2-2016

The Ineffectiveness of Drones in the Total Defeat of Al Qaeda

Adam R. McQuarrie

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Professor Name [Last, First] *	Sibayan, Jerome			
Program Name * See list	Military Studies			
Keywords [250 character max.]	Al Qaeda, Drones, Counterterrorism, Strategic Victory			
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THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF DRONES IN THE TOTAL DEFEAT OF AL QAEDA

A Master Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

American Public University

by

Adam Ross McQuarrie

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

of

Master of Arts

November 2015

American Public University

Charles Town, WV

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DEDICATION

       I dedicate this thesis to my wife. Throughout this process, she has gone above and beyond what one could expect from a partner; without her sacrifices, patience, understanding, and support, the completion of this work would not have been possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all those members of the faculty and staff at American Military University that supported me on my journey to this point and throughout this process. From the outset of this program, I was given tremendous support in the pursuit of this topic, and the tools to succeed throughout.

I found my course work throughout the military studies program to be both challenging and very rewarding. The lessons I have learned and the tools I have acquired here will serve me very well throughout the remainder of my career, and for that I am very grateful.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF DRONES IN THE TOTAL DEFEAT OF AL QAEDA

by

Adam Ross McQuarrie

American Public University System, October 25, 2015

Charles Town, West Virginia

Professor Jerome Sibayan, Thesis Professor

This paper reports on the utility of drone strikes in the strategic defeat of Al Qaeda. This paper employed a mixed method approach that saw the use of existing published literature in the development of qualitative and quantitative data, as well as the use of quantitative data from databases. This paper also utilized the SWORD model of counterinsurgency in operationalizing data. The research showed that over the last decade, drone strikes became increasingly accurate due to the development of the Reaper drone, and new CIA targeting techniques. Those improvements in accuracy ultimately generated greater tactical losses for Al Qaeda, but those tactical losses did not generate equal strategic losses. Despite tactical losses, Al Qaeda was still capable of conducting

regional and global operations while expanding its sphere of influence throughout the

Middle East. The research showed that drone strikes were not achieving the desired

strategic effects because they of Al Qaeda's unique organizational structure, and because

they failed to affect Al Qaeda's centers of gravity.

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I.   Introduction

For over a decade, Al Qaeda has been the primary target of the global

counterinsurgency and counterterrorism efforts led by the United States. During the early

stages of that effort, the United States expended a tremendous amount of human,

monetary, and industrial resources to bring the fight to Al Qaeda and their allies in the

Middle East during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom. While

these operations were successful in eventually driving Al Qaeda out of Iraq and

Afghanistan, the total resource burden felt by the United States led to domestic concerns

about how to proceed in the prosecution of radical Islamic terrorists who posed a security

threat to the United States. While coalition forces swiftly evicted Al Qaeda from Iraq,

they found safe haven in Pakistan under the protection of the Pakistani Taliban,

facilitated by the Haqqani Network. So while coalition forces continued to fight some

factions of Al Qaeda and its allies in Afghanistan, other Al Qaeda members and leaders

recruited, trained, and planned domestic and regional operations under a large Pakistani

Taliban safety net. Coalition governments, led by the United States, identified this issue

with the Pakistani government. While the Pakistani government could not agree to allow

a foreign force fight Al Qaeda within Pakistan, they did allow the U.S. to being

conducting drone strikes against Al Qaeda operatives and facilities; thus began the drone

war that still continues today. The United States initially achieved tremendous success

against Al Qaeda with the use of drones. Drone strikes slowed down Al Qaeda attacks

within Pakistan and throughout the region,[1] they disrupted Al Qaeda recruiting and

training efforts, and they forced key Al Qaeda leaders to move deep underground,

limiting their ability to plan attacks and influence operations.[2] Ultimately, drone strikes

generated successes against Al Qaeda while reducing expenditures in human, monetary, and industrial resources. In Washington, this reduction in resource expenditure, combined with the tactical success of drone strikes, made drones the most economically, politically, and socially sustainable option in the persecution of Al Qaeda and its affiliates; drone strikes thus became primary tool for the United States in its global counterterrorism efforts.

Early in the history of warfare, armies were capable of achieving decisive victories in single battles; ultimately, tactical successes often directly produced strategic victories. During World War I, it became evident that this was no longer the case; primarily because of the mass states were able to bring to the battlefield. World War I saw the advent of a three dimensional battlefield with depth necessitating the way armies planed and conducted battles and campaigns. In war colleges in the United States and Russia, scholars and defense experts reacted to the carnage of World War I by developing the operational art. The operational art would be used to combat the depth of modern armies, ensure that forces maintained momentum from one engagement to the next, and ensure that tactical victories could eventually produce the desired strategic effect.

Presently, the operational art is absent in the global counterterrorism effort against Al Qaeda; this is evident in the fact that countless tactical victories through the use of drone strikes have failed to yield any positive strategic outcome. Despite great losses in Pakistan after over a decade of drone strikes, Al Qaeda continues to press on. While Al Qaeda is presently less active in Pakistan than in years past,[3] they still have some influence there.[4] Also, and perhaps more significantly, in recent years, Al Qaeda has had great success expanding throughout other areas of the Middle East, most significantly, the

Arab Peninsula.[5] Al Qaeda's strategic goals include expanding their influence and conducting global jihad; their expansion into the Arab Peninsula shows that tactical victories against them are not preventing them from achieving their strategic goals.

This problem begs the question that is the basis for this research project, and that is: why have drone strikes been unsuccessful at degrading Al Qaeda's operational capabilities and restricting it from expanding its organization into new areas throughout the Middle East? The purpose of this research project is to determine why Al Qaeda has remained operationally effective and capable of expanding its organization despite decades of drone strike targeting by U.S. and coalition forces. This will be achieved by examining the issue through three lenses: first, the effect of drone strikes on the relationship between Al Qaeda and its key internal and external sources of support; second, the effect of drone strikes on Al Qaeda's perceived legitimacy throughout the Middle East; and finally, the aspects of Al Qaeda's organizational structure which may make it resistant to drone strikes. This will be achieved through the analysis of existing published literature as well as through the analysis of data relating to the frequency and results of drone strikes against Al Qaeda available through open sources.

Drone strikes have been a major topic of conversation within academia for several years now because of their relevance to so many fields. In addition to the defense and security field, drone strikes have been discussed at length within the legal community over considerations of unintended civilian deaths, and also due to the use of force in areas not declared as war zones. Within the defense and security field drone strikes have been discussed in a variety of manners. These include tactical approaches, technological upgrades and improvements in operating procedures, potential global precedents, and

most notably, their utility in the defeat of global terrorist organizations. With so many discussion points and such great interest surrounding this topic, there is a great depth of literature available for consideration on this issue. At present, the literature on the utility and suitability of drones as a counterterrorism tool focuses on three major points of discussion. The first point of discussion is whether or not drone strikes actually produce a significant tactical outcome against Middle Eastern based global terrorist organizations. This discussion is filled with statistics on how many combatant deaths drone strikes have caused and how much combatant infrastructure drone strikes have destroyed. These statistics are usually juxtaposed against increases, decreases, or lack of a change in terrorist acts to demonstrate whether or not drone strikes are a suitable counterterrorism tool. The second point of discussion focuses on the utility of leadership decapitation against terrorist organizations. This discussion has lead to the classification of several types of terrorist organizations based on leadership institutionalization, age, and size, and attempts to predict the successfulness of leadership decapitation against each classification of terrorist organization. The third point of discussion debates whether or not drone strikes are actually counter productive to global counterterrorism efforts. Some scholars have posited that collateral damage from drone strikes, namely unintended civilian deaths, exacerbate some of the social, economic, and political conditions that generate support for global terrorist organizations. The debate in this area is pretty well even on both sides. The data generally consists of quantitative data illustrating the accuracy or inaccuracy of drones in any given instance, juxtaposed against social reactions to drone use or civilian commentary on drone use in general.

As a complete whole, the literature paints a somewhat incomplete picture. Aside from establishing a confusing duality on the utility of drones in the global counterterrorism effort, current literature fails to answer more specific questions by discussing drones in absolute terms of if they are suitable tools or not. Drones are here to stay, and the more pressing question at hand (and the one that if answered will complete the picture) is under what conditions can we expect drones to be successful. By addressing why Al Qaeda has remained operationally effective and capable of expanding its sphere of influence into new areas of the Middle East, this research project will begin to close that gap in the literature.

In order to begin closing the gap in the current literature, this research paper will use a research methodology that will address two critical components of this issue. The first component is identifying what conditions or characteristics, specific to Al Qaeda, might make them resistant to strategic defeat through the use of drones. The methodology that will be used here will be two-fold. First, existing published literature which describes terrorist organization classifications will be examined to determine which characteristics of terrorist organizations typically cause them to be resistant to drone strikes, or specific drone strike employment methodologies. Subsequently, secondary source data will be examined in order to determine which, if any, drone strike resistant characteristics are present within Al Qaeda's organizational makeup. This alone however, would not fully answer the question; thus, the second component is identifying how drone strikes, if at all, affect Al Qaeda's centers of gravity. This exploration will be rooted in the SWORD model, a counterinsurgency model developed by Max Manwaring and John Fishel. The SWORD model describes that two centers of gravity of any insurgent or terrorist force

are perceived moral legitimacy, and internal and external sources of support.[6] Thus, the methodology utilized here will attempt to explain how drone strikes affect Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy, and its internal and external sources of support. This will be done through primary and secondary data collection on drone strike results against Al Qaeda, which specifically show how Al Qaeda is currently being targeted, and by leveraging secondary qualitative data on any social shifts toward or against Al Qaeda in the aftermath of drone strikes.

Presently, drones represent the most socially, politically, and economically sustainable option in the global counterterrorism effort. At this time, much of the literature concerning drones attempts to sway the reader one way or the other about the use or drones in general; and if they should be proliferated or banned. In an effort to win a debate, much of the literature and the arguments contained within it miss the big picture; that big picture is that drones will continue to be used as the primary tool in the global counterterrorism effort for the foreseeable future. The fight against global terrorism is surely a long fight,[7] and the only way to win, or survive, is to approach counterterrorism as a long war, one that requires sustainable options that not only support victory, but also defend against defeat.[8] It seems as though the United States government, or at least the Department of Defense and the State Department understand that, which is why we are seeing such an emphasis on drones and why we likely will for the foreseeable future. With that said, it is imperative that the literature move away from advocating for or against drone use, and shift toward trying to understand when drones will and will not be successful, and in what form success will take shape. This topic merits much more study than what is currently available in literature. While drones are certainly a

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sustainable option in the global counterterrorism effort, they are still a resource that needs to be managed effectively in order to secure victory over global terrorist threats.

The results of this research, whether the hypothesis is proved, partially proved, or outright disproved will become part of the blueprint that will allow senior defense officials and decision makers to make more effective choices in the employment of drones against global terrorist organizations. While this data will be specific to drone use against Al Qaeda, the resultant data will be applicable to other terrorist organizations through the application of some of the general themes that emerge. Researchers and analysts further exploring this topic will be able to apply those general themes to other terrorist organizations or other potential drone strike targets in order to produce specific data about the likely outcomes or expected success rate and success type of a given type of drone strike against that terrorist organization. Ultimately, the pool of data that could emerge from this process might not change how effective drones can be against any given type of terrorist organization, but it should give decision makers a better understanding of the likely outcome of any given type of drone strike against a variety of targets. This improved understanding by decision makers will undoubtedly lead to a more efficient and effective use of drones in the global counterterrorism effort, and possibly reduce the instances where drone strikes are counter productive to that effort.

II.   Literature Review

Introduction

As a major aspect of the current counterterrorism approach utilized by the United States, drone strikes have commanded a lot of attention in both mainstream media, and scholarly literature. With respect to the latter, the mixed results drone strikes have achieved against primary targets such as Al Qaeda, the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and now ISIS across more than a decade, have generated a great breadth and depth of material on the topic.

This study will be examining the affects of three independent variables on one independent variable. Specifically, this study will examine how Al Qaeda's organizational structure, its ability to establish a moral legitimacy and maintain that legitimacy, and its ability to foster internal and external sources of support affect the effectiveness of drone strikes in preventing Al Qaeda from achieving its strategic goals. This study will also be using the SWORD model of counterinsurgency as a theoretical basis for the analysis of the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

With respect to the independent variables, scholarly literature is readably available in great depth, with commentary evenly split across the spectrum of arguments. Additionally, found within each literary category is a great deal of general analysis on the dependent variable of this study. Specifically, each source within the subsections of the literature consistently provides commentary on the effectiveness of drone strikes in general terms based on the data produced from their specific study. While this trend is a shortcoming across most of the literature, combining the findings and the general analysis

of the effectiveness of drone strikes allows the reader to make specific inferences about drone use in specific situations.

In terms of organizational structure, there is a great depth of sources that examine several organizational characteristics of terrorist and insurgent organizations and their resiliency against, or susceptibility to drone strikes. Within this subsection of the literature, there are many competing views on which organizational classifications are the most and least susceptible to drone strikes, and the literature also offers some analysis of which drone strike methodologies are most effective against each organizational classification. As a whole, this subsection of the literature is critical to this study as it will allow the identification of Al Qaeda's organizational classification, as well as provide an understanding of the resiliency against or susceptibility to drone strikes of that organizational classification. Revealing this information will of course be critical in proving or disproving the hypothesis.

In terms of moral legitimacy, the greatest depth of literature exists within this subsection of the literature. Within this subsection of the literature, the sources examine how, and in some cases whether or not drone strikes actually contribute to enhancing the moral legitimacy of targeted terrorist organizations. Within this subsection, the majority of the sources examine the impact of unintended civilian casualties resulting from drone strikes targeting terrorist operatives and infrastructure. These sources examine the overall civilian death toll, examine the civilian death toll as a factor of the militant death toll, and look at changes in accuracy and employment methods of drones over the total period of their use in Afghanistan, Iraq, and in particular Pakistan. Additionally, these sources examine changes in public opinion in the areas affected by drone strikes and reveal

potential attitude shifts with respect to Al Qaeda and its goals. Also within this subsection of the literature, there are some sources that look at the morality and other potential negative consequences of drone use in general. These sources look at the global image the United States is creating for itself by using drones in areas not officially declared as war zones. These sources examine the potential precedent the United States is establishing that could eventually cause security concerns in the future, and how the United States' global partners perceive their efforts, especially when civilian casualties are involved. As a whole, this subsection of the literature is critical to this study. Primarily, the data collected and the qualitative information recorded, speak to strike operations against Al Qaeda within Pakistan. Thus, these sources not only reveal some general information about how drone strikes can affect the perceived moral legitimacy of a terrorist organization, but they reveal specifically how several CIA drone strike campaigns in Pakistan have affected Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy. Also, as perceived moral legitimacy is a zero sum game when two sides are opposing one another, these sources offer a critical perspective on how drone strike operations are potentially hurting the United States' perceived moral legitimacy and thus elevating that of Al Qaeda.

In terms of internal and external sources of support, there is a good depth of literature that discusses both Al Qaeda's relationship with several internal and external sources, and how drone strikes affect those relationships as well as the forming of new ones. The sources within this subsection of the literature look at how Al Qaeda has evolved over the last decade, and how its allies, partners, and affiliates have contributed to that evolution. These sources also look at if and how the unintended effects of drone

strikes change or shape the relationship between terrorist organizations and their sources of support. Much of the literature available specifically speaks to Al Qaeda and its allies; therefore, this subsection of the literature is critical to this study, as examination and analysis of this literature will ensure the hypothesis is properly tested.

In terms of the SWORD model of counterinsurgency, there is very little literature available either critiquing or utilizing the model. Of the literature that does utilize the SWORD model, the researchers found it to be a very effective model in either developing effective counterinsurgency approaches, or in predicting the outcome of past insurgencies. These sources, although very few, are critical to this study as they provide further clarification on the components and use of the model, as well as its utility for counterinsurgency operations.

Independent Variables – Organizational Structure

There is a great depth of literature that explores several avenues of this independent variable. The first source comes from Audrey Kurth Cronin, a leading expert in counterterrorism operations, and Al Qaeda. In her article titled "How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups" Cronin discusses the uniqueness of Al Qaeda compared to other terrorist organizations of the 20th and 21st centuries,[9] but stresses the US cannot forget previous lessons learned from their fights with other terrorists and insurgents in their efforts to defeat Al Qaeda.[10] She preludes her argument on how to best defeat Al Qaeda by reviewing how many other terrorists groups have either been defeated or dissolved in the past. Overall, she argues that terrorist groups can dissolve or be defeated in the following manners: capture or killing the leader; inability to pass the cause on to the next generation; achievement of the cause; negotiations toward a

legitimate political process; diminishment of popular support; military force repression; and transition to another modus operandi.[11] Cronin argues, that depending on a variety of geopolitical and socioeconomic factors, some terrorist organizations are more susceptible to defeat or dissolving by some of these measures than others.[12] Cronin then discusses the four factors that make Al Qaeda a unique terrorist organization in the 21st century; these factors are: the fluidity of their organization; their recruitment methods; their means of support; and their means of communication.[13] Based on her analysis of Al Qaeda's uniqueness, and her analysis of methods of destroying or dissolving terrorist organizations, Cronin concludes that a successful strategy for defeating Al Qaeda would have to include exploiting the differences of the people Al Qaeda typically recruit to turn them against one another, in order to make their unification impossible, and thus their cooperation in support of Al Qaeda impossible.[14] This article actually speaks to two of the independent variables of this study and is clearly very critical to this study. Much of the research has shown that drone strikes can cause different groups of people to unite. This source explains how that unification, particularly due to Al Qaeda's organizational structure, benefits Al Qaeda strategically.

Michael Freeman, a defense analyst at the Naval Postgraduate School discusses the implications of leadership institutionalization on the effectiveness of leadership decapitation in his article: "A Theory of Terrorist Leadership and its Consequences for Leadership Targeting." Freeman discusses this in broad terms but does offer specific analysis to Al Qaeda in his conclusion. Freeman argues that leaders of terrorist organizations provide two critical leadership functions: operational direction and inspiration. He suggests that early on in the life cycle of a terrorist organization, leaders

who provide these function help sustain the organization and ensure its survival; however, as the organization ages and becomes larger and more complex, leaders who continue to exclusively provide these leadership functions become a liability if removed.[15] Freeman argues that leadership decapitation is likely to be successful if the targeted leader provides both of these leadership functions, but it can also be successful if the targeted leader only provides one of these leadership functions.[16] Freeman argues that both of these leadership functions can be institutionalized, whereby the members of the organization believe in the cause so much, and they have been trained to such a high standard, that they no longer need a specific leader to pull the strings. In terrorist organizations where this is the case, Freeman argues that leadership decapitation is very likely to be unsuccessful.[17] In examining Al Qaeda, Freeman argues that while Osama bin Laden initially provided both inspiration and operational direction, these responsibilities eventually shifted away from him and were institutionalized throughout the organization.[18] Freeman suggests that this shift in leadership institutionalization is what insulated Al Qaeda from some of the potential adverse affects of bin Laden's death in 2011.[19] This source is critical to this study as it provides data and a clear explanation of how Al Qaeda's organizational structure make it resistant to the adverse effects of drone strikes and in particular, targeted killings.

Patrick B. Johnston discusses the effectiveness of leadership decapitation in broad, general terms in his article: "Does Decapitation Work? Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Targeting in Counterinsurgency Campaigns." Johnson argues that even in terrorist organizations with great depth, decapitation may ultimately degrade the organization's pool of skilled leaders and operatives, while disrupting the

planning process to the point where counterinsurgency forces are capable of seizing and maintaining the initiative.[20] Johnston also argues that in general, leadership decapitation is more likely to yield government victories over insurgencies more often than not; that leadership decapitation normally leads to the reduced lethality of terrorist attacks; and that leadership decapitation ultimately leads to fewer terrorist attacks overall.[21] Johnston also claims that ideological based insurgencies, and center-seeking insurgencies (insurgencies with the stated goal of becoming the sovereign government of the state) are more susceptible to leadership decapitation that other types of insurgent or terrorist organizations.[22] While Johnston does not provide any specific analysis of Al Qaeda, and his work predates much of the conflict with Al Qaeda, this source is still very useful to this study. Johnston's work here indicates that leadership decapitation is a useful counterterrorism tool overall. In describing the most susceptible insurgent types to leadership decapitation, he is essentially describing the antithesis of Al Qaeda. Additionally, some of the organizational attributes he considers less susceptible to leadership decapitation may be found in Al Qaeda; Johnston's data will be useful in analyzing this independent variable.

Jenna Jordan measures the effectiveness of leadership decapitation as a counterterrorism tool in her article titled: "When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation." Jordan analyses 298 incidents of leadership decapitation over a period of sixty years in order to produce a data set that adequately tracks the rate of decline of terrorist organizations whose leaders had been targeted versus those whose leaders had not. After collecting her data, Jordan determined that three organizational elements played significant factors in the rate of decline of terrorist organizations targeted

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by leadership decapitation; these were organizational type, organizational age, and organizational size. While organizational age and size are clear, Jordan established three types of organizations for her study: ideological; religious; and separatist. Overall, Jordan found that ideological, smaller, and younger groups experienced a much higher rate of decline after their leaders were targeted than did other types of groups, especially larger and older groups.[23] However, Jordan also found that the rate of decline of each classification was unaffected by leadership decapitation; that is to say that organizations of the same type, age and size, declined at similar rates whether their leaders had been targeted or not.[24] This source is critical to a well-rounded analysis of this independent variable. This is one of only a few sources that suggests that leadership decapitation is ineffective overall, and it provides some specific insights as to what aspects of Al Qaeda's organization might make it resistant to drone strikes, and specifically, leadership decapitation.

Austin Long looks at the organizational conditions under which leadership decapitation would or would not be successful in his article: "Whack-a-Mole or Coup de Grace? Institutionalization and Leadership Targeting in Iraq and Afghanistan." Long argues that the effectiveness of leadership decapitation is particularly dependent on the organizational institutionalization of a group more so than any other factor.[25] Long argues that there are three key factors of organizational institutionalism that determine how resistant or susceptible a terrorist organization is to leadership decapitation. The first factor is the existence of hierarchy: Long argues that with a clear chain of command and an established succession plan, terrorist organizations can quickly recover from the removal of top leaders.[26] The second factor, Long argues, is functional specialization.

Long maintains that presence of this factor allows leaders with specific skills to not only be readily replaced, but also to be moved throughout the organization to fill any gaps the form when leaders from other cells are killed.[27] Lastly, Long maintains that the third factor of organizational institutionalism is the existence of bureaucratic processes and standard operating procedures. He suggests that this factor alleviates the pressure, at least initially, to replace dead leaders as general operatives and specialists have the capability to operate independent of their leadership, at least temporarily.[28] This article is another critical source for the analysis of this independent variable. It explains the organizational characteristics that are resistant to the effects of drone strikes, specifically leadership decapitation, and when analyzed against Al Qaeda, it will help test the hypothesis.

Independent Variables – Perceived Moral Legitimacy

This subsection of the literature arguably contains the greatest depth of sources. Largely due to the polarizing nature of the discussion concerning the occurrence of civilian casualties, and the hypothesized and real implications of civilian casualties, the literature is rich in commentary with respect to this independent variable. The first source is another article by Audrey Kurth Cronin titled: "Why Drones Fail." In this article, Cronin argues that drone strikes are not a suitable counterterrorism tool as they have failed to achieve any strategic effects against Al Qaeda despite some tactical gains.[29] Cronin acknowledges that drone strikes have caused Al Qaeda to change the way it operates, and have limited Al Qaeda's ability to plan and conduct operations, overall reducing violence in the areas they operate in.[30] However, she argues the benefits end there, as she believes that drones are actually undermining Washington's ability to destroy Al Qaeda.[31] Cronin argues that Al Qaeda propaganda has actually been bolstered

as Al Qaeda uses drone strike footage to portray indiscriminate violence against Muslims.[32] Additionally, Cronin credits the drone campaign with increasing anti-American sentiment growing within Pakistan, the primary location of the CIA drone campaign.[33]Cronin indicated that only 12 percent of Pakistanis approved US drone strikes against terrorist leaders, even when conducted jointly with Pakistani forces. Additionally, she demonstrated that the disapproval of the drone strike campaign extends internationally as well with many traditional Muslim-majority allies of the US, and many US European allies disapprove of the drone campaign as well.[34] Cronin suggests that much of this disapproval is with respect to the use of force in areas not declared war zones, and over the deaths of civilians that have occurred as collateral damage from the strikes against Al Qaeda militants.[35] This source relates to two key aspects of this independent variable: first, that drone strikes are not adversely affecting Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy but rather potentially bolstering it; and second, that these drone strikes may be adversely affecting the US' perceived moral legitimacy in its efforts against Al Qaeda.

Matthew Fricker, et all examine the civilian death toll from the collateral damage of drone strikes in Pakistan through 2010 in their article titled: "New Light on the Accuracy of the CIA's Predator Drone Campaign in Pakistan." The most significant finding in their study is that the drone strikes in Pakistan have "maintained a greater proportionality than either ground operations in the area or targeting campaigns elsewhere."[36] Fricker et all found that through June 19, 2010, there had been a total of 144 CIA drone strikes in Pakistan, resulting in 1,372 deaths. Of those 1,372 deaths, only 68 could be confirmed as civilians, with 1,098 confirmed as militants or suspected

militants.[37] Fricker et all also found that despite increased drone strikes from 2007 to 2009, the ratio of militant to civilian deaths remained consistent with the other periods from 2004-2006, and 2009-2010.[38] This source will be useful in the analysis of this independent variable as it demonstrates that drone strikes produce, on average, a marginal difference, or at best fewer civilian casualties than conventional ground operations. This data will speak to the critique that drones are necessarily causing more collateral damage than is proportionate and thus contributing to a bolstering of Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy or damaging that of the US.

Thomas Mockaitis speaks to the necessity of a counterterrorism strategy to include a plan to gain the support of local populations in order to isolate terrorist organizations from them in his article titled: "Winning Hearts and Minds in the 'War on Terrorism'." Mockaitis argues that terrorist organizations require the support of local populations for supplies and safe heaven, and without that support they can be much more easily targeted.[39] Mockaitis also argued that intelligence gathering is the most critical element in defeating a terrorist organization, and he maintained that the best source of intelligence on terrorist organizations comes from local populations.[40] Mockaitis suggests that Al Qaeda's organizational structure and system make it even more critical to obtain human intelligence wherever possible. He argues that only the leader of each cell knows anyone within the next level of command, and that he may only know one individual; with each cell containing only a dozen or so operatives across 60 countries.[41] Mockaitis argues that this cell structure means capturing one cell yields little information about the organizational whole, and explains why even despite the attacks of 9/11 precise intelligence on Al Qaeda remained difficult to gather as of 2003.[42] Mockaitis

stresses that Al Qaeda is able to maintain a grasp over the local populations it resides in due to the ferocity and success with which they carry out terrorist attacks. He suggests that any campaign to gain the support of a local population would have to convince that population that they would be better off with that force rather than siding with Al Qaeda.[43] Finally, Mockaitis addresses the need to a strategic counterterrorism approach to address the grievances for which local populations side with Al Qaeda in the first place. He suggested, while that may be difficult, at a minimum, counterterrorism efforts should strive to avoid aggravating those situations or creating new ones that make local populations feel aggrieved to the extent the lead them to support terrorist organizations. This source will be very useful in analyzing this independent variable. It sheds light on how terrorist organizations rely on perceived moral legitimacy and how inadvertently bolstering that can allow terrorists to achieve their strategic goals.

Dan Parsons provides an analysis of how the CIA drone program may damage US credibility and produce greater security concerns in his article titled: "Remotely Piloted Aircraft Strikes Score Victories But Could Backfire in the Long Run." Parsons makes two critical arguments in his article: first, that the US' international credibility is eroding as a result of the CIA drone campaign; and second, that the US is potentially setting a dangerous international precedent whereby it is acceptable to identify and target security threats within the borders of other states. To the first point, Parsons argues that many US allies generally frown upon the use of drones in targeting Al Qaeda militants in Pakistan.[44] To the second point, Parsons posits that the US may ultimately face greater security concerns from other states who will soon develop the same drone technology they have and potentially use those drones to target non-state enemies operating within

the US or within the borders of one of its allies.[45] Parsons takes a different approach to analyzing how US drone operations against Pakistan are potentially damaging their perceived moral legitimacy and thus this source is key to a well-rounded analysis of this independent variable.

Avery Plaw et all, analyse the claim that the civilian death toll in Pakistan is rising from the collateral damage of drone strikes in their article titled: "Practice Makes Perfect?: The Changing Civilian Toll of CIA Drone Strikes in Pakistan." Plaw et all review the current discussion on civilian casualties from drone strikes and remark at the absurdity of both sides. One the one hand, Pakistani news sources and NGOs, which take their information from the Pakistani news sources, were claiming almost 100 percent of drone strike casualties were civilian, while some US officials were on the complete other end of the spectrum, claiming 0 civilian casualties from 2010 to 2011.[46] Plaw et all argue that the drone debate has been increasingly fuelled by inflammatory reports from Pakistan as many news sites within the US report Pakistani drone strike casualty figures without conducting any due diligence.[47] Plaw et all suggest that this widely reported figures are damaging the image of the CIA drone program which has increased its accuracy consistently each year from 2009-2011. Utilizing statistics from The New American Foundation, The Long War Journal, and UMass DRONE, Plaw et all show that in each year, from 2009-2011, the CIA drone campaign in Pakistan produced significantly fewer civilian casualties than the year prior.[48] Plaw et all attribute this improved accuracy to the development of the Reaper drone, and the increased use of local spies who are able to provide real time, accurate information on the location of Al Qaeda militants.[49] This data will be useful in analyzing this independent variable not only

because it speaks to some potential explanations of the adverse effects of the drone campaign on US perceived moral legitimacy in this effort, but also because it speaks to the potential of developing drone technology and strike methodology that mitigates those effects.

Independent Variables – Sources of Support

There is a good depth of sources within this subsection of the literature. One aspect of this subsection of the literature explores the idea that drone strikes either do or do not, or may or may not, create additional internal sources of support for terrorist organizations due to unintended civilian deaths. The other aspect of this subsection of the literature describes Al Qaeda's current relationships with internal and external sources of support, and in some cases, explains how US foreign policy is affecting those relationships. The first source is an article by Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedemann titled: "Washington's Phantom War." In this article, Bergen and Tiedemann discuss the DoD and CIA drone programs and analyze how each contributes to the US counterterrorism effort. In analyzing each drone program, Bergen and Tiedemann concluded that over the lifespan of the programs, the militant death rate has been at 80 percent, a figure that jumped to 95 percent in 2010.[50] Bergen and Tiedemann then discuss the transparency with which the two drone programs are conducted; while the DoD program is perfectly transparent, the CIA has very little transparency, leaving it vulnerable to enemy propaganda.[51] Bergen and Tiedemann argue that this lack of transparency in the CIA program is actually allowing Al Qaeda to exploit the program in order to foster new local alliances within Pakistan.[52] Bergen and Tiedemann show that only nine percent of the Pakistani population support US drone strikes into the Federally

Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan in pursuit of Al Qaeda.[53] Bergen and Tiedemann suggest this figure is affected by Al Qaeda propaganda, and they recommend moving total control of US drone operations to the DoD who operate transparently, in order to counter Al Qaeda control of the message.[54] This source will be useful in analyzing this independent variable as it offers a perspective as to how Al Qaeda is able to take advantage of current drone operations to possibly engender internal sources of support within the Pakistani tribal areas.

Milam and Nelson offer an interesting take on the role the Pakistani population plays in Pakistani foreign policy in their article titled: "Pakistan's Populist Foreign Policy." Milam and Nelson first provide a brief look at the history of Pakistani foreign policy, which was largely aimed at defending itself from India. Milam and Nelson suggest that public fear toward India drove a largely anti-Indian foreign policy for decades.[55] Additionally, they argue that anytime the government needed to recover from a political error or mistake, it make bold foreign policy moves that "stoked the flames of public opinion."[56] Milam and Nelson note a specific change in public opinion in Pakistan from Indophobia to anti-Americanism. They suggest anti-Americanism has long been a factor in Pakistani public opinion, but it has only intensified with US counterterrorism operations in Pakistan.[57] Milam and Nelson discuss how public opinion played a major factor in the Pakistan army decision to not conduct operations in North Waziristan in pursuit of the Haqqani Network, despite pleas from the US.[58] Overall, Milam and Nelson paint a picture that suggests the Pakistani population plays a significant role in Pakistani foreign policy decisions, and that currently, anti-Americanism runs deep throughout the Pakistani population which is driving Pakistani to make foreign policy decisions that

might go against US interests and drive Pakistan closer to the Haqqani Network.[59] This source will be useful in analyzing this independent variable as it sheds some light on how current US policy might be pushing Pakistan closer to the Haqqani Network, an organization that has very close ties to Al Qaeda.

Quinlan looks at the duality of Pakistani foreign policy in his article titled: "Pakistan: A Conflicted Ally in the Fight Against Terrorism Since 9/11." Quinlan speaks to two major issues in this article. The first issue he discusses is the fact that Pakistan, despite more pressing domestic concerns, is still preoccupied with India.[60] Quinlan suggests that this preoccupation has led to Pakistan committing its resources away from the local fight against terrorism to such a degree that it is incapable of effectively engaging local groups such as Al Qaeda or the Pakistani Taliban, despite large amounts of US aid.[61] The second issue Quinlan discusses is a by-product of the first; Pakistani support to terrorist organizations. Quinlan suggests that Pakistani military capabilities are in such poor state, and that Pakistan is so over run with terrorist organizations, that the Pakistani government has had to co-opt the loyalties of other terrorist organizations to support their efforts at defeating select terrorists.[62] Specifically, Pakistan's ISI has turned to the Haqqani Network, and the Afghan Taliban to help defeat the Pakistani Taliban and its affiliates.[63] While this article is more geared toward US foreign policy considerations for Pakistan, it sheds light on a key issue that will provide some balance in analyzing this independent variable. Specifically looking at the Milam and Nelson article, this source offers an alternative perspective to why Pakistan supports certain terrorist groups.

Rassler and Brown offer an in-depth look at the Haqqani Network in their monograph titled: "The Haqqani Nexus and the Evolution of al-Qa'ida." Rassler and

Brown provide a background of the Haqqani Network, dating its roots back to the 1970s. Rassler and Brown suggest that while the Haqqani Network strives for global jihad, it portrays itself as a local actor, only concerned with local issues, which is what has allowed it to fly under the radar of US counterterrorism efforts for so long.[64] Rassler and Brown discuss how the Haqqani Network has control of North Waziristan and how that control has allowed them to control access in and out of Pakistan, from Afghanistan.[65] They note that this control, and their alliance with Al Qaeda, is what allowed Al Qaeda to survive coalition assaults during Operation Enduring Freedom.[66] Further, Rassler and Brown contend that the alliance between the Haqqani Network and Al Qaeda has allowed Al Qaeda to conduct heavy media campaigns despite Taliban opposition giving them access to more support,[67] and what has allowed Al Qaeda to recruit and train free from targeting within Pakistan.[68] They describe the Haqqani Network's nexus position within Pakistan and areas of Afghanistan as an ability to bring people from many different backgrounds together to fight for a common cause, usually under the control of Al Qaeda, which has been more blatant about its desires for global jihad.[69] Overall, this source provides an excellent overview of one of Al Qaeda's main external sources of support and also explains how Al Qaeda is capable of surviving within Pakistan and of expanding its influence into new regions. In conjunction with further analysis on drone strike operations against the Haqqani Network, this source will be very useful in analyzing this independent variable.

Theory

There is very little literature covering the SWORD model of counterinsurgency, as outside of the global security studies community, and even within it, the model is not

well known. What is available however, offers both high praise, and further understanding of the model, which will be useful to this study as it both lends credibility to the methodology, and also allows for appropriate application of the model. The first source from Phil Battaglia is an article titled: "The Manwaring Paradigm and the Iraqi Insurgency." In this article, Battaglia, tests coalition force counterinsurgency efforts in Iraq against the Manwaring model in order to make recommendations for the way ahead. Battaglia begins by introducing the problem and applies each of the seven dimensions of the model to the Iraq situation. Battaglia identifies the seven dimensions of the SWORD model as: military actions of the intervening power; support actions of the intervening power; host government legitimacy; degree of outside support to insurgents; actions against subversion; host country military actions; and unity of effort.[70] After assessing the situation in Iraq through the lens of the SWORD model, Battaglia concludes that the SWORD model is an effective tool in analyzing insurgencies.[71] While Battaglia's findings are not critical to this study, his use of the SWORD model and review of it are. Battaglia establishes first, that legitimacy and support to insurgents are critical to the survival of insurgencies (centers of gravity),[72] and second, that the SWORD model is an effective tool in analyzing a wide range of counterinsurgency and insurgency operations.[73]

Fishel and Manwaring provide an update to their SWORD model in their article titled: "The SWORD Model of Counterinsurgency: A Summary and Update." Fishel and Manwaring provide a background and review on how the model was created, and the process that led to the development of each of the seven dimensions; they discuss two critical issues moving forward. The first issue they discuss is the accuracy of the

SWORD model. When tested against 43 past insurgencies, the SWORD model accurately predicted 90% of the variation in outcomes, or in other words, it predicted the outcome correctly, 90% of the time.[74] When compared to other counterinsurgency models, the SWORD model vastly out performed the rest, as the next best model, USSOUTHCOM 2 correctly predicted the outcome 72% of the time.[75] The second issue they discuss is the need for counterinsurgency and counterterrorism forces to direct every effort at eliminating the legitimacy, and the internal and external sources of support for insurgents.[76] This article is very useful in not only helping to clarify the SWORD model and its utility, but also why it is critical to understand fully how drone strikes are affecting Al Qaeda's perceived legitimacy and internal and external sources of support.

Conclusion

Overall, there is a great depth of literature relating to each of the independent variables, and the dependent variable of this study, while literature concerning the theory is scarce at best. Unfortunately, much of the literature looks to make concrete statements about the general utility of drone strikes overall while leaving the reader to wonder why Al Qaeda has had continued strategic success despite tactical losses from drone strikes.

The purpose of this study will be to expand into this area by and explore why drone strikes have not yielded the total defeat of Al Qaeda. Understanding why tactical successes have not yielded strategic successes against Al Qaeda, and if drone strikes somehow inadvertently aggravate the problem, will go a long way in allowing defense and security experts and decision makers to better understand if, when, and how drones should be employed in counterterrorism operations moving forward.

III.   Methodology

This research project will use a methodology rooted primarily in the SWORD model of counterinsurgency. The theory of the SWORD model of counterinsurgency will be used to explain the phenomenon discovered during the analysis of the first two independent variables: the effects of drone strikes on Al Qaeda's internal and external sources of support, and the effects of drone strikes on Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy. This methodology will also include a data collection technique that utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data. These data types will be derived primarily from secondary sources available in existing published literature; however, drone strike databases will also be used to uncover additional quantitative data. When combined and analyzed within the SWORD model, this data will indicate how drone strikes are affecting Al Qaeda's centers of gravity, and how Al Qaeda's unique organizational structure might make it resistant or susceptible to the adverse affects of drone strikes at a strategic level. This methodology will be used to test the following hypotheses:

H_1 - drone strikes have failed to achieve a strategic affect against Al Qaeda because these strikes fail to degrade the internal and external sources of support Al Qaeda has fostered; because these strikes fail to degrade the legitimacy Al Qaeda has established throughout the Middle East; and because Al Qaeda has established a unique organizational structure with great depth, while institutionalizing leadership.

H_2 - drone strikes have had no strategic success against Al Qaeda because the inadvertent affects of drone strikes have bolstered Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy, and strengthened its ties with internal and external sources of support.

There are two possible null hypotheses for this study:

$H_{0(A)}$ - drone strikes have had strategic success against Al Qaeda because they have completely destroyed Al Qaeda by isolating it from sources of support and robbing it of all perceived moral legitimacy; and

$H_{0(B)}$ - drone strikes are beginning to isolate Al Qaeda from its sources of support and beginning to erode its perceived moral legitimacy, and are thus beginning to affect Al Qaeda strategically.

Theory

This study will utilize the SWORD model of counterinsurgency in operationalizing the data and examining the affects on the independent variables on the dependent variable. The SWORD model of counterinsurgency was developed out of a request from General Maxwell R. Thurman who as the Strategic Studies Institute of the Army War College to "conduct research to determine the correlates of success in COIN."[77] Once the group, led by Max G. Manwaring and John T. Fishel defined the parameters of an insurgency, the identified 43 post-World War II insurgencies which they would use as the basis for their study.[78] After consulting with both military and civilian experts, and reviewing the pertinent research, the group identified 71 independent variables that would affect the outcome of an insurgency.[79] Afterward, they used factor analysis to reduce those 71 independent variables into seven factors that would ultimately make up the SWORD model of counterinsurgency. Those seven factors were: military actions of the intervening power; support actions of the intervening power; host government legitimacy; host government military actions; unity of effort; actions against subversion; and external support to insurgents.[80] Overall, by testing the individual factors, they determined that host government legitimacy and external support to insurgents played the most significant role in predicting the outcome of insurgencies.[81]

While the sum of the SWORD model is greater than its individual parts,[82] it is clear moral legitimacy and internal and external sources of support are the clear centers of gravity of insurgent or terrorist organizations as defined by this model. Fishel and

Manwaring suggest that insurgent or terrorist forces are primarily concerned with the moral legitimacy of the incumbent regime and thus they rely on their own perceived moral legitimacy as the center of their efforts; their center of gravity.[83] They continue in this line of thought by arguing that any counterinsurgency campaign that does not address insurgent perceived moral legitimacy is likely to fail.[84] Additionally, Fishel and Manwaring suggest that insurgent or terrorist forces rely much more heavily on sources of support than conventional fighting forces.[85] They argue that insurgent forces are able to capitalize on the sympathy and support of local populaces to sustain their effort, while external supporters are able to provide the war materiel and political muscle necessary to sustain their efforts.[86] Manwaring and Fishel maintain that any counterinsurgency effort that fails to isolate the insurgent force from sources of support is likely to fail.[87]

Data Collection

The data for this research project was collected in an effort to examine several phenomena. First, this project is predicated on the assumption that drone strikes have been tactically effective, and strategically ineffective. With that in mind, I collected data that spoke to the tactical effectiveness or ineffectiveness of drones. Since this project is about why drone strikes are unable to link tactical successes to strategic successes, against Al Qaeda, I first had to ensure that drone strikes were having tactical successes. In order to do so, I collected secondary source data from existing published literature, which was also accompanied by analysis that spoke to the tactical effectiveness of drones. Much of the available literature however, only really spoke to statistics up until about 2012 or 2013. Thus, in order to close the loop on the two-year gap, I utilized data

from two drone strike databases, the Center for the Study of Targeted Killing, and the New America Foundation.

In terms of the independent variables of this study, this study used secondary sources in search of both quantitative data, and qualitative data. With respect to internal and external sources of support, this study used quantitative data that spoke to the volume of militants versus civilians killed by drone strikes. On its own, the quantitative data does not say much, much, which is why this study used secondary sources from existing published literature to gather qualitative data that spoke to civilian and government attitudes about the US drone program and about Al Qaeda in the aftermath of drone strikes. Additionally, this study used data on Al Qaeda propaganda efforts in the aftermath of drone strikes to show how Al Qaeda reaches out to its supporters and potential supporters in the aftermath of drone strikes, and throughout drone strike campaigns.

With respect to perceived moral legitimacy, this study primarily used qualitative data, but supported it with the quantitative data already collected. The qualitative data here came from secondary sources in the form of interviews and polls with the local Pakistani population, as well as surveys conducted with state officials throughout Europe and the Middle East. This data was not only used to gauge Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy, but also that of the United States.

With respect to Al Qaeda's organizational structure, this study primarily used qualitative data from secondary sources within existing published literature. This data measured two issues: first, what type of organization Al Qaeda is and what general theory

says about how that organization should be affected by drone strikes; and second, how quickly Al Qaeda was generally capable of regrouping in the aftermath of a drone strike.

Overall, while there is a great depth of secondary source analysis to use, as well as database statistics, primary source data collection is virtually impossible for this study given the timelines and resources available. Additionally, primary source data regarding Al Qaeda's organization is very difficult to produce, even within the intelligence field, so most studies, even with fewer time constraints and greater resources would have difficulty producing primary data about Al Qaeda without government assistance.

Limitations of the Study

There are four limitations to this study. The first limitation of this study is the reliability of statistics with respect to militant and civilian casualties from drone strikes. While databases and secondary sources typically report data that is corroborated by at least two sources of information, there really are no assurances as to the accuracy of any of those sources of information as they can often be corrupted by terrorist propaganda prior to being distributed to the news sites or government agencies who report them. Each statistic of a drone strike casualty that is handed to a credible news agency must first pass through the hands of a local reporter whose motives are unknown; and with no way to verify the initial report, the statistics are usually passed on as fact. The secrecy of the CIA drone campaign and CIA operations in general only exacerbates this problem. While the CIA likely has wholesale accounts with very accurate statistics on drone strike casualty results, this information is not available to rebuff potentially erroneous news reports and thus potentially flawed statistics are taken as fact. Thus, a potentially skewed picture of overall casualties is painted whereby both militant and civilian casualty numbers may be

inflated or deflated. Depending on how the numbers are skewed, we may believe drones to be more tactically effective than they really are, or we may believe them to be more strategically harmful than they really are, or vice versa.

The second limitation of this study is the availability of statistics on drone strikes and Al Qaeda operations. There are a very limited number of sources of information available on either of these and within those sources, usually only a few data inputs actually contribute to the source. This means that all the information we have on drone strikes, and Al Qaeda operations is generally unchallenged and un-vetted by a larger body of knowledge. It also means that there is potentially a lot of valuable information not reported. This lack of availability of statistics means we are potentially missing critical evidence that could drastically skew the findings of this study if reported.

The third limitation of this study is the reviews of, or more specifically the lack of challenges to the theoretical model employed in this study. The SWORD model of counterinsurgency, while highly praised by those who have used it or understand it, is not widely known or critiqued. While it is unlikely that the theory is flawed to such a degree to completely discredit the findings of this study, there is potential that some aspect of the theory, which has not been adequately critiqued, may skew the findings to some degree.

The fourth limitation of this study is the lack of primary data available detailing Al Qaeda's organizational structure. While some of the broader elements of Al Qaeda's organizational structure are well understood throughout the discipline, much of Al Qaeda's specific organizational characteristics are inferred or extrapolated by leading contributors to the field. There is no way to correct this deficiency, other analyzing the organization through evidence once it has been defeated, but this lack of primary data

leaves open the possibility that we have made some critical errors in our assumptions

about Al Qaeda's organizational structure.

IV.   Analysis and Findings

The data for this study was collected in an effort to gauge the effect of three independent variables on one dependent variable. The dependent variable of this study is the ability of drone strikes to cause the total defeat of Al Qaeda; the independent variables of this study are Al Qaeda's internal and external sources of support, Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy, and Al Qaeda's organizational structure. In addition to testing the primary hypothesis, this data will also be used to test one alternate hypothesis, while providing general analysis of the two null hypotheses in the process. In general, due to the limitations of available source material and data, the majority of the analysis of this study has been conducted through extrapolation and interpolation; thus, while the analysis will be rooted in logic, there remains the possibility of multiple varying analyses on this data.

Sources of Support

The SWORD model of counterinsurgency maintains that sources of support are critical to the survival of an insurgency and that any counterinsurgency or counterterrorism effort that fails to isolate the insurgent or terrorist force from its sources of support will likely not succeed.[88] Before we can analyze the effect of drone strikes on Al Qaeda's sources of support, it is important to define the types of sources of support and their role in supporting an insurgent or terrorist force. There are three types of sources of support to insurgent or terrorist forces.

The first type is internal sources of support. Internal sources of support are the local populations within which insurgent or terrorist forces operate. These sources of support take the shape of either inspired supporters who support the terrorist or insurgent

cause out of some psychological or sociological connection to it, or intimidated or coerced supporters who support the terrorist or insurgent organization out of fear of the consequences of denial of support. Internal sources of support offer insurgent or terrorist forces many of the resources they require to sustain their campaigns. These resources include safe haven from counterterrorist or counterinsurgent forces including counterterrorist and counterinsurgent intelligence collection; food, water and clothing; and most significantly, a recruiting base from which to draw additional fighters and specialists. When isolated from this source of support, insurgent and terrorist forces are more easily located and engaged by counterinsurgent and counterterrorist forces, while they quickly run out of resources, preventing them from sustaining their operations.

The second type is external non-state sources of support. External non-state sources of support are those like-minded insurgent or terrorist groups that support the actions of an insurgent or terrorist organization. Typically, these groups not only find common interest in their endeavours, but their ultimate goals do not compete with one another. In cases where the ultimate goals of two or more terrorist or insurgent forces compete, it is likely that any initial mutual support will eventually turn into conflict. External non-state sources of support offer insurgent or terrorist forces access to terrain, and local resources (including personnel) that they otherwise might not have had. In convoluted socio-political terrain areas such as the Middle East, these sources of support can give terrorists access to populations they might have otherwise not had due to cultural or religious differences. These sources of support can also offer safe haven from counterterrorist or counterinsurgent forces when they have access to terrain and facilities outside of the reach of their operations. When isolated from this source of support,

insurgent and terrorist forces are more easily fixed within smaller geographical areas and thus easier to target. Additionally, they are limited in their capabilities to recruit large numbers of fighters and are thus limited in their ability to sustain their operations.

The third is external state sources of support: external state sources of support are those states that find some value in the cause or efforts of an insurgent or terrorist force and covertly or overtly support those actions. When covertly supporting an insurgent or terrorist force, state external sources of support offer these forces safe haven within, or safe passage throughout their borders; they mitigate counterterrorist and counterinsurgent force efforts by using political barriers to limit the amount of force that can be used with that state's borders; and they help sustain the insurgent or terrorist force campaign by providing infrastructure support, food, money and weapons. When overtly supporting an insurgent or terrorist force, state external sources of support offer the same avenues of support as they do when acting covertly, but additionally, they offer political muscle that enhances the legitimacy of the insurgent or terrorist cause while potentially increasing their support base throughout regional and global exposure. When isolated from this source of support, counterterrorist and counterinsurgent forces more easily target insurgent and terrorist forces, as their ability to move fluidly throughout a given region is limited. Additionally, these forces face difficulty in sustaining an armed conflict without the support of state external sources of support as they lack the materiel and financial resources to procure the weapons they need.

Internal sources of support

The data shows, that over a decade of targeting Al Qaeda and its affiliates throughout Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Yemen, drone strikes have failed to isolate

Al Qaeda from internal sources of support. While drone strikes have been very effective at killing low-level Al Qaeda militants, and even a high amount of mid and high-level Al Qaeda leaders, would-be Al Qaeda operatives continue to join Al Qaeda. It is clear that some Al Qaeda operatives and would-be supporters have felt some of the psychological effects of drone strikes, as evidenced in their decision not to congregate in public in groups larger than five within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA),[89] and in the decision of Al Qaeda leaders to abandon old facilities in favour of operating underground and more dispersed.[90] However, the potentially, and well known, devastating effects of drone strikes have not deterred local populations from supporting Al Qaeda. In Pakistan, new recruits flocked to well known Al Qaeda training facilities just days after a CIA drone strike struck the facility killing several militants.[91] Additionally, despite increased targeting throughout the Arab Peninsula, and in particular in Yemen over the past five years,[92] Al Qaeda's presence has grown in that region though the rise of Al Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP).[93] Al Qaeda has typically used a mix of inspirational coercion through propaganda, as well as intimidation to foster the support of local populations. Local populations, especially those within the FATA, have seen the devastating tactical effects drones have had on Al Qaeda militants and they have established some credibility as a force that can counter Al Qaeda intimidation.[94] Thus, Al Qaeda's intimidation efforts are no longer as successful as they used to be in coercing local support; however, the effects of drone strikes have not deterred Al Qaeda's local propaganda campaigns,[95] or the coercive effects they have on those populations.[96]

The data is inconclusive with respect to the inadvertent effects of drone strikes bolstering internal sources of support to Al Qaeda. While civilian death tolls have been

high from drone strikes, especially in Pakistan and Yemen, there is no clear evidence within the data to suggest that these deaths have spiked internal support to Al Qaeda. There is where a lack of data limits this study. There are no statistics available on Al Qaeda recruiting statistics, nor on how they have or have not been affected by the CIA drone campaign. Additionally, there are no statistics available on the various provision of services provided by local populations to Al Qaeda, or how those volumes or types have been affected by the CIA drone campaign. What statistics we do have, suggest there is a polarity of opinion within affected regions on the CIA drone campaign and Al Qaeda. While some groups within the FATA overwhelmingly disapprove of the CIA drone campaign, others indicate that they prefer the drone strikes to Al Qaeda violence and rule.[97] Also, while some of the families of civilian drone strike casualties have indicated through polls that they foster feelings of hatred and revenge toward the United States, there is no existing follow-up data to indicate what actions, if any, those polled have taken.[98]

Findings

Overall, the data is conclusive that drone strikes, through the sum of their advertent and inadvertent effects, have failed to isolate Al Qaeda from internal sources of support. While Al Qaeda has had to rely more on propaganda efforts to engender internal sources of support, that data shows that these efforts have been successful, even in spite of the knowledge of the devastating effects of drone strikes by would-be supporters. Additionally, the data is inconclusive that drone strikes inadvertently bolster internal sources of support to Al Qaeda. There is not enough data available to make extrapolate a

conclusion or even make a logical inference on this issue, and the numerous claims throughout currently published literature that make those conclusions are unfounded.

External non-state sources of support

The data shows the drone strikes have failed to isolate Al Qaeda from external non-state sources of support. Al Qaeda's primary external non-state source of support is the Haqqani Network.[99] The Haqqani Network and Al Qaeda share a common goal, an interest in global jihad,[100] and this common goal, combined with the global posturing of Al Qaeda, made having Al Qaeda as an ally an easy choice for the Haqqani Network. With an alliance with Al Qaeda, the Haqqani Network had partner that was actively seeking global jihad, which allowed it to mask its true intentions by portraying itself as a local actor.[101] While Al Qaeda and the Haqqani Network have a long history of mutual support, they became much closer in the aftermath of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom. The Haqqani Network controls the North Waziristan area of Pakistan as well as entry into Pakistan from Afghanistan. When coalition forces forced Al Qaeda from Iraq and Afghanistan, the Haqqani Network facilitated their movement into Pakistani and provided them safe haven. It was this support that allowed Al Qaeda to survive the coalition onslaught. Not until about 2010 did the Haqqani Network's connection to Al Qaeda become clear to the United States and its partners,[102] and ever since, Haqqani Network leaders have been targeted by drone strikes in addition to the efforts against Al Qaeda.[103] However, despite being exposed as an organization with global ambitions and a supporter of Al Qaeda, and being targeted within the scope of US global counterterrorism operations, the Haqqani Network continues to provide integral support to Al Qaeda.[104] Additionally, there is no data that would suggest any change in

their relationship despite increased attacks against both organizations; ultimately, regardless of the effects of drone strikes, their relationship has remained unaffected.

The data shows that drone strikes have not bolstered Al Qaeda's relationship with external non-state sources of support. Although Al Qaeda has expanded its operation and influence throughout the Middle East, and into the Arab Peninsula in particular, this has not been the result of any new relationships with external non-state sources of support. For over a decade, Al Qaeda's primary non-state external source of support has been the Haqqani Network, and their relationship has been unchanged throughout that time.[105] While it might be expected that an external non-state source of support facilitated Al Qaeda's move into the Arab Peninsula, this move was actually facilitated by the strength of Al Qaeda's message, and the flexibility and fluidity of their organization.[106]

Findings

Overall, the data is conclusive that drone strikes have not isolated Al Qaeda from external non-state sources of support, and have not bolstered external non-state sources of support for Al Qaeda. Despite the fact that association with Al Qaeda has resulted in the deaths of several Haqqani Network militants and leaders, the Haqqani Network continues to harbour Al Qaeda within Pakistan and provide it the resources it needs to train and conduct operations, while supporting its propaganda and recruitment efforts. The unchanged relationship between Al Qaeda and the Haqqani Network, in addition to a lack of evidence suggesting Al Qaeda has fostered any new external non-state sources of support is also conclusive enough to suggest that drone strikes have not bolstered support for Al Qaeda from these sources either.

External state sources of support

The data shows that drone strikes have failed to isolate Al Qaeda from external state sources of support. While Al Qaeda has no overt state sources of support, it does have the indirect, covert support of the Pakistani government, specifically Pakistan's ISI. To be clear, Pakistan's ISI has a covert, but well known and well understood, relationship with the Haqqani Network.[107] The ISI has sought out the support of the Haqqani Network in destroying the Pakistani Taliban, and in exchange, the ISI has provided the Haqqani Network with money, weapons, and safe passage throughout, and safe haven within Pakistan.[108] Through its relationship with the Haqqani Network, the ISI is knowingly supporting Al Qaeda; while not to the fullest extent of its capabilities, ISI support ensures Al Qaeda's safe haven within Pakistan, and its access to weapons through the Haqqani Network.[109] Clearly in this case, drone strikes are not isolating Al Qaeda from the ISI. The United States has not threatened to use drone strikes against Pakistani military personnel or infrastructure in reaction to the ISI-Haqqani-Al Qaeda relationship, nor is there enough clarity on their relationship to permit such actions; thus, the ISI-Haqqani-Al Qaeda relationship has remained unaffected by the CIA drone campaign.

The data is inconclusive with respect to the effects of drone strikes bolstering external state sources of support to Al Qaeda. As discussed above, the only external state source of support in question is Pakistan. Within Pakistan, there is a significant polarity in terms of public opinion on the CIA drone campaign. As presented earlier, while some citizens highly disapprove of the drone campaign, others prefer it to Al Qaeda presence and violence within their communities.[110] So while Milam and Nelson suggest popular opinion within Pakistan largely informs Pakistani foreign policy decisions,[111] the data is

not conclusive enough to suggest that public opinion is resulting in greater Pakistani support to the Haqqani Network (and indirectly to Al Qaeda), that what already existed.

Findings

Overall, the data is conclusive that drone strikes have failed to isolate Al Qaeda from external state sources of support. The United States has not used the threat of the drone program to affect indirect support from the ISI to Al Qaeda through the Haqqani Network, and drone strikes have not shifted public opinion enough within Pakistan to drive foreign policy enough to result in a shift in attitude from the ISI on the Haqqani Network. Additionally, for the same reasons, the data is inconclusive with respect to drone strikes bolstering external state support for Al Qaeda. Firstly, there is very little data available to begin with, and the data that is available shows no clear evidence one way or another on this issue.

Perceived Moral Legitimacy

The SWORD model of counterinsurgency maintains that the rectitude of an insurgent or terrorist cause is what rests at the center of their ability to succeed in their efforts.[112] Otherwise known as moral legitimacy, how local populations, and regional and global observers perceive the rectitude of their cause, ultimately determines how insurgent or terrorist campaigns play out for two reasons. First, a local, regional, or global perception of high moral legitimacy will ultimately drive the equivalent level of support to that campaign.[113] Second, a regional or global perception of high moral legitimacy of an insurgent or terrorist cause will drive international support in opposing the state or non-state enemies or opponents of that campaign.[114] Thus, with a local and regional perception of moral legitimacy, Al Qaeda is able to engender support for their campaign

from local populations and even some state actors. If Al Qaeda had a global perception of moral legitimacy, it could expect international support in terms of opposition to US led global counterterrorism efforts. Another important consideration to understand with perceived moral legitimacy is that it is a zero-sum game when two forces are opposing one another such as is the case with Al Qaeda and the US led global counterterrorism effort.[115] Therefore, we can expect that when the actions of one side damage or inadvertently bolster the perceived moral legitimacy of the other, an equal and opposite effect occurs upon the originator; such is the logic behind the propaganda war.

Effects on Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy

The data shows that drone strikes have not had a degrading effect on Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy. Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy only extends as far as the local context, and specifically within those populations it has been able to turn with its propaganda messages, such as those in some small areas of Pakistan, Yemen, and other areas of the Arab Peninsula. Al Qaeda is only able to affect its perceived moral legitimacy through its propaganda campaigns which have not been interrupted by drone strikes, and have even in some cases, been bolstered by them.[116] Al Qaeda continues to recruit, train, and operate under the support of the Haqqani Network, and with the support of several population groups. The key indicator of Al Qaeda's level of perceived moral legitimacy locally and regionally is its relationship with the Haqqani Network. The Haqqani Network originally aligned with Al Qaeda because it believed in Al Qaeda's vision and the rectitude of their cause.[117] This affection has gone unaffected by drone strikes as Al Qaeda still enjoys a vast amount of support from the Haqqani Network and its affiliates.[118]

Findings

Overall, the data is conclusive that drone strikes have not degraded Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy locally or regionally. Al Qaeda is still able to affect populations with its propaganda campaign, and it still enjoys the support of the Haqqani Network who originally aligned with Al Qaeda because of a belief in their cause.

Effects on the United States' perceived moral legitimacy

The data shows that the CIA drone campaign has not had a degrading effect on the United States' perceived moral legitimacy at a global level. Additionally, the data is inconclusive as to the effects of the CIA drone campaign on the United States' perceived moral legitimacy at a local and regional level within the Middle East. Globally, the United States has the support of several of its allies in its global counterterrorism effort, due to the rectitude with which they perceive their cause. The data shows that overall, drone strikes had resulted in higher civilian deaths tolls, than many US allies are willing to consider proportional, especially considering these drone strikes are occurring in areas not defined as war zones.[119] Many US allies have considered the legality of drone strikes within Pakistan and Yemen, as well as their legality and morality in general.[120] Additionally, some have questioned the long-term precedents being established by the CIA drone campaign, and what those precedents mean for US security, and global security.[121] However, these condemnations specifically concern the use of drones, and not the United States' right to prosecute the terrorist organization responsible for the terrorist attacks against the US on 9/11. Despite concerns over drone use, allies continue to support the US in their effort to destroy Al Qaeda by supporting them politically, and by not using international bodies such as the UN to condemn them; thus, there seems to

be a clear separation between the legitimacy of the US cause, and the legitimacy of its methods at the global level; the same is unclear at the local and regional level within the Middle East.

Because of the effect of the Al Qaeda propaganda effort throughout Pakistan, Yemen, and other areas of the Arab Peninsula, the line is much more blurry between the legitimacy of US counterterrorism methods, and the legitimacy of that effort in principle. Al Qaeda has used the deaths of civilians from drone strikes to paint a picture of indiscriminate violence against all Muslims by the United States.[122] However, despite these efforts by Al Qaeda, many individuals who have first hand knowledge of Al Qaeda violence still speak out against them, while large groups of the populations within Pakistan and Yemen speak out against the CIA drone campaign as well.[123]

Findings

Overall, while the data is conclusive regarding the effect drone strikes have had on the perceived moral legitimacy of the United States globally, it is inconclusive with respect to the effects on the United States' perceived moral legitimacy at the local and regional levels within the Middle East. The data shows that while some US allies are concerned about the use of drones in general, they still support the idea of the US seeking out and destroying Al Qaeda. Also, the data either contradicts itself or contains to many holes to make a logical inference about the effect of drone strikes on the United States' perceived moral legitimacy locally and regionally within the Middle East; thus popular claims that suggest US credibility and morality are eroding with respect to Al Qaeda because of the CIA drone program are unfounded.

Organizational Structure

   Much of the theory and debate about the utility of drone strikes, and specifically the utility of leadership decapitation, has focused on various aspects of the terrorist organization that may make it more or less resistant to drone strikes. While each author has his or her own take on the subject, and many disagree with one another on some of the concepts, general data trends within the literature suggest that there are three critical components of a terrorist's organizational structure that will determine its resistance or susceptibility to drone strikes and leadership decapitation; those are: organizational style; organizational depth; and level of organizational and leadership institutionalization. Depending on the level that each of these exist within a terrorist organization, that organization could range anywhere from very susceptible, susceptible, resistant, and very resistant to drone strikes and leadership decapitation. A very susceptible organization would quickly be destroyed or fractured after a few key leaders were removed, and a low amount of militants were killed. A susceptible organization would potentially fracture after a few key leaders were removed but would likely not be completely destroyed until most top leaders and some mid level leaders were removed and at least half the militants were killed. A resistant organization would survive the removal of many top leaders and would only fracture after enough militants were killed to provoke the mid level leaders to seek change. Finally, a very resistant organization would survive the removal of almost all leaders and militants as the organization would be fluid enough to move to new areas and reconstitute the organization.

Organizational style

The data suggests that Al Qaeda's organizational style make it, in part, very resistant to drone strikes and leadership decapitation. The data shows that cell based terrorist organizations are the most resistant to leadership decapitation and general drone strike targeting. Cell based terrorist organizations hold up so well against leadership decapitation and general targeting because each cell is well insulated from every other, and no cell is critical to the functioning of any other cell, or the whole of the organization.[124] This also means that when one cell is captured or destroyed, there is typically no intelligence available that harms any of the other cells or the organization in general.[125] Although the entirety of Al Qaeda's organizational style are not completely understood, by all accounts, Al Qaeda is a cell-based, loosely structured, and highly fluid organization.[126] Each cell is generally believed to be independent of one another, with the capability of deploying to many different areas throughout the Middle East and Northern Africa and planning and conducting operations with complete independence from the center.[127] It is also believed, that communication between the cells and the center is very rare, and only occurs between one individual at each end.[128]

Organizational depth

The data suggests that Al Qaeda's organizational depth make it, in part, resistant to drone strikes and leadership decapitation. In understanding the impact of depth, it is important to distinguish it from size. Some scholars have argued that simply size is an indicator of drone strike and leadership decapitation resistance.[129] However, as others have rightly pointed out, size is not a tangible measurement of drone strike and leadership decapitation resistance because on its own, it fails to recognize what that size says about

an organizations ability to replace skilled workers or leaders.[130]Rather than just addressing how large or small an organization is, depth addresses the access organizations have internally, to specific types of workers, and thus it is a more appropriate measurement of how quickly, and how often, and organization can replace workers or leaders who provide critical functions within the organization. Unfortunately, the data is not entirely conclusive here. There is no list or organizational chart on Al Qaeda showing how many skilled workers it has of each type. Also, while many of its leaders are known, many others are not, and there is no clear indication as to what specialized function, if any, they perform. The only intangible evidence we do have is how quickly they are able to conduct operations in the aftermath of attacks, or to what degree typical Al Qaeda operations have been slowed. In some instances, Al Qaeda was reported to have conducted operations at a standard pace even in the face of a heavy campaign of drone strikes.[131]In other instances, drones were seen to have had a small effect on the pace and scale of Al Qaeda operations.[132]Thus, what we are seeing is, depending on the cell affected, and its access to resources and support personnel, drones having some, to little affect on operations, which illustrates good depth within Al Qaeda, but not great enough to mitigate the effects of drone strikes entirely.

Organizational institutionalization

The data suggests that Al Qaeda's organizational institutionalization, in part, make it very resistant to drone strikes and leadership decapitation. Organizational institutionalization encompasses several key aspects that, if present, will allow any terrorist organization, but especially a cell based organization, to sustain success for a long period of time. The factors of organizational institutionalization are: leadership institutionalization, hierarchy, and standard operating procedures. Leadership institutionalization is the process by which organizations rely less on an individual leader, and the functions previously performed by that leader, are transferred to the organization as a whole though experience and understanding.[133]Typically, leaders of terrorist organizations initially support the organization with inspiration and operational direction. Once the organization as a whole believes in the cause of the organization, and understands the tactics by which they operate, the top leader is no longer important to the survival of the organization and it can be said that leadership has been institutionalized.[134]Hierarchy exists within an organization when there is a clear chain of command, and a clear succession plan at all levels. Hierarchy mitigates the loss of leaders by ensuring they are quickly replaced, and it also mitigates the follow-on effects of personnel movement within the organization by ensuring all key positions are covered when a move takes place.[135] Standard operating procedures allow terrorist organizations to manage and train personnel in a consistent manner which allows for the efficient replacement of personnel across cells if necessary, and allows cells to operate independently of the direction of a superior commander from the center. This allows them to make smaller targets of themselves, and also ensures that when personnel are lost

from a key cell, the can be replaced from elsewhere in the organization efficiently.[136] By all accounts, Al Qaeda is a highly institutionalized organization. In terms of leadership institutionalization, high level Al Qaeda leaders are capable of going underground and not communicating with anyone, while Al Qaeda cells continue to plan and conduct successful operations.[137] Additionally, there is clear evidence that hierarchy exists within Al Qaeda, they quickly and efficiently replace dead leaders, including of their top leader Osama bin Laden, and they easily fill mid-level leadership gaps by promoting others.[138] While there is less evidence as to the existence of standard operating procedures within Al Qaeda, the fact that Al Qaeda cells can operate independently throughout the Middle East and North Africa, and conduct operations with the same intent and style suggests that Al Qaeda utilizes some level of standard operating procedures.[139]

Findings

Overall, based on the analysis that Al Qaeda has a very resistant organizational style, a resistant organizational depth, and a very high level of organizational institutionalization, the data is conclusive in demonstrating Al Qaeda's organizational structure is very resistant to the adverse effects of drone strikes and leadership decapitation. Within their structure, the capture of any one cell offers little to no intelligence about the rest of the organization, nor does it affect subsequent operations or planning by the other cells or the center. Al Qaeda has the depth to replace skilled workers and leaders at a pace that mitigates the loss of the individuals in the first place. Finally, Al Qaeda has institutionalized leadership and organizational practices to such a degree that no single leader or skilled worker is critical to the continuance of operations.

Hypothesis Testing

With respect to H_1, the data was sufficient to support the hypothesis. When tested against the dependent variable, each independent variable had the predicted effect and outcome. It is clear through the analysis, that drone strikes have not produced the desired strategic effect against Al Qaeda because drone strikes fail to isolate Al Qaeda from sources of support, fail to degrade Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy, and because Al Qaeda's organizational structure is very resistant to the adverse effects of drone strikes. Put another way, the effectiveness of drone strikes against Al Qaeda is resultant of the cumulative effects of the ability of drone strikes to affect Al Qaeda's sources of support, perceived moral legitimacy, and organizational structure. $H_{0(A)}$, and $H_{0(B)}$, are both null hypotheses of H_1. By establishing that the data supports H_1, this study effectively fails to support either null hypothesis.

With respect to H_2, the data was insufficient to support the hypothesis. Upon analyzing the data, there was not enough conclusive evidence to logically maintain that the unintended effects of drone strikes inadvertently strengthen Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy and bolster its sources of support. At this time, the requisite data does not exist to adequately test this hypothesis. However, with much greater time, and the ability to uncover greater detail on Al Qaeda, this hypothesis could be adequately tested with far reaching implications for the global security studies field.

V.	Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine why drone strikes, and in particular, the CIA drone program, have failed to achieve any strategic effect against Al Qaeda. Despite over a decade of tactical successes against Al Qaeda, Al Qaeda remains a major global terrorist actor, capable of spreading its sphere of influence throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Over that time Al Qaeda has suffered countless militant losses, including the losses of top leaders and highly skilled workers, yet they continue to conduct highly effective terrorist operations, while orchestrating effective propaganda campaigns. Thus, this study sought to answer the question: why have drone strikes been unsuccessful at degrading Al Qaeda's operational capabilities and restricting it from expanding its organization into new areas throughout the Middle East?

The state of the current literature on this topic demanded that this question be answered thoroughly and definitively if possible. As a complete whole, the literature paints a somewhat incomplete picture. In an attempt to make assertive statements about the utility of drones in general, as a complete body, current literature on drone strikes really gives us nothing entirely useful in understanding why or when we should use drones, and to what degree and under what circumstances we can expect them to be successful. Thus, decision makers looking to the literature for some insight as to what effects they can expect to achieve through drone strikes against a variety of target types are left looking at a significant knowledge gap. This study, and the analysis and conclusions derived from it, are a step in the right direction toward closing that gap, as the analysis will allow readers to understand what inherit characteristics of drone strikes,

and of Al Qaeda limit the exclusive use of drone strikes to tactical effects, with no real avenue to affect Al Qaeda strategically.

Overall, this study will contribute to a body of knowledge vastly growing and in demand. The global counterterrorism effort led by the United States will surely be a long effort if seen through to the end. Drones offer leaders in Washington a politically, socially, and economically sustainable option in the fight against global terrorism that is also highly flexible, and tactically effective. However, if the targets of drone strikes, global terrorist organizations, are not better understood, and the limits of drone strikes are not better understood, it remains quite possible that even a highly sustainable tool will not be able to outlast the 'long war'. The intent of this study is to ensure that drone strikes do not just become another wasted resource of the global counterterrorism effort. The analysis presented here should not only allow global counterterrorism decision makers to better understand the limits of drone strikes against Al Qaeda, and possibly similar organizations, but also to allow them to develop the most effective and efficient practices of employing drones in the global counterterrorism effort.

The research shows that in order to completely destroy a terrorist organization, methods must be employed that ultimately lead to the isolation of the terrorist organization from its sources of support, and also destroy its perceived moral legitimacy locally, regionally, and globally. Additionally, the research also showed that some terrorist organizations have established unique organizational structures that allow them to sustain the damage of military force and the loss of some organizational components. Thus, overall, the research showed that drone strikes, on their own are not only ineffective at destroying Al Qaeda, they are actually incapable of completely destroying

Al Qaeda if they are continued to be used in the same manner they have been thus far. Also, and just as significantly, the research was inconclusive about the unintended, potentially counterproductive effects of drone strikes. Despite several unfounded claims in present literature, there is not enough data available to make a logical, conclusive claim about the potentially counterproductive effects of drone strikes. The data did show that civilian deaths caused by drone strikes caused anger by local populations within Pakistan, and concern by some US allies, however, the polling of Pakistanis suggested the local population equally detested Al Qaeda, while no US ally condemned its efforts to destroy Al Qaeda due to the inadvertent effects of drone strikes, only the methods they used to do so.

The data collected for this study was sufficient to support the primary hypothesis. The primary hypothesis suggested that drone strikes were failing to affect any strategic effect on Al Qaeda because drone strikes were not isolating Al Qaeda from sources of support, they were not degrading Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy, and because Al Qaeda utilizes an organizational structure which allows it to recover from the tactical effects of drone strikes before they can affect a strategic effect; ultimately the data proved this to be true. The data collected for this study was insufficient to support the secondary hypothesis. The secondary hypothesis suggested that drone strikes were failing to achieve any strategic effect because they inadvertently bolstered Al Qaeda's perceived moral legitimacy and sources of support. Ultimately the data here was inconclusive, so while the secondary hypothesis was not proven, it was also not disproved.

The potential implications of the validity of the secondary hypothesis demand further research be conducted on this topic. While many have suggested drone strikes are

counterproductive because they create more enemies than they destroy, or because they damage US credibility, the only available data on this is actually inconclusive. At this point, these claims are just flashy statements designed to grab the attention of the reader. However, if these claims were actually proven to be conclusively true, they would have very serious policy implications for the use of drones moving forward. Despite their overall sustainability, if drones truly are counterproductive to the global counterterrorism effort, their use must be reconsidered. However, until such time as that is definitively proven, they are the best overall option in the counterterrorist fight. Thus, moving forward, research must be done to definitively prove or disprove the secondary hypothesis of this study. Concrete analysis of drone strike data, Al Qaeda organizational trends including operational changes, recruiting and propaganda, as well as local, regional, and global attitudes, and how those attitudes are effecting change will need to be conducted to definitively test this hypothesis.

Regardless of any forthcoming knowledge or the potential validity of the secondary hypothesis of this study, global counterterrorist decision makers need to address how to employ drones more effectively moving forward. With that said, the following employment measures are recommended:

First, eliminate civilian deaths as collateral damage from drone strikes. While civilians may likely be in the vicinity of a high value target, if this information is known at the time, the strike should be cancelled. As evident in the analysis of this study, the overall impact of removing a high value target, especially from an organization like Al Qaeda, is actually very minimal. However, even one civilian death is enough to incite public, and even global outrage, potentially damaging the overall counterterrorism effort.

While it is understood that this is not always possible, the increased use of spies in targeting enemy militants would allow for enhanced clarity on the presence of civilians in a target area.

Second, the CIA drone program must either become completely transparent, or drone strike responsibility must be transferred to the DoD, which already runs a transparent operation. Al Qaeda has been able to capitalize on the lack of transparency of the CIA drone program by using their vast propaganda resources to portray an image of the indiscriminate killing of Muslims. Ultimately, these claims cannot be counteracted with CIA evidence and thus Al Qaeda benefits each time a drone strike occurs.

Finally, drones must be used for more than just their strike capabilities. Drones offer a unique tool in the surveillance and intelligence acquisition field and should be used to bolster counterterrorist forces' understanding of day-to-day Al Qaeda operations and disposition. While Al Qaeda typically veils their movements and operations until after the fact, drones have outstanding loiter times which means they can provide 24 hour surveillance of suspected Al Qaeda training and operating areas. Ultimately, collecting intelligence on Al Qaeda will be one of the major keys to completely destroying them, and drones can play an important part in that effort.

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