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Public Forum

Topic Analysis

Resolved: Failed nations are a greater threat to the  
United States than stable nations.

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## **Topic Analysis by Sarah Spiker**

The global economic crisis has put increased concern on terrorism recruitment and nuclear threats. In testimony to Congress, U.S. Intelligence Chief Dennis C. Blair focused on the economy as “the primary near-term security concern [for the United States]... The longer it takes for the recovery to begin, the greater the likelihood of serious damage to U.S. strategic interests.”<sup>1</sup> During this critical time of recover, it becomes important to reanalyze targeted threats and the underlying theories that can help determine potential points of conflict.

### ***DEFINING STABLE AND FAILED***

Defining ‘stable’ and ‘failed’ nations can be a difficult task considering that there are many measures to gauge state progress. For this essay, I provide Jane’s Information Services<sup>2</sup> rankings as a comprehensive approach to identifying potential case studies in support or opposition to the resolution. In 2008, Jane’s Information Services ranked the 50 most stable nations and the 10 most unstable nations. While ‘unstable’ is not necessarily synonymous with ‘failed,’ the list provides a baseline for analyzing the success of national governments. Jane’s, sponsored by IHS Inc., classifies nations based on 24 factors in five broad categories: political, social, economic, external, and military and security. These five areas would be a good start for determining criteria to gauge whether a

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/13/washington/13intel.html>

<sup>2</sup>With more than 100 years of experience, Jane’s, an IHS company, holds an unrivalled reputation for the reliability, accuracy and impartiality of our information and advice, trusted and relied upon by business, government and military decision-makers worldwide.

particular should be regarded in the failed state/stable state dichotomy. Each country is assigned a numerical rating for each subsection. The factors are then weighted for accuracy according to the condition of each country. IHS/Jane's list is probably one of the most comprehensive and holistic measures of stability because it includes multiple points of analysis in determining a nation's final score.

According to Jane's list, the top ten most stable nations are: (1) Vatican, (2) Sweden, (3) Luxembourg, (4) Monaco, (5) Gibraltar, (6) San Marino, (7) Liechtenstein, (8) UK, (9) Netherlands, (10) Ireland.<sup>3</sup> Interesting tidbit, the US only ranked 24<sup>th</sup> on the list in part due to its porous borders, small arms proliferation, and international reputation.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, Jane's list ranked the 10 most unstable nations:<sup>5</sup> (1) Gaza and West Bank, (2) Somalia, (3) Afghanistan, (4) Sudan (5) Cote d'Ivoire (6) Haiti, (7) Zimbabwe, (8) Chad, (9) Democratic Republic of Congo, (10) Central African Republic. IHS analysis indicates that "the least-stable states will often lack a strong, capable central government, which can lead to factionalism, power politics, warlordism and low levels of law and order."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article3617160.ece>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ihs.com/NR/rdonlyres/8E00D44C-A70B-466A-A524-0CFE19FA4D0E/0/032508JANESNRCountryRiskRatingFINAL.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ihs.com/NR/rdonlyres/8E00D44C-A70B-466A-A524-0CFE19FA4D0E/0/032508JANESNRCountryRiskRatingFINAL.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ihs.com/NR/rdonlyres/8E00D44C-A70B-466A-A524-0CFE19FA4D0E/0/032508JANESNRCountryRiskRatingFINAL.pdf>

Taking a step back, it's also important to define a nation separate from the adjectives of 'failed' and 'stable.' Princeton's Wordnet defines a nation as a politically organized body of people under a single government.<sup>7</sup> This particular definition would eliminate group threats like al Qaeda, which are not bound within national borders or associated with any specific government. While al Qaeda and rebel groups do pose a threat to U.S. interests, in my opinion, the resolution factors those particular groups out of the debate decision making calculus, forcing debaters to focus on character and threat analysis of leaders and national populations. While the uprising of rebel groups and factionalism may be a sign of a failed state, debaters should be more concerned with the political posturing of the government.

Although there are a great number of ways to define failed and stable, for the purpose of this article, we will generalize a failed nation to mean a nation in which a government is incapable of governing the area within its borders. In some regards, nations can be both failed and stable at the same time – until recently, Sri Lanka had no control over its Tamil region while the rest of the nation was firmly under government control. Sri Lanka, by this definition would be treated as a failed nation when discussing the Tamil revolution, and a stable nation when addressing the rest. Today, Sri Lanka is a relatively stable nation, which must deal with many Tamil refugees in the wake of its military crackdown.

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<sup>7</sup> [wordnet.princeton.edu/](http://wordnet.princeton.edu/)

The last decade has been a decade of threat containment – from the War on Terror to an economic crisis, the decade has had to deal with Russian aggression, Iranian nuclear programs, North Korean nuclear programs, Somali Pirates, the rise of Hugo Chavez’s power, a renewed economic threat from China, and countless other smaller crises. The future is, as always, uncertain – and many wonder where the next “threat” to the United States lies. Each person finds a different aspect of a crisis to be threatening. Business leaders may worry how threats affect their ability to compete abroad or whether consumers will be willing to spend on luxuries. Military leaders may worry for the effectiveness of the armed forces. Everyday people want to know they are safe going about their daily lives. Because a threat can be interpreted through a number of different lenses, and because another article this month discusses these types of threats in detail, this article will attempt to address the different ways in which failed and stable nations generate threats to the United States.

### ***THREATS IN GENERAL***

We can easily separate types of threats into the five broad categories specified by Jane’s Information Services (previously mentioned): political, social, economic, external, and military and security. On the political level, key leaders can be a simple way to determine threat levels to the United States through rhetoric, intentions, and actions. Leaders, Congressional or Parliamentary attitudes, Presidents, and Prime Ministers can all indicate the threat level of a

nation. Think: Chavez of Venezuela,<sup>8</sup> Castro of Cuba,<sup>9</sup> Putin of Russia<sup>10</sup> (to a lesser extent), and Ahmadinejad of Iran<sup>11</sup>. Social factors include religious pressure and allegiances, social unrest, and patterns of violence and radical behavior. Think Israel,<sup>12</sup> Palestine,<sup>13</sup> Libya, Pakistan,<sup>14</sup><sup>15</sup> and Afghanistan.<sup>16</sup> <sup>17</sup> Economic indicators include dropping or unstable GDPs, high unemployment levels, state ownership of industry, and investor flight. External threats rely on international perceptions, posturing, and credibility. Military and security threats include nuclear proliferation, potential for military attacks, war making capabilities, and development of new military weapons (traditional, chemical, and biological).

### ***FAILED NATIONS***

Failed nations generally lack centralized control over their own borders. Somalia is a prime example of a failed nation, because its so-called “government” in fact has little to no control over the neighborhood in which it exists. The nation of Somalia is not ruled by any sort of government, but rather is divided into territories belonging to various gangs. The nation is “failed” because the government has “failed” to exert control over its own borders. Mexico made the

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/news/4874>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9359/#p3>

<sup>10</sup> <http://author.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasia/wm1356.cfm>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.nydailynews.com/news/us\\_world/2007-09-23\\_irans\\_ahmadinejad\\_issues\\_new\\_threats\\_aga.html](http://www.nydailynews.com/news/us_world/2007-09-23_irans_ahmadinejad_issues_new_threats_aga.html)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.fmep.org/reports/special-reports/strategic-nuclear-and-missile-developments-in-the-middle-east-facing-armageddon/israel-u.s.-strategic-cooperation-reaffirmed-and-reinvigorated>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.pmw.org.il/indoctrinaying%20%20children%20to%20violence.htm>

<sup>14</sup> <http://nyulocal.com/national/2009/10/19/us-pumps-billions-into-panic-ridden-pakistan/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704500604574482973468887970.html>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.elon.edu/pendulum/Story.aspx?id=2783>

<sup>17</sup> [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/28/content\\_12119321.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/28/content_12119321.htm)

news this last summer as several U.S. commanders stated it threatened to become a failed state due to the increasing violence in its Juarez region.

Obama's promise to increase troop commitments in Afghanistan is based on a growing fear that the Afghan government has failed to control the movement of weapons and drugs within its own borders. Failed nations generally present security threats to the United States, and usually for a few reasons.

First, failed nations are ideal conditions for violent groups to organize.

Governments have a tendency to track down violent groups and gangs.

Although such nations are not always successful, the mere action of the state to try to mitigate the presence of terrorist cells drives them underground. In

Somalia, however, the government has no ability to do anything about terrorist groups, so such organizations are freer to move around. Drugs, money

laundering, and weapons are all much more easily found in failed nations, and the concentration of these items creates ideal conditions for the operation and

management of terrorist organizations. Al Qaeda would have a difficult time locating all of its central management in Kansas City, but it had no problem

running its operations out of Afghanistan prior to the U.S. invasion, since the nation was lawless.

Violent groups meet and operate within failed nations, but they rarely remain

there. Somali pirates have seized vessels from many different nations that

simply pass by the country. Al Qaeda has launched a series of terrorist attacks

across the globe. Drug smugglers in Afghanistan ship opium to the United

States in shipping containers, and gangs in the Juarez region fund violence in the Southern United States. This spillover creates a security threat for the people in the United States, who often feel the effects of violent groups that decide to set their eyes on a prize the size of the United States.

Second, failed nations are unpredictable and often unknown. Because the governments of failed nations are not managing the territory within their borders, they often have less information about what happens within. This makes it harder for the United States to predict the actions of the people living within such nations, because intelligence is needed to make such predictions. Moreover, whenever the U.S. takes an action that involves a failed nation, that action has to deal with more inconclusive variables. If the United States decides to strengthen the military of Kenya, could that make Kenya less enticing of a target for Somali warlords, making gangs attack different nations instead? The variable is harder to determine if the United States has no idea what motivates certain Somali warlords. The lack of information can cause policy paralysis.

This unpredictability also makes any attack from an unstable nation much more of a surprise. The effectiveness of the September 11 attacks lay in the element of surprise. Because the U.S. had less information on what was happening in Afghanistan, it wasn't able to piece together the brewing threat, which enabled a low-budget terrorist operation to deal a powerful blow to the most powerful nation on the Earth. Even today, U.S. intelligence analysts struggle to handle all of the

potential threats coming out of unstable nations. They have little to no local government assistance, and efforts to garner intelligence can involve risky spy missions that may turn out badly. In this regard, failed nations may not present a threat in the metaphysical sense; however, absent such certainty, such nations still require an immense amount of observation.

### ***STABLE NATIONS***

When a nation is stable, it is capable of acting in its own self-interest. These interests often conflict with the interests of other nations, leading to conflict. This conflict is not always violent outright, but nevertheless creates some sort of contest by which two nations seek superiority over another. In this regard, every stable nation with any interest even remotely different from the interests of the United States constitute threats, as they will rationally act to favor themselves. A few examples of this include China mitigating U.S. climate negotiations on the international scene, North Korea developing nuclear weaponry, and Germany subsidizing Airbus, a competitor with the U.S. company: Boeing. Each threat is unique, but there are a few ways in which stable nations generally could be construed as a major threat.

First, stable nations are organized and generally efficient. Unlike failed nations, which are unable to form a coherent union of interests, stable nations generally act with some consensus of action led by a form of government. This efficiency allows stable nations to much more effectively utilize their resources to challenge

the United States on a number of fronts. Moreover, because stable nations are well organized in the gathering of information, they are capable of proactively mitigating U.S. power, as well as reacting to U.S. actions. In other words, they know what the U.S. wants, they know where they conflict with the United States, and they are capable of determining the most effective means of favoring themselves.

Efficiency is the reason why the United States fears Iran more than it fears terrorists in Gaza; both have goals that differ with those of the United States, both dislike Israel, and both have a history of violent action. However, terrorists in Gaza, even when relatively unified, lack the cohesiveness to generate a large-scale threat to Israel. People may debate Iran's intentions regarding its nuclear program, but all debaters must recognize that the potential for an organized state like Iran to construct nuclear weaponry presents a larger threat to Israel than even the most gruesome of roadside bombs.

Second, stable nations form alliances. Stable nations rarely act alone.

Specifically, because stable nations prefer to advance their own interests, they have the unique ability to create alliances that are larger than the United States alone. Organizations such as OPEC or the EU all represent alliances of interest. While the most prominent of alliances are economic, the U.S. does concern itself over attempts by its enemies to cooperate with one another. For instance, Hugo Chavez's nation, Venezuela, has taken several steps to reach out to its

neighbors in an attempt to check against U.S. power in the region. These alliances serve to weaken U.S. power, and in so doing constitute a threat of sorts.

These alliances can also trade off with U.S. alliances. China, for instance, has launched a diplomatic offensive in Africa, offering friendly trade deals with nations and building economic ties which trade off with United States offers. In this way, China's alliance-building capacity weakens the alliance-building capacity of the U.S. Weakened alliances put the U.S. in a poor position economically and militarily, and certainly favor China, which wants less competition with U.S. interests in the region.

### ***PARTING THOUGHTS.***

Basically, be cautious of everyone. Look out for terrorists. Watch out for failed states. Be wary of stable nations. This particular topic may have you becoming a little more paranoid. In the end game, you need to find a way to evaluate types of threat. Which are more likely? Political or economic threats? Social or external threats? What about military security threats? Using a standard ranking system, like Jane's list, can help create an objective scale to base your threat analysis on. It's up to the individual team to determine which types of threats to focus on, but *stay focused* once you have decided on to avoid an "everywhere" debate.

## **Topic Analysis by Todd Rainey**

Odds are, your parents, coaches, and judges were alive to witness the fall of the Berlin Wall at the end of the glasnost period toward the end of the Cold War. After a half-century of nuclear threat, the ominous shadow of Russia slowly retreated, and many wondered what would happen next. Those same figures witnessed the fragmentation of Balkan Europe, and felt the economic and emotional pains of the September 11, 2001 attacks, launched from a failed state halfway across the globe. Although I am strongly opposed to any notion of fear-mongering, it is this duality of which I ask you to be aware as you conduct yourselves this month, when discussing the resolution. Our generation has largely conducted itself in an era in which one superpower dominates the global scene, having only to defend itself against small nations with intent to acquire large weapons. The rise of China may change this, and Russia is still nothing to sneeze at. Nevertheless, the ruling parties of this world are very focused on assessing threats, and although there are many threats in many forms, there is a reason why the Tom Clancy novel “The Sum of All Fears” is about a nuclear bomb.

So what does that mean for us when we begin researching this topic? It means that we have to ask ourselves, before we begin to do a single Google search, how we want to argue the topic. You should always pick a fight you feel comfortable fighting, and my emphasis this month will be on the different battles

available to you, as well as how you can determine which battle to pick as well as when.

### **What Constitutes a Threat?**

I stated above that there are many different threats to the United States. In order to determine what nation threatens the U.S. the most, it is imperative that we determine how we want to examine the word “threat.” Although I hope to produce a detailed list of different threats, this list is by no means complete – feel free to pursue the argument of whatever you consider to be a threat to the United States.

The most obvious threat is a domestic security threat. This has changed in recent times, and with the strength of the U.S. military alongside the weakness of its border security, the danger it faces every day is no longer the danger of an invading army (which would be swiftly defeated by the domestic armed forces), but a small contingent of terrorists placing a bomb in an unmarked shipping container. These groups may have different motives, and the financing of such a project is more difficult than the evening news makes it seem. Looking at threats to the United States in terms of domestic security can be advantageous in a few ways; most cable news networks have emphasized the dangers of terrorist groups to the United States already, so the groundwork for your case is already laid. There are plenty of people who lament the ease with which a nuclear bomb could work its way to the heart of a U.S. city, and the border is already heavily

compromised by a threat right now in the form of drug trafficking. (We will talk more about drug trafficking in the section on cultural threats.) The downside to arguing the domestic security threat has to do with the environment of fear mongering in which many news agencies deal right now. Truth be told, everybody recognizes that terrorist attacks are bad. However, when the idea has been beaten to death and over-emphasized, you walk a narrow line between justified argumentation and appeal to base fears. Some judges may feel disrespected with too much fear rhetoric, and plenty of other debaters would be happy to call you out on it. If you feel persuasive and don't want to be technical on the argument, this is a good route to take.

International security threats are the next most obvious concern, notably threats to U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. News pundits argue that nations such as Iran and Pakistan have degenerate influences in these nations and have the potential to undermine the safety of American troops. A threat to the United States in this sense is slightly more abstract – unless you are connected to the military, you are not directly threatened by Pakistani influence over the Afghan conflict. Yet, because the United States puts much of its resources into securing influence over remote parts of the world, this type of threat is of critical importance. In order to sustain the American lifestyle, the U.S. needs to ensure a free flow of economic imports in the form of capital and energy – much of that energy happens to come from abroad, and from both secure and failed states. The energy vulnerability of the United States has been touched upon before, so I

will not go into further depth on the matter. When arguing this type of threat, one faces the advantage of having a wider array of case examples to lean upon, as well as avoiding the drawbacks of fear mongering noted in the first form of threat. As a downside, a good debater will have to commit some reasonable space of time to the effort of establishing this threat – time that could be spent on arguing the specifics of pro or con.

Hegemonic influence is a phrase often used in policy debate. Recognizing that this is not policy, I still recommend that you aim for a comprehensive understanding of the arguments surrounding U.S. hegemony. Hegemony is basically the ability of the United States to influence other nations to adopt agendas friendly to its own influence. This can happen either through bullying (often called “hard power,” and a sub-set of hegemony), or through diplomacy (otherwise called “soft power.”) Since hegemony is the gateway to other security issues, threats to hegemony are threats to U.S. interests. A concrete example of this could be seen in the “coalition of the willing,” which was formed prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Nations with whom we had favor were willing to assist the American military endeavor, but after a lengthy war, few of these nations would happily join such a coalition again. This deterioration of U.S. hegemony is a threat to its military interests, because it has fewer resources to leverage in any potential military conflict of the future. Diplomacy can also be threatened in a number of ways. Hugo Chavez, who holds the United States in low regard, has had a great deal of success in preventing the U.S. from being as diplomatically

successful in South America as it may wish to be. Arguing that a hegemonic threat is the most important can be abstract for citizen judges, so I would personally narrow the field to either hard power or soft power. This bears similar benefits and drawbacks to international security threats, but tends to be slightly more scholarly. Debates over hegemony tend to ask what the root cause of U.S. hegemony is, so be prepared for such a debate should you choose this route.

Economic threats to the United States are not primarily considered by many, but they are a viable route for this debate. While the U.S. economy primarily enjoys trade with stable nations, making the debate seem one-sided toward the Con, it is important to recognize that “borderline” nations make this debate incorporate the threat and the country together a bit more. Mexico, for instance, is considered a failed state by some and a stable nation by others. The economic threat posed to the United States by a leaky border to its South and by smuggling operations in Mexico is a substantial one. Abroad, failed states can influence stable nations in the form of trade as well – attacks on Israel by terrorist cells organized in failed states have a direct impact on the U.S. economy, which trades with the nation. Likewise, Somali pirates threaten U.S. trade by commandeering ships that attempt to pass through the Suez canal in an effort to find the lowest trading costs. Arguing economic threats can be one of the most abstract means of debate in this topic, and deals with many alternate causalities. In other words, it is definitely a high-risk debate to choose in an event with a notoriously unstable judging pool. As an advantage, if you Google the phrase

“threat to the united states” (but not in quotes), you will find that the testimony of Dennis C Blair (a name with which you should be familiar) claims the global economy is the biggest short-term threat to the United States. The economic debate may be abstract, but it can lean on expert testimony and a solid appeal to authority in the field.

Cultural threats to the United States are fairly subjective, but by my definition, I would consider any subversive influence to be a cultural threat. In the 1950s, the cultural threat was communism and the threat of usurping the capitalist ideals of the United States. Whether this was positive or negative, I leave up to you, but today there are many subversive influences in the United States, and several could be considered universally negative. The importation of hard narcotics from abroad brings gang wars into U.S. territory, sends American money overseas, and kills thousands each year in the form of overdoses. Depending on the politics of your region, the importation of conservative or liberal ideology threatens to undermine the basis of our relatively successful government.

Cultural threats are too diverse to discuss in-detail here, and you will have to tailor the argument to your own region and judging pool in order to be successful. I’m honestly uncomfortable debating this type of threat and wouldn’t touch it with a ten-foot pole. However, the beauty of this event is that it lets you express the arguments that you want, and this paragraph is only here to get the ball rolling on what may be, for you, a very successful month.

## **Failed nations and Stable Nations**

Some nations are easily classified as failed states. Somalia's "government" is a joke, and the capital city of Mogadishu is one of the most dangerous in the world. Pirates run rampant off of the country's shores, blatantly disregarding international law. Wars are fought by glorified gangs over turf, and the country is extremely hostile to its own citizens, let alone outsiders. In stark contrast, Norway is a nation that many people may associate with pine trees, saunas, and a very high tax rate. So what separates the two from one another? And where can we draw that line?

The Fund for Peace has a list on its website of all the nations of the world, ranked from least stable to most stable. While I would not recommend that you cite this group as a source in round, it provides a fairly comprehensive background on the ideas of failed states. It offers the following criteria:

1. Mounting demographic pressures
2. Massive movement of refugees or internally displaced persons creating complex humanitarian emergencies
3. Legacy of vengeance-seeking group grievance or group paranoia
4. Chronic and sustained human flight
5. Uneven economic development along group lines
6. Sharp and/or severe economic decline
7. Criminalization and/or delegitimization of the state
8. Progressive deterioration of public services

9. Suspension or arbitrary application of the rule of law and widespread violation of human rights
10. Security apparatus operates as a “state within a state”
11. Rise of factionalized elites
12. Intervention of other states or external political actors.<sup>18</sup>

No nation has to fulfill all of the criteria to count as a failed state, but it must have at least one, and isn't considered a critically failed nation until several are broadly fulfilled. At first glance, failed states are certainly more terrifying than stable nations, until one realizes that the category that pops up with failed states is internal conflict. This internal conflict has the potential to breed terrorist groups or those outwardly hostile to the United States and its interests, but most of the efforts by “bad guys” within a failed state are to commit atrocities against their own people. A tragedy that must be alleviated, yes, but not one for this month's debate topic.

Secure nations tend to be more outward-focused. China is a much more stable nation than Somalia, but could be considered a greater threat to the United States on many levels. This is because of the ability of China's government to leverage its resources against U.S. interests, while the influence of Somali citizens is often limited to the area near Somalia. At the core of the failed vs stable debate, one asks whether the enemy you know is more dangerous than

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the enemy you don't know. China is more powerful than any terrorist organization operating within Somalia; it has a nuclear arsenal, a massive army, is able to leverage its diplomacy against U.S. interests, and is openly confrontational at times. Yet, after nearly half a century of possessing the Bomb, China is yet to use it against an enemy. On the flip side, the chaotic organizations living within failed states are far weaker – they are hunted, hated, and possess few economic resources. However, their small size makes them harder to deal with and they are more unpredictable. If a terrorist organization gained access to a nuclear weapon, they would likely be eager to utilize it.

No matter what the threat is, debaters will have a certain set of goals for each side. If you are on the pro, you are playing into large threats with little certainty. Failed states aren't as capable as stable nations and you shouldn't enter the debate with any such illusions. The capacity of a rogue element is, however, far more dangerous than most military leaders in other countries. Since it's hard to discuss attacks that haven't empirically happened (a nuclear attack on New York, for instance), systematic harms will likely be your gateway issue to larger threats. For examples, look into Hezbollah, the FARC, Somali Pirates, the tribal regions of Pakistan, as well as Mexico (if you are willing to go for the argument that Mexico is, in fact, a failed state). The con needs to emphasize cold-war style bipolarity. Do not hearken to the cold war itself, which saw relatively little violence compared to the World Wars prior. However, with stable challengers to U.S. power, the ability of organized governments to challenge U.S. authority

becomes your friend. China's anti-satellite rockets are a great example in which stable nations are able to generate threats. Russia's military presence in the Caucasus region is another, and the potential economic threat posed by the European Union is yet another option, should you construe the threat debate in terms of corporate competition. There are plenty of case examples on which to build, and you can dig into the literature to take you wherever you like. I would advise you read up on all that I've talked about today, since your opponents may also be reading Victory Briefs (if they know what's good for them). As a bit of generic advice, while your arguments should be evidence-supported, you want to be sure to tell a clear story. If that requires a bit of a sales job, don't be afraid to push the implications of a given point. You should never lie, but the fact is that we live in an uncertain world, and it's not wrong of you to try to look at evidence in a new light. Just never present evidence out-of-context, and never be misleading in your argument. Until next month, good luck!

## **Topic Analysis by Ryan Hamilton**

This topic has the potential to provide debaters with substantial insight on international policy-making from the perspective of U.S. strategists and diplomats as well as a greater philosophical understanding of the theories and schools of thought that help guide foreign policy action. However, it has the significant risk of becoming a no fun, uneducational, bromide if debaters steer to the easiest choice and elect for intellectual laziness over more rigorous, challenging debates.

The debate should be about whether the risks to which the respective nation-types are prone pose a greater risk in the abstract than in concrete instances. To be clear, this should not be a debate about any two particular nations, i.e., Afghanistan or the Sudan in recent history and North Korea or Iran and their respective challenges to the United States, but rather what dangers a failed state might pose relative to a stable state in purely hypothetical terms. This is true because the resolution doesn't give a particular country, and more to the point, the range of dangers that might be posed by two failed states, again using Afghanistan and the Sudan, run a gamut so large that to pick one and say that it is truly representative is simply dishonest.

Opting to go down the road of Afghanistan v. North Korea road will mean for a boring round where opponents simply stand up and list the most exaggerated risks of either country – I think some kind of nuclear holocaust will be the

preferred impact to end all impacts here – and then setting the judge loose to ride roughshod over the round and choose which he finds more horrifying – a missile launched from Pyongyang on Honolulu or Los Angeles or a nuclear device smuggled in from Kabul and blowing up Phoenix or Sheboygan. The more honest and challenging debate comes when debaters chose to weigh between the totality of risks involved between failed and stable nations, construct risk and decision calculi, and then argue in favor for that calculi in front of the judge, giving solid reasons why one ought to prefer theirs to their opponents. This has the advantage of creating a more interesting and educational round, but also gives debaters more control because judges won't be voting on what they find more frightening, but rather the rational arguments with clear reasons why they ought to be preferred.

That's not to say that examining failed states and dangerous stable states is worthless. The first step in establishing these sorts of arguments begins with setting clear parameters on when a state is and what constitutes a "failed" state or a "stable" state. These are complex definitions that probably have literally thousands of variables in the academic literature. The best way to do this is to start examining the shared characteristics of failed states. The Fund for Peace publishes a study with states that are most likely to fail. The top three countries it lists are Somalia, Zimbabwe, and Sudan. There are, of course, problems with the study that exhibit themselves immediately (some of which will be discussed later), but it is a useful place to get started.

It also becomes important to define very clearly what constitutes a threat – the many varied interactions between countries and the individuals from which they are made up complicate things almost beyond measure – is a state that cannot produce passports that are sufficiently resistant to forgery a threat to the United States, or is a threat only constituted through the potentiality of armed conflict and something more substantial? All told, the debaters will have to work out what it means to be failed, stable, and then from either one what sorts of actions meet the threshold of risk.

Affirmatives in this case have an extra link to make than most negative positions will have to make in most debates. Failed states typically do not pose a threat to the United States *qua* failed states, but rather pose a risk because of the terrorist groups or other enterprises seeking to destroy or erode US power that set up shop when the government doesn't have the power or the will to assert control. The example that I anticipate will be most used is that the Taliban, which itself lacked the power, funds, resources, or will to attack the United States as an organization allowed or at least could not stop Al Qaeda – an organization that had the power and means to attack the US – from establishing strong holds in the country and using it as a recruiting and operations center. The toughest part of using this example is the link that the greatest impact of the argument that failed states turn into host sites for more malignant organizations is warranting

that it is a common enough occurrence to warrant a significant enough place in the risk calculus for failed states.

It seems that the more significant risk factor is that these states risk internal collapse and war that can spread like wildfire – if one is to take the Fund for Peace study seriously, and I think it can be agreed beyond that, most failed states or states at risk of failure are located close to one another, creating a tinder box or a gunpowder barrel or some other device or object that is just ready to explode with the slightest spark. The revolt of the people in one country might inspire violence that spills across borders igniting an entire region, for instance, sub-Saharan and central Africa in a conflict that is more or borderless and lacks any centralized authority to combat violence or prevent human rights abuses. This seems to me to be a fair scenario and one that has significant impacts in the abstract.

More troublesome still is the idea that some states that are rated highly for failure are those that possess nuclear arms technology. Within the last couple of weeks, for instance, insurgents in Pakistan mounted an attack on Army Headquarters, penetrated the perimeter, and took several army staff hostage. There are mixed reports about whether or not the groups of loosely allied insurgents have attacked or are aware of the locations at which nuclear waste is stored. If the government were to suddenly lack the capacity to enforce the rule of law in Pakistan and assert its authority while safe guarding its nuclear

technology and assets, the situation would clearly be a major problem for every country in the world.

These examples are also important because the countries that are at a significant risk of failure are typically located next to states that are rated at “warning” levels for significant risk of failure. Any destabilization in one or many of the significantly failure-prone states might immediately de-stabilize those countries and jeopardize more than half of the world’s population.

It seems that all of the most horrific situations that constitute part of the risk calculus lack an immediate impact back to the United States, but anyone who thinks that the US wouldn’t immediately intervene to attempt to put a stop to these crisis or negotiate some sort of truce or put some kind of capital on the line for stability is making a fool’s argument. There would be both internal and external pressure on the US government to intervene in some way and in so doing it would necessarily have to risk some of its capital and resources to try to get a handle on the situation.

That is one end of the failed states are an enormous risk spectrum, but the arguments that don’t require so much work to make and have less extravagant impacts are probably going to be the arguments that win most rounds. For instance, aside from being a terrorist bed and breakfast, Afghanistan’s impoverished farmers have turned to growing and selling poppies on the black

market for use in heroin. I'm not sure of exact statistics, but you can be sure that some portion of the heroin using Afghani poppy seeds or whatever part of the plant is used to make heroin ends up in US American streets. This is clearly a problem, but only clever affirmatives will be able to make the argument that such a thing rises to the level of a threat – thorough research may indicate that regions with failed government are the primary growers and producers of illegal drugs that make their way into the United States and cause a serious problem for the population.

The lack of stable governments with the ability to effectively police their borders and homeland create the opportunity for a whole host of problems to the United States, some of which are definitely threatening: even if a terrorist group doesn't set up shop within a failed state, it is certainly much more likely to use it as a spring board to enacting any malfeasance it has planned. Stable states are likely to use these regions as a meeting area or espionage centers because of the lax security and surveillance – these countries colluding without any real risk of being caught can certainly pose a threat to the United States.

It seems, then, that the most successful affirmatives will try to define threats to the United States as broadly as possible and then argue that failed states are the states that are most likely to require engagement of US forces to stabilize regions or take actions against groups, organizations, or individuals who are working against the interests of the United States. It relies on a careful construction of

threats to which the United States must respond if it wants to maintain its status as the world's only remaining super power and protect and advance its interests.

Negatives have the job of demonstrating that stable states pose as much of a risk or a greater risk to the United States, and they seem to have the easier task by my estimation. Stable states are able to raise armies, develop aggressive technologies, leverage intelligence and espionage systems, develop complex long term plans, and utilize international alliances and power structures to achieve their ends. While failed states can really only passively threaten the United States, stable states that are bellicose can directly threaten the United States. In times past and perhaps in future it has not always been clear that the United States would come out on top of an armed engagement with other stable states – for the time being it seems that our military technology and hegemony will protect us from defeat, but states (like Iran or potentially North Korea) developing weapons of mass destruction might be able to inflict significant losses in the course of being defeated.

One of the most interesting and relevant questions for negatives comes up after reading some definitions of failed states – it would seem that autocratic regimes that have no significant risk of failing, like North Korea, do not constitute “stable” states, or sustainable states, in the academic literature. Studies tend to think that autocratic regimes are not “sustainable” because of the intense amount of energy that goes in to keeping the people propagandized and repressed, draining

resources from the states ability to take care of them. This means that negatives will have to construct a counter definition for stable that distinguishes between stable and “sustainable” or whatever other term a particular journal or article uses to denote states like North Korea – which are in no immediate danger of collapsing – and states like Canada, which are both stable and sustainable. In this sense, the negative will be using a more pedestrian definition of the word stable, while affirmatives will try to undercut the impacts of current states posing threats by pointing out that the academic literature usually claims that what we think of stable states are actually not stable at all.

After establishing that definition, it is not a stretch to argue that with all of the organizational powers of stable states, that they would pose at least as great a danger to the United States as failed states would. The best arguments come from the past: the typical countries that the United States has engaged in conflict, namely Nazi Germany, were developed states with powerful governments that enacted far reaching plans and had designs on the future as well, with at least some meaningful support of the population.

## Topic Analysis by Fritz Pielstick

This is admittedly somewhat of a strange topic, at least in terms of the wording. The subject area is something that is of great importance. The United States is constantly evaluating which of the many existential threats we face is of most pressing concern. This topic gets right to the heart of this issue. It asks debaters to determine if failed nations (nations that are politically and/or economically unstable to the point of near-collapse) pose a greater threat than other nations whose stability is more certain, but who share an equal or greater incentive to destroy the United States.

To begin let us sort through the wording of this resolution.

The term 'failed nation' is synonymous with 'failed state', and both indicate a nation that has lost physical control of its territory and monopoly over authoritative control.<sup>19</sup> There are many nations that fit this qualification, and some of them do pose a grave threat to the United States. In some of these nations, such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Yemen, large terror or militia groups such as Al Qaeda or the Taliban control large swaths of land and are left to develop and thrive without control. The logical extension is that these failed

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<sup>19</sup> Fund for Peace. Non-profit research and educational organization. 2009. Failed States Index FAQ.  
[http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=102&Itemid=327#5](http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=102&Itemid=327#5)

nations are thus threats to the United States because their lack of authoritative monopoly and territorial control has allowed existential threats to the United States to thrive.

Conversely, the term 'stable nation' does not necessarily imply a nation that has a strong economy and a high standard of living. Rather, it merely indicates that the nation in question has a government with enough control over the nations boundaries for it to remain in total authoritative control. There are a number of stable nations in the world that also pose an existential threat to the United States. There is a metaphysical difference in the quality of threat that these nations pose, however, and that it the issue at the heart of this topic. While failed nations may threaten the United States by harboring terrorists who are determined to attack the United States (Afghanistan, Pakistan), these stable nations may possibly be developing dangerous weapons with the intent to use them against the U.S or its allies (Iran, North Korea), or may be expanding economically and militarily such that the U.S.'s hegemony and global primacy could be threatened (Russia, China).

Because there is a distinct difference in the nature of these existential threats, debaters are being asked to determine which threat is more significant. The implicit manor in which debaters will resolve this issue is by weighing out two things. First, the potential harm that a nation, failed or stable, poses to the United States; and second, the likelihood that harm will be inflicted upon us.

I think the most logical way to go about proving this is to select a handful of nations from each category (failed, stable) that do pose some risk to U.S. national security, and explain the threat posed by those nations. Focus on weighing both the likelihood and the magnitude of an attack against the United States for all of these nations.

### Failed Nations

Proposition teams have empirical evidence on their side. Recent attacks against U.S. targets have been perpetrated almost exclusively by terrorist organizations living within nations whose governments are weak, corrupt, evil, or all three. The argument is that the instability experienced in these nations is a breeding ground for terrorism. The 9/11 attacks were perpetrated by Al-Qaeda members who had been harbored by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Recent attacks against U.S. targets in Yemen were perpetrated by Al-Qaeda members living in that nation, and recently a plot was uncovered by U.S. Proposition teams have empirical evidence on their side. Recent attacks against U.S. targets have been perpetrated almost exclusively by terrorist organizations living within nations whose governments are weak, corrupt, evil, or all three. The argument is that the instability experienced in these nations is a breeding ground for terrorism. The 9/11 attacks were perpetrated by Al-Qaeda members who had been harbored by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Recent attacks against U.S. targets in Yemen were perpetrated by Al-Qaeda members living in that nation, and recently a plot was

uncovered by U.S. Intelligence Officials for Somali terrorists to attack U.S. targets in South Africa.

In terms of weighing out the likelihood that an attack from a terrorist organization will occur in the near future, the proposition has a pretty easy case to make here. It is almost certain that there will be another attack (or at least attempted attack) in the relatively near future, because there have been several attacks in the recent past. The likelihood that failed nations pose a threat to the United States is thus very high because terrorists harbored by failed nations have already attacked us.

The proposition's job, then, is to explain the gravity of the terrorist threat. There is certainly evidence out there that highlights the risk that international terrorist organizations pose to nations such as the United States. Even with Al-Qaeda being qualitatively weaker than it was the day of the 9/11 attacks, there is still evidence that indicates that Al-Qaeda poses a threat. Additionally, there is evidence available that explains worst case scenarios for terrorist attacks. Evidence indicates that terrorists have the capacity to acquire dangerous biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons of mass destruction and the motivation to use them against the United States.

The empirical proof that terrorists harbored by failed nations have attacked the United States in the past coupled with the analysis that terrorists have the

capacity to kill millions of innocent civilians makes a pretty compelling case for the proposition.

### Stable Nations

The United States is facing pressing international competition, both militarily and economically, from a number of nations, some of which do not particularly care for us. Among these nations are China and Russia, which are building rapidly expanding armies, massively increasing defense spending, and in the case of China, have fast growing populations. In addition, their economic prowess is also growing, and is approaching levels that may threaten the U.S.'s primacy economically—China's in particular. The logical extension to be made here is that nations will soon rise to levels where they can challenge the U.S. on many fronts, and that this is a threat to the United States. The significance and magnitude of this potential threat is obvious; a nation that has as much power as the U.S. as well as a strong disliking for it is likely to be a threat. The potential for harm to the United States is tremendous. What is less certain is the likelihood that harm will be inflicted. The proposition could most likely argue that two superpowers are actually very unlikely to engage in armed conflict with one another, given the threat of mutually assured destruction.

One way the opposition can approach this is to interpret "threat" less in the sense of taking lives and more in the sense of threatening our power and influence.

Certainly a nation such as China, at the rate it is expanding, will be able to usurp

a substantial amount of American power in coming decades. Perhaps this alone constitutes a “threat.”

The other threat posed by stable nations lies in those handful of nations with the capability to launch an attack against the United States (at least in the near future), and the die-hard motivation to do so. Nations such as Iran and North Korea fall under this category. There is evidence that indicates that these nations do have the capacity be nuclear threats to the United States. Needless to say, these nations are ideologically oppositional to the United States, and thus a nuclear weapon in their hands constitutes a grave threat. One important consideration is that although neither Iran nor North Korea has the capability to launch a ballistic missile fitted with a nuclear weapon at the United States, there is always the possibility that they could sell the weapon or the technology to terrorist organizations who would have secretive means of transporting the weapon into the United States.

The opposition could argue that the potential harm caused by a nuclear weapon combined with the intense motivation to attack the United States constitutes both a strong magnitude and a strong likelihood, thus constituting a tremendous threat.

Negative Option: The Threats are Equal

In addition to proving that the threats posed by stable nations outweigh those posed by failed nations, the negative has the option of proving that the threats are equivalent to one another. If the two threats are equivalent, then the proposition is not proving that the threat posed by failed nations is greater, and thus not meeting their burden in the round.

One way the opposition could accomplish this is by describing the often codependent relationship among failed nations, terrorist networks, and rogue stable nations. For example, I mentioned above that one potential risk posed by rogue stable nations such as North Korea and Iran is that these nations could sell either nuclear weapons or nuclear technology to terrorist networks. The opposition could argue that insofar as scenarios such as this could occur, the two categories (failed, stable) are equally serious threats because they are equally responsible for creating this threat. The stable nations are responsible because they developed the technology and sold it to terrorists, and the failed nations are responsible because they harbored the terrorists and allowed them to purchase and utilize this technology freely.

It is not as though failed and stable nations do not interact with one another.

There are a number of nations that fit into one of those two categories and have an intense hatred for the United States. It is not unreasonable to assume they may work together to work against us.

Ultimately, this is a resolution that gives debaters an opportunity to explore important geopolitical concerns and important issues of national security. There is a wide array of topically relevant literature available and an equally wide array of compelling arguments to be made on both sides. Surely, this topic will be conducive to exciting and stimulating debates.

Happy Debating!

## **Topic Analysis by Carol Green**

*Nation: A large aggregate of communities and individuals united by factors such as common descent, language, culture, history, or occupation of the same territory, so as to form a distinct people. Now also: such a people forming a political state; a political state.*

*Country: The territory or land of a nation; usually an independent state, or a region once independent and still distinct in race, language, institutions, or historical memories, as England, Scotland, and Ireland, in the United Kingdom, etc.*

*State: A body of people occupying a defined territory and organized under a sovereign government.*

*Nation-State: An independent political state formed from a people who share a common national identity (historically, culturally, or ethnically); (more generally) any independent political state.*

I started out with these definitions, all taken from the Oxford English Dictionary<sup>1</sup>, so we can get the giant elephant in the room over with before we address the rest of the topic. Yes, the resolution says nation. Yes, the evidence you will find

related to the context of the resolution says state. Which brings me to the first question I have heard from a number of debaters:

Can you run topicality arguments on the use of evidence relating to states when the resolution says nations?

Yes.

Now for the important question:

Should I run topicality arguments on the use of evidence relating to states when the resolution says nations?

NO!

Public Forum is a contextual event. We take statements and generalize a thesis on each side of the debate to support. Our goal is not to pick as specifics. It's why we don't have plan texts or specify funding mechanisms. Although academically speaking, if we were to take this resolution at it's face value, we should be debating failed **cultures** instead of governments. And while the conflation of the two is frustrating from a political science point of view, it would not be wise in front of the majority of audiences to get nitpicky about a definitional debate.

That said; to finish herding this elephant out of the debate, make sure you have prepared a block that responds to someone questioning the language of your cards in relation to the language of the topic. You should look at educational framework, literature base, common understanding of terminology, as well as the term nation-state and its definition in order to construct your block.

When examining the rest of the resolution, it is easy to see where negative and affirmative ground has been given. A line has been drawn and states are lining up on the Failed and Stable teams. But which country will be picked for each team? I strongly encourage you to examine multiple authors when deciding what makes a country fall on either side of the line.

The first place that everyone will turn is the Failed States Index. This list is compiled by Foreign Policy Magazine and the Fund for Peace. This after all, is the first thing that pops up in Google when you plug in key words of the resolution. The Fund for Peace assesses countries using their own compiled list of 12 indicators of state vulnerability. *“The 12 indicators are: Demographic Pressures, Refugees/IDPs, Group Grievance, Human Flight, Uneven Development, Economic Decline, Delegitimization of the State, Public Services, Human Rights, Security Apparatus, Factionalized Elites, and External Intervention.”*<sup>ii</sup> And while this may be accepted by the media as a valid tool for measurement, if you do a quick search on the Internet, you will find criticisms of

the organization for being regionally biased or for relying on things like media reports from outside states. While these criticisms exist, I expect that the majority of debaters will still rely on this source to set up the parameters of a failed and stable nation.

However, I like the comparative analysis of a failed and stable state done by Rosa Ehrenreich Brooks in the University of Chicago Law Review<sup>iii</sup>, which doesn't just put countries on a list. Instead, Brooks sets up a narrative comparison between a failed and stable state:

*“In the fifteen years since the end of the Cold War, the international community – and the community of international lawyers – has become increasingly preoccupied with the phenomenon usually dubbed “state failure.” Definitions of the failed state vary, but, unsurprisingly, most commentators define failed states in opposition to successful states that are presumed to be the norm. Successful states control defined territories and populations, conduct diplomatic relations with other states, monopolize legitimate violence within their territories, and succeed in providing adequate social goods to their populations. Failed states, their dark mirror image, lose control over the means of violence, and cannot create peace or stability for their populations or control their territories. They cannot ensure economic growth or any reasonable distribution of*

*social goods. They are often characterized by massive economic inequities, warlordism, and violent competition for resources.”*

The author then goes on to discuss the difference between a failed state and a weak or failing state. She defines this set of states as having some sense of stability, *“but they all teeter in common on the precipice, at seemingly perpetual risk of collapse into devastating civil war or simple anarchy.”*<sup>iv</sup> Through her own words as well as the multiple authors she cites, there is a clear differentiation of a failed and a failing state. Which then begs the question: What do I have to defend as a debater?

Since the text of the resolution inherently sets up a false dichotomy of two choices, failed and stable, without giving consideration to the vast turmoil of states in the middle, there are loopholes for a crafty negative team to twist the burdens that on face seem to be set. However, those loopholes aside, seeing that there is no firmly accepted list of failed states in the academic world, I think you should be defending a more narrative overview of the failed and stable state instead of just focusing each contention on a country.

You should also have prepared answers as to why a single country does not prove the whole of the resolution. The reasoning here is that since the notion of a stable or failed state is not an internationally accepted definition and thus the list is fluid (with authors like Noam Chomsky claiming that the United States is a

failed state<sup>v</sup>, I think the fluid list argument is valid). You should still prepare blocks to individual countries, as they can be used to support a large framework.

Finally, what is a threat?

Threat is a term that is tossed around a fair amount these days. From the National Football League worrying that Twitter was a threat to Spring Training<sup>vi</sup> to discourse of whether Iran is a threat to the United States<sup>vii</sup>. The United States Federal Government has a National Threat Assessment Center and there is even an Association of Threat Assessment Professionals.

According to Janice Gross Stein in her article in *Political Psychology*<sup>viii</sup>, there are two types of threats within the scope of international politics. The conditional threat is one where a leader threatens another. According to Stein, *“What is relevant to the success of the strategy is not the threat itself but its perception; there is often a considerable gap between the intentions of the leader who issues the threat and its perception by another.”*<sup>ix</sup> However, in order for something to be a conditional threat, there is an actual statement made by one party against another. The debate then begins where the stated threat ends. What did the leader mean by that threat? What were his or her intentions?

This is different from the situational threat, which is perceived by the environment. According to Stein, *“Accuracy in the perception of situations threats*

*is even more problematic for policy makers to achieve and for scholars to establish. People may read their environment very differently: one may perceive a situation as threatening while another will consider the same set to be benign.*<sup>28</sup>

Stein goes on to argue that even experts see differently within the same set of conditions and thus the assessment of situational threats can be more difficult. She utilizes the example of 1979, when analysts and leaders varied greatly in their assessment of Iran as a threat.

The important thing to keep in mind when framing your case is establishing a clear impact calculation internally. If you can show strong negative impacts against the United States on your side, you don't need a specific definition of a threat. I don't need a definition of a threat to know that someone holding a gun to my head is a danger to me. However, if you opt to go into more subtle arguments to prove your side is a greater threat, you will want to construct a more specific framework. If my students asked for advice, I would opt for the impact calculation over the framework debate because I think there is clearly debate about what makes a threat in more subtle cases and unless you just want to debate about framework, you should avoid it.

With definitions under control, let's look at how judges will be evaluating rounds on this topic. There are a couple of options that immediately come to mind when framing your arguments. The most commonly used in Public Forum rounds would be to examine the round utilizing a cost-benefit scale. If a country has

more benefits than detriments, are they a threat? If stable nations benefit us more than failed nations, does that make stable nations less of a threat? I would personally opt out of this scale as it prescribes an additional burden to each team. Instead, ignore the good of a state. Focus solely on the bad. If someone gives me \$100 dollars and then gives me a black eye, they are still a threat to my safety. The money doesn't negate the threat of injury.

Whether you opt to focus on economics, military or ideology (or some combination of the three), the primary concern should not just be proving that your side of the resolution is a threat. You should be doing a fair amount of comparative analysis from the beginning of the debate. This will prevent your critics from breaking out their own scales to weigh, or assess, the threats from each team in order to determine the bigger threat.

Since the resolution calls for a comparative analysis to be made between two sides, one would expect those sides to be similar in structure but evidenced with support for a stable or failed nation. Thus, rather than divide into a Pro/Con analysis, let's examine the different scopes under which you should be doing dual analysis. The following arenas are not in any priority order and will be left up to you to develop and calculate the threat magnitude.

The first area that comes to mind is the military scope of the resolution. It is here where the examination of state-sponsored violence should be considered.

Explicit threats, nuclear weapons programs, arms stockpiling, and capacity to launch offense should all be considered within this arena. This would also be the arena in which you would analyze the United States' need to utilize our military. If we need to send troops to combat or stabilize a country, this expends our resources, costs us lives, and overall serves as a threat to our country's safety and stability.

The second arena is terrorism. This includes state sponsored terrorism, harboring terrorists, and even refusing to cooperate in the United States' War on Terror. I am separating this from military as terrorism often includes some ideological or religious frameworks that are sometimes not present in military threats. Debaters who want to look at terrorism should examine countries that harbor terrorists as well as those who fund them. Make sure you are clear about what makes someone a terrorist as opposed to a soldier operating under a government. You will also need to establish that the presence of terrorists makes the state a threat, as the terrorists themselves are not the nation. Thus you should not argue that Al-Qaeda is a threat but rather show how a particular nation fuels the violence of Al-Qaeda and therefore that nation is a threat.

Ideology is an area that may go unnoticed by some debaters but should clearly be researched and addressed. Many conflicts start over a difference in political or religious beliefs. This is different than terrorism, as it doesn't necessitate violence to be a threat. Think about some of the conflicts that the United States has

engaged in over the last 60 years and what prompted them. From spreading democracy to protecting religious freedoms, a country that stands against the ideology of the United States could be viewed as a threat to the United States. Remember that if you are making this argument, you need to look at the capacity of the nation to pose harm to the United States, not just that the nation has a different view than the United States.

One of the threats that I can see becoming a frontrunner on this topic, but one that may also be difficult to explain, is the economy. When Public Forum debaters hear the word economy, it often translates into muddled debaters where non-comparable numbers get tossed around and judges are left up to their own devices. Focusing on the economy is a great way to get to your critics' pocketbooks. However, let me be clear that the number doesn't make the argument. You should be able to tell a story, to explain the factors that went into getting a number, and how that number is directly comparable to an economic argument made by your opposition. Without being able to do all this, it is just a number. And that doesn't guarantee a win.

Finally, I would encourage debaters to look at the complexity of the international web. How does one country working with another country affect their ability to work with the United States. Diplomacy is critical in engaging in all other focus points of this debate and a country that is unwilling to work with us, or perhaps works with us but on the side deals arms to other countries, should be carefully

examined. Which side of the debate serves as a direct threat to the United States and why are they more of a threat than the opposing side?

Ultimately, this topic comes down to stories. You must create a profile of your side of the debate and tell the story that turns those countries into a threat. You create the threat profile for the judge to evaluate and thus simple statistics and over generalized claims without warrants will lose to the team who can craft the real threat profile.

Good luck and I look forward to hearing many of you debate this month!

## **Pro Evidence**

### **A failed nation has several qualities and attributes.**

Fund for Peace. Non-profit research and educational organization. 2009. Failed States Index FAQ.

[http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=102&Itemid=327#5](http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=102&Itemid=327#5)

A state that is failing has several attributes. One of the most common is the loss of physical control of its territory or a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Other attributes of state failure include the erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions, an inability to provide reasonable public services, and the inability to interact with other states as a full member of the international community. The 12 indicators cover a wide range of state failure risk elements such as extensive corruption and criminal behavior, inability to collect taxes or otherwise draw on citizen support, large-scale involuntary dislocation of the population, sharp economic decline, group-based inequality, institutionalized persecution or discrimination, severe demographic pressures, brain drain, and environmental decay. States can fail at varying rates through explosion, implosion, erosion, or invasion over different time periods.

**The Obama administration considers Pakistan a “mortal threat” to the United States.**

The Hindu—Online Edition of India’s Nationak Newspaper. Pakistan a mortal threat, says Hillary. April 24, 2009.

<http://www.thehindu.com/2009/04/24/stories/2009042454731700.htm>

The Obama administration has warned that Pakistan posed a “mortal threat” to the U.S. and the world in the wake of rapid Taliban advances and bluntly told Islamabad it was “abdicating” power to the militia and extremists by agreeing to Islamic law in parts of the country. The advance of the Taliban, which has moved within 100 km of Islamabad by taking control of Buner district just outside the capital region, has stunned the U.S.; as reflected in the strong remarks of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton who also said it posed an “existential threat” to Pakistan. Pakistan on Thursday deployed specialised paramilitary forces to protect important personalities and sensitive installations in Buner and nearby areas. Reports indicated heavily-armed Taliban militants were patrolling the streets and had set up check points. Deteriorating security in nuclear-armed Pakistan “poses a mortal threat to the security and safety of our country and the world,” Ms. Clinton told the House Foreign Affairs Committee. In her remarks — the strongest yet from Washington — Ms. Clinton also asked the Pakistani government and Pakistanis at home and abroad, including in the U.S., to “speak out forcefully against a policy [Swat peace accord] that is ceding more and more territory to the insurgents”.

### **Al-Qaeda's influence in Pakistan is spreading.**

Orla Guerin—BBC News. Pakistan's New Zone of 'Militancy'. October 12, 2009.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8296485.stm>

Interviews we have conducted with senior police officers, independent analysts and militants in custody suggest that southern Punjab could be Pakistan's next battleground. Internal police documents we have seen paint a picture of a province at risk. One report states that "poverty stricken, extremely feudalistic and illiterate south Punjab could possibly provide shelter to Taliban and other jihadi outfits. It has the potential to become a nursery or a major centre for sectarian recruitment." Some experts here argue that it has already reached that point. One describes it as "a factory for suicide bombers". Police say that al-Qaeda has access to a labour pool via the banned sectarian group Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), among others. Al-Qaeda is operating as a parasitic presence on a loose network of militant groups in Punjab, according to Azmat Abbas, a Pakistani analyst who has been tracking militancy for years. "Al-Qaeda moves in and then it takes over the organisation," he says.

## **The Taliban is overwhelming the Pakistani military.**

Declan Walsh—The Guardian UK. Pakistani army facing threat from Punjabi, al-Qaida and Taliban militants. The Guardian, October 12, 2009.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/oct/12/pakistan-army-taliban-militancy-threat>

Pakistan's army made a stark admission today of the scale of the threat it faces from a nexus of Punjabi, al-Qaida and Taliban militants whose attacks are increasingly coordinated, include soldiers in their ranks and span the country. The unusually frank assessment, made after the audacious assault on the military's headquarters this weekend, came as a Taliban suicide bomber struck an army convoy as it passed through a crowded marketplace in a small mountain town near the Swat valley, killing 41 people and wounding 45. It was the fourth militant atrocity to hit Pakistan in eight days of bloodshed that have killed more than 120 people. One television channel reported that the bomber in Shangla district in North West Frontier province was a 13-year-old boy. Meanwhile a Taliban spokesman claimed responsibility for the 22-hour gun battle and siege at the army's headquarters in Rawalpindi, which ended on Sunday morning when commandos freed 39 hostages. Eleven soldiers, three civilians and nine militants died. "This was our first small effort and a present to the Pakistani and American governments," a Taliban spokesman, Azam Tariq, told the Associated Press.

**The U.S. has a vital interest in preventing extremist takeover of Pakistan.**

The Washington Post. The Taliban Threat: As Pakistan finally faces the truth, will the United States stand down? October 14, 2009.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/13/AR2009101302796.html>

During the past 10 days, Pakistan's conflict with the Taliban movement has escalated toward full-scale war -- and the extreme Islamist movement has mostly held the initiative. On Tuesday, government warplanes bombed targets in the Taliban stronghold of South Waziristan in what may be the prelude to a major army offensive there. Over the previous eight days, however, the Taliban carried out four major attacks that demonstrated both its growing power and its ambitions. One, against Pakistan's army headquarters, was staged with the help of a terrorist organization from the country's ethnic Punjabi heartland. That alliance underlines the fact that the Taliban no longer aims merely at controlling the ethnic Pashtun areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan but at gaining control over a nuclear-armed state. All of this is bad news for the United States, which has a vital national interest in preventing an extremist takeover in Pakistan and the destabilization of the region stretching from Afghanistan to India.

**Pakistan's Taliban leader is threatening attacks in the U.S.**

By Zulfikar Ali and Laura King. Los Angeles Times. [Pakistan's Taliban leader threatens attacks in the U.S.](#) April 1, 2009.

<http://articles.latimes.com/2009/apr/01/world/fg-pakistan-threat1>

Reporting from Istanbul, Turkey, and Peshawar, Pakistan -- Baitullah Mahsud, the leader of Pakistan's Taliban movement, threatened Tuesday to launch attacks inside the United States in retaliation for missile strikes by American drones aimed at militant leaders sheltering in Pakistan's tribal areas. In an unusual step, the normally reclusive Mahsud personally made a round of telephone calls to media representatives claiming responsibility for an audacious commando-style strike on a police training school near the eastern city of Lahore a day earlier. In those calls, he also threatened to widen his campaign of attacks.

**Pakistan is in danger of falling into terrorist hands.**

Clinton: Pakistan in danger. CNN News. April 23, 2009.

<http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/04/22/clinton.pakistan/index.html>

**WASHINGTON (CNN)** -- U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warned that Pakistan is in danger of falling into terrorist hands because of failed government policies and called on Pakistani citizens and expatriates to voice more concern. "I think that we cannot underscore the seriousness of the existential threat posed to the state of Pakistan by continuing advances, now within hours of Islamabad, that are being made by a loosely confederated group of terrorists and others who are seeking the overthrow of the Pakistani state, a nuclear-armed state," Clinton said in an appearance before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Wednesday. "I don't hear that kind of outrage and concern coming from enough people that would reverberate back within the highest echelons of the civilian and military leadership of Pakistan," she added. In her first congressional hearing since being confirmed, Clinton told the panel the chief goal of the Obama administration's strategy is to defeat al Qaeda and prevent it from returning to Afghanistan.

**The Pakistani government is making concessions to the Taliban.**

Tony Karson—TIME Magazine. Pakistan and the U.S. Still at Odds over Taliban Threat. May 4, 2009.

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1895167,00.html>

Two weeks ago, Pakistan's parliament had endorsed a peace agreement that involved the imposition of Islamic Shari'a law in the Malakand Division, which includes Swat and Buner. The Taliban insist that it allowed them to maintain an armed presence; the military rejects that claim and made clear its intention to limit the Taliban from further advances. But the U.S. had deemed even the original Malakand deal, which was announced in mid-February, a dangerous concession to the militants, and Washington wants Pakistan's security forces to drive out the Taliban. It's not certain that such a rollback is on the military's agenda, although Monday's attack on a military convoy in the Swat Valley could prompt a stronger reaction from the army. Retaking the Swat Valley, however, would involve a protracted campaign with heavy casualties and thousands of displaced people, which would make it politically unpopular in Pakistan.

## **Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is in danger.**

Mary Louise Kelly. [Is Pakistan's Nuclear Arsenal At Risk?](#) National Public Radio, October 16, 2009.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=113868793>

Pakistan is believed to have at least 60 nuclear warheads. The country's leaders say the security systems guarding them are "foolproof." But a wave of terrorist attacks sweeping the country has raised serious questions. Within the past week, armed extremists raided a police commando training center and laid siege to the headquarters of Pakistan's army. Could they also infiltrate a nuclear facility? Matthew Bunn, a Harvard University professor and an expert on nuclear proliferation, says there is cause for worry. Militants dressed in army uniforms attacked Pakistan's army headquarters, and they had forged identification that allowed them to get through a checkpoint. "This is exactly the kind of thing one often worries about in a potential attack on a nuclear facility," Bunn says. In the wake of the attacks, the Obama administration expressed its support for Pakistani authorities and cautioned against undue concern. After the army headquarters attack, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the U.S. has "confidence in the Pakistani government and the military's control over nuclear weapons." Clinton added that the attack is evidence that extremists are "increasingly threatening the authority of the state." But she said there is no evidence they will take over. Still, what's worrying about events this past week is the prospect that terrorists might not have to take over in Pakistan to get their hands on a nuclear weapon. There are plausible scenarios under which extremists don't take over the country but are able to obtain major components for a nuclear weapon, says Sam Faddis, who ran the weapons of mass destruction unit for the CIA's Counterterrorism Center until last year. The biggest potential threat is extremists already within Pakistan's military or intelligence agencies — in other words, an inside job, Faddis says.

**A Taliban insurgency is counterproductive towards achieving South Asian economic and political normalization.**

Steve Coll Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee By Steve Coll,  
New America Foundation October 13, 2009

[http://www.newamerica.net/publications/resources/2009/steve\\_coll\\_testimony\\_house\\_foreign\\_affairs\\_committee](http://www.newamerica.net/publications/resources/2009/steve_coll_testimony_house_foreign_affairs_committee)

American policy over the next five or ten years must proceed from the understanding that the ultimate exit strategy for international forces from South Asia is Pakistan's economic success and political normalization, manifested in an Army that shares power with civilian leaders in a reasonably stable constitutional bargain, and in the increasing integration of Pakistan's economy with regional economies, including India's. Such an evolution will likely consolidate the emerging view within Pakistan's elites that the country requires a new and less self-defeating national security doctrine. As in the Philippines, Colombia, and Indonesia, the pursuit of a more balanced, less coup-ridden, more modern political-military order in Pakistan need not be complete or confused with perfection for it to gradually pinch the space in which Al Qaeda, the Taliban and related groups now operate. Moreover, in South Asia, outsiders need not construct or impose this modernizing pathway as a neo-imperial project; the hope for durable change lies first of all in the potential for normalizing relations between Pakistan and India, a negotiation between elites in those two countries that is already well under way, without Western mediation, and is much more advanced than is typically appreciated. Its success is hardly assured, but because of the transformational effect such normalization would create, the effects of American policies in the region on its prospects should be carefully assessed. Against this backdrop, a Taliban insurgency that increasingly destabilizes both Afghanistan and the border region with Pakistan would make such regional normalization very difficult, if not impossible, in the foreseeable future. Among other things, it would reinforce the sense of siege and encirclement that has shaped the Pakistan Army's self-defeating policies of support for Islamist militias that provide, along with a nuclear deterrent, asymmetrical balance against a (perceived) hegemonic India.

**Afghanistan's weak government is threatening US interests in the region.**

PressTV—Online News Source. Kabul legitimacy crisis 'threat' to US goals.

September 16, 2009.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=106330&sectionid=351020403>

The chairman of the US joint chief of staff has warned that the Afghan government's lack of credibility poses a serious threat to US goals in the country. President Barack Obama's top military adviser to the Afghan war strategy, Admiral Michael Mullen, said on Tuesday that the issue of Kabul's weak legitimacy among Afghans is as serious as the Taliban. Mullen who has been re-nominated by Obama to another two-year term was testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, amid widening divisions over a troop surge in Afghanistan. The nation's top military officer also called for the deployment of additional military trainers along with more combat troops from the United States and its NATO partners, to counter the growing insurgency in Afghanistan. "A properly resourced counterinsurgency probably needs more forces," Mullen told congress without specifying the ratio of combat troops to training forces. He however estimated that NATO contributions would not be large. Mullen also called for patience with US efforts. The American public and Congress are becoming more critical of the Afghan war, as the number of US fatalities since the 2001 invasion rose to a record high of 250 in 2009, making it the deadliest year for US forces in Afghanistan.

**Failed states allow terrorist networks to develop.**

Steve Coll Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee By Steve Coll,  
New America Foundation October 13, 2009

[http://www.newamerica.net/publications/resources/2009/steve\\_coll\\_testimony\\_ho  
urse\\_foreign\\_affairs\\_committee](http://www.newamerica.net/publications/resources/2009/steve_coll_testimony_ho<br/>urse_foreign_affairs_committee)

These are credible, serious arguments that accurately describe some of Al Qaeda's character as a stateless, millenarian terrorist group. But they misunderstand the history of Al Qaeda's birth and growth alongside specific Pashtun Islamist militias on the Afghan-Pakistan border. It is simply not true that all potential Al Qaeda sanctuaries are of the same importance, now or potentially. Osama Bin Laden and Ayman Al-Zawahiri have a thirty-year unique history of trust and collaboration with the Pashtun Islamist networks located in North Waziristan, Bajaur, and the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan. It is not surprising, given this distinctive history, that Al Qaeda's presumed protectors - perhaps the Haqqanni network, which provided the territory in which Al Qaeda constructed its first training camps in the summer of 1988 - have never betrayed their Arab guests. These networks have fought alongside Al Qaeda since the mid-1980s and have raised vast sums of money in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states through their A.Q. connections. These Pashtun Islamist networks possess infrastructure - religious institutions, trucking firms, criminal networks, preaching networks, housing networks - from Kandahar and Khost Province, from Quetta to Karachi's exurban Pashtun neighborhoods, that is either impervious to penetration by the Pakistani state or has coopted those in the Pakistani security services who might prove disruptive. It is mistaken to assume that Bin Laden, Zawahiri or other Arab leaders would enjoy similar sanctuary anywhere else. In Somalia they would almost certainly be betrayed for money; in Yemen, they would be much more susceptible to detection by the country's police network. The United States should welcome the migration of Al Qaeda's leadership to such countries.

**The Pakistan-Afghanistan border region is a safe-haven for Al Qaeda.**

Steve Coll Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee By Steve Coll,  
New America Foundation October 13, 2009

[http://www.newamerica.net/publications/resources/2009/steve\\_coll\\_testimony\\_house\\_foreign\\_affairs\\_committee](http://www.newamerica.net/publications/resources/2009/steve_coll_testimony_house_foreign_affairs_committee)

Because there is no nexus on Earth more favorable to Al Qaeda's current leaders than the radicalized Pashtun militias in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region, American policy in the region must take special account of this specific, daunting political-military geography. As counterinsurgency doctrine correctly argues, the only way to penetrate such territory and disrupt or defeat insurgents, including outside terrorists like Al Qaeda's leaders, is to do so in partnership with indigenous forces that are motivated to carry out such a campaign because they see it as in their own interests. No such campaign is plausible if the Taliban rule Afghanistan. And no such campaign is plausible if Pakistan does not continue to receive the economic and political support from the international community that may lead its own elites to decide that they will be better off without the Haqqannis and other uncompromising Islamists than with them.

**Terrorist networks are continuing to establish bases in Afghanistan.**

Philadelphia Inquirer. Trudy Rubin—Columnist. Worldview: Taliban remains a potential threat. October 18, 2009.

[http://www.philly.com/inquirer/columnists/20091018\\_Worldview\\_Taliban\\_remain\\_s\\_a\\_potent\\_threat.html](http://www.philly.com/inquirer/columnists/20091018_Worldview_Taliban_remain_s_a_potent_threat.html)

Jon Landay and John Walcott, of the McClatchy Newspapers team that famously wrote of CIA concerns about overhyped intelligence on WMD before the Iraq war, now see the opposite problem. They write (with Nancy Youssef) that some U.S. intelligence analysts feel White House officials are minimizing the Taliban threat. "Recent U.S. intelligence assessments," their article says, "have found that the Taliban and other Pakistan-based [jihadi] groups . . . have much closer ties to al-Qaeda now than they did before Sept. 11, 2001." These ties "would allow the terrorist network to reestablish bases in Afghanistan" and permit the expansion of radical Islam to Central Asia, should the Taliban retake Afghanistan. And the noted Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid, one of the world's top experts on the Taliban, told me a U.S. pullback in Afghanistan would lead to a "huge expansion" of Pakistani Taliban activity in his own country, which would threaten "uncontrolled chaos." He said, "The blowback would be serious, and safe havens [for al-Qaeda] would be stepped up with the danger of a takeover of Pakistan." This raises the nightmare scenario that jihadis might try to provoke a war between nuclear-armed India and nuclear-armed Pakistan.

## **The Taliban is outmaneuvering US troops in Afghanistan.**

Sophia A. Nelson, The Huffington Post. The President and Afghanistan: The Case for Why He Must Stay. October 15, 2009.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sophia-a-nelson/the-president-afghanistan\\_b\\_323214.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sophia-a-nelson/the-president-afghanistan_b_323214.html)

According to news reports Taliban militiamen attacked American and Afghan military outposts in a daylong siege on Saturday that killed eight U.S. soldiers and two Afghan security forces in one of the deadliest battles in months, according to U.S. and Afghan officials. The fighting began early that Saturday morning and raged throughout the day in a remote region of eastern Afghanistan in Nuristan province, which borders Pakistan. Since that time, things appear to have worsened with more troop losses and injuries. All of this comes at a time when General Stanley McChrystal has made clear (and publicly so) that we need another 45,000 troops or more on the ground to have a chance at winning the war. President Obama and McChrystal met for the first time last week aboard Air Force One and I think we can safely assume that they discussed the feasibility of sending such a large number of U.S. troops to the region when we are still fighting a protracted war in Iraq. But here is the thing folks, the President has no real choice but to accede to McChrystal's request and soon; because if he does not the Taliban and Al Qaeda have proven that they are willing to out maneuver, outlast, and outfight our troops on the ground and do so by engaging in bloody battles that leave our soldiers either dead or wounded.

### **A threat persists from the ongoing Shiite revolt in Yemen.**

Wall Street Journal. Threat Persists in Yemen, Somalia. October 13, 2009.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125537463884180867.html>

While Washington obsessed Monday over President Barack Obama's plans in Afghanistan, as well as over a new burst of violence next door in Pakistan, some unsettling news arrived to remind everyone that the extremist threat isn't limited to those troubled countries. Reports from Yemen said government forces had killed 59 Shiite rebels in the country's north. The death toll is a sign of the intensity of the government's current fight against a Shiite revolt that has forced tens of thousands of Yemenis out of their homes. Combine that revolt in the north with separatist unrest in the south and a growing al Qaeda movement, all in the Arab world's poorest country bordering Saudi Arabia, and you have a recipe for the kind of incubator for trouble that Afghanistan became before the 9/11 attacks. Lest we forget, barely a year has passed since al Qaeda forces struck the U.S. Embassy in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa.

**Somalia is becoming a safe haven for terrorist groups, including Al Qaeda.**

Wall Street Journal. Threat Persists in Yemen, Somalia. October 13, 2009.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125537463884180867.html>

Meanwhile, a second nation, this one in Africa, is moving much further down the track toward failed-state status and becoming a haven for Islamic extremists. It's Somalia, where Islamist militias are not only battling a virtually powerless central government, but over the weekend threatened to advance across the border to hit targets in Kenya as well. Somali President Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed visited the U.S. in recent days and warned that "a foreign idea" is taking hold in his country; he didn't mention foreign terrorists, but that's what he meant. The State Department's most recent terrorism report says that al Qaeda "elements" are benefiting "from safe haven in the regions of southern Somalia." Taken together, the reports from Yemen and Somalia present a vivid reminder that al Qaeda became a direct threat during the 1990s precisely because it was able to fill the power vacuum that Afghanistan had become. That could happen again in Afghanistan or Pakistan, of course -- but not only there.

**Terrorist networks in Pakistan and Afghanistan can relocate in Somalia.**

Wall Street Journal. Threat Persists in Yemen, Somalia. October 13, 2009.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125537463884180867.html>

Fighting extremism, after all, is like squeezing a balloon; when flattened in one place, it tends to bulge somewhere else. That's particularly important to keep in mind because, despite the turmoil in Afghanistan and Pakistan, U.S. analysts think the fight against al Qaeda in those countries has diminished the terror group's ability to operate. The most recent State Department report on terrorism says that, over the past year or so, al Qaeda and "associated networks continued to lose ground, both structurally and in the court of world public opinion." Yet like-minded Islamic extremists in places such as Yemen and Somalia can pick up the cause, with or without guidance from al Qaeda's home office

**Somalia and Yemen are going to become even greater Al Qaeda strongholds in the future.**

Wall Street Journal. Threat Persists in Yemen, Somalia. October 13, 2009.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125537463884180867.html>

The danger is most acute in Somalia, where lawlessness is rampant. The central government controls little outside the capital of Mogadishu, and not all of that city, international reports indicate. Meanwhile, the Islamist movement al Shabaab is led by men affiliated with al Qaeda, some of whom fought with it in Afghanistan, the State Department reports. The only good news in Somalia is that the Islamists have spent some of their time and energy in recent weeks fighting among themselves. In the long run, Yemen may be the more worrisome spot. It is, after all, the ancestral homeland of al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, and it has a close relationship with oil-rich Saudi Arabia, whose monarchy is a perpetual bin Laden target. Al Qaeda-affiliated groups already have claimed responsibility for a list of small-scale attacks in Yemen over the past two years; Yemenis' broader role is underscored by the fact that 92 of the 221 remaining terror detainees at Guantanamo Bay prison are Yemenis.

**Somalia's political instability poses a growing threat to U.S. national security.**

Diana Marrero—Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Feingold talks of Somalia threat: Stability is in interest of U.S., senator says. March 10, 2009.

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/usandworld/41030547.html>

**Washington** - Somalia poses a growing threat to U.S. national security, but the Obama administration can try to help restore stability to the region through new strategic policies that address the many challenges facing the East African nation, Sen. Russ Feingold said Tuesday in a speech before the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Somalia has been buffeted by turmoil and factional fighting since the early 1990s. Recently, international observers have grown increasingly concerned about ties between Islamist insurgents in the country and the terrorist network al-Qaida. "Achieving stability and restoring the rule of law in Somalia will not be easy or quick - 18 years of dysfunction have proven that," Feingold said. "But I am optimistic, as a result of both new political dynamics in Somalia and new leadership in the White House, that we have a unique opportunity to take critical steps in that direction." Feingold's comments came even as a top military intelligence official warned the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday that the insurgent group al-Shabaab appears poised to formally merge with al-Qaida. The group conducts almost daily attacks in Somalia, and a merger would strengthen al-Qaida's influence in East Africa. The Obama administration has begun reviewing U.S. policies toward Somalia, and Feingold, who leads the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs, said he was "confident that President Obama and his administration are paying attention to these growing threats and the deepening crisis."

**The threat is real. Somali terrorists recently plotted to attack U.S. targets in South Africa.**

Mirriam Mannak—Digital Journal. Somali group planned to bomb US targets in South Africa. October 12, 2009. <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/280389>

Although the motive behind the decision to close US embassies and consulates had been vaguely identified as a terror scare, more details were revealed this weekend. Apparently, the US authorities in South Africa had intercepted cellphone communication, detailing planned attacks on American interests in Africa's largest economy - specifically during the FIFA World Cup, which is scheduled for next year. The cellphone calls were allegedly made by a group of Somalis residing in Cape Town's township of Khayelitsha, and were made to a group in Somalia. According to media reports, the various conversations revolved around, among other things, the plot to blow up American interests in South Africa. The Sunday Tribune quoted sources saying that "US intelligence agents, South Africa's National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and the police's Crime Intelligence operatives launched a surveillance operation on the Cape-based group, gathering crucial information before the operation was thrown into disarray." A NIA spokeswoman however, refused to comment and threatened the paper with legal action. Another source quoted by the paper said: "What has been established is that the Cape guys are linked to al-Qaeda cells in Somalia, who are connected to the group in Afghanistan. We have established that most al-Qaeda operatives are relocating from Afghanistan to Pakistan, attracted by increased lawlessness in Pakistan."

**Terror groups are gaining power and influence in Somalia.**

Obama Team Mulls Aims Of Somali Extremists. Seeing Potential Terror Threat, Officials Debate Their Options *By Greg Jaffe and Karen DeYoung*, Washington Post Staff Writers Saturday, April 11, 2009. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/10/AR2009041003734.html>

Some officials have said that those trained at the camps could leave Somalia, making their way through countries such as Yemen, where al-Qaeda has a stronger presence. But officials said there has been little movement outside Somalia. Al-Shabab was formed from the remnants of an Islamist government overthrown in 2006 by a U.S.-backed Ethiopian invasion. Many of its recruits joined to fight the Ethiopians, who have now largely withdrawn, and officials said U.S. intelligence believes most al-Shabab fighters have been drawn to the organization for nationalistic reasons rather than an interest in global terrorism. The group has become the strongest force inside Somalia, holding a large swath of territory in the south and contesting the current government's hold on power. Mudd compared al-Shabab to other nationalistic movements in places such as Chechnya and Bosnia that have drawn fighters from abroad. Foreign recruits raise the profile of the local militant groups and make it appear as though they are part of a broader struggle, Mudd said. "They're accepting non-Somali fighters. . . . I think it adds to their credibility. It's a public relations bonanza for them."

## **Yemen is emerging as a terrorist threat.**

Daily Times—Pakistani Newspaper. US Identifies Yemen as new terror threat.  
October 1, 2009.

[http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C10%5C01%5Cstory\\_1-10-2009\\_pg4\\_3](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C10%5C01%5Cstory_1-10-2009_pg4_3)

Saudi Arabia's drive to disrupt Al Qaeda financing networks should be more strictly enforced while Yemen is emerging as a new base for terror groups plotting against US and Saudi interests, a US government watchdog report said on Tuesday. The Government Accounting Office (GAO) said Saudi Arabia has made progress in the fight against terrorism, arresting and prosecuting suspects and taking steps to curtail fund-raising by extremist groups inside the country. But it said loopholes remain, including the flow of donations from individuals and charities in Saudi Arabia to support extremist organisations outside the country as well as the nation's limited ability to crack down on cash couriers who physically transfer funds. The report stressed there was no indication the government of Saudi Arabia is providing funding for terrorism. But it said Washington should set certain specific performance targets on preventing terror financing to help measure efforts to stop people from bankrolling Al Qaeda and other extremist groups. The ranking Republican on the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee said the report underscored the need for more action. "It is vital that the US demand more from the Saudi government in cutting off the money flow to the extremist network," Ileana Ros-Lehtinen said in a statement.

**Al Qaeda is gaining strength in Yemen.**

Google News. (AFP) – Sep 30, 2009 Al-Qaeda focuses on Yemen as launchpad:  
<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jhpGI9fTqWovEAPWJZaOvneu3K4w>

WASHINGTON — Al-Qaeda has suffered setbacks due to US pressure but its presence in Yemen threatens to turn that country into a dangerous base for training and plotting attacks, a top US counterterrorism official said. The extremist network has been steadily weakened since its attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, with its haven in northwest Pakistan smaller and less secure, Michael Leiter, director of the National Counterterrorism Center, told a US Senate hearing. But he said the group's regional affiliates were a growing threat, citing a branch in Yemen as cause for serious concern. Saudi and Yemeni arms of Al-Qaeda announced in January their merger into "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula" (AQAP), and US officials are worried the group is gaining a dangerous foothold in Yemen. "We have witnessed the reemergence of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, with Yemen as a key battleground and potential regional base of operations from which Al-Qaeda can plan attacks, train recruits, and facilitate the movement of operatives," Leiter said. "We are concerned that if AQAP strengthens, Al-Qaeda leaders could use the group and the growing presence of foreign fighters in the region to supplement its transnational operations capability," Leiter said before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

**Failed states brew armed conflict and regional spillover conflict.**

Robin Geib [International Review of the Red Cross](#). Armed violence in fragile states: Low-intensity conflicts, spillover conflicts, and sporadic law enforcement operations by third parties. Volume 91 Number 873 March 2009

It is against this background that the following brief article considers whether, and if so, to what extent, the specific situation of failed and failing states (i.e. the absence of government control in a given state) influences the qualification of armed violence as an armed conflict under IHL. In addition, it will focus on two phenomena that typically, albeit not necessarily always, accompany conflicts in fragile states: (a) the spillover of armed clashes into neighbouring countries; and (b) the exercise of specific, very limited, law enforcement functions by third parties that aim to fill the void left by a disabled government. Regional spillover effects are frequent in failed state conflict scenarios: they increase the number of players involved in the conflict and they add an international, cross-border element that may complicate a precise qualification of the situation. What is more, in times of transnational terrorism and powerful criminal networks operating on an international scale, states are ever more likely to perceive the absence of government control in a given state as a potential threat to their own security interests.<sup>2</sup> They may thus be increasingly inclined to step in and take over at least rudimentary, rather sporadic, order maintenance functions sufficient to maintain the perceived security threat at a tolerable level. Current efforts to repress acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia are a case in point.<sup>3</sup> Such law enforcement efforts by third parties may overlap with an ongoing armed conflict between local players and add another level of intricate questions pertaining to the identification of the legal framework applicable.

**Failed nations are generally sought after by terror groups.**

Robin Geib [International Review of the Red Cross](#). Armed violence in fragile states: Low-intensity conflicts, spillover conflicts, and sporadic law enforcement operations by third parties. Volume 91 Number 873 March 2009

During the following years, failed and failing states were associated first of all with humanitarian catastrophes and, in view of the risk of local spillover effects, at the most were regarded as a regional problem. This perception has changed, at the latest since September 2001. Today, state failure in and of itself is understood – largely because of the attractiveness of weak states to transnational terror networks and transnational criminal organizations, and irrespective of an acute humanitarian crisis – as a concern of global reach.<sup>18</sup> Afghanistan and Pakistan have become security priorities for the international community; both the US National Security Strategy (2002) report and the European Security Strategy (2003) report have identified state failure as a central threat to international security.<sup>19</sup> In 2009, amid the turmoil of a global financial and economic crisis, the risk of further weakened state structures and occurrences of state failure is clearly as pertinent as ever.<sup>20</sup>

**Failed states are often incapable of entering into international agreements.**

Robin Geib [International Review of the Red Cross](#). Armed violence in fragile states: Low-intensity conflicts, spillover conflicts, and sporadic law enforcement operations by third parties. Volume 91 Number 873 March 2009

In a primarily state-centred international system that after two world wars was primarily designed to curb overly powerful states, the conceptualization and integration of overly weak states has proved quite problematic. States that lack a central government are not only incapable of exercising essential state functions domestically; they are also unable to operate on the international plane. This has farreaching implications. Without a representative government, a state cannot enter into international agreements and may even be incapable of requesting and consenting to urgently required interventions by third parties; diplomatic channels lie dormant, and international representation – if any – will be reduced to a bare minimum.<sup>24</sup> Weak, failing and especially failed states, therefore, are prone to international isolation.

**Failed nations such as Somalia are training grounds for pirates.**

Robin Geib [International Review of the Red Cross](#). Armed violence in fragile states: Low-intensity conflicts, spillover conflicts, and sporadic law enforcement operations by third parties. Volume 91 Number 873 March 2009

As has been noted above, in times of transnational terrorism and transnational criminal networks states increasingly perceive state failure as a direct threat to their security interests. They will thus probably be all the more inclined to partially fill the control gap and assume specific law enforcement functions in place of a disabled government so as to keep potential threats under control. Ongoing operations to repress piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia are a topical case in point. Piracy is certainly only one specific aspect of a far more complex crisis situation in Somalia, but one with particular global security implications. It has traditionally been viewed as a crime over which universal jurisdiction should be exercised and the fight against piracy has been seen as an act of law enforcement.<sup>49</sup>

### **Failed states promote transnational crime.**

Remarks by Deputy Attorney General David Ogden at 78<sup>th</sup> Interpol General Assembly. US Dept of Justice. Justice News. October 12, 2009.

<http://www.usdoj.gov/dag/speeches/2009/dag-speech-091012.html>

Encumbered in many ways, law enforcement has not been as quick to adapt to globalization, and criminals are well aware of this fact. Transnational criminal organizations exploit the inherent difficulties of international law enforcement to conduct their illegal activities and hide their illicit proceeds in ways that minimize the risk that they will ever be arrested or prosecuted, or forfeit their assets. Indeed, transnational organized crime has accelerated with the pace of globalization. By one estimate, organized crime today comprises up to 15 percent of the global gross domestic product. Whatever the actual number, criminal organizations undoubtedly wield economic clout sufficient to neutralize and turn to their own unlawful ends political, judicial and law enforcement institutions, especially those in failed or fragile states destabilized by conflict or economic woes. Criminal organizations can and do use their economic power to target individual public officials, public institutions, and even entire countries to look for new victims and new markets. In so doing, they rob millions of people of the opportunity to live normal lives, free from the fear of crime. We are now witnessing in many parts of the world, what U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy almost a half century ago presciently condemned in my own country as the "private government of organized crime."

## Con Evidence

**China's growing economy will give it tremendous geopolitical weight in the near future.**

Christopher Layne—Professor @ Texas A&M. China's Challenge to U.S. Hegemony. *Global Trends*, 2008.

The leadership in Beijing understands the link between economic strength and geopolitical weight. It realizes that, if China can continue to sustain near–double digit growth rates in the early decades of this century, it will surpass the United States as the world's largest economy (measured by gross domestic product). Because of this astonishing economic growth, China is, as journalist James Kynge has put it (with a nod to Napoleon), truly shaking the world both economically *and* geopolitically. Studies by the us Central Intelligence Agency and others have projected that China will be a first-rate military power and will rival America in global power by 2020.

**The emergence of China will be the paramount concern for the United States in the future.**

Christopher Layne—Professor @ Texas A&M. China's Challenge to U.S. Hegemony. *Global Trends*, 2008.

There is mounting evidence, however, that this view is mistaken, and that, in fact, the era of American hegemony is drawing to a close right before our eyes. The rise of China is the biggest reason for this. Notwithstanding Washington's current preoccupation with the Middle East, in the coming decades China's great power emergence will be the paramount issue of grand strategy facing the United States. Whether China will undergo a "peaceful rise"—as Beijing claims—is doubtful. Historically, the emergence of new poles of power in the international system has been geopolitically destabilizing. For example, the rise of Germany, the United States, and Japan at the end of the nineteenth century contributed to the international political frictions that culminated in two world wars. There is no reason to believe that China's rise will be an exception.

**China's rapidly expanding navy is a threat to U.S. naval hegemony.**

Bill Powell—TIME Magazine. The Chinese Navy: How Big a Threat to the U.S.?

April 21, 2009. <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1892954,00.html>

China's rapidly growing Navy today patrols the Gulf of Aden, helping to protect Chinese commercial ships from piracy. It has eight new kilo class submarines — whose silence underwater makes them difficult to detect. Many of them are housed at a huge, new Naval base on the tropical island of Hainan, the "Hawaii" of China. Just last week, Admiral Wu Shengli, China's top naval officer, said his country needed to acquire more high tech weaponry in "order to boost the ability to fight in regional sea wars." Toward that end, many military analysts believe, China will soon build its first aircraft carrier group, evidence of China's intention to field a globe straddling blue water navy. (Check out a story about the coming naval rivalry between China and India.) The anniversary celebrations come at a pivotal moment for the United States and China. On April 6 Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced his intention — and a budget to back it up — to build future defense spending around the "wars we are in," rather than those that military planners can imagine. The decision is hugely consequential. Even as the U.S. was engaged in two fronts in the so called War on Terror over the last eight years, it simultaneously spent defense dollars on weapons systems grounded in the assumption that someday the U.S. might well find itself in conflict with a big, technologically sophisticated nation with global ambitions, one with a well-funded, well-equipped army, navy and air force. America needed, in other words, to be ready to go to war with China.

**North Korea has threatened to launch pre-emptive strikes against the US.**

The Guardian UK. N Korea threatens US with first strike:Pyongyang asserts right to pre-emptive attack as tensions rise over American build-up. February 2003.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/feb/06/usa.northkorea>

North Korea is entitled to launch a pre-emptive strike against the US rather than wait until the American military have finished with Iraq, the North's foreign ministry told the Guardian yesterday. Warning that the current nuclear crisis is worse than that in 1994, when the peninsula stood on the brink of oblivion, a ministry spokesman called on Britain to use its influence with Washington to avert war. "The United States says that after Iraq, we are next", said the deputy director Ri Pyong-gap, "but we have our own countermeasures. Pre-emptive attacks are not the exclusive right of the US." His comments came on a day when tension was apparent in Pyongyang, with an air-raid drill that cleared the city's streets and the North's announcement that it has begun full-scale operations at the Yongbyon nuclear plant, the suspected site of weapons-grade plutonium production.

## **North Korea has threatened to “wipe out” the U.S.**

Fox News. June 24, 2009. Associated Press. NORTH KOREA THREATENS TO 'WIPE OUT' U.S.

[HTTP://WWW.FOXNEWS.COM/STORY/0,2933,528880,00.HTML](http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,528880,00.html)

The new U.N. Security Council resolution requires member states to seek permission to inspect suspicious cargo. North Korea has said it would consider interception a declaration of war and on Wednesday accused the U.S. of seeking to provoke another Korean War. "If the U.S. imperialists start another war, the army and people of Korea will ... wipe out the aggressors on the globe once and for all," the official Korean Central News Agency said. The warning came on the eve of the 59th anniversary of the start of the three-year Korean War, which ended in a truce in 1953, not a peace treaty, leaving the peninsula in state of war. The U.S. has 28,500 troops in South Korea to protect against an outbreak of hostilities. Tensions have been high since North Korea launched a long-range rocket in April and then conducted its second underground atomic test on May 25. Reacting to U.N. condemnation of that test, North Korea walked away from nuclear disarmament talks and warned it would fire a long-range missile.

**North Korea has warned of a “nuclear fire shower” against the U.S.**

US News and World Report. North Korea Threatens Nuclear 'Fire Shower' Against the United States: Tensions continue to mount between Pyongyang and Washington. *By Queenie Wong* Posted June 25, 2009.

<http://www.usnews.com/articles/news/world/2009/06/25/north-korea-threatens-nuclear-fire-shower-against-the-united-states.html>

North Korea stepped up its threats against the United States today, warning that the Obama administration's recent pledge to provide nuclear defenses to South Korea could invite what the state-run media called a "fire shower" of nuclear retaliation. The threat was made in the *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper on the eve of the 59th anniversary of the beginning of the Korean War. In lengthy editorials, North Korea accused the United States of provoking the war in 1950. The paper also reported that North Korea would "never give up its nuclear deterrent . . . and will further strengthen it" if attacked by the United States. Tensions between the two countries have risen since Pyongyang launched its second underground nuclear test last month. There has been speculation by the Japanese media that North Korea might launch a long-range test missile toward Hawaii on July 4.

**North Korea has the potential to develop a nuclear weapon and sell it to Iran or to a terrorist organization.**

By David Martin—CBS News. June 16, 2009. Obama: North Korea 'Grave Threat': Obama Takes A Hard Line Against North Korea.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/06/16/eveningnews/main5092559.shtml>

The long range missiles North Korea has tested so far could reach Alaska and Hawaii. In an exchange with Sen. Bayh, Cartwright said he would tell the President the chances of shooting them down are excellent. "What are the percentages that we're going to be able to hit it and bring it down? What would you tell him," asked Bayh. Cartwright responded, "90 percent plus." The more immediate threat is that North Korea might sell nuclear or ballistic missile technology to a country like Iran or even a terrorist group like al Qaeda. The U.N. Security Council passed sanctions giving the U.S. and other navies the authority to confront but not board any North Korean ship suspected of carrying arms. North Korea's response has been to continue preparations to launch more missiles. To which President Obama said "belligerent, provocative behavior that threatens neighbors will be met with significant and serious enforcement of sanctions that are in place."

**North Korea will declare war if the US searches North Korean ships.**

Martin Sieff—United Press International. Obama faces North Korean war threat.

May 27, 2009. <http://www.upi.com/news/issueoftheday/2009/05/27/Obama-faces-North-Korean-war-threat/UPI-38061243436131/>

WASHINGTON , May 27 (UPI) -- North Korea has threatened war against South Korea and handed U.S. President Barack Obama his first major international security crisis. The South Korean government of President Lee Myung-bak responded Tuesday to North Korea's second nuclear test by joining the United States in the Proliferation Security Initiative to share intelligence and attempt to search ships carrying nuclear technology to proliferate weapons of mass destruction. But the response from North Korea was swift: Pyongyang came close to issuing its own declaration of war against South Korea and, by extension, even the United States. The North Korean government stated that if South Korea joined the United States in an effort to search ships for nuclear weapons, it is declaring war. The North would attack the South if any of its ships were searched. It also said it was no longer tied to the 1953 truce that served as a shaky end to the three-year Korean War.

**China is hesitant to sanction North Korea for fear of unleashing a flood of refugees.**

New York Times. North Korea's Threats. Editorial. June 16, 2009.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/17/opinion/17wed1.html>

But talk is cheap. China and Russia exposed their continued ambivalence by blocking efforts to make certain elements of the new sanctions mandatory. China also insisted on carving out an exception so that it could continue selling small arms to the North. No one has more influence with the North Koreans than China, but it has repeatedly blocked tough sanctions for fear of destabilizing the North and unleashing a flood of refugees. The Obama administration is doing its part. It has said that it would confront any ship suspected of carrying banned items and is exploring new ways to squeeze the North financially. After all that has happened, administration officials are understandably skeptical that any negotiated deal is possible. And they are right to insist that they will not keep paying the North to live up to commitments it has repeatedly made and then reneged on. But they are also right to leave the door open to negotiations.

**There is covert nuclear cooperation between North Korea and Syria.**

**"The Real Threat From North Korea". William H. Tobey**, Senior Fellow, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Op-Ed, CBS News. May 20, 2009.

[http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/19067/real\\_threat\\_from\\_north\\_korea.html](http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/19067/real_threat_from_north_korea.html)

The covert nuclear cooperation between Syria and North Korea fundamentally changes the threat posed by the North Korean nuclear program. Pyongyang's longstanding strategy is to create international crises by threatening or taking actions which the world deems dangerous, and use the resulting negotiating leverage to extract political and economic concessions to prop up a failed state. This strategy resulted in the 1994 Agreed Framework, under which the North froze the nuclear facilities at Yongbyon, in exchange for two light water power reactors and up to 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil per year, until the reactors came on line. The United States and its allies contributed more than \$2.5 billion under the deal. Pyongyang, however, apparently had no intention to abide by the Agreed Framework or associated agreements. According to the briefing cited above, nuclear cooperation between North Korea and Syria probably began as early as 1997. In 2002, U.S. officials confronted Pyongyang with information that North Korea was pursuing uranium enrichment in violation of the Agreed Framework and other international agreements. Over the next several months, North Korea withdrew from the Nonproliferation Treaty, expelled International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors, and restarted the Yongbyon reactor. On October 9, 2006, North Korea confirmed what it had long denied, by announcing its nuclear test.

**The North Korean special forces have the ability to inflict mass casualties.**

North Korea special forces called credible threat: Troops could inflict a large casualty count. By Blaine Harden

Washington Post / October 18, 2009.

[http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2009/10/18/north\\_korea\\_special\\_forces\\_called\\_credible\\_threat/](http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2009/10/18/north_korea_special_forces_called_credible_threat/)

By expanding what was already the world's largest such force, the North appears to be adding teeth to what is, in essence, a defensive military strategy. The cash-strapped government of Kim Jong Il, which struggles to maintain and buy fuel for its aging armored forces, has concluded it cannot win a conventional war, according to US and South Korean military officials. But by combining huge numbers of special forces with artillery that can devastate Seoul and missiles that can pound all of South Korea, North Korea has found an affordable way to remain terrifying, ensure regime survival, and deter a preemptive strike on the nuclear bombs that make it a player on the world stage, say US and South Korean military analysts. "The North Koreans have done what they had to do to make sure their military is still a credible threat," said Bruce Bechtol, a North Korean specialist who is a professor at the Marine Corps Command and Staff College in Quantico, Va. "They can still inflict tens of thousands of civilian casualties in Seoul on the first day of combat." The havoc-raising potential of North Korea's special forces has grown as their numbers have increased and their training has shifted to terrorist tactics developed by insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to General Walter Sharp, commander of US forces in Korea.

**Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles is a deadly serious threat.**

Micah Morrison, Fox News. May 6, 2009. Morgenthau: Iran Threat 'Deadly Serious' to U.S. <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/05/06/morgenthau-iran-threat-world/>

Famed Manhattan District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau warned Congress on Wednesday that Iran's efforts to build nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles pose a "deadly serious" threat to the United States. The legendary prosecutor -- whose pursuit of white-collar criminals has spanned the globe -- told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he has uncovered a pervasive system of deceitful practices and fraud designed to let Iran's banks skirt U.S. and international sanctions. Sources told FOX News that the Morgenthau probe into Iranian money laundering schemes is broad and ongoing. So far, the Manhattan DA has struck a plea deal with a British bank and, separately, indicted a Chinese citizen and his company on charges related to Iran's violations of international sanctions designed to block its acquisition of nuclear weaponry.

**Iran is developing the necessary technology to build a nuclear weapon.**

New York Times Editorial. October 2, 2009. Iran's Nuclear Program.

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/iran/nuclear\\_program/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/iran/nuclear_program/index.html)

After a long-running clandestine nuclear program was uncovered in 2003, Iran suspended the program, allowed international inspectors in and began negotiations with Britain, France and Germany. But after hardliners solidified their power with the election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005, Iran has taken an increasingly confrontational line, restarting its enrichment program and ignoring demands from the United Nations Security Council to stop. American officials and international inspectors are concerned that Iran seems to have made significant progress in the three technologies necessary to field an effective nuclear weapon: enriching uranium to weapons grade; developing a missile capable of reaching Israel and parts of Western Europe; and designing a warhead that will fit on the missile. And in late September 2009, Iran said that its Revolutionary Guards test-fired missiles with sufficient range to strike Israel, parts of Europe and American bases in the Persian Gulf.

**An Iranian nuclear program could prompt other middle-east nations to follow suit.**

*By Joseph Cirincione, Washinton Post. Sunday, October 18, 2009. Five Myths About Iran's Nuclear Program. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/15/AR2009101503476.html>*

The real threat posed by Iran's nuclear program is that other states in the region feel they must match it. The race has already begun. While Israel's possession of nuclear weapons has not spurred other countries in the area to develop their own, over the past three years a dozen states in the Middle East, including Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Libya (again), have begun civilian nuclear programs. These programs, alas, are not about reducing the countries' carbon footprint -- they are a hedge against Iran. These states have begun the decades-long process of developing the technical, commercial and engineering capabilities to build nuclear weapons, should they decide to do so. At this point, it is not clear that stopping Iran would stop these programs. The real danger is not a nuclear-armed Iran but a Middle East with more nuclear-armed nations and unresolved territorial, economic and political disputes. That is a recipe for disaster, and that is why there is no country-specific solution; we cannot play nuclear whack-a-mole.

**Iran has a history of deception regarding its nuclear program.**

Fareed Zakaria, Newsweek. Containing a Nuclear Iran. October 3, 2009.

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/216702>

Iran's nuclear ambitions are a problem. Nuclear proliferation in the Middle East is a danger, and the Iranian regime's foreign policy—which has involved support for militias and terrorist groups—make it a destabilizing force in the region. The country has a right to civilian nuclear energy, as do all nations. But Tehran has signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, submitting itself to the jurisdiction of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The IAEA says Iran has exhibited a pattern of deception and non-cooperation involving its nuclear program for 20 years—including lying about its activities and concealing sites. In that context, it makes sense to be suspicious of Iran's intentions and to ask that the IAEA routinely verify and inspect its facilities. Unless that can be achieved, Iran should pay the price for its actions. Washington's current strategy is to muster international support to impose greater costs, while at the same time negotiating with Iran to find a solution that gives the world greater assurance that the Iranian program is purely civilian in nature.

**Iran has both economic and ideological incentives not to cooperate with America.**

Fareed Zakaria, Newsweek. Containing a Nuclear Iran. October 3, 2009.

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/216702>

But the fundamental analysis is flawed. I do not believe the Iranian regime, at its core, wants normalized relations with America. Isolation from the West and hostility toward the United States are fundamental pillars that prop up the current regime—the reason that this system of government came into being and what sustains it every day. This is not simply a matter of ideology— though that is important—but economics. Those who rule in Tehran have created a closed, oligarchic economy that channels the country's oil revenues into the coffers of its religious foundations (for compliant clerics) and the increasingly powerful Revolutionary Guard. They benefit from a closed economy that they can manipulate. An opening to the world, which would mean more trade, commerce, and contact with the United States, would strengthen Iran's civil society, its trading class, its students, its bourgeoisie, and thus strengthen opposition to the regime.

**A nuclear Iran would threaten U.S. national security on many levels.**

US News and World Report. [The World Cannot Live With the Threat of a Nuclear Iran](#) *By Mortimer Zuckerman* Posted March 23, 2009.

<http://www.usnews.com/articles/opinion/mzuckerman/2009/03/23/the-world-cannot-live-with-the-threat-of-a-nuclear-iran.html>

Nuclear Iran will be a threat to U.S. national security, worldwide energy security, the efficacy of multilateralism, and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Having defied the world so brazenly, it might become overconfident enough to believe that its conventional or proxy forces could operate without fear of serious reprisals from the United States, Israel, or any other power. It will be emboldened to use terrorism to threaten or subvert others in the area—especially those who might be inclined to pursue peace with Israel. Pro-Western Arab regimes such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the gulf states sense the Iranian threat, and if Iran succeeds in going nuclear, they may decide to join Iran rather than fight it. And Iran, through its support for Hezbollah and Hamas and the Baath Party in Iraq, has the capacity to put direct pressure on Lebanon, Syria, the Palestinians, and the Iraqis. Tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands would join radical Islamist groups in the belief that Islamism is on the march.

**Iran will not be deterred by mutually assured destruction.**

US News and World Report. The World Cannot Live With the Threat of a Nuclear Iran By Mortimer Zuckerman Posted March 23, 2009.

<http://www.usnews.com/articles/opinion/mzuckerman/2009/03/23/the-world-cannot-live-with-the-threat-of-a-nuclear-iran.html>

Fundamentally, a nuclear Iran represents a unique threat. The fear of mutually assured destruction has long restrained other nuclear powers. There is a real risk that the Iranian leadership is not rational, that driven by its mad hatreds, it will act in ways that are unreasonable, even self-destructive. Anti-Americanism is a cornerstone of the ideology of this Islamic state. The virulence of Iran's hostility is impervious to reason. "Death to America!" has provoked the Iranian street for over a quarter of a century and is the venom upon which an entire generation of Iranians has been raised. The dominant Ayatollah Ali Khamenei reiterates that Iran's differences with America are more fundamental than political differences.

**Iran's interest in talking is just for the purposes of buying time.**

US News and World Report. The World Cannot Live With the Threat of a Nuclear Iran By Mortimer Zuckerman Posted March 23, 2009.

<http://www.usnews.com/articles/opinion/mzuckerman/2009/03/23/the-world-cannot-live-with-the-threat-of-a-nuclear-iran.html>

It is not that the Iranians don't want to talk—they do. That's how they play for time. Quite simply, they seek the technical know-how that will enable them to produce nuclear weapons in a short period. They are in the midst of building stockpiles of low-enriched uranium from which they can produce enough highly enriched uranium for a nuclear device in a matter of months—a breakout capability. They are adding centrifuges faster than the U.N. Security Council can step up the pressure and are learning about the intricate art of connecting a large number of centrifuges to a vast amount of pipe work, while maintaining everything in a vacuum. Getting centrifuges to run is not the challenge; getting them to run as a single entity is, and they are mastering it. Simultaneously, they are enhancing their ability to launch long-range ballistic missiles, a potential delivery system of nuclear weapons. Alas, this is also a living testimony to the failure of the world community to curb the trade of missile technology that Iran lacks on its own.

## **Iran has the motive and the capability to launch missiles at the United States.**

Chris Wessling—Newsmax. Iranian Nuclear Threat Targets U.S., Israel. August 30, 2009.

[http://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/iran\\_nuclear\\_threat/2009/08/30/254223.html](http://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/iran_nuclear_threat/2009/08/30/254223.html)

The Islamic republic has test-fired missiles capable of reaching Israel, southeastern Europe, and U.S. bases in the Mideast — and published reports say Iran is within a year of developing its own nuclear bomb. Security experts warn that even one nuclear device in the hands of a rogue nation could be used against the United States in a devastating electromagnetic pulse attack, an intense burst of energy from an exploding nuclear warhead high above the Earth. So why isn't the Obama administration doing more to prevent a nuclear nightmare? "I get very, very nervous about it," Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., told Newsmax.TV's Kathleen Walter. "I think Iran will have a nuclear weapon. I think now it's only a question of when." The United States is caught in the middle of a Mideast faceoff between one of its strongest allies, Israel, and Iran. Iran has threatened to wipe Israel off the map, and Israel refuses to rule out a preemptive strike against its adversary, while insisting that Iran must not be allowed to develop nuclear weapons. If the United States tries to prevent Iran from making nuclear weapons, its president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has vowed a campaign of bloody revenge. Iran's hatred of Israel "is rooted in ideology," said Walid Phares of Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "The Iranian regime is jihadist, and they do not acknowledge nor accept the idea that a non-Islamic, non-jihadist state could exist in the region." Although Iran is thousands of miles from America's shores, its belligerent actions could have far-reaching repercussions. A regional war or nuclear attack could cause an already shaky U.S. economy to collapse.

## **An Iranian electromagnetic pulse attack would devastate the U.S. electrical grid.**

Chris Wessling—Newsmax. Iranian Nuclear Threat Targets U.S., Israel. August 30, 2009.

[http://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/iran\\_nuclear\\_threat/2009/08/30/254223.html](http://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/iran_nuclear_threat/2009/08/30/254223.html)

Even scarier is the growing threat of an electromagnetic pulse attack, security analysts say. Such an attack could destroy all electronic devices over a massive area, from cell phones to computers to America's electrical grid, experts say.

“Within a year of that attack, nine out of 10 Americans would be dead, because we can't support a population of the present size in urban centers and the like without electricity,” said Frank Gaffney, president of the Center for Security Policy. “That would be a world without America, as a practical matter. And that is exactly what I believe the Iranians are working towards.” President Barack Obama has committed the U.S. government to a diplomatic approach for resolving the high-stakes nuclear dispute, but Iran has rebuffed Obama's overtures. Meanwhile, Congress is working on legislation to grant Obama the power to impose crippling sanctions on Iran if the talk-first approach doesn't work.

**The U.S. is reconsidering 2007 the intelligence report that Iran has halted its nuclear weapons program**

U.S. Considers a New Assessment of Iran Threat. By SIOBHAN GORMAN and JAY SOLOMON Wall Street Journal, October 19, 2009.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125565146184988939.html>

WASHINGTON -- U.S. spy agencies are considering whether to rewrite a controversial 2007 intelligence report that asserted Tehran halted its efforts to build nuclear weapons in 2003, current and former U.S. intelligence officials say. The intelligence agencies' rethink comes as pressure is mounting on Capitol Hill, and among U.S. allies, for the Obama administration to redo the 2007 assessment, after a string of recent revelations about Tehran's nuclear program. German, French and British intelligence agencies have all disputed the conclusions of the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate, or NIE, in recent months, according to European officials briefed on the exchanges. Intelligence on the state of Iran's nuclear capabilities has for years been politically fraught within Washington and among U.S. allies and international institutions like the International Atomic Energy Agency.

**Even if Iran is not developing a nuclear weapon, it still has the physical capacity to do so.**

Tehran's nukes:Our intelligence community ignores the Iranian threat.

Washington Times. May 11, 2009.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/may/11/tehrans-nukes/>

At last week's Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings titled, "Engaging Iran: Obstacles and Opportunities," former Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns told senators that "there is no question [Iran is] seeking a nuclear weapons capability. No one doubts that." No one? Really? Actually, our own spy agencies belittle the Iranian threat. On March 12, the CIA's Weapons Intelligence, Nonproliferation and Arms Control Center, known as WINPAC, released its report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions, which covered 2008. The agency concluded that "we do not know whether Iran currently intends to develop a nuclear weapon." However, Iran "continued to expand its nuclear infrastructure and continued uranium enrichment activities ... despite multiple United Nations Security Council Resolutions since 2006 calling for the suspension of those activities."

**Iran is more serious than some think about developing nuclear weapons.**

Tehran's nukes:Our intelligence community ignores the Iranian threat.

Washington Times. May 11, 2009.

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New York District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, who also testified at last week's Senate hearing, said the message from Iran was "loud and clear." His investigations of the multibillion-dollar criminal financial schemes Iran is using to finance its programs indicated "it is late in this game and we don't have a lot of time to stop Iran" from developing nuclear weapons and the missiles to deliver them. "The Iranians are deadly serious about proceeding with this program," he said. "It is later than a lot of people think." Just how late is it? Last February, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that Iran already had sufficient raw materials to build a nuclear weapon and noted that the "continued lack of cooperation by Iran ... gives rise to concerns about possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program." The center-left Institute for Science and International Security reported in December 2008 that Iran "is expected to reach [the nuclear-capability] milestone during 2009 under a wide variety of scenarios." Even the 2007 NIE indicated Iran could have weapons capability by next year.

### **The U.S is facing a second cold war with Russia.**

New York Daily News. Russian invasion of Georgia illustrates threat to U.S. global role. Michael Goodwin. Saturday, August 16th 2008

The Cold War is back, right down to references to the "Evil Empire" and fearful talk of nuclear strikes. But before we rush back into our dusty air raid shelters and teach schoolchildren to duck and cover under their desks, we would do well to remember this is 2008, not 1948. Just as generals tend to make the mistake of fighting the last hot war, many politicians and pundits are gearing up to fight the last Cold War. By all means, we must stand firm - and demand that Europe do the same - against Russia's brutal land grab and naked threats. But America also needs to get its own act together if we have any hope of rallying the world against the new rise of totalitarian regimes. Russia was clearly emboldened not only by its newfound oil and gas wealth, but also by our obvious weakness. We are hobbled in the world and divided at home, dependent on others for our energy, much of our food, manufacturing, and even for our financing. We are going deeper into debt with each passing day, our future mortgaged with commitments we cannot possibly keep. And yet the solutions our leaders offer are no match for the scale of the problems. We don't even demand that Obama and McCain offer honest ideas that would halt our alarming decline, let alone put us on the path to security and prosperity.

## **Russia is experiencing a resurgence of power and an increased capacity to challenge the U.S.**

WorldNetDaily. Is new Russian triumvirate a threat? Changing global security map shows heightened turmoil. August 31, 2009.

<http://www.wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageld=108127>

A strategic triumvirate of Russia, India and Iran appears to be emerging from the turmoil of world tensions and uncertainty, and analysts say it is impacting the layout of the global security map, according to a report from Joseph Farah's G2 Bulletin. Anxiety levels are on the rise because of a more assertive Russia challenging a multitude of neighbors and a nuclear-prone Iran in conflict with the United States and India, which is experiencing a higher level of conflict with neighboring China. The scenario raises the unwelcome prospect of a strategic grouping of Russia, India and Iran balanced against the U.S., China and Pakistan. "The Russia-India-Iran strategic triangle in terms of comparative strategic analysis would far outweigh any triangular strategic configurations linking the United States and China with any third nation combination," said Dr. Subhash Kapila, a strategic analyst with the South Asia Analysis Group. "This formidable strategic potential arises from the sum total of the respective strategic strengths and geo-strategic significance of Russia, India and Iran," Kapila said. With a resurgence and a rush to modernize its armed forces, Russia has re-emerged as an independent global power. It is the only power other than the U.S. with global power projection. This also is the case compared to China, which remains largely a regional Asian power with the eventual goal of achieving worldwide military prowess.

**Iran, China, North Korea, and Russia are the biggest existential threats to the U.S.**

Indian Express. China, Russia, N Korea, Iran threat to US: Report. September 16, 2009. <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/china-russia-n-korea-iran-threat-to-us-report/517799/1>

Besides violent extremist groups like Al-Qaeda, America's top intelligence agency identified N Korea, Iran, China and Russia as countries which have the ability to challenge US interests in traditional and emerging ways. The 2009 National Intelligence Strategy, released on Tuesday, by the Director of National Intelligence, said that Iran poses an array of challenges to US security objectives in the Middle East and beyond because of its nuclear and missile programmes, supports of terrorism, and provision of lethal aid to US and coalition adversaries. North Korea continues to threaten peace and security in East Asia because of its sustained pursuit of nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities, its transfer of these capabilities to third parties, its erratic behaviour, and its large conventional military capability, it said. Although China shares many interests with United States, but its increasing natural resource-focused diplomacy and military modernisation are among the factors making it a complex global challenge, said the report. Similarly Russia is a US partner in important initiatives such as securing fissile material and combating nuclear terrorism, but it may continue to seek avenues for reasserting power and influence in ways that complicate US interests.

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<sup>i</sup> (2009). Oxford English Dictionary.

<sup>ii</sup> The Failed States Index 2009: FAQ & Methodology. Foreign Policy Magazine. Last Access: October 19, 2009.

[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/22/2009\\_failed\\_states\\_index\\_faq\\_methodology](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/22/2009_failed_states_index_faq_methodology)

<sup>iii</sup> Brooks, R.E. (Autumn 2005). "Failed States, or the State as Failure?" The University of Chicago Law Review, Vol. 72, No. 4, pp 1160-1161.

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid, page 1161.

<sup>v</sup> Chomsky, N. (2006). Failed States: the abuse of power and the assault on democracy. Metropolitan Books: New York, NY.

<sup>vi</sup> Battista, J. (August 3, 2009). "The N.F.L. has identified the enemy and it is Twitter." New York Times. Last Access: October 15, 2009.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/04/sports/football/04twitter.html>

<sup>vii</sup> Beech, E. (October 16, 2009). "U.S. mulling new assessment of Iran threat: report." Washington Post. Last Access: October 18, 2009.

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/16/AR2009101600204.html)

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<sup>viii</sup> Stein, J.G. (June 1988). "Building politics into psychology: the misperception of threat." Political Psychology, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp 245-271.

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid, page 246.

<sup>x</sup> Ibid, pages 246-247.