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Coloniality, expert knowledges and the 'war on terror': a survey of three
think tanks' discourses 2001-2015

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2022

Keele University

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Dedication

To Ammi, Usman, and in loving memory, to Baba, inna lillahe wa inna ilayhe rajeoon.

Acknowledgements

A huge debt of gratitude is owed to Professor Bülent Gökay for supervising the writing of this thesis. His support, encouragement and advice have been invaluable throughout, and have made its completion possible despite the many challenges I faced along the way. In particular, his sustained guidance and concern over the past year of lockdowns and disruption due to the global pandemic have been exemplary. Thank you!

Special appreciation is due to Professor Pnina Werbner for encouraging me to come to Keele.

My sincere thanks to The Research Faculty at Keele's School of Global, Political and Social Studies for their kindness and generosity as well as to the Faculty members I worked with as a Sessional Teacher, Mr. Navid Sheikh and Dr. Lorna Lloyd, and from whom I learnt so much. Thank you also to Keele's PGR Administrator Helen Farrell for consistently providing sound advice and support throughout the duration of my PhD.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the convenors and participants of the workshops, webinars, and conferences I have attended, in particular BISA's Colonial Postcolonial and Decolonial working group events, Critical Muslim Studies workshops, the Decolonizing the Academy workshop at Edinburgh University, the Connected Sociologies Project, and the ACES Decolonising Europe lecture series. Your contributions and exchanges were crucial in shaping my understanding of decoloniality and its challenges.

To Dr. Saadia Toor – thank you for sharing your sharp insights from across the pond.

To Samina Amin Qadir, Shaida Nabi, Imtiaz Ahmad, Myriam Blin, Ashna Sen, Amun Qureishi and Hayet Bahri - friends whose affection, trust, and prayers have withstood time and distance, you cannot be valued or thanked enough. And to Jasmine Gani, Rabea Khan, and Aasiya Ahmad, it's been a privilege meeting you over the course of this PhD. Thank you for the many different ways—academic, personal, and spiritual-- in which your solidarity, support, and care come through.

Lastly, there can be no accounting for my family's deep love, endless patience, and unflinching support. My father was not able to see the completion of this thesis, but I like to think he would not have been too displeased with it.

Abstract

Informed by the critique of Eurocentrism in the discipline of International Relations, this thesis investigates the relationship between knowledge production defined as expertise, the ‘global war on terror’, and coloniality. It conducts a critical survey of the discourses produced by experts at three leading US think tanks, The Council on Foreign Relations, The RAND Corporation, and The Heritage Foundation on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq between 2001 and 2015. Casting the experts as purveyors of policy-oriented knowledges, the thesis interrogates their role in instantiating the war, and negotiating its trajectories. It excavates the discourse’s content, rationalities and strategies, and in doing so, disrupts representations of think tank expertise as the detached, technocratic labour of foreign policy interlocutors. Instead, it reconceptualises expertise as the epistemic dimension of US sovereign/imperial power, and foregrounds its constitutive role in the legitimisation and prosecution of the war, notably via its embedded attachments to coloniality and Orientalism.

Concomitantly, the thesis draws upon decolonial critiques of Eurocentric knowledge production, which centre the concept of modernity/coloniality, and include think tanks among institutions that sustain and reproduce epistemic forms of dominance associated with European colonial/imperial rule. Juxtaposing the key premises of decolonial critique with a range of critical perspectives in IR and its sub-fields, the thesis interrogates its validity and scope in elucidating the operations of power/knowledge evinced in think tank expertise. While it affirms the broad relevance of decolonial interventions in unmasking Eurocentrism and coloniality in think tank discourses that uphold contemporary empire, it also identifies various lacunae. These stem primarily from the critique’s Atlanticist biases, which elide a fuller appreciation of the Islamicate, and of Orientalism

within the trajectories of colonialism, and secondarily from insufficiently rigorous conceptualisations of contemporary world order, and the US' role within it. It maintains that disciplinary IR needs to address these lacunae to further the decolonial project, notably as it relates in general to articulations of empire in policy-focused knowledges, and in particular to discursive constructions of the 'war on terror'.

List of Acronyms

ANSF:	Afghanistan National Security Forces
BoIJ:	Bureau of Investigative Journalism
BSA:	US-Afghan Bilateral Security Agreement
BU:	Brown University
CBM:	Confidence Building Measures
CFR:	Council on Foreign Relations
CIA:	Central Intelligence Agency (USA)
COIN:	Counterinsurgency
CPA:	Coalition Provisional Authority (Iraq)
CT:	Counterterrorism
CTS:	Critical Terrorism Studies
DoD:	Department of Defence (USA)
FATA:	Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Pakistan)
GWoT:	Global War on Terror
HTS:	US Department of Defense's Human Terrain System
I-ANDS:	Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ICC:	International Criminal Court
ICT:	International Conference on Terrorism
INC:	Iraqi National Congress
ISAF:	International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan)
ISI:	Inter-Services Intelligence (Pakistan)
MNF-I:	Multinational Force Iraq

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

RAND Corp: Research and Development Corporation

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency

UNOCAL: Union Oil Company of California

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

UNSCOM: United Nations Special Commission

US: United States of America

WMD: Weapons of Mass Destruction

Introduction

...the laws are mine, not thine.

Who can arraign me for't?

(William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act V Scene 3)

‘For generations, the central challenge for US foreign policy has been straightforward: consolidate, protect, and extend the liberal international order that the United States helped create after World War II... Because the order doesn’t discriminate on grounds of geography, race, religion, or other ascriptive characteristics, any country that wants to join and is prepared to play by the rules is allowed in, making it a potentially universal alliance that is constantly expanding’ (Rose, 2015: 2-3).¹

‘Since becoming the world’s most powerful nation in the middle of the last century, the United States has laboured to build a rules-based global system dominated by market democracies and dedicated to promoting free trade and the peaceful settlement of disputes. This new order ... produced the end of colonialism, the reunification of Germany, the liberation of Eastern Europe, the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet empire, the extension of democracy to 144 countries... Preserving and extending this world order should remain the core objective of US policy...’ (Dobbins et al., 2015: xxiv-xxv).²

‘For the last seven years we have witnessed an unprecedented experiment based on a fundamental question: What would the world look like if the United States pulled back from its traditional leadership role? That was after all, the key thrust of President Barack Obama’s new foreign policy.... There is only one way to reverse this dynamic: disrupt the disrupters – that is, those who wish to disrupt America’s leadership in the world ...’ (Holmes, 2016).³

¹ Rose, G. (2015). ‘What Obama gets right’, *Foreign Affairs*, 94(5). Rose is Peter G. Peterson Chair at the Council on Foreign Relations and Editor of this flagship publication.

² Dobbins et al. (2015) *Choices for America in a turbulent world: Strategic rethink*. RAND Corporation. Dobbins is a senior US diplomat who served as Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

³ Holmes, K.R. (2016). ‘Reviving American power after Obama’, *The Heritage Foundation*, 4 February. Holmes is Distinguished Fellow, Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign and National Security Policy at The Heritage Foundation, and was Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Organisation Affairs 2002-2005.

Almost fifteen years after the United States launched the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively, and in the wake of differentially executed troop withdrawals from each state, experts at the three US based think tanks that form the focus of this dissertation, namely the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the RAND Corporation, and the Heritage Foundation, outline in key publications the multifarious policy challenges surrounding the assertion of US global primacy, interspersing notes of triumphalism with varying degrees of chagrin. The publications are a journal article, *What Obama Gets Right – Keep Calm and Carry the Liberal Order On*, a book, *Choices for America in a Turbulent World: Strategic Rethink*, and an online commentary, *Reviving American Power After Obama*, and they collectively provide an example of the think tanks' versatile corpus. They also hearken to the scrupulous attention lavished by experts at the institutions to the wars from their onset. In the years since, the interventions have generated a copious archive, and played a formative role in consolidating the discursive field in which the wars are narrated, fusing prescription and prediction, analysis, and apologia. The experts' preoccupation with the wars, commonly subsumed under the rubric of the 'global war on terror' (GWOt) is sustained in these publications although rather than serving as the exclusive thematic, it comprises one element within broader investigations into the challenges attending the current projection of US power.

Ensnared within the capacious horizon of US foreign, security and defence policy, the ongoing wars have to date exacted a monumental death toll, precipitated mass civilian displacement; fuelled multiple insurgencies and proxy wars; routinised apparatuses of surveillance, extrajudicial incarceration, target killing, and torture; and normalised global Islamophobia. The differential perspectives of the wars advanced in publications of varying import and length

reveal convergences and divergences in the think tanks' political, ideological, and normative investments. The wars elicit extended scrutiny in the RAND Corporation's *Strategic Rethink*, a more succinct but no less authoritative overview in the CFR's journal, *Foreign Affairs*, and an episodic, highly polemical mention in the Heritage Foundation's *Commentary*. Although the accounts diverge in their analyses of the wars' *modi operandi*, their putative successes and failures, they display a radical symmetry in their allegiance to the chain of equivalence linking US exceptionalism, global supremacy and world order. This covalence is articulated in the syllogism that the US' exceptional credentials are the condition of possibility for its global ascendancy, which, in turn, is enshrined in its role as the founder, architect and guarantor of the post-World War 2 (WW2) liberal international order. As the fountainhead of planetary order, the US is uniquely endowed with the capacity to configure and pacify the international and incorporate it within the global; concurrently, in privileging the dissemination of democracy and the free market, it alone heralds the realisation of the Kantian teleology of democratic peace (Bell 2014; Reid 2010; Ryan 2011).⁴ As such a relational ontology is established according to which the establishment of global order becomes contingent upon US global stewardship, while the latter becomes contingent upon the order's reproduction and extension.

In his genealogy of US exceptionalism, Hughes (2015: 527-551) delineates the surge of interest in the subject during the new millennium coincident with the instantiation of the GWoT. As he recounts, belief in US exceptionalism 'transcends party-political differences', and as recorded in a survey of public attitudes, has been endorsed by eighty percent of the populace (2015:

⁴ The think tanks' convictions regarding the US' singularity echo the claims of official state discourse; "In the most authoritative documents of its administration the United States declares itself to be the only country that, in its capacity as a 'global power', can 'project power' worldwide" (Zolo 2007b: 161).

529).⁵ The credo also emerges though perhaps with less alacrity in scholarly iterations; to exemplify the latter, Hughes cites Bobbitt's contention that to accuse the US of hypocrisy when it fails to comply with 'the regimes it urges on others' is futile since it is 'simply not in the same position as other states' (Bobbitt 2002 cited in Hughes 2015: 528). Bobbitt's contribution is useful in that it elides notions of exceptionalism, which privilege cultural-historical-political factors, with the sovereign exception, which is primarily a juridico-legal category theorised most famously by Schmitt (1985 [2005]). In Schmitt's conception (1985), the sovereign alone is competent to proclaim a state of exception or emergency, suspending the law to uphold it. The elision is especially pertinent to this study in that it is mirrored in the three think tanks' discourses as they construct multivariate registers of exceptionality. On the one hand, they align seamlessly with articulations of American exceptionalism that are ubiquitous in popular, scholarly, and state discourse in the US, and on the other they also echo and amplify declamations of the US as the 'global exception' (Pasha 2017).

Nonetheless a degree of caution is due in that the think tanks' understanding of the US as the sovereign exception is at slight variance from Schmitt's formulation. This may be gleaned at this opening stage of this study by turning to Zolo's (2007a, 2007b) contentions regarding the interface between US imperial power on the one hand, and the preservation of global order via international law on the other. The US, he observes, may be '*legibus soluta*'; however, its self-sanctioned departures from international law, especially via the doctrine of preventive war, stem from 'a will to undermine' rather than restore 'the current international order, which is still

⁵ The precise statement of the survey conducted in December 2010 reads, 'the United States has a unique character because of its history and Constitution that sets it apart from other nations as the greatest in the world' (Hughes 2015: 129).

founded on the sovereignty of states' (Zolo 2007a: 60). In Zolo's coinage then, US power is a force that erodes, even subverts, the juridical structures of an order grounded in territoriality, setting in train processes of transformation that exceed the horizon of restoration following a state of emergency.

Zolo invokes the concept of 'de-spatialisation' to distinguish this dynamic from statist models of territoriality and warfare, and relates it to the notion of 'global war' that is 'waged in the name of a strategy' privileging the pursuit of 'universal objectives such as global security and world order' (2007a: 59). He contests the concept of 'global war' by recalling Carl Schmitt's 'anti-normativist and anti-universalist' anxieties regarding the collapse of the Eurocentric *nomos* following WW1, and the rise of an increasingly dominant US (2007b: 160). Schmitt, as Zolo notes, not only decried 'universalist and globalist' constructions of power, but also) the waging of war in the name of humanity (Zolo 2007b: 159-160). For Schmitt, the invocation of humanity was suspect as it implied

'...a war wherein a particular state seeks to usurp a universal concept against its military opponent' (Schmitt 1976: 54).

However, the relation between de-spatialisation defined thus and the think tanks' policy prescriptives needs further elaboration, and is a theme that is explored recurrently in the dissertation. A sense of the prevalent discrepancies may be gleaned by pointing to the directions in which the think tank experts' discussion of the US as the 'global exception' (Pasha 2017) unfolds. At the most elementary level, a disjuncture exists in the very conception of order; whereas Zolo associates it with the international, it is necessarily US centric and liberal in the experts' conception. In another respect, both conceptions align broadly in that the experts also envisage a dynamic rather than a static model of order suggesting a work in progress, one that

elides sovereign borders, and bypasses the restitution of the geopolitical status quo ante for the expansion of pacified liberal space through war. Yet the apparent alignment betrays differences: in the think tanks' imaginaries, despatialisation is a precursor to *respatialisation*, which incorporates a more complex topography. It encompasses emergent territorialities and hierarchies involving the reclassification of 'weak' and 'strong' states (Dobbins et al 2015: xxvi), of 'core', 'periphery' and 'badlands' (Rose 2015: 2, 8), and of terrorist 'safe havens' (Holmes 2016). As such, an exclusive focus on the US' infringement of sovereignty does not capture the complex dynamics at play in the think tank experts' appraisals of order from the vantage point of the exception.

Equally pertinently for the subject matter of this dissertation, the US' imperative to order the globe is juxtaposed to the trajectories of the unfinished wars, and an anomalous relation is inscribed between the overarching project and its putative instrument. The wars are viewed with disquiet, although for conflicting reasons, and their role in facilitating the expansion of the US centric international order is problematised. Differences relate chiefly to questions of tactics and modalities rather than overarching strategy, translating at times into politically and ideologically partisan positions. For example, Rose in the *Foreign Affairs* piece castigates the 'three pillars' of the so-termed Bush doctrine, "'pre-emption', regime change, and a Manichean division between friends and enemies" as 'a dead letter' that had provoked a strong 'reaction' by the end of the President's first term (Rose 2015: 6). Concomitantly, he applauds President Obama for 'his recognition that the core of [the liberal international] order needed to be salvaged by pulling back from misguided adventures and feuds in the global periphery' (2). In contrast, Holmes (2016) discerns in the unending wars a symptom of the 'historic failure' of

Obama's policies, which are not only 'disrupting the order we helped create', but are replacing it with 'a new order in which the United States cannot possibly win'. Meanwhile, the authors of RAND's *Strategic Rethink* surmise that the US required 'a generation to get over the lost war in Vietnam; it can ill afford to wait another generation before recovering from the setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan...' (Dobbins et al 2016: 112).

The thesis' rationale and approach

The previous section foregrounded think tank experts' latter-day ruminations on the long wars amidst a broader discourse that intertwines US exceptionalism with the preservation and expansion of a liberal international order. In this endeavour, it provides a backdrop for the conceptual and empirical terrain traversed in this thesis as it undertakes a critical interrogation of the think tank experts' discursive interventions at successive phases of the GWoT since 2001. The concept of an archive is deployed to connote the regularity and longevity of the interventions, and underline their specificity as discourses marking the intersections of expert knowledge production, war and coloniality. In attempting to delineate the interlinkages amongst these domains, the thesis is animated by the burgeoning focus on the Eurocentric and colonial/imperial underpinnings of the discipline of International Relations (IR) that constitute its core problematics, normative categories and analytical standpoints. The growth of this critical epistemic consciousness has led to the production of a rich and diverse body of literature that is creative, insightful and subversive, and that in several instances is inspired by an urgent quest to *decolonise* the discipline by drawing attention to the silences, elisions, and erasures sustaining its ontological and canonical foundations.⁶

⁶ This study is deeply appreciative of such endeavours, but is sceptical towards the possibility of decolonising IR, given the existential symmetry between the discipline and Eurocentrism. In this it follows Haşimi's contention that 'the discipline cannot exist without positing or reproducing Eurocentrism as nomos of the world' (2015: 38-39).

The emergent critique acquires theoretical, conceptual, and empirical force by drawing upon the repertoire of anticolonial, postcolonial and decolonial thought for the articulation of new theoretical, normative, and substantive research agendas. In continuation of this endeavour, this study interrogates think tank discourses through the lens of decolonial critique that centres the modernity/coloniality dyad. The dyadic formulation owes its provenance to the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano (1992), and its subsequent elaboration to scholars broadly grouped as the Latin American modernity/coloniality or simply the decolonial collective that includes Mignolo, Grosfoguel, Dussel, Lugones, Escobar and Icaza. In Quijano's iteration, coloniality represents the constitutive underside of modernity or as he states, 'there is no modernity without coloniality' (2000). According to Icaza (2017: 28), modernity/coloniality represents a 'duality' rather than 'a binary' or 'a dialectic' such that 'modernity cannot be thought, sensed, and experienced without its underside: coloniality'. Furthermore, modernity/coloniality encompasses the key 'analytical categories of the colonial matrix of power' (Mignolo 2011a: 45), an elaborate structure of 'management and control' inaugurated by European colonialism that intermeshes knowledge production, subjectivity, gender, the economy, and political authority (Mignolo 2018: 142). Key to the decolonial analytic is the contention that 'Western expansion was not only economic and political but fundamentally epistemic' (Mignolo 2018: 137), and that the structures of domination it instituted for its reproduction have outlasted empire's demise and the triumph of formal decolonisation.

Quijano's conception is distinctive in locating the birth of modernity to the conquest of the Americas, which became 'the first space/time of a new model of power' (Quijano, 2000: 533), 'the constitution of a new world order, culminating, five hundred years, later in global power

covering the whole planet' (Quijano 2007: 168). In consonance with postcolonial theorists, Quijano's analytic emphasises the reconstitution of knowledge in tandem with the process of colonisation; as he explains, knowledge became akin to 'property - as a relation between one individual and something else' rooted in a subject/object binary (Quijano 2007: 173). Within this binary, Europeans assumed the mantle of rationality and subjectivity as producers of knowledge, whilst 'other cultures', deemed 'inferior' were relegated to being the 'objects of knowledge or/and domination practices' (173). The emerging 'European paradigm of rational knowledge', Quijano continues, implied the exclusion of the 'other' as an agent in intersubjective knowledge production; it

'...blocked... every relation of communication, of interchange of knowledge and of modes of producing knowledge between the cultures, since the paradigm implies that between 'subject' and 'object' there can be but a relation of externality' (174).

In this way, it served 'to make invisible the colonial order as totality' (173). Equally, this exclusion inaugurated the construction of Europe through a process of self-differentiation that culminated in accounts of the endogenous emergence of European modernity.⁷ Quijano contests such exclusivist and hegemonic understandings of Europe's rise. He observes that "The emergence of the idea of the 'West' or of 'Europe', is an admission of identity" that bespeaks 'a 'power structure' in which the 'European paradigm of rational knowledge' became pivotal to European colonial domination (174). Thus, modernity is inextricable from coloniality.

In connoting the human, material and ecological devastation wrought during this expansion, coloniality becomes emblematic of western modernity's 'darker and hidden side' (Mignolo

⁷ Haşimi provides an extended reading of the rise of Europe and of Eurocentrism (134ff). He notes, 'It seems that there is also a need to consider the notion of Europe (as a geography, idea, and discourse) to understand both Eurocentrism and what is defined as *the Rise of Europe*... rather than a question of history and historiography, Eurocentrism is a matter of political theory' (2015: 144).

2018:140). It also constitutes, as Icaza avers, a subversive ‘epistemic location’ from which ‘hegemonic histories of modernity’ centring the Renaissance or Industrial Revolution are contested as self-serving narratives of ‘Eurocentric power projection’ (Icaza 2017: 27). For Mignolo such acts of contestation are integral to *decoloniality* as a ‘manifesto’ that aims to ‘unveil the logic...and processes’ that trammel ‘knowledge and being’ within the colonial matrix (2018: 136). Decoloniality embodies ‘the energy that does not allow the operation of the logic of coloniality nor believes the fairy tales of the rhetoric of modernity’ (Mignolo 2011a: 46). As he elaborates,

‘You cannot decolonise knowledge if you do not question the very foundation of Western epistemology. And you cannot decolonise being if you do not question the very foundation of Western ontology. How do you decolonise Western political economy if you do not question ... the epistemic assumptions from which the edifice of political economy has been built since Adam Smith?’ (2018: 136)

Decoloniality, then, commences as an exhaustive interrogation of the transformations wrought by centuries of western colonial dominance, and aims to cultivate ‘ways of relating to the world...of feeling, acting and thinking...that come from other geo-genealogies’ and lie ‘beyond modernity’ (Vasquez 2014 translated by Icaza 2017: 28) in its ‘borderlands’ and ‘cracks’ (cited in Capan 2017: 7).

The ramifications of applying the coloniality/modernity analytic to the discipline of IR are potentially momentous. A preliminary sense of the analytic’s disruptive impact may be gleaned in Capan’s observations on the rationale, trajectory, and modalities of decolonising the discipline (Capan 2017). Acknowledging and extending the critique of IR’s Eurocentrism, she delineates the specific ways in which coloniality as a concept disputes conventional

understandings of the subject. At the most general level, coloniality illuminates how IR narrates itself ‘through Western conceptions of modernity [that] silence [its] ... colonial past and the constitutive role of colonialism’ (Capan 2017: 4). It foregrounds the role of the colonial matrix of power in structuring the contemporary modern/colonial world, and cleaving the ‘social and political divisions’ that enable its reproduction (4). Situating IR as a form of Eurocentric knowledge within this matrix enables questioning of the international system’s moorings in the colonial past, and the persistence of colonial influences in the nominally postcolonial present (4). Furthermore, it prompts scrutiny of the ‘constitutive alterities’, the ‘spatial and temporal’ binaries that emerged from the ‘discovery’ of the ‘New World’ in 1492, and ground IR’s conception of the ‘geo-political and geo-cultural organization of world politics’ (4). Through these embedded binaries, IR casts the West as ‘the knower...human...civilised’, and devises classificatory regimes such as the three-world schema in which the non-west is ascribed various degrees of lack (4).

Equally, Capan elucidates how coloniality permeates the norms and protocols governing knowledge production in IR (2017: 5-6). Drawing upon Escobar’s and Quijano’s insights, she amplifies the discussion of Eurocentrism as ‘the knowledge form of modernity/coloniality - a hegemonic representation and mode of knowing that claims universality’ (Escobar 2007 cited in Capan 2017: 4). She echoes Quijano’s observation that Eurocentrism constructs binaries within a linear account of progress, naturalises and codifies cultural differences as race, and relegates non-European societies to the past (Capan 2017: 4-5).⁸ Relatedly, IR’s Eurocentrism

⁸ This study follows Haşimi in extending the epistemic understanding of Eurocentrism to ontology and cosmology. He observes, Eurocentrism is ‘a creative, formative political project, which relies on certain forms of imagining and constituting the earth. [It is] ...conceived...as a globalized regime of truth, while also codifying the very meaning of the globe and the global’ (2015: 36).

is catalytic in establishing ‘who gets to be the knower and who the known’, and in designating ‘the West’ as the proper ‘locus of enunciation’ from which the world is hierarchically ordered (5).

Capan’s discussion offers a valuable point of entry into the critique of knowledge advanced in decolonial thought, and to its relevance for the discipline of IR. In problematising the practices of knowledge production in IR, and especially in referring to the ‘locus of enunciation’, (5) her arguments resonate with what decolonial scholars term ‘the geopolitics of knowledge’ (Mignolo 2002, Grosfogel 2002), a concept that is pivotal to this study’s focus on the think tanks’ literature. The term encapsulates Mignolo’s contention that ‘epistemology cannot be detached from the politics of location’ (Mignolo 1999: 244). As Bhambra elaborates, Mignolo does not only argue for

‘...the geo-politics of location as central to any academic endeavour, but a consideration of *what* that geo-politics enables to be known and *how* it is to be known’ (Bhambra 2014: 118).

Extending the critique, Mignolo (1999) connects the geo-politics of knowledge to ‘the (epistemic) colonial difference’. In his co-authored volume, Mignolo deploys the term to denote the hierarchies ‘located at the junction of knowledge, subjectivity and racial classification’ that European colonial powers established to cast subject populations as ‘lesser humans’ (Mignolo and Walsh 2018: 186, 179). Tracing its emergence to the rise of Catholic Spain after 1492, and specifically to the Inquisition that he terms ‘one of the first modern institutions to regulate racial classification and hierarchy’ Mignolo charts its evolution across centuries of colonial domination to its post-1945 appropriation by the US. (2018: 182, 179). As he elaborates, knowledge production by ‘actors in institutional positions’ was crucial to the

(re)articulation of colonial differences, and became one of the ‘hidden strategies’ of colonialism (2018: 186). He observes,

‘It served European intellectuals, philosophers, and men of letters ... well to implement the colonial difference and racialise (i.e., to describe as inferior) both the Indigenous of the New World and Africans after doing the same with Moors and Jews; ... Racialisation of Moors and Jews served well to affirm Christian political, territorial-economic, and religious identity. In the New World it was necessary to legitimise land dispossession, slavery, and slave trade’ (2018: 186).

Mignolo highlights two further aspects of knowledge production linked to the colonial difference. One relates to its projection across time and space via ‘universal fictions’ invoking aesthetics, culture, and politics to cultivate subjectivities (2018: 187), and formulate pedagogies that teach the inducted ‘*how to think*’ (1999: 237). The second elucidates the ways in which ‘epistemology, the colonial difference and the politics of location’ are implicated in ‘the subalternisation of knowledge’ (1999: 238). As elaborated in a later chapter, Mignolo draws upon Carl Pletsch’s critique of the social scientific division of labour after WW2 in which a tripartite division of the world informed ‘academic studies of foreign areas’ (Pletsch 1981: 567). Mignolo accepts Pletsch’s analysis of the formative influence of the Cold War in fashioning the rise of Area Studies and modernisation theory (Mignolo 1999: 238). More significantly, both scholars link these developments to imperial/colonial antecedents. Thus, Pletsch connects modernisation theory to Orientalism, and also observes that the latter extended beyond the cultural realm to inflect the labours of ‘economists, political scientists and sociologists’ (Pletsch 1981: 584). Mignolo, however, apprehends the three-world schema and Orientalism as continuations of the epistemic colonial difference inaugurated in 16th century Iberia (1999: 238). In this genealogy, subalternisation appears in epistemic norms that nurture projects of conquest and domination, exclude or marginalise alternative discursive formations, and

establish hierarchies that designate entire regions and populations as ‘objects of study’ rather than as producers of ‘sustainable knowledge’ (Mignolo 1999: 239).

Imperial questions, war and knowledge

This thesis mobilises the concept of modernity/coloniality and its cognates in ‘the geopolitics of knowledge’ (Mignolo 2002; Grosfoguel 2002) to direct its interrogation of think tank knowledges in the context of the assertion of US neo-imperial power in the GWoT. Resurgent interest in US empire has provoked a profusion of publications by apologists and critics in mainstream media and policy discourse.⁹ In an article published shortly after the invasion of Iraq, Mabee points to the ubiquity of the terms ‘empire’ and ‘imperial’ in discussions of US foreign policy, observing that the terms which had previously animated ‘the discourse of radical politics’ had undergone a process of ‘normalisation’ whereby they conveyed critical as well as laudatory meanings (Mabee 2004: 1359). His aim is to connect IR scholars’ engagement with this process to ‘the broader context of the role of empire in [IR] theorising’ (1359). Although focused on the concept of ‘globalisation’, Mabee’s general argument is that reconceptualising the US as an empire enables a ‘richer understanding ... of [its] contemporary role’, and ameliorates ‘problems’ arising from the ways in which ‘mainstream international relations have conceptualised the international realm’ (1360). An example of the latter that Mabee highlights is the inattention to hierarchy in international relations due to its foundational core in its ‘antithesis’, anarchy (1368). Thus the 19th century is frequently depicted as ‘the classical period

⁹ The well-rehearsed list of works explicitly invoking US empire and proclaiming its indispensability includes Ignatieff (2003); Cooper (2002); Mallaby (2002); Haass (2000); Boot (2001); Ferguson (2004) to name but a few. These are distinguished as Mabee (2004) points out from those which do not mention empire, but valorize US unilateralism and unipolarity, for example Kristol and Kagan (1996), Krauthammer (1990).

of Westphalian international relations’ rather than of ‘inter-imperial rivalries... formal and informal imperial rule’.

Mabee’s account is significant in relating the millennial surge of US imperial power to the larger question of IR’s epistemic predilections, and, in the latter context, identifying issues that have gained momentum lately, leading to calls to ‘decolonise’ the discipline. Examples abound of scholarly works in IR that have attempted to reconfigure the theoretical, conceptual and empirical landscape of IR in a decolonial direction. Less than a decade ago, however, Barkawi remarked in a chapter titled ‘Empire and Order in International Relations and Security Studies’ that a discipline ‘founded amidst empire’ obscures its imperial origins, in order to focus upon ‘a world of sovereign states and their collective action problems’ under anarchy rather than hierarchy (Barkawi 2010: 1361-62). The reluctance to formulate ‘a coherent and developed body of inquiry on questions of empire’ Barkawi added, distinguishes IR from disciplines such as anthropology that have acknowledged ‘their... implications in imperial power’ (1361-1362). Similarly, Zielonka observes that while empire, is ‘back in vogue amongst historians and political theorists’ this is not the case for IR scholars; he inquires whether the discipline’s attachment to the Westphalian nation-state as its unit of analysis, as well as to concepts such as ‘great powers’ and ‘hegemony’ renders it ‘too self-contained’ [for] ... serious dialogue with students of empires’ (Zielonka 2012: 503).

These critiques fuse three principal strands of inquiry, namely the conceptualisation of the US as an imperial power, IR’s protracted disengagement with empire, and the production of Eurocentric knowledges anchored in coloniality not only in disciplinary IR, but in discourses

of international relations circulating *outside* the academy. These strands drive the key problematic of this study that, at the broadest level, explores their intersections through the GWoT. To pursue this task, it undertakes a two-pronged investigation, refracting its inquiry into two interrelated questions. First, centring think tank experts as elite actors engaged in the production of (neo)imperial policy-oriented knowledges who traverse academia, the media, and the upper echelons of the state, the thesis critically evaluates their discursive instantiation of the GWoT in the consolidation of post-Cold War US primacy. In deploying the categories of empire and imperialism, it draws on several studies on the topic in IR as well as in related disciplines.¹⁰ Its usage of the categories is especially resonant with the concept of ‘imperial formations’ deployed by Stoler and McGranahan who seek to advance ‘a specific genealogy of American imperialism that predates the Cold War’ (Stoler and McGranahan 2007: 33), and by Duara, namely that of ‘imperialism without colonialism’ (Duara 2007: 232).

Such conceptualisations foreground the study’s endeavour to mine the archive that has agglomerated since 2001 comprising the contributions of experts at the CFR, the RAND Corporation, and the Heritage Foundation. In engaging with the archive, the study scrutinises the experts’ discursive investments in constructing policy-relevant understandings of the war after the attacks of September 11. Deploying the concept of discourse as explicated in Hall’s synoptic explication of Foucault, the study aims initially to retrieve the interventions’ salient arguments:

‘Discourses are ways of talking, thinking, or representing a particular subject or topic. They produce meaningful knowledge about that subject. This knowledge influences social practices, and so has real consequences and effects. Discourses are not reducible to class-interests, but always operate in relation to power - they

¹⁰ Examples include Gökay and Fouskas (2005), Rao (2004), Walker (2002), Cox (2004), Barkawi and Laffey (2002), Go (2008, 2011, 2017), Gregory (2004), Zolo (2007a), Stoler (2006), Rana (2010) and Toor (2011).

are part of the way power circulates and is contested. The question of whether a discourse is true or false is less important than whether it is effective in practice. When it is effective-organizing and regulating relations of power ... - it is called a "regime of truth." (Hall 1992: 295).

Relatedly, Foucault's uses the term 'archive' to denote 'the accumulated existence of discourses' and 'the general system of the formation and transformation of statements' (Foucault 1989 cited in Olssen 2014: 29, 31). As Olssen explains, this system, 'far from being static ... is constantly being reproduced and transformed through use' (Olssen 2014: 31). Concurrently, it attempts to elucidate the discursive strategies and logics whereby the experts produce 'meaningful knowledge' (Hall 1992: 295) about the war, delimiting its boundaries of intelligibility, congealing specific representations, and reaffirming their status as authoritative interlocutors or 'intellectuals of statecraft' (Agnew and O'Tuathail 1992). Furthermore, it documents the discourse's progression alongside the wars' vitiating trajectories, and interrogates the experts' attempt to navigate the disorder via strategies of rationalisation, amelioration, and extrication. In approaching the think tanks' ostensibly technocratic and value-free interventions as assemblages of knowledge and power, the thesis overlaps to a degree with the salient aims of critical discourse analysis (CDA). These may be summed up as 'understanding how discourses work to construct social process and structures in ways that reproduce power relations' (Jackson 2005: 4). The overlap is partial as CDA is expressly devoted to scrutiny of linguistic and syntactical structures as well as 'rhetorical ... strategies' in specific texts (Jackson: 2005: 4); in contrast, while the decolonial project is not inattentive to such concerns, its overriding focus is epistemic and ontological rather than linguistic. Correspondingly, decoloniality particularises the understanding of 'power relations' within the

modernity/coloniality nexus while CDA adopts a more diffuse approach that is applicable to different contexts.

From scrutinising the think tank experts' interventions, the thesis turns to the second strand of its inquiry. It links the emerging analytic to the decolonial critique of knowledge production, notably in the domain of international relations understood both as a discipline and as a praxis extending beyond the academy. It evaluates the extent to which the critique's principal theoretical, conceptual, and empirical insights illuminate the think tanks' discursive interventions as performative assemblages of (neo)imperial power and knowledge. While Quijano's articulation of the modernity/coloniality nexus grounds the decolonial endeavour, the thesis focuses principally, but not exclusively, on the insights of two of its leading exponents, Mignolo and Grosfoguel. The appositeness of deploying decolonial critique as an epistemic lens for investigating think tank experts' interventions resides in several factors. The most immediate is the conjunction between the critique's powerful exposition of colonial/imperial/Eurocentric structures of knowledge production, and the intellectual labour of elite actors inhabiting policymaking milieux in what Go terms the 'liberal empire-state' (2017: 70). A corollary to this point is decolonial scholars' characterisation of the US as the successor to defunct European empires rather than a post-imperial hegemon (Mignolo 2011a; Grosfoguel 2008).¹¹ Significantly, this characterisation incorporates the multiple domains, for example, economic and military power, culture, race, and knowledge production that constitute 'the rhetoric of modernity' and shape its doctrines of salvation (Mignolo 2015: 3). A further

¹¹ Mignolo's posture may be contrasted with Schmitt's views that were briefly alluded to earlier in this chapter. As Haşimi notes, Schmitt discerned "a radical opposition between a European ordering of the universe and the 'American' version", extolling the former and bemoaning the latter (2015: 38). Mignolo critiques Schmitt's Eurocentrism in 'The Global South and World Dis/Order' (2011: 171ff).

correspondence obtains in Mignolo's interventions regarding the coloniality of IR as a discipline. In an interview in the volume, *Critical Epistemologies of Global Politics*, Mignolo (2017: 21) posits an intrinsic connection between IR and the inter-state system established after Westphalia, stating that the discipline's *raison d'être* is the perpetuation, regulation and legitimization of the latter. Other considerations notwithstanding, IR's state centrism underlines its irreconcilability with decoloniality which envisages, as he explains, the 'end of the nation state as the form of governance entrenched with capitalism' ,

'The radical decolonial view summons the moment in which IR will no longer be necessary because coloniality would be over. As long as coloniality is not over, but all over, IR will remain a colonialist discipline entrenched in coloniality' (Mignolo 2017: 22).

Mignolo welcomes the advent of decolonial scholarship in IR in that it takes 'the experiential legacies of colonialism' as its point of departure rather than 'the European half of the story' (22). As detailed in a later chapter, such considerations are also significant in that reinforce the significance of studying think tanks as *geopolitical* actors in IR in addition to their more commonplace inclusion in fields such as Political Science or American Studies. Equally germane is the decolonial emphasis on knowledge production as a societal endeavour that extends beyond the academy, reproducing coloniality at plural sites in which think tanks complement 'museums...institutes, foundations and religious organisations' (Mignolo 2015: 5). The particular status of think tanks as 'interstitial' actors (Medvetz 2012) traversing multiple domains lends a further layer of complexity to this observation as will be detailed in subsequent chapters. Lastly, a connection also emerges in Mignolo's interventions about the GWoT, notably the 2003 invasion of Iraq, that follow two principal lines of argument: first, Iraq is assimilated within a genealogy of colonial/imperial expansion and represented as 'almost an exact replica' of the Spanish colonial conquest of the Incas (2015: 7-8); Second, its geopolitical

ramifications are analysed in the context of his reflections on dewesternisation and rewesternisation and their relation to the gradual weakening of the colonial matrix of power via (2015: 16).

Problematising decoloniality

Recognising the broad relevance of decolonial approaches to its subject matter, this study probes their resilience and traction amidst an intensive scrutiny of think tank expertise in the context of the GWoT. Although Mignolo enumerates categories of knowledge producing institutions reproducing coloniality, and lists think tanks amongst these, his critique prompts several questions. For example, are the various institutional categories equally complicit as regards the reproduction of coloniality? How is coloniality manifest in their endeavours, and how is it sustained over shifting imperial formations? How is each positioned in relation to dominant power structures in the ‘liberal empire-state’ (Go 2017: 70)? What is distinctive about the knowledges it disseminates? How does the notion of ‘expertise’ inflect each category? How resilient are the prevailing structures? Most importantly, how does the context of *global war* impinge upon the institutions’ *routinised* articulation of coloniality? In sum, what resources does decoloniality furnish to undertake a rigorous and granular critique of the institutions’ knowledge making practices, and how efficacious is the critique in unveiling their particularities?

These questions are especially pertinent in view of Mignolo’s classification of three forms of critique, one of which ‘is internal to the history of Europe’, and advances ‘a Eurocentred critique of modernity (for example, psychoanalysis, Marxism, poststructuralism, postmodernity)’; the others

‘... emerged from non-European histories entangled with Western modernity. One ... focuses on the idea of Western civilization (for example, dewesternisation...), and the other [from the Bandung Conference] on coloniality...’ (Mignolo 2011b: xi-xii).

Arguably then, given the importance Mignolo attaches to critique in general and to institutions in particular, his summative statement warrants clarification, and problematisation of ‘the geopolitics of knowledge’ (Mignolo 2002; Grosfoguel 2002) defining their operations. Without further interrogation, the statement risks essentialising complex constellations of colonial/(neo)imperial power involving state and societal actors. Thus, while decolonial critique aptly connects histories of western colonialism to contemporary phenomenon and demystifies the shifting allure of ‘modernity’, there is a risk that it reifies coloniality as a univocal narrative, occluding its specificity, and thereby contracts rather than enlarges the space for resistance.

The thesis draws upon these questions to propel its overarching inquiry into the intersections between decolonial critique and think tank discourses. While expertise associated with three leading think tanks offers fertile ground per se for decolonial investigations into processes of knowledge production, its instantiation in the GWOt presents an especially compelling case for such undertakings. Three factors, in particular, are of note. First, the launch of the GWOt in a post-Cold War setting distinguished by the emergence of US unipolarity constitutes an encounter between ‘old’ and ‘new’ imperial formations. Second, it condenses multiple dimensions of the ‘neo-imperial’ (Gökay and Fouskas 2005) exercise of US power that are local and global, and often embody the intersectionality of the colonial matrix of power. Third, as the harbinger of momentous suffering, and of the normalisation of regimes of torture,

incarceration, disappearance, rendition and surveillance, it becomes an especially vivid embodiment of ‘the darker side of modernity’ and postmodernity (Mignolo 2011b).

However, in addition to the role of institutions, the GWoT is also notable in pointing to other areas of decolonial critique that require problematisation. While this point is detailed in a later chapter, an example of the issues at stake may be gleaned in the question of historical conceptualisation. Thus, in conceptualising the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Mignolo states,

‘If we look closely at the European invasion of Tawantinsuyu (the name the Incas gave to their territory) from approximately 1532 to 1580, we find that the United States’ invasion of Iraq in 2003 is almost an exact replica, carried out some 500 years later by the last imperial state in a long history of the consolidation of Western civilization and expansion’ (2015: 7-8).

Undeniably, excavating imperial/colonial legacies and genealogies of silence and erasure as correctives to ahistorical modes of Eurocentric knowledge productions is crucial to a decolonial project. However, collapsing the present into the past risks obfuscation, essentialism and a denigration of the *postcolonial*, the transformations wrought by decolonisation. Instructive in this context are Barkawi’s and Laffey’s observations that the GWoT represents historical continuity *as well as* rupture (2006; 330 emphasis added). The GWoT may be linked to, but not reduced to, historical antecedents. Thus, it may be located within trajectories of Western attempts to reconstitute colonial/postcolonial geopolitical orders following the First World War (WW1) the collapse of the Eurocentric ‘nomos of the earth’ (Schmitt, 2003) and subsequently WW2. It may be related to the tumultuous geopolitical shifts evinced for example, in the carving up of Ottoman territories, 19th and 20th century British colonial incursions in Afghanistan, the intensification of anti-colonial struggles, the rise of the US to global pre-eminence, the onset of the Cold War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. It may also be linked

to other wars of the late 20th century, notably the Iran-Iraq war, the first Gulf war, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the ensuing internecine war that raged in Afghanistan following Soviet withdrawal. Aside from its linkages with such momentous events, historical continuities arise in its specific modes of warfare, notably counterinsurgency, and in its constitutive discourses that reprise racialised and orientalist narratives. Mignolo's discussion of the GWoT, especially the Iraq invasion, is not confined to the citation, and his other writings offer greater elaboration; however residual areas of concern persist and are discussed in later chapters.

The study then acquires its critical force from the antinomies that emerge through the juxtaposition of discourses articulating (neo)imperial understandings of order to the dominant contentions of decolonial critique regarding the geopolitical and epistemic legacies of European colonialism. However, while the study's critical impetus is driven by the framework of decoloniality, it also alludes to critical streams of scholarship in IR and its subfields such as Critical Geopolitics that address disparate facets of the GWoT, and differentially acknowledge the colonial legacies of knowledge production. As such they align at different points with decolonial IR scholarship but remain distinct from it. In drawing attention to these streams, the study acknowledges Capan's endorsement of Smith's observation that decolonisation does not advocate 'a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge' (Smith 1999 cited in Capan 2017: 9). Privileging comparison over 'rejection', the thesis brings other critical perspectives into conversation with decolonial readings. This is undertaken with a view to eliciting the relationality of such perspectives with 'Eurocentric critiques of modernity' (Grosfoguel 2011: 3; 2012: 98), and deploying their methodological and substantive insights to interrogate the critical value of decoloniality as regards its scope and rigour.

Key propositions

From this vantage point, the thesis strives to advance the following sets of propositions. First, it aims to advance understanding of the think tank experts as purveyors of policy-oriented knowledges constitutive of a global order shaped by the imperatives of US empire, and apprehends the GWoT as emblematic of this order. Scrutiny of the experts' discursive endeavour discloses their initial contributions towards enabling, legitimating, and navigating the GWoT as a strategic and *moral* enterprise for US primacy, and subsequently towards attenuating and finessing its deleterious consequences. Relatedly, it discloses the authorising force (Asad 2003) of the expert discourses as regards delimitation of the boundaries and grammars shaping representations of the GWoT. In Mignolo's conception, the experts claim the 'privilege' of 'enunciation', and institute 'the terms' and 'the content' of the conversation' (2009: 8). Evaluated from this perspective, the understanding of expertise as the disinterested labour of erudite interlocutors is contested. It is reassessed as a highly politicised enterprise 'infused with ideology and disciplinary practices' (Grovgoui 2012: 125), and one impelled by the preservation of enunciatory privileges. Similarly, the characterisation of its interventions as a corpus of unvarnished and objective policy-relevant statements is interrogated, and its surface fluency and dexterity are shown to be transected by orientalist, racialised and exceptionalist logics that enable obfuscation, essentialisation and ultimately impunity. Whereas interest in think tanks' complicity in the GWoT often foregrounds the role of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), this study aims to widen the focus of inquiry by highlighting the role of other institutions that may be equally momentous if not more insidious.

Selecting the think tanks

The selection of the three think tanks that form the subject of this study is informed by various analytical and methodological considerations. Some caveats are in order, however, as a preface to this discussion. Of primary significance in this context is appreciation of the sheer number of institutions within the US that are classified as think tanks. In the 2017 edition of the ‘Global Go To Think Tank Index’ (GOTIT) compiled by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program at the University of Pennsylvania, McGann notes the existence of 1835 think tanks in the US, as compared to 1770 across Europe (McGann 2017: 10). As he elaborates, about 400 are located in Washington DC, whilst half are affiliated with a university; 90.5% were established after 1951 with the number more than doubling since 1980; the latter period also reflects the collapse of the post war consensus around the welfare state, which ‘contributed to the growth of think tanks on the left and the right’ (McGann 2017: 10). Given the profusion and variety of institutions described as think tanks in the US, this study does not seek to cast those at the centre of its inquiry as a representative sample. Rather, it acknowledges the larger epistemic context of knowledge production, discourse construction, and policy formulation within which the three think tanks operate. It also recognises that in representing heterogeneity, the context implies a space marked by contestation, competition, hierarchy, and collaboration. However, excepting allusions to PNAC, the study does not strive to ascertain whether the discourses articulated by the CFR, the RAND Corporation, and the Heritage Foundation are replicated or refuted by others, and leaves this question open for further research. Accordingly, it limits its inquiry to *their* specific interventions, namely the logics, and arguments, and strategies they deploy in the discursive construction of the GWoT as a rational, ethical, and indispensable policy venture.

Relatedly, in documenting these endeavours, the study does not offer a granular investigation into the micro-relationships connecting think tank experts to policy officials such as Congressional incumbents, presidential advisers, senior administration officials, and federal government officials (civil servants). Thus, it resists casting the tank experts either as an echo chamber for state actors, or as implacable mandarins whose prescriptives are necessarily destined to become policy. Rather, it takes a more nuanced approach in which the experts are recognised as belonging to elite, internationally-renowned institutions with long-established links, and channels of communication to the state, and to policy-making milieux at large. The approach suggests interaction rather than one-sided transmission. What is consistent, however, is their iteration of, and commitment to US exceptionalism, and its translation into policy.

With these caveats, the criteria shaping the selection of the three think tanks in this study are summarised here, prior to their elaboration in Part 1, Chapter 2 as well as in Part 2, Chapters 1-3 that address each think tank individually. A key factor influencing the selection is the institutions' proximity to key agencies and organs of state, for example, Congress, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the inner circle of Presidential advisors. Another is the institutional experts' association with multiple sites of knowledge production and opinion formation, for example the academy and the media. These factors become especially pertinent in the context of what is commonly referred to as 'the revolving door', a phrase that captures think tank experts' ease of mobility across elite policy-making domains.¹² Importantly, however, this process is not merely sequential but may be simultaneous with the experts occupying multiple positions of privilege, as for example in academia, in one or more

¹² Haas' endorsement of the 'revolving door' tradition are discussed on page 79.

think tanks, and in an advisory capacity in government. A related consideration is the contrast that obtains amongst the think tanks as regards their status as elite institutions of a specific type, which may be reflected in divergent political affiliations, and their founding at decisive moments in US 20th century history. Thus, the CFR, widely acclaimed as a premier foreign policy think tank, was established shortly after WW1 in 1921 as the US began its rise to global ascendancy; the RAND Corporation, recognised as a pre-eminent military and defence research institute was founded after WW2 in 1948 coincident with the US' emergence as a superpower and the outbreak of the Cold War; the Heritage Foundation, a leading exponent of conservatism in the US was established in 1973 in the wake of various political-economic challenges to US hegemony, notably the fraying of the post-war Bretton Woods Consensus, the OPEC oil embargo, and looming defeat in Vietnam. An additional factor encompasses the range, volume, and regularity of the three think tanks' interventions on the GWoT, which in notable instances are also preceded by various experts' longstanding interest in the areas under review. A final consideration is public accessibility to a large swathe of the three institutions' corpus via the internet.

The GWoT as reconstituting coloniality

Second, decolonial critique's epistemological focus generates strategies and concepts that are applied to think tank discourses on the GWoT. Pivotal to this process are decolonial understandings of the geopolitics of knowledge, enunciation, the colonial difference and the rhetoric of modernity on the one hand, and the interpellation of the US within the trajectory of European/western imperialism on the other. Refracting the discourses through these concepts enriches understanding of their imbrication in coloniality notwithstanding the variance in its

iteration. Such differences are often, but not always, indicative of the ideological/political divergences amongst the institutions, but they do not negate the experts' collective endorsement of the GWoT. Rather, the GWoT *reconstitutes* coloniality in the discourses in that it agglomerates themes which may be otherwise dispersed across the think tanks' prodigious interventions on subjects as diverse as warfare, security, state-building, democracy promotion, gender, 'fundamentalism', public health, and narcotics inter alia. Most significantly, it inscribes a relationality between coloniality and neo-imperialism in the context of the relative retreat of US power amidst the passing of the 'unipolar moment' (Krauthammer 1990: 24). As such the GWoT becomes intrinsic to the process of enunciation in that it becomes the vehicle through which different articulations of coloniality congeal in specific understandings of key terms, for example terrorism, stabilisation, sacrifice, or enter into larger clusters of relational meanings.

A decolonial deficit?

Third, although the thesis recognises the profound cogency of decolonial perspectives on knowledge production to analyses of think tank expertise, it identifies various methodological and substantive deficiencies in these that merit review, elaboration or augmentation in order to strengthen a decolonial standpoint. These limitations become apparent primarily in relation to the GWoT's particular focus on *Islam* and *Muslims*, and emerge as a series of lacunae that are conceptual, historical, and empirical. They issue from gaps pertaining to three areas: the incorporation of *Muslim* polities in projects of western colonialism; the conceptualisation and historicisation of Orientalism as well as its past and present deployments in wars and

counterinsurgency campaigns; and the disruption of Eurocentrism via the resurgence of Muslim political identity (Sayyid 2015, 2018).¹³

The first two factors are attributable to a significant degree to the decolonial privileging of the fall of al Andalus as the inaugural act of European colonialisms. Momentous as it was, the end of Muslim rule in Al-Andalus does not, however, mark the eclipse of Islamicate political power around the globe, which remained ascendant for centuries afterwards.¹⁴ Nor does it encapsulate the variegated histories of Europe's post-Andalusian encounters with its instantiations, for example in the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Empires that collectively spanned large swathes of Eurasia and North Africa. Besides their geopolitical and military significance, the empires were also distinctive as centres of knowledge production and cultural efflorescence.¹⁵ The latter in particular merits attention in order to contribute to a growing body of scholarly literature on 'connected histories' (Subrahmanyam 1997), and 'connected sociologies' (Bhambra 2010). Contesting Eurocentric narratives of Europe's endogenous rise (Haşimi 2015) such histories suggest that what is apprehended as *European* modernity was shaped in significant ways by Europe's protracted interactions with the Islamicate world (Abu

¹³ *Military Orientalism* (Porter 2009), *Orientalism and War*, (Barkawi and Stanski 2012), 'Drones: A History from the British Middle East' (Satia 2014), 'State terrorism: orientalism and the drone programme' (Espinoza 2018) are some examples of scholarship that highlight the diverse uses of orientalism in warfare.

¹⁴ The usage of Islamicate follows the historian Marshall Hodgson's formulation as detailed in his magisterial study, *The Venture of Islam* (1974). Hodgson coined the term to counter orientalist constructions by underlining the transhistorical significance of Islam as a form of world-making. The term differentiates Islam, understood specifically as the core beliefs and practices of the faith, from its cultural-intellectual-societal articulations. Its expansive remit makes it applicable to political formations that derive their founding rationale from Islam.

¹⁵ This is of course a vast field. An example from the domain of knowledge production is provided in Yılmaz's account of Ottoman political writings. Thus he recounts how the 16th century marked a shift from the normative, 'moralistic...sultan-centric' literature to a 'realist and empirical' genre that centred 'the state as a rational institution that operates per prescribed laws and procedures' (2018: 13-14). Questions may be posed then as to the westward diffusion of such writings, and the uptake of homologous ideas in European political theory.

Lughod 1989; Hobson 2004; Brotton 2016; Anievas and Nisancıoğlu 2015). Relatedly, such works suggest that understandings of modernity in *decolonial* accounts also require problematisation via the recognition that these encounters constitute valid subjects of critical inquiry. Mignolo and Grosfoguel acknowledge the existence of Islamicate empires in a polycentric, pre-modern world predating the Iberian conquest of the Americas, but do not deliberate their subsequent trajectories encompassing their entanglements with Europe over three centuries preceding European colonial or semi-colonial encroachments into the Islamicate world.

Mignolo locates this encroachment chronologically within ‘the second modernity’ that was defined geopolitically by the shift in the centre of European gravity away from Southern to western Europe (2018: 190), and epistemically by ‘the French Enlightenment, German Romantic philosophy, and the British industrial revolution’ (2002: 63) as well as the rise of Orientalism (2018: 189-190). He acknowledges Said’s landmark excavations of Orientalism; however, , he also states elsewhere that ‘the conditions for Orientalism’ were ‘created’ by the ‘racial system of social classification that invented Occidentalism’ coincident with Iberian trans-Atlantic expansion after 1492 (2009: 2-3). In other words, Orientalism becomes a *derivate* of racialised knowledge forms inaugurated in the Spanish conquest of Granada and the subsequent ‘discovery’ of Americas. This contention raises questions as it enacts its own version of the Eurocentric ‘diffusionist’ thesis, re-centres al Andalus, and occludes the role of *various* ‘connected histories’ and their related discourses.¹⁶ Especially pertinent in this context are discourses circulating in late medieval and early modern Europe that cast Muslims as

¹⁶ For example, it overlooks the flight of Spanish Muslims to the Ottoman empire during the Reconquista.

Europe's 'external other' designated variously as 'infidels', 'Saracens', and most threateningly as 'Turks' (Haşimi 2015: 212-217).¹⁷ ¹⁸ Mignolo's account of Orientalism as denoting 'the changing contents of the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality' (2018: 190), invisibilises these histories and, as such merits revisitation and elaboration.

Decoloniality, Orientalism and the GWOt

In another sense, although Orientalism features in Mignolo's reflections on the stages of modernity, it is absent from his specific writings on the GWOt, which are framed, in contrast, around the themes of de/rewesternisation in relation to the colonial matrix of power. This lacuna is curious given that Orientalism assumes a near-ubiquitous status in the GWOt's dominant discourses, notably in representations of western agency, 'Islamic terrorism', rogue regimes, and failing states. Also absent in the context of de/rewesternisation are allusions to Muslim political agency or as Sayyid opines, 'a global Muslimness [that] is disruptive of the existing world order not only in terms of security or culturally but also philosophically', and that is countered by an 'increasingly muscular attempt to re-assert[] white supremacy' (2018b: 1). In its inattention to both these considerations, Mignolo's analytic overlooks the GWOt's discursive contribution to Islamophobia and its allied investments as a form of knowledge inculcating the *depoliticisation and liberal pacification* of Islam.

¹⁷ 'Throughout the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, rather than the general image of Saracens or Muslim, the figure of the Turk, via the threat presented by the Ottoman Empire, became the dominant Muslim Other. The Turk had become an external enemy, the enemy of all Christians/Europeans ... On the one hand, such a transition in the image of the Other owed much to the rise of the Ottoman Empire. However, [it]... involve[d] more than such a transformation. ... The rise of the figure of the Turk as the enemy [was] another sign, which could be taken as the consolidation of Europe and the idea of Europe' (Haşimi 2015).

¹⁸ Said of course ascribed the origins of orientalism to the Athenians: 'Consider first the demarcation between Orient and West. It already seems bold by the time of the *Iliad*' (1978: 56).

Finally, these lacunae converge in the very construction of a ‘war on terrorism’ and its relation to US empire and coloniality. Mignolo does not present coloniality as an unchanging phenomenon, and is attentive to its modulations over time. It is thus surprising that he does not explore the myriad ways in which terrorism becomes the *dominant* signifier of coloniality in the current projection of US power as the imperial exception. Terrorism as a signifier enables the reformulation of the juridico-legal, political, and civic verities that served as the markers of a liberal international order encoding the difference between the civilised and developed West, and the violent and chaotic newly decolonised states of the global South. It sanctions the assimilation into the liberal order of praxis that was erstwhile considered transgressive, for example torture, ‘targeted killing’, ‘regime change’, mass surveillance, indefinite detention, and more significantly enables their incorporation into the narratives of ‘salvation’ that Mignolo outlines. Coloniality, as decolonial scholars assert, denotes the ‘darker and hidden side’ of modernity (2018: 194); however, the ‘war on terror’ as a discourse expounded by diverse actors and institutions including think tanks, points to the gradual and piecemeal visibilisation and *normalisation* of its key facets. To this end, decolonial approaches are insufficiently attentive to the implications of visibilisation, and the possibility that it is one symptom amongst others of (relative) imperial decline. While they underline the process of ‘dewesternisation’ (Mignolo 2015), they ignore its effects on knowledge production *within* the imperium.

Thesis structure

The thesis has three parts and a conclusion. Each part is divided into chapters and subsections incorporating its empirical and conceptual foci. Part 1 consists of two chapters that establish the contours of the thesis. Chapter 1 highlights and interrelates dominant strands of decolonial critique, the critique of Eurocentrism in IR, and the GWoT’s rediscovery of empire. Chapter 2

conducts a detailed literature review considering scholarship on think tanks and expertise from the social sciences on the one hand and post and decolonial perspectives on the other.

Part 2 is prefaced by a prologue and consists of four chapters. The prologue outlines the format of this part, and its key concerns. The chapters that follow inaugurate the empirical and analytical investigation of the think tank experts' discourses. Each chapter highlights one think tank's interventions at the onset of the GWoT. Chapter 4 conducts a preliminary investigation into the efficacy of decolonial critique, and relates it to the preceding discussion.

Part 3 is also prefaced by a prologue and comprises five chapters. Again, the prologue introduces the broad contours of this part of the thesis and anticipates the chapters' discussion. The first chapter provides an overview of counterinsurgency as doctrine and praxis. The following three chapters narrate the GWoT's progression through the discourses of different think tanks. Chapter 5 offers a composite critical review of the emergent archive, and advances further insights that bolster the study's earlier problematisations of decolonial critique. The Conclusion integrates the thesis' research question with its key findings.

Part 1

Chapter 1 – Towards Decolonial Critiques of International Relations

International Relations, Eurocentrism, and modernity/coloniality

This chapter inaugurates discussion of the thesis' critical focus on decoloniality by performing two interrelated tasks. The first of these examines the dominant premises of the critique of knowledge that condense in the modernity/coloniality construction, and in the process also teases out the critique's relationship to postcoloniality. The second foregrounds the instantiation of Eurocentrism and coloniality in IR by reprising the disciplinary critiques that have gathered momentum over two decades and collectively call for decolonizing the field. Within this analytic, it outlines IR's conflicted relationship with empire, and underscores the pivotal role of the GWoT in propelling the latter to the centre of debate. In pursuing these twin tasks, the chapter juxtaposes the sweeping epistemic focus of decolonial critique with the more specific critiques emerging within the discipline of IR, which may not necessarily draw upon the former. Rather, they suggest that the impetus to decolonise IR does not spring from a sole source or body of theory; its relationship to decolonial critique is contingent and may reflect a variety of positions. Thus, it may reveal an implicit or explicit overlap; a parallelism in displaying, for example, a closer affinity to postcolonialism; and even a divergence in drawing, for instance, on Marxism. As such, decolonial interventions *within* IR cannot be apprehended unproblematically as a univocal subset of decolonial thought as espoused by Mignolo et al. In navigating the two strands of critical scholarship, the chapter seeks to position the thesis' contribution as an explicit attempt to draw the modernity/coloniality framework into IR's ongoing conversation about the discipline's Eurocentric and racialised underpinnings, and direct it specifically to the GWoT as its key problematic. In making this connection explicit, it

seeks to interrogate the scope of epistemic critique founded upon the modernity/coloniality formulation, and thereby to assess the self-sufficiency of its radical and expansive insights as tools for scrutinizing the knowledges produced by the think tanks in the context of the war.

The chapter will commence its discussion of modernity/coloniality by turning to Grosfoguel's differentiation of the terms coloniality and colonialism. As he explains, 'One of the most powerful myths of the twentieth century was the notion that the elimination of colonial administrations amounted to the decolonisation of the world' (Grosfoguel 2011: 14). In elaborating Grosfoguel draws upon the term 'colonial situations' to denote 'the cultural, political, sexual and economic oppression/exploitation of subordinate racialized/ethnic groups by dominant racial/ethnic groups' (15). Importantly, he notes that such situations can exist under colonialism, in which case they are 'enforced by the presence of a colonial administration such as the period of classical colonialism' as well as under 'coloniality', *after* such systems of rule have been 'almost eradicated' (15). Coloniality, then, is emblematic of 'The heterogeneous and multiple global structures put in place over a period of 450 years [that] did not evaporate with the juridical-political decolonisation of the periphery' (14). As such, decolonisation marks the shift from "a period of 'global colonialism' to one of 'global coloniality' (14). Similarly, Donahue and Kalyan note,

"Many formal colonial institutions were disassembled during the second half of the twentieth century. Yet even in these 'postcolonial' contexts, discourses and categories of colonialism survive in the condition of coloniality. They constitute, ... what David Kim calls the 'epistemic landscape of Western culture, politics and philosophy', which has survived the transition from colonial to postcolonial states largely intact" (2015: 128).

Coloniality, then, evokes the persistence of colonial forms of domination in the domains of culture, economy, politics and gender (128). It manifests as patriarchy, racism, the international

division of labour, capital accumulation, and the epistemic privileging Western/Eurocentric knowledge as abstract, universal and detached from any geo-historical or biographical location (Mignolo 2011a). In the epistemic context, it embodies a call to excavate ‘those subaltern knowledges and cultural practices worldwide that modernity itself shunned, suppressed, made invisible and disqualified’ (Escobar 2004: 210).

Coloniality’s associated concept, the colonial matrix of power refers to ‘a complex structure of management and control composed of domains, levels and flows’ (Mignolo 2015: 2; that operates along four inter-related axes: knowledge, authority, economy and gender, encompassing social relations, institutions of state, political organizations, and households Quijano 1990 paraphrased in Grosfoguel 2011: 12). Mignolo defines the colonial matrix of power as a ‘theoretical concept’, drawing an analogy with “ ‘the unconscious’ in Sigmund Freud or ‘surplus value’ in Karl Marx that helps make visible what is invisible to the naked (or rather the non-theoretical) eye’ (Mignolo 2015: 2). He maintains that the notion of a matrix reveals the essential interconnections between modernity’s different domains, which cannot be encompassed in isolation, for example politics without reference to the economic, the epistemic, the racial and so on. The concept overlaps closely with the term coloniality of power, which as Grosfoguel observes also connotes ‘entanglement’ or the ‘intersectionality’ of ‘multiple and heterogeneous global hierarchies’ that are ‘political, epistemic, economic...and racial’, but where race serves to mediate and ‘transversally reconfigure[]...other...power structures’ (2011:11). The emphasis on intersectionality obviates the base/superstructure distinction that epitomises the economic reductionism of Marxist approaches as well as the culture/political-

economy distinctions in certain variants of postcolonialism and world-system analyses.¹⁹ Although capitalism comprises a crucial assemblage of power, it has already been colonised from within by civilizational logics that are not epiphenomenal or derivative, but constitutive (Grosfoguel 2016).²⁰ Modernity/coloniality, then, as Escobar (2004: 210), remarks, challenges the construction of modernity as an endogenous, ‘intra-European phenomenon’, and reveals its imbrication with the concealed ‘underside’ of empire.

For Mignolo (2015: 2), one of the distinctive features of the concept is its provenance, namely its emergence ‘not in Europe or in the US academy’ but in the ‘theoretical-political struggles in South America at the intersection between the academic and public spheres’ Emerging thus, it connotes ‘the Westernisation of the world’ or the ‘conceptual arrangement of ... global order between 1500 and 2000’ by western empires (8); nonetheless

‘Around the year 2000, the West (...the US and ...Western Europe) began to lose managerial control of the CMP. (8).

Deploying modernity/coloniality as a dominant prism carries significant theoretical and conceptual purchase in rendering visible the interfaces between historical European imperial formations and contemporary US articulations of empire. The concept’s intersectionality makes it apposite for a study of think tanks as institutions that straddle academia, government, and wider public-political sphere, and that furthermore occupy a privileged position as knowledge-producers within the ‘entangled hierarchies’ (Grosfoguel 2011: 17) sustaining the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo 2015). Emerging in the ‘periphery’, it points to the possibility of

¹⁹ The distinction between decolonial and postcolonial is discussed in subsequent sections.

²⁰ This reference is to Grosfoguel’s lectures on ‘Decolonising the Academy’, held at Edinburgh University 24-26 February 2016. Available at: <https://youtu.be/0SncjIqJG44>. The bibliographic entry for this reference is attributed to: University of Edinburgh, School of GeoSciences (2016).

decentring positivist Eurocentered analysis of think tanks and relocating it within the longer *durée* of colonial knowledge production. In this context, coloniality as a metaphor for the disorder unleashed by modernity's underside becomes especially pertinent given the think tanks' complicity in disseminating US centric narratives of global order and situating the GWOt within these. Finally, Mignolo's reference to the destabilisation of the colonial matrix provokes inquiry as to whether the think tanks' discourses acknowledge this fact.

Decoloniality as epistemic critique

This section builds upon the preceding discussion by amplifying the distinctiveness of decolonial critique and assessing its potential in interrogating the discursive frames that structure the think tanks' 'cartographies of geopolitical strategy' (Hyndman, 2015: 666). It proceeds by pursuing a deeper engagement with the decolonial critique of knowledge highlighting some of its key concepts and premises. In doing so, it anticipates the next section's discussion of the variegated relationship between postcolonial and decolonial scholarship.

Three key facets of decolonial epistemic critique based are outlined here to elucidate its expansive and radical tenor: the deployment of al Andalus as a formative moment in the constitution of a Eurocentric colonial imaginary centred upon 'epistemic racism' (Grosfoguel, 2012, 2013); the reformulation of Cartesian philosophy (Dussel 2013); and the rejection of modernity's 'embellished' emancipatory narratives (Grosfoguel 2016). First, Grosfoguel suggests that the connections between the fall in January 1492 of Granada, the last remaining Muslim sultanate in al Andalus, and the Castilian monarchy's assent to Columbus' voyage to 'Indias Orientales' nine days later have been under-researched (Grosfoguel, 2013: 79). The

Catholic conquest of Iberia served as a pre-requisite for Columbus' Atlantic expedition; pursued under the 'proto-racist discourse' banner of the purity of blood, it replaced Al Andalus' heterogeneous assemblages of religion and authority with the unitary logic of a homogenised Christianised population inhabiting a sovereign territory (79). Orchestrating the murder, forced conversion or expulsion of Jews and Muslims from the peninsula and the re-habitation of depopulated areas, the 'reconquista' also oversaw the attendant destruction of knowledge, epitomized in the burning of the great libraries in Cordoba and Granada (78). Reminiscent of Krishna's 'originary alienation' (2006: 91), Grosfoguel (2013: 77-79) construes the event as one of the four genocides/epistemicides of the 16th century that accompanied capitalist accumulation, and the emergence of 'Western men's epistemic privilege'.²¹ A reciprocal dynamic ensued in which the genocides/epistemicides honed in Al Andalus 'were extrapolated to the Americas' while Columbus' encounter with indigenous peoples reinforced racialised typologies of classification in Catholic Spain, notably of 'Marranos' and 'Moriscos' (75-79). Delineating the emerging racial hierarchies, Grosfoguel cites Maldonado-Torres' allusion to Columbus' description of indigenous peoples as 'a people without sect' which in medieval Christian cosmology denoted the absence of religion, and the questionable possession of a soul,

'With a single stroke Columbus took the discourse on religion from the theological realm into a modern philosophical anthropology that distinguishes among different degrees of humanity through identities fixed into what would later be called races' (Maldonado-Torres 2008 cited in Grosfoguel 2013: 81).

These transformations undergirded modernity's 'dominant episteme' to establish 'a dynamic relation between empire, religion and race' (cited in Grosfoguel: 80), and sparked protracted

²¹ Grosfoguel borrows the term epistemicide from de Sousa Santos (2012). He remarks, 'These four genocides/epistemicides in the long 16th century are: 1) against Muslims and Jews in the conquest of Al-Andalus; 2) against indigenous peoples first in the Americas and then in Asia; 3) against African people with the captive trade and their enslavement in the Americas; 4) against women in Europe who transmitted Indo-European knowledge and who were accused of witchcraft and burnt alive (77).

argumentations in the Church on the question of the indigenous peoples' soul and by extension their humanity. Commencing in 1550, the Valladolid debates, 'the first public and central philosophical debate of Modernity' (Dussel 2013: 32), produced 'two major racist discourses ... that [would] be mobilised by Western imperial powers for the next 450 years: biological racist discourses and cultural racist discourses' (Grosfoguel 2013: 83). Thus, the theologian de Sepulvada argued that the tenets of natural law required that indigenous people be 'subjected to the empire of princes and nations that are more cultured and humane' so that 'they abandon barbarism and are subdued by a more humane life and cult of virtue' (Sepulvada 1547 cited in Dussel 2013: 22). Resisting empire, however, required its imposition 'by way of arms' and just war (Sepulvada 1547 cited in Dussel: 22).

Second, the decolonial focus on the imbrication of race, empire and knowledge, and on the Iberian colonisation of the Americas yields a critique of Cartesian philosophy in Dussel's liberation philosophy. Dussel (2013: 24) recounts Descartes' location in Holland, Europe's new imperial centre after Spain's defeat in the Thirty years war, and his indebtedness to 16th century Spanish philosophy that in turn refracted 'Atlantic events, with the opening of Europe to the world'. For Dussel (2013) and Grosfoguel (2013), these factors informed Descartes' meditations of the transcendental ego, which subsequently grounded Enlightenment epistemology and positivism's affirmation of objectivity, universality and the subject/object duality. Premised upon a mind-body split, Descartes' ontological dualism assumed 'a God-eye view' (Grosfoguel 2013: 76), producing an unsituated 'zero-point epistemology' or 'the point of view that does not assume itself as a point of view' (Castro-Gomez 2003 cited in Grosfoguel 2013: 76). Dussel recontextualises Descartes' 'I think therefore I am' as the utterance of the

Imperial Being, the ego conquiro who proclaims, ‘I conquer therefore I am’ (Dussel 2005 cited in Grosfoguel 2013:77). Paraphrasing Dussel, Grosfoguel states that the Cartesian ego embodies ‘the ... [subject] who thinks of himself as the centre of the world because he has already conquered the world’ (2013: 77). Within the evolving racial/patriarchal epistemic matrices of the 17th century that excluded indigenous peoples, Africans, Muslims, Jews and women, ‘the only one left as epistemically superior was ... Western man’ (Grosfoguel 2013: 86).

Third, Grosfoguel (2012) and other decolonial thinkers amplify these arguments through an extended critique of European philosophy’s emancipatory claims as propounded in the works of Kant, Hegel and Marx.²² A detailed engagement with this critique is beyond the scope of this section, which outlines the decolonial scepticism towards ‘the rhetoric of modernity’, its emancipatory promises of ‘conversion, progress, civilisation, modernisation, development, and market democracy’ (Mignolo 2015: 3) that are viewed as tainted by modernity’s colonial assemblages. Grosfoguel (2016) relates the rhetoric with the shift of imperial power to Northern Europe from the ‘long 16th century’ when newly ‘embellished’ Eurocentric narratives congealed around Westphalia, the Glorious and French Revolutions beyond the Valladolid debates or Vitoria’s theological writings.²³ Emancipation becomes a form of internal critique conducted by ‘critical authors inside the walls’ (Grosfoguel 2016) who still espouse

²² For instance, he notes of Kant, “If we take up his anthropological works, we can see that ... transcendental reason is predominantly male, white, and European... Kant maintains the Cartesian mind-body dualism and solipsism, but in a reformed and updated form...he maintains and deepens the second type of abstract Cartesian universalism, the epistemological type ... making explicit what was implicit in Descartes... the privilege of “European man” in the production of universal knowledges (Grosfoguel, 2012: 90).

²³ Grosfoguel refers to ‘embellishing’ in his lecture on ‘Decolonising the Academy’, held at Edinburgh University 26 February 2016. Available at: <https://youtu.be/0SncjIqJG44>.

Eurocentrism's 'disembodied universalism' (Cesaire 1955 [2006] cited in Grosfoguel 2012: 9), and are always already complicit with coloniality (Grosfoguel 2016).

Decolonial scepticism also extends to postmodernist/poststructuralist perspectives, which are perceived as advancing 'a Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism' (Grosfoguel 2011: 3; 2012: 98) or what Kim terms 'second-order Eurocentrism' (cited in Donahue and Kalyan 2015: 132). Despite their critical merit, such perspectives do not escape the bounds of the 'western canon' and end up 'reproducing...a particular form of coloniality of power/knowledge' (Grosfoguel, 2011: 4). This limits the extent to which the critical insights of thinkers such as Gramsci, Lacan, Foucault, Derrida, Laclau, Mouffe can successfully contest dominant epistemic structures (Grosfoguel 2011: 3-4). Grosfoguel's allusion to Foucault is especially germane since it recalls the discussion of Al Andalus and the conquest of the Americas. Contesting Foucault's account of 'race wars' in 19th century Europe, Grosfoguel notes,

'Contrary to Eurocentric narratives such as Foucault (1996), ... antisemitic racism emerged in 16th century Spain when the old medieval antisemitic religious discrimination was entangled with the new modern racial imaginary produced by the conquest... Contrary to Foucault, this antisemitic racism of the 16th century was already institutionalised as state biopolitical racism... Foucault is blind towards the conquest of the Americas, colonialism and Spain's 16th century (2013: 84-85).'

The notion that recourse to 'Western epistemology' limits critique constitutes a point of dissonance between decolonial and postcolonial perspectives (2011:3). This may be seen for example in Grosfoguel's qualified acclaim for the South Asian Subaltern Studies Group's endeavours; acknowledging that the collective produced 'a critique of modernity from the Global South', he suggests that its horizons are circumscribed due to the 'privileging [of] Gramsci and Foucault' and that a properly decolonial stance necessitates surpassing 'the

Western canon' (2011: 4).²⁴ Also critiqued are variants of postcolonialism that ally uncritically with modernist or postmodernist perspectives in construing modernity/coloniality as a 'semi-autonomous' rather than a mutually constitutive relation. This is evinced for example in conceptions of multiple/diversified/expanded modernities that are still haunted by forms of coloniality (Grosfoguel 2016). The distance between decolonial and postcolonial perspectives may be appreciated in the context of Said's critique of Orientalism; echoing Grosfoguel, Mignolo (2000: 18) describes Said and the Subaltern Studies Group as

“... piggybacking on Michel Foucault, first, and ... Marx and ... Gramsci, second, whose debates on colonialism are located in a 'universal' domain of discussion...”.

He contends that Said falls 'into the same trap [as Wallerstein]' in discounting 'the Spanish contribution to the epistemological imaginary of the modern world system' (57, 56), and claiming that 'The Orient is ... the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies' (Said 1978, cited in Mignolo 2000: 57). For Mignolo, Orientalism needs to be conceptualised as 'the hegemonic cultural imaginary ... in the second modernity' that was anticipated and enabled by Occidentalism (2000: 57), 'the overarching imaginary and self-definition of the modern world system' inspired by the colonisation of the Americas (2000: 68). Nonetheless in the same volume, Mignolo acknowledges the 'tremendous impact and the scholarly transformation [*Orientalism*] possible' and distances himself from Said's detractors such as Aijaz Ahmad (2000: 57). Also, opining that the dominant strands of Said's critique are resonant with the concept of coloniality, he observes that 'the reordering of the geopolitics of knowledge' involves 'the emergence of border thinking ... as a new epistemological modality', and retrieval of the 'diversity of categories' excluded by Occidentalism, Orientalism and 'area studies (... an

²⁴ Another example is Grosfoguel's contention that Bhabha reads Fanon from a Lacanian perspective whereas Fanon was critical of many authors in the canon including Lacan (2016).

objectification of the ‘Third World,’ as producer of cultures but not of knowledge)” (2000: 93). Mignolo follows Anzaldua in deploying the concept of ‘border thinking’ to denote the sense of ‘dwelling in the border’ rather than ‘crossing it’, and relates it to Du Bois’ notion of double consciousness and to Fanon’s reference to sociogenesis (2017: 13). Deploying the concept to link epistemology to territoriality, he explains the reconfiguration of the border as the (colonial) frontier that marks the edge of ‘the void...space to be conquered or civilised’ (2017:13). As such, ‘western epistemology is territorial’ and contingent upon ‘the frontier’ whereas ‘Decolonial thinking is always-already border thinking’ (2017: 14).

Differentiating postcolonial and decolonial critique

Questions of epistemology are integral to and constitutive of an emerging world-system centred upon European primacy that came to be expressed through military-political- economic but also civilisational or religious-racial axes. In depicting the slow congealing of a colonial imaginary after the conquest of Al Andalus in 1492, decolonial thought scrutinises the inaugural phases of European colonial expansion that would eventually incorporate regions that are the focus of postcolonial critique. As such, it casts a retroactive eye on the postcolonial, and to the extent that it affirms its core assumptions, it locates these within other temporalities and paradigms of colonial expansion. Decolonial scholars’ reflections on postcoloniality are pertinent to this study for reasons of analytical clarity, but also because it frequently cites Said’s corpus to amplify a theme in decolonial accounts or to address various *lacunae* in these, notably those pertaining to questions of expertise, to the relative inattention to Orientalism in discourses of the GWO, as well as to Islamic history, specifically the resurgence of Muslim power in the Ottoman, Mughal and Safavid empires after the fall of Granada. As such, the study adopts a qualified stance towards decolonial writers’ critique of postcolonialism, and inclines towards

Bhambra's (2014) succinct overview of the overlap and divergences between the two approaches. Neither is privileged in her analytic; instead each is valorised for its potential to disrupt orthodox as well as avowedly *critical* perspectives in the social sciences and humanities. This is gleaned in her nuanced appraisal of post and decolonial standpoints.

First, Bhambra narrates the contrasting provenance of each approach, locating postcolonialism within the humanities, notably literary studies, in the oeuvre of diasporic scholars such as Said, Spivak and Bhabha who form its 'canonical hub' (2014; 115). Although the field incorporates socio-economic concerns, it appears primarily as cultural critique that interrogates the operations and effects of colonialism principally in the Middle East and South Asia from the 19th century (115). In contrast, decoloniality emerges in the works of various diasporic Latin American scholars, notably Quijano, Mignolo and Lugones, whose disciplinary affiliations are the social sciences and philosophy, and whose contributions resonate in differentially with world systems theory, the Frankfurt school as well as development and under-development theory (115). Relatedly, decolonial critique dates the colonial encounter to the fifteenth century. Such differences notwithstanding, the two approaches converge in sharing a 'radical potential' (115) as movements of 'intellectual resistance' to 'associated forms of epistemological dominance' (120). This is principally evinced in their historiographical challenge to Eurocentric metanarratives that iterate modernity's endogenous nature, and conceal its entanglement in 'broader histories of colonialism, empire, and enslavement' (115). From this starting point, Bhambra elaborates the approaches' distinctive understandings of the intermeshing triad of knowledge structures, modernity, and subjectivity.

Her survey of postcolonial scholarship outlines the dominant contributions of Said, Bhabha and Spivak. Most apposite for this study is her account of Said's critique of Orientalism as scholarship and as imperial enterprise (116). For Bhabha, Said's 'key theoretical contribution' lies in his challenge to Europe's appropriation of the 'idea of the universal' (120). Said, she continues, showed how this appropriation involved 'a double displacement' that produced on the one hand 'an analytical bifurcation of the world, [between Orient and Occident] and a concealment of that bifurcation' (116). This was achieved by redefining History as the record of Europe's actions upon/in the world, and modernity as its singular and self-constituted accomplishment; the contribution of the 'oriental' was thereby effaced in depictions of the 'other' as passive, inert and incapable of generating change (116). The erasure that was central to the orientalist imaginary 'naturalised and justified' Western dominance of 'the Orient' until, Said argues, it was assailed by anti-colonial struggles that ruptured the myths of passivity (116).

For Bhabha, the key challenge is to dismantle 'dominant conceptual frameworks' (Bhabha 2014: 116). He advocates a departure from understanding modernity as 'a singular event' (Bhabha: 116), and conceiving it instead as the 'historical construction of a specific position of historical enunciation and address' (Bhabha 1994 cited in Bhabha: 116). For example, he contends that equating modernity with the French and industrial revolutions betrays the 'eurocentricity of Foucault's theory of cultural difference' (Bhabha cited in Bhabha: 116), a point that Bhabha reinforces by alluding to the bracketing of the Haitian revolution (116). Modernity, then is to be contested by 'bearing witness to different pasts' (Bhabha: 117), or in Bhabha's vision by establishing 'other historical sites, other forms of enunciation' (Bhabha cited in Bhabha: 117).

Lastly, Spivak attempts to disrupt dominant discourses by ‘reversing, displacing, and seizing the apparatus of value-coding itself’, and pursues this endeavour by questioning western representations of subalternity (Spivak 1990 cited in Bhabra 117). Focusing on subaltern women in particular, Spivak decries post-structuralism, an ostensibly critical approach, for its inattention to the imperialist dimensions of ‘power and epistemic violence’ and for the non-recognition of theorists such as Foucault and Deleuze of their ‘implication in intellectual and economic history’ (Spivak 1988 paraphrased in Bhabra: 117). This leads them to reinforce ‘a self-contained version of the West’ that discounts its ‘production by the imperialist project’, and to ‘masquerade[] as absent non-representers’ who do not consider the constraints that impede the subaltern from speaking (Spivak 1988 cited in Bhabra: 117).

‘Decolonising’ International Relations

The following sections turn to the chapter’s second task of elucidating critiques of International Relations. These critiques strive, as Alina Sajed notes, “to re-centre the importance of colonialism and imperialism in the creation and endurance of ‘inter-national’ relations both as a discipline and as a set of practices”, and render legible ‘the colonial difference ... and the global racial hierarchies it has engendered’ (Sajed 2013: 2). In a parallel vein, Haşimi (2015: 38) notes that ‘scrutinizing IR, including Anglo-American experiences’ can reveal how

‘Eurocentrism has been deployed and re-deployed in various iterations since 1492. In particular, the post-1919 official history of the discipline carries with it...associated attempts at ordering the universe from a Eurocentric position’.

He suggests that critiques of Eurocentrism in IR remain inadequate if the term is construed in an ethno-cultural or empiricist register to imply 'distortion' or exclusion that can be rectified by incorporating the Other into the field (Haşimi:39). Rather, the term needs to be reconceptualised as an *abstraction* that enables a specifically *political* reading of 'the world as composed of the

international and states' (Haşimi: 37). Haşimi's reading can be situated alongside other critiques that advocate a radical re-evaluation of the discipline's foundational imaginaries, its ontological, theoretical, methodological, and conceptual suppositions, in order to dismantle Eurocentrism in mainstream Realist and Liberal but also in 'critical' perspectives (Pasha 2006; de Carvalho et al 2011). Central to such critiques is the contention that IR's purportedly universalist categories such as sovereignty, the state system, international society, international law, humanitarian intervention derive from particularistic and reified facets of European/Western modernity that meld into narratives of European exceptionalism. This enables, as Pasha notes, a reading of IR in its 'official account' as a 'biography of Western triumph, of encounters premised on a consolidation of Western power, not weakness' (Pasha, 2006).

Extending the critique, and resonant with this study's focus, other accounts connect Eurocentric conceptions of the international system to dominant theorisations of war (Barkawi 2004, 2011, 2015, 2016). This is gleaned in Barkawi's comments on Strobe Talbott's 2003 article, 'War in Iraq, Revolution in America' (Barkawi 2004: 20). As President of the Brookings Institution from 2002 -2017, a member of CFR, a senior official in the Clinton administration, and a senior academic at Yale University, Talbott exemplifies the 'revolving door' that connects think tanks to government to academia. Barkawi points to Talbott's designation of the Congress of Vienna and the Peace of Westphalia as the signature events defining the emergence of the modern international system; by merging the European and the international, Talbott's account elides 'the imperial state, the empire, ... the international blocs of the Cold War and the western "international state... [as] the dominant political entities in world politics from the sixteenth

century' (Barkawi: 20-21). This interpretation, Barkawi continues, is by no means atypical, but is legion in 'many Anglo-American departments of international relations' and in the rhetoric of 'academics and decision makers' (20). Such 'Eurocentric limitation[s]' also extend to

'European histories of war [that] provide the (provincial) basis for the putatively universal concepts and definitions with which we study war in both the global South and North' (Barkawi 2016: 200).

Consequently, any critical endeavour, he continues, must interrogate the central premises informing Eurocentric studies of war, namely "the war/peace binary; an international system of sovereign and national states; [the distinctions between] international and civil war (with residual categories involving 'nonstate actors')" (Barkawi: 200). Especially relevant in Barkawi's analytic is his reference to Callwell's concept of Small Wars (Callwell 1896, 1906: cited in Barkawi 2004: 21). The term, Barkawi explains, denoted European colonial incursions that not only had far reaching local repercussion, but were likewise catalytic in shaping intra-European power struggles, 'capitalist modernity', and socio-political developments in the 'global North and South' (2016: 201). Subsequently, it also came to describe 20th century conflicts in the global South that were construed as derivative of First World struggles (Barkawi 2004: 22). Despite their momentous ramifications, the wars were deemed 'small' since few European soldiers participated in the former while the latter were regarded as 'peripheral to...the main action amongst great powers' (Barkawi and Laffey, 2006: 330). The GWoT, however, has disturbed such modes of classification and produced a 'moment of postcolonial rupture' in which conflicts once deemed 'peripheral [have] become central' (Barkawi and Laffey: 330). As such it has intensified the shifting 'axis of threat' attending the end of the Cold War when the fading spectre of superpower confrontation rekindled a 'much older struggle: that between the North and South, between the powerful and the weak' (Barkawi

2004: 21). However, whereas anti-colonial struggles were historically located in the global South, the globality of ‘the resistance movement taking shape around al Qaeda’ has upturned existing explanatory categories (Barkawi and Laffey 2006: 330). In its wake, Barkawi (2016: 201) propose a new research agenda that revisits the concept of small wars, and traces the interconnections between the ‘histories and sociologies of Western warfare’ and those of ‘North-South relations’.

An important strand in the emerging body of scholarship historicising small wars uncovers the European and American colonial antecedents of contemporary counterinsurgency, and in turn relates these to liberal forms of rule, notably Khalili (2013); Owens (2015); and Grove (2016). Thus, Khalili (2013: 12) observes that asymmetric warfare in counterinsurgency operations ‘had long served colonial conquest, and ... had even been incorporated into manuals of warfare as early as the first major wave of transoceanic colonization’. She subsequently enumerates key episodes from later colonial history that were pivotal in the development of counterinsurgency doctrines, namely ‘the French conquest of Algeria, the nascent wars against Native Americans, and the alternating butcher-and-bolt and policing policies of the British Empire in the north-western and western frontiers of India’ (13).

An American social science?

IR’s “parochial” (Grovgui 2004: 33) self-understandings epitomise the discipline’s obfuscation at best, and dismissal at worst, of the colonial and imperial dimensions of European modernity. These, as Jones (2006: 4) elaborates, commingled ‘authoritarianism, theft, racism, and in significant cases, massacre and genocide’ such that it is the ‘the history of the colonial state and political economy rather than European sovereignty and liberal democracy’ that is

pivotal to understanding the present-day international system. Disciplinary IR, however, disavows the racial and imperial foundations of the system even as it

‘...traces its modern origins without embarrassment to a place and moment at the heart and height of imperialism. Imperialism is characterized by relations, doctrines, and practices of exclusion;... ’ (2)..

Instead, taking ‘Europe’s internal history... [notably] the Enlightenment, modernity, democracy, sovereignty and rights’ as the wellspring for theorising the international (4), IR makes it possible to ‘depoliticise and dehistoricise’ the deleterious effects of European colonialism, and assimilate these in doctrines of development and ‘good governance’ (9). It then becomes imperative not only to contest IR’s ‘Eurocentric nature’, and its role as ‘a modern form of imperial ideology’ (5), but also to acknowledge the varying forms of imperialism in the ‘neo-colonial era’ (9). Postcolonial and decolonial critiques of IR respond to this challenge by seeking to render the genealogy of racism and colonialism legible, and thereby generating ‘alternative methodologies, ethics, and politics’ that reinvigorate an appreciation of the ‘complexity of international existence’ (Grovoqui 2004: 34, 33). Grovoqui cautions, however, that decolonial initiatives incite resistance that appears in ‘explicit attempts to preserve the authority of the West as sole legislator of international norms and values’ (34).

Grovoqui’s warning offers an apposite point of entry for an engagement with the critiques of *American IR* advanced by Hoffman (1977), and by Vitalis (2015). Hoffman’s widely cited article *An American Social Science: International Relations* correlates the rise of the US as a global superpower with the growth of IR as a discipline, and further elucidates the ‘remarkable convergence’ between scholarship in this field and state policy (1977: 47). As he observes, ‘The growth of the discipline cannot be separated from the American role in world affairs after

1945', and that this 'pre-eminence' is a key reason 'why the discipline has fared so badly' (47-48). The Cold War is cast as catalytic in cementing of the relationship between academia and the state: 'What the scholars offered, the policy makers wanted' (47). Conceding that his analytic may 'oversimplify' matters, he outlines state officials' search for 'some intellectual compass' that would rationalize multiple objectives, notably 'a permanent and global involvement in world affairs; ... the accumulation of power, the techniques of intervention, and the methods of containment' while inculcating the limits of 'idealism' (47-48). In this context, realism emerged as the theoretical apparatus that could furnish resolutions to these challenges (48). Hoffman subsequently adumbrates the institutional factors that amplify 'political connections' in the US of which two are particularly relevant (49). First the governmental system inducts 'academics and researchers not merely in the corridors but also in the kitchens of power' in order to extract 'data and ideas' sustaining 'imperial' prerogatives (49); second, a 'network of foundations' with boards of directors comprising 'former academics and ... officials' constitute 'a golden halfway house between Washington and academia' (50). Although Hoffmann does not mention think tanks specifically, his characterization of the foundations' ethos and dynamics is equally applicable to these institutions.

Hoffmann's analytic, however, ignores the question of race unlike Vitalis' *White World Order, Black Power Politics* (2015), which extends Dubois' reflections on the 'colour line' to the rise of disciplinary IR in the US. Vitalis documents how IR's emergence in the early 20th century fused concerns pertaining to the imperial governance of subject peoples abroad with the domestic management of 'backward races', a term usually reserved for 'negroes' residing in

the American South (Shilliam 2016: 756).²⁵ Anievas and Nisancioğlu concur in their general depiction of IR ‘as an intellectual project... designed to solve the dilemmas posed by white European powers’ attempts to control, subjugate, and exploit colonised subject populations’ (Anievas & Nisancioğlu 2019: 83). The intertwining of domestic and external concerns rested upon prevalent theories of ‘race development’ such that ‘international relations meant race relations’ (Vitalis 2015: 1). Moreover, race theories in sanctioning ‘natural and biological hierarchy’, were perceived as efficacious in limiting the damage wreaked by war (Shilliam 2016: 756). Illustrating the topicality of the discourse, Vitalis (2015: 17-18) points to the establishment of the *Journal of Race Development*, the forerunner of the CFR’s flagship publication *Foreign Affairs*, by the Harvard historian William Langer. Sabaratnam (2016) notes how Vitalis’ book has provoked ‘the rearguard’, exemplified in this instance by the CFR’s Gideon Rose who castigates the work as ‘flawed’ and ‘political’ (Rose 2016 cited in Sabaratnam 2016). She states,

“Rose’s capsule review for *Foreign Affairs*, the journal once named for *Race Development*, perfectly captures ... how this rearguard can function, ... re-inscribing the ‘norm against noticing’ the operation of racism and white supremacy in ... world politics and the discipline (IR) ... Rose accepts that the origins of the discipline were racialised... However, his rhetoric ... consigns the analytic case that there are continuities in these ideas to a *conspiratorial* form of politics...”²⁶

Contrastingly, Shilliam in his review of what he terms ‘a path-breaking book’ highlights Vitalis’ references to the black as well as white scholars of the Howard School who advanced ‘an original, complex and diverse tradition of IR scholarship’ that challenged its racist bases

²⁵‘The most pressing policy problems arose, the first professors of international relations said, from the extension of the American colonial model in New Mexico and other territories to the new Caribbean and Pacific dependencies’ (Vitalis: 18).

²⁶ Rose’s review is available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/2016-02-16/white-world-order-black-power-politics-birth-american>

(Shilliam 2016: 757, 756) . From its inception, however, the School struggled to secure funding and inclusion in pre-eminent scholarly circles, and its achievements were eventually ‘erased from the memory of the discipline’ (Shilliam 2016: 757). Nevertheless, race continued to inflect IR scholarship, assuming different intonations at different junctures of the 20th century (Shilliam 2016: 757). It was, as Bell (2012: 34) remarks, an ‘imprecise’ term incorporating ‘cultural and biological’ markers in varying proportions. Even today, IR remains ‘a white, mainly male rampart that exhibits routine anxieties about the various threats beyond the walls’ (Vitalis 2015: 180).

While Vitalis traces the centrality of race in the birth of IR in the US, Henderson (2013: 90) disambiguates its presence in IR’s ‘foundational construct...anarchy’ that grounds mainstream liberal and realist as well as constructivist schools. He suggests that anarchy’s resilience as the foremost descriptor of the international system explains why IR’s general antipathy to racism has failed to forestall its reproduction at the ‘empirical, ethical and epistemological’ levels (78-79). Drawing on Mills’ conception of the ‘racial contract’ (1997), Henderson illuminates the ‘racist dualism’ characterizing depictions of the anarchic state of nature in social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Kant (Henderson 2013: 71,79). Mills’ construction, he remarks, submerges the social contract within a larger ‘racial contract’, replacing the former’s homogeneity with the latter’s racially inflected hierarchical ordering of humanity (80). Henderson concurs with Sampson (2002) that contractarian theories converged in depicting anarchy and the state of nature as the ‘primeval condition of non-white peoples’, a supposition that became instrumental to European colonial expansion (Henderson 2013: 85). It permeated early IR theorizing as ‘realists and idealists’ obligated ‘superior peoples to impose order on the

anarchic domains of inferior peoples' through 'rational colonial administration' thus averting the intrusion of anarchy into the West and its corollary, intra-imperialist wars (85). This imaginary enabled the validation of specific domestic and international policies intended to consolidate a 'white racist order' (85). Like Vitalis, Henderson contends that the discipline's originary racism remains intact, turning to Sampson's critique of neo-realism to support his claim (86). Sampson's detailed critique of neo-realist precepts demonstrates their founding in Nadel's 1957 anthropological study of so-termed African primitive society; moreover, while anthropologists have contested such constructs vigorously, these continue to be 'recycle[d]' in IR (Sampson 2002 cited in Henderson: 86).

The GWoT and IR's rediscovery of empire

Vitalis highlights the primacy of empire in early IR, specifically the relations of 'domination and dependency among the world's superior and inferior races', (2015:106). Yet, the imperial question was subsequently muted as the discipline developed except for rare contributions for example by Doty (1996) or by Grovogui (1996) that 'attempted, in different ways, to theorise how the colonial/imperial becomes transmuted into the international' (Biswas, 2007: 118). Biswas decries IR's failure to follow disciplines such as Anthropology, History and Geography in 'stock-taking and intellectual revamping', prompted by Said's critical insights (118).²⁷ Her intervention aligns with scholarship that outlines the role of the GWoT in reversing IR's neglect of empire, and according it the 'status of an analytical category enabling us to describe the way power is actually exercised in the world today (Rao, 2004: 145).²⁸

²⁷ Jones similarly cites Said in noting that IR has resisted 'an acute and embarrassed awareness of the all-pervasive, unavoidable imperial setting' (Said cited in Jones 2006).

²⁸ Anghie makes a similar point stating, 'One of the consequences of current US policy and the war in Iraq is that it has made imperialism a central and inescapable aspect of contemporary analysis (Anghie, 2006: 110).

Contributions by Rao (2004), Jones (2006), Gökay and Fouskas (2005), and to an extent Hobson (2012), contest the ‘return of imperialism’ thesis (Jones 2006: 10), counterposing IR’s resurgent interest in empire with its enduring actuality that is most recently manifest in the GWoT. Thus, Rao refutes Shaw’s depiction of the West as ‘post-imperial’ (2004: 160) within a broader critique of Ignatieff’s imperial apologia, which “ignores the extent to which the circumstances allegedly necessitating ‘new’ empire are themselves a consequence of ... older US empire” (2004: 145). Jones similarly decries the

‘... shallow understanding of imperialism in terms of obvious visible features of military invasion ... occupation and overt racism. But imperialism and racism never went away despite the formally decolonised appearance of the modern international system’ (Jones 2006: 10).

In parallel, Gökay and Fouskas remark,

‘... the key political instruments and methods of America’s neo-imperial system were established in the 1940s and 1950s... what has been happening after the end of the Cold War, particularly after 9/11, should be seen as a radical expansion of the same...system...’ (2005: 40).

In a thematic variation, Hobson precludes addressing the GWoT’s instrumentality in resurrecting empire’s conceptual cogency, and focuses on the war’s legitimization in various post-Cold War discursive shifts in international theory; thus he notes, ‘mainstream Western neo-imperialist international theory’, emerging in this period iterates ‘different, albeit complementary Eurocentric meta-narratives’ mark a shift from ‘subliminal’ Eurocentrism in the 1945-1989 period to a ‘manifest version’ thereafter (Hobson, 2012: 257). He discerns a ‘return to the key themes that were articulated within post-1889 racist-realism... expressed in Eurocentric institutional terms;’ (259). However, several scholars who are otherwise sympathetic to his arguments contest Hobson’s disarticulation of scientific racism from Eurocentrism post 1945. Introducing a special journal issue devoted to Hobson’s book, Sajed

outlines the significance of this ‘analytical separation’ for critical, ‘postcolonial’ expositions of IR’s ‘racist genealogy’ and its ‘racist epistemological assumptions’ (2016: 169, 168). The ensuing contributions, which cannot be detailed here comprise diverse analytical perspectives that collectively elucidate the connections rather than the divergences between Eurocentrism and racism (Sajed 2016: 170).

As Rao’s critique of Ignatieff suggests, refutations of the ‘new imperialism’ in IR literature are countered by the equally visible flow of apologia, or what he terms ‘the insidious return of normative defences of empire’ (Rao 2004: 145).²⁹ Biswas (2007: 118) similarly laments the ‘defence of empire in the literature, but hopes that it will herald a reappraisal of the discipline’s conceptual and theoretical constraints, and its ‘colonialist imaginaries’ beyond the customary focus on ‘state sovereignty...security and order’. Indeed, within the complex interconnections of war, empire building and knowledge, critiques of war are not axiomatically critiques of imperialism and critiques of imperialism are not axiomatically critiques of Eurocentrism (Hobson, 2012: 257-286). Moreover, concepts of the nation-state, sovereignty, security and order already contaminated with repressed colonial associations.^{30 31} In this respect, Krishna (2006: 89) observes that IR operates through ‘crucial strategies of containment that normalize the coeval emergence of modern sovereignty and dispossession on a global scale’ and centre upon ‘abstraction’ . It is through abstraction that the discipline attempts to surmount ‘an

²⁹ Rao outlines two key justifications of empire as a defensive undertaking designed to protect ‘the security interests of the metropolis’, and as a panacea delivering good governance for failing states, a latter-day version, in his reading, of the *mission civilisatrice* (2004: 146). Rao’s insights will be related in the following chapter to discussion of the think tanks’ justifications for war.

³⁰ Seth (2013: 15ff) challenges the putatively neutral remit of concept of sovereignty as well as of diplomacy and international law, arguing that each serves to reproduce inequality in the international system.

³¹ Rao concurs with Hobsbawm’s contention that the ‘ “imperialism of human rights” is “more dangerous” than the self-interested arguments for empire advanced by the right, because of the veneer of legitimacy that it gives this project’ (Rao 2004: 147).

originary alienation' that began with Columbus' 'discovery' of the Americas, and which marked Europe's self-identification against an inferior and barbaric other (91). It invokes a 'political unconscious' wherein 'stories of racism, genocide, violence, and theft' are repressed and overlain by 'issues such as combating terrorism, securing sovereignty, and winning the games that nations play' (105). Specifically, abstraction enables the denial of overlapping histories that would disrupt the binaristic division between 'sovereign, developed and secure nation-state[s]' and 'quasi-states destined for perpetual anarchy' (105).³² Contextualised amidst the colonial/imperial connotations permeating discursive representations of the postcolonial state, the facile return of empire in a discipline tethered to Westphalian templates is less anomalous than initial appraisals might suggest. Rather, it amplifies the supposition that IR theory rests upon a discursive reservoir in which Eurocentric and colonial/imperial suppositions are latent, and readily available for rearticulation.

The GWoT, empire's (in)visibility and postcolonial fault lines

Ironically, while the GWoT became a vehicle for exposing IR's disengagement with empire and scripting new apologias for benevolent imperialism, a comparable process unfolded in the field of Postcolonial Studies. An exploration of this point will pave the way in this section for an overview of the differences between the postcolonial and the decolonial, followed by a more specific engagement with modernity/coloniality as a critical tool. First, Lazarus' article entitled *Postcolonial Studies After the Invasion of Iraq* (2006) signposted the extant divisions in the field between materialist perspectives privileging political economy, and those informed by

³² Hobson dismisses the conventional view of the sovereign state as a uniquely European accomplishment that was eventually globalised, arguing that its emergence was contingent upon Europe's access to networks of 'oriental globalisation'. He also advances the notions of 'conditional' and 'gradated' sovereignties as well as 'hierarchy' to counter abstract iterations. (Hobson, 2013: 32ff).

post-structuralism privileging language, culture and identity. In his indictment of the invasion, Lazarus notes,

‘Yet any student of imperialism will be struck by the similarities between the old style of imperialism and the new: the gigantic disparity between the technical and military might of the conquerors and the conquered; the inextricable combination of rapacious commercial interest and geopolitical ambition and design; ... the use of one colony as a stepping stone to seize others or pressure them into compliance with the imperial agenda; the appeal to jingoism on the home front’ (Lazarus 2006: 20).

He hopes this momentous event will impel postcolonial studies towards ‘a broad reconsideration of dominant assumptions and prevailing modes of practice’, and thus reverse the field’s neglect of US empire due to its preoccupation with ‘binaristic modes of conceptualisation, against liberationist ideologies, against nationalism, against Marxist theory and socialist practice!’ (21). Concomitantly, he censures postcolonial acclaim for Hardt and Negri’s *Empire*, specifically their contention that ‘ “[t]he United States does not, and indeed no nation-state can today, form the centre of an imperialist project. Imperialism is over” ’ (Hardt and Negri 2001, cited in Lazarus: 21). A ‘corrective’ to such disavowals of US imperialism emerges, Lazarus notes, in Loomba et al’s *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (2005), a scholarly intervention that calls ‘domination by its name’ (Lazarus 2006: 21). The passage that he cites from the volume’s introduction closely echoes the interventions by Biswas and Rao regarding IR theory:

‘The shadow the 2003 US invasion of Iraq casts on the twenty-first century makes it more absurd than ever to speak of ours as a postcolonial world... In a context of rapidly proliferating defences of empire... by policy makers and intellectuals alike, the projects of making visible the long history of empire... and of identifying the contemporary sites of resistance and oppression that have defined

postcolonial studies have, arguably, never been more urgent (Loomba et al 2005 cited in Lazarus 2006: 21).³³

Lazarus' critique of Postcolonial Studies dovetails in several ways with the difference between post and decolonial approaches. Although his allusions to the global expansion of neoliberalism, the postulations of *Empire* and the record of overt and covert US Cold War interventions are valid, there are various anomalies in the argument.³⁴ First, even if IR scholarship on imperialism in the wake of the GWOI is bracketed, Lazarus' delimitation of the field of Postcolonial Studies is questionable in that it overlooks various powerful critiques of empire in the humanities and social sciences, which resonate with postcolonial perspectives even if they do not consciously identify with the canon. Notable amongst these are recognizably 'postcolonial' publications by Arundhati Roy (2002, 2004), Barsamian & Said (2003), Gregory (2004) and Venn (2006). Other salient contributions focusing specifically on Islam and Muslims after the wars' inception include Hirschkind and Mahmood (2002), Barlas (2003), Sayyid (2003), Asad (2003), and Mamdani (2004) in a list that is by no means exhaustive. Second, while Lazarus objects to 'binaristic modes' and 'alterity' (2006: 21), it scarcely needs reiterating that discourses endorsing the 'war on terror' conceptualise the military offensives, and its protagonists in starkly binarist terms, with the latter linked projects of liberal pacification (Jabri 2006). Third, there is scant indication in Lazarus' critique that postcolonial writings prior to 2001 on liberal imperialism, resistance, and state formation, examples of which are Mehta (1999) and Chatterjee et al. (1993), can serve to connect past and present to the current manifestations of imperialism.

³³ *Empire* also has its 'postcolonial' apologists, notably the writer Salman Rushdie, whom Sardar (2006) included in his celebrity pageant of 'Blitcons'.

³⁴ Regarding US interventions, Lazarus mentions 'El Salvador, Nicaragua ... Grenada, Colombia ... Venezuela, Somalia ... Angola, Korea, the Philippines ... Indonesia, ... Cuba ... Haiti or Iraq in the wake of the Gulf War of 1991' (21).

Conclusion

This chapter provided an entry point into the thesis' critical engagement with decoloniality via two principal avenues. It commenced by detailing the core arguments of decolonial critique that flow from the dyad of modernity/coloniality and subsequently focused on its elaborate epistemic dimensions that target Eurocentric knowledge production. In the course of this endeavour, it also explored the points of confluence and contrast between decolonial and postcolonial perspectives. From this opening, it explored the decolonial endeavour in the discipline of IR drawing attention to the recent scholarship in the field, tracing IR's elision of empire, and its belated interest in the subject concomitant to the GWoT. In paralleling explorations of decoloniality in distinct domains, as iterations of the decolonial collective and as an emerging focus in disciplinary IR, the chapter suggested that the two may evince commonalities but are not homologous.

Chapter 2 – Reading Think Tanks Across a Spectrum

A copious body of literature has emerged in the social sciences in which think tanks comprise the principal subject of inquiry or are pivotal to topics drawn from a broad epistemic field. This chapter aims to highlight the variable distances that divide readings of think tanks in critical decolonial and postcolonial perspectives from the mainstream social science literature including IR, Political Science, and American Studies. Methodologically, the chapters provide an overview of the scholarship by locating it along a normative and ideational spectrum whose polarities are represented on the one hand by the radical critique advanced in post/decolonial writings, and on the other by the laudatory self-descriptive accounts of eminent think tank experts. The social scientific literature that is examined and situated within these polarities is divided into two streams for heuristic purposes. In the first stream, think tanks form the primary subject of inquiry and are broached in anodyne and occasionally admiring tones. Furthermore, the analyses centre around thematic clusters that relate typically to definitional challenges, provenance and evolution, organisational and operational logics, proximity to state power, influence on policy, funding, proliferation within the US and overseas, and ideological affiliation.

In the second stream, think tanks constitute a derivative area of interest within broader explorations of US foreign and security policies, geopolitics and the GWoT. Studies falling in this group evince a pronounced critical component that bears an affinity with aspects of post/decolonial critique, and offers insights whereby the latter may be amplified and textured. The allusions to think tanks in this stream iterate the institutions' imbrication with state power, their contributions to hegemonic discourses that reprise orientalist, racialised tropes, and meta-

narratives of American identity, and that in some instances include discursive constructions of the GWoT. As such, this stream displays a marked degree of concordance with the core problematics of the thesis. While the demarcation between the two streams is reasonably clear, it is not absolute and there are examples of scholarship, notably Parmar's work (1995, 2000; 2001; 2004; 2009; 2011; 2013), and Stone's later writing (2007) that focus on think tanks but are more critically attuned than is commonplace in the first category.

The survey endeavours to highlight the broad range of perspectives attending the study of think tanks in social science scholarship, and relates these to those obtaining in post/decolonial critique. It suggests that despite its analytical breadth, a large segment of the social science literature is characterised by a positivist, technocratic approach and remains aloof from the substance of the latter. Relatedly, it explores the methodological and substantive points of confluence and contrast between the critically positioned second stream and post/decolonial scholarship as a way of clearing a conceptual and analytical space for its contribution. Thus, on the one hand the critical stream mirrors the approach of post/decolonial writings in representing the institutions as *one* element within a discursive constellation and as a subordinate rather than principal area of inquiry. On the other hand, its *specific* accounts of war, knowledge and geopolitics are more elaborate and granular than post/decolonial accounts including for example, Mignolo's indictments of the US' post 9/11 military ventures (Mignolo 2015). Furthermore, whilst the approaches acknowledge the colonial/imperial and racial determinants of knowledge production, they articulate the precise implications of these in subtly differentiated ways.

In conducting the literature survey, the chapter aims to demarcate a space for the thesis' contribution. First, the thesis seeks to amplify think tanks' relevance to IR as geopolitical actors whose global, panoptic frames of reference exceed the bounds of domestically focused Political Science approaches and of narrowly conceived foreign policy centric approaches. Second, in drawing the social science literature into conversation with post/decolonial perspectives, it seeks to identify conceptualisations of coloniality, the geopolitics of knowledge and expertise as critical methodological tools that can enrich analyses of think tanks in IR. Third, it endeavours to build upon decolonial interventions as well upon critical scholarship on think tanks in IR's subfields, for example Critical Geopolitics, that acknowledge the colonial/imperial underpinnings of knowledge production including in US state and foreign policy discourses. Forging linkages among think tank expertise, coloniality and GWO, the thesis performs an integrative task by establishing a relationality between topics that are either disaggregated or insufficiently connected. To this end, it endorses the scholarship's attention to the roles of various think tanks in shaping the discursive imaginaries that enabled war. However, it aims to extend this endeavour by documenting the experts' sustained investments in efforts to steer the war's outcomes while iterating their authoritative credentials as its interlocutors. In scrutinising these efforts, the thesis seeks to enrich understanding of the expert discourses' evolution as knowledges produced over an extended period of warfare, and their instantiations of coloniality in ways that sustain their coherence.

In pursuing these tasks, the chapter opens by juxtaposing conceptualisations of think tanks that ostensibly represent the spectrum's polarities, namely Mignolo' and Said's writings on the one hand, and those of think tank experts at the CFR, RAND and the Heritage Foundation on the

other. However, it argues that the apparent dissimilarity obscures instances of symmetry between the two. Subsequently, it maps the various social science writings along this spectrum beginning with the more neutral or laudatory expositions of the first category and proceeding to more critically oriented publications.

Think tanks and institutional imperial knowledges

The radical critique of knowledge-producing institutions advanced in post and decolonial perspectives constitutes one component in their expansive interrogation of the complicity between epistemology and colonial power. As such, it is subsumed within a meta-critique of the organization, production, and diffusion of Eurocentric knowledges as sources of what Spivak calls ‘epistemic violence’ (Spivak 1988). This section pursues this observation by considering Mignolo’s references to think tanks within the framework of coloniality, and Said’s depiction of expertise in the colonial/orientalist enterprise.

First, the decolonial focus on ‘the long horizon of coloniality’ (Walsh 2007: 224) as it connects past and present knowledge practices, and the institutional complexes through which these are processed, renders it particularly apposite for examining think tanks as centres of policy-relevant research and advocacy. Combined with decolonial thinkers’ declared intent to transcend academia’s walls, it instantiates Sajed’s view of ‘what it might mean to bring the world back into IR’ (2013: 2). Echoing in many respects Said’s (1978:3) depiction of Orientalism as a ‘corporate institution’, decolonial readings of ‘epistemological dominance’ (Bhabra, 2014: 120) cast think tanks as one fixture within an institutional grid that ‘create[s] and maintain[s] knowledge’ sustaining the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo 2015: 20). In this perspective, institutions become a rallying point for the key concepts that anchor decolonial

critique, notably ‘enunciation’, and the ‘geo and body-politics of knowledge’ (Mignolo 2009: 7-8). In developing these concepts, Mignolo (2009: 5) centres Benveniste’s distinction between enunciation and the enunciated, and Fanon’s depiction of speech as the capacity to ‘support the weight of a civilization’ (Fanon 1967 cited in Mignolo 2009: 7). He underscores how certain ‘actors, languages and institutions’ in specific geo-historical contexts produce knowledge ‘in the deep sense of the word’ (Mignolo 2015: 5). This is defined as the level of ‘“enunciation” proper’ in which the ‘“terms” of the conversation’ (Mignolo 2015: 5) denoting mastery of disciplinary rules, and the authority to evaluate and proscribe are established. Mignolo elaborates further in his comments on Carl Pletsch’s article, ‘The Three Worlds, or the Division of Social Scientific Labour, circa 1950–1975’ (1981),

‘Yet Pletsch’s landmark article was still centrifugal: it mapped what First World scholars thought of the new world order. First World scholars have the privilege of being both in the enunciated (one of the three worlds) and the enunciator (the First World)... [They] ... had the *privilege of inventing the classification and being part of it*’ (Mignolo 2009: 8).

Commanding ‘the formal apparatus of enunciation’, institutions represent ‘knowledge-making entrenched with imperial/colonial purposes, from the European Renaissance to US neoliberalism’ (Mignolo 2009:18). The ‘purposes’ entail

‘... the training of new (epistemic obedient) members and control of who enters...what knowledge-making is allowed, disavowed, devalued or celebrated’ (Mignolo 2009: 18).

In this constellation, think tanks flank colleges, universities, museums, foundations, and institutes as edifices that buttress ‘the hegemonic frame of western modernity’ (Mignolo 2007: 462). For Mignolo, the ‘vocabulary, syntax and semantics’ of the ‘grammar of decoloniality’ provide a means of countering Eurocentric epistemologies ‘of regulation and oppression’, and delinking politically and epistemically from the content and the terms of the conversation

(2009: 37, 11). Significantly for Mignolo, this process resists ‘disciplinary or interdisciplinary controversies and the conflict of interpretations’ that follow ‘the same rules of the game’ without questioning the mechanisms of control (2009: 4). As such, the mutations in ‘the rhetoric of modern salvation’ expressed as Christian liberation theology, civilisational discourses, theories of modernisation and development, capitalist or Marxist promises of decolonisation, and neoliberal inducements only serve to perpetuate colonality (Mignolo 2018: 129; 2007: 11, 15). In contrast, a decolonial epistemic shift strikes at ‘the imperial form of consciousness’ (14) which inscribes ‘hegemonic ideas of what knowledge and understanding are, and consequently what economy and politics, ethics and philosophy...should be’ (11). Most importantly, it involves *reorienting* knowledge away from the imperial management of populations towards pluriversally defined ethical alternatives (Mignolo 2009: 19).

Two further points bear upon think tanks as elements in an institutional ‘web of imperial knowledge’ (Mignolo 2009: 20). First, although institutions are interconnected by horizontal linkages, they are collectively emblems of an enduring epistemic hierarchy. Thus,

‘The colonisation of knowledge and being worked from top down and ... is still working today [as regards the] economy and politics and the state... That is the way social sciences and financial and political think tanks work’ (Mignolo 2007: 492).

In opposition, Mignolo advocates the ‘bottom up’ approach of the geo and body-politics of knowledge accord political and philosophical primacy to Fanon’s ‘damnés’ (Fanon 1961 cited in Mignolo 2007:458), the ‘institutionally and economically disenfranchised’ who produce ‘intellectual work not at the service of the corporation or the state’ (Mignolo: 492). Second, despite its prominence, the ‘rhetoric of modernity’ (Mignolo 2011a: 46) remains contingent upon concealment of the logic of colonality, and erasure of the ‘geo-historical and bio-

graphical locations' of knowledge production (Mignolo 2009: 2). In response, decolonial critique exceeds the critique of situated knowledge by identifying the agents, purposes, and temporality of concealment in various disciplines and institutions. It thereby disrupts the Cartesian abstraction in which thought precedes being, and centres instead the utterance of the 'racially-marked body in a geo-historical marked space' (Mignolo 2009: 2).

In describing think tanks as institutions sustaining the colonial matrix of power, Mignolo's analytic is at once sparse as well as profound in its provocations. It eschews interest in their ontic aspects and does not disaggregate them according to form and function or political and ideological affiliation and orientation. The focus remains the disclosure by the geo and body-politics of knowledge of their location within the apparatus of enunciation that sustains coloniality. The thesis will draw upon these insights in two formative ways. First, it will interweave the distinction between terms and content into its inquiry; thus, it will investigate the extent to which and the means whereby the think tanks assume an enunciatory role producing constitutive knowledges that reinscribe forms of coloniality. Extending Barkawi and Laffey's depiction of 'conventional security studies' as 'the seemingly neutral and timeless language of social science' (2006: 334) to the discourses of the think tanks, it will explore the 'authorising discourses' (Asad 2003) imbricating the positivist grammars they deploy that permit certain narratives to be disseminated and others silenced. It will seek to uncover and interrogate the 'terms' that they designate for the 'conversation' (Mignolo 2009: 37, 11) as the *conditions of possibility* for generating authoritative *discourses of war* within the framework of coloniality. Relatedly, it will consider the extent to which the 'content' (Mignolo 2009 37, 11)

of the discourses manifests variant instantiations of coloniality as instances of intra-discursive divergence.

The second pertains to the decolonial inscription of geopolitics. Its relation to the sub-texts of knowledge production upends the classical usage of the term with its attachments to empire, whiteness, and cartography, but displays a strong affinity with the preoccupations of *Critical Geopolitics*, a disciplinary area that is explored later in this chapter. The geopolitics of knowledge is germane to this study for its applicability to the sphere of knowledge production, but to the thesis' interest in the geopolitical perspectives undergirding the wars. In other words, the term comes to embody the contestations over the meanings and purposes of knowledge that are inherent in its antithetical uses. The conflictual uses of the term become legible if the think tanks' discourses are construed as exemplars of conventional geopolitics and the panopticism of the 'geopolitical gaze' (Klinke 2009).

Think tanks, orientalist expertise and the exilic intellectual

The decolonial critique of think tanks complements Said's statements about the institutional force of Orientalism, which inheres in

'... making statements about [the Orient], authorising views of it, describing it...ruling over it...in short...a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the [it]' (1978 [2019]: 3).

For Said as for Mignolo, 'epistemological dominance' is inseparable from institutional dominance, and ultimately from questions of ontology or what Mignolo and Tlostanova term 'the ego-politics of knowledge' (2006: 206), and what Dussell calls the 'ego conquiro' (Dussell 2005). This may be gleaned in Said's reflections on the co-constitution of knowledge and power in *Orientalism* (1978), and later in the companion title, *Covering Islam* (1997). The

characterisation of Orientalism as a particular discursive formation undergirding European colonisation of the Arab and Islamic Middle East is widely regarded as inaugurating Postcolonial studies in the humanities although as noted frequently, Said distanced himself from the field. In the current context, the fervid reactivation of orientalist tropes in media and policy commentary on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has been instrumental in enlisting Saidian-inspired analyses in the social sciences including IR (examples include Barkawi and Stanski; Gregory; Porter; Jabri; Biswas; Kumar).

Although references to think tanks are sparse in Said's prolific corpus, his writings recurrently evoke the transhistorical figure of the 'expert' who becomes emblematic of the knowledges produced in various institutional settings. Said's expert originates as the scholar associated with early colonial incursions into " 'the Orient'... that semi-mythical construct" (Said 2003), beginning with the Napoleonic occupation of Egypt in 1798.³⁵ Said (1997: 153) emphasises the resilience of the 'class of colonial experts' whose socio-cultural-aesthetic representations of the region rendered it amenable to European domination. He notes its 'contemporary' visibility in a context in which the US has assumed 'positions of dominance and hegemony once held in the Islamic world by Britain and France' (1997: I, 27). The current setting features 'academic experts on Islam, geopolitical strategists...cultural thinkers' (Ii) whose institutional locations bespeak the intertwining of academia with 'the network of government, corporate and foreign policy associations' (19). The expertise, he maintains, is pivotal to US intervention in the 'Orient' and underlines 'the replacement of one imperial system by another'(27). Examples of

³⁵ Said, E. (2003). 'A window on the world', *The Guardian*, 2 August. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/aug/02/alqaida.highereducation>

this tendency include US support for the anti-Soviet insurgency in Afghanistan, and the first Gulf War that was fought to ‘safeguard ... [US] economic interests in the Persian Gulf’ (27).

Shortly before his death, and subsequent to the Afghan and Iraq invasions, Said (2003) returned to the theme of ‘traditional orientalist dogma’ espoused by ‘experts on the Arab and Islamic world’, ‘intellectual lackeys’ and ‘jejeune publicists who speak in the name of foreign policy’ contributing to the ‘shabby screeds bearing screaming headlines about Islam and terror’ that unleashed the wars. His scathing indictment of the colonial/imperial aegis of expert knowledges links temporalities and spatialities:

‘So from the very same directorate of paid professional scholars enlisted by the Dutch conquerors of Malaysia and Indonesia, the British armies of India, Mesopotamia, Egypt, West Africa, the French armies of Indochina and North Africa, came the American advisers to the Pentagon and the White House, using the same clichés, the same demeaning stereotypes, the same justifications for power and violence (2003).

The relevance of Said’s denunciation of expertise for think tanks is further clarified in his extended reflections on the role and status of intellectuals in post-war academia. These are prefaced with a critique of the term ‘intelligentsia’ as encompassing an array of knowledge-linked professions (Said 1996: 68).³⁶ In contrast, Said envisages the intellectual as someone who is neither ‘so uncontroversial a figure...as to be a friendly technician’ nor ‘a full-time Cassandra’ and aspires to ‘knowledge and freedom’ rather than to ‘professionalism’ (1996: 69, 59, 74). For Said, professionalism is an umbrella term that signifies the diminution of the intellectual’s vocation into a technocratic routinised activity prioritising conformity,

³⁶ ‘...the world is more crowded than it ever has been with professionals, experts, consultants, in a word, with *intellectuals* whose main role is to provide authority with their labor while gaining great profit...managers, professors, journalists, computer or government experts, lobbyists, pundits, syndicated columnists, consultants...’ (Said 1996: xv, 68).

marketability, and ostensibly objectivity (74). He associates professionalism with ‘expertise and the cult of the certified expert’ , and his elaboration of its processual features recalls Mignolo’s references to enunciation,

‘To be an expert you have to be certified by the proper authorities; they instruct you in speaking the right language, citing the right authorities, holding down the right territory. This is especially true when sensitive and or profitable areas of knowledge are at stake’ (74).

In contrast, he casts intellectuals as ‘outsiders’, ‘exiles’, (52) and ‘amateurs’ (77), the liminal ‘nay-sayers’ who forego the ‘comforts of privilege, power, being-at-homeness’ that accompany ‘adjustment... [with the] ... mainstream’ (52). ‘Amateurism’ s in this conception denotes morally-engaged intellectual activity that generates ‘lively and radical’ interventions in opposition to ‘expertise’ (83). It distinguishes the intellectual from those ‘constrained’ by their ‘affiliations with universities ..., political parties ..., [and] think tanks’ (67-68)’ those who seek ‘grants and fellowships ... sabbatical leaves and publishing subventions, ... professional advancement’ (81) but in the process, ‘compromise judgement and restrain the critical voice’ (67-68). In contrast, academia shields the intellectual from the work practices of ‘the policy-think-tank riddled age’ such as rigid deadlines (Said 2004: 71-72).

Said, however, is acutely aware of the encroachment of national security and defense interests upon academia, notably during the Cold War, and eschews a rigid dichotomy in which the academy houses intellectuals, and institutions such as think tanks produce experts. Rather, representing expertise as ‘an attitude’ that transects institutional walls (74), he points to the ‘legions of intellectuals’ from different disciplines who were remunerated lavishly for endorsing anti-communist initiatives (1996: 110, 94). Propounding the malevolence of the Soviet Union, and the benevolence of modernisation and development was requisite in ‘a

controlled market for expertise tailored to further the national effort' (78-79). In this climate, dissenting scholars such as Chomsky who challenged the official discourse of the Vietnam war were side-lined whilst those 'experts on foreign policy' with aspirations to join 'the State Department or the Rand Corporation', 'never strayed into that territory at all' (82, 79).

Such conformism, Said continues, justified 'imperial policies' that led to 'immense disasters ... costly wars and invasions...indirect support for massacres and invasions...client regimes' (78-79). It constituted an abandonment of the intellectual's obligation 'to challenge and defeat both an imposed silence and the normalised quiet of unseen power' (Said 2001: 31). For Said, this subversive vocation can only materialise within the 'territory' of the 'precarious exilic realm' (36). As he observes, " 'expertise' in the end has rather little, strictly speaking, to do with knowledge" (1996: 79).

Whilst Mignolo alludes to think tanks occur within an expansive critique of knowledge producing institutions mired in coloniality, Said refers to the institutions amidst an indictment of expertise as professionalised, securitised knowledge that serves power. Although expertise as a concept bears a colonial and neo-imperial imprimatur connecting the orientalist trappings of colonialism to their contemporary resurgence, it also incorporates Said's deeply held beliefs regarding the role and status of the humanist intellectual, particularly within the landscape of US academia.³⁷ Whilst he connects historical and contemporary manifestations of Orientalism and their complicity in oppression, injustice and war, Said also contemplates expertise in other

³⁷ '... the intellectual does not represent a statue like icon, but an individual vocation, an energy, ... engaging as a committed ... voice in language and in society with a whole slew of issues, all of them having to do ... with a combination of enlightenment and emancipation or freedom' (Said 1996: 73).

contexts that encroach upon the autonomy of the critical intellectual. The operations of expertise then range widely from enabling colonial oppression to steering research agendas, and reorienting intellectual labour. However, whereas Mignolo invokes the geo-politics of knowledge to critique the institutional matrix in which think tanks and universities are co-present, Said envisages the residual privileged spaces of academia as sites of resistance to the culture of expertise.

Think tanks' self-representations

Said's and Mignolo's critical appraisals of think tanks and of expertise serve as counterpoints to IR and related social science literature on the subject. As noted previously the degree of divergence is variable as this literature traverses a broad terrain, and more significantly, represents discordant perspectives on the politics of knowledge formation, understandings of US power, and its global projection. Nonetheless, dissimilar conceptualisations of think tanks still converge in recognising the institutions as key agents within matrices of power and knowledge. This section plots the coordinates of this literature, comparing its standpoints with post and decolonial perspectives. It begins by considering writings located at the oppositional end of Mignolo's and Said's critiques, namely the think tank experts' representations of their oeuvre.

Haass

First, Richard Haass' commentary, with its multivocal resonance for this study relays a synoptic but laudatory account of the integral and generative contributions of think tanks to the construction of US foreign policy. As President of the CFR from 2003, Haass propounds his views in the article 'Think Tanks and US Foreign Policy: a Policy Maker's Perspective' (2002),

which delineates the rise and proliferation of think tanks in the US, and their contribution to policy formation. Penning the article when he was Director Policy Planning Staff US State Department, Haass personifies and valorises the interchange of senior personnel between government and elite think tanks.³⁸ Validating the knowledge-power nexus and its exceptionalism in the US context, Haas depicts think tanks as ‘a distinctively American phenomenon’ (2002). He documents the coequality of their emergence and the evolution of US hegemony, stating that ‘the rise of modern [US] think tanks parallels the rise of the [US] to global leadership’ (2002). Nonetheless, he maintains, ‘the role of think tanks is among the most important and least appreciated’ amongst the determinants of US foreign policy (2002). In elucidating their importance, Haass advances several observations that are pertinent for the referentiality to the critical accounts examined earlier.

Regarding definition and rationale, Haass characterises think tanks as ‘independent institutions organised to conduct research and produce independent, policy-relevant knowledge’ that fills ‘a critical void between the academic world on the one hand, and the realm of government on the other’ (2002). As intermediaries between the academy’s ‘arcane theoretical and methodological debates’ that have little resonance with ‘real policy dilemmas’, and the ‘concrete demands of day-to-day policy making’ that may obfuscate the ‘broader trajectory of US policy’, think tanks strive ‘to bridge the gap between ... ideas and action’ (2002).

Second, Haass charts the think tanks’ historical evolution ascribing their rise in ‘the progressive era’ to a concerted but primarily ‘apolitical’ campaign to ‘professionalise government’ and

³⁸ ‘Having divided my career between government service and think tanks, I can testify to the insights to be gained by combining ideas and practice’ (Haass 2002).

advance the public interest by establishing sources of ‘impartial, policy-relevant advice’ for government functionaries (2002). A three-stage chronology describing distinctive ‘waves’ of think tank evolution is advanced that corresponds with signature moments in 20th century US political-economic development, and in each of which the institutions studied in this dissertation are identified as prototypes. The first wave, which includes the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, established in 1916, The CFR in 1921, and the Brookings Institution in 1927 was dedicated principally to ‘foreign affairs’ specifically to scrutinising matters of war and peace within a shared commitment to internationalism (2002). The early think tanks successfully created ‘a domestic constituency for global engagement’ that sustained an internationalist orientation during the isolationist inter-war years (2002).

Haass associates the RAND Corporation with the post WW2 second wave that oversaw the US’ ascent to superpower status and its emergent role as ‘defender of the free world’ in the Cold War (2002). The institutions established in this period were frequently directly funded by the government, which invested ‘massive resources to defense scientists and researchers’ (2002). Established in 1948 as an ‘independent non-profit organization’ with funding from the US Air Force, RAND has produced ‘pioneering studies of systems analysis, game theory, and strategic bargaining that continue to shape the way we analyse defense policy and deterrence ...’ (2002). Finally, ‘[t]he conservative Heritage Foundation’ formed in 1973 was prototypical of the third wave, which featured think tanks dedicated to ‘advocacy and research’ that could shape policy in ‘a crowded marketplace of ideas’ (2002). Haass does not, however, document the dramatic domestic and international developments of this period, specifically anti-war and civil rights protests, oil shocks, demands for a new international economic order, and the rise of other

political-economic powers problematising US hegemony. The burgeoning market he describes appears distant from the prevailing turbulence.

Haass demarcates think tanks' roles into five clusters that are frequently iterated in the social science literature, namely serving as 'the idea factory', 'providing talent', 'convening professionals', 'engaging the public', and 'bridging differences' (2002). In elaborating each cluster, Haass strives to reinforce the think tanks' irrefutable importance to policy making. Thus, the 'idea factory' furnishes 'original insights', namely redefining US national interests and priorities, charting strategy, mobilising bureaucratic and political coalitions and engineering institutional compliance (2002). Although in continuous motion, the 'factory' has galvanised during critical historical moments. Haas provides an example in the War and Peace Studies project that the CFR undertook during WW2 in order to provide the State Department with a detailed blueprint of the US' post-war international role. Relatedly, Haass highlights the agenda-setting impact of articles in *Foreign Affairs*, notably George Kennan's 'Containment' essay of 1947 and Huntington's 'Clash of Civilisations' piece of 1993. Furthermore, he cites instances of presidential candidates consulting think tanks for advice amidst election campaigns, notably Reagan's adoption of the Heritage Foundation's 'Mandate for Change' as an election manifesto in 1980 (2002).

In 'providing talent', Haass focuses more explicitly on expertise in the context of " 'the revolving door'" (2002). He commends the symbiosis between government and think tanks whereby the latter provide 'a steady stream of experts' for new administrations and congress; correspondingly, they serve as institutional anchors for outgoing government staffers enabling

their continued engagement ‘in pressing foreign policy debates’ as ‘an informal shadow foreign affairs establishment’ (2002). Haass alludes to various luminaries with think tank experience who held key positions in the Bush administration including Kim Holmes of the Heritage Foundation and Paula Dobriansky of the CFR; furthermore, he recounts the sequential ‘stints’ of his own distinguished career through ‘the revolving door’ (2002). In the context of US politics, such arrangements are ‘a source of its strength’ as they compensate for the lack of a professionalised civil service, and avert the incipient ‘void’ that would arise during administrative transitions (2002). It is striking that Haass omits reference to the influx of office bearers in the Bush administration from the PNAC, which is commonly cited as one of the mainsprings of the GWoT.

In ‘convening professionals’ and ‘engaging the public’ Haass (2002) underscores the importance of foreign policy discourse construction in conjunction with other experts as well as the public sphere. Affirming the importance of platforms that cultivate ‘shared understanding, if not consensus, on policy options’, Haass envisages the active engagement of ‘the foreign policy public’, an appellation he borrows from his colleague Ernest May (May cited in Haas 2002). As he asserts, the successful policies necessitate a ‘critical base of support’, and think tanks with their ‘non-partisan’ leanings are optimally situated to facilitate this goal; furthermore, he commends the CFR for convening ‘hundreds of meetings annually’ (2002). The pedagogic ‘outreach function’ of think tanks then becomes crucial as a means of educating citizens about present and future threats and dangers (2002).

In ‘building bridges’, Haass turns to the ‘delicate undertakings’ that constitute ‘a more active foreign policy’ and are associated with mediation and the fostering of ‘sensitive dialogue’ or ‘Track II’ negotiations, for example, the Carnegie Endowment’s role in the anti-apartheid cause during the 1980s (2002). In his estimation, think tanks

‘have great potential to build peace and reconciliation in *conflict-prone* regions and war-torn societies, either as a complement to US government efforts or as a substitute when an official American presence is impossible. In the darkest corners of the world, they can serve as the eyes, the ears, and even the conscience of the United States and the international community’ (2002).

Haass’ vision of the think tanks’ potential imbues their policy contributions with moral and ethical force, and their surveillance capacity with a redemptive power. The institutions are metonymic for the projection of US power but also for an amorphous ‘international community’ navigating the world’s ‘darkest corners’ (2002). As such Haass endows the think tanks with a universalist persona from which all suggestions of political and ideological bias have been effaced. Although Haass’ effusive conceptualisation inverts Mignolo’s and Said’s grimmer assessment of the institutions’ epistemic role, it becomes illustrative of Mignolo’s references to the ‘zero-point’,

‘From a detached and neutral point of observation (that ... Santiago Castro-Gómez ... describes as the *hubris of the zero point*), the knowing subject maps the world and its problems, classifies people and projects into what is good for them. Today that assumption is no longer tenable, although there are still many believers’ (Mignolo 2009:159).

In its political and normative standpoints rather than its substantive elements, Haass’ insider commentary represents the widest distance from Said’s and Mignolo’s representations. Its summative endorsement of think tanks in general interspersed with references to the particular merits of the CFR, RAND and the Heritage Foundation establishes a template which may be refined and elaborated, but remains intact in its essentials. This may be evidenced in the

following discussion of contributions by representatives of RAND and Heritage. In both cases, the authors adopt a functionalist approach that amplifies Haass' emphasis on think tanks' differential efficacy in the policy process, and reinforces the symbiotic links between the institutions and the state.

Rich

In his contribution entitled, 'RAND: How Think Tanks Interact with the Military', Michael Rich, the current President and CEO of RAND, affirms the embedded ties between think tanks and the US Department of Defense (DoD) and indexes these to the civilian and military leadership's need for 'high-quality, objective research on geopolitical trends' (Rich 2003: 22). Describing RAND as the 'oldest and largest' of think tanks affiliated with the DoD, Rich notes that its establishment under the auspices of the US Air Force represented 'a path breaking analytical effort to understand the Soviet Union' (22). In response to Air Force requests, the institution placed military and strategy-oriented research within a comprehensive cognitive focus on economy, society, and foreign policy (22). Although scrutiny of the Soviet Union was an initial priority, the Air Force and the Office of the Secretary of Defence spurred the widening of RAND's research operations by commissioning studies of other states and regions including China, the Middle East, and Latin America (23).

Detailing RAND's distinctiveness, Rich observes that its reports cover an array of topics including 'economic strength, military capabilities, insurgencies, hegemonic intentions...' and are distributed to sponsors, government and the general public (23). In turn, RAND's 'iterative' formulation of a research agenda proceeds from consultation between its leaders and senior

military and civilian personnel (23). Expanding ties with the Army and with the intelligence community have enriched RAND's 'country studies and broader regional analyses' (24). Invariably, Rich claims, a 'rigorous quality assurance process' is at play ensuring that the think tank's experts continue to assist America's defence capabilities (25). More generally, RAND's influence and interconnectedness are reflected in the standardisation and widespread adoption of its research methodologies (24).

Spring

Finally, Baker Spring (2002), formerly Research Fellow in National Security Policy recounts the think tank's successes in an article entitled, 'The Heritage Foundation: Influencing the Debate on Missile Defence'. Spring mentions Heritage's role in the repeal of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972 and the inauguration of a global missile defence system from 2002 as paradigmatic of its policy shaping efficacy (2002). Rather than rehearse the minutiae of the article's arguments on missile defence, it is more apt to consider how it addresses the themes outlined by Haass and Rich. The commonalities are, first, an emphasis on the Foundation's pedagogic role with the caveat that this directed at Congress and policymakers rather than the public. Second, there is a homologous assertion of the think tank's expertise, which ensures its relevance in the policy arena rather than its political affiliations or lobbying power (34). Third, although more resonant with RAND than with the CFR, Spring depicts Heritage as a civilian think tank that assiduously monitors the technological bases of the US' military arsenal. To elaborate he points to its founding of the Commission for Missile Defence in 1995 that comprised 'some of the nation's ablest minds on the technological aspects of missile defence' (34). The Commission reported directly to Congress, and deployed the latter's receptivity to

persuade the Clinton administration to retract its policy; subsequently, its key recommendations were endorsed in a Pentagon report (34).

In other respects, Spring's article strikes a contrasting note. For example, his characterisation of Heritage as an institution that produces knowledge specifically to influence policy and shape outcomes differs from the relatively more oblique approach of the CFR or the task-based, contractual orientation of RAND. Spring enumerates the tactics and instruments that Heritage experts marshal in pursuit of this agenda. Distinctive amongst these is the circulation of 'succinct papers called Backgrounders or Executive Memoranda on narrow topics' during critical phases of policy-making' (32). Other practices also followed by RAND and the CFR include briefing Congress and attending Congressional hearings; briefing the media; and organising lectures (32). Furthermore, the Foundation's emphasis on military superiority as a cardinal element of US pre-eminence, and its alacrity in engineering major policy shifts in this arena are noteworthy considering its civilian credentials. That its strategic rationale for a policy shift was eventually endorsed by the Pentagon suggests that its ideological and political commitment to US primacy, its determination to influence policy, and its dexterity in persuading Congress enable it to seize the initiative in policy debates that may be the preserve of other institutions. Lastly, Spring's article contextualises the missile defence debate in terms of 'vulnerability' and 'threat' (34). There are parallels here with Rich's references to the armed forces' efforts to 'defend the nation', the 'threat' from 'the emergence of terrorism on a worldwide' scale, and the need for 'a better understanding of our nation's vulnerabilities' (Rich 2003: 25, 24). Rich, however, counsels 'a comprehensive analytical approach' since

'Bigger bombs, better guns, and new weapons systems ... are not enough to defeat terrorists, who operate far from traditional battlefields. We also need a

better understanding of who terrorists are, how they operate, what motivates them, and what can be done to stop them from expanding their ranks' (24).

In contrast Heritage experts approach the question of vulnerability in the missile debate through a strategically delimited or 'narrow' (Spring 2002: 32) prism that de-prioritises a fuller exploration of the issues.

Think tanks, coloniality and the bounds of expertise

The three articles surveyed encapsulate the self-affirming performances of the think tank experts as actors cognisant of the symbolic, institutional, and material accoutrements of policy formulation. Their self-appraisals regarding their role, *modi operandi*, and achievements vindicate key arguments in Mignolo's and Said's critiques. Whilst these critiques are framed in terms of coloniality for Mignolo, and Orientalism as well as intellectual vocation for Said, the scholars' differentiated views of knowledge production can be linked to a reformulation of the notion of 'boundary-production' advanced by Campbell (2005). Although he does not write explicitly about think tanks, Campbell's insights on US foreign policy are illuminating. He notes,

'... the boundary-producing political performance of foreign policy does more than inscribe a geopolitical marker on a map. This construction of social space also involves an axiological dimension in which the delineation of an inside from an outside gives rise to a moral hierarchy that renders the domestic superior and the foreign inferior. Foreign policy thus incorporates an ethical power of segregation in its performance of identity/difference' (Campbell 2005: 948).

Campbell's elaboration of foreign policy illuminates the literature discussed in this chapter, and links it with the think tank experts' subsequent interventions on the GWO. Their accounts, be they laudatory or critical, consensually associate think tanks with a boundary setting role that is evinced in four key areas: the delimitation of political debate around appeals to the national

interest, the formation of communities of consent, the immobilisation of dissent, and the translation of their labour into policies. However, as the experts' self-representations suggest, the epistemic boundaries they establish affirm the *global* writ of US power. As such discursive regulation naturalises the (neo)imperial imaginary of US geopolitical supremacy. Although Campbell's allusions to the constitutive boundaries of foreign policy are state-centric, they are also germane to a (neo)imperial context in which state sovereignty collides with US interventionism, and its cartographies of coloniality. The generalised focus of the articles surveyed in this section only provides sporadic examples of the latter. Thus, Haass can invoke the world's 'darkest corners' (2002) in disregard of the phrase's connection with race and empire. The recourse to moral or ethical boundaries becomes urgent in the experts' writings on the GWoT. The war intensifies their routine 'performance[s]' in the articulation of foreign policy as its 'axiological dimension' (Campbell 2005: 948) becomes paramount in a contest that is already framed as a titanic struggle against evil.

Anticipating later discussion, the concept of boundaries recalls Haass' (2002) reference to think tank expertise as bridging 'arcane' theory and 'real policy' challenges. Given that discourses have material consequences, Haass' distinction appears tendentious; moreover, he does not elucidate which theories would qualify as 'arcane'. The think tank documents surveyed thus far suggest that the experts' approach to policy accords with theoretical understandings of US exceptionalism, liberal pacification, realist power projection, and deterrence *inter alia*, which in turn *enable* the experts' boundary-producing performances. It may be inferred then that Haass would not consider such theorisations 'arcane'. Rather, it is arguable that Haass' allusion to the 'bridging' of 'ideas and action' (2002) is also a mode of boundary production in that it

envisages the intermeshing of *specific* theories and forms of political praxis, and also locates think tank expertise as a vital node in the process.

Narrating think tanks in the social sciences

The foregoing sections of the chapter opened the literature survey by highlighting the polarities in the scholarship that are marked on the one hand by critiques of think tanks, knowledge production and expertise advanced in decolonial and postcolonial accounts, and on the other, by leading experts' representations of the institutions. The following sections proceed to survey the two streams of social science scholarship alluded to earlier, , one in which think tanks are centred, and the other in which they are situated within broader critiques of the GWoT, geopolitics, and US foreign policy. The discussion commences with scholarship that centres think tanks. It takes a synoptic and selective in outlining the dominant concerns of this literature, and underlining its normative and conceptual distance from the second stream. As the next section demonstrates, the stream centring think tanks displays a self-referentiality, and at an epistemological level, represents a form of scholarship in which knowledge *of* think tanks chimes felicitously with the think tanks' self-descriptions. Its principal merits reside in its delineation of the historical contexts in which think tanks emerged and proliferated within the US, and of their *modi operandi*. This segment of the survey makes an exception for Parmar's expansive corpus, which centres think tanks (and foundations), but incorporates a critically informed approach towards its subject matter. Parmar's writings diverge from the first stream's valorisations of the think tanks, and begin examining the racial dimensions of the expertise they represent, but forego a more sustained critique of their imperial/colonial dimensions.

Narrations delinked from coloniality's shadow

This section opens the survey of the social science literature. It details the rise of scholarship on think tanks and traces its broad themes, namely the challenges of definition, the institutions' genesis and evolution, the changing nature of expertise, and their overall efficacy and influence.

The rise of think tank scholarship

Social science scholars frequently draw attention to the relatively recent emergence of scholarship on think tanks following decades of disinterest. Most concur with Abelson in identifying Dickson's *Think Tanks* (1972) as 'the first major study' on the subject while noting also that the repertory of publication remained sparse for approximately two further decades (Abelson 2006: 49). In her introduction to *Think Tank Traditions: Policy Research and the Politics of Ideas* (2004), Stone recalls her contention in an earlier publication, *Think Tanks Across Nations* (Stone et al. 1998) that 'until the 1990s, policy research institutes had been accorded little scholarly investigation' (2004: 1). She detects a shift in the intervening years when increasing publications were paralleled by widening disciplinary engagement from 'scholars working on comparative politics and public policy... international relations and security studies ...[and] a greater array of anthropologists, economists and sociologists...' (2004:1). Stone relates the amplified academic scrutiny to the 'explosion of think tank numbers worldwide' as well as to the 'increasing activity of other organizations' with the upshot that studies of think tanks could no longer be cast as a social science 'cottage industry' (2004:1). Rather, the accumulating scholarly works fell into two principal types, one related primarily to 'organisational form' and the other to evaluating think tanks as 'a vehicle for broader questions about the policy process and the role of ideas and expertise in decision-making' (2004: 2).

Writing contemporaneously with Stone, Rich (2004) in *Think Tanks, Public Policy and the Politics of Expertise*) also points to the paucity of scholarly literature on the institutions. He notes that ‘Fewer than a dozen books published since the 1970s focus on American think tanks’ and no journal articles on the subject have appeared in major political science or sociology journals (Rich 2004: 6). Rich attributes this deficit to two key factors, ‘the traditional characteristics of think tanks... [and]...the biases of social scientists’ (7). These are explained respectively as the prevailing norm amidst think tanks until the 1960s to remain ‘low-profile actors’ shunning publicity, and thereby also evading scholarly interest (7). This tendency merged with scholars’ own predisposition to discount the ‘role of ideas and expertise in American politics’ excepting their appearance as ‘interests, often tied to economically rational calculations’ rather than as ‘substantively important and independent forces’ (8). Accordingly, the emergence in this period of ‘a diverse literature’ detailing ‘the attributes and influence of visible and aggressive interest-based organizations’ was attributable, Rich notes, to a consensus regarding ‘the rules of the game’ shared by Democrats and Republicans alike (9). As such, the primary lines of dissent were relegated to ‘empirical’ questions of “competing interests’ claims to public privileges and resources” rather than to the domain of ‘ideas and expertise’ (9). For Rich, the fracturing of this consensus by the growing prominence of conservative worldviews in the 1970s was catalytic in directing scholarly attention to think tanks. Just as questions regarding ‘ideas and ideology’ acquired a new salience, the proliferation of new think tanks with explicit ideological alignments, often conservative, adopting a ‘more aggressively promotional’ stance spurred the institutions from relatively obscurity to greater visibility and increased interest from the academy (10).

In a shift of emphasis, Medvetz in *Think Tanks in America* relates the slow accretion of academic literature on the topic to the gradual codification of the category itself such that the scholarship ‘cannot be separated from the discursive creation of the think tank’ (Medvetz 2012: 28). Medvetz regards the 1970s and 1980s as a formative period in which the institutions strove to *define themselves as think tanks*, and garnered increased scholarly interest; concurrently, compilations produced by other actors such as foundations, civil society organizations and NGOs included several think tank directories (28). Although Medvetz like Rich underscores the gradual nature of academia’s uptake of the subject, he attributes this process to ‘the liminal characteristics of the organizations themselves which placed them in between the subject matter of traditional academic disciplines’ (29). Thus, the process of writing about think tanks has been paralleled by scholarly efforts to address ‘the problem of *demarcation*’ and ‘to formulate rigorous operational definitions’ (30).

Medvetz’ ascribes think tanks’ earliest scholarly appearance to elite theory studies, namely Domhoff’s 1967 volume, *Who Rules America* written (30). He observes, however, that the various reprints of Domhoff’s volume including the 1967 edition did not mention the term think tank, and addressed organisations such as the CFR as peripheral topics (30). The term eventually appeared in the 1983 edition to denote an institution that forms one of the ‘four main components’ of the ‘policy-planning network’, the others being ‘policy groups, foundations, and university research institutes’ (Domhoff 1983 cited in Medvetz 2012: 30). In subsequent editions, Medvetz adds, Domhoff intensifies the focus on think tanks averring, for example, that they epitomise the ‘deepest and most critical thinking within the policy-planning network’ (Domhoff cited in Medvetz: 30). Medvetz attributes Domhoff’s sharpening focus to the

mounting scholarly “recognition of think tanks as distinct ‘things’ which ... led in turn to more in-depth studies of their history and functioning” (30).

Genesis and evolution

The emergence and evolution of think tanks are pivotal themes in the literature. The commentaries frequently chronicle distinct ‘waves’ of think tank development commencing with the pioneering institutions of the early 20th century followed by the contract type research institutes of the post WW2 era, and then by the ideologically vocal, advocacy-based centres dating to the 1970s.³⁹ Accounts of the inaugural phase in the corpus are most instructive for this survey as they provide benchmarks for scholarly appraisals of the role of knowledge, appellated as *expertise*, within the crystallising political-economic power structures of the US state. In tracing their genealogy from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the dominant accounts ascribe varying degrees of emphasis to a common set of international and domestic factors. The international aspects centre the US’ rising stature amidst the transformative currents unleashed by WW1. The domestic aspects highlight societal, economic, and intellectual developments in the US that converged in the rise of elite coalitions connecting the spheres of business, law, academia, and government. The emerging groups mobilised to create what Medvetz (2012: 47) terms ‘proto-think tanks’, an array of civic organisations comprising municipal research bureaus, philanthropic foundations, foreign policy collectives and economic research institutes.

³⁹ In general scholars point to 3 or 4 waves, and Medvetz (2012) is an exception in discerning 5.

The Progressive Movement

The elites' activism is widely attributed to the reformism of the Progressive era that envisaged the amelioration of public policy through the application of rigorous social science methods or 'techno-scientific reason' (Medvetz 2012: 55, 47). The Progressivist faith in social science as a 'vehicle of human progress' also influenced the sphere of foreign policy, which became increasingly salient amidst the expansion of the US' international role (Medvetz 2012: 55).⁴⁰ It is arguable that the sanguine views of expertise in the literature detailing the first 'wave' of think tank development reflects the Progressivist credo in its overall optimism; in contrast, mid-century, and notably post-1970s accounts lament the jettisoning of the avowedly non-partisan, non-ideological credentials of the earliest institutions. The literature's interest in Progressivism may be elaborated further in a synoptic overview of contributions by Rich (2004), Abelson (2006, 2014), and Medvetz (2012).

Policy, philanthropy, and power/knowledge

For Rich (2004), the Progressive movement was integral to the rise of think tanks in the 20th century. Consonant with the Progressive ethic, reformers looked to "experts to generate the 'scientific knowledge' that would move policy making beyond rancorous log rolling and partisan patronage", and promote 'efficiency' (2004: 34).⁴¹ Concurring with Critchlow (1985 cited in Rich 2004: 35), Rich connects the valorisation of social science to the depoliticisation of policy-making and the 'professionalisation of government administration' (Rich 2004: 35).

⁴⁰ Medvetz (2012: 60) refers to the bylaws of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace founded in 1910 detailing its mission to pursue peace, and resolve international disputes through 'the scientific study of the cause of war and of practical methods to avoid it'. Smith (1991: 34) notes that experts 'sought a new public role for themselves...as scientists of efficiency, ...[of]... the techniques of institutional management'.

⁴¹ The Russell Sage Foundation and the Bureau of Municipal Research, both established in 1907 exemplify the trend.

The Progressive movement, he notes, cemented ties between experts and the vastly affluent entrepreneurs of the industrial era latter who courted the new institutions seeking ‘the scientific management of government’ to ‘ameliorate the social problems caused by industrialisation’ (Rich 2004: 36). The experts’ ‘credibility and perceived independence’, he continues (40), were crucial for wealthy sponsors who instituted expansive programmes of philanthropy to promote policy reforms. The establishment of the Carnegie Foundation in 1906 and the Rockefeller Foundation in 1913 were illustrative of this tendency.⁴² Rich describes the former, subsequently named the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, as an institution dedicated to ‘research and education in the areas of international affairs and US foreign policy’ in consonance with Progressivist ideals (40).

Abelson (2006, 2014) lauds the rise of US foreign policy think tanks, while sharing Rich’s appraisals of civic reformist movements, philanthropy, and the evolving ‘policy-making community’ (Abelson 2006: 53, 43). He remarks,

‘The first half of the twentieth century proved to be a formative period for think-tank growth in the United States. From 1910 to 1921, four of the most distinguished think-tanks with expertise in foreign policy were created’ (Abelson 2014: 134).

Abelson detects antecedents of think tanks in the civic associations of the 19th century whilst acknowledging the difficulty of ascertaining which of these represents ‘the first think tank’ (2006: 50). However, he also locates these developments on a continuum with ‘the interaction between intellectuals and government’ that began before ‘the founding of the American republic’, and has sparked ‘the development, refinement and dissemination of ideas’ for over

⁴² For example, between 1907-1914, John Rockefeller, Fulton Cutting, Andrew Carnegie, E.H. Harriman and J.P. Morgan made the largest donations to the Municipal Bureau while the Rockefeller Foundation granted £525,000 to the Institute of Government Research, which was a precursor to the Brookings Institution (Rich: 36).

two centuries (Abelson 2006: 50). As he opines, the establishment of several Ivy League universities such as Harvard and Yale from the 17th century makes it highly probable that government officials solicited the expertise of scholars (50). Although such scholars were unlikely to ‘consciously’ identify with a particular ‘association or institute’, they nevertheless ‘performed many functions characteristic of contemporary think tanks’ (50). Since such exchanges can occur in ‘the hallowed halls of prestigious universities and think tanks or in the ... conference rooms on Capitol Hill’, conflating the rise of think tanks ‘with the construction of physical headquarters to house intellectuals would be misleading’ (50).

Abelson’s narration parallels Said’s genealogy of orientalist scholarship with the obvious caveat that his account makes no colonial/imperial inferences. The varnished history serves as a fitting backdrop for the pioneering foreign policy think tanks that were contemporaneous with the CFR, namely the Carnegie Endowment, the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, and the Brookings Institute. Abelson’s fulsome account of their rise merits citation prior to closer scrutiny of his commentary on the CFR.

‘Possessing wealth, vision and an intimate understanding of the world ..., Andrew Carnegie, Robert Brookings and Herbert Hoover shared ... a profound desire to encourage policy experts to use their knowledge to address the many challenges confronting the United States at home and abroad during the first half of the twentieth century. Together with other visionaries, the steel tycoon, the St Louis businessman and the mining engineer who served as ... president of the United States created some of America’s most prestigious policy research institutes, marking the early 1900s as the golden age of think-tanks’ (2014:132-133).

Abelson details the establishment of the CFR in 1918 through the merger of an elite Manhattan dinner club with The Inquiry, a group formed at President Wilson’s behest to represent the US

at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Led by Elihu Root,⁴³ a Nobel Prize winner and ‘the former secretary of war, secretary of state, US senator, and first president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace’ (Abelson 2006: 71), the dinner club assumed the CFR as its name and outlined its mission in the 1919 handbook:

‘The object of the Council on Foreign relations is to afford a continuous conference on foreign affairs, bringing together...international thinkers...expert minds in finance, industry, education, statecraft and science...to bear on international problems. It is a board of Initiation...It plans to cooperate with the Government and all existing agencies and to bring them all into constructive accord’ (cited in Abelson: 71).

Disillusionment with Wilson and the Versailles Treaty prompted The Inquiry to seek a dialogue with British delegates at Paris regarding the establishment of a transatlantic research institute. When the project lapsed due to anti-British sentiment in the US, Inquiry members approached Root leading to the incorporation of the CFR in 1921 (71).⁴⁴ The modified mission statement of the restructured Council reaffirmed the presence of a ‘continuous conference’, adding however that it was

‘...simply...a group of men concerned in spreading a knowledge of international relations, and ... in developing a reasoned American foreign policy’ (cited in Abelson: 72).

Abelson recounts the stellar expansion of the CFR’s membership from ‘a group of men’ to an illuminati comprising ‘corporate and political leaders’, ‘some of America’s most influential citizens’ who gather regularly in ‘its striking headquarters in...a five-storey mansion...’ in Manhattan (73).⁴⁵ He notes that while it is ‘difficult to ignore’ members’ associations with the upper echelons of government or the private sector, ‘it is equally difficult to disregard the

⁴³ As Secretary of War from 1899-1904, Root oversaw US’ colonial expansion into Cuba and the Phillipines.

⁴⁴ The CFR’s consolidation in the US was paralleled by the founding of the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London in 1920.

⁴⁵ Similarly, Abelson refers to RAND’s ‘star-studded line-up of scientists’ at the time of its formation (2014: 134).

institution's contribution to scholarly literature' (73). The latter includes the 'expertise' proffered to government in the War and Peace Studies project (1939-45), in topical studies on terrorism (73), and in the contributions of the CFR journal *Foreign Affairs* with its 'long and distinguished history' (2014:134). Finally, the CFR has steadfastly safeguarded its non-partisan credentials, and remained open to 'educating Republican and Democratic administrations about important policy issues' (2006: 74).

Medvetz-fields of power

Third, Medvetz's account of think tanks' origins rehearses many of the key empirical features outlined by Rich and Abelson, notably the constitutive role played by Progressivism and by civic federations, elite coalitions, philanthropists, and the intelligentsia. However, it diverges at the theoretical/analytical levels due to his recourse to Bourdieu's concept of the field of power, a term that denotes a shared space of action marked by contestation and competition (Medvetz 2012: 52). Medvetz differentiates his methodology from that of earlier accounts, which, he maintains, display certain 'weaknesses', and proposes instead to 'develop a historical baseline for a theory of the emergence of think tanks' (2012: 47-48). A key shortcoming lies in the 'conceptual dilemma' pervading the definition of think tanks that leads scholars to adduce different 'agents, groups and processes' as their forebears (48). It rests upon the belief that the emerging organisations were " 'destined' to become members of the same species" (48). Rather than taking 'their affinities for granted', Medvetz highlights their prolonged 'taxonomic uncertainty' in that until the 1960s, journalistic accounts emphasised the 'uniqueness' of each institution rather than their shared identity (48, 49). For Medvetz the eventual deployment of the think tank category is *itself* 'an outcome to be explained' and 'denaturalised' (49-50). This

task calls for a ‘rigorous social scientific investigation’ that explores ‘the social relations in which they are embedded...[and] the network ties’ through which they distinguished themselves from other institutions, and developed interconnections in an emergent space (49). Medvetz terms the organisations pre-dating the consolidation of this space ‘proto-think tanks’ (47ff).

Medvetz also critiques the dichotomy ‘between idealist and materialist readings’ of think tank origins (2012: 50). He opines that privileging the ‘rationalist project’ of the Progressive era, and depicting the first think tanks pre-eminently as producers of new ideas lead various scholars to rue the shift to the advocacy type institutions after the 1960s (51). He accepts that a shift occurred at this juncture, but disputes its antithetical framing as an ‘idealised rendering’ of history, and a misconceived focus on ideas. Moreover, the characterisation fails to account for the ‘distinctive class composition’ of the think tank founders, the ‘strategic’ calculus they pursued, and most importantly, the ‘distinctive content’ of their policies that captured their political orientations and aspirations (51).

Concurrently, Medvetz contests materialist theories in which think tanks are explained solely as ‘a ruling class project to manage capitalism and direct America’s foreign policy in the context of the country’s growing international power’ (2012: 51). Instead, he disaggregates the notion of elites, and describes the proto think tank founders as

‘a heterogeneous partnership of progressive capitalists ... aspiring civil servants... diplomats and statesmen, [and] a technocratic fraction of the American intelligentsia’

that excluded other elite actors, notably ultra-libertarian capitalists and autonomous intellectuals (51). Concomitantly, Medvetz emphasises “cooperation [and] ‘horizontal’ struggle” characterising ‘*the precarious encounter among economic, political and cultural elites in the American field of power*’ (52-53). By politicising the birth of think tanks and associating these with distinct constellations of power, Medvetz refutes the commonly described shift “from ‘pure thinking’ to ‘tainted advocacy’ ” (51).

Medvetz’ allusions to the ‘fragile compromises’ amongst elites extends to his account of foreign policy think tanks, notably the CFR (2012: 78). He attributes the rise of a foreign policy establishment *outside* the formal apparatus of the state to the US’ ‘growing diplomatic and military engagement’ overseas that exposed the federal government’s unpreparedness for ‘extensive foreign policy planning’ (73, 61).⁴⁶ Medvetz locates CFR founders within ‘a network of elites’ outside government, and notes that the merger between the dining club and the Inquiry was motivated primarily by the League of Nation’s impact on business (62). The merger incorporated a ‘complementarity of resources’ (62) in that the Inquiry brought ‘diplomatic experience, expertise, and high-level contacts but no funds’ while the club contributed ‘men of law and banking’ possessing ‘untold resources of finance’ (Grose 1996 cited in Medvetz 62). Yet, Medvetz adds, contrary to the ‘sense of openness expressed in the mission statement’, CFR’s founding members were ‘intensely private, bordering on secretive’ (63).

Like Abelson, Medvetz also alludes to the CFR’s leading publication, *Foreign Affairs*, adding that its contributors included ‘statesmen, scholars and foreign policy specialists’ who focused

⁴⁶ From 91 staff members in 1900, the State Department expanded to 708 in 1920 and 8609 in 1950 (Medvetz 61).

primarily on the League of Nations, trade issues, and colonialism in Africa (2012: 63). Medvetz' critically nuanced contextualisation of think tanks within the circuits of power and knowledge attending the US' burgeoning international role adds significantly to other key writings on the subject surveyed thus far. Nonetheless while he alludes to the thematic significance of 'colonialism in Africa' in the CFR's renowned journal, he omits a reference to its former title *Journal of Race Development*. Relatedly, he does not delve into the substance of the journal's interventions, nor does he speculate on the ways in which colonialism inflected understandings of foreign policy at this time, or the formative negotiations between the Inquiry and the dining club.

It is thus relevant at this point to recall Vitalis' (2017) depiction of the emerging field of international relations in the US as 'race relations' (2015: 1). As Shilliam notes, Vitalis identifies the imperial management of colonised populations as the core problematic in international relations at the turn of the century, a time when theories of race development naturalised racial hierarchies as modes of governance and panaceas for the diminution of war (Shilliam 2016: 756). Medvetz depicts this period as one in which the US pursued 'the ambivalent goal of expanding business abroad while avoiding military intervention' (2012: 61), but eschews discussion of its colonial/imperial dimensions, for example the Spanish-American war of 1898 or the subject of racialised governmentality more generally.

The challenges of definition

The publications surveyed thus far advance divergent accounts of think tanks' emergence albeit within a broadly shared terrain. This section details another commonality in the literature, namely concerns surrounding the formulation of a precise definition of the term think tank. As

noted frequently, the term has evolved from its 19th century colloquial usage for person's brain to the current meaning, which congealed from the 1970s (Medvetz 2012: 25-28). Within this timespan, it also designated a secure room for military planners (Abelson 2014: 127), a brain trust, a research organization, computers, and a gathering of experts (Medvetz 2012: 27). Medvetz suggests that the term's fluidity also captures its vacillation between 'pejorative' and more neutral connotations that make it a touchstone for 'both pro- and anti-intellectual strains of American cultural discourse' (28). Despite this variation, accounts of definitional controversies parallel those of the think tanks' emergence in largely foreclosing references to imperialism, coloniality and race. This obtains even though the literature's focus on the absence of a consensual definition might signal greater conceptual flexibility, and thus prompt consideration of these subjects. Yet, the main thematic preoccupations of the literature remain confined to questions of autonomy/independence, political neutrality, proximity to power and institutional distinctiveness. As such, the literature functions for the greater part as a form of *internal* critique. The remainder of this section will illustrate this tendency by alluding to writings by Weaver (1989), Stone (2004, 2008) and Medvetz (2008).

Weaver-definitions and typologies

The notion that think tanks constitute 'a murky object' that cannot escape the 'dilemma of definition' (Medvetz 2008: 1; 2014: 25) is deeply ingrained in the literature, and its persistence may be seen in Weaver's (1989) writings that anticipate Stone and Medvetz by over a decade. Writing in a period marked by an 'explosion' in think tank numbers, Weaver, who holds senior positions in academia and at Brookings, observes that there is 'no accepted definition of what a think tank is', or indeed of 'what think tanks do or should do'; furthermore, that the 'boundary

line between these and other organizations’ and between ‘objective policy evaluation and policy advocacy’ is blurred (1989: 563-564). Acknowledging the definitional pitfalls, Weaver adopts a working definition of think tanks as ‘non-profit organizations having substantial organizational independence’ before advancing a functionalist three-fold typology that captures the distinctiveness of the category (563). Weaver’s functionalist approach is consistent with a broad section of the literature including its subsequently refined and extended iterations. Its key elements are summarised here prior to an examination of Stone’s and Medvetz’ dissenting views.

Weaver’s typology discerns three types of think tanks: the ‘universities without students’, the ‘non-profit government research contractors’, and the ‘advocacy tank’ (1989: 563-564). The first tends to employ academics as researchers, secures funding from diverse private sector sources, prioritizes book-length studies, and seeks long-term transformations in elite opinion (564). Weaver extols Brookings as ‘the progenitor’ of this type for its ‘rigorous academic standards of objectivity and non-partisanship in research’ (565). Besides the absence of students, he continues, think tanks differ from academia in that the latter privileges theory over policy-based inquiry, is less likely to network with ‘policy activists and ...researchers’ (566). Such considerations shape the production of knowledge/research that is honed to the needs of different audiences.

The second type, as Weaver remarks, is the contract research organization exemplified by RAND, undertakes commissioned research for a government agency rather than the public although its materials may be publicly disseminated with the agency’s consent (1989: 566). As

with the previous type, contract organizations recruit a significant percentage of staff with doctorates, and are committed to ‘objective analysis’ (567). By outsourcing research to think tanks, government agencies secure ‘an external voice’ that can arbitrate in disputes or provide critical perspectives, although the latter may be compromised occasionally due to the need for compliance with ‘the agency’s line’ (567).

Weaver selects the Heritage Foundation as prototypical of the third category, the ‘advocacy tank’ that embodies the fusion of ‘a strong policy, partisan or ideological bent with aggressive salesmanship and an effort to influence current policy debates’ (1989: 567). Acknowledging this category’s ‘spectacular growth’, Weaver, like other scholars, considers the challenge it poses to ‘the value of impartiality’, hitherto the key marker of think tank proficiency (571). The novel approach, he adds, is also evidenced in a restructured research remit that is less reliant on generating new material than on re-evaluating existing policies, and condensing arguments into brief documents rather than extended reports or books.

Stone-challenging conventional wisdom

Stone reaffirms the definitional challenge, and discerns its intensification as think tanks proliferate globally and diversify, stretching the parameters of the category (2004: 3). A key consequence of this proliferation, Stone opines, is that the dominant Anglo-American conception of think tanks as ‘relatively autonomous policy-oriented organisations’ detached from government, political parties and pressure groups cannot adequately capture the form and function of institutions in states such as Italy, France or China (2004: 2-3). Nevertheless, Stone’s depiction of institutions in the Anglo-American context remains tenuous as she

acknowledges that think tank ‘is a slippery term’ (2004: 2) which ‘defies definition’ (2007: 261). The slippage, she explains, arises from the term’s denotation of an *evolving* form that typological accounts fail to capture adequately, and also from the growth of other ‘policy analytic’ institutions that are marked by degrees of ‘convergence’ with think tanks (2007: 262). The ‘blurring of boundaries and the overlap of objectives and activities’ (2007: 264) is most apparent with universities, pressure groups, private and public philanthropic foundations, and to a lesser extent with financial institutions, consultancy firms and legal offices. Nonetheless, she, like other scholars, asserts that sufficient differences obtain to counter their absorption in pre-existing institutional categories. Differences exist that maintain the boundary albeit tentatively; for example, unlike universities think tanks rarely engage in teaching or the award of degrees and RAND is a significant exception in this respect (2007: 263). Similarly, unlike pressure groups, think tanks refrain from ‘public demonstrations of political lobbying...[they] address multiple policy areas...rather than focus on a single issue...’ (2004: 3).

While Stone shares many of the definitional concerns expressed by Weaver, she moves towards a more critically informed direction invoking questions of power and knowledge. She undertakes a partial reconstruction of the think tank category through the negation of commonly held assumptions about their bridging function, their service to the public interest and the precise ways in which they ‘think’ (2007). The key points of her argument are summarised here. First, Stone challenges the bridging aspect of think tanks which permeates their self-descriptions and is reinforced when endorsed by an agency such as the UNDP. In the UNDP’s coinage, think tanks are ‘organizations engaged... in research and advocacy on any matter

related to public policy. They are the bridge between knowledge and power in modern democracies' (UNDP 2003; cited in Stone 2007: 259). For Stone, this assumption rests on the 'dualism' (260) that 'knowledge and policy', "theory and practice ... the 'ivory tower' and the so-called 'real world'" are ontologically distinct rather than 'a mutually constituted nexus' (275-276). Instead of viewing the think tank as 'a neutral transmission belt or research', she opines, it is more aptly understood as 'a manifestation of the knowledge/power nexus' (276). Stone's elaboration of this point, which appears to corroborate Mignolo's (2009) key arguments regarding enunciation is instructive;

'...many think tanks help provide the conceptual language, the ruling paradigms, the empirical examples, that ... become the accepted assumptions of those making policy. Think tanks do not act alone...but more usually in coalition with like-minded thinkers in journalism, universities and so forth....[They] also construct narratives concerning their own roles between science and the state or society' (Stone 2007: 276).

Second, Stone contests the view that think tanks are organizations that engage closely with the public or act in the public interest. She points instead to their elitism, their insular organizational culture, and notably their capacity to ringfence debate in privileged sanctuaries that only those recognized as possessing expert policy credentials can frequent (2007: 269). To these attributes may be added what she terms 'empire building' or attending to corporate private interests considered necessary for the institution's self-perpetuation such as fundraising, securing grants, attracting media coverage, seeking political patronage, and developing programmes (2007: 270).

Third, Stone unpacks the forms of intellectual activities or 'thinking' that think tanks undertake (2007: 271). Rather than necessarily generating new research, a significant element in their repertoire is 'recycling' or collating and frequently reiterating dispersed and complex

knowledge to render it accessible to policymakers (272). More significantly, Stone refutes the linear approach in which they are cast as producers of ‘uni-directional’ knowledge taking abstract theory and processing it as policy or as simple problem-solving (273). Instead, she borrows from Cohen et al’s ‘garbage can’ model which is premised on the ambiguity and randomness of policymaking, and which can be summed up as involving the construction of problems to justify solutions or as she notes, “sets of solutions waiting for their ‘window of opportunity’” (Cohen et al 1972 cited in Stone 2007: 274). As an incubus of long debated ideas, Stone remarks, the garbage can signifies a reservoir that think tanks draw upon as ‘policy entrepreneurs’ for ‘policy recommendations, problem definitions, and explanations’ (2007: 274). ‘Policy entrepreneurship’, understood thus, ‘is an important social practice’ that aims to ‘soften up’ key interlocutors via ‘personal contacts, networking, media strategies and the creation of powerful policy narratives’ (274).

Medvetz-heterogeneity and contestation

In Weaver’s and Stone’s accounts, and across much of the literature, the challenges of definition preface typology. An alternative method that critiques and reworks such definitional strategies is advanced by Medvetz (2008, 2012) who as previously noted, draws upon Bourdieu to develop a topological model. Stating that his intention is not to dismiss the ‘fuzzy, mutable and contentious’ nature of the concept of think tanks, but to render it ‘more intelligible’, Medvetz adopts a strategy that is ‘flexible’ but still capable of ‘capturing the particular kind of wooliness they exhibit’ (2012: 23). Accordingly, he advocates approaching think tanks not as ‘particular object[s]’ or as “organizations of an entirely novel or discrete ‘type’”, but as ‘a heterogeneous ensemble’,

‘... a constitutively blurry network of organizations, themselves internally divided by the opposing logics of academic, political, economic and media production’ (23, 34).

The notion of an internally conflicted space is key to Medvetz’ characterization of think tanks and is directly interwoven with his critique of the literature’s emphasis on the institutions’ independence. This, he observes, is an ‘arbitrary...and misleading definitional assumption’ that conflates formal and cognitive independence (32); more significantly, it fails to capture the *modus operandi* of the think tank, which can be construed as ‘a complex juggling act’, ‘a dynamic game of separation and attachment’ whereby it invokes association with one institution in order to distinguish itself from another (24). Thus, whereas it is intrinsically *dependent* on a range of institutions, namely bureaucracy, academia, the market and the media for acquiring ‘resources, personnel and legitimacy’ or diverse ‘forms of capital in Bourdieu’s terminology’, it also resists its exclusive assimilation into any one of these (24). For example, it counters the semblance of being a lobby firm by accenting its academic credentials, and in turn repels the label of an ‘ivory tower’ by cultivating enduring ties with policy makers and politicians (24). Sustaining the balance between proximity and distance becomes crucial to the process of identification as a think tank and attaining the kudos of ‘expertise’ (34). However, Medvetz resists interpreting ‘expertise’ as the formulation of ‘rational’ or ‘scientific’ solutions to policy, and moves towards problematising think tanks’ research practices and products (32).

Medvetz’ dissatisfaction with the ‘vain’ quest for definitional clarity based upon think tanks’ putative independence leads to a re-evaluation of the boundary question. Rather than reprising frequently iterated sources of difference, he develops a *relational* model that positions the organizations with respect to others but also to one another; instead of consigning them to a

particular field, he underscores their liminality and hybridity as actors inhabiting the ‘spaces between fields’ (Eyal cited in Medvetz 2012: 25). As ‘members of an interstitial field’, Medvetz states, they constitute ‘a semi-structured network of organizations’ (25) that occupies ‘a privileged central location within the field of power’ represented by the more defined sites of academia, politics, business and the media (36).

Medvetz notes, however, that hybridity is not unique to think tanks as there is no organization that is purely academic, political or economic (36). Even if think tanks appear to devolve from other organizations, it is their *mutual interaction* evidenced in various ‘judgements and practices’ that leads them over time to establish ‘a semi-distinct universe with its own logic, history, and interior structures ...its agents’ (38). It is ‘in this process of historical differentiation that we must find the reality of the think tank’, the consolidation of ‘a stable institutional niche’ that has come to demarcate ‘a hybrid subspace of knowledge production’ (38, 42). Medvetz’ conceptualisation of the integral links between this space and the role of the policy expert is noteworthy. As he remarks, the field of policy expertise is contingent upon the internalisation of the ‘objective constraints and necessities of the field’ and the ‘*preconscious acceptance of the historically specific rules of the space of think tanks*’ since ‘policy research functions most successfully when...the structure of the field operates *through*, rather than against, the will of the policy expert’ (153-154 emphasis added).

Parmar's critical corpus

This section focuses exclusively on Parmar's scholarship, which is distinctive in the social science literature that it centres think tanks, but significantly expands the critical range of the analytic. While Parmar's copious writings on philanthropic foundations and think tanks make him one of the most prolific contributors to the field, especially pertinent to this literature survey are his theoretical and analytical insights regarding the latter's foreign policy interventions. These are prominent in his overarching approach, which also historicises think tanks, but signals a critical shift in connecting discussions of Progressivism, (expert) knowledge and war to questions of imperialism and race. It is less concerned with the challenges of definition and categorisation, and only addresses such topics implicitly in relation to the modalities of US power. The volume entitled *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy: a Comparative Study of the Role and Influence of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Royal Institute of International Affairs 1939-1945* (2004) is representative of these tendencies. It consolidates Parmar's research into the CFR and the Royal Institute (RIIA), the two institutions initially conceived as a single institute of international affairs (2004: 3). Deploying a Gramscian perspective, Parmar details their origins and subsequent trajectory by which they became "the most important, respected, 'influential' and prestigious organisations for the continuous study of foreign affairs in their respective nations" (2004: 50). Recounting the rise of the CFR, Parmar (2004: 26) like Abelson (2006) points to the Inquiry's pivotal role at the Paris peace conference. However, he also alludes to the preponderance of Anglophiles in the group with close ties to British imperial networks such as the Round Table movement, which was founded in 1909 with the express aim of strengthening the bonds of empire (Parmar 2004: 26). As he elaborates, WW1 and the Paris conference cemented ties between men espousing 'similar attitudes and underlying assumptions' rooted in the imperative of Anglo-American unity as the condition of

global order (26-27). More pointedly, Parmar relates Anglo-American collaboration with shifts in the grammar of *race*, and the replacement of overtly ‘racial imagery or language’ with tropes of ‘cultural deprivation’, ‘advanced’ and ‘backward’ regions; and the recasting of ‘imperial responsibility’ and ‘the white man’s burden’ as ‘international trusteeship’ (216).

The two world wars are pivotal to Parmar’s analytic. Enshrining the replacement of Pax Britannica with Pax Americana, they were formative, Parmar argues, in the process whereby the think tanks engineered enduring shifts in the foreign policies of the two states. In forming ‘part of an elite network that connects corporate wealth, universities, philanthropic foundations, and official policymakers...’ (2004: 3), the CFR like RIIA sought to mobilise elite and popular opinion

“...for a major reorientation of foreign policy ... [by] forging ... a new political and ideological consensus that had the capacity to attack, undermine and marginalise, if not to eliminate, the forces of the ‘old order’ (of isolationism and empire)” (2004: 19).

In this context, Parmar delineates the CFR’s deepening wartime collaboration with the State Department in the War and Peace Studies Project that aimed to adumbrate a new template for US foreign policy in the post-war global order (1995: 83; 2001: 33). Amongst other initiatives, the Project called for the formation of ‘The Grand Area’ designating US ‘access or control’ of economically strategic zones that would be buttressed by an institutional architecture (1995: 83). For Parmar, this initiative typifies the *realpolitik* that colours the CFR’s internationalism (1995: 83).

Parmar’s delineation of the relationality between war and think tanks’ rearticulation of a foreign policy consensus is also evinced in his more recent writing on the Iraq war (2009). This work

contextualises the role of think tanks amidst the cross-partisan alignment that emerged prior to the war within the US political establishment linking neo-conservatives, conservatives and liberal interventionists, and enabled its pursuit. Parmar terms the confluence of *rival* ideological and political standpoints ‘the new foreign policy consensus’, and illustrates his argument by reference to the Princeton Project on National Security (PPNS) (2009: 178). A key observation in Parmar’s account is that the PPNS, liberal interventionist-led initiative, featured the close collaboration of the Heritage Foundation *and* the CFR (178). The observation may be juxtaposed to Parmar’s (2018) critiques of the liberal international order, and of liberal international theory. As he avers, the former represents

‘a class-based elitist hegemony—strongly imbued with explicit and implicit racial and colonial/imperial assumptions—in both US domestic and foreign relations’ (2018: 152)

The theory, in turn, provides its ‘ideological legitimisation even when its proponents offer reform’ (2018:155). Relatedly, Parmar defines liberal internationalism as ‘an amalgam’ (155), ‘an ambiguous, multifaceted approach to understanding, explaining, justifying and practising international politics’ encompassing ‘a theory of US foreign policy’, ‘a normative world-view’, and ‘a set of policies, institutions and established practices’ (154). He traces its ‘symbiotic[]’ links with Wilsonianism, which was predicated upon the perceived necessity of US engagement in the international sphere (155). However, he also notes that ‘Wilsonian liberal internationalism’ emerged at a time when ‘international relations’ signified ‘race relations’, and, following WW1, a mode of knowledge implicated in the management of ‘overtly racialised imperial power’ (155). In an earlier article (2016), Parmar scrutinises the Korean War to critique the post WW2 international order inaugurated by Truman and Attlee, and feted by liberal internationalists as a golden age of peace and prosperity. He exposes its ‘racialised and

imperial’ underpinnings, and their sublimation in contemporary policy statements that legitimated the use of extreme violence in the war (2016: 353, 364, 362). The policy stance, he opines, is paralleled by scholarly iterations of liberal internationalism that are silent on questions of race and empire, and occlude understanding of the ways in which violence in the periphery *enables* the order’s reproduction and ‘recalibration’ (2016: 364).

Lastly, Parmar suggests that liberal internationalist precepts, namely ‘the rule of law, superiority of the western idea (however lightly worn), a rules-based institutional order open to all’, are ingrained in ‘core’ institutions of the ‘white Anglo Saxon Protestant establishment’ in the US, including ‘elite think-tanks’ (2018:156). This statement may be related to his elaboration of the epistemic and institutional underpinnings of US global power:

‘Knowledge production is deeply implicated in the organised power structures of American society. The processes of developing America’s national security state and global superpower have transformed and been influenced by the university, philanthropic foundation and think tank (Parmar 2013: 234).

The outcome is a ‘technology of power’ that intermeshes ‘knowledge networks’ espousing liberal internationalism with ‘the east coast liberal foreign policy establishment[.]’(2013: 234, 235). Furthermore, such processes are emblematic of the transhistorical ‘deep structure’ of ‘race, religion and empire’ that shapes ‘American identities’ (2011: 157).

Deepening critique: Critical Geopolitics

Whereas think tanks form the core subject matter in the social science literature surveyed in the previous sections, they form a sub-theme in the publications explored in this section that fall within the rubric of IR scholarship. Foregrounding the epistemological and normative aspects of foreign policy construction in the US, they deliberate think tanks’ contributions to the

formation of foreign policy, and connect knowledge production to issues of race and empire. Demonstrating an alignment with decolonial perspectives, the writings greatly extend the space of critique. This may be evidenced, first, in the literature from Critical Geopolitics, a disciplinary field that connects IR to Political Geography, and that, as Hyndman explains, interrogates ‘geography’s imperial past... its complicities with colonial knowledge production and its complementary cartographic technologies’ (Hyndman 2015: 666). Interrelating geographical space, empire, knowledge with cartography, Hyndman demonstrates how the remit of Critical Geopolitics departs from its antecedents in classical geopolitical thought. She concurs with O’Tuathail that Critical Geopolitics constitutes ‘one of many cultures of resistance to Geography as imperial truth, ...a small part of a much larger rainbow struggle to decolonise our inherited geographical imagination’ (O’Tuathail 1996 cited in Hyndman 2015: 256). Critical Geopolitics, then, is redolent of core themes in Mignolo and Said that are neglected in mainstream social science accounts. Its enlargement of the scope of critique is evinced in several ways, notably in its attention to knowledge production in different forms, including think tank expertise, which is distinguished as paradigmatic of the geopolitical reasoning it seeks to subvert. The following discussion outlines the dominant premises of the critique, prior to detailing its references to think tanks.

Denaturalising knowledge production

First, digressing from the regnant definition of conventional geopolitics as the study of the effects of geography and the natural environment on foreign policy (O’ Tuathail 1999: 109) Critical Geopolitics emphasises its discursive aspects whereby “intellectuals of statecraft ‘spatialise’ international politics in such a way as to represent it as a world...[rendered

intelligible] by core powers and hegemonic states” (O’Tuathail and Agnew 2003: 80). As they continue,

‘To designate a place is not simply to define a location or setting. It is to open up a field of possible taxonomies and trigger a series of narratives, subjects and appropriate foreign-policy responses’ (2003:81).

For O’Tuathail and Agnew, the term ‘intellectuals of statecraft’ is central to critical geopolitical writing, and incorporates those who observe, shape, and implement state policy, notably bureaucrats, political leaders, and foreign policy strategists (2003: 81). Specifically, Critical Geopolitics critiques their endeavours insofar as these reinforce the naturalisation and appropriation of a given world defined by fixed conceptions of geography, which uphold extant power structures. Subsumed within the latter are essentialised understandings of identity, and depoliticised representations of ‘imperialism, territorial expansionism, and militarism’ that appear as ‘instance[s] of a perpetual struggle for survival ... among competing states’ (O’Tuathail 1996: 54).⁴⁷ Concomitantly, geographical fixity enables the fiction of ‘the geopolitical gaze that puts the geopolitician in a God-like position above the geopolitical map’ (Klinke 2009). For O’Tuathail, such a posture is ‘profoundly geo-political’ since it projects ‘a certain metropolitan spatial and political order over those marginalised groups...who would contest that order” (1996: 55). In this, he continues, it embodies ‘a form of epistemological imperialism’ that harnesses ‘Eurocentric standards to survey, measure, and describe the world’s geography and political structure’ (1996: 55).

In contrast, Critical Geopolitics denaturalises processes of knowledge production, practices of statecraft, and cultures of expertise (O’Tuathail 1999: 108; O’Tuathail and Dalby 1998: 4). It

⁴⁷ Belief in the inescapability of competition reflects the affinity between classical geopolitics and political realism.

situates think tanks amidst other ‘institutional structures and social networks of power, privilege and access’ that are interconnected and sequentially traversed by policymakers, intellectuals, and statespersons (Agnew and O’Tuathail 2003: 9).⁴⁸ Furthermore, O’Tuathail decries the ‘unreflexively Eurocentric and narrowly rational culture’ within which experts “in powerful Western institutions (from universities to military bureaucracies to strategic ‘think tanks’)” operate (1999:108).⁴⁹

The critique of institutional expertise in the critical geopolitical lexicon displays parallels with decolonial, postcolonial and Gramscian perspectives, notably Mignolo’s references to the geopolitics of knowledge, Said’s delineation of the orientalist expert, and Parmar’s exposition of elite knowledge networks. The critique’s distinctive contribution lies in its translation of expertise into ‘*spatialising practices of power*’ that elicit particularistic understandings of ‘identity, nationhood and danger’ (O’Tuathail and Dalby 1994: 513). Pivotal in this context are the discursive enactments or ‘performances’ that imbue particular geographical entities and territorialities including the nation-state with meaning (Bialasiewicz et al 2007: 406; O’Tuathail and Dalby 1994: 4). The latter may be evidenced, for instance, in the production of ‘the material borders at the edge of the state and the conceptual borders designating this as a boundary

⁴⁸ Agnew and O’Tuathail (2003: 9) mention George Kennan’s moves from the foreign service to the post-war Policy Planning agency to academia to professional writing to membership of the CFR.

⁴⁹ Although Critical Geopolitics reprises conventional geopolitics’ concern with elite actors, its insistence on plurality extends to representations in the field of popular geopolitics such encompassing the mass media, film, and fiction-writing (Dalby and O’Tuathail 1998: 4).

between a secure inside and an anarchic outside' (O'Tuathail and Dalby: 1994: 4).^{50 51} To this end, Critical Geopolitics redescribes geography as 'geo-graphy' that signifies "literally 'writing the earth'" (O'Tuathail 1999: 109; Dalby 2007: 587).⁵²

Geopolitical reasoning

The critique expands through the concept of geopolitical reasoning meaning specific instantiations of expertise that are sub-divided into 'formal', 'practical', and 'popular' variants (O'Tuathail and Dalby 1998: 4; O'Tuathail 1999: 109ff; Dalby 2007: 588). Formal geopolitics, also known as the geopolitical tradition, encompasses the grand narratives of scholars and statesmen, notably Mackinder, Mahan, Ratzel, Haushofer, and more contemporaneously Kissinger and Brzezinski. It encodes the grammar of the tradition, outlining the foundations of statecraft in 'highly formalised rules of statement, description and debate' (O' Tuathail and Agnew 1992: 81), and as such, recalls Mignolo's allusions to 'enunciation proper' (2009). Critical geopolitical scholars' 'revisionist historiography' highlights the tradition's historical specificity (O' Tuathail and Agnew 1992: 81), and reveals its racialised and imperialist logics along with their accompanying anxieties. Furthermore, it contests the tradition's apolitical stance, and reveals its complicities with power (O' Tuathail and Agnew 1992: 79; Hobson 2012: 106ff).⁵³ Hobson, for example, notes Mackinder's and Mahan's millenarian misgivings,

⁵⁰ Bialasiewicz et al (2007) deploy performativity as an analytical prism to critique the 'imaginative geographies' that enable the GWOt's 'integration strategies'. Especially notable is their depiction of Haass' view of integration as 'a successor idea to containment' (Haass 2002 cited in Bialasiewicz et al 2007: 414).

⁵¹ In developing this argument, Dalby and O'Tuathail recall Walker's writings on the construction of 'domestic' and 'foreign' spaces denoting an 'inside' and 'outside' and to Ashley's description of foreign policy as a "specific sort of *boundary-producing political performance*" (Walker 1993, Ashley 1987 cited in Dalby and Tuathail 1994: 4).

⁵² Dalby (2007) develops an extensive critique of the Bush administration's 'graphings of the geo' that evince the alignment of neo-conservative and neo-liberal perspectives in the GWOt through the binary construction of 'civilized core' versus 'dangerous periphery'.

⁵³ In this context, Hobson makes the broader point that mainstream IR historiography 'whitewashes geopolitical theory of its racist base' (2012: 123).

“Crucial to the geopolitical discourse is the perception of global interdependence, or what Mahan and Mackinder called ‘the closing of the world’. This was ... constructed as dangerous because it brought the Eastern Barbaric races right onto the doorstep of the West” (2012: 124).

While Mahan fears ‘proximity’ as the source of ‘political friction’; (Mahan 1897 cited in Hobson 2012:124-126), Mackinder laments that the maximal expansion of European empires means that ‘there is scarcely a region left for the pegging out of a claim of ownership’ (Mackinder 1904 cited in Hobson: 126). The abstractions of formal geopolitical reasoning reappear in contemporary foreign policy articulations that reprise ahistorical tropes such as ‘heartland’, ‘rimland’, ‘shatterbelt’ as well as binaristic constructs of East and West (O’Tuathail 1999: 113).

In contrast to ‘formalised theories and grand strategic visions’ (O’Tuathail 1999: 115), practical geopolitical reasoning denotes the ‘common-sense’ endeavours of foreign policy experts, state functionaries, politicians, and military strategists who draw upon sedimented constructions of geography and identity to shape the praxis of international relations (Agnew and O’Tuathail 1992: 81). The ‘metageographies’ that function as ‘ontological categories of political thought’ are mobilised as policy statements determining how various regions are “‘domesticated’, controlled, invaded or bombed” and thereby incorporated into a malleable world order (Dalby 2007: 587; Agnew and O’Tuathail 1992: 82). Agnew and O’Tuathail elicit the motif of the frontier in US history as an example of practical geopolitical reasoning, and enumerate its varying connotations (1992: 85). Thus, it has signified the boundary between civilised and uncivilised, self and other, superior and inferior races, maturity and childhood, freedom and totalitarianism (85). An example of the use of ‘metageographies’ obtains in Kennan’s Cold War reference to the Soviet Union’s ‘particular brand of fanaticism’ as a hallmark of ‘the Russian

Asiatic world’ and its ‘centuries of obscure battles between nomadic forces over a vast ... plain’ (Kennan 1947 cited in Agnew 2003: 110). Another, as Agnew and O’Tuathail explicate, appears in the Truman Doctrine’s vision of ‘containment’, and its projection of the ‘local’ conflict in Greece on to the global arena (1992: 49, 85).

Bialasiewicz et al (2007) extend the discussion by detailing the *performative* dimensions of formal and practical geopolitical reasoning. Drawing on Butler’s contention that performativity denotes ‘the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names’ (Butler 1993 cited in Bialasiewicz et al 2007: 407), they trace its effects in the production of ‘imaginative geographies guiding current US strategy’ (Bialasiewicz et al 2007: 409). Specifically, they deploy performativity to capture ‘the politics of agency’ associated with the activities of ‘non-state scribes’ based in ‘governmental and private research centres, think tanks and study groups’ who inhabit ‘a liminal zone between academic and non-academic work’, (2007: 407, 409, 410). As the authors elaborate, these individuals expended considerable labour during the Clinton administration to construct an imaginary of post-Cold War ‘threats’, emanating principally from terrorism, failing states, and civilisational strife ((2007: 409). Involving the citational practices of ‘reiteration recitation, and resignification’, the scribes’ interventions were instrumental in ‘laying the ground for some of the securitizing strategies of the current Bush administration’ (2007: 409). The authors point to figures associated with PNAC as exemplars of this tendency (2007: 410).

Reasoning geopolitically in the post-Cold war period

In the post-2001 period, several studies have delineated how new articulations of US practical geopolitical reasoning have remapped and re-encoded global space in consonance with the exigencies of regime change and pre-emptive war. In this respect contributions by Roberts et al (2003), Sparke (2005, 2007), Dalby (2007) and Bialasiewicz et al (2007) point to the supplanting of Cold War binaries with a new focus on *integration*, described as the expression of ‘neoliberal geopolitics’ or neo-liberalism’s ‘interarticulation with... the violence of American military force’ (Roberts et al 2003: 887). Barnett’s *The Pentagon’s New Map – War and Peace in the 21st Century*’ (2004) typifies this proclivity offering, in Roberts et al’s estimation, a ‘stunningly simplified strategic vision’ of global order (2003: 889) pitting a ‘Functioning Core’ of globally networked states against a ‘Non-integrating Gap’ (Barnett 2004).⁵⁴ Inverting Mahan’s fears of ‘proximity’ (1897), danger in this schema is envisaged as *distance and detachment* from globalisation’s disciplinary circuits. In his magazine article Barnett avers,

‘Disconnectedness defines danger. Saddam Hussein’s outlaw regime is dangerously disconnected from the globalising world, from its rule sets, its norms... *A country’s potential to warrant a US military response is inversely related to its globalization connectivity*’ (Barnett, 2003).⁵⁵

Furthermore, Barnett envisages war on Iraq as the preamble to ‘the US military’s next round of away games’ (2003). In exemplifying the ‘complex combination of geopolitical assertion and geoeconomic assumption’ (Sparke 2005: 271), Barnett’s arguments however, are not aberrant.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Thomas Barnett served as Professor at the US Naval War College prior to joining the Department of Defense’s Office for Force Transformation in October 2001.

⁵⁵ <http://www.esquire.com/news-politics/a1546/thomas-barnett-iraq-war-primer/>

⁵⁶ The prolific writings of New York Times journalist Thomas Friedman capture the diffusion of cognate ideas in the wider public sphere. For example, in ‘In A Manifesto for the Fast World’, Friedman observes, ‘It is not easy for this

They distil and expand the geopolitical imaginaries circulated by broad coalitions of state and non-state actors () during the 1990s regarding the recalibration of US power.⁵⁷

Sparke (2005), Bialasiewicz et al (2007), and Dalby (2007) explore the iteration of such themes in various National Security and Strategy documents *after* 2001.⁵⁸ As regards precedents in think tank contributions, attention has centred upon PNAC's (1997, 2000) bold assertion of US global leadership via the bolstering of defense and military capabilities. While PNAC's intervention was significant, kindred views had been disseminated earlier in Zalmay Khalilzad's 1995 monograph for RAND entitled, *From Containment to Global Leadership? America and the World after the Cold War*. Khalilzad urges the US is to 'maintain ... global leadership ...preclude the rise of another global rival and multipolarity' by propounding 'a new vision and grand strategy' to replace containment after the 'collapse of ... the Soviet empire and ... state' (1995: viii, 1, 4). Additionally, he advocates safeguarding 'the zone of peace', retaining control over 'critical regions' (the Persian Gulf and East Asia) by force if necessary, preserving military pre-eminence, and ensuring economic strength within 'an open international order' (viii-ix).⁵⁹ Zalmay's propositions were subsequently echoed in PNAC's extended report

generation of Americans to grasp how important the United States is to the world in the era of globalisation ... What globalisation does is simply put a different frame around geopolitics, a frame that raises the costs of war but cannot eliminate it... That is why sustainable globalisation still requires a stable, geopolitical power structure, which ... cannot be maintained without the active involvement of the United States' (<http://www.nytimes.com/1999/03/28/magazine/a-manifesto-for-the-fast-world.html>).

In 'Globalisation Alive and Well' he states, 'If one thing stands out from 9/11, it's the fact that the terrorists originated from the least globalised, least open, least integrated corners of the world: namely, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan' (<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/22/opinion/globalization-alive-and-well.html>)

⁵⁷ Hazbun remarks that geopolitical imaginaries '... shape discourses and mobilise ideological power, rhetorical force, or political affect to promote certain notions of threat, geopolitical goals, and forms of authority over territory. In doing so they often shape the policies and behaviors of states' (Hazbun 2011: 207-230).

⁵⁸ For example, Dalby notes the salience of 'economic integration in pacifying dangerous states' in the *National Security Strategy* of 2006, and cautions against a reductive equivalence of the Bush doctrine with oil interests (2007: 589).

⁵⁹ Khalilzad was also a signatory to PNAC's 1997 'Statement of Principles'.

entitled *Rebuilding America's Defenses* (2000). Published shortly before the presidential election of 2000, the report linked Pax Americana to the extension of *liberal* space:

“Today, the United States...is in the midst of the longest economic expansion in its history and its political and economic principles are almost universally embraced... the next president... will choose whether today's ‘unipolar moment’...[denoting] America's geopolitical pre-eminence, will be extended ...This goal is the most promising for future US grand strategy. A world in which the United States exercises leadership would be more peaceful and more open to values of liberal democracy, free markets and the rule of law’ (Donnelly et al 2000: iv).”

As Sparke remarks, militarist discourses were nonetheless predicated upon the ‘smoothing force of geoeconomics’, and were decisive in co-opting (neo)liberals to the neoconservatives’ agenda (2005: 270). Cumulatively, as Bialasiewicz et al observe, the statements advocating an integrated global order constituted an ‘assemblage of practices’ that furnished the ‘imaginative geography’ of the GWoT (2007: 419). Additionally, they point to the resilience of such imaginaries amidst recurrent failure and the production of contrary effects, for instance fragmentation and disorder in Iraq (419).

Hegemony

A last point of note pertains to critical geopolitical scholars’ reference to hegemony. Animated through performative understandings of ‘determining social structures and personal agency’ (Nash 2000 cited in Bialasiewicz et al 2007: 405), the concept explicates how those located in ‘key institutional structures’ (O’Tuathail & Dalby 1998: 9), the ‘deans of world affairs, the administrators, regulators, and geographers of international affairs’, expound ‘hegemonic geopolitical discourses [as] epistemological enforcers’ (O’Tuathail 1998: 20). However, hegemony as a descriptor of US practical geopolitical in the context of the GWoT is at best fitful. If such actors were successful in hegemonising specific perspectives on the GWoT across

the political spectrum in the US (Ryan 2011),⁶⁰ this was not the case for Muslim publics who, with few exceptions, denounced the enterprise. Indeed, as discussed in a later chapter, RAND, and the CFR spearheaded efforts to co-opt Muslim public opinion in support of the GWoT. A consideration of resilient geopolitical imaginaries amidst failure, then needs to address the anomalous outcomes of such attempts to institute hegemony.

Notwithstanding such anomalies, critical geopolitical scholarship unmasks the imperial/colonial and racialised underpinnings of conventional geopolitics, and enables a granular engagement with the modes of reasoning that geopolitical actors including think tanks deploy to extend the *colonial difference* to particular topographies. In denaturalising space and its discursive or cartographic representations, Critical Geopolitics elucidates their transmutations as objects of the colonial gaze made *newly* relevant. A later chapter alludes to the colonial optics refurbished for contemporary performances of security involving practices of surveillance, assault and assassination.⁶¹

Critical Geopolitics and exceptionalism

The survey of the literature on Critical Geopolitics concludes by alluding to Hazbun's and Debrix's contributions, which interweave the theme of exceptionalism into expositions of knowledge production in the context of GWoT. In echoes of Said's critique of Orientalism, Hazbun relates representations of the invasion of Iraq to the 'geopolitical imaginary' that prevailed after WW2 producing

⁶⁰ The role of deeply embedded myths, tropes and symbols about the American state was a vital component of this process and will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

⁶¹ Gregory's work eloquently details these dynamics, for example in his account of drone warfare.

‘... discourses [that] tend to privilege certain forms of global order while ignoring the hierarchical power relations and means of violence deployed to sustain them. At the same time, they reject the legitimacy of the subjectivity, history, and memory of political actors external to this order’ (Hazbun 2013: 218).

His key argument is that widely disseminated notions of ‘Middle East exceptionalism’ were crucial to building consensus for the war (2011: 210). To elaborate, he avers that whereas the theme of exceptionalism had been well documented in academic writings, it found ‘its most prolific representations in American popular media and commentary’ (2011: 213). Pointing to the tenuousness of the geographical marker ‘Middle East’ (210-211), Hazbun explores its association with exceptionalism in Friedman’s and Barnett’s writings that, he suggests, are paradigmatic of the popular genre. He recounts how the writings’ thematic insistence on the region’s uniqueness was subsequently related to its putative ‘resistance to globalisation’ (214). The correlation was amplified after the September 2001 attacks when the region’s apparently ‘dysfunctional states, societies and economies’ were directly associated with ‘abnormal threats’ (216). The analysis proceeded, however, ‘with little awareness or appreciation of the geopolitical factors that may count for such conditions’, especially the role of US ‘policies and interests’ (216). From this juncture, the insistence on ‘the logic of Middle East exceptionalism’ in Friedman’s reportage preceding the attacks was formative in shaping ‘public debate and policy-making’ in their aftermath (216). The debate, which centred upon the attacks’ causation and the possible mechanisms of response enlisted ‘media commentators, think-tank scholars, and policy makers’ (216). Eventually, Hazbun continues, it forged a consensual view of the region’s deficiencies, specifically its detachment from globalisation, its denial of political freedoms, its dearth of economic openings, and its incapacity to reform without external agency (216). In this way, it ‘naturalised’ US power as the means of ‘unblocking [the region’s] internal obstacles’ (210). Framed within two streams of exceptionalism, the argument held that the only

remedy for 'the region's exceptional status' lay in the 'exceptional capacities and universal values of the US' (229).

Hazbun delineates the incorporation of Iraq into this discourse as 'the archetype of the most dangerous form of exceptionalism' (210), the source of 'deterritorialised dangers such as international terrorism' (225). The chain of association linking exceptionalism, globalisation and threat in the context of Iraq is exemplified, Hazbun suggests, in Barnett's 2003 article 'The Pentagon's New Map'. For example, Barnett states, 'disconnectedness defines danger', 'Saddam was the Demon of Disconnectedness', and 'the Middle East exports oil and terrorism and virtually nothing else of significance to the global economy' (Barnett 2003 cited in Hazbun 2011: 221, 223). For Hazbun, Barnett's interventions represented the 'redrawing of geopolitical strategies that folded the ideals of neoliberal capitalism into geopolitics and military affairs' (221). They persuaded 'liberal hawks' to support the case for war, and were eventually reflected in the Bush administration's official rhetoric (224). Thus, the Bush Doctrine's call for 'sweeping political change in the Arab world' (Bush 2002 cited in Hazbun 2011: 225) was repeated in Bush's so-termed 'forward strategy of freedom' to usher economic and political transformation in Iraq and the wider region (Bush 2003 cited in Hazbun: 224). However, Hazbun also highlights the malleability of the discourse of exceptionalism, for example its utility in rationalising failure. This was evinced in the relegation of the multiple crises afflicting Iraq by 2006 to 'the nature of Iraqi society' and its resistance to liberal American values (228). Additionally, it reappeared into the Bush administration's construction of a new geopolitical fixture, the 'Greater Middle East', encompassing Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran and Israel, an area also defined as 'a unique challenge and opportunity (226). Cumulatively, Hazbun

notes, it established a binarism that effaced the colonial legacy in the region, ‘erase[d] the geopolitical context and ... depoliticise[d] the notion of reform’ (227).

Hazbun’s discussion of exceptionalism in the context of the Middle East may be juxtaposed to Debrix’s (2005) critical geopolitical analytic of expertise. Debrix reprises Kristeva’s (1982) concept of abjection to capture ‘a condition/position that does not allow one to fall on either side of the subjectivity/objectivity, us/them, hero/villain, nation/enemy, or good/evil divide’ (2005: 1158). He applies this formulation to the ‘new discourses of war, the geopolitics of security, policies of violence and theories of national identity’ that framed the GWoT as a war against ‘the unthinkable and the intolerable’, one that is ‘not a traditional object of geopolitics’, but is waged ‘in the border regions of the concept of war’ (1158), in other words an *exceptional* war. Amongst the exponents of this position are those ‘intellectuals of statecraft’

‘...who serve as relays between public leadership in the media, government, and the military and the public in general. These ... scholars of the abject, have grown in numbers in the USA ... (1159).

They purport to explain to Americans ‘*who* they are and *where* they are’ thereby turning being ‘into an eminently situational and geopolitical concern’ (1160). Located in ‘foreign policy and geopolitical circles’, such ‘intellectuals’ have constricted the US’ quest ‘for meaning’ after the September attacks, and ‘reduced US politics and policy making ... to a form of war and war making by other means’ (1170).

‘Promoting policies, ideologies and wartime strategies designed to hate, expel and eradicate ... these masters of statecraft, terror and abjection offer an image of the USA that may no longer be distinguishable from the image of those who attacked it in the first place (1170)’.

Debrix thus offers an interesting counterpoint to Hazbun’s discussion of antithetical but entangled exceptionalisms (the US and the Middle East). He contends that the violence and

virulence of the expert discourses that aim to chalk ontological boundaries in the context of a war deemed a geopolitical *aberration* lead to the collapse of distinctions. His bleak assessment of the formative role of various ‘intellectuals’ in producing virulent knowledges in tandem with his allusions to the primacy of war in US foreign policy expands the range of critical geopolitical scholarship. Nonetheless, although he constructs ontology as a ‘geopolitical’ issue, the recourse to collapsing distinctions serves to *depoliticise* the experts’ endeavours along with the actions of the US’ foes by tacitly inserting these in a moral framework. Relatedly, the reference to the ‘image of the US’ (1170) implies a disjuncture with a more benevolent reality.

Deepening critique: Critical Terrorism Studies

The previous section surveyed salient works from Critical Geopolitics that do not centre think tanks, but extend the critique of knowledge production significantly beyond the parameters of mainstream IR, and also generate valuable insights on the GWoT. This section concludes the literature review by turning to scholarship in the field of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) as well as to cognate publications, which emerge from other starting points and cannot be subsumed within its bounds. Collectively, the writings surveyed refer to think tanks in a tangential light, but are germane to the thesis’ inquiry due to their scrutiny of the discursive aspects of the GWoT. Emerging in 2007, CTS has generated a rich and diverse literature which challenges the core assumptions of the discourse of terrorism as articulated by state officials, politicians, technocrats, think tank experts and media figures. Writing in the inaugural issue of the journal *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, the field’s founders Jackson et al ascribe its genesis to their disaffection with the methodologies, scope and substance of mainstream terrorism studies. Noting how the subject of ‘terrorism’ has spawned ‘a growth industry’, they discern a need to contest the ‘(perceived) ontological, epistemological, and ideological commitments’ of

the knowledges it has occasioned (Jackson et al 2008: 2). As a corrective, they propose a new research agenda that

‘challenge[s] dominant knowledge and understandings of terrorism, is sensitive to the politics of labelling in the terrorism field, is transparent about its own values and political standpoints, adheres to a set of responsible research ethics, and is committed to a broadly defined notion of emancipation’ (2008: 2).

Stated thus, the field’s founding rationale appears unambiguous. Jarvis, however, one of its key proponents, detects a degree of ambivalence in the field’s name: it could denote ‘a single coherent framework’ based upon a set of ‘meta-theoretical and normative assumptions and values’ or ‘a more diverse research orientation’ seeking to interrogate ‘the politics of (counter)terrorism’ (Jarvis 2016: 33). This study acknowledges the ambivalence in the caption CTS, but for practical purposes, uses the name to denote the research area inaugurated by Jackson et al, and refers to other critically oriented works as its affiliates. With this caveat, the ensuing discussion outlines key strands of Jackson’s and Stampnitzky’s interventions as examples respectively of the former and the latter.

Jackson-discourse analysis

Jackson’s writings, first, overlap with critical geopolitical scholarship in their critique of hegemonic discourses although their specific focus is on hegemonic representations of terrorism in the GWoT. In his 2005 volume, *Writing the War on Terrorism, Language, Politics and Counter-terrorism*, Jackson scrutinises representations of the ‘war on terror’ using a discourse analytic approach that highlights their institutionalization in US foreign and domestic policies. As he and Dexter explain,

‘Discourses are broader than language, being constituted not just in texts, but also in definite institutional and organisational practices; For example, a political discourse involves not just speeches by politicians, or their pamphlets and

writings, but also ... symbols ... myths ... histories ... laws ... organisational structures ... decision making procedures ... In other words, discourses can be considered as amalgam of material practices and forms of knowledge' (Jackson and Dexter 2014:10).

Jackson attributes 'the successful inculcation' of this discourse to several factors, namely its 'shrewdness and ingenuity', its 'sheer volume' (2005:163-164), and its correlation of the GWOt with 'central narratives of American identity [that are] functional to American hegemony' (Jackson 2011: 407). As he and Dexter maintain, 'War is not something that happens *to* a community but is 'ontologically embedded' in the community's discourses (Jackson and Dexter 2014: 2). The discourse of the GWOt, then, operates as 'a grid of intelligibility' that reproduces narratives of the exceptional nation, 'accords with the logic, structures and processes of US capitalism and politics, and...reinscribes existing power structures' (Jackson 2011: 400). Significantly, Jackson locates think tanks, notably the Heritage Foundation, RAND, the CFR and PNAC, amongst the networked institutions that have been most influential in propelling the discourse's entrenchment in the public sphere (2005: 174).

Equally pertinently, Jackson relates the GWOt and its related practices, 'counter-insurgency, targeted killings, preventive detention, torture, military commissions, and a demonising discourse of the enemy' to key episodes in US history, namely colonial campaigns against Native Americans, invasion of the Philippines, and Cold War interventions, for example in Vietnam (2011: 399). Relatedly, he observes that the terrorism discourse expounded by the Reagan administration during the 1980s had already primed actors within the security establishment and amongst the public to be receptive to such narratives (399).

Notwithstanding such insights, decolonial motivations are not the principal drivers of CTS' critical impetus. The dispersed references to resurgent colonial practices and tropes do not fuse into a shared critical perspective that might, for example, seek to uncover the imperial/colonial biases of *mainstream* terrorism studies. Indeed, reminiscing on a decade of scholarship, the founders of this field express a comparable view. Assessing its emergence amidst

‘a very violent global war on terror, frequent moral panics and the political manipulation of terrorism fears, increasingly draconian anti-terrorism legislation, and the mass proliferation of academic and cultural terrorism-related texts’

they recognise that despite its successes, it still falters in transmitting ‘the perspectives and concerns of the global south’ or including writings that invoke post-colonialism ‘as a framework of analysis’ (Jackson et al 2017:197, 199). Accordingly, they observe that further measures are required to ‘decolonise CTS’ (199).

CTS and the think tanks' oeuvre

The relevance of CTS and its affiliated scholarship for this thesis inheres primarily in the field's exposition of (‘orthodox’) terrorism studies as a distinctive branch of knowledge, the constitutive role of discourse in the legitimisation and prosecution of the GWoT, and finally the agential endeavours of experts including those based at think tanks, to disseminate this discourse in ‘speeches, laws, reports, policy documents, operating manuals’ (Jackson 2005: 4). In all these respects, the vast literature generated in the field resonates as a critical lens for evaluating the think tanks' interventions. The most salient commentaries, some of which also invoke Orientalism, are those interrogating mainstream representations of the ‘terrorist’ (Jackson 2005), ‘Islamic terrorism’ (Jackson 2007; Gunning and Jackson 2011), political Islam (Mullin 2011), counterinsurgency (Breen-Smyth 2014), and drone warfare (Espinoza 2018). In

other instances, CTS scholars delineate the colonial antecedents of contemporary intervention (Mullin 2011), practices of securitisation (Breen-Smyth 2014), and counterinsurgency campaigns (Jackson 2011). Lastly, CTS accounts highlight Eurocentric readings of ‘religion’ that ignore its emergence as a category within the specific cultural-historical-political context of European modernity (Jackson and Gunning 2011: 375).

In probing these themes, CTS writings render legible the core components of the discourse of terrorism through which it becomes the *principal* ordering mechanism of contemporary US imperialism. The scholarship fulfils the tasks of first and second order critique as elaborated by Jackson in an article entitled “Constructing Enemies: ‘Islamic Terrorism’ in Political and Academic Discourse” (2007). First-order or immanent critique aims to ‘destabilise dominant interpretations’ by shedding light on a discourse’s ‘internal contradictions, mistakes and misconceptions’, and exposing its fallibility on its own terms (Jackson 2007: 397). In contrast, second-order critique investigates ‘the broader political and ethical consequences – the ideological effects’ of discursive representations that comprise a ‘symbolic technology’ (Laffey and Weldes 1997 cited in Jackson 2007: 397) deployed by ‘*elites* and *institutions*’ to ‘naturalise a particular political and social order; and construct and maintain a hegemonic regime of truth’ (Jackson 2007: 397)

Jackson’s allusion to the constitutive role of dominant discourses is redolent of Mignolo’s allusions to enunciation as a process that involves control of the content and terms of the conversation (Mignolo 2009: 37, 11). The crucial difference is that dominance in CTS scholarship appears sporadically as an asymmetrical relation rooted in Eurocentric, imperial/colonial forms of power. The lack of adequate recognition applies to first-order

critique, and raises the question as to whether anomalies in the texts are conditioned by the denial of coloniality. It inflects second order critique to a greater extent in that the focus upon the ‘symbolic technology’ in which discourses of terrorism are embedded is insufficiently attentive to the wider context of knowledge production under coloniality. To state as much, however, is not to deny CTS’ valuable role in destabilising and contesting discursive representations of the GWOt, but rather to recognise its limits.

Anti-knowledges and terrorism expertise

Following the overview of CTS as a distinct field, this section focuses on Stampnitzky’s contributions, which CTS scholarship, but without assimilating within its fold.⁶² Whilst Stampnitzky dissects knowledge production on terrorism from multiple angles, of central importance to this study is the relation she posits between the rise of terrorism studies as a field of expertise within and without the academy, and the formation of a *discourse* of terrorism. Proposing to ‘denaturalise’ both, she remarks,

‘... terrorism is not a natural category, but one with a history ... the field of terrorism expertise came into existence together with the contemporary conceptualisation of terrorism ... In other words, the expert field and the terrorism discourse have been co-produced, and therefore, if we wish to understand the terrorism discourse ... we must understand the structuring of the expert field’ (2016: 17).

Stampnitzky details how the construction of terrorism ‘as an object of knowledge’ from the 1970s gradually displaced the prevailing conceptualisation of political violence within discourses of counterinsurgency (2015: 1; 2016: 21). In the process, the assumptions governing inquiry shifted from the *political* logics of counterinsurgency in which terror was understood

⁶² Reviewing the extant literature on terrorism studies, Stampnitzky notes, “More recently a ‘critical terrorism studies’ movement has emerged, seeking to critique existing research on terrorism and develop a new framework for research on terrorism from a critical perspective” (2011: 5).

as a tactic to a *depoliticised* calculus of moral absolutes in which it became the marker of identity (2016: 21). Stampnitzky's account interlaces a number of important themes, notably US state backing for the emergence of terrorism studies as a distinct field; terrorism experts' proximity to the state and other centres of power; the experts' diverse backgrounds; the low thresholds for their entry and rapid turnover; the expert field's failure to achieve an 'ideal-typical scientific' status; internal and external criticism of this failure; and lastly, the field's links to the politics of 'anti-knowledge' (2011: 2-3, 8; 2016: 23-24). Stampnitzky's analytic anticipates the project of CTS in explicating the rise of the discourse of terrorism three decades prior to the GWoT. Thus, it enables contextualisation of the think tanks' contributions within a longer time frame, and appreciation of their connection with salient ideological-political shifts in US foreign policy as well as popularly disseminated discourses. Especially significant are Stampnitzky's references to various think tank experts' involvement in the formation of terrorism expertise, and their generative roles in its subsequent development. The remainder of this section outlines elements of her critique that are most relevant to this literature review.

Reconstructing political violence as terrorism

First, Stampnitzky observes that the construction of terrorism as 'an object of knowledge' is traceable to 'a rupture in understandings of political violence' (2015: 2) that occurred in the 1970s in response to attacks staged by Palestinian nationalists after the 1967 war (2016: 19). Specifically, the killing of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics prompted the US government's inauguration of '...a new field of expertise', and President Nixon's establishment of the Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism, 'the first US government body' of its kind (2016: 19). The rapidly developing area of research, Stampnitzky adds, would henceforth investigate

the ‘new’ problem of terrorism via the auspices of the newly anointed ‘terrorism expert’ (2016: 19). The field’s burgeoning status was evinced in the copious government funding it received, amounting in 1976 to a quarter-million-dollars (State Department 1976 cited in Stampnitzky 2016: 19), and in the State Department’s Office of External Research assuming responsibility for its management (2016: 19). Consequently, Stampnitzky continues, terrorism catapulted from being a subject of negligible expert interest to one that became the centrepiece of ‘entire institutes, journals, and conferences’ (19). In addition, terrorism’s meteoric rise was reflected in the increased visibility of ‘a networked group of terrorism scholars’ who sometimes referred to themselves as ‘the terrorism mafia’ (2016: 19-20). Significantly, the majority of experts were drawn from ‘think tanks, journalism, and the state’ rather than from academia, and this continued to be the norm as the field developed with many of its members featuring as ‘one timers’ with ‘*no prior training* or experience’ in the field and no lasting presence within it (2016: 23).

Second, Stampnitzky explains that the discursive and ideological shifts instigated by the emergent field redefined the ‘morality... politicality, and ... rationality’ of political violence (2015: 3). Although the terms ‘terror’ and ‘terrorism’ designated violence against civilians, they were deployed in discourses of insurgency and counterinsurgency wherein they were associated *initially* with state or institutional violence and *subsequently* with specific groups (2015: 3). In the latter instance, the violence was deemed the ‘work of rational, potentially honourable actors’ or ‘freedom fighters’ whose motivations were amenable to ‘rational analysis’ (2015: 7). Furthermore, understanding ‘terror’ as a set of ‘tactics’ (targeting civilians), and insurgency as

‘a strategy’ deployed by ‘morally sympathetic and morally blameworthy actors’ precluded ‘any *necessary* moral evaluation’ (2015: 5, 2-3).

Stampnitzky enumerates various institutional articulations of this standpoint. For example, in the American conference on terrorism hosted by the State Department in 1972, participants concurred that ‘nearly every variety of political and ethnic group is likely under certain (generally desperate) circumstances to resort to terrorism’, and that it was often ‘the product of frustration’ fuelled by ‘unresolved grievance’ (Perenyi 1972 cited in Stampnitzky 2015: 6-7). Additionally, in WW2, the US military endorsed ‘terror’, denoting violence against civilians, as a tactic that was ‘useful and legitimate so long as it was selective and discriminate’, and could refer to practices ranging from ‘hostage-taking to selective assassination’ (McClintock 1992 cited in Stampnitzky 2015: 6). An analogous view prevailed during the Vietnam war when the US state regarded terrorism as ‘a means to an end, an unpleasant solution to a greater problem’ (McClintock 1992: cited in Stampnitzky: 6).

Such perspectives on political violence and counterinsurgency were also shared by think tanks who refused to adopt a moralist understanding of ‘terror’. Thus, Stampnitzky details the findings of a RAND counterinsurgency symposium held in 1962 in which participants abstained from a wholesale condemnation of terrorism; instead, they deliberated the prospects of ‘*using terror wisely and selectively*’ (Paget 1967 cited in Stampnitzky 2016: 21). They emphasised causation, notably the role of structural factors such as economic injustice and colonialism as contributors to the rise of insurgencies (2016: 22). The symposium report’s report Table of Contents indexes the approach; thus the section captioned ‘Primary Objectives of

Counterinsurgency and Some Effective Organizational and Operational Approaches’ has a subsection entitled ‘The Judicious Use of Terror and the Importance of Lawful Procedures’ (Hosmer & Crane: 1963 [2006]).⁶³

In contrast, the discursive shift from insurgency to terrorism initiated far reaching effects that reshaped ‘conceptualisations of the problem, its causes, and ... potential responses’ (Stampnitzky 2015: 3). Henceforth, violence against civilians was distanced from considerations of political motivation, and construed as the work ‘of pathological, irrational, immoral actors’ that exemplified the ‘identity of the terrorist’ (3-4). If a political dimension was entertained at all, it was characterised as “not ‘normally’ political, but rather pathological” (Stampnitzky 2011: 8). Indeed, as Stampnitzky notes, deliberating the possibility of a rational/political basis to terrorist acts itself became a ‘highly politically charged’ question of ‘ends [or] means’ (2015: 7). Experts cast perpetrators as ‘fanatics’ who were ‘naive, emotional, impulsive, often irrational, and fundamentally uninformed’ and resistant to negotiation (Livingston 1978 cited in Stampnitzky 2015: 7), thus contradicting previous characterisations. As Stampnitzky states,

‘Terrorism, by the mid-1970s, was assumed to be a particular type of action, committed by particular types of actors, with a particular moral and political valence’ (7).

⁶³ The report’s preface states, ‘The basic rationale in undertaking the Symposium was that, rather than approach the problems of guerrilla and counter guerrilla warfare theoretically and academically, it might be useful to draw on the knowledge of men of recent and direct experience in counterinsurgency, with a view to assembling a large body of detailed information and judgement on ... this inadequately explored form of conflict... The main criterion in the selection of the participants, therefore, was that each have *firsthand and successful* experience in some phase of insurgent or counterinsurgent operations. RAND was most fortunate in being able to bring together the particular group of military and civilian experts ...[who] combined the experience of some nine different theaters of insurgency during the last twenty years, including such key areas as *Malaya, the Philippines, South Vietnam, Kenya, and Algeria*’ (RAND 1962)

Third, Stampnitzky investigates the intellectual, political, and disciplinary effects of the reconstitution of terrorism as an object of knowledge, and traces their intensification since the onset of the GWoT. She suggests that the redefinition of political violence has not served to ‘purify’ or ‘stabilise’ understandings of terrorism as a concept nor indeed the field of terrorism studies as a site of knowledge production (2015: 11). Rather, it has amplified controversies regarding the politicisation of expertise, the ascription of authority, and the question of authenticity. Expectations of reconciling moral censure with critical detachment ‘constrained’ the kinds of interventions possible since any attempt at explanation or understanding was conflated with ‘justification’ and ‘sympathy’ (2015: 10). Such limitations influenced the selection of ‘who is authorised to speak’ about political violence (2016: 24), especially after the September 11 attacks when deviation from the language of absolute evil, and allusion to other contributory factors such as foreign policy ‘faced a backlash’ (2015: 10). Echoing Ferguson’s notion of ‘anti-politics’ (1994), Stampnitzky terms this tendency the “politics of ‘anti-knowledge’ – an active refusal of explanation ... in which the problem has been removed from (some types of) political debate”, leading many terrorism experts to consider themselves debarred from the conversation (2016: 24-25).

Disenchanted experts

The contested nature of authority in terrorism expertise is, however, one aspect of a wider disenchantment with the field that is shared by outsiders as well as by its own practitioners. The dissensus on themes such as the proper understanding of knowledge or a rigorous definition of terrorism, has led to the field’s association with ‘a rhetoric of failure’ (Stampnitzky 2011: 1). Stampnitzky mentions RAND experts Brian Jenkins who headed terrorism research at RAND,

and Bruce Hoffman as consistent advocates of a more structured approach. She cites Hoffman as stating that ‘terrorism research arguably has failed miserably’, and Jenkins decrying that ‘Frivolous and nonsensical things have been mixed with some good work’ in the field (Hoffman 1992, Jenkins 1983 cited in Stampnitzky 2011: 2).

Also instructive is Stampnitzky’s suggestion that attempts to impose an ‘ideal-typical’ disciplinary or professional model upon terrorism studies is unlikely to succeed since it denotes ‘an interstitial space ... oriented between and towards multiple arenas of knowledge production, consumption, and legitimation, including academia, the media, and the state’ (2011: 3). This depiction of terrorism studies recalls Medvetz’ allusion to think tanks as interstitial actors, and other scholars’ references to the challenge of demarcating the institutions. This coincidence provokes a series of questions: does the shared fact of interstitiality make the think tanks *especially* well-placed to claim terrorism expertise, particularly since the latter does not require specific training? How does Hoffman’s and Jenkins’ critique of the field of terrorism expertise reflect upon their and other experts’ commentaries on the GWoT? As noted earlier, the participants at RAND’s 1962 symposium were selected for their ‘first-hand and successful experience’ (in various counterinsurgency campaigns, *all* of which had a *colonial* provenance. Ironically, whereas the participants affirmed the insurgents’ ‘rationality’ and political logic, they simultaneously *dissociated* counterinsurgency from colonialism.

Stampnitzky’s incisive writings, then, are neither centred on colonialism nor on think tanks, but incorporate both within an analysis of the co-constitution of the discourse of terrorism and terrorism studies as an expert domain. In detailing the normative and analytical shifts in the

discourse on terrorism that from 2001 onwards came to constitute a technology of rule, she elucidates various think tanks' contributions to this process. The references to RAND experts' longstanding engagement with conceptions of counterinsurgency and terrorism is especially notable and provides a point of comparison from which their subsequent interventions during the various phases of the GWoT may be evaluated.

Kumar – the new homology

While Stampnitzky's writings have greatly enriched understandings of terrorism as a field of knowledge, questions remain over the process whereby a discourse spurred by the upsurge of Palestinian nationalism came to be eclipsed by a near-totalising focus on 'radical Islam', 'Islamism' or 'Islamofascism'. The dynamics of this shift, which reached a crescendo in the GWoT, merit recognition in parallel with the broader shifts in constructions of political violence. Kumar (2012) offers a compelling account of this trajectory in her writings on Islamophobia and the GWoT. Delineating the convergence in perceptions of 'the terrorist threat' amongst American neoconservatives and representatives of Israel's Likud party from the late 1970s, she alludes to the international conference on terrorism (ICT) held in 1979 at the Jonathan Institute in Jerusalem headed by Binyamin Netanyahu (Kumar 2012: 120). The delegates included Menachem Begin, George Bush senior, Netanyahu's father Benzion Netanyahu, prominent American neoconservatives including Senator Henry Jackson and the historian, Richard Pipes as well as senior European officials (121). Kumar recounts that Benzion Netanyahu opened the conference urging the world to unite against the peril of Palestinian terrorism (120). He depicted the terrorist as an individual who claimed to seek freedom, but actually lacked any 'moral restraints', observed 'no code of law' and harboured a

‘genocidal attitude’ (Benzion Netanyahu 1979 cited in Kumar: 120). Islam, Kumar notes, ‘was marginal to this conference’, which centred ‘the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organisation] and the conflation of Arabs with terrorism’ (121).

In the second ICT held in Washington DC in 1984, the ‘Islamic’ descriptor infiltrated discursive representations of terrorism, but without supplanting pre-existing Palestinian/Arab referents, a move that Kumar associates with post-revolutionary Iran’s support for Hizbollah in Lebanon (121). Entitled ‘Terrorism and the Islamic World’, the conference brought leading orientalists such as Lewis, Vatikiotis and Kedourie into conversation with neoconservatives and Likud (121). By the 1990s, this ‘interchange’ would lead to the construction of ‘Islamic terrorism’ as ‘the next great threat’, and forge new associations between Islamism and fascism (122).⁶⁴ Although the ICT’s convening in Washington affirmed US leadership in ‘the war on terrorists,’ Kumar adds, its origins in Israel should be kept in mind’; nonetheless,

“... despite the efforts of the neocons and the Israeli lobbyists, this attitude towards ‘Islamic terrorism’ did not significantly impact the rhetoric or policy of the first Bush and Clinton administrations...The 1990s were the era of liberal imperialism and the neocons would have to wait their turn” (122).

Kumar’s account contextualises shifts in the discourse of terrorism by relating key geopolitical developments to emerging transnational networks of scholars, politicians, and terrorism experts. As such it is germane to understandings of the events, processes, and agents that shaped conceptions of terrorism over two and a half decades, and propelled these to the forefront of political, media and policy discourses as a cacophony after 2001. In detailing the rearticulation of terrorism from an ethno-national to a transnational ‘Islamic’ register, Kumar’s analytic

⁶⁴ Krauthammer, Moynihan and Kirkpatrick were amongst the neoconservatives attending the ICT whilst Binyamin Netanyahu numbered amongst representatives from Likud (Kumar 121).

reinforces the concept of ‘anti-knowledges’, (Stampnitzky 2016: 24), and also demonstrates its imbrication with orientalist typologies. Furthermore, it is equally relevant as a preamble to CTS in illuminating how the scholarship’s key preoccupations link to developments antedating the GWoT.

Conclusion

This chapter conducted a detailed survey of the literature on think tanks and the expertise they cultivate. Reviewing scholarship from distinct disciplinary fields and standpoints, it aimed to capture the breadth of scholarly opinion pertaining to the institutions as knowledge producing actors in order to carve a space for the thesis’ contribution. It elucidated the salient fault lines in the literature situating representations of the institutions along a spectrum whose end points are marked respectively by post/decolonial critique, and by think tank experts’ submissions. Subsequently, it located the readings that it examined from the social sciences, namely Political Science, American Studies, IR, and its sub-fields, Critical Geopolitics and Critical Terrorism Studies within this spectrum. Cumulatively, the survey revealed a consistent pattern of methodological, theoretical and analytical convergences and divergences. Thus, meaningful affinities emerged between the think tank experts’ laudatory self-representations and mainstream scholarly accounts that centre think tanks on the one hand; and between post and decolonial approaches, and the works from Critical Geopolitics, CTS and its cognates in which think tanks are a secondary topic on the other, and are generally approached critically. However, as the chapter also pointed out, there are overlapping concerns within this binary division that are evinced primarily in varying interpretations of think tanks’ historical emergence, their constitution as an object of study, their susceptibility to definitional and classificatory ambiguities. Above all, the chapter demonstrated the expansive scope of the thesis

in that it needs to draw upon a wide range of literature encompassing but also exceeding IR scholarship in order to pursue its inquiry. By delineating these fields, and their respective treatment of think tanks, the chapter demarcated a space for the thesis' contribution.

Part 2

Prologue: Inaugurating War

Part 2 commences the examination of think tanks' discourses over successive periodisations of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The first three chapters combine an empirical and analytical approach with each focusing on a think tank individually and exploring its orientation towards the prosecution of war in Afghanistan. The discussion details the think tank experts' discursive endeavours from the September 11 attacks to the early phases of the military intervention codenamed Operation Enduring Freedom. It documents the experts' initial response to the attacks, their advocacy of military assault, and lastly their early counsels regarding a post regime change settlement. Chapter 4 extends the discussion to an investigation of the critical purchase of decolonial interventions. It assesses the interventions' cogency in unmasking the operations of coloniality in the think tank discourses, specifically the interface between coloniality and US neo-imperialism at a point at which the 'unipolar moment' (Krauthammer 1990) is already receding into history.

In establishing the core problematics and critical strategies of the thesis' investigation, Part 2 anticipates the analysis in Part 3 of the GWoT's prolongation and expansion. The method varies in Part 3 as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are approached separately in CFR and RAND texts, and jointly in Heritage accounts. This method enables a dynamic approach that fuses breadth with depth so that the expert contributions are approached collectively and individually, analysed for their regularity and consistency, and explored across a continuum. It contrasts with

a more formulaic approach that would evaluate each think tank's output at each phase of the GWoT.

The following chapters, then, detail with the discursive interventions of the think tank experts at the onset of the GWoT. The emphasis accorded to this inaugural phase arises from three principal considerations. First, the experts invoke the September attacks as a constitutive moment to articulate and render hegemonic an ensemble of statements on US foreign and security policy. The congealing discourse furnishes the grammar that renders the war intelligible, crystallising its terms of reference and constitutive categories, delimiting its conceptual boundaries, authorising select voices as its credible exponents, and by inference delegitimising others. In Mignolo's coinage it establishes the 'terms of the conversation' (2009: 37, 11). Equally, the discourse reflects the privileged position of the think tank experts as 'intellectuals of statecraft' (Agnew and O'Tuathail 1992) intervening at multiple sites, for example Congress and the national media, to build the case for war. Lastly, the experts' interventions at this turning point enable comparison with their subsequent endeavours in the lengthening war, allowing assessments of the discourse's fluidity. Cumulatively, the amplitude of think tank experts' opening statements constitutes a fruitful avenue for engaging critically with the cogency of decolonial thought.

In addressing the experts' interventions at this stage, the succeeding chapters do not engage separately with the war in Iraq; as the discussion elucidates, Heritage and CFR experts propound the removal of Saddam Hussein as a necessary and logical sequel to the invasion of

Afghanistan. RAND experts are more ambivalent in that they assert the importance of political, economic as well as military paths to pacification, and envisage an expansion of the GWoT, but without explicitly referencing Iraq. Such ambivalence, however, should not be misconstrued as opposition since RAND's earlier and extended volume entitled 'Confronting Iraq - US Policy and the Use of Force Since the Gulf War' (Byman and Waxman 2000) deliberates the question of Iraqi regime change prior to the September attacks. The volume provides an assessment of the efficacy of diverse 'coercive threats ... [and]... strategies' in containing and neutralising the Iraqi regime (Byman and Waxman 2000: 90-91). Elaborating various cost/benefit and risk analytic assessments, the authors endorse coercion, and retain regime change as a viable option, but stop short of a clear standpoint (Byman and Waxman 2000). Since RAND experts eventually express unqualified support for invasion of Iraq, their reticence at this point does not impede the flow of the argument. The work will be referenced again in the discussion; as in other instances, reference to the think tanks' pre-2001 writings is undertaken to clarify points that may be obscured in the immediate context.

In what follows, the chapters focus on the Afghan war's incipience with a view to understanding the strategic calculus shaping the 'twin wars' (Pasha 2017: 9). In this endeavour, they provide a benchmark for posing derivative questions about the war's expansion, and its enlarging cartography. The inquiry proceeds by constructing a typology that divides the broader problematic into four thematic areas: legitimization: temporality, spatiality and subject construction. The division is undertaken for structural, heuristic, and critical purposes since the areas entwine closely. The use of the typology is not undertaken to impose a rigid uniformity on the three think tanks' interventions, but to enable a relational approach that disaggregates

the texts, anchors the discourse, and makes legible the variations that arise amidst large areas of overlap. The variations reveal the discourse's unevenness, and may arise in the relative significance of each element within a think tank's interventions, and/or the actual content through which the element is instantiated. For example, anticipating later discussion, temporality is less prominent in CFR rather than in RAND accounts; similarly, the approach to subject construction in Heritage texts differs from that followed in RAND texts. In using the typology to make visible the convergences and divergences in the think tanks texts, the discussion contributes to the understanding of the GWoT as a discursive formation.

More specifically, the typology enables disaggregation of the intertwined strands of argument that the experts mobilise to entrench the case for war amidst a substantive reorientation of US policy. It facilitates close scrutiny of the tools – the categories, concepts, and logics – that the experts deploy to produce meaning in a policy-focused context, and makes visible the extent to which the discourses uphold structures of power/knowledge shaped by US exceptionalism and coloniality. In doing so, it serves the critical endeavour that is central to this thesis: to unmask, and dismantle the epistemic claims of policy-relevant expertise that is purportedly neutral, objective, and technocratic; and relatedly, to assess the degree to which decolonial theory facilitates this task.

The materials evaluated are drawn from a publicly accessible online or printed repertoire that includes backgrounders, briefs, reports, congressional testimonies, commentaries and blogs. The documents often display a consistency in authorship with the same experts scrutinising a particular topic and region over an extended period of time.

Structurally, the first three chapters are organised symmetrically, and divided into two principal tasks: documentation of the expert discourses' salient arguments followed by critique based on the typology outlined above. The fourth chapter shifts the focus to interrogations of decoloniality.

Chapter 1 – The RAND Corporation

Three testimonies

This chapter examines texts authored by RAND experts that were produced in 2001 following the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York, and the launch of Operation Enduring Freedom in early October. It commences with three congressional testimonies, two of which were delivered by Bruce Hoffman, and one by Brian Jenkins. According to his social media profile, Hoffman ‘has been studying terrorism and insurgency for four decades’.⁶⁵ The author of several volumes on these subjects, Hoffman has held distinguished faculty positions at Georgetown University and at the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at the University of St. Andrews in addition to serving as Vice President External Affairs and Director at RAND’s Washington Office, and as Visting Senior Fellow at the CFR. Jenkins, who has served as head of terrorism research at RAND and also as Senior Adviser to the President, is regarded as ‘one of the founders of the field’ of terrorism studies, and ‘one of the most prominent and prolific authors on terrorism’ (Stampnitzky 2016: 25; 2011: 10),. What follows is a synopsis of the principal arguments of Hoffman’s September testimonies numbered CT 181 (2001b) and CT 182 (2001c), and Jenkins’ November testimony (Jenkins 2001).

Hoffman-proportionality, counterterrorism, and exceptionalism

Hoffman’s depositions are especially notable for their immediacy in appearing respectively a week and a fortnight after the September 11 attacks; however, they are also consistent with his previous testimony of March 2001 to the House Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans

⁶⁵ https://twitter.com/hoffman_bruce?lang=en

Affairs and International Relations (CT 175) (2001a). Hoffman delivered testimony CT 181 entitled 'Preparing for the War on Terrorism' to a congressional House Committee in which he refers to the attacks as 'last week's tragic events' (2001b: 1). He observes that his statement closely echoes the March testimony, which had urged the formulation of a national strategy to combat terrorism. His opening asserts the importance of 'proportionality' in US counterterrorism (CT) policy, and cites responses to previous terrorist attacks on US personnel and assets as examples of this principle. These include airstrikes on Tripoli and Benghazi in 1986 that targeted military facilities and 'Qaddafi's living quarters' following the bombing of a discotheque in Berlin in which two US soldiers were killed; the launch of 'nearly 100 cruise missiles' on Bin Laden's 'training camps' in Afghanistan in 1998 following the bombings of US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, although the response 'may have been insufficient'; and a further strike in 1998 on a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan, which he notes was 'allegedly linked to Bin Laden' (1-2).

The attacks of 9/11, Hoffman observes, are unprecedented in 'their enormity and sheer scale', and also necessitate 'a proportionate response that can harness the diverse and multi-faceted capabilities that the United States can bring to bear' (2001b: 2). The remainder of the testimony outlines a set of prescriptives for devising 'a comprehensive, fully coordinated' strategy, and an 'effective CT policy' that is not limited to military power(2). As he states, 'Clearly, military options are only one of many instruments at our disposal in the struggle against terrorism' (2). Hoffman recalls his warning in the March testimony that the lack of a 'comprehensive national strategy has hindered our CT efforts', and that its formulation was not merely 'an intellectual exercise' but foundational to 'any effective counterterrorism policy' (3). He views the recent

attacks as a vindication of his concerns that the extant counterterror infrastructure is ‘fragmented and uncoordinated’ (3), and proposes wide-ranging measures as correctives. These include an assessment of domestic and foreign threats (4); reform of the ‘fundamentally cold war-era’ intelligence apparatus in order to ‘counter the terrorist threats of today and tomorrow’ from ‘formidable, transnational, non-state adversaries’ (4, 5); and an overhaul of aviation security in view of the ‘breaches in our defences’(6). In concluding, he reiterates the urgency of formulating ‘an overarching strategy’ that will allow the US to respond ‘across the *entire* technological spectrum of potential adversarial attacks’ (7). He cautions that ‘political will and patience’ are essential since ‘the struggle against terrorism is never-ending’ (7).

Hoffman’s subsequent testimony (CT 182) (2001c), delivered on September 26th before the Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security largely rehearses the content of CT 181.⁶⁶ The differences appear in the amplified emphases on the attacks’ exceptionalism and on the role of Bin Laden. Thus, he discerns a ‘unique constellation of professional capabilities’ in the attacks that reveals ‘ambitious scope and dimensions’, ‘coordination and synchronization’, ‘professionalism and tradecraft’ in maintaining secrecy, and a readiness to kill and be killed (2001c: 1, 2). Hoffman relates the attacks’ singularity to the US security establishment’s overestimating ‘past successes’ in thwarting terrorist attacks, and misunderstanding present threats (3). He surmises,

⁶⁶ The Subcommittee forms a part of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, US House of Representatives.

‘... we were perhaps lulled into believing that mass simultaneous attacks in general and those of such devastating potential ... were ... beyond most capabilities of most terrorists’ (3).

Besides prioritising ‘low-end...or the more exotic high-end threats’, Hoffman continues, the dominant view held that potential attackers sought ‘publicity ... and ...had neither the need nor interest in annihilating large numbers of people’ (3).

After detailing the convergence between the attacks’ uniqueness and the deficiencies in US counterterror preparations, Hoffman dissects the role of Bin Laden. Opining that Bin Laden has ‘single-handedly’ ‘re-written the history of terrorism and ... of the post-Cold War era’, Hoffman expatiates on his mythic appeal:

‘a David versus the American Goliath...the fabled right man in the right place at the right time possessing the vision, financial resources, organizational skills and flair for self-promotion to meld together the disparate strands of Islamic fervour, Muslim piety and general enmity towards the West into a formidable global force’ (2001c: 4).

Given ‘the profound changes and development...in the nature of terrorism...and the salient threat posed ... to the United States’, Hoffman poses the central question, “how should we begin to organize for a ‘war on terrorism’?” (4). The remainder of the testimony reiterates the arguments of CT 181 by way of response.

Jenkins-parables of vulnerability

The third testimony considered in this section was delivered by Brian Jenkins before the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats on November 15th, 2001, more than six weeks after the launch of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Whilst Hoffman's interventions integrated previously voiced concerns about the lack of strategic clarity, Jenkins' statements embed the attacks in leitmotifs of vulnerability and danger, dwelling on 'current and near-term threats', 'long-term consequences', and 'a sobering vision of the future' (Jenkins 2001: 1, 2, 5). Of note in Jenkins' enumeration of threats is his conviction that the September attacks presage 'further major terrorist operations' since

'...the terrorist leaders did not intend September 11th to be their last act—they intended it as the beginning of their end-game... they would have made plans to survive the anticipated military response...and they may have set in motion terrorist operations that will occur weeks or months or years from now, unless we can identify and destroy every terrorist cell...There is no obvious predictable scenario and the vulnerabilities are infinite' (2001: 2).

Jenkins subsequently outlines the most 'logical targets' in infinity, for example aviation, public transport, infrastructure, embassies, and symbols of US corporate power abroad (3). Furthermore, he fears that al Qaeda may inspire other groups, such as Colombian guerrillas, anti-globalisation protestors, white supremacists (3-4). Reiterating concerns that the attacks may appear as 'an anomaly', and presage a return to the status quo ante, Jenkins alerts his audience to their possible long-term consequences although he acknowledges their causation in 'a unique confluence of developments' (5). These are the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan that created 'a network of veterans throughout the world'; the Taliban victory that provided al Qaeda and its 'megalomaniac leader' with safe havens and recruits, exposing 'a sense of strategy unusual among terrorists'; and finally, 'a religion-based ideology calling for violent holy war'

(6). Notwithstanding their ‘uniqueness’, Jenkins finds ‘some aspects of the attacks’ resonant with the ‘new terrorism’ of the 1990s that analysts associated with ideologies of ethnic hatred or religious extremism, as well as with ‘looser networks’ of operatives envisaging ‘mass destruction’ (6). He recalls the warnings of the Bremer, Gilmore and Deutch commissions on terrorism and proliferation regarding ‘large-scale terrorism’ against the US involving chemical or biological weapons (6). He fears that the 1990s attacks on US targets, including those thwarted, which were ‘political’ and underscored ‘the hostile use of violence as opposed to the instrumental use of violence’ could manifest in the future as ‘coordinated multidimensional attacks’ and ‘overload our capacity to respond’ (7). Although Jenkins doubts that Bin Laden commands nuclear weapons, he observes that ‘if he did’, these would probably augur ‘a final act of destruction’; therefore, the US must assume that al Qaeda will ‘always seek the most advanced means of destruction and that we will be the target’ (7). The US must also recognise that such lethal force was now the preserve of ‘smaller and smaller groups ...bands of irreconcilables, fanatics, and lunatics... [who] in our age have become a force to be reckoned with’ (9). Like Hoffman, Jenkins cautions against a return to ‘complacency’ or ‘to business as usual’ once the trauma of the attacks dissipates as transpired following the attacks against US targets in the 1990s (1-2).

The *RAND Review* – four editorials

This section outlines the salient arguments of four editorials from the Fall 2001 issue of the *RAND Review* that follows closely from the testimonies. Published quarterly at the time, and bi-monthly since 2015, The *RAND Review* is described on RAND's website as 'our flagship magazine, covers the big issues with an eye for the important details'.⁶⁷ The publication elicits contributions from RAND experts, senior state officials, leading policy practitioners, and academics. The content varies across issues, but in general comprises a medley of comment pieces, news items, and letters to the editor pages. The Fall 2001 issue was the first to be published after the September attacks, which dominate its cover story entitled 'Full Alert: An Arsenal of Ideas for the War Against Terrorism'. Introducing the issue, the Editor John Godges states that the cover story 'proposes several specific ways to defeat terrorism, from completely reorganising our intelligence bureaucracy to consistently promoting democracy around the world' (Godges 2001: 2). The issue's eight editorials perform this task; bold and succinct, each exhorts the immediate initiation of short, medium, and long-term policy measures that are of 'national and international relevance (12). The four discussed in this section are chosen for their thematic relevance over those that address narrower technical issues such as biometrics or aviation security.

Thomson-fronting the war

The opening editorial, 'Suddenly a New NATO Agenda', is authored by James A. Thomson, President and Chief Executive Officer at RAND, and encapsulates the arguments he presented at a NATO meeting in Berlin on September 19, 2001. From the outset, Thomson denies the

⁶⁷ <https://www.rand.org/pubs/periodicals/rand-review.html>

9/11 attackers any ‘apparent political aim other than to inflict as much harm as they can on the United States and the West’ via ‘spectacular’ acts including a nuclear strike (Thomson 2001:13). Thomson avers that ‘this war’ must be fought ‘In the long term...on at least nine fronts’ (13). These are counter-proliferation to deter terrorists from acquiring nuclear capability; international cooperation entailing ‘a broader coalition’ with ‘moderate Muslim regimes’ who may also be targeted; addressing ‘the intelligence problem’ by renewing human and technological assets; improving the US’ tarnished image in the Muslim world; strengthening domestic and international policing ‘to rip up [terrorist] networks’; reversing ‘the decline in international development assistance’ throughout the ‘Islamic world’; securing ‘international military cooperation’; and lastly, undertaking international emergency planning to assess infrastructural and societal ‘vulnerabilities’ (13).

Lesser’s excavations

The second editorial entitled ‘Strike at the Roots of Terrorism’ is penned by Ian Lesser, a senior political scientist at RAND. Lesser diverges from Thomson in identifying the ‘systemic origins’ of terrorism (Lesser 2001:14). He adduces contributors in socio-economic, political, and personal grievances, which accumulate in states that disallow ‘peaceful political change’, and suffer from economic maldistribution and demographic pressures (14). Whereas the US’ position as the ‘perceived leading beneficiary’ of globalisation makes it ‘a prime target of terrorists’, he continues, “the roots of their rage are to be found in dysfunctional societies and ‘failed states’ ” (14). Accordingly, the US needs to pursue political and economic reform worldwide in order ‘to drain the reservoir of terrorism’ (14). Subsequently, Lesser deliberates the incidence of terrorism outside the US, and avers that its causes are preponderantly ‘domestic’, namely ‘unresolved ethnic and nationalist conflicts’ exemplified in the Balkans or

Palestine (14). . As such, socio-economic and political disaffection elsewhere precipitates international terror attacks *within* the US, while those occurring in other regions are also ‘domestic’ in provenance.

Given the relationality between domestic causes and international consequences, Lesser insists that the US must commit to ‘containing terrorism worldwide’ since ‘American interests can still be harmed when allies are destabilised or regions become insecure’ (2001:14). He adumbrates ‘an environment-shaping policy’ focused on ‘prevention’ that incorporates socio-economic reforms, diplomatic overtures, and military preparedness (14). He cautions against replicating ‘the glacial pace of traditional diplomatic approaches’, and recommends a search for “ways to ‘harden’ our policies in the face of the terrorist challenge” (14). Of vital importance in a policy focused on modifying the international environment, he continues, is a resolve ‘to shrink the zones of chaos around the world where terrorist networks have *already* found sanctuary’ (14). For Lesser, ‘Afghanistan, Sudan, northern Iraq and Syrian-controlled areas of Lebanon are leading examples in the Middle East’ of such conflicted domains (14). A distinguishing feature of such ‘zones’ and others is the absence of a ‘clear-cut exercise of state sovereignty ... [making them] natural breeding grounds for violent nonstate actors and terrorist networks’ (15). Lesser counsels concerned governments that the closure of such havens, and the expulsion of terror groups are ‘essential preconditions for positive relations’ with the US (15). Lastly, he advocates the extension of ‘military assets ... beyond traditional uses’ in counterterrorism, for example the deployment of ‘air and space power ... to make terrorism ... more transparent to policy makers and allies’ (15).

Green-democracy as panacea

The editorial by Jerold Green, director of the centre for Middle East Public Policy and of International Programmes and Development at RAND, is entitled ‘Promote Democracy and Legitimate Governments’. His key contention is that military force alone will fail to address ‘the underlying causes’ that impel ‘Middle Eastern terrorists’ to target the US (Green 2001:15-16). In elaboration, Green amplifies Lesser’s preoccupation with political and economic reform making it the centrepiece of his argument and linking it explicitly to the question of regime legitimacy in ‘the Middle East ... particularly in the Gulf region’ (15). He declares regimes in the region ‘corrupt’, prone to ‘excess[]’, and impervious to their publics’ ‘resentment’, ‘political alienation’, and ‘economic and demographic’ distress resulting from the waning of petrodollar economies (15). The US becomes the ‘focal point’ of public antagonism, and stands accused of ‘hypocrisy’ for supporting such regimes despite its widely touted pro-democracy stance (15). Since the perception of ‘hypocrisy’ serves as ‘a rallying cry for terrorists’, the US must urge ‘political and economic liberalization’ as well as ‘increased political participation’ upon regimes that ‘lack both the inclination and the resources’ to pursue such goals themselves (16). Whilst Green’s argument focuses exclusively on ‘the Middle East’, its conclusion diverges by positing a parallel with earlier policy failings in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Palestine; thus, he notes,

‘We must not repeat the mistakes we made when we ignored the Palestinians for decades, abandoned Afghanistan in 1989, and walked away from Pakistan a few years later. This time, we must not walk away... Indeed, we must ... help to rebuild the nations of Afghanistan and Pakistan—if not for humanitarian reasons, then for reasons of collective defense and even of narrow US self-interest’ (16)’.

Byman-recruiting insurgents

The final editorial examined in this section is entitled, 'Give Selected Insurgents Selected Kinds of Support', and is written by Daniel Byman, Research Director of Middle East Policy at RAND. Eschewing analysis of the causes of terrorism, Byman contemplates the actual conduct of the war, specifically the mobilisation of insurgent support to serve US' strategic interests (2001: 17). He admits that the US' historical record shows 'mixed success' in this endeavour, but also notes that its 'failures' stemmed largely from backing groups that did not pose credible threats to state regimes, for example Kurds in Iraq (17). He differentiates the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan from such groups due to its longstanding opposition to the Taliban, and deems US assistance to the Alliance 'useful' especially as the GWoT 'moves beyond Afghanistan' (17). The Alliance, he continues, bear the hallmarks of a successful 'armed opposition', namely the readiness 'to compete militarily', 'fight and die', procure the local population' support, and garner state backing (17). However, he cautions that such attributes may not guarantee 'victory', and counsels 'external state support', since this has been a critical factor in bolstering 45 post-Cold War insurgencies (17). The most efficacious mechanisms for external state assistance to insurgents are the provision of 'safe havens'; 'financial support' for insurgents to purchase weapons, 'bribe local officials', commission 'propaganda', and create 'a social network' for popular support; 'political backing' to secure inter alia 'diplomatic legitimacy', 'international recognition', and humanitarian assistance for favoured groups; and military support with state armies joining insurgents in combat (17). Byman favours external states' input even if insurgents receive funds from non-state sources, for example diasporic donors or affluent individuals (17). Nevertheless, Byman concludes that 'the many advantages' of aiding insurgents should not impede 'Washington' from appreciating 'the potential costs', namely the

risks of US involvement in 'a broader conflict' or disquiet in Pakistan over the US' deepening ties with the Northern Alliance (18). Accordingly, he ends on a cautionary note urging prudence and flexibility (18).

Critical overview

The previous sections of this chapter detailed the salient arguments in RAND experts' testimonies and editorials, which number amongst their earliest contributions following the September attacks. This section undertakes a critical overview of the interventions in conformity with the typology outlined at the chapter's beginning. To recapitulate, the typology divides the expert discourses into four thematic areas in order to facilitate analyses of their construction as forms of knowledge instantiating the GWoT. These areas are the experts' legitimization and prosecution of the GWoT; their use of spatial and temporal markers; and their production of subjects. Inflecting the texts through these themes enables scrutiny of the salient arguments, logics, and strategies through which the experts propound key policy objectives.

Legitimation

This section centres the theme of legitimization in the testimonies and editorials as it relates to RAND experts' perspectives on military action in Afghanistan in the wider context of the GWoT. Legitimation as deployed in this study refers to the discourse's foundational premises as these underwrite the war's legitimacy and necessity, and define its modalities. Collectively, the texts that are authored by six senior RAND experts, and are wide-ranging in scope, display no reservations about the GWoT's legitimacy in general or military intervention in Afghanistan in particular. On the contrary, the interventions incrementally build the case for, and naturalise

the GWoT as the only conceivable and judicious response to the September attacks. They are consistent in foregrounding the September attacks, rather the exercise of military power, as a discrete and spectacular event. Iterating its extraordinary character, the texts explicate causes, and proffer responses within the contours of an overarching discourse of threat that melds the local into the global. Rendering the attacks legible in particular ways, they extrapolate the need for decisive domestic and foreign policy shifts that require the reconfiguration and enlargement of the edifice of counterterrorism.

In the repurposed calculus, military action conjoins other policies to constitute the GWoT as a multifaceted project of global restructuring. Although the testimonies and editorials deploy the term ‘GWoT’ infrequently, they are consistent in referring to a multifaceted war. The clearest expression of this consensus appears in Thomson’s editorial, which stipulates a ‘war [fought on] at least nine fronts’ (Thomson 2001: 13). Juxtaposed to Hoffman’s allusion (2001: 4) to Bin Laden’s mythopoeic qualities, and Jenkins’ (2001: 2) vision of infinite vulnerability, the experts construe the GWoT as an abstraction, a counterpoint to metaphysical threat, and an amalgam of practices derived from policies that they articulate. Their recitation of the September attacks through the prism of calamity, causation, and salvation, then, imbues the GWoT with form and meaning. The interventions are productive as discourses of legitimation that validate the war as an immanent project; however, their constitutive role also needs recognition in order to avert the misconception that the experts’ interventions merely endorse a pre-existing discourse rather than contribute to its formulation.

In categorising the war and articulating its objectives, RAND's testimonies and editorials display considerable overlap although the latter provide further elaborations of key themes and agendas. Hoffman's and Jenkins' testimonies lay the groundwork by invoking CT rather than regime change or liberal interventionism as the cornerstone of the 'war on terrorism' (Hoffman 2001b: 4) . Outlining measures relating mainly to security and intelligence reform, Hoffman deploys CT in an expansive sense as the distinctive signifier of policy, the fount of 'an overarching strategy' designed to counter the 'spectrum of ... adversaries', and ultimately the connective for 'the diverse and multi-faceted capabilities' that the US commands (2001b: 2, 5, 2). Military action in this testimony is not mentioned explicitly, and remains implicit. Rather, in designating a discrete arena of state activity, CT becomes a descriptor for the aggregate instruments that comprise the US' war-making prowess in which *military action* is but *one* component. To this end, CT is not merely a modality, but a technology of imperial dominance. Hoffman does not explicate the precise relation between CT and the 'war on terrorism' by clarifying whether they are equivalent, complementary, overlapping, or hierarchically related. In the absence of such insight, the inference remains that the 'war on terrorism' serves as the vernacular and messianic caption for the reconfiguration of the CT architecture in the wake of an unprecedented attack on the US. It is, however, important not to collapse the two categories since, as later chapters argue, the deployments of each are subject to change across different phases of the wars. Thus, for example, expert interventions, US state and military statements refer to CT in the context of, as well as in detachment from, counterinsurgency (COIN) operations; similarly, the nomenclature of the 'war on terrorism' recedes against the shift to developmentalist rhetoric of nation-building.

Whereas Hoffman's analysis remains focused and pragmatic, Jenkins' testimony tends towards mystification in alluding to ineffable threats and vulnerabilities (Jenkins 2001: 2). Furthermore, while Hoffman expresses confidence in the US' formidable arsenal of 'capabilities' providing these are calibrated, Jenkins is apprehensive that such capabilities may be overwhelmed by an attack of extreme ferocity (Jenkins 2001: 7). Both experts insist upon sustaining the momentum for the 'war on terror', warning repeatedly against a return to 'complacency' (Jenkins 2001: 1) while Hoffman's allusions to past strategic failures endows the project with a reparative quality (Hoffman 2001b: 3).

The testimonies present primarily as problem-solving exercises dealing with organisational aspects of the incipient 'war on terror'. They eschew a detailed exposition of objectives beyond recurrent emphases on responding to the attacks and preventing future assaults. The modalities associated with these objectives are subsumed within Hoffman's valorisation of 'proportionality', and encompass the array of measures he espouses under 'strategy', for example intelligence reform and budgetary reallocation (2001b: 1, 2). The editorials also consider modalities, shifting the focus, however, from US-based policy changes to the actual conduct of a war that is not limited to military means, and is global in scope, extending beyond Afghanistan's borders. Thus, Thomson magisterially incorporates measures such as coalition building, development initiatives, policing and military operations into a war fought minimally on nine fronts (Thomson 2001: 15). Green (2001) and Lesser reinforce Thomson's developmental enthusiasm by focusing on incidences of terrorism in 'insecure' or 'corrupt' states allied to the US (Lesser 2001: 14, 15), and in which political and economic reform is requisite alongside possible military intervention. Finally, Byman integrates financial, societal,

political incentives into the military domain as he advocates support for key insurgent groups, notably the Northern Alliance (Byman 2001: 17-18).

Temporality

This section explores the second element in the typology, namely the experts' references to temporality in the discursive construction of the GWOt. As deployed in this thesis, temporality refers to the experts' invocations of time, specifically their attempts to situate the attacks and their aftermath within specific understandings of the past, present, and future as integral to their advocacy of a policy shift. The section begins with a critical analysis of the RAND testimonies that were delivered shortly after the attacks of September 11. A key feature of the testimonies is the refraction of the extraordinary character of the attacks through a temporal frame. This is evinced in the depiction of the attacks as epochal events that commingle a nonpareil present, a past marked by squandered opportunities, and a future poised between apocalyptic destruction on the one hand, and its panacea in the guise of an open-ended war on the other. The references in Hoffman's generally prosaic, policy-focused depositions to the attacks' unprecedented quality, and to Bin Laden's rewriting historical time (2001b, 2001c) provide early examples of temporality as a key marker in a sedimenting discourse.

Temporal markers are salient in Jenkins' congressional testimony (2001), and perform diverse types of labour. First, the testimony's opening asserts Jenkins' credentials as a reliable interlocutor of future trends, one who cautions against 'complacency', but eschews apocalyptic 'scenarios of doom' (2001:1). Second, Jenkins' argument follows a temporal structure in its evaluation of 'current and near-term threats ... or ... long-term consequences' subsequently

associated with ‘weeks or months or years from now’ (2001:1, 2). He prefaces his enumeration of such dangers with a warning that the magnitude of the September attacks should not obscure the gravity of other portents of catastrophe (1). Although the testimony iterates present traumas, it strives to project an imaginary of dread across the temporal horizon, enmeshing different moments of time in multiple vistas of destruction. Through these recitations, Jenkins attempts to reconcile the attacks’ exceptionalism with future strikes of comparable or greater potency. Amidst burgeoning potentialities, Jenkins equates ‘complacency’ (1) with a future bereft of the assertion of US global power. He counters this spectre with a starkly simplified policy response insisting that ‘we identify and destroy every terrorist cell’ to avert further assaults (2). Third, striking by omission within this temporal framework is any reference to the launch of the GWoT via Operation Freedom on 7th October 2001. Jenkins’ time-focused compendium of calamity precludes analysis of the destruction unleashed upon Afghanistan; rather, temporality as the index of (in)security is appropriated wholly within a US-centric framework. Fourth, the testimony’s imaginaries of threat, immediate or distant, also reveal a dualist stance in constructing a future suspended between certainty and doubt in which *each* connotes grave danger. Thus, Jenkins contends that ‘the terrorist leaders did not intend September 11th to be their last act—they intended it as the beginning of their end-game’ (2). To clarify, he notes that al Qaeda ‘will almost certainly attempt further major terrorist operations’ on US soil and on US targets overseas (2). Whilst he attributes the September attacks to a ‘unique’ set of co-terminous factors, he avers that they ‘also confirm broader trends’ consistent with the so-termed new terrorism (5). Future atrocities are imminent in these prognostications; the indecipherability lies in the precise ‘form’ (2) they will they take; nonetheless, he anticipates ‘large-scale terrorist attacks, coordinated where possible to achieve greater destruction’ (6).

Jenkins populates his futurology by enumerating material and human agents of destruction and disruption. He mentions nuclear weapons (8), ‘radioactive material’ (8), ‘chemical warfare’ (7), ‘poison gas’ (7), anthrax (4), ‘Cyber-crime...Cyber terrorism and cyber war’ (5) as examples of the former. The would-be human perpetrators include ‘terrorists, extortionists, and lunatics’, chief amongst them Al Qaeda, but also other potential incumbents such as Colombian guerrillas and anti-globalisation activists (4).⁶⁸ The testimony, then, conjures a future saturated with portents of destruction that bridge the gap between inevitability and probability. It unfolds as a narration of the present crisis through the spectre of a future blighted by agglomerating rather dangers, but one curiously inattentive to the implications of an ongoing war. Rather, in consistently foregrounding scenarios of disaster, Jenkins renders the waging and prolongation of the GWoT a banal event.

The cover page of the editorials (2001) similarly contextualises a unique present within calls for immediate policy shifts that will require ‘years’ to reach fruition. Subsequent editorials reinforce such prognostications by referring to a future shaped by an indeterminate war fought on numerous fronts (Thomson 2001: 13), and extensive socio-political re-engineering across the world, notably in ‘Middle Eastern’ geographies (Lesser 2001: 15).

Spatiality

In referring to spatiality and its allied concept, spatialisation, this study recalls the discussion in Chapter 2 of Critical Geopolitics and cognate sub-fields of Geography. A key concept in these fields, spatiality denotes ‘any property relating to or occupying space such as dimensionality,

⁶⁸ Jarvis (2008: 246) provides an extended critique of the Bush administration’s use of temporality ‘as a discursive resource’ to construct a specific narrative of the GWoT, which closely mirrors that advanced by the think tanks.

directionality and spatial configuration' (Wei 2016: 6). The concept has garnered plural connotations that reflect the influence of different scholarly traditions, for example Marxism and post-structuralism. Its usage in this section follows its application in Critical Geopolitics, which draws upon some of these traditions, notably constructivism, post-structuralism, and postcolonialism. To recapitulate, Critical Geopolitics contests the realist, ahistorical and avowedly neutral foundations of classical geopolitics, and foregrounds the discursivity of the 'spatial theories and assumptions' (Moisio 2015: 223) on which it is based. Elaborating on the field's critical intervention, Moisio (2015) offers a succinct explanation of the concept of spatiality. He observes that for Critical Geopolitics, "the spaces of world politics are 'produced' in representations and practices", and that 'this socially constructed spatiality of international affairs becomes visible in different mapping exercises ... strategic plans and related imaginations' (Moisio 2015: 224).

It is in light of this explication of spatiality that this section connects the discursive reliance on temporality in RAND accounts to the experts' (re)constructions of geographical space. Its starting point is the extension of the algorithm of vulnerability and threat to a spatial register in consonance with the logics of a colonial/imperial cartographic strategy. The distinctive aim of the strategy is to map the international in ways that render it legible for the long-term prosecution of the GWoT as the instrument of US global power. The texts centre the international as a conflicted space, the originating point of current and future attacks against the US, but equally one amenable to future reclamation and pacification by the latter. Conceived in this light, the international emerges as a set of spatialities encoded with meanings redolent of colonial binaries that buttress the rationale for US (neo-imperial) intervention. The deployments of spatiality, then, are formative to the experts' arguments, and comprise a 'geopolitical imaginary' that valorise a specific ordering of

the world whilst erasing the violent hierarchies through which it is constituted (Hazbun 2013: 218). They also corroborate the salient arguments of critical geopolitical scholars concerning the naturalisation of geography, ‘the geopolitical gaze’ (Klinke 2009), and globalisation. Finally, they accord with discourses circulating in the public domain, notably the contributions of Barnett (2003) and Friedman that foreground themes of globalisation, integration, and disconnectedness.⁶⁹

The significance of spatiality and its resonance with themes previously touched upon in this study are evidenced in the discursive moves animating the texts’ cartographic strategy. These are the use of colonialist, essentialist, and ahistorical spatial markers to label and categorise various locales; the foregrounding of US geopolitical and security concerns as the connective amongst different geographies; and, by virtue of each of these factors, the reproduction of a cartography shaped by ‘the colonial difference’ (Mignolo 1999). Examples of such cartographic endeavours animate the texts, and are outlined respectively.

First, the texts classify and label disparate locations in terms that enable their assimilation within a reductionist map of the international. Pivotal to the mapping exercise are essentialist constructs that purport to signify clearly demarcated and intelligible domains, namely ‘the Islamic world’ (Thomson 2001: 13), ‘Middle Eastern terrorists’ (Green 2001: 15), ‘the Balkans [...] Central Asia’, a ‘Middle East’ that includes Afghanistan and Sudan (Lesser 2001: 14-15). Essentialism complements the use of depoliticised, naturalised, and/or racialised abstractions that foreclose rather than facilitate deeper understandings of local, regional or transnational conflicts and struggles, and their historical provenance. This tendency is illustrated in the use

⁶⁹ Hazbun’s conception, the key contributions of Critical Geopolitics, and Barnett’s and Friedman’s works are detailed in Chapter 2.

of banal captions such as ‘an environment-shaping policy’ that conceal colonial and Cold War histories; and/or epithets such as ‘reservoir’, ‘zones of chaos’, ‘sanctuary’, ‘breeding grounds’ (Lesser 2001: 14-15) that reverberate with colonial iterations of the gulf between civilisation and savagery. The gulf reappears in 2001 via imputations of lack, failure, and terrorist violence, that in turn are framed in opposition to globalisation, state sovereignty (Lesser 2001: 14), democracy, and economic liberalisation (Green 2001: 16). Mapped thus, the cartographic scale varies between macro and micro referents, abstractions and named states that invoke colonial representations of subjugated peoples and territories while discounting colonial histories and their present-day manifestations.

Second, spatiality in the texts proceeds through the privileging of US geopolitical and security concerns, subsumed within the signifier of terrorism, to map its connections with dispersed geographies, chiefly in the postcolonial Global South. The texts collectively reinscribe the rudiments of an imperial cartography that encodes states and regions as transgressive or beleaguered in relation to the incidence of terrorism that ultimately targets the US. In depicting the US as the erstwhile or potential target of terror attacks originating from these locales, the emerging map constructs an imaginary in which the prevalence of threat and the necessity of US intervention are co-present. The mapping of connections in this light relies on various modalities, which speak to a wider, and deeply entrenched field of discursivity pertaining to conceptualisations of US power.

A key modality in this regard is the iteration of the duality that captures the US’ exceptionalist credentials vis a vis the international. The founding premise of this duality inheres in the US’

unique status as the fount of the post WW2 liberal international order, which means that it is located simultaneously within and above the order. Other contentions follow from this initial premise. Thus, the US is both an imperial hegemon, and a victim of terrorist excess. It is exceptional in its capacity to launch a global war on terror, and in its vulnerability to present and future assaults. The co-presence of extraordinary strength and threat is indexed in its unrivalled, global extension, which renders it susceptible to terrorist attacks targeting its national territory as well as the multifarious emblems of its presence overseas.

The double-sided quality of the US' international entanglements is highlighted at various points in the testimonies and editorials. Hoffman's testimony (2001b), for example, connects Berlin, New York, and Washington, Tanzania, and Kenya as spaces that have incurred anti-US attacks. Correspondingly, Hoffman links locales across the Global South, 'Tripoli', 'Benghazi', 'training camps', and a 'pharmaceutical factory', as targets of the US' 'proportionate' and sometimes overly restrained retaliatory firepower (Hoffman 2001b: 1-2). Significantly, Hoffman, in conformity with editorial writers, omits any reference to the Oklahoma City bombing of 1995, which, as an FBI blog chronicles, was the 'worst act of homegrown terrorism in the nation's history' prior to September 2001.⁷⁰ He jettisons analysis of a domestically-based incident that would complicate the testimony's dualist cartography. Instead, he restricts his view of the US' dispersed vulnerabilities to locales in the Global North and South that proffer a clearer segue to its far-reaching, but judicious capacity for retaliation. This enables him to plot the September attacks on a cartography animated by circuits of assault and reprisal,

⁷⁰ <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/oklahoma-city-bombing>

and given that the testimony calls for ‘rethinking terrorism’ in the context of ‘a war on terrorism’, to suggest that the map will require a scalar readjustment (2001b).

A varied and more critical iteration of duality as a hallmark of the US’ entanglements with other domains in the international appears in Green’s editorial (2001). Green aims to identify the factors driving ‘the spread of terrorism from the Middle East’ that, he opines, will inevitably target the US (2001: 15). He does not explicate the reference to terrorism emanating from the region, barring a gesture towards ‘the once opulent Persian Gulf’ (15). Instead, the hazy geographical templates ground his contention that the US’ susceptibility to attack springs from its ‘perceived hypocrisy’ in allying with the region’s tainted, unrepresentative regimes contrary to its well-rehearsed advocacy of democracy (16). The gap between its rhetorical stance and its deeds, he continues, becomes the clarion call for terrorists mobilising against the US (16). In this construction of duality as hypocrisy, Green urges US policymakers to promote political and economic liberalisation across the region, and thus close the gap. However, the geographical imprecision of his commentary precludes serious engagement with the merits and efficacy of his otherwise well-sounding overtures. This is especially the case given the unpropitious record of structural adjustment and economic liberalisation in states such as Egypt or Tunisia, which later became the torchbearers of the so-termed Arab Spring. Similarly, Green does not consider whether greater democratisation across diverse states would ensure their ongoing support for US foreign policy objectives. The ameliorative policy approach that he propounds to shield the US from charges of duplicity nevertheless perpetuates an essentialist cartography that recuperates the complexity and specificity of US relations with key states into conventional liberal precepts. Condensing conflicted histories into a discrete problem, hypocrisy, Green does

not interrogate the broader strategic and security framework shaping US policies towards the states, but assumes its continuation after piecemeal reform. Despite its overt interest in political representation, his analytic elides the agency of the states concerned or their citizens in determining the form and substance of this framework.

Another key modality of the mapping exercise evacuates the emerging spatial configuration of any complexity regarding the origin and nature of the trajectories of violence that connect the US to the international. Rather, the cartography imposes a sharply bifurcated view of these trajectories that reinforces colonial and racial divisions. This is evidenced in the exclusive use of terrorism as a signifier of violence whose point of origin is fixed to geographies preponderantly located in the Global South (Lesser 2001: 14). In contrast, the US' recourse to violence in any form is construed as measured, redemptive, and in its present instantiation as the GWoT, the very *antidote* to terrorism. The point is underscored by Lesser who delimits the drivers or 'roots of terrorism' (Lesser 2001) to endogenous factors within particular states and regions where the US' role in its origination is entirely absent or tangential. In this respect, the cartography *others* terrorism as a practice that is specific to various locales across the international, and is only evinced in US as an externally-generated form of violence.

The cumulative effect of such discursive moves that label, demarcate, and populate disparate geographies is the sedimentation of a cartography that anticipates the *respatialisation* of the international via US intervention. Significantly, the texts examined illustrate how the sedimentation marries US exceptionalism to the 'the colonial difference' (Mignolo 1999) as a necessity rather than as a contingency. Denoting the irreducible distinction between the

coloniser and colonised, the ‘colonial difference’ haunts the international, parsing and imbuing space with particular characteristics such as disorder, violence, and diminished agency. A critical interrogation of either supposition, the US’ unique standing within the international and the colonially-inscribed distinction, would complicate the argument, and reveal the cartography’s assumptive biases. As will be discussed in subsequent sections, the logics underlying spatiality, notably essentialism, elision, and the iteration of colonial tropes, recur with regularity in the experts’ discourses and are crucial to the latter’s dissemination.

Subject construction

This section considers the last element in the typology, namely the discursive construction of subjects in the experts’ contributions. It aims to explicate the salience of subject construction as an element that operates in conjunction with processes of legitimation, temporalisation, and spatialisation to consolidate the geopolitical imaginary *and* moral economy of the GWoT. Specifically, the explicit or implicit assigning and categorisation of subjects in the texts, most notably the terrorist enemy, but also the think tank experts themselves and their interlocutors, work to establish the GWoT’s ontological binaries, which are vital to its pursuit. Stated otherwise, the texts provide an early indication of the significance of subjectivity and its associated knowledges as a key site of contestation in the GWoT. Subjectivity becomes pivotal to a war construed in abstract terms that disrupt conventional, notably statist, understandings of the enemy. As this study will detail, the GWoT’s regime of pacification centres the ‘deradicalised’, depoliticised, liberal *Muslim* subject as its prototype.⁷¹ The think tank discourses echo this undertaking in different ways, constructing the GWoT as a military-

⁷¹ RAND’s monograph entitled *Building Moderate Muslim Networks* (Benard et al 2006) exemplifies the copious literature devoted to this theme during the GWoT’s first decade.

ontological-epistemic project that targets particular, globally dispersed subjects, *and* the knowledges they embody.⁷²

As the discussion will demonstrate, the logics of subjectivity in the experts' interventions texts, as indeed in US (and allied) governmental and media discourse at large, foreshadow this ideal-typical subject through the polarities that they inscribe. The study elicits these logics through two principal methods. First, it anchors the discussion to a Foucauldian discourse-theoretic conception of the subject. It draws upon the conception's most salient elements acknowledging its cogency, and more generally, its immense influence across scholarly disciplines. However, it also recognises its limitations, and maintains that to become meaningful in the GWoT's context, the theorisation needs to incorporate discursive fields that Foucault's analytic largely disregards, namely colonialism, Orientalism, racism, and, spanning these, US exceptionalism. Second, it analyses each think tank's texts' instantiation of particular subjects as a pivotal, and indeed enduring component of embedding specific understandings of the GWoT. Furthermore, it relates the argument to the theoretical issues raised above.

Foucault, as Hall (1997: 57) explains, critiqued what may be termed 'the traditional conception of the subject' that denoted 'an individual who is fully endowed with consciousness; an autonomous and stable entity'. Rather, Foucault's interest lay in discovering 'the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects' (Foucault 1982 cited in Hall 1997: 57). As Youdell elaborates,

⁷² The extension of the grammar of the GWoT into the category of non-violent extremism illustrates this aim.

According to Foucault, the person is *subjectivated*—she/he is at once rendered a subject and subjected to relations of power through discourse. That is, *productive power* constitutes and constrains, but does not determine, the subjects with whom it is concerned (2006: 517).

Continuing, she notes that Foucault's works demonstrate 'how the subject is subjected to relations to power as she/he is individualized, categorized, classified, hierarchized, normalized, surveilled, and provoked to self-surveillance' (518). These 'technologies of subjection', she adds, are activated 'within institutions ... because institutions improvise, cite and circulate discursive frames and coterminous technologies that render subjects in relations of power' (518). In a related vein, Hall remarks that for Foucault the subject is '*produced within discourse*', which means that it 'cannot be outside discourse, because it must be *subjected to discourse*. It must submit to its rules and conventions, its dispositions of power and knowledge' (1997: 55 original italics). Thus, 'Subjects may produce texts, but they are still operating within the limits of the episteme, the discursive formation' (55). He then elaborates two ways in which discourse produces subjects. One involves personification in that 'the discourse itself produces...figures who personify the particular forms of knowledge which [it] produces' (56). Such subjects, Hall continues, 'have the attributes we would expect as these are defined by the discourse: the madman, the hysterical woman ...'; additionally, they are historicised, and only acquire meaning within 'specific discursive regimes and historical periods' (56). The other involves the discourse's production of subject positions, defined as '*a place for the subject*', in this instance the "reader or viewer who is also 'subjected to' discourse", specifically to its 'meanings, power and regulation' (56, original italics). It is only from this position, Hall adds, that the 'particular knowledge and meaning' embedded in the discourse 'most makes sense', 'become[s] meaningful and [has] effects' (56). In this way, discourse constructs 'the ideal

subject-position' (56) with which the reader or spectator 'is invited to identify (8), and thus become the 'bearer[] of its power/knowledge' (56).

The following discussion critically analyses the RAND texts in light of discussion above, drawing upon the Foucauldian conception of the subject. It begins by examining a key preoccupation in the texts, namely the production of the terrorist subject. This endeavour illustrates Hall's (1997: 56) reference to personification in that the texts produce figures who embody traits that acquire meaning, and enable recognition of the figures as *subjects* within the bounds of a specific historically situated discourse. Hall's example of psychiatric discourse constructing the madman (56) is paralleled in this context by the construction of the terrorist in the discourse of the GWoT that subsumes the think tanks' interventions as a constitutive element. However, echoing the discussion on spatiality, this section will also argue that the discourse of the GWoT does not operate in isolation, but overlaps to a significant degree with colonial and orientalist discourses.

The construction of the terrorist subject may be detailed by turning to the testimonies that precede and follow the onset of the war, and centre the depiction of the enemy as a terrorist. Even though the terrorist motif is ubiquitous in the accounts, its instantiation varies in each. Thus, Hoffman's Testimony CT 182 (2001c) encapsulates the enemy almost entirely in the figure of Bin Laden rather than in the Taliban or even al Qaeda. It is Bin Laden who is endowed with extraordinary qualities as the mastermind of attacks that Hoffman deems unique in the history of the US and indeed of terrorism in general (2001c: 4). Hoffman confers mythopoeic attributes upon Bin Laden that are redolent of 'the individual charismatic leader' of yesteryear,

‘a David against the American Goliath: *one man* standing up to the world’s sole remaining superpower (4, italics added). While Hoffman individuates the enemy in the person of Bin Laden, his attempt to explain the resonance of the latter’s message is steeped in essentialism. The message succeeds, he suggests, because it fuses ‘Islamic piety, Muslim fervour and general enmity towards the West’ (4). In tautological fashion then, the enemy is the one who harbours enmity but for reasons that remain obscure. Similarly, Hoffman does not clarify the significance of the epithets ‘Islamic’ and ‘Muslim’, nor does he explicate the distinction between ‘piety [and] fervour’ (4). Rather, the tacit expectation is that the epithets are self-explanatory, and will not impede the coherence of his commentary, which discursively constructs Bin Laden as the ontological rather than the political or sociological enemy.

Jenkins’ testimony (2001:6) also invokes the ‘megalomaniac leader’, but extends the list of enemy subjects to include the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Furthermore, it expands the framing of the enemy by associating the September attacks with the ‘new terrorism’ that is ostensibly rooted in ethnic and religious hate or in a fetish for wholesale destruction (6). Moreover, Jenkins enigmatically casts the foe as pursuing the ‘hostile’ rather than the ‘instrumental use[s] of violence’ (7). In a yet further extension, his analytic conjures a perturbed vision of antagonists proliferating into small ‘bands of irreconcilables, fanatics, and lunatics’ with easy access to chemical and nuclear weapons (9). Interestingly, Jenkins ascribes a ‘political’ calculus to the attacks of the 1990s, but does not discern the same for the attacks just witnessed, nor for those looming in a malign future.

The terrorist subject is also produced in the editorials. Thus, Thomson's editorial reprises the dismissal of political rationality, and constructs an enemy driven purely by the will to inflict 'spectacular' destruction upon the US and the West (2001: 13). In contrast, Lesser and Green attempt to produce *potential* terrorist subjects. Lesser opts for a 'systemic' understanding of terrorism directed at the US, but attributes it to *endogenous* factors in "dysfunctional societies and 'failed' states" that inculcate the terrorist subject's 'roots of rage' (14). He exonerates the US of any (geo)political contribution to such dysfunctionality or failure other than unwittingly sparking envy amongst the enraged for its successful pursuit of globalisation (14). In other instances where globalisation envy is not an operative factor, the absence of state sovereignty is identified as the harbinger of disorder that yields enemies in the guise of 'violent nonstate actors' (15). Lastly, Green ascribes Gulf states' citizens' animus towards the US to its avowedly hypocritical support for illegitimate and corrupt rulers in the region despite its official pro-democracy rhetoric.

Concomitantly, the discursive production of the terrorist subject *reproduces* the authoritative status of RAND expert as knowledge producers. Locating the enemy or terrorist subject amidst a medley of well-worn tropes, the RAND texts implicitly assert the experts' normative, intellectual, ideological, and societal distance from those they battle. Arguably, the reprisal of motifs such as rage, fanaticism, and resentment is constitutive in underwriting their credentials as rational, scholarly, and above all non-violent enunciators who transcend parochial self or institutional interests in offering panaceas for the prevailing disorder. The testimonies also shine a light on the experts' proximity to key organs of state as interlocutors for foreign and domestic policy, briefing powerful congressional committees in times of acute crisis.

In another sense, however, the experts' interlocutory role also resonates with Hall's observation that for Foucault, 'Subjects may produce texts, but they are still operating within the limits of the episteme, the discursive formation' (1997: 55). This statement bears upon wide-ranging debates regarding subject-agency tensions or as Potter & Wetherell (1990; cited in Bacchi 2006: 200) remark, on the question of 'how people use discourse and how discourse uses people'. In Foucault's case, as Ball (1990; cited in Bacchi 2006: 200) maintains, 'We do not speak the discourse. The discourse speaks us'. In this formulation, subjects or agents may produce or deploy discourse, but remain limited in their capacity to steer its meanings. This contention can be extended to the experts' production of texts, in this context the testimonies and editorials, that are constrained in certain ways by the exceptionalist, orientalist, and colonialist discourses that they reprise. It is arguable that the constraints emerge as opacity and abstraction, ahistoricity and depoliticisation, seen for example in previously discussed references to realms of chaos, dysfunctional societies, and fathomless enmity. The aim here is to suggest that these features combine to infuse the experts' arguments with *suggestibility and imprecision*, which *shield* their submissions from close scrutiny. The lack of rigour bespeaks shared normative and ideological assumptions of statehood and national identity that appear as common sense, and mask the lacunae in the argument. It serves as a strategic tool in the pursuit of policies whose impact on target populations is obscured by the (re)iteration of racialised myths pitting an elusive enemy against an exceptional global hegemon. The implication is less that the intellectual talents of the experts transmute the dross of knowledges imbued with cultural, racial, and religious essentialism on the one hand, and exceptionalism on the other, into policy-relevant gold. It is rather that their role as knowledge producing subjects demonstrates their syncretic skills in crafting ostensibly technocratic, and authoritative policy statements that

retain a fidelity to embedded, but tainted, imaginaries. Such syncretic endeavours reproduce the overarching discursive framework within which policies are fashioned; thus, what appear to be constraints become *essential* to the imperial privileges that the experts exercise as *users* (Potter & Wetherell 1990; cited in Bacchi 2006: 200) of discourses steeped in coloniality.

Lastly, the experts' submissions to congressional committees as a frontline audience constitute an especially vivid example of Hall's elucidation of subject positions (1997: 56). The testimonies comprise part of a discourse that locates congressional actors within the relations of power it embodies or in Hall's delineation, 'subjects' them to its 'rules and conventions, its dispositions of power/knowledge' (1997: 55). It is by occupying this position that the listeners make sense of the discourse, affirm the 'regime of truth' (Foucault 1980 cited in Hall 1997: 55) it upholds, and become the 'bearers of its power/knowledge' (56). In this instance, the 'ideal subject position' (56) is articulated through the fusion of elements from multiple discourses that are already in circulation, notably of US exceptionalism, Orientalism, and terrorism. The testimonies then (re)construct subject positions defined by the power/knowledge complexes embedded in these discourses with which the congressional audience are asked to in Hall's words 'to take up the positions indicated by the discourse, identify with them, subject [themselves] to its meanings, and become its 'subjects'' (60).

Conclusion

This chapter set out the core analytical and critical concerns of the thesis explored in Part 2. It inaugurated the thesis' aim to critically evaluate the think tanks' discursive interventions regarding the GWoT from its outset. It focused on a series of interventions by RAND experts at the incipient phases of the war, and followed with a critical overview based upon a heuristic

typology incorporating four thematic areas: legitimization, temporality, spatiality, and subject construction.

The texts examined comprise three congressional testimonies delivered between September and November 2001, and four editorials selected from the Fall 2001 issue of the *RAND Review*. A detailed critical survey of the texts conducted through the four areas of the typology contributed to the thesis' key arguments in three principal ways. First, it established the experts' privileged location with the power/knowledge matrix. Thus, it revealed their proximity to centres of political power, and their authoritative status as interlocutors in moments of national crisis; relatedly, it provided an early indication of the range of resources available for the publicisation of their views. Reference to the regularity of their depositions to Congress, their presence in congressional hearings in the immediate aftermath of a calamity such as the September attacks, and the amplification of their analyses in the *RAND Review* demonstrated this point. Second, the survey revealed how the texts' content indexed the experts' sustained investments in the discursive construction of the 'war on terror'. It outlined the experts' progression from the adumbration of sweeping domestic policy shifts following the September attacks to a near-exclusive preoccupation with the projection of US sovereign power in an open-ended project of global pacification. Subsumed under the umbrella of counterterrorism, and validated as a 'war on terror', the project was characterised as a historic turning point in US foreign policy. Warning of the dangers of inaction, the experts approached the prosecution of the war from a range of prescriptives, iterating its messianic aspects, but also grounding its viability in the multi-faceted instruments of US global power. Despite their preoccupation with Afghanistan as the war's opening gambit, the experts identified terrorism as a transglobal peril, thereby

pointing to the incremental opening of new fronts. Third, the survey disclosed the eclectic methodology guiding the experts' policy-making endeavours, in which technocratic realism is punctuated with recurrent invocations of US exceptionalism and coloniality. The latter was manifest in the use of racialised and orientalist tropes that imbued the texts with strategically significant degrees of imprecision and suggestibility. Furthermore, the methodology reflected a high degree of consensus amongst the experts, and was visible across the thematic areas of the typology in the legitimisation of war, the representation of temporality, the deployment of spatiality, and the construction of subjects.

Chapter 2 – The Heritage Foundation

From Afghanistan to Iraq

This chapter draws upon literature composed by experts at the Heritage Foundation between September and December 2001. Over 30 documents were authored in this period as commentaries or reports, the key distinction being length, and collectively comprise a multi-dimensional response to the attacks of 9/11 and the onset of war in Afghanistan. They offer explanations of the attacks as well as extended prescriptives for the pursuit of war incorporating military, strategic, geopolitical, legal, financial, and humanitarian concerns. In accordance with the purposes of this study, the chapter focuses upon the first three areas, and primarily examines interventions by Kim Holmes, Executive Vice President, and James Phillips, Senior Research Fellow for Middle Eastern Affairs who are the think tank's most prolific experts on Afghanistan. In terms of organization, their select contributions are discussed chronologically to capture the unfolding narratives of the war.

A declaration of war

The survey commences with a commentary co-authored by Holmes, and Jack Spencer, defence policy analyst, entitled 'More than a "Warning Shot"' (2001) that, was published on September 12, the very day after the attacks. It opens with a condemnation of US inaction in response to "so-called 'warning shots'" or previous attacks on American targets, namely the bombing of USS Cole, the Saudi bombings 1995 and 1996, and the 1992 attack on a hotel in Yemen (Holmes and Spencer 2001). The authors aver that the attacks of 9/11 are different as they took place on 'our shores', but index a war that 'was declared long ago' (2001). They explain that this is a war waged against the US for its promotion of 'freedom and democracy', which has

earned it the honorific of ‘the great satan’, and its prolongation reflects the US’ failure to ‘respond swiftly and surely to unprovoked attacks’ in the past (2001). They consider it an imperative that the attacks are recognized as ‘calculated acts of military aggression’ and ‘dealt with as such’ (2001). From this resounding opening, the authors adumbrate a raft of policy measures for urgent implementation. Thus, the president must seek an immediate declaration of war against any ‘group or state’ complicit in the attacks; states that have ‘harboured or supported’ the terrorists must be held ‘accountable’, and if Taliban are deemed culpable, the US must pursue regime change in Afghanistan ‘by any means necessary’; the US must deter future terrorist attacks by undertaking a long due overhaul of intelligence and technical capabilities; it must formulate a comprehensive ‘homeland defense policy’ that includes industrial infrastructure, financial and computer systems; finally it must abandon its ‘complacency’ regarding anti-ballistic missile defence, and embark upon a new programme of development (2001). The authors conclude with the declaration ‘Enough is enough. Like it or not we are at war. Let’s start acting like it’ (2001).

Constraining coalitions

The second commentary, published on 17th September, is authored by Holmes and is entitled ‘The Attack on America: Beware of Constraints Imposed by International Coalition’ (Holmes 2001a). The commentary reflects the rapid progression in Holmes’ thought as he moves from sketching a broad programmatic response to the attacks to focusing exclusively on the potential hazards of coalition building. Holmes voices approval of Bush’s call for a ‘global coalition’ against terrorism and proceeds to analyse Pakistan’s response. He notes that the Pakistani government has agreed ‘to cooperate’ with the US in several ways, including by opening up

airspace to US overflights; however, it has also indicated that it would only grant territorial access to a military force if it were international and included troops from other Muslim states (2001a). Referring also to Colin Powell's overtures to Iran to join the global coalition, Holmes foregrounds 'the very important question' concerning the extent to which the US should 'allow members of a coalition to limit the means and ends of any operation it must undertake' (2001a). To explain, he recalls the ambivalent role of allied 'Middle Eastern countries' in the first Gulf war who extended logistical and ideational support to the US, but 'also limited the military campaign' (2001a). An example of such curtailment was evinced, he notes, in various Arab states' and Turkey's opposition to the toppling of Saddam Hussain such that sustaining a coalition of dissenting members itself became a 'strategic and political' objective of US policy (2001a). A further constraint appeared in the requirement of a UN mandate for the coalition's remit since the sanctioning of military action did not authorise Saddam Hussain's removal (2001a).

For Holmes, recalling the restrictive impact of past coalitional strategies is instructive in the present when the US requires 'as much diplomatic support as possible...not only from allies but from countries in the Middle East, Eurasia, Central Asia and even East Asia' (2001a). This support, he opines, is 'politically and militarily necessary to mount an effective campaign' (2001a). He acknowledges that the US already has 'access to bases in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey and Oman'; however, it will require 'other access if it wishes to undertake operations in Afghanistan' including 'a basing agreement with Pakistan' (2001a). Due to these exigencies, 'the US must beware' that its calls for 'access' or 'closer military cooperation' may 'whet the appetite of America's would-be allies' such as Pakistan with the consequence that 'the price

may go up' (2001a). In such circumstances, the US must ensure that its 'freedom of action' is not overly compromised and it still retains 'the right to undertake any action necessary' to prosecute its mission (2001a). Specifically, the US must resist moves for a UNSC resolution on the matter, and likewise refuse to forego cooperation with India or Israel; rather, Holmes declares,

'Pakistan must be asked to make a decision: does it support the United States or not in its campaign to eliminate terrorism?' (2001a).

Even in the case of the US' 'closest allies', namely the United Kingdom and other NATO states, Holmes adds that 'the price of entry must be unreserved support for the [US'] political and military objectives' (2001a). Finally, he fears that in soliciting 'Islamic support for a war against radical Islamic terrorism' and demonstrating that this is not a war on Islam, the US may 'restrain itself militarily to accommodate the...complex and contradictory political agenda of Islamic states' (2001a). In concluding, he renews his exhortation that the US be 'realistic' and recognise that whilst some 'deals' with coalition partners are requisite for 'the cause',

'No coalition partner should be allowed to dictate ... the terms, conditions or nature of military operations; who should or should not be part of the ... coalition; or what kind of foreign policies America should pursue' (2001a).

Hastening to Iraq

The section examines a report authored by Holmes (2001b) entitled, 'America Strikes Back: Looking Ahead' dated 8th October, a day after the launch of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Holmes acknowledges that airstrikes have begun and may last 'for days' whilst 'military operations' to support anti-Taliban 'rebel forces' and to 'find and destroy Bin Laden's network' may require 'a long time after that' (2001b). He suggests that the challenges of the latter are less onerous than those attending 'the next phase of the war against global terrorism',

namely the pursuit of ‘the entire international network of global terrorism, including the states that harbour terrorists’ (2001b). To progress to this phase and in anticipation of ‘complete victory’, ‘the job in Afghanistan’ must be finished ‘as soon as possible’ (2001b). The remainder of the report outlines measures to produce such outcomes. The first item, a pledge of humanitarian, diplomatic and material aid to ‘any’ successor regime that abjures terrorism, respects human rights, and embraces peaceful coexistence with its neighbours, pertains solely to Afghanistan (2001b). The second is a “strategy of ‘sequencing’ the war against terrorism”, and envisaging it as ‘a series of phases in which we take on one problem at a time’ (2001b). The third elaborates the sequence by placing ‘a nuclear armed Iraq’ ‘at the top of the list’ of states that pose ‘an unacceptable risk for the security of the United States’ due to their terrorist proclivities and their acquisition of WMDs (2001b). Concomitantly, Holmes envisages a ‘flexible...timetable’ for Saddam’s removal, and warns that his continued presence will compromise the US’s success in combating terrorism (2001b). The fourth urges President Bush to commence a ‘diplomatic...[and] educational campaign’ soliciting Gulf and European allies’ support for Saddam’s ouster ‘by any means necessary’, and initiate the cultivation of opposition groups for a future Iraqi government (2001b). Finally, the accomplishment of missions in Afghanistan and Iraq should be commemorated with a declaration to ‘put other terrorist-supporting states on notice that they will not escape America’s wrath’ if they fail to desist from such activity (2001b). Identifying potential wrath-incurring states as Iran, Syria, Sudan and Libya, Holmes clarifies that whilst direct military intervention should never be ‘ruled out’, there are ‘many other ways’ for the US to ‘isolate, pressure and even overthrow’ recalcitrant regimes (2001b).

Targeting Iraq

This section examines publications by James Phillips, Senior Research Fellow for Middle Eastern Affairs at the Heritage Foundation, that were published between October and December 2001. Phillips amplifies Holmes' call to sequence the war by toppling Saddam Hussain by projecting Iraq as a greater peril than Afghanistan as regards the terrorist threat. The two publications, an extended report dated 2nd October (Phillips 2001a) that predates Holmes' contribution as well as the launch of Operation Enduring Freedom, and a commentary dated 18th October differ primarily in length rather than in content. The report entitled, 'Target Iraq's Terrorist Regime, Not Just Bin Laden to Win the War on Terrorism' (Phillips 2001a) is discussed here to elucidate the remobilisation of the terrorism discourse in the Iraqi context.

Phillips commences by affirming that war in Afghanistan is essential to destroy Osama bin Laden's 'global terrorist network' and uproot 'its Taliban protectors' (2001a). Nevertheless, he notes, these measures will be insufficient to 'stop terrorism' since 'troubling questions' remain about possible Iraqi support for al Qaeda (2001a). As he explains, *regardless* of the evidence available 'any war against terrorism' that leaves Saddam Hussain in power 'will be judged a failure' since his regime is founded on 'systematic terrorism' against its citizens and neighbours (2001a). Therefore, it is crucial that US to 'push hard and fast for regime changes in both Baghdad and Kabul' (2001a).

Henceforth, Phillips strives to establish the grounds for such a course of action. His argument proceeds as follows: although Iraq's complicity in the September attacks cannot be substantiated, there is 'mounting evidence' of its links with al Qaeda (Phillips 2001a). Iraq's 'long record of supporting terrorist groups...as an adjunct of foreign policy' absents actual

incidents or ‘a smoking gun’ should not be ignored (2001a). This is because Iraq has ‘violated the cease-fire agreement’ that ended the first Gulf war, and is thus ‘technically at war’ with the US (2001a). The capacity to manufacture WMDs renders Iraq ‘a much greater threat to national security than Osama bin Laden’, and it must be thwarted from becoming ‘an even more dangerous terrorist state’ (2001a).

Having outlined the case for regime change, Phillips advances a series of preparatory political and military manoeuvres. Amongst these is the extension of ‘full support’ to Iraqi opposition groups, particularly the Iraqi National Congress (INC) (Phillips 2001a). The opposition, he notes, currently controls the ‘only safe haven’ in Iraqi Kurdistan, and the US must seek Turkey’s collaboration in cementing ‘a political-military alliance between the INC and the Kurds’ (2001a). This will enable the INC to return to the ‘northern mountains’ and form a provisional government under protection of US air power (2001a).

Afghan endgames revisited

The final document referenced in this section is Phillips’ ‘Keys to the Endgame in Afghanistan’ (Phillips 2001b). It was published on 6th December, almost two months after the fall of Kabul and on the eve of the fall of Kandahar, the Taliban’s last remaining stronghold. It is the longest of the documents surveyed thus far, and represents a shift in focus from advocacy of regime change in Iraq to an overview of the challenges of consolidation and pacification in post-Taliban Afghanistan. Thus, it marks a discursive transition from the logic of regime change to the project of ‘nation-building’ incorporating military, geopolitical, and governmental concerns. It is notable that Phillips’ preoccupation with ‘Endgames’ has a precedent in a piece entitled ‘Winning the Endgame in Afghanistan’ that he authored in May 1992 following the collapse of

the communist government of President Najibullah. This chapter cannot engage at length with this text; however, a cursory glance at its central arguments is instructive. Phillips' principal endeavour in the 1992 report is to dissuade the US from 'turn[ing] its back on its former Afghan clients before a stable and lasting peace can be brought to Afghanistan' (Phillips 1992). As he observes, while Afghanistan may have

'...lost its Cold War importance as a cockpit for anti-Soviet struggle ... [it] remains a strategic crossroads that links Central Asia to the Persian Gulf region and the Indian subcontinent. Afghanistan looms large as a factor in the outcome of the intensifying political and ideological struggle for influence in Central Asia between Islamic fundamentalist Iran and secular democratic Turkey' (1992).

Phillips fears Afghanistan's descent into civil war and anarchy, but his overriding concern is the growing influence of Gulbuddin Hekmetyar, 'the ruthless leader of one of the most radical and most heavily-armed resistance groups, the Islamic Party' as well as 'the spread of Iranian-style Islamic fundamentalism' across the region (1992). His 'endgame' therefore envisages a series of economic, diplomatic and strategic measures, centring upon 'Washington, Islamabad and Riyadh' that will strengthen 'moderate Afghan groups', 'help build a stable, moderate, pluralistic Afghanistan', and promote 'a flourishing free market economy' (1992). These goals can only be attained if the Bush administration 'end[s] its passivity and formulate[s] a coherent U.S. policy toward Afghanistan's post-war reconstruction'(1992).

Phillips's re-visitation of the endgame two decades later indexes the progress of the newest war, specifically the erosion of Taliban control following the combined onslaught of the Northern Alliance, relentless US aerial bombardment, and US Special Forces' interventions, notably in reconnaissance. In this context, he evaluates the evolving military and political balance, and makes a series of policy recommendations to ensure that the Taliban are 'defeated in detail',

and a new viable political settlement becomes conceivable (2001b). The report is notable for relaying Phillips' commanding view of the situation and incorporates various references to Pakistan in threading its disparate elements. The following discussion seeks to draw out its central arguments.

Consolidating victory

Phillips commences by noting the satisfactory completion of the first phase of the war as evidenced in the capture of all cities except Kandahar, which along with 'the southern hinterland' marked the Taliban's stronghold (2001b). Control of cities is not coterminous with victory, he notes, especially as their support base extends to 'the teeming Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan, and [to] Pakistani Pashtuns, who...are concentrated on the border', and possibly to 'the radical madrassas...in Afghanistan and Pakistan funded by Arab fundamentalists' (2001b). Various contingencies compound Phillips' fears of a thwarted victory: the prospect that the Taliban leader Mullah Omar may hide in Afghanistan's 'rugged mountains' or shelter in 'the unruly frontier provinces of Pakistan'; the 'notoriously fickle' character of Afghan politics, and the risks of factional infighting or Pashtun resentment of non-Pashtun influence; the danger that an extended US presence, even if humanitarian in scope, may be 'denounced as an occupying force'; and the potential rise of a new government in Pakistan disinclined to support the US (2001b). 'For all of these reasons' he continues, it is vital that the US deliver 'a swift knockout blow' against Taliban leaders, to secure 'an irreversible military and political victory' (2001b).

Bolstering an anti-Taliban alliance

Phillips enumerates the mechanisms for attaining victory. First, he urges ‘military and economic support’ for the Northern Alliance to maintain ‘relentless pressure’ on the Taliban and al Qaeda, but discourages promoting the Alliance as the future government due to its weak support amongst Pashtuns (Phillips 2001b). He recognises Pakistan’s reservations about the Alliance in view of its affiliations with Russia, India, Uzbekistan, and Iran, but advises against acceding to the Pakistani request to stall the Alliance’s advance until a provisional government takes control in Kabul (2001b). Attempts to ‘appease Pakistan’ by awaiting the formation of ‘a pro-Pakistani post-war government’ are ‘unrealistic’ he observes, and would enable the Taliban to regroup, grant Bin Laden ‘more time to... attack Americans’, and increase ‘the political costs of the war’ for the US and its allies (2001b). Furthermore, he considers it vital to expedite the Alliance’s southern advance since its progress will directly influence the US’ capacity

‘to twist the Afghan political kaleidoscope, induce Taliban defections, and enlist opportunistic Pashtun tribes to dismember the Taliban, [and] hunt down Bin Laden’ (2001b).

Next, Phillips urges redoubling efforts to ‘recruit’ non-Taliban Pashtuns as allies especially via ‘charismatic local leaders’ since the ‘primary allegiance of most Pashtuns—indeed most Afghans—is to their qaum (the Arabic word for tribe)’ (2001b). Such leaders must be offered a melee of present incentives as well as ‘great rewards in the future’ (2001b). Recent developments such as Pashtun tribal leaders’ willingness to confront the Taliban as well as Taliban commanders’ defection back to the tribal militias are promising (2001b).

Creating governments, reconstructing states

Phillips then counsels the establishment of a new ‘decentralised post-war’ national government that is ‘broad, inclusive, multi-ethnic’ and free of the ‘factional feuding’ that occurred in 1992 and 1996 (Phillips 2001b). He welcomes the Bonn Agreement, negotiated amongst diverse Afghan factions and brokered by the UN to establish an interim administration in Kabul (2001b). He is, however, concerned that ‘a viable power-sharing arrangement’ will prove taxing, given the Northern Alliance’s reluctance to join a consociational pact with diasporic groups lacking a military base in Afghanistan; accordingly, he urges ‘firm American diplomacy’ to forestall the group from ‘overplaying its hand’ (2001b). Extolling the virtues of a federalist political system, and a new generation of leaders such as Hamid Karzai, Phillips laments the ‘external meddling’ that ended the half century of ‘stability’ enjoyed by Afghans from 1930 to 1978 (2001b). He attributes the interference initially to ‘Soviet-inspired Afghan communists’ striving to ‘impose totalitarian rule...by force’, and subsequently to the ‘Pakistani-supported Taliban’ endeavouring to ‘impose harsh Islamic extremism by force’; however, he is hopeful that ‘freed of outside meddling’ and incentivised with offers of ‘considerable international aid’, Afghans may consensually agree to a new government (2001b).

Building on these insights, Phillips urges Afghans to become ‘active stakeholders’ rather than ‘passive clients of the UN’ in the project of post-war reconstruction (2001b). Acknowledging that the UN will have a role to play in this phase, he insists that it be ‘a supportive one’ rather than one in which its functionaries mimic ‘viceroys seeking to micromanage Afghan affairs’ in the form of ‘a colonial mandate’ (2001b). Change, he notes, must ‘spring organically’ and

nation building must include reform of educational institutions to ‘weed out...radical Islamic ideologies’ that produced Taliban rule alongside ‘madrassas in Pakistan’ (2001b). As such, the US must press Pakistan to “close or reform the ‘jihad factory’ madrassas”, and reconstruct its educational infrastructure (2001b).

Default to the buffer state

Phillips’ penultimate recommendation calls for reconfiguring Afghanistan’s ‘historic role as a buffer state’ via a peace treaty negotiated by the US, Russia and its six neighbouring states on the model of the 1955 State Treaty guaranteeing Austrian neutrality (Phillips 2001b). The treaty would free Afghanistan of the ‘meddling’ that has characterized the past 25 years (2001b). Phillips refers to attempts by Uzbekistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Russia and India to exert influence via disparate ‘ethnic and religious groups’, but is primarily concerned with Pakistan’s likely reluctance to sign the treaty due to its aspirations to include ‘Taliban moderates’ in a prospective government (2001b). He recalls the diverging policy orientations of the US and Pakistan after Soviet withdrawal when Pakistan pursued strategic depth through a distinctively pro-Taliban stance to minimise the fallout from a potential war with India, offset Pashtun nationalism, and intensify ‘the Muslim separatist insurgency in Kashmir’ (2001b). He urges the US to mitigate Pakistan’s ‘sense of alarm’ at its waning influence in Afghanistan, notably via pledges of economic aid, rescheduling foreign debt, and reducing India-Pakistan tensions through ‘confidence-building measures’ and dialogue over Kashmir (2001b). Although Pakistan remains at the forefront of Phillips’ ruminations regarding Afghanistan’s proposed re-emergence as *a buffer state*, he also advocates US engagement within the wider region (2001b).

Future deployments

In concluding, Phillips outlines the hazards of the US' assuming 'an open-ended' peacekeeping role in Afghanistan (2001b). Acknowledging the Bonn Agreement's call for a multinational peacekeeping force, Phillips insists that the US' contribution must be delimited to the fulfilment of its 'military objectives' (2001b). Thereafter its forces 'should be redeployed to other theatres of the war on terrorism' especially since retaining troops would be 'a lightning rod' for terror attacks from Taliban sympathisers comparable to the 'virulently anti-American Islamic radicals' who launched attacks in Lebanon in 1983 and Somalia in 1993 (2001b). He reasserts this point in his conclusion,

'The United States must win the war in Afghanistan as quickly and decisively as possible to set the stage for subsequent campaigns in the global war against international terrorism' (2001b).

Critical overview

This section interrogates Heritage experts' early responses to the attacks of September 11 using the typology established in the last chapter.

Legitimation

First, as regards legitimation, Heritage contributions resonate to a considerable degree with those of RAND experts, but display a new stridence in relinquishing such a task. Holmes and Spencer depict the September attacks as the latest salvo in a long-running war against the US, and attribute their occurrence to its 'inaction' following 'unprovoked attacks' in the past (Holmes and Spencer 2001). In echoes of RAND testimonies, legitimation exists *a priori*, and military action at this juncture becomes a retroactive undertaking to redress successive policy lapses. In another parallel, the extraneous need for legitimation is matched by the swift

delegitimation of the September attacks as devoid of apolitical logic and fuelled solely by pique at the US' advocacy of 'freedom and democracy' (Holmes and Spencer 2001). In a further correspondence, the Heritage commentaries instantiate legitimation through various concepts and modalities shaping praxis. It is in the detail that contrasts with RAND begin to emerge.

Continuing with the categorisation of the conflict and elaboration of its objectives, Holmes and Spencer (2001) diverge from Hoffman's deployment of the frame of counterterrorism, and opt instead for the stark canvass of 'war', and occasionally 'the war on terror' (Phillips 2001a). Holmes (2001b) assigns a gradated logic to the objectives of this 'war'. While echoing Hoffman's and Jenkins' preoccupation with overhauling security and intelligence infrastructure within the US, Holmes (2001b) adumbrates a protracted military campaign commencing with regime change in Afghanistan, and thereafter extending in conjunction with non-military modalities to 'the entire ... network of global terrorism'. Pivotal to the latter phase is the attack on 'a nuclear armed Iraq', and beyond that the disciplining of other states such as Iran and Syria through forms of coercion encapsulating the imperium's 'wrath' (Holmes 2001b). Phillips (2001a) reinforces Holmes' trajectory of armed intervention stating that the Afghan campaign would be futile if it did not presage regime change in Iraq, and he strives to underscore the urgency of this goal. In the extended report of December 2001, however, Phillips (2001b) renews the focus on pacifying Afghanistan following Taliban defeat.

The Heritage accounts then exhibit instances of variation in form and substance rather than outright dissonance with RAND experts' conceptualisation of the war's objectives. They inaugurate a teleology encompassing regime change Afghanistan to Iraq, and subsequently a

panoply of disciplinary measures directed at other offending states. The programmatic and bellicose appropriation of the international in a multi-faceted war that accompanies the reconfiguration of the domestic counterterror architecture contrasts with RAND's more diffuse proclamations regarding intangible threats and disordered locales. RAND writings adopt a less belligerent tone, encompassing political, economic and military instruments in a broad counterterror strategy rather than an undisguised campaign of regime change.

Present modalities

In outlining the modalities of war, Holmes (2001a, 2001b) and Phillips (2001a, 2001b) expend considerable labour in moving between macro and micro-level analyses of the incipient phases of regime change (Iraq and Afghanistan) or those of stabilisation (Afghanistan). Approached initially from the macro level, the most singular aspect of this exercise is its framing by Holmes (2001a) within the vocabulary of 'constraint', and relatedly the linking of the latter to individual states such as Pakistan and Turkey. Holmes (2001a) centres the 'very important question' of constraint in his commentary of 17th September recalling past US' experiences of coalition-management, which are now linked to the possibility that Pakistan and other allied states may demand greater concessions. In order to counter such perturbing inclinations, Holmes (2001a) iterates the fundamentals of US' exceptionalism. Interspersing his commentary with phrases such as 'freedom of action', 'the right to undertake any action necessary', 'unreserved support' of allies, 'dictat[ing] the terms, conditions or nature of military operations', Holmes (2001a) ensures that the logics of coalition building are subordinated to the imperatives of US sovereign power. His blunt proposition to Pakistan regarding its 'decision' virtually replicates George

Bush's oft-quoted ultimatum to a global audience (2001a).⁷³ Coercion, co-optation, and a clearly delineated hierarchical relation, then, underwrite the rules of coalition building in Holmes' and Phillips' commentaries bringing the question of modality into sharp relief, and subsuming it within the assertion of US primacy.

Framed as articulations of untrammelled US power, the experts' elaborations of modalities are notable for additional factors. One relates to the frenetic pace at which the early commentaries transition from Afghanistan, now cast as 'a job' (Holmes 2001b) for expeditious completion, to Iraq. Holmes' (2001a) commentary of 17th September published *eight* days after the attacks on the Twin Towers foreshadows the tilt that becomes explicit in Phillips' (2001a) report in which Afghanistan is all but eclipsed. In turn, the redirected focus upon Iraq denotes a parallel shift to the doctrine of pre-emption. Thus, Phillips (2001a) tacitly acknowledges the dearth of evidence surrounding the alleged WMDs in Iraq's armoury, and its putative support for terrorism, but proceeds to invest an unsubstantiated case with the same degree of facticity that Heritage experts claim as the hallmark of their oeuvre. Stated otherwise, the tenuous rationale of pre-emption does not dissuade Phillips from approaching intervention as a foregone conclusion and adumbrating its anticipatory steps, for example the co-optation of Iraqi opposition groups (2001a).

Past Modalities

Phillips' report of December 2001 (2001b) concerning the Afghan 'Endgame' surpasses the commentaries in terms of the degree of detail accorded to modalities, in this case the post-war

⁷³ <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/gen.attack.on.terror/>

challenges of pacification. The multiple axes along which modalities are invoked in the commentaries are reprised in this report as investments of enhanced scope and detail. The shift to minutiae reflects the altered context as the complexities of pacification eclipse the fervid launch of military action with the potential to frustrate the Taliban's imminent defeat. The discussion sheds some of its peremptoriness and manifests a degree of anxiety regarding the consolidation of 'irreversible victory', and the US's capacity to 'twist' renegade elements into compliance (Phillips 2001b). It also acquires a more dynamic character, and acquires a closer link with changing facts on the ground.

In this it recalls its forerunner in the 'Endgame' of 1992 which also privileged political and strategic modalities even though military imperatives had yet to fade from view.⁷⁴ The 1992 text merits revisiting for the light it sheds on the ways in which the iterations of endgames are insightful as well as reductive. This may be seen in Phillips' forewarnings regarding infighting amongst Afghan mujahideen factions and the looming spectre of civil war, which chimed with consistent refrains in Pakistan's foreign policy statements (Phillips 1992). In July 1992, the journalist Steve Coll penned two op-eds after conducting a series of interviews with General Muhammad Yousaf, the Pakistani intelligence officer in charge of the covert assistance programme for Afghanistan:

'To some who managed the Afghan program, the violent factionalism that accompanied the mujaheddin victory in April suggested that the CIA had done too little to promote political success for the Afghans as well as a military victory. To many in Pakistan, U.S. abandonment of the alliance seemed final evidence of a ruthless, fickle America that never cared very much about anything other than turning back the Soviet tide in central Asia' (Coll, 1992a).

⁷⁴ In 1992, the latter relate to the impending outbreak of civil war amongst mujahideen factions.

However, Phillips (1992) displays a deeper anxiety regarding the spread of Iranian-backed ‘fundamentalism’ across Central Asia in the Muslim post-Soviet successor states. The posture is ironic when juxtaposed to Coll’s allusion to a visit by CIA director, William Casey, to Islamabad in 1984 to ‘plan strategy’ in the ongoing Afghan war (Coll, 1992b). Coll’s remarks are instructive,

‘During the visit, Casey startled his Pakistani hosts by proposing that they take the Afghan war into enemy territory -- into the Soviet Union itself. Casey wanted to ship subversive propaganda through Afghanistan to the Soviet Union's predominantly Muslim southern republics. The Pakistanis agreed, and the CIA soon supplied thousands of Korans, as well as books on Soviet atrocities in Uzbekistan and tracts on historical heroes of Uzbek nationalism, according to Pakistani and Western officials (Coll, 1992b)’.

This raises questions as to whether Phillips’ fears of ‘fundamentalism’ were amplified by knowledge of the possible fallout from previous episodes in the covert war. Similarly, in relation to the aversion to Hekmetyar, Coll (1992b) recounts how ‘conservative activists’ pressed the Reagan administration to intensify assistance to the Afghan mujahideen. Consequently, from 1985 the CIA obliged by supplying

‘...extensive satellite reconnaissance data of Soviet targets on the Afghan battlefield, plans for military operations based on the satellite intelligence, intercepts of Soviet communications, secret communications networks for the rebels, delayed timing devices for tons of C-4 plastic explosives for urban sabotage and sophisticated guerrilla attacks, long-range sniper rifles, a targeting device for mortars that was linked to a U.S. Navy satellite, wire-guided anti-tank missiles, and other equipment’

and later, Stinger missiles (Coll 1992b). Coll does not name Heritage experts amongst the ‘conservative’ activists, but a report also penned by Phillips on 1st February 1984 entitled ‘U.S. Aid for Afghan Freedom Fighters Overdue’ relays his contention that

‘Afghan resistance leaders remain disappointed by the insignificant trickle of foreign--particularly American--aid for their cause. The Afghans have no realistic chance of frustrating Soviet designs on their country unless they receive the

military tools they need to force Moscow into meaningful negotiations. This will not happen until bureaucratic resistance within the U.S. government is overcome' (Phillips, 1984).

Phillips subsequently itemises a list of weapons that in his view would change the course of the war (1984). Coll describes the deepening nexus involving the CIA, the ISI and the mujahideen:

'At any one time during the Afghan fighting season, as many as 11 ISI teams trained and supplied by the CIA accompanied the mujaheddin across the border to supervise attacks... The teams attacked airports, railroads, fuel depots, electricity pylons, bridges and roads... Experts on psychological warfare brought propaganda and books. Demolitions experts gave instructions on the explosives needed to destroy key targets ... CIA operations officers helped Pakistani trainers establish schools for the mujaheddin in secure communications, guerrilla warfare, urban sabotage and heavy weapons' (Coll 1992b).

As for the recipients of the arms and funds, Coll (1992b) also notes that according to Yousaf, Hekmetyar received between 18-20% whilst the four 'fundamentalist' groups collectively received approximately 75%; these estimates are corroborated by US and European sources who added that Hekmetyar's consignments tended to be superior since his troops consistently demonstrated their skill in using more sophisticated arms than did other factions.⁷⁵ Given Phillips' close involvement in the war's modalities, it is difficult to assume his ignorance of these trends.

Imperial calibrations

In the renewed endgame of December 2001, Phillips (2001b) directs his well-honed skills to securing the end of the Taliban regime by urging defections, recruiting non-Taliban Pashtun fighters, and reining in Northern Alliance ambitions. The omnibus concern is the exercise of imperial governmentality, and the calibration of other actors' influence and contributions. It is

⁷⁵ See Phillips (2001a).

not devoid of irony as evinced for example in Phillips' (2001b) concern regarding the UN's assumption of a viceregal presence . It is also discernible in the extended references to Pakistan, which is assigned an increasingly prominent role in the evolving calculus of regime change; whereas restraining the UN appears uncomplicated, moulding Pakistan's strategic priorities to align with the US' presents a greater challenge (2001b). Phillips identifies four areas where Pakistan's historic support for the Taliban may influence a post-war settlement: the establishment of post-Taliban governments, the US' support for the Northern Alliance, the presence of madrassas and refugee camps on the border, and the proposed recasting of Afghanistan as a 'buffer state' (2001b). Phillips' analytic vacillates between injunctions against 'appeasing' Pakistan or offering it various incentives (2001b). Arguably, the proper configuration of Pakistan's role in the stabilisation of a post-Taliban Afghanistan itself becomes a critical modality of the war effort, and one whose precise contours are already marked by tensions.

Temporality

Heritage texts overlap with RAND contributions on the theme of temporality, but also evince notable points of contrast. Thus, Holmes' and Spencer's commentary (2001) reprises the double-edged quality of the September 11 attacks in recapitulating past failures and presaging a reconfigured future. From a common starting point, however, the Heritage commentaries shift to a directed approach that parses time along a trajectory in which the war traverses disparate locales, and divests the Afghan campaign of its singularity. This makes for contrast with the RAND contributions, in which the projection of an open-ended and itinerant conflict eschews a more segmented dynamic. The Heritage pieces begin by advancing a linear teleology with no

end point, but invoke a segmented war with each phase delimited in time, fought decisively, and succeeded by another campaign. However, as Phillips' 'Endgame' (2001b) shows, Heritage accounts become more circumspect about securing victory in Afghanistan, hence the preoccupation with steering events to a satisfactory conclusion (Phillips 2001b). The measures outlined relate both to the immediate and longer term, but continue to emphasise the significance of *speed* (Holmes 2001b; Phillips 2001a). Time, then, is appropriated for the unleashing of US military might to the effect that the deferral of victory in a war with no finite markers is made contingent upon the swift resolution of its individual phases. The post-haste insertion of Iraq into the schema of regime change reflects this dynamic as do Phillips' (2001b) micro level prescriptives regarding delay in Afghanistan that index the dual logics of achieving victory as an end in itself, but also instrumentally as the preamble to war in Iraq. Cast as the navigation of bounded and unbounded futures, temporality is central to the operations of US exceptionalism, and its constitutive discourses.

Spatiality

The Heritage commentaries and report also parallel RAND's contributions as performances of spatiality, and once again display a series of commonalities and contrasts. As in RAND's case, a foundational distinction is posited between 'our shores' 'the homeland' (Holmes and Spencer 2001), and an external realm that is defined sometimes as the 'international' sometimes as the 'global' (Phillips 2001b). However, at some variance from RAND, the plural meanings of the 'global'/'international' become more explicit. The terms represent a war-space accessible to disciplinary and/or sovereign power or as the fertile terrain for 'a coalition' against 'terrorism', but one *already* implicated in the exercise of US supremacy (Holmes 2001a). The

international/global bespeak the performances of US power on spaces shaped by the imperatives of the 'homeland' be it in conditions of war or of peace, conflict or cooperation. As such the initially posited dichotomy is elided and the war becomes the instrument for reasserting the extension of the 'homeland' over the global/international through its domestication.

The variance is also evidenced in Heritage's geographies of 'wrath' (Holmes 2001b) in which specific states are identified for imminent intervention rather than the abstracted terrains in RAND's contributions; relatedly, special emphasis is accorded to the geopolitical calculations of Afghanistan's neighbours, notably Pakistan (Phillips 2001b). Phillips' account of Pakistan's motivations is, however, partial. It forecloses engagement with the structural legacies of Cold War geopolitics as these pertain to Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to decolonisation. Instead, Phillips reduces causation to the 'meddling' of two states, namely the Soviet Union and Pakistan (Phillips 2001b).

Trope surges and transitional spaces

Phillips' (2001b) analytic is further compromised as he shifts from a global or regional template to the local, understood as the Pakistan-Afghanistan border or as the internally fractured geography of Afghanistan. Although his use of well-worn tropes seems curious, given Heritage writers' characteristic directness, it is arguable that these are central to a discursive strategy in which closer engagement with complex historical legacies is inimical to imperial purpose, and that facticity is again subordinated to mythology. Phillips (2001b) depicts the border as 'the unruly frontier', a space populated by 'teeming ... refugee camps', 'concentra[tions]' of

Pashtuns, and the ‘radical madrassas’ of a ‘jihad factory’, in sum a site of suspect encounters between renegade populations and proscribed forms of knowledge. Mapped thus, the border’s threatening territoriality complements the portentous geography of Afghanistan’s interior denoted by ‘rugged mountains’ and the ‘southern hinterland’ (Phillips 2001b). The essentialised landscape naturalises historical and nascent wars, and decentres the US’ pivotal role in these. As such, spatiality in Phillips’ account reveals the elisions in Heritage’s cartographical analytic as it alternates between named states and obfuscatory tropes.

Significantly, the spatialised tropes also produce Afghanistan as *a transitional space*, one experiencing transformation from terrorist sanctuary to pacified ‘buffer state’ in which the dynamism of US military power encounters the immobility of ‘hinterland[s]’ ‘mountains’ and ‘borders’ (Phillips 2001b). In recalling the ‘historic’ ‘buffer state’ to denote its future destiny, Phillips visualises Afghanistan’s transition as a journey from *one set of colonial tropes to another* (2001b). The transitional aspect imbues the project of regime change with contingency; in the spaces produced through elision, the ‘border’ is directly implicated in the future salvation of Afghanistan, and by inference is a space *legitimated* for future disciplinary intervention. The imagined ‘*buffer state*’ then represents the ‘endgame’ of the US project of regime change in which international guarantees of non-intervention legitimate the (re)production of Afghanistan as a space pacified via US intervention the effects of which resonate beyond its territory.

Subject construction

The final part of the critical overview considers the theme of subject construction, which also elicits a pattern of contrast and congruence with the interventions of RAND experts. In respect

of contrast, Holmes, Spencer and Phillips dispense with scrutinising Bin Laden as an individual or al Qaeda as an organization beyond asserting their ontological aversion to the US' allure of 'freedom and democracy' (Holmes and Spencer 2001; Phillips 2001a). Rather, the focus becomes more diffuse, assimilating enmity into the economy of 'terrorism', and dispersing it amongst heterogeneous entities in a chain of equivalence, notably a network - al Qaeda, a 'regime' - the Taliban, various states – Iraq et al, and an abstraction - 'radical Islamic terrorism' (Holmes 2001a). Heritage experts orientate the discussion of enmity construed as terrorism away from the stateless zones in RAND writings, and recast it as a *state* or *regime* backed enterprise. Bin Laden is eclipsed by the Iraqi president who becomes emblematic of state and regime, the iterations of 'terrorism' become more frequent, and, to borrow from Phillips, 'systematic' in their recursion (Phillips 2001a). The 'terrorist' ensemble that is Iraq/Saddam/the Baath regime whose record of defence and security cooperation with the US is effaced stands accused of 'systematic terrorism' against its people, supporting unnamed terrorist groups, developing unsubstantiated WMDs, and becoming 'an even more dangerous terrorist' enemy in the process (Phillips 2001a). Located within a cluster of terrorist transgressions, Iraqi enmity is deemed a legitimate concern for US 'national security'. In reciting the terrorist label, Heritage experts replace an evidentiary basis for military action with iterative performances that recall Jenkins' hypothetical scenarios of vulnerability and destruction.

Locating Pakistan- elision, amnesia, and coloniality

Heritage writings diverge from RAND's repertoire in subsuming enmity wholly within the rubric of terrorism as a master signifier. While RAND accounts also invoke terrorism, they

enmesh the category within other tropes and associations such as unruly zones and authoritarian regimes. In contrast, Heritage writings focus attention on terrorism in plural contexts, displaying a parsimony that the RAND contributions eschew. Again, notwithstanding this variance, each think tank resists a political reading of terrorism and/or of enmity, and a granular appraisal of the US' extended and shifting involvements in the regions concerned. The binaries of the non-terrorist friend/terrorist enemy distinction in Heritage texts become especially tenuous in Pakistan's context. As discussed, Phillips captures Pakistan's vacillating position on the spectrum of coercion and appeasement (2001b). He recounts tensions in US-Pakistan relations after Soviet withdrawal, which, he notes, compromised Pakistan's erstwhile role as a steadfast ally (2001b). In contrast to his amnesia regarding US-Iraq ties, Phillips *does* revisit key phases of US-Pakistan relations, but his account is selective. It surveys the Cold War and the anti-Soviet Afghan war through the prism of US interests as entirely virtuous causes with scant consideration of their impact on Pakistan and Afghanistan. Thus, it elides the conflicts' far-reaching and disruptive legacies that include, for example, prolonged warfare, militarisation, political-economic and societal dislocation, narcotics proliferation and humanitarian crises.

It is due to this elision that Phillips can discount the US' prolonged contribution to the making of 'the jihad factory' (2001b), and its sustained negotiations with the Taliban in the 1990s regarding the UNOCAL pipeline. As various observers have recounted, the Clinton and Bush administrations conducted protracted discussions with the Taliban between 1996 and August 2001 about the proposed construction of an oil pipeline between Turkmenistan and Pakistan by UNOCAL, a California based petroleum company, and other matters such as the extradition of

Bin Laden (BBC News 1997; Brisard 2002).⁷⁶ A key figure conducting the negotiations was Zalmay Khalilzad, then a UNOCAL consultant. In 2001, the ongoing negotiations included a Taliban delegation's visit to Washington in April on the invitation of Leila Helms, niece of former CIA director, Richard Helms (Brisard 2002). The negotiations round held in Berlin in July was attended by senior US, Pakistani, Russian and Iranian officials; it featured a US delegate threatening military action in Afghanistan if the Taliban refused to comply with US demands (Brisard 2002). A final and inconclusive meeting took place in August, five weeks prior to the September attacks.

The Taliban-centric prism occludes reference to other disjunctures in Pakistan-US relations, namely the economic and military sanctions that the US applied to Pakistan in 1990 via the Pressler Amendment, which also entailed non-delivery of the F-16 fighter aircraft that Pakistan had earlier paid for in part.⁷⁷ Thus, Pakistan embodies the precarity of the boundaries that Heritage writings seek to draw around descriptors of enemies and friends, which can only be upheld through abstraction and occlusion. Perceived in this light, the ambiguity surrounding Pakistan's participation in the war becomes a *strategic necessity* in a context where a fuller account of its complex relationship with the US prior to, during and after the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan would erode the normative bases conditioning its inclusion. Pakistan cannot be cast as the enemy as it has agreed to cooperate with the US war effort; however, its instantiation

⁷⁶http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/west_asia/37021.stm; https://www.salon.com/2002/06/05/memo_11/

⁷⁷ The Pressler Amendment, which was Pakistan specific, was added to the Foreign Assistance Act in 1985 and pegged future economic and military aid to annual certification by the US President that Pakistan that "(1) that Pakistan not possess a nuclear explosive device; and (2) that new aid 'will reduce significantly the risk' that Pakistan will possess such a device". The Agreement was subject to waivers during the anti-Soviet campaign, but dispensed with once the US exited from Afghanistan following Soviet defeat.

https://www.newenglishreview.org/Hugh_Fitzgerald/Robert_Gates_Pakistan_%26_The_Pressler_Amendment/
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2001/10/29/pakistan-s-sanction-waivers-summary-pub-10778>

as a friend/ally is also overlain with difficulties. This is not merely due to divergent national interests; rather, at a more fundamental level, Pakistan recalls the muted dissonances of US imperial power. It offers an example of the ways in which coloniality, which is predicated on concealment, manifests through the discursive reliance on *ambiguity and amnesia*.

Transgressive states, and pre-emptive war

This section dissects the representation of enmity in the context of pre-emptive war in Iraq. As noted previously, Heritage experts refrain from personalising the enemy or probing the aetiology of ‘terrorism’, and redirect attention towards states and regimes as its drivers. This cognitive shift prompts several observations. First, the interpellation of specific states within the economy of terrorism as subjects of US ‘wrath’ reinforces the programmatic quality of Heritage interventions, and qualifies the more generic references to networks or ‘radical Islamic terrorism’(Holmes 2001a). However, it supplements, rather than displaces the use of abstractions, which continue to be deployed to amplify specific themes and associations.

As such, the interpellation of enemy states in 2001 remains consistent with earlier instances when the same experts, amongst others, cast the same states as a threat to US regional and/or global interests. The enumerated dangers included terrorism, ‘fundamentalism’, the export of revolution in the case of Iran (Phillips 1994), ‘militant anti-Zionism’ in the case of Syria (Phillips 1985), and the multifarious crimes of the ‘rogue state’ (Homolar 2011: 718) in the case of Iraq.⁷⁸ Thus, unproblematised abstractions were conjugated in the context of particular

⁷⁸For examples of Holmes’ and Phillips’ writings on Iraq during the 1990s and their critique of the Clinton administration: <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/report/punish-saddam-hussein-his-latest-provocation> and <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/report/the-anatomy-clintons-failure-iraq>;

states that were also associated with transnational or substate actors, and cast as emblems of global hazard . However, the conjugation, past and present, represents a facile reductionism, and is a political act that involves elision and erasure of the US' role in historical and contemporary conflicts within which the transgressing states were/are embroiled. It would thus be misleading to conclude that programmatic clarity in Heritage accounts equates with conceptual clarity or with claims of impartial knowledge production. Rather, it is arguable that Heritage's prescriptive certitudes *presuppose* the epistemic use of abstraction to produce templates of transgressive statehood.

Relatedly, Heritage experts' reliance on abstraction becomes fully weaponised in the doctrine of *pre-emptive* war, which as noted earlier, dismisses the need for evidence to rationalise regime change in Iraq. This posture amplifies earlier preoccupations relating to weapons inspection regimes, the Iraqi regime's perceived incompatibility with US regional interests, and its summative credentials as a 'rogue state' (Phillips and Holmes 1998). As such, the 'rogue state' discourse precedes and intersects the terrorism discourse in enabling the scripting of Iraq into the tableau of pre-emptive war, and underpins the leaps of logic that simultaneously shroud the dearth of evidence regarding WMDS *and* erase the historical record. Examples of the latter include the 8-year long Iran-Iraq war, the destruction of Iraqi infrastructure in the first Gulf war, the subsequent military and economic targeting of Iraq. Refracted through the aftershocks

Iran provides a comparable case, as for example in this report by Phillips published in 1994: <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/report/containing-iran>

Phillips' report on Syria dating to 1985 exemplifies writings prior to the 1990s: <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/report/us-strategy-dealing-syria>

Terrorism is frequently mentioned with respect to Iran and Syria rather than to Iraq.

of the September attacks, pre-emptive war becomes a rational, urgent, and above all ethical undertaking.

Although this chapter cannot pursue this point in depth, it is useful to contextualise Heritage writings on Iraq in October 2001 within other landmark interventions of the period as an index of the evolving discourse on Iraq. A cursory review reveals that these commentaries *predated* the subsequent ‘dossiers’ and alleged intelligence briefings which were pivotal to Prime Minister Blair’s advocacy of war. They comprise PNAC statements on the toppling of Hussain, (1998; 2001); Holmes’ and Phillips’ earlier calls for regime change, and their umbrage towards the Clinton administration for its ‘failure in Iraq’ (1997, 1998); and the Iraq Liberation Act which committed the US to the ouster of Saddam Hussain, passed with bipartisan support, and was signed into law in October 1998 by President Clinton. While PNAC’s neo-conservatives are commonly perceived as the standard-bearers of Iraqi regime change, and then as its managers in the Bush administration, Heritage experts’ parallel endeavours as untiring proponents of the cause are less well documented as is the role of the bipartisan consensus behind the Iraq Liberation Act.

Experts and the exception

Lastly, the interpellation of transgressive statehood is noteworthy at an epistemic level for the light it sheds upon the Heritage experts’ self-positioning vis a vis the conceptualisation of US power as the sovereign exception. This subject may be broached by turning to Pasha’s exposition of the distinctions and anomalies in conceptualisations of the ‘state of exception’ and the ‘global exception’ as applied to the GWoT and in particular to the US’ role within it

(Pasha 2017: 3-20). In framing the discussion, Pasha alludes to De Benoist's account of the Schmittian 'state of exception', namely 'the concrete capacity to make a decision in the face of an urgent or exceptional situation ... [such that] the suspension of legal norms in the case of the exception constitutes the ultimate manifestation of political sovereignty' (De Benoist cited in Pasha 2017: 8). 'Global exception' in contrast evokes 'a new species of transnational peril', 'a de-territorialised canvas of danger' that calls forth 'an undeclared global state of emergency' requiring 'new enclosures on a global scale, superseding national borders' (Pasha 2017: 8, 10). Encompassing both approaches, the US is positioned as 'the sovereign of the global order' in being 'exempt ... from the (international) framework of law, [while] demanding compliance by others' (Van Munster cited in Pasha 2017: 8). However, as de Benoist also observes, the GWoT presents an anomaly in that the US' 'institutionalization of exceptional measures' renders the exception the norm (De Benoist cited in Pasha 2017: 10). Pasha, however, cautions against 'ahistorical' uses of the state of exception which are inattentive to its 'ever-presence' in European colonial rule 'as a norm *for* the natives' (2017: 11).

This fragmentary engagement with Pasha's framework can foreground Heritage contributors' understandings of the role of the US as the sovereign exception. To recapitulate, their contributions advocate changing or disciplining various aberrant regimes; concurrently, they also advocate asserting US writ upon coalition members. Thus, they conduct a double manoeuvre in upholding the juridical order of sovereign statehood as the linchpin of the international system while *simultaneously* affirming its contingency upon the imperatives of US sovereign power, a proviso that applies to enemies and allies. This duality then serially invokes the Schmittian construction, Van Muster's characterisation, Pasha's elaboration of

emergency, and in eschewing temporal limits for the wars, de Benoist's insights pertaining to the normalisation of the exception. In respect of the last, however, Heritage experts provide no avenues for exploring the aporias that such normalisation creates. Arguably, *pre-emption* articulates the state of exception and provides a new category of US intervention. Its implied normalisation as a disciplinary technology that may be deployed beyond Iraq signals the compounding of this irresolution. Correspondingly, pre-emption also throws the colonial antecedents of normalisation as raised by Pasha (2017) into sharp relief. This point is especially pertinent with regard to the question of coloniality and will be returned to in a later chapter.

Discussions of transgressive statehood, pre-emptive war, and the challenge of coalition building then become the vehicles through which Heritage experts instantiate US sovereign power as the determinant of the state of (global) exception. However, their writings do not merely proffer detached assertions of this imperative, but also reveal their self-imbrication within its logics. Thus, implicit in their arguments is the validation of their role as knowledge producers who are also the *arbiters* of the exception; they articulate its logics and rules, and identify the contingencies in which it is instantiated. It is in assuming this mantle that the extent of their self-ascription as scholars/experts/policy-analysts becomes visible, a point that needs to be refracted across their contributions in toto rather than in part.

Conclusion

This chapter continued the examination of think tank discourses at the onset and early phases of the GWoT by examining the commentaries of Heritage Foundation experts. It followed the methodology of the preceding chapter scrutinising key texts through four thematic clusters; however, it also identified consonances and dissonances between Heritage and RAND

interventions. The chapter revealed that Heritage scripts are distinguished by a level of assertiveness, an urgency regarding the extension of the war to Iraq, a narrower focus on the minutiae of the war and post-war stabilisation, a pointed interest in Pakistan, and finally a more emphatic articulation of US exceptionalism.

The chapter made the following observations. First, foregoing the need for legitimisation, the commentaries affirmed the recourse to military intervention as a corrective to previous US inaction. Concomitantly, scrutiny of the possible motivations of the attackers was eschewed beyond mirroring of the Bush administration's rhetoric. The policy prescriptive elements in the contributions were amplified in comparison with RAND, and the modalities of coalition-building, warfighting, and pacification were detailed with a view to ensuring the US' freedom of action. The Afghan war was envisaged as a prelude to regime change in Iraq, and various measures outlined in its anticipation. Subsequently, a detailed programme of stabilisation in Afghanistan, cast as an 'endgame' was unfurled recalling a parallel contribution by the same expert in 1992.

Second, as regards temporality, the Heritage accounts moved towards teleology in advocating a phased, but open-ended programme of global transformation entailing the swift completion of the Afghan mission and the launch of operations in Iraq. Third, caught in the vistas of coloniality invoking past and present imperial encounters, Heritage experts articulated spatiality by resurrecting tropes that essentialise geographies, and cast Afghanistan as a transitional space that best serves the neo-imperial order by resuming its erstwhile role as a 'buffer state' (Phillips

2001b). The insertion of Pakistan within the emergent geopolitical imaginary was deemed anomalous and triggered disquiet.

Lastly, modes of subject construction departed in significant ways from those evinced in RAND writings. Heritage experts displayed little interest in individualising or mythologising the attackers. Rather, the ascription of enmity extended to states and regimes interpellated as transgressive subjects, and was juxtaposed to the iteration of US exceptionalism as the ‘global exception’ (Pasha 2017). Relatedly, the status of experts as knowledge producers was also linked to their role as the exception’s interlocutors.

Chapter 3 – The Council on Foreign Relations

This chapter examines CFR interventions between October and December 2001 comprising two chapters from an edited volume, two interviews, and two reports.

Vulnerable America

The first text referenced in the chapter is the volume entitled *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War* published in November 2001 (Hoge and Rose 2001a) edited by James Hoge Jr., editor as well as Peter G. Peterson Chair at the CFR, and Gideon Rose managing editor of 'Foreign Affairs'. The volume consists of 23 essays authored by eminent scholars and senior ranking intelligence and military officials, the majority of whom are not directly affiliated to the CFR, and as such provides a contrast to the more abbreviated commentaries and reports produced by RAND and Heritage experts.⁷⁹ It adopts an omnibus approach with chapters spanning topics such as terrorism and counter-terrorism, Afghanistan's recent history, Islam and political Islam, homeland security, economic repercussions of 9/11, the post-Cold War world order, US engagement in the Middle East, US military capability, and US intelligence operations. Rose explains the genesis of the book, and elaborates its key themes in his and Hoge's joint television interview with Charlie Rose of 21st November 2001,

'[it's] a...one-stop shopping for everything you wanted to know...we got the best people we could find to give us *not just ... opinions but facts* about the kind of conditions that created the crisis, that allowed it to happen and that are responsible for driving it forward' (Hoge and Rose 2001b).

In his CNN interview, Rose explains that the book explores three principal themes:

'... the motivations of the people who carried out the attacks, and the context in which they operate. ... American vulnerabilities. ... [and]the overarching

⁷⁹ Contributors include Joseph Nye, Fouad Ajami, Wesley Clark, Milton Bearden.

historical significance of the attacks, and the new world we are in' (Rose 2001).

This chapter draws selectively on the book, focusing on contributions by CFR scholars that are pertinent to this study.

Hoge and Rose – decoding the attacks

First, Hoge and Rose's introduction to their edited volume (Hoge and Rose 2001a) may be read in conjunction with their joint television interview with Charlie Rose (Hoge and Rose 2001b) as well as with Gideon Rose's individual interview with CNN (Rose 2001). The authors begin by observing that the September attacks are transformative in shattering the 'public's geopolitical nap', which accompanied the end of the Cold War when the US adopted a 'relaxed' approach to foreign policy (Hoge and Rose 2001a: ix). In contrast, on 9/11

'the nation woke to find itself at war...a strange kind of war...fought in the shadows against an elusive enemy, without a clear sense of where it would lead or how it would end' (Hoge and Rose 2001a: ix).

At this juncture, the need for 'measured determination...grounded in facts and sound judgement' is paramount, hence the publication of a curated volume featuring contributions by 'leading experts in their respective fields', many of whom had forewarned of 'lurking dangers or glaring vulnerabilities' (Hoge and Rose 2001a: ix). The authors subsequently articulate the book's titular question, 'how did it happen' observing that 'causation is a complex issue', and in anticipation of ensuing chapters, proceed to offer preliminary answers (ix-x). They term the attacks an 'act of radical evil', a fulfilment of expert predictions in the 1990s that 'a new kind of terrorist' would rise who would be fired by 'fanaticism and hatred' rather than by 'limited political objectives' and would be ready to inflict mass casualties (x). This assessment reappears in their interview with Charlie Rose, when Hoge claims

‘But one of the big changes in terrorism that's occurred is--historically, terrorism has been for specific political objectives and against reasonably specific targets, and there was a proportionality to it’ (Hoge and Rose 2001b).

In contrast, he continues ‘the objectives of terrorism have changed... [into] a holy war between Islam ... the pure world, and all the rest of us’ (Hoge and Rose 2001b). The ‘Introduction’ personifies the amorphous ‘threat’ by profiling Bin Laden with a biographical note regarding his emergence in the anti-Soviet jihad, his establishment of a ‘vast terrorist network’, his financial and organizational prowess, his stated grievances and objectives (Hoge and Rose 2001a: x). However, the authors note, his success typifies the ‘*vulnerabilities of an open and ill-prepared society*’ which failed to decipher potentially incriminating ‘fragments of information’ from diverse sources (Hoge and Rose 2001a: xi). More specifically, they ascribe the lack of responsiveness to subpar human intelligence, a dearth of ‘regional experts’, and impaired networking among disparate agencies (xi).

The authors identify three overarching missions in the aftermath of the attacks, ‘how to fight back...how to reduce our vulnerability...and how to engage the world’ (Hoge and Rose 2001a: ix). They reiterate that ‘America is now at war’ in a mission which may be protracted ‘with no neat or clear end’ (xi). Furthermore, whilst the ‘initial targets are in Afghanistan’, there are unspecified others ‘elsewhere’ (xi). To wage the war, they continue, the US has marshalled a coalition of ‘disparate and uneasy states’ whose long-term commitment cannot be assured (xi). In the interview with Charlie Rose, the authors endorse the Bush administration’s characterisation of the military intervention as ‘war’ on the grounds that this would legitimise ‘different sets of rules’ for engagement exemplified by the establishment of military courts

(Hoge and Rose 2001b).⁸⁰ Correspondingly, the ‘scale and sophistication’ of the recent attacks render terrorism ‘the number one security problem’ that demands a paradigm shift in US foreign policy. As Hoge states,

‘If there's going to be an organizing principle for our foreign policy, like containment was in the Cold War, it's going to be *CT*... (Hoge and Rose 2001b).⁸¹

For Rose, the attacks bespeak the renewed salience of foreign policy following the drift of the 1990s, ‘a time in which we used our power to walk away from the world’ (Hoge and Rose 2001b). Re-engaging with the world will require, Hoge remarks, the resolve to ‘gin up again’ via an empowered juridical-security-intelligence armature, which may lend itself to ‘abuse’ (Hoge and Rose 2001b).⁸² It will also require recognising that ‘running the world is still difficult’ and constructing ‘a strong, stable international system that protects your interests requires work’ (Hoge and Rose 2001b). Hoge and Rose urge ‘the cooperation and support of

⁸⁰ [James Hoge](#): And I think [the administration] also called it war--

04:31

[Charlie Rose](#): They viewed it as an act of war, so that therefore there would be different sets of--

04:34

[James Hoge](#): Yes.

04:35

[Charlie Rose](#): --of rules that they could say they were playing by.

04:37

[James Hoge](#): Including setting up military courts--

04:38

[Charlie Rose](#): Exactly.

04:40

[James Hoge](#): --which they're about to do.

⁸¹ Hoge at 10:11 in Charlie Rose interview

⁸² 14:01

[James Hoge](#): ‘Well, if the past is prologue, we're going to gin up again. We're going to have much tougher -- we've already passed some of them -- anti-terrorist laws.

14:08

[Charlie Rose](#): Right.

14:10

[James Hoge](#): We're going to gin up the CIA, allow them to do some things that maybe they haven't done. And all of this may serve a very good purpose, but I think you can absolutely bet there are going to be some abuses. And when the abuses begin to come to light a little further down the road, it's going to lead once again to a reexamination of whether we have gone too far...’

partners' alongside other policy adjustments, notably a reassessment of the US' ties to 'repressive authoritarian regimes...In the Arab world' where demographic pressures, political-economic disaffection, and regime corruption bolster 'radical Islamist movements' (2001: xiii). Thus, the US should promote political and economic liberalisation in the region for its 'own safety and stability' (xiii). Hoge believes that the attacks have primed the US' capacity to exercise global leadership, but insists that the momentum must be sustained after the Afghan mission has been completed (Hoge and Rose 2001b). This is especially pertinent since 'more and more people' are suggesting that 'we can't leave Iraq sitting there. We have to go after Saddam' (Hoge and Rose 2001b).⁸³ The experts conclude their Introduction with a Churchillian flourish calling for 'preparedness, determination, and ...self-confidence' (2001a: xiv).

Mandelbaum – the utility of war

This section turns to the chapter in the volume authored by Michael Mandelbaum, Professor of American Foreign Policy at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University and Senior Fellow at the CFR. Mandelbaum's chapter is entitled 'Diplomacy in Wartime New Priorities and Alignments' (2001: 255-268). It dovetails the 'Introduction' in affirming and extending the utility of 'war' as an explanatory framework enabling the transformations in US foreign policy wrought by the events of 9/11. Mandelbaum acknowledges that the term may be 'misleading' since 'the campaign against terrorism' deviates from conventional models of warfare that presume opposing 'organised military forces fielded

⁸³ 21:54 [Charlie Rose](#): It's fair to say that the United States has enhanced its leadership in the world by its events following September 11th.

22:01

[James Hoge](#): No question about it. The tricky part is going to be can we keep from blowing that by what comes next after Afghanistan? That's the \$64 question now. As you know, more and more people are beginning to talk about we can't leave Iraq sitting there. We have to go after Saddam.

by recognizable political entities for the purpose of controlling territory' (255). Moreover, this is a 'conflict' in which the contributions of other government agencies responsible for intelligence, law-enforcement, public health, immigration, and of the bureaucracy such as the Department of Justice are as important as those of the DoD (Department of Defense) (255). Nonetheless, the term is valid since the momentous shifts in foreign policy consequent to the September attacks are comparable to those instigated by war (255). 'Major' shifts are anticipated in four areas: diminished opposition to military intervention; the recentring of US diplomacy around the attacks; the adoption of regime change meaning the removal of 'a certain type of government' as a key foreign policy objective; and lastly, confronting terrorism by scrutinising 'its underlying causes' (255-256).

In elaboration, Mandelbaum interprets 'military prospects' through the lens of prospective casualties, opining that imperilling US soldiers' lives remains 'difficult for the nation's commander-in-chief' (Mandelbaum 2001: 256). In his estimation, this scrupulousness has a longstanding history even though the US has 'never has been a pacifist country' and will readily engage in war in the pursuit of 'self-defence' (256). The September attacks have 'settled the question' of military intervention, and whilst they have been compared to Pearl Harbour, Mandelbaum prefers an analogy with Americans' post-WW2 critique of the dilatory British and French response to Hitler, which precipitated 'an avoidable and tragic war' (257). He maintains that this standpoint catalysed 'a cardinal principle' of US Cold War policy, obstructing Soviet and communist expansion, that subsequently constituted the 'rationale' for American intervention in Korea and 'Indochina' (257). Positing a correspondence from the 1930s via the Cold War to the present, Mandelbaum states that the September attacks provide a 'similar

rationale for forceful pre-emptive attacks against terrorists wherever they are' that will rally popular support for military intervention (257).

Second, Mandelbaum deliberates the 'diplomatic realignments' following the attacks since, as he explains, 'Wars reshape diplomacy. Victory becomes the supreme goal of foreign policy...' (2001: 257). He avers that the Cold War dictated allegiances with regimes that conflicted with Americans' 'political values', and cites US support for 'Islamic fundamentalists' in Afghanistan's anti-Soviet campaign as an example (258). The current war has revived this tendency, and led the US to ally with, and overlook the 'shortcomings' of 'countries bordering Afghanistan' who were previously subject to its 'disapproving policies' (258). Mandelbaum includes Iran, Russia, various Central Asian states and Pakistan in this category (258). He mentions the various incentives offered to Pakistan for its cooperation in the war, notably the lifting of US economic sanctions that were applied after the nuclear tests of 1998, which, Mandelbaum concurs, constituted a violation of the US' nuclear non-proliferation policy (258).

Third, Mandelbaum elaborates on regime change, and states that a putative shift in foreign policy is entirely consistent with currents in US praxis during the Cold War:

"Yet 'regime change' was central to American foreign policy...the initial cause of which was the forcible imposition of communist governments in Central and Eastern Europe and the end of which came when those governments collapsed" (260).

He discerns relevance of the policy in the GWoT:

'The reason is that terrorists need a base from which to operate. Any terrorist base will be located within a sovereign state, the government of which will therefore be complicit in the terrorists' activities' (260).

Mandelbaum finds Afghanistan's situation 'ironic' in that none of the attackers was Afghan, and it was the Taliban's 'generous...hospitality' to terrorist groups that made it 'the nerve centre of international terrorism' (262). Beyond Afghanistan, he identifies Iran, Syria, Libya, the Palestinian Authority as 'offending regimes', and adds that their compliance with US demands is improbable since terrorism is embedded in 'their governing philosophy' which 'includes deep and abiding hostility to Western values and institutions' (260-261). Iraq and Syria are conferred added emphasis as examples of state/regime terrorism (260).⁸⁴ This conviction leads Mandelbaum to stipulate regime change as an 'unavoidable aim of the war against terrorism', one that represents 'opportunities and challenges' for US foreign policy (261). He avers that the deposition of such regimes, for instance via 'the disappearance of Saddam Hussain and his sons', should not be 'overwhelming' since they lack domestic legitimacy, and may collapse like former communist states thus precluding 'direct assault by the United States' (261-262). Nonetheless, while contemplating 'military pressure (rather than an actual invasion), and smothering economic embargoes', Mandelbaum does not overlook the demonstration effect of 'at least one...direct attack' in fomenting 'internal resistance' against incumbent regimes (262).

He anticipates that the relative facility of removing an undesirable government may not be replicated in the installation of a successor that can eradicate terrorism within its borders, a problem that is 'particularly acute in Afghanistan' (2001:262). He attributes the difficulty to two key factors: first, the legacy of warfare amongst a population marked by ethno-linguistic, cultural, religious, tribal, clan-based fissures; and second, the conflicting interests of Afghanistan's neighbours, Pakistan, Russia, and Iran (263). Concurring with the Bush

⁸⁴ Gani (2014) provides a rich account of the US-Syria relationship.

administration that Afghanistan presents a cheerless scenario for nation-building, Mandelbaum fears failure on a scale surpassing Clinton's attempts in Haiti, Somalia and the Balkans; he is, however, resigned to the US undertaking such a mission in the aftermath of 9/11 (263). Mandelbaum concludes his essay by contemplating the physiognomy of victory in the GWoT. Unlike what he terms the 'decisive conclusions' of the US' 20th century wars, for example the Japanese surrender, the Korean armistice, the departure from Saigon, he does not foresee a 'neat' end to the present war (267). Rather, he maintains that its success would be gauged by 'what terrorists do not do', and by the dislocation of terrorism from the centre of public concern as

'...the innovations of foreign policy, law enforcement, and public safety established in the wake of September 11 are absorbed into the everyday fabric of American and international life' (267).

Tasking public diplomacy

This section examines a Task Force report sponsored by the CFR and published on November 6th, 2001, entitled 'Improving the US Public Diplomacy Campaign in the War Against Terrorism' (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001). As a resource it differs from publications examined in previous sections collected from the CFR, RAND and Heritage Foundation archive. Its distinction lies in the status it claims as a compilation produced by an 'independent task force' that is 'bipartisan' and is composed of 'individuals with experience at the highest levels of national security policy' who are affiliated with academia, industry, think tanks, foundations, law and government (2001: 6-8).⁸⁵ CFR experts comprise two of the Task Force's participants, but occupy its most senior positions with General Charles Boyd, Senior Vice President, Director, and Henry A. Kissinger Senior Fellow in National Security and European

⁸⁵ The list includes Joseph Nye, George Soros, Newton Gingrich, Jessica Stern, Arthur Schlesinger et al.

Affairs at the CFR acting as Project Director; and Carla Hills, Vice Chairman of the CFR's Board of Directors, and Richard Holbrooke, Counselor at the CFR serving as co-Chairs. According to the disclaimer, the CFR assembles a Task Force when 'an issue or current and critical importance to US foreign policy arises', and 'a group diverse in backgrounds and perspectives may ...reach a meaningful consensus on a policy through private and nonpartisan deliberations' (8). The key findings of the report are outlined below.

Outlining the task

The Task Force begin by underscoring the value of a 'decisive' public diplomacy campaign as an adjunct to 'military operations' in the GWoT, stating that

'if we are unable to win the battle for hearts and minds, it may prove impossible to carry our military operations through to completion' (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001:1).

Accordingly, the report 'is intended to assist the U.S. Administration in its ongoing efforts to prevail in this crucial struggle' (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001:1). The overriding mission of the public diplomacy campaign is to inculcate Muslim publics' 'understanding' of the war as a 'just cause', and enlist their support by iterating that

'We are taking action against those who murdered our people and as well as to prevent them from threatening us again' (2001:1).

In this context, the Force approve the establishment of a new central coordinating office for public diplomacy in the White House with branches in London and Islamabad, but observe that there is 'still much to be done'; therefore,

'... the United States must further broaden and sharpen the message and the messengers we use to persuade the peoples of the world of the justness of our cause' (2001:1).

Organisational tasks

The main body of the report is divided into three sections respectively named ‘Organization’, ‘Messengers’ and ‘Messages’ (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001: 1) with the latter two being especially pertinent to this study. The section on organization makes several recommendations, two of which are particularly notable. First, the Task Force opine that the US federal bureaucracy is inadequately equipped to conduct a vigorous public diplomacy campaign, and advise that it coordinate its efforts with other government agencies as well as the private sector to achieve tangible results (1). Specifically, the Force urge the bureaucracy to deliberate the launch of an effective campaign ‘in the Middle East and South Asia’ using ‘the most sophisticated tools that modern marketing (and political campaigns) have developed’ (2). Such a project, they state, must also scrutinise ‘the regional press, their audiences, their messages’ to ascertain how the US can optimise its communications through the media (2). Second, they call for intensive congressional involvement as regards institutional and financial support on the premise that ‘the massive augmentation of public diplomacy assets’ will require sharply increased funding as well as ‘top-calibre personnel’ (2).

Tasking proxies

The section on ‘Messengers’ opens with the pronouncement that the individuals entrusted with this duty ‘may be more important than the message’:

‘The regional populace is far more likely to find Muslim and Arab interlocutors credible on these issues. *The most important tactic we can take is to find credible proxies who can speak on our behalf* rather than shouldering the entire public diplomacy burden ourselves (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001:2; emphasis added).

The Force note that in searching for ‘proxies’, the Administration must entertain working with ‘independent interlocutors’ in order to demonstrate its commitment to ‘engaging [its] critics’ and outline various measures to this end (2). These include the establishment of an Advisory Board comprising ‘prominent Arab-and Muslim-Americans’ with professional links to and interests in these regions, namely professors, businessmen, marketing and advertising executives (3). They propose that the collective functions ‘as a resource and sounding board’ and as a coalition of ‘goodwill ambassadors to the regions’ (3). However, while they emphasise the need for ‘differing views’ on the Board, they urge the exclusion of ‘those who radically oppose the Administration’s policy or who promote hatred’ (3). Second, they advocate ‘listening tours’ wherein US officials, and Board members visit designated regions to meet ‘government officials, elites, and average people’, and relay the Administration’s solicitude for their concerns (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001:3). Third, they recommend initiating ‘an aggressive recruiting campaign’ to induct Arab and Afghan Americans, Muslims in general, and those fluent in local languages into the US government; concomitantly, they urge a language competency drive across all its levels (3). Fourth, they call upon ‘Slavic’ and Turkish Muslims ‘to educate foreign audiences’ about the US’ laudable role in ‘saving’ Balkan Muslims in the mid-1990s (3). Lastly, they reiterate the importance of engaging the regions’ intellectuals and its journalists who cannot be allowed to ‘claim ignorance as a defense’ (3).

In continuing, the Force clarify that their support for ‘proxies’ who can ‘strike the most important blows’ is not intended to compromise the US government’s role in the campaign, which remains that of an ‘aggressive participant[]’ (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001: 3). Accordingly, they devise a succinct blueprint to steer the aggression. The proposals include

intensive monitoring of the press in the target regions; developing mechanisms under guidance from the ‘rapid-response centres in Washington, London and Islamabad’ for countering adverse coverage of US policies; ‘insist[ing]’ that US officials access local media outlets ‘regularly and frequently’; convening regular briefings of ‘large numbers’ of US based ‘Middle Eastern and South Asian’ journalists and promoting their contributions in leading platforms such as *The New York Times*; drafting a White Paper on the 9/11 attacks; inaugurating a ‘Radio Free Afghanistan’, boosting the Voice of America’s programming in the regions, and establishing a ‘high-quality Arabic’ satellite channel at par with the BBC (4).

Relatedly, the Force advocate liaising with ‘our Allies...particularly in Europe’ especially those who seem ‘uncomfortable’ with US foreign policy towards ‘the Middle East and South Asia’ (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001:4). Such parties must be ‘persuade[d]’ and ‘press[ed]’ to rally their publics alongside ‘the Muslim world about the justness of our cause’ (4). The Force recognise that ‘changing hearts and minds’ in a long war is a ‘monumental task’, but anticipate its facilitation through incentivising cooperation with the US as the harbinger of ‘tangible benefits’ (4). These may include encouraging economic growth and political liberalisation in ‘Muslim states’; promoting cultural and educational initiatives such as a ‘US-Muslim Policy Engagement Commission’ that runs ‘outreach’ and ‘intercultural’ programmes; and lastly, sponsoring ‘people-to-people contacts’ as a means of ‘promoting understanding of American culture, values and policies’ (5).

Calibrating the message

In concluding, the Force proceed from asserting the importance of ‘messengers’ to explicating the ‘message’, and the mechanisms ensuring its reproduction. Acknowledging ‘the complexity of the task’, the authors note that a univocal missive will be insufficient, and ‘a range of messages’ are required for disseminating to ‘people of the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia’ (5). Nonetheless, they deem it of paramount importance that the messages ‘personalise the victims and the attacks’ of September 11 (5). This predicates rehearsing ‘the names, national origin, and families of Muslims’ who were killed on September 11, and translating their ‘*New York Times* obituaries into Arabic and other Middle Eastern and South Asian languages’ (5). Additionally, it entails relaying the ‘stories of particular victims’ to show that the attacks affected individuals from diverse ‘religions, races, income levels’ (5). Furthermore, it means recalling ‘named victims’ in relation to ‘our cause and goals’ (5). Finally, it requires Muslim intellectuals and theologians to proclaim that Islam prohibits the murder of innocents, that the US’ intervention does not constitute a ‘war on Muslims’ and that ‘those who attacked the United States’ took the lives of Jews, Muslims and Christians (5).

Mapping the war’s end

The concluding document examined in this chapter is an extended report by Radha Kumar entitled, ‘A Roadmap for Afghanistan’ and published on December 12, 2001. In contrast to CFR writings referenced thus far, this report prioritises the ‘stabilisation’ of Afghanistan as Kumar opines that the war is now ‘near[ing] its end, and formerly warring factions [are] work[ing] on a future order for their country’ (Kumar 2001). To this end, Kumar deliberates the political, military, humanitarian challenges attending this phase, and concludes with an overview of the US’ present and future role in Afghanistan. Despite her conviction that the

war's cessation is nigh, Kumar's commentary resists triumphalism and unfolds as a sober assessment of the 'good and bad' signs defining the current juncture (2001). She believes that the prospect of 'broad based government' combined with various 'stabilisation' measures outlined in the Bonn talks constitute a 'positive' trend in contrast to reports of 'horrible massacres ... infighting ... and a mounting toll of civilian deaths due to the air campaign' (2001). The report's subsections respectively captioned as the 'Bonn Agreement', 'multinational troops', 'aid and reconstruction', and 'the US role' detail her insights (2001).

Moderating a new government

First, Kumar is cautiously optimistic that the Bonn Agreement will cultivate the nascent shoots of political and ethnic reconciliation and stabilisation. She approves the gradated or 'three-stage process' enshrined in the Agreement for encapsulating the accumulated wisdom of previous conflicts such as 'Bosnia, Cambodia, East Timor and Kosovo', and outlining the sequential creation of an interim council, a commission to establish a Loya Jirga, and finally a 'constitutionally mandated government' (Kumar 2001). From outlining the macro-level features of the Agreement, for example the 'safeguards' ensuring broad-based ethnic representation, the preference for 'moderate and untainted leaders' assisting 'southern Pashtun leader Hamid Karzai', Kumar progresses to a consideration of individual ministerial portfolios (2001). She expresses concern that the posts may become the means of 'consolidating rival power bases' if the interim council attempts to 'function as a normal government', and neglects the task of 'stabilising Afghanistan' by focusing on aid, transport, security, reconstruction, bureaucratic and judicial infrastructural development (2001).

Moderating a multinational force

Second, Kumar contemplates the size, composition, and purpose of a multinational force, which she deems essential for achieving stabilisation. Asserting that Afghanistan will not be ‘a protectorate’ since ‘the bulk of Afghans’ will oppose this, she anticipates troop sizes of 5000-6000 soldiers, smaller than deployments in Bosnia or Kosovo, but larger than the Northern Alliance’s ‘bandied’ figure of ‘2000 minus’ with the possibility of enlargement (Kumar 2001). She regards the force’s composition as a ‘more tricky’ subject and welcomes the jettisoning of plans for a contingent from ‘moderate Muslim countries’ such as Turkey, Indonesia, Jordan and Bangladesh (2001). This could have ‘backfired’, she opines, especially as Turkey which aspired to lead such a force ‘can hardly be called a moderate Muslim country’ while Indonesia with its legacy of human rights infringements ‘is hardly a force for peace or stabilisation’ (2001). Instead, she endorses the United Kingdom’s leadership of the contingent because of its experience with stabilisation in Kosovo, and because memories of its ‘disastrous colonial rout by Afghans two centuries earlier will keep the force low-profile...in a region famously suspicious of foreigners’ (2001). Concomitantly, Kumar laments the absence of India and Pakistan, ‘two ideally placed countries’ from the proposed force: ‘Pakistan because of its erstwhile links to the Taliban and the volatile situation amongst the Pashtun on either side of the ... border; and India because of hostility with Pakistan’ (2001).

The multinational force, Kumar continues, should immediately undertake aid delivery, stabilise Kabul, and pursue demilitarisation prior to its ‘longer term’ goal, training Afghan ‘security, border and police forces’ (Kumar 2001). This goal, she observes, ‘is a particularly sensitive task’ because it involves reconciling various factions, and the decommissioning of those who

are excluded (2001). It requires Afghan rather than foreign handling, and once again Turkey is dismissed as ‘a model’, now on the grounds of its ‘overweening and centralizing military’ (2001). Furthermore, Kumar underscores the importance of the states bordering Afghanistan stating,

‘Cooperative border security is especially important along the long Afghanistan-Pakistan border that remains a zone of ongoing conflict as well as an important set of routes for humanitarian aid and refugee returns’ (Kumar 2001).

Programming reconstruction

Third, Kumar stresses the importance of ‘aid and reconstruction’ in the project of nation building. Referencing the conflicts in Yugoslavia and East Timor as edifying precedents, Kumar pins the successful achievement of the aid programme to two key conditions: the cultivation of ‘local resources and ...planning’; and timely delivery and coordination to offset the baneful effects of ‘wartime divisions and a black-market economy’ (Kumar 2001). Besides addressing humanitarian concerns, the programme should encompass the creation of a civil service and a police force, institutions that will deliver wide-ranging benefits, such as national unity and demilitarisation (2001). As regards available funds, she notes that whereas ‘the international community’ pledged \$10 billion, other estimates call for over double this amount over the next decade, and is concerned about discrepancies between donor pledges and actual transfers (2001).

Subsequently, Kumar deliberates the US’ role in the stabilisation process. Noting that the war on Afghanistan fused the twin objectives of destroying al Qaeda and ‘dislodging’ the Taliban whilst securing the country from other ‘terrorist groups’, she is concerned that such aims may be subverted without due safeguards (2001). Noting that the upsurge of factional infighting

amongst allied groups reflects their willingness to form tactical alliances, she urges the US to exert its influence and quell the clashes (2001). She affirms that although the US will not join the multinational force, it can provide ‘logistical support’, and provide funding, thus remaining involved in the humanitarian mission (2001). It may also assist the establishment of a central bank for Afghanistan, and the implementation of border and customs controls to revive transit trade and generate revenue for the empty treasury (2001). Lastly, she urges the US to ‘mobilise funds’ for reconstruction by supplementing its own donations with those from other states (2001). In concluding, she notes that whereas the US ‘walked away once from Afghanistan’, it must now ‘stay the course’ and facilitate the Bonn Agreement by prioritising nation building and stabilisation (2001).

Critical overview

This section concludes the examination of early think tank interventions. It evaluates CFR experts’ contributions using the typology previously deployed for RAND and Heritage contributions, and drawing out salient comparisons and contrasts.

Legitimation

First, as regards legitimation, CFR experts’ interventions reveal an unequivocal embrace of the war as a necessary and just enterprise, thus aligning closely with their counterparts at RAND and the Heritage Foundation. This posture is iterated less as a discrete statement, but is interlaced within other topics, notably the repercussions of the attacks, the imperatives of US global hegemony, and the current crisis’ resonance with other episodes in US history. Approached in this fashion the war is validated and legitimated via its embedding in dominant

narratives of US identity and statehood. This may be evidenced at different points in the selected documents. Thus, Hoge and Rose's 'Introduction' and their interview with Charlie Rose, establishes a preliminary distinction between legitimate and illegitimate violence that replays through CFR interventions. In striving to apprehend and categorise the attacks, Hoge and Rose echo the Bush administration's characterisation of September 11 with the announcement that 'America is now at war', 'a strange kind of war' which compels retaliation (Hoge and Rose 2001a: xi, ix). In explicating the strangeness, the experts deliberate the nature of 'terrorism', settling for its definition as 'the illegitimate use of violence for political aims' (Hoge and Rose 2001b).⁸⁶ The attacks are ascribed a revelatory force that captures this distinction, and exposes deficiencies in the US political establishment, notably in foreign policy, but also in domains such as 'soft power', intelligence capability and public relations (Hoge and Rose 2001b).⁸⁷ Cumulatively, this lack compromises US leadership over 'a strong, stable, international system', which may not be free of 'terrorism' but is one in which 'the rest of us lead reasonably civilised lives' (Hoge and Rose 2001b).⁸⁸ The use of phrases such as a 'relaxed' post-Cold War environment, 'walk[ing]away', 'geopolitical nap' capture the sense of relinquished imperial purpose (Hoge and Rose 2001a: ix). In disclosing such lapses and instilling a resolve to 'fight back ... reduce vulnerability ... engage the world', the attacks serve to inaugurate a janus-faced

⁸⁶ 03:15

[Charlie Rose](#): Has anybody come up with an appropriate definition of terrorism...

03:21

[James Hoge](#): Well, there are a number around. I don't know of one all-encompassing one. The one ... I tend to favor is the one that says "the illegitimate use of violence for political aims".

⁸⁷ 11:07 [James Hoge](#): ... we have to build up a lot of our "soft power" that we allowed to wane, our intelligence services that withered, our public relations or propaganda arm ... because this is a war, ultimately, for the old cliché, "hearts and minds," as well as it is for finding out secret cells and disbanding them.

⁸⁸ 02:32 [James Hoge](#): Well, I think-- you know, I think there are really challenges confronting us immediately... the thing everybody's going to have to get used to is that you cannot probably eliminate terrorism altogether. What you can do is to contain it at a level that allows the rest of us to lead reasonably civilized lives

war that is deemed illegitimate when waged by ‘terrorists’ but entirely legitimate when it connotes the violence of a global hegemon (Hoge and Rose 2001b).

The matrix of counterterrorism - Cold Warriors and proxies

Construed in binary terms, the war is enmeshed within the matrix of counterterrorism (CT), which as noted earlier has become for Hoge ‘the organising principle for our foreign policy, like containment was in the Cold War’ (Hoge and Rose 2001b). In echoes of RAND’s interventions, the war’s legitimacy accrues from its subsumption within a matrix in which it enables the redemption of faltering state apparatuses and policy-making structures, the reassertion of US *global* hegemony, and the restoration of equilibrium in a world where civilisation can thrive. However, as Hoge suggests, the war’s legitimacy also accrues from its potential to unleash *new* wars ‘after Afghanistan’ (Hoge and Rose 2001b). A virtuous cycle of legitimisation obtains when Hoge, in consonance with experts at the Heritage Foundation, approves extending the GWoT to Iraq once Afghanistan has been pacified. Ultimately, then, the war’s legitimacy derives from its promise to extirpate illegitimate forms of violence be they practiced by ‘terrorists’ or by leaders such as Hussain, and re-establish its rightful monopolisation by the imperium.

Mandelbaum’s analytic amplifies the excavation of Cold War grammars and histories (Mandelbaum 2001). He outlines that the Cold War’s broad resonance for a military operation in the present citing the doctrine of ‘containment’, the ‘instructive precedent’ evinced in the appeasement of Nazi Germany, and the valorisation of regime change as a tool of foreign policy (Mandelbaum 2001: 257, 260). Thus, Mandelbaum upholds regime change in Iraq and

elsewhere as a US' objective in the GWoT without deeming it a rupture from past practice. Although he does not explore the concept of pre-emptive war, his clarity in this respect echoes the expositions of Heritage rather than RAND experts.

Whilst Rose, Hoge and Mandelbaum are active participants in what may termed a legitimisation exercise, the Task Force Report is notable as a public diplomacy venture targeting diverse societal groups in 'the Middle East and South Asia' for validating and *legitimizing* the military campaign. In vying to embed particular knowledges and understandings of a 'just' war amidst approbation of US foreign policy in general, the Task Force Report is singular amongst the documents surveyed for its disclosure of the proselytising zeal of liberal imperialism.

Modalities –counterterrorism and the exception

The CFR interventions overlap considerably in detailing the general and more specific modalities of the war with the main differences arising in respect of detail and emphasis. Three principal areas are discernible; First insofar as legality implies a rules-based international system, Hoge and Rose aver that the war's subsumption within CT implies 'different' rule sets which could authorise the establishment of military courts, and lead to 'abuses' as the CIA 'gin[s] up' (Hoge and Rose 2001b). Although they recognise that the discovery of such violations may prompt a review of procedure, they do not contest the proposition, thus implicitly invoking the 'global exception' (Pasha 2017). Concomitantly, Mandelbaum's references to the US' alternation between applying or relaxing coercive military and economic measures against recalcitrant states, for example economic sanctions upon Pakistan, underline the exercise of sovereign rule-making prerogatives. Furthermore, the experts' collective

insistence upon US leadership, and its representation in the Task Force report as the posture of the ‘aggressive participant’ (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001: 3) suggests that Hoge and Rose’s qualifier implies variation within an existing paradigm of sovereign power rather than a discontinuity. Moreover, it suggests that CT is not merely the overarching modality of the war but has become the very vehicle through which the US’ role as the *global exception* is articulated. As such, CFR experts’ exposition of the war’s modalities reveals the aporias attending the attempt to articulate US sovereign power in tandem with a putatively rule-based international order. Their interventions recall parallel dilemmas attending the articulation of the exception in Heritage literature even though the mainsprings of the latter do not delve into questions of legality. Concomitantly, the CFR’s valorisation of CT as the generative modality and constitutive rationale of the GWoT also recalls the posture taken in RAND writings.

Modalities of cooperation

Second, the iteration of sovereign power recast as CT subsumes other modalities, namely the foreign policy shift from unilateralism to cooperation and re-engagement. While no direct statement of the irreconcilability of sovereign power and coalition building is proffered, the actual prospect of policy shifts elicits anxiety when it involves ‘disparate and uneasy states’ (Hoge and Rose 2001: xi) or states previously subject to disciplinary measures such as Pakistan. Mandelbaum’s references to the US’ renewed outreach to Pakistan need to be juxtaposed to his prognosis of the GWoT’s ‘innovations of foreign policy’ assimilating into ‘the fabric of ... international life’ (Mandelbaum 2001: 267). Such remarks provide clues as to how regimes of cooperation governed by CT and tainted by such anxiety will evolve as the war progresses. Thus, in the context of Pakistan, the subsequent launch of the CIA’s drone war in the border

region of Waziristan, the presence of Blackwater agents in major urban centres, and more generally, the fraught vacillation between collaboration and coercion exemplify the complex subtext of an apparently anodyne policy stance. In the global context, a parallel obtains in transnationally dispersed practices of surveillance, rendition, incarceration that came to define such regimes, epitomised in the ‘abuses’ discovered at Abu Ghraib detention facility in Iraq. A subsequent chapter will develop this discussion further.

While such challenges lie in the future, in 2001 the bipartisan Task Force’s recommendations construe international cooperation as the discursive reconstruction of public, chiefly Muslim, opinion via ‘public diplomacy’ (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001). As detailed earlier, the Report envisages a panoply of globally dispersed agents cooperating in the production of discourses designed to garner Muslims’ support for the GWoT (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001). The calls for ‘messengers’ and ‘proxies’ who relay the ‘message’ across numerous platforms within the regions targeted as well as in Western Europe and the US underline the substance of ‘engagement’ in a war whose discursive apparatus complements its military manifestations (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrook 2001).

Modalities of stabilisation and miscalculation

Third, CFR experts’ exposition of the war’s modalities concludes in 2001 with Kumar’s extended report (Kumar 2001) regarding the anticipated end of combat operations, and the consequent shift to stabilisation and reconstruction. The publication of Kumar’s report six days after Phillips’ ‘Endgame’ piece highlights the commonalities in policy-relevant knowledges produced from ideologically dissimilar institutions, namely a liberal internationalist and a

conservative think tank, notwithstanding differences in tone, detail and emphasis. Kumar's analytics derive primarily from an acceptance of the war's ostensibly just ends, the destruction of al Qaeda and the ouster of the Taliban, and the expectation in common with Phillips that its military phase is reaching its terminus. Both premises prompt her to outline a linear trajectory in which military intervention is followed by carefully coordinated measures that have the potential to deliver a pacified, reconstituted Afghanistan. Although challenges to such a mode of governmentality exist, these are largely seen as surmountable if the stipulated measures are implemented.

In hindsight, assessments of the Afghan war's entering a penultimate phase in December 2001 underscore the limits of the experts' analytics, and raise questions about the discursive framework in which such prognostications emerge. In the years since, the failure to pacify Afghanistan has been a subject of extensive public debate involving military, political, media and policy making figures in the US, and elsewhere. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to retrace the debate's key arguments and their resonance with those of the CFR and Heritage. Of note is Kumar's and Phillips' readiness to construe the fall of Kabul as a watershed moment heralding an 'endgame', a managed, technocratic process of stabilisation, rather than to speculate on the invasion as producing intensified violence, suffering, and displacement. Again, the experts posit a rupture between the legitimate violence of Operation Enduring Freedom, and its illegitimate forms, cast as Taliban resurgence or as factionalism and tribal antagonisms, the essentialised default propensities of Afghans. Kumar's report attempts to *distance* such instances of violence from the invasion, and depoliticise their appearance in a nominally *post-war* scenario framing imperial conjecture of an attainable end state. The possibility that the

limitations pervading the think tanks' modalities of pacification are limited by their imbrication in *coloniality* is a point that is addressed in the conclusion of this chapter.

Panopticism and elision

Relatedly, the formulaic approach of the CFR's stabilisation narrative is notable as a statement of technocratic panopticism fusing macro-political, military, infrastructural, humanitarian and social concerns with minutiae such as the selection of ministerial incumbents. The sweeping gaze of the report acknowledges the 'massacres' and the death toll from the air war; however, it foregoes elaboration, and resorts to an abacus enumerating 'good and bad' outcomes of the war (Kumar 2001). It bypasses, for example, the representations of the war recorded by Gregory (2004): the 'Daliesque panorama of wholesale destruction' that the reporter John Lee Anderson discovered in Kabul after the fall of the Taliban (Anderson 2001 cited in Gregory 2004: 69), the 'avalanche of death' descending on Taliban prisoners at the Qala-i-Jhangi fortress in November 2001 (Luke Harding 2001 cited in Gregory 2004: 64), the death toll exacted by cluster bombs dropped with food parcels, or the

'Millions of dollars ... expended in wholesale bribery to persuade [the Northern Alliance] to fight the Taliban, which minimised American casualties but ... ensured that the warlordism that had disfigured Afghanistan for decades would resurface ...' (Gregory 2004: 68-70).

Nor does it attempt to engage with discrepant reports of Taliban rule prior to the invasion; for example, Hirschkind and Mahmood note with reference to William Vollman's article in *The New Yorker* published in May 2000,

'As the article suggested, one consequence of the admittedly oppressive regulations put into place by the Taliban was that life for the majority of Afghans had become considerably safer' (Hirschkind and Mahmood 2002: 346).

The elisions become more apparent still if an attempt is made to connect the current war with the anti-Soviet campaign; thus, Mamdani notes,

‘Perhaps no other society paid a higher price for the defeat of the Soviet Union than did Afghanistan. Out of a population of roughly 20 million, a million died, another million and a half were maimed, another five million became refugees... nearly a million and a half have gone clinically insane as a consequence of decades of continuous war. Those who survived lived in the most mined country in the world. Afghanistan was a brutalized society even before the present war began’ (Mamdani 2002: 773).

Instead, the report’s panopticism retreats into the comforting grammar of liberal salvation invoking the armature of nation building, constitutionalism and humanitarian relief. In this it performs the discursive shift summed up by Barkawi and Laffey:

‘The great antagonists of realism, the liberals, seek to regulate conflict and alleviate its humanitarian consequences through a turn to domestic and international institutions and norms’ (Barkawi and Laffey 2006: 331)

However, it is only by embracing a reductionism that forecloses the possibility of ‘any ambiguities’ within accounts of the ‘admittedly brutal practices of the Taliban’ (Hirschkind and Mahmood 2002: 346) as well as a more rigorous assessment of the invasion and its antecedents that the CFR’s liberal panopticism can operate.⁸⁹

Stabilisation, moderation, and colonial legacies

Lastly, the modalities of stabilisation in Kumar’s report bearing on the roles of Turkey and Pakistan in a putatively *post-combat* scenario also elicit comparison with Phillips’ contribution. As such, both countries are discounted as participants of a proposed multinational force and in Turkey’s case, a potential leader. Turkey is dismissed since its secularist political leanings

⁸⁹ In a parallel vein, Gökay and Fouskas (2005) elaborate on the US’ attempts to reach agreement with the Taliban regarding the construction of the UNOCAL pipeline.

disqualify it as a ‘moderate Muslim country’, and its powerful military cannot undertake ‘sensitive tasks’ (Kumar 2001). Pakistan may be an ‘ideal’ candidate, but is ineligible due to its former ties with the Taliban, and the presence of Pashtuns on either side of the border (Kumar 2001). The suggestion is that each state stands at a discomfiting distance from the normative centrepiece of ‘moderate’ Islam. In contrast, Britain is deemed suitable to lead the force because of its *colonial* role in Afghanistan, and its more recent efforts in Kosovo.

The argument pivots around Kumar’s ready recursion of the epithet, ‘moderate Muslim’, which like ‘moderate Islam’, has been widely recognised and critiqued as one of the formative binaries of the GWoT that marks the opposition to qualifiers such as ‘radical’, ‘fundamentalist’, ‘extremist’ or ‘terrorist’. Barlas, for example, situates the term within the field of discursivity constituting US imperial designs:

‘References to a militant Islam and a moderate Islam, a peaceful Islam and a violent Islam, an Islam that is the US’s mortal foe and an Islam that is its trusted friend suggest that...the problem of violence is not even partly of the US’ making; ... [and it is therefore] absolved of the responsibility to rethink its own injurious policies’ (Barlas 2004: 28-29).

Writing 5 years later primarily in the context of UK policymaking, Kundnani identifies the multiple registers in which the term has since been deployed since the onset of the GWoT, namely theology, culture, national belonging, and security (Kundnani 2009: 35-39). Kumar (2001), however, deploys the term unproblematically, and takes its signification as self-evident. Thus, she does not explain why Turkish secularism would impact adversely upon the Turkish military’s field operations especially in view of the country’s membership of NATO, and its declared support for the Northern Alliance (Salmi and Durgun 2005: 3-4). Kumar’s observations, then clarify little beyond affirming the ascriptive logics of imperial privilege that

stipulate which states are properly ‘Muslim’, and when ‘Muslimness’ complies with strictures of ‘moderation’. The same logics are evinced in the reference to ‘sensitive tasks’, which is mystificatory in the context of an invasion that has compounded the devastation of a war-wracked country.

Concomitantly, the reference to Pakistan’s ties with the Taliban, a common refrain in the think tank writings, is ironic given the US’ deep entanglement with the Mujahideen, and its subsequent attempt to negotiate the UNOCAL pipeline with the Taliban. More importantly, it provides an early indication of the mistrust between the US and Pakistan that exacerbates as the war continues and the prospects of stabilisation recede. Similarly, Kumar does not explain why the cross-border presence of Pashtuns constitutes a problem, or whether this may impact upon the question of ‘cooperative border security’ (2001). Rather the analytic reprises elements of what Manchanda terms “the imperial sociology of ‘the tribe’ in Afghanistan” as ‘a generic signifier’ that in this context is displaced to the border (Manchanda 2018: 165-189). Manchanda argues that the notion of ‘the tribe’ functions as ‘a fixed marker of Afghan identity and society’ and constitutes the ‘capstone of [the] colonial episteme’ that has been revived in the GWoT to legitimate foreign intervention (2018:183). She points to the concept’s use in counterinsurgency doctrine, exemplified in the current context in the US Department of Defense’s Human Terrain System or HTS (183). A later chapter returns to Manchanda’s observations in the context of counterinsurgency and the use of drone strikes in the border regions.

Finally, Kumar's endorsement of Britain's transit from a failed 19th century colonial venture to the modern-day theatre of liberal war reinforces the view that imperialism/colonialism lie buried in the past, and the current world order promises salvation through benign intervention. However, the implied rupture between past and present when linked to keeping a 'low profile' (Kumar 2001), is tendentious considering British support for the GWoT, and its participation in the invasion of Afghanistan. Evidently, the question of British rather than Turkish leadership of the multinational force does not merit comparable scrutiny, and suggests that Kumar's report reprises the 'colonial episteme' inflecting discourses of the GWoT (Manchanda: 2018). The slippages and elisions within the discourse contaminate the surface claim that former European imperialisms are defunct, and that contemporary military interventions are predicated upon the dissimilar logics of liberal state building and humanitarian relief.

Temporality

CFR experts' articulation of temporality largely corroborates RAND and Heritage perspectives. However, attention to temporality is comparatively sparse in CFR's analytic, and its main contentions resonate largely with those advanced by either or both of the other think tanks. Thus, scattered across CFR texts are characterisations of the GWoT as an extended project with no determinate end, as relayed, for example, in Mandelbaum's assertion that there will be no 'neat[]' resolution (2001: 267). This open-endedness is synchronous with Hoge and Rose's attempts to sequence the Afghan campaign, deliberate its impending resolution, and underscore the commencement of war in Iraq (Hoge and Rose 2001b). The fixation with extending the war into Iraq aligns CFR discourse most closely with Heritage writings while the refusal to place temporal limits on the war also affiliates it with RAND texts.

Spatiality

As regards spatiality, previous sections detailed CFR experts' references to Afghanistan's geopolitical neighbourhood in the context of coalition building and pacification as well as to the mobile parameters of the GWoT, and are not repeated here. Instead, the section focuses primarily on identifying the commonalities and variations between CFR discourse and that of RAND and Heritage. The commonalties arise in CFR texts' reproduction of a racialised, imperial cartography beholden to racially inflected tropes such as, 'base', 'safe haven', 'nerve centre of international terrorism' (Mandelbaum 2001: 260, 262); the demarcation of geographies of 'terrorism' associated with various 'complicit' 'sovereign state[s]', notably Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq (Mandelbaum 2001: 260); the insertion of Afghanistan and its neighbours within regional groupings that are facile and reductive (Mandelbaum 2001; Kumar 2001); and the consistent validation of the US' 'geopolitical gaze' (Klinke 2009). Within this schema, the CFR's analytic of spatiality diverges from RAND accounts that tend to associate terrorism with ungoverned spaces and failing states. Contrastingly, it echoes Heritage writings in connecting specific states to various terrorist groups. Yet again, such univocal geographies are forged by occluding the troubled histories of US intervention in Afghanistan and indeed in other Cold War theatres of conflict in the Global South. Mamdani's allusion to the repeal of the Clark amendment in 1985 in Reagan's second term is relevant here:

'CIA chief William Casey took the lead in orchestrating support for terrorist and pro terrorist movements around the world-from Contras in Nicaragua to the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, to Mozambican National Resistance...and (UNITA) in Angola ... Simply put, after the defeat in Vietnam and the Watergate scandal, the United States decided to harness ... terrorism in the struggle against regimes it considered pro-Soviet' (Mamdani 2002: 769).

He adds that Bin Laden, recruited under Saudi and US auspices, aided the construction in 1986 of the 'tunnel complex deep under the mountains close to the Pakistani border, a complex the

CIA funded as a major arms depot [and] training facility’, and established al Qaeda, meaning ‘military base’ for mujahideen fighters in 1989 (Mamdani 2002: 770). Clearly, then Mandelbaum’s and indeed other experts’ writings are more fruitfully conceptualised as attempts to *respatialise* terrains disfigured through previous episodes of US ‘complicity’.

Space and public diplomacy

A less obvious but equally pertinent form of spatiality is evinced in the public diplomacy campaign delineated in the CFR’s Task Force report. In order to foster understanding of the war as a ‘just cause’, the report articulates an elaborate mission of connecting diverse regions, public spaces, institutional arenas, media and communication hubs, diasporic enclaves, and linguistically defined locales (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001). In shifting between macro and micro level analytics, denoted for instance by ‘the Middle East’, ‘South Asia’ on the one hand, and by the localised habitats of ‘government, elites, average people’ on the other, the report envisages a grid of overlapping spaces that connect within a pacified field of discursivity. In this field, culture, language, information technology, and religion serve as instruments of spatialisation while the gatekeeping role of ‘messengers’ filters discordant messages that may imperial the ideological-political frontiers of the GWoT. It is notable then that Pakistan is inducted into this imaginary as the site of the sole coordinating office outside Washington and London. Arguably, the CFR’s investment in a public diplomacy campaign, which could with little exaggeration be termed war propaganda, problematises the think tank’s own self-description as a site of detached knowledge production. In the absence of any direct engagement by CFR experts on this point, and in light of the CFR’s global institutional reach, the inference

is that the discursive arena envisioned in the report marks a continuation rather than deviation of the geopolitics of knowledge shaping the think tank's endeavours, now in the context of war.

Subject construction

This section concludes the examination of CFR's early writings by focusing on subject construction. Again, despite variations, the experts' leanings on this issue uphold rather than disrupt the commonalities discerned amongst the think tanks thus far. This is especially apparent in the performances of subjectivity in which CFR contributors adopt the same binarist grammar when framing the perpetrators of the attacks, imagining their motivations and worldviews, juxtaposing these to the political sensibilities of the targeted nation, and impressing the latter's vulnerability. The aim here is to identify commonalities amongst CFR discourse and the interventions of RAND and Heritage experts, and also highlight its distinctive features. Thus, Hoge and Rose's chapter and interview are most relevant as examples of subject construction. In terms of substance, structure, and vocabulary, their depictions of the attacks and attackers reverberate so closely with RAND accounts as to suggest a formulaic approach. In readily invoking the grammar of the 'new terrorism' discourse in references to 'radical evil', 'fanaticism and hatred', 'an elusive enemy' and the singular focus on Bin Laden, Hoge and Rose virtually mirror RAND testimonies except that the latter are more developed (Hoge and Rose 2001a, 2001b). Other affinities surface in their references to 'vulnerability' and to an 'ill prepared' society (Hoge and Rose 2001a: xi). What appears to be an emerging pattern with CFR writings is their strong but intermittent congruity with one or the other think tanks without complete absorption in either. There are then questions to be posed as to the distinctiveness of

the CFR's liberal internationalist discourse as it navigates an acute crisis in US politics and foreign policy.

The subjects of public diplomacy

There are two interrelated ways in which CFR writings extend the discursive construction of subjects, both of which are lodged in the Task Force report. First, this text surpasses the interventions of RAND and Heritage experts in its overriding preoccupation with subject production, and the allied cultivation of specific subject positions as *ancillary war aims*. Its pre-eminent 'task' is the forging of transnationally dispersed docile subjects who imbibe US-sponsored readings of the GWoT specifically, and the necessity of US global leadership generally. Furthermore, the task assumes an intersubjective dimension in the importance attached to producing, circulating, and monitoring knowledges within and across state borders. To recall Hall's formulations, the Task Force envisages the production of subjects who uphold the 'regime of truth' (Foucault 1980 cited in Hall 1997: 55) embedded in discourses of the GWoT, and become the 'bearers of its power/knowledge' (Hall 1997: 56). In this respect, subjectivity assumes a cardinal status, and becomes a dynamic, purposive undertaking involving, as noted earlier, a plethora of resources, geographical locales and actors that complement but also *exceed* those of an individual or various think tank(s). Second, it supplements the binary understanding of imperial and subaltern subjects by according special emphasis to the category of 'messengers' or 'proxies' as the imperium's chief whips (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001). The report does not assume that this cohort already exists, and proceeds as if it is to be constructed *ex nihilo*.

Anticipating later discussion, the Task Force's search for 'proxies' may be linked to Toor's (2012) discussion of Pakistani liberals' support for the GWoT. Thus, she alludes to the 'special political role that Pakistani liberals have come to play within Western debates over the war in Afghanistan' and to their

'increased visibility within mainstream and left-liberal media in the United States in recent years, which is connected to the extension of the 'Afghanistan war' into Pakistan ... Like their counterparts in the United States, Pakistani liberals are strong supporters of the US presence in Afghanistan and of drone attacks in Pakistan's FATA region' (Toor 2012: 154-155).

Toor makes no reference to ventures such as the Task Force report, nor does her analysis reduce liberal alignments to an effect of external manipulation. As she notes elsewhere, Pakistani liberals welcomed General Musharraf's military coup in 1999 primarily on the grounds that his 'westernised lifestyle' and secularist biases would arrest the state's putative drift towards 'Talibanisation' (2011:196).⁹⁰ Her observation that the liberals' backing for the coup garnered significant traction in US media circles is indicative of a convergence between a section of elite opinion in Pakistan and the operations of public diplomacy as outlined in the Task Force report (Toor 2011).

Memorialising subjects

The report's insistence on personalising the victims of the Twin Towers also represents a form of subject construction. Whilst honouring the fallen by listing names, ethnicities, faiths, biographies is a worthy cause, its marshalling for a proselytising campaign vindicating the GWoT renders it highly tendentious. Whereas Kumar's report acknowledges the deaths of

⁹⁰ "Unfortunately, not only did the obsession with 'Talibanization' not translate into any form of organized resistance at the social, political, or cultural level ... but it also led Pakistani liberals in dangerous and fundamentally anti progressive directions, a particularly egregious example of which was their open support for Musharraf's coup d'état in 1999" (Toor 2011: 196).

Afghans in the GWoT, however cursorily, the Task Force report is entirely silent on this issue as it calls for commemorating the victims of September 11. The inference is that recalling death in contexts inimical to the sanctification of US power is a challenge that ‘messengers’ and ‘proxies’ will strive to circumvent in communicating with newly emergent subjects. This is not to prejudge the content of ‘messages’ that will be generated as the war extends in time and space. It is rather to suggest that the Task Force report construes ‘public diplomacy’ as the mapping of specific subjectivities of the living *and* the dead within a cartography defined by the knowledge frameworks of the GWoT. The strategy pursued in the Task force report, then, recalls Butler’s reflections of the politics of mourning and its connection to the very conception of the ‘human’; she remarks,

‘Some lives are grievable, and others are not; the differential allocation of grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must be grieved, and what kind of subject must not, operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human...?’ (Butler 2004: xiv-xv)

The Report’s call to mark out ‘grievable’ deaths (Butler 2004) is normative, but also strategic in that it involves the control and management of knowledge with a view to producing *subjects who grieve* at specific moments and in designated spaces.

Expert self-positionings

Lastly CFR experts’ self-representations as producers of knowledge also reveal a broad affinity with the postures of Heritage and RAND. Notable in this regard are Hoge and Rose’s claims regarding their edited volume, which emerge in their ‘Introduction’ and more emphatically in their interview. In each case, the authors herald the volume’s *necessity*, veracity, analytical scope, and the exemplary credentials of its contributors. Hoge and Rose proclaim their own competencies and privileges as editors curating, authorising and disseminating specific readings

of a national emergency. Defining the parameters of debate in terms of content and approach, they become the enunciators of 'the terms of the conversation' (Mignolo 2009: 37, 11), privileging a grammar that affixes specific meanings to key concepts such as 'war', 'terrorism', 'CT', and 'vulnerability'. They assume a pivotal role as experts identifying challenges, designating priorities, recoding ethical standpoints, and sedimenting meanings in the formulation of a new discourse signalling a dramatic reorientation of foreign policy.

Whereas Hoge and Rose inaugurate the framework of discussion, Mandelbaum provides an illustration of policy relevant knowledge framed within its horizon. He amplifies and rationalises an unfolding foreign policy shift by turning to practical lessons from US history, and rendering what appears to be disturbing and discordant, plausible and familiar. Concepts such as regime change, pre-emption and defensive war are domesticated by their association with iconic historical moments. Furthermore, Mandelbaum's identification with the bearers of America's ethically encoded foreign policy is implicit in the valorisation of Cold War doctrine, in allusions to 'Western values and institutions' as well as to the 'shortcomings' of states that the US has tactically allied with (Mandelbaum 2001: 257, 261, 258). By investing US foreign policy with sustained moral and ethical intent, Mandelbaum invokes a means/ends logic that reaffirms the unsullied motivations and objectives of US foreign policy makers thus pre-empting the possibility of future aberrations.

The Task Force report presents an interesting contrast to the preceding interventions, which despite their investment in the new war, profess analytical detachment and a degree of critical distance. The 'bipartisan' report is redolent of Hoge and Rose's volume as it gathers

contributors from diverse backgrounds under the aegis of CFR direction. However, a distinction emerges in that the contributors are less concerned with presenting as impartial interlocutors of policy relevant knowledges than in harnessing ‘public diplomacy’ to the military campaign, and serving as the latter’s propagandists, and asserting their hierarchical position within the evolving calculus. Excavating the grammar of coloniality, their designation of ‘proxies’, ‘messengers’, ‘messages’, *recalibrates* the cognates they and their counterparts in RAND and Heritage deploy to identify, for example, ‘allies’ and ‘coalition’ members. As such, the Report’s dynamics provide the discursive counterpart to the political/military calculus: the triangulation of pliant Muslims, agential intermediaries, and imperial managers places those formulating the strategy at the apex of the discursive edifice, thus preserving the *coloniality* of expert knowledge production. Arguably then, the venture of Public Diplomacy and its propagandist moorings add yet another layer to the think tank experts’ multivariate and mutable roles.

Conclusion

This chapter concluded the examination of the think tanks’ inaugural discourses of the GWoT by focusing on expert interventions from the CFR whose prestige and pre-eminence amongst elite US foreign policy think tanks is well documented. The chapter examined a series of expert contributions in the form of book chapters, reports and a televised interview, which date from September to December 2001. Scrutiny of CFR texts revealed their strong commonalities with one or both of the other think tanks. The dominant findings from this essay were as follows.

First, CFR experts concurred with their counterparts at RAND and the Heritage Foundation in legitimising the war as *one* element within a significant reorientation of foreign and domestic policy. The war’s legitimacy was established through its renarration in terms of present trauma

and future peril, signature policy precedents such as containment as well as policy lapses, appeals to shared norms and values, and a consistent iteration of the US' role as the enforcer and the exception in a rules based international system. As regards the war's modalities, the focus on CT in CFR texts was redolent of RAND's statements, while the detailed analysis of post-war pacification aligned closely with Phillips' (2001b) 'endgames' in Heritage writings. CFR interventions were, however, distinctive in situating *Muslim* subjectivity within the schema of stabilisation, applying it both to states and specific institutions via the emphasis on 'moderation' and to publics who become the central protagonists in a programme of public diplomacy.

Second, in common with RAND and Heritage discourses, CFR accounts temporalised the attacks as a moment of rupture but displayed greater symmetry with Heritage accounts in promulgating a phased and open-ended war. Significantly, a prominent aspect of the affinity between CFR and Heritage texts was the conspicuous advocacy of war in Iraq as the next vista of the GWoT. The correspondences with RAND and Heritage accounts also appeared in CFR experts' deployments of spatiality, notably the insertion of Afghanistan and other states within geographies of 'terrorism', the use of racially encoded tropes, and of mapping strategies invested in exceptionalist and imperial purposes. The Task Force report added a further layer to the question of spatiality by scripting connections across a reconfigured field of global discursivity. Temporality and spatiality remained contingent upon rituals of historical amnesia and erasure.

Lastly, the construction of subjects in CFR texts was also resonant with tendencies evinced in RAND and Heritage interventions. The affinity with RAND appeared primarily in binarised and depoliticised representations of the terrorist subject, and the associated use of labels and concepts such as ‘vulnerability’ in a broader affirmation of the ‘new terrorism’ thesis (Hoge and Rose 2001a). Concomitantly, CFR experts echoed their counterparts at Heritage in identifying various states and regimes as terrorist sponsors. Relatedly, CFR experts’ implicit self-representations as gatekeepers of ethically encoded policy grammars, and as authoritative interlocutors navigating a national emergency overlapped with comparable claims by experts at RAND and Heritage. CFR expertise diverged visibly in the Task Force Report’s recourse to the grammar of public diplomacy to foreground the production of transnationally situated docile subjects who would assimilate and disseminate specific narrations of the GWoT.

In closing, the survey of early think tank interventions in the GWoT revealed how the substantive, normative and methodological overlaps amongst the think tanks stemmed from shared epistemological investments in discourses of US exceptionalism and of coloniality. The differences where they arose tended mainly towards tonality and tactics. In tandem, the areas of agreement and divergence coalesced to form a point of departure for the experts’ inaugural attempts at building the discursive armature of the GWoT. The survey also demonstrated that while the reliance on US exceptionalism and on coloniality constrains the discourse and accounts for its recurrent elisions and obfuscations, it is, however, a condition of possibility for its production and dissemination.

Chapter 4 – Interrogating Decoloniality

The decolonial triad

This chapter connects the think tanks' discursive interventions surveyed thus far to the thesis' central concern with decoloniality, a task that will extend into the next part of the study. The objective in this part will be to assess the extent to which decolonial critique encompasses the axial premises of the expert discourses, and furnishes tools for unmasking the operations of power at play therein. Concomitantly with the thesis' critical strategy, this endeavour also involves exploring the interface between decolonial calls for 'epistemic disobedience' (Mignolo 2009), and scholarship from Critical Geopolitics and Critical Terrorism Studies. As noted, these fields have analysed connections between think tank expertise and the projection of US power, notably in the context of the GWoT. Foregrounding Mignolo's writings on decolonisation, the Cold War, as well as rewesternisation and dewesternisation in the post-Cold War period and the GWoT, the chapter extends the interrogation of decolonial thought beyond the thesis' initial engagement with the coloniality/modernity nexus. Specifically, it interrogates whether a more expansive exploration with Mignolo's writings advances a decolonial epistemic project in the context of the GWoT, and illuminates the core concerns of this study. The chapter proceeds as follows: it opens by revisiting and adding to explications of coloniality/modernity addressed in earlier sections of the thesis; subsequently, it outlines and critically analyses salient contentions in Mignolo's work beyond his core writings on coloniality/modernity; lastly, it addresses the cogency of decolonial critique as a critical epistemic tool, and identifies various lacunae.

Revisiting coloniality/modernity/decoloniality

To contextualise its key concerns, the section revisits and amplifies the thesis' introductory discussion of decolonial critique primarily by referencing Mignolo's more recent work (2018). According to Donahue and Kalyan, decolonial (and postcolonial) critique strive to 'make [the] contemporary condition of coloniality theoretically and empirically visible', and unravel the material and epistemic structures established through 'practices of subjugation, derogation, and dehumanisation' (2015, 124). For Mignolo this endeavour is articulated specifically in relation to the colonial matrix of power (CMP), which as previously noted is defined as "a complex structure of management and control ... 'the underlying structure' of Western civilization and Eurocentrism'" (Mignolo 2018: 125). He remarks,

'Part of the significance of the CMP as a theoretical construct lies in its uncovering of the domains that the discourse of modernity produces in order to advance its overall project, hiding, destroying, demonizing, and disavowing whatever gets in its way' (2018: 142).

Mignolo explains that decoloniality attaches to the 'opening theoretical concept of modernity/coloniality' advanced by Quijano to form 'the conceptual triad' (2018: 111, 135). It departs from dyadic constructions of 'signifier/signified... sign/reference ... and word/think' in relocating signification on 'different grounds: decolonial grounds' (Mignolo 2018: 109). Decoloniality cannot be grasped without an understanding of modernity/coloniality, and coloniality cannot be dismantled without undoing the 'fictions of modernity' (Mignolo 2018: 109). Decoloniality assails 'the hegemonic architecture of knowledge' and calls for '*delinking from the CMP to engage in epistemic reconstitution*' by unsettling 'the disciplinary management of knowledge' and becoming 'a disrupter in the academy' (2018: 212, 223, 106). Also significant are Mignolo's allusions to the tripartite division of the world, the triad's origins in the Third World, and the coincidence between its articulation and the demise of the Soviet Union (2018: 111). Most

notable, is his assertion that the Cold War's end marked the transition from *decolonisation* to decoloniality (2018: 106). For Mignolo, decolonisation, for all its promise, was directed at 'specific colonisation'; because 'the overall logic of coloniality was still not available', it remained mired in the 'terms and sensibility of modern thinking' (2018: 112).

Dewesternisation, rewesternisation and the GWOt

This supplementary sketch of decoloniality's aims, origins, as well as its intersection with the Cold War prefaces an interrogation of Mignolo's exposition of the GWOt. Mignolo assimilates the war into an overarching genealogy of the consolidation, and incipient fracturing of colonial modernity by deploying the concepts of dewesternisation and rewesternisation. Depicting the war as an emblem of 'the closing [of] the cycle of Western hegemony' (Mignolo 2015: 7), he states

'The end of the Cold War and the invasion of Iraq, justified by the collapse of the Twin Towers ... closed a five-hundred-year cycle of Western mental and physical hegemony. We are living on the planet in the concerted Western effort...to manage and control the colonial matrix of power (CMP) now that hegemony has disintegrated' (Mignolo 2018: 106).

Launched by 'the last imperial state', the attack on Iraq encapsulates 'the long history of the Westernization of the world' signifying a 'replica' of previous western global expansion (Mignolo 2015: 7-8). It typifies the clash between western hegemonic designs and 'the project of *delinking* ...[via] the discrete efforts of dewesternisation and decoloniality' (Mignolo 2015: 16). Mignolo defines 'dewesternisation' as 'a process of political ... and economic ... delinking from Western domination' best exemplified by Russia and China (2015: 14). Its genealogy incorporates the Bandung Conference of 1955, which enshrined the 'state-led' decolonisation of the Cold War (Mignolo 2018: 128). Unlike decoloniality which envisages 'altering the *principles and assumptions* of knowledge creation, transformation and dissemination', dewesternisation 'disputes the *content* of the conversation' but

‘...leaves intact the structure of the CMP: for example, the modern state as the form of governance, and economic coloniality (capitalism) as the form of production, exchange, circulation, finances, and markets; (Mignolo 2018: 130).

Alongside *epistemology*, dewesternisation diverges from decoloniality as regards agency and scope; thus, dewesternisation is state-led and denotes control of the colonial matrix of power rather than a questioning of ‘its very foundation’; in contrast, ‘decoloniality implies dewesternisation by other means’ rooted in ‘the sphere of an *emerging global political society*’ (2018: 125, 129, 130).

Besides Iraq, events in Ukraine and Syria also demonstrate that ‘the West can no longer do what it pleases’ (Mignolo 2015: 16-17). Thus, the disruption of western hegemony at the end of the Cold War is ongoing despite the west’s attempt ‘to manage and control the CMP’ by invading Iraq in 2003 (Mignolo 2018: 106).

‘Iraq and Libya were possibly the last opportunities for the West to expand the territorial lines of the second nomos of the earth and enact the designs inscribed in the [CMP]. It was obvious to many (and certainly to Russia and China) that Syria and Ukraine had been targeted for the same purposes’ (Mignolo 2015: 16-17).

This ‘clash between dewesternisation’ and its corollary, ‘rewesternisation’, understood as ‘a violent effort [by the West] to reassert itself’ and ‘revamp ... the global designs that were successful for five hundred years’ underlies the ‘present disorder’ (Mignolo 2015: 1, 16). Significantly, however, Mignolo identifies rewesternisation with specific episodes in *US politics*, namely Obama’s assumption of the presidency in 2008 amidst Chinese and Russian moves towards dewesternisation (2015: 14). Furthermore, he adduces Obama’s Cairo address of 2009 as presaging an impending policy shift:

“... since Barack Obama’s inauguration as president ..., his goal in terms of international relations has been to start the process of *rewesternisation*... [The] ... speech in Cairo was a clear sign that his foreign policy was redirecting Westernization after the world’s disenchantment with the Bush-Cheney-Rice

foreign policy legacy. Obama therefore initiated the discourse of rewesternisation, claiming a ‘new beginning’.” (2015: 14).

The inference is that US imperial designs in the GWoT are the *precursors* of ‘rewesternisation’ construed as an internal moment in the post-hegemonic unfolding logic of coloniality.

The following sections will delineate various areas of ambiguity appear in Mignolo’s otherwise illuminating account. They are interrelated and overlapping, but are separated for heuristic reasons and will be addressed sequentially. They relate to the trajectory of dewesternisation, and its interface with the Cold War; the framing of the GWoT within the parameters of the latter; and the third to the de-emphasis of Orientalism’s role in congealing multiple discourses prior to and during the GWoT.

The dyad’s ambiguity: dewesternisation, rewesternisation and the Cold War

Several empirical and conceptual anomalies emerge in the connections that are established in Mignolo’s writings between the advance of dewesternisation and its intersections with the Cold War. Mignolo defines the latter as ‘a confrontation between two westernising ideologies’ in which the antagonists were ‘caught up in the same western history, only they bent it for different purposes’ (2018: 129). His main contention is that its end accelerated dewesternisation by mobilising ‘non-Western memories, languages, politics, religions, sensibilities’ (2018: 128).

Revisiting Bandung

Mignolo remarks that ‘Dewesternisation is an outcome of the Bandung Conference of 1955’ (2018: 128); however, his treatment of the subject is anomalous. In recent years, critical IR scholars have revived interest in Bandung as a watershed in the history of anti-imperial struggles, and contested

its peripheralisation in the discipline. Thus, Pasha describes Bandung as ‘a defining moment in twentieth-century international history’, but one notable for ‘its marginalisation in IR’s self-accountings’ (Pasha 2013: 147). His exposition of Bandung’s magnitude and its ‘aporias’ constitutes a critique of IR’s inattention to ‘decolonisation as rupture’, notably its propensity to assimilate newly independent states as latter-day entrants within a pre-existing international sphere (2013: 154, 146). For Pham and Shilliam, Bandung is saturated with ‘an excess of meanings’ that surpass ‘standard narratives of geopolitics, diplomacy and ethics’, and presage ‘*the life of other international relations*’ besides those of the hegemonic West and its theoretical narrations of global order’ (Pham and Shilliam 2016: 3-4). They concur that the conference remains ‘woefully understudied in IR’, and attribute this neglect to the field’s engagement with formerly colonised peoples as ‘objects, usually of interventions, and rarely...as co-authors of and in international relations’ (2016: 17). They too point to Bandung’s ‘tensions and contradictions’ (2016: 5).

Although Mignolo’s allusions to Bandung resonate with these commentaries, various contrasts emerge that diminish the efficacy of his critique. As he recounts, Bandung was an inaugural conference of 29 ex-colonial states who collectively outlined a ‘vision for the future’ premised upon a ‘delinking from the two major Western macronarratives’, capitalism and communism, and a rejection of ‘all of [the] manifestations’ of colonialism (Mignolo 2011b: 273, 282). Although the conference strove ‘to show that another way was possible’, its retention of colonially derived conceptions of progress and development tempered its ambitions, and left ‘the epistemic question’ unaddressed (Mignolo 2011b: 276). Consequently, the ‘state politics of decolonisation’ were unsuccessful, and contributed to ‘the failed modern/colonial nation-states created after independence as seen today in several regions of Asia and Africa’ (Mignolo 2018: 28). In this

context, Bandung's legacies 'materialised in [the] state politics of dewesternisation' exemplified by states such as China and Singapore that appropriated capitalism, but rejected liberalism and neoliberalism; concomitantly, others such as Iran and the Russian Federation reinvigorated 'their own local histories' as bulwarks against western domination (2018: 28-29).

The difficulties in Mignolo's reading of Bandung, and its putative legacy in dewesternisation arise to a significant extent from its state-centricity. Although Bandung represented newly independent nation-states, its mainsprings lay in centuries of anti-colonial resistance exemplified in discrete events such as the Haitian Revolution, but also in myriad 'incredible and consequential intercolonial crossings and collaborations' (Pasha 2013: 148; Pham and Shilliam 2016: 7, 12). Correspondingly, the emphasis on state-led dewesternisation underestimates the extent to which Bandung continues to inspire 'non-state centric articulations of global order and solidarity (Pham and Shilliam 2016: 16). In Pasha's reckoning, it embodies an 'impulse' and a 'memory' that reignite the quest for 'political decolonisation', and deter acquiescence with a racially encoded world (Pasha 2013: 150ff). For Shilliam, the conference was exemplary in heralding the possibility of ex-colonial 'peoples relating to each other without the mediation of past masters' across 'hinterlands' unassimilated into 'colonial rule' (2016: 425ff). He distinguishes between 'the History' of Bandung which narrates failure by invoking 'a modern-colonial episteme' beholden to the coloniser, and the 'Memory' that inheres in its 'spirit' (Shilliam 2016: 426). It is the latter, Shilliam maintains, that carries the promise of 'people in the hinterlands cultivating decolonial relations besides and other-wise to postcolonial architecture' (2016: 426). Allied conceptions pervade Grovogui's account which depicts Bandung as a touchstone for social movements seeking 'justice, global solidarity and coexistence' (Grovogui 2016).

Other factors are also of concern, notably Mignolo's recourse to the 'failed states' trope which as discussed previously is a hallmark of coloniality and strikes an incongruous note in his critique. To assert as much is not to dismiss the turbulent trajectory of postcolonial state formation, but to recall with Getachew that the dilemmas of 'anticolonial nationalism' and of 'postcolonial sovereignty' require scrutinising 'on [their] own terms' (Getachew 2019: 30, 62). Moreover, the precise interrelation of failed state-led decolonisation, Bandung's role therein, and successful dewesternisation is opaque in light of Mignolo's observation that 'the epistemic question', which is foregone in the latter, was already effaced at the conference. Furthermore, the pairing of Singapore and China as dewesternising states, and of liberalism and neoliberalism is questionable. Singapore may be described uncontroversially as a capitalist state that is closely aligned to the West, while China's political-economic model is more ambiguous, and its geopolitical allegiances are distinctive. Similarly, the differences between liberalism and neoliberalism, which is discussed later in this section, are substantive and need explicating if they are to contribute to the argument.

Dewesternisation, excavating the local, and the Cold War's end

Finally, Mignolo's characterisation of various states recovering 'local', 'non-western' cognitive and cultural frameworks requires elaboration. Thus, the reference to the Russian Federation's excavation of its pre-Soviet roots does not elucidate how tsarist imperial Russia might be classified *unambiguously* as 'non-western'. That to Iran homogenises the mobilisation of diverse political ideologies in the revolutionary struggle, including Marxism and liberalism. It also overlooks the fact that Ayatollah Khomeini's triumph represented an *innovation* of Shi'i eschatology rather than

the renewal of a historical tradition.⁹¹ Moreover, questions remain even if these ambiguities are ignored; thus, how would the ‘content’ of dewesternisation escape assimilation and recuperation within the colonial matrix? Alternatively, is it utile to posit the matrix as a stable entity that sustains a clear distinction between its terms and its content if it is no longer the preserve of western colonial powers? Mignolo’s critique borders upon a reversion to a point discussed earlier: just as newly independent states were cast as socialising into a pre-defined international sphere, states such as China are cast as inducting into a fixed schema without the resources to alter its dynamics. In other words, is it conceivable that dewesternisation may precipitate decoloniality as an unintended consequence?

The problems pervading the argument from its inception are compounded in Mignolo’s references to the Cold War. First, at an empirical level, notwithstanding the shared Enlightenment origins of Marxism and Liberalism, Mignolo’s homogenisation of Cold War conflagrations risks essentialising the myriad conflicts of this period, which were in many instances anticolonial struggles, as *western* epiphenomenon. It implies, for example, that communist insurgencies in Vietnam, Cambodia, Zaire or Angola are assimilable under a western episteme. Second, the characterisation misrepresents groups such as the Afghan mujahideen who were neither communist nor liberal but whose mobilisations under the Islamicate banner of ‘jihad’ received prodigious US support. Third, the post-Cold War’s period’s popular framing in terms of western triumphalism was captured definitively in Fukuyama’s ‘end of history’ thesis (1989). The apparent

⁹¹ Additionally, imperial Russia’s divisions between Slavophiles and Europhiles, its variant of Orientalism towards the Islamicate ‘near abroad’, its record of brutal reprisals in the Caucasus complicates the understanding of local, dewesternising histories. Moreover, the positing of a break with the Soviet period is also difficult to maintain given that Communist leaders’ policies towards the Caucasus and towards Soviet Muslims in general alternated between severe repression and accommodation (Gökay 1998: 25-64). Similarly, China’s brutal suppression of Muslim Uyghurs complicates understandings of its role as a dewesternising state.

validation of western global stewardship oversaw concerted efforts of western governments, NGOs and financial institutions to promote neoliberal globalisation, and its cultural corollary, a depoliticised and homogenised liberal sphere, as a universal good. Such efforts, which also entailed the delegitimation of alternative political-economic-cultural models, were extended with alacrity to the global South and the former communist states.

In consonance with other critical scholars of political economy, Gökay and Fouskas (2012) note that the shift to neoliberalism in the US and other core western economies from the 1970s was driven primarily by the need to reverse declining rates of profit. Stemming largely from the emergence of rivals and competitors in the global economy, notably Germany, Japan, China and the East Asian ‘tigers’, the challenge to US economic supremacy also constituted a challenge to the Bretton Woods architecture that had served as its foundation (Gökay and Fouskas 2012). The reinvention of Bretton Woods institutions, the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO, as agents of neoliberal structural adjustment in the Global South in the 1980s was consolidated in the so-termed Washington Consensus in which the US Treasury assumed a key role.

The co-ordinated state-backed attempts to globalise neoliberalism become especially resonant when it is recalled that its most avid proponents, namely the US and UK, were amongst the 6 UN members who voted in 1974 against the adoption of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, the landmark statute that embodied ex-colonial nations’ aspirations for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) (Weber and Winanti 2016: 401). The lapsed promise of the NIEO and the gradual ascendancy of neoliberalism then are co-constitutive, and disrupt the easy acceptance of Mignolo’s claims regarding post-Cold War dewesternisation and democracy.

Rewesternisation and US unipolarity

If the concept of dewesternisation poses challenges, Mignolo's use of rewesternisation as an explanatory variable also raises questions. He ascribes it to disillusionment at the stymied course of the GWoT and to the counter-hegemonic impacts of Russia and China, but does not explore the precise role of each of these factors or their possible interrelation. Furthermore, the depiction of rewesternisation as a departure from the Bush administration's policies is also questionable. Obama's dramatic escalation of drone attacks in Waziristan, his failure to condemn El Sissi's military coup against President Morsi in July 2013, his equivocal response to the Rabaa massacre of 14th August 2013, and beyond Egypt, his assent to NATO's intervention in Libya in 2011 are instances that problematise suppositions of a putative policy shift.⁹²

Equally significant is the extent to which each of its terms, dewesternisation and rewesternisation is predicated upon *US* primacy. Whereas Mignolo construes dewesternisation in generic terms, his discussion of rewesternisation focuses specifically on *US* policies. Not only does this discrepancy compromise the dyad's cogency; rather, it blunts understanding of the specificities of US imperialism as it has evolved across the 20th century. Mignolo refers frequently to US imperial design, but does not fully explicate its relation to an undifferentiated 'west' nor does he speculate about its erosion within the dynamics of dewesternisation. Relatedly, the dyad risks imposing a reductionist logic to western/US policy by framing it within a cycle of attrition and revanchism. While US foreign policy is shaped by such logics, the evolution of US 'globalism' (Smith 2003) across the 'American Century' (Luce 1941) suggests that its mainsprings are not reducible to these.

⁹² 'In a portion of his statement that bordered on lecturing, Obama said it was the responsibility of Egyptian to decide their future. He is correct. But that does not absolve the United States -- the Egyptian military's largest Western backer -- from flatly condemning a coup and the killing of hundreds of demonstrators' (Rohde 2013, *The Atlantic*).

The limitations of deploying dewesternisation without resolving its anomalies are especially discernible in Mignolo's assertion that the Cold War's end advanced its momentum. In contrast, the ascendancy of US/western triumphalist rhetoric following Soviet collapse has received extensive scholarly and media attention, and is epitomised in the conservative political columnist Charles Krauthammer's (1990) eponymous article, 'The Unipolar Moment'. Krauthammer extols the US' unrivalled global position with reference to the first Gulf War. He maintains that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was exemplary in revealing the 'unipolar', 'true geopolitical structure of the post-Cold War world' (1990: 24), comprising

'...a single pole of world power that consists of the United States at the apex of the industrial West. Perhaps it is more accurate to say the United States and behind it the West, because where the United States does not tread, the alliance does not follow ... American pre-eminence is based on the fact that it is the only country with the military, diplomatic, political and economic assets to be a decisive player in any conflict in whatever part of the world it chooses to involve itself... it was the United States, acting unilaterally and with extraordinary speed, that in August 1990 prevented Iraq from taking effective control of the entire Arabian Peninsula' (1990: 24).

Notwithstanding the questionable claims of Iraqi designs on the 'Peninsula' as well as the debates surrounding reports of US Ambassador April Glaspie's conversation with Hussain in July 1990, Krauthammer is unequivocal in associating US global supremacy with its commanding posture in the western bloc.⁹³ As noted earlier, the ascent of neoconservatives in the political establishment interlaced such perceptions of dominance with anxieties regarding its perpetuation, fostering widespread speculation as to emergent threats.

⁹³ Glaspie is on record as holding a conciliatory meeting with Hussain in which she took note of his 'grievances' and conveyed no hint of possible US retaliation in case he acted upon these (Walt 2011, *Foreign Policy*).

While Krauthammer's and others' assertions of US unipolarity acquired a particularly strident form at this time, it is useful to recall that in their substance, such statements could be placed on a continuum with discourses of US 'globalism' that remained hegemonic for much of the 20th century (Smith 2003, Van Vleck 2007). Thus, Smith, a critical geographer, chronicles the career of Isaiah Bowman, a founding director of the CFR and senior State Department official during WW2 (2003). He traces the interconnections of US empire, globalism and internationalism as these fused in the 'American Century' (Luce 1941 cited in Smith 2003). Deploying 'empire' and 'US globalism' interchangeably, Smith observes that although the latter originated in 'traditional colonial conquest', it subsequently came to occupy an *antithetical* relation to 'European colonialism and anticolonial movements alike' (2003: 2). Smith locates the rise of US globalism at the end of the 19th century when 'the loss of vacant, conquerable space', a central motif in 'Turnerian history', fuelled the 'antispacial imagination of the American century', and the notion that 'Geography could no longer contain history' (Smith 2003: 15). The 'displacement of geography by history', Smith argues, nurtured imaginaries of an empire that arose as the 'natural result of historical progress' and which would be 'spaceless in its global universality' (2003: 4, 20). For Smith, these imaginaries constituted 'an early blueprint' for 'globalism' and eventually for 'globalisation' as processes bearing an 'American imprimatur from the start' (2003: 2). They congealed in the rubric of 'nationalist internationalism', a worldview associated with elite officials and institutions including Bowman, Wilson, Roosevelt, the State Department and the CFR according to which 'internationalism *was* the fruition of American nationalism, a global manifest destiny underpinned by economic dominance' (2003: 455).

In a survey of mid-20th century aviation discourses in the US, the geopolitical scholar Van Vleck advances parallel arguments delineating how discourses of ‘nationalist globalism’ that fused elements of exceptionalism, nationalism and internationalism attained a hegemonic status in popular and foreign policy circles (Van Vleck 2007: 3). Aviation became a key site for the articulation of a globalism that replaced the ‘geopolitical idiom of empire [with] the geoeconomic idiom of the American century’, and naturalised the ‘right to near-limitless extensions of influence over [the] earth’s surface’ (Van Vleck 2007: 36, 34). Both Smith and Van Vleck concur that internationalist discourses receded with the rise of Cold War rivalries and the bipolar division of the world; nonetheless, Van Vleck suggests that despite their eclipse, undertones of ‘nationalism and exceptionalism’ have always informed salient US conceptions of ‘the global’ (2007: 37). Smith discerns the rearticulation of globalism at the Cold War’s end in ‘a new cartography’ of globalisation that would ameliorate ‘the geographical divisions established after 1945’ (2003: 23, 22).

Krauthammer’s iteration of US supremacy in 1990 and its echoes by neoconservatives then are less atypical than initial appearances may suggest. They underline the limits of approaching ‘dewesternisation’ without distinguishing the US’ hierarchical role from the ‘west’ as a collectivity, and relegating US imperialism to another moment within European colonial/imperial history.

In several respects, Mignolo’s arguments appear to resonate with those of other scholars, notably Kennedy (1987), Frank (1998), Arrighi and Silver (1999), Gökay and Fouskas (2005, 2012, 2018) who outline the political, economic, ideological, normative challenges assailing western/US

hegemony from the late 20th century onwards. Yet significant differences obtain. For example, writing from a critical non-Eurocentric political-economy perspective, Gökay and Fouskas (2018: 15) build upon Frank's thesis in *ReOrient* (1998) to narrate a 'Global Shift', namely the relocation of 'the hegemonic structures of the world economy' from the Global North to 'emerging economies' primarily in Asia, and in the Global South. They situate this process within a longer chronology dating to the late 1960s, and specifically to the unravelling of the post-war Bretton Woods system that consolidated US hegemony, connecting Europe, North America and Japan/Australasia (2018). Gökay (2016) describes its successor, neo-liberalism, as a strategy of political-economic governance, evinced especially in the accelerating pace of financialisation and militarisation. He delineates the widening disjuncture between the US' economic and military dominance. Thus, the rise of other states and regions such as China, Japan, Germany and East Asia has dented US economic hegemony; however, US military capability has enlarged steadily, vastly outstripping its nearest rivals (Gökay 2016). This dynamic has intensified US reliance on military intervention as the most optimal instrument of global dominance (Gökay 2016).

Awareness of this latter tendency has reverberated in US policy and media discourse in allusions to 'permanent' or 'perpetual war'. For example, writing in *The Atlantic*, Joyner, an academic at the Marine Corps Command and Staff College and senior fellow at the think tank The Atlantic Council remarks that

'...the foreign policy elite operates on a consensus that routinely leads to the use of military power to solve international crises... Starting with the 1991 Gulf War, ...[and] despite the end of the Cold War, we've had two decades of non-stop fighting: Somalia in 1992, Haiti in 1994, Bosnia in 1995, Serbia-Kosovo in 1999, Afghanistan starting in 2001, and Iraq again from 2003. With Libya, we've added another U.S. war' (Joyner 2011).

Another instance of the theme's topicality appears in a RAND commentary entitled 'The Risks of Permanent War' (Wyne 2018). Wyne observes,

"Less noted, though, is that the U.S. seems to have resigned itself to interminable war not only in the Middle East, but also well outside the region. It is expanding its campaign of drone strikes in Africa and fighting terrorist organizations in at least 14 countries, and it has special operations forces deployed in nearly three-quarters of the world's countries. The chief of the Air Force's Air Combat Command warned ... that the U.S. may need to countenance 'infinite war...' " (2018).

Wyne deliberates the implications of endless war for the definition of victory, economic stability, and the conduct of US foreign policy, and concludes on a cautionary, but pragmatist note:

'If permanent war is indeed a *fait accompli*, it merits deep discussion and debate that involve all elements of American society' (2018).

Gökay's argument may be extended to subsequent developments in US policy. Thus, the US seeks to exert neo-liberal hegemony through the repurposing of Bretton Woods institutions as agents of structural adjustment. However, it also embraces disciplinary, unilateral measures such as the suspension or conditional release of aid or the use of economic sanctions. Whether such acts of economic unilateralism become more pronounced as US economic hegemony continues to wane, notably in the wake of the Covid-19 global pandemic, is an open question.

Similarly, the exercise of military power in 'permanent war' has expanded to include diverse modalities and materialities of combat, for example drone warfare, missile strikes, proxy warfare, special operations, and the subcontracting of private firms. To this end, the category of rewesternisation requires reformulation. In one respect, it requires replacement with a narrower category that refers specifically to US power, but also makes legible the shifts and transformations marking its exercise. In another, it merits extending so that its reference to a broadly conceived

‘west’ can accommodate the resurgence of far right, eugenicist, and white supremacist discourses evinced in part in the Brexit referendum, and the spread of Islamophobia as well as the strengthening of anti-racist movements such as Black Lives Matter and Rhodes Must Fall.

Framing the GWoT

This section continues the interrogation of Mignolo’s writings by examining his framing of the GWoT. First, the centrality accorded to Iraq in the analytic of dewesternisation and the corresponding elision of Afghanistan, the initial battleground of the GWoT, is puzzling. Furthermore, even if this lacuna is side-lined, the precise insertion of Iraq (and Syria) within this analytic is contentious. Mignolo states,

‘West Asia became a space where the West’s attempts to implement its global designs encountered the strategies and the force of people and states who do not want to be told what to do any more. Beyond the local ethnic and religious complexities of the region, the situation in West Asia has been shaped by the opening that dewesternisation offers and the closing that rewesternisation intends’ (2015: 17).

His analytic suggests that Iraq from 2003 or indeed ‘West Asia’ become interesting as case-studies of resistance to US aggression in this period. This characterisation ignores the history of Iraq’s independence struggles, notably its resistance against the British after World War 1. This omission is especially notable given Mignolo’s depiction of the US invasion as a replay of early colonial conquests, and his passing reference to French and British designs on Iraq in the early 20th century (Mignolo 2011b: 274. Relatedly, his account sidesteps the record of Iraq’s complex post-independence alignments with the US, and its war against Iran during the 1980s. Concomitantly, whilst he views the invasion of 2003 as eroding western hegemony, he does not state whether the first Gulf war or the subsequent attacks and sanctions inflicted upon Iraq during the 1990s also contributed to this dynamic. Without elaboration, the suggestion is that Iraqis only discovered anti-

imperial resistance after 2003. Furthermore, the affirmation of Iraqi resistance after 2003 sidelines Iraq's post-invasion traumas, notably the destruction of the state; the disbanding of the army; the proliferation of insurgencies; the colossal death toll from diverse causes including US military action, insurgent attacks, disease, malnutrition, lack of sanitation; and the routinisation of the US presence in the so-termed Green Zone. These details are excluded from the concept of dewesternisation which in the context evokes little beyond the failure of the US' pacification strategies.

Second, Mignolo locates the GWoT at the Cold War's end, focusing primarily on the 2003 invasion of Iraq. However, if the first Gulf war as its precursor hovered upon the dying embers of the bipolar world, the Afghan conflict of the 1970s followed directly from superpower rivalry, and even contributed to the Soviet Union's collapse. In this sense there is an element of reductionism in Mignolo's conceptualisation that occludes recognition of the multiple, discontinuous, but overlapping conflicts that coalesced in the GWoT. Lastly, whereas dewesternisation is defined exclusively as a *state-led* process in relation to China and Russia, it is now invoked for non-state actors, but again in the context of Iraq rather than Afghanistan.

It is instructive at this point to draw comparison with Sayyid's reading of what he terms 'a postcolonial war' (2013). Sayyid argues that the GWoT is symptomatic of 'the postcolonial condition' marked by the 'decentring of the universal claims of Western values', and the 'weakening of the colonial framework' bifurcating 'metropole and periphery' (2013: 289, 290). Like Mignolo, Sayyid foregrounds the erosion of western hegemony or as he states, 'the erosion of the axis of colonialism: the hierarchy of the West and the non-West' (2013: 289); however,

there are salient, if subtle, differences in his analytic. First, by incorporating a more abstract focus on ‘values’, Sayyid’s critique diverges from Mignolo’s focus on state-led dewesternisation and its limitations as regards the content rather than the terms of the CMP. Secondly, Sayyid posits an explicit relation between the GWoT, *US* primacy and post-Cold War unipolarity, notably the latter’s instantiation by neo-conservatives as an opening for the *US* to ‘reshape the world system (the unipolar moment)’ and to ‘remake the world in its image’ (2013: 290). Thus, he remarks that the GWoT ‘has been inexorably linked with the continued primacy’ of the *US* at a time when its economic pre-eminence and its capacity to exercise soft power face contestation; as such the GWoT is ‘about the capacity of the United States to exercise global leadership in the aftermath of the Cold War and in the postcolonial condition’ (2013: 281). Conjunctural to this issue is recognition of ‘the way in which *US* foreign policy has become more directly involved in Muslimstan’ bringing with it a reinforced need ‘for forms of knowledge’ that will assist its objectives (2018: 58).

By alluding to the specificities of *US* politics, and its role as a global hegemon, Sayyid particularises the more generic references to dewesternisation in Mignolo’s critique; in contrast to Mignolo’s depiction of the Iraq invasion as a re-enactment of historical Western imperial designs, Sayyid contends that the GWoT cannot be construed as ‘a replay of colonial warfare’, and that the ‘landscape upon which the exercise of organized violence takes place’ requires recognition as the ‘postcolonial condition’ (2013: 291). Finally, Sayyid connects the racialised underpinnings of *US* power and its current projection in the GWoT to Islamophobia as its discursive vehicle: ‘White

supremacy in its current form is expressed through the cultivation and institutionalisation of Islamophobia domestically and internationally'.⁹⁴

The dyad and Orientalism

The last area examined in this critique relates to conceptual anomalies in the relationship between decolonial thought and Said's critique of Orientalism. These are conspicuous given Mignolo's reflections on 'the rhetoric of modernity' (Mignolo 2011a) in the context of the GWoT, the paramount emphasis on dismantling coloniality's knowledge structures, and the multiple references to Islam, Orientalism and Islamophobia in his writings. As noted in a previous chapter, decolonial thinkers such as Grosfoguel and Mignolo question aspects of Said's writings within a broader critique of postcolonial studies, but nevertheless laud the landmark achievement of *Orientalism*, and affirm its overarching arguments (Mignolo 2000). It is therefore curious that Mignolo's ruminations on 'global coloniality' (Mignolo 2015) in the context of the US' occupation of two majority *Muslim* states, Iraq and Afghanistan, discount the orientalist narratives undergirding the GWoT, nor do they extend to a consideration of the possible interface between these and the dynamics of rewesternisation/dewesternisation. Walsh and Mignolo's recent co-authored volume references *Orientalism* in one instance only, and omits Said from a list of luminaries including Fanon, Cesaire, Gandhi, Cabral, and Lorde who are extolled for opening 'decolonial horizons of praxis, knowledge and thought' (2018: 190, 8). In contrast, Grosfoguel does consider Orientalism in the GWoT, but as a sub-theme within his primary exploration of Islamophobia (2006: 6-8).

⁹⁴ <https://www.criticalmuslimstudies.co.uk/recalling-the-caliphate/>

Orientalism, Atlanticism, and decoloniality

Mignolo's relative reticence on Orientalism in the GWoT may be contextualised within the overarching Atlanticism of decolonial critique to suggest that its theoretical and empirical richness notwithstanding, the critique falters in addressing coloniality in the Islamicate context. As detailed in this study, decolonial critique privileges the fall of Granada in 1492 in its exposition of European colonisation of the Americas. Although this Atlanticist orientation is generative in advancing and reshaping understandings of the colonial enterprise, it makes for an ambiguous relation with the Islamicate. Thus, it elides inquiry into pre and post-Andalusian encounters between Europe and the Islamicate, including the discourses circulating in Europe *prior* to 1492 that cast Muslims, termed infidels, Saracens, or Turks, as its external other (Haşimi 2015). It also elides the fact that the fall of Granada did not impede the expansion and consolidation of Islamicate political power across Eurasia (and the African continent). Indeed, Columbus' quest for a sea route to India was spurred by the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Without due recognition of these and other concerns, inquiry into the *post-Andalusian* but *pre-colonial encounters* between Europe and Islamicate empires remains partial, and does not adequately capture the ways in which *European* modernity may have been shaped by such interactions (Abu Lughod 1989; Hobson 2004; Brotton 2016; Anievas and Nisancioğlu 2015). It ascribes a linearity and ahistoricity to colonial logics, and inhibits fuller understanding of the precise ways in which colonialism impacted upon the Islamicate.

Decolonial accounts return to the Islamicate in the context of what Mignolo terms 'the second modernity', (2018: 190) that marks the advent of European colonialism in Islamicate realms, and is the context for Mignolo's allusions to Orientalism. In maintaining that 'the conditions for

Orientalism’ derive from the ‘racial system of social classification that invented Occidentalism’ from 1492 (2009: 2-3), Mignolo, who berates Said for ‘piggybacking’ (2000: 18) on Foucault and others, makes Orientalism ‘piggyback’ on the colonisation of the Americas as its successor. This reading performs a decolonial version of the Eurocentric diffusionist thesis, denying specificity to the Islamicate, and its complex interactions with Europe.

Post-Cold War Orientalism

The elision of Orientalism in Mignolo’s decolonial writings on the GWoT contrasts conspicuously with the attention it has received in other critical treatments of the war and of the US’ post-Cold War global role. Thus, Pasha (2017: 122-140) centres Orientalism in a critique of the formative role played by civilisational discourses associated most commonly with Huntington (1993, 1996) and Fukuyama (1989, 1992) in consolidating post-Cold War western/US hegemony. Civilisational discourses, Pasha maintains, signify the ‘salience of the politics of knowledge production’ in iterating orientalist essentialisms that juxtapose Islam’s ‘radical alterity’ to the west’s triumphal liberal universalism (2017: 125-6). As such Pasha asserts the importance of discourses that were already in circulation prior to the launch of the GWoT, and that folded subsequently into its specific binaries. Affirming Said’s conception of Orientalism as a *political* rather than a cultural phenomenon, Pasha maintains that its force as ‘an integral part of *modern* political-intellectual sensibility’ remains to be fully grasped (2017: 128). It involves, Pasha asserts, acknowledging the co-constitution of colonialism and Orientalism, and recognising its contemporary rearticulation in hegemonic projects that reprise ‘a refurbished civilizer/barbarian distinction’ (2017: 128). He explains that the distinction is reiterated in ‘the scopic regimes of Orientalism’ that devolve upon ‘*essentialism, stasis, othering, self-enclosure and historicism*’ in depictions of ‘Islamic

exceptionalism'; they circulate not only amongst 'Western organic intellectuals supplying counsel and prescription to the Prince, but broadly within Western civil societies' (2017: 130, 136, 131).

Especially relevant to this study are Pasha's allusions to othering and historicism that resonate closely with the think tank experts' discursive manoeuvres. Thus, othering 'affirms civilisational hierarchies' and confers 'ontological certainty' rooted in perceptions of the west's 'moral and material advance'; on the other hand, it generates 'deep anxieties' regarding 'an irrational, fatalistic or fanatical adversary' (Pasha 2017: 133). Historicism conjures the modern conception of 'space-time' (Pasha 2017: 133). It aligns with 'presentism', and inscribes 'a singular known present' upon a monolithic past (Pasha 2017:127). It counterposes notions of 'Oriental deficiency' to hegemonic narratives of western 'progress, ... modernisation and development... democracy and civil society... quasi-states...or failed states' (Pasha 2017: 133). If 'post-Orientalism' promised an interlude from orientalist hegemony, this was aborted by the GWOt which renewed the circulation of 'orientalist tropes' amongst 'hegemonic epistemic communities', underscoring 'the recursive character of knowledge production' (Pasha 2017:136).

Relatedly, writing from a decolonial Critical Muslim Studies perspective, Sayyid also foregrounds Orientalism's centrality to 'the Western enterprise' as a boundary-producing modality that entrenches racialised hierarchies and power structures:

'Orientalism is not just another discipline or another division of knowledge production; it is the discursive formation that can be described as ... holding the barbarians at bay, and thus articulating whiteness as a form of rule' (Sayyid 2018: 55, 45).

The urgency of 'policing the boundary between the West and the Rest' (55), Sayyid suggests, is evinced in orientalists' attempts to retain control over knowledge production pertaining to 'Islam,

Muslims and the Islamicate in the postcolonial West' (2018: 61).⁹⁵ Reminiscent of Pasha's allusion to possible challenges emerging from post-Orientalism, Sayyid recounts how present-day orientalist's 'desire to have their discipline back' signifies the re-extension of academic 'ownership' over the subject domain as well as a bid to 'regulate the production of knowledge ... to discipline a disciplinary field' (2018: 64).

In the context of the GWoT, however, the renewal of Orientalism exceeds the endeavours of orientalist scholars. Rather, as Barkawi and Stanski aver, it becomes ubiquitous, and more importantly, it underlines the fact that war and Orientalism are mutually constitutive.

"The public discourses of the War on Terror are suffused with Orientalism. Law abiding, Christian and Western civilization is threatened by 'mad mullahs' who hail from an East ever-resistant to modernity and who use violence in ways that violate the most fundamental ethical protocols of armed conflict... These themes ... are in significant respects constitutive of the War on Terror ... While the 'war on terror' may be unimaginable without Orientalism, it would seem that Orientalism is also not thinkable without war" (Barkawi and Stanski 2014: 2).

Equally pertinent is their observation that Orientalism is a *dynamic* phenomenon endowed with a 'rich pool of resources' that enables the invention of 'new enemies' and new opportunities to 'rework orientalist themes and apply them to new fronts creating new Orientalisms' (2014: 9). This observation makes it plausible to re-evaluate Obama's Cairo speech not as an instance of rewesternisation but of *reorientalisation*. This tendency becomes more pronounced in later phases of the war, and is discussed in subsequent chapters.

⁹⁵ As its dedicated website states, 'Critical Muslim Studies is not confined to a single discipline, or scholarly work, or methodological approach. It is an epistemological orientation that starts from the idea that the hierarchy between the west and the non-west is no longer assured. Among its themes, it includes a critique of Eurocentrism and positivism and an engagement with decolonial and postcolonial thinking'. <https://www.criticalmuslimstudies.co.uk/about-us/>

Furthermore, Barkawi and Stanski adduce the role of ‘experts’ who produce ‘interpretations’ of the war for government and the wider public, which, they opine, ‘are not just interpretations, [but] truths authorised and legitimated by their own expertise’ (2014: 3). In forming ‘an interpretive machine’ the experts generate discourses that ‘reproduce East/West categories and distinctions’, waging war ‘at the level of meaning’ in the tradition of orientalists of yore who were ‘the object of Said’s initial statement’ (2014: 3). Significant in this category are foreign policy and strategy experts who ‘bring Orientalism and war into orbit with one another’ as well as terrorism studies professional (2014: 8, 5).

Barkawi and Stanski, Pasha and Sayyid relate Orientalism as a knowledge structure to specific constellations of power in the post-Cold War period that were generative in affixing binarist meanings to Islam and Muslims. Orientalism in such accounts is not a disused relic of bygone empires, but is constitutive of political order, and its instantiation in war. Thus, its relative eclipse in Mignolo’s critiques of the GWoT, and the post-Cold War period is discernible, and compromises their capacity to address coloniality’s *dynamic* and varied character in general, and the think tank discourses in particular.

Orientalism and terrorism – deciphering the old and the new

This section expands inquiry into the productive role of Orientalism by exploring its instantiation within shifting conceptualisations of terrorism as these evolved from the post-Cold War period to the outbreak of the GWoT in 2001. The discussion outlines how the terrorism discourse, which began as a sub-component of the broader civilizational discourse (Pasha 2017), attained dominance, and transformed understandings of political violence. It contextualises the think tanks’ iteration of the discourse by relating it to various ideological narratives circulating in the 1990s,

and also elaborates how certain experts located at these institutions played agential roles in the discourse's transformation. It demonstrates how the orientalist vocabularies and grammars that the experts deploy to conceptualise terrorism in 2001 reveal strong correspondences with the discursive shifts of the preceding decade. Especially marked in this context are the references to ontology and causation as well as to the distinctions posited between the 'new' and 'old' terrorism.

Terrorism and the new orientalists

This sub-section returns to the contributions of Stampnitzky and Kumar, detailed in a previous chapter, pertaining to momentous shifts in the construction of political violence from the 1970s. In summary, these shifts encompassed the rise of terrorism as an object of study involving a distinct class of experts, the ascendancy of moral understandings of political violence, and the increasing association of terrorism with specific actors, initially Palestinians, then Muslims. Stampnitzky and Kumar attribute an agential role to new coalitions of experts and policymakers, primarily neoconservatives, pro-Israeli lobbyists and orientalist scholars (Stampnitzky 2011, 2016; Kumar 2012), who laboured to redefine the *terms of the conversation* (2009: 37, 11) in an emerging field of knowledge. The reconstitution of political violence culminated in the 'new' terrorism thesis that gained traction in the 1990s. Typically, its proponents argued that contemporary terrorists were motivated by religious fanaticism rather than by political goals, were impervious to 'dialogue or negotiation', and were organised in loose networks (Spencer 2016: 125).⁹⁶ Relatedly, whereas old terrorists were 'targeted and proportionate in scope and intensity' (Simon and Benjamin 2000; cited in Spencer 2016: 126), the newcomers embraced moral absolutes that sanctioned 'the

⁹⁶ In an extended critique of the category of 'religious terrorism', Gunning and Jackson draw parallels with a well-established 'tradition within Western social science linking religion causally to violence'; they note furthermore that the 'analytical obfuscations' enabled by the 'original' religion-secularity dyad are not merely academic but serve to bolster and reproduce extant power structures (2011: 379, 381).

destruction of society and the elimination of large sections of the population’ (Lacquer 1999; cited in Spencer 2016: 127). Lastly, whereas old terrorists devised ‘an escape plan’, the newcomers’ eschatological yearnings envisaged martyrdom as the promised end (Enders and Sandler 2000 cited in Spencer: 2016: 127).

Of note in this context are the political-ideological journeys of two RAND experts, Jenkins and Hoffman, who are also cited as terrorism scholars, from the ‘old’ to the ‘new’ theses. Writing from a CTS perspective, Spencer points to Jenkins’ conceptualisation of political violence in the 1970s as a form of ‘theatre’ calibrated to garner publicity for a *political* cause that would be undermined by indiscriminate slaughter (Spencer 2016:127). Comparing Jenkins’ statements post-September 11 with his earlier stance enables an appreciation of his latter-day conversion to the new terrorism thesis. Relatedly, Spencer (2016: 125-130) as well as Gunning and Jackson (2011) allude to Hoffman’s and other experts’ pivotal role in expounding the fundamentals of the ‘new’ terrorism template during the 1990s.⁹⁷ Thus, Spencer cites from Hoffman’s repertoire of statements on religiously motivated violence, which in the latter’s view stems from ‘radically different value systems, mechanisms of legitimisation and justification, concepts of morality and, Manichean world view’ (Hoffman 1995; cited in Spencer 2016: 125). Elsewhere, Hoffman opines that the new terrorists’ proclivity for untrammelled violence implies that ‘many of the constraints ... which previously inhibited terrorist use of WMD are eroding’ (Hoffman 1998; cited in Spencer 2016: 127).

⁹⁷ The scholars that Spencer mentions alongside Hoffman are Laqueur 1999; Simon and Benjamin 2000; Neumann 2009; Kurtulus 2011 (2016: 124).

Gunning and Jackson concur that Hoffman was instrumental in reconstructing ‘religious terrorism’ from ‘a simple label to a set of descriptive characteristics and substantive claims’ denoting exemplary violence (2011: 371). They allude to Hoffman’s statement that religious terrorism ‘represents a very different and possibly far more lethal threat than that posed by more familiar, traditional terrorist adversaries’, and that ‘the religious imperative . . . is the most important defining characteristic of terrorist activity today’ (Hoffman 2006; cited in Gunning and Jackson 2011: 371). What is especially interesting in this respect is the consistency in Hoffman’s position prior to and following the onset of the GWoT when not only Afghanistan but Iraq too had succumbed to US military intervention.⁹⁸

Hoffman’s and Jenkins’ writings on terrorism collectively provide an ironic counterpoint to their writings on the *field* of terrorism studies. Thus, Hoffman notes,

“Fifteen years ago, the study of terrorism was described by perhaps the world’s preeminent authority on modern warfare as a ‘huge and ill-defined subject [that] has probably been responsible for more incompetent and unnecessary books than any other outside the field of sociology’” (Hoffman 1992: cited in Stampnitzky 2011: 2);

‘... there was a whole generation of terrorism scholars that never got out in the field that did all of their research from the faculty lounges or university libraries’ (Hoffman 2006: cited in Stampnitzky 2011: 9);

‘...the field remains very narrow. People keep going back to the same issues’ (Hoffman 2006: cited in Stampnitzky 2011: 11).

⁹⁸ Despite the large area of congruence amongst Hoffman and Jenkins, minor differences also emerge. Whereas Jenkins (2001) endorses the contentions of the ‘new’ terrorism thesis regarding organizational change via his endorsement of ‘looser networks’, Hoffman, as Spencer (2016: 130) notes, is more sceptical. This study’s citation of Hoffman’s allusions to al Qaeda’s and specifically to Bin Laden’s ‘vision, financial resources, organizational skills’ (Hoffman 2001c: 4) align with Spencer’s reading. The suggestion then is that the experts may differ on questions of empirical detail without however, disturbing the *ontological* inferences of the thesis.

Meanwhile, Jenkins states,

‘Just as the cartographers a century ago mapped from a distance a vast and impenetrable continent few of them had ever seen, most contemporary terrorism research is conducted far removed from, and therefore with little direct knowledge of, the actual terrorists themselves’ (Jenkins 2004 cited in Stampnitzky 2016: 25).

It is then questionable whether the experts’ reiteration of orientalist representations of Islam to animate the ‘new’ terrorism thesis, and subsequently their commentaries on the GWoT constituted endeavours to imbue rigour to the field. The new terrorism thesis for all its preoccupation with the novelty is anchored in *coloniality* as it resurrects racialised tropes dating to European imperial/colonial encounters with Islam. This is not to dispute Spencer’s emphasis on the significance of the epithet ‘new’ in constructing the phenomenon, and sanctioning responses that also comprise ‘new’ ‘intrusive, violent, and expensive counter policies’ (2016: 132).⁹⁹ Rather, it is to juxtapose the role of Orientalism in the evolving discourse of terrorism with earlier chapters’ discussion of the think tank experts’ allusions to the terrorists’ fanaticism and destructiveness, and to the epistemic value of uncertainty, fear, and catastrophe. While RAND and CFR contributions illustrated this synthesis principally in relation to depictions of al Qaeda, Heritage accounts extended its purchase to urge war in Iraq.

Additionally, it is to suggest that orientalist representations of the Islamicate through essentialism and reductionism, elision and binarisation extend beyond the experts’ statements on terrorism, and inflect the wider discursive landscape. It is then apparent that the allure of Orientalism in

⁹⁹ Gunning and Jackson (2011: 382) also observe that the dyadic ontology involving the extreme othering of enemies undergirded a spectrum of responses ranging from domestic counterterrorist legislation to ‘extraordinary’ procedures of incarceration involving ‘humiliation’ in the GWoT witnessed most graphically in Guantanamo Bay and at Abu Ghraib.

organising and cementing specific political projects surmounts the experts' own standards of superior scholarship. Rather than regretting the absence of rigour in the 'new terrorism' thesis, it may be pertinent to acknowledge the experts' *dexterity* in constructing narratives via curated rhetorical techniques that envision hegemony. The resonance of 'new terrorism' can be evinced in the organic connections it forged amongst expert communities over two decades, and its eventual normalisation in official statements. Thus, Rumsfeld declared,

'Instead of building our armed forces around plans to fight this or that country, we need to examine our *vulnerabilities* ... They know, for example, that an *open society* is vulnerable to new forms of terrorism ... We need to prepare for *new* forms of terrorism ... All the high-tech weapons in the world will not transform US armed forces unless we also transform the way we *think*, the way we train, the way we exercise and the way we fight' (Rumsfeld 2002: 3).

Jenkins and Hoffman then typify the varied and *overlapping* spaces marking the interface between coloniality and neo-imperial dominance in which knowledges of terrorism are cultivated. Orientalism as the weapon of choice in these spaces is emblematic of the refurbishment of coloniality in thrall to the current exigencies of US global power.

It is then especially interesting that Jackson, a CTS scholar, turns to decolonial thought and calls for 'epistemic disobedience' to contest the 'epistemic privilege' of counterterrorism experts, for 'epistemic delinking' of unsubstantiated terrorist threats from proposed policies, and most importantly for 'changing the terms of the conversation' that shape understandings of political violence (Mignolo 2009 cited in Jackson 2015: 49). Jackson acknowledges the importance of introducing decolonial critique to avowedly 'critical' fields of scholarship that examine hegemonic discourses such as counterterrorism. However, it is questionable whether critique launched in this vein will disrupt the discourse's key assumptions and its moorings in coloniality without privileging the role of Orientalism in its construction and repetition. As this section has sought to

demonstrate, Orientalism *is* the principal vehicle through which coloniality is iterated in discourses of terrorism.

Decoloniality beyond dewesternisation

The central preoccupation in Mignolo's writings remains the decolonial imperative, and his allusions to the limits of US/western global designs serve primarily as coordinates in his trajectory of historical transformation. His analytic culminates in a call to intensify decolonial struggles, notably in the sphere of knowledge production by 'delinking' from the 'institutions' and 'actors' that inscribe the terms as well as 'the *content* of the conversation, which entangles dewesternisation with re-westernisation today' (Mignolo 2015: 26). However, it is unclear how such a project can proceed in the context of the GWoT without recognising the limits of the critique discussed above. Such concerns are especially pertinent to the think tanks' expositions, and centre upon the extent to which the GWoT's inflection through the prism of dewesternisation/rewesternisation assists the broader project of epistemological decoloniality. In other words, *how far does the critique succeed on its own terms* when directed at the think tanks' discursive contributions? The argument in this study is that as a subsection in Mignolo's writings, it constrains understanding of the ways in which the institutions reproduce neo-imperial logics and entrench the '*terms of the conversation*' (Mignolo 2009: 37, 11) regarding the GWoT. The limitations become apparent in the areas of ambivalence highlighted in the discussion, notably those related to the Cold War's end, its legacy of war and conflict, the growth of neoconservatism in the US, the recalibration of US power in a unipolar setting, and the conceptualisation of other 'dewesternising' states. These areas define the temporal context in which the experts produce knowledge; more importantly, however, their discursive dimensions are imbricated with the latter's agency as actors participating in the production of policy-orientated knowledges. To this end, they merit scrutiny. As argued

previously, the experts obfuscate the Cold War and its legacies, rally around neoconservative arguments for pre-emptive war, realign US exceptionalism to the condition of unipolarity, amplify terrorism as the lodestar of a revamped foreign policy, and underscore their own authority as producers of knowledge. Of paramount significance then is their role as agents who define the terms and the content of a conversation, which if collapsed into the binary of rewesternisation/dewesternisation, risks loss of analytical nuance and depth, and occlusion of the specificities of US imperialism.

The relevance of decolonial thought

Following from this contention, this section deliberates how decoloniality might remain relevant to the think tanks' discourses despite these lacunae. It suggests that its critical validity is contingent upon retrieval of its constitutive elements rather than its subordinate insights. It performs this task by considering the experts' contributions in the aggregate and demonstrating how the cardinal elements in the emergent discourse instantiate the critique's dominant theoretical and conceptual claims.

First, the volume, breadth and regularity of RAND, Heritage and CFR experts' contributions affirm Mignolo's inclusion of think tanks amongst the myriad institutions sustaining the 'web of imperial knowledge' (Mignolo 2009: 20) and its arrogation of 'epistemological dominance' (Bhambra 2014: 120). That they are not outliers but pivotal actors producing knowledges imbued with 'imperial/colonial purposes' (Mignolo 2009: 18) is evinced in their consensual understandings of US imperial power, their access to diverse governmental and societal platforms, their confidence in soliciting collaboration from other key actors, and their mobility across

networked elite spaces, namely think tanks, government, academia, industry and the media. As such the three institutions occupy a privileged position within the ‘web’ as it pertains to the fashioning of foreign, security and defence policy, and affirms Mignolo’s depiction of the ‘top down’ dissemination of knowledge (2007: 492).

Second, recognising the think tanks’ apex location within the neo-imperial power structure dovetails closely with decolonial arguments regarding the ‘geopolitics of knowledge’ (Mignolo 2002; Grosfoguel 2002). The term denotes the hierarchical arrangement of knowledges within ‘the axis of the colonial difference’ wherein they present as ‘unpositioned, unlocated, neutral and universalistic’ (Grosfoguel 2002: 208). To consolidate their ‘hegemonic’ status, they ‘localis[e] other forms of thought as at best folkloric’ (Walsh 2007: 225). The term’s validity as a descriptor is adduced at various junctures. Thus, it aptly describes the think tanks’ formulations as policy-related expertise that emulates the universalist ‘rhetoric of modernity’, for example via allusions to statehood, development, democracy, and nation-building. It also captures the experts’ attempts to embed specific representations of the GWOt by hegemonising the field of discursivity and discrediting dissenting accounts as particularistic and extreme. Furthermore, in echoes of Said, it highlights the experts’ general disavowal of their interventions’ antecedents in the genre of *colonial* expertise, and their naturalisation of colonially inscribed tropes such as ‘the tribe’ (Manchanda 2018).

In other respects, however, the term’s allusion to the concealment of ‘geo-historical and biographical locations’ (Mignolo 2011a) requires interrogation. Thus, while imperial legacies are generally elided by the experts, their recourse to counterinsurgency doctrine (COIN) not only

acknowledges its colonial antecedents, but valorises its relevance in the present context while framing it within a non-imperial, statist register. Second, the concealment of the settler colonial origins of the US, its roots in institutionalised slavery, the formative role of race in its political structure, and the experts' privileged positions within a racially inscribed knowledge structure need to be balanced against the hyper-visibility of the exceptional, sovereign power of the US, which extends panoptically to 'the darkest corners of the earth' (Haas 2002). Moreover, the panopticism is conjoined with the capacity for unilateral action in the form of regime change or targeted assassination. The subjects of drone strikes and COIN are detailed in a subsequent chapter that links the concept of panopticism to Feldman's (1997) critique of 'scopic regimes'.¹⁰⁰ The point of note is that the interplay of *invisibility/erasure* with *hyper-visibility* then becomes the hallmark of the interface between the legacy of old empire, coloniality and its rearticulation in the GWoT.

Third, the discursive techniques shaping the ostensibly unbiased, policy-relevant think tank literature reveal a sustained effort to control 'the formal apparatus of enunciation' (Mignolo 2009:18). This entails proscribing the 'terms' and 'content' of the conversation, 'inventing classification and being part of it' (Mignolo 2009: 8), and is manifest in the logics that structure and regulate the interventions. Thus, the representations of the September attacks and consequent US policy responses establish discursive boundaries via the selection of interlocutors and topics; the codification of the grammars, formats, and sites of discussion; and the concatenation of chronologies, exclusivist narratives of subjectivity, and statehood. The regulative framework that

¹⁰⁰ Feldman defines scopic regimes as 'an ensemble of practices and discourses' that 'prescribe modes of seeing and object visibility and that proscribe or render untenable other modes and objects of perception' (1997 cited in Grayson and Mawdsley 2019: 438).

emerges enables ‘the content’ to be *varied* as long as it abides by the enunciatory rules. This variation constitutes the differences in tone and approach amongst the three think tanks, which illustrate Mignolo’s observation regarding ‘interdisciplinary controversies and the conflict of interpretations’ (2009: 4). Arguably then, the rules of enunciation are channelised into diverse streams as conservatism (Heritage Foundation), liberal internationalism (the CFR), and defence/security related research (RAND). Furthermore, the literature instantiates Mignolo’s allusions to the reproduction and extension of such logics via ‘the training of new (epistemic obedient) members’ (2009: 18). Whilst it is littered with references to cajoling or coercing diverse actors including state regimes, civil society groups and insurgents, such pedagogical ambitions are most lucidly articulated in the CFR Task Force report’s call for ‘proxies’ (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001) who steer the global conversation on the GWoT. Finally, a substantial relation can be drawn between enunciation and Grosfoguel’s (2013) and Dussel’s (2005) allusions to the ‘ego conquiro’ insofar as it invokes positivism, epistemic superiority and world-making.

Lastly, iterations of the ‘colonial difference’ (Mignolo 1999) are amplified in conjunction with assertions of US *exceptionalism*. Framed as such, the expert discourses are haunted by echoes of the ‘*mission civilisatrice*’ (Rao 2004: 146), positing an unbridgeable distinction between US exceptionalism and its opponents, between US sovereign power and other contingent sovereignties, between licit and illicit violence, between an anarchic world and one pacified by US power, and between liberal governmentality and other forms of governance. This manifests recurrently in the discourses, notably in allusions to counterterrorism in the context of radical alterity, spatial templates of cartographical otherness, and temporal constructions of a war stretching into a limitless future, but dissociated from 500 years of western colonial rule. Furthermore, the exceptionalist depiction of September 11 as temporal rupture moves towards a

tautological representation of the tragedy as a singular event afflicting an exceptional land. Sayyid suggests that the intense shock generated by the attacks also reflected their instantiation of ‘the unthinkable’, namely a breach of ‘the colonial enframing of the planet’ whereby

‘Colonial violence was almost exclusively what happened outside the metropole. The attacks of 9/11 broke that distinction between peace in the metropole and violence in the periphery’ (2013: 289).

Viewed in this light, the erasure of the ‘colonial difference’ allows the think tanks’ discursive interventions to be recast as concerted investments in its *reinstatement*.

If the attacks obfuscate the spatio-temporal distinctions, this is not replicated in practices of subject construction. In this context, Shilliam’s distinction between the European ‘self’s’ construction of “the ‘abject’ – the entity that is impossible for the self to bear a relationship to” and ‘the other’ who ‘might be granted a non-speaking part in the drama’ (2011) is instructive. Shilliam also implies, however, that the categories are not fixed, and that “in general, all ‘others’ – when judged to be unsalvageable – can slip into abject status” or vice versa (2011). The term ‘abject’ aptly describes the experts’ labelling of ‘terrorists’, ‘rogue states’, ‘corrupt’ regimes to connote those who are positioned at *maximal* distance from the ontology of US exceptionalism. On the other hand, Shilliam’s reference to a ‘non-speaking part’ for the ‘other’ may be qualified with regard to ‘proxies’ (Boyd, Hills, and Holbrooke 2001) to designate subjects who *may* speak, but only from authorised scripts. It is, however, the ever-present possibility of slippage, seen for instance in the altered perspectives on Iraq or on ‘terrorism’, that underlines the experts’ prerogative to construct and locate subjects within the gradations of the ‘colonial difference’ (Mignolo 1999).

Conclusion

Following the survey of think tank discourses at the opening stages of the war, this chapter interrogated the efficacy of decoloniality in uncovering the imbrications of knowledge and power in the interventions, and directed attention to the role of expertise as a key site of this nexus. Opening with a brief recall of decoloniality's central aims in light of Mignolo's and Walsh's more recent reflections, the chapter examined Mignolo's ancillary interventions on the GWoT. The examination revealed a number of conceptual and empirical inconsistencies. These were partially evinced in arguments subsumed within the dyad of dewesternisation and rewesternisation, notably in representations of decolonisation, the Cold War, the GWoT, and US primacy. Additionally, these were evinced in the relative misrecognition of Orientalism as a defining technology of expert and mainstream discourses circulating prior to and during the GWoT, notably those pertaining to civilisational superiority and to terrorism. The relative neglect of Orientalism in decolonial critique was connected to a more pervasive inconsistency in its treatment of the Islamicate, which, it was suggested stemmed from its Atlanticist focus. Furthermore, the chapter delineated the endeavours of various think tank experts in the production of the latter.

In advancing its critique, the chapter referenced various strands of critical scholarship on US empire and on Eurocentric knowledge production to delineate the limitations in decolonial arguments, the distinctiveness of the GWoT as the point of confluence for disparate discourses, and the interstitial nature of think tank expertise. Thus, the chapter maintained that the exposition of the GWoT in Mignolo's decolonial writings limits critical appraisal of the think tanks' contributions specifically, and poses challenges for the decolonial project more generally. Accordingly, it proposed relocating the critical impetus of decoloniality in its constitutive insights. It demonstrated the consonance between these insights and the assumptions, strategies and

modalities that animate the expert discourses, marking the convergence between the architecture of coloniality and present day empire. It suggested that although this consonance provides an inaugural conceptual and theoretical framework for approaching the expert discourses, attention to the empirical and conceptual lacunae identified in the discussion would enable a more rigorous and granular reading of the texts.

Part 3

Prologue – An Archive of Salvation

The concluding part of the thesis completes the documentation of the think tank experts' discursive interventions by examining their contributions over successive phases of the GWoT as it extends in time and space, fuels resistance, generates mass displacement across and within states, and inflicts injury and death on an exponential scale. The war's prolongation evinces a discernible discursive shift in its rearticulation via the grammar of counterinsurgency (COIN) rather than the originary frame of regime change and CT. However, the shift is not definitive and the think tanks continue to invoke CT and its offshoots in discourses of targeted killing. A further shift emerges in the Obama administration's rescinding of the 'war on terrorism' nomenclature. Arturo Munoz, an ex-CIA operative, alludes to this shift in a RAND monograph, which analyses the effectiveness of US military psychological operations (psy ops) in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2010 (2012:31):

‘The biggest change has to do with the war-on-terrorism justification for intervening in Afghanistan. With the change in US administrations in 2009, the very term *global war on terrorism* (GWOT) was discontinued... the United States used the terrorist attacks on September 11 to justify its intervention, with poor results in general’ (Munoz 2012: 31).

He adds that the changing content of psy ops in COIN strategy does not offset the ‘significant continuity in messaging over the past eight years’ (2012: 31). Rather,

‘the propaganda is currently Afghan-centric, focusing on what the terrorists are doing to the Afghans, as opposed to what was done to the Americans. This is much more effective’ (2012: 31).

Munoz's allusions to change and continuity in discursive technologies, candidly termed ‘*propaganda*’, that shaped the GWoT's psy ops for several years are a useful point of entry into the empirical, analytical, and conceptual aims of Part 3.

Empirically, the discussion documents the experts' attempts to navigate the vicissitudes of post-invasion pacification at distinct junctures of the GWoT. Whereas preceding chapters considered the experts' opening interventions on the GWoT, the chapters in Part 3 adopt a variant, disaggregated approach. Following the first chapter's focus on COIN, chapters 2 and 3 respectively survey RAND and CFR experts' interventions on Iraq and Afghanistan, and chapter 4 examines Heritage experts' interventions on both states. The interventions are considered in an approximately chronological order to narrate the GWoT's progression, and highlight the commentaries' discursive regularity in unfolding along a continuum. Chapter 5 undertakes a composite critique of the texts surveyed across Part 3, building on previous chapters' assessments of the experts' interventions as the agential endeavours of 'intellectuals of statecraft' (Agnew and O'Tuathail 1992) deeply invested in knowledges that sustain US imperial power. As the GWoT lengthens, however, this investment constitutes an ironic twist on Mignolo's 'rhetoric of modern salvation' (2018: 129) in that it displays a commitment to salvage and reinvigorate *the imperial project* amidst compounding failure. The chapter's argument develops this characterisation of the think tanks' contributions via endeavours to outline the texts' salient arguments and observations, interrogate their consistency with the earlier commentaries, and excavate the discursive strategies through which embedded 'regimes of truth' are revalidated in altered and often unpropitious contexts.

Finally, Chapter 5 returns to the thesis' interrogation of the scope and validity of decolonial critique. The discussion thus far has affirmed its general salience but identified anomalies that restrict understanding of the post-Cold War projection of US power, including via the GWoT. Concomitantly, it has alluded to instances of critical, decolonial scholarship in IR and cognate

disciplines such as Critical Geopolitics and CTS that address these subjects in productive ways, amplifying understanding of the expert discourses. A key aim in the chapter, then, is to ascertain whether the strengths and limitations of decolonial critique manifest in comparable ways in the experts' later commentaries, which address the GWoT in altered contexts.

Chapter 1 – Counterinsurgency Redux

This chapter underscores the significance of COIN as a discourse that foregrounds the relation between knowledge production, warfare and the interstitiality of empire or its alternation between coloniality and contemporary imperialism. The discussion represents the think tank experts' contributions as formative in cementing understandings of COIN that iterate its strategic relevance in the context of the GWoT, and in future US military encounters. As noted, the discourse of COIN does not efface the discourse of terrorism, but develops in relation to it; nevertheless, COIN's prominence in the experts' writings, and indeed in media, military and policy discourse, represents a shift in the *content* of the conversation regarding the GWoT. It reveals the experts' recognition of the GWoT's troubled trajectories, and their search for panaceas that often recall colonial precedents of pacification. The resurrection of colonial knowledges, and their imbrication within the calculus that interlaces US exceptionalism, the GWoT as its enterprise, and the experts as its self-ascribed interlocutors make COIN particularly apposite to the thesis' overarching inquiry.

COIN, coloniality and empire

The chapter commences with two preliminary observations. First, the illusory promises of swift victory in Afghanistan and Iraq, the growth and intensification of armed resistance to foreign occupation, and the mounting death toll in both countries precipitated the discursive reframing of the GWoT in the grammar of counterinsurgency in state, elite policy and media circles. Second, the salient tenets of counterinsurgency discourse propounded by the so-termed 'soldier-scholars' complicate this study's focus on coloniality via the proponents' *overt* invocation of colonial antecedents. The discursive attachment to empire becomes explicit

rather than oblique even though it reprises liberal narratives of state-building, humanitarian relief and emancipation. Various scholars of counterinsurgency have underscored this relationality; thus, Dyvik notes,

‘Recently revived from its colonial past, counterinsurgency gained renewed attention within Western forces in the early twenty-first century as a means to fight military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. Classic texts by David Galula, T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), Bernard Fall and Robert Thompson were dusted off, military training guides and manuals were updated and revised, and promises of a new set of bold and comprehensive strategies ... were made’ (Dyvik 2017: 319).

The conspicuous valorisation of colonial/imperial warfare as a template for navigating post-invasion challenges exceeds the emphasis on structural legacies in the concept of coloniality, and disrupts the erasure of empire in the discipline of IR. Instead, it points to the convergence of old and new imperial knowledges encompassing strategy and praxis. These factors—the altered modalities of the GWoT, its discursive reconstitution (and relegitimation), and its explicit connection with colonialism—are highly significant in engaging with the later commentaries, and will be elaborated in later sections. The rudiments of counterinsurgency discourse are outlined below in anticipation of this discussion.

Formulations of counterinsurgency

As Kilcullen explains, counterinsurgency in its ‘classical’ sense branches into two broad sub-categories, the ‘enemy-centric’ or ‘kinetic’ approach, and its ‘population-centric’ counterpart (Kilcullen 2007).¹⁰¹ The former denotes ‘a variant of conventional warfare’ that prioritises the

¹⁰¹ Kilcullen, currently Professor of International and Political Studies at the University of Canberra is widely recognized as an authority on COIN. His career spans a series of prestigious positions including Senior COIN Advisor to General Petraeus in Iraq, Special Advisor to Condoleezza Rice, founder of ISAF’s COIN Advisory Assistance Team, Advisor to ISAF Commander, Afghanistan: <https://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/school-of-humanities-and-social-sciences/professor-david-kilcullen>; <https://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/two-schools-of-classical-counterinsurgency>.

destruction of the enemy, while the latter privileges ‘the control problem’, namely the assertion of control over ‘the population and [its] environment (physical, human and informational)’ (Kilcullen 2007). In each case, the powers of the state confront armed ‘non-state challengers’ (Kilcullen: 2006 cited in Dyvik 2017: 320) resisting a government or occupying force deemed legitimate. Furthermore, counterinsurgency differs from CT in recognising that the insurgency commands popular support (Dixon 2009: 356).

Replacing and refashioning the colonial concept of ‘small wars’ (Callwell 1896), counterinsurgency acquired form as doctrine and praxis amidst the decolonisation struggles of the mid-20th century, notably in Malaya, Kenya, Algeria and Vietnam. Former and successor imperial actors, notably Britain, France and the US, reformulated modalities of ‘imperial policing and pacification’ (Feichtinger et al. 2012: 39) to crush anti-colonial uprisings by severing the multivariate links, operational, logistical, political and ideological, between the insurgents and the populace. Coined in 1961 during the Vietnam war by Walt Rostow, Kennedy’s National Security Advisor, (Khalili 2011: 1471; Owens 2015: 9) the term counterinsurgency offered a palatable alternative to counter-revolution. Its synonyms include ‘asymmetric warfare’, ‘winning hearts and minds’, and ‘armed social work’.¹⁰² The last is especially cogent for incorporating modernisation theory, liberal humanitarianism, and developmentalism into campaigns of military pacification, and thus typifying the centrality of ‘social governance’ (Owens 2015: 9) to population-centric counterinsurgency. Furthermore, it reinforces representation of the latter as a ‘progressive’ and ‘humane’ alternative (Khalili: 20,

¹⁰² The oft-repeated cliché ‘hearts and minds’ is attributed to the ‘Tiger of Malaya’, General Sir Gerald Templer who led British counterinsurgency efforts in Malaya: ‘The answer ... lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people. (Templer 1952 cited in Dixon 2009: 354). Templer’s phrase is often seen as a response to Mao’s axiom regarding revolutionary guerillas’ assimilation into the local population. (362).

16) in which the civilian population's protection and allegiance 'remain[s]the prize' (Kilcullen 2006: 117). Contrastingly, the 'kinetic' objective to destroy the enemy, and potentially inflict punitive measures upon civilians is deemed counterproductive in terms of casualties and outcomes. However, as Owens (2015: 9) notes, 'social governance' does not relinquish kinetic methods; rather, for counterinsurgents such as Sarah Sewall, force is calibrated by 'emotionally intelligent' troops to reduce civilian fatalities (Sewall 2007 cited in Owens 2015: 245).¹⁰³

Rediscovering Galula

For contemporary COIN experts mining the repertoire of late colonial counterinsurgency, the writings of French military officer David Galula are especially resonant. Galula's fame is primarily traced to Algeria (Porch 2014; Khalili 2010: 17), although he also participated in other insurgencies, and was a consultant for the US and to several Latin American militaries (Feichtinger and Malinowski 2012: 43). On retiring, Galula joined RAND, which published his monograph *Pacification in Algeria 1956-1958* in 1963, and became Associate Professor at Harvard (Feichtinger and Malinowski 2012: 47). Owens (2015: 10) connects the 'cliché' 'armed social work' to Galula's conception of the counterinsurgent as 'a propagandist, a social worker, a civil engineer, a schoolteacher, a boy scout' (Galula 1964 cited in Owens: 10). Feichtinger and Malinowski (2012: 42) document the transformations in late colonial warfare in which military personnel undertook 'developmental' roles, but also served alongside civilians such as 'missionaries, nurses, ... and NGOs'. The rise of 'new sorts of colonial agents'

¹⁰³ Sewall's stellar career spans the US Department of Defense, the State Department, the Kennedy School of Government, and leading think tanks. She contributed to the US military's widely circulated *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* produced under the guidance of Lt. General David Petraus and Lt. General James Amos in December 2006 and wrote the Introduction to the book edition. <https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=468442>

who undertook ‘civil administrative functions and establish[ed] close contact with representatives of the local population’ marked a departure from earlier colonial practice (Feichtinger and Malinowski 2012: 42). It sanctioned the reconfiguration of the social as a site of intervention; as Khalili summarises,

‘...the focus of counterinsurgency is the transformation of *civilian* allegiances and remaking of their social world...those spaces and subjectivities which regular warfare destroys as a matter of side effect rather than intent, ... are demarginalised, ...’ (2011: 1473).

Galula’s axiom regarding patterns of allegiance was frequently endorsed in the GWoT,

‘In any situation ... there will be an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority, and an active minority against ... [it]. The technique of power consists in relying on the favourable minority ... to rally the neutral majority and to neutralize or eliminate the hostile minority’ (2006: 53).¹⁰⁴

Rediscovering gender

In reconfiguring the social, late colonial counterinsurgents attached especial significance to gender. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to detail the rich arguments of scholars who have critiqued the instrumentalisation of gender in Islamicate contexts in past and present counterinsurgencies (Khalili 2011; Dyvik 2017; McBride and Wibben 2012; Feichtinger et al. 2012; Owens 2015). Such accounts converge in tracing counterinsurgency praxis in the GWoT to colonial precedents, pointing to shared views of women as transmitters of social norms, and beneficiaries of western emancipatory visions.¹⁰⁵ In the GWoT, such views span initiatives

¹⁰⁴ Reflecting on the GWoT in Afghanistan, Kilcullen states, ‘Counterinsurgency theory, as well as field observation, suggests that a minority of the population will support the government come what may, and another minority will back the Taliban under any circumstance, but the majority of Afghans simply want security, peace and prosperity and will swing to support the side that appears most likely to prevail...’ (Kilcullen 2009: 66).

¹⁰⁵ Feichtinger and Malinowski document the campaigns of acculturation targeting Algerian women, which included public performances of unveiling that were relayed to the French public as evidence of counterinsurgency’s beneficence (2012: 41, 50).

ranging from calls to liberate Afghan women to the use of military Female Engagement Teams (FETS) tasked with

“...searching Iraqi and Afghan women at checkpoints, providing medical, social and educational assistance, and targeting women ... to turn families away from support of the insurgency...” (Dyvik 2017: 325).

The recourse to counterinsurgency, Owens explains, reflects the unfeasibility of crushing insurgencies by military means alone, as evinced in post-invasion Afghanistan and Iraq (2015: 246-247). Nonetheless, critical scholars dispute counterinsurgency’s claim to represent more benign forms of warfighting, and highlight its idiosyncratic forms of violence. Thus, as Cromartie (2012: 95) notes, Galula condoned torture and would force suspects into ovens threatening to set them aflame. Owens notes how Britain’s fabled success in Malaya and Kenya involved

‘state terror and the forced resettlement of hundreds of thousands of actual and potential guerrilla supporters—... [I]n Kenya ... British officials sanctioned torture, including rape, castration and burning people alive’ (Owens 2015: 178).

Relatedly, Duncanson and Cornish maintain that the prescriptions of counterinsurgency deviate from practice, which frequently defaults to kinetic methods (2012: cited in Dyvik 2017: 323).

Countersurgency, small wars, and difference

The relevance of counterinsurgency as a genre of military discourse is also discernible in two other factors, the essentialisation of difference, and the formative contributions of prominent soldier-scholars and non-military scholars. Regarding difference, the previous section referred to Callwell’s concept of ‘small wars’ (1896, 1906). A Major General in the British army, Callwell participated in several colonial campaigns including the Second Anglo-Afghan war and the Boer War. His renowned work, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (1896, 1906) distils his extensive military experience into an almost 500-page tome chronicling several 19th

and 20th century missions of military pacification. It became foundational to British military discourses of counterinsurgency/asymmetric warfare, and retains its classic status for military historians and analysts (Khalili 2013; Wagner 2018). Callwell contends that ‘the conduct of small wars is an art by itself, diverging widely from what is adapted to regular warfare’ (Callwell cited in Wagner 2018: 221). Reprising the racism of colonial military discourse, he attributes its distinctiveness to the *irreducible* difference between British soldiers and their enemies, namely ‘savages’, ‘lower races’, ‘refractory subjects’ (Callwell cited in Wagner 2018: 221-222). For Callwell, this ontological dissimilarity obligated the use of military tactics proscribed in the ‘laws of regular warfare’ (Callwell cited in Wagner 2018: 222). Thus, ‘regular’ forces ‘are compelled...to conform to the savage method of battle’ and engage in ‘cattle lifting ... village burning, ... which may shock the humanitarian’ (Callwell cited in Wagner 2018: 222). Since ‘uncivilised races attribute leniency to timidity’, military strategy must be directed towards ‘overawing and terrifying the enemy’ (Callwell cited in Wagner 2018: 230, 222). Elsewhere, Callwell advocates precluding excessive force through knowledge of the enemy; however, as Wagner (2018; 221) observes, ‘knowing’ the enemy ...meant ‘constructing’ the enemy”.^{106 107}

¹⁰⁶ Callwell’s work may be compared with Major General Gwynn’s *Imperial Policing* (1936), another classic of British counterinsurgency. Gwynn differentiates imperial policing from ‘small wars’, prefiguring the distinction between population centric and kinetic counterinsurgency; thus, effective policing to counter rebellion in conquered populations should eschew ‘excessive severity’ but also the appearance of ‘weakness’ which undermines the ‘power ... of the Government forces’; ‘small wars’, however, are conducted against ‘irregular’ forces to reassert ‘civilian control’ and require no constraints on the ‘force’ wielded or ‘the weapons’ deployed (Gwynn cited in Khalili 2013: 27-28).

¹⁰⁷ Wagner also points to Callwell’s approbation of the US military’s Plains campaigns against Indigenous peoples through the 19th century (2018: 222).

Although Callwell's injunctions derive primarily from the Boer war, he also documents anti-colonial uprisings in the Northwest Frontier of British India, the present-day Pakistan-Afghanistan border (Khalili 2013: 19). Outlining 'theoretical principles' for 'hill warfare' (Callwell 1906: 347), Callwell envisages 'another form of guerrilla warfare--that against the well-armed fanatical cut-throat of the hills' (1906: 32). Thus, Callwell replaces 'savage' with 'fanatic' as the epithet of choice for Muslim fighters in British India, Afghanistan, Sudan, Egypt, Algeria and the Caucasus.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, he describes Pashtun tribesmen as 'active, cunning, determined', the 'most formidable foemen' famed for their 'marital instinct' (1906: 289).

Callwell's observations may be juxtaposed to the two principal forms of colonial warfare in the Northwest Frontier: the so-termed 'butcher and bolt' system that targeted the population collectively to leave a trail of 'scorched earth [and] destroyed villages'; and, the Sandeman system of rewards and punishment that was administered from 1877 through co-opted local chiefs (Manchanda 2020; Khalili 2013: 21; Bayley 2019: 262). Callwell's 'principles' inclined towards the former with the corollary that 'the destruction of villages... a task... often imposed on regular troops' must be undertaken 'methodically and with deliberation' in order to inflict comprehensive 'damage' (Callwell: 1906: 308-309).

Exemplifying the colonial difference in military knowledges, (Wagner 2018; Mignolo 2018), *Small Wars* inspired diverse publications on warfare over the 20th century, notably the US

¹⁰⁸ For example: '... fanatics like the Mahdists or the Afghan ghazis, rebels who ... like the defenders of Delhi, will accept battle in any case'; or 'The very rapid advance of fanatics ... in the Sudan and sometimes in Algeria enables ... sudden onslaughts upon the regular forces' (Callwell 1906: 103, 188).

Marine Corps *Small Wars Manual* of 1940.¹⁰⁹ Evolving alongside the century's epochal events, notably world wars and decolonisation, the genre shed Callwell's undisguised racism to reframe difference within the inchoate grammar of population-centric counterinsurgency. From mid-century, the grammar supported the 'imperial management and transformation of conquered populations', cementing notions of modernisation, development, emancipation and humanitarianism frequently backed by 'legal and administrative apparatuses in the service of warfare' (Khalili 2015: 1).

COIN expertise in the GWoT

Re-minted as COIN, the epistemic components of population centric counterinsurgency in the GWoT have been re-energised by prominent 'counterinsurgent intellectuals' or 'soldier-scholars' (Khalili 2011: 1475), and academics collaborating with the US military. Copious publications by 'soldier-scholars', many of whom possess doctorates from elite western universities, have leant 'a scholarly sheen' to the field (Khalili, 2010: 18). The repertoire includes books, articles, newspaper columns as well as specialist texts best exemplified by the US military's multi-authored *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* of 2006, which was hailed as a landmark contribution detailing the GWoT's transmutation into COIN. Luminary counterinsurgent scholars from the US include General David Petraeus, architect of the *Field Manual* (2006), Commander ISAF and Commander US forces in Afghanistan, Commander CENTCOM and Commanding General Multi-National Force in Iraq; Lt. Gen John Nagl, author of *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (2002, 2005); and Col Kalev Sepp, author of 'Best Practices in Counterinsurgency' (2005). The

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.marines.mil/Portals/1/Publications/FMFRP%2012-15%20%20Small%20Wars%20Manual.pdf>

most celebrated allied forces expert is the Australian military's Lt. Col. David Kilcullen, advisor to Gen Petraeus, to Condoleezza Rice, and Associate Professor at Johns Hopkins. His extensive corpus includes 'Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency' (2006), *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the midst of a Big One* (2009), and *Counterinsurgency* (2010).¹¹⁰

These publications share the standpoint articulated in the *Field Manual* 'Preface', which

'...establishes doctrine ... for military operations in a counterinsurgency (COIN) environment. It is based on lessons learned from previous counterinsurgencies and contemporary operations... Counterinsurgency operations ... have been neglected in broader American military doctrine and national security policies since the end of the Vietnam War ...' (2006: vii).

Thus, COIN melds knowledges distilled from past (colonial) insurrections with newly accumulating instruction.¹¹¹ Armed with this formula, the soldier-scholars exhort the calibration of force under the banner of protection, stability and political participation (McBride and Wibben 2012: 203; Khalili 2011: 1472-3; 2010: 17). COIN's success, they aver, requires civil-military coordination, proxies, cultural and ethnographic knowledge, psyops and biometric data while kinetic methods remain a potentiality (Khalili 2011: 1472-3).

A second element in COIN's growth and visibility is the increased induction of women in the US and other western defence establishments as experts in the field (Khalili: 2010: 1475). As Khalili notes, the entrants who traverse policy, academic, and think tank circles disseminate a

¹¹⁰ Petraeus and Nagl have doctorates in International Relations respectively from Princeton and Oxford; Sepp in History from Harvard; and Kilcullen in Political Science from New South Wales (Khalili 2010: 16).

¹¹¹ Allusions to past campaigns abound in the works. Kilcullen recalls Lawrence's 'Twenty-Seven Articles' while Nagle retrieves his comparison to counterinsurgency to 'eating soup with a knife': https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_27_Articles_of_T.E._Lawrence <https://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/naglpanel.pdf>

‘colonial feminist discourse’ that invests COIN with a ‘feminised’ appeal, and facilitates the co-optation of local women in the GWoT against insurgents; they unite a ‘liberal interventionist ideology’ with deep veneration for the US military (Khalili 2010: 1475, 1486, 1488, 1490).¹¹²

The third element pertains to the co-optation of academics in COIN-specific programmes, notably the Human Terrain System programme (HTS) that was launched in 2005 by the US Army’s Foreign Military Studies Office, and implemented in Iraq and subsequently in Afghanistan. HTS fielded multi-disciplinary teams of social science scholars collaborating with the military within the US and in combat zones. As specialists in fields that would expand COIN’s knowledge base, the scholars were tasked with documenting and decoding the life worlds of Afghans and Iraqis into the legible format of a ‘terrain’. HTS thereby reinvigorated colonial fantasies of knowing the ‘oriental’ (Said 1978), in this case by applying anthropological and ethnographic knowledge to import

“...bodies and spaces previously coded as ‘private’ or ‘feminine’ – women, non-combatant men, and the spaces of the ‘home’ – into the battlefield” (Khalili 2011: 1474).

HTS’ focus on gender amplifies female counterinsurgents’ emphasis on ‘culturally sensitive missions’ (McBride and Wibben 2012: 200). Several scholars, for example Khalili (2011), McBride and Wibben (2012: 200), have attributed the conceptualisation of HTS to the cultural anthropologist Montgomery McFate. A key contributor to the *Field Manual*, McFate has held

¹¹² Prominent female counterinsurgents include Sarah Sewall a senior defense official under Clinton, head of the Carr Centre at Harvard, and author of the ‘Foreword’ to the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*; Sarah Chayes whose career spans journalism, the Carnegie Endowment, and an advisory role to General McChrystal in Afghanistan; Janine Davidson, formerly Senior Fellow at Brookings and the CFR, Director in the Pentagon’s Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict unit, Deputy Assistant Undersecretary of Defense for Plans under Obama, and author of the ‘Introduction’ to *The US Army Stability Operations Field Manual* (2010); and Emma Sky, Senior Fellow at the Jackson Institute, Director at a Yale Fellows programme, advisor to ISAF Commander in Afghanistan and to General Odierno and Petraeus in Iraq (Khalili 2010: 1489).

a series of distinguished positions across think tanks including RAND, at the US Naval War College, and at HTS as a Senior Social Scientist.¹¹³ Co-articulating the importance of cultural awareness and anthropology in war, she states

‘Why has cultural knowledge suddenly become such an imperative? Primarily because traditional methods of warfighting have proven inadequate in Iraq and Afghanistan...Countering the insurgency... requires cultural and social knowledge of the adversary. Yet, none of the elements of U.S. national power ... explicitly take adversary culture into account This cultural knowledge gap has a simple cause—the almost total absence of anthropology within the national-security establishment ...’ (McFate 2005: 24).

Noting that anthropology served ‘as an intellectual tool to consolidate imperial power at the margins of empire’, McFate laments its exclusion from ‘the policy arena’ (2005: 28). Nonetheless, various academic and professional bodies, notably the American Anthropological Association and the American Psychiatric and Psychological Association, denounced HTS for linking scholarship explicitly to warfare, thus violating established codes of academic conduct (McBride and Wibben 2012: 211).

Conclusion

This chapter opened the thesis’ final investigations into the think tank experts’ interventions on the GWoT between 2004 and 2015. To contextualise this examination, it foregrounded the salience of counterinsurgency in the experts’ discursive endeavours as they transitioned from advocacy of the GWoT to its management as it extended in time and space. Delineating the mobilisation and valorisation of counterinsurgency discourse as a hallmark of the transition, the chapter maintained, however, that it marked the partial and periodic rather than complete eclipse of the discourse of counterterrorism. In elaborating on counterinsurgency, the chapter

¹¹³ <https://www.montgomerymcfate.com/>

underscored its antecedents as a form of knowledge imbricated in colonial/imperial histories. It excavated modulations in the discourse from its precursors in the 19th century doctrine of ‘small wars’ (Callwell 1906) via its reformulation in 20th century liberal colonial governance to its rebranding as population centric COIN in the GWoT. Relatedly, it discussed how these modulations corresponded with shifts in the constitutive racialised and orientalist grammars of the discourse, which remained resilient despite variations. Most importantly, it delineated the resuscitation and veneration of late colonial counterinsurgency doctrine in the GWoT by prominent ‘soldier-scholars’ and other knowledge producers. Consequently, it demonstrated that the uptake of colonial knowledges in present-day empire complicated discussions of coloniality as a concept, which seeks to unmask concealed or obliquely articulated colonial and imperial attachments. Through these lines of argument linking knowledge production, warfare, coloniality, and expertise in the context of the GWoT’s shifting vistas, the chapter laid the groundwork for the thesis’ inquiry into the think tank experts’ writings at different junctures of a lengthening and increasingly deadly war.

Chapter 2 – RAND in Iraq: Conscripting Counterinsurgency

This chapter examines documents authored by RAND experts between 2004 and 2009, which detail the invasion's aftermath in Iraq. The texts are examined in order of publication, but their content does not necessarily denote a linear progression; for example, Dobbins et al.'s volume published in 2009 is a retrospective appraisal of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) while Hoffman's occasional paper of 2004 advocates a strategic shift to COIN.

Hoffman – imperial pathologies

Hoffman's (2004) occasional paper entitled 'Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq' establishes the parameters for RAND investigations of counterinsurgency articulating core arguments that are iterated or expanded in subsequent publications. It is considered in its entirety unlike succeeding documents which are referenced selectively to avoid repetition.

Hoffman's Preface acknowledges his indebtedness to

'past research undertaken at the RAND Corporation on insurgency and counterinsurgency, terrorism and CT, and related forms of nonconventional warfare' (2004: iii).

His citations include

"Ian O. Lesser et al., *Countering the New Terrorism* ... ; ... Hoffman and ... Taw, *A Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Insurgency* ... ; ...Hoffman and ... Taw, *Defense Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict: The Development of Britain's 'Small Wars' Doctrine During the 1950s* ...; Hoffman et al., *Lessons for Contemporary Counterinsurgencies: The Rhodesian Experience* ... ; ...and ... Schwarz, *American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador: The Frustrations of Reform and the Illusions of Nation Building* ..." (2004: iii).

Hoffman explains that he authored the paper before assuming 'temporary duty' in Baghdad as senior advisor on CT and counterinsurgency from March to April 2003, and the assignment bolstered his views (2004: 1). Foregrounding 'America's historical ambivalence towards

counterinsurgency' given the 'fraught triangle' of Vietnam, El Salvador and now Iraq, he deliberates the current campaign's errors, identifying its 'unique challenges' and its potential for 'future ... planning, operations and requirements' (2004: 2).

Assenting with critics that post-invasion planning for Iraq was 'woefully neglected', Hoffman underlines counterinsurgency's 'political dimension', and its 'critical civil side (2004: 2, 4). He opines that 'the US effort in Iraq' was 'undermined' by the failures to anticipate 'civil disorder and looting', and align inter-agency activity, notably between the State and Defense departments, and between the CPA and US military command (3). He terms the neglect 'a pathology' that impedes governments and militaries from detecting and responding swiftly to a developing insurgency (3). He references RAND's studies of counterinsurgency, notably of British campaigns in Kenya, Malaya and Cyprus during the 1950s (3) that advocate civil-military coordination to confront 'insurgents or terrorists' before they embed within the population (4). He acknowledges that the battle for 'hearts and minds' gained momentum via improvements in essential services, but considers these 'too little or too late or both' since by October 2003, a majority of Iraqis viewed the US and its allies as occupiers rather than liberators (4). Thus, he applauds the realisation amongst senior personnel, namely Major John Nagl, Paul Bremer the CPA administrator, and Lieutenant General Sanchez, the US military Commander in Iraq that winning 'hearts and minds' requires 'much work' (Sanchez cited in Hoffman 2004: 5).

Hoffman extols the multipronged approaches of various 'practitioners' of counterinsurgency, including General Rene Emilio Ponce, the defense minister 'at the height of the insurgency in

El Salvador' in the 1980s (2004: 5).¹¹⁴ Another exemplar is President Kennedy whom he credits with overseeing the 'escalation of US assistance' to South Vietnam, and reinforcing 'British military thinking' by asserting the importance of political and military coordination (Hoffman 2004:5). However, Hoffman distinguishes Britain's initial failures in post-WW2 counterinsurgency campaigns from its subsequent successes, explaining that the former mimicked 'conventional' warfare while the latter emulated *colonial* precedents:

'Counterinsurgency, née imperial policing, tactics developed to suppress ... colonial insurrections ... were often readily adaptable to ... mid-20th century campaigns. Nevertheless, when the British found themselves embroiled in overseas internal security commitments after World War II, they were completely unprepared' (6).

By the late 1950s, he adds, Britain adopted a 'unified policy and command authority' encompassing political and military affairs that undergirds its counterinsurgency doctrine (6-7). He cites Sir General Frank Kitson, a decorated veteran of the Northern Irish and Malayan campaigns,

'...a government facing insurgency ... [must recognise] there can be no such thing as a purely military solution because insurgency is not primarily a military activity' (Kitson cited in Hoffman 2004: 7).

Hoffman parallels Britain's initial errors with US contemporary praxis in Iraq, but approves of the Marine Corps' conferring with British military officers prior to deployment, and lauds the Marines' *Small Wars Manual* of 1940 as 'the seminal American encapsulation' of counterinsurgency's tenets (2004: 7). Such initiatives, he muses, will enable the US to overcome its 'institutional pathologies' and undertake 'nation-building efforts in ... violent, polarised, and tyrannically ruled countries like Iraq' (7-8). He also detects shades of British

¹¹⁴ Grimes (2011) and others have observed that the General was accused of one of the campaign's 'most shocking atrocities'; <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/04/world/americas/04ponce.html>

wisdom in the ‘innovative approaches’ of senior commanders, especially Major General David Petraeus (9). Overall, however, Hoffman appraises counterinsurgency in Iraq as ‘flawed and mostly uneven’, and questions whether progress is conceivable without ‘systemic changes in [US military] doctrine, organizational mind-set and institutional ethos’ (9).

Hoffman next addresses counterinsurgency’s ‘military and intelligence dimensions’ (2004: 9). Citing Kitson again, he states that insurgency, which is inherently violent, cannot be subdued by political means alone, but requires ‘actionable intelligence’ for ‘the effective application of ... force’ (Kitson 1971 cited in Hoffman 2004: 10). Recalling Paget’s emphasis on acquiring knowledge of the enemy (Paget 1967 referenced in Hoffman 2004: 10), Hoffman laments the defects in US intelligence operations in Iraq despite the establishment there of the world’s largest CIA station (2004: 10).¹¹⁵ For Hoffman, these derive inter alia from an excessive focus on WMDs, flawed assessments, but chiefly insufficient ‘attuning [of] men’s minds to ... this sort of war’ (Kitson cited in Hoffman 2004: 10).

This ‘intelligence lacuna’, Hoffman continues, became visible in November 2003 when insurgent attacks grew in number, lethality and variety, the last encompassing ‘sectarian’ suicide and IED (improvised explosive devices) attacks targeting civilians and troops (2004: 14-15).¹¹⁶ As Bremer, General Abizaid, and a European intelligence chief conceded, the ‘poverty of definitive ... knowledge’ was paramount regarding ‘insurgent identity and numbers’(11). Hoffman believes that the insurgents are preponderantly ex-Baathists and ‘hired

¹¹⁵ Hoffman describes Lieutenant Colonel Julian Paget as ‘one of Britain’s foremost experts’ on counterinsurgency (2004: 10).

¹¹⁶ Hoffman mentions nine suicide attacks targeting Shias between January and February 2004 resulting in 257 deaths and then on Ashura in March when at least 117 died and over 400 were injured (15).

criminals', while a minority are 'foreign jihadists' (12-13). With military commanders 'painting a grim picture', he does not anticipate that the capture of Saddam Hussain will result in diminishing violence (14).

Hoffman recalls Simpson's 'truism of counterinsurgency' (2004:15). A US Army officer with Special Forces whose deployments included Korea and Vietnam and academic appointments at Harvard and West Point, Simpson detached partisanship from 'ideology' 'in the dirty ... business of revolution' (Simpson 1982 cited in Hoffman 2004: 15). He ascribed partisanship to peasants' fears of incurring 'death or ... punishment' for defying the guerrillas rather than to political solidarity; thus, to win support, Simpson argued, a government would need to extend guarantees of protection and '*a better life*' (Simpson 1982 cited in Hoffman 2004: 15). Hoffman notes that the insurgents' 'spectacular acts of violence' in Iraq aim to 'demoralise the population' and erode 'trust' in the 'authorities' (2004: 15). He considers coalition troops' visibility and their 'disruption...[of] daily life' as factors that provoke Iraqis to resist them rather than the insurgents (15).

In concluding, Hoffman maintains that the insurgency is best captured by the concept of 'netwar' coined by RAND analysts Arquilla and Ronfeldt, which denotes 'flatter more linear networks'(17). The term denotes dispersed groups who coordinate manoeuvres 'in an internettted manner, without a precise central command' (Arquilla et al 1999 cited in Hoffman 2004: 17). He considers it especially relevant to the 'ambiguous, constantly shifting environment' in Iraq where individuals lacking a common ideology, namely 'secular Baathists' and 'jihadists', collaborate at different levels but in a transitory fashion (Hoffman 2004: 17).

He speculates whether Iraq's 'postmodern insurgency' constitutes 'a new form of warfare for a new networked century' that requires an overhaul of 'our entire strategy and approach' to avoid 'fight[ing] yesterday's ... wars' (18).¹¹⁷

Pirnie and O'Connell – COIN's unruly course in Iraq

Opening their co-authored volume entitled *Counterinsurgency in Iraq (2003-2006)*, Pirnie and O'Connell observe that the insurgency's 'violence' and the spectre of 'civil war' are receding (Pirnie and O'Connell 2008: iii-iv). Nonetheless, they are sceptical that Iraq's Shias, Sunnis and Kurds will surmount 'their divisions' in

'...a local political power struggle overlain with sectarian violence and fuelled by fanatical foreign jihadists and persistent criminal opportunists'

which could erupt 'in other troubled states' (2008: iv). They propose evaluating Iraq's 'political and military challenges' for 'improving future counterinsurgency strategy and capabilities', and urge civilian and military personnel to '*fearlessly and thoroughly*' apprise senior decisionmakers of COIN's progress (iv, xvi). The six chapters of the volume are respectively entitled 'Overview of the conflict', 'Armed groups in Iraq', 'Counterinsurgency in Iraq', 'Accounting for success and failure', 'Building effective capabilities for counterinsurgency', and lastly 'Recommendations'. The following survey selects topics that are most germane to this study.

¹¹⁷ Hoffman's call to overhaul models of warfare may be juxtaposed to key arguments in the *National Military Strategy* (2004). The document aims to direct 'the Armed Forces on winning the WOT and enhancing joint warfighting while supporting actions to create a joint, network-centric, distributed force, capable of full spectrum dominance' explained as '... the ability to control any situation or defeat any adversary across the range of military operations' (2004: 27, 23).

Implementing COIN, establishing the CPA

Pirnie and O'Connell outline their evaluations of COIN in Chapter 3, focusing inter alia on the roles of US military and civilian actors, urban operations, detainee treatment, and the economy. The authors rebuke 'Congress, national agencies, and senior military commanders' for failing to impose responsibility for civilian protection on coalition and Iraqi forces (2008: 33-34). Detailing the 'slow' development of COIN amidst the US' attempts to institutionalise its presence in post-invasion Iraq, they note that the DoD assumed leadership of 'all matters', including the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) and its successor the CPA (35). The CPA's establishment, they continue, marked a shift to 'shared' civilian and military control while its leader, Bremer exercised 'full authority under international law' and Security Council resolutions 'to govern the country', and answered solely to the President (35). Although the Coalition Commander, Lieutenant General Sanchez, was 'formally tasked' to assist Bremer, each worked 'autonomously' with Sanchez preferring kinetic methods to crush the simmering insurgency and Bremer initiating policy-related dialogue with 'Iraqi factions' (36). The appointments of John Negroponte in 2004 and of Zalmay Khalilzad in 2005 as US ambassadors to Iraq, and subsequently of Casey and later Petraeus as Commanding General, Multi-National Force Iraq (MNF-I) marked the routinisation of a 'two channel' civil-military structure (36).

Pirnie and O'Connell locate these developments against a 'landscape highlighted by suicide and roadside bombings, assassinations, and beheadings' unlike that of 'traditional combat', but

also decry US forces' 'kick-down-the-door operations' in the 'Sunni triangle' (2008: 37).¹¹⁸ They mention that a RAND draft report submitted to Bremer prior to his departure projected approximately 500,000 troops to stabilise Iraq, and observe that the numbers deployed were far lower despite Bremer's requests to Rumsfeld for additional soldiers (37).¹¹⁹

Urban counterinsurgency – Fallujah and Tal Afar

Pirnie and O'Connell's account of urban counterinsurgency operations commences with Fallujah. They recount that strident opposition from Fallujah's inhabitants in February 2004 precipitated the withdrawal of a US Army division thereby 'conceding control to the insurgents' (2008: 38). In March, following the Marines' planned comeback, insurgents ambushed four Blackwater security personnel; a 'frenzied mob' burnt their vehicles, paraded their 'charred corpses through the streets' and suspended two from a bridge (38). With Army units engaged in battles with the Mahdi Army, US Marines' Lt. General Conway was tasked with retaliation (38). The offensive provoked Sunni threats of resignation from the Governing Council and 'outraged' Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN Representative, leading Bush to announce its termination (38). US forces followed with a further assault in November after warning civilians to leave or remain indoors; assisted by 'two heavy Army battalions', the Marines deployed 'tank main guns, mortars, artillery and air attack', and 'proceeded through the city systematically, clearing some 15,000 to 20,000 buildings' (39). On regaining control, the Marines established 'a permanent presence' in Fallujah, supported Iraqi forces' gradual resumption of responsibility,

¹¹⁸ The ubiquitously iterated term "Sunni Triangle" a roughly equidistant area encompassing Baghdad, Tikrit to the north and Ramadi to the west. <https://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/5712.11-the-discursive-mapping-of-sectarianism-in-iraq-the-%E2%80%9Csunni-triangle%E2%80%9D-in-the-pages-of-the-new-york-times-sahar-bazzaz>

¹¹⁹ Thus, in January 2005, coalition troops numbered 185,000 of which 160,000 were US forces; additionally, 58,000 private contractors rendered support, and 20,000 personnel provided security (Pirnie and O'Connell 2008: 37).

and implemented a ‘system of population control’ to block insurgents, and facilitate the return of civilians (39).

Pirnie and O’Connell subsequently detail counterinsurgency operations in Tal Afar near the Syrian border, describing the city as ‘a conduit for foreign extremists entering from Syria’ (2008: 39). They credit the regiment commander, Colonel McMaster with addressing ‘the problem...methodically’ by incorporating Special Forces’ directives, including ‘very close cooperation with Iraqi government forces’ (39-40). Furthermore, they note, US forces treated Iraqi personnel ‘as equals’ and permitted them to ‘observe US soldiers ... in combat’ for training purposes (41). ‘As in Fallujah’, they maintain, the operation’s ‘methodical’ nature was evinced in the troops’ prefatory warnings to the city-dwellers (40). Towards its completion, Iraqi Army and police units re-entering the city undertook various reparative tasks such as reforming civil administration and commencing reconstruction (41).

Baghdad 2004

Lastly, Pirnie and O’Connell focus on Baghdad during summer 2004, which unlike the ‘Sunni triangle’, faced resistance from Shi’i followers of Muqtada al Sadr in Sadr City (2008: 41). They commend General Peter Chiarelli, the Commanding General, for combining ‘nonkinetic’ and kinetic methods; the former comprised economic initiatives and sanitation works, and the latter, the frontline placement of Iraqi soldiers in battles with the Mahdi Army, and eventually the negotiation of a ceasefire (41-42). They add that while the efficacy of Chiarelli’s approach was never proven, he recommended its implementation elsewhere on the premise that ‘reconstruction projects’ would convince Iraqis that they ‘would benefit from a peaceful future’

(42). However, by January 2006, security in Baghdad and four other provinces was deemed ‘critical’ due to ‘high levels of ... anti-Iraqi forces activity, assassination and extremism’ (MNF report 2006 cited in Pirnie and O’Connell 2008: 43). In July, the violence claimed 90 percent of Baghdad’s 1815 recorded mortalities (43).¹²⁰ Concomitantly, the ‘large-scale operation’ that commenced in June by US and Iraqi forces culminated in an assault on Sadr City that provoked a harsh rebuke from the ‘Shi’ite Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki’ (43).

Detainees, Abu Ghraib

Affirming that detainee operations in Iraq are subject to legal procedure, Pirnie and O’Connell note that 50,000 suspects were detained between 2003-2005 and approximately 20,000 in 2007 (2008: 46). They stress that understanding detainees’ motivation is important for ‘exploiting’ them as for shaping counterinsurgency strategy, and endorse approaching families of ‘young detainee[s]’ for ‘important information’ (47). Subsequently, they acknowledge ‘at least 24 serious incidents of [prisoner] abuse ... at the Abu Ghraib detention facility’ (47). They add that a military investigation found prison staff to be insufficiently trained and ‘overwhelmed by conditions’, while an independent inquiry chaired by former Defence Secretary Schlesinger attributed the ‘purposeless sadism ... to a failure of military leadership and discipline’ (47) . They concur that the ‘chaotic conditions at Abu Ghraib’, stemmed from problems of ‘... leadership, ... resources, ... guidance, and ... command relationships’ (48). They discern ‘serious flaws’ in the detainee programme, which lacks ‘properly trained interrogators’, allows suspects to ‘easily withstand interrogation’, and has failed to ‘incite ... [insurgent] defections’ (48). Finally, they note that images of ‘sexual sadism’ are especially traumatic for ‘Arab

¹²⁰ Pirnie and O’Connell cite the UN’s use of Iraq’s Ministry of Health data, which recorded over 3000 civilian deaths per month between July and October (52).

audiences' given their notions of 'masculinity and personal honour', and have reinforced their 'worst apprehensions of Americans' (48).

Economic trends

Pirnie and O'Connell observe that the CPA only spent 10 percent of US reconstruction funds during its existence, and that production in key sectors such as oil, energy and drinking water fell below Ba'ath metrics (2008: 53). They cite MNF assessments that Baghdad's economy is 'developing slowly' while five provinces are 'critical' in lacking 'infrastructure or government leadership' (MNF 2006 cited in Pirnie and O'Connell 2008: 53). They note that recurrent insurgent strikes on oil installations and reconstruction projects between June 2004 and January 2006 cost approximately \$11 billion, and resulted in the US' diverting about 40 percent of reconstruction funds to security (56). Although oil production returned to near pre-invasion levels in 2006 and global oil prices inflated, Iraq failed to generate requisite sums for reconstruction due to grand 'theft' and the enduring Ba'athist subsidy system (56). Electricity generation declined due to insurgent attacks, increased consumer demand, and an anachronistic distribution system leaving Iraqis with power outages for more than half the day (57). In October 2003, the World Bank reported that none of Iraq's sewage-treatment plants was functional, while US military surveys in 2006 estimated that Baghdad's water supply met 60 percent of requirements (58). Garbage 'choke[d] the city' and 'clog[ged]' waste pipes while areas outside Baghdad fared worse with nationwide risks of disease (58). By January 2006, 50 percent of Iraqis endorsed attacks on US forces; although the majority were Sunnis, 'surprising[ly]' 41 percent were Shias while majorities from all groups linked improved security conditions to the US' departure (58).

A reckoning?

In 'Accounting for Success and Failure', Pirnie and O'Connell interweave earlier themes pertaining to COIN with new concerns. They juxtapose the Bush administration's failure to foresee 'virulent resistance to US occupation' with the Iraqi government's 'ethnic and sectarian' fissures (61). They maintain that US planners displayed insufficient 'understanding [of] Iraqi society', and misrecognised the 'tensions' stemming from its 'highly turbulent history' (61). 'Outside experts', they suggest, would affirm that these tensions bespeak Sunnis' political dominance since Ottoman times, and their resistance to a 'new democratic order' that accords them 'minority status' (61).

The authors also censure the DoD for anticipating 'a best-case scenario' in the invasion's aftermath, curtailing troop numbers, and excluding 'all relevant departments' from strategic planning (62-63).¹²¹ Given Iraq's democratic deficit, the lack of planning was especially damaging, and contributed to 'Arab-inhabited parts of Iraq abruptly [becoming] ungoverned space' (63). Planners also overlooked 'Iraq's porous borders and meddling neighbours', notably Iran and Syria with their histories of antagonism towards the US (63).

Pirnie and O'Connell concede that the war lacked international support, and that its rationale connecting WMDs with terrorism 'proved to be groundless' (2008: 63-64). Coalition partners besides the UK reduced their combat commitments, many withdrew their forces by 2005 while others signalled their imminent departure (64). Moreover, Arab media and public opinion

¹²¹ Pirnie and O'Connell enumerate various instances in which insufficient troop numbers proved costly: post-invasion looting, Mosul 2004, Anbar province 2006, Baghdad 2006, Iraq's borders throughout (70).

remained hostile, attributing US designs in Iraq to ‘ulterior motives’ such as access to cheap oil rather than democracy promotion (64).

De-Ba’athification

Pirnie and O’Connell subsequently explicate the ‘disastrous effects’ of de-Ba’athification, and the challenges of constructing a new state ‘from scratch’ (2008: 64, 65). They hold Bremer responsible for purging Ba’athists from the Army, but add that he acted under pressure from ‘Shi’ite Arab and Kurdish leaders’ (65). They surmise that failure to re-inscript or demobilise deserting soldiers systematically created a reservoir of ex-servicemen ready for recruitment into insurgent ranks (65). Correspondingly, the dismantling of the Ba’ath Party, which nominally included senior professionals from ‘practically the entire Sunni Arab elite’ deprived Iraq of skilled personnel (65). Despite the adoption of a new constitution, and the formation of a ‘democratically elected government’, they remain concerned at the persistence of ‘sectarian’ allegiances, rivalries and corruption (66).

COIN and reconstruction

Elaborating on ‘reconstruction’ in counterinsurgency, Pirnie and O’Connell affirm its ‘humanitarian’ purpose, and its utility as ‘an instrument’ for garnering public support, and fulfilling the US’ pledge to ‘clear, hold and build’ (2008: 67). They recall that Rumsfeld’s congressional testimony of 2003 affirmed that Iraq would self-finance its reconstruction through oil proceeds (68). Such expectations, however, were scuppered by deteriorating security, Iraq’s ‘decayed’ oil infrastructure, and the diversion of oil revenue into subsidies;

consequently, the US ‘began funding large contracts’ for infrastructure projects rather than social welfare with ‘disappointing’ outcomes (68).

For Pirnie and O’Connell, security deficits exemplified the ‘astounding lack of military direction’, and led to ‘a watershed moment’ when Iraqis lost ‘trust’ in the US; furthermore, US forces’ aggressive responses to the insurgency alienated ‘Sunni Arabs’ and later Shias who joined insurgent groups or sought their protection (2008: 70-71). Security dilemmas also emerged in human intelligence gathering with protracted difficulties pervading the replacement of defunct Ba’athist structures (71). Counterintelligence personnel focused on recruiting Iraqis to government positions rather than creating ‘networks of informers’, a cardinal pre-requisite of COIN (71). Pirnie and O’Connell conclude with exhaustive recommendations that include strategic direction, unity of effort, and meticulous planning (95). Most pertinently, they exhort inculcating COIN as a ‘primary mission’ for the US military, a ‘distinct type of political-military operation’, and an integral field in military education that incorporates knowledge of ‘foreign cultures’ and other militaries (95).

Dobbins et al – redeeming the CPA

The final RAND text examined is the summary of the 410-page volume authored by Dobbins et al entitled *Occupying Iraq – A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority* (2009), which documents the 13-month tenure of the CPA between May 2003 – June 2004.¹²² This section documents the summary’s most relevant contributions.

¹²² The other authors of the volume are [Seth G. Jones](#), [Benjamin Runkle](#), and [Siddharth Mohandas](#).

Launching the CPA and its Administrator

Dobbins et al commence by asserting the ambivalence of Bremer's position as CPA administrator, noting that the 'broad mandate and plenary powers' of his role were in practice 'limited' since the US military controlled over 90 percent of official US personnel in Iraq (Dobbins et al 2009: xiii). Relatedly, they remark that the ORHA's replacement by the CPA was abrupt, and fuelled 'bitterness and recrimination' from the outset (2009: xv). They note that Bremer did not consult Lieutenant General Garner, head of the ORHA, about the CPA's 'most controversial' measures, namely the disbanding of the Iraqi Army and the removal of 'some 30,000' Ba'athists from public office (xv). Although Garner conveyed his opposition to Bremer after learning of the measures, Bremer proceeded regardless after briefing the President and cabinet advisors, and receiving Rumsfeld's assent (xv). For much of his tenure, Bremer worked directly under White House supervision (xvii).

Detailing the genesis of the CPA, Dobbins et al note that it was 'built from scratch', and was simultaneously 'an element of the Defense Department, a multinational organisation, and a foreign government' (2009: xvii). They opine that Bremer appointed 'good, sometimes superior' personnel to the CPA, but frequent turnover and staff shortages hampered its performance as a "government within a government" (xvi). Bremer lacked 'precise' employee figures, but the 7000 individuals frequenting the 'Green Zone mess halls' were mostly military personnel or contractors (xvi). As the officiating 'government of Iraq', the CPA spurned Washington's regulatory agencies' oversight of 'how [it] spent Iraqi funds' (xvii). Bremer's relationship with General Sanchez remained volatile revealing the 'sheer novelty' of the CPA as the DoD's 'unique political experiment' in a 'war zone' with no precedent (xviii).

Furthermore, ‘communication blockages’, notably between the Defense and State Departments, impeded Bremer’s communications with state agencies (xviii).

The CPA emerged, as Dobbins et al relate, from two ‘ill-defined’ options envisioned for post-invasion Iraq, namely an ‘extended occupation’ or a rapid transition to an unelected Iraqi government (2009: ix). Garner and Khalilzad, Bush’s envoy to the Iraqi opposition, promoted the latter in their dialogue with Iraqi leaders before Bremer’s arrival (ix). The authors state that the rationale for the eventual shift to a protracted occupation ‘is unclear’, but it reflects the ‘lack of clarity’ in the early stage of the military intervention (xx). They opine that Garner’s swift supersession by Bremer constituted an attempt to extend ‘a firmer American grip’ upon the ‘mounting chaos’, but suggest that the shift was unsettling for many, including US military commanders and ‘Iraqi leaders’ who felt ‘deceived’ (xx). Nonetheless, the authors maintain that the shift was ‘not unreasonable’ given the escalating violence and Iraqi elites’ divisions; rather, its execution was ‘censurable’, and reflected, inter alia, insufficiently clear guidelines (xxi).

Dobbins et al reiterate that Bremer was not ‘the originator’ of de-Ba’athification nor of the order to disband the Iraqi Army, and that he acted consistently to establish the CPA’s writ and the irreversibility of regime change (2009: xxvi, xxii). Although he subsequently regretted delegating de-Ba’athification to Iraqi leaders, he successfully parried Shi’ite and Kurdish leaders’ demands to expand its remit, and was successful in reinstating ‘several thousand teachers’ (xxvii).¹²³

¹²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jul/06/iraq-war-aftermath-paul-bremer>

The reformist CPA

The CPA, Dobbins et al continue, instituted manifold reforms (2009: xxxi). In the legal domain, it established a Central Criminal Court in 2003 for trying ‘war crimes and crimes against humanity’, introduced anti-corruption reforms, and reopened Abu Ghraib prison to process the housing of detainees (xxx-xxxi). In the economy, Iraq experienced 46 percent growth a year after the invasion, the ‘second-highest figure’ recorded by RAND in 22 ‘post-conflict environments’ (xxxi). They note that despite CPA interventions in areas such as inflation, banking, and consumer spending, Iraqis remained ‘disappointed’ largely due to their ‘unrealistic expectations and the Bush administration’s own rhetoric’ (xxxii). Responding to criticism that the CPA was ‘naively ideological’ in applying free market policies, they contend that this characterisation was only partially correct, and that the CPA’s aggregate approach demonstrated the ‘best practices in post conflict environments’; moreover, it was occasionally overcautious, notably in leaving subsidies intact (xxxii). They anticipate that the CPA’s economic and financial reforms will yield future growth if security prevails (xxxiii).

Turning to political progress under the CPA, Dobbins et al regard it as fitful since ‘by fall 2003, the original American project...was clearly faltering’ (2009: xxxv). As the worsening violence prompted the Bush administration to expedite the transfer of power, Bremer negotiated an accelerated timetable with Iraqi leaders for the adoption of a ‘liberal interim constitution’ and the formation of a national government (xxxv-xxxvi). These measures endured despite the ‘civil war’, and ‘provide hope’ that Iraq will not relapse into a ‘savage dictatorship’ (xxxvi).

The CPA's unravelling

The CPA's concluding phase coincided, Dobbins et al explain, with 'war on two fronts' against Sunni insurgents in Fallujah and the Shi'ite Mahdi army (2009: xxxvi-xxxvii). For the authors, the US' 'launching [of] simultaneous offensives against ... the Fallujah insurgents and ... al Sadr's militia was ill-conceived' (xvii). Pursued despite the misgivings of US civil-military leaders in Iraq, it was 'primarily a Washington problem' that 'enraged both communities', and underlined the decisional failures of Bush, Rumsfeld, and the NSC in communicating with Bremer and Sanchez (xxxvii).

The authors assess Bremer's departure from Iraq in June 2004 in the section entitled, 'Mission Accomplished or Mission Impossible?' (2009: xxxviii). They note that the CPA's dissolution, and the Iraqi interim government's assumption of sovereignty rendered the Authority 'a convenient repository for blame' in the US and in Iraq (xxxviii). Yet, the authors claim, Bremer's performance compared favourably with '20 other American, NATO, and UN-led postconflict reconstruction missions' (xxxviii). Nonetheless, the CPA could not prevent 'civil war' as 'violent resistance' to US occupation precipitated 'an even more violent conflict between ... extremist groups' (xxxviii). In their assessment, 'The CPA ... largely succeeded in the areas where it had the lead responsibility but failed in the most important task, [providing security] for which it did not' (xxxviii). They insist that 'primary responsibility for rising insecurity' lay with the Bush administration which met 'a maximalist agenda', Iraq's reconfiguration as a 'model democracy', with 'minimalist' resources (xxxix). As such, Bremer was assigned 'an impossible task' (xxxix). Whereas Bush, the DoD, and the State Department were occasionally 'surprised' at Bremer's conduct, this was largely due to Washington's flawed communication lines (xl). However, for Dobbins et al, the Bush administration's gravest

‘conceptual and rhetorical errors’ include deploying the post-WW2 occupations of Japan and Germany as precedents for Iraq (xl). These countries had ‘surrendered unconditionally’; they were ‘homogenous societies’ lacking ‘sectarian’ fissures, and also ‘first world economies’ capable of ‘run[ning] a successful free-market system’ (xli). Iraq, they suggest, is more usefully compared with

‘Yugoslavia in 1995--ethnically and religiously divided, with an economy wracked by war and sanctions and a pattern of historical sectarian grievances’ (xli).

In concluding they reiterate that Bremer ‘performed credibly’, and was ‘restrained and judicious’ despite the obstacles; furthermore, whereas the challenges confronting the CPA 2003 were exceptional, it is ‘certain’ that the US will again

‘assist[] a society emerging from conflict to build an enduring peace and establish a representative government...[As such], Iraq provides an object lesson of the costs and consequences of unprepared nation-building’ (xlili).

Conclusion

In commencing the analysis of each think tank’s interventions at successive junctures of the GWoT, this chapter examined three texts authored by RAND experts between 2004 and 2009 that focus on developments in post-invasion of Iraq. The texts comprised respectively an occasional paper by Hoffman (2004), a co-authored volume by Pirnie and O’Connell (2008), and the summary of a multi-authored volume by Dobbins et al (2009). The first two focus specifically on counterinsurgency operations in Iraq while the third contextualises counterinsurgency within an exposition of the CPA’s role.

Collectively, the texts revealed the rising prominence of discourses of counterinsurgency in the experts' attempts to chronicle, explicate, and offer panaceas for the grim outcomes of the war, interweaving knowledges gleaned from colonial campaigns and narratives of US exceptionalism with insights drawn from the immediate context.

Chapter 3 – The CFR on Afghanistan: Liberal Salvation in Retreat

A cross-border insurgency

This chapter examines five CFR documents published between 2006 and 2013 that comprise congressional testimonies and reports. The discussion draws differentially on the documents that are extensive in scope; again, the order of publication is followed although a more linear chronology obtains in comparison with RAND's interventions.

Afghanistan 2006-stabilisation deferred

The discussion commences with two complementary texts authored by Barnett Rubin, a Council Special Report entitled *Afghanistan's Uncertain Transition from Turmoil to Normalcy* (Rubin 2006a), and a congressional testimony entitled *Still Ours to Lose: Afghanistan on the Brink* (2006b) that updates the Report following his visit to Afghanistan.¹²⁴ In the Report's 'Foreword', CFR President Haass (2006) explicates its recommendatory nature, and contextualises it against the Afghanistan Compact, the agreement concluding the international meeting held in London in January 2006. Presided by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Afghan President Hamid Karzai and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the meeting aimed to redirect international attention to Afghanistan where 'stabilisation and reconstruction operations' had been eclipsed by the Iraq war, and 'the security situation ha[d] deteriorated significantly' (Haass 2006: v). As Rubin details, the meeting's delegates linked state-building in Afghanistan to extensive reforms notably in 'security, governance and development' but

¹²⁴ Professor Rubin was director of the Centre for Preventive Action and director of peace and conflict studies at the CFR between 1994-2000. In late 2001 he served as advisor to the UN secretary general's special representative to Afghanistan in the negotiations that led to the Bonn Agreement. He has taught at Yale and Columbia and is currently Director at New York University's Centre on International Cooperation.

following opposition from the US, the UK and others, placed the onus of implementation solely on the Afghan government (Rubin 2006a: 1). Rubin welcomes the Compact ‘as an international declaration’ that acknowledges the ‘challenges’ facing Afghanistan (2006a: 2). Afghanistan’s travails, he states, include a corrupt administration, plunging socio-economic indices, meagre international aid budgets, drug trafficking, ethnic tensions, interference from neighbouring countries, and ‘an ever-more deadly insurgency with sanctuaries in ...Pakistan’ (3). Rubin views the Report as supporting and amplifying the Compact’s recommendations, but stipulates that its ‘principal’ contribution is to insist that ‘all stakeholders...fully fund and implement the...compact and the I-ANDS’ (3).¹²⁵

Elaborating on the insurgency, Rubin recounts that ‘two international military commands’ operate in Afghanistan, the US-led Coalition and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) (2006a: 5). The Coalition’s principal responsibility, he explains, is CT and counterinsurgency, and it ‘enjoys freedom of action’ in this regard under the US’ right to self-defence; concomitantly, NATO / ISAF’s role as per the Bonn Agreement is to assist Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) (5). Both commands have thus far operated ‘with a light footprint’ that has proved ‘inadequate’ in delivering security (5). Rubin discerns ‘a strengthening’ insurgency, and notes that US forces specifically are ‘overextended’ due to deployment in Iraq, and seek withdrawal from Afghanistan; however, NATO, which assumed charge of the ISAF in late 2003, is reluctant to engage in direct combat (6). Moreover, he adds, the US government has belatedly acknowledged that mounting US and Afghan casualties are not indicative of the insurgents’ ‘desperation’, but of a deepening insurgency that claimed more

¹²⁵ I-ANDS denotes Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy devised by the Afghan government.

lives in 2005 than in any previous year (7). Suicide and IED attacks deployed in Iraq, the ‘testing ground for new jihadi tactics’ have proliferated in Afghanistan, which has ‘switched places’ with ‘the Arab world’ (7).

Rubin detects divisions in US and Afghan government perspectives. The latter demands a diminution of ‘unpopular ... and unilateral [US] actions’ within Afghanistan and intensified US ‘pressure on Pakistan’ (2006a: 8). Furthermore, it has ‘discreetly’ mentioned detainee treatment, and complained of the US’ inadequate response to its troops’ complicity in torture and murder at Bagram prison, and their burning of Taliban corpses (8-9). Rubin fears that US troops’ and contractors’ impunity erodes support for the Coalition, and he recommends a ‘status of forces agreement’ compliant with international humanitarian law (9). He cautions however that ‘a counterinsurgency strategy’ must also incorporate ‘an end to foreign sanctuaries’ and support for the Afghan government and economy (9).

Rubin’s congressional testimony (2006b) also critiques policymakers’ underestimation of Afghanistan’s ‘stakes for the US and the world’. He claims that whereas the Bush administration is in pursuit of a ‘New Middle East’ in Iraq, ‘the main centre of global terrorism is in Pakistan, especially the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region’ (2006b). He remarks that the US failed to reintegrate neutral Taliban in 2001 when their and al Qaeda’s ‘core leadership’ fled into Pakistan (2006b). Instead, its policy of “incommunicado detention in Guantanamo, Bagram, and ‘black sites’ ” prompted the Taliban to remain in Pakistan and reconstruct ‘their command structure, recruitment networks, and support bases’ (2006b). Concomitantly, the

reconstruction of Afghanistan stalled, and the emergent ‘cross border insurgency’ intensified by instrumentalising ‘an impoverished society and an ineffective government’ (2006b).

NATO, Afghanistan and Pakistan

Rubin subsequently evaluates NATO’s deployment in southern Afghanistan in its ‘first military operation’, which he deems ‘essential to [its] future’ (2006b). He notes the Taliban’s ‘large and resilient presence’ there that occasionally constitutes a ‘parallel administration’ with courts that locals prefer to the ‘corrupt official system’ (2006b). Furthermore, intelligence reports confirm that Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is assisting Quetta-based Taliban groups who command the southern insurgency while other Taliban groups shelter in Pakistan’s tribal agencies of North and South Waziristan (2006b). Rubin states in the Report that defeating the insurgency is inextricable from devising effective strategies for Afghanistan and Pakistan individually and jointly (2006a: 10). He describes their relationship as historically ‘tense’, the root of ‘much of the region’s instability’, and the mainspring of ‘sanctuary for the Taliban, foreign jihadists and other extremists’ (2006a: 10). Nonetheless, he continues, the Bush administration has remained ‘tone-deaf’ about its allies’ conflicted past, which dates to Afghanistan’s refusal to accept the Durand Line as the international border between the two states in 1947 (2006a: 10-11).

Rubin documents the two states’ mutual accusations: Karzai insists that the US centre Pakistan as the insurgency’s source, while Pakistan’s President Musharraf highlights Afghan and Indian collaboration against Pakistan (2006a: 11-12). He cites Musharraf’s comment during Bush’s visit to Pakistan that there had been some ‘slippage’ in its performance (Musharraf 2006 cited

in Rubin 2006a: 12), an allusion to the recent killing of a US diplomat, and to the ‘virtual occupation of ...Waziristan ... by the Taliban and foreign jihadists’ (Rubin 2006a: 12).¹²⁶ Rubin notes that ‘over one hundred guerrillas and civilians’ died and 10,000 people were displaced in the Pakistan Army’s subsequent operation in Waziristan, and opines that the Taliban and ‘foreign jihadists’ hold greater sway in Pakistan than in Afghanistan (12).

Rubin counsels the formulation of a ‘comprehensive policy’ towards the two states who cannot ‘extricate themselves from this conflict’ without external support (2006a 12-13). His recommendations include democratisation in Pakistan; Afghanistan’s acknowledgement of Pakistan’s anxieties regarding the border and India; the uplift and reform of Pakistan’s tribal areas; and joint US-UK efforts to promote dialogue amongst all stakeholders (14-15). The testimony also calls for exerting ‘serious pressure’ upon Pakistan via a ‘consistent message’ from NATO, Russia and China that failure to confront the Taliban constitutes an international threat, and could have negative implications for future US assistance to Pakistan (Rubin 2006b).

Wither state-building?

Concomitantly, Rubin’s testimony cautions that counterinsurgency and ‘stabilisation’ in Afghanistan cannot succeed without ‘urgent’ state and economic reform (2006b). He mentions institutional corruption and organised crime in Afghanistan highlighting the culpability of the Ministry of Interior and the Judiciary, and adding that Coalition reforms will take years to attain fruition (2006b). He notes that Afghanistan is ‘the poorest country’ globally excepting some sub-Saharan states; it has ‘never received’ the assistance stabilisation requires, and is bedevilled

¹²⁶ <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060304-2.html>

by ‘the narcotics economy’(2006b). The US initially supported all anti-Taliban commanders regardless of their complicity in the drug trade, then relented following the anti-narcotics lobby’s interventions, and now advocates crop destruction (2006b). Such measures are ‘self-defeating’ and reinforce Afghans’ perception that impoverished farmers rather than drug lords are targeted, a sentiment the Taliban exploit (2006b). Rubin insists that US policies misunderstand and ‘misjudge’ Pakistan and Afghanistan, and also typify the error of pursuing ‘major strategic changes on the cheap’ (2006b). As he concludes, ‘Until we transform the tribal belt, the US is at risk’ (2006b).

Tasks and forces

Published in 2010, and spanning about 100 pages, the Task Force Report reflects the combined labour of 25 experts, including former US government and military personnel, academics, private military contractors, and think tank experts. Directed by Daniel Markey, Senior Fellow for South Asia at CFR, and co-chaired by Richard Armitage, former Deputy Secretary of State in the Bush administration, and Samuel Berger, National Security Advisor to Clinton, the Report is entitled *US Strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan*. Other distinguished contributors include Lt. Colonel John Nagl, General Keane, Christine Fair, John Negroponte, and Robert Grenier. The Report amplifies and supplements the salient themes addressed by Rubin, and besides its ‘Introduction’ and ‘Conclusion’, divides its subject-matter as follows: ‘The Threat’, ‘US Strategic Objectives’, ‘An Assessment of US Strategy and Policy’, and lastly, ‘Policy Options and Recommendations’ (Armitage et al 2010).

Haass' 'Foreword' to the Report recounts that the US had a 'clear' 'rationale' for declaring war on Afghanistan in 2001; however, it had now

'embarked on a different and considerably more ambitious undertaking ... that affects—and is affected by—the complex political currents of Pakistan and its border regions. It is not clear that U.S. interests warrant such an investment. Nor is it clear that the effort will succeed' (Haass in Armitage et al 2010: ix).

Haass declares that Pakistan had transitioned to a 'weak civilian government' beset by myriad challenges, and its military had lost over 2000 soldiers in domestic counterinsurgency campaigns; nonetheless, its 'tolerance' of specific militant groups inimical to 'American interests' in Afghanistan and elsewhere problematises its relationship with the US (Haass in Armitage et al 2010: ix). Concurrently, the insurgency in Afghanistan is 'more violent' than ever before, NATO has suffered heavy losses, the economy remains impoverished, and Afghans' support for the corrupt and 'ineffective' government has waned (Haass in Armitage et al 2010 ix). Anticipating the Obama administration's upcoming 'third policy review in two years', Haass urges cognisance of 'local realities, growing US debt, and widespread public scepticism about current US strategy' (Haass in Armitage et al 2010: ix). Adumbrating 'US interests' in both countries, Haass states that the Task Force evaluates current policy, and proffers recommendations that constitute 'a qualified endorsement of ... Obama's approach to the region' (Haass in Armitage et al 2010: ix-x). It supports the 'surge' of 100,000 US forces in Afghanistan, and the drawdown planned from July 2011 (Haass in Armitage et al 2010: x). It advocates cooperation with Pakistan, but contends that 'Washington should act against terrorists operating from Pakistani soil ... and leave no uncertainty in Islamabad' that rupturing ties with such groups is essential for sustaining the two states' 'partnership' (Haass in Armitage et al 2010: x). The recommendations for Afghanistan centre upon mitigating the government's

failings, deliberating ‘the terms of reference for negotiations with the Taliban’, bolstering the ANSF, promoting economic development and curbing narcotics (Haass in Armitage et al 2010: x). However, if the December 2019 review deems ‘the present strategy’ ineffective, the Task Force proposes shifting to ‘a more limited mission at a substantially reduced level of military force’ (Haass in Armitage et al 2010: x).

Uncertain futures

The Report’s opening acknowledges the ‘sacrifice Americans are ... making in Afghanistan’ with over a thousand soldiers killed and several thousand injured (Armitage et al 2010: 6, 3). The Task Force opine that although the US-NATO civil-military ‘surge’ in Afghanistan terminated in August 2010, and garnered some success, the outlook remains ‘cloudy’ as ‘the underlying dynamics’ that fuelled the insurgency, notably corruption and poor governance, remain entrenched (4,3). Concomitantly, they note that Americans and US allies appear war weary, and question US objectives and the possibility of success (6, 3). For the Force, ‘Outcomes’, in Afghanistan and Pakistan ‘matter[] to Americans’ who will be ‘*less safe*’, ‘*less secure*’, ‘*at greater risk*’ if ‘*terrorists ... operate freely*’ in the two countries, if ‘*turmoil- even civil war- in Afghanistan threatens the stability of Pakistan and the region*’ and if ‘*extremists in Pakistan exploit the country’s ... floods, fragile institutions, and internal conflict to undermine the ... state*’ (4). They aver that the US has reached ‘a critical point’, and President Obama’s December review should initiate ‘a clear-eyed assessment’ of the current strategy’s efficacy (5). If the strategy is deemed successful, it should herald the gradual drawdown of US troops from 2011; if not, a ‘drawdown to a narrower military mission is warranted’ (5).

In the Task Force's assessment, current US strategy in Afghanistan aims to weaken the Taliban, develop Afghans' security capability, support the government's provision of key services, preempt support for insurgents, and foster security conditions that will outlast NATO's departure (Armitage et al 2010: 10). The Force approve the role of 'greatly enhanced Special Forces' who have to date undertaken 'counterinsurgency operations' in southern Afghanistan 'pressuring the Taliban' towards negotiations (10-11). However, the pace has been slow and the costs excessive; a viable security force remains a potentiality; the presidential election of 2009 sullied Karzai's government; and US and allied fatalities have consistently risen (11).

Detailing US policies towards Pakistan, the Force note that these include fortified relationships with civil and military officials, increased military and non-military aid, and 'unrelenting assault by unmanned aerial drones on ... militant networks... in ... FATA' (Armitage et al 2010: 9, 11). These policies aim to 'degrade and defeat terrorist groups', and avert 'turmoil' from engulfing 'the Pakistani state' and its nuclear facilities (8). Pakistan has conducted 'costly, commendable' counterinsurgency campaigns along the border, but still 'distinguish[es]' between militants (11). Extending current policy with its attendant 'sacrifices' is contingent upon 'visible and timely' progress; thus, they advocate recalculation of its 'relative costs and benefits (12).

Shifts in US strategy towards Pakistan

Subsequently, the Task Force detail the progression of US policy:

‘Since 9/11 US goals in Pakistan and Afghanistan have shifted in important but unappreciated ways’ (Armitage et al 2010: 29).

They state that the US initially viewed Pakistan ‘in narrow terms ... [as] a necessary element of the military and counterterror campaign in Afghanistan’ (29). It ‘demanded’ Pakistan’s compliance as ‘the US staging ground and logistics hub’, and its severance from the ‘Taliban-al Qaeda alliance’ (29). Subsequently, ‘as it became ... apparent ... that the terrorist threat’ resided within Pakistan, the Bush administration’s objectives extended to incorporate economic support, expanded ‘military and intelligence ties’, and ‘internal politics’ via the contentious question of ‘democracy promotion’ (29). The Obama administration, the Force observe, adopted ‘an even more expansive commitment’ captioned in the multi-pronged ‘strategic dialogue’ (30). This coincided with ‘greatly intensified direct military operations against terrorist camps in Pakistan’ notably via the doubling of US drone strikes in 2010 as compared to 2009 (37). The Force commend the strikes’ ‘tactical successes’ in securing the ‘elimina[tion] [of] top terrorist leaders’, improving accuracy and reducing civilian fatalities; however, they note that these have incurred ‘some cost in Pakistani public sentiment’ (37). They deliberate replacing partnership with ‘coercion and containment’, but surmise that an ‘adversarial’ stance would prove costly for Pakistan, unleashing ‘dangerous economic, and social trends’ (46). Correspondingly, it would entail diminished intelligence cooperation for the US, logistical blocks for NATO, and the relocation of US personnel to other states (46). While they regard the situation as ‘frustrating and difficult’, they opine that the preferred course is to establish ‘a more effective partnership’ (47). The Report’s recommendations ‘complement’ extant policy

by incorporating flood relief, trade incentives, counterterror capacity building, regional initiatives, democracy promotion, and encouraging India-Pakistan dialogue inter alia (47-55).

Shifts in US strategy in Afghanistan

Outlining US aims in Afghanistan, the Task Force observe that these have shifted in consonance with its lengthening stay, and the ‘narrowly conceived’ counterterrorist mission ‘to eliminate the threat ... [of] al Qaeda’ has melded with ‘a more ambitious effort to build a post-Taliban state’ (Armitage et al 2010: 30). They note that Obama’s first policy review was conducted amidst a sharp downturn in the war, post-election ‘disillusionment’, and an intensifying insurgency (31). Presently, the near-decade long war elicits increased opposition and critics warn that ‘the American public will not bear [its] ... costs much longer’ (57). As an alternative, the ‘light footprint’ strategy envisages a ‘narrow counterterror mission’ led by Special Forces and implemented by significantly reduced numbers of civil-military contingents (57-58). While the strategy has merit, it risks exposing Special Forces to deleterious security conditions with few Afghan partners, and the stalling of Afghanistan’s political-economic recovery; it should be discouraged, but held in reserve if the current strategy cannot deliver (58-59).

Recommendations

The Task Force make several recommendations. ‘Seizing the political initiative’ underscores the imperative of ‘a political not military’ solution even though hostile insurgents must be ‘killed or captured’ (Armitage et al 2010: 59). ‘Political reform, national reconciliation and regional diplomacy’ centre ameliorating the ‘ineffective, corrupt, and sometimes predatory’ Afghan state whose deficits also fuel the insurgency (59). A ‘realistic expansion of Afghan

security forces' involves recognising that any 'exit strategy' is contingent upon Afghans' aggregate responsibility for security; nonetheless, 'NATO need not build an Afghan army in its image' (61). Referring to the US' annual budgetary outlay for Afghan forces of approximately \$6-\$7 billion with Afghan government contributions totalling £320 million, the Force opine that reducing the US' burden, will require 'greater contributions from allies and the private sector' (60). To 'promote private sector economic growth', they advise that US economic assistance prioritises 'investment and regional trade' (63). The avenues include 'Leverag[ing] extractive industries' since the value of Afghanistan's deposits could total 'trillions of US dollars', and it would benefit from assistance in making 'sensitive political decisions' about revenue allocation (63).

Relinquishing triumphalism

The Task Force conclude by restating that its strategic interventions exact 'severe demands on the American people'; thousands of troops are 'engaged in bloody, exhausting combat', civilians toil in an uncongenial foreign region and the venture extracts 'billions of ... taxpayer dollars' per month (65). Although 'the margin for ... victory is likely to be slim' (65), 'strong US leadership' is essential to confront the dangers posed by Pakistan and Afghanistan in a region with a 'historically demonstrated ... proclivity for competition and war' (67).

'[V]ictory in the region will not come through an enemy's formal surrender; it will come when ... Pakistan and Afghanistan are committed and stable enough to secure their own territories' (67).

Biddle's Testimony – the responsibility to negotiate

The final CFR document examined is Dr. Biddle's congressional testimony entitled 'War Termination in Afghanistan' (2013).¹²⁷ Its opening iterates Obama's January 2013 statement that the war will come to 'a responsible end' in late 2014 (Obama 2013 cited in Biddle 2013: 2). Biddle contends, however, that the war 'will continue' despite US withdrawal, and may produce 'a stalemated' outcome in which neither the Taliban nor the ANSF achieve victory (2). Relatedly, he states that the ANSF's capacity to resist the Taliban is contingent upon Congress' provision of 'multibillion dollar bills' (2). Absenting a clear victory, he anticipates that the war will either culminate in 'a negotiated ... settlement with the Taliban' or in Afghan government defeat and 'defunding' of the ANSF (2). Accordingly, averting defeat necessitates steering current policy towards 'favourable' terms for an eventual settlement (2). He considers three policy initiatives as essential, namely 'governance reform' to legalise the Taliban 'as a political party'; extended congressional funding for the ANSF; and willingness to 'compromise with the Taliban' even if they are 'loathsome actors', and their ideology contravenes 'American values' (3). For Biddle, the 'worst case scenario' for the US is not 'losing' but 'losing expensively', which is assured if the US pursues a 'myopic short-term transition' in lieu of 'the political work' required for a better outcome (3).

Biddle elucidates 'American interests in the war' to assess 'the minimum conditions ... [of] an acceptable outcome', the military situation, and the modalities of a lasting settlement (2013: 3). Elaborating, he opines that the US has 'many aspirations for Afghanistan' that could be fulfilled peaceably; however, the war stipulates 'a much narrower range of potentially vital national

¹²⁷ Biddle was Adjunct Senior Fellow for Defense Policy at the CFR and Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at George Washington University when he delivered the testimony at a hearing named "After the Withdrawal: The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan".

interests', namely preventing Afghanistan from becoming 'a base for terrorism against the West', and averting its 'chaos' from 'destabilising ... neighbours especially Pakistan' (4). 'Afghanistan's role in the 9/11 attacks clearly justified' the war, but al Qaeda is no longer based there, and its possible return is a danger besetting 'other weak states' (4). The US 'clearly cannot ... wage protracted warfare on an Afghan scale' elsewhere as it 'would run out of money...' (4). While the danger of 'state collapse' in Pakistan is 'a greater threat to US interests', it is 'indirect' and not 'predetermined' by failure in Afghanistan (5-6). He recognises that the US troop surge 'weakened' the Taliban, but without eliminating them or diminishing their capacity to harm; thus, the ANSF will continue to require 'assistance from Western enablers' although post-transition estimates of \$4-6 billion yearly are significantly lower than the \$120 billion spent in 2011 (6-8). As such, 'a stalemated war is strategically tolerable for Americans (if tragic for Afghans), but chaos represents defeat' (8). Although US progressives maintain that 'concessions' to the Taliban will endanger women and minorities, and conservatives associate dialogue with 'weakness', the militia have clearly endorsed negotiation and 'a space for bargaining exists' (8).

Biddle's 'deal' entails that the Taliban shun violence, rupture ties with al Qaeda and demonstrate 'some' acceptance of the constitution; the Afghan government affirms the Taliban's legitimacy, and approves their inclusion in a ruling coalition; Pakistan exchanges the search for an 'Afghan puppet state' for guarantees of 'order', and an end to Indian-Afghan collaboration; the US acknowledges the Taliban's legitimacy and offers 'an extra-democratic guarantee of positions and influence' although this conflicts with its 'aims ... since 2001' (2013:10). The deal may be 'bitter', and require 'painful political work' but is preferable to 'defeat in a defunded war' (10). It requires balancing the Taliban's legitimation with their

‘containment’, which may prove elusive if Karzai’s successors reprise his ‘deeply corrupt, exclusionary’ politics since the Taliban, although ‘unpopular’, are perceived as ‘incorruptible’ (10-11). Therefore, the West must undertake ‘coercive diplomacy’ tying aid to political reform (11). Furthermore, ‘Capitol Hill’ must sustain ‘multi-billion dollar’ disbursements to the ANSF during the negotiations, and be ready to ‘compromise’ (11). However, if these ‘costs’ seem excessive, the US should ‘cut ... [its] losses and leave now’ and ‘save some American lives’ rather than risk ‘a more expensive version of failure’ (12-13).

Conclusion

This chapter rehearsed the key arguments of four CFR texts on Afghanistan published between 2006 and 2013, namely a congressional testimony and Special Report by Barnett Rubin (2006), a detailed Task Force Report chaired by Armitage et al (2010), and a congressional testimony delivered by Stephen Biddle (2013). It contextualised the texts against a succession of policy-related developments about Afghanistan, notably the signing of the Afghanistan Compact of 2006 (Rubin), the Obama administration’s anticipated review of policy towards Afghanistan in 2010 (Task Force Report), and the intensifying debate about drawdown in the GWoT’s second decade (Biddle). The texts documented the experts’ preoccupation with the intensification and prolongation of the insurgency as well as the deleterious progress of US-Coalition stabilisation efforts. In their attempts to analyse, explicate, and resolve the difficulties attending the US’ mission in Afghanistan, the experts advanced a range of panaceas. These included developmental, institutional, security, and military measures, and invoked national, regional, and sometimes international registers. Whilst some pertained to the short or medium term, others impinged upon a re-evaluation of the entire mission.

Chapter 4 – The Heritage Foundation in Iraq and Afghanistan: Templates of Victory

This chapter surveys Heritage Foundation experts' interventions between 2012 and 2015 that address Iraq and Afghanistan individually and together. Typifying Heritage's concise approach to communication, the interventions are short online commentaries and reports, and as such are grouped by year rather than author.

Iraq 2012: Renewed threats

The first of the commentaries on Iraq is James Phillips' 'A Resurgent al Qaeda in Iraq Threatens U.S. Attack' dated July 2012. Phillips documents the threat issued to the US by Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, the leader of al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), noting that the group was 'severely degraded' during the joint US-Iraqi counterterror campaign from 2006-2011 (Phillips 2012). However, he notes, as Heritage experts had repeatedly cautioned, it re-emerged following US troop withdrawal in 2011 (Phillips 2012). Since its return, AQI has exploited 'Sunni-Shia tensions' fanned in part by the Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki's post-withdrawal 'political purge' of Sunnis (Phillips 2012).

Iraq 2013: Heritage and history

James Carafano's commentaries 'History and the Blame Game Ten Years After Iraq' (Carafano 2013a), and 'We Won the War Before We Lost It' (Carafano 2013b), published respectively in March and May 2013 scrutinise the debates attending the war's tenth anniversary.¹²⁸ A self-

¹²⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Carafano is Vice President Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy, and the E. W. Richardson Fellow.

declared ‘practising historian’, Carafano parallels the current conversation to revisionist appraisals of the Vietnam war (2013a). These, he remarks, flow from ‘lumpers’ who amass ‘evidence’ regardless of its facticity to advance a specific standpoint or from ‘splitters’ who extrapolate an event, for example My Lai, as ‘a metaphor’ for an entire enterprise (2013a). He decries disparagement of the Iraq war on the question of WMDs, and reiterates Hussain’s culpability as ‘a vicious dictator’ who propagated WMD myths to ‘his neighbours’(2013a). He acknowledges that ‘America (and Iraq) endured a long, tortuous period of occupation’, but rejects Obama’s depiction of the war as a ‘mistake’ (2013a). Rather, he enumerates the President’s policy errors, notably ‘the timetable-driven withdrawal’ of US forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, a Libyan intervention ‘on the cheap’, and missile defence cuts that were eventually reversed (2013a). Obama’s reliance on ‘retrenchment’ and ‘smart’ rather than ‘military power’ are rebuked, as is the view that the US can emulate ‘the full Iraq’ across the world’s ‘trouble spots’ (2013a). Carafano urges ‘America’ to display ‘strength and focus’ and remain ‘prudent and judicious’ in exercising power (2013a). The May commentary adds that wars should be judged ‘before the conflict is joined, not after’, and depicts the toppling of Hussain as a ‘just cause’ with consequences that were ‘more complicated’ than imagined (2013b). Furthermore, Vietnam and Iraq are wars ‘we won before we lost’ by ‘walk[ing] away’ (2013b).

Peter Brookes’ ‘U.S., Iraq at Crossroads’ (Brookes 2013) published in October 2013 evaluates the situation in Iraq on the eve of Maliki’s Washington visit.¹²⁹ Alluding to the ‘raging and sectarian violence’ that has claimed 5000-7000 lives in 2013, he observes that the surge’s successes have ‘gone ... up in smoke’ and ‘a civil war’ may erupt (Brookes 2013). A resurgent

¹²⁹ Brookes is Senior Fellow at Heritage and former Deputy Undersecretary Defense to George Bush.

al Qaeda has rekindled ‘the worst days of the blood-soaked insurgency’, and one of its groups, ISIS, is ‘running amok’ to establish ‘a caliphate in the region’ and exploiting the ‘instability in ... neighbouring countries’; furthermore, ‘(Shiite) Tehran is very influential in (Shiite-dominated) Baghdad’ (Brookes 2013). He adds that Maliki who has also contributed to ‘the mess’ is arriving ‘hat in hand’ seeking US counterterror assistance (Brookes 2013). Although Iraq’s importance for the US stems from its location, the GWoT, energy flows, and ‘the blood and sweat of brave Americans’, it is especially salient as ‘a preview’ of possible outcomes in Afghanistan if the drawdown proceeds (Brookes 2013).

Iraq 2014: Lessons for Afghanistan

Carafano’s commentary of May 2014 (Carafano 2014a), ‘Learn from Iraq: don’t abandon Afghanistan’ restates that US withdrawal from Vietnam ‘squandered’ the labour of 25 years. Correspondingly, he notes, the US’s refusal to retain ‘a residual force’ in Iraq reignited violence there, and a similar outcome looms over Afghanistan where the ‘surge’ was smaller and less conclusive (Carafano 2014a). Although the US’ primary aim in both countries was to ‘eradicate the terrorist forces’ responsible for thousands of American deaths, ‘America always prefers to leave a path to liberty and prosperity’ in its warzones (Carafano 2014a). However, he declares, as in Iraq, Obama will again ‘pluck defeat from the jaws of victory’ (Carafano 2014a).

Concerns with ISIS’ expansion are reinforced in Carafano’s and in Phillips’ commentaries of June 2014. In ‘Does Obama understand that Iraq may soon be an Islamist state?’ (Carafano 2014b), Carafano centres ISIS’ control over a third of Iraqi territory, and proclaims that ‘disaster’ in the form of two civil wars engulfs Iraq and Syria. Fearing that ‘a contiguous Islamist state’ may be emerging ‘in the middle of the Middle East’, he is especially wary of its

regional implications, and its emulatory value for ‘the terrorist movement’(Carafano 2014b). He urges Obama to take ‘serious measures’ and exert himself as a ‘real commander in chief’ (Carafano 2014b).

Phillips in ‘Iraq: the fall of Mosul Spells Disaster for US CT Policy’ (Phillips 2014) chronicles the collapse of Iraq’s security forces under ISIS’ onslaught. ‘The insurgents’, Phillips comments, amassed vast stockpiles of weapons and monies to become ‘the richest terrorist group ever’ and will extend their reach amongst disaffected ‘Sunnis’ (Phillips 2014). Although Maliki’s ‘heavy-handed rule’ and the Syrian civil war have facilitated ISIS’ return, Obama’s alacrity in terminating rather than winning the war is leading towards defeat (Phillips 2014).

Iraq 2015: The fall of Ramadi

In his 2015 commentary entitled “The Strange ‘How We Lost Iraq and Afghanistan’ Debate” (Carafano 2015a), Carafano ponders the profusion of ‘laments over Iraq and Afghanistan’. The ‘record numbers’ of complaints evince ‘a malaise about the nature of U.S. military power’ (Carafano 2015a). Although they bespeak a ‘worthy debate’, readers are reminded that ‘common defense’ is the government’s ‘most sacred duty’, and the military’s paramount role is to protect the nation (Carafano 2015a). As ‘U.S. interests’ remain endangered in ‘the Middle East and South Asia’, ‘post-mortems’ about defeat are ‘premature’ and ‘serious critics’ should strive to frame ‘responsible defense and foreign policies’ (Carafano 2015a).

Phillips’ May 2015 commentary (Phillips 2015), ‘Fall of Ramadi Raises Questions About Obama’s Strategy to Defeat ISIS in Iraq’ describes the precarity of US interests at a pivotal moment. He underscores the symbolic value of ISIS’ capture of Ramadi, the capital of ‘the

predominantly Sunni Arab’ Anbar province, a long-time Qaeda bastion that has witnessed intense fighting (Phillips 2015). Its fall disrupts ‘Iraqi and American plans’ to build ‘an inclusive ruling coalition’ capable of mobilising diverse militias to fight ISIS alongside the ‘Shiite-dominated Iraqi Army’ (Phillips 2015). Specifically, he continues, it weakens Iraq’s US-backed Prime Minister al Abadi whose plans to recruit ‘Sunni militias’ are opposed by ‘rival Shiite leaders’ backing ‘Iran’s surrogate militias’ (Phillips 2015). The latter’s potential triumph against ISIS would constitute ‘a political defeat’ for the US and provoke a ‘Sunni backlash’ that will lengthen ‘Iraq’s civil war’ (Phillips 2015).

Afghanistan 2012: New dilemmas

Heritage commentaries on Afghanistan may be commenced with Brookes’ August 2012 piece, ‘Afghanistan Mission’s New Woes’ (Brookes 2012). Brookes laments ‘the treble increase’ in ‘green-on-blue’ attacks by Afghan troops against US and Coalition soldiers (Brookes 2012). Such incidents, he opines, stem from Taliban and other insurgents’ efforts to infiltrate the Afghan Army and police, and compound ‘the challenges’ attending the Afghan mission, namely IEDs, suicide attacks, killings of Afghan officials (Brookes 2012). He calls for presidential intervention to ameliorate the situation (Brookes 2012).

Afghanistan 2013: The risks of withdrawal

Lisa Curtis’ Report entitled ‘Afghanistan: Zero Troops Should Not Be an Option’ (Curtis 2013a) dated July 2013 considers the recently convened US-Afghan Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) talks focusing on post-withdrawal arrangements.¹³⁰ She advocates retaining

¹³⁰ Curtis was Senior Research Fellow at Heritage’s Asian Studies Centre; in 2017 she was appointed Deputy Assistant to the President and Senior Director at the National Security Council.

‘a robust troop presence’ for training and counterterror purposes alongside sustained economic, political diplomatic engagement in order to thwart the Taliban’s return, and draws cautionary parallels with the US’ ‘poor track record’ in Iraq (Curtis 2013a). Additionally, Curtis comments on the incipient talks between US officials and the Taliban at the latter’s newly inaugurated political office in Qatar (Curtis 2013a). She censures the Obama administration for excluding the Afghan government from the talks, and provoking Karzai’s retaliatory boycott of BSA negotiations, which compounds existing US-Afghan tensions (Curtis 2013a). Terming the Taliban’s posture a ‘masquerade’, she alludes to their branding the Afghan government a ‘puppet’, their intention to create a rift between the US and Afghanistan, their expectations of post-withdrawal victory, and their ongoing attacks against Afghan security forces (Curtis 2013a). Lastly, she advocates making aid to Pakistan conditional upon its intensifying operations against the Taliban and its ally, the Haqqani network (Curtis 2013a). Curtis amplifies her warnings in a commentary dated November 2013 in which she posits a direct link between the US’ ‘long-term military and economic commitment to Afghanistan’ and regional stability (Curtis 2013b). She notes that the BSA talks include US’ demands for its forces’ immunity from prosecution, and is concerned that the Afghans’ potential refusal may trigger the US’ exodus (Curtis 2013b). This would re- create an Iraq-like scenario wherein various ‘Islamist terrorists’ deploy Afghanistan as a base for operations into Pakistan and across Central Asia (Curtis 2013b).

Afghanistan 2014: The redoubled risks of withdrawal

The same themes resurface in Curtis’ commentary of March 2014, entitled ‘Afghanistan’s future – a haven for international terrorism?’ (Curtis 2014a). As BSA talks remain inconclusive, she reiterates the risk of ‘a security vacuum’ consequent to a complete pull-out

(Curtis 2014a). She notes that the intended withdrawal has prompted NATO's proposed emulatory exodus, and China's and Russia's recourse to pre-emptive strategies that counter perceived 'threats' emanating from Afghanistan (Curtis 2014a). In a further commentary posted shortly afterwards entitled 'Afghanistan-Pakistan: US Must Ensure that Its Military Gear Does not Exacerbate Regional Tensions' (Curtis 2014b), Curtis alludes to the vast stores of US military equipment in Afghanistan that would require a 'costly logistical feat' to repatriate as withdrawal proceeds. She notes that while US officials are hesitant to leave these with the Afghan authorities, they are in consultations with the Pakistan military about possible procurement (Curtis 2014b). Expressing reservations, she recommends that the US conduct a rigorous analysis of the regional security implications, attach conditions to the procurement and revive Afghan-Pakistan military dialogue (Curtis 2014b).

Afghanistan 2015: A belated shift

Lastly, Carafano's October 2015 commentary entitled 'Obama makes the right call to tough it out on Afghanistan' (Carafano 2015b) evaluates the President's 'turnaround' regarding troop pull-out. Obama's 'rare shift' entails that the 9800 troops currently stationed will remain for approximately a year, and subsequently reduce to 5,500 (Carafano 2015b). Recapitulating Obama's errors to date, he nevertheless claims that 'Afghanistan is not a total failure...and ranks as his best achievement yet' (Carafano 2015b). Nonetheless, as 'the bare minimum' conceivable for the US mission, the strategy will yield few benefits for Afghans or the wider security environment; rather, 'More forces with looser rules of engagement would make the country much safer, much faster' (Carafano 2015b).

Conclusion

This chapter completed the survey of think tank interventions on the GWoT in Part 3 of the thesis by examining fourteen commentaries on Afghanistan and Iraq authored by four Heritage experts, James Carafano, James Phillips, Peter Brookes and Lisa Curtis between 2012 and 2015. The texts revealed the experts' staunch opposition to a reduction in the US' military presence in both countries. Thus, they strive to parry accusations of failure in Iraq, prompted most recently by the rise of ISIS, by combining a robust defence of the Iraqi invasion, and indeed of past US military ventures, with sharp criticism of Obama's phased withdrawal of US troops. Relatedly, the commentaries on Afghanistan revealed the experts confronting the dim prospects of victory amidst an unabated insurgency by warning against the prospect of negotiations with the Taliban, bolstering the US' military presence, and above all by avoiding what they deem to be policy errors in Iraq.

Chapter 5 – Impunity’s Script

To contextualise this chapter’s discussion, it is salutary to recall the findings of Brown University’s Costs of War Project which records the devastation wrought by the GWoT in terms of death, injury, deprivation, and displacement. Focusing on Iraq, Afghanistan, the US, Pakistan and Syria, the Project records the following statistics over a 20 year period: 37 million people are displaced; over 801,000 have died through direct violence; as many have died through indirect causes such as malnutrition and environmental depletion; 300,000 civilians are confirmed dead; 21 million people are internally displaced in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria; Afghan and Iraqi women remain excluded from power, and a high proportion are widows; reconstruction funds of \$199 billion have been largely diverted to security forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, and allocations of humanitarian assistance have been squandered through ‘fraud, waste and abuse’ (BU, 2021).¹³¹

Discursive strategies in a lengthening war

This chapter completes the investigation into the think tanks’ oeuvre. It undertakes a composite critical overview of the texts examined in the preceding chapters of Part 3, and relates the findings to the thesis’ interrogation of decolonial critique. Building upon the typology that anchored the critical survey of the experts’ early interventions on the GWoT, the chapter proceeds by scrutinising texts published between 2004 and 2015. It identifies the particularities of the later texts, and interrogates their resilience and coherence as they document a seemingly intractable war far removed from vistas of ‘full spectrum dominance’. The chapter’s key objective is to extend the characterisation of the discourses as an archive, a sustained

¹³¹ Iraq Body Count is an alternative resource that documents the deadly impact of the GWoT there: <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/>

engagement by experts exercising the enunciatory privileges of coloniality. Concurrently, it seeks to deepen appreciation of the ‘geo-historical and bio-graphical locations’ (Mignolo 2009: 2) of the experts as the GWoT’s protagonists. It suggests that their immersion in the war’s inglorious trajectories as these incorporate societal, political, military and intelligence concerns, and their unceasing labours to redirect, redeem, and rationalise its outcomes exceed the realm of ‘intellectuals of statecraft’ (Agnew and O’Tuathail 1992). Rather, the fusion of epistemic and managerial roles brings the experts into a closer affinity with COIN’s ‘soldier-scholars’.

To pursue these tasks, the chapter posits a contrast between the experts’ initial interventions, which documented the incipient or recently inaugurated GWoT through the prism of exceptionalism, messianism, and moral certitude, and which anticipated successful outcomes, albeit within an open-ended imaginary. The later corpus, however, addresses the GWoT as a stalling enterprise marked by increasingly complex challenges that apparently defy the planners’ expectations. In seeking to assert discursive control over the violence accompanying regime change, shattered state structures, and fractured societies in both Afghanistan and Iraq, the experts turn to their accessible tableaux and tool kits for (re)ordering the world. Upholding the sanctity of the GWoT, they adopt various strategies to navigate challenges, and simultaneously sustain their credibility and authority. As attempts to reconcile the GWoT’s virtuous origins with its turbulent course, the strategies involve a modulation of the initial discourses rather than a rupture, and are indicative of the precarity, contingency, and provincialism that creep into the experts’ interventions. Nevertheless, given their policy-focused orientation, the experts persevere in offering resolutions via analysis and prescription. In the process, they (re)assert their epistemic privileges, but more significantly, extend their

discursive entanglements with coloniality from legitimating an impending war to selectively highlighting its errors, and ultimately asserting the US' *impunity* amidst the devastation. Coloniality, then, emerges as a malleable but constitutive feature of the experts' interventions.

The following sections outline this dynamic, focusing on two principal strategies deployed by the experts, both of which assume US exceptionalism *and* impunity as established verities, and deepen the nexus between coloniality and US empire. The first of these centres COIN as a node where multiple relations of hierarchy and racialised difference converge; however, the chapter also suggests that the distinctiveness of COIN as an alternative to CT wanes with the increasing prominence of targeted killing as hegemonic praxis. The second relates to the attribution of causality and responsibility amidst a trajectory of stalemates, setbacks, and failure. The chapter concludes by considering avenues for expanding the scope of decolonial critique.

The grammar(s) of COIN

A key strategy deployed in the later accounts, notably by RAND and CFR experts, emerges in the focus on COIN, which overtakes or complements CT in reconstituting the embattled project of the GWoT. With regime changes accomplished, COIN affirms the legitimacy of the new ruling structures installed by the empire, casting armed resistance as insurgency rather than as war. Various considerations follow from this. First, the utility of COIN as a panacea for Iraq's woes and more significantly, the US' entrenched institutional 'pathologies' is articulated enthusiastically by Hoffman (2004) prior to its systematic uptake in US policy. Hoffman's paper is striking for its recapitulation of RAND's discursive contributions to past counterinsurgency campaigns, its unabashed veneration of late colonial war, notably the British exemplar alongside

Kennedy's mimetic praxis in Vietnam, and lastly, its apprehension of Iraq as a salutary lesson for future counterinsurgencies.

However, while Hoffman references RAND's long-established expertise in the field, he remains silent about earlier conceptualisations of insurgency as a political act that may entwine with freedom struggles, and may incorporate terrorism. This is especially noticeable since he *does* reference his earlier writings on counterinsurgency unlike his earlier contributions to the 'new terrorism' thesis of the 1990s. Whilst he endorses the importance of combining political and military methods in COIN, he casts the Iraqi insurgency in a depoliticised register invoking terms such as 'civil disorder', 'looting', criminality, jihadism, tyranny, polarisation (Hoffman 2004). The depoliticisation is also apparent in his echoes of Simpson's truism that projects a reductive and essentialist schema upon 'peasants' agency (Simpson 1982 cited in Hoffman 2004). Hoffman also avoids engaging with the US' longer historical record in COIN. Thus, he does not pursue Grove's proposal to 'stretch [] the historical lineage of counterinsurgency' and locate it in 'the heart of the American paradigm of state making' notably in the context of 'the Indian Wars and subsequent efforts at American Indian population concentration and pacification' (Grove: 2016). To this end, Hoffman's retrieval of RAND's record remains partial and selective.

COIN and the calibration of difference

Second, although COIN emphasises the calibration of force, also at stake is the *calibration of difference*. COIN envisages pacification through the diminution of radical alterity that prevails between government or occupation forces and the civilian population through social engineering, surveillance, intelligence-gathering, and the threat of armed force. However, it

also exacerbates differences *within* the population. In Owens' view, counterinsurgency measures in Iraq and Afghanistan produced this exacerbation in tandem with empowering militias and warlords, and worsening abuses against women (2015: 275). She remarks, 'the manipulation of sectarian distinctions' to fragment the insurgency was a tactic deployed in Iraq where the US "armed sectarian militia and death squads to 'cleanse' entire cities and towns"; correspondingly, it reified tribal and ethnic markers in Afghanistan (2015: 263). As such, COIN functions in concert with Orientalism's productive fissures that are subsumed into the 'colonial difference' (Mignolo 1999), and naturalised as particularities that differentiate 'Arabs', 'Muslims', 'Afghans' from white, Euro-Americans. In this context, the Iraqi anthropologist Zainab Saleh remarks that the occupation of Iraq and the CPA's conduct, specifically

'...the institutionalization of a sectarian quota system, the alienation of Sunnis, the disbanding of the army, the de-Ba'athification order, and the failure to protect Iraqi borders – fuelled an insurgency in the country and led to rampant sectarian violence' (Saleh 2020: 10).

Saleh also implicates the occupation in 'the devastation' of Iraq, the 'total collapse of basic services', and in tandem with the policies of Iraqi governments, the rise of ISIS (2020: 10). Finally, in contrast to self-absolving expert accounts, she contends that US forces routinely 'employed brute force' and unleashed 'extreme violence' upon Iraqis, of which Abu Ghraib was the most graphic example (2020: 10).

Relatedly, Sahar Bazzaz (2013: 245f) analyses the uses of sectarianism 'as an analytical framework' in 'the discursive mapping of Iraq' after the eruption of the insurgency in 2003. She explicates how the term's ubiquity as the dominant signifier of Iraqi identity and politics in US media representations enabled the recreation of Iraq as 'an epistemological space' (Cohen 1996 cited in Bazzaz 2013: 245). Her critique is especially resonant with the concerns of this

chapter. Thus, Bazzaz contends that the use of a sectarian register rendered the insurgency 'legible' to the US public, and simultaneously vindicated the invasion's necessity (2013: 253). Furthermore, she delineates the extension of 'Shi'ite' and 'Sunni' as ontologically fixed markers to the insurgency's spatialisation via the so-termed 'Sunni triangle' (2013: 253). Focusing on *the New York Times* between 2003 and 2005, Bazzaz notes that sectarianism made a further 230 appearances in the publication after its initial usage in June 2003, (2013: 253). The effect was to concretise 'the highly abstracted sectarian landscape of Iraqi society', and delimit the insurgency to a specific geography described as the mainspring of exceptional violence (2013: 254-255). There are abundant parallels between the *Times*' performances of 'recitation' (Bialasiewicz et al 2007), and the experts' contributions in which sectarian identities are pre-supposed, and sometimes viewed as requiring US mediation, for example in Dobbins et al's (2009) account of the CPA. The correspondences are amplified in Bazzaz's citations from other articles in the *New York Times* detailing Iraq's ostensibly historical divisions. The citations relay a recurrent concern with Iraq's majoritarian dynamics given the legacies of Sunni Arab dominance, and the disruptive impact of an emerging democratic polity upon such structures (249).

COIN, Counterterrorism, and drones

Third, the experts' comparatively sanitised renderings of COIN operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and in Pakistan are countered in several scholarly accounts. Owens, for example, notes the normalisation of 'encirclement, blockades and control of basic supplies' in Iraq, and the routine use of drones and night raids on civilian homes in Afghanistan (2015: 276). Similarly,

Gregory's narration of operations in Fallujah in 2004 disturbs Pirnie and O'Connell's views of a 'methodical' (2008: 40) operation, and is worth citation:

“Only women, children and the elderly were allowed to pass through; men and teenage boys were trapped in the beleaguered city, which was then systematically levelled. When asked whether he intended to allow humanitarian supplies through the cordon to aid non-combatants ..., one US Marine Colonel replied: ‘I don’t think that is the case.’ The war machine had marked them all as insurgents without discrimination and their deaths were dismissed as being of no account” (Gregory 2006: 97).

This is also evinced in the CFR's assimilation of COIN within the context of stabilisation and liberal state building. There are no detailed CFR accounts of COIN operations in civilian areas, although developmentalist references abound, and oblique references arise episodically, for example in Rubin's references to US forces' freedom of manoeuvre, and detainee abuse in Bagram prison (Rubin 2006a). Rather, CFR accounts accord greater visibility to CT notably in the context of drone strikes in Waziristan. The Task Force Report (Armitage et al 2010: 37) highlights the sharp escalation in drone attacks in 2010, and affirms their efficacy in eliminating terrorists; concurrently, it notes that these have produced 'some' adverse reaction in Pakistan. The experts' nonchalance may be juxtaposed to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism's (BoIJ) records of drone attacks between January 2010 and January 2011. The Bureau tallies a minimum of 132 confirmed strikes leading to 775–1133 reported deaths, and between 355–432 reported injuries (BoIJ, 2021). It may also be juxtaposed to the senior Pakistani diplomat Tanvir Ahmad Khan's observations that the US was waging 'a limited war inside Pakistan', and that a Pew poll of Pakistani public opinion found that 74 percent of those sampled considered the US a hostile power (Khan: 2012).

This study cannot address the large body of scholarship that has accumulated on drone strikes. An especially cogent example of works in this field is Espinoza's powerful critique of drone warfare as a 'racialised' form of state terrorism underpinned by orientalist 'language, attitudes and policies' (Espinoza 2018: 377). She notes how drone enthusiasts including former CIA Directors Brennan and Hayden as well as President Obama depict drones as precise, discriminating and ethical weapons, and echo the tenets of colonial/civilisational discourse in which the 'virtuous' 'rational' violence of the coloniser is pitted against the non-discriminating and 'irrational' 'terrorists' (2018: 378-379). Referring to 'the orientalist apparatus of knowledge' shaping the drone programme, and its human component, Espinoza observes that the selection of targets for surveillance and assassination mimics 'the colonial gaze' and its logics of 'racial supremacy' (2018: 377, 380). Fusing 'biopolitical racism and a necropolitical gaze of surveillance', drones cast 'military-aged males in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen and Somalia as the category of unworthy life' (Espinoza 2018: 377, 383).

Grayson (2012: 121) posits that 'targeted killing 'is productive of broader power relations, cultural dispositions and geopolitical imaginaries' undergirding contemporary counterinsurgency campaigns. Especially notable is his observation that as 'a form of visual practice', targeted killing (2012: 122) affirms Feldman's assertion that 'compulsory visibility is the rationality of state counterinsurgency' (Feldman 1997 cited in Grayson 2012: 122). Focusing specifically on the drone campaign in FATA, Gregory terms it 'a distinctly if not uniquely *American* way of war' (Gregory 2011: 240). It underlines the US' prerogative to conduct target killing operations in Afghanistan under the auspices of the military and the CIA using aircraft, drones, and Special Forces, and to claim FATA 'as a spatial supplement to the war zone' (Gregory 2017: 42-44). The

supplementarity invokes a ‘granular geography’ that is not rooted in territory but in ‘the mobility of individuals, both terrorists and insurgents’ (Gregory 2017: 44). Additionally, Gregory underscores the drones’ ‘enabling function’ for waging what the Pentagon in the *Quadrennial Defence Review* of 2006 terms ‘war in countries we are not at war with’, and what military jargon calls ‘outside a defined theatre of active armed conflict’ (ODTAAC) (2017: 45). Especially pertinent is Gregory’s contention that drone missions to ‘Dwell, Detect and Destroy’ are reinvigorating

‘a colonial form of power in a radically new constellation. For the drone makes possible an extended *occupation* rather than a time-limited *incursion*. Its ... presence provides ... unremitting surveillance-the residents of the FATA constantly complain about ... [its] never-ending buzz’ (2017: 27, 45).¹³²

Relatedly, Shaw and Akhtar note the drone’s dominance in US military strategy, and contest its ‘fetish[ised]’ construction as ‘accurate, efficient, and deadly’, ‘an autonomous agent, isolated from the imperial and military apparatus behind it’ (Shaw and Akhtar 2012: 1492, 1495, 1501-1502). Such depictions, they continue, presuppose ‘a disavowed corporeality’ between the

‘...drone and its battlefield of objectified targets, rather than the relationship between the ... technicians operating the drone as agents of American empire and the unsuspecting bodies surveilled and slaughtered on the ground’ (2012: 1502).

In elucidating the knowledge bases of drone warfare as an integral element of CT, and asserting its colonial linkages, these critiques diminish CT’s postulated contrast with COIN. The experts’ malleable uses of CT implicitly vindicate a more diffuse distinction. Thus, the CFR deliberate but eventually reject its deployment as a component of an exit strategy based upon the ‘light footprint’ of Special Forces (Armitage et al 2010: 57). Similarly, the repeated references to the

¹³² ‘Dwell, Detect and Destroy’ is the slogan coined by General Atomics, the American manufacturer of MQ-1 Predators and MQ-9 Reapers (Gregory: 27).

‘surges’ in Iraq and Afghanistan presume civilian-military and Special Forces’ participation. Contrastingly, Heritage experts insist upon CT’s insertion into a broader strategic calculus underpinned by robust troop presence. Lastly, Pirnie and O’Connell (2008: 47) invoke CT’s necessity but bemoan its failures in Iraq in the context of detainees’ questioning and intelligence gathering. As such CT *also* invokes calibrations of violence, and invokes encroachments on ‘the human terrain’ (2005) although it eschews the expansive programmes of socio-cultural (re)engineering that are central to COIN. The experts invoke COIN and CT in diverse contexts, often with a calculated imprecision; in each instance, however, they routinise the sovereign, necropolitical and surveillant powers of US supremacy against regnant dangers.

COIN, coloniality, and imperial redemption

The shift to COIN and specific modalities of CT, notably drone strikes, centres the role of interconnected knowledges in warfighting, and as such magnifies the interstitial spaces that the experts inhabit. The quest for pacification amidst spectacles of defeat reprises expert knowledges as purposive and programmatic but also sociologically and culturally embedded in the ‘colonial episteme’ (Manchanda 2018: 183). It brings discourses of COIN and CT into a double-edged relationship with coloniality. On the one hand, COIN’s associations with stabilisation, state-building, and emancipation reinscribe coloniality understood as the ‘rhetoric of modernity’ (Mignolo 2011a). On the other hand, COIN practitioners readily invoke colonial discourses of ‘small wars’ (Callwell 1906) as doctrinal exemplars of pacification. Through this retroactive manoeuvre, COIN imagines the re-sanctification of empire evinced by the GWoT’s apologists at its outset. In subsuming the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan within *ameliorative* logics, it simultaneously offers an ameliorative, redemptive dynamic to the US’

fraying empire, recovering its dimmed benevolence. In contrast to coloniality's concealment of past and present imperial violence, COIN redeems empire via the conceit of diminished, judiciously exercised, violence. Approaching knowledge-production in the GWoT in this light complicates understandings of modernity/coloniality and exceeds the frames of the 'rewesternisation' thesis (Mignolo 2015). Again, the slippage between the US and 'the west' occludes understanding of the specific challenges attending US dominance. Correspondingly, it occludes understanding of the retrieval of 'the west' as a signifier, and the context(s) in which this occurs. That the experts seek salvation in the colonial past and, by extension, its imbrication in modernisation theory is significant primarily as a pedagogic exercise undertaken for the benefit of *US* planners facing a fast-unravelling situation in Iraq. The objective to 'rewesternise' Iraq is far more anomalous notably in view of the oft-repeated assertions of its 'otherness'.

The conceit remains intact in CT's discourses of 'targeted killing'; although the focus falls on sovereign power rather than on population protection, the operations' lethality is camouflaged in ubiquitous claims of technological superiority, automation, and precision. That orientalist and racialised constructs permeate the programming of the most sophisticated weapons systems reinforces the contention that decolonial critiques that privilege de/rewesternisation and de-emphasise Orientalism's resilience will remain tendentious.

Causality and responsibility

A further strategy evinced across the expert discourses is the moderated iteration of causality and responsibility in the GWoT's ailing fortunes. As noted previously, appraisals of the parlous conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan punctuate the later interventions, and distinguish these from the early texts. The accounts' convergence in referencing the challenges of pacification is

complemented by varied explications of their causality. However, the overarching relevance of the strategy lies less in the specifics of this process than in the pattern of retribution and absolution that it establishes, which reveals the experts' attempts to address the GWoT's aporias without questioning its foundational logics. In illustration of this point, it is useful to schematise the think tanks' respective attributions of culpability. Commencing with RAND experts' evaluations, the chief sources of error are variously identified as institutional pathologies, delayed adoption of COIN, de-Baathification, disbanding of the Iraqi Army, terrorism, jihadism, criminality, the DoD's insufficient planning, insufficient support for the CPA, the individual roles of key statesmen, notably Rumsfeld, prison conditions at Abu Ghraib, Saddam Hussain's dictatorship, sectarianism, factionalism, Iraq's historical continuities, its democratic deficit, and its remoteness from first world economies.

For the CFR in Afghanistan, the identifiable factors are deflection of US attention to Iraq, failure to reintegrate fleeing Taliban, inadequate provision of reconstruction funds, sub-optimal troop presence, the international community's indifference, the Karzai government's corruption, US forces' impunity, isolated incidents of abuse, the Taliban, the Haqqani network, the tribal belt, and Pakistan.

For the Heritage Foundation in Afghanistan and Iraq, the major enumerated causes are Obama's troop drawdown and withdrawal, Pakistan, the Taliban, al Qaeda in Iraq, ISIS, and revisionist perspectives on the Iraq war as well as on the war in Vietnam.

The various indictments reflect a different valence; thus, Pakistan features preponderantly in the CFR's deliberations, and the discrediting of the CPA exercises RAND experts to a greater degree than the revelations of abuse at Abu Ghraib. Despite the divergences and contrast, the accounts adopt a more stringent, punitive posture towards the perceived errors of external, non-US and non-western actors both in terms of representation and suggested correctives. For example, Pakistan is recurrently referred to as the potential object of coercive diplomacy, and various conditionalities are suggested for engaging with Afghan governments even when large scale withdrawal is proposed. In contrast, the fallibility of US and Coalition actors is frequently attenuated, rationalised, redacted, and assimilated as a form of *internal critique*. Errors and omissions are relegated to the logics of governmentality as instances of flawed execution and implementation or are outsourced to other agents. The decision to prosecute the GWoT, the experts' discursive endorsements of its necessity, and indeed the US' future engagements in cognate campaigns are, however, immune from scrutiny. This point may be expanded with reference to specific themes drawn from each of the think tanks.

RAND

First, the RAND volume by Dobbins et al (2009) elaborates the chequered career of the CPA, and concludes with a bold defence of the CPA and its Administrator Paul Bremer. Relatedly, Pirnie and O'Connell highlight the CPA's economic reforms prior to elucidating their attrition through assorted factors, notably subsidies, theft, and insurgent attacks. These accounts may be juxtaposed to Whyte's exposition of the 'economic exceptionalism' that characterised the CPA's tenure, and entailed 'systematic fraud and bribery.... the disbursal of revenue and the accumulation of profits at an accelerated rate' in the virtual absence of mechanisms of

accountability (Whyte 2016: 298). Elsewhere, recounting the application of ‘neo-liberal shock therapy in Iraq’, Whyte observes that:

‘The scale and intensity of the appropriation of Iraqi oil revenue makes the 2003 invasion one of the most audacious and spectacular crimes of theft in modern history... the Coalition Provisional Authority restructured the economy and spent over \$20 billion in Iraqi oil revenue, most of which was disbursed to US corporations by the CPA directly or via Iraqi ministries. Since the disbanding of the CPA, evidence of widespread corruption in the reconstruction economy has emerged’ (2007: 177-178).

Similarly, Pirnie and O’Connell’s’ passing allusions to Abu Ghraib and later to the importance of ‘exploiting’ detainees may be juxtaposed to Khalili’s depictions of the merger of proceduralism and torture in the GWoT. Thus, she notes that ‘Physical and psychological torture, wrapped in procedure and ... legalese, became ordinary’ (Khalili 2013: 159). Moreover, the routinisation of torture was assured considering the combined labours of ‘lawyers, psychologists, interrogators, and military and intelligence officials’ in the formulation of ‘bureaucratic procedures, memoranda, and processes’ (Khalili 2013: 159).

The CFR

Second, CFR experts’ preoccupations with Pakistan and Afghanistan fuse ascription of blame with a denial of agency. It is beyond the scope of the chapter to address this subject in detail and the following observations are cursory. Pakistan is frequently cast as an impediment to a lasting solution in Afghanistan due to its differentiated policies towards disparate militant groups. This discriminatory approach is attributed to its longstanding anxieties regarding the balance of power in the region, which in turn stem from the hostility characterising its relations with Afghanistan since independence. The antagonism is depicted as the source of the region’s volatility, and considered a dispute that the two states cannot resolve independently. This

reductionist portrayal which rests upon amnesia, essentialism, and paternalism makes no reference to the damaging impact of superpower rivalry in the region nor to the ebb and flow in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. Additionally, it understates the idiosyncrasies and anomalies of the US' role in Afghanistan post 2001. For example, Khan refers to the US' policy of arming and funding local Afghan militias to fight the Taliban alongside its publicly stated aim of supporting the Afghan government (Khan 2012). He maintains that the policy has 'come home to roost' in that

'... militias control taxes, tolls, the allocation of financial opportunities and the administration of justice. The scheme has spawned a new, lower order of warlords existing alongside traditional ones' (Khan 2012).

Khan's observations provide a counterpoint to US policymakers' and think tank experts' glib allusions to Pakistan's ambiguous role, and the military and financial assistance it has received from US and Coalition funds.

Less common are the references to Pakistan's human and material losses since the onset of the GWoT. According to Brown University (2021), by 2018, violence related to the GWoT had claimed 65,000 lives in Pakistan of which 9000 were security personnel and 23,000 were civilians. Direct military assaults on Pakistan through drone strikes, and NATO Special Forces' attack on a Pakistani border check post that killed 49 soldiers were complemented by deepening covert operations epitomised in the so-termed Raymond Davis affair.¹³³ Relatedly, the economic impact of the war has been crippling with losses eclipsing the volume of US assistance. Although Pakistani liberals displayed consistent fidelity to the GWoT, this was not a widely shared sentiment. Rather, as Khan (2011) remarks,

¹³³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/feb/21/raymond-davis-pakistan-cia-blackwater>

‘Ironies abound for its hapless people who ponder why it suffered so grievously when it was being trumpeted as a partner, a non-NATO ally of Washington, earmarked for American largesse’.

In the CFR’s calculus of risk, the dangers facing Pakistan in terms of destabilisation, state collapse, and their implications for its nuclear facilities are seen to outweigh those facing Afghanistan. While the Task Force recognise the destabilisation consequent to the insurgency within Pakistan, this is attributed largely to Pakistan’s own lapses, and its deviations from US prescriptions. However, the counterproductive results of these prescriptions, notably the extension of Pakistan’s counterinsurgency operations within its territory, was a consistent refrain in statements by Pakistani analysts and diplomats. In his account of the Bajaur operations of 2006 conducted on the eve of Bush’s visit, Usher (2007) writes,

“But ‘every use of force is a gain for the Taliban,’ says [the journalist] Yusufzai. The first consequence of the Bajaur attack for the Pakistan Taliban was a swell of new cadre. The second was revenge, with the murder in November of 42 army recruits by a Taliban suicide bomber on a parade ground in the NWFP – the worst attack on the Pakistan army outside of war. Bajaur also left Musharraf’s strategy of restoring the power of the maliks [local leaders] in shambles, says Tanvir Ahmed Khan. ‘Historically, agreements in the tribal areas were conditioned on the government not breaking its word. With Bajaur, the government broke its word, and the sense of betrayal among the tribesmen is enormous’.”

Despite such omissions, the Task Force’s calibrations of Pakistan’s vulnerability culminate in their advising the Obama administration to forego a more aggressive posture. To this end, Pakistan, notwithstanding its traumatic inscription in the GWoT, ironically underlines the limitations of US power. As Khan (2012) opines, Pakistan ‘provides... a cautionary tale’ of the difficulties inherent in ‘dealing with a superpower reluctant to admit that it has lost a decade-long military campaign’.

The Task Force Report is also noteworthy for its articulation of the US' changing priorities in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which serve to rationalise its prolonged footprint via newfound proclamations of (paternalistic) responsibility. The surface logic, namely that the US' agglomerating objectives derive from a deepening commitment to stabilisation, is anomalous. It obfuscates the vicious cycle characterising US' interventions in the region that have amplified rather than diminished existing conflicts. An inadvertent rejoinder to this statement appears in Biddle's testimony, which advocates a further change of course. Cognisant of the impasse facing the US in Afghanistan after nearly 13 years of war, Biddle urges negotiations with the Taliban, ignoring Pakistan's longstanding support for this policy. Although haunted by shades of defeat, Biddle's arguments follow a cost/benefit analysis, and rest on an implicit, but reconstituted schema of responsibility and blame. Thus, for Biddle negotiating with the 'loathsome' Taliban will cost more Afghan lives, but is less blameworthy than risking a costly defeat (2013:3).

The Heritage Foundation

In comparison with the CFR and RAND, the Heritage Foundation adopts a minimalist conceptualisation of responsibility and error. Whilst references to external actors, notably Pakistan and various militant groups, punctuate their contributions, the overarching emphasis is on the presumed folly of troop withdrawal or reduction. As such Heritage experts propound an imaginary that is preponderantly militarist albeit one occasionally peppered with curious references to the US' halcyon paths to war. Correspondingly, those associating the US' historical and contemporary exploits with defeat and failure are reprimanded for their methodologies and overall ignorance. Responsibility in this conception elides seamlessly with

the responsibility of the US military to defend the nation, and with iterations of US exceptionalism as the value of ‘American’ lives and interests. In a series of logic-defying statements, a simple equivalence obtains between the projection of military power interpreted as troop strength and a triumphal outcome.

By virtue of this logic, the US is deemed to have triumphed in Vietnam over 25 years before it squandered its laurels through withdrawal. Should the logic prove tenuous, the ultimate arbiter of a war’s success is its foundational premise. If this too falters, for example as regards the absence of WMDs in Iraq, there is always an assortment of post-facto rationalisations to select from. In the current context, Iraq is deemed a triumph after the ‘surge’ and prior to its unravelling by Obama, and fears of his repeating the error are raised in Afghanistan’s context. The fact that Obama authorised drone strikes on an unprecedented scale in Pakistan and Afghanistan is not sufficient to compensate for the proposed exit strategy. Nonetheless after incurring sustained censure, Obama is redeemed for reneging on the issue.

Heritage experts’ explication of ISIS’ resurgence is also instructive for its posited links with the question of troop numbers. Suggestions that the group’s initial emergence hearkens to the invasion, occupation, and destruction of the Iraqi state are obviated. Through this presentist manoeuvre, the experts redirect attention to the modalities of the group’s annihilation, notably the danger that its potential defeat by Iran-backed militias will upend US plans for the country and the region. The experts’ preference for minimalism and pragmatism is especially commendable in enabling them to reinvest a floundering project with value, and dispense with the labour of recalling their past interventions. Recall of their advocacy of a speedy exit from

Afghanistan, support for the Northern Alliance, and most notably three decades of ‘endgames’ may bring their methodologies and understanding of global affairs into question.

Expert strategies and implications for decolonial critique

Evaluation of the experts’ discursive strategies in the lengthening GWoT opens possibilities for expanding decolonial critiques of knowledge production. First, it affirms the importance of interrogating the intersections of coloniality with US neo-imperialism as it encounters multiple challenges, which constrain its capacity to construct a pliant global order. To this end, it calls for a more granular focus on the modalities of knowledge production in the context of an unfolding ‘global shift’ (Gökay and Fouskas 2018). This becomes especially pertinent as ‘the geopolitics of knowledge production’ expose a widening gap between the ‘zero point’ (Gomez 2007), and the subjectivities, political and ideological investments, cultural and racial biases of those claiming the privilege of enunciation. In an ironic articulation of Mignolo’s references to ‘delinking’, the evolving discourses reveal an incremental disconnect of US from global/Iraqi/Afghan interests. This is significant since even the strident iterations of US primacy by Heritage experts assumed the global as a plane of reference. The emergent tensions become visible even in the CFR’s liberal internationalist discourses, most pointedly in Biddle’s testimony in which Afghan lives are opposed to those of US soldiers. However, whereas ‘delinking’ in decolonial accounts is an emancipatory phenomenon, its inferred presence in the expert discourses proceeds from failure when the recitation of the US’ pristine intentions in waging war cannot subsume its (unintended) consequences. An exploration of this dynamic needs to foreground inquiry into the discursive strategies that shape knowledges invested in US neo-imperial power, and its attendant *responsibilities* and prerogatives. Scrutiny of the

knowledges as they navigate anomalies in the co-articulation of exceptionalism, globalism, and nationalism provides a way of returning to the question of enunciation. Since the enunciatory privilege presupposes hierarchy, authority and universalism, awareness of its inner tensions can direct inquiry beyond the de/rewesternisation paradigm, and beyond the question of ‘content’.

Second, as noted, the expert accounts reveal complementarity, overlap, and occasionally dissonance in their algorithms of responsibility and causation as regards the GWoT’s travails. To this end, they typify ‘the conflict of interpretations’ that in decolonial readings reproduces coloniality in that it preserves the ‘rules of the game’ (Mignolo 2009: 4) despite surface dissimilarities. Mignolo’s warnings are exemplified in the experts’ overarching endorsement of the GWoT and its governing rationale. However, the overlaps notwithstanding, the expert writings are noteworthy in eliciting the war’s expansive character, the panoply of instruments and strategies that it marshals to subdue the ‘human’ as well as the military ‘terrain’ (2005), and, even if partially, the damage and destruction that it unleashed. Cumulatively, the expert accounts instantiate the workings of US power via elaborate sequences of disclosure amidst evasion, subterfuge, and erasure. In this respect, disaggregating the discourses, even if they buttress the same constellation of power, can assist the critical endeavour, and advance understanding of its dynamics. Significantly, the experts articulation of differing strategies for absolving the US, their respective institutions, and themselves of culpability for the infelicitous outcomes of the GWoT can direct decolonial inquiry beyond affirmation of the think tanks’ location within the matrix of power, to broader investigations of institutional and state impunity.

Conclusion

This chapter concluded the thesis' investigation. It advanced a composite critique of the three preceding chapters that detailed the think tank experts' discursive endeavours over an eleven-year period following the initial launch of the GWoT in Afghanistan and Iraq. The principal objectives of the critique were two-pronged: to analyse the think tank experts' oversight of the war(s) as an evolving archive in a fluid context marked by impending or actual failure; and connect the findings of the analysis to the thesis' exploration of decolonial critique. To pursue this objective, the chapter excavated the principal discursive strategies framing the experts' later interventions in their efforts to influence policy, arrest or reverse the GWoT's ailing fortunes, mitigate perceptions of failure, and most importantly, reiterate the war's virtuous rationale. It identified the strategies as the centring of COIN, and the ascription of causality and responsibility. Relatedly, it demonstrated that whilst these strategies reaffirmed the experts' enduring investments in the US exceptionalism, and their role as its interlocutors, they also imbibed a further dimension as statements of impunity. Lastly, it demonstrated the ongoing salience of coloniality as a constitutive element in the experts' discursive instantiations of contemporary empire.

Conclusion

‘Civilisation both in the East and the West was visited by a destructive plague which devastated nations and caused populations to vanish. It overtook the dynasties at the time of their senility when they had reached the limit of their duration. It lessened their power ... It weakened their authority.’ (Ibn Khaldûn 1377 [2005])

This thesis has been animated by critical scholarship in the discipline of International Relations that seeks to uncover and contest its imbrication in Eurocentric modes of knowledge production. The scholarship has advanced compelling critiques of the foundational role of Eurocentrism in the field’s genesis, formative theories, methodologies, and analytical categories. Most importantly, it has demonstrated how Eurocentrism cements IR’s normative and intellectual boundaries, and reproduces its complicities in oppressive structures of global power through concealment of the discipline’s formative relationship with colonial/imperial and racialised modes of inquiry. Although the scholarship incorporates disparate perspectives and starting points, it converges broadly with the repertoire of postcolonial and more recently decolonial writings that centre the legacies of empire and colonialism on knowledge production within and without the academy.

Consistent with this endeavour, the thesis has critically surveyed the discourses produced by three US based think tanks over fourteen years of the ‘war on terror’. Its inquiry has foregrounded critiques of Eurocentrism advanced by the so-termed decolonial collective that centre the concept of modernity/coloniality. The concept’s paramount critical impetus lies in its disruption of hegemonic and laudatory understandings of modernity as the hallmark of European exceptionalism. Rather, in shifting attention to the colonial/imperial foundations of

the modern world, decolonial thinkers argue that modernity is inextricably entangled with coloniality, its darker underside. Coloniality also serves as the constitutive element of the ‘matrix of power’, the multifaceted structure comprising the intersecting transformations that were integral to the consolidation and reproduction of colonial rule. Two salient contentions follow from this formulation; first, there is modernity without coloniality; and second, in denoting structural change, coloniality makes visible the replication of colonial ontologies and practices after the formal demise of European empires.

Identifying the coloniality of knowledge production as a key domain of the matrix, decolonial thinkers locate think tanks amongst the dominant institutions that uphold its oppressive structures via the hegemony of Eurocentric epistemologies. They claim that far from being neutral or emancipatory, Eurocentric epistemologies perpetuate racial, political-economic, and ideational hierarchies that collectively reproduce ‘the colonial difference’ (Mignolo 1999), the putatively unassailable superiority of ‘Europe’ over non-European peoples. Decoloniality, then, as a ‘manifesto’ (Mignolo 2011a) seeks to unmask and dismantle the structures, frameworks, and logics undergirding Eurocentric knowledge production, and enable the cultivation of new epistemic modes, subjects, and languages that ‘delink’ from coloniality’s bequest.

The thesis’ approach and key findings

This thesis has aimed to contribute to decolonial endeavours in IR by situating its key problematic, the production of knowledges by think tank experts on the ‘global war on terror’ (GWOt), within the critical framework of modernity/coloniality. It has pursued a two-pronged inquiry interrogating the discursive instantiation of the GWOt by experts at three elite think

tanks, and assessing the efficacy of decolonial critique in unmasking the operations of power attending this endeavour. Approaching the think tanks' oeuvre as an archive, an accumulation of policy-prescriptive discourses or assemblages of knowledge and power, it has undertaken a critical survey of the literature produced by the experts between 2001 and 2015. It has deployed an eclectic, interdisciplinary research methodology that fuses empirical, theoretical and conceptual approaches, juxtaposing the experts' interventions with decolonial and postcolonial scholarship on the one hand, and literature drawn from the social sciences, namely Political Science, American Studies, IR and its sub-fields, Critical Geopolitics and Critical Terrorism Studies on the other.

Structurally, the thesis has divided the survey of the experts' interventions into two parts, the first examining materials dating to the GWoT's inception in 2001, and the second addressing sequential interventions from 2004 that charted the war's extension in time and space. In each case, the objective has been to elucidate the experts' epistemic investments in the war by rehearsing their core arguments, excavating their constitutive logics and standpoints, and advancing a critique that allows an evaluation of the scope and validity of decolonial thought. In light of this endeavour, the key findings of the thesis are as follows.

The think tank experts who form the focus of this study are elite actors strategically located within the top echelons of policy-relevant knowledge networks in the US. Their respective institutions, namely the CFR, the RAND Corporation, and the Heritage Foundation rank amongst the most prestigious, influential, well-endowed national think tanks that are closely entwined with centres of power within and beyond the state apparatus. The experts sequentially,

and sometimes simultaneously, occupy senior positions in government, other think tanks, academia, the corporate world, and the media. Their individual career paths, institutional affiliations, and networked links combine to cement their reputation as authoritative interlocutors on foreign, security and defence policy. Their prolific contributions over the course of the GWoT, for example in the form of congressional hearings, media interviews, and assignments to war zones, underscore their pivotal locations in processes of policy-oriented knowledge production.

The experts' policy-focused interventions are formative in the construction, normalisation, and circulation of discourses that uphold the projection of US imperial power via its status as the guarantor of the liberal international order, and the sovereign exception. In reproducing empire, the experts serve as the 'bearers of its power/knowledge' (Hall 1997: 56), inscribing its meanings across different time periods and contexts. Thus, understandings of expertise as objective, technocratic knowledge misrecognise its cultivation in institutions, in this context the three think tanks, that are geopolitical actors in IR, and (re)articulate empire's discursive frameworks. Central to their labours are attempts to structure the field of discursivity, and set the boundaries of debate leading to the formation of a hegemonic consensus. The methods of choice include the ascription of meanings and connotations to events, concepts, and categories, and the insertion of these into chains of causality. Reinvigorating the meanings of US exceptionalism diachronically, the experts also position themselves as its custodians. While the thesis' substantive focus is a specific period of the GWoT, it also situates the experts' discursive endeavours within a longer time-frame, referencing contributions from the 1980s and 1990s on Afghanistan, Iraq, and terrorism. The juxtaposition of past and present interventions reveals

repetition, continuity amidst change, and reinforces the thesis' characterisation of expertise as policy-oriented research animated by attachments to empire.

In the context of the GWoT, the think tank discourses modulate over time as the experts attempt to reconcile the short-term horizon of regime change, and pacification, with the war's lengthening and vitiating trajectories. The discourses become multi-layered appearing variously as performances of legitimation, homilies of pacification, parables of counterinsurgency, apologias of failure, and statements of impunity. The discourses acquire a degree of tenuousness, and reveal differences amongst the think tanks pertaining to the future course of the GWoT, the distribution of blame, and the modes of suturing the links between US exceptionalism and global order. Nonetheless broad areas of convergence remain: the affirmation of the GWoT as a meritorious project, the certainty of future wars, and the role of the US as sovereign exception is co-articulated with essentialist recapitulations of the targeted states' and societies' inherent deficiencies, and tacit assertions of US impunity.

As iterations of power/knowledge the expert discourses are deeply imbricated in the coloniality, which is not incidental, but integral to their instantiation of the GWoT in a neo-imperial context. Coloniality permeates the discourses in formative ways, manifesting as the co-articulation of US exceptionalism with civilisational superiority and global order; as generative iterations of the colonial difference through racialised, and orientalist tropes and binaries; as the salvational 'rhetoric of modernity' (Mignolo 2011a: 46); as the occlusion of the 'geopolitics of knowledge'; as enunciatory privilege within the matrix of power; as elision of the US' complicity in prevalent crises; and finally, as gestures of impunity. Coloniality, then is constitutive to the

production of the think tank discourses, and indexes the error of apprehending these as technocratic, value-free policy prescriptions. It assumes plural forms, and makes visible the connections between the experts' positionality in the hierarchy of knowledge producing institutions, and the mode as well as content of the policies they expound. Its absence would severely impede the production of discourse instantiating the GWoT as a neo-imperial project; conversely, it is probable that the regime of truth it has entrenched will outlast the war.

Lastly, the theoretical and conceptual contributions of decolonial critique encompass a valuable resource for unmasking, disrupting, and dismantling of entrenched modes of Eurocentric knowledge production. From its grounding in the dyad of modernity/coloniality, the critique makes a series of radical interventions. The most salient of these are the reformulation of the genealogy of colonialism to the Iberian conquest of Granada; the theorisation of colonial domination as intersectional, and the identification of knowledge production as one of its core domains; the focus on structural transformations wrought by colonialism persisting after the formal demise of empires, underlining the distinction between decolonisation and decoloniality; and the inclusion of think tanks amongst institutions reproducing coloniality. At a more specific level, decolonial critique advances concepts elucidating the ways in which the coloniality of knowledge is reproduced, notably Eurocentrism, the geopolitics of knowledge, enunciation, the colonial difference, and the rhetoric of modernity. Cumulatively, the critique furnishes tools that can reshape understanding of knowledge production in think tanks beyond the remit of conventional approaches in IR and in social science more generally.

However, notwithstanding its rich array of insights into enduring modes of coloniality in knowledge production, decolonial critique manifests various lacunae. These relate primarily to the location of the Islamicate in colonial modernity, and relate principally to the historical, theoretical and conceptual implications of the critique's Atlanticist focus. In general terms, they appear in the insufficient recognition of pre and post-Andalusian commercial, military, and cultural encounters between Europe and the Islamicate; in the relative inattention to the geopolitical implications of resurgent Islamicate political/imperial power after al Andalus, and its possible imbrication with European modernity; in collapsing Orientalism within post-Andalusian racial colonial binaries. In sum, the critique elides the particularity of the Islamicate and its trajectories within the expansion of the European colonial imaginary.

In more specific terms, the critique falters in Mignolo's conception of Bandung, dewesternisation and rewesternisation, the post-Cold War period, and the GWoT. As deployed the analytic is insufficiently lucid, and occasionally essentialist. It risks reifying different articulations of US global power, conflating it with westernisation, subsuming its contemporary logics within the grammar of 15th century transatlantic conquest; and, most importantly, discounting the role of Orientalism in the prosecution of the GWoT. Collectively, these lacunae compromise the critique's range and cogency in conceptualising coloniality within the aporias of contemporary empire, and signpost areas for further elaborations of a decolonial project.

Significance of the thesis and contribution to IR theory

This thesis has built upon the critiques of Eurocentric knowledge production in the discipline of International Relations. It has pursued this task by centring the discursive instantiation of the GWoT, commonly referred to as the US' longest war, by experts located at three influential US think tanks. Concomitantly, it has interrogated the efficacy of decolonial thought in unmasking the instantiations of power/knowledge in the experts' interventions. In the process, it has underscored the relevance of think tanks as valid subjects of study in IR that merit critical scrutiny beyond the more conventional, domestically-focused and positivist approaches taken in fields such as Political Science and American Studies. Specifically, it has demonstrated the value of using a decolonial methodology that steers analysis towards an ontological direction, uncovering the colonial values, standpoints, and privileges think tanks encode on to the praxis of 'international relations'. This praxis encompasses the formulation, legitimation, and continuation of policies that reproduce US empire, and are capable of unleashing violence and devastation on a global scale.

In analysing the think tanks' interventions on the GWoT, this thesis has documented the reactivation of coloniality in contemporary discourses of empire that are purportedly technocratic and apolitical. It has shown how coloniality inflects the think tank experts' articulation of US exceptionalism, furnishes the racist and orientalist grammars that underpin the GWoT's discursive instantiation, and conceals its darker side. It has thus demonstrated that a decolonial project in IR needs to be attentive to the presence of coloniality in institutions beyond academia, especially those where expert knowledges entwine with policy outreach and

the cultivation of public opinion. Such a project can prompt reflection on disparate institutions' relative resistance to addressing coloniality in their ethos and practices.

In elaborating the imbrication of coloniality in the think tanks' discursive production of contemporary empire, the thesis contributes to IR theory primarily by asserting the value of decoloniality as a critical endeavour. In foregrounding the interventions of the decolonial collective that emerged in other disciplines, notably Anthropology and Philosophy, rather than IR, it reinforces the significance of interdisciplinarity. It suggests that IR's incorporation and cultivation of decolonial standpoints would denaturalise the discipline's self-imposed boundaries. Most importantly, it would disrupt IR's perpetuation of the hierarchies, oppression, and erasures that are congruent with a denial of the colonial/racial constitution of the international system. It is by systematically addressing the colonial deficit that the field can devise alternative methodologies and theories, and thereby produce richer, historically informed, and potentially emancipatory accounts of global politics.

Concomitantly, the thesis has approached decolonial thought in a critical light, validating its dominant insights, but also pointing to its limitations. In executing this task, it has juxtaposed decolonial thought with postcolonial perspectives on the one hand, and IR's cognate sub-fields, Critical Geopolitics and CTS on the other. It has suggested that the sub-fields, which also attend to processes of discursivity including the colonial bases of knowledge production, depart from IR's mainstream articulations. They are simultaneously an index of the decolonial potential in IR's sub-fields, and, in displaying a granularity that is lacking in some decolonial accounts, of the ways in which decolonial thought may be refined and extended. In this sense, the thesis

understands decoloniality as an eclectic undertaking that links theory to grounded historical and empirical analyses. In this context, the thesis has also emphasised that decolonial theorisations, will remain partial unless they attend to the hegemony of Orientalism as a mode of representation, and to the historical erasure of the Islamicate from accounts of European modernity. The latter involves a deep interrogation of modernity and its claims to exclusivity, and is especially relevant to IR as a quintessentially Eurocentric discipline rooted in the myth of Westphalia. Furthermore, IR's disciplinary emergence in the early 20th century, and its conceptualisation of world order also need to be contextualised against the dismantling of the Ottoman empire, and the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924.

Lastly, in juxtaposing coloniality in the academy and in policy-oriented in think tanks, the thesis contests a sharp bifurcation of theory and policy just as it dismisses the commonplace references to the bridging function of their institutions. Rather, it construes knowledge production in think tanks and the academy as variant instantiations of theory in disparate spheres. As noted previously, the experts' policy-prescriptions and analyses are grounded in dominant theoretical traditions, notably liberal internationalism and realism, and more broadly in the Eurocentrism of western social theory with its anchoring in claims of racial/civilisational superiority. What is at stake then, is recognition of the colonial order of knowledge production that inflects theory and policy so that both are entwined and co-constitutive. In this reading, coloniality is the common denominator connecting not only theory and policy but also old and new empire. Consequently, the thesis anticipates that by attending to the imbrication of theory and policy, a critical decolonial project in IR will amplify the field's understanding of present-day configurations of empire that enabled and sanctified the devastation it wreaked in the GWoT.

End notes

In March 2020, the International Criminal Court (ICC) began investigating allegations of war crimes in Afghanistan including those attributed to US forces. Secretary of State Pompeo called it a ‘truly breathtaking action by an unaccountable, political institution masquerading as a legal body’ (Pompeo cited in Peltier & Faizi, 2020).

In May 2020, waves of *Black Lives Matter* protests decrying police brutality towards Black communities spread across US cities after the murder of George Floyd.

In November 2020, Pompeo met representatives of the Afghan government and the Taliban in Doha to discuss Washington’s planned pull-out. The encounter followed rocket attacks in Kabul that killed at least 7 civilians.

In December 2020, the ICC dropped an inquiry into alleged British war crimes in Iraq despite discerning

‘... a reasonable basis to believe that members of the British armed forces committed the war crimes of wilful killing, torture, inhuman/cruel treatment, outrages upon personal dignity, and rape and/or other forms of sexual violence’ (ICC 2020 cited in Bowcott 2020).

In January 2021, armed white supremacist supporters of the outgoing President Trump stormed the Capitol building. Many were later identified as current or former military, and law enforcement officers.

In January 2021, two suicide attacks in Baghdad killed at least 32 people and injured more than a 100 (Abdul Ahad and Chulov 2021).

By January 2021, the US death toll from the Covid-19 global pandemic exceeded 400,000.

This thesis opened with citations from think tank experts in which they attempt to suture the fraying links between US exceptionalism and global order. It concludes by suggesting that they reorient their discursive endeavours to excavating the relationalities amongst the vignettes above – between the death and disorder wreaked by the empire's foreign wars, and the systemic violence, racial injustice, and political decay afflicting its core.

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