

ANALYSIS OF A FAILED STATE AND ITS CURRENT THREAT TO THE U.S.

HOMELAND SECURITY

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## Introduction

Security is perceived as one of the most essential and critical tools for a nation's growth and development. The level of security measures a nation's prowess it enjoys, among other issues. Also, political stability is a factor that is crucial for the well-being of a state. With a secure environment of operation, investors will often feel attracted to start up their ventures as they consider venturing into areas that will guarantee the security of their investments. Therefore, in ensuring stability and an effective operation of a country, there is the need for states to create an enabling business environment that will promote economic growth and development and protect the lives of its citizens. Therefore, this treatise aims to analyze some of the public sector's threats and discuss cyber threats as the most current and emergent threat and their implication to the U.S. National Security.

According to a speech by the former Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Comey James, he outlined some of the emergent threats to the homeland, alongside the efforts put in place by the state to address these challenges. "To start with, terrorism has been a threat across the globe and even to the U.S. Homeland Security with the extremist groups aiming to thwart and attack the American interests both homeland and abroad"<sup>1</sup>. Coats states that this has led to counterterrorism efforts geared towards eradicating the activities of the militia groups such as the al Qaeda group of Islamic Maghreb and the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), among other violent terrorist groups<sup>2</sup>. In a new threat, the extremist

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<sup>1</sup> Comey, James. 2015. "Worldwide threats and Homeland Security Challenges." *Washington D.C.: Federal Bureau of Investigation*, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/testimony/worldwide-threats-and-homeland-security-challenges>

<sup>2</sup> Coats, Daniel, R. 2017. "Worldwide threat assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence." *Director of National Intelligence*, pp. 1-32.

groups have advanced their tactics by embracing the use of technology to reach out to their members and even recruit new people to their group<sup>3</sup>.

### **Analysis of the Emergent threat and its Implications**

According to Dorff's, the widespread incorporation of technological devices into daily operation is speedily changing how individuals alongside machines interact with each other as well as the world around them<sup>4</sup>. The use of these technological devices has led to vulnerabilities in many segments as cyber actors deploy the internet of things (IoT) devices in their operations. ISIL group, for example, disseminates their terrorist messages to all social media users, irrespective of age.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the group had recently released a clip, through social media, that reiterated their stand and campaign for attacks against law enforcement officers as well as soldiers, government personnel, and intelligent community members.

Contrary to the threats of terrorist attacks, homeland security also suffers emergent challenge of cyber-related crime<sup>6</sup>. The advancements in technology have brought about opportunities and challenges with it. Garamone connotes that the country has experienced sophisticated cyber threats emanating from both hired and sponsored hackers and organized

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<sup>3</sup>Akaha, Tsuneo. 2002. "Non-traditional security: Issues in Northeast Asia and prospects for international cooperation." *Monetary Institute of International Studies*, pp.1-23.

<sup>4</sup> Dorff, R. 2000. "Failed States III: Globalization and the failed State." [http://www.comm.ucsb.edu/faculty/mstohl/failed\\_states/2000/papers/dorff.html](http://www.comm.ucsb.edu/faculty/mstohl/failed_states/2000/papers/dorff.html)

<sup>5</sup> Scroggs, Patricia. 2000. "The United States' experiences and policies in non-traditional security. ASEAN Regional Forum Seminar on Enhancing Cooperation in the Field of Non-traditional Security Issues." pp. 1-6.

<sup>6</sup> Hamill, Paul. 2015. "10 Key National Security Challenges in 2015."

<https://www.americansecurityproject.org/10-key-national-security-challenges-in-2015/>

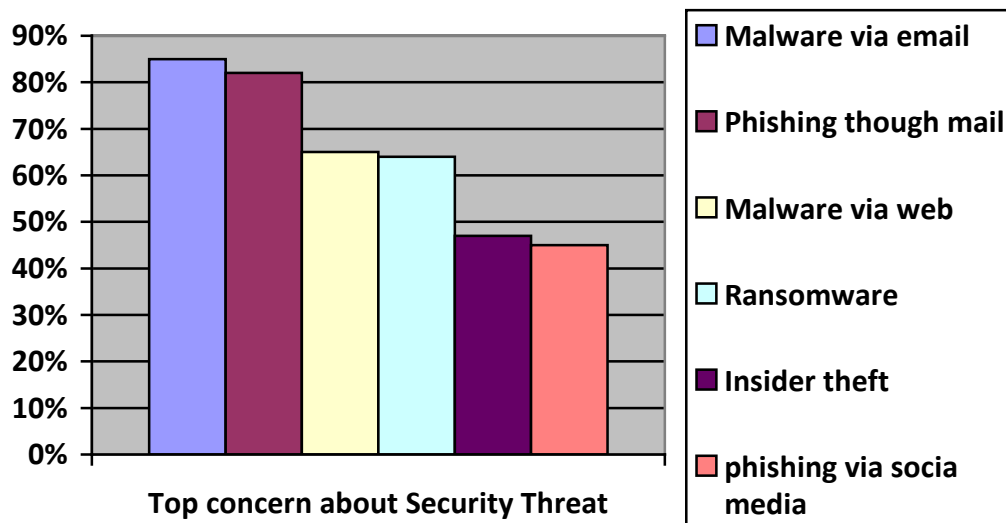
cyber groups, among others<sup>7</sup>. The growing prevalence and severity of malicious cyber-enabled activities have constituted an unusual over and above an extraordinary danger to homeland security and the country's general economy.

Studies show that cyber attackers always aim and seek to strike very critical infrastructure besides harming the economy. With the extensive use of various social media platforms, the cyber attackers have found a potential ground to advance their activities, thereby preying on the vulnerable<sup>8</sup>. Arguably, cybercrime occurs in various ways, right from denial of service attacks on the websites, through to extortion, blackmail, alongside manipulation. Threats of cybersecurity have gone to the extent of affecting the economy. For instance, there is an underground economy, perceived as a substantial global online black market, which trades in crime-related products along with services like malware, vulnerabilities, and spammers besides host services. The underground economy further offers cash-out services, making the illegal trade gain ground leading to substantial financial losses, with millions of debit and credit cards directed through the black market. Among the security threats, malware infiltration via email is presented as the top concern, as shown in the graph below:

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<sup>7</sup> Garamone, Jim. 2018. "Cyber tops list of threats to U.S., Director of National Intelligence says. Department of Defense News." *U.S. Department of Defence*, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1440838/cyber-tops-list-of-threats-to-us-director-of-national-intelligence-says/>

<sup>8</sup> Hough, Peter. 2013. "Understanding Global Security [S.l.]: *Routledge*."



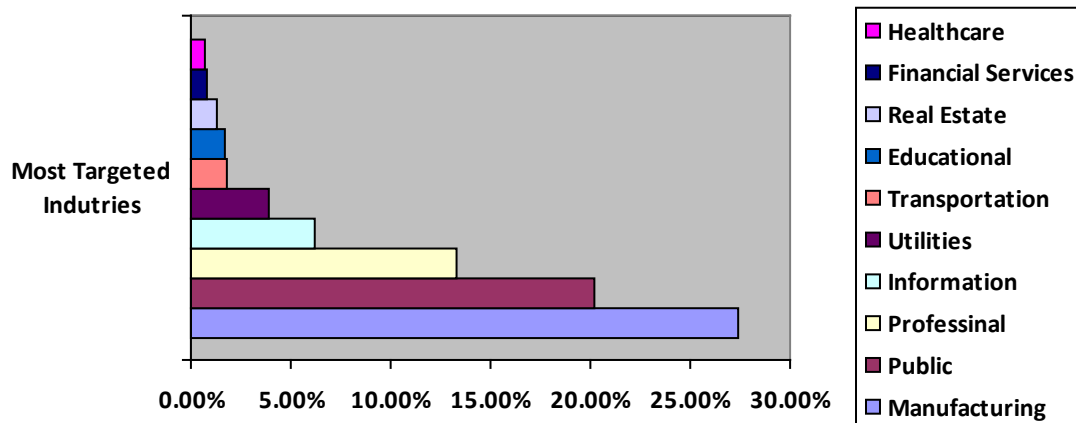
*Source: Osterman Research, Inc.*

From the chart, it is evident that most business organizations' top concern is malware infiltration via email at 85 percent, followed closely by phishing through email. Notably, in these two attacks, email servers form part of the defense, as entities rely on their staff's ability to identify suspicious emails. According to Hammond and Gummer, phishing comes about when a cyber gang tries to give an offer of bait for one (prey) to take, to enable him/her to get access into the vital information they targeted<sup>9</sup>. For example, the attacker may place it in the forms of business proposals, being pronounced to some lottery that you even had no idea about or anything that guarantees you money for no efforts<sup>10</sup>.

According to Data Investigation Report, the top ten espionage targeted organizations comprise the manufacturing, professional, public, and transportation industries, as illustrated in the graph below.

<sup>9</sup> Hammond, Philip, and Gummer, Ben. 2016. "National cybersecurity strategy 2016-2021."

<sup>10</sup> AICPA. 2016. "Cybersecurity reporting: A backgrounder."



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activities such as carding, the public sector and the state have found themselves victims of cyber-related crimes. Carding entails an instance where the attacker impersonates to be another person, with a hidden intent of indulging in fraudulent activity<sup>11</sup>. The attacker hacks the target's system, enabling him to access the critical data and information such as email identification numbers, alongside credit card information, among others, from the host website.

Additionally, ransomware is also another way that attackers employ in their operation, by gaining access to the host's computer network, before encrypting the files through the application of public-key encryption<sup>12</sup>. Respectively, cyber attackers also employ another crime method referred to as social engineering. Here, the hacker makes express contact with the targeted victim, via the application of emails, and phones, before trying to win the victim's confidence and getting vital data related to the victim's bank account balance, place of work, on top of other personal data. This critical data obtained can later be used by the hacker to apply for loans with the victim's data. Indisputably, studies show that individuals, organizations, and the public sector at large suffer the threats posed by continuous cybercrime

<sup>11</sup> Gottschalk, Hanno. 2016. New age of cybersecurity and data protection: Removing fear, uncertainty, and doubt.

<sup>12</sup> Hildreth, Steve. 2001. "Cyberwarfare. Congressional Research Service." <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/intel/RL30735.pdf/>

activities, thereby need for cybersecurity measures by the United States to protect its economy from being eroded. Since the economic chains connecting several firms to the international economy are dependent, a given cyberattack on one of the firms in the chain may end up impacting the entire business in the economic group<sup>13</sup>. Moreover, there is the need by the United States to diversify its tactics on the war against crime by inducing non-traditional methods such as the use of technology<sup>14</sup>. The public sector has suffered losses concerning revenue and data, making it hard for the entities to regain their earlier financial status before the flop.

### **The Importance of Understanding failed state and why they fail in the first place**

Political and economic systems are critical determiners to the stability and prowess of a nation. Strikingly, a country that enjoys political stability is said to have the potential of attracting investors resulting in the development and growth of the economy. For instance, there will be peaceful co-existence between communities, a functional government in place to protect its citizens' rights and enhance the rule of law. A secure and stable government provides security to its people alongside others who reside within its jurisdiction. On the other hand, political instability may cause the complete opposite of what the United Nations entails. A state that lacks stability in its political and economic system suffers several setbacks in its operations. For example, political instability may lead to a state of lawlessness and anarchy, where people rule themselves, and there is no one to observe the law. The situation may result in insecurity and tension and the possibility of conflict emerging due to various groups forming and trying to create authority as there is no government in place.

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<sup>13</sup> Ventura, L. 2005. "Building a Security Policy Framework for a Large, Multi-national Company. SANS Institute.

<sup>14</sup> Scroggs, Patricia. 2005. The United States' experiences and policies in non-traditional security. ASEAN Regional Forum Seminar on Enhancing Cooperation in the Field of Non-traditional Security Issues. *Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs*, pp. 2-6.

Hence, in understanding the significance of political and economic stability, this research aims at discussing and analyzing the context of a failed state and the importance of addressing the issues that may lead to the failures of states.

Understandably, a failed state is perceived as a country that is not able to perform some of the fundamental functions, a sovereign nation-state in the modern global system. The government in power is weak and does not have absolute authority over its citizens and its territorial, besides being unable to safeguard its national boundaries. Remarkably, the governing ability of failed states is usually attenuated so that they are unable to fulfill both the administration and organizational duties needed to control and govern people and resources. In a failed state, citizens have no trust in their system, making the state illegitimate before the international community<sup>15</sup>. Additionally, there is a presence of feeble and weak institutions with the executive barely functioning, whereas the judiciary, the legislature, alongside the armed forces losing their ability over and above professional independence. They suffer from collapsing infrastructures, hesitating utility supplies, educational and health facilities, alongside deteriorating fundamental human development standards, such as life expectancy, literacy, and child mortality rates.

The dynamics resulting in a state's compounding failure are several and varied, for example, civil war, bureaucratic red tape, ethnic genocide, over and above predatory government. The given state cannot be able to formulate policies to effectively promote infrastructure alongside delivering services to its people or safeguard civil liberties and fundamental human rights. Therefore, state failure tends to manifest itself if a government cannot deliver physical security and ensure a stable political system, let alone create a

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<sup>15</sup> Ventura, L. 2005. "Building a Security Policy Framework for a Large, Multi-national Company. SANS Institute.



productive and enabling economic environment for its people. Rotberg connotes that failing and failed states present grave danger not only to the local populace but also has an impact on international stability and to the well-being of their people<sup>16</sup>.

### **Implications of Failed States**

Failed states are often perceived to create safe havens for extremist groups, grounds for the trade of illegal drugs and firearms, and the breeding ground for various diseases. According to Rice, a failed state experiencing anarchy can end up spilling instability across its borders, thereby creating a conflict dynamic that may affect neighboring countries, like the case with Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)<sup>17</sup>. Since the overthrown state cannot protect its borders. Failed states end up creating an environment that spurs broader regional conflicts with substantial economic and security costs to the neighboring nations. For instance, the impacts of failed states pose severe challenges to America's interests in terms of refugees' flow, lost trade, trafficking in illegal goods, and investment opportunities. On top of that, there will be a need for peacekeeping and provision of humanitarian assistance, and adoption of strategies that have visionary policies and ways of countering these threats. Research conducted by Rotberg found that in most cases, a failure of nation-states occurs as a result of the outbreak of civil violence or rise of warring nonstate groups fighting for power or to overthrow a government in place<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Rotberg, Rotberg. 2004. "When States Fail: Causes and Consequences." *Princeton: Princeton University Press*

<sup>17</sup> Rice, Susan. 2003. "The New National Security: Focus on Failed States." *The Brookings Institution*, 16: 1-9.

<sup>18</sup> Rotberg, Rotberg. 2004. "When States Fail: Causes and Consequences." *Princeton: Princeton University Press*

Generally, there is no agreed comprehensive list of failed states, as all countries are deemed to have failed in some respects. Furthermore, a state also can move in and out of fragility. For example, Zimbabwe had enjoyed moments of steady economic growth and development before the early 1990s. The Military operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo have left the nation in political instability, contributing to the decline of the country's economy by 30% over the past few years, making it unable to service its external debt, with continuous quest humanitarian assistance<sup>19</sup>. The World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessments (CPIA) has divided the low-income states into five different performance classes, giving a list of 46 fragile states, with a population of about 870 million.

### **Solution for Failed States**

The real threats posed by fragile and failed states have resulted in calls for early global intervention to address the effects brought about by these states before the situation worsens. The demand for external interventions to stabilize the states that are about to collapse is relatively great compared to the limited available resources<sup>20</sup>. Besides, there is also a lack of knowledge on the kinds of approaches that can enable these states to recover alongside the various instruments suitable for undertaking the initiative. So far, the international community has dealt with fragile states in an ad hoc, piecemeal fashion, where a situation is looked into only after it has become critical. Thus, a sustainable approach to dealing with fragile states remains elusive. Energy should be focused on reconstructing fragile states. Some of the strategies that can be embraced to avert and save nations from finding themselves in a failed state are by advancing intelligence collection, especially around areas prone to state collapse, by focusing specifically on transnational security threats

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<sup>19</sup> Ottaway, M., and Mair, Stefan. 2004. "States at Risk and Failed States." *German Institute or International and Security Affairs*, pp.1-10.

<sup>20</sup> 7 Deadly Scenarios: A Military Futurist Explores the Changing Face of War in the 21st Century by Andrew Krepinevich

like smuggling terrorism, and crime among others. There is also the need to take risks for peace by taking initiatives to prevent conflicts and efforts to broker peace<sup>21</sup>. This has been seen in the vigorous efforts by the U.S. to defuse tensions between Pakistan and India. Additionally, nations should also come together and help the fragile states recover by providing aid, trade, as well as debt relief.

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<sup>21</sup> Ina Breuer. 2002. "The Experiences of Local Actors in Peace-building, Reconstruction and the Establishment of Rule of Law," *Unpublished Manuscript*.

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