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From the Editor

Happy new year to everyone, wherever you may be. This past year has brought a lot of changes to the *Combating Terrorism Exchange* in terms of design and distribution, as we continue to refine and improve it. We hope you're enjoying the journal's new look. Besides changes to the graphics and layout, the biggest change, of course, is having current and past issues of the journal available for reading or download on our website, www.GlobalECCO.org.

This issue brings you an eclectic collection of essays and columns from authors around the world, on a variety of CT-related topics. If there is a theme to the group, you might call it "soul searching." Twelve years after the United States began what was then termed the "War on Terror," troop levels in Afghanistan are gradually declining ahead of the proposed 2014 deadline for withdrawal. Several of the authors look back and think about what we have, and have not, learned from these difficult years of fighting.

MAJ Sándor Fábíán of the Hungarian SOF starts with a hard look at the way the allies are preparing Afghan Defense Forces to stand up on their own against the Taliban. Why, he wonders, are we trying to duplicate a Western-style conventional force in a rural, tribally based country, with troops whose entire military culture has evolved around highly effective irregular warfare? In answer, he proposes a force structure for the Afghans that capitalizes on their historic strengths and borrows from the enemy's strike-and-run tactics. Doug Borer and Jason Morrissette then shine a light on events in Mali, once one of Africa's most stable democracies and now torn by violent Islamist insurgencies dominating the desert north, and a feckless military junta trying to keep its grip in the more prosperous south. The authors describe how short-sighted and often corrupt government policies are turning wide swathes of ancestral farmland over to multinational corporations for export crops, and transforming countless villages of peaceful farmers into angry, rebellious mobs primed for radicalization.

Our rhetoric about war has changed over the past decade as well, and Gaute Solheim draws on Norway's experience in World War II to explain why this has not been for the better. What generals and politicians like to call COIN, he reminds us with dry wit, is what previous generations called occupation, and we should be aligning our strategies accordingly. Bob Miske follows with a synopsis of a master's thesis he wrote with partner Srinivas Ganapathiraju, in which, similar to Sándor Fábíán, they question the wisdom of trying to fit a centralized, Western-style government structure to a highly factionalized post-conflict society like Afghanistan's or Iraq's. The successful decentralized democracy of fractious India, they suggest, could serve as a useful model for pulling divided countries together.

The Counter-Terrorism Archive Project, a key part of the Global ECCO group that includes this journal, collects interviews with CT operators, who recount

their experiences in the field for the benefit of their peers. Katherine Ellena and Rebecca Lorentz of CTAP draw on the lessons learned by an American and a Norwegian officer in Afghanistan to discuss the roles that cultural and language training play in CT and peace-building operations. An open mind, they deduce, can be more useful to cross-cultural understanding than intensive study. Next, Amina Kator-Mubarez shows us the damage that harsh Islamist-backed blasphemy laws are doing to Pakistan's fragile multi-ethnic society, where an open mind often invites death threats. She warns that Pakistan's ascendant extremists continue to both influence and support Afghanistan's Taliban, while at the same time further alienate Pakistan's dwindling roster of allies.

Bringing to a close this thoughtful group of articles, Victor Asal and Steve Sin offer a short primer on why people rebel. As Borer and Morrisette observed, grievance is the underlying condition, but is that enough to bring ordinary people to risk their lives against their (typically) better armed tormentors? Asal and Sin offer evidence that to catalyze rebellion, grievance must have opportunity, and rebels must have resources.¹

We welcome several new contributors to our regular columns. First, Andrew Ely, a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Coast Guard and assistant professor at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, uses the Ethics and Insights column to raise the subject of obligation as it relates to our personal lives, and more importantly, to the lives of those in uniform. When enlisted or commissioned personnel swear to uphold the duties and obligations of the service, is there an expiration date to that oath? If the security of the country might be put at risk through word or deed, LCDR Ely concludes, the answer has to be no.

Next, we are fortunate to have not one, but two Moving Image columns. So butter the popcorn and get ready for a couple of rainy weekends' CT-style entertainment! First, John Arquilla reminds us that the U.S.-British TV mini-series *The Grid*, which ran in 2004, not only preceded *Zero Dark Thirty*, but at four and a half hours of running time, easily outstrips the new film in terms of edge-of-your-chair realism and depth. As recent history and this series make all too clear, anyone can exploit a network. Nils French then draws us back in time to the height of the Nazi occupation of Europe with a couple of recent films, one French and one Danish. While collaborators in both countries willingly turned their governments over to the enemy for a chance to wallow in power, these two films tell about the men and women who risked their lives to resist in any way they could. The French Resistance is famous, but much less is known about the Danes' struggle to undermine the Nazi puppet regime. (Here's your chance to learn how the word "quisling" came to signify a traitor.)

Srinivas Ganapathiraju supplies our book review, with a discussion of *The Politics of Counterterrorism in India* by Prem Mahadevan. Despite its remarkable plethora of indigenous ethnic groups, languages, and religions, India has managed to remain an impressively stable, relatively functional democracy since independence in 1948. At the same time, many Indian states have been chronically plagued by insurgencies and terrorism. Ganapathiraju, a group captain in the Indian Air Force, not only describes Mahadevan's analysis of Indian CT policies, but gives us the operator-eye view of New Delhi's dilemmas.

We close once again with the occasional column State of the Art, our forum for creative and/or off-the-wall discussions of this "interesting" world we find ourselves in. Contributor Rachel Davis returns with a sharp-eyed look at the 9/11 Memorial website, ostensibly a forum for educating young teenagers about the tragedy that took place a little over a decade ago. She minutely dissects the website's pop-culture sensibility, and delves deeply into the layers of innuendo that perhaps inevitably leave the reader with far more questions than the website's authors ever thought to answer.

As always, we've got several publications announcements for you to check out, including two studies from JSOU and a new book by Dr. Shanthie D'Souza. Thanks for reading the *CTX*, and please, send us your stuff! May the coming year bring you prosperity, and, at long last, peace.

ELIZABETH SKINNER

Managing Editor

¹ These findings are echoed in Rob Schroeder, Sean Everton, and Russell Shepherd, "Mining Twitter Data from the Arab Spring," *CTX* vol. 2, no. 4 (November 2012). The authors describe their original research showing that Egyptian activists were able to frame grievances and thus organize a movement using the Twitter social network.

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MAJ Nils French, Canadian Army, is completing a Master of Science degree in Defense Analysis at NPS. He has a MA in Military Studies from American Military University, and a certificate from the Institute of Counter-Terrorism in Herzliya, Israel. He has completed one tour to Afghanistan and has commanded at the platoon and company level.

GP CPT Srinivas Ganapathiraju, an Indian Air Force fighter pilot, is chief operations officer at a premier Indian air base. GP CPT Ganapathiraju was commissioned as a fighter pilot into the Indian Air Force in 1991. He earned a MS degree in Defense and Strategic Studies at the Defense Services Staff College in 2008, and a second degree in Defense Analysis from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in 2012. Recent assignments include staff tours in the Personnel branch at Air Force HQ and command of a fighter squadron.

Rebecca Lorentz is a research assistant in the DA Department at NPS, where she focuses on the sociological and demographic elements affecting domestic gang membership and gang-related crime. She contributed to Hy Rothstein and John Arquilla, eds., *Afghan Endgames* (Georgetown University Press, 2012). Ms. Lorentz earned a MA in Public Policy from the Panetta Institute of Public Policy in 2010.

MAJ Robert Miske is a U.S. Army Special Forces officer. He graduated in 2012 from NPS with a MS in Defense Analysis. He earned his BA from the University of Notre Dame and was commissioned as a field artillery officer in 2001. He has served in the Republic of Korea, Afghanistan, and in several Central and South American countries in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Amina Kator-Mubarez is a research assistant with the DA Department at NPS. She has a BA in Political Science from UC Berkeley. Her research has focused on gender mainstreaming and empowerment in Afghanistan, including issues of domestic violence and deterrence. She has also worked with projects to design, implement, and evaluate international development projects in Afghanistan.

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LT (Ret.) Gaute Solheim served in the Norwegian special forces in the 1980s. He has a law degree and works in the field of tax law for multinational enterprises. He has a special interest in the analysis and structuring of information, and has continued his studies with a course in intelligence at the Norwegian Defense University in Fall 2011.

COVER PHOTO

Multinational service members with Maimanah Provincial Reconstruction Team, Regional Command North secure an area during Operation Wahadat in Faryab province, Afghanistan, April 12, 2011. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Caroline Lunde/Released)

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Learning from the Enemy: Alternative Afghan Security Forces¹

AFTER A DECADE OF VIGOROUS FIGHTING IN AFGHANISTAN, THE UNITED States and its allies are beginning to understand that a conventional battlefield military strategy, conducted by traditionally organized, trained, and equipped forces, does not work against a determined irregular adversary. With nearly 3,000 dead and tens of thousands of casualties, the allies have started to shift their main effort from conventional operations to unorthodox ways of doing business. Allied leaders seem finally to recognize the key points of Ivan Arreguín-Toft's theory of asymmetric conflict, and have decided to use an indirect strategy to counter the enemy's irregular tactics.² Even though NATO is starting to use non-traditional forces to enhance the Afghan military's capabilities, however, we are still misreading the lessons of history by trying to fit a conventional military organization to a problem it was not designed for.

This article suggests that Afghan and allied leaders replace both the conventional military force structure and their plans for local irregular militias with a defensive strategy built around non-traditional organizational and operational principles. The goal would be to transform the entire Afghan Security Forces into a full-time, professional irregular force. This proposal is based on three assumptions about how a small country (in terms of population and economic power)³ may best defend itself against a stronger irregular or conventional enemy:

1. A small state with limited resources can more easily afford effective professional irregular forces than conventional forces;
2. a small state has a better chance to defeat its enemies by using irregular warfare techniques rather than traditional military approaches;
3. such a strategy will be more effective when the irregular force is professional and its members have been trained and equipped for irregular warfare before conflict begins, rather than in response to a conflict that is underway.

Structural changes in most countries' military forces have always come from the lessons learned from their own and their enemies' experiences, yet it seems that in Afghanistan we have forgotten the latter. Despite the fact that Western allies adopted so many organizational and operational principles from Napoleon's *Grand Armée*, the Germans in World War II, and later from the Soviet Union, it seems we are not willing to learn the same lessons from our "new" irregular enemies. Instead of building an organization capable of answering the irregular threat by implementing the structural and operational advantages of our enemies, the planners of the new Afghan Security Forces are relying on familiar, old-fashioned, massed conventional force structure, training, and equipment. We are developing a military that looks similar to ours in an environment that completely lacks the fundamental principles of Western-style military culture.

We need to change this mindset. The current plan calls for an Afghan Security Force of about 350,000 men to ensure the country's security after the

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departure of allied forces in 2014. The Afghan army and air force are organized into battalions (*kandaks*), brigades, and corps, equipped primarily with traditional U.S. and European weapon-systems, and trained according to U.S. military doctrine.⁴ If we really want to answer the insurgents' indirect strategy with our own, however, then we need an organization built, trained, and equipped to fight irregular wars.

This may not be as difficult as it sounds, because throughout history the Afghan warriors have proven themselves to be vicious fighters, with remarkable skill in irregular warfare—of which allied forces have acquired firsthand experience. Through familiarity with their homeland, resilience in the most difficult physical conditions, and the ability to adapt to the tactics and strategies of different enemies, the Afghan fighters have repeatedly demonstrated their strength against some of the mightiest military powers in the world. As we build the future Afghan military, we should be learning lessons from the organizational structure and military operations of the insurgents of Afghanistan, as well as other irregular forces throughout history. We all have seen how effective the Balkan partisans, the Chechen militias, and Hezbollah were with a handful of fighters, ad hoc organizations, and limited supplies.⁵ Imagine how effective these organizations could have been if they had been elevated to the state level, with full national economic, informational, and infrastructural support. Instead of forcing our traditional approach on the Afghans, why do we not capitalize on these same principles of irregular warfare, but on a different, national level?

If we really want to answer the insurgents' indirect strategy, then we need an organization built to fight irregular wars.

Structure and Training

One of the most important elements of our present conventional strategy (and the one we are preparing for our Afghan partners as well) is to hold onto the territories we already own or have taken from the enemy. We are trying to gain control of the vast Afghan countryside through the establishment of large conventional bases and forward operational bases and outposts, from which we launch operations. Since this approach and our conventional force structure do not allow our forces to maintain a continuous presence in the countryside, the strategy has shown limited success. Without the presence of NATO and Afghan forces, the insurgents prosper in these rural areas, and have had remarkable success in establishing a shadow government in the districts they occupy. To change this situation in our favor, we need to change our approach and build a force really capable of controlling territories. The proposed irregular force would be much smaller (about 100,000 men) than the currently existing one, but it has to be a select, high-quality force.

To be effective both in the current unconventional environment and in a possible future conventional conflict in defense of Afghanistan, the new force should be organized and trained along the lines of John Arquilla's and David Ronfeldt's battleswarm theory.⁶ According to this theory, the new Afghan Defense Forces must be a network-like organization with a unified command and control element that sets strategic goals, but that intervenes in the operations of the subordinate elements only when it is strictly necessary. The main body of the defense forces would consist of a large number of small units (fighting cells of 30–40 men) capable of operating autonomously in their respective areas of operations by following mission-type orders. These individual units would also be capable of conducting operations as part of a larger formation (for example, as a designated quick-reaction



Professor John Arquilla

force). The locally recruited and deployed units must possess a mixed set of capabilities, including, at a minimum, an infantry assault force, engineering skills, explosive ordnance disposal, long-range communications, information collection and processing, and enhanced medical skills.

How would this force structure be better than the conventional forces? The small size of the proposed units and their enabling capabilities would have two major advantages over the insurgents or against a future conventional force. First, having only a small footprint and the ability to operate with limited re-supply would eliminate the large conventional units' current disadvantages of being visible and predictable, and thus easily targetable. Second, the sustained pulsing and continuous field presence of the numerous small units within their respective area of operations would not only keep the enemy off-balance, but would more effectively extend and consolidate our territorial control.

The most obvious way to create the proposed force structure is to build it on Afghan society's most defining social structure, that of the tribes. Although the idea of Village Support Operations (VSO) indicates the allies are starting to capitalize on local militias, these groups' questionable effectiveness makes it necessary to take this approach to a different level. The locally recruited guerrilla fighters have to become professional soldiers who are organized, trained, and equipped to fight irregular wars. The small, localized units would operate in their home area, the place they know best and where their own interests lie.

Because modern warfare goes beyond combat operations into security/stability building, the proposed forces have to be able to conduct their missions across the entire spectrum of conflicts. On the one hand, these professional irregular units have to possess both offensive and defensive swarming capabilities to effectively counter the current insurgent threat. Their mission sets must include patrolling, intelligence collection, cordon and search operations, raids, ambushes, etc. On the other hand, the new forces also have to have the skills to support non-military governmental efforts to mitigate those societal problems that insurgents thrive on, such as poverty, grievance, and lack of governance. Based on these operational requirements, the training of the new Afghan forces has to encompass a unique combination of skills. They have to be able to operate much more like our Special Forces than our conventional combat units.

We are currently using our elite forces to train and build the Afghan Security Forces along conventional lines to meet traditional infantry standards. Let's be honest: For numerous reasons (lack of discipline as we understand it, lack of cohesion, high levels of illiteracy, no history of Western-type military culture, and so on), we have had limited success with this approach. We would do better to let the Special Forces do what they do best, which would be to reorganize and train the new Afghan forces for special tactics, techniques, and procedures along the lines of the proposed theory. With the

The new Afghan Defense Forces must be a network-like organization.

Locally recruited fighters have to become professional soldiers who are trained and equipped to fight irregular wars.



Sons of Iraq



new type of training, organization, and tactics, the Afghan Security Forces would almost instantly take away all of the insurgents' current tactical advantages.

Equipment

To best exploit the proposed force structure and achieve mission success, the professional irregular forces need to be equipped with light, high-quality weapons and communication systems, which should allow them to carry out swift and unpredictable maneuvers while providing accurate local information and fire superiority.⁷ Instead of proposing specific systems, it makes more sense to consider several requirements and some general frameworks for such systems.

First and foremost, every piece of gear they use has to be locally sustainable. We must avoid equipping the Afghan forces with our high-tech weapon systems, whose maintenance requirements are so high that only a handful of countries can really afford to use them. At the small unit level, the equipment must facilitate the maximum exploitation of battleswarm, and should ensure the ability to operate at night and under severe weather conditions; conduct long-range observation; maintain secure communications; record, evaluate, and transfer data at the site; and rely on an intel reach-back capability from the field to central databases, to name a few basic requirements. At the higher command levels, the Afghan forces have to have the capability to follow operations in real time, conduct secure communication, operate large databases, etc.

This proposed restructuring seems to ask a lot from both the allied powers that have been bleeding and spending their taxpayers' money in Afghanistan for years, and the Afghan government, which has been trying to establish some level of law and order for years as well. The proposal not only provides a solution for winning the current fight, however, it also introduces a valid and sustainable strategic approach for Afghanistan's future defense. For those who still have doubts, thinking about the answers to the following questions might help clarify things:

1. Would a professional irregular defense force, using irregular warfare tactics, be more effective for answering the current threat than a conventional military?
2. Would a professional irregular defense force be better able to protect information about itself in the field than our large conventional formations have?
3. Would the maintenance of the proposed forces be more affordable for both the allies and the future Afghan government than the current structure?
4. What size of professional, irregular defense force could be sustained from the same budget used by the current conventional military?
5. What missions would the proposed forces be unable to conduct, that would require conventional forces?
6. How long would it take to transform the current tenuous Afghan conventional military culture and organization into a professional irregular defense force?

There is no “one size fits all” solution to military requirements.

It is time for us to understand that our military organizational and procedural designs are not the only ones that can work; there is no “one size fits all” solution to military requirements. We need to start learning the right lessons, by focusing not only on how to exploit our enemies’ weaknesses, but also on how to incorporate their organizational and operational strengths into our own and our partners’ military systems. This outlook would set us up for success in the current conflict more effectively than does our present approach. And it could well prepare us for the next military conflict we are likely to fight. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MAJ Sándor Fábán is currently senior Special Forces advisor at the Operational Directorate in the Hungarian Ministry of Defense.

NOTES

- 1 This article is based on LTC Fábán’s graduate thesis, “Professional Irregular Defense Forces: The Other Side of COIN,” prepared for the Defense Analysis Department of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, June 2012. It is available on the Dudley Knox Library website: <http://calhoun.nps.edu/public/handle/10945/7338>; accessed November 15, 2012.
- 2 Until recently, allied forces in Afghanistan have been trying to counter the insurgents’ indirect strategy with a direct approach. According to Ivan Arreguin-Toft’s strategic interaction theory, the weaker side stands a better chance of victory over the long run in the Afghanistan conflict than does the stronger side. It seems that allied leaders have started to realize this, and recently introduced their own indirect approach, which changes the odds in the allied forces’ favor. See Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: The Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- 3 For the definition of small states in this context, see Fábán, “Professional Irregular Defense Forces,” 17–18.
- 4 Anthony H. Cordesman, *Afghan National Security Forces and Security Lead Transition: The Assessment Process, Metrics, and Efforts to Build Capacity*, Statement before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, July 24, 2012: http://csis.org/files/ts120724_cordesman.pdf; accessed January 9, 2013.
- 5 See Fábán, “Professional Irregular Defense Forces,” 93–155.
- 6 The phenomenon, as Arquilla and Ronfeldt defined it, is the systematic pulsing of force and/or fire by dispersed units, so as to strike the adversary from all directions simultaneously. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *Swarming and the Future of Conflict* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2000), 8.
- 7 William H. McRaven, *Spec Ops: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice* (San Marin: Presidio Press, 1995).

Land Grabs, Radicalization, and Political Violence: Lessons from Mali and Beyond

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Jason J. Morrisette,
Marshall University*

“Mali: Islamist Rebels Smash Historic Sufi Tombs”
New York Times
Diningareyber Mosque
Dateline 10 July 2012, Timbuktu, Mali

IT IS SOMETIMES SAID THAT UNITED STATES MILITARY PERSONNEL AND policymakers are more interested in making history than reading it. Due to this lack of local knowledge and cultural awareness, many of the United States’ modern wars—primarily those unconventional or irregular in nature—have turned out rather poorly. Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq illustrate this point. Of course, the United States’ adversaries in these wars also have their blind spots, one of the most egregious of which is demonstrated by contemporary militant Islamists, who too often are more interested in destroying history—even that of their own culture—than in cherishing it. The Taliban’s demolition of 1,500-year-old Buddhist statues in Afghanistan in 2001 and, more recently, the obliteration of ancient Sufi shrines in Mali by the al Qaeda-linked Ansar Dine in 2012, serve as reminders that America’s tendency to underestimate history pales in comparison to the banal intolerance many militant Islamist groups express for ideas not their own.

Economic decisions made by Mali’s government have further destabilized an already struggling country.

What are the origins of militant Islam in Mali? Was it imported via the World Wide Web after 9/11? Was it brought across the border as chaos spread through neighboring Libya? Or have the seeds always been present in Mali, but lain dormant? Like most countries, Mali’s situation is complicated and can be looked at through a variety of lenses. As outsiders peering in from afar, we find it useful to consider the recent upswing in political unrest in Mali through the lens of economic globalization. Recent research identifies three main reasons for the emergence of the militant group Ansar Dine in Mali: 1) the diffusion of al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) from Algeria throughout much of North Africa; 2) the recent civil war in Libya; and 3) Tuareg tribal politics.¹ While we agree with these findings, we suggest that the role played by economic policies both inside and outside Mali should not be overlooked. In this essay, we will consider how economic decisions made by Mali’s government have further destabilized an already struggling country, and enhanced the conditions in which a militant group like Ansar Dine can survive and thrive. Our basic premise is simple: Mali today illustrates how “old” issues of land tenure and food production, the very issues that have generated wars throughout the ages, remain important factors to investigate in many countries that now face or are likely to face civil unrest or insurgency.

Political Instability in Mali

The news out of Mali in 2012 has been nothing but bad, and the roots of its present discord go back decades. Roughly speaking, the country of Mali (1.24 million square miles, or roughly twice the size of Alaska) can be broken into two regions: the larger sparsely populated and underdeveloped north,

which is the home of Saharan Tuaregs and Arabs, and the more developed south, populated by sub-Saharan Arab and non-Arab ethnic groups. The Tuaregs have been in intermittent rebellion against the southern political establishment that has controlled Mali since France granted independence in 1960. The political center in the capital, Bamako, has never fully brought the north, referred to as Azawad by Tuaregs, under the authority of the state.

Recently emboldened by weapons and supplies obtained during the Libyan civil war, a new Tuareg paramilitary organization emerged in 2012, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). While claiming secular status, the MNLA quickly aligned itself with the Islamist elements of AQIM and Ansar Dine in an effort to expel the government's military forces from the north. Building on a few initial successes, the northern rebellion took off when the democratically elected Malian president, Amadou Toumani Toure, was overthrown in a surprise military coup in late March 2012. Led by disgruntled soldiers upset about a lack of support from the government, the coup in the south had an immediate impact in the north.

The Malian soldiers, mostly southerners, evacuated the three northern regions of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu (essentially two-thirds of the country), thus giving the Saharan rebels an easy victory. Even as they filled the power vacuum, however, the rebels soon turned on each other, with the Islamist Ansar Dine expelling the secular MNLA. This marked the beginning of the "Talibanization" of northern Mali (including the destruction of the ancient Sufi tombs noted above). By mid-July 2012, the MNLA withdrew its demands for an independent state and sought international assistance to deal with Ansar Dine and AQIM.²

While this current Islamist power-grab in Mali can be seen as the result of a confluence of both long-standing grievances and shifts in the military balance of power, the inability of the central government to regain control is perhaps surprising. The truth, according to U.S. military advisors, is that the Tuaregs and the Islamists in the north are exceedingly weak militarily, and they could only have gained control as a result of internal discord among the traditional ruling southern elite.³ Why, after years of democratic and economic stability in southern Mali, did the government and military become so ineffective? As political outsiders, we must not overstate our claims to understand; nevertheless, based on our broad



knowledge of the socio-economic origins of conflict in other societies, we encourage the reader to consider the following analysis.

The Roots of Discontent

Sub-Saharan Mali is a predominantly rural society, where exported cotton, accounting for more than 80 percent of the country's export revenues, is the backbone of the economy. In 2003 President Amadou Toumani Touré illustrated the crop's importance when he co-authored a *New York Times* op-ed with Burkina Faso's President Blaise Compaoré, entitled "Your Farm Subsidies Are Strangling Us."⁴ They described how American farm subsidies, in effect, lowered cotton prices on the international market, resulting in a grossly unequal status quo in which Malian farmers were paid less than true market value for their goods:

In the period from 2001 to 2002, America's 25,000 cotton farmers received more in subsidies—some \$3 billion—than the entire economic output of Burkina Faso, where two million people depend on cotton. Further, United States subsidies are concentrated on just 10 percent of its cotton farmers. Thus, the payments to about 2,500 relatively well-off farmers has the unintended but nevertheless real effect of impoverishing some 10 million rural poor people in West and Central Africa.⁵

Their complaints seem plausible, and they echo a common criticism of U.S. farm subsidies by the country's competitors in the global market. To make matters worse, long before the military coup in Mali, farmers were complaining that government mismanagement was delaying payments for their cotton crops until months after the harvest, exposing them to very real subsistence pressures.

Mali's cotton follies were further heightened in August 2008, when the democratically elected legislature voted to completely privatize the cotton industry. The government divided the state-owned Malian Company for the Development of Textiles (CMDT) into four subsidiaries and offered them up for sale, breaking its own trade monopoly and fully exposing the country's farmers to international pressures. Reports suggest that by December 2010, the government in Bamako had negotiated the lease of 544,500 hectares of Malian land to just 22 foreign investment firms, with 40 percent of the land targeted for the production of biofuel. In 2011, a Chinese company, the Yuemei Group, which owns cotton fields and garment plants elsewhere in Africa, agreed to buy two of the CMDT subsidiaries in southern and western Mali. In response, southern peasants mobilized against these changes.

In November 2011, Malian peasants converged on the southern village of Nyéléni to protest land sales to foreign interests. Other participants came from 30 different countries, speaking to the international nature of the threat of land grabs. At the conference, Ibrahim Coulibaly of the National Confederation of Peasant Organizations emphasized the human costs: "We have seen an increase in land grabbing. Just in Mali alone the government has

The government negotiated the lease of 544,500 hectares to just 22 foreign investment firms.



committed to give 800,000 hectares to business investors. But these lands are not empty! People may not have legal titles, but they have been there for generations, even centuries.”⁶

A new NGO, the Syndicate of Peasants of Mali, held its first meeting in February 2012, when more than 600 peasants gathered in the city of Koutiala to express their concerns about privatization and related agricultural policies. According to Brian Peterson and Brandon County, “Beyond land and farming, runaway privatization has made inroads into other sectors of the economy: the railroad, the telecommunications company, utilities, gold mines, and vegetable oil factories are controlled by private stakeholders with a penchant for cost-cutting, producing stagnant wages, discontent, layoffs, and protests. But the government has ignored workers’ voices, and labor leaders have been dismissed and even imprisoned.”⁷ In short, self-generated unrest eroded the foundations of popular sovereignty.

Self-generated unrest eroded the foundations of popular sovereignty.

A Stable Democracy Fails

In March 2012, when soldiers of the Malian armed forces mutinied, the people of Mali largely supported the military’s action, despite the country’s long history as a democracy. It would be inaccurate to suggest that a rising tide of mass discontent alone sparked the coup; it would not be inaccurate, however, to infer that the southern population had lost faith in the government and was willing to give the soldiers a chance to correct the government’s perceived mistakes in the economic arena. The Syndicate of Peasants in Mali supported the military junta and asked it to pursue four goals: restore the ideals of 1991’s pro-democracy movement; manage the crisis in the country’s north; fight corruption; and work to restore expropriated lands.⁸ As of this writing, the military regime has yet to make any meaningful progress in governance, and as a result, it appears unlikely that the change in leadership in the south will significantly hinder Ansar Dine in its quest to further reshape northern Mali into a Salafi bastion in the heart of West Africa. As incidents of sickening juridical brutality, reminiscent of the worst years of Taliban rule continue to mount, however, the Islamists of Mali may be sowing the seeds of rebellion. But even if their own government is too inept to act, many sectors of the civilian population may welcome the international intervention that is now being considered by the UN Security Council.⁹



Beyond Mali: A Wider Problem

The Malian government’s land reform policy played what seems to be an important role in instigating the political divisions in the south that both contributed to the military coup and perpetuated an environment in which the Ansar Dine can thrive. These so-called “land grabs” reflect a broader trend, whereby states (and states in Africa in particular) seize arable land from local farmers—in some cases, hundreds of thousands of hectares at a time—and either lease or sell this acreage to foreign investors. In turn, the significant populations displaced by these land grabs can become politically volatile.

These land deals have displaced perhaps millions of small farmers from their ancestral lands across the continent of Africa.

For instance, in Uganda, over 20,000 villagers claim to have been evicted from their land.¹⁰ This population is ripe for rebellion. In addition, Human Rights Watch reported in January 2012 that it has evidence that approximately 70,000 indigenous people in the western Gambella region of Ethiopia were forcibly relocated when the land they lived on was leased to foreign investors.¹¹ These people are likely to turn against the government. The Oakland Institute, a U.S.-based policy think tank, estimates that these land deals have displaced perhaps millions of small farmers from their ancestral lands across the entire continent of Africa.¹² Not only does this displacement undermine the livelihoods of millions of Africans, but researchers point out that, in Africa, “the close association of land and identity has received much attention.

Land and natural resources are not merely assets, sources of income, and commodities but represent repositories of ancestral spirits, sites for sacred rituals, and historical landmarks that tie the individual to particular locations and landscapes.”¹³



Taking into account

both the economic and cultural value of these holdings, governments that choose to displace their citizens from their lands by the tens of thousands run the risk of creating aggrieved—and potentially volatile—populations that will further undermine governmental legitimacy.

With no written documentation to prove they own the land their families may have occupied for generations, Neil MacFarquhar describes scenarios in which “stunned villagers are discovering that African governments typically own their land and have been leasing it, often at bargain prices, to private investors and foreign governments for decades to come.”¹⁴ Although the oil-rich Gulf States, intent on securing affordable food for their own populations, initially led the land-buying charge, investors from Asia, Europe, and North America have increasingly followed suit in anticipation of sizeable returns as global food prices continue to soar. Despite local opposition in many states, a 2011 World Bank report reveals that these African land grabs represent a growing trend since the 2008 global food crisis:

Compared to an average annual expansion of global agricultural land of less than 4 million hectares before 2008, approximately 56 million hectares worth of large-scale farmland deals were announced even before the end of 2009. More than 70 percent of such demand has been in Africa; countries such as Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Sudan have transferred millions of hectares to investors in recent years.¹⁵

In fact, these foreign land deals currently account for 14.6 percent of the total agricultural area in Uganda, 21.1 percent in Mozambique, and a staggering 48.8 percent in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.¹⁶

Advocates of these land deals insist that they represent a potential windfall for African countries that have historically failed to fully capitalize on their own agricultural potential. As South African entrepreneur Nissi Ekpott suggests, “If land deals are implemented properly, they can bring many benefits to Africa—including increased food production, access to improved agro-skills, and development in rural communities, which, in turn, will stem the tide of urban migration, one of Africa’s most pressing issues.”¹⁷ Critics, however, note



that these development opportunities are not without their costs, costs that historically echo those documented during the 19th century “scramble for Africa,” which occurred at the zenith of European colonialism.¹⁸ For instance, when land previously used for subsistence farming is leased to foreign investors intent on

exporting agricultural products to wealthier nations, land grabs constitute a potential threat to local food supplies. “The food security of the country concerned must be first and foremost in everybody’s mind,” insists former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan. “Otherwise it is straightforward exploitation and it won’t work.”¹⁹

A Harbinger for Africa’s Future?

Mali offers a potentially instructive example of how land grabs in Africa can displace large populations, threaten food security as crops are diverted to global markets, and increase the likelihood of scarcity-induced resource competition. Each of these outcomes, independently or in combination, potentially pits societal groups against one another in a struggle for ever-dwindling resources. They also can undermine the legitimacy of those governments responsible for signing the land deals, thus increasing the potential for civil unrest. In the most grievous cases, these lands deals can spark intrastate violence, sow the seeds of revolution, and contribute to the further radicalization of groups like the Ansar Dine. As this trend becomes increasingly common throughout Africa, we suggest that the potential for intrastate and interstate violence across the continent significantly increases.

One does not need a doctorate in economics, history, anthropology, or political science to understand the possible implications of these types of government policies. Both the proponents and critics noted above might in fact be correct. If land and agricultural reforms are “done right,” meaning

These lands deals can spark intrastate violence, sow the seeds of revolution, and contribute to radicalization.

significant numbers of the population benefit, then the use of the phrase “land grab” is probably specious. If, however, land and agricultural reforms are “done wrong,” meaning a large segment of the population perceive of themselves as losers and have no options other than to fight, then the term “land grab” has validity. The simple truth is this: all revolutions great and small start with aggravated individuals who eventually become aggrieved populations. As Ted Gurr argued in his seminal work, *Why Men Rebel*, the development of a perceived gap between people’s expectations and their ability to satisfy those expectations—what Gurr termed relative deprivation—can result in mass frustration, popular uprisings, and ultimately political violence.²⁰ When pushed to the edge of survival, humans have a tendency to fight back. In the case of Africa writ large, the structural variables driving global capitalism, combined with the comparative weakness, corruption, and inability of existing nation-states to “get it right,” may make it inevitable that routine outbreaks of localized warfare will increasingly resemble what is taking place in Mali. ❖

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NOTES

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The Problem with Rhetoric in COIN

THE TAX MAN SHOULD THINK TWICE BEFORE WEIGHING IN WHEN PROFESSIONALS debate CT and COIN. But working in the tax profession will teach you a thing or two about the relationship between government and those governed. My own military years were spent in the Norwegian HJK/FSK (Special Forces) in the mid-eighties, and during that time, I learned that military force is useful for three kinds of tasks:

1. Eliminating the force of an opponent (either materially or psychologically, or both);
2. Denying an opponent the use of a resource (usually terrain, but also radio frequencies or water);
3. Securing a resource for one's own use (usually terrain).

From this perspective, the use of military force to go after al Qaeda in Afghanistan makes perfect sense.

Phase one involved knocking out the fighting resources of the Taliban and al Qaeda.

Phase two involved denying the opponent the use of Afghanistan as a safe haven.

Phase three saw the United States and its allies striving to secure Afghanistan as an area for their own operations. This phase, it could be argued, served the dual objectives of eliminating the fighting power of al Qaeda and the Taliban in the region, and securing a vantage point in the only place within close proximity to the strategic problem of an unstable, nuclear-armed Pakistan.

Phase three is an occupation. You may dress it in any language you want, but as a military operation it still is an occupation.

The political problem is that tasks two and three are military operations for which there is no “win.” They do not have an endpoint. They are something you keep on doing for as long as the benefits are higher than the costs. You keep your men on top of Hill 386 not because you want to grow grapes there for generations, but because it is the perfect place from which to direct artillery fire on the enemy. If the enemy moves, the hill becomes useless, and you would be stupid if you did not cut the cost of keeping men there.

Based on this Stone Age perspective on the use of military force, I see at least two problems with COIN. The first problem is one of deception. The political and military rhetoric used to communicate about the conflict is one of the main problems with Afghanistan today. It is the rhetoric of COIN. We have wrapped something that has the nature of tasks two or three in words belonging to task one: “winning hearts and minds,” instead of “occupying for as long as the costs remain lower than the benefits.”

Gaute Solheim

Tasks two and three are military operations for which there is no “win.”

This is why politicians love COIN. It creates the illusion of an operation with the character of task 1, and gives politicians the rhetoric they need when they want to dress up an occupation as something else, something more palatable. The vocabulary of COIN allows them to create the illusion of a future victory parade after “winning” those hearts and minds, while pointing to military and academic COIN experts as witnesses for the truth of the words they use.

The military profession has changed its rhetoric from that once used by generals to that of politicians.

What is hidden from the public is the fact that the military profession has changed its rhetoric from that once used by generals to that of politicians, rewriting occupation to resemble the theatre of an election campaign in which you try to “win” hearts and minds. This shift obscures the reality that to “win” an election is not the kind of “winning” we think about in terms of a task one-type military operation. An election amounts to a ceasefire with a time limit. The opposition will be just as resourceful when it comes to the next election.

COIN is at best the least costly way to conduct task two or three operations. Worse, it is wilful deception of your own population. Worst of all, you end up fooling yourself. As Robert Feynman told Caltech students in a 1974 commencement address, “The first principle is that you must not fool yourself—and you are the easiest person to fool.”¹ An illustrative example of the importance of fooling neither yourself nor others with COIN rhetoric appeared in an op-ed in a Norwegian newspaper in October 2012.² A Norwegian LTG assessed whether our military involvement in Afghanistan had been a success or a failure. His analysis was based entirely on the premise that the reason why Norway sent military forces to Afghanistan was to help establish a stable democracy that would respect the rule of law and human rights, and improve the living conditions of the Afghan people.

Norwegian soldiers in Afghanistan were the hard currency with which strategic debts could be paid after 9/11.

I was surprised. From 2001 until I read this, I had believed that the reason we Norwegians sent our soldiers there was because it was payback time. As a nation with a long coastline that reaches to the Arctic sea, we have a strategic interest in keeping the United States as a close friend, and such friendships come at a cost. Soldiers in Afghanistan were the hard currency with which such strategic debts could be paid after 9/11. Later, when we said, “No, thank you,” after being invited to go into Iraq, we experienced a corresponding devaluation of our standing with Washington.³

The second problem with COIN rhetoric is that it limits our ability to learn the lessons that are there to be learned. By denying the fact that we are either trying to deny someone the use of territory or secure our own use of that territory, we fail to learn from some of the most successful prior occupations. Among these are the German occupations during WWII, if we can put aside moral judgement and evaluate them purely with regard to effectiveness and efficiency. As a Norwegian, I know Norwegian history best, so will use it for an example.

From a strategic perspective, it was important for Germany to secure Norway for its own operations. Norway provided the Germans with strategically located harbours and access to the North Atlantic, and secured them a

year-round supply of Swedish iron ore, while at the same time denying the Allies the use of Norway as a safe haven for support to the Soviet Union.

The occupation's costs were kept low by relying on a puppet regime (the infamous Quisling⁴) and building support among the Norwegians by providing work. The Nazis managed to build almost 300 coastal forts, along with roads and factories, in only a couple of years, using a population of less than 4 million people. Norway's neighbour Sweden (read: Pakistan) served as a safe haven for the Norwegian resistance. The Germans, however, managed to keep the harm inflicted by this resistance movement at an absolute minimum level during their five years of occupation.

The occupation of Norway was a masterpiece of COIN, which relied heavily on tweaking existing local structures into supportive functions, observing local procedures for deciding and meting out punishment, and elegantly relying on the existing security units, which already were very well trained in gathering intelligence against labour movements and communists. A body of literature is now emerging that offers a perspective less influenced by stories about Norway's rather few real resistance heroes and the Norwegian people's need to feel good about themselves in the spring of 1945.

So this is the second casualty of COIN rhetoric: We fail to learn from anything that we classify as an occupation.

From friends still serving in the army, my impression is that your "conventional" officer feels more at home when reality is described in terms of tasks one, two, and three and calculations of cost-benefit than when the talk is all about hearts and minds. Special operations are sometimes useful tools when it comes to keeping costs (material or political or both) low. As stand-alone forces deployed with a lot of COIN rhetoric, however, they are better for improving the image of political leaders than they are for improving the strategic outlook of a nation.

Some Final Thoughts

Here is an entertaining side note: The U.S. field manual for COIN, FM 3-24, offers a fantastic (probably unintentional) illustration of what happens when field manual meets reality. Under the headline "Hand Shake Con" on top of page 58, you will find this quote:

General Anthony C. Zinni:⁵

"... [t]he Joint Chiefs of Staff asked me ... 'The lines in your command chart, the command relationships, what are they? OpCon [operational control]? TaCon [tactical control]? Command?' 'Sir, we don't ask, because no one can sign up to any of that stuff.' 'Well, how do you do business?' 'Hand Shake Con. That's it.' No memoranda of agreement. No memoranda of understanding ... [T]he relationships are worked out on the scene, and they aren't pretty. And you don't really want to capture them, ... distil them, and say as you go off into the future, you're going to have this sort of command relationship... "

The German occupation of Norway was a masterpiece of COIN.



Quisling visits the German propaganda companies' large exhibition "War and Correspondent" in the National Gallery in Oslo on August 15, 1944. The exhibition was about German war reporters. The photo is from the exhibition hall for the army's film reports.

I discovered Zinni’s quote just fifteen pages after I had read paragraph 1-133 on page 43 of the manual:

Every action by counterinsurgents leaves a “forensic trace” that may be required later in a court of law. Counterinsurgents document all their activities to preserve, wherever possible, a chain of evidence. Accurate documentation can also be important means to counter insurgent propaganda.

The clash between reality and the theory of COIN is documented by the field manual itself! ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gaute Solheim served in the Norwegian Armed Forces SOF.

NOTES

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- 5 U.S. Marine Corps General (Ret.) Anthony Zinni served as commanding general of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and then CENTCOM commander from the mid-1990s until his retirement in 2000.



Decentralizing Democracy: Governance in Post-conflict Ethnically Divided Countries¹

DURING OUR FIRST FEW ACADEMIC QUARTERS AT NPS, MY THESIS PARTNER, Wing Commander Srinivas Ganapathiraju (Indian Air Force), and I engaged in some sporadic dialogue while reflecting on the idea of how a country's instability might make it the breeding ground for the kinds of insurgencies that are of interest to our respective countries' armed forces. Then, while reading the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy for one of our classes, we found ourselves questioning the premise of the "democratic peace theory" upon which much of U.S. strategy is based. We intuitively understood that democracy, in and of itself, may not be necessary or sufficient as a precondition for political stability in a given country. Context matters, and we were both driven to discover under what conditions governance could lead to greater stability in certain types of deeply divided societies, like Iraq and Afghanistan.

Although the growth or decline of an insurgency depends on a number of factors, including the opportunities or threats the insurgency faces, its mobilizing structures, and the strength of the insurgents' cause, we chose to focus our attention on the opportunities and obstacles that are presented by a country's system of governance. While the idea of better understanding governance may not seem an obvious first choice for two combat veterans who have been involved in their respective countries' military efforts to counter insurgencies, we both felt that misaligned governance accounted for more of the problems with recent nation-building efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan than any misguided tactical, operational, or even strategic military efforts in either country.

Beyond identifying a problem with how each country's system of governance *fit* its population, our discussions kept bringing us back to the realization that there were distinct societal divides in both countries. In each case, governance was considered illegitimate by minority groups whenever they didn't have sufficient voice or representative authority within the central government. It was apparent, however, that some countries with similarly divided societies, like India, have managed to achieve considerable stability over time, thanks to more decentralized systems of governance. We wanted to know whether there was something intrinsically beneficial about India's model of governance that could be applied to other countries with deep-seated divisions. Specifically, we sought to discover whether there is a relationship between the decentralization of governance and political stability in deeply fragmented societies.

In the course of our early literature review and while designing the theoretical framework for our thesis proposal, we were introduced to the ideas of consociational democracy² and social fit theory.³ Our discussions with faculty about these concepts were instrumental to how we conceived of both the governance problem that confronts divided countries, and a governance model to help stabilize such societies. We consequently formulated a framework to assess the

MAJ Robert Miske, USA

Is there a relationship between decentralized governance and political stability in deeply fragmented societies?

degree of social fit between a country’s method of governance and its population’s ethnic fractionalization (or divisiveness).

In our framework, we listed some of the most important factors that comprise “national identity” (the column *Independent Variables* in Figure 1). We also included the four prominent tenets of consociational democracy that comprise power-sharing (the column *Dependent Variables* in Figure 1). We used this theoretical framework as a model to understand the various dynamics affecting a country’s stability, and ultimately to test our hypothesis that correlates better “social fit” and greater decentralization with stability.

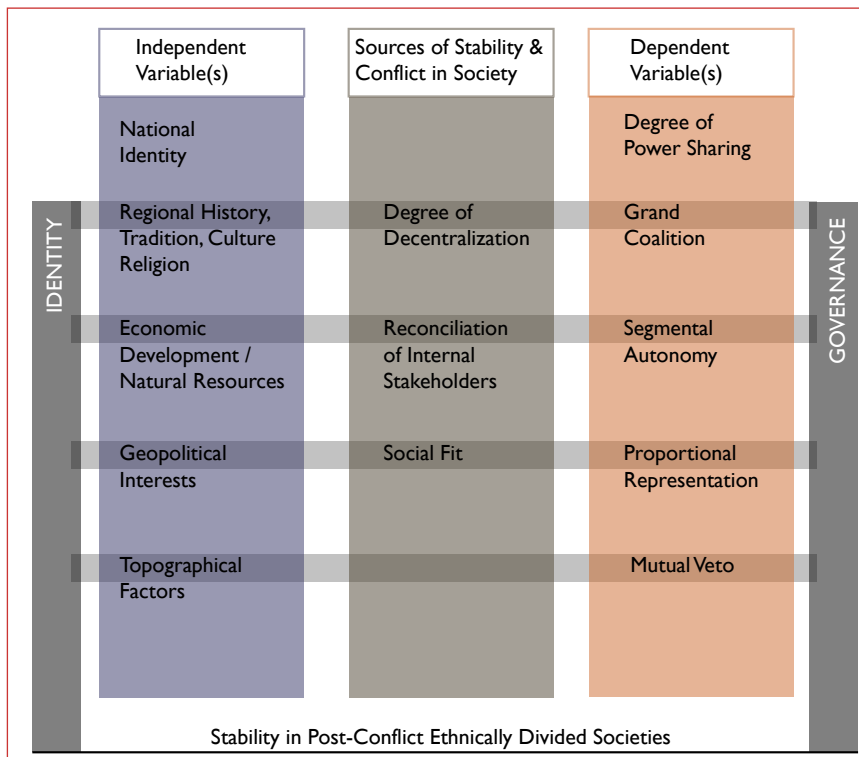


Figure 1: Theoretical framework for stability in post-conflict ethnically divided countries

Although we arrived at our problem statement and research question fairly quickly, we knew that our methodology for studying the nature of the relationship between governance and stability required considerably more attention. It was important for us to devise our case selection criteria in such a way that we could be reasonably sure that if we saw a change in governance, we would see a corresponding change in stability. Furthermore, we wanted to limit our subset of countries to those that were not only highly fragmented, but had shown a propensity towards conflict as a result of those societal divisions. We decided that post-conflict ethnically divided countries would best meet these criteria and test our model.

To validate our methodology, we examined several indices that provide the most recent and objective analysis of countries’ status. These include the Fund for Peace’s “Failed States Index” and “Conflict Assessment Indicators” for 2006 and 2011, as well as James Fearon’s 2003 “Ethnic and Cultural Diversity by Country.”⁴ In addition to looking for countries that displayed a substantial increase or decrease in their overall composite conflict assessment indicators,

Government legitimacy turns out to be a function of individual and group perceptions.

we also looked for a corresponding increase or decrease in three indicators that we determined were most representative of instability resulting from a country's divided society: a legacy of vengeance seeking (group grievance or paranoia); the criminalization and/or de-legitimization of the state through corrupt or extra-legal practices; and the rise of factionalized elites.

We also matched the countries' conflict assessment scores and regional rankings with their ethnic and cultural fractionalization scores and regional rankings. In both indices, higher scores meant a greater degree of conflict potential and fractionalization, respectively. We initially narrowed our selection to seventeen countries from four different regions (see Table 1). In the end, we selected six countries—three with increasing and three with decreasing stability across all four regions—all of them ranked high in terms of ethnic fractionalization and conflict based on ethnic divisions (see Table 2).

Table 1: Country Case Selection—Preliminary Selection

Country	Overall Stability Score/Ranking		Legacy of Vengeance Seeking/Group Grievance		Criminalization and/or De-legitimization of the State		Rise of Factionalized Elites		Ethnic Fractionalization Ranking/Score in Region		Cultural Fractionalization Ranking in Region
	2006	2011	2006	2011	2006	2011	2006	2011			
Afghanistan	99.8/10	107.5/7	9.1	9.3	8.3	9.7	8	9.4	3/23	0.751	1/23
India	70.4/93	79.3/76	6.9	8.2	4.8	5.8	5.7	6.8	2/23	0.811	2/23
Nepal	95.4/20	93.7/27	9.2	9	9.2	7.9	9	8	5/23	0.677	5/23
Myanmar	96.5/18	98.3/18	9	8.7	9.2	9.7	8	8.3	10/23	0.522	9/23
Indonesia	89.2/32	81.6/64	6.3	6.6	6.7	6.7	7.9	7	3/23	0.766	6/23
Nigeria	94.4/22	99.9/14	9.1	9.3	9	9	9	9.5	16/43	0.805	4/43
Rwanda	92.9/24	91.0/34	9	8.2	8.7	7.1	8.9	8.4	43/43	0.18	43/43
Zimbabwe	108.9/5	107.9/6	8.5	9	8.9	9.3	8.5	9.6	38/43	0.366	40/43
Somalia	105.9/7	113.4/1	8	9.5	10	9.8	9.8	9.8	15/43	0.812	32/43
Sudan	112.3/1	108.7	9.7	9.9	9.5	9.4	9.1	9.9	29/43	0.708	3/43
Kenya	88.6/34	98.7/16	6.7	8.7	7.3	8.9	7.6	8.8	11/43	0.852	9/43
Bosnia	88.5/35	80.9/69	8.6	8.4	8.1	7.6	8.7	9.2	3/31	0.681	26/31
Kyrgyzstan	90.3/28	91.8/31	7	8.3	8.3	9	7.9	8.3	4/31	0.679	1/31
Kazakhstan	71.9/88	70.2/107	5.1	6	7.5	7.2	7.7	7.7	14/31	0.664	2/31
Uzbekistan	94.4/23	88.3/39	7.5	7.4	9.3	8.4	9.1	8.7	6/31	0.485	6/31
Lebanon	80.5/65	87.7/43	7.8	8.7	6.4	7	8.3	8.8	1/19	0.78	14/19
Iran	84.0/53	90.2/35	6.9	8.5	8.1	9.1	8.8	9.2	4/19	0.669	2/19

Table 2: Country Case Selection—Final

Increasing Stability	Decreasing Stability
India	Afghanistan
Rwanda	Kenya
Bosnia	Lebanon

After performing a rigorous case study selection, we found ourselves needing to conduct further research on both consociationalism and decentralization in order to assess how both methods might be best adapted to a given country's "national identity" to achieve an optimal degree of social fit. In our thesis, we dedicated two chapters to understanding the nature of democracy in post-conflict ethnically divided countries: exploring both the tenets of consociational democracy and how decentralization of various functions of governance can reduce the potential for conflict within a country. These theoretical chapters served a dual purpose: they enabled us to define the metrics by which we would analyze the nature of governance in our six case study countries, and provided a foundational understanding for how greater stability might be achieved in deeply divided countries.

Although many of the demographic, economic, geopolitical, and topographical factors affecting a country's stability can be quantified, our research suggested that, with respect to governance, it is legitimacy that matters above all else. Therefore, while it can be argued that one system of governance is superior to another if one relies on various quantitative indices, legitimacy turns out to be a function of individual and group perceptions that can be as diverse as the populations that generate them. This led us to build on the argument that John Bishop and Michael George made in their thesis: To gain legitimacy and reduce the potential for conflict, a system of governance must be designed with local, and thus societal, contexts in mind to achieve a social fit.

Following an analysis of Afghanistan, India, Rwanda, Kenya, Lebanon, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, we were able to conclude that a system of governance built around a decentralized framework offers a more viable option than any other currently being proposed for deeply divided societies. Our findings also suggest that tailored decentralization of governance functions requires steadfast adherence to consociational democracy tenets. Both, when done together, can achieve the "right" social fit for post-conflict ethnically divided countries. Although involvement by external actors, economic growth (or decline), and other geopolitical considerations can delay stability or serve as a catalyst for instability, it is the governance dimension of achieving a social fit that matters most. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NOTES

- 1 This article is a synopsis of research done for a graduate thesis written while the author was a student in the Defense Analysis Department of the Naval Postgraduate School. See Srinivas Ganapathiraju and Robert Miske, "Decentralizing Democracy: A Governance Proposal for Post-conflict Ethnically Divided Countries," Master's thesis, Department of Defense Analysis, Naval Postgraduate School, December 2012.
- 2 Arend Lijphart, credited as the founding theorist of consociational democracy, observes that political stability is empirically related to both political culture and social culture. See Lijphart, "The Puzzle of Indian Democracy," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 9, no. 2 (June 1996): 258–268.
- 3 John Bishop and Michael George argue that the people's social acceptance of a post-conflict government is critical to fostering long-term stability. For more, see John D. Bishop and Michael J. George, "Governing in a Post-Conflict Society: Social Fit," Master's thesis, Department of Defense Analysis, Naval Postgraduate School, June 2011: <http://calhoun.nps.edu/public/handle/10945/5639>
- 4 "Failed States Index 2006," The Fund for Peace, 2006: <http://www.fundforpeace.org/global/?q=fsi-grid2006>; "Failed States Index 2011," The Fund for Peace: <http://www.fundforpeace.org/global/library/cr-11-14-fs-failedstatesindex2011-1106p.pdf>; "Conflict Assessment Indicators," The Fund for Peace, 2011: <http://www.fundforpeace.org/global/library/cr-10-97-ca-conflictassessmentindicators-1105c.pdf>; all accessed July 18, 2012; and James D. Fearon, "Ethnic and Cultural Diversity by Country," *Journal of Economic Growth* vol. 8 (2003): 215–219.

Cultural Intelligence: Archiving Lessons from Afghanistan

THE DECADE SINCE THE UNITED STATES BEGAN ITS WAR AGAINST AL QAEDA in Afghanistan has brought changes to how militaries operate. The insights gained during this time are being captured as part of the DoD-sponsored Counter-Terrorism Archive Project (CTAP), which preserves critical lessons applicable to future engagements.¹ One of the key lessons to emerge from operations in Afghanistan is how important language and culture are when working with international partners to disrupt terrorist networks. As a result of a decade of irregular warfare, coalition building, and stability operations, military personnel have come to be seen not only as warfighters or protectors, but also as trainers, community builders, and cultural ambassadors. In executing these new missions, operators have learned—often the hard way—the importance of cultural and language skills.

While the value of cultural knowledge and language competence is clear, exactly what kind of training soldiers should have to achieve that competence is less so. Does simply exhibiting cultural respect matter more than understanding cultural nuances, for example, or does a deep understanding of culture and language allow for more meaningful and effective interactions with local forces and communities? This paper outlines CTAP's mission, presents contrasting lessons on language and culture from two CTAP interviews, and assesses the implications for future military training. In the United States, for example, the U.S. Army's "Regionally Aligned Brigades" initiative, designed to provide cultural training specific to the region where soldiers will deploy, is scheduled to begin in 2013. We conclude that, while language fluency should continue to be a priority for select operators and missions, "cultural intelligence" should be cultivated in operators at all levels.

The Importance of Capturing and Applying Lessons Learned in Afghanistan

The Counter-Terrorism Archive Project, sponsored under the DoD's Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program, aims to capture insights and lessons learned in the last decade's efforts to disrupt and eradicate terrorist networks. The storytellers in this archive are personnel, both military and civilian, who have taken part in the ongoing fight against terrorists and militant extremists. The lessons are many and varied: navigating new terrain and new methods; the agonies of asymmetric warfare; the value of institutional and international cooperation; and the pitfalls of "nation-building." These changes have transformed how our military operates, and must also inform how it develops for the future.

As part of CTAP, the authors interviewed counterterrorism operators from special operations communities in Norway and at NATO Headquarters in Belgium.² One topic of discussion that emerged in both locations was the issue of language and cultural training. In particular, two interviews, one with

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Military personnel are seen not only as warfighters, but also as community builders and cultural ambassadors.

Respect means being aware of how one’s own cultural “lens” affects communication with—and perceptions of—others.

a Norwegian officer involved in mentoring Afghan SOF, and the other with a U.S. officer deployed as part of the “AFPAK Hands” program (now called Afghan Hands due to deteriorating relations with Pakistan), provided contrasting perspectives on which elements of cultural training are most critical.

The Norwegian interviewee, reflecting on his own experience in Afghanistan, concluded that cultural respect is of primary importance, because it is respect, rather than an acquired understanding of language and cultural practices, that builds relationships of trust in an international theater. For him, respect meant being open to local methods of training and operating, as well as showing regard for different perspectives and practices, even when those practices were hard to understand. It also means being aware of how one’s own cultural context or “lens” affects communication with—and perceptions of—others.

In contrast, the U.S. interviewee, recalling his time with the AFPAK Hands program, found that intensive language training and study of cultural practices and nuances were critical to building genuine relationships, as these skills support the clear dialogue necessary for governance and development to take root. Hence, he considered the understanding of specific cultural practices to be just as important, if not more so, than simply being open and adaptable.

Does Cultural Respect Matter More than Cultural Understanding ... ?

According to the Norwegian officer we interviewed, “It doesn’t matter if you have three or four months of training if you come to Afghanistan and don’t respect the culture, and you are trying to work with the people and they don’t



A U.S. Army officer uses a translator, second from right, to speak with Afghan elders.

respect you.” From his experience in Afghanistan, he observed that without a significant history in-country, international operators could never develop a full understanding of the complexities of a culture, even with intensive training. More pointedly, he surmised that cultural competence, without cultural respect, would be worthless. Therefore, he contended, the most critical training for any military is to establish a norm of cultural respect, which can then be applied globally by all deployed troops, not only by those who receive intense training specific to a given culture.

How then does cultural respect, as opposed to cultural understanding, manifest itself in-theater? For the Norwegian SOF unit that has been mentoring Afghan military units, the key was getting alongside their Afghan counterparts not as teachers but as role models—a subtle difference, but one that allows local partners to take ownership of new methods and strategies. “It is better to come into Afghanistan and be alongside the people you are working with. *Show* them that you respect their culture and *show* them that you want to work with them for their cause, not fighting your own battle.”

The focus of his work was therefore not on telling, but on doing, in the hope that lessons would permeate in a more indirect, more lasting way. “We try to focus on team leaders ... showing them things we think it is valuable for them to learn and giving them examples, but letting them make the choice on whether they want to focus on it... We are leading as much as we need, but they are looking at our leadership and hopefully try to implement that in their way of doing things.”

“There is a difference between learning culture and having cultural respect.”

For military units trained to undertake operations in a particular way, and which have had success with particular methods and strategies, it can be difficult to impart skills and lessons in a more informal manner. Yet cultural respect rests very much in *how* information and assistance is provided, as opposed to exactly *what* is provided. It also requires an authenticity of intent, “showing them you are there for them, for them to develop, not for us to develop ... it is better to let them do it their way ... better than hoping that they will react, think, and do as we do in the Western part of the world.” Hence, training for Norwegian officers involved in mentoring Afghan security forces focuses on instilling cultural respect and openness to indigenous ways of assimilating skills and information. “We are not focusing so much on learning their culture or learning their habits in our training ... it doesn’t mean we don’t try and learn their culture, but there is a difference between learning culture and having cultural respect.”

Our interviewee was less clear on exactly how cultural respect could be taught: “I’m not sure that we are aware of why we succeed. We [Norway] are not a threat to anyone ... [and] we are not an aggressive unit ... we are a unit that is curious about other people and how they live. I think the mentality is different. If we had units that were only there for fighting, it would be harder to get them into mentoring.” He also observed that Norwegian culture has a certain “naiveté,” and “the lucky result of that is that we can build up good rapport.”

While it was difficult for our interviewee to define exactly how cultural respect could be taught pre-deployment, he was clear about how it must be implemented in the field. In particular, coalition forces need to better integrate their



Repartition map of language families

In an unstable environment where miscommunication can have devastating effects, language fluency is critical.



activities with the Afghan system, particularly when it comes to intelligence sharing and cooperation, rather than remaining separate. “We have problems sharing ISAF intelligence with the Afghans, so we are operating along two operational lines. We can’t build up a system in Afghanistan before we start to rely on the Afghans, before we start to implement them in all procedures and follow their system.... The Afghan leaders are the reason why we can do [an operation], but the Afghans don’t want to do it because they don’t know anything about the intelligence behind it: Why should they put their soldiers at risk...?”

From his perspective, local forces must be seen as equal, not junior or less trusted partners. Building up this sense of trust and partnership takes time. “You need to be there, live with them in their way, spending months with them, to build up the rapport.” It also means being open to learning from those local partners, rather than being solely focused on developing their capabilities. “If you are going to see the threats from Afghanistan, you have to see it from Afghan eyes.... I think we have to work closer with the security forces in the country ... than we have done.”

... Or Does a Deep Understanding of Culture and Language Allow for Deeper Cooperation?

“Winning the hearts and minds” of the Afghan population has been an underlying mantra of the American narrative of the war for a decade now, but the most effective method of doing that has remained elusive. In 2009, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen lent his support to a program aimed at cultural training, known as AFPAK Hands. Now called Afghan Hands, the program consists of a 3 to 4-year training and deployment commitment designed to train participants from all service branches to operate in sync with their foreign counterparts. A participant in the program spends five to six months learning either Pashto or Dari, and then several months intensively studying the culture of the specific area in Afghanistan where he or she will be working. The participant deploys for a one-year period, returns stateside to a domestic post focused on Afghanistan for one year, and then returns to Afghanistan for another year.

Our U.S. AFPAK Hands interviewee had completed his training, spent a year in a province of Afghanistan, and was now at a NATO post awaiting redeployment back to the same province. A former linguist who had served in that capacity in Operation Desert Storm, he focused on some of the ways that he has seen cultural training evolve. In the early part of his career, cultural training was mostly based on language, and “being a linguist meant just learning through headphones,” whereas currently the language training a person receives pre-deployment is paired with cultural education. In addition to the more in-depth training, which includes cultural norms, customs, religion, and regional nuances, he explained that the operators’ longer deployments to specific regions allow them to use their training to build relationships and consistency in a way that shorter deployments (normally six to nine months) cannot.

In contrast to our Norwegian interviewee, who had observed that the value of cultural respect for opening doors was equal to in-depth language training but with less investment of money and time, his U.S. counterpart spoke about the value of intensive language and cultural training as a means to build genuine, rather than superficial, connections and relationships. He analogized that if you went to conduct business in any foreign nation and could not speak the language in which the business was being conducted, your understanding of the transaction would be limited to the most basic terms, or you would have to rely on someone else to interpret.

It was the same with military operations and training overseas, he said. Knowing the language not only means that you can understand what those around you are saying, but it also allows you to convey clear messages and instruction, as well as exchange ideas. In an unstable environment where miscommunication can have devastating effects, language fluency is critical. Language skills also eliminate reliance on an interpreter, making communication quicker, more personal, and less susceptible to misrepresentation. In addition, he stated, “Afghan local police ... any group ... is only as good as the leadership they have in place,” and in his opinion language fluency makes identifying and mentoring local leaders possible.

According to our American interviewee, the critical aims in Afghanistan were governance, development, and security, and of those security is paramount, as “the other two cannot exist without established security...” Without proper language and cultural training, he suggested, operators cannot communicate well enough within the community to develop the level of security needed to defend against insurgencies and enable effective governance and development.

Simply put, he explained, it is difficult to travel, gain access to needed supplies, and garner useful information if an operator does not understand the language or cannot use knowledge of cultural practices, nuances, and hierarchies to build and then leverage relationships. In a part of the world where information is critical to the fight, our interviewee considered the ACPAK Hands methodology—intense language and cultural training coupled with longer and repeated deployments—the best method for getting coalition operators into key mentorship positions. Being in these positions makes it easier to impart both skills and knowledge, but also to receive critical information, through “speaking the language and learning from the Afghans.” This method, he emphasized, offers the allies their best chance of success in Afghanistan.

A U.S. Response to the Importance of Culture: Regionally Aligned Army Brigades

It was evident from both of our interviews that the lessons from Afghanistan on the importance of culture have left an impression on international military personnel. The question that remains, however, is how these lessons should be applied. Exactly how should militaries respond to issues of language and culture in a manner that best promotes success?



A “distinct lack of training focus” may mean that brigades become good at a lot of things but great at none.

In March 2012, U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Ray Odierno announced a new initiative to regionally align the army’s brigades with each of the six U.S. Global Combatant Commands, observing that “We have learned many lessons over the last 10 years, but one of the most compelling is that—whether you are working among the citizens of a country, or working with their government or Armed Forces—nothing is as important to your long term success as understanding the prevailing culture and values.”³ This new regional alignment would see Army units and leaders focus on a specific region within their normal training program, and receive cultural training and language familiarization relevant to that region while continuing to train in core combat skills and capabilities.⁴

The arguments behind the concept of regionally aligned brigades are instinctively compelling. Who wouldn’t want soldiers more attuned to the operational theater in which they find themselves? In addition, the initiative



Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond T. Odierno

is designed to have deterrence value, a point that was explicitly acknowledged by Odierno.⁵ Despite this, there are problems with the concept. Some of these are institutional: as Steve Griffin observed in the *Small Wars Journal*, the army lacks an adaptive personnel system to go along with this new process of regional alignment, which means a soldier may receive training in a specific language and culture, only to then rotate to a new unit aligned to a different region.⁶ Some are more procedural: regional alignment threatens to revive the tendency toward “unit favoritism” that existed prior to 9/11, while what Griffin calls a “distinct lack of training focus” may mean that brigades become good at a lot of things but great at none, requiring yet more specific training when it actually comes time to deploy.⁷

While criticisms can always be made about the implementation of new directives, this article is concerned less with the administrative nuances of the program than with the language and cultural assumptions that underpin it. It is hard to argue against the value of language and cultural skills, particularly

under the requirements of foreign internal defense, combating terrorism, and counterinsurgency, when communication and cooperation with local security forces and populations can be critical. As Steve Griffin has noted, “Soldier proficiency in language and culture can be immense combat multipliers—some might argue that these skills have even more value than the latest weapon or vehicle platform.”⁸

Lack of cultural understanding has also been highlighted as a security issue. The U.S. Center for Army Lessons Learned has been developing a handbook suggesting that coalition leaders would benefit from more in-depth cultural understanding of local security forces, and vice versa, to help guard against the interpersonal tensions that can lead to “green on blue” attacks.⁹ A former Afghan soldier named Mahmood, who carried out such an attack in May 2012 before “defecting” to the Taliban, suggested that simmering resentment between Afghans and their international counterparts can result in violence: “I have intimate friends in the army who have the same opinion [of Americans] as I do.”¹⁰ This suggests that cultural training is not only a potential “combat multiplier” but also a conflict suppressor, a fundamental element of damage control: first—do no harm.

Given these assumptions, does the Regionally Aligned Brigades concept truly embrace the lessons learned over the last ten years with respect to the importance of language and culture, or does it simply pay lip service, assuming that *any* language and cultural training is better than none at all? Can it provide a model for other countries? The obvious and significant pitfall of the concept is its lack of specificity. With the breadth of languages and dialects across Africa and the Middle East, it is anyone’s guess exactly what language(s) should be taught to the inaugural brigade aligned to AFRICOM beginning in 2014. Even once that is decided, the language training provided at the brigade level is likely to be basic, not the kind of fluency advocated by our AFPAK Hands interviewee as necessary to improve security or undermine insurgencies.

Likewise with culture: international operators in Iraq and Afghanistan have learned the hard way that cultural practices prevalent in one province may be foreign in another; hence, any regionally aligned brigade will face a herculean task trying to develop a useful modicum of cultural fluency for an entire region. As our Norwegian SOF interviewee observed, the cultural complexities of a society may not be fully comprehensible even with extensive training. Add to this the fact that the proclivities of individuals are the key to results. Cultural training that can be applied successfully in a host nation is as dependent on an individual’s desire to internalize and manifest cultural awareness as it is on the content of the program itself. It is unlikely that even a majority of the three to four thousand members of a Regionally Aligned Brigade will share that aptitude.

The importance of the individual is also highlighted in a U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) study, which found that, while cultural knowledge can be helpful when operating in a foreign environment, it is insufficient without the behavioral skills necessary to interpret and respond to dynamic cultural cues. The institute developed a concept of “cross-cultural competence,” in which the three components of *knowledge* (cultural understanding of one’s own and another culture); *affect* (attitudes toward foreign cultures and the motivation to learn about and engage with

Cultural training is not only a potential “combat multiplier” but also a conflict suppressor.

It is anyone’s guess exactly what language(s) should be taught to the inaugural brigade aligned to AFRICOM.

“Interpersonal skills tend to make stronger contributions than language proficiency or prior experience.”

A quality of cultural intelligence is “a propensity to suspend judgment—to think before acting.”

them); and *skills* (the ability to regulate one’s own reactions in a cross-cultural setting, interpersonal skills, and the flexibility to assume the perspective of someone from a different culture) combine to provide the capabilities necessary to work well in a foreign culture.¹¹ Crucially, in developing this concept, researchers found that *skills* and *affect* were more directly related to successful outcomes than *knowledge*: “[C]ultural knowledge may have limited utility if rigid interpersonal behavior or ethnocentric attitudes are not addressed.”¹²

The ARI also noted in its research that language proficiency, while contributing to positive outcomes for individuals working in foreign environments, usually had less effect than expected: “Interpersonal skills tend to make stronger contributions than language proficiency or prior international experience.”¹³ What is more, such programs are usually much less costly than comprehensive language and cultural training.

A Proposed Alternative Model: Cultural Intelligence and Strategic Language Fluency

Given this analysis, before sending personnel into language and cultural training, the command level should first determine when specific language and cultural capabilities are a must (and for whom), and when simple cultural respect is sufficient. Like any skill, language and cultural capabilities reveal their value in their application. To be the kind of “immense combat multiplier” suggested by Steve Griffin, intensive language training must be targeted to a specific theater of operations as well as a specific type of mission. Done effectively, it has the potential for a high return on investment.

Conversely, the development of cultural respect can boost the military’s effectiveness across the board if instituted effectively, by teaching interpersonal skills that are transferable and therefore flexible across different missions. As the ARI observed,

Culture is best taught as a factor across full-spectrum operations, an enabler supporting other capabilities, rather than an “a la carte” supplement to conventional warfighter knowledge and skills. Future strategic challenges may include multiple engagements around the world with a greater reliance on partner relationships, and expanded cultural breadth and agility will be required if we are to meet those challenges.¹⁴

So what might this “enabler” approach to culture look like? It must focus on ability rather than knowledge, and programs must be designed to deliver behavioral, not simply informational, education (an “EQ” vs. IQ approach).¹⁵ This is an area where international militaries might benefit from the experience of intelligence agencies, for which the development of inter-cultural skills is fundamental. One model that has been reviewed positively by the Central Intelligence Agency¹⁶ is that of “cultural intelligence,” defined as “a person’s ability to adjust to new cultural contexts” based on behavioral, motivational, and cognitive elements and processes.¹⁷ The developers of this model, Christopher Earley and Soon Ang, assert that to function effectively in a new

cultural context, an individual must be able to understand the new setting based on cultural cues, be committed to understanding the new culture and overcoming his or her limitations within it, and be able to apply specific actions demanded by specific cultural situations. In addition, psychologist Daniel Goleman points out that cultural intelligence allows for more logical, intelligent decision-making; he defines a quality of that intelligence as “a propensity to suspend judgment—to think before acting.”¹⁸

Earley and Ang also point out that genuine cultural intelligence is not fixed and does not just come “naturally.” Rather, it requires constant refinement and learning. Therefore, in applying the lessons learned over the past decade and more on the importance of culture, military leaders must look not only at new initiatives, but also consider a fundamental change in how the military teaches all its soldiers, from the ground up and in an ongoing manner, to develop and apply cultural intelligence. This requires that the highest levels of command acknowledge the fundamental value of cultural competence for warfighting, and muster the institutional will to adapt accordingly. As the ARI has observed, “[A]rmed forces cannot ‘surge’ cultural expertise, nor can they expect complex interpersonal skills and cultural cognition to develop when placed in competition with fundamental military skill sets.”¹⁹

Conclusion

We have much to learn from those who have experienced the hardest lessons firsthand in the last decade of conflict, including our interviewees from Norway and the United States, even when their conclusions disagree. It is often in those points of difference that we learn the best lessons, in this instance the value of language and cultural fluency when they are strategically taught and applied. Nor should we overlook the compounding value of cultural intelligence as a fundamental, flexible skill and “combat multiplier,” and as a vital tool for sustaining peace. General (Ret.) David Petraeus observed, “We have spent the last fifty years remembering and forgetting the importance of cultural awareness ... now it’s coming to us full force.”²⁰ International military leaders and policymakers owe it to their operators not only to acknowledge the lessons learned, but to apply them effectively so that we might not spend the next fifty years forgetting what cost us so much to learn. ❖

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The highest levels of command must acknowledge the value of cultural competence for warfighting, and muster the will to adapt.

A U.S. Marine Corps officer listens to his Afghan interpreter speak to Afghan men while attending a shura at Sangin, Afghanistan.



NOTES

- 1 For questions or comments, or to contribute to the Counter-Terrorism Archive Project, please contact the authors: Katherine Ellena (krellena@nps.edu) and Rebecca Lorentz (rdlorentz@nps.edu).
- 2 The interviews used in this article took place in Oslo, Norway, and Mons, Belgium, in September 2012. These interviews are based on the individuals' experiences and are not intended to represent the views of the Norwegian or United States governments.
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- 6 Steve Griffin, "Regionally-Aligned Brigades: There's More to This Plan than Meets the Eye," *Small Wars Journal*, September 19, 2012: <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/regionally-aligned-brigades-theres-more-to-this-plan-than-meets-the-eye>; accessed November 15, 2012.
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- 11 Allison Abbe and Stanley M. Halpin, "The Cultural Imperative for Professional Military Education and Leadership Development," *Parameters* (Winter 2009-10): 24–25.
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- 17 P. Christopher Earley and Soon Ang, *Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions Across Cultures*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 59.
- 18 Daniel Goleman, as quoted in P. Christopher Earley and Elaine Mosakowski, "Cultural Intelligence," *Harvard Business Review* (October, 2004): <http://hbr.org/2004/10/cultural-intelligence/ar/1>; accessed January 5, 2013.
- 19 Abbe and Halpin, "The Cultural Imperative," 26.
- 20 General David Petraeus, USA "Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq," *Military Review* (January-February, 2006): 8.



Three members of the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR), confer with a North Korean interpreter (left) who is serving with the battalion.

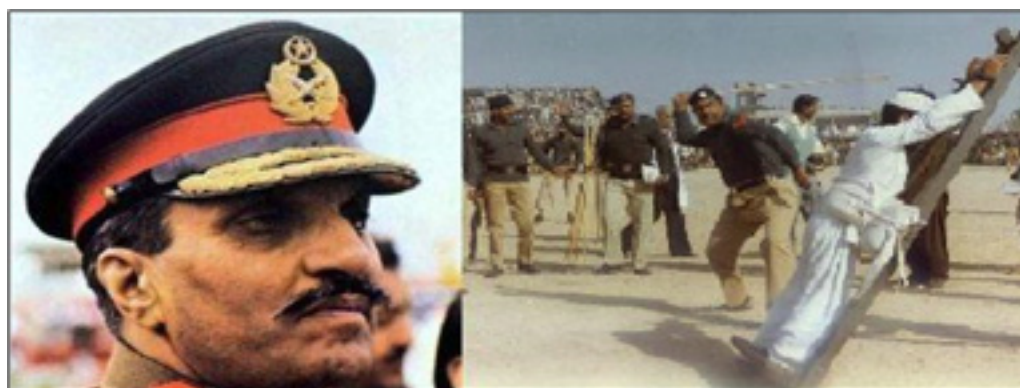
Equivocated Intentions: Blasphemy Laws in Pakistan

“Bad laws are the worst form of tyranny.”
—Edmund Burke, 18th century Irish statesman

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GENERAL MUHAMMAD ZIA-UL-HAQ'S CUNNING ARGUMENT FOR THE “Islamization” of Pakistan in the 1970s enabled him to weaken his secular opponents and consolidate a decade of authoritarian rule over the country. His dogmatic Islamist reforms—especially with the amendment of the blasphemy laws—transformed the fabric of Pakistani society. Although the blasphemy laws originated in British-controlled India in 1860 to deter religious persecution of heterogeneous groups, Zia-ul-Haq's tainted amendment of the laws paved the way for institutionalized socio-religious intolerance and violent extremism in Pakistan.¹ These egregious laws continue to permit shocking abuses against Muslims and minorities, as well as worsen Islamic radicalization not only in Pakistan, but in other countries as well.² Militant groups in Pakistan have also exploited the draconian laws to legitimize their moral authority and galvanize flourishing conservative Islamic groups already sympathetic to the jihadi cause.

This article will outline the content of Pakistan's blasphemy laws, and discuss the adverse effects they have had on minority groups and dissident Muslims in the country, as well as the veneer of legitimacy they have given to extremists both in Pakistan and its neighboring country, Afghanistan. This increasing radicalization



Left: General Zia ul Haq. Right: A public flogging during his rule³

of elements in Pakistani society not only has had ripple effects in Afghanistan, but also has at times jeopardized Pakistani relations with the United States. The article will explain the failed attempts at repealing the laws, and provide some recommendations to improve the laws as they currently stand.

Pakistan's Penal Code: Blasphemy Laws

The coup d'état in 1977 that ousted Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's populist Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) and installed the Zia-ul-Haq regime emboldened Pakistan's religious extremists. Deviating from the country's pluralistic and secular origins, Zia-ul-Haq institutionalized Islamic tenets and laid the foundations for theocratic rule in the country by creating the Federal Shariat Court. With his support, this body used its religious authority to examine existing Pakistani laws for their obedience to Islamic teachings. Furthermore, he sought to imbed sharia ordinances within Pakistan's constitution, and eventually

General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq laid the foundations for theocratic rule by creating the Federal Shariat Court.

succeeded in orchestrating sharia's gradual supremacy over the constitution itself.⁴ Consequently, the "Federal Shariat Court, [was] accorded wide discretionary power, [and] became the state's legal instrument to legitimize subsequent criminal ordinances," also referred to as Pakistan Penal Codes (PPC).⁵ An amalgamation of sharia and English law, the PPC explicitly state the punishments for multifarious offences in Pakistan.

The blasphemy laws that are the focus of this article sit within Sections 295–298 of the Penal Code, titled, "Of Offences Relating to Religion."⁶ During his decade-long rule, Zia-ul-Haq significantly strengthened the blasphemy laws through a series of martial law amendments; five additional clauses were inserted. Following are Sections 295-B, 295-C, and 298-A of the Penal Code [emphasis added]:

295B. [President's Order 1 of 1982] Defiling, etc., of Holy Qur'an:

Whoever willfully defiles, damages or desecrates a copy of the Holy Qur'an or of an extract therefrom or uses it in any derogatory manner or for any unlawful purpose shall be punishable with imprisonment for life.

295C. [Criminal Law Amendment Act, (111 of 1986), S. 2] Use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet:

Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) *shall be punished with death*, or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine. Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) *shall be punished with death*, or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.

298A. [Pakistan Penal Code (Second Amendment) Ordinance (XLIV of 1980), S. 2] Use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of holy personages:

Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, or by any imputation, innuendo or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of any wife (Ummul Mumineen), or members of the family (Ahle-bait), of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), or any of the righteous Caliphs (Khulafa-e-Rashideen) or companions (Sahaaba) of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both.

Sections 298-B and 298-C of the Penal Code assert that certain minority sects—namely the Shiite Ahmadi community—are prohibited from referring

to themselves as Muslims or using Islamic terminology, names, and practices under threat of imprisonment and fines.⁷ Ahmadis can also be punished if they “in any manner whatsoever outrage the religious feelings of Muslims.”⁸

Violence Against Minorities

Zia-ul-Haq’s amendments to the blasphemy laws have legitimized bigotry under the guise of safeguarding religion, and have produced conditions ideal for the pursuit of vendettas. The laws are inherently flawed for several reasons: First, there is no filtering mechanism to prevent individuals from misusing the laws, considering only scant evidence is required to convict an individual of blasphemy. Second, the laws do not require “a link between an offence and the intention, so that even an unintentional act can also be treated as a willful one.”⁹ Consequently, from 1984 onward, the number of blasphemy cases, especially against minority groups who bear the brunt of these egregious laws, reached more than 5,500.¹⁰ To date, the Pakistani court has not executed any convicted blasphemer; however, the trajectory of violence against offenders by vigilantes continues to escalate.¹¹ The Pakistani government and army, both of which have an historical affinity to Sunni fundamentalism, have been utterly apathetic with regard to providing security for the accused.¹²

Following enactment of the PPC anti-Ahmadi laws amended by Zia-ul-Haq in 1984, extremist Muslims unleashed unprecedented levels of violence against the Ahmadi community.¹³ Hatred toward Ahmadis by orthodox Muslims derives from the Ahmadi rejection of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as the *Khatem-e-Nabuwat* (final prophet). Ahmadis claim Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India, was the Messiah foretold by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).¹⁴ Declared heretics in Pakistan, Ahmadis have been the “most persecuted Muslim religious group,” and a number of Ahmadis accused of blasphemy have been murdered by lynch mobs, especially if they were charged with claiming to be Muslim.¹⁵

Although Shiites are not legally declared to be non-Muslims in the PPC, blasphemy laws have perpetuated this sectarian divide, especially for the Sunni denomination. Extremist Sunni groups deride Shiites, who revere Hazrat Ali as the fourth and final Caliph and reject the Shiite claim that Hazrat Ali was the rightful successor to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Within the past decade, fanatical militant Deobandi groups such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) have escalated their persecution and indiscriminate killings of Pakistani Shiites.¹⁶ Targeted killings of Shiite scholars, political activists, and young professionals in recent years are evidence of the intensifying hatred extremists harbor for the sect.¹⁷ This trend is reflected in “hate material” found in school curriculums throughout Punjab: schoolchildren study chapters that shun and belittle religious minorities in Pakistan, as well as all non-Islamist religious groups in neighboring India.¹⁸ The most nefarious incident to date occurred in February 2011, when militants seized a bus traveling to Gilgit Baltistan, singled out all the Shia passengers, and bludgeoned them to death. The perpetrators have yet to be caught because the Pakistani police declared it a cold case and refused to investigate further.¹⁹

The U.S. war against al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan post-9/11 not only affected Afghans, but Pakistanis as well. U.S. drone strikes against

Certain minority sects are prohibited from referring to themselves as Muslims or using Islamic terminology.



Lashkar-e-Jhangvi fighters beheading two Pakistanis for being Shia. Accessed August 20, 2012 on private Facebook account.

The blasphemy laws—by default—have legitimized vendettas against Pakistani Christians.

militants suspected of hiding in eastern Pakistan have exacerbated the plight of ordinary citizens, especially local Christians, and inflamed anti-Western sentiment in Pakistan. Consequently, the blasphemy laws—by default—have legitimized vendettas against Pakistani Christians because “Christians in Muslim societies are generally affiliated with foreigners, and are regarded by many as an extension of Western religious influence.”²⁰ Because Pakistan’s religious extremists cannot punish perpetrators outside of the country for blasphemous crimes, they unleash their anger on the local Christian population. For instance, when in 2011 a Florida pastor organized a Qur’an burning ceremony in the United States to commemorate September 11, religious extremists in Pakistan responded by killing Pakistani Christians, and vandalizing and burning churches.²¹

Tensions against local Christians have mounted to the point that in August 2012, a mentally disabled 11-year old Christian girl was forced to flee from her home after allegations surfaced that she had burned Qur’anic scriptures. Although the situation diffused when it was discovered that a local imam had framed her, other innocent Christians have not been so fortunate.²² In 2009, seven Christians falsely accused of burning a Qur’an in Gojra and Korian were savagely burned alive by the Taliban-linked group Sipah-e-Sahaba.²³



Supporters of Malik Mumtaz Qadri protest after a court sentenced him to death, in Lahore, Pakistan.

The most contentious aspect of the blasphemy laws that has directly affected Pakistani Christians has been Section 295B: death as punishment for defiling the Prophet. Because fundamentalist Muslims believe Christians reject the Prophet as the messenger of God, they have used this section of the law to “take matters into their own hands, and kill accused blasphemers [and their supporters], regardless of official rulings or investigations.”²⁴ Punjab Governor Salman Taseer, who spoke out against the blasphemy laws and staunchly defended the rights of non-Muslims and dissident Muslims, was shot 26 times by his personal security guard, Malik Mumtaz Qadri, for defending Asia Bibi, a Christian mother of five sentenced to death by hanging for making what were deemed derogatory comments about the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Qadri stated he was “protecting Allah’s religion,” and was subsequently lauded for his crime by conservative Islamists who “showered [him] with rose petals” upon his arrest.²⁵ As for Asia Bibi herself, Yousuf Qureshi, an imam of the Mohabat Khan mosque in Peshawar, announced a reward of U.S. \$6,000 for anyone who killed her. He publicly declared that if she was acquitted in court, the “mujahideen would kill her.”²⁶

Failed Attempts to Repeal the Blasphemy Laws

Despite its severe flaws, the majority of Pakistanis ardently support the blasphemy laws and claim the laws deter religious persecution and debasement. The reality, however, is that fundamentalist religious groups have drowned out—or silenced—the voices of moderates and secularists in Pakistan who want the laws either amended or repealed. Several unsuccessful attempts have been made at both. In 2001, former President Pervez Musharraf sought to repeal the blasphemy laws entirely, but was forced to retract his decision after strong opposition from religious groups. In 2010, Sherry Rehman, a PPP member, introduced a bill that called for procedural changes to the laws. The bill required that blasphemy cases be heard in higher courts, rather than in lower courts. Although it reached Parliament, it was struck down once again after extremist groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) rallied against the bill.

Despite being a designated terrorist group, LeT has been at the forefront of protests demanding that the status quo for the laws remain, and has garnered tremendous support from conservative parties.²⁷ The Pakistani army—historically aligned with the country’s ideologically conservative groups—has also strongly opposed any amendments or calls for repeal of the blasphemy laws, thus giving the laws’ extremist proponents a sheen of national legitimacy.

The Pakistani government has given up trying to repeal or amend the laws, because, “given the growing religious conservatism in Pakistan, the government is wary about losing public support over the issue.”²⁸ The government’s inability to repeal or even amend the laws has established a pernicious legal precedent, and institutionalized religious intolerance and ethnocentrism in the country. This was recently illustrated when former Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani stated that the laws would be “undiluted,” despite the murders of several secular PPP members who criticized the laws.²⁹ Opposition parties such as Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have already aligned themselves with religious extremist groups in the upcoming 2013 general elections and acquiesced to the latter’s anti-Western and pro-conservative rhetoric,³⁰ a decision that has major implications for the trajectory of U.S.–Pakistan relations.

The government’s inability to repeal or even amend the laws has established a pernicious legal precedent.

A Veneer of Legitimacy for Extremism

Zia-ul-Haq’s Islamic social engineering did much to entrench fanaticism and xenophobia in Pakistani society. Now referred to as the “most dangerous place in the world,” Pakistan has seen its prospects for social and economic development erode as even allies grow wary.³¹ Other countries such as Afghanistan that are divided by religious extremism should learn from Pakistan that entrenching a dogmatic ideology could have devastating consequences for the country’s future. At this juncture, religious intolerance across the Muslim world has reached unprecedented levels. Blasphemy laws only kindle the fire of extremism and undermine judicial authority by legitimizing vigilantism. Reversing the damage becomes nearly impossible, particularly when insurgent groups are deemed the enforcers of the laws.³² Just recently, Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG), one of Afghanistan’s most sophisticated insurgent groups, claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing carried out by a teenage girl near the Kabul airport, which killed twelve people and injured many others. HIG stated the attack was in response to clips from an amateur film produced in the United States that mocked the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).³³



Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, a notorious Islamist warlord and leader of Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin—the second largest militant group in Afghanistan.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Freedom of speech in democracies must be an inalienable right, and individuals exercising that right should be protected by the government from those who try to silence them. Once bigotry has become institutionalized, however, reversing it is no easy endeavor, particularly in the face of a volatile opposition force.

The blasphemy laws in Pakistan are unfortunately so politicized that repealing them would cause a volatile backlash by conservatives and simply bolster the legitimacy of militant religious groups. The only way this issue can be dealt with is to strengthen the role of the judiciary by creating rigid procedural rules that will deter abuses and make the complaint process onerous. One suggestion would be to require accusers to provide substantial, rather than

According to Islam, forgiveness and preserving the sanctity of life are among the most rewarding deeds.

circumstantial, evidence against alleged blasphemers. To file a complaint, the accuser would have to provide proof that the act was premeditated and intentional. These strictures ideally would both uphold the presumption of innocence and prevent would-be accusers from instigating charges for unintentional acts.

Blasphemy laws in Pakistan are inherently biased and discriminatory, have induced sectarian violence, and have silenced honest political discourse in the country. More importantly, the laws run contrary to the spirit of justice and respect toward other faiths under the precepts of Islam. Verses in both the Qur'an and Hadith (specifically how the Prophet treated other faiths) leave no doubt about the importance of religious tolerance and the rights of minorities. Furthermore, according to Islam, forgiveness and preserving the sanctity of life are among the most rewarding deeds.³⁴ In the case of Pakistan, the blasphemy laws “appease rather than control violent extremists, giving them license to continue bullying religious minorities or dissenters.”³⁵ Unfortunately, they also have become the third rail of Pakistani politics, and neither the repeal nor amendment of them appears likely anytime soon.

These laws are having effects beyond the borders of Pakistan.³⁶ For instance, the Afghan Taliban could not have become established had it not been for the financial, ideological, and logistical support of Pakistan's radical religious parties, such as Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam.³⁷ The Taliban, many of whom were taught in Deobandi madrassas in Pakistan but became inculcated with the puritanical version of Wahhabi Islam, unleashed unprecedented levels of relentless violence against religious minority groups—especially Hazaras (who are predominantly Shiite)—while they were in control of Afghanistan in the 1990s.³⁸

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Although blasphemy laws were not directly responsible for the proliferation of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Pakistan's institutionalization of bigotry and extremism—due in part to the implementation of the laws—and their export to Afghanistan by the Taliban, make Pakistan partially to blame.³⁹ Following 9/11, Pervez Musharraf's government was put under significant pressure by the United States to repudiate the Afghan Taliban. However, that sentiment has lately changed. Given the announced 2014 withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, Pakistan is now considered crucial for securing a peace deal with the militant group. This has major implications for whether the Taliban will seize control of Afghanistan once again, and reinstate its draconian laws and abuses against minorities. Unfortunately, given Pakistan's continued state-sanctioned religious intolerance and extremism, Islamabad might just give the Afghan Taliban a free pass. The already strained U.S.–Pakistan relations are likely only to worsen as Pakistani opposition groups such as PML-N and PTI begin to capitalize on the country's growing radicalization and anti-Western sentiment in preparation for the 2013 general elections.⁴⁰ ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NOTES

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- 2 There are, of course, many other factors contributing to the rise of extremism in Pakistan, which include but are not limited to Pakistan's corrupt and incompetent government, its dwindling economy, and the near-collapse of the public education system. Those factors, however, are beyond the scope of this paper.
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- 7 PPC. Persecution against the Ahmadi community was actually initiated by President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who sought to consolidate his own power by acquiescing to fundamentalists' and Islamist organizations' demands to treat Ahmadis as *takfir* (non-believers).
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- 12 Rasul Rais, "Religious Radicalism and Minorities in Pakistan," in *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia*, Satu P. Limay et al., eds. (Hawaii: A-PCSS, 2004), 459–60.
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- 40 Two recent significant events have further exacerbated U.S. and Pakistan relations: The first occurred in January 2011, when a CIA contractor killed two Pakistanis in Lahore. The second occurred in November 2011, when American airstrikes killed 24 Pakistani troops at two Afghan border posts. The United States has claimed it was an accident, but the Pakistani army claimed it was deliberate. U.S. drone strikes against suspected militants in Waziristan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have also emboldened hatred toward the United States in Pakistan.

Anger or Ability: Arguing the Causes of Rebellion

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HISTORY BOOKS ARE SO FILLED WITH STORIES OF REBELLION THAT IT would seem that rebellion is a common thing. If we look at history as the flow of days and events, for most of those days for the vast majority of humans, rebellion has been a very rare thing. This is despite the fact that life for the vast majority of people for much of the last 2,000 years was one of unfairness, hardship, and repression. According to data from the Quality of Government Institute at the University of Gothenburg, in a sample of countries from 1976 to 2004, the percentage in which political murder, police brutality, and unlimited detentions were common was at least 49% of the total sample in any given year, and often was much higher than that.¹ Nevertheless, in the same sample of countries during those years, rebellions or civil wars never occurred more than 10% of the time. In other words, many governments treat their people very badly, but only on rare occasions do enough people rise up to start a full-scale civil war or rebellion.

For the vast majority of humans, rebellion has been a very rare thing.

“I am willing to die for freedom. But I am not willing to let you or your mother die. That is the leverage dictators have.”

On the one hand, this just doesn't make sense. When my students, most of whom are 18 or 19 years old, hear these statistics, they invariably ask me why more people don't revolt against these perpetrators of injustice. Why would so many people be willing to be treated like garbage every day and simply take it? I remember when I was 14 years of age, reading a horrific story about a massacre by government officials in a faraway country. I protested to my father that everyone should grab whatever weapon they could and march on the capital to overthrow the government. My father, who had grown up in a country with a history of dictatorship and occupation, only smiled a little sadly and told me I simply did not understand the costs of rebellion. Convinced of my moral rectitude, I proudly responded that I *did* understand the costs and knew I might die, but insisted I would never stand for such treatment without fighting back. My father smiled again and said, “Yes, I agree, I am with you. I too would be willing to die for freedom. But I am not willing to let you, your brother, your sister, or your mother die for freedom. That is the leverage the dictators have over the people.”

It is no surprise that the vast majority of rebels are young people. From the perspective of a parent, the idea of rebellion sounds like a very bad one. As one war survivor put it, “However bad [the government] may be, as long as you are alive you have a chance, and if you pick up a gun, then you are very likely to get dead.” This question of why people sometimes do rebel, the realistic opposite of my childish demand to know why people would not, has perplexed historians, social scientists, and philosophers over the centuries. What would make someone risk it all for a cause that is most likely to fail, and is unlikely to bring that person much benefit, even with success? Taking up arms is certainly less likely to be beneficial than if he or she simply let someone else bear the risk of rebellion, and then shared in the rewards if victory should be won. Mark Lichbach refers to this as the “Rebel's Dilemma,” and suggests that the real challenge of rebellion is for the rebel leaders to figure out how to get

people to do something that on its face makes no rational sense.² Indeed, it makes a heck of a lot more sense to stay as far away as possible.

One major explanation, developed by Ted Robert Gurr, for why some people do eventually rebel is called “grievance theory.”³ This theory holds that if people are mistreated long enough and badly enough, they will eventually, given the chance, take up arms against their oppressors. This argument is illustrated in the most painful way possible by a quote from an interview with a Chechen teacher after the second Chechen war:

Standing outside her closed school—by order of the Russian command—she points at the bullet holes that scar the building. “At last count, I lost 100 of my children,” she says, adding that during the first war, when the Russians entered Samashki during “cleansing operations,” they would walk by groups of children and shoot at them. “We don’t teach children history,” she continues. “The children teach us. I sleep in the same bed with my ten-year-old. He says, ‘When I am 13 or 14, just let me go and kill one Russian.’”⁴

However powerful the grievance argument might be, there are many who dismiss it by pointing out that everyone has some kind of grievance, and therefore it cannot be the key explanatory factor for why some groups rebel and others do not.⁵ Proponents of grievance theory answer simply that the type of grievance matters.⁶ Not all grievances warrant an uprising. One may resent the extravagant privileges of an elite ruling class, but resentment is not the same kind of motivation as seeing one’s family slaughtered in an armed conflict, or watching one’s children starve because the landowner takes the harvest for himself. The Chechen child described above, who is waiting for the moment he can pick up a gun to kill his tormentors, does not seem motivated by anything else.

In contrast, some scholars point to “greed” as the prime motivator, saying that people need an incentive such as the promise of reward before they rebel. In this view, greed is used as shorthand for all forms of motivations and incentives, from the simple desire of people to better their situation all the way to gaining material wealth and/or position.⁷ The material aspect of the greed argument is based on the logic that rebellions are more likely to happen in areas where the rebels will have access to “lootable” resources (e.g., diamonds, oil, drugs) by holding and controlling territory. In other words, people will participate in a rebellion if they think it can make them rich.⁸ So, for example, one rebel told an interviewer,

My salary ... before entering [the guerilla force] was 8,000 pesos a day, and the guerrilla promised me that I would earn between 300,000 and 400,000 pesos a month ... In fact, that is why I joined.⁹

Other scholars reject both the grievance and greed theories, in favor of an argument based on resources and opportunity. This is generally known as the “opportunity structure” argument.¹⁰ We can agree that everyone has a grievance, and perhaps even the motives and incentives to rebel, but only those who have a reasonable shot at success are actually going to launch a rebellion. Thus, countries in which there are mountains or inaccessible forests where

What would make someone risk it all for a cause that is most likely to fail?

Class resentment is not the same kind of motivation as seeing one’s family slaughtered.

Everyone has a grievance, but only those with a shot at success will actually launch a rebellion.

rebels can hold out are much more likely to see people take up arms against the government, because these rebels have a place to retreat to, to rest and regroup and plan further operations.¹¹ The opportunity structure argument actually dovetails very well with the greed argument. For example, areas that can easily be defended from government attacks, and that also offer access to resources such as diamonds or drug smuggling, are invitations to people to band together and challenge government authority.

What do these three theories—grievance, greed, and opportunity structure—mean for those who have the responsibility to make policy and avoid rebellion? Policy makers must not only understand the core grievances of the rebels; their motivations (including material incentives); and the political and geographical opportunities available to them. Authorities must also be able to weigh accurately the relative priorities of these categories for the rebels. This means that each situation warrants a careful and rigorous examination to define the key factor(s) driving anger and unrest.

Whenever grievances or greed, or some combination of the two, pushes people over the edge, it seems clear that those with the resources and the opportunity to rebel are also more likely to do so.¹² Treating a group badly is a risky move; doing so when they can go up to the mountains or retreat to the forest or across the border may be more than risky—it is likely to be foolish. ❖

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- 8 Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance," (2004).
- 9 Francisco Gutierrez Sanin, "Organizing Minors: The Case of Colombia," in *Child Soldiers in the Age of Fractured States*, Scott Gates and Simon Reich, eds. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), 137.
- 10 For an excellent discussion of political opportunity structure, see Douglas McAdam, "Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Direction," in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, Douglas McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 23–40 (especially 27).
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ETHICS AND INSIGHTS

Should Former Military Members Maintain Their Military Obligation?¹

WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL RETIRES OR MOVES TO A JOB WITH A DIFFERENT employer, there may be limits placed upon that individual's activities in the new position. The former employee may be obligated to adhere to a rule that limits his or her future employment status. A common example is that of federal officials, who are prohibited for a set period of time from working as lobbyists with the same federal office in which they previously served.

This type of limit on what an individual is permitted to do brings up a difficult issue for former members of the military. How long after personnel leave the military should they maintain their obligation to those still on active duty? While serving, soldiers are directed to protect information about specific details of their assigned missions. They are trained to understand that the group's security and safety are the responsibility of every member, and that control of information is the responsibility of everyone who has access to that information. What I want to examine is the obligation that soldiers² have to one another, and whether that obligation can change after an individual leaves the service.

As citizens of a democracy we expect reasonably open access to information. The line between the amount of information a democracy requires from its government to function, and what the government wants or needs to keep secret, however, is vague and constantly shifting. Too often, secrecy is perceived as an excuse to hide malfeasance or ineptitude. If a former soldier believes that revealing the truth about a mistake (for example, the Pentagon Papers) will strengthen his service and potentially save lives by exposing failures, what is his obligation then? Can we identify a limit to what former members of the military can disclose as bureaucratically as we can define a two-year limit for a former U.S. senator to lobby Congress?

Learning from Others' Experiences

Members of the U.S. and many other militaries enter the profession willingly. While in the service, their actions are guided by an oath, and the individual service's core values, rules, and regulations. Despite these kinds of guidance, the hard lessons of experience in the uncertainty of military operations remain a valuable asset to the soldier who is executing a current mission or preparing for a future one. All human beings have the potential to learn something new or better understand something we already know about, through the recounted exploits of both real people and the fictional characters we admire in novels and films.

Throughout history, soldiers have written moving accounts about their military experiences, a tradition that continues today in the form of books, articles, and blogs. This practice, I believe, is not

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Soldiers are trained to understand that the group's security and safety are the responsibility of every member.



a careless word...

A NEEDLESS LOSS

Throughout history, soldiers have written moving accounts about their military experiences.

only a right of the author; it also provides a great benefit to our current and future soldiers, by giving them an opportunity to learn. Through the words of those who have been there, we can safely encounter the mistakes of others, celebrate the victories won through perseverance and determination, and gain a deeper respect for those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

I use this type of historical account to teach cadets how they might apply the Stoic principles put forth by Epictetus in 130 A.D. A memoir by Admiral James Stockdale of his time as a POW in Vietnam is an excellent modern study of how to accept the things that are not up to us to change, and focus our efforts on the things that are up to us. Admiral Stockdale embraced his study of Epictetus during his imprisonment, which helped him realize that as humans we are fully responsible for the expression of our emotions. This and other accounts of moral courage, leadership, and the ability to make decisions in seemingly hopeless circumstances teach our young soldiers lessons that will likely influence the outcome of missions they undertake in the future. Similarly, heroic actions such as the firefighters' response to the 9/11 attacks influenced a generation of children, many of whom are my students today. Some of them tell me that their exposure to the horrific events more than a decade ago led them to dedicate their time and talent to national service.



It may even be said that these accounts of soldiers' experiences are necessary for the military organization to improve. Soldiers need to be able to make sense of the past, to learn how those events might affect the missions that they will undertake in the future. The 9/11 attacks demonstrated, for example, that the various military, law enforcement, and emergency response personnel faced unanticipated obstacles trying to communicate with one another. Today, it is readily apparent that these same agencies learned from their experiences and have put the communication protocols, organizational structures, and equipment in place to rectify that breakdown in communication.

The former soldier's right to publish is a "bound" right: it is a right that is limited.

The Limits of Freedom

So what is the big deal? Why would I even ask the question: Should former military members maintain their obligation to guard military secrets? While I know that the recounting of a soldier's experiences can be valuable to those who serve now or in the future, there is nevertheless a potential for this useful

practice to go a step too far, and become destructive to the service. What if a former soldier's writings unveil sensitive information, such as specific details about the tactics used to carry out a military maneuver? Publishing information like this could jeopardize the lives of soldiers who are still serving on active duty and relying on those same tactics. Does a former soldier owe it to current soldiers and to his nation not to publish these kinds of details, even at personal cost? I believe the answer is yes. More specifically, I believe the former soldier's right to publish is a "bound" right: it is a right that is limited. Such a limit is an aspect of the personal sacrifice undertaken by the individual soldier. Military service obligates its members in a way that limits the same freedom their service is obliged to protect.

If such a limit does in fact exist, what is the basis for it? The oath of service taken by both military officers and enlisted personnel states, "that [a soldier]

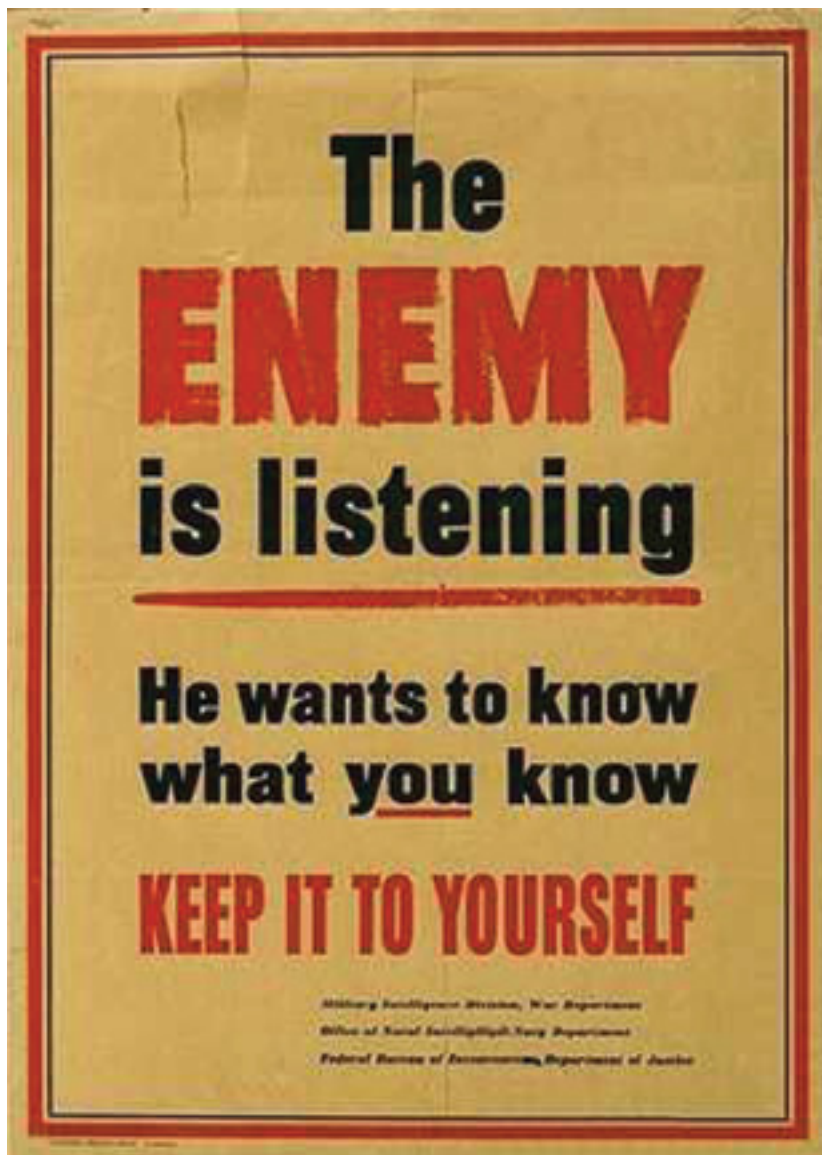


will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which [he or she is] about to enter." In a legal sense, one could argue that this obligation only applies to soldiers while they serve on active duty. This may be true, but is there also a moral obligation to continue to observe the bound rights after discharge? If we agree that such a moral obligation exists for the former soldier, we have to understand why this is so.

The territory of moral obligation is complex, because obligation has

different aspects, requiring greater or lesser degrees of commitment or sacrifice. A common concern of the principle of obligation is whether or not an individual determines what he or she will commit to. There are three common categories of human obligation. First, some obligations we undertake appear to be involuntary, that is, they are not self-selected. For example, children do not choose their parents, yet when parents give their child life and then raise and support her, a special relationship forms. That child feels that she owes her parents respect and mutual care in return for the care she has received. Then there are the obligations we take on voluntarily, such as choosing to participate in a local community effort to clean up a beach over the weekend, or observing our wedding vows. We sacrifice a weekend, or a degree of personal autonomy. Between the voluntary and the involuntary, there is a third category of obligation that is partially both. An example of a mixed obligation might be a decision to jettison cargo from a ship during a storm. The agent voluntarily decides to jettison valuable cargo because he feels obliged to save the ship, but it is an involuntary obligation in that the agent does not have a useful alternative if the ship, and by extension his own life, are to be saved. He

These personal obligations are often not up to us to select, but they are up to us to maintain and preserve.



sacrifices wealth, perhaps even reputation, but these are outweighed by the benefits of his decision.

The obligations a person takes on when he or she joins the United States military are voluntary. To become a soldier involves a conscious act of self-selection. Further, unlike mixed obligations, there is no external coercion (excluding personal circumstances like an overbearing parent) involved in the decision. The initiation of enlistment or acceptance of a commission rests exclusively with the individual.

This brings me back to the question about former members of the military. I believe that not just their obligation to the military, but many of their obligations to family and society as individuals require them to display the moral courage to limit their disclosure of sensitive information to the public, even when it means subsuming their desire for personal vindication or acclaim. Furthermore, such disclosure of information can violate the former soldier’s other obligations as a citizen, a member of a family, and a friend. These obligations are multi-layered and often compete with each other. Importantly, such obligations are based on interpersonal relationships. To function well, such relationships require mutual trust and respect. These personal obligations to others are often involuntary; they are often not up

to us to select, but they are up to us to maintain and preserve. To disseminate sensitive information without regard for the consequences is not excusable. It potentially endangers those soldiers still on active duty who may rely on the security of this information for their safety, in operations that already by their very nature pose great risk to their lives. ❖

NOTES

- 1 The contents of this article reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the U.S. Coast Guard Academy or the U.S. Coast Guard.
- 2 Throughout I will use the term “soldier” as a general term of reference for all members of the military services.

THE MOVING IMAGE

The Grid: A Primer in Network Warfare¹

“

OUR CELL AGAINST THEIR CELL. I LIKE IT.” SO SAYS FBI AGENT MAX CANARY early on in *The Grid*, a limited television series that was co-produced by Fox and the BBC. Canary’s comment is in response to a National Security Council staffer, Maren Jackson, who is seeking to recruit him as she builds her own network to fight the network of a rising new terrorist leader, “Muhammad.” What unfolds over the six episodes of the series, which aired in the summer of 2004, is a race in which Muhammad and his operatives get their terrorist campaign under way—largely by means of hitting at oil and oil industry-related targets—while being hunted by the Anglo-American network that Maren cobbles together in pursuit of them.

The story is told in something close to documentary style, yet the characters are very well delineated, on both sides. Ragib, a medical doctor who once patched up Muhammad during the war against the Russians in Afghanistan, is a particularly sympathetic figure. Conflicted about the very idea of committing acts of terror, his attempt to lead a normal life back in Egypt is completely upended by Hosni Mubarak’s secret police. On the counterterrorist side, Max Canary’s motivations clearly come from the loss of one of his closest friends in the 9/11 attacks. He struggles, not always successfully, to maintain his professionalism.

Among the more fascinating elements of the story—for me, at least—is the bitter bureaucratic feuding among the Americans that makes it so hard to operate in networked fashion. The CIA, FBI, and the National Security Council struggle to sort out just who’s in charge, and what exactly they’re in charge of. Eventually, the network is allowed to emerge, and things really start humming when the British representatives of MI5 and MI6 begin to demonstrate their formidable capabilities. They are portrayed as being more willing to share information and to trust their American allies. Together, the Brits and Americans begin to put the pieces together and start tracking Muhammad’s cells.

But they aren’t fast enough, and the terrorists get in a number of attacks—sometimes mounted against the very people who are hunting them, giving the series an interesting sense of turnabout. It seems quite prescient of the producers to have come up with a major set of terrorist cells operating and intending to strike at targets

John Arquilla

John Arquilla is professor of Defense Analysis at NPS, and current chairman of the DA Department.

“Our cell against their cell. I like it.”



Things really start humming when the British representatives of MI5 and MI6 begin to demonstrate their formidable capabilities.

The producers should have figured out a way to bring more international elements into the fight.

within the United Kingdom, given that the attacks on the London transportation system occurred just a year after the series aired.

The climax of the series comes, predictably, as Muhammad's cells prepare a series of strikes even as the counterterrorist forces are closing in on them. Without giving away too much, let me just say that the resolution is much closer to reality than the usual thriller of this sort: not all of the attacks are thwarted, and not all of the terrorists are caught or killed. It is clear that the struggle will go on, and the side that prevails will be the one with the more effective network.

Shot on location in the United States, Britain, and Morocco—the last substituting for a number of sites in the Middle East and Africa—the series has a good cinematic feel. It is exceptionally well cast, particularly with its strong female roles on the terrorist-hunting side. Indeed, the Maren Jackson character from *The Grid* seems clearly to foreshadow Maya, the heroine of the counterterror film of the moment, *Zero Dark Thirty*.

If there is one significant criticism I have of *The Grid*, it is that the producers took a very limited view of networking. The Anglo-American intelligence alliance is seen as sufficient, and no doubt kept the writers from having to develop too many characters. But they should have figured out a way to bring more international elements into the fight against Muhammad and his cells. A few years after the series aired, I was approached by the producers and asked about what a sequel should look like, and the one big point I tried to get across was that they needed to highlight the transnational nature of the fight against terrorist networks.

The sequel has never been made. But the original holds up quite well, and is certainly worth making the effort to find online, via Amazon, or by other means. *The Grid* was the first, and to this day remains the best, effort to portray a conflict between two networks in which the fundamental dynamic is that of hider/finder, and the critical need is to gain greater knowledge as swiftly as possible. That the writers and producers at Fox and the BBC captured these themes so well, in a series so entertaining, is a tribute to their skill and perspicacity. ❖

NOTES

- 1 You can buy the DVD from Amazon:
<http://www.amazon.com/The-Grid-Dylan-McDermott/dp/B0006GAO4A>
 or download it at:
<http://www.thebox.bz/login.php>

Thebox.bz requires you to create a (free) login and download a bit torrent app. Please note that while the site appears to be legitimate, CTX does not guarantee the safety or quality of the apps or files available on this site.

THE MOVING IMAGE

Two World War II Resistance Films Worth Watching

MUCH OF EUROPE FELL QUICKLY UNDER THE SHADOW OF GERMAN OCCUPATION at the outset of World War II. Starting with small, passive gestures and rapidly gaining momentum over the months and years to come, resistance to the Nazis formed in every occupied country. At their height, in the months leading up to the Allied invasion in 1944, these underground forces numbered in the hundreds of thousands: men, women, and children of all ages filling a wide range of roles, both direct and supporting, in the cause of freedom. Their actions included sabotage, assassination, propaganda, guerrilla warfare, intelligence collection, and the operation of escape networks for downed Allied airmen. These efforts tied up German forces, destroyed equipment, killed and threatened enemy leaders and soldiers, bled the German supply system, and weakened the German troops' morale. At the same time, the Resistance helped to sustain the spirits of those in the occupied countries, and produced valuable intelligence for the Allies.

Two recent European films provide an inside look at two specific Resistance movements. The first tells the story of a group of French partisans in Paris, while the second portrays the Danish Holger Danske resistance group. Both of these films are based on actual events and true historical figures. They skillfully represent the detailed inner operations of such organizations, the daring and commitment of their members, and the staggering challenges and risks these individuals faced throughout the war. Both films are recommended viewing for those who wish to learn more about this period of history, or gain an appreciation for the realities of clandestine organizations and this realm of warfare in general.

L'armée du crime (Army of Crime)

Directed by Robert Guédiguian. France: Studio Canal, 2009; U.S. release in 2010. French with English subtitles. 133 minutes. DVD available on Amazon.com (price varies); also available to U.S. Netflix subscribers. ASIN: B0048FQFI4.

The story of *L'armée du crime* revolves around the French-Armenian resistance leader Missak Manouchian and his organization of French and immigrant fighters, many of whom are still memorialized as national heroes in both France and their respective countries of origin. Their operations, directed against the Nazis and French collaborators in Paris and its environs, included bombings directed against German troops, assassinations of key leaders (including a Nazi general), dissemination of propaganda, urban guerilla warfare, and sabotage. The carefully detailed examples of tradecraft featured throughout are fascinating, but the screenplay also vividly portrays the extensive supporting operations that, although often overlooked by historians, are just as crucial to effective resistance. This emotionally charged film gives us a

MAJ Nils J. French, CA

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At their height, these underground forces numbered in the hundreds of thousands.

The carefully detailed examples of tradecraft featured throughout are fascinating.

perspective into the varying motivations of the group's members, their relationships and internal divisions, their moral dilemmas, and their suffering and loss.

Actions taken by the authorities to counter the group range from simple surveillance to violent reprisals against the general population. Viewers will note that those who hunt the insurgents are mostly French, not German, and that they often act with little more than a touch of direction from the Nazi occupiers. This may come as a bit of an awakening to those less familiar with the occupation, who may have thought that the oppression was entirely at the hands of the Germans. *L'armée du crime* makes this important historical point quite clear.

The high quality of the acting and cinematography serve to further enhance the story's inherent drama. Perhaps the most powerful moment comes as the film concludes with a staggering tie-in to the real-life history of Manouchian and his group. If you have an interest in this remarkable aspect of the war against Nazi Germany, you won't want to miss this film.

Flammen & Citronen (Flame and Citron)

Directed by Ole Christian Madsen.
Denmark: Nimbus Film Productions, 2009. Danish with English subtitles. 130 minutes. DVD available on Amazon.com (price varies); also available to U.S. Netflix subscribers. ASIN: B004GJMW0W.

Flammen & Citronen (Flame and Citron) tells the true story of two assassins in the Danish resistance: the debonair and confident Bent Faurschou-Hviid (Flame) and the bitter and scruffy Jørgen Haagen Schmith (Citron, "Lemon"). The saga is narrated by the character of Bent and is generally seen through his eyes. Throughout the movie we see the incredible strengths of this odd couple, as well as their fundamental human flaws, and the personal and moral challenges each faces as they work to undermine Denmark's occupiers.

At the outset, Flame and Citron have a relatively simple (although difficult) role—that of killing Danish collaborators. This quickly becomes complicated, however, as their leaders begin to direct hits on German officers and civilians, which actions may lead to retaliation against innocent Danish civilians. The



possibility of a double agent somewhere within the resistance organization poses yet another danger.

One of the profound realities of the underground depicted throughout the film is the way in which the duo and their fellow resistance members must operate continually under the noses of their Gestapo and Abwehr pursuers—in shops, restaurants, bars, and on the streets. This initially is of little consequence, as their faces and identities are unknown to the enemy. Here the essence of the information advantage is laid bare: we see the far superior forces of the Nazis made impotent as the members of the resistance blend perfectly with the population. The film gives a real feel for this nerve-racking dynamic, and also shows that the apparent cover it offers can be fragile: the very success of the pair soon puts a price on their heads.

The film offers many visually rich scenes on location in both Copenhagen and Stockholm.

Another interesting feature of *Flammen & Citronen* is its portrayal of the resistance organizational structure. We see the chain of command that runs from their group to a local leader, to a higher command in Stockholm, and eventually to the British Special Operations Executive. We see the manner in which this chain directs the operations, coordinates support, and disseminates intelligence—and the friction that can arise along the way. The film also introduces the local organization, a crew of men and women of all ages and professions: a leader, an expert researcher, a member who has extensive connections and sells information to both sides, a weapons expert, a pair of students, a former nun with her own resistance cell, and a number of others. While the focus is certainly on Flame and Citron, we occasionally see the workings of the broader group throughout the story.

From an artistic perspective, the film is highly cinematic. It begins with carefully selected segments of actual war footage that lend context to the story, and offers many visually rich scenes on location in both Copenhagen and Stockholm. The acting is superb and the narration is skillful, at times almost poetic, as Bent leads us through this complicated story.

From chain-of-command challenges to personal dilemmas, and of course edge-of-your-seat action, *Flammen & Citronen* provides a rare, valuable glance inside the complicated and morally challenging world of the Danish resistance fighters in World War II. ❖



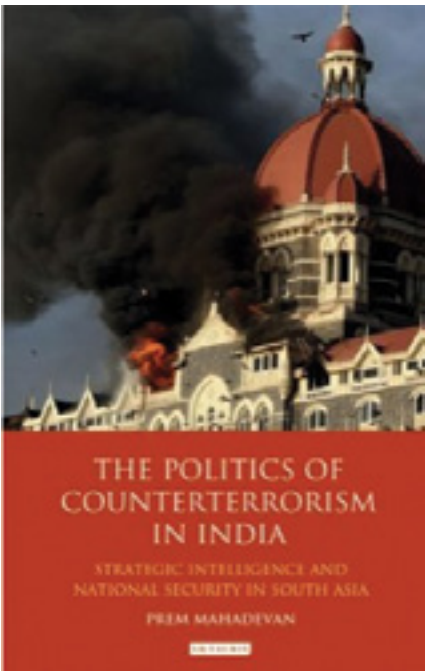
THE WRITTEN WORD

The Politics of Counterterrorism in India: Strategic Intelligence and National Security in South Asia

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IAF*

GP CPT Srinivas Ganapathiraju is an Indian Air Force fighter pilot.

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297 pages



INDIA HAS WITNESSED ONE OF THE WORLD'S HIGHEST LEVELS OF TERRORIST violence in the last three decades, with a unique hybrid of both domestic and international terrorism. Two audacious attacks, one on the Indian parliament in 2001 and the other in Mumbai in 2008, along with scores of smaller ones that have left thousands dead over the past ten years alone, have unsurprisingly brought into question the effectiveness of India's security and intelligence agencies in counterterrorism.

While the country's leadership has been quick to place the blame on the intelligence agencies for not providing timely and actionable information, however, the official post-mortem analysis in all cases has failed to take a holistic view of the complex issue of CT. The learning curve has, therefore, been unimpressive to say the least. Barring a few gap-filler organizational changes, corrective action has to this point been piecemeal and incoherent. The continued failure of the country as a whole to anticipate and prevent terrorist attacks, especially the ones driven by transnational Islamic jihadist ideology, has received almost no scholarly attention. The few analyses that are available have merely skimmed the surface of the problem by focusing narrowly on individual events, and hence failed to address the problem at its core.

Dr. Prem Mahadevan is a senior researcher at the Center for Strategic Studies in Zurich, specializing in the study of intelligence agencies, sub-state conflict, and organized crime. In this latest work, Mahadevan manages to delve through those many layers surrounding the complex problem of CT in India to identify the core problems. He begins by laying out the following hypothesis and alternative hypothesis:

- CT failures are caused by intelligence failures.
- CT failures might arise from the poor quality of such intelligence instead of poor follow-up on strategic intelligence.

He disproves the first hypothesis by applying a "four constraints" paradigm as it applies to India: lack of political consistency, lack of political consensus, lack of operational capacity, and lack of operational coordination. He argues that Indian CT policy vacillates between coercive and conciliatory stances on a purely ad hoc and reactive basis. Any attempt by the central government to mount an offensive strategy has invariably been scuttled due to lack of domestic political consensus and international support. State police forces lack the operational capacity and capabilities to capitalize on good strategic intelligence with good tactical intelligence. Finally, inter-agency rivalry and the absence of a centralized analysis and assessment mechanism at the operational level hamper information sharing and cooperation.

Mahadevan uses three major CT cases within recent Indian experience to apply the “four constraints” model, and critically examines the way the Indian intelligence apparatuses handled each case. These are 1) the Sikh separatist movement in the state of Punjab between 1981 and 1991; 2) the Kashmir separatist movement beginning in the early 1990s; and 3) the more recent rise of pan-Islamic jihadists. He points out that the security forces’ CT operations were successful in one case (the Sikh separatist movement), partially successful in another (Kashmir) and utterly unsuccessful in the last (jihadism). This was despite the fact that they harbored the same organizational deficiencies across time and space, suggesting that the success factor is linked to the willingness to act rather than to organization. Consistent political consensus allowed the security forces to adopt an offensive stance that ultimately led to a successful CT campaign in Punjab. In contrast, waning political consistency and lack of consensus prevented the security forces from taking a similarly strong stance in the cases of Kashmir and the jihadis, which ultimately resulted in partial success in the former case and visible failure in the latter.

Indian CT policy vacillates between coercive and conciliatory stances on a purely ad hoc and reactive basis.

Disproving the alternative hypothesis as well, Mahadevan concludes on the basis of India’s CT experience that the action the security services take on strategic intelligence is more important than the quality of the intelligence itself. Without discounting organizational deficiencies, Mahadevan connects them as contributors to the lack of operational capacity among the intelligence agencies. He attributes the cascade of CT failures to the decision makers’ inability to develop strategic intelligence into tactical intelligence through timely follow-up action, a symptom of low operational capacity combined with poor coordination. Highlighting the differences between these two types of intelligence, he challenges the dominant presumption that CT failures are caused solely by organizational weaknesses within intelligence agencies, and attempts instead to draw researchers’ attention to the problem of why decision makers fail to act on the generic warnings they do receive.

He attributes the cascade of CT failures to the inability to develop strategic intelligence into tactical intelligence.

In his conclusions and reflections, Mahadevan recommends a two-pronged approach for India as it works to counter violent Islamic jihadism. First, he calls on the country to implement a series of domestic security reforms that were supposed to follow from the lessons of the 2008 Mumbai attacks. He further suggests that India take offensive CT measures inside Pakistan itself, intended primarily as a deterrent to Pakistan’s ISI (Inter Services Intelligence) and Pakistani jihadists.

Eloquently written, the book is well researched and stands apart from many government commissions of enquiry for its holistic approach to the complex subject of CT. The book is a must read for practitioners of CT at all levels who wish to understand its complexity, especially in the political environment of a vibrant, multi-ethnic democracy like India. At just over 200 pages, the book is a quick read and worth the price. A must have for all libraries. ❖

STATE OF THE ARTS

Reflections on the 9/11 Memorial

Rachel Davis, Naval Postgraduate School

Rachel Davis is currently a graduate student in the National Security Affairs Department at NPS. She holds a BA in History of Art and Visual Culture from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

The 9/11 Memorial website reflects a longing for closure to an event that most Americans cannot seem to let go.

THE 9/11 MEMORIAL WEBSITE, SET UP TO ACCOMPANY THE LONG-AWAITED Freedom Tower complex in lower Manhattan, reflects a longing for closure to an event that most Americans cannot seem to let go.¹ The primary function of the website, with the five subsections Planning your Visit, Memorial, Museum, Teach+Learn, and Donate+Get Involved, is to help the public chew and digest the incomprehensible manifestation of a phantom menace that was 9/11; to this end, the site, like the Freedom Tower, nevertheless falls just shy of making any definitive statements. Rather, it seeks to promote healing through participatory personal story-telling, along with mythologizing about the day of the event itself.

The section of the site titled “Education Goals,” under the main heading Teach+Learn, comes closest to a direct confrontation with the attack’s perpetrators. It warns that discussing 9/11 may “trigger strong and even unfamiliar feelings,” in oddly bland terms that echo the safety-conscious civil law reforms of the 1990s, as in, “Caution, beverage may be hot.” Although its stated goal is the education of late middle and high school students, the text then proceeds to acknowledge both the “unfinished nature of the story” and its “continuing ambiguities.” One wonders, what is the purpose of beginning a painful conversation with the assumption that a conclusion, and thus a sense of closure, is impossible to achieve?

The text bounces between obvious sentiments like, “The scale of death and destruction that resulted from 9/11 made Americans feel vulnerable in ways that were new and unfamiliar,” and ambiguous questioning that leave definitions and answers up to the imagination: “Acts of terrorism reinforce awareness of communities of difference, heightening a sense of ‘us’ versus ‘them.’ How can we resist the impulse to view other people stereotypically or as monolithic ‘others’? How can we balance appropriate caution with curiosity about other communities and respect for diversity?”

The reader is left wondering what a “community of difference” might be, and whether we are being directed to define and explore unfamiliar groups of people—or to avoid acknowledging their existence at all. This line of questioning would suggest the latter is preferable: as long as we are able to politely sweep differences under the rug, we should do so. The ostensibly educational discussion for young teens invokes terms like “others” in a sort of pop-academic context, suggesting that the site includes its junior audience as an excuse for its feebleness in addressing the burning questions of an adult audience.²

The reader is left wondering what a “community of difference” might be.

The questioning then plunges into contradiction, teetering between the complete denial and the complete acceptance of “others:” “We are taught to respect differences, but how should we react to groups whose views are fundamentally antithetical to our own values and ideals? How do we deal with communities

of hate?”³ Here the reader discovers a new community, the equally undefined but highly polarized “community of hate,” to go along with the “community of difference.” In both cases, the questions of what constitutes these “communities” and how we should deal with them are left to dangle. The website’s rhetoric, echoed in the architecture of the Freedom Tower and the Memorial structure itself, is, quite naturally, primarily concerned with America’s self-image, including healing and issues like diversity and security. But it is precisely from this self-image, and not necessarily the reality of the cataclysm around which the debate centers, that the source of ambiguity stems.

The website’s rhetoric is, quite naturally, primarily concerned with America’s self-image.

The site shows that what is missing from the history-writing, or “historicizing,” of the events of 9/11 is an examination of the attacks from the standpoint of the private citizen, as opposed to the government. This is what philosopher Jacques Rancière was talking about when he said there appeared to be no symbolic break, no conscious distinction, between American culture and identity and American foreign policy (represented by the White House), or American global financial power (represented by the Trade Towers). Instead of distinguishing between the citizen and the government, and taking a close look at the dynamics of global politics and the use of terrorism all over the world today, the broad American reaction was to become more introverted, and more dependent on governmental authority. The familiar tug-of-war between constitutional freedom and personal security shifted strongly in the latter’s direction after 9/11.

As the Memorial pilgrim becomes lost in self-examination, al Qaeda fades to the horizon. Missing in the Memorial and new Tower is the true iconography of the previous site. The World Trade Center, the symbol of global finance, American world power by way of monetary and military hegemony, is now the Freedom Tower. The freedom, perhaps, of the free market now, since it is still a financial center. Yet nowhere is there a discussion of economic and political globalization relevant to the Trade Center’s creation and, arguably, its demise. The construction of the tower’s meaning is more nostalgic, ephemeral, metaphysical. It is as if the old towers, once the architectural embodiment of the market institution of global financial power, have, in their apparent martyrdom, been graced with a sublime aura they did not previously possess. Photographs, presented in a way to evoke nostalgic film slides, show a couple embracing in one frame and graffiti that reads, “fuck Osama” in another, both treated with the same tenderness and respect: the decompartmentalization of emotion under the discipline of an overall righteous aesthetic.⁴ In the time and space of 9/11, as a discreet moment in history, all American feelings of victimhood, loss, and anger were just and true.

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The pervading lesson expounded by U.S. political leaders about 9/11 was that this was a reason for American solidarity and a vindication of American ideals. Al Qaeda was the perfect metaphor for evil’s hatred of American goodness. Thus the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts were initially framed in terms of the Second World War. 9/11 was analogous to Pearl Harbor. Saddam Hussein and bin Laden embodied the same pure evil as Hitler and Stalin. The United States was once again the victim and the savior, rising in righteous anger.

Al Qaeda's attack was neither the harbinger of a great clash of civilizations nor an isolated act of hatred.

But the terrorist conflict is not as clean as the nation-state conflict appeared to be. Terrorists exist in a kind of liminal zone outside convention and law, manifested in the vague handling of Guantánamo prisoners: Where should they be tried, what should they be called? Hence the note of caution and of nostalgia in the memorialization of the Trade Towers. Hence the introversion of the narrative. Finally, Americans are not sure who these anti-American people are or what to do about them. They are inexplicable and exasperating, and yet they also conveniently fill the vacant role once played by the Soviet Union of necessary antithesis, against whom in contrast American rectitude is reified.

Even this, however, is too shallow a conclusion. Al Qaeda's intended symbolism in targeting American global finance by attacking the Trade Towers (as opposed to, say, crowded Disney World or hedonist Las Vegas) was apparently completely lost or disregarded in constructing the national 9/11 narrative. Terrorism is a political act. Bin Laden and his gang, enemies of the Islamic Saudi regime that Washington supports, had a gripe with U.S. activities in the Gulf. 9/11 was the ugly face of geo-political terrorism of the type many nations have been facing for years. Acts of terrorism are a harsh reality of the globalized age we live in, not the spiritual clash between good and evil manifesting on U.S. soil. Until Americans can cast aside the mythologized version of the War on Terror as the good fight against random acts of evil by "communities of hate," our strategy will continue to rely on American exceptionalism as a key tenet and blind us to our own global vulnerabilities and geo-economic context. Al Qaeda's successful attack should be seen neither as the harbinger of a great clash of civilizations nor as an isolated act of insanity and hatred. Rather, al Qaeda's violence on 9/11 was motivated, much like Unabomber Ted Kazinski's, by frustration with U.S. cultural and economic hegemony. A more relevant question is, how would we like to deal with that? Seeking the answer might make a realistic discussion possible. ❖

NOTES

- 1 The website is at <http://www.911memorial.org>
- 2 Edward Said is best known for describing the endemic racism in Middle East/Islamic scholarship by Western academics in his 1987 book *Orientalism*. In this text, Said frequently referred to modern psychoanalyst Jacques Luis Lacan's use of the term "Other" to define that which is seen as radically apart or different from the self. By setting "others" apart and using the word in conjunction with "monolithic," the website's authors are making an explicitly academic reference. See <http://www.911memorial.org/education-goals>
- 3 See <http://www.911memorial.org/sites/all/files/PoR%20Study%20Guide.pdf>
- 4 These were part of a series of photographs published by Getty Images to mark the one-year anniversary of bin Laden's death and the Freedom Tower's climb to an equal plane with the Empire State building: <http://www.bloomberg.com/slideshow/2012-05-01/one-world-trade-center-rises.html>

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

Afghanistan in Transition Beyond 2014?

Afghanistan in Transition
Beyond 2014?

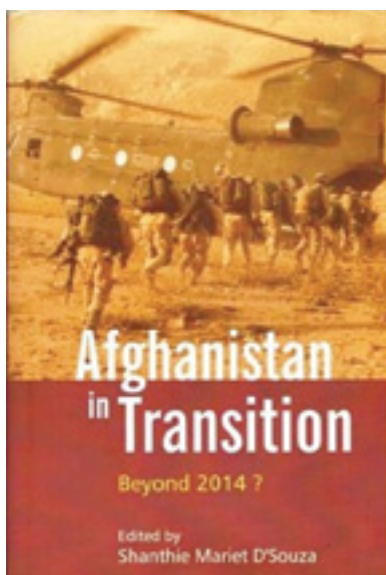
Shanthie Mariet D`Souza (ed.)

ISBN: 978-81-8274-674-9

Publication Year: 2012

Pages: 264

Price: US\$ 39



Afghanistan is at a cusp of “change.” As 2014, the date for the drawdown of international forces draws near, the international community is confounded by the complexities of an effective *inteqal* (transition) as by the modalities for ensuring it.

This book brings together varied Afghan voices to set the agenda, address critical gaps in the ongoing *inteqal* process, 2012–14 and suggest alternate courses of action by setting a forward looking agenda, beyond 2014. The strength of this volume stems from the rich contributions by experts and practitioners from the field, providing an in-depth analysis of the perceptions, needs, and preparedness on the ground.

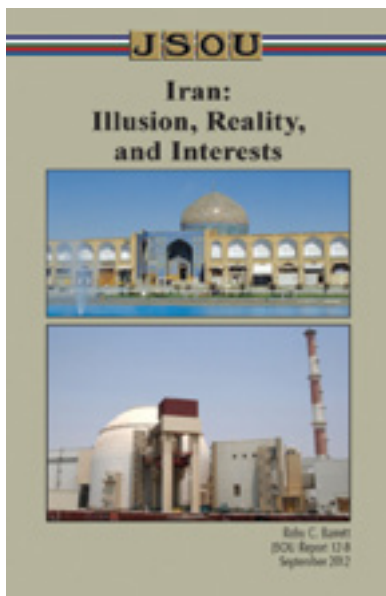
The common thread that runs through all the chapters of the book is that the *inteqal* process needs to be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned. This book provides diverse perspectives from a number of Afghans, offering a realistic assessment of the achievements and challenges in building local capacities and institutions in key sectors—security, political, governmental, and economic. These will form the basis of future progress.

Chapters on regional perspectives and also the U.S. perspective provide important insights into the role of external players in the present imbroglio. This book is a valuable and timely contribution to the academic and policy discourse on the prospects for effective transition and long-term stabilization in Afghanistan.

Dr. Shanthie Mariet D`Souza is a research fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore. She was previously an associate fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi; and a Fulbright Scholar of South Asia Studies, The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C. Dr. D`Souza has published extensively in journals, edited volumes, and other media. Her research interests and expertise include the regional dynamics of the Afghan insurgency and the counterinsurgency campaign; transition and long-term stabilization in Afghanistan; and counterterrorism in South Asia. She has conducted field studies in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir and India`s Northeast. ❖

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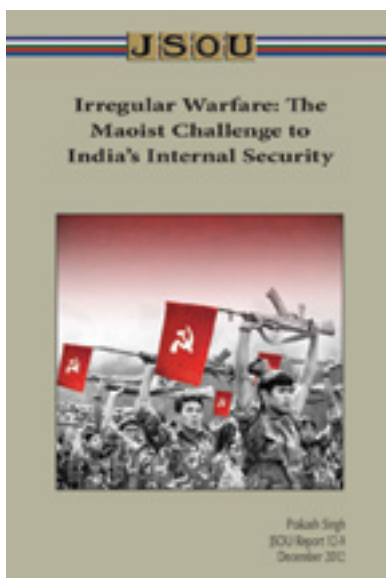


Iran: Illusion, Reality, and Interests

by Roby C. Barrett

Issue Date: September 2012

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran has perhaps been the United States' most intractable foreign policy issue. Dr. Roby Barrett provides a deep analysis of Iran's motivations and finds that they are not the result of irrational messianic religious thought, but rather are based on a rational worldview developed over centuries of history. Looking back over the course of that history, Barrett shows the reader how a strong sense of victimization and humiliation, rooted in Persia's loss of its historical preeminence in the Gulf, shapes the Iranian psyche. He suggests that their elected president holds little actual power. The Iranian constitution vests the highest political and religious authority in the Supreme Leader; this includes the power to declare war and dismiss the president. As such, the United States must be prepared to deal with the complexities of the entire regime, not just the presidency. ❖



Irregular Warfare: The Maoist Challenge to India's Internal Security

by Prakash Singh

Issue Date: December 2012

Mr. Prakash Singh's monograph on the Maoist movement in India benefits from his unique perspective as a distinguished police officer in some of the country's most turbulent regions. He provides a detailed history of insurgency in India, including the history of uprisings starting from the Telengana insurrection of the mid-to-late 1940s to the Communist movement, sponsored by Mao Zedong's China. Mr. Singh traces the transition of the peasant-led Naxalite movement, with its roots in a single village in West Bengal, to the Communist Party of India (Maoist) Movement, which has spread to some 20 of India's 28 states. India's prime minister has declared more than once that the Maoist challenge is the biggest threat to the internal security of the country. How India accommodates its tribal minorities and reaches an accommodation with insurgents is a critical element for long-term regional stability. ❖

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The *Combating Terrorism Exchange* (CTX) is a quarterly peer-reviewed journal. We accept submissions of nearly any type, from anyone; however, submission does not guarantee publication. Our aim is to distribute high quality analyses, opinions, and studies to military officers, government officials, and security and academic professionals in the counterterrorism community. We give priority to non-typical, insightful work, and to topics concerning countries with the most pressing terrorism and CT issues.

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- **photographic essays**
- **video clips** with explanation or narration
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- **book reviews** (500–1,000 words); review essays (1,000–3,000 words); or lists of books of interest (which may include books in other languages)
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