Defense Threat Reduction Agency
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Advanced Systems and Concepts Office

FINAL REPORT

Comparative Strategic Cultures Workshop- Phase I

September 21, 22, 2005

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Comparative Strategic Cultures Workshop – Phase I

Dr. Kerry Kartchner

ASCO December 05

Table of Contents   **Page No.**

CENTER *for* CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT

Comparative Strategic Culture

Monterey, California, September 21-22, 2005

Conference organized by the Center for Contemporary Conflict, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School for the Advanced Systems and Concepts Office of the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

Conference Report

by Ms. Elizabeth L. Stone, Dr. Christopher P. Twomey, and Dr. Peter R. Lavoy

For a printable version of this report, please click here.

For a schedule of the conference, please click here.

Introduction

There is enormous intuitive appeal to the idea that, if "culture matters" at some general level, then it must also be important in shaping national security processes and outcomes. There is an extensive academic literature on this issue—often called "strategic culture"—and it serves as a sort of "folk theorem" that practitioners and casual observers of foreign affairs find compelling.

Beyond that, the potential impact of arguments related to strategic culture is tremendous. If culture is a central determinant of strategic behavior, then ahistorical and global theories like "offensive realism" and "neo-liberalism" are inappropriate for understanding foreign policy.[1] Those theories claim that countries in similar strategic or institutional settings will act similarly, regardless of their strategic culture. Similarly, core components of current American foreign policy—the universal attraction of democracy and the utility of deterrent threats in general (to pick just two)—are misguided. Rather, these factors will vary considerably in their applicability to different countries depending on their strategic culture.

Despite the publication of many path-breaking books and scholarly articles on the subject of strategic culture, the research in this area has not cumulated into a coherent, productive field of study. The lack of cumulation is often the result of authors employing often very different conceptions of strategic culture and applying them to a single case study. For instance, the seminal work in this field is a study of Soviet strategic culture in key organizations as it pertains to nuclear affairs.[2] In contrast, a recent addition to the literature examines the role of deeply held national culture as it shapes broad beliefs about the efficacy of force in China.[3] The challenge posed by this lack of cumulation notwithstanding, with renewed policy interest in discerning the motivations and related sources of behavior of hard-to-understand countries such as North Korea, Iran, Syria, Pakistan, India, and China, it is time to take a new look at comparative strategic culture.

To assess the state of the field of strategic cultural studies, the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Contemporary Conflict (CCC) organized a workshop on Comparative Strategic Culture

on September 21 and 22, 2005. The workshop was part of the second annual Monterey Strategy Seminar. It was initiated and sponsored by the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency's Advanced System and Concepts Office (DTRA/ASCO) to enable the Center for Contemporary Conflict to bring together a top-notch group of experts and consider the utility and future role for comparative strategic culture theory in U.S. defense strategy. One of the main workshop objectives was to determine whether an approach to "comparative strategic cultures" has promise for yielding insights into threat anticipation and reduction, as well as other policy implications and applications.

Rather than emphasizing one particular approach to strategic culture, the conference featured scholars and practitioners who had vastly different opinions about whether strategic culture was a useful analytical concept, how it could be made more productive, and how best to characterize its definition and analytical role. Beyond that, CCC stepped outside the confines of political science approaches to strategic culture topics to draw on expertise from other disciplines, notably anthropology and political psychology.

The goal of the project was to assess whether a methodologically sound framework for identifying strategic culture that can be used to study a wide range of different countries and societies exists. What is strategic culture? How can it be measured objectively? In what parts of society does it exist? What factors reinforce a strategic culture and what factors produce change in a strategic culture? Under what conditions does strategic culture most affect policy outcomes? To gain a practical handle on these broad questions, the conference featured three sets of case analyses. Scholars debated the concept of strategic culture in the cases of China, Iran, and Pakistan. In each case, the aim was to generate operationalizable definitions of terms, logically sound causal statements, testable hypotheses, and—when applicable—clear policy implications. The goal was to serve as a plausibility probe for a line of research rather than aiming to lay out a final answer for the way in which strategic culture predicts specific behaviors.

This report details the deliberations of the different panels from the conference, and summarizes general findings in the conclusion. Key among the insights established at the conference was the insistence that a better understanding of an adversary's strategic culture would dramatically increase the likelihood of policy success within a given a region. "Know thy enemy" has taken on an increased significance in the post-9/11 world, and the U.S. government must continue to better understand how to operationalize that maxim. Although concepts of strategic culture have been introduced as far back as the 1960s, culture—as a tool of policy analysis—has repeatedly taken a back seat to realist, power politics models of foreign policy theory. This conference resoundingly emphasized the rational and contemporary need to reexamine culture as a legitimate tool of policy analysis.

The conference also highlighted multiple ways in which concepts of strategic culture could be better defined and analyzed, though no consensual definition of the concept was ever reached. Many of the scholars in attendance presented their own schematics and representations of how strategic culture can be divided and strengthened to better meet the needs of contemporary strategic culture systems.

On that same note, the conference successfully depicted the need to view culture not as single system, but as a conglomerate of co-existing variables, with each major regional and cultural area resonating with its own strategic culture. There is no one pass/fail test for strategic culture, and therefore no single way in which it can be defined or tested. The regions of China, Pakistan, and Iran each separately possess their own distinct strategic culture. Commonalities of cultural traits and categories can be found among each region, but each state also possesses very distinct and very strategic cultural peculiarities that—if properly understood and addressed—could assist the U.S. government in achieving regionally pursued objectives and policies.

The Importance of Culture in International Security Policy

Dr. Kerry Kartchner, of DTRA/ASCO, kicked off the event with a presentation that argued that a thorough understanding of strategic culture is vital to the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. It is often the case that U.S. policies are misunderstood, miscommunicated, or ill-informed by the local and regional cultural contexts in which officials try to execute policy. According to the 2004 Defense Science Board Study on Strategic Communications, Kartchner indicated that hostility to U.S. national security goals and policies is undermining U.S. power, influence, and strategic alliances. Potentially some of this hostility might be driven by a lack of understanding of the cultural and regional context for U.S. policy. If this is the case, the U.S. Defense Department needs to better understand the cultural contexts that U.S. national security and foreign policy interacts with, so that it is be better able to achieve U.S. defense policy goals.

Kartchner opened with an important question to the audience that framed the sponsor's interest in the topic: "Does culture even matter?" He went on to query whether or not culture can shape behavior and define values in discernible and measurable ways, and asked which behaviors and values are most subject to cultural influence, or find their origins most firmly rooted in cultural grounds? He noted that the answers to these questions were of critical importance to national policy making.

(From left)Dr. Peter Lavoy of CCC, Mr. David Hamon of DTRA/ASCO, Dr. Kerry Kartchner of DTRA/ASCO, and Dr. Robert Hickson of the Joint Staff

In the discussions that followed, many agreed that culture does, in fact, matter. That said, there was less agreement about whether the study of strategic culture would lead to a comprehensive enough understanding to allow for prediction of other countries' behaviors. However, without that, the policy relevance of this approach (for the U.S. government or others) would be greatly curtailed. Resolving that dispute will be critical for moving this research agenda forward.

Levels of Analysis and Definitions

The first panel introduced the field of strategic culture and featured literature reviews by Ms. Elizabeth Stone of the Naval Postgraduate School, Dr. Jeffrey Lantis of the University of Wooster, and Dr. Darryl Howlett of Southampton University. Each speaker agreed that a consensual definition of strategic culture was not available.

Across the literature, strategic culture is defined in many different ways. When culture became a trendy academic subject during the 1970s, some theorists emphasized the ideational roots of

culture, thus necessitating its study from a sociological and psychological perspective. These theorists, who came from a wide array of cross-disciplinary fields, including anthropology, sociology, and psychology, posited culture to be "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life."[4] Clifford Geertz, an anthropologist whose work political scientists draw upon heavily and repeatedly in this field, defined culture in by focusing on individual-specific variables, and had a very broad, complex, and porous conception of culture.

Other policy-focused theorists, like Colin Gray, would apply a concept of culture to the study of security affairs by defining strategic culture as "modes of thought and action with respect to [force], derived from perception of national historical experience, aspiration for self-characterization, and from state-distinctive experiences."[5] Notable in this approach is a focus less on individuals, and more on how a state's national historical experience generates ideas and actions on issues of national grand strategy and policy.

Still other theorists emerged, who either did not fully accept all the definitions of strategic culture that came before them or disagreed with them fundamentally. Some pushed for strategic culture to became an even more focused concept, as in the 1995 definition as "different predominant strategic preferences rooted in early formative experiences of state, influenced to some degree by philosophical, political, cultural, and cognitive characteristics of state and its elites."[6] Other definitions along these same lines highlighted the "fundamental and enduring assumptions about role of war (both interstate and intrastate) in human affairs and the efficacy of applying force held by political and military elites in a country."[7]

Recognizing this lack of definitional consensus, many theorists at the CCC conference insisted that an agreed-upon definition would be necessary if strategic culture were to ever develop into a viable policy framework. Unfortunately achieving this is quite a challenge due to the range of issues that divide scholars. In particular, two separate sets of issues each need to be addressed:

1. First, where does the culture in question lie?
2. Second, where does the behavior that it shapes exist?

At the conference Ms. Stone presented matrix developed at CCC outlining the way this might be arrayed. It visually displays the wide variation of approaches taken by scholars of strategic culture.

Figure 1: Explanations for How Strategic Culture Matters

Explanations for How Strategic Culture Matters

		Effects of Strategic Culture (Dependent Variable)			
		Doctrine	National Grand Strategy	National Interests	Systemic
Location of Culture (Independent Variable)	Organizations Other Sub-State	Legro Posen (Source of Doctrine) Kier Twomey	Snyder (Soviet Culture)	Snyder (Myths of Empire)	
	Nation	Gray	Johnston Lantis Scobell	Hopf Khan Chuan	Kissinger
	International System	Van Evera (Cult of the Offensive)		Wendt	

Figure 1: Strategic Culture Matrix, Ms. Elizabeth Stone and CCC

Along the vertical axis are three possible levels where the particular culture in question might exist. That is, is the culture in question global or merely in existence within a particular organization within a state? Across the horizontal axis are the possible areas that might be affected by culture. Thus, strategic culture might shape a nation's military doctrine. At the other extreme, it might shape even the predominant form security policy at the international level by all (or most) states. The instinctual view of strategic culture would see nations possessing cultural beliefs that shape their national grand strategy (i.e., the cell in the chart above that holds Alastair Iain Johnston's classic work (*Cultural Realism* (Princeton, 1995)). However, as this chart makes clear, this is only one view of strategic culture and not necessarily the most commonly studies or even the most accurate. It is important to recognize the range of existing work, even if that complicates analysis and cumulation.

Ms. Elizabeth Stone of CCC explaining the CCC Strategic Culture Matrix.

Dr. Jeffrey Lantis highlighted the fact that strategic culture has had many competing and complimentary influences, such as sociology, political psychology, anthropology, and security studies. He ultimately observed that contemporary scholars seem to agree that distinct political cultures may exist, but definitions still blur the line between preference formation, values, and state behaviors.

Dr. Lantis added that there is inherent explanatory and analytical value in viewing strategic cultures as a hierarchy, and evaluating elite-level discourses, military organizational cultures, and public/social cultures as distinct, but interrelated, realms of strategic thought. Also, Dr. Anne Clunan of the Naval Postgraduate School, cautioned against just focusing on elites as sources of strategic culture, and reminded the group that scholars and policymakers must also look at the societies in which the elites are embedded. Societies reveal power relationship within and among elites and between elites and the greater society, and can possibly reveal how some state decisions are shaped more by culture and other state decisions are made and are not at all influenced by culture. Adding to this notion, Dr. Darryl Howlett reminded the audience that in attempting to define and identify the sources of strategic culture, it is very important to understand that strategic culture can be influenced by both material and ideational factors. Those most frequently cited are: geography, climate and resources; history and experience; political structure; the nature of organizations involved in defense; myths and symbols; key texts that inform actors of appropriate strategic action; and transnational norms, generational change and the role of technology.

Dr. Anne Clunan of NPS and Mr. Kevin Farrell.

In the end, the group was unable to agree upon a consensual definition of strategic culture, or even if a consensual definitional was required at all. The utility of dividing up concepts, explanations, and definitions of strategic culture into some sort of hierarchy of typology was, however, deemed useful and necessary if strategic culture was to advance as a tool of academic and policy analysis.

Pakistani Strategic Culture

The first country case study panel focused on the strategic culture of Pakistan. In it, Pakistani Brig. Gen (retd). Feroz Hassan Khan highlighted the evolving nature of strategic cultures when he pointed out that what might appear as "culture" could well be evolving trends within the society, reactions to regional or local threats, and repercussions of events elsewhere. Khan also cautioned that for many states, there is no permanent strategic culture, as some newly formed states, like Pakistan, are still struggling to define its own strategic culture and are heavily influenced by day-to-day domestic and international events.

Khan also pointed out that Pakistan domestically faces an identity crisis as to whether it is a homogenous Muslim state or an Islamic state, and faces ethnic and sectarian clashes and disturbing civil-military relations, and—though short in history as a nation-state—it has had an extraordinary amount of crises and has needed to bear a heavy burden of security challenges. These everyday realities for Pakistan have helped shaped its still-emerging strategic culture over the last sixty years.

Dr. Peter Lavoy of the Naval Postgraduate School, laid out an alternative framework to conceptualize ideational causes of international policy both in Pakistan and more generally. Lavoy sees a hierarchy of different "strategic myths" that interact with material constraints and the preferences of particular leaders. For Lavoy, this has the advantage of providing an escape from some of the definitional problems found in the study of culture. Rather, he counsels a focus on more tangible subjects of analysis, such as individuals, their beliefs, and the ways in which these

beliefs become entrenched in rules, laws, bureaucratic missions and standard operating procedures, etc.

Figure 2: Categories of Strategic Beliefs
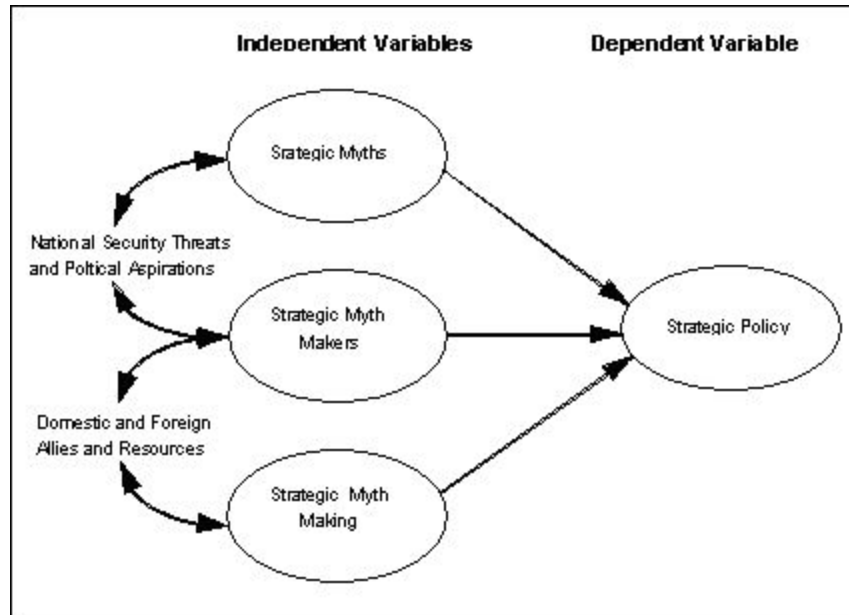
Categories of Strategic Beliefs, Dr. Peter Lavoy.

Lavoy then applied this framework to a number of recent turning points in Pakistani foreign policy. In doing so he concluded that it provided superior explanatory power compared to either a traditional strategic culture-based explanation or a realpolitik based one.

Chinese Strategic Culture

On a panel discussing the strategic culture of China, Dr. Andrew Scobell of the Army War College, remarked that strategic culture should be thought of as a typology or hierarchy, and insisted that the lines of strategic culture become very blurred above the operational level and at the level of grand strategy. Nevertheless, Scobell highlighted a "Cult of the Defense" that he argues plays an important role in Chinese thinking about their security policy. As Scobell argues "Chinese elites fervently believe that China is under the sway of a unique peace-loving, non-expansionist, defensive-minded strategic tradition." Scobell nevertheless claims, however, that when explaining actions, rather than rhetoric, Chinese leaders are more traditionally realist. As he writes in his book, he sees "a Beijing ready to employ military force assertively against perceived external or internal threats all the while insisting that China possesses a cultural aversion to using force, doing so only defensively and solely as a last resort."[8] Scobell suggests that the dialectic between this realist tradition and the pacifist norms in the deep culture of China help to deepen our understanding of Chinese security policy.

Dr. Christopher Twomey of the Naval Postgraduate School presented a less sweeping view of strategic culture in China. He posited that it would be advantageous to view strategic culture from the level of military elites and national strategy. He insisted that one can apply a cultural lens to the study of Chinese security policy through examination of the perceptual effects of military doctrine, and reiterated the importance of PLA doctrine in shaping the way China viewed its interaction with the United States in the past. For instance, during the Korean War, the Chinese doctrine of People's War greatly affected Beijing's views about American intentions and the

capabilities that she might bring to bear on the Korean Peninsula. These perceptions often differed markedly from American views, and led to important—and unnecessary—escalations in the war. Similarly, Chinese views about the utility of asymmetric strategies (or Assassin's Mace strategies, as they are popularized) will likely lead Chinese leaders to a degree of overconfidence and, potentially, to misinterpret American signals should conflict arise.

Dr. Twomey argued that this (relatively narrow) approach to strategic culture has significant advantages in terms of objectivity and clarity of causal statements that can enhance the utility of the study of strategic culture to policymakers and scholars alike.

Iranian Strategic Culture

During a panel examining the strategic culture of Iran, Dr. Vali Nasr of the Naval Postgraduate School and Mr. Willis Stanley of the Institute of Public Policy offered different interpretations about where to look to understand Iranian strategic culture and what are the most salient features of that culture.

Stanley echoed a caution Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence, Dr. Stephen Cambone, said in 2004 that "deterring future adversaries will require a detailed understanding of their goals, motivations, history, networks, relationships, and all the dimensions of human political behavior, on a scale broader and deeper than today's."[9] Stanley emphasized policy analysts must take a multidisciplinary study of an opponent, and look at and opponent's interests, strategic profile, default patterns, and historical patterns so that insight can be gained into an opponent's behavior during a particular scenario.

Stanley focused on how historically influenced, and thus consistent, Iranian strategic culture was. He also focused on the role of religion and the influences of ancient Persian and Islamic cultures to explain the broader patterns of contemporary Iranian political and strategic policies. Stanley believed that a revolutionary interpretation of Shia Islam, the influences of Persian culture and Islamic exceptionalism, extremely complex, consistent, and far-reaching familial relationships, and a continuing belief that Iran is far superior than its neighbors creates a perpetual and distinct Iranian strategic culture. Stanley also felt that Iran's leaders understand U.S. positions and policies, but misinterpret them. They also believe the United States is not a reliable partner and that the United States constantly betrays its allies. Overall, Stanley characterized Iranian strategic culture as more or less consistent and argued that contemporary events were absorbed into an already fixed strategic Iranian mindset.

While agreeing that Iran's ancient history still plays a large role in contemporary strategic thought, Nasr emphasized the influence that modern changes have had on Iran and its leadership. Events such as the Iran-Iraq War, Iran's push for regional hegemony as its neighbors become weaker, and Iran's quest for nuclear weapons to secure its new regional power status are all a part of the calculus that provides insight into Iranian strategic thinking. Nasr emphasized the major changes Iranian leadership and society has and will continue to have in the future.

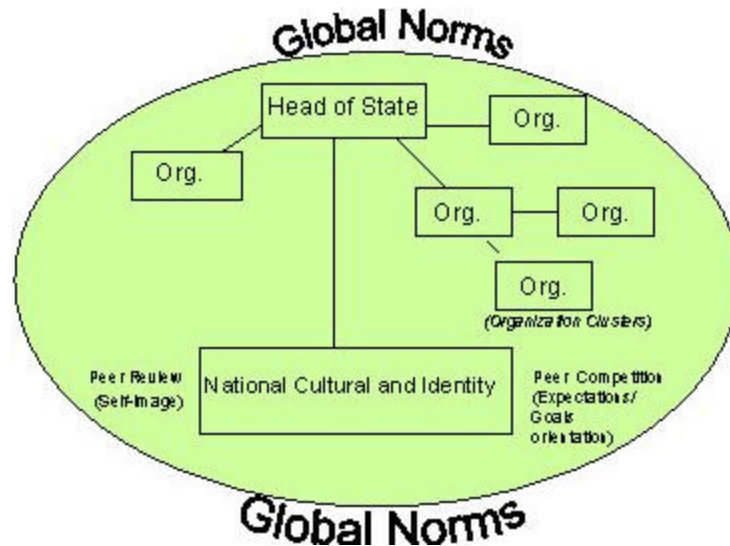*Dr. Vali Nasr describing Iran's strategic culture.*

The slight discrepancies in these two presentations only reiterated the theme raised above: the lack of a consensual definition and the disagreement on which levels of analysis better embody and display the true strategic cultures of states.

Continuity or Change?

Is culture static? Is it malleable? How permeable are cultural boundaries and influences? These questions pervaded the conference's discussions on strategic culture. Among the participants of the conference, there was disagreement as to whether or not strategic culture was a static and continuous concept, or a constantly evolving, permeable variable.

During a panel highlighting the academic implications and multidisciplinary perspectives of strategic culture, Dr. Hugh Gusterson of MIT highlighted the Achilles heel of both attempting to define strategic culture, as well as attempting to use strategic cultural analysis in defense and security studies. He claimed that issues that depend on or are influence by culture cannot be predictive. He reminded the audience that, "As you write about the culture of a people and as they read your writings, their cultures change; human sciences can never be predictive because they investigate entities with consciousness."

Gusterson went on to remind the audience that culture is complex, descriptions are partial and subjective, and descriptions change what it is they are trying to describe once they describe it. In his opinion, not only can a definition of strategic culture never be widely agreed upon by scholars, but strategic culture may, in fact, not be definable at all. Indeed he noted that the mainstream work in anthropology had moved away from attempting to define or measure culture at a societal level.

Attempting to move beyond the pessimism implied by Gusterson's comments and as a way to integrate across the different levels of strategic cultures discussed in the conference, Professor Jeannie Johnson of Utah State University laid out one view of how analysts might think about strategic culture .

Sources of Strategic Culture, Ms. Jeannie Johnson.

Her graphic depicted the many inputs and outputs that could influence a state's overall strategic thinking. Her perception centered on a systems level approach, and emphasized how permeable all levels of strategic culture can be. Johnson emphasized the need to view strategic culture as an ever-changing and evolving system.

Johnson reiterated that broad theories of human nature do not, by themselves, allow us to make short-term predictions about country-by country-foreign policy behavior, and scholars need to keep in mind that definitions of strategic culture must be dynamic and will contain embedded contradictions.

Dr. Lantis rejoined the discussion to emphasize that culture is an evolving system of shared meaning that governs perceptions, communications, and actions, and offers little in the way of testable hypotheses. While asking whether or not strategic cultures can evolve, he emphasized that strategic culture possessed a strong degree of continuity, and highlighted that more often than not past learning becomes sedimented into the collective consciousness of a population or group. Lantis also raised the important concept of external shocks to a culture group, which sometimes drastically alter and force a reconsideration of historical norms. This implies that strategic culture must be thought of and analyzed as a fluid, continuously evolving concept.

Dr. Theo Farrell of King's College, London, echoed this notion when he concluded that strategic culture must always be viewed and analyzed as an open system. However, Farrell argued that culture itself is more or less consistent. He admitted that both internal and external shocks occur—and the impact of such shocks are hugely important—but that culture more often than not settles and continues on as a constant norm. Farrell emphasized that if we are ever to attempt to use strategic culture as an analytical independent variable, we must view it as a fixed, continuous concept.

In juxtaposition—but not in opposition—to examples of how strategic culture must be thought of as constantly evolving and always changing, Dr. Robert Hickson raised the important examples of the continuity and coherency of both Jewish and Chinese cultures. Both of these cultures, and subsequently the strategic cultures of the states most influence by these traditions, possess an enduring longevity—even with the enormous numbers of external and internal shocks the cultures have undergone. He asked whether or not we can learn more about the debate between continuity and change in strategic culture from societies and groups such as these? Although such a continuity would certainly ease the task of using strategic culture, it is notable that most other participants in the conference saw a much more fluid form of culture in the cases they knew best.

Conclusions, Or the Way Forward…

The conference raised more questions than it answered. This was by design. The organizers at CCC view this as the first step of a longer-term research endeavor. That said, several critical conclusions emerged from the conference.

First, for all of strategic culture's intuitive appeal as a concept, it remains profoundly difficult to make objective statements about a particular country or group. Thus, a strategic cultural approach can easily mask for the use of superficial stereotypes about another group. Aside from gratuitous complaints about the lack of "political correctness" of such an approach, a more profound danger is also posed. Superficial stereotypes are often out of date and inaccurate when applied to individuals. In interpersonal relations, these problems might merely lead to repugnant behavior. However, in international relations deep misperceptions can lead to unnecessary conflict. In the nuclear era, such errors might be catastrophic.

Ironically, utilization of an analytically weak concept of strategic culture might worsen the very problem it is intended to solve. That is, the intuitive insight of strategic cultural approaches is based on the fact that people in different cultures might think differently about important issues of national security. In order to recognize the interests and be able to communicate with others in the international system, it is important to understand how they think. However, if superficial cultural stereotypes provide the supposed lens through which the other side is evaluated, those errors might be compounded rather than mitigated.

One of the points that emerged strongly in the conference was the malleability of culture. Different national leaders chose from a huge range of cultural narratives to garner support for their policies in any national context. National cultures change over time in response to material and ideational factors. Different groups within society have different cultures and they may shape security policy at various different points in a particular crisis. These all pose deep challenges for the creation of a predictive model of foreign policy behavior based on strategic culture.

If culture matters in important ways, but we cannot accurately characterize culture at any particular time, this has disturbing implications, not for the study of strategic culture but for the study of international security. This means that scholars of strategic culture, and international security more generally, need to be much more modest in their claims, particularly with regard to making predictions. It does not matter that policymakers demand prediction. Of course, from an academic perspective this would also be valued. However, if objective analysis cannot be conducted about an important source of policy, promises of predictive power will seduce but not advance a nation's ability to achieve its goals.

In order to move forward, it will be critical to assess whether some aspects of strategic cultural studies are less susceptible to these problems. As noted above in the matrix laying out the range of approaches, scholars assessing the effect of culture of international security vary considerably in the types of culture they study and the types of effects they predict. Some areas within that

matrix are less prone to the problems of objective assessment than others. Indeed, some of the most interesting current work on the topic takes a very narrow approach, looking within particular organizations rather than trying to characterize "national" cultures.[10] Other work, focusing more broadly on the way national cultures can shape beliefs about national interests, abandons prediction as a goal.[11] In order to find a middle ground between these two—that is to create a field of comparative, national strategic cultural studies—will require resolution of the issues that have stymied the entire fields of anthropology and sociology: how to objective characterize the cultural beliefs held by large groups of individuals.

The more modest approaches, outlined by the narrower works cited above, can be used in the interim to advance our understanding of other countries' behaviors. While not as sweeping in the scope of their applicability, they do provide viable strategies for examining the beliefs of particular military and organizational cultures in foreign countries in ways that allow for the relatively high demands of prediction needed to anticipate and influence threats to U.S. interests.

References

1. For a similar view, see Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

2. Jack L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*, R-2154-AF (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1977).

3. A. I. Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995).

4. Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

5. Colin Gray, "National Styles in Strategy: The American Example," *International Security* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1981).

6. Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19 (Spring 1995).

7. Andrew Scobell, "China and Strategic Culture," *Strategic Studies Institute* (May 2002).

8. Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

9. Dr. Stephen Cambone, Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Strategic Forces Subcommittee, April 7, 2004.

10. See for instance, Jeffrey Legro, *Cooperation under Fire: Anglo-German Restraint During World War II* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995) and Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

11. Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities & Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

Monterey Strategy Seminar Conference Schedule

Wednesday, September 21, 2005

1:00 – 1:30: Introduction

Dr. Christopher Twomey, *Naval Postgraduate School*

Dr. Kerry M. Kartchner, *Foreign Policy Advisor, DTRA-ASCO*

1:30 – 3:15: Literature Review and Definitions Survey

Presenter: Ms. Elizabeth Stone, *Research Associate, NPS*

Author: Prof. Jeffrey S. Lantis, *The College of Wooster*

Author: Prof. Darryl Howlett, *Southampton University*

Discussant: Dr. Theo Farrell, *King's College London*

3:15 – 3:30: Break

3:30 – 5:00: Case I: Iran

Author: Mr. Willis Stanley, *National Institute of Public Policy*

Discussant: Prof. Vali Nasr, *Naval Postgraduate School*

5:00 – 5:15: Participants take bus from NPS to Embassy Suites

Dinner at guests' own leisure.

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Thursday, September 22, 2005

8:00 – 8:15: Participants take Bus from Embassy Suites to NPS

8:30 – 10:15: Case II: China

Author: Prof. Andrew Scobell, *Army War College*

Author: Dr. Christopher Twomey, *NPS*

Discussant: Prof. Lowell Dittmer, *UC Berkeley*

10:15 – 10:30: Break

10:30 – 12:15: Case III: Pakistan

Author: Brig. Gen. (ret.) Feroz Hassan Khan, *NPS*

Author: Dr. Peter Lavoy, *Director, CCC, NPS*

Discussant: Mr. Steve Coll, *The New Yorker*

*12:30 – 1:15: **Lunch - La Novia Room***

*1:45 – 3:15: **Roundtable on Academic Implications and Multidisciplinary Perspectives***

Chair: Dr. Anne Clunan, *Naval Postgraduate School*

Panelist: Ms. Jeannie Johnson, *Utah State University*

Panelist: Prof. Hugh Gusterson, *MIT*

Panelist: Prof. Michael Desch*, Texas A and M*

*3:15 – 3:30: **Break***

*3:30 – 4:30: **Roundtable on Policy Implications***

Chair: Dr. Peter Lavoy, *Director, CCC*

Panelist: Dr. Robert Hickson, *Joint Special Operations University*

Panelist: Mr. David Hamon*, DTRA/ASCO*

Panelist: TBA

*4:30 – 5:00: **Charting the Way Forward***

Panelist: Dr. Kerry Kartchner, *DTRA/ASCO*

Panelist: Dr. Anne Clunan*, NPS*

Panelist: Dr. Christopher Twomey, *NPS*

*5:00 – 5:15: **Participants take bus from NPS to Embassy Suites***

*6:15 – 6:30: **Participants take bus from Embassy Suites to Carmel-by-the-Sea***

*6:30 – 9:30: **Dinner at Beach, Carmel-by-the-Sea, 13th Street Beach***

*9:30 – 9:45: **Participants take bus from Carmel-by-the-Sea to Embassy Suites***

Explanations for How Strategic Culture Matters

		Effects of Strategic Culture *(Dependent Variable)*			
		Doctrine	National Grand Strategy	National Interests	Systemic
Location of Culture (Independent Variable)	Organizations Other Sub-State	**Legro** **Posen** (Sources of Doctrine) **Kier** **Twomey**	**Snyder** (Sov. Strat. Culture)	**Snyder** (Myths of Empire)	
	Nation	**Gray**	**Johnston** **Lantis** **Scobell**	**Hopf** **Khan** **Clunan**	**Kissinger** **Wendt**
	International System	**Van Evera** (Cult of the Offensive)			

Project Focus:

Despite the publication of many path-breaking books and scholarly articles on the subject of strategic culture, the research in this area has not cumulated into a coherent, productive field of study. However, with renewed policy interest in discerning the motivations and related sources of behavior of countries such as North Korea, Iran, Syria, Pakistan, India, and China, it is time to take a new look at comparative strategic culture.

Where the field has been:

Essentially, literature on comparative strategic culture has come in three waves of study:

1. *Wave 1: Early 1980s*
    a. Focused mainly on explaining why Soviets and Americans apparently thought differently about nuclear strategy.
    b. Scholars (Snyder, Gray, Jones) argued these differences were caused by unique variations in macro-environmental variables such as deeply rooted historical experience, political culture, and geography.
    c. Shortcomings of Wave 1:
        i. Definitional problem; too unwieldy (Still a problem).
        ii. By subsuming patterns of behavior within a definition of strategic culture, first wave implied that strategic thought led consistently to one type of behavior.
        iii. Alleged homogeneity of society's strategic culture across time proved problematic.
2. *Wave 2: mid-1980s*
    a. Began from premise that there is a vast difference between what leaders think or say they are doing and the deeper motives for what in fact they do.
    b. Strategic culture viewed as tool of political hegemony in realm of strategic decision-making.
    c. Shortcomings of Wave 2:
        i. Still has problems with symbolic discourse—linking culture and behavior.
            1. Not clear whether we should expect the strategic discourse to influence behavior; elites socialized in strategic culture they produce and thus can be constrained by symbolic myths their predecessors created
                a. In a sense, one should expect cross-national differences in behavior to extent that discourses vary nationally
            2. second generation literature undecided as whether to expect cross-national differences in strategy.
3. *Wave 3: 1990's*
    a. Both more rigorous and eclectic in its conceptualization or ideational independent variables, and more narrowly focused on particular strategic decisions as dependent variables.
    b. All theories take realist edifice as target and focus on cases where structuralist-materialist notions of interest cannot explain a particular strategic choice.
    c. Strengths of Wave 3:
        i. Avoids determinism of first generation—leaves behavior out of independent variable.
        ii. Explicitly committed to competitive theory testing, pitting alternative explanations against each other.
    d. Shortcomings of Wave 3:
        i. Focus on realism weaknesses is flawed
        ii. Use of organizational culture as key independent variable in strategic choices is troublesome
        iii. DEFINITION STILL TOO LOOSE.

Presently, the field rests largely in an ill defined, oft debated over netherworld. Comparative Strategic Culture concepts maintain their methodological limitations and the concept remains too amorphous and grossly oversimplified. However, despite this, scholars hold on to strategic culture's utility. As Iain Johnston has written:

> Done well, the careful analysis of strategic culture could help policymakers establish more accurate and empathetic understandings of how different actors perceive the game being played, reducing uncertainty and other information problems

in strategic choice. Done badly, the analysis of strategic culture could reinforce stereotypes about strategic dispositions of other states and close off policy alternatives deemed inappropriate for dealing with local strategic cultures.

Where the field needs to go:

1. Learn from the past:

Need to learn from past mistakes and construct a more rigorous concept of strategic culture that specifies *inter alia* the scope and content of strategic culture, the objects of analysis and the historical periods from which these are drawn, and the methods for deriving a picture of strategic culture from these objects. (Johnston, 1995).

2. Utilize cross-discipline studies:

Need to accept that this concept of strategic culture stretches across multiple disciplines (sociology, psychology, political science, international relations theory) and cannot fully be strengthened unless all crossing disciplines are used. Especially on the basic notion of DEFINING strategic culture itself—it ultimately comes back to cognitive concepts of self, symbols, etc., for which sociological and psychological study is needed.

3. Address relevance of concept as applied to NON-STATE ACTORS:

Upon reviewing the literature, essentially nothing new has been written since the late 1990s, in other words—pre-9/11. If strategic culture as a discipline and lens is to survive, it must move beyond its state centric approach to explaining policy and behavior. Can strategic culture be used to analyze non-state actors? If yes (which I believe it can be), it is even more important to utilize a multi-discipline approach to predicting behavior. The concept of non-state actors further plunges political scientists into realms of needing to understand personal psychology, cognitive choice, symbols, cohesive cultures, etc. Behavior and actions of non-state actors cements strategic culture as a supra-individual concept—above and beyond the individual and within and among the state.

My emphasis of the need to focus on non-state actor psychology as well as the differentiation between democracy and Islamic rule is further testament that strategic culture concepts, even if pursued to better understand state elites' decision making on foreign or WMD policy, has been and will remain a cultural argument at the most basic level. In the post-9/11 environment, "know thy enemy" has never rung more true, and the true implications of the aphorism can and must be further explored using dynamic, cross-discipline, and complex concepts such as comparative strategic culture if the national security of the United States is to be kept secure.

Theoretical Concepts

Historical Background Pieces

-   Colin Gray, "National Styles in Strategy: The American Example," *International Security* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1981).

-   Colin Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Style* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Press, 1986).

-   David R. Jones, "Soviet Strategic Culture," in Carl G. Jacobsen, ed., *Strategic Power: USA/USSR* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

-   Shelly B. Ortner, *The Fate of Culture: Geertz and Beyond* (University of California Press, November 1999).

-   Jack Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Nuclear Options, R-2154-AF* (Santa Monica, CA, RAND, 1977).

Essays

-   **Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture,"** *International Security*, **vol. 19 (Spring 1995).**
    o   The "must have" piece in any strategic culture info introduction
    o   Concludes literature (up until 1995) on strategic culture is both under and over-determined, and has so far been unable to offer a convincing research design for isolating effects of strategic culture

- ▪ Essentially, this is still the case
    - o *culture*: different states have different predominant strategic preferences rooted in early formative experiences of state, influenced to some degree by philosophical, political, cultural, and cognitive characteristics of state and its elites
    - o Strategic culture theory doesn't reject rationality; instead, a historically imposed inertia on choice makes strategy less responsive to specific contingencies
    - o Problem for culturalists is to explain similarities in strategic behavior across varied strategic cultures.
    - o Too many definitions out there; still too vague on culture's relationship to choice—what does culture do in a behavioral sense?
        - ▪ We need a notion of strategic culture that is falsifiable.

- **Michael C. Desch, "Culture Clash: Assessing the Importance of Ideas in Security Studies," *International Security* 23, no. 1. (Summer, 1998), pp. 141-170.**

    - o Highlights ongoing theoretical debate between culture theories and realism
    - o Explains brief history of 3 waves of cultural theory, beginning with Cold War, then 1970s-1980s, then post-Cold War
    - o 4 strands of cultural theorizing dominate current wave:
        - ▪ organizational
        - ▪ political
        - ▪ strategic
        - ▪ global
    - o all cultural approaches take realist edifice as target, and focus cases where structural material notions of interest cannot explain a particular strategic choice
    - o to make the case that cultural theories should supplant exisiting theories outperform realist theories in "hard cases for cultural theories

- **Fritz Gaenslen, "Culture and Decision Making in China, Japan, Russia, and the United States," *World Politics* 39, no. 1. (Oct., 1986), pp. 78-103.**

    - o Discusses basic tenets of cultural arguments
    - o Hits on differences/weakness in the culture v. realism debate
    - o cultures consists of assumptions about human nature
        - ▪ assumptions about causality, the possible, the desirable, the appropriate, nature of physical environment
    - o Chinese, Japanese, and Russians tend o have different conceptions of "self" and "others" than do Americans, and former tend to be more collectivist than the latter
        - ▪ These different conceptions have implications for collective decision making under conditions of complexity, uncertainty, and ambiguity
        - ▪ A focus on national culture is likely to obscure one's vision of the variety of behavior that can occur within societies
        - ▪ Cultural explanations are not and should not be about similarities, they must explain differences.
    - o Under what circumstances is cultural explanation most persuasive?:
        - ▪ Smaller conceptual distance between cultural variables and what one wishes to explain by them
        - ▪ When individuals whose behavior is to be explained are unclear about structure of rewards/ punishments they face; when situation is characterized by complexity, uncertainty, and ambiguity.

- **Jeffrey Legro, "Culture and Preferences in International Two Step," *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 1 (March 1996).**

    - o Rational choice analyses of international cooperation have slighted effect of state preference formation and influence of cultural forces in that process
    - o Article addresses gaps by developing an explanation that specifies how organizational cultures of bureaucracies shape state aims and international outcomes

- o Offers domestic-level cultural explanation of preferences that contrasts to common view that state desires are functionally determined or definitively constrained by international system
    - Organizational cultures of bureaucracies produce information, plans, and capabilities which can constitute state preferences in ways that need not efficiently correspond to international circumstances
    - Preference dynamics can be central to variations in international conflict and cooperation
    - Importance of culturally shaped preferences in issue areas—such as use of force in war.
    - When national security and survival are at stake, analysts tend to posit interests, emphasize strategic interaction, and discount bureaucratic influence.

- **Paul DiMaggio, "Culture and Cognition," An*nual Review of Sociology* 23 (1997), 263-287.**
    - o Cultural theory has become highly sophisticated but not fully operational; need to focus on how people use culture
    - o In past, culture defined as latent variable, influencing in common such manifestations as media images, responses, values; individuals assumed to acquire culture in course of socialization
    - o Recent work depicts culture as fragmented across groups and inconsistent across its manifestations
        - Culture as a complex rule-like structures that constitute resources that can be put to strategic use
        - Make studying culture more complicated;
            - Once we identify culture as inconsistent, must identify units of cultural analysis and to focus attention upon relations among them
            - Once we acknowledge that people behave as if they use culture strategically, it follows that cultures into which people socialize leave much opportunity for choice and variation.
    - o highlights importance of wedding all fields on culture together: sociology, social psychology, political science, etc.
    - o emphasizes important cognitive concepts such as culture as supra-individual, and "pluralistic ignorance": idea that people act with reference to shared representations of collective opinion that are empirically inaccurate
        - important implication to comparative strategic cultures

- **Michael Vlabos, "Culture and Foreign Policy," Foreign Policy 82 (Spring 1991).**
    - o too often cultural variations are seen only as national stereotypes and never move beyond myopic impression
    - o Yet stereotypes lead to truths: other cultures are and will remain alien, and culture is source of people's reality, and culture is bigger than countries.
    - o Talks about "culture areas" that bound cultural identities
        - Talks about introduction of "the West" as concept
    - o patterns of thought and behavior are shaped by culture; they are not products of mere nationalism

- **Stephen Peter Rosen, "Military Effectiveness: Why Society Matters,"** *International Security***, vol. 19 (Spring 1995).**
    - o About impact of social structures on amount of military power that can be generated by nations from different cultures
    - o Argues social structures can affect generation of military power in two ways:
        - People in a political unit can identify themselves with social structures in ways that can create divisive loyalties within the political unit, creating fissures in the unit that reduce effective military power of the unit as a whole
        - Social structures than create fissures in unit at large may extend to military organizations of unit, causing military to insulate themselves from divisions created by social structures
    - o IV: (2): 1. dominant social structures of a country, 2. degree to which the military organizations divorces themselves from their society
    - o DV: Amount of offensive and defensive national military power that can be generated from a given quantity of material resources
    - o Does NOT try to explain national military strategy or behavior of individual military commanders

Additional Sources:

- Martin Wight, "An Anatomy of International Thought," *Review of International Studies*, vol. 13 (1987).

- David S. Yost, "Political Philosophy and the Theory of International Relations," *International Affairs*, vol. 70 (April 1994).

- Yitzhak Klein, "A Theory of Strategic Culture," *Comparative Strategy* 10, no. 1 (1991).

- Samuel P. Huntington, "The West: Unique, Not Universal," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 75 (November/December 1996).

Books

- Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995).

- Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

- Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; paperback edition, 1992).

- Douglas J. Murray and Paul R. Viotti, eds., *The Defense Policies of Nations: A Comparative Study*, third edition (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

Country Studies

China

- **Andrew Scobell, "China and Strategic Culture," *Strategic Studies Institute* (May 2002).**
  - *Strategic culture defined*: fundamental and enduring assumptions about role of war (both interstate and intrastate) in human affairs and the efficacy of applying force held by political and military elites in a country; assumptions will vary from country to country.
  - Highlights importance of elites' perceptions of others' strategic cultures, as well.
    - Preconceived stereotype of strategic disposition of another nation, state, or people that is derived from a selective interpretation of history, traditions, and self-image.
  - Using strategic culture lens on subject of China's use of force, two dimensions highlighted:
    - Nature and impact of China's assessment of its own strategic culture
    - Nature and impact of China's depictions of the strategic cultures of Japan and United States.
  - Existing depictions of China's strategic culture are flawed
    - Country has dualistic strategic culture:
      - First strand: Confucian-Mencian, conflict averse and defensive minded
      - Second strand: realpolitik, favors military solutions and is offensive oriented.
        - Both strands operative and influence/combine in dialectic fashion to form a "Chinese Cult of Defense"
  - China views Japan as having extremely warped, violent, militaristic strategic culture
  - Views U.S. as expansionist, offensive-minded, conflict-prone, obsessed with technology.

Additional Sources

- Jim Nichol, "Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests," *CRS Issue Brief for Congress* (November 12, 2004).

- Rosemary Foot, "China and the ASEAN Regional Forum: Organizational Processes and Domestic Modes of Thought," *Asian Survey* 38, no. 5 (May 1998), 424-440.

- David B.H. Denoon, Wendy Frieman, "China's Security Strategy: The View from Beijing, ASEAN, and Washington," *Asian Survey* 36, no. 4 (April 1996), 422-439.

- Alastair Iain Johnston, "Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History," in *Cultural Realism* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995).

South Asia

- Jessica Stern, "Pakistan's Jihad Culture," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2000).

- George K. Tanham, "Indian Strategic Culture," *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 15 (Winter 1992).

- George K. Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay*, R-4207-USDP (Santa Monica, Ca.: Rand Corporation, 1992).

- **V.K. Shrivastava, "Indian Army 2020: A Vision Statement on Strategy and Capability," Strategic Analysis 25, no. 6 (September 2001).**

    o Scrutiny of events of the post-independence era points to the same set of shortfalls as those in the past. In an attempt to examine the Indian thoughts on strategy, George K. Tanham has observed, "Deeply embedded habits of thoughts related to Indian geography, history, culture.... exert a powerful influence....they will, in the foreseeable future, help to shape its strategic thinking and its strategy."

East Asia

- **Desmond Ball, "Strategic Culture in the Asia-Pacific Region," Security Studies 3, no. 1 (Autumn 1993), 44-74.**

    o Delineates principal purported elements of strategic culture in region, and assesses the extent to which they have real substance, application, impact on emerging security processes in region.
    o Analysis suggests cultural factors will be less important than economic, technological, and strategic developments in determining new architecture of regional security.

- **Scott Snyder, "Patterns of Negotiation in South Korean Cultural Context," Asian Survey 39, no. 3 (May-June 1999).**

    o Highlights understandings of cross-cultural influences on negotiation
    o Examine misunderstandings in various international negotiations that may be traced to differences stemming from deeply held views on identity and action that have been shaped by culturally defined socialization processes (which reinforce cultural norms or conceptions of identity) within particular social structure.
    o Uses case studies of the 1997 South Korean Labor Management Dispute and the South Korean-IMF Bailout Negotiations

Additional Readings:

- Yung Myung Kim, "Asian Style Democracy': A Critique from East Asia," *Asian Survey* 37, no. 12 (December 1997), 1119-1134.

- Frank L. Miller, Jr., "Impact of Strategic Culture on U.S. Policies for East Asia," *Strategic Studies Institute* (November 2003).

Middle East

- **Anthony C. Cain, "Iran's Strategic Culture and Weapons of Mass Destruction," Air War College Maxwell Paper No. 26 (Maxwell Air Force Base: Maxwell, Alabama), April 2002.**
    o Ascertains that U.S. leaders fail to comprehend Islamic Republic's struggle to reconcile tensions between faith and economic, diplomatic, and military functions of state power.
    o Defines strategic culture simply from a policy/deterrence angle—focus on WMD.

o Iran is rational and deterrable.
o In order to prevent proliferation, must better understand Iranian decision making processes, which are highlighted by:
  ▪ Distinguishing between Shi'ism espoused by clerics in government power, the politicized Islam that threatens moderate Muslim regimes in ME, and Islamic tenets to which peaceful Muslims adhere.
o challenge to U.S. policy will center on modifying our understanding of Iran to reflect the synergies and conflicts between various segments of Iranian polity that help to shape relations between U.S./Iran.
o For contemporary Iranian politics, reconciling demands of international statecraft and domestic consensus building with principles of religious dogma remains difficult.
o Increasing global trends of globalization coupled with contemporary international consensus centered on fighting terrorism may provide levers needed to ease tensions between U.S./Iran.
o U.S. policymakers can encourage Iranian actions with regard to changing policies about terrorism by acknowledging Islamic republic's legitimate aspirations for regional leadership.

William O Beeman, "Iran and the United States: Postmodern Conflict in Action." *Anthropological Quarterly* **76, no. 4 (2003) pp 671-691**

o Points to the role of Anthropological insight in one of the longstanding diplomatic conflicts. Specifically, Beeman argues for the use of discourse theory to better understand why diplomatic relations between the to nations have been so troubled. He also provides a brief introduction to the concept of discourse theory:
  ▪ "discourse analysts posit a set of implicit contextual agreements between parties which allow face-to-face conversation to take place in an unimpeded manner."
  ▪ Additionally, the term discourse can also be used to include the "culturally contextualized rhetorical practices of governments, scholarly institutions and commercial businesses"
  ▪ Thus, different nations may have divergent discourses that dictate their manner of approach to diplomatic negotiations. An addition implication Beeman briefly touches on is that different discourses will be employed in different situations of domestic politics. State actors will thus be likely to act with regard to these discourses, and while they will be comprehensible from within the domestic situation, they will not necessarily appear so from without.
o He argues that most countries maintain a "foreign policy myth" which is formed by limited or particular interactions and which can set foreign relation thought patterns in inaccurate manners.
o Particularly, in this discussion he notes that the United States is disposed to see the world as composed of nation-states in which the political elite represent the unified opinion of the inhabitants. This is false, and creates a number of puzzling regions. This explanation could potentially throw light on the questions of non-state actors and how they fit into the study of Strategic Cultures.

Additional Sources:

- Mehran Kamrava, *Democracy in the Balance: Culture and Society in the Middle East* (New York: New York, Chatham House/ Seven Bridges Press, 1998), 300 p.

- Frederick Strain, "Discerning Iran's Nuclear Strategy: An Examination of Motives, Strategic Culture, And Rationality," *Air War College, Air University* (Maxwell Air Force Base: Alabama, April 1996).

Europe

- **Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine: France between the Wars,"** *International Security***, vol. 19 (Spring 1995).**

  o Highlights differences between offensive and defensive military doctrine
  o Very heavily references throughout other strategic culture readings
  o Challenges portrait of civilians and military in choices between offensive and defensive military doctrines

o Argues choices between offensive and defensive military doctrines are best understood from cultural perspective; two reasons:
- Military doctrine rarely carefully calculated response to external environment
  - Civilian policymakers have beliefs about military's role in society, and these beliefs guide civilian decisions about organizational form of military
- military organizations do not inherently prefer offensive doctrines: preferences cannot be deduced from functional characteristics and generalized across all military organizations
  - military organizations differ in how they view their world and the proper conduct of their mission, and these organizational cultures constrain choices between offensive and defensive military doctrines

Additional Sources:

- Idem, "France and the Gulf War of 1990-1991: Political-Military Lessons Learned," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 16 (September 1993).

- Dalia Dassa Kaye, "Bound to Cooperate: Transatlantic Policy in the Middle East," *Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2003-2004), 179-195.

Theme-Related

Islam

- Roy P. Mottahedeh, "The Clash of Civilizations: An Islamicist's Critique," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review*, vol. 2 (Autumn 1995).

- Pierre Hassner, "Huntington's Clash of Civilizations: I — Morally Objectionable, Politically Dangerous," *The National Interest*, no. 46 (Winter 1996-1997).

WMD

- **Greg Giles, "Strategic Personality: Overview of Case Studies," *SAIC* (June 21, 1996).**
  o Argues that explicit assessment of strategic personality can enhance understanding of WMD force building in particular countries.

- **Anthony C. Cain, "Iran's Strategic Culture and Weapons of Mass Destruction," *Air War College Maxwell Paper No. 26* (Maxwell Air Force Base: Maxwell, Alabama), April 2002.**
  o Ascertains that U.S. leaders fail to comprehend Islamic Republic's struggle to reconcile tensions between faith and economic, diplomatic, and military functions of state power.
  o Defines strategic culture simply from a policy/deterrence angle—focus on WMD.
  o Iran is rational and deterrable.
  o In order to prevent proliferation, must better understand Iranian decision making processes, which are highlighted by:
    - Distinguishing between Shi'ism espoused by clerics in government power, the politicized Islam that threatens moderate Muslim regimes in ME, and Islamic tenets to which peaceful Muslims adhere.
  o challenge to U.S. policy will center on modifying our understanding of Iran to reflect the synergies and conflicts between various segments of Iranian polity that help to shape relations between U.S./Iran.
  o For contemporary Iranian politics, reconciling demands of international statecraft and domestic consensus building with principles of religious dogma remains difficult.
  o Increasing global trends of globalization coupled with contemporary international consensus centered on fighting terrorism may provide levers needed to ease tensions between U.S./Iran.

- U.S. policymakers can encourage Iranian actions with regard to changing policies about terrorism by acknowledging Islamic republic's legitimate aspirations for regional leadership.

Additional Sources

- Henry Rowen, "The Evolution of Strategic Nuclear Doctrine," in Laurence Martin, ed., *Strategic Thought in the Nuclear Age* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).

- Frederick Strain, "Discerning Iran's Nuclear Strategy: An Examination of Motives, Strategic Culture, And Rationality," *Air War College, Air University* (Maxwell Air Force Base: Alabama, April 1996).

- Craig Black, "Deterring Libya: The Strategic Culture of Muammar Qaddafi," *The Counterproliferation Papers, Future Warfare Series No. 8* (USAF Counterproliferation Center: Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama), October 2000.

- Greg Giles, "Assessing Strategic Culture: New Analytical Tools for Hard Targets?" *SAIC Symposium on Strategic Culture of Hard Targets (*November 5, 1997).

Non-State Actors' Strategic Culture

- Lee Harris, "Al Qaeda's Fantasy Ideology," Policy Review, www.policyreview.org , August 2002.

- Rex Hudson, "The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?," *Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (*September 1999), 186 p.

Culture Versus Structure in Post-9/11 Security Studies

Strategic Insights, Volume IV, Issue 10 (October 2005)

by Michael C. Desch

Introduction

Cultural theories have long enjoyed a prominent place in the field of international security. Indeed, two waves have come and gone since the start of World War II, and we are now at the high water mark of a third.[1] The terrorist attacks of September 11th in the United States, the July 2005 London Underground attacks, and the numerous suicide bombings in the Occupied Territories and Iraq have led to renewed interest in the role Islamic culture may be playing in the increasingly frequent use of this tactic and expectations for a quick end to the war in Iraq were the result of misunderstandings about Arab strategic culture.

Today's culturalists in national security studies are a heterogeneous lot, as they bring a variety of different theories to the table. But virtually all new culturalists in security studies are united in their belief that realism, the dominant research program in international relations which emphasizes factors such as the material balance of power, is an overrated, if not bankrupt, body of theory, and that cultural theories, which look to ideational factors, do a much better job of explaining how the world works.

This memorandum assesses this latest wave of cultural theories in security studies by focusing on some of its most prominent examples. There is no question that virtually all cultural theories tell us something about how states behave. The crucial question, however, is whether these new theories merely supplement realist theories or actually threaten to supplant them. My argument is that when you run the different cultural theories up against the evidence from the real world, it becomes apparent that there is no reason to think that they will relegate realist theories to the dustbin of social science history. The best case that can be said for the new cultural theories in security studies is that they are sometimes useful as a supplement to realist theories. This becomes clear when we consider the track record of culturalist theories in explaining two key aspects of the post-9/11 security environment: the rise of suicide bombing and the course of the war in Iraq.

Why Culture Cannot Supplant Realist Theories in National Security

The post-Cold War wave of culturalism in security studies is a broad research program with a wide range of research foci (such as military doctrine, escalation, weapons acquisition, grand

strategy, and foreign policy decision-making), embracing a diverse range of epistemologies (from the avowedly positivistic to the explicitly antipositivistic), and utilizing a broad array of explanatory variables. Four strands of cultural theorizing dominate the current wave: *organizational, political, strategic,* and *global*. For example, Jeffrey Legro holds that militaries have different *organizational* cultures that will lead them to fight differently.[2] Elizabeth Kier argues that different domestic *political* cultures will adopt divergent means of controlling their militaries based on domestic political considerations, not external strategic concerns.[3] Similarly, Peter Katzenstein and Noburo Okawara and Thomas Berger maintain that domestic *political* attitudes toward the use of force vary significantly among states similarly situated in the international system.[4] Stephen Rosen argues that societies with different domestic social structures will produce different levels of military power.[5] Iain Johnston suggests that domestic *strategic* culture, rather than international systemic imperatives, best explains a state's grand strategy.[6] Martha Finnemore argues that *global* cultural norms, rather than domestic state interests, determine patterns of great power intervention.[7] Likewise, Richard Price and Nina Tannenwald claim that *global* cultural norms proscribing the use of particular weapons best account for why they are not used.[8] Robert Herman argues that the Soviet Union bowed out of the Cold War because it was attracted to the norms and culture of the West.[9] Thomas Risse-Kappen argues that alliances such as NATO coalesce around *global* norms rather than responding to mutual threats.[10] In a similar vein, Michael Barnett maintains that common identity, rather than shared threat, best explains alliance patterns.[11] Finally, Dana Eyre and Mark Suchman argue that all states will acquire similar sorts of high-technology conventional weaponry, not because they need them, but because these weapons epitomize "stateness."[12]

These diverse arguments have a common thread: dissatisfaction with realist explanations for state behavior in the realm of national security. As Iain Johnston notes, "All [cultural approaches] take the realist edifice as target, and focus on cases where structural material notions of interest cannot explain a particular strategic choice."[13] Although it is obvious that cultural theories seek to challenge the realist research program, the key question is whether the new strategic culturalism supplants or supplements realist explanations?[14] Some of the new strategic culturalists take an uncompromising position that rejects realism as a first cut at explaining strategic behavior and maintains that material and structural variables are of "secondary importance."[15] Others concede that sometimes structural variables will trump culture but that most of the time the reverse will be true.[16] All maintain that cultural variables are more than epiphenomena to material factors and often explain outcomes for which realism cannot account.[17] Because no proponent of realism thinks that realist theories explain everything,[18] there will be little argument about culture, or any other variables, supplementing realism. The major debate will concern whether cultural theories can supplant realist theories.

The central problem with the new culturalism in security studies is that its theories, by themselves, do not provide much additional explanatory power beyond existing structural theories. Subsequent reassessments of why the United States failed in Vietnam and its clear victory in the Cold War demonstrate that these Cold War culturalist arguments were wrong. The U.S. loss in Vietnam became the well-spring of concern about the deficiencies of U.S. strategic culture.[19] But a convincing case can be made that the U.S. government and military accomplished their main goal of preserving a non-communist government in South Vietnam from 1965 to 1973.[20] Moreover, to the extent that the United States failed in Vietnam, that failure had more to do with the insurmountable task of nation-building and the many deficiencies of our ally than with any American cultural short-comings.[21] If culture was such a critical explanation for the outcome of the Vietnam War, how does one explain the dramatically different combat performances of the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong compared with the South Vietnamese army? All were products of similar strategic and political cultures. A few years later, the Soviet Union with its supposedly more effective strategic and political cultures did no better in a similar sort of war in Afghanistan.[22] The nuclear revolution, a major technological change in the structure of the international system, ultimately had roughly equivalent effects on the behavior, if not the rhetoric,

of both the United States and the Soviet Union.[23] Most damning for the Cold War wave, however, was the final outcome of the Cold War.

Despite forecasts of doom by culturalists at the time,[24] the democratic, commercial, and non-Clausewitzian United States clearly won the Cold War,[25] and it did so with largely the same strategic and political cultures that had "lost" Vietnam. It also handily won the Persian Gulf War.[26] One recent book, though sympathetic to the cultural approach, nonetheless shows how traditional theories of Soviet domestic politics, which relied heavily on cultural variables, led the vast majority of Sovietologists to miss the dramatic changes that were taking place right under their noses.[27] In short, the Cold War wave of cultural theorizing made predictions that largely turned out to be wrong.

Although the post-Cold War wave of cultural theorizing has, for the most part, not yet been proven wrong, it will not supplant realist theories in national security studies because it has selected cases that do not provide crucial tests that enable us to distinguish which theories are better.[28] Instead of selecting "hard cases" for cultural theories, much of the new cultural literature in security studies relies on four other types of cases:

1. "most likely" cases for the culturalist theories;
2. cases that have the same outcomes as predicted by realist theories;
3. cases where the culturalist interpretations are disputable; and
4. cases in which it is too early to tell what the outcome will be.

How Culture Might Supplement Existing Theories in National Security

As a supplement to existing theories cultural theories have at least three contributions to make. First, cultural variables may explain the lag between structural change and alterations in state behavior. Second, cultural variables may account for why some states behave irrationally and suffer the consequences of failing to adapt to the constraints of the international system. Finally, in structurally indeterminate situations, domestic variables such as culture may have a more independent impact.

Culturalist arguments can supplement existing theories by providing an explanation of the lag between structural change and alterations in state behavior.[29] For instance, during the Cold War both the United States and the Soviet Union were models of civilian control of the military.[30] With the end of the Cold War, evidence is accumulating that civilian control of the military in both the former Cold War antagonists has weakened.[31] Brian Taylor offers a very convincing argument that residual norms of military subordination to civilian control have kept the Russian military from launching a coup or otherwise intervening more directly in Russian politics.[32] Taylor's organizational cultural argument, however, has trouble accounting for the relative weakening of Russian civilian control of the military compared with the firm civilian control of the Soviet military during the Cold War that he documents.[33] As a supplement to existing theories, culture works well; but on its own, culture cannot supplant them.

Cultural variables may also explain why some states act contrary to the structural imperatives of the international system. Structure never directly determines outcomes; rather, it operates through a variety of mechanisms: socialization, emulation, and competition. Kenneth Waltz suggests that states are not forced to adopt any particular pattern of behavior by the international structure. Rather, observing that other states which conform their behavior to the structure of the international system do better in competition with other states, states will gradually learn to do so as well. Waltz succinctly summarizes his argument: "The theory explains why states similarly placed behave similarly despite their internal differences."[34] Realists such as Waltz expect that states in roughly similar structural positions should act similarly if they are to survive and prosper.[35] Kenneth Pollack makes a compelling case that Arab political culture undermines the

ability of Arab armies to successfully conduct modern armored warfare.[36] But since the Arabs consistently suffered as a result of their inability to conduct armored warfare, this culturalist theory does not challenge realist arguments about the consequences of their failure to successfully emulate the dominant powers.[37] Only if the Arabs had consistently done well in armored warfare despite their distinct domestic political culture, could culturalist theories plausibly claim to supplant realist theories by explaining both behavior and outcomes. Pollack's argument therefore supplements, but does not supplant, existing theories.

Finally, as Waltz suggests: "One must ask how and to what extent the structure of a realm accounts for outcomes."[38] Structure tends to establish parameters; actual outcomes are sometimes determined by other factors. This makes the competition between cultural and rationalist theories less sweeping but also more intense. In structurally indeterminate environments, culturalist and realist theories often make similar predictions about state behavior and international outcomes; thus the crucial cases for deciding between them will be in structurally determinate environments.

The major issue of contention will be how often structure is determinate or not. Realists maintain that structure is frequently determinate, and so it makes sense to begin with it; culturalists argue that material structure is so often indeterminate that it makes sense to begin with other variables.[39] This issue is important inasmuch as realist theories are likely to accord significant weight to cultural or any other type of variable when structure is indeterminate. In a determinate structural environment, where states have only one or at most a few satisfactory strategic choices, realist theories expect culture to serve mostly as a dependent, or an intervening variable, that usually reflects the structural environment, changing slowly enough to cause a lag between structural change and changes in state behavior. In indeterminate structural environments, where states have many optimal choices, realist theories ought to have little trouble according culture, or any other domestic variable, a greater independent role in explaining state behavior.

In *Civilian Control of the Military*, I show how different combinations of domestic and international security threats produce more or less determinative structural environments. When a state faces either external or internal threats, structure is determinative; when it faces both, or neither, structure is indeterminate. In such an indeterminate threat environment, it is necessary to look to other variables to explain various types of strategic behavior. Culture and other domestic variables may take on greater independent explanatory power in these cases. The challenge for scholars interested in international relations and comparative politics is to determine when, under what conditions, and to what extent other structural environments—or other, non-structural factors—affect outcomes.

Structure, Culture, and the Global War on Terrorism

There has been much interest in the motives of suicide bombers among scholars and policy makers since September 11, 2001. Many would agree with Michael Ignatieff that the "most dangerous thing about [suicide] terrorism is... that terrorists are responding to grievances about which, in fact, they do not care.... The hijackers were more interested in the spectacle of destruction, in violence for its own sake..."[40] "The Arab –Israeli quarrel is not a *cause* of Islamic extremism," Richard Perle maintains "the unwillingness of the Arabs to end the quarrel is a *manifestation* of the underlying cultural malaise from which Islamic extremism emerges."[41]

Or as *New York Times* foreign affairs columnist Thomas Friedman puts it, "many of these terrorists hate our existence, not just our policies."[42] Others attribute this to the "culture of death" in deeply embedded in Islamic societies. As Princeton professor Bernard Lewis puts it: "If the peoples of the Middle East continue on their present path, the suicide bomber may become a metaphor for the whole region..."[43] From this perspective suicide terrorism is an irrational act,

motivated not by consistent and logical strategic goals, but rather by archaic and dysfunctional ideas unique to Islamic societies.[44] In other words, the Arabs are just like that.

In contrast, Robert Pape convincingly argues that we ought to think about suicide terrorism as a strategic exercise in coercion to achieve national liberation and as a form of asymmetric warfare, rather than as the result of irrational religious fundamentalism. Overall, I find this argument both logically and empirically quite compelling. The fact that almost all suicide bombing campaigns have taken place in the context of national liberation struggles is persuasive evidence for his view that they are most often part of a rational and coherent strategy.[45]

I am not fully persuaded, though, by his argument about the role that religion plays in these campaigns. Pape posits that religious difference makes it more likely that groups will wage suicide terrorism campaigns to achieve independence but he thinks that the specific content of these religions is largely irrelevant. In his *APSR* article, which employed data up through 2002, this aspect of his argument seemed plausible inasmuch as the largest single suicide bombing campaign was waged by the secular and non-Muslim Tamil LTTE. But if you look at the data in his new book *Dying to Win*, which goes through the end of 2003, 71% of the suicide attacks are conducted by individuals from Islamic societies and they account for 90% of the deaths inflicted by suicide terrorism since 1980.[46] I have seen CENTCOM data that counts 279 suicide terrorist attacks from the beginning of the U.S. occupation of Iraq through April of 2005, which would make this the single largest campaign by an order of magnitude and further increases the Islamic character of the phenomenon of suicide terrorism even more (to 85% of the total).

Pape deals with this issue in his book by pointing out that many of these Islamic incidents were carried out under the auspices of secular groups like the Palestinian *al-Fatah* or the Lebanese *Syrian Social Nationalist Party* and concludes that the individual bombers were not religiously motivated. I don't find this fully persuasive, however, because using the orientation of the group claiming credit for the suicide attack does not really get at the individual's motivation for becoming a bomber. In my view this would be analogous to arguing that German Christianity had little to do with Nazi anti-semitism because *National Socialism* was an avowedly secular political movement. That is certainly true but many individual Nazis were practicing Christians and even those who were not came out of a decidedly Christian culture which undoubtedly played some role in their view of the Jews. Of course if in the future many more non-Islamic groups begin to employ suicide terrorism in their national liberation struggles, Pape's argument about the irrelevance of the specific content of religions mattering will become more compelling. As of now, however, I am not convinced that suicide terrorism is a tactic that many non-Islamic national liberation movements can use.

None of this is to say that I disagree with either Pape's larger theoretical argument—that suicide terrorism ought to be seen as a rational strategy of coercion and asymmetric warfare—nor do I dissent from any of his very sensible policy recommendations—particularly the importance of understanding how U.S. military deployments in the Islamic world can inflame nationalist sentiments. But it does suggest to me another important way in which structural and cultural arguments ought to be combined. In this case, it seems to me that structural variables (nationalism and asymmetric warfare) explain the strategy of suicide terrorism campaigns. In other words, suicide bombing has mostly been employed by weaker actors to achieve rational strategic objectives such as driving out stronger powers from their countries. However, it also seems clear that the tactic of suicide bombing is one only available to national liberation movements coming out of certain cultures. Indeed, the overwhelmingly Islamic character of the phenomenon is becoming increasingly clear every day in Iraq. In other words, structural realism would lead us to expect some form of asymmetric warfare when larger powers occupy smaller ones; cultural theories might explain the particular form it will take. Together, structural and cultural explanations for suicide terrorism give us a much better sense of why groups employ this tactic and which groups are most likely to do so than do purely cultural explanations.

Another example of where cultural theories have lead us astray is the current war in Iraq. It is probably not a coincidence that Kenneth Pollack, who literally wrote the book detailing how Arab culture undermined the effectiveness of Arab militaries in waging modern armored warfare, would argue in a subsequent book that a relatively small U.S. military force would "have little difficulty overrunning the Iraqi armed forces and conquering the country" because "there is substantial evidence that the Iraqi armed forces will not fight to death for Saddam's regime."[47] To be sure, Pollack never argued that it would be a "cakewalk," the way many neoconservatives did.[48] Indeed, it has also been a staple of neoconservative rhetoric about Arab culture that Arabs only respect military force.[49] But still, a big part of his case for war rested on the belief that U.S. military could relatively easily achieve its objective of ousting Saddam (and in this he was generally proven correct) and rebuild an Iraq that would be "stable, prosperous, and... not a source of violence and instability" (a task that proved far more difficult).[50]

Pollack's book did much to push many fence-sitters into the party of war.[51] It was persuasive in part because it convinced many that threat of inaction was too high because a Saddam with weapons of mass destruction was undeterrable (in part for political cultural reasons) and that he was vulnerable (largely for strategic cultural reasons). The problem with this strategic cultural argument is that it assumed that the war would end with the defeat of Saddam's conventional military forces. Pollack turned out to be only half-right: While Saddam's military was no match for the United States in a conventional stand-up fight, large numbers of Iraqi soldiers were nonetheless willing to fight and die to resist the American invasion.[52]

Learning very quickly that a symmetrical response was not working and proving very costly, former regime loyalist and other Sunni nationalists very quickly adopted an asymmetrical strategy by shifting to guerrilla warfare. Moreover, some recognition of the power of nationalism (a ubiquitous, rather than culturally specific trait) and the option of asymmetric warfare in the face of overwhelming U.S. conventional superiority, would have tempered optimism that simply ousting Saddam would have solved all of our problems in Iraq. This, by the way, was Israel's experience in Lebanon twenty-two years earlier when they entertained similarly grandiose ideas of using a quick military victory to reorient a large part of the Middle East. The Israel Defense Forces won quick and decisive conventional military victories against the Syrians and the PLO, but their subsequent occupation sparked Shia nationalism and guerrilla resistance which forced them to eventually withdraw in defeat.[53] A strictly cultural approach to Iraq would lead us to think that Arabs are militarily incompetent and that in the face of overwhelming force they will submit. Events in Iraq (and Lebanon previously) suggest a much more nuanced perspective: Arab Armies may not be very effective in high-technology conventional warfare but they are very good guerrillas when faced with superior forces. Moreover, there does not seem to be more of a cultural predisposition for Arabs to submit to force than any other group. Indeed, as the Israelis discovered in Lebanon and we are learning in Iraq, foreign occupation breeds a nationalist backlash. This has been the nearly universal response and has little to do with Arab culture, *per se*.

Conclusions

The new cultural theories in security studies show some promise of supplementing realist theories by explaining lags between structural change and state behavior, accounting for deviant

state behavior, and explaining behavior in structurally indeterminate environments. Thus there is no doubt that culture matters and that the return to thinking about cultural variables will make some contribution to our understanding of post-Cold War international security issues. For these and other reasons, the post-Cold War wave of articles, chapters, and books on strategic culture will be widely read and stimulate much productive debate.

The problem is that some new culturalists in security studies, like many of the old culturalists in other fields,[54] claim too much for cultural explanations. By themselves, cultural variables do not provide much additional explanatory power. The Cold War wave was largely discredited. The post-Cold War wave is not fully persuasive because it relies upon cases that do not provide much evidence of its ability to supplant realism. Purely cultural theories will do little to help us understand the dynamics of the Global War on Terrorism, as recent discussions of suicide bombing suggest and the course of the war in Iraq suggest. In short, the new strategic culturalist theories will not supplant realist theories in national security studies because, by themselves, they have very limited explanatory power.

Many culturalists seem to recognize this and so they turn out, in the final analysis, to be ambivalent about how much independent explanatory power cultural variables have in national security studies. Most new culturalists would agree with Legro that "cultures are... not mere weather vanes to environmental forces or strategic rationality."[55] Rather, they are often independent variables. But elsewhere Legro admits that: "Reality can be socially constructed, but only with available materials and within existing structures... however, when the contradiction between external conditions and cultural tendencies becomes too great, culture will likely adapt."[56] On this point, many other new strategic culturalist scholars are equivocal: Kier, for example, concludes that "culture has (relative) causal autonomy."[57] While everyone agrees that culture matters, the critical question is how much independent explanatory power it has. We can only answer that question when we have a clear sense of whether culture is often an independent causal variable (as most culturalists believe) or mostly an intervening or dependent variable (as realist theories would maintain).

The empirical track-record of strategic culture suggests caution about how much of strategic behavior is explained exclusively by cultural variables. Therefore we should not yet abandon realist theories in favor of the new culturalism in security studies. Of course, when realist theories are found wanting, we should supplement them with new culturalist theories. But this will turn out to be the case less often than the new culturalists suggest. While we should applaud the return to culture in national security studies, we should not be swept away by that wave.

About the Author

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Strategic Culture: Reviewing Recent Literature

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by Darryl Howlett

Introduction

The task of this paper is to outline the main currents of thought that have influenced recent literature on strategic culture. While some analyses use strategic culture without necessarily specifying intended meaning, others are seeking to make the study of strategic culture more rigorous in conceptual and policy relevant terms.

The modern understanding of strategic culture emerged during the East-West Cold War and the immediate period following its denouement. In the western world the texts written in a period from the mid-1970s until the end of 1990s provide an invaluable archive of thinking about how continuity and change influence strategic culture, and what factors should be deemed the most important.

The point of emphasizing the emergence of the modern pantheon of strategic culture is a contextual one. The world underwent profound transformation in the early part of the twentieth century with major wars occurring in Europe that had global ramifications. Later, the Cold War and the advent of the nuclear revolution brought to the fore important writings on realism/neorealism and strategic culture. The Cold War ended without conflict, a major outcome in human history. What can the writings of this period and subsequently inform us of the world we now confront? This question represents the starting position for this paper; and although the focus will be on developments in strategic culture research the impact that realist/neorealist thought continues to have provides a backdrop to this analysis.

The first observation of recent (and much previous) work is that several writers on strategic culture are seeking to develop a richer account of the international environment than the one derived from neorealism. It seeks to accomplish this by emphasizing the domestic cultural context in influencing strategic outcomes. Rather than interpreting behavior solely as a result of constraints and opportunities imposed by the material environment, strategic culture analysts wish to reassert the importance of cultural, ideational, and normative influences on the motivations of states and their leaders. Equally, many also accept that to analyze strategy purely from a cultural position would be inappropriate. Instead, the objective is to explore the range of cultural conditions, which shape the perception strategists have of material conditions.[1]

Another observation of recent literature is noteworthy. While questions still remain for those interested in developing a strategic culture research program efforts are underway to: assess the knowledge gleaned from using both neorealist and strategic culture analyses; develop a more dynamic understanding of culture and consider how this influences strategic outcomes; and, although still rare, compare strategic cultures in a regional and cross-regional setting. At the same time definitional issues have not disappeared and new questions have emerged. Can a research framework be applied to entities that are not states, and what implications do globalization and the Internet have for our understanding of strategic culture? In the post-9/11 world this has policy relevance as analysts are confronted with a conundrum: is it appropriate to apply a strategic culture framework to transnational non-state terrorist networks like al Qaeda or can it be used only for states operating within defined territorial boundaries? Similarly, what implications does this have for regional actors comprising several states like the European Union (EU)?

Developing a consensus on issues such as definition may be important if a coherent research program is to flourish although this should not necessarily preclude collaborative research. Can a definition of strategic culture be found that is acceptable to all? At stake is whether there is a core concept of strategic culture that is generally accepted but still gives rise to dispute about particular interpretations; or whether there is no agreement about an underlying concept and consequently what we are left with is competing conceptions? But even if there was no agreement about an underlying concept there may be possibilities to engage in an enterprise intended to establish "middle range" theoretical and policy relevant knowledge. This is understood as theories that "provide conceptualization and contextualization of issues and cases, trace policy processes, and explain consequences of policy choices."[2]

Consequently, this research would seek to identify "common ground" whereby even those from different conceptual and disciplinary orientations collaborate across boundaries in the spirit of developing what Alexander George and Andrew Bennett refer to as "generic knowledge."[3] Such knowledge "is most useful when it identifies conditions, processes, and causal mechanisms that link the use of each strategy to variance in its outcomes."[4]

Surveying Recent Literature: Trends and Issues

One reason why strategic culture is often criticized is because of the diversity of definitions that have been used by analysts and the difficulties this has generated for knowledge building. Some writers have adopted a narrow military definition linking it to traditional strategic criteria for considering various possible courses of action to attain a specific objective or qualify this by considering strategic culture only as it applies to the nuclear realm. Additionally, others have preferred to focus on the grand strategies of states and include aspects such as economics and diplomatic ways of attaining a state's objectives in addition to military ones.

There have also been three main approaches to the study of the strategic culture of particular states. The first views strategic culture in terms of its capacity to add greater historical and cultural detail of developments operating within the state but are seeking only to supplement material based analyses centered on interest and the distribution of power. Strategic culture is here understood as a variable that may influence behavior but is regarded as having secondary significance to the material structure.

A second approach is seeking to provide an alternative basis for knowledge of strategic cultures by constructing a methodology that is falsifiable and leads to cumulative research, which can be used for future prediction. This view considers strategic culture to be "an independent variable and behavior as a dependent variable, and pitting the culturalist explanation of behavior against alternative explanations, such as realist and institutionalist ones."[5]

Finally, there are those who consider that aspects of human conduct can be understood only by becoming immersed within a culture and consequently the search for falsifiable general statements is unachievable. The objective of this approach is to understand the meanings of both discursive and non-discursive expressions. From this perspective what is unsaid may be as important as verbal statements and non-discursive gestures may be as significant as written evidence. These assumptions led earlier writers to try and understand rather than explain various cultures: that is, to understand what actors meant by their actions. The task was therefore to locate such action within the cultural "form of life" the actor was immersed in.[6]

Re cent analyses have also attempted to both improve on the definitional aspect of strategic culture and consider research frameworks that can be applied at the comparative regional level. In a study of strategic culture in the Nordic region, for example, the author's approached strategic culture as a "transnationally nested dynamic interplay between grand strategic discourse and strategic practices."[7] Elsewhere in that volume it is suggested that strategic culture focuses on:

> the nexus between the political or strategic and the military or operational dimensions of strategy. The approach is basically an argument for taking a holistic approach to questions of strategy by arguing that they cannot merely be reduced to technical questions (e.g. how to conduct a successful campaign) or reduced to 'a continuation of political intercourse with addition of other means' (Clausewitz, 1976: 605). Military matters constitute a practice in their own right that cannot be reduced to the political purpose for which armed force is deployed; but, on the other hand, this practice cannot be regarded independently of the political rationales of the security policy of which the armed forces are a part.[8]

This study of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden represents a significant collaborative venture between the states in the Nordic region. The analyses reveal many of the traditionally associated sources of strategic culture but is noteworthy also as it was written during changing times: that is, the post-Cold War, post-9/11 international environment. Each of the case studies observed changes in the strategic cultures of their respective countries as a result of these events.

Comparative studies of this kind are still relative few. Most concentrate on individual country studies without making regional or cross-regional comparisons. There may be important reasons for this. One concerns the complexity of this type of analysis as the frames of reference for each case study may be different – the analyses may be comparing like with unlike. Another reason relates to a question common to regional analyses in general: what is the region for the purposes of study? There are several ways of defining a region including by geography, by cultural affinity, by institutional arrangement or by security complex.[9] Determining which states are to be included has impacted on security and arms control dialogues in the past and also affects regional and cross-regional analyses of strategic culture.

In their analysis of an emerging EU strategic culture, Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards adopt a definition related to the institutional identity of the regional actor and the processes by which it uses military force. Consequently, they define strategic culture as:

the political and institutional confidence and processes to manage and deploy military force, coupled with external recognition of the EU as a legitimate actor in the military sphere…[10]

Cornish and Edwards also highlight the post-9/11 environment as representative of a change in policy orientation. Hence, they point to the EU's "capacity and confidence to use military force and non-military coercion as policy tools" in the face of new threats, especially the "post-9/11 campaign against international terrorism', which has 'constituted a vitally important area of operation…"[11]

Analysts have also been considering changes occurring in other parts of the world and whether international structural factors stemming from neorealist theorizing or insights derived from strategic culture research provide the most appropriate means for conceptualizing these changes. Studies of Japan, for example, have focused on the nature of its security policy between 1945 and1989, and the period since the end of the Cold War.[12] By testing this country's security policy with "a constructivist theory of antimilitarism and a realist theory of buck-passing," Jennifer Lind seeks to provide "better foundations for predictions about future Japanese policy."[13] Lind considers there have been misunderstandings in assessing Japan's security policy and that this has both theoretical and policy implications as it concerns: underestimations of the level of Japan's military power, especially sea control capabilities; the inability of domestic norms of restraint to inhibit changes in security policy; and the role of a "buck-passing" strategy in explaining the evolution of the military transformation that has occurred.[14]

The Sources of Strategic Culture

Much has been written previously on the sources of strategic culture but it is worthwhile to reconsider such factors, as there have been variations within and between studies. Several sources of strategic culture have been identified encompassing both material and ideational factors. Those most frequently cited are: geography, climate and resources; history and experience; political structure; the nature of organizations involved in defense; myths and symbols; key texts that inform actors of appropriate strategic action; and transnational norms, generational change and the role of technology.

This list alludes to the complexities associated with strategic culture research. Each of the most frequently cited sources is significant in its own right and may have a range of differing understandings and explanations associated with it. This has implications for attempts at theory building as judgment needs to be made about what are the most important factors to be studied and when and how do they influence strategic culture? Additionally, should these be ranked or will it be variable across case studies, regions and the actors involved?

The significance of geography, climate and resources has been a key element in strategic thinking throughout the millennia and remain important sources of strategic culture in the current era. For many, geographical circumstance is the key to understanding why some countries adopt particular strategic policies rather than others. For example, proximity or otherwise to great powers has been viewed as an important factor, as the examples of Norway and Finland exemplified during the Cold War and in previous eras.[15] Additionally, many territorial borders are settled by negotiation but others have been forged through conflict and in several parts of the world they are still contested. Some states have multiple borders and may be confronted by different strategic factors at each point of contact with neighboring states: that is, they could have to respond to multiple security dilemmas. Equally, ensuring access to vital resources is an enduring aspect that many view as a significant motivating factor in their strategic considerations. Geographic factors in the context of a changing global territorial and resource landscape consequently continue to exert influence on the makers of strategic policy in the 21st century.

History and experience are also deemed important considerations in the birth and evolution of states, and the strategic cultural identities that comprise them. This presents the analysts of strategic culture with a question: what type of state are you dealing with? International Relations theory has identified several kinds of states ranging from weak to strong, colonial to post-colonial, and pre-modern, modern and postmodern.[16] This raises the prospect that different kinds of states may confront different strategic problems and with varying material and ideational resources, apply unique responses.[17] For newly-formed states the difficulties of nation-building can compound insecurities and become an important generator of strategic cultural identities. This is not related just to what may be hostile neighbors either acting individually or in concert with others (potentially over disputed territories), but also as a result of other cultural groupings operating from within and beyond these borders. Conversely, for those states of ancient standing

the longevity of their existence may have awoken consecutive leaders to the conditions and contexts that give rise to the rise and fall of great powers or civilizations and adopt policies to suit.

This observation provokes the question of what should be the historical starting point for research because this also varies between studies. Some take the long view by tracing particular factors that have influenced strategic cultural identities over time, possible millennia. Others adopt a more limited timeframe and focus on recent events that have transformed strategic cultural identities such as conflict or other catastrophic incursions. In this context, the end of the East-West Cold War and the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 and in other parts of the world subsequently have raised new questions about the emerging strategic environment and the policy responses necessary both now and in the future.

Another source of strategic culture is the nature of a country's political structure and those organizations involved in defense. An earlier study highlighted the following questions in this context:

What traditionally have been the most important features of the country's political system? Has it been liberal-democratic or communist, centralized or decentralized, open or closed, pluralist or dominated by narrow elites? Is there a tradition of stability or instability? Has the system undergone any radical change? Has public opinion had much of a role to play in policy-making? Have the armed forces involved themselves in politics? Can any generalizations be made about the type of polity and its military behavior?[18]

These questions raise significant issues for the analyst of strategic culture as political structures have taken various forms throughout the world. Some adopt a broadly Western liberal democratic style of government others do not. Some are considered mature democracies while others are undergoing democratic transformation and are in various stages of consolidation. Where the latter are concerned there may be cultural variables such as tribal, religious or ethnic allegiances that operate within and across territorial boundaries, which determine the pace and depth of consolidation.

Similarly, many regard defense organizations as being critical to strategic cultures but differ over the precise impact these have. Studies of the Nordic region have revealed that issues such as whether the forces are professional or conscript and their experiences in conflict are significant. Emphasis was also placed on the role of doctrinal, civil-military relations and procurement practices. For example, when focusing on previous debates concerning doctrines in grand strategy, two central insights are made:

The first is that both civil and military logics make it unlikely for any concept of 'grand strategy' to be applied in its entirety. The other insight is that any 'grand strategy' worthy of its name must not be allowed to develop in continuation of tactics and strategy, as a purely military pursuit, but must on the other hand be explicated on the basis of general, political goals.[19]

Similarly, where civil-military relations are concerned, it is argued the debate is not so much about military doctrines, "but the preconditions for the deployment and the kind of rationality that is at stake in those deployments."[20]

Myths and symbols are considered be part of all cultural groupings. Both are viewed as relevant as these can act as a stabilizing or destabilizing factor in the evolution of strategic cultural identities. The notion of "myth" can have meaning different from the traditional understanding as something "unfounded or false."[21] John Calvert writes that it can also refer to:

A body of beliefs that express the fundamental, largely unconscious or assumed political values of a society—in short, as a dramatic expression of ideology. The details narrated in a political

myth may be true or false; most often they meld truth and fiction in ways that are difficult to distinguish. What is important, however, is that the myth's narrative element are perceived and embraced as true. To be effective, political myth must engage not reason, but belief and faith.[22]

Work on symbols has also suggested that these act as "socially recognized objects of more or less common understanding" and which provide a cultural community with stable points of reference for strategic thought and action.[23]

Many analysts regard key texts as important in informing actors of appropriate strategic thought and action. Traditional analyses of peace and conflict have long pointed to the influence of such texts throughout history and in different cultural settings. These may follow a historical trajectory from Sun Tzu, who was considered to have written the *Art of War* during the time of the warring states in ancient China, through the writings of Kautilya in ancient India, and into western understanding as a result of Thucydides commentary on the Peloponnesian Wars and Clausewitz's writings on the nature of war as a result of observations of the Napoleonic period.

Concomitantly, writers on strategic culture have identified other sources of knowledge that may be in competition with these writings. Studies of particular countries have observed the oscillating influence of two distinct strategic traditions. In a study of Greece the author identified this as operating between the followers of Achilles and those who revere Odysseus. On the one hand there are the 'traditionalists', who derive their intellectual sustenance from the exploits of Achilles, hero of the *Iliad*, and who view the world as an anarchic arena where power is the ultimate guarantee of security. On the other hand there are the 'modernists', followers of Odysseus the hero of Homer's epic poem, Odyssey, who although viewing the world as an anarchic environment consider that Greece's best strategy is to adopt a multilateral cooperative approach to peace and security.[24] This is a dualism in strategic culture that reflects the influence of long held myths and legends, which continue to find resonance in the modern era.

Analyses of Sweden and Denmark have also revealed two forms of strategic culture. In the case of Sweden the first form emphasizes professional and technologically advanced forces for its military, while the second revolves around notions of a people's army based on conscription and the democratic involvement of citizens of the state.[25] Where Denmark is concerned the two forms have been labeled cosmopolitanism and defencism. Cosmopolitanism stresses neutrality, alternative non-military means of conflict resolution and the importance of international institutions such as the former League of Nations and the United Nations. In contrast, defencism emphasizes the importance of military preparedness encapsulated in the dictum 'if you want peace, you must prepare for war' and the importance of regional military organizations, such as NATO, in defending the country and deterring would be aggressors. After the Second World War, a compromise was reached between these two alternative perspectives under a policy of "deterrence" based on the principle of a strong defence bolstered by membership of NATO.[26]

Finally, transnational norms, generational change and technology are also regarded as important sources of strategic culture. Transnational norms are said to define 'the purpose and possibilities of military change' and in providing guidance concerning the use of force.[27] Theo Farrell has considered how transnational norms (in his case, those relating to military professionalism), have influenced national norms and the process by which this occurs.[28] Farrell considers that transnational norms can be transplanted into a country's cultural context either through a process involving pressure on a target community to accept the new norms (termed "political mobilization"), or by a process of voluntary adoption (termed "social learning"). Norm transplantation, as Farrell refers to it, can thus occur via a process of incremental adoption over time eventually achieving a cultural match between the transnational and national norms.

Conversely, such a process of transplantation can occur through radical means, which induces major cultural change within a specific community. Radical norm transplantation may be generated in three ways: the first is by an "external shock to the local cultural system—in the form

of wars, depression and revolutions;" the second is by "norm entrepreneurs," individuals who, the closer they are "to the decision-making apparatus of the target community, the better they will be able to communicate and push through new ideas;" and the third is through 'personnel change' such that innovative thinkers gain access to influential positions and are able to introduce new ideas to the policy-making process.

Both generational change and technology, particularly information and communications technology (ICT), can have important ramifications for issues of empowerment and strategic reach. The arrival of the Internet is a relatively recent phenomenon yet there are now generations who have grown up with this medium of information and communication. This is also a world of individual and group empowerment that is both global in scope and potentially unique in its implications as a dual use technology. While ICT has transformed societies, it has also allowed individuals or groups to communicate in novel ways and cause disruption at a distance.

Are strategic cultures immutable or do they change over time ?

Some strategic culture research has been criticized for adopting an essentialist conception of culture that assumed coherent cultural entities with clearly defined boundaries largely impermeable to change. This research is also said to have adopted a deterministic view of the relationship between culture and behavior making it difficult to assess the causal relevance of strategic culture.[29] This is a complex issue, as it raises the question of how to understand the dynamic relationship between cultural identities, different types of behavior and strategic outcomes. As one writer has commented:

Cultures can never really be described in their entirety, partly because they are too complex and dynamic. In practice, seeing through the cultural maze requires the identification of cultural totems: the images, meanings, norms, values, stories, and practices that seem particularly significant in determining what political or social life looks like….Culture can help us understand why humans act the way they do, and what similarities and differences exist among them.[30]

Recent analysis has started to utilize developments in sociological and anthropological theory to provide a more dynamic understanding of culture. This work seeks to challenge 'the distinction between behavior and culture' by considering "culture as practice."[31]

Iver Neumann and Henrikki Heikka consider that previous work on strategic culture has been using an outdated and reified concept of culture. This, they argue, has consequences for research as, "the literature on strategic culture does not (yet) give us the kind of dynamic and specific framework for empirical analysis that we need."[32] Using the work of writers on practice theory, Neumann and Heikka seek to develop such a framework whereby "practice and discourse constitute a culture."[33] Discourse is understood as "a system for the formation of statements" (quoting Jens Bartelson), whereas practice is taken to be "socially recognized forms of activity, done on the basis of what members learn from others, and capable of being done well or badly, correctly or incorrectly" (quoting Barry Barnes).[34]

Neumann and Heikka apply this notion of culture to the strategic realm by considering its use in the context of grand strategy, which they argue is also in need of disaggregation.[35] Their intention is to accomplish this "by reconceptualizing 'grand strategy' from being a coverall term on a par with strategic culture, to being a coverall term for all *preconditions* for action."[36]Grand strategy, thus reformulated is understood as, "a set of preconditions for action, at a specific time, in a specific place, that may exist in more or less explicit and systematized form, and that is actualized in practices."[37] Neumann and Heikka acknowledge that at this stage the model "still treats culture as a clearly bound and homogeneous phenomenon," so they augment it "in such a way that strategic culture emerges not as the stable product of a homogeneous process inside a

clearly limited nation-state, but rather as an unstable compromise of a contested transnational type."[38]

In the same volume, Mikkel Vedby Rassmussen writes that this reconceptualization has significance for analyses of strategic cultures of states other than great powers:

Practice theory makes it possible to study how changes in the international order not only give a minor power like Denmark new possibilities for action but how these possibilities for action influence and are influenced by existing discourse on the country's place in the world. Responding to the end of the Cold War is not just a matter of how Denmark uses new possibilities given by structural conditions, but also a matter of how Denmark establishes a practice for using them. New possibilities for action are thus not only opportunities which states automatically utilizes, but rather shocks that, using Ann Swidler's term, 'unsettle' the existing culture. In such unsettled periods, practice and discourse are unhinged because they no longer co-constitute a culture but rather challenge one another. The result can be a new culture, but the existing one can also settle in a new pattern in which the relationships between discourses are redefined to fit a new practice.[39]

Can transnational actors have strategic cultures?

Can a research framework be applied to anything that is not a state and what implications do globalization and the Internet have for our understanding of strategic culture? It was noted earlier that some consider there is an evolving EU strategic culture operating at the regional level: but can this apply to non-state actors operating across territorial boundaries where identities may be formed in the realms of both physical and cyberspace.

The advent of the cyber revolution has generated several issues concerning our understanding of conflict and security.[40] Emily Goldman writes that threats to cyberspace, "range from the systematic and persistent, to the decentralized and dispersed, to the accidental and non-malevolent."[41] Additionally, while acknowledging that the technologies associated with globalization have enable terrorist groups to conduct operations that "are deadlier, more distributed, and more difficult to combat than those of their predecessors," James Kiras argues that these same technologies "can be harnessed to defeat terrorism by those governments with the will and resources to combat it."[42]

At the turn of the millennium Victor Cha identified what he termed a "globalization-security' spectrum.[43] At one end of this spectrum Cha placed grand strategic options related to the ending of the East-West rivalry, because these were derived 'from the end of bipolar competition rather than from globalization." At the other end were those aspects derived from globalization's security effects, which had heightened "the salience of substate extremist groups or fundamentalist groups because their ability to organize transnationally, meet virtually, and utilize terrorist tactics has been substantially enhanced by the globalization of technology and information."[44] As Cha encapsulated it:

The most far-reaching security effect of globalization is its complication of the basic concept of 'threat' in international relations. This is in terms of both agency and scope. Agents of threat can be states but can also be non-state groups or individuals.[45]

Thus for Cha, the advent of "instantaneous communication and transportation, exchanges of information and technology, flow of capital—catalyze certain dangerous phenomena or empower certain groups in ways unimagined previously."[46]

John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt have also argued that "the information revolution is altering the nature of conflict across the spectrum."[47] They identify two related developments, which

concern both changes to organizational structures and how we understand conflict. As they characterize the situation: first, "network forms of organization" now have the advantage "over hierarchical forms; and second, as this 'revolution deepens, the conduct and outcome of conflicts increasingly depend on information and communication."[48] Consequently, they consider that, "information-age threats are likely to be more diffuse, dispersed, multi-dimensional nonlinear, and ambiguous than industrial-age threats."[49]

Some have noted the possible parallels between traditional types of terrorism and those relating to cyberspace, including, "the diversity of actors involved, the reliance of at least some of them on networks, the broad range of motivations, the anonymity of the perpetrators of terrorist incidents….and the enormous array of potential targets and weapons."[50]

Do these developments imply that transnational non-state terrorist actors can have a strategic culture? This could depend on the approach to strategic culture adopted. If the approach considers that strategic cultures apply to actors that have a material basis, especially a defined territory, then only states could be included in the framework. Conversely, if ideational factors such as myths and symbols are deemed important and that these gain significance transnationally and via new communication modes such as cyberspace, then this approach could encompass such actors. Additionally, this also resonates with the issue of whether terrorist groups should be treated as armed bands. As Joseph McMillan comments:

The trend in the United States since 9/11 has increasingly been to view terrorists more as armed enemies and less as criminals – in other words, to treat them primarily as an opposing armed force, albeit an unlawful one. The word 'primarily' is important, because the two approaches are not mutually exclusive. In fact, Abraham D. Sofaer and Paul R. Williams have aptly described terrorism as 'unconventional warfare conducted by unprivileged combatants with the assistance of criminal co-conspirators designed primarily to terrorize and kill civilians.' The question is whether that approach is appropriate and justified. In answering that question, two criteria have to be considered. The first is definitional: is the term 'armed force' applicable to terrorist groups in general or only to one terrorist groups in particular? The second is utilitarian: is treating terrorist groups as armed forces strategically useful?[51]

Strategic culture: developing a framework for the future?

Works on strategic culture have not been that numerous in recent years, yet those that have been produced offer suggestions in overcoming some of the problems identified with this kind of analysis. This body of work is seeking to develop greater theoretical precision to allow for the possibility of gaining insights into the future strategic realm. It has also embraced developments in other disciplines and while such analysis could be charged with becoming more eclectic, this can also be interpreted as a positive virtue. There is research strength in developing an approach to strategic culture that allows for the accumulation of inter-disciplinary knowledge in individual country, regional, cross-regional and transnational settings.

Much research still needs to be done to provide detailed studies of strategic cultures for the purposes of comparative case studies. At the same time, one caveat is that in seeking to identify causal relations there is a risk of over-simplifying the social world and consequently categories from one case may be applied inappropriately to others. An inadequate knowledge of a given strategic culture may lead to the misinterpretation of the various attributes of notions such as pride, honor, duty and also security and stability.

One method that may allow for cumulative research is process tracing, which involves "theoretically informed historical research to reconstruct the sequence of events leading to an outcome."[52] As George and Bennett have outlined:

process-tracing is one means of attempting to get closer to the mechanisms or microfoundations behind observed phenomena. Process-tracing attempts to empirically establish the posited intervening variables and implication that should be true in a case if a particular explanation of that case is true. Theories or models of causal mechanisms must undergird each step of a hypothesized causal process for the process to constitute a historical explanation of the case'.[53]

The task for the researcher is to trace the processes that could have generated a strategic outcome in particular case studies. This method will produce several observations within each case, which "must be linked in particular ways to constitute an explanation of the case."[54]

Another theoretical move that George and Bennett advocate is "the development of contingent generalizations about combinations or configurations of variables that constitute theoretical types…"[55] Typological theorizing as they refer to it "allows for cross-case comparisons/studies which can be integrated with within-case methods to allow structured iterations between theories and cases."[56] The "hallmark of a fruitful and cumulative typological theory is the refinement of contingent generalizations that differentiate both independent and dependent variables in ways that produce increasingly close similarity of cases within each type, as well as sharper distinctions between types."[57]

Considering strategic culture as "a dynamic interplay between discourse and practice" also offers a means for accommodating the issue of the mutable nature of strategic culture. Similarly, it could illuminate both how strategic culture evolves from generation to generation and is transformed by competing groups through negotiation and debate. Studies outlined in this paper have also identified that at least two strategic cultures within a state historically compete with each other for dominance. An emphasis on discourse and practice could illuminate when, how and why one form of strategic culture challenges another during critical periods of a state's history. Often, both generational change and paradigm competition go hand in hand so that the older generation maintains its faith in the dominant strategic culture while the new generation adopts the opposing form.[58]

In order to gain a better insight into the nature of any one state's strategic culture and what influences continuity and change may thus require a combination of analytical methods. One conclusion may therefore be that strategic cultures are generally slow to change and consequently exhibit a persistence and continuity over time, but that ideas, discourse, norms and the influence of new generations play a significant role. An emphasis on these factors may further our understanding of the processes that induce change in strategic cultures.[59]

Finally, the impact of transnational non-state terrorist actors and whether strategic cultural research can illuminate their actions is also crucial to this research endeavor. Much has been accomplished already in responding to the challenges the post-9/11 world has engendered. This should not be overlooked, but the world does not stand still and neither do strategic cultures. In a globalized and technologically dynamic environment where material and ideational forces are at work this could be the key to developing future policies. As George and Bennett have suggested what is needed are:

More discriminating 'actor-specific' behavioral models…that recognize that an adversary is not a unitary actor, but often includes a number of individuals who may differ in important ways in their analysis and opportunities to be considered in deciding policy. Similarly, the particular rationality of an opponent may reflect values, beliefs, perceptions, and judgments of acceptable risk that differ from those of the side that is attempting to influence its behavior. Simple assumptions that one is dealing with rational or unitary actors may be particularly dangerous when one is trying to deal with *non-state actors*, such as warlords, terrorists, or rivals in civil wars.[60]

Further research could therefore seek to integrate the knowledge gleaned into threat assessments; and analyses of trends in strategic cultures of all types could seek to identify changes occurring over time, be forewarned when new challenges emerge and be as well prepared as pragmatically feasible to respond when the time comes.

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27. Theo Farrell and Terry Terriff , eds., *The Sources of Military Change. Culture, Politics, Technology,* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 7.

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29. Neumann and Heikka, *Op. Cit.*, 8.

30. Simon Murden, "Culture in World Affairs," in John Baylis and Steve Smith, eds., *The Globalization of World Politics*, third edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 540.

31. Rassmussen, *Op. Cit.*, 71.

32. Neumann and Heikka, *Op. Cit.*, 6.

33. Rassmussen, *Op. Cit.*, 71.

34. Neumann and Heikka, *Op. Cit.*, 11.

35. "The points behind performing this disaggregation are two: (a) we are able to identify building blocks that are familiar to students of strategic studies, thus splicing together general social theory with a tradition in the study of security and defence policy; (b) we are better able to specify the concepts of culture, discourse and practice in a strategic setting, and to model the relationships between them. The point is to follow Swidler's shift of attention 'down' from conscious ideas and values ---such as the idea of grand strategy – to the physical and the habitual, and also 'up' from ideas located in individual consciousness to the impersonal arena of 'discourse'," Neumann and Heikka, *Ibid.*, 12.

36. *Ibid.*, 13.

37. *Ibid.*, 14.

38. *Ibid.*, 17.

39. Rassmussen, *Op. Cit.*, 71-72.

40. Gregory J. Rattray, "The Cyberterrorism Threat," in Russell D. Howard and Reid L. Sawyer, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism. Understanding the New Security Environment,* (Guildford, Connecticut: McGraw-Hill, 2002): 221-245; Stuart J.D. Schwartzstein, ed*., The Information Revolution and National Security. Dimensions and Directions*, (Washington D.C., The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1996), and *Cybercrime, Cyberterrorism and Cyberwarfare: Averting an Electronic Waterloo*, (Washington D.C., The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1998).

41. Emily O. Goldman, "Introduction: Security in the Information Technology Age," in Emily O. Goldman, ed., "National Security in the Information Age," special issue, *Contemporary Security Policy* 24, no. 1 (April 2003) 1.

42. James D. Kiras, "Terrorism and globalization," in John Baylis and Steve Smith, eds., *The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International Relations*, 3 rd edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 479.

43. Victor D. Cha, "Globalization and the Study of International Security," *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 3 (2000): 391-403.

44. Cha, *Ibid.*, 392. See also, Audrey Kurth Cronin, "Behind the Curve. Globalization and International Terrorism," *International Security* 27, no. 3, (Winter 2002/03): 30-58 (especially 46-48).

45. Cha, *Ibid.*, 393.

46. Cha, *Ibid.*, 394.

47. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, eds., *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy* 1, no. 1 (2001). See also, Athina Karatzogianni, "The Politics of 'Cyberconflict,'" *Politics. Surveys, Debates and Controversies in Politics* 24, no. 1 (February 2004): 46-55.

48. Arquilla and Ronfeldt, *Op. Cit.,* 1.

49. Arquilla and Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars*, 2.

50. Phil Williams, Timothy Shimeall and Casey Dunleavy, "Intelligence analysis for internet security," *Contemporary Security Policy* 23, no. 2 (August 2002): 13.

51. Joseph McMillan, "Treating Terrorist Groups as Armed Bands: The Strategic Implications," in Jason S. Purcell and Joshua D. Weintraub, eds., *Topics in Terrorism: Toward a Transatlantic Consensus on the Nature of the Threat* (Washington D.C.: Atlantic Council of the United States, July 2005), 26.

52. "Causal relations may be inferred from historical observation, but historical research must be informed by theory to identify the *mechanisms* responsible for producing causation between independent and dependent variables." Theo Farrell, "Constructivist Security Studies: Portrait of a Research Program," *International Studies Review* 4, no. 1 (2002): 61-2

53. George and Bennett, *Op. Cit.*, 147.

54. *Ibid.*, 207.

55. *Ibid.*, 233.

56. "We define a typological theory as a theory that specifies independent variables, delineates them into the categories for which the researcher will measure the cases and their outcomes, and provides not only hypotheses on how these variables operate individually, but also contingent generalizations on how and under what circumstances they behave in specified conjunctions or configurations to produce effects on specified dependent variables. We call specified conjunctions or configurations of the variables 'types"…Typological theories specify the pathways through which particular types related to specified outcomes." *Ibid.*, 235.

57. *Ibid.*, 235. They suggest that an "important advantage of typological theorizing is that it can move beyond earlier debates between structural and agent-centered theories by including within a single typological framework hypotheses on mechanisms leading from agents to structures and

those leading from structures to agents. This allows the theorist to address questions of how different kinds of agents (individuals, organizations, or states, depending on the level of analysis) behave in and change various kinds of structures." *Ibid.*, 245.

58. Darryl Howlett and John Glenn, "Epilogue: Nordic Strategic Culture," *Cooperation and Conflict* 40, no. 1 (2005): 129.

59. *Ibid.*, 131.

60. George and Bennett, *Op. Cit.*, 273.

Comparative Strategic Culture: The Case of Pakistan

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by Feroz Hassan Khan

Introduction

Explaining strategic culture in respect of newly formed nation-states—still evolving and in the process of discovering their identity—is in itself is a challenge. Strategic culture in new states is affected by two factors: the regional security situation and the local political culture. In such cases, what might appear as "culture" could well be evolving trends within society, reactions to regional or local threats, and repercussions of events elsewhere. Strategic culture assumes a connotation of quasi permanence—a subtle attempt to identify a pattern of response or predict strategic responses or military behavior.

Many new nations are yet lacking complete structures that are necessary to form a modern nation-state. In examining case studies such as that of Pakistan, there is a danger of reading too much. Developing nations have national psyches and strategic outlooks based on their historic experience, which might differ from the western experience. Strategic choices are often determined on narrow parochial interests, driven by local factors and normally in response to a regional-based competition, which is invariably fierce. In countries such as India and Pakistan dominant elites build narratives, hypothesize threat perceptions, and develop notions of war and peace. They create narratives and "myths to help consolidate local interests' domestic politics, and organizational interests."[1]

Politico-military policy-makers do not necessarily make a comprehensive net assessment of threat based on reality, but often shape their security disposition by "their image of the situation."[2] This does not imply that security policy dispositions and responses are made impulsively but in essence from a mix of realism, organizational dynamics, and a backdrop of a relatively permanent strategic culture.[3] Hasan-Askari Rizvi, a well-respected Pakistani scholar has defined strategic culture as "a collectivity of beliefs, norms, values and historical experiences of the dominant elite in a polity that influences their understanding and interpretation of security issues and environment, and shapes their responses to these."[4]

Pakistan is a young nation-state, with a still evolving concept of itself and its role in the world. In the world of states, it is a teenager—internally struggling with hormones, living in a bad neighborhood, and still in the process of developing its strategic personality. It has a well-defined "strategic enclave," however, which directs the strategic dialogue in the country.[5] This group is

dominated by the military in Pakistan, with the support of professional bureaucrats, particularly those in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These individuals are the keepers of Pakistan's strategic culture. Like most bureaucracies, they are slow to admit mistakes, resistant to alternative worldviews, and tend to lean on organizational preferences when faced with new situations that require change. These inertial forces in policy may give Pakistan a greater consistency in strategic thought than might be expected given its often turbulent domestic political situation.

This paper will explain Pakistan's strategic culture by examining several factors: historical experiences, image of the self, images of adversaries, experience with strategic alliances, and the role of nuclear weapons.

Historical Experience

With some 150 million inhabitants, this Muslim nation has over half a million armed forces and possesses an unspecified but substantial number of nuclear weapons and delivery means.[6] Pakistan has had a checkered history of relations both with its immediate neighbors as well as within the state and society. Though short in history as a nation-state, it has had an extraordinary share of security challenges. Pakistani nationhood is evolving under the shadow of a sensitive geopolitical arena at the confluence of three large and relatively rich and powerful neighbors. China, India, and Iran have past memories of being great civilizations and hold ambitions of becoming great powers. Pakistan's historic narrative is replete with a sense of wrongdoing and injustices, betrayals of trust and treaties, abandonment by allies, and victimization due to religion, race, and color.

Domestically, it faces an identity crisis as to whether it is a homogenous Muslim state or an Islamic state, and faces ethnic and sectarian clashes and unsettled civil-military relations. Regular bouts with regional rivals on unsettled borders both to its east and west have fostered a security-intensive environment. In short, its experiences in dealing with security threats—both external and internal—have lead Pakistan to become less secure, impacting both its civil society as well as the military.

The ascendance of the military in Pakistan is a direct outcome of its security intensive environment. The Pakistan military inherited the British tradition: subservient and answerable to the civilian masters, while still playing a significant role in governance and security. After partition, unlike its neighbor India, Pakistan's political and security structures took off on quite a different trajectory. Save for the military, Pakistan never had robust state institutions.

Pakistanis believe that India has never accepted the concept of Pakistan, at least not completely, and has sought proactively to undermine Pakistan's security. The trauma of partition, the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, and the debate over distribution of assets are the main issues that pitched Pakistan and India onto a track of hostility and wars, and both countries have not been able to change course—even after nearly six decades. Afghanistan's claims over Pakistan territory—duly supported by Delhi and Moscow—exacerbated Pakistan's security concern. Pakistan's experience with external alliances—with the United States and with China—could not redress its security concerns. At best, both provided some military equipment and marginal political support, while also enabling Pakistan to present its grievances internationally. But during times of intense crises, outside alliances were unable to ensure Pakistan's national security.

Based on its historical experience over time, certain traits peculiar to the Pakistani nation are discernable. Pakistanis are extremely proud of their history, culture and traditions. They are always eager to compete with neighbors and accept challenges much greater than might be handled objectively. They have a belief in their own self-righteousness. Pakistanis internally have a penchant to confront state authority and generally distrust government. This is part of a broader tendency to reject or express skepticism on face-value explanations. Pakistanis are always

searching for conspiracies. These traits, coupled with Pakistan's intrinsic national insecurity, entwine to form images of self and others, as is explored in the following section.

Image of the Self

A nation's image of itself has a strong link to the historical experiences of the people. Like its neighbors in Iran and India, Pakistanis consider themselves to be second to none. These nations re-live there past glories, and take pride in their histories. The Muslim nation evolved over centuries, and carved out its distinct identity of Indian Muslims in the subcontinent. Pakistanis believe that they are the descendents of the Muslim rulers of the subcontinent who fought for (and won) an ideology entitling them to a separate homeland. At the core of Pakistani nationhood lies this emphasis on separateness and distinct identity—a character of the nation and especially of the keepers of the strategic culture in Pakistan. And Pakistani insistence of separateness is dismissed with equal vigor by India. The Pakistan strategic enclave has internalized this belief that Pakistan must be protected physically and ideologically from the more powerful influence of India.

Pakistani military culture is central to understanding Pakistan's self image. The military prides itself as the guarantor of the state—an enduring legacy of the British times. The military played a key role in consolidating the British Empire in India and was always an equal partner. The British Indian civil administration depended heavily on the army in fulfilling local responsibilities and establishing control of the rowdy principalities, feuding princes, and hostile tribes in the frontiers. The Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) was second in order of precedence to the Governor General/Viceroy, and his role was significant—both in strategy and policy. Defense expenditure was the single largest item in British India, and always took away more resources than education, health and other needs—a pattern that continues to date in Pakistan.

This tradition of governance—being the bulwark of the state—was strong in the congenital self-image of the military. The British Indian Military was viewed as the guarantor of external security and the safeguard against the internal collapse, and this gave the military an expanded role.

In collaboration with the senior bureaucracy, the military became a powerful actor in decision-making within the set-up in India. [7] Immediately at independence, the regular army—still being divided between India and Pakistan—was simultaneously engaged in a border crisis, handling an influx of refugees, and otherwise dealing with the trauma of partition. The regular army could pride itself for its role in state-building and its aid to civil power, while simultaneously managing a war over Kashmir when Pakistan was barely on its feet. Since Pakistan's birth, the security threat was real and imminent and thus strong defense was the foremost priority, a view equally shared by both military as well as civilians. [8]

The first decade of Pakistan's existence revealed that its political leadership showed little respect for democratic and parliamentary principle, norms, and conventions, which are the essence and foremost principle of civilian supremacy over the military. The military respects civil institutions when these ideals are upheld. Absent that, the polity becomes a battlefield of brute power politics, fragmenting political forces, and weakening civil society. And when political institutions decline it creates a vacuum allowing the military-bureaucratic elite to gain the upper hand, in which they assume the role of the savior of the state. As a professional, disciplined, and task-oriented force, the military brings in a semblance of order and stability to the relief of the people. In the process, the military discovers wrongdoings by their political masters and develops disdain for the politicians. This validates the self-image not just as savior, but also as the ultimate key to national security and the prosperity of the state. This pits it against the civilian politicians. And when the civil powers return, their energies are consumed in settling scores with the opposition and power-consolidation rather than strengthening institutions. For the past five decades, Pakistan has been caught in this vicious cycle, which is the tragedy of Pakistani politics.[9]

The institutional belief that the military must be well paid and well respected for its sacrifices and challenges is an accepted norm in most countries. Though the role of and reward to the military were legacies of the British times, the Pakistan military faced much stronger adversaries and greater structural handicaps in performance of its role. In retaining its pride and self image, the military blames handicaps and failures to ill luck, and is not prepared to accept that it lacked will, or professional competence, to face national challenges. Because of the Pakistani military's frequent take-over of power, the civil politicians resent the military's overbearing role, and Pakistan is caught between this vicious cycle of democracy, quasi-democracy, and military rule.

The greatest damage inflicted to the self-image of the savior of Pakistan was Pakistan military's defeat in Bangladesh at the hands of India, following widespread accusations of gross human rights violations and even genocide. The military's explanation is that excesses were committed to save the federation from secession, and that it was India's machinations and intervention that exploited Pakistan's vulnerability in order to humiliate it. The Pakistani strategic elite had internalized the latter factor, and as an institution the military examined and learned lessons from its professional failures, but kept those lessons internal and classified. In their view, defeat was caused by bad luck or a unique situation, not a matter of overall incompetence.[10] Virtually no one was held responsible for the fiasco of Bangladesh or brought to justice[11]—and this has become a reference point in the blame-game and subsequent civil-military frictions in Pakistan.

The Pakistani military does not concede superiority to the adversary, and with each subsequent episode and set back—such as Siachin in 1984 or Kargil in 1999—it resolves to live and fight another day. From a broader strategic cultural viewpoint, Pakistan refuses to acquiesce to Indian military might, and remains determined to find ways to equalize or balance. Preservation of national sovereignty is thus the primary objective, and in pursuance of national security all tools— including the use of an asymmetric strategy—are justified. The military expects the nation to understand its difficulties rather than ridicule it as it faces an uphill battle.

The meddling by Pakistan's military in domestic civil affairs emerges from its efforts to protect its professional integrity from interference and exploitation by the domestic political leadership. Pakistan's military has viewed civilian political leadership with disdain—as will be explained below. The military also feels threatened from being ridiculed or disrespected in the eyes of public. In a departure from this trend of ducking criticism, the Musharraf regime—especially since he restored controlled democracy in 2002—has allowed unprecedented media and press freedom. This has resulted in both healthy and unhealthy criticism. Desperate and disenchanted politicians mostly in opposition have found the new media freedom a platform to vent their anger against the military. And the military watches carefully from the sidelines. In cultural terms, it picks up criticism *a la carte* for reform and adjustments, but watches its interests and protects its way of life.

Though Pakistan faces identity crises in a political sense, at the cultural level there is no issue as to the nature of its people and society. Pakistan is a Muslim country with a strong sense of "Islam" and its virtues. The ethos of its society remains moderate, conservative, and traditional. The Pakistani military and strategic elites are from the same stock. Since the birth of the Pakistani army there have been three sources of motivation: Regiment, Nation, and Faith. A soldier fights for his Nation (Pakistan) and upholds the pride of his Regiment (British tradition), and he sacrifices in the cause of Islam (in the name of God). A soldier's sacrifice makes his regiment, his family, his clan or tribe, and his country proud, and above all he is a soldier of Islam who sacrifices in the name of God for a just cause. The Pakistani Army derives its strength and morale from all these sources, but most importantly its over-arching cause is the omnipresence of God in every facet of a Muslim life. When a soldier dies in the line of duty, he is revered for having embraced the highest form of death—Shahadat.

In the mid 1970s, Zia-ul-Haq became the army chief. He institutionalized the role of Islam in the military. He gave the motto to the army "Iman (Faith), Taqwa (Piety) and Jihad (Struggle for Truth and Godliness)." The injunction of faith as a force-multiplier and the belief that superior training

and faith will compensate against the otherwise larger and materially superior foe—India—was ingrained. During Zia-ul-Haq's tenure in the 1980s, the army ethos gradually evolved towards simplicity and a conservative lifestyle. Zia never dismantled the traditional structures of the military, or its organizational outlook and regimented style.

He institutionalized rankwise privileges in the army and gave a clear template for professional development. And affecting not just the armed forces, Zia's vision shaped the social fabric of the entire society. Other developments in the region, such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the Islamic revolution in Iran, contributed to this evolution in Pakistani society and strategic culture. The influx of global aid, mercenaries, and Islamic warriors from all over the world, and their ultimate success against the Soviets, had a significant impact on the military culture in terms of the influence of Islam and virtues of asymmetric wars.

By the late 1980s, Pakistani security thinking based meeting the challenge from India at three levels: asymmetric, conventional force response, and nuclear deterrent. It was not until the turn of the century that the realization came that support for ideological radicalism can boomerang. The attack by global terrorists based in Afghanistan on September 11, 2001 signaled the diminishing return and unintended consequences of encouraging ideological zealots. In a bold move, Pakistan reversed course after two decades to get back into the mainstream. This strategic reorientation is multi-dimensional: supporting the United States in its war against terror, rapprochement with India and Afghanistan, and focusing on economic revival and domestic issues. Pakistan's reorientation is a reflection of its powerful realist compulsions. Realism often trumps other factors, leading it to take bold initiatives—some that can backfire and others that can pull it out from deep troubles.

Image of the Adversary

Pakistan's insecurity is derived from three major factors: its geophysical and structural asymmetry with India; its lingering perceptions of India's role in undermining Pakistan, and eroding its sovereignty and independence; and, finally, the intrinsic belief that Pakistan has been used by the United States and then abandoned when those interests were served.

At the heart of Pakistan's rivalry with India is its belief that the Hindus never truly accepted the presence of the Muslims in their midst. This perception is reinforced with every major act of communal violence that frequents India targeting minorities, mostly Muslims (such as the Ayodhya mosque destruction in 1991, and the communal violence in Gujarat in 2002). Communal rioting harkens back to the memory of the traumatic partition, and validates the two-nation theory.

Pakistani grievances of treachery and conspiracy are grounded in more than simply the narrative and bitter experience of partition, but also in India's overall aggressive behavior with all of its neighbors. Kashmir has several dimensions relating to the Pakistani polity. Besides the historical and ideological affinity of geographically contiguous Muslims, Pakistani strategic compulsions are tied to the region. All major rivers flow from Kashmir into Pakistan, and India has demonstrated it is willing to strangle Pakistan's lifeline. As well, Pakistan has found alienated Kashmir suffering under forced occupation, and Pakistan's objective is to deny India's forceful attempt to pocket Kashmir. Pakistan has supported the Kashmir insurgency, and facilitated and encouraged volunteers to fight an asymmetric struggle in Kashmir. For fifteen years now this insurgency has tied down Indian forces that would otherwise either crush with impunity the Kashmiri Muslims or menace Pakistan's eastern frontiers. Since September 11th, this insurgency is looked upon as terrorism by India, but as the continuity of a freedom struggle or insurgency by Pakistan.

Pakistan's external and internal threats often interacted in ways that were disastrous to Pakistani security. Internally, Pakistan faced serious ethnic divisions and questions about the proper role of religion in the public sphere. Externally, Pakistan faced threats on its northwest border with

Afghanistan, and at points the Soviet Union, as well. Though this was less dangerous than the eastern threat, the problem on the northwest border included the sponsoring of Pashtun militants by Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. Most critical to Pakistani security was the India problem. This security challenge was exacerbated as Pakistan attempted to secure two wings separated by a hostile India. And the Pakistani nightmare manifested itself in the 1971 war, when India successfully severed Pakistan's eastern wing, and played midwife to the new state of Bangladesh. During the long political crisis that preceded the 1971 war, Indian analyst K. Subrahmanyam noted that the situation provided India with "an opportunity the like of which will never come again."[12]

Subsequent events reinforced Pakistani suspicions that India will seize any available opportunity to erode Pakistan's position. Traumatized by the loss of its eastern half, Pakistan—under duress—signed the Simla Agreement in 1972. But for Pakistan, the Indian security threat did not end with Simla. India continued a forward-leaning policy along the Line of Control in Kashmir, most visibly evident in the operation to seize the Siachin glacier in 1984. At several points in the 1980s, Pakistan also received what it viewed as credible intelligence that India was planning for a preventive strike against Pakistan's centrifuge plant at Kahuta. In 1987, India's large-scale Operation Brasstacks caused real concern in Islamabad about India's possible hostile intent, especially since Pakistan was occupied with the Soviet threat in Afghanistan.

From their experiences in the 1970s and 1980s, Pakistani decision-makers were increasingly convinced that if India was presented with an opportunity, it would weaken Pakistan. When the Kashmir uprising came about in 1989 and 1990, it surprised Pakistani policymakers. The Kashmir dispute would once again take center-stage in the India-Pakistan relationship, a position that it continues to hold even today. The unresolved Kashmir question was at the center of Indo-Pakistani discord throughout the 1990s and until today.

For decades, Kabul asserted a revisionist claim on Pakistan's western border as Pakistan was struggling in a fight for survival against India. Afghanistan's strategic networking with India and the Soviet Union created problems in the two volatile western provinces of Pakistan. This posed a two-front challenge for Pakistan that bedeviled its relations with Afghanistan. In the 1990s, Pakistan continued its forward policy in Afghanistan—even when the United States abandoned Pakistan. Pakistan, though left alone, was still determined to continue with the success begun with the anti-Soviet jihad of the 1980s. Its support of the Taliban was derived from its sense of abandonment and its fear of victimization for its role of supporting the United States during the Cold War. It sole purpose was to prevent forces inimical to Pakistan from taking power, and to open routes for energy and economic access to Central Asia. This policy boomeranged, and its consequence was immense, as manifested on September 11, 2001.

Pakistan has thus resorted to a range of strategies, which are a mix of realism and strategic culture. To balance against its geophysical and conventional force disadvantages, it has sought an alliance with the United States and China in the hope of bridging the gap, and redressing this fundamental insecurity. And it has relied upon asymmetric strategies and conventional force deterrence to make aggression costly and/or deny strategic space to its principal adversary, India.

But Pakistan is unwilling to accept perceived injustices, unwilling to acquiesce to Indian hegemony, and resolved to compete rather than recognize an unfavorable state of imbalance.[13] It has suffered losses and reputation costs, but is beholden to the dynamics of threats and response. Under a rational assumption, the logical course for Pakistan would be to come to terms with the status quo power of India. But Pakistan is psychologically unwilling to accept India's superiority and political dominance. It can accept primacy—but not hegemony. Strategic culture demands a "never say die" attitude of acceptance of strategic defeat—and subservience remains a non-option.

Strategic Choices

Strategic culture plays an important role in determining state behavior and responses to emerging threats and policy courses. When weak states confront stronger states within a regional construct, they have two fundamental options: bandwagon with the emerging power, or seek to balance against a perceived threat. Both are rational options but each course has a price to pay. When states exercise the first option, they accept the dominance of the stronger state and reconcile that their continued safety relies on the will of the stronger state. Necessarily, such bandwagoning requires an intense sacrifice by the weaker state and a coming-to-terms with this status-quo. India believes it is the status quo power, but Pakistan is neither willing to sacrifice its sovereignty, nor ready to accept the terms of the status quo. Islamabad can sense the rise of India, but feels that a policy of acquiescence will put it on a slippery slope and refuses a slow evolution into a "West Bangladesh."

The second option for Pakistan is to seek balance against the security threat, which is more closely aligned to its strategic culture, and in conformity with the history of Pakistani reaction and response to external threats. A balancing course might include a mix of several strategies: the involvement of international institutions, the pursuit of alliances, and/or the development of internal military capabilities. Pakistan has pursued all of these potential options in its desire to balance against growing Indian power. Given these multiple challenges and three-dimensional threats, and driven out of fear and concerns over its ultimate survival, Pakistan's case is analogous to another state: Israel. Stephen Cohen summed up the Pakistani situation, and has argued:

Like Israel, Pakistan was founded by a people who felt persecuted when living as a minority, and even though they possess their own states (which are based on religious identity), both remain under threat from powerful enemies. In both cases, an original partition demonstrated the hostility of neighbors, and subsequent wars showed that these neighbors remained hostile. Pakistan and Israel have also followed parallel strategic policies. Both sought an entangling alliance with various outside powers (at various times Britain, France, China, and the United States), both ultimately concluded that outsiders could not be trusted in a moment of extreme crisis, and this led them to develop nuclear weapons.[14]

Strategic Culture and External Alliance: China and the United States

Despite uncertainties about its allies, Pakistani security policy has been shaped by strategic partnerships with the United States and China. The onset of the Cold War provided Pakistan an opportunity to seek a formal alliance with the United States. But it was soon apparent that there existed only a marginal overlap between United States and Pakistani security interests. U.S. security guarantees, so enticing to Pakistan, were found to have no utility when Pakistan faced Indian forces in 1965 and 1971. Pakistan drifted from the "most allied ally" in the 1950s and 1980s to the most sanctioned ally in the 1990s, to the "most suspected ally" from 2001 onwards.

Dennis Kux in his appropriately titled book, *U.S.-Pakistan Relations: Disenchanted Allies* records how relations between two differently focused countries developed over decades. Each episode ended with disappointment, leaving a gap between expectations and delivery. At one time in the 1950s and 60s, Pakistan trusted its security to its alliance with the United States. The Pakistani strategic enclave began to believe in its own self-deception about the nature of the alliance, and the degree of U.S. commitment to Pakistan's security concerns regarding India and Afghanistan. But generally after 1965—and most certainly after 1971—Pakistani strategic thinking concluded that Pakistan's survival could not be guaranteed by an outside power.

Pakistan's shifted its policy towards the Middle East and China during the 1970s, and commenced its nuclear program—which brought further alienation and friction with the United

States. Though China also did not provide substantial support during periods of intense crisis, it has provided Pakistan with military, technological, and diplomatic support for several decades. In the early 1960s, Pakistan was formally in alliance with the United States, but immediately after India's defeat in the 1962 India-China border war, in a shrewd Machiavellian move, Pakistan extended a hand to China.

Much to the chagrin of India and the dislike of the United States, Pakistan settled its border issues with China, ceding territory to China, and establishing a long-term relationship that has lasted to date. Realism brought Pakistan a strategic partner in China, and in the decades ahead helped Pakistan—especially during the period of U.S. abandonment. While China, like the United States, valued aspects of its relationship with Pakistan, Beijing did not necessarily agree with all of Islamabad's security concerns and threat perceptions.

So why is China seen as a more reliable partner? China and Pakistan have memories of supporting the other during moments of international isolation. The Pakistani narrative recalls that China came to Pakistan's help, if not rescue, in times of dire need and international isolation. China helped Pakistan even under pressure from the United States, and also suffered sanctions for Pakistan's sake (such as U.S. sanctions against China in the early 1990s). In turn, Chinese strategic leaders almost always recall—and remind Pakistani leaders of—their appreciation of the risks Pakistan took when it gave unstinted support to an otherwise lonely China in the 1960s. Pakistan faced the wrath and annoyance of the U.S. administration during the Johnson period. Later it was Pakistan that facilitated the Nixon-Kissinger initiative in 1971 that revolutionized China's relationship with the world.[15] The Pakistani strategic community believes, especially within the military-scientific community, that there is this common "Islamic–Confucian" cultural value of not abandoning friends—an experience which contrasts sharply with the Pakistani experience of its western alliance, especially with the United States in critical times for Pakistan (1965, 1971, 1990 and 1999).[16] The continued sustenance of a "Sino-Pakistani entente cordiale"[17] can be explained as the result of both realist compulsions and strategic cultural inclinations.

As a smaller partner in its alliances, and a weaker protagonist in its rivalry with India, Pakistan's ambition exceeded its capacity. Pakistan repeatedly miscalculated in challenging and confronting a much stronger India. There existed a gap between Pakistani strategic expectations and the actual delivery from Pakistan's allies. The most enigmatic aspect of Pakistan's regional security policy has been Pakistani decisions to undertake adventures alone, even when there's no realistic hope of support by allies. Pakistani strategic policy in 1948, 1965, 1971, the 1990s (Kashmir and the Taliban), and 1999 (Kargil) exemplifies this pattern. This aspect of Pakistani policy defies the logic of realism, but can be explained as the result of strategic compulsions, organizational dynamics, or strategic culture—or a combination of all. Even though Pakistan's experience with allies has been disappointing, together, these political relationships have prevented India-centric positions on the Kashmir issue in international forums, and these military relationships have provided Pakistan with much needed equipment and technology in its race to maintain a conventional and nuclear deterrent against India.

Strategic Culture and the Nuclear Factor

Failing to find support from allies and international institutions, Pakistan determined that only by matching India's conventional and nuclear development could its security be ensured. Pakistan's quest for nuclear weapons began in 1972 after its defeat in the Bangladesh War. But India's 1974 "peaceful nuclear experiment" jostled Pakistan out of its nuclear complacency. Coming so close after its defeat in East Pakistan and reeling under domestic pressures, Pakistan had a severe shock.

There were two sets of responses in Pakistan. First, there was a firm belief that only nuclear response could neutralize a nuclear threat. Pakistan never countenanced seeking a poor man's equalizer through chemical and/or biological options. Second, nuclear weapons were seen as a force multiplier to deter aggression by conventional force. As nuclear capability developed, it compensated for Pakistan's limited resources and its strategic asymmetry with India. Nuclear weapons are critical to Pakistan and an assurance for national survival. There is no constituency in Pakistan that believes otherwise.

The nuclear weapons factor might best explain cohesive Pakistani strategic culture perceptions: Pakistan firmly believes that for every proliferation act committed by India, Pakistan was (and would be) punished. Pakistan faced three major challenges in its pursuit of a nuclear deterrent, and takes great pride in being able to overcome all three. The first political-technical challenge for Pakistan was to develop a nuclear weapon despite the global nonproliferation regime. The second challenge for Pakistan was to acquire and/or develop a means of delivery, again jumping over the hurdle of sanctions—and in particular the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). Third, Pakistan needed to validate its delivery means and its weapons designs through testing. Facing multiple layers of sanctions because of its nuclear weapons and missile programs, Pakistan could have only conducted tests if India obliged—and India did oblige.

By the end of the century, the story of defiance and ingenuity through which Pakistan acquired its nuclear weapons capability had been passed on to three generations. The Pakistani public eulogized every innovative method applied by A. Q. Khan to acquire Pakistan's nuclear capability, and this norm-defiance was indeed a cultural trait, one that is so hard for the West to comprehend. When the A. Q. Khan saga unfolded, the Pakistani nation saw a hero in A Q Khan—and the consequences of black market activity was not a matter of concern but rather a symbol of defiance of the West.

But only when A. Q. Khan resisted efforts to come under authority did he become a source of concern, and was sacked. When his proliferation network took a life of its own, and was exposed, there was no choice but to take action. But the immediate political reaction in Pakistan was to search for a conspiracy, and then to accept the official explanation. Pakistani strategic culture will admit there were mistakes committed in the process of its acquiring nuclear capability, but the belief extends that in the quest to get its nuclear capability at all costs, such mistakes were unavoidable.

Acquiring nuclear weapons did not imply that deterrence was automatic. Pakistan faced challenges of other sorts. The lessons of modern strategy are equally applicable in the region as well. Pakistan's fundamental security policy is to deter India from aggression, and therefore Pakistan must deny strategic space and raise the cost should India contemplate conventional force attacks. And India has avowed to create such strategic space, occupy it, and "punish" Pakistan through coercive military policies and the use of force.

This strategic construct has escalatory potential. Pakistan is compelled to match all levels of escalation and put the onus of escalation and risk on India to take the conflict to the next level. The risk in this game of chicken is high, and unacceptable when nuclear weapons are in the backdrop. Precisely because Pakistan denies India's ability of escalation control, it has been able to deter conventional conflict with India. Pakistan's major strategic centers are perilously close to the Indian border, and Pakistan must respond quickly if it is to ensure that these key centers of gravity are protected. This explains Pakistan's rejection of no-first-use which is "a natural refusal to lighten or simplify a stronger adversary's assessment of risk; it implies the retention of an option, not a positive policy of first use as a preferred course."[18] It is precisely for this reason that Pakistan has neither explained the red lines nor articulated a public nuclear doctrine. As U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower said to his vice president, Richard Nixon, in 1958, "You should never let the enemy know what you will not do."[19]

The use of nuclear weapons as a war-fighting tool is not a contemplated doctrine in Pakistani strategic thinking; however the command system believes that the integration of nuclear and conventional forces is necessary to create a credible deterrent. This does not necessarily mean that Pakistan is considering elaborate nuclear war-fighting scenarios. Instead, Pakistan's command system at the highest level should know what both the "conventional hand" and the "nuclear hand" are doing. Pakistan's civil and military leadership operates jointly at the Joint Services level under a unified military command system.

Conclusions

In a mix of realism and strategic culture, Pakistan's behavior is predictable in many ways. It will not seek parity with India but will do its utmost to balance and retain initiative; it will seek external alliances with outside powers (the United States or China), but will not sacrifice its regional objectives. Pakistan will be cognizant of "emerging India" in partnership with the United States, but will never assume that this rise will be benign. The most rational path that might be suggested for Pakistan is to accept this reality, give up its claims, and bandwagon with emerging India. But realism and strategic culture will predict that Pakistan will never accept hegemony. Strategic culture will explain that the Pakistanis will work night and day to develop responses and countervailing strategies to ensure that India has a high cost to pay for any adventure. This was ingrained in Pakistan's military since the very onset of Pakistan when its founder Jinnah stated:

Pakistan has been created and its security and defense is now your responsibility. I want them to be the best soldiers in the world, so that no one can cast an evil eye on Pakistan, and if he does we shall fight him to the end until either he throws us into Arabian Sea or we drown in the Indian Ocean.[20]

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11. A judicial commission headed by Chief Justice Hamood-ur-Rahman was established by the Bhutto government but its finding were never made public until a few years back it came out open due to media leaks.

12. K. Subrahmanyam, *National Herald* (Delhi), April 5, 1971 as cited in Dennis Kux, *United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2001), 206.

13. Some scholars' have spun the idea that it is primarily Pakistan's military that keeps the India threat alive to preserve military corporate interests, and as such remains the chief impediment to accepting India's status quo power. Some India-origin U.S. scholars have also labeled Pakistan as a "revisionist state" with "chauvinistic nationalism." See, for example, Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions since 1947* (Washington DC: Oxford University Press, 2001), 7. Also, see Ashley Tellis "U.S. Strategy: Assisting Pakistan's Transformation," *The Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2004-05) 97-116.

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16. This is based on the author's own personal experience. Though both the military and scientific communities have benefited from China, and both realize that China has inherent limits in its support. The narrative is that China may not support Pakistan at times due to expediencies; the Chinese view strategy in terms of Sun Tse's long term vision, and find the virtue in keeping support of a trusted ally, located at a geopolitically sensitive location for China's long term interests. The term Islamic-Confucian connection is borrowed from Samuel P. Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993).

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Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism

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by Jeffrey S. Lantis

Introduction

This paper charts the evolution of the theory of strategic culture through several generations of scholarship, both inside and outside the discipline, and explores contemporary arguments about the role of culture in shaping national security policy. Key questions include:

- Do cultural theories provide useful explanations of national security policy?
- Is strategic culture "semi-permanent," as most of its supporters suggest, or can it evolve over time?
- And how *universal* is strategic culture?

The essay concludes that while constructivism has generated new attention to ideational foundations of national security policy behavior, there remains substantial room for refinement of the research program.

Recent events have renewed scholarly interest in the role of culture in international security. Scholars and practitioners have begun to interpret challenges like the struggle to consolidate the Iraqi democracy, U.S.-China trade disputes, and the war on terror through the lens of national identity and culture. This essay charts the evolution of the theory of strategic culture through several generations of scholarly work inside and outside the discipline. Key questions include: What are the ideational foundations of national security policy? Do cultural theories, newly inspired by constructivism, provide the most accurate explanations of security policy? Is strategic culture really "semi-permanent," as its supporters suggest, or can strategic culture evolve? Who are the 'keepers' of strategic culture? And how universal is strategic culture? I conclude that while contemporary works on strategic culture offer promise, there remains substantial room for development of more reflexive models.

Political Culture

The "national character studies" of the 1940s and 1950s represented some of the first social scientific efforts to draw connections between culture and state behavior based largely on anthropological models.[1] Early work defined the roots of a nation's character, or culture, in language, religion, customs, socialization, and the interpretation of common memories.[2] While

national character studies soon drew intense criticism, prominent sociologists and anthropologists including Mead, Douglas, and Levi-Strauss, continued to develop works linking culture and behavior.

In one of the most influential anthropological works on the subject, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), Geertz defined culture as "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life."[3] He provided a useful model of culture and suggested ways that patterns of meanings could lead to distinct behaviors.

Political scientists Almond and Verba launched a high profile study of the concept of political culture in the 1960s, defining it as "that subset of beliefs and values of a society that relate to the political system."[4] Political culture, they argued, included a commitment to values like democratic principles and institutions, ideas about morality and the use of force, the rights of individuals or collectivities, and predispositions toward the role of a country in global politics. Political culture manifests itself on at least three levels: "the cognitive, which includes empirical and causal beliefs; the evaluative, which consists of values, norms and moral judgments, and the expressive or affective, which encompasses emotional attachments, patterns of identity and loyalty, and feelings of affinity, aversion, or indifference."[5] Parsons added that culture was comprised of "interpretive codes" including language, values, and even substantive beliefs like support for democracy or the futility of war.[6]

By the 1980s, interdisciplinary studies linking culture and politics had grown in popularity.[7] Sociologist Ann Swidler proposed a more complex model of connections between culture and state behavior, mediated by cultural "strategies of action." Swidler defined culture quite broadly as consisting of "symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal cultural practices such as language, gossip, stories, and rituals of daily life."[8] Building on the arguments of Weber and Parsons, she contended that interest-driven strategies are important, mediating conditions on state behavior.[9]

But while sociological models of culture became increasingly complex, subsequent studies of political culture yielded little theoretical refinement during this period. Critics argued that the approach was epiphenomenal and subjective, and that proponents of political culture often made exaggerated claims about its explanatory power.[10] Cultural interpretive arguments fell out of favor with the behavioral revolution in the social sciences. The concept remained alive in area studies, but it garnered less attention in mainstream international relations scholarship.

Strategic Culture and National Style

The argument that culture could influence national security policy was grounded in classic works, including the writings of Thucydides and Sun Tzu. Clausewitz advanced these ideas by recognizing war and war-fighting strategy as "a test of moral and physical forces." The goal of strategy was much more than defeat of the enemy on the battlefield—it was the elimination of the enemy's morale. Clausewitz stressed that leaders should not forget the real potential of a mobilized society, as he had witnessed first-hand in defeats by Napoleonic armies marching for the glory of the empire.[11]

In 1977, Jack Snyder brought the political cultural argument into the realm of modern security studies by developing a theory of strategic culture to interpret Soviet military strategy. Snyder suggested that elites articulate a unique strategic culture related to security-military affairs that is a wider manifestation of public opinion, socialized into a distinctive mode of strategic thinking. He contended, "as a result of this socialization process, a set of general beliefs, attitudes, and

behavior patterns with regard to nuclear strategy has achieved a state of semi-permanence that places them on the level of 'cultural' rather than mere policy."[12]

Snyder applied his strategic cultural framework to interpret the development of Soviet and American nuclear doctrines as products of different organizational, historical, and political contexts and technological constraints. The result was his prediction that the Soviet military exhibited a preference for the preemptive, offensive use of force and the origins for this could be found rooted in a Russian history of insecurity and authoritarian control. Ultimately, Snyder argued that strategic culture was "semi-permanent," and new developments would be perceived only through the lens of strategic culture.

Snyder's contributions had resonance for other security policy analysts, and subsequent work on strategic culture, such as Booth's *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* (1979), continued to explore the ideational foundations of nuclear strategy and superpower relations. Gray (1981) also suggested that distinctive national styles, with "deep roots within a particular stream of historical experience," characterize strategy-making in countries like the United States and the Soviet Union. He defined strategic culture as "referring to modes of thought and action with respect to force, which derives from perception of the national historical experience, from aspirations for responsible behavior in national terms" and even from "the civic culture and way of life." Thus, strategic culture "provides the milieu within which strategy is debated" and serves as an independent determinate of strategic policy patterns. Like Snyder, Gray maintained that strategic culture would be a semi-permanent influence on security policy.[13]

While these arguments drew attention to the role of domestic conditions in shaping national security policy behavior, critics asserted that the operationalization of strategic culture, too, was problematic and subjective. They suggested that strategic cultural models were tautological, as it would be nearly impossible to separate independent and dependent variables in a reliable way. Critics also charged that strategic cultural interpretations were by definition unique, drawing upon narrow and contextual historiography as much as anthropology. Furthermore, both supporters and detractors believed that the concept of strategic culture was fairly static, focusing on enduring historical orientations with strong predictive capability. This left little room for development of a cross-national study of the phenomenon.

Even supporters of strategic culture called for more careful study. Writing in 1988, Gray said that "social science has developed no exact methodology for identifying distinctive national cultures and styles." Literature on the "academically unfashionable subject of national character" was anecdotal at best, yet he believed that learning about the "cultural thoughtways" of a nation was crucial to understanding a country's behavior and its role in world politics.[14] Booth had called the formation of military strategy "a peculiarly ethnocentric business," and Klein argued that only a "comparative, in-depth study of the formation, influence, and process of change in the strategic cultures of the major powers in the modern era" could make a useful contribution to studies of war and peace.[15] With the abrupt end of the Cold War, strategic culture once again fell into disfavor.

Strategic Culture Rediscovered: The Rise of Constructivism

In the 1990s, a third generation of scholarly work reasserted the utility of cultural interpretations.[16] Theoretical work on strategic culture, domestic structures, and organizational culture advanced significantly in this period, influenced, in part, by the rise of constructivism. Wendt argued that state identities and interests can be seen as "socially constructed by knowledgeable practice."[17] Constructivism recognizes the importance of "inter-subjective structures that give the material world meaning," including norms, culture, identity, and ideas on state behavior or on international relations more generally.[18] Given its proclaimed ontological agnosticism, Hopf argued that the paradigm provides "a promising approach for uncovering those

features of domestic society, culture, and politics that should matter to state identity and state action in global politics."[19]

The constructivist research program devotes particular attention to identity formation, with connections to organizational process, history, tradition, and culture. According to Hudson, constructivism "views culture as an evolving system of shared meaning that governs perceptions, communications, and actions... Culture shapes practice in both the short and long term. At the moment of action, culture provides the elements of grammar that define the situation, that reveal motives, and that set forth a strategy for success."[20] But constructivists focus primarily on social structures at the systems level, with special attention to the role of norms in international security.[21] Norms are defined as "intersubjective beliefs about the social and natural world that define actors, their situations, and the possibilities of action."[22] Tannenwald's studies of the nuclear taboo and the norm of non-proliferation, along with Legro's work on military restraint during World War II, are impressive forays into this subject, and they have generated a great deal of scholarly attention.[23]

Although the central tenets of constructivism were familiar to many—Geertz's work clearly had a significant influence on contemporary thinking, for example—Wendt and his supporters successfully framed it as a paradigmatic challenge to neorealism. One of the most controversial prongs of this challenge was the assertion by some constructivists that their approach would, assuredly, supplant neorealism as the dominant paradigm in the discipline. While this has not been accomplished, it is true that the rise of constructivism clearly energized a new wave of strategic cultural research. Farrell sees contemporary work as a merger of two relevant lines of scholarship—culturalism, as derived from comparative politics (and sociological and anthropological studies) and constructivism, from international relations theorists. Both, he contends, have recognized the impact of norms and ideas on international security. The merger of culturalism and constructivism allows us to "view actors and structure much differently than the rationalist approaches to international relations…locating actors in a social structure that both constitutes those actors and is constituted by their interactions.[24] But he does allow that differences in focus remain, with culturalists attending to social structures defined by domestic actors and conditions, and constructivists focusing on the social structure of state action in the international system.

Third Generation Studies

Johnston's *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (1995) is often cited as the quintessential third generation work on strategic culture. The study set out to investigate the existence and character of Chinese strategic culture and causal linkages to the use of military force against external threats. Johnston takes the concept of strategic culture seriously as an "ideational milieu that limits behavioral choices," from which "one could derive specific predictions about strategic choice." But Johnston chose several unconventional research approaches.

He selected the intriguing period of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) as the focus for his contemporary theoretical test. He said that strategic cultural arguments assert that "China has exhibited a tendency for the controlled, politically driven defensive and minimalist use of force that is deeply rooted in the statecraft of ancient strategists and a worldview of relatively complacent superiority."[25] Based on careful historical analysis, Johnston concluded that there were two Chinese strategic cultures in action: "one a symbolic or idealized set of assumptions and ranked preferences, and one an operational set that had a nontrivial effect on strategic choices in the Ming period."[26] Ironically, he found that while China does have characteristics of unique strategic cultures, these cultures actually exhibit some classic elements of realpolitik.

Specialized studies of German and Japanese strategic culture also emerged in this period.[27] Berger's *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan* (1998) focused on "antimilitarist political-military cultures" to explain patterns in these countries' foreign policy behaviors.[28] Berger noted that while Japan's economic and technological power placed it in a position to become an economic and perhaps even military superpower at the end of the Cold War, the persistent postwar culture of antimilitarism truly defined Japanese security policy in the 1990s. According to Berger, cultural beliefs and values act as a distinct national lens to shape perceptions of events and even channel possible societal responses. In this sense, he states, "cultures enjoy a certain degree of autonomy and are not merely subjective reflections of concrete 'objective' reality."[29] To Berger, antimilitarist sentiments became deeply institutionalized in Germany and Japan through a long historical process that included legitimated compromises.

Related works on German foreign policy in the 1990s interpret it as a product of both historical memory and geopolitical circumstances. Banchoff developed a consciously constructivist, "path-dependent" model of foreign policy whereby he argues that decisions taken at critical historical junctures have shaped the development of foreign policy over time. These foreign policy paths form traditions and routines which are then adopted by political institutions. "Together," he concludes, "interlocking institutions and political consensus sustained German foreign policy continuity across the 1990s divide."[30] Meanwhile, Duffield contended that political culture has significantly influenced contemporary German foreign policy within a broader international environmental context.[31] He states that far from setting off in adventurous new directions, "Germany has exercised considerable restraint and circumspection in its external relations since 1990… In short, notwithstanding initial fears to the contrary, Germany has acted with little more assertiveness and independent-mindedness in the area of national security than it did during the Cold War."[32] To Duffield, "[t]he overall effect of national security culture is to predispose societies in general and political elites in particular toward certain actions and policies over others. Some options will simply not be imagined…some are more likely to be rejected as inappropriate or ineffective than others."[33]

Another important strand of this scholarship focuses on military organizational cultures. For example, Kier described the significance of organizational culture in the development of French military doctrine.[34] Rosen provided a compelling account of the ways that the military and organizational cultures in India have shaped strategy over time. And in a rich work, Ebel, Taras, and Cochrane argued that the cultures of Latin American countries are distinctive, identifiable, and highly influential in the development of domestic and foreign policies.[35] According to these studies, organizational culture can be interpreted as an independent or intervening variable that directly influences strategic choice.

A Research Agenda for Strategic Culture

Generations of scholarship have produced greater understanding of ties between culture and state behavior. Strategic cultural studies have provided rich descriptions of particularistic cultures and identities, and researchers have acknowledged important links between external and internal determinants of national security policy. Cultural studies have been informed by cross-disciplinary linkages to anthropology, historical research, sociology, and psychology. Inspired by constructivism, scholars have begun to explore ways in which strategic culture is shaped and may evolve over time. As a result, even skeptics have acknowledged that contemporary works on culture offer much more than an "explanation of last resort."

But this survey of the literature also points to substantial room for refinement of the research program. Areas for further attention include the development of a common definition of strategic culture to build theoretically progressive models, delineation of the ways that strategic culture is created, maintained, and passed on to new generations, the question of the universality of strategic culture, and refinement of models of linkages between external and internal determinants of security policy. While some scholars suggest that adoption of cultural models

represents a fundamental rejection of structure, contemporary research suggests more comprehensive models of state behavior can be developed short of falsification of the realist program.[36] Contrary to neorealist critiques of ideational frameworks, few cultural scholars believe that this really is an "either-or" theoretical debate. Furthermore, many cultural scholars recognize the need for a defined ontology as well as falsifiable, middle-range theory. In this spirit, I offer a "to-do" list for the development of new, progressive models of strategic culture in comparative perspective.

Develop Common Definitions

Given decades of scholarship on cultural determinants, one might assume that strategic culture has become an accepted *independent* variable in causal modeling. It has not. Snyder's definition of strategic culture as "a set of semi-permanent elite beliefs, attitudes, and behavior patterns socialized into a distinctive mode of thought" set the tone for decades of investigations.[37] Today, scholars seem to agree that distinct political cultures may exist, but definitions still blur the line between preference formation, values, and state behaviors. Pye's definition of culture as "the dynamic vessel that holds and revitalizes the collective memories of a people by giving emotional life to traditions" is a case in point.[38] Here, strategic culture becomes a generator of preferences, a vehicle for the perpetuation of values and preferences, and a force of action in revitalization and renewal of these values. Rosen said that strategic culture includes the "beliefs and assumptions that frame...choices about international military behavior, particularly those concerning decisions to go to war, preferences for offensive, expansionist or defensive modes of warfare, and levels of wartime casualties that would be acceptable."[39] While more focused on preference structures, this definition includes reference to the rules that might govern conduct in war. Delineating culture as an independent variable remains challenging, and some scholarly efforts have bordered on tautology wherein domestic political structures are identified as both reflecting and shaping political culture.[40]

Constructivism has energized work on strategic culture, but it has not advanced the search for a common definition. Hudson's contention that culture is "an evolving system of shared meaning that governs perceptions, communications, and actions..." offers little in the way of testable hypotheses.[41] And ontological agnosticism may not provide a sufficient base for theory-building in strategic cultural studies. Scholars must recognize the difficulty of drawing linkages between political structure and state behavior yet seek consensus on explanatory boundaries.[42]

Johnston offered one of the most promising avenues for a progressive research program on strategic culture by characterizing culture as "an ideational milieu which limits behavior choices." But in so doing, his efforts have drawn fire from both first generation culturalists and constructivists. Johnston frames strategic culture as "shared assumptions and decision rules that impose a degree of order on individual and group conceptions of their relationship to their social, organizational or political environment." While he noted that strategic subcultures may exist, "there is a generally dominant culture whose holders are interested in preserving the status quo." This approach to strategic culture as a set of shared assumptions and decision rules allows one to separate the strands of culture from dependent variable outcomes like strategic choice. Furthermore, Johnston's conceptual approach to strategic culture was designed to be falsifiable, "or at least distinguishable from non-strategic culture variables...[that would] provide decision-makers with a uniquely ordered set of strategic choices from which we can derive predictions about behavior."[43] This work is certainly informed by progress in political psychology as well as contemporary sociological studies of the complex connections between culture and state behavior.

In sum, there is real potential in the latest generation of work on strategic culture, which has tended to be more focused in its conceptualization of independent variables such as strategic cultural principles and dependent variables in specific security policy decisions. Nevertheless, there remains a significant arena for clarification of the research program.

Who are the Keepers of Strategic Culture?

Identifying strategic culture as a set of shared assumptions and decision rules prompts the question of how they are maintained, and by whom? Most scholars prefer descriptions of political and strategic cultures as the "property of collectivities rather than simply of the individuals that constitute them."[44] For example, Wilson proposed:

"In the most general sense political cultures are socially constructed normative systems that are the product of both social (for example, rules that coordinate role relationships within the organizations) and psychological (for example, the preferences of individuals) influences but are not reducible to either...A political culture is not simply the sum of individual preferences, nor do preferences, especially those of any given individual, necessarily correspond with normative prescriptions."[45]

Acknowledging strategic culture as an "important ideational source of national predispositions, and thus of national security policy," suggests deep, but vague, cultural foundations for state behavior. If political culture is truly manifested in cognitive, evaluative, and expressive dimensions, it is conceivable that actors who carry those values might be identified. In fact, various political leaders and institutions are engaged in historical interpretation and development of the foreign policy path. This, in turn, prompts coalition-and consensus-building efforts by specific political players. To Duffield, "institutional sources of national predispositions are likely to reside in the central governmental organs charged with the formulation and execution of policy." They may shape policy by "organizational processes, routines, and standard operating procedures may constrain the types of information to which decision makers are exposed."[46] Berger suggests that political culture can only be understood as a combination of norms and political institutions which "exist in an interdependent relationship."[47]

Elites are often the purveyors of the common historical narrative.[48] Most scholars agree that elites are instrumental in defining foreign policy goals and the scope and direction of policy restructuring in the face of new challenges. Furthermore, there is a general consensus in the literature that elites are cognitively predisposed to maintain the status quo. But Berger's work on policy discourse recognizes the fact that strategic culture is best characterized as a "negotiated reality" among elites. Leaders clearly pay respect to deeply held convictions such as multilateralism and historical responsibility, but the record of past behavior for many countries also shows that leaders chose when and where to stake claims of strategic cultural traditions; they decided when and where to consciously move beyond previous boundaries of acceptability in foreign policy behavior. Ultimately, contemporary scholarship contends, elite behavior may be more consistent with the assertion that leaders are strategic "users of culture" who "redefine the limits of the possible" in key foreign and security policy discourses.[49]

Political institutions—including parties and domestic coalitions—also have a significant impact on foreign policy behavior. The organizational culture literature, for example, suggests that state behavior is a function of specific institutional orientations. Studies of Japanese and German foreign policy decisions in the 1990s argue that there are enduring institutional manifestations of strategic culture. But the keepers of the culture may not be *military* bureaucracies. Indeed, in Germany the Foreign Minister has dominant control over foreign and security policy. In Japan, political institutions from the *Diet* to the Liberal Democratic Party to the Self-Defense Forces share commitments to a foreign policy of restraint.[50] Whether or not military bureaucracies are the most common keepers of strategic culture around the world, it remains the case that the influence of organizational culture on state behavior is mediated by other institutions and by the policy making process in democratic states.

Continuity or Change? The Evolution of Strategic Culture

The focus of most studies of strategic culture is on continuity of state behavior. Eckstein (1998) suggested that the socialization of values and beliefs occurs over time. Past learning becomes sedimented in the collective consciousness and is relatively resilient to change. Lessons of the past, therefore, serve as a tight filter for any future learning that might occur.[51] An intriguing characteristic of the latest generation of cultural studies, however, is the recognition of the possibility of change over time. If historical memory, political institutions, and multilateral commitments shape strategic culture, then, recent studies argue, it would seem logical to accept that foreign policies around the globe are undergoing "enduring transformations."[52] This contribution to the strategic culture literature is informed both by studies of foreign policy restructuring and constructivist ideas on foreign policy as discourse. It also represents a response to the criticism of prior generations of cultural models as static and unresponsive to systemic pressures.[53]

Under what conditions can strategic culture change? When might foreign policy decisions transcend the traditional bounds of strategic culture? In my own work on the subject, I contend that at least two conditions can cause "strategic cultural dilemmas" and produce changes in security policy. First, external shocks may fundamentally challenge existing beliefs and undermine past historical narratives. For German leaders in the 1990s, the scale of the humanitarian tragedies in the Balkans served as a catalyst for consideration of policy options outside the traditional bounds of German strategic culture. The recognition that groups were being systematically targeted for genocide and ethnic cleansing created a moral imperative for German action. Thus, the intensity of external shocks prompted a reexamination on all sides of the proper response. Neither economic power nor diplomacy was sufficient to prevent these tragedies, and even pacifists were forced to consider the use of military force as the final option to end the conflict. Some experts have even suggested that ethnic cleansing in Bosnia eroded the moral legitimacy of pacifism on the German political left and led to an atmosphere more permissive of the use of force to stop such violence.[54]

But most scholars rightly assert that any process of change would not be easy. Potential catalysts for change, Berger argued, might be "dramatic events or traumatic experiences [such as revolutions, wars, and economic catastrophes]," that would "discredit thoroughly core beliefs and values."[55] Such change would be accompanied by extreme psychological stress and would require a resocialization process, involving participation by various groups in the crafting of a compromise on a new political cultural orientation.[56]

Second, foreign policy behavior may break the traditional bounds of strategic cultural orientations when primary tenets of strategic thought come into direct conflict with one another. In other words, a country with interpretive codes of support for democracy and an aversion to the use of military force faces a strategic cultural dilemma when confronted by a challenge to democracy that necessitates a military response. The Japanese government confronted this question in relation to the struggle for self-determination in East Timor. The same type of dilemma may arise from a conflict between commitments to multilateralism and unilateral convictions that norms are being violated. Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky said that cultures remain vital only if their core principles continue to generate solutions that satisfy human needs and make sense of the world.[57] Products of this strategic cultural *dissonance* include occasional state defections from multilateral arrangements, the development of alternative diplomatic initiatives, or stipulations for policy cooperation.

Thus, strategic cultural dilemmas define new directions for foreign policy and demand the reconstruction of historical narratives. Changes—including abrupt and fairly dramatic reorientations of security policy behavior—appear to be possible, and strategic cultural models must be more reflective of the conditions that draw out such changes. Indeed, Swidler recognized that the relationship between state behavior and strategic culture becomes especially apparent "in unsettled cultural periods…when explicit ideologies govern action [and] structural opportunities for action determine which among competing ideologies survive in the long run."[58] As NATO

leaders implement a new strategic concept, China pursues liberalized trade, and the United States leads a global war on terrorism in the 21st century, strategic cultural models must themselves adapt for long-term relevance.

Perhaps Berger is correct that strategic culture is best understood as a "negotiated reality" among foreign policy elites. While leaders clearly pay respect to deeply held convictions associated with strategic culture, the story of foreign policy development may be best understood as the pursuit of legitimation for preferred policy courses that may, or may not, conform to traditional cultural boundaries. In a recent study, Cruz contended that elites have much more latitude than scholars generally allow. They may "recast a particular agenda as most appropriate to a given collective reality or...recast reality itself by establishing a (new) credible balance between the known and the unknown." In short, Cruz argued, they "redefine the limits of the possible, both descriptively and prescriptively."[59]

The Universality of Strategic Culture?

The events of September 11th and the subsequent war on terrorism have prompted renewed attention to the role of culture in shaping state (and non-state) behaviors. But one of the most intriguing questions that carries over through several generations of scholarship is what types of actors are most likely to have defined strategic cultures. For example, Snyder made a strong case for the existence—and influence of—strategic culture in Soviet nuclear policy. Subsequent studies effectively framed U.S. and Soviet cultures within the larger Cold War context. But does the literature imply that authoritarian systems more likely to have defined strategic cultures than are democratic systems? Or, are authoritarian systems simply less likely to have definable strategic subcultures? Can non-state actors have strategic cultures? Can regional organizations or meta-cultural groups have some form of strategic culture?

A fascinating debate has emerged over whether the European Union (EU) can establish a strategic culture. The EU formalized a common European Security Strategy (ESS) for the first time in its history in December 2003. Some hailed the achievement as marking a common European strategic culture, but others question whether the EU will ever be capable of forging a bond of common threat perceptions and interests. Optimists such as Cornish and Edwards (2001) contend that "there are signs that a European strategic culture is already developing through a socialization process." They define EU strategic culture as simply "the institutional confidence and processes to manage and deploy military force as part of the accepted range of legitimate and effective policy instruments."[60] To Meyer (2004), the European Council vote on ESS in December 2003 provided a necessary "strategic concept" around which to focus attention and resources.[61] However, Lindley-French (2002) charges that Europe lacks both the capabilities and will to establish a common foreign and security policy in the foreseeable future. He characterizes the Europe of today as "not so much an architecture as a decaying arcade of stately structures of varying designs reflective of a bygone era."[62] Europeans disagree over threat perception and the proper responses to perceived threats, and they themselves question whether the EU can be an effective actor in the face of serious crises. Rynning (2003) concludes that the "EU is unlikely to develop a coherent and strong strategic culture" any time soon.[63]

Finally, Huntington's "civilizational thesis" pushes the envelope of theoretical interpretation.[64] He contended that states are part of broader civilizations that share strong bonds of culture, societal values, religion, and ideologies. The most important of these bonds, he argued, is religion, and "the major civilizations in human history have been closely identified with the world's great religions."[65] Meta-cultural ties, taken to the broadest level of categorization, are civilizational identities that shape modern world politics. The crux of the civilizational thesis is Huntington's argument that conflict is more likely to occur between states of different civilizations in the post-Cold War era.[66] Ultimately, Huntington insisted, decision-makers would be "much more likely to see threats coming from states whose societies have different cultures and hence which they do not understand and feel they cannot trust."[67]

The civilizational thesis has drawn sharp criticism from the scholarly community. Area studies experts are critical of Huntington's willingness to propose the sweeping generalizations that were necessary to undergird the civilizational thesis. Proponents of cultural interpretations take issue with Huntington's reduction of civilizational identity to a focus on religion. They claim that this represents an over-simplification of more complex anthropological and social-psychological chords that define a cultural (or perhaps meta-cultural) group. Others have challenged Huntington's work on the obvious limitations of empirical foundation. And recent investigations of Huntington's claims (Henderson and Tucker 2001; Henderson 2000) have concluded that there is no statistically significant causal linkage before, during, or after the Cold War.[68] In the end, Huntington's work may have undermined the careful, social scientific progress that had been achieved in the cultural research program.

Conclusion

While constructivism may represent a paradigmatic challenge to structural realism in the discipline today, most supporters of strategic culture have adopted the more modest goal of "bringing culture back in" to the study of national security policy. In fact, these research traditions are more similar than some would believe. Scholars must work to overcome barriers to integration of these two approaches into a more comprehensive model of strategic culture formation, implementation, and change. Some argue that one of these barriers is a certain defensiveness on the part of neorealists, who contend that culturalists (and constructivists) simply seek to supplant neorealism.

But ultimately, even Desch allows that cultural theories might supplement neorealism by helping to explain time lags between structural change and alterations in state behavior, by accounting for seemingly "irrational" state behavior, and in helping to explain state actions in "structurally indeterminate situations."[69] For example, the cases of the evolution of German and Japanese security policies are better understood as a product of domestic political adjustments (rooted in culture, traditions, and common historical narratives) to changing international circumstances. Far from an exclusive interpretation, progressive models that explore external-internal linkages and their impact on discrete, strategic choices represent an important avenue for theoretical advancement.

Finally, constructivism has directed new attention to ideational variables and energized third generation studies. But one wonders exactly how far strategic cultural models can stretch while retaining any sort of legitimacy. For example, Basrur's study of Indian strategic culture and nuclear weapons suggests some promise, but seems to waiver on defining key actors and continuity in nuclear policy.[70] Booth and Trood's edited volume on strategic cultures in the Asia-Pacific region, offers additional perspective. But by grounding their study in postpositivism, they deftly avoid the advancement of middle-range theory. Instead, they readily admit that their culturalist study is "less concerned with the immediacy and neatness of causal connections."[71] As Checkel contends, constructivists have "succeeded in broadening the theoretical contours of international relations" by enabling research on international norms and ideas. But, he contends that a remaining ontological challenge is the need to "avoid the charge that they are reducing one unit of analysis—agents—to the other, structures (norms)."[72] Constructivists need to be very careful about the emergent "empirical ad hocism" with the invocation of "all sorts of competing implicit models of domestic politics."[73]

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Pakistan's Strategic Culture: A Theoretical Excursion

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by Peter R. Lavoy

Introduction

Pakistan is a vital U.S. ally in the global war on terrorism. This is not the first time the United States has relied on Islamabad for its defense needs: Pakistan provided crucial support in the Cold War struggle against communism, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s, and it re-emerged as a "frontline state" in the covert campaign to drive the Soviets out of Afghanistan in the 1980s. After each of these periods, however, U.S.-Pakistan partnership broke down under the weight of altered international conditions and irretrievable strategic divergences. Because of this troubled history, and also due to current uncertainties about Pakistan's domestic stability and commitment to democracy, its close military ties to North Korea and China, its fractious relations with India and Afghanistan, and its checkered history of control over nuclear weapon technology, some observers warn that Pakistan is "at best a reluctant supporter of U.S. goals and at worst a potential long-term adversary."[1] Even if one accepts the rationale for "a close and enduring" U.S.-Pakistan partnership "for the long term,"[2] there is every reason to scrutinize what kind of strategic ally Pakistan may become, especially after Washington's good friend, President Pervez Musharraf, departs the scene.

It is a very challenging task to explain what motivates a country's foreign and defense policies and to predict how it will behave in the future, especially when the country in question is so distant—culturally as well as physically—from one's own nation. Fortunately, international relations theory has something to offer here. Several well developed arguments can be brought to bear on the analysis of a country's foreign policy. But unfortunately, there is no consensus on which of the many candidate approaches is most useful for explaining and predicting a given country's defense strategies. In particular, structural realism (or neo-realism) and strategic cultural analysis offer potentially important insights into Pakistan's past, present, and future security policies. Rather than attempting to describe Pakistan's strategic preferences and behavior through one approach, selected *a priori*, this essay identifies and tests each of these competing theories of foreign policy against Pakistan's actual behavior. The underlying objective is to determine the value of strategic cultural analysis relative to realism and other explanatory approaches.

After describing the general contours of Pakistan's security policy, I infer predictions from two separate theoretical approaches and then evaluate these predictions against the historical data on two specific Pakistani policies: (1) Pakistan's decision to pursue nuclear weapons, and (2) its

post 9-11 decision to reverse its support for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and more generally support the United States in the global war on terrorism. These two policies are vitally important to Pakistan's national security today; thus this analysis is designed not only to test leading IR theories, but also to generate important insights about the key features of Pakistan's current and future strategic conduct.

I argue that neither of the two theoretical approaches considered can adequately explain why Pakistan has pursued its main security policies. Neo-realism has the most explanatory power, but it cannot explain all of the phenomena that are of immediate interest to policymakers. However, a realist approach, supplemented with a kind of strategic cultural analysis can fill the most important gaps in our understanding of Pakistani security policy. The specific theoretical model that I find to have the most explanatory power is one that combines elements of realism with elements of culture, but also adds a third dimension: the critical role of individual elites who identify and respond to structural (realist) incentives in a manner consistent with culturally accepted modes of behavior, but who also redefine and transform the strategic culture in line with both their own strategic preferences and their understanding of the room they have to maneouvre within the constraints of the international security system. In other words, these elites, whom I call *myth makers*, operate within the constraints of both the international environment and their nation's political culture, but they are not helpless prisoners of these two confining structures; they have some degree of freedom to reorient and expand the internal and external boundaries of their behavior.[3] But, it should be noted, the more a myth maker tries to push out either of these boundaries of traditional behavior, the greater the risk he runs domestically and internationally.

Although this combined explanatory approach sacrifices some elegance and parsimony, and thus may not be particularly attractive to some IR theorists, it serves the needs of policy analysts better than most candidate approaches. It enables observers to identify—and potentially influence—three sets of variables:

1. the regional and international security context of the country in question,
2. its strategic culture, and
3. the perceptions and political actions of national myth makers.

After developing the argument in general terms, I outline several policy implications for the United States related to Pakistan's future strategic conduct.

Competing Theoretical Approaches

Scant theoretical attention has been devoted to understanding Pakistan's foreign and defense policies, but two approaches in vogue in the international relations (IR) theory literature could be specified to illuminate certain of Pakistan's main strategic preferences and behavior. Because these two approaches—neo-realism and strategic cultural analysis—are likely to generate contradictory predictions about Pakistan's security policy, my goal is to test their utility in explaining key features of Pakistani policy.[4] Beyond that, I also show what we should take away for our ongoing project to improve the explanatory power and policy relevance of strategic cultural analysis.

Neo-realism

Realism is the most time-honored approach for understanding general patterns of state behavior in an anarchic international political system. The main expectations of neo-realism, the version of realism popularized by Kenneth Waltz, are (1) the recurrence of balances of power in the international political system; (2) the tendency of states to balance, or strengthen themselves in the face of external military threats; and (3) the inclination of states to imitate one another and to become socialized to the world political system.[5] Power balancing is the oldest concept in the

literature on international relations; it is central to all brands of realism.[6] According to Stephen Walt and Kenneth Waltz, countries usually balance against serious foreign threats to their security; rarely do they *bandwagon*, that is, accommodate or appease the countries making these threats.[7] Countries can balance "internally"—by relying on their own military capabilities—or "externally"—by relying on the military capabilities of allies.[8] Statesmen generally prefer internal balancing because it leaves less to chance and less to the will of others.[9]

Strategic Culture

There is no consensus on the precise definition or characteristics of strategic culture, but most authors would agree, at least in general terms, with the definition offered nearly thirty years ago by Jack Snyder, who describes strategic culture as "the sum total of ideals, conditional emotional responses, and patterns of behavior that members of the national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other…"[10] Stephen Rosen's approach is very similar, observing that strategic culture is made up of the shared "beliefs and assumptions that frame … choices about international military behavior, particularly those concerning decisions to go to war, preferences for offensive, expansionist or defensive modes of warfare, and levels of wartime casualties that would be acceptable."[11] Ian Johnston provides one of the more recent and widely embraced approaches to the concept. In contrast to the material context of realism, Johnston portrays strategic culture as "an ideational milieu which limits behavior choices." This milieu is shaped by "shared assumptions and decision rules that impose a degree of order on individual and group conceptions of their relationship to their social, organizational or political environment."[12]

Nearly all adherents to strategic cultural analysis recognize that in order to understand a nation's strategic culture, the observer needs to immerse him or herself in its history, attitudes, and conduct—in short, the observer needs to practice good area studies. The methodology employed typically is derived from cultural anthropology and political sociology. One does not have to go as far as Clifford Geertz, who argued that "As interworked systems of construable signs (symbols), culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly—that is, thickly described."[13] Thick description is necessary for strategic cultural analysis, but it is insufficient for the explanatory task we have at hand.

A reasonable explanation—as opposed to a purely "thick" description—for a country's key strategic policies is possible. It requires a more precise approach, one that singles out specific variables and examines their causal impact. In the next section, I provide a brief, "semi-thick" description of the cultural context of Pakistan's security policy, and then identify five key characteristics of Pakistani strategic culture. This allows me to compare the explanatory value of strategic culture with neo-realism and with the myth-making model that I develop in the following section.

Pakistan's Strategic Culture

Pakistan is one of the least secure countries on the planet. As a reflection of its obsession with security, Pakistan now spends close to $4 billion per year on defense, which ranks 28th highest in the world. More tellingly, it ranks 19th in the world in terms of military expenditure as a percent of GDP (at just 5 percent).[14] All other indicators of military capability show that Pakistan has one of the world's largest and best equipped armed forces, which of course possess a steadily growing arsenal of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. But statistics hardly do justice to the country's intense feelings of insecurity, which are rooted deeply in the past. Emerging out of British colonial India as a homeland for a sizeable portion of the region's Muslim population, one could say that Pakistan was born insecure.

The Roots of Insecurity

The antipathy between the Pakistan and India dates back to August 1947 when Britain partitioned the religiously and ethnically diverse Indian empire into two independent states. India was to become a secular democracy and Pakistan was intended to be a democratic homeland for South Asian Muslims. Because Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs lived in virtually every part of the British colony, more than six million Muslims migrated to Pakistan, and more than four million Hindus and Sikhs moved to India.[15] Communal tensions often flared into violence. More than one million migrants were slaughtered, and the religious minorities remaining behind often were treated poorly.[16]

Bitter memories of partition remain etched in the minds of older Indians and Pakistanis, and even the youth hold strong views because of jingoistic accounts passed down through state-controlled educational texts and the media (especially the vernacular language media). Still worse, Pakistanis fear that India rejects the "two-nation theory" that was the logic behind partition. India's active support for the creation of Bangladesh (which had been East Pakistan) in 1971 reinforced Pakistan's view that New Delhi aspires to re-unify the Indian empire under its control, or at least reduce Pakistan to a position of weakness and subservience like India's other neighbors (with the notable exception of China).[17] Because both countries are vulnerable to religious and ethnic fragmentation,[18] moreover, each side fears that the other will exploit its social and political cleavages to undermine the legitimacy of the state.

For Pakistan, the greatest concern in this regard is in the territory bordering Afghanistan, where Pashtun tribesmen periodically have threatened to withdraw from the Pakistani state to form a greater Pashtunistan nation with their kinfolk across the border in Afghanistan. To this very day, the Afghan government does not recognize the Durand Line, the 1500-mile border the British colonial government created in 1893 to demark the northwest boundary of its Indian empire. Intermittent Pak-Afghan border clashes took place during the 1950s and 1960s, and they have reoccurred recently as Afghan and Pakistani troops deployed along the border for counter-terrorist missions have occasionally fired on each other.[19] Pakistan does not fear outright attack from the much weaker Afghan military, but India's support for Afghanistan's claims on Pakistani territory have long created unrest among Pakistani military planners, who dread the prospect of a major two-front war. This is the larger context in which Pakistan formulates its security policies.

The Kashmir Dispute

The dispute that caused three of the four Indo-Pakistani wars and continues to be a major source of regional tension is a direct product of partition. In 1947, Hari Singh, the Hindu maharajah of the mainly Muslim state of Kashmir, refused to join either India or Pakistan. India wanted Kashmir to solidify its identify as a pluralistic democracy, but Pakistan coveted the territory to complete its identity as a democratic and secure homeland for the region's Muslim population. When tribal militants from Pakistan's North West Frontier Province tried to "liberate" Kashmir, Pakistan's fledgling army supported them. Under pressure from the tribal invaders, on one side, and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's new Indian government, on the other, Hari Singh acceded to India. Fearing that the loss of Kashmir might spur other ethnic groups inside India to press for autonomy, New Delhi sent its own army to crush the tribal rebellion. War then broke out between India and Pakistan. When it ended in stalemate in 1948, Kashmir was divided, leaving India with two-thirds of the territory, including the populous and picturesque Vale of Kashmir. Since then, Pakistan has tried various methods, from diplomacy to the direct use of force, to wrest the remainder of Kashmir from Indian control. For the past fifteen years, it has covertly supported a violent insurgency that—together with India's heavy-handed response—has ravaged Kashmir. Pakistan portrays the insurgency as a freedom movement and India calls it state-sponsored terrorism. Each argument contains an element of truth.

Having claimed the lives of tens of thousands of Kashmiris, and more than once bringing India and Pakistan to the brink of war, the Kashmir dispute has become an unstable, emotionally charged source of nuclear danger.[20] No matter how dangerous the threat of nuclear war has become, India and Pakistan are unable to agree on an effective political process to reduce tensions or resolve the issue. Pakistan welcomes either direct negotiations with India or third-party mediation; but New Delhi opposes what it views as Pakistani ploys to politicize and internationalize the issue. Indian government officials insist on talks only with Kashmiri groups that reject violence and even then, only in the context of integrating them into the Indian republic. Concerned outsiders have proposed various schemes to bring India and Pakistan to the negotiating table, but so far neither side will abandon its self-serving, hard-line position. The threat and actual use of force remain the dominant forms of "dialogue" between India and Pakistan on Kashmir.

Dangerous Military Practices

Some observers predicted that nuclear weapons would stabilize India-Pakistan relations and make war less likely because any conflict now could escalate to nuclear use.[21] This logic caused earlier nuclear powers to act cautiously with one another; however, the opposite appears to hold in South Asia. India and Pakistan exhibit care in handling and even speaking about nuclear forces, but each side engages in risky conduct at the conventional and low-intensity levels of conflict, which creates pressure for escalation to full-scale war. According to New Delhi, the problem began with Pakistan's support for armed insurgents supporting Kashmiri independence. The Indian government estimates that these insurgents have committed over 50,000 terrorist incidents claiming 13,000 Indian lives since 1989.[22] Islamabad retorts that more than 60,000 Kashmiri civilians have been killed in "a reign of terror and repression" by over 600,000 Indian troops.[23] Although each side's claim probably is exaggerated, the advent of nuclear weaponry has not diminished the violence in Indian-held Kashmir or along the Kashmir Line of Control (LOC), where Indian and Pakistani forces routinely have traded small arms and artillery fire.

In fact, all of this border skirmishing and guerilla violence creates strong pressures for conventional warfare. The Indian government mobilized its armed forces in December 2001 to compel Pakistan to withdraw its support for the Kashmir insurgency and possibly to launch an attack if Pakistan failed to withdraw. Although Indian officials claimed that Pakistan continued to support "cross-border terrorism," Prime Minister Vajpayee ultimately decided not to initiate a war. However, the Indian and Pakistani armed forces continue to prepare for the possibility of conflict. If war starts, Pakistan's leadership might feel compelled to ready nuclear weapons for use, and Indian officials might follow suit, thus creating a situation where one wrong move could trigger a nuclear war.

Key Elements of Pakistan's Strategic Culture

This essay does not undertake a comprehensive description of Pakistan's strategic culture. But based on this brief survey of Pakistan's strategic history and context, five general characteristics of the country's strategic culture can be outlined (in decreasing order of importance).[24]

- *Opposition to Indian hegemony.* Pakistani political and military elites are unified in their opposition to Indian hegemony as a basis for a peaceful and durable regional order. The very notion of an independent Pakistan was premised on the right of South Asia's Muslim population to enjoy the benefits of national sovereignty free from the domination of the region's much more populous Hindu population. After gaining independence, the Pakistani elites have treasured their hard-won sovereignty and resisted every Indian effort to curtail their freedom of action. Pakistan's political and military competition with

India therefore forms the centerpiece of its regional and international diplomacy, its military planning, and its arms acquisitions.[25]

- *Primacy of defense requirements.* **Regardless of whether the Pakistan government was run by civilians or the military (which has ruled for most of Pakistan's existence), defense has always been the country's top budgetary priority. Although Pakistan continues to experience intense poverty, poor infrastructure, a weak educational system, and nearly non-existent social services, defense expenditures run very high, ranging from 73 percent in 1949-1950 to around 25 percent in recent years.[26]

- *Nuclear deterrence.* **Pakistan has waged a determined campaign to acquire and modernize an operational nuclear deterrent ever since its military loss to Indian forces in the 1971 East Pakistan war and the creation of Bangladesh. Despite Pakistan's detonation of nuclear explosive devices in May 1998 and numerous test flights of various missile delivery systems, the expansion, diversification, and security of its deterrent remain key priorities, especially as Indian military might continues to grow. Pakistan's deterrence posture is predicated on a strong conventional force capability and demonstration of its willingness to run high risks and pay high costs to deter aggression.

- *Acceptance, but not reliance, on outside assistance.* **To compensate for India's vast advantages in manpower, wealth, and military equipment, Pakistan consistently has sought out foreign supplies of modern weapons and military training. The United States was its main arms provider during the 1950s and 1960s and again in the 1980s,[27] but Islamabad turned to China and other weapons sources in the 1970s and again in the 1990s when Washington imposed conditions on arms transfers that would inhibit Pakistan from pursuing nuclear weapons, which Pakistani defense planners deemed essential for their competition with India.

- *Identification with conservative Islamic causes.* **The emphasis on Muslim nationalism that brought Pakistan into being continues to play an important role in shaping its national identity and foreign relations. In the years following independence, Muslim nationalism became more than a nationalist ideology, it became a rallying cry for Islamic solidarity and Muslim causes all over the world. At times, Pakistan has tried to be seen as a leader of the Islamic world, but these efforts have upset some countries, which saw themselves as more fitting international leaders or which did not place as much emphasis on Islam as a domestic or international political force. Thus while Islam remains a major part of Pakistan's political identity, it generally is not a dominant theme in Pakistan's foreign and defense policies.

Strategic Myths, Myth Makers, and Myth Making

Before testing the neo-realist and strategic culture approaches against Pakistan's actual strategic conduct, a third approach must be introduced, one which I believe has potentially more explanatory power over many national security questions. My approach emphasizes the strategic beliefs and political behavior of *strategic myth makers*. The argument is that a country is likely to adopt a certain national security strategy (such as developing nuclear weapons, or allying with another country) when certain national elites who want their government to adopt this strategy, (1) emphasize their country's insecurity or its poor international standing, (2) portray this strategy as the best corrective for these problems, (3) successfully associate these beliefs with existing cultural norms and political priorities, and finally (4) convince policy makers to accept and act on these views.

This argument provides insight into the sources of key national security debates as well: if enterprising and well-connected strategic elites manage to cultivate a national—or at least a governmental—consensus around the notion that not pursuing the strategy in question (for example, not developing nuclear weapons, or not aligning with a certain foreign power) would make the country *less* secure or *less* influential, then the government is not likely to initiate or continue this course of action. At any given time and in any given country, of course, various strategic myths will co-exist and compete with rival strategic myths.

The success of one myth over another depends on three factors:

1. the substantive content of the strategic myth and its compatibility with existing cultural norms and political priorities;
2. the ability of the myth maker to legitimize and popularize his or her beliefs among fellow elites and then to persuade national leaders to act on these beliefs; and finally
3. the process whereby institutional actors integrate the popularized strategic myths into their own organizational identities and missions.

Theoretical Assumptions

The emphasis on strategic myth making is not intended to downplay the significance of actual security threats or real status considerations as powerful inducements for countries to seek certain defense policies. On the contrary, it is hard to imagine any responsible government official calling for a significant national security strategy (such as acquiring nuclear weapons) without a prior interest in solving some pressing military or political problem. Realists are correct: the real world does matter. Strategic myths and the existence of genuine security threats are closely correlated.

The chief distinction between the myth-maker approach and the neo-realist or strategic cultural perspectives described above lies at the level of analysis. Whereas security and cultural accounts focus on the prior events or conditions that are believed to trigger a certain strategic behavior, I emphasize the arguments and the political maneuvering that link the triggering conditions to the subsequent decision to adopt this policy and then to the actual process of implementing this policy. Three elements are singled out in my approach:

1. the composition, scope, and logical consistency of the strategic myths themselves,
2. the identity, background and skills of the strategic myth maker, or carrier of these beliefs; and
3. the process of strategic myth making—of legitimizing, popularizing and institutionalizing strategic arguments about national security policy.

This argument rests on two assertions that are not necessarily rejected by neo-realists, but which certainly are not emphasized by them either. The first assumption is that the beliefs of individuals matter for foreign policy making and international behavior.[28] Analysis of foreign policy decision making is not required to understand all security problems, but choices and strategies about certain very important policies, such as acquiring nuclear weapons, are not adequately explained without reference to the beliefs of decision makers concerning the political and military implications of these policies. This is true because of the multiple and only partially predictable political, economic and military consequences of developing, deploying, threatening to use, or actually using nuclear weapons. Second, talented and well-placed experts can play a crucial part in helping to create, diffuse and perpetuate strategic myths.

Types of Strategic Myths

The argument developed above posits that the behavior of various states is influenced by the beliefs that officials in these states hold about national security affairs. To illustrate what kinds of beliefs matter the most, consider the case of nuclear weapons development. Two kinds of beliefs play especially important roles in the development of nuclear weapons. The first beliefs are the myths of nuclear security and nuclear influence. These are beliefs about the desirability of acquiring nuclear weapons. The other set of beliefs concerns the technical, economic, and political feasibility of building nuclear bombs as well as the utility of eventually using these weapons for military purposes. Table 1 lists these sets of beliefs and summarizes their main characteristics.

Table 1: Categories of Beliefs about Nuclear Weapons

Belief Type	Subject of Belief
Nuclear Myths	
Nuclear security	Relationship between nuclear weapons acquisition and the political and military dimensions of national security
Nuclear influence	Relationship between nuclear weapons acquisition and the status and political influence of the state in international affairs
Auxiliary Assertions	
Technical feasibility	Capacity to overcome technical difficulties associated with developing nuclear weapons; possibility for industrial spin-offs.
Economic feasibility	Capacity to meet financial costs associated with developing nuclear weapons; possibility for lucrative industrial spin-offs.
Political feasibility	Capacity to mange political problems associated with developing nuclear weapons; impact on relations with important states.
Military utility	Capacity to develop operational nuclear weapons and to devise options for their effective use in military operations.

The key variables in the strategic myth-making approach, as described above, are summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Categories of Strategic Beliefs

Pakistan's Security Policy Analyzed
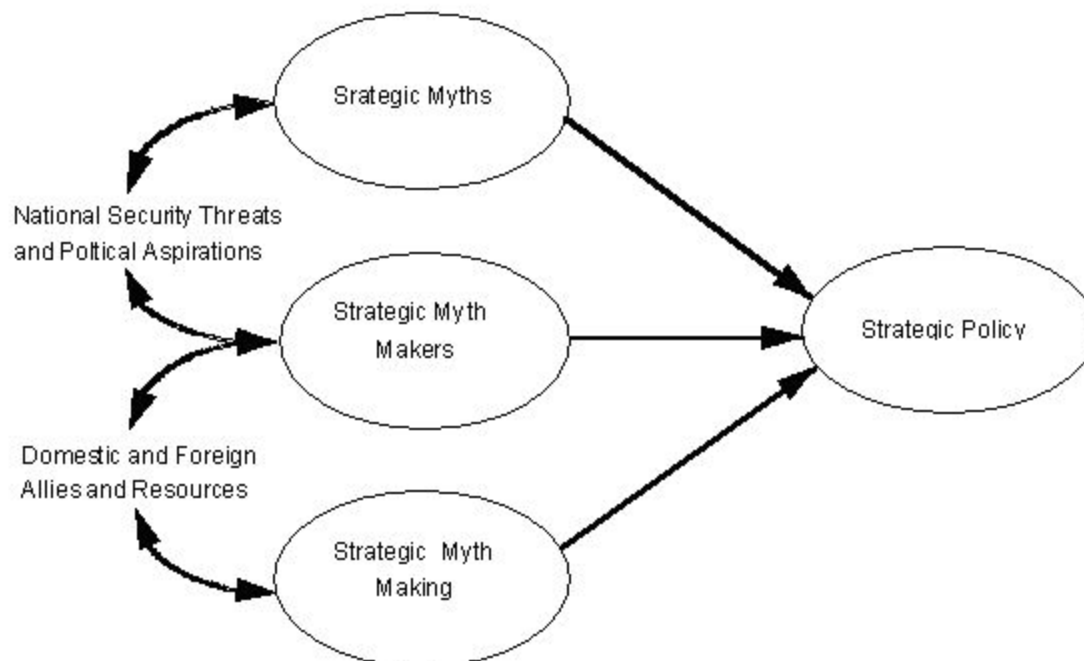
Having described the essential features of three analytical approaches that can be employed to account for Pakistan's security policy, the task now is to specify predictions from these three separate theoretical approaches and then evaluate these predictions against the historical data on specific Pakistani security policies. I choose two especially pertinent Pakistani policies for very brief, illustrative analysis:

1. Pakistan's development of nuclear weapons; and
2. Pakistan's post 9-11 decision to reverse its support for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and more generally support the United States in the global war on terrorism.

Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Program

Arguably, the most important—and controversial—strategic choice Pakistan made in its five-plus decades of existence was to develop nuclear weapons. It managed to obtain nuclear weapons and maintain a close relationship with the United States, the stalwart if the nuclear nonproliferation regime. Looking at the issue of whether Pakistan should have developed nuclear weapons, and when, the three theoretical perspectives developed in this essay lead to very different predictions:

- *Neo-realism:* According to the neo-realist model, which posits that countries generally try to balance against security threats first by developing their own military might and only secondly by forming alliances, Pakistan should have launched a crash program to develop nuclear weapons when it learned that its archrival, India, had initiated its own program to make nuclear bombs shortly after China's nuclear test in October 1964. Although many Pakistani officials suspected India of harboring an interest in nuclear weapons soon after independence, when Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru openly mused about the benefits of nuclear power, Pakistan became convinced about India's nuclear program when the latter launched its Subterranean Nuclear Experiment Project (SNEP) in early 1965.
- *Strategic culture:* Focusing more on the internal and historical attributes of Pakistan, this approach would hypothesize that because the dominant national security organization in the country was the armed forces, and because this institution was very conservative and pro-Western, Pakistan would continue to rely on conventional weapons and a close strategic relationship with the United States to meet its security needs.
- *Myth making:* This approach would expect Pakistan to pursue the nuclear option when key national elites were able to convince the country's leadership that nuclear weapons production is required to enhance the state's security, power, and welfare.

The historical record supports each one of these approaches to some extent, but on the whole, the myth making model performs better. As realists would expect, a strong pro-bomb lobby formed in Pakistan in 1964 and 1965. Led by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who served as foreign minister under President Ayub Khan's military regime in the mid-1960s, this group urged Ayub to match India's nuclear progress by approving Pakistan's own secret nuclear weapons research and development program, but Ayub resisted their pressure and ruled against going nuclear,[29] just as strategic culture proponents would expect.

After Pakistan's devastating loss to India in the December 1971 Bangladesh war, however, the Pakistan government finally initiated a nuclear bomb program. This time, realists would predict this decision and strategic culturalists would not. But the key factor was once again the role of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who had emerged as the country's president following the Bangladesh defeat. Now at the helm, Bhutto instructed his top scientists to begin work at once on nuclear weapons.

Pakistan's nuclear policymaking is best understood through the lens of the myth maker approach, which can explain how the myth of nuclear security initially spread in the 1960s, why it failed to

shape official policy at that time, and why Pakistan ultimately decided to go nuclear in 1972. The key factors in this analysis are Bhutto's critical role as Pakistan's primary nuclear myth maker, the gradual acceptance of the strategic beliefs that nuclear weapons would enhance Pakistan's security and influence, and the eventual institutionalization of these beliefs among Pakistan's politicians, the armed forces, and the bureaucracy—to the extent that no leader after Bhutto could (or would want to) reverse Pakistan's nuclear weapons policy.

Pakistan's Post-9/11 Policy Reversal

Al Qaeda's September 11, 2001 attacks against Washington, D.C. and New York city fundamentally altered Pakistan's relations with the United States. The George W. Bush administration's campaign to destroy the Taliban as a haven for terrorist networks with global reach and to eliminate the Al Qaeda network had a particularly dramatic impact on Pakistan, which had been the Taliban's strongest ally. Pakistan had helped the Taliban consolidate power in Afghanistan in the mid-to-late 1990s. Viewing the Taliban as a friendly if fanatical regime that could stabilize Pakistan's often unruly Pushtun population and also provide much-needed "strategic depth" in Pakistan's military competition with India, Pakistani leaders were loathe to see the return of instability, and possibly hostility, on their western flank. But faced with intense pressure from the United States, President Pervez Musharraf agreed to break relations with the Taliban, provide basing and over-flight permission for all U.S. and coalition forces, deploy two divisions of troops along the Afghanistan border in support of OEF, and provide intelligence support to the international anti-terrorism coalition.[30] When he announced this controversial policy reversal on Afghanistan in a September 2001 speech to the nation, President Musharraf indicated that any other decision could have caused "unbearable losses" to the security of the country, the health of the economy, the Kashmir cause, and to Pakistan's strategic nuclear and missile assets.[31]

While most of Pakistan's mainstream political parties supported the government's decision to join the international coalition against terrorism, the country's Islamic groups and parties were outraged. About two dozen religious parties, including the powerful Jamaat-e-Islami, which earlier had cooperated with the Musharraf government, came together under the umbrella of the Pak-Afghan Defense Council and launched a nationwide campaign to oust Musharraf. Strikes and street demonstrations occurred throughout the country, American flags were burned, several people were killed, and many buildings were destroyed. Truckloads of Pakistani extremists also traveled to Afghanistan to fight with the Taliban against the U.S.-led anti-terrorism coalition. However, none of these actions managed to incite the Pakistani population against the government or persuade President Musharraf either to backtrack on his policies or to step down. What would our three theoretical perspectives have to say about Pakistan's post-9/11 policy reversal on Afghanistan?

- *Neo-realism:* According to the neo-realist model, Pakistan would do whatever was required to balance against its key adversary, India. President Musharraf warned in his famous September 19, 2001 address to the nation: "Lets look at our neighbors. They have promised U.S. all cooperation. They want to isolate us, get us declared a terrorist state."[32] Because continuing support for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan would mean opposing the United States, and driving Washington into a military alliance with India, realpolitik dictated that Pakistan join the U.S. counter-Taliban coalition.
- *Strategic culture:* Giving more causal weight to the beliefs and desires of powerful domestic constituencies, such as the pro-Taliban Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISID), the strategic cultural argument probably would expect Pakistan to find a way to maintain its strong support for its Taliban allies in Afghanistan.
- *Myth making:* This approach would argue that Pakistan's policy decision would depend mainly on the strategic beliefs of the country's leader, President Pervez Musharraf. It would recognize that Musharraf faced internal pressures to stand by the Taliban and external pressures to support the United States; but his own beliefs and his ability to

cultivate support fro these beliefs among the country's influential elites (principally among the armed forces) would be the key factor. Because Musharraf's own strategic beliefs, at least in this case, corresponded with the tents of realpolitik, this particular security policy is overdetermined: both the neo-realist and the strategic myth-maker approaches would successfully predict Pakistan's behavior.

The sudden shift in Pakistan's Afghanistan policy poses a potentially big problem for strategic cultural analysis. For that matter, all cultural studies, which point to the steady socialization of values and beliefs over time, have difficulty in explaining change. But some proponents of strategic culture recognize that under certain conditions strategic cultures do change. Jeffrey Lantis observes that two conditions, in particular, cause strategic cultures to transform. First, external shocks can fundamentally challenge existing beliefs and undermine long-held historical narratives and practices.[33] The second cause of change is related to the first. At certain times, deeply held foreign policy commitments clash and force policymakers to make critical choices. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Pakistan suffered a serious external shock and President Musharraf was forced to choose between the Taliban and the United States. This choice posed intense value tradeoffs and arguably caused Musharraf—and Pakistan's strategic culture—to adapt to new circumstances, much as realism and the myth-making approaches would have suggested. The myth-making model is particularly useful in accounting for this policy shift, because it sees leaders (and other strategic elites) as instrumental in defining—and redefining—policy goals. They can preserve traditions or they can choose to move beyond previous boundaries of acceptability. Musharraf clearly did the latter.

Implications

This short essay explores the relative utility of three theoretical approaches in accounting for specific Pakistani foreign policy choices. Neo-realism and a general model of strategic cultural analysis each point to significant constraints on the freedom of choice of Pakistani leaders. Neo-realists correctly comprehend that the imperatives of international competition, and especially Pakistan's long-standing political and military rivalry with India, have severely restricted the room for maneuver of successive Pakistani heads of states. Similarly, proponents of strategic cultural analysis can show how the values and beliefs of the Pakistani population, and especially the conservative armed forces and the bureaucracy, also have constrained Pakistani policies over time.

As Pakistan's policymaking on nuclear weapons illustrates, at one time (the mid-1960s) the Pakistani leadership defied the dictates of Realpolitik and instead acted according to the traditional strategic views of the armed forces (as strategic culture would predict), which was not to go nuclear, but to maintain close security ties with the United States and to beef up its conventional military forces. But at another time (1972), Pakistan's leadership reversed course and chose to manufacture nuclear weapons, even if this policy resulted in the estrangement of relations with Washington (which it did, during the 1990s). Why do some Realpolitik or cultural constraints seem so severe at one time and yet so malleable at other times?

The answer lies with the behavior of strategic key strategic elites, who are free to accept some constraints and yet ignore or overcome others. These elites, whom I call *strategic myth makers*, operate within the confines of both the international environment and their nation's political culture, but they sometimes have some degree of freedom to reorient and expand the internal and external boundaries of their behavior. However, the more a myth maker tries to extend either of these boundaries of traditional behavior, the greater the risk he runs domestically and internationally.

Leadership entails knowing one's limits, but also knowing how to take advantage of rare opportunities for change, when they present themselves. The myth-making approach points

analysts to examine strategic elites as well as their beliefs about national security. It further calls attention to the institutionalization of these beliefs, or myths, in the rules, values, and beliefs of key national security institutions. As organization theorists would understand, the more national security myths become institutionalized, the greater the hold of culture takes over strategic elites. If U.S. policymakers had recognized this, they would have understood why their efforts to discourage Pakistan from going nuclear were doomed to fail from the mid-1970s onward. Similarly, if current American officials understand Pakistan's strategic culture, and the role of key individuals and elites within the country's key strategic institutions, they would have a much better handle on the question of how reliable an ally Pakistan will be now and in the future.

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5. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979), 128. The first prediction concerns an outcome of international interaction and thus is less directly relevant to the task of explaining state behavior.

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15. Khalid bin Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase, 1957-1948* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 264.

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17. By contrast, Indians believe that Pakistan justifies its existence by vilifying India, and cannot live in peace with its large and prosperous neighbor.

18. Pakistan's population is 97% Muslim. About 77% of the population is Sunni; 20% are Shi'a. Language is often a reliable indicator of ethnicity. The breakdown of languages that Pakistanis speak is: Punjabi 48%, Sindhi 12%, Siraiki (a Punjabi variant) 10%, Pashtu 8%, Urdu (the

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23. Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Jammu and Kashmir Dispute."

24. This list is similar to the outline of Pakistan's strategic priorities found in Hasan-Askari Rizvi, "Pakistan's Strategic Culture," in *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances*, ed. Michael R. Chalmers (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, November 2002), 305-28.

25. For background, see Peter R. Lavoy, "Pakistan's Foreign Relations," in South Asia in World Politics, ed. Devin T. Hagerty (Boulder, Colo.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

26. Rizvi, "Pakistan's Strategic Culture," 314.

27. Pakistan and the United States signed a mutual defense agreement in May 1954. The following year Pakistan joined two of Washington's three most important regional defense alliances—the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Baghdad Pact (which in 1958 evolved into the Central Treaty Organization, or CENTO). Between 1955 and 1965, Washington provided Pakistan with more than $700 million in military grant aid. U.S. economic assistance to Pakistan between 1947 and 2000 reached nearly $11.8 billion. K. Alan Kronstadt, "Pakistan-U.S. Relations," *Congressional Research Service Issue Brief*, 3 September 2003, document no. IB94941, 1.

28. The claim about decision making is well known: the goals, judgments and perceptions of policy makers mediate foreign policy decisions. From the vast literature on foreign policy decision making, see especially Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Harold and Margaret Sprout, *The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965); Yaacov Y. I. Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds: Information Processing, Cognition, and Perception in Foreign Policy Decisionmaking* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990); and Alexander L. George, "The Causal Nexus between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision-Making Behavior: The 'Operational Code' Belief System," in *Psychological Models in International Politics*. ed. Lawrence S. Falkowski (Boulder: Westview, 1979), 95-124.

29. For background, see Zafar Iqbal Cheema, "Pakistan's Nuclear Policy under Z. A. Bhutto and Zia-ul-Haq: An Assessment," *Strategic Studies* 15 (Summer 1992): 5-20; and Ashok Kapur, *Pakistan's Nuclear Development* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 24-28.

30. For background, see C. Christine Fair, The Counterterror Coalitions: Cooperation with India and Pakistan (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2004), MG-141-AF; and Peter R. Lavoy, "Fighting Terrorism and Avoiding War in South Asia: The Indo-Pakistani Situation," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 32 (Autumn 2002).

31. See "Highlights of General Pervez Musharraf's Address to the Nation," September 19, 2004.

32. *Ibid*.

33. Lantis, "Strategic Culture and National Security Policy," 111.

STRATEGIC CULTURE AND CHINA:

IR THEORY VERSUS THE FORTUNE COOKIE?*

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Strategic Culture and China: IR Theory vs. the Fortune Cookie?

I. Introduction.

For once Sinologists have become innovators in political science, at least on the subject of strategic culture. Iain Johnston published his pioneering work *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* in 1995 to much fanfare and acclaim.[1] Since then other works have utilized the strategic culture approach, including this writer's *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* published in 2003.[2] There are also a significant number of volumes, journal articles, and book chapters focused on China that invoke the term but do not deal with the concept in any depth.[3]

Now, a decade after Johnston's seminal volume, it seems an appropriate point in time to take stock of how far we have come in strategic culture scholarship as a whole and in the field of Chinese security studies in particular. This paper will argue that while significant progress has been made on both counts, developments have not fulfilled the promise of Johnston's path breaking work. First, this paper identifies a major challenge confronting the strategy culture approach. Second, it suggests the key areas in which strategic culture studies of China have advanced the field as a whole. Third, the paper outlines key China-specific areas in which strategic culture studies of the Central Kingdom have made significant advances. Finally, the paper suggests possible fruitful avenues for future research.

The Challenge

A significant challenge confronts those scholars and analysts who believe that culture matters in International Relations (IR). A large number of IR theorists remain disdainful of the concept of culture and dismissive of area studies. Culture tends to be viewed as a residual category that gets in the way of clear, elegant, and straightforward theoretical models and analyses. While Realism is the hegemonic theory in IR, Rational Choice enjoys comparable hegemony in Comparative Politics. Not surprisingly, cultural approaches get short shrift in both. Thus, for many in mainstream political science, strategic culture analyses of China boil down to a contest between IR theory and the fortune cookie.[4]

Be that as it may, the onus for countering this widespread perception is upon adherents to demonstrate that culture is a key dimension in security studies. It is they who must demonstrate its importance through the highest standards of scholarship and analysis. To date, they (this writer included) have fallen somewhat short in this endeavor. No scholarship--on China at least--has equaled the high standards set by Iain Johnston a decade ago. But the good news is that we have made progress and there are a handful of bright young scholars who have taken up Johnston's mantle.

Contributions Made

So what contributions have China scholars made to the broader study of strategic culture and to the study of Chinese security? Regarding the former, I suggest

the contributions have been in four main areas: rigor, sophistication, framing, and domestication. Regarding the latter, advances have been made in at least three areas: recognizing the diversity of China's strategic traditions, appreciating the significance of rhetoric, and understanding China's actual use of military force.

Toward Advancing Strategic Culture Analysis

First, substantial progress has been made in terms of rigor. This is especially true in Iain Johnston's research. He has been particularly good at laying out relatively clear definitions, explicit methodology, and operationalizing his concepts. Johnston, for example, makes good use of cognitive mapping.[5] These efforts permit others to replicate his results relatively easily. But Johnston's definitions and research design are not totally flawless and scholars have identified some methodological problems.[6] On the matter of definition, Johnston specifies the "what" but omits the "who." This writer has sought to improve on Johnston's laudable effort and define strategic culture as "the set of fundamental and enduring assumptions about the role of war in human affairs and the efficacy of applying force *held by a country's political and military elites*."[7]

Second, the scholarship on strategic culture has become more sophisticated thanks to the advances made by researchers studying China. Many analysts have tended to invoke the words "strategic culture" or an explicitly cultural approach and proceed to engage in blanket stereotyping about a particular country or society. This approach is similar to the "national character" approach which, when applied to China, might be summarized as follows: "Chinese tend to emphasize stratagem over brute

force." Such statements are often supported by making reference to Confucianism or quoting Sun Tzu.[8] At worst, sloppy scholarship gives cultural approaches a bad name; at best this type of work tends to engage in dead end circular logic. Again, if applied to China, the assertion would be along the following lines: "Chinese act like this because this is how Chinese act." In short, often the simplistic assumption was that a country possesses a single unified strategic culture.

One of Iain Johnston's the most important findings has been to identify the existence of two strands of Chinese strategic culture: a "Parabellum "(or Realpolitik) one and a "Confucian-Mencian" one. Still, the significance of this breakthrough was weakened by Johnston's conclusion that while two strands existed, only one—the Parabellum strand—was operative and the other was purely for "idealized discourse."[9] The present writer's own research also discerns the existence of two strands of Chinese strategic culture but, unlike Johnston, Scobell argues that BOTH the Realpolitik and Confucian-Mencian strands are operative. In fact, this writer contends that the two strands interact in a dialectic fashion to produce a distinctive "Chinese Cult of Defense."[10]

Third, scholarship on China has provided some interesting ideas on how to frame, contextualize, and conceptualize strategic culture. Where and how does it fit in to the hierarchy and greater schema of political science theories? Johnson argues that Chinese realism stems from ideational sources rather than structural factors. Scobell suggests that a country's strategic culture be conceptualized as one layer in a

multilayered cake. This cake contains various tiers of culture: political, civil-military, organizational, and strategic. A full appreciation for the cake requires one to sample a piece with all the layers contained in one mouthful.[11]

Moreover, the vast majority of strategic culture adherents have limited their analysis of the impact of strategic culture to explain how one country's own strategic culture influences its strategic behavior. They have grasped only half of the picture, missing what this writer labels the "second face of strategic culture"—the strategic cultural image that the political and military elites of a country hold of a particular adversary or potential adversary. Leaders' perceptions of another country's capabilities, activities, and intentions are filtered though how these elites conceive of the other country's strategic culture.   This image is defined as "the preconceived stereotype of the strategic disposition of another nation, state, or people that is derived from a selective interpretation of history traditions, and self-image."[12] This writer has conducted preliminary research on the China's "second face of strategic culture" regarding the United States, Japan, and India.[13]

Fourth, while studies of strategic culture have focused on the external use of force and foreign policy, they have excluded consideration of domestic influences and policies on a country's strategic culture seems arbitrary and ill-advised. First of all, most states consider national security to encompass internal and as well as external threats. After September 11, 2001, the United States is much more focused on domestic threats to security. But even before this historically there have been significant deployments

and employments of military force internally and in border and frontier areas of the United States. Scholars who ignore intrastate and societal violence risk missing an important pieces of the puzzle.[14] Of particular note is the domestic use of military force: in many other countries soldiers are routinely deployed/ employed internally to deal with riots, rebellions, and insurgencies. This is certainly true for China. In the decades since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been employed to deal with social upheaval on an massive scale in the late 1960s (soldiers restored order following the most tumultuous phases of the so-called Cultural Revolution) and in 1989 the PLA was used to end popular protests in Beijing (culminating in the violent crackdown in the Chinese capital on the weekend of June 3-4). [15]

Strategic culture scholars (and other researchers) have focused largely on classic works of strategy and statecraft or official doctrine. In concentrating on what might be called the "great tradition" or "high culture", they have all but ignored the arena of popular culture or what has been called the "little tradition." In most societies there are rich and varied folk traditions with graphic depictions of war and violence and replete with colorful heroes and powerful symbols. These traditions greatly influence members of a society as they grow up and imbue them with values, ideals, and images that are likely to remain with them for the rest of their lives.[16] This is certainly true in China where classic dramas, legends, and novels often drawn from ancient Chinese history are well known to most Chinese.

Toward Advancing Strategic Culture Analysis on China

There has also been progress in the China field in at least three areas: a deeper understanding of the variety and scope of the country's strategic traditions; a more nuanced understanding of Chinese strategic rhetoric, and advances in discerning patterns in China's use of military force.

First, the study of strategic culture has resulted in a deeper understanding of the scope and variety of China's strategic traditions. Culture has long been considered a critical dimension in China's approach to strategy and warfare. While the term "strategic culture" was not used until 1988,[17] conventional thinking was that China's Confucian tradition was a key determining factor in Chinese strategic thinking. Because of Confucianism, in this interpretation, China tends to favor harmony over conflict, and defense over offense.[18] Other analysts, usually focusing on Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, have stressed a Chinese predisposition for stratagem over combat and psychological and symbolic warfare over head-to-head combat on the battlefield.[19]

As a result of recent scholarship there is greater appreciation that Chinese strategy does not stem exclusively from Sun Tzu's Art of War or Confucianism but also includes such traditions as Legalism and Daoism as well as popular myths and folk traditions.[20] Furthermore, this writer has argued that real existing Chinese strategic culture is a result of interaction between different strands of strategic tradition. The outcome has been called "Cult of Defense" whereby Chinese elites fervently believe

that China is under the sway of a unique peace-loving, non-expansionist, defensive-minded strategic tradition.

Second, there is more nuanced appreciation for the subtleties of the rhetoric of contemporary Chinese strategy, doctrine, and signaling. There is, for example, more respect for "active defense" as a meaningful strategic idea. This concept had been considered almost meaningless by some analysts either because it was seen merely as propaganda or because it was considered a rubbery term that has lost any of the original meaning it might have had once.[21] Indeed, active defense does appear to have considerable flexibility in the sense that it permits Chinese leaders to rationalize virtually any use of force as defensive, including pre-emptive strikes.[22]

Third, there has been modest but discernible progress in understanding China's use of force. Because of the interaction between different strands of strategic culture and the way China's strategists define 'defense' virtually any use of force by China is defensive in nature.[23] Thus, paradoxically China is more disposed to use force when confronting a political-military crisis than it would otherwise be. Iain Johnston's research suggests that China is a realpolitik power that historically has not shrunk from using force. This writer's research has expanded upon Johnston's basic findings suggesting that while China's elites view the world in realpolitik terms, at the same time they perceive China's own strategic culture as Confucian or pacifist and defensive-minded. But while Johnston contends that the Confucian strand is essentially symbolic, Scobell asserts it is much more and interacts in dialectic fashion with the realpolitik strand to

produce a "Cult of Defense."   The result is "…a Beijing ready to employ military force assertively against perceived external or internal threats all the while insisting that China possesses a cultural aversion to using force, doing so only defensively and solely as a last resort."[24]

The Cult of Defense identifies six principles that influence Chinese strategists: (1) the primacy of national unification; (2) heightened threat perceptions; (3) the concept of active defense; (4) Chinese just war theory; (5) chaos phobia; and (6) an emphasis on the welfare of the community over that of the individual.[25] The combined effect of these principles is a predisposition by China to resort to force in a crisis, a marked tendency toward risk taking, and justifying the use of force in terms of the big picture. First, under the influence of the Cult of Defense, Chinese elite thinking on the use force can be summed up in the following tongue-in-cheek mantra: "Use force sparingly; repeat as often as needed."[26] Second, the record of communist China's use of force since 1949 reveals a disturbing habit of calculated risk taking. While Chinese leaders do not use force lightly or without a considerable amount of thought, they are prone to believe that calculated risks are worth taking. They seem confident that China can ensure escalation control by strictly limiting the scale, area, and timing of its application of military power.[27] Moreover, when Chinese look at their record of the use of force, they conclude there has been a one hundred percent success rate.[28] Third, when Chinese deliberate about when and how to use force, they do not think in terms of operational victory. For them, the criterion of success is the impact of the operation on the "overall situation."[29] If they can conclude that China has bought some time and, for a few years,

deterred the Soviet Union and/or Vietnam from a campaign of military adventurism

(Sino-Soviet border conflict of 1969, Vietnam border war of 1979), then the price in

blood and treasure was worth it.

Challenges to Strategic Culture Scholarship

General Challenges:

There are a number of important challenges to be addressed if strategic culture

scholarship is to move forward. First, greater methodological rigor is essential. The

standards set by Iain Johnston must be upheld. Providing definitions, clearly identifying

and then operationalizing one's variables are all essential. Are the data to be analyzed

military classics, defense white papers, military academy textbooks and curricula, or

elite memoirs? A second challenge is to demonstrate causality—the link missing in

many strategic culture studies (including this writer's!).

China Challenges:

The scholarship on Chinese strategy runs the risk of perpetuating a belief that

China is unlike any other country in the world and can therefore only be understood on

its own terms (i.e. a fortune cookie).[30] This is a particular danger for strategic culture

analyses because of a tendency to highlight the unique or at least distinctive aspects of

Chinese culture and traditions.[31] The unfortunate result could be that we only succeed

in making Chinese approaches to warfare and strategy appear more impenetrable and

incomprehensible to outsiders, and decipherable only to those possessing extensive

study, language training, and in-country experience. Only learned high priests can

accurately interpret the oracle bones, or in this case, read the tea leaves. This outcome would retard rather than advance strategic culture scholarship.

By Way of Conclusion: Getting Back and Going Forward

Strategic culture holds significant promise as a fruitful concept in interpreting and understanding how different countries approach matters of war, peace, strategy, and the use of military force. Considerable challenges remain, however. These include clarifying concepts as well as units and levels of analysis. Should adherents focus on states, different bureaucracies, groupings of leaders, or on individual leaders? Should adherents focus on grand strategy alone or look also at the operational level of war?

In tackling these questions, strategic culture adherents should be willing to experiment with new ideas and approaches, revisiting old concepts and approaches, or even combining, adapting, or borrowing from various approaches. One fruitful avenue of inquiry might be to go back and take another look at the operational code approach. Indeed, this is exactly what one scholar in the field of Chinese security studies is doing.[32] Another worthwhile avenue to explore would be to go back to the original context in which strategic culture was raised by Jack Snyder in the 1970s—to understand the nuclear doctrine of an adversary. But beyond these ideas, making real progress almost certainly requires cross-national comparative analysis. Therein lies the ultimate challenge for next generation of strategy culture scholars.

<u>ENDNOTES</u>

[1] Alastair I. Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese* History (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). Lowell Dittmer also labeled the book "pioneering." See his review, "The Culture of Structural Realism," in *The Review of Politics* 59: 1 (Winter 1997), p. 194.

[2] Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Other works that focus on China and analyze strategic culture or utilize strategic culture approach include: Rosita Dellios, " 'How May the World Be at Peace?': Idealism as Realism in China's Strategic Culture," in Valerie M. Hudson, ed., *Culture and Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1997). Shu Guang Zhang, "China: Traditional and Revolutionary Heritage" in Ken Booth and Russell Trood, eds., *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1999), pp. 29-50. Mark Burles and Abraham N. Shulsky, *Patterns in China's Use of Force: Evidence from History and Doctrinal Writings* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2000); Tiejun Zhang, "Chinese Strategic Culture: Traditional and Present Features," *Comparative Strategy* 21 (2002), pp. 73-90.

For some key works in Chinese, see Gong Yuzhen, *Zhongguo zhanlue wenhua jiexi* [Analyzing Chinese strategic culture (Beijing: Junshe Kexue Chubanshe, 2002); Li Jijun, "*Lun zhanlue wenhua*," [on strategic culture] *Zhongguo junshi kexue* [China military science] no. 1, 1997, p. 8. See also Li Jijun, *Traditional Military Thinking and the Defense Strategy of China*, An address to the US Army War College, Letort Paper No. 1, with an introduction by Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, August 29, 1997). For the Chinese language version, see Li Jijun, "Zhongguo junshi sixiang chuantong yu fangyu zhanlue," *Zhongguo junshi kexue* [China Military Science] no. 4, Winter 1997, pp. 62-64.

[3] See, for example, Shu Guang Zhang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontations, 1949-1958* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); Paul H.B. Godwin, "Force and Diplomacy: China Prepares for the Twenty-First Century," in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millennium* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), pp. 171-192;

[4] The title of this paper cribs shamelessly from the title of a chapter written by Allen S. Whiting entitled: "Forecasting Chinese Foreign Policy: IR Theory vs. the Fortune Cookie," in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh, eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 506-523.

Whiting, of course, is evaluating the usefulness of political science theories compared to area studies insights in forecasting Chinese actions. By contrast, In this paper I am trying to underscore how many in the discipline of political science view strategic culture and how it has been employed to analyze Chinese phenomena.

[5] Johnston, *Cultural Realism*; Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Grand Strategy in Maoist China," in Peter Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 216-268.

[6] See, for example, Joseph Esherick's review in *Journal of Asian Studies*, 56:3 (August 1997), p. 771.

[7] Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, p. 2.

[8] See, for example, Edward S. Boylan, "The Chinese Cultural Style of Warfare," *Comparative Strategy* 3:4 (1982), pp. 341-364 and Jonathan R. Adelman and Chih-yu Shih, *Symbolic War: The Chinese Use of Force, 1840-1980* (Taipei: Institute for International Relations, 1993), chapter 2.

[9] Johnston, *Cultural Realism,* p. 173.

[10] Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, chap. 2.

[11] Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, p. 3.

[12] Scobell, *China and Strategic Culture*, p. 2.

[13] On Chinese perceptions of U.S and Japanese strategic culture images, see Andrew Scobell, *China and Strategic Culture* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, May 2002). On Chinese perceptions of Indian strategic culture images, see Andrew Scobell, " 'Cult of Defense' and 'Great Power Dreams': The Influence of Strategic Culture on China's Relationship with India," in Michael R. Chambers, ed., *South Asia 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, November 2002), pp. 329-259.

[14] Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, pp. 19, 23-25.

[15] On these two episodes, see Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, chapters 5 and 7.

[16] Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, p. 23.

[17] Chong-Pin Lin, *China's Nuclear Strategy: Evolution Within Tradition* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1988).

[18] Fairbank, "Introduction," in Fairbank and Kierman, eds., *Chinese Ways in Warfare* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 1-26. For a similar type of argument which stresses the influence of Daoism, see Rosita Dellios, "How May the World Be at Peace?"

[19] Adelman and Shih, *Symbolic War*; Howard L. Boorman and Scott A. Boorman, "Strategy and National Psychology in China," *The Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 1967, pp. 143-155; Boylan, "The Chinese Cultural Style of Warfare."

[20] Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, pp. 19-23. See also Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990).

[21] For an assessment judging it to be propaganda, see Johnston, *Cultural Realism,* pp. 249-50, esp. note 63..

[22] Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, pp. 34-35.

[23] Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, chapter 2, especially pp. 26-39.

[24] Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, p. 193.

[25] Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, pp. 32-38.

[26] Andrew Scobell, "Is There a Chinese Way of War?" *Parameters* XXXV:1 (Spring 2005), p. 119.

[27] Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, p. 193.

[28] Laurie Burkitt, Andrew Scobell, and Larry Wortzel, "Introduction," in Burkitt, Scobell, and Wortzel, eds*., The Lessons of History: The PLA at 75* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, July 2003), pp. 6-7.

[29] Scobell, "Is There a Chinese Way of War?" p. 118; Ron Christman, "How Beijing Evaluates Military Campaigns: An Initial Assessment," Burkitt, Scobell, and Wortzel, eds., *The Lessons of History*, pp. 253-292.

[30] This tends to a major theme underlying the work of Michael Pillsbury. See Michael Pillsbury, ed., *Chinese Views of Future Warfare* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1997) and Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2000).

[31] One might exempt Johnston's *Cultural Realism* from this criticism but probably not Scobell's *China's Use of Military Force*.

[32] Huiyun Feng, "A Dragon on Defense: China's Strategic Culture and War." Ph. D. Dissertation, Arizona State University, May 2005.

Chinese Doctrines as Strategic Culture: Assessing their Effects

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by Christopher P. Twomey, Ph.D.

Introduction

Culture substantially shapes peoples' understanding of the world. Perception about international security issues is no exception. Reality is rarely objectively observable, and indeed, in issues of national security, opacity is not only inadvertent but is often deliberately created. In such an issue-area, the propensity for even small biases to play a large role in shaping beliefs should be large.

A large number of scholars, many of whom are involved in this project, have productively examined the role of culture in the study of national security affairs. In particular, the study of Chinese foreign policy has benefited from this approach significantly over the years, ranging from Alan Whiting's early work to the contemporary work of Andrew Scobell and Arthur Waldron.

This paper—drawing extensively on an 'in progress' book manuscript[1]—takes a different approach, focusing quite narrowly on one specific set of ideational factors: military doctrine. In particular, I evaluate the effects that Chinese military doctrine had in 1950 in shaping Chinese perceptions about American policy and signaling at the time in two different strategic geographies. In short, I argue that Chinese doctrine shaped Beijing's perceptions of Washington in ways that the balance of power between the two does not satisfactorily explain.

This paper attempts to make use of the self-conscious attention to positivist rigor that characterizes more recent scholarship on strategic culture.[2] However, it focuses on a narrower form of strategic culture than many other works. Johnston centers his definition of the term on beliefs regarding "the role of and efficacy of military forces in interstate political affairs."[3] As will be clear below, the independent variable of this paper, doctrine or "theory of victory," is used to describe beliefs at a different level, one closer to the operational art of military strategies and tactics. The usage in this paper more closely accords with that referred to by Scobell as the "organizational culture" of different national militaries.[4]

This is clearly a much narrower form of "strategic culture" than that many other scholars find useful to study. Nevertheless, I think it is an important contribution to the literature for several reasons:

1. First, I think the effects shown here are very clearly apparent in the historical record, not just for China but also for the United States and many other states.[5] Accordance with empirical reality must be the first criterion for assessing the utility of any theoretical construct.
2. Second, I think such a narrow focus eases the task for objective coding of the cultural factor in question (military doctrine) and avoiding the critiques of circular reasoning and tautology that are often levied against similar arguments. That is, this work focuses on an aspect of culture that is clearly measurable in isolation from the effects it has on international behavior. Military doctrine is relatively easy to observe, even in closed societies like 1950s' China.
3. Third, military doctrine is often relatively homogeneous. That is, there are rarely (although sometimes) multiple competing military doctrines within a single military organization. For training, procurement, and planning purposes it is important to have a relatively unified doctrine. This reduces the problems—faced by many other authors working on strategic culture—of multiple, competing cultural strands implying different lessons for perspectives on security.

As a final introductory aside, the bane of any cultural argument in the study of politics is separating out the effect of material factors from those of a more ideational nature. This paper makes every effort to do this by highlighting deviations between doctrinal cultural shaped perceptions and reality—sometimes as manifested in military combat (an ultimate arbiter if there ever was one).

The rest of this paper will proceed as follows:

1. First, a brief definition of terms will be offered and the theoretic predictions made explicit.
2. Second, two cases of Chinese military statecraft from 1950 will be presented.
3. Third, I go on to sketch out current Chinese doctrine and tentatively project the similar sorts of misperceptions that might lead to today.
4. Finally, some notional conclusions will be offered.

Hypothesis and Definitions

This section first lays out an explicit definition of "doctrine" and where it comes from, and explains what implications come from viewing it as a form of culture.

Doctrines and Theories of Victory

Building on the usage of Posen[6] and others[7], this paper defines a "theory of victory" as a belief about what constitutes effective military power at a fundamental level and how it should be used operationally and tactically. It includes—indeed, is centered on—doctrine, but also consists of the make up of military forces as well as some elements of grand strategy. It is a blanket term to describe a generic understanding of how to win wars. It is a mental construct, albeit one that is often informed by past empirical experience and one that clearly has tangible effects on policy.

This paper does not explain the *sources* of different theories of victory but rather their *effects*. That said, I recognize there is a large literature that is relevant here emphasizing the importance of systemic and geographic imperative[8], technology,[9] past historic practice,[10] and organizational structures and practice.[11] Here is it important to highlight that to the extent that the first two (systemic and geographic factors as well as technology) are of primary importance— and to the extent that doctrine shifts smoothly in response to changes in either of those—then thinking of doctrine as a culture with independent explanatory power does not make sense. Rather, in those cases, doctrine would simply be a representation of underlying material factors. However, the bulk of the studies of doctrine have emphasized the latter two factors of historic and

organizational practices. Thus, it is appropriate to focus on doctrine as a form of organizational culture, and of course, it is one that speaks to strategic issues directly.

Predictions about the Importance of Doctrine

If we view doctrine as a form of culture, then it as with any culture, can shape perceptions in critical ways.[12] By creating norms and expected patterns of behavior, culture profoundly shapes one's understanding of reality. At a very fundamental level, "culture refers both to a set of evaluative standards, such as norms or values, and to cognitive standards, such as rules or models defining what entities and actors exist in a system and how they operate and interrelate."[13] Military cultures are known to have important effects on grand strategic preferences.[14] Theories of victory are a sort of military strategic and doctrinal culture, and thus are likely to have their own effects on perceptions of power and signals.

Regardless of its sources, the effects of the choice of a particular doctrine are wide-ranging. Future force procurement decisions will be made based on that decision. Training is geared to implement it (even at senior levels of the military). Political leaders will also be educated in it by the military leadership. Further, once incorporated into a nation's doctrine, these beliefs are often applied to unexpected situations through the creation of standard operating procedures that are relatively inflexible yet widely applied.[15] Indeed, while military doctrine is necessary in order to rehearse and plan, once accepted it reinforces a belief system about its own efficacy.[16] This inflexibility of doctrine, coupled with its application to a wide range of policies and issues, emphasizes the importance of this ideational factor as a variable in and of itself.

The use of military signals or statecraft to communicate regarding interests and capabilities often characterizes crisis diplomacy. I predict that the interpretation of the other side's signals in international crises will be heavily shaped by a state's own military doctrine. *When a state interprets an adversary's signal, it will do so by evaluating it through the lens of its own military doctrine.* When a nation's doctrine deviates from or oversimplifies reality as given by the military technology at the time, this interpretation will differ from that implied by the material (and technological) conditions themselves. These perceptions—or often misperceptions—are important in the conduct of international diplomacy. If states do not understand the distribution of power and the degree of adversary intent, inadvertent escalation and unnecessary military conflict are likely. In cases where combat is joined, we should see reality crashing into the blurred doctrinal lenses and shattering them.

The paper now turns to two broad historical cases to probe the plausibility of the hypothesis.

China's Army Doctrine in 1950 and its Effects

The first case examines Chinese doctrine as it pertained to ground combat and goes on to assess the degree to which it served as a cultural lens shaping Beijing's perception of Washington in the summer and fall of 1950 as the Korean War escalated. Strong evidence is provided for the hypothesis proposed in the paper: Chinese doctrine leads to gross misperceptions about the degree of American intent and the effectiveness of American capabilities.

Characterizing the Doctrine

In 1950, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had just emerged victorious from two decades of civil war and a seven-year fight against Japan. These experiences left it with a robust set of strategic beliefs that it incorporated into its theory of victory: Mao downplayed the importance of nuclear weapons and emphasized the role of People's War and infantry forces more generally.

Mao's well-known statements that nuclear weapons were mere "paper tigers" may have contained an element of bravado, but they also represented the views of senior Chinese military leaders to a great extent. For instance, in an internal debate in July 1948, Mao and Zhou argued for the weakness and irrelevance of nuclear weapons for important global security affairs.[17] Before 1955, there had been no formal study of what atomic weapons could do against China. Only in July of that year did the top 200 leaders in the CCP finally receive a briefing on the subject. Even this was only a scant 25 pages long, covering different aspects of nuclear war, such as what the weapons could do to cities, to forces in the field, etc.[18] The words of the acting Chief of Staff during the Korean War exemplified this in September 1950: "After all, China lives on the farms. What can atom bombs do there?"[19]

A second component of Chinese doctrinal beliefs was the emphasis of People's War on morale and manpower over material. As Mao succinctly pronounced, "Weapons are an important factor in war, but not the decisive factor; it is people, not things, that are decisive."[20] Mao's large, high-morale forces would be used to concentrate large numbers of forces to overwhelm or annihilate entire enemy units. He wrote:

In every battle concentrate an absolutely superior force (two, three, four, and sometimes even five or six times the enemy's strength), encircle the enemy forces completely, strive to wipe them out thoroughly, and do not let any escape from the net.[21]

Whitson and Huang's *The Chinese High Command*, a definitive survey of the PLA, suggests that this particular pronouncement represented not only Mao's strategic thought, but a consensus of the senior military leadership at the time.[22] This strategy had been used many times with great success during the civil war.[23] The west referred to it as a "human wave" or "human sea" tactic.[24]

These doctrines were not just theoretical for the Chinese but were put into practice throughout the military. In terms of capabilities, the PLA was an exceptionally large, under-equipped force. One military analyst writes:

In terms of equipment, the Chinese Communist Army of 1950 was primitive by any standards. It has been compared to an army of 1914, without the trucks and the artillery, primarily an army of infantrymen. There were few trucks, little artillery, very limited communication (particularly via radio), no air support, and no antiaircraft defense. Logistical support in the civil war had been provided by the local population.[25]

The PLA's doctrinal and strategic beliefs had many sources. Many of these elements can be pulled out of Sun Tsu and other sources of classical military thought in Chinese history.[26] More importantly, recent history reified these ancient themes. Many of these strategies had stood them in good stead against the better-armed and better-equipped KMT in the civil war.[27] These cultural views remained dominant in the PLA for years to come.

China's Army Doctrine Shapes its Perceptions

When engaging in military statecraft with the United States in 1950, Chinese doctrine pervaded its perceptions. There is substantial evidence that the Chinese had a deep confidence that their doctrine would be effective against the American forces. For instance, a detailed assessment made by field commanders from late September 1950 makes apparent this confidence and does so by explicitly analyzing the situation using the doctrinal lens one would expect from a belief in People's War. The following summary of that report, with a number of direct quotations from the actual document, merits reprinting at length:

1. First, the U.S. forces were politically unmotivated because "they are invading other people's country, fighting an unjust war, and thus encountering opposition not only from the American but other peace-loving peoples around the world," whereas the Chinese forces would "fight against aggression, carrying on a just war, and thus will have the support of our people and other peace-loving peoples; and more important our troops have a stronger political consciousness and higher combat spirit."
2. Second, the U.S. troops were inferior in terms of combat effectiveness, because, "although they have excellent modern equipment, their officers and soldiers are not adept in night battles, close combat, and bayonet charges." By contrast, the CCP troops "have had rich experience over the past ten years in fighting an enemy of modern equipment …and are good at close combat, night battles, mountainous assaults, and bayonets charges."
3. Thirst, the U.S. forces were not tactically flexible, since "American soldiers always confine themselves to the bounds of military codes and regulations, and their tactics are dull and mechanical." On the other hand, the CCP forces were "good at maneuvering flexibility and mobility and, in particular, good at surrounding and attacking enemy's flanks by taking tortuous courses, as well as dispersing and concealing [our own] forces."
4. Fourth, American soldiers were not capable of enduring hardship. "They are afraid of dying and merely relying on firepower [in combat, while] … on the contrary our soldiers are brave and willing to sacrifice life and blood and capable of bearing hardship and heavy burdens," attributes that would remedy the disadvantage of inferior firepower.
5. Finally, the U.S. forces had greater logistical problems. The U.S. was "carrying on a war across the [Pacific] Ocean and has to ship most of the necessities from the American continent—even if it can use supply bases in Japan, [for instance] it is transporting drinking water from Japan—and therefore its supply lines are much longer, eventually making it difficult for them to reinforce manpower and supplies." Meanwhile, the Chinese would be close the rear bases and "back by [their] fatherland." The organization of supplies would also be much easier; because "we have less trucks and artillery, we won't consume that much gasoline and ammunition."[28]

In this passage, note in particular the references to U.S. military weakness due to numbers of troops, long supply lines, tactical inflexibility, lack of appropriate political motivation, and the dismissal of nuclear weapons. Conversely, the Chinese side was thought to benefit from the justness of its cause, their ability to move on foot, their aptitude for hand-to-hand fighting, and their light logistics tail. The Chinese military doctrinal lens clearly shaped both those perspectives.

Other instances of relative Chinese confidence abound. One of Mao's generals later wrote of the perceptions at the time:

During the past several decades, our army had always defeated well-equipped enemies with our poor arms. Our troops were skillful in close fighting, night combat, mountain operations, and bayonet charges. Even though the American army had modern weapons and advanced equipment, its commanders and soldiers were not familiar with close fighting, night combat, and bayonet charges.[29]

The Chinese expected bayonet charges to play a large role in the *hypothetical* next war; the United States thought that in general strategic bombing and nuclear exchanges would be central. Again, this is precisely what the hypothesis would predict: Each side should believe that factors emphasized by their own theory of victory would dominate in battles.

A second element of China's confidence in their forces' ability to fight the Americans came on the issue of nuclear weapons. Once the Korean War broke out, a wide range of Chinese leaders continued to express confidence in their ability to address this potential threat. As the two sides were edging toward conflict, the United States sent a number of subtle nuclear threats.[30] However, these threats by no means cowed the Chinese. At a meeting of the commanders at

divisional level and above of the Northeast Military Region on August 13, 1950, one senior participant recalled that the military leaders relied on international popular opposition to prevent the United States from using the weapons:

We then explicitly assessed the factor of nuclear weapons and concluded that it was men, not one or two atomic bombs, that determined the outcome of war. And an atomic bomb use on the battlefield would inflict damage not only on the enemy's side but also on friendly forces. Furthermore, the people of the world opposed the use of nuclear weapons; the United States would have to think twice before dropping them.[31]

Such thinking seems more appropriate for pacifist idealists and political propagandists than for hard-nose military line unit commanders. Internal briefing papers were making similar points in November:

The atomic bomb itself cannot be the decisive factor in a war … the atomic bomb has many drawbacks as a military weapon … it can only be used against a big and concentrated object like a big armament industry center or huge concentration of troops. Therefore, the more extensive the opponents' territory is and the more scattered the opponents' population is, the less effective will the atomic bomb be.[32]

A later discussion held by operational military commanders toward the end of the war was similarly Panglossian and simplified.[33]

Chinese (Doctrinally Shaped) Perceptions Proven Wrong

All of this might be explained away as a set of accurate perceptions given the strategic realities that China faced at the time. However, after the United States joined the conventional battle, a number of instances when the Chinese express surprise suggest that their perceptions were indeed "misperceptions." The shock shown at all levels—tactical, operational, and strategic—in China comes up repeatedly and strongly in the historic record.

The Chinese soon found that the difficulties in surrounding and wiping out large enemy units—the primary operational doctrine for the PLA—were pronounced. American tactical mobility and the substantial firepower available even to small American units caused these problems for the Chinese.[34] Once the U.S. forces had been found and fixed, the Chinese forces still had trouble destroying them (which they had been able to do against similarly engaged Japanese or KMT forces). "Luring them in deep" was not effective when "they" could then set up hasty, but strong, defensive positions from which they could easily hold off the ill-equipped Chinese forces.[35] Peng Dehuai summarized the wide scope of problems that the Chinese forces faced at the end of the Third Campaign, in early January 1951:

By now the Chinese People's Volunteers had fought three major campaigns in a row in severe winter after their entry into Korea three months before. They had neither an air force nor sufficient anti-aircraft guns to protect them from enemy bombers. Bombed by aircraft and shelled by long-range guns day and night, our troops could not move about in the daytime. And they had not had a single day's good rest in three months. It is easy to imagine how tired they were. As our supply lines had now been extended, it was very difficult to get provisions. The strength of our forces had been reduced by nearly 50 percent due to combat and non-combat losses. Our troops badly need reinforcements and rest and reorganization before they could go into battle again.[36]

The PLA had not expected to face such a capable military, as the paper's hypothesis would predict. *This provides powerful evidence that in this case the ideational factors were sharply at odds with the material ones.*

China 's Navy Doctrine in 1950 and its Effects

Amphibious operations in the same period present a different sort of case to examine through the lens of doctrine as strategic culture. In this case, the misperceptions relative to an objective reality are less sharp, but nonetheless the study emphasizes the close linkage between doctrine and perception.

Characterizing the Doctrine

In contrast to the backward PLA ground force (that is, the Army *per se*), for idiosyncratic reasons the Chinese Navy was relatively modern. The People's Liberation Army Navy (the PLAN), as it was officially known, was relatively professionalized and technically advanced, at least in comparison to the PLA ground force. There were two main sources for the leaders in this service: graduates of Soviet training academies and KMT defectors. Many of the defectors had even been trained in the West, underscoring their familiarity with the American way of war. These former KMT officers were well versed in modern amphibious operations, and provided a core of expertise for the PLAN to refine. The Nationalist Navy had conducted unopposed amphibious landings numerous times, including a major operation in August 1947.[37] As the civil war turned against the Nationalists, their navy conducted a series of amphibious extractions, often while the ground element was under attack, a particularly challenging tactical situation.[38]

Beyond these background conditions, the Chinese communist leadership had recently learned quite a bit in this area against a relatively advanced foe. Its attempts to conquer the small coastal islands of Jinmen, Zhoushan, and Dengbu in late 1949 had led to abysmal defeats. These setbacks taught the Chinese many doctrinal lessons about the conduct of such landings.[39] For instance, they began to focus on providing the troops with specialized training for amphibious landings, something prior Chinese operations had lacked. Soon they would be using translated U.S. Marine amphibious warfare manuals.[40] At this point, the Chinese communists were using regular Army divisions rather than dedicated marines, just as the United States had occasionally done in WWII.[41] From their prior defeats, "they again learned that without the support of regular navy ships, landing operations by small boats could be disastrous."[42] They prepared to remedy this problem as well. Further, these defeats had also emphasized the importance of follow-on logistics support.[43] There, the key lesson of the importance of controlling the sea to prevent the opposing navy from attacking or reinforcing was emphasized.[44]

Over time, the PLA had internalized many of the lessons from these earlier campaigns. The diligence and dedication following their earlier defeats allowed them to win a resounding victory on Hainan against a substantial and determined KMT force including a significant naval squadron. As the Chinese looked forward to the invasion of Taiwan, they recognized "victory would depend on cooperative operations of the three services."[45] They also knew they could draw on units that were now experienced in conducting successful amphibious assaults against an opposed coastline.[46]

The Effects of China's Naval Doctrine

This naval doctrine is relevant to the Chinese decision to postpone their plan to invade Taiwan following the American declaration of the neutralization of the Taiwan Strait by the Seventh Fleet. Separating out the material factors (i.e., the balance of forces) from the doctrinal cultural one is less clear in this case to be sure. However, in an objective military sense, the "deployment" of the Seventh Fleet was less strong that it might have appeared. For a month, there was a single show of force by a carrier and a series of air patrols. After that only a small fleet was deployed, and it was frequently pulled to Korean waters—days away from the Strait—to support the war effort there. Beyond that, U.S. military leaders repeatedly expressed concern throughout the fall that they would be unable to stop a significant Chinese attack.

There is limited information available about the Chinese interpretation of this deterrent threat. However, their response was immediate: the declaration of the deployment of the Seventh Fleet caused the Chinese to abandon their plans. Following the announcement of the 7th Fleet deployment, a number of orders were issued immediately in Beijing to push back the invasion of Taiwan. On June 30, just over two days after Truman's declaration, Zhou Enlai ordered "the date for the invasion of Taiwan to be postponed. The army should continue to demobilize, and the establishment of the air force and navy should be strengthened."[47] The formal order from the Central Military Commission to relocate troops that had previously been slated for the invasion of Taiwan was issued on July 7.[48] In early August, they were shifted northeast where they would participate in the Korean intervention.[49] Also in early August, the CMC gave its formal approval to an extended delay, postponing the invasion until after 1951.[50]

In terms of detail on *why* this decision was taken, it is clear from several other pieces of evidence that the Chinese leaders found the American threat to be both credible and *very capable*. For instance, while the 3rd Field Army had prepared hard for the invasion, the top political leadership of the PRC quickly recognized a need to abandon these plans:

However, in an internal directive, the Central Committee [of the CCP] had to admit: it [China] did not have the ability to compete with the United States in a trial of modern navies.[51]

Similarly, a tantalizing report regarding the reaction in Beijing to the American deterrent threat comes from a Chinese Nationalist agent who reportedly attended a high level meeting in Beijing. He passed on the conclusion of the senior Communist cadres, that the Chinese assault fleet would "last only a few [hours] against 7th Flt and U.S. Air Force."[52]

In both of these pieces of data, the specific dangers posed by the U.S. Navy (and in one case, the Air Force) are tied to the decision to postpone the attack. Thus, the Chinese understood that even a minimal deployment would decimate any prospects for a successful invasion. In this case, then, *the Chinese doctrine led them to emphasize the strong capabilities of their adversary, perhaps even beyond what an objective reading of the situation might have suggested.*

Chinese Doctrine Today

Taking the insights from the two case studies offered above, we can now assess the prospects that modern Chinese doctrine might shape its perceptions and thus lead to misperceptions

Characterizing Chinese Doctrine

Chinese military doctrine today is multifaceted and certainly in flux.[53] However, we might draw out a few notional strains for the purposes of this essay. The most important of these might be characterized as asymmetric doctrine, aimed at finding key vulnerabilities in American forces. Beyond that, nuclear doctrine will be discussed briefly.

Overall, American capabilities (and technology in particular) remain very substantially ahead of China's.[54] However, a number of prominent sources suggest that China is engaged in a deliberate effort to develop asymmetric strategies that might be used in a coercive manner to counter current American conventional dominance.[55] The extensive discussions of so-called Assassin's Mace (*shashou jian*) strategies and weapons most clearly exemplify this.[56]

Weapons do not determine doctrine, but they do signify priorities in Chinese doctrinal thinking. Notable among the recently obtained weapons for the PLA are the heavy missile destroyers (the 2-4 Sovremenny-class DDGs) and advanced diesel submarines (the 4-12 Kilo-class SSKs), both imported from Russia. Both of these are systems that seem designed to penetrate the defenses

of carrier battle groups that the Aegis missile defense platforms provide (Arleigh Burke-class DDGs and Ticonderoga-class CGs).[57] Similar points might be made regarding the SU-30 fighters (long range strike fighters aimed to hold at risk American carrier-based air assets) and the substantial modernization (including accuracy improvements) and build up of ballistic missiles (e.g., hundreds of M-9/11 missiles that can be used to threaten Taiwan; MaRV systems aimed to defeat American NMD systems; etc.)

All of these systems would be used in a relatively tactically offensive manner, attacking what are perceived to be key centers of gravity for America (and in some cases Taiwan). In most cases, the use of such systems would have to be conceived of in coercive terms: the threat of their existence will lead to their utility in deterring U.S. involvement.[58] This might be contrasted with a strategy aimed at more completely defeating a potential adversary (which the PLA recognizes would be beyond its means).

On the nuclear side, China is clearly undergoing substantial modernization of both its missiles and warheads.[59] This currently includes the development of road-mobile, solid-fueled ICBMs far less vulnerable to a "bolt from the blue" first strike than the currently fielded systems. Additionally, and further out in the future, the Chinese are developing a more reliable SSBN (the so-called Type-94 project) and associated long-range, sea-launched, ballistic missiles. Nevertheless, the core doctrine underlying China's force posture has remained fairly consistent: minimum deterrence.[60] This is generally described as a retaliatory, no-first use doctrine that aims solely to deter nuclear attack on China and a belief that small numbers of deliverable warheads are sufficient for this task. According to Senior Colonel Yao Yunzhu of the Academy of Military Sciences:

Chinese strategists take the concept [of minimum deterrence] as a relative one, defined not only by pure numbers, but more importantly by such key criteria as invulnerability of nuclear forces, assurance of retaliation, and credibility of counter-attack. When a Chinese document says that China intends to possess nuclear weapons only at the minimum (or lowest) level for the needs of self-defense, that means to have the minimum but assured capabilities for a retaliatory second strike.[61]

That is, given a degree of reliability in the security of a second strike, the overall size of the arsenal (critical for most warfighting doctrines) need not be increased.

Prospects for Misperceptions Due to Modern Doctrinal Culture

Extrapolating the lessons of the first two cases forward to today, what do these two facets of current Chinese doctrine imply for the ability of Beijing to evaluate signals from the United States and the overall balance of power? In both the conventional and nuclear arenas, the Chinese doctrine is substantially different from that of the United States. This will make it rather challenging for the Chinese to correctly interpret American signals.

For asymmetric "Assassin's Mace" strategies, the "asymmetry" is explicitly defined relative to the U.S. strategy. Thus, by definition it is a doctrine (or theory of victory) very different from that of the United States. This will have the effect of making communication of military threats more difficult for both sides. Washington deploys force and projects power by fielding well rounded, balanced forces whose aim it is to dominate a particular region for a sustained period, rather than getting off a few quick devastating strikes to deter an adversary from continuing a course of action. This is a pronounced contrast with the Chinese view as characterized above.

One important mitigating factor in this arena is the very focus in the development of Chinese asymmetric strategies on contingencies for use against American forces. This might reduce the challenges posed by such large doctrinal differences. That said, a doctrinal culture is likely to

emerge and harden over time, leading to excessive confidence in the strategies practiced and employed by the PLA. This will make the conduct of military statecraft more challenging.

While there is significant evidence that the Chinese did find the American deployment of carrier battle groups to the Taiwan Strait region in 1995/96 to be a strong signal,[62] the evidence is not entirely clear, with many characterizing Beijing's view of the crisis overall as "successful" from its perspective.[63] Regardless of which of these views is correct, the shifts in Chinese doctrine described in the previous section are precisely in response to that crisis, and thus followed it. It will be in the future that larger misperceptions should occur.

Nuclear issues likely present a similar set of issues. As American doctrine continues to evolve along the lines implied in the Nuclear Posture Review, the potential for nuclear forces to be more integrated with conventional forces seems likely.[64] Given the Chinese doctrinal view on the limited tactical utility of such weapons, they are not likely to understand the enhancements to capability that such weapons might provide for U.S. military forces.

The dangers here are that Washington and Beijing will not understand the overall balance of power and the degree of intent communicated by military signals when the other side's doctrinal culture or theory of victory is different from its own.

Implications

This paper has shown that narrow views of strategic culture—here examined as military doctrine—can contribute to our understanding of important events in international politics even beyond what we can explain through an analysis of military capabilities alone. The role of Chinese over-optimism in the first case is critical to the development of the Korean War. In contrast, the degree of realism that comes from less radical doctrine in the naval case from 1950 leads to an important "dog that did not bark" in the avoidance of war in the Taiwan Strait. The description of Chinese doctrine today suggests we should be concerned about several misperceptions and that Washington needs to carefully tailor its signaling with that in mind.

This paper's conclusions are particularly relevant today for two reasons. First, in the context of the ongoing military transformation or revolution in military affairs (RMA), it is likely that major militaries in the world today will face off with radically different doctrines. The U.S. theory of victory increasingly emphasizes a number of exotic technologies: precision guided munitions, space-based intelligence gathering, electronic warfare, information warfare, stealth, heavy strategic bombers, standoff weaponry, "total battlespace awareness," and systems integration. However, when the United States sends deterrent or compellent signals relying on the threat or actual use of this sort of military power, it should avoid assuming that its adversaries will view American forces as Washington does.

Many students of strategic coercion preach similar general lessons to those that this paper counsels.[65] For instance, Keith Payne's recent examination of deterrence policy with the post-Cold War era in mind concludes:

That solution [to the problems posed by post-Cold War deterrence] is to examine as closely as possible the particular opponent's thinking—its beliefs and thought filters—to better anticipate its likely behavior in response to U.S. deterrence policies, and structure those policies accordingly.[66]

However, the existing work on "putting yourself in your adversary's shoes" generally focuses on considering his national interests. How important is a specific piece of territory to him? Would a particular concession be difficult to make? This project points out that this is insufficient. This paper contributes to the points made on mirror imaging in general by providing specific evidence

of this phenomenon, locating it in one very important issue-area, and explaining why it occurs by making explicit its causal mechanism. Policymakers need to understand how their adversary assesses power, which requires understanding the cultural perspective provided by his military doctrines, his theory of victory.

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