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Culture Versus Structure in Post-9/11 Security Studies

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by [Michael C. Desch](#)

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Introduction

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

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

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

Why Culture Cannot Supplant Realist Theories in National Security

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How Culture Might Supplement Existing Theories in National Security

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Structure, Culture, and the Global War on Terrorism

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions

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

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

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

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

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

About the Author

Michael C. Desch is Professor and Robert M. Gates Chair in Intelligence and National Security Decision-making at the George Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. This memorandum draws heavily upon his "Culture Clash: Assessing the Importance of Ideas in Security Studies," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 141-70.

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Stephen Peter Rosen, "Military Effectiveness: Why Society Matters," *International Security* 19, No. 4 (Spring 1995), pp 23 and 24 and his *Societies and Military Power: India and Its Armies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 22-26 explicitly contrasts his domestic structural approach with a cultural approach. However, I include him within the post-Cold War culturalist wave because the domestic social structure he is most interested in, the Indian caste system, has largely ideational roots.

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3. Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and French Military Doctrine Before World War II" in Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 187; and Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine," 84.

4. Berger, "From Sword to Chrysanthemum," 119-150; Katzenstein and Okawara, "Japan's National Security," 84-118; and Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*.

5. Rosen, "Military Effectiveness," 5-32 and Rosen, *Societies and Military Power*, viii-xi.

6. Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, x, 247, and 262-66; Johnston, "Thinking About Culture," 63; and Alistair Iain Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Maoist China" in Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 257.

7. Martha Finnemore, "Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention" in Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 156.

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9. Robert G. Herman, "Identity, Norms, and National Security: The Soviet Foreign Policy Revolution and the End of the Cold War" in Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 271-316.

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13. Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," 41. All the essays in Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security* explicitly target realism.

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15. Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, 1.

16. Legro, *Cooperation under Fire*, 221.

17. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security* and Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein, "Norms, Identity, and Culture," in Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 34.

18. Some of the best critiques of realism have come from within the paradigm itself. See, for example, Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In," *International Security* 19, No. 1 (Summer 1994), pp 72-108.

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22. Sarah Mendelson, "Internal Battles and External Wars: Politics, Learning and the Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan," *World Politics* 45, No. 3 (April 1993), 327-360.

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30. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 194; Allan Millett, *The American Political System and Civilian Control of the Military: A Historical Perspective* (Columbus, OH: The Merhson Center of the Ohio State University, April 1979), 38; and Condoleeza Rice, "The Party, the Military, and Decision Authority in the Soviet Union," *World Politics* Vol. 60, No. 1 (October 1987), 80-1.
31. I make this argument in detail in my *Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). For further evidence of recent changes in civilian control of the military in the United States and Russia see: Russell F. Weigley, "The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control From McClellan to Powell," *The Journal of Military History* 57, No. (Special Issue October 1993), 27-58; A. J. Bacevich, "Clinton's Military Problem—and Ours," *National Review*, December 13, 1993, 36-40; Richard H. Kohn, "Out of Control: The Crisis in Civil-Military Relations," *The National Interest*, No. 35 (Spring 1994), 3-17; Kohn "Upstarts In Uniform," *The New York Times*, April 10, 1994, 19; Edward N. Luttwak, "Washington's Biggest Scandal," *Commentary* 97, No. 5 (May 1994), 29-33; Colonel Charles J. Dunlap, Jr., "Welcome to the Junta: The Erosion of Civilian Control of the U.S. Military," *Wake Forest Law Review* 29, No. 2 (Summer 1994), 341-92; Mikhail Tsyppkin, "Will the Military Rule Russia?" *Security Studies* 2, No. 1 (Autumn 1992), 38-73; Stephen Foye, "Post-Soviet Russia: Politics and the New Russian Army," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [RFE/RL] Research Report* 1, No. 33 (August 21, 1992), 5-12; Thomas M. Nichols, *The Sacred Cause: Civil-Military Conflict Over Soviet National Security, 1917-1992*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); and Kimberly Martin Zisk, "Civil-Military Relations in the New Russia," *Occasional Paper* (Columbus: The Merhson Center, Ohio State University, March 1993).
32. Brian D. Taylor, "Culture and Coups: The Norm of Civilian Supremacy," (unpublished manuscript, Olin Institute, February 1996).
33. Brian D. Taylor, "The Russian Military in Politics: Civilian Supremacy in Comparative and Historical Perspective," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, September 1997), Table 1-5.
34. Waltz, "International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy," 52.
35. Waltz, *Theory*, 74 and 124-28. At different points Waltz appears to base his prediction of behavioral isomorphism on three different, and perhaps mutually exclusive, types of argument. At various points he relies on an evolutionary selection mechanism, socialization to accepted international practice, and learning through rational assessment of structural constraints. Colin Elman, "Horses for Courses: Why Not Neo-Realist Theories of Foreign Policy?" *Security Studies* 6, No. 1 (Fall 1996), 7-53 argues that while most scholars accept the rational assessment model as the dominant reading, the other strands continue to draw adherents.
36. See his *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).
37. Scott Sagan also makes this point in his "Culture, Strategy, and Selection in International Politics," (Paper Prepared for Delivery at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 28-31, 1997).

38. Waltz, *Theory*, 78.
39. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, 23; Kier, "Culture and French Military Doctrine Before World War II," in Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 190; Herman, "Identity, Norms, and National Security," in Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 279; and Berger, "Norms, Identity, and National Security in Germany and Japan," in Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 325. But elsewhere, Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, 4-5 concedes that structure can sometimes be quite constraining.
40. Michael Ignatieff, "The Challenges of American Imperial Power," *Naval War college Review* Vol. LVI, No. 2 (Spring 2003): 56.
41. Quoted in Thomas Powers, "Tomorrow the World," *New York Review of Books* Vol. 51, No. 4 (March 11, 2004).
42. Thomas Friedman, "World War III," *New York Times*, September 13, 2001, 27. Also see his "Suicidal Lies," *New York Times*, March 31, 2002, 9, which argues that Palestinian suicide attacks against Israel are similarly irrational.
43. Bernard Lewis, "What Went Wrong," *The Atlantic Monthly*, January 2002, 45.
44. For discussion and critique of this literature, see Robert A. Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* vol. 97, No. 3 (August 2003): 343.
45. *Ibid.*, Table 2.
46. Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005).
47. Kenneth Pollack, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (New York: Random House, 2003), 339 and 346.
48. Ken Adelman, "Cakewalk in Iraq," *Washington Post* (February 13, 2002): A27.
49. The Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies, "[A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm](#)." Contributors include American neoconservatives such as Richard Perle, James Colbert, Charles Fairbanks, Jr., Douglas Feith, Robert Loewenberg, and David and Meyrav Wurmser.
50. Pollack, *The Threatening Storm*, 338.
51. David Remnick, "[Making A Case](#)," *The New Yorker*, February 3, 2003.
52. For an excellent account of how doggedly, but also ineffectively, elements of the Iraqi military fought U.S. forces in Baghdad see David Zucchino, *Thunder Run: The Armored Strike to Capture Baghdad* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2004). Among other weapons, Iraqi defenders used suicide car bombs and improvised explosive devices against U.S. forces. That those tactics took us by surprise later in the summer of 2003 as the guerilla war heated-up seems like another example of how our prejudices about Arab military effectiveness were exacerbated by thinking about the problem exclusively in cultural terms.
53. For an extended discussion of Lebanon and Iraq see my "Ominous Precedent," *The American Conservative*, May 5, 2003, 8-11.

54. See Elkins and Simeon, "A Cause in Search of Its Effect," 127.

55. Legro, "Military Culture and Inadvertent Escalation," 116.

56. Legro, *Cooperation Under Fire*, 231. Also cf. 25.

57. Kier, "Culture and French Military Doctrine Before World War II," in Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, 187.

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Post-Cold War and post-9/11 challenges raise questions about the effectiveness of the traditional intelligence paradigm. Not surprisingly, many of these transnational issues are becoming central themes of intelligence organizations. In a series of workshops in 2004, the CIA and the Rand Corporation examined what could be done to adapt analysis to better address threats coming from the transnational realm.⁵ Among the many insights generated from those meetings was the idea that such issues could be better understood through a process of “sense-making” namely, a continuous, more free-wheeling, creative and. Cultural approaches to strategic studies have existed in various forms for hundreds of years. The argument that culture influences national security policy is grounded in classic works, including the... Foreign Policy Nuclear Weapon Security Policy Political Culture Strategic Choice. These keywords were added by machine and not by the authors. This process is experimental and the keywords may be updated as the learning algorithm improves. Strategic Culture Foundation provides a platform for exclusive analysis, research and policy comment on Eurasian and global affairs. We are covering political, economic, social and security issues worldwide. Trudeau now has the red-faced embarrassment of explaining why his country lost out to Ireland in obtaining a seat on the UN Security Council. Most recent. Security.