



## about me

- Professor, Department of Political Science, McGill University
- Middle East politics and security
- humanitarian, peace, and stabilization operations
- intelligence analysis
- serious (political-military) gaming
- Policy Staff, Department of Foreign Affairs; Intelligence Assessment Secretariat, Privy Council Office; Senior Nonresident Fellow, Atlantic Council; consultant to World Bank, UN agencies, others
- Senior editor, PAXsims (<http://www.paxsims.org>)



# why game?

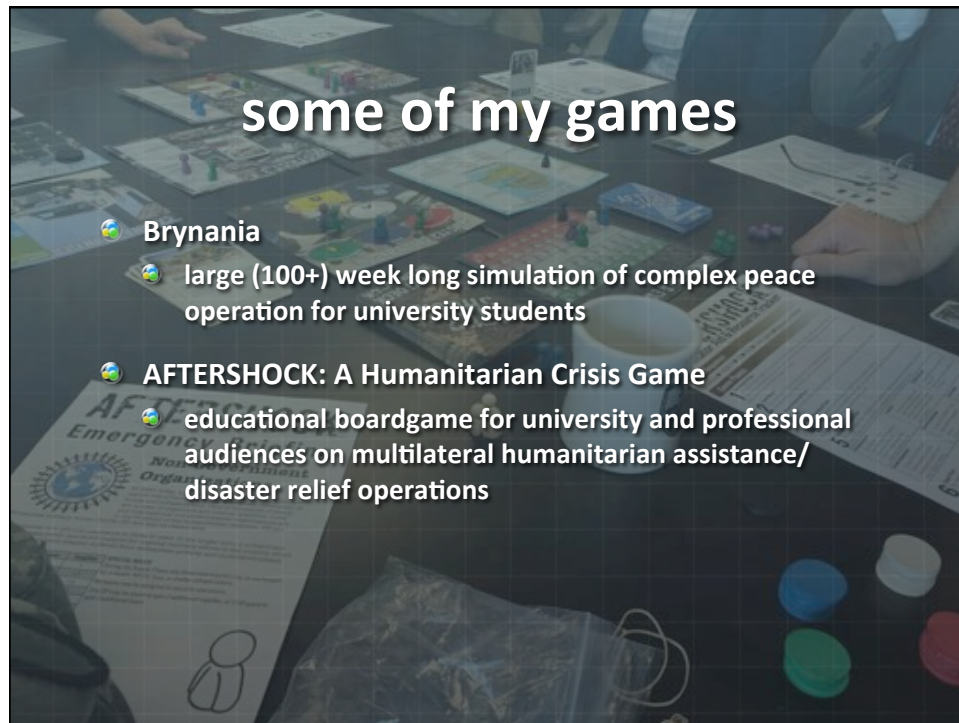
- Games can be effective educational and training tools.
  - Engagement and learning
  - Help bridge theory and practice
- Games can offer analytical insight.
  - Empathy/alternative views.
  - Crowdsourcing (generating collective insight).
  - Adversary responses.
  - Second and third order effects.
  - Explore alternatives.
  - Adjunct to other methods.
- Networking and team-building.

“Mid-term wargaming will focus on the development of new capabilities as well as operational and organizational concepts... with an eye to incorporating innovative approaches or technologies into the future force and identifying potential portfolio offsets.”

In order to “effectively pursue an innovative... strategy avoid operational and technological surprise, and make the best of limited resources, we need to reinvigorate, institutionalize, and systematize wargaming

Gaming “across different time horizons will also serve a crucial educational function by bringing together different groups of defense professionals to think critically about future challenges.”

“When done right, wargames spur innovation and provide a mechanism for addressing emerging challenges, exploiting new technologies, and shaping the further security environment. The can potentially make the difference between wise and unwise investment trajectories and make our forces more successful in future conflicts”



## some of my games

- 🌐 **Brynania**
  - 🌐 large (100+) week long simulation of complex peace operation for university students
- 🌐 **AFTERSHOCK: A Humanitarian Crisis Game**
  - 🌐 educational boardgame for university and professional audiences on multilateral humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations



## some of my games


- 🌐 **Fall of Tripoli**
  - 🌐 scenario-based examination of post-Qaddafi governance challenges prepared for Libyan NTC (Benghazi, July 2011)


## some of my games

- 🌐 Palestinian refugee negotiation simulation (2009)
- 🌐 FCO-supported Chatham House project
- 🌐 UNRWA policy simulation (2013)
- 🌐 policy recommendation for UNRWA CG
- 🌐 Palestinian refugee workshops (2014)
- 🌐 US DoS/FCO-supported Chatham House project in support of Kerry negotiations
- 🌐 Syrian Refugees in Lebanon simulation (2014-15)
- 🌐 educational simulation for Exeter University, McGill University

## some of my games

- 🌐 US Engagement in the Middle East (2016)
- 🌐 asked by Atlantic Council Middle East to develop game exploring the impact of greater US engagement/disengagement on Middle East
- 🌐 focus on crisis stability: can US effectively deter challengers, support (and restrain) allies, build coalitions, mediate and resolve disputes?
- 🌐 two **simultaneous, semi-linked games**





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## PAXsims

SIMULATIONS • CONFLICT, PEACEBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT • TRAINING AND EDUCATION

### Dstl wargaming trip report (or, I visited Portdown West and all I got was this lousy mug)

Posted by Rex Brynen on 02/08/2016 6:56 4 Comments

Last month I visited the UK for a week of discussions on professional wargaming. My trip report has now been cleared for publication (public release identifier DSTI/PUB097079), and I'm pleased to present it below. It was a terrific visit as you'll see below.

**Dstl Day 1: Wargaming and its challenges**

In late June I spent a week as a guest of Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), at their Portdown West campus near Portsmouth. Dstl is an executive agency, sponsored by the Ministry of Defence. Dstl ensures that "innovative science and technology contribute to the defence and security of the UK."

PAXsims is devoted to peace, conflict, humanitarian, and development simulations and serious games for education, training, and policy analysis.

If you wish to be notified when new material is posted here, simply use the RSS feed or "email subscription" features below.

Relevant comments are welcomed.

Recent Posts

#### Dstl trip report:

<https://paxsims.wordpress.com/2016/08/02/dstl-wargaming-trip-report-or-i-visited-portsdown-west-and-all-i-got-was-this-lousy-mug/>

## some of my games

- ISIS Crisis
- multi-sided pol-mil matrix game
- examines counter-ISIS challenges, with emphasis on Iraq
- developed with Major Tom Mouat (Defence Academy of the UK), based on matrix game approach first developed by Chris Engle

## matrix games

- 🌐 matrix games\* are narrative-based game with no rigid rules
- 🌐 in turn, each player declares:
  1. an action
  2. the outcome/effect of that action (if successful)
  3. reasons why they will be successful
- 🌐 other players (+SME) identify other arguments for/against success
- 🌐 outcome is then determined
  - 🌐 umpire adjudication
  - 🌐 balance of arguments
  - 🌐 adjusted stochastic determination (dice + modifiers)
- 🌐 game is adjusted, and next player takes turn


\*which involve no actual matrix

## matrix games





- 🌐 **strengths**
  - 🌐 cheap, fast, and easy
  - 🌐 flexible
  - 🌐 multisided
  - 🌐 full spectrum of diplomatic/information/military/economic actions and effects
  - 🌐 role-playing
- 🌐 **weaknesses**
  - 🌐 skilled facilitator?
  - 🌐 don't look complicated (or expensive) enough
  - 🌐 sequential one-action-at-a-time
  - 🌐 language skills
  - 🌐 lack sophisticated modeling



# ISIS Crisis (Iraq edition)

 Six players/teams + optional SME

1. ISIS
2. Kurds
3. Iraqi government
4. Sunni opposition
5. Iran
6. United States
7. *SME (unrepresented players and effects)*

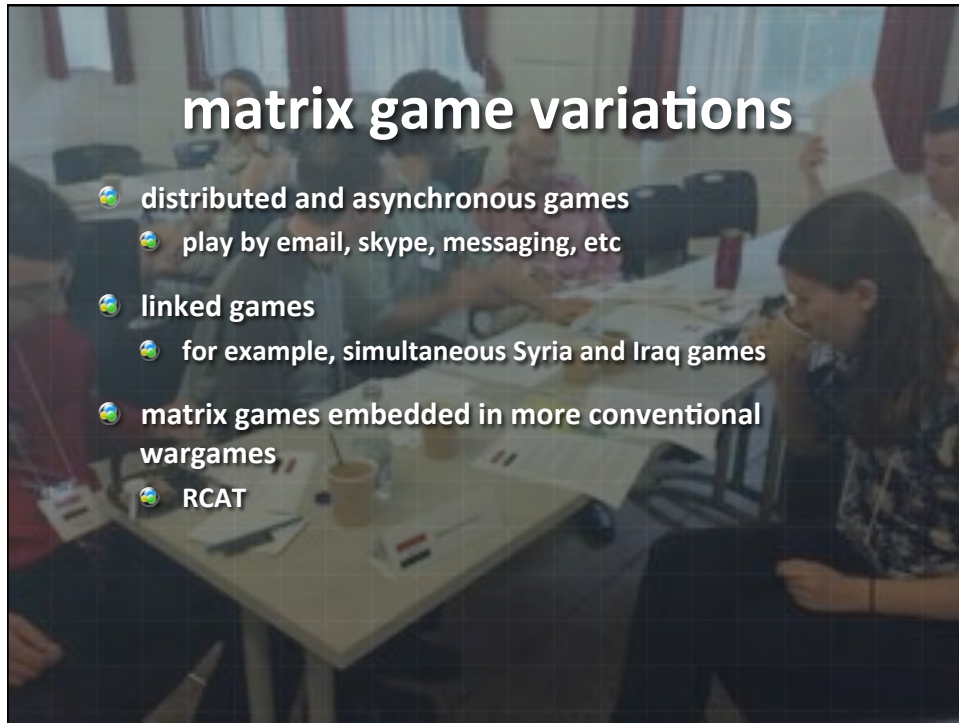
 <p><b>Kurdish Regional Government</b></p> <p><b>LIMITED HORIZONS.</b> Kurdish politicians are largely focused on Kurdistan.</p> <p>Ongoing effect: Any actions outside Kurdish-majority areas suffer a -1 penalty.</p>	 <p><b>Islamic State (of Iraq and the Levant)</b></p> <p><b>SUNNI SYMPATHIES.</b> You enjoy a "home court" advantage in Sunni-majority areas.</p> <p>Ongoing effect: All actions taking place in Sunni-majority areas gain a +1 bonus. Actions taking place in Shiite or Kurdish-majority areas suffer a -1 penalty, however.</p>
 <p><b>Iran</b></p> <p><b>HEGEMONIC NEIGHBOUR?</b> Iranian involvement in Iraq only deepens Sunni suspicions.</p> <p>Ongoing effect: Any unsuccessful direct actions by Iran against Sunni opposition or ISIL provides that actor with a +1 bonus on their next action.</p>	 <p><b>Iraqi Government</b></p> <p><b>PATRONAGE AND CORRUPTION.</b> Government actions are hampered by corruption, political infighting, patronage, and weak institutions.</p> <p>Ongoing effect: All actions suffer a -1 penalty.</p>

 <p><b>United States</b></p> <p><b>POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS.</b> No one at home is eager to get sucked back into the Iraqi quagmire.</p> <p>Ongoing effect: Suffer -1 penalty to all actions that involve use of US military ground forces.</p>	 <p><b>Iraqi Government</b></p> <p><b>MILITARY SHORTCOMINGS.</b> Despite billions in weapons and training, the Iraqi armed forces are poorly organized and led, and riddled with patronage and corruption.</p> <p>Ongoing effect: All military actions outside of Baghdad and Shiite areas suffer a -1 penalty.</p>
 <p><b>Sunni opposition</b></p> <p><b>FEAR AND LOATHING.</b> Sunnis might fear ISIL, but they might loathe the Shiite-dominated central government even more.</p> <p>Ongoing effect: Any actions taken directly against ISIL suffer a -2 penalty. Actions taken against non-ISIL actors in Sunni-majority areas gain a +1 bonus.</p>	<p><b>The Enduring Curse of Unforeseen Consequences and Second Order Effects</b></p> <p><b>ONGOING EFFECT:</b> Whenever a double is rolled, ISIL may take an immediate action. This action must pertain to the immediately prior action for which the double was rolled.</p>

## matrix game variations

- 🌐 multi-level game
- 🌐 larger teams (4-6), with players assigned roles and individual goals
- 🌐 group decision-making rules
- 🌐 individual interaction limits
- 🌐 multiple COAs, select one
- 🌐 generates larger number of possible action
- 🌐 enables analysis of roads-not-taken
- 🌐 multiple actions per team in different (diplomatic, military, economic, other) domains
- 🌐 all-of-government
- 🌐 reduce kinetic bias





## matrix game variations

- 🌐 distributed and asynchronous games
  - 🌐 play by email, skype, messaging, etc
- 🌐 linked games
  - 🌐 for example, simultaneous Syria and Iraq games
- 🌐 matrix games embedded in more conventional wargames
  - 🌐 RCAT