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## **Affording new futures: The neuroscience and cognition of reintegration and reconciliation**

**Report for the Pentagon Joint Staff Strategic  
Multilayer Assessment Group  
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This report is related to a coherent family of products that together provide a framework for successful influence across the spectrum of competition, including the Grey Zone. All are available from [www.intelligentbiology.co.uk](http://www.intelligentbiology.co.uk). These include:

- Wright, ND (2019) ***From Control to Influence: Cognition in the Grey Zone***, Intelligent Biology.
- Ed. Wright ND, (2018) ***AI, China, Russia and the Global Order: Technological, Political, Global, and Creative Perspectives***, U.S. Dept. of Defense Joint Staff.

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This report responds to **Question B4** posed by CENTCOM: *How do you reintegrate radicalized people back into society? Both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have centers focussed on this problem. What should the international community do with people who cannot be reintegrated into society? Are there lessons from other regions on reintegration and reconciliation that could be applied to the central region?*

## Executive summary

Reintegrating radicalised or violent people back into society requires focussing on two elements: the person themselves; and the society into which they might go. Here I apply cognitive and neuroscientific insights to help CENTCOM better address both.

**Part I considers the radicalised or violent person themselves.** What cognitive factors affect their process of disengagement and reintegration – and how can we influence their decision-making?

**Recommendation One:** *CENTCOM should reframe their question away from just radicalisation (i.e. beliefs), because both beliefs and behaviours matter.*

Behavioural disengagement should be the main aim. Behaviour can beget belief.

**Recommendation Two:** *Individuals often disengage from violent extremist activity (or civil war) and CENTCOM should use evidence-based methods to influence that process.* This includes:

- (a) Audience: Put the target audience's decision-making at the heart of the influence process. Practical tools help put one in the audiences' shoes. For terrorism or those caught in civil war, identify the costs/benefits of continuing (e.g. dissatisfaction with day-to-day tasks) versus leaving (e.g. money).
- (b) Messengers: Audiences to be disengaged will often not perceive CENTCOM as the appropriate voice, so CENTCOM should act with trusted local, civil society and other actors. Local tailoring is key for Pakistani and Saudi centres.

Furthermore, societies must consider what should be done with those who cannot be reintegrated. Cognitive insights, e.g. for risk-assessment, can help marginally but offer no panacea. More research is needed for these specific cases.

**Part II considers the societal scale.** In a society as dislocated as Syria's, what cognitive factors affect reconciliation between its factions, and what opportunities does Syrian society afford people who might—we hope—reintegrate?

**Recommendation Three:** *Help society afford individuals options to disengage.* A useful concept is that of “affordances”, which are the possibilities for action that an actor perceives that their tools or environment gives them.

- (a) Afford people plausible pathways to futures outside violence, e.g. CENTCOM can work with partners to prioritise economic development, safety, family and social networks.
- (b) Order or predictability provided by formal laws or informal rules is a key psychological need for populations – and CENTCOM should work with partners (local, allies, civil society) to generate societal order.

**Recommendation Four:** *Syrian “society” fractured in civil war and CENTCOM should use long-term, evidence-based interventions for predictable psychological forces (e.g. fear, self-interest, fairness) that obstruct societal reconciliation.*

## Introduction

Cognitive factors are central to the processes by which radicalised or violent individuals disengage from violence and reintegrate into society. That is true in Syria, but Syria faces the additional challenge that the society into which they must reintegrate is itself deeply dislocated. This report applies cognitive and neuroscientific insights to help CENTCOM make progress with both these challenges.

Part I considers the radicalised person themselves. Part II considers what cognitive factors affect reconciliation between Syria's factions, and what opportunities Syrian society affords people who might reintegrate.

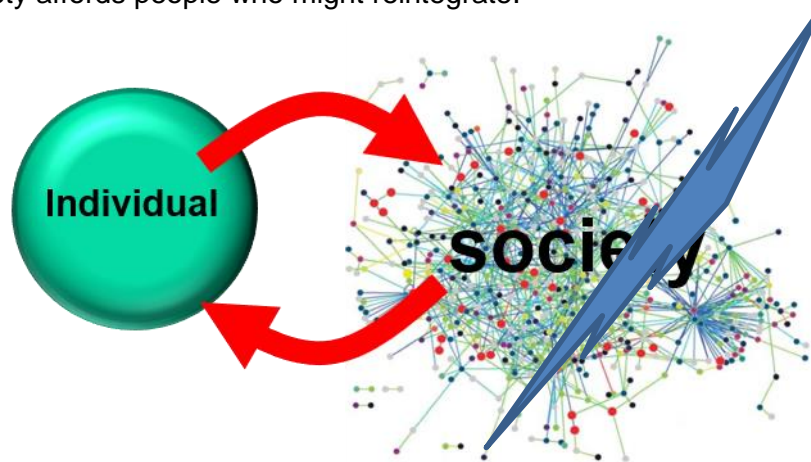


Figure 1 Part I examines the individual. Part II examines the fractured society into which they must reintegrate.

## PART I. THE RADICALIZED OR VIOLENT PERSON THEMSELVES

### A comment on the questions: beliefs and behaviour matter

**Recommendation One:** CENTCOM should reframe their question away from just radicalisation (i.e. beliefs), because both beliefs and behaviours matter. Behavioural disengagement should be the main aim, although beliefs also matter as they can afford or promote violent behaviours.

CENTCOM should not frame the challenge only in terms of radicalisation, because we know that such beliefs often do not explain the violent behaviours of concern to policymakers. Consider the following definitions (CREST, 2019):

- Deradicalisation is a term commonly used to describe attitudinal and ideological change associated with a reduced commitment to extremism.
- Disengagement refers to behavioural change connected with the move away from extremism.
- Reintegration is focused on broader social, political, and economic involvement with wider society.

Extremity of belief and extremity of behaviour can be considered separately – and both matter (Fig. 2). Research on terrorism in Northern Ireland, for example,

illustrates that full deradicalization is not a necessary component in desisting from violent extremism (Ferguson, 2016).<sup>1</sup> Such behaviour change should be the primary focus, not least because psychological evidence suggests (see below) that changed behaviour can go on to change beliefs.

Distinguishing belief and behaviour matters for CENTCOM not only because they should focus **interventions** on both, but also because they should **evaluate** disengagement or reintegration programmes based on both belief and behaviour (Wright, 2019, Chapter 11 describes measurement of both<sup>2</sup>).

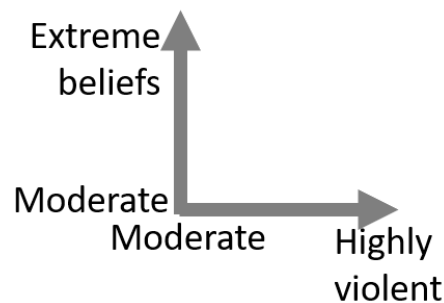


Figure 2 Attitudes and behaviours.

But extreme beliefs and behaviours are also linked – and beliefs can contribute to violent behaviour. Ideas provide “affordances”, a term which I define as the possibilities for action that an actor perceives that their tools or environment gives them (I discuss affordances in more detail below). Beliefs shape the behaviours that individuals perceive are possible in their environment. Ideology can *afford* individuals with violent extremist paths to go down, or make it difficult for them to see that life affords them any alternatives so they remain stuck in those lives. We are free to choose from amongst those options we perceive our environment affords us. Many members of troubled societies harbour grievances, but often it takes a persuasive (and frequently a shared) narrative to channel those grievances towards violent resistance or action. Seventeenth century English Puritanism, twentieth century Revolutionary Communism or twenty first century Jihadist Islam have provided such ideological affordances.

More broadly, the affordances from ideas matter. Even if we are unaware of where a strand of thought comes from it can shape behaviour, by shaping what we see as possible or desirable in the world. As the economist John Maynard Keynes famously wrote:

*“Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air are distilling their frenzy*

<sup>1</sup> For some amongst the very many discussions of this distinction in the terrorism literature see e.g. (Knudsen, 2018) for use in European contexts, (Horgan, 2014, Chapter 6) for discussion in the psychology of terrorism, or (Ferguson, 2016) for a discussion in Northern Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> Wright 2019, From Control to Influence. Download from [www.intelligentbiology.co.uk](http://www.intelligentbiology.co.uk)

*from some academic scribbler of a few years back.*” — The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money (1936)

Thus, both behaviour *and* beliefs matter, and furthermore whilst the distinction between them is important for policy they are also linked. In addition to terrorism studies we can see this distinction—and the two-way links between beliefs and behaviours—much more broadly. Consider two other fields:

- **General psychology:** Attitudes are explicit or implicit evaluative judgements about an abstract or concrete object. Importantly, there is often a big gap between attitudes and actual behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), although carefully using attitudinal data can help audience analysis and influence. In particular, attitudes better predict behaviour when they are strong, more confidently held, less internally inconsistent, less ambivalent and easier to recall (Glasman & Albarracín, 2006; Maio & Haddock, 2009). Unformed or ambiguous attitudes are more susceptible to influence. Behaviour change can itself change attitudes. As an example, changing energy consumption behaviour leads to continued energy efficient behaviour, even after the initial incentives have been removed (Pallak et al., 1980).
- **German history:** The German experience after 1945 also illustrates the distinction between beliefs and behaviour: beliefs about Nazism weren't that unfavourable for quite a while after 1945. Historian Tony Judt's well regarded book 'PostWar' describes US opinion surveys in the American zone of occupied Germany. The surveys reported that a consistent majority in the years 1945–1949 stated National Socialism to have been a good idea badly applied; that in 1950, 1 in 3 said the Nuremberg trials had been unfair; that in 1952, 37% said Germany was better off without the Jews on its territory; and in 1952, 25% had a good opinion of Hitler (Judt, 2005). Clearly Nazi thinking afforded appalling German behaviours before 1945, and it also seems likely that after 1945 the behaviour change imposed during decades of Allied occupation contributed to the eventual positive changes in German beliefs.

## **Influencing individuals to disengage**

**Recommendation Two:** *Individuals often disengage from violent extremist activity (or civil war) and CENTCOM should use evidence-based methods to influence that process.*

How can CENTCOM best **influence** such individuals, particularly in a messy civil war with diverse target populations some of whom were radicalised and others just drawn into the violence? Evidence-based principles for influence provide a useful framework across these diverse populations – and indeed they incorporate most of the insights stressed in the terrorism or deradicalization literatures (e.g. locally created interventions with more trusted messengers, or the importance of “push” and “pull” factors).

I define influence as a means to affect an audience's behaviour, perceptions or attitudes. Influence can be achieved by deterrence, persuasion, or the use of hard or soft power. Influence does not only include “soft” means, but also the use or threat of hard power. Influence aims to affect an audience's decision process, which is shown in Fig. 3.

An evidence-based framework for successful influence can be broken down into three areas:

- Audience: Put the target audience's decision-making at the heart of the influence process.
- Messages: Tailor messages to maximise impact.
- Messengers: Messengers to deliver those messages. Audiences to be disengaged will often not perceive CENTCOM as the appropriate voice, so CENTCOM should act with trusted local, civil society and other actors.

I provide detailed evidence-based influence in Wright (2019), with Chapters 2-4 addressing the audience, message and messenger respectively. Here due to space limits I focus on illustrative aspects related to the audience and messenger.

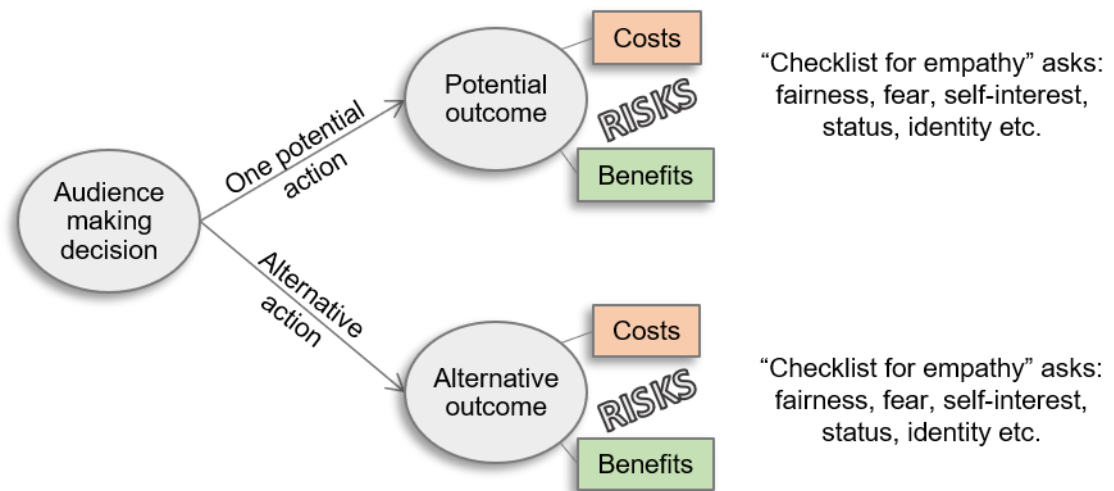


Figure 3 The audience decision process. The audience's decision calculus must be at the heart of planning for influence. Practical tools, based in evidence, can help put oneself in the audience's shoes (e.g. the "checklist for empathy" described in Wright (2019) From Control to Influence; download from [www.intelligentbiology.co.uk](http://www.intelligentbiology.co.uk)).

**Audience:** What is the decision-making process by which individuals *decide* to disengage or continue with violent behaviour? What are the costs and benefits of each option as shown in Fig. 3? We need to put ourselves in the shoes of the audience and conduct target audience analysis. One practical method is the "checklist for empathy" asking about key human drivers (e.g. fear, fairness, self-interest, identity; (Wright, 2019)). Much recent research on terrorist disengagement focusses on such factors in terrorist populations, including:

- *Costs of continuing* terrorism play a large role in individuals' disengagement decisions. These include the lifestyle's physical, psychological and socio-economic stresses and strains (Barrelle, 2015; Bjørge, 2011; Reinares, 2011) as well as aging and changing life priorities (Ferguson, 2010). A recent study of eighty-seven autobiographical accounts examined the costs of continuing, or what the terrorism literature describes as "push factors" out of terrorism (Altier et al., 2017). That study suggested disillusionment with the group's strategy or actions, disagreements with group leaders or members,

dissatisfaction with one's day-to-day tasks, and burnout are more often reported as driving disengagement decisions than deradicalization.

- *Benefits of leaving* terrorism may be critical for pulling certain individuals out of terrorist groups, and for dissuading re-engagement. Reintegrating former violent extremists back into society requires employment, training or educational opportunities (Bertram, 2015; Dwyer, 2013; Stern, 2016). Indeed, research with incarcerated Islamist extremists in Indonesia shows the importance of tailoring such economic and educational opportunities to the individual's skills and interests (Sukabdi, 2015). Further factors include financial incentives, interactions with moderate peers, family demands and desires, careers, etc. (Altier et al, 2017)<sup>3</sup>.
- *Costs of leaving* should also be addressed as barriers to disengagement. These can be material, e.g. possessing criminal records can be a barrier to reintegration (Laub & Sampson, 2001; Visher & Travis, 2003). Amnesties also seem to help in some cases, which reduce costs of leaving (Altier et al., 2017). If individuals are radicalised this increases the perceived cost of leaving. Moreover, as identity plays an important role and is difficult to simply "switch off", it is important to afford them alternative and attractive enough identities.

**Messengers:** Using trusted messengers, and in particular using local organisations to create an intervention, enhances influence as expected from general principles. Disengagement is often led or supported by Government, but partnership with third sector organisations or representatives from faith communities is not uncommon. As one recent review notes: "their relative independence can enable them to engage with individuals more effectively. Third sector organisations and mentors are more effective when they are perceived to be legitimate and credible. Legitimacy is often informed by the organisation's relationship to the community, for example if they have a history of public service." (CREST, 2019). Indeed, work in Northern Ireland suggests using the official probation service is counterproductive (Dwyer, 2013) and suggests programmes use more civil society or similar groups "in order for them to be tailored more sensitively to the needs of the people undertaking them" (Ferguson, 2016). The well-studied Saudi deradicalisation programme is locally tailored, being seen as "a Saudi solution to a Saudi problem. It incorporates many traditional Saudi methods of conflict resolution and conflict management." (Boucek, 2007)

## **Assessment tools and what to do with those who cannot be reintegrated**

Terrorism-related risk assessment has been a hot research topic, but the scholarship remains in its infancy (Knudsen, 2018). Research across fields including forensic psychology, psychiatry and more quantitative terrorism studies has sought to identify a "best" model or a list of indicators to assess individuals (Gill, 2015; Sarma, 2017). However, because success so far has been limited, might we instead look to

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<sup>3</sup> Altier et al. also argue that such "pull" factors out of terrorism exerted relatively less influence than "pull" factors in the particular terrorist autobiographies they studied.



more established (and larger) fields like psychiatry for an idea of how successful risk assessment for violence can be?

Unfortunately, risk assessment even for psychiatric patients in the rich world—a challenge for which we have far greater evidence and resources than terrorism or extremism—is useful but only partially predicts violence.<sup>4</sup> A trade-off always exists because no clear answer can exist: incarcerating huge numbers of relatively lower risk individuals prevents those individuals from acting outside, but in itself leads to hopelessness for ever larger numbers of people. More research on better tools to make judgments is needed, but even that is no panacea.

Another problem is that we do not yet know how best to incarcerate those who cannot be reintegrated into society. Should they, for instance, be held amid general prisoners or separated (Powis et al., 2019)? Again, further research is needed.

A third problem is that public opinion in key Western countries simply does not want returnees. Recent polling in France, for instance, found 89 percent of respondents are against the return of adult jihadis and 67 percent oppose repatriating children (Cebrián, 2019). Moreover, permanently incarcerating people for potentially committing future crimes is problematic for understandable human rights reasons in countries like the UK.

In sum, evidence-based tools can help CENTCOM more effectively address this challenge – but they offer no panacea. Nor given current Western domestic politics do they yet offer a clear route to avoid incarcerating such people in the Middle East and trying to limit the harm they pose to other prisoners (e.g. through general prison reform and rebuilding societies), whilst researching better future risk management.

## PART II THE SOCIETAL SCALE

Part II considers the societal scale. In a society as dislocated as Syria's, what cognitive factors affect reconciliation between its factions, and what opportunities does Syrian society afford people who might—we hope—reintegrate?

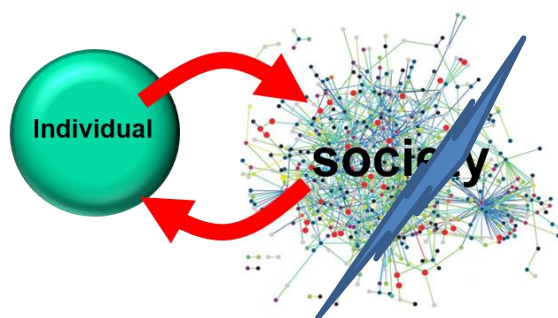


Figure 4. Part II examines the fractured society into which people must reintegrate.

### **Help society afford individuals options to disengage**

**Recommendation Three:** *Help society afford individuals options to disengage.*

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. (Fazel et al., 2012). A comprehensive set of UK official psychiatric risk guidelines based on thorough analysis of evidence can be seen at <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng10/evidence/full-guideline-pdf-70830253>

To grasp what society offers radicalised or violent individuals—or what those individuals perceive society offers them—a useful concept is that of “affordances.”

“**Affordances**” are the possibilities for action that an actor perceives that their tools or environment gives them.<sup>5</sup> Affordances are an important concept in designing technology for humans: what tasks can users possibly perform with new technologies at their disposal? My first iPhone afforded me the new ability to browse the internet wherever I went. Kindles versus iPads have different affordances, because they facilitate different actions. Affordances shape perception and action: so, to a man with a hammer everything looks like a nail; and as strategists argue “capabilities create intentions.” In our personal or work lives, a “mentor” or “role model” might help us see possibilities afforded by the world that we couldn’t see on our own. Criminology literature shows the importance of environments (e.g. physical streets or prisons) that afford possibilities for crime or violence (or afford possibilities for study and betterment) – and such insights can be applied to extremism (Bouhana, 2019).

What opportunities does society afford the individual? An individual terrorist or fighter’s decision calculus was shown in Figure 3, but what options do they perceive their environment really affords them? Can CENTCOM help shape society so it affords radicalised or violent individuals plausible alternative options outside violence to meet their cognitive needs?

### **Afford plausible pathways outside violence**

***Recommendation 3a:** Afford people plausible pathways to futures outside violence, e.g. CENTCOM can work with partners to prioritise economic development, safety, family and social networks.*

For many of these interventions to improve society (e.g. in camps or more broadly) CENTCOM cannot create success by itself – but CENTCOM is often critical to provide security, funding and leadership amongst US (e.g. USAID) and other (e.g. allies, charities, local) partners. CENTCOM is often necessary but not sufficient.

### **Order and disorder – psychological needs society must meet**

***Recommendation 3b:** Order or predictability provided by formal laws or informal rules is a key psychological need for populations – and CENTCOM should work with partners (local, allies, civil society) to generate societal order.*

How can we afford people ordered environments to live in? A core insight from neuroscience is that when an action occurs its impact is crucially modulated by its associated “prediction error.” This prediction error is simply defined as the difference between what actually occurred, and what they expected. The bigger an action’s associated prediction error, the bigger the action’s psychological impact. This explains, for instance, the psychological impact of “strategic surprise” (something occurs but wasn’t expected, so has a big prediction error and big impact) while recurrent events lose that impact (they occur and are expected, so has a small prediction error and impact).

To build acceptance and legitimacy among populations, one must manage the “prediction errors” that accumulate in day-to-day activities with them. This involves:

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<sup>5</sup> For a recent review in cognitive science see e.g. (Ramstead et al., 2016), but the term itself arose in the 1970s psychology literature with James J. Gibson.

**(a) Producing predictability:** In a predictable environment, events are well expected – there are few prediction errors. Neuroscience work suggests predictability is itself desirable (Friston, 2010). This concurs with David Kilcullen’s argument (Kilcullen, 2013) that generating predictability is central to successful counterinsurgency (COIN). The foundation of his book "Out of the Mountains" is the "theory of competitive control," where "*populations respond to a predictable, ordered, normative system, which tells them exactly what they need to do, and not do, in order to be safe.*"

**(b) Managing expectations:** When a population expects something and it is not delivered, this leads to a prediction error. This is why managing expectations to prevent prediction error is critical. We see this in counterinsurgency theory, e.g. as David Kilcullen stated (IRRC, 2011) a major way things "*can go wrong is you can create expectations for programmes which then don’t deliver. And that can lead to resentment, which actually ends up empowering the radical group.*"

More broadly, the idea that managing expectations is central to maintaining political order in changing societies was also a key insight in seminal work on political development, e.g. (Huntington, 1965).

## **Reconciliation in Syrian society – overcoming cognitive barriers**

**Recommendation Four:** *Syrian “society” fractured in civil war and CENTCOM should use long-term, evidence-based interventions for predictable psychological forces (e.g. fear, self-interest, fairness) that obstruct societal reconciliation.*

Syrian “society” fractured apart in civil war. Reintegrating radicalized or violent individuals into that society requires tackling the psychological forces pushing that fractured society apart. That is, a long-term Syrian reconciliation process.

Peace and reconciliation is a long process for which no magic bullets exist. It involves addressing the psychological forces obstructing societal reconciliation, which are predictable and treatable; as well as building trust between groups. I discuss these in the final section of this report.<sup>6</sup>

### **Psychological forces pushing society apart**

Psychological forces push fractured states like Syria apart, and serve to bring them together. I highlight three here (Fig. 5).

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<sup>6</sup> This subsection adapts my previous work for SMA on Israel-Palestine reconciliation, which (Wright, 2015) covers in much greater detail.

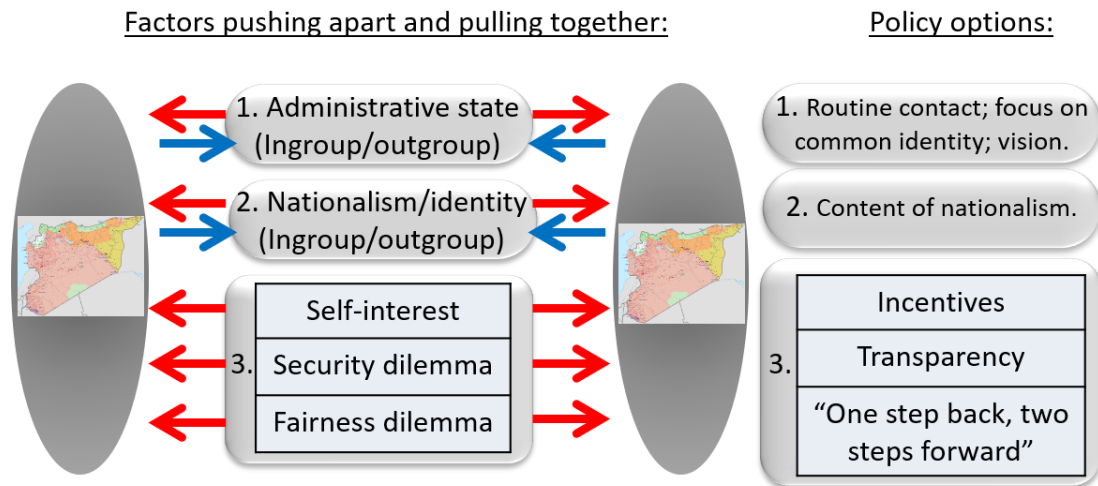


Figure 5. Psychological forces push the shards of fractured states apart, and bring them together.

### (1) Reconciling administrations and security sectors

Policy options to reconcile the administrations and security sectors in a fractured state include:

- (a) Regular contact and undertaking common tasks to build cooperation, relationships and routinize contact. This should be high "bandwidth" (i.e. between many levels in the administration), e.g. "cigarettes and humus" at the higher levels and other techniques at lower levels. This is especially challenging when face-to-face meetings may be dangerous, in which case virtual methods may be safer and more cost-effective.
- (b) As individuals often have multiple overlapping identities (e.g. a Syrian, a Sunni, a person of a particular clan or profession, a woman) it is possible to focus individuals' attention on a common identity across the groups (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2009). Effects of focusing on specific aspects of identity are widespread, e.g. focusing on criminal aspects of identity increased dishonesty in prison populations (World Bank, 2015, pp. 67–68). Where possible, one should also avoid increasing the salience of group membership or divisions, as this tends to increase division (Sambanis et al., 2012).
- (c) Implement a common vision and goals for both sides. Both sides need a plausible, unifying path forward, even if it can initially only be limited coordination and economic development.

### (2) Nationalism and national identity

The state or nation that underlies a government administration will have some form of national identity or nationalism. That national identity matters particularly in the security sector, where one may be asked to lay down one's life. For example, consider the difficulties of the Iraqi Army versus ISIS in 2014, where Iraq has a weakly coherent national identity. Syria as a whole must have a national identity and national narrative that: fosters social cohesion and enables the people to defend national interests when necessary; encourages acceptable internal policies (e.g. human rights); and does not airbrush uncomfortable chapters from its history.

Syrian nationalism has been one of multiple overlapping and important identities, with others involving the village/clan, pan-Arab nationalism, pan-Islamism and previously pan-Syrianism (including Palestine). Syrian and regional or sub-national

nationalisms are currently developing, and there are many possible future paths that they could take.

Finally, I note that this issue of national identity and nationalism received perhaps less interest in the COIN or nation-building literatures than might be expected. For example, in the prominent Rand book “A beginner’s guide to nation-building” (Dobbins et al., 2007), a search reveals no results for either “nationalism” or “identity”. The relative lack of attention to group identities and COIN was also noted in a paper that sought to address the subject (Sambanis et al., 2012). Although prominent voices such as Francis Fukuyama increasingly recognize its importance (Fukuyama, 2014, 2018).

### **(3) Self-interest, security dilemma and fairness dilemma**

Thucydides, the father of realism, suggested a trio of human drives behind war (Kagan, 1996). These three motivations push the non-contiguous parts of states apart: self-interest (that can be incompatible between groups), fear (that can cause a Security Dilemma); and honor (that can cause a Fairness Dilemma).

In a security dilemma, each side’s fear of the other side’s capabilities and uncertain intentions leads to countermeasures that feed a vicious cycle (Christensen, 1999). Policies to address a security dilemma include reassuring allies while reducing uncertainty through transparency and clear deterrence. Reducing this fear is necessary, but insufficient in this case.

In the Fairness Dilemma (Wright & Schoff, 2014) each side is driven to take actions they see as self-evidently right and just, even at high cost to themselves – but which the other side considers unfair, aggressive or risk-taking. One does not necessarily have to be afraid or uncertain of the other’s motivations and capabilities; the rejection of unfairness or pursuit of justice can drive one to act.

Policy recommendations for the Fairness Dilemma form a strategy called “one step back, two steps forward”. First, looking back, all sides could learn from examples of overcoming the fairness dilemma – not just the lesson of German apologies, but also lessons to all sides from Northern Ireland and other cases. The importance of apologies (Shin & Sneider, 2014) must not be minimized, but they can only ever be half the story and they must be accepted. And the strategy involves two steps forward. A first step forward is anticipating factors that may exacerbate the fairness dilemma – and a crucial example is helping develop forms of nationalism and group identities that will not inflame this dynamic. In a second step forward, the parties should develop a rules-based structure for dealing with disputes – and it is the process that is important in providing a path forward.

### **Methods to build trust between societal groups**

Trust is inherently psychological: something one values is at risk, in a situation where what happens to it depends on somebody else’s decision.

Here I consider trust-building during more stable periods – clearly a medium- or longer-term goal for CENTCOM in Syria. Various interventions are shown to build trust or reduce prejudice between groups. Here I focus on interventions supported by field evidence, for example from observing interventions in the field, or from randomised controlled trials that compare an intervention against a control (in the same way a new medicine may be compared against a placebo). Here I draw in

particular on the excellent review by Betsy Paluck (Paluck & Green, 2009) to describe the following methods:

- (1) Cooperative learning: Sessions are engineered so that students must teach and learn from one another. For example, teachers give each student one piece of the lesson plan, requiring students to put the pieces of the “puzzle” together collectively.
- (2) Media and entertainment interventions: Books, radio, television, and film are vivid and popular couriers of many kinds of social and political messages. For example, in a year-long field study nearly 600 Rwandan citizens, prisoners, and genocide survivors either listened to a soap opera about two communities struggling with prejudice and violence, or one on health (Paluck, 2009). It affected perceptions of social norms and behaviors on intermarriage, open dissent, cooperation, and trauma healing.
- (3) Discussing opinions about intergroup relations brings benefits (and potential pitfalls). For example, white university females’ opinions about a racial incident on campus conformed to the publicly expressed opinions of confederates who were randomly assigned to condone, condemn, or remain neutral in their reactions (Blanchard et al., 1994).
- (4) Contact between groups can reduce prejudice between them. For example, a study randomly assigned white teenagers to Outward Bound camping expeditions that were either all white or racially mixed (Green & Wong, 2008). Those from the mixed group later reported less prejudice.

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