Counter-terrorism Pitfalls: What the U.S. Fight against ISIS and al-Qaeda Should Avoid

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Executive Summary

In pledging to destroy the Islamic State (ISIS), U.S. President Donald J. Trump looks set to make counter-terrorism a centrepiece of his foreign policy. His administration's determination against groups that plot to kill Americans is understandable, but it should be careful when fighting jihadists not to play into their hands. The risks include angering local populations whose support is critical, picking untimely or counter-productive fights and neglecting the vital role diplomacy and foreign aid must play in national security policy. Most importantly, aggressive counter-terrorism operations should not inadvertently fuel other conflicts and deepen the disorder that both ISIS and al-Qaeda exploit.

The new U.S. administration has inherited military campaigns that are eating deep into ISIS's self-proclaimed caliphate. Much of Mosul, its last urban stronghold in Iraq, has been recaptured; Raqqa, its capital in Syria, is encircled. Its decisive defeat is still a remote prospect while the Syrian war rages and Sunnis' place in Iraqi politics is uncertain. The threat it poses will evolve in its heartlands and elsewhere, as fighters disperse. But ISIS is in retreat, its brand diminished. For many adherents, its allure was its territorial expansion; with that gone, its leaders are struggling to redefine success. Al-Qaeda could prove harder to suppress. Its affiliates fight across numerous war zones in coalitions with other armed groups, its operatives are embedded in local militias, and it shows more pragmatic adaptability to local conditions.

Though the roots of ISIS's rise and al-Qaeda's resurgence are complex and varied, the primary catalyst has been the turmoil across parts of the Muslim world. Both movements grow when things fall apart, less because their ideology inspires wide appeal than by offering protection or firepower against enemies, rough law and order where no one else can or by occupying a vacuum and forcing communities to acquiesce. The U.S. can do only so much to reboot Arab politics, remake regional orders or repair cracked fault lines, but its counter-terrorism strategy cannot ignore the upheaval. So long as wars continue and chaos persists, jihadism will thrive, whatever ISIS's immediate fate. In particular, the new administration should avoid:

1. **Angering communities**. Campaigns against jihadists hinge on winning over the population in which they operate. Offensives against Mosul, Raqqa or elsewhere need to avoid destruction but also need plans to preserve gains, prevent reprisals, stabilise liberated cities and rebuild them; as yet, no such plan for Raqqa seems to exist. "Targeted" strikes that kill civilians and alienate communities, as appears to have been the case in the January Yemen raid and the 16 March strike in Syria's Aleppo province, are counterproductive, regardless of immediate yield. Loosening rules and oversight designed to protect civilians, as has been suggested, would be a mistake.

2. **Aggravating other fronts**. The new administration's fight against ISIS and al-Qaeda intersects a tinderbox of wars and regional rivalries. No regional state's interests dovetail precisely with those of the U.S.; few consider jihadists their top priority; most are more intent on strengthening their hand against traditional rivals. The U.S. should be careful that the Raqqa campaign does not stimulate

fighting elsewhere, particularly among Turkish and Kurdish forces and their respective allies. Success in Mosul hinges on preventing the forces involved (the Iraqi army, Kurdish peshmerga units, Shiite militias and Sunni tribes; Turkey and Iran) battling for turf after ousting ISIS. Likewise, support for Gulf allies should not mean a blank check for the Saudi-led Yemen campaign, which – if wrongly prosecuted – would play further into al-Qaeda's hands.

3. **Picking other fights**. Confronting Iran, which the administration identifies as a priority alongside the fight against ISIS and al-Qaeda, requires careful consideration. Militarily battling Tehran in Iraq, Yemen or Syria, questioning the nuclear deal's validity or imposing sanctions that flout its spirit could provoke asymmetric responses via non-state allies and put Iraq's government in an untenable position. Iran's behaviour across the region is often destabilising and, by aggravating sectarian tensions, provides fodder to jihadist groups; as with similar conduct by others, it calls for a calibrated U.S. response. But the answer ultimately lies in dampening the Iranian-Saudi rivalry, not stimulating it with the attendant risk of escalating proxy wars across the region and reinforcing sectarian currents that buoy jihadists. Similarly, sabre-rattling with China hinders diplomacy with Pakistan and thus efforts to stabilise Afghanistan; effective counter-terrorism in South Asia requires cooperation with Beijing.

4. **Defining the enemy too broadly**. ISIS and al-Qaeda thrive on confusion generated by how the U.S. defines its foe: violent jihadists, political Islam or Muslims as a whole. Designating the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist group would be a self-inflicted wound, alienating an ideological and political counterweight to jihadism. Similarly, many armed groups fight beside al-Qaeda in alliances that are tactical and do not signal support for jihadists' goals of attacking the West or establishing a caliphate. Prising them away from al-Qaeda would be wiser than fighting them all.

5. **Neglecting peace processes**. From Libya to Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Afghanistan, no country where ISIS or al-Qaeda branches hold territory has a single force strong enough to secure the whole country. Without accommodation, factions will either ally with jihadists against rivals or use the fight against them for other ends. Backing forces for counter-terrorism while neglecting efforts to promote compromise will deepen instability.

6. **Fighting terrorism without diplomacy**. Navigating allies' rivalries, preventing a free-for-all in Mosul, managing the fallout from Raqqa, mediating between Afghan, Iraqi or Libyan factions – all are diplomats' work. Multilateral engagement matters too, whether to back UN mediation, enlist its help for reconstruction and stabilisation or use UN and other multilateral frameworks for counter-terrorism cooperation. Staffing the State Department's top levels and sustaining its expertise are priorities. The cuts proposed to U.S. diplomacy and foreign assistance, including to the UN's budget, would damage U.S. security.

That the new administration wants to prioritise operations against groups that plot against the U.S. is understandable, but counter-terrorism does not exist in a vacuum. The U.S. administration's executive order banning entry from certain Muslim countries; the troubling rhetoric of some of its officials; the calling into question of some of the restraints imposed on military operations; and the proposed slashing of the State Department and development budgets all undermine its goal of protecting Americans from terrorism. More broadly, it should be cautious not to overlook or aggravate other sources of instability even as it takes steps to defeat jihadists. The big winners from any new disorder in the Muslim world would be groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda – whatever guise they ultimately assume.

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I. Introduction

U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis submitted an initial battle plan against ISIS in late February.[1] Its precise contents are not public, but the administration appears ready to accelerate operations against ISIS and al-Qaeda-linked groups across the Muslim world.

The jihadist landscape has evolved fast in recent months.[2] ISIS has lost swathes of its Iraqi and Syrian heartlands. Its Libyan branch, with closest ties to the Iraqi leadership, has been ousted from the Mediterranean coastal strip it held. Boko Haram, whose leaders pledged allegiance to ISIS, menaces the four African states around Lake Chad but has split and lost much of the territory it held a year ago. Though smaller branches exist from Afghanistan to the Sinai and Yemen to Somalia, the movement has struggled to make major inroads or hold territory elsewhere. Fewer local groups are signing up. Fewer foreigners are travelling to join; a main danger now is their return to countries of origin or escape elsewhere.[3]

Al-Qaeda, too, has changed. Its affiliates, particularly its big branches in Somalia, Syria and Yemen, are more influential than the leadership in South Asia.[4] Osama bin Laden's successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri, still inspires loyalty and offers guidance but has less influence on daily operations. Many significant al-Qaeda operatives are in Syria or Yemen. The affiliates' primary identity is local more than transnational. While cells within them aim to inspire attacks against the West, they fight local wars and have opened their doors to many fighters motivated by local concerns.

As grave a threat as ISIS or al-Qaeda is the disorder across parts of the Muslim world that has enabled their growth. Neither it nor the fraying social contracts and regional power rivalries beneath much of the chaos show signs of abating. The pool both movements draw from has deepened, as more young people have come into their orbit.

A main dilemma facing the Trump administration is to find the right balance between military action against jihadists and policies aimed at tackling the conditions they exploit. This report, drawing from Crisis Group's decades of research on

[1] This report adopts the acronym ISIS, as that is the version used by the new U.S. administration, to which it is primarily addressed.

[2] For a definition of "jihadist" and an explanation for its use, see Crisis Group Special Report N°1, *Exploiting Disorder: al-Qaeda and the Islamic State*, 14 March 2016.

[3] This report focuses on U.S. military operations against ISIS and al-Qaeda, not the danger posed by the potential dispersal or return of foreign fighters or the risk ISIS remnants may inspire attacks elsewhere.

[4] Other affiliates include al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, now part of a new coalition of jihadist groups in the Sahel, and al-Qaeda in the Indian subcontinent.

war and jihadism, explores potential pitfalls in getting the balance wrong. It poses four questions the new administration's ultimate plan should answer: (i) how to fight ISIS in Iraq and Syria; (ii) how to tackle jihadists elsewhere without aggravating the chaos on which they feed; (iii) what direction for Afghanistan and Pakistan policy?; and (iv) how to define the enemy. Though jihadists pose a threat elsewhere, with Africa of particular concern, it focuses mostly on the Arab world and South Asia – roughly corresponding to U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility – as the main arena for U.S. counter-terrorism operations and the regions hosting the largest numbers of U.S. forces.[5]

[5] For analysis of the Sahel, see Jean-Hervé Jezequel and Vincent Foucher, "Forced out of Towns in the Sahel, Africa's Jihadists go Rural", Crisis Group commentary, 11 January 2017. For Crisis Group's extensive Boko Haram work, see www.crisisgroup.org/boko-haram-insurgency.

II. How to Fight ISIS in Iraq and Syria?

In Mosul, ISIS is hemmed in. The agreement the Obama administration forged before the offensive has largely held: U.S.-trained elite Iraqi counter-terrorism forces, Iraqi army divisions and local Sunni auxiliaries are fighting ISIS in the city, with support from Western advisers and special forces; Iran-backed Shiite militias and the Turkey-backed peshmerga of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, both forces distrusted by Mosul's inhabitants, have mostly remained in the outskirts. Parts of the city east of the Tigris have been recaptured. The warren of alleys in its old quarter and adjacent neighbourhoods to the north west, where ISIS fighters are entrenched, are likely to see even fiercer battles.

Greater challenges will follow Mosul's capture. The first will be to secure the city and, to the extent possible, prevent reprisals. Divisions within the local Sunni Arab community mean that intra-Sunni bloodshed is as much a risk as Shiite, Kurdish or Yazidi violence against Sunni Arabs. Preventing clashes among forces involved in the campaign and among their foreign backers over spheres of influence in the city and its surroundings is another challenge. Whatever remains of ISIS may escape into the desert but is likely also to operate cells in Mosul and other cities – perpetrating attacks, sowing division, extorting reconstruction funds, offering a path for those angry at whatever arrangements follow its rule or simply lying low to await more opportune times.

Sunnis' role in Iraq's politics and security, or even what Sunni political identity will emerge, is unclear. Sunnis are traumatised and atomised, fragmented between tribes, within tribes and between generations. Shiite and Kurdish forces entrenched in Mosul's surroundings will not easily relinquish areas under their control, which also hinders any potential devolution of political authority and security responsibility. The best way to inoculate Iraq against the return of ISIS or a jihadist successor is to help Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's government re-enfranchise Sunnis and bring them back into the political fold. Strengthening the state is vital, and will help as long as it is also inclusive.

Iran is vastly influential in Iraq, but its outsized role is resented and contested by a large array of Iraqi politicians. These include Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr, who has adopted a nationalist platform ahead of provincial and national elections, as well as the Shiites' foremost religious authority, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. Many residents of Baghdad, regardless of religious affiliation, complain that Iran-backed militias are morphing into a multi-functional and corrupt para-state, running businesses as part of an extending patronage network. Efforts by Iran-backed militias in the north to forge a land corridor to Syria risk setting the stage for a next phase of conflict.

Paradoxically, however, more aggressive U.S. efforts to turn Iraq into a battlefield to reverse Iran's influence would likely have the opposite effect. They would not only be destabilising, given Tehran's sway over the Iraqi government, powerful Shiite militias and parts of the army, federal police and body politic, but would also vastly complicate counter-ISIS operations and – by placing Prime Minister Abadi squarely at the centre of U.S.-Iranian competition – undercut Baghdad's efforts to forge a path more independent from Tehran.

A better way to sustain momentum against ISIS and promote Iraq's stability would be for the U.S. to play a balancing role: preserving Baghdad's independence by

supporting its military as well as economic and humanitarian efforts, while keeping Iran, Turkey and their respective allies at bay. Flashpoints – such as Sinjar, where Turkey's archenemy the Kurdish insurgent group Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) holds territory; Bashiqa, where Turkey maintains a military presence despite Iraqi objections; and the Turkman town of Tel Afar, where Shiite militias' advances sow fear among Sunnis – will necessitate deft diplomacy and management. In particular, the U.S. should invest in deepening security cooperation among the Abadi government, the Kurdistan Regional Government and Sunni Arab fighters, while acknowledging that Shiite militias also will have to play a role lest this delicate balance unravel.

Critical for the new U.S. administration is to learn from mistakes made after the Sunni Awakening and U.S. surge defeated ISIS's precursor, al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), a decade ago. The Awakening movement was subsequently handed over to and promptly betrayed by the government of Abadi's predecessor, Nouri al-Maliki. Military gains were not translated into a sustainable political order. Doing so now will be harder still, given considerably diminished U.S. military presence and leverage, Iran's entrenchment, the fracturing of Sunni politics and a legacy of distrust deriving from that betrayal. It requires rebuilding liberated areas but also ensuring that international aid does not create new division by favouring some groups over others. It also means working with communities – arranging joint security arrangements and local governance – to avert another descent into sectarian chauvinism and revenge that would allow ISIS to re-emerge.

The campaign against ISIS in Syria is yet more complex. Taking back Raqqa, and subsequently Deir al-Zour, would deal major blows to both the movement's propaganda and operational capacity. Western intelligence sources assert Raqqa is a hub for ISIS external operations planning. Secretary Mattis reportedly has recommended a beefed-up variant of the Obama plan under which the U.S. would deploy additional troops to back an offensive on Raqqa by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a U.S.-supported group. No other force in Syria offers a better alternative: Turkish troops and their rebel allies fighting with the Euphrates Shield operation do not currently appear capable of taking Raqqa; an offensive by the regime and its allies – Hizbollah, Iran and Russia – or by Iraqi militias would be disastrous, provoking greater Sunni resentment.

The SDF option, however, raises its own problems, not least that its commanders and fighting core, the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), have direct operational links to the PKK, which Turkey and the U.S. designate a terrorist group. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan – his repeated, if ambivalent, acquiescence to previous aspects of the U.S. plan notwithstanding – is already furious at Washington's backing for the YPG and apparent failure to keep it east of the Euphrates.

Arming the group to assault Raqqa would further anger a NATO ally that has a critical role in the fight against ISIS and al-Qaeda. Turkey would fear that the YPG could win political capital from the West (indeed, for the Kurds, Raqqa's only strategic value is as leverage) and divert U.S.-supplied weapons to the PKK in Turkey after the fight. Even leaving aside the longer-term pitfalls of alienating Ankara, Turkish forces and their rebel allies could escalate against the YPG and its local allies elsewhere in Syria, such as in Tel Abyad, which would force the YPG to redeploy fighters away from Raqqa. The U.S. has already felt the need to intervene around Manbij to prevent

clashes escalating between Turkish-backed and YPG-backed forces, which both benefit from U.S. military support.

Nor should the U.S. enlist the YPG as the occupying force in Raqqa after an assault, particularly in light of its reported reprisals in some of the non-Kurdish towns already taken from ISIS. The city could not be handed over to the regime or its allies without further outraging its Sunni Arab inhabitants.

An alternative would be to slow the battle tempo to minimise the risk of aggravating other fronts in Syria's war and push for the type of consensus the U.S. built ahead of the Mosul operation. However, if the White House presses ahead – motivated by fear of operations planned against U.S. interests by Raqqa-based militants – steps to mitigate Turkish concerns would be crucial. As U.S. officials have suggested, they could, for example, guarantee not to give the YPG heavy weapons, particularly advanced anti-tank systems; offer to help police the Turkish border; reiterate opposition to linking the three Kurdish cantons in northern Syria; and/or press the YPG to disassociate itself from the PKK militarily. U.S. generals should also deepen the coordination they appear to have begun with Turkish and Russian counterparts to avoid clashes among their forces or proxies in Syria. A realistic plan is also needed for holding Raqqa once ISIS is ousted; local tribes should police inside the city, even if the YPG provides perimeter security.

III. How to Fight Other Jihadists Without Creating Further Chaos?

Beyond fighting ISIS in its heartlands, the new administration confronts al-Qaeda-linked groups elsewhere. Even in Syria, al-Qaeda may pose a graver threat over time than ISIS. There, as in other Arab war zones, its "long game" strategy – embedding within popular uprisings, forming alliances with other armed groups and displaying some pragmatism and sensitivity to local norms – could prove more sustainable than that of ISIS. Picking a fight with everyone, as ISIS has discovered, travels badly outside Iraq.

Syria's al-Qaeda branch, Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (JFS), formerly known as Jabhat al-Nusra, is the largest force in the newly-formed Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and among the most powerful armed groups in the north west.[6] The war's evolution has worked in its favour. As violence escalated, it forged alliances, if often uneasy, with rebels. Its discipline and suicide bombers have meant that it often serves as shock troops during rebel offensives. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's policies – sectarian rhetoric, pitting Alawites and other minorities against the Sunni majority and collective punishment that razes cities – have also played into its hands.

After the rebels' defeat in Aleppo at the end of 2016, the balance within the opposition, particularly around Idlib, has shifted further toward jihadists, as HTS has encroached on areas controlled by other rebels. To portray the north west as entirely al-Qaeda-run is wrong, however. Much of it is outside HTS control: rebels, particularly Ahrar al-Sham, a large Islamist force that confines its goals within Syria's borders and has, in principle, accepted political and religious pluralism for a future Syria, controls parts. HTS, though JFS-dominated, includes diverse factions, some non-jihadist. Even JFS is heterogeneous, comprising a core of al-Qaeda and fighters with local motives.

No present option against al-Qaeda in Syria is good. The new U.S. administration can continue targeting its leaders and external planning capacity, even as it supports the Raqqa offensive against ISIS further east. Strikes against targets in Idlib, which accelerated in the last months of the Obama administration, have killed dozens of al-Qaeda operatives but cannot reverse that movement's expanding influence while conditions on the ground enable it. Attacks that kill civilians, as those in al-Jina, near Aleppo, on 16 March appear to have done, bolster local support for al-Qaeda and undercut non-jihadist groups that portray the U.S. as a potential ally.[7]

[6] Though JFS has formally broken with al-Qaeda, it retains a close link to the movement.

[7] The U.S. military's Central Command (CENTCOM) disclosed it conducted a raid against "a meeting location" in Idlib, Syria on 16 March, "killing several terrorists". "U.S. forces strike Al Qaeda in Syria", CENTCOM press release no. 17-104, 17 March 2017. A Pentagon spokesman initially told reporters officials thought there were "zero" civilian casualties, but after reviewing further information, the Pentagon launched a casualty "credibility assessment" to evaluate claims of civilian casualties. "Pentagon launches probe after strike near Syria mosque", Agence France-Presse, 20 March 2017. Local media, activists and human rights groups estimated some 50 civilians were killed and dozens injured, with many more possibly trapped under rubble. Michael R. Gordon and Hwaida Saad, "U.S. military denies reports it bombed mosque in Syria", *The New York Times,* 16 March 2017.

Turkey can shape rebel dynamics in the areas held by Euphrates Shield forces east of Aleppo, where it intervened directly in part to prevent the YPG from connecting the non-contiguous cantons it controls. It has less interest in doing so within and adjacent to HTS strongholds in north-western Idlib province, which, with no Kurdish presence, have less strategic value and where an intervention could provoke an al-Qaeda backlash in Turkey.

An assault by the regime and its allies around Idlib is no solution either. It could weaken HTS temporarily but would ultimately play into al-Qaeda's hands, stoking resentment and leaving the regime facing a war of attrition against a jihadist insurgency able to recruit from an angry population. Overall, the regime is no counter-terrorism partner in Syria. Even with Russian and Iranian support, it cannot secure the whole country, as shown by its inability to control Palmyra while simultaneously fighting to retake Aleppo. More importantly, its methods of prosecuting the war (use of indiscriminate weapons and targeting of civilians, hospitals and doctors, among others) bolsters the appeal of jihadists it claims to be fighting.

Ultimately, the only way of sustainably eroding al-Qaeda's influence in Syria is through a settlement between the regime and a non-jihadist opposition that has some ability to end violence on the ground. While the Assad regime, Iran and Hizbollah seem inclined to press their advantage, Russia appears to recognise that it and its allies cannot destroy all rebel forces. Shifting the balance in the north west away from HTS would require strengthening more pragmatic rebels and, where possible, peeling fighters with national goals away from al-Qaeda-linked groups. In other words, progress toward settlement, or at least sustained de-escalation, would require deeper U.S. cooperation with Turkey to get the opposition's house in order and engagement with Russia and Iran. Though this seems remote for now, the Syrian war drives radicalisation across the region, and abandoning efforts to end it would leave a big gap in U.S. counter-terrorism strategy.

In Yemen, as in Syria, al-Qaeda has been a main beneficiary of the war.[8] Its local branch, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), was dangerous to the West but a sideshow in Yemeni politics until the state collapsed. In the aftermath of the 2011 Yemeni uprising, it established Ansar al-Sharia, parallel but aligned militias, to popularise the movement and lower the bar of entry for recruits. As fighting escalated in 2015 between the rebel Huthis and ex-President Ali Abdullah Saleh, on the one hand, and President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi and the Saudi-led coalition on the other, AQAP seized the Gulf of Aden port Mukalla and surrounding areas. It governed Mukalla via a council of local elders, placing less emphasis on enforcing its variant of Sharia (Islamic law) and more on providing water, electricity, dispute resolution and security. Conditions in Mukalla under AQAP rule were better than in many other Yemeni towns, helped by the fact that it was among the few the Saudi-led coalition did not bomb. Throughout the south, AQAP has positioned itself as protector against the Huthis.

Together with Ansar al-Sharia, AQAP now comprises thousands of fighters, embedded in the fabric of the anti-Huthi/Saleh alliance. It has acquired heavy weap-

[8] See Crisis Group Middle East and North Africa Report N°174, *Yemen's al-Qaeda: Expanding the Base*, 2 February 2017.

ons from Yemeni military camps or indirectly from the Saudi-led coalition, whose arms, supplied to a range of anti-Huthi groups, seep into al-Qaeda's arsenal. Control of the port and emptying banks during its tenure in Mukalla have fed its coffers. While an Emirati-led, U.S.-supported campaign forced AQAP to withdraw from Mukalla in April 2016, the group still exercises on-again, off-again control of areas in Abyan and Shebwa governorates.

The Obama administration in 2016 killed dozens of AQAP members, including its leader, Nasir al-Wuhayshi, then al-Qaeda's global number two. The recent uptick in U.S. operations, including a special forces raid in late January involving a firefight that left women, children and one U.S. marine dead, suggests the new administration will be still more aggressive.[9]

This approach carries risks. However many al-Qaeda members are killed and whatever intelligence is captured, harming civilians and deploying U.S. forces on the ground, particularly if they engage in sustained fighting, tend to be counterproductive, alienating communities and generating further support for AQAP and Ansar al-Sharia. Counter-terrorism operations risk complicating the Yemeni war and, ironically, strengthening the Huthi/Saleh bloc in areas where AQAP or Ansar al-Sharia are part of the fighting front against them. Regional and local allies may also try to exploit U.S. support for the fight against AQAP to target local opponents and, in the south, the mainstream Islamist movement Islah.

A few steps could help. Narrowing the range of targets to known AQAP leaders (rather than local Ansar al-Sharia fighters) and training camps, ensuring that each attack complies with domestic and international law and making further efforts to avoid harm to civilians would reduce chances of local backlash. In this respect, for the U.S. to loosen policies on the use of force for such operations would be a mistake.[10]

[9] See, for example, Basma Atassi, Laura Smith-Spark and Angela Dewan, "Yemen raid: The plan, the operation, and the aftermath", CNN, 9 February 2017.

[10] President Trump could do so in different ways. For instance, he could designate new "areas of active hostility (AAH)" under Obama's May 2013 Presidential Policy Guidance (PPG). While all U.S. uses of force are subject to applicable law, including applicable international humanitarian and human rights law, the PPG's strict targeting rules – which include high-level approval procedures – do not apply to strikes in AAH. See "Presidential Policy Guidance on Procedures for Approving Direct Action Against Terrorist Targets Located Outside the United States and Areas of Active Hostilities" (PPG), 22 May 2013; "Executive Order – United States Policy on Pre- and Post-Strike Measures to Address Civilian Casualties in U.S. Operations Involving the Use of Force", 1 July 2016. Some reports suggest Trump has already declared parts of Yemen AAH. Missy Ryan, Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Ali al-Mujahed, "Accelerating Yemen campaign, U.S. conducts flurry of strikes targeting al-Qaeda", *The Washington Post*, 2 March 2017. A second way to relax policy would be to eliminate, or very loosely interpret, all or some of the PPG's standards for use of lethal force outside AAH, including the requirement for a determination of "near certainty" that civilians will not be injured or killed, that capture or other non-lethal options are not feasible and that the target poses "a continuing, imminent threat to U.S. persons". A last option would be to simply scrap the PPG and the associated executive order on pre- and post-drone strike procedures, including annual Pentagon reporting of strikes and civilian casualties outside AAH, and devise new policy. It should be noted that even though Obama's PPG is widely regarded as providing important protections for civilians, it has also met criticism, including from human rights groups. See, for example, "US: Counterterrorism Report Sets Standards", Human Rights Watch, 6 December 2016. www.hrw.org/news/2016/12/06/us-counterterrorism-report-sets-standards.

The fight against AQAP could focus on areas freed from Huthi/Saleh control, where local forces no longer rely on AQAP/Ansar al-Sharia militias as fighting partners. Ideally, recently formed militias that operate outside the law and often abuse local populations (like Aden's Security Belt forces or Hadramout's Elite forces) would be integrated into police and military units.

Most important, though, is not to abandon diplomatic efforts to end the war. Prospects in Yemen are better than in Syria, given U.S. influence on Saudi Arabia and the existence of a realistic UN roadmap that offers a framework for compromise. Helping Riyadh find a way out of an unwinnable war that empowers jihadists, increases Iran's influence across its border and provokes humanitarian disaster should be the priority.

Steps likely to prolong the war, by contrast, should be avoided. Direct U.S. strikes against the Huthi/Saleh bloc or increased U.S. military assistance for operations against them, for example, would likely push the Huthis – who benefit from Iranian arms shipments but are potent on their own, are not Iranian proxies and have largely parochial interests – further into Iran's orbit.

That would lead both sides toward greater escalation, with Iran upping support for the Huthis, dragging Saudi Arabia into a deepening quagmire, while feeding the illusion that the Saudis and their Emirati allies could end the conflict by heightening pressure on the Huthis.

Such an escalation, by heightening sectarian polarisation and prolonging the war, would also play to jihadists' benefit over time. The anti-Huthi/Saleh alliance is too internally fragmented and weak, even with more U.S. support, to decisively reverse Huthi/Saleh gains in the north while holding territory recaptured from al-Qaeda in the south. A peace settlement along the lines of the UN plan would offer the Huthis a legitimate role in the country's future; that, plus the promise of Saudi and Gulf reconstruction assistance, would do more to pull them away from Tehran than a conflict that reinforces their mutual dependence and utility.

In Libya, jihadist groups are dangerous but for now less potent than in the Iraqi, Syrian and Yemeni war zones. Ansar al-Sharia groups, with loose ties to transnational jihadists, emerged after the 2011 war and ouster of Muammar al-Qadhafi; some members later joined ISIS, others joined militias that fought ISIS. Between August and December 2016, militias from the western town of Misrata ousted ISIS from a 120km coastal stretch it controlled around Sirte, killing many foreign fighters and scattering others, while locals mostly melted back into communities. The extent to which militants have drifted south to groups in the Sahel or southern Libya is unclear.

Critical in Libya is to resist the idea, promoted in part by Egyptian President Abdelfattah al-Sisi and the Emiratis, that General Khalifa Haftar can eradicate radical groups. While Haftar enjoys considerable support in eastern Libya, he – like the various forces in Syria and Yemen – cannot conquer the whole country, even with international backing. His opponents are too powerful and his support base too narrow.

Haftar's track record against jihadists is also mixed. ISIS, for example, was ousted from Sirte not by him but by his Misratan opponents, who were closer and provoked by ISIS first. His forces did rout Ansar al-Sharia groups from Benghazi and inflicted a blow on ISIS militants there, but he alienated many non-jihadists in the process. Like his Egyptian and Emirati backers, Haftar tends to portray all Muslim Brotherhood-linked groups as terrorists, even though he aligns in some areas with more

conservative Salafi militias. Haftar and his constituencies cannot be excluded from Libya's political order, but backing him militarily in the hope that he can dominate it by force would be a mistake. Given the strength of his rivals and the support they enjoy from their own external backers, particularly Qatar and Turkey, it would escalate conflict, further destabilise the country and potentially open new opportunities for ISIS and al-Qaeda-linked groups that for now are largely contained.

The region's power rivalries overshadow its wars and complicate U.S. operations against jihadists. Most dangerous is the Saudi-Iran rivalry, which has fed sectarianism and extremism on both sides of the Sunni-Shiite divide. Iranian leaders, their perspective shaped by the traumatic war with Iraq in the 1980s – in which almost all Arab states and the U.S. backed Saddam Hussein – and the U.S. invasions of and continued military presence in neighbouring Afghanistan and Iraq, believe their country is encircled. Their rivals' conventional military capacity dwarfs their own. Backing non-state actors and proxies across the region, in Tehran's view, is a way to keep threats from its immediate borders.

Yet, what Tehran portrays as defensive appears as anything but to rivals. Major Sunni Arab states see Iran as a revolutionary power and reject the regional role to which Iran aspires and the influence it now wields, thanks largely to the U.S. invasion of Iraq and chaos in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings. The violence Sunnis have suffered at the hands of Iranian-sponsored governments and militias in Iraq and Syria has fed a profound and dangerous sense of victimisation among the region's Sunni Arab majority and been a recruitment boon for jihadists. It has also incurred high costs for Tehran, by deepening regionwide Sunni animosity toward Iran, its allies and its proxies.

Gulf powers and Turkey, too, bear much responsibility. Their oversight of arms poured into Libya, Syria and Yemen has been inadequate, much ending in jihadists' hands. Sunni militants of all stripes – not just jihadists – have committed their own atrocities against Shiites. Sectarian rhetoric has been far too common. Exclusionary and repressive policies in Bahrain inevitably have also exacerbated sectarian tensions. Ultimately, all prioritise enemies other than jihadists: in Saudi Arabia's case, Iran; in the UAE's, Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood; in Turkey's, the PKK/YPG. All this has opened space for ISIS and al-Qaeda.

The U.S. appears set to deal with this unfavourable regional context by bolstering ties to traditional Gulf allies – augmenting weapons sales and working in concert with Gulf states on a more muscular approach toward Iran. Providing extra hardware would carry drawbacks, given the weapons proliferation in the region, the economic challenges faced by Gulf monarchies in a time of lower oil prices and the often indiscriminate conduct of the Yemen campaign. Any more confrontational stance would also risk an asymmetrical Iranian response through non-state allies across the Middle East and Afghanistan, a dangerous dynamic that could provoke a military conflagration. It also could put Iraqi Prime Minister Abadi in a bind, as he could ill afford to side with the U.S. in a confrontation with his powerful neighbour.

That the Trump administration would seek to shore up alliances with traditional Gulf partners in the wake of relative estrangement under Obama is reasonable. But backing should neither be unconditional nor enable a Saudi quagmire in Yemen or a risky escalation with Iran, both of which could further destabilise the region. An alternative would be to use the leverage of improved relations, first, to ensure the

Saudi-led coalition prosecutes the war in compliance with international law and, secondly, to press for de-escalation of Iranian-Saudi hostility, in particular through a Yemeni settlement, lessening of sectarian rhetoric, a more inclusive approach in Bahrain and resumption of dialogue between Riyadh and Tehran. Diplomacy, by helping to pacify the region's conflicts, would do as much or more to counter jihadism as any military operation.

IV. What Direction for South Asia Policy?

Outside the Middle East, South Asia is the region most critical for U.S. counter-terrorism policy, particularly as the centre of gravity of global jihadism over past decades has swung between there and the Arab world. Bar brief mentions of Afghanistan and Pakistan during Secretary Mattis's confirmation hearing, the new administration has given little sense of its direction for the region.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban is stronger than at any point since its ouster in 2001. Internal UN estimates suggest it controls more than half the countryside.[11] In summer 2016, it briefly captured Kunduz, a provincial capital in the north east. As weather warms, it will again threaten that town and other provincial capitals. It mounts sophisticated offensives, deploys mobile columns across front lines in Humvees and confronts Afghan army and police units directly.

The Taliban's ties to al-Qaeda stretch back decades. According to U.S. officials, al-Qaeda operatives use Taliban training camps to plot operations across South Asia.[12] Senior Taliban leaders, however, have distanced themselves from global jihadism in dealings with the U.S. and states in the region. Their focus is on regaining power in Afghanistan.

A local ISIS branch operates in remote eastern districts. It is deeply anti-Shiite, conducts attacks that kill many civilians and comprises mostly former Pakistani tribal militants, with some local recruits. Since its establishment in 2015, its growth has largely been checked by Taliban operations and U.S. airstrikes, though attacks, including on Shiite Hazaras in 2016, suggest growing potency. The Taliban, however, is by far Afghanistan's largest armed opposition group.

Pakistan hosts the Taliban's leadership. Afghan-Pakistani relations are badly strained: President Ashraf Ghani initially tried to strengthen ties to Pakistani leaders hoping they would bring the Taliban to peace talks but now accuses Islamabad of conducting war in Afghanistan.[13] Closer Indian-Afghan ties appear to have deepened the Pakistani military's long-held view that the Taliban safeguards Islamabad's national security interests. Successive Afghan governments' failures, indiscriminate U.S. counter-terrorism operations and local strongmen's manipulation of those operations to defeat rivals have helped fill its ranks, but the Taliban could not maintain its potency without Pakistani sanctuaries.

The Taliban has built ties to other governments, too. Iran bitterly opposed its rule in Afghanistan in the 1990s but more recently has backed Taliban insurgents, initially to pressure U.S. forces in western Afghanistan and now to support their fight against ISIS. The Russians talk to its leaders also, to share, in Moscow's words, intelligence

[11] Crisis Group interview, UN official, March 2017.

[12] See, for example, Brian Dodwell and Don Rassler, "A View from the CT Foxhole: General John W. Nicholson, Commander, Resolute Support and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan", *CTC Sentinel*, 22 February 2017.

[13] At the June 2016 NATO summit, Ghani said that Pakistan had imposed an "undeclared war" on Afghanistan. "Afghanistan's Ghani urges Pakistan to expel insurgents from its soil", Voice of America, 11 July 2016.

against ISIS and in the hopes of laying the groundwork for future talks between the Taliban and Afghan government.[14]

Troop increases requested in February by the U.S. commander in Afghanistan, General John W. Nicholson, would help the Afghan army hold the line against insurgents but not decisively tip the balance. The Taliban has weathered far larger numbers of U.S. forces during Obama's first-term surge. Here, too, diplomacy is as vital as military support. The Afghan power-sharing government is dysfunctional, with friction mounting between President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah. U.S. engagement with and support for the government would help avert a crisis ahead of parliamentary elections expected in 2018 and a 2019 presidential contest that could further fracture the country and facilitate Taliban gains.

Nor can the U.S. exit without diplomacy. The only way of withdrawing forces without leaving a haven for al-Qaeda or other transnational groups is through a settlement with the Taliban that, first, requires it to announce it has severed links with international jihadists and respects the Afghan constitution and, secondly, meets neighbours' core concerns. Though recent Russian-brokered talks brought together neighbours and the Afghan government, serious progress is unlikely without a U.S. lead: the new administration should prioritise reopening publicly acknowledged lines of communication to Taliban leaders and rethinking a format for regional engagement. Sending more U.S. troops only makes sense as part of a political strategy that pushes toward a settlement, however remote that currently seems.

Pakistan poses further dilemmas. Not only does peace in Afghanistan hinge on its military establishment helping bring the Taliban to the table; the country also faces its own multipronged threat from tribal, sectarian and anti-India jihadists, some with old al-Qaeda ties.[15] Anti-Shiite groups such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi have recently forged an alliance with ISIS (reportedly its Middle East-based leadership), with both claiming credit for sophisticated attacks.[16]

The military has in recent years cracked down on militants that attack the Pakistani state. Operations in the tribal areas along the north-west border with Afghanistan have dispersed disparate tribal militants and foreign jihadists sheltering there since fleeing Afghanistan in 2001. Offensives have often been brutal and displaced the problem rather than resolved it; militants have already begun to regroup and resume attacks countrywide, claiming hundreds of lives in 2017. Introducing civilian governance and policing is the only way to stabilise the tribal areas. Together with years of U.S. drone strikes, however, operations have meant they no longer serve as a base for al-Qaeda's leadership to the same degree as a decade ago.

The two main anti-India groups, Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad, enjoy considerable operating space, with their relief wings distributing aid, madrasas functioning and leaders preaching openly. Though neither has formal links to al-Qaeda, their fighters rub shoulders with other militants and global jihadists in

[14] See, for example, Mehmet Ozturk, "Exclusive interview with Russian diplomat Zamir Kabulov", Anadolu Agency, 31 December 2016.

[15] Crisis Group Asia Report, N°217, *Revisiting Counter-terrorism Strategies in Pakistan: Opportunities and Pitfalls*, 22 July 2015.

[16] See, for example, Mubashir Zaidi, "IS recruiting thousands in Pakistan, govt warned in 'secret' report", *Dawn*, 8 November 2014.

Afghanistan and Pakistan. The gravest danger they pose for Pakistan and the U.S. is another strike on India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's response to attacks last year on Indian forces in Kashmir suggests his reaction would be calibrated carefully, and public opinion would weigh only so far on that calculation. But it would be difficult to show restraint in the event of an attack like that which killed large numbers of civilians in Mumbai in 2008.

Pakistan's jihadist problem, if largely of its own making, is deeply entrenched. That Afghan Taliban leaders who talk to the U.S. or Afghan government without Pakistani blessing are promptly jailed or disappear shows how the military can clamp down. Only a strategic rethink of relations with India, however, would lead it to dismantle the LeT's and Jaish's Punjab-based infrastructure.

The main challenge for the U.S. is to persuade the military establishment to push the Taliban toward talks and act against anti-India groups. Inducements to military leaders, including strategic dialogue and extra aid in the early years of the Obama administration, did not shift its strategic calculation. Wielding a larger stick, for which there is some support in Congress, would be a new tactic, though U.S. military leaders would likely have little appetite to exert significant pressure on Pakistani counterparts. Blank checks in the past, however, have produced at best selective counter-terrorism cooperation. U.S. national security interests would be best served by a multipronged policy: conditionality on aid to the military; technical assistance for civilian law enforcement and intelligence agencies; and continued support for a democratic transition that is incrementally empowering a Pakistani political leadership less prone to see jihadists as strategic assets.

Pressing and persuading Pakistan to do more against its militant proxies also requires U.S. cooperation with China. Beijing fears jihadism as much as the U.S., and its proximity to and growing economic cooperation in the region give it more to lose from Afghan instability. The web of trade routes it funds across South and Central Asia could be a geopolitical game changer for the region. Without its support, the U.S. will struggle to extract more constructive policy from Islamabad. This makes the administration's initial hostility to China all the riskier.

V. Defining the Enemy

A last question for the new administration is whom to fight. Where will it draw the line on which Islamists are the enemy? Secretary Mattis and National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster in the past have been pragmatic, particularly in Iraq, where they dealt with diverse politicians, including Islamists. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, on the other hand, has argued that defeating the Muslim Brotherhood is as much a priority as defeating al-Qaeda.

Defining the enemy applies first on the battlefield, particularly where jihadists fight beside other militias, whether in Libya, Syria or Yemen. These alliances tend to be tactical: jihadists provide extra firepower against a shared enemy. They rarely signal wider support for aims to strike the West or establish a caliphate. U.S. interests would be best served by defining the enemy narrowly and aiming to change conditions on the ground to prompt other armed groups to break ties with jihadists. Ideally this would involve de-escalating the conflicts that motivate those alliances, but even without that, there may be ways to pull groups with national goals and a willingness to coexist with rivals away from transnational jihadists. Outreach to such groups by the U.S. or its allies – similar to outreach to Sunni tribal leaders ahead of the Awakening and U.S. surge in Iraq – could occur even alongside attacks on al-Qaeda leaders.

Identifying the aims of militias across the Muslim world's war zones is, of course, hard. Fighters with links, however loose, to jihadists pervade armed groups of all stripes. Few powerful militia leaders champion liberal values or tolerance, even where they espouse national goals or accept power sharing. The perceived failure, over past decades, of secular ideologies and the flow of Gulf funding, combined with severe violence and repression, have empowered few moderates. But the Trump administration should be realistic. Many militants have now rubbed shoulders with al-Qaeda; many espouse anti-U.S. sentiment. The U.S. cannot declare them all beyond the pale if it hopes to influence decisively the wars they fight in.

A sensible position on mainstream Islamists is especially critical. Designating the Muslim Brotherhood terrorist, for example, would backfire. The movement espouses some illiberal and intolerant ideas. Since President Mohamed Morsi was deposed in Egypt, younger Brotherhood members, facing a brutal crackdown, have been implicated in attacks against the Egyptian state, even if the movement's leaders reject their violence.

Overall, however, the Brotherhood has explicitly distanced itself over past decades from the thinkers that inspire al-Qaeda and ISIS. Its political Islam is perhaps jihadists' main ideological competitor; ISIS and al-Qaeda propagandists reserve particular venom for its gradualism and electoral participation. They portray that strategy's failure as vindication of their violence. Over recent years, jihadists' fortunes have tended to wax as those of mainstream Islamists have waned.

There are other challenges, too. Members of Muslim Brotherhood offshoots sit in the cabinets and parliaments of staunch U.S. allies like Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan, whose support is critical against ISIS and al-Qaeda. Elsewhere – in Syria and Yemen, for example – militias linked to the Brotherhood fight beside U.S. allies. Other allies, like Turkey and Qatar, host exiled leaders. Designating the movement would also play dangerously into rivalries between Turkey and Qatar, which are sympathetic to

it, and the UAE and Egypt, which view it as a threat. Where those rivalries play out through proxies, designation would pick a side, encouraging anti-Islamist forces, like those of Haftar in Libya, to double down.

Designation would not necessarily impel Muslim Brotherhood leaders toward violence, but it would narrow the movement's options and potentially increase the anti-U.S. sentiment of members. It would play into jihadist narratives, already reinforced by some of President Trump's rhetoric and his immigration policies, that peaceful resistance and accommodation with the West are futile. While little suggests the new administration has either the leverage or the inclination to shift the Egyptian or Emirati line on the movement, it should at least not buy into the same logic. Picking a fight with the Muslim Brotherhood makes no strategic sense for the U.S.

VI. Conclusion

Since the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the war against jihadists has dominated U.S. national security policy. The aggressive operations that look set to mark President Trump's foreign policy do not in themselves signal major departures. Reversing al-Qaeda's and ISIS's gains and protecting U.S. citizens from their attacks should, of course, be imperative for U.S. leaders. But for the last decade and a half, too great a focus on counter-terrorism has often distorted U.S. policy and, in many cases, made the problem worse.[17] The new administration's elevation of the threat, combined with the damaging anti-Muslim language of some in Trump's inner circle and immigration policies that appear discriminatory, makes risks all the graver.

Some early signs are particularly troubling. Loosening procedures that protect against civilian casualties during targeted killings would be a serious mistake. Such killings in any case have a mixed record: repeated strikes against al-Qaeda commanders in Somalia, Syria and Yemen have not inhibited their movements' growth; often harder-line leaders replace those killed.[18] Invariably they are counterproductive, and potentially illegal, if they kill civilians and, with that, anger local communities as well as partners and allies. Even small numbers of civilian casualties can complicate the fight against jihadists. Overlooking allies' harmful policies or their potential misuse of counter-terrorism operations against rivals is also a danger and could deepen chaos in the region or even provoke a wider conflagration. So, too, could an escalation against Iran.

Especially troubling is the apparent neglect of diplomacy, which is critical for navigating the rivalries among states in parts of the world most affected and forging solutions to the wars jihadists feed off. Staffing the State Department's top levels; maintaining a deep bench of expertise at both State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which plays a vital role in preventing and mitigating violence and helping communities recover; and maintaining both their budgets are critical to U.S. soft power and should be priorities. Cutting support to the UN would hinder efforts against jihadists, potentially undermining its critical peace-making and peacekeeping, coordination of reconstruction funds in places like Iraq, humanitarian support to sustain communities in war zones and its forum for counter-terrorism coordination.

In the words of the U.S. Counterinsurgency Field Manual that Secretary Mattis co-authored: "The military contribution to countering insurgency, while vital, is not as important as political efforts for long term success".[19] Or in his own words as still a general, "… if you don't fund the State Department fully then I need to buy more ammunition ultimately".[20] Fighting terrorists without diplomats, in other words, is a fool's game.

[17] Crisis Group Report, *Exploiting Disorder*, op. cit.
[18] Ibid.
[19] "Counterinsurgency Operations", Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Publication 3-24, 5 October 2009, p.III.3.
[20] Hearing, Armed Services Committee, U.S. Senate, 5 March 2013, p. 16.

The new administration's focus on degrading groups that plot attacks against the U.S. and its citizens is understandable. But in doing so, it must avoid inadvertently creating further disorder that plays into jihadists' hands.

Washington/New York/Brussels, 22 March 2017

Appendix A: Map of North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia

Appendix B: About the International Crisis Group

The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 120 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries or regions at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international, regional and national decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a monthly early warning bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in up to 70 situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports are distributed widely by email and made available simultaneously on its website, www.crisisgroup.org. Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board of Trustees – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policymakers around the world. Crisis Group is chaired by former UN Deputy Secretary-General and Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Lord Mark Malloch-Brown. Its Vice Chair is Ayo Obe, a Legal Practitioner, Columnist and TV Presenter in Nigeria.

Crisis Group's President & CEO, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, served as the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations from 2000-2008, and in 2012, as Deputy Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States on Syria. He left his post as Deputy Joint Special Envoy to chair the commission that prepared the white paper on French defence and national security in 2013. Crisis Group's international headquarters is in Brussels, and the organisation has offices in nine other locations: Bishkek, Bogota, Dakar, Islamabad, Istanbul, Nairobi, London, New York, and Washington DC. It also has staff representation in the following locations: Bangkok, Beijing, Beirut, Caracas, Delhi, Dubai, Gaza City, Guatemala City, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Kabul, Kiev, Mexico City, Rabat, Sydney, Tunis, and Yangon.

Crisis Group receives financial support from a wide range of governments, foundations, and private sources. Currently Crisis Group holds relationships with the following governmental departments and agencies: Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Austrian Development Agency, Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, German Federal Foreign Office, Irish Aid, Principality of Liechtenstein, Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and U.S. Agency for International Development.

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March 2017

Appendix C: International Crisis Group Board of Trustees