Background
The Department of Defense (DoD), National Science Foundation (NSF), and the UK Research Councils (RCUK) have all invested in research aimed at understanding ideas, behaviors and beliefs in a security context. This workshop was a collaborative effort to compare diverse approaches in this research and to seek out synergies, by bringing together Principal Investigators on projects funded through the 2008 DoD Minerva Research Initiative; the NSF National Security, Conflict and Cooperation competitions; Minerva Research Chairs; fellows funded through the RCUK Global Uncertainties Programme; and other scholars from both countries with related research.

Summary
The workshop brought together scholars with a range of disciplinary backgrounds and research interests to explore a number of themes. The distinctive scholarly traditions in the United States and Britain were in evidence, notably in the American tendency to see social science in terms of the generation of verifiable propositions, while the British were more European in their view of scientific activity as being about systematic analysis of available evidence. Nevertheless, the discussions were of high quality, with a readiness to engage with unfamiliar approaches that demonstrated the potential for future transatlantic collaboration.

The field has already been transformed in the two decades since the end of the Cold War. This is the result of a focus on intra-state rather than inter-state conflict, raising issues about the source of ethnic differences and posing the challenge of humanitarian intervention. For research, intra-state emphasis has encouraged more sociological and anthropological approaches. Yet, at the same time, developments in more formal methodologies based on economic analysis and the influence of cognitive psychology have influenced the social sciences more widely. Workshop participants also learned how a better understanding of evolution encourages appreciation of adaptive processes.

The potential for further transformation of the field was seen in either the pull of changes in the international system—for example, the growing importance of developments such as political Islam or balance of power considerations in the Asia-Pacific region—or in the push of new methods—for example, the ability to interrogate large data sets. In addition, there was a lively
discussion about ethical and practical challenges faced by social scientists who work closely with practitioners and, in particular, armed forces when engaged in operations.

After 9/11 there was a surge of interest in terrorism and the sources of radicalization, but also in the impact this can have on particular communities and legal rights. This has raised issues such as whether there are so-called root causes of violent extremism, such as deteriorating economic conditions and inequalities (even though these conditions by no means invariably lead to violence), and also the impact of the criminal justice system and forms of policing on attitudes towards state institutions. This was considered especially important in terms of what might be considered a different type of security challenge emerging from the testing economic conditions resulting from the financial crisis. In the United States this tends to be viewed in terms of the pressure on defense budgets, which leads to a reduced capability to project power. In Europe, concerns about effects of budgetary austerity are combined with worry that, as recent polls testify, a period of intense austerity can lead to the rise of populist and extremist politics, which might challenge the European project and indeed challenge other forms of multilateralism.

Lastly there is the question of whether more traditional—realist—concepts of international affairs may be making a comeback as China starts to flex its muscles in the Asia-Pacific region. This raises questions for the United States about the meaning of alliance and how best to engage a rising power such as China in the context of China’s own difficult relations with India, Japan, and a number of the ASEAN countries.

Looking ahead, it might be possible to frame research proposals that will anticipate new issues, such as those arising out of new power relationships or austerity measures, so that they can be analyzed in real time rather than only in retrospect. In general, to the extent that foreign policy requires a good understanding of “foreigners,” there is much to be said for reinforcing area studies to ensure that expertise in countries of concern is readily at hand.

The challenge, whether addressing an established or evolving agenda, is to ensure that academics can add value. This can mean providing evidence to test various propositions made in the policy debates but also providing context, so that the issues are located fully in their broader social, political, and historical settings. If relations with China—or between China and Japan—are going to be tense, is there anything that can be learned from the management of Cold War crises or the IR literature on security dilemmas?

There is bound to be pressure on governments to take initiatives in the face of a new challenge. Academics can show the value of ensuring the best possible diagnosis, that the “problem” to be “solved” has been properly identified, and can offer a framework for evaluating alternative solutions and their possible consequences. For example, those imposing coercive sanctions on a “rogue” state also need to consider how the rogue governments of such states can actually be strengthened through opportunities provided by sanctions to control smuggling and rationing.
Academics can also offer a different perspective from that of government, considering issues as those on the receiving end of policy rather than those devising it (worm’s eye rather than bird’s eye). This can not only help inform wider political debates but also alert policymakers to unintended negative consequences of well-intentioned efforts.

In terms of relating research to policy, participants were reminded of the importance of making any new insights intelligible so that they can be grasped by policymakers and fed into decision-making processes or else can be picked up so as to help shape and inform a wider public debate. At the same time, it is of note that most participants had experienced the difficulties of getting their findings used appropriately if at all, given the many pressures on the policy process. This leads to the suggestion that the relationship between the scholarly community and government is an area that in itself requires further consideration.

The social sciences developed in part as an independent source of policy to what was presumed to be a benign state, but this view has obviously changed in the light of the growing professionalization of the social sciences (which is one reason why their internal conversations can barely be understood by the lay public) and questioning about whether the state does really always act in a way to benefit the wider community. Academics in the UK are under considerable pressure to demonstrate a (helpful) impact on policy and public debate, which is resented by those who believe that scholarship brings its own rewards. These issues raise important ethical questions as well as practical ones.

Those academics who work particularly closely with governments and the armed forces have special responsibilities and will face distinctive challenges. There can be real and difficult trade-offs in terms of acquiring—and disseminating—research materials and not doing harm to either individuals or institutions. The issue is different for those who are independent of government, as opposed to those employed by government. The purist view would be to stay at arm’s length at all times; yet that would leave some important issues uninvestigated and some valuable practical advice unoffered.

Research Topics: Transformative Concepts

1. **Managing escalation**: The management of international escalations is a well-established field of scholarship, yet the twenty-first century presents three new challenges: First, the rise of China presents new technological and economic aspects of great power competition, as well as a particular importance of transparency and an understanding of governance mechanisms. Second, multilateral proliferation of nuclear weapons in Asia and possibly the Middle East goes beyond existing deterrence theory, just as a generation of deterrence scholars is retiring. Third, deterrence of states using multiple nonconventional methods (for

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1 Comments on the workshop were generally very enthusiastic. Representative and illustrative comments are included as footnotes. The full set is available on request.
example, nuclear threats, terrorism, and cyberattacks) is not well developed theoretically. All three topics would benefit from an investment in area studies.2

2. **State consolidation/disintegration:** The concept of ungoverned space is more usefully broadened to include space and function not controlled by government, in which endemic organizations might prevent state consolidation and contribute to disintegration, while themselves providing state-like functions, including security. The nature of organizations that successfully challenge states, the services they provide, their forms of mobilization, and their relationship with residents are of great interest. Which spaces states choose to expend resources to control is similarly interesting. These can be studied using formal theory, and field and survey research methods. A strategic doctrine for the use of drones in monitoring and targeting extremists would complement the study of ungoverned spaces.

3. **Allies and clients:** The Arab Spring uprisings and the withdrawal from Afghanistan raise questions of strategic management of relations with allies who function as weak democracies or weak autocracies without U.S. or Western forces present. We require a principal/agent theory to inform those relationships, especially for CENTCOM, AFRICOM, and the U.S. State Department. Analysis of a strategic doctrine for the use of drones on the one hand, and development on the other, would complement that research effort.

4. **Management of coercive organizations:** Rebel organizations using coercive force may now be studied using a wealth of new data available from video, captured documents, intercepted communications and participant interviews. (Brian McQuinn and Jacob Shapiro provided excellent examples.) Symmetrically, austerity provides a new impetus to study the efficiency of methods and management within our own militaries and those of allies that we support. Communication, contracting, compensation, training, and education in these organizations might well benefit from rigorous academic research.3

5. **Connectedness:** A more useful concept than changes in information and communication technology is the idea of connectedness, which provides an address and low-cost access for individuals through various electronic media—principally cellular phones. Increased connectedness affects the function of individuals and organizations by creating scarcity of four resources: attention, privacy, mediated contact (including peer review), and emotional space. Several examples were presented:

   A. Scarce attention was a theme of in Sir Nigel Sheinwald’s discussion of policymaking on security issues.

   B. Scarce private communication came up in Jacob Shapiro’s description of experimental innovations that undermine corruption of government in insecure areas by using the cellphone network to enhance transparency.

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2 “The workshop was overly focused on terrorism, political violence, and internal conflict and less on traditional approaches to security studies, such as the role of the state and inter-state conflict issues.” (Tai Ming Cheung)

3 “Future possible research strands—something behavioral—how political and military leaders behave under pressure; how leaders handle information.” (Sir Nigel Sheinwald)
C. Unmediated contact is a growing problem in efforts to effectively privilege informed (or even peer-reviewed) scholarship over anecdotal evidence in policy-making.

D. Remote-controlled conflict through drones creates emotional pressure on warfighters by shifting them daily from conflict to civilian life without the buffer of downtime with peers that soldiers would get in the field.

6. **Social effects of austerity**: An immediate policy concern is that austerity imposed on social programs and domestic policing will yield domestic violent extremism, as it did in the aftermath of the Great Depression in Europe. The duration of that austerity is as uncertain as its effects. Deploying measurement instruments should be both a research and a policy priority.

7. **Political Islam**: Although jurisprudence in Islam is somewhat plastic, the submission of leaders to a recognized jurisprudence provides their constituents with some reassurance that Islamist politicians might be less corrupt and less rapacious in the exercise of power than the old regimes in Egypt, Syria, Libya, Pakistan, and elsewhere. That notion stands in contrast to views of political Islam which conflate violent extremists with mainstream jurisprudence and politics. A research agenda that examines this and other explanations for the popularity of political Islam (drawn from politics, anthropology and related fields) by applying survey methods (in the tradition of political science) would be extremely promising. Organizational studies of successful Islamist movements would complement that effort, as their success relative to secular alternatives remains a puzzle.

8. **Major topics we missed**:

A. **Criminal violence as an international threat**. To some extent this is a symptom of unconsolidated states and could be placed under that topic heading.

B. **Multilateral interventions**. Current U.S. policy is getting out ahead of scholarship in the sense that we are now building complex security interventions with tens of partners, each with their own military capacity and domestic constraints. The management of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, for instance, has been a challenge.

C. **Invited interventions**, such as African Union forces in Somalia, or United Nations prosecutors in Nicaragua, are an increasing element of international policy. These might also be grouped under unconsolidated states.

D. **Defense procurement and the management of large procurement projects** has been the focus of strikingly little academic research, despite accounting for 5 to 7 percent of the U.S. federal budget. In contrast, the functioning of the federal Medicare and Medicaid systems—which are roughly the same size as the defense budget—have been usefully informed by myriad studies over the past three decades.

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4 Future possible research strands—practical lessons on nation-building (security assistance, judiciary, civilian capacity building, elections, civil society) from Iraq and Afghanistan. (Sir Nigel Sheinwald)
E. A legal framework for countering international insurgency and terrorism by civilians that goes beyond the Geneva Convention.

Transformative Methods

1. Data availability: Many of the valuable research projects over the last few years have relied on declassified data or data collected from open sources that are redundant with classified data. A complement to investment in security research would be investment in procedures to permit data declassification for research purposes. A sure path to engagement of a broader set of scholars is to lower barriers to entry by creating accessible datasets. The data declassification effort of the Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point and the Empirical Studies of Conflict website, both described by Col. Michael Meese, are excellent examples.

2. Methodological cleavages: Security research has attracted well-trained scholars from a wide variety of fields. Abstracting from semantics and artificial constructions, important methodological distinctions remain between the research methods practiced, ranging from purely narrative to rigorous formal modeling and testing. An inductive narrative approach is a complement to—not a substitute for—a deductive approach emphasizing precisely-stated hypotheses with testable implications for observables. The cost of mastery of each skill sets causes most scholars to specialize. While competition for resources often motivates scholars to argue over the relative benefits of induction and deduction, a field with a sense of urgency about inference would be well served by recognizing this complementarity, and seek to simultaneously analyze inductively, state hypotheses, and test deductively.\(^5\) Implementing that parallel inference in teams has proven difficult with mature scholars. A more feasible alternative would be to fund research teams large enough to include multiple graduate students and postdoctoral fellows with different training.

A second cleavage, particularly in political science and economics, is between macro and micro analysis. Micro analysis tends to analyze individual behavior more rigorously and lends itself to testing using large datasets, sometimes including experiments—allowing very convincing inference. Macro analysis often takes on more important questions for policymakers, such as nuclear deterrence, or incentive problems with corrupt allies—which seldom allow analysis in large samples and preclude experiments. That tension between topics that are important and topics that lend themselves to precise inference must be recognized. Our discussion stressed the potential to link micro and macro analyses through well-theorized models, an emphasis on basic research, and the choice of appropriate methods for a given research question.

3. Synergies between U.S. and UK scholars: Researchers on either side of the Atlantic clearly shared sufficient vocabulary, approaches, and mutual respect to very productively exchange ideas. Yet our approaches tend to differ, with the British universities showing relative strength on analysis of political Islam, narrative approaches, and historical analysis, while U.S. institutions are relatively strong on formal analytics, deductive approaches, and met-

\(^5\) “Great to hear about how people have employed a range of qualitative and quantitative methods—very beneficial for my work.” (Nick Wheeler)
rics. These differences are reflected in the instruction of graduate students. Constructive ways to effectively exploit gains to intellectual exchange would include: joint research teams; exchange of graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and young scholars;\(^6\) and thematic conferences.\(^7\) One suggestion was for the funders to broaden the reviewer pool to include scholars from the other country.

4. **Engagement with practitioners:** Engagement of social science with practitioners has had large payoffs: the revised U.S. military *Counterinsurgency* manual of 2006; the U.S. transition to an all-volunteer force in 1973; the Empirical Studies of Conflict collection of microdata; the Counterinsurgency Advisory and Assistance Team in Afghanistan; the Human Terrain System.

Less intimate engagement has also yielded payoffs, most notably the game theory underlying nuclear deterrence policy, current scholarship on rational extremists, and optimal rules of engagement, based on analysis of microdata and sometimes on experimental data. In contrast, disengaged policy has gotten ahead of social science scholarship in the last decade in two costly pre-emptive invasions and in a poorly articulated democratization strategy.

While personal engagement has tremendous possibilities, and has been a superb source of research insights, it is fraught with logistic and ethical pitfalls. In particular, maintaining academic integrity and secrecy, guarding the safety of human subjects and institutions, and minding unequal power relationships with human subjects can create conflicting challenges.\(^8\) Communicating effectively with a military “mindset” and measuring the effects of engagement also present difficulties. A cohort of graduate students with veteran status may partially alleviate these tensions.

5. **Basic research and decision cycles:** A repeated theme is that the security environment changes faster than doctrine or research can adapt. Yet many of the great surprises of the past decades were not such great transformations that the response could not have been informed by existing scholarship. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, the attacks of 9/11, the Iraqi insurgency, and the Arab Spring were all surprises, and in all those cases the principal failing of policy was arguably that it was slow to refresh the doctrine with *existing* scholarship. A prudent overall strategy from a policy perspective would therefore be to maintain broad capacities in basic research on conflict studies, with RFP topics strategically informed by assessments of emerging threats.

6. **Disseminating research results:** As funded research on security accumulates more results, dissemination becomes an increasingly important issue. Possible solutions include encouraging grantees to apply for additional resources for dissemination and training activities, and organizing thematic workshops with practitioners.

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\(^{6}\) “—funding exchange programs” (Marie Gillespie)

\(^{7}\) Many participants suggested a reciprocal conference in the UK.

\(^{8}\) “The typical NSF initiative involves interdisciplinary connections, but the nice thing about Minerva is that it spans theory and practice. I’d like to see some encouragement of combinations of an academic and a practitioner/consultant, but I’m not sure this is possible, or even having the idea get funded and DoD assigning a practitioner or two to the project.” (Charles Holt)
7. **Big data**: The expansion of the Internet and mobile telephone networks, together with the increased presence of sensors, indicate that orders of magnitude more data will soon be available for research. How we can best use YouTube videos from Libyan rebels, for instance, as an original source of data, is an open methodological and technical question. Once we agree on what constitutes convincing inference using such data, new fields of interdisciplinary research may open up.

**Facilitators’ Notes**

Research on security-related topics has benefited from four positive trends: 1) the Vietnam era reticence of academic social scientists to engage in security issues has been replaced with a post-9/11 sense of urgency; 2) military officers are better educated than ever before, improving possibilities for engagement with scholars; 3) the number of veterans in graduate school has increased due to the post-9/11 expansion in military personnel; and 4) data availability and new methods have made research easier.

At the same time, the field faces three major challenges. First, a pool of scholars that expanded during the Cold War period is retiring and not being replaced. At the same time, it is quite difficult to induce mature scholars to change fields, so that much recent progress is due to the efforts of assistant and associate professors. Second, the security environment now changes so quickly that RFPs can scarcely keep pace. Moreover, the field now includes scholars with disparate methods, approaches, and expertise, challenging the breadth of review panels. Given the difficulty in establishing multidisciplinary research teams of mature scholars, one suggestion would be to fund multiple investigator research teams with postdoctoral fellows from different disciplines.

Given the reasonable success in generating a useful interdisciplinary dialogue in this conference, a smaller follow-up meeting focused on particular topics might be sensible.

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