



Editor's Picks

Peacebuilding: Assumptions, Practices and Critiques; Deterring and Dissuading Cyberterrorism; Is Cyber Deterrence an Illusory Course of Action?; Sharia as Desert Business: Understanding the Links between Criminal Networks and Jihadism in Northern Mali; and Foundations of Economic Theory: Money, Markets and Social Power

Professor Teresa Almeida Cravo posits that peacebuilding has become a guiding principle of international intervention in the periphery since its inclusion in the *Agenda for Peace* of the United Nations in 1992. She considers, in her article, “Peacebuilding: Assumptions, Practices and Critiques,” that the aim of creating the conditions for a self-sustaining peace in order to prevent a return to armed conflict is, however, far from easy or consensual. The conception of liberal peace proved particularly limited, and inevitably controversial, and the reality of war-torn societies far more complex than anticipated by international actors that today assume activities in the promotion of peace in post-conflict contexts. With a trajectory full of contested successes and some glaring failures, the current model has been the target of harsh criticism and widespread skepticism. This article critically examines the theoretical background and practicalities of peacebuilding, exploring its ambition as well as the weaknesses of the paradigm adopted by the international community since the 1990s.

Dr. John Klein in “Deterring and Dissuading Cyberterrorism” hypothesizes that cyberterrorism, while being written about since the early 2000s, is still not fully understood as a strategic concept and whether such actions can be deterred is hotly contested. Some strategists and policy makers believe that acts of cyberterrorism, especially by non-state actors, may prove to be undeterrable. Yet the leadership of both state and non-state actors tends to act rationally and function strategically, and therefore they can, in fact, be deterred to some degree. Helping to shape the legitimate options following a significant cyber attack, the Law of Armed Conflict has salient considerations for the deterrence of cyberterrorism, particularly the principles of military necessity and lawful targeting. Furthermore, when

considered holistically and using all available means, deterrence combined with dissuasion activities can lessen the likelihood of cyberterrorism, while mitigating any consequences should such a cyber attack actually occur.

Mr. Emilio Iasiello ascertains that with the U.S. government acknowledgement of the seriousness of cyber threats, particularly against its critical infrastructures, as well as the Department of Defense officially labeling cyberspace as a war fighting domain, the Cold War strategy of deterrence is being applied to the cyber domain in “Is Cyber Deterrence an Illusory Course of Action?” However, he adds, unlike the nuclear realm, cyber deterrence must incorporate a wide spectrum of potential adversaries of various skills, determination, and capabilities, ranging from individual actors to state run enterprises. What’s more, the very principles that achieved success in deterring the launch of nuclear weapons during the Cold War, namely the threat of severe retaliation, cannot be achieved in cyberspace, thus neutralizing the potential effectiveness of leveraging a similar strategy. Attribution challenges, the ability to respond quickly and effectively, and the ability to sustain a model of repeatability prove to be insurmountable in a domain where actors operate in obfuscation.

How can we understand the social and economic dynamics that enable the operative space of the militant networks in northern Mali? is a question raised by Ms. Rikke Hauggaard, in her article “Sharia as ‘Desert Business’: Understanding the Links between Criminal Networks and Jihadism in Northern Mali.” This article argues that jihadist militant groups are actors in local power struggles rather than “fighters” or “terrorists” with extremist ideological motivations. She argues that the sharp distinctions drawn by the Malian government and the international community between compliant and non-compliant groups in the implementation of the peace agreement from June 2015 is problematic. She concludes that understanding the conflicts in northern Mali requires an increased focus on the links between jihadist militant groups, local politics and criminal network activities in Gao and Kidal.

In “Foundations of Economic Theory: Money, Markets and Social Power,” CEO Garry Jacobs postulates that the future science of Economics must be human-centered, value-based, inclusive, global in scope and evolutionary in perspective. It needs to be fundamentally interdisciplinary to reflect the increasingly complex sectoral interconnections that characterize modern society. It must also be founded on trans-disciplinary principles of social existence and human development that constitute the theoretical foundation for all the human sciences. He emphasizes that markets and money are instruments for the conversion of social potential into social power. They harness the power of organization to transform human energies into the capacity for social accomplishment. The distribution of rights and privileges in society determines how these social institutions function and who benefits.

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