



NPS IN THE NEWS

Weekly Media Report – July 6-12, 2021

Further reproduction or distribution is subject to original copyright restrictions.

COMMUNITY:

[Monterey underwater robotics competition was a year for girls](#)

(Monterey Herald 6 July 21) ... Dennis L. Taylor

School teams from across Central California gathered recently in Monterey for an underwater robotics competition aimed at teaching students to use the technology to solve the many problems facing the world's oceans and waterways, and this year the laurels belonged to the girls.

The 20th Annual Marine Advanced Technology Education, or MATE, regional competition was held June 19 at the **Naval Postgraduate School's** Sea Land Air Military Research facility, with a team from all-girls St. Francis Catholic High School in Sacramento taking home first place with their "Geneseas" project.

RESEARCH:

[NPS Student Wins Prestigious National Award for High-Energy Laser Research](#)

(Navy.mil 8 July 21) ... Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class James Norket

(NPS.edu 8 July 21) ... Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class James Norket

"Lasers are the future of U.S. Navy shipboard defense."

A straightforward statement, but it was all the motivation U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Austin West needed to tackle a highly-challenging research topic for his master's degree on Meteorology and Oceanography from the Naval Postgraduate School.

[Naval Postgraduate School integration with I MIG](#)

(DVIDS 17 June 21) ... U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Patrick Katz

United States Marine Corps Capt. Christian Thiessen, an infantry officer and student in the Information Sciences Department at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), along with Dr. Britta Hale, a professor from NPS, collaborated with Marines from I Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group to analyze operational shortfalls that can be reduced and or resolved.

[Israel's Drone Swarm Over Gaza Should Worry Everyone](#)

(Defense One 7 July 21) ... Zak Kallenborn

In a world first, Israel used a true drone swarm in combat during the conflict in May with Hamas in Gaza. It was a significant new benchmark in drone technology, and it should be a wakeup call for the United States and its allies to mitigate the risk these weapons create for national defense and global stability... Global proliferation of drone swarms creates risks of instability. In the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict last year, Azeri use of drones contributed significantly to a rapid Armenian surrender (other factors no doubt helped too). A swarm amplifies such effects with more drones, using more complex tactics that can overwhelm existing defenses. It's a concern the U.S. military has studied for a decade already. A 2012 study by the **Naval Postgraduate School** simulated eight drones attacking a U.S. Navy destroyer, finding four drones would hit the ship. Terrorists may also see great appeal in drone swarms as a more accessible air force to overcome ground-based defenses, and carry out attacks on critical infrastructure and VIPs.



FACULTY:

[US withdrawal from Afghanistan: Vietnam revisited](#)

(Ahrum Online 6 July 21) ... Bassem Aly

The Biden administration is willing to conclude its withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan by 11 September, coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. But this is no longer news. Instead, the whole world is waiting to see what the country will look like after no foreign troops are present on its soil... This “could be very similar to Vietnam,” said Thomas Johnson, a research professor of national security Affairs at the Monterey-based **Naval Postgraduate School**. “In April 1975, even though there were the Paris peace negotiations - a political theatre just like that of Afghanistan - the US-backed South Vietnamese army disappeared in the woodwork in six days, the minute the last helicopter left the US embassy,” said Johnson, who authored a book called *Taliban Narratives: The Use and Power of Stories in the Afghanistan Conflict*.

ALUMNI:

[The Enemy Within and Without: Historical Examples of Islamic and Buddhist Fundamentalism](#)

(Small Wars Journal 6 July 21) ... Andy Philips

Author’s Note: In light of extremist threats found both inside and outside the ranks of the US Military, it may prove useful to review the theory of fundamentalism and how it can help us to understand the motivations for acts of violence committed by other principled and dutiful groups throughout history... Major Andy Phillips is a Psychological Operations (PSYOP) officer currently serving as a planner for the XVIII Airborne Corps. His previous assignments include: Military Advisor to the Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; Battalion Executive Officer and Alpha Company Commander, 8th PSYOP Battalion (Airborne); PSYOP Representative to the Tribal Engagement Coordination Cell (Iraq); Military Information Support Team-Afghanistan (MIST-AF) Director; and Afghan Information Dissemination Operations (AIDO) Detachment Commander. Major Phillips holds a Master of Science in Information Strategy and Political Warfare from the **Naval Postgraduate School** and a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Seton Hall University.

[Governor Newsom Announces Appointments 7.8.21](#)

(CA.gov 8 July 21)

Governor Gavin Newsom today announced the following appointments:

Kelly Huston, 50, of West Sacramento, has been appointed Senior Policy Advisor at the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency. Huston has been Deputy Executive Director at the California Public Utilities Commission since 2019. He was Deputy Director of the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services from 2012 to 2019 and 2008 to 2009, Assistant Secretary for the California Emergency Management Agency from 2009 to 2012 and Vice President of Corporate Communications and Marketing for PMZ Inc. from 2005 to 2007. Huston was Assistant Deputy Director of the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security in 2005, Commander of Public Affairs for the California Highway Patrol from 2004 to 2005 and Legislative Affairs and Media Relations Manager for the Stanislaus County Sheriff’s Department from 2000 to 2004. Huston earned a Master of Arts degree in homeland security and defense from the **Naval Postgraduate School**. This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$170,004. Huston is a Democrat.

[ONR Global Welcomes New Leadership, Celebrates 80th Anniversary during Change of Command](#)

(DVIDS 8 July 21)

The Office of Naval Research (ONR) Global welcomed new leadership during a change of command ceremony at the Admiralty House Garden in Portsmouth, United Kingdom, while also commemorating its 80th anniversary. Chief of Naval Research Rear Adm. Lorin C. Selby officiated the ceremony, which was attended by U.S. and Royal Navy representatives... Capt. Matthew Farr was sworn in as ONR Global commanding officer, taking over for Capt. James P. Borghardt. Farr flew P-3s, served in naval aviation program management and most recently served as the executive officer of ONR Global. He is a 1996 graduate of the U. S. Naval Academy, holds a Master of Systems Analysis from the U. S. **Naval Postgraduate School** and is a graduate of the NAVAIR Leadership Development Program.



Excellence in Homeland Security

(American Security Today 9 July 21)

Dr. Kathleen Kiernan is the Founder and CEO of national security, education, risk management and compliance firm Kiernan Group Holdings, Chair Emeritus of InfraGard National Members Alliance, and adjunct faculty member at Johns Hopkins University and **Naval Postgraduate School**.

UPCOMING NEWS & EVENTS:

July 13, 2021: [SGL with Congressman Adam Smith, Chairman, House Armed Services Committee \(HASC\): Advancing Our Defense Technological Leadership](#)

August 9-13, 2021: [Center for Executive Education NSL Seminar](#)

August 23-28, 2021: [Joint Interagency Field Experimentation \(JIFX\) 21-4](#)



COMMUNITY:

Monterey underwater robotics competition was a year for girls

(*Monterey Herald 6 July 21*) ... Dennis L. Taylor

School teams from across Central California gathered recently in Monterey for an underwater robotics competition aimed at teaching students to use the technology to solve the many problems facing the world's oceans and waterways, and this year the laurels belonged to the girls.

The 20th Annual Marine Advanced Technology Education, or MATE, regional competition was held June 19 at the **Naval Postgraduate School's** Sea Land Air Military Research facility, with a team from all-girls St. Francis Catholic High School in Sacramento taking home first place with their "Geneseas" project.

The Monterey Bay Regional event challenged eight teams of middle and high school students to design submersible vehicles to tackle problems that impact the entire world, such as plastics clogging rivers, lakes, waterways, and oceans and dramatically affecting coral reefs.

Judges scored the teams as their entries maneuvered through an obstacle course while collecting plastic debris that were simulated by ping pong balls.

The western world's love affair with plastic bottles and other plastic products has contaminated lakes, rivers and oceans around the world and has subsequently found its way into everything from tiny marine animals to people where plastics are now found in human organs.

The girls, who call themselves the "Fembots," built a remotely operated underwater vehicle dubbed "Enhydra" after the mythical sea creature, that is powered by water thrusters designed to pluck plastic pollution and floating debris from the ocean.

The Fembots will take their creation to the world championships that begin Aug. 5 at East Tennessee State University. There are 42 regional contests that take place across North America, Europe, Asia, North Africa, the Middle East and the Western Pacific. Each year roughly 1,000 student teams from middle schools, high schools, home schools, community colleges, universities, and community organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Club and 4-H, participate.

Between 8,000 and 10,000 students around the world participate annually.

The entire global competition is headquartered in Monterey, on the campus of Monterey Peninsula College. Jill Zande, executive director of MATE, said the nonprofit launched in 2008 when it became apparent that there was a need to raise awareness of the career opportunities available in underwater robotics or robotics in general.

Zande, who also holds a master's degree in oceanography, called Monterey the "epicenter of marine science," which has a demand for the types of skills required of the young competitors. And it's not just engineering, but what Zande calls "employable skills" that include such things as understanding how to manage projects and work collaboratively.

The competitors are scored on such skills as creating documentation, writing engineering reports, creating marketing strategies and ensuring safety protocols are in place. The requirements mimic what any entrepreneurial team would put together at the launch of their enterprise.

In the case of the Fembots, there are five members of the "deck crew" who traveled to Monterey for the competition, but all told there were 18 girls who worked on the project, said Kitara Crain, an Intel Corp. computer engineer who served as a coach and mentor to the girls.

She said one of the things she wanted to impart to the students is that a science, technology, engineering and math curriculum, most often referred to as STEM, is not as hard as many think.

"It's about problem-solving," Crain said. "It's about rethinking approaches when there is a problem that needs to be fixed."

It wasn't lost on Crain that she would be mentoring an all-girls team. Technology has from the beginning been dominated by men, and even though women still only make up just 20% of the technology workforce, it is getting better, she said.

"The girls learn to understand that they can contribute and that they do contribute," she said. Brian Bingham, a professor in the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Department at the Naval



Postgraduate School and one of this year's judges, said there were challenges for this year's Monterey competition because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Part of the competition – technical reports, oral presentations and safety — was delivered via Zoom, he said.

“It had been held at Watsonville High School for years,” Bingham said. “But there was no way to get access to the school early on.”

So Ray Buettner, the director of the Consortium for Robotics and Unmanned Systems Education and Research at NPS, came to Bingham and asked if he could host the competition.

The rest is history as the Fembots work to get Enhydra ready for the trek across the country for the world championships in a little under a month.

[Monterey underwater robotics competition was a year for girls – Monterey Herald](#)

[Return to Index](#)

RESEARCH:

NPS Student Wins Prestigious National Award for High-Energy Laser Research

(Navy.mil 8 July 21) ... Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class James Norket

(NPS.edu 8 July 21) ... Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class James Norket

“Lasers are the future of U.S. Navy shipboard defense.”

A straightforward statement, but it was all the motivation U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Austin West needed to tackle a highly-challenging research topic for his master's degree on Meteorology and Oceanography from the Naval Postgraduate School.

A member of the 2021 Spring Quarter graduating class, West's thesis examined the atmospheric effects of the maritime environment on the Navy's High Energy Laser Weapons System (HELWS), and how adaptive optics could compensate for those effects making the futuristic weapons system more effective.

As a METOC officer (Meteorology and Oceanography) West combined his operational specialty with NPS' cutting-edge curricula to deliver impactful research with immediate application to one of the Navy's high-priority defensive capabilities under development for the Fleet.

And he was recognized, significantly, for his efforts ... Announced just before graduation, the Navy League of the United States awarded West with the prestigious Parsons Award for Scientific and Technical Progress.

“The Navy League of the United States is honored to sponsor the 2020 Rear Admiral William S. Parsons Award for Scientific and Technical Progress,” said Navy League CEO Mike Stevens, who previously served as 13th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. “We are proud of Lt. Cmdr. West for the receipt of this award. We are also grateful for his contributions to the scientific community. He is an outstanding example and what makes NPS and U.S. Naval forces second to none.”

The Navy League first awarded this honor in 1957, and has been on the quest to honor the Navy's top scientists ever since. The award is given every year to a U.S. Navy or Marine Corps officer, enlisted or civilian who has made an outstanding contribution in any field of science that has furthered the development and progress of the Navy or Marine Corps.

“My research focused on modeling how different types of atmospheric effects impact the laser propagation, such as environmental absorption, scattering, and turbulence,” described West. “The Fleet is starting to see these weapons systems arrive aboard ships, and they need to understand when and how they can operate, and how atmospheric conditions will impact their system performance. So I looked at how lasers perform under these effects, and researched how much adaptive optics can correct for them.”

The tactical advantage of adaptive optics is significant, West explained, capable of accounting for and correcting the impact of a constantly-changing atmospheric environment near the surface.



“[The research] was such a cognitively tactile experience,” said West on working with high energy lasers, and working with his faculty advisor, Dr. Qing Wang. “I thank Dr. Wang, and the entire NPS faculty and staff who helped me develop the conceptual model that I applied to this research. You were the foundation that was the nexus necessary to understand the complexities of such a multi-disciplinary field such as high energy lasers through the atmosphere.”

West also thanked the METOC community for supporting higher education so that officers like him can perform critical research, and develop critical skills, that provide a high-return on the educational investment.

“Having just graduated, I am prepared to return and relieve the watch,” said West. “Hopefully I’m armed with more than just memorized equations and formulas, but creative and structured critical thinking skills that will allow me to not just tackle the problems that are emerging on the horizon, but those unforeseen ones that are coming tomorrow.”

West joins a highly-accomplished community of Parsons Award winners, many of whom are also NPS graduates. Parsons himself graduated the university with a degree in ordnance engineering, and was instrumental in developing the variable time fuse which is still in use today, as well as making notable contributions to the Manhattan Project in World War II.

Retired Adm. John H. Sides, considered to be the father of the Navy’s guided missile program, and Rear Adm. Wayne E. Meyer, coined the Father of the AEGIS program, are also NPS graduates who have received the award.

University leaders noted these accomplishments are an indicator of how NPS develops the Navy’s future technology, and the Navy’s future thought leadership.

“[West’s] research reflects one of the unique aspects of NPS,” said NPS Dean of Students U.S. Navy Capt. Markus Gudmundsson. “Students bring their own operational experience to classrooms and laboratories to collaborate with defense-focused faculty to solve key, operational problems with technical solutions. This produces two critical products ... New capabilities for the fleet, certainly, but even more importantly, naval leaders who are exceptionally well qualified to acquire and deploy advanced naval warfare capabilities.”

[NPS Student Wins Prestigious National Award for High-Energy Laser Research > United States Navy > News-Stories](#)

[NPS Student Wins Prestigious National Award for High-Energy Laser Research - Naval Postgraduate School](#)

[Return to Index](#)

Naval Postgraduate School integration with I MIG

(DVIDS 17 June 21) ... U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Patrick Katz

United States Marine Corps Capt. Christian Thiessen, an infantry officer and student in the Information Sciences Department at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), along with Dr. Britta Hale, a professor from NPS, collaborated with Marines from I Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group to analyze operational shortfalls that can be reduced and or resolved.

The NPS accepts U.S. service members, DOD employees and international students into their many programs such as Applied Mathematics, Computer Science, National Security Affairs, Operations Research, and Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. These programs provide students a chance to engage in defense-focused education and classified studies in order to provide the fleet with operational level advancements that meet the needs of the fleet and unit leader’s requirements.

While working at NPS Dr. Hale explains how students have the opportunity to work with personnel from the lower enlisted ranks all the way up to higher commissioned officers so that all perspectives can contribute to the ideas which may become solutions to identified problems in the future.



systems should be deployed around high-risk target areas, like airports, critical infrastructure, and heads of state. As the threat is fundamentally international, states should also provide their cutting-edge counter-swarm capabilities to partners and allies who are at risk.

Keeping drone swarms from the hands of terrorists will require a separate effort. States may adopt measures akin to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 on preventing terrorist acquisition of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons that apply to drone swarms (or just expand UNSCR 1540). Local, national, and international law enforcement agencies should also search for indicators of terrorists seeking drone swarm capabilities, such as large drone purchases and known extremist work to develop or modify drone control systems.

In recent years, the threat of drone swarms has grown alongside their increasing sophistication. In 2016, the Department of Defense launched 103 Perdix drones out of three F/A-18 Super Hornets. The drones operated using a “collective brain,” gathering into various formations, flying across a test battlefield, and reforming into new configurations. Notably, the system was designed by students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. If drone swarms are simple enough students can make them, conflict zones across the world can expect to see them soon. In the past year, China, France, India, Spain, South Africa, the United States, and the United Kingdom have all unveiled or tested new drone swarm programs.

Global proliferation of drone swarms creates risks of instability. In the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict last year, Azeri use of drones contributed significantly to a rapid Armenian surrender (other factors no doubt helped too). A swarm amplifies such effects with more drones, using more complex tactics that can overwhelm existing defenses. It’s a concern the U.S. military has studied for a decade already. A 2012 study by the **Naval Postgraduate School** simulated eight drones attacking a U.S. Navy destroyer, finding four drones would hit the ship. Terrorists may also see great appeal in drone swarms as a more accessible air force to overcome ground-based defenses, and carry out attacks on critical infrastructure and VIPs.

Drone swarms create risks akin to traditional weapons of mass destruction. As drone swarms scale into super-swarms of 1,000 or even up to a million drones, no human could plausibly have meaningful control. That’s a problem, autonomous weapons can only make limited judgments on the civilian or military nature of their targets. The difference of a single pixel can change a stealth bomber into a dog. Errors may mean dead civilians or friendly soldiers, and accidental conflict escalation.

The reality is that virtually no current counter-drone systems are designed for counter-swarm operations. Current detections systems cannot necessarily accommodate multiple drones. They could overwhelm interdiction systems, which contain limited or slow-to-shoot interceptors. And the drone swarm may simply be too spread out. Of course, new counter-drone systems like the Air Force’s microwave-based THOR system, low cost per shot defenses like lasers, and counter-swarm swarms may eventually prove effective. While these defenses may protect great powers, smaller states and civilians are likely to be more vulnerable.

The increased autonomy of a drone swarm allows states to use many more drones at once. Human cognition limits simultaneous drone operation, because it is difficult to monitor operations of many drones, ensure they do not collide, and still achieve mission objectives. But the military is working to overcome human limitations. In one 2008 study, a single operator could handle only four drones without significant losses to mission effectiveness. By 2018, the U.S. military’s Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, confirmed a human could control an entire drone swarm telepathically, using a single microchip implanted in their brain.

The military value of drone swarms stems from enabling complexity and flexibility. Current swarms use typically small, homogenous drones. Future swarms may be of different sizes, equipped with an array of different interchangeable sensors, weapons, and other payloads. That enables combined armed tactics, where drones strike with multiple weapons from multiple angles: one may spray bullets, while another sprays a chemical weapons agent. Swarms may also have adaptive properties such as self-healing, where the swarm modifies itself to accommodate the loss of some members, or self-destruction, to complete one-way missions. Drone swarms will also likely be increasingly integrated into some form of drone mothership (and perhaps integrated into an even larger mothership in a “turducken of lethality.”)

Drone swarms are not science fiction. The technology is here, and spreading fast.



[Return to Index](#)

FACULTY:

US withdrawal from Afghanistan: Vietnam revisited

(Ahran Online 6 July 21) ... Bassem Aly

The Biden administration is willing to conclude its withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan by 11 September, coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. But this is no longer news. Instead, the whole world is waiting to see what the country will look like after no foreign troops are present on its soil.

The Taliban, which hosted Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden and formed a regime the Americans ousted after invading the country in 2001, is too impatient to wait beyond this date, giving out mixed signals.

On the one hand, it keeps moving forward with peace talks, planning to submit a written proposal to the government – to which the Americans are transferring by August, just as they did in Bagram’s Air Base. On the other hand, it is resorting to violence on an enormous scale.

This “could be very similar to Vietnam,” said Thomas Johnson, a research professor of national security Affairs at the Monterey-based **Naval Postgraduate School**. “In April 1975, even though there were the Paris peace negotiations - a political theatre just like that of Afghanistan - the US-backed South Vietnamese army disappeared in the woodwork in six days, the minute the last helicopter left the US embassy,” said Johnson, who authored a book called *Taliban Narratives: The Use and Power of Stories in the Afghanistan Conflict*.

The South Vietnamese army was “highly professional and had 500,000 men and a tremendous air force,” explained Johnson. The ex-senior political and counter-insurgency adviser to the Canadian forces in Afghanistan thinks that the Taliban is “getting ready for assaults on cities”, taking district centres and controlling areas that are only 20 miles away from Kabul. “Once this happens, I believe the vast majority of the Afghan national police, which we already know is an extractive institution, will disappear; and I can give you many examples for this. So I am extremely pessimistic.”

He pointed out that, two weeks and a half ago, a US intelligence community report estimated that the Taliban would overtake the country within six months. “I think that’s overly optimistic. It will happen in six weeks if not six days. Since 1 May, people are saying that the Taliban captured 46 areas. But my information from Washington suggests that they captured 80 new districts.”

Many US Republicans, such as the House’s Foreign Affairs Committee Congressman Michael McCaul, are concerned about the situation in Afghanistan: they are blaming Biden for the withdrawal. But Afghanistan’s neighbours too seem to be thinking about it the same way.

On Monday Turkey and Iran decided to suspend their consulates in Afghanistan’s Balkh province due to government-Taliban clashes. Pakistan, which vowed to close its border with Afghanistan if the Taliban managed to rule the country once again, saw three of its soldiers killed on Monday in North Waziristan. This is an area where Pakistani Taliban militants regularly attack the army.

Yet Michael O’Hanlon, a Brookings expert and ex-member of the external advisory board at the Central Intelligence Agency, said “it’s not likely” that the Taliban would manage a complete takeover of Afghanistan. O’Hanlon believes that “it will be very hard for them in parts of the Tajik-dominated north in particular. I think they may wind up with about half the country, maybe three fifths.”

Responding to a question on whether the US withdrawal from Afghanistan will pave the way to greater Turkish, Iranian and Pakistan roles, he said, “Perhaps, but that’s not my main concern.” O’Hanlon highlighted, rather, Afghanistan’s stability and the broader global counterterrorism efforts. “By those metrics, the US decision to leave is regrettable, I think.”

But this is now how Johnson, who fears a “proxy war” in Afghanistan, sees it. He stresses that Pakistan and China are now extremely close, conducting joint business that will reach almost \$80 billion in the next few years. “A lot of people believe that the Taliban are proxies for the Pakistanis, which is incorrect. The Pakistanis for sure have an influence, and they give them refuge. But while the Pakistanis want the Americans to stay, the Taliban’s greatest wish has always been to get the US out.”

Johnson referred to India, which he expects will also be involved, being close to Russia. Finally, he spoke about Iran having “had a long, decent relationship with Afghanistan that has never been quite understood. Johnson argued that “it’s more of an ‘enemy of my enemy is my friend’ relationship although there is a small Shia community in the country. Actually, during the anti-Soviet Jihad, the Iranians deployed helicopters and gave weapons to the Shias who were fighting.”

Most European forces including those of Germany, Italy and Poland have already left. So, except for government forces, arguably no one is left there to back the Americans. According to the CNN, the Biden administration is still thinking about whether to carry out drone offensives and commando raids after the troops leave as tools of a post-withdrawal, counterinsurgency strategy.

Last month, moreover, Biden met with Afghanistan’s President Ashraf Ghani at the Oval Office to express support for him amid the growing fight against the powerful Taliban groups. It is yet to be seen to what extent the Americans will do so after they leave and how domestic events will unfold in the war-torn country.

[US withdrawal from Afghanistan: Vietnam revisited - World - Al-Ahram Weekly - Ahram Online](#)

[Return to Index](#)

ALUMNI:

The Enemy Within and Without: Historical Examples of Islamic and Buddhist Fundamentalism

(Small Wars Journal 6 July 21) ... Andy Philips

Author’s Note: In light of extremist threats found both inside and outside the ranks of the US Military, it may prove useful to review the theory of fundamentalism and how it can help us to understand the motivations for acts of violence committed by other principled and dutiful groups throughout history.

The Enemy Within and Without

Encirclement, or the understanding that one is “surrounded by enemies,” can have a dramatic effect on the human psyche akin to that of a cornered animal who submits to its primal instincts in order to preserve its life. Reaction to an all-encompassing threat will almost certainly be violent. What the uncertainty is: who or what will be the target of this violence. A narrative of group disenfranchisement paired with individualistic sense of divine purpose are primary aspects of this psychological condition that can be used to understand the violence committed by religious groups such as the Nizari Ismailis sect of Islam and the Theravadin Buddhists in Sri Lanka. The theory of Fundamentalism can provide a useful lens in which to view and explain the escalation of such violence in groups with seemingly non-violent tenants.

The Theory of Fundamentalism

The theory of Fundamentalism applies to those with the belief that only select individuals, closely connected to the true meaning of the faith, can prevent its imminent destruction or disappearance. This devout group believes that it must band together to defend its religious traditions against threats that can be both internal and external to its religion or cause. However, defense is not inherent to group membership, as it requires active participation in fighting against those who would seek to destroy the faith. Those who lead such groups often invoke, what appears to be, sacred approval for their actions. These group characteristics can arise as a response to an inter-faith shift or societal change that signals the



end of important traditions. As explained by theorists Gabriel Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan (2003), fundamentalist movements are “militant, mobilized, defensive reactions to modernity” (p. 99).

Reaction to World Events

Secularization and modernization can have profound and divisive effects on nations with deeply rooted religious traditions. To fundamentalists, the idea of removing God from the government delegitimizes both institutions and must be opposed at all costs. Whether it is the purpose of nations to limit the influence of religion on its people or not, the consequences of such actions can create severe distinctions in society between ‘in and out groups.’ These distinctions can be exploited by leaders who seek to restore what they feel is religion’s proper role in the world through the use of dire rhetoric (Almond, Appleby, and Sivan, 2003 p. 99).

“Moral Manichaeism,” a concept presented by Almond, Appleby, and Sivan (2003) that frames the struggle in terms of “light” and “darkness,” helps craft the message that the faithful are fighting against evil (p. 95). Essentially, they become the light beset on all sides by an overwhelming darkness. This narrative appeals to the individual’s ego and has the potential to be manipulated to a great degree. Allowing initiated fundamentalists to accept the inevitability of casualties, including both innocent bystanders and their own principles, for what they believe to be a “greater good” that is divinely ordained and translated through a charismatic leader.

Divinely Appointed Leadership

Fundamentalist leadership, both individuals and small groups, can be said to have greater access to and understanding of the world and the will of the divine entity. The perception of this ability or gift allows these individuals to provide selected others with the inerrant truth as if God himself deemed it. In most cases, leadership is derived from those already embedded within a hierarchical structure of religion and are performing the duties of their position. In other words, there is already a familiarity and respect amongst those who share the same ideals before the movement gains momentum (Almond, Appleby, and Sivan, 2003 pp. 101-104).

Using their supposed gift of theological interpretation, fundamentalist leaders propagate what is to be the group’s creed and code of conduct. It is not enough to simply follow the faith and adhere to its rules; fundamentalist groups require that their members actively participate in defending it. For “good” to triumph over “evil” members must unflinchingly implement the leader’s decisions. The rewards for this behavior may not be known in the physical world or in the individual’s lifetime, but they are nothing short of miraculous. Fundamentalist leadership often uses themes of “messianism” or “millennialism,” the idea or belief that their actions could usher in the return of a messiah figure or a golden age, to motivate followers (Almond, Appleby, and Sivan, 2003, p. 104). With the understanding that the conflict transcends the temporal world, the principles of the established religion or cause may be manipulated to achieve the desired end state.

Men of the Mountain: Nizari Ismailis Strike from Exile

For example: Alamut, the eagle’s nest, a hidden castle high in the Elburz Mountains of Persia was a safe haven and base of operations for the Nizari Ismailis, a minority sect of Shiite Islam. Its secrecy and isolation served as much of a practical purpose as it did a symbolic one to both initiate and attract followers seeking a higher purpose. The only way to travel to Alamut was by way of a single narrow track through treacherous mountain terrain. Those few who were allowed to enter did so as converts to the Ismaili cause and those permitted to leave were designated as missionaries (da’is), who would seek to recruit and spread the word or as self-sacrificers (Fedayeen) armed with the sole purpose of eliminating specific Muslim “heretics” (Boot, 2013, p. 206).

The Nizari Ismailis found themselves at Alamut after being excommunicated by both the Shiite and Sunni leadership. A minority within the smaller sect of Shiite Islam, the Ismailis practices and teachings were extremely unpopular amongst the wealthy and ruling class who regarded them as threatening to their existence. Eliminating the Ismailis was a way for the wealthy leaders of the Sunni establishment to



preserve their way of life unhindered by the moral scruples of the small group. In many cases, the exile of the Ismailis was violent and fed into their narrative of being a persecuted group forced into exile after espousing the true nature of Islam.

Hasan-I Sabbah led the exiled group and provided them with a safe haven at Alamut. From there he crafted what he referred to as the “new preaching” that justified the use of terror and assassination as tools to strike back at those who persecuted them and those who were believed to be leading Islam astray; namely the Sunni establishment. At the core of his teachings was the belief that “to shed the blood of a heretic is more meritorious than to kill seventy infidels” (Lewis, 1967, p. 48).

The Nizari Ismailis became feared and widely known as the “assassins” which was derived from the Arabic word “hashish,” a plant that when prepared and ingested, can cause hallucinations. It is believed that Sabbah used hashish as a hallucinogenic supplement to his teachings in order to show his followers the rewards of eternal salvation and to gain their unfailing service and unquestioning loyalty when choosing targets (Lewis, 1967, pp.11-12). The term “assassination” and the act of killing for political reasons became synonymous with the group’s ethos. Their first recorded target was Nizam al-Mulk, a scholar and vizier of the Seljuk Empire. Deemed a “devil” by Sabbah, he easily convinced one of his willing followers to strike the killing blow that would end in his own martyrdom and supposed passage to eternal bliss (Lewis, 1967, p. 47).

According to historian Bernard Lewis (1967) the Ismailis violence was aimed at the Sunni leadership, “their murders were designed to frighten, to weaken, and ultimately overthrow it” (p. 134). The attacks were both specific, purposeful, and rarely harmed civilians. The vast majority of the attacks were made against Sunnis and rarely targeted Christians, Jews, or Shiites. During the Crusades, the Ismailis’ reputation became widespread due to choosing targets with propagandist motives to make examples and spread fear (Lewis, 1967, p. 134).

The Crusades (1095-1291), a holy war between Christians and Muslims, provided the conditions for the Ismaili cause to gain momentum but ultimately lead to its undoing. After Sabbah’s death, Rashid ad-Din Sinan stepped into the leadership role, also known as “The Old Man of the Mountain,” who saw a target of opportunity in Saladin, the leader of the Muslim opposition to the European Crusaders. Saladin prioritized the destruction of the Ismailis, second to defeating the Crusaders, because of their heretical and dangerous ways. However, after two extremely close calls with the assassins and after many threats, Saladin decided to use the Ismailis rather than destroy them, by paying for their services. This newfound partnership resulted in the assassination of the Marquis Conrad of Montferrat, the King of Jerusalem, in Tyre (Lewis, 1967, p. 117).

Once the Ismailis became a “murder for hire” organization it seemed to dilute the strength of their original intentions and gave way to their willingness to accept contracts based on the will of their leader rather than the righteousness of their cause. At this point, they were regarded as an isolated, devout, and murderous group of contract killers that was too dangerous to be left alone, and in the thirteenth century were wiped out by the Mongols (Boot, 2013, p.208).

Using the theory of fundamentalism to view the Nizari Ismailis’ struggle, it is clear how important the characteristics of reaction, Moral Manichaeism, and leadership were to them. The Nizari Ismailis grasped onto a persecution narrative that forced them into exile and to turn to charismatic leaders who would selectively use the tenants of Shia Islam to mobilize its members and enact a violent vengeance. The threat they faced was internal to their faith and directed at those who they believed were leading Islam astray.

The Honeybee’s Dilemma: Buddhist Violence in Sri Lanka

The honeybee lives to build and protect the hive. It serves as a member of a community without ambition for conquest, attachment to material things, or excessive behavior. This becomes most evident when the community is under attack. The honeybee, without hesitation, defends the hive: a selfless and suicidal act. To defend what it holds dear, even a pacifist may resort to violent measures.

‘War for the sake of peace’ may seem like an obvious contradiction, but this justification has become common rhetoric in explaining many of today’s ideological wars. Theravada Buddhists, professing to follow a path of non-violence and compassion for all living things, have not avoided waging war or



finding rationalizations for the hypocrisy inherent to human nature. Through the loose interpretation and the shaping of ancient precepts, Buddhist monks have justified violence against those they regarded as aliens in Sri Lanka. They believed that to preserve their community, protect the holy land, and return to a state of peace they had no choice but to shun the laws of man and follow a path that advocated for violent self-defense. How a Buddhist decides to go to war can be understood using the theory of Fundamentalism.

Perhaps, the most commonly recognized dimension of Buddhism is that of non-violence or Ahimsa. It is the first of the ten precepts of ethical behavior and it is based on the belief that all living things are connected by the same life force and to harm any living creature would be to harm oneself (Hopfe, 1976, p. 89). As it is the first precept mentioned it is also the first precept to be bent to suit the objectives of fundamentalist leadership. The violence perpetrated by Buddhists in Sri Lanka finds its foundations in the smaller and more conservative branch of Theravada Buddhism, which is believed to be the closest interpretation of the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama's teachings (Dharma). The monastic order, or Sangha, is the center of Buddhist authority for Theravadins and it is given a symbolic authority that even has had a legitimizing effect on political power (Bartholomeusz, 2002, p.30). These select monks have taken on the responsibility of safeguarding their traditions and determining the methods used to provide this protection. Theravada Buddhists profess that there is justification for violence, committed with righteous intent, found in the Mahavamsa, the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, as religious scholar Tessa Bartholomeusz (2002) explains, "we find that the criterion must be understood within the context of an "act of truth," satyakriya, an ancient form of acting with righteous intent" (p. 145). Violence committed in defense of the Dharma is therefore permitted.

The defense of Sinhalese (native) Buddhism has an ancient context, but in regards to the more recent conflict, it can be traced back to the period of British rule 1796-1948 that sought to convert Buddhists to Catholicism, secularize the government, and marginalize Sinhalese culture. This resulted in a "Buddhist Revival" led by "the homeless guardian of the Dharma" Anagarika Dharmapala who laid down the rhetoric which would cause the divide between Sinhalese Buddhists and essentially everyone else. What started as a reaction to thwarting British influence became a way to mobilize Buddhists against the minority Muslim Tamils. Dharmapala explained to his followers that the Muslims were "an alien people" and that the Buddhists were "sons of the soil, whose ancestors for 2358 years had shed rivers of blood to keep the country free of alien invaders" (Little, 1984, p. 34).

This perspective seemed to give Sinhalese Buddhists permission to violently attack Christians, Muslims, and anyone recognized as "alien" in defense of the Dharma. This resulted in the disenfranchisement of the Tamils and the eruption of a bloody civil war that cost the lives of nearly 100,000 people. Despite the defeat of the insurgent group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2011, many still recognize that the Tamils have a legitimate cause for their grievances (Mohan, 2015).

There is no justification, in the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, for Buddhists to commit acts of violence. However, the Buddhist is still a human being and therefore subject to the flaws inherent in human nature. These failings can be amplified by the circumstances of the changing world and manipulated by fundamentalists willing to interpret and translate the purest teachings with ill intent. Like the honeybee, which gives its life in defense of the hive, the Sinhalese Buddhist has been convinced to sacrifice his foremost principle in the defense of symbols and ideas.

Conclusion

The theory of fundamentalism provides an excellent lens to view and make sense of the acts of violence committed by religious groups directed both inward and outward. The key factors of reacting adversely to the changing world, providing the last bastion of hope for their religion, and divinely anointed leadership who is willing to interpret the teachings in order to accept violent measures can be found in many examples of fundamentalist groups. In the case of the Nizari Ismailis, the violence was precise and directed at those within the faith, other Muslims who were believed to be heretics to the true faith. Sri Lankan Buddhists used violence to defend their traditions against outsiders of the faith that they perceive as trying to destroy their foundations. The implications are that the perception of threat can have



a powerful effect on religious groups and that their long-standing principles may be discarded when self-preservation is at stake.

BIO

Major Andy Phillips is a Psychological Operations (PSYOP) officer currently serving as a planner for the XVIII Airborne Corps. His previous assignments include: Military Advisor to the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; Battalion Executive Officer and Alpha Company Commander, 8th PSYOP Battalion (Airborne); PSYOP Representative to the Tribal Engagement Coordination Cell (Iraq); Military Information Support Team-Afghanistan (MIST-AF) Director; and Afghan Information Dissemination Operations (AIDO) Detachment Commander. Major Phillips holds a Master of Science in Information Strategy and Political Warfare from the **Naval Postgraduate School** and a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Seton Hall University.

[The Enemy Within and Without: Historical Examples of Islamic and Buddhist Fundamentalism | Small Wars Journal](#)

[Return to Index](#)

Governor Newsom Announces Appointments 7.8.21

(CA.gov 8 July 21)

Governor Gavin Newsom today announced the following appointments:

Kelly Huston, 50, of West Sacramento, has been appointed Senior Policy Advisor at the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency. Huston has been Deputy Executive Director at the California Public Utilities Commission since 2019. He was Deputy Director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services from 2012 to 2019 and 2008 to 2009, Assistant Secretary for the California Emergency Management Agency from 2009 to 2012 and Vice President of Corporate Communications and Marketing for PMZ Inc. from 2005 to 2007. Huston was Assistant Deputy Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security in 2005, Commander of Public Affairs for the California Highway Patrol from 2004 to 2005 and Legislative Affairs and Media Relations Manager for the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department from 2000 to 2004. Huston earned a Master of Arts degree in homeland security and defense from the **Naval Postgraduate School**. This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$170,004. Huston is a Democrat.

David Scribner, 51, of Sacramento, has been appointed Director of the California Department of Community Services and Development. Scribner has been Acting Director and Chief Counsel for the California Department of Community Services and Development since 2017 and an Attorney for the Law Office of David Scribner since 2003. He was Interim Chief Executive Officer and General Counsel for Nivano Physicians Inc. from 2016 to 2017, Owner and President of Overlord Computer LLC from 2012 to 2015 and Owner and Chief Executive Officer of MAX8550 from 2005 to 2014. He was Owner and Executive Director of Schools Mandate Group from 2003 to 2006, an Associate at Spector, Middleton, Young & Minney LLP from 2001 to 2003 and Staff Counsel for the Commission on State Mandates from 1997 to 2001. Scribner earned a Juris Doctor degree from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law. This position requires Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$171,996. Scribner is registered without party preference.

Stuart Drown, 62, of Davis, has been reappointed Deputy Secretary of Government Improvement and Accountability at the Government Operations Agency, where he has served in that role since 2013. Drown was Executive Director of the Little Hoover Commission from 2006 to 2013. He held multiple positions at the Sacramento Bee from 1999 to 2006, including City Editor, Business Editor and Deputy Business Editor. Drown held multiple positions at the Akron Beacon Journal from 1991 to 1999, including Business Editor, Assistant Business Editor and Staff Writer. He was a Staff Writer at the Dow Jones News Service from 1990 to 1991, at the Sun Herald from 1988 to 1990 and at the State Times from



1986 to 1988. Drown earned a Master of Public Policy degree from the University of California, Berkeley School of Public Policy. This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$154,152. Drown is a Democrat.

Jaime Garza, 59, of Sacramento, has been appointed Assistant Deputy Director of Communications at the California Department of Motor Vehicles. Garza has served as Information Officer II at the California Department of Motor Vehicles since 2014, where he served as Information Officer I in 2011. He was Deputy Director of External Affairs at the Board of Equalization from 2012 to 2014. Garza was a News Anchor at KTXL-TV from 2008 to 2011. He was a News Anchor and Reporter at KCBS-TV and KCAL-TV from 1995 to 2008. This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$122,724. Garza is a Democrat.

Michael Flores, 64, of Sacramento, has been appointed Deputy Secretary at the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Flores has been a Political Consultant since 2019. He was Senior Advisor for the California Correctional Peace Officers Association from 2005 to 2019. He served in multiple positions in the Office of Governor Gray Davis from 1999 to 2003, including Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Director of Administration. Flores was President and Commissioner of the California Fish and Game Commission from 2000 to 2007, Chairman of the Wildlife Conservation Board in 2001 and Chief of Staff for the Office of Lieutenant Governor Gray Davis from 1997 to 1999. This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$116,604. Flores is a Democrat.

Daniel Bryant, 51, of Loomis, has been appointed Cyber Defense Forensic Lead at the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. Bryant has been FBI Taskforce Leader at the Federal Bureau of Investigation since 2018, where he held several roles from 2003 to 2018, including FBI Digital Forensic Agent, FBI Advisor, Supervisory Special Agent, Acting Chief Division Counsel, Special Agent and FBI Certified SWAT Operator. He was an Assistant District Attorney at the Clark County Prosecutor's Office from 1998 to 2001. Bryant earned a Juris Doctor degree from Capital University Law School. This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$140,436. Bryant is registered without party preference.

[Governor Newsom Announces Appointments 7.8.21 | California Governor](#)

[Return to Index](#)

ONR Global Welcomes New Leadership, Celebrates 80th Anniversary during Change of Command

(DVIDS 8 July 21)

The Office of Naval Research (ONR) Global welcomed new leadership during a change of command ceremony at the Admiralty House Garden in Portsmouth, United Kingdom, while also commemorating its 80th anniversary. Chief of Naval Research Rear Adm. Lorin C. Selby officiated the ceremony, which was attended by U.S. and Royal Navy representatives.

Capt. Matthew Farr was sworn in as ONR Global commanding officer, taking over for Capt. James P. Borghardt. Farr flew P-3s, served in naval aviation program management and most recently served as the executive officer of ONR Global. He is a 1996 graduate of the U. S. Naval Academy, holds a Master of Systems Analysis from the U. S. **Naval Postgraduate School** and is a graduate of the NAVAIR Leadership Development Program.

“The research and partnerships being advanced around the world by ONR Global are critical to our future,” said Selby. “Over the last few years, Capt. Borghardt has done an incredible job, including guiding ONR Global through the pandemic.

“As we salute him for his distinguished leadership, we welcome Capt. Farr as CO. Skipper, I look forward to working with you in the days ahead.”

ONR Global's mission of being the partner of choice for science and technology leaders worldwide started 80 years ago in London, its headquarters. Today, the command has physical presence in six other



locations around the globe, with scientists stationed in Japan, Brazil, Singapore, Australia, Chile and Czech Republic, building trust-based relationships with key international partners.

“I am excited to be a part of this organization, helping to create an environment for collaboration on cutting edge research and technology, and to build partnerships around the world for maritime security,” said Farr. “These partnerships will continue to be increasingly important as we face the challenges of the future. Building on our 80-year legacy, we look forward to even greater success.”

Borghardt thanked the ONR Global team for outstanding work across the world during his time in command. “I am incredibly proud to have been given the opportunity to work with the finest innovation experts in the globe. Despite a truly challenging year due to the pandemic, ONR Global has defied the odds and measurably increased both the number and quality of the trusted partnerships that are the precursor for innovation discovery and development.

“Just over 80 years ago, during another very challenging period in human history, like-minded champions of science and technology, dedicated to freedom and maritime security, had the foresight to recognize that through collaboration and trusted partnerships, disruptive innovations such as RADAR could provide the naval power needed to make the world a better place for all people. To have been a part of that legacy for the past four years has been the honor of my career.”

ONR Global sponsors scientific efforts outside of the U.S., working with scientists and partners worldwide to discover and advance naval capabilities.

[DVIDS - News - ONR Global Welcomes New Leadership, Celebrates 80th Anniversary during Change of Command \(dvidshub.net\)](#)

[Return to Index](#)

Excellence in Homeland Security

(American Security Today 9 July 21)

Dr. Kathleen Kiernan is the Founder and CEO of national security, education, risk management and compliance firm Kiernan Group Holdings, Chair Emeritus of InfraGard National Members Alliance, and adjunct faculty member at Johns Hopkins University and **Naval Postgraduate School**.

Dr. Kathleen Kiernan is a 29-year veteran of Federal Law Enforcement, previously serving as the Assistant Director for the Office of Strategic Intelligence and Information for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) where she was responsible for the design and implementation of an intelligence-led organizational strategy to mine and disseminate data related to explosives, firearms and illegal tobacco diversion, the traditional and non-traditional tools of terrorism.

Preparedness without Paranoia® the experience-based training in awareness, preparedness, response and recovery training for active assailant and workplace violence prevention is delivered on a learning management system.

GOT Preparedness (Got Online Training), was built specifically for dispersed and remote workforces and we have trained thousands of individuals domestically and internationally.

She has delivered operational and educational capabilities across the globe and developed a methodological based approach to the resiliency cycle at an individual and organizational level.

[TSA Administer Pecoske to Join 2021 'ASTORS' Awards Luncheon in NYC - American Security Today](#)

[Return to Index](#)

