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HELLFIRE AND GREY DRONES: AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF TARGETED KILLINGS

by

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A THESIS

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HELLFIRE AND GREY DRONES: AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF TARGETED KILLINGS

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University of Nebraska, 2011

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This study examines the effectiveness of the United States' targeted killing program. Specifically, do targeted killings work as an effective program for combating global terrorism? This thesis is divided into parts. The first section provides a brief introduction to targeted killings. The second part consists of an examination of targeted killings as an essentially contested concept, arguing that targeted killings can be defined in a manner consistent with the scientific enterprise. The third section contains a thorough review of the literature on targeted killings, demonstrating that there is a dearth of works investigating the actual effectiveness of targeted killings. The fourth portion outlines the methodologies chosen for this endeavor – a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The fifth part provides the descriptive and predictive results of the statistical analyses conducted in the course of this study. It is found that the statistical data provides mixed results concerning the effectiveness of targeted killings. The sixth section contains the qualitative data uncovered in the authors' research. The qualitative information provides strong support to the view that targeted killings are an effective method for combating terrorist groups. The final chapter consists of an analysis of the results, thoughts on future research and methodologies, and policy recommendations.

To Bekah, my family, and friends

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The use of targeted killings by state actors against non-state actors has become a contentious issue in the United States' "War on Terror." The debates surrounding targeted killings appear to center around three main issues. Firstly, there are debates concerning the normative implications that arise from the utilization of targeted killings by states. Secondly, both international law and domestic laws play a strong role in the debate over targeted killings. Finally, empirical questions concerning the effectiveness of targeted killings come into play in the debate over targeted killings. Unfortunately, this last debate seems to have been the least examined.

A Gap in the Literature

Whilst there has been a vast quantity of research produced on the subject of targeted killings, the specific focuses of the literature published on the topic have been unbalanced in their levels of attention. For example, whilst there is a body of research on the historical usage of targeted killings in their research, much of the literature has focused mainly upon the Israeli usage of targeted killings, to the neglect of other similar programs (Ben Naftali, 2007; Cohen & Shany, 2007; David, 2003a; Gross, 2003; Kasher & Yadlin, 2005; etc.). Furthermore, a great deal of the literature has consisted of normative arguments for and against the utilization of targeted killings as an instrument of state security (Stein, 2003; Hitz, 2002; Lang, 2008, etc.). In addition, a massive volume of legal scholarship has been produced on the topic, even surpassing the number of normative works on the topic (Ratner, 2008; Casey, 2005; Downes, 2004; Solis, 2007; Guiora, 2004; Eickenspahr, 2003). Unfortunately, the least researched portion of the literature has been that of empirical tests of the effectiveness of targeted killings. In

regards to the American case in particular, there has been a particular lack of research into the effectiveness of the program, with almost exclusive attention being placed upon testing the effectiveness of the Israeli program. Thus, the goal of this study is to rectify this situation by providing the first systematic examination and empirical test of the United States' targeted killing program, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The Importance of Empirical Testing of the Efficacy of Targeted Killings

The question of whether or not targeted killings are an effective strategy for combating terrorism is not simply a question limited to the domain of the Ivory Tower. Indeed, the findings of such a study have inherent policy ramifications as well. Firstly, if targeted killings were found to be ineffective, or to be positively related to an increase in terrorist attacks, then the need for the continuance of the program would be called into question. On the other hand, if targeted killings were found to decrease the occurrence of terrorist attacks, and were found to inhibit the operations of a terrorist group's leadership, then it would be considered imprudent to cease targeted killing operations. Secondly, an empirical test of the effectiveness of US-conducted targeted killings would fill a gap in the literature, and provide a new avenue for dialogue for political theorists and international lawyers engaged in the targeted killings debates. Finally, such a study would provide the perfect avenue for a side-by-side comparison/test of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Specifically, it would be interesting to examine whether said methodologies would come to the same conclusions in their respective tests, or if different methodologies would find different results. Furthermore, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods would strengthen any study's findings, due to their

inherently complementary nature. Whilst statistical methods may assist with the large-*n* of the study and the quest for statistical rigor, they lack the depth and detail needed for an in-depth analysis of the inner workings of terrorist organizations. The addition of qualitative data and analysis into the study makes up for said concerns by allowing one to interpret the behavior of terrorist leaders, through the utilization of data from news sources, etcetera. In summary, an empirical test of the effectiveness of targeted killings would assist in filling a major gap in the literature, and would provide data for policy formation to government and military officials.

Towards this goal, this study attempts to fill the abovementioned gap in the literature through the usage of a mixed-methods research design. Both statistical and qualitative methods are taken in hand for empirically testing the effectiveness of the United States' targeted killing program from 2004 to 2009. The remainder of this chapter outlines the form of this thesis.

Looking Ahead

Chapter 2 of this study examines targeted killings as an essentially contested concept. The chapter demonstrates that the key point of contestation in the literature is definitional in nature. Specifically, are “targeted killings” the same thing as political assassinations? This chapter briefly outlines the history of the term, and demonstrates that “targeted killings” has become an “essentially contested” concept. Through the necessary and sufficient conditions perspective as outlined by Giovanni Sartori (1971) and William Connolly (1974), this chapter also addresses the appraisive dimension of targeted killings. In addition, the Family Resemblance Concept approach associated with Gary Goertz (2006) is assessed, and found to be inapplicable in these definitional debates.

Finally, utilizing the necessary and sufficient conditions as outlined by Sartori (1971), this chapter provides a definition of targeted killings which is both value neutral, and is distinguished from the concept of political assassination.

Chapter 3 of this study consists of a comprehensive review of the four streams of literature pertaining to targeted killings. Firstly, there are historical studies of the use of targeted killings. Secondly, there are debates concerning the normative implications that arise from the utilization of targeted killings by states. Thirdly, there is a plethora of work on how international and domestic laws play a role in targeted killings. Finally, there are empirical and methodological pieces concerning targeted killings. In conclusion, this literature review attempts to tackle this leviathan through investigating the historical, normative, legal, and empirical/methodological literatures on the subject.

Chapter 4 provides the research design and methodology utilized in this study. This examines concerns related to investigating the empirical effectiveness of targeted killings. Specifically, this focuses upon the case of the American program. This chapter also explains the manner in which the dataset utilized in this was constructed. Furthermore, this chapter addresses methodological concerns pertaining to gauging the effectiveness of targeted killings by explicating the manner in which mixed-methods are utilized in this study.

Chapter 5 presents the statistical results derived from the database of United States conducted targeted killings produced for this study. An analysis of the results is also provided.

Chapter 6 contains a qualitative evaluation of the United States' targeted killing program. Particular attention is paid to statements made/leaked from Al-Qaeda and

Taliban sources to locality-specific media sources.

Chapter 7 provides a comprehensive evaluation of this study's findings. The results of the statistical and qualitative data are compared. Furthermore, suggestions for future courses of research on this topic are put forth. Finally, this section provides policy recommendations.

Conclusion

In summary, whilst a great deal of research has been produced on the topic of targeted killings over the past decade, the scope of the literature has been unbalanced. The overwhelming majority of works on the matter have been historical, normative, or legal in nature. On the other hand, very little work has been done to test the effectiveness of targeted killings. Furthermore, the empirical tests that have come forth have almost exclusively focused upon the Israeli's targeted killing program. Hence, this study attempts to fill this void in the literature through the production of a mixed-methods research program which gauges the effectiveness of the United States' targeted killing program from 2004 to 2009. In conclusion, this study's scope is not limited to scholarly interest, its findings also provide important data for policymakers.

Chapter 2: What is a Targeted Killing?

The debates surrounding the utilization of targeted killings by the US and Israeli governments are among some of the most heated arguments between members of both the academic and policy communities. Arguably, the key point of contestation is definitional in nature. Specifically, are “targeted killings” the same thing as political assassinations? The first section of this chapter demonstrates that “targeted killings” has become an “essentially contested” concept in the current state of the literature. The second area of the chapter takes into account concerns pertaining to the appraisive dimension when defining targeted killings. The third section examines whether or not the Family Resemblance Concept approach as outlined by Goertz (2006) is applicable in these debates. The fourth portion utilizes a form of the necessary and sufficient conditions as outlined by Sartori (1970), and demonstrates that it is possible for scholars to arrive at a definition of targeted killings which is both value neutral and distinguishes the aforementioned concept from political assassination. The final portion of the chapter assesses the scientific utility of the new formulation of the concept.

An Essentially Contested Concept?

William Connolly explains that an essentially contested concept is one in which “the concept involved is *appraisive*...is *internally complex*...and the agreed and contested rules of application are relatively *open*” (emphases in original) (1974, p.10). An examination of the literature makes it apparent that the term “targeted killings” is an essentially contested concept. A key problem in the literature is the fact that the various normative values held by scholars have had a strong influence in the way that they define targeted killings. In general, there are two main debates in the literature concerning the

definition of targeted killings. Firstly, there have been arguments over whether or not a “targeted killing” is the same thing as a political “assassination” (Downes, 2004; Fisher, 2007; Lotrionte, 2003; Ratner, 2007; Solis, 2007). Secondly, the conceptual debates have contested whether targeted killings are within the domain of law-enforcement or warfare, due to conflicts over whether terrorism is a criminal act or an act of war (Gross, 2006; Machon, 2006; Osiel, 2009; Ratner, 2007). Thus, if terrorism is a criminal act, then targeted killings are an illegal method of law enforcement; whilst if terrorism is an act of war, then targeted killings is simply a military tactic. As one shall see, “targeted killings” is indeed an essentially contested concept.

There has been a strong debate concerning whether or not targeted killings mean the same thing as political assassinations. Scholars such Frederick Hitz argue that targeted killings are the same thing as political assassination, pointing to the US Executive Order 12,333, which prohibits the use of assassination, as a source of support (2002, pp. 774-777). Said order came about during the 1970s in response to the public disclosure of the excesses of the Kennedy administration and its repeated attempts to kill political officials such as Fidel Castro (pp. 774-777). On the other hand, scholars such as Gary Solis argue that the aforementioned executive order does not apply to targeted killings, since the order solely addresses the killing of government officials (2007, p. 134; Lotrionte, 2003, p. 76). Some military scholars have argued that targeted killings may be misinterpreted as being political assassinations due to the fact that “during an armed conflict, self-defense is a political purpose” (Kasher and Yadlin, 2005, p. 55). Thus, there have been a series of debates concerning whether or not there is a distinct legal difference between political assassinations and targeted killings.

Arguably, political assassinations and targeted killings are two different acts in an objective legal sense. Firstly, one must take into consideration the military component of a state as well when formulating such a concept. It is well known that it is not a concern of law if one were to kill an active member of a state's military during a conflict. Since the military is an armed entity as a whole, and its purpose is to inflict damage upon the enemies of its state, members of a state's military have generally been considered legitimate targets for elimination. Amos Guiora (2004) and Gary Solis (2007) both note that under customary (and treaty) international law and conventions, civilians who actively take part in hostilities are considered to be combatants. Secondly, it becomes apparent from traditional understandings of international law that assassinations are customarily meant to refer to the killing of heads of government and officials of the government (David, 2003; Lotrionte, 2003).

Thus, one can extract a few key truths from the conflicting connotations. First, assassinations have traditionally meant the killing of non-military members of the government. Secondly, the killing of military officials of a state with which one is at war has never been considered (in a legal sense) an assassination. Thirdly, civilians have been considered to be combatants legally on par with military forces when they begin to take part in hostilities. Since non-state actors are by their very nature not a part of the government, it follows that the killing of a member would not be considered to be an assassination in a legal sense. Even if the formerly recognized government of a state has collapsed, under customary international law, a non-state actor could not be considered to be a government, unless it becomes recognized as such by another state or a body such as the United Nations. Since those whom are actively involved in hostilities lose their

protections as civilians in such cases, it becomes apparent that they make themselves legitimate targets for other belligerents. Furthermore, killing a member of an armed non-state actor would legally be on par with killing a member of a state's military, since members of the military do not receive any special legal protections in regards to attempts on their lives. Thus, there is a distinct difference between assassinations and targeted killings. Whilst assassinations pertain to the killing of non-combatant members of a government, targeted killings refer to the killing of specific, non-government affiliated individuals engaged in warfare.

There has been a rather robust debate concerning whether targeted killings fall in the domain of warfare or law enforcement. Scholars such as Steven Ratner make the case that terrorists are "quasi-civilians" and that targeted killings constitute "extrajudicial killings" under the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (2008, p. 258). Yael Stein also implies that terrorists should be punished in a court of law (2003, pp. 132-133). Legal scholars, such as Solis, remind us that the definition of "civilian" under international law is not necessarily to be interpreted as meaning "noncombatant" (2007, pp. 134-136). Guiora provides similar results, utilizing the Geneva Conventions, explaining that terrorists are "combatants minus any insignia" (2004, p. 331). In the Israeli case, their Supreme Court has found that civilians lose their legal protections when they take "direct part in hostilities" under the Geneva and Hague conventions (Ben-Naftali & Michaeli, 2007, p. 61). Anthony Lang (2008) argues that programs such as targeted killings are only justifiable if they are sanctioned under a collective international system in which states would have "adjudicating responsibility" (pp. 510-511). Tamar Meisels argues that targeted killings are a form of warfare utilized for preventing or

disrupting future attacks (2004, p. 307). Thus, it is not a form of punishment in response to a criminal act (p. 306). However, some argue that killing terrorist leaders is morally permissible, but killing the leadership of rogue regimes is not (Thomas, 2005, p. 38). Thus, it appears that the debates concerning the connotative dimensions of the concept of targeted killings may continue without end.

In conclusion, the self-contradictory assertions found among the works in the literature demonstrate that “targeted killings” is an essentially contested concept. Scholars have thus far not been able to come to an agreement concerning whether or not targeted killings constitute political assassinations. Furthermore, academics have been unable to come to an agreement upon whether or not targeted killings are an action of law enforcement or warfare.

The Current State of the Term

Considering the literature reviewed above, it becomes apparent that a veritable plethora of terms have been associated with targeted killings (see Figure 1). Some have utilized the term, “extrajudicial,” in their attempts to define targeted killings. Furthermore, such attempts have worked to link targeted killings and law enforcement. In regards to the appraisive dimension, there have been attempts to specify targeted killings with the terms “perfidy,” “revenge,” “punitive,” and “disproportionality.” Many scholars have attempted to separate targeted killings from political assassinations. Such scholars have generally worked to regard targeted killings as a form of “warfare,” as opposed to a matter best left to law enforcement. In regards to the appraisive dimension, scholars in favor of targeted killings have worked to link targeted killings with the terms “responsibility to protect,” “self-defense,” “punishment,” and “prevention.” When one

examines the connotational meanings associated with “targeted killings,” it becomes

Figure 1		Connotations	Denotations	Appraisive Terms from the Literature
		An attack carried out by a state against specific members of an armed non-state group	Any state as the initiator of the attack Any actor as the initiator of the attack	1. Treachery 2. Punitive
		Any attack carried out by any actor against any individual or group of individuals	Any member of an armed-nonstate actor as the target Any individual or group of individuals as the target	3. Revenge 4. Perfidy 5. Responsibility to Protect 6. Self-defense
		1. Assassination	The Israeli government as the initiator	
		2. Extrajudicial Punishment	The US government as the initiator	
		3. Warfare		
		4. Law Enforcement	Hamas members as the target	
		5. Self-defense	Al-Qaeda members as the target	

apparent that said meanings are better viewed as being ontological/constitutive, as opposed to being considered causal/disease-symptom. Specifically, there is no causal relationship to be found among the meanings associated with the concept in question. For example, the act of just simply being a state does not cause a state to attack specific members of an armed non-state actor. Rather, the meanings are better seen as being ontological/constitutive. The actors, actions, and conditions considered necessary for a targeted killing are constitutive, in that the combination of these constitute a targeted killing.

In regards to internal complexity, *portions* of the connotative aspects of the term “targeted killing,” are fairly consistent in the literature. There have been absolutely no debates over the roles the actors play in the operation. All of the literature is in agreement that targeted killings are carried out by state actors against members of armed non-state groups. However, there has been an extreme level of connotational debate concerning whether or not targeted killings are the same thing as assassination and whether or not it is a form of warfare or an (illegal) method of law enforcement.

In essence, the debate concerning the connotative aspects of the concept of targeted killings has centered around the issues of its differentiation from assassination and whether or not it is an act of law enforcement or warfare. As outlined above, states that utilize targeted killings and those scholars who argue in favor of targeted killings hold that targeted killings are a form of warfare. On the other hand, those who argue against targeted killings argue that terrorism is a criminal act, and thus targeted killings constitute an illegal, extrajudicial form of punishment. The entirety of the connotational debate hinges upon this issue.

There has been agreement on the denotative aspects of the term “targeted killings” in the literature. The initiator referents in all cases have been the United States and Israel as the initiators, whilst the recipient referents in all cases have been members of armed non-state actors. Presumably, any utilization of such tactics by other states would also qualify as a targeted killing. Thus, there seem to be no cleavages in the academic community concerning the denotative (referent) aspects of the concept.

At issue is the fact that, in the current time period, targeted killings suffers from collective ambiguity. As Connolly explains, collective ambiguity occurs when every scholar ascribes her own meaning to the definition of a term (1974, p. 35). Whilst there has been agreement amongst scholars in regards to the actors involved in targeted killings, there have been issues relating to ambiguity in regards to the appraisive dimension of the term. Specifically, the scholarly community does seem to be in agreement that targeted killings are carried out by state actors against specific members of armed non-state actors. Thus, a non-state actor targeting a member of another non-state actor would not constitute a targeted killing under any conventional take on the concept. However, there has been an extreme level of ambiguity in academia in regard to whether or not targeted killings are morally and/or legally the same thing as political assassination and whether or not it is a law enforcement or military operation¹.

Concerning the Appraisive Dimension

As Connolly states, “essentially contested concepts...are typically *appraisive* in that to call something ‘a work of art’ or a ‘democracy’ is both to describe it and to ascribe a value to it” (1974, p. 22). Arguably, the literature itself provides the greatest evidence

¹ Debates over whether or not a “ticking time bomb” scenario pertains to targeted killings has never been an issue, as the targets have always been high ranking officials who do not actually carry out such attacks.

in favor of not utilizing an appraisive dimension when operationalizing targeted killings. Unsurprisingly, due to the divisive nature of the subject matter, individual authors' operationalizations and categorizations of targeted killings often reflect their own personal biases and predispositions on the issue. In this regard, the connotational aspects of the term "targeted killing" has been the source of debate, whilst the denotational aspects of the term have never been a point of contention. As explained above, many of the terms connotationally associated with targeted killings have been "loaded." Examples would include the arguments that targeted killings are "extrajudicial," "revenge," and "punitive." On the other hand, positive connotations associated with the term include "the responsibility to protect {the citizenry}," "self-defense," and "prevention." Thus, the contestations concerning the appraisive dimension of the term have been inherently based upon normative evaluations of the connotational aspect of the term.

Arguably, it is difficult to tease out where the appraisive debate begins and ends in regards to the connotative and denotative portions of the definition of targeted killings. At issue is the fact that all of the research has focused upon the programs carried out by the United States and Israel. It is quite possible that the biases (whether favorable or not) that each individual holds in regards to the US and Israel could strongly influence their normative views concerning the connotative aspects of the programs in question. Thus, personal biases concerning the denotative referents would inherently bias could bias one's appraisal of the connotative dimension. In addition, the denotational aspects of the targets of such strikes are also at issue. Whether or not the intended target is involved in the military aspects of the group seems to be the key issue. Therefore, much of the concerns pertaining to use of force against members of armed non-state groups is based

upon whether or not they are morally/legally targets. In a similar fashion, assassination is generally considered distasteful, as the targets of assassination are political officials. Hence, it is difficult for scholars to separate the relationship between the connotative and denotative aspects of this particular term under question in regards to its appraisive dimension.

However, scholars must remember that it is in the best interests of the social sciences that normative issues remain outside their scope of examination, for this is that which separates social science from philosophy. Whilst it is difficult to separate one's personal views from their work on any controversial subject, it is still possible. It is with this goal in mind that Sartori outlined the manner in which to properly define concepts through the utilization of necessary and sufficient conditions. Only through the adoption of a normatively-neutral definition of targeted killings can social scientists be able to engage in research into the subject matter virtually free from the constraints of biases. Thus, the appraisive dimension should play absolutely no role in the operationalization of the term. Rather, normative concerns should be dropped in favor of a neutral legal-based operationalization of the term. However, this should in no way be interpreted to mean that the normative dimensions cannot be studied scientifically (see Miller & Jackman, 2004). In fact, the conceptualization of targeted killings which is outlined in the final section of this paper utilizes customary laws and norms as its basis to demonstrate how targeted killings are different from political assassinations. In essence, research into targeted killings has been hampered specifically because scholars have focused so strongly upon the appraisive dimension of the issues.

However, a few key facts may be objectively examined under the appraisive

dimension. As explained in the previous section, norms and laws prohibiting assassination have always and unambiguously been targeted towards preventing the killing of *political officials*, not military officials. In addition, it is also outlined that, under the Hague Convention and the Geneva Convention (including the Additional Protocols), those who take part in hostilities lose their status as civilians. Eickenspahr notes that United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1368 and 1373 “reinforced the right of victims of terror attacks to use lethal force in self-defense, (2003, p. 38). The codification of the status of members of non-state armed groups under international laws pertaining to *military* issues demonstrates that terrorism is more closely linked with acts of warfare than it is with pure criminal enterprises. Furthermore, legal precedents have been set which have interpreted said laws and conventions in the aforementioned manner. Hence, if terrorism constitutes an act of war, then targeted killings is a form of warfare. In such a situation, targeted killings would be consistent with conventional norms regarding warfare. If targeted killings are a tactic of war, then, they are differentiated from political assassinations which have been legally and normatively held as being criminal acts. Thus, it appears that targeted killings can be legally and normatively justified, and differentiated from political assassinations, under conventional thought on subject matters of war and crime.

What of the Family Resemblance Concept?

One may question why the family resemblance concept (FRC) approach to concept formation has not been utilized for examining targeted killings. The issue is that it would be rather difficult to use the FRC approach in the case of targeted killings. In the following paragraphs it is demonstrated why this is the case.

As Goertz explains, the basic level is the key “theoretical” level in which the concept under observation serves as “the noun to which we attach adjectives” (2006, p. 6). Targeted killings do not necessarily fit within the basic level which Goertz speaks of. The examples which Goertz provides of basic level concepts include “corporatism,” “democracy,” and “welfare state.” In addition, his examples of an adjective being attached to a noun at this level include “parliamentary *democracy*” and “democratic *corporatism*” (emphases in original) (p. 6). Targeted killings, unlike the concept of democracy, do not seem to fit in the basic level due to the fact that the term is not as theoretical. In addition, there does not appear to be any logically consistent way to attach adjectives to said noun. One would be unlikely to speak of an “extrajudicial *targeted killing*” compared to a “self-defense *targeted killing*” compared to “a non-state initiated *targeted killing*.” Thus, whilst there are strong debates concerning the concept of “targeted killings,” said concept does not appear to fit within the basic level as elaborated upon by Goertz.

Arguably, the concept of targeted killings would fit on the secondary level as outlined by Goertz. Under such circumstances, it is arguable that the basic level concept would be “warfare” as opposed to “targeted killings” itself. Goertz explains that the secondary level is where we give the concept “its constitutive dimensions” in relation to the basic level term (2006, p. 6). In addition, it is at this level where one examines the “causal mechanisms” (p. 6). Targeted killings could fit on the secondary level since such an operation would be a part of the basic level concept of warfare. However, the concept of targeted killings could not fit within this level due to the fact that the concept of targeted killings does not include causal mechanisms. Thus, targeted killings may

tentatively fit within the secondary level as outlined by Goertz.

To attempt to examine the concept of targeted killings through the FRC approach would be an exercise in futility. As Goertz explains, FRC approach “is in many ways the polar opposite of the necessary and sufficient one” (2006, p. 7). FRC has no necessary conditions, only sufficient conditions (pp. 7, 36). In this line of reasoning, it would not matter which actor was either the recipient or initiator of a strike. In addition, neither would the status of the target as either a military or political official be problematic. Goertz also explains that in order to meet the required sufficient conditions, the *m-of-n* rule must be met, which means that phenomenon under observation must meet or surpass a “minimum threshold” (*m*) of characteristics (*n*) (p. 36). Thus, the sufficient conditions of “state initiator,” “non-state actor,” and “specific target” could be met, but the target could be a “political actor.” The only way that the FRC approach would work in the targeted killing would be if *m* were equal to all of *n*. The FRC approach also holds to substitutability, meaning that a missing “dimension” of a phenomenon can be substituted for in this manner of concept formation (p. 45). To do otherwise would mean that one could never truly differentiate between targeted killings and political assassinations. To utilize the FRC approach in the case of targeted killings would provide nothing new to the literature. Therefore, the only sufficient way to separate “targeted killings” from “political assassinations” would be to utilize the necessary and sufficient conditions frame work as outlined by Sartori.

Targeted Killings and the Ladder of Abstraction

As one can see (Figure 2), the only way to resolve the debates concerning the differentiation of targeted killings and assassination is to utilize the necessary and

Differentiation between Assassination and Targeted Killings						
Assassination:	Initiator	Target	State of War/Hostilities Necessary?	Purpose of the Strike	Real World Examples	
	Any Actor (ex. A State, a group, an individual)	Any Political Actor (ex. A prime minister, a party official, non-combatants, etc.)	No	Political Change, Terror, etc.	The killings of Indira Gandhi, Benazir Bhutto, Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln, etc.	
Targeted Killing:	Initiator	Target	State of War/Hostilities Necessary?	Purpose of the Strike	Real World Examples	
	A State (ex. United States, Israel, etc.)	An individual or group of individuals associated with the armed wing of a non-state actor (ex. Hezbollah)	No	Achieve a Military Objective (eg. Disrupt a group's operations, etc.)	The targeted killings of Sheik Ahmed Yassin, Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi, etc.	

sufficient conditions approach to concept formation. In the following pages, it shall be

demonstrated that how targeted killings can be conceptualized in a manner free from bias. It shall be argued that only necessary conditions can be utilized to conceptualize targeted killings. Furthermore, the rung which targeted killings occupy upon the ladder of abstraction shall be examined. Finally, concerns over the conceptualization of “assassinations” shall be taken into account.

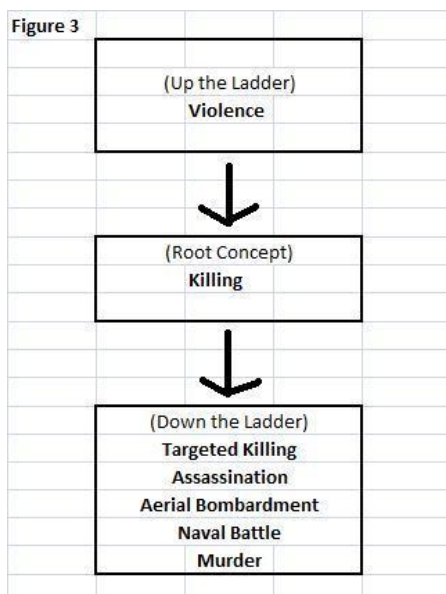
Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Targeted Killings:

1. The act is carried out by a state actor. As the literature demonstrates, the only instances which have been referred to as targeted killings have been those in which the actor which carried out the strike was a state. No piece found in the literature has referred to an attack made by a non-state actor as a targeted killing. Thus, the literature demonstrates that targeted killings inherently refer to acts carried out by a state.
2. The target of the act is an individual actor {or, a small group of specific individuals}. A review of the literature makes it apparent that “targeted killings” refers to an act which targets specific individuals, rather than a group as a whole. Therefore, targeted killings are differentiated from carpet bombings of military bases and set piece battles in the Fulda Gap.
3. The targeted individual actor is a member of a group which is a non-state actor. This differentiation is necessary in order to separate targeted killings from assassinations. If the individual were a political official, then the strike would automatically be categorized as a political assassination.

4. The non-state actor in questions has an armed wing. If the group is not armed, then the protections of the Hague Conventions, the Geneva Convention (and its various Additional Protocols), etcetera would apply to the members of the group.
5. If the group has an affiliated political party, the individual targeted is not an elected official in a government. An attack on a political actor automatically qualifies as a political assassination.
6. Whether or not hostilities are currently underway when the strike occurs matters not. Since a full, official declaration of war does not necessarily exist between the state and non-state actors in question, then (arguably) a state of hostilities between the two parties is in a constant state of existence. Hence, the end of hostilities only occurs when one or both of the parties is either destroyed or dissolved.

As one can see (Figure 3), an examination of the literature presented above indicates that many scholars appear to place assassinations and targeted killings upon the same ladder. Under this conceptualization, “violence,” in all of its various forms, would serve as the highest rung of the ladder. Under this would be the root concept, “killing,” which would include all forms of killing. Thus, there would be no differentiation between murders, warfare, justifiable homicides, etc. Under this rung would be specific acts, such

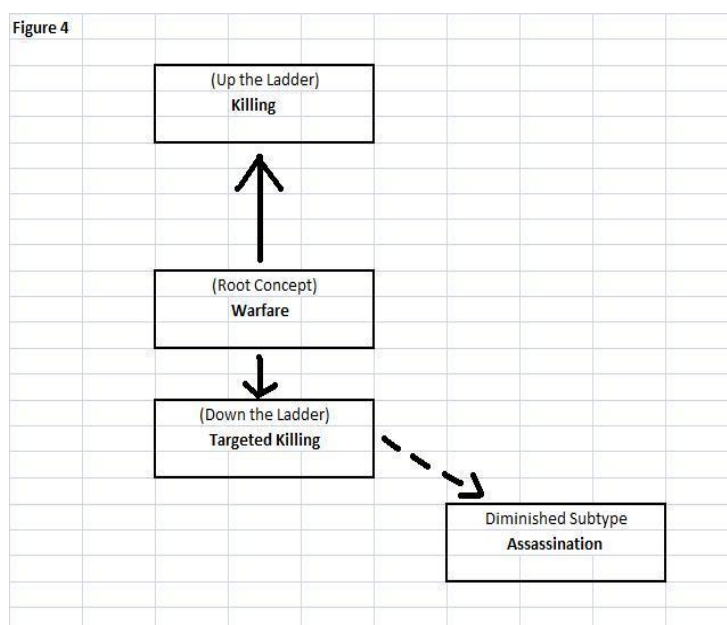
as targeted killings, assassinations, naval battles, etc. Hence, it appears that the implicit



ladder of abstraction which could be culled from the literature places “killing” upon the root concept rung, which therefore leads to the placement of all specific acts of killing being placed upon the rung below the root concept.

As discussed earlier, the examples of targeted killings which have been examined and debated over in the literature have all been the product of state behavior. All of the literature on the topic -- be it normative, legal, or empirical, has made it clear that targeted killings are a tactic solely utilized by state actors. In addition, traditionally, targeted killing incidents have seen members of non-state actors being the targets of such attacks. Thus, a targeted killing would constitute a form of attack conducted by a state actor, and directed towards a member of a non-state entity. Thus, targeted killings are undoubtedly a form of warfare utilized by state actors against members of non-state actors. This would differentiate it from a political assassination, which could be carried out by any form of actor, but would be directed towards an individual who is an official of the state.

This article argues for the ladder of abstraction for targeted killings presented below (Figure 4). In this manner, “killing” would serve as the highest, most general rung upon the ladder of abstraction. Thus, any form of killing whatsoever would in some way fall under this level. However, the next rung down in this examination would be that of “warfare.” Moving down the ladder, one finds the concept of targeted killings as a specific tactic of warfare. This tactic would be differentiated from a standard military attack due to the fact that either a single individual or small group of individuals (say, the leadership of a group) are specifically targeted for elimination, rather than the entire membership of the group in a certain area being the general target for an attack.



Therefore, a targeted killing would be akin to an attempted killing of Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, as opposed to the carpet bombing of an Al-Qaeda training camp. This tactic would also be differentiated from an assassination because members of non-state groups are the targets of targeted killings, whilst individuals whom are members of the government are the targets of assassinations.

Under the ladder of abstraction, a targeted killing would be solely directed towards members of a non-state actor, holding that the non-state actor in question has an armed wing. As the literature presented above demonstrates, targeted killings have generally been directed towards individuals who are members of armed non-state actors. Thus, attacks against an unarmed non-state actor would not constitute a targeted killing. For example, an attack against the leadership of Al-Qaeda would unambiguously constitute a targeted killing. On the other hand, an attack upon the leadership of Greenpeace would be an unambiguous example of state terrorism. Thus, only attacks against members of armed non-state actors would fit within the operationalization of targeted killings.

One may attempt to argue that a potential cause for concern in the ladder of abstraction would be in the case where a non-state entity has both a military component and a civilian political party. However, the configuration under the ladder would still hold true with no real problems. The present configuration holds that there is a difference between killing government officials and those connected with the military apparatus of the non-state actor. Killing a member of non-state actor under such circumstances would in no way be problematic for the definition so long as the individual targeted was not a member of the government at the time the attack occurred. Any attack which would specifically target a member of the group whom was simultaneously a member of the government would automatically constitute an assassination attempt under the current operationalization. Thus, the current configuration of the ladder stands firm against such concerns.

One may ask where the term “assassination” falls on the ladder of abstraction (see

Figure 4). Arguably, there are two places upon the ladder in which assassination may be placed. Assassination could be seen as a “diminished subtype” of targeted killings. The killing of a political actor would be seen as a case which fails to meet the necessary and sufficient conditions of a targeted killing, namely the requirement that the target be a member of the military wing of the non-state actor. Thus, an assassination would fall aside from targeted killings as a diminished subtype. The other way in which one could address the placement of assassination on the ladder would be to place it under a separate root concept run named “murder.” In such a case, assassination would be placed at the same rung on which targeted killings stands on the adjoining ladder. In conclusion, either of the abovementioned placements for the term “assassination” would be sufficient and logically consistent, with no real preference being given to either position.

In conclusion, this reconceptualization of targeted killings allows one to better understand its placement upon the ladder of abstraction. Furthermore, this format allows one to empirically distinguish between targeted killings and assassinations in an objective and norm-free manner.

Conclusion

The new formulation of targeted killings is advantageous for the scientific community for several key reasons. Firstly, the conceptualization delinks targeted killings from the law enforcement paradigm. Since the military and intelligence services are utilized for the purposes of attacking specific members of an armed non-state actor, it becomes clear that targeted killings are a form of warfare utilized by states. Secondly, the new terminology allows scholars to unambiguously differentiate between examples of targeted killings and assassinations, thus ensuring that members of the academic and

policy communities are “speaking the same language.” This has been achieved simply by placing all killings of government political officials within the realm of assassination, whilst simultaneously placing the killing of all individuals connected with non-state armed activities under the heading of targeted killings. Lastly, and flowing forth from the first two, the new differentiation eliminates normative concerns by making it starkly clear which activities are assassination, and which are not, thus preventing scholars from labeling such activities any way they please.

Chapter 3: A Gap in the Literature

The use of targeted killings by state actors against non-state actors has become a contentious issue in the United States’ “War on Terror.” The debates surrounding targeted killings appear to center around three main issues. First, there are debates among ethicists concerning the normative implications that arise from the utilization of targeted killings by states (Stein, 2003; David, 2003b; Hitz, 2002; Lang, 2008; Altman & Wellman, 2008; Dolnik, 2002; Kasher & Yadlin, 2005). For example, is it proper for states to kill individuals whom they deem to be enemies of the state? Or, is it an obligation of states to take all possible actions in order to defend their citizens? Thus, the issue is contested on normative grounds.

Second, both international law and domestic laws play a strong role in the debate over targeted killings (Gross, 2006; Machon, 2006; Melzer, 2008; Osiel, 2009; Ratner, 2007; Casey, 2005; Guiora, 2004; Fisher, 2007; Solis, 2007; Eickenspahr, 2003). For example, is it legal for a state to kill an individual who is not affiliated with the military of another state? What legal issues surround the killing of individuals by one state, on the territory of another state? Could the use of targeted killings violate the domestic laws of a particular state? In summary, a myriad of legal quandaries come forth in this debate.

Finally, empirical questions come to play in the debate over targeted killings (Byman, 2006; Wilner, 2010; Zussman & Zussman, 2006; Jaeger & Paserman, 2007; Hafez and Hatfield, 2006; Jacobson & Kaplan, 2007; Radlauer, 2006; Kober, 2007; Catignani, 2008; Honig, 2008; Ben-Yehuda, 1990). Are targeted killings an effective defense against terrorist attacks? Can targeted killings serve a deterrent role? Is there any way to estimate the effectiveness of targeted killings? Thus, issues concerning empirical evidence and methodology come into play in the debate.

In conclusion, this literature review attempts to tackle this leviathan through investigating targeted killings through the four main streams of the literature. Hence, the first portion of this review examines the historical literature. Afterwards, normative writings are examined. Following this, legal scholarship on the matter is taken into account. Finally, the empirical/methodological literatures on the subject are examined. Hence, this literature review attempts to contribute to the literature as a whole through outlining the current state of the literature and uncovering the gaps in the literature.

Historical Cases of Targeted Killing Programs

While many authors have touched on the historical use of targeted killings in their research, only a scant proportion of the literature focuses specifically on the historical cases of such tactics. Furthermore, much of the literature has focused mainly upon the Israeli program of targeted killings, to the neglect of other similar programs. Thus, this portion of the literature could indeed be improved upon.

As shall be seen below, much of the historical literature has focused upon the targeted killing of important political figures and leaders. An example of this would be the work of Harris Lentz (1988), which consists of paragraph-long entries which highlight the killings of famous individuals from 1865 to 1986. However, other scholars have attempted to provide slightly more in-depth analyses of the predicating events and aftereffects of such assassinations (see Laucella, 1998). Finally, a smaller proportion of the literature has examined historical cases of assassination from a concretely academic perspective. Representative of this part of the literature is the work of Havens, Leiden, and Schmitt (1970) (see also Rapoport, 1971; Kramer, 2004). Such works examine issues such as the problem of defining assassination and calculating the effects of assassination (Havens, et al., p. vii). However, such writings have still focused exclusively on historical cases of assassinations of government officials and political leaders. In addition, they have been extremely general in the geographical and temporal scope of their respective analyses.

The Israelis

A few scholars focused upon specific cases and programs of targeted killings from a historical perspective (Ben-Yehuda, 1990; Palmer-Fernandez, 2000; Tal Tovy, 2009). However, the majority of the works in this category of the historical literature has

been narrowly focused upon a single state – Israel (Ben Naftali, 2007; Cohen & Shany, 2007; David, 2003a). In addition, such examinations have almost exclusively served as preludes to either normative or legal arguments concerning the Israeli program (Ben Naftali, 2007; Cohen & Shany, 2007; David, 2003a; Gross, 2003; Kasher & Yadlin, 2005; etc.).

However, certain information about the Israeli program can still be garnered. First, the Israeli's have utilized killings off and on throughout history. Targeted killings were utilized both in ancient Israel, and by underground groups such as the Hagana (David, 2003a, p. 2; Ben-Yehuda, 1990). Second, the underground groups utilized the Biblical cases of targeted killings as a justification for their use against all enemies (David, pp. 2-3). Targets of Israeli killings have included members of the British occupation forces, Arabs, Nazi-sympathizers living in Israel during the time of the British protectorate, and fellow Jews (Ben-Yehuda, pp. 356, 358, 360). Third, since independence, Israel has continued to utilize killings (p. 3). Fourth, the Israelis prefer to refer to their tactic as either “targeted thwarting” or “interceptions” (David, p. 2). Fifth, a variety of tactics have been utilized in the conduct of targeted killing operations. For example, *Mistar'aravim*, teams of individuals disguised as Arabs, have conducted killings (Catignani, 2005, pp. 64). Uniformed snipers have also been utilized (Bar, 2005, p. 134). Other tactics have included “helicopter gunships, fighter aircraft, tanks, car bombs,” and “booby traps” (David, p. 1). Sixth, the Israelis have begun utilizing targeted killings more frequently since the start of the Second Intifada in 2000 (Henriksen, 2007, p. 22). Finally, the Israeli Supreme Court has ruled that targeted killings are legal under

both Israeli and international law (Fenrick, 2007; Ben-Naftali & Michaeli, 2007; Cassese, 2007; Cohen & Shany, 2007; Ben-Naftali, 2007; Crawford, 2007).

The United Kingdom

There are two key works which have examined the usage of targeted killings of individuals during the conflicts in Ireland during the last century. Palmer-Fernandez (2000) examines British intelligence's utilization of a death squad known as the "Cairo Gang." The group was organized for the purposes of terminating the leadership of Sinn Fein (p. 160). The British plan was for its operatives to dress as civilians and launch a series of coordinated nighttime attacks to kill high-ranking members of Sinn Fein (pp. 160-161). However, the majority of Palmer-Fernandez's article focuses on Sinn Fein's successful counterplot to kill the British operatives before their plans had been realized and the aftermath (pp. 160-162). Sinn Fein was successful in eliminating the operatives, but this resulted in British Army reprisals against Irish civilians (p. 162). Christopher Tuck (2007) has examined more recent cases of the United Kingdom's covert and overt war in Northern Ireland. While he did not specifically address the issue of targeted killings, he does indirectly mention official tactics which seem to border upon being classified as targeted killings. Covert forces were known to have "shot first, and asked questions later" in regards to engaging suspected IRA members "rather than arresting them" (p. 174). The Special Air Service (SAS) was also known for participating in ambushes in theater (p. 175). Thus, the United Kingdom does appear to have utilized targeted killings in the past, but the existence of a contemporary program is in question.

The United States

In a fashion similar to that of the Israeli case, examinations of the historical usage of targeted killings by the United States have focused on the War on Terror and have generally served as backgrounders to either normative or legal arguments (Duffy, 2005; Downes, 2004; etc.). However, the current US targeted killing program was not its first experience with such a program. For example, Tal Tovy provides, arguably, the most thorough and in-depth historical case study of a state's targeted killing program. His case example was the United States' targeted killing program during the Vietnam War, which was codenamed "The Phoenix Program" (2009, p. 1). Through process-tracing, he elaborates on the formation of the program, its implementation, and measurements of its effectiveness (pp. 1-2, 17). It was found that the program was heavily influenced by American insights into the lessons learned from the United Kingdom's earlier campaign in Malaysia and France's war in Indochina (pp. 2, 6). The program was developed due to the purposeful collaboration of military, political, and social science specialists (p. 7). The program was funded by the CIA and executed by US Special Forces and their Vietnamese trainees (pp. 7, 10-11). The purpose of the program was to capture and/or kill individuals whom had been identified by local Vietnamese as being members of the Viet Cong (pp. 13-15). He concludes his work, finding that the program did indeed bring a critical level of harm to the effectiveness and operational scope of the Viet Cong's activities, with upwards of 81,740 VC having been killed between 1968 and 1972 (pp. 17-21).

Thus, the US has had a history of debating the relative merits and legality of targeted killings. For example, the CIA was involved in numerous operations which attempted to kill foreign leaders between the 1950s and 1970s (Hitz, 2002, p. 775). This

led to the “Church Committee hearings” in the US Senate between the years 1975 and 1976 (p. 765). The committee’s findings led to the signing of Executive Order 12,333 by Gerald Ford (p. 765). His successors have not rescinded the aforementioned order (pp. 1, 774-776). This policy has been a continuing influence on US decisions on whether or not to target particular individuals. For example, an American General was relieved of his command in the lead up to the First Gulf War when he suggested that the US would attempt to kill Saddam Hussein (Lotrionte, 2003, pp. 73-74). The executive branch of the US government was adamant in its public statements that it did not condone assassinations (p. 74). Interestingly, the United Kingdom secretly argued in favor of assassinating Hussein (Thomas, 2005, p. 27). However, by the time of the Second Gulf War, the US government had modified its views, and specifically targeted Hussein and the Iraqi leadership for liquidation (Watkin, 2004, p. 8). Hence, the current debates over targeted killings are nothing new in government circles.

In regards to the current program, a great deal of the literature has focused upon one particular case example: the 2003 killing of an Al-Qaeda operative in Yemen (Thomas, 2005; Foot, 2007; Lang, 2008; Fisher, 2007; Hajjar, 2003; Machon, 2006; Plaw, 2007; etc.). However, Kessler and Warner have noted that, as of 2008, the US has “engaged in at least 20 officially acknowledged targeted killing operations in a wide variety of countries, including Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sudan and Iraq” (2008, p. 290). On the other hand, since little is publicly known about other cases, the Yemen example serves as a good case for examining the US program. Unlike the Israeli program, with its diverse assortment of assassination activities, the Yemen

example and other statements by the US government demonstrate that the US program has generally relied upon the usage of missile attacks by aircraft (Machon, p. iii). In particular, the program has relied upon unmanned Predator drones (Henriksen, 2007, pp. 23-24). A noted difference between the Israeli and US programs is that, while the former's program is under the control of the military, the latter's is under the control of the CIA (Ratner, 2008, p. 29; Solis, 2007, p. 130, Plaw, 2007, p. 4). Further elaboration on the program is difficult to do, due to the program's high level of secrecy.

In summary, as important as all of this information is, there are five main weaknesses within the literature, considering the present state of affairs regarding the United States' "War on Terror." Firstly, the majority of the works produced have focused primarily upon the killing of political figures. Whilst there is nothing wrong with this focus, considering previous historical trends, there is a noted lack of a comprehensive historical review of targeted killing programs worldwide. Secondly, the literature has been primarily atheoretical in its approach, mainly consisting of almost completely encyclopedic accounts of assassinations. Only a small proportion has examined the assassinations from theoretical perspectives. A great contribution would be done to the literature if scholars from the realist, liberal, constructivist, and critical perspectives were to produce historical analyses of targeted killing programs, grounded in their respective theoretical heritages. Thirdly, very few works have gone very far in-depth into examining the processes behind state adoption and implementation of targeted killing programs. The majority of papers address history almost solely to provide background for either normative or legal arguments. It would be a worthy addition to the literature if one schooled in policy analysis were to provide a thorough examination of targeted killing

programs. Fourthly, the majority of works have examined the Israeli and American cases, to the almost complete exclusion of other historical examples. The study of targeted killings would be well served by additions concerning the United Kingdom's program, along with similar programs from other states. Finally, the majority of the literature has only utilized historical methodologies, to the exclusion of true process-tracing and quantitative methodologies. Hence, while scholars may learn a great deal from the existing literature, there is still much that could be added.

Normative Implications of Targeted Killings

An examination of the normative literature related to targeted killings demonstrates that the issue of morality plays a key role in the debates. The amount of works on this aspect available to the scholar is only surpassed by that of the applicable legal literature. It becomes apparent that there are two main sub-debates concerning morality. First, scholars have questioned whether or not targeted killings are the moral equivalent of political assassinations. At the same time, academics have struggled over the issue of whether or not targeted killings are morally supported by the Just War Theory.

Several scholars have attempted to argue against the morality of targeted killings, utilizing Just War Theory as the basis for their case (Stein, 2003; Hitz, 2002; Lang, 2008). However, most of the critiques have served as backgrounders for legal arguments. On the other hand, two authors provide relatively in-depth normative arguments against targeted killings in the manner in which they are now conducted. Stein (2003) provides a direct counterattack to the work of David (2003b). Stein argues that the Israeli program does not meet the Just War criteria of proportionality in that approximately 33% of those

killed in targeted killing operations have been “innocent bystanders” (p. 132). Stein also argues that revenge is not a morally justifiable reason for utilizing targeted killings (p. 132). In fact, it is argued that David’s argument concerning revenge could be turned around to justify Palestinian attacks against the Israeli’s (p. 132). Stein also implies that terrorists should be punished in a court of law (pp. 132-133). Hitz (2002) argues that the United States should not adopt a targeted killing program due to the unintended consequence of opening up the American leadership to being the victims of targeted killings themselves (p. 776). He also argues, in regards to the potential killing of rogue leaders, that it is impossible to tell whether or not his successor would be any better or worse (pp. 775-776). Lang (2008) argues that programs such as targeted killings are only justifiable if they are sanctioned under a collective international system in which states would have “adjudicating responsibility” (pp. 510-511). In summary, most scholars can utilize Just War Theory to criticize the morality of targeted killing programs.

However, several scholars have argued in favor of the moral permissibility of targeted killings in the War on Terror (Altman & Wellman, 2008; Dolnik, 2002, Kasher & Yadlin, 2005). Kasher and Yadlin (2005) have argued that targeted killings are morally justifiable under a modified view of Just War. They argue that a state’s primary responsibility is to protect its citizens, and thus, conducting a targeted killing is morally justifiable, even if collateral damage may occur (p. 53). However, this is not meant to mean that a state should not attempt to limit collateral damage (p. 53). The authors address the issue of assassination by explaining that targeted killing may occasionally appear to be the former due to the fact that “during an armed conflict, self-defense is a political purpose” (p. 55). Meisels (2004) argues that unlike conventional wars, it is

impossible for states to engage terrorists in “optimal battle settings” (i.e. solely on the battlefield) (p. 301). Furthermore, she argues that targeted killings are a form of warfare utilized for preventing or disrupting future attacks (p. 307). Thus, it is not a form of punishment (eg. criminal justice), which outside of a trial is immoral to carry out (p. 306; see also Thomas, 2005, p. 35). Anne-Marie Slaughter has gone as far to argue that regime leaders should be targeted for killing under the auspices of the UN Security Council (2003). It is argued that it is more moral to kill one leader than it is to kill another countries soldiers and civilians (p. 72). However, she does not believe that it is morally permissible for states to individually decide to eliminate a regime’s leadership during a war (p. 73).

However, some who argue that killing terrorist leaders is morally permissible, also state that killing the leadership of rogue regimes is not (Thomas, p. 38). David (2003a) argues that, while assassination and targeted killings are different activities, the norm against assassination came about only as late as the 17th century (p. 12). He argues that targeted killings are permissible in that the Israeli program obeys Just War Theory’s preconditions of “discrimination” and “proportionality” (p. 17). In addition, the program is morally justifiable due to the fact that it satisfies the Israeli public’s desire for revenge (pp. 17-18). He states that revenge is morally permissible in the context of war, which is different from “domestic infractions” which are solved “through the rule of law” (p. 17). Thus, while many scholars have utilized Just War Theory to argue in favor of targeted killings, they have not all arrived at complete agreement in regards to the particulars of the complete moral permissibility of all aspects of existing or potential programs.

Some scholars, such as Neta Crawford (2003), have held that Just War Theory does not apply to issues related to the War on Terror. She has argued that Just War Theory is not necessarily a logical manner for states to base their actions on in the War on Terror. She outlines a series of twelve points which demonstrate the problems with Just War Theory (pp. 14-20). Included among these problems are Just War Theory's requirements that war be a state's last resort, whether or not the theory should be applied to actors whom have not adopted the theory, and the requirement that states only engage in wars if they believe that they will be successful (pp. 16-17, 19; see also Dolnik, 2002). Thus, certain scholars have attempted to explain that Just War Theory may not be applicable in the 21st century.

There are four main problems with the existing literature concerning the morality of targeted killings. Firstly, essentially every author, regardless of her position on the issue, has attempted (explicitly or implicitly) to utilize either unmodified or modified forms of Just War Theory to support her argument. While there is nothing inherently wrong with one utilizing Just War Theory, it is arguable that a false consciousness regarding morality has been created within the population of the West due to the prevalence of this theory. It has been, arguably, reified in Western culture as the sole basis of true morality regarding the laws of war. In addition, while it is held up as a "Christian" standard of war due to its initial development by Augustine, the theory does not necessarily reflect the Bible's teachings concerning war (See Deuteronomy Ch. 20; II Samuel Ch. 22). Thus, Just War Theory is not necessarily the Biblical theory of war. Secondly, the all of literature, aside from the work of Slaughter, presupposes that assassination is morally wrong, regardless of the author's respective views on targeted

killings. Again, the ghost of Augustine is likely lingering in the shadows behind this supposition. Thirdly, the literature does not take into account moral arguments from other philosophical traditions, in particular from other Christian scholars (especially from non-Catholics). Finally, much of the literature seems self-contradictory, in regards to its confusion over the differences between law enforcement and wartime morality.

Law and Targeted Killings

The vast majority of research conducted on targeted killings has come from the legal community (Ratner, 2008; Casey, 2005; Downes, 2004; Solis, 2007; Guiora, 2004; Eickenspahr, 2003). The myriad debates concerning the legality of targeted killings can be reduced to the following two main legal perspectives: those whom view terrorism as being governed by criminal law, and those whom view terrorism as being governed by the laws of war. This is the key debate from which all legal arguments on the issue appear to flow.

Gross (2006) notes that the main debate among scholars and policymakers in regards to targeted killings is whether terrorism is a criminal act or an act of war (pp. 323-324; see also Machon, 2006; Melzer, 2008; Osiel, 2009; Ratner, 2007). Those whom argue against the legality of targeted killings, appear to adopt the perspective that terrorism is a criminal act. Ratner (2008) argues that terrorists are “quasi-civilians” and can only be targeted whilst they are physically engaged in attacks (p. 30). Otherwise, they must be captured and placed on trial (p. 30; see also Casey, 2005, pp. 337-338). Scholars operating from this perspective have utilized an eclectic grouping of domestic and international laws to make their arguments. Casey (2005) argues that, in the Israeli case, both parties to the conflict are governed by Geneva Convention IV and the First

Additional Protocol due the Israeli occupation (pp. 318-319). It is argued that targeted killings violate international humanitarian law as laid out in the aforementioned agreements, but do not rise to the level of crimes against humanity as defined by the Rome Statute (pp. 322, 337-343). Ratner (2007) explains that the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) has outlawed the “extrajudicial killing of any individual” (p. 258). Furthermore, “the 1998 Statute of the International Criminal Court, states may not target civilians or civilian objects, and they may not engage in attacks that cannot by their nature distinguish between civilians and combatants” (p. 258). Targeted killing must be utilized as a last resort measure only, if capture is impossible (pp. 274-275). Downes (2004) argues that targeted killings are illegal under any interpretation of international law, regardless of the argument that it is legal under the right to self-defense doctrine of Article 51 of the UN Charter (pars. 21, 30-34). Hitz hints that targeted killings are illegal due to the continued emplacement of Executive order 12,333, which outlawed the use of assassination by the United States (2002, pp. 774-777). It is interesting to note that some scholars who have utilized international humanitarian law to argue against targeted killings have admitted that said laws have traditionally only applied to actions taken by states within their own borders (Ratner, 2007, pp. 261-262).

Some scholars have argued that targeted killings are legal under international law. Such authors have generally viewed terrorism as an act of war, and have thus examined the legality of targeted killings from the perspective of the laws of war. It is argued that terrorists are not to be equated with being civilians. Solis (2007) reminds scholars that the definition of “civilian” under international law is not necessarily to be interpreted as

meaning “noncombatant” (pp. 134-136). Accordingly, terrorists “fit none of the various criteria for prisoner-of-war status contained in 1949 Geneva Convention III” (p. 136). Guiora (2004), utilizing the Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War explains that terrorists are “combatants minus any insignia” (p. 331). Thus, it is argued that criminal law is not necessarily applicable to the disposition of terrorists.

It is also argued that targeted killings and assassinations are not necessarily outlawed under international law. Eickenspahr (2003) argues that targeted killings are not prohibited by either Hague Convention (II) or Additional Protocol I, due to the fact that strikes do not necessarily constitute “treachery” or “perfidy” (pp. 36-37; see also Solis, 2007). Some have also argued that targeted killings are legal under United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1368 and 1373, which “reinforced the right of victims of terror attacks to use lethal force in self-defense (Eickenspahr, p. 38). Gross (2006) explains that international law does not outlaw assassinations; rather, it outlaws “perfidy” (p. 325; Fisher, 2007; see also Guiora, 2004). Neither the “the 1907 Hague Convention on the Laws and Customs of War nor the 1949 Geneva Conventions” specifically prohibit the killing of any combatant or regime leader during a time of war (Lotrionte, 2003, p. 78). The only restrictions on targeted killings would be the prohibitions concerning “treachery,” the cause of “unnecessary suffering,” and “indiscriminate attacks;” which are outlawed by the 1977 Protocols Additional to the Geneva Convention and the Hague Convention (p. 78; see also Plaw, 2007). Finally, it is argued that the Rome Statutes do not apply to targeted killing programs provided that such programs “avoid foreseeable [non-combatant] casualties” (Plaw, p. 12). While some scholars state that the optimal legal option is to arrest such individuals, when terrorists are beyond the

legal jurisdiction of a state or its allies, targeted killings are legal under international law (Solis, p. 136). While all of the aforementioned scholars agree that states can individually utilize targeted killings, one has argued that such programs it must conducted multilaterally to remain legal. Slaughter (2003) supports the usage of targeted killings, but argues that they would only be legal if they were to be authorized by the UN Security Council. Thus, there appears to support from international law in favor of targeted killings.

Some academics have also taken into account applicable domestic laws. Solis (2007) argues that Executive Order 12,333 does not apply to targeted killings, as said order only addresses assassinations of political figures (p. 134). Lotrionte (2003) notes that, while Executive Order 12,333 prohibits assassination, no definition of “assassination” was provided (p. 76). In addition, from the context of the ongoing debates and hearings during the period, it becomes apparent that the order was “intended to prohibit the killing of foreign political leaders as long as the United States was not engaged in armed conflict with the countries of those leaders” (p. 76). Thus, it is argued that there is a distinct legal difference between assassination and targeted killings in domestic US law.

A good proportion of the literature has focused upon the ruling made by the Israeli Supreme Court in regards to the legality of targeted killings under both international and domestic Israeli law. Some scholars have suggested that the most surprising portion of the Israeli ruling was the court’s assertion that targeted killings can sometimes be illegal, and that the Court has the authority to rule on the legality of each killing on a case by case basis (Ben-Naftali, 2007, pp. 328-329, 331). The Israeli

Supreme Court ruled that the state's targeted killing program was legal under both the laws of war and international humanitarian law (Ben-Naftali & Michaeli, 2007, pp. 460-461). Furthermore, the Court ruled that, while the Palestinian militants were not to be considered "unlawful combatants" under the "the Hague Regulations and in the Geneva Convention, they lose their legal protections as civilians during the time in which they take "direct part in hostilities" following the Court's interpretation of "Article 51(3) of Additional Protocol I" of the Geneva Convention (p. 61). This case was the first ruling handed down by any court in regards to Additional Protocol I, thus setting legal precedent (p. 463). Ben-Naftali and Michaeli criticize the Court for not defining more precisely what constitutes "civilians who take direct part in the hostilities" (p. 465, see also Cohen & Shany, 2007).

On the other hand, some scholars have applauded the Israeli court for its eclectic approach to legal reasoning and demonstration of a willingness to review the legality of targeted killings on a case by case basis (Cassese, 2007; Cohen & Shany, 2007; Fenrick, 2007). In fact, Schondorf (2007) argues that the restrictions placed on the Israeli military by the court goes "beyond what is commonly considered to be mandated under this body of law {laws of war and international humanitarian law }" (p. 308). Some have noted the Court's ruling as groundbreaking due to its legal codification of what constitutes proportionality (Cohen & Shany, 2007, pp. 312-318). Thus, legal rulings of the Israeli Supreme Court have received a great deal of attention

Some scholars have argued that the main problem with current debates concerning targeted killings is the legal ambiguity of terrorism. Fisher (2007) argues that

current international law does not truly address targeted killings, considering that the legal community is divided over which laws are applicable (p. 757). It is argued that the legal community must work together to codify new rules to aid and guide state behavior in this new issue area (pp. 757-758). Arend (2003) concludes that “for all practical purposes, the UN Charter framework is dead” due to the fact that it does not take into account issues such as terrorism (pp. 100-102; see also Guiora, 2004). Thus, such scholars conclude that targeted killings are legal under current international law, but it is recommended that the US work with the rest of the international community to develop new rules which reflect the realities of the modern world, but can still govern state behavior (p. 102).

As one can see, there is no lack of legal studies of targeted killings. The main issue to be resolved among legal scholars is the confusion of whether the fight against terrorism is governed by the rules of law enforcement or the rules of war. Furthermore, it becomes apparent that scholars are attempting to make up for the lack of explicit international laws pertaining to combating terrorism by utilizing a veritable hodgepodge of existing laws to make their legal arguments. What is lacking in the legal community are actionable recommendations for creating new international laws which specifically pertain to governing conflicts between state and non-state actors.

Empirical and Methodological Issues Related to Targeted Killings

Arguably, the most neglected part of the literature has been that which examines the empirical effectiveness of targeted killings and methodological issues related to the study of targeted killings. In a fashion similar to that of the historical literature, investigations into the effectiveness of targeted killings have served as small non-

empirical appendages to normative and legal arguments. However, a few scholars have attempted to provide empirical arguments concerning the effectiveness of targeted killings. Such works have utilized methodologies as diverse as case studies, quantitative methods, and game theory. Explicit examinations of the methodological challenges involved with studying this subject, have been lacking in the literature. Thus, the matters of empirical data and methodology are arguably the most fruitful areas for future study and research.

The several studies which have focused upon the effectiveness of targeted killings have utilized case studies as their research method. Daniel Byman (2006) finds that the number of Israelis killed in attacks conducted by Hamas fell each year from 2001 to 2005 (par. 27). This is correlated with the increased usage of targeted killings by the IDF (par. 00). While the number of attacks conducted by Hamas increased over the period, their lethality dropped (par. 27). It is argued that the killing of key leaders and technical specialists has brought this to be (par. 28). Furthermore, the now dead Hamas leader, Rantisi, “conceded that the killings had made things harder for his organization” (par. 32). Also, in “2005 the group even declared that it would unilaterally accept a "period of calm" because of the losses it was suffering among its senior cadre” (par. 32; see also Bar, 2008).

Wilner (2010) also examines the effectiveness of targeted killings through the use of comparative case studies (and resulting statistics) of four targeted killings conducted in Afghanistan (p. 307). He notes that some targeted killings have resulted in leadership vacuums that directly led to combat between rival groups of terrorists vying for control over the organization (p. 313). This happened in the wake of the killing of Mullah

Dadullah, in which the lack of a leader allowed fighting to break out amongst rival factions (p. 313). He created datasets to go along with his case studies. He constructed “before” and “after” datasets in order to determine if there were any changes in group behavior after the targeted killing was carried out (p. 317). He examined cases intra-nationally in order to serve as a control for differing “sociopolitical” conditions as would be found in an international study (pp. 317-18). It was found that violence generally declined after targeted killings were carried out (p. 318). Furthermore, after targeted killings occur, there is a drop in the number of sophisticated attacks (such as suicide bombings and IED attacks), whilst there is a rise in the number of unsophisticated attacks (such as simple shootings) (p. 319). In addition, when sophisticated attacks are carried out after a targeted killing occurs, there is a higher likelihood of the attack being unsuccessful (p. 319). Thus, Wilner’s work provides evidence in favor of the effectiveness of targeted killings.

Thus, it becomes apparent from such case studies that a key issue in the study of the effectiveness of targeted killings is the examination of retaliatory attacks by terrorist groups. The first question is whether one should gauge the effectiveness of targeted killings by taking into account the *number of retaliatory attacks*, or if one should examine the *number of casualties generated in retaliatory attacks*. The second question is whether one should control for *the types of attacks which are carried out before and after targeted killings*, or if one should focus on *the number of casualties in attacks before and after targeted killings*. While this issue is as of yet to be resolved, it appears that case studies have been the method of choice for calculating the effectiveness of targeted killings.

One unique study utilized quantitative methods to support the effectiveness of targeted killings. Zussman and Zussman (2006), arguing that the Second Intifada has had an extremely negative impact upon the Israeli economy, decided to compare changes in the Israeli stock market index (the Tel Aviv 25 index) to the usage of targeted killings (pp. 194, 198). Changes in the NASDAQ index were utilized as the control variable (p. 198). They also examine the influence of targeted killings on the Palestinian stock market index (Al-Quds) (p. 202). They find that the Israeli and Palestinian markets reacted “positively to assassination attempts targeting senior Palestinian military leaders,” but the Palestinian market example was statistically insignificant (p. 203). However, the markets responded negatively to the killings of high ranking Palestinian political leadership (p. 204). The authors conclude that the killing of military leaders is seen as an effective tool of defense, but that the killing of political leaders is viewed as being harmful to Israeli interests (pp. 204-205). However, it must be noted that while the authors report the R-square value in the tables, they do not speak of it in the text. The R-square for the influence on the Israeli index was 0.08 while the corresponding Palestinian value was 0.06. This means that the influence of the independent variables of assassinations and terrorist attacks only account for 8% of the changes in the Israeli index and 6% of changes in the Palestinian index. Thus, while the authors provide an interesting model for gauging the perceived effectiveness of the targeted killing program, their results do not seem to be very supportive of their claims.

Jaeger and Paserman (2007) utilize a mixed methods research design, combining formal modeling and a quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of Israel’s targeted killing program during the Second Intifada. The time scale of their analysis is from

September 20, 2000 to January 15, 2005 (p. 8). The data sets utilized were taken from B'Tselem and from Zussman and Zussman (2006) {mentioned below}(pp. 8-9). Jaeger and Paserman create two measures of “*intended* Palestinian violence” {emphasis in original} in order to address endogeneity concerns pertaining to targeted killings research (pp. 9-10). The authors also mitigated endogeneity concerns by controlling for the construction of the security fence separating the Israelis and Palestinians (p. 11). The authors also separated the time period into distinct phases in order to control for changes in the international and domestic political environments (pp. 10-11). They utilized OLS for their calculations (p. 13). It was found that targeted killings killed the intended target 80% of the time (p. 12). Furthermore, the Israeli government carries out attacks in response to successful suicide attacks (as opposed to unsuccessful attacks) (p. 15). It was found that successful targeted killings had a statistically significant effect on lower the effectiveness of Palestinian attacks (p. 18). However, after several weeks, the effectiveness of Palestinian attacks begins to rise (p. 18). It was found that the killing of Palestinian leaders decreased the number of successful Palestinian attacks (p. 22). Interestingly, they also found that the influence of targeted killings upon Palestinian attacks was “inverted-U shaped” (p. 22). Specifically, small numbers of attacks cause an increase in Palestinian violence, whilst high levels of attacks cause a deterrent effect (p. 22). Thus, the authors provide empirical support for the effectiveness of targeted killings.

Hafez and Hatfield (2006) conduct a quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of the Israeli targeted killing program during the Second Intifada (p. 2). The authors’ timeframe for analysis was from September 29, 2000 to June 16, 2004 (p. 13). They utilized news sources to code “successful attacks,” “foiled attacks,” “the number of

Israelis killed and injured in Palestinian attacks,” the occasions on which the Israelis utilized targeted killings and made military incursions, and “the number of Palestinians killed and injured in Israeli counter-terrorism operations” (pp. 13-14). The scholars noted that there were some issues concerning the accuracy of data (p. 14). While they acknowledge that it may have lowered their number of cases, they erred on the side of caution by excluding any ambiguous cases of which they were uncertain of either the accuracy or veracity of the data (p. 14).

However, it must be noted that the authors seemed to betray their normative views concerning Israel and targeted killings. They utilized loaded terms and language on several occasions throughout the work in their description of the situation on the ground and Israeli behavior. The authors utilized a multivariate approach in order to measure the “interactions between predictive factors as well as their possible isolated affects” (ie. determine which variables are interactive, purely independent, etc) (Hafez & Hatfield, 2006, p. 14). They note that linear regression did not “produce a model with significant predictive power” (p. 14). Furthermore, they found that “many factors/models that were found to be statistically significant were determined to have no *practical* explanatory significance” (emphasis Hafez & Hatfield) (p. 15). The scholars found that the utilization of targeted killings neither increases nor decreases terrorist attacks (pp. 21-23). Targeted killings do not appear to deter attacks, do not result in “backlash” attacks, do not disrupt terrorist operations, and do not seem to disrupt terrorist “resource endowments” (pp. 21-23). The authors state that the results of their statistical analysis suggest that increased defensive capabilities and intelligence capabilities may be the factors which have caused the observed decrease in the “success rate” of terrorist attacks (p. 23).

Only one study was found which adopted formal modeling as its method for gauging the effectiveness of targeted killings (Jacobson & Kaplan, 2007). The authors constructed a two period game in which both the terrorists and the government calculated the best actions to take in response to each others' behavior (pp. 774-775). The Second Intifada was utilized as the hypothetical context of their game. They found that targeted killings (conducted in the first period) increase terrorist recruitment levels (p. 789). However, it was found that if the government waited until after a terrorist attack occurred (i.e. the second period) to execute a targeted killing, an optimal solution would be found (p. 789). As the authors state, "the analysis in the present article is the first that suggests circumstances under which hitting serves to maximize the number of (Palestinian plus Israeli) civilian lives saved" (p. 789).

Radlauer (2006) utilizes rational choice theory from a criminology perspective for examining manners in which governments may potentially deter terrorists (p. 609). In rational choice theory, it is assumed that criminals are rational actors who weight the costs and benefits of their actions (p. 609). Under this perspective, "if punishment is swift, severe, and certain, few people will choose to disobey the law even if the potential illicit gain is substantial" (p. 609). However, "if punishment is uncertain, slow, or minimal, breaking the law can be seen as worthwhile even if the potential rewards are modest" (p. 609).

In regards to applying this model to terrorism, the question is whether or not terrorists are rational actors (Radlauer, 2006, p. 610). It is argued that since terrorism includes the actions of individuals, groups, and communities, one must examine deterrence from these three levels of analysis (pp. 610-11). It is argued that it is difficult

to deter suicide terrorists (p. 611). For example, the Israelis have tried demolishing the homes of the families of suicide bombers, but this has had no appreciable deterrent effect (p. 611). It is argued that suicide terrorists think their families will be better off due to the pensions provided by the Palestinian authority to the families of suicide bombers (p. 611). In addition, the demolitions appear to serve as positive propaganda for the Palestinian terrorist groups (p. 611). Imprisonment of terrorists does not seem to have any deterrent effect in the Israeli case either (pp. 611-12).

Radlauer (2006) argues that targeted killings should be an effective method of deterrence, but that there are three hindrances to such a policy having a maximum deterrent effect (p. 612). Firstly, the only way for a terrorist to cease being a target of a targeted killing would be to cease being a terrorist altogether (p. 612). There would be no way to deter against a particular attack (p. 612). Secondly, terrorists already live with a high prospect of death in their work (p. 612). Finally, targeted killings are not carried out consistently enough to convince terrorists that this would be the action a government would definitely take against all terrorists in all contexts (p. 612).

However, whilst it is relatively difficult to deter individual terrorists, it would be easier to deter an organization as a whole (Radlauer, 2006, p. 613). Specifically, the killing of its leadership would be the most effective method, as demonstrated by the Israeli case (p. 613). However, such a strategy is only effective if the entire leadership is targeted and liquidated within a relatively short period of time (pp. 613-14). This prevents an organization from simply promoting a well-seasoned terrorist to the top after the killing of a single leader (p. 613). An example of this would be the rapid, consecutive Israeli targeted killings of the leadership of Hamas (p. 614). As Radlauer notes, “while

Hamas has not disappeared or even renounced terrorism, the organization has behaved much more cautiously since these killings than it did previously” (p. 614). However, it must be noted that such a strategy seems to only be effective against centralized groups, as opposed to decentralized groups (p. 614).

Kober (2007) works to examine the empirical effectiveness of targeted killings, from the perspective of the debates between Warden and Pape in the 1990s regarding the use of airpower as an effective instrument of decapitating leaders, and thus “incapacitating the enemy” (p. 80). Warden believes it can be effective, whilst Pape argues that it is not effective (p. 80). Rather, Pape believes that conventional combat is the best method for success (p. 80). Kober focuses on the differences in effectiveness of targeted killings on inhibiting a group’s capabilities, when examining the killing of one military leaders versus political leaders (pp. 81-82). With the Second Intifada as his conflict case, and utilizing statistical and case study evidence, he finds that the killing of political leaders of terrorist groups results in greater damage to the organization’s capabilities than does the killing of military leaders (pp. 81-86). For example, on several occasions, Hamas has implemented unilateral ceasefires after the killing of its political leadership, and on occasions when a specific threat of a targeted killing occurring was issued by the Israeli government (pp. 85-86). However, he could not find a causal relationship between the decline in the death toll in terrorist attacks and the use of targeted killings (p. 86). Rather, he notes that the decline is also correlated with the IDF’s incursion and control of Palestinian areas and the building of the security barrier, both of which could serve as reasons behind the decline (pp. 86-88). Thus, Kober’s work provides some interesting findings.

Catignani (2008) examines changes in Israel Defense Force (IDF) operational behavior and tactics during the Intifada (pp. 3-5). The IDF has placed the safety of its troops first, even in situations in which increased aggressiveness may result in increased negative coverage in the media (p. 5). It was also the IDF's view that if the Palestinians were to believe that terrorism made them any gains whatsoever, it would encourage further terrorism (pp. 6-7). Due to increased negative media coverage of targeted killings which utilized missile attacks and airpower, the IDF began switching to more covert targeted killings utilizing its special forces (p. 7). He finds that whilst the IDF was tactically successful, some of its aggressive harmed Israeli political/strategic goals in the end (p. 16). Catignani assists in advancing the field of knowledge concerning the effectiveness of targeted killings by bringing in political variables into the context of gauging such a program's effectiveness.

Honig (2008) provides a realist critique of the Israeli usage of targeted killings (p. 563). However, he neither argues against the use of targeted killings from a normative perspective, nor does he critique them from an empirical perspective (p. 563). Rather, he argues that current Israeli policy has resulted in "the sub-optimal use of the tool" (p. 563).

Honig argues that Israeli utilization of targeted killings has been "insufficiently discriminate" in the following five dimensions: Firstly, he states that one must consider "the political views and potential influence of the person killed" (2008, p. 564). Honig argues that the Israelis have sometimes killed leaders who may have made better negotiating partners than individuals such as Arafat, if they had been left alive instead of being eliminated (pp. 564-65). Thus, one may gain a tactical edge, whilst committing a strategic blunder.

Secondly, one must take into consideration “the timing of the operation and the possible political and strategic ramifications” (Honig, 2008, p. 564). He argues that the Israelis have sometimes inadvertently placed tactical success over strategic outcomes (p. 565). For example, Israel has sometimes taken advantage of the tactical opportunity to eliminate specific leaders, but this has sometimes led to the end of a ceasefire, and to the detriment of the Israelis’ image in the media (pp. 565-66). Hence, a state must take into consideration how its actions may be portrayed in the media, because the media may be used as a propaganda tool by the enemy.

Thirdly, one must be mindful of “the target’s organizational affiliation, and the operational capacities of this organization to retaliate” (Honig, 2008, p. 564). The Israelis have not always taken into account the differing capabilities groups have, and thus the differing levels of response each group could bring to bear on Israel, and the level of deterrence that Israel can bring to bear on each group (pp. 566-67). For example, it is argued that Israel has a greater ability to deter and withstand responses from Hamas (a local Palestinian terrorist group), than it can Hezbollah, an international terrorist group funded by Iran (pp. 566-67). Finally, he argues that it is difficult to destroy terrorist groups such as Hamas, because it is decentralized and it has become embedded in Palestinian society (p. 571).

Fourthly, one must consider “the political context and potential domestic political impact for the enemy” (p. 564). He argues that a targeted killing could sometimes be harmful to Israeli interests, because such incidents could be utilized as propaganda for extremists to utilize to outflank moderates in the Arab world (p. 567). The paradox faced

by the Israelis is that by killing those that threaten their security, they may inadvertently give an opportunity for the enemies of Israel to increase their own standing and political capital, in order to outflank their domestic rivals.

Finally, one must take account of “the media profile given to the operation” (Honig, 2008, p. 564). The scholar argues that Israel is not as discrete as it should be in its utilization of targeted killings (p. 568). However, he notes that the Israelis have attempted to reduce civilian casualties, which has been demonstrated by “consistent preference {for} shooting the terrorists while in their vehicles, rather than {sic} targeting their apartment buildings, where other innocent people may reside” (p. 564). Honig believes that a more discrete and secretive use of targeted killings would prevent Israel from receiving the high level of negative media coverage it has been receiving during the Second Intifada (pp. 568-69).

Honig argues that there are “three pathologies which characterize the Israeli decision-making {process}” (p. 569). Firstly, there is a “military dominant organizational culture” (p. 569). The military is the primary force in making decisions on when to utilize targeted killings, with the diplomatic corps being essentially shut out of the process (pp. 569-70). The second issue is “a lack of deep historical awareness” (p. 570). Specifically, it appears that the Israeli leadership is focusing primarily on short-term issues in the decision-making process, rather than long term goals (p. 570). Finally, there is the so-called “hi-technology cult” (p. 570). Specifically, the IDF, like most militaries, has become focused on the utilization of high tech weapons on the battlefield, as opposed to more low tech solutions (p. 570). Thus, whilst targeted killings can be an effective

solution to terrorism, Honig believes that the Israelis are not utilizing their abilities to their optimal extent.

In regards to explicit examinations of issues related to methodology and targeted killings, only one article was found in this literature review. Ben-Yehuda (1990), operating from a sociologist's perspective, provides an overview of methodological issues that came about during his examination of the history of targeted killings in Israel (pp. 345-347). The author explains that one of the main issues in conducting such research is the fact that much of the data is classified (p. 351). While officials occasionally offered him access, it was explained that any potential project would "undergo censorship," which Ben-Yehuda believes to be "totally unacceptable" (p. 351). Ben-Yehuda utilized a "socio-historical" approach which utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods (p. 352). The qualitative methods mentioned consisted of standard examinations of autobiographies, archives, newspapers, historical accounts, court documents, and the conduction of interviews (pp. 352-356). The quantitative section consisted solely of descriptive figures (p. 363). In regards to interviews, it was found that the main issues were maintaining neutrality and a phenomenon they refer to as "dripping" (pp. 355, 359). Essentially, "dripping" is a small leak whose purpose is to either frame a particular event in a favorable light, or to provide false leads (pp. 359- 361). The author concluded that he had "full information" for approximately 17% of all assassination cases (p. 362). The author concludes by reexamining the aforementioned complications which arise from conducting research into secretive practices.

As demonstrated, one can see that the empirical and methodological literature concerning targeted killings has been relatively sparse, but is slowly beginning to grow.

However, in order to resolve the issue of the lack of empirical data, scholars first need to adopt a strong methodological frameworks for research. Successful empirical examinations into the effectiveness of targeted killings must be both interdisciplinary and utilize mixed methods. Pure quantitative, qualitative, and game theory designs, while useful, cannot take into account the “truth” of the issue. Alone, each method can only provide a small portion of the whole picture. If academics take such actions, empirical research into the effectiveness of targeted killings will be much more fruitful in the future.

Conclusion

As one can see, there has been no lack of research into targeted killings. In fact, there are four main ways in which future research can build upon and improve the existing literature. Firstly, historians must begin delving into examinations of targeted killing programs against non-state actors, rather than focusing on cases of political assassination. Secondly, historians can improve the literature through utilizing process tracing methods, rather than supplying their readers with encyclopedic entries of cases of individuals whom have been targeted. Thirdly, normative examinations of the morality of targeted killings must move beyond the hegemonic framework of pure Just War Theory. Fourthly, legal theorists must free themselves from the bondage of the law enforcement versus law of war debate which has arisen due to the legal ambiguity of terrorism under international law. Rather, jurists must work to develop new legal frameworks to offer for adoption by the international community. Finally, scholars must create interdisciplinary and mixed-methods based research designs for examining the empirical effectiveness of

targeted killings. In conclusion, the study of targeted killings will likely prove to be a fruitful field of work for the years to come.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methods

Whilst much of the debates concerning the utilization of targeted killings have focused on normative and legal perspectives, there has been a veritable dearth of research concerning the whether or not such tactics are actually effective in fighting terrorism (Morehouse, 2009). Hence, this study attempts to rectify this situation through the provision of both a quantitative and qualitative examination of the effectiveness of the United States' targeted killing program. This chapter is divided into three main parts. The first portion outlines the quantitative research design. The second part of this chapter explains that qualitative approach utilized in this study. The final portion of this chapter provides a conclusion.

The Quantitative Data

In regards to the United States' targeted killing program, my research preliminary found that there was a lack of a dataset comparable to that of the Israelis. However, in early 2010, Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedemann of the New America Foundation released a dataset of US-conducted predator drone strikes in Pakistan, which covers the years 2004-2010. Whilst said dataset is expertly made and comprehensive in its intended scope, it does not serve as a total record of US-conducted targeted killings. Specifically, the dataset does not cover targeted killings conducted in states other than Pakistan. US targeted killings have been conducted in places as diverse as Afghanistan and Somalia. Furthermore, the dataset solely focuses upon strikes conducted by predator drones. The US has used tactics that include attacks by AC-130 gunships and special operations strike teams. Hence, there is a need for a comprehensive dataset of all US initiated targeted killings, regardless of the tactic utilized or the country in which the attack occurred.

This study's dataset was created in the following manner². The Lexis-Nexis Academic archives were culled for news reports concerning occurrences of US-conducted targeted killings. The time period under observation in the search was from January 1st 2000 to May of 2010. The following terms were utilized as search terms in this exercise: "targeted killing," "predator drone," "drone attack," and "drone strike." The data sources searched within the Lexis-Nexis archive were the Associated Press, the Global Broadcast Database, and the BBC Monitoring Service. It was found that the BBC had the most comprehensive amount of information on the subject matter. Each targeted killing incident found was recorded, including the number of terrorists killed and the number of civilians killed. If there was a disparity in the number of dead between reports, the chronologically latest report figures were always chosen. In instances in which there was an estimate of dead, the highest figures were always chosen. This data was aggregated on the weekly level, utilizing the timetables of broadcasting calendars. The time period included in the final dataset was 2004-2009.

For purposes of comparison, the data from the NAF dataset was added to the dataset created for this study, for the purposes of comparison (Bergen & Tiedemann, 2011). The NAF data on targeted killing incidents, the number of terrorists killed, and the number of civilians killed in each attack was included. This data was aggregated on the weekly level. The time period under observation was 2004-2009.

The data measuring the numbers of terrorist attacks, and fatalities from terrorist attacks, comes from the Worldwide Incidents Tracking Systems (WITS) provided by the United States government (NCTC, 2011). This data service provides statistics on all terrorist attacks conducted worldwide since 2004. The data utilized included the dates of

² Replication sets may be obtained from the author. Please email morehousema1@huskers.unl.edu.

incidents and the number of deaths from each attack. This data was aggregated on the weekly level. The time period under observation was 2004-2009.

This study tests the following **Hypotheses:**

H1: An increase in the number of targeted killings will lead to a decrease in the number of terrorist attacks.

H2: An increase in the number of targeted killings will lead to a decrease in the number of individuals killed in terrorist attacks.

This study utilizes the following **Dependent Variables:**

DV1: The total number of terrorist attacks carried out (per week) in the theater of operations under observation (Afghanistan and Pakistan combined). This data comes from the total number of attacks per week, as culled from the WITS data for the aforementioned states. The time period under observation is 2004-2009.

DV2: The total number of fatalities in terrorist attacks (per week) in the theater of operations under observation (Afghanistan and Pakistan combined). This data comes from the total number of fatalities per week, as culled from the WITS data for the aforementioned states. The time period under observation is 2004-2009.

This study utilizes the following **Independent Variable:**

IV1: The number of targeted killings carried out (per week) by the United States in the theater of operations, per the Morehouse dataset. The time period under observation is 2004 to 2009. This variable is lagged by one week.

IV2: The number of targeted killings carried out (per week) by the United States in the theater of operations, per the NAF dataset. The time period under observation is 2004 to 2009. This variable is lagged by one week.

This study utilizes the following **Control Variables:**

C1: The season of the year in which the targeted killing was carried out. This variable will serve as a proxy for weather. It is possible that changes in weather and seasons could influence the number of terrorist attacks carried out. It is coded at the weekly level in the same manner as the rest of the dataset.

C2: Ramadan. This is included to see if the month of Ramadan has an influence on the number of terrorist attacks carried out. It is possible that terrorist attacks may be less likely to be carried out during Ramadan, than during other months, due to Muslim religious observances.

C3: The President of the United States. This variable measures whether or not the person residing in the White House has an influence upon the number of terrorist attacks carried out in the theater of operations.

The statistical portion of this study consists of two parts. The first part consists of basic descriptive statistics, utilizing simple crosstabulations. The second portion consists of statistical tests, utilizing linear regression.

The Qualitative Data

A qualitative examination of the effectiveness of the US program is also carried out. Specifically, this is carried out through a case study of the data available concerning terrorist behavior in the wake of targeted killings, in order to see what impact (if any) that targeted killing operations have on terrorist behavior. Data for this portion of the study consists of news reports, official announcements, and other documentation concerning the perceived effectiveness of the program and examples of said program influencing the behavior of terrorist leaders. The data for this part was culled from both the Lexis-Nexis Academic archives and Google searches conducted in the course of collecting data for the quantitative portion of this study. Additional examples were drawn for references found within the literature reviewed for this study. Hence, this section of the study takes a decidedly interpretivist stance in order to garner non-quantifiable empirical knowledge.

Conclusion

In summary, this study attempts to empirically examine the relative strengths and weaknesses of the American targeted killing program. Towards this end, this study carries out the first quantitative examination of the effectiveness of the United States' targeted killing program during the years 2004 to 2009. Furthermore, this study provides a qualitative examination of the effectiveness of targeted killings. In the following

chapters, it shall become apparent that there are conflicting results between the quantitative and qualitative data.

Chapter 5: The Quantitative Evidence

This chapter provides an examination of the statistical findings pertaining to targeted killings conducting in the combined Afghanistan-Pakistan theater of operations during the years 2004 to 2009. This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first portion of this chapter provides an overview of the descriptive statistics calculated in the course of this study. The second part of this chapter presents the results of the linear regressions ran for the purposes of gauging the effectiveness of targeted killings. The final section of this chapter consists of an examination of the findings and a conclusion.

The Descriptive Data

As one can seen below (see Table 1), during the 2004 to 2009 time period, there was a total of 74 weeks in which targeted killings occurred. This means that, during the period under observation, targeted killings occurred during approximately 30% of weeks.

Number of Weeks in which Targeted Killings Occurred: 2004-2009

Table 1

		YEAR						Total
		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
TK?	Yes	1	2	2	5	28	36	74
	No	52	51	51	48	25	17	244
Total		53	53	53	53	53	53	318

However, it also becomes apparent that the targeted killing program saw a massive increase in operational weeks during the last year of the Bush administration, and the first year of the Obama administration. Hence, the years 2008 and 2009 marked a period of transition in the program, in that these two years were the first time in which the majority of weeks saw targeted killings carried out. Thus, targeted killings occurred in approximately 52% of the weeks of the year, whilst in 2009 targeted killing occurred in

approximately 67% of the weeks of the year. Furthermore, one can also see that the first year of the Obama administration saw an approximately 15% rise in operational weeks, compared to the last year of the Bush administration. Finally, when one takes into account the actual number of attacks per year, one again sees a dramatic increase in the number of strikes carried out in the years 2008 and 2009 (see Table 2). In summary, it appears that the US has increased its utilization of targeted killings during the period under observation.

Number of Targeted Killings: 2004-2009 (Sorted by Dataset)						
Table 2	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Morehouse	0	1	1	3	47	52
NAF	1	2	1	4	34	52

Unsurprisingly, the number of terrorists killed in targeted killings has increased in tandem with the increase in the number of such operations being carried out (see Tables 3 and 4). Taking into account the numbers of targeted killings provided below, it appears

Number of Terrorists Killed Per Year: 2004-2009 (Sorted by Dataset)							
Table 3	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Morehouse	0	1	5	35	264	415	720
NAF	4	6	5	67	180	504	766

Mean Number of terrorists Killed per Targeted Killing: 2004-2009 (Sorted by Dataset)							
Table 4	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Morehouse	0	1	5	11.6	5.6	7.9	6.9
NAF	4	3	5	16.75	5.2	9.6	8.1

that targeted killings are a relatively efficient method of killing terrorists. For example,

taking the Morehouse figures into account, there were 104 targeted killings and 720 terrorist deaths in the 2004-2009 period. This averages out to approximately 7 terrorist deaths per strike over the 2004-2009 period (see Table 4). The NAF figures provide an average of 8.1 terrorists killed per strike during the same period.

An examination of the data suggests that that the level of civilian casualties generated by targeted killings is clouded (see Table 5). For example, the Morehouse

Number of Civilians Killed in Targeted Killings: 2004-2009							
(Sorted by Dataset)							
Table 5	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Morehouse	0	0	13	0	46	23	82
NAF	0	0	5	4	169	218	396

data finds that a total of 82 civilians were killed during the course of targeted killings from 2004 to 2009. On the other hand, the NAF figures show that 396 civilians were killed during targeted killings during the same period. Hence, the Morehouse data finds that the average number of civilian deaths per targeted killing was 0.7 during the period under observation, whilst the NAF numbers show an average of 7.6 deaths per strike (see Table 6). Thus, the NAF figures show an average of civilian deaths that is 10 times that

Mean Number of Civilians Killed per Targeted Killing: 2004-2009							
(Sorted by Dataset)							
Table 6	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Morehouse	0	0	13	0	0.9	0.4	0.7
NAF	0	0	5	4	4.9	4.1	7.6

of the Morehouse dataset. Furthermore, in regards to the total number of civilian deaths during the 2004-2009 period, it becomes apparent that the NAF dataset codes over 4 times as many civilian deaths than does the Morehouse dataset. The questions are how

such a disparity was generated in the first place, and if such a disparity influences this study's calculations concerning the effectiveness of targeted killings.

In regards to the first question, this study takes the position that the differences in the totals of civilian casualties must be the result of the differing sources utilized in the course of the creation of the two datasets. These two datasets did not utilize all of the same sources of information, and thus differences should be of no surprise. For example, some sources may report higher numbers, whilst others may report lower figures. Furthermore, some sources may report more attacks than others. Thus, differences in figures should come as no surprise.

On the topic of the second question, this study holds that the discrepancy found in the level of civilian casualties between the two datasets should be of no strong concern. Whilst any collateral damage is saddening, when one takes into consideration both sets of figures, the numbers of civilian deaths are relatively low. This is especially true if one were to compare civilian casualties in targeted killings to conventional aerial bombardments conducted during general wars, such as World War Two. In addition, there is a concern over the how differing news organizations are determining who is a civilian and who is a terrorist. A perusal of the source notes from the Morehouse dataset and the NAF would highlight that these very issues were encountered by those who worked on both datasets. Finally, since the number of civilian deaths in targeted killings is not calculated in the linear regressions ran in this study, the disparities outlined above should not cause much methodological concern.

Targeted Killings and the Presidents

As one can see below (see Table 7), there is some interesting data concerning

trends in the number of operational weeks during the Bush and Obama administrations. It

**Weeks in Which targeted Killings Occurred, by
Administration: 2004-2009**

Table 7

	US President		Total
	Bush	Obama	
Targeted Yes	40	34	74
Killing? No	228	16	244
Total	268	50	318

appears that during the course of the entire Bush administration, 40 targeted killings were carried out in theater. However, the first year of the Obama administration saw a total of 34 operational weeks, 6 operational weeks shy of the total for the previous 5 years. One can also from the data (See Table 8) that the total number of targeted killings conducted

Table 8			
Total Number of Targeted Killings, by Administration: 2004-2009			
(Sorted by Dataset)			
	Bush	Obama	
Morehouse	29	26	Total
NAF	33	33	Total

during the first year of the Obama administration was, depending on the data source, near-equal or equal with the total number of targeted killings carried out by the Bush administration. Taking these two facts into account, one may hazard to guess that both the Bush and Obama administrations appear to believe targeted killings to be an effective strategy for combating terrorism. Considering that said administrations would be privy to much more information pertaining to the effectiveness of targeted killings, than would be available to a common academic, it is arguable that both presidents would hold a relatively strong grasp of the relative merits of such operations. Hence, if either president

believed that targeted killings were ineffective (according to the data available to them), one would logically hold that either (or both) presidents would discontinue (or limit) such operations. However, since both administrations have increased the utilization of targeted killing operations, compared to previous years, then it would be logical to believe that both presidents have viewed targeted killings to be an effective strategy for combating terrorism.

Targeted Killings and Ramadan

As one can see below (see Tables 9-10), the United States is not inhibited from

Weeks in which Targeted Killings Occurred: 2004-2009
(Sorted by Weeks Running Concurrent with Ramadan)

Table 9		Ramadan?		Total
		Yes	No	
Targeted	Yes	9	65	74
Killing?	No	21	223	244
Total		30	288	318

Number of Targeted Killings During Ramadan: 2004-2009				
Table 10	(Sorted by Administration and Dataset)			
	Bush	Obama	Total	
Morehouse	13	6	19	
NAF	18	5	23	

carrying out targeted killings during the month of Ramadan. The US carried out targeted killings during 9 of the 30 (total) weeks of Ramadan during the years 2004 to 2009.

Hence, 30% of the weeks of Ramadan during the six-year period saw at least one targeted killing operation. Thus, it is apparent that the US is willing to carry out targeted killings during Ramadan. Furthermore, it becomes apparent that both the Bush and Obama

administrations are willing to conduct targeted killing operations during Ramadan (see Table 10). Thus, the US government, regardless of administration, seems to be prepared to carry out targeted killings year round, even during Ramadan.

Targeted Killings and the Seasons of the Year

As one can see below the United States has carried out targeted killings during all seasons of the year, during the 2004-2009 period (see Table 11). However, it also appears

Weeks in which targeted Killings Occurred, by Season: 2004-2009

Table 11	Season				Total
	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	
Targeted Yes	13	21	24	16	74
Killing? No	67	59	53	65	244
Total	80	80	77	81	318

that the majority of the weeks which saw targeted killings occurred in the Summer and Fall seasons of the year. Thus, it appears that targeted killing operations are carried out continuously throughout the year, with a potential bias in favor of the Summer and Fall seasons.

Concerning Terrorist Attacks

Since 2004, there has been a dramatic and steady increase in the number of terrorist attacks carried out in the theater of operations (see Table 12). In fact, according

Number of Terrorist Attacks and Fatalities per Year: 2004-2009							
Table 12	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Terrorist Attacks	303	931	1335	2012	3072	4042	11695
Fatalities	561	1025	1588	3273	4282	5449	16178

to this study's dataset, there has only been one week during the period under observation

in which no terrorist attacks were carried out in the region. The week in question was the 11th week of 2004. The increase in the yearly total of attacks has been dramatic. For example, there were 303 terrorist attacks in 2004, compared to 4,042 attacks in 2009. This means that there was more than a 13-fold increase in the number of terrorist attacks between 2004 and 2009. In addition, the number of fatalities from terrorist attacks has increased alongside with the increases in terrorist attack incidents. For example, there were 561 fatalities from terrorist attacks in 2004, whilst by 2009 this figure reached a total of 5,449. This represents an almost 10-fold increase in the number of fatalities from terrorist attacks in theater from 2004 to 2009. Furthermore, taking into account that there was only one week since 2004 in which there was no terrorist attack carried out, it becomes apparent that the terrorists conduct their operations year-round, and therefore are not necessarily hindered by changes in seasonal weather conditions. In addition, it is interesting to note that the terrorists were consistently willing to carry out attacks during Ramadan during the 2004-2009 period (see Table 13). There were terrorist attacks carried

Table 13 Weeks in which terrorist Attacks were Carried out During Ramadan				
	Attack	No Attack		
Ramadan	30	0	Total	

out during every single week of Ramadan during the period under observation. Hence, it becomes apparent that the terrorists are still very much active in the region. Furthermore, it appears that the terrorists are unconcerned with drawing the ire of their fellow Muslims for conducting attacks during the month of Ramadan.

Conclusions Regarding the Descriptive Data

Several interesting conclusions may be drawn from the descriptive statistics

uncovered in the course of this study. There are six main findings in this study concerning targeted killings and terrorist attacks. Firstly, targeted killing operations have gone from a relatively rare tactic during the 2004 to 2007 period, to become a relatively frequent tactic in the 2008 to 2009 period. In fact, over half of the weeks during both 2008 and 2009 saw at least one targeted killing strike carried out in theater. Secondly, it appears that targeted killings are effective at killing terrorists with an average of 6.9 to 8.1 terrorists being killed per strike (depending on the dataset). Thirdly, it is difficult to discern the true number of civilians being killed during the course of targeted killing strikes. The average number of civilian deaths per strike varies between 0.7 and 7.6, depending upon the data source. Thus, it appears that research focusing specifically upon divining the number of civilians killed in such strikes, and the methodological issues with conducting such a study, would be of merit in its own right. Fourthly, it appears that both the Bush and Obama administrations must view targeted killings as being an effective strategy for killing terrorists, considering that there was a marked increase in the number of attacks in the last year of the Bush administration, and the first year of the Obama administration. Furthermore, both administrations have proven themselves capable of allowing strikes to be carried out during Ramadan. Fifthly, the US carries out targeted killings year-round, with a slight preference being detected for the summer and fall months. Finally, it becomes apparent that the terrorists conduct their attacks year-round, with only one week since 2004 not seeing a terrorist attack. In addition, the number of fatalities has increased during the period. Furthermore, terrorists do not seem to fear retribution from their fellow Muslims for carrying out attacks during Ramadan. In conclusion, one can see than many valuable findings can come forth from descriptive

found in the data generated for this study.

The Statistical Results

The bstatistical testseveral linear regressions were ran. As one will remember from the previous chapter, the independent variables in each regression were lagged by one week. Furthermore, it must be noted that SPSS was the statistical program utilized in the regressions for this study, and thus all tests of significance are two-tailed.

The Morehouse Dataset Findings

The first regression ran measured the influence of targeted killings (lagged by one week) upon the number of terrorist attacks (in the week following the targeted killing) (See Tables 14-16). The variables for Ramadan, US president, and season were added as controls in the regression. The R-square value of the model was .464, meaning that 46.4% of the variation in the number of terrorist attacks per week is explained by the variables entered into this model. The B coefficients for this regression found several

Table 14. Regression 1: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.681 ^a	.464	.457	20.196

a. Predictors: (Constant), NUMTKLAG, SEAS, RAM, PRES

b. Dependent Variable: NUMTAT

interesting results. For the lagged targeted killing variable, it was found that for every one-unit increase in targeted killings per week, there was an increase of over 5 terrorist attacks in the following week. This result was statistically significant, with the p-value being .000. However, the scatter plot for this model shows that there is an outlier, which was the 51st week of 2009, in which 11 targeted killings occurred. In regards to the seasonal variable, it appears that the further into the year the season under observation is,

there are approximately 3 less targeted killings per week. This variable is statistically significant, with the p-value being .003. The results for the Ramadan were statistically insignificant, with the p-value equaling .586. Finally, the presidential variable suggests that, under the Obama administration, it was likely that there would be an increase of 43 terrorist attacks per week compared to the Bush administration. This variable was statistically significant, with the p-value being .000.

Table 15. Regression 1: ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	109959.917	4	27489.979	67.395	.000 ^a
Residual	127263.218	312	407.895		
Total	237223.136	316			

a. Predictors: (Constant), NUMTKLAG, SEAS, RAM, PRES

b. Dependent Variable: NUMTAT

Table 16. Regression 1: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	-3.326	8.882		-.375	.708	-20.802	14.149
SEAS	-3.092	1.017	-.127	-3.040	.003	-5.094	-1.091
RAM	-2.129	3.902	-.023	-.546	.586	-9.806	5.548
PRES	43.270	3.271	.577	13.230	.000	36.835	49.706
NUMTKLAG	5.773	1.243	.204	4.646	.000	3.328	8.218

a. Dependent Variable: NUMTAT

A second regression was run, in which the sole change from the previous model was in the dependent variable. In this model, the number of fatalities in terrorist attacks served as the dependent variable (See Tables 17-19). In this case, the R-square for the

model was .326, meaning that 32.6% of the variation of the dependent variable was explained by changes in the independent variables under observation. Several interesting observations can be made from these data. For example, the lagged targeted killing model found that for every one-unit increase in targeted killings in a week resulted in approximately 8 more fatalities from terrorist attacks in the following week. This variable

Table 17. Regression 2: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.571 ^a	.326	.317	36.838

a. Predictors: (Constant), NUMTKLAG, SEAS, RAM, PRES

b. Dependent Variable: NUMFAT

Table 18. Regression 2: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	204592.833	4	51148.208	37.691	.000 ^a
	Residual	423391.785	312	1357.025		
	Total	627984.618	316			

a. Predictors: (Constant), NUMTKLAG, SEAS, RAM, PRES

b. Dependent Variable: NUMFAT

Table 19. Regression 2: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	11.495	16.200		.710	.478	-20.380	43.371
	SEAS	-3.753	1.855	-.095	-2.023	.044	-7.403	-.102
	RAM	-11.028	7.117	-.073	-1.550	.122	-25.031	2.974
	PRES	58.073	5.966	.476	9.735	.000	46.335	69.811
	NUMTKLAG	8.178	2.267	.178	3.608	.000	3.718	12.638

a. Dependent Variable: NUMFAT

was statistically significant, with a p-value of .000. However, as in the previous model, the incident in which there were 11 targeted killings in the 51st week of 2009 serves as an outlier once more. Again, the seasonal variable was statistically significant, with every increase in the season of the year correlating with a decrease of approximately 3 fatalities in terrorist attacks per week. This variable was statistically significant, with a p-value of .044. The Ramadan variable was again statistically insignificant, with a p-value of .122. The presidential variable found that, under the Obama administration, there was likely to be approximately 58 more fatalities from terrorist attacks per week, than under the Bush administration. This variable was statistically significant, with a p-value of .000.

Due to the discovery of an outlier event in the lagged targeted killings variable, a dummy variable was inserted in the model. The regression from above was run again, with the number of terrorist attacks per week again serving as the dependent variable (See Tables 20-22). The R-square for this model was .427, meaning that 42.7 percent of the

Table 20. Regression 3: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.654 ^a	.427	.420	20.891

a. Predictors: (Constant), DUMMYTKLAG, RAM, SEAS, PRES

b. Dependent Variable: NUMTAT

variation in the dependent variable was explained by the independent variables in the equation. In regards to the lagged dummy targeted killing variable, it was found that for every one-unit increase in targeted killings per week, there was an increase of approximately 5 terrorist attacks in the following week. However, this variable was statistically insignificant, with the p-value equaling .797. The seasonal variable showed that there was a decrease in approximately 2 terrorist attacks per week, the further the

season was into the year. This variable remained statistically significant, with the p-value being .008. The Ramadan variable remained statistically insignificant, with its p-value equaling .312. Finally, the presidential variable showed that, under the Obama administration, there was likely to be approximately 48 more terrorist attacks per week than under the Bush administration. This variable was statistically significant, with the p-value being .000.

Table 21. Regression 3: ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	101902.792	4	25475.698	58.372	.000 ^a
Residual	136604.356	313	436.436		
Total	238507.148	317			

a. Predictors: (Constant), DUMMYTKLAG, RAM, SEAS, PRES

b. Dependent Variable: NUMTAT

Table 22. Regression 3: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	-3.915	9.220		-.425	.671	-22.055	14.225
SEAS	-2.794	1.049	-.115	-2.664	.008	-4.857	-.730
RAM	-4.064	4.016	-.043	-1.012	.312	-11.966	3.837
PRES	47.877	3.250	.636	14.731	.000	41.482	54.271
DUMMYTKLAG	5.466	21.178	.011	.258	.797	-36.204	47.136

a. Dependent Variable: NUMTAT

The dummy lagged targeted killing variable was again added to the model from above. In this model, the dependent variable was the number of fatalities from terrorist attacks per week (See Tables 23-25). The R-square for this model was .300, meaning that 30% of the variation of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables

Table 23. Regression 4: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.548 ^a	.300	.291	37.552

a. Predictors: (Constant), DUMMYTKLAG, RAM, SEAS, PRES

b. Dependent Variable: NUMFAT

in the model. In regards to the lagged dummy targeted killing variable, it was found that for every one-unit increase in targeted killings per week, there was a decrease of approximately 30 fatalities from terrorist attacks in the following week. However, this

Table 24. Regression 4: ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	189202.363	4	47300.591	33.543	.000 ^a
Residual	441378.605	313	1410.155		
Total	630580.969	317			

a. Predictors: (Constant), DUMMYTKLAG, RAM, SEAS, PRES

b. Dependent Variable: NUMFAT

Table 25. Regression 4: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	9.181	16.572		.554	.580	-23.426	41.788
SEAS	-3.180	1.885	-.080	-1.687	.093	-6.889	.529
RAM	-13.600	7.219	-.089	-1.884	.060	-27.804	.603
PRES	65.376	5.842	.534	11.191	.000	53.882	76.870
DUMMYTKLAG	-30.012	38.069	-.038	-.788	.431	-104.915	44.890

a. Dependent Variable: NUMFAT

variable is statistically insignificant, with a p-value of .431. The seasonal variable found that the further into the year that the season is, there is a decrease of approximately 3 fatalities from terrorist attacks per week. Whilst this variable was statistically

insignificant at the $p=.05$ level, it was statistically significant at the $p=.10$ level. The Ramadan variable was again statistically insignificant at the $p=.05$ level. The presidential variable showed that, under the Obama administration, there were would be approximately 65 more fatalities from terrorist attacks per week, than there were under the Bush administration. This variable was statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

The data outlined above provide several interesting findings. In depth-discussion on the consequences of these findings are left for the conclusion. Firstly, it appears that the number of terrorist attacks and number of fatalities from terrorist attacks is somewhat influenced by the time of year. Since the number of terrorist attacks and fatalities consistently decreases as the year progresses, it appears that terrorist behavior is influenced by such factors. Secondly, it appears that Ramadan has no influence upon the number of terrorist attacks and fatalities from terrorist attacks. Thirdly, it appears that terrorist attacks and fatalities from terrorist attacks are more likely to happen under the Obama administration than under the Bush administration. Finally, it appears that increases in the number of targeted killings result in increases in both the numbers of terrorist attacks and the numbers of fatalities from such attacks.

The New America Foundation Data Findings

The first regression ran measured the influence of targeted killings (lagged by one week) upon the number of terrorist attacks (in the week following the targeted killing) (See Tables 26-28). The variables for Ramadan, US president, and season were added a controls in the regression. The R-square for this model was .468, meaning that 46.8% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by changes in the independent variables in the model. In regards to the lagged NAF targeted killing variable, for every

Table 26. Regression 5: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.684 ^a	.468	.462	20.103

a. Predictors: (Constant), NAFTKLAG, SEAS, RAM, PRES

b. Dependent Variable: NUMTAT

Table 27. Regression 5: ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	111132.107	4	27783.027	68.746	.000 ^a
	Residual	126091.029	312	404.138		
	Total	237223.136	316			

a. Predictors: (Constant), NAFTKLAG, SEAS, RAM, PRES

b. Dependent Variable: NUMTAT

Table 28. Regression 5: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	-.596	8.871		-.067	.946	-18.050	16.858
SEAS	-2.753	1.009	-.113	-2.729	.007	-4.737	-.768
RAM	-2.539	3.875	-.027	-.655	.513	-10.163	5.084
PRES	40.045	3.481	.534	11.504	.000	33.196	46.894
NAFTKLAG	9.650	1.942	.231	4.968	.000	5.828	13.472

a. Dependent Variable: NUMTAT

one-unit increase in the number of targeted killings per week, there was an increase of approximately 9 terrorist attacks in the following week. This variable was statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level. The seasonal variable showed a decrease of approximately 2 terrorist attacks per week, as the seasons of the year progressed. This was statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level. The Ramadan variable was statistically insignificant, with its p -value equaling .513. The presidential variable found that there were approximately 50 more terrorist attacks per week under the Obama administration than there were under

the Bush administration. This variable was statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

A second regression was run on this model, with the sole change being the dependent variable (See Tables 29-31). In this equation, the dependent variable was the

Table 29. Regression 6: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.578 ^a	.334	.325	36.620

a. Predictors: (Constant), NAFTAKLAG, SEAS, RAM, PRES

b. Dependent Variable: NUMFAT

Table 30. Regression 6: ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	209590.085	4	52397.521	39.073	.000 ^a
Residual	418394.534	312	1341.008		
Total	627984.618	316			

a. Predictors: (Constant), NAFTAKLAG, SEAS, RAM, PRES

b. Dependent Variable: NUMFAT

Table 31. Regression 6: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	15.706	16.159		.972	.332	-16.088	47.500
SEAS	-3.278	1.837	-.083	-1.784	.075	-6.893	.337
RAM	-11.482	7.058	-.076	-1.627	.105	-25.369	2.405
PRES	52.791	6.341	.432	8.326	.000	40.315	65.267
NAFTKLAG	14.545	3.538	.214	4.111	.000	7.583	21.506

a. Dependent Variable: NUMFAT

number of fatalities from terrorist attacks per week. The R-square for this model was .334, meaning that 33.4% of the variation in the dependent variable was explained by

changes in the independent variables in this model. In regards to the lagged NAF targeted killing variable, it was found that for every one-unit increase in the number of targeted killings per week, there was an increase of approximately 14 fatalities from terrorist attacks in the following week. This variable was statistically significant at the $p=.01$ level. The seasonal variable shows that as the seasons of the progressed, there was a decrease of approximately 3 fatalities per week from terrorist attacks. This variable was statistically insignificant at the $p=.05$ level, but was statistically significant at the $p=.10$ level. The Ramadan variable was again statistically insignificant, with its p-value equaling .105. The presidential variable suggests that, under the Obama administration, there were approximately 52 more fatalities from terrorist attacks per week than under the Bush administration. This variable was statistically significant at the $p=.01$ level.

Several interesting findings come forth from the results of the lagged NAF targeted killing variable. In-depth discussion of their implications shall be reserved for the conclusion. Interestingly, the NAF variable findings lend support to those of the Morehouse dataset. Firstly, it appears that the season of the year has somewhat of an influence on terrorist activity. Secondly, Ramadan again has no apparent influence on terrorist operations. Thirdly, it appears that terrorist attacks and terrorist attack fatalities are at an increased chance of occurring under the Obama administration, compared to the Bush administration. Finally, it again appears that increases in the number of targeted killings are correlated with increases in both the number of terrorist attacks and the number of fatalities from terrorist attacks.

Conclusion

As one can see, there are many interesting observations which can be made

concerning targeted killings. Firstly, it appears that the number of terrorist attacks and number of fatalities from terrorist attacks is somewhat influenced by the time of year, under the findings of both the Morehouse and NAF data. Hence, it may be that seasons and weather could influence terrorists' operational planning. Furthermore, this finding is consistent with the well-known strategy of insurgents in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region commencing their offensives in the springtime. Secondly, it appears that Ramadan has no influence upon the number of terrorist attacks and fatalities from terrorist attacks, regardless of the targeted killing data utilized. This suggests that the Ramadan holiday has no influence whatsoever upon terrorist activities. Thus, military planners and security officials would be wise to not allow themselves to be caught off-guard during Ramadan by believing that terrorism would be less likely to occur during a religious holiday celebrated by the terrorists. To do otherwise would be to commit the same mistake as the United States did immediately prior to the Tet Offensive, by believing that the North Vietnamese would hold to a truce during the Buddhist holiday. Thirdly, it appears that terrorist attacks and fatalities from terrorist attacks are more likely to happen under the Obama administration than under the Bush administration, under both sources of targeted killing data. However, this result could be spurious, further testing is called for on this variable. Finally, it appears that increases in the number of targeted killings result in increases in both the numbers of terrorist attacks and the numbers of fatalities from such attacks, under both targeted killing datasets. Thus, it appears that targeted killings do not have an influence upon the ability of terrorist groups to carry out attacks in theater. However, the question remains if targeted killings could impact terrorist group behavior in some other manner. This question is answered in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: The Qualitative Evidence

This chapter examines the qualitative evidence pertaining to the effectiveness of the United States' targeted killing program. It is herein argued that the qualitative evidence available suggests that the United States' targeted killing program is effective in hindering the operations of terrorist organizations. This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section argues against the utilization of terrorist recruitment levels as a variable, explaining that it is a problematic variable for gauging the effectiveness of a targeted killing program. The second section of this chapter presents the empirical data pertaining to the effectiveness of targeted killings. The final section of this chapter consists of a conclusion and analysis of the findings of the qualitative data.

Is Terrorist Recruitment an Appropriate Variable?

A critical question one must ask in formulating a qualitative method for gauging the effectiveness of targeted killings is if terrorist recruitment should serve as a variable. Specifically, should the possibility of there being a positive (or negative, or inverse) relationship between targeted killings and terrorist recruitment levels be taken into account in a qualitative model? Whilst some may argue that this should be the case, this study takes the position that such a variable would be difficult to accurately account for in a qualitative (or, quantitative, for that matter) model. At issue is the ability for one to properly measure what the level/volume of terrorist recruitment would have been in the absence of targeted killings. One could not honestly argue that targeted killings cause an increase (or decrease) in terrorist recruitment levels unless one would know what would otherwise have occurred in terrorist recruitment.

The construction of such a model would present great difficulties for a researcher.

Firstly, it would be nigh impossible for one to obtain the actual data pertaining to recruitment numbers over time from a terrorist group.

Secondly, if one were to hypothetically obtain accurate information on this topic, how would one be able to determine what was the cause of changes in recruitment levels over time? One could not simply assume that changes in recruitment levels were solely determined by changes in the number of targeted killings. Factors such as the territory controlled by coalition forces, the territory controlled by militants, the methods which the militants utilize for their recruitment drives, the economic situation in the states in which militant groups are operating, etcetera could all or in part each account for variations in terrorist recruitment numbers over time. One could not accurately measure the influence of targeted killings upon terrorist recruitment unless one knew exactly why recruits joined terrorist groups, and it is unlikely that such groups issue surveys their recruits, with it being further unlikely that one could find such data if it did in fact exist.

Thirdly, one would be wise to not take potential statements by terrorist groups at face value, regarding their recruitment levels. It would be in the best interests of terrorist groups to inflate their recruitment numbers in the first place, for propaganda purposes. It would not serve the terrorists' cause to state that their recruitment numbers were falling. So, regardless of the existence of targeted killings, it would be logical for terrorist groups to claim that they had high/increasing recruitment numbers in the first place. Furthermore, official terrorist statements regarding the influence of targeted killings upon recruitment levels would be suspect. If recruitment levels were falling due to targeted killings, why would the terrorists release such information, considering that it could be a sign of weakness which could further lower their recruitment levels? Would not the

interests of the militants be served best by stating that targeted killings were increasing their recruitment numbers? How could one determine which was the truth? If it were true, then it would mean that the targeted killing program may be ineffective in the long run. However, if the program were effective, would it not be in the best interest of the terrorists to claim that the program was causing more recruits to join their cause?

Finally, one would question the appropriateness of measuring the effectiveness of targeted killings, by measuring the impact of targeted killings upon terrorist recruitment. Specifically, the issue is over what the targeted killing program itself is supposed to achieve. As one would recall from the previous chapters of this work, the United States' program attempts to hinder terrorist operations through the targeting of the *leadership* of such organizations, not specifically through the targeting of *common members*. Hence, attempts to measure the effectiveness of targeted killing levels through the measurement of changes in terrorist recruitment levels would be of questionable utility. To do as such would be akin to gauging the impact of the Lincoln assassination upon the United States government by measuring US Army recruitment levels before and after Lincoln's assassination. Therefore, since the purpose of the program is to eliminate the leadership of terrorist groups, the most logical course of action would be to examine the impact that targeted killings have upon the leadership and operations of such groups.

The Evidence

In order to gauge the empirical effectiveness of targeted killings, one must first determine what would qualify as evidence of the effectiveness of targeted killings, and what would demonstrate that targeted killings were ineffective. Towards this end, this study argues the following concerning targeted killings. If targeted killings are effective,

the qualitative data must provide evidence that targeted killings have caused terrorist groups to change their tactics, organizational structure, etcetera. If targeted killings are ineffective, then the qualitative data should not have any hint that targeted killings have caused any discernable change in the tactics, organizational structure, etcetera of terrorist groups. This section will take such factors into account, and examine the data observed from the three models of behavior outlined earlier in this chapter. However, before proceeding, it must be noted that a qualitative examination of terrorist behavior does carry with it certain limitations. Specifically, the issue is the lack of depth in the qualitative data available concerning terrorist operations. It would not really be feasible for a scholar from a Western university to conduct fieldwork with a terrorist organization. Neither is it likely for a terrorist group's records to suddenly become readily obtainable to members of the public. Considering this, news reports serve as the primary, readily available source for qualitative data on terrorist group behavior. Hence, at the present time, a qualitative assessment of the effectiveness of targeted killings serves as a basic triangulation/approximation of terrorist behavior in the face of targeted killings. This chapter attempts to carry out such an assessment.

There has been some evidence that the US targeted killing program has had an effect upon the behavior of terrorist leaders, from the perspective of viewing terrorist groups as unitary actors under the Rational Actor Model (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). For example, in a newspaper article printed in the Pakistani paper *The Nation* in April of 2009, it was stated that the US program was causing terrorist leaders to change the location of their respective headquarters (Shahid, 2009 April 30). The author of the story relates that "Taleban leaders after discussing in detail the situation, caused by recent

threats of drone attacks by the United States, United Kingdom and other allies, had decided to vacate Quetta with immediate effect” (par. 1). Furthermore, it was also found that the “majority of the top leaders have shifted to Karachi, Peshawar and other areas of Pakistan and are now living in a low profile” (par. 2). Pakistani police officials have stated that it is hard to keep track of militants within the cities (Guerin, 2010 June 22). The United States’ drone program has continued to influence the behavior of the militants. For example, strikes conducted by the CIA have been driving the militants out of North Waziristan (Wright & Tohid, 2010 November 5, par. 1-4). As a result of the increase in drone strikes, Taliban forces appear to be “dispersing” to other tribal regions of Pakistan (par. 4). Interestingly, the region to which a great deal of the Taliban forces are moving is one which has historically seen few drone strikes (par. 11).

These data suggest that the possibility of being killed in a targeted killing is perceived by terrorist leaders as being a real danger to themselves. Furthermore, this data demonstrates that in the calculations of the terrorist groups, it is a safer course of action to go into major cities, thus placing themselves at an increased risk of detection and arrest from the security forces, than it is to stay in the countryside and risk being killed in a targeted killing. In summary, the abovementioned information lends support to the argument that targeted killings hamper the operations of terrorist groups, from a Rational Actor Model perspective. This would be so, due to the fact that no seemed to be no disagreement among the terrorists on the decision, since the organizations were presented as unitary actors in the article above.

It appears that there are pre-existing tensions between local fighters and foreign fighters, which could become exacerbated by targeted killings. It has been noted that

there is a split within the Taliban concerning the strong influence which Al-Qaeda holds in the tribal regions of Pakistan (Khan, 2007 March 7, par. 17). Al-Qaeda members in the region, mainly consisting of Arabs, Uzbeks, and Tajiks, have not hesitated to demonstrate their influence in the area, even resorting to killing locals who were seen as obstacles to their goals/power in the region (par. 17-39). Such tensions have led to intra-militant violence in the past (par. 31). In fact, in the fall of 2006 a conflict almost erupted among the militants in the area over who would become the region's Taliban commander (par. 32). Conflict was only averted due to the direct intervention of Taliban leader Mullah Dadullah (par. 33). In 2007, open conflict erupted between the local and foreign fighters in the aforementioned region (BBC, 2007 March 21, par. 1). Thus, it is arguable that there is a possibility that targeted killings may prove capable of exacerbating the tensions between different terrorist organizations.

Hence, it appears that both the Organizational Behavior and Governmental Politics models of examining behavior seem to be applicable in this case (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). For example, in the wake of the death of Taliban commander Baitullah Mehsud, rifts began to form in the midst of the Taliban in Pakistan (Dai, 2009 August 26, par. 1). His death was also linked with the defection of several Pashtun tribes from the Taliban (par. 1). Furthermore, Mehsud was an Al-Qaeda ally, and his death harmed the organization's access to support and resources in the area (par. 2-4). Mehsud had assisted Al-Qaeda in acquiring bases and training facilities for their international activities (par. 4). Thus, his death could be seen as hindering Al-Qaeda's international activities. Just days after the killing of Mehsud, over 70 Taliban members had been killed in intra-Taliban fighting (The Nation, 2009 August 14, par. 1-3). In fact, a Taliban meeting was

held two days after Mehsud's death, for the purpose of picking a new leader (Hussain & Page, 2009 August 10, par. 1-2). At the meeting, a verbal conflict over leadership turned violent, leading to the death of one and the severe injury of another one of the men whom aspired to fill Mehsud's place in the Taliban leadership (par. 3). It was also reported that both Al-Qaeda and Afghan Taliban representatives were attempting to act as mediators in order to prevent infighting, but that they were unsuccessful at stopping the eruption of intra-Taliban violence (par. 8). In the wake of Mehsud's death, Taliban members also became concerned over the possibility of an informant existing "in their midst," due to the fact that the US had placed a \$5 million reward up to the one who provided information leading to the capture of Mehsud (Qayum & Rupert, 2009 August 10).

There are several key findings that flow forth from this data. Firstly, the data demonstrates, consistent with the expectations of the Organizational Behavior Models, the terrorists of Afghanistan and Pakistan can by no means be considered to be a unitary actor. The fact that conflict can erupt between allied organizations such as the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, and even within the same organization (ie. the Taliban), suggests that said groups are not as united as they are commonly believed to be, and that their behavior may be best explained as the result of inter-organizational (and intra-organizational) conflicts. Secondly, it appears that, consistent with the Governmental Politics Model, that group behavior can be the result of internal dynamics within the group. An example of this would be the deaths and injuries that were the result of the conflict over who would take over the regional leadership position after the death of Mehsud. Hence, decisions within the Taliban do not appear to necessarily be governed by rational calculations, as much as they are by the outcomes of internal political battles. Finally, the data suggests that

targeted killings can be an effective tool for combating terrorism, but from an oblique perspective. Specifically, this case may be suggestive that the targeting of the mid-level leadership of a terrorist organization may be the most effective course of action for states to take, as opposed to mainly targeting the top leadership of a group. The death of a regional commander, such as the abovementioned case of Mehsud, can lead to internal squabbles over leadership within a group, with a great chance for intra-group (and inter-group) violence to be the result. Hence, states can harm terrorists by setting into motion situations which would likely lead towards terrorists targeting focus (and weapons) towards each other.

It appears that the terrorists themselves consider the loss of members of its leadership to be potentially dangerous to the cohesion of their subsidiary units. Journalists Zahid Hussain and Jeremy Page have noted that intelligence analysts have found a trend among militants in the region denying the veracity of reports of the deaths of their leaders in order to prevent dissension and fights over power from developing within the ranks (2009 August 10, par. 20). The risks of internal conflict over leadership are not solely based upon personality conflicts, but also upon pre-existing intra-militant conflicts (Tufail, 2009 February 12). Furthermore, infighting is not limited to just the Pakistani Taliban. There are examples of violent clashes among portions of the Afghani Taliban (Afghan Islamic Press, 2008 April 12). Some of such conflicts have taken the form of leadership conflicts (Afghan Islamic Press, 2008 April 12). Other intra-Taliban conflicts have taken the form of conflicts over resources, such as the collection of taxes from farmers (National Afghanistan TV, 2007 September 14; Roggio, 2010 March 6).

Examples of the terrorists' fears coming to fruition include the deaths of Taliban

commanders Mullah Dedullah and Akhtar Mohammad Osmani. After their deaths, the Taliban became concerned over the potential presence of spies within their organization (Ross, 2007 May 17, par. 1-2). It was learned by Taliban leaders that Taliban members close to the aforementioned targets passed on the location of their whereabouts to the United States government (par. 2-12). It appears that the fear of spies exists within the Taliban on both the Afghani and Pakistani sides of the border, with executions of suspects occurring on a fairly regular basis (par. 13). Furthermore, concerns over spies have begun to create “tension” within the echelons of the Taliban, with even heretofore “trusted men” falling under suspicion (par. 14). Hence, it again appears that the use of targeted killings can assist states in combating their enemies through creating paranoia within the organization in the wake of a targeted killing.

Finally, it appears that targeted killings can have an influence upon changes in terrorist group organization and strategies. For example, after the killing of Mullah Dadullah, the Taliban leadership began to make changes to the group’s command structure and strategies (Shahzad, 2007 August 11, par. 12-15). The first new rule was that henceforth “no members of the central military command would work in southwestern Afghanistan” (par. 15). The second stipulation was that command, control, and strategizing would be devolved to the district-level “group commanders” (par. 15). Official district-level strategies would only be passed one from the “group commander” to his regional Taliban “governor,” who would then pass it on solely to the central military command (par. 15). The central command would use this information in order to “develop a broader strategy for particular regions” (par. 15). Thirdly, “the Taliban would discourage personality cults like Dadullah’s, as the death of a ‘hero’ demoralized his

followers” (par. 15). Finally, the Taliban devolved its media contact structure, by dividing it among four separate regional representatives (par. 15). This was done as a way to prevent the volume of information disclosed in the media representative were to be captured (par. 15). These data suggest that the leadership of the terrorist groups must consider targeted killings, and their aftermath, to be a credible threat to the efficacy of their organizations.

Conclusion

Taking the qualitative data in its totality, it appears that the United States’ targeted killing program is effective at hindering the effectiveness of terrorist groups. Firstly, the threat of targeted killings has caused the terrorist groups in Pakistan to disperse their members across several provinces. Secondly, the threat of targeted killings has caused terrorist leaders to take refuge in the larger cities of Pakistan, where they believe themselves safe from the risk of US drone attacks. This is particularly telling, considering that moving into a major city could place said terrorist leaders at greater risk of arrest from Pakistani authorities. Thirdly, targeted killings have lead to the creation of power vacuums, which in turn have lead to intra-terrorist conflicts over leadership. Fourthly, targeted killings have caused members of terrorist groups to become paranoid, thinking that even their most trusted comrades may be informants. Finally, targeted killings have caused terrorist groups to change their organizational structures and tactics in order to better withstand the occurrence of targeted killings.

Conclusion: Effectiveness is what Scholars make of it

As one can see, the topic of targeted killings is a wellspring for research. Whilst one may argue that there is contradictory information concerning the effectiveness of targeted killings, this chapter holds that these seemingly disparate findings can indeed be synthesized. Furthermore, the results of this study provide a wealth of information pertaining to topics such as research methods, avenues of future research, and government policy. Towards this end, this chapter consists of four parts. The first section contains a synthesis and evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative results of this study. The second portion of this chapter addresses methodological issues pertaining to targeted killings research, and potential areas of future research. The third part provides policy recommendations concerning the United States' targeted killing program. The final section provides a conclusion to this study.

Thoughts on the Evidence

At first look, one may argue that the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study are contradictory. However, this is not necessarily the case. As one remembers, the quantitative data found that increases in the number of targeted killings result in increases in both the numbers of terrorist attacks and the numbers of fatalities from such attacks. These results were statistically significant, utilizing both the Morehouse and NAF datasets. Thus, it appears that targeted killings do not have an influence upon the ability of terrorist groups to carry out attacks in Afghanistan-Pakistan region.

However, one is also reminded that the qualitative data has shown that there has been a significant amount of evidence that the US targeted killing program has had a hindering influence effect upon the operations of terrorist groups. Firstly, it was found

that the fear of being killed in a targeted killing was causing terrorist leaders to change the location of their respective headquarters to larger cities, believing that the US would not carry out such attacks in major cities (Shahid, 2009 April 30). In addition, targeted killings have caused the Taliban to “disperse” its members to other tribal regions of Pakistan (Wright & Tohid, 2010 November 5). Furthermore, targeted killings have created leadership vacuums, resulting in violent conflict among the terrorists in their struggle for power (Dai, 2009 August 26). Also, targeted killings have caused the terrorists to become paranoid about spies being in their midst (Qayum & Rupert, 2009 August 10; Ross, 2007 May 17). Finally, it appears that targeted killings can have an influence upon changes in terrorist group organization and strategies (Shahzad, 2007 August 11).

Arguably, the difference in results is based upon the difference in the units of analysis. The quantitative data examined the aggregate number of targeted killings, compared to the aggregate number of terrorist attacks in theater; whilst the qualitative data examined the influence of targeted killings on internal group behavior. Hence, it is arguable that targeted killings are an effective method for combating terrorism for the following reasons. Firstly, one must remember that the quantitative data only measured terrorist attacks in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. Whilst targeted killings may not have lessened the number of attacks in theater, it is possible that targeted killing operations have hindered the plans of terrorist groups to carry out their attacks internationally. Secondly, it is impossible to know for sure if targeted killings are the actual cause of the increase in the number of terrorist attacks in the region. One must remember that correlation does not equal causation. In addition, one cannot know for sure what the

baseline number of terrorist attacks would have been otherwise. Finally, targeted killings are an effective strategy for combating terrorism, even if they have no influence on the number of terrorist attacks. Rather, it is possible that their effectiveness exists in the realm of the non-quantifiable. Specifically, the value of targeted killings could be found in the hindering of ongoing operations; generating distrust and paranoia among allied terrorists; causing leaders to move into cities where they may be at an increased risk of capture; forcing groups to decentralize themselves, thereby increasing the risk of group fragmentation and the creation of competing bases of power within the various movements, etcetera. Hence, it is arguable, on the basis of the aforementioned qualitative data, that targeted killings are an effective strategy for combating terrorism.

Concerning Methods and Future Research

As the preceding section has highlighted, targeted killings research is a microcosm of the ongoing debates concerning the relative merits of quantitative versus qualitative research. Arguably, empirical research into the effectiveness of targeted killings highlights the need for mixed-methods research in the discipline. For example, if one had solely relied on the quantitative data presented in this study, one would have determined that targeted killings are an ineffective strategy for combating terrorism. On the other hand, if one had solely relied on the qualitative data in this study, one would have wrongly come to the conclusion that targeted killings are effective in hindering terrorist operations in every conceivable way. But, through an examination of both quantitative and qualitative data, one can gain a better, more balanced understanding of the relative merits and effectiveness of the United States' targeted killing program. Hence, research into targeted killings highlights the importance of mixed-methods

research in the social sciences.

There are many avenues of fruitful research on targeted killings. Firstly, it would be recommendable that a dataset be generated which would aggregate targeted killing and terrorist attack data on the daily level. Secondly, an updated dataset should increase the breadth of terrorist attack related variables from the WITS dataset. Specifically, the variables related to injuries and hostages should be included in any future analysis. Thirdly, an expanded dataset should attempt to code targeted killings and terrorist attacks at the provincial level, and in Afghanistan and Pakistan individually. Fourthly, a variable controlling for the numbers of NATO forces (and Pakistani forces) at the regional level would be recommendable as well. Fifthly, any future qualitative analysis should include on the ground interviews within the region, in order to gain a better understanding of how targeted killings may be influencing the behavior of terrorist organizations. Obviously, such interviews would not be conducted with actual terrorists. However, a good deal of insight into their operations could be gleaned from individuals such as local government officials, police officers, soldiers, local and international journalists, etcetera. Sixthly, the qualitative data should be expanded upon to examine cases of US-conducted targeted killings in places outside of the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, such as those which have occurred in Somalia. Finally, a comparative study would be of great value, by comparing the targeted killing programs conducted by other countries, which have received very little attention. For example, both Russia and Colombia have conducted targeted killings in recent years. In sum, a great deal of research could be made for years to come.

Policy Recommendation

In consideration of the evidence found during the course of this study, it is

recommended that the United States government increase and geographically expand its utilization of targeted killings for combating terrorism. Granted, the quantitative data does demonstrate that increases in the number of targeted killings results in increases in the numbers of terrorist attacks and the number of fatalities from such attacks. However, one must also keep in mind that there has not been another major terrorist attack in the United States since 9-11, and that targeted killings may have played a crucial role in preventing such an occurrence. Furthermore, the qualitative data demonstrates that targeted killings are deemed to be a threat to the terrorists' lives, at least in their own minds. In addition, it has been demonstrated that targeted killings have hindered terrorist operations in the past, having forced them to change standard operating procedures, organizational structures, instigated power vacuums which have resulted in intra-group conflicts, etcetera. Hence, base upon the evidence, it is recommended that the United States government continue to utilize targeted killings, and to furthermore expand the scope of its program.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to rectify a major gap in the literature. Namely, the dearth of empirical investigations into the effectiveness of the United States' targeted killing program. This gap in the literature was not only a loss to the academic community, but a problem for the policy community as well. Specifically, how could policymakers logically argue in favor of continuing a program, if they had no idea if it was even effective? Hence, this study attempts to provide a step towards filling this wide gap in the literature, with hopes that this hole will someday be filled. In the meantime, there is still much work to be done.

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