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Founded by Benjamin Franklin - 1777
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Background for “Wanted: Dead!” by Robert Hardy

The Islamic State Caliphate, age about 12 and a half - its message, the organization, its leaders, its members, and its supporters.

The Islamic State Caliphate is a functioning modern state with territory. It is modeled after the first Islamic State founded by the Prophet Muhammad in 622 A.D. in city of Medina in the Arabian Peninsula. It has a modern bureaucracy to administer its territories in its core, Syria and Iraq, as well as affiliates and provinces in some 22 countries.

It is governed under Sunni Sharia law that covers every aspect of daily life. Sharia is interpreted from Al Quran (lit. “The Recitation”), and the Hadith (“narratives” on the doings and sayings of the Prophet and his original companions).

Muslims consider Muhammad (570 A.D. – 623 A.D.) the last prophet sent by Allah to mankind to restore Islam, believed by Muslims to be the unaltered original monotheistic faith of Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and other prophets. Muhammad, a member of Mecca’s dominant Quraysh tribe in Mecca, first received Ayah (“Revelations”) from the angle Gabriel at the age of 40 in a cave near Mecca. They continued for 23 years until his death.

The Quran was first compiled in written form about 100 years after Muhammad’s death. The various Hadiths, of which there are plethora dealing with Sunni and Shia beliefs and various scholars of different schools of Islam, first appeared in written form about 300 years after Muhammad died. Each Hadith consists of the Ishad (“support”) or provenance, the chain of transmitters through which scholars have traced the matn (“text”) back to the time of the Prophet.

Each Hadith is classified by clerics as authentic, good or weak. However, there is no overall agreement on these ratings and different schools and scholars often classify them differently.

The current Islamic State (IS) has the same objective, as did Muhammad’s Islamic State. That is, to have all of mankind submit to Allah or otherwise to literally eliminate non-believers.

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IS follows the teachings of the eminent scholar Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855) who founded one of the main schools of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence called Hanbali Islam, and that of another supreme theologian of the same strict orthodoxy - ibn Tayyimiya (1263-1328), who lived during the troubled times of the Mongol invasions.

The latter said the reason why the Mongols were successful was because Muslims were not practicing the true faith and had returned to Jahiliyah ("the state of ignorance of the guidance of Allah" before Muhammad received Ayah).

The two men are seen as the spiritual forefathers of later thinkers and movements, which became known as "salafist," advocating a return to the time of Muhammad and as-salaf as-salaf ("righteous ancestors," Muhammad and his companions).

In the Quran Allah said: "My Messenger is the perfect one whose ways and practices all Muslims should follow." In a passage in a Hadith, Muhammad reportedly said: "My companions are the perfect ones and then the next generation and then the next."

Thus, IS are pejoratively called in the West radicals or fundamentalists, but the word al'usulia (fundamentalism in Arabic) means the fundamentals of the Quran and the Hadith. Thus, the IS Caliphate believes it adheres to the correct path and does not consider many former Caliphates legitimate.

On June 29, 2014 - the first day of the holy lunar month of Ramadan when the angel Gabriel first gave the Prophet Ayah -, following what was then called the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham's (ISIS) sweep through northern and western Iraq seizing 30 percent of the latter's territory adding to the 40 percent of Syria it already controlled, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi proclaimed, in the largest Mosque in Mosul, the establishment of his Caliphate and himself as Caliph.

After the late Abu Muhammad al-Adnani introduced him as Caliph Ibrahim, Commander of the Faithful, al-Baghdadi said: "I have been chosen to lead you. The Ummah (the global Muslim community) must pledge bay'at (allegiance) to your Caliph and to the Islamic State Caliphate. There has not been a true Caliphate that has enforced Sharia for about 1,000 years."

He made clear: the organization would wage Jihad against all non-believers living in Dar al-Harb (the House of War) until the end of time when all would live in Dar as-Salam (the House of Peace or submission to Allah). Thus, the message: "Come join the noble Caliphate, which has been prophesized in the holy books, Al-Quran and the Hadith."

Mustafa Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey, abolished the Ottoman Empire in 1924. It was the last official Caliphate. Thus, the notion that al-Baghdadi declared he was appointed by Allah to revive the true Caliphate, much as Allah chose Muhammad, was

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regarded by Sunni Muslims as extraordinary; not the least of which because it actually was a physical state. In Islam there are no states but Islam, seen in the Ummah.

IS relies heavily on symbolism relating to Muhammad's first Islamic State established in what is now called the city of Medina around 622 A.D., after he was expelled by the Quraysh (called the Hijra lit. "The Migration," basically a strategic retreat) for removing idols from the Kaaba stone, that is now the central focus of the Grand Mosque in Mecca.

For example, the group's now famous black banner is similar to Muhammad's battle standard: a square black flag known as *rayat al-uqab* or "banner of the eagle". Muhammad's banner was said to have been the headscarf of his second wife Aisha, daughter of Abu Bakr called "The Truthful" in Quran.

The holy book says Abu Bakr was the first Muslim after Muhammad's immediate family and was the most perfect of the Prophet's companions. He became the first Caliph after Muhammad. The first of four Caliphs referred to as the Rashidun, meaning "Rightly Guided" Caliphs.

Before Islam, the Roman army used a visible standard to identify the core of the legion, the Eagles. They were deployed to what are now Egypt, Israel and the greater Levant (*al-Sham* in Arabic).

Muhammad, according to Islamic tradition, had at least two banners. There was a smaller white one nicknamed "the young eagle" and the larger black battle flag known as "the Eagle".

The IS banner is black with the words 'La 'ilaha 'illa-Allah' – "There is no god (ila meaning god, Allah means The God) but God" – in white, coarse, handwritten Arabic script emblazoned across the top. It is the first part of the shahada, a Muslim's statement of faith. Even coarser is the white circle in the middle of the flag. Inside the circle are three words: Allah Messenger Muhammad.

It is worth noting, the second part of the shahada is: "and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger."

The white circle is a copy of the Seal of Muhammad, which he used in his lifetime to seal letters. A version of the seal purported to have belonged to Uthman, the third of the Rashidun, is permanently on display next to the sword of the Prophet at the Topkapi Palace museum in Istanbul.

Since the flag features the name of God, it is considered sacred and may not be desecrated. The use of the seal adds a veneer of historical authenticity to IS and its mission.

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The Islamic State took root in the form of an al-Qaeda affiliate group wal-Tahwid wal-Jihad created in the late 1990s in Jordan by a Jordanian street thug (homicidal maniac) Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. It later grew into umbrella organizations, Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia (AQM) and later the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI).

Zarqawi was not religious growing up, but late in 1988 he read Abdulla Azzam's - a Palestinian cleric teaching in Saudi Arabia - "Come Join the Caravan," a fatwah written on or about December 27, 1979, two days after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. It called on all Muslims to fulfill their obligation to join a Jihad, first in Afghanistan and later the world; to defend Islam and Muslim lands from non-believers. This religious edict was the first calling for Global Jihad.

Zarqawi traveled to Afghanistan in late 1988 as the war was winding down. There, he met Azzam - a man of words and a man of action - who had set up the "Services Offices" in Peshawar, Pakistan in 1982, to support fighters in the Jihad. There, he attracted the wealthy Saudi Usama bin-Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri (a fanatic and a former leader of Islamic Jihad in Egypt).

Azzam told the two men, as the war was winding down, that after the war the organization would serve as the base "al-Qaeda" to create a physical Caliphate in Afghanistan (the ancient name for which is Khurasan). There, Muhammad had predicted a mighty army would form carrying black banners led by mighty men with long hair and long beards, that would fight the final battle against Rome in the northwestern Syrian town of Dabiq and then along with the "Mahdi" the redeemer and Jesus would conquer Jerusalem.

Ayman al-Zawahiri had other plans. He wanted the group to attack the Sunni monarchies in the core of the Middle East, so as to attract the Crusaders to the region. That would see Muslims join the organization and they would destroy the invaders. Out of jealousy of bin Laden's relationship with Azzam and his opposition to Zawahiri's plan, Zawahiri's Egyptians assassinated Azzam with a roadside IED in Peshawar, Pakistan in late February 1989.

Zarqawi returned to Jordan in the early 1990s. He established a local militant group Jund al-Sham (the Syrian Division). He was arrested and imprisoned after guns and explosives were found in his home. While in jail -1993-1999 - he was radicalized by Jordanian cleric Abu Muhammad al-Maqqdis, who had an abiding hatred for Shi'ites.

Both men were released in 1999 under a general amnesty. Jordanian authorities discovered the two men were trying to resurrect Jund al-Sham and took away their passports. The two then fled to Pakistan where they pledged bay'at (allegiance) to al Qaeda, according to documents recovered from bin Laden's lair in Abattottabad, Pakistan.

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After the Americans invaded Afghanistan in 2001; Zarqawi, whom both bin Laden and Zawahiri considered perhaps too headstrong and strange (tattoos) yet magnetic, was dispatched on a mission. He along with other members of the group traveled to a safe house in Iran. Zarqawi then made his way to Kurdistan in Iraq, where he fought with an Islamist Kurdish group (now an IS affiliate) against Saddam Hussein.

In early 2002, he gave a televised speech in which he announced wal-Tahwid wal-Jihad had moved to Iraq to wage Jihad, but did not disclose its relationship with al Qaeda. The speech made him famous overnight.

After the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, in early 2004 bin Laden in a video address, which included Zawahiri and Maqdis; proclaimed Zarqawi the Emir of al Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers or Mesopotamia (AQM). Al-Baghdadi, who received a PhD in Islamic jurisprudence from Baghdad University, joined Zarqawi's first organization in 2003 and became a member of AQM's Sharia Shura (religious council) giving the group its religious credentials.

It is worth noting, Usama bin Laden pledged bay'at to Taliban founder Mullah Umar in part to give al Qaeda religious credentials.

AQM's mission was to attack the American occupiers, but Zarqawi slipped the leash and also waged a bloody war on Shi'ites. He staged dozens of bombings that killed Shi'ites and Sunnis alike, and was nicknamed "Sheikh of the slaughterers."

This caused consternation at al Qaeda prime. They sent numerous messages to Zarqawi to stop killing so many Muslims, because it would shine a bad light on the organization. These were found in bin Laden's lair along with Zarqawi's only reply. He explained: "If Sunnis realize the war (with the Shi'ites) has begun and there can be no turning back. They will have to join the Jihad."

However, the American intelligence net was closing in around him. On June 8, 2006, an American F-16 dropped a 500-pound bomb on a safe house just north of Baghdad where Zarqawi was talking with a religious adviser. Reportedly, Zarqawi walked out of the house muttering prayers and then dropped dead in about a minute.

Western media speculated this was a turning point in the war on terror. However, the group rebranded itself as ISI under the leadership of Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in the third slot.

The group then fled into the desert and became a widely ridiculed clandestine guerrilla force. In 2007 Abu Umar said in an audio message that ISI was "remaining" (baqiya), which became the group's slogan. He made this defiant remark in response to the U.S. "surge" in Iraq that began in early January 2007.

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The surge of U.S. forces, coupled with then Prime Minister al-Maliki allowing the U.S. to arm Sunni tribes in Anbar Province called the “Awakening Councils,” devastated ISI. However, after the city of Falujah was pacified in early 2008 by 20,000 U.S. Marines, ISI told the Sunnis, “We’ll be back when circumstances improve.”

The Democrats disparaged the surge in the 2008 election campaign. After President Obama was elected, he along with Congressional leaders vowed to bring U.S. troops home. Thus, began the drawdown.

On April 19, 2010 Abu Umar and Abu Hamza were killed in a U.S. nighttime raid just south of Tikrit. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi inherited the leadership.

He took the group underground in Nineveh Province where he linked up with like-minded Sunni groups and set up religious schools and a bureaucracy. He began to give a series of fiery sermons, always in classical Arabic, referred to as the “tongue of angels.”

His sermons were impressive. He told Sunnis that ISI was remaining and called on them to rise up against the oppressive rule of al-Maliki’s Shi’ite government, and “the Americans are defeated and are fleeing.” Maliki had already disarmed the Awakening Councils and was installing Shi’ite government officials to rule in Sunni territories; therefore, al-Baghdadi’s sermons resonated with Iraqi Sunnis who rushed to join ISI.

After bin Laden was killed May 1, 2010, all the leaders of al Qaeda’s official affiliates AQAP and AQIM pledged allegiance to Zawahiri, including a little known Syrian in the Golan Heights, Abu Muhammad al-Julani who led a militant Islamist group called Jabhat al-Nusra. All, that is, save al-Baghdadi.

In early 2012, al-Baghdadi took his men north into Syria to join the war against the Assad regime. However, some members were ordered to remain in Iraq as sleeper cells. They were awakened when ISIS returned as promised.

After ISI took Raqqa in early March 2013, al-Baghdadi changed the group’s name to “al-dowla al-islamyya fii-il-l’raaq wa-ash-shaam” (lit. the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham), acronym ISIS in English, DAESH in Arabic. The latter non-member Muslims and some in the West use as a pejorative – Arabic speakers understand it as only one letter different than “da’es”, a conjugation of a verb meaning someone or something one crushes under foot.

Acronyms are rarely used in Arabic. In 2013 Syrian activist Khaled al-Haj Salih coined the term Daesh, knowing that using a neologism to name the group was insulting, also it just sounded silly.

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ISIS fought against the Assad regime and with other rebel groups especially al-Nusra.

Al-Baghdadi, in a March 2013 speech, declared Raqqa the ISIS capital and himself emir of ISIS. Zawahiri ordered al-Baghdadi to leave Syria to al-Nusra, but Baghdad then began to disparage Zawahiri in audio messages; correctly claiming al Qaeda had a non-aggression pact with the hated Iranian Shi'ites. He basically said Zawahiri was unworthy to follow in the footsteps of Azzam and bin Laden.

On January 4, 2014, Zawahiri, in a video message, officially kicked ISIS out of the organization. Several months later al-Baghdadi announced al Nusra and ISIS had merged. Al-Julani denied this and reiterated that al-Nusra remained loyal to Zawahiri.

In late April 2014, ISIS produced a new slogan: baqiya wa-tatamadd'ad (“Remaining and Expanding”) Less than two months later this became a slogan of triumph.

IS fighters are professionally trained. In the core of the Caliphate they have fought as a conventional army, as guerrillas, and those that volunteer as suicide fighter/ bombers and terrorists. Its foreign Jihadis and those in its provinces are trained in the latter disciplines.

IS also has an administrative bureaucracy like a modern state. It names emirs for its provinces that name sub-administrators. In the Caliphate's capitals Raqqa and Mosul, the water ran and electricity flowed. The Caliphate issued passports, stamped out gold coins, and before the group's current circumstances, IS police even issued parking tickets.

The group also has religious police to, among other things; make sure women in the Caliphate are what they consider properly covered. Although the Quran only says “women should cover their bosom and dress modestly.” All other garb, such as veils (from the Ottomans) was invented later.

The Caliphate enforces strict Sharia law, according to its interpretation. Alcohol is, of course, forbidden as is smoking. Those caught imbibing are at least jailed if not beheaded. Those caught smoking cigarettes have two of their fingers cut off. Thieves lose a hand for the first offense, and those few fighters suspected might flee lose a foot. Those fleeing from battle without orders are shot dead on the spot.

After al-Baghdadi announced his Caliphate, he ramped up the group's propaganda machine run by then official spokesman al-Adnani. Its main media arm is the Al-Hayat Media Center, second is Al-Furqan Media Center; and there is the Amaq News Agency, a semi-official social media platform. It also puts out a very slick online English language magazine “Dabiq,” and “al-Naba,” a weekly newspaper in various languages. There are radio stations in some official provinces.

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By early 2015, the Caliphate propaganda machine was operating 24/7 putting out propaganda in more languages on a daily basis than the U.S. State Department published statements. Thousands of Muslim recruits from Muslim countries in the Middle East, Africa, Russia's North Caucasus region, Central, South and Southeast Asia and converted Muslims self-radicalized in the West responded and moved to the core of the Caliphate in Syria, many with their families.

IS propaganda would say: "You don't have to be a fighter; if you are a doctor, a cinematographer, an accountant, an electrician, an engineer, or an administrator, come to the Caliphate and bring your families."

The video messages on social media were compelling. They showed happy families living in the Caliphate. Men teaching their sons using the Quran and the Hadith and mothers teaching daughters how cook and sew, as well and their role to support the males.

Native speakers would say to the camera in recruiting videos:

"You know that is it recited in the Hadith that a Muslim asked the Messenger if he should give up his life and go on Jihad and Allah's Apostle said: 'Know that Paradise lies in the shade of swords.'"

"You sitting there in comfort, look around yourself. Is this how you want to die? You have lived your life in peace, but now it is time for you to join the Caliphate's Jihad against those that have oppressed you. I know how you feel as I felt that way myself, but all my bad thoughts and depression went away once I joined the noble Caliphate."

Amaq, at the height of the Caliphate's power, would tweet daily battle reports with historical attachments relating a current battle to one of Muhammad's campaigns, with all the gory details. It would also publish very slick info-graphics on where the Caliphate was remaining and expanding.

One post after the November 13, 2015 attack in Paris showed dead bodies with this caption: "As recited by the Messenger, Allah said: 'We shall cast terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers...and their abode is the (hell) fire, and evil is the abode of the unjust.'"

In fact, al-Baghdadi's Caliphate has committed no act of terror more horrible than did Muhammad and his original companions. The only difference is al-Baghdadi's forces have modern weapons.

After President Obama basically declared war on ISIL in late August 2014; on October 13, 2014, IS released an al-Adnani audio message directed at youth in the West and Russia titled: "Say to those who disbelieve 'You will be overcome'."

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He told youth in the West and in Russia to “Join the Caliphate and thereby become kings who rule the world and conquer.” He said if one could not migrate to Caliphate then kill the non-believers in their lands, including women, children and the aged.

He said: “hit them with rocks in the head, stab them while they sleep, run over them with cars in marketplaces, poison them, slaughter their livestock and burn their crops”. Those last instructions might seem odd.

Muhammad did set forth certain rules for battle. For example, he said that it is haram (forbidden) to kill the aged, women and children, and to slaughter livestock, burn crops or poison wells, unless Islam was under threat.

Thus, al-Adnani was suggesting the war on the Islamic State was in fact a war on Islam. He was also saying the religion was under threat; therefore, the rules are cancelled: poison, burn and slaughter away.

At this point it is legitimate for IS citizens and supporters to question as a pro-IS media site headlined an article about a month and a half ago: “Why has the Islamic State lost some of its territories under its control? And why has it lost some of its leaders?”

Since it is inconceivable that Allah has ceased to bless the Islamic State, the propaganda article turned to the Quran to explain:

“This is a period “trial” (ibtala) and “tests” (aikhtibarat). It is Allah’s practice to subject His creation to trials and tests, as He subjected the prophets and the other Muslims before our time,” the article said.

Thus, everything ebbs and flows, including Allah’s divine favor; therefore, the current circumstances are nothing to wail about. Rather it argued, “we should rejoice in Allah’s choice... (Even as we are about to lose Mosul, Raqqa and Sirte, Libya) to extend the period of preparation, tribulation and difficulty.”

On May 21, 2016, the Islamic State’s Al-Furqan Media released via Telegram Channels, which was tweeted and re-tweeted by followers, al-Adnani’s (killed by a U.S. airstrike near Aleppo on August 30) last audio message, “That they live by proof.”

He spent most of his speech urging followers to kill civilians in Europe and the U.S. during Ramadan, which began June 6. His words have since been immortalized in official IS media and on social networks.

At the end he prepared followers for the loss of Mosul, Raqqa and Sirte; reintroduced the theme baqiya (remaining), but noticeably absent was tatamadd’ad (expanding). He suggested baqiya and muruna (“resilience”) were one and the same. He dealt with the

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nature of victory and defeat, by saying the Caliphate might be down, but definitely was not out:

“Do you think America, that victory is in the death of one or more leaders? For that is false victory. Were you victorious when you killed Abu Musab (al-Zarqawi) or Abu Hamza (al-Muhajir)? Or Abu Umar (al-Baghdadi) or Usama (bin Laden)? ... No way! Victory is for the adversary to be defeated.”

“Or do you reckon, America that defeat is the loss of a city or the loss of territory? Were we defeated when we lost cities in Iraq and came to be in the desert, with no territory and no land? Will we be defeated if we lose Mosul, or Sirte, or Raqqa, or all the cities and go back to how we were before? No!”

“Defeat is when the mujahedeen lose their determination and will to fight. The U.S. would win and the mujahedeen would be defeated only if you remove the Quran from the hearts of Muslims.”

* To understand the nature of the Islamic State, I have used Miller’s living systems analysis. See attached.

Robert Hardy

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PUBLISHER’S NOTE: This background provides relevant context and detail for Robert Hardy’s essay “Wanted: Dead!”.

James Grier Miller's "Living Systems Analysis"

To understand the nature of the Islamic State, I have used living systems analysis (see James Grier Miller "Living Systems Analysis").

Mr. Miller's Living Systems Theory is a general theory about how all living systems "work," about how they maintain themselves and how they develop and change. By definition, living systems are open, self-organizing systems that have special characteristics of life and interact with their environment. This occurs by means of information and material-energy exchanges.

In Miller's theory, living systems form 8 levels of organization and complexity. Some of the eight levels of living systems are, "cells": a basic building block of life; "organs": the principle components are cells organized in simple, multi-cellular systems. Organs each have distinctive cells, tissues and body plans that carry our life processes differently.

The organs form "groups" that contain two or more organs and their relationships. The groups form "organizations", in this case the Islamic State. Organizations involve one or more groups within their "control system".

One may envisage the Islamic State's control system as an octagon. Inside the shape at the top is the Caliph, and below him are two deputies.

Moving clockwise, from above the Caliph's left shoulder is the Sharia Council, below that is intelligence and security, next is media, then comes schools, next is provincial, moving up is finance, then military and finally the Shura or leadership council.

Each of these are "communities", that include both individual persons and groups responsible for governing and providing essential services for life and energy to the living system.

This octagon is loose associations of communities with systemic relationships between and among them, forming supranational systems or organizations of societies with supraordinate systems of influence and control.

There are twenty subsystems that process information or material-energy or both, and account for the survival of the living system. The systems are arranged by input-throughput-output processes.

An "input transducer" brings information into the system. A: It receives and converts information brought into the system throughputs it to the "system decoder", which prepares information for the "system timer". The timer maintains the appropriate spatial/temporal for the "relationship associator". The associator maintains appropriate relationships between sources memory, which stores information for the "system use decider".

The decider makes decisions for the operations of various "operational encoders", they convert information to needed and usable form B: Material-energy processes. The "reproducer" uses the information to carry out the reproductive function. It also provides information to the "system protector" to protect system from outside influences. I would like to edit the comment on force strength.

The "distributor" distributes material-energy throughout the "system converter", which converts material-energy into suitable form for use within the "system storage". This system stores material-energy used by the "system motor", which supplies the "system producer" with material-energy for the "output transducer." The latter outputs the material-energy to "organizers" and "planners" for "actors" that perform system's missions such as attacks. The "extruder" then handles material-energy discharged by the system, such as assuring the safety of "overseers" and "supporter" of an operation.

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