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# FORCE MULTIPLIERS

## THE INSTRUMENTALITIES OF IMPERIALISM

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The New Imperialism, Volume 5

Edited by  
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Montréal, Québec, Canada

2015

## Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Force multipliers : the instrumentalities of imperialism / edited by  
Maximilian C. Forte.

(The new imperialism ; volume 5)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Issued in print and electronic formats.

ISBN 978-0-9868021-7-1 (bound).-ISBN 978-0-9868021-6-4 (paperback).--

ISBN 978-0-9868021-8-8 (pdf)

1. Imperialism. 2. United States--Foreign relations. 3. United States--Military  
policy. 4. World politics--1989-. 5. International relations. 6. Instrumentalism (Phi-  
losophy). I. Forte, Maximilian C., 1967-, editor II. Series: New imperialism (Mon-  
tréal, Québec) ; v. 5

JC359.F67 2015

325'.32

C2015-906336-1

C2015-906337-X

Cover design: Maximilian C. Forte

© 2015 Alert Press

1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd., W.,  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3G-1M8  
[www.alertpress.net](http://www.alertpress.net)

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Printed in Canada

## Introduction

# FORCE MULTIPLIERS: IMPERIAL INSTRUMENTALISM IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

*Maximilian C. Forte*

“Force multipliers: Machines which allow a small effort to move a larger load are called *force multipliers*. Some examples of force multipliers include: a crowbar, wheelbarrow, nutcracker, and bottle opener. The number of times a machine multiplies the effort is called its *mechanical advantage*. *The mechanical advantage of a machine is the number of times the load moved is greater than the effort used. Mechanical advantage (MA) = load/effort*”. (Avison, 1989, p. 109)

“Force Multiplier. A capability that, when added to and employed by a combat force, significantly increases the combat potential of that force and thus enhances the probability of successful mission accomplishment.” (US Department of Defense [DoD], 2007, p. GL-11)

“Observation Number 9, *cultural awareness is a force multiplier*, reflects [*sic*] our recognition that knowledge of the cultural ‘terrain’ can be as important as, and sometimes even more important than, knowledge of the geographic terrain. This observation acknowledges that the people are, in many respects, the decisive terrain, and that we must study that terrain in the same way that we have always studied the geographic terrain.” (General David H. Petraeus, 2006, p. 8)

“Gender issues aren’t just personnel issues. They are intelligence issues! Gender is a force multiplier—if you understand how gender works in a particular society, you can control that society much more effectively!” (A senior US military lawyer speaking at a workshop on gender and international humanitarian law, in 2007. Quoted in Orford [2010, p. 335])

Whether it is smart (as in “smart bombs” or “smart power”), involves stealth (“stealth technology” like the B-2 bomber, or “leading from behind” as in the US-led NATO war on Libya), uses “leverage”, employs “force multipliers,” or engages in “full-spectrum operations,” the political and military establishment of the US has produced a battery of terms having an aura of rationality and science. Added to the physics of dominance produced in rhetoric about “force-multipliers,” there is a geometry of war (“asymmetric warfare” and “three-dimensional warfare”) and even a quasi-biology of war (“hybrid wars”). Power is described by military leaders using concepts of time, energy, mass, and velocity. Just as the US Department of State (DoS) announces “smart, effective American leadership” (DoS, 2010, p. 14), so does the US Army proclaim “the science of control” (US Army, 2008a, p. 6-1). It is fitting then that the new US Secretary of Defense, Ashton Carter, is someone who received a PhD in physics. What lies behind the scientific-sounding certitude is both a deep anxiety about the increasingly precarious global grasp of the US, and a signal that many other nations will face greater peril as the US leans more than ever on social and cultural forces internal to those nations in order to advance its political and corporate interests.

US military spokespersons appear to have little trouble in speaking either plainly or in transparent euphemisms about the US’ quest for control over other societies, through a variety of “force multipliers”. Force multiplication means using leverage, proxies, cogs, and networks of collaborators. Force multipliers can also refer to mechanisms, processes, and institutions: trade treaties, military education, or the rule of law. Power relations are built into force multiplication, such as “leveraging debt”: for example, structural adjustment policies have sought to reverse long-standing political principles and legal systems originating in anti-colonialism, national self-determination, and anti-imperialism, by eliminating the socio-economic supports of self-determination (such as tariffs, subsidies, wages, and support for national industries; see: Hickel & Kirk, [2014/11/20]). The concept—if we can call it that—of the “force multiplier” has itself been prone to multiplication, such that a force multiplier can refer to anything from military technology, to culture in the abstract, or culture in terms of news and entertainment communicated via radio, television, newspapers, and the Internet; gender and specifically relations between men and women; sexuality; law and legal enforcement systems; energy; food; education; “humanitarian aid” by non-governmental organizations

(see Forte, 2014a, pp. 8-12; Lischer, 2007); and even induced mental states where according to retired US General Colin Powell, “perpetual optimism is a force multiplier” (Powell, 2006, slide 13). Simply showing images of potential force, by flying bombers over civilian areas with the expectation that crowds will post images to Twitter, is an act cast as a force multiplier designed to intimidate North Korea (Thompson, 2014/6/26). It seems that everything can or could be a force multiplier. The reason for this is due to the fact that in the West, militarization and securitization have reached such an extreme state of expansion (with practices following suit), that they are predicated on the potential recruitment of everything and everybody, manufacturing compliance with complicity as the desired by-product. That the *means* available may not produce “successful mission accomplishment,” does not in any way deny either the *attempt* to secure control or the *desire* for totalizing forms of control.

Events during 2014-2015 alone, the period in which this volume was developed, seem to speak to the active use of force multipliers by the US in Ukraine, Venezuela, Russia, Iraq and Syria. For example, backing anti-government protesters in Ukraine and Venezuela, both having explicit aims of overthrowing their respective, democratically-elected governments, succeeding in Ukraine where the US had an active hand in selecting pro-US “leaders” (see O’Connor, 2014/2/7). In addition, as confirmed in a multitude of US government documents, there has been extensive US financing and training of dozens of Venezuelan opposition groups (see Johnston, 2014/2/21; Capote, 2014/3/25; Carasik, 2014/4/8; US Embassy-Caracas, 2006/11/9). The Obama administration also quietly admitted to supporting activists in the 2014 protests, along with providing current funding worth US \$5 million, among other means of intervening to destabilize the legitimate government (Bulluck, 2014/4/27; US Department of State [DoS], 2014a, p. 126; Busby, 2014; Weisbrot, 2014/2/18; Al Jazeera, 2014/3/14). Recently, Obama went as far as officially declaring in an Executive Order that Venezuela was an “unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States,” a move typically used when imposing sanctions, and escalating intervention (Obama, 2015; White House, 2015a). In this same time period sanctions were imposed on Russia, support of NGOs in Russia was defended, and the US State Department appeared to be publicly adopting Pussy Riot, a supposed punk band that engaged in pornographic acts in Russian churches and museums, while also supporting LGBT rights in Russia, and this includes US and West-

ern support for the “right” to spread information about “non-traditional” sex to *minors*—which Western corporate media (the state’s private information contractors) typically denounced as a “draconian” law that was “anti-gay,” without any mention of children or the fact that LGBT persons have legal protection in Russia; indeed, an argument has been made that Hollywood interests would be most affected by the passage of Russian Federation Federal Law № 135-FZ (Heiss, 2014, pp. 63, 66; also see Ossowski, 2013/10/22). In Syria, the US began to openly support armed rebels with military aid, plus training, and financing. In Iraq, the US launched new military attacks, while loudly lauding the supporting role of its allies and partners (Obama, 2014a). Add all of this to news from recent years about Pentagon “sock puppets” in social media, the US crackdown on whistle blowers, and the supportive role played by US academics, universities, professional associations, and philanthropies, and we have, even so brief, a robust picture of US force multipliers. Typically we find such US multipliers listed in US documents under the banners of “democracy promotion,” “strategic communications,” “humanitarianism,” and “stabilization”.

In addition to introducing the chapters contributed to this volume, all of which speak to one or more aspects of the concept of force multipliers, or more broadly the imperial “physics” of dominance, the aim of this chapter is to introduce and critically analyze the thinking and historical context implicated in the idea of force multipliers. This continues a project begun elsewhere (see Forte 2014a, 2014b) involving the critique of imperial ideology and its social and cultural practice. Specific to this chapter, we ask and address several questions: What is and what is not a force multiplier? What assumptions are at the root of the concept? Why does the US need force multipliers? What are the implied aims? What does the use of the term convey about how the US values its supposed partners and allies? What does the existence of social and cultural force multipliers, spread worldwide, suggest about the nature of US empire and its power? Since when has the US needed such multipliers? Does the possession and use of force multipliers suggest strength, weakness, or both?

One of my theses is that the resort to the language of science betrays a need for conceptual security on the part of political and military leaders, along with an attempt to provide assurance of clear thinking and successful outcomes to deeply fatigued and disgruntled masses at home, and elected officials tasked with making budget cuts. Linguistic scientism also creates an aura of order and

neutrality, which helps to mask much uglier realities. Conceptual security, even just the “sound” of such security, is needed to offset the rising instability caused by US interventions around the globe, ranging from fighting up to eight international wars simultaneously (Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Syria, Pakistan, Colombia), the spread of militant resistance across Africa wherever the US engages in military intervention, to the outright creation of what the US itself alludes to as “failed states” (Iraq, Libya), and multiple productions of chaos and disorder on the streets of Kiev and Caracas. In the face of such rising instability, US planners and their corporate allies seek to reassure themselves of eventual success, thus gaining continued political and financial support in the form of new laws, and new weapons or consulting contracts. Everything, at home and abroad, is thus cast in terms of overt or implied destabilization. Thus US strategists and policymakers do abroad what they fear at home: protests are not about free speech or free assembly, but about destabilization—this is why protests are repressed at home, yet encouraged abroad, and the fig leaf of “human rights” is not meant to be taken at face value. The “fear of the masses,” at the heart of democratic elitists, is now projected externally and turned into policy as “democracy promotion”. Fear at home continues meanwhile, and is conveyed by an “all-threats, all-hazards” philosophy of enhanced national security awareness, with calls for more community policing and even the use of conservation officers as “force multipliers” in “counterterrorism” (Carter & Gore, 2013, p. 285).

Related to the above thesis, one cannot help but think that, at best, a spurious science is being generated by strategists, offering imprecision that is muted by the sound of conceptual precision. The idea of developing force multipliers is more useful when read as a statement of intent, a plan, as an index of actual and desired reach, rather than something certain, fixed, and unambiguous. What is also interesting to note is that such language refuses to reject or deflect conspiratorial views of power; instead, it actively promotes such views, thereby validating them.

A second thesis is that the force multiplier idea, premised on the definition of using a small effort to move a large load, involves recognition of limits while threatening expansion. In simple terms, it can mean that either the effort is getting smaller because resources are diminished (budget cuts, increased costs, rising debt, collapse in public support), or the load is getting larger because too many interventionist projects have been initiated, or both. In some sense, the idea masks a deeper anxiety about perceived weakness

and strain. This anxiety about a diminished autonomous capacity is starting to come out in the open: “success will increasingly depend on how well our military instrument can support the other instruments of power and enable our network of allies and partners” (DoD, 2015, p. i). However, the danger comes in the desire to maintain the “large load,” even to increase the size of the load, rather than scaling back to “small effort, small load,” or “no effort, no load”. “Force multiplier” implies projection at the same time as recognition of limits, of force that is insufficient on its own and thus requires extensions, that is, multiples of itself. However, we should also note some of the changing tone—more openly worried—that we find in very recent US military statements, such as those of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the 2015 *National Military Strategy*: “control of escalation is becoming more difficult and more important...and that as a hedge against unpredictability with reduced resources, *we may have to adjust our global posture*” (DoD, 2015, p. i, emphasis added). While not going further and thus leaving much room for interpretation, the emphasized statement is still unusual in contrast with the normally assured tone of such documents.

A third thesis is that the use of partners and proxies highlights the role of collaborators in the imperialist project. As the load-bearing hands of US empire recede into the background, those of its local collaborators stand out on the front line. This shifts struggles for power from the international arena, between states, to the domestic arena within states. Inevitably then anti-imperialist violence becomes domestic, not international, which is exactly where US leaders want to move such violence—“Assad is killing his own people” can then become the opportunistic, expedient, and disingenuous claim fit for rhetorical contests about “human rights” at the UN Security Council, as a discredited US seeks to build up its “soft power” among the less-informed, the forgetful, and especially youths. No wonder then that doctrines like the “responsibility to protect” (R2P) are so popular among segments of the interventionist Western elite, as it allows them to treat opportunistically selected target states as if such states existed in a vacuum, and were not what they actually are: the new battlegrounds for the proxies of empire.

A fourth thesis is based on recognition of the simple fact that the force multiplier concept is ultimately rooted in military force. Problematically, the concept implies that if the multipliers fail, the hard force behind them will be brought closer to bear, creating a chain-link of connections that draw US intervention in more



closely, turning indirect intervention into direct intervention. The force multiplier idea would thus appear to be a perilous, deceptive means of making a down payment on future US aggression against another nation, without wishing to telegraph such intentions too far in advance.

A fifth thesis is that the force multiplier idea reduces a complex world to a grid-like array, that is still based on ideas of “us” versus “them,” masking what is still the basic doctrine of George W. Bush—you are either with us or against us—by encoding it into scientific-sounding, or scientific, rhetoric. The world is thus reduced to force multipliers versus force “diminishers”. By turning the term into a blob concept, US leaders make it seem that everything is open to intervention and manipulation, but likewise everything can also diminish US power. There has been obviously, painfully, little effort to clarify or elaborate on the concept, that is, little in the way of “deep thinking” that critically examines the concept, and what attempts there have been (e.g. Hurley, 2005), seem to obscure more than they explain by using sequences of mathematical equations with invented variables.

My sixth thesis is rather blunt: *that this is all fake*. By fake I mean that the attempt to produce a scientific effect around the idea of “force multipliers” is simply something intended as misdirection. The suggestion here is that those deploying the term are not taking their task seriously; they offer an underdeveloped concept as a gloss for a policy of destabilization—that is to say, *phony science* for *real policy*, masking internal uncertainty, confusion, and a refusal to logically think through the ramifications of policy. The scientism is for internal propaganda purposes, to impress peers, seniors, lawmakers, budget panels, and to convince the kinds of readers who might search for and consult documents of state. The fakery also allows proponents of the use of proxies—like the Afghan collaborators identified in WikiLeaks documents whose safety, once exposed, caused much public fretting among US officials—to defer questioning of US assumptions about the nature of humans, the nature of its allies, and the potential for contradictions and reversals, let alone potential harm to human proxies. Ultimately, the real message about force multipliers is not partnership, it is domination.

The seventh thesis, for which this chapter provides some notes for further development, concerns force multiplication as another form of capital accumulation, namely, extraction. The need to “multiply” plus the need to *reduce energy expended*, are both meaningful primarily, even exclusively, as an expression of *cost*. What is thus directly implied is that the US seeks to minimize the cost of

any intervention in the affairs of another nation-state, by passing those costs onto others. Those others thus effectively subsidize US intervention, either “literally” by paying for it, or in analogous terms of taking on risk and of doing the leg work. By using humans as strategic resources, and by using more of them and at the least possible expense, we have a relation of extraction. This is the equation that is hidden by that of the force multiplier—it is not so much about power *projection*, which could also connote ideas of power being spread abroad, and even less power *sharing*, as it is about *power extraction*—rendering all others less powerful, or even powerless, in the face of US global expansion. Moreover, by fixating on a concept which is expressed as a function of cost, US military planners and diplomats make calculations, and this calculating logic about the cost and utility of others is fundamentally an instrumentalist and transactionalist perspective. Such an approach was already abundantly evident in US theorizations of winning hearts and minds in Afghanistan by distributing *things* and offering *jobs*, in return for non-resistance or armed cooperation—reducing human social interaction and cultural meaning to a matter of strategic gain and rational choice on the part of individual “agents”. The trick for an “overstretched” empire is, of course, how to minimize financial burdens by instead using cultural means—“shared values”—to win allegiance, acceptance, and acquiescence.

### Instrumental Partners: An Imperial Science of Agency

For an empire whose imperialism is still denied by many, a striking number of terms and concepts have been generated by US leaders that nonetheless are premised on the root idea of “force” in achieving or securing US “global leadership”. These terms command the language of US military, political, and corporate spokespersons, and they have been influential enough to be institutionalized in formal military doctrine. However, in order to acquire a varnish of respectability and credibility, and to project the image of likely success, these force-based terms are presented as scientific. In rendering domination in neutral *scientistic* terms, the processes involved are naturalized and thus depoliticized; or at least the undertone is that of mastery over nature, rather than the subjugation of others or their instrumentalization as “partners”. Partners, as in coalitions and alliances, are presented as “force multipliers” in numerous documents produced by the State and Defense Departments. The

amorphous concept of force multipliers is our focus, both for what it reveals as for what it obscures.

Limited resources occasioned by another reality that is stated in physics-like terms—overstretch—is a recurring concern for US strategists, as is the consequent demand for operating indirectly through chains of allied operatives, or force multipliers. Major David S. Powell, in a paper for the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, stated that, “the concept of force multipliers is a key element of U.S. doctrine that asserts we can fight with limited resources and win” (Powell, 1990, p. 1). In addition, “there are several categories of force multipliers which include human, environmental, and organizational” (Powell, 1990, p. 2). The force multiplier concept is rooted in doctrines of “low-intensity conflict,” the scientific term for the US-directed counter-insurgencies in Central America in the 1980s (Powell, 1990, p. 3). In explaining the slippery concept of force multipliers, Powell (1990) makes reference to Honduras, the US invasion of Grenada in 1983, the US invasion of Panama in 1989, Costa Rica, and the US invasion of Dominican Republic in 1965—primarily Latin American and Caribbean cases, that is, the old laboratory of US imperialism. But what is, and what is not, a force multiplier? For Powell, “a force multiplier is a tangible or intangible variable that increases the combat value and overall capability of a military force” (1990, p. 5)—which could be anything. Indeed, since then the concept—if we can call it that—has expanded dramatically, to include virtually any *thing* and anyone, anywhere, who might advance US interests in any measure. Far from dispelling “conspiracy theory,” US military and diplomatic strategists have in fact proceeded to fashion their plans in the most conspiratorial (even if unrealistic) terms.

In 2014 there was a surprising yet widely ignored admission from the White House that the use of force by the US had created “failed states”: “We know from hard-learned experience that it is better to encourage and support reform than to impose policies that will render a country a failed state” (White House, 2014). This has not stopped the US from either using force or imposing policies. The recognition that force has its limits was preceded by the policy to lessen US costs by spreading the burden to other actors. As then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared, “the problems we face today will not be solved by governments alone. It will be in partnerships—partnerships with philanthropy, with global business, partnerships with civil society” (Clinton, 2009). Adding to this, she spoke of “the three Ds of our foreign policy—defense,

diplomacy and development” (Clinton, 2009). Clinton also spoke in terms of force multipliers: “by combining our strengths, governments and philanthropies can more than double our impact. And the multiplier effect continues if we add businesses, NGOs, universities, unions, faith communities, and individuals. That’s the power of partnership at its best—allowing us to achieve so much more together than we could apart” (Clinton, 2009). There would be a “new generation of public-private partnerships” coordinated by the State Department, which Clinton hailed as “smart power”—the emphasis being on “collaboration” and the deployment of “the full range of tools available” (Clinton, 2009), with *tools* underscoring the degree to which the US government instrumentalizes the agency of others. The purpose of such tools is to advance US interests, to ensure “American leadership” in the euphemistic though nonetheless imperial language of government spokespersons. As Obama argued, “no nation should be better positioned to lead in an era of globalization than America—the Nation that helped bring globalization about,” which he stated even as he denied any intent to build an empire (White House, 2010, pp. ii, iii).

US military strategists are keen to maximize the potential for US dominance in the context of “globalization,” with some apprehension but also with a rising interest in working through the agency of others. The US Army’s Field Manual for *Stability Operations* (FM 3-07), states these concerns in the following terms:

“As the Nation continues into this era of uncertainty and persistent conflict, the lines separating war and peace, enemy and friend, have blurred and no longer conform to the clear delineations we once knew. At the same time, emerging drivers of conflict and instability are combining with rapid cultural, social, and technological change to further complicate our understanding of the global security environment. Military success alone will not be sufficient to prevail in this environment. To confront the challenges before us, we must strengthen the capacity of the other elements of national power, leveraging the full potential of our interagency partners”. (US Army, 2008b, p. ii)

The level of apprehension has recently come into clearer public view, with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff exclaiming in what is meant to be a staid document, “today’s global security environment is the most unpredictable I have seen in 40 years of service” (DoD, 2015, p. i). The “complications,” “challenges,” and “opportunities” of globalization, have recently tended to be replaced by reference to “global disorder” which has “significantly

increased,” with the prediction being that, “future conflicts will come more rapidly, last longer, and take place on a much more technically challenging battlefield” (DoD, 2015, p. i).

Acknowledging that military success alone is insufficient, the US Army speaks of “leverage,” “partners,” and continues in the same document to endorse “soft power,” and different kinds of intervention operating through international agencies—indeed, even the production of the manual itself was heralded as symbolic of this turn: “the first doctrine of any type to undergo a comprehensive joint, service, interagency, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental review” (Caldwell & Leonard, 2008, p. 6). Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell, the author of FM 3-07, co-authored an article with Lieutenant Colonel Steven M. Leonard, the head of the Combined Arms Center, in which they proclaimed the arrival of a “Brave New World” that would require different modes of operation:

“The forces of globalization and the emergence of regional economic and political powers are fundamentally reshaping the world we thought we understood. Future cultural and ethnocentric conflicts are likely to be exacerbated by increased global competition for shrinking natural resources, teeming urban populations with rising expectations, unrestrained technological diffusion, and rapidly accelerating climate change. The future is not one of major battles and engagements fought by armies on battlefields devoid of population; instead, the course of conflict will be decided by forces operating among the people of the world. Here, the margin of victory will be measured in far different terms than the wars of our past. The allegiance, trust, and confidence of populations will be the final arbiters of success”. (Caldwell & Leonard, 2008, p. 6)

Here we see another articulation of the force multipliers idea: “Forces operating among the people of the world,” whose “allegiance, trust, and confidence” are critical in the new battlefield of this brave new world brought on by globalization.

Given these prevailing winds, the US Army announced in 2014 that its doctrine would “change dramatically in the near future” as military leaders developed the operational concept of “Strategic Landpower”. General Robert W. Cone, who commands the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), also announced that a new warfare function would be added, called “engagement”: “the new warfighting function would involve skills used to influence foreign governments and militaries” (Sheftick, 2014/1/16). Along with “engagement,” Gen. Cone emphasized the

need for a “Human Domain” program which would take the place of the Human Terrain System (for more on HTS, see past volumes in this series). Keeping up the appearance of science, a recent military article on the “Human Domain” opens with a quote from a 19<sup>th</sup>-century economist: “Man, the molecule of society, is the subject of social science” (Henry Charles Carey quoted in Herbert, 2014, p. 81).

As with the concept of force multipliers, which Powell above identified as originating from US participation in the Central American counterinsurgencies and invasions of Grenada and Panama, so do Caldwell and Leonard find precedents for their planning not only in the US war against Vietnam but even further back when they link the colonial history of the US, the wars against Indians, Mexico, and the civil war with current formulations of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. This is rare and frank historicization. What Caldwell and Leonard are advocating is a renewal of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program, from the Vietnam war, as the basis for “whole-of-government” thinking in counterinsurgency, where stability equals pacification. As they state, “effective interagency integration—a true whole-of-government approach—offered the best solution to insurgency and best hope for lasting success” and is “fundamental to full-spectrum operations” (Caldwell & Leonard, 2008, pp. 8-9). FM 3-07 was thus explicitly intended to provide information that the branches of the armed forces, “interagency and intergovernmental partners, nongovernmental community, and even the private sector can refer to and put to use” (Caldwell & Leonard, 2008, p. 10). What they mask, however, is the extreme lethality of CORDS, and the fact that ultimately it failed to achieve US objectives. Suddenly, their attempt to historicize failed them. What is useful, on the other hand, is the fact that in the understanding of military strategists, force multipliers, whole-of-government, and full-spectrum, are always ultimately and intimately tied to violence. Indeed, once the US commits itself by seeking out force multipliers in other societies, it is committing itself to a slippery slope of increasingly direct intervention when those “multipliers” (local politicians, local armies, journalists, NGOs, etc.) fail to secure the desired gains, leaving the US with stark choices: more direct intervention (as in Libya) or humiliating defeat (the Bay of Pigs, Cuba).

Collaboration, partners, and coalitions underline the force multiplication sought by the US in avoiding what Obama calls overextension, and what historians similarly call overstretch, which is the

classic contradiction of imperialism as much as Obama may publicly gainsay this fact. The emphasis on coalitions, though not invented by Obama's predecessor, George W. Bush, was certainly present in Bush's 2002 *National Security Strategy*, and then largely repeated by Obama. In 2002, Bush maintained that the US was "guided by the conviction that no nation can build a safer, better world alone," adding in significant language that, "alliances and multilateral institutions can multiply the strength of freedom-loving nations," listing the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the Organization of American States, and NATO along with "coalitions of the willing" as the preferred multipliers of US policy (Bush, 2002, p. v).

While NATO is an obvious choice, the influence of the US in the OAS has declined considerably. Some might not be prepared to recognize the WTO and UN as arms of US policy, but this is due to a significant amount of misdirection and misrecognition. The WTO has been an excellent vehicle for the US to push its liberalizing trade agenda, which would see US corporations forced into sectors of national economies where they are currently barred or impeded, while pressuring other societies to commodify education and open local media to even greater US penetration, not to mention the privatization and deregulation of other public goods and social services (see Germann, 2005; Scherrer, 2005). The UN, popular misconceptions in the US notwithstanding, has become an imposer and enforcer of liberal capitalist norms of governance (see Cammack, 2006). "Good governance," as Parthasarathy (2005, p. 192) convincingly demonstrates, has become "one of the direct *instruments* of capitalist production," by imposing commodified Western law and ethics that open nations to foreign capital. In a grand display of Western ethnocentrism, various UN agencies, particularly the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), have even gone as far as equating the absence of multi-party elections with "human rights abuse" (e.g. UNHRC, 2015). The UNHRC, and its supportive NGOs such as the US-staffed and Soros-funded Human Rights Watch, impose a singular, Eurocentric definition of democracy whose implementation has not only blocked popular and direct forms of democracy, but also directly contributed to the generation of inter-ethnic strife in many post-colonies of the periphery. Meanwhile, most US anthropologists have remained silent on the issue of enforced impositions of Western-style democracy, while some actively participate as consultants to the State Department, or involve themselves in various "pro-democracy" campaigns that aim at regime change.<sup>1</sup>

Having already identified “America” with the “cause of freedom,” Bush added: “America will implement its strategies by organizing coalitions—as broad as practicable—of states able and willing to promote a balance of power that favors freedom” (Bush, 2002, p. 24). Obama then essentially repeated the same theme in his 2010 *National Security Strategy*:

“The burdens of a young century cannot fall on American shoulders alone—indeed, our adversaries would like to see America sap our strength by overextending our power. In the past, we have had the foresight to act judiciously and to avoid acting alone. We were part of the most powerful wartime coalition in human history through World War II, and stitched together a community of free nations and institutions to endure a Cold War....we will be steadfast in strengthening those old alliances that have served us so well....As influence extends to more countries and capitals, we will build new and deeper partnerships in every region”. (White House, 2010, p. ii)

The emphasis on coalitions finds its way into military doctrine. FM 3-07 discussed above lists the following goals:

“Encouraging partner nations to assume lead roles in areas that represent the common interests of the United States and the host nation. Encouraging partner nations to increase their capability and willingness to participate in a coalition with U.S. forces. Facilitating cooperation with partner militaries and ministries of defense. Spurring the military transformation of allied partner nations by developing multinational command and control, training and education, concept development and experimentation, and security assessment framework”. (US Army, 2008b, p. 1-12)

Former NATO commander, General Wesley Clark, maintained that “having allied support” makes a military power stronger, calling an alliance a “force multiplier” (Green, 2003, p. 38). Obama repeated this recently, using the “force multiplier” phrase with reference to Libya and NATO: “We’re going to continue investing in our critical partnerships and alliances, including NATO, which has demonstrated time and again—most recently in Libya—that it’s a force multiplier” (Obama, 2012). Also on Libya, former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said that, “building a multilateral coalition to deal with foreign conflicts actually strengthens the hand of the United States. The support of the United Nations Security Council and the Arab League for the NATO mission in Libya was a ‘force multiplier,’” and she advised using the “responsibility to



protect” principles essentially for propaganda to build military coalitions, thus lessening US military and political expense (however nominally) (Landler, 2013/7/23).

Chapters in this volume speak directly to the alliance and coalition aspects of force multiplication, in military and economic terms. Thus chapter 1, “Protégé of an Empire: Influence and Exchange between US and Israeli Imperialism,” by John Talbot, deals with the question of Israel as a force multiplier of US empire in the Middle East. Talbot’s research sought to uncover how the relationship between the US and Israel impacts the foreign policy and global actions of both. Further his work seeks to understand what exactly is the “special” relationship between the US and Israel. His chapter explores two prominent answers to these questions and posits its own. One answer is that there is a significant and powerful pro-Israel lobby in the US which has a grappling hold on the US Congress, media, and within universities—suggesting that these are Israel’s own “force multipliers”. The Israel lobby’s actions create ardent support for Israel’s actions and pro-Israel foreign policy even when this goes against US interests. The second position argues that the US is not being manipulated; rather it is acting according to its own imperial interests. The argument assumes Israel was, and is, in a strategic position which works to protect the US’ imperial and economic interests. Both the vast reserves of oil in the Middle East and the spread of cultural imperialism are of interest to the US empire. The chapter ends with a position that the relationship is neither one-sided nor symbiotic. The US is supporting a protégé in the realms of nationalism, colonialism, imperialism, exceptionalism, state violence, heavy militarization, the creation of a state of emergency, and empire. Israel is acting as the US itself does while relying on its support. Understanding this relationship alongside the other standpoints can help make sense of otherwise irrational actions in which each actor may engage on the global stage. Talbot’s work has added significance in that it was produced just as the Concordia Students’ Union (CSU) officially supported the international boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israeli occupation, a decision that was the product of a historic vote by a majority of Concordia undergraduate student voters, reinforcing the decisions by graduate students and other campus bodies.

In chapter 2, “The New Alliance: Gaining Ground in Africa,” Mandela Coupal Dalglish focuses on the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition which claims that it will bring 50 million people out of poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. He examines the ori-

gins of the New Alliance as well as the narrative that fuels New Alliance strategies. The chapter also considers how the value chains, growth corridors and public-private partnerships are furthering the interests of corporations while causing the further impoverishment of smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa. The relaxation and reduction of regulations and laws related to trade and ownership, which are required for African countries to participate in the New Alliance, are enabling occurrences of land grabbing, contract farming and the loss of diversity and resilience in African farming systems. This chapter is also very much related to discussions (see the following sections) of “connected capitalism,” the existence of the corporate oligarchic state at the centre of imperial power, and of course by invoking “alliance” the chapter’s contents relate to force multiplication. In this instance, force multiplication has to do with gaining productive territory and projecting power by remaking food security into something controlled by Western transnational corporations and subject to Western oversight.

In chapter 3, “Cocaine Blues: The Cost of Democratization under Plan Colombia,” Robert Majewski asks: Is the “war on drugs” in Colombia really about drugs? Majewski finds that the situation is more complex than simply a war on drugs. Instead he shows that rather than limiting actions to controlling and eradicating drug production, the US is on a imperialist quest of forging Colombia into a country able to uphold US ideals of democracy, capitalism and the free market. Through the highly militarized Plan Colombia that came to light in 2000, the US has utilized a number of mechanisms to restructure the country to its own liking. The ways in which US imperial aims are being attained are both through ideological and more direct means. Ideologically, the rule of law acts as a legal basis for the implementation of Americanized democracy. In a more direct manner, the US is training the Colombian army and employing private military security companies to carry out its objectives. As Majewski argues, the final aim is to create a secure environment for foreign capital to flourish, an environment that is even today seen as under threat by insurgent groups such as the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (known by their Spanish acronym, FARC). As we will see in the following sections, the US’ cultivation of ties to the Colombian military is an excellent example of what Special Forces and US Army documents describe when speaking of force multipliers and “foreign internal defense,” allowing the US a presence by proxy inside the Colombian polity.

Chapter 4, “Bulgarian Membership in NATO and the Price of Democracy,” by Lea Marinova, examines Bulgaria’s membership in NATO—where Bulgaria now serves as one of the newer force multipliers of a force multiplying alliance that works to project US dominance. Some of the central questions raised by this chapter in examining the nature of Bulgaria’s NATO membership are: What are the main arguments on the side of NATO which favour Bulgarian participation in the Alliance, and to what ends? How is Bulgaria advantaged from this allegiance? Through the examination of the Bulgarian government’s “Vision 2020” project and the participation of Bulgaria in NATO missions, it is argued that NATO is an instrumentalization of US imperialism. Through the exposition of specific socio-historical predispositions which led to that association, the link between the interests of the US in having Bulgaria as an ally by its side in the “global war on terrorism” is demonstrated. Marinova argues that it is important to produce critical investigation of organizations such as NATO, which claim to promote “democracy, freedom and equality,” because behind this discourse there is a reality of creating political and economic dependency, while public and political attention is removed from this reality as the country’s internal problems continue to escalate.

Chapter 5, “Forced Migrations: An Echo of the Structural Violence of the New Imperialism,” by Chloë Blaszkewycz, shows how borders too can be used as force multipliers, or feared as force diminishers—either way, Blaszkewycz brings to light the *territoriality* of the so-called new imperialism which is routinely theorized as being divorced from the territorial concerns of the old colonial form of imperialism. Her chapter explores migratory movement as being influenced by the structures supporting the new imperialism. Harsha Walia’s concept of border imperialism is used as a starting point to understand the different level of oppression and forms of violence coming from the US new imperialism. Even though scholars are less likely to talk about the territorial forms of domination in the new imperialism, when analyzing migratory movement one is confronted with the fortification of borders, both material and psychological ones. Therefore, adding the concept of the border into imperialism is a paramount, Blaszkewycz argues. Border imperialism legitimizes structural, psychological, physical and social violence towards migrants through narratives of criminalization and apparatus of control such as detention centres that are an extension of the prison system. In brief, in a paternalistic way the US is compelling the migration trajectory of Others and forces people to

be in constant movement. Therefore this is also a significant contribution for bridging migration studies with studies of imperialism.

Chapter 6, “Humanitarian Relief vs. Humanitarian Belief,” by Iléana Gutnick, continues themes that were heavily developed in the fourth of our volumes, *Good Intentions*. It plays an important role in this volume for highlighting how humanitarian doctrines, NGOs, and development, are forms of foreign intervention that also serve as force multipliers for the interests of powerful states. Moreover, Gutnick argues that humanitarian aid discourse is voluntarily misleading in that it shifts the public’s focus of attention towards seemingly immediate yet irrelevant ways of coping with the world’s problems. The pursuit of development has become the basis of action for foreign intervention in all sectors. This chapter tries to present the actual causes of “poverty” in an attempt to re-contextualize it within its political framework to shed light on possible solutions, if there are any.

Chapter 7, “On Secrecy, Power, and the Imperial State: Perspectives from WikiLeaks and Anthropology,” which has been written and somewhat redeveloped since 2010, focuses on the demand for secrecy that is occasioned by an imperial state relying heavily on covert operations and whose own forms of governance are increasingly beholden to the operations of a “shadow state”. This chapter is thus related to discussions of “connected capitalism” and the corporate oligarchic state discussed below. I proceed by examining how WikiLeaks understands strategies of secrecy, the dissemination of information, and state power, and how anthropology has treated issues of secret knowledge and the social conventions that govern the dissemination of that knowledge. In part, I highlight a new method of doing research on the imperial state and its force multipliers, which rests heavily on the work of anti-secrecy organizations, of which WikiLeaks is paramount.

## Scientific Imperialism

“A fundamental law of Newtonian physics applies also to military maneuver: one can achieve overwhelming force by substituting velocity for mass”. (Maj. Gen. Robert H. Scales, 2003)

“Are we to reserve the techniques and the right to manipulate peoples as the privilege of a few planning, goal-oriented and

power-hungry individuals to whom the instrumentality of science makes a natural appeal? Now that we have techniques, are we in cold blood, going to treat people as things?" (Gregory Bateson quoted in Price, 2008, pp. 35-36)

Major General Robert Scales is a fan of scientific allusions. In one publication he classed world wars into a typology where World War I was "the chemists' war," World War II was "the physicists' war," World War III (the Cold War) was "the information researchers' war," and World War IV (the "war on terror") is "the social scientists' war," based on a typology produced by Alan Beyerchen, a historian at Ohio State University (Scales, 2006). Scales sees World War IV as dispersed, distributed and nonlinear, with an emphasis on human and biological "amplifiers". World War IV, he argues, "will cause a shift in classical centers of gravity from the will of governments and armies to the perceptions of populations" and success will depend on "effective surrogates" (Scales, 2006). "In war, speed kills," he wrote in a book as if producing an incontrovertible formula (Murray & Scales, 2003, p. 245). Scales is not a self-made man, nor a scientist; if his writings gained notoriety, and he gained prominence, it is due to institutions, cultural phenomena, and an ideology that precedes him, and that was appointed by political elites. The relationship between modern science and imperialism is a long recognized one, and here we will only glimpse select, contemporary, aspects relevant to the current period of the new imperialism.

Introducing the 2002 *National Security Strategy*, then US President George W. Bush announced that, "innovation within the armed forces will rest on experimentation with new approaches to warfare, strengthening joint operations, exploiting U.S. intelligence advantages, and taking full advantage of science and technology" (Bush, 2002, p. 30). From early on after September 11, 2001, the connections were drawn between selling warfare as scientifically sophisticated and calling for "joint operations" and "interoperability" with other militaries. Here I will focus on the "science" that is used to bolster the political and intellectual credentials of contemporary interventionism.

As others have observed, since World War II science and development have become two new reasons of state, added to that of national security and, "in the name of science and development one can today demand enormous sacrifices from, and inflict immense sufferings on, the ordinary citizen. That these are often willingly borne by the citizen is itself a part of the syndrome; for this willingness is an extension of the problem which national security

has posed over the centuries” (Nandy, 2005, p. 21). Science, as Nandy notes, can inflict violence in the name of national security and development. Furthermore, science is becoming “a substitute for politics” in many societies (Nandy, 2005, p. 27). Nandy traces the idea of science as a reason of state to a speech made by President John F. Kennedy in 1962, in which Kennedy declared one of America’s major national goals to be, “the scientific feat of putting a man on the moon....science was, for the first time, projected in Kennedy’s speech as a goal of a state and, one might add, as a substitute for conventional politics” (Nandy, 2005, p. 22; see Kennedy, 1962). Kennedy showed that, “a wide enough political base had been built in a major developed society for the successful use of science as a goal of state and, perhaps, as a means of populist political mobilization” (Nandy, 2005, p. 23). The sign of science has acquired so much value, that it appears the political and military elites have decided that even just the sign rather than the substance of science will suffice—hence, “force multipliers” advanced as if a serious, scientific concept.

In other words, what we are dealing with here is more scientism than science—an image, veneer or allusion to science, in a rhetorical play that produces what we might call an aesthetic of science. This rests on the cultural work that has been done such that “scientificity” is socially accredited” and becomes an important objective because of the force of “belief which produces the appearance of truth” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 28).

Scientism can also be used to quell intellectual insurgency, or at least to keep it at bay and thin its ranks. In terms of science in relation to politics, as Bourdieu (1990, p. 6) explained, “political ambition...is dissimulated by scientific neutralism”. Science acts as a social force that produces legitimacy:

“In the struggle between different representations, the representation socially recognized as scientific, that is to say as true, contains its own social force, and, in the case of the social world, science gives those who hold it, or who appear to hold it, a monopoly of the legitimate viewpoint, of self-fulfilling prophecy”. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 28)

Appeals to science and reason work to “block off the paths leading (back) to power” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. xxv).

In light of what Nandy and Bourdieu explained, Scales makes sense: his Newtonian overtures cleanse the field of discussion of the massive amount of bloodshed and intimidation wrought by US intervention. Instead of frank political analysis, we are treated to

the simplistic pseudo-physics of “force multipliers” that bounce against “demultipliers,” a “spoiling factor” that results from “the enemy having and using a specific force multiplier,” implying “a reciprocal type effect” (Powell, 1990, pp. 6, 7). Obviously, the idea being copied here and pasted onto complicated social and political realities is the idea that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction (Newton’s Third Law of Motion—this same idea returns to our discussion later in the guise of the “blowback” concept). Time is also treated in military analyses as something that reigns above social and cultural realities—reference is made to “the golden hour,” or “that limited amount of time in which we enjoy the forbearance of the host nation populace” (Caldwell & Leonard, 2008, p. 11). Scientism in US intervention also facilitates the militarization of civilian diplomatic activities, in the name of “development”: in 2011 it was announced that the US Agency for International Development (USAID) planned to establish a “Geographic Intelligence Center” utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to focus on “mapping a number of topics such as food security, development economics, cultural issues, social issues, political issues” (Rasmussen, 2011). Both the hardware and software to be used had been developed in multiple forms by the Defense Department, and the program itself closely mirrored that of the Human Terrain System. As a West Point blog stated in conclusion: “the ability to apply geospatial analysis and spatial thinking is a force multiplier in achieving mission objectives” (Rasmussen, 2011).

Yet, who are these “effective surrogates” that Scales mentioned above? For now they appear to form a lifeless category, without their own (conflicting) interests or competing local agendas. Recent history is filled with the US’ numerous “ineffective” surrogates who would become targets of the US itself in some cases, from Ngo Dinh Diem, the president of South Vietnam overthrown in a US-backed coup on November 1, 1963, to Hamid Karzai, the president of Afghanistan, to those formerly on the CIA payroll such as General Manuel Noriega in Panama and Saddam Hussein in Iraq. In the same vein, the assumption is that “surrogates” will offer pure submission to US policy, and not pursue their own interests. Sometimes the results of such a flawed assumption become the basis for public revelations, such as the recent one concerning extensive fraud, waste, and mismanagement of US development funding in Afghanistan, that highlights the role of force multipliers in dispersing and limiting US efforts: “The reports by the special inspector general underscore the inherently chaotic na-

ture of development that relies on private contractors and local agencies. Records disappear, agencies do not measure progress accurately and outright corruption drains government funds, especially in war zones” (Nixon, 2015/8/24).

## Machinism

“It was indeed as a machine that the colonialists themselves often envisaged the operations of colonial power”. (Young, 1995, p. 166)

The force multiplier, as defined in physics, is precisely a machine. But then why would the machine be used to understand socio-cultural aspects of political power? As some historians have observed, in American thinking the “machine in all of its manifestations—as an object, a process, and ultimately a symbol—became the fundamental fact of modernism” (see Wilson, Pilgrim, & Tashjian, 1986, p. 23). That industrialization should inspire the mechanization of social life and the production of cultural meaning such that the machine is fetishized, is understandable. The choice of “force multiplier” as the mechanized means to explain power is thus not accidental. What the choice (however unconscious) reveals is the manner in which the strategists of “American leadership” think of the qualities of US power, and the qualities of other human beings. The omnipresence of the machine brings to mind the philosophical viewpoint of the Iranian revolutionary sociologist, Ali Shari’ati, and his work on *machinism*. As Shari’ati explained, “Machinism leads to the domination of the Machine over human life and substitution of the Machine for creative and determining man. Hence man becomes absent from himself” (quoted in Manoochehri, 2005, p. 296). A “man” who has become “absent from himself” then is the ideal “force multiplier” that serves as a spear-carrier for the US empire. Edward Said also pointed out the *machinist* conception of British imperial ideologues, such as Lord Corner, who saw the British empire as consisting of a seat of power in the West and a “great embracing machine” in the East: “What the machine’s branches feed into it in the East—human material, material wealth, knowledge, what have you—is preceded by the machine, then converted into more power” (Said, 1978, p. 44).

In this manner of conceptualization, US strategists reveal a stark inhumanity in their own power, while diminishing the human qualities of their “surrogates,” who appear as divorced from their own cultures, as free-floating *actors* who will somehow lead others



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to “prosperity,” which in light of these machinist understandings can only mean a barren path of imitative consumption. Put simply, the “force multiplier” idea betrays a deeply bleak conception of humanity—but even more troubling is that sometimes there seem to be agents willing to satisfy the conception’s conditions.

## The Imperial Mechanics of Control

Gen. Petraeus’ notion that “cultural awareness” is a “force multiplier” was offered as part of a spread of supposed insights on how to achieve success in the military occupation of Iraq (see Petraeus, 2006, p. 3; see Figure I.1). Among these were related ideas of acting through the efforts of Iraqis: quoting from the counterinsurgents’ favourite source of colonial inspiration, T. E. Laurence, Petraeus wrote, “do not try to do too much with your own hands”. He stressed the need for rapid action: “every Army of liberation has a half-life”. Petraeus added that, “increasing the number of stakeholders is critical to success” and that “ultimate success” (left undefined) depends on “local leaders”. Others were to act as mechanisms of US control, in this alleged science of counterinsurgency. Both “community,” “culture,” and “gender” would also form part of the imperial mechanics of control as force multipliers.

Figure I.1: General Petraeus and His Force Multipliers



US Army General David H. Petraeus (centre), then commander of NATO's US-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, is shown on April 13, 2011, with the Governor of Helmand province, Gulab Mangol (right), and unspecified "other national leaders". They are being briefed by Abdul Karim Barahawi, the provincial governor of Nimroz, before attending a conference of "local authorities and tribal members" led by President Karzai in Zaranj, Nimroz province. (Photo: US Marine Corps, Sgt. Mallory VanderSchans)

Community has since then been redefined as an arm of the police state. "The community" was to be included in "law enforcement's battle against the threat of terrorism," an FBI intelligence analyst wrote, and the FBI should "train residents to become its eyes and ears because officers simply cannot do it alone," predictably adding as a conclusion: "building law enforcement-community partnerships can constitute the ultimate force multiplier" (Gaylord, 2008, p. 17). For its part, the US Department of Homeland Security identified "the community" as playing a central role in information collection and planning efforts. Homeland Security also concluded that this role "can be likened to the force multiplier effect—the community acting as the 'eyes and ears' of law enforcement" (Carter & Gore, 2013, p. 295). As for "culture," what Petraeus called "cultural awareness" became "cultural intelligence" in the works of others, who advertised it as "a force multiplier that is relatively inexpensive and, if properly harnessed, can furnish a return on investment far in excess of its cost"—then chillingly adding with the tone of someone training customer service representatives: "After all, conflict in general, and military operations

specifically, are all about the people” (Spencer, 2009, n.p.). Gender, about which more will be discussed further on, would also be cast as a force multiplier of US military operations, as highlighted in the opening quotes of this chapter. This is deeply problematic, in part due to the following reason:

“to become an object of knowledge is to become a potential target. So to introduce gender, or bodies, or human suffering into the system for producing knowledge about war automatically means that knowledge about gender, or bodies, or human suffering becomes part of the targeting machine”. (Orford, 2010, p. 335)

Where matters become more confusing is when dealing with people as force multipliers of US interests, or as the eyes and ears of the US security apparatus. Are such people selfless? Why would they serve as force multipliers? Bringing to the fore their basic, instrumentalist assumptions, US military writers openly speak of buying support (Petraeus, 2006, p. 5; DeFrancisci, 2008, pp. 177, 179). Thus money becomes the force multiplier; however, where the confusion arises is about whom or what is the force multiplier in this equation. There seems to be little effort devoted to making any distinction in the military literature.

### **Force Multipliers and Secrecy: Categories without Contents?**

In no US military or State Department document that is meant for public access will one find anything like a list of specific, named entities that constitute “force multipliers”. The category is continually multiplied and expanded—everything from a strategically situated fuel depot to a NGO is a force multiplier—ranging from things, to persons, organizations, to social groups and cultural constructs, and even states of mind. This cannot be a science if it refuses to identify its units of analysis or its basic methodology. This pretend science lacks even the most rudimentary bases for developing an analytical frame, such as a typology, defined categories, and so on. This realization might lead some to raise questions of the real value of the scientific-sounding rhetoric deployed by officials—since it fails to adequately describe, let alone explain, then what does it serve? More to the point, what does it obscure, even as it reveals the basic instrumentalism at the root of US conceptions of the role the world’s *others* in its plans? Perhaps the military and State Department have found a tactful, neutral-sounding trope for speaking

of what is in fact tacitly understood by them as servitude, deception, exploitation, and subordination—a successful trope it seems, given the lack of any study in the English language that is critical of the force multipliers trope.

On the other hand, as in the examples that follow, we know of many actual instances of individuals, communities, and organizations that have collaborated with US imperial projects—including journalists, “human rights activists,” trade unions, entertainment industries, churches, armed ethnic factions, government officials, and so forth. The US may lack a science of force multipliers, but it does not lack actual proxies that play that role. What lies unspoken *between* the official, publicly accessible document on force multipliers (like the ones referenced in this chapter), and the eventual revelations of which persons and groups colluded with the US, is a body of documentation that is secret. This is where WikiLeaks (see chapter 7, this volume) serves as one of the entities that fills this obvious gap, where we can learn of the named entities that act as proxies, as agents, as indirect instruments of US power, as identified for example in the diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks, among other troves of data.

However, simply compiling a catalogue of such proxies, however interesting and illuminating, would be insufficient and potentially incomplete. The reason is that interpretation is still required—it is not a mere matter of factual listing. “Force multipliers” may risk equalizing and homogenizing considerable diversity, while papering over deep contradictions and potential reversals. Difficulties are caused by differences in intentionality among the actors concerned, the duration of collaboration, the material extent of collaboration, and the diversity of actors’ external relationships, to name only four factors. Association may be confused with affiliation, if two very different “force multipliers” are simultaneously present in a US-centred network. As an example, X and Y are both proxies of the US, but X and Y are otherwise opposed to each other (on military, religious, ethnic, or broadly political grounds)—they have a common association with the US, but are not affiliated with one another. The fact that they are both allied to the US does not entail that they are allies to each other. Then there can be proxies that may be serving different interests of competing state powers, that is, proxy X collaborates with states A, B, and C, where A, B, and C are competing against each other.

Misrecognition among actors may occur as well: X believes that the US is actually its proxy, not the other way around, a misrecognition that forgets the unequal distribution of power between

the two. Indeed, historical amnesia, combined with opportunism in the quest for short-term gain, and a political naïveté that allows X to believe it can pick and choose among facets of US power, and that it may choose when and for how long it can rely on US support, is at the base of misrecognition. A current example of this involves the People's Defense Units (or YPG), the militia of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party in Rojava, Syria. When it thought convenient, the YPG welcomed the US-led NATO bombardment of positions of the encroaching Islamic State (ISIS), helping to legitimize and validate US intervention among some Western leftists (anarchists in particular) who also assumed that NATO could be used like an *à la carte* item—a similar miscalculation made by some Libyan insurgents, in the very recent past. Divorced from any of the apparently dreaded “propaganda” about imperialism, NATO is misunderstood as another Western package to be imported and consumed, as if it could be somehow disaggregated from the agendas, interests, rationales and policies of the power-hungry state structures that make NATO possible. The reflex anti-anti-imperialism that meets with the approval of the US State Department meant that anti-imperialists were to be mocked, while those calling for US intervention invoked spurious analogies with the Spanish Civil War, and received applause. A few months later and it would now be the YPG who would be in NATO's sights, as Turkey (a NATO member) bombarded its positions with NATO's approval—and nobody mentioned “Spain” any more. Turkey refuses to make a distinction between the YPG and ISIS, especially since Turkey is fighting its own domestic war against armed elements of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) who are allied to the YPG. Apparently absent in all of this was any careful thinking about history, context, direction, and purpose of US power projection in Iraq and Syria, which certainly is not designed to serve the interests of the putatively socialist and strategically insignificant YPG. Ants cannot long afford to dream that they are elephants.

Diverging agendas and momentary role reversals also render the force multipliers' landscape problematic. One example would be that, at the same time as the US claims to be fighting a “war on terror,” pitching itself in battle against “Islamic extremists,” it has tacitly collaborated with such forces in Bosnia, Kosovo, pre-9/11 Afghanistan, Chechnya, Libya, and Syria, to name the better known examples. Momentary convergences—when enemies are shared in common, and opportunism is the deciding factor on both sides—may mean that a group such as Al Qaeda is a force multiplier in one moment, but not in the next. ISIS (whatever it may be) can be

the target of US bombardments, but at the same time it is the creature of funding, material support, and recruitment from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, that is, US allies. This is why one cannot merely *list* “force multipliers,” because the positioning as such is often momentary, shifting, subject to reversal and even fighting among “force multipliers” allied to the US. In addition, the lessons of the old colonial principle of divide and rule have not been lost on US strategists, even though they may be lost to the opportunists who cry for air support.

The US may have found strength in its weakness—its diminishing resources requiring the supportive work of others, who thus renew and extend US power. However, it may also be creating many new weaknesses in this new strength, as symbolically represented by its own ambassador in Libya, along with CIA agents and US military forces, being attacked and murdered in Benghazi, allegedly by those who benefited from US intervention in Libya.

### **Stealth Imperialism: Infiltration, Disruption, Destabilization**

The force multiplier mechanism is not just something envisioned in military writing, but is instead a cornerstone of US intervention, both overt and covert. The CIA uses the term “disruption” when referring to the covert support of allied agencies who aid the CIA in the capture of so-called “terrorists”—collaborating security forces in other countries then hide the fact of CIA involvement (Johnson, 2004, pp. 15, 16). Regarding destabilization, in 1987 the US created the Special Operations Command, based in Tampa, Florida; its mission was to engage in “low-intensity conflict” by covering units that worked closely with the CIA and Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), while training units from target nations with the aim of marshalling them towards destabilizing or overthrowing their own governments (Johnson, 2004, pp. 71-72). As Chalmers Johnson explained, in 1991 the US Congress, “inadvertently gave the military’s special forces a green light to penetrate virtually every country on earth” (Johnson, 2004, p. 72). Congress did so by passing (Section 2011, Title 10) that authorized the Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) program, allowing the Pentagon to send Special Operations Forces on overseas exercises with military units of other countries, “so long as the primary purpose of the mission was stated to be the training of our soldiers, not theirs” (Johnson, 2004, p. 72). One consequence is that such forces can then engage in espionage: “They return from such exercises loaded with information about and photographs of the country they have visited,

and with new knowledge of its military units, terrain, and potential adversaries” (Johnson, 2004, p. 72). This law also permitted US Special Forces to “train foreign military forces in numerous lethal skills, as well as to establish relationships with their officer corps aimed at bringing them on board as possible assets for future political operations” (Johnson, 2004, p. 72). By 1998 the Special Operations Command had established JCET missions in 110 countries (Johnson, 2004, p. 72). During 1998 alone, Special Forces operations “were carried out in each of the nineteen countries of Latin America and in nine Caribbean nations” (Johnson, 2004, p. 73).

In 1990 the US Army published *Doctrine for Special Forces Operations* (Field Manual No. 31-20) which described one of the principal activities of Special Forces on JCET missions as training foreign militaries in what the Army calls “Foreign Internal Defense” (FID). As Johnson noted, “most of the training exercises are meant to prepare foreign militaries for actions against their own populaces or rebel forces in their countries” (Johnson, 2004, p. 73). Brig. Gen. Robert W. Wagner of the US Southern Command in Miami told the *Washington Post* that FID is the “heart” of special operations, and an officer of the US Special Forces Command asserted that FID is “our bread and butter” (quoted in Johnson, 2004, p. 73). Stripped of the euphemisms, Johnson called FID little more than “instruction in state terrorism” (Johnson, 2004, p. 73).

Special Forces do not just train foreign militaries as part of FID missions, they also support insurgent groups trying to overthrow their governments:

“SF can conduct a UW [Unconventional Warfare] mission to support an insurgent or other armed resistance organization. The United States may undertake long-term operations in support of selected resistance organizations that seek to oppose or overthrow foreign powers hostile to vital US interests. When directed, SF units advise, train, and assist indigenous resistance organizations. These units use the same TTP [tactics, techniques, and procedures] they employ to conduct a wartime UW mission. Direct US military involvement is rare and subject to legal and policy constraints. Indirect support from friendly territory will be the norm”. (US Army, 1990, p. 1-17)

Using local actors, in fact even creating insurgent armies, with the explicit aim of overthrowing foreign governments is stated in very direct terms within the Army document, in an absolutely brazen violation of international law:

“The United States cannot afford to ignore the resistance potential that exists in the territories of its potential enemies. In a conflict situation or during war, SF can develop this potential into an organized resistance movement capable of significantly advancing US interests....the objectives may range from interdicting foreign intervention in another country, to opposing the consolidation of a new hostile regime, to actually overthrowing such a regime”. (US Army, 1990, p. 9-5)

What the US Army deceptively terms “resistance” organizations, are intended as force multipliers, “that enhance US national interests” (US Army, 1990, p. 9-5).

Even as Indonesia was conducting genocide in East Timor, US JCET missions in Indonesia were expanded in the 1990s, despite the US Congress cutting off military aid (Johnson, 2004, p. 78). It is interesting to note the individual force multipliers at work, and their web of interests: beneficiaries of the JCET missions were US partners in Indonesia, such as Lt. General Prabowo, a business partner of President Suharto; Prabowo’s wife was Suharto’s daughter and she owned a sizeable share of Merrill Lynch Indonesia; Prabowo was himself “a graduate of elite military training courses at Fort Benning, Georgia, and Fort Bragg, North Carolina” and had spent “ten years fighting guerrillas in East Timor, where he earned a reputation for cruelty and ruthlessness”—his units participated in 24 of the 41 US military exercises (Johnson, 2004, p. 78). Indonesian commandos under Prabowo were also trained by the US in “military operations in urban terrain” following the outbreak of the Indonesian economic crisis (Johnson, 2004, p. 78). US President Bill Clinton’s Secretary of Defense, William Cohen, visited Indonesia at the height of the economic crisis, meeting for hours with Prabowo, with the visit taken as a green light “to use force to maintain the political status quo in the face of protests against the International Monetary Fund’s hyperausterity measures” (Johnson, 2004, p. 79).

The introduction of US “military advisors” into a “host nation” requires the government of that host nation (HN) to serve as a force multiplier by paving the way for a US military presence: “before advisors enter a country, the HN government carefully explains their introduction and clearly emphasizes the benefits of their presence to the citizens” (US Army, 2003, p. I-5). The US Army and its Special Forces also instruct the host government to, “provide a credible justification to minimize the obvious propaganda benefits the insurgents could derive from this action”—which serves to underline the esteem in which propaganda is held



by the US military, and their worry about their status and presence being named for what it is: “the country’s dissenting elements label our actions, no matter how well-intended, an ‘imperialistic intervention’” (US Army, 2003, p. I-5). Again, how the US and its client state are judged, is a matter of utmost strategic importance for the US in a counterinsurgency situation, as it indicates under the heading of “populace and resources control”: “if the insurgents win popular support among the majority of the populace, the HN government’s military successes are irrelevant” (US Army, 2003, p. 3-22). Given the degree to which public opinion can impact on the US military, it is no wonder then that it undertakes major operations in Hollywood, in Silicon Valley, and reacts as harshly as it has done against WikiLeaks (see chapter 7 in this volume).

When US leaders speak of “engagement” they are summing up the full range of activities described above. As retired US Army Colonel Andrew Bacevich explains about engagement,

“this anodyne term encompasses a panoply of activities that, since 2001, have included recurring training missions, exercises, and war games; routine visits [abroad]...by senior military officers and Defense Department civilians; and generous ‘security assistance’ subsidies to train and equip local military forces. The purpose of engagement is to increase U.S. influence, especially over regional security establishments, facilitating access to the region by U.S. forces and thereby laying the groundwork for future interventions”. (Bacevich, 2008, p. 47)

As he also explains, US requests for over-flight rights and permission to use local military facilities are also a part of “engagement” and a form of intervention that can permit escalation when desired.

“Stealth imperialism” was a term used by Chalmers Johnson to describe the Pentagon’s JCET operations, as well as the US’ public and private arms sales abroad. He noted that the US is the world’s largest exporter of weapons, the source of 49% of global arms exports, selling to over 140 countries (Johnson, 2004, p. 88). The sale of weapons could be construed as having an intended “force multiplier” effect—as Johnson explains, according to the White House under Bill Clinton, “the United States’ arms export policies are intended to deter aggression,” and to “increase ‘interoperability’ of the equipment of American and allied armies” (Johnson, 2004, p. 88). Arms sales also provide justification for contacts with foreign military officers: “as a means to get to know [foreign military] leaders personally and to develop long-term relationships of trust” (Johnson, 2004, p. 91).

However, Johnson's understanding of imperialism, like that of his other libertarian colleagues in academia, was almost exclusively focused on the "big government" dimensions of imperialism, such as military expansion with the growth in the number of bases abroad, heightened military expenditures, the militarization of foreign policy, and so forth. In addition, they usually prefer to speak of "empire" rather than imperialism, and their narratives often retain that margin of US patriotism that sees occasional "good intentions" behind US "miscalculations". What they also tend to diminish even when speaking of "US interests," given their generally anti-Marxist stance, is in-depth discussion dealing with capital investments, debt, natural resources, labour, trade or aid. Johnson and other scholars in his circle, notably his contemporary, Andrew Bacevich, had ties to US military or intelligence agencies at some point in their careers, and their scholarly work tends to be in the areas of political science and history, which possibly explains their focus, but not their bias perhaps. Had they expanded their understanding of imperialism to include something more than the power of states over other states, and bemoaning the failure of "citizens" to stand up to the national security state, they might have developed the idea of "stealth imperialism" further to better match actual practice, and to better grasp the large range of what military, political, and corporate leaders mean when they speak of "force multipliers".

A more comprehensive analysis of "stealth imperialism" must include the workings of US-dominated financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and Western-dominated multilateral institutions such as the World Trade Organization, each of which has done far more to remake societies around the world than what the US military usually achieves. The IMF, World Bank, and WTO have served to extend the power of US-based transnational corporations over global production, exchange, and finance, while other non-US but still Western corporations have benefited as well (Ash, 2003, p. 239). Even in the view of such a mainstream, establishment economist as Jeffrey Sachs, "the IMF is essentially a covert arm of the U.S. Treasury," adding,

"Not unlike the days when the British Empire placed senior officials directly into the Egyptian and Ottoman financial ministries, the IMF is insinuated into the inner sanctums of nearly 75 developing country governments around the world—countries with a combined population of some 1.4 billion". (Jeffrey Sachs quoted in Johnson, 2004, p. 210)

Even though Johnson quotes Sachs, his understanding of imperialism remained nonetheless restricted to familiar political and military themes. Instead, as we shall see further on, the conceptualization and employment of “force multipliers” today is largely dominated by the biggest US corporations, in “partnership” with the state and “civil society”. What is described in terms of “connected capitalism” below is not separate from or added to “stealth imperialism,” it is firmly a part of it. (Had we not sought to multiply terms beyond Kwame Nkrumah’s “neo-colonialism,” we might have been better off.)

### Precedents: Practicing with Cuba

Dissatisfied with an excessive reliance on nuclear weapons as a strategy for countering Soviet influence during the early years of the Cold War, General Maxwell D. Taylor, US Army Chief of Staff (1955-1959) during the Eisenhower years, emphasized *flexible response* which in turn introduced the idea of what are now called “full spectrum operations”: effective security meant the US would need to acquire the means “to react across the entire spectrum of possible challenge”; this would involve a greater range of capabilities that would allow the US “to respond anywhere, any time, with weapons and forces appropriate to the situation” (Taylor quoted in Bacevich, 2010, p. 61). Under President John F. Kennedy, non-nuclear “options” would gain greater weight as part of a “flexible response” to the spread of socialism in the periphery (Bacevich, 2010, p. 65). An impetus to expand this range of options came in the wake of the disastrous defeat for the US-sponsored invasion at the Bay of Pigs, Cuba. General Taylor reappeared as Kennedy’s chair of the Cuba Study Group, after the failure of Operation Zapata (the Bay of Pigs invasion). That group included CIA director Allen Dulles and Robert Kennedy. The group urged the president to persist in attempting to overthrow the government of Cuba, recommending that “new guidance be provided for political, military, economic and propaganda action against Castro” (Bacevich, 2010, p. 75).

Allegedly “wary of action that smacked of naked imperialism” (Bacevich, 2010, pp. 76-77) the White House welcomed the Cuba Study Group’s recommendations which took the shape of “Operation Mongoose”. This Operation was headed by Attorney General Robert Kennedy and involved, “an aggressive program of covert action that aimed to get rid of Castro and subvert his revolution” — Robert Kennedy declared his intention to “stir things up on

[the] island with espionage, sabotage, [and] general disorder,'” working with Cuban exiles, and with direct military intervention as a last resort (Kennedy quoted in Bacevich, 2010, p. 77). All government agencies in the US would coordinate their efforts to overthrow the Cuban government. Robert Kennedy’s “Special Group (Augmented)” secretly colluded “with the Mafia in plots to assassinate Castro, fantastical schemes aimed at inciting popular insurrection, and a program of sabotage directed at Cuba’s food supply, power plants, oil refineries, and other economic assets” (Bacevich, 2010, p. 78). Thirty-two specific tasks were involved in Attorney General Kennedy’s plan, ranging from “‘inducing failures in food crops’ and mounting sabotage attacks to recruiting defectors and devising ‘songs, symbols, [and] propaganda themes’ to boost the morale of an all but nonexistent indigenous resistance” (Bacevich, 2010, p. 78). Rather than negating “paranoid conspiracy theory,” US plans fully embraced conspiracy, relying on the use of non-US government operatives to do some of the dirty work of US imperialism. In addition—and this is relevant to one of the opening theses of this chapter—the failure of covert options always entailed “upping the ante” to more overt, direct responses. The failure of US force multipliers can often commit the US to more direct use of force.

## The “Science” of Global Domination

While it is an odd mix of physics, biology, and geometry that has captured the communications strategy of military planners, the messages themselves are very telling about how such planners go about envisioning US global domination, and the parts to be played by others in assuring that dominance. Some thus speak about the “center of gravity” in “hybrid wars”—writing in *Military Review*, Colonel John J. McCuen declared:

“We in the West are facing a seemingly new form of war—hybrid war. Although conventional in form, the decisive battles in today’s hybrid wars are fought not on conventional battlegrounds, but on asymmetric battlegrounds within the conflict zone population, the home front population, and the international community population”. (McCuen, 2008, p. 107)

As Orford suggested above, and as borne out here, everyone is a target population. How do you combat resistance to such a monumental ambition to dominate all of us? By using us against ourselves—here is another rendition of the force multiplier theme:

“counter-organization necessitates recruiting and training cadres from the local population and then organizing, paying, equipping, and instilling them with values adequate to their task” (McCuen, 2008, p. 111). However, if we are so amenable to US command and manipulation, so easy to bend because we come empty, then from where does resistance stem for which “counter-organization” is needed? Thinking beyond the more challenging questions of logic, McCuen proceeds to tell us that the way to think about success in “hybrid wars” is to adopt Clausewitz’s notion of the “center of gravity”: “the ‘hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends...the point at which all our energies should be directed’” (McCuen, 2008, p. 111). All our energies, in other military documents, means every branch of the US federal state: “A whole of government approach is an approach that integrates the collaborative efforts of the departments and agencies of the United States Government to achieve unity of effort toward a shared goal” (US Army, 2008b, p. 1-4).

The US Army speaks explicitly in terms of “the science of control” in its *Operations* Field Manual 3-0 (US Army, 2008a, p. 6-1). Achieving “control” involves what the Army calls “full spectrum operations” (a concept that as we saw originated in the US desire to conquer Cuba during the Cold War). Such operations require,

“continuous, simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support tasks. In all operations, commanders seek to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative while synchronizing their actions to achieve the best effects possible. Operations conducted outside the United States and its territories simultaneously combine three elements—offense, defense, and stability”. (US Army, 2008a, p. 3-1)

Added to these concepts, former US Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, outlined the idea of “asymmetric warfare” which clearly rests on changing others outside of the US, in terms of their culture and behaviour, so that they embody the new territory in which “US interests” are planted:

“We can expect that asymmetric warfare will be the mainstay of the contemporary battlefield for some time. These conflicts will be fundamentally political in nature, and require the application of all elements of national power. success will be less a matter of imposing one’s will and more a function of shaping behavior—of friends, adversaries, and most importantly, the people in between”. (Gates, 2008, p. 6)

In line with this concept of asymmetric warfare, Robert Gates explained his view of the subordinate role of others in US plans, labeled as “force multipliers” by some:

“arguably the most important military component in the War on terror is not the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we enable and empower our partners to defend and govern themselves. The standing up and mentoring of indigenous army and police—once the province of special Forces—is now a key mission for the military as a whole”. (Gates, 2008, p. 6)

What Gates’ views rest on is a vision of the globalization of US counterinsurgency doctrine. War as the blunt use of force was now deemed to be ineffective, in large part due to an unspoken acknowledgment of the successful use of force by the Iraqi and Afghan resistance. Instead, counterinsurgency doctrine mandated, “a collaborative undertaking involving not simply military forces but a wide range of other government agencies, along with private contractors, international entities like the United Nations, and nongovernmental organizations that may or may not even share U.S. policy objectives” (Bacevich, 2010, p. 200). In this context Gates praised the role of anthropologists in the military, Texas A&M agriculture faculty on the ground in Afghanistan, and Kansas State University for its work in Afghanistan, by way of explaining that force multipliers are as much domestic as foreign:

“we also need new thinking about how to integrate...government capabilities with those in the private sector, in universities, in other non-governmental organizations, with the capabilities of our allies and friends—and with the nascent capabilities of those we are trying to help”. (Gates, 2008, pp. 7-8)

Needless to say at this point, US diplomats are not exempt from executing their role in in-depth social and cultural intervention. Thus, speaking of “community diplomacy” (DoS, 2010, pp. 63-64), the US State Department introduced the concept of the “circuit rider”:

“Where building new physical platforms of engagement outside of capitals is not cost effective, embassy circuit riders offer a promising alternative. Circuit riders will be subject-matter experts based at an embassy who systematically travel to key areas of a country to allow embassy access to targeted communities and groups. These roving diplomats, properly supported, can significantly expand our embassies’ ability to engage on specific issues, with a broader cross section of a

country's people, or in areas of a country that have particular foreign policy relevance to the United States". (DoS, 2010, p. 51)

The language of US diplomacy does not shy away from speaking of "target peoples". A country can have an "area" within it (likely either a reference to valuable natural resources, or a bastion of political opposition to the national government) that is of "foreign policy relevance" to the US, which inevitably empties another nation of its sovereignty. The US has already stated that it has every intention of using such "circuit riders" in Cuba as embassies are reestablished.

## Imperial Half-Lives: Theoretical Assumptions of Force Multiplication

While Gen. Scales mentions mass and velocity, military scientism turned to *time* in Gen. Petraeus' conception of the right doctrine of warfare. It is a conception without a tested formula, but it does sound "smart" to target audiences. However, the question of the time dimension is nonetheless significant because it calls into play the need for "force multipliers"—even though this too is laden with untested theoretical assumptions.

Speaking of time, some officers have written about "the 'golden hour'" which is "that limited amount of time in which we enjoy the forbearance of the host nation populace" (Caldwell & Leonard, 2008, p. 11). Gen. Petraeus thus urged that, in a situation like Iraq,

*"the liberating force must act quickly, because every Army of liberation has a half-life beyond which it turns into an Army of occupation. The length of this half-life is tied to the perceptions of the populace about the impact of the liberating force's activities. From the moment a force enters a country, its leaders must keep this in mind, striving to meet the expectations of the liberated in what becomes a race against the clock....we were keenly aware that sooner or later, the people would begin to view us as an Army of occupation. Over time, the local citizenry would feel that we were not doing enough or were not moving as quickly as desired, would see us damage property and hurt innocent civilians in the course of operations, and would resent the inconveniences and intrusion of checkpoints, low helicopter flights, and other military activities. The accumulation of these perceptions, coupled with the natural pride of Iraqis and resentment that their country, so blessed in natural resources,*

had to rely on outsiders, would eventually result in us being seen less as liberators and more as occupiers. That has, of course, been the case to varying degrees in much of Iraq". (Petraeus, 2006, p. 4)

Bacevich also observed that "the post-Vietnam military have come to regard time as the principal limit in limited wars" (quoted in Bacevich, 2010, p. 195). Petraeus offers his conclusion above, however, even as he publicly calls for the elimination of "exit timelines"—clearly disregarding his own "science" of time (see Halper, 2010/8/13 and Petraeus & O'Hanlon, 2015/7/7). Indeed, when engaged in politics to support US military occupations, Petraeus has consistently argued for *more* time, without any reference to "half-lives," which would in case make little sense in a context of permanent war where careers and profits are made to depend on war. Thus, on the one hand, Petraeus "the scholar" and "guru of counterinsurgents" has to sound "smart" about limits to occupation while, on the other hand, Petraeus the politician-entrepreneur has to sound limitless about US investments in occupation. When the alleged scientists fail to take their own science seriously, then it is incumbent on the public to be severely skeptical about what is being peddled.

Though not stated directly, the assumption is that limited time increases reliance on local force multipliers. That almost constitutes the beginning of a formula. However, the problem is that the force multiplier concept itself—ever growing as it is—is riddled with inconsistency, ambiguity, and untested assumptions. Even military insiders, among the few to examine the concept of force multipliers to any degree, have found a *failure* to "develop the concept with regard to the exact nature and utility of force multipliers as operational planning factors" along with "a void" in the doctrinal literature in terms of the development of the concept (Powell, 1990, pp. 2, 9). Even in studies which via "a cross-national time-series dataset of post-civil-conflict and post-natural-disaster states" purport to produce empirical answers to the question of whether international non-governmental organizations engaged in humanitarian work can be a "force multiplier" for military action in achieving "human security outcomes," the "force multiplier" concept is itself left undefined and its assumptions are thus not tested (see for example, Bell et al., 2013). More recently, the term seems to have been dropped altogether, showing that at the very least there is uncertain and unsteady reliance on this concept. In fact, even calling "force multipliers" a *concept* may be asking too much for it to be respected as "scientific".<sup>2</sup> Instead, its real value is as a political state-



ment about the multiple forms and directions of US intervention. When the neutralizing scientific euphemisms are filtered out, the force multiplier agenda bespeaks an ideological ambition of US global intervention, occupation, and domination, which rests firmly on the support of non-US actors, and non-US state actors.

## Imperial Mechanisms: Destabilization and the Physics of Domination

Using unmistakably imperial language, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2010 outlined ways of “protecting our interests and projecting our leadership in the 21st century” (DoS, 2010, p. iv), euphemizing global domination in terms of “American global leadership” which she saw as resting on “our global military advantage,” while needing to “lead through civilian power” (DoS, 2010, p. 8). On the one hand, Clinton indicated the government’s commitment to “shaping the international order to advance American interests” (DoS, 2010, p. 9). On the other hand, she conflated this with “supporting the spread of universal values” (DoS, 2010, p. 9), which are *clearly not universal* if they need to be spread in the first place, and by a self-seeking US ironically. Like her military counterparts, Clinton renewed the justification for US intervention and destabilization, using a happy gloss. The US would support those who support its “values” (meaning, the US would support itself), and this implies the idea of force multipliers: “We will support democratic institutions within fragile societies, raise human rights issues in our dialogues with all countries, and provide assistance to human rights defenders and champions” (DoS, 2010, p. 10). The force multiplier idea is further implied by Clinton when she spoke of pursuing “new ways of doing business that help us bring together like-minded people and nations,” in what she branded as, “21st century statecraft” that would “extend the reach of our diplomacy beyond the halls of government office buildings” (DoS, 2010, p. v). Clinton’s primary target population, the pool that offered the best force multipliers for US foreign policy, consisted of youths: “In the Middle East and North Africa, for example, large youth populations are altering countries’ internal politics, economic prospects, and international relations. The United States must reach out to youth populations to promote growth and stable democratic government” (DoS, 2010, p. 13). A year later, Clinton would violently stomp out Libyan socialism and Pan-African leadership in the name of the “Arab Spring” and a supposed “popular

uprising”, by youths of course, leaving alone the fact that the leaders were evidently mostly elderly men.

Clinton’s sermons mostly consisted of rewording what George W. Bush had outlined nearly a decade before in his national security strategy. In 2002 Bush committed the US to encouraging “the advancement of democracy and economic openness” in China and Russia, while more broadly using the post-9/11 “moment of opportunity,” in his words, “to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe” and thus to “actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world” (Bush, 2002, p. iv). In a sweeping statement of intent to remake the face of the world so it would look back at the US with an American smile, Bush declared: “We will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent” (Bush, 2002, p. iii). This could be seen as the “large load” in the force multiplier equation at the start of this chapter. Bush’s successor would identify the instruments to be used in making for a “small effort” on the part of the US:

“The United States Government will make a sustained effort to engage civil society and citizens and facilitate increased connections among the American people and peoples around the world—through efforts ranging from public service and educational exchanges, to increased commerce and private sector partnerships”. (White House, 2010, p. 12)

In an unexpectedly astute observation, a prominent neoconservative identified the US idea of “multilateralism” as involving the geopolitical objective of “remaking the international system in the image of domestic civil society” (Krauthammer, 2002-2003).

## Imperialism by Invitation or by Imitation? Empire’s “Mimic Men”

US efforts in remaking the international system according to an image reflecting the US are not usually in complete vain, since a path has already been laid for them. To continue with the analogy, the discussion above is about widening and then paving the track so that it becomes a permanent highway. None of the military or diplomatic documents consulted (not even those with the highest of scientific pretense) ever bothers to go into any detail about the origins, development, and constitutions of the actual people who are constructed as force multipliers. On the other hand, Harvard

historian Charles S. Maier addressed these ideas under the lemma of “empire by invitation” or “consensual empire” (Maier, 2002). While US leaders speak in terms of “partners,” “alliances,” and “coalitions,” Maier is not convinced that any of these adequately describe the nature of the US as “a major actor” (in his minimalist terms) in the international system. Instead, it is more accurate to speak of “the subordination of diverse national elites who—whether under compulsion or from shared convictions—accept the values of those who govern the dominant center or metropole,” Maier maintains. What distinguishes an empire from an alliance is the inequality in terms of power, resources, and influence between leaders at the centre of empire and the national subordinates who are, at most, their nominal counterparts. Political, economic, and cultural leaders in the periphery “hobnob with their imperial rulers”. Even those who organize resistance, Maier argues, “have often assimilated their colonizers’ culture and even values”. Maier endorses the Cultural Imperialism thesis in explaining these deep ties between the US core and what V.S. Naipaul (1967) called “the mimic men” of the periphery:

“Empires function by virtue of the prestige they radiate as well as by might, and indeed collapse if they rely on force alone. Artistic styles, the language of the rulers, and consumer preferences flow outward along with power and investment capital—sometimes diffused consciously by cultural diplomacy and student exchanges, sometimes just by popular taste for the intriguing products of the metropole, whether Coca Cola or Big Mac”. (Maier, 2002, p. 28)

As for Naipaul’s “mimic men,” these tend to be members of the new national elites in “formerly” colonized territories, who have acquired the tastes and prejudices of the colonial master, who aspire to the culture and identity of the colonizer, while cringing from the culture of the colonized. Mimic men ultimately find themselves displaced, disenchanting, and alienated, not able to fully join the ranks of the master class in the colonial mother country, but divorced from the culture into which they were born and which causes them shame. It is also important to note that Naipaul’s protagonist, Ralph Singh, is a politician, and was educated in the UK.

Elsewhere I wrote in similar terms to Maier’s about the relationships between the domestic and international versions of the US (Forte, 2014c). As I outlined there, one can discern what we might call a National United States of America (NUSA) and a

Globalized United States of America (GUSA). NUSA is a simple reference to the current political geography of the US, filled in by places that can be specified with geographic coordinates, inhabited by people in relatively dense relations with one another. Most of the inhabitants of NUSA refer to themselves as “Americans,” or are “Americans in waiting” (immigrants awaiting eventual citizenship). GUSA is not so neatly geographic, but it can still be found and seen, concretely. GUSA’s existence can be observed (in no particular order of importance) in the adoption of US consumption patterns and standards by local elites around the world, who may also be dual US citizens. The existence of a transnational capitalist class, a large part of which is US-educated, also manifests this globalization of US power. Military leaderships formed by funding and training by the US military, must also be included, as should the tens of thousands fighting in US uniforms with the promise of getting Green Cards. Political parties funded by the US and often led by people who spent some time living and studying in the US, and who adopt the US as a model, form a part of GUSA. GUSA includes upper-class neighbourhoods, districts, and gated communities, and those whose life patterns, choices, and personal orientations have been seriously influenced or remade by US cultural imperialism, in a process commonly referred to as “Americanization”. One of my working hypotheses is that it is GUSA which is now largely responsible for sustaining and extending the imperial reach of NUSA. Leaving the critique of scientism behind, we should now move from this overview of the instrumentality of imperialist logic to consider some of the practices, tools and devices used to multiply, mirror, and extend US power globally.

That the so-called force multipliers of US dominance can comprise, to a significant extent, dependent and mimetic bourgeoisies in former colonies is something deeply problematic for scholars and critics such as Ali Shari’ati. As he argued, these elites consist of what has long been known and referred to as the “comprador bourgeoisie,” the functionaries who benefit from the distribution of Western imports and the export of local resources, but also those who are among the most assimilated and who encourage a “modernization” of local tastes in order to expand the market for foreign imported goods (Manoochehri, 2005, p. 297). In Shari’ati’s terms, assimilation applies to,

“the conduct of the one who, intentionally or unintentionally, starts imitating the manners of someone else. Obsessively, and with no reservations he denies himself in order to transform his identity. Hoping to attain the goals and the grandeur, which he

sees in another, the assimilated attempts to rid himself of perceived shameful associations with his original society and culture". (Shari'ati quoted in Manoochehri, 2005, p. 297)

The issue of dependency is also useful in another sense, one related to the broader, critical literature on the political economy of underdevelopment. Since the force multiplier idea is inherently an expression of the *cost* function of foreign action, it is appropriate to understand it in the terms of political economy as an *extractive* process. Extraction, and the accumulation of capital (understood in all senses) at the core, is an essential outcome of any formula that posits the use of the most strategic resources at the least expense.

Speaking of the Bulgarian case (see chapter 4), as just one example, the force multiplication of increased "Americanization" in the early 1990s, could be viewed as taking on another facet, this one being a specialty of anthropologists who studied cargo cults. As explained better by Eleanor Smollett, an anthropologist with twenty years of research experience in Bulgaria,

"The thought that keeps coming to me is *cargo*. A mechanical analogy to cargo cults is meaningless of course. There is no cargo cult in Bulgaria. There is no charismatic leader. We are not seeing a revitalization movement (though some monarchists have appeared) or a millenarian religious movement. But still, in this secular, highly educated, industrial society, there are echoes that say 'cargo'. The wealth that is coveted exists somewhere else, in an external society. The structure of that external society and the manner in which the wealth is produced are poorly understood. The young people who covet what they imagine is the universal wealth of the West were not suffering from unemployment, poverty or absolute deprivation under socialism (although, in the present situation, they are beginning to experience all of these). They were and are, however, experiencing relative deprivation, as compared with their external model. It is this relative deprivation that moves them, as David Aberle made clear long ago in discussion of cargo cults. And as Eric Hobsbawm pointed out in contrasting these movements with revolutions, the leadership of such movements has no clear programme or plan of implementation for a new social system. The expected improvement to society is based on faith. If we strip away the old institutions, then the foreign aid, the investment, the development, the cargo will come". (Smollett, 1993, p. 12)

The Mexican philosopher of liberation, Enrique Dussel, like Shari'ati, wrote on the fabrication of culture in the image of impe-

rial culture that is represented by the new national elites, those he sees as historically the most assimilated. Dussel notes that imperial culture is,

“particularly refracted in the oligarchic culture of dominant groups within dependent nations of the periphery. It is the culture that they admire and imitate, fascinated by the artistic, scientific, and technological program of the centre....On the masks of these local elites the face of the centre is duplicated. They ignore their national culture, they despise their skin color, they pretend to be white...and live as if they were in the centre”.  
(quoted in Manoochchri, 2005, p. 294)

Dussel, however, does not see this culture as being confined to the oligarchic minority alone. Instead, a “pop” version is produced, “the kitsch vulgarization of imperialist culture,” one that is encouraged, reproduced and distributed by the elites who thus help to expand the imperialist economy by supplying a willing market for its goods—which resonates in the research of Smollett in Bulgaria. The process then is one where the imperial culture is “refracted by oligarchical culture and passed on for consumption. It is by means of the culture of the masses that ideology propagates imperialist enterprise and produces a market for its product” (Dussel as quoted in Manoochchri, 2005, p. 294).

Shari’ati described the culmination of assimilation as being the creation of monoculture. However, we can add that matters do not stop there, since there is also the growth of something resembling a “monoeconomy” under neoliberal tutelage, and a “monopolitics” that absorbs the nation-states of the global periphery as the new wards and even outright protectorates under UN, EU, and NATO auspices. Thus are US strategists able to speak of growing “alliances” and the spread of “universal values”—monoculture is the smoothest path to acquiring the most efficient machines: the force multiplier.

On the other hand, in US military and diplomatic papers there is no exegesis, no treatment, description or interpretation of the nature of those reduced in their roles to functional force multipliers. One wonders who US writers think these *people* are, what image of these human beings exists in their minds. It would appear, from the unspoken assumptions, that the average force multiplying person is conceived as being idealistic, one who associates the US with his/her highest ideals, and thus one who suspends judgment, and defers questioning. Above all, the force multiplier, being on the front line, is willing to sacrifice. These are to be sensed then as the

perfect Christian Soldiers, in the Church of American Divinity, and the reader's job is to have *faith* in these force multipliers.

There is also an "ecological fallacy" at work in US writings about "civil society" and "youth" or other social collectivities as force multipliers. The ecological fallacy is, "a confusion of the forest and the trees or, more accurately, the observing of one and the drawing of inferences about the other" (Stevenson, 1983, p. 263). One result of this fallacy is drawing conclusions about individuals, on the basis of their membership in social groups. Specifically, this fallacy emerges as such in State Department documents that automatically cast "civil society" worldwide as opposed to the state, as pro-US democracy, and as a natural ally of the US.

### The Instruments of Imperial Practice

Both the US Departments of State and Defense have created multiple programs for "targeting" foreign audiences and "winning hearts and minds"—a subject that is far broader than what is presented below (or even in previous volumes in this series). Hillary Clinton's "21<sup>st</sup> century statecraft" was mentioned earlier. The approach involved using communications technologies "to connect to new audiences, particularly civil society" as part of an "engagement" strategy (DoS, 2010, p. 65). As parts of its "public diplomacy," the State Department created "Regional Media Hubs" in Miami, London, Brussels, Pretoria, Dubai, and Tokyo, in order to "increase official U.S. voices and faces on foreign television, radio, and other media, so that we are visible, active, and effective advocates of our own policies, priorities, and actions with foreign audiences...serving as a resource and tool for amplifying the regional dimension of our message" (DoS, 2010, pp. 60-61). In addition, the State Department created the "Virtual Student Foreign Service," enlisting the aid of US university students to support US diplomatic missions (DoS, 2010, p. 66). Also dealing with students, the State Department expanded the "ACCESS Micro-scholarships" program so that, "teenagers, particularly in the Muslim world," could be funded "to attend English classes and learn about America" (DoS, 2010, p. 61), thus utilizing conventional techniques of cultural imperialism, targeting Muslim youths and enforcing the dominance of the English language. While some would say that these programs are "peaceful," the State Department also announced it was partnering with the Pentagon, in particular by using USAID in support of the Pentagon's regional Combatant Commands (DoS, 2010, p. 54).

One of the more central and consistent tools used to deepen US intervention has arisen from the exploitation of gender issues to win “hearts and minds” as part of the US’ globalization of its counterinsurgency practices (see Byrd & Decker, 2008, p. 96; Pas, 2013; King, 2014). The State Department itself officially announced that the “protection and empowerment of women and girls is key to the foreign policy and security of the United States....women are at the center of our diplomacy and development efforts—not simply as beneficiaries, but also as agents of peace, reconciliation, development, growth, and stability” (DoS, 2010, p. 23). As “women are increasingly playing critical roles as agents of change in their societies,” the US would, “harness efforts and support their roles by focusing programs to engage with women and expand their opportunities for entrepreneurship, access to technology, and leadership” (DoS, 2010, p. 58). Also, as Pas points out under the heading of “security feminism,” the fetishizing of oppressed women is used as an opportune asset to ideologically advance the cause of imperialist intervention: “the war becomes about her. In this process the host country is also feminized and the American heterosexual pursuit becomes about gallantly ‘saving’ the Muslim woman from Islam. While America strives to save the Muslim woman from her alleged theological oppression she is effectively put on the front lines” (Pas, 2013, p. 56).

The CIA has also instrumentalized gender issues as part of a covert campaign to bolster international support for US wars. In 2010, after the Dutch government fell in part because of the issue of its participation in the war in Afghanistan, the CIA began to worry about a possible electoral backlash in the upcoming elections in France and Germany, both of which suffered mounting casualties among their forces in Afghanistan. According to a confidential CIA memorandum made public by WikiLeaks,

“Some NATO states, notably France and Germany, have counted on public apathy about Afghanistan to increase their contributions to the mission, but indifference might turn into active hostility if spring and summer fighting results in an upsurge in military or Afghan civilian casualties and if a Dutch-style debate spills over into other states contributing troops”.  
(CIA, 2010, p. 1)

A CIA “expert on strategic communication” along with public opinion analysts at the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) came together to “consider information approaches that might better link the Afghan mission to the priorities



of French, German, and other Western European publics” (CIA, 2010, p. 1). This was critical to the US since Germany and France respectively commanded the third and fourth largest troop contingents in Afghanistan, and any withdrawal would have been a significant blow not just to military operations but especially to the public image of the US-led occupation effort, leading to a crumbling in the credibility of the US-led NATO alliance and its “International Security Assistance Force” in Afghanistan. The CIA was already aware that, though not a top election issue, the majority of public opinion in Germany and France was against participation in the Afghan war (CIA, 2010, p. 1). The CIA’s strategic information exercise in Europe was based on the following logic,

“Western European publics might be better prepared to tolerate a spring and summer of greater military and civilian casualties if they perceive clear connections between outcomes in Afghanistan and their own priorities. A consistent and iterative strategic communication program across NATO troop contributors that taps into the key concerns of specific Western European audiences could provide a buffer if today’s apathy becomes tomorrow’s opposition to ISAF, giving politicians greater scope to support deployments to Afghanistan”. (CIA, 2010, p. 2)

The question of *girls* in Afghanistan was thus brought to the fore: “The prospect of the Taliban rolling back hard-won progress on girls’ education could provoke French indignation, become a rallying point for France’s largely secular public, and give voters a reason to support a good and necessary cause despite casualties” (CIA, 2010, p. 2). The CIA proposed that,

“Afghan women could serve as ideal messengers in humanizing the ISAF role in combating the Taliban because of women’s ability to speak personally and credibly about their experiences under the Taliban, their aspirations for the future, and their fears of a Taliban victory. Outreach initiatives that create media opportunities for Afghan women to share their stories with French, German, and other European women could help to overcome pervasive skepticism among women in Western Europe toward the ISAF mission”. (CIA, 2010, p. 4)

The CIA thus advanced the idea that, “media events that feature testimonials by Afghan women would probably be most effective if broadcast on programs that have large and disproportionately female audiences” (CIA, 2010, p. 4).

While there is no chain of leaked documents to show that this CIA-organized strategy session led to the formulation and then implementation of a specific propaganda effort that followed these guidelines, we do know that Western media, as well as the messages widely and prominently circulated by Western human rights NGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have over the years tended to heavily capitalize on the image of Afghan women and girls allegedly suffering from “Taliban oppression” as a major impulse toward supporting at least some US aims in Afghanistan. Even the otherwise anti-war US activist organization, Code Pink, sent a delegation to Afghanistan that spoke out about what could happen to Afghan women and girls if the US-led NATO occupation should come to an abrupt end: “We would leave with the same parameters of an exit strategy but we might perhaps be more flexible about a timeline,” said Medea Benjamin to the *Christian Science Monitor*, adding: “That’s where we have opened ourselves, being here, to some other possibilities. We have been feeling a sense of fear of the people of the return of the Taliban. So many people are saying that, ‘If the US troops left the country, would collapse. We’d go into civil war.’ A palpable sense of fear that is making us start to reconsider that” (Mojumdar, 2009/10/6; for more, see Code Pink, 2009/10/7a, 2009/10/7b, and Horton, 2009).

The goal of instrumentalizing Afghan women for pro-war public relations reappeared in another of the documents released to WikiLeaks, published by the Media Operations Centre of the Press and Media Service of NATO headquarters in Brussels. The document titled, “NATO in Afghanistan: Master Narrative as at 6 October 2008,” laid out a series of propaganda talking points oriented toward the domestic mass media in troop contributing nations, which NATO spokespersons were to follow. NATO’s “master narrative” concerning Afghan women was to tell the public that, “Presidential, Parliamentary and Provincial elections have taken place and women are now sitting in the Afghan Parliament. 28% of the MPs of the Lower House are female. Legitimate and representative government is now in place” (NATO, 2008). What is standard about these approaches is their superficiality, stressing numbers over qualitative realities, or in some cases inventing numbers outright, hence the recent admission that a large number of “ghost schools” exist in Afghanistan, that were either never constructed (but were paid for), or that were but have no teachers of pupils.

As with gender, the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, has become another vehicle for the US to sell itself politically, or to create another wedge device for intervention and for practicing divide and rule. Thus in 2011, the State Department launched, “the Global Equality Fund to protect and advance the human rights of LGBT persons by supporting civil society organizations to protect human rights defenders, challenge discriminatory legislation, undertake advocacy campaigns, and document human rights violations that target the LGBT community”. Consequently, “over \$7.5 million was allocated to civil rights organizations in over 50 countries; more than 150 human rights defenders have been assisted” (DoS, 2014b, p. 24). There is very little in the realm of “human rights,” LGBT and women’s activism, NGOs and “civil society” that is not touched by the US in nations that it is targeting—as the State Department itself proclaims, “advancing human rights and democracy is a key priority that reflects American values and promotes our security” (DoS, 2010, p. 42). The concept of “human security” has also been effectively reworked as part of a militarized, absolute security agenda (see McLoughlin & Forte, 2013).

In its search for more “force multipliers,” the State Department, particularly under the Obama administration, has established a series of programs to attract and enlist US and foreign students, corporate executives, and new media users. A program titled “100,000 Strong in the Americas”<sup>3</sup> was launched by Obama in order to increase the number of US students studying throughout the Americas to 100,000, and likewise to increase the number of students from the Americas studying in the US to 100,000, by 2020. There is no explanation as to why 100,000 is the magic number—unless it is in fact founded on numerological mysticism. To fund the program, the State Department was joined by Partners of the Americas (see below) and NAFSA: Association of International Educators (NAFSA, 2013). US universities, without any known exception, are participants. The “Innovation Fund” that supports the program is hailed as a “public-private partnership,” in line with the growing corporatization, privatization, and outsourcing that now dominates ostensibly public institutions in North America. Obama’s program promises a propaganda boost to private corporations: “Highlight your corporate efforts to create jobs and international education for young people through media placement and recognition”.<sup>4</sup> This connection between government, private business, and universities, brings to the foreground the widening idea of force multiplication employed by the US.

As just mentioned, Partners of the Americas is part of the above program. Partners of the Americas was first formed as part of the Alliance for Progress in 1964,<sup>5</sup> during an earlier phase of US-led hemispheric counterinsurgency, marked by a developmentalist and militarized drive against “communism” as the US sought shore up its dominance by countering the example of revolutionary Cuba. Partners of the Americas involves itself in elections in Latin America, and in mobilizing people to impact on the selection of candidates for positions in justice systems such as Bolivia’s, until Partners’ partner, USAID, was expelled from the country. Partners boasts of funding hundreds of unnamed “civil society organizations” in 24 countries in the Americas.<sup>6</sup>

Among similar initiatives launched by the Obama administration, again by turning over part of US foreign policy to gigantic corporate entities, is the so-called “Alliance for Affordable Internet” (A4AI), which includes Google and the Omidyar Network. The program has clear political, strategic, and neoliberal aims. One of its top aims is to “reduce regulatory barriers and encourage policies to offer affordable access to both mobile and fixed-lined internet, particularly among women in developing countries”.<sup>7</sup> A4AI is active in an unspecified number of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the only ones mentioned thus far being Ghana, Nigeria, Mozambique, and the Dominican Republic. Understanding that limitations to Internet access persist, the US government is directly involved in expanding the potential market of those listening to its messages, watching its corporate advertisements, and consuming US exports, both material and ideological.

A program that specifically targets Africa and what could be its future leaders, is the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) which has launched the “Mandela Washington Fellowship” (MWF) program. The State Department partnered with RocketHub on a crowdfunding campaign to support projects created by graduates of the MWF. The first class of 500 Mandela Washington Fellows arrived in June 2014, “to study business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership, and public management at U.S. campuses, followed by a Presidential Summit in Washington”.<sup>8</sup> The target audiences, as expected are women, youths, and “civil society”. So far 22 MWF projects have been funded. In undertaking this initiative, the US is reinforcing classic patterns of cultural imperialism.

It should become clearer how the employment of “force multipliers” can be seen as threat to target states, when it comes to Western reactions to penetration of their own states. For example, when speaking of China’s force multipliers—or “agents of influ-

ence”— Western agencies such as the UK’s Ministry of Defence (MoD) speak in no uncertain terms of their presence as a threat, constructed in terms of espionage, specifically naming “the mass of ordinary students, businessmen and locally employed staff” who work on behalf of China’s state intelligence gathering apparatus (MoD, 2001, p. 21F-2; see also WikiLeaks, 2009). What may be presented as innocuous ties of friendship, partnership, and aid when it comes to Western use of force multipliers, is instead dramatically inverted when speaking of Chinese influence, using a markedly more sinister tone:

“The process of being cultivated as a ‘friend of China’ (ie. an ‘agent’) is subtle and long-term. The Chinese are adept at exploiting a visitor’s interest in, and appreciation of, Chinese history and culture. They are expert flatterers and are well aware of the ‘softening’ effect of food and alcohol. Under cover of consultation or lecturing, a visitor may be given favours, advantageous economic conditions or commercial opportunities. In return they will be expected to give information or access to material. Or, at the very least, to speak out on China’s behalf (becoming an ‘agent of influence’).” (MoD, 2001, p. 21F-2)

## Connected Capitalism and Connected Militarism

“The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist—McDonald’s cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the builder of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley’s technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps”. (Friedman, 1999/3/28)

With keenly supportive interest from the State Department and Pentagon, Neville Isdell, former chairman and CEO of the Coca-Cola Co., has articulated what he calls “connected capitalism,” mixing profit with at best nominal social responsibility, out of an acknowledgment of growing global revulsion toward the dominance of capitalists (see Trubey, 2010/4/27). Isdell held a conference in South Africa, which we should note was organized by *CNN* and *Fortune* magazine, where he was joined by Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta president and CEO Dennis Lockhart, GE Technology Infrastructure CEO John Rice, and executives from companies such as Coke, United Parcel Service Inc., SunTrust Banks Inc., and agencies such as USAID and CARE. “People are now questioning

the capitalist model that we have,” Isdell remarked, but then added that capitalism, “is the best way to take people out of poverty and to grow the world economy”. He urged on his fellow corporate leaders:

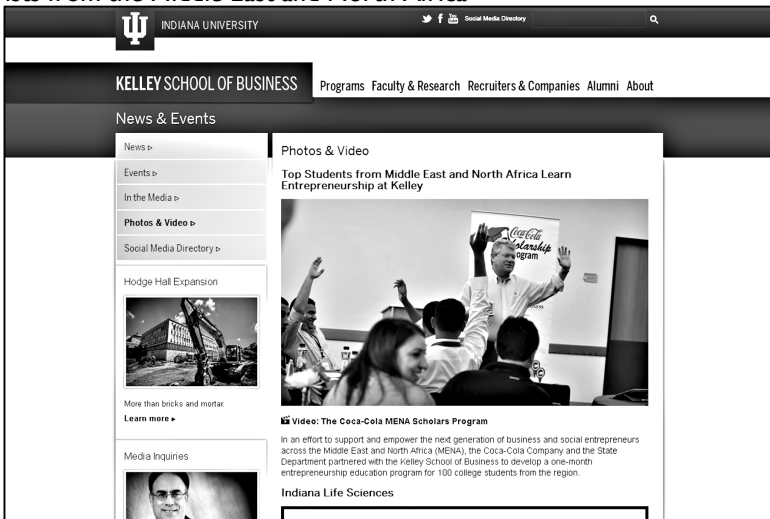
“A corporation can’t lose sight of turning a profit, but it must also use the weight of its brand and the power of its people, as well as its intellectual and actual capital, to help be a change agent in hard-to-solve global issues. For instance, with Coke, water is the company’s No. 1 social priority, and it is the world’s largest beverage maker’s most-used commodity”. (Quoted in Trubey, 2010/4/27)

Of course Coca-Cola is interested in water, without a doubt—but it is interested in it as a commodity, not as a basic and inalienable right. Isdell worries that, “capitalism is in danger of being torn asunder by forces outraged by abuses on Wall Street, bailouts of banks and automakers,” and his notion of “connected capitalism,” while finally admitting current social irresponsibility by those in his class of world rulers, does little to change that. Indeed, there is an excess of irony to Isdell’s remarks, given Coca-Cola’s deplorable history of human rights violations in its operations in Colombia (see Foster, 2010).

In what would easily be described as a program of cultural imperialism, the US State Department, in partnership with the Coca-Cola Company and Indiana University, sponsors roughly 100 students annually from the Middle East and North Africa, to attend a month-long summer entrepreneurship program at Indiana University’s Kelley School of Business, with students undertaking an “immersion scholarship program” (Opportunity Desk, 2015/2/18; see also Indiana University, 2013, 2014; see Figure I.2). Thus the website for the US Embassy in Amman, Jordan, features the “Coca-Cola Scholarship Program” and points out the targets of the scholarship: “preference will be given to candidates who have limited or no experience of travel to the United States,” which could be understood to mean those who may not have been as Americanized as others and thus stand out as a valuable asset for conversion (US Embassy-Amman [USEA], 2015). Nada Berrada, a Moroccan business student, said she wanted to become “a Coca-Cola Ambassador” because “Coca-Cola is not only about happiness, but it’s also about inspiration” (Priselac, 2013/7/19). Coca-Cola chairman and CEO Muhtar Kent told the visiting students, “this is your start-up phase—your chance to be a great agent for positive change,” adding, “you can and will make a real difference,

so stay in touch with each other...and with Coca-Cola”—and in his parting “words of wisdom,” as a company writer put it, he advised students to, “develop an abiding respect for cash. Keep some on you at all times. Touch it and feel it and know it’s real. Never let money become an abstraction” (Priselac, 2013/7/19). Interestingly, as far as “positive agents for change” can go, the program in 2012, on how to “Make Tomorrow Better,” did not include any Libyan students. Yet Libyan students had been praised only a year earlier by corporate and public media in North America, during the US-led destruction of the nation’s state structures that opened the way to ongoing civil war. Contrary to the White House’s “failed states” admission mentioned earlier, even with the use of local “force multipliers” the extreme collapse of a nation-state can and has happened, and will do so again.

Figure I.2: The US State Department’s Connected Coca-Cola Capitalists from the Middle East and North Africa



This is a still from the website of the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, showing a session held with students from the Middle East and North Africa as part of the US State Department’s program in partnership with Coca-Cola. As if Indiana University’s mission has been reduced to uncritically producing corporate propaganda, the university’s “news room” website speaks of Coca-Cola “refreshing consumers” who “enjoy” its drinks, as “the world’s most valuable brand,” claiming that the company’s initiatives “support active, healthy living”. Then, the university asks readers to follow Coca-Cola in Twitter (Indiana University, 2013).

The Coca-Cola CEO’s “connected capitalism” also attracted the attention of key speakers within the US military, in a growing display of what anthropologist Bruce Kapferer (2005) described as

the corporate-oligarchic state at the base of contemporary imperialism. Admiral James Stavridis was the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and Commander of the US European Command (EUCOM); Evelyn N. Farkas was his Senior Advisor for “Public-Private Partnership”. The two reminded their readers that the most recent National Security Strategy at the time, “calls on the executive branch to work with the private sector, repeatedly referring to public-private partnerships” (Stavridis & Farkas, 2012, p. 7). It was under that banner of “public-private partnerships”—for which they single out Coca-Cola and Isdell’s “connected capitalism—that they explained collaboration as a “force multiplier”. It is a force multiplier, they maintain, because it permits the state to share “the resource burden”. From “whole-of-government” they move to “whole-of-society”: binding the state, corporations, universities, and NGOs, which “can save the government money” (Stavridis & Farkas, 2012, pp. 8-9). Rather than just an idea, they note the rise of what we can call “connected militarism” as a complement to “connected capitalism”:

“the U.S. Southern Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, and U.S. Africa Command all have full-time personnel dedicated to garnering efficiencies and fostering effectiveness for DOD by collaborating with the private sector—businesses, academic institutions, and non-profits” (Stavridis & Farkas, 2012, p. 9)

Members of an organization calling itself Business Executives for National Security (BENS) have worked with the US Southern Command in countering drug cartels and have also worked with NATO forces in Afghanistan and in the Baltic states (Stavridis & Farkas, 2012, p. 10). The Enduring Security Framework (ESF), also exists as a public-private collaboration between the Pentagon, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Director of National Intelligence, and “representative information technology and defense industrial firms” (Stavridis & Farkas, 2012, p. 16).

What is not raised for discussion in the self-interested, corporate sales piece by Stavridis and Farkas, is the nature of direct benefits for private corporations, beyond being able to tell the public how good they feel about being partners. Private corporations have been “partnering” with the Pentagon for decades. Increased corporatization of governance has accelerated the process. As journalist Ken Silverstein observed, “with little public knowledge or debate, the government has been dispatching private companies—most of



them with tight links to the Pentagon and staffed by retired armed forces personnel—to provide military and police training to America’s foreign allies” (quoted in Johnson, 2004, p. 85). While Stavridis and Farkas do point out that, “for corporate or non-profit entities, collaboration with the government may offer access to information and sometimes intelligence, as well as legitimacy” (2012, p. 13), they refuse to comment on what that means. However, others have commented: “One reason privatization appeals to the Pentagon is that whatever these companies do becomes ‘proprietary information’. The Pentagon does not even have to classify it; and as private property, information on the activities of such companies is exempt from the Freedom of Information Act” (Johnson, 2004, p. 85). Likewise, private corporations are able to secure such information and own it, taking away from the public what originally belonged to the public, at least in principle.

### **Security for US Capitalists: The State Department and its Global Partners**

Very much in line in with the idea of “connected capitalism,” the US State Department created the office of advisor for global partnerships, a Senate-confirmed position (Stavridis & Farkas, 2012, p. 17; see also DoS, 2015, 2015/3/12). The Secretary of State’s Office of Global Partnerships, instituted in 2009, is officially described as, “the entry point for collaboration between the U.S. Department of State, the public and private sectors, and civil society” (DoS, 2015). Its programs cover the Americas, scholarships for the Middle East, the training of “young African leaders,” and spreading the US-dominated Internet to “poor communities” (DoS, 2015/3/12). The State Department says its Global Partnership Initiative has spent \$650 Million in public and private resources on “diplomacy and development,” reaching 1,100 “partners” from 2009 through 2012, and cultivating 6,500 private sector contacts.<sup>9</sup> In its official propaganda, GPI boasts that its method involves starting with one country, 10 cities, 100 investors, 1,000 partnerships—which as much as these are figures too neat to be anything but invented for glossy brochures and happy-looking websites, at least this 1-10-100-1000 progression graphically shows how deeply entrenched the “force multiplier” idea has become in official circles, military and civilian.<sup>10</sup>

The “partners” listed for the State Department’s GPI include philanthropic foundations, universities, airlines, weapons manufacturers, software companies, Google, Yahoo, soft drink manufactur-

ers, retail giants, entertainment, banks, and oil companies (DoS, 2014b, pp. 30-31), the core corporate sectors of the contemporary US economy. Among the US universities working under GPI are, as listed in 2014: University of Kansas, University of Massachusetts Boston, University of Washington, Northwestern University, and the University of California system (DoS, 2014b, p. 31).

Since the creation of the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) in 1985 under the Reagan administration, the State Department has been involved in “security cooperation” with US “private sector interests worldwide”. Since 1985, universities, churches, and NGOs have been added to the State Department’s list of security partners. This arrangement is directly the result of demands placed on the state by US corporations: “The increase in terrorism over the last 30 years and the continuing threat against U.S. interests overseas has forced many American companies to seek advice and assistance from the U.S. Government, particularly the State Department”.<sup>11</sup> This has been the case since OSAC’s conception: “In 1985, a handful of chief executive officers from prominent American companies met with then Secretary of State George P. Shultz to promote cooperation between the American private sector worldwide and the U.S. Government on security issues”.<sup>12</sup> More than 3,500 US corporations, educational institutions, “faith-based institutions,” and NGOs are OSAC “constituents”.<sup>13</sup> Current members include Northwestern University, the University of California system, McGraw Hill, and a range of the most familiar names in US entertainment, software, weapons manufacturing, financial industries, from Monsanto to Raytheon, Boeing, Microsoft, Walt Disney, Wal-Mart, Target, VISA, joined also by the Pentagon, FBI, and the Department of Homeland Security.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, USAID, which established its “Global Development Alliance” in 2001 (see USAID, 2007), has worked with various corporations such as Coca-Cola (on water projects in 13 countries) and with Wal-Mart in Brazil. By 2005, USAID claimed to have established more than 400 such alliances, using \$1.4 billion of its own funds with a further \$4.6 billion from its partners (Stavridis & Farkas, 2012, p. 11).

### **The US Military’s Connected Capitalists: Mass Media’s “Military Analysts”**

Several years ago, a series of exposés demonstrated US corporate mass media’s use of “military analysts” and “experts” who are retired senior military officers, serving in the private sector and with

continued access to the Pentagon with the proviso that they repeat the Pentagon's talking points on war (Barstow, 2008/4/20, 2009/11/28, 2011/12/24). This program, which bridged the Department of Defense, mass media, and corporations with military contracts, was described by Barstow (2008/4/20):

“The effort... has sought to exploit ideological and military allegiances, and also a powerful financial dynamic: Most of the analysts have ties to military contractors vested in the very war policies they are asked to assess on air....Records and interviews show how the Bush administration has used its control over access and information in an effort to transform the analysts into a kind of media Trojan horse—an instrument intended to shape terrorism coverage from inside the major TV and radio networks”.

A military retiree turned analyst-lobbyist military would gain access to current inside information in the Pentagon, which would be useful for the private weapons contractors they served, and in return they would sell the administration's talking points to the public. This is “connected” in the same way a totalitarian system is connected. Information presented to the public was often fabricated, exaggerated or otherwise distorted, to boost public support for the war in Iraq. “A few” of these so-called analysts “expressed regret for participating in what they regarded as an effort to dupe the American public with propaganda dressed as independent military analysis” (Barstow, 2008/4/20). Thousands of records that were made public revealed “a symbiotic relationship where the usual dividing lines between government and journalism have been obliterated”—because the mass media had themselves been enlisted as “force multipliers”: “Internal Pentagon documents repeatedly refer to the military analysts as ‘message force multipliers’ or ‘surrogates’ who could be counted on to deliver administration ‘themes and messages’ to millions of Americans ‘in the form of their own opinions’” (Barstow, 2008/4/20).

## NGOs as US Force Multipliers

The US military has been very interested in utilizing non-governmental organizations. In 2005 then President George W. Bush signed National Security Presidential Directive 44 (NSPD-44), instructing US forces to “coordinate USG [US government] stability operations with foreign governments, international and regional organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and private

sector entities” (US Army, 2008b, pp. 1-13-1-14). Referring to NGOs in particular, the US Army noted with interest, “their extensive involvement, local contacts, and experience,” which make “NGOs valuable sources of information about local and regional governments and civilian attitudes toward an operation” (US Army, 2008b, p. A-10). The same document then added, however: “military forces do not describe NGHAs [non-governmental humanitarian aid groups] as ‘force multipliers’ or ‘partners’ of the military, or in any fashion that could compromise their independence or their goal to be perceived by the population as independent” (US Army, 2008b, p. E-2). The reason for this little-noticed political move was to minimize the apparent damage done by US Secretary of State Colin Powell, when he declared to leaders of NGOs at a foreign policy conference in 2001, “I am serious about making sure we have the best relationship with the NGOs who are such a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team” (Powell, 2001). Regardless of the minimal corrective offered by the US Army, seven years after Powell spoke, the fact remains that in its actions the US military has consistently worked in tandem with NGOs, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan. Indeed, some in the military even publicly boast of such partnerships:

*“NGOs are increasingly working in tandem with the military on mutually agreed projects and objectives across the globe. Arzu, a Chicago-based NGO that is a significant foreign employer of Afghan women, and the non-profit Spirit of America have teamed up to sell ‘peace cords,’ bracelets that symbolically and literally support U.S. and NATO operations in Afghanistan. Employment in Afghanistan generated by the sales of the cords creates an environment conducive to the success of those operations”.* (Stavridis & Farkas, 2012, p. 10, emphases added)

“Non-state actors offer significant opportunities to expand the reach and effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy,” the US State Department asserted in its First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. The State Department added:

*“The potential of civil society organizations around the world to advance common interests with us is unprecedented....Civil society, universities, and humanitarian organizations can often act in areas or in a manner that a government simply cannot: as neutrals or aid providers in conflict zones; as thought-leaders; and as intermediaries between states or between states and peoples. They are indispensable partners, force multipliers, and agents of positive change”.* (DoS, 2010, p. 14)

*Force multipliers, partners, intermediaries, agents of change*—all of these are contained in the State Department’s language, as it perfectly echoes the terms in favour in the military. The State Department makes it plainly clear that it intends to use NGOs abroad as tools of US foreign policy, frequently using “civil society” as a rhetorically pretentious cover:

“We will reach beyond governments to offer a place at the table to groups and citizens willing to shoulder a fair share of the burden. Our efforts to engage beyond the state begin with outreach to civil society—the activists, organizations, congregations, and journalists who work through peaceful means to make their countries better. While civil society is varied, many groups share common goals with the United States, and working with civil society can be an effective and efficient path to advance our foreign policy”. (DoS, 2010, pp. 21-22)

In those straightforward terms, the US declares its intention of using its diplomatic stations to undermine the sovereignty of all other states, particularly those which it has targeted for “improvement”. “Civil society groups”—largely undemocratic, unaccountable and elitist—will “shoulder a fair share of the burden” for the sake of US interests. In addition, this is an “efficient” path for the US, as it spreads costs to others, furthering the idea that such groups are instrumentalized as force multipliers, of the type we see defined in physics texts more than in social science.

Since the US makes some investment in the use of its force multipliers among the citizens of other nations, it is of course anxious about their having as much room to manoeuvre as possible. Thus the State Department declared, “we will oppose efforts to restrict the space for civil society and create opportunities for civil society to thrive within nations and to forge connections among them”. Not just barring restrictions on the space for “civil society”—a term used by US officials as if they were referring to a subcontractor of their own government—but it also important to diminish the realm of a sovereign state by eroding its boundaries, thus: “we will promote open governments around the world that are accountable and participatory” (DoS, 2010, p. 22). The State Department speaks of “engaging beyond the state,” which in very plain terms is understood to mean bypassing other states: “engagement must go far beyond government-to-government interactions. Non-state actors, ranging from non-governmental organizations to business, religious groups to community organizations, are playing an ever greater role, both locally and globally.

And in this information age, public opinion takes on added importance” (DoS, 2010, p. 59). US diplomats are to function as the “circuit riders” mentioned previously: “it is increasingly important for American diplomats to meet not only with their foreign ministry counterparts, but also with tribal elders or local authorities. Our diplomats must build partnerships and networks, implement programs, and engage with citizens, groups, and organizations” (DoS, 2010, p. 59). In 2011, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton opened what she called a “strategic dialogue with civil society,” and the choice of the term “strategic” clearly cannot be taken lightly. In addition she created the position of Senior Advisor for Civil Society and Emerging Democracies (DoS, 2010, p. 59), intending to further institutionalize this deeper form of US intervention, where something akin to occupation and indirect role becomes the standard operating procedure.

If the State Department thinks it can use NGOs as its tools, it is due in part to the fact that some NGOs have been more than willing to serve as such. In some noteworthy cases, such as the first war against Iraq, “NGOs supplied the necessary legitimacy for the U.S. ‘police interventions,’ a legitimacy expressed in terms of human rights and respect for law” (Ash, 2003, p. 239). NGOs, funded by US philanthropic foundations, help to maintain the illusion of an international social contract, as if speaking for a nonexistent world electorate. As Ash explained, with the US government professing a “commitment to human rights, democracy, and rule of law,” this “promised hope and gave the system respectability, even among its critics,” with the result that revelations of war crimes, atrocities, and negation of human rights are treated as “flaws,” or “mistakes,” and “far from undermining the system, they generated calls for improving it” (Ash, 2003, p. 239).

In *Good Intentions* (Forte, 2014), space was devoted to the role of NGOs in supporting US imperial ventures, as part of successive US governments’ “diplomacy, development, defence” programs. The US prefers to work through non-state actors because it grants US intervention cover, a veneer of popularity and legitimacy when uncovered, and it serves the basic capitalist aim of undermining the power of states not sufficiently “open” and “responsive” to US capital. Horace Campbell (2014) further explained how NGOs served as “force multipliers” for the US:

“During the nineties military [j]ournals such as *Parameters* honed the discussion of the planning for the increased engagement of international NGO’s and by the end of the 20th century the big international NGO’s Care, Catholic Relief Services , Save The

Children, World Vision, and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) were acting like major international corporations doing subcontracting work for the US military. At the time when the book *The Road to Hell: the Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity* was written by Michael Maren to expose the role of humanitarian agencies in Somalia, there was already enough information to expose the militarization of humanitarian work”.

The US government has formally institutionalized its partnership with NGOs through the State Department’s Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation (CMC).

The role of NGOs as “a Trojan Horse for world imperialism” was also demonstrated in the propaganda leading up to the planned US armed attacks against Syria in August-September (2012):

“Among the most strident voices was that of Bernard Kouchner, the co-founder of Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders—MSF) and former foreign minister in the right-wing government of President Nicolas Sarkozy. He impatiently asked in late July, ‘The famous American drones, where are they?’ imploring the imperialist powers to take military action in the name of humanitarianism. The MSF, recipient of the 1999 Nobel Peace Prize, was the first to report the August 21 attack in Ghouta, Syria, which the US hoped to use as a direct pretext for a military assault. As the organization admitted, the MSF’s decision to issue an international press release on the incident—which had not taken place in an MSF hospital, but in its ‘silent partner’ facilities in rebel-controlled areas—was highly political” (Hanover, 2013/12/30).

Indeed, MSF doctors were not even present in the area of the alleged government attack. A month after the fact, Hanover noted, the New York Times “belatedly mentioned that doctors are often ‘notoriously wrong’ when assessing chemical weapons injuries”. Since then, Seymour Hersh has shown that the US President Barack Obama and his officials were “knowingly lying when they claimed that the Syrian government had carried out the sarin gas attack last August” (Hanover, 2013/12/30).

## Academic Multipliers

“I had no hint that, as a student of Asia, I would become as much a spear-carrier for empire as I had been in the navy” (Johnson, 2004, p. xxvi)

A great many books have been, and continue to be written about the collaboration and complicities between universities and their scholars and the US imperial state, from before the Cold War, during, and after. This topic largely exceeds the confines of this chapter, but as we saw in the case of OSAC above, it is important to remember that US universities and numerous academics, including very prominent ones, have played roles supportive of specific and broad US foreign policy goals. The scientization of discourse is itself one result of the Cold War repression of academic dissent in the US. The elites have enlisted “science” as a means of “containing the future by controlling the present politics of knowledge” (Nandy, 2005, p. 28)

In the period since September 11, 2001, there has been a major push in parts of Europe and North America to re-enlist academics as “force multipliers,” ranging from various research streams funded by military and intelligence agencies, to outright incorporation into military units active in war zones. In what is a representative point of view considering the nature of attendees at the annual Halifax International Security Forum, a participant from the Hoover Institution in the US told his audience that, “ideas the best force-multipliers. They incite and intoxicate, making men fight to the death and fueling boundless cruelty” (Joffe, 2014). However, Joffe bitterly bemoaned the fact that “the West” has lost the “fervor” that drove “global conquest,” and he condemned “postmodernism” as a “force diminisher” for being an ideology that abjures racism, imperialism, oppression—as if these are virtuous stances that need further reinforcement. Joffe then denounced intellectuals as a “force inhibitor: “Once the spearhead of nationalism, the West’s intelligentsia is now its fiercest critic. The West’s warrior culture is disappearing outside the US, Israel, Britain, and France” (Joffe, 2014). The elite is clearly getting desperate when such full-throated and crude diatribes, that represent the worst, most reactionary orthodoxy, are offered proudly to the public as important contributions.

## The Desire to Annex Cuba from the Inside Out

In the context of the recent resumption of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the US, it is important to note and understand in light of the above sections that the term “engagement” reappears in the US narrative on Cuba: “I believe that we can do more to support the Cuban people and promote our values through engage-



ment” (Obama, 2014b). Announcing the new phase of Cuba-US relations, Obama stated, “I am convinced that through a policy of engagement, we can more effectively stand up for our values”. Obama insists that, “the United States has supported democracy and human rights in Cuba through these five decades,” as he attempts to sell his policy as a continuation of that theme, in order to allay the fears of domestic expatriates and more reactionary elements of Cuban-American opinion. Obama’s policy is clearly in line with everything he has said in the passages quoted throughout this chapter: he intends to rely on force multipliers. His call for lifting travel restrictions on US citizens, is thus justified as follows: “Cuban Americans have been reunited with their families, and are the best possible ambassadors for our values”. Repeatedly throughout his announcement, Obama speaks of “engagement,” “openness,” US citizens traveling to Cuba and serving as “ambassadors” who take part in “people-to-people engagement”. Obama also committed the US to supporting “humanitarian projects,” the growth of a Cuban private sector, and to open the floodgates to US telecommunications access to Cuba. In other words, if we have learned anything, then we would understand that there is nothing at all innocent about Obama’s remarks. This does not mean that Cuba will not or cannot resist; it means it must continue to do so, only with even greater vigilance.

In the years and months leading up to the December 17, 2014, announcement of renewed diplomatic ties, a series of reports revealed several programs of covert US intervention in Cuba, which Obama would hope to institutionalize as “normal bilateral relations”. For example, in 2009 Alan Gross, a USAID contractor, was imprisoned in Cuba for crimes against the state: “Gross was sent to Cuba to secretly distribute Internet equipment to Jewish community groups, part of a congressionally mandated program to encourage Cuban democracy” (DeYoung, 2014/12/17). More recently, in a series of detailed revelations published by the Associated Press, USAID, “infiltrated Cuba’s hip-hop scene, recruiting unwitting rappers to spark a youth movement against the government”, having developed a four-year program that compromised critics of the government. We also learned that the hip-hop operation ran simultaneously with two other USAID programs: “the launch of a secret ‘Cuban Twitter’ [ZunZuneo] and a program that sent Latin American youth to provoke dissent—and also involved elaborate subterfuge, including a front organization and an exotic financial scheme to mask American involvement”. At the centre of the plot was Creative Associates International, “a company with a

multimillion-dollar contract from USAID,” whose goal was stated as follows: “commandeer the island’s hip-hop scene ‘to help Cuban youth break the information blockade’ and build ‘youth networks for social change’” (Butler et al., 2014/12/11). Soon after the reports were published, USAID director Raj Shah resigned (Kumar, 2014/12/17). The Cuban American “youth group,” Roots of Hope, which was involved with the covert USAID program to create ZunZuneo, is currently partnering with Google as the latter seeks to essentially build Cuba’s Internet. A US academic, Ted Henken, “a Baruch College professor who has studied Cuba’s Internet issues,” told a newspaper that, “it is less likely that Web connection and services coming from the United States, such as Google’s, will be seen as a Trojan horse now that the Obama administration has explicitly rejected a regime change policy and moved toward engagement” (quoted in Torres, 2015/7/3). While Henken may understand certain Internet issues, he botched the analysis of what the US government means by “engagement,” given what we have learned in previous sections here, from US government documents themselves.

What has been covert—and denied until it was exposed—can become more or less overt now, if one takes Obama’s announced intentions at face value, and if one believes the Cuban authorities and the revolutionary system that has benefited the majority will simply be passive unlike ever before. Obama is first of all interested in spearheading the development of the Cuban private sector: “Our travel and remittance policies are helping Cubans by providing alternative sources of information and opportunities for self-employment and private property ownership, and by strengthening independent civil society”. Several announced policy changes are intended to make it easier for US citizens “to provide business training for private Cuban businesses and small farmers and provide other support for the growth of Cuba’s nascent private sector”. Secondly, the US hopes to expand “Internet penetration” in Cuba; allowing for the commercial export of US telecommunications goods and services, “will contribute to the ability of the Cuban people to communicate with people in the United States”. Thirdly, in order to provide political protection for these US intrusions, “a critical focus of our increased engagement will include continued strong support by the United States for improved human rights conditions and democratic reforms in Cuba,” and in very bold language the White House adds: “Our efforts are aimed at promoting the independence of the Cuban people so they do not need to rely on the Cuban state”. The intention to diminish the

power of the Cuban state, to sideline it, and to thus lower the sovereign protection of Cuba, is stated plainly in commonplace neoliberal terms. The US Congress is already funding “democracy programming” in Cuba—ironic, given Cuba’s already extensive system of participatory democracy and mass mobilization (White House, 2014).

In language that reminds one of the meaning of “circuit rider,” Obama stated the following in his July 1, 2015, announcement of the upcoming opening of embassies:

“With this change, we will be able to substantially increase our contacts with the Cuban people. We’ll have more personnel at our embassy. And our diplomats will have the ability to engage more broadly across the island. That will include the Cuban government, civil society, and ordinary Cubans who are reaching for a better life.” (White House, 2015b)

However, since US diplomats will be required to inform the Cuban authorities of their travel in the island, and since they will be watched regardless, it’s not certain that the US will be doing anything other than placing a few Cuban individuals on the front-line of US policy. The “normalization” of relations is nowhere explained by Cuban authorities as a desire to surrender or to change the socio-economic system to become more like the US. Instead, it is cast as a victory for Cuba, since it was obtained without having given the US any of its long-sought concessions and since it involved a more than tacit admission by the US that decades of seeking regime change amounted to a complete failure.

## The Physics of Blowback and Overstretch

Another sort of physics emerged, right from within the same establishment of military and political institutions that produced “force multipliers”. If this other physics has attained the prominence that it has, such that it now has a foothold in academia and is a firm part of popular discourse in the US primarily, it is due at least in part to the social prominence and respectability of the false physics that it counters. By this other physics I mean the concepts of “blowback” and “overstretch” which, like “force multipliers,” are useful for descriptively pointing to certain “real-world” phenomena, but are impoverished half-attempts at theory. I return to the question of theory, and theorization, in the concluding paragraphs of this chapter.

## Blowback: In Its Restricted and Extended Senses

Blowback is a *reaction to force*: a reaction to “hard power,” and particularly a reaction to covert operations. The term originates from “a classified government document in the CIA’s post-action report on the secret overthrow of the Iranian government in 1953” (Johnson, 2004, p. xii). As Chalmers Johnson explained further, “blowback” was invented by the CIA “to describe the likelihood that our covert operations in other people’s countries would result in retaliations against Americans, civilian and military, at home and abroad” (Johnson, 2004, p. ix). As a former CIA analyst, Johnson would have been familiar with CIA terminology, and he did a great deal to popularize the term. From the CIA, it became the centerpiece of academic analysis with Johnson. In its “most rigorous definition,” blowback does not mean “mere reactions to historical events but rather to clandestine operations carried out by the U.S. government that are aimed at overthrowing foreign regimes, or seeking the execution of people the United States wanted eliminated by ‘friendly’ foreign armies, or helping launch state terrorist operations against overseas target populations” (Johnson, 2004, p. xi). Thus a reaction against force multipliers is also implied by blowback. “As a concept,” Johnson adds, “blowback is obviously most easily grasped in its straightforward manifestations. The unintended consequences of American policies and acts in country X lead to a bomb at an American embassy in country Y or a dead American in country Z” (2004, p. xi). In a broader sense, “blowback is another way of saying that a nation reaps what it sows” (Johnson, 2004, p. xi). Thus far the concept appears simple enough, blending very basic action-reaction with common moral approaches to human affairs, rooted in biblical proverbs.

The idea of blowback hinges on the motivation to retaliate. As Johnson puts it, “American policy is seeding resentments that are bound to breed attempts at revenge” (2004, p. 65). Without resentment there is no compulsion to seek revenge; without an effort made to exact revenge, there can be no blowback. “The most direct and obvious form of blowback” has tended to occur “when the victims fight back after a secret American bombing, or a U.S.-sponsored campaign of state terrorism, or a CIA-engineered overthrow of a foreign political leader” (Johnson, 2004, p. 9). Blowback involves the creation of force multipliers in reverse. The Defense Science Board (1997, p. 15) resists identifying US intervention as a cause for retaliation, but nonetheless stated the following highly suggestive conclusion based on the data it accumulated:

“Historical data show a strong correlation between US involvement in international situations and an increase in terrorist attacks against the United States. In addition, the military asymmetry that denies nation states the ability to engage in overt attacks against the United States drives the use of transnational actors”.

Blowback is also understood in an “extended” sense by Johnson, one that departs from what he calls straightforward examples. Blowback in this broader sense “includes the decline of key American industries because of the export-led economic policies of our satellites, the militarism and arrogance of power that inevitably conflict with our democratic structure of government, and the distortions to our culture and basic values as we are increasingly required to try to justify our imperialism” (Johnson, 2004, pp. xi-xii). This can be a more productive approach to blowback, one that can link to a series of related theses describing the wider fallout of US interventionism, and not just the covert kind. In words that echo those of former President Dwight Eisenhower and Senator J. William Fulbright, Johnson laments the extravagant growth of a self-seeking military establishment nearly beyond civilian control, and an increasingly impoverished citizenry forced to pay for perpetual wars and bailouts (Johnson, 2004, pp. 218, 221, 222). Andrew Bacevich makes similar points, tying blowback into overstretch:

“as events have made plain, the United States is ill-prepared to wage a global war of no exits and no deadlines. The sole superpower lacks the resources—economic, political, and military—to support a large-scale, protracted conflict without, at the very least, inflicting severe economic and political damage on itself. American power has limits and is inadequate to the ambitions to which hubris and sanctimony have given rise”. (Bacevich, 2008, p. 11)

One of Johnson’s primary conclusions was that “more imperialist projects simply generate more blowback” (2004, p. 223)—simple, and even inevitable, he thus maintained: “efforts to maintain imperial hegemony inevitably generate multiple forms of blowback” (2004, p. 229). Inevitability is scaled down to “in all likelihood,” when Johnson argued that world politics in the twenty-first century will be driven primarily by blowback from the second half of the twentieth century, “that is, from the unintended consequences of the Cold War and the crucial American decision to maintain a Cold War posture in a post-Cold War world” (2004, p.

229). In words that foresaw the current US and NATO conflict with Russia, Johnson offered some wise words:

“The American empire has become skilled at developing self-fulfilling—and self-serving—prophecies in order to justify its policies. It expands the NATO alliance eastward in part in order to sell arms to the former Soviet bloc countries, whose armies are being integrated into the NATO command structure, with the certain knowledge that doing so will threaten Russia and elicit a hostile Russian reaction. This Russian reaction then becomes the excuse for the expansion”. (Johnson, 2004, p. 92)

As previewed above, Johnson like Bacevich also carried over the implications of blowback into his arguments about what he calls overstretch (more about that in the next section). Since the US is reaching the limits in what it can afford in terms of its ongoing military deployment and interventions, it has begun to extract “ever growing amounts of ‘host-nation support’ from its clients, or even direct subsidies from its ‘allies’. Japan, one of many allied nations that helped finance the massive American military effort in the Gulf War, paid up to the tune of \$13 billion. (The U.S. government even claimed in the end to have made a profit on the venture.)” (Johnson, 2004, p. 221). Here we see a formulation that derives from the “science” that has been proffered by military and intelligence elites: because “overstretch” results from “blowback” (in the broad sense), the US needs to lean more heavily on “force multipliers”.

If we take blowback in its restricted sense, it appears to be a useful concept—when actual blowback happens. It is a simple, arguably simplistic, concept that derives its credibility from Newtonian physics. Isaac Newton’s “third law of motion,” as most readers can recite already, is that “for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction”. But is there? Since the attacks of “9/11” are seen by writers following Johnson as “blowback”—then there should have a very long line of culprits if the concept really worked. Everyone from Chileans to Argentinians, Uruguayans, Bolivians, Colombians, Nicaraguans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Filipinos, Japanese, Germans, Italians, Russians, Serbians, Libyans, Congolese, etc., etc., should have been plotting multiple attacks for decades. In fact, given the wide array of grievances and resentments, spread near and far, if there is one conclusion that can be safely derived is that, understood in its restricted sense, *blowback almost never happens*. When such blowback does happen, then of course it is a relatively easy thing to call it a “self-fulfilling proph-

ecy” and to appear convincing. We should be cautious about assuming blowback to be either simple, or simply inevitable (as Johnson tends to do), since it offers another falsely scientific, mechanical formulation that does not stand even the most basic empirical testing.

It is far more useful to broaden blowback, but to do so in a manner that goes beyond Johnson’s attempt. When blowback is understood in cyclical, socio-economic and cultural terms, alternating between external and internal events that sometimes operate in tandem, in a nation-state where blowback was already to be found before any given external actions, where new domestic effects are generated by the importation of the techniques of war and domination, with mounting political and economic costs, then we have the foundation not for a productive concept, but a theory. For example, the security spectacle produced in US airports, the militarization of the police, the increased number of riots in African-American inner cities, the bankruptcy of whole cities, the excessive production of violent movies and games, and many other phenomena, can all be taken as constituting blowback.

Otherwise, what embarrasses the simple concepts of blowback and force multipliers, is the apparent reality of some of the US’ own force multipliers becoming the vectors of blowback, such as Saudi Arabia, Al Qaeda, and numerous “Islamist militias” in Libya. Blowback, in Johnson’s formulations, also rests on the common assumption of “unintended consequences”. It is increasingly difficult to find US security and international relations writers mentioning consequences without qualifying them as “unintended”. Why must they always be assumed to be unintended, even in cases where a battery of officials have testified before Congress about the likely outcomes of US military intervention in cases such as Libya? While neither the idea of an omniscient, ubiquitous and all-powerful US, nor a perfectly innocent and ignorant US, is convincing, we must allow some room for cases where chaos, disorder, and fragmentation were the unspoken aims of US interventions abroad. Chaos can be very profitable, especially for those who have turned permanent war into a lucrative industry. Even understood in Johnson’s broad sense, blowback can be profitable. Bacevich (2008, p. 173) argues that some wish to maintain US dependence on imported oil, imported goods, and foreign credit:

“The centers of authority within Washington—above all, the White House and the upper echelons of the national security state—actually benefit from this dependency: It provides the source of status, power, and prerogatives. Imagine the impact

just on the Pentagon were this country actually to achieve anything approaching energy independence. U.S. Central Command would go out of business. Dozens of bases in and around the Middle East would close. The navy's Fifth Fleet would stand down. Weapons contracts worth tens of billions of dollars would risk being canceled".

## Overstretch: The Unnatural Limits of Imperialism

Overstretch, like blowback, forms part of a publicly acceptable American way of speaking of the "dilemmas" of "global leadership," and has been the case at least since the 1966 publication of *The Arrogance of Power* by then US Senator J. William Fulbright. Fulbright, referring to the history of "great nations," noted that they have always set out upon missions to police the world, "and they have wrought havoc, bringing misery to their intended beneficiaries and destruction upon themselves" (Fulbright, 1966, p. 138). There is an implicit idea of blowback, in the broad sense. What is now called overstretch, Fulbright called overextension:

"America is showing some signs of that fatal presumption, that overextension of power and mission, which has brought ruin to great nations in the past. The process has hardly begun, but the war which we are now fighting [in Vietnam] can only accelerate it. If the war goes on and expands, if that fatal process continues to accelerate until America becomes what she is not now and never has been, a seeker after unlimited power and empire, the leader of a global counter-revolution, then Vietnam will have had a mighty and tragic fallout indeed". (Fulbright, 1966, p. 138)

Overextension stemmed from "our excessive involvement in the affairs of other countries," excessive in part because US empire was now "living off our assets and denying our own people the proper enjoyment of their resources" (Fulbright, 1966, p. 21). The "excessive preoccupation with foreign relations over a long period of time" is a "drain on the power that gave rise to it, because it diverts a nation from the sources of its strength, which are in its domestic life" and Fulbright warned that, "a nation immersed in foreign affairs is expending its capital, human as well as material" and faced the prospect of ruin by expending its "energies in foreign adventures while allowing...domestic bases to deteriorate" (Fulbright, 1966, pp. 20-21). Repeatedly in his book Fulbright argued against a foreign policy that involved the US "in the affairs of most of the nations of the world while its own domestic needs are neglected or



postponed" (Fulbright, 1966, p. 134), emphasizing his warning that "an ambitious foreign policy built on a deteriorating domestic base is possible only for a limited time" (Fulbright, 1966, p. 217).

The concept of imperial "overstretch" is now regularly associated with the work of the historian Paul Kennedy (1989), which describes a situation that arises when a state's engagements and presence beyond its borders result in mounting costs, while the ability to meet such costs begins to diminish. This concept of empire living beyond its means has also become popularized, largely as a form of safe critique: imperialism is to be rejected, when it becomes too costly to the imperialists. Overstretch seems to stand out, after the fact. However, there is clearly a concern among political and military elites in Washington that overstretch is a distinct possibility, either right now or in the near future, hence the growing proliferation in usage of the force multiplier idea, of spreading costs, and "sharing the burden" as Hillary Clinton put it. Johnson also links overstretch to blowback: "the duties of 'lone superpower' produced military overstretch; globalization led to economic overstretch; and both are contributing to an endemic crisis of blowback" (2004, p. 215). Some root the problem of overstretch in policies that began to take shape from the start of the 1960s, with an increased US emphasis on maintaining a "forward presence," to be "forward deployed," and thus ultimately able to project power anywhere on earth (Bacevich, 2010, pp. 22, 150, 162). The "American credo of global leadership" commits the US to what is in effect "a condition of permanent national security crisis," or constant "semiwar" (Bacevich, 2010, p. 27). This placement of US "interests" everywhere on earth, an effective territorialization that parallels older forms of colonialism, is best expressed in the words of then CIA Director Allen Dulles in 1963:

"The whole world is the arena of our conflict....our vital interests are subject to attack in almost every quarter of the globe at any time...[it is essential] to maintain a constant watch in every part of the world, no matter what may at the moment be occupying the main attention of diplomats and military men". (Quoted in Bacevich, 2010, p. 40)

Bacevich also anchors the dynamics of overstretch in an extended critique of the perceived moral qualities of all Americans, in terms of their hubris, sanctimony, convinced of their own exceptional qualities and as destined to lead the world, their overconfidence and arrogance, and so forth. His analysis relies heavily on the works of a theological scholar, Reinhold Niebuhr. There is very lit-

tle in the way of a materialist analysis, of discussion of capital and labour, trade and investment, production and consumption, or even inequality as Bacevich speaks of “Americans” as a largely undifferentiated and unitary entity, with shared moral qualities (or defects) and shared understandings. Rather than the rigorously imitative scientism of his former colleagues in the US military, Bacevich indulges in theology and morality. Empire exists in his work largely as a quality of the mind, and secondarily as expressed by military action. It is an argument that resonates with the Christian, anti-big government crowd of libertarian Republicans (Bacevich professes to be Republican)—and thus what is largely excluded is any discussion of the role of “big business,” which is shielded from his critique.

This is not to say that there is little to learn from Bacevich’s works, as much as they tend to repeat each other, and that one should ignore the ideological and cultural dimensions of imperialism, such as the civilizing mission, universalism, and assimilation. His critique can also be useful as a corrective to the mainstream propaganda—here he is quoting Niebuhr:

“One of the most pathetic aspects of human history is that every civilization expresses itself most pretentiously, compounds its partial and universal values most convincingly, and claims immortality for its finite existence at the very moment when the decay which leads to death has already begun”. (Bacevich, 2008, p. 12)

While his critique is more political-military than economic, Bacevich as a senior officer and insider offers much that is valuable concerning the state’s practice of global interventionism and the reigning ideology.

Going back to Fulbright, one may also detect an assumption that US imperialism was meant to be profitable to all US citizens, like an investment that promised returns, only these returns are now failing to materialize. Moreover, the resources needed to sustain this global overextension are dwindling (Fulbright does not object to *extension* as such, only to an undefined *excess* of it). This is a view that differs sharply with understandings of imperialism found in the works of Marxists, or in anthropological writings such as Kapferer (2005). Thus Fulbright does not admit that imperialism need be profitable only to a select few (Kapferer’s corporate oligarchy), that exploitation and inequality at home is fully consistent with imperial extension, and that the resources to sustain empire may be dwindling at home, but expanding abroad.

## Imperialism as a Syndrome

Diverse theories of imperialism and their research methodologies tend to focus attention on a select aspect of the phenomenon (the economic, political, military, or moral as we just saw), rather than taking a holistic approach that would approach imperialism as a grouping of phenomena, processes, and practices. “Imperialism as a syndrome” might be what we call this holistic approach, one that understands and explains imperialism as ideology, narratives, values, beliefs, ways of living, social relationships, and ways of producing, consuming and exchanging.

While imperialism is safely spotted in a projection outwards from the state at the heart of an empire, imperialism also involves domesticated replication of patterns of foreign domination, an internalization of imperialism, down to everyday social relations and cultural meanings. Home is a laboratory for conceiving and devising practices of domination, just as occupied territories abroad furnish laboratories for the further refinement and reworking of the techniques of oppression which are then imported back into the home state of empire. In other words, the US did not invent its imperialism only after its first foreign intervention. Instead we see a continuum between the dominant vilification of “savagism” in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and “terrorism” in the twenty-first century. There is also a continuum between the internal colonial wars against Indigenous Peoples, the formation of reservations and residential schools, and the counterinsurgency and school building programs undertaken by the US in Afghanistan, and the growth of the prison-industrial complex at home, the militarization of policing, and mass surveillance of citizens. The mistake commonly made in public discourse is to treat these as individual and separate phenomena, when we know and experience the fact that they do not occur as individual or separate: one is preceded by the other which enables, justifies, permits or requires the next phenomenon in the chain. War overseas, for example, is inevitably tied to monitoring and suppressing anti-war dissent at home—not, in other words, separate phenomena to be treated apart from each other.

Imperialism may be seen as a social relationship, not just an “international” one between states. As a social relationship it is shaped by and produces a belief system, self-conceptions, identities, and practices that are driven by goals of accumulation-via-domination—by principles of a life that is lived at the expense of the lives of others. Interpersonal encounters are militarized by the

technologies of warfare and security. Bodies are pathologized (e.g. the black teenager in a “hoodie” assumed to be a threat). Classes are exploited as if those born into them had a natural duty to serve the wealthy and make the wealthy even richer. Imperialism is not just something that states do to other states—it might even be easier to extirpate if that is all it was.

As a way of life, imperialism thrives on the domination of the non-human world, laying waste to it if necessary, through excess consumption that boasts of massive accumulation, and the social respectability and political clout that is won by the demonstrated ability of the few to consume massively. Indeed, even the creation of categories such as “human” and “non-human” is the ideological infrastructure set up to prepare for an assault on our environment and all of its other inhabitants. Moreover, destructive exploitation of the environment under capitalism is mirrored socially, through the unequal differential allocation of the “benefits” of this exploitation. Historically, it is under capitalism that imperialism reaches the most extreme limits of this sort of thinking and practice, of consumption through destruction, of production through annihilation, and exchange via dispossession, with the concomitant scaling of rewards according to class and race. Furthermore, this sort of imperialism has itself reached an extreme under US dominance. This is merely offered as the barest and most rudimentary of synopses.

To his credit, of the writers consulted for this chapter, Bacevich has glimpsed the dual inner-outer dynamic of imperialism when he argues that “the impulses that have landed us in a war of no exits and no deadlines come from within” (Bacevich, 2008, p. 5). He explains his argument by adding that, “foreign policy has, for decades, provided an outward manifestation of American domestic ambitions, urges, and fears,” with foreign policy increasingly becoming an expression of “domestic dysfunction—an attempt to manage or defer coming to terms with contradictions besetting the American way of life” (Bacevich, 2008, p. 5). He takes this approach even further when he theorizes that, “Washington is less a geographic expression than a set of interlocking institutions,” and it extends from the executive, judicial and legislative branches to beyond, including law enforcement more generally, plus think tanks and interests groups, lawyers and lobbyists, big banks and other financial institutions, and universities (Bacevich, 2010, p. 15). Washington is a place in name only, otherwise it travels across places as it transcends, forming a system as only an imperial capital could. I would add that Washington is also not just “American,” but includes at least the dominant classes of what I earlier called the

Global USA, that vast network of elites and their dependents, whose ambitions comprise acting, thinking, eating, drinking, dressing, and even talking like “Americans”. My thesis is also that without this GUSA, the US imperialist project would collapse with dramatic rapidity, hence the importance of our discussion focusing on “force multipliers”.

## Conclusions, Questions, Orientations

If the present provides a hint of what it is to come, the nastiest, ugliest, and bloodiest wars to be fought this century will be between states opposed to continued US dominance, and the force multipliers of US dominance. We see the outline of sovereign self-defense programs that take diverse forms, from the banning of foreign funding for NGOs operating in a state’s territory, controlling the mass media, arresting protesters, shutting down CIA-funded political parties, curtailing foreign student exchanges, denying visas to foreign academic researchers, terminating USAID operations, to expelling US ambassadors, and so forth. In extreme cases, this includes open warfare between governments and armed rebels backed by the US, or more indirectly (as the force multiplier principle mandates) backed by US allies. US intervention will provoke and heighten paranoia, stoking repression, and create the illusion of a self-fulfilling prophecy that US interventionists can further manipulate, using logic of this kind: they are serial human rights abusers; we therefore need to intervene in the name of humanity. There will be no discussion, let alone admission, that US covert intervention helped to provoke repression, and that the US knowingly placed its “force multipliers” on the front line. “Force multipliers” also requires us to understand the full depth and scope of US imperialism comprising, among other things: entertainment, food, drink, software, agriculture, arms sales, media, and so on.

Yet, in the end, we are still left with a basic question: *What is a force multiplier?* There are even more answers to this question than there are persons answering it. Beyond the most basic definition in physics, we see a proliferation of examples of force multipliers, reflecting a weak pseudo-science that reifies actual policies, offering mixed results in practice. Given the scientific and positivist approach that achieved hegemony during the Cold War in US universities and the military, the conceptualization of force multipliers reveals familiar problems arising from the naturalization of social phenomena, of “man” as “molecule” of society. As an impover-

ished form of political science, one that is formulaic, mechanical, utilitarian, and ideologically-driven, the force multiplier idea nonetheless poses difficult anthropological questions about the agency of others. My hope was that military writers did not choose to write “force multipliers,” because candidly calling them “quislings,” “shills,” “dupes,” “pawns” or “suckers” would have been too “politically incorrect,” or would have validated older, Cold War-era accusations of the US supporting “stooges,” “lackeys,” “cronies,” “henchmen,” “running dogs,” or “lap dogs”. In other words, my hope was that this was not yet another imperial euphemism. Regardless of the intentions behind the terminology, whether conscious or not, the basic idea of using humans as a form of *drone*, one that is less expensive yet more precise and in less need of constant guidance, seems to be the persisting feature of the force multiplier concept.

If the concept is not a mere euphemism, then there is still an absence of sound theorization of force multipliers on the part of the Pentagon, and by that I mean that while an inchoate lexical infrastructure exists consisting of nested synonyms derived from the natural sciences, there is little more than crude utilitarianism and functionalism to hold the terms together. Some may wish to retort, “then *that* is the theory” by noting the presence of functionalist assumptions and premises derived from rational-choice theories. However, the presence of theory should also involve the process of theorization, which entails questioning, revising, and exposing one’s assumptions to a dialogue with other theories and with facts that appear to challenge the validity of the theory. There may be a lot of real-world destruction by the US military and intelligence apparatus, but there is no winning as such—the absence of theorization is killing the imperial political and security structures, but their exposure to critical theories will only hasten their defeat. No wonder then that so many right-wing “pro-military” columnists in the US routinely scoff at and dismiss “post-colonialism”—theirs is a hegemony in trouble, turned narcissistic: unable to find their mirror image in many sectors of the social sciences and humanities, they resort to angry triumphalism and cyclical repetition of the same failed “solutions,” repeated over and over again. On the other hand, they can find their mirror-image in academia, and particularly anthropology, in other ways: many US anthropologists’ convoluted (meta)theoretical fumbblings, obfuscated by pretentious language whose deliberate lack of clarity masks deep confusion and bewilderment, stands out particularly in the cases of topics which are “new,” such as democracy or globalization. In this sense, both the

US military and US anthropology in some quarters share in common a proliferation of theoretical-sounding rhetoric and a lack of scientific theory. Not coincidentally, both also share an apparent aversion to even saying the word “imperialism”. One might detect a certain decadence in imperial intellectual life, of which the force multiplier theoretical pretense is but one small example.

Clearly there are numerous examples of agents serving as “force multipliers,” and almost as clear is the absence of theorization, let alone reason for imperial elites to feel confident about success when the political, economic, and cultural projects they represent are domestically bankrupt and alienating. Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and Iraq, and “winning hearts and minds,” certainly did happen in some places and to some extent, which gives partial weight to the “force multiplier” idea at the core of these processes. However, on the whole, counterinsurgency programs have been defeated in Afghanistan just as in Vietnam before.

## Notes

- 1 The involvement of US anthropologists in initiatives that support US foreign policy is still a very much neglected subject, apart from the narrower focus on militarization which has tended to obscure and defer discussion of this relationship. The focus on militarization, shorn of any concept of imperialism, also allows for some US academics to disingenuously shift the critique of militarization to nations that are trying to defend themselves against imperial aggression. Some of the few anthropologists who claim to study “empire,” only do so with regard to topics and histories that either bolster US foreign policy (by focusing on China and Tibet, for example), and/or stay silent about the US (by writing about other empires, usually in the past). Whether serving as consultants to the State Department on the Central African Republic, writing journal articles on Ukraine that tend to back anti-Russian narratives, or supporting sanctions against Eritrea, the support of US academics for liberal imperialist projects of “democracy-promotion,” “empowering civil society,” “LGBT rights,” or “stabilization,” represents their joining an earlier wave of anthropologists who consulted on Western “development” projects funded by the World Bank and USAID, and an earlier wave that enthusiastically engaged in efforts to support warfare in WWI and WWII. Indeed, the American Anthropological Association has recently gone as far as officially celebrating the memory of President Obama’s mother, an anthropologist who worked for USAID, an agency correctly interpreted as an arm of US intervention and destabilization around the world.

- 2 There is a much broader question here of North American socialization patterns that grant “science” (natural science, positivism, experimentation, numbers) an iconic value, even reflected in some children’s games where they mimic caricatures of scientists. This is largely beyond the scope of this chapter, except to say that the practice of military technocrats to sound as “scientific” as possible will have some unconscious resonance with sectors of the population. More importantly, science becomes associated with acceptance of, and obedience to the status quo, while criticism of the status quo will be automatically dubbed as “ideological”.
- 3 The website for “100,000 Strong for the Americas” can be found at <http://www.100kstrongamericas.org/100000-strong-explained>
- 4 <http://www.100kstrongamericas.org/get-involved-opportunities>
- 5 Partners of the Americas presents a brief history of the organization at <http://www.partners.net/partners/History.asp>
- 6 <http://www.partners.net/partners/Overview12.asp>
- 7 Alliance for Affordable Internet:  
<http://www.state.gov/s/partnerships/releases/reports/2015/238828.htm#A4AI>
- 8 Details on YALI and the MWF were presented at:  
<http://www.state.gov/s/partnerships/releases/reports/2015/238828.htm#YALI>
- 9 <http://www.state.gov/s/partnerships/achievements/202394.htm>
- 10 <http://www.state.gov/s/partnerships/achievements/202394.htm>
- 11 <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/AboutUs.aspx>
- 12 <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/AboutUs.aspx>
- 13 <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/AboutUs.aspx>
- 14 <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/AboutUs.aspx>

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