

ISIS and the battle for the heart of
the Middle East:
Towards a non-state theory of war

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Some jargon

- IR – International Relations
- FPA – Foreign Policy Analysis
- ANSA – armed non-state actor
- NSA – non-state actor
- ISIS – Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham

ISIS

- 2004
- Inter-sect war
- 2006 = ISI
- Suppressed through surge (Sunni tribes)
- State weakness in Syria and Iraq (2011 ->) = resurgence
- 2013 = ISIS
- 2014 = caliphate

Major players

- ISIS
- DeFSNoS
- KRG
- Hezbollah
- PMF
- other Shia militias (LAFA, Liwat Fatemiyun and Zaynebiyun, etc.),

Major players, ctd.

- Tribal militias
- Sunni militias (Nusrah Front, AQ, Jaysh al Islam, al-Awdah, Jamaat Ansar al-Sunnah, etc.)
- Ba'athist militias (GM CIR, *Jaysh Rijāl at-Ṭarīqa an-Naqshabandiya*)
- Palestinian militias (PFLP, PLA)
- minority militias (Syriacs, Yazidis, Turkmen, Assyrians, Druze, etc.),
- etc.

Characteristics of war in Middle East

- Instrumentalisation and leverage
- Distrust
- Internal conflict
- Projection and fragmentation
- Alliances of convenience

Theory of war

- Anarchy
- Multi-polarity
- Survival
- Rationality
- Security dilemma
- Balancing

Towards a non-state theory of war

- That the unit is the state is a key contention...
- Does changing the unit weaken the theory?
- Are ANSAs rational?
- Is ANSA world 'anarchic'?
- Is it multi-polar?
- Balance of threat?
- The Liberal critique...

Questions and suggestions