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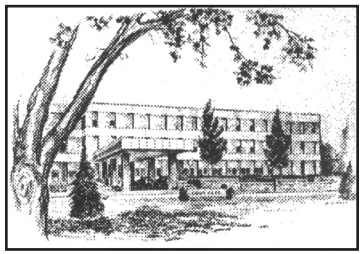

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TRANSNATIONAL INSURGENCIES AND THE ESCALATION OF REGIONAL CONFLICT: LESSONS FOR IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

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FOREWORD

Many contemporary insurgencies are characterized by militant groups that span national boundaries, benefitting from sanctuaries in neighboring states. Such groups complicate traditional counterinsurgency operations and have the potential to spark conflict between states. While some countries have engaged in cooperative strategies to contain transnational violence, many neighbors have been drawn into prolonged conflict over the issue of foreign sanctuaries.

In this monograph, Dr. Idean Salehyan examines several recent transnational insurgencies and their implications for regional relations. While the majority of cases resulted in an escalation of conflict between neighbors, in some instances countries have been able to construct successful border security regimes. This monograph discusses these patterns of conflict and cooperation. Additionally, detailed analyses of the relations between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as India and its neighbors, are offered to shed light on positive and negative dynamics.

Importantly, Dr. Salehyan uses past cases of conflict and cooperation over transnational militancy to underscore the current issues facing Iraq and Afghanistan. Looking ahead to the eventual reduction of foreign troops in these countries, this monograph assesses prospects for regional stability and offers concrete policy advice for decisionmakers.

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SUMMARY

Many contemporary insurgencies pit governments against rebel organizations that span international boundaries, find sanctuaries in neighboring states, and receive support from rival governments. Because the military and police forces of recognized governments must respect international boundaries, militant groups often use border regions to their advantage as they seek safe havens in which to operate. Rebel groups with foreign sanctuaries are quite common as conflicts in Turkey, Colombia, Liberia, India, Sudan, and elsewhere attest. Current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have demonstrated the difficulties in confronting transnational rebel groups, as relations with neighboring states may pose challenges for security forces.

Once transnational rebels have established themselves on foreign soil, the conflict ceases to be a wholly domestic one and necessarily draws in regional governments. Traditional counterinsurgency strategies can only go so far in containing the threat as foreign soil is off limits to security forces. This threatens to change the dynamic of the war and lead to an escalatory process which encompasses neighboring states. The problem of cross-border militancy has the potential to raise tensions in the region, and even lead to a full-blown war between governments.

At times, states will use coercive bargaining against their neighbors to press them to evict rebel units on their territory. Troop movements along the border, cross-border strikes against rebel bases, and direct confrontations with the armed forces of the neighboring state can be used, among other tactics, to increase pressure on the rebel host. At other times, states may

devise cooperative strategies to police their borders and launch joint operations against militant groups. Doing so requires clear lines of communication and effective coordination of military action. Finally, states can simply neglect the problem. Rather than direct confrontations or active cooperation, some states may find that they are unwilling or unable to engage their neighbors and will let the problem fester, perhaps for years. Gaining an understanding of best and worst practices in dealing with transnational insurgencies is critical for confronting 21st century militant groups.

This monograph examines all major rebel organizations active since 1990 to determine patterns of conflict and cooperation over transnational militant groups. Groups such as the Kurdish Workers' Party, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, and the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone, among others, are included in the analysis. The most common outcome was for transnational insurgencies to escalate into direct interstate disputes. More often than not, states fail to communicate effectively to design joint counterinsurgency strategies, which in turn lead to direct interstate hostilities. In many of these conflictual cases, one or both states deliberately provided sanctuary and assistance to rebel organizations, indicating preexisting interstate frictions. Many rebel groups took actions that provoked interstate clashes and turned simmering rivalries into full-scale wars.

While conflict over transnational rebellions was more common, states can and do cooperate to manage these threats. States recognizing a common problem along their border may engage in constructive dialogue and common counterinsurgency strategies, which help to preserve friendly relations. For instance, Iran has agreed to cooperate with Turkey on border security

issues. India has also cooperated with its neighbors over insurgencies in its north eastern provinces. However, effective border regimes have been relatively rare.

Another set of countries have had militant groups operating along their borders, but have chosen to simply ignore the problem. In many of these instances, the problem of transnational militancy is compounded by states that are too weak to respond adequately to the problem—on either side of the border. State weakness led to paralysis in confronting the problem at hand and has often resulted in a collapse of central authority.

To illustrate how transnational insurgencies can escalate into international conflicts, and how states may cooperate on security issues, this monograph takes a deeper look at the relations between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as the relations between India and its neighbors to the east. Following the 1994 genocide, the new Tutsi-led regime in Rwanda faced considerable challenges from a growing Hutu insurgency based in Zaire, later renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The presence of a Hutu rebel force in the DRC led Rwanda to invade its neighbor twice: first to unseat President Mobutu Sese Seko and install what it thought would be a friendly regime, then to attack the newly instated Kabila government. However, this latter invasion drew in forces from many African states, cost millions of lives, and ultimately failed. After an agreement signed in 2002, Rwanda and the DRC, with help from the UN, have transformed their relationship into a more cooperative one and have taken steps to limit cross-border violence.

Since independence, India has grappled with several low-level insurgencies in its North Eastern provinces, particularly Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura,

Mizoram, Manipur, and Nagaland. Although rebels from Assam and elsewhere in northeast India have benefitted from sanctuaries in several states, Bhutan became an especially important safe-haven for rebels. After years of failed negotiation attempts to persuade rebels to leave, on December 15, 2003, the Royal Bhutanese Army (RBA) began major operations against Indian insurgents on their territory, with considerable assistance from India itself. This offensive was the RBA's first military action in 140 years. Pointing to the successful bilateral cooperation with Bhutan, India called on other governments in the region to do their part in combating transnational militancy and began working with Myanmar and Bangladesh to plan similar operations. India has sought a strategy of engagement with its neighbors and has successfully coordinated actions with militaries in the region.

Moving beyond past cases, this monograph also sheds light on current dilemmas facing Iraq, Afghanistan, and their allies and neighbors. The continuing insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan will present considerable challenges for the United States and its allies for at least the next decade. A counterinsurgency strategy has been implemented, which places the emphasis on protecting civilians, building trust, and providing services—all important steps. Nonetheless, both insurgencies exhibit considerable transnational elements that complicate matters and necessitate building strong bonds with neighboring countries to contain militancy as well as prevent disputes arising between states.

Iraq's most pressing concern with respect to transnational insurgency relates to the presence of Kurdish militants from Turkey, namely the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), on Iraqi soil, although Iranian

militants also operate inside Iraq. In Afghanistan, the spread of Taliban militancy to Pakistan threatens to destabilize the entire South Asia region. As foreign forces begin to scale-back their presence in these countries, it is vital that effective border security regimes are established to contain, if not eliminate, transnational rebel violence and prevent the escalation of regional conflict.

In this monograph, concrete policy recommendations are offered to the foreign policy community. First, states must find the right balance between local and central government security capacity. Local forces in border regions—such as the Kurdish Peshmerga and the Pakistani Frontier Corps—are often better able to confront security challenges, but must be better integrated into the government's force structure. Second, states must improve coordination between security forces, especially between units along the border. This involves traditional counterinsurgency forces, but also local police officials, customs agents, border patrol forces, and so on. Third, countries should enhance mechanisms for intelligence sharing. Current intelligence sharing institutions are in place, but must be strengthened and expanded upon. Finally, countries must promote diplomacy and commercial exchanges in the region. Cooperation must include more than exchanges among security forces, but also be backed by robust diplomatic measures and the linking of societies through trade and commerce.

TRANSNATIONAL INSURGENCIES AND THE ESCALATION OF REGIONAL CONFLICT: LESSONS FOR IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

Many contemporary insurgencies pit governments against rebel organizations that span international boundaries, find sanctuaries in neighboring states, and receive support from rival governments. For instance, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) poses a major threat to the Colombian government and has maintained bases across the North Andean region.[1] Likewise, rebel groups from the Sudanese region of Darfur equip and train their fighters in neighboring Chad. U.S., North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and Afghan forces have faced serious difficulties in combating the Taliban as militants straddle the border with Pakistan.[2] These examples reveal the limitations that modern states operating under international legal constraints face when conducting counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. Because the military and police forces of recognized governments must respect international boundaries, militant groups often use border regions to their advantage as they seek safe havens in which to operate. The ability to establish foreign sanctuaries is aided by transnational ethnic communities that span borders, by hostile foreign governments that deliberately provide support to insurgent groups, and by weak neighboring states that cannot control their borders.[3] Violence also frequently leads to mass refugee migration into neighboring countries, which in turn benefits militant groups as they find supplies and recruits among refugee camps, particularly when such camps are poorly administered and guarded.[4]

Transnational insurgency is not a new phenomenon. While the current conflict in Afghanistan is complicated by the cross-border nature of the Taliban, Pashtun tribal loyalties, and possible links to elements within the Pakistani state, similar features were also present during the period of Soviet occupation. In decades past, militant groups such as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Nicaraguan Contras, and the Khmer Rouge operated in border regions where they could flee from government offensives. Militant activities, moreover, are not limited to the immediate neighborhood; groups such as the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) and the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) have mobilized activities and gathered funds from diaspora across the globe. What is new is the declining importance of distance in conducting transnational operations. Modern communications, mobile phones, internet sites, and so on, help to link militant groups and their supporters abroad through dense networks of informational exchange in ways that were previously unimaginable. These changes also mean that contemporary insurgencies can more easily link with criminal organizations and tap into illicit markets for financing.[5] This has clearly helped transnational groups such as al-Qaeda finance their activities and coordinate activities and rally supporters in multiple countries.[6]

Despite these technological advances, battlefield operations must still be conducted in close proximity to one's target. Therefore, rebel organizations will seek out sanctuaries in neighboring countries, where they can train their fighters, stockpile resources, and find a degree of safety from attack. Once transnational rebels (TNRs) have established themselves on foreign soil, however, the conflict ceases to be a wholly domestic one

and necessarily draws in regional governments. This threatens to change the dynamic of the war and lead to an escalatory process which encompasses neighboring states. The problem of cross-border militancy has the potential to raise tensions in the region, and even lead to a full-blown war between governments. For instance, Rwanda has invaded neighboring Zaire/the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on numerous occasions to fight Hutu militant groups and punish its neighbor for providing support to these groups; similarly, Israel invaded Lebanon in the 1980s and again in 2006 in order to strike at TNRs such as the PLO and Hezbollah.

The purpose of this monograph is to better understand interstate conflict and cooperation over transnational insurgency. While Rwanda's invasion of the DRC presents an example in which states came to blows over the issue of cross-border militancy, some countries have agreed to cooperate on the issue. India, for instance, has constructively engaged its neighbors to contain violence in its northeastern states. While sporadic attacks continue to occur, India has worked with Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar (Burma) to deal major blows to insurgent groups and limit their growth. Thus, this analysis asks: Why do transnational insurgencies sometimes lead to interstate disputes? Why do states sometimes successfully cooperate in COIN operations on both sides of the border? What lessons can be learned from best and worst cases from the past? Importantly, this monograph will apply some of these lessons to current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, where the Taliban and Kurdish insurgents (respectively) threaten regional relations. After the United States reduces its forces in these troubled areas, how can trust and cooperation among neighbors be

established so that insurgent groups do not foment hostility?

UNDERSTANDING TRANSNATIONAL INSURGENCY

The defining feature of modern nation-states is that they have the legitimate authority to use force within their sovereign territory. This coercive force is used to maintain law and order, enforce contracts, protect lives and property, and to deter violent challengers. Yet, this power is also defined by the state's given territorial borders. The police and military forces of a state have no authority outside of their jurisdiction. For instance, countries often do coordinate military and police efforts to catch and extradite fugitives, but coordinating such efforts creates transaction costs, raises the potential for miscommunication, and impedes action more generally.

Civil wars and insurgencies are unlikely to emerge if the state can successfully monitor and control subversive elements.[7] Some states are exceptionally weak and cannot effectively police their jurisdiction. Many African states, for example, lack the ability to project force across their entire territory;[8] likewise, the Pakistani state has long been unable to control its western tribal regions. While poor state capacity can provide the space needed for insurgents to find domestic safe havens, all states, even relatively strong ones, are constrained by their borders. Some countries are fortunate enough to be blessed by good geography and find themselves in neighborhoods that are relatively democratic, prosperous, and well-governed. Other countries are located in neighborhoods that are plagued by weak states, international rivalries,

and governance failures.[9] "Bad neighborhoods" can facilitate insurgencies by providing militants transnational sanctuaries where they can operate in relative safety.

TNRs present a series of challenges for normal COIN operations. According to well-accepted thinking on COIN,[10] government forces must be able to accomplish three interrelated tasks: (1) clear an area of insurgents through the appropriate use of military power and bolstered by adequate intelligence; (2) hold the area and be able to protect civilian populations from continued attacks; and (3) win over the "hearts and minds" of the population by providing services and well-functioning institutions and by building trust. Thus, COIN operations entail both the kinetic use of force as well as efforts to build governance.

TNRs complicate this picture in a number of ways. First, insurgents located across the border are more difficult to strike. Crossing the border through the movement of troops, violation of airspace, or even firing munitions violates the sovereignty of the neighboring country and international legal prohibitions on the use of force. Offensives against rebel strongholds are more difficult to conduct since the neighbor will protest against violations of its sovereignty and perhaps respond with strong countermeasures. Second, according to COIN doctrine, military forces must be able to gather good intelligence on the insurgent organization and their movements. In combating transnational groups, the state lacks a dense network of informants; the ability to patrol the area; and extensive knowledge of local customs, languages, and traditions. It is more difficult to gather intelligence on the external operations of the insurgency. Third, COIN requires building effective governance institutions and

providing social services in areas that are cleared by state security forces. Clearly, the state cannot govern in areas where it lacks the sovereign authority to do so. Thus, even if the state is willing or able to conduct limited cross-border strikes on insurgent bases, this will not be sufficient to neutralize the threat since the vital task of holding territory and winning over populations cannot be achieved on foreign soil. For these reasons, previous research has shown that transnational rebellions are more likely to become protracted insurgencies.[11] States are much less likely to defeat TNRs or to be willing to negotiate a settlement with them, since they cannot be assured that peace treaties will result in the demobilization of externally-based fighters.

In addition to these added difficulties for COIN operations, transnational militancy can lead to conflicts between states. The nature of such conflicts will depend on the type of host involved. First, some rebel hosts deliberately support their neighbor's insurgent movements as a means to undermine their foreign enemies. Rival neighbors will often empower an insurgency as an alternative to the direct use of force. Iran and Iraq, for example, ended direct warfare in 1988, but continued to attack one another indirectly by providing arms and sanctuaries to insurgent groups. In such cases, transnational rebel sanctuaries are indicative of preexisting hostilities between states, but they can heighten tensions and provoke escalatory dynamics that result in direct clashes between official militaries. For example, hot pursuit raids across the border to chase rebels may lead to clashes with border guards and spark an interstate war. Moreover, support for an insurgent force may lead the target state to launch retaliatory action against the rebel sponsor to

coerce it to cease such support. Second, weak states can become reluctant hosts to insurgent movements because they cannot effectively control their border regions.[12] Foreign insurgents are likely to be seen as another country's problem, and diverting resources away from more pressing domestic concerns, including suppressing domestic groups, will be seen as too costly. In these cases, new hostilities may arise between rebel host and home countries. The home government will object to the establishment of TNR sanctuaries and will demand that the host evict rebels from their soil; the host state may be unwilling or unable to comply with these demands, provoking disputes between states. Thus, weak neighboring states may be drawn into conflicts against their will by TNR groups in border areas.

While current thinking on COIN operations emphasizes the appropriate use of force in addition to building governance, the discussion above points to a third element in transnational counterinsurgency: diplomacy. Conflicts entail "triangular," three-actor bargains between the rebels, the target government, and the host state. Domestic efforts to fight militants are unlikely to succeed without bargaining with governments in the region and coordinating efforts among states. Rather than unilateral efforts, joint strategies must be adopted. However, states often fail to effectively engage their neighbors, and as a result, transnational rebellions often provoke tensions between governments. Cross-border attacks, troop mobilization near the border, and inadvertent spillovers have the potential to spark major diplomatic rifts and possibly violent clashes. For instance, in 2008, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Colombia experienced a major diplomatic row after cross-border COIN opera-

tions by Colombia violated Ecuador's territory. After these attacks on the FARC, both Ecuador and Venezuela put their armed forces on alert and moved troops near the border, risking a war.[13] As will be demonstrated in the next section, TNR activities will more often than not provoke militarized hostilities between countries; but in some cases, countries may be able to forge alliances to counter the threat. Examining case evidence may reveal patterns in cooperative and conflictual relations over TNRs.

TRANSNATIONAL INSURGENCIES AND INTERSTATE CONFLICT

The presence of cross-border militant groups will undoubtedly internationalize domestic insurgencies and lead to tacit or explicit bargains between neighboring states over how to deal with the problem. At times, target states will use coercive bargaining against their neighbors to press them to evict rebel units on their territory. Troop movements along the border, cross-border strikes against rebel bases, and direct confrontations with the armed forces of the neighboring state can be used, among other tactics, to increase pressure on the rebel host. At other times, states may devise cooperative strategies to police their border and launch joint operations against militant groups. Doing so requires clear lines of communication and effective coordination of military action. Finally, states can simply neglect the problem. Rather than direct confrontations or active cooperation, some states may find that they are unwilling or unable to engage their neighbors and will let the problem fester, perhaps for years.

To understand these patterns, Tables 1, 2, and 3 present a listing of cases where TNR groups spanned national boundaries. This list contains information on TNRs that were active during the 1990s and 2000s and that made extensive use of neighboring territory.[14] This implies that the group conducted major sustained operations in neighboring countries, rather than had limited or sporadic access to external bases. As such, it misses some high-profile cases, such as the FARC bases in Ecuador, but it does capture several significant insurgencies such as the Southern Sudanese insurgency, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, and the PKK. The rebel origin state, the host state, and the name/affiliation of the rebel organization are given. In addition, using data from the Correlates of War project,[15] newspapers, and secondary materials, information on the relationship between states is given. The interstate relationship is listed as conflictual if there were direct, state-to-state militarized activities between official armed forces. These include threats to use force, minor skirmishes, small-scale lethal violence between states, and full-blown hostilities with many casualties. The relationship is listed as cooperative if the countries agree to joint counterinsurgency operations and border security programs. Finally, if there were no significant conflictual or cooperative events, the relationship is listed as neutral.

Origin	Host Name	Rebels
Burundi	DR Congo	National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD), CNDD-FDD (Forces for the Defense of Democracy - FDD)
Burundi	Tanzania	CNDD, CNDD-FDD, Palipehutu, Palipehutu-FNL (National Forces of Liberation - FNL)
Cambodia	Thailand	Khmer Rouge, others
DR Congo/ Zaire	Rwanda	Democratic Alliance for the Liberation of the Congo (AFDL), Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD)
DR Congo/ Zaire	Uganda	RCD, RCD-ML, Movement for the Liberation of the Congo
Eritrea	Sudan	Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement
Ethiopia	Eritrea	Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front, Oromo Liberation Front
Guinea	Liberia	Rally of Democratic Forces of Guinea
India	Pakistan	Kashmiri Insurgents
Iran	Iraq	Mujahedeen e Khalq, Kurdish insurgents
Iraq	Iran	Kurdish insurgents, Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq
Iraq	Turkey	Kurdish insurgents
Israel	Lebanon	Hezbollah
Israel	Syria	Hezbollah
Liberia	Guinea	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
Myanmar	Thailand	Karen groups, other ethnic insurgents
Rwanda	DR Congo/ Zaire	Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda
Senegal	Guinea-Bissau	Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance
Sudan	Eritrea	Sudan's People's Liberation Army
Sudan	Ethiopia	Sudan's People's Liberation Army
Sudan	Uganda	Sudan's People's Liberation Army
Turkey	Iraq	Kurdish Workers Party
Turkey	Syria	Kurdish Workers Party
Uganda	DR Congo/ Zaire	Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF), West Nile Bank Front (WNBF)

Table 1. Conflictual Cases.

Origin	Host Name	Rebels
Burundi	Rwanda	Palipehutu, Palipehutu-FNL
India	Bangladesh	Northeastern insurgent groups
India	Bhutan	Northeastern insurgent groups
India	Burma	Northeastern insurgent groups
Iran	Turkey	Kurdish insurgents
Turkey	Iran	Kurdish Workers Party

Table 2. Cooperative Cases.

Origin	Host Name	Rebels
Chad	Libya	Movement for Democracy and Development
Chad	Niger	Movement for Democracy and Development
Chad	Nigeria	Movement for Democracy and Development
Guinea	Sierra Leone	Rally of Democratic Forces of Guinea
Liberia	Burkina Faso	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
Liberia	Cote d'Ivoire	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
Liberia	Sierra Leone	Ulimo-J
Rwanda	Uganda	Rwandan Patriotic Front
Senegal	Gambia	Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance
Sierra Leone	Liberia	Revolutionary United Front
Turkey	Greece	Kurdish Workers Party

Table 3. Neutral Cases.

First, let us examine the conflictual cases. As can be seen the modal, or most common, outcome when TNRs are present is direct confrontation between states. Thus, it is very common for transnational insurgencies to escalate into direct interstate disputes. It is important to note, however, the nature of the relationship between rebel host and home countries. In many of these conflictual cases, one or both states deliberately provided sanctuary and assistance to rebel organizations. The insurgency was supported by hostile foreign powers as another tool to impose costs on their rivals, so it cannot be said that cross-border militant activities were the sole cause of poor relations between states; rather, externally supported rebels are a symptom of regional rivalries. Nonetheless, rebel organizations—often acting independently of their hosts— may take actions that provoke interstate clashes and threaten to turn simmering rivalries into full-scale wars. For example, the government of Zaire (later the Democratic Republic of the Congo) supported Hutu rebels from Rwanda, who would later come to form the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR). In response, the Rwandan government, alongside Congolese rebel factions, invaded the DRC twice to remove the ruling regime. While the first invasion successfully toppled the government of Mobutu Sese Seko, the second invasion failed to unseat Kabila as states across Africa sent in troops, sparking a regional war.[16] In another instance, in 2006 Israel launched extensive strikes on Lebanese territory in retaliation against Hezbollah militants, who were launching rockets across the border and who had captured Israeli soldiers. This significantly threatened to further deteriorate regional relations, especially as Syria voiced strong support for Hezbollah, which it had long aided.

A full-scale war nearly broke out in the mid-1990s between the African nations of Sudan and Eritrea over mutual recriminations over support for insurgent groups. Sudan accused Eritrea of supporting the Sudanese People's Liberation Army; for its part, Eritrea accused Sudan of supporting militant Islamist groups—notably, the Eritrean Islamic Jihad—that were attempting to overthrow the government of Isaias Afwerki. Diplomatic relations were suspended in 1994, and tensions mounted in July 1996 as two Sudanese soldiers were killed near the border with Eritrea.[17] For several months, a pattern emerged in which cross-border raids by rebel organizations were followed by verbal attacks condemning the other state for harboring militants. Then in December, following a spate of attacks, the Sudanese government placed Kassala State, on the border with Eritrea, on maximum alert. In January 1997, Sudanese rebels launched several significant attacks in the border region and clearly had the backing of Eritrean President Afwerki, who remarked in an interview, "Since the opposition represents the Sudanese people's will, certainly the Eritrean government and people will stand by the opposition. . . ."[18] The interstate nature of this conflict became more direct in 1998, when the Eritrean press reported that Sudanese government forces attacked several villages within Eritrea. In March, Eritrean forces launched artillery attacks on the Sudanese villages of Awad, Galsa, and Hadra, followed by a June 19 attack on Sudanese border posts.[19] Similar cross-border violence between Sudan, Eritrea, and various rebel groups continued throughout 1998 and early 1999; these attacks mainly consisted of air and artillery strikes, but troop deployments near the border threatened more extensive operations. Yet, the

two countries were able to avert further escalation of the crisis in May 1999 after they signed an agreement in Qatar and agreed to restore diplomatic relations. In the agreement, they formally agreed to halt support for one another's rebel organizations.[20] Mutual suspicion continued for some time, but the crisis did not again threaten to erupt into a full-scale war.

While it was clear that militant groups attacking Israel, Rwanda, Sudan, and Eritrea were deliberately backed by governments in the region, in other cases, TNRs can spark new hostilities between states. In other words, transnational nonstate actors can draw countries into conflicts that are not of their choosing. For example, relations between Myanmar and Thailand have sometimes been tense as ethnic insurgents (especially Karen and Shan groups) conducted major operations across the border. Thailand maintained relations with Myanmar after the military violently suppressed the democracy movement in the late 1980s. Although the Karen National Union and other separatists were based on Thai territory, Thailand's attitude towards the insurgency was one of neglect rather than direct support.[21] Nonetheless, Thailand fiercely defended its sovereignty on several occasions when Myanmar's military attempted to strike at rebel positions on the Thai side of the border. In one instance in February 1992, Thai aircraft fired warning shots at Burmese soldiers who had crossed the border to attack a Karen rebel outpost.[22] Similar clashes occurred in 1995 near the Thai village of Mae Sot.

Despite border tensions, Thailand continued a policy of "constructive engagement" with the military junta in Myanmar, and pressed the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to do the same, eventually winning (in 1997) a place for Myanmar in

the regional bloc.[23] However, in 2001 and 2002 tensions increased over a string of attacks across the border. In February 2001, about 200 Myanmar troops entered Thailand to attack ethnic Shan rebels. Clashes with Thai forces ensued near the town of Mae Sai, killing at least 20 soldiers and civilians. After the attack, Thailand sealed its border.[24] Another round of clashes ensued in June 2002 after Myanmar attacked Shan rebels on the Thai side of the border, prompting an exchange of artillery fire.[25] The Thai military was on high alert and issued a statement that: "Artillery shells have landed on Thai territory, endangering the lives of villagers. . . . As long as the Burmese government continues to suppress the ethnic minority groups and refuses to embrace democracy, the fighting will continue and Burma will continue to mistrust Thailand."[26] Cooperative gestures later that year helped to diffuse the situation. Although a full scale war was averted, these incidents demonstrate how neighbors—despite attempts to maintain good relations—can be drawn into conflict by cross-border militancy.

While conflict over transnational rebellions is more common, states can and do cooperate to manage these threats. States recognizing a common problem along their border may engage in constructive dialogue and common counterinsurgency strategies, which help to preserve friendly relations. For instance, Iran and Turkey have each been faced with Kurdish insurgent groups seeking an independent homeland. While Turkey has found Syria and Iraq to be uncooperative, Iran has agreed to cooperate with Turkey on border security issues. Relations between Turkey and Iran have not always been cheery, although the two states have at least in principal agreed to cooperate on border security. A joint-security commission was established

in 1992 and several high-level diplomatic meetings were held between the two countries in 1993, culminating in a security protocol in which procedures for sealing of the border were developed.[27] Following additional talks in 1994, Turkish President Suleyman Demirel remarked, ". . . friendly relations and close cooperation between Turkey and Iran will serve regional peace and stability."[28] Then in 1995, after a string of PKK attacks, Iran and Turkey agreed to a joint "sandwich operation" to drive rebels out of their bases.[29]

Relations soured over the next several years as Turkey complained that Iran was not taking strong enough measures against the insurgents. Mutual recriminations and suspicion threatened to scuttle the joint security regime altogether. Yet, as demonstrated in October 2001, bilateral relations eventually improved when Iran captured and handed over three PKK militants.[30] Then in June 2003, clashes between the PKK and Iranian soldiers erupted near the border, resulting in eight Iranian soldiers killed.[31] Since mid-2003, Iran's military has scaled up direct operations against the PKK and has handed over several rebels to its Turkish counterparts. The two governments also engaged in talks over the status of Iraqi Kurdistan and common security interests in northern Iraq. A further security agreement was reached in December 2006, where both sides agreed to cooperate on drug smuggling across the border, cooperation in fighting Kurdish insurgents, and maintaining regular communications.[32] Thus, while Iran and Turkey continue to have disagreements about several issues, they do recognize a common threat along their border. Joint security cooperation—in effect since 1992—has not always proceeded smoothly, although the two countries have made a concerted effort to maintain good relations on this issue.[33]

Another set of countries have had militant groups operating along their borders, but have chosen to simply ignore the problem. Some of these rebel groups, such as Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF), are explicitly backed by foreign powers. Other groups, such as Chad's Movement for Democracy and Development (MDD) which was active in the early 1990s, operated from neighboring states, but did not receive significant external support. Because the rebel target state is not willing or able to cooperate with neighboring states, and is similarly unable to put direct pressure on rebel hosts through threatening retaliation, the problem can fester for years. This can allow the rebels sufficient time to "incubate" themselves and grow into a formidable force, threatening the stability of their origin country and the region more generally. In such a manner, Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), and the RUF were able to depose ruling regimes or cause the state to fail. Thus, in many (but not all) of these instances, the problem of transnational militancy is compounded by states that are too weak to respond adequately to the problem—on either side of the border.

Are there more general patterns that emerge from Tables 1-3? As was discussed above, conflict over cross-border insurgent activity seems to be the most common outcome. What more can be said about these conflictual cases? First, the majority of cases where conflict emerged over TNR activities were those in which the neighboring state deliberately backed the insurgency. Often times, support for insurgents was a reciprocal strategy, where each state backed rebels from the other. In such a manner, the DRC and Rwanda, Eritrea and Sudan, Iran and Iraq, Guinea and Liberia,

and Sudan and Uganda, each supported insurgents from the other state. In these cases, support for rebel organizations was either used as a substitute for the direct use of force, where the conflict was entirely delegated to TNRs; or, it was a complement to the use of force, where states used rebels in conjunction with their own troops. Thus, interstate hostility precedes rebel support, but rebel support in turn causes international tensions to escalate and can spark full-blown conflicts.

Second, many international conflict events are initiated by the relatively stronger party responding to their TNRs based in weaker neighbors. States with stronger militaries and more competent state apparatuses often launched attacks against weak hosts who could not prevent such strikes. Thus, Rwanda invaded the DRC, Israel attacked Lebanon and Syria over Hezbollah activities, Turkey used or threatened force against Iraq and Syria, and Senegal violated the border with Guinea-Bissau in pursuit of rebels. These weak states are unable to prevent foreign incursions into their territory, are more sensitive to coercive bargaining by external actors, and moreover, are less able to evict rebels on their own. Therefore, they invite attacks by their stronger neighbors, both against the militant group as well as against the host state. These were also the most likely to escalate to extensive battles and troop incursions on neighboring territory, as in the Israel/Lebanon, Rwanda/DRC, and Turkey/Iraq cases.

Finally, another set of cases involved a relatively weak state confronted by rebels, where the state attempted limited actions across the border, but was repulsed by a stronger host state. For instance, Thailand responded to Cambodian and Myanmarese

troop movements along their frontier by issuing threats and amassing its own forces near the border. Tanazania took strong prophylactic measures against Burundian cross-border strikes against rebels. In these cases, stronger neighbors took steps to protect their sovereignty from border violations by weaker rebel origin states, but these were less likely to erupt into large-scale violence.

The limited instances of cooperation mostly involve rebel groups that are perceived to be common threats to both countries. In the mid to late 1990s, Rwanda and Burundi cooperated against Hutu extremist groups threatening the Tutsi-dominated regimes of both states. These neighbors cooperated against Hutu militants on both sides of their border as well as against Hutu groups based inside the DRC. Iran and Turkey, as discussed above, both faced threats from Kurdish insurgents. Although their relationship has sometimes been rocky, they have established a border security regime to counter militancy. Finally, India, South-Asia's regional power, has worked with neighboring states in the northeast to deal with transnational militancy, crime, and drug trafficking, which negatively affects all countries in the region. At times, India has used its power and influence in the region to persuade reluctant neighbors to cooperate on security affairs, but commonly-faced threats have certainly engendered a willingness to coordinate efforts. India's cooperation with its neighbors will be dealt with in more detail below.

Finally, the handful of cases in which states have merely let the problem simmer without significant conflict or cooperation reflect a dominant pattern where both states are simply too weak to act decisively. In the West African region, neighboring states

harbored the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, but the Liberian government under Samuel Doe was so ineffectual and corrupt that it could hardly offer any resistance. When Liberia began backing the RUF in Sierra Leone, the government there quickly crumbled, not allowing it time to respond to this externally-supported threat. The Rwandan government under Juvenal Habyarimana was similarly unable to either challenge the Ugandan government head-on, or find a cooperative solution to cross-border attacks by the Rwandan Patriotic Front. Therefore, in many of these "neutral" cases, the affected government(s) was too paralyzed to take any meaningful action against the insurgents or the states that harbored them. In another case, Greece harbored PKK militants fighting Turkey—neither state can be considered weak. However, while Turkey repeatedly condemned Greece for providing shelter to the PKK, significant military action was not taken. Both countries possessed a sufficient deterrent so that they prudently avoided escalatory dynamics that could lead to war, and their joint membership in NATO imposed some constraints on their behavior.

RWANDA AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

To illustrate how transnational insurgencies can escalate into international conflicts, and how states can eventually come to cooperate on security issues, it is useful to examine a case in greater depth. Following the 1994 genocide, the new Tutsi-led regime in Rwanda faced considerable challenges from a growing Hutu insurgency based in Zaire, later renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Rwandan Patriotic Front—which began its assault from bases in

Uganda—was able to put an end to the genocide and topple the Hutu regime in Kigali in July 1994. This new government, led by Paul Kagame, transitioned from a rebel force to the ruling party relatively quickly and turned to the difficult task of rebuilding Rwanda's economy, establishing effective state institutions, and pursuing justice for the horrible massacre of Tutsis as well as Hutus who did not go along with the killings. This effort was made all the more difficult by an emerging rebel force along Rwanda's border with Zaire. Following the genocide, hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees, along with former officials responsible for orchestrating the massacres, fled into neighboring countries. In contrast to states like Tanzania, which limited militant activities within the camps, Zaire under Mobutu Sese Seko actively encouraged these refugees to organize themselves into a fighting force and retake Kigali.[34]

Mobutu had faced political challenges from a domestic Tutsi minority in the eastern provinces of Zaire and was friendly toward the former Rwandan government. Therefore, he allowed the former Rwandan armed forces (ex-FAR) to maintain their weapons and organize into an insurgent force within the refugee camps. These militants, along with their local counterparts, first moved against Tutsis within Zaire in an effort to establish safe havens near the border from which to launch a reinvasion. Moreover, they were effective in diverting humanitarian aid—intended for legitimate refugees—toward militant activities. These activities did not go unnoticed by humanitarian actors on the ground. As Shahyar Khan, the United Nations (UN) representative to Rwanda, proclaimed: "We are sitting on a volcano . . . we must separate the wolves from the sheep."[35] Nonetheless,

the international community failed to demilitarize the refugee camps and according to estimates, some 40,000 fighters were based in Zaire, mainly around the town of Goma.[36] In 1995 and 1996, the ex-FAR conducted several strikes across the border, attempting to establish a toehold within Rwandan territory. The RPF-led state, although still in its infancy, was able to repulse these attacks, but it was still unprepared to launch extensive military campaigns on the Zairean side of the border.

Human rights violations against Zairean Tutsis and attacks across the border intensified in 1996, alarming the government in Kigali, which feared a renewed genocide and which was convinced that the international community was unwilling to respond to the state of insecurity along the border.[37] In response to the growing threat, Rwanda decided to take decisive action in order to protect Zairean Tutsis, debilitate the Hutu insurgency across the border, and remove Mobutu from power. Therefore, cross-border TNR activities led to a Rwandan military operation across the border in Zaire, not only to attack rebel positions, but also to directly confront the state which provided sanctuary.

Zaire's vast territory, over 2 million square kilometers, made it impossible for Rwanda to act on its own to unseat the government in Kinshasa, located in the west. Therefore, it adopted a two-pronged strategy. First, Rwanda armed and supported Zairean rebels. In the beginning, Rwanda armed local Zairean Tutsis to defend themselves against attacks. By November 1996, this group, aided by the Rwandan Army, was able to capture the town of Goma.[38] Yet, because the Tutsis were a small minority within Zaire and would not have broad domestic support, Rwanda enlisted Laurent Kabila—a member of the Luba tribe—to lead a popular

insurgent army, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL). Kabila had fought an unsuccessful campaign against Mobutu in the 1960s, but with Rwandan help was able to lead the ADFL to several early victories against the Zairean army. Second, the Rwandan army conducted a large-scale invasion of Zaire's eastern provinces, notably, North and South Kivu. Rwanda relentlessly attacked Hutu rebels based in the Mugunga refugee camp near Goma, along with smaller camps. These attacks cut off humanitarian aid to the refugees and forced thousands—militants and civilian refugees alike—to disperse. By the end of 1996, the major camps had been cleared, and an estimated 700,000 refugees were repatriated back to Rwanda.[39] The rebels were in a state of disarray and the Zairean military was crippled by the invasion.

The ADFL pushed westward with their offensive and rapidly gained strength as thousands, dissatisfied with Mobutu's corrupt rule, welcomed the rebel's advance. Moreover, Mobutu was increasingly isolated in the international community as his erstwhile Cold-War Western allies abandoned him. His army, which bore little loyalty to the regime, often refused to fight. Owing to these factors, the Rwandan-backed ADFL took Kinshasa on May 17, 1997, and renamed the country the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mobutu was forced to flee the country and died of cancer soon thereafter. Thus, a transnational insurgent group prompted Rwanda to invade its neighbor, oust the incumbent regime, and install a government believed to be friendly. What began as an insurgency pitting the Tutsi-led state against a Hutu rebel force quickly escalated to a major war between Rwanda and Zaire.

Rwanda had bet on Kabila to be a reliable ally and to prevent the reestablishment of Hutu rebel bases on Congolese territory. However, it soon became apparent that Kabila had little loyalty toward his Rwandan supporters, and took several steps to distance himself from his former patrons. He faced considerable domestic criticism that Rwanda was meddling in Congolese affairs.[40] Critics pointed to the sizeable presence of Tutsis in the armed forces and a large contingent of Rwandan "advisors" in Kinshasa. To placate detractors, Kabila expelled all Rwandan troops in July 1998 and dismissed Tutsis in his military.[41] In addition, while the ex-FAR militants suffered a major setback, they were not completely defeated. Still forming his new government, Kabila did little to prevent these rebels from organizing. By mid 1998, they had regrouped into a new rebel force named the Army for the Liberation of Rwanda (ALIR) with a force of roughly 15,000.[42]

In response to ALIR attacks and Kabila's unwelcome policies, Rwanda prepared for a second offensive. The logic was similar to the previous one: disarm Hutu rebels across the border and install a regime that would prevent future cross-border attacks. This time, Rwanda focused on supporting Congolese Tutsis and backed the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD). Uganda joined this effort as it was similarly plagued by cross-border militant groups. In August 1998, Rwandan forces reinvaded the DRC, fighting alongside their allies: the RCD, Uganda, and Burundi. However, in contrast to the international contempt for Mobutu, Kabila's supporters came to his defense. A major continental war erupted pitting the DRC and its supporters—most notably, Angola, Chad, Namibia, and Zimbabwe—against Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi,

and the RCD. This conflict would become the deadliest since World War II, with an estimated five million dead due to violence, disease, and malnutrition.[43]

In what has been termed the Second Congo War, Rwanda was not able to repeat its swift success. Rather, it became embroiled in a bitter, protracted conflict. Rwanda's second invasion of the Congo lead to UN Security Council resolutions condemning the violation of Congolese sovereignty, and marginalized it on the continent. Moreover, the RCD would end up splitting into two factions, with Rwanda supporting one and Uganda supporting the other. By mid-1999, it became clear that Rwanda could not win a military victory, and the belligerents agreed to a cease-fire on July 10 in Lusaka, Zambia. The Lusaka Accord called for an end to hostilities, the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the DRC, the disarmament of illegal militias, and the invitation of a UN Peacekeeping force. This UN force, termed the UN Organization Mission in Congo (MONUC) was created on November 30 and was tasked with overseeing the peace agreement. However, MONUC was powerless to stop the violence, and fighting quickly resumed between Rwanda, the DRC, and armed nonstate militias. Neither side was willing to comply with the Lusaka agreement as each mistrusted the other and MONUC could not offer credible security guarantees. Moreover, the Rwandan Hutu rebels had regrouped and reconstituted themselves as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). As long as these rebels were still active, Rwanda promised to continue its operations in the DRC.

Unexpectedly, Laurent Kabila was assassinated by one of his bodyguards in January 2001, and his son, Joseph Kabila, took over as head of state. The younger

Kabila pledged his commitment to peace,[44] although he moved slowly in disarming the FDLR. In May and June, the FDLR launched a major offensive, termed Operation ORACLE DU SEIGNEUR, in an attempt to capture Rwandan territory. Although this offensive failed, it further strained relations between Kigali and Kinshasa. Rwanda accused the new DRC leadership of continuing the policy of supporting the Hutu rebels hiding in the east.

Rwanda and the DRC were at an impasse. They could not achieve their objectives by military force alone. Rwanda was not capable of disarming the FDLR unilaterally because trying to round up insurgents on foreign territory—particularly in an area as large as the DRC—was bound to be a futile effort. The younger Kabila, moreover, had to deal with the more pressing task of rebuilding state institutions and containing dozens of militias that had formed across the DRC. Therefore, the parties agreed to talks once more, mediated by South African President Thabo Mbeki. In these talks, the DRC demanded a withdrawal of foreign troops while Rwanda sought credible promises that the DRC would go after the FDLR. As President Kagame stated, "the disarmament and repatriation of [Hutu militias] based in Congo is still the most important problem."[45] On July 20, 2002, in Pretoria, South Africa, Rwanda and the DRC signed a new accord, renewing their pledges of peace and security cooperation. The Pretoria Accord called for a timetable for the withdrawal of Rwandan troops, the eviction of FDLR forces, and a neutral third party comprised of South African and MONUC observers to verify compliance.

In accordance with its treaty obligations, on September 24 the Congolese government officially

banned FDLR activities, stating that its members, ". . . are declared persona non grata and invited to leave the territory within 72 hours."[46] Following through with these threats, the DRC launched a string of attacks against the FDLR, including a significant strike at the Kamina rebel camp. These offensives only had limited military success, however, and failed to impose significant costs on the rebels. But politically, they demonstrated the DRC's seriousness in expelling militants, while at the same time revealing its inability to act on its own. Therefore, the UN Security Council adopted a series of resolutions in 2003 and 2004 to significantly increase MONUC's troop size and permit it to use Chapter VII peacekeeping powers to directly engage militant groups in the DRC, augmenting local capacity. With Rwandan troops positioned along the border to prevent FDLR incursions, the DRC and MONUC launched several coordinated strikes against FDLR bases in the eastern provinces.[47] Because of this pressure and feeling that its days as an effective fighting force were limited, in 2005 the FDLR sought compromise and offered to abandon its armed struggle in exchange for recognition as a legitimate political party[48]—Kigali flatly rejected this demand.

Further exemplifying this renewed cooperation in central Africa, the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda issued a joint statement setting a September 30, 2005, deadline for FDLR disarmament and repatriation.[49] The deadline came and went without FDLR action, and so, MONUC and Congolese forces followed through on their threats and launched a major operation to clear the Virunga National Park of militants.[50] Clashes between DRC/MONUC troops and the FDLR continued in 2006 and 2007. Although this effort did not completely defeat the rebel force, it left them marginalized and incapable of significant new attacks on Rwandan territory itself.

Despite these positive steps, relations between the two countries were temporarily strained as Tutsi commander General Laurent Nkunda led a significant militia in the eastern DRC—the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP)—which was responsible for a series of atrocities. Nkunda claimed that his forces were there to protect Congolese Tutsis from attacks by the remnants of the FDLR, although he has been accused of serious war crimes including systematic rape, torture, and the use of child soldiers.[51] Because of his former ties to the RPF, it was widely believed that Nkunda worked in close collaboration with Rwandan authorities. As Nkunda escalated attacks in 2008, relations between the DRC and Rwanda became tense and efforts at security cooperation threatened to unravel.

However, this outcome was averted as the DRC and Rwanda engaged in the most significant joint operations to date. In December 2008, the DRC agreed to allow Rwandan troops to cross the border and participate in coordinated action against the FDLR as well as the CNDP. Reports indicated that in January 2009, approximately 5,000 Rwandan troops crossed the border and established positions in North Kivu province.[52] A battalion of Rwandan infantry, alongside Congolese forces, proceeded toward Nkunda's headquarters near Rutshuru and arrested him on January 23 as he attempted to escape to Rwanda.[53] With Nkunda neutralized, the DRC and Rwanda moved against FDLR militants. On February 11, Rwandan radio announced that joint operations had destroyed the FDLR's main bases, including their headquarters at Masisi;[54] a few days later, several FDLR commanders surrendered to advancing troops.[55] By late February, after the 1-month operation, Rwandan

forces began to withdraw back to their side of the border, feeling satisfied with progress against the FDLR. Congolese Defense Minister Charles Mwando Nsimba commented that the campaign, "shows that Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo can construct a common future in peace and with respect of the sovereignty of each."[56]

Although the FDLR has not been completely destroyed, it has been significantly weakened after this joint offensive and will not likely be able to challenge the Rwandan armed forces in the near future. Such measures demonstrate that broad security cooperation—even between bitter rivals—can emerge to deal with TNR activities and violence along the border. Rwanda/DRC cooperation to confront the FDLR, along with other militants in the region, enhanced the internal security of both countries as well as diffused regional tensions.

SECURITY COOPERATION AND INDIA'S NORTH-EASTERN INSURGENCIES

Some states have effectively engaged in cooperation with neighbors to avert regional tensions and contain insurgencies; it is important to examine one particular case in greater depth. Since independence, India has grappled with several low-level insurgencies in its northeastern provinces, particularly Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, and Nagaland. These regions are ethnically distinct and geographically isolated from the rest of India. They have also faced demographic pressures, particularly as Bangladeshi immigrants have competed with locals for employment. With some 200 tribal groups in this region, a patchwork of insurgencies operates in the area. In recent years, the most significant of these

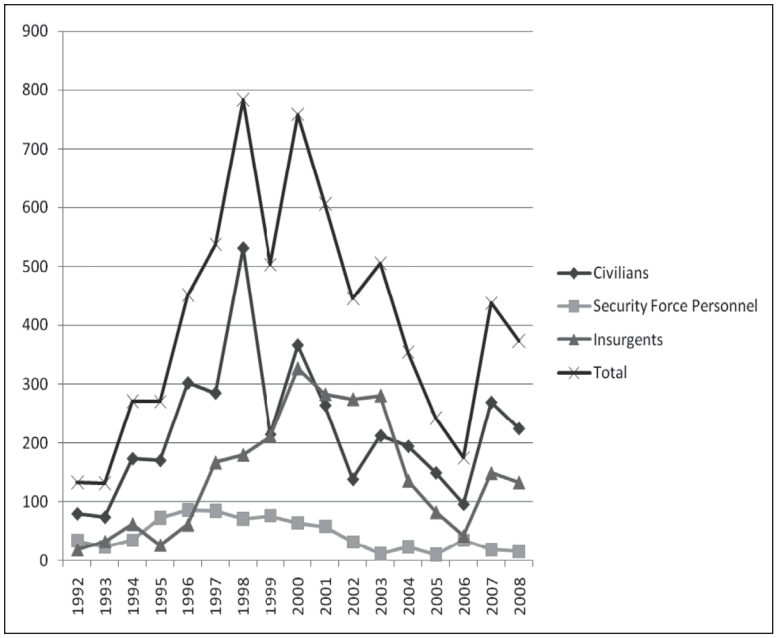
have included the following: in Assam, the United Liberation Front of Assam and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland; in Nagaland, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland; in Tripura, the All Tripura Tribal Front and the National Liberation Front of Tripura; in Manipur, the People Liberation Army, and the United National Liberation Front. In addition to these, several dozen more insurgent groups and criminal bands operate in the area. These insurgent movements have a wide variety of economic and social aims, but at the most general level, they seek to win a greater degree of autonomy from the Indian state.[57] Although none of these ethnic rebels in the northeast have risen to the size and military effectiveness of the insurgencies in Kashmir and Punjab, they do pose significant threats to India's security, economy, and social relations. India has responded to these threats with a mix of development projects, federal restructuring, political concessions, and counterinsurgency operations. These COIN operations are conducted by regular security forces as well as through paramilitary forces such as the Assam Rifles, the Central Reserve Police Force, and the Border Security Force.[58]

The Assamese insurgency is the deadliest and best-known. The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) emerged out of political movements in the 1970s and 1980s, which opposed Bangladeshi illegal immigration into the region. Many Assamese saw this migration as threatening their culture and way of life, not to mention economic opportunities. While some Assamese groups sought a political solution to the region's problems and participated in regional elections, the ULFA, which was formed on April 7, 1979, rejected negotiations with the government and adopted the more extreme demand of independence. Over time, the ULFA would come to

focus primarily on the independence issue, rather than illegal immigration.[59] The UFLA became especially active in the 1990s and reached an estimated strength of somewhere between 2,000 and 4,000 fighters. The conflict has killed an average of 50-100 people per year since 1990.[60]

To complicate matters, another ethnic group from Assam, the Bodos, have also fought for greater independence from India. The Bodos have demanded greater autonomy for Bodoland, economic opportunities, and recognition of their Christian identity. In the late 1980s, several Bodo insurgent movements emerged, with the most notable being the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB).[61] The NDFB has been more extreme than other groups in its demands, rejecting negotiated settlements and deliberately attacking civilians; it seeks nothing short of complete independence of Bodo regions. During the 1990s and 2000s the group has killed a few dozen per year, and it reached an estimated troop strength of 3,500 at its peak.[62] It has also been significantly involved in extortion, smuggling, and other criminal activities. Figure 1 displays all insurgent-related violence in Assam since 1992, involving all groups. In total, over 7,000 people have been killed, including insurgents, security forces, and civilians.

Although rebels from Assam and elsewhere in northeast India have benefitted from sanctuaries in several states, Bhutan became an especially important safe haven for ULFA and NDFB.[63] Bhutan is a small country, with a population of less than one million, sandwiched between India and China. The 1949 Treaty of Friendship between India and Bhutan assured the independence of the Bhutanese kingdom, but held



Source: *South Asia Terrorism Portal*.

Figure 1. Persons Killed in Insurgent-Related Violence in Assam.

that Bhutan would accept Indian guidance on foreign policy matters. Relations between the two were largely friendly, and India served as Bhutan's most important trading partner, accounting for the majority of the kingdom's trade.

Major Indian military offensives in the early 1990s, coupled with an India-friendly regime in Bangladesh where rebels had been hiding, forced the ULFA and NDFB across the porous border into Bhutan.[64] However, militarily weak Bhutan chose to ignore the problem as long as the rebels did not pose a threat to Bhutanese citizens, and the costs of eviction were perceived to be high. India made repeated requests for

permission to attack the rebels, but the kingdom was not willing to allow violations of the border.[65] Instead, beginning in the late-1990s Bhutan decided to enter into negotiations with the rebels in order to persuade them to leave, or at least reduce their presence. This would not be an easy proposition since the ULFA and NDFB, along with a smaller group known as the Kamtapur Liberation Organization (KLO) had roughly 3,000 fighters located in 30 camps.[66] Despite the kingdom's pleading, the rebel organizations were not prepared to give up their strategically important bases in Bhutan, especially since the government demonstrated its unwillingness to use force. As one observer noted, Bhutanese foot-dragging, "…presented a considerable threat to the excellent and close relationship between Bhutan and India."[67] In addition to growing Indian pressure, by 2000, the rebel presence had jeopardized the safety and security of Bhutanese citizens and there was a growing recognition that the sovereignty of the kingdom itself was at stake. As Yashey Dorji, of Bhutan's foreign ministry, would later state: "The rebels' continued presence was becoming a direct threat to Bhutan's security and sovereignty."[68]

In May 2003, the Bhutanese government demanded that Indian militant groups vacate their camps by June 15 and began to raise a counterinsurgent force. However, the deadline came and went without action by the ULFA, the NDFB, or the KLO. In response, Bhutan began consultations with India over next steps.[69] After years of failed negotiation attempts, on December 15, 2003, the Royal Bhutanese Army (RBA) began major operations against Indian insurgents on Bhutanese territory, with considerable assistance from India itself. This offensive, termed Operation ALL CLEAR (OAC), was the RBA's first military action

in 140 years. In addition to Bhutan's military efforts, the Indian army provided logistical support, medical evacuations, and positioned its forces along the 380 kilometer border to capture militants trying to re-enter India.[70] The two countries also agreed to allow Indian forces into Bhutan, provided the latter gave the green light to do so,[71] although this provision proved to be unnecessary. Within a few days of the operation, Bhutan had succeeded in capturing several senior rebel leaders;[72] over the next several weeks, Bhutan succeeded in killing or capturing several hundred additional rebels. Prisoners were quickly handed over to Indian authorities to await trial. By the end of the year, the RBA destroyed all of the major rebel camps and was conducting mop-up operations to locate remaining rebels in hiding. By mid-January, after neutralizing more than 650 rebels, OAC was declared a victory. Pointing to the successful bilateral cooperation with Bhutan, India called on other governments in the region to do their part in combating transnational militancy, and began working with Myanmar to plan similar operations.[73]

Rather than cross-border militancy becoming a contentious issue in the bilateral relationship and escalating regional hostilities, relations between Bhutan and India were strengthened as the result of robust security cooperation. Indeed, on February 8, 2007, the two nations renewed and revised their friendship treaty. While the revised treaty asserted Bhutan's independence and sovereignty, it also pledged that, "Neither government shall allow the use of its territory for activities harmful to the national security and interest of the other."[74] Thus, while TNRs can prove to be a sore point between many countries, India and Bhutan found ways to deal with this mutual threat and preserve positive ties.

India has also pressed other countries in the region to help combat border insecurity. For instance, in September 2006, India and Myanmar held talks regarding the activities of insurgent groups along the border as well as problems such as arms smuggling.[75] Indian Home Secretary V.K. Duggal remarked that the talks have "further deepened the understanding between the two countries on security, drug trafficking, and effective border management." [76] On October 2, it was reported that the two countries had launched joint operations along the border, particularly to hit ULFA bases and training camps inside Myanmar. [77] Over the next several months, India provided Myanmar with arms while the two countries worked on enhancing border security. In one notable instance of security cooperation, in November 2007, Myanmar reportedly destroyed several ULFA bases on its soil.[78] India has also put pressure on Bangladesh to assist in border security measures and joint COIN operations. After 2 days of talks in 2004 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the two countries vowed to work closely on security matters and coordinate activities on their respective sides of the border.[79] However, despite pledges to step up security measures, Bangladeshi progress in combating crime and militancy along the border remained slow. On February 9, 2009, the two countries met again to sign pacts on economic issues and promised to improve cooperation on countering insurgencies.[80] Implementation of robust security measures remains a problem, however, as internal problems in Bangladesh, including a mutiny by border guards, prevented progress on the deal.

India's northeastern insurgencies span national boundaries as militant groups benefit from porous borders with neighbors and sanctuaries in unguarded,

remote terrain. However, in contrast to other cases, such as the Rwanda/DRC case discussed above, India has sought a strategy of engagement with its neighbors and has successfully coordinated actions with militaries in the region. The example of joint COIN operations with Bhutan serves as a particularly noteworthy instance of security cooperation. While the insurgent threat has not been completely eliminated, friendly relations with neighbors have been preserved. For this reason, full-scale clashes between government forces seem highly unlikely.

CURRENT DILEMMAS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

The continuing insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan will present considerable challenges for the United States and its allies for at least the next decade. A COIN strategy has been implemented that places the emphasis on protecting civilians, building trust, and providing services—all important steps. Nonetheless, both insurgencies exhibit considerable transnational elements that complicate matters and necessitate building strong bonds with neighboring countries in order to contain militancy as well as prevent disputes arising between states. It is unclear whether U.S. public opinion will allow for significant troop presence in either country—particularly in combat roles—for extended periods of time. As the United States reduces its footprint in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is essential that these countries have the capacity to govern effectively on their own. One often neglected element of this overarching goal is the need for the Afghan and Iraqi governments to establish diplomatic and military understandings with neighboring states so as to establish robust, sustainable security cooperation.

Iraq's most pressing concern with respect to transnational insurgency relates to the presence of Kurdish militants from Turkey, namely the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), on Iraqi soil. The PKK was founded in the late 1970s and demands an independent Kurdish state. This goal is shared by Iraqi Kurdish factions—the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDK)—as well as by Iranian Kurdish movements, although relations between these various groups have often been hostile.[81] Although the PKK is designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S. Government, it maintains bases in northern Iraq, where the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has proven unwilling or unable to restrict cross-border attacks. The transnational nature of the PKK is nothing new, and Turkey conducted COIN raids across the border during the Saddam Hussein era. However, continued attacks by the PKK on Turkish forces have been a major sticking point in Iraqi-Turkish-U.S. relations. Unable to persuade the KRG or Baghdad to limit PKK activities, Turkey launched significant air and ground operations on Iraqi territory in early 2008.[82] Following these raids, Iraq and Turkey signed a border security agreement, which sought to diffuse some of the tensions arising from cross-border attacks.[83] However, a series of strikes by the PKK in late 2008 and early 2009 led to renewed demands that the Iraqi central government, the KRG, and the United States do more to contain its activities.[84] While these disputes with Turkey are well-known, Iran also has concerns about militants in Iraq. Iranian Kurdish rebels operating under the banner of the Party of Free Life of Iranian Kurdistan (PJAK) hide in the remote mountains of northern Iraq, and the Iranian government has attacked its bases across the border

on several occasions.[85] Recently, in May 2009, battles broke out in the Iranian province of West Azerbaijan, and subsequently, Iranian military aircraft hit PJAK targets on the Iraqi side of the border.[86] Although the PKK and PJAK are distinct entities targeting different countries, Iran and Turkey have been cooperating in battling both groups. In addition to Kurdish rebels, Tehran has concerns over the continued presence of anti-Iranian, Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK) supporters on Iraqi territory, 3,000 of which were housed at Camp Ashraf north of Baghdad. The MEK was welcomed by Saddam Hussein as a tactic to strike at Iran, but the post-Hussein Iraqi government has taken recent steps to dismantle their camps.[87] Although the MEK seem to be neutralized for now, they may attempt to regroup in the future. To complicate matters further, the U.S. and Iraqi governments are worried that Iran provides assistance to Shiite fighters who subscribe to a radical Islamist agenda. Thus, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq all have concerns over the continued presence of transnational militant organizations.

Unless effective protocols are established to deal with border security issues, as U.S. troop levels begin to come down, Iran, Turkey, and perhaps other states in the region may be tempted to engage in stronger actions against militants on Iraqi soil. A fragmented Iraqi government with little control over its territory and sympathetic Kurdish populations in the north would be sufficient ingredients for the continued operations of TNRs in Iraq. A weak Iraqi state, with insufficient deterrent capabilities, would also invite cross-border attacks by its neighbors, or more extensive violations of its sovereignty, to combat insurgent movements. The continued presence of foreign militants on Iraqi soil, coupled with an ineffective government in

Baghdad, would threaten the existence of a sovereign, independent Iraq.

In Afghanistan, the spread of militancy to Pakistan threatens to destabilize the entire South Asia region. Following the ouster of the Taliban government in Kabul, the Taliban and al-Qaeda have regrouped across the border in Pakistan. The new insurgency is aided by Pashtun tribal loyalties spanning the border, historical ties going back to the anti-Soviet resistance launched from inside Pakistan, little to no government presence in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and difficult terrain.[88] Further hindering progress in dealing with the issue on the Pakistani side of the border are issues such as: internal bickering between rival political factions, a military posture focused overwhelmingly on India, and alleged links between elements of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency and the Taliban. Under the administration of President Pervez Musharaff in Pakistan, relations between neighbors were icy. Afghan President Hamid Karzai barely hid his animosity toward the Musharaff government, remarking that, "The state of Pakistan was supporting the Taliban, so we presume that if there is still any Taliban, that they are still being supported by a state element."[89] Worryingly, on a number of occasions in 2007, Afghan and Pakistani forces clashed while patrolling the border. In April 2007, Pakistani forces fired on Afghan troops as they were removing a barbed wire fence in Barmal district.[90] Then on May 13, 2007, reports indicate that up to seven Afghan troops were killed in the Kurram region by Pakistani forces claiming that they were attacked first.[91] These events underscore the difficulties that arise when effective protocols for patrolling the border are not in place.

Since the establishment of an elected, civilian government in Pakistan, the Taliban have gathered

strength inside that country. Pakistani Taliban factions, led by Beitullah Mehsud until his recent death, have threatened the stability of the Pakistani state itself. While Afghan Taliban factions continue to launch deadly assaults on Afghan and NATO forces, the Pakistani Taliban has struck beyond the border regions, taking territory in Swat and Buner. In addition, a separatist movement in the Pakistani region of Balochistan has been gathering steam and killed several dozen in early 2009.[92]

It is clear that Afghanistan and Pakistan are no longer facing a "unidirectional" insurgency with militants focusing their attention on targets in Afghanistan; rather, these neighbors share a common threat as a porous, poorly controlled border region serves as a sanctuary for militants attacking both states. As such, there have been a number of positive recent developments. The Pakistani government and military increasingly view the insurgency as a Pakistani—not just Afghan/NATO—problem, and have engaged in major battles against the Taliban, driving them out of the country's interior. The Pakistani public seems to support efforts to crack down on Islamist militancy; many are also willing to take direct action against the Taliban, as evidenced by the establishment of village defense forces.[93] In addition, the Obama administration and the new military leadership in Afghanistan, under the command of General Stanley McChrystal, have come to focus on the Taliban/al-Qaeda threat as a regional, rather than purely Afghan issue. NATO allies have also stressed the importance of dealing with Pakistan in an effective manner.[94] Nonetheless, the situation remains fragile, and tensions could rise again between Afghanistan and Pakistan, particularly given the eventuality of reduced foreign troop presence.

While the Pakistani state has had trouble dealing with insurgents, the Afghan security forces are still considerably weaker than their counterparts across the border. TNRs will seek safe haven in the "weakest link," and the NATO presence in Afghanistan has denied the Taliban/al-Qaeda extensive safe havens outside of the border regions. Nonetheless, it is entirely plausible that as NATO troop levels come down, militants will find Afghanistan to be the regional weak link. Afghan and Pakistani Taliban factions, along with Baloch separatists, and perhaps other militant groups in the South Asia region, may come to find safe havens within Afghanistan's territory if a power vacuum is left by the withdrawal of foreign troops. Thus, if the Afghan military is deterred from engaging in extensive cross-border operations by its stronger neighbor, Pakistan will not face similar constraints in violating Afghan territory. If Pakistani militants come to find strongholds in a weak Afghan state, Pakistan may be tempted to strike.

MOVING FORWARD IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

The transnational insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan are similar in many respects, but also exhibit important differences that cannot be ignored when developing appropriate policies to contain violence. First, both regions contain ethnic groups that straddle national boundaries and that have broadly similar agendas. While no one organization speaks for the group as a whole, Kurdish people in Iraq, Iran, and Turkey all aspire to a common homeland, or at least significant autonomy and the recognition of cultural rights. The Taliban is similarly aided by transnational

Pashtun loyalties and sympathetic populations on both sides of the border. One notable difference, however, is that the Kurds are a minority in all of the countries they inhabit, while Pashtuns are a dominant force in Afghanistan. All states in the Iraq theater oppose a unified Kurdish state, but some Pashtun leaders in Afghanistan have expressed a desire for a greater "Pashtunistan." A Pashtun-dominated state in Afghanistan with irredentist ambitions vis-à-vis Pakistan would clearly irk Islamabad.[95]

Second, in both regions there are large swaths of territory that are not controlled by recognized governments. The Iraqi government in Baghdad does not control the KRG, particularly as the Kurdish Peshmerga is the dominant security force in the north. In Afghanistan, the state is still far too weak to police its entire territory and it relies on NATO forces to maintain control, although pockets of space remain lawless. In the border regions of Pakistan, particularly the FATA, the central government has never enjoyed full control. Rather, it relies on paramilitary forces—the Frontier Corps (FC)—largely drawn from Pashtun tribesmen from the FATA to maintain security. These forces are paid by the Pakistani military, but their loyalty and effectiveness have often been questioned.[96] In contrast to Iraq, where neighboring states are relatively strong, the Taliban insurgency benefits from ungoverned areas on both sides of the border and it strikes at both states. Iraqi Kurdish regions serve as bases for Turkish and Iranian rebels; the situation is far more complex in Afghanistan and Pakistan where fragmented insurgent groups—under the catch-all label of the "Taliban"—strike at both states and benefit from sanctuaries on both sides of the border. Cobbling together local and central government forces in order

to secure border regions is essential but will prove to be difficult.

What can be done to prevent cross-border militancy from escalating to an international conflict among neighbors? In an ideal world, these insurgencies would be brought under control before U.S. and NATO troops withdraw or reduce levels. Turkey and Iran would find appropriate accommodations with Kurdish groups, and the Taliban insurgency would be contained on both sides of the border through a combination of kinetic operations and negotiations with moderates. However, while every effort should be made to find solutions to these conflicts quickly, the more likely scenario is that some militant factions will continue to operate after foreign troops pull out. Iraq, Afghanistan, and governments in the region will face lingering violence and will be largely on their own to deal with the problem. While the United States and its coalition partners have placed considerable emphasis on improving security forces and governance functions in both countries, far less attention has been paid to establishing diplomatic links with neighboring countries. Improving communication between neighbors and coordinated efforts to secure border regions are crucial to preventing transitional insurgencies from escalating to regional conflicts. Although the details must be worked out in close coordination with other actors in the region, a general strategy should focus on the following elements.

Find the Right Balance between local and Central Government Security Capacity.

It is clearly important to build the capacity of the central governments in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan to secure their borders, patrol their territory,

and prevent the movement of insurgents, arms, and contraband. These governments must establish appropriate migration controls, customs enforcement, counternarcotics operations, and border surveillance capabilities. It is also important to improve security forces so as to confront insurgents, protect civilian populations, and provide critical services to communities in the border region.

All of these elements of COIN operations are well-known and need not be reiterated here. Strengthening core government functions is essential, but these countries have a history of weak state control in border regions and it is unlikely that the central government will be able to operate effectively in these areas anytime soon. In Iraq, the Kurdish Regional Government and Peshmerga forces have a considerable degree of autonomy from the central state. In Pakistan, the tribal regions are dominated by local leaders rather than the central government. Thus, it is essential that the Kurdish Peshmerga and forces in the FATA be on board with the central government's agenda to secure border regions. To this end, the United States and Pakistan have been working together to strengthen the Pakistani Frontier Corps (FC), which is largely drawn from Pashtun tribal areas. Pakistan has received approximately $100 million in assistance for establishing training centers, raising new units, and providing equipment to the FC. Efforts have also been made to professionalize the Kurdish Peshmerga. These steps are important because central government forces have little legitimacy in these areas and the locals drawn from ethnic communities have better information about events in the area and can more effectively communicate with their counterparts across the border. As George Gavrilis argues, "border authorities vested with administrative autonomy, and the ability to interact with their counterparts on the

other side will tend toward cooperation in order to manage the shared boundary."[97]

There are risks to such a strategy, however. Strengthening forces such as the FC and Peshmerga can potentially backfire unless these groups are well-integrated into an overarching security agenda and force structure. While local forces can sometimes be more effective than the central government in policing their respective areas, their loyalty to the state may be questionable. The Peshmerga operate independently from the Iraqi Army, and relations between these forces and the central government have been tense, even hostile at times.[98] Pakistan's FC has often been treated as an untrustworthy second-class force, earning less pay than regular Pakistani units and being commanded by regular army officers. There have also been questions of loyalty since the FC is drawn from the same regions that harbor the Taliban. The Iraqi, Pakistani, and Afghan governments will be hesitant to bolster local forces if these groups threaten to pose problems in the future.

To build trust, local security forces and populations in these regions must feel that their livelihoods and well-being are inextricably linked to that of the country as a whole. That is, they must come to believe that remaining loyal to the central government promises greater rewards than autonomy. To do so, it is important that local units, while retaining their local roots, be integrated as full partners in the regular military structure. Soldier's pay, equipment, and advancement opportunities to senior ranks should be directed by the central government (rather than subnational units), and the leadership should be rewarded for meritorious service to the country as a whole. Pay grades and ranks should be equivalent to units in regular forces, and be afforded the same prestige and status. It is also vital

for local forces to be consulted in strategic planning sessions, joint operations should be encouraged, and training be conducted in such a way so as to foster a common esprit de corps. More broadly, it is important to foster commerce and cultural exchanges between the center and peripheral regions so as to create greater interdependence and trust. The central government must also be seen as providing vital services such as roads, schools, hospitals, and so on, to these regions to foster a common national spirit.

Improve Coordination between Security Forces, Especially between Units Along the Border.

While it is essential to place more troops and border security forces along the frontier, misunderstandings and tensions may arise unless there is cooperation among such forces. Here we can distinguish between COIN operations and normal policing. When actively engaging militant groups, particularly along the border, it is important that officers are apprised of what their counterparts on the other side of the boundary are doing. Troop movements along the border can potentially be threatening to the other side, provoking countermeasures, and it must be clear that these are intended to target insurgents rather than being hostile acts. Forces on the other side of the border may also be encouraged move to positions so as to intercept fighters fleeing the combat area. Whenever possible, coordinated "pincer" operations should be conducted on both sides of the border so as to squeeze militants out of strategic areas. Importantly, protocols must be established for hot-pursuit raids across the border. These should delineate when and under what circumstances security forces can cross the border

in pursuit of militants, how far they can move, the duration of these operations, and the point of contact for authorizing them.

In addition, border guards, immigration officials, customs agents, and police forces must be able to cooperate with similar entities on the other side of the border, coordinate actions, and share intelligence.[99] These agencies must be encouraged to share information on smuggling routes, wanted persons, illegal activities, and so on. In addition to high-level meetings between heads of agencies, it is also important that local agents on both sides of the border be in close contact with one another, hold joint training exercises, and take steps to foster trust. Finally, countries in the region must develop understandings and protocols for the extradition of criminals and terrorist suspects. In short, coordination among law enforcement can be as important as coordinating military operations. As Metz writes, "Law enforcement should replace the military as the primary manager of a mature counterinsurgency campaign."[100]

As an encouraging sign, meetings are currently being held to discuss security matters in both the Middle East and South Asia. These consultations should be encouraged and deepened. Afghanistan, Pakistan, and NATO hold regular meetings under the framework of the Tripartite Commission. Similarly, Iraq, Turkey, and the United States held meetings as part of the Trilateral Commission for Countering Terrorism;[101] while this effort fizzled, the three countries have recently agreed to more regular meetings to discuss security issues.[102] Beyond high-level meetings of military officers and civilian leaders, however, it is important that units on the ground establish effective, direct communications on a day-to-day basis. Forces that are responsible for

the everyday business of securing border regions must be able to directly access one another and build confidence in order to effectively counter cross-border crime and militancy and prevent tensions from arising between the states.

With respect to the Afghan-Pakistan border, it is absolutely essential that the countries come to a final settlement concerning their border. The Durand Line, established by the British colonial administration, has never been fully accepted as the international border, particularly as Pashtun leaders see it as arbitrarily dividing the Pashtun people. Without a clear demarcation of the border and mutual recognition of its legitimacy, misunderstandings will inevitably arise about appropriate political jurisdictions, troop movements, governance, and so on. A treaty establishing Afghanistan's borders once and for all, and with broad acceptance by various leaders and factions, is an essential undertaking that must be completed before foreign forces leave.

Enhance Mechanisms for Intelligence Sharing.

Coordination of COIN operations on both sides of the border will require that all states in the region have access to information about the activities of insurgents, terrorists, and criminals. Intelligence sharing in an open and timely manner is critical to defining and countering common threats. For many years, Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as Iraq and its neighbors were reluctant to provide detailed information to one another. Such secrecy can only serve to deepen mistrust and seriously hinders the effective targeting of militant groups.

In a positive development, in 2007, NATO forces, Afghanistan, and Pakistan announced the creation of the Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC). The mission of the JIOC is to enable joint campaign planning, and is capable of 24-hour operations. It is essential that the JIOC be seen by all sides as achieving concrete goals and fostering deeper cooperation between Afghan and Pakistani forces. Any remaining wrinkles for the sharing information must be ironed out. Most importantly, institutions such as the JIOC must continue to be viable even after foreign forces begin to withdraw. While it is likely that NATO forces will continue to play a pivotal role in providing intelligence to both countries for some time and will provide some support for coordinated operations, governments in the region must be encouraged to take ownership of intelligence sharing efforts.

Intelligence sharing must also be enhanced among Iraq and its neighbors. Here there has been greater reluctance to act as the KRG may be hesitant to provide Turkey with information about Kurdish militants. In addition, Iran has not been particularly helpful in engaging in intelligence sharing with other countries in the region; yet, obstacles to effective communication run both ways. While Iran and Turkey view regional militancy as a common threat and have engaged in intelligence sharing, U.S. and Iraqi forces have yet to establish contacts with Iran in a meaningful way. Clearly, there is a history of animosity between Iran, Iraq, and the United States. Nonetheless, common ground can be found on the issue of preventing cross-border attacks and the escalation of regional hostilities. Establishing a mechanism for Iraq and its neighbors similar to the JIOC in Afghanistan/Pakistan, and ensuring its long-term viability is an important step forward.

Promote Diplomacy and Commercial Exchanges in the Region.

The military efforts, detailed above, should be seen as a complement to continued diplomatic and commercial exchanges among actors in the region. Meetings between heads of state, foreign ministries, ministries of commerce and trade, and so forth, must be held on a regular basis, all with an eye towards preventing inevitable conflicts of interests and low-level clashes in border zones from escalating to a major conflict. Thus, civilian leadership at the highest levels is critical for diffusing potential tensions that arise from cross-border militant groups. These contacts have been going on for some time and must be sustained, even after foreign forces leave. Nevertheless, one critical player in the region has been on the sideline: Iran. Both Afghanistan and Iraq share borders with Iran and Iran has historically played an important role in both countries. Iran has at times not been seen as a helpful partner in the region. Current disputes over Iran's nuclear program, a history of mistrust between Iran and its neighbors, internal unrest following Iran's disputed election in June 2009, and several decades of hostility between Iran and the United States all contribute to difficult environment for effective diplomacy. Nonetheless, all actors in the region, including Iran, have an interest in curtailing cross-border militancy and in preventing an escalation of violence in the region. Therefore, while agreement will not be found on all issues, Iran must be brought to the bargaining table on the important matter of curtailing insurgencies in the region.

Finally, commercial exchanges among actors in the region can help to bind states in a common purpose and deepen interdependence among neighbors. Shared commercial interests and preserving growth through trade and investment can play a positive role in fostering cooperation on security matters. Turkey, for instance, has taken steps to promote trade and investment, deepening its economic ties with northern Iraq. Trade between Turkey and Iraq has averaged $5 billion per year. The Kurdistan region has benefitted from Turkish-financed construction projects and services, and it consumes $1 billion worth of Turkish goods per year. In addition, Turkish oil exploration companies have signed contracts with the KRG to develop fields inside the region, and Turkey provides vital pipelines for Iraqi oil.[103] Projects such as this have gone a long way in cementing good relations between Turkey, the KRG, and Iraq in general and provide a strong incentive to cooperate on security matters. Through robust commercial ties, the KRG may come to understand that limiting the PKK is in its long-term self-interest. Commercial links between Iraq and other countries in the region, as well as Afghanistan and its neighbors can similarly help to bind these country's futures together.

CONCLUSION

Transnational insurgent groups exploit limitations on government power and authority by strategically placing themselves outside of the state's reach. They make the best efforts at counterinsurgency more complex by increasing the transaction costs that governments face when they deal with their neighbors. Often times, cross-border fighting between rebels

and the state sour regional relations and can prompt escalatory dynamics that lead to clashes between neighbors. Rival neighbors use rebel organizations as an alternative to the direct use of force, but these groups can provoke interstate violence. Weak rebel hosts can be drawn into conflicts with their neighbors because they are unable to prevent rebel access or incursions by other states.

However, states can and do cooperate on border security matters to prevent the escalation of conflict. Learning from these examples can provide lessons for today's challenges. Promoting clear lines of communication, sharing intelligence, and establishing border cooperation regimes can go a long way in both countering violent groups and preserving friendly relations between states. Thus, effective diplomacy is critical to preventing the escalation of regional crises.

Iraq, Afghanistan, and their neighbors and allies will certainly confront transnational violence for some time to come. As foreign forces begin to withdraw it is essential that agreements with neighbors are struck so as to establish appropriate coordination mechanisms and border security regimes. Such steps will help to limit insurgent movements and preserve stability in neighborhoods that have long been plagued by conflict.

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