

Reports

The Trump-Iran Showdown: A Conflict Resolution Perspective

**Richard E. Rubenstein*

***Oakley Thomas Hill*

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[Getty]

In the midst of his controversial handling of the Coronavirus dilemma and oil war with Russia and Saudi Arabia, President Trump announced he had ordered the US navy “to shoot down and destroy any and all Iranian gunboats if they harass our ships at sea”, in reaction to the move of a dozen Iranian boats within a few yards of US warships. His Deputy Defense Secretary David Norquist explained the President was emphasizing “all of our ships retain the right of self-defense and people need to be very careful in their interactions to understand the inherent right of self-defense.” The Iranian Revolutionary Guard said it had put the country's first military satellite into orbit at 425km. It considers the move to be “a great success and a new development in the field of space for Islamic Iran.” While various interpretations have solidified mistrust between Washington and Tehran about whether the technology used could help Iran develop intercontinental ballistic missiles, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo stated “Iran needs to be held accountable for what they've done. They have now had a military organisation that the United States has designated a terrorist attempt to launch a satellite.”

In this paper, Richard E. Rubenstein and Oakley Thomas Hill of George Mason University examine the de-escalation-escalation mood of the US-Iranian relations over the past five years, after the Obama White House signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), known commonly as the Iran Nuclear Deal in Vienna on July 14, 2015, with Iran and the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States—plus Germany) together with the European Union. They argue that these paradoxes are best understood within the historical context of imperial decline, which forefronts the tension between an “America first” orientation on the one hand, and maintaining a unipolar world order on the other. From the signing of the JCPOA accord in

2015 to the killing of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in 2020, U.S-Iranian relations have dramatically shifted from their most cooperative to their most combative. President Trump's decision to assassinate the leader of the Quds Force has been explained as a power play in the Political Realist mode – a calculated risk aimed at advancing U.S. interests while avoiding a general war.

As the U.S.-Iran conflict has escalated, the United States has sought to achieve these ends by employing low-intensity weapons such as economic sanctions and targeted killings that are said to be both economical and unlikely to produce a high-intensity conflict. However, these weapons at best leave the conflict unchanged, and, at worse, risk all-out war. The products of imperial strategy, they may meet a demand for a less costly empire, but they do not move toward conflict resolution. Resolving systemic conflicts of this sort requires that the system generating the conflict be altered so as to enable satisfaction of the parties' basic needs.



Iranian satellite launch comes amid tensions between Tehran and Washington over the collapsing nuclear deal [AP]

Many analysts have criticized Donald Trump's foreign policy strategies as paradoxical. Even before Qassem Soleimani arrived in Baghdad on January 3, 2020, American intelligence services had been alerted. Avoiding the use of his private plane for security reasons, the Iranian general had devised other travel arrangements. In Damascus, he and four Revolutionary Guard soldiers had slipped onto a Cham Wings passenger jet destined for Baghdad. The flight landed at 12:30 a.m. It was a cool, clear night and there was a slight breeze coming from the northeast. As they stepped off the jet and onto the tarmac, Abu Mahdi Muhandis, the Deputy

Head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces, was waiting to greet them with two black SUVs ready and running. Though none of them would move through customs or appear on the flight's roster, their location was nevertheless known. Investigators now suspect that one spy was present at the Damascus airport, a second on the flight, and two more on security staff at Baghdad International Airport. Before driving away on the airport's main road, Muhandis and Soleimani entered the front vehicle and the soldiers entered the back. Under cover of night a U.S. Reaper Drone flew tens of thousands of feet in the air. At 12:55 a.m., while the two SUVs were driving away from the airport, two missiles struck the front vehicle killing both men. Seconds later the second vehicle was struck as well. [\(1\)](#)

The assassination of General Soleimani on the orders of U.S. President Donald Trump raises profound questions of ethics and international politics, but the first question that demands an answer is "Why?" Why, after refusing to retaliate against Iran for a series of attacks in 2019, would the President now decide to eliminate one of that nation's most powerful and popular figures, said by many to be second in authority only to Supreme Leader Ali Khomeini?

1. The Context of Assassination: U.S.-Iran Conflict

The U.S.-Iran conflict has escalated dramatically since President Donald Trump pulled out of the Iran nuclear agreement on May 8, 2018. The withdrawal came as little surprise since Trump had pronounced it a "disastrous deal" even before his election. [\(2\)](#) More unexpected were Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's blistering demands and his threat to impose the "strongest sanctions in history" if they were not met. [\(3\)](#) Trump followed through on these threats by resuming pre-deal sanctions in August 2018, imposing a second wave of sanctions in November 2018, and initiating a Maximum Pressure Campaign the following April. Within the first few months this campaign included designating the Revolutionary Guard a terrorist organization, blocking Iranian oil exports, and revoking waivers allowing Iran to export heavy water. [\(4\)](#) The campaign also played a role in the U.S. increasing military personnel in the region by approximately 20,000. [\(5\)](#)

The Maximum Pressure Campaign is a form of economic strangulation whose aims remain somewhat ambiguous. While Trump claims the goal of the campaign is to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, his National Security Advisor states that the goal is regime change, and his Secretary of State suggests its purpose is to get a better deal on the table. In any case, from the U.S. point of view, the campaign has failed to secure any of its goals. In the absence of the nuclear agreement, Iran is stockpiling more uranium and spinning more centrifuges; outside pressure has unified a sometimes-divided country behind the government;

and, far from moving toward a better deal, the killing of General Soleimani has probably decreased the prospects of a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

Iran at first responded to Trump's abandonment of the JPCOA accord with "strategic patience," while waiting to see if other parties to the pact would be able to hold up their end without the U.S. When they proved unable to do so, Iran incrementally reduced its commitments to observe the terms of the agreement and began a campaign of Maximum Resistance. With little diplomatic or economic recourse, this campaign was primarily violent. Four days after Iran announced the reduction of its commitments, four ships in the Gulf of Oman were bombed: two Saudi, one Norwegian, and one Emirati. One month later, it is suspected that Iran damaged two more ships in the Strait of Hormuz—one Japanese and the other Norwegian—while simultaneously increasing operations in Yemen and Iraq. [\(6\)](#)



A moment of serious talk between former US Secretary of State John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Jawad Darif [Getty]

As economic strangulation continued, the U.S and Iran engaged in continued tit-for-tat conflict, with neither side willing to concede. In July, Iran further reduced its commitments to the nuclear deal and the U.S. moved to cut the nation off from the international banking system. In September, Iran reduced its commitments further and allegedly played a role in a drone attack on Saudi oil facilities. In October the Iran-backed militia Kataib Hezbollah began a sustained campaign against U.S. forces in Iraq. [\(7\)](#) Their eleventh attack resulted in the death of a U.S contractor, prompting Trump to respond by ordering an air strike that killed two dozen militia

members. Allegedly, Kataib Hezbollah then sought to storm a U.S. embassy, which Trump used as the warrant to kill Soleimani. [\(8\)](#)

Considered a savior by some and a devil by others, General Soleimani was a controversial figure. Earlier in the decade, when American officials told a congressional committee that he should be killed, two hundred Iranian dignitaries signed a letter in his defense, and a social-media campaign stated “we are all Qassem Soleimani.” [\(9\)](#) Before his death he was the only general without term limits, and many considered him to be Iran’s second in command. As attested by his vast funeral attendance, Soleimani was beloved in Iran and by many in Iraq and the region.

Having spent most of his life in the Revolutionary Guard, General Soleimani had a long and antagonistic history with the United States, and the Axis of Resistance he organized may long stand as his legacy. Even so, between maneuvers against American interests he occasionally engaged in pragmatic cooperation with the U.S. In 2001 and 2002, he used back channels to feed the U.S. intelligence information on common enemies, including the Taliban and Al Qaeda. The two nations also worked together to empower Iraq’s Shia majority and to form its governing council after the Hussein regime crumbled. Soleimani is also believed to have played a role in persuading Bashar Hafez al-Assad to abandon the use of chemical weapons in Syria, though this may have only been for strategic reasons. [\(10\)](#) More recently, he was reported to favor the JPCOA nuclear deal, although others in Iran saw negotiations with the U.S. as treason. And, even before the U.S. moved against ISIS, Soleimani had mobilized the Iraqi Shia militias against them. [\(11\)](#)

Despite such moments of cooperation, the U.S. has long considered Soleimani an enemy, and this was not the first time a U.S. president had considered killing him. Apparently both George W. Bush and Barack Obama had similar opportunities but declined them because an assassination risked inflaming tensions and turning Soleimani into a martyr, and might also put American troops in the region in danger. [\(12\)](#) In the wake of Soleimani’s assassination, it seems each of these concerns had merit. It would be near political suicide now for an Iranian leader to renegotiate a deal with the U.S. The deceased general has, in fact, become a martyr, and Iran has openly attacked U.S. troops for the first time in a long time. In response to his killing, Iran launched missile attacks on two U.S. air bases in Iraq. The explosions took no lives but caused a number of brain injuries—currently estimated at one hundred—that continues to rise as new symptoms appear among U.S. military personnel. [\(13\)](#) Initially it was reported that no one was killed or wounded, though President Trump noted some soldiers had “headaches” and

later said they were “not very serious,” a remark criticized by the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization. (14) Trump was also quick to assure the American public that “Iran appears to be standing down” and to take credit for a successful, relatively low-cost assertion of U.S. power against a dangerous enemy. (15)



Protesters demonstrate over the U.S. airstrike in Iraq that killed Iranian Revolutionary Guard General Soleimani [Getty]

2. Causes of the Assassination: The Realist Explanation

It is difficult to assess the motivation of a figure as mercurial and often as unreflective as the current U.S. president. The historical account above implies that Trump was moved to assassinate General Soleimani by a number of immediate events, particularly the killing of an American contractor and an assault on the U.S. embassy by Katib Hezbollah. Related political factors noted by many commentators include Trump’s desire to be seen as a tough, competent leader at a time when he was confronted by impeachment proceedings in the U.S. Congress, and after an earlier decision to avoid retaliating for the downing of an American surveillance drone had been characterized as weak and indecisive by members of his own party. It also seems clear that the President considered Soleimani a dangerous enemy responsible for taking American lives following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, as well as for organizing more recent anti-U.S. and anti-Saudi military activities throughout the region. The common theory is that his recent activities, combined with Trump’s domestic political problems, persuaded Trump to order his liquidation.

Essentially, Trump approached this conflict, as he so often does, in the persona of a high-stakes

business negotiator, gambling that he could eliminate a highly effective and popular enemy official without provoking all-out war. Operating in the mode of classical Political Realism, he assumed that by demonstrating a willingness to risk general (perhaps regional) war, the Americans' overall military superiority and the shaky economic condition of the Iranian state would deter that nation's leaders from launching a devastating response to the assassination. Iran's relatively moderate counter-blows made it seem that his gamble had paid off, at least for the time being. Moreover, the President's domestic opponents, who had loudly trumpeted their antagonism to Soleimani and had criticized the killing for the sole reason that it might lead to a general war, found themselves unable to mount a challenge to Trump's narrative of successful risk-taking.

The U.S. President could therefore declare that killing Soleimani produced a military gain for American forces and a political victory for himself. On the other hand, the avoidance of a more serious U.S.-Iran war in this case did not mitigate any of the underlying factors that produced the confrontation to begin with or make the outbreak of war at some future point less likely. So far as we know, the United States has no plans to re-adhere to the JCPOA agreement, to soften the harsh sanctions regime that continues to damage Iran's economy, or to reduce its military support to Iran's regional enemies. Nor is there any sign that the temporary avoidance of war signals an Iranian intention to conciliate the Americans, disband the alliance of Shiite regimes and groups that renders it a regional power, or cease responding aggressively to the pain and frustrations generated by the sanctions regime. Absent some dramatic new initiative on either side to resolve the conflict, there is every likelihood that it will escalate in the near to medium term future, again threatening a major war.



The 10 American sailors captured and held by Iran for about 15 hours May 2016 [AP]

As we know, the Realist view that still underpins most foreign-policy thinking by great powers in the twenty-first century admits of only two ways of resolving international conflicts: through war, and through negotiations that create or maintain a “balance of power.” [\(16\)](#) This is the doctrine espoused by Realist pioneers like Hans Morgenthau, but even among liberal neo-Realists like John J. Mearsheimer, who branded the assassination of Soleimani “remarkably foolish” and disadvantageous to American interests in the region, the U.S.-Iran standoff generates a guarded optimism suggested by balance of power considerations. “Even President Trump and his closest advisers, as foolish as they are, are not going to invade Iran. It would be a disastrous decision,” Mearsheimer said. “I think an air war against Iran is the most serious possible military outcome. What is more likely is that over time you will have a low-grade tit-for-tat (conflict) between Iran and its proxies on one side and the Americans on the other. And I think it will mainly take place in countries like Iraq, Syria and so forth. [\(17\)](#)

This judgment reflects Mearsheimer’s understanding that while the United States enjoys overwhelming military superiority in quantitative terms, an all-out war against Iran could turn out to be as disadvantageous for American interests as were the U.S. wars in Indochina (1965-1973) and Iraq (2003-2011). Military superiority weighed in conventional terms cannot be counted on to produce victory when the “weaker” side is fighting for independence on its own territory, when it combines sophisticated weapons systems with a mastery of unconventional military techniques, and when it has regional allies that can impose unwanted costs on the invading power. [\(18\)](#) Although he admits that an air war initiated by the U.S. is a possibility,

Mearsheimer assumes that the instrumental rationality of all parties, including the American government, will limit the conflict to “low- grade tit-for-tat” exchanges.

Nevertheless, there are factors at play here which take the conflict outside the Realist frame of reference and which undermine these apparently common-sense judgments and predictions. Under certain circumstances, a balance of power stable enough to avoid serious conflict escalation is an outcome as utopian as the coming of the Peaceable Kingdom. In this case, we contend, to frame the conflict as a struggle of two states determined to defend their national interests by maximizing their strategic power is a dangerously inadequate formulation. By focusing on Donald Trump’s immediate motives and the power games of ordinary nation-states, it ignores the systemic aspects of U.S.-Iranian conflict and underestimates the importance of long-term trends likely to lead to war.



An Iranian rocket carrying a satellite is launched from an undisclosed site believed to be in Iran's Semnan province [AP]

3. Assassination as an Act of Empire

The most important of these factors is empire. The United States is not a mere nation-state trying to defend particular national interests; it is a global empire projecting economic, cultural, military, and political power around the world and ruled by leaders determined to maintain its hegemony and advance its interests by all means necessary, including the use of force. (19) The problem, of course, is that empires fall as well as rise. Maintaining them for extended periods

is exceptionally costly both in financial terms and in terms of human lives and cultural/political values. (20) Furthermore, since the days of the ancient empires their institutional “life-span” has tended strongly to shorten, with the result, according to Johan Galtung, that the American Empire’s lease on life is due to expire within the next few decades. (21) U.S. foreign and military policies, therefore, cannot be understood in Realist terms simply as the use of power to advance traditional national interests. They must also be seen as efforts to maintain and expand a global empire under conditions that threaten its rapid decline.

This duality helps to explain the inconsistencies in U.S. behavior towards Iran and many other nations. On the one hand, President Trump views himself as the leader of a Great Power whose mission is to combine credible military threats with skillful negotiation in order to make the best possible “deals” for American economic, political, and socio-cultural interest groups. In his role as a traditional nationalist leader (“America First”), Trump advocates reducing U.S. commitments abroad that do not appear to advance concrete American interests. Thus, he has declared himself a “tariff man” and abandoned or renegotiated multilateral trade agreements, restructured U.S. participation in NATO, engaged in serious peace negotiations with the Afghan Taliban, criticized globalism, withdrawn from the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, attempted to negotiate nuclear weapons issues with North Korea, and – until the assassination of General Soleimani – avoided ordering overt attacks on Iran or its leaders. All these moves are consistent with the limited, power-based nationalism said to characterize European Great Power politics in the nineteenth century, and considered a model of conflict management by many Realists.

At the same time, though, the Trump regime has behaved in crucial respects like one of the ambitious imperial powers bitterly criticized by the leading Realist thinkers. (22) Under its leadership, the U.S. has increased its already astronomical military spending to record levels, begun modernizing the nation’s nuclear arsenal, and announced the creation of a new “space force” intended to dominate outer space. It has increased the overall number of U.S. bases and troops abroad, expanded the number of Special Forces covert operatives to a reported total of 70,000, and authorized a large increase in the production and employment of drone aircraft in areas of combat. In addition to taking these military measures, Trump has wielded the weapon of economic sanctions with unprecedented vigor against imperial enemies like Iran and challengers like Russia and China. Moreover, his administration has substantially increased civil and military aid to imperial allies like Israel and Saudi Arabia. In siding with Sunni powers against Shia contenders throughout the Middle East, as well as in aiding East European allies against Russia and East Asian allies against China, Trump clearly departed from the more

restrained “national interest” scenario in order to pursue global strategies long associated with imperial interests. The relevant slogan is not “America First” but Divide et Impera.



President Trump VP Mike Pence meeting with Congressional Leadership in the Situation Room of the White House January 5 2019 [White House Photo]

What can help us to understand these contradictory policies is their historical environment: the context of imperial decline. Ever since the disastrous Vietnam War, analysts have detailed the increasing costs and decreasing benefits of maintaining an American Empire, and have noted the spread of mass disenchantment with and opposition to the century-long project of “making the world safe for Democracy.” This opposition, emanating as much from the American right wing as the left, was an important factor motivating Trump’s campaign pledge in 2016 to oppose U.S. participation in “endless wars.” At the same time, significant elements of the President’s political coalition and the Democratic Party’s oppositional coalition vehemently oppose liquidation of the empire and call for America to continue to fulfill its alleged “international responsibilities.” These elements include key members of the economic elite (especially those with global interests), the major military-industrial corporations, current and retired leaders of the “Deep State” (the Pentagon, State and Justice departments, and intelligence agencies), important news media organizations and think tanks, and communities dependent on military-industrial jobs and appropriations.

This being the case, an administration like Donald Trump’s is whipsawed between its desire to reduce U.S. commitments abroad and the imperative to maintain America as “the world’s only

superpower”: a global empire capable of continuous socio-economic, political, and cultural expansion. The decision to kill General Soleimani, like the rise and expansion of drone warfare and special operations generally, can best be understood as a product of this contradiction – that is, as an attempt to maintain the American empire without continuing to incur the increasing costs, political and cultural as well as fiscal, described by commentators like Chalmers Johnson, Noam Chomsky, and Andrew Bacevich. (23) It can be seen as part of a process of providing lower cost, more efficient imperial rule that began with a series of assassinations of Third World leaders committed or procured by the CIA during the Cold War. (24) The process accelerated after the Vietnam War, when President Richard Nixon abolished conscription and inaugurated the all-volunteer U.S. armed forces, and continued into the age of covert operations, drone warfare, cyberwar, economic sanctions and “smart power.” (25)

The hypothesis that supports these forms of irregular warfare is that targeted acts of violence, like the use of coercive sanctions against designated economic targets, will enable the United States to advance its imperial interests forcefully without involving the nation in a costly ground war, or a naval and air war that could escalate armed hostilities to the regional or global level. (26) The hypothesis is seldom stated so baldly, perhaps because stating it immediately reveals its defects. Assassinations and other forms of low intensity violence risk provoking major wars; whether they lead to high-intensity struggle or not depends upon a number of key variables, including the degree of desperation and frustration experienced by the parties, their internal stability, and their readiness for all-out war. The assassination of the Serbia’s Archduke Ferdinand and his wife Sophie by a Bosnian Serb in 1914 is generally accounted one of the provocations that caused the outbreak of World War I. The Roosevelt Administration’s imposition of economic sanctions on Japan was an important factor in convincing the Japanese leaders to attack Pearl Harbor in 1941. (27) And the assassination of South Vietnam’s Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963 as part of a CIA-orchestrated coup did nothing to prevent the outbreak of conventional war and a massive U.S. intervention in that nation two years later. (28)



Iran's President Hassan Rouhani speaks at parliament in Tehran on Sept 3 2019 [Getty]

In the case of Iran, one can easily see why the assassination of General Soleimani, as important and popular a figure as he was, did not lead immediately to general war. His killing did not significantly alter the balance of power in the region. Rather than destabilizing the Iranian regime or strengthening the opposition to its current leaders, it united the nation behind the ayatollahs. Furthermore, while Iran possesses a sophisticated military establishment, it could not counter high-intensity bombing and missile attacks by the U.S. Air Force and Navy without exposing the nation to the destruction of vital transportation, energy, and water facilities, as well as the loss of vulnerable military and air bases. By responding to the provocation as they did, Iran's leaders retained the ability to retaliate at a later time, using their considerable capacity to wage unconventional and proxy warfare. They also left the door open to negotiations with the Americans, should there be another shift in the U.S.'s unstable and contradictory foreign policy.

In sum, the killing of General Soleimani and his colleagues left the conflict between the United States and Iran essentially unchanged, except that Iran lost an effective military leader and acquired another motive for future revenge against his killers. U.S. economic sanctions continue to damage the Iranian economy and depress that nation's living standards, although the refusal of many nations and business enterprises to enforce them somewhat reduces the pain. Meanwhile, the region as a whole continues to be roiled by Sunni-Shia conflict. The vicious proxy war in Yemen persists, although temporarily interrupted by the effects of the

Coronavirus plague. Israel mounts sporadic air attacks against Hezbollah in Lebanon and Iranian-backed groups in Syria. Covert activities by both the U.S. and Iran, as well as violent incidents in the Straits of Hormuz, keep the pot boiling.



Iran's Supreme Leader cries at General Soleimani's funeral [Getty]

Realist assumptions aside, it seems unrealistic to imagine that this situation can long continue without moving either in the direction of conflict escalation and regional warfare or a relaxation of the sanctions regime, renewal of U.S.-Iran negotiations, and serious efforts to resolve the conflict between Sunni and Shia forces. One indication that escalation is occurring is the continuation of attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq by Iranian-backed militias, which generate increasingly uninhibited air strike retaliatory strikes by U.S. forces. On March 12, 2020, some 57 short-range missiles apparently fired by Khatib Hezbollah fell on Camp Taji, an American airbase north of Baghdad, killing three U.S. and British soldiers and three Iraqi civilians. Retaliatory U.S. air strikes targeted five militia ammunition dumps, but the Iraqi government reported angrily that the attacks also killed a number of their own soldiers and civilians. It thus became increasingly clear that the initial Iranian response to the Soleimani and Muhandis assassinations was not the end of the matter. (29) Five thousand U.S. troops remain in Iraq at this writing, targets for whatever further punishment the militias deem justified. The Trump Administration remains trapped in the contradiction between a desire to protect its imperial legions and a dread of triggering another unpopular war. Escalation in any case seems likely to continue.

Contradictions of this sort make a turn from military confrontation to conflict resolution

imperative. Happily, there are ways of resolving conflicts that do not depend upon the exercise of military power or power-based negotiations, but that rest on efforts to assist warring parties to identify and satisfy the unsatisfied needs generating their conflict. (30) Where conflicts are generated by an elite-dominated sociopolitical system, resolution requires altering that system – a difficult task, but not an impossible one. (31) One hopes that the opponents of “endless war” in the United States will overcome the current taboo against critiquing the American empire and call for an end to their nation’s increasingly dangerous struggle against Iran.



General Amir Ali Hajizadeh head of the Revolutionary Guard's aerospace division stands in front of an Iranian rocket carrying a satellite in an undisclosed site believed to be in Iran's Semnan province April 22 2020 [AP]

Richard E. Rubenstein

Author and University Professor of Conflict Resolution and Public Affairs at George Mason University, holding degrees from Harvard College, Oxford University (as a Rhodes Scholar), and Harvard Law School. His recent books include “Reasons to Kill: Why Americans Choose War” (Bloomsbury, 2010) and “Resolving Structural Conflicts: How Violent Systems Can Be Transformed” (Routledge, 2017).

Oakley Thomas Hill

Graduate student at George Mason University and former Teaching Assistant at Utah Valley University’s School of Philosophy and Humanities, Orem.

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26. Interestingly, this approach represents an adaptation by the Empire of the forms of unconventional warfare formerly employed against it by Third World insurgents, and in this sense resembles the counterinsurgency doctrines originally proposed by liberal anti-Communists as a strategy of winning native "hearts and minds" in rebellious locales like Indochina. See, e.g., Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay*, Stamford, CT: Markham Publishing Co. (1970)
27. See, for example, Roland H. Worth, Jr., *No Choice But War: the United States Embargo Against Japan and the Eruption of War in the Pacific*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland Press (1995).
28. Seth Jacobs, *Cold War Mandarin: Ngo Dinh Diem and the Origins of America's War in Vietnam, 1950–1963*. Lanham, Maryland: [*Rowman & Littlefield*](#) (2006)

29. See Louisa Loveluck and Missy Ryan, “In Iraq attacks by Iran-backed militias are becoming more audacious. The U.S. is wrestling with how to respond.” Washington Post, March 28, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/militia-attacks-on-americans-in-iraq-becoming-more-audacious-us-wrestling-with-how-to-respond/2020/03/27/7b31d76c-6d38-11ea-a156-0048b62cdb51_story.html
30. See, for example, Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, et al., Contemporary Conflict Resolution, 4th Ed. Cambridge, MA: Polity (2016); Johan Galtung, Searching for Peace: The Road to Transform, 2d Ed. London; Pluto Press (2002)
31. Richard E. Rubenstein, Resolving Structural Conflicts: How Violent Systems Can Be Transformed. Abingdon, U.K.: Routledge (2017)