



CHICAGO PROJECT ON SECURITY & THREATS



Paris, France - December 5, 2015: A French soldier guards the Eiffel Tower.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

DIVISION OF THE
**SOCIAL
SCIENCES**



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SECURITY & THREATS



The rise of militant groups, such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda, brings unprecedented instability and presents an urgent need to better understand threats to global security.

MISSION

The Chicago Project on Security and Threats (CPOST), a research institute at the University of Chicago, is closing the knowledge gap on terrorism and international security.

We conduct data-driven, non-partisan research that examines on-the-ground outcomes to shape high-level security strategy. CPOST investigates and analyzes new forms of violence that are disrupting nations around the world. We share our findings with policy makers and the intelligence and diplomatic communities and provide warnings of emerging threats. We aim to identify new trends and craft responses before they threaten our security.



June 13, 2016 - Philadelphia, PA: Thousands gather at City Hall in Center City Philadelphia as Members of Philadelphia City Council, joined by religious and community leaders lead a vigil for the victims of the June 2016 massacre at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, FL.

PROBLEM CPOST IDENTIFIES EMERGING THREATS

The rise of militant groups—such as ISIS, Al Qaeda, and others throughout the Middle East and beyond— brings unprecedented instability to the existing global security order and presents increasingly complex and unpredictable challenges for the US and its allies. CPOST offers strategic insights into these issues as well as US-China relations, humanitarian interventions, and political insurgencies.

SOLUTION CPOST'S INNOVATIVE APPROACH PROVIDES SECURITY

CPOST employs empirically-driven, interdisciplinary research to uncover the hidden motivations behind the emerging threats and develop real, actionable methods to prevent them. From creating open-source toolkits for government and corporate partners, to providing the only comprehensive global Suicide Attack Database, CPOST is the only research institute in the world that works with experts in political science, neuroscience, and international affairs to create original integrated solutions.

PRIORITIES



Conducting Cutting-Edge Research

CPOST brings together a multidisciplinary team of researchers to conduct innovative scholarship focused on militant group behavior, U.S. counter-terrorism strategies, and emerging threats. From examining the recruitment strategies of ISIS propaganda videos by using fMRI scanning to conducting comparative analyses of armed groups and criminal gangs in South Asia, Latin America and at home, our researchers are making breakthroughs on today's critical security issues. Our resulting portfolio of research draws on a diverse team of innovators in political science, psychology, behavioral science, sociology, and other fields.



Shaping Policy

CPOST produces knowledge that brings key research findings to policy makers, lawmakers, and members of the defense and intelligence communities. Our goal is to provide these decision makers with open source building blocks to more pro-active foreign policy. CPOST's published work includes pathbreaking scholarship and leading reports as well as policy briefings, conferences, and media engagement.

Our recent report, "The American Face of ISIS," is the most comprehensive examination of ISIS supporters in the United States. The report received extensive media coverage and has been used to brief intelligence officials tasked with controlling the homegrown threat of terrorism in the US.



Educating Future Leaders

We are committed to training and mentoring the next generation of scholars and leaders in the public and private sectors. Each quarter, CPOST engages a diverse group of over two dozen student researchers who play a pivotal role in driving our research forward. We provide valuable academic training and professional development to undergraduate and graduate students in a unique research setting. CPOST alums are now leaders at elite academic institutions, all branches of the military, the intel community, and the State Department as well as throughout the private sector.

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Robert Pape is partnering with neuroscientist **Jean Decety** to lead The Social and Neurological Construction of Martyrdom, a research project aiming to develop a comprehensive understanding of how extremist organizations, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), propagate their messages and mobilize support for their activities, and to identify beliefs and psychological traits of the audiences most susceptible to the messaging. The research team is systematically analyzing militant strategies to construct cultures of martyrdom and the content of martyr videos produced by a wide range of groups. Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), the team is also analyzing individuals as they view martyr videos in order to identify characteristics that moderate the messages' persuasive effects on audience beliefs.



Paul Staniland and **Benjamin Lessing** have launched a new study that brings a rigorous, empirically intensive, cross-regional perspective to advance our understanding of armed groups and group-state relations. They are currently producing more than two dozen case studies on a wide range of armed groups in Latin America and South Asia, from ideological to purely criminal, many financed by drug-trafficking and other illicit activities, and engaged in electoral politics. They will then compile quantitative datasets of armed groups' key characteristics and interactions with states, which will be used to improve predictions about the dynamics of contemporary conflicts—from drug wars to militarized elections to paramilitary politics.



LOOKING AHEAD

CPOST is building a future where data drives policy by giving decision makers insight into the root causes of conflict. From defeating ISIS, to keeping peace in the South China Sea, to developing comprehensive offensive and defensive cyber strategies, CPOST produces original data that leads our investigators to find complex, effective solutions others miss. Future CPOST research includes The Early Warning Project, to better predict the risk of terror attacks, as well as a unique study using social media to bridge the worlds of security studies and gang violence.

Robert Pape is the founder and director of CPOST and a professor of political science at the University of Chicago. He is considered one of the world's foremost experts on strategic air power and terrorism studies and is a frequent media commentator. Dr. Pape's publications include *Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It* (Chicago 2010, with James Feldman); *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (Random House 2005); *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Cornell 1996). His commentary has appeared in The New York Times, Washington Post, New Republic, The Boston Globe, The Los Angeles Times, and The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. Dr. Pape has received over a decade of grant funding from The Department of Defense Minerva Initiative, The Office of Naval Research, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and more. Dr. Pape earned his PhD in Political Science (1988) at the University of Chicago.

Paul Staniland is an associate professor of political science at the University of Chicago, where he co-directs the Program on International Security Policy. His research interests are in civil war, international security, and ethnic politics, primarily in South Asia. Dr. Staniland is the recipient of a 2017 Minerva grant "Armed Conflict Beyond Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: Comparative Evidence from Latin America and South Asia" along with Dr. Lessing.

Benjamin Lessing is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Chicago, where he co-directs the Program on International Security Policy. He has examined armed conflict between drug cartels and the state in Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil, and prison gangs' pernicious effect on state authority and how paramilitary groups use territorial control to influence electoral outcomes. Dr. Lessing is the recipient of a 2017 Minerva grant "Armed Conflict Beyond Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: Comparative Evidence from Latin America and South Asia" along with Dr. Staniland.

Paul Poast is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Chicago and a co-director of the Project on Diplomacy and Global Governance. He studies international relations, with a focus on international security. He is the author of two books, *The Economics of War* (McGraw Hill-Irwin, 2006) and *Organizing Democracy* (University of Chicago Press, forthcoming).

Austin Carson is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Chicago and a co-director of the Project on Diplomacy and Global Governance. He specializes in secrecy and intelligence and their relationship to International Relations theory, international security, and global governance.

Robert Gulotty is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Chicago. His first book project is *Governing Trade Beyond Tariffs: The politics of multinational production and its implications for international cooperation*.

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