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Homeland Threats in the Fourth Generation of Warfare and the Case for a Department of Homeland Security Human Intelligence Program

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All planning, particularly strategic planning must pay attention to the character of contemporary warfare."—Clausewitz, *On War*

Enduring effects of the Peace of Westphalia included the rise of a European sovereign nation-state system and the origins of contemporary international order[1]. It was the genesis of the western civilization's nation-state, national sovereignty and the eventual norms of international law which rested on the equilibrium in the geopolitical national balance of power[2]. It also led to the growth of military technology and provided nation-states the ability to "advance policy by other means"[3] and to the eventual development of operational art. This martial

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evolution has been described as "generational."[4] The First Generation of Warfare (1GW)—massed linear forces; Second (2GW)—indirect use of firepower/artillery, Third (3GW)—maneuver warfare/*Blitzkrieg;* and the Fourth (4GW)—described as an advanced transnational and/or non-state insurgency using all available elements of power to defeat nation-states. The 4GW concept manipulated the nation-state reliance on the Clausewitz Trinity paradigm of balance between a nation-state's people, government and military to achieve their objectives.[5] This is the contemporary method of warfare favored by transnational Islamist groups, criminal organizations and drug trafficking organizations.

The intent of this essay is to address the concept of 4GW and the associated threats to the U.S. Homeland and to offer a proposal for an intelligence platform, based on Human Derived Information (HDI), to counter these emergent threats. In order to examine and analyze this threat, I will first define what 4GW actually means and provide examples of asymmetric tactics and how these tactics evolved into 4GW. This essay will specifically examine violent Islamic Jihad organizations, transnational criminal organizations (TCO), and transnational drug trafficking organizations (DTO), and will offer a brief look at the global ground gained by 4GW practitioners in the Middle East, African and the Americas. I will conclude with an HDI-driven proposal, based on an existing initiative, to counter these emergent threats in the U.S. Homeland. This existing initiative can be restructured to counter the decentralized strengths of 4GW, while not creating another onerous level of bureaucracy or risk infringement on U.S. civil rights.

Defining the 4GW Threat: The Blurred Lines between Crime and Terrorism

To begin, what is 4GW and how is it different from previous experiences of the U.S. with the tactics of asymmetric warfare? The use of asymmetric tactics in warfare is nothing new and the significance of 4GW is not necessarily the tactics used but rather the notion that warfare is no longer advancing policy between nation-states[6]. Non-state actors are also achieving the strategic effects once reserved only for nation-states and these non-state actors are not interested in negotiating policy. Essentially, 4GW, practiced by an emerging trifecta of transnational threats of Islamic extremists, TCOs and DTOs, is a devolution of warfare back to a pre-Westphalian state of affairs[7]. Accordingly, regional security affairs must now consider the possibility of viewing non-state actors and the alliances between the three as potential principals in regional security considerations. These groups include the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIS) advancing the strategic objective of an Islamic Caliphate as well as Latin American-based TCOs and DTOs, systemically advancing criminal enterprise and in the process turning nation-states into "narco-states".

Non-state 4GW practitioners understand Western strategic and cultural principles, including the importance of manipulating the Clausewitzian Trinity[8]. Western military doctrine and even sensitive intelligence methods are available on the Internet and are commonly circulated in extremist literature, such as *Inspire*, an internet-based "how to" Al Qaeda publication. These non-state actors, particularly Islamic extremists, are aware of Clausewitz, Mao and Sun Tzu and, after 12 years of war with the US, it is reasonable to conclude Islamic extremists have learned US military and political doctrine to anticipate countermeasure in a multitude of likely scenarios. Specifically, Islamic extremists seem to understand US political considerations when planning military operations towards maintaining the Clausewitzian paradigm of balance between People, Military and Government. [9] They seek to manipulate that paradigm towards a non-Trinitarian model of 4GW, effectively countering the strengths of nation-states and their center of gravity (COG).[10] For example, Al Qaeda affiliates identified U.S. COGs as the economy and population[11]. They pursued attacking the economic aspect with the 9/11 attacks and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have affected American public opinion. In addition, Internet radicalization of American citizens, including former U.S. Army Major Nidal Hassan illustrates the emerging threat of Homegrown Violent Extremism (HVE)[12].

"Evolved insurgency"[13] has been used to describe 4GW, but it is much more complex and comprehensive than that. Prior to the advent of 4GW, the 20th century world witnessed the political and military tactics of insurgency inspired by tacticians such as Mao Zedong, who coined the term "People's War" and challenged the notion of the Clausewitz Trinity. Practitioners of 4GW employ Mao's principles of "People's War" and use them to alter the nation-state concept. From an extremist Salafist Islamic standpoint, there is no interest in a hypothetical "Al Qaedastan" peacefully coexisting in the community of nations; rather, extremist Salafists are interested in a pan-Salafist Caliphate without regard for national borders. This objective is currently being realized in the Levant and Middle East, where Salafists from all over the world, fighting together, control the Al Anbar region of Iraq to portions of Syria—effectively controlling the ground from the western suburbs of Baghdad to the shores of the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, Mexican and Central American DTOs and TCOs have systemically corrupted governments throughout Latin American including Mexico, Honduras and El Salvador, creating a regional instability that has even made its way into the US.[14]

The theory of generational warfare and specifically 4GW was first submitted by John Lind, with his 1989 Marine Corps Gazette article "The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation." It evaluated the history and qualitative development of military and national capabilities into contemporary operational art[15]. As a distinct warfare theory, 4GW has been disregarded by some scholars, including Dr. Antulio J. Echevarria II of the U.S. Army's Strategic Studies Institute, who believe it detracts from developing theories more helpful in understanding of how the enemy thinks and acts. In his 2005 paper "Fourth Generation Warfare and Other Myths", Echevarria wrote:

> There is no reason to reinvent the wheel with regard to insurgencies—super or otherwise—and their various kin. A great deal of very good work has already been done, especially lately, on that topic, to include the effects that globalization and information technologies have had, are having, and are likely to have, on such movements. We do not need another label, as well as an incoherent supporting logic, to obscure what many have already made clear. The fact that 4GW theorists are not aware of this work, or at least do not acknowledge it, should give us pause indeed. They have not kept up with the scholarship on unconventional wars, nor with changes in the historical interpretations of conventional wars. Their logic is too narrowly focused and irredeemably flawed. In any case, the wheel they have been reinventing will never turn.

Six years after Echevarria's paper was submitted, the so-called "Arab Spring" and subsequent nation-state implosions throughout the Middle East and Africa seemed to contradict the author's conclusions. These implosions were galvanized through grassroots political activism and the use of social media's Twitter and Facebook[16] and "citizen journalists" provided updates to the world through You Tube. Many believe the Arab Spring was good example of the non-Trinitarian concept of 4GW war, first espoused by Lind. Since the 2011 beginning of the Arab Spring, Libya has devolved into chaos; the Government of Syria, aided by the Government of Iran and Hezbollah, are trying to survive an international confederation of militant Salafists led by Al Qaeda-affiliate ISIS (formerly Al Qaeda in Iraq), which now dominates the Al Anbar region of Iraq—spanning from the western suburbs of Baghdad through to Syria.[17]

Moreover, Abu 'Ubeid al Qurashi, a former aide to Usama bin Laden, wrote an essay titled "Fourth Generation Wars" for the now defunct online magazine *Al Ansar: For The Struggle Against the Crusader War*. Qurashi opined that 4GW theory was taken seriously by Al Qaeda leadership and believed that wars in the fourth generation were already taking place and had shown that "the superiority of the theoretically weaker party had already been proven." He showed a familiarity with the concepts of Mao Zedong and Karl von Clausewitz and the importance of popular support in meeting

strategic goals, using the 2000 Palestinian Intifada as example. Qurashi's essay also included the following excerpt:

> The time has come for the Islamic movements facing a general crusader offensive to internalize the rules of fourth-generation warfare. They must consolidate appropriate strategic thought, and make appropriate military preparations. They must increase interest in Da'wa [proselytizing], and recruit the peoples' public and political support. In addition to the religious obligation, this has become an integral part of the means to triumph in fourth-generation warfare. Old strategists, such as [von] Clausewitz and Mao Zedong, have already indicated this. Perhaps the best example is the phenomenon of the intifada, which wiped out the Zionist military's mighty superiority over the Muslim Palestinian people.

It is interesting to note that copies of Lind's 1989 article "The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation of Warfare" were found by U.S. forces in the caves of Tora Bora subsequent to the 2002 escape of Al Qaeda's leadership to Pakistan.[18] The discovery of his article in the possession of Al Qaeda leadership suggests the highest levels of Al Qaeda had indeed studied the theory and makes one wonder why 4GW should not be considered relevant (according to Echevarria) to begin with.

4GW in the U.S. Homeland

The advent of 4GW is a global threat not limited purely to Islamic extremists. There is no longer a clear division between Islamic extremism, TCOs and DTOs. According to Michael Braun, a former assistant administrator and chief of operations with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Hizb'Allah "uses the same criminal weapons smugglers, document traffickers and transportation experts as the drug cartels to enter the U.S. from the southern border." And according to 2009 testimony to the House Armed Services Committee, Admiral James G. Stavridis, then-commander of U.S. Southern Command, testified that the nexus "between illicit drug trafficking, including routes, profits, and corruptive influence and Islamic radical terrorism" are growing threats to the U.S. [19]

Since Echevarria's paper , areas of Honduras, El Salvador and Mexico have fallen into chaos due to increasing transnational criminal influences; particularly the cash-flush DTO insurgency. Since 2006, fighting between DTOs and the Government of Mexico has killed over 60,000 people, leading some to wonder if Mexico is falling into failed state status[20] Indeed, the Mexican border city of Ciudad Juarez, directly facing El Paso, Texas is considered more dangerous than Baghdad and some consider it the world's most dangerous city[21]. Stray bullets from Juarez-based violence routinely fall on the U.S. side of the border. Additionally, U.S. Border Patrol agents have been shot at and even detained by individuals wearing Mexican Army uniforms, driving Humvees and who have possibly been coopted by DTOs to guard drug shipments into the US[22]. This presents a deeply troubling and significant development in 4GW, where the tail is now wagging the dog on the southern border of the U.S with no short term changes in sight.

Connect the Dots—Address the Threat Comprehensively

By increasing information dominance through additional intelligence capabilities, 4GW can be countered within the U.S. Homeland. There is a need for a domestic, field-based intelligence organization, based on current federal and Intelligence Community (IC) doctrine. However, this organization, while centrally managed, would be flexible enough to allow employees maximum operational initiative. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), according to this author, is currently the closest

organization to meet this paradigm. The USCG regularly handles both Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Defense (DOD) missions. The development of a non-law enforcement (LE) equivalent, within the US, that can provide the same type of flexibility between homeland security (HS) and homeland defense (HD) overt intelligence collection would provide information dominance within the U.S. Homeland.

This enterprise can be developed with infrastructure already fielded through the DHS-State and Local Fusion Center (SLFC) Network initiative. Regional fusion centers have shared criminal intelligence amongst state and local Law Enforcement Organizations (LEOs) for years. This intelligence includes LE relationships with recent immigrant populations, with possible access to TCOs, such as MS-13 and/or DTOs operating in the U.S. Homeland, including Los Zetas and the Sinaloa Cartel[23]. The post 9/11 DHS effort to leverage intelligence from fusion centers towards a common operating picture with the IC was an excellent suggestion. And the LE and the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) have made great strides in sharing information and collaboration. However, while the DHS-SLFC collaboration has been online for almost ten years, it has not matured to where it should be by now. During 2006 congressional testimony, then-DHS Undersecretary for Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) Charles E. Allen provided his goals for the DHS and its mission with the SLFC Network included:

- Improved information flow from State and Local entities to DHS
- Improved situational awareness at the Federal level
- Improved access to Local officials
- Consultation on State and Local issues
- Access to non-traditional information sources
- Clearly defined information gathering requirements
- Improved intelligence analysis and production capabilities
- Improved intelligence/information sharing and dissemination capabilities
- Improved prevention, protection, response and recovery capabilities.[24]

Access to non-traditional information sources is a fundamental strategy for countering 4GW in the U.S. Homeland and formally developing this aspect of DHS-SLFC through formal policy, both internally and interagency, can easily take this organization from its current status to a new level of IC relevance. However, to change the DHS-SLFC status quo will require a significant investment of time, resources and creativity for this unique opportunity to be successful. This is a politically sensitive undertaking, one in which both civil liberties and operational authorities need to be clearly understood.

The routinely interwoven intersection of transnational crime and intelligence are fundamental towards meeting mission objectives. Good judgment and experience are both key in operating within the domestic environment. Indeed, not understanding the DHS I&A mission has already caused embarrassing missteps with this SLFC engagement.[25] In 2007, DHS was named by Congress as the lead federal partner to the SLFC Network, deploying intelligence personnel throughout the country to partner with SLFC staff. The concept made sense and on a surface level is similar to this essay's proposal[26].

A proposed solution is an organizational reassessment of the DHS and SLFC engagement strategy, including a top-to-bottom organizational review and comprehensive net assessment of what is devoted to the DHS-SLFC engagement and how to best leverage those existing resources. This review should be directly led by career intelligence officers, with extensive experience in Human Intelligence (HUMINT) collection, as well as career LE officers. Both of whom would serve as Subject Matter Experts

(SME), providing both HUMINT and LE doctrinal aspects of the Intelligence-Operations paradigm of operational success. This SME review would also be used in the formulation of policies and internal instructions, specifically intended enact Executive Order (EO) 12333 and Intelligence Community Directive (ICD) 304, which provide DHS the overall Executive level and IC authorities. Properly codified, these documents can provide a well regulated, trained and flexible organization that can be value added to the IC.

The result of this work would be a DHS Human Derived Information (HDI) enterprise. An enterprise grounded with a clear mission that will be undertaken only with clear organizational doctrine, Director of National Intelligence recognized training curricula and extensive training in civil liberties and other DHS specific requirements. Codifying the elements of organizational structure will fully leverage the unique placement and responsibilities of DHS HDI personnel providing intelligence collection support to national decision-makers within the Homeland. DHS I&A can do its part to fully leverage its role as the lead federal partner to the SLFC network by strategically adapting its approach to the threat. The HDI enterprise can fill the gap between established SLFC-based jurisdictions and "connect the dots" to HS, HD and IC requirements, providing information dominance on emerging threats to the Homeland with a resilience-based approach to the complexity of 4GW.

The proposed HDI concept, in a way, is analogous to Eschevaria's 4GW criticism. The DHS HDI is a concept already taken by other federal organizations, such as the FBI and ICE/HSI. They have done it longer, have a clear mission and have numerous success stories. However, while it is true that these agencies do excellent investigative and national security work, they are criminal investigators. DHS HDI would be focused purely on transnational and foreign intelligence *collection*. This would be a truly unique organization, complementing both the HD and HS missions. Additionally, it would not be an investigative organization nor would it have any type of LE authorities. Moreover, just as Eschevarria's paper did not foresee the dramatic global changes due to 4GW, naysayers for this type of organization may not foresee the overall complexity of emergent 4GW transnational threats and the need to for vigilance. Transnational terrorism, drug enforcement, influence operations, cyber threats, gang activity and human trafficking are all present within the SLFC operating environment.

DHS as the lead federal partner of the SLFC network has an obligation to develop this program to meet the standards set for forth by Mr. Allen—to "connect the dots" and prevent 4GW from further degrading the security of the U.S. This enterprise will be properly developed through strong leadership and well-developed doctrine, reflecting a strategic adaptation to the current Homeland operating environment and carefully balancing the collection mission with the foundation of what they are guarding to begin with: the freedoms and civil liberties of the U.S., the same freedom and liberties manipulated by 4GW practitioners.

The difficult aspects of this proposal are cultural. Bureaucracies are known as many things but institutional creativity, flexibility and forward-leaning are not usually associated with them. Historically, DOD senior leadership has been accused of planning for the last war, rather than critically thinking about the next. That paradigm is likely also true for non-DOD agencies. However, that "next" war or campaign is already being fought—sometimes in the shadows and sometimes with obscene levels of asymmetric violence—and what is currently in place could do much more with no more effort than what is already being expended.

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[2] Ibid.

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