLO was recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by the United Nations and Yasser Arafat received a standing ovation at the General Assembly. In his speech at the UN, Arafat ended by saying, “Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter’s gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand.”<sup>281</sup> Israel dismissed Arafat’s gesture as insincere, but many saw it as a sign that the PLO was starting to moderate its position. Israel, however, continued to have no interest in negotiating with the PLO.

The same year, Yitzhak Rabin became Prime Minister. Despite the win for Labor, the election marked the beginning of a shift in Israeli politics. Long preeminent, the Israeli left, namely Mapai and later its successors Alignment and Labor,<sup>282</sup> was dominated by a “combination of socialists, secular Zionists and a predominant Eastern European

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<sup>279</sup> Wanis-St. John, 29

<sup>280</sup> After the ceasefires, the United Nations Security Council again called on Israel to withdraw from the territories it took from Egypt and Syria in the 1967 war, but the IDF remained in place. United Nations, “Resolution 338,” October 22, 1973, available from [<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/7FB7C26FCBE80A31852560C50065F878>].

<sup>281</sup> “Speech by Yasser Arafat,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, November 13, 1974, available from [<http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/cahier/proche-orient/arafat74-en>], accessed on January 23, 2014.

<sup>282</sup> Hereafter referred to collectively as Labor.

Ashkenazi elite,”<sup>283</sup> but the country’s demographics were shifting rapidly in the 1970s. Israel had received an influx of Sephardic immigrants, who were disillusioned with the Ashkenazi elite. The Sephardim, in concert with hardcore nationalists who supported a harder line in peace negotiations with Israel’s Arab neighbors, shifted support toward the right-wing Likud party. By the 1974 election, a bipolar power structure had begun to emerge, whereby Likud and Labor each secured a significant percentage of support, midsize parties declined, and small fringe parties on the ideological fringes were needed to form ruling coalitions.<sup>284</sup>

It was under Rabin that a coherent policy on negotiating with terrorists was first formulated, albeit for singular coercive attacks. The policy was not formalized in writing or announced publically, but it was articulated during the June 1976 hijacking of Air France jet by the PFLP. The jet was hijacked between Athens and Paris and diverted to Entebbe, Uganda, where the country’s President, Idi Amin, welcomed the hijackers.<sup>285</sup> The perpetrators promised to kill the 100 Israeli and Jewish passengers and the Captain that remained in their custody if Israel did not release 53 prisoners from its jails.<sup>286</sup> Initially, Rabin was of the opinion that there was no viable military option, and urged his cabinet to consider negotiations.<sup>287</sup> After reconsideration by several IDF commanders, a rescue plan was formed and unanimously approved by the cabinet, despite the significant risks it entailed. Ultimately, the July 4<sup>th</sup> rescue secured the release of 98 hostages, with

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<sup>283</sup> Daniel J. Elazar and Shmuel Sandler, “The Two-Bloc System: A New Development in Israeli Politics - Israel’s Odd Couple: The 1984 Elections and the National Unity Government, Introduction,” Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, available from [<http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles3/isrpolls84-intro.htm>].

<sup>284</sup> The proportional representation system ensured that Israel did not evolve into a true two party system; the two major blocs needed the small parties to join with them to form a coalition government. Elazar and Sandler.

<sup>285</sup> The PFLP operated in concert with the German group Revolutionary Cells in hijacking the plane originally scheduled to fly from Tel Aviv to Athens to Paris.

<sup>286</sup> After two days, the hijackers had released all the other passengers.

<sup>287</sup> “Operation Entebbe Protocols Revealed,” *Yedioth Ahronoth*, May 11, 2010.



only a few Israeli fatalities. Entebbe led Rabin to adopt the following unofficial policy: When faced with coercive attacks with lives in the balance, Israel would always prefer to use military options, but if no such options existed, Rabin and subsequent governments<sup>288</sup> were willing to use negotiations to end the crisis.<sup>289</sup> This policy led to the repeated use of negotiations to release of hostages even when it required extremely lopsided exchange ratios and the release of high-profile prisoners with blood on their hands.<sup>290</sup>

Rabin's policy on negotiating with terrorists in response to coercive acts reflected the Israeli approach to counterterrorism more broadly. There was a strong preference for military action over conciliation, but if a military solution proved elusive, the government was open to other strategies. This included negotiations when it came to skyjackings or hostage situations, but Rabin and his contemporaries did not yet view the broader Palestinian conflict as necessitating a political solution. If Rabin had, he may have been able to pursue such a course of action, but as his term progressed, the domestic political situation was becoming less and less hospitable to such an approach.

#### **4.2.3 Period III – 1977-1987: PLO Softens; but Rise of Likud Hardens Israeli Policy**

In June 1977, the long line of leftist governments was interrupted by the election of a Likud government headed by Menachem Begin. Allegations of corruption, infighting, and an investigation into the country's lack of preparedness on the eve of the 1973 War led to an astounding Labor defeat at the polls. At the time of the election, the

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<sup>288</sup> Boaz Ganor, interview with author, June 7, 2012, Herzliya.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> The decline of demands in the 1970s – yet since 1980s, the demands are growing (qualitatively and quantitatively) – kidnapers are demanding more high profile prisoners with blood on their hands and more of them. Also, they want them to determine where they are released to (ex. – to Gaza v. exile) and which group they are associated with (ex. HAMAS or Fatah). Ibid.

most striking difference between the parties was their treatment of the territories Israel captured in the 1967 War. Whereas, under Labor prime ministers, the Occupied Territories were initially considered for unilateral return, then later, in exchange for peace, Likud championed a “Greater Israel” - the idea that the Territories were part of biblical Israel. Likud also argued it was essential to keep the newly acquired land for security reasons. Under the new Likud government, it could no longer be assumed that a land for peace policy was on the table, at least with regard to the West Bank. The Likud Government moved quickly to expand settlements in the disputed Territories, in an effort to solidify Israel’s hold on the land. Ironically, however, Begin was open to trading other land gained in the 1967 War for peace.

Begin had the reputation of a warrior,<sup>291</sup> but the election of Likud did not – at least initially<sup>292</sup> – represent a significant change in approach to the Palestinian issue. It must be remembered that every left-wing prime minister since independence had – with the exception of Golda Meir – had military experience.<sup>293</sup> All Israeli prime ministers were largely inclined towards the “war model”<sup>294</sup> of counterterrorism. Early efforts by Israel to stem fedayeen attacks against it included military offensives in host countries for the express purpose of demonstrating to its neighbors that there would be a “high price to pay

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<sup>291</sup> Begin was arrested by the Russians and imprisoned for his role in the Zionist movement. He later served with the Polish Army fighting the Germans. He was sent to Palestine, where he joined the Irgun. He led Irgun attacks on the British colonial administration in Palestine for several years. He fought along with Jewish partisans in the civil war and then in the 1948 war.

<sup>292</sup> By 1981, things had changed and a more aggressive policy – invading Lebanon – was promoted.

<sup>293</sup> Ben-Gurion led the Jewish militias – uniting them under the IDF – to fight the war of independence. Sharett had served in the Ottoman Army. Eshkol fought with the Haganah and went on to become the Director General of the Ministry of Defense. Allon had been the commander of the Palmach and a general in the IDF. Rabin served with the Palmach and the IDF.

<sup>294</sup> This model places the primary responsibility for responding to the problem on the shoulders of the military (as compared to the criminal justice model – the criminal justice system, and the reconciliatory model – politicians and diplomats). The models aren’t mutually exclusive and a regime can utilize more than one at a time. Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle Against Terrorism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

for murdering Jews.”<sup>295</sup> Following the 1972 Munich attack, Meir authorized targeted assassinations of anyone who was directly or indirectly involved in the attack. From the early days, the left-wing prime ministers appeared to have doubted the effectiveness of this approach, but they appeared unwilling or unable to consider other options.<sup>296</sup> The focus on eradicating the Palestinian terrorist threat was not viewed as at odds with finding a solution to the larger Palestinian question. Labor, at least, was open to finding a negotiated settlement that dealt with the Palestinian demands as part of a larger peace agreement with its Arab neighbors. There was, however, no willingness to negotiate directly with the PLO, rather, Labor prime ministers preferred to work with a Jordanian delegation that would represent the Palestinians. Likud was still focused on destroying the PLO militarily, but it recognized other conflicts must be addressed diplomatically.

After two weeks of secret talks brokered by President Jimmy Carter, Egyptian President Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin signed the historic Camp David Accord in September 1978.<sup>297</sup> The frameworks established at Camp David became the model for the peace agreement signed between the two countries in 1979, which stipulated that Israel would return the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in return for peace and normalization of relations. The Accords envisioned the parties would work out a solution to the Palestinian problem, but Begin’s government had no interest negotiating a solution with the Palestinians. The PLO was not party to the talks,<sup>298</sup> and soon after the Accords were

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<sup>295</sup> Quoting Ben-Gurion, Dan Byman, *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 21.

<sup>296</sup> Ami Pedahzur claims that Ben-Gurion doubted the effectiveness of the war model. Pedahzur, 29.

<sup>297</sup> The Agreement marked the first time an Arab country signed a peace treaty with Israel, acknowledging and accepting its existence.

<sup>298</sup> Wanis-St. John, 26.

signed Begin began an aggressive settlement plan in Territories.<sup>299</sup> As a result, only a bilateral peace agreement between Israel and Egypt emerged from Camp David. Sadat, beset by criticism from the Palestinians, worked to demonstrate he had not forsaken them and urged Begin to endorse the idea of Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank.<sup>300</sup> The US supported the idea and suggested that an interim phase of power-sharing should be followed by final status negotiations between Israel and the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. The idea did not go far, despite the continued push by newly appointed special envoys to the region. Rather, Israel moved to impose its own vision for the Occupied Territories and worked to create non-PLO leadership in West Bank villages.<sup>301</sup>

Just as the Israeli government was working to building up local Palestinian leaders in the Occupied Territories, Jewish terrorists were working to take them out. Following the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the Jewish settler movement expanded dramatically in the Territories and spawned violent spinoffs in the late 1970s/early 1980s. The most prominent Jewish terrorist group at the time was the Jewish Underground, which conducted a violent campaign against the governors of West Bank towns and plotted to blow up the Dome of the Rock. The Israeli security forces were able to largely dismantle the group within a few years. Jewish terrorism declined significantly after 1984 and would not become a significant problem again until after the signing of the Oslo Accords.

While Israel was able to largely neutralize the Jewish terrorist threat, and continued to work to deter Palestinian terrorism, the underlying issues that contributed to

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<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>300</sup> David Makovsky, *Making Peace with the PLO: The Rabin Government's Road to the Oslo Accords*, (Boulder CO: Westview Press), 5.

<sup>301</sup> Wanis-St. John, 28.

the Palestinian-Israeli conflict remained. By negotiating a separate peace with Egypt instead of the comprehensive agenda sought by the Arab League, many key issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict were not addressed. In August 1981, Crown Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia attempted to address these gaps and cool the escalating tensions along Israel's northern border by presenting an eight-point peace proposal at the Arab Foreign Ministers meeting. The plan called for a withdrawal from the 1967 Territories, including East Jerusalem, the dismantling of settlements, guarantees of freedom of worship for all in the holy places, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, the right of self-determination, and UN-supervised transition to independence in the West Bank and Gaza. After some initial resistance,<sup>302</sup> the Arab League adopted the plan in September 1982,<sup>303</sup> and Arafat welcomed it. Initially cool to the plan, the United States signaled it was warming to it after it received European support.<sup>304</sup> Israel's reaction was decidedly less positive. Begin lamented the US position, declared that Israel would never bow to outside pressure, and insisted that its limited autonomy offer in the Territories was the most it would ever concede.<sup>305</sup>

Israeli frustration with the US over the Fahd Plan spilled over into its dealings with the US over Lebanon. The US had brokered a ceasefire between Israel and the PLO in July 1981 after the artillery volleys between the two threatened to escalate into a

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<sup>302</sup> When it was first presented in 1981, the plan was rejected outright for even hinting at recognizing Israel by Syria, South Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Algeria, and the PLO.

<sup>303</sup> The plan also called for East Jerusalem to be the capital of the new Palestinian state and demanded the UN Security Council endorse the plan and guarantee of peace in the area. The Fahd plan would remain the basis of the Arab state's bargaining position until the 1991 Madrid conference. Egypt, however, opposed the plan because it made no mention of the Camp David Accords. Egypt, suspended from the Arab League at the time for negotiating bilaterally with Israel, had no bearing on the League's stance. Bernard Gwertzman, "Two-Month-Old Saudi Peace Plan is Gaining New Attention in U.S.," *The New York Times*, October 31, 1981.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> "Begin Warns Israel Has Reached Limit of Its Concessions," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)*, November 10, 1981.

regional war. US support for the Fahd Plan led Defense Minister Ariel Sharon to complain about the confusing messages from Washington, US weapon shipments to Saudi Arabia, and the US failure to enforce the ceasefire it had brokered. On the latter issue, Sharon warned that he would give the US special envoy Philip Habib one more chance to halt the PLO terrorist attacks that breached the ceasefire, but in the event of further violence, Israel would be forced to take ominously described “other action.”<sup>306</sup>

The disagreement over the ceasefire would have serious consequences for all parties involved. The PLO and the US interpreted the ceasefire to include only attacks launched from Lebanon on Israel. Sensing the seriousness of the situation, Arafat had demanded all Palestinian factions to observe the ceasefire so as not to give Israel a reason to engage in a larger operation in Lebanon. Israel, however, took a more expansive view, arguing the ceasefire covered all acts of terrorism on Israeli targets, even those abroad. This interpretation was purposely adopted by the leaders of Likud – namely Prime Minister Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon – who were looking for an excuse to attack Lebanon. They believed that if they could eliminate the PLO leadership in Lebanon, not only would they prevent further attacks, but they would also give the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories little option other than to directly negotiate a settlement with Israel and do so from a position of weakness.<sup>307</sup> When on June 3, 1982, members of Abu Nidal’s organization – a breakaway faction of the PLO – attempted to assassinate Israeli Ambassador Shlomo Argov in London,<sup>308</sup> Israel had the reason it

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid.

<sup>307</sup> Makovsky, 6.

<sup>308</sup> Argov was gravely injured by a shot to the head, but ultimately he survived the attack (after brain surgery and three months in a coma).

needed to invade Lebanon.<sup>309</sup> The attack on Argov, however, was merely the “match that ignited the fuse” of an invasion plan Sharon had planned for some time.<sup>310</sup>

Israel pounded Lebanon by air and sea as its army advanced toward Beirut. By June 15<sup>th</sup>, the IDF was on the edge of the city, from where it used artillery to destroy the PLO headquarters. After ten days of bombardment, President Reagan called Begin to implore him to end the siege. Begin immediately ordered a cessation of military activities. In August, Habib brokered another truce whereby the IDF withdrew from Beirut, the PLO agreed to leave for exile in Tunis, and the UN monitored the Organization’s exit. The deal allowed the PLO to survive, but it dealt a serious blow to the Organization: Only several thousand PLO fighters traveled to Tunis, the rest scattered throughout the region. Arafat and the rest of the PLO leadership were now disconnected from the population they purported to represent. Thereafter, for all practical purposes, the PLO became a strictly political organization bereft of any viable fighting option.<sup>311</sup>

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon may have weakened the PLO, but it had unanticipated domestic political consequences. In September 1982, the Lebanese Phalange militia, with *at least* the tacit support of the IDF, committed a massacre in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, killing between thousands of Palestinian civilians. The public outcry over the massacre and the mounting IDF casualties in the largely reservist

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<sup>309</sup> The Israeli response appears to have played into the hands of Abu Nidal, who hoped that the attack would provoke Israel to invade Lebanon and take out the PLO leadership, thus eliminating Abu Nidal’s rival for power and embroiling Israel in a conflict in Lebanon. This is attributed to Samuel Katz, by Lawrence Joffe, “Obituary: Shlomo Argov,” *The Guardian*, February 25, 2003. Katz did not respond to requests to confirm the quote.

<sup>310</sup> Ariel Sharon and David Chanoff, *Warrior: The Autobiography of Ariel Sharon*, (New York: Touchstone, 2001), 455.

<sup>311</sup> Khalil Barhoum, “Origin and History of the PLO,” Trans Arab Research Institute, available from [[http://tari.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=10](http://tari.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=10)].

force,<sup>312</sup> “...provoked some of the most fractious manifestations of public opinion in Israel’s history.”<sup>313</sup> On September 25, 400,000 people took to the streets in Tel Aviv to protest Israel’s incursion into Lebanon and demand an investigation into Sabra and Shatila.<sup>314</sup> Feeling that Sharon had misled him about the massacre and the Operation more broadly,<sup>315</sup> Begin decided to exit politics, turning his position over to Yitzhak Shamir. As the Operation stretched out and its initially limited goals expanded, support plummeted. By 1985, only 15% of the population supported Israel’s actions in Lebanon; 60% thought the IDF should never have pushed to Beirut; and 25% believed the war should never have been fought in the first place.<sup>316</sup> Under domestic pressure, the Israeli Government hoped to negotiate an exit from Lebanon, but the assassination of Lebanese President Bachir Gemayel, the inability of Lebanese military to uphold its end of the ceasefire, and Syrian pressure nullify the truce made it difficult. As the civil war rolled on, the IDF began to slowly, and unilaterally, pull back from its positions in and around Beirut, but maintained forces in the 15 km wide southern strip of Lebanon for fifteen more years.

In the wake of the PLO evacuation from Beirut, President Reagan began promoting a broad Middle East peace plan modeled on Camp David that outlined a land

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<sup>312</sup> There were over 1,200 IDF soldiers were killed from 1982-1985. Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “The Lebanon War: Operation Peace for Galilee (1982),” available from [<http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/History/Pages/Operation%20Peace%20for%20Galilee%20-%201982.aspx>], accessed on January 22, 2014.

<sup>313</sup> Asher Arian, *Security Threatened: Surveying Israeli Opinion on Peace and War*, (Cambridge: Press Syndicate for the University of Cambridge, 1995) 75, citing Heda Feldman and Shai Rehnitz-Kijner, *Deception, Consensus and War: Israel in Lebanon*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984).

<sup>314</sup> Ibid. An official Israeli inquiry later found Defense Minister Ariel Sharon indirectly responsible for the massacre, saying he did nothing to stop the militias from entering the camps.

<sup>315</sup> In May 1991, Uzi Benziman wrote in *Haaretz* about how Begin knew he had been duped by Sharon on Lebanon. The paper was sued by Ariel Sharon for libel. After nearly a decade, the court sided with Benziman. The claim and ensuing legal battle are discussed here: Moshe Negbi, “Breaking the Silence of Cowards,” *Haaretz*, Aug. 23, 2002.

<sup>316</sup> Arian, 75.



for peace exchange, the creation of an autonomous West Bank-Jordan confederation,<sup>317</sup> encouraged a joint Jordanian-PLO negotiating team, and insisted that Jerusalem not be divided.<sup>318</sup> Although it was vaguely worded in order to garner broad support, the Reagan plan won little: the Likud government rejected it outright and later Arafat and Hussein did too. Any interest in reviving the peace process vanished when US Marines and the French Paratroopers – part of the multinational force sent to Lebanon – were attacked in October 1983, resulting in nearly 300 deaths.

These attacks, and another one against the US embassy in Beirut just months earlier, took place as the fault lines of the Lebanese civil war were shifting. The PLO's ouster from Lebanon had led to soul searching within the Organization. In 1983, PLO and Fatah commanders began to agitate for reform and criticized the Organization's response to the Israeli invasion and its perceived moderating position. After their complaints fell on deaf ears, the critics teamed up with Syrian-backed factions under the banner of the Palestinian National Salvation Front (NSF) and revolted. The revolt was sizeable; approximately 2,000-3,600 fighters began attacking the pro-Arafat forces in Lebanon, escalating into a full out war.<sup>319</sup> When the mutineers looked as though they were on the edge of victory, Arafat slipped back into Lebanon in disguise to join the PLO fighters supporting his leadership, a move that turned the tide of the conflict.<sup>320</sup> Arafat's factions ultimately prevailed because members were unnerved that Syrian support was the first step towards Arab state hegemony over the Organization and the factions long-critical of

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<sup>317</sup> The plan called for something short of statehood without explicitly defining the power relationship between Hussein and the PLO.

<sup>318</sup> Ronald Reagan, "The Reagan Plan: U.S. Policy for Peace in the Middle East," transcript of September 1, 1982 speech, available from [<http://www.cfr.org/israel/reagan-plan-us-policy-peace-middle-east/p14140>].

<sup>319</sup> 2,000 - Aburish, 183. 3,600 - Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory?* 165.

<sup>320</sup> Aburish, 183.

Arafat – the PFLP and DFLP - refused to join the fight against him.<sup>321</sup> The coup attempt altered Arafat’s calculation about the Organization’s relationship with the Arab states; he recognized that he was vulnerable and needed to establish closer relations to bolster his leadership and improve the Organization’s chances to achieving Palestinian statehood.

Domestic political boundaries were also shifting in Israel. The bipolar shift that had started in 1973 crystallized in the 1984 election, when there was a virtual tie between Likud and Labor.<sup>322</sup> Neither party could form a ruling coalition without the other, so they entered into a strange alliance.<sup>323</sup> The resulting national unity government allowed Labor’s Shimon Peres to form the first government, but he passed the role of prime minister to Yitzhak Shamir and Likud in October 1986. The odd couple government allowed for the representation of ideologically divergent views at the highest levels of government, which facilitated a departure from traditional, diplomatic approaches to peacemaking.<sup>324</sup>

From at least the late 1970s/early 1980s, Israeli officials began to recognize the complexity of the Palestinian conflict combined with the constraints caused by the international recognition of the Palestinian cause. It was becoming increasingly apparent

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>322</sup> Likud had steadily gained seats over the prior decade and soon came to be seen as a counterweight to Labor: it won 39 of 120 seats in 1973 (to Labor’s 51), 43 seats in 1977 (to Labor’s 32), and 48 in 1981 (to Labor’s 47).

<sup>323</sup> Elazar and Sandler. Both parties also suffered from reputational problems that made governing problematic: Likud had earned a reputation for being unable to govern: Under Likud, Israel suffered from hyperinflation that prompted the country’s bankruptcy and had become mired in an unnecessary and costly war in Lebanon. Labor continued to be perceived as the party of the establishment.

<sup>324</sup> Wanis-St. John, 31. By 1984, Labor was “ideologically committed to a secular, socialist Zionist state, searching for a territorial compromise with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan... and [was viewed as] more willing to make the concessions for peace with the Arabs.” Daniel J. Elazar and Shmuel Sandler, “The Two-Bloc System: A New Development in Israeli Politics - Israel’s Odd Couple: The 1984 Elections and the National Unity Government, Introduction,” Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, available from [<http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles3/isrpolls84-intro.htm>]. Likud, on the other hand, had adopted a “Greater Israel” policy, which viewed the West Bank as part of biblical Israel, and thus territory to be maintained. It also argued that it would not be advantageous to Israeli security to cede land for peace with its neighbors in a peace agreement.

to many in the Israeli government and in the security establishment that it was ineffectual to “insist on a policy whose goal was to eliminate terrorism solely through military means.”<sup>325</sup> That recognition, however, did not translate into universal support for negotiations: Likud remained entirely against them, and Labor, while open to talks with Palestinians, was still not willing to talk directly with the PLO. In the face of disagreement, the unity government focused its efforts on minimizing the damage from terrorism.<sup>326</sup>

Ironically, at this time, the PLO was shifting its attention towards negotiations. In 1985, the Jordanians and the PLO publically announced their intention to form a joint negotiating team for talks with Israel with the goal of creating a confederated Jordanian and Palestinian state.<sup>327</sup> Pre-talks, however, fell apart after a series of Palestinian terrorist attacks, including the shipjacking of the MS Achille Lauro by the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF).<sup>328</sup> The Achille Lauro incident had a significant impact on the prospects for the PLO being included in multilateral peace talks: US Secretary of State Shultz questioned, “how those who are perpetrating terror and violence against one of the parties

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<sup>325</sup> Ganor, *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle*, 27.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> Core principals declared by the two included: an exchange for peace with Israel in return for a total withdrawal from the 1967 territories, right to self-determination for the Palestinians in the context of a Jordanian-Palestinian federation, and resolution of the refugee issue. Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “The Hussein-Arafat Accord- 11 February 1985,” available from [<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/mfadocuments/yearbook7/pages/42%20the%20hussein-arafat%20accord-%2011%20february%201985.aspx>].

<sup>328</sup> In October 1985, members of the Palestine Liberation Front (a PLO affiliate) hijacked an Italian cruise ship, the *Achille Lauro*, and demanded Israel release 50 Palestinian prisoners and ordered the ship sailed to Syria. The attackers murdered an American passenger. When they were refused docking, the ship sailed to Port Said in Egypt. After two days of negotiations, the hijackers agreed to abandon the ship if they were provided safe travel to Tunis. They were on an Egyptian airliner headed to Tunis, when US fighter jets forces the plane to land in Italy the hijackers were taken into custody and subsequently charged. Wanis-St. John, 32-33.

deserve a place at a peace table.”<sup>329</sup> Indeed, there were moves afoot to cut out the PLO entirely and designate a surrogate to negotiate on the Palestinian people’s behalf. Jordanian-PLO relations frayed over the attack. Talks proceeded without the PLO with the Jordanians shoehorned into the role of proxy – a role that did not fit, but that would continue for several more years. Simultaneously, Rabin, who was Defense Minister, had Eitan Haber, a member of his staff, secretly meet with prominent Palestinian mayors in the Territories in an effort to find an effective substitute negotiating partner for the PLO, but it soon became obvious there weren’t any.<sup>330</sup> Such Labor-initiated contacts unnerved Likud, who introduced legislation to proscribe meetings with the PLO. Likud was able to convince Labor to support the law as long as it banned talks with Kach<sup>331</sup> – a right-wing extremist party - as well. In August 1986, the passed making the secret exchanges recently pursued by several members of the cabinet illegal.

The general coercive environment created by Palestinian terrorism was routinely punctuated by acute coercive events - Munich, Dawson Field, the Achille Lauro. These events often led to ad hoc negotiations and prisoner exchanges between Israel and Palestinian terrorists. One of the most dramatic of these exchanges occurred in 1985, when Israel negotiated the “Jibril deal” – a lopsided exchange with Ahmed Jibril’s Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC) of 1,150 prisoners held in Israel for the release of three soldiers, Nissim Salem, Yossef Grof, and

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<sup>329</sup> Barry Rubin, “Middle East: Search for Peace,” *Foreign Affairs*, America and the World, Vol. 64, No. 3, (1985).

<sup>330</sup> Wanis St-John, 35-36.

<sup>331</sup> The reader will notice that Kach receives little attention herein. During the time period under consideration, Kach was not considered a terrorist group. Kach was a political party – albeit one that was prone to incitement and racism and was later barred from participating in elections. After the murder of Kach’s founder, Rabbi Meir Kahane, in 1990, the group split into factions – Kach and Kahane Chai. Around the time that the secret channel with the PLO began, the two factions became more involved in violent activity and were later classified as terrorist groups. Most of their violence took place following the Oslo Accords.

Hezi Shai. The Jibril deal marked a shift in Israeli public opinion and its influence on counterterrorism policymaking. The asymmetry of the Jibril deal sparked outrage and soul searching in Israel, but it seemed to solidify the unwritten contract between soldiers and society.<sup>332</sup> If captured, mother Israel would move heaven and earth to rescue her sons, a shift away from the axiom that the individual must sacrifice himself/herself for Israel, a development that would have a lasting impact on Israeli counterterrorism policymaking.<sup>333</sup> This growing permissibility for ad hoc negotiations, however, did not yet translate into public support for more conciliatory counterterrorism policies on a strategic scale. If it had, the government might have been pushed to consider strategic negotiations with the PLO earlier. Israeli officials, who had long ignored public opinion when crafting security policy, were now being forced to consider public preferences. This was readily apparent in the Jibril deal, which was in large part encouraged by the public relations campaign launched by the mother of one of the captured soldiers, Miriam Grof. Rabin once said that he, Peres, and Shamir were all tough men, but they simply couldn't stand up to Miriam Grof: Eventually, the public pressure she exerted, her fits, the harassment "broke them all down."<sup>334</sup> These shifts would eventually prove important, but for the time being, the Israeli government was not swayed to change its position about including the PLO in strategic peace talks.

In 1987, there were efforts by Israel and Jordan to establish negotiations. Seeking legitimacy, King Hussein called for a multilateral peace conference before the launch of

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<sup>332</sup> Bergman.

<sup>333</sup> It was this expectation that led the failure to successfully bring Ron Arad - an Israeli aviator shot down over Lebanon - home to have an enormous impact on the Israeli conscience. In October 1986, Ron Arad and Yishai Aviram, Israeli aviators, were shot down while on a mission over Lebanon. Aviram was located, but Arad was captured by Amal, which demanded the release of Shia and Lebanese prisoners in exchange for Arad. Negotiations ensued, but broke down in 1988. Thereafter Arad's whereabouts remained unknown. Israeli intelligence later concluded that Arad had likely died between 1995 and 1997. Ibid.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

bilateral talks with Israel and received US support for the proposal. In April 1987, Hussein and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres signed a secret agreement in London that outlined an Arab-Israeli peace conference to be held by the United Nations. The Palestinians would be represented by the Jordanian delegation, essentially excluding the PLO. The tentative deal created a rift within the unity government: Peres had negotiated the agreement without the explicit support of the Prime Minister Shamir, who eventually rejected the proposed international peace conference and the change to the territorial status quo that it implied. This stood in contrast to the Labor members of the government, who supported some form of territorial compromise. The latter's efforts to move forward with the conference were thwarted when the cabinet rejected the London agreement and foiling any progress on the proposed conference that it outlined. In response, an angry Peres attempted, unsuccessfully, to bring a no confidence vote against Shamir in the Knesset.

Peres efforts to advance multi-lateral peace talks were for not, as the Likud party in the unity government held an effective veto over any conciliatory shift toward the Palestinians. When Likud was in power from 1977-1984, there was no interest in pursuing any real dialogue with the Palestinians, and especially not the PLO. On the latter point, there was not a huge disparity with the Labor Party. Despite its willingness to negotiate over the Palestinian question, Labor was still against directly negotiating with the PLO. During this period, despite no encouraging signs from the Israeli government, the PLO had begun to moderate its positions and was increasingly focused on getting a seat at the negotiating table. Weakened after its expulsion from Beirut and off the radar as it engaged in fewer direct terrorists attacks and was frequently bypassed and undermined by

regional peace efforts, the PLO's influence appeared to have faded. The Israeli government – including those from Likud and Labor - remained convinced it could bypass the group completely.

#### **4.2.4 Period IV – 1987–1992: Shifts in Public Opinion, but No Domestic Opportunity for Conciliation**

Just when it seemed that the PLO had been relegated to obscurity and the Palestinian question had dropped off the agenda, a dramatic turn of events brought them both back to the fore. On December 9, 1987, an Israeli Army truck struck four Palestinians, killing them, near the Jabalya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. The incident was classified as an accident, but rumors that it was purposeful attack sparked a series of ever intensifying demonstrations. Often dominated by children and teenagers, the demonstrations led to strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience, and acts of violence, including the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails at the IDF in the Territories.<sup>335</sup> The dramatic coverage of the *Intifada* (uprising in Arabic) and the IDF's brutal response had a significant impact on the course of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Intifada helped revive international attention to the Palestinian question and Israel's hard-line response unwittingly helped bolster the leadership of Arafat and the PLO. The PLO was stunned by the impromptu uprising and didn't know how best to respond. After a month, it became obvious the Intifada was an enduring movement and Arafat scrambled to assert some control over the uprising by naming a PLO commander to "lead" the Intifada, and funneling money to, and attempting to coordinate with, local

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<sup>335</sup> The violence that characterized the first intifada was low tech and more spontaneous than that of the second intifada. There was only one suicide bombing during this period, perpetrated by PIJ and it stood out against the rock throwing and Molotov cocktail attacks that were more typical.

leaders. Despite overtures to a united front, Arafat viewed the grassroots leaders as a threat to PLO primacy and sought to co-opt them so they wouldn't become the visible face of the Intifada.<sup>336</sup> While Arafat did not have much control over the Intifada, he managed to get the local leadership in the Territories to refrain from openly asserting their independence, and thus kept the leadership position of the PLO from eroding further.<sup>337</sup> The supremacy of Arafat and the PLO in the Palestinian movement were further shored up when in April 1988, Israel sent a hit squad to Tunisia to kill Abu Jihad, the PLO Executive Committee member ostensibly in charge of the Intifada. Abu Jihad's direction of the uprising was inconsiderable, but the public reaction to his assassination wasn't. Abu Jihad became a martyr for the cause and hundreds of thousands of people marched in his funeral procession.<sup>338</sup> Moreover, given Arafat was primarily surrounded by "sycophants, yes-men, and mediocrities," Abu Jihad's assassination removed one of the only men who could actually challenge Arafat's grip on power in the PLO.<sup>339</sup>

Israel's heavy-handed approach to quell the uprising also provoked domestic and international condemnation and garnered sympathy for the Palestinian cause. Minister of Defense Yitzhak Rabin publically promised to destroy the Intifada with "force, power and blows."<sup>340</sup> IDF troops were instructed to break the bones of Palestinian

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<sup>336</sup> For example, He created the United National Leadership (UNL or United National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU)), an umbrella group to bring community leaders into the fold with the four PLO parties active in the Territories: Fatah, the PFLP, the DFLP and the PPP. Arafat worked out a deal whereby he would announce the formation of the UNL but said that the identities of its leaders would remain secret, thus making it clear that the UNL was not a rival to the PLO, but either subordinate or coordinated with it. Aburish, 208.

<sup>337</sup> Francesco Strazzari and Simone Tholens, "Another Nakba: Weapons Availability and the Transformation of the Palestinian National Struggle, 1987-2007," *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol. 11, Issue 2, (2010), 118.

<sup>338</sup> Aburish, 209-210.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, 210, quoting Edward Said.

<sup>340</sup> John Kifner, "Israelis Invoking Emergency Power in East Jerusalem," *The New York Times*, January 20, 1988.



demonstrators<sup>341</sup> and used live ammunition to subdue rock throwers. From 1987 to September 1993, 100 Israelis were killed, but the IDF killed over ten times as many Palestinians, including over 200 children under the age of 16.<sup>342</sup> At least 40,000 people were detained.<sup>343</sup> Images of many of the IDF's harsh tactics were broadcast around the world: In one particularly gruesome incident, four protestors were buried alive while CBS news cameras rolled.<sup>344</sup> The ineffectiveness and moral questions surrounding the IDF's response to the uprising also helped facilitate a shift in public opinion about Israeli counterterrorism policy. Whereas the Israeli public had long assumed that the occupation improved the quality of life for the Arab inhabitants of the Occupied Territories; the Intifada destroyed that myth.<sup>345</sup> Israelis had believed the violence against them was directed by evil terrorist masterminds; but now the perpetrators of the protests were often women and children, who were being brutally put down by the IDF.<sup>346</sup> Among the public and within the halls of government, it was becoming clear that Israel "could no longer dominate with impunity" in the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>347</sup> The IDF and Israeli government recognized early on in the uprising, that the Intifada could not be quelled by force, and there were secret overtures made to the PLO because the government was under the impression the former was responsible.<sup>348</sup> The overtures were tactical in nature and did

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<sup>341</sup> Middle East Research and Information Project, "The Intifada," available from [[http://www.merip.org/palestine-israel\\_primer/intifada-87-pal-isr-primer.html](http://www.merip.org/palestine-israel_primer/intifada-87-pal-isr-primer.html)].

<sup>342</sup> "Statistics: Fatalities in the first Intifada," B'Tselem, available from [[http://www.btselem.org/statistics/first\\_intifada\\_tables](http://www.btselem.org/statistics/first_intifada_tables)].

<sup>343</sup> Aburish, 207-210. The 40,000 figure is attributed to Bernard Kimberling and Joel S. Migdal, *The Palestinians: The Making of a People*, (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 265.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Shlomo Brom, interview with author, October 29, 2012, Tel Aviv.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Wanis-St. John, 31.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid., 63.

not represent a willingness on behalf of the Shamir government to engage in strategic negotiations. Regardless, the PLO was unable to quell the uprising even if it wanted to.

The Intifada, and the violent suppression of it, altered the calculations of the parties to the conflict. In 1988, after a year of astounding violence during which the animosity towards Jordan was clearly apparent, King Hussein announced that Jordan was relinquishing any claim to the West Bank. This ended, for good, the pretense that the Jordanians could negotiate a peace agreement on behalf of the Palestinians.<sup>349</sup>

The Intifada destroyed the myth of the Jordanian proxy and brought the PLO back to the forefront of Palestinian politics, reaffirming its dominant role in the Palestinian national movement, but shifting the calculation of its leader. Although it was not fully appreciated by outsiders at the time, the Intifada marked - and facilitated - a growing shift away from the traditional centers of power in the Palestinian movement. Although largely organic, the Intifada had elevated the status of local activists and organizations on the ground and posed a latent threat to Arafat and the old guard's leadership. PLO youth leaders – Marwan Barghouti and Mohammed Dahlan – amassed large followings; new especially brutal factions – loosely affiliated with existing PLO factions – emerged (e.g. the Black Panthers of Fatah, Fatah Hawks, Red Eagles of the PFLP<sup>350</sup>). The Islamist groups that the IDF had long privileged in the Territories as a counterpoint to the PLO, flourished after the Intifada broke out. Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the larger Hamas garnered significant followings, especially in the latter case due to the group's ardent no negotiations stance, dedication to recovering *all* Palestinian land, free social services, and

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<sup>349</sup> Aburish, 204-205.

<sup>350</sup> Black Panthers of Fatah and the Fatah Hawks were loosely affiliated with Fatah, and the Red Eagles with the PFLP. Strazzari and Tholens, 118. These groups helped identify and punish collaborators. Harold M. Cubert, *The PFLP's Changing Role in the Middle East*, (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 142.

incorruptible image. The PLO and Hamas were offering conflicting advice to their followers in the early days of the uprising.<sup>351</sup> Arafat, recognizing how damaging this was, invited Hamas to join the PLO, but talks broke down when Arafat wouldn't acquiesce to the group's demands.<sup>352</sup> Thereafter, competition intensified between the PLO and Hamas for the hearts and minds of the Palestinians in the Territories.

The changing power dynamics in the territories forced Arafat to recognize that any resurgence in notoriety he was enjoying due to the Intifada was fleeting. The uprising had shifted the center of gravity of Palestinian nationalism away from Tunis to the Occupied Territories. If Arafat wanted to remain in charge of the Palestinian national movement he would need to effectuate change, and fast. The status quo was untenable, but the Intifada alone could not bring about the end the occupation. Arafat understood the PLO would need to negotiate a solution to the Palestinian question. To this end, Arafat took steps to ingratiate the PLO to Israel and its backers: The PLO expanded its communications beyond left-leaning, anti-Zionist Jews and began a secret dialogue with Likud about MIA soldiers in Lebanon.<sup>353</sup> In 1988, using an intermediary, Arafat sent a message to the Israeli government saying that he was willing to attend an international peace conference with the Israelis.<sup>354</sup> His efforts were futile as the government did not answer him, again, and back channel communications with Likud members ceased once their existence was leaked to the media.<sup>355</sup> Arafat, undeterred, charged forward. On December 14, 1988, Yasser Arafat condemned all forms of terrorism and recognized the

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<sup>351</sup> Jonathan Schanzer, "The Challenge of Hamas to Fatah," *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. X, No. 2 (Spring 2003).

<sup>352</sup> Hamas demanded the PLO escalate the armed struggle, reject negotiations with Israel, and cede control 40% of the PNC to Hamas. Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory?* 165-166.

<sup>353</sup> Wanis-St. John, 39.

<sup>354</sup> Arafat also complained that earlier efforts at communication had not been answered. Groth, 19.

<sup>355</sup> Wanis-St. John, 39.

state of Israel. As a result, US President Ronald Reagan authorized his government to enter into a substantive dialogue with the PLO.

By 1988, both Likud and Labor were anxious to end their power-sharing experiment. The general elections that November again end in a practical tie. Another national unity government was formed. In May 1989, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin presented a Peace Initiative that called for elections to be held in the West Bank and Gaza in order to elect representatives to negotiate an interim peace deal and establish self-rule in those areas.<sup>356</sup> The plan, however, specifically banned negotiating with the PLO and was narrower than that promoted by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. Finance Minister Peres was frustrated by the direction of peace efforts. By 1990, the Labor party had come to recognize that any deal about the future of the Palestinians would require the involvement of the PLO.<sup>357</sup> In an effort to bypass Likud's resistance to pursuing the broader Baker plan, Peres worked with religious parties to use the first ever no-confidence motion to bring down the government in March.<sup>358</sup> Peres was allowed to form a government, but was unable to do so when one of the religious parties backed out. Shamir was then given the opportunity, and with small religious and ultra-nationalist parties was able to form a government in June. Any softening influence the Labor Party had on Likud during the unity years was removed and Shamir established the most right-wing government in Israel's history.

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<sup>356</sup> For a five-year period, the Palestinians would rule themselves before an eventual transition to a more permanent solution acceptable to all parties. Israeli Knesset, "Peace Initiative of the National Unity Government," May 14, 1989, available from [[http://www.knesset.gov.il/process/docs/achdut\\_eng.htm](http://www.knesset.gov.il/process/docs/achdut_eng.htm)], accessed on January 21, 2014.

<sup>357</sup> This was in part because of Shamir's intransigence on participating in the peace conference Hussein needed as political cover to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians. After the violence of two years of the Intifada, Hussein had relinquished his claim to the West Bank. Colin Shindler, *The Land Beyond Promise: Israel, Likud and the Zionist Dream*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995), 264.

<sup>358</sup> This episode is known as the 'dirty trick.'

The Intifada had continued into the new decade, but the pace and ferocity of demonstrations had slowed as most of the local Palestinian leadership had been arrested. Rising tensions in the Gulf overshadowed the uprising for international audiences. Shamir hoped the brewing crisis would keep the United States occupied and allow Israel to avoid attending the Baker peace conference, which the US had continued to promote. Any distraction on the US side vanished when in October 1990, an incident<sup>359</sup> at the al Aqsa Mosque led to Israeli border agents firing live ammunition at worshippers, killing at least 21 people and sparking riots in the Territories. Castigation came from all over the globe. Even the United States introduced a resolution to the UN Security Council expressing alarm about the shootings and demanding an investigation into the incident.<sup>360</sup> Iraq responded menacingly, threatening retaliation for the deaths.<sup>361</sup>

Iraq's threats, although not out of character, represented a growing problem for Israel<sup>362</sup> in the context of the conflict brewing in the Gulf. Crippled by war debts, Iraq had issued several ultimatums to its neighbor Kuwait,<sup>363</sup> and by July 1990, was threatening to

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<sup>359</sup> Some say it started when worshippers at the al-Aqsa Mosque started throwing stones down at the Jewish worshippers below at the Western Wall. Some argue the rock throwing was a premeditated attack on Jews celebrating Succoth at the Wall, whereas others have said that the rock throwing only started after security forces fired on worshippers meeting in the mosque (where they had gathered there to defend the Mosque from Jewish radicals that attempt to lay cornerstone for a new temple where the al-Aqsa Mosque stands on Succoth). Sabra Chartrand, "The Middle East; 19 Arabs Killed in Battle With Jerusalem Police," *The New York Times*, October 9, 1990.

<sup>360</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 672, October 12, 1990, available form [<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/575/22/IMG/NR057522.pdf?OpenElement>].

<sup>361</sup> "The Middle East; Baker Urges Israeli Restraint," Special to *The New York Times*, October 9, 1990.

<sup>362</sup> It should be noted that Iraq had always posed a threat to Israeli security - Iraqi forces had attacked Israel in 1948, 1967, and 1973 - but by the mid-1970s, that threat began to loom larger. In 1981, Prime Minister Begin had authorized the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak and commenced a sizeable support program - that included armaments and training - for the Iranians were amidst what would be an eight year war against Iraq. These efforts prolonged the war, but they did not derail the threat. Despite hundreds of thousands of dead and injured, the loss of military equipment and soldiers, and accruing of massive debts, Iraq was still standing. It still had the largest, battle-hardened Arab military in the Middle East, which it began to highlight in its threats to its neighbors.

<sup>363</sup> Iraq demanded Kuwait stop producing oil beyond the OPEC quotas, which was damaging its market price,<sup>363</sup> and cease its slant-drilling into Iraqi oil fields along the border, a border that Iraq already disputed

use force if its demands were not met.<sup>364</sup> Around the same time, Hussein started issuing a series of threats against Israel, boasting that his country had acquired chemical weapons, which it would not hesitate to use against Israel in the event it was attacked.<sup>365</sup> Diplomatic efforts to settle the conflict broke down in the summer of 1990,<sup>366</sup> and on August 2, Iraq responded by invading Kuwait to the surprise of the Arab states and the United States. Within two days, the Kuwaiti forces had been completely overwhelmed, the royal family had fled, and Iraq was in control of most of the country.

Iraq's invasion was roundly denounced,<sup>367</sup> and the UN Security Council licensed economic sanctions and eventually authorized member states to employ force in the event that Saddam Hussein refuse to retreat.<sup>368</sup> Although Arafat had initially condemned the invasion, he eventually was forced to alter his position. He had no love lost for Iraq's president, who actively supported anti-Arafat factions, but Arafat felt compelled to throw his lot in with Hussein once the latter linked a possible withdrawal from Kuwait to the Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories.<sup>369</sup> Some have suggested that Arafat's decision was motivated by a desire to bolster his support in the Territories, where people

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(Actually, Hussein claimed Kuwait was historically part of Iraq). Youssef M. Ibrahim, "OPEC Meets Today; Talks Are Clouded by Iraq's Threat to Kuwait," *The New York Times*, July 25, 1990.

<sup>364</sup> Iraq also threatened the UAE, which it also accused of overproduction.

<sup>365</sup> Alan Cowell, "Iraq Chief, Boasting of Poison Gas, Warns of Disaster if Israelis Strike," *The New York Times*, April 3, 1990. The threats against Israel at first appeared to be part of a larger rebuke of Western criticism of Iraq or perhaps demonstrative of the country's desire to dominate the region, but they soon made sense in the context of Iraq's disagreements with the Arab oil producing states.

<sup>366</sup> Iraq apparently demanded \$10 billion in restitution, Kuwait countered with only \$9 billion, which Saddam rejected.

<sup>367</sup> By the Arab League and the UN Security Council. UN Security Council, "Resolution 660 (1990)," August 2, 1990, available from [<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/575/10/IMG/NR057510.pdf?OpenElement>].

<sup>368</sup> UN Security Council, "Resolution 678 (1990)," November 29, 1990, available from [<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/575/28/IMG/NR057528.pdf?OpenElement>].

<sup>369</sup> Hussein also linked his withdrawal from Kuwait to the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and Syrian territory and a Syrian withdrawal of Lebanon. Arafat had already taken Iraqi money to keep the Organization afloat in the late 1980s, but that had not significantly impaired his capacity to navigate. Aburish, 220.

were “solidly behind Saddam because Iraqi intransigence and lobbing rockets against Israel provided them with emotional satisfaction. Arafat felt that he had to go along with them or lose them.”<sup>370</sup> At that point, Arafat had already decided that the PLO would have to negotiate a settlement with Israel, and he knew he needed the support for the Territories.<sup>371</sup> Ultimately, however, the alliance with Iraq undermined Arafat’s efforts to negotiate: After Arafat, for fear of angering Hussein, refused to move against the Iraqi-backed PLF after an attack on beachgoers in Tel Aviv, the Americans suspended their engagement with the PLO. The PLO’s alliance with Iraq damaged the public relations gains it made during the Intifada and alienated former allies, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which were fighting as part of the US-led coalition. Hamas undermined Arafat’s position further by calling for Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait.<sup>372</sup>

In mid-January 1991, the US-led coalition commenced a massive air campaign against Iraqi positions in Kuwait, when the former refused to retreat by the UN deadline. In response, Iraq started launching scud missiles into Israel hoping to provoke an Israeli response and erode Arab support for the Operation against him once Arab leaders realized they were fighting alongside Israel,<sup>373</sup> but President Bush persuaded Shamir not to retaliate and play into Saddam’s hand. Israel endured weeks of scud attacks, which caused tens of deaths, hundreds of injuries, and extensive damage. The war was over in

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<sup>370</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid., 228.

<sup>373</sup> The coalition included more than 30 countries – including several Arab states, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria and UAE.

short order, and the US dictated the terms of a ceasefire, but Hussein was allowed to stay in power, much to the chagrin of Shamir.<sup>374</sup>

Recognizing that the Gulf War had altered the playing field dramatically, the US pushed for a “new world order” in the Middle East: The Cold War had ended, changing the calculations of Arab states who had once benefited from Soviet largess. Emboldened by his victory over Iraq and the enhanced legitimacy the US had earned as a result, Bush urged local powers to finally put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In order to ensure peace and security in the region, the Bush administration argued it was necessary to find a comprehensive peace deal between the Israel and her Arab neighbors, and in particular a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians based on UNSC 242 and 338<sup>375</sup> that would enhance Israel’s security and recognize legitimate Palestinian political rights.<sup>376</sup>

To this end, the US and USSR announced they would co-host a peace conference with Spain in Madrid in October 1991 to bring together the parties to the conflict – Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the Palestinians. The Americans pushed hard for each country to participate, but it did not have a coherent plan: there was “an American conviction that the very act of getting all the parties to sit down with one another for the first time w[ould create] a new dynamic between them and open the door for

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<sup>374</sup> Since 1982, a policy proposal had floated around right-wing circles whereby Israel should seek to divide her neighbors up into smaller ethnic enclaves to ensure they would not threaten her security. The policy is often linked back to Oded Yinon, “A Strategy for Israel in the Nineteen Eighties,” *KIVUNIM (Directions)*, A Journal for Judaism and Zionism, February 1982 (translated by Israel Shahak), available from [<http://cosmos.ucc.ie/cs1064/jabowen/IPSC/articles/article0005345.html>].

<sup>375</sup> UNSC 338 (1973) called on the parties to the Yom Kippur War in 1973 implement UNSC 242 (1967) in all of its parts and start negotiations to establish a just and lasting peace in the region. United Nations Security Council, “Resolution 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973,” available from [<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/7FB7C26FCBE80A31852560C50065F878>], accessed on December 15, 2013.

<sup>376</sup> George H. W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of Congress on the End of the Gulf War,” March 6, 1991, available from [<http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3430>].



compromises down the road.”<sup>377</sup> The conference was designed to have three stages of talks, starting with a three-day opening conference in Madrid, followed by bilateral negotiations between each delegation to be held in Washington DC, and then a third, subsequent phase of detailed multi-lateral negotiations. The PLO and Arab states pledged a united front in negotiations, precluding any side deals with Israel.<sup>378</sup> Israel demanded that the Palestinians not have their own delegation, so again the Palestinians were forced to negotiate under the auspices of a Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. It also insisted that the Palestinian delegates could not be PLO members or East Jerusalemites. The resulting delegation as a farce more than anything – the Palestinian negotiators involved were affiliated with the PLO, which stayed near the conference hotel in Madrid, paid for the negotiating team, which, in turn, was taking its marching orders directly from Arafat.<sup>379</sup>

The PLO viewed the conference – and the negotiations more broadly – as essential to its survival at the forefront of the Palestinian nationalist movement. Arafat agreed to the US preconditions for talks – acceptance of UNSCR 242 and 338 – and won Palestine National Council approval to attend. The concessions met all of Israel’s requirements, but the continued resistance by Shamir, laid bare his government’s efforts to obstruct the Conference. Secretary of State Baker would not accept Shamir’s subsequent, hollow objections. To pressure Israel to attend, the Bush administration announced it was withholding \$10 billion in loan guarantees. Shamir attempted to circumvent Bush by lobbying the Congress directly, but was unsuccessful. With great

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<sup>377</sup> Thomas Friedman, “The Middle East Talks; U.S. Hopes Sessions on Mideast Create a New Atmosphere,” *The New York Times*, October 27, 1991

<sup>378</sup> Chris Hedges, “Arabs Meeting in Syria Bar Separate Deals With Israel,” *The New York Times*, October 25, 1991.

<sup>379</sup> Mona Ziade, “PLO makes the Contacts and Decisions – and Foots the Bill,” *Associated Press*, November 1, 1991.

resentment, Shamir announced Israel would agree to the conditions of the Madrid Conference just ten days before it was to start. The USSR responded by reestablishing diplomatic relations with Israel.

The talks were highly significant in their symbolism - the Madrid conference was the first time most of the Arab parties (except for Egypt) and Israel sat down at a table together – but no real progress was made. For the most part, the belligerents had not softened their positions. The parties – especially Israel and Syria - largely felt they had to attend to appease the US, but the postures articulated by Shamir and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Shara “reiterated their standard confrontational positions.”<sup>380</sup> Israel attended the talks, but its negotiating team was instructed to do everything it could to try to scuttle them as Shamir was completely opposed to the very basis of the conference – acceptance of UNSCR 242 and the principle of swapping land for peace.<sup>381</sup> He maintained hope that Israel could destroy the PLO militarily, thus rendering negotiations completely unnecessary.<sup>382</sup> Israel only attended the Madrid conference in an effort to appease the US – and thus have its loan guarantees reinstated - and used the talks as a public relations campaign to improve its world image after the Intifada.

Unlike the Shamir government, the PLO was hoping the conference would lead to a genuine dialogue with the Israeli government. The Palestinian delegation enthusiastically embraced talks, even arriving to the conference carrying olive

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<sup>380</sup> Jeremy Pressman, “Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiations, 1991–2000,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (July-September 2007), 355.

<sup>381</sup> Yitzhak Shamir was “not a bargainer. Shamir [wa]s a two-dimensional man. One dimension is the length of the Land of Israel, the second, its width. Since Shamir's historical vision [wa]s measured in inches, he wo[uldn't] give an inch.” Avi Shlaim, “The Oslo Accord,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3, (Spring 1994), footnote 7.

<sup>382</sup> Wanis-St. John, 63.

branches.<sup>383</sup> The participation of the Palestinians and the image they projected to the world helped bolster the growing perception that peace might be possible with the Palestinians, and, possibly, the PLO.

When the second stage of negotiations opened in Washington in November 1991, the Israeli negotiating team continued to do everything it could to hinder their progress. By then, Palestinian negotiators were completely under Arafat's control, but they maintained a level of plausible deniability that the PLO was not involved. Even though the PLO was directing the negotiating team in Washington, there were indications the group wanted to initiate direct talks with the Israeli government. Purportedly, the PLO sent an envoy to meet with Ariel Sharon in the spring of 1992 to express Abu Mazen's desire for direct contact and several other secret channels of communication between PLO members and Israeli military and intelligence officials cropped up around the same time.<sup>384</sup>

In May 1992, after watching the impasse in Washington, Norwegian Terje Rød Larsen, director of the FAFO Institute, met with Yossi Beilin – a former Labor Member of the Knesset (MK) and then a political commentator out of government – to suggest that Oslo might be a good location for quiet backchannel talks between the Israelis and Palestinians.<sup>385</sup> Larsen's wife, Mona Juul, ran the office of the Deputy Foreign Minister, Jan Egeland, who had received a PLO delegation a few months earlier. During that visit, Ahmed Qurei (aka Abu Alaa), the PLO's Director-General of Economic Affairs, had expressed willingness to meet with Israelis, given an acceptable forum. Beilin had spent

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<sup>383</sup> Aburish, 240.

<sup>384</sup> Wanis-St. John, 85.

<sup>385</sup> Yossi Beilin, *The Path to Geneva: The Quest for a Permanent Agreement*, (New York: RDV Books, 2004), 15.

several years making contacts with prominent Palestinians, including PLO members – then illegal under Israeli law – to establish a protocol for negotiations that could be put in place when Labor won an election. Beilin had informed the Shamir government of his prior initiatives,<sup>386</sup> and although some senior government officials welcomed Beilin’s reports,<sup>387</sup> Likud condemned such activities publically. There was one instance when a message from the prime minister’s office suggested that Shamir found a related report “interesting, and he wanted to seem more,”<sup>388</sup> but this expression of interest did not translate into Likud support for conciliatory counterterrorism strategies.

Larsen and Beilin were not the only ones to grasp the strategic opportunities of the time. The PLO had moderated its position and was willing to negotiate a settlement with the Israeli government. This was readily apparent to all but the Shamir government, which remained intransigent about negotiating with the PLO. This steadfast opposition was not driven entirely by its assessment of the PLO’s potential as a possible negotiating partner, but out of a refusal to even consider relinquishing all or part of the Occupied Territories, which it viewed as “Greater Israel.” On these issues, Shamir’s government was increasingly out of synch with Israeli public opinion. By early 1992, more than 40% of the Israeli public supported the government negotiating with the PLO.

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<sup>386</sup> There were several efforts to create unofficial dialogues between Israelis and the Palestinians. The government knew of some: To Yossi and the Jaffe center, they never would have thought not to clue in the prime minister’s office. The Jaffe center always distributed their reports from the talks to the “NATO list” – government officials, military and intelligence officials, Knesset members - they’d always hope for some feedback or blessing, which they never received. There were, however, those on the left who would never have considered telling the administration what they were doing and giving them updates.

<sup>387</sup> Yossi Alpher, interview by author, May 31, 2012, Ramat HaSharon. Beilin hoped he might get some feedback to guide his conversations, but he almost never got any

<sup>388</sup> Ibid.

#### 4.2.5 Period V – 1992-1993: Strategic and Domestic Opportunities to Make Peace

The next month, Shamir's intransigence at Madrid – and the floundering relationship with the US and lack of progress on the peace process that it represented – was repudiated in the general election, as Labor was overwhelmingly elected to power. Labor's leader, Yitzhak Rabin, had run on a platform that promised an interim agreement on Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza within six to nine months after he was elected, the first step, he promised, to a peace settlement.<sup>389</sup> Moreover, Rabin publically stated that UNSC Resolution 242 applied to the Golan Heights, suggesting Israel was also willing to consider a withdrawal from the Golan. Although Rabin had an established reputation as a military man and hawk, he formed one of the most dovish governments in the country's history. Rabin had a mandate for making peace with the Palestinians,<sup>390</sup> but he had a reputation for safeguarding Israel's security.

Despite his campaign promises, Rabin was slow to shift gears away from the Shamir government's position on the bi-lateral talks. The Rabin government retained Likud's head negotiator, Eliakim Rubinstein, and did not provide – even when asked – new guidance on how to approach the talks.<sup>391</sup> When, at the sixth round of talks, Rabin's government provided its initial offer for Palestinian autonomy, it was not markedly different from Shamir's offer. Rabin's government continued to shun the PLO despite the Organization's efforts to demonstrate to Rabin that it was in control of the negotiating team and it would not be possible to negotiate a deal without implicitly dealing with the

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<sup>389</sup> “Rabin Incentives: Spurred Talks, U.S. Guarantees,” *The New York Times*, June 24, 1992.

<sup>390</sup> In addition to Labor's gains, Meretz, the other major party favoring a more conciliatory policy toward the Palestinians and accommodation with the Arab states based on the exchange of territories for peace, increased their vote share significantly, suggesting the Israeli electorate was favorable to a resolution of the Palestinian question, even if that involved direct negotiations.

<sup>391</sup> Wanis-St. John, 59.

group. Rabin viewed the PLO and Arafat, with their legitimacy routed in the Palestinian Diaspora, as an obstacle to reaching a settlement.<sup>392</sup> Rabin wanted Arafat to be marginalized and Palestinian leaders from the Occupied Territories to be propped up.<sup>393</sup> Rabin jealously guarded the Washington talks as part of his portfolio, even though it would have naturally fallen under the preview of Shimon Peres, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Rabin's political rival. Undeterred by the lack of transformation in Rabin's early days in office, Beilin, now Peres' Deputy, continued to meet with the Norwegians to plot a possible backchannel discussion with the Palestinians.

Beilin envisioned the backchannel as parallel to, and bolstering, the talks in Washington, not circumventing them.<sup>394</sup> The backchannel would allow the parties to work out an agreement in secrecy and once approved, it would be introduced and signed through the official bilateral talks in Washington. In order to work around the ban on meeting PLO members (there was an exception for academics and journalists) and shield Peres from the potential blowback in government (Rabin had forbidden him from meeting with Palestinian leaders) and from the public in the event it was leaked, the Norwegians organized a meeting between Abu Alaa and Israeli academic Yair Hirschfeld in London during the December 1992 post-Madrid multi-lateral talks. The meeting went well and convinced Beilin that further talks were worth pursuing. Although the nascent Oslo backchannel that started with the London meeting had *no* official Israeli participation or sanction, the PLO was convinced that Hirschfeld couldn't have acted on his own initiative. Arafat believed the new Israeli government was feeling out the PLO

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<sup>392</sup> Shlaim, "The Oslo Accord," 29.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> Quoting Beilin, Wanis-St. John, 89.

for direct talks.<sup>395</sup> At the time, Beilin was the only Israeli official who knew about the channel.

The positive developments in London were almost derailed when in mid-December 1992. In response to the kidnapping, and subsequent killing, of a border policeman by Hamas, close on the heels of five other similar deadly attacks, Rabin closed the borders with the Territories and ordered the expulsion of 415 Gazans and West Bank Palestinians thought to be associated with Hamas. The deportees were driven to the Lebanese border, but the Lebanese refused to let the men across, thus stranding them in the buffer zone between the two countries' check points for months, exposed to the winter elements. The PLO responded by suspending Palestinian participation in the Washington peace talks until the exiled were allowed to return home. The situation generated significant backlash at home and abroad, especially after the government acknowledged some of the deportees had been incorrectly identified and several had to be readmitted for health reasons. The UN Security Council condemned the deportations and the US State Department and the newly elected US president criticized Israel.<sup>396</sup> The deportation drama-induced quagmire in Washington led Rabin to consider shifting his attention to Syria, possibly to pressure the Palestinians to return to the negotiating table,<sup>397</sup> or mollify public demand,<sup>398</sup> and shore up a political victory after months of little

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<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

<sup>396</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 726, January 6, 1993, available from [[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/726\(1992\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/726(1992))], and Clyde Haberman, "400 Arabs Ousted by Israel Are Mired in Frozen Limbo," *The New York Times*, December 19, 1992.

<sup>397</sup> Sarah Helm, "Rabin Promotes Peace with Syria to Top of Agenda," *The Independent*, February 26, 1993.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

progress on the Palestinian front.<sup>399</sup> Whatever his motivation, Rabin returned his attention back to the Palestinian issue<sup>400</sup> after overtures to Assad proved “disappointing.”<sup>401</sup>

Amidst the deportation crisis, the Knesset repealed the “Law of Association” which had made it illegal for Israeli officials to talk to PLO members. The next day, the first round of Oslo backchannel talks began. On January 20, at the invitation of FAFO, and under the guise of a conference there, Hirschfeld and another Israeli academic, Ron Pundak, met with PLO representatives to discuss possible solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The PLO negotiating team consisted of Ahmed Qurei, Maher al-Kurd, and Hassan Asfour, Secretary of the PLO’s Negotiation Committee. Talks focused on three main ideas: a Palestinian “Marshall Plan,” the devolution of economic power, and the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.<sup>402</sup> The next month, the delegates came back to Oslo for another round of talks. The discussions were fruitful enough that Beilin decided it was time to inform his boss.<sup>403</sup>

In between the second and third round of talks, Beilin informed Peres, who in turn informed Rabin about the backchannel.<sup>404</sup> Peres viewed the Oslo channel as a positive development because he was particularly frustrated with the Israeli negotiating team’s approach in Washington, which struck him as tactical and ill-suited to crafting a

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<sup>399</sup> Ibid.

<sup>400</sup> It has been suggested that Rabin was faced with a much bigger commitment with regards to Syria - complete withdrawal from the Golan and the dismantlement of all Jewish settlements there – as compared to the Palestinian front, which was focusing primarily on a 5 year interim self-government with only limited territorial withdrawal and did not require the dismantling of settlements. Shlaim, “The Oslo Accord,” 28.

<sup>401</sup> Itamar Rabinovich, *Waging Peace: Israel and the Arabs 1948-2003*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 55.

<sup>402</sup> Makovsky, 23.

<sup>403</sup> Wanis-St. John, 91.

<sup>404</sup> Beilin, *The Path to Geneva*, 36.



permanent peace.<sup>405</sup> At the very least, the talks could provide the Israelis with intelligence on the PLO. Rabin, however, was unimpressed.<sup>406</sup> This was perhaps because there were as many as nine other backchannel communications occurring with Palestinian representatives at the time.<sup>407</sup> More importantly, Rabin did not want Oslo to replace the Washington talks, but he did not push to have the channel dismantled. Rabin never responded to any of the reports about talks, but he purportedly read every word and was interested.<sup>408</sup> Indicative of the value he placed on each negotiation track (and his efforts to keep his rival distracted with unessential matters), Rabin maintained direct control over the Washington negotiations, while giving Peres control over the nascent, Oslo track II talks.<sup>409</sup> Gradually, however, Rabin became more involved in the details of the Oslo channel and assumed an active role in directing the talks alongside Peres. Since Abu Alaa reported to Arafat, a direct line of communication had been established between Jerusalem and the PLO headquarters in Tunis.

During the third round of talks in March, the two sides agreed to a draft declaration of principals. In late April the bilateral talks finally restarted in Washington, but through the backchannel the Israelis requested that the recently returned Palestinian delegation purposely slow down the talks in order to give the Israeli government time to consider the draft declaration that had come out of the Oslo channel. Within days, the fourth round of talks occurred in Oslo. While Rabin and Peres were directing the Oslo channel by this point, the talks were still not official.

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<sup>405</sup> Shlaim, "The Oslo Accord," 31.

<sup>406</sup> Wanis-St. John, 91.

<sup>407</sup> Quoting Mohamed Heikel, *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>408</sup> Alpher.

<sup>409</sup> Wanis-St. John, 67.

In May 1993, Peres made a highly significant decision: he ordered Uri Savir, the Director-General of the Foreign Ministry, and Joel Singer, a former IDF legal adviser, to join Hirschfeld and Pundak in Oslo, thus elevating the talks to an official level. The previous power imbalance at Oslo, whereby the Palestinians were negotiating from an official position while the Israelis were not authorized to make concessions hamstrung the amount of progress the backchannel could facilitate. Savir came with new conditions for talks and the framework that had previously been drafted was tossed out.<sup>410</sup> Initially, Savir's proposals rankled the Palestinians, but they agreed to continue talks. After his first session, Savir reported back to his supervisors that he recommended they continue to pursue the talks.<sup>411</sup> Rabin was still not convinced about the benefits of pursuing the Oslo channel.<sup>412</sup> In June 1993, he threatened to stop it from going forward unless the Washington talks, which were stalled again, continued.<sup>413</sup> He later relented after Peres intervened. Recognizing that there would be a political price to pay if the back channel was revealed, Rabin insisted on total secrecy if the channel was to continue. For example, only a few Americans were aware of the process by August 1993; Rabin had even scoffed when asked by Secretary of State Warren Christopher if there were secret talks occurring.<sup>414</sup>

The seventh and eighth rounds of talks occurred in June, the latter of which proved problematic when Singer produced a draft that differed drastically from the one negotiated with Hirschfeld and Pundak. Ultimately the angered Palestinian negotiators

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<sup>410</sup> Alpher.

<sup>411</sup> Wanis-St. John, 95.

<sup>412</sup> Apparently the first duty of the Israeli officials assigned to take over the Oslo channel was to assess the benefits of continuing it for Rabin. *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>413</sup> Apparently Arafat was trying to signal to Rabin the PLO preferred the Oslo forum to Washington, but Rabin misinterpreted the Palestinian delegation's actions. *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>414</sup> Beilin, *The Path to Geneva*, 37.

agreed to continue talking because the new draft included mutual recognition. By numerous accounts, Rabin still did not take the Oslo channel “at all seriously,” but this would change rapidly over the following month.<sup>415</sup> This is in part due to Singer’s judgment that a real deal could be reached. A ninth and tenth round took place in early July. At the 11<sup>th</sup> round in late July, the talks nearly broke down over 16 outstanding issues. Crisis was averted when the two sides agreed to split the difference, but no future date was set for the next round of talks. Without informing the delegates party to the Oslo channel, Rabin sent Arafat a letter at this time, wherein he sought to explain the Israeli team’s position on limiting Palestinian jurisdiction in some cases. Arafat’s response accepted the limitations if there was mutual recognition. It is around the time of this exchange, that Rabin appears to have finally appreciated the possibility of the Oslo backchannel. Although talks were upgraded to an official status with the introduction of Savir in May, it was not until July that Rabin seems to have completely grasped the authenticity of the negotiations. While other scholars have more closely covered the last rounds of the Oslo talks and the resulting Declaration of Principles (DOP), for the purpose of this study, the history of the onset of negotiations can conclude here.

#### **4.2.6 Conclusion**

To understand how Israel shifted from a status quo, military-oriented counterterrorism strategy to engaging in strategic negotiations with its long-time enemy the PLO, one must examine the confluence of strategic and domestic factors at the beginning of the 1990s. At that time, the conflict was becoming increasingly ripe for

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<sup>415</sup> Citing Nahum Barnea and Shimon Schiffer, “The Norwegian Connection,” *Yedioth Ahronot*, 3 September 1993, Shlaim, “The Oslo Accord,” 32.

resolution. On the strategic front, both sides had recognized that they were stuck in a mutually hurting stalemate. The Israelis had finally accepted that there was no military solution to the conflict. Likewise, the PLO recognized that it needed to negotiate because the military option was not viable and in order to salvage its position within the Palestinian national movement. These realizations alone, however, would not have precipitated a significant change in Israel's counterterrorism policy.

Israel had long pursued a status quo policy, and would have likely continued to do so, if it hadn't been for significant changes to the geo-political and strategic environments that forced the Israeli government to consider the utility of a conciliatory strategy. At the time, the strategic conditions for negotiating were the best they'd ever been: The PLO had moderated and agreed to Israeli preconditions. It was the indubitable representative of the Palestinian people, recognized around the world. Moreover, the PLO had been weakened enough to be desperate, but still controlled the Palestinian movement, making it an ideal negotiating partner. Some within the Israeli government recognized that this window of opportunity was fleeting – the rise of Hamas during the Intifada suggested that the Palestinian movement might soon become more fractionalized and the potential emerging power center would be more radical, uncompromising, and violent than its predecessor. There were also other strategic pressures and advantages that added to the ripeness of the time: The Cold War, which had long played out in the Arab-Israeli conflict, was finally over. The US President was deeply interested in facilitating a peace agreement and was exerting significant pressure on Israel to come to the negotiating table. Most importantly, after nearly fifteen years wherein the Government was either unwilling, due to ideology, or unable, due to corruption scandals that made it hard to do

anything, to work towards a political settlement with the Palestinians, the domestic political environment was finally favorable for shifting towards a conciliatory counterterrorism strategy.

Efforts to reorient Israel's counterterrorism policy would have died on the vine, if there had not been room for the Israeli prime minister to successfully maneuver the domestic political arena. The change in government in 1992 and shifts in public opinion gave the newly elected Prime Minister Rabin the room he needed. Even though the country was as polarized as ever, especially on the issue of the Territories,<sup>416</sup> there was a steady growth in support for negotiating with the PLO. Israelis were weary from decades of violence. In 1989, Labor MK Arie (Lova) Eliav said at the time, "More than ever people say we must talk to the PLO, not out of love or knowledge but out of sheer exhaustion and despair."<sup>417</sup> That sentiment grew after the outbreak of the Intifada, which had caused the Israeli public to rethink the occupation. While the violence raged in 1988 and 1989, it was difficult to do anything but adopt a defensive stance, but as it began to diminish, it was possible to consider alternate counterterrorism strategies.<sup>418</sup> Likewise, the missile attacks during the Gulf War initially hardened attitudes against the PLO, but ultimately increased the urgency for reducing tensions with Israel's neighbors and addressing the Palestinian problem. Public opinion was reflected in the Knesset. While nearly equally divided between the right and left, Rabin had managed to assemble the most ideologically cohesive coalition Israel had seen in decades. He had a hawkish reputation that insulated him from attacks from the more hawkish members of his own party as well as those from the right. The security establishment largely supported the

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<sup>416</sup> Not to mention along other fault lines – ethnic, religious/secular, capitalist/socialist.

<sup>417</sup> Trudy Rubin, "The Angst Of Israeli, PLO Contact," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 3, 1989.

<sup>418</sup> Brom.

shift in counterterrorism strategy; long recognizing the problem did not have a military solution.

When Rabin ran for election in 1992, his peace platform represented the political realities of the day – there was no military solution to the conflict – and a cautious optimism that a negotiated settlement could address Israel’s security problem. At the time, he still resisted negotiating directly with the PLO,<sup>419</sup> but members of his coalition and the experience with the Washington talks would eventually convince him that it was impossible to bypass the PLO.<sup>420</sup> With that, Rabin threw his energy into the track II talks in Oslo. By all accounts, he did not initially think the back channel was important,<sup>421</sup> but once he fully appreciated the constraints and opportunities he faced, Rabin took over the reins and managed the Oslo channel to find a negotiated settlement with the PLO.<sup>422</sup> To approve the Declaration of Principles produced by the channel, however, Rabin needed the support of his left-leaning coalition, which was large enough with the support of Arab MKs - to survive the defection of a minor party. Thus, it was only after the Palestinian-Israeli conflict reached a mutually hurting stalemate, which both sides recognized they could not win, and the strategic environment became more conducive, and the domestic impediments fell away that Rabin’s government could pursue a negotiate solution with the PLO.

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<sup>419</sup> Rabin still hoped to make peace without dealing directly with the PLO. Over his career, Rabin had repeated on countless occasions that he would never talk to the PLO.

<sup>420</sup> Peres and Beilin were instrumental in convincing Rabin of the centrality of the PLO to any peace agreement.

<sup>421</sup> Eitan Haber, his chargé d’affaires, claimed that Rabin was not sure about the negotiations even as he was about to publically sign the DOP that they produced. Eitan Haber, phone interview with author, May 31, 2012. That Rabin was unsure anything would come of the channel is further evidenced by the fact that he let Peres continue to run the Oslo track for a while. As his political rival, Rabin had tried to sideline Peres on all important issues – keeping the Washington talks for himself, even though it was naturally part of Peres’ foreign ministry portfolio.

<sup>422</sup> Makovsky, 50.

### **4.3 Strategic Environment**

Changes in the strategic environment between Israeli independence and 1993 are central to understanding how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict became ripe for resolution and why the Israeli government ultimately chose the PLO as a negotiating partner. The endurance of the PLO despite concerted efforts to destroy the Organization helped the Israelis come to recognize that there was no military solution to the conflict. Successive Israeli governments sought to bypass the PLO and find a political solution through proxies, usually the Jordanians. The PLO's market share in the Palestinian movement eventually helped convince the Israelis that it could not bypass the group if a real deal was to be made. The PLO and its leader Yasser Arafat were the internationally-recognized leaders of the Palestinian movement. The PLO had more support and members than any other Palestinian organization at the time. Moreover, the PLO had moderated its positions and met US and Israeli preconditions for talks. Of all the Palestinian factions, the PLO – by the nature of its goals, extensive support, and centralization - was the most likely group to both strike a compromise with Israel and deliver the majority of the Palestinian population in a settlement.

#### **4.3.1 Terrorist Group Size**

Overall projections for the strength of the Palestinian guerrilla movement vary significantly. All evidence suggests, however, that by the 1970s, the number of Palestinian nationalist guerrillas was significant. Several projections put the number of PLO affiliated guerillas in Jordan alone at 30,000-50,000.<sup>423</sup> At the height of its military

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<sup>423</sup> Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation*, 41. Laffin provides a similar figure of 30,000. John Laffin, *Arab Armies of the Middle East Wars: 1948-1973*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2005), 29.

strength, the PLO guerrillas were well armed. Some estimates suggest the PLO could have *equipped* an all out mobilization of about 100,000 in the early 1970s.<sup>424</sup> At the time, the PLO had advanced weaponry, including rocket launchers and truck mounted heavy machine guns. There were Palestinian guerrilla groups outside the PLO, but they never were able to generate the same type of following as the PLO factions. It wasn't until the rise of Hamas in years following the Oslo Accords that any other Palestinian organization would be able to match the PLO factions in membership *and* capacity.

From soon after its inception until the signing of the Oslo Accords, the PLO dominated the Palestinian nationalist movement.<sup>425</sup> Since 1969, when Arafat took over the reins of the PLO, his Fatah faction was the undisputed driving force behind the Organization, and thus the movement more broadly. Before 1982, Fatah comprised 80% of the PLO armed forces, staffed 90% of the PLO political positions, and controlled PLO diplomacy and up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of its finances.<sup>426</sup> A breakdown of the PLO forces at the time is instructive for envisioning the general power structure within the Organization: 1982 estimates place the number of PLO affiliated fighters at 15,000<sup>427</sup>-25,000,<sup>428</sup> of which

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<sup>424</sup> John Laffin, *Arab Armies of the Middle East Wars: 1948-1973*, 29.

<sup>425</sup> By the 1980s, the PLO's control over the movement was being challenged, but it was not until the next decade when this would become obvious.

<sup>426</sup> Groth, 14.

<sup>427</sup> The 15,000 figure is provided by Anat N. Kurz, *Fatah and the Politics of Violence: The Institutionalization of a Popular Struggle*, (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), note 100, page 185-186. Rouleau puts the number a bit higher at 20,000 in 1983. Eric Rouleau, "The Future of the PLO," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 62, No. 1, (Fall 1983), 153.

<sup>428</sup> T. Elaine Carey, "Factions under PLO umbrella jostle to end cease-fire," *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 15, 1982.



9,000<sup>429</sup>-14,000<sup>430</sup> were Fatah, the PFLP and DFLP each had between 1,000<sup>431</sup>-6,000,<sup>432</sup> with 2,000 Sa'iqa, 250 PFLP-GC, 500 ALF, 200 PPSF, 250 PLF.<sup>433</sup>

#### 4.3.1.1 Fatah

When it was founded in 1959, Fatah comprised only a handful of fedayeen. By 1963, it had between 200-300 members, none of them fighters.<sup>434</sup> Soon after, a recruitment campaign netted thousands of new guerrillas, who were then quickly dispatched to Algeria, Iraq, and Syria for training, after which they were positioned in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon.<sup>435</sup> By 1969, Fatah was thought to have 6,000 members.<sup>436</sup> Before the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, it was estimated that there were 9,000 Fatah forces,<sup>437</sup> almost half of the total number of fedayeen under the PLO umbrella.<sup>438</sup> By the eve of Oslo, Fatah's forces had declined: estimates run from 6,000-8,000 members.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>429</sup> Kurz, note 100, page 185-186.

<sup>430</sup> Carey, "Factions Under PLO Umbrella Jostle to End Cease-fire."

<sup>431</sup> Kurz, note 100, page 185-186.

<sup>432</sup> Carey, "Factions Under PLO Umbrella Jostle to End Cease-fire."

<sup>433</sup> Kurz, note 100, page 185-186.

<sup>434</sup> Aburish, 54.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>436</sup> Muhamad Hasrul Zakariah, "The Uprising of the Fedayeen Against the Government of Jordan, 1970-1971: Declassified Documents from The British Archive," *International Journal of West Asian Studies*, Vol. 2 No. 2, 2010, 49.

<sup>437</sup> Kurz, note 100, page 185-186.

<sup>438</sup> Rouleau, 153.

<sup>439</sup> 8,000 in the early 1990s – Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory*, 155. 6,000-8,000 - U.S. Department of State, "Appendix B: Background Information on Major Groups Discussed in the Report," in *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1994*, (April 1995), available from [http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/terror\\_94/append.html#AppendixB](http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/terror_94/append.html#AppendixB)].

#### 4.3.1.2 PLO Factions – PFLP, DFLP, PLF, PPSF, Al Sa’iqa

Behind Fatah, the next two largest and influential factions in the PLO were its leftist factions, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). In 1967, several commando groups merged to form the PFLP, which received support from the Soviet Union and China.<sup>440</sup> In 1969, the PFLP was thought to have 900 members.<sup>441</sup> By 1970 it had 1,500 guerrillas and non-combat personnel and control over a few thousand militiamen in Jordan.<sup>442</sup> The PFLP eventually became the second largest faction under the PLO after Arafat’s Fatah. Black September left the PFLP in “disarray;”<sup>443</sup> the group splintered further and its membership declined down to 900 guerrillas.<sup>444</sup> By the early 1990s, the group had declined a bit further to an estimated 800 members.<sup>445</sup>

The other leftist faction, the DFLP, broke off from the PFLP in 1969, initially under the name the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP). At the time of the split, the DFLP had about 200 members. In the early 1990s, the DFLP had about 500 members.<sup>446</sup> The DFLP is believed to have received limited financial and military assistance from Syria and Libya.<sup>447</sup> In 1991, the DFLP split into two factions, with one group re-entering the PLO fold, the other adopting a more hard-line stance.<sup>448</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, “PFLP, DFLP, PFLP-GC, Palestinian leftists,” available from [<http://www.cfr.org/israel/pflp-dflp-pflp-gc-palestinian-leftists/p9128>].

<sup>441</sup> Zakariah, 50-51.

<sup>442</sup> Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement 1949-1993*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 256.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>445</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Appendix B: Background Information on Major Groups Discussed in the Report,” in *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1994*, (April 1995), available from [[http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/terror\\_94/append.html#AppendixB](http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/terror_94/append.html#AppendixB)].

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>447</sup> “Profile: DFLP,” *BBC*, February 4, 2002.

<sup>448</sup> This cell, led by Naif Hawatmeh suspended participation in the PLO, and strongly opposed the 1993 Declaration of Principles between Israel and the Palestinians.

The DFLP stagnated around 500 members largely operating in Syria, Lebanon, and the Territories.<sup>449</sup>

The minor factions of the PLO could not match the manpower – and correspondingly, influence – of the aforementioned guerrilla groups. Al Sa’iqa was initially one of the largest PLO factions, but its association with Syria hindered it from gaining widespread support. In the early 1970s, Al Sa’iqa was thought to have only 750 members,<sup>450</sup> and it declined in numbers thereafter. Abu Abbas’ faction of the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF), which split off from the PFLP-GC, had about 400 members,<sup>451</sup> but declined to about 50 by the early 1990s.<sup>452</sup> The Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PPSF) was estimated to have fewer than 300 members.<sup>453</sup> The Arab Liberation Front (ALF) had approximately 100 members by the early 1970s,<sup>454</sup> and eventually reached its peak strength at approximately 500 members.<sup>455</sup> There are several other minor political parties that are members of the PLO, to include the Palestinian Democratic Union, which split from the DFLP, and the Palestinian People’s Party (PPP), but their support was minor, as was their influence over the Organization.

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<sup>449</sup> “Profile: DFLP,” *BBC*, February 4, 2002.

<sup>450</sup> Zakariah, 50.

<sup>451</sup> “Palestine Liberation Front (PLF): Jabhat al-Tahrir al-Filistiniyyah,” International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), available from [<http://212.150.54.123/organizations/orgdet.cfm?orgid=29>].

<sup>452</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Appendix B,” *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1994*.

<sup>453</sup> “Popular Struggle Front (PSF),” Federation of American Scientists Intelligence Resource Program, available from [<https://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/psf.htm>].

<sup>454</sup> Zakariah, 50-51.

<sup>455</sup> National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), “Terrorist Organization Profile: Arab Liberation Front (ALF),” available from [[http://www.start.umd.edu/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=151](http://www.start.umd.edu/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=151)].

#### 4.3.1.3 Other Palestinian Organizations – PLA, PFLP-GC, ANO, PSF

There are several organizations that operated outside the PLO, although that does not suggest that they were necessarily at odds with the Organization. For example, the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) was created to be the military wing of the PLO, but never actually functioned in this regard. Rather, the PLA was a military force comprised largely of Palestinian refugees, but controlled by the Arab states that founded the PLO. The PLA never deployed in support of the PLO, rather its host governments would utilize PLA battalions from time to time as auxiliary forces. Before 1970, the estimated combined strength of the PLA and Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) was about 3,000.<sup>456</sup> This is drastically different from other estimates that suggest some 30,000 Palestinians received military training from the PLA in 1965-67 alone.<sup>457</sup> By 1980, the PLA was thought to be close to 20,000 strong.<sup>458</sup> The strength projections are largely irrelevant as the PLA was never really part of the Palestinian guerrilla movement.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC) broke off from the PFLP in 1968. It briefly operated under the PLO umbrella, but under the leadership of Ahmed Jibril, a former Syrian Army captain, the group shifted into the Syrian axis of influence. The PFLP-GC initially comprised a few hundred members, who wanted to concentrate on a military campaign instead of politics.<sup>459</sup> In 1977, the pro-Iraqi faction split off from the group. In 1991, the PLFP-GC was comprised

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<sup>456</sup> Citing FCO 51/137, Research Department Memorandum, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, enclosed in a letter from D.E Tatham, British Embassy, Jeddah to W.H Fullerton, Arabian Department, FCO, 10 March 1970, Zakariah, 49.

<sup>457</sup> The discrepancy in estimates could be in part due to fedayeen being trained by the PLA, but moving on to fight for other Palestinian groups. Yezid Sayigh, "Turning Defeat into Opportunity: The Palestinian Guerrillas after the June 1967 War," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 2, (Spring, 1992), 253.

<sup>458</sup> Cobban, 12.

<sup>459</sup> U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*, available from [<http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2002/pdf/index.htm>], 118.

800 men.<sup>460</sup> The PFLP-GC was never a particularly large organization, but its use of innovative terrorist tactics allowed it to exert influence beyond what would be expected for a group its size. PFLP-GC operations often undermined Arafat's efforts to demonstrate the moderation of the PLO. The group worked with Syria to undermine Arafat and the PLO. Ultimately, however, the PFLP-GC, despite the headlines it grabbed for skyjackings, did not have the size or support necessary to exert significant influence over the direction of the Palestinian national movement. The threat posed by the PFLP-GC, however, was nothing compared to that of the mercenary outfit run by his one time ally Abu Nidal.

Sabri al-Banna (a.k.a Abu Nidal), an expelled Fatah member, started his own terrorist group in 1974, known as the Abu Nidal Organization (ANO). From then on, ANO conducted revenge killings of Abu Nidal's former PLO comrades. ANO is thought to have had peaked at only a few hundred members.<sup>461</sup> ANO relocated to Baghdad, earned a reputation as a gun for hire, and never gained a popular following. Abu Nidal may have lacked the support and legitimacy to rival Arafat, but he used violence in an attempt to undermine his leadership, launching attacks that provoked Israel to attack the PLO and numerous assassination attempts on Arafat himself.

There were numerous other fringe Palestinian groups, but they tended to be small and often disappeared nearly as soon as they announced their existence: By one account, there were at least 31 groups operating under or alongside the PLO in Jordan alone in the early 1970s.<sup>462</sup> For example, the al Aqsa Fedayeen Front (AFF), the Active Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (AOLP), and Islamic Conquest (Fatah al Islam) all enjoyed

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<sup>460</sup> Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory*, 165.

<sup>461</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*, 101.

<sup>462</sup> Aburish, 101.

membership between 100-150 during that period, but none of these groups grew large enough to make a lasting impression on the Palestinian movement.<sup>463</sup> The Popular Struggle Front (PSF) had a longer tenure than most, but it never had more than 300 members.<sup>464</sup> As these groups disappeared, others arose and quickly faded. It was not until the late 1980s, with the rise of the “Islamist” groups that there was a potential counterweight to the Fatah-dominated PLO.

#### 4.3.1.4 “Islamists”

Current observers of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may find it strange that so little attention has thus far been paid to the “Islamist” groups – namely Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). Although these groups – particularly Hamas - would eventually come to rival the PLO in influence, by the early 1990s, these groups were still in their incunabulum.

Hamas and PIJ emerged in the Occupied Territories in the mid- to late 1980s, although they both grew out of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), which had networks operating there for decades. Unfortunately, it is especially difficult to assess their support at the time. A general estimate of Hamas support can be extrapolated from MB membership numbers in the region: in the 1980s, there were thought to be a few thousand committed members of the MB in the West Bank.<sup>465</sup> It is difficult to determine how many of these committed MB members became Hamas guerrillas when the group was officially launched in 1987. At that time, the Brotherhood had just created its first armed branch in

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<sup>463</sup> Zakariah, 50-51.

<sup>464</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Appendix B,” *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1994*.

<sup>465</sup> Ziyād Abū ‘Am, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza: Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad*, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1994), 21.

Gaza, but it was not focused on attacking Israel, but rather had a defense orientation and arose primarily as a reaction to rising PIJ violence.<sup>466</sup> Hamas as a terrorist group was really born after Sheikh Yassin allowed his followers to join the Intifada in an organized way. At the time of the Oslo Agreement one intelligence estimate put the actual number of Hamas Qassam fighters at only around 100.<sup>467</sup> That assessment may have been too modest. It is, however, clear that by 1990 Hamas had thousands of supporters and exerted significant influence in the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>468</sup> This support was in part won by the social services Hamas provided and as a result of Hamas actions during the Intifada.

Terrorist cells affiliated with PIJ emerged as early as the late 1970s and were operating in Gaza by the early 1980s.<sup>469</sup> PIJ was exiled to Lebanon after the Intifada, and later moved its headquarters to Damascus. PIJ never reached the level of support of Hamas, in part because it did not provide social services. At the time of Oslo, the number of PIJ fighters was unknown,<sup>470</sup> but estimated to be drastically lower than Hamas.

As armed guerrilla and terrorist movements go, the Palestinians were relatively well-equipped. The Cold War order and Arab unwillingness to directly engage Israel benefitted the PLO and arms flowed to the Organization from the USSR, Egypt, Syria,

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<sup>466</sup> Jean-Pierre Filiu, "Origins of Hamas: Militant Legacy or Israeli Tool?" *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Spring 2012), 66.

<sup>467</sup> Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Brotherhood of Anger -A special report; Palestinian Religious Militants: Why Their Ranks Are Growing," *The New York Times*, November 8, 1994.

<sup>468</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Appendix B: Background Information on Terrorist Groups," in *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1992*, (April 30, 1993), available from [[http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/terror\\_92/](http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/terror_92/)] and U.S. Department of State, "Appendix B," *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1994*.

<sup>469</sup> There are disputed claims about whether PIJ was started in Gaza or Egypt: Originated in Egypt and came to Gaza after it was exiled following Sadat's assassination - START, "Palestinian Islamic Jihad," available from [[http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data\\_collections/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=82](http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=82)]. Originated in Gaza in the 1970s - U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "Chapter 6. Foreign Terrorist Organizations," in *Country Reports on Terrorism 2011*, July 31, 2012, available from [<http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2011/195553.htm#PIJ>].

<sup>470</sup> This report and subsequent reports from the decade, place PIJ strength as unknown. US Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1994*.

and Iraq. PLO-affiliated groups were able to amass a significant arsenal in Jordan and then in Lebanon, including sniper rifles and assault weapons from the USSR<sup>471</sup> and stores of RPG-7s and Katyusha rocket launchers. In Lebanon, the PLO was known to use anti-aircraft guns and jeep-mounted cannons against the invading IDF forces.<sup>472</sup> The PLO even produced Ak-47 like weapons in their own factories.<sup>473</sup> In the 1970s, the PLO had worked to “regularize” its armed wings and overlay a structure that lent its forces a “statist” flavor.<sup>474</sup> The Israeli invasion of Lebanon, however, dealt a serious blow to the PLO’s military capacity. Any hopes of building a regular military force were dashed in 1982. As a result, the PLO guerrillas scattered throughout the Middle East and as they fled their weapons were often confiscated by the Lebanese Army or the IDF.<sup>475</sup> The PLO’s move to Tunis in 1982 essentially ended the Organization’s military campaign for Palestinian statehood.

Even as it was rendered impotent militarily, the PLO continued to conceptualize Palestinian liberation exclusively in military terms.<sup>476</sup> There was a hope that the PLO could bide its time, reconstitute its military wing, and some day rise again against Israel. The damage and distance imposed on the PLO, however, were too great to overcome. Palestinian factions within and outside the PLO did not sit idle while their PLO leadership tried to find its bearings in Tunis and continued to innovate with terrorist tactics that did not require the same manpower or weaponry as insurgent actions. For example, the PFLP-GC used hot air balloons and motorized hang-gliders to attack Israel.

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<sup>471</sup> Samuel Katz and Lee E. Russell, *Armies in Lebanon, 1982-1984*, (New York: Osprey Publishing, 2005), 40-44.

<sup>472</sup> “PLO Guerrillas Give Up Their Heavy Weapons,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 7, 1991.

<sup>473</sup> Katz and Russell, 44.

<sup>474</sup> Strazzari and Tholens, 117.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*



It was not until the Intifada broke out that the PLO leadership fully shifted its conceptualization of the Palestinian struggle: the impact of the spontaneous uprising - fought with stones and Molotov cocktails but generating an international impact beyond the capacity of AK-47s and Katyusha rockets – made it clear that it was not military might that would end the occupation.

Rechavam Ze'evi, an advisor to Rabin, once articulated Israel's counterterrorism policy as "keep[ing] terrorism on such a low flame that it has no impact on the decisions made by the political echelon."<sup>477</sup> When the Palestinian groups were weak and divided in the 1960s, terrorism had little impact on Israeli policy. Eventually, the PLO amassed a significant, well-armed fighting force, which was able to inflict a lot of pain, but never constituted a real threat to the IDF.<sup>478</sup> The PLO and affiliated groups' use of terrorism, however, increasing constituted a problem for the Israelis - the state's security was never in jeopardy, the attacks undermined governance and generated significant political pressure on successive Israeli governments. After decades of trying, it had become obvious that efforts to destroy the PLO and its affiliates and rivals had fallen short. The PLO had not only endured, against all odds, but it had been recognized as the legitimate leader of the Palestinian people, a quasi-state in exile. That legitimacy and increased

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<sup>477</sup> Ganor, *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle*, 27.

<sup>478</sup> Although it was likely driven largely by domestic politics, the timing of Israel's decision to negotiate with the PLO is fitting vis-à-vis the PLO's capacity trajectory. Israel's approach to negotiations in the broad sense has often been articulated as – when we are strong, why should we negotiate? When we are weak, how can we think of negotiating? It seems paradoxical, but it would have been unlikely that the Israelis would have chosen to negotiate with the PLO when it was at its strongest, but it is only because the PLO was strong enough to survive but weaken enough to be desperate for a deal that it negotiated with the group. It was clear by its endurance and following that the PLO, and thus the Palestinian problem, was not going to fade away. Israel would have to deal with the Palestinian question eventually, but it chose to deal with the Fatah-dominated PLO, rather than its rivals and affiliates, because of the group's type and market share.

international recognition only further hampered subsequent Israeli efforts to destroy the Organization.

### 4.3.2 Terrorist Group Type

In general, Palestinian nationalism was an interesting mix of nationalism, Islam, Marxism/Leninism, and third world radicalism.<sup>479</sup> Different groups within the PLO, or outside it, adopted their own brand of nationalism that might emphasize a particular tenet or strain. Each group interpreted the Palestinian revolution differently, even though all the organizations shared a broad agreement on general goals.<sup>480</sup> For example, the PFLP was a Leninist organization dedicated to toppling conservative Arab states, promoting Pan Arabism, and destroying Israel.<sup>481</sup> Within the left-wing of the Palestinian movement, there were ideological disagreements: the DFLP broke off from the PFLP to form a Maoist group more focused on grassroots mobilization. The “Islamist” Palestinian groups that emerged as a force during the Intifada – Hamas and PIJ - drew from the Quran and cited individual religious obligations to motivate their membership, but Palestinian national aims remained their primary goals. Hamas is a predominately nationalist organization, albeit one with Islamist ideological packaging.<sup>482</sup> Born of the Muslim Brotherhood, there is a sincere connection to Islam for Hamas, but it also provided a way to politically maneuver past a moderating PLO and adopt a hard-line rejectionist

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<sup>479</sup> Rubin, *Revolution until Victory*, 8.

<sup>480</sup> Barhoum.

<sup>481</sup> “Founding document of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – December 1967,” Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine website, available from [<http://pflp.ps/english/2012/12/founding-document-of-the-popular-front-for-the-liberation-of-palestine-december-1967/>].

<sup>482</sup> Most of the Israeli officials, academics, and reporters I interviewed for this project view Hamas as a nationalist group above all else. They are not seen as motivated by religion.

stance.<sup>483</sup> In addition to ideology and worldview, Palestinian terrorist groups have very different strategies for achieving their goals, which prompted rifts and competition between them: For example, in 1968, Jibril broke off from the PFLP, which he accused of being only interested in political declarations and not action, to form PFLP-GC, which promised to focus more on a military operations.

Despite the predominance of the nationalist aims across Palestinian groups, the Israeli government did not view all brands of Palestinian nationalism as equally conducive for negotiating a political settlement. Left-leaning groups were more likely to adopt an expansive view of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict or preclude negotiations out of an ideological dedication to revolutionary approaches. For example, the PFLP's Leninist outlook led to a very different understanding of the Palestinian question; one that rendered it more antagonistic toward possible allies. This lens led the PFLP to view the Jordanian monarchy as "a reactionary class enemy that should be overthrown," whereas Fatah had adopted a practical outlook that viewed cooperation with Amman as beneficial to achieving Palestinian aims.<sup>484</sup> The PFLP began to actively challenge Hussein's rule, thus triggering the Jordanian Civil War and bringing on Black September, which was a major blow to the PLO at large. Fatah's practical nationalism was more inclusive and less alienating, and thus under its leadership, the PLO enjoyed greater support and room to maneuver than it likely would have if it has been under more ideologically-driven stewardship.

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<sup>483</sup> Philipp Holtmann, *The PLO Charters of 1964 and 1968 and the Hamas Charter of 1988: A Comparative Essay*, (Norderstedt, Germany: Books on Demand GmbH, 2005), 20.

<sup>484</sup> Ilana Kass and Bard E. O'Neill, *The Deadly Embrace: The Impact of Israeli and Palestinian Rejectionism on the Peace Process*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, INC, 1997), 39.

Since the mid-1960s, Fatah has been the predominant PLO guerrilla faction, a status it owes in large part to its “clear disdain for political ideology.”<sup>485</sup> Fatah’s founders thought it would be counterproductive for the Palestinian national movement to become associated with a single political ideology (e.g. Communism, Ba’athism), which were often associated with one Arab regime or the other. Fatah worried that espousing an ideological bent might bog the Organization down in intra-Arab rivalries.<sup>486</sup> Instead, Fatah promoted a broad nationalist agenda and sought autonomy from Arab governments, which helped garner the Organization a wide following.<sup>487</sup> In the eyes of Israeli officials, Fatah’s practical nationalism made it the most appealing potential negotiating partner of the Palestinian groups as it does not have an ideological dedication to violence and is more likely to see the utility of compromise. Moreover, the Fatah-led PLO had the broadest support base,<sup>488</sup> and, despite challenges, was best positioned to deliver the majority of the Palestinian population in support of a possible agreement.

The Fatah-led PLO was recognized the world over as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.<sup>489</sup> From the early days of his tenure, Arafat worked to establish this reputation. He sold the PLO as a government in exile, with himself at the helm. From its organization to its symbols, the PLO had all the trappings and pomp befit of a national government. The PLO was envisioned as a quasi-state – it had an assembly (the Palestine National Council), an executive (PLO Executive

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<sup>485</sup> Barhoum.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid.

<sup>487</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 255.

<sup>488</sup> Although, as the next section discusses, this was eroding with the rise of local leadership and the “Islamists” in the territories.

<sup>489</sup> In the mid-1970s, the Arab League, Soviet Union, and the Non-Aligned Movement all recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative for the Palestinian people.

Committee), laws, a treasure, and an army (Palestine Liberation Army).<sup>490</sup> At the 1988 PNC meeting, the delegates passed a motion declaring Palestinian independence; Arafat was named President. He dressed the part. He crafted an image that allowed him to become the “walking, breathing symbol of his cause”<sup>491</sup> - to denote his sacrifices and bravery for the Palestinian national movement, he wore a khaki military uniform; to demonstrate his humility and dedication to the Palestinian state he wore a humble, checkered *keffiyeh*<sup>492</sup> draped to resemble the shape of Palestine. The PLO worked to establish diplomatic relations around the world. One of the Organization’s biggest coups was to get UN non-state observer status and for Arafat to address the General Assembly as if he were a sitting head of state in 1974. As the world increasingly recognized the PLO and Yasser Arafat as the leaders of the Palestinian cause, it became more and more difficult for the Israelis, despite their efforts, to deal with anyone else. Under Arafat, the PLO did an excellent job of creating the impression that the Palestinian state was already a reality, giving the Palestinian quest an aura of inevitability.

The Fatah-led PLO, with its trappings of traditional statehood and moderated demands, was viewed as a more favorable negotiating partner over the ideological or religiously-hued Palestinian groups, even when it was clear that Hamas was surging in influence. In addition to type, the relationships between the Palestinian factions would also influence Israel’s calculation about the utility of negotiations.

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<sup>490</sup> As previously mentioned, the PLA was the PLO’s Army in name only. The PLA remained under the command of the Arab states that had originally set up the PLO, and once Fatah and Arafat had wrestled control of the PLO out from under them, the PLO was unable to command the PLA.

<sup>491</sup> Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, “A Briefing on the Middle East Peace Process: Who Is Yasir Arafat?” Foreign Policy Research Institute, December 2003, available from [<http://www.fpri.org/peacefacts/102.200312.rubin.arafat.html>].

<sup>492</sup> A woven head covering commonly worn in the Middle East to prevent sunburn and protect from sand.

### **4.3.3 Terrorist Group Factional Politics**

The Palestinian national movement was characterized by a duality whereby the movement had a degree – and certainly gave the impression - of unity consolidated around the leadership of one man and his faction, but was simultaneously racked with rivalries and fissures. The primary force in the struggle for Palestinian independence was the PLO, but as an umbrella organization to other factions, it was often divided along ideological lines and cults of personality.<sup>493</sup> Depending on the squabbles of the day, the PLO umbrella usually encompassed 8-10 groups, which included at one time or another: Fatah, PFLP, DFLP, Palestinian People's Party (PPP), PLF (Abu Abbas faction), Arab Liberation Front (ALF), Al Sa'iqa, Palestinian Democratic Union, PPSF (Samir Ghawisha faction), and the Palestinian Arab Front, (PAF), and the PFLP-GC. Of these factions, three – Fatah, PFLP, and the DFLP - loomed larger than the others with regard to their membership, armaments, support, and thus their influence.

#### **4.3.3.1 Factionalism within the PLO**

There has been a long rivalry between the three main factions of the PLO. The PFLP and the DFLP made occasional tactical alliances with Fatah, but were largely in opposition to Arafat for most of the period up until 1982. The following year, Fatah split into anti- and pro-Arafat factions and the ensuing power struggle was long and bloody.<sup>494</sup> Seeing how inter-organizational warfare distracted the Palestinian movement away from

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<sup>493</sup> Groth, 3.

<sup>494</sup> Assad longed to control the PLO for his purposes, but Fatah and Arafat had buttressed his advances. In 1983, Assad supported the anti-Arafat factions, which had joined together under the banner of the Palestinian National Salvation Front. The remaining pro-Arafat forces remaining in the Palestinian refugee camps and PNSF guerrillas fought two years of bloody battles in Lebanon until 1985, when their rift fizzled as they both came under attack by the Shia group Amal.

its primary goals, the PFLP and DFLP reconciled with Fatah and formed a “loyal opposition” that was critical of Arafat, yet willing to accept his leadership and remain loyal to the PLO framework.<sup>495</sup>

#### 4.3.3.2 Challenges from Outside

Challenges to Fatah and Arafat’s supremacy from the outside, however, persisted. Two of the biggest challenges to Arafat came from Abu Nidal Organization (ANO) and the PFLP-GC. Abu Nidal was a loud critic of Fatah and Arafat, who was a target of several ANO assassination attempts.<sup>496</sup> With his reputation as a mercenary, however, Abu Nidal never garnered enough popular support to pose a serious challenge to Arafat’s leadership and the PLO’s supremacy in the Palestinian movement. Abu Nidal’s program of assassinations of top PLO leaders hurt the Organization,<sup>497</sup> but they, unintentionally, helped remove Arafat’s potential rivals within Fatah, thus shoring up his position. Likewise the PFLP-GC came to oppose Fatah and Arafat’s leadership, but failed to encourage a large following because the group shunned the political component of the movement.<sup>498</sup> The PFLP-GC mounted attention-grabbing terrorist attacks, but never made declarations and Jibril failed to cast himself as a political leader. Moreover, the PFLP-GC’s close relationship with Syria undermined its support. The ANO and PLFP-GC were able to hurt the Fatah-led PLO, but they never constituted viable alternatives to it.

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<sup>495</sup> Sayigh, “Turning Defeat into Opportunity,” 253.

<sup>496</sup> Rubin, *Revolution until Victory?* 40.

<sup>497</sup> “From 1978 to 1983 he had assassinated the cream of the moderate Palestinian leadership, culminating, in a final deadly flourish in 1991, in the killing in Tunis of Abu Iyad, the PLO’s intelligence chief, with whom he had been engaged in a duel to the death for a quarter of a century.” Patrick Seale, “Terror in the Middle East : Who controlled Abu Nidal?” *The New York Times*, August 22, 2002.

<sup>498</sup> There was a significant lag between Jibril’s alignment with the anti-Arafat group and his suspension from the PLO, which took place in 1984. This may be yet another example of Arafat trying to maintain the lowest common denominator of unity and avoiding difficult decisions until the very last moment possible.

Another important challenge to Arafat and the PLO's leadership came from the Occupied Territories, specifically from the burgeoning "Islamist" groups and the local political leadership that rose to prominence during the Intifada. Hanan Ashrawi, Faisal Husseini, and Ziyad Abu Zayyad, among other Palestinian elite, became active in organizing protests during the uprising. Arafat worked at every turn to co-opt and marginalize these leaders, to the frustration of the Israelis, who hoped to negotiate with the latter and bypass the PLO. Peres once described Arafat's behavior as understandable, saying 'expecting the PLO to enable the local leaders to reach an agreement with Israel was like expecting the turkey to help in preparing the Thanksgiving dinner.'<sup>499</sup>

The "Islamists" that arose alongside the local nationalist politicians were are more latent threat. PIJ remained relatively small, and did not serve as a counterweight to the PLO, especially after its move to Damascus. Hamas was a different story. Hamas was born of the Intifada, but based on the Muslim Brotherhoods well-established social service networks. The latter had earned Hamas widespread support, but it was unclear by the early 1990s how this translated into fighting strength and political support. At the time, the group appeared to be still getting its bearings. The Declaration of Principles helped focus its ire and inspire its violence. In many ways, Arafat was extremely lucky that the Oslo backchannel opened when it did, as Fatah lacked the infrastructure on the ground and was not organized in a way to deal with the leadership challenges it was facing in the Territories.<sup>500</sup> Hamas was rising fast, but its potential was underappreciated at the time.

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<sup>499</sup> Shlaim, "The Oslo Accord," 29.

<sup>500</sup> Groth, 10.



#### 4.3.3.3 Competition from Arab Statesmen

Arafat and the Fatah-led PLO faced challenges not only from other guerrilla groups, but from Arab statesmen as well. From the mid-1960s, Hafez al-Assad's designs for Fatah were well known. As Syrian Defense Minister, Assad tried to have Arafat and several other Fatah leaders sentenced to death after accusing them of murder.<sup>501</sup> When he came to power in 1970, Assad's efforts to eliminate Fatah and take control of the PLO intensified. Assad backed the anti-Arafat groups that challenged the pro-Arafat factions in Lebanon in the spring in 1983.<sup>502</sup> Much to Assad's chagrin, the anti-Arafat movement declined after the rejectionists were unable to build popular support in the Territories or among the refugee communities. Moreover, several PLO factions recognized the infighting was damaging the movement and came back into the fold.

Assad was not the only Arab statesman who had designs to control the PLO or the carry the mantle of the Palestinian cause for his own purposes, but with time, most came to view trying to control the Organization as a losing proposition. The Jordanian regime, however, was an exception and continued to compete with Arafat and the PLO as the legitimate interlocutor for the Palestinian people. King Hussein was vying to be the representative of the West Bank inhabitants largely because he wanted to regain control over the territory that was once part of his kingdom and worried that the PLO would gain sovereignty at his expense. In their efforts to bypass the PLO, the Americans and Israelis nominated Hussein as the representative of the Palestinians. King Hussein took on the

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<sup>501</sup> Aburish, 63-64. Syria's leader, Salah Jadid, annulled the verdict and released them.

<sup>502</sup> The withdrawal from Beirut and Arafat's ambiguous response to the Reagan plan infuriated some of his comrades within the PLO, who seceded in the spring of 1983 to mount a revolt. The PFLP-GC, Sa'iqa, disgruntled Fatah members (Fatah-Provisional Command), a splinter-group from the Palestinian Communist Party, the PPSF and the pro-Syrian wing of the PLF united as the Palestine National Salvation Front (PNSF) to overthrow Arafat.

role, but in several situations realized, wisely, that he lacked the legitimacy to make large concessions on behalf of the Palestinians. Thereafter, Hussein sought out a common negotiating platform with Arafat.<sup>503</sup> After the Intifada, it was clear that the Palestinians in the West Bank had no allegiance to Jordan, and the King finally relinquished his claims.

#### **4.3.3.4 Arafat and PLO emerge as Leader of Palestinian people**

Despite the factionalism within the Palestinian nationalist movement, Arafat emerged as the face of the Palestinian movement and its unrivaled leader by the early 1970s. Arafat accomplished this by ensuring Fatah remained the dominant PLO faction. To protect his position, Arafat promoted sycophants and either undercut or made alliances with rivals. While his self-serving power hold may have hurt the Organization, Arafat's extreme pragmatism and focus on consensus helped maintain a broad coalition and overcome successive setbacks in Jordan and Lebanon. Under Arafat, Fatah, and the PLO more broadly, had the widest support of the Palestinian resistance organizations – violent or otherwise.<sup>504</sup> Despite Israel's efforts to destroy the PLO and bolster an alternative Palestinian political leadership in the West Bank and Gaza, and the rising threat of Hamas, the PLO managed to remain the premier Palestinian organization and Palestinians looked to Arafat as their representative. After decades of trying to circumvent the PLO, Israel finally came to accept that there was no other organization

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<sup>503</sup> Hussein later broke with Arafat and the PLO, but to disastrous consequences. Protests broke out when Jordan tried to circumvent PLO influence in the West Bank by bypassing the Jordanian-Palestinian Joint Committee by working directly with the Israelis. The backlash proved so great that in 1988, Hussein eventually announced he would sever Jordan's financial ties with the West Bank and cede his country's role in the region to the PLO. Yezid Sayigh, "Struggle within, Struggle without: The Transformation of PLO Politics Since 1982," *International Affairs*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (Spring, 1989), 264-265.

<sup>504</sup> Prior to the PLO's departure for Tunis, this was the case among the Diaspora and in the Territories.

that could represent the Palestinian people. Any negotiated settlement would have to include the PLO.

#### **4.3.4 Strategic Environment Summary**

Although Israeli politicians are loath to admit it, they did view some terrorist groups as inherently better potential negotiating partners than others.<sup>505</sup> Several characteristics were key in determining the potential of Israel's terrorist challengers, namely endurance/size, type, and fractionalization/market share. The Fatah-led PLO was eventually privileged over other Palestinian groups because it had the largest membership and support base. It had endured for decades despite concerted efforts to destroy it. While the militarily-weakened PLO had largely shifted away from guerrilla raids and conducting terrorist acts, the Israelis believed the Organization could influence the future trajectory of the conflict. Compared to other Palestinian factions and groups, the Fatah-led PLO's pragmatic nationalism made it a more attractive negotiating partner as it was not wedded to violence for ideological reasons and had demonstrated willingness to compromise. Of the strategic factors examined herein, the interesting duality of intra-Palestinian politics appears to have played an important role in shifting the PLO toward negotiations while opening Israel up to talks. Two simultaneous trends – the improving dynamics internally and the worsening ones outside - helped shift the PLO toward Oslo: First, Arafat's capacity to maneuver improved when the Syrian-sponsored rejectionist groups declined, the mainstream PLO groups – Fatah, PFLP, and DFLP consolidated control over the PLO, and the latter curbed their criticism of Arafat.<sup>506</sup> The PLO was no

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<sup>505</sup> Mier Elran, interview with author, Tel Aviv, May 28, 2012.

<sup>506</sup> Sayigh, "Struggle Within, Struggle without," 254-255.

longer held hostage by the veto of smaller guerrilla groups,<sup>507</sup> and was able to reorient the Organization, moderating its demands. The second trend, the rise of outside challengers to the PLO's dominance during the intifada – namely local leaders in the Territories and Hamas – generated urgency for Arafat to pursue talks with the Israelis.<sup>508</sup>

Despite decades of denying as much, Israel eventually accepted that the PLO, with Fatah and Arafat at its helm, were the unavoidable, internationally-recognized, legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people.<sup>509</sup> Rabin himself expressed the frustrating inevitability of dealing with the PLO, when he told his Labor colleagues, “They killed. They are murderers, but peace you make with your enemies, including despicable enemies. I’m not going to beautify them...[but] We have to take risks.”<sup>510</sup> Begrudgingly, the Israeli government came to accept that *if* it had to negotiate a political settlement, no other leader and faction had the capacity, legitimacy, and following necessary to make a real deal than Arafat and the PLO. No other group was seen as a possible negotiating partner. The rising challenge from Hamas was not yet fully recognized: At the time of the Oslo backchannel, Hamas was seen as a terrorist group that “needed to be dealt with but not a serious challenge to the PLO.”<sup>511</sup>

#### **4.4 Domestic Political Environment**

Negotiating with terrorists represents a threat to the government in two ways: First, negotiations pose a threat to governance if they make the conflict worse, and second, and as important, they pose a political threat to those who engage in the talks.

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<sup>507</sup> Ibid.

<sup>508</sup> Brom.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid.

<sup>510</sup> Michael Kort, *Yitzhak Rabin: Israel's Soldier Statesman*, (Brookfield, CT: Millbrook Press, 1996), 144.

<sup>511</sup> Brom.

While they weren't the only determinant of Israeli foreign policy, domestic political constraints are "a decisive factor in the making of Israeli foreign policy and that, indeed, many of the most salient features of Israeli foreign policy can only be understood when seen against the backdrop of domestic politics."<sup>512</sup> The preceding section examined why many Israeli officials had come to view the first threat - the terrorist threat to governance - as real, but dissipating by the late 1990s. On the domestic political front, the threat perspective had also improved. With the election of Rabin, there was suddenly a shift both in personal conviction and capacity to pursue a negotiations counterterrorism strategy. Rabin's pro-peace platform marked a departure from the strategy and goals pursued by the Likud governments that dominated Israeli politics for the previous 15 years. The shift was not just ideological, but about capacity. Unlike the unity governments of the previous decade - when Likud vetoed Labor's more conciliatory preferences - Rabin enjoyed a considerable degree of domestic political maneuverability. The improved environment for policymaking was largely due to a shift in public opinion in favor of direct talks with the PLO; Rabin's personal mandate; and the lack of institutional, and with proper handling, potential political, veto players. When Rabin took office in 1992, the domestic political stars had aligned in a way to provide him with the flexibility to shift Israel's counterterrorism policy toward negotiations with the PLO.

#### **4.4.1 Public Opinion**

Early Israeli politicians paid little attention to public opinion – certainly polling (the little there was), but arguably, other expressions of public sentiment. Defense and

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<sup>512</sup> Avi Shlaim and Avner Yaniv, "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy in Israel," *International Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Spring, 1980), 247.

counterterrorism policy were largely beyond public rebuke. Starting in the mid-1970s a series of scandals (e.g. the Yom Kippur intelligence failure, Rabin's corruption scandal) led to rising discontent with the government;<sup>513</sup> a trend that correlated with increased political polling. Likud's 1977 win, which displaced Labor after three decades in power, helped restore some of the public's faith in the government, though it quickly waned as Likud came to be viewed as inept. Through the 1980s, Israeli politicians did not use public opinion polls except during election periods. With the end of Labor's electoral hold on power and the increasing bifurcation of Israeli politics, however, politicians began to better appreciate the importance of public opinion in policymaking.

There is evidence that when making counterterrorism policy decisions – both tactical and strategic - Israeli officials were increasingly cognizant of public opinion. When meeting with Prime Minister Rabin to consider Israel's response options to the Entebbe hijacking, Foreign Minister Yigal Allon justified his support for the military operation in part because of public criticism about the way the government had handled previous incidents, particularly, allegations that the government's response had varied depending on which ethnic group was predominant among the hostages.<sup>514</sup> In this meeting Rabin also expressed concern about the public's reaction – anticipating he'd get questions as to why the government, when faced with a hostage situations, could successfully bring home dead bodies (as part of prisoner exchange trades) but not live

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<sup>513</sup> Gadi Wolfsfeld, *The Politics of Provocation: Participation and Protest in Israel*, (Albany: Statue University of New York Press, 1988), 13.

<sup>514</sup> "I support this [military] mission. Questions have already been raised in this country, why did we act quickly in the Ma'alot attack when there were children from a certain ethnicity involved, whereas we were willing to settle when it came to people belonging to a different ethnic group." "Operation Entebbe Protocols Revealed."

people.<sup>515</sup> Rabin's concern about public opinion, however, led him to the opposite proscription from Allon: The government should negotiate with the Entebbe hijackers to ensure they were able to bring back the hostages alive. Beyond crafting tactical responses to attacks, public opinion increasingly influenced the broader security policy toward the Palestinians, as is evident by comparing Rabin's two terms as Prime Minister.

Public opinion was not always important to Rabin.<sup>516</sup> Perhaps as a result of his career in the military, Rabin was "not a great believer in public opinion and in the democratic value of the public's right to information."<sup>517</sup> During his first term, Rabin did not rely heavily on polls or other measures of public opinion in policymaking.<sup>518</sup> His views changed significantly by his second term. One of the first things Rabin did after his 1992 election was to hire Labor's head pollster, Kalman Gayer, to quietly issue a series of polls that measured public support for potential concessions the Israelis might have to make to the Palestinians in the event the two sides agreed to negotiate.<sup>519</sup> Gayer's polls corroborated the trends demonstrated by several years of independent polling: Israeli attitudes toward the PLO and its demands were shifting, as were policy preferences for dealing with the Palestinian question. Even with Rabin's constant eye towards the polls, he was not beholden to public sentiment. Ultimately, he believed it was his job to lead Israel in the way he saw fit, and not be "captive to public opinion."<sup>520</sup>

Traditionally, the Israeli public held two juxtaposed counterterrorism policy

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid.

<sup>516</sup> Brom.

<sup>517</sup> Yehudith Auerbach and Charles W. Greenbaum, "Assessing Leader Credibility during a Peace Process: Rabin's Private Polls," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 37, No. 1, (2000), 36.

<sup>518</sup> As mentioned, there is one exception to this with regard to terrorism: Rabin was very concerned about how the Entebbe operation would go and commented on public reaction in the meetings where he made the decision to launch a military rescue operation. "Operation Entebbe Protocols Revealed."

<sup>519</sup> Auerbach and Greenbaum, 37.

<sup>520</sup> Quoting Rabin. Yoram Peri, *Telepopulism: Media and Politics in Israel*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 139.

preferences: The Israeli siege mentality led to a preference for defense over civil rights, hard-line counterterrorism policies, and offensive defense strategies.<sup>521</sup> Simultaneously, Israel is a small country with limited resources and as such, it is forced to be woefully practical. The concept of negotiating with enemies, while it flies in the face of hard-line preferences, is ingrained in the political tradition and culture of the country.<sup>522</sup> This context helps explain the evolution in Israeli public sentiment on the Palestinian question and the PLO in particular.

Up until the mid-1980s, the Israeli public considered it taboo to even consider negotiating with the PLO.<sup>523</sup> After the Lebanon incursion, the PLO's legitimacy and international status only grew, and eventually Israeli public opinion began to shift. The percentages differ by poll, but there is myriad survey evidence that demonstrates growing support for direct negotiations with the PLO. In the late 1980s, only a third of those polled thought Israel should engage in negotiations with the PLO.<sup>524</sup> The PLO's concurrent efforts to distance the group from violence, endorse a two state solution, and diplomatic outreach had a significant impact on Israeli opinion.<sup>525</sup> Support for

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<sup>521</sup> A. Pedahzur and M. Ranstorp, "A Tertiary Model for Countering Terrorism in Liberal Democracies: The Case of Israel," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Summer 2001), 9-10.

<sup>522</sup> Barak Ben Zur, interview by author, Herzliya, June 7, 2012.

<sup>523</sup> Citing the data of Moseh Arian, Sarit Yalov, "A Palestinian State and Israeli Public Opinion," Policy Paper No. 82, in Arie Stav, ed., *Israel and a Palestinian State: Zero Sum Game?* (Shaarei Tikva, Israel: Zmora-Bitan Publishers, 2001), 313.

<sup>524</sup> Moshe Arian's poll showed that in 1987, 33% supported talks, and in 1988, 34% did. Ibid. I've focused mostly on Arian's polls because they are the only ones that ask the same question over almost a decade. Another poll found by the beginning of 1989, however, 54% of the public supported direct talks. Rubin, "The Angst Of Israeli, PLO Contact." In March of the same year, another survey found 70 percent of Israeli women and 50 percent of men favored direct Israeli-PLO negotiations. "Likud Lawmakers Won't Seek Action Against Laborite Who Met with PLO," *JTA*, September 1, 1992.

<sup>525</sup> Not only was support for negotiations increasing, but Israeli's views of the PLO's goals had also shifted. By 1989, 58% of Israelis did not think that the Palestinians wanted a state plus all of Israel in the long run. Daniel Lieberfeld, *Talking with the Enemy: Negotiation and the threat Perception in South Africa and Israel/Palestine*, (Westport CT: Praeger, 1999), 99. The majority of Israelis still felt the PLO had not done enough to demonstrate its commitment to peace. Brinkley, "Majority in Israel Opposes PLO Talks, A Poll Shows," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1989.



negotiations increased significantly starting in 1990. That year, 40% of Israelis supported negotiations with the PLO.<sup>526</sup> The Gulf War – and Arafat’s alliance with Saddam Hussein – had a dampening effect and support dropped to 29%,<sup>527</sup> but the conflict highlighted the need for a solution to the Palestinian question, and ultimately increased support for negotiations with the PLO.<sup>528</sup> By 1992, 43% of Israelis supported negotiations, and by 1993, 52% did.<sup>529</sup> When the survey question was posed with conditions – the PLO would officially recognize Israel and cease terrorist activities – then support for negotiations rose even higher: In 1987, 42% of Israelis supported negotiations with the PLO, by 1988, support rose to 53% and then to 58% the following year.<sup>530</sup> Even among those who opposed negotiations, there was a belief that negotiations with the PLO were inevitable within a five year time period.<sup>531</sup> Support for negotiations, however, may not have been the result of a new consciousness, but rather recognition that negotiations were the “only way to fulfill the long-standing political aspirations of Israel and to salvage the self-image which defined Israeli culture.”<sup>532</sup>

Just as support for a negotiations counterterrorism policy was mounting, so too was support for some of the potential concessions Israel might have to make to the Palestinians. Support for the creation of a Palestinian state increased from 21% in 1987,

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<sup>526</sup> Citing the data of Moseh Arian, Yalov, “A Palestinian State and Israeli Public Opinion,” 313.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid.

<sup>528</sup> Lieberfeld, 99, and Asher Arian, “Security and Political Attitudes in Israel: 1986-1991), *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 56, (1992), 116.

<sup>529</sup> Citing the data of Moseh Arian, Yalov, 313.

<sup>530</sup> Brinkley, “Majority in Israel Opposes PLO Talks.”

<sup>531</sup> In 1989, 62% of the Israeli talks believed that negotiations with the PLO were inevitable in five years. Ibid.

<sup>532</sup> “Paradoxically, the terms of the Oslo Accord and the shift in the attitude towards the PLO were accepted by many Israelis because it helped them to preserve their identity and political goals.” George Giacama and Dag JØorund LØnning, *After Oslo: New Realities, Old Problems*, (London: Pluto Press, 1998), 60.

to 28% in 1990, 34% in 1991, back to 29% the next year, and then up to 33% in 1993.<sup>533</sup>

In 1989, 44% of Israelis thought a Palestinian State in all or part of the West Bank and Gaza was inevitable.<sup>534</sup>

In addition to the moderation of the PLO and the influence of the Gulf War, the Intifada was responsible for the shift in Israeli public sentiment: The uprising appears to have forced both the public and its leaders to think about the future of the Territories in a more concrete and realistic manner than they had previously.<sup>535</sup> Polling data suggests that the Intifada had impacted the national mood<sup>536</sup> and forced the majority (55%) of Israelis to rethink their opinions on security issues. Although the uprising had a polarizing effect, a quarter of the population moderated its views as a result of the uprising, whereas a third reported their opinions had hardened.<sup>537</sup> Ultimately, the uprising “destroyed Israeli self-deception”: Whereas Israelis had long believed that the attacks against them were orchestrated by a fringe terrorist menace and that the occupation was an improvement for the Palestinians in the Territories, the Intifada demonstrated that the entirety of the population was against Israeli rule and that ordinary citizens, rather than hardened terrorists, were leading the charge.<sup>538</sup> This shift in consciousness brought the majority of Israelis around to the prospect of negotiations with the PLO.

Even with growing support for negotiations and concessions to the Palestinians, Rabin was concerned about the public reaction to the backchannel talks should they be revealed. His concern motivated him to suspend talks following serious terrorist

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<sup>533</sup> Citing the data of Moseh Arian, Yalov, 313.

<sup>534</sup> Brinkley, “Majority in Israel Opposes PLO Talks.”

<sup>535</sup> Asher Arian, Michal Shamir and Raphael Ventura, “Public Opinion and Political Change: Israel and the Intifada,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Apr., 1992), 318.

<sup>536</sup> The national mood had worsened according to a majority (59%) of those surveyed, and more than 40% reported that their own mood had been negatively impacted. *Ibid.*

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>538</sup> Brom.

attacks.<sup>539</sup> While polls from the period – including his - did not specifically address this question, concern about Rabin’s about face on negotiations with the PLO likely also weighed on him.<sup>540</sup> Rabin’s concern about potential audience costs appear to have been overblown<sup>541</sup> - indeed, Israelis are used to politicians saying one thing one day, and something totally different the next day,<sup>542</sup> but explain his cautious approach to the backchannel.

It is important to note that Rabin’s hawkish credentials helped insulate him from criticism from the public and right-wing rivals. For the first two decades of Israel’s history the issue of hawkishness was irrelevant because there was no reason to negotiate with the weak and disorganized Palestinian fedayeen and before 1967, the Territories had yet to create the Greater Israel wedge. Moreover, the Israeli right was weak. Even when the right emerged as a political force, there was not a huge difference between the hawkishness that it displayed compared to that of the left. At the time, every Israeli prime minister, but one, had been a soldier. There were hawks of all different degrees

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<sup>539</sup> Ibid.

<sup>540</sup> Interviews with Israeli politicians, former military and intelligence officials, journalists, and academics highlighted the concern Israeli politicians harbor over making not only a catastrophic mistake for Israel’s security, but also the difficulty of acting against their hawkish type and the potential for concerns about legacy to impact a prime minister’s willingness to adopt conciliatory strategy towards the Palestinians. Moreover, according to Alpher, since Rabin, there is an added concern for prime ministers who want to negotiate with the Palestinians: Rabin’s assassination by an Israeli right-wing extremist served as a shadow hanging over subsequent prime ministers, and has acted as a real deterrent. Alpher.

<sup>541</sup> Despite his concern, Rabin did not suffer audience costs because of his shift in policy. Rabin, like so many Israeli politicians across the political spectrum, had for decades said he would never negotiate with the PLO. Rabin remained vociferous on the issue, even after his party overturned the law that made such talks illegal. Yet, when Oslo was revealed, there was not a huge backlash because Israelis were upset their leader had lied to them. In the weeks following the signing of the DOP, Rabin’s approval ratings roled, and there was significant support – 65% of the Israeli public – for the agreement he secured. (Amy Marcus, “Israel’s Parliament Votes in Favor of Pact Reached with the PLO,” *The Wall Street Journal*, September 24, 1993.) Other polls similarly show a significant majority: A poll taken at the same time by Yedioth Aharonot, Israel’s largest newspaper, showed 61% in favor of the agreement. Michael Parks, “Support in Israel for Mideast Peace Plan Accord,” *The Los Angeles Times*, September 20, 1993. Rabin’s job approval ratings would fall in 8 months, as the talks stalled and violence continued. The opposition that did arise on the right stemmed from concerns about the consequences of the DOP, not Rabin’s about face.

<sup>542</sup> Elran.

represented in Likud and within Labor.<sup>543</sup> Hawkishness, however, became more politically salient when the two main parties began to diverge over how to settle conflicts with the Palestinians and their Arab neighbors and over Israel's relationship with the Territories. It is repeatedly argued that Begin's extremely hawkish reputation allowed him to successfully establish a peace treaty with Egypt despite enormous opposition on the right. Especially given he came from the more dovish party, Rabin's military credentials and reputation for caution on security matters helped garner popular support from the moderate right and shield him from criticism from his Likud rivals after the Oslo channel was revealed.<sup>544</sup>

Rabin was "neither by nature nor by ideology an ardent solicitor of the public's affection," but he recognized that in order to successfully negotiate with the PLO, he needed significant public support.<sup>545</sup> When he was reelected in 1992, Rabin had a mandate and the credentials<sup>546</sup> to make peace with the Palestinians. He recognized the shift in public opinion towards the PLO and negotiations, but knew that even with significant support he would need to insulate himself from the political attacks and prevent defections from his coalition. The extreme secrecy around the Oslo channel talks was designed to insulate Rabin politically from potential blowback if the channel was discovered. Rabin's risk paid off with the public: A September 1993 Gallup poll found that there was considerable popular support for the Prime Minister and 65% of Israelis

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<sup>543</sup> Shlaim and Yaniv classify three types of hawks and claim that each grouping is represented in both Likud and Labor: Unconditional hawks, Militant hawks, Moderate hawks, Moderate doves. Shlaim and Yaniv, 255.

<sup>544</sup> Gershon Baskin, interview with author, June 5, 2012, Jerusalem. Subsequently, hawkishness has been essential in conciliatory moves taken by prime ministers whose tenure exceeds the period examined for this study: Ariel Sharon's forced removal of settlers from Gaza.

<sup>545</sup> Auerbach and Greenbaum, 37.

<sup>546</sup> Rabin "was considered by large segments of the public, including many right-wing Likud voters, to be a leader who could make peace with the Palestinians without sacrificing security." Ibid.

said they approved of the peace accord, with only 13% describing themselves as “very much against.”<sup>547</sup> Even with the majority of the public behind him, the disclosure of the DOP set off a rabid reaction on the right and opened Rabin up to criticism.

#### **4.4.2 Veto Player**

Israel has a strong tradition of political veto players, as compared to institutional veto players. Israel’s political system is well-suited to generating numerous vetoes for political parties in the Knesset, but its institutional vetoes (e.g. the Supreme Court) are notoriously weak. In this particular case, political veto players, namely small parties that are part of the governing coalition and even individual members of the prime minister’s party had the potential to veto a negotiated settlement with a terrorist group *ex post* and make it difficult for a prime minister to pursue negotiations with a terrorist group *ex ante* by raising their political costs.

##### **4.4.2.1 Knesset**

Israel is a parliamentary democracy that elects the 120-person legislature – the Knesset – using a proportional party-list system. The low threshold for gaining seats in parliament has led to extreme multi-partyism (e.g. 27 parties ran in 1988, 15 won seats) centered on two ideological poles. As small parties emerged on the extremes, the centrifugal pull away from the center was exacerbated and Israeli politics became increasingly polarized.<sup>548</sup> Based on the results of the election, the President selects the party leader best able to form a government of at least 61 seats. Only once in the history

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<sup>547</sup> Citing reporting of the poll results from *The Guardian*, September 16, 1993, Shlaim, “The Oslo Accord,” 34.

<sup>548</sup> Arian et al., 317.

of the country has a single party won enough seats to be able to form a government alone (Labor 1968-1969). On occasion, the two largest party blocks on the right and the left have formed odd couple coalitions (e.g. Likud-Labor unity governments in the 1980s), but in most cases the party with the strongest showing in the election will enter into a coalition government with small parties, an arrangement which allows the latter to exercise political power over the direction of government disproportionate to their electoral support. Moreover, the requirement that the Knesset must approve the cabinet allows small parties leverage over who will become important players in making counterterrorism policy. The opposition in the Knesset has no formal veto, but can work to undermine the prime minister's policies with the public.

The Knesset lacks an *ex ante* institutional veto to prevent the Government from pursuing negotiations with a terrorist group. Technically, it also lacks a formal *ex post* veto – that is the right to approve or rejected any settlement that is arrived at by negotiations - but in practice the Government needs the support of a simple majority to approve a settlement agreement. In Israel, the process of ratifying treaties is not established by explicit legislation. The Supreme Court has found that the Government has the authority to sign international treaties and ratify them. By custom, however, the Government typically presents important treaties to the Knesset for approval before they are ratified.<sup>549</sup> Treaties that deal with territorial concessions, security issues, and human rights are considered important enough for Knesset approval. Ultimately, this custom does not amount to an institutional veto for the Knesset over a potential settlement

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<sup>549</sup> Dafna Ben-Porat and Hodaya Kain, *International Treaties and Agreements: A Comparative Survey*, The Knesset - Research and Information Center, July 10, 2003, available from [<http://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/me00647.pdf>]. This custom became more closely followed starting in 1983. Suzi Navot, *Constitutional Law of Israel*, (Frederick, MD: Aspen Publishers, 2007), 67.

agreement, but precedent suggests the Knesset as a *de facto* veto. As such, a prime minister who wants to come to a successful settlement with a terrorist group needs to be confident the ruling coalition is unified behind his/her policy in order to avoid an *ex post* political veto.

#### 4.4.2.2 Political Parties

While Israel is known for having a particularly vocal opposition, it has little power. It is the members of the governing coalition, however, who are the real potential veto players.<sup>550</sup> The nature of the ruling coalition – size and ideological position of parties – determines who can potentially serve as a veto player. Due to electoral trends whereby general elections produced polarized support for the left and right, insufficient on both sides for forming a majority government, would-be prime ministers look to small – often religious – political parties to complete their coalitions.<sup>551</sup> In the early years of the country, Mapai/Alignment and left leaning allies were able to form coalitions with large majorities, making it theoretically easier for early prime ministers to have pursued negotiations with Palestinian groups if they had so wanted. As Israeli politics became increasingly bipolar, successive prime ministers found their capacity to maneuver on controversial issues narrowed as they often faced resistance from within their own increasingly fractured parties, and from coalition partners.

The power of coalition partners to veto conciliatory efforts toward the PLO was at its height during the national unity governments of 1984-1988 and 1988-1990.<sup>552</sup> The

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<sup>550</sup> Brom.

<sup>551</sup> Small religious parties have played a part in almost every government in Israeli history.

<sup>552</sup> There had been national unity governments before, but in those cases, the small parties of the traditional opposition were not in the position to veto the Prime Minister's preferred policy. First, the

Labor party was willing to engage with Palestinians over a peace deal, but Likud was vehemently opposed to pursuing talks and ceding land they considered part of Greater Israel. By the very nature of the national unity governments, Likud had an *ex ante* veto on Labor's efforts to advance peace efforts with the Jordanians and Palestinians. Likud's leaders helped stifle Labor's conciliatory efforts before they even came close to the ratification process in the Knesset. Labor, however, was also able to exercise a veto over Likud during the unity government. In 1990, Shamir, under pressure from his own Likud party, refused to answer Secretary of State Baker regarding a plan for a Palestinian delegation at an international peace conference.<sup>553</sup> Infuriated, Peres pulled out of the coalition and convinced Shas, a small coalition party, to abstain from the non-confidence vote, thus toppling the Government.

After the national unity governments of the 1980s, would-be prime ministers have increasingly relied on these small, often religious parties to create ruling coalitions, and as such, those small parties are often in the position to exert an *ex post* veto by making it impossible to pass a negotiated settlement in the Knesset or by threatening the prime minister's position.<sup>554</sup> Given that the survival of the Government has often been

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Mapai/Alignment prime ministers enjoyed large majorities that could survive the defection of the right wing parties. Second, the primary conflict that would eventually define the left and the right – willingness to explore negotiations and cede territory for peace v. advocating a hard-line approach to the PLO and promoting a Greater Israel – was not yet prescient. This was primarily due to timing: the PLO was just emerging as a force and no parties were talking about negotiating with the Organization, and “Greater Israel” had yet to become the ingrained principal of the right.

<sup>553</sup> Colin Shindler, *The Land Beyond Promise: Israel, Likud and the Zionist Dream*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995), 258.

<sup>554</sup> Although not relevant to the period examined herein, the Knesset passed electoral reform in 1992, after the election of Rabin, which altered the way the country selected a prime minister. Instead of the strict parliamentary system the country had in place for more than forty years, thereafter elections would include a direct election of the Prime Minister. The reforms were undertaken in an effort to empower the larger political parties, thereby strengthening their ruling coalitions and bringing more stability to the government. Instead of bolstering the big parties as anticipated, the electoral reforms undermined them. Now that voters chose their prime minister independently from their preferred party of their choice, there was no long a strong imperative to vote for a larger party with a greater chance to forming a coalition. Thus voting for



predicated on the continued participation of religious parties in the coalition, the latter have enjoyed power beyond their weight and succeeded in effecting their agenda.<sup>555</sup> For example, the 1992 elections were brought about when the Likud-led government of Shamir was brought down when Moledet and Tehiya, two small extreme-right parties, left the coalition in protest that the Government's talks with the Palestinian delegation after the Madrid conference might address substantive issues.<sup>556</sup> Although the potential spoiler role of small coalition parties in Israeli politics gets a lot of attention, it is often the prime minister's own party that undermines his/her agenda, as evidenced by Begin's efforts to negotiate a peace accord with Egypt.<sup>557</sup>

Before it became customary to seek parliamentary approval for treaties, Begin had promised to submit the peace treaty with Egypt to the Knesset for approval in order to bolster its – and his – legitimacy. Begin faced significant opposition from within his own party in his efforts to push the Camp David Accords and the subsequent peace treaty with Egypt through his cabinet and the Knesset. When Begin presented the peace treaty to his cabinet in 1979, two ministers from his own party voted against it.<sup>558</sup> Pressure from the cabinet and his party during the course of talks forced Begin to instruct the negotiating

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smaller political parties - at expense of the larger parties, Labor and Likud, increased, and the system became even more fractionalized. As a result, the electoral reform was cancelled in 2001 and Israel returned to a strictly parliamentary system.

<sup>555</sup> Yoav Dotan, "Judicial Review and Political Accountability: The Case of the High Court of Justice in Israel," *Israeli Law Review*, 32, (1998), 454-455. Interestingly, the "ideological agenda of the religious political leadership has proved to be highly successful within the executive and the legislature. Not so with the courts. Even from the early rulings of the Supreme Court on public law issues, the Court espoused policies which were in sharp contrast with the ambitions of the religious political leadership to force its ideological agenda on the non-religious sections of the population." Dotan, 458.

<sup>556</sup> "Two Ministers Say They Will Quit, Putting Shamir Regime in Jeopardy," *JTA*, January 16, 1992.

<sup>557</sup> The peace accord with Egypt was originally conceived as a way to deal with the Palestinian issue, but Egypt and Israel's efforts to deal with the West Bank and Gaza spurred controversy and condemnation and were later abandoned.

<sup>558</sup> At that time, Likud had four wings (the ultra-nationalist Herut, the Liberals, the ex-Labor members in La'am, and Ariel Sharfon's Shlomzio).

team to alter its positions.<sup>559</sup> Several Likud MKs held a series of public demonstrations against the treaty and two MKs from Begin's party - Geula Cohen and Moshe Shamir – defected over the issue, starting their own party. Their departure and the abstention of several of Begin's coalition members would have resulted in a defeat for the Treaty in the Knesset if the opposition Labor party hadn't instructed its members to support it.<sup>560</sup>

Begin's experience with the Treaty serves as an important reminder of the power the prime minister's coalition – even members of his own party and very small parties – can hold over the Israeli leader in the event he/she cannot afford defections in order to pass an agreement.<sup>561</sup>

Rabin was extremely concerned about the possibility that his cabinet, party, or coalition members might threaten the secret backchannel Oslo talks with the PLO, and vice versa. This is why Rabin kept the negotiations secret from even his closest advisors. Rabin, unlike Begin, came from the other side of the political spectrum, so he was less likely to encounter significant ideological dissent over the prospect of negotiating an agreement with the Palestinians from within his own party, although certainly many MKs may have held reservations about allowing a terrorist group to be the official

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<sup>559</sup> To appease those within his party and coalition who were disgruntled about the draft – specifically the removal of Israeli settlements in the Sinai– and push back at claims that he was under US pressure to pass the treaty – Begin announced that the freeze on settlement activity in Gaza and the West Bank and ended and instructed his negotiating team insist on changes to the treaty's preamble. Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, *Israel and the Peace Process 1977-1982: In Search of Legitimacy for Peace*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 159-160.

<sup>560</sup> 95 voted in favor, 18 against, 2 abstained, and 5 others who refused to participate. *Ibid.*, 183. (Bar-Siman-Tov). The two that abstained and 11 of the 18 MKs who voted against the treaty belonged to Likud and National religious Party – the central parties to Begin's coalition. Shlaim and Yaniv, 256.

<sup>561</sup> The concept that small parties have disproportionate influence in the Israeli system has widespread appreciation, but some have challenged the idea. Anthony J. McGann and Teresa Moran, "The Myth of the Disproportionate Influence of Small Parties in Israel," Center for the Study of Democracy, May 11, 2005, available from [<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/8t67x8b8>].

interlocutors. The low number of partners (Labor, Meretz, Shas)<sup>562</sup> combined with their ideological bent, made it easier for Rabin to persuade his coalition to support the Declaration of Principles once it was revealed. Rabin would ultimately submit the Declaration of Principles that came out of Oslo to the cabinet, and subsequently to the Knesset for approval. Like Begin, he wanted support to bolster the legitimacy of his decision. Rabin, however, had another political consideration. Rabin needed his entire coalition, particularly the six members of Shas<sup>563</sup> to support the DOP in order to avoid relying on the five Arab MKs aligned with coalition to pass the Declaration. By delivering his entire coalition, especially the ultra-orthodox Shas party, Rabin hoped to insulate himself from criticism that the vote did not have the majority of Jewish MKs. As expected, Likud attacked Rabin for negotiating with the PLO and betraying the Israeli people, especially the settlers in the Territories, but the vote ultimately vindicated Rabin. Even though Shas chose to abstain, so did three Likud MKs, suggesting some support for the DOP on the right. With the support from the Arab parties, the DOP passed the Knesset 61 to 50,<sup>564</sup> thus providing Rabin with a Jewish MK majority and enough support to implement the Gaza-Jericho plan.<sup>565</sup>

While the Knesset does not constitute a formal institutional veto on the prime minister's capacity to negotiate with terrorist groups, the customary process of ratifying important treaties before they are adopted by the Government opens up the prime

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<sup>562</sup> Tsebelis' theory of veto players suggests that fewer the number of potential political veto players in the government, the easier it should be for the Prime Minister to effectuate change.

<sup>563</sup> Of the religious parties, Shas has proved itself to be the "unchallenged kingmaker of Israeli politics." Shas initially held centrist views and supported the Oslo Accords. Nathan Guttman, "Shas Sets Up Shop in U.S." *The Jewish Daily Forward*, December 23, 2011.

<sup>564</sup> Rabin enjoyed the most homogeneous Governments Israel had had for decades. Shas would eventually move further right, but the party was much closer to the peace camp in 1993. There were no defections from Labor or Meretz.

<sup>565</sup> Shlaim, "The Oslo Accords," 34.

minister to a political *ex post* veto by those within the governing coalition, including those within prime minister's own party. The possibility of an *ex post* veto, and the devastating effects it could have on the coalition, weighs heavily on prime ministers. As Israeli domestic politics revolves around security issues, repudiation by the Knesset – even if out of synch with public opinion - would be a huge blow to the prime minister's credibility. Thus, when considering the utility of negotiations, Israeli prime ministers place significant importance on how their coalitions would respond to any agreements talks might produce.

#### **4.4.2.3 Cabinet**

While the Israeli cabinet<sup>566</sup> is designed to be the primary policymaking body, the realities of cabinet politics in the Israeli system have led successive prime ministers to avoid using it for counterterrorism policymaking. In theory, the prime minister chooses the cabinet, offers posts in line with the vote distribution won by the parties in the winning coalition, and can dismiss ministers at will. In reality, the prime minister is often prevented from designing the cabinet to his/her liking. For example, when Begin became Prime Minister in 1977, he essentially had to accept the ministers chosen by his coalition partners, even those from his own party, which were picked by the four Likud camps: the ultra nationalist Herut, middle class Liberals, the ex-Labor La'am, and Ariel Sharon's Shlomzion.<sup>567</sup> Since then, steps have been taken to try to shore up loyalty from cabinet

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<sup>566</sup> The size of the cabinet changes with each prime minister depending on how many portfolios he keeps for himself/allocates to others and if he creates ministerial positions without portfolios. From 1948-1992, cabinets ranged from 11 to 24 ministers. "Israeli Politics: Government Cabinet & Ministers (1948 - Present)," available from [<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/govtoc.html>].

<sup>567</sup> Shlaim and Yaniv, 257.

ministers – for example, their privileges have been increased<sup>568</sup> - but this has had little impact on their willingness to oppose the prime minister’s agenda. This, combined with the lack of secrecy of cabinet discussions, has led prime ministers to move away from using the cabinet as the principle counterterrorism policymaking organ. Under the glare of publicity, cabinet discussions have become “modified versions of the parliamentary and even public debates on the same set of questions,” during which parties and constituents can observe and pressure their ministers to tow the party line.<sup>569</sup> As a result, cabinet proceedings are lengthy, polarized, and often inconclusive. For two years, Begin’s negotiations with Egypt were bogged down and almost collapsed due to cabinet battles. These conditions are not conducive to good policymaking, and as such, most prime ministers make cardinal decisions alone or with a small informal ‘kitchen cabinet.’<sup>570</sup>

This was certainly the case in the run up to Oslo: Israel’s peace policy was largely designed and run by only two men - Rabin and Peres.<sup>571</sup> Rabin brought the DOP to his cabinet for approval before it was officially signed, but concern about the reaction to direct talks with a terrorist group led him to present the Declaration without explicitly mentioning the role of the PLO in drafting the agreement.<sup>572</sup> Ultimately, many in the Israeli government have admitted that a strong prime minister would be able to go it alone without the cabinet, but he/she would need to have the support of his coalition and

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<sup>568</sup> Becoming a minister is often called a “Mitsubishi deal” – every member of the cabinet gets a Mitsubishi and a driver. The benefits were thought of as a way to create a coalition and ensure loyalty from other parties to go along with your agenda. This is one of the reasons why prime ministers create numerous minister without portfolio positions, so they can buy off other important coalition partners. Alpher.

<sup>569</sup> Shlaim and Yaniv, 256.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid. Starting in the late 1990s, Israel adopted a Security Cabinet, an inner cabinet of key ministers and security officials who would evaluate military and national security policies.

<sup>571</sup> Uri Savir, *The Process: 1,100 Days that Changed the Middle East*, (New York: Random House, 1998), 96.

<sup>572</sup> Wanis-St. John, 103.

the public.<sup>573</sup> Rabin was lucky because ultimately he had both: despite some misgivings, not a single cabinet member chose to oppose the DOP.<sup>574</sup>

#### 4.4.2.4 Supreme Court

In spite of its jurisdiction to rule on international treaties as they relate to local law and its capacity to evaluate and subsequently influence the application of the Prevention of Terrorism ordinances, the Israeli Supreme Court had little influence over whether a prime minister could pursue negotiations with terrorists. The Israeli Supreme Court can sit as the Court of Appeals or Court of High Justice (HCJ), that latter of which examines the legality of Government decisions. Israel does not have a constitution, but it has built up a body of case law – described as Israel’s common law or referred to as the Basic Law – against which the actions of the Government, agents of the state, or Knesset are examined to determine if the latter exceeded or abused their powers.<sup>575</sup> The Court employs its power to evaluate the Government sparingly, but it has done so without deference to the parties in power,<sup>576</sup> earning it a reputation of political neutrality.<sup>577</sup>

The Court has jurisdiction to overrule the actions or policies of the security establishment, and thus, in theory, repudiate the Government’s security strategy more broadly. The Court’s jurisdiction in this regard, however, relates primarily to offensive

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<sup>573</sup> Alpher.

<sup>574</sup> At least openly - Interior Minister Aryeh Deri and Economics Minister Shimon Shetreet abstained.

<sup>575</sup> Ronen Shamir, “‘Landmark Cases’ and the Reproduction of Legitimacy: The Case of Israel’s High Court of Justice,” *Law & Society Review*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (1990), *Law & Society Review*, 784.

<sup>576</sup> For example, despite their centrality in forming coalitions in the Knesset, which affords them significant power to legislate, the Court repeatedly has ruled on religion v. secular issues in favor of the latter.

<sup>577</sup> The Court enjoys a high degree of legitimacy from across the Israeli public, with prestige almost on par with the IDF. David Kretzmer, *The Occupation of Justice: The Supreme Court of Israel and the Occupied Territories*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 12.

actions, rather than conciliatory actions.<sup>578</sup> Even when the Court has ruled against the security establishment, the latter is often slow to respond, if at all, to Court orders related to counterterrorism actions in the Territories, suggesting the Court's authority is weak. With regard to conciliatory counterterrorism policies, the Court could have theoretically influenced efforts to negotiate with the PLO by ruling in cases related to the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance,<sup>579</sup> which was expanded in 1986 to make it illegal for Israelis to meet with members of the PLO. The Court could have struck down the law or enhanced the taboo of talking with the PLO by pushing the Attorney General to enforce it more stringently, but the Court had little to say on the legality of the law or the appropriateness of its application. Numerous people openly broke the law (including several MKs) and several people were subsequently prosecuted under the law, but the Court did not get involved.<sup>580</sup> While the Court had the capacity to influence the Government's ability to

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<sup>578</sup> Initially, the Court appeared uncertain of its jurisdiction, but when petitions began in the early 1970s, the Court took them up and the Government did not protest. In the absence of protest, the Court accepted jurisdiction. In the Occupied territories, where the Court's jurisdiction is based on precedence rather than enshrined in law it has repeatedly ruled the Government's actions there were illegal and issued injunctions of IDF actions related to interrogation techniques, curfews, land seizures, extradition, among others. Shamir, 785.

<sup>579</sup> Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance No 33 of 5708-1948," available from [<http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFA-Archive/1900-1949/Pages/Prevention%20of%20Terrorism%20Ordinance%20No%2033%20of%205708-19.aspx>].

<sup>580</sup> To include an Israeli radio-station owner who was given a six-month jail sentence for having met with Arafat in 1989, but numerous people openly flouted it without repercussions. Several MKs openly broke the law, but they were not prosecuted due to their immunity. In 1992, Likud MKs demanded that Labor MK Yael Dayan be stripped of her parliamentary immunity because she had met with PLO officials. The issue was dropped after Dayan promised to not meet with PLO officials again. Earlier the same year, an Israeli Arab MK joined a delegation that met PLO officials in Tunis. In 1989, MK Arie (Lova) Eliav met with PLO officials, causing controversy. Numerous other delegations – some including Israeli politicians – took place during that period in Eastern Europe. "Likud Lawmakers Won't Seek Action Against Laborite Who Met with PLO," *JTA*, September 1, 1992. The Court did not weigh in that their immunity should be revoked. Even Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin announced that his ministry had authorized and funded meetings between relatives of MIA IDF soldiers captured in Lebanon and PLO representatives. These visits technically violated Israeli law, but it was clear the families have been given official dispensation by the Government and would not be charged. "Israel Authorizes Approach to PLO," *The New York Times*, December 19, 1989. It should be said that many of those who met with the PLO took steps to stay just within the confines of the law – for example, Israelis would meet PLO officials as part of larger academic conferences and were careful never to be in the same room with the PLO leaders alone.

negotiate with the PLO via its treatment of the Prevent of Terrorism ordinance, this influence was not tantamount to a veto as the prime minister could have worked to overturn that provision at any time in order to pursue talks with the PLO. Ultimately, Rabin did so, and the law was changed the day before the opening round of the track II talks started in Oslo.

There is also a possibility that the Court could exert some influence on negotiations *ex post* if it evaluated the resulting negotiated settlement. The Court has developed a strange jurisdiction with regard to international law: While it does not allow petitioners to cite international law in their cases against the government, it does occasionally rule that international treaties negotiated by the Government are illegal because they are in contradiction with local or Israel's basic law.<sup>581</sup> As any settlement with the PLO would likely deal with the status of the Occupied Territories, examining the Court's precedents on those areas is helpful for determining any potential veto the Court may have held.<sup>582</sup> There is nothing to suggest the Court would oppose the Government agreeing to set up an autonomous Palestinian government or eventually an independent Palestinian state in the Territories. There are, however, concerns that when petitions are brought before the Court in the event that the political settlement conflicts with local law,

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<sup>581</sup> In several cases, the Court has declared a custom treaties negotiated by the Government to be illegal when they were found to contradict existing state law.

<sup>582</sup> For four decades, a series of High Court of Justice rulings have affirmed that Israel's occupation of the West Bank is a violation of international law, but nothing has changed on the ground. This is in juxtaposition to East Jerusalem: In October 1970, 2/3 of the Israeli Supreme Court sitting as the High Court of Justice stated that East Jerusalem should be considered Israeli territory as compared to an occupied foreign territory like the rest of the West Bank and Gaza. The Court has never treated the West Bank and Gaza as Israeli territory, but its rulings have created a strange middle ground: it has stultified the application of international law to the territories while establishing jurisprudence over the Israeli Government's administration there. For example, with regard to international human rights law, the Court's official position has been that it does not apply to the administration of the West Bank and Gaza, but it has continually applied it nevertheless. Eyal Benvenisti, "Judicial Misgivings Regarding the Application of International Law: An Analysis of Attitudes of National Courts," *European Journal of International Law*, Vol. 4, (1993), 182, and Sharon Weill, "The Judicial Arm of the Occupation: The Israeli Military Courts in the Occupied Territories" *International Review the Red Cross*, Vol. 89, No. 866, June 2007, Note 14, 399.



that the Court will privilege the latter over any agreement with the PLO, thus undermining it.<sup>583</sup> That said, the Court has a long history of privileging collective security concerns over individual rights and a negotiated settlement would likely be viewed in this vein.<sup>584</sup> Concern about the Court's capacity to veto a political settlement with the PLO *ex post* was largely theoretical; one that did not keep Israeli policymakers or the PLO up at night.<sup>585</sup>

Interestingly, the Court did influence the course of the Oslo talks by exercising oversight of prosecutions, albeit on a completely unrelated issue. On August 10, 1993, just days before Rabin would present the draft Declaration of Principals to his cabinet, the Court gave the Government 14 days to explain why Interior Minister Aryeh Deri from Shas should not be required to step down from his post<sup>586</sup> after charges of bribery and fraud were brought against him.<sup>587</sup> Rabin had rejected just such a request from his Attorney General and Justice Minister, for fear that it would cause Shas to withdraw from his coalition.<sup>588</sup> As stated, Rabin desperately wanted to pass the DOP in the Knesset without relying solely on the Arab parties that voted with his coalition in order to insulate him to criticism that not enough Jewish MKs had supported the DOP. The Court's action forced Rabin to move much faster than he wanted in finalizing the DOP in order for it to go to a vote in the Knesset while Deri was still in office and Shas was still part of the

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<sup>583</sup> There are a few precedents that are interesting: For example, when adjudicating the claim by Arabs whose lands – previously under Jordanian control – became part of Israel in 1948, the Court treated customary law, and not international treaties (i.e. (the 1949 Israeli-Jordanian General Armistice Agreement) as binding. In cases where military necessity has been invoked, they have rarely been disputed by the Court. Benvenisti 177.

<sup>584</sup> *Ibid.*, 176-177.

<sup>585</sup> No one interviewed for this project ever mentioned the Court as a possible veto player. No one mentioned the Court period.

<sup>586</sup> "High Court Order on Shas Leader Could Imperil Labor Government," *JTA*, August 11, 1993.

<sup>587</sup> Dotan, 466.

<sup>588</sup> Indeed, Deri had promised as much in the event he was prosecuted.

coalition.<sup>589</sup> The Court's action pushed Rabin to accelerate his time frame, but the Court's ruling did not ultimately represent a major obstacle for his negotiations counterterrorism policy.

#### **4.4.2.5 Security Services**

The security establishment has always played a prominent role in Israeli policymaking. This is in part because of the constant threat under which Israel exists. For much of its history, hostile neighbors bent on its annihilation have surrounded Israel. As such, there is a constant focus on military strength and security. Hanging over the heads of every elected official is “the omnipresent fear that a major miscalculation could lead to another catastrophe for the Jewish people.”<sup>590</sup> For that reason, the security establishment plays an important role in counterterrorism policymaking, especially with regard to crafting offensive policies.<sup>591</sup> Some former military officials and observers of Israeli politics admit that when it comes to offensive action, if the IDF does not concur with an elected official's desired policy, it doesn't happen.<sup>592</sup> When it comes to conciliatory policies, including negotiations, however, the security establishment exerts significant influence, but it falls far short of a veto over the policymaking process.

Israel has myriad security and intelligence agencies, but only a few play a central role in counterterrorism policymaking: the military services – usually represented by the Chief of General Staff, the Defense Minister - and the heads of the main intelligence

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<sup>589</sup> A month later, the Court demanded Deri step down.

<sup>590</sup> Bard E. O'Neill, “Israel,” in *The Defense Policies of Nations: A Comparative Study*, Third Edition, eds. Douglas J. Murray and Paul R. Viotti, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1994), 531.

<sup>591</sup> Elran.

<sup>592</sup> Baskin, interview.

agencies - Shabak (often called Shin Bet), Mossad, and Aman.<sup>593</sup> Shabak is the internal security agency, whereas Mossad is the foreign intelligence organization. Aman is the military's intelligence wing, coequal with the services – the Army, Navy, and Air Force.<sup>594</sup> Entities like the National and Border Police, play a central role in implementing the country's counterterrorism policies, but have little influence on strategy.

At times it feels as though the security establishment is completely intertwined with political leaders at the highest levels of policymaking: While the Defense Minister is a civilian job, it is often held by a former high ranking soldier, typically a former Chief of Staff. Indeed, several prime ministers have even kept the defense portfolio for themselves while they were in office, including Ben Gurion, Eshkol, Begin, and Rabin, during his second term.

The influence exerted by the security establishment on Israeli political leadership has always been strong, but it strengthened after the 1967 war,<sup>595</sup> and again after the appointment of Sharon as Defense Minister. Since then, the IDF and intelligence agencies' have enjoyed an eminent place in Israeli society, buoyed by significant public support.<sup>596</sup> Historically, the general staff was the focal point for providing military advice

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<sup>593</sup> On the Palestinian issue, jurisdiction was shared: In general, non-state actors are the purview of Shabak and Mossad. Shabak charge of the territories and Mossad was focused on terrorist activity abroad. Per Alpher, Shabak was responsible for the West Bank and Gaza, and as such, it had a strong incentive on policy related to it, and as such, it has more weight in this area. Alpher, interview. The IDF ran Special Forces units that did intelligence collection and operations against terrorist groups, including rescue operations. The security forces work closely together and coordinate intelligence, avoiding many of the rivalries that plague US foreign and domestic intelligence agencies. Jonathan B. Tucker, "Strategies for Countering Terrorism – Lessons from the Israeli Experience," *COIN Central – The Counterinsurgency Journal*, June 4, 2008, available from [<http://coincentral.wordpress.com/2008/06/04/strategies-for-countering-terrorism-lessons-from-the-israeli-experience/>].

<sup>594</sup> "Aman Military Intelligence - Agaf ha-Modi'in," Global Security, available from [<http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/israel/aman.htm>].

<sup>595</sup> O'Neill, "Israel," 530.

<sup>596</sup> Ganor, interview. The IDF has confidence ratings that consistently dwarf those for the prime minister, MKs, and the Knesset.

to the country's elected leaders.<sup>597</sup> There are many examples where a Chief of the General Staff pushed his view on the prime minister, but there is little evidence to suggest that prime ministers have felt constricted by the IDF or intelligence community's stances in making policy decisions – at least conciliatory ones. There are myriad other examples that demonstrate the security establishment's subordination to the political leadership in Israel: Begin was greatly influenced by Defense Minister Ariel Sharon,<sup>598</sup> but despite Sharon's influence, Begin still chose to cut the military budget over the former's protests. In the run up to the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, Aman identified potential threats to the IDF war plan, which the directorate's chief, Major General Saguy, expressed to both the Chief of General Staff and Prime Minister Begin, but Saguy failed to contradict Begin and Sharon when they offered alternate positions in cabinet discussions on the subject.<sup>599</sup> When Sadat addressed the Knesset, top officials at the IDF and within the intelligence community thought it was a ploy, but Begin went along with the visit despite their concerns.<sup>600</sup> The established civilian supremacy over the IDF and the latent threat to the positions of the Minister of Defense or intelligence chiefs in the event they protest too much reduces the veto potential of the security establishment.<sup>601</sup> Ultimately, when the government chooses to pursue a conciliatory strategy, the security establishment, especially the IDF, has less influence, and the decision is the prime minister's.<sup>602</sup>

While the security establishment may not have had a veto over Rabin's shift to a conciliatory counterterrorism policy, it certainly had views on the subject. When the

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<sup>597</sup> O'Neill, "Israel," 530.

<sup>598</sup> Begin would come to believe he had been tricked by Sharon and greatly regretted pushing

<sup>599</sup> e.g. the Christian militia on which Israel was depending was extremely weak and a clash with the Syrian troops there was inevitable. "Aman: Military Intelligence."

<sup>600</sup> Elran.

<sup>601</sup> Ganor, interview.

<sup>602</sup> Ibid.

Intifada broke out,<sup>603</sup> the IDF went from preparing Israel's defenses against its hostile neighbors to manning checkpoints and trying to stop rock throwing protesters – not what most soldiers had signed up for. Soon after the uprising started, the military commander in the West Bank, Maj. Gen. Amram Mitzna, concluded that there was no military solution to quell the Intifada; only a political compromise could do that.<sup>604</sup> Likewise, the intelligence community had come to the conclusion by 1989 that the Intifada could only be brought to an end by negotiating with the PLO: In March of that year, the Cabinet was provided with an intelligence estimate that determined that there was no serious leadership in the Territories.<sup>605</sup> The IDF had come to a similar conclusion.<sup>606</sup> The intelligence agencies had produced several reports highlighting the dire situation Arafat found himself in – the PLO was broke and weak and his leadership was increasingly being challenged by Islamists – which led to the conclusion that Arafat made “the most convenient interlocutor for Israel at that particular juncture.”<sup>607</sup> Thus, it was understandable that once the secret channel was unveiled, there was “interest and encouragement” from senior intelligence and IDF planning branch officials.<sup>608</sup> Any criticism from the security establishment seemed to focus solely on the terms of subsequent agreements.

In examining the influence of the security establishment on Prime Minister Rabin, it is clear that he was extremely close to the military and intelligence agencies, but the

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<sup>603</sup> With hostile neighbors on those borders, the IDF had traditionally viewed comprehensive withdraw of the 1967 territories as imprudent. The Intifada altered that view. O'Neill, “Israel,” 531.

<sup>604</sup> Byman, 73.

<sup>605</sup> Joel Brinkley, “Israeli Intelligence Report Links Peace Hopes to Talks With P.L.O.” *The New York Times*, March 21, 1989.

<sup>606</sup> Makovsky, 41.

<sup>607</sup> Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, (New York: Norton, 2001), 515.

<sup>608</sup> That support, however, began to wane after 1994. Shai Feldman, Ahmad Khālidī, Zeev Schiff, *Track-II Diplomacy: Lessons from the Middle East*, (Cambridge: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2003), 130.

security establishment did not inhibit his pursuit of negotiations with the PLO. Rabin was known for being suspicious of politicians; he preferred to work with the military, which he trusted, and which, in turn, trusted him.<sup>609</sup> Rabin was known to employ IDF staff to assist on unrelated policy work while he was Prime Minister. He had even used the IDF in other secret negotiations because he was worried about leaks.<sup>610</sup> Yet, there are many instances in which it is clear that Rabin did not allow this close relationship to have undue influence on his policy choices. For example, Rabin ignored the concerns raised by Israel's civil administrator in the West Bank and Gaza – Maj. Gen. Danny Rothschild – about the deportation of 400 “ Hamas linked ” militants to Lebanon in 1992, to great peril.<sup>611</sup> The ensuing public relations debacle where the men were forced to live in the security zone between the two countries, followed by reports of incorrect identification, and the Supreme Court ruling that several deportees must be repatriated was a nightmare for Rabin and Israel.<sup>612</sup> Rabin's propensity to ignore advice from the security establishment was best demonstrated the secrecy with which he pursued the Oslo channel.

Rabin largely kept the back channel talks secret from the security establishment. Even his closest military advisor and in-house Arabist Jacques Neriah was in the dark about the Oslo channel.<sup>613</sup> It has long been reported that even Defense Minister Ehud Barak was completely unaware of the backchannel negotiations until August 30, 1993,

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<sup>609</sup> Brom.

<sup>610</sup> This reliance on the military was a detriment at times. According to one source, the IDF was heavily involved with negotiations with Syria, but when economic issues came up the IDF told Rabin it was not well-suited to represent Israel's economic position. The solution was to find an IDF reservist. This was in the same way as Rabin turned to Singer for the Oslo channel. Ibid.

<sup>611</sup> Rabin also apparently ignored the warnings of the chief negotiator in Washington – Elyakim Rubinstein, who rightly believed the deportations would derail the talks. Makovsky, 24.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid., 50.

when Rabin presented the draft DOP to the cabinet. Others cite evidence that Barak knew about the back channel, but either Rabin did not consult him closely on developments or largely ignored his input during the process.<sup>614</sup> There were no known protests from Barak about the negotiations, although he did later voice concerns about the draft DOP that was presented to the cabinet; saying it put the IDF in the terrible position of being required to protect settlers and prevent terrorism while simultaneously relinquishing control of the area.<sup>615</sup> Ultimately, Barak acknowledged that the DOP was a historic achievement that he would support, albeit with a heavy heart.<sup>616</sup> There is evidence that Aman chief Maj. Gen. Saguy knew about the channel as well, but he is not known to have protested the talks or the resulting agreement.<sup>617</sup> When the channel was revealed, there were some indications that the military brass was bitter about having been excluded from the secret talks and unable to weigh in on the security aspects of the accord. Ultimately, however, Barak's reservations and the security establishment's views were not enough to move Rabin to alter or abandon the DOP.

In light of his willingness to defy the security establishment, Rabin's decision to largely keep the IDF and intelligence chiefs in the dark about the Oslo Channel is

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<sup>614</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>615</sup> Wanis-St. John, 103. Barak also worried about the consequences of retaking the territories in the event the agreement failed.

<sup>616</sup> Ofira Seliktar, *Doomed to Failure? The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process*, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 47.

<sup>617</sup> There is some evidence that Rabin was unimpressed with Saguy's suggestions and political instinct, and would have likely ignored any suggestions the latter might have offered about the back channel. At some point in 1993, there was a meeting about Syrian talks. Rabin asked Saguy if he favored focusing on those or Oslo, Saguy "thought that Israel should prefer the Syrian track. Ehud Barak agreed and Rabin said: 'I also think Israel's strategic and military national interest is to close with the Syrians and then leverage that in favor of an agreement with the Palestinians, but I do not think I can pass that.' And then I made a terrible and even impertinent mistake and asked him: 'Mr. Prime Minister, why can't you pass that here in public opinion?' He went right along with me and said: 'I have no way to pass that.' I told him: 'But your public as there, most of the people of the Golan are Labor Party settlers.' And then he told me: 'It is obvious you don't understand anything about Israeli politics.'" Didi Remez, "Uri Saguy Tells All, ctd: Provides an Insider's Account of Barak's 'Missed Opportunity' with Syria in 2000," *Corteret*, June 17, 2010.

interesting. It may demonstrate his concern about the security establishment's capacity to unduly influence – although not veto - the talks. Barak later suggested that Rabin did so to insulate the IDF from the potential criticism that it had been politicized.<sup>618</sup> Others proffer it was because Rabin had no faith in Oslo and didn't think the talks would amount to anything, or that he was so concerned about political blowback that he kept government involvement at a bare minimum to avoid a potential leak.<sup>619</sup> Even if the security establishment couldn't veto his decision, Rabin's lack of consultation with the IDF and intelligence heads likely suggests he wanted to reduce the potential for resistance to build against particular concessions by limiting the amount of time that key ministers and institutions would have to consider any settlement the talks might produce. Rabin may have been the central decision-maker, but he wasn't going to take any unnecessary risks.

Despite the centrality of the military and intelligence agencies in Israeli politics, Israel has maintained a firm tradition of civilian control over the security forces. The security establishment provides important advice to the prime minister, but does not prevent the prime minister from pursuing conciliatory counterterrorism policies.<sup>620</sup> Yet, some suggest that there is variation across prime ministers based on their respective backgrounds. A soldier prime minister – someone like Rabin – was not going to accept a veto from any agency, even the IDF, whereas a civilian prime minister might be more

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<sup>618</sup> Makovsky, 51.

<sup>619</sup> It hardly seems likely that Rabin would be worried about the security and intelligence chiefs being responsible for a leak. Israel does not have the same leak culture as other countries. It's military and intelligence professionals refrain from public confrontation with political leaders, even in retirement. It was only recently that PM Netanyahu's Iran policy led some former intelligence directors to openly question his policies.

<sup>620</sup> Baskin, interview.



heavily influenced by the military.<sup>621</sup> Given that nearly all of Israel's prime ministers have been soldiers, this is more a theoretical problem than anything else. The power relationship – at least on conciliatory policies - is clear: the security establishment serves the government. A similar level of confidence in hierarchy could not, however, be afforded to a prime minister's coalition.

Israel lacks strong institutional veto players capable of derailing the prime minister's pursuit of negotiations with terrorists. The Supreme Court in theory may be able to exercise some influence, but in practice it has little impact on the onset of state-terrorist negotiations. There are, however, political veto players, namely political parties and their factions within the prime minister's coalition, that have the capacity to possibly prevent talks, or at least serve deliver an *ex post* veto on any settlement they produce. Especially given the centrality of security to Israeli politics, the prime minister is forced to consider the likelihood that political veto players might prevent the opening of negotiations with the PLO. Thus it is not necessarily the strategic environment that prevents a prime minister from employing a negotiations counterterrorism strategy, but the domestic political constraints that render doing so akin to political suicide.

## **4.5 Third Party Influence?**

### **4.5.1 The United States**

There is another potential geo-political factor that is not laid out in the theory, but should be discussed in the Israeli case – the influence of third parties, particularly, the United States. In the Philippines and Northern Ireland, there is often a lot of attention

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<sup>621</sup> Ganor, interview.

paid to the role of third parties, but ultimately, that influence is overblown. In Israel, however, the influence of third parties played a much more important, albeit non-essential, role in facilitating talks between the Israeli Government and the PLO.

Rabin's chargé d'affaires, Etian Harber, once said that it is only when a man becomes prime minister, that he comes to "realize how utterly dependent Israel is on the US... For absolutely everything — in the realms of diplomacy, security, even economically... [Israel is] in America's little pocket."<sup>622</sup> As Harber indicates, the United States had the capacity to exhibit significant pressure on Israel's counterterrorism policy, but for much of Israel's history it refrained from doing so. From 1948 to the mid-1980s, the two countries were largely on the same page. Early US communication with the PLO was relatively hostile: In November 1973 and March 1974, CIA Deputy Director Vernon Walters met with PLO executive members at the direction of Henry Kissinger in order to warn the PLO against targeting the US, Jordan, and Israel.<sup>623</sup> In 1975, after receiving an overture from the PLO, Kissinger promised the Israeli government that it would not deal directly the Organization.<sup>624</sup> Although Carter's administration sent feelers out to the PLO to see if it would be willing to accept UN Resolution 242 in order to become a potential negotiating partner, "Ultimately, the United States continued its policy of excluding the PLO, following the maxim that politics is the art of the possible."<sup>625</sup> On tactical issues, there was occasional communication with the group: For example, the US Ambassador to Lebanon engaged in talks with PLO leaders in Beirut following a series of hostage-

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<sup>622</sup> David Horovitz, "I Didn't Believe for a Second that Arafat was a Partner, and I'm Not at all sure that Rabin Believed He Was," *The Times of Israel*, September 18, 2013.

<sup>623</sup> Wanis-St. John, 25.

<sup>624</sup> Aburish, 215.

<sup>625</sup> Wanis-St. John, 25.

takings of Americans.<sup>626</sup> These talks were never fully acknowledged by the US government – indeed to do so was politically risky, as the US Ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young, had been forced to resign after he met informally with the PLO representative to the UN.<sup>627</sup>

The US relationship with the PLO began to change in 1988, when the PLO met US preconditions for multiparty talks by denouncing violence and recognizing Israel's right to exist. The outgoing Reagan administration opened the door to a dialogue. The US government blessed unofficial talks between American Jews and the PLO in the late 1980s. In the spring of 1989, Secretary of State Baker testified before Congress that the US government would push Israel to hold meaningful talks with non-PLO members in the Palestinian community, but if that proved impossible or fruitless, the US would demand Israel meet directly with PLO representatives.<sup>628</sup> The US warming to the PLO provoked a dialogue within the Labor Party and more than a dozen Labor doves cautiously backed the US decision to open contacts with the group.<sup>629</sup> Likud remained recalcitrant. After the Intifada undermined US support for the Israeli hard line, there was talk of slowing aid to Israel.<sup>630</sup>

This shift was significant given the considerable military and financial leverage the United States enjoyed over the Israeli government.<sup>631</sup> H.W. Bush was the first president willing to use this leverage to push Israel to shift its counterterrorism policy.

When Shamir initially refused negotiate with a Palestinian delegation handpicked to meet

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<sup>626</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>627</sup> Ibid.

<sup>628</sup> Brinkley, "Israeli Intelligence Report Links Peace Hopes to Talks With P.L.O."

<sup>629</sup> Including cabinet minister Ezer Weizman. Rubin, "The Angst Of Israeli, PLO Contact."

<sup>630</sup> Brinkley, "Majority in Israel Opposes PLO Talks."

<sup>631</sup> At the time, US aid to Israel was more than \$3 billion a year – approximately 10% of the nation's budget. Jeremy M. Sharp, *U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel*, Congressional Research Service Report, April 11, 2013, 27-28.

Israel's specifications, the Bush administration froze \$10 billion in loan guarantees for Israel.<sup>632</sup> Ultimately, the US exerted enough influence to compel Israel to attend the Madrid conference, but it could not force the government to negotiate with the Palestinians in good faith. Shamir attended the Conference for appearances, but instructed his negotiating team to ensure no progress was made. Of all the outside influences on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the United States was the most influential on Israeli policy, but that influence was not sufficient to push the Israelis to earnestly pursue negotiations with the PLO.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

The Israeli case study is held up against the integrated strategic-domestic theory presented herein to explain what conditions influence states to shift towards a negotiations counterterrorism strategy. In the strategic environment, there are three central characteristics of a terrorist group – endurance/type, size, and fractionalization/market share – that help a state determine first, if the group is capable of continuing a costly and painful conflict, and second, if the group will be a satisfactory negotiating partner. On the domestic front, a state executive's capacity to pursue negotiations with a terrorist group is determined by the obstacles and opportunities created by the domestic political environment. In this regard, public opinion and veto players are critical in determining if the state leader can create the political space necessary for pursue negotiations.

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<sup>632</sup> The money was intended to help Israel absorb the flood of new immigrants from former Soviet Union countries.

When trying to understand why Israel finally negotiated with the PLO in 1993, one must examine the history of the conflict through this dual strategic and domestic politics lens. In the early days of the conflict, when domestic political circumstances were more conducive to conciliation, the strategic ones were not. In the first two decades of the country's existence, Israeli governments were left-leaning, relatively cohesive, enjoyed large majorities, and largely ignored public opinion. Yet, it is unfathomable that the Mapai/Alignment/Labor governments would have negotiated with the Palestinians at that time. The Palestinian nationalist movement was then either non-existent or disorganized and lacked a focal point. The Palestinian fedayeen were an annoyance, but did not constitute a real threat to Israeli security or governance. The Palestinian issue was not yet a salient one, and Israeli politicians did not feel great pressure to deal with it: Golda Meir even famously denied that Palestinians were a distinct people.<sup>633</sup>

Eventually, the strategic situation changed, but by that time, the prospects for domestic political maneuverability had worsened. The terrorist attacks of the 1970s and 1980s undermined Israelis' sense of security. The PLO and Yasser Arafat emerged as the undisputed and recognized leaders of the Palestinian movement. That mattered little however, because of the domestic political situation. From 1977 to 1984 and from 1990 to 1992, right-wing governments advocated hard-line counterterrorism policies and pursued objectives that undermined any possibility of a negotiated compromise with the Palestinians. In the intervening years, while part of unity governments, Likud prevented the more dovish Labor party from pursuing conciliatory strategies. Even if the right had not controlled government (or had the capacity to veto policy) during the latter part of the

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<sup>633</sup> Gerald Butt, "Profiles: Golda Meir," *BBC*, April 21, 1998.

1970s and most of the 1980s, it is unclear if a left-leaning government would have sought negotiations *with the PLO*. At this point, the Labor party had a policy of engagement and Peres had personally sought to negotiate with the Jordanians on behalf of the Palestinians, but those initiatives did not include the PLO. Moreover, the conflict was not quite ripe for resolution. Sure, the Israeli people were weary of terrorist attacks, but their view of the PLO and their preference for hard-line counterterrorism responses were in tact. It was not until the Intifada that the public's views shifted significantly. The resulting change in worldview and sense of urgency to address the Palestinian problem were furthered by Gulf War missile attacks, which exasperated the conflict fatigue that had already become overbearing with the Intifada. These developments coincided with the PLO moderating its stance and approach, lending to a sense of optimism that there might be another policy option available. A redirection in policy was not fully possible until Rabin and Labor won in 1992. It was only then, when domestic and strategic factors aligned that it would, for the first time, be both expedient and feasible for Israel to negotiate a political settlement with the PLO.

## Chapter 5

### *UK Case Study (Northern Ireland)*

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines British counterterrorism policymaking from the 1960s to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century related to the “Troubles” in Northern Ireland - the three decades of violent inter-communal conflict that plagued the region and resulted in 3,500 people dead, tens of thousands injured,<sup>634</sup> and tens of billions of dollars in security costs and economic damage. The case study evaluates UK counterterrorism policymaking against the theoretical argument outlined in Chapter 3. The Northern Ireland case offers both an interesting comparison to the Israeli and Philippine ones presented in Chapters 4 and 6 respectively, but also provides intra-case variation on strategic and domestic variables, which allows us to examine how differences across terrorist threats and the domestic political environment impact a government’s decision to pursue a negotiations counterterrorism policy. As expected, the UK government long avoided negotiating with terrorist groups to end the Troubles and preferred to use military methods to quell the conflict. It was only after it had become readily apparent that there was no military solution to the conflict that the UK government even considered pursuing a negotiated settlement, but it was prevented from shifting its policy to include negotiations by domestic political obstacles. A comprehensive peace process in Northern Ireland only became possible after the UK government came to view the Irish Republican Army

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<sup>634</sup> Malcolm Sutton, “An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland,” available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/>], and Mike Morrissey, Marie Smyth, and Marie Therese Fay, *The Cost of the Troubles Study: Report on the Northern Ireland Survey: The experience and Impact of Violence*, 1999, available from [<http://www.conflictresearch.org.uk/Resources/Documents/COST%20OF%20THE%20TROUBLES%20STUDY%20Survey%20Final%20Report.pdf>], accessed on May 8, 2013.

(IRA) as a capable and credible negotiating partner and the domestic obstacles that had plagued previous governments were removed.

Northern Ireland offers enough intra-case variation to make for a good test of the integrated theory laid out in Chapter 3. On the strategic front, there were numerous terrorist groups operating during the Troubles that varied in size, type, internal fractionalization, and market share. Differences on these strategic independent variables and the dependent variables (i.e. negotiations) allow us to isolate the characteristics that the UK government valued in a negotiating partner. As theorized, endurance, type, and internal cohesion/market share were key components to the UK government's assessment of particular groups as potential negotiating partners. The government only fully explored a peace process that included Irish Republican terrorists<sup>635</sup> after it became clear that they were capable of continuing their fight, and they enjoyed enough widespread popularity and legitimacy that no agreement that excluded them would work.

The Northern Ireland case study offers an interesting example of how domestic factors can prevent state executives from pursuing their preferred counterterrorism policies. As laid out by the theory in Chapter 3, state executives will not pursue negotiations – even if doing so is in the state's strategic interest – if the domestic political environment is not conducive for doing so. State executives will not pursue negotiations if doing so threatens their position. There is significant evidence of this in the Northern Ireland case, wherein John Major was prevented from pursuing talks with the IRA even though he had come to view the group as a potential negotiating partner, because

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<sup>635</sup> Irish Republicanism is a nationalist movement dedicated to the belief that *all* of Ireland should be an independent republic. During the Troubles, Republicans in Northern Ireland fought to unite the northern six counties with the Irish Republic in the South.



opposition from key members of his coalition in Parliament threatened his position. Interestingly, public opinion does not appear to have had a strong influence - structurally or culturally - on counterterrorism policymaking during the Troubles, but successive prime ministers worried about how their policies would be received by the mainland public and in turn proceeded with extreme caution when it came to negotiating with terrorists. This suggests that even when the public does not have the formal means or interest in rebuking a particular counterterrorism policy, the nascent threat of public disapproval is still a powerful influence on elected officials.

This chapter begins with an overview of the Troubles and the UK government's counterterrorism policy responses to the conflict from the 1960s to end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This study is broken up into four periods that were characterized by a distinct mix of strategic and domestic conditions. For each period, it is assessed whether the conflict had reached a mutually hurting stalemate. Once the conflict was ripe for resolution, I examine how the UK government viewed the potential of its terrorist challengers to be effective negotiating partners and whether the domestic political environment was conducive to shifting the country's counterterrorism policy to include negotiations. As this chapter demonstrates, it was only after the Troubles had raged for decades, other counterterrorism strategies failed, the government came to view the IRA as a possible partner for peace, and political veto players were no longer an obstacle that the UK government was finally able to pursue a comprehensive peace process in Northern Ireland.

## **5.2 Overview of the Troubles & UK Counterterrorism Policy Responses**

During the time covered by this case study, there appear to be four distinct phases of UK counterterrorism response to the violence in Northern Ireland. During the first period, from the mounting tensions in the 1960s until the extreme violence of 1972, the UK government remained convinced of its capacity to defeat Irish republican terrorism solely using a military strategy. During the next period, from 1973 to the early 1990s, the government had come to recognize that a military strategy alone would not solve the conflict. A political solution was necessary, but the government did not believe that Irish republicans – particularly, the IRA - were partners for peace. Starting during the third period, in the early 1990s until the 1997 general election, that assessment started to change. Under John Major, the UK government came to see the IRA as a willing and capable negotiating partner, but Major was prevented from pursuing peace negotiations with the group because of political veto players within his own coalition. During the last period, from 1997 until negotiations began in 1998, the strategic and domestic factors finally aligned and the new Prime Minister, Tony Blair, was able to pursue strategic talks with the IRA and other paramilitary groups.

### **5.2.1 Period I – 1960s-1972: Tensions Turn to Violence, Forcing London’s Hand**

Since it was partitioned from the Free State in the south in 1922,<sup>636</sup> Ulster’s place

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<sup>636</sup> In the midst of the Anglo-Irish war (Irish War of Independence), the British Parliament passed the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 (An Act to Provide for the Better Government of Ireland or Fourth Home Rule Bill), which partitioned Ireland into Southern Ireland – the lower 26 counties – and Northern Ireland – the six northeastern counties. Both Southern and Northern Ireland were to remain part of the British Union, but they would be governed by different home institutions. The negotiated settlement that ended the fighting (The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1922), however, allowed for the creation of an Irish Free State in the south, but stipulated that the newly created parliament in the North could determine its own status per the Government of Ireland Act of 1920. In 1922, the Parliament of Northern Ireland voted to remain part of the United Kingdom. The vote did not, however, represent the unified aspirations of

in the United Kingdom has oscillated between a valued, militarily-strategic, central part of the Union to an “uncertain and unloved place in the United Kingdom firmament.”<sup>637</sup> This duality was embodied by the UK government’s relationship with the pro-union residents of North – the unionists or loyalists – who despite the particularism they enjoyed to ensure Protestant ascendancy,<sup>638</sup> were increasingly viewed by London with apathy, and even downright hostility.<sup>639</sup> London had largely left the Ulster unionists to run their own affairs, and as such, the unionists continued to dominate the social, economic, and political life of Northern Ireland (NI) for four decades after partition. During this time, little had been done to cultivate the feeling that the sizeable Catholic population was fully part of Northern Irish society or encourage its loyalty.<sup>640</sup> Catholics, although *legally* full citizens, were *in practice* excluded from the political process due to unfair electoral practices (e.g. vote restrictions, gerrymandering), and subject to hiring and housing discrimination. As media coverage started to highlight the inequalities in Northern Ireland in the late 1950s, it became increasingly difficult for unionists to defend

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Northern Ireland’s populace. Rather, the vote represented most of the Protestant majority (62% of the population), but little of the Catholic nationalist minority (34%). The divergent aspirations of these two groups cohabiting in a small area, combined with mutual hostility and suspicion spurned by violence and discrimination, proved to be combustible.

<sup>637</sup> Paul Bew, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity 1789-2006*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Ereader edition, loc 7389.

<sup>638</sup> Unionist particularism seeped into all aspects of daily life and led to mounting Catholic grievances over abuses of the Special Powers Act and discrimination in housing, jobs, and education. Patrick Ryan, “The Birth of the Provisionals: A Clash between Politics and Tradition,” excerpt from “A Ballot Paper in Both Hands – The Gradual Politicisation of the Provisional Republican Movement,” available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/organ/docs/ryan01.htm>], accessed on May 1, 2013.

<sup>639</sup> Bew, *Ireland*, loc 7405, and Patrick Ryan, “The Birth of the Provisionals: A Clash between Politics and Tradition,” excerpt from “A Ballot Paper in Both Hands – The Gradual Politicisation of the Provisional Republican Movement,” available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/organ/docs/ryan01.htm>], accessed on May 1, 2013. During WWII, the strategic value of Northern Ireland forced the UK government to treat “the ‘irritating’ demands of Ulster Unionists with some sensitivity.” Irish Free State neutrality had undermined British military planning and Winston Churchill viewed Belfast’s ship building capacity and strategic harbors as essential to British war efforts. Bew, *Ireland*, loc 7404-7405.

<sup>640</sup> Graham Ellison and Greg Martin, “Policing, Collective Action and Social Movement Theory: The Case of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Campaign,” *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 51, Issue 4 (December 2000), 685.

the peculiarities of their governing system to outsiders. In response, the Northern Ireland and UK governments instituted stimulus programs to improve the lots of many Catholics, but in doing so, they also heightened the disparity between the two communities, thus creating a perception of relative deprivation.<sup>641</sup> As tensions mounted between the two communities, a civil rights movement (CRM) promoting a broad social justice and civil rights platform gained momentum.

Traditionally, London had paid little attention to the affairs of Northern Ireland, but the burgeoning civil rights campaign forced that to change. Since partition, the UK government had done its best to ignore Northern Irish affairs, as was demonstrated by the placement of the Northern Ireland affairs office in an obscure department in the Home Office; the failure of the Home Secretary to ever visit Northern Ireland;<sup>642</sup> and the “virtual insulation of the internal political system of Northern Ireland from Westminster’s scrutiny between 1921 and 1969,”<sup>643</sup> facilitated by the ban on discussing Stormont-related issues in Parliament.<sup>644</sup> London, however, was shaken from its “weariness with Irish affairs”<sup>645</sup> by the violent response to the CRM. The movement started benignly enough with letter writing campaigns, and pamphleting, but when it began to engage in marches in 1968, violence erupted. Although the marches were of a peaceful nature, they took

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<sup>641</sup> Landon Hancock, “Northern Ireland: Troubles Brewing,” dated 1998, available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/landon.htm>], accessed on May 8, 2013.

<sup>642</sup> The Northern Ireland Office was part of the Home Office from 1924 to 1972, when the Northern Ireland Office took on the same stature as those of the other devolved departments.

<sup>643</sup> Hugh Roberts, “Sound Stupidity: The British Party System and the Northern Ireland Question,” *Government and Opposition* Vol. 22, No. 3, (1987), 316-317. Citing Max Bebb and Gillian Peele, *The Government of the United Kingdom: Political Authority in a Changing Society*, 2nd ed., (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1985), 334.

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

<sup>645</sup> *Ibid.*

routes provocative to unionists and set the stage for violent flashpoints.<sup>646</sup> Protestants in the North had initially supported the CRM reforms on issues of common concern (e.g. housing, jobs), but the mounting unrest and scaremongering by the likes of the provocative loyalist preacher Rev. Ian Paisley<sup>647</sup> began to convince many that “CRM was part of a republican conspiracy to destroy the state,” and unionist hardliners “demanded higher and higher levels of repression against the CRM.”<sup>648</sup> As sectarian tensions mounted, the UK government supported – albeit with little interest – the moderate reforms proposed by Northern Ireland’s Prime Minister Terrence O’Neill.<sup>649</sup>

Rioting and violence broke out at several CRM marches within a few months of each other in 1969 and dashed the hopes that reforms might mollify the mounting sectarian tensions. In October 1968, a march sponsored by the Derry Housing Action Committee (DHAC) was violently attacked by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). In January 1969, a People’s Democracy march from Belfast to Derry<sup>650</sup> was repeatedly attacked by Loyalists despite having RUC protection. In each case, the violence was captured by TV crews and broadcast around the world garnering international attention to the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland. The coverage drew attention to the relationship between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which appeared increasingly

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<sup>646</sup> There were few IRA men in the North at the time, but the ones there were heavily involved in organizing civil rights marches and other political agitation. Brian Feeney, *Sinn Féin: A Hundred Turbulent Years*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 247.

<sup>647</sup> This shift was further facilitated by scaremongering by the likes of Rev. Ian Paisley, who admonished protestants to open their eyes that the Civil Rights Association was a front for the destruction of the constitution of Northern Ireland and the rise of unionist paramilitaries, namely the Ulster Volunteer Force, which sought to protect Northern Ireland’s position in the UK from Republicans.

<sup>648</sup> Ellison and Martin, 686.

<sup>649</sup> Bew, *Ireland*.

<sup>650</sup> The march was modeled on the civil rights marches from Selma to Montgomery in 1965.

anachronistic in “an international political system where colonial rule had no place.”<sup>651</sup> Media coverage of the violence in Northern Ireland forced to the UK government, however begrudgingly, to take a greater interest in the region: Prime Minister Harold Wilson even threatened a complete “liquidation” of financial support if changes were not made imminently.<sup>652</sup> O’Neill issued a five-point plan in November 1968 that dealt with the most deplorable of the grievances articulated by the CRM. O’Neill’s party endorsed the reforms, but only after securing a promise that they would be the last.<sup>653</sup> Loyalist paramilitaries, which had cropped up in recent years to protect Northern Ireland from republican inroads, sought to destabilize O’Neill’s government with a series of utility instillation bombings.

Facing mounting violence and a burgeoning republican terrorist movement in North, the policy options open to the UK government amounted to what Conor Cruise O’Brien, the Irish politician, described as “alternative routes to the cemetery.”<sup>654</sup> Indeed, the British came to recognize the existing policy options for Northern Ireland - unilateral withdrawal, negotiated independence, repartition, and total integration – all had significant consequences. Unilateral withdrawal would surely cause a civil war that would destabilize the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom.<sup>655</sup> Total integration with the UK would spawn a republican nationalist uprising. As such, the UK

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<sup>651</sup> Adrian Guelke and Frank Wright, “The Option of a “British Withdrawal” from Northern Ireland: An Exploration of its Meaning, Influence, and Feasibility,” *Conflict Quarterly*, (Fall 1990), 54.

<sup>652</sup> Bew, *Ireland*, loc 6306.

<sup>653</sup> *Ibid.*, loc 6316.

<sup>654</sup> Quoted by Michael L. Moodie and Frank T.J. Bray, “British Policy Options in Northern Ireland, “Alternative Routes to the Cemetery?”” *The Fletcher Forum*, Vol. 1, (Fall 1976), 13.

<sup>655</sup> Fears about the possibility of a civil war were warranted: In October 1972, William Craig, a former Stormont MP and leader of the Vanguard Movement, announced in a meeting with right-wing members of the Conservative Party at Westminster that the Unionists could mobilize 80,000 men who’d be ...” prepared to come out and shoot and kill. I am prepared to come out and shoot and kill. Let us put the bluff aside.” Chris Ryder, “William Craig Obituary,” *The Guardian*, April 26, 2011.

government's most attractive option was creating a stabilized status quo. In April 1969, the UK military announced that a select number of troops would be used to guard public installations in the North. O'Neill had survived the February 1969 election, but the violence in the North had exacerbated internal divisions within his party, threatening his leadership. In April 1969, O'Neill resigned and was replaced by James Chichester-Clark, but the latter would not hold the position for long. The continued dissolution of Northern Ireland into violence would soon push London to intercede.

By August 1969, when the Apprentice Boys march took place in Derry, tensions were at their peak. The march devolved into rioting and then a two-day assault by the RUC and Loyalists on the Bogside, a Catholic neighborhood in Derry. The "Battle of the Bogside," as it was later called, inspired more riots across the region, stretching the capacity of the RUC forces. On August 13, 1969, the Irish Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, made a televised speech in which he said that violence in the North was "the inevitable outcome of the policies pursued for decades by successive Stormont Governments."<sup>656</sup> Lynch asked the United Nations to send a peacekeeping force to Northern Ireland and demanded the UK government enter into negotiations on reunification of the six northern counties with the Republic. The Battle of the Bogside was a pivotal event for all the conflict's actors: The next day the UK government deployed 2,700 British soldiers on the streets of Northern Ireland per the request of Stormont. The battle also forced a split within the republican movement.

The riots and sectarian violence over the previous year had left the Catholic community feeling threatened from all angles, and their supposed champion - the Irish

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<sup>656</sup> Department of the Taoiseach, "Statement by the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, regarding events in Northern Ireland, August 13, 1969," available from the National Archives of Ireland, accessed from [[http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/nai/1969/nai\\_TSCH-2000-6-657\\_1969-08-13\\_b.pdf](http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/nai/1969/nai_TSCH-2000-6-657_1969-08-13_b.pdf)].

Republican Army (IRA) – was widely perceived to have left them defenseless.<sup>657</sup> Graffiti began to appear in Catholic neighborhoods that read, "IRA = I Ran Away."<sup>658</sup> This sentiment coupled with images of grateful Catholics welcoming the first wave of British army soldiers in the streets of Belfast marked an important “turning point for contemporary republicanism,”<sup>659</sup> sparking a crisis of conscience,<sup>660</sup> that would eventually split the republican movement. The shell of the IRA in Belfast, frustrated with the criticism, grew increasingly angry that the IRA leadership in “Dublin, preoccupied with political and social issues, had failed to heed its warnings of an imminent confrontation

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<sup>657</sup> For example, Tim Pat Coogan finds that during the Battle of the Bogside, only six IRA men, some middle aged, long since decommissioned, and poorly armed, attempted to protect the Catholic residents from the Orange mobs and the B-Specials. Tim Pat Coogan, *The IRA: A History*, (Niwot, CO: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1994), 334. Indeed, White details conversations at an IRA meeting in May 1969, during which Goulding responded to a concern voiced about the potential for civil rights actions to inspire violence against the catholic communities and a need for the IRA to be ready to defend the people by saying “It is not our job to be Catholic defenders. When the time comes, we’ll put it up to the official forces, the British Army and the RUC, to defend the people.” Robert William White, *Ruairi O Bradaigh: The Life and Politics of an Irish Revolutionary*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 143. This differs from the description by Brian Hanley, who argues that while the IRA was relatively small (500 men in the North according to British intelligence) and lacked sufficient arms, IRA men were manning the barricades during the Battle of the Bogside, pressuring the Republic for arms or intervention, and making statements about their role in defending Bogside neighborhoods from a massacre. Brian Hanley, “‘I Ran Away’? the IRA and 1969,” *History Ireland*, Vol. 17, Issue 4, (July/August 2009). Before the riots, the IRA leadership was relatively apathetic toward Northern Ireland as well in the years leading up to the civil rights movement. The group, based in Dublin, had largely become dormant by 1967. Under the leadership of Cathal Goulding, the IRA had eschewed its military capability and divested most of its arms in order to dabble in academic Marxist debates. (Ian McAllistar, “‘The Armalite and the ballot box’: Sinn Féin’s electoral strategy in Northern Ireland,” *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 23 (2004), 126.)<sup>657</sup> Just as the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) started to gain momentum in the North, where there were only a few members and even fewer weapons, Republicans suddenly realized that “they had no movement at all.” (Citing an interview with C. Goulding from *This Week*, July 31, 1970, M.L.R. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland? The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement*, (London: Routledge, 1997), 80.)

<sup>658</sup> Brian Hanley disputes the claim that “I Ran Away” graffiti began to appear shortly after the Bogside and suggest that rather the famous slogan was not first uttered until eight months later by an Ardoyne priest at the Scarman Tribunal. Hanley, “‘I Ran Away’? the IRA and 1969.”

<sup>659</sup> PBS, “The IRA/Provos”, available from [<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ira/conflict/provos.html>], accessed on April 30, 2013.

<sup>660</sup> The PIRA’s August 1969 communiqué on this issue is defensive: Although the communiqué is primarily a warning to British Soldiers to expect attacks in the event that they defend the B Specials who had attacked Catholic Communities, the statement mentions – in defensive language - that the IRA units “...have played their part in the defensive operations in Bogside where they have put their discipline and experience at the disposal of the Citizens Defence Association.” Statement by C. Goulding, Chief of Staff of the Irish Republican Army, August 1969, PRONI Records, available from [[http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1969/proni\\_CAB-9-B-312-1\\_1969-nd.pdf](http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1969/proni_CAB-9-B-312-1_1969-nd.pdf)].



with the Protestant enemy and had allowed the military strength of the army to fall into decline.”<sup>661</sup> When there were not enough men or weapons to defend the Catholic neighborhoods during the Battle of the Bogside, the group split:<sup>662</sup> the Official Irish Republican Army (OIRA) - the leftist, predominately southern, urban wing of the movement, promoted a non-violent, constitutional political approach - whereas the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA or often just referred to as the IRA) – comprised largely of northern, rural, ardent abstentionists,<sup>663</sup> who blamed the movement’s recent malaise on its failure to sustain the struggle - embarked on a reinvigorated campaign of violence.<sup>664</sup> Initially, in response to the attacks on Catholics, the PIRA mostly limited itself to defensive actions – protecting the Catholic neighborhoods of Northern Ireland’s cities – because it lacked the men or arms to do anything else. But when British soldiers were deployed en masse in 1969, the PIRA threatened to attack soldiers in the event that they defended Ulster Special Constabulary in their attacks on Catholic neighborhoods.<sup>665</sup> That changed quickly: Buoyed by funds from the Diaspora in the US and modern armaments supplied from Libya, PIRA began to mount an all-out

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<sup>661</sup> “A News Team inquiry,” *Times* [London], April 7, 1970. There has been some recent debate about the origins of “I Ran Away,” but it is clear that the Catholic community was increasingly disillusioned the organization. The IRA’s leader Cathal Goulding was singled out for sacrificing the IRA’s military preparedness in favor of seemingly academic ideological debates. J. Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army: The IRA*, Third Edition, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 366.

<sup>662</sup> The IRA had been divided for some time. The 1962 ceasefire and subsequent decline in military capacity and readiness had led some to question the group’s strategy. Another divide over the abstention policy had been brewing for years: At the 1965 Ard Fheis, there was a vote on ending the policy that essentially divided the movement. The shift toward Marxism had alienated a lot of members. Feeney, 242.

<sup>663</sup> After the Anglo-Irish War (1919-1921), the IRA split over the issue of participating in elections in the new Irish Free State, because at the time, all members of Dáil were required to take an Oath of Allegiance to the British queen. The anti-treaty faction refused, started a guerrilla war against the Irish Free State. The remnants of the anti-treaty IRA in the North became the seed for the PIRA.

<sup>664</sup> A similar split took place within Sinn Féin over whether to continue the group’s abstention policy, resulting in the Official Sinn Féin and the abstentionist Provision Sinn Féin. The split represented “The central tension in the Republican Movement since 1921 [which] has been whether or not the “Republic” can be achieved through parliamentary politics. The issue split the movement in 1922, 1926, 1946, 1969/1970, and 1986.” White, *Ruairi O Bradaigh*, 337.

<sup>665</sup> C. Goulding, August 1969.

offensive against the 'British occupation system' in 1970. The next year, it began to target British soldiers.

More attention, especially in the early years of the Troubles, was paid to republican terrorism, but the PIRA was not the only violent actor in the North. Indeed, the PIRA was predated by the rise of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), which sought to protect Northern Ireland from encroaching republicanism. Other Loyalist paramilitary groups emerged after violence broke out in the late 1960s – including the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) – with had thousands, possibly tens of thousands, of members active in the region. The Loyalist paramilitaries conducted revenge killings, attacked Catholic civilians, and the police and British Army on occasion. These groups used armed assaults and bombings, although not with the same technical prowess as the PIRA and other republican groups. Loyalist violence would eventually result in over 700 deaths during the course of the conflict, and represent a major threat to stability.

Although there were suddenly thousands of British troops in Northern Ireland, the UK government continued to pursue similar policies to those promoted by O'Neill before widespread violence had erupted. On August 29, 1969, the UK and Stormont governments met and issued a communiqué which re-affirmed the promise that Northern Ireland would remain part of the United Kingdom as long as its Parliament and people so wished and promised further administrative, housing, and employment reforms.<sup>666</sup> They

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<sup>666</sup> "Northern Ireland," Communiqué issued on August 29, 1969 at the conclusion of the visit of the Secretary of State for the Home Department to Northern Ireland, Presented to Parliament by the Home Secretary, available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/hmso/bni290869.htm>].

also promised to revamp the region's police and security forces.<sup>667</sup> The reforms, however, represented too little, too late.

In June 1970, the Conservative Party won the general election and Edward Heath became Prime Minister. Heath desperately wanted to reduce Northern Ireland's impact on other aspects of policy, especially the UK's application to the European Union (EU). The new Home Secretary Reginald Maudling<sup>668</sup> threatened to impose direct rule if the reforms outlined in the joint 1969 communiqué were not carried out.<sup>669</sup> In an attempt to reestablish security, the British Army began imposing curfews and launched widespread housing searches. The Army began using rubber bullets in response to riots. Despite the influx of British Army troops into Northern Ireland – nearly 12,000 were on the ground by mid-1971 - stability remained elusive.

While most Catholics in Northern Ireland had initially welcomed the British Army as their protectors, the indiscriminate security measures the military imposed quickly alienated the Catholic community and generated deep resentment. Increasingly, there was the conviction that the British were not only turning a blind eye to Protestant abuses, but tacitly approving and facilitating them. Support for PIRA began to increase,<sup>670</sup> as did the frequency and ferocity of the group's attacks. PIRA's intensifying violence was part of the Provisionals' plan to achieve a United Ireland by causing enough destruction

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<sup>667</sup> In April 1970, the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) replaced the Ulster Special Constabulary – the much hated B-Specials in the Catholic community.

<sup>668</sup> Maudling had no love lost for Northern Ireland. On his maiden trip to there later that summer, he reportedly said, "For God's sake bring me a large scotch. What a bloody awful country!" as he boarded the plain after his visit. CAIN Web Service, "Chronology of the Conflict: 1970," available from <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch70.htm>.

<sup>669</sup> Heath didn't want to create waves in Northern Ireland especially because the French were inclined to look for things to prevent UK membership to the EU; Heath didn't want to give them ammunition. Bill Smith, interview by author, March 4, 2013, Belfast.

<sup>670</sup> Bart Schuurman, "Defeated by Popular Demand: Public Support and Counterterrorism in Three Western Democracies, 1963–1998" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 36, No. 2, (2013) PP152–175, 157.

and insecurity “to render the existing State [of Northern Ireland] inoperable so that the [British] army would have to withdraw.”<sup>671</sup>

In the face of continued sectarian violence, some British military officials were beginning to question the UK policy in Northern Ireland. In June 1971, General Officer Commanding the British Army in the North, Harry Tuzo acknowledged that a military solution to the conflict could not be achieved.<sup>672</sup> London did not agree, and soon thereafter, the British introduced internment – the arrest and detainment, without trial, of suspected republicans.<sup>673</sup> Over the next four years, nearly 2,000 people, the overwhelming majority of which were Catholic, were interred. Internment erased any remaining perception of impartiality on the part of the British,<sup>674</sup> and finalized the shift in support for the PIRA, which by 1972 was so strong<sup>675</sup> it appeared to constitute a popular mandate for violent opposition.<sup>676</sup> Yet, there remained optimism among some Military brass that the heavy-handed counterterrorism strategy would yield results. On August 13, 1971, Brigadier Marston Tickeil briefed the press on how internment had led PIRA to be “virtually defeated,”<sup>677</sup> a boast that rang hollow given the level of violence that followed. In that month alone, 35 people were killed in violence in Northern Ireland, there were more than 100 bombings, and numerous rifle attacks.<sup>678</sup>

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<sup>671</sup> Coogan, *The IRA*, (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 285.

<sup>672</sup> Tuzo was not alone. Several other military officials are referenced as having expressed similar opinions at the time. Tuzo’s assessment is acknowledged by several sources at the time, including North Derry Civil Rights Association Executive Committee, *There is Only One Wary*, August 13, 1971, available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/pdfs/oneway.pdf>].

<sup>673</sup> No unionist paramilitaries were initially targeted.

<sup>674</sup> A 1974 survey found that 95% of all Catholics polled opposed internment, compared to 47% of the Protestant population. Schuurman, 157.

<sup>675</sup> Despite internment, the PIRA flourished, in part because the British Army had been hesitant to go into the “no-go areas,” cognizant of exacerbating relations with the Catholic community.

<sup>676</sup> The plan was articulated in the 1971 “Eire Nua” document. *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>677</sup> Bell, 381.

<sup>678</sup> *Ibid.*

That year, the level of violence in Northern Ireland forced the British cabinet to consider alternative options, including “letting Ulster go” or giving Dublin more say in the administration of the North in order to avoid another Rhodesia or Vietnam.<sup>679</sup>

Negotiations with the PIRA, however, were not considered an option at the time. Despite the grave concerns expressed at the highest level of the UK government, the British found themselves drawn further into Northern Ireland.

In January 1972, the violence in Northern Ireland escalated exponentially.<sup>680</sup> On January 30, 1972, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association held a march against internment in Derry, which led to a small riot.<sup>681</sup> A paratrooper unit in the area requested permission to arrest the rioters, but instead opened fire, killing 13 people, and injuring at least as many. “Bloody Sunday,” as it was soon named, invoked furor as the media broadcast images of the dead around the world: tens of thousands attended the funerals of those who died and nearly 100,000 protestors marched on the British Embassy in Dublin to protest the military’s abuse, attacking the building and burning it to the ground. Bloody Sunday and internment led to an influx of recruits, weapons, donations, and support for the PIRA. More and more British soldiers were sent to the conflict – over 30,000 troops were stationed in the North as of July 1972. In that year alone, 480 people were killed in the fighting, 85 of them British soldiers.<sup>682</sup>

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<sup>679</sup> Philip Johnston, “Army Chief Opposed Internment,” *The Telegraph*, January 1, 2002.

<sup>680</sup> Violence was so bad that Faulkner banned all parades and marches until 1973. Brian Faulkner, “Processions,” Extract from Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet, January 18, 1972, PRONI Public Records HA/32/2/44; 3, available from [[http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/cgi-bin/PRONI/pronibase.pl?field=doctype&martin=1&title=\(18 January 1972\)&key=PRONI](http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/cgi-bin/PRONI/pronibase.pl?field=doctype&martin=1&title=(18%20January%201972)&key=PRONI)].

<sup>681</sup> The military, British Cabinet, and Northern Ireland officials had been aware of the march. Despite the ban, the RUC had recommended to the British military that the march be allowed to proceed without military intervention. There was also a brief exchange of fire between two military soldiers – who shot at marchers - and an IRA sniper who returned fire on their position.

<sup>682</sup> Sutton, “Revised and Updated Extracts,” available from [<http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/book/index.html#append>], accessed on April 30, 2013.

At this point, the UK government's tolerance of the security situation in Northern Ireland had completely frayed. On March 24, 1972, Prime Minister Heath announced that Stormont was to be prorogued and Westminster would directly rule Northern Ireland, beginning a 25-year period<sup>683</sup> whereby London would manage the affairs of the North.<sup>684</sup> If direct rule was intended to convince the PIRA that the British were in charge, it failed. Direct rule "... convinced the Provisionals that their campaign was dictating the course of events;"<sup>685</sup> their violence was working.

In June 1972, the new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (SSNI), William Whitelaw – responsible for running the North on behalf of London - commented to the press that, "There can be no question of negotiations with people who are shooting at British troops. I cannot foresee negotiations with them [PIRA] even after the violence has stopped."<sup>686</sup> That same month, members of the Social Democrat and Labour Party (SDLP) – a new, non-abstentionist nationalist party in the North - met with Whitelaw to present the PIRA's conditions for just such a meeting, which he accepted. Soon thereafter, the PIRA announced a ceasefire as long as the British Army reacted in kind. On July 7, 1972, a PIRA delegation<sup>687</sup> met with Whitelaw and other Northern Ireland Office (NIO) ministers in London. The PIRA was under the impression that the UK wanted to withdraw from Northern Ireland and the meeting was about how they might do

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<sup>683</sup> Except for a brief experiment with local rule in 1974 that was short-lived.

<sup>684</sup> The UK government had been considering this option for almost three years, but had hoped to avoid it. Paul Bew, "'The Blind Leading the Blind'? London's Response to the 1969 Crisis," *20th-century/Contemporary History*, Features, Issue 4 (Jul/Aug 2009), Troubles in Northern Ireland, Volume 17.

<sup>685</sup> Smith, *Fighting for Ireland?* 101.

<sup>686</sup> Yet in July 1972 Whitelaw met with members of PIRA. Dixon, "British Policy Towards Northern Ireland 1969–2000: Continuity, Tactical Adjustment and Consistent 'inconsistencies'," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (October 2001), 360.

<sup>687</sup> The delegation included: Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness, Séamus Twomey, Seán MacStiofáin, Dáithí Ó Conaill, and Ivor Bell.

so.<sup>688</sup> While the PIRA correctly picked up on British apathy over the prize, the group misunderstood the purpose of the meeting, failed to grasp the options available to the UK and their consequences, and underestimated the British capacity to endure the conflict. No progress was made and the ceasefire collapsed, but the meeting had an effect on the trajectory of the conflict. PIRA leaders were encouraged that the “British were looking for a way out” of Northern Ireland.<sup>689</sup> Unionists worried there might be truth to the PIRA assessment and some Loyalist paramilitaries began to focus on creating an independent Northern Ireland rather than maintaining the Union.<sup>690</sup>

The next month, the UK government pivoted from its first attempt at engaging the republican movement to a concerted effort to destroy it. Whitelaw ordered more troops to the North and relaxed their rules of engagement in order to destroy the PIRA.<sup>691</sup> The PIRA responded with force. On Friday July 21, 1972, the PIRA conducted a bombing spree: nineteen bombs, many of them car bombs, exploded within 80 minutes of each other in and around Belfast, killing nine and injuring 130. Bloody Friday goaded the recently unrestrained military to mount a big response - Operation Motorman. On July

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<sup>688</sup> The PIRA apparently viewed the meeting as a negotiation and made bold demands: in return for peace in Northern Ireland, the British must totally withdrawal security forces; the UK government must agree that the Irish people had a right to self-determination; and there must amnesty for political prisoners. “1972: Whitelaw’s Secret Meeting with IRA,” On this Day, *BBC*, available from [[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/10/newsid\\_2499000/2499643.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/10/newsid_2499000/2499643.stm)].

<sup>689</sup> Paul Dixon, ““Hearts and Minds’? British Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3, (2009), 453.

<sup>690</sup> Several loyalist paramilitaries began supporting independence for Northern Ireland – with a presumed Protestant majority. Vanguard leader William Craig began admonishing unionists if “they wish to maintain the Union, we should all be seriously thinking of an independent dominion of Ulster.” CAIN, “A Chronology of the Conflict – 1973,” available from, [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch73.htm>].

<sup>691</sup> The military, Whitelaw promised, was “not to be inhibited in its campaign by the threat of court proceedings and should therefore be suitably indemnified.” “Conclusions of Morning Meeting held at Stormont Castle on Monday, 10 July 1972 at 11:30am,” available from [[http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1972/proni\\_CAB-9-G-27-6-3\\_1972-07-10.pdf](http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1972/proni_CAB-9-G-27-6-3_1972-07-10.pdf)].

31, 1972, 28,000 British troops<sup>692</sup> conducted a massive operation to remove the barricades that protected the republican ‘no-go’ areas.<sup>693</sup> The PIRA was not equipped to stand its ground and was pushed out of the Catholic ghettos in Derry and Belfast. The British may have gained ground in Operation Motorman, but by the end of 1972 it was becoming increasingly clear that the military strategy hadn’t worked and the PIRA was capable and willing to continue the fight. The strategic situation seemed to demand new approach.

### **5.2.2 Period II – 1973–mid-1980s: Finding a Political Solution Without the PIRA**

By 1973, the conflict in Northern Ireland had been thoroughly internationalized - the UK government was under significant international pressure and the PIRA had become a truly international terrorist group. For example, the Irish government repeatedly brought internment-related cases of torture against the British government at the European Commission on Human Rights, which led to the castigation of British Army practices and inspired further reviews by international human rights groups.<sup>694</sup> Second, by 1974, republican terrorists had drastically expanded their reach and targets: Republicans procured advanced weaponry from Libya and donations from around the world. The PIRA increasingly conducted bombings of clubs, pubs, stores, and schools in London, Manchester and Birmingham. The PIRA was not alone; a new republican group – the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) – had just emerged and was rearing to fight.

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<sup>692</sup> This deployment represented 15% of the British Army and was the largest UK operation since the Suez Crisis.

<sup>693</sup> The Army had long been reluctant to go into the “no go” areas because of its already disastrous relations with the Catholic community. It only did so in the wake of an especially gruesome day of carnage.

<sup>694</sup> The Commission called on the British government to answer a case of ill treatment of internees and referred the matter to the European Court of Human Rights. The Court later found that, while short of “torture,” the internees had been subjected to ‘inhuman and degrading treatment. In June 1978, Amnesty International issued a report detailing ill treatment of those detained by the RUC.



Mounting international pressure in concert with deepening contacts with the Irish Republic<sup>695</sup> led to a shift in thinking amongst some in the corridors of the UK government. It became painfully obvious to the UK government that despite decades of rhetoric to the contrary the “Irish government did not actually want a united Ireland,” but the PIRA, which was perpetuating much of the violence in the region, continued to draw its “legitimacy from the wider Irish nationalist story as articulated by the Irish governments.”<sup>696</sup> Although the Republic may not have wanted to incorporate the North, it was essential in crafting a solution to the violence there. This realization, combined with improving contacts with the Irish government, led to the Sunningdale Agreement in 1974.

In December 1973, Prime Minister Heath and Taoiseach Cosgrave met, the first such meeting between the British and Irish heads of state since 1925, at Sunningdale, England. The two countries had come together to establish a cross-border, power-sharing arrangement for the Northern Ireland government, the culmination of a two-year search for a solution.<sup>697</sup> The resulting Sunningdale Agreement retained British sovereignty over the North but expanded the role played by the Irish government in Northern affairs.<sup>698</sup>

The Agreement restructured the local government by creating a Northern Ireland Executive and addressed some of the most egregious social problems. In some ways the

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<sup>695</sup> Despite the Republic’s use of EU bodies to criticize the UK, the admission of both countries to EU led to deepening contacts between them and resulted in the recognition that the Republic had a role to play in the North.

<sup>696</sup> Bew, *Ireland*, loc 6729.

<sup>697</sup> Sunningdale was the culmination of two years during which the UK government had searched for a solution to the violence in Northern Ireland. After numerous studies to determine policy options, Parliament eventually a bill outlining a new power-sharing Northern Ireland assembly and a Council of Ireland that would allow the Republic of Ireland to have a voice in Northern affairs. The UK had eschewed more radical policy suggestions in favor of Sunningdale, including the idea laid out in “Towards a New Ireland” for joint British Irish sovereignty over Northern Ireland until the North could be united with the Republic.

<sup>698</sup> The UK retained its primary responsibility for the province’s security but created a Council of Ireland . As part of the Agreement, 30 members of the Dáil Éireann would work with 30 counterparts in the Northern Ireland Assembly to serve in an advisory capacity. The *Dáil Éireann* (hereafter known as the Dáil) is the lower house, but principal chamber, of the Irish Parliament (*Oireachtas*).

Agreement constituted a drastic change in policy - the first formal recognition that the Republic had a legitimate stake in the North – but in many ways it represented a furtherance of the UK government’s efforts to engage the Republic in its battle against the PIRA.<sup>699</sup> The Agreement was supported by the SDLP, a divided Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), and the Alliance Party, but opposed by the PIRA and Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party (VUPP), as well as the UDA and UVF. After years of direct rule, the members of the new Northern Ireland Executive took their seats in January 1974. They would not be in power long.

Heath’s willingness to compromise over Northern Ireland generated public backlash in the North. The March 1974 general election effectively served as a referendum on Sunningdale - at least in Northern Ireland: unionists united against the Agreement won 11 of the 12 seats in Westminster,<sup>700</sup> enhancing their position against the power-sharing initiative. In London, the Conservatives lost power and Labour leader Harold Wilson was again Prime Minister. The 1974 election had produced a hung parliament, but Labour was able to put together the most votes – in part because the unionists decided not to take the Conservative whip in retribution for Sunningdale. Despite the inadvertent assistance from spurned unionist backbenchers, Wilson did not

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<sup>699</sup> In 1971, there were discussions of tripartite talks – NI, GB, and Republic of Ireland – which led some unionist MPS to resign from Stormont. The talks took place but no progress was made. In November 1972, Jack Lynch, then Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister), met Edward Heath, then British Prime Minister, in London to give Irish approval to Attlee’s paper that said new arrangements should be 'acceptable to and accepted by the Republic of Ireland.

<sup>700</sup> The Vanguard Progressive Unionist Party, Democratic Unionist Party, and Official Unionists united under the umbrella of the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC) and ran a single candidate in each district.

demonstrate gratitude by altering course on Sunningdale: indeed, on his first trip to the North, Wilson chided the public that there was “no alternative” to the Agreement.<sup>701</sup>

The unionists, however, were not finished making the extent of their displeasure with the Agreement known. Soon after the election, the Ulster Workers’ Council (UWC) called a strike to protest the Sunningdale Agreement - roads were blocked; electricity and the food supply were disrupted; workers were intimidated from going to their jobs; and a UVF bombing campaign, riots, and other acts of strike violence left scores dead. The 14-day strike eventually forced London to begrudgingly reinstitute direct rule in Northern Ireland. The UK government, however, would spend the next two decades trying to recreate the Sunningdale Agreement.<sup>702</sup>

The return of Labour – and Wilson - to power appeared to signal a shift in UK government policy toward Northern Ireland. Wilson appeared more sympathetic to the republican cause than his predecessors.<sup>703</sup> His administration quickly enacted several unilateral reforms that addressed Republican grievances, to include, de-proscribing Sinn Féin (SF).<sup>704</sup> Moreover, Wilson’s disdain for unionist leaders in Northern Ireland was palpable.<sup>705</sup> In response to the failure of power-sharing, and in the face of unionist

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<sup>701</sup> Tim Pat Coogan, *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal and the Search for Peace*, (New York: Palgrave, 1996), 199.

<sup>702</sup> UK government refused to negotiate with the UWC and sent additional troops to bolster the forces in Northern Ireland, but they were never used to break the strike. The strike continued for 14 days, and it was clear that the UWC was capable of continuing the strike. When on May 28, the UK government again refused to negotiate with the UWC, the Faulkner and pro-Executive unionist MPs resigned, and the Northern Ireland Executive fell. Dixon, “British Policy Towards Northern Ireland 1969–2000,” 343.

<sup>703</sup> He had met with the PIRA in Dublin two years prior while in opposition. But his messages were missed - in December 1971, Wilson told the media, “No democratic politicians can negotiate with people who are murdering people,” but met with PIRA three months later. It is unclear if this was a statement made in the spirit of bi-partisanship or if this was to cover his own actions. “Irish Unity on Agenda but Internment Must End, Mr. Wilson says,” *Times* [London], December 7, 1971.

<sup>704</sup> The same was done for the UVF.

<sup>705</sup> Moreover, Wilson’s was on full display in the speech he gave in reaction to UWC strike, in which he described the frustration of the British public with unionist intransigence in the face of UK government efforts to bolster the economy and ensure security in the North: “The people on this side of the water -

implacability, Wilson slowly became obsessed with the “nuclear option” – a total British withdrawal from Northern Ireland.<sup>706</sup> To this end, Wilson established a secret committee to examine the possibilities of a British withdrawal from the North and circulated a plan that envisioned giving Northern Ireland a dominion status and cutting off funds within a short time period.<sup>707</sup> While keeping the plan secret from other government departments out of concern they would oppose it because of the potential consequences, the UK government sent a series of trial balloons to test the Irish Republic. The Irish, however, expressed reservations about the prospects of Irish unification or a liberated dominion in Northern Ireland.<sup>708</sup> Alarmed that they would either have a new deadbeat appendage or a civil war-torn dominion on their border, the Irish government began to pressure the US to intercede and prevent the British from leaving Northern Ireland.<sup>709</sup> While Wilson would have preferred to cut ties with the North, the civil service and cabinet were more cautious and they began to agitate for a continued British presence in Northern Ireland. With withdrawal off the table, the government was again forced to focus on security. In November 1974, Parliament passed the Prevention of Terrorism Act, to increase punishments for terrorist crimes and expand the government’s counterterrorism powers.

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British parents - have seen their sons vilified and spat upon and murdered. British taxpayers have seen the taxes they have poured out, almost without regard to cost - over £300 million a year this year with the cost of the Army operation on top of that - going into Northern Ireland. They see property destroyed by evil violence and are asked to pick up the bill for rebuilding it. Yet people who benefit from all this now viciously defy Westminster, purporting to act as though they were an elected government; people who spend their lives sponging on Westminster and British democracy and then systematically assault democratic methods. Who do these people think they are? UWC Strike - Text of broadcast made by Harold Wilson, 25 May 1974, available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/uwc/docs/hw25574.htm>].

<sup>706</sup> Bew, *Ireland*, loc 6624.

<sup>707</sup> *Ibid.*, loc 6666.

<sup>708</sup> *Ibid.*, loc 6624-6630. FitzGerald feared a civil war would ensue that the Irish Army could not contain or defeat. “Wilson had NI ‘doomsday’ plan,” *BBC*, September 11, 2008,.

<sup>709</sup> Bew, *Ireland*, loc 6677. According to Bew, then Foreign Minister Garret FitzGerald mentioned the Irish concerns about British withdrawal to Henry Kissinger.

Concurrently, Wilson authorized the reopening of communications with the PIRA in hopes of establishing a ceasefire and improving the security situation in the North.

In December 1974, communications with PIRA were facilitated by a group of protestant clergy who delivered messages back and forth. The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) made it clear it would not engage in negotiations, but there was a possibility of an exchange of views. The NIO promised a gesture of good faith and within a week, SSNI Merlyn Rees announced internment would be phased out.<sup>710</sup> The PIRA acted in kind and on December 22, 1974, it announced a ceasefire until January 2, 1975, which was extended when the UK government began talks with Sinn Féin in mid-January 1975. Some claim that the talks were merely an opportunity for each side to express themselves; others suggest more significant negotiations occurred.<sup>711</sup> Some argue the talks were a ruse to deliberately plant the belief among Republicans that the UK was on the verge of withdrawing from Northern Ireland, which "...created the space for the British to 'Ulsterise' security and prepare for the 'long war' while at the same time demoralising republicans who believed they were on the verge of victory."<sup>712</sup> Either way, the ceasefire soon collapsed and the PIRA quickly returned to violence: On January 19, 1975, the PIRA attacked hotels in London, and within the coming days more bombs rocked the city, as well as Belfast and Manchester. A renewed ceasefire effort began on February 10, 1975 and was intended to last until January 1976, but violence continued in

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<sup>710</sup> There are indications that the UK government agreed to many of the stipulations the PIRA had demanded for a truce: British troops had been pulled back, house searches scaled down, many of the interned were released.

<sup>711</sup> For example, the Reverend William Arlow claimed to have proof the British had pledged in 1974 to withdraw from Ulster in the event the constitutional convention broke down. Withdrawal, however, became impossible after the Irish Republic caught wind of the exchange and immediately put pressure on the UK not to pull out. Christopher Walker, "Storm Over Forecast of Ulster Withdrawal," *Times* [London], May 26, 1975.

<sup>712</sup> Dixon, "Hearts and Minds?" 453.

Northern Ireland punctuated by occasional attacks in England, including several lethal bombings and a hostage barricade attack in London. Loyalist paramilitary groups became more active in Northern Ireland, perhaps in an effort to lure the PIRA out of its ceasefire.<sup>713</sup> Rees tried to dismiss the violence as inter-republican squabbles and not violations of the ceasefire, but they clearly strained the agreement, and it eventually collapsed again. As a result of the talks – whatever their purpose – a secret back channel was created between a few high-level UK government officials and the PIRA,<sup>714</sup> but it would not become useful for another decade or more.

Despite the rise in violence, the UK government continued to try to find a power-sharing solution, although one that would exclude the PIRA. In May 1975, elections were held for the Constitutional Convention – a forum created in order for the region’s elected representatives to come to an agreement in how Northern Ireland should be governed.<sup>715</sup> The Convention was intended to provide for the region’s “special relationship” with the Irish Republic, but when the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC) – the umbrella group comprised of the UUP, DUP, and VUPP, won a slight majority in the Convention, they introduced a bill that returned majority rule to Northern Ireland. Talks reconvened in February 1976, but ended when the UUUC refused to allow power sharing with the SDLP. The UK government ended the Convention the next month.

By January 1976, Wilson had given up on the prospect of withdrawing from the region and establishing an unfunded dominion. The British – like it or not - would have

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<sup>713</sup> For example, On July 31, 1975 the UVF killed several members of a band, after which the UVF attempted to plant explosives on the tour bus in hopes of framing the band as weapons runners for the PIRA. On October 2, 1975, the UVF killed twelve people in a series of attacks across N. Ireland, leading to the group’s proscription a day later.

<sup>714</sup> Peter Brooke, interview with author, London, March 12, 2013.

<sup>715</sup> Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, *The Northern Ireland Constitution*, White Paper Presented to Parliament, July 1974, available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/hmsocmd5675.htm>].

to endure a considerably longer period of direct rule.<sup>716</sup> That said, Wilson, and much of the public, began to “psychologically withdrawal” from Northern Ireland at this time.<sup>717</sup> Reflective of this new mental state, the UK government’s policies took on a “hands off” approach “to let well enough alone” in the North.<sup>718</sup> Wilson attempted to make direct rule as palatable and unobtrusive as possible for the British people, that is, he shifted the burden of direct rule to those in Northern Ireland.

Maintaining the current level of British troops deployed in Northern Ireland was unsustainable. The deaths of hundreds of British soldiers in Northern Ireland was especially difficult for the British public to accept given the lack of support for continued British control over the region. Northern Ireland required so many soldiers and resources that the Military’s other commitments were jeopardized. The mission hurt Army moral, especially since soldiers did not view Northern Ireland as part of their core duty.<sup>719</sup> In an effort to reduce the burden on the military and the conflict’s toll on the British mainland, the UK government began a process of “Ulsterizing” the conflict. Instead of using English, Scottish, or Welsh soldiers, the job of securing the North would be increasingly transferred to locals.<sup>720</sup> Seen from a cynical perspective, Ulsterization insured that the security forces dying in the Troubles would be local, and their deaths would be less likely

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<sup>716</sup> Likewise, Wilson acknowledged that a United Ireland was not a solution that any British political party would wish to impose. Bew, *Ireland*, loc 6682.

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.*, loc 6695.

<sup>718</sup> D. G. Boyce, *The Irish Question and British Politics, 1868–1996*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1988), 116.

<sup>719</sup> By the mid-1970s, the defense establishment was “taking the view that the job of the British army was to defend the North German plain from the Red Army, not chasing around the backstreets of Belfast.” Peter R. Neumann, “The Myth of Ulsterization in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 26, No. 5, (2003), 369.

<sup>720</sup> Some have argued that “Ulsterization” does not accurately describe the shift that occurred at this time and really the government was employing a policy of “de-militarization” – that a shift toward the police in Northern Ireland, not the British Army, being the lead agency in dealing with the Troubles. Internment had failed and the British government had moved to a criminalization model to deal with Republican terrorism. Neumann, “The Myth of Ulsterization in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland.”

to impact mainland politics. In March 1976, Rees announced that the RUC would take over the lead role in security from the Army, despite knowing there were overlaps with loyalist paramilitary groups.<sup>721</sup> The government moved ahead, convinced it was better to have loyalist extremists within the police, to expose them to some discipline and impose a degree of control over their activities, than have them in the streets, unengaged.<sup>722</sup> Even with locals bearing a larger share of the security burden, Ulsterization was not sufficient: for years afterward, when there was an uptick in violence, strikes, or marches, British Army reinforcements from the mainland had to be sent to Northern Ireland.

By the mid-1970s, the PIRA, and a few of its republican rivals, had developed into a highly sophisticated organizations - going after high-value targets, often overseas: On July 21, 1976, the British Ambassador to Ireland Christopher Biggs was killed in Dublin, when his car – also intended to carry SSNI Rees - was targeted. PIRA murdered Richard Sykes, the British Ambassador to the Netherlands in Den Haag in March 1979. That same month, an INLA bomb planted a bomb under the car of Airey Neave, then Conservative Party spokesperson on Northern Ireland, killing him in the House of Commons parking lot. In 1979, the PIRA assassinated Lord Mountbatten – uncle of Queen Elizabeth II – along with three companions. As attacks grew deadlier, their reach expanded: soon thereafter, the INLA claimed responsibility for bombings outside the British Consulate in Hamburg and a British Army base in Herford, West Germany.

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<sup>721</sup> In 1977, the RUC forces grew to meet this new challenge: In 1979, the UK government announced the RUC would expand from 1,000 officers to 7,500. The rush to recruit local forces led to lax standards in hiring for the RUC and especially the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), leading to a great deal of overlap with Loyalist paramilitary groups. On May 3, 2006 the *Irish News* (a Belfast based newspaper) published details of confidential cabinet minutes that had been taken at the meeting. The minutes reveal that the British government was aware of collusion between the security forces, particularly the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), and Loyalist paramilitaries.] CAIN, “A Chronology of the Conflict – 1975,” available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch75.htm>].

<sup>722</sup> This was seen as a productive way to channel the unionist “energies” of young men. Dixon, ““Hearts and Minds’?” 467–468.



Any conciliatory approach to counterterrorism in Northern Ireland disappeared when Wilson resigned in March 1976 and James Callaghan took over the post of Prime Minister. Callaghan appointed Roy Mason as SSNI, a staunch defender of direct rule<sup>723</sup> and an advocate of a hawkish military-oriented approach to counterterrorism. Mason marked the end of his first year on the job by announcing ‘the myth of British withdrawal from Northern Ireland’ was now dead.<sup>724</sup> Callaghan had inherited Wilson’s weak, minority government and was forced to reach out to the unionists in order to stay in office further diminishing any possibility of conciliation with the republicans. In March 1977, to maintain his position, Callaghan was forced to negotiate a pact with the Labour party and entice the unionist MPs to support him by introducing legislation to increase the number of MPs who represented North at Westminster.<sup>725</sup>

Around this time, the British began a “Dirty War” against the PIRA. The British Army worked to infiltrate the PIRA’s ranks and spread misinformation about the group. It had significant success on the first front: Some claim that one in four PIRA members were double agents, a figure that rose to one in two at the leadership level.<sup>726</sup> Many high-level PIRA officials were flipped, including its head of internal security.<sup>727</sup> The infiltration of the PIRA would have lasting effects on the organization, but was not

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<sup>723</sup> Bew, *Ireland*, loc 6749.

<sup>724</sup> Northern Ireland Office, “Speech by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mr. Roy Mason, on Tuesday 13 September 1977 at 1pm at Parliament Buildings, Stormont,” Press Notice, NIO/9/3, September 13, 1977, available from [[http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1977/proni\\_CENT-1-6-1\\_1977-09-13.pdf](http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1977/proni_CENT-1-6-1_1977-09-13.pdf)].

<sup>725</sup> The number was to increase from 12 to 16-18. Callaghan’s plan backfired when his Labour government was brought down in 1979 by a vote of confidence, in which Callaghan was narrowly defeated when the two nationalist MPs from Northern Ireland voted against him and Unionist MPs failed to support him.

<sup>726</sup> Liam Clarke, “Half of all top IRA men 'worked for security services',” *The Belfast Telegraph*, December 21, 2011.

<sup>727</sup> Matthew Teague, “Double Blind: The Untold Story of How British Intelligence Infiltrated and Undermined the IRA,” *The Atlantic*, March 7, 2006.

sufficient to defeat the group or prevent it from carrying out many, deadly terrorist attacks.<sup>728</sup>

Under new leadership, the PIRA was shifting as well. Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness rose to prominence within the organization and criticized the old leadership for believing 1974-5 talks with the NIO were genuine. The new generation pivoted toward a long-war strategy and announced they would never negotiate with the UK government until the British set a date for withdrawing from Northern Ireland. In addition to changes in leadership, the mid-1970s marked a shift in PIRA tactics and organization, the latter motivated by the infiltration of British intelligence. The group decentralized its structure into specialized cells and began to reinvigorate its dilapidated political wing - Sinn Féin.<sup>729</sup> The PIRA began conducting multiple, concurrent bombings and expanded its target selection beyond Northern Ireland.

On May 3, 1979, the Conservative Party won the general election and Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister. When Thatcher took office, the Troubles had been raging for a decade and there were no signs that the violence would abate. On August 27, 1979, the IRA killed 18 soldiers – the greatest loss of British soldiers in Northern Ireland in a single day. Indeed, there were mounting signs in the early years of Thatcher’s government that the situation in Northern Ireland was on the brink of getting worse. Yet,

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<sup>728</sup> Some have argued the British penetration of the PIRA is overblown and while there was penetration in some areas, the British did not have a chokehold on the organization. For example, the British were completely surprised by the Canary Wharf bombing; they had no intelligence suggesting an attack was imminent. This was apparently due to the fact that they had infiltrated the Belfast wing of the PIRA, but not the one from South Armagh that conducted the bombing. Paul Bew, interview with the author, London, March 7, 2013.

<sup>729</sup> A 1978 PIRA document stressed the need to decentralize the organization into specialized cells, train recruits to resist interrogation by British intelligence, and draw on female members more, and use Sinn Féin more actively for political agitation and public relations. “Plan for a New IRA Found in Leader’s Flat, Court Told.” *Times* [London], June 13, 1978.

Thatcher by disposition and experience was unlikely to adopt a radical course of action in Northern Ireland.

Thatcher's pro-unionist predisposition,<sup>730</sup> combined with her experience being targeted by the PIRA and losing colleagues to republican violence,<sup>731</sup> and her commitment to defending British sovereignty at every turn,<sup>732</sup> did not predispose her to make concessions to the nationalists, and certainly not the PIRA. In opposition, the Conservatives had advocated a hard-line stance on Northern Ireland.<sup>733</sup> Once in power, the Thatcher government largely viewed itself as having two options: total integration or gradual devolution, both of which presented significant problems for the government and

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<sup>730</sup> Thatcher was “a unionist by passionate conviction and no friend to Irish nationalism. Michael Lillis, “Emerging from Despair in Anglo-Irish Relations,” from Michael Lillis and David Goodall, *Edging Towards Peace*, available from [<http://www.drb.ie/essays/edging-towards-peace>].

<sup>731</sup> Just before the general election that would bring her to office, one of her closest advisors, Airey Neave, then Conservative shadow secretary on Northern Ireland, was killed when his car was booby-trapped by the INLA. Thatcher herself was the target of an assassination attempt: On October 12, 1984, as Thatcher prepared to address the Conservative Party Conference, the conference hotel was targeted by an IRA bomb. The attack killed five, including two high-level members of the Conservative Party, and injured many more. Thatcher narrowly escaped injury, but the attack had a lasting impression on her. The PIRA's message following the bombing drove home the ominous threat posed to the Thatcher government and the UK at large: “Today we were unlucky, but remember we only have to be lucky once. You will have to be lucky always. Give Ireland peace and there will be no more war.” “1984: Memories of the Brighton Bomb,” On this Day, *BBC*, available from [[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/witness/october/12/newsid\\_3665000/3665388.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/witness/october/12/newsid_3665000/3665388.stm)].

<sup>732</sup> Thatcher was a sovereignist who initially bristled at the thought of Irish – or any outside – involvement in Northern Ireland. On the eve of a state visit from the Irish Taoiseach to London in May 1980, Thatcher stated in the House of Commons: “The future of the constitutional affairs of Northern Ireland is a matter for the people of Northern Ireland, this government and this parliament and no one else.” Margaret Thatcher, “House of Commons PGs,” record of statements before the House of Commons, May 20, 1980, available from [<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104367>].

<sup>733</sup> Neave advocated a tougher stance toward the republican movement, calling for the proscription of Sinn Féin in April 1977, and staked out a more integrationist stance on Northern Ireland that avoided compromises to the nationalist minority. Power sharing, they party argued, no longer represented practical politics. Even in power, Thatcher dismissed calls for reforms, believing that the grievances of the Catholic population in Northern Ireland had been largely addressed, and even expressed an interest in forcibly relocating all the Catholics in the North to the Republic. When she brought up the possibility with staff, Thatcher referenced the historical precedent set by earlier migrations inspired by Cromwell's violence. Kevin Meagher, “Why did Margaret Thatcher have a jaundiced view of the Irish?” *The New Statesman*, April 19, 2013.

immense opposition from within Northern Ireland.<sup>734</sup> Like Labour before them, the Conservatives were quick to recognize the logistical, financial,<sup>735</sup> and ethical problems of direct rule – it was “very unBritish”<sup>736</sup> – but there were few prospects of returning to a devolved administration. The government commissioned studies on policy options in Northern Ireland and attempted to restart talks among the Northern political parties on several occasions to no avail.<sup>737</sup> The conflict continued unabated. Thatcher expressed doubts about whether the UK government was capable of solving the Northern Ireland problem and even considered the possibility of a “tactical withdrawal,” which was dismissed as likely to lead to civil war.<sup>738</sup>

In March 1980, the government announced that there would be no special category status<sup>739</sup> for any inmates in Northern Ireland claiming to be political prisoners, which caused several republican prisoners to go on hunger-strike. The initial strike was

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<sup>734</sup> Power-sharing was unpopular amongst unionists and majority rule was unacceptable to nationalists. In July 1980, the British government published a discussion document, “The Government of Northern Ireland: Proposals for Further Discussion,” which outlined these two options. Atkins acknowledged that there was insufficient support for either.

<sup>735</sup> In 1979, it was estimated that ten years of British Army operations from 1969-1979 cost more than £400 million, the daily cost of terrorism was thought to be £500,000, and per year, it cost the British government over £1 billion to hold on to Northern Ireland. Coogan, *The IRA*, 285.

<sup>736</sup> He went on to indicate that he personally preferred a form dual citizenship, with Britain and the Republic of Ireland being responsible for the administration of those who considered themselves to be Irish. CAIN, “A Chronology of the Conflict – 1982,” available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch82.htm>].

<sup>737</sup> In November 1979, a government white paper suggested that the possible 'solutions' to the conflict were a United Ireland, confederation, or independence for Northern Ireland. In April 1982, the British government published another white paper, 'Northern Ireland: A Framework for Devolution' which proposed creating an elected 78-member Assembly at Stormont that would be responsible in determining how any powers devolved to it from Westminster would be administered. There was little support for the proposal. In October 1979, Atkins invited the four main political parties – UUP, DUP, SDLP, and Alliance Party, to discuss potential political settlements, but there was little support and the effort failed. In July 1981, Atkins suggested the setting up of an advisory council of 50 elected representatives to help govern Northern Ireland.

<sup>738</sup> Eamon Phoenix, “Confidential files give insight into Margaret Thatcher’s view of Northern Ireland,” *BBC*, August 1, 2013.

<sup>739</sup> Early in the conflict, republican and loyalist prisoners to enjoyed special status and certain rights (e.g. wearing their own clothes). In March 1976, the practice was ended for new inmates, sparking a “blanket protest” whereby republican prisoners refused to wear prison clothes and only wrapped themselves in their issued blankets.

called off on December 18, 1980 after the Catholic Primate of Ireland intervened, but it set the stage for a much larger protest. On March 1, 1981, the PIRA leader in the Maze Prison, Bobby Sands, began to refuse food.<sup>740</sup> At staggered intervals, other prisoners joined Sands. Soon thereafter, Sands was nominated to run for MP in Fermanagh and South Tyrone in a by-election, which he won. His position as an MP brought even more media attention to the hunger strike, prompting a representative to the Pope to visit Sands and President Reagan to announce that he was “deeply concerned” about the strike. Over the next seven months, Sands and nine other republican prisoners died of starvation. Despite secret backchannel efforts that suggested otherwise,<sup>741</sup> Thatcher kept up the intransigent rhetoric in public, stating, “There can be no question of political status for someone who is serving a sentence for a crime. Crime is crime is crime, it is not political.”<sup>742</sup> After several men had died and the media-driven tension had reached a fever pitch, the UK government announced unilateral changes to its prison policy in hopes of ameliorating the strike.<sup>743</sup> The damage, however, had been done.

The hunger strike proved to be a turning point for Sinn Féin and the beginning of a shift in thinking within the UK government. Up until that time, the UK government had assumed that SF/PIRA was a fringe element without much support. The vote for Bobby

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<sup>740</sup> There is evidence that the IRA leadership outside the prison was not in favor of a new hunger strike following the outcome of the 1980 strike and that Sands and other republican leaders in the prison initiated it without coordination with the leadership outside.

<sup>741</sup> Owen Bowcott, “Thatcher Cabinet ‘Wobbled’ Over IRA Hunger Strikes,” *The Guardian*, December 30, 2011.

<sup>742</sup> Thatcher was apparently willing to make concessions to the IRA during the hunger strike. Using a back channel, she authorized secret messages to be sent to the IRA leadership offering to allow the Republican prisoners to wear their own clothes and promising the government would deny it had offered concessions if the IRA leaked news of the offer. The IRA never responded. Christopher Thomas, “Mrs. Thatcher Snubs Eire MPs over Sands Plea,” *Times* [London], April 22, 1981, 1.

<sup>743</sup> Prisoners were permitted to wear their civilian clothes; free association would be allowed in neighboring wings of each H-Block, in the exercise areas and in recreation rooms; there would be an increase in the number of visits each prisoner would be entitled to; and up to 50% of lost remission would be restored. [The issue of prison work was not resolved at this stage but Prior gave indications that this issue too would be addressed.]

Sands and 100,000 people at his funeral made it clear that Sinn Féin had a much bigger following than the UK government had ever imagined. Including the SDLP as a proxy for the republicans in a power-sharing agreement surely would not satisfy the Catholic population. For Sinn Féin, the election of Sands helped test the political waters without risking a loss of face: the party threw its weight behind Sands and other prisoners, but if they lost, Sinn Féin could distance itself because they were not official candidates for the party. In June 1981, 11 Sinn Féin candidates, nine of whom were prisoners, ran in the Republic's general election. The party won 40,000 votes and won two seats in the Dáil. The party's electoral success helped transform Sinn Féin and the PIRA.<sup>744</sup>

Sinn Féin and the IRA had long been hampered by the legacy of the Irish Civil War, which “bequeathed a suspicion of politics and politicians that has been little diminished by the passage of time.”<sup>745</sup> During most of the 1970s, the PIRA had no political strategy. Sinn Féin was the “poor relations” of the organization<sup>746</sup> - it had no political voice and was completely subjugated to the Army Council.<sup>747</sup> PIRA had long been hostile to electoral politics: indeed, the group actively discouraged people from voting in the 1970s.<sup>748</sup> That changed with Sands' election. At the 1981 Sinn Féin *Ard Fheis*,<sup>749</sup> Danny Morrison, then editor of *An Phoblacht*,<sup>750</sup> gave a speech in which he addressed the party's abstentionist position, “Who here really believes we can win the

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<sup>744</sup> The Hunger Strike also impacted other parties - as the conflict escalated, moderate parties suffered and the politics became more polarized. During the height of the hunger strike, the May 1981 district council elections were won by the more extreme DUP, while support for the more moderate UUP and the SDLP fell.

<sup>745</sup> Ian McAllister, ‘The Armalite and the ballot box’: Sinn Féin's Electoral Strategy in Northern Ireland,’ *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 23, (2004), 139.

<sup>746</sup> In the early 1970s, most nationalists wanted to join the IRA, so the people who went to SF were too old to fight or were women. Feeney, 260.

<sup>747</sup> *Ibid.*, 295-296.

<sup>748</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>749</sup> Gaelic for “annual conference.”

<sup>750</sup> *An Phoblacht* is the official newspaper of Sinn Féin.

war through the ballot box? But will anyone here object if, with a ballot paper in one hand and the Armalite in the other, we take power in Ireland?”<sup>751</sup> Whereas the PIRA had long viewed electoral politics – which lent credibility to the abhorred Stormont – as hindering its efforts to drive the British out of the North, it now viewed the two as complimentary strategies.<sup>752</sup> In the 1983 general elections, Gerry Adams, then Vice-President of Sinn Féin, was elected in the West Belfast constituency. The UK, fearful of potential blowback, lifted the ban on Adams entering Britain. Within three years, with the blessing of the PIRA’s General Army Convention, Sinn Féin ended its abstentionist policy.<sup>753</sup> Some viewed Sinn Féin’s entry into politics as a potential signal that PIRA was moderating, others like the Irish Taoiseach, Garret FitzGerald, saw the rise of Sinn Féin as having the potential to destabilize the whole island.<sup>754</sup>

When Garret FitzGerald came to office in the Republic in 1981, Anglo-Irish relations were just short of disastrous.<sup>755</sup> Thatcher viewed the new Taoiseach far more positively than his predecessor,<sup>756</sup> who had been extremely “green,”<sup>757</sup> but she felt FitzGerald was overreacting when he warned Sinn Féin would soon displace the

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<sup>751</sup> R. L. McCartney, “Combating IRA Terror in Ulster,” *Times* [London], November 6, 1981.

<sup>752</sup> Indeed, if the IRA could demonstrate Sinn Féin had broad support, it could claim that support extended to the IRA’s military policy. Feeney, 303.

<sup>753</sup> This vote led to a split in the movement and the birth of a splinter organization called Republican Sinn Féin.

<sup>754</sup> Feeney, 302.

<sup>755</sup> Garret FitzGerald, *All in a Life: Garret FitzGerald – An Autobiography*, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1991), 462. During Charlie Haughey’s term, there was “literally no Anglo-Irish political dialogue on Northern Ireland and little prospect of it...” Lillis.

<sup>756</sup> Thatcher described FitzGerald as possessing an “honesty of purpose” and held him in affection. David Goodall: An Agreement Worth Remembering in Michael Lillis and David Goodall, *Edging Toward Peace*, available form

[<http://www.drb.ie/essays/edging-towards-peace>].

<sup>757</sup> “green” = extremely nationalist. Charlie Haughey was an ardent Irish nationalist with a penchant for gun running for republicans, who was quick to criticize the UK over the North in order to distract from his domestic failures. He also hated Thatcher for her handling of the hunger strike, which he blame for costing him the 1981 election, and so he worked to stymie the UK’s pursuit of sanctions against Argentina at the UN. Feeney, 307.

constitutional nationalist movement in the North if they did not act.<sup>758</sup> By most accounts<sup>759</sup> Thatcher was not interested in a grand solution to the Northern Ireland problem, but she found herself in a bind: the UK could not pull out of Northern Ireland, and the Irish had made it clear they did not want to absorb the region, but the latter needed to be involved in some way in order to help convince the Catholic minority that its interests were represented and delegitimize the continued violence of the republican terrorists. Thus Thatcher, the ardent sovereignist, opened the door to a bi-lateral solution to the conflict.<sup>760</sup>

In late 1983, a series of secret meetings between the UK and Irish governments commenced. FitzGerald had previously indicated that Ireland – for the first time - was “prepared drastically to lower Nationalist sights on Irish unification in the interest of promoting stability in Northern Ireland and halting the political advance of Sinn Féin.”<sup>761</sup> Despite some major stumbling blocks – Thatcher’s outright dismissal of the New Ireland Forum’s solutions to the Troubles<sup>762</sup> and the attack on her life by the PIRA at the Conservative Party convention in October 1984 - talks continued. The negotiations culminated in the November 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA), which stipulated that any change to Northern Ireland’s political status would only come about with the consent of the majority of its population. Until there was a devolved administration or another

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<sup>758</sup> Bew, *Ireland*, loc 6843.

<sup>759</sup> On the eve of the 1983 elections, she said that if the Conservatives stayed in power, perhaps she could do “something” about Northern Ireland. Goodall.

<sup>760</sup> Not much happened when Haughey briefly took over the office from March-December 1982, but when FitzGerald was again restored to the position of Taoiseach, Thatcher was open to talks.

<sup>761</sup> Citing David Goodall, “The Irish Question,” Headmaster’s Lecture given at Ampleforth, 1992, *Ampleforth Journal*, 98, (Spring 1992), 471, Bew, *Ireland*, loc 6846-6851.

<sup>762</sup> The Forum – founded by FitzGerald - produced a report that identified three possible alternative political structures in Northern Ireland: a unitary state, a federal/confederal state, and a joint British/Irish authority. Thatcher dismissed all three, rejecting each option was “out, out, out.” Margaret Thatcher, “Press Conference following Anglo-Irish Summit (“out ... out ... out”),” November 19, 1984, available from [<http://www.margarethatcher.org/document/105790>], accessed on October 7, 2013.



political solution, the Irish and the British would staff an Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference that would serve as an advisory council on political, legal, and security matters and promote cross-border co-operation in the region. The Agreement was approved by Westminster with the largest margin of any vote in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the Dáil passed the AIA despite objections from the opposition, the nationalist Fianna Fáil party. The PIRA rejected AIA because it implied that Northern Ireland was part of the UK – and there was concurrently an increase in Republican violence.<sup>763</sup> Unionist fallout from the Agreement was significant<sup>764</sup> - the 15 unionist MPs in Westminster viewed the expanded role of the Republic as the first step toward the unification with Ireland and resigned in protest,<sup>765</sup> mounted a protest campaign against AIA, and refused to meet with Thatcher until it was overturned.<sup>766</sup>

The unionists were right to be upset. The Anglo-Irish Agreement marked a significant shift away from unionist particularism in Northern Ireland. What had been long coming was now crystal clear, the UK government was no longer going to be constrained by the “orange card”<sup>767</sup> and Anglo-Irish coordination on Northern Ireland was only going to continue. Unionist politicians were forced to realize that they would be outmaneuvered and get a “greener” deal if they didn’t participate in a power-sharing

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<sup>763</sup> This was likely not related to AIA, but rather a response to the intense pressure it was under by the security forces.

<sup>764</sup> More than 100,000 people rallied in front of Belfast City Hall to protest the Agreement. Loyalist paramilitary groups – bolstered by new ranks and bomb-making skills - intensified their attacks and declared members of the Anglo-Irish Conference to be legitimate targets. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland?* 215.

<sup>765</sup> The by-election triggered by the resignation of the unionist politicians resulted in an increased their vote share for the unionists, but it was the SDLP who picked up an extra seat.

<sup>766</sup> Thatcher later admitted the unionist uproar over the Agreement was “worse than anyone had predicted” - Ian Gow, then British Treasury Minister and a close friend of Thatcher’s, resigned in protest; unionist parties organized a general strike; the UUP voted to end the special relationship with the British Conservative Party; and a petition against the AIA that garnered 400,000 signatures. Margaret Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, (Harper Collins e-books), Ereader location 7890.

<sup>767</sup> Presumed Unionist leverage over policy on Northern Ireland.

agreement. AIA furthered what had been started at Sunningdale. Even though AIA would eventually fail, its failure helped expose the fallacy that a political solution that marginalized Sinn Féin - or alienated the unionists – would work. The Anglo-Irish Agreement set the stage for the Good Friday talks.<sup>768</sup>

The constitutional republicans – the SDLP – had recognized that the SF/PIRA needed to be brought into any political settlement on Northern Ireland. Starting in February 1985, SDLP leader John Hume announced he would meet with the PIRA to urge the group to give up violence. The first meeting went nowhere, but three years later, talks resumed on how the two might coordinate in a potential peace process. Thatcher’s government, however, was not quite ready to negotiate with the PIRA. It continued to pursue heavy-handed counterterrorism strategies – often provoking public backlash. In March 1988, three unarmed PIRA members were shot dead by undercover Special Air Service (SAS) agents in Gibraltar sparking an uproar, which did not dissipate when the funeral for the three was targeted by a loyalist gunman, resulting in three more deaths and scores of injuries – all captured on live TV – and Thatcher’s government tried to prevent the broadcast of TV programs on the inquest into the SAS operation.<sup>769</sup> The Thatcher government was further embroiled in scandal when reports of collusion between loyalist

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<sup>768</sup> Bew, interview.

<sup>769</sup> Including a Northern Ireland BBC program about the Gibraltar inquests in May 1988 and subsequent broadcasting restrictions introduced later that year only provided credence to the charge that the government was trying to cover up its actions in Gibraltar. This was not the first time the Thatcher government had tried to prevent the airing of specific programs related to the Troubles. Long worried about the PR successes made by Republican groups in the media, Thatcher instituted restrictions on the broadcast of direct statements from proscribed groups, with the hope that it would starve paramilitary organizations of “the oxygen of publicity.” The organizations affected were; Sinn Féin (SF), Republican Sinn Féin (RSF) and the Ulster Defense Association (UDA). Media organizations eventually used a number of methods to try to overcome the effects of the ban. One approach was to employ actors to mimic the voices of those being interviewed. Peter Evans, Home Affairs Correspondent. “Thatcher Unfolds Strategy to Beat Hijack Terror,” *Times* [London], July 16, 1985.

paramilitaries and Northern Ireland's security forces came to light in 1989.<sup>770</sup> An inquiry confirmed what nationalists had long alleged - loyalist paramilitaries were getting information on Republicans from security forces in Northern Ireland.<sup>771</sup> The backlash to these revelations was significant, but it was not enough to convince Thatcher to radically shift her counterterrorism policy.

### **5.2.3 Period III – Late 1980s-1997 – The PIRA Shifts; Domestic Obstacles Remain**

By at least the late 1980s<sup>772</sup> (by some accounts, the early 1970s), the UK government realized that it could not defeat the PIRA militarily. On the Republican side, there was a realization that violence had failed to push the British out of Northern Ireland and PIRA attacks were increasingly alienating their traditional supporters. Despite knowing they could not win outright, neither side was ready to give up its military campaign against the other. While the political overture that began at Sunningdale and was furthered by the Anglo-Irish Agreement had failed, the experience had convinced the UK government that some sort of political settlement was necessary. There was, however, little support for including the PIRA. The PIRA was not particularly interested in participating in a political process at the time, but the significant support for AIA among Catholics in the North led the PIRA Army Council to realize there was widespread public support for a compromise and the constitutional approach – an unsettling development for the terrorist group. Moreover, the British intelligence services

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<sup>770</sup> That August, the UFF claimed to have files on PIRA suspects from the security forces and that the information had made one of their recent assassinations possible. The findings were compounded by an October 1991 documentary by Channel 4 called "The Committee," which claimed that there was an inner circle in the RUC and UDR that worked with Loyalist paramilitaries in the killing of Catholics.

<sup>771</sup> The report concluded that the collusion was thought to be "restricted to a small number of members... and is neither widespread nor institutionalized." Jack Holland, "Investigating the Investigators," *The Irish Echo*, February 16, 2011.

<sup>772</sup> Richard Wilford, interview with author, Belfast, March 4, 2013.

had completely infiltrated the PIRA and the group was turning in on itself in its efforts to rout informers. I was at this time that PIRA's rhetoric began to shift.<sup>773</sup>

The hint of conciliation in PIRA's messaging at the time was complimented by the shift in tone of British policy pronouncements. Soon after the appointment of Peter Brooke as SSNI in 1989, Brooke announced that the British Army could not defeat the PIRA militarily. More importantly, in the event that the PIRA discontinued violence, the UK government would consider talks with Sinn Féin. In his dealings with unionists, Brooke was sensitive to objections to AIA, but clear that the Agreement would not be suspended. In a November 1990 speech, Brooke stated that Britain had no "selfish strategic or economic interest"<sup>774</sup> in Northern Ireland and the British government would accept unification, if the people in Northern Ireland wished it – stating, "It is not the aspiration to a sovereign, united Ireland against which we set our face, but its violent expression."<sup>775</sup> During Brooke's tenure, back channel talks with the PIRA accelerated, but very few in the government knew about them – including, initially, Brooke.<sup>776</sup> This shift in message had a significant impact on republican thinking.<sup>777</sup>

In November 1990, Thatcher's leadership was challenged from within the Conservative party and John Major emerged as the winner from the ensuing political tussle. Major claimed to be "four square" behind the Union,<sup>778</sup> but he – like his

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<sup>773</sup> Ibid.

<sup>774</sup> "Timeline: Northern Ireland's road to peace," *BBC*, January 27, 2006.

<sup>775</sup> Ibid.

<sup>776</sup> Brooke only learned of the channel partway through his tenure. Brooke.

<sup>777</sup> Anthony Bevens, "Major's Secret Links with IRA Leadership Revealed," *The Observer*, November 28, 1993.

<sup>778</sup> Dixon, "British policy towards Northern Ireland 1969–2000," 357.

predecessor - was rather ignorant about the Northern Ireland situation.<sup>779</sup> Major was told about the back channel with the PIRA upon taking office. Despite comments suggesting a more combative stance against the PIRA, Major authorized continued communication through the secret back channel with the group.

Despite the lack of buy in from the political parties in Northern Ireland, Brooke pressed on in his efforts to restart political talks. In March 1991, Brooke worked with the Irish government to devise three strands of talks: devolved government, relations between Northern Ireland and the Republic, and issues between the British and Irish. The talks began in April 1991 and lasted until November 1992. Later known as the Brooke/Mayhew Talks, they involved the UUP, DUP, SDLP, and APNI, but not the PIRA.<sup>780</sup> Talks – especially those over devolution – were undermined by administrative battles<sup>781</sup> and speculation about the next general election, leading Brooke to concede in January 1992 that they had failed. In April, Brooke was succeeded by Patrick Mayhew, who was able to get the parties involved to precede on strands two and three in June. In July, there were signs of progress – in a significant shift, the unionist parties agreed to strand two talks with representatives from the Republic. The UK government took several steps to demonstrate their sincerity to republicans – announcing the proscription of the UDA. This was followed by a statement by Mayhew that the UK did not have a “pre-selected constitutional outcome” for talks and that British government would not

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<sup>779</sup> David Owen, “The Resolution of Armed Conflict: Internationalization and its Lessons, Particularly in Northern Ireland,” in Marianne Elliott, ed., *The Long Road to Peace in Northern Ireland*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 35.

<sup>780</sup> In order to entice unionist participation, Brooke announced that the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (AIIIC) would break in-between meetings in order to allow Unionists to attend.

<sup>781</sup> Disagreements over where the talks should be held and who would chair them held up the main talks. Eventually, the SDLP announced it was leaving the political talks until such time as the procedures for the main talks were agreed by the other parties.

“join the ranks of the persuaders” for a particular outcome.<sup>782</sup> Most importantly, the government announced that Sinn Féin could be included in future talks if the PIRA ended its use of violence. To facilitate the party’s participation, the Irish and UK governments lifted their respective broadcasting bans, allowing Sinn Féin access to the media.

The UK government’s conciliatory moves toward the Republicans paid off. In February 1992, a backchannel message from the PIRA, supposedly sent by McGuinness, stated,

The conflict is over but we need your advice on how to bring it to an end. We wish to have an unannounced ceasefire in order to hold a dialogue leading to peace. We cannot announce such a move as it will lead to confusion for the volunteers because the press will interpret it as surrender. We cannot meet the secretary of state’s public renunciation of violence, but it would be given privately as long as we were sure that we were not being tricked.<sup>783</sup>

McGuinness would later deny that he sent the message when it was exposed, but at the time, the UK government was confident that the message was authentic. In response, Major convened a special cabinet committee to discuss how to respond. On March 19, the government sent a reply that, if the PIRA announced a ceasefire, it would be “bold and imaginative” in its response.<sup>784</sup>

The government’s actions were in complete contrast to its continued combative rhetoric. In November 1993, Major, in a reply to a Labour MP in Parliament, stated that,

...to sit down and talk with Mr. Adams and the Provisional IRA... would turn my stomach. Members; we will not do it. If and when there is a total ending of violence, and if and when that ending of violence is established for a significant time, we shall talk to all the constitutional parties that have people elected in their names. I will not talk to people who murder indiscriminately.<sup>785</sup>

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<sup>782</sup> Patrick Mayhew, quoted in Northern Ireland Information Service, “Text of speech delivered today by the Secretary of State, Sir Patrick Mayhew, MP, at the Centre for the Study of Conflict, University of Ulster at Coleraine” December 16, 1992, available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/nio/pm161292.pdf>].

<sup>783</sup> “Talking to the Enemy: The Secret Intermediaries Who Contacted the IRA,” *The Guardian*, March 18, 2008.

<sup>784</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>785</sup> Hansard, HC 6 ser, Vol. 231 Col. 35 (November 1, 1993).

Soon after delivering the comment, Major was approached by one of the operators of the back channel about whether or not to proceed given the former's public promise not to negotiate with the PIRA. Major responded by saying, 'I said *I* wouldn't talk to the PIRA, I never said anything about *you*.'<sup>786</sup> Major's public promise would come back to haunt him in short order. Later the same month, it was revealed in the media – who had been fed information by Sinn Féin – that the Major government had been in secret talks with the party for some time. Mayhew had originally denied the allegations – indeed the talks had been so secret they were kept from him – but was later forced to confirm the existence of backchannel communications.

Weeks after the exposure of the back channel, the Irish and UK governments took several significant steps to facilitate a negotiated solution. Major and Taoiseach Albert Reynolds issued the Downing Street Declaration, which affirmed that the people of Northern Ireland had the right to self-determination and could be unified with the South in the event that both a majority in the North and South approved it.<sup>787</sup> The Declaration was the latest in a series of political agreements that reaffirmed Ireland had a stake in the North and reiterated the unionists' failure to prevent the involvement of the Republic.<sup>788</sup> It coincided with several speeches by Irish officials that indicated that Articles 2 and 3 of the Republic's Constitution, which staked the Republic's claim to the North, were not cast in bronze and would have to change for a future political settlement to work.<sup>789</sup>

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<sup>786</sup> Brooke.

<sup>787</sup> "Joint Declaration on Peace: The Downing Street Declaration," December 15, 1993, available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/dsd151293.htm>].

<sup>788</sup> Although that did not prevent Unionist politicians from trying to keep the Republic out of future meetings.

<sup>789</sup> The message was somewhat muddled when in April 1993, Reynolds, gave a speech in the Dáil defending the Irish Constitution and calling for a new framework to help take the guns out of politics on the island.

For several weeks after the Downing Street Declaration, Gerry Adams and Sinn Féin publically asked the UK Government to clarify the Declaration's meaning. Major warned Sinn Féin that the Declaration was not open to renegotiation and what had started as a potential opening to the Republicans now appeared to be causing tension. In May, the NIO relented and published a government response to Sinn Féin's clarification questions about the Downing Street Declaration. Much to the dismay of the UK Government the US government chose this moment to announce that it had issued a visa to Gerry Adams to attend a peace conference in the United States.<sup>790</sup> In response, Major refused to return President Bill Clinton's calls for days. At the time, Major viewed Clinton's involvement in Northern Irish affairs as unhelpful, but the visa for Adams would eventually play a significant role in shifting Sinn Féin/PIRA away from violence.

On August 31, 1994, the PIRA issued a statement announcing the cessation of its military activities,<sup>791</sup> stating, "We believe that an opportunity to secure a just and lasting settlement has been created," and its units were ordered to stand down "...to significantly contribute to the creation of a climate which will encourage this."<sup>792</sup> The UK government remained skeptical as the announcement failed to explicitly state that the ceasefire was

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<sup>790</sup> In March 1995, the White House announced that it would allow Gerry Adams to raise funds on behalf of Sinn Féin in the United States, reversing a longstanding policy proscribing such fundraising. A week later, Adams attended the White House St. Patrick's Day celebration.

<sup>791</sup> While the PIRA largely ceased its attacks on the Northern Ireland security forces and attacks on the mainland UK, it did continue its 'policing' role in Nationalist areas of Northern Ireland. In so doing, PIRA carried out regular punishment beatings and murdered a number of alleged drug dealers. These policing activities served several important functions for the organization: First, policing helped to raise the morale of PIRA members by giving them a sense of purpose while the group was militarily idle. Second, policing helped ensure PIRA members would remain trained and ready for military action should the political situation require it again. Third, policing served to assert the group's power and authority in Nationalist areas. Fourth, policing helped bolster the traditional Republican rejection of the British and Northern Irish security services. Lastly, policing served to enhance the image of the IRA in those Republican areas where there has been traditional support for the organization as well as a desire for action against anti-social elements in the community. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ira/inside/org.html>

<sup>792</sup> "Irish Republican Army (IRA) Ceasefire Statement," August 31, 1994, available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/ira31894.htm>].



permanent, although the Irish government announced it considered the statement to imply as much. Expectedly, unionist politicians and paramilitaries were deeply skeptical, but six weeks later, the Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC) – the umbrella body for loyalist paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland – announced its members would also observe a ceasefire as long as the PIRA did.<sup>793</sup> The PIRA ceasefire agitated the Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA), which had split off nearly a decade earlier, but had not engaged in attacks, to suddenly launch a violent campaign.

In February 1994, Gerry Adams addressed Sinn Féin’s annual conference and declared that the Downing Street Declaration signified a significant departure from previous British policies, but added, “... does anyone really expect the IRA to cease its activities so that British civil servants can discuss with Sinn Féin the surrender of IRA weapons after we have been ‘decontaminated’?”<sup>794</sup> At the time, the UK government had been entirely focused on a cessation of violence, not decommissioning. This issue was broached in back channel communications, but it was never mentioned as a requirement for entry to talks in the UK’s official policy documents. Adams’ speech, however, made decommissioning the central issue for the Major government.

Unionist politicians were demanding the Major government insist on verified PIRA decommissioning as a prerequisite for Sinn Féin’s entry into political talks. Major eventually relented and in March 1995, Mayhew outlined a three-point plan for PIRA decommissioning - known as “The Washington 3.” Sinn Féin’s inclusion now hinged on the PIRA demonstrating a willingness to disarm, and showing progress on disarming, and

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<sup>793</sup> “Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC) Ceasefire Statement,” October 13, 1994, available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/clmc131094.htm>].

<sup>794</sup> Recounted in Gerry Adams, *Free Ireland: Towards a Lasting Peace*, (Niwot, CO: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1994), 192.

a credibly committing to employing peaceful means. These conditions satisfied unionists, but they were wholly unacceptable to the PIRA, which viewed giving up its weapons prior to talks as tantamount to surrender. It refused to do so. The UK government hardened its position and the central issue of the peace talks shifted to decommissioning.<sup>795</sup> Many observers, the Irish Government included, believed the Major government had purposefully focused on decommissioning in order to slow down talks after he had been forced to rely on unionist backbenchers to maintain his majority in Parliament.<sup>796</sup>

In the fall of 1995, in an effort to overcome the morass created by the focus on decommissioning, the Irish and UK governments began talks about talks – to determine the framework for later substantive negotiations. They also created an independent commission headed by former US Senator George Mitchell to examine the issue of paramilitary decommissioning. In January 1996, the Mitchell Commission published its recommendations, proffering a compromise between unionist and PIRA positions by advocating decommissioning occur concurrently with talks and urging all parties to support six principals of democracy and non-violence. The Commission’s recommendations, however, were not enough to overcome the domestic political obstacles preventing Major’s government from pursuing talks with the PIRA.

Major’s support in Parliament was waning: Members of his party were in open revolt over the Maastricht Treaty, refusing to support Major’s votes and almost bringing down his government on three occasions. Forced to rely on unionist backbenchers to

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<sup>795</sup> Colin McInnes, “A Farewell to Arms? Decommissioning and the Peace Process,” in Michael Cox, Adrian Guelke, and Fiona Stephen, eds., *A Farewell to Arms? Beyond the Good Friday Agreement*, Second Edition, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 155.

<sup>796</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

maintain his parliamentary majority, Major “began to erect an ever-changing obstacle course to inclusive multi-party negotiations.”<sup>797</sup> In the House of Commons, Major credited the Mitchell report, but called on the PIRA to “make a start on the decommissioning process” before talks began anyway.<sup>798</sup> Without waiting to resolve the issue, Major called an election to establish the assembly to determine which parties would be included in talks. The PIRA viewed the government’s movement of the goal post mid-game as evidence it was acting in bad faith. On February 9, 1996, the PIRA announced it was ending its 17-month ceasefire with “great reluctance,”<sup>799</sup> and an hour later a large truck bomb exploded at Canary Wharf in London, killing two and causing an estimated £350 million in damage. After the ceasefire ended, the PIRA focused its attention on attacks in England, namely London, over attacks on the security forces in the North.

The peace process moved on without Sinn Féin. Major and Taoiseach John Bruton announced a June start date for all-party talks and announced May elections to determine party involvement. In response, the PIRA released a statement in which it declared that there was little hope for a renewed ceasefire. A month later, it attempted to blow up the Hammersmith Bridge in London, but the main charge failed to explode. The UK government reiterated its insistence that the PIRA reconstitute its ceasefire and Sinn Féin agree to the Mitchell Principles if the latter hoped to join talks.<sup>800</sup> In the May

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<sup>797</sup> Brendan O’Leary, “The Conservative Stewardship of Northern Ireland, 1979-97: Sound-bottomed Contradictions or Slow Learning?” *Political Studies*, XLV, (1997), 672. Pp: 663-676.

<sup>798</sup> “John Major’s Commons Statement on the Mitchell Report,” Statement before the House of Commons, January 24, 1996, available from [<http://www.johnmajor.co.uk/page830.html>].

<sup>799</sup> “Irish Republican Army (IRA) Statement ending the Ceasefire,” February 9, 1996, available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/ira9296.htm>].

<sup>800</sup> Sinn Féin stated it was prepared to accept the Mitchell Principles if the other parties did.

elections, nine parties won enough votes to join talks.<sup>801</sup> Sinn Féin attracted record support, winning 15.5% of the vote, but was barred entry to the talks.

Mixed messages from the republicans followed: Sinn Féin continued to protest that it should be allowed to enter talks, but the PIRA continued to conduct terrorist attacks. On June 15, 1996, the PIRA exploded a massive bomb in the center of Manchester, injuring 200 people and causing extensive damage, but announced it was “still prepared to enhance the democratic peace process.”<sup>802</sup> CIRA responded in step, conducting a car bombing in Enniskillen in July, injuring 17 people. The INLA, however, announced it was disbanding in September. The escalating violence led to the formation of several loyalist splinter groups and an escalation of loyalist violence: The Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) was formed two months after the Manchester bombing and in response to the attack, the UFF announced that it was putting its members ‘on alert.’ At the time, projections about the PIRA’s strategy were decidedly mixed: the UK government expected the group to launch a renewed bombing campaign in Britain, whereas there was significant speculation in the media that the PIRA was ready to call a permanent ceasefire. The truth lay somewhere in the middle - the PIRA was engaging in violent attacks, but rather than indicate its dedication to a military strategy, the violence was aimed at coercing the government to allow Sinn Féin into talks without preconditions and reminding the public how much better life was during the ceasefire. Major seems to have sensed as much, but would not bend, telling delegates at the Conservative Party

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<sup>801</sup> Turnout - 64.7%, 754,296; Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) - 30 seats, 24.2%; Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) - 21 seats, 21.4%; Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) - 24 seats, 21.4%; Sinn Féin (SF) - 17 seats, 15.5%; Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI) - 7 seats, 6.5%; United Kingdom Unionists (UKU) - 3 seats, 3.7%; Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) - 2 seats, 3.5%; Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) - 2 seats, 2.2%; Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC) - 2 seats, 1.0%; Labour - 2 seats, 0.8%.

<sup>802</sup> Colin Brown and David McKittrick, “IRA Apologises to Bomb Victims,” *The Independent*, June 20, 1996.

conference that year that the PIRA would not bomb its way into the Stormont talks.<sup>803</sup>

Seeing the prospects for a cessation of Republican violence slipping away, in November 1996, the SDLP presented Major's government with a proposal whereby Sinn Féin would be immediately included in talks in the event of a PIRA ceasefire, but Major refused. The next month, Bruton and Clinton issued a statement supporting Sinn Féin's swift entry into talks in the event of a PIRA ceasefire. This also had no effect. Ultimately, Major's hands were tied on the issue. Reliant on Unionist MPs to stay in office, Major had to erect obstacles to prevent Sinn Féin's entry into talks to remain Prime Minister. Under such conditions, there was no way the UK government would negotiate with the PIRA.

#### **5.2.4 Period IV – 1997-1998 – New Domestic Conditions Open Way for PIRA Talks**

The election of the Labour party in the general election in May 1997 removed the unionist veto that had prevented the Major government from including Sinn Féin in peace talks. The new Prime Minister, Tony Blair, had a large margin in Parliament that did not include the unionists, and upon taking office, he made it clear he wanted to do something about Northern Ireland. Whereas Labour may not have once been the likely peace facilitator given the party's pro-United Ireland stance,<sup>804</sup> it had shifted the party's platform in opposition to support consent and now was in line with traditional British views on Northern Ireland. The election had likewise reiterated Sinn Féin's support in the North. Its vote share increased again in the 1997 general election: It won 16.1% of the

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<sup>803</sup> "Mr. Major's 1996 Conservative Party Conference Speech," October 11, 1996, available from [<http://www.johnmajor.co.uk/page849.html>].

<sup>804</sup> Trevor C. Salmon, "Securing Stability, Ensuring Change: British Defence Policy in Northern Ireland," in *The Development of British Defence Policy: Blair, Brown and Beyond*, ed. David Brown, (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 108.

vote and eclipsed the DUP to be the third most popular party in Northern Ireland.<sup>805</sup> It was more apparent than ever that there could be no successful political settlement in Northern Ireland without Sinn Féin/PIRA. The new Labour government recognized as much and the new SSNI Mo Mowlam announced that Sinn Féin could enter the talks as soon as the PIRA renewed its ceasefire. Sinn Féin signaled the Republicans' readiness to negotiate with the new leadership, announcing it was "ready to do business with the British government."<sup>806</sup>

Only two weeks after his election, Blair traveled to Belfast to deliver an important speech that reaffirmed his commitment to the Framework Document, the Mitchell Report, and the ground rules for parties to enter talks. Blair also announced his government would meet with Sinn Féin. All party talks resumed in June 1997. A few days later, the British and Irish governments announced that they were giving the PIRA five weeks to call an unequivocal ceasefire. After a cessation of violence was announced, a six-week waiting period would be required before Sinn Féin could rejoin talks. Talks were set to resume on September 15, 1997 and conclude the following May. Unionists continued to call for verified evidence of decommissioning as a precondition, but those demands fell on deaf ears. On July 20, 1997, the PIRA began a ceasefire. The next day, Sinn Féin's representatives were allowed into Stormont to establish their offices. The UUP leader, David Trimble, told Blair he could not accept the government's current stance on decommissioning, but his party remained in talks. The next month, the British and Irish governments signed an agreement to set up an Independent International

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<sup>805</sup> Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) won 10 seats with 32.7 per cent of the vote; the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) won three seats and 24.1 per cent of the vote; the DUP won two seats and 13.6 per cent of the vote; and the United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP) won one seat.

<sup>806</sup> Shawn Pogatchnik, "Sinn Féin Asks New British Premier for Admission to Peace Talks," *Associated Press*, May 4, 1997.

Commission on Decommissioning, but it was clear the Blair government would not be obstructed by the decommissioning issue as Major's had.

On September 15, 1997, Sinn Féin entered the multi-party talks, but the UUP, PUP and UDP did not attend the first plenary. Within two days, they rejoined talks. It was clear they would get a worse deal if they abstained. Substantive talks began three weeks later. On a visit to Northern Ireland a week after the start of talks, Blair held a meeting with the political parties involved, including Sinn Féin. Gerry Adams and Blair met and shook hands for the first time. In February 1998, the PIRA was involved in two killings: the first of an alleged drug dealer and the second, an alleged UDA member. Although it issued a statement that its ceasefire was still intact, an RUC investigation found that the PIRA was likely responsible. The Blair government suspended Sinn Féin involvement in the talks for more than two weeks. The unionists protested the exclusion was too short, but eventually in March, Sinn Féin was allowed back at the negotiating table. For the purpose of this project, my history of the Troubles and the UK government's counterterrorism response will end here with Sinn Féin's inclusion in substantive peace talks.

### **5.2.5. Conclusion**

Over the course of the Troubles, successive UK governments sought to achieve two strategic goals in Northern Ireland: the creation of stability and prosperity in the North, or at the very least, the assurance that the region would not serve as a base for any external threat to the United Kingdom. In the lead up to, and in the years immediately following, the outbreak of the Troubles, the British focused primarily on defeating the

republican terrorist fringe using military means and appeasing the Catholic population with unilateral reforms aimed at “bring[ing] Northern Ireland up to ‘British standards’.”<sup>807</sup> The persistence of violence, however, helped shift the British mindset. When it became quite clear that the Troubles could not be quelled by military operations and reforms alone, the British began to realize that a political solution was needed. A series of agreements that included the Irish Republic and SDLP were signed - Sunningdale, AIA – but Sinn Féin/PIRA was excluded. The UK government hoped to bypass and undermine the group. When the hunger strike demonstrated the groundswell of support for Sinn Féin/PIRA, the UK government began to realize that a political solution that excluded the group would not be viable. The PIRA was also coming to recognize that violence had failed to push the British out of Northern Ireland and it would need to alter its tactics. Under John Major, the UK government began pre-negotiation backchannel discussions with the PIRA, but genuine, substantive negotiations with the group were thwarted by unionist backbenchers, who were elevated to a veto-playing role due to Major’s crumbing support in Parliament. It was only after this domestic constraint was removed by the 1997 general election and a new prime minister used his honeymoon period to aggressively pursue a peace process that included paramilitary groups, that negotiations with the PIRA were possible. In many ways, the resulting agreement – the Belfast Agreement (referred to as the Good Friday Agreement) - was the culmination and expansion of the political agreements that preceded it, causing some to brand it, “Sunningdale for slow learners.”<sup>808</sup> While it has been argued by some that the UK was

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<sup>807</sup> Dixon, “British Policy Towards Northern Ireland 1969-2000,” 365.

<sup>808</sup> Mary Holland, “A Very Good Friday,” *The Observer*, April 11, 1998. Some have argued that the UK government was guilty of “ethno-national policy learning” – a very slow learning process that took place between 79-97 – coined by O’Leary. Cited in Dixon, “British Policy,” 352.



slow to learn from its mistakes in Northern Ireland, others have suggested that successive British governments pursued largely consistent goals in Northern Ireland, but updated their policy preferences based on the specific strategic opportunities and domestic constraints they faced.<sup>809</sup> It was only after the conflict reached a mutually hurting stalemate and was ripe for resolution, the strategic environment became more conducive, and the domestic impediments fell away that the UK government could pursue a negotiate solution with the paramilitaries.

### **5.3 Strategic Environment**

Changes in the strategic environment are central to understanding the UK government's shift in counterterrorism policy responses to the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Over the course of the conflict, the British government's view of the PIRA remained steady: the group was a violent terrorist organization. While that did not waiver, everything else did. The government's view of the conflict and its capacity to win it militarily underwent a complete reversal. By the early 1980s, many within the government recognized that the conflict could not be quelled militarily. The two sides were locked in a mutually hurting stalemate in which neither could win outright. The stalemate was painful for both sides.

The Troubles raged and then steadily burned for three decades. In a region of only 1.5 million people, more than 3,500 were killed,<sup>810</sup> more than 40,000 were injured, and even more were displaced or otherwise significantly impacted. To compare the magnitude of violence to Britain's mainland population, it would be as if some 111,000

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<sup>809</sup> Dixon, "British Policy Towards Northern Ireland 1969-2000," 361.

<sup>810</sup> Sutton, "An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland."

people died, and 1.4 million people were injured.<sup>811</sup> This level of violence in such a small area ensured that every single family was personally touched by the conflict: for example, more than 2/3 of the population lived in households where someone was injured in the conflict.<sup>812</sup> The Troubles brought Northern Ireland, part of one of the most stable democracies in the world, to the brink of all-out civil war.

By the mid-1970s-early 1980s, republican terrorists, specifically the PIRA, had demonstrated their capacity to endure and coerce. The sophistication of republican terrorist attacks and the ability of their perpetrators to persist despite infiltration from the British security services eventually convinced the military brass and other UK officials that republican terrorists had the capacity to continue their violent struggle for the foreseeable future. Once it had decided that the Troubles required a political solution, successive UK governments tried to determine whether the terrorists could be party to a political settlement. Thatcher's government never viewed the PIRA as having the capacity to make credible commitments, but subsequent signals sent through the backchannel, the PIRA's ceasefire, and increasing emphasis on electoral politics helped convince Major and then Blair's governments that the PIRA was moderating its positions and could be a potential negotiating partner. Of the terrorist groups active in Northern Ireland, the PIRA was the most dangerous, but its size, type, internal cohesion, and market share made it the best potential partner for peace. Given its large popular

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<sup>811</sup> "Sowing Dragon's Teeth: Public Support for Political Violence and Paramilitarism in Northern Ireland," A paper prepared for the meetings of the UK Political Studies Association, London School of Economics and Political Science, 10-13 April 2000.

<sup>812</sup> Bruno S. Frey, Simon Luechinger, and Alois Stutzer, "Calculating Tragedy: Assessing the Costs of Terrorism," *Journal of Economic Surveys*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (2007), 17. Survey evidence corroborates this claim: By 1998, 25% and 23% of the population had been in a building that was bombed or reported being caught up in a riot, respectively. More than 14% of the population reported being the victim of a violent incident, 21% had a family member killed or injured, 55% knew someone who was injured or killed. Northern Ireland Referendum and Election Study, 1998, available from [[http://www.ark.ac.uk/sol/surveys/electoral\\_studies/NIES/1998/website/Main/](http://www.ark.ac.uk/sol/surveys/electoral_studies/NIES/1998/website/Main/)].

following, pragmatic approach to violence, professionalism, and well-disciplined membership, the PIRA had the potential to be the UK government's negotiating partner.

### **5.3.1 Terrorist Group Size**

#### **5.3.1.1 Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA)**

Although there were several groups that engaged in terrorism to promote republican goals in Northern Ireland, the republican movement was clearly dominated by the PIRA. The group was able to maintain a thirty-year terrorist campaign because of its size and sophistication. The PIRA had humble beginnings: When violence broke out in 1969, there were approximately 60 IRA members in Belfast and 10 in Derry,<sup>813</sup> many of whom were past their fighting prime – veterans of the Anglo-Irish war (1919-1921). They had few weapons, leaving the Northern contingent entirely unprepared to defend Catholic neighborhoods against the sectarian violence and security force onslaughts that broke out in 1969.<sup>814</sup> The picture changed significantly within a year. By early 1971 – after splitting from the Official IRA, the Provisionals<sup>815</sup> had over a thousand volunteers.<sup>816</sup> After internment was introduced and Bloody Sunday, there was an influx of “...bored young men with few job prospects and their own deep-set enmities towards the forces of law and order, towards the British, and towards British soldiers on Irish soil in particular... ‘a sudden generation of kamikaze children’...” to join the Provos.<sup>817</sup> Within a couple years,

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<sup>813</sup> Feeney, 249.

<sup>814</sup> Ibid.

<sup>815</sup> Often shortened to “Provos.”

<sup>816</sup> Bell, 374.

<sup>817</sup> Andy Beckett, *When the Lights Went Out: What Really Happened to Britain in the Seventies*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), 105.

the number of PIRA volunteers had doubled or tripled according to different estimates.<sup>818</sup>

Beyond its membership, the PIRA enjoyed significant tacit and active support from the Catholic community in Northern Ireland – from safe houses, to moving money,

communications, and arms, and discreet medical assistance for wounded fighters.

Membership is thought to have peaked in the mid mid-1970s, after which it declined to

350 hardcore activists — gunmen and bomb-makers, commanders, and staff — with

some 2,000-3,000 active supporters (those who supplied all manner of logistical support)

by 1979.<sup>819</sup> Traditionally, the PIRA had been a hierarchical organization, but in response

to penetration by British intelligence in the 1970s, the group moved to a decentralized structure, which allocated more autonomy to individual cells to make military decisions.

The shift from a hierarchical to a cell structure helped the PIRA survive the British

intelligence infiltration and influenced its shift toward more lethal tactics that relied on

advanced technology, but did not require large numbers of fighters. This suited the

slimmed down PIRA that emerged in the 1980s, when it was estimated that there were

120 active members in Belfast, 100 in Derry, and approximately 100 more spread across

the rest of the six counties, with several hundred more reserve members (perhaps 450).<sup>820</sup>

By the time of the 1994 ceasefire, PIRA membership was thought to have declined to 500

active members.<sup>821</sup> By 1996, PIRA was thought to have 400 hard-core activists, with

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<sup>818</sup> By the early 1970s, the PIRA was thought to have 2,000-3,000 volunteers. James Dingley, *The IRA: The Irish Republican Army*, (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2012), 166. Some put the numbers lower – at around 1,500, CAIN, “Estimates of the Strength of Paramilitary Groups,” available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/violence/paramilitary2.htm>].

<sup>819</sup> David Chapters, “The Changing Forms of Conflict in Northern Ireland,” *Journal of Conflict Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (October 1980).

<sup>820</sup> Brendan O’Brien, *The Long War: The IRA and Sinn Féin*, Second Edition, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 161.

<sup>821</sup> CAIN, “Estimates of the Strength of Paramilitary Groups,” available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/violence/paramilitary2.htm>].

some additional auxiliary forces.<sup>822</sup> When compared to the size of the terrorist groups examined in the Philippine and Israeli case studies, the PIRA's membership appears paltry, but for such a small place – Northern Ireland had a population of 1.5 million – and in comparison to the other paramilitary groups fighting there, PIRA's few thousand fighters posed a significant threat.

Most of the PIRA's membership was based in Northern Ireland, although the group maintained some cells in the Republic. In addition to members in Ireland, the PIRA also had one or two 'active service units' in Britain and mainland Europe, and at one time there were operatives in the United States. In 1972, the Provos claimed to have fewer than 100 "active sympathizers" in Britain.<sup>823</sup>

The PIRA was an exceedingly sophisticated group, capable of producing and employing sophisticated weaponry, mounting counterintelligence operations, managing logistics, training volunteers, and adapting to changing circumstances.<sup>824</sup> Just as with its membership, PIRA had to overcome a significant weapons deficit. When the Troubles broke out, Goulding had no weapons to send to the North. After it broke away, the PIRA only had access to between 10 - a couple dozen weapons.<sup>825</sup> This presented a significant deficit when compared with the weapons loyalists had access to. In 1970, 107,000 firearms were registered to Protestants, whereas Catholic populations were thought to

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<sup>822</sup> Sean Boyne, "Uncovering the Irish Republican Army," *Janes Intelligence Review*, (August 1, 1996), reprinted by [<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ira/inside/weapons.html>]

<sup>823</sup> Christopher Sweeney, "The Many Faces of Ulster's Private Armies," *Times* [London], August 23, 1973.

<sup>824</sup> Brian A. Jackson, Peter Chalk, R. Kim Cragin, Bruce Newsome, John V. Parachini, William Rosenau, *Breaching the Fortress Wall: Understanding Terrorist Efforts to Overcome Defensive Technologies*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2007), 84.

<sup>825</sup> Coogan, *The IRA*, 279, and Bell, 369.

have a far smaller number.<sup>826</sup> As the violence worsened, the PIRA was able to buy some arms and transport them across the Republic to dumps near the border with the tacit support from the Irish government.<sup>827</sup> After the riots were broadcast around the world, money and arms began to flow into the North, mostly from the United States. The money proved difficult to spend and guns only trickled in. Irish naïveté and British intelligence monitoring prevented larger shipments from making it through.<sup>828</sup> Eventually, the PIRA established a relationship with Muammar al-Gaddafi, the newly, self-installed leader of Libya, who provided the group with tons of arms starting in the early 1970s. Shipments increased after US bombing raids on Libya in 1986, which included plastic explosives, anti-helicopter machine guns, and surface to air missiles.<sup>829</sup> The PIRA developed its own weapon-making expertise to compliment the Gaddafi weapons. In the early 1990s, Gaddafi stopped providing aid to the PIRA and the flow of weapons and money started to dry up from the US. There were claims that Kaitselit, the Estonian territorial reserve force, had helped the PIRA buy arms.<sup>830</sup> While it had become more difficult for the PIRA to procure weapons, the organization had successfully developed the technical acumen to manufacture its own, including sophisticated remote-controlled bombs, mortars, and large-scale fertilizer car bombs.

In addition to external arms, the PIRA enjoyed significant financial donations from sympathetic Diaspora communities and friendly states. At the height of the conflict,

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<sup>826</sup> The Falls Road, one of the densest Catholic neighborhoods in Belfast, was thought to have only a few hundred weapons in 1970 after being the subject of attacks and military actions for two years. Coogan, *The IRA: A History*, 269.

<sup>827</sup> Bell, 369-370.

<sup>828</sup> *Ibid.*, 373.

<sup>829</sup> O'Brien, 135.

<sup>830</sup> Boyne.

much of the PIRA's annual budget - estimated at £2-3 million<sup>831</sup> - came from overseas donations. As funding from the US thinned, the PIRA started using extortion, bank robberies, and other criminal pursuits to fill the gap. These activities earned the group the wrath of the Government of Ireland, as southern targets were often hit, and alienated would-be supporters in Northern Ireland.<sup>832</sup>

The PIRA was both bolstered and undermined by competition with other republican groups, to include initially, the Official IRA (OIRA), then the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), the Continuity IRA, and the Real IRA.

### **5.3.1.2 Official Irish Republican Army (OIRA)**

The Official Irish Republican Army (OIRA) promoted a mix of Marxism and republicanism, with the goal of uniting Protestant and Catholic workers in a united, socialist Ireland. After the split with the Provos, the OIRA lost support in the cities in the North, but retained some support in rural areas. On the eve of its unilateral ceasefire in May 1972, the OIRA was thought to have hundreds of members in Belfast, constituting a serious potential military force.<sup>833</sup> Within months, however, the OIRA was largely nonoperational barring some fighting with the PIRA. The OIRA's focus on class politics and non-violent means did not attract a large following against the backdrop of an extremely violent reality in the North.<sup>834</sup> By the mid-1970s, the Officials in both the

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<sup>831</sup> Chapters, 34.

<sup>832</sup> Ibid.

<sup>833</sup> Kacper Edward Rekawek, "How 'Terrorism' Does Not End: The Case of the Official Irish Republican Army," *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (2008), 365.

<sup>834</sup> Ibid., 362.

North and South were a “discredited rump, themselves regarded as a faction by what was not the main body of the movement,” the PIRA.<sup>835</sup>

### **5.3.1.3 The Irish National Liberation Army (INLA)**

The Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) was born of a feud with the Official IRA in the mid-1970s. A Sinn Féin splinter group, the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) split from the group in 1974 and the next year, the IRSP formed its own military wing – the INLA. The OIRA tried to destroy the splinter group, setting off a deadly feud that lasted for years. In 1986, this feud was eclipsed by another one with the Irish People’s Liberation Organization (IPLO) – an INLA splinter group, the latter of which does not deserve much attention as it was largely a criminal gang.<sup>836</sup> The INLA had more of a Marxist bent than the PIRA, with which it competed for members. Membership was estimated at a couple of dozen active members with a network of supporters in Ireland and continental Europe. At the time of the hunger strike, the INLA had about 40-50 hardcore members.<sup>837</sup> The strike divided the INLA, which lost a disproportionate number of men, causing many of its members to leave (or be expelled), but it also attracted an influx of new recruits.<sup>838</sup> The new recruits, however, were not vetted closely, leaving the organization susceptible to informers. In 1983, the RUC arrested a top INLA man –

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<sup>835</sup> Feeney, 252.

<sup>836</sup> The Irish People’s Liberation Organization (IPLO) was more of a 50-100 member criminal gang involved in ecstasy dealing, than a politically-oriented group. (Our Ireland Correspondent, "IRA claims demise of death group." *Times* [London], November 7, 1992: 13.) Eventually, the group split into two factions – the Belfast Brigade and the Army Council, which then proceeded to turn on each other. The IPLO was largely consumed by internal feuding between the two wings and some tit for tat killings with Loyalist paramilitaries, thus eclipsing any focus on British targets. David McKittrick, “Terrorists’ Split Could Erupt into Bloody Feud: Violence in Northern Ireland,” *The Independent*, August 22, 1992.

<sup>837</sup> Andrew Sanders, *Inside the IRA: Dissident Republicans and the War for Legitimacy*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

<sup>838</sup> *Ibid.*



Harry Kirkpatrick – who helped implicate many of his former comrades.<sup>839</sup> Feuds left the group with around 20 core activists by 1992.<sup>840</sup> In 2004, the INLA was thought to have fewer than 50 hardcore members.<sup>841</sup>

Despite its small size, the INLA was organized to be very nimble, relied on cell-level ingenuity, and was very sophisticated. The INLA conducted several international and highly sophisticated attacks, facilitated in part by the group's relationships with the West German Revolutionary Cells and Action Directe in France.<sup>842</sup> The INLA conducted numerous high-level attacks, including: the assassination of Northern Ireland shadow secretary Airey Neave and attacks on British troops in the North and at army bases in West Germany. INLA funded itself with bank robberies and "Middle Eastern subventions."<sup>843</sup> Before decommissioning took place the INLA was believed to have small stocks of rifles, hand guns and, possibly, grenades; it was also believed to have a small stock of commercial explosives in the mid-1990s. In 1998, right after the Omagh bombing, the INLA immediately called for a ceasefire. Although it had been largely inactive for a decade, the group officially ended its armed struggle in October 2009. The INLA was both a rival and a force multiplier for the PIRA: while it competed with the PIRA for recruits, it also helped bolster the PIRA's power by conducting attacks against the British Army and participating in the hunger strike, in which three of its members died.

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<sup>839</sup> Ibid.

<sup>840</sup> Michael Horsnell and Peter Victor, "Breakaway Group Maybe Recruiting Young Activists," *Times* [London], April 15, 1992.

<sup>841</sup> US State Department, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism, 2004*, (April 2005), 119.

<sup>842</sup> Vice President George Bush, "Introduction," in US Defense Department, *Terrorist Group Profiles*, (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1988), 51.

<sup>843</sup> Coogan, *The IRA*, 457.

### 5.3.1.4 Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA)

The Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA) was formed in 1986 by PIRA Executive Committee members who opposed the attempt by Gerry Adams and his supporters to reopen the debate on abstentionism. The group, however, did not engage in violent attacks until the PIRA announced its ceasefire in 1994. Most membership projections for the CIRA have ranged between 20 and 50, with occasionally higher estimates of “less than 200.”<sup>844</sup> The CIRA conducted a series of large car bombings against RUC and soft targets in the North throughout the mid- and late 1990s. The CIRA was thought to have a small arsenal – largely taken from PIRA dumps and purchased from the Balkans – that included a few dozen rifles, machine guns, pistols, some Semtex, and a few dozen detonators.<sup>845</sup> The CIRA opposed the 1998 peace process and refused to declare a ceasefire in order to receive amnesty. It continued its violent actions – and was joined by a few new, small spoiler groups - in the wake of the Good Friday Agreement.<sup>846</sup>

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<sup>844</sup> National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), “Terrorist Organization Profile: Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA),” available from [http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data\\_collections/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=37](http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=37)

<sup>845</sup> Duncan Gardham, “Northern Ireland shootings: A profile of the Continuity IRA,” *The Telegraph*, March 11, 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/northernireland/4968775/Northern-Ireland-shootings-A-profile-of-the-Continuity-IRA.html>

<sup>846</sup> CIRA lost members to the Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA), the armed wing of the 32 County Sovereignty Movement, which emerged in opposition to the peace process. RIRA amassed dozen of members disillusioned with Sinn Féin’s participation in the Good Friday process. After the 1998 Omagh bombing, which killed 29 people and injured more than 200 – the most lethal single incident of the Troubles - RIRA announced a cessation of military activities. CIRA gained some members who left RIRA after the ceasefire, recent estimates suggest the group has a core membership in the dozens to no more than 50 hard-core activists. (The MacKenzie Institute, “Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA),” available from <http://www.mackenzieinstitute.com/profiles/cont-irish-republican-army.html> and US State Department, *Country Reports on Terrorism, 2004*, 97. And in 2011, the membership estimates were similar. US State Department, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism, 2011*, July 31, 2012) RIRA ended its ceasefire in 2000 and resumed attacks. Estimates suggest the group had several hundred members largely concentrated in Derry, South Armagh, and South Down in the North and Louth in the South. (James Sturcke, “Explainer: Real IRA and Continuity IRA,” *The Guardian*, March 10, 2009) Membership was thought to have dropped by 2004 to, and remained at, approximately 100 (US State Department, *Country Reports on Terrorism, 2004*, 108, and *Country Reports on Terrorism, 2011*). Both groups are thought to have access a significant cache of arms. (IMC, *First Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, 15.) Unlike PIRA, CIRA and RIRA lack organizational

### 5.3.1.5 Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)

Like the republican terrorist groups, the loyalist paramilitaries represented a significant coercive force that endured for more than three decades. The emergence of loyalist paramilitaries predated the emergence of the PIRA. The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) was started in 1966 as the reincarnation of the Ulster Volunteers from 1912. The UVF sought to combat Irish republicanism, which it viewed to be on the rise and threatening the Union. The UVF attracted loyalists who wanted to defend the Union, sought revenge or perhaps adventure, but “Nobody joined for politics lessons.”<sup>847</sup> That said, the UVF and its affiliate, the Red Hand Commando (RHC), were linked to the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP). In 1973, the UVF was thought to have 1,000 members.<sup>848</sup> By 2004, the UVF and RHC were thought to comprise only a few hundred members.<sup>849</sup> Unlike some of the other loyalist groups that were to follow, the UVF was extremely selective in its recruitment; it maintained a centralized command structure that exercised coherent decision-making; and had firm control over its membership. The UVF exercised a ‘no first strike’ policy: most of its actions were revenge attacks on Catholics and punishment attacks for drug dealing and other anti-social behaviors. Estimates of the number of deaths caused by the UVF range from 384 to 426.<sup>850</sup>

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structure, and individual cells have significant autonomy to act – as a result the membership is not as cohesive or disciplined as its predecessors. (IMC, *First Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, (HC 516), April 20, 2004, <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/imc/imc200404.pdf>) Neither group has extensive support.

<sup>847</sup> Steve Bruce, “Terrorists and Politics: The Case of Northern Ireland’s Loyalist Paramilitaries,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2001), 28. pp. 27-48.

<sup>848</sup> Sweeney.

<sup>849</sup> IMC, *First Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission*, 17.

<sup>850</sup> 384 – Michael McKeown, “Spreadsheet of Deaths Associated with Violence in Northern Ireland, 1969-2001,” (February, 2013), available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/victims/mckeown/index.html>], and 426 – Sutton, “An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland.”

### 5.3.1.6 Ulster Defense Association (UDA)

The Ulster Defense Association (UDA) emerged from the local defense vigilante associations created in Protestant neighborhoods when the Troubles began. In 1972, the group claimed to have 30,000 members,<sup>851</sup> but other estimates put membership at closer to 40,000.<sup>852</sup> The group peaked a few years later, when it was estimated to have had 50,000 members.<sup>853</sup> The UDA was thought to have declined to less than 10,000 members by 1985.<sup>854</sup> The number of violent activists within the group was a small minority of the overall UDA membership, most of which represented neighborhood watch patrols. Even a small minority, however, suggests that the UDA boasted a significant fighting force.<sup>855</sup> Just as other paramilitary groups active in the region, the UDA declined through the 1980s. By 1994, the group had approximately 3,000 members.<sup>856</sup> The UDA often used the name Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) to claim attacks. The UDA's attacks were primarily revenge murders of Catholics following republican attacks, although the victims were often innocent civilians with no connection to the republican paramilitaries. For much of the conflict, given that their actions were largely sectarian, and did not target the security forces, the UDA did not receive the same attention as republicans did from the British military – and certainly not the police forces, which often held unionist sympathies. The UDA was aligned with the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP).

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<sup>851</sup> Sweeney.

<sup>852</sup> Richard Ford, "How Ulster's 'Strong Arm' was Shackled," *Times* [London], August 11, 1992.

<sup>853</sup> David Sharrock, "Loyalist Terror Group to be 'Stood Down with all Weapons Out of Use'," *Times* [London], November 12, 2007.

<sup>854</sup> Ford.

<sup>855</sup> For example, in 1972 the UDA was able to mobilize 5,000 uniformed members to confront British troops over the establishment of permanent barricades near Unionist neighborhoods – a year they claimed to have 30,000 members. "Ulster Protestants Win Right to Patrol Areas after 5,000 Confront Army," *Times* [London], July 4, 1972.

<sup>856</sup> Sharrock.

### **5.3.1.7 Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF)**

The Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) was a splinter group that broke off from the UVF's Portadown command in 1996 when it was stood down after its members broke the UVF's ceasefire. The LVF leader, Billy Wright was jailed a year later and soon thereafter, he was shot by the INLA while being transferred to another prison block. The LVF often claimed attacks with the name the Red Hand Defenders. In 2000, the LVF had 150 members.<sup>857</sup> In 2004, US Intelligence estimates placed the LVF as having approximately 300 members, about half of which were active.<sup>858</sup> The group continued its violent campaign until May 1998 when it declared a ceasefire and participated in the peace negotiations following the Good Friday Agreement.<sup>859</sup> The LVF did not have a political affiliation with a party, although LVF leader Bill Wright made pro-DUP statements and appeared in public with the Rev. Ian Paisley.

### **5.3.1.8 Orange Volunteers (OV)**

The Orange Volunteers (OV) emerged in the 1970s as a paramilitary group closely associated with the Orange Order, a protestant fraternal organization. The OV was thought to be the second<sup>860</sup> or third largest loyalist paramilitary group, but there was

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<sup>857</sup> US State Department, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "Appendix B: Background Information on Terrorist Groups," from *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2000*, April 30, 2001.

<sup>858</sup> US State Department, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "Appendix C - Background Information on Other Terrorist Groups Contents," *Country Reports on Terrorism, 2004*, 140.

<sup>859</sup> The LVF may have been largely motivated out of a need to secure the release of its incarcerated members. After the amnesty, the group continued dealing in narcotics and other criminal pursuits, which prompted the UK government to rescind its amnesty offer in October 2001. The LVF returned to violence in 1999 when a feud with its parent group - the UVF - broke out, announced it was standing down in 2005. "Who are the Loyalist Volunteer Force?" *BBC*, September 14, 2010 and START, "Terrorist Organization Profile: Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF)," available from [[http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data\\_collections/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=68](http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=68)].

<sup>860</sup> START, "Terrorist Organization Profile: The Orange Volunteers," available from [[http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data\\_collections/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=79](http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=79)]

no clear estimate of its size.<sup>861</sup> The group appeared to disband in the 1980s, but in July 1998, the OV claimed responsibility for several attacks in Northern Ireland. Security forces believe the OV shares members with Red Hand Defenders (RHD),<sup>862</sup> a cover organization that claims attacks on behalf of the UDA and LVF.<sup>863</sup> It is unclear if OV was actually resurrected or if it was a new iteration of the group launched by disgruntled members of the LVF and UDA who wanted to undermine their groups' Good Friday Agreement ceasefires.<sup>864</sup>

There were many other smaller paramilitary groups, to include the Ulster Resistance (UR) and Ulster Service Corps (USC), but they were too small to have a real impact on the conflict. The UDA and UVF dominated the paramilitary scene on the loyalist side, and exhibited some influence over most of the other paramilitary groups, with the exception of the LVF.

It is difficult to conduct a direct comparison of the nationalist v. loyalist paramilitaries given, for example, that many members of the UDA were not involved in violent attacks, but rather defensive actions or other activities. The loyalist ranks were significant – likely in the low thousands – but nowhere near the estimated total official membership of 50,000. When compared to the PIRA alone, with its peak membership of about 3,000, the loyalists, in total, may have been slightly stronger or on par.

In this case, size was extremely important in determining a group's capacity to endure and coerce, but so were other factors. While both the UVF and PIRA grew to have

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<sup>861</sup> Sweeney.

<sup>862</sup> START, "The Orange Volunteers."

<sup>863</sup> START, "Terrorist Organization Profile: Red Hand Defenders (RHD)," available from [http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data\\_collections/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=93](http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=93)

<sup>864</sup> US State Department, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "Appendix C: Background Information on Other Terrorist Groups," in Country Reports on Terrorism, 2004, 125.

thousands of fighters over which they exhibited clear control, the latter was able to become a much more sophisticated organization in its employment of destructive technology. This sophistication was in marked contrast to most loyalist groups: One British government official told me that ‘the difference between PIRA and loyalist groups is that if they both decided to take you out, the PIRA would have a professional assassin, use a shiny pistol, and if he only used three of his six shiny bullets, he would return the other three to the arms depot where they would be accounted for in PIRA records. By comparison, the loyalist paramilitaries would get a 16 year old punk and hand him a rusty pistol and tell him to do it.’<sup>865</sup> This difference is demonstrated in their respective body counts: From 1969-2001, the PIRA was thought to be responsible for 1,707 deaths, whereas the UDA and the UVF were responsible for 543 combined.<sup>866</sup>

When examining the trajectory of the conflict, the importance of a group’s capacity to endure and coerce is clear. When the British government was convinced the threat posed by republican terrorists was minor and the PIRA could be easily defeated, it had little interest in negotiating with the group. It was only after it was clear the PIRA had endured decades of attrition, the deaths of its fighters, internment, and the dirty war, and it had the capacity to continue the fight, that the UK government considered negotiating with the group. Other terrorist groups operating in Northern Ireland recognized the necessity of demonstrating coercive capacity in order to gain entrance to the all-party talks in 1998. Once it had become clear that Sinn Féin would participate in the peace process, there is evidence that the INLA leadership was concerned it would be excluded. Its leadership believed calling a ceasefire would have no effect, and only a

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<sup>865</sup> Andrew Pike, interview by author, March 7, 2013, London.

<sup>866</sup> Sutton, “An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland.”

spectacular act of violence in the North or in mainland Britain would persuade the UK government that its political wing, the IRSP, should be included in talks.<sup>867</sup>

In order to maintain a coercive campaign, a group must endure attrition, imprisonment, and the deaths of its fighters. Group type and the level of cohesion within a group had a significant impact on paramilitary groups' capacity to endure in Northern Ireland.

### **5.3.2 Terrorist Group Type**

The capacity of terrorist groups in Northern Ireland to endure and coerce is related to their group type. In some ways, the loyalist groups were advantaged in this area. The security forces were often sympathetic to the loyalist groups, their membership overlapped significantly, and on numerous occasions, the former even provided the paramilitaries with intelligence to aid in their attacks. The loyalists not only enjoyed this advantage, but they also benefited from being right-wing. They did not seek to overthrow the government or push the British out of the North (quite the opposite), so they were never the main thrust of the UK's counterterrorism campaign. The lack of focus on the loyalist threat allowed the loyalist groups to endure, but also created hurdles to generating sympathy and fundraising outside of Northern Ireland. Ultimately, the nature of loyalist groups, which were essentially fighting for the status quo, made them less disagreeable potential negotiating partners for the UK government, but their goals – coupled with their lower levels of violence and choice of targets – made them less of a priority for inclusion.

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<sup>867</sup> Ranald Maclean, (chair), *The Billy Wright Inquiry - Report*, HC 431, September 14, 2010, available from [[http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/collusion/docs/wright\\_140910.pdf](http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/collusion/docs/wright_140910.pdf)], 619.



The republican groups did not enjoy the same home turf advantage. Indeed their very nature made them a natural enemy of the UK government. Despite being the focus of British counterterrorism efforts, the nationalist character of the PIRA<sup>868</sup> served as a benefit when it came to generating support and fundraising, thus allowing the group to grow and endure in spite of hostile circumstances.

For both loyalists and republicans, the easy identification of like-ethnics facilitated recruitment and communication. This is not due to any noticeable racial/ethnic differences between the Protestant and Catholic populations of Northern Ireland, who to most outward observers would appear very similar, but rather to the ghettoization of the two populations. This segregation was in part voluntary, as co-ethnics selected into neighborhoods where they had the churches, athletic facilities, etc. The ghettoization of the Catholic population was especially acute, however, because of discriminatory hiring and housing policies. Thus the PIRA did not have to look far from the Catholic housing projects in Belfast to identify and vet potential recruits.<sup>869</sup>

Even when under pressure from the loyalist paramilitaries, the local security forces, and the British army and intelligence services, the republican groups were able to survive due to the support of the Catholic community. This widespread support was due in part to the nature of the group's goals and values, which were largely congruent – even when the tactics weren't – with those of the Catholic population of Northern Ireland. Support for the PIRA was bolstered by the British Army's sweeping and aggressive operations in Catholic ghettos, which generated widespread resentment and reiterated

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<sup>868</sup> Across the Republican landscape, there was some variation in type. A few Republican groups had a strong Marxist or socialist bent, namely OIRA, but even these groups were primarily nationalist groups. These were never as popular with potential recruits or donors as the less ideological Republican groups (e.g. PIRA).

<sup>869</sup> Bell, 375.

PIRA's worldview about British colonial abuse in Northern Ireland. Sympathy towards the PIRA translated into extensive logistical and tacit support, which combined with intimidations, allowed PIRA members to live amongst the Catholic population without fear of betrayal.<sup>870</sup>

The nature of republican aims allowed the PIRA and other republican groups to fundraise from the Diaspora overseas in a way that the loyalist paramilitaries could not. The latter were never good at developing overseas relations. They did not actively court Ulster's descendants in the United States in the same way that the PIRA worked the Irish-American population there. Moreover, the loyalist paramilitaries were never able – as the PIRA was – to translate violence into political support in a meaningful way. The loyalists were not without influence within the existing unionist parties, but the relationship was tenuous at times and not as strong as the PIRA/Sinn Féin bond.

Republican terrorist groups largely derived their legitimacy from the national population they claimed to represent. As mentioned above, this relationship helped facilitate support for the groups, but it also introduced an element of restraint on their behavior. Republican groups had to be practical about their use of violence. They could not conduct attacks that were so lethal that they would alienate their supporters. This was apparent when the INLA conducted an attack on British soldiers in the Divis Flats area of Belfast, when the attack accidentally killed two local boys – along with a soldier - the residents of Divis asked the INLA to leave the area.<sup>871</sup> Such responses have forced republican groups to moderate their behavior. The clearest example of this restraining

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<sup>870</sup> PIRA also complimented this with intimidation that made people fearful of cooperating with the army/police.

<sup>871</sup> Martin Dillon, *The Trigger Men: Assassins and Terror Bosses in the Ireland Conflict*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Co, 2004).

effect was the RIRA car bombing in Omagh in August 1998. The attack killed 29 civilians and injured 200 more. The public reaction was severe from all sides, but the anger within the nationalist community led the RIRA to issue an apology and announce an immediate cessation of military operations. This mix of popular support and self-restraint – especially with regard to the PIRA – helped convince the UK government that without Sinn Féin no political solution would have the necessary Catholic buy in to work, and that the PIRA was somewhat restrained in its actions by its support base, a relationship which would hopefully help motivate the group to adhere to a negotiated settlement that had popular support.

### **5.3.3 Terrorist Group Fractional Politics**

Fractionalization was a significant problem for both nationalists and loyalists: In each case, rivalries and feuds distracted the groups from their primary targets. In the later years of the Troubles, most of the loyalist violence was directed at its own people.<sup>872</sup> Of the loyalist paramilitaries who died between 1969-1998, 56% were killed by other loyalists.<sup>873</sup> Figures for republicans are not that different – 46% died at the hands of their compatriots.<sup>874</sup>

#### **5.3.3.1 Republicans**

On both sides of the conflict there was intra-group fractionalization, intra-movement rivalries, and tension between constitutional groups and paramilitaries that

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<sup>872</sup> Bruce, “Turf War and Peace: Loyalist Paramilitaries since 1994,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 16, Issue 3, 2004, 507.

<sup>873</sup> Ibid.

<sup>874</sup> Ibid.

utilized extra-judicial means. Overall, the republican movement displayed more unity than the loyalist one. That said, the republican movement had suffered two agonizing splits in the post-Irish Civil War period: in 1969, the movement split over strategy, and in 1996, the PIRA split over both goals and strategy when Adams accepted the Mitchell Principals, implicitly endorsing the principle of consent. With each new splinter movement, competition for recruits and funding intensified. At times feuds erupted. Yet, in their actions, for most of the conflict, all the republican groups advanced the same basic cause – the disruption of an all-unionist Stormont, the withdrawal of the British troops, a united Ireland, and rights for Catholics in the North. Thus even when they were rivals, the groups often found themselves complementing each other. This was made clear after the hunger strike in 1981. Prior to the strike, there was no love lost between the PIRA and INLA,<sup>875</sup> but prisoners from the two groups coordinated the strike, which improved relations between the two and facilitated some operational coordination.<sup>876</sup> Despite the signs of friendship and coordination, the relationship between the two groups was asymmetric, with the INLA playing the subordinate role. Indeed, later in the conflict, there were signs that the CIRA served as a proxy for the PIRA, conducting attacks that the PIRA “quietly condoned and found convenient, but for which it could not be formally held accountable.”<sup>877</sup> There were indeed tensions and rivalries within the republican movement, but there was also a clear leader.

The supremacy of the PIRA within the republican movement was evident from the early days of the Troubles. Within a year of the PIRA/OIRA split, the majority of

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<sup>875</sup> Maclean, *The Billy Wright Inquiry - Report*, 48.

<sup>876</sup> Andrew Sanders, *Inside the IRA: Dissident Republicans and the War for Legitimacy*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012). There is also evidence the two groups coordinated on post-Drumcree operations during the summer of 1997. Maclean, *The Billy Wright Inquiry - Report*, 48, 618, 620.

<sup>877</sup> Dingley, 105.

IRA men had sided with the Provos,<sup>878</sup> and the splinter became the dominant group in the movement, exercising influence over other paramilitaries, even coercing its rivals. In September 1997, the INLA complained that it could not tolerate repeated loyalist attacks without retaliating, but the PIRA convinced the INLA to refrain from military operations so Sinn Féin could engage in all party talks.<sup>879</sup> Even when compared to the constitutional wing of the republican movement, the PIRA was as powerful, if not more so, than the SDLP. The SDLP was long the only nationalist party available to voters, but once Sinn Féin began contesting elections in 1983, it had a serious rival. From that election until 1997, Sinn Féin trailed, but steadily gained, on the SDLP in vote share, until it surpassed the SDLP in 2001 and became the third largest vote getter in Northern Ireland behind the UUP and DUP. Many have criticized Sinn Féin and Gerry Adams for essentially destroying the SDLP. This critique, however, is flawed: The rise of Sinn Féin did not come entirely at the SDLP's expense as the percentage of votes going to "nationalist" parties increased overall during this time. For the decade that preceded the Good Friday Agreement, Hume established a close relationship with the Sinn Féin's leadership, encouraged Sinn Féin's ascension, knowing that its rise might hurt the SDLP's electoral success, but would advance the nationalist cause.<sup>880</sup>

### 5.3.3.2 Loyalists

By contrast to the SLDP-Sinn Féin coordination, the unionist movement was more fractionalized. There were several small unionist political parties – the Progressive

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<sup>878</sup> 90% according to PIRA, only 60% according to the Official IRA. "A News Team inquiry," *Times* [London] April 7, 1970.

<sup>879</sup> Maclean, *The Billy Wright Inquiry - Report*, 619-620.

<sup>880</sup> Robert Hannigan, interview with author, London, March 6, 2013.

Unionist Party (PUP), United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP), Ulster Democratic Party (UDP), VUUP, among numerous others which never received a significant vote share in general elections or who faded away<sup>881</sup> - but the movement was largely dominated by two, the DUP and UUP. The DUP and UUP were deeply divided for much of the Troubles over goals and tactics. The UUP fought to maintain the Union, and thus tried to stay in step with Westminster, whereas the DUP, headed by Ian Paisley, fought to maintain the integrity of the Protestant people in Northern Ireland through devolution or an independent unionist Ulster, if necessary.<sup>882</sup> The DUP was ready to escalate its actions whether in the form of strikes, or by encouraging violence, whereas the UUP conducted itself with more propriety. The UUP and DUP represented “two increasingly divergent Unionist traditions” – one working class that bore the brunt of Republican violence, and the other more successful, well-off Protestants who only read about the violence and disengaged from politics.<sup>883</sup> When David Trimble became UUP leader in 1995, he sought to recreate some level of unity amongst the unionist parties, but despite short periods of solidarity, the DUP and UUP were largely rivals.

While the major unionist political parties rarely worked closely together, there was a significant degree of coordination between individual unionist political parties and affiliated loyalist paramilitary groups. For example, Ian Paisley was involved in founding two paramilitary groups: Ulster Resistance and the Ulster Protestant Volunteers.<sup>884</sup>

Another example is the UDR helping to facilitate the Ulster Workers strike in 1974 on

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<sup>881</sup> VUUP did perform relatively well in the 1973 and 1975 Assembly elections (11.5% and 12.7% respectively) and in the 1974 general election 13.1%, but the party went into decline in 1977, and by 1978 it had collapsed.

<sup>882</sup> John Torode, “Unionists by Name, Duelists by nature: James Molyneaux and Ian Paisley,” *The Independent*, September 3, 1994 .

<sup>883</sup> Ibid.

<sup>884</sup> CAIN, “Organization Abstracts,” available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/organ/azorgan.htm>].

behalf of the UDP.<sup>885</sup> Despite a history of coordination between paramilitary groups and politicians, the relationship was often tenuous and oft denied by politicians. The façade of independence was dashed when in 1976, angered by the failure of unionist parties to take up their cause when their prisoners were denied political status, an umbrella group for several unionist paramilitary groups alleged that Protestant politicians has been directly involved in the violence for years and threatened to release specific names to the media.<sup>886</sup> As this incident demonstrates, while they were coordinating with the paramilitaries, the unionist political parties did not have firm control over them, further evidenced by the former's inability to prevent the feuding between paramilitary groups.

The violent part of the unionist movement was heavily fractionalized because of the number of players involved and their frequent feuds and shifting alliances. Some of the large loyalist paramilitaries are outlined here, but there many more small ones. In 1973, there were more than twenty loyalist paramilitary groups claiming to represent different sections of the Protestant community.<sup>887</sup> Relations between the numerous loyalist paramilitary groups oscillated between coordination and conflict. In 1973, it was reported that the UDA, OV, RHC, and several small outfits – the Ulster Special Constabulary Association, Down Orange Welfare, Ulster Volunteer Service Corps (UVSC) – had formed an umbrella group, the Ulster Army Council. The UVF was not invited to join because it was feuding with the UDA at the time. The feud was resolved in 1975,<sup>888</sup> and a new umbrella organization was established - the Ulster Loyalist Central Coordinating Committee (ULCC), which represented the OV, UVSC, Loyalist

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<sup>885</sup> Wilford.

<sup>886</sup> Christopher Walker, "Politicians 'Involved in the Ulster Violence'," *Times* [London], December 13, 1976.

<sup>887</sup> Sweeney.

<sup>888</sup> Christopher Walker, "Protestant Factions 'Resolve their Feud'," *Times* [London], April 12 1975.

Association of Workers, RHC, and UVF.<sup>889</sup> The ULCCC served to facilitate communication between the unionist political parties and paramilitaries, which were thought to have nearly 20,000 members to draw upon, many of whom had training in the British Army.<sup>890</sup> In the 1990s, the UDA and UVF cooperated under the umbrella of the Combined Loyalist Military Command – even operating in step in calling ceasefires in response to the 1994 PIRA ceasefire. The relationship soured in 2001 when the groups descended into a violent feud.<sup>891</sup> As the peace process gained steam, the UVF was the most supportive, whereas the UDA was more reluctant. Generally, despite some famous splits in their history, the republicans were far more cohesive than the loyalists: “Unlike the IRA, the loyalists have lacked the organizational tradition and ruthless discipline to contain their supporters under one umbrella.”<sup>892</sup>

#### **5.3.4 Strategic Environment Conclusion**

The strategic environment shifted significantly over the course of the Troubles. As the conflict continued it eventually became clear to both the British Government and PIRA that they could not win militarily. This was central to the shift toward a negotiations policy – on both sides – but it did not happen instantly. Rather, it required continued fighting – generating weariness on all sides and allowing other counterterrorism strategies time to fail – in order to get to the Good Friday peace process. The British government realized by the 1980s that it needed a political solution to the

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<sup>889</sup> Walker, “Politicians ‘Involved in the Ulster Violence’.”

<sup>890</sup> Christopher Walker, “Why Ulster may be Nearer Civil War than ever Before,” *Times* [London] January 12, 1976.

<sup>891</sup> Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), “Backgrounder: Northern Ireland Loyalist Paramilitaries,” available from [<http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-organizations-and-networks/northern-ireland-loyalist-paramilitaries-uk-extremists/p9274>].

<sup>892</sup> Sweeney.



conflict, but had hoped to exclude Sinn Féin/PIRA. The failure of the AIA and the rise of Sinn Féin as a political force made it clear that such an approach would not work. From this point forward, the UK government looked for ways to make including Sinn Féin possible. The group's demonstration that it could make credible commitments, by keeping its ceasefire, and that it had the capacity to control its members (and even those from a few other groups), helped demonstrate to the UK government that the PIRA was a viable negotiating partner. Even when the UK government was convinced of the PIRA's potential, it was not sufficient for ensuring negotiations. Change could only occur once the domestic conditions were conducive for shifting towards a more conciliatory counterterrorism strategy.

#### **5.4 Domestic Political Environment**

When analyzing British counterterrorism policy toward Northern Ireland, some scholars have overly focused on characterizations of prime ministers to explain differences across governments. Despite differences in style, British policy toward Northern Ireland has been profoundly consistent across governments and even parties since 1972. In part, this is due to strategic factors, but it is also driven by domestic ones. Structural constraints that produced “strong incentives for successive governments to pursue a broadly similar approach to the resolution of the conflict, whether or not this is the personal preference of leading actors...”<sup>893</sup> have contributed to a continuity in UK counterterrorism policy. As this study argues, public opinion and the acquiescence of veto players are key to determining whether there is sufficient domestic political space

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<sup>893</sup> Dixon, “British Policy Towards Northern Ireland 1969-2000,” 342.

for a prime minister to pursue a negotiations counterterrorism policy. As will become apparent, public opinion was almost a nonfactor in UK policymaking in Northern Ireland, but in contrast, political veto players were able to prevent the onset of a negotiation strategy for several years.

#### **5.4.1 Public Opinion**

In general, public opinion is important in policymaking in the UK, but the particular issue of Northern Ireland and the gentlemen's agreement about how to address it forged between the major political parties rendered the Troubles a non-issue in British mainland electoral politics. In the early 1970s, the British political parties adopted a bipartisan<sup>894</sup> approach to dealing with Northern Ireland in order to promote a consistent policy in the region and facilitate management of the conflict. Each party realized that when in power, it would have to deal with Northern Ireland, so agitating on the issue when in opposition might bring short-lived political victories, but would ultimately make it harder to govern there once in power. So the major British mainland political parties agreed to support whatever policy the current government pursued in Northern Ireland. Such an agreement to agree, or at least not to vocally disagree, does not operate with respect to any other sphere of government policy.<sup>895</sup> There remained some level of disagreement over Northern Ireland,<sup>896</sup> but overall the mainland British parties put forward a united front. Even if a party in opposition adopted a more radical policy on

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<sup>894</sup> Really it was a multilateral effort, even small parties agreed.

<sup>895</sup> Peter F. Trumbore, "Electoral Politics as Domestic Ratification in International Negotiations: Insights from the Anglo-Irish Peace Process," *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, Vol. 12, (2001), 124.

<sup>896</sup> For example, while in opposition in the 1980s, the left-wing of Labour managed to push the party to adopt a United Ireland policy, but stopped short calling for a "troops out" position or vocally criticizing Thatcher's policy, not that it mattered, as the party was completely unelectable at that point. Dixon "'Hearts and Minds?'" 449 and Hannigan, interview.

Northern Ireland, the realities of governing would force it to moderate its position and fall in line with its predecessors. For example, Airey Neave crafted a more integrationist stance on Northern Ireland for the Conservative party while in opposition, but Thatcher abandoned that approach when the party came to power in 1979 out of a need to ‘balance’ the claims of both nationalists and unionists in Northern Ireland.<sup>897</sup>

By minimizing inter-party conflict over Northern Ireland, which inevitably would have stimulated public debate, bipartisanship helped insulate politicians from public pressure on the issue. A bipartisan approach ensured that the “Irish Question” did not come to dominate domestic politics as it had done at the beginning of the century<sup>898</sup> or allow one party to offer more favorable terms to one of the parties to the conflict.<sup>899</sup> The bipartisan arrangement – combined with restrictions on discussing Northern Irish issues at Westminster and the fact that British parties did not contest elections in the North<sup>900</sup> - helped eliminate the Northern Irish issues from domestic electoral politics. The British voting public was not alarmed by such an arrangement,<sup>901</sup> as it did not see it appropriate to pressure MPs to pursue a particular policy in the North.<sup>902</sup> As such, the British public never regarded the NI issue as a general election issue.<sup>903</sup>

For most mainland Brits, Northern Ireland exists on the margins of British consciousness – it was “a place apart” - differentiated by culture, people, history, and geography. Even in times of relative peace, Northern Ireland was not a particularly loved,

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<sup>897</sup> Dixon, “British policy towards Northern Ireland 1969–2000,” 348.

<sup>898</sup> Dixon, “‘Hearts and Minds’?” 449

<sup>899</sup> Ibid.

<sup>900</sup> Conservatives began contesting elections in N. Ireland only after 1989 and only tentatively. Labour has not contested a single parliamentary or local election in N. Ireland. It is also historically rejected membership applications from N. Ireland residents. Trumbore, 119.

<sup>901</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>902</sup> Brooke, interview.

<sup>903</sup> Hannigan, interview.

or even accepted as an integral, part of the United Kingdom. When violence broke out in the late 1960s, contempt for Northern Ireland grew. On one end of the spectrum there was a very British view that those who lived there needed to ‘get their act together,’<sup>904</sup> while others were less generous, seeing the Northerners as animals, who best be abandoned to their own demise.<sup>905</sup> The success of anti-imperialist movements and the withdrawal of the British Empire around the world gave the impression that “anti-imperialism was surfing a wave of history and British defeat in Northern Ireland was inevitable.”<sup>906</sup> The British mainlanders were increasingly uncomfortable defending Britain’s continued role in the North or the unionists, whom many Brits viewed as ‘right bigots.’<sup>907</sup> These feelings have translated into clear policy preferences on Northern Ireland: starting in the early 1970s, the British public has consistently favored ending the Union between Great Britain and Northern Ireland and withdrawing British troops from the region.

Every public opinion poll since 1974 has shown a majority<sup>908</sup> of British mainlanders favor withdrawing British troops from Northern Ireland.<sup>909</sup> Those who

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<sup>904</sup> Smith, interview.

<sup>905</sup> Bew, interview.

<sup>906</sup> Dixon, “‘Hearts and Minds?’” 425.

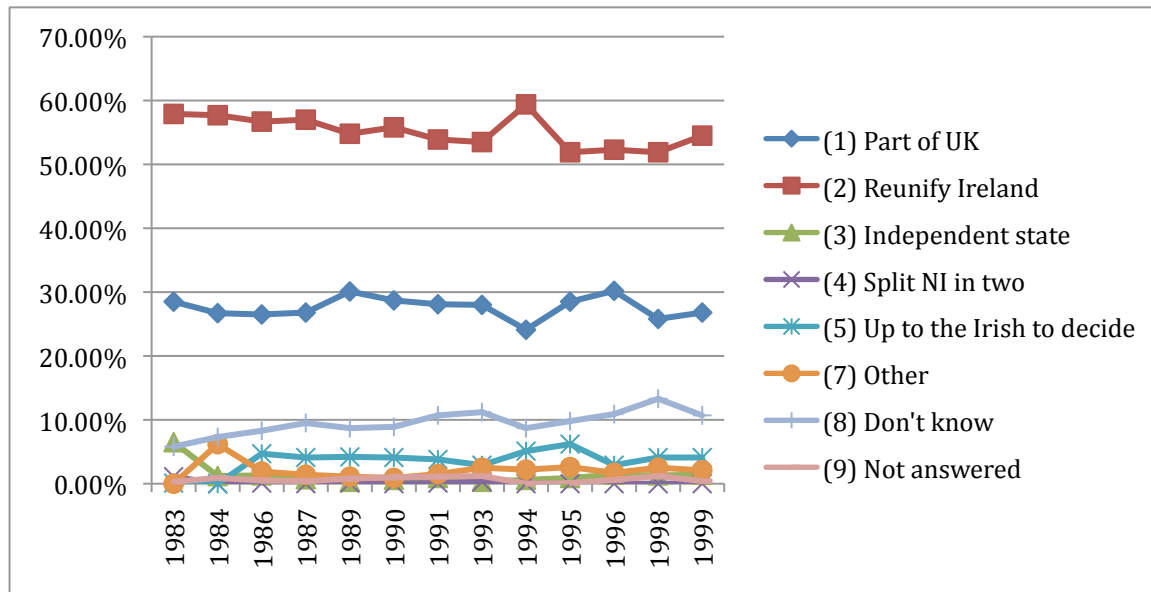
<sup>907</sup> Smith, interview.

<sup>908</sup> In June 1974, a Gallup poll found that 59% of the British public thought the UK government should begin to withdraw its troops from Northern Ireland; support slightly decreased in Jan 1976 when it fell to 54%. Ian Bradley, “Polls Offer no Encouragement to Mainland Bombers,” *The Times* (London), Oct 28, 1981, pg. 2. In 1978, RTE poll found that 55% favored withdrawal, whereas only 28% favored troops remaining in the North. Christopher Walker, “British poll Shows Majority Want Government Declaration of Intent on Ulster Withdrawal,” *Times* [London], September 20, 1978. Sometimes the percentage would fall below constituting a majority if the question asked about “immediate” withdrawal. For example, in 1992, a Gallup poll found that 44.9% of the public thought that British troops should be pulled out of NI immediately, compared to 47.7% who thought they shouldn’t. British General Election Study, 1992; Cross-Section Survey, available from [[http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/variables/variable/?id=2981\\_V109](http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/variables/variable/?id=2981_V109)].

<sup>909</sup> Christopher Walker, “British poll Shows Majority Want Government Declaration of Intent on Ulster Withdrawal,” *Times* [London], September 20, 1978.

favoured withdrawal often cited the number of troops killed, their lack of purpose there, and the cost to the taxpayer as justification for their position.<sup>910</sup> In May 1981, just after

**Figure 1 - British Public Opinion on Northern Ireland's Future<sup>911</sup>**



the death of Bobby Sands, only 29% of the British public wanted to retain British sovereignty over Northern Ireland.<sup>912</sup> In 1987, a Gallup poll found that more than half the British population thought the Army should pull out of Northern Ireland immediately.<sup>913</sup>

<sup>910</sup> Ibid.

<sup>911</sup> Question – “Do you think the long-term policy for Northern Ireland should be for it to remain part of the United Kingdom or to unify with the rest of Ireland?” British Social Attitudes Survey, 1983-1999, available from [\[http://www.britisocat.com/BodyTwoCol\\_rpt.aspx?control=CCESDMarginals&MapID=NIRELAND&SeriesID=12\]](http://www.britisocat.com/BodyTwoCol_rpt.aspx?control=CCESDMarginals&MapID=NIRELAND&SeriesID=12)

<sup>912</sup> William Borders, “Britons Talking of Even a Radical Solution in Ulster,” *The New York Times*, Late Edition, May 28, 1981.

<sup>913</sup> 50.4% agreed compared to 40.6% who disagreed troops should be pulled out immediately. Dataset: British General Election Study, 1987; Cross-Section Survey, available from [\[http://nesstar.esds.ac.uk/webview/index.jsp?v=2&study=http%3A%2F%2Fnesstar.esds.ac.uk%3A80%2Fobj%2FStudy%2F2568&mode=documentation&submode=variable&variable=http%3A%2F%2Fnesstar.esds.ac.uk%3A80%2Fobj%2Fvariable%2F2568\\_V187&top=yes\]](http://nesstar.esds.ac.uk/webview/index.jsp?v=2&study=http%3A%2F%2Fnesstar.esds.ac.uk%3A80%2Fobj%2FStudy%2F2568&mode=documentation&submode=variable&variable=http%3A%2F%2Fnesstar.esds.ac.uk%3A80%2Fobj%2Fvariable%2F2568_V187&top=yes). Over time, there appears to have been more support for an immediate withdrawal than a gradual one: In September 1978, 32% wanted immediate withdrawal as compared to 23% who preferred withdrawal in 5 years, with corresponding percentage for September 1979 at 44%/15%, and in September 1981 at 37%/17%. Ian Bradley, “Polls Offer no Encouragement to Mainland Bombers,” *Times* [London], Oct 28, 1981: 2.

Moreover, as demonstrated in Figure 2, there has been steady support among the British public for the reunification of Northern Ireland with the Republic.<sup>914</sup>

The British public's preference for withdrawal should not be read as a demonstration of its sympathy for the republican cause or terrorism; far from it. In 1977, a Gallup poll showed that 97% of British mainlanders viewed the PIRA as a terrorist group, rather than a band of freedom fighters.<sup>915</sup> Poll data suggests that the British public has preferences for hard-line counterterrorism policies in Northern Ireland: An 1972 Gallup poll found that 71% of the British public thought the country's counterterrorism policy was not tough enough.<sup>916</sup> By 1975, that percentage grew to 90%; and 88% of the public thought capital punishment should be reintroduced for terrorist crimes.<sup>917</sup> Polls suggest the British were supportive of internment.<sup>918</sup> Support for heavy-handed counterterrorism strategies against the PIRA appears to stand in contrast to the concurrent support for the withdrawal of British troops and reunification of Ireland – the PIRA's two main goals. Polling, however, demonstrated that the British public saw these as separate issues: terrorists should be dealt with brutally, but the continued Army presence in Northern Ireland was not in the best interest of the United Kingdom – “too many had been killed and they were serving no purpose, not to mention the cost to the British taxpayer.”<sup>919</sup>

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<sup>914</sup> British General Election Study, 1997; Cross Section Survey, available from [[http://nesstar.esds.ac.uk/webview/index.jsp?v=2&study=http%3A%2F%2Fnesstar.esds.ac.uk%3A80%2Fobj%2FStudy%2F2568&mode=documentation&submode=variable&variable=http%3A%2F%2Fnesstar.esds.ac.uk%3A80%2Fobj%2Fvariable%2F2568\\_V187&top=yes](http://nesstar.esds.ac.uk/webview/index.jsp?v=2&study=http%3A%2F%2Fnesstar.esds.ac.uk%3A80%2Fobj%2FStudy%2F2568&mode=documentation&submode=variable&variable=http%3A%2F%2Fnesstar.esds.ac.uk%3A80%2Fobj%2Fvariable%2F2568_V187&top=yes)].

<sup>915</sup> Citing a December 1977 Gallup poll, Dixon, “‘Hearts and Minds?’” 463.

<sup>916</sup> Ibid.

<sup>917</sup> Ibid.

<sup>918</sup> Citing George H. Gallup, Gallup Political Index 1935–97 (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources 1999), Ibid., 462.

<sup>919</sup> Citing Gallup Political Index, September 1978, Ibid., 463.

Public policy preferences were not lost on British politicians in Westminster and 10 Downing Street. The government was well aware of the public's preferred policies, but often chose to ignore them. On the occasions when the media covered opinion polls on Northern Ireland, the growing disparity between the British public's preferred course of action in Northern Ireland and that of its government, which maintained the Union and kept troops in place, was palpable. *The Sunday Times* ran an editorial on May 24, 1981 that lamented, "Westminster is governing part of its territory without the consent of the governed."<sup>920</sup> This disparity was allowed to continue largely due to the insulation of domestic politics from the Northern Ireland issue, but also because despite having clear preferences, the British mainland population consistently ranked Northern Ireland as a very low priority. In 1974, after several bloody years and hundreds of soldiers killed, only the National Health Service ranked lower than Northern Ireland as a concern for voters.<sup>921</sup> The issue would remain relegated to a low/middling concern for most of the next three decades.<sup>922</sup> The British media coverage of the Troubles may have contributed to the lack of interest in the North. The lack of urgency about the Northern Ireland conflict among the mainland population, combined with Thatcher's broadcasting ban, led

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<sup>920</sup> "Yes, Mr. Paisley?" *Sunday Times* [London], May 24, 1981.

<sup>921</sup> In that year, only the NHS ranked lower of the issues that registered any response. The issues that were more valued included, in rank order, Inflation/Prices, Housing, Unions/Strikes, Common Market, Education, Pensions, Unemployment, Crime, and Race/Immigration.

<sup>922</sup> For voters, Northern Ireland peaked in importance in 1979 and 1980, when an average of 11.5% of those polled listed it as an important issue facing Britain. That year, Northern Ireland eclipsed several other issues including, Race/Immigration, Education, Housing, and the Common Market. Those numbers dropped dramatically the next year and remained low. From 1982 until early 1997, on average, only 2.1%<sup>922</sup> of the British public ranked Northern Ireland as an important issue except for spikes that corresponded to big IRA attacks which killed numerous soldiers or demonstrated the reach and capacity of the IRA: March 1999 followed Gibraltar, August 1988 followed the Lisburn killings and Ballygawley bombing, and February 1996 followed the Canary Wharf bombing. "The Most Important Issues Facing Britain Today," Combined answers from - Q What would you say is the most important issue facing Britain today? And Q What do you see as other important issues facing Britain today? [<http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/poll.aspx?oItemID=2439&view=wide>].

to terrorism being largely filtered out of the news.<sup>923</sup> This self-censorship by the media further relegated Northern Ireland to the basement of British priorities and reduced the prospects for public influence on British counterterrorism policymaking.

The UK government's ability to continue policies on Northern Ireland that ran counter to public preferences is demonstrative of the complete lack of leverage the British mainland had over their elected officials on this issue. The government insulated itself by refusing to allow Northern Ireland to become a general election issue or to be discussed in Westminster. By not contesting elections in Northern Ireland, none of the mainland parties were dependent on constituents in the region.<sup>924</sup> Lastly, the British public, despite having clear preferences, did not see it as appropriate to lobby their representatives on this issue. As such, the UK Government enjoyed a startling amount of mobility with regard to public opinion in crafting its preferred Northern Ireland policy. It was largely other strategic factors, as well as a few veto players, that slowed the Government's march toward the peace process.

#### **5.4.2 Veto Players**

In analyzing British policy toward Northern Ireland, it is important not to view the UK government as a unitary actor, but rather as a conglomerate of different agencies and actors that have their own bureaucratic and personal interests. Structural and institutional factors, as well as the nature of the policy dilemma at hand, determine who constitutes a veto player. In the British case, the unionists have at times served as veto players, but

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<sup>923</sup> Michael Bromley, "Writing Terrorism Out of the Story: Sunday Life and 'War Weariness' in Northern Ireland," in *Political Violence in Northern Ireland: Conflict and Conflict Resolution*, ed. O'Day, A., (London: Praeger, 1997).

<sup>924</sup> Although the historical alliance between the Unionist MPs and Conservatives did prove to be a veto on John Major's efforts to negotiate a political agreement in Northern Ireland.



overall, their power over the UK government had largely waned by the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – with one important exception during John Major’s government. Even without political leverage, however, the unionists and the implicit threat of a bloodbath in Northern Ireland in the event that British troops pulled out did serve as a serious check on UK policymaking. The security forces, which are generally positioned to play a veto role in security policymaking, did not exert a great deal of influence on the course of British policy in Northern Ireland. Other elements in the British bureaucracy had even less influence. For all the praise dotted on the American government for its role in the Good Friday Agreement talks, it had relatively little influence on the course of counterterrorism policy in Northern Ireland from the late 1960s to the late 1990s. Hindsight provides a level of clarity after the fact, but in the moment, successive governments worried about the possible resistance from these actors – even when they lacked the political or institutional leverage to formally stymie policy. This was especially true with regard to the security services.

#### **5.4.2.1 Security Services**

In general, the security forces are uniquely positioned to play the role of veto player in counterterrorism policymaking both because they are usually responsible for implementing some or many aspects of the policy and because they represent the state’s capacity to coerce. The latter poses a significant problem in countries with no, or a weak, tradition of civilian rule of the military, or those in which the military has performed domestic political functions, as was the case with the Philippines. This was not the case in the UK. The British security services exerted influence on the UK government’s

counterterrorism policy making process, but nothing tantamount to a veto, and certainly did not coerce prime ministers into heeding its concerns under the threat of coup. At the leadership level, the security forces expressed their views, which were often at odds with those of political leaders, through traditional channels (e.g. cabinet meetings). When they were ignored or dismissed, the security forces followed orders. At the implementation level, however, the military services exerted significant influence over policies and in doing so, ultimately impacted the UK government's political efforts to end the conflict.

In 1968, no one in the British government wanted the British military to get involved in Northern Ireland.<sup>925</sup> When the Battle of the Bogside broke out in Derry and more riots ensued in Belfast on August 12, 1969, the RUC was quickly overwhelmed. Images of the violence broadcast on TV and the Irish Taoiseach's call for UN intervention convinced Stormont that British military intervention was necessary.<sup>926</sup> Prime Minister Wilson reluctantly approved the dispatch of soldiers as an absolute last resort, against the advice of the military establishment. The Defence Secretary at the time, Denis Healey, "said on no account must we risk having to take over."<sup>927</sup>

The British armed forces can rarely be treated as a unitary body,<sup>928</sup> but on the issue of deployment to Northern Ireland, the military was categorically opposed. The

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<sup>925</sup> The UK government was desperate to keep the Army out, going to far as to urge lobby correspondents in London to leak the fact that the use of British troops to control public order in Northern Ireland would necessitate the abolition of Stormont and the introduction of direct rule, in order to keep pressure on the Unionist government to handle the situation. The Army, like the Prime Minister and Whitehall, was vehemently opposed to entering the conflict.

<sup>926</sup> Stormont did not initially want the British troops to intervene, as "their arrival would inevitably mean a loss of power for its Unionist government." David McKittrick, "Northern Ireland: The longest tour of duty is over," *The Independent*, July 31, 2007. As violence grew worse, on August 14, Stormont sent an appeal to James Callaghan, the Home Secretary, for military intervention. "Formal Message to Mr. Cairncross of the Home Office Given to him on the Telephone at 3:15 p.m. on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1969" available from [[http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1969/proni\\_HA-32-2-55\\_1969-08-14\\_a.pdf](http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1969/proni_HA-32-2-55_1969-08-14_a.pdf)].

<sup>927</sup> McKittrick, "Northern Ireland."

<sup>928</sup> This was certainly the case when it came to Northern Ireland. There was rivalry between the four major intelligence agencies operating in Northern Ireland: MI5, MI6, Army intelligence, RUC special branch.

Ministry of Defense (MoD) was very concerned about how the Northern Ireland deployment would impact other aspects of the national defense. The defense establishment was of the view that “the job of the British army was to defend the North German plain from the Red Army, not chasing around the backstreets of Belfast.”<sup>929</sup> The military was very concerned its involvement would cause it to be embarrassed internationally<sup>930</sup> or deplete its resources. As early as 1970, the Defence Secretary, Lord Carrington, complained to his Cabinet colleagues that “the maintenance of the garrison of Northern Ireland at its present level involved heavy expenditure and imposed a serious strain on the Army.”<sup>931</sup> A senior MoD official testifying before Parliament concluded that “Britain’s position in NATO could be jeopardised” if troop levels in Northern Ireland were not reduced.<sup>932</sup> The military expressed its opposition to successive prime ministers “clearly, dispassionately and with a precise estimate of the consequences likely to follow

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Bew, interview and Wilford, interview. Each agency had its own agenda and its own views on Northern Ireland. The London-based intelligence agencies had a more strategic view than the military’s intelligence. Hannigan, interview. From the early days of the Troubles, MI5 was talking to the PIRA through known Republicans, third parties, and clergy with connections. MI5 reached the view early on that PIRA’s demands were quite reasonable and that the UK government should just get out of Northern Ireland and let the two communities sort it out. This view, somewhat obviously, was predicated on the belief that Northern Ireland was not vital to the Union, but rather a colony of sorts, a view that was common among civil service but not necessarily the foreign office. Smith, interview. Moreover, MI5, which had operated bugs against IRA and Sinn Féin targets for years, was able to determine if the promises being made by IRA leaders in the back channel were reflected in intra-Republican debate and if directives were indeed trickling down to the rank and file. Hannigan, interview. The military was more attuned to preventing the next attack and therefore and therefore maintained a healthy skepticism about PIRA’s intentions. At the same time, the British Army had realized early on that the Troubles would not be solved militarily. Its extensive experience in counterinsurgency in the 20th century - Cyprus, Yemen, and Malaysia – convinced the military brass that Northern Ireland required a political, civil and economic strategy in addition to military action. While the British Army didn’t necessarily think the IRA were nice guys, but “institutionally we were well accustomed to the idea that the men and women we regarded as enemies would in the end be people that would be accepted as legitimate politicians, even if they had a very murky past.” Military skepticism about PIRA was therefore more about the timescale than about the ultimate outcome. Alistair Stuart Hastings Irwin, email interview, April 27, 2013.

<sup>929</sup> Quoting Roland Moyle, a Northern Ireland Office (NIO) minister in the mid-1970s, Neumann, “The Myth of Ulsterization,” 369.

<sup>930</sup> This was especially the case after President Carter refused allowed an arms sale to go through for the RUC, due to allegations of human rights violations.

<sup>931</sup> Neumann, “The Myth of Ulsterization,” 369.

<sup>932</sup> Ibid.

but never in public.”<sup>933</sup> When successive prime ministers chose policies that went against the preferences of the MoD, the latter followed orders. The role of the Secretary of State for Defense was to provide the troops, but his say beyond that was more limited, rendering him a minor player in the political discussions about the future of Northern Ireland.<sup>934</sup>

Once in Northern Ireland, the goals of the security forces often came into conflict with political objectives.<sup>935</sup> This was ironic given that when Wilson initially, and reluctantly, ordered the British Army into the North, he refrained from providing military brass with political objectives from which they could craft a military strategy. Rather, Wilson, Labour, the Conservatives - “No one seemed willing to think seriously about the Irish problem that offered so few political benefits for any British politician. Thus the Army had been sent into the North in August 1969 and left largely to its own devices.”<sup>936</sup> Throughout the 1970s, the only goal articulated for Northern Ireland was security.<sup>937</sup> When Whitelaw promoted his “softly, softly” approach, the military, unused to receiving direction, grew frustrated<sup>938</sup> as it watched helplessly as its hard-won successes evaporated and cleared areas of Belfast and Derry were returned to the Provos without a shot fired.<sup>939</sup> The Army viewed this strategy as having significant tactical consequences: intelligence

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<sup>933</sup> Irwin, email interview.

<sup>934</sup> Ibid.

<sup>935</sup> The military and government were not always at odds on Northern Ireland, there were preferences converged. For example, when Ulster Workers struck in 1974, there were reports that the Army was reluctant to act, and Wilson’s government refrained from doing so. Likewise, the British Army was reluctant to confront the Loyalist mobs that took to the streets after the signing of the Sunningdale Agreement. Lillis.

<sup>936</sup> Bell, 378.

<sup>937</sup> Hannigan, interview.

<sup>938</sup> Dixon “‘Hearts and Minds?’” 451

<sup>939</sup> Desmond Hamill, *Pig in the Middle: Army in Northern Ireland, 1969-84*, (London, Methuen 1985), 103.

sources dried up,<sup>940</sup> and troop morale suffered.<sup>941</sup> The concerns MoD raised were largely ignored. This occurred not only in reaction to conciliatory strategies but also hard-line military policies as well, to include internment, which the Army staunchly opposed. When the idea of internment was discussed, General Harry Tuzo, GOC Northern Ireland, argued that the policy was not justified and would have consequences for the security of military personnel, but he was overruled. There was a widespread feeling among military commanders on the ground that they had a better idea of what was going on in Northern Ireland than the bureaucrats or elected officials in London, who were naïve about the true intentions of the republicans.<sup>942</sup> This tension existed for the duration of the Army's time in Northern Ireland.<sup>943</sup> Nonetheless, and regardless of their concerns and objections, when overruled, the generals carried out their orders.<sup>944</sup>

The security services did, however, exert influence at the level of policy implementation, which had significant consequences for the government's strategy.<sup>945</sup> For example, although the UK does not have a significant leak culture,<sup>946</sup> there were some untimely leaks from the security services that embarrassed the government and made it

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<sup>940</sup> Dixon, "Hearts and Minds?" 459.

<sup>941</sup> Soldiers found it difficult to reconcile the job they were doing in Northern Ireland with the military career they had pursued. Ibid.

<sup>942</sup> Hamill, 107.

<sup>943</sup> Tensions ebbed during periods that involved a more kinetic orientation.

<sup>944</sup> There are exceptions where those orders were obviously illegal or ran counter to an officer's conscience, leaving him no option but to resign.

<sup>945</sup> In addition to high-level decisions about implementation, the misbehavior of individual soldiers or the lack of supervision of a unit could have significant consequences for the government's policy. For example, Paul Bew has argued that Bloody Sunday was the result of paratrooper culture run amok, an event that generated resentment against the British forces and support for PIRA. Bew, interview. For the most part, however, soldiers followed orders. Unlike the case of the Philippines, the UK benefited from having a professional army wherein "...junior officers and their soldiers have confidence that what they are being asked to do is both appropriate and has a legitimate purpose." Irwin, email interview.

<sup>946</sup> Brittan, interview, and Irwin, email interview.

more difficult to pursue its preferred policies.<sup>947</sup> At times, the focus on security clashed with the political strategies advanced by the UK government, deepening the frustration already felt by the security forces.<sup>948</sup> This capacity to influence the political environment through security tactics did not amount to a veto, far from it.

Although the British military was by all accounts highly professional and unlikely to try to undermine the government's political strategy in Northern Ireland, it does appear that successive prime ministers were somewhat concerned about the prospects of military opposition to particular counterterrorism policies. Army reluctance in Northern Ireland likely led Prime Minister Heath to keep the 1972 negotiations with the PIRA secret from the military.<sup>949</sup> It is unclear, however, what exactly Heath was concerned about – a coup, public critiques by generals, etc. There were indications that Heath was right to be concerned. It was well known that the Army had reacted angrily when it became apparent that decisions were being made without consulting the Army Command in Northern Ireland and the Chief of the General Staff in London.<sup>950</sup> As London became more assertive in pursuing some political strategies in Northern Ireland, the Army, which had

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<sup>947</sup> The vast majority is thought to have come from the RUC, but some were thought to have originated with the British security services. Hannigan, interview. Another example, albeit outside the period studied herein, was when the UK government asked the military to take down the security towers and cameras around Belfast and Derry that spied on Catholic neighborhoods after the Good Friday Agreement in order to appease a Sinn Féin demand. Citing the continued violence by RIRA and CIRA the military refused, irritating No. 10, and making it more difficult for the UK government to build political trust with the Republicans.

<sup>948</sup> The army had long been one of the most highly respected institutions in the country but it was increasingly accused of abuses and maligned in the media. When the PIRA began to target the Army in 1971, the death toll of soldiers mounted quickly. There was a families' campaign that attempted to drum up popular support for withdrawal. Antony Beevor, "The Army in Modern Society," in *The British Army, Manpower and Society Into the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Hew Strachan, (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

<sup>949</sup> Martin Dillon, *The Enemy Within*, (London: Doubleday, 1994), 115.

<sup>950</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

largely shaped the political and military policy for the province since it arrived in 1969, felt excluded from policy discussions.<sup>951</sup>

The military's acquiescence on Northern Ireland is both expected and simultaneously amazing: At the outset, the Army was reluctant to get involved in Northern Ireland. Its reticence grew as tens, and then hundreds, of its soldiers were killed, as it became obvious that the PIRA could not be defeated militarily. It opposed internment, yet facilitated it. It disagreed vehemently with Whitelaw's "softly, softly" approach, which surrendered hard-fought ground to the PIRA, yet it stood down as directed. The security forces voiced their opposition and concerns, but ultimately dutifully followed orders with little acting out. This tension between preferred course of action and duty led to some incredulity among senior Army officers that there hadn't been a coup in Britain in the early 1970s.<sup>952</sup> Despite their unspoken capacity to coerce political leaders on Northern Ireland, the British security forces stayed within the institutional and political confines of their second tier role and did not play a veto role in the Northern Ireland policymaking process.

#### **5.4.2.2 Secretary of State for Northern Ireland/Northern Ireland Office**

The most obvious other potential veto player within the cabinet was the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (SSNI), yet the SSNI never had enough power to exercise a veto. With the institution of direct rule in Northern Ireland, a separate Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and the position of SSNI were created, but that did not elevate the position to one of importance. Indeed, the SSNI was long a position where middling politicians

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<sup>951</sup> Dixon, "British policy towards Northern Ireland 1969–2000," 154.

<sup>952</sup> 'A Senior Officer,' "Military Coups: Could it Happen Here?" *The Spectator*, August 16, 1974: 10.

were exiled. Many early SSNIs did not feel in control of the region for which they had been given responsibility.<sup>953</sup>

The SSNI position did gain some degree of power as the Troubles continued and the UK paid more attention to the North. There were some particular powers that the SSNI alone could exercise that in theory lent the position significant authority, to include the capacity to call referendums on agreements and impose direct rule.<sup>954</sup> For example, although it is outside the period focused on herein, in 2000, when Northern Ireland's political parties were unable to strike a deal on decommissioning, SSNI Peter Mendelson dissolved Stormont and re-imposed direct rule. Such occasions were rare, however, and it was usually the prime minister who directed the most important aspects of Northern Irish affairs – security and its political future. The SSNI was further undermined by the fact that many of the parties to the conflict had direct access to No. 10, which the SSNI didn't necessarily have, and as such, the latter often bypassed the latter altogether.<sup>955</sup> Whatever limited power the position entailed, the SSNI was unlikely to be so inclined to use it in opposition to the prime minister. Moreover, the SSNIs were largely on the same wavelength with the prime ministers who appointed them and thus were unlikely candidates for dramatic unilateral action that was self-serving or in drastic contrast to the interests of No. 10. That said, the SSNIs were not obsequious. Peter Brooke, one of Thatcher's SSNIs, was told his job was to 'prevent the region from boiling over before

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<sup>953</sup> The SSNI lacked the leverage to effectively coordinate policy. This was evident in 1979, when GOC NI Lt-Gen Timothy Creasy was so frustrated with haphazard and disjointed nature of Northern Irish affairs that he tried to persuade Thatcher to appoint a "supremo" – exactly the role of the SSNI - to coordinate military and political strategy in the region in a more coherent way. Dixon, "Hearts and Minds'?" 469.

<sup>954</sup> SSNI Peter Mendelson re-imposed direct rule in 2000 when the PIRA failed to meet a UUP deadline for decommissioning and the UUP was threatening to walk out of Stormont. Direct rule was re-imposed – briefly – several times thereafter when the nationalists and unionists in Stormont were unable to work together.

<sup>955</sup> Hannigan, interview.



the general election; to try to tamp down violence but avoid making waves,' but he told me that he "largely disregarded that advice" and began in earnest trying to find a solution to the crisis there.<sup>956</sup> Brooke suggested that Thatcher had known him well before his appointment and must not have been totally surprised by his behavior. Any straying by a SSNI from the prime minister's preferred course of action was unlikely to be dramatic, however, as the latter could replace the SSNI at any time. The SSNI had limited influence on Northern Ireland policy, falling far short of anything close to a veto.

#### **5.4.2.3 Northern Ireland Office (NIO)/Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)**

Like the SSNI, the NIO did not exercise a veto over UK government policymaking on Northern Ireland. That said, the NIO did have a distinct point of view on the conflict and strategies to solve it. The NIO enjoyed a unique in-between existence: It was a Whitehall department, but enjoyed broad territorial authority rather than narrow functional responsibilities.<sup>957</sup> When the NIO was created, the Home Office and Foreign Offices initially staffed it, contributing to the nature of its outlook<sup>958</sup> and its fundamentally British unionist culture (as distinct from the narrower Ulster variant).<sup>959</sup> The NIO supervised the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), which was comprised of locals.<sup>960</sup> While in general the civil service in the UK is considered to be risk averse, the NICS was particularly so. The local civil service staff was more traditional, old fashioned, and wary of policy change. This risk aversion created tension with Whitehall

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<sup>956</sup> Brooke, interview.

<sup>957</sup> Compared to the other devolved administrations in Wales and Scotland, the NIO remains the most autonomous. Paul Carmichael, "The Northern Ireland Civil Service: Characteristics and Trends since 1970," *Public Administration*, Vol. 80, No. 1, 2002.

<sup>958</sup> Hannigan, interview.

<sup>959</sup> Carmichael, 27.

<sup>960</sup> The NICS got the best and brightest of Northern Ireland, largely because there was no private sector with which to compete. Hannigan, interview.

counterparts over how much risk was worth taking and what was seen to be possible.<sup>961</sup> Tensions were exacerbated by direct rule, but that waned and trust eventually grew as the NIO took over a large role in the day-to-day administration of social and economic matters in the North.<sup>962</sup> Likewise, there was friction when London tried to use crossover issues (i.e. education, housing) – especially with regard to their funding – as leverage on local unionist politicians, thus raising the costs of direct rule to force them into a power sharing arrangement, to which the NICS objected.<sup>963</sup> The NIO as a distinct entity from the SSNI did not exert additional influence on the policymaking process. The NICS had little to no leverage, but its use of occasional leaks had significant political ramifications.

#### **5.4.2.4 Parliament**

Parliamentary democracy provides the prime minister with exceptional powers. With executive-legislative authority integrated, the prime minister wields significant power over the bureaucracy and can steer the course and nature of policy. This power, however, is not unconditional. It requires the prime minister maintain a majority in Parliament and significant support from his/her party or coalition in order to whip members into voting with him/her. Theoretically, it is possible that a prime minister's pursuit of negotiations in Northern Ireland could be thwarted if he/she lacked support from his/her party or, in the event of a minority government, coalition partners. In reality, bipartisanship and the lack of significant party disagreement on Northern Ireland platforms made it hard to imagine anyone other than the unionist backbenchers trying to prevent a prime minister from pursuing a negotiations policy in Northern Ireland. Indeed,

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<sup>961</sup> Ibid.

<sup>962</sup> Carmichael.

<sup>963</sup> Hannigan, interview.

Thatcher lost unionist support over the AIA, but it was inconsequential because of the size of her majority. John Major did not enjoy the same margins, and he became increasingly reliant on unionist backbenchers to stay in power, and thus increasingly susceptible to unionist influence. Major's efforts to bring Sinn Féin into multiparty talks in Northern Ireland were stymied by his shrinking majority in Parliament, which required him to rely on the support of unionist backbenchers to stay in office. To appease the unionists, Major kept erecting obstacles to Sinn Féin's inclusion of talks. Thus, there are scenarios in which the Parliament – more specifically, unionist members within a diminishing Conservative coalition in Parliament – can serve as veto players in counterterrorism policymaking. Although much has been made of the unionist veto – often called the “Orange Card” – on British policy in Northern Ireland, it is unclear if it was actually tantamount to a veto during the Troubles other than during this particular period of Major's government.

#### **5.4.2.5 Unionists**

During Home Rule agitation at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Conservative Party acted with unionist MPs to block the Home Rule Bills. The unionist MPs and Conservative Party established a link that would last 80 years, but there were only two periods where the former enjoyed a formal lever over the Party. The unionists were long confident in their veto, but there were signs during the Troubles that the “Orange Card” was not as powerful as the unionists assumed. For example, Stormont kept asking London for more troops, but those requests were continually denied.<sup>964</sup> The British

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<sup>964</sup> Bell, 379.

government signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement, establishing a role for the Republic of Ireland in the North, despite fierce unionist opposition, suggesting the Orange Card was not weakened, but dead. Continued and expanded Irish involvement in subsequent Northern Ireland multiparty talks and agreements further undermined the power of the Orange Card. Under John Major, the Orange Card was strengthened when Major's majority in Parliament was fracturing and he needed the unionist backbenchers to pass the Maastricht Treaty.<sup>965</sup> He owed the unionists a "debt of honor" for Maastricht, and established a NI committee in Parliament as quid pro quo.<sup>966</sup> Major was not only in debt, but reliant on the unionists to take the party whip to survive as prime minister. As such, this period and the Home Rule Agitation at the turn of the century were the only two times the Orange Card served as a formal lever over policymaking in the UK government. Otherwise, the unionists had little institutional or political leverage in Parliament or over No 10. That is not to say that unionists, inside Parliament and out, didn't have considerable influence over the policymaking process.

The true nature of the Orange Card was not political, but based on a latent threat of a bloodbath in the event the British pulled out of Northern Ireland. Given the demographics and political, social, and economic conditions favored unionists, there was a concern that the majority, which was armed to the teeth and prepared to die to maintain the Union, would fight to the end to maintain its position in Northern Ireland. Thus the Orange Card was essentially the threat of mass violence in Northern Ireland that hung over British politicians and provided unionists with some leverage over the political

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<sup>965</sup> In the spring of 1971, Chichester-Clark had asked for 3,000 but he only got 1,300. Hannigan, interview.

<sup>966</sup> This was viewed as an integrationist move, as Northern Ireland had never had its own committee as had the other devolved departments: Wales and Scotland. The establishment of the committee seemed to bring Northern Ireland to the same status.

process there; any political leverage in Westminster was redundant.<sup>967</sup> The Orange Card created major roadblocks for the British government from the late 1960s to early 1980s, preventing any real consideration of the nuclear option and forcing the government to demonstrate some sympathy to unionist demands. By the mid-1980s, however, the UK government had grown tired of unionist intransigence. It excluded the radical unionist parties from the Anglo-Irish Agreement, with the justification that "...most Unionists were at that time so immured in their veto-proofed immunity from any other reality that they would have wrecked the negotiation process had they been included in it."<sup>968</sup> When it became clear that AIA was just the beginning, Sinn Féin might enter multiparty talks, and the Republic would only get more involved in Northern affairs, the unionist parties began to realize if they did not participate and compromise, it was possible that a far "greener" deal would be worked out without them. With that, the myth of their veto destroyed, unionist interests shifted and so did their approach to a political solution to the Troubles.

#### **5.4.2.6 Cabinet**

The Cabinet is the ultimate decision-making body in the Westminster system, although some have argued that the cabinet's powers have declined relative to the power of the prime minister, altering the power dynamic. As they were appointed by the prime minister, it was long thought that cabinet ministers did the former's bidding without protest. That is not necessarily the case. Cabinet members are most often plucked from the House of Commons or the House of Lords, and in the former case, they have

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<sup>967</sup> Wilford, interview.

<sup>968</sup> Lillis.

constituents to whom they are responsible. Cabinet members are susceptible to no confidence votes in Parliament, which would remove them from their seats, and as such, raise the stakes of their decisions. Thus, it should not be assumed that cabinet ministers acquiesce to every whim of the prime minister. For example, even though Margaret Thatcher enjoyed a large majority in Parliament that voted in step with her legislation, she could not rely on obsequious support from her cabinet ministers. Rather, on several key issues, including Northern Ireland, Thatcher found herself to be constrained by her cabinet.<sup>969</sup> One observer concluded that, “Thatcher diktats do not simply slide down the Cabinet table like castor oil,” and indeed, cabinet resistance prevented Thatcher from establishing ministerial groups skewed in favor of her preferred policies, which would not find support in the full cabinet.<sup>970</sup> Moreover, when SSNI James Prior proposed rolling devolution in the North in the early 1980s, Thatcher resisted, but there was significant pressure from within her cabinet and from the three former SSNIs, so she eventually relented.<sup>971</sup> The cabinet does not provide a rubber stamp for prime ministerial policy preferences, but in this case, there does not appear to have been any cabinet or particular cabinet member that successfully thwarted a prime minister from pursuing preferred counterterrorism policies in Northern Ireland in the period under examination.

#### **5.4.2.7 Home Office & Foreign Office**

Within the Cabinet, there are several ministers who represent portfolios with some jurisdiction or interest in Northern Ireland: In addition to Defense and the NIO, the Home

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<sup>969</sup> Dixon, “British policy towards Northern Ireland 1969–2000,” 354.

<sup>970</sup> Citing Peter Hennessy, *Cabinet*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986) 111, *Ibid.*

<sup>971</sup> *Ibid.*

Office and Foreign Office had some influence over Northern Ireland policymaking.<sup>972</sup>

The region was initially the purview of Home Office, and in those days it had more influence, if it had cared enough to use it. Once the SSNI position and NIO were created, the Home Office had much less influence.

The Foreign Office<sup>973</sup> had a particular interest in the conflict due to its the increasing internationalization. The Foreign Office through its Minister made its preferences on Northern Ireland known, and at times was able to influence policy, but it had nothing approaching a veto. Like the military, the Foreign Office took a wider view of Britain's national interests. The Foreign Office was very conscious of how UK policy in the North impacted Britain's relations with Ireland, Europe, and the US.<sup>974</sup> The latter was a subject of particular concern, motivated in part by their "special relationship," but largely born of practical concerns: British diplomats – as well as the military - relied on the US a good deal, so it impacted their jobs more broadly if relations were damaged.<sup>975</sup>

Within the UK, the aforementioned institutions were the primary potential veto players. With the exception of the unionists in Parliament who's leverage constituted a veto over policy toward the North at only two short periods in history, the aforementioned were unable to veto British policy on Northern Ireland, specifically the inclusion of Sinn Féin, the political wing of the PIRA, in multiparty peace talks. That said, there was considerable concern from successive prime ministers and their cabinets about the potential for opposition from any one of these institutions to impede the implementation of counterterrorism policies. Much like the mythical Orange Card,

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<sup>972</sup> Albeit more significant than NIO and NICS.

<sup>973</sup> Often collectively referred to as 'Whitehall.'

<sup>974</sup> Smith, interview.

<sup>975</sup> Ibid.

perceived and potential opposition served as a restraint on policymaking. For example, as previously mentioned, when Prime Minister Heath was concerned that the Army would disagree with his efforts to communicate with the PIRA in 1972, he kept the military out of the loop. His concern, however, did not prevent him from ordering his SSNI to meet with the PIRA. This example is indicative of the domestic political situation throughout the Troubles: While there may have been concern about potential opposition in the military or bureaucracy that influenced policymaking, it did not ultimately prevent British prime ministers from carrying out their preferred policies. In Parliament, the bipartisan agreement reduced the potential for the opposition to significantly influence Northern Ireland policy. It was only a particular configuration in Parliament whereby John Major relied on the unionists to stay in power that allowed the latter to exercise a brief veto. Otherwise the British government enjoyed a relatively conducive political environment – particularly with regard to public opinion - for negotiating with republican paramilitaries.

## **5.5 Third Party Influence?**

### **5.5.1 The United States**

An alternate factor in policymaking that garners a lot of attention, especially in the case of Northern Ireland, is the influence of third parties on negotiations. The United States' role in the Northern Ireland peace process has long been heralded. President Clinton reaps the most praise, with commentators frequently citing how he “fundamentally changed things...” and insisting “there is no question that President Clinton greatly advanced peace in Northern Ireland...”<sup>976</sup> While Bill Clinton and George

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<sup>976</sup> Trina Vargo, “Clinton’s Legacy Is US Support For Both NI Traditions,” *Irish Times*, December 9, 2000.



Mitchell played an instrumental role in facilitating the actual GFA negotiations, they and the United States more broadly had little to do with the onset of negotiations. The US had decidedly little influence over the shift in British policy to include Sinn Féin in negotiations.

Much to the dismay of the UK government and unionists, US politicians had long held republican sympathies: there was significant support for republican aims in Congress,<sup>977</sup> every presidential candidate courted the Irish-American vote, the republicans and the Irish Government were excellent at lobbying the US for support,<sup>978</sup> and the US government took positions that impacted the conflict in the North. The overtly pro-republican tone changed a bit under President Carter, who asked Americans to “refrain from supporting with financial or other aid,” any organization involved in violence in Northern Ireland.<sup>979</sup> That did not, however, translate into sympathy for unionists or a crack down on republican activities in the US: The Carter administration, in response to a request from the Republic, halted a private arms sale to the RUC in August 1979 out of concerns that the force used disproportionate force against the Catholic population, deeply embarrassing to the UK government. Similarly, Reagan made a speech on St. Patrick’s Day in 1983 asking Americans to “turn away from the moral bankruptcy of the

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<sup>977</sup> A group of Irish-American lawmaker, to include, Ted Kennedy, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Christopher Dodd, Tom Foley, Peter King, Richie Neel, and John Mackey were particularly sympathetic and vocal on the issue. Indeed, in March 1983, Senator Edward Kennedy proposed a Senate motion calling for a United Ireland!

<sup>978</sup> Compared to the British government and the Unionists, which did a poor job proactively explaining their policies in Northern Ireland and in the latter case, selling their side of the story. Unionists felt their stake in the US was never recognized, as compared to that of Republicans. That Americans didn’t realize their connection to Northern Ireland was an especially ironic and ungrateful twist of fate given that 16 American presidents trace their roots to the North. Reg Empey remembers visiting the North Carolina state house, outside of which is a statue of the state’s three native sons: Presidents Jackson, Polk, and Johnson. All three had descended from migrants from Northern Ireland, the North Carolinian officials had no idea. Reg Empey, interview by author, Belfast, March 1, 2013.

<sup>979</sup> Jimmy Carter, “Northern Ireland Statement of US Policy,” August 30, 1977, available from [<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=8014#axzz2jmuowBrz>].

men of violence” and deny support to terrorist groups in Northern Ireland.<sup>980</sup> Reagan, however, declined to explicitly mention the PIRA. His comments were indicative of US policy for the next decade: The US President made vague statements against the violence, but never explicitly criticized the republican terrorists or worked especially hard to curtail support to them. Indeed, the United States had long turned a blind eye to PIRA fundraising and gun smuggling in the US.

With regard to the onset of negotiations, the United States made three key contributions, which, while important, were not sufficient to shift British counterterrorism policy in Northern Ireland. First, on several occasions, at the prompting of the Irish government, the United States reached out the UK government to warn against pulling out of Northern Ireland. Second, by providing visas to Gerry Adams and other members of Sinn Féin, the Americans helped elevate Sinn Féin and Adams’ to a statesman-like status, push the party to the middle politically, and convince them of its political future.<sup>981</sup> Third, the concurrent shift in American rhetoric about Northern Ireland, from a pro-republican stance to a more neutral position under Clinton, helped unionists see the US as an honest broker and ultimately helped the US in its facilitation role in the peace process.<sup>982</sup> This was an important development: Although the focus is usually on terrorist splinters who try to spoil the process and the within government

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<sup>980</sup> Francis X. Clines, “Reagan Assails ‘Men of Violence’,” *The New York Times*, March 18, 1983.

<sup>981</sup> When Adams raised money in the US for Sinn Féin it became abundantly clear that he and the party had a viable future post-PIRA violence. The trip, however, served as golden handcuffs: All the status and potential wealth it promised would disappear in the event that PIRA returned to a military campaign. The visa – loudly denounced across the Atlantic – had a significant impact on the trajectory of PIRA and Sinn Féin. Hannigan, interview.

<sup>982</sup> Under Clinton, the US finally recognized that the Unionist tradition was just as valid as the Republican one, the Congress shifted to a more neutral stance, and Unionists had access to the White House and Congress in a way they never had before. Empey, interview. For example, whereas 100 Congressmen had pressured the State Department to revoke an issue to Ian Paisley in 1981, now Paisley and other Unionist politicians found themselves increasingly invited to visit Congress.

spoilers, the mainstream unionist parties were a key to the success of all party talks and a comprehensive peace would not have been possible without them. The shift in US rhetoric also influenced Sinn Féin's calculus, which had taken for granted that as long as the US was sympathetic to the party, it had leverage on the UK government.<sup>983</sup> When it realized the US was shifting, Sinn Féin/PIRA realized continued violence would be met with stiffening resistance by the Americans, their traditional champions and backers. Ultimately, despite this and the other types of influence the United States exerted on the trajectory of the process, outside influence, even by a superpower, was not sufficient to pressure the United Kingdom to pursue negotiations with Sinn Féin when it did not see the utility of doing so.<sup>984</sup>

### **5.5.2 European Union**

The other third parties that receive some credit in the Irish peace process are the European Union (EU) and the Republic of Ireland. There is general agreement that the EU did not have a significant role in influencing the direction of the Northern Ireland peace process, despite the pressures of the ascension process, EU funds to Northern Ireland, or pressure exerted by the Human Rights Court.<sup>985</sup> Ultimately, this pressure was minimal and did not appear to change the UK's course of policy. Membership in the EU, however, was particularly helpful in facilitating communication between the Irish and British governments at a time when the two had little contact and helped the two governments realize their common interests in the North.<sup>986</sup>

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<sup>983</sup> Patrick Mayhew, interview with author, London, March 12, 2013.

<sup>984</sup> Hannigan, interview.

<sup>985</sup> Empey, Hannigan, Pike, and Mayhew interviews.

<sup>986</sup> John Kerr, email interview, April 7, 2013.

### **5.5.3 The Irish Republic**

Given its role as a quasi-state sponsor of the republican movement, the Republic's involvement in agreements with the United Kingdom over Northern Ireland influenced the trajectory of the PIRA. The Irish government had at times provided explicit – or at least tacit – support for the republican cause,<sup>987</sup> and with its claim to the North, the Republic gave rhetorical support and lent legitimacy to the republican paramilitaries. Irish support began to change with the signing of Sunningdale and the AIA, which reiterated the UK's legitimate role in Northern Ireland, undercutting the Republic's historic goal of achieving Irish unity. With time, the Irish government's rhetoric began to change – no longer did it publically bewail its lost counties, but rather it raised the prospect of amending the Constitutional claim to the region. Concurrently, there was a shift in the Republic's actions: Around the same time, the government began stepping up counterterrorism operations South of the border, making it more difficult for the PIRA to operate across the border. The Irish, although not a veto player over British counterterrorism policy, helped influence Sinn Féin/PIRA's acceptance of multiparty talks.

### **5.6 Conclusion**

This case study of UK policymaking on Northern Ireland is presented against the integrated theory outlined in Chapter 3 in an effort to understand what conditions influenced the British government to pursue negotiations with the PIRA. As theorized,

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<sup>987</sup> The Irish government was concerned about IRA actions within its borders. It also did not want to incur the wrath of the IRA and find itself in the group's crosshairs. It has even been alleged that the Fianna Fáil supported the IRA in a deal that required the Provos not to attack Dublin.

certain conditions in both the strategic environment and the domestic political arena must be met for a state to view a negotiations counterterrorism strategy as advantageous. On the strategic front, terrorist groups must demonstrate they are capable of enduring and coercing to be considered for negotiations. As a second order concern, state executives consider terrorist groups' capacity and credibility to commit to a future negotiated settlement in light of three observable characteristics – group size, type, and fractionalization. Even if thought to be expedient, state executives will only pursue a negotiations counterterrorism strategy when they are able to navigate the domestic political environment without threatening their positions. In this regard, public opinion and veto players are critical in determining if state leaders can create the political space necessary for pursuing a conciliatory counterterrorism policy.

The shift in British counterterrorism policy in Northern Ireland is best appreciated through this dual lens of strategic opportunities and domestic obstacles. In reviewing the history of the conflict, shifts in the strategic environment are key for understanding why the conflict became ripe for resolution: After years of bloodshed, the conflict persisted and the violent group at the helm of the Republican movement – the PIRA - showed signs that it could continue fighting for years despite concerted efforts to defeat it. The violence and heavy costs of security and maintaining the basic way of life in the North<sup>988</sup> helped

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<sup>988</sup> Once a prosperous part of the Union, the North's prosperity declined in the 1950s as the economies for shipbuilding and textiles and engineering shifted. The financial woes of the region were exacerbated by the outbreak of violence in 1968. In 1990, it was estimated that the cost of the Troubles to the British and Irish Governments was £410 million. (CAIN, "A Chronology of the Conflict – 1990," available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch90.htm>].) This does not include the £1 billion in compensation the NIO has paid out for 'Troubles'-related incidents. The costs of maintaining security, and life, in Northern Ireland led Lord Gowrie, then a Northern Ireland Office (NIO) Minister "... if the people of Northern Ireland wished to join with the South of Ireland, no British government would resist it for twenty minutes." (Paul Bew and Gordon Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: A Chronology of the Troubles, 1968-1993*, (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1993), 163.) The economic depression of the North did not drastically improve with the decline in violence and a political settlement, Northern Ireland drains over £3 billion annually from the

diminish the region's value eyes of the British government and reinforced the "otherness" of Northern Ireland among the mainland British public. Several British prime ministers considered unilateral withdrawal, but once the Irish made it clear they did not want unification, the threat of a civil war 70 km off Britain's coast was enough to keep the UK government involved in the North. Under these circumstances, the British government came to recognize a political solution was necessary to solve the Northern Ireland conflict, but initial efforts sought to exclude and marginalize the Republican paramilitaries. Eventually, after several failed attempts, the UK government recognized it needed to include the paramilitaries namely the PIRA, in a political settlement, but the question was how.

Concurrent with this revelation were other strategic changes that made it possible for the UK government to consider negotiating with the PIRA. Around this time, the PIRA began to demonstrate signs of moderating, which helped encourage a reluctant UK government to consider its potential as a negotiating partner. Just as the British government realized it could not defeat the PIRA, so too did the PIRA recognize it could not coerce the British government into withdrawing from the North. The PIRA began to examine the possibility of pursuing its goals by constitutional means. In 1982, the response to the hunger strike forced the British to acknowledge that Sinn Féin/PIRA represented a large swatch of the Catholic population of Northern Ireland. Sinn Féin was likewise inspired start contesting elections in Northern Ireland, to great support.

Concurrently, there were signs that the PIRA was moderating both in tactics and in its demands. When a message from McGuinness came over the backchannel declaring that

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British treasury while increased security and border patrols cost the Irish Republic over one-quarter of its annual budget. Landon Hancock, "Northern Ireland: Troubles Brewing," 1998, available from [<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/landon.htm>].

the war was over but the PIRA needed help bringing it to an end, it was the culmination in a shift in the group that the British government had been observing for some years. The group's 1994 and 1997 ceasefires helped demonstrate the PIRA's capacity to control its foot soldiers and even the members of other republican groups, enhancing its credibility.

The timing of this shift was opportune as it coincided with changes in the larger strategic environment that aided in the UK's decision to negotiate with the PIRA. First, the Cold War was over, which allowed the government to allocate significant time and resources on the Northern Ireland problem that it would not have garnered if there were other looming threats to the UK's security.<sup>989</sup> Second, the PIRA moderated before the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, which significantly shifted American and British attitudes towards republican terrorist groups and resulted in greater legal obstacles to negotiating with groups classified as terroristic. Lastly, there was an urgency in the time running up to the Good Friday process, as it looked as though the violence in Northern Ireland was on the verge of getting much worse: the loyalist paramilitaries were gaining traction;<sup>990</sup> the republican movement was under pressure and without some change, it might splinter in unpredictable ways. While conditions in the strategic environment were favorable, there was concern that they might not hold, and thus there might be a finite window for pursuing negotiations to end the conflict in Northern Ireland. A British prime minister, however, would not be able to take advantage of these conditions, if doing so imperiled his/her position.

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<sup>989</sup> This was especially important with regards to American involvement. It is hard to imagine that the leader of the free world would have been able to get down in the weeds of the GFA talks had the Cold War not been over. Indeed, Bill Clinton gave the GFA talks so much personal attention that he was often fielding phone calls in the middle of the night from Adams and Trimble.

<sup>990</sup> Empey, interview.

The UK government faced far fewer domestic constraints on its counterterrorism policymaking than other countries. The bipartisan agreement protected the prime minister and his/her party from attacks from the opposition over Northern Ireland. Combined with the refusal of all mainland political parties to contest elections in the North, bipartisanship helped ensure Northern Ireland would never become a general election issue. These policies did not cause, but merely exacerbated, the British public's apathy toward Northern Ireland. The British mainland public always viewed the North as 'a place apart,' and as violence exploded there, that view gained credence as did support for withdrawal. The public's preferences, however, had little impact on the policymaking process, which had been thoroughly insulated from Northern Irish affairs. That is not to say that elected officials did not worry about the public's response to counterterrorism policies, particularly with regard to the prospect of backchannel communications with the PIRA being leaked to the media, but ultimately public opinion on Northern Ireland had very little influence on policymaking.

As importantly, there were few veto players within and outside of the British government with the capacity to prevent the pursuit of negotiations with the PIRA. The Army, the most important potential veto player, was astoundingly professional in carrying out orders from the government even when they were at odds with military preferences and despite oscillating policy directives, frustration with politicians in London, and the deaths of hundreds of its soldiers. No other players – even the SSNI – had the power to veto the government's negotiations policy. The only actors that exercised that capacity – albeit briefly – were the unionist backbenchers in Parliament whom John Major needed to stay in power. Apart from this brief interlude, the unionist



veto – the Orange Card – as a means of actual political leverage was largely overblown. That said, the very real threat of unionist violence in the North served as a check of sorts on policymaking, albeit one that was ultimately unable to prevent negotiations with the PIRA because it had been eroded by unionist political party participation in the peace process. Generally speaking, the British prime minister has significant room to navigate when drafting policy, but this case study suggests successive prime ministers in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century still felt encumbered by the potential of public blowback and concerns about the Army and unionist opposition.

Concerns about potential opposition and structural constraints led to a fairly consistent policy on Northern Ireland from the early 1970s to the late 1990s. Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald once memorably decried that “Because there’s a Northern Ireland Secretary people think there’s a Northern Ireland policy – but there isn’t.”<sup>991</sup> In viewing each major party’s Northern Ireland policies while in opposition one might be tempted to side with FitzGerald: whereas the Conservative Party designed an integrationist stance with few compromises for the Catholic community in opposition 1979, the left wing of Labour pushed the Party to adopt a “Troops Out” position in the 1980s. Once in power, however, both Labour and the Conservative Party were forced to shift their policies to reflect the political realities at home and the conflict’s strategic conditions. Across governments and regardless of party, UK policy toward Northern Ireland was fairly stable. Major shifts only occurred when it became readily apparent to the government that a military campaign alone could not solve the conflict, a negotiated solution was necessary, and any settlement would need to involve the republican paramilitaries,

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<sup>991</sup> Citing David McKittrick, “FitzGerald attacks inept Britain” *The Independent*, [London] June 7, 1989, O’Leary, 675.

namely the PIRA. The remaining question was how to involve the group. It took the British over a decade to figure this last part out. It was only when the UK government was free from unionist leverage and the PIRA had demonstrated its willingness and ability to negotiate a solution to the conflict, that the UK pursued peace talks.

## Chapter 6

### *The Philippines Case Study*

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter evaluates Philippine counterterrorism policymaking during the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century against the theoretical argument outlined in Chapter 3. The Philippine case is well-suited to the task - both when compared to the Northern Ireland and Israel case studies offered in the previous chapters, but also as a within-case study. The Philippines offers intra-case variation on the strategic variables and the dependent variables, which allows us to examine variations in the state's counterterrorism policies toward different groups. The Philippines also offers an interesting example of domestic political obstacles to counterterrorism policymaking not seen in the other cases. Ultimately, this chapter will demonstrate that - as expected - the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) only pursued genuine strategic negotiations with terrorist challengers when both the state had come to view its opponents as a capable foe and credible partner for peace and the domestic political environment allowed the president the necessary space to pursue negotiations.

The Philippines provides intra-case variation because the GRP has been under attack by two insurgencies<sup>992</sup> – the Moro insurgency and the communist one, each of which is comprised of numerous violent groups. The differences between these two insurgencies and the various groups within them allows for significant variation on the strategic independent variables (i.e. group endurance, size, type, fractionalization) and

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<sup>992</sup> The dominant groups in both conflicts are often thought as insurgent in nature: they largely target the military and government installations. That said, each of the groups considered herein has engaged in significant terrorist violence and therefore qualifies as terrorist organizations for the purposes of this study (as well as most terrorism datasets and analysis on the subject).

dependent variables (i.e. negotiations). As theorized, endurance and market share are key to understanding when the state employed a negotiations counterterrorism strategy. Most importantly, as this chapter shows, group type is essential for understanding when states chose to negotiate. A comparison of the counterterrorism policies pursued in response to each insurgency in the Philippines provides support for the argument that states view ethnonationalist terrorist groups as better negotiating partners than their ideological contemporaries.

The Philippine case study offers an interesting illustration of how domestic factors can prevent state executives from pursuing their preferred counterterrorism policies. The theory laid out in Chapter 3 hypothesizes that state executives will not pursue negotiations – even if strategic factors are favorable - if the domestic political environment is not conducive for doing so. Specifically, executives will not be able to pursue negotiations if public opinion and/or key veto players are solidly against them. As will become evident, public opinion did not play an important role in counterterrorism policymaking in the Philippines during the period examined. In contrast, veto players are central to understanding the onset of negotiations in the Philippine case. Despite their interest in pursuing negotiations with the Moros, several Philippine presidents were prevented from doing so by the military. As this chapter will demonstrate, it was only when the military acquiesced, that the Philippine government began to earnestly pursue peace talks with the Moros.

This chapter begins with an overview of the Moro and communist insurgencies and the evolution of the government's policy towards the various groups involved. The history is divided into four periods, each characterized by a distinct set of strategic

opportunities and domestic obstacles for counterterrorism policymaking. Each period is assessed to determine if during that time the state viewed negotiations with a terrorist challenger as advantageous and if the domestic conditions made it feasible for the executive to pursue them. To determine whether the state viewed each terrorist challenger as a capable and credible opponent, three key characteristics are examined – size, type, and cohesiveness. This chapter concludes that the Moro groups' ethnonationalist type was instrumental in the government privileging them in negotiations over the NPA, despite the latter's size and capacity to coerce. Domestically, the key players and forces in Philippine policymaking are analyzed in order to determine if successive presidents had the domestic political maneuverability to employ a negotiations counterterrorism strategy. This chapter concludes that the Philippine armed forces held a veto over counterterrorism policymaking for much of the period examined, and it was only after the military relented that the Philippine president could pursue serious talks with the Moros. Although, as the next section attests, there have been many negotiation efforts by the government with both of the main Moro groups, very few of these overtures represent genuine efforts to find a negotiated solution to the conflict, but rather were undertaken to assuage third party pressure or undermine support for the terrorists. As this chapter demonstrates, it was only after the violent conflict dragged on for decades, other counterterrorism strategies failed, and the military opposition to negotiations waned that the Philippine government seriously pursued negotiations with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and eventually came to even consider the possibility of negotiations with the communist New People's Army (NPA).

## **6.2 The Moro and Communist Conflicts & Policy Responses**

The Philippines has been besieged by two large-scale insurgencies for the last sixty years. The first conflict, a Maoist insurgency spearheaded by the New People's Army has been a battle over the political organization of the state. The second conflict over the stewardship of the southern part of the country involved a series of terrorist groups – mostly ethnonationalist in nature – challenging the government's claim to Mindanao. Each insurgency has at one time or another constituted a serious challenge to Philippine governance, but the government's approach to each conflict has been varied.

This case study examines Philippine counterterrorism policy for the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and then some. Over that stretch of time, there appear to be four relatively distinct periods characterized by different strategic and domestic conditions that influenced Philippine counterterrorism policymaking. The first period was the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship, when the communist and Moro terrorist groups were still developing. Although domestically, Marcos enjoyed free reign in crafting policy, he saw no utility in negotiating with the NPA or the MNLF/MILF, which he was confident the Philippine security forces could defeat militarily. Pressure from outside third parties compelled Marcos to engage in superficial talks with the MNLF, but was not enough to spark genuine negotiations. The second period covers the Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos' presidencies, during which there was a softening towards both the NPA and the Moro insurgents, but neither president enthusiastically pursued negotiations because of domestic political constraints – namely the opposition of the armed forces. Moreover, both Aquino and Ramos viewed making peace with the communist and Moro insurgents

as secondary in importance to their primary goals – democratization, and development and reorientation of the military, respectively. Ramos, a military man himself, was ultimately able to sign a weak agreement with the MNLF, but encountered military opposition to dealing with its splinter group the MILF and the NPA. The third period constitutes Joseph Estrada’s presidency, by which time, both insurgencies had demonstrated their capacity to endure and coerce, but the military remained convinced it could defeat them. Under Estrada, the Philippine government backtracked from the softer position of his predecessors and launched an all out war to destroy the main terrorist challengers. Estrada was in part motivated by domestic political concerns, namely shoring up his support within the military and establishing a tough guy reputation. The fourth period starts during the presidency of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo but comes into fruition under Benigno Aquino III. Under Arroyo, the military began to change its position on negotiations, particularly with regard to the Moro groups, which it finally seemed to understand. Talks with the MILF began under Arroyo, but the peace process collapsed when the Supreme Court declared the agreement the government had just negotiated with the MILF illegal. This shift in attitude helped open up the domestic space necessary for talks with the MNLF and MILF. Arroyo remained, however, dedicated to eradicating the NPA, but was unable to do so before leaving office. After coming to power, Aquino III announced that his administration would be unable to meet Arroyo’s goal, and vowed to find a political solution to the conflict. Aquino was able to jump start negotiations with the MILF and eventually signed a peace deal with the group in 2014. Even after doing so, the government remained lukewarm about pursuing negotiations

with the NPA, which it continued to view as a mediocre negotiating partner.

### **6.2.1 Period I – 1960s-1986: Dictatorship, Budding Conflicts, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Pressure**

The communist insurgency in the Philippines – led by the New People’s Army - has its origins in the Huk rebellion against the Japanese invasion of the Philippines during WWII.<sup>993</sup> Out of the leftist remnants of the Huk rebellion,<sup>994</sup> the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (Communist Party of the Philippines (known as CPP)) emerged in 1968.<sup>995</sup> Founded by Jose Maria Sison, the CPP sought to overthrow the Philippine government and establish a national democratic state. To further its Maoist-inspired protracted people’s war, Sison asked the former Huk commander to help establish CPP’s military wing – the New People’s Army (NPA) - from existing Huk troop battalions.<sup>996</sup> Initially, the NPA did not dominate the leftist movement in the country, nor did it constitute a

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<sup>993</sup> The Japanese invasion of the Philippines during WWII sparked a peasant resistance movement, Hukbong Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon (People’s Army Against the Japanese – it changed its name to Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan or the People’s Liberation Army in 1950). The organization was built on top of a series of existing peasant unions organized to protest against landlords. Widely known widely as Huks, the revolutionaries – numbering in the tens of thousands - sought to expel the imperial Japanese and establish a communist country. When the war ended in 1945 and the tenancy situation failed to stabilize, the Huks continued fighting against the US colonial government. US concern prompted a significant increase in military aid and the Philippine expanded to meet the challenge. The Huks established a political party - Pambansang Kaisahan ng Magbubukid (PKM) or National Peasants Union - to lobby for Huk goals in Manila. When these efforts proved futile, the Huks returned to guerrilla warfare. Independence from the US did not shift the Philippine approach to the Huks, which intensified as the Roxas administration came to view the Huks as communists that needed to be suppressed and mounted to heavy-handed military campaign against the guerillas. The expanding Philippine military began to make inroads against the insurgents and the “hearts and minds” campaign launched by the Magsaysay administration resulted in thinned ranks and support. In 1954, Luis Taruc, the Huk leader, surrendered, and by 1955, there were less than a thousand Huk fighters left.

<sup>994</sup> After the Huk rebellion, the leftist movement in the Philippines declined until the 1960s sparked a renewed interest in Marxism. One of the prominent organizations at the time was the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (Communist Party of the Philippines (PKP, eventually known as PKP-1930)). In the mid-1960s, a rift within the leadership of the PKP-1930 occurred Jose Maria Sison, leader of the youth movement, began to agitate for changes in the group. When he was expelled from the group, Sison founded his own Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (Communist Party of the Philippines (known as CPP)) in December 1968.

<sup>995</sup> The original PKP worked to marginalize Sison’s CPP, but the latter was making huge gains due to its youth network and Maoist (as compared to Leninist) orientation.

<sup>996</sup> Under the direction of Commander Dante (Bernabe Buscayno).



significant military threat to the Philippine state. For the first decade plus of its existence, the Philippine armed forces viewed the NPA as “an unthreatening assortment of poorly armed mavericks roaming the hills.”<sup>997</sup> Indeed, the NPA started with just sixty some odd fighters, nine automatic rifles, and 26 single shot pistols,<sup>998</sup> but its coercive capacity grew as did its influence within the left.<sup>999</sup> While its rivals on the left worked to undermine the CPP-NPA, the latter was gaining recruits relative to other organizations due to its youth network and Maoist (as compared to Leninist) orientation. Likewise, the NPA was expanding its reach and capacity. This was driven in part by Sison’s diversification strategy to extend the NPA’s reach beyond Luzon and establish relations with Beijing. The NPA’s growth was also spurred by President Ferdinand Marcos’ increasingly hard-line policies. Marcos cited the NPA when he declared martial law in 1972, which only elevated the group’s status. Martial law and the heavy-handed military action<sup>1000</sup> that accompanied it motivated several alliances between the CPP-NPA and local communities, unions, and the Church, and bolstered NPA recruitment.<sup>1001</sup> Furthermore, the exploitation of resources by Marcos’ cronies and beautification drives alienated many poor Filipinos who were ripe for recruitment or inspired to provide logistical support for the NPA.

Despite the growing strength of the NPA, Marcos and the armed forces remained convinced they could crush the group militarily. Indeed, the Armed Forces of the

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<sup>997</sup> William Chapman, *Inside the Philippine Revolution: The New People’s Army and its Struggle for Power*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co, 1988), 23.

<sup>998</sup> Armando Liwanag, *Brief Review of the History of the Communist Party of the Philippines: On the Occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its Reestablishment*, December 26, 1988, 10.

<sup>999</sup> Initially, the relationship provided legitimacy and some Chinese weapons.

<sup>1000</sup> Marcos also created self-defense units in local areas made of volunteers, which were armed and trained by the government to fight the NPA when attacked, which also impacted the NPA’s capacity. Cesar Emilio Aguinaldo Virata, interview with author, June 19, 2013, Makati City.

<sup>1001</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), “The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines: Tactics and Talks: Asia Report No 202,” February 14, 2011, 3.

Philippines (AFP) launched an offensive against the NPA in the 1970s that dealt devastating losses to the group. The military launched a series of offenses that killed more than 10,000 fighters and confiscated more than 2,000 weapons in the mid-1970s.<sup>1002</sup> In 1977, Sison was arrested, as were hundreds of other NPA troops. As he would later do with the Moro conflict, Marcos worked to neutralize outside influence on his handling of the communist insurgency.<sup>1003</sup> Marcos went to China to meet with Mao and persuaded him to refrain from arming the NPA rebels. Although they supported the CPP-NPA in principal, the Chinese cared more about the maintenance of US military bases in the Philippines as a means for countering Soviet expansion or influence,<sup>1004</sup> and thus agreed to withdraw material support for the NPA.<sup>1005</sup> With dwindling Chinese support and mounting defeats at the hands of the AFP, the NPA found itself severely weakened. Feeling confident the NPA had been dealt a deathblow, the government shifted its attention (and troops) to Mindanao to quell the Moro conflict.

The Moro<sup>1006</sup> conflict had origins in the Spanish and US colonizations of the Philippines, but the tensions it fueled came to a head in the same year that the NPA was

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<sup>1002</sup> Marilen J. Danguilan, "Bullets and Bandages: Public Health as a Tool of Engagement in the Philippines," June 1999, Research Paper No. 161, 20, available from [<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/takemi/files/2012/10/rp161.pdf>], accessed on August 27, 2013.

<sup>1003</sup> At the time, the Philippines did not have relations with China, which were very controversial and the prospect of which generated significant opposition in congress. Once Marcos had instituted martial law and he did not have to consider the limitations imposed by Congress. At the time, there was a group of notable people who were very nationalist (Speaker of House, Mayor of Manila) who would block any move to establish relations with China. So when Marcos initiated martial law, didn't have to worry about this opposition, and met with Mao and began to establish relations. Virata, interview.

<sup>1004</sup> Lillian Craig Harris, Robert L. Worden, eds., *China and the Third World: Champion Or Challenger?* (Dover, MA: Auburn House, 1986), 143.

<sup>1005</sup> Mao, however, warned Marcos that there was not a "tariff barrier" on ideology. Virata, interview.

<sup>1006</sup> Used interchangeably herein with Bangsamoro. Bangsamoro is derived from the Malay word *bangsa*, which means nation and the Spanish word *moro*, the Spanish word for Moor, the Reconquista-period term used for Muslims.

founded – 1968.<sup>1007</sup> For more than half a century, land laws that sought to ease agrarian conflicts in the northern islands, while simultaneously encouraging Moro integration, had generated tensions largely along religious fault lines in Mindanao and beyond.<sup>1008</sup> In March 1968, long-simmering hostilities exploded into violence when Muslim army recruits from Sulu and Tawi-Tawi were massacred by the military on Corregidor Island during a special training exercise.<sup>1009</sup> The incident awakened Moro consciousness and sparked Moro activism, to include student groups, political organizations, and eventually, terrorist organizations. In 1969, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), a nationalist group dedicated to the foundation of an independent Moro nation, was formed by Nor Misuari.<sup>1010</sup> The MNLF soon proclaimed itself a political party with the goal of achieving independence for the Bangsamoro people from the Philippine government.

Within a few years, the MNLF launched an insurgency against the Philippine government

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<sup>1007</sup> When the Spanish colonized the Philippines, they never succeeded in bringing the Sulu archipelago under their reign. The southern islands of Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, and the southern part of the island of Palawan were largely populated by Muslims of Malay heritage, which were called Bangsamoro by the Spanish (today they are often referred to as the Moros). When the Spanish-American war ended in 1898, the Treaty of Paris transferred Spain's Philippine colony to the United States. The Treaty included the lands of the Sulu archipelago despite the fact that they had never been under Spain's control. Philippine revolutionaries immediately declared war against the United States, sparking the Philippine-American War. After the most intense fighting subsided in 1902, the US passed a series of legislation that sought to ease agitation over agrarian conflicts in the northern islands, while simultaneously encouraging Moro integration, by opening up land holdings in Mindanao to Christians from Luzon. In practice, these laws stripped many Moros of their land and allowed Christian migrants to take them over.

<sup>1008</sup> Under the American Colonial Administration, Land Registration Act 496 (6 November 1902) required registration and titling of all lands occupied by private individuals and corporations. This replaced all past existing Moro and Lumad land tenure arrangements. Act 718 (4 April 1903) nullified all land grants from Moro Sultans or Datus and chiefs of non-Christian tribes without prior government authority and consent. Public Land Act 926 (7 October 1903) permitted individuals to acquire a homestead land of 16 hectares and every corporation to claim titled land of 1,024 hectares. In 1936, the homestead rights for non-Christians were reduced from 10 to 4 hectares. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, "Competing Claims over Land is one of the Root Cause and Trigger of Conflict in Mindanao," available from [[http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/\(httpEnvelopes\)/658548A8400046B8C12572820035EA38?OpenDocument](http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/658548A8400046B8C12572820035EA38?OpenDocument)], accessed on July 18, 2013.

<sup>1009</sup> The Moro military trainees were apparently murdered by their superiors to prevent them from leaking the news that they were being trained to infiltrate Sabah, Malaysia to foment unrest among the Muslim population there. Fermin Adriano and Thomas Parks, *The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflict and International Development Assistance – The Case of Mindanao*, The Asia Foundation, June 2013, 29.

<sup>1010</sup> Misuari was a nationalist lecturer from the University of the Philippines.

and soon expanded its attacks to include civilians. The violent conflict accelerated rapidly, causing the deaths of thousands of Mindanao civilians and AFP soldiers.<sup>1011</sup>

While the MNLF started with only several hundred fighters, within a few years it had grown into a formidable force. By 1976, the MNLF's military wing – the Bangsa Moro Army (BMA) - was thought to have 6,900 fighters; a year later, the group reached its maximum strength with over 21,000 guerrillas.<sup>1012</sup> Beyond its ranks, the MNLF (and later its splinter group and main rival, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)) enjoyed extensive support in much of Mindanao and other parts of the southern Philippines. In 1975, it was thought that the MNLF had the support of 55% of the Muslim population in the Philippines and given there were 2.2 million Muslims in the country at the time, that was a significant support base.<sup>1013</sup> Its ranks and extensive support helped facilitate the MNLF's coercive capacity. The group was able develop an extensive support infrastructure, including its own advanced weapons production capacity and its attack tactics grew more sophisticated. By the mid-1970s, the group was mounting seaborne raids on Christian villages in Mindanao, burning down buildings and sometimes occupying towns;<sup>1014</sup> mounting direct attacks on AFP troops, and conducting indiscriminate bombing and grenade attacks on civilian targets.

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<sup>1011</sup> Concurrently, land conflicts escalated, tensions mounted between Moro and Christian neighbors, and the economy of the region stagnated.

<sup>1012</sup> Merliza M. Makinano and Alfredo Lubang, "Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: The Mindanao Experience," prepared for the International Security Research and Outreach Programme, Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, February 2001, 29.

<sup>1013</sup> Lela Garner Noble, "The Moro National Liberation Front in the Philippines," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Autumn, 1976), 413.

<sup>1014</sup> That year, the MNLF began a series of seaborne attacks on largely Christian towns, in one, they burned down the town hall of Davao del Norte, and attacked private homes in others.<sup>1014</sup> "Philippine Moslems Expanding Attacks," *The New York Times*, July 31, 1978, A3. For example, in September 1974, MNLF rebels supported by mortar fire stormed Balabagan in Lanao del Sur Province, and held the town for 8 days before they were driven out by the AFP. "Manila Reports New Rebel Action," *The New York Times*, September 22, 1974.

Marcos' approach to the Moro insurgency differed from his approach to the communist one, in part because of differences in the types of terrorist groups fighting in each and their popular support. Both the Moro and communist movements represented significant coercive capacity, but the former had more extensive, geographically-concentrated support than the latter. The Moro and communist movements differed in their outside support as well – whereas outside support for the NPA was limited, especially after Marcos' trip to China, support for the Moro cause reached a fever pitch during the 1970s. Media coverage of the fighting caught the attention of Muammar Gaddafi and subsequently, the rest of the Muslim world. Soon thereafter the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), and individual Muslim states began pressuring the Philippine government to address the situation in Mindanao.<sup>1015</sup> As outside pressure ramped up, the conflict in Mindanao settled into a deadly stalemate.

In response, President Marco's adopted a two-prong response – working to win over his third party critics and undermining the Moro insurgency at home through a dual strategy of attraction and punishment. To the latter end, Marcos used the 1972 martial law declaration to launch a large-scale military campaign against Moro agitators. This drew the MNLF into full rebellion. The AFP budget quadrupled from 1972 to 1975<sup>1016</sup> and, reinvigorated with fresh troops and arms, the military launched a series of offensives against the Moro insurgents. At the time, several AFP generals promised a quick victory

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<sup>1015</sup> After a 1972 tour of the region, a Libyan and Egyptian delegation declared that there is a full blown war between Muslims and Christians. Libya pushed for an economic and political blockade against the Philippines and the there were threats of an oil embargo from OPEC. In 1974, to OIC recognized the MNLF as the official representative body of the Moro people. Soliman M. Santos, Jr., and Paz Verdades M. Santos, *Primed and Purposeful: Armed Groups and Human Security Efforts in the Philippines*, (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2010), 68.

<sup>1016</sup> Noble, 418.

in Mindanao – General Hernandez famously promised to win the war in a week<sup>1017</sup> – but, despite the military’s asymmetric advantage, the insurgents proliferated and were able to escalate their violent campaign to large-scale conventional confrontations with the AFP.

Marcos’ attraction strategy focused on unilaterally addressing some Moro grievances. Marcos instituted free trade in Zamboanga City, allowed for Sharia courts, and created an Islamic bank. He also spearheaded numerous development projects, including electrification, but the fighting was so bad that it rendered many of the economic development projects untenable. As the conflict continued and international pressure mounted, Marcos shifted his strategy and began a program to co-opt Muslim leaders, providing incentives for MNLF commanders to give up fighting.<sup>1018</sup>

Marcos latter appeared to concede further when he agreed to negotiations with the MNLF after the conflict in Mindanao caught global attention. In response to mounting outside pressure, Marcos launched a diplomatic effort to win over the Muslim and non-aligned nations that had been supporting the Moro cause. Marcos reached out to the OIC, ICFM, the Non-Aligned Summit, and individual Muslim countries. Marcos even began to distance himself from the United States and went so far as to de-recognize Israel in an effort to improve his reputation in the Arab world.<sup>1019</sup> Under pressure, Marcos agreed to negotiate with the MNLF and sent his wife, Imelda, to personally confer with General Gaddafi about peace talks.<sup>1020</sup> Negotiations appeared to be a major victory for the MNLF, but Marcos’ concession to negotiate did not represent a true willingness to compromise.

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<sup>1017</sup> Jose Lorena, interview by author, June 21, 2013, Manila.

<sup>1018</sup> Key leaders were offered amnesty, business opportunities, etc. – many took the offer.

<sup>1019</sup> Steven Rood, interview with author, June 18, 2013, Makati City.

<sup>1020</sup> Marcos undertook a serious PR Foreign Policy push to establish relationships with Muslim and non-aligned countries and convince them that the Philippines did not always follow the United States. For example, Marcos

The 1976 negotiations produced the Tripoli Agreement, which created an autonomous region in 13 southern Philippine provinces, but any gains were soon whittled away by disagreements over the implementation of the agreement. In response, Marcos announced a plebiscite over the objections of the MNLF. Only 10 of 13 provinces outlined by the Tripoli Agreement actually approved autonomy.<sup>1021</sup> Negotiations broke down and the Agreement was never implemented.

While Marcos may have negotiated, and even signed an agreement with the MNLF, his conciliation was not genuine. Rather, negotiations were a subterfuge to convince the outside world – especially the Muslim world – that the regime would address Moro grievances, and thus, reduce the external pressure – especially the threat of an oil embargo, which would have had catastrophic consequences – on the regime.<sup>1022</sup> Marcos’ diplomatic efforts worked: in 1973, the ICFM agreed the Moro problem was “internal to an independent sovereign state” and the next year, it urged the Philippine government to find a “political and peaceful solution through negotiation....(and) within the framework of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines.”<sup>1023</sup> Marcos’ diplomatic efforts paid off. Not only had the organizations and states that had been exerting pressure over the Moro issue come to accept that the conflict was an internal one, and thus, they committed not to interfere, but the negotiation process had also served to pressure the MNLF to give up its goal of independence in return for some level of autonomy.<sup>1024</sup> Once international pressure subsided, Marcos let the Tripoli Agreement languish, leaving the MNLF debilitated and divided.

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<sup>1021</sup> This number was reduced further when Marcos issued Proclamation No. 1628 in 1977.

<sup>1022</sup> Rood, interview.

<sup>1023</sup> Citing 1974 OIC document, Santos and Santos, 66.

<sup>1024</sup> Lorena, interview.

After the failed implementation of the Tripoli Agreement, the MNLF went back to its call for independence and restarted its violent campaign, but the negotiations had clearly weakened the group. Disagreements over how the MNLF was run, its goals, and whether it was negotiating effectively began to strain the organization as early as 1977.<sup>1025</sup> In the years that followed, thousands of MNLF fighters laid down their arms.<sup>1026</sup> Others left the group: Misuari's deputy – Hashim Salamat – was part of the disgruntled faction that started calling itself the “new” MNLF. This faction agitated<sup>1027</sup> for several years before formally spitting from the MNLF. Salamat's followers conducted attacks that sought to undermine MNLF efforts to negotiate with the government and undermine the group's credibility with its supporters. For example, in September 1980, the Salamat faction conducted a wave of attacks across Mindanao that left 17 civilians dead and injured 120 in just a week.<sup>1028</sup> After four years of such actions, the Salamat's faction declared itself to be independent of the MNLF and named itself the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).<sup>1029</sup>

While Marcos' policy toward the Moros appears to have been more conciliatory than its policy towards the NPA, in reality the strategy employed in both cases was similar. Marcos and his generals were convinced they could defeat both the Moro and communist insurgents militarily. The more conciliatory actions undertaken with regards

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<sup>1025</sup> The Tripoli Agreement focused more on the nation, than on the religious aspect of Moro nationalism, frustrating the more religiously oriented of the organization. The breakaway faction that would become the MILF was frustrated that Misuari had brought in a wider coalition of people under the MNLF umbrella, including some notable priests from the region. Lorena, interview.

<sup>1026</sup> “Manila Says Most Moslems Have Ended Rebellion,” *The New York Times*, November 2, 1980.

<sup>1027</sup> The faction sought to circumvent Misuari and his commanders by gaining recognition from the OIC and other international actors.

<sup>1028</sup> “6 Rebel Moslem Attacks kill 17 in South Philippines; Autonomy Talks Planned,” *The New York Times*, September 1980.

<sup>1029</sup> In the 1980s the Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO) emerged in an effort to unify the competing Moro groups, but with no success. The BMLO effectively became defunct when its founders died in 1984 and 1985. Santos and Santos, 64-65.



to the MNLF (e.g. unilateral concessions) were either unrelated to the Moro conflict and part of broader development goals, or an effort to undermine support for the group. The 1976 negotiations with the MNLF do not represent a real effort to come to a negotiated settlement in Mindanao, but rather a tactical maneuver to reduce external pressure on the regime. Once that pressure was neutralized, Marcos returned to a largely military-oriented counterterrorism strategy that sought to destroy the MNLF.

### **6.2.2 Period II – 1986-2000: Post-Marcos Democracy, Military Opposition to Talks**

While deft at navigating the international pressure surrounding the Moro conflict, Marcos' ability to weather domestic opposition waned: Marcos won the snap elections called for February 1986, but rampant violence and electoral fraud sparked widespread condemnation.<sup>1030</sup> Soon thereafter, Marcos learned of a military plot to oust him from power. He arrested the organizers, which prompted over a million civilians to gather in the streets to demonstrate their support for the coup plotters. As the protests mounted so did military defections. Loyalist forces were keen to attack protestors, but Marcos ordered them to stand down. The street protests - later known as the EDSA revolution<sup>1031</sup> or the People's Power Revolution – continued to grow and it became clear Marcos would not survive politically. On February 25, 1986, the Marcos family was flown to Hawaii by the US government and Corazon Aquino, the widow of the assassinated opposition leader Benigno Aquino, took her oath as President.

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<sup>1030</sup> Critics ranged from all sectors of society, including the Catholic Bishops, the United States, and many of the employees of the Commission on Elections, who walked off the job and refused to count any more ballots.

<sup>1031</sup> Named after the *Epifanio de los Santos Avenue* (EDSA) – a main artery in Manila where the protesters flocked to after the failed coup.

Aquino's ascendancy to power marked a shift in both the strategic realm – both terrorist movements had recovered from blows during the Marcos dictatorship and were operating at significant strength at the time – and in the domestic political arena as well – Aquino was more sympathetic toward both movements than her predecessor. That softening in sentiment, however, translated into more of a stylistic shift in counterterrorism policy than a substantive one. Aquino – and her predecessor, Fidel Ramos – were unable to pursue strategic negotiations with the Moros because of the veto exercised by the armed forces.

To the first point, by the time Aquino took power in 1986, both the Moro and communist insurgencies had rebounded from Marcos' attempts to destroy or undermine them. Whereas in the late 1970s, military assaults and the erosion of Chinese support had left the NPA weak, by the mid-1980s, the group had bolstered its ranks, extended its reach, and was emboldened in its engagement with the Philippine government. By the mid-1980s, NPA membership was growing rapidly: estimates range from 7,500-20,000 insurgents and upwards of a million supporters and sympathizers.<sup>1032</sup> When he lifted martial law in 1981, Marcos allowed some space for opposition, facilitating a resurgence of the left and buoying support for the CPP-NPA and its new umbrella organization – the National Democratic Front (NDF). Restructured and decentralized, the NPA was more impervious to infiltration and better able to expand beyond its traditional stronghold in Luzon. The NPA started the Alex Boncayao Brigade (ABB) in 1986 to serve as its urban guerrilla unit. The NPA and ABB are thought to have been involved in many of the left-

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<sup>1032</sup> Drawing on US and Philippine estimates from 1983 until 1985, F.A. Mediansky, "The New People's Army," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (June 1986), 4.

wing anti-Marcos terrorist attacks in Manila in those years,<sup>1033</sup> but most of the NPA remained in the rural areas. Within a few years, the NPA was operational in 2/3 of the country's 73 provinces.<sup>1034</sup> Empowered, the NPA increasingly engaged in direct confrontations with the military: In 1977, there were only 70 such encounters; in 1980 there were 83; and during 1984, there were 3,500, 75% of which had been initiated by the guerrillas.<sup>1035</sup> Furthermore, these confrontations with the AFP increasingly involved "battalion-sized" operations involving 200-400 guerrillas.<sup>1036</sup> In 1985, the NPA was involved in operations that killed over 1,200 soldiers and police officers and more than 1,300 civilians.<sup>1037</sup> Confident in its fighting capacity, the CPP leadership announced the NPA was on the verge of a military victory.<sup>1038</sup>

The Moro insurgency, like the communist one, rebounded after years of AFP assaults under Marcos. Internal divisions that emerged during that period, however, had a lasting impact on the movement's military capacity. The crisis of conscience that gripped the MNLF after the 1976 Tripoli Agreement eventually split the group in two, weakening the movement. Fractionalization generated competition for recruits; third party sponsors were torn in their allegiances, reducing the efficacy of their advocacy; and inspired the

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<sup>1033</sup> For example, when a series of hotels hosting an international tourism conference were attacked in Manila. "10 Are Hurt at 4 Philippine Hotels by Bombs of an Anti-Marcos Group," *The New York Times*, October 5, 1980.

<sup>1034</sup> Starting with units in Samar, Negros, and Mindanao, the NPA expanded beyond Luzon rapidly. Citing U.S. Senate, *The Situation in the Philippines*, and Congressional testimony of James A. Kelly, on 18 September 18, 1984, Mediansky, 2.

<sup>1035</sup> Citing Congressional testimony of Assistant Secretary of Defence, Richard Armitage, on 12 March 12, 1985, Ibid.

<sup>1036</sup> Citing US Senate, *The Situation in the Philippines*, Ibid., 4.

<sup>1037</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), "The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines: Tactics and Talks," Asia Report No 202, February 14, 2011, 4.

<sup>1038</sup> Santos and Santos, 35-36, 44.

government to pursue divide and conquer tactics to exacerbate the divisions.<sup>1039</sup> While the government does not appear to have made the latter a dominant aspect of its counterterrorism strategy, there were numerous cases where the Philippine government alternately engaged one faction at the expense of the other, generating confusion as to which group was the legitimate representative of the Moro people and fueling the rivalry between them. Lastly, violent clashes between the MNLF and MILF distracted each group from its primary goals. Despite the fractionalization of the movement, the MNLF and the MILF still managed to exert significant coercive capacity. In 1988, the MNLF conducted more terrorist attacks than in any year prior. The MILF quickly eclipsed its predecessor in violence, launching scores of terrorist attacks<sup>1040</sup> and countless insurgent battles – many of which have reached battalion-sized interactions. Despite the rivalry between the two groups, their overlapping goals contributed to the complimentary effect of their individual violent efforts.

Aquino's ascent to power marked a shift in outlook on the Moro and communist insurgencies. Aquino was generally sympathetic to the left, and perhaps specifically to the NPA. Indeed, there are rumors that her husband, Benigno Aquino Jr., had previously served as President Magsaysay's personal emissary to Luis Taruc – the leader of the Huk rebellion. That sympathy was undermined when the CPP boycotted the February 1986 elections – a “major tactical blunder” that left the group out of step with popular

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<sup>1039</sup> Arab countries were torn between the two leaderships and as such their lobbying for the Moro cause became muddled and diluted. Repeated attempts to resolve the split by the OIC and Muslim World league failed.

<sup>1040</sup> RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI) – only has 33 attacks specifically attributed to the MNLF, available from [[http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search\\_form.php](http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search_form.php)], accessed on August 23, 2013, whereas the GTD has 384 terrorist attacks attributed to the MNLF, available from [<http://www.start.umd.edu/>], accessed on August 23, 2013.

sentiment,<sup>1041</sup> leaving it sidelined. Still, when Aquino took office, she made several conciliatory gestures to the left. She released all political prisoners, including NPA founder, Sison and extended peace talks to the CPP-NPA. Aquino's government sent mixed signals when it simultaneously launched Oplan Mamamayan – a heavy-handed counterinsurgency strategy that envisioned using clear and hold operations to wipe out the CPP-NPA infrastructure.<sup>1042</sup> Despite the operations, there was some progress with the CPP-NPA - a ceasefire was called in December 1986 and talks with the NDF started in August 1986. Talks, however, did not last long. The ceasefire collapsed in January 1987, and negotiations fell apart the next month. Sison went into exile in Utrecht, The Netherlands, where he began criticizing Aquino for human rights abuses in the European press. The NPA began frequently lambasting Aquino, claiming her restored democracy was as elitist as it had been under Marcos.<sup>1043</sup>

The conciliatory gestures made by Aquino (e.g. ceasefire, talks) were not pursued in earnest by the administration. Aquino had miscalculated the Philippine military's resistance to the prospects of a conciliatory policy toward the NPA, and as the coup attempts against her mounted, it became clear that she could not pursue a negotiated settlement with the communists. When the military brutally put down a land reform protest in Manila in 1987 – the Mendiola Massacre - both sides had an excuse to leave

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<sup>1041</sup> ICG, "The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines," 5, and *CPP-NPA-NDF: The Armed Struggle, Peace Talk Philippines*, May 31, 2011, available from [<http://peacetalkphilippines.wordpress.com/peace-tables/cpp-npa-ndf/>], accessed on August 13, 2013.

<sup>1042</sup> According to Gareth Porter, Oplan Mamamayan, which was announced shortly after Aquino came to office, had actually been drawn up in 1985 under Marcos and was essentially the same as its predecessor – Oplan Katatagan. Gareth Porter, "The Politics of Counterinsurgency in the Philippines: Military and Political Options," *Philippine Studies Occasional Paper 9* (Honolulu, HI: Center for Philippine Studies, 1987), 86.

<sup>1043</sup> Santos and Santos, 21.

talks.<sup>1044</sup> Spurred on by the military (and the United States), Aquino switched gears and announced an “all-out war” against the NPA in 1987. Launched in 1988, Oplan Lambat Bitag (“Net Trap”) marked a shift towards a concerted military effort to defeat the NPA – something the generals at the time were convinced was attainable – while working unilaterally to address to the social, economic, and political causes of the conflict.<sup>1045</sup> The Operation showed kinetic success - resulting in a reported 50% loss in NPA troops in just three years.<sup>1046</sup> 1988 marked a major decline for the NPA.

The NPA’s decline was only due in part to the Philippine military’s renewed counterterrorism program. The NPA was racked by internal debates over tactics, strategy, and organizational matters.<sup>1047</sup> The fractionalization deepened until the group was essentially split in two camps - the “reaffirmists” - those who supported Sison’s attempts to shift away from urban guerrilla warfare and bring the conflict back to its original strategy of rural armed struggle - and the “rejectionists” - who believed that the organization needed to focus on cities and embrace alternate methods of protest, including electoral politics.<sup>1048</sup> Internal struggles were responsible for a drastic decline in NPA fighters through brutal internal purges designed to weed out moles and through splintering: Around 2,000 CPP-NPA members and leftist activists nationwide were killed during the internal purge alone.<sup>1049</sup> Many more left the organization because of the ideological rift: several high-level leaders left the group (e.g. former NPA chief Romulo Kintanar, former CPP Chair and NPA chief Rodolfo Salas) to start their own

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<sup>1044</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1045</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1046</sup> The NPA was thought to have 25,200 fighters in 1987 and 14,800 by 1991. Citing figures from Barbicho 2003 and Hernandez 2006, Ibid.

<sup>1047</sup> ICG, *The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines*,” 6.

<sup>1048</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>1049</sup> Santos and Santos, 50.

organizations. The damage due to fractionalization was compounded as the Berlin Wall fell, undermining the communist ideology espoused by the CPP-NPA. While the splintering left the group much smaller, it also left it more streamlined, which would eventually prove useful.<sup>1050</sup>

A similar pattern arose with regards to the Moros: Aquino was predisposed to be sympathetic to the Moro cause<sup>1051</sup> and once in office, she followed her predecessor's lead in trying to unilaterally address some of the grievances of the Bangsamoro. Aquino went further, however, establishing a commission to write a new constitution, which included provisions for autonomy for Muslim Mindanao and Cordillera region in Luzon. Later that year, the MILF and MNLF sent a message that they are willing to jointly negotiate with Aquino.<sup>1052</sup> The divisions between them, however, were too deep and would come to stymie talks. When in September of that year, Aquino visited a MNLF camp in Sulu, the MNLF seized the opportunity to exact the government's promise that the group would be the only representative of the Moros in future negotiations. In response, the MILF launched a five-day assault in protest, which ended in a negotiated truce with Aquino.<sup>1053</sup>

Aquino's government began formal talks with the MNLF in January 1987, and the MNLF expressed willingness to accept an autonomy offer, but the MILF refused. Aquino even held talks with a small militant outfit, the Cordillera People's Liberation

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<sup>1050</sup> ICG, "The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines," 7.

<sup>1051</sup> Aquino's husband – Benigno Aquino, Jr. - had been sympathetic to the Bangsamoro plight. Aquino had traveled to Damascus, Syria, to meet personally MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari and other leaders to bridge the gap of finding a positive solution to the raging Filipino-Moro war in Mindanao. Further, he journeyed to Saudi Arabia to arrange the reconciliation of Bangsamoro revolutionary leaders in order to forge a united front against Philippine colonialism under the Marcos regime. Aquino's sympathy also stemmed from her pro-democracy ideology – she believed in self-determination. Rood, interview.

<sup>1052</sup> In March, MILF sends the message. In August 1986, OIC and MWL get MILF and MNLF to agree in principal to negotiate jointly, but soon after MNLF gets Aquino to recognize the group as sole negotiators.

<sup>1053</sup> Some have argued these talks constitute strategic negotiations, but they were largely a tactical ceasefire.

Army (CPLA), solely to entice the MILF to the negotiating table, but to no avail.<sup>1054</sup> The talks with the MNLF produced the Jeddah Accord in January 1987, but any hope of progress quickly disappeared as the Aquino government refused to suspend the autonomy provisions in the 1987 constitution per MNLF's request as they contradicted the Jeddah Accord. Like Marcos, when faced with a lack of Moro acquiescence, Aquino pressed ahead unilaterally: on August 1, 1989, she passed the Republic Act No. 6734, which created the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), against the wishes of the MNLF. In the plebiscite that followed, only four of the requested 13 provinces voted for autonomy, creating a Moro autonomous region that was far smaller than the one outlined in the negotiated settlement. The failed Agreement helped bolster support for MILF and a new challenger for the Moro mantle emerged - the Al-Harakatul Islamiyya group – commonly referred to as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).<sup>1055</sup>

Aquino, like Marcos, did not negotiate in good faith, but for different reasons. Aquino may have been sympathetic to the Moro cause, but she reached the “limits of her class.”<sup>1056</sup> Aquino was an ideologue dedicated to the creation of a democratic regime. Expanding opportunities and rights for the Moros fit within her broader ideology of self-determination and rightful representation, but alone, the Moro issue did not have significant resonance for her. Aquino was not willing to sacrifice democratization for peace in Mindanao. Moreover, she worked to de-internationalize the Moro conflict,<sup>1057</sup>

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<sup>1054</sup> Dencio Severo Acop, “The Expanded Nontraditional Role of the AFP: A Reassessment,” *Prism*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (March 2012), 102.

<sup>1055</sup> ASG was founded by Afghan alumni – mujahedeen returning from fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan – and claimed to it was the only organization fighting for a true Islamic state, but in reality, it was mostly a criminal syndicate. Its ruthless tactics (e.g. kidnapping and beheading of its captives) and purported connections to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Al Qaeda sparked American interest and AFP operations in the region.

<sup>1056</sup> Rood, interview.

<sup>1057</sup> Santos and Santos, 72.



and like her predecessor, reduce the external pressure on the government to address the grievances of the Bangsamoro. When the military made it clear that it did not support the negotiations, Aquino was forced to take steps to undermine them.<sup>1058</sup> The military - the most powerful institution in the Philippines at the time - only allowed Aquino to continue with the negotiations with the understanding that they would not amount to any real change. The January 22, 1987 Mendiola massacre<sup>1059</sup> gave the government the cover needed to back away from the negotiations with the MNLF.

Aquino was succeeded by Fidel Ramos, a member of her cabinet and former general, who had been instrumental in the People Power Revolution that had overthrown Marcos and brought Aquino to power. When he was elected in June 1992, Ramos believed the communist and Moro conflicts were preventing the Philippines from developing and distracted the Philippine military from its core duty defending the nation from external threats. Just as these problems were intertwined, so was their solution. Ramos embarked on a course to negotiate with the insurgents in both conflicts,<sup>1060</sup> modernized the AFP and reorient it to other duties, and launched development projects that unilaterally addressed some of the grievances cited by both the communists and the Moros, while simultaneously facilitating his larger development agenda.

As part of his approach, Ramos established the National Unification Commission (NUC) and congress repealed the anti-subversion law. Specific to the NPA, Ramos lifted the ban on the CPP. A few months later, the Ramos administration and the NDF issued

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<sup>1058</sup> That is not to say that Aquino's government eschewed future talks, but they were never a sincere reflection of the government's willingness to make concessions. They were for show.

<sup>1059</sup> The massacre occurred when over 10,000 farmers, joined by other militants along the way, marched to demand that Aquino fulfill her campaign promises on land reform. At least 12 farmers died from gunshots from the National Police, while many others were wounded.

<sup>1060</sup> Acop, "The Expanded Nontraditional Role of the AFP".

the September 1992 Hague Joint Declaration, which confirmed both parties' willingness to negotiate, but it took four more rounds of talks over the next two and a half years before formal negotiations could begin. In February 1995, the NPA and government signed the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), which provided immunity to the rebels who would participate in talks. With Norway serving as the mediator, formal talks began in Brussels in June 1995. More formal talks took place in June 1996 and February 1997. Just months before the end of his term in 1998, Ramos signed the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) with the NDF. CARHRIHL was not a peace agreement, but it was a recognition of basic human rights by both sides that was intended to lay the groundwork for comprehensive talks on economic, social, and political issues.

In concert with his efforts with the CPP-NPA, Ramos simultaneously appeared to be making headway with the Moro movement. Upon taking office, Ramos established the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process (OPAPP), announced an amnesty program, and started exploratory talks with the MNLF in October of 1992. Ramos pressed forward with formal talks in October 1993 and appeared to make progress - a ceasefire was signed; the MILF agreed not to oppose the government-MNLF talks; and after two rounds of formal talks in 1994 and 1995, an interim agreement was signed. The agreement, however, was not without its detractors: namely congress. Six senators went so far as to file a petition against the agreement with the Supreme Court. On September 2, 1996, there was a signing ceremony for the GPH-MNLF 1996 Final Peace Agreement (known as the Jakarta Accord). During all this, the government commenced exploratory

talks with the MILF. In 1997, the government signed a General Cessation of Hostilities with the MILF. Things appeared to be moving in the right direction.

Despite the appearance of progress, Ramos' policy toward both the communist and Moro conflicts was more of the same rather than a sincere re-boot: While Ramos demonstrated a willingness to negotiate with insurgents to settle the communist and Moro conflicts, he simultaneously assured the military that talks - and any potentially deals - would not go anywhere.<sup>1061</sup> While Ramos - with his military credentials and relationships - was uniquely positioned to overcome AFP resistance,<sup>1062</sup> he never attempted to do so. This is most apparent in Ramos' approach to the Jakarta Agreement with the MNLF, which although it was heralded by many as a step toward a peaceful resolution of the Moro insurgency, was not a real agreement. Indeed, *it was never signed by Ramos.*<sup>1063</sup> Moreover, once the Agreement was announced, Ramos immediately set out to undermine it: in October 1996, Ramos issued Executive Order 371, which departed from the Agreement on several key points and weakened the Agreement's intended effect. Ramos also offered MNLF leader Misuari a political alliance with his party, thus co-opting the MNLF leadership with the promise of some control over what was left of the ARMM. Despite receiving far less than they had agreed to, MNLF leaders wanted to maintain political power and did not want to return to violence despite having retained their arms. Even in the face of conciliatory overtures to the NPA and Moro groups by Ramos, the AFP kept up its pressure on both. With regard to the former, the military had great

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<sup>1061</sup> All the while the government was negotiating the Jakarta Agreement, Ramos was 'winking at the military.' Lorena, interview. Confirmed by Ramon Casiple, in an interview by the author, June 20, 2013, Makati City.

<sup>1062</sup> Ramos was a former general himself; he had good relations with the military hierarchy; and he had released the military coup plotters who had tried to unseat Aquino from prison, which won him more support from the ranks.

<sup>1063</sup> Lorena, interview.

success. Lambat-Bitag – Ramos’ counterinsurgency plan – was viewed as so efficacious that it was terminated and the military shifted its focus back on the Moro situation.

Ultimately, like his predecessors, Ramos engaged in a policy of appearances; negotiations were largely for show because he wouldn’t stand up to military opposition. Ramos, like Aquino, has some sympathy for both causes and wanted them addressed in order to pursue his primary goals - development and the reorientation of the military to effectively deal with external enemies (e.g. China). By engaging in peace talks in Mindanao, Ramos hoped to quell MNLF actions and mollify Moro grievances sufficiently to generate some level of stability in order to pursue an economic development program and shift the AFP focus to external threats. Like Aquino, peace in Mindanao was not a goal in and of itself for Ramos. Some say that Ramos ran out of time – MILF negotiations failed to progress past the opening rounds before the end of his term and the Jakarta Agreement represented true conciliation on behalf of the government, but it floundered when it wasn’t fully implemented by the time he left office. Such an assessment is naïve. Ramos – like his predecessor, Aquino – was not willing to extend his political capital and alienate the military over secondary goals like ending the communist and Moro insurgencies.

### **6.2.3 Period III – 1998-2001: War Model of Counterterrorism For Domestic Gain**

In the 1998 elections, anti-Jakarta Agreement politicians had a strong showing, while five of the six former MNLF leaders who were elected to the ARMM in 1996 lost their seats. The electoral backlash against the ARMM did not entice the new president, Joseph Estrada, a former actor and Ramos’ vice president, to continue the policies of his

predecessor. It quickly became evident that Estrada actually wanted to undue the progress Ramos made with the Moros.

As violence mounted in Mindanao, the ceasefire between the government and the MILF was increasingly strained. When fighting between MILF insurgents and AFP soldiers broke out in Lanao del Norte in March 2000, Estrada did an abrupt about-face and announced an “all out war” against the MILF. Estrada lacked the legitimacy of his two predecessors and his all-out war policy was designed to bolster a “tough guy” reputation and establish his security credentials.<sup>1064</sup> Estrada was also thought to be trying to court the military leadership who had long-wanted a full-blown campaign against the MILF.<sup>1065</sup> In July, the Philippine military took over 46 MILF camps and declared victory, and in response, the MILF declared its formal withdrawal from peace talks.

Although Estrada’s administration showed some conciliatory signs toward the NPA early on - approving the CARHRIHL Agreement negotiated by his predecessor in August 1998 – the President moved quickly to undermine talks with the NPA. In the summer of 1998, he bypassed the leftist leadership to pursue talks with smaller rejectionist splinter groups – to include Revolutionary Workers Party-Mindanao and its armed wing, the Revolutionary People’s Army (RPMM/RPA) in hopes of undermining the CPP-NPA.<sup>1066</sup> The next year, Estrada started localizing negotiations with leftists on the ground, to bypass both Sison and the NPA leadership in the Philippines.<sup>1067</sup> By May of 1999, the NPA-CPP-NDF talks had been suspended.

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<sup>1064</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1065</sup> Acop, “The Expanded Nontraditional Role of the AFP,” 104.

<sup>1066</sup> ICG, “The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines,” 8.

<sup>1067</sup> Soliman M. Santos, Jr. “Evolution of the Armed Conflict on the Communist Front,” A background paper submitted to the Human Development Network Foundation, Inc, for the Philippine Human Development Report 2005, 7.

When an impeachment trial spawned by widespread corruption was aborted, a military coup ousted Estrada. His vice president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, replaced him. The NPA-CPP appeared to have learned its lesson from the ESDA debacle and supported the movement to overthrow Estrada. At the end of the Estrada administration, both insurgencies continued to rage and any trust that had been built with the MILF and the CPP-NPA had been destroyed.

#### **6.2.4 Period IV – 2001-2014: Mindanao Stalemate and Domestic Opportunities**

When Gloria Macapagal Arroyo took office in 2001, she declared an “all-out peace” strategy and immediately offered MILF a ceasefire and extended an invitation to negotiations. While Arroyo appeared to abandon the punishment and retribution approach of Estrada’s administration, her negotiating efforts were hardly undertaken in earnest. Although the GRP and MILF participated in three rounds of talks in 2001, there are signs that Arroyo may have been working to undermine negotiation efforts from the start.

In March of 2001, the Philippine government and the MILF signed a General Framework of Agreement of Intent indicating their support for a negotiated solution. In June, the government and the MILF signed the Tripoli Agreement on Peace, a security pact that provided security guarantees and established monitoring groups to document ceasefire violations. Around the same time, MNLF leaders working to oust Misauri had come to an arrangement with the MILF on establishing unified Moro movement. The burgeoning cohesion within the Moro movement appeared to bode well for the government’s peacemaking efforts. Things began to go off the rails later that year,

however, when after a law passed in congress expanded the ARMM,<sup>1068</sup> but in the subsequent plebiscite, only one additional city and one province joined the autonomous region. Arroyo's interest in the ARMM appeared to be waning. Indeed, Arroyo failed to actually sign the bill, rather allowing it to eventually lapse into law.

In comparison to the Moro groups, Arroyo's early policy on the NPA was not conciliatory. Any appreciation towards the CPP-NPA for its role in the downfall of Estrada did not leave a lasting impression on his successor. Arroyo's early strategy towards the insurgency was Operation Plan Bantay-Laya I (2001), which complemented security operations with the delivery of basic services needed by communities to win them back from the influence of the CPP-NPA.<sup>1069</sup> In March 2001, talks between the NPA-CPP and the government resumed and lasted a few months. Any optimism about the prospects for a resolution was short-lived. A few months later, the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks significantly altered the Philippine government's relationship with the NPA. The attacks reinvigorated international support for the Philippine government's fight against the communist insurgents: In 2002, the United States, Canada, UK, EU, and Australia banned the CPP-NPA and Sison, a move which was publically welcomed by the Arroyo administration. In January 2002, the AFP launched Plan Bantay-Laya and Campaign Plan Balangai against the NPA.<sup>1070</sup> In 2003, the United States gave the Philippine government \$65 million USD to bolster its fight against terrorists, money that was intended to largely go to operations against the NPA. Before the 9/11 attacks, AFP estimates put the NPA at

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<sup>1068</sup> Republic A 9054

<sup>1069</sup> Acop, "The Expanded Nontraditional Role of the AFP," 104.

<sup>1070</sup> The plan was renewed in 2007 as Operation Plan Bantay-Laya II in 2007, which saw the establishment of the AFP National Development Support Command (NDSC) to implement national development projects in internal security operations (ISO)-related areas, the NDSC was later authorized by the Arroyo regime (in 2008) to undertake national development projects even in non-ISO-related areas. *Ibid.*, 105.

half its peak strength,<sup>1071</sup> but the renewed military efforts against the group, invigorated by US money and later bolstered by 1,300 US troops sent to the region,<sup>1072</sup> helped further reduce the NPA's fighting capacity.

The renewed offensive against the NPA was juxtaposed with conciliatory signals. In 2004, at Norway's invitation, Arroyo's government accepted peace talks with the NDF. Soon thereafter, the NDF pulled out in protest of the US and EU classification of the CPP-NPA as a terrorist organization. In 2004, Arroyo announced her "Ten Point Agenda," which declared her intention to end the insurgencies in the Philippines in six years. The Agenda suggested that negotiated peace processes were the path through which Arroyo intended to end the conflicts, but she simultaneously gave the Philippine military 1 billion PHP (22 million USD) to intensify its campaign against the NPA.<sup>1073</sup> In 2004, the Joint Monitoring Committee outlined in the CARHRIHL Agreement was finally established. These moves were not reciprocated by the NPA, which at that point had decided not to pursue a negotiated solution with Arroyo.

By August 2005, the CPP believed the Arroyo government was on borrowed time. Although it participated in periodic informal talks mediated by the Norwegian government, the CPP-NPA had decided to reserve its negotiation efforts for Arroyo's successor and reinvigorated its attacks on AFP soldiers.<sup>1074</sup> Realizing that Arroyo would only be toppled if the military was so inclined, the CPP forged tactical alliances with anti-

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<sup>1071</sup> Santos and Santos, 24.

<sup>1072</sup> The US troops were sent largely to the south of the country to deal primarily with Abu Sayyaf, but in the process engaged with other insurgent groups as well.

<sup>1073</sup> Citing Avendana, 2006a, Santos and Santos, 261, 276.

<sup>1074</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.



Arroyo AFP officers.<sup>1075</sup> Arroyo responded by declaring a state of emergency and shifting resources from Mindanao to NPA areas in an attempt to finally eradicate the group. In 2007, the Philippine Government declared a ceasefire, but the NPA refused to comply. At the end of her term, Arroyo's deadline to eradicate the NPA came and passed, with the military acknowledging that while it had failed to destroy the group, it had weakened the organization in the last few years. In a series of informal talks in June, the two sides agreed to work towards the resumption of formal talks but little progress was made.

The September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks also had a significant impact on the Moro insurgency. After 9/11, the Philippine government and its ally the United States were trying to determine if the MILF was a group of al Qaeda's ilk or if it could be brought into the mainstream. The MILF was thought to have some connections to ASG and Jemaah Islamiah, an al-Qaeda-affiliated Islamist terrorist group dedicated to creating a caliphate in Southeast Asia. As the US assessed the threat posed by the MILF, Arroyo suspend formal talks with the group in March 2002. Back channel talks, however, continued to occur for the next year. Concurrent with those talks, however, the Philippine military – aided by the US military - stepped up operations against terrorist infrastructure in Mindanao. Surprisingly, in spite of the enhanced military operations in the region, the Philippine government and the MILF announced on July 16, 2008 that they had reached an agreement to expand the autonomous Muslim region in Mindanao – the Memorandum of Agreement on the Ancestral Domain (MOA AD).<sup>1076</sup> There was sizeable resistance

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<sup>1075</sup> The anti-Arroyo soldiers were consolidated under the Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan-Makabayang Kawal ng Pilipinas (Society of Children of the People-Patriotic Soldiers of the Philippines) and the CPP set up a special unit to conduct revolutionary work in the AFP – Crispin Tagamolila Movement. Ibid., 24.

<sup>1076</sup> Under the proposed memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain (MOA-AD), the planned homeland also referred to as the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE) was to include the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (Sulu, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan and Marawi City); six

within the government to MOA AD: Within the military there was staunch opposition from some of the brass that remained convinced that, if uninhibited, the security services could win a decisive military victory against the MILF.<sup>1077</sup> There was also significant Congressional opposition and within a short period of time the Supreme Court declared the Agreement unconstitutional.

It is possible that Arroyo, like Marcos, engaged MILF in talks for ulterior motives: there was suspicion at the time that Arroyo was using the peace process as a medium to amend the Constitution and keep herself in power. Others suggested that the Arroyo administration never intended to negotiate with the MILF in good faith and had in fact written the MOA-AD in a way to ensure it was illegal and impossible to implement. The defeat of MOA-AD plunged Mindanao back into violence and further fractionalized the Moro movement.<sup>1078</sup>

With regard to the communist conflict, there was little tangible progress under Arroyo. Mixed policies that vacillated from conciliatory to scorched earth in emphasis characterized Arroyo's term. There was, however, an important shift afoot during Arroyo's administration. Under Arroyo – Gen. Carolina, later Undersecretary of National Defence, and other high-level military officials began to rethink the country's approach to counterinsurgency and counterterrorism – at least as far as the Moro conflict was

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municipalities in Lanao del Norte; hundreds of villages in the provinces of Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte and North Cotabato, which voted in 2001 to become part of the ARMM; and parts of Palawan.

Memorandum of Agreement on the Ancestral Domain Aspect of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001, available from [<http://pcdspo.gov.ph/downloads/2012/10/MOA-%E2%80%93-Ancestral-Domain-August-5-2008.pdf>].

<sup>1077</sup> “Ms. Arroyo Goes to Washington,” Foreign Policy Association Blog, August 3, 2009, available from [<http://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2009/08/03/ms-arroyo-goes-to-washington/>], accessed on August 2, 2013.

<sup>1078</sup> A senior MILF commander, Ameril Umra Kato, formed the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), which launched a violent campaign aimed at derailing talks.

concerned. Carolina wrote a plan for the military on peace building.<sup>1079</sup> New young officers were encouraged to think about negotiating a peace rather than slaying insurgents.<sup>1080</sup> Not only was the military's thinking changing, but so was its influence on domestic politics. This trend had begun after EDSA and intensified under Ramos. After Marcos' fall, the placement of military officers in civil service positions steadily declined. Under Ramos, the military began a reorientation toward external defense. Ramos had the military spearhead the implementation of his economic development projects, and increasingly relied on the Philippine National Police in counterterrorism planning and operations, helping further facilitate a shift in military focus.<sup>1081</sup> This shift would have significant ramifications for Arroyo's successor's counterterrorism policymaking efforts.

Benigno "Noy" Aquino III's landslide victory in June 2010 coincided with increased military efforts to eradicate the NPA. Early in his term, Aquino III acknowledged his government could not – or perhaps would not - meet the June 30 deadline for the full eradication of the group set by Arroyo. Instead, Aquino III vowed to find a political solution to the conflict. Aquino appointed a peace panel in October 2010 to negotiate with the NDF-CPP-NPA and set an aggressive goal of finalizing a settlement in three years. After six years, formal talks restarted in February 2011. During those negotiations, the parties agreed to an 18-month timeline for the completion of talks. Talks should have continued in February 2013 between the Aquino III government and the Dutch CPP-NPA leadership, but hardliner commanders from the NPA in the Philippines undermined the Dutch-based leadership by demanding preconditions and concessions,

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<sup>1079</sup> Lorena, interview.

<sup>1080</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1081</sup> Acop, "The Expanded Nontraditional Role of the AFP," 103.

scuttling the talks.<sup>1082</sup> Aquino's government, like those of his predecessors, has moved ahead to unilaterally address some of the core demands made by the communists in hopes of alleviating some of the conditions that feed NPA recruitment and support. For example, Aquino III has worked to comply with the human rights requirements of international humanitarian law and stem military abuses, long a complaint made by the communists.<sup>1083</sup>

Aquino III, according to observers, is genuine in his efforts to negotiate a peaceful end to the communist conflict. His view is born in practicality: Like Ramos, Aquino has realized that the military needs to reorient itself in order to fulfill its primary mission – external security – especially with regard to the South China Sea. Even though the Philippines will never be strong enough to stand up to China alone, its complete inability to protect its borders – and more importantly its waters and fisheries – is a major security problem. Despite a real interest in addressing the NPA conflict, Aquino III is more focused and committed to solving the Moro conflict.

Aquino's partiality towards the Moro conflict over the communist one stems from practicality, a preference for negotiating with ethnonational groups, and the international attention the Moro conflict has garnered. To the first point, the peaceful solution of the Moro conflict appears within reach compared to the difficulties surrounding the communist insurgency. Aquino wants peace in Mindanao to be part of his legacy. In that regard, Aquino resumed talks with the MILF in February 2011 and has held resilient against spoiler violence. Spoilers attempted to derail talks with high profile, violent attacks – most notably the Al Barka, Basilan massacre in October 2011 – but Aquino and

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<sup>1082</sup> Tomasito S. Villarin, interview with author, June 18, 2013, Makati City.

<sup>1083</sup> Acop, "The Expanded Nontraditional Role of the AFP," 105.

*his generals* rejected public calls for an all out war response and continued talks. Negotiations continued until October 2012, when the MILF and the Philippine Government signed a general framework for formal peace negotiations. Talks continued until January 2014, when the two sides signed a peace agreement that created a new autonomous Bangsamoro region. Unlike previous efforts, the Aquino III administration worked hard to ensure the legality and permissibility of the agreement before it was signed to ensure it couldn't be vetoed *ex post* by the Supreme Court or Congress, although questions about how to meld this agreement with the ARMM created by the Jakarta Agreement have yet to be addressed. In March 2014, the government and the MILF finalized the peace accord, which grants greater political autonomy to the Bangsamoro in the south.

### **6.2.5 Conclusion**

Since the outbreak of the violent Moro and communist insurgencies, the GRP has employed three types of counterterrorism/counterinsurgency policies: pacification and demobilization (e.g. efforts to buy off Moro leaders and unilateral efforts to address grievances); military-led efforts to destroy the insurgents; and institutional peace-building.<sup>1084</sup> Historically, there has been an emphasis on pacification and military strategies – in part because they do not require negotiated concessions with the enemy and can be employed quickly – but despite repeated use, they failed to create a durable peace in Mindanao. Under Marcos, negotiations with the Moros were used as a tactical tool to alleviate foreign pressures, which threatened the Philippines reliance on outside

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<sup>1084</sup> Santos and Santos, 80.

oil. Aquino and Ramos were more sympathetic to both the NPA and MNLF/MILF, but were unable to overcome military resistance or unwilling to sacrifice their primary goals in order to pursue negotiations. There were talks with both groups, but they did not represent a genuine effort to address the origins of the conflict. Both presidents preferred unilateral development projects to alleviate some problems central to the terrorists' grievances, without pursuing negotiations, which would have earned them the ire of the military. These projects were often undertaken with an eye for undermining the claims of the MNLF or MILF and facilitating cultural assimilation.<sup>1085</sup> Unilateral concessions that sought to assuage poverty and military abuses were adopted in order to stem support for the communist insurgency. Despite decades of military onslaughts the MNLF, MILF, and NPA continued to endure and coerce, recognition of which slowly grew in the Philippine government during Arroyo's presidency. There was finally a realization among the military brass that the MNLF/MILF could not be defeated; another strategy was needed. It was only after the government, weary of fighting the Moro insurgents for decades, resigned itself that it could not defeat the Moro insurgents using military tactics that the Philippine government fully embraced negotiations. There are several strategic factors that helped convince Philippine officials, and most importantly, the military, of this, namely the size, type, and fractionalization/market share of the Moro insurgent groups, which allowed them to endure and coerce long enough that the GRP shifted its approach to the conflict. Differences across insurgencies led the Philippine government to come to a less optimistic assessment about the prospects of negotiating with the NPA.

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<sup>1085</sup> For example, the Marco administration allowed for the launch of the United Nations Development Programme in Muslim Mindanao in 1973, but despite its development efforts, the Programme was primarily about building a national consciousness among the Moro people. Citing Majul, 1999, *Primed and Purposeful*, 68.

### **6.3 Strategic Environment**

Changes in the strategic environment are central to understanding the shift in Philippine counterterrorism policy from the Marcos to the Aquino III administrations. In both the Moro and communist insurgencies, the conflicts reached mutually hurting stalemates wherein the MNLF/MILF and NPA were unable to overthrow the Philippine government, respectively, but the Philippine military was unable to defeat the terrorist groups after decades of concerted efforts. The terrorists clearly demonstrated their capacity to endure and coerce as was evident by the hundreds of thousands killed, millions displaced, and billions of dollars in damages and lost investment. Their large size and broad support suggested that each insurgent group could continue their violent campaign for years, if not decades. Yet, as the domestic analysis will demonstrate, the Philippine government could not pursue negotiations until the military had come to the realization it could not defeat the insurgents and recognized the utility of a negotiations strategy. Once that shift occurred, the Philippine government began to evaluate the capacity and credibility of each terrorist challenger to enter into and enforce a negotiated settlement by examining observable characteristics: namely size, group type, and intra-group fractionalization and market share in the broader movement. When considering these strategic factors, the Philippine government came to view the Moro groups as better potential negotiating partners than the NPA and subsequently, focused its efforts on negotiating a solution to the crisis in Mindanao. Given that both the Moro and communist movements demonstrated their capacity to endure and coerce and their potential to continue the fight, the government's privileged assessment of the Moros was largely based on the judgment that given the groups' type, the Moro groups were more willing to

negotiate; their aims were more limited and easily accommodated; and they were more cohesive and therefore better able ensure their followers complied with a negotiated settlement.

### **6.3.1. Terrorist Group Size**

#### **6.3.1.1 NPA**

The NPA has been able to endure for 45 years largely due to its size and structure, and in some ways, in spite of its type. The group started from meager beginnings: In 1969, the NPA reportedly started with just sixty some odd fighters, nine automatic rifles, and 26 single shot pistols.<sup>1086</sup> By the early 1970s, NPA ranks had swelled into the thousands. Military defections<sup>1087</sup> and weapon shipments from China helped the group build an extensive arms cache. External support soon dried up, but the NPA was able to cobble together arms from the black market and raids on military and police installations. Citing the threat by the NPA, Marcos declared martial law in 1972, which helped the CPP-NPA galvanize alliances with local communities, unions, and the Church, and entice new recruits.<sup>1088</sup> Eventually, the AFP was able to deal devastating losses to the NPA through military campaigns and the arrest of key leaders, to include Sison. By the late 1970s, the NPA appeared to be on the brink of defeat, but when the military shifted its attention to Mindanao, the NPA had the room to regroup and reestablish itself.<sup>1089</sup>

The NPA restructured, maintaining a degree of central control, but allowing for local initiative. Restructuring reduced the group's vulnerability to infiltration, as tactical

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<sup>1086</sup> Liwanag, *Brief Review of the History of the Communist Party of the Philippines*, 10.

<sup>1087</sup> Virata, interview.

<sup>1088</sup> ICG, "The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines," 3.

<sup>1089</sup> Mediansky, 2.



decisions no longer required the approval of the central committee, which had involved more communication and meetings – all of which opened up the group to penetration by the security services. By empowering local units to act without approval, the CPP was able to franchise the NPA in new areas without an outlay of startup resources and significant oversight. Franchising helped the group grow significantly in the 1980s: By June 1983, the NPA was thought to have 7,500 regulars and 100,000 active supporters and sympathizers,<sup>1090</sup> demonstrating a level of growth that the US Pentagon estimated represented a 20% increase per annum.<sup>1091</sup> By 1984, the NPA had a “meaningful presence” in about 2/3 of the country’s 73 provinces and substantial influence in 20% of the country’s villages.<sup>1092</sup> In 1985, the NPA was thought to be active in 62 of 73 provinces,<sup>1093</sup> prompting the US State Department to warn the Congress that within three years, the fate of insurgency could be decided.<sup>1094</sup> Intelligence estimates suggested that without a successful counteroffensive, the NPA would be strong enough to take power in the Philippines in just 5 years.<sup>1095</sup> According to the Philippine military, the NPA had grown to 25,200 fighters in 1987.<sup>1096</sup> Internal feuding, however, would soon erode these gains.

Feuding within the CPP-NPA led to a split in 1992 and as factions broke away, the CPP conducted draconian purges within its ranks. NPA membership shrank to 6,000

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<sup>1090</sup> Citing U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Sub-Committee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, Hearings, June 17, 23, and 28 1983, *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>1091</sup> *Ibid.* Also, it appeared as if the NPA was trying to triple its forces in three years and ramped up its armament campaign.

<sup>1092</sup> Citing U.S. Senate, *The Situation in the Philippines*, and Congressional testimony of James A. Kelly, on September 18, 1984, *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>1093</sup> Citing U.S. Senate, *The Situation in the Philippines*, *Ibid.*

<sup>1094</sup> Citing Armitage testimony on March 12, 1985, *Ibid.*

<sup>1095</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1096</sup> Citing figures from Barbicho 2003 and Hernandez 2006, Santos and Santos, 21.

within a year.<sup>1097</sup> The split reduced its ranks, but allowed the CPP-NPA to shift its focus away from urban guerrilla warfare and recommit to a protracted, rural people's war. Soon after the split, Ramos launched a military onslaught on the NPA, which was seen as so effective, it was quickly halted and attention was again shifted toward the Moro conflict. Within a year of Ramos' campaign, the NPA was on the rise again. By 1995, the group was surging again, and by 1997, it had returned to its 1983 troop levels.<sup>1098</sup> After its recovery, the government yet again shifted its resources and resumed full hostilities against the NPA. Despite AFP efforts, the remaining "reaffirmists" were reinvigorated by the NPA's return to the rural peasant revolution envisioned by Mao, and they energetically worked to rebuild the group. They were successful. The NPA expanded again in the early 2000s: At the turn of the millennium, the NPA was estimated to have 11,000-12,000 fighters and more than 7,000 firearms.<sup>1099</sup> In Bicol, membership grew by 35% between 2002-2005 alone.<sup>1100</sup> In 2006, the NPA was thought to have just over 7,000 personnel and 6,000 firearms.<sup>1101</sup> Repeatedly, the NPA has demonstrated considerable staying power, weathering a devastating split and periodic, large-scale military campaigns against it.

It is not only the NPA's intimidating peak size and its capacity to endure decades of military onslaughts that signals the group's capacity and determination, but it's capacity to coerce. Over the course of its four-plus-decade campaign, the NPA has been

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<sup>1097</sup> Ibid., 266.

<sup>1098</sup> Citing Barabicho, 2003, Ibid., 23.

<sup>1099</sup> Ibid., 268, and Hermogenes C. Esperon, "Perspective from the Military," *Digest*, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 2006, Office of Strategic and Special Studies, Armed Forces of the Philippines.

<sup>1100</sup> Santos and Santos, 44.

<sup>1101</sup> Esperon, 6.

responsible for significant terroristic violence,<sup>1102</sup> insurgent operations, and massive battalion-sized direct confrontations with the AFP. Violent activity declined in the mid-1970s after being dealt a significant blow by the Philippine military, but NPA attacks surged in the mid-1980s. Between 1986 and 1992, the NPA was averaging hundreds of attacks a year, many of them against civilians. The NPA went into decline again after the internal split with the rejectionists in 1992. Again it regained its coercive capacity. By the millennium, it had recouped much of its strength: In 2000, it was estimated that the NPA was fighting on 100 different guerrilla fronts.<sup>1103</sup> In 2010 alone, the group claimed to have conducted 250 attacks and killed 300 soldiers.<sup>1104</sup> Over the duration of its campaign, NPA attacks are estimated to have caused 40,000 deaths and hundreds of thousands of injuries, and even far more displacements.<sup>1105</sup>

### **6.3.1.2 Moro Groups (MNLF/MILF)**

Like the NPA, the Moro groups have demonstrated that they are long-enduring and extremely coercive. The Moro insurgency continued for over 40 years. The MNLF and MILF have been able to mount long-running, devastating campaigns largely because of their size and the popularity of their cause.

The MNLF started with only several hundred fighters. By 1976, the MNLF's military wing – the Bangsa Moro Army (BMA) - was thought to have 6,900 fighters; a

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<sup>1102</sup> RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI) – 131 specifically attributed to the NPA, available from [[http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search\\_form.php](http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search_form.php)], accessed on August 23, 2013 and GTD – 1,348 attacks attributed to the NPA, available from [<http://www.start.umd.edu/>], accessed on August 23, 2013.

<sup>1103</sup> Esperon, 6.

<sup>1104</sup> ICG, “The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines.”

<sup>1105</sup> “Philippines-CPP-NPA (1969 – first combat deaths),” Ploughshares, available from [[http://ploughshares.ca/pl\\_armedconflict/philippines-cppnpa-1969-first-combat-deaths/](http://ploughshares.ca/pl_armedconflict/philippines-cppnpa-1969-first-combat-deaths/)], accessed on August 25, 2013.

year later, the group reached its maximum strength with over 21,000 guerrillas.<sup>1106</sup> Other estimates go as high as 30,000 or more full time fighters.<sup>1107</sup> The group's membership declined somewhat in the early 1980s due to defections to the MILF and those who gave up fighting in response to government concessions, but membership grew again by the early 1990s. In 1994, the MNLF was estimated at 14,000 strong; two years later, that number had risen to over 17,000.<sup>1108</sup> In the mid-2000s, the MNLF was estimated to have about 5,800 fighters – the rest had integrated back into society or joined other groups (including the rival MILF).<sup>1109</sup>

When it officially broke from the MNLF in 1984, the MILF was not very large. It grew quickly and by the mid-1990s, the MILF had more than 8,000 fighters. When the MNLF negotiated a settlement with the government in September 1996, thousands of fighters defected to its splinter and the MILF almost doubled in size.<sup>1110</sup> In 2006, the AFP estimated that the MILF had just over 11,000 fighters, although the MILF put the number much higher – at 45,000.<sup>1111</sup>

Beyond the size of their respective ranks, both the MILF and MNLF have extensive support in the community. In 1975, it was thought that the MNLF had the support of 55% of the Muslim population in the Philippines, giving it more than 1.2

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<sup>1106</sup> Merliza M. Makinano and Alfredo Lubang, "Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: The Mindanao Experience," prepared for the International Security Research and Outreach Programme, Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, February 2001, 29.

<sup>1107</sup> 30,000 cited by Christian Science Monitor, "Mindanao," available from [[http://www.csmonitor.com/1983/0105/010547.html/\(page\)/3](http://www.csmonitor.com/1983/0105/010547.html/(page)/3)], accessed on August 21, 2013 and Noble, 413. 30,000-60,000 cited by TDP Dugdale-Pointon, *Insurgency in the Philippines*, July 23, 2006, available from [[http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/wars\\_philippines.html](http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/wars_philippines.html)], accessed on August 21, 2013.

<sup>1108</sup> Santos and Santos, 332.

<sup>1109</sup> Makinano and Lubang, 29.

<sup>1110</sup> Ibid. Military estimates put membership in MILF at 15,420 in June 1999.

<sup>1111</sup> Esperon, 6, and, citing an interview with Mohagher Iqbal, Chairman, Committee for Information, MILF Central Committee, by Romy Elusfa on June 18, 2006 in Cotabato City, Santos and Santos, 349.

million supporters.<sup>1112</sup> This extensive support base allowed both the MNLF and its splinter group, the MILF, to develop deep ranks and the coercive expertise necessary to mount long-running, violent campaigns.

The MNLF and MILF both developed extensive support infrastructures, including their own weapons production operations. The MILF had several arms workshops<sup>1113</sup> that produce M79 grenade launchers, pistols, and copies of M14 automatic rifles, as well as anti-tank weapons.<sup>1114</sup> Beyond their in-house production, the Moro groups have been able to procure weapons from foreign suppliers due to sympathy for their cause abroad. For example, until 1975, the MNLF received extensive support from Malaysia and many of the rifles and anti-tank rockets it procured came over from Sabah.<sup>1115</sup> Despite not having a stable international supplier,<sup>1116</sup> the MILF has been able to surpass its predecessor in amassing arms, procuring significant stores of C-4 explosives, landmines, RPG-2s, and Browning .50 M2 machine guns. The size of the group's stockpile is disputed, but by any metric it is considerable: While it only had 3,000 weapons when it broke off from the MNLF,<sup>1117</sup> the MILF is now believed to have millions of rounds of ammunition, over 8,000 firearms, and possibly as many as 70,000-80,000 assault rifles.<sup>1118</sup> This arsenal, combined with the legions of fighters well-versed in using the military hardware and

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<sup>1112</sup> Noble, 413.

<sup>1113</sup> The ubiquity of the MILF-manufactured M16 in Mindanao has led to the extreme cache surrounding AK47s, which despite being inferior weapons (and pedestrian in most other conflicts worldwide), are carried by high-level commanders. Arjun Jain, interview by author, June 12, 2013, Makati City.

<sup>1114</sup> Citing an interview with Ghazali Jaafar, MILF Vice-Chairman for Political Affairs, interviewed by Soliman M. Santos, Jr. on August 26, 2006 in Shariff Kabunsuan province, Santos and Santos, 355.

<sup>1115</sup> Noble, 413.

<sup>1116</sup> The MILF does not appear to have a single steady supplier but has periodically received weapons from sources abroad (e.g. from 1999-2002, it is thought to have received weaponry from North Korea). Santos and Santos, 356.

<sup>1117</sup> *Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>1118</sup> *Ibid.*, and Esperon, 6.

hundreds of thousands of supporters, has rendered the Moro groups very capable opponents.

The MNLF and MILF have been responsible for significant violence over the course of their campaigns. The MNLF is known to be responsible for thousands of acts of violence, including hundreds of terrorist attacks.<sup>1119</sup> The MNLF was also able to mount extensive insurgent operations against military targets. MNLF violence surged after Marcos failed to implement the 1976 Tripoli Agreement: the number of MNLF attacks more than quintupled in a year. Violence fell after 1982 but spiked again in 1988 – with the MNLF conducting more terrorist attacks that year than in any year prior. Violence declined dramatically thereafter until the 1996 Final Peace Agreement was signed.

The MILF was more violent than its predecessor. The organization was responsible for hundreds of terrorist attacks<sup>1120</sup> and countless insurgent battles – many of which have reached battalion-sized interactions. The MILF's campaign has had three violent surges: in the late 1990s; after May 2000 when talks broke down and the Estrada government declared an all out war on the group; and starting in 2008 as the MOA-AD debacle unfolded until 2009. The group has conducted attacks far beyond Mindanao, including a series of bombings in Manila.

The costs of the Moro insurgency have been extremely high: Between the MNLF and MILF, and other small splinter groups, it is estimated the Moro insurgency has

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<sup>1119</sup> RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI) – only has 15 terrorist attacks specifically attributed to the MNLF, available from [[http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search\\_form.php](http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search_form.php)], accessed on August 23, 2013, whereas the GTD has 194 attacks attributed to the MNLF, available from [<http://www.start.umd.edu/>], accessed on August 23, 2013.

<sup>1120</sup> RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI) – only has 33 terrorist attacks specifically attributed to the MILF, available from [[http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search\\_form.php](http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search_form.php)], accessed on August 23, 2013, whereas the GTD has 384 terrorist attacks attributed to the MNLF, available from [<http://www.start.umd.edu/>], accessed on August 23, 2013.

caused at least 120,000 deaths and countless injuries.<sup>1121</sup> Fighting in Mindanao has resulted in over 2 million displaced persons – many of them displaced multiple times.<sup>1122</sup> Over half a million citizens were displaced since mid-2008 alone.<sup>1123</sup> The economic cost of the conflict from 1970-2001 is estimated to have been \$2-3 billion USD.<sup>1124</sup>

With regard to both insurgencies, it became clear to the Philippine government that it was dealing with capable enemies. The MNLF, MILF, and NPA demonstrated their capacity to endure and coerce. In both conflicts, the terrorist groups were able to reach mutually hurting stalemates with the government, where no side could win an outright military victory, and yet negotiations were more forthcoming with the Moro groups. How do we explain this, especially in light of the threat posed by the NPA? In many ways the Philippine government views the NPA as a much bigger threat than the Moro groups:<sup>1125</sup> By most accounts, the NPA is more violent; it has mounted many more attacks than its Moro counterparts; and the military challenge to the state posed by the NPA was more acute and widespread than that of the Moro groups. Indeed, in the late 1980s, US intelligence reports argued that the NPA was on the cusp of defeating the Philippine military and taking over the country. Even as it posed a greater security threat,

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<sup>1121</sup> Eric Gutierrez and Saturnino Borrás, Jr., “The Moro Conflict: Landlessness and Misdirected State Policies,” East-West Center, Policy Studies 8, (Washington DC: East-West Center, 2004), and Salvatore Schiavo-Campo and Mary Judd, “The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend,” The World Bank, Societal Development Papers: Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction, Paper No. 24, February 2005.

<sup>1122</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, “Conflict between Muslim rebels and the government in Mindanao is the main cause of displacement,” available from [[http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/\(httpEnvelopes\)/6B3C891E5C59D3BDC1257871003488E1?OpenDocument](http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/6B3C891E5C59D3BDC1257871003488E1?OpenDocument)], accessed on August 26, 2013.

<sup>1123</sup> Timothy Williams, “The MOA-AD Debacle – An Analysis of Individuals’ Voices, Provincial Propaganda and National Disinterest,” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 122.

<sup>1124</sup> Schiavo-Campo and Judd.

<sup>1125</sup> Dave Greenberg, interview by author, June 11, 2013, Manila.

the Philippine government was wary of negotiating with the NPA given the nature of its goals and the fractionalization of the group.

### **6.3.2 Terrorist Group Type**

#### **6.3.2.1 NPA**

Despite its capacity to hurt, the NPA's ideology and ideological dedication to revolutionary violence make it a less desirable negotiating partner than the Moro groups. The CPP-NPA's ideologically-driven dedication to a protracted people's war also influences its chances for being party to serious negotiations. The CPP-NPA was founded on Maoist principles, with a particular emphasis on means – namely a devotion to a violent proletarian revolution. In 1991, after years of fighting about tactics, the CPP-NPA reaffirmed the organization's dedication to protracted people's war, eschewing other operational strategies.<sup>1126</sup> This ideologically-driven strategy makes it more difficult for the CPP-NPA leadership to negotiate without losing credibility among their followers, and in turn, erodes the government's confidence that the group's leaders will be able to convince their members to put down their arms one day.

The CPP-NPA is a Maoist group that seeks to overthrow the Philippine government and replace it with a communist one. The NPA is fighting US imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism.<sup>1127</sup> Some of the latter goals are outdated<sup>1128</sup> and

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<sup>1126</sup> Armando Liwanag, *Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Carry the Revolution Forward Twenty-Third Anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines*, December 26, 1991, 14.

<sup>1127</sup> CPP, *Rectify Errors, Rebuild the Party!* Re-Establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines, December 26, 1968, 1.

<sup>1128</sup> With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the increasingly capitalist nature of the only major communist country remaining today – China – the ideology to which the CPP-NPA clings has largely been discredited. Moreover, there are few sources of foreign support – financial, logistical, or rhetorical – for the CPP-NPA's communism.



today, may be largely rhetorical. Contemporary rants about US imperialism<sup>1129</sup> fail to incite public support as official US influence on the Philippines is minimal.<sup>1130</sup> It is especially ironic that the CPP-NPA's continues to focus on US imperialism given that the largest "imperial" threat to the Philippines is widely recognized to come from China, a subject on which the CPP-NPA has remained silent. Even if its talk about US imperialism is more rhetorical than a reflection of the group's primary aims, the problems that really fuel the insurgency - poverty, injustice, land reform - are extremely difficult to solve.

Some have questioned the degree to which the CPP-NPA and its members are committed to communist ideology.<sup>1131</sup> The real grievances of the group, it is argued, are poverty, inequality, injustice, land policies, and the lack of infrastructure and government services. These issues have broad resonance where the CPP-NPA operates, places that are extremely poor and where people lack access to water, health care, education, and infrastructure and are often deprived of access to land and cheated by landlords. Deprivation and injustice are central to understanding the communist insurgency.<sup>1132</sup> The CPP-NPA offers recruits and supporters tangible benefits: In areas under NPA control, criminals are actually punished, land rents and interest rates have been lowered, and in some cases, lands were confiscated and redistributed to the poor.<sup>1133</sup> In areas where the

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<sup>1129</sup> The NPA's anti-imperialist platform was relevant when US influence in the Philippines was greater, and for its precursor organization, during Japanese rule or US colonial rule, today they are immaterial.

<sup>1130</sup> Unofficial cultural influence, however, is significant, but that is not the thrust of the CPP-NPA's critique.

<sup>1131</sup> "Too little research has been done on what CPP members really believe, why they joined the party, and what they think the party stands for and is struggling to achieve. But available evidence suggests that the degree of commitment to a communist ideology has been shallow, especially after party leaders relaxed recruitment methods and the criteria for membership." Ben J. Tria Kerkvliet, *A Different View of Insurgencies*, HDN Discussion Paper Series, No. 5, 2010, 3.

<sup>1132</sup> Human Development Network (HDN), *Philippine Human Development Report (PHDR): Peace, Human Security and Human Development in the Philippines*, 2005, available from [[http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/asiathepacific/philippines/Philippines\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/asiathepacific/philippines/Philippines_2005_en.pdf)], accessed on August 12, 2013.

<sup>1133</sup> Kerkvliet, 4.

military has been responsible for human rights violations and other abuses, the NPA offers a mechanism through which to exact revenge. Some have suggested that the more moderate Sison-led wing of the CPP-NPA might be willing to lay down their arms if the government was able to provide real reforms to address these problems. Others suggest an ideological compromise is also possible if the Philippines moved to a more social-democratic model of governance. While the moderate factions within the CPP-NPA may be willing to accept these concessions, there is a very significant faction that won't and will continue fighting. Thus the combination of difficult to achieve aims, an ideological dedication to revolutionary violence, and a degree of fractionalization that all but guarantees a significant spoiler problem renders the CPP-NPA a less desirable negotiating partner in the eyes of the state.

### **6.3.2.2 Moro Groups (MNLF/MILF)**

The Moro groups were not always seen as ideal negotiating partners. It was only after the Philippine government came to appreciate the limits of the movement's ethnonationalist aims and worked with the MNLF under the auspices of Marcos' tactical negotiations that elements within the government started to realize that both the Moro insurgents could be partners for peace. That realization grew and spread throughout the government under successive presidents.

The Moro groups were long misunderstood. Most casual observers view the MNLF and MILF as Islamist groups intent on obtaining religious goals.<sup>1134</sup> Yet these

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<sup>1134</sup> For example, the RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI), one of the premier datasets on terrorism, classifies both the MNLF and MILF as religious organizations. RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI), available from [[http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search\\_form.php](http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search_form.php)], accessed on August 23, 2013.

groups are drastically different from those that epitomize the religious classification. The MNLF and MILF have inherently political goals and their religion is part of their national identity rather than the source of an ideologically-inspired conflict.

The case of the MNLF is the more obvious of the two. The MNLF was founded by Nur Misuari - a secular, leftist university professor and nationalist youth movement leader. MNLF leaders continually stressed that the Moro movement was a national one and all the communities within the Bangsamoro homeland were part of it.<sup>1135</sup> This was evidenced by the group's many non-Muslim members, including a number of Catholic priests, who held leadership positions.<sup>1136</sup> There are some indications that any emphasis the MNLF placed on religion was initially made to draw a distinction between the Moro movement and the NPA.<sup>1137</sup> Thus, the demand for the freedom to practice Islamic customs and institute Islamic law may have been more about distinguishing the organization from the communist insurgents than a reflection of the MNLF's religiosity.

The MILF inspires more debate, but ultimately must be viewed as an ethnonationalist group as well. Some have suggested that the MNLF-MILF split was due to religious disagreements and point to MILF founder Hashim Salamat's religious background as evidence. While Salamat was more religious than the left-leaning Misauri,<sup>1138</sup> the initial split was mostly about leadership. Indeed, it would be more

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<sup>1135</sup> For example, Commander Ulangutan, a MNLF commander in Tawi-Tawi, repeatedly clarified that the Moro fight was not a Muslim one – "...there are Muslims in other countries and not all the people here are Muslims... This is not a religious war. Christians can also be Moros..." Noble, 417.

<sup>1136</sup> In some cases, these priests operated as MNLF military commanders.

<sup>1137</sup> An early MNLF manifesto insists that the MNLF is not a communist organization, but rather the MNLF was comprised of "God-fearing people." This distinction may have been drawn to distance Chairman Misuari's former affiliation with the Maoist organization Kabataan Makabayan, and thus ensure a distinction with the NPA. *Ibid.*, 416-417.

<sup>1138</sup> Salamat studied theology, made the haj, and was influenced by Quttub. Moreover, Salamat was frustrated that Misuari had brought in many non-Muslims to prominent positions in the MNLF – including some well-known priests. Lorena, interview.

accurate to describe the split as a failed coup attempt. In December 1977, Salamat Hashim announced a takeover of the MNLF, but was expelled by Misuari. Hashim called his splinter faction, the “New Moro National Liberation Front” suggesting more of a continuation than a drastic break from the MNLF’s goals and outlook. It wasn’t until the splinter faction convened its first leadership council years later that it was decided that the group would call themselves the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).<sup>1139</sup> By incorporating “Islamic” in the name and stacking the council with religious figures, the MILF was likely playing up its Islamic-ness in a calculated move to attract support from the IOC and Muslim countries that had already established relationships with the MNLF.<sup>1140</sup> Supporting this idea is the lack of religious-based criticism between the two groups: the MILF never criticized the MNLF over its Islamic-ness. Every indication suggests the MILF was a very pragmatic organization. It was not looking to establish an Islamist state,<sup>1141</sup> indeed, it did not want to alter life dramatically in Mindanao upon achieving autonomy.<sup>1142</sup> While the MILF had more trappings of religion, the general consensus is that the MILF was a Moro organization first and foremost, and a Muslim one second.

Differences in group type across the two insurgencies have had a significant impact on how each terrorist group – the MNLF, MILF, and NPA – views violence. Indeed it is likely their type that has allowed the Moro groups to adopt a pragmatic – rather than ideological – approach to violence. The NPA, particularly, the younger

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<sup>1139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1140</sup> This makes sense given that the MILF was competing with the MNLF which in 1974, had been recognized by the ICFM recognizes MNLF as leader of “sole and legitimate representative of the Bangsamoro people.” Citing 1973 OIC documents, Santos and Santos, 72.

<sup>1141</sup> One INGO worker suggested to me that the MILF talks of instituting sharia courts not out of religious devotion to Islamic law, but rather as a bellwether for determining the degree of autonomy the group has actually achieved from the Philippine Government.

<sup>1142</sup> Greenberg, interview.

generation that fills its ranks and makes up its local leadership, has an ideological devotion to revolutionary violence. These different outlooks have translated into a marked divergence in how the Moro groups and the CPP-NPA view negotiations. For decades, the MNLF and MILF have demonstrated an earnest interest in finding a negotiated solution to the conflict.<sup>1143</sup> The behavior of the MNLF and MILF stands in contrast to that of the NDF-CPP-NPA, which often appears unwilling or unable – due to ideological constraints played out in intra-organizational disagreements – to negotiate. For example, when the MILF’s fundraising “rainmaker” and member of the Central Committee, Eduard Guerra, was arrested in September 2010 and ordered to serve 12 months in jail, the MILF continued to negotiate with the government, whereas the NDF scuttled talks in 2013 over the JASIG amnesty list despite the government’s willingness to find some compromise to the problem. The latter example is often cited by Philippine government officials as evidence the NDF-CPP-NPA doesn’t really want to negotiate a settlement to the conflict – or perhaps is unable to do so, because of internal divisions.<sup>1144</sup> The latter issue – factionalism - has plagued both the Moro and communist insurgencies to some degree, and has served as a major influence on the Philippine government’s assessment of each group’s potential as a negotiating partner.

### **6.3.3 Terrorist Group Factional Politics**

The issue of fractionalization is key to understanding why the Philippine government has traditionally viewed the Moro terrorist groups as better negotiating

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<sup>1143</sup> For example, once, the MNLF signed its final agreement in 1996 it has been largely uninvolved in the insurgency, despite retaining its arms and widespread disillusionment with the weak autonomy the agreement provided. The MILF has coordinated with the AFP on monitoring missions to enforce ceasefires.

<sup>1144</sup> Rood, interview.

partners than the CPP-NPA. With the NPA, it is unclear if the leaders at the top have any control over the troops on the ground, which does not bode well for enforcing a negotiated settlement. That is not the case with the Moro groups. Minus a few splinter factions, the Moro groups are more cohesive than the CPP-NPA. This is especially true for the MILF, which exhibits firm control over its fighters. An anecdote shared with me by an aid worker in the Philippines highlights the different levels of centralization across the movements: When this aid worker has a meeting with a MILF forward commander, upon his arrival, 100 armed guards are there in formation to greet him and he is offered a full security detail for the duration of his visit.<sup>1145</sup> When visiting the NPA, however, the news of the meeting rarely trickles down to the leaders on the ground, creating a potentially dangerous situation when the aid worker approaches the NPA forward operating base.

### **6.3.3.1 NPA**

The CPP-NPA has been racked by three major types of fractures: ideological, leadership, and hierarchical/generational. The ideological split has been the most damaging. The near calamitous 1992 split between the rejectionist-reaffirmist factions still reverberates through the CPP-NPA.<sup>1146</sup> The split sparked significant defections and

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<sup>1145</sup> Jain, interview.

<sup>1146</sup> In addition to the fractionalization within the NPA, the left in the Philippines is deeply divided, which weakens the larger movement of which the NPA is ostensibly apart. The revolutionary left has a long history in the Philippines. The Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (Communist Party of the Philippines or CPP-1930) was established in 1930 and merged with the (Socialist Party of the Philippines) in 1938. Together they established the Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon-Hukbalahap in 1942 to fight the Japanese occupation. Once the war ended, the CPP-SPP was greatly weakened, but the left enjoyed a resurgence in the 1960s. Reenergized, the left began to agitate for change, but it was badly divided over strategy, leadership, tactics, and goals. Those divisions exist today. Despite these divisions there is significant sympathy for NDF – much more than the CPP even though the latter founded and remains a dominant member in the NDF. The dominance of the CPP was recently apparent when NDF released a

the creation of rival groups. The reaffirmists' draconian reaction to the split, which they blamed on double agents, inspired violent purges, resulting in a further thinning of the ranks. In 2006, there was a movement aimed at reuniting the rejectionist and reaffirmist schools of the NPA, but it was unsuccessful.<sup>1147</sup>

Several of the NPA splinters have become vocal critics and even violent rivals of the group. Some eventually negotiated separate settlements with Philippine government – undertaken by the latter to undermine the larger NPA, rather than out of a sincere effort to address the conflict's causes. Of the rivals and splinters, the most prominent – the Revolutionary Workers Party-Mindanao/Revolutionary People's Army (RPMM/RPA) – has engaged in violent clashes with its predecessor, whereas a series of other splinter groups have remained less active, but have still influenced the trajectory of the conflict – namely, the Revolutionary People's Army (RHB) and Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA).<sup>1148</sup>

### **6.3.3.2 Revolutionary People's Army (RPA)**

In 1992, the NPA “rejectionist” camp left the group to found the Revolutionary Workers Party-Mindanao and its armed wing, the Revolutionary People's Army (RPMM/RPA). The group was thought to have several hundred fighters and cover at least

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statement and it had to be recalled because the Central Committee of the CPP didn't agree with it. That said, there is some sympathy for the CPP-NPA among some prominent members of the left and leftist organizations. Several people I interviewed suggested the NPA had certain friends in the Senate and the House of Representatives. There are limits to what that sympathy can do for the CPP-NPA: Sympathizers are unable to defend the violent actions of the NPA, but they can make a big deal when the AFP engages in human rights abuses in the course of responding to NPA attacks. These elements within the government have recently been marginalized by the President's popularity. Villarin and Casiple interviews.

<sup>1147</sup> Santos and Santos, 22.

<sup>1148</sup> Another group that is often mentioned is the *Parido ng Manggagawang Pilipino* (PMP) and its armed wing – *Armadong Partisano ng Paggawa* (Armed Labor Partisans – or APP), which was created when rejectionist groups merged in 2002.

half of the Mindanao area.<sup>1149</sup> In 1997, the RPA merged with another NPA splinter group – the Alex Boncayao Brigade (ABB), which had several thousand fighters.<sup>1150</sup> In 2000, the group shifted its methods – eschewing fighting for development, political participation, and negotiating with the Philippine government. Talks with the Estrada government were formalized in an agreement in 2001 by the Arroyo administration and since then it has largely adhered to a formal ceasefire. In 2003, the RPA-ABB was thought to have less than 1,000 fighters.<sup>1151</sup> Given its declining ranks and peace talks with the government, it looked as though the group would change its methods, especially when it ran several candidates in the elections in 2004,<sup>1152</sup> but reports suggest that the RPA-ABB has continued to freelance as a vigilante militia for hire.<sup>1153</sup> It has been suggested that the RPA-ABB has continued to operate with the tacit consent of the government,<sup>1154</sup> because the organization has repeatedly engaged in attacks on the NPA, although it has largely adhered to its ceasefire with the government.<sup>1155</sup>

### **6.3.3.3 Revolutionary People’s Army (RHB)**

In 1998, elements within the CPP-NPA that were pressing the leadership to restart its urban guerrilla campaign were expelled from the group. They went on to form the Marxist-Leninist Party of the Philippines (MLPP) and its armed wing – the Rebolusyonaryong Kugbong Byan (Revolutionary People’s Army (RHB)). The political wing claimed to have 5,000 members, but the armed wing was thought to only have 50

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<sup>1149</sup> Santos and Santos, 296.

<sup>1150</sup> The ABB was 5,000 strong before it split from the CPP-NPA. Citing Coronel-Ferrer, 1997, *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>1151</sup> Citing Zuasola, 2003, *Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>1152</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>1153</sup> ICG, “The Philippines: Dismantling Rebel Groups,” Asia Report N°248, June 19, 2013, i.

<sup>1154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1155</sup> Santos and Santos, 281.



fighters.<sup>1156</sup> The group engages in criminal activities and occasionally has had violent clashes with the NPA, but has not be offered negotiations with the government.

#### **6.3.3.4 Cordillera People’s Liberation Army (CPLA)**

The indigenous people from Cordillera aligned with the CPP-NPA in the early 1970s in an effort to promote their own struggle for independence. In 1986, Cordilleran units broke away from the NPA to form the Cordillera People’s Liberation Army (CPLA). Cory Aquino routinely used the promise of negotiations with the CPLA to entice the Moros to negotiate. Although Aquino and the CPLA signed a Joint Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signifying the parties’ commitment to a cessation of hostilities,<sup>1157</sup> the government “strung along” the CPLA only as long as the Moro groups looked as though they might be willing to enter into talks and lay down their arms. As soon as it was clear they weren’t willing to do either, the government began to ignore the CPLA. For more than twenty years following the signing of the MOA, the CPLA protested the government that the promises for autonomy laid out in the Agreement had not been met.<sup>1158</sup> In 2010, the CPLA agreed to a new Memorandum of Agreement with President Noynoy Aquino, which stipulated that the CPLA would finally disarm, and that its troops would be largely integrated into the AFP.<sup>1159</sup>

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<sup>1156</sup> Ibid., 313.

<sup>1157</sup> OPAPP, “Brief History of the Cordillera Peace Process Posted on Tuesday, “ dated June 14, 2011, available from [<http://opapp.gov.ph/cpla/brief-history-cordillera-peace-process#sthash.AK2UHxgW.dpuf>], accessed on August 20, 2013.

<sup>1158</sup> In a 1990 referendum only Ifugao voted for autonomy and the rest of the provinces that make up Cordillera voted to retain their administrative status under the national government. In 1998, Apayao voted in favor of the autonomy.

<sup>1159</sup> The agreement was signed the following year. OPAPP, *Memorandum of Agreement between CPLA-CBA and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines*, available from [<http://opapp.gov.ph/sites/default/files/GPH-CPLA%20Memorandum%20of%20Agreement.pdf>], accessed August 20, 2013.

In addition to competition within the wider leftist movement, the CPP-NPA has suffered from internal divisions that have undermined the group's capacity to coerce and credibility to make commitments. Most notably, the NPA has suffered from a leadership struggle, which was exacerbated when Sison and other CPP leaders moved to the Netherlands in 1986.<sup>1160</sup> The move touched off a leadership struggle between Sison's camp and Luzon-based CPP leaders Benito and Wilma Tiamzon. That rift boiled over into open conflict in the 1990s. The Tiamzons even considered overthrowing Sison in 2010 after a disagreement about the CPP-NPA's strategy on elections and negotiations.<sup>1161</sup> This leadership struggle – combined with the geographic isolation of Sison and the decentralized nature of the organization – has caused a huge divide in the CPP-NPA. The leadership is in The Hague, which today has little control over the boots on the ground in the Philippines. There is a belief that the CPP leaders in the Netherlands are old and want to come home, but that they have little leverage over their followers.<sup>1162</sup> In contrast, the local NPA commanders on the ground have fought for a shorter period of time and their experiences make them more distrustful of the government and thus less inclined to negotiate than the leadership abroad. It is unclear that in the event the CPP-NPA leadership was able to come to an agreement with the Philippine government that the local NPA units on the ground would adhere to it, and if they chose not to, it is clear the leadership has no leverage to compel them.

Generational divides have also created a key fault line within the NPA. There is a vast gulf between the mindsets of the NPA's aging leadership in the Netherlands and the

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<sup>1160</sup> Kerkvliet, 4.

<sup>1161</sup> Francis Domingo, "The Leadership Crisis in the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army," *Small Wars Journal*, February 12, 2013.

<sup>1162</sup> Stephen Lillie and Tom Phipps, interview by author, June 10, 2013, Manila.

young fighters on the ground. The young fighters are more radical, they are in the position to extend the war, and they are willing to do so, in part because they don't remember the major AFP offenses of earlier decades.<sup>1163</sup> There is a short window before the young commanders completely take over the CPP-NPA, after which negotiating a political settlement will become that much harder.<sup>1164</sup> While Sison provides the organization with the ideological credentials it needs to recruit and maintain legitimacy, the local commanders - who are much more radical than Sison's generation - are really in charge. These young hardliners have repeatedly undermined the Dutch-based international committee in recent years. Whereas Sison and the Netherlands-based committee members have hinted at their willingness to abandon violent conflict in formal negotiations, the Philippines-based leadership has intensified their attacks on the AFP and talked about achieving a military stalemate by 2015.<sup>1165</sup> This division within the group, poses a major dilemma for the CPP-NPA: Sison provides the organization with credibility and if he leaves, the CPP-NPA will have a major legitimacy issue and will certainly lose many of its members and supporters.<sup>1166</sup> That said, Sison does not have the leverage to sign an agreement that the rank and file doesn't want. Without being able to deliver a good portion of CPP-NPA members in a negotiated settlement, Sison has no leverage with the government to negotiate a settlement.

The CPP-NPA's many fault lines make it a less desirable negotiating partner for the Philippine government. The bifurcated leadership structure makes it difficult for the

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<sup>1163</sup> Casiple, interview.

<sup>1164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1165</sup> Villarín, interview.

<sup>1166</sup> Casiple, interview.

government to understand who is actually in charge.<sup>1167</sup> Much of its mid-level leadership is unknown and underground.<sup>1168</sup> Continued defiance of Central Committee positions by local NPA commanders in the field suggests the leadership isn't able to control its troops, leading to the conclusion that any settlement negotiated with Sison is unlikely to result in widespread compliance on the ground. The potential for making money through campaign permits and revolutionary taxes also incentivizes local commanders to keep fighting. Peace talks held in Amsterdam in February 2013 almost produced a draft joint statement that would lay the groundwork for a projected meeting between Sison and President Aquino in Hanoi, but the talks collapsed in part because the NDF-CPP-NPA negotiators were unsure of their mandate given the lack of dialogue with their base. It was safer for them to scuttle a potential agreement with the government than do something that would spark a mutiny within the NPA and cause them to lose their legitimacy.

### **6.3.3.5 Moro Groups (MNLF/MILF)**

While the Moro insurgency has a more obvious division, that is the MNLF-MILF split, it is in many ways a more cohesive movement, made up of more unified organizations, than the communist one. This not to suggest that the MNLF-MILF split was not damaging to the movement as a whole and to each organization. Indeed, the split significantly weakened the Moro movement, created competition for third party sponsors, and opened up the groups to divide and conquer strategies. Moreover, periodic fighting between the MNLF and MILF distracted each group from their core goals. Interestingly,

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<sup>1167</sup> Villarín, interview.

<sup>1168</sup> This is in stark contrast to the Moro groups, whose leaders are known and living in the open.

however, relations between the MNLF and MILF have been largely “cordial” for much of their history.<sup>1169</sup> The groups share corresponding goals, have refrained from criticizing each other’s religious credentials, and on numerous occasions, have respected each other’s pursuit of negotiations with the Philippine government, even when they disagreed with the approach or stood to lose from a resulting settlement.

Beyond the MNLF/MILF split, both organizations have suffered some additional fragmentation. The MNLF is more fractured than the MILF, partly due to its decentralized structure: the MNLF Central Committee regards itself as setting broad policy outlines and allowing local commanders to make tactical decisions and maintain discipline.<sup>1170</sup> Misuari and other group leaders lived abroad for many years, exacerbating the divisions between the Committee and commanders on the ground. Since it signed the 1996 Final Peace Agreement, the MNLF has remained largely out of the insurgency. It retained its weapons, and only some of its troops have been incorporated into the state’s security apparatus, but the leadership has largely eschewed violence in order to pursue mainstream politics. Leadership struggles led the MNLF founder to lead a violent breakaway group in 2001, but Misuari and his few hundred fighters were ousted from the group, and later captured and imprisoned.

### **6.3.3.6 Misuari Breakaway Group (MBG)**

In 2006, the Misuari Breakaway Group (MBG) - the remnants of Misuari’s rebellion – was estimated to have 700 fighters and 300 firearms.<sup>1171</sup> Misuari was released

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<sup>1169</sup> “Moro National Liberation Front,” available from [<http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/379>].

<sup>1170</sup> Noble, 415.

<sup>1171</sup> Esperon, 6.

in 2008 and has continued to be a vocal critic of the Philippine government and the MNLF-led ARMM. Although he is vocal, Misuari has only a small following and has been entirely marginalized by the remaining MNLF leadership and other mainstream Moro groups. The bulk of the MNLF continues to observe the peace agreement with the GRP and the leadership of the ARMM government is upholding its end of the autonomy agreement.

The MILF has traditionally been a more cohesive group. There is a clear hierarchy that the local units respect. Towards the end of the recently finalized peace negotiations, however, there was concern that the MILF could lose control over its boots on the ground due to the strain of more than a decade of negotiations. The MILF negotiators repeatedly sent the message that they couldn't hold on forever or afford to be discredited in the eyes of their supporters.<sup>1172</sup> Since it began seriously negotiating with the Philippine government, the MILF has faced challenges from splinter organizations, namely the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF).<sup>1173</sup> Prior to negotiations, there

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<sup>1172</sup> Lillie and Phipps, interview.

<sup>1173</sup> Given that this group has largely emerged since the onset of serious negotiations with the MILF, it is beyond the purview of this project. A brief background follows - The most serious threat to the MILF has come from Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM), with its military wing, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) since the MILF started serious negotiations with the Philippine Government. BIFM is headed by former MILF base commander Ameril Umra Kato, a Saudi Arabia-trained cleric. In 2008, when talks between the government and the MILF stalled, Kato launched a violent campaign against Christians across Mindanao that left nearly 400 people dead and displaced hundreds of thousands of others. At the time, the BIFM had distanced itself from MILF's political leadership (Lillie and Phipps interview), but it was difficult to discern if the faction had split entirely from the group. After several years of trying to get Kato back under their control (Jim Gomez, "Ameril Umra Kato, Filipino Militant, Warns Of Post-Ramadan Attacks," *The Huffington Post*, August 31, 2011), and under mounting pressure from the Philippine Government, MLIF expelled Kato in 2011. BIFM has tried to undermine MILF's legitimacy; claiming the group is no longer fighting a jihad and has been corrupted by criminal interests and only cares about profits (Gomez). When talks continued, Kato rebuked the MILF for negotiations that have not born fruit and BIFF intensified its attacks on the AFP and infrastructure in Mindanao. Attacks in the summer of 2013 have sparked a coordinated MILF-AFP response. (Mario J. Mallari, "BIFF Attacks Become Daring Amid Stalemate," *The Daily Tribune*, July 10, 2013). Although it is small, the BIFF poses a serious problem for the MILF. BIFF was thought to have 200 to 300 fighters in 2011, and by the next year, estimates ranged from 500 to just over a thousand armed men. (Karlos Manlupig, "Kato Group Blames 'Other Forces' for Deadly Blast," *Inquirer Mindanao*, November 29,

were several other terrorist organizations operating in the region that created trouble for the Moro movement – either by engaging in verbal and violent attacks on the MILF or MNLF or creating the impression that they are working together, most notably the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

### **6.3.3.7 Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)**

In 1989, Abdurajak Abubakar Janijalani and several other Afghan alumni who had fought the Russians and had Islamic schooling abroad, founded Abu Sayyaf (Abu Sayyaf Group or ASG).<sup>1174</sup> Several of the other founding members were MILF defectors, but the organization was not strictly speaking a Moro splinter group. For much of its existence, ASG has been relatively small: In the early 1990s, the ASG was thought to have more than 600 fighters and 300 weapons,<sup>1175</sup> by 2000, the number of ASG guerrillas rose to nearly 3,000.<sup>1176</sup> As joint US-AFP efforts to destroy Abu Sayyaf were stepped up, the group's ranks were culled; by 2006, Abu Sayyaf was estimated to have 500 fighters and 300 weapons.<sup>1177</sup> In 2013, Abu Sayyaf was thought to have approximately 400

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2012). In 2013, some estimates put the number of BIFF fighters at over 1,000. (“Rebels bomb bridge in Maguindanao,” Rappler.com, July 8, 2013) The group is rumored to have relationships with other regional Islamist groups, including JI, a prominent member of which - Zulkifli bin Hir, also known as Marwan – was supposedly being sheltered by the BIFF in 2012. (Jeoffrey Maitem, “Malaysian Terrorist Hiding in Moro Rebs’ Camp,” *Inquirer Mindanao*, August 10, 2013). The BIFF has engaged in spoiler violence intended to derail talks between the GRP and the MILF. For example, when talks between the GRP and MILF stalled in July 2013, BIFF launched a series of attacks in Mindanao, including the bombing of the Magaslong Bridge in Datu Piang and several IED attacks on AFP convoys. (“Rebels Bomb Bridge in Maguindanao”). The BIFF poses a serious challenge the MILF – not militarily, but its continued existence served to undermine MILF’s credibility during negotiations and could potentially threaten the implementation of the 2014 peace accord.

<sup>1174</sup> Santos and Santos, 365.

<sup>1175</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

<sup>1176</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

<sup>1177</sup> Esperon, 6.

fighters.<sup>1178</sup> The ASG does not manufacture its own weapons and must rely on raids on the police and military and the black market for arms. This limitation, combined with its limited size and geographic presence,<sup>1179</sup> ensure that the ASG does not pose a serious challenge to the MILF's legitimacy or a direct military challenge to the group, but its continued activity has been problematic because of its use of extreme violence and connections with Islamist groups.

Abu Sayyaf occasionally criticizes the MNLF for failing to incorporate Islam into the group's platform. This critique is ironic given that despite some paltry trappings of religion, the ASG is nothing more than a criminal syndicate and has no religious credibility. The MILF has refused to ally with Abu Sayyaf and had been very critical of the group for its tactics, specifically the rampant use of kidnapping.<sup>1180</sup> That said, there were often tactical alliances between the two on the ground in Sulu.<sup>1181</sup> Suggested linkages with the ASG have been detrimental to the MILF's efforts to negotiate an agreement with the Philippine government and convince the US of its interest in pursuing moderate aims, especially in the face of extreme ASG violence, including the kidnapping and beheading of foreigners.

In addition to the ASG, there are smaller breakaway groups: In the late 1980s, MNLF members split off to form the Pentagon Gang – a Moro criminal syndicate known for kidnapping people for ransom. In 2003, the Gang was thought to have 200 members

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<sup>1178</sup> The Australian Government, "Abu Sayyaf Group," available from [[http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/agd/WWW/nationalsecurity.nsf/Page/What\\_Governments\\_are\\_doing\\_Listing\\_of\\_Terrorism\\_Organisations\\_Abu\\_Sayyaf\\_Group](http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/agd/WWW/nationalsecurity.nsf/Page/What_Governments_are_doing_Listing_of_Terrorism_Organisations_Abu_Sayyaf_Group)], last modified July 11, 2013, accessed on August 13, 2013.

<sup>1179</sup> Unlike the NPA, or the MILF, the ASG does not operate across huge swaths of the country. It is largely concentrated in the Basilan province, Sulu province, and in western Mindanao.

<sup>1180</sup> Santos and Santos, 371.

<sup>1181</sup> Ibid.



and 400 firearms.<sup>1182</sup> The group appears primarily interested in financial gain and any political aspirations it may have are unclear. A more religiously-motivated group founded in 2001, the Rajah Solaiman Islamic Movement (RSM), fights for the Islamization of the Philippines. The group operates in Luzon, north of Manila. At its height, the group was thought to have 50-100 fighters,<sup>1183</sup> but by 2006, it was thought to only have 28 members.<sup>1184</sup> The group is not well armed, but it is known to stockpile explosives and have some automatic rifles.<sup>1185</sup> For the most part, the Pentagon Gang and RSM are either too small or insufficiently political in nature to pose any real threat to the MNLF or the MILF – either in administering the ARMM or in its military or negotiation efforts, respectively. None of these organizations pose a serious threat to the Philippine government either – and as such, none were ever considered for participation in negotiations.

The continued existence of these splinter groups does threaten negotiations insofar as their actions provide ammunition to elements within the GRP who are resistant to a negotiations policy. In some cases, the spoiler violence – even when it is unrelated to the main Moro groups - has been cited as the impetus for military action against the MNLF and MILF. The most dramatic example occurred the day after the signing of the MOA-AD on June 22, 2001, when the Philippine military launched a series of attacks on MILF installations in Basilan after it alleged that the MILF was assisting the ASG, which at the time was holding several foreign hostages in the area. This attack undermined trust between the MILF and the government, but despite the setback, the AFP and MILF have

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<sup>1182</sup> Ibid., 399, and “Guide to the Philippines conflict,” BBC.

<sup>1183</sup> Santos and Santos, 385.

<sup>1184</sup> Esperon, 6.

<sup>1185</sup> Santos and Santos, 389.

gone on to coordinate their efforts against spoiler groups. For example, in May 2002, the MILF signed a Joint Communiqué on Criminal Interdiction with the government – a promise to assist with the interdiction of criminal networks in their area of operation - and under the guise of that agreement, provided intelligence that contributed to an airstrike on the Pentagon Gang’s base in August 2004.<sup>1186</sup> The MILF was able to move against these groups precisely because they do not have legitimacy and doing so has helped establish more support within the government for a final negotiated settlement with the MILF.

Despite the fractionalization and rivalries described above, the MILF and MNLF – and the Moro movement more broadly - are extremely cohesive when compared to the NPA. The extent of the factional conflict within the NPA and the left more broadly has made the NDF-CPP-NPA a far less attractive negotiating partner than the Moro terrorist groups.

#### **6.4 Domestic Political Environment**

The preceding section demonstrated that both the Moro and communist insurgencies reached mutually hurting stalemates, but successive Philippine presidents did not earnestly pursue strategic negotiations in either case. This is because state executives are unlikely to pursue negotiations based solely on an assessment of strategic factors alone. A conflict may be ripe for a political resolution and the terrorist challenger in question may demonstrate traits that suggest it will be a good negotiating partner, but if the domestic political environment is hostile, an executive will not pursue negotiations

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<sup>1186</sup> Ibid., 398-399.

with a terrorist group. State leaders will not shift their counterterrorism policy to include negotiations if doing so threatens their position. There are many characteristics that can determine whether there is sufficient domestic political space for the state to pursue negotiations, the two most important are public opinion and veto players. As the following section will demonstrate, for much of the period in question, there were significant domestic political obstacles to pursuing a negotiations counterterrorism strategy in the Philippines.

#### **6.4.1 Public Opinion**

Public opinion in the Philippines does not pose a significant barrier to the president's pursuit of negotiations with the country's primary insurgent groups. The significant violence each conflict has generated does not generate a dramatic public response. Filipinos are largely apolitical and given that they live in a very dangerous society, the deaths of AFP soldiers is a semi-regular occurrence and is unlikely to bring anyone into the streets. That said, the two insurgencies generate different responses from the Filipino public. Despite these differences, the public remains largely uninformed and apathetic towards both conflicts. Moreover, the Filipino population has little leverage over their elected officials to push for particular policies. As such, the Philippine president can largely pursue whatever strategy he or she likes as long as he/she are popular.

Public apathy about the two insurgencies that have long raged in the Philippines is in part born out of the media situation there. To say that Philippine journalism and media are underdeveloped is a gross understatement. Unlike in many western countries,

journalists in the Philippines are not usually paid salaries. They write a story about someone, then ask that person to buy ad space in the newspaper in order to generate funds for their wages. This structure has helped develop a press that is exceedingly uncritical. Some of the large newspapers in Manila, especially Makati, are better, but not by much. Moreover, readership in the Philippines is extremely low,<sup>1187</sup> and like in many places, it is declining significantly.<sup>1188</sup> In general, Filipinos are not well-versed in the political developments in their own country, especially with regard to counterinsurgency policies.

Despite feeling largely apathetic about both conflicts, the Filipino public does view the Moro and communist insurgencies differently. Everyone in the Philippines knows about the Moro insurgency in the country's south, but that knowledge is extremely limited. A story relayed to me by an INGO worker exemplifies this dichotomy: One night when he was leaving a nice restaurant in Makati a number of prostitutes attempted to sell him their services. When he declined, the most aggressive of the group walked along side him, giving him the hard sell. He demurred saying he had an early flight the next day, to which she inquired about his destination. When he said Mindanao, the prostitute screamed "Terrorists!!" and sprinted down the block in five-inch heels. Mindanao, everyone knows, is dangerous, but the Philippine people residing outside the region are largely ignorant and uninterested in the conflict there.

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<sup>1187</sup> There are 14 newspapers that have some level of national distribution. The top three have less than 900,000 daily readers combined. Ramon R. Tuazon, "The Print Media: A Tradition of Freedom," National Commission for Culture and the Arts, available from [<http://www.ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/articles-on-c-n-a/article.php?igm=3&i=221>], accessed on August 14, 2013.

<sup>1188</sup> Greenslade Blog, "Philippines Newspaper Readership in Decline," July 3, 2006, available from [<http://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2006/jul/03/philippinesnewspaperreadersh>], accessed on August 14, 2013.

Mindanao is rich agriculturally and in natural resources, but it is generally felt that the region has nothing to offer the Philippine people. They don't go there on vacation. It is "a place apart."<sup>1189</sup> As they are un-invested in Mindanao, the average Filipino is completely uninterested in what is going on there. A Norwegian diplomat relayed to me a stark example of this: Norway has hosted several rounds of Mindanao peace talks.<sup>1190</sup> In the summer of 2013, there was another round of talks with the MILF scheduled in Oslo. When the lead MILF negotiator came to the Norwegian Embassy to obtain a visa in order to travel to the talks, the locally engaged staff (all Filipinos) employed by the country hosting the meeting had no idea who he was. This may in part demonstrate how extremely apolitical most Filipinos are, but it also shows the public's lack of interest and ignorance of the Moro conflict.

Whereas most Filipinos are divorced from the Moro conflict, the NPA conflict is more omnipresent. The communist conflict touches most of the Philippines, and by extension most Filipinos in some way. The NPA and its communist collaborators and rivals are in more than 80% of the country's provinces. In a country, where there are large families, tight bonds with far-flung kin, and economic pressure to migrate to work, every Filipino knows at least one person directly impacted by the fighting with the communists. To give a personal account of how pervasive the communist insurgent threat is in the Philippines, I come from a large rather homogenous Irish-Catholic American family, but I have one Filipino aunt, and her first husband was killed by the NPA.

In addition to the difference in how the conflicts are personally experienced by Filipinos, there is also a difference in how their goals are viewed. Whereas Muslim

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<sup>1189</sup> Lillie and Phipps, interview.

<sup>1190</sup> Norway also serves as the facilitator for negotiations with the NDF-CPP-NPA.

grievances resonate across Southeast Asia, communist-inspired insurgencies no longer do.<sup>1191</sup> There is a strong anti-communist sentiment in Philippine public opinion. The nature of concessions may also play into public opinion regarding the two conflicts. With regard to the Moro conflict, the potential concessions the government has made do not rank high on the list of Philippine priorities. Filipinos are happy to change the constitution if it brings peace in Mindanao.<sup>1192</sup> The areas claimed by the Moros constitute 1/3 of Philippine territory, but given the negotiations have focused on autonomy instead of full independence, granting Moro goals seems paltry in comparison with the prospects of fundamentally altering the social, economic, and political structure of the entire country to accommodate the communists.

There are indications that the public is responsive to shifts in the conflicts, particularly periods of violence, but the capacity for public opinion to *directly* influence policymaking is minimal. With regard to the current president, several people who work for him acknowledged that while Aquino III listens to polls and takes them seriously, the President does what he believes is right regardless of public opinion.<sup>1193</sup> Another NGO worker told me that he brings polls to meetings with the president's office, not because he believes they will sway Aquino III in his deliberations, but rather that they will provide him with justification for policies he may already want to pursue.<sup>1194</sup> The Basilan massacre provided an example of the limited direct impact of public opinion on Aquino's decision-making: In the days following the 2011 Basilan massacre, an ABS-CBN poll showed 97% of Filipinos supported the suspension of talks and an "all-out war" on the

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<sup>1191</sup> Steven Rood, "Forging Sustainable Peace in Mindanao: The Role of Civil Society," *Policy Studies*, 17, East-West Center, 2005, 7.

<sup>1192</sup> Rood, interview.

<sup>1193</sup> Villarín, interview.

<sup>1194</sup> Rood, interview.

MILF.<sup>1195</sup> Yet, President Aquino III responded that he would not pursue an indiscriminate “all-out war” but rather “all-out justice,” a holistic approach that would still include negotiations.<sup>1196</sup> The President felt compelled to make a statement about the massacre, but the public’s response did not translate into political pressure to shift his policy. Aquino III was able to press on with negotiations with the MILF because the public has little leverage over Philippine leaders; the cultural predilection toward compromise and ambivalence toward violence; and the lack of resistance from within the government combined with the current president’s unprecedented popularity.

First and foremost, public opinion has not historically mattered in policymaking in the Philippines. This is in part because the quality and frequency of polls has traditionally been so poor that it was nearly impossible to accurately gauge the public mood.<sup>1197</sup> More importantly, polls, when they were conducted, fail to have any real influence on Philippine politics because up to 2010 you could essentially buy an election.<sup>1198</sup>

Second, in the Philippines, there is not the same cultural resistance to negotiating with terrorists and the public is not easily whipped into action in response to terrorist violence. The first predilection was made evident to me by a cab driver in Manila, who

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<sup>1195</sup> This poll was heavily criticized in the Philippines and it was eventually removed from the ABS-CBN website. There are still many references to the ABS-CBN polls, for example see Rina Jimenez-David, “At Large: The Fragile Peace,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October 22, 2011.

<sup>1196</sup> OPAPP, “Not All-Out War, but All-Out Justice - Statement of President Aquino on the Aftermath of the Armed Encounter in Basilan,” Press release, Oct 24th, 2011, available from [<http://www.opapp.gov.ph/milf/news/not-all-out-war-all-out-justice-statement-president-aquino-aftermath-armed-encounter#sthash.JJo1SNkl.dpuf>]

<sup>1197</sup> “The Philippines has high-quality periodic surveys of public opinion, but political discourse does not generally reflect this. For instance, political commentary on U.S. military training exercises is almost uniformly critical—as any perusal of Philippine newspapers will show—despite data (noted earlier) showing broad public support for the exercises. Political commentators in the Philippines tend to use surveys almost exclusively to measure the “horse race” aspects of electoral contests.” Rood, “Forging Sustainable Peace in Mindanao.”

<sup>1198</sup> Rood, interview.

told me Aquino III was very unpopular (a statement disputed by polling data) because he hadn't personally called up the perpetrators in two separate hostage-takings to listen to their demands (he had left this to lower-level personnel). The sentiment expressed by my taxi driver stands in stark contrast to that in other countries where there is a general revulsion to making concessions – or even talking to – those who employ terroristic tactics. The Philippines lacks a strong cultural bias against negotiating with terrorist groups. As a small country with powerful neighbors, the Philippines has developed a culture of accommodation in international disputes<sup>1199</sup> that extends to counterterrorism policy. Moreover, Philippine culture is known to be inimical to fighting: Filipinos prefer to amicably discuss their problems; they don't yell.<sup>1200</sup> These cultural tenets, combined with early negotiations with the MNLF – even if they were farcical – have helped create a cultural preference for peaceful solutions, which makes it easier for the president to pursue talks with insurgent groups,<sup>1201</sup> and weather the public response to violent outbursts along the way.

The Filipino public is also unlikely to demand hard-line responses to terrorism because violence is unlikely to spur public outcry. Violent episodes associated with the Moro and communist conflicts usually don't generate significant political pressure on

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<sup>1199</sup> While the Philippines may bluster in a conflict, it is the first to realize its military disadvantage vis-à-vis its neighbors, and as such, it is always the first country to negotiate. For example, as tensions mounted over territorial dispute in the South China Sea, the GRP recognized its impotence against the Chinese navy, so it instead indicated its displeasure by deporting a Chinese businessman who was being rude to Filipino flight attendants. Patrick Boehler, "Chinese Tourist Deported from Philippines for 'Bullying' Flight Attendant," *South China Morning Post*, August 29, 2013.

<sup>1200</sup> Aid workers in the region find the Philippine aversion to arguing can make it difficult to anticipate violent outbursts as combatants often have cordial communication up until the moment they try to kill each other. Rood, interview.

<sup>1201</sup> *Ibid.* That said, there is a myth that historically the Philippine president has used military force against insurgents in Mindanao to garner support from the public. Despite how widely this belief is held, it does not dovetail with the Philippine culture, which is inimical to fighting. Poll data doesn't provide strong support for this belief.



elected officials because there is already such a high level of violence in the country and the public has developed a tolerance that mutes their reaction in all but the most egregious cases. The Moro and communist insurgencies have lasted almost a half century and have killed hundreds of thousands of people and impacted the lives of millions more. But many have argued that insurgent violence is not the greatest threat to peace in the Philippines. Indeed, the most pervasive violence in the country is *rido* – inter-ethnic or clan blood feuds. In many communities in Mindanao, *rido*, not the Moro insurgency, is the primary cause for instability.<sup>1202</sup> Inter-elite competition also generates violence on a regular basis as elites compete for political posts or control of economic resources.<sup>1203</sup> For example, in November 2009, the son of the governor of Maguinadanao who was running for his father’s seat used his family’s private army to confront a group on their way to file the candidacy of his opponent: the attack left 57 people dead.<sup>1204</sup> Pervasive violence has numbed the public reaction when insurgents kill AFP soldiers on a semi-regular basis; no one likes it, but no one really reacts.

Third, even though public opinion had little direct effect on presidential decision-making in the Philippines, it does serve as a potential justification for elite criticism, which in some cases – namely from veto players in the military and the Senate - can impact the president’s policymaking. In the case of the Basilan massacre, public outrage fueled critiques from both the AFP and prominent Senators against Aquino’s continued pursuit of negotiations with the MILF. Army spokesman Colonel Antonio Parlade publically urged the government to suspend the ceasefire with the MILF in response to the Basilan massacre, saying that keeping the ceasefire in place prevented the AFP from

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<sup>1202</sup> Adriano and Parks, 36.

<sup>1203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1204</sup> “Philippines Charges 196 over Maguindanao Massacre,” *BBC*, February 9, 2010.

pursuing those responsible and hurt troop morale.<sup>1205</sup> Parlade told the media that this was not the first time the MILF had violated the ceasefire and suggested that if up to him, he would “suspend the ceasefire specifically in Basilan, if only to give them [the MILF] a lesson.”<sup>1206</sup> Senator Chiz Escudero called on the government to end the ceasefire and Representative Rodolfo Biazon demanded Aquino III pull out of peace talks with the MILF entirely.<sup>1207</sup> Despite heavy criticism from within the government, Aquino was able to continue with his preferred course of action due to his popularity.

In the Philippines, the presidency is imbued with a great deal of power. In general, the president of the Philippines can pursue the policies he/she wishes as long as he/she remains popular – and, most importantly, does not incur the ire of the military. Aquino’s unprecedented levels of popularity have helped dampen elite critiques of his policies. Unlike his predecessors, Aquino’s popularity has actually gone up while he was in office. Elected in 2010 with 42% of the vote – itself one of the largest margins of victory in Philippine politics – Aquino’s popularity steadily grew once in office. In October 2010, polls found that 79% of the public approved of the job he was doing and 80% trusted him as the President.<sup>1208</sup> Aquino’s popularity has helped shield him from attacks from the opposition. He has been so popular that he has been able to defy campaign promises (e.g. on raising taxes)<sup>1209</sup> without inviting criticism from other elites.

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<sup>1205</sup> Jojo Malig, “Palace urged to suspend MILF ceasefire,” *ABS-CBN News*, October 20, 2011, available from [<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/regions/10/20/11/army-officer-urges-palace-suspend-milf-ceasefire>], accessed on August 2, 2013.

<sup>1206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1207</sup> “Senator: Suspend ceasefire in Basilan,” *SunStar.com*, October 24, 2011, and Alito L. Malinao, “Basilan massacre of Philippine troops big blow to peace talks with Moro” October 201, 2011, *CCTV.com English rebels*, [<http://english.cntv.cn/20111020/117587.shtml>], accessed on August 23, 2013.

<sup>1208</sup> “Philippine President gets high public approval: Pulse Survey,” *The Xinhua News Agency*, September 19, 2012.

<sup>1209</sup> For example, Aquino ran on a platform that he would not raise taxes, but in 2012 he signed the Republic Act No. 10351 (An Act Restructuring the Excise Tax on Alcohol and Tobacco), which imposed a

Ultimately, Aquino's popularity and the lack of public leverage over the policymaking process let him continue negotiations with the MILF even after Basilan, and even allowed him to explore the possibility of negotiating with the NPA.

## **6.4.2 Veto Players**

States are not unitary actors. They are comprised of different actors and agencies that have their own personal or bureaucratic interests. These actors have varying degrees of influence over the policymaking process. Likewise, there may be actors outside the government who can influence policymaking, such as the media. The actors whose agreement is necessary for a change in policy hold a veto in the policymaking process. Structural and institutional factors, as well as the nature of the policy dilemma at hand, determine which actors constitute veto players. In counterterrorism policymaking, the security forces are expected to play a role greater than provided by their institutional powers. This was indeed the case in the Philippines for much of the period under consideration.

### **6.4.2.1 Security Services**

Traditionally, the Philippine military<sup>1210</sup> was a powerful force in domestic politics. Despite constitutional provisions designed to create distance between the military and domestic politics, in practice, the AFP played a central role in Philippine politics. For

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sin tax on cigarettes and alcohol to raise money for the country's fledgling public health sector. Michael Lim Ubac, "Aquino Signs Sin Tax Bill into Law," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, December 21, 2012.

<sup>1210</sup> The discussion of the AFP often reads as though the Philippine military is a unitary actor with distinct preferences; a depiction that is far from reality. The Philippine military, like all bureaucratic entities, is comprised of subgroups and individual actors that have different bureaucratic, personal, and political objectives. When describing the AFP's capacity to veto counterinsurgency/counterterrorism policy, it is important to consider the various levels at which that veto power exists.

much of the period examined herein, the Philippine military has been against negotiating with the communist and Moro insurgents. AFP generals thought they could easily defeat the insurgents, and when they couldn't, the perpetuation of the conflicts proved financially and bureaucratically profitable for many in the military. For many years, the military was able to use the threat of a coup to pressure Philippine presidents into refraining from engaging in real strategic negotiations and making real concessions to the insurgents. Moreover, the AFP engaged in offensive actions that perpetuated the conflicts and rendered negotiations unviable. This began to slowly change as more and more of the military brass came to recognize there weren't military solutions to the communist or Moro conflicts. In the last decade, the Philippine military altered its thinking about the potential utility of negotiations to end the conflict in Mindanao and today most of the military establishment appears supportive of the GRP-MILF peace process. With that shift in thinking and as the AFP's grip over domestic politics loosened, the domestic political space necessary for a Philippine president to earnestly pursue negotiations opened up, at least with regard to the Moro conflict. The military, however, has retained its animus to the NPA and skepticism about whether the NPA will ever give up its fight, and as such, has not provided enthusiastic support for negotiations with the group.

The Philippine military is by all accounts extremely weak, but its comparative weakness does not extend to its influence on domestic politics. The AFP is the weakest military in Asia.<sup>1211</sup> It is desperately underfunded: In the early 1980s, the AFP budget

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<sup>1211</sup> The AFP is still undergoing modernization. Acop, "The Expanded Nontraditional Role of the AFP," 107.

represented less than 1% of the country's GDP.<sup>1212</sup> The AFP suffers from a comprehensive lack of equipment - from basic infantry tools like radios to the transportation and attack infrastructure of a modern military like trucks and helicopters.<sup>1213</sup> While it is true that the AFP is weak compared to the military forces of its neighbors, the Philippine military has historically been a driving force in Philippine domestic politics, a position it is only now slowly relinquishing.

From its foundation, the Philippine military has been designed to be subservient to the civilian government. Yet, in practice, the military had more power and wider influence than outlined in the constitution of 1935. In the 1950s, President Magsaysay used the AFP to monitor elections and appointed active duty officers to positions in his administration.<sup>1214</sup> When his successor, President Garcia, removed many of those officers from their government positions, there were elements within the AFP that would have liked to have overthrown the government, but the organization lacked the cohesion and capacity to do so.<sup>1215</sup> Those qualities gradually improved and the AFP would soon be better positioned to intervene in domestic politics when its interests were threatened.

The military's involvement in domestic affairs grew under Marcos, who remained wary of the AFP and worked to shore up its loyalty by initially maintaining the military portfolio for himself and providing military brass with top bureaucratic posts and

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<sup>1212</sup> Even in the face of growing defence budgets and foreign military aid, the AFP remained one of the most poorly funded militaries in the region. Global Security, "Philippine Defense Spending," available from [<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/philippines/budget.htm>], accessed on August 14, 2013.

<sup>1213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1214</sup> Viberto Selochan, "The Military and the Fragile Democracy of the Philippines," in *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*, eds. Ronald James May and Viberto Selochan, (Australian National University Press: Canberra, 2004), 62-63.

<sup>1215</sup> Ibid., 64.

positions managing state-owned corporations.<sup>1216</sup> Martial law only raised the profile of the military in the Philippines, making it the penultimate power in domestic politics behind the president – a level of power unseen before or since.<sup>1217</sup> The military became more like Marcos' private militia than the army of the Philippine state, and this position left the AFP more interested in politics than fighting the two major insurgencies raging in the country.<sup>1218</sup> Likewise, the focus on politics left its external security posture in a laughable state. Most believe the military was loyal to Marcos and would not have stood in the way of his preferred policies, but years of cronyism had caused deep fissures in the AFP. Fractionalized, the military found itself declining in public esteem: Whereas the military was once the most highly revered institution in Philippine society, public support waned after Benigno Aquino's assassination in 1983. Those military officials who were not benefiting directly from the President's largess and corruption facilitated by their political positions increasingly wanted Marcos out of power. There was apparently a coup planned in 1985, but it was canceled after Marcos announced snap elections for February 1986.<sup>1219</sup>

When the EDSA revolution swept Corazon Aquino to power in February 1986, many thought it marked the beginning of a significant downgrade in standing for the AFP. Aquino made early efforts to reduce the military's reach into government, but military opposition, often expressed as coup attempts (seven between 1986 and 1992),

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<sup>1216</sup> Acop, "The Expanded Nontraditional Role of the AFP," 102, and Selochan. According to Selochan, Marcos retained the military portfolio for the first 13 months of his administration. He then promoted officers loyal to him and installed his own cousin as the Chief of Staff.

<sup>1217</sup> Dencio S. Acop, "Assessing the Expanded Role of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in Nation-Building," *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, Vol. 6, No. 2, (2006).

<sup>1218</sup> Selochan, 65.

<sup>1219</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

frustrated her efforts.<sup>1220</sup> Aquino's efforts to deal with the Moro and communist conflicts were impeded by the military: The AFP was unhappy with Aquino's position on the NDF and several of the coup attempts during her administration were efforts to persuade her to back away from her initial conciliatory stance toward the communist insurgents.<sup>1221</sup> Aquino continued talks even after the coup attempts, but most observers describe them as disingenuous; with the threat of a coup hanging over her head, Aquino was unable to make any real concessions.

Under her successor, Fidel Ramos - a former general himself, an effort to create a "New AFP" was declared, which sought to restore the military to the barracks, remove generals from domestic politics, and rehabilitate the armed forces' image with the people.<sup>1222</sup> Yet, even under Ramos, a former general, the military was slow to relinquish its hold on domestic politics. Military resistance to negotiations with the MILF ensured that talks remained largely for show - as is evident by the fact that Ramos never even signed the Jakarta Agreement.

Several presidents, particularly Ramos, viewed the military's counterterrorism/counterinsurgency focus as deeply problematic and sought to bolster and reorient the military to defend the country against foreign threats. The need to reorient the military took on new urgency in 1991 when the Philippine Senate voted against renewing the Military Bases Agreement with the United States. With the closing

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<sup>1220</sup> (1) the July 1986 Manila Hotel Incident, (2) the November 1986 "God-Save-the-Queen Plot", (3) the January 1987 GMA-7 Incident, (4) the April 1987 "Black Saturday" Incident, (5) the July 1987 MIA Takeover Plot, (6) the August 1987 Coup Attempt, and (7) the December 1989 Coup Attempt. Not to mention the threat of another coup following the 1992 elections. There were no coup attempts during the Ramos administration, but a nonviolent coup - EDSA II - unseated Joseph Estrada in January 2001. A coup attempt of sorts took place in July 2003, under Macapagal-Arroyo. Coup rumors persisted during her administration. Acop, "Assessing the Expanded Role of the Armed Forces of the Philippines," 139-140, and Selochan, 59-60 and 67.

<sup>1221</sup> Rood, interview.

<sup>1222</sup> Acop, "Assessing the Expanded Role of the Armed Forces of the Philippines," 139.

of the Subic naval and Clarke air force bases, the American military was no longer the first line of Philippine national defense and the country lost its nuclear deterrent provided by its American tenants. The AFP had vigorously campaigned for renewing the treaty. In the early 1990s, the resulting military vulnerability may have seemed inconsequential as the Cold War ended, but within a few years, the rise of China made the country's lack of an externally-focused security force a major problem.

The military again demonstrated its prominent position in politics when it withdrew support for Ramos' successor – Estrada – a move that led to his downfall from power. Estrada's vice president, Arroyo, replaced him and was sure to recognize the players who put her in power. Upon taking office, she appointed a number of former generals to key positions in her administration, but despite her close association with military brass, Arroyo still faced military resistance to some of her policies.

The election of Noynoy Aquino marks a shift in the Philippine military's role in domestic politics. It is unclear if this is due to a willing retreat by the AFP, or specific to Aquino's presidency. Indeed, with regard to the latter, Aquino's unprecedented popularity and close relationships with high-ranking generals has provided him more latitude in dealing with the armed forces than his predecessors. It was still shocking, however, when immediately upon taking office Aquino III announced that he would not keep the AFP Chief of Staff – General Delfin Bangit – who had been appointed by Arroyo – in the job. In earlier times, such an action would have resulted in Aquino III, not Bangit, being out of a job. Today, it appears as if the Philippine military is not powerful enough or interested in interfering with Presidential appointments, which may be indicative of a wider retreat from domestic politics, one that would significantly



influence the Philippine president's capacity to make counterterrorism/counterinsurgency decisions.

Over the period examined herein, the Philippine military expressed its bureaucratic preferences in a range of ways at the policymaking stage or in policy implementation. With regards to the policymaking process, the Philippine defense minister and the top brass can express their concerns and policy preferences to the president during their work on the security cluster.<sup>1223</sup> The cluster is influential in forming policy, but in the event that there is a disagreement with the president, the cluster does not impede the president's pursuit of counterterrorism policy.<sup>1224</sup> Participation in the cluster does not provide the military with an institutional veto. Rather, the military's veto stems from the latent threat that the military will remove the president from power in the event that it feels that his or her policies threaten the institution.

In the event of a disagreement about policy, it is unlikely that the military will outwardly and vocally oppose the president. The Philippine military generally flies beneath the radar. Generals are not very vocal about preferences and in most cases the generals do as they are told. That said, when the organization has felt threatened, its leaders have been vocal in defending its reputation<sup>1225</sup> and protecting its bureaucratic interests.<sup>1226</sup> All Philippine presidents are wary of ignoring the military's preferences for fear that doing so could provoke AFP intervention. The number of coup attempts and the role the military has played in the downfall of presidents (i.e. Estrada) lend credibility to this threat - one that is taken very seriously by all Philippine presidents. Moreover,

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<sup>1223</sup> The Security Cluster is comprised of the Defense Minister, the Peace Minister (OP), the Interior Minister, the Justice Minister and the president's political advisors on counterinsurgency policy.

<sup>1224</sup> The president appointed all of these officials so it is unlikely they'd vocally oppose his chosen policy.

<sup>1225</sup> Greenberg, interview.

<sup>1226</sup> Jain, interview.

several of those coup attempts were a direct response to the conciliatory policies toward the Moros or the communists. The threat of a coup is real, not only because of the history of such actions, but also because Philippine governments are easy to fell: According to one observer, in such a small country, with a high concentration of power, you can mount a successful coup if ‘you control the Peninsula Hotel and the three main streets in Manila.’<sup>1227</sup> Thus, the AFP appears uniquely positioned to veto counterterrorism policy. The military is the only institution in Philippine society that has demonstrated the capacity to veto a policy by removing the president from power.<sup>1228</sup> Indeed, the very threat of a coup has effectively dissuaded several Philippine presidents from pursuing genuine negotiations with insurgents.

The Philippine military, as compared to other government actors, is uniquely positioned to veto a negotiations policy at the implementation stage. Several people I interviewed for this study suggested that local commanders against negotiations engage in attacks on the insurgents that seek to undermine their trust in the government’s dedication to peace. Sometimes troops on the ground, angry at losing comrades, engage in revenge killings and human rights abuses. There are examples of local commanders leaking information about violent exchanges in hopes of eroding public support for the peace process and generating pressure for the government to rescind talks in light of atrocities. For example, on October 19, 2011, MILF forces killed 19 AFP soldiers in Basilan in the southern Philippines.<sup>1229</sup> Rumors spread that the soldiers had been

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<sup>1227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1228</sup> One might argue the people have demonstrated such power in the EDSA revolution, but 1. It is unclear if they could have done so without the support of the military defectors and the restraint of the military factions loyal to Marcos, and 2. It is unclear the people would ever be exercised enough about counterterrorism/counterinsurgency policy to take to the streets to unseat the president.

<sup>1229</sup> Julie Alipala, “19 Soldiers Slain in Basilan,” *Inquirer Mindanao*, October 20, 2011.

beheaded, sparking outrage, but there was no evidence that was the case. Low-level military officials who disagreed with the Moro peace process made the erroneous leak to undermine the peace talks with the MILF. As previously described, their efforts resonated and soon military commanders and politicians were calling for Aquino III to abrogate negotiations and, in some cases, resume an “all out war” against the MILF.<sup>1230</sup> Soon thereafter, rumors circulated that there was a movement afoot in the military to agitate for the removal of Aquino III from power, but nothing materialized and the military dismissed the rumors as baseless.<sup>1231</sup>

There are also financial incentives, as well as bureaucratic incentives, associated with the Moro and communist insurgencies that motivate some local commanders to perpetuate the conflicts. For example, there is evidence that soldiers, often with the tacit, if not explicit, approval of their commanders, have sold their weapons and ammunition to the NPA and MILF.<sup>1232</sup> While they are motivated by greed, or in many cases extreme poverty and the need to supplement insufficient provisions, their actions help strengthen the insurgents and prolong the conflicts. In addition to the sale of ammunition, the conflicts provide justification for large military contracts, many of which are overpaid and provide kickbacks to military staff. Likewise, the Moro and communist conflicts help create a significant number of security jobs: For example, the mining companies in Mindanao, and those in Luzon that are regularly taxed by the NPA, hire former generals

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<sup>1230</sup> Christine O. Avendano, “Aquino: All-out Justice for 19 Dead Soldiers,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October 25, 2011.

<sup>1231</sup> Manuel Mogato, “PNoy Faces Coup Rumors amid Basilan Fiasco,” *Reuters*, October 27, 2011.

<sup>1232</sup> AFP records are full of tell tale signs of bartering weapons – to explain the loss of ammo or guns, after-action reports are filed that specify that hundreds of rounds of ammunition were used and weapons were lost in battles that are either fictitious or greatly overblown in an effort to hide the sale. Malou Mangahas, “Petty, Big, Routine Graft a Lucrative Trade at AFP,” *Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ)*, February 23, 2011.

as security advisors.<sup>1233</sup> Some branches of the military stand to benefit more than others by the continual focus on counterinsurgency: Given that a reorientation towards an external defense posture will shift funding and focus to the navy and the air force, the army stands to lose bureaucratic clout and funds as the conflict in Mindanao winds down.<sup>1234</sup> As such, it is speculated that elements within the Army have worked to undermine the peace process in Mindanao. Unfortunately, the years of politicization of the military exposed officers to political corruption while creating opportunities for their own financial kickbacks, thus creating an allure, which has seeped deep into the AFP's consciousness.<sup>1235</sup> Sadly, military corruption in the Philippines has been tolerated by post-ESDA presidents, but at the expense of efforts to negotiate peaceful solutions to the Moro and communist conflicts.

With regard to both conflicts, the Philippine military has tended to have a more conservative view of the insurgencies. This is in part because the military directly confronts – and is confronted by – the insurgents, and because career military officials have a much longer view of the conflict than the current president they serve and his/her advisors who are only in office for a few years. Given the personal and bureaucratic interests outlined above, and this elongated view of the conflicts, the military has tended to be more apprehensive about pursuing a negotiated settlement with the terrorists. That general position was accompanied by very different assessments of the Moro and communist terrorist challengers.

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<sup>1233</sup> Jain, interview.

<sup>1234</sup> Villarín, interview.

<sup>1235</sup> Acop, "The Expanded Nontraditional Role of the AFP," 111.

The Philippine military has long held the Moro insurgents in higher esteem than the NPA.<sup>1236</sup> For at least a decade, the MILF insurgents have been viewed as very professional, disciplined, and extremely fierce fighters. By contrast, the AFP has little respect for NPA.<sup>1237</sup> By contrast to the professional MILF fighters, the NPA soldiers are described as not being able to hold their weapons properly. The AFP's view of the NPA is motivated in part by a cultural bias against communism. There is a broad political consensus against negotiating with the NPA and the military likes being on the side of public opinion.<sup>1238</sup> Causing more acute antagonism is the NPA's style of fighting, especially its use of landmines, which have injured and killed scores of AFP soldiers.<sup>1239</sup>

In conclusion, the Philippine military has undergone significant changes in the last 15 years. The Philippine military's hold on domestic politics had gradually loosened. The AFP has become less corrupt, it has been working to modernize its force, and it is slowly turning outward. Once the US withdrew from its bases in the Philippines in the early 1990s, it became dangerously clear that the AFP needed to shift its attention away from counterinsurgency and get the Moro problem 'off its plate,'<sup>1240</sup> in order to develop the capacity to defend country against current external threats.<sup>1241</sup> This urgency helped the AFP accept the notion of an "all out peace" in Mindanao. Despite its shift in position and gradual retreat from domestic politics and reorientation to external threats, there remains

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<sup>1236</sup> Rood, interview.

<sup>1237</sup> Greenberg, interview.

<sup>1238</sup> Greenberg, interview.

<sup>1239</sup> Rood, interview.

<sup>1240</sup> Rood, interview. That said, there are, as I described above, individual military commanders who disagree and have worked to undermine the peace process in Mindanao.

<sup>1241</sup> There is a contradiction in the AFP's shift away from COIN to external security: Indeed, the military wants to shift away from COIN and AFP generals recognize that its the forces need to become more professional, better trained and equipped, and yet is aware that it will never be able to repel China. The AFP is starting so far behind the starting line that it can never hope to catch up enough that it can protect its territory from an emerging superpower. That said, the AFP needs to modernize and bolster its forces so it can meet other threats and be a viable partner for its allies.

a general consensus that the Philippine military remains powerful enough to prevent counterterrorism policies it doesn't like.<sup>1242</sup> Even the MILF recognized the military's capacity as a veto player: In recent years, the MILF made a habit of going to AFP bases in Mindanao to brief local commanders in order to keep them on board with the peace process, a recognition that the military was powerful enough to derail talks.<sup>1243</sup> Whereas the Philippine military once opposed the talks and made it clear to several presidents that they should not make real concessions to the MNLF and subsequently the MILF, today, recent military support for the peace process in Mindanao was essential for Aquino III to be able to complete negotiations with the MILF in 2014.<sup>1244</sup> The military is more wary of the prospects of negotiating with the NPA, but for now, even if the AFP felt strongly enough to intercede to prevent negotiations from occurring, there is no need. The NDF-CPP-NPA has consistently sabotaged talks and the current JASIG controversy suggests that prospects for moving forward are slim.

Other than the military, no other institutions or actors in the Philippines can successfully *ex ante* veto the president's preferred counterterrorism policy. Given the Philippines has a presidential system, one could expect that any veto players would be those actors and agencies that have an institutional check on the president's power. In the case of the Philippines, that would include the legislature – House of Representatives and Senate – and Supreme Court, but their powers may only extend to the implementation of a negotiated settlement and thus, do not serve to prevent the onset of negotiations. Rather these institutions hold an *ex post* veto, which remains important, however, because *ex*

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<sup>1242</sup> Of all the people I interviewed for this project, only one said the AFP didn't have a veto over counterterrorism policy. He did, however, concede that the AFP was extremely powerful and its opinion on counterterrorism policy mattered. Greenberg, interview.

<sup>1243</sup> Rood, interview.

<sup>1244</sup> Lillie and Phipps, interview.

*post* vetoes have derailed peace talks in the past and fear of an *ex post* veto may alter the president's calculated utility for pursuing talks. Other important actors in the Philippines, particularly the Catholic Church, once held significant sway on the course of Philippine policy, but today they are unable to effectuate policy change. There are a few other local actors – local politicians from Mindanao like the Lorbegat family from Zamboanga City – who have made a lot of noise in opposing negotiated settlements, but their efforts have not prevented negotiations from occurring. Ultimately, no actor – other than the military – can really stop the Philippine president if he/she chooses to pursue negotiations with a terrorist group. That is not to say that veto players can't render any agreement they produce illegal or impossible to implement, and the latent threat of such action may serve as a deterrent for pursuing negotiations.

#### **6.4.2.2 Supreme Court**

The Supreme Court of the Philippines is often cited as a potential spoiler of the peace process because of its ruling on the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD), which caused the peace process with the MILF to collapse. In July 2008, the Arroyo's government and MILF leaders reached an agreement on the ancestral domain in Mindanao, which would establish the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE), a state within the Philippine state. The BJE was designed as a local government that could administer its own legislative, administrative, security, financial, judicial and educational systems, and natural resources in an area that expanded beyond the ARMM to include Lanao del Norte, parts of Sultan Kudarat and Palawan, and North Cotabato. The MOA-AD sparked opposition in Mindanao and in Congress. Several Representatives took the

issue to the Supreme Court. The Agreement was scheduled to be signed on August 5, 2008, but the Supreme Court filed an injunction to prevent the signing. In October, the Court declared the MOA-AD unconstitutional. The Court's ruling caused negotiations to collapse.

In the Philippines, the Supreme Court has established jurisdiction to evaluate negotiated settlements with provisions that impact the territorial integrity of the state and autonomy. This jurisdiction appears to give the Court an *ex post* veto over negotiated agreements, but does not constitute an *ex ante* veto that could prevent a president from pursuing negotiations with terrorists. Unlike the military, it cannot dissuade the president from pursuing negotiations out of some latent threat to the administration. Some, however, have questioned whether the Court even has an *ex post* veto. In several of my interviews, people repeated the rumor that the Court declared MOA-AD illegal at the request of the Arroyo administration. Apparently, Arroyo wanted credit for the peace process but didn't want it to make any real concessions in Mindanao, especially when opposition mounted to the Agreement, so she helped engineer the Supreme Court decision by purposely writing the agreement in a way that it would violate the constitution. It is argued that Arroyo did not support the MOA-AD (as evidenced by her 2008 State of the Nation Address in which it was only mentioned briefly in the 38<sup>th</sup> minute of the speech)<sup>1245</sup> and her backtracking on the Agreement, arguing she had not given the negotiators the full authority to sign it.<sup>1246</sup> The argument that the Supreme Court ruling was made at the behest of the Arroyo administration gained further credence during the 2012 impeachment trial of the Supreme Court Justice – Renato Corona,

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<sup>1245</sup> Williams, 125.

<sup>1246</sup> Ibid.



appointed by Arroyo – for corruption.<sup>1247</sup> The Chief Justice was impeached for ruling with partiality to Arroyo and failing to declare \$2.4 million (USD) in foreign bank accounts.<sup>1248</sup> Thus it remains somewhat unclear if the Court’s ruling constituted a real *ex post* veto, or was in fact undertaken at the behest of the president. Either way, and despite the fallout from the MOA-AD debacle, the Philippine government has continued to negotiate with the MILF, suggesting that the Court’s decision may have served as a setback for the peace process, but it did not prevent Arroyo’s successor from pursuing subsequent negotiations. That said, the impact of the ruling has been significant: It forced Aquino’s administration to be extremely careful in making commitments and concessions to the MILF in recent rounds of talks in order to produce a settlement that is impervious to legal challenges. This suggests that the threat of an *ex post* veto by the Supreme Court may influence how a president pursues negotiations and what concessions are made, but does not prevent the onset of negotiations with a terrorist group.

### 6.4.2.3 Congress

After Ferdinand Marcos’ dictatorship crumbled in 1986, the US-modeled democratic Philippine republic was reinstated with a tri-part diffusion of power between an executive branch headed by the president, a bi-cameral legislature with a House and

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<sup>1247</sup> Floyd Whaley, “Philippine Chief Justice Removed Over Omission in Report on Assets,” *The New York Times*, May 29, 2012.

<sup>1248</sup> As early as 2011, there were suspicions aired about the Chief Justice’s relationship with the Arroyo administration: Senator Franklin Drilon demanded the Chief Justice recuse himself of any cases related to Arroyo as he had sided with her in every case that had come to the Court. Drilon marks the record as 19 cases in favor of Arroyo and 0 against. Evangeline de Vera, “Drilon pushes Corona inhibition: Says CJ took GMA side in 19 key cases,” *Malay Business Insight*, (<http://archive.malaya.com.ph/2011/November/nov29/news1.html>). On the MOA-AD decision, Corona was in the opposition – seemingly a vote for the administration. But the minority did not vote that the MOA-AD was constitutional, rather they claimed the decision was a moot point because the administration had declared it would not sign the document anyway. Williams, 128.

Senate, and a judiciary that culminates in a Supreme Court. It has changed over the period examined herein, but today, the Senate is comprised of 24 nationally-elected Senators who serve six year terms. The House is comprised of over 280 congressmen<sup>1249</sup> – 80% of which are elected from districts and 20% of which are elected nationally as sectoral representatives (e.g. labor unions). Congressmen serve for three-year terms. The Philippine Congress is remarkably similar to the US one, with a significant exception; the Philippine Congress does not have complete power of the purse. Rather, the President controls pork barrel funding. The President determines how the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) is dispersed and as such, congressmen are largely deferential to the president in order not to risk losing PDAF funds for their districts. This deference was on full display in 2005 when the Congress failed to impeach Arroyo, despite having a solid case against her, after her office offered money, pork barrel projects, and government appointments that proved irresistible to unscrupulous congressmen.<sup>1250</sup> This tradition of pork barrel handouts has generated a tradition whereby the House does not oppose the president. As such, the House has never been a significant check on presidential power in the Philippines.<sup>1251</sup>

The House has no veto over presidential counterterrorism policymaking. Despite the institutional capacity to veto any law that results from a peace agreement and thus veto the implementation of the negotiated settlement, the House never does so. This was evident in the MOA-AD debacle: representatives who opposed the Agreement went to

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<sup>1249</sup> The number of congressmen had changed with different iterations of the constitution. The 1987 Constitution allowed the number of congressmen to be raised by statute.

<sup>1250</sup> “Bribes Show Futility of Impeachment Attempt Against GMA,” Press Release, Senate of the Philippines, 16<sup>th</sup> Congress, May 29, 2006, available from [[http://www.senate.gov.ph/press\\_release/2006/0529\\_pimentel4.asp](http://www.senate.gov.ph/press_release/2006/0529_pimentel4.asp)].

<sup>1251</sup> Greenberg, interview.

the Supreme Court rather than oppose it directly in Congress. A popular president generally gets what he/she wants from the House. Even the House's theoretical veto is limited to the implementation of the agreement not the onset of negotiations. Nor does the House's institutional veto serve as any sort of deterrent to the president when contemplating the prospects for a negotiated peace deal. The Senate, however, is another story.

The Senate is endowed with the same institutional powers as the House with regard to the approval of agreements, but the political realities of the Senate help foment more opposition. The Senate is a natural launching pad for politicians with presidential ambitions.<sup>1252</sup> It is the only other nationally elected office.<sup>1253</sup> There are no consequences for running for the presidency concurrently with a Senate.<sup>1254</sup> These factors – and the lack of a political party structure that would keep senators in check - incentivizes senators to become vocal critics of the Philippine president, especially when the president has low or middling approval ratings.<sup>1255</sup> Moreover, senators do not feel obliged to follow the policies laid out by the president. An excellent example of this is Senator Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who participated in the 1989 ARMM, 1990 CPLA autonomous region accord, and 2001 ARMM revision.<sup>1256</sup> Pimentel Jr. harbored presidential ambitions<sup>1257</sup> and did not heed the directions he received from the executive and thus inserted several self-serving provisions into the accords that benefited him.<sup>1258</sup> When the president is very

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<sup>1252</sup> Given the lack of a strong party system in the Philippines, the only way to reach the presidency is by establishing a national reputation and recognition. The Senate provides just such a platform.

<sup>1253</sup> Unlike in the United States, senators are elected in nation-wide contests, not by province or other sub-state constituencies.

<sup>1254</sup> A candidate can keep his/her senate seat if he/she loses the presidential race.

<sup>1255</sup> Noynoy Aquino's unprecedented popularity has largely mitigated this effect.

<sup>1256</sup> Pimentel also was involved in the Jeddah Accord, but it was right before he became a Senator.

<sup>1257</sup> Or at least vice presidential ones, he ran for the position in 1992 and 1995.

<sup>1258</sup> Rood, interview.

popular, however, senators are more careful about criticizing him, for fear that doing so will hurt their presidential ambitions.

Although the Senate is more likely a source of opposition for the president than the House, the threat posed by the institution does not constitute a veto. While the Senate is more likely than the House to threaten the implementation of a negotiated settlement, it cannot prevent the onset of negotiations or a shift in counterterrorism policy. Moreover, the potential obstacles it poses to implementation have not been enough to dissuade subsequent governments from pursuing negotiations. This is especially true when the president is widely popular. In pursuing a final peace accord with the MILF, President Aquino III appeared immune to critiques from the Senate because of his unprecedented popularity. After the mid-term elections in 2013, Senator Antonio Trillanes IV admitted that the opposition in the Senate would refrain from opposing the President in the coming term because of his popularity, for fear of alienating the public in the 2016 elections.<sup>1259</sup> Ultimately, the senate poses a bigger problem for the president than the House, but opposition in the Senate is not enough to prevent the president from pursuing negotiations with terrorists and it appears that if the president is popular, senators will refrain from employing their *ex post* veto over any negotiated settlement negotiations produce for fear of damaging their own political trajectories.

#### **6.4.2.4 Catholic Church**

Given its historic role in Philippine society, some might expect the Catholic Church could play a veto role in policymaking in the same way that it did in the Republic

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<sup>1259</sup> Interview with Antonio Trillanes IV, ANC, June 10, 2013, available from [<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/video/anc/06/10/13/trillanes-opposition-wary-aquinos-popularity>], accessed on September 4, 2013.

of Ireland for so many decades. Over 80% of Filipinos are Catholic. While church-going has declined and the centrality of the Church in Philippine life has waned in recent decades, the Catholic Church is perhaps the most important institution with the exception of the military.<sup>1260</sup> Despite its prominence and importance, the Church does not have a veto in policymaking.

The Catholic Church remains very influential in Philippine politics today. It is not unusual for priests to hand out ballots during mass that have already been marked for the congregants to take to the polling station on election day. While the church remains an influential force, it is not a veto player when it comes to counterterrorism policymaking, or even when it comes to issues in its roundhouse. This was demonstrated most recently by the signing of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10354), which guarantees universal access to contraception, sexual education, and maternal care. The Church was against the law, and while it was able to stall the bill, it couldn't defeat it. The waning influence of the Church is in part due to divisions within it. The Philippine Church is divided between orders and diocesan priests, the latter of which reflect the prejudices of their constituents.<sup>1261</sup> Many of the diocesan priests grew up in the violence and their congregants are disproportionately kidnapped and targeted. Many priests have been influential in the Moro and NPA insurgencies – in both cases, priests have been commanders of local units. The orders, which are farther removed from the day-to-day violence of the Moro and communist insurgencies are more supportive of the peace process. The fractionalization within the Church makes it difficult to exert influence. Most importantly, there is little public support for the Church to be

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<sup>1260</sup> Robert A. Manning, "The Philippines in Crisis," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 63, No. 2, (Winter, 1984), 400.

<sup>1261</sup> Rood, interview.

involved in politics,<sup>1262</sup> which makes the Church leadership wary of taking strong positions on many issues.

#### **6.4.2.5 Political Parties**

The political party system – or lack thereof – creates an interesting dynamic in Philippine politics. The Philippines lacks a strong political party system: Parties are created around one personality for a single election and then they disintegrate. Parties merge and shift alliances once in power. As parties don't endure beyond the reign of an individual president, there is no pressure to take actions to bolster the party's legacy. There is no institutional party memory to hold members from other parties in check. As such, the president is only concerned with his/her own legacy. This focus helps serve as a self-restraint dynamic with regard to counterterrorism policymaking. As the president only has 6 years to build his/her legacy, the president is incentivized to abandon initiatives when they become difficult. The president wants use his/her political capital to generate quick achievements that will bolster his/her legacy. Without established parties, there is nothing larger to be a part of. These factors create a dynamic whereby the president does not feel bound by the policies of previous presidents. For example, Estrada came to power and immediately began to undermine the peace process set in motion by Ramos. The lack of continuation has caused government policy toward the insurgents to oscillate; there is no strategic outlook, each president adopts a specific, tactical approach.<sup>1263</sup> Clearly political parties are too weak to serve as veto players, but it is important to notice how the lack of parties and the single term presidency has created

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<sup>1262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1263</sup> Casiple, interview.

incentives for the president to focus on legacy and ignore or abandon policy issues that are impervious to quick, demonstrable progress, including entrenched insurgent conflicts.

#### **6.4.2.6 Veto Players Summary**

In general, the Philippine president faces very few veto players – with the exception of the military - that can prevent him from pursuing the counterterrorism/counterinsurgency policy he/she prefers. Historically, the military has been the sole actor that has been able – either through the threat of a coup or in its implementation – to prevent the president from fully pursuing a negotiations strategy with the insurgents. The military’s capacity and interest in preventing the government from pursuing talks with terrorist groups has largely waned as it has become less active in domestic politics, professionalized its forces, reoriented itself toward external threats, and come to the realization that the Moro and communist conflicts do not have military solutions. The Supreme Court and Congress – specifically the Senate - may be able to exert influence on the Agreements negotiations produce – and thus may indirectly influence the negotiating process – but they are not in the position to veto the opening of talks with terrorists. The Church, long a dominant force in Philippine politics, has no influence over Philippine counterterrorism policymaking.

#### **6.5 Third Parties?**

Historically, third parties have been an important – albeit not necessary and sufficient – factor in the Philippine government’s decisions to pursue negotiations with its terrorist challengers. Initially, the most important group of third parties consisted of

Muslim states – especially Libya - and the international organizations in which they played a dominant role, including: the OIC, ICFM, OPEC, and the Non-Aligned Movement. Despite constant conspiracies that see US involvement in Philippine affairs, the United States has played a very minimal role in influencing Philippine counterterrorism policy. Lastly, third parties – especially Malaysia, Indonesia, Norway, and the International Contact Group quartet – comprised of the UK, Saudi Arabia, Japan and Turkey - have played an important role in mediating negotiations and monitoring the implementation of ceasefires and settlements. Despite their influence, none of these third parties has been able to force the Philippines to pursue negotiations when it was not in the country's strategic interest.

The recognition of the MNLF as the legitimate representative of the Moro people by the OIC raised awareness of the Moro conflict and generated pressure on the GRP. From the 1970s to the 1990s, the threat of an oil embargo pushed the Philippine government to the negotiating table, but once it was able to mollify the OIC and other third parties through aggressive public relations campaigns and superficial conciliatory gestures, negotiations stalled. For all the pressure they exerted, no third party has been able to force the Philippine government to make real concessions to the Moro or communist insurgents. Early negotiations to appease third parties were no more than a pretense of conciliation.

The United States has had a limited impact on the course of Philippine counterterrorism policy. In general, the US does not view either insurgency as relevant to its strategic interests and has not taken strong positions on either conflict. That said, the US does view the Moro and communist insurgencies differently. Essentially, the US does



not care about the NDF-CPP-NPA. It only put the NPA and Sison on the list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) after the GRP requested it do so and after the 9/11 attacks forced it to take other countries' terrorism concerns seriously in order to establish quid pro quo with its efforts to eliminate the al Qaeda network, which was thought to include ASG.<sup>1264</sup> Today, the US is not worried about the NPA, although when it had two military bases in the Philippines it was concerned with the prospects that the NPA could bring down the government and impact the US strategic defense posture. Moreover, the US had a history of assisting the AFP against the group because the communists attacked American servicemen stationed in the country. As compared to other third parties, the US has not demonstrated an interest in the underlying causes of the conflict.<sup>1265</sup>

The United States has taken more interest in the Moro conflict than the communist one, but not so much that it has gotten involved. After 9/11, the United States was very interested in whether the MILF would maintain connections with ASG and JI, which would have made it part of a larger terrorist network that the US does consider a threat. Through intermediaries the US sent message to the MILF that if the group was serious about peace, it needed to cut ties with terrorist groups.<sup>1266</sup> It took a little time to discern its intentions, but the MILF shed the few ties it had with both groups and invited the US to get involved solving the Mindanao conflict, believing it is the only third party powerful enough to push the Philippine government to come a real settlement.<sup>1267</sup>

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<sup>1264</sup> Rood, interview. That said, the US does have a very strong position on ASG, which it has urged the Philippine government not to negotiate with, not that the Philippine government has expressed any interest in doing so.

<sup>1265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1267</sup> Chairman Murad wrote to President Bush offering the United States an opportunity to rectify its historical mistake of including Bangsamoro in the Philippines by getting involved in the peace process. Eventually the MILF leadership gets a response in May 2003, which says that if MILF renounces terrorism, the US will send a representative to talks. Ibid.

The United States pursued a policy whereby as long as things were going well in Mindanao, it has remained supportive but uninvolved, for fear that direct engagement in the peace process with MILF<sup>1268</sup> would “suck the air out of the room”<sup>1269</sup> or alienate the GRP, which did not like the increasing internationalization of the conflict. On the occasions where the process appears to be going off the rails, the US has taken a more forward-leaning position. For example, when the Basilan massacre happened, Undersecretary for East Asian Affairs Kurt Campbell released a statement supporting the continuation of talks with the MILF. The statement did not have the effect of mollifying public opinion or elite criticism, but the GRP genuinely has high regard for US opinion, so it served as reassuring measure. Another example is that when the United States classified the Jemaah Islamiyah and Abu Sayyaf as FTOs, it refrained from putting the MILF on the FTO list, despite its attacks on civilians, in order to provide the Philippine government with the political space necessary to negotiate with the group.<sup>1270</sup> Ultimately, for all its support and influence, the United States – or any third party for that matter - has not played a decisive role in the onset of state-terrorist negotiations in the Philippines. As Marcos proved, outside influence may force the Philippine government to take action, but

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<sup>1268</sup> For example, after Murad encouraged the US to become involved, the United States explored the possibility of a think tank (e.g. United States Institute of Peace) – instead of US officials – attending future talks.

<sup>1269</sup> Greenberg, interview.

<sup>1270</sup> The US has taken additional low profile but supportive actions: the US sent a steady stream of low level state department officials to Mindanao to meet with the MILF about the peace process. On occasion, high-level officials have met with the MILF to demonstrate US support for the group’s continued participation in the process: In February 2008, US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney visited Chairman Murad in Mindanao. Campbell had regular correspondence and even met with Chairman Murad to express the US’ willingness to provide political and financial support for the peace process. In 2009, Hillary Clinton visited the Philippines and urged Arroyo to wrap up talks by the end of her term; likening her position to the role that Bill Clinton played in N. Ireland at the end of his term. Al Labita, “Clinton in the middle of Philippine fight,” *Asia Times*, November 15, 2011, and Rood interview.

is not necessary and sufficient to force the state to earnestly pursue negotiations with a terrorist group when it is not viewed as in the state's strategic interest to do so.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

In attempting to understand when and why the Philippine government undertook negotiations with insurgent groups, it is important to consider both strategic and domestic political factors. While the Philippine government has engaged in superficial negotiations with several violent groups, it has only demonstrated real effort to find a political settlement in a few cases. For example, the GRP strung along the CPLA for decades: Engaging the group talks in the 1980s in order to woo the Moro groups to the negotiating table, forgetting about the CPLA when it was clear talks had no effect on the Moro conflict, then signing a Memorandum of Agreement with the group but refusing to implement the concessions it agreed to for more than two decades. The CPLA did not pose a real threat to governance and therefore it was not party to a real effort to find a negotiated settlement. In determining which groups it would seriously negotiate with the Philippine government clearly privileged groups that were able to endure and to hurt; were large in size and represented large segments of the population; had limited, negotiable goals; and were cohesive enough that they could credibly commit their fighters would adhere to a resulting settlement. Faced with an array of terrorist challengers, the GRP has been the most enthusiastic in its negotiations with the Moro groups, particularly the MILF.

As this chapter has demonstrated, the MNLF, MILF, and NPA were the only organizations that have been able to sustain significant terrorist/insurgent campaigns that

forced the Philippine government to seriously consider the utility of negotiations. The Moro groups, especially the MILF, have been privileged in the government's estimation because not only have they demonstrated the capacity to endure and hurt, but they appear to have the capacity and credibility to make peace. The MILF has demonstrated its capacity to commit to peace by maintaining the loyalty and obedience of most of its troops.<sup>1271</sup> The MILF has demonstrated its credibility that the organization will lay down its arms as part of a peace process by refraining from demanding new concessions beyond its original goals, largely adhering to the 1997 ceasefire agreement with the government, and coordinating with the AFP in Mindanao to monitor the ceasefire and crack down on splinter groups. The MILF has demonstrated its commitment to the peace process by continuing talks even after AFP raids on its bases and the arrest and imprisonment of one of its key fundraisers.

The MILF's behavior stands in stark contrast to that of the NPA, which has been schizophrenic in its approach to negotiations: the leadership in Utrecht appears to have moderated and may be willing to find a negotiated settlement, but it is frequently undermined by the boots on the ground who are more radical and distrustful of the government. Moreover, the CPP-NPA's goals are much more difficult to accommodate. Many are outdated and pertain to things over which the Philippine government has no control. The poverty and injustice at the heart of the conflict are extremely intractable problems to solve and will require enormous resources, effort, and time. Moreover, the internal divisions within the organization have made it extremely difficult for the government to negotiate with the NPA leadership because it is unclear if they have the

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<sup>1271</sup> With the exception of the BIFF, but that represents a very small percentage of the organization's fighters.

support – or even the ear – of the troops on the ground. Ultimately, the Philippine government, especially the military, does not view the NPA as a strong negotiating partner. There have been passing attempts to engage the CPP-NPA leadership in the Netherlands, but the feeling that negotiations are futile continues to pervade the government.

Simultaneously with strategic considerations, successive Philippine presidents have considered the domestic political ramifications of pursuing a negotiations policy. As this case study has demonstrated, public opinion in the Philippines has not served as a significant barrier to pursuing a negotiations policy. In general, Philippine culture is conducive to a negotiations counterterrorism/counterinsurgency policy. On the occasions when insurgent violence has generated public anger, there has been little impact on policymaking. That said, the public is more supportive of negotiating an end to the Moro conflict, probably stemming from a deep cultural distrust of communism and the geographical isolation of the Moro conflict. Regardless of the differences of political attitudes toward the two conflicts, Filipinos are generally apolitical and public opinion has failed to generate significant political pressure to impact counterinsurgency policy.

As far as veto players go, this study argues that the military has the potential to serve as a veto player in counterterrorism policymaking. The Philippines case is an excellent example of the military's unique position to veto a negotiations policy. In the Philippines, there are no other actors who can prevent the president from pursuing negotiations *ex ante*. Certainly, other institutions can impact the trajectory or success of state-terrorist negotiations: the Supreme Court can potentially nullify negotiated settlements and senators can raise the domestic political costs of pursuing a controversial

policy, but neither can prevent the president from starting talks. When the president is popular, rivals are dissuaded from criticizing the president and the latter can largely pursue his/her preferred counterterrorism policy unencumbered – that is, as long as the military acquiesces, but even that check on presidential power is waning.

In the months before a final peace agreement was reached with the MILF in March 2014, there was a palpable feeling on both sides that the Moro conflict was ripe for resolution. Chairman Murad trusted President Aquino III and had come to believe if they were unable to find a political settlement soon, fighting would go on for another 20 years.<sup>1272</sup> Aquino III wanted a Mindanao deal to be part of his legacy and he was determined to sign – and then more importantly, implement – a settlement with the MILF before he leaves office.<sup>1273</sup> Finally, both sides finally appeared to realize that if they were going to successfully find a settlement to the conflict they need to make their opponent's life a little easier. This was especially true on the GRP side, which has come to recognize that it must play a role in helping the MILF transform from an insurgent group to a political actor.<sup>1274</sup> Unfortunately, despite this realization, neither party is very good at playing this role, but at least they are cognizant and trying.

The prospects for future negotiations with the NPA are not encouraging. Third parties have tried to convince the Philippine government that in order to have fruitful negotiations with the NPA it needs to elevate its opponent, so that the NPA is on more equal footing. The asymmetry will never be completely fixed, but the internal divisions in the NPA today make it impossible for the group to negotiate from a position of cohesion and strength. Despite its evolving views in this regard with respect to the MILF, the

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<sup>1272</sup> Jain, interview.

<sup>1273</sup> Lillie and Phipps, interview.

<sup>1274</sup> Confirmed in interviews with Jain, Rood, and Lorena.

government does not view this as their job as far as the NPA is concerned. Indeed, even if it did, the NPA is so skeptical of the GRP that any government involvement could backfire. Many observers believe Aquino III is sincere in his offer to continue negotiations with the NDF-CPP-NPA, despite the group's apparent inability or unwillingness to find a negotiated solution. Aquino III is perhaps encouraged by the progress in the Moro peace process or feels that he cannot withhold a similar offer for talks from the communists given his work to address the conflict in Mindanao. Either way, the negotiations with the MILF are clearly his priority and reticence remains about negotiating with the CPP-NPA. In recent years, the behavior of the CPP-NPA has done little to assuage the government's concerns. Even if the leadership in the Netherlands was able to seize the initiative and come back to the table, it is unlikely that negotiations would soon bring an end to communist violence in the Philippines. A settlement would likely only mollify a slim majority of NPA forces, and the AFP estimates that at least a third of NPA fighters might refuse to put down their arms. According to government sources, the Philippine military feels confident that it is capable of defeating this diminished NPA force in the event a negotiated settlement takes root, but as previous forecasts for military operations against the NPA proved optimistic, it is likely that fighting could continue for years if not decades.

## Chapter 7

### *Conclusion*

#### **7.1 The Puzzle**

Statesmen are quick to declare that they will not negotiate with terrorists. Yet, the empirical record demonstrates that, despite statements to the contrary, many states do eventually negotiate with their terrorist challengers. This study seeks to explain the circumstances under which states employ strategic negotiations with terrorist groups to resolve violent conflict.

I argued that a mix of strategic and domestic conditions is necessary for a state to include negotiations as part of its counterterrorism strategy. I advanced a theory that only when faced with a capable and credible terrorist adversary and afforded relative freedom of action domestically will a state executive negotiate with terrorists. Moreover, a state will only negotiate with a terrorist group if it is unable to defeat it militarily. It is only after a terrorist conflict reaches a mutually hurting stalemate that neither side can win outright, and it is clear that the terrorist group in question has the coercive capacity to keep fighting, that a state executive will consider the utility of a negotiations approach. To evaluate whether the terrorist challenger is an acceptable negotiating partner, the state considers three main characteristics – the group's size, type, and fractionalization (both intra-group cohesiveness and market share in the broader movement). These qualities help the state to determine whether the group is capable and willing to credibly commit to a negotiated settlement. A positive assessment in that regard, however, is not sufficient for the onset of negotiations. A state executive will only pursue a negotiations counterterrorism strategy when he/she is able to navigate the political environment



without threatening his/her own position. In this regard, public opinion and veto players are critical in determining if a state leader has the political space required to pursue a conciliatory counterterrorism policy without endangering his/her office.

## **7.2 Summary of Findings**

This project provided an integrated study of the strategic and domestic conditions that lead states to engage terrorist challengers in peace talks. The following is a summary of its key findings.

As detailed in Chapter 1, empirical evidence suggests that states recurrently negotiate with terrorist challengers as a result of ongoing coercive events and over the latter's strategic aims in hopes of ending broader conflicts. While states are more likely to negotiate over hostages,<sup>1275</sup> they regularly negotiate with terrorist groups as part of peace processes. A study of terrorist groups from 1968 to 2006 demonstrates that when states are confronted by terrorist campaigns, in nearly 13% of cases they engage in negotiations in an effort to end the conflicts. The onset of state-terrorist negotiations is probably even higher, but failed negotiations are likely kept secret in order to protect both parties and are not readily observed.

The empirical evidence suggests that states do not view all terrorist challengers as equally suited for being party to a negotiated settlement. A comparison of state-terrorist dyads that don't negotiate with state-terrorist dyads that have negotiated suggests that certain terrorists groups are privileged as partners for peace, namely groups that are enduring, large, and have nationalist aims. Only terrorist groups that demonstrate serious

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<sup>1275</sup> Mickolus et al. found that from 1968 to 1991, states, many of which have official non-negotiation policies, attempted negotiation in more than half of terrorist hostage-taking incidents. Mickolus et al. "International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events."

stamina are likely to be privy to negotiations. Among the negotiating dyads, terrorist groups lasted more than 23 years on average,<sup>1276</sup> whereas non-negotiating groups had an average lifespan of less than 8 years. Of the non-negotiating groups, nearly a third didn't even last a full year. The empirical evidence is consistent with the hypothesis that for terrorist groups to be considered as possible negotiating partners, they need to endure long enough for the state to exhaust other counterterrorism strategies and shift its view on the utility of a negotiations approach.

Terrorist group endurance is related to other group characteristics, namely size and type. Larger terrorist groups last longer. Groups with a peak size of over 10,000 members last more than 24 years on average; whereas, groups with membership under 100 lasted on average for only 4 years.<sup>1277</sup> Capacity to endure is also related to group type: Nationalist groups lasted several years longer on average, and were more likely to surpass the 20-year mark, than their religious and ideological compatriots.<sup>1278</sup> The correlation between endurance and size and type translates into more large, ethnonationalist terrorist groups being party to strategic negotiations than any other type of terrorist organization.

The data supports the claim that states are more likely to negotiate with large terrorist groups. It is hypothesized that deep ranks demonstrates a terrorist group's potential for continued coercive and its legitimacy and market share in the broader

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<sup>1276</sup> In reality, the average is higher because 42% of the groups that had negotiating were still active when the dataset cuts off in 2006.

<sup>1277</sup> In both cases, the average is a bit higher as the dataset cuts off in 2006 and some of the groups, especially among the larger ones, were still active at that time.

<sup>1278</sup> Whereas leftist groups averaged 8.5 years and religious and right-wing groups both averaged 9.6 years, nationalist groups last several years longer than longer – at an average of 11.3 years. The discrepancy in endurance between nationalist and other group types is actually larger due to the percentage of the former that were still active when the dataset cuts off. Moreover, nationalist groups – as compared to other group types – are more likely to last 20 years or more.

movement it claims to represent. Of the negotiating state-terrorist dyads, nearly a quarter of the terrorist groups involved had a peak membership estimated in the 10,000s. Only 2% of non-negotiating groups ever grew that large.<sup>1279</sup> Indeed, the overwhelming majority of non-negotiating groups never had more than 100 members.

There is empirical support for the hypothesis that states privilege certain terrorist group types over others. It is thought that certain group types – namely ethnonationalist groups – are better suited to negotiations because their aims are limited and divisible and they have a more pragmatic view of violence. The empirical evidence suggests states are more likely to negotiate with ethnonational groups: ethnonational groups make up 55% of negotiation dyads, as compared to the 35% of the non-negotiation dyads. Negotiating groups were more likely to seek territorial change than non-negotiating groups, which had a higher percentage of those looking for social revolution – something completely absent from negotiating dyads.

The data analysis demonstrates several strong correlations between strategic variables – terrorist group endurance, size, and type – and the onset of strategic negotiations. Counterterrorism policymaking, however, is complex and the causal processes simply cannot be observed in a cross-national analysis. Case studies are better suited for tracing the policymaking process and evaluating the impact of strategic and domestic conditions on shifts in counterterrorism strategy.

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<sup>1279</sup> Whereas nearly two-thirds of all negotiating groups have over 1,000 members, just over a tenth of non-negotiating groups ever grew that large.

### **7.3 Case Studies**

In order to further probe the validity of the integrated strategic and domestic theory of state-terrorist strategic negotiation onset, I conducted three case studies: Israel (1950s to 1993), Northern Ireland (1960s-1998), and Philippines (1960s-2014). These within case studies exhibit enough intra-case variation to explicate how differences across terrorist groups lead the state to pursue varied counterterrorism policy responses. The cases also demonstrated how shifts in domestic political dynamics make pursuing a negotiations approach possible or perilous for the state executive.

#### **7.3.1 Israel**

First, I examined Israeli counterterrorism policy from the early days of the Palestinian national movement until the signing of the Declaration of Principles (Oslo Accords) in the summer of 1993. In its early years, the Palestinian national movement was slow to gain steam – the *fedayeen* were fractured and inept. The Israelis viewed them as a nuisance, not a threat. The rise of Fatah and the PLO, which it soon took over, however, lent focus to the movement and coincided with its expansion and growing coercive power. By the 1970s, Palestinian terrorism and insurgent violence posed a real threat to Israeli governance. With its focus on maintaining the status quo, Israel might have continued its military-focused deterrence and retribution counterterrorism policy if it had not been for the outbreak of the Intifada in 1987, which fundamentally altered the government and the Israeli public’s perspective on the conflict.

In concert with the uprising, other changes in the strategic environment helped shift the Israeli government’s counterterrorism approach in the early 1990s. The

endurance of the PLO despite concerted efforts to destroy the Organization helped the Israelis come to recognize that there was no military solution to the conflict. The group was weakened by the 1982 IDF incursion into Lebanon and its subsequent exile to Tunis, but the Organization demonstrated a continued capacity to channel the trajectory of the Palestinian conflict. Successive Israeli governments sought to bypass the PLO and find a political solution through a proxy, usually the Jordanians, as part of a larger bilateral or multi-lateral regional peace effort. The Intifada demonstrated that the Palestinian aspirations articulated by the PLO were not fringe views. The Intifada bolstered the PLO's credibility, which combined with failed efforts to work with the new leaders of the uprising in its place, forced the Israelis to finally recognize that there was no way to bypass the PLO. For over a decade, the PLO and its leader Yasser Arafat had been the undisputable, internationally recognized leaders of the Palestinians. They had more support and members than any other Palestinian organization at the time. Moreover, in the previous years, the PLO had moderated its positions and met US and Israeli preconditions for talks. Of all the Palestinian groups, the PLO – by the nature of its goals, pragmatism, and centralization - was the most likely to both strike a compromise with Israel and deliver the majority of the Palestinian population in a settlement.

In the Israeli case, the shift in the government's view of the PLO and the adjusted utility of employing negotiations did not translate into an immediate shift in counterterrorism policy. There were significant domestic obstacles to pursuing such a policy: From 1977 to 1984 and from 1990 to 1992, right-wing governments advocated hard-line counterterrorism policies and pursued objectives, namely, the establishment of a "Greater Israel" that undermined any possibility of a negotiated compromise with the

Palestinians. In the intervening years, while part of unity governments, Likud prevented the more dovish Labor party from pursuing more conciliatory strategies. Even if the right had not controlled government (or had the capacity to veto Labor efforts), it is unlikely that a left-leaning government would have sought negotiations with the PLO. During this period, the Labor party had a policy of engagement and wanted to pursue negotiations to address the Palestinian problem, but it was not yet willing to talk directly to the PLO. Public opinion at the time also demonstrated a preference for hard-line counterterrorism strategies. It was not until the Intifada and the missile attacks of the Gulf War that the public's views shifted significantly about the Palestinian problem and the urgency of finding a settlement. These developments coincided with the PLO moderating its stance, leading to a sense of optimism that there might be another policy option available. With the election of the hawkish Rabin on a pro-peace platform and the creation of the most left-leaning coalition in Knesset history, an Israeli prime minister finally had the reputation and domestic political flexibility to pursue a negotiations strategy in an effort to end the Palestinian conflict.

### **7.3.2 UK/Northern Ireland**

Second, I examined British counterterrorism policymaking during the Troubles – the three decades (late 1960s-1998) of violent inter-communal conflict that plagued Northern Ireland and left 3,500 people dead and tens of thousands injured.<sup>1280</sup> Early in the conflict, the UK government remained convinced that it could defeat the republican terrorists outright, but after years of bloodshed, their coercive persistence demonstrated

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<sup>1280</sup> Sutton, “An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland,” and Morrissey et al.

the fallacy of that thinking A political solution was needed, but the UK government continued to hope to exclude the violent republican groups, namely the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA).

It was only after several political efforts that excluded the PIRA failed and the political rise of Sinn Féin, the PIRA's political wing, that the UK government came to appreciate that no political settlement would be viable without PIRA's buy in. This shift in thinking coincided with several strategic developments that improved the UK government's estimation of PIRA's negotiating potential. When the PIRA had come to recognize it could not coerce the British government to withdraw from the North, it began to consider the possibility of pursuing its goals by constitutional means. The response to the hunger strike convinced the PIRA to start contesting elections in Northern Ireland, to great support. Concurrently, the PIRA appeared to be moderating both its tactics and demands. When a message from McGuinness came over the backchannel declaring that the PIRA recognized the war was over but needed help bringing it to an end, it was the culmination of a shift that the British government had been observing for some years. The group's 1994 and 1997 ceasefires helped demonstrate the PIRA's capacity to control its foot soldiers and even the members of other republican groups, enhancing the British view of the group's legitimacy and capacity to direct not only its own men but the wider republican movement.

The shifting strategic conditions did not precipitate an immediate change in UK policy toward including the PIRA in the multiparty peace talks in Northern Ireland even though there were few domestic hurdles in the way at the time. Indeed, public opinion did not represent an obstacle, as the population - unenamoured with the North to begin with -

was apathetic, unable, and uninterested in pressuring their elected officials over the issue. Likewise, the other government departments involved in policymaking in the North – the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (SSNI), Northern Ireland Office (NIO), Home Office, and Foreign Office - did not exercise decisive influence over the prime minister's desired course of action. The British military had the potential to assert more influence, but despite preferences and frustrations over Northern Ireland, it expressed its opinions through formal channels and fell in line as successive prime ministers ignored the military brass' advice. The only actors that exercised a veto capacity – albeit briefly – over policy towards Northern Ireland were the unionist backbenchers in Parliament that John Major needed to appease in order to stay in power. This veto coincided with the PIRA's moderation and the UK government's appreciation of the former as a possible partner for peace, but pushed Major to erect obstacles to prevent Sinn Féin from entering all-party talks. Apart from this brief interlude, the unionist veto – “the Orange Card” – was largely overblown as a means of actual political leverage. That said, the very real threat of unionist violence in the North served as a sobering check on prime ministerial consideration of more radical policy options (e.g. unilateral withdrawal from the North). Ultimately, however, the strength of the Orange Card diminished, as there was increased unionist political party involvement in multi-party talks in the early and mid-1990s. Generally speaking, the British prime minister has significant room to navigate when drafting policy, but this case study suggests that successive prime ministers in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even when unencumbered by a unionist veto, still worried about the potential public blowback and military and unionist opposition when considering the



possibility of negotiating with the PIRA. Those concerns were not tantamount to a veto, but they did influence how and when counterterrorism policies were crafted.

### **7.3.3 The Philippines**

Third, I examined Philippine counterterrorism policy from the late 1960s to 2014. For the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and beyond, the Philippines was besieged by two large-scale insurgencies. The first conflict, a Maoist insurgency spearheaded by the New People's Army (NPA) was waged over the political organization of the state. The second, a Moro ethnonationalist conflict was fought over the stewardship of the southern part of the country. In crafting its counterterrorism/counterinsurgency response to each conflict, the Philippine government weighted both strategic and domestic political factors.

In both cases, the Philippine government spent years trying to defeat the communist and Moro insurgents militarily. As the conflicts dragged on for decades – killing hundreds of thousands of people and costing billions of dollars, it eventually came to recognize that a military strategy alone would not end the violence. At this point, however, the Philippine government's policies toward the two conflicts begin to diverge, which provides us with insight into how states contradistinguish between violent challengers.

The Moro groups - MNLF, MILF - and the communist NPA were the only organizations in either conflict able to sustain significant terrorist/insurgent campaigns. Their endurance and coercive capacity in the face of sustained military efforts to destroy them eventually forced the Philippine government to seriously consider the utility of negotiations to end the fighting on both fronts. The government came to view a

negotiations approach to the Moro conflict as promising, but remained skeptical about the NPA's potential as a negotiating partner. This divergence was driven largely by an assessment of the groups' observable characteristics. In each case, the terrorist groups clearly had the capacity (e.g. large number of fighters, weapons, support) to continue the conflict for decades to come. There were significant perceived differences, however, in each group's capacity and credibility to commit to a negotiated settlement. The Moro groups, with their limited national aspirations; widespread support; demonstrated capacity to compromise; and more cohesive, disciplined, professional membership, were viewed as better potential negotiating partners. The government believed the MNLF/MILF had the credibility and support to negotiate a settlement, and the capacity to ensure compliance from a large section of the Moro population. The NPA, by comparison, appeared to be so fractured that the leadership in the Netherlands did not appear to represent the boots on the ground, and did not have the mandate to negotiate on their behalf or the capacity to ensure their compliance if an agreement was reached. The radical young foot soldiers appeared steadfast in their opposition to negotiations and a significant portion of the group's members would likely continue to fight in the event a settlement was found. Moreover, the NPA's goals, in many ways, were more difficult to accommodate than Moro aspirations. This difference in strategic conditions across conflicts led to the aggressive negotiations to end the Moro conflict, but while the government has also made overtures to the NPA for negotiations, these have been halfhearted by comparison. There is the feeling that the NPA was offered talks because the Moro groups were, but in the Philippine government, especially within the military,

the view that the NPA is not a good negotiating partner remains pervasive. Today, the prospects for future negotiations with the NPA are not encouraging.

As the Philippine cases study demonstrates, the differences in counterterrorism policy across conflicts and the timing of negotiations are also understood in relation to domestic politics. Public opinion in the Philippines did not serve as a significant barrier to pursuing a negotiations policy. Indeed, Philippine culture is conducive for a negotiations counterterrorism/counterinsurgency policy and public opinion had little leverage over the president once in office. There were government actors, however, who exercised significant influence over the counterterrorism policy process, particularly the military. For much of the period examined herein, the military's entrenchment in domestic politics and its latent threat to overthrow the president bolstered by frequent coup attempts provided the Philippine armed forces with a virtual veto over counterterrorism policy. With the permission of the military, the government pursued tactical negotiations with the MNLF in the 1970s in an effort to reduce external pressure on the regime, but once the pressure abated, the government, as promised to the armed forces, allowed the talks and the agreement they produced to atrophy. Real negotiated progress did not occur until the military came to appreciate the utility of a negotiations counterterrorism strategy. For decades, the Philippine armed forces remained convinced they could defeat the Moro and communist insurgents. It was only after the armed forces eventually recognized an outright victory over the insurgents was unattainable, and the military's grip on domestic politics waned as it reoriented its mission to external threats, that the Philippine president had the flexibility to pursue a negotiated settlement. That said, the military has remained more reluctant to negotiate with the NPA, in which it has

little confidence and for whom it carries great resentment, and this may explain why even after the communists have been offered negotiations, the Philippine government's pursuit of talks has been perfunctory. Other government actors – the Senate and the Supreme Court – have enough leverage to raise the costs of pursuing negotiations or scuttle the settlements they produce *ex post*, but do not have a *ex ante* veto over the president's pursuit of negotiations with a terrorist group.

#### **7.4 Cross-case Analysis**

Each case study stands on its own given the extent of the intra-case variation on key independent and dependent variables, but taken together the case studies provide an opportunity for a comparative analysis of causal mechanisms. This is particularly important given that some of the domestic factors examined by this study don't vary significantly within cases. For example, a state's basic structure is unlikely to vary significantly from year to year and thus alter which actors serve as institutional veto players. Thus a comparative analysis can provide additional leverage on the analysis of domestic conditions that impact when and why state executives include negotiations as part of their counterterrorism strategies. Looking across the three case studies, there are several important conclusions to be drawn:

First, the Philippine, Northern Irish, and Israeli cases provide an interesting contrast in the potential veto-playing role of the military. The military did not hold a true institutional veto over conciliatory counterterrorism policymaking in any of the cases, but in the Philippines it was able to exert a *de facto* veto for much of the period in question. Compared to Israel and the UK, the Philippines had extremely weak institutions, a history

of widespread military involvement in the bureaucracy, and a corrupt military that had a demonstrated proclivity for coups. In the UK and Israeli cases, their militaries often took strong positions and demonstrated institutional preferences on the direction of counterterrorism policy, which were expressed through traditional channels, but when overruled, both followed orders and heeded civilian command. Thus, it is important to consider the strength of institutions, the professionalism of the security establishment, and the degree of civilian control over the military when evaluating the potential for serious intra-governmental opposition to pursuing a negotiations counterterrorism strategy.

Second, a comparison of the case studies provides some insight in how different political systems impact state executives' capacity to pursue their preferred counterterrorism course of action. The UK and Israel are parliamentary democracies, while the Philippines has a presidential system quasi-modeled on the United States. In the parliamentary cases, both British and Israeli prime ministers are heavily dependent on their parties or coalitions in maintaining their positions and in the event of opposition therein, the prime ministers are unlikely to pursue such a policy if doing so threatens their tenure. In theory, a Philippine president would be checked by institutional veto players – namely Congress – especially if it was dominated by opposition parties. In reality, the lack of a strong political party system and the particularities of funding allocation in the Philippines render Congress an unlikely veto player, with the exception of individual aspirational senators. In low numbers the latter are unable to veto the president's policy *ex post*, but they can raise its domestic political costs. While the two parliamentary cases provide clear evidence of the obstructionist capacity of political veto players, it is

difficult to compare the veto-potential of the parliamentary system compared to the presidential system because the Philippine case is unusually weak in this regard.

The analysis of veto players highlights the different types of veto players across cases, but also where in the process they exert influence. There are veto players that can prevent the state executive from pursuing negotiations full stop (*ex ante*) and there are veto players that can make talks untenable after they begin or overturn any agreements they may produce (*ex post*). Given that this study is primarily focused on the onset of negotiations, I am mostly interested in *ex ante* veto players, but the threat of *ex post* vetoes can weigh heavily on the executive during the policymaking process and therefore the concern generated by *ex post* vetoes deserves some attention. An examination of the role of the Supreme Court in the Philippines is interesting in this regard. The Philippine Supreme Court appears to have demonstrated its capacity as an *ex post* veto player when it ruled that the (the MOA AD) – the peace agreement negotiated between President Arroyo and the MILF - was unconstitutional in 2008. There were, however, questions as to whether the Court's action was independent or if it was acting at the behest of the President. If there is credence to the latter explanation, the Philippine Supreme Court does not appear to be an independent veto player. Either way, the Court's ruling did not prevent future negotiations with the group, but it did inspire the Aquino III administration to be extremely careful in drafting its concessions so as not to violate the state's constitution and give the Court cause to strike down the 2014 agreement. In Israel, the Court has traditionally been a weak institution and voted in favor of communal security over individual rights, and thus, the threat of a possible veto over a negotiated settlement does not appear to have factored into Rabin's approach to the backchannel talks with the

PLO. Generally, the judiciary may be able to influence the outcome of negotiations, and as such, the manner in which they are conducted, but the most supreme courts lack the ability to prevent the onset of state-terrorist negotiations.

Third, several of the cases highlight how public sentiment weighs on state executives even when the public is not in a position to exert leverage on the counterterrorism policymaking process. Given the insulation of domestic politics to Northern Irish affairs, public opinion had very little influence over UK policymaking on Northern Ireland and yet successive prime ministers were consumed by worry about how the public might react to a leak about the backchannel with the PIRA. This concern raises questions about the causal mechanisms behind public opinion's influence on the policymaking process. When there is no great threat that a general election can turn into a referendum on an executive's counterterrorism policy, the continued concern about public opinion raises the question about whether executives are worried about the interaction effect between public opinion and elite opposition or if they are concerned for their legacies? Both appear at work in the chosen case studies. The latter explanation is especially pronounced in the Philippine case, which due to term limits and the lack of strong political parties, creates an incentive for the president to tackle easy problems and ignore or abandon those that become too complicated in order to shore up his/her legacy.

Fourth, an interesting comparison across cases is the role, or lack thereof, of third parties. In all three cases, the roll of third parties is traditionally lauded for having a significant impact on the resolution of the conflict, whether a third party served as a state sponsor for the terrorists, pressured the government in question to alter its counterterrorism policy, or served as a mediator in peace talks. Universally, the

arguments that third parties play an essential role in the onset of state-terrorist negotiations are overblown. In the cases examined herein, third parties played a role, but *not a necessary or sufficient one*, in facilitating Israel, the UK, and the Philippine governments' shifts towards a negotiations counterterrorism policy. In all three cases, third parties played a more pivotal role in the facilitation of negotiations once they began: the Norwegians facilitated the Oslo backchannel; Clinton and Mitchell were essential in motivating and coaxing the parties back to the negotiating table in Northern Ireland; and Indonesia (MNLF), Malaysia (MILF), and Norway (NPA) have played key roles in mediating talks with the Philippine government. Third parties, however, were not able to push any of the countries studied herein to pursue negotiations with a terrorist group when the state executive in question did not view doing so in the state's strategic interest. For example, in the face of immense pressure by the OIC, ICFM, the Non-Aligned Summit, OPEC, and individual Muslim countries, President Marcos agreed to negotiate with the MNLF, but these negotiations were a sham to alleviate external pressure and as soon as the latter abated, the negotiations were abandoned and the resulting agreement collapsed. A similar pattern can be seen in Israel, where under immense diplomatic and financial pressure from the US to attend the Madrid conference, a recalcitrant Prime Minister Shamir relented, but Israel's participation was for show. The negotiating team was instructed to obstruct the talks. These examples are clear indications that despite the important influence of outside third parties, states will not engage a terrorist challenger in genuine negotiations unless it is convinced doing so is in the country's best interest.

Fifth, across cases it appears as though states only pursued negotiations with the terrorist groups that demonstrated their capacity to endure and continue their coercion. A



group's strength was thus key to its inclusion in negotiations, and yet none of the negotiating groups in Israel, Northern Ireland, or the Philippines entered negotiations at the height of their strength. All were still very powerful, and by far the most powerful within the larger movement of which they were a part, when they negotiated, but the PIRA, PLO, MNLF, and MILF had all significantly declined in fighting strength by the time they sat down at the negotiating table. This raises several questions: Does pivoting towards negotiations inevitably weaken a terrorist group as its members leave for more hard-line outfits or slip back into normal society after the focus on violence has dissipated? Conversely, it is possible that a state may come to the conclusion that a military solution to the conflict isn't possible around the time that the terrorist group in question is at its peak strength, but there is a lag time in between that realization and recognition of other strategic considerations and domestic opportunities necessary for the executive to pursue negotiations. The lag may also be purposeful – a state may recognize a terrorist conflict needs a political solution, but it wants to wait until the group has weakened a bit before it negotiates with it in order to ensure its leaders are motivated and their leverage has been reduced. Clearly terrorist capacity is central in understanding when a state pursues negotiations, but the trend across cases whereby coercive capacity had diminished somewhat by the time the groups arrive at the negotiating table is conspicuous.

## 7.5 Implications for Academia

This study's findings have a number of implications for academic research on conflict processes and state policymaking. First and foremost, this study challenges the myth that states don't negotiate with terrorist groups. The data analysis and the case studies demonstrate that states – even those that publically promise never to negotiate with terrorist challengers – often do just that.

Second, this study innovates by providing an integrated theory that incorporates both strategic and domestic factors to explain when states pursue peace talks with terrorist challengers. Putnam argues that interstate negotiations are essentially two-level games, whereby statesmen try to achieve a positive outcome at the international level that is permissible to the powerful domestic actors at the national level.<sup>1281</sup> My research is the extension of this paradigmatic approach to counterterrorism policymaking. As I argue, state leaders cannot make moves on the strategic board that will upset their standing on the domestic political one. Studies that focus on only the strategic factors that influence state-terrorist negotiations - or lack thereof - are only getting half the story.

Third, this study challenges the argument that when considering negotiations with a terrorist group, a state focuses on the group's credibility to commit to a potential negotiated settlement when making its decision. Certainly, a state will eventually consider credibility, but this is a second order concern. A state will never even get around to considering a terrorist group's credibility if the group is not capable of enduring and exerting coercion long enough that the state comes to recognize it cannot defeat the group

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<sup>1281</sup> Putnam.

militarily and that a negotiations strategy may have utility. Thus, it is terrorist capacity, not credibility, that is key to understanding the onset of state-terrorist negotiations.

Fourth, my research finds evidence that elected officials are very concerned about how the public will respond when it is revealed that they have gone back on their public promise not to negotiate with terrorists. This finding dovetails with the research on audience costs.<sup>1282</sup> In the UK case, however, successive prime ministers were extremely concerned about the public reaction on this issue despite the fact that they were largely insulated from domestic opinion and unlikely to face punishment at the ballot box as a result. This case raises the possibility that it is not just the prospect of electoral punishment for going back on a public promise that weighs on executives and there may be something else influencing their decisions (e.g. concerns about legacy, concerns about the outcome of negotiations). This application of audience costs to counterterrorism policymaking requires further research.

## **7.6 Future Research**

There are many additional research questions raised by this study that deserve of attention. First, this project was solely state-focused and did not try to understand the onset of state-terrorist negotiations from the latter's perspective. A more comprehensive study would have incorporated both. If some of the information challenges associated with studying terrorist groups can be overcome – and in some cases they can - future research should address decision making from both sides.

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<sup>1282</sup> For example, see Trager and Vavreck, Tomz, and Fearon, “Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands versus Sinking Costs,” and “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes.”

Second, this research project questions the assumption that negotiating with terrorists incites further violence, but does not directly study the subject. Previous studies that have examined the question – often tangentially – have been underspecified. Future studies need better attack data and a longer period of consideration to ensure that researchers can determine which group or faction was responsible, infer motives behind attacks, and measure destructiveness, all of which will help better explicate the relationship between negotiations and further violence. This is an area where research is desperately needed. Many states' counterterrorism policies are predicated on the assumption that negotiations with terrorist groups incite further violence and lead to other serious consequences. If, as I suspect, that is not a universal truth, and strategic negotiations have the potential to reduce violence in some - or many – conflicts, executives may be pursuing policies that have the opposite of the intended effect.

Third, this research project examines the issue of terrorist capacity, but we need more fine-grained data on how changes in terrorist strength over time influence the onset of negotiations. For example, I hypothesize and find evidence that states are more likely to negotiate with large terrorist groups. The data I have on group size, however, is a blunt, static measurement that does not allow for a systematic study of how fluctuations in terrorist group strength impact terrorist (and state) decision-making (i.e. peak strength measurements in magnitudes of 10 – 10s, 100s, 1,000s). The question raised by the cross case analysis of diminished capacity in the years leading up to state-terrorist negotiations highlights the need for more study in this area.

Fourth, the Philippine and UK case studies highlight the potential for the use of tactical negotiations in terrorist conflicts and raise the question of how tactical

negotiations may impact the prospects for strategic ones. For example, Marcos engaged in talks with the MNLF to decrease outside pressure, whereas SSNI Willie Whitelaw met with a PIRA delegation in 1972 to secure a ceasefire and exchange views, but not as part of strategic negotiations. How these tactical negotiations influence the trajectory of the conflict and the state's subsequent evaluation of the terrorist group as a possible negotiation partner requires further study. There are some indications that there may be an interaction effect between the two types of negotiations. It is possible that tactical negotiations – over prisoners, ceasefires – may help a terrorist group demonstrate its willingness and capacity to abide by agreements and therefore give the state more information from which to evaluate the group's credibility.

Another potential cross over effect that is raised herein is how the government's decision to negotiate with one terrorist group may impact its decision to negotiate with other groups. Both the Philippine and UK case studies raise this issue. In the Philippine case, the government clearly viewed the MILF as an acceptable negotiating partner, whereas it remained wary of the NPA's capacity and willingness to come to a compromise with the state. And yet, the NPA has been offered the opportunity to enter into talks with the government. There are many who believe that the invitation was motivated not out of genuine confidence in the NPA or a dedication to finding a negotiated solution to the communist insurgency, but rather the government was concerned about the effects of offering talks to the Moros and denying them to the communists. In the case of Northern Ireland, the main concern in the peace process was the inclusion of the PIRA, but the UK government invited any paramilitary organization – republican or loyalist - that declared a ceasefire to enjoy the benefits of the negotiated

settlement (e.g. amnesty, prisoner releases). They may not have had a seat at the negotiating table as elections determined which parties would be included, but the government knew it needed the greatest possible buy in for the Good Friday Agreement to hold and as such, even small paramilitary groups with more limited coercive capacity were invited to be part of the comprehensive peace settlement.

Lastly, my findings raise questions about how terrorist conflict resolution is similar or different from civil war resolution. The empirical record indicates that civil wars are subject to negotiations at a much higher rate than terrorist conflicts.<sup>1283</sup> This difference may actually reflect the importance of combatant capacity, as argued in this dissertation. Given that rebels usually demonstrate a greater coercive capacity and higher level of violence threaten security, not just governance,<sup>1284</sup> governments involved in civil wars may quickly come to the realization that they cannot defeat their challengers and thus need a political solution. By contrast, when facing terrorist challengers, governments may remain optimistic that they can annihilate the terrorist threat by force for much longer. It is also possible that there are differences in negotiation onset between civil wars and terrorist campaigns because, with respect to the latter, statesmen become locked in to hard-line policies that make it more difficult to employ talks to end the conflict.<sup>1285</sup> Just as the level of violence may influence the onset of negotiations across terrorist campaigns and civil wars, so too may differences in the type of violence employed. Civil

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<sup>1283</sup> Walter, "Designing Transitions from Civil War."

<sup>1284</sup> Many scholars define civil war as intra-state conflict that meets the metric of 1,000 battle deaths. Melvin Small, and J. David Singer, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil War, 1816–1980*, (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982).

<sup>1285</sup> Statesmen near universally talk about the perils of negotiating with terrorists – often hypothetically or aren't in a position to make counterterrorism policy, a tendency that is not replicated with regard to rebels. As such, statesmen are afraid of incurring audience costs by reversing their position on negotiating with terrorists, something they have less concern about in civil wars because of they have not publically locked themselves into hard-line positions on the subject.

wars – as compared to terrorist conflicts - include any combination of attacks on civilians and/or attacks on military targets, and perhaps the make up of the violent activity influences the onset of negotiations. There is evidence that rebels shift tactics in response to a variety of exogenous and endogenous conditions<sup>1286</sup> and perhaps this flexibility allows them to be more effective, leading to a higher rate of negotiations in civil wars as compared to terrorist campaigns. Future research that looks at state policies toward violent groups more broadly – and thus does not compartmentalize them in practical categories of terrorists, insurgents, etc. – would be helpful to better determine how state executives react to violent internal challenges and broad types of incentives to negotiate, particularly with regard to how differences in intensity and targeting influence the onset of negotiations.

## **7.7 Implications for Policy**

This study was conducted with the awareness that its findings would inform the public policy debates on counterterrorism and conflict resolution. This project challenged the conventional wisdom that states *don't* or *shouldn't* negotiate with terrorist groups. Empirical evidence demonstrates that states *do* recurrently negotiate with terrorist groups over the latter's strategic aims. This project sought to explore how and why a state would undertake negotiations as part of its counterterrorism strategy. The state has little control over many of the strategic conditions that facilitate an eventual negotiations approach

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<sup>1286</sup> Rebels shift targets based on the number of their fighters killed and the number of government troops they kill. Lisa Hultman, "Battle Losses for Rebel Violence: Raising the Costs of Fighting," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 19, No. 2, (2007). Rebels shift towards terrorism in democratic states. Kristine Eck and Lisa Hultman, "One-Sided Violence Against Civilians in War: Insights from New Fatality Data," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 44, No. 2, (2007). This idea is also endorsed by Jessica Stanton, who also finds that rebel groups pick targets based on the makeup of their own constituency. Jessica A. Stanton, "Terrorism in the Context of Civil War," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 75, Issue 4, (2013).

(e.g. the type of terrorist group attacking it), but in the course of this study, I identified several areas where state executives made decisions that made it harder to eventually pursue a negotiations strategy despite its projected utility.

First, in order to maintain maximum flexibility in crafting counterterrorism policy, elected officials should be careful in choosing the language they use to describe terrorist groups in order to prevent locking themselves into hard-line security strategies. Certainly, there are incentives to use tough talk against terrorists: On the campaign trail and in the wake of terrorist attacks, strong, threatening language to the terrorists is often popular domestically. Strategically, executives use strong language and the classification of terrorists to tie their hands to strong positions, in hopes that their lack of flexibility will influence the terrorists to give up or make it more difficult to make concessions down the road. The more immediate benefits of such a tough talk strategy need to be weighed against the long-term challenges that such language helps create. Demonizing rhetoric has the potential to polarize protest movements, forcing moderates to move to either extreme and pushing terrorists to adopt even more intransigent positions.<sup>1287</sup> Some have argued that rejection and alienation from society are causes of terrorism, and that by furthering that process, the terrorists; resolve only hardens.<sup>1288</sup> Moreover, often the demonization of a terrorist group bleeds over and inculcates the larger population the terrorist claims to represent, creating fault lines in society that are difficult to heal even if the terrorist group is defeated or gives up its coercive campaign. Lastly, officials who have made specific promises to use hard-line policies and/or characterized the terrorist challenger as the devil incarnate, may be unable to overcome domestic opposition to

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<sup>1287</sup> Toros, 412.

<sup>1288</sup> Ginges, 182.



negotiate with the group even when doing so is in the country's best interest, and as such, violent conflicts may drag on for longer.

That is not to say that elected officials should not condemn terrorist violence, but they should be careful about how they phrase their condemnation. As survey research on audience costs has found, the use of vague threats instead of specific ones allow executives to reverse their policies in interstate disputes without facing punishment at the ballot box.<sup>1289</sup> Statesmen should adopt a similar approach for counterterrorism, using gradients of criticism, instead of extreme condemnation. When state executives begin to view a negotiations approach as possibly beneficial, it is essential to begin to shift their domestic messaging on the subject. Most importantly, state executives should avoid explicit promises about the counterterrorism policies they will or will not pursue. In the UK and the Israeli case, prime ministers felt themselves greatly limited in how they addressed their terrorist problem because of promises they had made to never talk to or make concessions with terrorist groups. More research is needed on how audience costs relate to counterterrorism policymaking, but it is clear that state executives feel bound by the public promises they make in terrorist conflicts, thus limiting the counterterrorism policy options available to them even in light of strategic openings.

Second, elected officials should do everything they can to insulate themselves from public pressure when determining counterterrorism policy. This is not to suggest that elected officials should ignore the stable public sentiments on the issue, but they need to realize that terrorism is a highly emotional issue and public opinion may harden in response to terrorist acts, making it more difficult to pursue conciliatory policies even

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<sup>1289</sup> Trager and Vavreck.

when they are in the best interest of the state. Moreover, public opinion can incentivize elite opposition, which can make it more difficult for an executive to pursue preferred counterterrorism strategies. The UK bipartisan policy was extremely helpful in this regard. By projecting a united front on Northern Ireland, refusing to contest elections there, and keeping Northern Irish affairs out of Westminster, the British managed to prevent counterterrorism policymaking in Northern Ireland from becoming a general election issue. They were so successful that the British mainland public came to feel it was not appropriate to petition their leaders on the issue. The significant insulation from public opinion that this policy provided, gave the prime minister more domestic room to maneuver when crafting a policy response to the Troubles. This obviously is a unique case, and few executives will be able to insulate themselves from public opinion to this degree, especially in this media-driven age. By following the British example and establishing a united front with other parties and potential veto players, an executive can hope to remove some of the incentives for a hawkish arms race that inevitably will stir passions in the public and potentially generate public opposition to particular counterterrorism policies.

Third, if the prior two suggestions do not prove viable and executives are likely to encounter significant domestic obstacles to pursuing talks with a terrorist group, they should consider negotiating in secret. Doing so offers a number of benefits: Secrecy helps shield the process from being politicized, protects executives from attacks from the public and opposition, and it makes it more difficult for veto players to thwart talks. In the Israeli case, Rabin insulated himself from public blowback and certain efforts by members of his coalition and/or the opposition to try to undermine negotiations. When he

finally revealed the existence of backchannel talks, Rabin concurrently presented the agreement they had produced, a successful outcome that helped mollify some of the shock and anger that their exposure generated. As subsequent rounds of negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians have demonstrated, it is much harder to come to a resolution when every concession made is being observed and criticized by each party's supporters. Thus, for a variety of reasons, executives are encouraged to conduct strategic negotiations with terrorists in secret.

Fourth, there is a significant advantage to pursuing negotiations early in a leader's tenure (i.e. the "honeymoon period"). Aquino III and Blair aggressively pursued negotiations with terrorist groups in their countries from their early days in office. They took advantage of the initial good will of the opposition and the mandate they received from the election to tackle serious challenges. Using a honeymoon to pursue negotiations is advantageous because executives have not yet expended their political capital on other issues or created tension – or enemies - within the opposition or their coalitions. Given the short duration of Israeli governments, and his failure to meet the timeframe set on the campaign trail, it's harder to classify Rabin's pursuit of talks with the PLO as occurring during his honeymoon period. That said, the DOP was signed about a year after his election. With the ensuing corruption scandal and the inevitable conflicts that arise in the course of governing, it only would have been harder (if not impossible) for Rabin to pursue peace later in his term. Thus, it is important for state executives to consider the timing of their pursuit of talks in relation to the election cycle.

Fifth, state executives need to recognize that the conditions that make it strategically beneficial and domestically possible to negotiate with a terrorist challenger

require that two windows of opportunity to align. The prospects for such an alignment are generally poor, which is why negotiations are infrequent and often unsuccessful.

Statesmen are often biased to think that conditions are trending in their favor and may be tempted to allow the alignment of strategic and domestic windows of opportunity to pass in hopes that conditions will get even better in the future. This is problematic as waiting longer for strategic or domestic conditions to improve in the future inevitably means the conflict will claim more lives and generate more social and economic costs. State executives are urged not to let the alignment of strategic and domestic windows of opportunity pass by.

Lastly, state executives that are not party to terrorist conflicts can play an important role in their mediation if they present their services when the conflict is ripe for resolution. This project concludes that pressure or encouragement by third parties is not a necessary and sufficient condition for the onset of state-terrorist negotiations, but it can be helpful. With regard to facilitating talks themselves and their potential to produce a settlement, third parties can be invaluable. For example, the Norwegian offer to facilitate talks between the PLO and Israeli officials came at an extremely ripe moment. Beilin was looking to establish just such a dialogue and the Norwegians were able to use their relationship with PLO Executive Committee member Abu Ala to facilitate talks. The Norwegian offer was not sufficient to facilitate a change in Israeli policy given the Shamir government was in power at the time, but when Rabin was elected in 1992 and Beilin was suddenly back in a position of power, the Norwegian-facilitated backchannel became incredibly important and ultimately transitioned to an official dialogue between the PLO and Israel. Thus, state executives that perceive a ripening in external terrorist

conflicts should consider offering their services as communication conduits, mediators, and negotiation facilitators. If well-timed, such offers may help the parties to a terrorist conflict take the first step towards strategic talks.

## **7.8 Conclusion**

Terrorism is, and will likely remain for the foreseeable future, a serious national security threat. When faced with a terrorist threat that cannot be defeated militarily, state executives will inevitably be compelled to consider other counterterrorism policy options, including negotiations. This study was undertaken in order to better understand the conditions that lead states to pursue strategic negotiations with terrorist challengers. My objective was to improve our understanding of terrorist conflict processes so that state executives would be able to craft more effective counterterrorism strategies. Hopefully, this study's findings represent a modest contribution to our comprehension on how to facilitate an end to terrorist conflicts.

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