

# DYNAMICS OF ISIS: AN EMERGING-STATE ACTOR

Handout of Model Information, Terminology & Key Points

## **Model Information:**

**Perspective:** US Military (terminology) & US Government (intervention policy options)

**Modeling Method:** Strategy Dynamics, Warren Method

**Model Boundaries:**

### **Slicing for Complex Problems<sup>1</sup>**

| Axes             | Slice Modeled   | Slice Not Modeled   |
|------------------|---|---|
| Mode             | Exponential growth of Governed Population   | Behavioral Limits to Growth                                   |
| Time             | Duration = 2013-2020<br>Unit = 6 months, $dt = .0055$ (or 1 day)<br>(later changed to 2013-2020 during model boundary validation) | Pre-2013 and greater than 7 year feedback loops               |
| Geography        | Territory: Iraq & Syria Provinces & Cities<br>Ethno-Social Populations: Kurds, Shia & Sunni<br>Forces: ISIS vs. Everyone Else     | Cross Regional Flows<br>Tribal Structures<br>Towns & Villages |
| Policy Responses | Exogenous Policies  | Latent Structure Policies                                     |

## **Terminology:**

**Control though Coercive Power:** Results from the exercise of “coercion and reward”, is “particularistic as it is support for a specific action or specific person, not for an institution or a system of government” and is more resource intensive as it “requires the investment... to induce compliance whenever necessary.”<sup>2</sup>

**Governed through Legitimacy:** is a form of power that relies on the function of procedures that the governed considers fair established with credibility over time. Unlike coercive power used to ensure compliance, control by others is replaced by self-control, which socially is a much cheaper way to ensure social order.”<sup>3</sup>

**Insurgent:** “challenge the state by making it impossible for the government to perform its functions, or by usurping those functions—most commonly, local-level political legitimacy; the rule of law; monopoly on the use of force; taxation; control of movement; and regulation of the economy.”<sup>4</sup>

**Irregular Warfare:** “...violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s),”<sup>5</sup>

**Outer Ethnographic Envelope:** The human terrain where ISIS no longer shares associations with the underlying religious, tribal or latent forms of social organization. (See Inner Ethnographic Envelope.)

**State-Like Actors:** “[s]tate-like adversaries refer to non-traditional adversaries that have evolved to the point of attaining state-like power, authority, and influence over a population” and later acknowledging that “these adaptive actors may possess some of the power of states and adopt state-like structures.”<sup>6</sup>

**Terrorist:** “Western popular culture the conception of terrorism became that of disembodied cells of radicalized, nihilistic individuals [who]...could not and did not tap into a mass base that drew its legitimacy

<sup>1</sup> Saeed, Khalid, “Slicing a Complex Problem for System Dynamics Modeling.”

<sup>2</sup> Turnley et al., *COIN 2.0 Formulation*, 37-38.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 38–40.

<sup>4</sup> Kilcullen, David, *Counterinsurgency*. Location 2529

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>6</sup> Olson, Mattis, and Mullen, *IRREGULAR WARFARE: COUNTERING IRREGULAR THREATS JOINT OPERATING CONCEPT*, 8 & 16.

from popular grievances, as traditional insurgents.”<sup>7</sup>

**Inner Ethnographic Envelope:** The human terrain which shares “indigenous forms of association, local means of organization, and traditional methods of mobilization... or latent forms of social organization” with ISIS.<sup>8</sup>

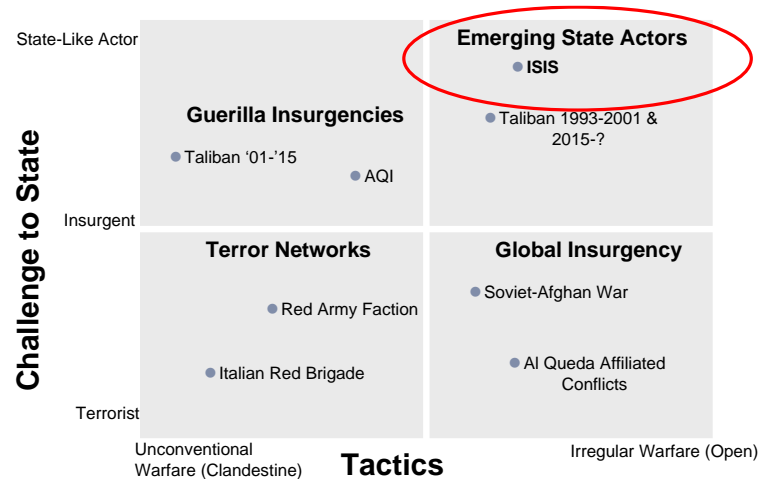
**Unconventional Warfare:** “...operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area.”<sup>9</sup>

### **KEY POINTS:**

ISIS is an emerging-state actor located in the matrix to the right.

Emerging-state actor theory can be summarized as:

1. Emerging-state actor must take territory and *govern openly*.
2. Territory must possess a *valuable resource*.
3. Transition from control via coercion to *legitimacy* must be rapid.
4. *Local grievances* required to attract local recruits.
5. *Global grievances* are required to attract foreign recruits.
6. *Insurgency modes cannot replicate* same performance.
7. Emerging-state actor *cannot return to an insurgency mode*.



### ***Papers Related to this Topic available in Conference Proceedings:***

“Dynamics of ISIS: An Emerging-State Actor”

“Containing ISIS: Analysis of Intervention Policies”

“Art of War: Modeling Combat Simulation with Endogenous Geospatial Feedback”

A poster of this work can be found in the Exhibitors Foyer titled “Art of War: Modeling Combat Simulation”

### ***Contact Information:***

PhD Candidate Timothy Clancy, WPI [tbclancy@wpi.edu](mailto:tbclancy@wpi.edu) [timothy.clancy.nv@gmail.com](mailto:timothy.clancy.nv@gmail.com)

Advisor: Professor Saeed Khalid, WPI

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Location 3123

<sup>8</sup> Renzi, “Networks: Terra Incognita and the Case for Ethnographic Intelligence.”

<sup>9</sup> “Joint Publication 1-02: Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,” 261.