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"Global shadow war: a conceptual analysis"

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Global Shadow War –a conceptual analysis

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Abstract
The US strategic shift from nation-building to what has been labelled "light footprint" has carried with it a number of changes in the practices used when waging war on terrorism. These activities include covert and clandestine action by special operations and paramilitary forces, and others, operating under a shadowy mandate. It is essential to analyse these changes, due to the nature of the actions taken and the global reach and consequences of US foreign policies. The concept of "global shadow war" has been used by scholars and journalists alike to describe the practices associated with the light footprint framework, although the concept is ambiguous, lacks clear conceptual boundaries and is yet to be defined.

This article attempts to resolve the problem of ambiguity through a systematic analysis of how and when the concept is used, in the process establishing its conceptual boundaries and definitional qualities. Using a method for concept analysis developed by Giovanni Sartori, the article provides a conceptual definition which is more clearly delineated, encompasses the characteristics found in the sources studied, and can be used when theorizing about the many practices taking place within the light footprint framework.

Introduction[1]

The aggregated lessons learned from the two US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and 9/11 have forced the US to rethink its security strategy. After abandoning "nation-building" as a strategy a new framework of operations has taken form, commonly labelled "light footprint" (Wieseltier, 2013). This new approach has been described as "a combination of air power, special operators, intelligence agents, indigenous armed groups and contractors, often leveraging relationships with allies and enabling partner militaries to take more active roles" (Lújan, 2013, p. 5). A number of terms have been used by scholars, journalists and policy-makers alike when describing the range of US military and intelligence activities taking place under the light footprint umbrella. Terms such as "long war", "global war on terror", "shadow war", "global shadow war", and "permanent war", to mention but a few. Their shared feature is the global and "shadowy" nature of the activities concerned. However, these terms are ambiguous and vague, if defined at all. They also overlap, with a lack of clear boundaries defining the use of each term. In short, the terminology is at best ambiguous.

The problem with conceptual ambiguity is evident in the clandestine practices outlined in the report on the Central Intelligence Agency's detention and interrogation program, to give a recent case.[2] This illustrates the importance of better outlining conceptual borders and providing clear definitions of concepts, so that "shadowy" practices are not placed under a "shadowy" conceptual umbrella, as we argue is the case. Such ambiguity compounds the difficulty in grasping, comprehending and analysing which is already present when studying practices that occur out of the public eye. In short, there is a great need for an improved conceptual framework regarding practices occurring under the light footprint umbrella. In reconstructing an unambiguous and delineated concept we also provide a shared starting point for analysis, facilitating forthcoming research. The aim is that the use of this shared viewpoint will provide a basis for addressing (or indeed not addressing) certain practices in a less normative and subjective manner, thereby generating a better understanding of why they are employed and enabling policy recommendations that are well-founded and sound, rather than based on personal beliefs.

The need for a definition and how to get there

Rather than invent yet another term to denote these practices, this article is centred on the term "global shadow war" (GSW) as the semantic projection designated to practices within the light footprint framework. There are two reasons for this: firstly, it captures the *geist* regarding the global nature of current US security policy and secondly, many of the practices within the light footprint framework are indeed "shadowy", for example the use of special operations and paramilitary forces under Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC).[3] Admittedly, the concept of global shadow war is itself ambiguous, lacking clear conceptual boundaries as well as previous definitions. This article attempts to resolve these issues, by systematically analysing different strands of research and providing both a definition and conceptual boundaries. In this way, a more stable and delineated concept, with a clear intension and extension, better suited for use as an operational definition is presented.

This has been done by applying a concept analysis based on the logical steps stipulated by Giovanni Sartori (1984) to the GSW concept. The aim is to form or reconstruct a concept that can be used with minimal ambiguity when describing the said practices. The selected texts are reviewed with regard to these practices and the labelling applied to them, in order to fill the concept of GSW with meaning beyond its floating and vague connotation (Sartori, 1984, pp. 41f).

As indicated above, there is an abundance of material pertaining to action taken within the conceptual umbrella of shadow war, however, it differs little and is often case-specific. Existing research can be roughly divided into three main strands: one legally-oriented, one theoretical and one more case-specific. The legal strand is focused on the legal- and/or accountability-oriented aspects of US security strategy and related practices, such as the use of kinetic force in "non-war"[4] (e.g. Bacevich, 2012; Sylla, 2013; Lobel & Turner, 2012; Turner, 2012; McAndrew, 2006; Kibbe, 2004, 2007, 2012; Ryan, 2011). The second is centred on strategy as well as the operational and tactical aspects of GSW, such as the increased use of special operations (or paramilitary) forces (SOF), networking and counter-network operations *outside* the area of operations (e.g. Niva, 2012; Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 2001; Christiansson, 2014; Bousquet, 2008, 2009; Feickert, 2014; Mohlin, 2013). The third strand can be said to fuse the first two and consists of case-specific studies which range from the use of Remotely Piloted Vehicles (RPV) (e.g. Holmqvist, 2013; Glyn-Williams, 2010a; Gregory 2011a-b; Turse, 2011, 2012; Engelhardt 2014; Price, 2012; Turse & Engelhardt, 2012) to SOF action in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere (Glyn-Williams, 2010b; Robinson, 2013; Sanger, 2012).

In order to focus on the concept as such, emphasis has been put on texts in the two first strands of research when selecting key texts for study. Preference has been given to those with a broad approach and/or descriptions of the phenomena and practices of GSW. Texts that focus on case-specific examples of GSW, such as drone campaigns, have been excluded. In order to ensure that the first two strands of research on the subject are adequately captured, priority has been given to texts that complement each other; effectively "sliding" over a spectrum from constitutional matters, via military strategic and operational levels, to networked action at unit level. A total of six texts by four scholars have been selected, which together have been considered sufficient to cover the two research strands, while still allowing each text to be given the rigorous attention needed for concept analysis.

This article is admittedly US-centric, for two reasons: 1) the bulk of research is conducted in the US and 2) the US system is more accessible and less shrouded in secrecy than one would expect, especially when compared to most other states. As a result, the examples found regarding GSW are tied to US action, although the phenomenon is not confined to the US; Russian actions in Ukraine contain the same "shadowy" elements (Pifer, 2014; Shevchenko, 2014) and Iran has conducted cloaked operations in Bulgaria (via Hezbollah) as recently as 2012,[5] to give a few non-US examples.

The legal- and accountability-oriented aspect is covered by works by Jennifer Kibbe and Andrew Bacevich. Kibbe's research is focused on oversight and the legal aspects of covert action and intelligence. Three articles have been selected that explore the territorial struggles between the CIA and the Pentagon stemming from the shift within

the US administration towards SOF as a tool in the war on terror under JSOC (Kibbe 2004, 2007) and on the "players" running covert actions and the development since 2007 (Kibbe, 2012).

Bacevich (2012) has been chosen because the text captures the main arguments regarding the legality, autonomy and accountability of GSW and SOF action – drawing from a larger body of research (including his 2010 book) – condensed in a very short text. More specifically, it focuses on the US shift from conventional to more unconventional methods of operation as a part of its security strategy. Its main concern is the autonomy of special operators and how this affects accountability. Bacevich is admittedly critical of how the US utilizes its military forces as well as of its military posturing, which means that issues of bias may well exist. However, we consider this article valid on account of its pointing to central problems with GSW, primarily regarding autonomy. When autonomy is increased in this manner the political level may be bypassed, war is then waged without explicit policy goals and for its own sake, justified by efficiency at the operational and tactical levels.

The strategic and operational aspects are covered by Magnus Christiansson and Steve Niva. Christiansson's article (2014) was chosen for its focus on US operational frameworks within the light footprint model. Even though GSW is a secondary theme in the article, the global context in which networking and counter-network warfare is discussed make it relevant to this study. The article is concerned with the strategic level, identifying two US operational frameworks which it labels networking and access. The pertinent framework for this study is networking, where Christiansson places GSW. Niva (2012) extends the discussion on the networking aspect with a focus on the operational level, thus providing a solid complement to Christiansson's text. He also touches on themes from the other texts, creating a full circle of similar areas of reference, albeit with slightly differing perspectives. Niva discusses transnational SOF activities and the increased proclivity to deploy SOF under the banner of JSOC, which is attributed to the effectiveness of JSOC run operations.[6]

Moving towards a definition

The method for concept analysis developed by Giovanni Sartori is aimed at providing a clearly delineated GSW concept through what he calls conceptual reconstruction. Conceptual reconstruction is a process of explication where characteristics are extracted and ordered from pertinent work, i.e. the texts chosen in this article. The reconstruction consists of three steps: 1) formation of the concept's connotative (stipulative) definition, 2) determination of its referents and 3) the formulation of a declarative definition (Sartori, 1984, pp. 29, 35).

The first step was the formulation of a stipulative definition (given below). This definition was based on a cursory reading of the selected texts and is intended as a focal point within the semantic field. At the heart of the analysis is the connotation of the term global shadow war, intuitively something entailing armed conflict on a global scale outside the public eye (Sartori, 1984, pp. 16ff). The connotation of the concept was further elucidated by using the stipulative definition to analyse the chosen texts and derive a number of characteristics (outlined below).

Next, it follows that to understand the phenomenon it must be clear what the term GSW really refers to – i.e. the denotation must be determined. The second step does this by determining the referents. The referents are real life counterparts, attached to the characteristics that constitute the connotation (Sartori, 1984, p. 24). An obvious example of a referent would be leadership decapitation, such as the Osama bin Laden operation. It is attached to the characteristics of SOF (direct action), networking (a joint JSOC-CIA action), a transnational operation in a state not at war (Pakistan) with the executing state (USA). As the type of definition we seek to provide in this article is a declarative, as opposed to an operational definition, the denotational portion (i.e. the referents) will not be elaborated to the same extent.

The third and final step is a formulation of a definition combining the two first steps, yielding a concept that "[…] contains enough characteristics to identify the referents and their boundaries […]" (Sartori, 1984, p. 56). The immediate empirical usefulness of this definition will be lacking, but developing the concept further by mapping the referents derived from the characteristics is facilitated by this declarative definition.

"Global Shadow War"

In lieu of previous definitions a stipulative definition, derived from a cursory reading of the six texts, was formulated:

> "Shadow war is a form of armed conflict, conducted secretly in the nexus between war and peace where different actors utilize different means to obtain their goals."

This definition was used in the subsequent analysis, when through conducting close-readings and re-readings of the six chosen texts a number of characteristics that account for the connotation of GSW were derived. This definition is purposely vague in order to approach the texts with a less narrow focus. The addition of the grey area (here labelled nexus) between war and peace is vital in progressing with the reconstruction since it would otherwise be a "global war", "non-war" (e.g. Ryan, 2011) or military action (kinetic or non-kinetic). Prominent examples of this can be found in Yemen, the Horn of Africa or the FATA areas of Pakistan.

That said, what does this definition *not* point to? One example would be SOF action in Afghanistan. Would tribal outreach and troops embedded within Northern Alliance forces be labelled GSW? Admittedly no, even though it is a clear case of unconventional warfare, these actions take place within the interstate war frame since the US declared war on Afghanistan. US SOF conducting training missions in Libya during the uprising on the other hand surely is an expression of GSW (Mohlin, 2013). Firstly, because the UN mandate explicitly prohibited boots on the ground (Engelbrekt & Wagnsson, 2013) and secondly, because the purpose was to prevent regime atrocities against the Libyan population in accordance with the responsibility to protect – not to induce a regime change (Kuperman, 2013; Mohlin, 2013). This illustrates both the problem with pigeonholing actions and why the "nexus between war and peace" must be present in the definition.

As mentioned above, in delineating the GSW concept a number of characteristics were derived from the texts by using the stipulative definition above. These characteristics are as follows:

Firstly, *Special operations forces*, and their CIA counterpart *paramilitary forces* (from here on conflated as SOF for clarity) are integral to the GSW concept in many ways, the most important being: 1) the notion of *networked action* coordinated by JSOC[7] (Bacevich, 2012; Christiansson, 2014, pp. 63ff; Niva, 2013, pp. 187ff, 191. See also Robinson, 2013, p. 10.), 2) *direct action* which includes classified operations (either covert or clandestine) such as intelligence gathering or targeted killings using either RPVs or combat teams (Bacevich, 2012; Christiansson, 2014, pp. 65f; Kibbe, 2007, p. 59; 2012, p. 375; Niva, 2013, pp. 190f, 195ff. See also Malvesti, 2010, pp. 7, 15), and lastly 3) *indirect action* (or special warfare) such as unconventional warfare and psychological operations which entail long-term commitment to allies and partners (Christiansson, 2014, pp. 60ff; Kibbe 2004, p. 108; 2007, pp. 59, 67, 71; 2012, p. 375; Malvesti, 2010, pp. 8, 20; Niva, 2013, p. 199. See also Robinson, 2013, p. 11).

The prominence of "drone warfare" in the discourse surrounding US action, primarily in newspapers and television broadcasts, can be addressed at this point to elucidate the tactical strength of SOF. Drones certainly are a major part of GSW and are widely used – that much should be acknowledged. However, the notoriety of drones can be attributed mainly to the fact that their appearances and strikes are harder to conceal; in short they symbolize what GSW is in the eyes of the masses. Or as Niva phrases it "[d]rones, however, are a synecdoche for a bigger issue: the expanding system of a high-tempo regime of targeted strikes, special operations forces raids, and detention practices that are largely unaccountable to the public and draped in secrecy rules" (Niva, 2013, p. 199). Herein lays one of the strengths (in a strictly instrumental sense) of contemporary special operations and paramilitary forces coordinated by JSOC, the networked action and F3EA method; its speed and effectiveness. The fact that these clandestine and covert operations are by default *shadowy* is the reason that SOF must be considered the centrepiece of GSW.

Secondly, *legal "fuzziness"* and *lack of accountability and oversight* are aspects intimately connected with GSW, and pertain first and foremost to bills and resolutions passed by the US legislative body, at the behest of the national security apparatus in the wake of 9/11. Legal "fuzziness" refers to the legal grey area where operations can be placed under the legal authority of JSOC or the CIA (governed by US code titles 10 and 50 respectively) when necessary to avoid scrutiny and bypass legal barriers. One significant resolution that is vital to the development of the current *modus operandi* is Senate Joint Resolution 23, unanimously passed in 2001 days after the attack on the Twin Towers – effectively starting the global war on terror (GWOT). This resolution gives the US president "virtually unlimited authority" to approve lethal action, as long as the particular target has a connection to Al-Qaeda – the problem with this has been sententiously formulated by Bacevich "[a]utonomy and accountability exist in inverse proportion to one another" (Bacevich, 2012; Kibbe, 2004, p. 108; 2007, pp. 64, 71; 2012, p. 373).

Another important factor is the executive order (EXORD) signed by Donald Rumsfeld in 2003 that pre-approved JSOC action without notification in 15 countries concerning three types of operations (killing, capturing or assisting), *in essentia* giving free reign to arbitrarily assassinate (if desired) belligerents without oversight (Niva, 2013, p. 191). The intelligence committees that do exist in the two houses of congress (created to

prevent a new scandal akin to the Iran-Contras affair) are circumvented via exceptions in US law, and the broad scope for interpretation therein regarding which framework is applicable to the case at hand. For example regarding "traditional military activities" and routine support to said activities, as was the case with previously mentioned EXORD (Kibbe, 2007, pp. 62f).

The third characteristic is the *non-public nature* of global shadow wars. SOF action, direct or indirect, is by default "shadowy". As a result, most operations within GSW are not advertised to the public, unlike "spins" in armed conflict used to create a psychological effect. One example would be the operation Neptune Spear, eliminating Bin Laden, which was not advertised to the public until after its successful execution. Instead the purpose of covert and clandestine action is to counter the external manoeuvres of the adversary (or adversaries) *outside* the theatre of operations i.e. Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya since 9/11 (Beaufre, 1965), achieving maximum effect while maintaining deniability (Kibbe, 2004, p. 104; Niva, 2013, p. 194; Malvesti, 2010, p. 23). The definition of covert action in US law summarizes the approach:

> *... defined [a]s used in this subchapter, the term "covert action" means an activity or activities of the United States Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad, where it is intended that the role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly...*[8]

The fourth characteristic identified is the *networked character* of GSW. The acknowledgement of belligerent networks and their potential induced the shift towards a network organization as early as 2003, primarily regarding SOCOM[9] as the nexus of forces used to counter these new enemies (Kibbe, 2004, p. 111; 2007, pp. 60f; 2012, p. 373; Niva, 2013, p. 187)[10]. A networked organization is a hybrid between hierarchical and horizontal structures, meaning that even though directives trickle down the hierarchy the lower echelons enjoy a degree of autonomy. This means it is decentralized and self-synchronizing,[11] albeit with a clear directive and interconnected by means of technology and an overarching strategic task through a hub, in this case the JSOC (Niva, 2013, pp. 188f).

A term describing the JSOC mode of operation is counter-network operations, or network decapitation (Christiansson, 2014, p. 66), where networks are targeted in a manner similar to hierarchical structures – where it hurts the most – aiming to collapse the targeted network (Niva, 2012, p. 195). The integration of military organization with the CIA and their already existing network of contacts built on a paramilitary basis was key to forming the network used today, an example of the partnering (networking) approach in conjunction with technological advances and high-speed intelligence gathering and processing (Christiansson, 2014, pp. 63f; Kibbe, 2007, p. 68; Niva, 2013, p. 195).

The "JSOC-method" called F3EA (find, fix, finish, exploit and analyse) was developed out of necessity. In the early stages of the Global War on Terror and the COIN-operations in Iraq, McChrystal and cohorts had difficulties keeping up with the adversaries and their mobility (spatially and intelligence-wise). Targets often escaped due to something called "blinks" caused by the hierarchical structure of JSOC and its

inertia. The new five step method combined analysts, drone operators, combat teams, tech-specialists and intelligence analysts creating an effective apparatus for high-speed operations, reducing blinks and promoting lateral decision-making (McChrystal, 2011). The ideational turn towards the networked organization can be condensed into a quote by Paul Wolfowitz from 2003 "[a]s we have seen so vividly in recent days, lives depend, not just on technology, but on a culture that fosters leadership, flexibility, agility and adaptability." (Wolfowitz, 2003).

The fifth characteristic is the *transnational/global scope* of global shadow wars. The light-footprint framework, the ongoing long war and the global NATO-partnership arrangements (Christiansson, 2014, p. 60) have taken 66 000 US military and civilian special operators (2012), up from 50 000 at the beginning of 2006, to bases in 60 different countries and conducting operations in 75 – the Shadow War is truly global in scope (Bacevich, 2012; Kibbe, 2007, p. 60; Niva, 2013, p. 198). The global scope does not only pertain to the number of countries where operators are active, but also where indirect action is taken through partners and in the realm of cyber warfare.

Sixth, *permanency* is traced from the current security strategy entailing "continuous military action" and "preparing the battle-space" – the first is connected to networking and speed, the second to the nature of operations (Christiansson, 2014, p. 65; Kibbe, 2004, p. 106; 2007, pp. 61, 63, 68; 2012, p. 380; Niva, 2013, p. 93). American officials as well as prominent military theoreticians discuss the idea of permanency in a number of statements, albeit with shifting terminology. To exemplify, Sir Rupert Smith dubbed contemporary wars "endless", claiming that wars are no longer conducted by armed forces combating other armed forces in pitched battles. Instead the battlefield is centred on civilian populations, defending or combating civilians where the civilian population is key. Smith (2008, pp. 5f, 291ff) labelled it "war amongst the people". This is consistent with Niva's argument that contemporary armed conflict has become a part of the "social fabric" and thus has created a permanent social relation. One in which US pre-emption and risk management acted out through surveillance and targeted action in foreign countries undermine their sovereignty (Niva, 2013, p. 199).

Permanency is admittedly not the most accurate or equitable term. Conflicts could be referred to as "temporally open-ended" or "without end in sight", in that they resemble global policing where the symptoms of a problem are continually tended to. However, a police force is not meant to control populations and parcel out punishment as they see fit. The police uphold the law and are a tool of the sovereign governments. Operations aimed at control and punishment in third countries are therefore a violation of state sovereignty (and a breach of human rights). It is not beyond possibility that governments in the states on the "receiving end" have given consent to the US-conducted operations and so a judgement on this is beyond the scope of this article.

When synthesizing the findings, there are three key characteristics shared in the texts of the four authors, which can be said to work as the backbone of the global shadow war concept: A GSW is characterized by 1) the use of special operations and paramilitary forces, 2) action taken out of the public eye, 3) on a global (or transnational) scale (see table below). In contrast, the three other characteristics (legal "fuzziness" and lack of accountability and oversight, networked character, and permanency) are not necessarily present in *every* operation taking place in a GSW. For example, the amorphous

networks which constitute the US enemy can in some places be targeted without army units operating without legal wrangling, such as in Afghanistan.[12] However, a GSW is by definition carried out on a transnational scale and cannot be conducted in full sight of the public. Furthermore, it must be carried out by someone – in this case SOF. The centrality of these three key characteristics is clear in the works of all four authors, which is not the case with the others.

When defining global shadow war, however, there is a need to take into account all six types of characteristics identified since they are all internally congruent. In other words, there is a common core comprised of the three key characteristics, while the other three (non-core) characteristics pose no problem as they are present in the work of at least 3 out of 4 authors (Sartori, 1984: p. 47). A strong case can therefore be made for the inclusion of the three non-core characteristics when defining GSW, even though only one of the authors includes all six characteristics. To give a concrete example of their interrelatedness: the transnational, classified operations of SOF cannot be carried out without at least sometimes landing in a legally grey area and their relative autonomy and networked character do create serious problems regarding accountability and oversight – all being tracks leading to the non-public character of the phenomenon. Furthermore, SOF is a key factor in the permanency of the GSW.

[ADD TABLE ABOUT HERE]

Conclusions: Definitions and boundaries

The intension, in a simplified manner, can be described as the associations the concept invokes within the reader; the intension holds all properties of a concept. In other words, the concept *is* its intension (Sartori, 1984, p. 40). Thus, in the case of GSW this pertains to the stipulative definition and the connotation of its three separate parts in lieu of earlier definitions. When progressing from the stipulative definition to the construction of a declarative definition (Sartori, 1984, p. 29), actions have to be taken into account – these are the referents accounting for the denotation of the concept. That is deliberate activities connected to the characteristics derived from the analysis; keeping *operations* on a *global scale* by *special operations forces* out of the *public eye*. The italics highlight deliberate actions and choices that pertain to the concept of GSW and its characteristics. With this in mind, the declarative definition formulated reads:

> *Global shadow war is the utilization of highly autonomous special operations or paramilitary forces operating within a networked organization equipped with advanced military technology performing tasks on a transnational scale, hidden*

> *from the public-eye, with little or no political oversight in a conflict with no immediate end in sight.*

This definition would be used as the lexical definition of GSW as well as an approximation of the concept meaning (or connotation).

Following Satori (1984, p. 42.), the extension can be described as the concept filtered through the meaning (intension) and its relation to the referents. As can be seen, the inclusion of the characteristics in the declarative definition creates conceptual boundaries regarding what can be considered to be global shadow war. It does not, however, mean that all criteria must be fulfilled for an event to be considered as taking place within the context of global shadow war – rather it reduces the room for incorrect use of the term. This is pertinent in particular for those studying practices related to global shadow war from which they produce texts that reach outside academia to where readers are reliant on the interpretations of events. The concept boundaries are therefore connected to the characteristics. One such real-life referent is an operation that is either covert or clandestine, takes place outside the theatre of operations, includes the use of RPVs *and* SOF in conjunction, performing indirect or direct action (such as unconventional warfare or a decapitation strike). Such an event can definitely be said to take place in the global shadow war context. This is of course just a start, no concept is static; the intension and extension will change as the practices evolve and the use of the concept evolves with them. The declarative definition developed after analysis of the selected texts is a synthesis of the characteristics revealed; it summarizes the GSW concept and adds a lexical definition to an otherwise connotative phenomenon, bringing some clarity to murky waters.

To sum things up, there were no definitions of global shadow war to be found in the analysed articles, but the properties derived provided enough substance to form the stipulative definition based on the authors' different foci. This was further augmented by the subsequent declarative definition, providing a starting point for further scrutiny of the concept as such, as well as future empirical studies. The previous research is, as stated above, surprisingly concordant and the variations found between the texts are largely explained by the fact that the focus of the authors varies. The more legalistic aspects of Kibbe regarding classified operations and oversight are offset by the focus on networked action in Niva, on strategic aspects in Christiansson and on the autonomy-accountability discussion in Bacevich.

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Table 1. Global shadow war characteristics.

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Author: Phenomenon:	Kibbe	Niva	Christiansson	Bacevich
1) Special Operations Forces (and paramilitary forces)	YES	YES	YES	YES
2) Legal "fuzziness" and lack of accountability and oversight	YES	YES	NO	YES
3) Non-public nature	YES	YES	YES	YES
4) Networked character	YES	YES	YES	NO
5) Transnational/global scope	YES	YES	YES	YES
6) Permanency	NO	YES	YES	YES

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[2] Full report available at https://www.cia.gov/news-information/press-releases-statements/2014-press-releases-statements/cia-fact-sheet-ssci-study-on-detention-interrogation-program.html.

[3] JSOC is a subcommand of the United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM).

[4] "wars in countries where we are not at war with" Quadrennial Defense Review 2006 vi, this passage is significant and cited by both Steve Niva (2013) and Maria Ryan (2011), the latter labels this phenomenon "non-war".

[5] It should be noted, however, that it is disputed whether the attack was carried out on Hezbollah orders or not (See e.g. BBC, 2013).

[6] This effectiveness, in turn, is argued to hinge on the networked structure implemented by Gen. Stanley McChrystal. Key to the networked Joint Special Operations Command organization is autonomy of operation, the ability to take action without authorization. Niva frames autonomy as a problem and a key issue with the current modus operandi and as such with the light footprint strategy.

[7] For example, Operation Neptune Spear was a joint-operation between CIA and SOCOM, where Navy SEALs formally operating under CIA control were coordinated by JSOC and carried out an operation in a country where the US was not at war.

[8] 50 U.S.C. § 413b: US Code - Section 413B: Presidential approval and reporting of covert actions. Retrieved from http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2009-title50/pdf/USCODE-2009-title50-chap15-subchapIII-sec413b.pdf.

[9] Even though JSOC has been given the role as an organizational hub, it is still subordinated to SOCOM.

[10] While Kibbe does not explicitly mention networked command structures or warfare, she acknowledges the important part Donald Rumsfeld's decisions regarding SOCOM leadership structures, hierarchies and authority played in altering the role of SOF in manners congruent with what Steve Niva labels networked structures and warfare (Kibbe, 2004, pp. 110; 2012: 376f, 379f).

[11] A self-synchronizing network is one where the units operating within it interact continually on a loose but pre-determined (goal-oriented) basis, gradually growing into a homogenous collective with less need for direct leadership, relying instead on bottom-up coordination.

[12] Operations in Afghanistan are carried out under title 10 and as such there is no need to temporarily transfer SOF under CIA command.