Wireless Ad hoc Networks:
Where Security, Real-time and Lifetime Meet

Zdravko Karakehayov

Technical University of Sofia,
Bulgaria
Department Computer Systems

Email: zgk@tu-sofia.bg

Abstract—**This paper deals with the multihop nature of wireless ad hoc networks where security, real-time and lifetime meet. We propose a hierarchical communication model to study how medium access control and network energy signatures provide opportunities for power-efficient partitioning of communication links. We show possibilities to integrate multihop services into routing protocols. At the same time, malicious nodes included in a routing path may misbehave and the paper analyzes vulnerable points in case of communication attacks. The REWARD algorithm for secure routing is used as a main example for corrective actions. Nodes listen to neighbor transmissions to detect black hole attacks. The energy overhead is broken down into static, the additional energy required to watch for attacks, and dynamic, which is application specific. We evaluate the static energy overhead associated with symmetrical routing.**

I. INTRODUCTION

AD HOC networks have a wide spectrum of military and commercial applications. Ad hoc networks are employed in situations where installing an infrastructure is too expensive, too vulnerable or the network is transient. The interaction between the nodes is based on wireless communication. Packets are forwarded in a multihop manner. Nodes have a limited radio footprint and when a node receives a packet it applies a routing algorithm to select a neighbor for forwarding.

There is a class ad hoc networks, sensor networks, where the requirements for lifetime and size of the nodes are driven to extremes. A wireless sensor network consists of a large number of nodes that may be randomly and densely deployed. Sensor nodes are capable of sensing many types of information such as temperature, light, humidity and radiation. Sensor networks must collect data in an area of interest for months or years. Since the energy is a scarce and usually non-renewable resource, the network's functionality must be viewed from a low-power perspective. Sensor network nodes execute three major tasks: sensing, computation and communication.

Communication energy dominates the overall energy budget. The greater than linear relationship between transmit energy and distance promises to reduce the energy cost when the radio link is partitioned. Nodes calculate the distance and tune their transmit power accordingly. Consequently, it would be beneficial to use several hops to reach a node within the transmission radius instead of a direct link. Along with available locations of the nodes, a multihop optimization requires an appropriate power model. For some applications it is not necessary nodes to have real coordinates. Instead, nodes may have virtual coordinates: hop-distances to other nodes.

Moreover, some applications require the network to influence the environment via actuators. Synchronization between input and output demands real-time traffic. Real-time forwarding of packets under multihop communication scheme is a serious challenge. When we factor in security, the outlook becomes even more grim. Packets travel over several nodes and malicious attacks are easy to organize. To detect malicious influence and wage corrective actions the nodes must spend extra energy. Consequently, the multihop nature of ad hoc networks, while beneficial for energy reduction, brings the packets delivery time up. The dynamic nature of the network and the power-efficient partitioning of communication links in particular, often result in unpredictable traffic timing parameters. Enemy nodes included in a routing path may misbehave and any attempt to make the network less vulnerable requires extra energy and affects the lifetime, thus closing the loop.

II. RELATED WORK

Different MAC protocols are discussed in [1]-[6]. Energy efficiency is the primary goal of the research. While a power saving technique, termed Span [1], dynamically splits the nodes into sleeping nodes and forwarding nodes, S-MAC, a medium access control protocol [2], establishes a low duty cycle operation in all nodes. ExOR, extremely opportunistic routing is a routing method developed to reduce the total number of transmissions taking into account the actual packet propagation [3]. DTA, data transmission algebra, has been developed to generate complex transmission schedules based on collision-free concurrent data transmissions [5]. In related research we proposed ALS-MAC, a medium access control protocol where contention-based advertising slots are mapped to scheduled-based transmission slots [6]. The energy model employed in this paper has been adopted from [7], [8]. Despite there being a plethora of sensing and MAC papers, comparatively little has been published on the companion task of actuation and real-time requirements. Sensor-actuator networks are discussed in [9], [10]. The problem of obtaining virtual coordinates is addressed in [11].

Different aspects of node architectures and capabilities can be found in [12]-[17]. The power reduction methods discussed in [15]-[17] are not confined to computation energy of network nodes. They can be applied, also, in other cases where voltage-scalable or speed-scalable CPUs follow the current requirements and save energy. Another approach to reduce the power consumption is to remove hardware used for localization, such as GPS, and utilize receive signal strength, RSS. The resulting accuracy and impact factors are investigated in [14].

Methods for energy efficient multihop communication are discussed in [18]-[22]. A detailed investigation for simple settings is available in [19]. In related research we studied multihop optimization for non-regular topologies [6], [10]. An Aloha type access control mechanism for large, multihop, wireless networks is defined in [21]. The protocol optimizes the product of the number of simultaneously successful transmissions per unit of space, spatial reuse, by the average range of each transmission.

A review of routing protocols for wireless ad hoc networks is available in [23]. The problem of radio irregularity is discussed in [24]. Later in Section V, we compare distances with the communication range. Due to radio irregularity some neighbors located within the transmission disk may be inaccessible while some remote nodes, outside the disk, will be capable to communicate. Since quite a few processor architectures vie for attention in the realm of sensor networks, target-aware modeling of routing algorithms helps to evaluate important timing properties [25]. Security of wireless sensor networks is in focus in [26]-[31]. Two papers, [22] and [30], emphasize the fact that multiobjective design is needed. Listening to neighbor transmissions to detect black hole attacks is discussed in [32]-[35].

III. COMMUNICATION MODEL

The communication model describes a packet forwarding from a source to a destination. The destination is within the communication range of the source. The communication model, C, has three components: a set of the locations of nodes, L, a medium access control model, M, and an energy model, E.

$$C = \left[L, M, E \right] \qquad (1)$$

A. Medium access control model

Medium access control (MAC) mechanism has a significant impact on the energy efficiency [2], [4], [6]. Currently available MAC protocols for wireless sensor networks can be broken down into two major types: contention-based and scheduled-based. While under contention-based protocols nodes compete among each other for channel access, scheduled-based schemes rely on prearranged collision-free links between nodes. There are different methods to assign collision-free links to each node. Links may be assigned as time slots, frequency bands, or spread spectrum codes. However, size and cost constrains may not permit allocating complex radio subsystems for the node architecture. Logically, TDMA scheduling is the most common scheme for the domain of wireless sensor networks. The limited communication range of network nodes provides an extra opportunity for collision-free interaction, space division access [5], [6], [21].

- *Assume scheduled links*

In order to save energy nodes should stay in a sleeping mode as long as possible. Ideally, nodes should have prearranged collision-free links and wake up only to exchange packets. This MAC approach can be termed Assume Scheduled Links, **ASL**. The **ASL** model has two parameters: a packet length in bits, p, and a bit rate, B.

$$M = \left\{ ASL, p, B \right\} \qquad (2)$$

While **ASL** is a theoretical concept, it helps to outline the floor of the energy required for communication.

- *Beacon Advertise Transmit*

Beacon Advertise Transmit, **BAT**, model is a widespread MAC mechanism [4]. Beacons are employed to synchronize internode communications. A beacon period, T_B, includes two major sections. The period begins with a traffic indication window, T_A. During T_A all nodes are listening and pending packets are advertised. The nodes addressed till the end of T_A send acknowledgements and receive data packets. Data transmissions are followed by acknowledgement frames to confirm successful reception. Fig. 1 illustrates a beacon period.

The **BAT** model has five parameters: T_A, T_B, a data packet length in bits, p, a control packet length in bits, q, and a bit rate, B.

$$M = \left[BAT, T_A, T_B, p, q, B \right] \qquad (3)$$

B. Energy model

The energy used to send a bit over a distance *d* via radio communication may be written as

$$E = a d^n + b \qquad (4)$$

where *a* is a proportionality constant [7], [8]. The radio parameter *n* is a path loss exponent that describes the rate at which the transmitted power decays with increasing distance. Typically, *n* is between 2 and 4. The *b* constant is associated with specific receivers, CPUs and computational algorithms. Thus the model emerges as

$$E = \left[a, n, b, P_R \right] \qquad (5)$$

where P_R is the power consumption of a turned on receiver.
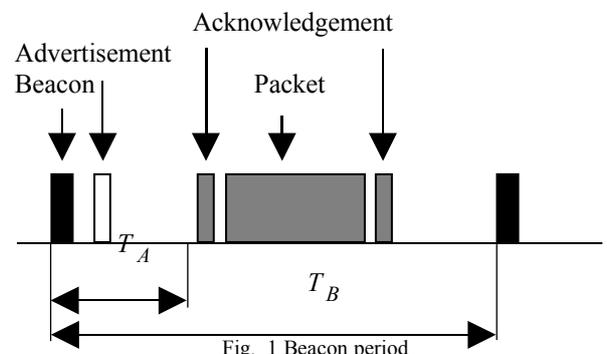
Fig. 1 Beacon period

IV. REAL-TIME BEHAVIOR

Using the BAT model and counting the beacon periods nodes are in position to calculate the packets delivery time. While this completely applies for destination nodes, intermediate nodes can use the actual packet propagation time and virtual coordinates to foresee the overall delivery time.

In the large, energy versus real-time tradeoffs can be resolved via different values assigned for the beacon period. In the small, at each hop nodes decide whether to include an extra intermediate node for power efficiency or to forward the packet as fast as possible. The local decision is based on the actual propagation of the packet measured in number of beacon periods and the remaining number of hops.

V. LIFETIME

An ad hoc network lifetime can be measured by the time when the first node runs out of energy, or a network can be declared dead when a certain fraction of nodes die. Alternatively, the system lifetime can be measured by application-specific parameters, such as the time until the system can no longer provide acceptable quality of service. Clearly, the higher the energy efficiency is, the longer the network will survive. The energy efficiency can be optimized at three levels.

A. Node architecture

A typical node is built around a low-power microcontroller [12],[13],[15]. Wireless transceivers create physical links between nodes. Hardware provides the following low-power mechanisms. The receiver and transmitter can be individually enabled and disabled. The transmit power can be adjusted gradually. For many applications nodes are capable of determining their coordinates. Voltage-scalable systems may apply dynamic voltage or clock frequency scaling to reduce the power consumption.

B. Multihop routing service

Once the routing protocol has provided the next relay another neighbor can be considered to partition the link. The number of hops is increased to save energy. As an additional benefit, the reduced transmit power allows better spatial reuse. Fig. 2 shows how an intermediate node can be used to break down the link between a source S and a destination D into two hops.
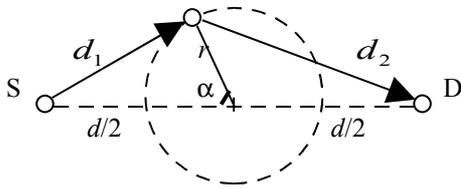

Fig. 2 Routing via an intermediate node

Theorem 1. Let $C=\left\{\left[\text{ASL},p,B\right],\left[a,4,b,P_R\right]\right\}$ be the communication model of a wireless ad hoc network. If the distance between the source S and the destination D $d\geq\left((8b+(p/B)P_R)/7a\right)^{1/4}$ and the distance between an intermediate node and the halfway point between S and D

$$r\leq(-0.75d^2+0.25(9d^4-a^{-1}(8b-7ad^4+(\frac{p}{B})P_R))^{\frac{1}{2}})^{\frac{1}{2}},$$

the two-hop communication requires less energy than the direct link.

Proof. We must prove when the following inequality holds.

$$ad_1^4+b+ad_2^4+b+2(p/B)P_R\leq ad^4+b+(p/B)P_R \quad (6)$$

Taking into account that

$$d_1=\left(d^2/4-dr\cos\alpha+r^2\right)^{1/2} \quad (7)$$

$$d_2=\left(d^2/4+dr\cos\alpha+r^2\right)^{1/2} \quad (8)$$

We get

$$16ar^4+8ad^2\left(1+2\cos^2\alpha\right)r^2+8b-7ad^4+(p/B)P_R\leq0 \quad (9)$$

The inequality has solutions if and only if $d\geq\left((8b+(p/B)P_R)/7a\right)^{1/4}$. Since the threshold value for the distance r will vary with α, we take the worst case, $\cos\alpha=1$.

Using the quadratic formula,

$$r\leq(-0.75d^2+0.25(9d^4-a^{-1}(8b-7ad^4+(\frac{p}{B})P_R))^{\frac{1}{2}})^{\frac{1}{2}}, \quad (10)$$

□

Fig. 3 shows plots for the radius r compared with half of the distance. This example assumes two bit rates, 1 Mbps and 0.5 Mbps, $a = 0.2$ fJ/m^4, $b = 1$ nJ, $P_R= 10$ mW and $p = 128$ bit.

Theorem 2. Let $C=\left\{\left[\text{BAT},T_A,T_B,p,q,B\right],\left[a,4,b,P_R\right]\right\}$ be the communication model of a wireless ad hoc network. Let the average number of neighbors listening to a beacon transmission be D. If the distance between the source S and the destination D

$$d\geq((b(3q+p)+P_RB^{-1}(q+p)$$
$$+P_R\text{DT}_A)a^{-1}(3.5625q+0.875p)^{-1})^{1/4}$$

and the distance between the intermediate node and the halfway point between S and D

$$r\leq(-0.25d^2(10.5q+3p+0.5qd)(3q+p+qd)^{-1}$$
$$+0.5a^{-1}(3q+p+qd)^{-1}(0.25a^2d^2(10.5q+3p+0.5qd)^2$$
$$-2a(3q+p+qd)(-ad^4(3.5625q+0.875p)$$
$$+b(3q+p)+P_RB^{-1}(q+p)+P_R\text{DT}_A))^{1/2})^{1/2}$$

the two-hop communication requires less energy than the direct link.

□

The radius r for a given distance d indicates application-specific opportunities for power-efficient partitioning of communication links. Fig. 4 compares **ASL** and **BAT** MAC models for a bit rate of 512 Kbps.

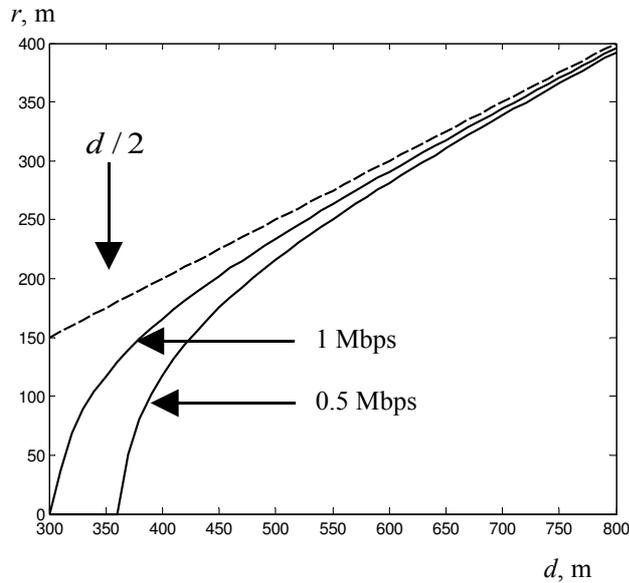Fig. 3 Radius r scales with the distance for two bit rates

Fig. 4 Radius r scales with the distance for two MAC models

C. Routing algorithms

Routing algorithms can be based on two major approaches: topology-based and position-based routing [23]. The topology-based algorithms can be further split into table-driven and demand-driven. The main idea behind the table-driven routing protocols is to create a clear picture of all available routes from each node to every other node in the network. In contrast to the table-driven protocols, the demand-driven algorithms create routes via route discovery procedures only when a necessity arises.

Position-based routing algorithms utilize the physical positions of the participating nodes [19],[21],[23]. Position-based or geographic routing does not require each node to have the locations of all other nodes. Each node keeps track of the coordinates of its neighbors and their neighbors. A greedy routing algorithm based on geographic distance selects the closest to the destination neighbor for the next hop [19].

Assume that the nodes of a wireless ad hoc network are members of the following set $N = \{N_1, N_2, N_3, \ldots, N_{n(N)}\}$. The nodes are placed in a rectangular region of X by Y. The distance between node i and node j is $d(i,j)$. The distance between node k and the halfway point between node i and node j is $d(k, m_{i,j})$.

Routing algorithms are employed to determine the next hop of N_i, N_i^{+1}. The distance between N_i and its next hop N_i^{+1} is $d(i,+1)$. Likewise, the distance between N_k and the halfway point between N_i and N_i^{+1} is $d(k, m_{i,+1})$. A statement **power**(d(i,j)) in the pseudocode listing adjusts the transmit power according to the distance d(i,j). A statement **send**($N_i \rightarrow N_j$) indicates a packet forwarding from node i toward node j.
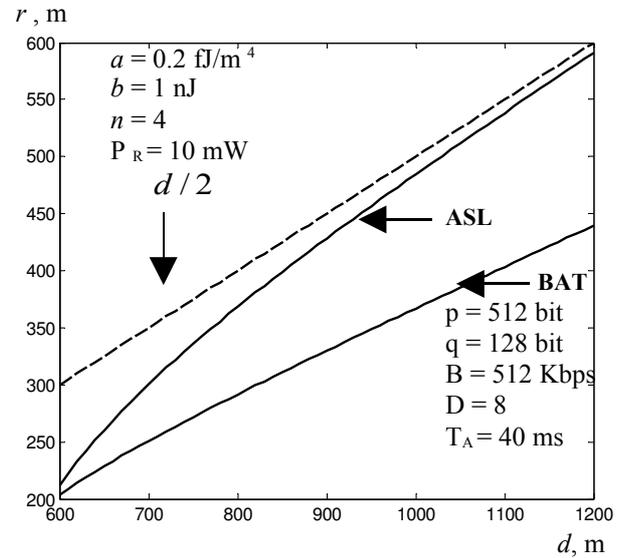

Algorithm 1 $N_i^R \leftarrow \mathrm{OneHop}\left(N_i\right)$

1: $N_i^R = \emptyset$
2: **for** $1 \leq j \leq n(N)$, $j \neq i$ **do**
3:    **if** $d(i, j) \leq R$
4:      $N_i^R = N_i^R \cup N_j$
5:    **end if**
6: **end for**

Algorithm 1 describes the procedure to determine the set N_i^R, which includes the one-hop neighbours of N_i. R denotes the communication range.

Algorithm 2 $N_i^{+1} \leftarrow \mathrm{NextHop}\left(N_i, N_D, N_i^R\right)$

1: **if** $N_D \in N_i^R$
2:    **return** N_D
3: **end if**
4: $s = \left(X^2 + Y^2\right)^{1/2}$
5: **for** $1 \leq j \leq n(N)$, $j \neq i$ **do**
6:    **if** $N_j \in N_i^R$ and $d(j, D) < s$
7:      $N_i^{+1} = N_j$, $s = d(j, D)$
8:    **end if**
9: **end for**

Algorithm 2 applies the greedy routing algorithm to find the next relay of N_i.

The multihop service can be integrated into the routing algorithm.

Algorithm 3 MultiHop $\left(N_i, N_i^{+1}\right)$

1: **do**
2:     MULTI=0
3:     $d = d(i, +1)$
4:     $s = \left(X^2 + Y^2\right)^{1/2}$
5:     **for** $1 \leq j \leq n(N), \ j \neq i$ **do**
6:         **if** $d(j, m_{i,+1}) \leq MIN(r, s)$
7:             $s = d(j, m_{i,+1}) ,$ $N_i^{+1} = N_j ,$
MULTI=1
8:         **end if**
9:     **end for**
10: **while** MULTI
11: **power** $(d(i, +1))$
12: **send** $(N_i \rightarrow N_i^{+1})$

Algorithm 3 applies Theorem 1 or Theorem 2 to partition the communication link until suitable intermediate nodes are found. The procedure results in one forwarding.

Algorithm 4 Send (N_S, N_D)

1: $N_i = N_S$
2: **do**
3:     NextHop $\left(N_i, N_D, N_i^R\right)$
4:     MultiHop $\left(N_i, N_i^{+1}\right)$
5: **while** $N_i \neq N_D$

Algorithm 4 describes the successive approximation routing. The interaction between the routing procedure and the low-power forwarding is implemented via successive approximations. As soon as the routing algorithm determines the next hop, multihop optimization is applied to select an intermediate node. As soon as the packet is sent to the intermediate node, the routing algorithm is executed again. The multihop service algorithm itself is a successive approximation procedure as well.

In a two-hop distance approach, each node maintains a table of all immediate neighbors as well as each neighbor's neighbors. The number of hops taken into account determines the vulnerability of the routing in case of topology holes. However, considering more hops will require longer execution times. Fig. 5 shows how the transition from a single hop to two hops brings the execution time up. The code has been written in C and compiled for two CPUs: 8051 and Atmel AVR [25].
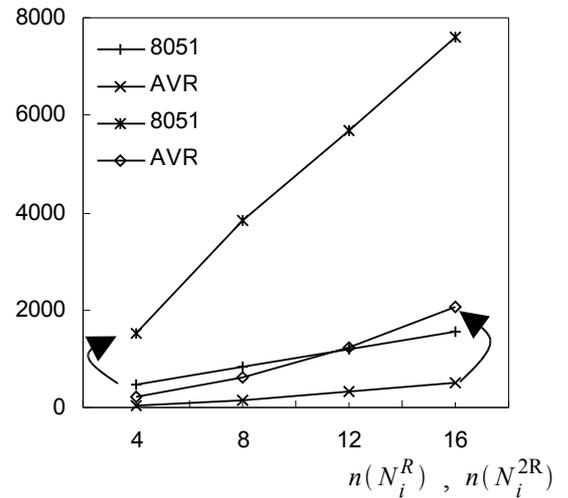
Execution time, µs

Fig. 5 Execution time to select the next relay

VI. SECURITY

The network functional partitioning into sensing, computation and communication can be used to deal with possible avenues of attacks. First, a misbehaving node may provide false sensor readings. In general, this kind of attack is not effective. Collected data is aggregated and a small number of malicious nodes can not change the profile of the physical event. However, a false alarm, an input has reached a threshold, will wake up several nodes and attack the batteries. Another attack related to the environment is a wrong location. Sensing is useful only in the context of where the data has been measured.

In contrast to sensing, a well placed enemy may successfully attack via wrong calculations. Aggregation is important for power efficiency and nodes that aggregate data packets are in a good position to attack.

Communication is what makes ad hoc networks most vulnerable and the multihop forwarding of packets unrolls ample possibilities for attackers. Once a malicious node has been included on the routing path, it will be in position to change the content of the packets. Along with data, packets may convey code. Mobile agent-based sensor networks distribute the computation into the participating leaf nodes [28], [29]. Since agents may visit a long path of nodes, a single modified packet can force several nodes to execute enemy code. Another axis along which packets can be affected relates to timing. A scheduling attack would change the number of past beacon periods a packet carries. Another form of a scheduling attack is delayed packets. An extreme type of this attack, termed black hole, is observed when a malicious node consumes packets. In a special case of black hole, an attacker could create a gray hole, in which it selectively drops some packets but not others. For example, the malicious node may forward control packets but not data packets.

VII. REWARD ALGORITHM

REWARD (receive, watch, redirect) is a routing method that provides a scalable security service for geographic ad-hoc routing [33]-[35].

A. Black holes data base

The algorithm creates a distributed data base for detected black hole and scheduling attacks. The data base keeps records for suspicious nodes and areas. The REWARD security service provides alternative paths for the geographic routing in an attempt to avoid misbehaving nodes and regions of detected attacks. The algorithm utilizes two types of broadcast messages, MISS and SAMBA, to recruit security servers. Security servers are nodes that keep records of the distributed data base and modify the geographic forwarding of packets to bypass insecure nodes and regions.

Assume that a demand-driven protocol performs a route discovery procedure. When the destination receives the query, it sends its location back and waits for a packet. If the packet does not arrive within a specified period of time, the destination node broadcasts a MISS (material for intersection of suspicious sets) message. The destination copies the list of all involved nodes from the query to the MISS message. Since the reason for not receiving the packet is most likely a black hole attack, all nodes listed in the MISS message are under suspicion. Nodes collect MISS messages and intersect them to detect misbehaving participants in the routes. The detected malicious nodes are excluded from the routing if other paths are available.

Radio is inherently a broadcast medium and nodes can detect black hole attacks if they listen to neighbor transmissions [32]. Fig. 6 shows an example. Each node tunes the transmit power to reach both immediate neighbors, N_i^{+1} and N_i^{-1}. We call this type of forwarding symmetrical. The nodes transmit packets and watch if the packets are forwarded properly. If a malicious node does not act as expected, the previous node in the path will broadcast a SAMBA (suspicious area, mark a black-hole attack) message.

$$\textbf{power} \; (\text{MAX}(d(i,+1),d(i,-1)))$$
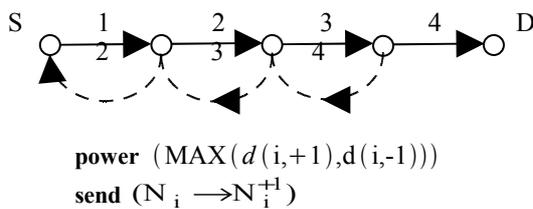$$\textbf{send} \; (N_i \longrightarrow N_i^{+1})$$

Fig. 6 Transmissions must be received by two nodes

Fig. 7 shows an example routing with the assumption that two malicious nodes would attempt a black hole attack. In this case the algorithm requires the nodes to listen for two retransmissions. Fig. 8 indicates the exact positions of two black holes in the path. The first malicious node forwards the packet using the required transmit power to deceive two nodes backward. The second malicious node drops the packet, however the attack is detected by the last node before the black holes. The missing transmission is shown by a dot line in Fig. 8. An extra black hole in the path would mask the attack.

$$\textbf{power} \; (\text{MAX}(d(i,+1),d(i,-2)))$$
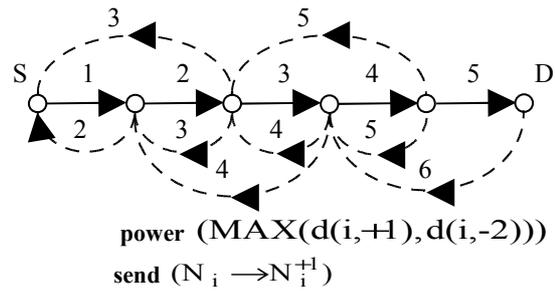$$\textbf{send} \; (N_i \longrightarrow N_i^{+1})$$

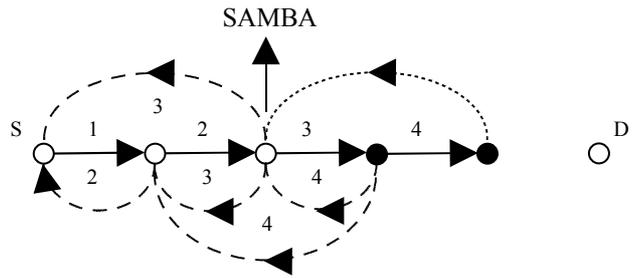Fig. 7 REWARD against two black holes

Fig. 8 REWARD detects the second black hole

In order to determine the effectiveness of REWARD we used ANTS (ad-hoc networks traffic simulator) [34],[35]. We assume that all nodes are stationary throughout the simulation. Fig. 9 shows simulation results of the throughput, 100 packets routing for eight example deployments. Each deployment has a density of 100 nodes randomly located in a square kilometer. The maximum communication range of the nodes is 100 meters. Also, the simulation results are obtained at 10% misbehaving nodes. MISS servers are recruited in a rectangular region. The source and destination locations define the diagonal of the rectangle.

Fig. 10 shows the fraction of malicious nodes detected against false detection. False detection is associated with nodes excluded from the network as malicious when in fact they are not. For the current simulation, nodes that are listed in two or more MISS messages are marked as malicious.

B. Energy overhead

We distinguish between two types of security energy overhead. Static overhead is the additional energy required to watch for attacks. Dynamic overhead is the extra amount of energy spent to detect compromised nodes and mitigate routing misbehaviour. While the dynamic overhead will vary from application to application, the static overhead is a constant and an inevitable item in the energy budget.
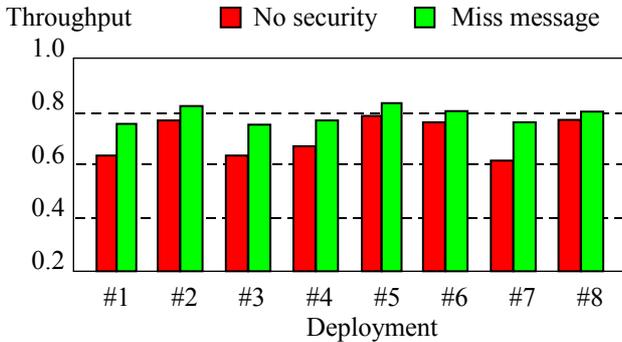
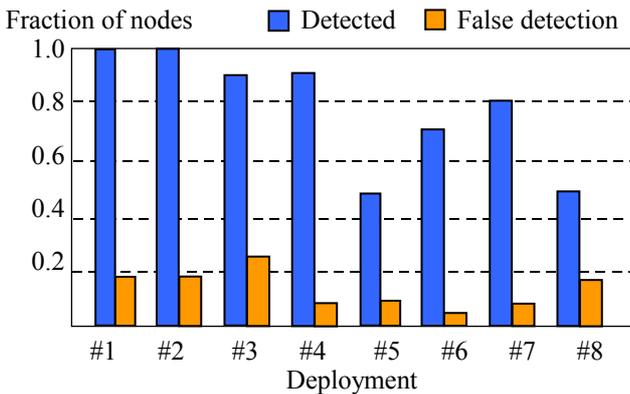Fig. 9 The fraction of packets received for eight examples

Fig. 10 Detected malicious nodes against false detection

Since secure routing protocols such as REWARD require symmetrical forwarding, the power efficiency is declined. Fig. 11 shows symmetrical routing for an example deployment. Three cases must be considered according to the distances:

$$d(i,-1) \leq (d(i,+1))/2 - r \qquad (11)$$

There is no security overhead in this case.

$$(d(i,+1))/2 - r < d(i,-1) \leq (d(i,+1))/2 + r \quad (12)$$

Again, there is no single-hop security overhead. Opportunities for partitioning of the link remain if neighbors are located within the shaded area, Fig. 11.

$$d(i,-1) > (d(i,+1))/2 + r \qquad (13)$$

Symmetrical routing may not increase the energy , however partitioning of the link is not power efficient in this case.
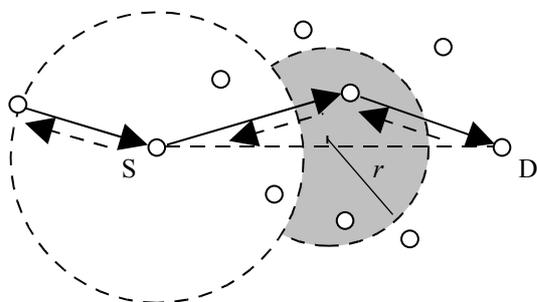

Fig. 11 Symmetrical routing

Algorithm 5 $\text{MultiHopSym}\left(N_i, N_i^{+1}\right)$

1: $s = \left(X^2 + Y^2\right)^{1/2}$
2: **if** $d(i,-1) > (d(i,+1))/2 + r$
3:   **power** $(\text{MAX}(d(i,+1), d(i,-1)))$
4:   **send** $(N_i \rightarrow N_i^{+1})$
5:   **return**
6: **end if**
7: **if** $d(i,-1) \leq (d(i,+1))/2 - r$
8:   **for** $1 \leq j \leq n(N)$, $j \neq i$ **do**
9:     **if** $d(j, m_{i,+1}) \leq \text{MIN}(r,s)$
10:       $s = d(j, m_{i,+1})$, $N_i^{+1} = N_j$
11:     **end if**
12:   **end for**
13:     **power** $(d(i,+1))$
14:   **send** $(N_i \rightarrow N_i^{+1})$
15:   **return**
16: **end if**
17: **for** $1 \leq j \leq n(N)$, $j \neq i$ **do**
18: **if** $d(j, m_{i,+1}) \leq \text{MIN}(r,s)$ and
    $d(i,j) \geq d(i,-1)$
19:     $s = d(j, m_{i,+1})$, $N_i^{+1} = N_j$
20: **end if**
21: **end for**
22: **power** $(d(i,+1))$
23: **send** $(N_i \rightarrow N_i^{+1})$

Algorithm 5 provides multihop optimization for symmetrical routing.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This paper manifests wireless ad hoc networks need multi-objective design. The multihop communication approach outlines tradeoffs between security, real-time and lifetime. We proposed a hierarchical communication model and employed it to compare how two MAC models are capable of link partitioning for non-regular topologies. The proofs can be used to organize look-up tables in the nodes memory and streamline the selection of the best next relay. We evaluated the static energy overhead associated with algorithms for secure routing, such as REWARD, which will help to reassess the lifetime of the network.

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