11 Sanctuary: The Geopolitics of Terrorism and Insurgency

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For the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1929), the editor commissioned T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) to write a piece on guerrilla warfare. Lawrence's article is a remarkable achievement—a concise but comprehensive treatment of a complex subject viewed through the lens of his own experience during the Arab revolt against the Turks in 1916–1918. In a short essay brimming with insights about the nature of guerrilla warfare, his discussion of the importance of sanctuary stands out.

Quoting Sir Francis Bacon, Lawrence compares guerrilla warfare in the desert to naval warfare. The key component of both is mobility. In both modes of warfare, a force must be able to move and strike.

> In character these operations were like naval warfare, in their mobility, their ubiquity, their independence of bases and communications, in their ignoring of ground features, of strategic areas, of fixed directions, of fixed points. "He who commands the sea is at great liberty, and may take as much or as little of the war as he will": he who commands the desert is equally fortunate. Camel raiding-parties, self-contained like ships, could cruise securely along the enemy's land-frontier, just out of sight of his posts along the edge of cultivation, and tap or raid into his lines where it seemed fittest or easiest or most profitable. . . .

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But mobility is only part of the equation. The striking force must also have a safe haven, enabling it, in Lawrence's case, to always keep a means of "sure retreat . . . into an element which the [enemy cannot] enter." In other words, as important as striking power is for guerrillas, they also require a secure base.[1] Lawrence summarizes his "thesis" at the end of his article:

> Rebellion must have an unassailable base, something guarded not merely from attack, but from the fear of it: such a base as the Arab revolt had in the Red Sea ports, the desert, or in the minds of men converted to its creed. It must have a sophisticated alien enemy, in the form of a disciplined army of occupation too small to fulfil the doctrine of acreage: too few to adjust number to space, in order to dominate the whole area effectively from fortified posts. It must have a friendly population, not actively friendly, but sympathetic to the point of not betraying rebel movements to the enemy. Rebellions can be made by 2% active in a striking force, and 98% passively sympathetic. The few active rebels must have the qualities of speed and endurance, ubiquity and independence of arteries of supply. They must have the technical equipment to destroy or paralyze the enemy's organized communications, for irregular war is fairly Willisen's definition of strategy, "the study of communication," in its extreme degree, of attack where the enemy is not. In 50 words: Granted mobility, security (in the form of denying targets to the enemy), time, and doctrine (the idea to convert every subject to friendliness), victory will rest with the insurgents, for the algebraical factors are in the end decisive, and against them perfections of means and spirit struggle quite in vain.[2]

Thus in order to have any hope of success, a guerrilla force must be able to operate from a secure base. That base may be geographical but it may also be conceptual—lying within the minds of a friendly or sympathetic population.

Although Lawrence was concerned in this article with the operational level of war, the principle applies to all levels—the strategic as well as the operational. Understanding this fact permits us to recognize the importance of "sanctuary" as the cornerstone of the geopolitics of insurgency and terrorism and the reason that insurgents, terrorists, and other armed groups must rely on the likes of Waziristan, the Sierra Maestre, or Shaanxi.

CLASSICAL GEOPOLITICS

Classical geopolitics recognized the important influence of geography—the physical setting of human activity, whether political, economic, or strategic—on the formulation of strategy.[3] As Nicholas Spykman observed, "geography is the most fundamental factor in foreign policy because it is the most permanent."[4] The geographic setting imposes distinctive constraints on a nation's foreign policy and strategy while at the same time providing distinctive opportunities. As Colin Gray has remarked, geography at a minimum defines the players in international relations, the stakes for which the players contend, and the terms by which they measure their security relative to others.[5]

Geopolitics—"the relation of international political power to the geographical setting"[6]—is concerned with the study of the political and strategic relevance of geography in the pursuit of international power. As such, it is most closely related to strategic geography, which is concerned with the control of, or access to, spatial areas that have an impact on the security and prosperity of nations.

Adherents of geopolitics contend that the study of the international scene from a spatial viewpoint, by which one better understands the whole, has strategic implications. The main directions of proper strategy may be deduced from an understanding of the overarching spatial relationships among political actors: by discerning broad geographical patterns, it is possible to develop better strategic options for ensuring states their places in the world.

The geopolitical perspective in international relations has given rise to spatial "pivotal binaries," categories that shape how we look at the world and suggest strategic steps to enhance state power, the most enduring of which include East and West, "sea power" and "land power," "maritime" and "continental," "heartland" and "rimland," and "core areas" and peripheral "shatterbelts." These are, of course, mental constructs, but strategy is directly connected to perceptions about the geographic attributes that configure the global space in which conflict occurs. We might call these "mental maps."[7]

Mental maps reflect another important aspect of geopolitics: "strategic culture." It is undeniable that different countries manifest different approaches to international politics. For instance, sea powers envision their security differently than land powers. As Gray observes, "Distinctive political culture, which substantially determines national style in foreign and military affairs, is the product of a distinctive national historical experience—and that distinctive historical experience reflects no less distinctive a blend of national geographical conditions."[8]

Since geopolitics describes the nexus of geographic factors; relative power, including economic power; and militarily significant technology, these geopolitical categories tend to be dynamic, not static. This point is often lost on critics of geopolitics. Thus Halford Mackinder revised his concept of the heartland three times and Saul Cohen modified his idea of which regions constituted the world's shatterbelts several times. Such changes reflect modified circumstances arising from changes in relative power among states, including economic development, or advances in technology.

This is a critically important point to remember: technology and economics are not extraneous to geopolitical analysis. They are integral to geopolitics. The shift from sail to coal to oil to nuclear ship propulsion significantly changed the geopolitical landscape, as did the railroad and the development of air power. Some analysts suggested that nuclear weapons spelled the end of geopolitics. Some make that claim now on behalf of information technology and cyberspace. But while technological advances can alter, they do not negate the importance of the geographic determinants of policy and strategy. The same is true of economic development. The infusion of capital may modify but not negate the importance of a particular geographic space.

Real strategy must take account of such factors as technology, the availability of resources, and geopolitical realities. This last factor is critical, although in a globalized world we sometimes forget that strategy is developed and implemented in real time and space. A state must consciously adapt its strategy to geopolitical realities. The strategy of a state is not self-correcting. If conditions change, policy makers must be able to discern these changes and modify the strategy and strategic goals accordingly.[9]

From World War I up to the collapse of the Soviet Union, U.S. strategy was based on the 1904 heartland theory of Sir Halford John Mackinder, modified by Nicholas

Spykman's rimland concept.[10] However, 9/11 and the rise of China have shown the shortcomings of such a theory.[11] But while U.S. policy makers have paid lip service to the idea that U.S. strategic focus must change as a result of the collapse of the Soviet empire, there is much evidence to indicate that America's focus has not changed.

THE EMERGING GEOPOLITICS OF TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY

When strategy makers, operators, and force planners do not adapt to changing conditions, serious problems can result. Jakub Grygiel shows how a failure to adapt strategy to geopolitical change led to the decline of Venice (1000–1600), the Ottoman Empire (1300–1699), and Ming China (1364–1644).[12] Each actor faced changing circumstances but made wrong strategic choices. These cases are cautionary for the United States, since it now is facing geopolitical changes of the same magnitude.

During the 1990s, serious thinking about security and strategy took a holiday. The end of the cold war led some to suggest optimistic alternatives to the bipolar structure of the world that had arisen from the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union.

By far the most optimistic and ambitious alternative appeared in a watershed article by Francis Fukuyama for the Summer 1989 issue of the *National Interest*. In "The End of History?" Fukuyama suggested that the end of the cold war meant that liberalism had defeated its one remaining ideological competitor to become the dominant force in the world. Fascism had been destroyed with the Allied victory in World War II. Now communism had joined it on the ash heap of history.[13]

Fukuyama was answered almost immediately by Samuel Huntington, who argued that the end of ideological war did not mean that major fault lines had disappeared in the world. In place of ideological conflict, he postulated a "clash of civilizations."[14] Robert Kaplan also joined the fray, arguing that in many parts of the world, "history" was very much still in evidence.[15] As one wag said of the Balkans: "too much history; too little space."

Fukuyama followed up his original article in the *National Interest* with a book in which he addressed his critics, acknowledging that, despite the progress of "a universal and directional history" leading to the end state of liberal democracy, there were many parts of the world in which liberal democracy had not yet triumphed. Nonetheless, he argued, there was an increasing acceptance of the idea that "liberal democracy in reality constitutes the best possible solution to the human problem."[16]

The corollary to the universal triumph of liberal democracy was "globalization," the dynamic, worldwide process of capitalistic economic integration and the irresistible expansion of global capitalist markets. Advocates of globalization concluded that interdependence and cooperation had replaced competition in international affairs and that the result would be more or less spontaneous peace and prosperity. Political scientists and economists alike agreed that this was the most important characteristic of our epoch, against which other forces didn't stand a chance. "Global interdependence" advanced the idea that the pursuit of power in its geographic setting had been supplanted by liberal economic cooperation. For many, the process of globalization was autonomous and self-regulating.

Of course, 9/11 called into question the assumption that globalization was an unambiguously beneficial phenomenon. We now began to discern what some commentators called the "dark underbelly" of globalization, represented by such enemies of Western liberalism as Osama bin Laden.

While a number of analysts tried to shoehorn 9/11 into previous paradigms, Thomas Barnett, a former research professor at the Naval War College, offered an innovative explanation of the link between globalization and terrorism in a controversial article for the March 2003 issue of *Esquire* entitled "The Pentagon's New Map." According to Barnett, 9/11 revealed the emerging geopolitical reality that the world's most important "fault line" was not between the rich and the poor but between those who accept modernity and those who reject it. The former part of the globe Barnett called the "Functioning Core"; the latter, the "Non-Integrating Gap."[17]

The Core, where "globalization is thick with network connectivity, financial transactions, liberal media flows, and collective security," is characterized by "stable governments, rising standards of living, and more deaths by suicide than murder." The Gap, where "globalization is thinning or just plain absent," is "plagued by politically repressive regimes, widespread poverty and disease, routine mass murder, and—most important—the chronic conflicts that incubate the next generation of global terrorists."[18]

Barnett, like Fukuyama, Huntington, and Kaplan before him, expanded his article into a book: *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century,*[19] which offers a persuasive analysis of the post-9/11 world as well as policy prescriptions flowing from that analysis. It supports the idea that the necessary (but not sufficient) cause of prosperity is security—in other words, that the expansion of a liberal world order (globalization) is not automatic—it must be underwritten by a power or powers willing to provide the public good of security. Just as the theories of such geopolitical writers as Sir Halford Mackinder and Nicholas Spykman provided the intellectual underpinnings of U.S. grand strategy during the cold war, Barnett offers the outline of a geopolitics rationale for a grand strategy to counter the new terrorism.

Barnett's Core is composed of North America, Europe, Japan, Russia, India, China, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina. The Gap includes South America (minus Brazil, Argentina, and Chile), most of Africa, the Middle East, and central Asia. This part of the world contains most of the "failed states" that epitomize the perceived failures of globalization. Before 9/11, U.S. policy makers acted in accordance with a "rule set" that focused on interstate conflict within the Core and consigned security concerns within the Gap to the status of "lesser included cases."

Policy makers in both the Clinton and Bush administrations failed to anticipate the events of 9/11 not primarily because of intelligence failures, important as they may have been, but because their attention was focused elsewhere. The former saw globalization as a panacea for the world's ills and ignored its failures in the Gap. The latter were focused on preventing the emergence of a competing great power—e.g., China—in the Core. The dominant rule set during the 1990s was a continuation of the cold war rule set, stressing arms control, deterrence, and the management of globalization. The dream was to create a Kantian world of "perpetual peace" among democratic states.

But this rule set left much of the Gap—the "disconnected" regions of the world—in a Hobbesian "state of nature," wherein the life of man is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Led by educated elites such as Osama bin Laden who desired to keep their regions disconnected from the grasp of globalization and American "empire," the Gap struck directly at the Core. In Barnett's view, 9/11 was the revenge of the "lesser includeds."

For Barnett, the key to future global security and prosperity is the requirement of the Core to "shrink" the Gap. Managing the Gap—a policy of containment—is not enough: such an approach further reduces what little connectivity the Gap has with the Core and renders it more dangerous to the Core over the long haul. The Core must export security into the Gap, providing the stability necessary for the regions within to achieve "connectivity" with the rest of the world and thereby position themselves to benefit from globalization. Otherwise, the Gap will continue to export terrorism to the Core, as it has been doing over the last decade.

Barnett argues that "bin Laden and Al Qaeda are pure products of the Gap—in effect, its most violent feedback to the Core." The attacks of 9/11 represented an attempt by bin Laden to create a "systems perturbation" in the Core so that he would be able to take the Islamic world "off-line" from globalization and return it to some seventh-century definition of the good life. For Barnett, the proper strategic response to 9/11 is to create a countervailing systems perturbation in the Gap—which is exactly what the Bush administration did by striking Afghanistan and Iraq.

The point here is that Barnett's "Gap" is critical to understanding the new geopolitics of terrorism. The Gap is sanctuary writ large. It provides the "ungoverned space" that terrorists, guerrillas, and armed groups can exploit to provide the "unassailable base" that Lawrence believed to be so important to the success of irregular fighters. As Lawrence observed, such a base may be not only physical but also psychological, existing "in the minds of men" who accept the creed of the guerrilla or who are intimidated into acquiescence. Whether it is located in South Waziristan, Pankisi Gorge, the Bekaa Valley, Fallujah, or the *banlieues* of Paris, terrorism needs some physical, geographical, or psychological locus in order to exert a material force.

ARMED GROUPS AND SANCTUARY

Sanctuary takes several forms. The most obvious example of sanctuary is the use of foreign territory as a base. The likelihood that an insurgency will succeed increases significantly if it can gain sanctuary in neighboring states and can obtain assistance from state and nonstate actors. Indeed, a territorial base outside of the state in which the insurgency is operating is positively correlated with the insurgency's success.[20]

But armed groups can also find sanctuary in remote areas within a state, e.g., a backwoods or highland area, illustrated by such cases as the Chinese communists in Shaanxi, the Cuban revolutionaries in the Sierra Maestre, and anti-Musharraf insurgents in Waziristan.[21]

Many of these areas had long histories as in-state sanctuaries. For instance, in the case of the Chinese Revolution, the base areas for the communists were located in the

peripheries of agricultural macroregions that had served the same function for nine-teenth-century revolts against imperial China.[22]

Armed groups may also find sanctuary within an ethnic diaspora, either within the insurgency state or without. Diasporas often provide a source of recruits, training, finance, arms, logistics, diplomatic backing, etc., for the insurgency. In the case of Islamic terrorism and insurgency, this form of sanctuary has been boosted by the emergence of a transnational *jihadi* network, which creates synergy between local and global groups.

Finally, terrorist organizations have been able to find sanctuary in cyberspace. Cybersanctuary is similar in nature to sanctuary provided by an ethnic diaspora. In the case of al Qaeda, *jihadis* are able to use the Internet to spread its ideology, to raise money, to gain recruits, and to signal operatives.

> Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda is not a hierarchical organization, but a network of like-minded Muslim fundamentalists with jihadi "spear carriers." Its expansion no longer depends on bin Laden and his deputy, the Egyptian doctor Ayman al-Zawahri (whose group assassinated Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981). The Internet, with more than 1 billion people on line, and reckoned to double to 2 billion by 2010, does that job for them automatically.[23]

The former commander of U.S. Central Command, General John Abizaid, recently observed that "Al Qaeda's organizing ability in cyberspace is unprecedented." Al Qaeda operates in cyberspace with impunity, using 6,000-plus Web sites to recruit, proselytize, and plan, exploiting the virtual reality of Islam's global *ummah*.

Sanctuary is subject to different scales of analysis.[24] The physical size of a sanctuary is a critical determinant of whether a terrorist group can transform itself into a full-blown insurgency. John Robb explains the relationship between sanctuary and the size of an armed group.[25]

He argues that terrorist networks are distributed and dynamic and cannot scale like hierarchical networks, because the same network design that makes them resilient when attacked also establishes absolute limits on their size.

He begins his analysis by citing the extensive data on the limits to group size within peaceful online communities. One theoretical limit is the so-called Dunbar Number. R. I. M. Dunbar is an anthropologist at the University College of London, who has hypothesized that

> there is a cognitive limit to the number of individuals with whom any one person can maintain stable relationships, that this limit is a direct function of relative neocortex size, and that this in turn limits group size. . . . [T]he limit imposed by neocortical processing capacity is simply on the number of individuals with whom a stable inter-personal relationship can be maintained.[26]

Dunbar predicts that 147.8 is the "mean group size" for humans, which matches census data on various village and tribe sizes in many cultures. The Dunbar Number seems to be applicable here because terrorist networks are essentially geographically dispersed online communities.

But Robb cites research by Christopher Allen[27] demonstrating that the optimal size of a terrorist group is far less than the Dunbar Number of 150. According to Allen, there

is a gradual falloff in the effectiveness of a terrorist network at 80 members, with an absolute falloff at 150 members. "The initial fall-off occurs . . . due to an increasing amount of effort spent on 'grooming' the group to maintain cohesion. The absolute fall-off at 150 members occurs when grooming fails to stem dissatisfaction and dissension, which causes the group to cleave apart into smaller subgroups (that may remain affiliated)."

According to Robb and Allen, there are two optimal sizes for terrorist networks: small and medium. Small groups (or cells), the minimum size capable of carrying out the tasks assigned, are optimized at seven to eight members. The lower boundary is five members because such a small group lacks sufficient resources to be effective. The upper boundary is nine for reasons of span of control.

> Medium sized groups are optimal at 45–50 members, with a lower limit of 25 and an upper limit of 80. Between these levels is a chasm that must be surmounted with significant peril to the group. This is due to the need for groups above 9–10 members to have some level of specialization by function. This specialization requires too much management oversight to be effective given the limited number of participants in each function. At 25 members, the group gains positive returns on specialization given the management effort applied (a break-even point).

> This chasm (between 9–25 members) nicely matches the problem period in the development of terrorist and guerrilla networks that studies of guerrilla groups refer to. The amount of damage a small (7–8 member) group can do is limited to narrow geographies and therefore does not represent a major threat. Once a network grows to 45–50 members, they can mount large attacks across multiple geographies. They are also very difficult to eliminate due to geographically [*sic*] dispersion of cells. However, during the transition to a larger group they are vulnerable to disruption. This vulnerability necessitates fast counter-terrorist action (this gives credibility to the military strategists who claim we didn't have enough troops in Iraq immediately after the war, nor were we quick enough to establish martial law) during that short period of time a network is transitioning in size.[28]

Of course, limits on organizational size do not mean that armed groups are not able to expand their ranks on a temporary basis. This is because of the availability of "contract" employees and the potential for intergroup cooperation.[29]

However, when a terrorist network possesses a sanctuary, it can grow larger than suggested by Allen's research because physical security and proximity permit it to operate as a hierarchy along military lines, complete with middle management. Before the United States responded to 9/11, al Qaeda operated in this mode in Afghanistan, while maintaining distributed networks outside of Afghanistan. Once the Taliban and al Qaeda were driven from Afghanistan, they tended to fragment into smaller, less effective groups.

The implication here is that without a sanctuary, terrorist networks are limited to cells of about 100 in order to maintain security. Since security is achieved at the expense of performance and flexibility, large cells cannot remain operationally secure without a sanctuary. This means that possession of a sanctuary allows terrorists to expand their networks to a larger and more potent size. Without a sanctuary, terrorists and other armed groups are transformed into small, clandestine hunted bands.[30] Thus dismantling terrorist enclaves is a critical component of antiterrorism and counterinsurgency.

This was the lesson of Afghanistan in 2002 and Fallujah in 2004. It also explains why al Qaeda has been able to reconstitute itself in Waziristan and why this sanctuary cannot be tolerated.

DENYING SANCTUARY: TWO CASE STUDIES

Geronimo[31]

In 1881, a series of unfortunate events exacerbated by corruption and incompetence on the part of U.S. Indian Affairs officials led to an Apache uprising in the American Southwest. Several bands left their reservation at San Carlos, taking refuge in the Sierra Madre, a massive, towering mountain range that dominates the western Mexican state of Sonora. Depredations against reservation officials and settlers in Arizona in January of 1882 spurred the U.S. Army into action. For the most part, the response was ineffectual. The superior mobility of the Apache bands and their knowledge of the terrain gave them a decided advantage over their pursuers.

Displeased with the Army's progress against the Apache rejectionists, general in chief of the Army William Tecumseh Sherman appointed General George Crook to command the Arizona Department. Crook identified three objectives: to bring the reservation Indians under control, to protect the lives and property of citizens, and to subjugate the hostiles operating from the Sierra Madre.[32] The second depended on the other two and the first ultimately depended on the third.

Crook improved the lot of the reservation Indians, removing a major source of discontent. He then prepared to campaign in Mexico, if necessary. His ability to do so was helped by a reciprocal crossing agreement signed by the Díaz government in July of 1882.

Crook was something of an eccentric character who sported a beard braided in two long tails. But he gained the affection of his troops, who appreciated his reticence and lack of pretentiousness. More importantly he was also an innovator who understood the special conditions and requirements of Indian warfare. "The adult Apache is the embodiment of physical endurance—lean, well proportioned, medium sized, with sinews like steel, insensible to hunger, fatigue, or physical pains." Crook understood that the only way to defeat such warriors was with other Apaches. As such he employed Apache scouts as his main tactical arm and pack trains in lieu of wagons for logistical support.

In March of 1883, an Apache raiding party under the Apache leaders Chato and Benito struck into Arizona near Fort Huachuca, plundering and killing for nearly a week before slipping back into Mexico. Sherman ordered Crook to pursue and destroy the Apaches without regard to department or national boundaries.[33]

Crook responded with alacrity and energy. Deploying the Third and Sixth cavalries to guard strategic points on the border, Crook himself led a compact and carefully balanced column in pursuit of the raiders into their stronghold of the Sierra Madre, which Crook described as "a natural fortress." Crook's column was composed of 193 Apache scouts and a small detachment of the Sixth Cavalry, supported by pack mules carrying ammunition and rations for 60 days. On 15 May, Crook's Apache scouts attacked the camps of Chato and Benito, killing a number of warriors and routing the rest. Crook's

success in the very heart of the Apache stronghold led the leaders, including Geronimo, to negotiate a return to the San Carlos reservation.

Geronimo tarried in Mexico for some time but, from late 1883 until March 1884, the Apaches filtered back to the United States and were returned to San Carlos. But discontent reemerged and, in 1885, Apaches again fled the reservation. Crook repeated his operational approach during the exhausting and less successful Sierra Madre campaign of 1885. Not only were the fugitives able to avoid Crook's columns this time, but, in November, an Apache band launched a raid that dwarfed most that had gone before.

Crook's column eventually located the main Apache camp on 19 January 1886. The pending attack was given away by a braying mule and the hostiles hastily vacated the position, but their shattered sense of security led the Apaches to open negotiations with Captain Emmett Crawford, the commander of Crook's Apache scouts. The Apaches agreed to surrender, but in late March, as they were being escorted back to the United States, Geronimo and a group of followers scattered into the mountains.

Crook's methods had been questioned by his superiors, especially General Phil Sheridan. Geronimo's escape led Sheridan to question the reliability of Crook's Apache scouts and to call for a defensive cordon against Apache depredations. Crook knew that this was a vain approach and asked to be relieved. Sheridan obliged, replacing him as commander of the Department of Arizona with Brigadier General Nelson Miles.

Despite Sheridan's charge to Miles to mount a vigorous campaign against the Apache rejectionists "making active and prominent use of the Regular troops of your command" rather than Apache scouts, Miles's approach actually mirrored that of Crook. He relied on mobile striking forces to wear down and root out the hostiles. Although composed mainly of regulars, they still relied on Apache scouts. Defensively, he established a system of heliographs designed to alert the mobile columns to any band of Indians sighted.[34]

To pursue Geronimo into Mexico, Miles organized a force of hand-picked regular troops and Apache scouts, and a small pack train under the command of Captain Henry Lawton. This column pursued its quarry for four months over a track of 2,000 miles of difficult terrain. Simultaneously, Miles also pursued a peace initiative to bring about Geronimo's surrender, which was effected on 4 September 1886.

In one respect, Lawton's offensive failed. Geronimo did not surrender to him but to Miles's peace envoy. Nonetheless, "Lawton's persistent campaigning almost certainly helped put Geronimo in a frame of mind conducive to peace talks."[35] It was the *offensive* and the lack of sanctuary that wore down Geronimo, inducing him to give up. His surrender ended the Apache threat to Arizona, New Mexico, and Mexico.

Fallujah and the Tigris-Euphrates "Ratlines"

The central goal of the U.S. strategy in Iraq in 2004 was to destroy the insurgency by depriving it of its base in the Sunni Triangle and its "ratlines"—the infiltration routes that run from the Syrian border into the heart of Iraq. One ratline follows the Euphrates River corridor—running from Syria to Husayba on the Syrian border and then through Qaim, Rawa, Hadithah, Asad, Hit, and Fallujah to Baghdad. The other follows the course of the Tigris—from the north through Mosul–Tel Afar to Tikrit and on to Baghdad. These two "river corridors" constitute the main spatial elements of a campaign to implement U.S. strategy.

Actual strategy, as opposed to strategy in theory, occurs in time and geographic space. These corridors constituted the main spatial elements of a campaign that began in November 2004 with the takedown of Fallujah. A campaign is a series of coordinated events—movements, battles, and supporting operations—designed to achieve strategic or operational objectives within a military theater. The key to a successful campaign is the proper sequencing of events designed to bring about the desired end. That sequencing depends on the circumstances.[36]

Wresting Fallujah from the rebels was critically important: Control of the town had given them the infrastructure—human and physical—necessary to maintain a high tempo of attacks against the Iraqi government and coalition forces. In and of itself, the loss of Fallujah didn't cause the insurgency to collapse, but it did deprive the rebels of an indispensable sanctuary. Absent such a sanctuary, large terrorist networks cannot easily survive, being reduced to small, hunted bands.

With Fallujah captured, the coalition continued a high tempo of offensive operations. After losing the city, the al Qaeda leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, apparently tried to reconstitute the insurgency in Mosul, but was unable to do so because of continued U.S. pressure. In Mosul as in Fallujah, coalition forces killed and captured insurgents—forcing Zarqawi to move west into Anbar province. In March 2005, an Iraqi special operations unit captured an insurgent camp near Lake Tharthar on the border of Anbar and Salaheddin provinces. Such operations forced Zarqawi back to positions along the Syrian border.

Next came the "Rivers Campaign," designed to destroy the insurgent infrastructure west and northwest of Fallujah and shut down those "ratlines." The so-called surge beginning in early 2007 and the "Anbar Awakening," which saw many Sunni sheikhs turn against their erstwhile ally, al Qaeda, combined to deprive the latter of a very important sanctuary.[37]

The results of these actions validated Lawrence's observations on the importance of a base to provide them a "safe haven," enabling them to always keep a means of "sure retreat . . . into an element which the [enemy cannot] enter," which in turn was necessary to support the guerrillas' "ubiquity" and "mobility." When Fallujah was taken, Zarqawi's group was dispersed, reduced to the small hunted bands described by Allen and Robb. The "Rivers Campaign" and the subsequent surge denied Zarqawi and his adherents other safe havens in Anbar, and they began to suffer from the lack of logistical, moral, and command support that only coalescence in a physical place can provide. The outcome in Iraq still remains in question, but the campaign that began with the seizure of Fallujah in November 2004 illustrates what must be done if a counterinsurgency has any hope at all of succeeding.

CONCLUSION

Sanctuary is indispensable to the success of guerrillas, terrorists, or other armed groups. At the strategic level, the need to deny sanctuary to such groups supports Tom Barnett's argument that the "Gap" cannot be merely managed, but must be shrunk. Otherwise, as noted above, the Gap will continue to export terrorism to the Core, as it has for the last decade. This was the justification for undertaking very difficult and demanding

operations to deny al Qaeda sanctuary in Afghanistan and to prevent it from turning Iraq into a safe haven.

At the operational level, the two cases above illustrate that when armed groups are deprived of sanctuary, their effectiveness drops off considerably. As Fallujah indicates, denying the enemy sanctuary can be a difficult and bloody undertaking but it is necessary if armed groups are to be defeated. This is true of sanctuary in both geographic space as well as cyberspace.

NOTES

1. Reprinted under the title of "Science of Guerrilla Warfare" in *T.E. Lawrence in War and Peace,* ed. Malcolm Brown (London: Greenhill Books, 2005), 281.

2. Ibid., 284.

3. For an overview of classical geopolitics, see Mackubin Thomas Owens, "In Defense of Classical Geopolitics," *Naval War College Review* 52, no. 4 (Autumn 1999); and Colin Gray and Geoffrey Sloan, eds., *Geopolitics: Geography and Strategy* (London: Frank Cass, 1999).

4. Nicholas J. Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1944), 41.

5. Colin S. Gray, "The Continued Primacy of Geography," *Orbis*, Spring 1996, 248–49.

6. Saul B. Cohen, *Geography and Politics in a World Divided,* 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 29.

7. Patrick O'Sullivan, *Geopolitics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 2–6, 23–38.

8. Colin Gray, *The Geopolitics of the Nuclear Era: Heartland, Rimlands, and the Technological Revolution* (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, 1977), 33.

9. Jakub J. Grygiel, *Great Powers and Geopolitical Change* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

10. Mackinder believed that changes in technology, especially the revolution in land transportation associated with the railroad, had altered the balance of power between sea power and land power, bringing the "Columbian Age" of dominant sea power to a close. In the new, closed international global system, land power would hold the advantage. The center of emerging land power was the Eurasian core area Mackinder first called the "geographical pivot of history" and later the *heartland.* This core area was inaccessible to sea power and therefore capable of sheltering a land power able to dominate the Eurasian "World-Island" from its central continental fortress: "The oversetting of the balance of power in favor of the pivot state, resulting in its expansion over the marginal lands of Euro-Asia, would permit the vast continental resources for fleet-building, and the empire of the world would then be in sight." For Mackinder, Eastern Europe was the gateway to the heartland. Mackinder's geopolitical thesis, which influenced the victors at Versailles after World War I, was whispered by an "airy cherub" to the statesmen of the world: "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; Who rules the World-Island commands the world."

    Surrounding the heartland were two crescents: a wholly maritime outer crescent consisting of the Americas, the British Isles, Australia, and sub-Saharan Africa; and a partly continental and partly maritime inner crescent, extending along the Eurasian littoral from Iberia to Siberia and including most of continental Europe west of Russia, the Maghreb, the Middle East, and continental South, Southeast, and East Asia. This "marginal region" contained the vast majority of the world's population and was the origin of most of the world's great civilizations, religions, and empires. Because of its location, Mackinder believed, the inner crescent would forever be a zone of conflict.

    Spykman contended that Mackinder had overemphasized the power potential of the heartland, having overestimated the impact of the revolution in land transportation and underestimated the power of the inner and outer crescents. Spykman argued that the critical geopolitical area of the globe was Mackinder's inner crescent, which he renamed the "rimland."

Spykman's approach greatly influenced the U.S. cold war policy of containment. Indeed, if George Kennan is the "father of containment," Spykman is its godfather. Kennan wrote that vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, the United States should follow a "policy of containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world." Thus containment is a particular manifestation of Spykman's dictum that the United States had a universal interest in "the prevention of hegemony, a power position which would permit the domination of all within [a hegemon's] reach."

Mackinder's seminal articles on geopolitics are "The Scope and Methods of Geography," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 9 (1887): 141–60; "The Geographical Pivot of History," *Geographical Journal* 23 (1904): 421–37; *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (1919); and "The Round World and the Winning of the Peace," *Foreign Affairs* 21, no. 4 (July 1943). All are reprinted in Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (New York: Norton, 1962). Cf. also W. H. Parker, *Mackinder: Geography as an Aid to Statecraft* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982). Spykman's major geopolitical works are *The Geography of the Peace* and *America's Strategy in World Politics* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1942). See also Owens, "In Defense of Classical Geopolitics," esp. 65.

11. But see C. Dale Watson, *Geopolitics and the Great Powers in the 21st Century: Multipolarity and the Revolution in Strategic Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2007).

12. Grygiel, *Great Powers and Geopolitical Change,* 51–161.

13. Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *National Interest*, Summer 1989.

14. Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993; Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

15. Robert Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," *Atlantic Monthly,* February 1994. Kaplan has recently become one of several writers arguing that the United States has shifted too far in the direction of irregular warfare, thus ignoring the possibility of traditional large-scale interstate warfare. See Robert Kaplan, "America's Elegant Decline," *Atlantic Monthly,* October 2007; Colin Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005). Cf. Colin Gray, "Future Warfare, or The Triumph of History," *RUSI Journal,* October 2005.

16. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

17. Thomas Barnett, "The Pentagon's New Map," *Esquire*, March 2003.

18. In addition to Barnett, see John Robb, *Brave New War: The Next Stage of Terrorism and the End of Globalization* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2007).

19. Thomas Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Putnam, 2004).

20. James D. Feron and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (February 2003): 75–90.

21. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltran, *Regions of Refuge* (Washington, DC: Society for Applied Anthropology, 1979).

22. Robert McColl, "The Rise of Territorial Communism in China, 1921–34: The Geography behind Politics" (PhD diss., Department of Geography, University of Washington, Seattle, 1957).

23. Arnaud de Borchgrave, "Al Qaeda on the Ropes?" *Washington Times,* 28 September 2007.

24. For the discussion that follows, I am particularly indebted to the Weblog "The Belmont Club," which discussed some of the concepts developed on the Web sites cited below. "The Belmont Club" site can be accessed at fallbackbelmont.blogspot.com/.

25. John Robb, "The Optimal Size of a Terrorist Network," Global Guerrillas, posted 24 March 2004, globalguerrillas.typepad.com/globalguerrillas/2004/03/what_is_the_opt.html.

26. R. I. M. Dunbar, "Coevolution of Neocortical Size, Group Size and Language in Humans," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16, no. 4 (Fall 1993), available at www.bbsonline.org/documents/a/00/00/05/65/bbs00000565-00/bbs.dunbar.html.

27. Christopher Allen's Weblog is "Life with Alacrity." For his discussion of the Dunbar Number, see "The Dunbar Number as a Limit to Group Size," Life with Alacrity, posted 10 March 2004, www.lifewithalacrity .com/2004/03/the_dunbar_numb.html.

28. Robb, "The Optimal Size of a Terrorist Network."

29. On the social mapping of terrorist networks, see Vladis E. Krebs, "Uncloaking Terrorist Networks," *First Monday,* www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue7_4/krebs/. Social network mapping was used to take down Saddam Hussein. See Vernon Loeb, "Clan, Family Ties Called Key to Army's Capture of Hussein: 'Link Diagrams' Showed Everyone Related by Blood or Tribe," *Washington Post*, 16 December 2003, A23, available at www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A3075-2003Dec15?language=printer.

30. "Dark Networks," The Belmont Club, posted 24 September 2004, belmontclub.blogspot.com/2004/09/ dark-networks-vladis-krebs-has-case.html.

31. The account here relies heavily on Robert M. Utley's indispensable study of the Indian wars, "Geronimo, 1881–1886," chap. 19 in *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866–1890* (New York: Macmillan, 1973).

32. Ibid., 377.

33. Ibid., 379.

34. See "The Heliograph," Douglas Self Site, www.dself.dsl.pipex.com/MUSEUM/COMMS/heliograph/ heliograph.htm. "The Heliograph was a simple but highly effective instrument for instantaneous optical communication over 50 miles or more in the 19th century. Its major uses were for military and survey work. The heliograph sent its signals by reflecting sunlight towards the intended recipient with a mirror or mirrors, the beam being keyed on and off with a shutter or a tilting mirror, allowing Morse code to be sent."

35. Utley, *Frontier Regulars,* 391.

36. On the takedown of Fallujah, see Bing West, *No True Glory: A Frontline Account of the Battle for Fallujah* (New York: Bantam, 2005).

37. On the campaign against the "ratlines subsequent to the battle of Fallujah," see Mackubin Thomas Owens, "Rollin' on the Rivers," *New York Post*, 23 June 2005, available at www.ashbrook.org/publicat/oped/owens/ 05/rivers.html; and Mackubin T. Owens, "Behind the Casualties," *New York Post*, 24 August 2005, available at www.ashbrook.org/publicat/oped/owens/05/casualties.html.