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From the Editor

This issue of *CTX* brings you several articles that take a critical look at the subject of leadership in irregular warfare and stability operations, as experienced in the cities, towns, and countryside of Afghanistan by a generation of special operations officers and military personnel from around the world. In addition to these analytical pieces, we offer two articles on entirely different topics from some new contributors. Two of our contributors chose to remain anonymous, a choice you'll understand when you read their pieces. We're happy to publish these unattributed articles, because it means that some people with important, unorthodox things to say trust *CTX* as the forum in which to say them. We hope the ideas they share inspire some serious conversation among readers, as well.

We begin with a special section, *Leadership in Afghanistan: Three Takes*. To begin, an author who prefers to remain anonymous uses two disastrous incidents that befell his unit in Afghanistan in 2010 to discuss the qualities of military leadership that he believes are too often missing in operations against irregular enemies. His concerns are echoed by LTC Lars Werner, a German Army Special Forces officer, who writes about the vital importance of unity of command for stability operations—in Afghanistan in particular, but his observations will apply anywhere an international coalition is trying to rout an indigenous insurgency.

The third article in this section is by LTC Gabor Santa, Hungarian Army, who is concerned with leadership at the planning level (also in Afghanistan). The SOF training units that LTC Santa observed tended to prefer direct action to developing the Afghan provincial response companies that were their responsibility. Not only were the Afghans left out of planning meetings, they weren't given access to the tools and data they needed to function efficiently, nor the equipment to operate effectively. (Leadership in counterterrorism/counterinsurgency operations is a theme that comes up frequently in *CTX*'s pages. See, for instance, "When the Goldfish Meets the Anaconda: A Modern Fable on Unconventional Leadership," in *CTX* vol. 3, no. 3.)

The next article, by Dr. Bibhu Routray and Dr. Shanthie D'Souza, introduces readers to the insurgent group known as the Indian Mujahideen (IM), which uses bombings throughout India to retaliate for what its leaders perceive to be oppression of Muslims. Closely associated with the notorious Lashkar-e-Taiba, the IM has kept Indian authorities guessing despite some successes against it. Australian freelance journalist Paul Johnstone then interviews Nir Maman, founder of the training program known as Israeli Special Forces Krav Maga. Johnstone, a former Australian Federal Police agent and soldier himself, details Maman's background in close protection, police work, and martial arts, and delves into the differences between what Maman teaches and what most martial arts courses are about.

The final feature article is a treatise on the ethics of drone warfare, but not, as you might expect, about the ways these weapons are used. Instead, LCDR Andrew Ely focuses on the effects on drone pilots of operating far from physical danger. The moral code of most military services demands bravery in battle. But what of the pilot who sits hundreds or thousands of miles away and participates by remote control? LCDR Ely offers some suggestions for training all personnel, not just drone pilots, in how to live up to their moral values when they are unable to take direct action.

The CTAP interview is an excerpt of a conversation Dr. Leo Blanken had with an anonymous Afghan Special Forces officer, about the officer's experience training with U.S. forces. The excerpt, although brief, is surprisingly poignant for those of us who come from countries with modern, bureaucratized, well-equipped militaries. This issue's ethics column, by longtime contributor George Lober, asks us to consider the quality of mercy through the prism of two appalling, yet rational, decisions made by soldiers in wartime. On what basis, the author asks, do the rest of us decide that one death is mercy and another murder?

World War II movie buffs are in for a treat with the review by contributor John Locke, who dives deep into the psychology and iconography of Hollywood war movies made while World War II still raged. Both filmmakers and their audiences had no idea how the war was going to end, Locke notes, a fact that lent the movies an emotional realism post-war films couldn't quite reach. Finally, MAJ Matt Spear reviews the book *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*. As MAJ Spear notes, not only did that geopolitical contest of the late nineteenth century bequeath to the world a tangle of weak nation-states and contested borders, but Western powers are still embroiled there.

You can always find the current and all back issues of *CTX* at www.globalecco.org/journal. You can also "like" Global ECCO on Facebook. Interested in contributing? See the last page of this journal for information on how to submit an article for review. Feedback is always welcome, especially since our goal is to keep you up to date on news and events that affect the CTFP community.

ELIZABETH SKINNER

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Inside This Issue

- Letter from the Editor ELIZABETH SKINNER
- 5** Leadership in Afghanistan: Three Takes
Part One: Little Norway in Big America: Soft Leadership on the Modern Battlefield
ANONYMOUS
- 13** Leadership in Afghanistan: Three Takes
Part Two: The PRT Kunduz: An Unsuccessful Command Structure LTC LARS WERNER, GERMAN ARMY
- 19** Leadership in Afghanistan: Three Takes
Part Three: The Misunderstood Strategic Purpose of SOTF in Afghanistan LTC GABOR SANTA, HUNGARIAN ARMY
- 22** The Indian Mujahideen: The New Face of Jihadist Consolidation
BIBHU PRASAD ROURAY AND SHANTHIE MARIET D'SOUZA, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE
- 36** Interview with Nir Maman PAUL JOHNSTONE
- 44** Drones: A Challenge to the Professional Military Ethic
LCDR ANDREW ELY, U.S. COAST GUARD ACADEMY
- 52** CTAP INTERVIEW
Anonymous, Afghan Army WITH LEO BLANKEN, NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
- 54** ETHICS AND INSIGHTS
Mercy GEORGE LOBER
- 57** THE WRITTEN WORD
The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia
MAJ WESLEY ("MATT") SPEAR, U.S. ARMY
- 60** THE MOVING IMAGE
American Suicide Bomber JOHN LOCKE
- 66** PUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

About the Contributors

Dr. Shanthie Mariet D'Souza is a research fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore. She is presently working on projects relating to transition and prospects for long-term stabilization of Afghanistan; the regional dynamics of the Afghan insurgency; and India's security, aid, and foreign policy. Among her most recent published works is *Afghanistan in Transition: Beyond 2014?* (Pentagon Press, 2012), and she co-edited *Perspectives on South Asian Security* (World Scientific, 2012) and *Saving Afghanistan* (Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 2009).

Lieutenant Commander Andrew Ely teaches Moral and Ethical Philosophy in the Humanities Department of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. He has served in the Coast Guard for over 18 years, most recently as commanding officer of Station New London, Connecticut. LCDR Ely also served as platoon officer and chief of nautical science at Officer Candidate School, as the school chief of the Chief Warrant Officer Professional Development Course, and as the administrative officer for the Leadership Development Center. He has an MA in philosophy from the University of Connecticut and an MA in Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College.

Freelance journalist **Paul Johnstone** has a combined 25 years of experience in protective security intelligence and counterterrorism. A former federal agent with the Australian Federal Police and with service in the Australian Army, Johnstone has been formally recognized for outstanding police investigations pertaining to complex fraud and war crimes. He has lectured and trained law enforcement, security, and military personnel throughout Australia, the People's Republic of China, Afghanistan, and the Pacific Rim and is the founder and principal director of Street-Edge Defensive Tactics and consultancy firm Defensive Measures International.

John Locke received a BA in English from the University of California, Berkeley and has published books and articles on a variety of topics. In 2006, he started Off-Trail Publications (offtrailpublications.com), which has produced over 30 books on the history of popular fiction. The latest Off-Trail book, *The Texas-Siberia Trail*, is a best-of collection of the authentic adventure fiction of Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, the founder of DC Comics, home of Superman and Batman. Locke helps run the Graduate Writing Center at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), and teaches writing to NPS students.

Dr. Bibhu Prasad Routray is a Singapore-based security analyst and consultant, and a visiting fellow at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi. He previously served as a deputy director in India's National Security Council Secretariat. Prior to this, Dr. Routray worked at various think tanks, including as the director of the Institute for Conflict Management in Assam, India. Dr. Routray has conducted extensive fieldwork in India's northeast, and in the states affected by left-wing extremists. His writings have appeared in several international publications, including *Jane's Intelligence Review*, the *Asia Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*.

Lieutenant Colonel Gabor Santa is a member of the 34th Special Forces Battalion, Hungarian Army. In Iraq in 2007, he was the assistant team leader of the Hungarian Military Assistant and Liaison team, NTM-I. Two of his three deployments to Afghanistan were as a member of the Hungarian SOF: in 2008, LTC Santa was a partnering officer in the International Security Assistance Force SOF Headquarters, and in 2012, he served as the Hungarian SOF Special Operations Task Unit liaison officer. He is currently studying at NPS.

Major Wesley "Matt" Spear is a United States Army Civil Affairs officer with extensive leadership and operational planning experience in both field artillery and civil affairs. In addition to three combat deployments to Iraq, MAJ Spear has served as a civil-military support element (CMSE) team leader in Tajikistan and as a theater CMSE commander with U.S. Central Command in multiple countries. He received his BA in sociology with minors in criminology and military science from Western Kentucky University. He is currently a student at NPS.

Lieutenant Colonel Lars Werner is a member of the German Army Special Forces (KSK). He joined the German Army in 1994 and received his commission in 1997. He served as a paratroop platoon leader and successfully passed the selection course for the KSK in 2002, where he has since served in several positions. LTC Werner received his bachelor's degree in business management from Munich University in 2001 and an MA in Special Operations from NPS in 2013.

COVER PHOTO

Timber Wolf (*Canis lupus*) pack, Minnesota—Image by © Jim Brandenburg/Minden Pictures/Corbis

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Little Norway in Big America: Soft Leadership on the Modern Battlefield

He has shown calmness and ability to motivate that is rarely seen in the Norwegian Armed Forces today. He has solved missions and taken care of his men in an exceptionally good way.¹

I WOULD LIKE TO TELL MY STORY, PRIMARILY ABOUT MY DEPLOYMENT TO Afghanistan in 2010 as a team leader for a military observation team (MOT) in Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Meymaneh, and use it to draw some personal leadership lessons. Since I received the citation quoted above, it has inspired me to excel in my studies and practice of military leadership in the Royal Norwegian Navy. In addition, it has impelled me to strive to articulate my leadership philosophy. You must judge for yourself whether my experience, coming from Little Norway, is applicable to the United States and others, or is perhaps too insignificant for the greatest military power in the world.

The importance of the two episodes I describe is that my team overcame two of the most significant incidents in Norwegian military history, in terms of casualties, since World War II. Although my experience may look like a small step for some of you, it was a giant leap for me, and the lessons I took from it, while they might not apply to Big America, certainly apply to Little Norway. Maybe some of these lessons have applicability, even if not directly, and there may be some food for thought in here, regardless of organizational size, legacy, and prevailing attitudes. (To paraphrase Mahatma Gandhi, first they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win. We'll see how it goes.)

I will begin by presenting a claim: that soft leadership is the solution to all of the issues and challenges arising in the complex and uncertain military context of the twenty-first-century battlefield. As to definitions and the scope of my claim, I should be more specific. Defining leadership is not at all straightforward; the research and literature are immense, and leadership is not necessarily the same as command. Nevertheless, the least common ground needs to be established; leadership is too important to be governed by “it depends,” too many “buts,” and the necessity for situational context. I believe that outstanding leadership is reflected primarily among a leader’s followers, and the principle of a cohesive team is significant. “Soft” leadership has proximity with the democratic, charismatic, transformational, and servant leadership styles. Soft emotional intelligence and relation cohesion—in contrast to mechanical military leadership developed by ancient, albeit great, military leaders and based on task cohesion—is on the horizon for future leadership.

Soft leadership is basically a people-oriented approach. People are the most precious resource, and they constitute the social capital of any organization or team. The soft approach in military leadership does not diminish the ability for real command when it comes to combat missions and the need for dedication

Anonymous

Faces have been blurred in this article's photographs to protect privacy.

My team overcame two of the most significant incidents in Norwegian military history, in terms of casualties, since World War II.

The soft approach in military leadership does not diminish the ability for real command when it comes to combat missions and the need for dedication and discipline.



“You got it. It is the most experienced team and it’s all set. Pick your XO, and report back when you want to start pre-deployment training.”

The significant other became insignificant, and the dog got new owners. The Special Forces brochures I’d left on my dining table beckoned me.

and discipline. Leadership is equal parts art and science; if it were all science, we would have undoubtedly won all wars. The art of leadership must be felt, experienced, and created. With that concept in mind, here is my story.

The Call: August 2009

Northern Norway, August 2009. The facial mosquito net was not helping me out. I was highly pissed off about being invaded in my personal space by a swarm of insects while trying to enhance my military mobility skills on the all-terrain vehicle (ATV). Between spitting out and chewing mosquitos, I felt my cell phone vibrate with a call that turned out to be from the executive officer (XO), Coastal Rangers Command.

“Hi, Boss. How are you?” I greeted the caller.

“Hi, I have a job for you.”

“Shoot.”

“We’re deploying MOT teams to Afghanistan. Which one do you want to command?”

“The second team: March to July.”

“You got it. It’s the most experienced team and it’s all set. Pick your XO, and report back when you want to start pre-deployment training.”

“Got it. We’ll observe the Christmas break and meet early January. By March, we’ll be ready to go.”

I was excited and honored by the trust shown to me by a unit outside my chain of command. The mosquitoes did not bother me anymore.

Earlier in my career, I had never dreamed of working in the Special Forces community. Several years before the call came in, my life had been very different: I had 10 years of service in the Navy, I had a significant other, and we had a dog. I assumed this lifestyle was irreconcilable with a life outside the conventional Navy. The significant other, however, became insignificant, and the dog got new owners. The Special Forces brochures I’d left on my dining table beckoned me, and I decided that I would excel in SF training. I told myself then that I was going to get a new job, and after a year of selection and basic training, I had a new job. One and a half years of advanced training paid off, and by late 2005, I was an FNG² headed for Afghanistan, Regional Command South.

In 2008, I deployed again, this time as squadron XO. Now, however, I was also father to a one-year-old son—I followed him to his first day of preschool on the same day I left for Afghanistan. Back in Norway in 2009, my fiancée and I squeezed in a wedding, but by January 2010, I was ready to start pre-deployment training once again, with a new team. I said goodbye to my wife, who was expecting our second child, and our little boy.

I learned a lot from those previous deployments, and I am grateful to be in a community that emphasizes the process of turning lessons identified into lessons learned. I was determined to utilize my lessons. I had one goal: to build the strongest team possible to execute missions on behalf of the Norwegian government and its allies. I had a clear vision of what mattered: I wanted to start with my men and exemplify how a leader can inspire everyone to take action. In a small team, I could not hold myself superior; I wanted to be the leader who could be a follower when possible and a leader when needed. I wanted to be proactive in taking care of my men. I found it suboptimal to solve the missions first and then, only in the aftermath, take care of my men if needed; I found it even more difficult to pull the dusty “caring card” from some bottom drawer only when the shit hit the fan.

Caring for my men was, in my opinion, not solely within the welfare domain: it was one of the criteria for mission success and something that needed my direct attention from day 1. My key to mission success was to “solve” my team by emphasizing the importance of communication, commitment, and trust. I knew the missions were going to be intricate, I knew it would be difficult to measure immediate success, and I knew that independent operations in rural areas could place collective stress on the team. I needed a team that was robust emotionally as well as tactically. I needed my men to be able to utilize their full range of will and skills: my job was to provide them with opportunity. I worked through my men to crystallize the mission and the significance of its purpose; as the facilitator, I put myself in the outer layer of the team circle and the men at the center.

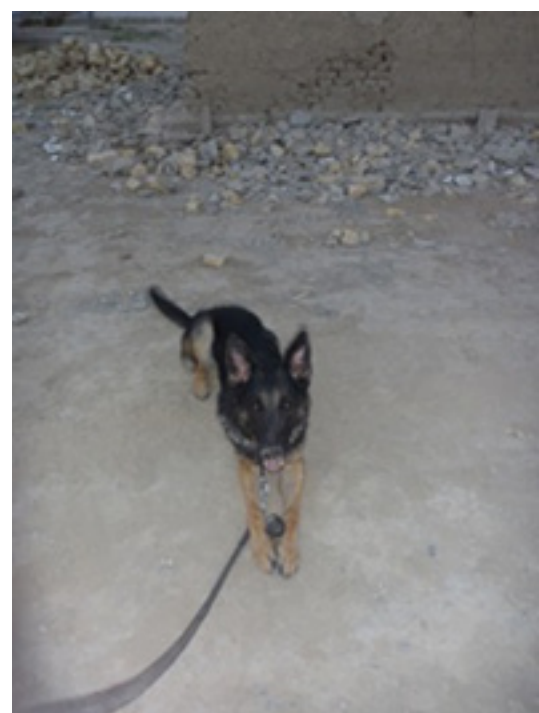
Meymaneh, Faryab Province, Afghanistan

Our deployment in 2010 turned out to be complex and necessitated adaptive leadership. The difficulty of the situation we encountered is hard to depict in words. Some of you may recognize some parts of the following story from your own experiences, but I will try to bring the events to life through detailed descriptions of the background, the context, and what actually happened.

The pre-deployment training went well, and in March 2010, off we went—13 pax and a German shepherd—to Afghanistan, Regional Command North, for our four-month deployment. We were headed for the Norwegian PRT in Meymaneh, Faryab province. As a MOT, our mission was to be the eyes and ears of the PRT commander in the three districts of Ghowrmach, Qeysar, and Almar. We restated our mission and broke it down into four operational pillars: (1) developing sufficient situational awareness (SA), (2) supporting the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), (3) IED-focused liaising, and (4) maintaining a presence in insurgents’ presumed key areas.

Thanks to the previous team and their willingness to stay in the area of operations (AO) for two extra weeks, we had an extensive handover/takeover (HOTO). Operating together and gaining an in-depth SA got us off to a good start. We incrementally built and expanded our freedom of movement/freedom of action. The hibernating insurgents were awakening: the IED threat was increasing, and the targeting of Norwegian forces was undisguised. In April, we were ambushed several times, and IED incidents occurred frequently. We took no casualties, but it was a ruthless period for our Afghan friends, the ANSF. They lost quite a few of their soldiers and officers. Nevertheless,

In a small team, I could not hold myself superior; I wanted to be the leader who could be a follower when possible and a leader when needed.



the mission was successful: we taught the ANSF to respond in a safer manner when it came to IEDs. The district governor liked having us there. He would say, “You are only 15 men, and you do better than 100 Americans do.”

2 May 2010: Ambush

At the end of April, the district governor asked us to provide limited support for a big, local operation that would take place in the early hours of 2 May, in the outskirts of Ghowrmach Bazar, an ancient town in the center of Ghowrmach district. This came at the end of a two-week period we had spent working in the district. We agreed to provide perimeter protection for the couple of hours the governor’s operation lasted, and then we got ready to head out on a three-day mission. The national directorate of security, the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police, and the district governor were all pleased by the outcome of the operation.

The operation had taken place on the outskirts of the bazaar in Ghowrmach, so when it was over, we took a stroll in the bazaar and bought some *naan*, candies, and soda for the long day ahead, and then departed. We totaled 16 Norwegian soldiers and two interpreters, distributed in four light-armored vehicles and four ATVs; we drove southeast through the valley of Tutak, aiming for a layup position in Senjetak Jinab for the following night. Our mission plan was to return to previously visited areas, follow up on some earlier initiatives, and fill in any gaps that had been brought to our attention by the all-source intelligence cell. In the early afternoon, we traveled through a beautiful area—a postcard picture of a luxuriant Afghanistan landscape, filled with contrasts: a challenging dusty arroyo to navigate in, high *wadi* walls, small houses surrounded by dense vegetation, huge dunes, and on the horizon, the majestic mountaintops still covered in snow. A snapshot from a fairy tale.

Suddenly, the fairy tale vanished: beauty was routed by the beast. Fifty to 100 insurgents ambushed us. And they were shooting fish in a barrel.

The attack began around 1400 hours. Due to the relatively unknown terrain ahead (we had only seen satellite pictures) and the fact that we were coming under heavy fire, we decided to turn back and take another approach route toward Senjetak Jinab: the mission was still in play, despite some minor injuries to my soldiers. Until this moment, nothing had caused me to question our moving forward with the mission. Nothing had given me any reason to abort the mission, or to ask for reinforcements beyond armed overwatch.³

1610. Man down. GSW (gunshot wound). Paralyzed. Litter patient.

1615. Man down. 43 RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) shrapnel in his body. Ambulatory. Kept on fighting.

1618. Man down. GSW. Entry lower back, exit thorax. Litter patient.

The mission changed drastically as the attack continued—saving our lives became the only pillar of operation in play. We had known that an ambush was possible, but we had no forewarning of such a massive attack: 26 RPGs, massive close-range small arms fire, three cars on fire, one broken car, nine out of 16 Norwegians wounded, four broken and abandoned ATVs. Air support dropped no ordnance, only gun strafes and a couple of low passes.



Hindsight told us we had been followed and reported, and the insurgents had created a plan to disrupt the Norwegians' operational progress in our own backyard. For 16 hours, we struggled for a happy ending amid heavy enemy fire. Twelve hours after it was over, we returned to camp with over half of our soldiers wounded in action (four were evacuated by helicopter), a shitload of equipment left behind, and a team that was happy to be alive. As far as we knew, anyway, everyone was still alive. Two soldiers, one of them my XO, were strategically evacuated to Norway, their lives hanging by a thin thread. In addition, two more had to be replaced due to injuries irreconcilable with combat exposure. We had survived, albeit barely, the heaviest casualties in a single ambush of Norwegian forces since World War II.

Despite our damage, the enemy was not able to conquer us. The mission had failed, but we had succeeded in saving all of our lives. We started prepping for the way ahead. Returning to our base in Meymaneh, I put my original standing mission on hold; I shut off my cell phone and put my sources on hold for a couple of days as well. The criteria for success needed to be reestablished, and the objective was clear: replace people, get the new ones up to speed, and continue our mission on behalf of Norway and its allies. It was time to reorganize and reestablish the confidence to carry on: we still had two months left of our watch.

I had two avenues of approach to gain motivational momentum again: first, reestablish the criteria of success, and second, improve arrangements within the team and relations between team members. I used relationship-building methods to help the team refocus on the task, all aimed toward the end goal: improved combat performance. Our after-action procedures (AAPs) set the framework for the next 10 days. In conjunction with the PRT Meymaneh commander, I guided and conferred with the International Security Assistance Force Joint Command, the military police, the investigation committee, the organic crisis support element, the chief of Military Hospital Meymaneh, and media officers, and plugged them all seamlessly into our procedures.

Three weeks later, we were back in the theater: four of the wounded men were replaced, our equipment was repaired, and a new mission in a new AO was on our plate. We all carried the stamp of the previous event, but it was a strong and motivated team that was back in business. The new mission was stated, and the objectives in Almar province were as follows: (1) initiate development projects to improve the security situation, (2) strengthen Afghan government influence with the local population, and (3) prepare HOTO for the next team taking over at the end of July.

27 June 2010: IED

My squad commander from previous deployments replaced my injured XO. He was my friend and mentor from my days as an FNG, back in 2005. We were determined to prevail, true to our operational pillars, and set out on a two-day mission in support of the ANSF. The district governor was the face of the operation. We brought along representatives from the Afghan Health Ministry, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S.-Afghan Atmospheric Detachment Team, the U.S. Police Mentoring Team, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as a U.S. engineer. We conducted successful meetings with local power brokers in both Ghalbala and Khwaja



Ghwar. The agenda included facilitating a road construction project and a health clinic, along with providing guidance and advice to the local population concerning agriculture and water. Papers were signed, and land was allocated to future projects. The governor and the rest of us were happy. We shook hands all around and headed back to our base, via the governor's seat in Almar Bazar. Only five miles outside the bazaar, we entered an engineered gravel road that headed into an Uzbek-dominated area. My driver, the IED specialist, was unconcerned, as were the rest of us.



“IED, IED, IED! Back up, back up, back up!”

The last vehicle in the convoy activated a 40-pound pressure-plate IED. All four men in the vehicle were killed instantly. I sent four of my men and the German shepherd to the explosion site. I then located myself 100 yards away to gain SA, lead, and allocate our scarce resources. My immediate priorities were clear: uphold security and evacuate the dead soldiers.



Afterward, just like before, I had to pull out my standard operating procedures/guidance for “measures after critical incidents in the field” and my AAPs from the ready drawer. I still had to plan for the remaining part of the mission: preparing for HOTO. In order to accomplish the mission, I found it crucial to focus on my men and lead them by providing purpose, direction, and motivation, while handling the loss of four fellow soldiers and preparing the next team to take up the challenging baton.

Once again, the mission had failed, and this time, we had failed in saving lives. Our long C-17 journey started: the whole team flew back to Norway with the four coffins, all with respective framed pictures affixed. After four funerals in Norway, we again returned back downrange with the new team to finish our deployment. Once again, the criteria for success needed to be reestablished, and the objective was clear: replace people, get them up to speed, and continue our mission.



One year after these two events, on 2 May 2011, I got a text message from my team members: “...no one could have stopped what happened, but no one else could have made the extent of damage so little, and gotten the rest of us up stronger than before. Thank you for being such a great role model.”

Three Principles for Successful Leadership

Have we learned anything useful to help strengthen our teams for completing missions and taking care of our men? Can these lessons be utilized without being blindly deductive? I believe so. Leadership literature suggests several traits and skills necessary to be a successful leader. Whether your model for leadership is the 21 irrefutable laws of leadership,⁴ the study of leadership as the warrior's art,⁵ the study of masters of irregular warfare,⁶ or accumulated lessons from historical case studies, it needs to be made concrete, applicable, and coherent to and interwoven within the respective units and organizational culture. Here I've categorized my major lessons learned into two ideas: the Circle and the Triangle.



The Norwegian creed for leadership is captured in the saying, “Solve your *mission*, and take care of your *men*.” I believe in changing the order of the nouns

and the emphasis: “Solve your *men*, and take care of the *mission*.” The Circle (see figure 1) illustrates my concept of leadership, which was inspired by Simon Sinek’s Golden Circle.⁷ In the three concentric rings of the circle, I have deliberately placed the three major components of leadership—the men, the mission, and the leader—as I believe they should relate to each other. I can’t agree with the traditional belief that you can have either a relation orientation, which is aimed at gaining low turnover and low grievance rates but also results in low performance, *or* task orientation, which is aimed at gaining high performance but brings high turnover and high grievance rates. I believe it is possible to achieve high performance, low turnover, and low grievance with a proactive emphasis on the men who are being led, a clear understanding of the mission and its vital importance for the legitimacy of the military force, and the leader’s consciousness about his facilitating role.

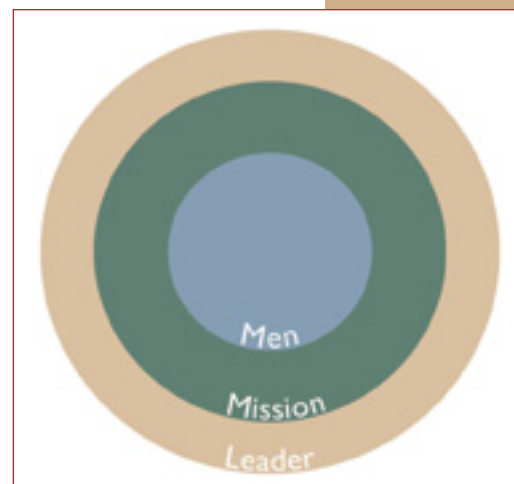


Figure 1: The Circle

“Solving my men” does not mean being nice. I do not shy away from open, healthy conflicts about any issues. Nice leaders are irresponsible and could cause dysfunctional teams. A conflict could be combat mission-related and quickly become a life-and-death situation: the caretaking does not take priority, but the deliberation about my men deserves my full attention. I do not care what you call it. Maybe it is emotional intelligence? Nevertheless, in my experience, relation orientation is a huge factor in increasing combat performance without compromising the mission.

As a leader, I “eat last”—yet another inspiring concept from Simon Sinek.⁸ In his latest book, Sinek concludes: “Great leaders sacrifice their own comfort—even their own survival—for the good of those in their care.” Furthermore, “When it matters most, leaders who are willing to eat last are rewarded with deeply loyal colleagues who will stop at nothing to advance their leader’s vision and their organization’s interests.”⁹

The Norwegian creed for leadership is captured in the saying, “Solve your *mission*, and take care of your *men*.” I believe in changing the order of the nouns and the emphasis: “Solve your *men*, and take care of the *mission*.”

My leadership triangle (see figure 2) identifies three overarching principles: communication, commitment, and trust (CCT). All three of these principles are concerned with relation cohesion and are a prerequisite for task cohesion. I believe that understanding CCT, and deliberately using the CCT principles as building blocks for team building, is crucial to avoiding dysfunctional teams. Communication needs to be open, clear, and focused on the objectives. Commitment to both the group and the mission is tied to loyalty and cohesion. Cohesion is a positive principle. It does not mean obedience or uniformity; it means that team members should impel each other to strive for excellence, but disagreements cannot spill over from cause to person. Commitment flourishes when we know why we are doing what we are doing, and it is strengthened through participation in decision making. Trust is not magically given; trust can only be built. The basis for trust lies in both character and competence.¹⁰ Communication should be the way, commitment should be the means, and trust should be the end. I believe that a consistent focus on CCT creates good interpersonal skills and enhances emotional engagement, outshining simple transactional relationships. It also paints a clear picture of my role and my expectations of the team, and vice versa.

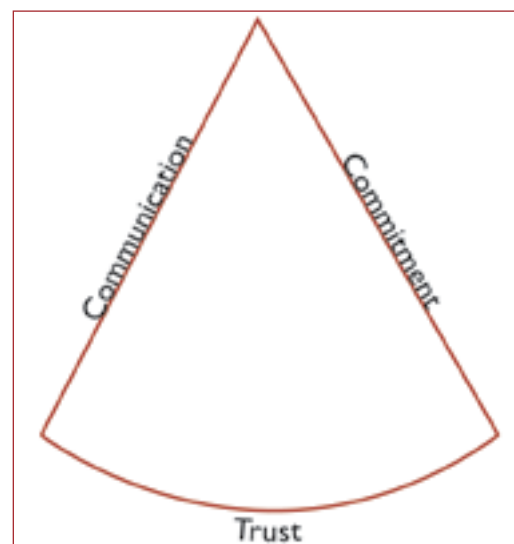


Figure 2: The Triangle

“I will be an *operator* when I can and the *leader* when I must.” This might be the most controversial statement a military leader can make.

Communication should be the way, commitment should be the means, and trust should be the end.

I am pursuing the tenets that make a great team and inspire everyone to take action. I am not a leader simply because I wear an “I am a leader” sign around my neck.

Does following this tenet result in ambiguity regarding the leader’s authority? Is it a description of an inconsistent and insecure leader? No, I do not believe so. As I said previously, I cannot afford to be superior, and I cannot afford to be separated from my team. I do not seek leadership for the sake of the title or position; I am pursuing the tenets that make a great team and inspire everyone to take action. I am not a leader simply because I wear an “I am a leader” sign around my neck.

By being transparent and consistent in my deliberation of the Circle and the Triangle, I believe there will be no contradictions or ambivalence between me and my men. Fundamentally, it is a mission command style: being comfortable with relinquishing control and authority.¹¹ Military leadership is all about action and accomplishing missions. I believe the marginal effect of squeezing that last little extra potential from my team is within the domain of relation orientation in the team. Being an operator when you can and a leader when you must might be a luxury. Taking such a position might be culturally dependent (e.g., nationality, service, history/legacy). Nevertheless, the lessons I have learned continue to work for me as a leader in the Royal Norwegian Navy. I will continue to utilize those experiences and search for new lessons in the future. To once again paraphrase Mahatma Gandhi: Lead as if you were going to die tomorrow. Build leadership as if you would live forever. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, a Defense Analysis (Irregular Warfare) master’s candidate at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, was honored in 2010 with the Norwegian War Medal for outstanding leadership, personal courage, and bravery as a team leader in Faryab province, Afghanistan.

NOTES

- 1 Report from the Commander, Norwegian Provincial Reconstruction Team Meymaneh, July 2010.
- 2 FNG: fucking new guy.
- 3 Air support.
- 4 John Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1998).
- 5 Christopher Kolenda, *Leadership: The Warrior’s Art* (Carlisle, Pa.: Army War College Foundation Press, 2001).
- 6 John Arquilla, *Insurgents, Raiders, and Bandits: How Masters of Irregular Warfare Have Shaped Our World* (Lanham, Md.: Ivan R. Dee, 2011).
- 7 Simon Sinek, *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action* (New York: Penguin Group, 2009).
- 8 Simon Sinek, *Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don’t* (New York: Portfolio Hardcover, 2014).
- 9 Ibid., from the publisher’s promotional material for Sinek’s book.
- 10 Stephen M. R. Covey, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* (New York: Free Press, 2006).
- 11 Eitan Shamir, *Transforming Command: The Pursuit of Mission Command in the U.S., British, and Israeli Armies* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011).

The PRT Kunduz: An Unsuccessful Command Structure

STABILITY OPERATIONS, SUCH AS THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN OF THE INTERNATIONAL Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, differ from offensive or defensive operations in their purpose. According to U.S. Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, the purpose of stability operations is to provide a secure environment, secure land areas, meet the critical needs of the populace, gain support for the host-nation government, and shape the environment for interagency and host-nation success.¹ Stability operations focus on construction rather than destruction. But current armed forces are not well trained to conduct such operations.

I have seen different approaches and experiments in how to achieve a stability operation's purpose. After being in Afghanistan for three years, I believe that unity of command, just as in conventional battle (i.e., offensive or defensive operations), is necessary for the success of any stability mission. This article reflects my personal experience with the mission command of a stability operation in the Kunduz area, ISAF Afghanistan, in 2011.

The Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kunduz

Until October 2013, a provincial reconstruction team (PRT) operated in Kunduz, a province in the north of Afghanistan. The PRT's overall tasks were to improve security, extend the authority of the Afghan government, and facilitate reconstruction. To fulfill these tasks, the PRT consisted of several construction teams and provided a home for several German, U.S., and multinational units to enforce security, stability, and partnering.

The PRT in Kunduz belonged to the ISAF Regional Command North (RC North), a German-led headquarters based in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif, located 100 miles (161 km) west of Kunduz. The commander of the PRT, a German colonel, was the official battlespace commander of the Kunduz area. Despite the fact that all units operated within his battlespace, however, the PRT commander had little command authority over these units. This often led to friction, not only between Afghans and ISAF but also among the different multinational units.

Forces Located in and around the PRT

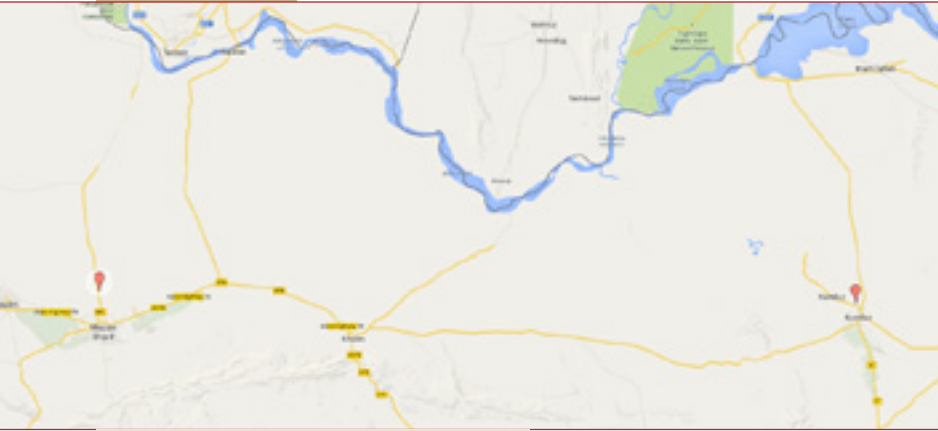
At least 13 different forces from various countries operated in the Kunduz area. First, the PRT had civilian-military teams that were responsible for rebuilding Afghan infrastructure, public authority, education systems, and medical support. The PRT also had its own security company, military police, medical center, maintenance company,

LTC Lars Werner, German Army

Stability operations focus on construction rather than destruction. But current armed forces are not well trained to conduct such operations.

Mazar-e-Sharif lies about 100 miles (161 km) west of the Kunduz PRT.





Many of the various units operating in the Kunduz PRT took their orders only from their seniors located 161 km west in Mazar-e-Sharif.

The TF KDZ leader established his own TOC away from the PRT's headquarters. He received his orders from and reported directly back to the operations center in Mazar-e-Sharif.



German Federal Minister of Defense Thomas de Maizière, center, talks to German service members assigned to the Kunduz Provincial Reconstruction Team in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan.



support and supply company, and on-post staff. The PRT commander was in charge of these troops.

Several forces not under the PRT commander's authority were also placed in, or close to, the PRT camp. One such force was Task Force Kunduz (TF KDZ), a battalion-sized unit tasked to train the Afghan National Army (ANA) and enforce security in the Kunduz area. Led by a lieutenant colonel and consisting of two infantry companies, reconnaissance

teams, and supporters, TF KDZ was constantly in the field to enforce security. The TF KDZ leader established his own tactical operating center (TOC) away from the PRT's headquarters. He received his orders from and reported directly back to the operations center in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Another force was Task Force Mazar-e-Sharif (TF MeS). Structured similarly to TF KDZ, TF MeS was sent to Kunduz because of the highly insecure situation in the Kunduz area. Its TOC remained in Mazar-e-Sharif, and its commander likewise reported directly to the joint operations center RC North.

A reinforced paratroop company of the operational mentoring and liaison team (OMLT) had its place inside the PRT as well. Despite its task to mentor and train an ANA company in Kunduz, the company reported directly to the OMLT senior mentor, a colonel who had his chair in Mazar-e-Sharif. German special operations forces and intelligence maintained their own compounds within the PRT camp, and used their own chain of command. An American infantry battalion had its camp nearby; it had its own TOC and reported to its U.S. higher headquarters, not to the PRT. U.S. SOF had camps close to the PRT, but they reported to their headquarters in Bagram, Afghanistan. Furthermore, the U.S. and German aviation units received their orders from and reported to their aviation operations centers in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Additional multinational police units who mentored and trained Afghan national civil order police had their camps close to the PRT. Multinational military and police units located near and inside the PRT were subordinate to the NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan and/or to Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan. They partnered with ANA and the Afghan National Police in Kunduz.

DYNCORP, a private American corporation, trained Afghan National Police personnel in its compound next to the PRT. Because of its civilian character, DYNCORP did not follow any military orders at all. To round out the picture, many nongovernmental organizations also operated in the Kunduz area.

Common Goals, Fragmented Command

All of the units operating in Kunduz had common objectives: to improve security, extend the authority of the Afghan government, and facilitate reconstruction. That called for unity of effort. Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, defines *unity of effort* as the “coordination and cooperation toward common objectives, even if the participants are not necessarily part of the same command or organization, which is the product of successful unified action.”² *Unified action*, then, is “the synchronization, coordination, and/or integration of the activities of governmental and nongovernmental entities with military operations to achieve unity of effort.”³ Unfortunately, despite their common goals, the many different chains of command in and around the PRT presented a fragmented patchwork of decision makers rather than a clear and unambiguous mission command.

How did this fragmented command structure work? Designated as the battlespace commander, the PRT commander was the first point of contact for high-ranking Afghan officials in Kunduz. He routinely called in all the chiefs of the different units to synchronize courses of actions. But coordination and synchronization of efforts and actions became difficult because the chiefs led their forces in the fields, and their staffs and TOCs were all in separate locations. Initially, for better coordination, different units operated in different, defined areas (called “boxes”) within the Kunduz area. But it turned out that all units focused only on their own “box,” rather than looking at the bigger picture. Commanders did not need to think outside their unit’s responsibilities because they were not subordinate to the PRT commander. It turned out that this kind of fragmented mission command depended highly on commanders’ personalities and whether they were willing to work together. As a result, individual commanders were able to jeopardize a common strategy because of personal incentives. That in turn sometimes caused major setbacks in achieving common goals.

As an example, a specific Afghan village was damaged in several local fire-fights, and the village population turned to ISAF forces for help. TF KDZ promised to help provide reconstruction. The reconstruction teams of the PRT, however, supported another village and thus did not have sufficient resources to back up TF KDZ’s promise. The village that did have the PRT’s reconstruction support was a well-known supporter of insurgency, but the reconstruction teams knew practically nothing of any insurgents inside the village because they received different information from their (PRT) TOC. The PRT’s TOC had no incentives to support TF KDZ because it followed its own priority list and did not share TF KDZ’s counterinsurgency priorities.

Results of an Unsynchronized Command

Based on my personal experience, many of the different units operating in the Kunduz area followed their own purposes. The PRT was not able to synchronize military actions with reconstruction and intelligence. It was not able to focus effort on the work that most needed doing. It seemed that all units concentrated their efforts on something that made sense to them but did not contribute to a common strategy. There was no concept of how to coordinate all of these goals and activities. Eventually, such unsynchronized actions aroused negative attitudes among Afghans toward ISAF. Sometimes

Individual commanders were able to jeopardize a common strategy because of personal incentives. That in turn sometimes caused major setbacks in achieving common goals.

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within only a few days or even hours, all previous efforts to secure, convince, and help the people were wasted due to these kinds of uncoordinated efforts and the negative propaganda spread by insurgents. Over time, there were many setbacks for the PRT in Kunduz.

Unsynchronized command also caused shortcomings in combat support, decreased situational awareness, and, even worse, blue-on-blue contacts. In Kunduz, each of the different multinational forces designated its own quick-reaction force in case of emergency. If such forces were not organically inherent to the unit or already specially designated, further combat support or combat service support had to be requested from other forces. But the ambiguous chain of command caused friction among those requesting and employing such required support. As a consequence, the PRT's TOC often did not know which assets were requested from which of the different forces and how the different available assets were being used. For example, if some forces requested immediate support after being ambushed, they called their own TOC (wherever it was located). That TOC then tried to figure out who could provide help with available assets and who could issue immediate orders. This lack of unity of command often led to time delays that caused fighting troops to remain longer in a dangerous area without quick support.⁴

Even when it came to supporting one's own troops, situational awareness differed among the various forces. For example, in one situation, German helicopters received the order to pick up a wounded soldier. The chain was as follows: The troops called their TOC in Kunduz. The TOC called the personal evacuation coordination center (PECC) in Mazar-e-Sharif. The PECC in Mazar-e-Sharif had to figure out which medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) helicopters were available and then issued orders to the Air-MEDEVAC TOC in Kunduz. The Air-MEDEVAC TOC launched the helicopters more than one hour after the ground troops requested MEDEVAC support. After a further 25 minutes' "notes to move"—the time it took after getting the call to be ready to act—the helicopters overflowed an insurgent hotspot and were hit by small-arms fire. Based on a debrief of the pilots, it turned out that the crew had no clue what was happening on the ground because they received all of their information from their TOC in Mazar-e-Sharif. That TOC had a completely different situational picture than one from the Kunduz area would have had. Sadly, the helicopter was only five flight-minutes away from the wounded soldier, but it took nearly an hour and a half to pick him up—even though the MEDEVAC crew did not have any parallel ongoing missions that day.

A second, much worse example involved a PRT patrol that had the task of speaking with elders of an Afghan village regarding



the progress of reconstruction. Not knowing where ISAF forces were operating, the patrol, with its civilian cars, moved into the box of an American infantry unit without telling them. The patrol was ambushed by insurgents and returned fire, not knowing that they were firing in the direction of a company of TF KDZ that had their position in the vicinity of the ambush site, just outside of the American box. TF KDZ returned fire, not knowing that they aimed toward the PRT patrol instead of the insurgents. It took a long time for the PRT patrol to solve the tricky situation and link up with the Americans because of different chains of command, different information about the situation on the ground, different procedures, and different radio frequencies and unknown call signs. Luckily, nobody was injured in the event.

As a further example, SOF conducted many night raids within the Kunduz area. They did not share their activities and plans with other forces, including the PRT, for security reasons. However, if someone was captured or killed, Afghan officials turned for information to the commander of the PRT, who could not respond immediately because of limited knowledge of the situation.

These kinds of issues did not contribute to unity of effort. In Kunduz, command relationships have tended to rely on commanders' personalities rather than on common objectives. A fragmented mission command produced friction that jeopardized long-term goals. Eventually, Afghans came to mistrust ISAF's ability to stabilize the region, which made it more likely that the Afghan population and their leaders would turn toward the insurgency.

What Can We Learn?

The question is, what can we learn from this? There are two simple lessons from Kunduz regarding leadership that are well-known but still important to reiterate. First, if there is one battlespace, the commander of that area should have command authority over all forces operating in his battlespace. Unity of command, according to Joint Publication 1-02, is the "operation of all forces under a single responsible commander who has the requisite authority to direct and employ those forces in pursuit of a common purpose."⁵ Thus, there should be only one unified mission command that is responsible for coordinating and controlling actions toward common goals. Synchronized efforts contribute to a "leader's responsibility to understand, visualize, describe, lead, and assess."⁶ Such a unified mission command "provides commanders and staff with a philosophy for operating in an uncertain environment as opposed to trying to create certainty and imposing order and control over a situation."⁷ With unity of command, the personal motivations of subordinates become less important than the coordination of authority among different commanders.

A second lesson is providing liaison elements. If time matters during ongoing missions, quick reaction is most important. Often, leaders

of different task forces establish their movable TOCs in the fields, or far away from the PRT's TOC. Only a direct link to all different forces, however, can adequately provide sufficient information and process requests. This is especially true if assembled forces come from different countries or units. Direct links, such as liaison elements, contribute to shared information and to a shared understanding in both directions.

In conclusion, the command structure in Kunduz was a mess. Without a clear and unambiguous chain of command, things went awry. Unity of effort was just barely achieved, and it was only the common threat that forced all of those different units to work together. The remedy for this situation is simple and not really new: create unity of command and establish liaison elements. Sometimes doctrines, often based on bloody lessons, are worth using. In cases of emergency and to achieve common goals devoid of personal motivations, a clear, single-headed chain of command is the way to success. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

LTC Lars Werner serves in the German Army Special Forces.

NOTES

- 1 Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Operations*, Field Manual 3-0 (Washington, D.C.: HQ, Dept. of the Army, February 2008), 3-6.
- 2 Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication 1-02 (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of Defense, 15 October 2013), 286.
- 3 Ibid., 284.
- 4 The PRT itself was mainly responsible for reconstruction rather than for security and combat support in the Kunduz area. The PRT TOC had no authority to launch forces for combat support other than those that directly belonged to the PRT commander, nor did it have access to the best intelligence that would allow it to effectively coordinate forces. Thus, despite being the nominal commander responsible for the battlespace, the PRT commander was not in the chain of command of most combat forces operating in the area and had no authority over them.
- 5 Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Dictionary*, 286.
- 6 Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Operations*, 4-4.
- 7 Ibid.



The Misunderstood Strategic Purpose of SOTF in Afghanistan

I SERVE IN THE 34TH SPECIAL FORCES BATTALION OF THE HUNGARIAN Army. While my battalion is not the most prominent SOF unit in the world, I work in the SOF realm and have operational experience leading SOF nations in the hottest battlefields, including Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2007, I was the assistant team leader of the Hungarian Military Assistant and Liaison Team, NATO Training Mission–Iraq. I have been deployed three times to Afghanistan, two of which were SOF-related deployments. In my first SOF-related deployment in 2008, I was a partnering officer in the International Security Assistance Force Special Operations Forces Headquarters (ISAF SOF HQ). Then, in 2012, I served as a Hungarian Special Operations Forces Special Operations Task Unit liaison officer. One of the greatest advantages of these two deployments was that I could experience the SOF environment from a multilevel perspective.

While working at the ISAF SOF HQ, I developed a clear picture of the strategic purpose of ISAF SOF, not only through a better understanding of the written directives but also through field experience with the units on the ground. I was responsible for the partnering task assigned to four nations; the units associated with the task were spread across Afghanistan’s northern and western provinces. The task clearly stated the strategic intent, which was to support a safe and secure environment by establishing a provincial response company (PRC)—an Afghan quick-reaction, special operations–capable police unit—for each province. The end goal of this process is for these independent PRCs to be capable of operating throughout their assigned area, maintaining their equipment, and sustaining manpower over the long term.

Direct Action vs. Military Assistance: Five Observations

The designated ISAF SOF special operations task forces (SOTFs) are responsible for training and advising the PRCs during the PRCs’ establishment, initial operational development, and full operational capability phases. In my view, these responsibilities are being only partially fulfilled. In 2008, my first impression of the situation was that SOTFs were focusing more on the so-called “sexy” SF mission—that is, direct action—than on providing military assistance to PRCs. SOTFs still viewed PRCs as important, but direct action always took priority. I know this perception had not significantly changed as of 2012. In the following sections, I share five observations that support why I think task forces view military assistance as less important than direct action.

Slow Development of Administrative Tools

In order to properly control, advise, and assist a designated partner unit, it is not enough for SOTFs to teach the unit how to shoot, break into houses, or handcuff and body search. SOTFs should have a proper system for all-around accountability, including manpower data (e.g., complete names, birthdates, family), logistics, and all other necessary databases. In 2008, several SOTFs

LTC Gabor Santa, Hungarian Army

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already had their designated PRC. Yet, by 2012 there were still only a few PRCs, and those units had access to an incomplete database that was scarcely useful. I understand the difficulties of human resource administration in an environment where the public sector is basically absent, and I cannot blame any unit for not possessing those administrative databases. But the fact that only minor changes have occurred since 2008 suggests that minimal effort has been put into developing these administrative tools.

Logistics are based on numbers, and these numbers are—or should be—the same in any language, whether it be Pashto or English or anything else. When we initially provide the PRCs with some equipment, we should keep tracking the numbers and the inventories to be sure that the equipment is used for the intended purpose. Many PRCs have received huge amounts of material support from ISAF and other agencies. The partnering reporting system within the ISAF SOF bureaucracy includes very detailed rosters of what each PRC is supposed to have, but the PRC accounts and these rosters often do not match. I do not know why this is happening, but this inconsistency definitely requires more attention.

PRCs Are Operationally Excluded

ISAF SOF directives determined the “Afghan face” participation percentage—that is, the number of individuals from the PRCs designated to participate in a given mission—for all operations, and according to my knowledge, these directives were never disobeyed. But the process for determining the percentage was still not conducted as expected. I had the chance to look through and listen to many concept-of-operation (CONOP) briefings during the PRC approval process and was impressed by the level of detail of the presentations, which included the names and call signs of all the PRC participants in the presentations’ task organization section. (I am not surprised that the final CONOP was over 40 slides—such a waste of time and energy!) These slides always received approval, but only very rarely did anyone verify how they were implemented in the operation.

All PRCs go through basic and advanced training, and most of the partnered PRCs have finished these courses. After completing both levels of training, a PRC should be able to plan and conduct operations independently. Nevertheless, PRC leaders are not involved in the operation planning process, and even worse, they are notified of an operation only a day or even a few hours prior to the mission. This practice does not support the operational experiment of preparing PRCs to operate independently when ISAF SOF withdraws. To make matters worse, the SOTF camps are not located near the units they partner with, a situation that does nothing to support the training mission. Physical distance makes it even harder to involve the PRCs in operational planning and execution, especially if SOTFs are reluctant to do so in the first place.

Limited Intel Sharing

Operational security is always the largest issue in an uncertain environment. Speaking from personal experience, I have never seen any PRC member involved in the intelligence process on a tactical level. Again, I am aware of how difficult it can be to manage sensitive information while working with indigenous forces, but we also have to consider the fact that without a common intelligence picture and operational capability, the final result will be edentate.



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Inadequate Resources for PRC Basic Training

The basic training for PRC members takes place at the Special Police Training Center in Maidan Wardak province. The main instruction is given by a civilian company, but SOTFs are expected to provide assistant instructors. The number of these assistant instructors depends on how many trainees the SOTFs send from their partnered PRCs. This has always been a serious problem, however, because none of the SOTFs is willing to send its operators to assist with this course, claiming that the operators are overloaded with other tasks. There should not be other tasks while conducting military assistance. The most important thing these task forces should be doing is to provide the PRCs with appropriate training from the beginning, so that when the SOTF's partnered unit returns from the training center, it is well positioned to start advanced training or participate in operations suited to its skills.

None of the SOTFs is willing to send its operators to this course, claiming that the operators are overloaded with other tasks. There should not be other tasks while conducting military assistance.

A Focus on High-Tech Systems

The members of the coalition are using advanced technology to eliminate our opponents. A \$1 million rocket hits a house where the enemy is hidden, soldiers use satellite-based communications systems, operations are drone dependent (CONOPs are not usually approved unless higher command has an eye on the target and is in control of the mission), and armored vehicles can resist a direct hit from rocket-propelled grenades with no significant damage. These are all great assets to protect our operators, but we also have to keep in mind that once we leave our partnered units alone, they will have only AK-47s and light-skinned vehicles. No surprise: our opponents also have these assets. Considering that the last decade of fighting did not bring resounding success to the coalition in the struggle against our opponents, even though we applied tremendous amounts of high-tech equipment, it is advisable to question whether we have trained the PRC in the right tactics, or whether we wanted to prove something else.

Conclusion

These are just a few observations supporting the idea that SOTFs are biased toward direct action. Many of the SOTF units that I met were more excited to kill or capture enemies of much lesser importance, and mark some additional scratches on their weapons, than focus on their PRCs. This is wasted energy, since there are always more enemies to replace the ones who are killed. Unfortunately, for these units, the glory still comes from how many Afghans they have killed, not from how many they have taught to kill. This is where, I think, the strategic purpose of SOF in Afghanistan is misunderstood. There are no perfect solutions. The Afghans, however, are fighters just like us; they fight in their homeland for their country against their kind. We have to build trust through such measures as sharing co-located camps, so we can involve them more deeply in a process that should ultimately become theirs. ❖

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The Indian Mujahideen: The New Face of Jihadist Consolidation

Dr. Bibhu Prasad Routray, security analyst and consultant, Singapore, and Dr. Shanthie Mariet D'Souza, National University of Singapore

According to the note, the Indian Muslim Mohammadi Mujahideen (IMMM) was “committed to eradicate the western culture from India.”

The IMMM was only one of many offshoots of a larger organization, the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), that set about implementing SIMI president Shahid Badr Falahi’s 1992 pledge: “Muslims organise themselves and stand up to defend the community.”

ON 29 FEBRUARY 2000, A ONE-PAGE NOTE, SCRIBBLED ON A PIECE OF paper, arrived at a newspaper office in Hyderabad, in India’s southern state of Andhra Pradesh. The “Indian Muslim Mohammadi Mujahideen (IMMM) has been formed,” it announced. According to the note, the organization was “committed to eradicate the western culture from India” and, as a first part of this campaign, had bombed cinemas that ran pornographic films.¹

The note ended law enforcement agencies’ search for the perpetrators of a number of incidents that had taken place a month earlier. These included a bomb blast at a sweets shop owned by a sympathizer of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a Hindu right-wing organization with a pan-Indian presence; two unexploded devices recovered from a movie theater and a location near the high-security Defence Research and Development Organisation laboratory; and explosions at two movie theaters, one in Andhra Pradesh and the other in the neighboring state of Maharashtra. All of the recovered and exploded bombs had been devised from the same substances: potassium nitrate, potassium permanganate, aluminum powder, and sugar.

Less than two months after the note’s appearance, the IMMM’s chief, Azam Ghauri—who was also a top leader of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)—was killed in an encounter with police, and the threat from the IMMM was thought to be over.² The IMMM, however, was only one of many offshoots of a larger organization, the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI),³ that set about implementing SIMI president Shahid Badr Falahi’s 1992 pledge: “Muslims organise themselves and stand up to defend the community.”⁴ Security agencies were able to swiftly neutralize organizations like the IMMM and the Mujahideen Islam e-Hind (MIH), another SIMI offshoot, mostly because the groups sought instant publicity for their actions, which exposed them to the security establishment. Law enforcement agencies’ experience with the Indian Mujahideen (IM) has proved to be different, however.

In the following three sections, we analyze the unique operational dynamics of the IM, which, we argue, are responsible for its cohesion as well as its success as a terrorist organization. On the basis of some recent findings, we examine the IM’s cadre recruitment, explosives manufacturing, external and internal linkages, attack patterns, and attempts to transform itself from a guardian of wronged Muslims in India to an avenger of ill-treated Muslims worldwide. We argue that the IM’s future and its success in carrying out attacks are critically linked to India’s internal efforts to target the IM’s unique strengths and neutralize the support that the IM receives from external sources.

The IM’s Developing Ideology: Three Distinct Phases

On 17 July 2013, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the organization that New Delhi set up after the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks as the primary

agency to investigate all terrorist incidents in India, stated in its charge sheet that the IM “was formed in 2003 after ultra-radicalised Muslim youth segregated from the Students Islamic Movement of India.”⁵ Similar to the IMMM and the MIH, the IM has its roots in the avowed need to radicalize the SIMI’s plan of action even further. In 2001 and 2002, a rebellion of sorts was brewing within the SIMI. A faction broke away from the less-radical parent organization and sought new cadres who were already sufficiently radicalized; their extremism was further boosted by contact with external militants such as the LeT. This new faction became the IM. The IM, in a way, was also a result of the LeT’s “Karachi Project,” which had sought to raise a new network of jihadists.⁶ In its 17 July 2013 charge sheet, the NIA added that the IM cadres “do not believe in India’s Constitution and IM’s members nurse communal hatred against the Hindu community.”⁷

Since the IM had been formed on an agenda of waging a violent war against Hindu India, no spell of moderate militancy separated the IM’s birth from its first act of violence. Within a relatively short time period, however, the IM underwent three distinct phases of ideological expansion: traversing from a narrow India-centric ideology to revenge-seeking and eventually embracing the concerns of Muslims in other countries. This is not to suggest that the IM abandoned or progressed beyond any of the causes that it initially championed. Rather, it acquired new additional causes to fight for. In effect, the IM’s successes in the Indian theater and its constant ideological oscillation demonstrated the IM’s widening profile and proclivity for becoming an integral part of the global jihad. Such a broadening of ideology was important, for it fit in well with the amplification of jihadist terrorism in South Asia, especially boosted by the prospects of instability in post-2014 Afghanistan.

Guardian of Wronged Muslims in India

According to an estimate by an intelligence agency,

By 2005, the IM had firmly established a complete terror outfit, with different sections in charge of providing manpower and sourcing explosives and bomb components. A specialist computer-services cell was already in place. Different leaders were already travelling countrywide, liaising between cells.⁸

The IM’s war on Hindu India began in 2005 with a string of urban attacks, which included serial explosions in the national capital, Delhi—two bombs exploded at busy marketplaces and a third exploded inside a Delhi Transport Corporation bus, killing 62 people.⁹ There was some question about who had carried out the attacks. The LeT was initially suspected. A Delhi Police special cell team also claimed to have killed the mastermind of the blasts in an operation in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir in 2007.

In 2006, the IM carried out serial bombings in the Hindu pilgrimage town of Varanasi, in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Three explosions, one in a crowded temple and two in a railway station, killed 21 people and injured 62 others.¹⁰ In 2013, an arrested IM cadre who had participated in the 2006 bombings told his interrogators that the timers and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) used in the Varanasi blasts were similar to the ones used in the 2005 Delhi blasts.¹¹ Since the formation of the IM had remained unannounced, these attacks



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Workers clear debris from a Mumbai railway station platform damaged by a bomb explosion as commuters waiting for their train watch.

were thought to have been perpetrated by Pakistan-based outfits, like the LeT, and the Bangladesh-based Harkat-ul Jihad-al-Islami. The fact that the LeT was still perpetrating large-scale attacks, like the July 2006 explosions that targeted the train systems in Mumbai and killed 200 people, made the task of looking for another perpetrator seem unnecessary.¹² Indian security personnel felt comfortable in the assumption that because the LeT was still active within India, the LeT must be behind the Varanasi attacks.

Emphasizing the miserable condition of the Muslims in the country, the manifesto concluded, “If you want to be a successful person in India, then you should be an idol worshipper and kill Muslims.”

The IM’s first-ever ideological affirmation came in the form of its first manifesto, which the group released in 2007 after it had bombed court complexes in Lucknow, Varanasi, and Faizabad. The manifesto claimed that the blasts were intended to “punish local lawyers” who had physically attacked some suspects who were being held for an abortive kidnap plot against politician Rahul Gandhi by the terrorist group Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM). The manifesto, however, spoke broadly of “wounds given by the idol worshippers to the Indian Muslims”¹³ and the demolition of the Babri Masjid, a disputed mosque in the state of Uttar Pradesh that Hindu radicals had demolished in 1992 following violent countrywide communal riots. Emphasizing the miserable condition of the Muslims in the country, the manifesto concluded, “If you want to be a successful person in India, then you should be an idol worshipper and kill Muslims.”¹⁴

The attack in 2010 served as a reminder to Hindus that the IM had “resolved that none of your mandirs [temples] will remain safe until and unless all our occupied Masjids [mosques] throughout India are returned back to the Muslims.”

The IM released two other manifestos in 2008 and 2010, following more bombings in Delhi and Varanasi, respectively. Both documents pointed at the role of “the Supreme Court, the high courts, the lower courts and all the commissions” for failing the Muslims in India. The 2008 manifesto, running nearly 14 pages and titled *The Rise of Jihad*, indicated that the bombings were carried out to avenge the 2002 anti-Muslim violence in Gujarat. “In the light of the injustice and wrongs on the Muslims of Gujarat, we advance our jihad and call all our brethren under it to unite and answer these irresolute *kafreen* [infidels] of India,” it said.¹⁵ The 2010 manifesto, titled *Let’s Feel the Pain Together*, said that the attack in 2010 served as a reminder to Hindus that the IM had “resolved that none of your mandirs [temples] will remain safe until and unless all our occupied Masjids [mosques] throughout India are returned back to the Muslims.”¹⁶

When the IM targeted the Indian judiciary in explosions outside the Delhi high court in 2011, its attacks had already spanned the entire country and were being carried out in almost all of the major urban centers, including New Delhi and the country’s financial capital, Mumbai. Attacks in Ahmedabad and Pune in the west, Hyderabad and Bangalore in the south, Patna and Bodh Gaya in the east, and Delhi in the north made the IM look like a pan-Indian outfit capable of taking its activities to almost any corner of the country. Among these attacks was a 2010 incident in which two bikers fired on tourists

gathered at the gate of the Jama Masjid in the Old Delhi area. The drive-by shooting, the only attack of this nature carried out by the IM so far, was to be followed by an explosion, but the explosive, which was fitted into a car parked in the area, did not go off due to faulty circuitry. This attack was carried out on 19 September 2010, days before the opening of the Commonwealth Games in the national capital. Two Taiwanese nationals sustained bullet wounds.¹⁷

By the time of the Jama Masjid attack in 2010, the IM had stopped mailing its usual manifestos claiming responsibility for its attacks, so investigative agencies had to rely on interrogations of arrested IM cadres to unravel the intentions behind the explosions. The IM had also diversified its target selection, demonstrating that it was indeed willing to go after almost any target, with the sole intention of maximizing fatalities. Revenge against Hindus and the institutions facilitating the dominance of Hinduism over the Muslims remained the proclaimed *raison d'être* of the IM—at least for awhile.

Avenging the Deaths of Its Cadres

Over a period of time, the IM began perpetrating terror attacks even to avenge the deaths of its cadres, representing a drastic climbdown from its larger goal of fighting on behalf of the Muslim community. According to interrogation reports, the explosions in Pune, Maharashtra, on 1 August 2012 were intended to avenge the killing of imprisoned IM cadre Qateel Siddique by his cell mates in a Pune prison a couple of months earlier.¹⁸ The attack included five coordinated low-intensity explosions on a busy road in the heart of Pune, injuring one person. Another live IED was later recovered from the area.

Guardian of Wronged Muslims Worldwide

Within a year of the Pune attack, the IM had expanded its worldview, aiming to take up the causes of persecuted Muslims outside of India. Blasts that targeted the Buddhist shrine in Bodh Gaya, Bihar, in July 2013 were said to have been in response to violence against the Rohingyas, a Muslim population in Myanmar, by members of the ethnic Buddhist majority. Arrested IM cadre Umair Siddiqui told his interrogators that he had been approached by another IM cadre, Haider Ali, about the Rohingyas' situation, and both had finalized the plan to carry out the attack at the Buddhist shrine.¹⁹ Earlier, arrested LeT cadre Abdul Karim Tunda revealed that the LeT had also been part of the Bodh Gaya attack; during his interrogation, Tunda detailed the LeT's plan,²⁰ in collaboration with the IM, to recruit Rohingyas and carry out the attack.

On 27 October 2013, explosions in Patna, Bihar, were reportedly carried out to protest communal riots in Muzaffarnagar, in the neighboring state of Uttar Pradesh.²¹ The recovery of a large amount of explosives at Ranchi, Jharkhand, on 4 November 2013²² demonstrated the IM's plan to maintain the momentum in its violent campaign. Similarly, the recovery of documents from an IM safe house in Ranchi, including handwritten notes from IM members detailing future action plans, pointed to the possibility that the IM would carry

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Delhi Police officials inspect the site of Sarojini Nagar Market bomb blast in New Delhi on 29 October 2005. Thirty-nine people were killed.

out future attacks on Buddhist shrines, foreign tourists, and public installations in the state of Chhattisgarh.²³

The IM's wide array of unconnected objectives underscores the fact that, instead of remaining a purely ideology-based organization with both local and global aspirations, the IM could be willing to carry out attacks for almost any cause that suits its convenience. Believed to be controlled by external forces (including the JeM, the LeT, and the Pakistani external

intelligence agency known as Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI]), and to nurture the aspiration of making common cause with al Qaeda,²⁴ IM leaders could be looking well beyond the traditional outfit that was triggering explosions only on behalf of wronged Indian Muslims. Although the IM is largely defined as an indigenous or homegrown terror organization within India, its leadership does not appear to be averse to eventually transforming the outfit into a pan-Islamist terrorist operation.

A Formula for Success: Three Operational Patterns of the IM

In this section, we show that, apart from its emergence as an alleged protector of Muslims' interests, the IM's success as a terrorist formation is based on three distinct operational patterns: its external support base and linkages, its unique and secretive recruitment drives, and its manufacture of explosives.

External Support Base and Linkages

As explained earlier, the IM is by no means the first-ever homegrown Islamist outfit to wage a war within India. It has several predecessors—the SIMI, the IMMM, the MIH, and the Al Ummah, an organization born in the early 1990s with the intent to radicalize Muslim youth in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. However, the way that the IM carries on with its shadowy bombing campaign, over a large swath of the country's territory, makes it a completely different, and far superior, entity than its predecessors in its organizational capacities and its ability to withstand the kinetic measures of the state.

Indian officials' assessments have routinely pointed at the IM's connections with Pakistan, contending that without the continuing assistance that IM leaders receive from India's western neighbor, the outfit's potency would have been far more limited. Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde's description of the IM says that it draws "motivation and sustenance from inimical forces operating from across the Western border."²⁵ India claims that two of the IM's founders, brothers Riyaz Bhatkal and Iqbal Bhatkal, are based in Pakistan under the protection of state agencies including the ISI. Indeed, both Bhatkal brothers, along with top IM leaders such as Abdul Subhan Qureshi and Sadiq Israr Sheikh, have undergone training in the LeT camps in Pakistan.²⁶ Their

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names are regularly included in the list of persons, both Indian and Pakistani nationals, whom India wants Islamabad to deport from Pakistani territory. Interrogations of arrested IM cadres have revealed that several persons within Pakistan have extensive connections with the IM outfit. The Indian home minister has claimed that a number of IM cadres “were sent to Pakistan for training in weapon and explosives” and investigations “will throw valuable light on the role played by elements based in Pakistan in fomenting acts of terrorism in India.”²⁷

Pakistani nationals have taken a direct part in a few of the IM’s operations in India. Among the six IM cadres arrested in the 2010 Jama Masjid attack in Delhi was a Pakistani operative.²⁸ Zia-ur-Rehman (alias Mohammad Waqas), who served as the principal explosive assembler for the IM and was arrested in the Indian state of Rajasthan on 21 March 2014, also is from Pakistan. Inversely, the IM’s Pakistani connection is a natural corollary of the fact that its leaders are based in Pakistan and their actions are believed to be directed by the state and by allied non-state agencies like the LeT. According to a report, the LeT and the ISI could have influenced individuals and modules within the IM, even to the point of promoting specific attacks.²⁹ However, whether such nexus, safe haven, and ad hoc support translates into “strict command and control over the entire IM network, which is significantly decentralised,” as the report claims, remains a matter of debate.³⁰

Contrary to the definitive official assertions linking the IM to its Pakistani sponsors, some recent accounts have pointed to a significant level of autonomy and self-sufficiency in the IM ranks and to the outfit’s ability to carry out attacks without any external help. Stephen Tankel’s extensive 2014 report on the IM suggested that this jihadist movement constitutes “an internal security issue with an external dimension.”³¹ Indian media reports have also underlined that the IM “works on its own and recent attacks have shown that they have carried out blasts with no support from Pakistan.”³² Theories about the functional independence and self-sufficiency of the IM explain, to an extent, the IM’s unique operational dynamics and success.

At the same time, however, none of the reports and theories points to a severing of ties between the IM and its Pakistani mentors. On the contrary, the IM’s achievement of a level of self-sufficiency indicates the fruition of the LeT/ISI strategy to portray the IM as a wholly homegrown terror formation—a key ingredient of Pakistan’s clandestine destabilization project, known to Indian officials as the Karachi Project. In the words of an unnamed intelligence official, “While it would not be right to say that there is no Pakistan patronage any more, the fact is that Inter Services Intelligence, the Pakistani spy agency, and the Lashkar-e-Tayiba have ensured that the IM becomes self-sufficient.”³³ IM cofounder and senior leader Syed Mohammed Ahmed Zarar Sidibapa (alias Yasin Bhatkal, hailing from the same village as the two Bhatkal brothers), following his arrest on 29 August 2013, revealed that the IM wished to become a part of the global jihad. The realization of such an arguably pretentious and grandiose dream can only be facilitated by the LeT.

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Wreckage from a car bomb that exploded in Bombay lies near Gateway of India. The bombings killed at least 25 people and injured at least 150, 40 of them critically.

Cadre Recruitment, Modules, and Linkages

Key to the functional efficiency of the IM is its somewhat unique, personalized recruitment campaign targeting small, Muslim-majority towns and villages in different parts of India. Available data suggest that select senior leaders of the IM were assigned to be at the center of highly personalized and closely guarded micro recruitment drives that targeted technically savvy and educated youth, who were to function as attack planners,

and petty criminals and the less educated, who would function as the more dispensable logistics providers and explosive planters. Available listings of IM cadres include men as young as 18 years of age and middle-aged men past 50 years.

IM modules comprising both tech-savvy and illiterate individuals sprang up in many of the medium-size and smaller cities of India. Each module is based on a formula: keep the cadre profile small and maintain a mixture of new and energetic as well as experienced individuals. The modules' cadres come from rural as well as urban areas, such as Azamgarh in the state of Uttar Pradesh, which is known to have contributed a large number of jihadists to the Indian theaters of conflict, and Seethio, a nondescript village in Jharkhand state that is far away from the radar of the Indian intelligence agencies. The IM had set up a module in Ranchi, Jharkhand, code-named *Machhli-5* (Fish-5), to assassinate Narendra Modi, the prime ministerial candidate of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).³⁴ According to intelligence sources, a module had also been planned in Nepal.³⁵

Each IM module replicates the model popularized by al Qaeda: it is functionally independent, although finances are centrally disbursed by the IM's top leadership.

Each IM module replicates the model popularized by al Qaeda: it is functionally independent, although finances are centrally disbursed by the IM's top leadership. Such functional independence maintains a regime of insularity between the modules, protecting the other modules and the IM in the event that a particular module is compromised.

The IM's seemingly uncomplicated organizational model, however, achieved some degree of complexity with reports of a three-way split within the IM in late 2008. On 14 May 2008, a day after the IM executed serial explosions in the city of Jaipur, killing 80 people and injuring 216 others, an e-mail sent to the media claimed that the IM now had three wings: "the Shahbuddin Ghouri group to attack southern India, the Mahmood Ghaznavi group operating in north India, and the Shaheed Al Zarqawi group that executed suicide attacks."³⁶ The IM's identification of the three groups, which were named after historical Muslim invaders and al Qaeda leaders, was mostly a propaganda exercise. Later in 2008, however, the IM is known to have split into three factions in actuality.

Following the Batla House encounter in New Delhi in September 2008, in which two IM cadres were killed and two others arrested, IM founding members Riyaz Bhatkal and Iqbal Bhatkal, based in Pakistan, are believed to have tried to gain complete control over the IM's operations. This initiative, which was accompanied by allegations of improper spending of funds by Iqbal, created a rift between the Bhatkal brothers and senior member Amir Reza Khan. Khan decided to operate separately with his own set of people and formed the second IM faction. The third faction of the IM is headed by Mirza Shadaab Beg and Mohammad Sajid, both hailing from Azamgarh.³⁷ Beg and Sajid are part of the first IM module that executed blasts from 2006 onward at various places, including in Uttar Pradesh, Jaipur, Mumbai, and Delhi. Beg is also accused of having participated in the 2007 blasts in Gorakhpur and Varanasi. Despite the divisions among the IM factions, available evidence suggests that the factions' top leaders maintain their independence while remaining in constant communication with one another, seeking advice and assistance.³⁸

Although the SIMI effectively disbanded itself in 2001, following its official proscription in India and subsequent governmental actions targeting SIMI cadres and facilities, it continued to provide significant support to the IM cadres. According to an estimate, by 2000, roughly three years before the IM's creation, the SIMI had some 400 *ansars* (full-time workers) and 20,000 *ikhwans* (sympathizers) in addition to a cell for young children aged seven to 11, called the Shahin Force.³⁹ This significant mass of people comprised lower-middle- and middle-class families who were energized by the message of Islam's preeminence over the decadent and immoral West and a polytheistic Hinduism. It would be correct to assume that by the time the IM achieved some influence in 2005, most of the SIMI cadres who had not become foot soldiers of the IM became its *ikhwans*. The SIMI cadres continue to provide shelter and gathering space for IM cadres who are attempting to evade security forces following an operation. Among the many examples of this collaboration between the two groups is an episode in which four IM operatives involved in the Patna explosions in October 2013 were hidden in Chhattisgarh for a fortnight by a group of erstwhile SIMI activists.⁴⁰ According to intelligence sources, certain IM cadres are responsible for maintaining a steady linkage with the SIMI. These include Hyder Ali, who is wanted in connection with the Patna explosions,⁴¹ and Abu Faisal, who is suspected of devising a plot to kill three judges because they handed down an allegedly pro-Hindu judgment in the Babri Masjid bombing.⁴²

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Tools of Terror

Aside from the lone drive-by shooting incident at Jama Masjid in Delhi in 2010, the IM's modus operandi has involved planting explosives in crowded places and is geared toward two objectives: maintaining the bomb planter's anonymity and maximizing casualties. Within this tightly defined mode of operation, the IM has benefited from its highly diversified, flexible, and cost-effective explosives manufacturing process.

The IM's mode of manufacturing explosives involves a central bomb-making expert, believed to be Mohammad Waqas, the IM Pakistani national.

To begin with, the IM's mode of manufacturing explosives involves a central bomb-making expert, believed to be Mohammad Waqas, the IM Pakistani national. Waqas was described as suffering from a facial paralysis that necessitated frequent visits to doctors within India, a story that allowed Waqas, over time, to pass on his techniques to a select band of Indian IM recruits during his stays in the country. This group included Yasin Bhatkal, one of the IM's founding members. To carry out explosions on an array of targets while maximizing fatalities, the IM requires a large number of IED assemblers to fulfill the needs of its different modules. After his explosives training with Waqas, Bhatkal in turn went on to train other IM cadres in the techniques.⁴³

The strategy of having an array of explosives assemblers, however, backfired to some extent. Starting in 2010, three of the IM's bombing campaigns—at the Jama Masjid, Pune, and Bodh Gaya—were largely unsuccessful. Many of the planted explosives either could not be detonated or were ineffective in their impact. Forensic experts who examined the unexploded bombs identified problems in the circuitry of the devices, among other issues. It is probable that the learning process for IED assembly in these cases was somewhat incomplete.

On many occasions, senior leaders like Yasin Bhatkal also doubled as planters of explosives,⁴⁴ indicating that the IM is indeed non-hierarchical and fully geared toward achieving its objectives. This further upholds the organization's operational principle of keeping its module strength small and maximizing the output of every member.

The IM had planned to develop sticky IEDs and use them on freight trains that carried petroleum products, in an attempt to turn the entire train into a mega bomb.

The IM has also experimented with establishing central manufacturing units for explosives. Indian officials raided at least four such facilities: one on the fringes of the Bhadra forests near Chikmagalur, Karnataka, in 2008; another in the Meer Vihar area of Nangloi on the outskirts of New Delhi in 2011; and two more in 2013, in the southern coastal city of Mangalore, Karnataka, and in Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh. As many as 90 ready-to-use IEDs were recovered from the raided facilities in Mangalore and Hyderabad.⁴⁵ Also recovered from the Mangalore facilities were 50 magnets. Interrogation of Yasin Bhatkal revealed that the IM had planned⁴⁶ to develop sticky IEDs and use them on freight trains that carried petroleum products, in an attempt to turn the entire train into a mega bomb.

The IM has manufactured its explosives predominantly using locally available chemicals. As a result, its IEDs contain less research department explosive (known as RDX), which has to be imported from foreign countries and is thus both harder to procure and more easily traceable than local products. Ammonium nitrate, which continues to be available in the Indian markets even after a 2011 sale ban by the government,⁴⁷ has remained a primary component in the IM's explosives throughout the group's bomb-making career.⁴⁸ On some

occasions, nitro-gelatin sourced from private suppliers⁴⁹ has also been used in IM explosives. Police sources reveal that the IM may be using stolen industrial explosives as well for manufacturing its IEDs.⁵⁰ While the explosive content of the IM's IEDs has remained more or less the same, the IM has attempted to bring sophistication to the manufacturing process by experimenting with a variety of timers.

Some Shortcomings of Indian Law Enforcement Agencies

Unlike the conflict-affected regions in India's northeast, the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir, and the states affected by left-wing extremism, where New Delhi uses a mix of force and development-centric approaches for conflict resolution, there isn't an official Indian policy toward violence perpetrated by the Islamists. Some of the key elements of the investigative agencies' anti-IM policy include pursuing IM cadres who are involved in particular attacks and targeting their networks, financial channels, and explosives manufacturing. Strengthening intelligence, hardening targets, and recruiting security-force personnel have also been key strategies to neutralize the IM game plan. This largely reactive approach has appeared successful in the event of a terrorist arrest, seizure of explosives, or raid of a module, but looks far less successful when the IM has managed to carry out its bombings.

Apart from India's inability to pursue the IM leadership based in Pakistan and the largely unresponsive attitude of Islamabad toward antiterrorism, Indian law enforcement agencies' overall policy suffers from three interlinked primary shortcomings: limited knowledge of the IM, increasing sectarian polarization in Indian politics with regard to the IM, and the Indian culture's apathy toward in-depth research on counterterrorism.

Limited Knowledge of the IM

Although hundreds of IM and SIMI cadres have been arrested since 2008 in connection with the bombings, including many who provided logistical assistance to the bombers and IM leaders, there is little indication that the agencies have developed any significant understanding of the IM's modus operandi, recruitment patterns, and funding. Only part of the problem has been addressed since the NIA came into existence in 2009 and was assigned to investigate the IM attacks. The NIA has struggled to gain adequate cooperation from the state police departments, and has been handicapped by botched investigations conducted by state counterterror units into a number of IM attacks prior to the NIA's formation. The unique and highly diversified operational tactics of the IM have created additional roadblocks for the NIA, even as NIA agents pursue leads generated from arrests of individual cadres.

The 29 August 2013 arrest of IM cofounder/leader Yasin Bhatkal has been the biggest achievement so far for the NIA vis-à-vis the IM.⁵¹ According to a statement issued by India's home minister, Bhatkal was arrested along with his associate Asadullah Akhtar (alias Tabrez) while "planning to meet in East Champaran area (near Raxaul), Bihar to plan/execute some terrorist acts."⁵² Other media reports, however, indicated that both of these terrorists were arrested in Nepal and deported to India. The Nepalese government has denied that the arrests occurred on its soil, while at the same time asserting that no anti-India activity would be allowed in Nepal.⁵³ The confusion around the

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The NIA has struggled to gain adequate cooperation from the state police departments, and has been handicapped by botched investigations conducted by state counterterror units.

exact location of the arrest notwithstanding, Bhatkal's arrest provided the intelligence agencies with some new inputs regarding the operational dynamics of the IM organization. The NIA nevertheless has struggled to transform those inputs into tactical advantages against the outfit. It is not clear whether the huge workload of the NIA, which is in charge of a large number of terror incidents in addition to the IM's activities, is taking a toll on the agency's capacities.

Increasing Polarization with Regard to the IM

The IM's activities have increased the polarization of Indian politics along sectarian lines, with Muslim groups doubting the existence of the IM and Hindu groups calling for strict action against it. This political polarization has, to an extent, forced the security agencies to scale down the intensity of their investigations into the IM's activities.

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The Urdu-language newspapers of India, some prominent Muslim organizations, and even some Indian national ministers continue to insist that there is no such thing as the IM. For example, an article in the October 2012 *Milli Gazette*, a Muslim magazine, said that the IM "is a fictitious organisation most possibly created by the Indian Intelligence Bureau to justify the repression and terrorisation of the Indian Muslim community in the name of fighting terror."⁵⁴ In October 2013, a number of Urdu newspapers and periodicals rejected reported linkages between the Muzaffarnagar riots and the explosions in Patna. Dismissing the conclusion that the IM could have been responsible for the explosion, one of these publications noted, "Political link of these blasts cannot be ruled out. In the past too, several blasts which were thought to have been perpetrated by Indian Mujahideen mercenaries were actually the handiwork of Hindutva terror groups. This fact must be kept in mind while investigating Patna blasts."⁵⁵

In July 2013, the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH), an Islamic organization in India, sent a letter to the general secretary of the ruling Congress Party insisting that Muslims of the country, particularly its educated class, feel that no organization by the name of "Indian Mujahideen" exists in the country."⁵⁶ In the same month, K. Rahman Khan, the union minister for minority affairs, went on record to say that he's skeptical that the IM exists because "nobody knows what it is, where it was formed, and who runs it." "The Muslim community," he continued, "is not buying its existence."⁵⁷ The political implications of such statements could have had a significant impact on the official policy of the Indian government.

Indian Culture's Apathy toward Counterterrorism Research

Although the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs and the intelligence agencies are largely insular institutions and fairly impervious to interventions from outside the country, the efforts they have made to delve deeper into the IM's operations have been thwarted by a general cultural disinterest in strategic research. Research institutions and think tanks in India have often shied away from research on terrorism. In the absence of primary, field-based research—a dearth reflected by the fact that one lone book on the IM has been published so far—the ill-informed news media have dominated reporting on security issues. Known mostly to publish what the intelligence agencies feed them on

In the absence of primary, field-based research—a dearth reflected by the fact that one lone book on the IM has been published so far—the ill-informed news media have dominated reporting on security issues.

a regular basis, the Indian media's pervasive lack of knowledge on the IM has been illustrated by news headlines that speculate on the future of the IM's activities. Attributed to police sources, these headlines have ranged from the grand to the benign and include plans to detonate a "small nuclear bomb,"⁵⁸ hijack an aircraft,⁵⁹ abduct politicians,⁶⁰ and hire sharpshooters to kill BJP leader Narendra Modi.⁶¹ Some outlets have even published grandiloquent articles speculating that the IM might carry out a "9/11 type of attack."⁶²

The Prognosis

The threat from the IM could easily transform into a much larger menace if this terrorist juggernaut remains unaddressed both inside India and in countries like Pakistan, where key IM leaders are based. While arrests of IM cadres within India may provide temporary setbacks for the IM's plan of action, its expanded presence in multiple Indian states makes it elimination-proof. Terrorist groups like the LeT are willing to play a supporting role to the IM, as long as the latter continues to inflame the Muslim-Hindu divide in India and batter the country with its hate and bombing campaigns. The year 2014 and beyond could prove to be important for the IM's future, especially if instability in Afghanistan continues to fuel the capacities of Pakistan-based terrorist groups as well as the IM.

The IM will maintain its status as the lead jihadist outfit in India in the time to come, unless India can focus on strengthening its current weak points: the NIA's knowledge gap regarding the operational dynamics of the IM, political polarization regarding the IM, and a lack of in-depth research on the evolving threat of Islamist groups. ❖

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NOTES

- 1 Praveen Swami, "The 'Liberation' of Hyderabad," *Frontline* 17, no. 10 (13–26 May 2000): <http://www.hindu.com/fline/fl1710/17100390.htm>
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An Interview with Nir Maman: Founder and Chief Instructor, Israeli Special Forces Krav Maga

Interviewed by Paul Johnstone

NIR MAMAN SERVED IN ONE OF THE MOST ELITE UNITS IN THE ISRAELI Special Forces: the Central Command Counter-Terror Unit (CTU) and the Special Forces Counter-Terror and Special Operations School (CTSO). During his service, he held several positions, including commander of the CTSO's International Training Section, where he was responsible for developing and delivering specialized counterterrorism, hostage rescue, and Krav Maga training to Special Forces counterterrorism units from various countries. Maman is the founder of and chief instructor for Israeli Special Forces Krav Maga (ISFKM).

In this exclusive interview, Paul Johnstone, who is a former Australian federal agent, military veteran, security contractor, and the ISFKM's Australasia chief instructor, speaks with Nir Maman about his extensive military and martial arts background, fighting and surviving in hostile environments, and the development of ISFKM.

PAUL JOHNSTONE: Hi, Nir. Can you please give the readers an overview of your professional history?

NIR MAMAN: Sure. I began with my mandatory military service in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) after high school, in a Special Forces reconnaissance unit. Upon completing my service, I returned to Canada and got involved in the close protection (CP) field. My Tae Kwon Do coach at that time was in charge of all of the CP details for Korean government officials traveling to Canada, so the CP team he put together for these details was composed of his top black belt instructors and students.

I was then recruited into an international CP and high-risk security operations firm based out of Canada, which was run by former Canadian and U.S. Special Forces personnel. We received extensive training in CP operations, tactical shooting, and hand-to-hand combat. I made my way up to being an instructor with this firm. Around this same time, I also began to work with the Israeli consulate and the United Jewish Federation of Canada, organizing, deploying, and commanding CP details for members of the Israeli government traveling into Canada.

In 2002, I got into policing. I was a sworn police constable working as a use-of-force and tactical instructor at one of the largest police academies in Canada, heading up training for new counterterrorism and special-response units that were being created as part of Canada's post-9/11 national security initiatives. In the summer of 2006, the second Israel-Lebanon war broke out. I packed everything up in Canada, returned to Israel, and signed up for an additional three years of service in the IDF. I was assigned to the Israeli Central Command and was immediately scooped up by the commander of the CTU and CTSO (LOTAR, as it's called in Hebrew).



Nir Maman

During my service, I held several positions, including section commander of the CTSO's International Training Section, where I was responsible for developing and delivering counterterror, tactical-shooting, and Krav Maga training to Special Forces units from the United States and many other countries, preparing them for their combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

I was also a lead counterterror instructor on the Designated Hostage Rescue Take-Over Units Instruction Section, where I was in charge of training all of the IDF's hostage rescue units. In addition, I was assigned to the CTSO's Chief Instruction Section, where my responsibilities included enhancing and developing strategies and tactics for counterterror warfare, tactical shooting, and Krav Maga, as well as training the CTSO instructors in those subject matters. In addition, I was a team leader on the operational counterterror unit during high-risk, direct-action, and CT missions throughout Gaza and the West Bank.

I completed my last term of service in the IDF approximately two years ago, and since then, I've been occupied with providing specialized training to various military and police organizations around the world. I'm also involved in special high-risk security and counterterror initiatives with various organizations. For one such initiative, I was recruited by a U.S. organization to be the team leader for a mission to rescue hostages being held captive on board vessels seized by pirates off the coast of Africa.

JOHNSTONE: What led you to this path?

MAMAN: My entire family served in both military and police services, and it was the path I wanted to take since I was a young child.

JOHNSTONE: What originally influenced your decision to learn unarmed combat?

MAMAN: I began learning martial arts as a very young child. My father studied karate and judo as a young child and was a Krav Maga instructor during his service in the IDF, so I've always had an innate interest in the martial arts. In addition, growing up in Canada, I was bullied a lot during my school years and was determined to learn the skills I needed to defend myself, as well as defend others who were victims of violence.

JOHNSTONE: How long have you been in the martial arts, and what styles and systems have you previously trained in?

MAMAN: I've been training in the martial arts for 30 years now. The two systems I have trained in that are still the predominant systems in my personal and professional lives are Krav Maga and Jeet Kune Do. In addition, I have trained very extensively in Hap Ki Do, American Kenpo karate, and WTF (World Taekwondo Federation) Tae Kwon Do, which I used to compete extensively in.

JOHNSTONE: You have served in both the military and the police. Can you tell me a bit about your background and experiences in both roles and how it has influenced your skills and knowledge as a well-respected instructor?

In the summer of 2006, the second Israel-Lebanon war broke out. I packed everything up in Canada, returned to Israel, and signed up for an additional three years of service in the IDF.



Israeli Defense Forces Forces returning from Lebanon, August 2006.

I was bullied a lot during my school years and was determined to learn the skills I needed to defend myself, as well as defend others who were victims of violence.



The majority of the subjects we deal with can't afford to get caught and be locked up and are therefore willing to use maximum violence to escape or impede our ability to effect an arrest.

MAMAN: My background and experiences in both the Special Forces and policing are the primary influences that guide my knowledge and teachings as they relate to real-life survival. I have not only been involved in many engagements and arrests with high-risk, violent terrorists and criminals but have also witnessed many violent attacks.

I have had the privilege to learn firsthand what the dynamics of real-life violence are about, and this has given me the ability to separate martial arts theories, which unfortunately are what practically every system and instructor out there teaches, from optimal, effective, real-life survival elements.

JOHNSTONE: What are the most important skills and personal traits in your line of work?

MAMAN: In my line of work, the worst thing that can happen is when a subject we deal with decides to initiate a violent reaction to our actions against him. The majority of the subjects we deal with can't afford to get caught and be locked up and are therefore willing to use maximum violence to escape or impede our ability to effect an arrest. This can mean ensuring we walk into an ambush if we approach the subject or the use of deliberate violence against us at the point of arrest.

Therefore, the most important traits in my line of work are solid mental focus and vigilance, and the ability to identify threatening indicators of a possible ambush or impending violence. This includes a thorough understanding of human behavior as it relates to body language and verbalization that can cue you to an individual's true mental intentions. In addition, we have to be 100 percent capable in our physical/tactical skills, to ensure that we can explode into action with surgical precision at the first indication that a subject's mental intention of violence manifests into physical action. We might be in a predicament where we are facing a terrorist armed with a suicide bomb belt who has to do no more than depress a detonator, so we have to be focused and super quick.

JOHNSTONE: How often do you deal with real violence in your line of work?

MAMAN: Any professional who deals with violence and unfavorable human behavior on a regular basis will develop certain perceptions that the regular population does not possess. Dealing with violence in my line of work does not affect me emotionally or mentally. I've chosen this line of work because I know that if there are no warriors willing to stand up and face evil, then innocent people will get hurt and killed, and my



love and respect for the gift of life that we have all been given far outweighs the negativity of evil. If anything, given my constant interaction with violent individuals, I've simply become a lot more vigilant in ensuring my safety in my everyday life.

JOHNSTONE: Is it possible for you to leave work at work?

MAMAN: It's easy for me to leave the ugly side of my work at work. I have many great things in my personal life to keep me distracted, but the artistic side of my work is with me constantly. I'm always thinking of and trying new ways to perfect my tactical craft, to be better and more effective in my work.

JOHNSTONE: How would you describe violence in real life?

MAMAN: Unfortunately, the violence we see today is uglier. Both terrorists and criminals are far more desperate and relentless in attempting to achieve their objectives. It used to be that the threat of violence would be their choice of implement, but now they simply attack their victims with no warning or threats. In addition, both criminals and terrorists do not want to get caught, so they use maximum violence to ensure the fastest possible compliance from their victims or to ensure that they achieve maximum death, injury, and damage during an attack in minimal time.

JOHNSTONE: What are some indicators of impending violence?

MAMAN: In almost every single violent attack situation, the subject displays indicators of their violent intentions. The majority of these indicators are presented through body language, which can include physical behavior or gestures that do not correspond with what the subject is verbalizing, such as a subject talking normally but standing in an aggressive stance or concealing a hand behind his back or in his clothing. Or a subject who is communicating with you but is constantly looking around in all directions. Usually when we interact with other people, our mental, visual, and verbal focus is directed at the individual we are interacting with. A subject constantly looking around while interacting with you is most likely ensuring that there are no other people around to witness or impede the ill-intended actions he is about to execute.

JOHNSTONE: What are some physical and mental responses when confronted with violence?

MAMAN: Physical and mental responses to violence vary a great deal from person to person. There are factors that come into play that will dictate how an individual will react, which include, first and foremost, the individual's level of awareness of an impending violent attack. Unfortunately, many people in this world take on a complacent attitude toward survival and figure they can react to an attack in time. This generally fails.

When someone is overwhelmed by unexpected violence, they usually go into shock. Going into mental shock will make you physically freeze as well, so there is not much you can do until you recover mentally. If the attack is initiated with serious injury-inflicting violence, it may be too late by the time you recover.

JOHNSTONE: When did you officially commence ISFKM?

The artistic side of my work is with me constantly. I'm always thinking of and trying new ways to perfect my tactical craft, to be better and more effective in my work.

In almost every single violent attack situation, the subject displays indicators of their violent intentions. The majority of these indicators are presented through body language.

Many people in this world take on a complacent attitude toward survival and figure they can react to an attack in time. This generally fails.

The ISFKM program I deliver today to civilian and law enforcement organizations is the exact same platform I delivered to the Israeli and other multinational Special Forces units.

MAMAN: ISFKM is the end result of my lifelong passion, dedication, and research into the science of surviving real-life violence, which is backed by my 30 years of extensive unarmed combat and martial arts experience and over 15 years of professional experience in the Special Forces, policing, and high-risk security fields.

The system, as it stands today, is the package I developed and delivered to all the U.S. Special Forces units at the Israeli Special Forces CTSO. The U.S. Special Forces, along with the SF units of many other allied countries, would come to the Israeli Special Forces CTSO for specialized counterterror warfare training before deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan. Generally, these units would be at our schoolhouse for as little as one week to as long as six weeks. I was the commander in charge of the CTSO's International Training Section, and it was my responsibility to develop training programs that would ensure that these units could attain optimal real-life combat efficiency in very minimal training time. The ISFKM program I deliver today to civilian and law enforcement organizations is the exact same platform I delivered to the Israeli and other multinational Special Forces units.

JOHNSTONE: Why did you decide to call it Israeli Special Forces Krav Maga?

My system is real military Krav Maga. I wanted to give it a name that would first brand its identity as a true military/SF system, and also identify its roots in real Krav Maga.

MAMAN: When I got out of the military and decided to teach my system on an official basis, I wasn't too sure what to call it. My system is real military Krav Maga, unlike any of the civilian Krav Maga organizations out there. I wanted to give it a name that would first brand its identity as a true military/SF system, and also identify its roots in real Krav Maga. Unfortunately, there are many Krav Maga organizations out there that do not teach the real military platform, and there are even more instructors and organizations out there that claim that what they teach is Krav Maga, when in fact it is not. So, joining the two terms of *Israeli Special Forces* and *Krav Maga* was the best solution I could come up with to brand our unique Krav Maga system.

JOHNSTONE: In what countries do you currently have instructors?

MAMAN: It's been almost three years now since I kicked off the very first ISFKM instructor certification course, and presently, we have a team of instructors throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, Europe, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

JOHNSTONE: What individuals have had the most influence on you as a martial artist?

There are several individuals throughout the course of my martial arts education who have influenced me. The first is my dad.

MAMAN: There are several individuals throughout the course of my martial arts education who have influenced me. The first is my dad. He was an avid martial arts practitioner since his childhood and was also a Krav Maga instructor during his service in the Israeli Special Forces. Aside from everything that he taught me, listening to his many stories and experiences of combat during his service as a paratrooper gave me many lessons that I took with me when I first entered my service in the Israeli Special Forces, and which have guided me in my own experiences.

Next there is, of course, Imi Lichtenfeld, the founder of Krav Maga. Although I have never had the honor of meeting Imi in person, I am first of all grateful for his creation of Krav Maga, which has trained my mind and body to deal

with many obstacles in my professional and personal lives. When you train in Krav Maga and realize just how intelligent and effective a system it is for real-life survival, you can't help but truly admire Imi's work, especially for its time!

Then there's Dave Lane. Dave was one of my instructors when I was growing up in Canada. He had over 40 years of experience in various martial arts, although American Kenpo was his predominant system. Dave was an individual who absolutely loved the science of fighting and was an encyclopedia of information on the subject of real-life survival. Many of the lessons I learned from him still guide me today in my practice and teaching, and I still quote him and share many of his lessons in my teaching today.

JOHNSTONE: Over the past 10 years, there has been an explosion in the various types of "reality-based systems" and defensive tactics (DT) systems that have flooded the market. What are your views pertaining to these systems, and why?

MAMAN: Oh, boy. Yes, there definitely has been! It's the natural progression of people following the trend of the season. This fad began immediately following 9/11, when suddenly there was an overt consciousness about real-world threats and violence, the world's militaries were in combat, Homeland Security was created in every country. Before you knew it, the same old martial artists, who once were on the covers of various martial arts magazines in judogis (the uniforms worn by Judo practitioners) teaching hip throws, were now on the exact same magazine covers, teaching the exact same hip throws, but only now they were wearing military fatigues and claiming that their hip throws were the new secret weapon of the world's Special Forces units fighting in Iraq!

All I can tell you is that it's important for people to realize that not everyone who served in the Special Forces necessarily knows how to teach people to survive, and not everyone who claims they were in the Special Forces really served in the Special Forces. It's important to do your homework, ask a lot of questions, and verify people's claims. And before you become a hard-core fan of a certain instructor or system, compare it to several others in the same category so you have a functional idea of what works and what doesn't.

JOHNSTONE: You have been teaching realistic and no-nonsense DT and reality-based training for over 20 years, and you are regarded around the world as one of the founders of reality-based training. Yet, there have been several instructors who have entered the market in the United States over the past several years saying they were the first reality-based instructor. What are your thoughts about these types of claims, and has it affected your own system?

MAMAN: To reiterate what I mentioned in my previous answer, there is no question that the martial arts field has more impostors than most other fields. For many people, the effectiveness of a self-defense system has to do with the grand perception it portrays. Many instructors feel that the more sensational the stories that surround their system are, the more effective their system actually will become.

I give nothing but credit to honest and dedicated people. Some of my most respected and influential instructors from whom I learned invaluable lessons about real-life survival never served as Special Forces soldiers or police officers.

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Not everyone who served in the Special Forces necessarily knows how to teach people to survive, and not everyone who claims they were in the Special Forces really served in the Special Forces.

What I teach will offer the average person a higher capability of surviving real-life violence over all other reality-based systems.



In ISFKM, our only goal is real-life survival. We don't fight with people, let alone grapple with them.

Let's also understand that many of the RBSD (reality-based self-defense) system instructors out there are legitimate and excellent instructors and people.

It definitely bothers me when I know I worked very hard and put my time in to achieve the professional experience I did in my life, and I'm competing [professionally] with someone who didn't put in a fraction of the effort, never served in the Special Forces, but adds the word *Commando* in front of his system, creates elaborate false claims of Special Forces service, and sells his system to military, police, and civilians under a false banner of credibility.

In the end, I believe that the best always rises to the top. I'm not afraid of legitimate competition, and I'm especially not worried about the frauds out there, because I know that what I have to offer is based on the best real-life experience, with a guarantee that what I teach will offer the average person a higher capability of surviving real-life violence over all other reality-based systems. Until today, the most dedicated members we have are the ones who trained in some of these other RBSD systems, because you can't really know what good is until you've experienced the worst.

JOHNSTONE: What's your opinion on the debate between sport-based and combat-oriented training systems?

MAMAN: I think everyone should do whatever it is that pleases them, as long as they do not mislead themselves. Sport is sport. It is designed for competitive application and not for the street. Individuals should not go into sport-oriented systems such as MMA (mixed martial arts) or grappling and walk around with a false sense of security that they will be efficiently capable of surviving real-life street violence.

As for the combat-oriented systems, again, this all depends on the instructor. As long as the instructor actually understands the true dynamics and realistic elements of uncoordinated, no-rules, ill-intended violence, then the system can justify the term *combat-oriented*.

JOHNSTONE: What is your opinion on the grappling craze that has seized the martial arts community in recent years, and what type of grappling is taught in ISFKM?

MAMAN: The grappling craze can be attributed to Royce Gracie in his first and subsequent victories in the early era of the UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship). Royce most definitely proved to the martial arts world that there is a necessity for ground fighting, although the problem is that he did not quite delineate the way in which an individual has to fight on the ground for real-life survival.

Anybody who believes that sport-oriented grappling such as BJJ (Brazilian jiu-jitsu), judo, and wrestling will suffice for the street should first hold their next grappling match on a concrete pavement with no protective gear. That should be enough to give you an understanding of the problems with rolling around on the street. If not, have your training partner deploy a knife while you are busy fighting for an arm bar.

In ISFKM, our only goal is real-life survival. We don't fight with people, let alone grapple with them. Our goal is to terminate the threat as fast as possible to ensure our safety. What we do on the ground is the exact same thing we do standing up. We eliminate, very quickly, the attacker's ability to function and bring more complex elements into the attack, such as weapons. What we do functions for small civilians the exact same way that it would for a soldier bearing battle equipment or a police officer in his or her duty belt.

JOHNSTONE: What is your opinion regarding the various Israeli DT systems that have spread throughout the world, and why are there differences and much conjecture between many of them and their authenticity?

MAMAN: There are two sides that you must be aware of when you're talking about Israeli DT systems. First are Israeli systems that are actually part of the Israeli culture. These include Krav Maga, Hisardut, and Kapap. Krav Maga is the official, and the only, system of the IDF. Hisardut was developed by Dennis Hanover and has been part of the Israeli culture for many decades. And Kapap, led by Chaim Peer, is a commemorative movement, a tribute to the pre-Israel era of defensive training. Second are traditional martial arts systems represented by Israelis or hybrid systems created by Israelis. Again, some of these instructors are legitimate and talented individuals, while others are dishonest individuals trying to sell their homemade systems as official systems of the IDF or as false representations of Israeli Krav Maga.

Some of these instructors are legitimate and talented individuals, while others are dishonest individuals trying to sell their homemade systems.

JOHNSTONE: In your experience, what qualities do you need to see in a person before you know they are ready to be qualified as an instructor in ISFKM?

MAMAN: The ISFKM instructor certification course is open to individuals who are good people, no criminal records, have extensive martial arts/DT backgrounds coupled with adequate teaching experience, and can demonstrate that they will be good ambassadors of the system and our organization.

JOHNSTONE: What are your current and future plans for ISFKM?

MAMAN: ISFKM is one element of our organization, CT 707 Israeli Krav Systems, Inc. CT 707 specializes in Israeli counterterrorism warfare, tactical shooting, and Krav Maga training. Our programs are highly regarded by many military and police organizations around the world. We have instructor certifications available for counterterrorism and active-shooter intervention as well as Israeli dynamic response shooting. As for ISFKM, we offer civilian, police, and military instructor certifications.

JOHNSTONE: It's good to chat with you again, and thanks for your time, mate. We look forward to seeing you in Australia next year.

MAMAN: Thank you, my friend, and I look forward to visiting you guys in 2015. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Freelance journalist **Paul Johnstone** is a former federal agent with the Australian Federal Police and also served in the Australian Army.

Drones: A Challenge to the Professional Military Ethic

LCDR Andrew Ely, U.S. Coast Guard Academy

THE MILITARY USE OF DRONES RECEIVES SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC ATTENTION, particularly regarding their technological advantages and combat superiority. While the many advantages of this new military technology are important for modern combat and other operations, the use of drones on the battlefield raises some questions unique to the men and women in uniform who pilot them. U.S. military personnel are trained to adhere to a code of conduct known as the Professional Military Ethic (PME). For personnel who operate remote weapons, this code can pose an ethical dilemma because the pilot's individual autonomy is constrained by the capabilities of the machines he or she controls.¹

This discussion looks at the conflicts that arise for the remotely piloted vehicle (RPV) pilot who is serving in roles that do not apparently require the traditional core military virtues. At first glance, there may be perceived emotional benefits to using RPVs in battle; a drone, after all, is not subject to the range of sensations and emotions faced by a soldier² on the ground. That is not to say that its use is devoid of moral implication, however. What, then, are the effects of piloting a drone on the military professional who is far removed from the battlespace and yet operating within it?

The sheer number of drones now in use demonstrates their perceived utility, and drones are affecting the way policy makers and soldiers think about and conduct the spectrum of military operations. The United States military now has nearly 150 times as many drones as it did just a decade ago.³ It is well worth exploring, then, what impact the radically expanded use of this still-young technology has on those personnel who pilot drones, and on the pilots' understanding of war. These lessons, while drawn from U.S. experience, could easily be expanded, *mutatis mutandis*,⁴ to every armed force that uses or is contemplating the use of drones in military operations.

While all branches of the U.S. military are becoming increasingly reliant on RPVs to put more physical distance between soldiers and the battlefield, it remains true that first and foremost, a military unit is composed of individuals. It is still individual soldiers who accomplish mission objectives. We see evidence of this in the organizational literature of the U.S. armed services, which guides all of their uniformed members. The "Soldier's Creed" of the U.S. Army and the "Airman's Creed" of the U.S. Air Force, for example, illustrate the central role of the fighter and the absolutist philosophy that is instilled in him or her at boot camp, the service academies, and other training venues for the services.⁵ These documents set out fundamental expectations—a warrior ethic. Such an ethic includes (but is not limited to) loyalty to the mission, prohibitions on accepting defeat and providing information to the enemy, a requirement for unwavering support for other members of the team according to traditional standards, and the defense of freedom and justice. In short,



SOLDIER'S CREED

I am an American Soldier.
 I am a warrior and a member of a team.
 I serve the people of the United States, and live the Army Values.
 I will always place the mission first.
 I will never accept defeat.
 I will never quit.
 I will never leave a fallen comrade.
 I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills.
 I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.
 I am an expert and I am a professional.
 I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.
 I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.
 I am an American Soldier.



AIRMAN'S CREED

This is the Airman's promise to country and colleagues.
 I am an American Airman.
 I am a warrior.
 I have answered my nation's call.
 I am an American Airman.
 My mission is to fly, fight, and win.
 I am faithful to a proud heritage,
 a tradition of honor,
 and a legacy of valor.
 I am an American Airman,
 guardian of freedom and justice,
 my nation's sword and shield,
 its sentry and avenger.
 I defend my country with my life.
 I am an American Airman:
 wingman, leader, warrior.
 I will never leave an Airman behind,
 I will never falter,
 and I will not fail.

the guidance emphasizes that one must be brave in all military endeavors on behalf of the nation. This leaves us with a pressing question for the soldier assigned to engage in combat through drones: How does operating a weapon thousands of miles from the battlespace correlate with the seemingly inherent requirement for the warfighter to honor traditional elements of the warrior ethic?

The Unique Obligations of a Soldier

Any soldier who has physically been in battle has experienced “the fog of war.” Overcoming this confusion requires strong leadership and a heavy reliance on basic military principles and values.⁶ Among these are the virtues traditionally attributed to the warfighter, including the virtues that are qualities of character—being a good soldier requires a good character. Consider the virtue of bravery. Simply acting bravely is not sufficient; the soldier must also develop the proper character that will guide his or her emotions through being given opportunities to practice being brave.⁷ It is hard to imagine how soldiers can maintain a virtue such as bravery while they are physically removed from the battlespace. The use of drones and other semi-autonomous or autonomous weapons should cause us to examine whether we need to differently frame traditional military training methods. Where should the armed services place the emphasis in military ethics training and professional military education to ensure that warriors are the most effective ethical practitioners possible?

To answer this question, we must first review military ethics in general. Members of the U.S. military, for example, have a distinct obligation to the society and citizens they serve and defend.⁸ Like all military personnel, they are trained to follow established procedures and policies. In combat, a soldier’s decisions are primarily aimed at benefiting his or her own side. The soldier’s decision process also must, secondarily, consider factors such as proportionality and discrimination—principles that will provide some benefit (or at least minimize harm) to the other side. Taken alone, policy and procedure will not serve as adequate tools for a soldier operating in-theater to navigate through the “fog of war”; rather, ethical considerations play just as vital a role in evaluating and selecting courses of action.

In war, the “right thing to do” is guided by unity of command, which requires, among other things, unity of effort—that is, coordination and cooperation among all elements that comprise the forces employed to accomplish the desired outcome or goal.⁹ It is important to note that such a structure expects that the soldiers who make up the unified command must willingly accept the goal of the mission as justified. In a democracy, it is not the role of the soldier, or even the commander of the unified force, to determine the goal of the mission. Rather, it is the obligation of the civilian government to articulate the moral justification for entering war, the *jus ad bellum*, in the planning phase.

The U.S. fighter maintains responsibility for his or her decision and actions according to *jus in bello*, the laws of war that apply to the actual conduct of operations in armed conflict. In traditional combat, soldiers operate physically in the theater of the war effort. Even bomber pilots who operate from the apparent safety and considerable distance of the sky are still working in-theater and assume some level of risk associated with their specific mission. The hardships of war are experienced by a cross-functional and integrated team of individuals working together *within* the battlespace. Thus, the more

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KANTIAN THINKING ABOUT MILITARY ETHICS

J. CARL FICARROTTA



technology removes the soldier from the battlespace, the harder it becomes for that soldier to adhere to the traditional PME. How can one individual meet the obligation to be brave and loyal to other team members while personally removed from any apparent physical harm?

In his book, *Kantian Thinking about Military Ethics*, J. Carl Ficarrotta explores how soldiers are morally bound while acting in war, and whether their moral obligations exceed those of ordinary citizens.¹⁰ He suggests that if we understand the function of the military in a narrow sense to be to fight on behalf of the nation, then soldiers are held to a higher moral standard while executing this function. His reasons are threefold: first, the operational complexity and cooperation required by warfare demand strict adherence to a code of ethics; second, the requirement that soldiers demonstrate “bravery, selflessness, and conscientiousness” while carrying out their duties calls for a clear moral code; and third, failure to successfully execute a military operation may result in exceptionally dire outcomes.¹¹ Each of these reasons underscores the importance of unity of effort to maintain unity of command. It is not clear that reliance solely on the military’s PME and leadership will produce the right result from the soldier confronted with the execution of a tactical objective in the battlespace.¹²

Trust and integrity within the military unit are foundational principles on which the team functions. The obligations of soldiers are obligations of solidarity; that is, they are particular to the armed service and impose requirements on members beyond mere consent.¹³ To accomplish the set of missions determined by national leadership, a soldier must be loyal to the military organization and fellow military members. But what happens when loyalty to the mission requires a soldier to betray her loyalty to a fellow member of the military? The drone pilot cannot aid her fellow soldiers who are physically in the battlespace as she would be able to if she were on-scene. Her agency is limited to the capabilities of the drone. If a drone pilot observes through her monitor an act of violence in the battlespace against soldiers on her own side, she may retaliate against the enemy by firing the drone’s weapons. Her range of action is limited, however; she cannot physically come to their aid and offer medical care, or help remove a wounded fellow warrior from the battlefield.

The difficulty that I am pointing out is a dissonance for the drone pilot between the justification to act that she receives from her branch of the service and her obligation to treat others fairly. In the first place, the RPV pilot is limited in her ability to carry out the physical expectations set forth in training and the traditional PME. In the second place, as a result of this limitation on her ability to act within the battlespace, the pilot is in some sense restricted from honoring the principle of unity of effort as she has been trained to do. That is, she may be put in a situation where she cannot come to the aid of a member or members of her own side because her on-scene agency is restricted to the capabilities of the drone. I argue that this creates an unacceptable moral dilemma for the RPV pilot. Her military training and guiding ethical principles—the PME—tell her to be brave at all costs and to stay with her team during a mission, even if she is in great peril. However, her assignment places a physical boundary between her and the battlespace that utterly precludes her from doing so.¹⁴

Trust and integrity within the military unit are foundational principles on which the team functions.

The pilot is in some sense restricted from honoring the principle of unity of effort as she has been trained to do.

This reality makes it morally problematic to align how the PME is directing the soldier to carry out her assignment with a role that limits her on-scene agency. If my argument here is correct, this disconnect has the potential to raise a seemingly unmanageable internal conflict for the drone pilot and could, in the worst case, lead to a breakdown of unity of effort by threatening the fundamental tenets of unity of command and the broader PME. In the next section, I go into more detail on just how this conflict may play out for the RPV pilot, and the problems this creates for the PME.

The Conflict: Military v. Individual Virtue

When we think of an ideal member of the armed services, there are specific attributes and values that readily come to mind such as courage, bravery, persistence, and integrity, to name only a few. Each of these virtues can be tied directly to the primary mission of the military professional: to serve as a warfighter.

Although the role of the modern military has expanded far beyond preparing for and fighting traditional interstate wars, the culture of the military still revolves around these kinds of virtues. Core values, and the methods that many armed services utilize in training to instill them, focus on the central idea that, as a soldier, you are not in the fight alone: you function as a part of a team of highly competent and trained individuals to execute the mission. The concepts of unity of command and unity of effort are of critical importance in this context. My concern is that the further one departs from the traditional model of unity of effort, the more difficult any justifications for unity of command become.¹⁵ The central moral point that appears to support the use of RPVs is that to conduct a just war, a soldier is expected to discriminate between combatants and non-combatants so as to deliberately target only those who are combatants. Proponents of RPVs insist that use of the technology in this case increases the morality of war because drone strikes are potentially more precise than other suitable weaponry, and hit what or who they are aimed at.¹⁶ The consistency of such technology, in their view, directly translates into increased military effectiveness and the ethical soundness required by *jus in bello*.

Unity of command, however, requires unity of effort. When I am directly in the physical presence of my team while fighting from a trench or the flight deck of an aircraft carrier, a sense of belonging and camaraderie arises through the shared history and experience that surround the mission. Thus, there is strong support for me to undertake a proportional role in the conflict, knowing that the others are doing so as well. Because the RPV pilot does not have this shared experience, it is possible to question whether he or she can truly act on behalf of fellow soldiers in the same way that someone next to

The military's role has expanded far beyond preparing for and fighting traditional wars, but military culture still revolves around these virtues.

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Cristobal Galindo watches a video feed from an RQ-12 Predator unmanned aerial vehicle during an operation near Spin Boldak, Afghanistan.



me in the trench or overhead in a fighter jet can. As Martin Cook writes, proportionality (and, I would contend, all *jus in bello* moral principles) is “highly contextual and depend[s] on many dimensions of practical military reality.”¹⁷ One of these practical realities is the shared physical battlespace in which soldiers fight. When this is lost due to the removal of some military operators from the theater, it is natural to infer that the virtues of the warrior ethic that are in part dependent on that practical reality could be lost along with it.

The pilot relinquishes some authority to the drone. She has no capacity in which to display physical bravery.

The focus of the traditional PME is on the empirical realm: a soldier is a part of a team, and this knowledge enables the soldier to recognize and understand the limits of his own authority. Choosing the right course of action is at least partially based on the justification for the method of action; for example, using violence to stop violence by another. A soldier on the ground can demonstrate physical and moral bravery and loyalty. He can exercise his authority as an autonomous agent while on-scene. An RPV pilot cannot behave in the same way. As I pointed out earlier, the pilot relinquishes her authority, at least in some sense, to the drone. She has no capacity in which to display physical bravery, and may have little opportunity to display moral bravery. She cannot act in the same fully autonomous way as the soldier on the ground because



she is physically absent from the battlespace, and consequently free from all risks of physical harm. Further, because a solid foundation in the virtues of military conduct requires opportunities to practice them, it seems difficult to assume that the drone pilot will reliably execute them.

I am not proposing that we do away with the use of drones—such a notion is equally impractical and undesirable. Rather, we must consider how we should equip and train the pilots who operate them to handle the cognitive dissonance that emerges between the traditional PME and an operational environment that obviates the need to exercise at least some of the fundamental military virtues. As militaries continue to incorporate remotely operated technology, I perceive a new obligation for military training and the PME.

A Proposal for the PME

The U.S. military’s current approach to training and education is focused on the mind-set of a soldier in battle. This includes what fighters’ obligations are to those on their own side: “Every soldier must have the potential to act like a warrior if only once in their life, whether they are support personnel who face the danger of improvised explosive devices . . . or mechanics huddling in shelters as mortars explode around them.”¹⁸ The traditional PME therefore is not adequate to guide the reactions of RPV pilots who operate completely remote from the battlespace. The challenge lies in how to modify the PME so that it can accommodate this new combat reality.

Military personnel engaged in combat must possess the cognitive and emotional tools to make timely decisions.

Uncovering this problem has been my primary aim. While a full exploration of potential solutions is beyond the scope of this article, the concept of virtue epistemology (VE) could potentially address this inadequacy, at least in part. Using VE, the individual does not seek to justify an action based on a set of external principles; instead, he or she evaluates when and whether to act based on intellectual “virtues and vices.” Virtues in this case refer to the qualities of careful, informed reasoning that serve as the basis of good moral character and lead to reliable, true beliefs. Vices include jumping to conclusions, or clinging to an idea in the face of disproving facts. These intellectual virtues and vices are fundamental concepts of self-evaluation that are meant to be practically useful in the face of a moral dilemma.¹⁹ The aim of VE is to promote intellectual and ethical well-being for agents who are faced with a difficult choice or situation. Examples include acknowledging that they do not know something or recognizing that they are unable to physically act.

Among the traditional virtues of honor, loyalty, bravery, and so on, there must be room to reinforce the intellectual virtues without interfering with the discipline that supports unity of command and unity of effort.

It is essential that all military personnel who are actively engaged in a combat operation possess the necessary cognitive and emotional tools to make timely decisions that are justifiable according to the dynamic circumstances and information available as the situation unfolds. At first glance, the inclusion of



intellectual virtues in military ethical training looks promising because it appears to address two of the most pressing problems faced by RPV pilots. First, the “fog of war” problem can be mitigated by applying such virtues as open-mindedness and what Aristotle called *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, which support the unity of effort that is vital to the military in combat operations.²⁰ Second, intellectual virtues allow RPV pilots to more fully recognize the limits of their agency and avoid applying amoral (faulty) beliefs to justify their moral position.

For example, when the RPV pilot cannot physically assist an injured fellow soldier, her ability to rely on her own intellectual virtues of informed reasoning may help the pilot understand her epistemic duty. Just as conflicts may arise between the moral virtues (e.g., do moral ends justify immoral means?), similar conflicts may arise between the intellectual and moral virtues (e.g., I know I have no means to act, but my moral virtue demands that I physically act). Open-mindedness helps the RPV pilot to be receptive to new ideas: e.g., recognizing the limits on her agency that prevent her from demonstrating moral bravery and finding other means to help, such as requesting assistance from another unit on the battlefield.

At this point, an overarching intellectual virtue, practical wisdom, comes into play. This quality of intellect allows the pilot to consider all of the moral and intellectual virtues involved in her choices. Practical wisdom allows the pilot to understand the totality of the situation and assess the practical thing to do,

while recognizing that the morally brave and the open-minded choices come into conflict. Having considered all of the factors, the pilot can then make the decision that a reasonable person would make (calling for help and waiting for it to arrive); she can justify her choice by evaluating the general motivation for good in all of the virtues involved and picking out those virtues that best fit the unique situation.

Despite the potential benefits of VE and the intellectual virtues for military training, the proposal presents some significant problems that must be addressed. The first problem is implementation. Without adequate funding, training resources, and time for personnel to attend training in VE decision making, the project will remain in the world of ideas. The difficulties of implementation will be compounded by the need to deliver VE training to the broad spectrum of the military workforce, from entry-level recruits to senior officers. Multiple training programs will have to be developed and implemented to target the cognitive skill levels, needs, and roles of such disparate groups of students. In the case of the U.S. military and most other military organizations, if the military leadership acknowledges the need for better cooperation and collaboration among personnel in combat operations, this need must be made apparent to those government officials responsible for the funding of military education.

A deeper problem consists of educating military personnel in the intellectual virtues while maintaining the battlefield-oriented PME that has been a time-honored part of military tradition and culture. Among the traditional virtues of honor, loyalty, bravery, and so on, there must be room to reinforce the intellectual virtues without interfering with the discipline that supports unity of command and unity of effort. If RPV pilots are expected to know what they ought to do during an operation, then they must be able to explore alternatives, apply careful reasoning, and remain focused on the ultimate objective of the current mission. The difficulty lies in balancing the ability of RPV pilots to adhere to their orders and required operational protocols while providing opportunities for them to acknowledge and justify the limits imposed on their personal autonomy.

In actual combat, there is often little or no time for advanced preparation. Therefore, a rules-based approach to moral problems is warranted. The objective of training and the PME is to create a clear policy for the individual

soldier to follow in a wide range of physically and morally difficult circumstances. One advantage of VE is that intellectual virtues—the qualities of a careful and competent thinker—rather than physical ones such as bravery under fire, serve as the foundation of epistemic evaluation.

Aristotle distinguished virtues of character to be those of one who is well tempered and wise: this state of mind allows him or her to reason and act in an appropriate way.²¹ RPV pilots must be able to draw on well-established intellectual virtues to navigate through the “fog of war” in a way that acknowledges the limits of their agency while they aim to act according to the truth of whatever situation they are

The difficulty lies in balancing the ability of RPV pilots to adhere to their orders and required operational protocols while providing opportunities for them to acknowledge and justify the limits imposed on their personal autonomy.

A U.S. Air Force captain works the controls of a Predator drone aircraft from the “cockpit” room at Kandahar Airfield.



operating in. Since soldiers already (presumably) possess virtues of character that guide them to act in a reasonable way, it seems a natural progression to educate them in the intellectual virtues. Using appropriate reasoning will allow soldiers, including RPV pilots, to critically examine and develop a clearer picture of the circumstances that have given rise to a moral dilemma. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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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 A note from the *CTX* editors: We recognize that combat personnel and drone pilots come from other services besides the Army. In the interests of simplicity, we are using the term *soldier* in a general sense to include all military personnel who serve in the roles described in this article.
- 3 See “The Growing U.S. Drone Fleet,” in the “World” section of the *Washington Post* website: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/the-growing-us-drone-fleet/2011/12/23/gIQA76faEP_graphic.html
- 4 *Mutatis mutandis* is a Latin phrase that can be translated as “only the necessary changes having been made.” In other words, the issues and principles described here can be adapted to other countries’ circumstances.
- 5 “Soldier’s Creed,” U.S. Army, n.d.: <http://www.army.mil/values/soldiers.html>; “Airman’s Creed,” U.S. Air Force, n.d.: <http://www.airforce.com/learn-about/airmans-creed/>
- 6 Mark Rhodes, “The Fog of War,” *Strategy by Design*, n.d.: <http://www.strategybydesign.org/fog-of-war/>
- 7 Epictetus, *The Handbook*, trans. Nicholas P. White (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983), 11–13. The Stoic philosophy of Epictetus is considered a foundational component of the PME for modern Western militaries. But, the control of emotion that Epictetus promoted is unrealistic if a modern soldier is supposed to abide by the Hague Conventions and show some level of compassion toward the enemy, thus minimizing unnecessary suffering in battle. Therefore, it must be the job of the military instructor and commander to guide a soldier’s emotional reaction to the circumstances of combat.
- 8 This obligation is evident in the time-honored tradition of the reading of the military officer’s commission and enlistment of non-commissioned soldiers.
- 9 Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 3-0 (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2001), A-2.
- 10 J. Carl Ficarrotta, “Are Military Professionals Bound by a Higher Moral Standard: Functionalism and Its Limits,” in *Kantian Thinking about Military Ethics* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2010), 1–16.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 6–7.
- 12 To act requires that a person—the *agent*—initiate his own action. The purpose of the PME and military leadership is to guide soldiers so that they choose right action. That is, the objective of guiding doctrine such as the PME is to fulfill a need of the individual. Soldiers operating under unity of command have to function as part of a team. The PME addresses this need, guiding the agent to help his fellow soldiers.
- 13 Michael J. Sandel, *Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 225.
- 14 Eric Beidel, “Army Pilots: Flying Drones Tougher Than It Looks,” *National Defense*, February 2011: <http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/archive/2011/February/Pages/ArmyPilotsFlyingDronesTougherThanItLooks.aspx>
- 15 Martin L. Cook, *The Moral Warrior: Ethics and Service in the U.S. Military* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2004), 28.
- 16 Bradley Jay Strawser, “Moral Predators: The Duty to Employ Uninhabited Aerial Vehicles,” *Journal of Military Ethics* 9, no. 4 (2010): 352.
- 17 Cook, *The Moral Warrior*, 34.
- 18 Christopher Coker, *The Warrior Ethos: Military Culture and the War on Terror* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 133.
- 19 Heather Battaly, “Virtue Epistemology,” *Philosophy Compass* 3, no. 4 (2008): 639–663.
- 20 When faced with a formidable opponent in combat, soldiers are trained to act with moral bravery, to accept personal risk, in order to prevail. Consider the example of a squad leader whose men are outnumbered by the enemy and cut off from any means to call for help. The leader decides to fight with everything he has, recognizing that attack or certain death are his only viable options—indeed, that the former option may result in the latter. By undertaking the attack in light of such overwhelming risk, the leader is considered courageous because he accepted personal sacrifice to further the larger goal. Other military and political leaders will emphasize this person’s moral bravery because they want those who find themselves in a similar situation ideally to conduct themselves in a similar fashion. This moral argument works only if the individual leader understands the ultimate goal that justifies the personal risks and sacrifices. For example, see Linda Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 256.
- 21 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Martin Ostwald (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1999), 27.

THE CTAP INTERVIEW

Interview with Anonymous

Interviewed by Leo Blanken, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School

The first thing that we learned was communication and how we should work closely with our personnel. This is really helpful for us.

I have had bad experiences in the past, when our ODAs or our personnel were in contact with the enemy and we couldn't support them in time.

This interview is taken from the collection of the Combating Terrorism Archive Project (CTAP).¹ On 13 November 2013, CTAP co-director Leo Blanken spoke with an Afghan Special Forces officer, who asked to remain anonymous.²

LEO BLANKEN: Tell me about any lesson learned that you think would benefit the global SOF community.

OFFICER: I have been working shoulder to shoulder with U.S. forces for more than five years. I have been training with them. This is really good, but sometimes we should review our actions: what we did in the past and what we will do in the future. There are some things that we have learned and some things that we still have problems with, like our communications, our chain of command, our command and control—this kind of stuff.

Because I am working closely with American forces, the first thing I learned is how we should support our ODAs (Operational Detachments–Alpha) and our personnel in the field. It is really good for me to learn now, as an officer, what I should do in the future with my ODAs, my personnel, my soldiers, and NCOs. The first thing that we learned was communication and how we should work closely with our personnel. This is really helpful for us. The second thing that we have had a problem with is our forces and our supply. We have [logistical] issues and the Afghan National Security Forces are not supplying us on time. We also sometimes have problems with our communications—how we should communicate with our ODAs and personnel in the field.

When they are in contact with the enemy, we have to focus on how we should help them. Sometimes it's really hard. I have had bad experiences in the past, when our ODAs or our personnel were in contact with the enemy and we couldn't support them in time. One time we had five WIAs (wounded in action). In that case, it was really, really bad because they were wounded in an IED explosion. It was during the night. We were unable to send Afghan aircraft because they can't fly during the night, so we sent our forces—infantry, vehicles, a convoy. They arrived near the AO (area of operations), but the AO was completely covered by enemy IEDs. Our wounded guys were waiting more than nine hours for us to help them. Unfortunately, we lost two NCOs in that case. There were three more who were still alive into the early morning, when our forces, our ODAs, cleared the AO and the roads, and we were able to help them. It was hard, because each soldier or NCO or officer wants to serve his country, his people—but in [an emergency] situation, we can't help them out. It is really bad. These are issues that we have problems with, especially logistical support, our quick reaction force support, this kind of thing.

BLANKEN: I wanted to ask about an interesting comment you made earlier, about the dog tags.

OFFICER: Oh, yes. Unfortunately, in our Special Operations brigade, or division, we don't have dog tags. I learned about them from the U.S. personnel over the past five years, and I requested from my generals, my command, that we [Afghan Special Forces] should have dog tags. Sometimes, when we want to go to the field, we know there are IEDs, and if we don't have dog tags, it is a very big problem for us. There was one experience I had that was really bad. There were three NCOs in a Humvee hit by an IED explosion. We lost one guy, and the other two were wounded. One of these wounded guys was now back here in the hospital: "This is Joe (for example), and this is his registration number." After one hour, unfortunately, we lost him—he died in the hospital. I sent his body back to our division with the name of Joe and just a number. After two days, they told me, "Hey, he is not Joe, and this number is wrong." He didn't have a dog tag, and no one knows who he was because he was 90% burned. No one is able to confirm who he was. If I should be in command and have the power, one of the first issues I would want to effect is our dog tags.

If I should be in command and have the power, one of the first issues I would want to effect is our dog tags.

I would be really happy to help my soldiers, NCOs, and officers back in the field because it is my job. The guys who are in command or in high positions—they have to help me. I already requested that we get dog tags. Maybe I should request it again—our Ministry of Defense or Special Operations division should have dog tags as soon as possible for the personnel, because we are just 10,000 people. ❖

NOTES

- 1 The Combating Terrorism Archive Project aims to collect and archive knowledge on strategy, operations, and tactics used by military and other security personnel from around the world in the twenty-first-century fight against global terrorism. Collectively, the individual interviews that CTAP conducts will create an oral history archive of knowledge and experience in counterterrorism for the benefit of the CT community now and in the future.
- 2 This interview was edited for length and clarity. Every effort was made to ensure that the meaning and intention of the participants were not altered in any way. The ideas and opinions of all participants are theirs alone and do not represent the official positions of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. government, or any other official entity.



ETHICS AND INSIGHTS

Mercy

George Lober, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School

George Lober teaches ethics and writing at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School.

Mercy, I'm discovering, has become a complicated subject, particularly in armed conflict.

There is nothing further, the medic tells the captain, that he can do for the man. The captain pauses a moment and then discharges a pistol round into the man, instantly killing him.

I HAVE BEEN THINKING LATELY ABOUT MERCY AND THE LIMITATIONS WE put on who can render it and who can receive it, and whether those limitations can ever be morally justified. Mercy, I'm discovering, has become a complicated subject, particularly in armed conflict. But should it be? Consider, for example, the two cases I describe here.

In the first case, a NATO platoon in Afghanistan engages in a high-speed pursuit of a vehicle fleeing a city checkpoint. The driver of the vehicle has refused repeated orders to stop, and since the car is believed to be carrying a high-value enemy leader, the platoon, as ordered, fires on the vehicle, causing it to crash into a wall. The surviving occupants of the car immediately flee into the neighborhood. As the platoon approaches the vehicle, the soldiers discover the driver still inside, mortally wounded by a round that tore away part of his skull. The platoon medic pulls the driver, who is barely alive, from the car, assesses his condition, and informs his young captain that the driver "isn't going to make it." There is nothing further, the medic tells the captain, that he can do for the man. The captain, looking at the driver, who is gurgling up blood into the dirt of the road and clearly suffering, pauses a moment and then discharges a pistol round into the man, instantly killing him. He does so, he will later testify at his court martial, to put the driver out of his misery. It was, he will say, "the right and honorable thing to do."

The entire incident is caught on video, and the young captain—allegedly an exemplary officer and religiously devout soldier—is subsequently brought up on charges of murder and is eventually convicted by the military court. In the verdict, he is found guilty of the lesser charge of involuntary manslaughter and immediately dismissed from military service. He is not sentenced to any prison time.

Whenever I've introduced this case to my students, their reactions have been uniformly unsympathetic to the captain. Typical responses have ranged from "He clearly violated the rules of engagement" and "Who is he to play God?" to "If he feels sympathy for the enemy, he's sick!" Almost all have agreed that the captain must serve some prison time, to set an example for other military members who may be tempted to indulge similar feelings and actions. A significant number have doubted whether the captain, as a true military professional, could truly feel mercy for the enemy at all.

I understand there are both long-standing international laws of armed conflict and sections of the numerous international codes of military justice—in addition to the rules of engagement that existed at the time—that forbid the young captain's actions, regardless of whether they were motivated by genuine human compassion. I've also inferred from my students' responses that such mercy has no place when it comes to the enemy. So let's say for argument's sake that I get all that. And then let's consider a second hypothetical case.

Imagine that you and three others of your unit are being overrun by a much larger, although less well-armed, enemy force in a mountainous area of Afghanistan. You are essentially surrounded, and evasion and escape are impossible. However, the four of you are holed up in a location where the only way the enemy can reach you is to assault your position in human waves, and they have started to launch such attacks at you. You've radioed for close air support and rescue, but you're told such support is not available for various reasons and likely won't arrive for another 24 to 48 hours. You're told you'll have to hold out and repel the attacks yourselves. Your group has enough ammunition for the moment, provided you use it sparingly, and the four of you have been able to turn the assaults back, although some have broken into your position and resulted in intense hand-to-hand combat. Finally, in one assault, a member of your group is taken alive by the retreating enemy and pulled into their main force. There is no doubt that the enemy's objective is to kill you all. There is also no doubt that any attempt to rescue your friend will be met with a storm of weapon fire that will result in your immediate death. From your position, as you look down upon the enemy, you see that your friend, now badly beaten, has been brought to an open area where it becomes obvious the enemy fighters intend to mutilate him to death within your sight.

You realize that although you cannot rescue him, you could with one shot kill your captured friend and spare him the terrible suffering he is about to endure. As though sensing your dilemma, your friend raises his head and looks at your protected position. Should you take the shot to mercifully spare him the pain he is about endure? If you do, is that murder?

When I recently presented the second case to my students and asked them the above questions, they responded almost overwhelmingly that (1) yes, they should take the shot; (2) if they were the captured prisoner, they would want one of their group to shoot and spare them from torture; and (3) no, that is not murder, that is a mercy killing. One particular student, however, a deeply religious colonel who had been fighting terrorists in his country for over 20 years, offered the opinion that if one truly believes in a God and a divine plan, then only God should determine the time and manner of the captured colleague's death. "Who are you," he asked his fellow students, "to interfere in that plan?" The question brought a silence to my class and actually changed a couple of students' minds.

Setting the spiritual implications of the colonel's remarks aside, I confess that I'm inclined to agree with the majority of my students on all fronts. But what is it about the two cases, I wonder, that makes the one decision appear morally questionable at best and the other feel morally right? I admit that I'm not sure. I want to believe it's not just that we selectively restrict the giving and receiving of a final act of mercy to those like ourselves, and deny it for others. And I certainly recognize that there are codified laws of conflict to prevent the summary execution of captives, detainees, and unarmed, non-threatening combatants under the captor's false pretense of rendering mercy. Yet the two cases still strike me as disturbingly similar. Both involve the unavoidable suffering and imminent death of a human being under humiliating, dishonorable circumstances; both involve an unarmed and defenseless combatant/captive; and if the young captain in the first case is perceived to be sincere, then the decision to shoot in both instances draws on a sense of compassion.

Typical responses have ranged from "He clearly violated the rules of engagement" and "Who is he to play God?" to "If he feels sympathy for the enemy, he's sick!"

You realize that although you cannot rescue him, you could with one shot kill your captured friend and spare him the terrible suffering he is about to endure.

If intentions matter, it would seem that both cases come close to suggesting that the act of killing in each circumstance would be an act of virtue.

Unable to physically rescue the captured friend, the final act of loyalty could be seen as a duty to spare him further unnecessary agony.

What if, in the first case, by unfortunate circumstance, the individual dying in the street was a fellow member of the platoon instead of an enemy driver?

If intentions matter, it would seem that both cases come close to suggesting that the act of killing in each circumstance would be an act of virtue. Why then the difference in reactions from my students? What is it about the first case that troubles so many of the professional service members I teach, and what is it that allows them to accept the second killing as morally justified?

Again, I don't know the answers, but I suspect the difference may lie in the circumstances. In the first case, the platoon captain appears to be making a personal judgment on the appropriate "honorable" circumstances under which a fellow human being should die. Who is he, my students may be asking, to determine what those circumstances are, or whether that individual's actual moment of dying is in fact imminent, or that his last moments have no personal value? In this case, their sentiments may well be closely aligned with the religious colonel's. It may well be part of some divine plan for that enemy driver to die writhing in the dirt road—it could even be what that driver deserves according to divine judgment. Furthermore, there are laws to prevent his being shot. By these criteria, then, the right thing to do is to leave him there to die in his own time.

In the second case, again I don't know for sure, but I suspect that the shooting of the captured teammate could assume the dimension of both a rescue and a final act of loyalty. Unable to physically rescue the captured friend, the final act of loyalty could be seen as a duty to spare him further unnecessary agony at the hands of those who would cruelly inflict it until his inevitable death. If that's so, I believe most of my students could see the two cases as distinctly different. The degree to which they would be interfering in some divine plan—if they even considered that an issue, and many of them don't—might not matter as much as their perceived obligation to act as a loyal brother-in-arms to a friend in peril. In cases like the second one, that loyalty, I suspect, trumps other moral considerations.

Such a conclusion, though, demands that we ask ourselves whether we restrict such acts of mercy only to those to whom we feel loyal. I'm uncomfortable with that implication, just as I'm uncomfortable with the question that someone occasionally has asked: What if, in the first case, by unfortunate circumstance, the individual dying in the street was a fellow member of the platoon instead of an enemy driver? Would I hesitate to condemn the apparently compassionate captain if he shot his dying companion because it was "the right and honorable thing to do"? My gut says, "No, I can see where that would be wrong." How then, you may ask, is that different from the second case? Good question.

One final aspect to consider in these cases is the matter of consent. Neither the driver in the first case, nor the friend in the second, is capable of giving his explicit consent to be killed. Yet the shooter in both cases is inferring that death is what those men would prefer. I'm generally uncomfortable with that inference. To act on what you think other people would want when it comes to ending their life seems presumptuous and dangerous. At the same time, I'm also strongly sympathetic. I know if I were the friend being tortured in the second case, I'd definitely want you to pull the trigger.

Mercy, as I said at the beginning of this essay, is complicated. Maybe that's because it should be. ❖

THE WRITTEN WORD

The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia

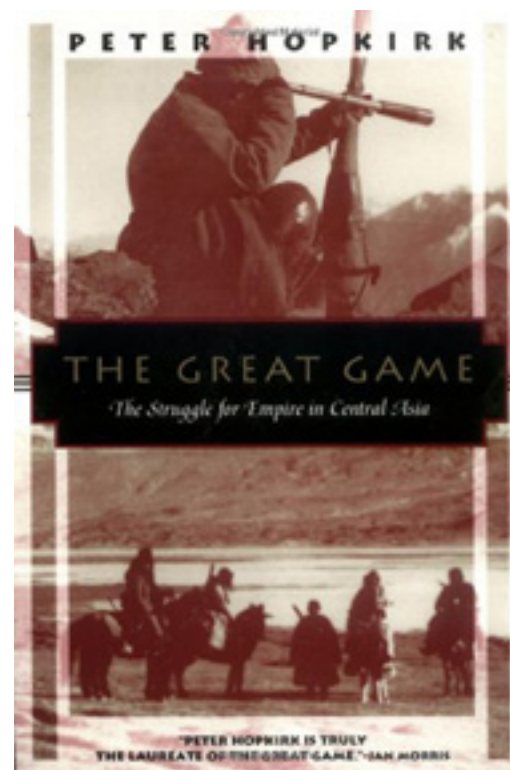
UNDERSTANDING THE PRESENT-DAY CONDITIONS AND ONGOING STRUGGLES for political and economic clout in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and other Central Asian countries requires understanding the region's past and the role that external actors have played in Central Asia's development. In his non-fiction book, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*, author Peter Hopkirk utilizes an impressive anthology of autobiographies, biographies, and contemporary accounts to describe the events and figures involved in the late nineteenth-century struggle for dominance in Central Asia by imperial powers Russia and Great Britain. This period of history was coined the "Great Game" by Captain Arthur Conolly and made famous in popular culture by Rudyard Kipling's novel *Kim*.¹ The two sides officially called a truce when they signed the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, but the geopolitical effects of the Great Game continue to this day.

Hopkirk's book begins in the pre-Russian state of Kievan Rus', which came under Mongol attack during the early thirteenth century. The utter destruction the Mongols left behind and the Russians' struggle to expel not only the Mongol invaders but Swedish and German armies of conquest as well was a main impetus behind the Russian tsars' drive to acquire more territory as a buffer. Russia's insatiable appetite for new lands to the south inevitably brought the Russian Empire and the British Empire into a nineteenth-century precursor to the U.S.-Soviet Cold War. A shadow war of spying, espionage, and sometimes-lethal engagements emerged as the two sides fought for influence in territories that spanned from the Caucasus Mountains in the west to the Chinese empire in the east. As Russia's armies advanced closer to British India, the British often felt compelled to respond in force to prevent their sphere of influence from being threatened. Both sides employed a mixture of military officers, political agents, and explorer-spies to spy on the other, map and research uncharted lands, and try to make friends with powerful indigenous leaders in hopes of forming political alliances to counter the advances of the other. As Hopkirk notes,

Certain areas were judged too perilous, or politically sensitive, for Europeans to venture into, even in disguise. And yet these parts had to be explored and mapped, if India was to be defended. An ingenious solution to this was soon found. Indian hillmen of exceptional intelligence and resource, specially trained in clandestine surveying techniques, were dispatched across the frontier disguised as Muslim holy men or Buddhist pilgrims. In this way, often at great risk to their lives, they secretly mapped thousands of square miles of previously unexplored terrain with remarkable accuracy. For their part, the Russians used Mongolian Buddhists to penetrate regions considered too dangerous for Europeans.²

MAJ Wesley "Matt" Spear,
U.S. Army

Peter Hopkirk
New York: Kodansha
International, 1994
ISBN: 1568360223
Paperback: U.S. \$14.64
524 pages



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A shadow war of spying, espionage, and sometimes-lethal engagements emerged as the two sides fought for influence in territories that spanned from the Caucasus Mountains in the west to the Chinese empire in the east.

The Great Game is a well-researched book with over 15 pages of bibliographic resources, including a number of biographies and autobiographies about and by intriguing Russians, Britons, and other relevant players of the time. Hopkirk has written several previous books concerning Central Asia and the Caucasus, and uses his experience as a subaltern in the King's African Rifles and his extensive knowledge of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Far East to provide a vivid chronological account of the tangled individual motivations and strategic thinking behind the actions of Britain and Russia. Hopkirk tells the story of these many participants in the Great Game without characterizing any of the individuals or countries involved as right or wrong, moral or immoral. The story is broad enough to be interesting, but avoids becoming vague or confusing.

Hopkirk's *The Great Game* is recommended for personnel involved with diplomatic, military, or economic policy concerning Central Asia. In explaining the past, *The Great Game* also provides insight into the physical and cognitive environment of the region as it is today:

If this narrative tells us nothing else, it at least shows not much has changed in the last hundred years. The storming of embassies by frenzied mobs, the murder of diplomats, and the dispatch of warships to the Persian Gulf—all these were only too familiar to our Victorian forebears. Indeed, the headlines of today are often indistinguishable from those of a century or more ago.³

With that in mind, Hopkirk discusses how the Russians might have been better served had they paid attention to the failures of previous invaders, including Great Britain. The same logic applies to the United States, which chose not to pay attention to the lessons it might have learned, in turn, from the Russians.

Hopkirk discusses how the Russians might have been better served had they paid attention to the failures of previous invaders, including Great Britain. The same logic applies to the United States.

The Great Game officially ended around the time of World War I, which is where Hopkirk's book ends as well. However, following the collapse of the Soviet empire, a new Great Game has emerged, with many players competing to fill the void left by Moscow's official departure from Central Asia. Some of the new players, like Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and China, have been busy constructing mosques and Qur'anic schools, opening up consulates, and proffering large infrastructure projects such as roads and dams, in an attempt to solidify their position in the region. Original player Russia continues to put pressure on Central Asian and Caucasian countries to fall in line with Moscow's policies. Wages from the 10 to 12 million immigrants who come to work in Russia are a huge economic boon for these workers' home countries, counting for half of the national GDP in Tajikistan, for example. Russia often uses such strong-arm tactics as threatening to deport these workers whenever one of the Central Asian or Caucasian countries disagrees with a Russian initiative.

Following the collapse of the Soviet empire, a new Great Game has emerged, with many players competing to fill the void.

Then there is the new player, the United States. In recent years, Washington's primary interest in Central Asia has revolved around how the region could support allied efforts against insurgents in Afghanistan. Central Asia's strategic significance, however, potentially will grow in the face of the pending withdrawal of most foreign military forces from Afghanistan in 2014. Consequently, experienced extremists will have increased freedom of maneuver to train, man, equip, and wage jihad against weak or failing regimes in Central

Asia. The departure of U.S. and allied military forces from Afghanistan therefore should not be viewed as the end of their involvement in Central Asia. The Western powers need to decide whether they will be silent spectators or influential players in the “New Great Game,” because the struggle for power and influence has already begun. ❖

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

MAJ Wesley “Matt” Spear is a United States Army Civil Affairs officer and a student at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School.

NOTES

- 1 *Kim* first appeared serially in 1900, in *McClure's Magazine*. The first book edition was published by Macmillan and Co. Ltd. (London) in 1901. It was made into a colorful Hollywood movie of the same name in 1950.
- 2 Hopkirk, *The Great Game*, 5.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 7.



Michael of Chernigov at the camp of Batu Khan (1883), painting by Vasily Smirnov.

THE MOVING IMAGE

American Suicide Bomber

John Locke, U.S. Naval
Postgraduate School

THERE IS A DISTINCTION TO BE MADE BETWEEN THE WWII-WWII MOVIE—that is, a movie about World War II made during the war—and the postwar WWII movie.¹ In the WWII-WWII movie, the characters in the film and the film’s contemporary audience were both in doubt as to the war’s outcome; in the postwar film, only the characters can be in doubt. The difference in feel between the two eras is palpable. The grittiest of the WWII-WWII movies, especially the early ones, convey a sense of rapidly expanding apocalypse. They are about individual *and national* survival. By the 1960s, one class of WWII movies had transformed the war from an event into a genre: purely fictional films like *The Guns of Navarone* (1961) narrowed the narrative possibilities to a set of action-adventure motifs. Another class, exemplified by films like *The Longest Day* (1962), offered re-creations of famous battles in which the fascination with historical detail offset the lack of suspense about the outcome.²

In the WWII-WWII movie, the characters in the film and the film’s contemporary audience were both in doubt as to the war’s outcome.

A prime example of the WWII-WWII movie is *So Proudly We Hail*, which went into general release in September 1943.³ It has the further distinction of being a “woman’s picture,” which makes it a rarity among the typically male-oriented war movies. Producer Mark Sandrich had made his name directing five of the Fred Astaire–Ginger Rogers dance-musicals of the 1930s. *So Proudly We Hail* shows him venturing into the action field while incorporating his expertise in romance. Despite the film’s appeal to women, Sandrich nevertheless didn’t shy away from the violent consequences of war; he even included material that has a strangely prophetic relevance to today’s fight against terrorism. The film, inspired by the story of eight nurses evacuated from Corregidor Island in the Philippines to Melbourne, Australia, in April 1942, centers on the experiences of U.S. Army nurses during the Battle of the Philippines: the retreat from the Bataan Peninsula and the fall of Corregidor.⁴

An additional distinction of the WWII-WWII movie, including *So Proudly We Hail*, was the infusion of propagandistic elements.

Sandrich risked taking the time to produce a quality film, which bucked the prevailing wisdom on two counts. First was the assumption that a film could not be produced and exhibited as fast as the war was progressing; its subject, therefore, would no longer be topical by the time of the film’s release. The second notion insisted that large segments of the film audience were ambivalent toward war films because they read more than enough unsettling news in their daily papers and preferred the escapism of Westerns, musicals, and comedy. Sandrich hedged his bets by building romantic subplots into the script.

An additional distinction of the WWII-WWII movie, including *So Proudly We Hail*, was the infusion of propagandistic elements. These often came about through a combination of the screenwriters’ initiative in reflecting or shaping public sentiment and the suggestions offered by the Office of War Information (OWI), a federal department created to influence the messages included in popular entertainment media such as movies, radio, and magazines. The OWI’s Bureau of Motion Pictures (BMP) opened a Hollywood office in June 1942,

inaugurating a cooperative venture between government and the film studios that avoided First Amendment and censorship issues. Sandrich submitted the first script of *So Proudly We Hail* to the BMP in October of that year, initiating a dialogue between BMP officials, Sandrich, and his screenwriters. BMP suggestions were woven into the final screenplay.⁵

The film's leads were the powerhouse trio of Claudette Colbert (Lt. Janet Davidson), Paulette Goddard (Lt. Joan O'Doul), and Veronica Lake (Lt. Olivia D'Arcy). Although all of the Army nurses shared the same rank, Davidson was the senior in charge. The story opens with a flashback to late November 1941. The nurses are shipped on a transport from San Francisco to Hawaii, but the attack on Pearl Harbor diverts them to the Philippines. As they see other ships in the convoy blown to smithereens by torpedoes, horror is visible on the faces of the witnesses. Throughout the film, the violent imagery is shocking, even by the jaded standards of modern cinema.⁶ The filmmakers repeatedly conjure a sense of imminent and extreme danger for their audience.

After being rescued from one of the destroyed ships, D'Arcy is brought under Davidson's command. D'Arcy's high order of coldness and bitchiness creates immediate consternation among her fellow nurses. Davidson bunks with D'Arcy because no one else will. On Christmas Day 1941, the ship's chaplain delivers a speech on faith and the necessity of fighting to the death. Back in their cabin afterward, under Davidson's pressure, D'Arcy finally breaks down and speaks her true thoughts: "I'm going to kill Japs, every bloodstained one I can get my hands on." D'Arcy reveals that she was to be married that very Christmas Day, but that she had seen her fiancé gunned down on an airstrip during the Pearl Harbor attack: "Sixty bullets ... his face was gone ... I couldn't see him anymore. ... They must be punished, and I'm going to punish them." Two other nurses, attracted by the commotion, stand in the hatch, aghast. D'Arcy's confession is as shocking as the torpedo attack. The inflammatory language, the use of "Japs," the lurid imagery, the high-pitched emotions—all are characteristic of these early WWII-WWII films. War films from the second half of the war, when the final outcome started to look like a foregone conclusion, tended to be tamer. The suffering remained, but the desperation melted away.

The nurses are ordered to Bataan. Idle time onboard the ship affords time for romance to bloom between nurses and soldiers. Davidson is courted by a Navy doctor.

Bombs Thundered Her Wedding March!



... and she spent her honeymoon in a foxhole with a peanut butter sandwich for a wedding cake!

**This Is the Great Romance of Our Girls
At the Fighting Front . . . Laughing, Loving,
Fighting Side by Side With Their Men!**





Claudette Paulette Veronica
COLBERT · GODDARD · LAKE

in Paramount's

"SO PROUDLY WE HAIL"

A MARK SANDRICH PRODUCTION
with George Reeves · Barbara Britton · Walter Abel · Sonny Tufts
Directed by Mark Sandrich · Written by ARAM SCOTT



GIRLS Here's **SONNY TUFTS**, sensational new helmin star, who's Paulette's sweetie in the picture!

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Throughout the film, the violent imagery is shocking, even by the jaded standards of modern cinema.



Joan Tours in *So Proudly We Hail* (1943)

The nurses hear about the “bravery at the front,” which credits the Allied forces for fighting without assessing blame for the disastrous outcome.

When he attempts to kiss her for the first time, though, she backs away, declaring, “I can’t love you. We’ve got jobs to do.” It’s a message about the higher love that all Americans should be cherishing: love of country.

On Bataan, Davidson is introduced to Ling Chee, a Chinese guide. He wears glasses and is demonstrably intelligent and calm, a sharp contrast to the Japanese, who are consistently shown as bestial and immoral. Chee is there really only to remind the audience of the difference between the allied Chinese and the enemy Japanese. Later in the story, a Filipino surgeon demonstrates his courage by persevering through an operation while his wood-framed clinic takes a bomb from above, another message about the character of the Allies. More or less superfluous to the main plot, these are the kind of insertions routinely suggested by the BMP. Other plot points in the film deal with war shortages—the limited diet on the islands, nurses’ uniforms that don’t fit, and so on—reminding the home audience that they must make do in far less tough conditions without complaint. Unraveling all of these messages from the plot, and attributing their sources, is an intellectual treasure hunt.

Inside the nurses’ tent, away from Davidson’s ears, D’Arcy asks the head nurse: “Do you have any Japanese wounded? I’d like to handle them.” She lies about wanting to learn the language. It’s an ominous note; we immediately understand that she’s contemplating murder. She is assigned to the appropriate ward, where she relieves an overworked nurse and is left alone with the patients. When Davidson hears what has happened, she runs there in panic: “D’Arcy with the Japanese wounded!” But she finds D’Arcy slumped in defeat: “It’s alright. I couldn’t do it. . . . I couldn’t kill even a wounded rat.” The message is that Americans, even in their lowest moments, are incapable of war crimes.

As the Japanese push southward toward the encampment, the nurses hear about the “bravery at the front,” which credits the Allied forces for fighting without assessing blame for the disastrous outcome. Retreat by the nurses becomes inevitable but is mistimed, leaving a group trapped while Japanese soldiers overrun the encampment. One nurse warns the others, “We’d better kill ourselves. I was in Nanking. I saw what happened to women there . . . I’ve seen ’em fight over a woman like dogs.” Unnoticed, D’Arcy stashes a grenade in her blouse. She addresses the group: “It’s one of us or all of us”; that is, it’s better that one should die than all should be raped. And, given the seeds sown by the plot, the one would have to be D’Arcy, whose grief and hatred are incurably deep. She wanders out of hiding and down the street, one arm raised over her head, the other in her blouse. She times her act perfectly. As a group of Japanese soldiers surrounds her—perhaps lulled by her femininity into dropping their guard—she disappears in a violent ball of flame, and the film quickly cuts to the next scene.

It’s a disturbing image, unquestionably a suicide bombing in the modern understanding of the term. Of course, acts of self-sacrifice are common in war films: a soldier charges a machine-gun bunker, is shot, and tosses a grenade through the horizontal slit before dying. But D’Arcy’s act seems qualitatively different. She is a woman, a noncombatant, and the ultimate efficacy of her act cannot be known—all traits that could be attributed to many modern-day

suicide bombers. Conventional suicide, it should be noted, is condemned under a broad consensus: it is illegal under the law, considered a betrayal of faith under the beliefs of religion, and seen as a cowardly act in society when used as an escape from personal problems. The term *suicide bomber*, with connotations of religious extremism and pointless terrorism, is thus a super pejorative. All of this raises the question of whether D'Arcy's act provoked any moral outrage among viewers at the time. The film reviews of seven major city newspapers across the U.S. offered one way to gauge contemporary reactions. Given the moral and legal strictures, labeling the act a suicide would tend to undermine its sense of nobility, and in fact, only one review, in the *Los Angeles Times*, used the word: "... the suicide of a certain nurse [is] theatrically effective drama."⁷ Indeed it is, and if it is effective as drama, absent of any contrary point, it must be laudable as behavior. In only one review was the scene pointedly characterized; Bosley Crowther's plot summary in the *New York Times* said merely: "[D'Arcy] finally eliminates herself as a human bomb," without further comment.⁸ The audience of 1943, with accounts of the actual events still fresh in their minds, accepted the extreme danger of the nurses' predicament, the hopelessness of D'Arcy's life, and the complete lack of redeeming merit in the enemy—a setting in which a suicide bombing could be viewed as reasonable, or even noble. The current fight against terrorism gives the act fresh resonance.⁹



As a result of D'Arcy's sacrifice, the nurses are able to evacuate to Baguio, in the mountains well north of Bataan.¹⁰ D'Arcy's act remains a lesson in self-sacrifice, about doing everything in one's power for the war effort. It's a reminder to the audience that the true hardships are happening abroad.

Many of the incidents in the film were taken from news stories and melded into a single plot. The love lives of Davidson and D'Arcy appear to be derived from the experiences of one of the actual Bataan nurses, Juanita Redmond. She met her fiancé on a ship going from San Francisco to the Philippines in June 1940—that's her contribution to Davidson's character. The fiancé died in a fighter plane that was shot down during a Japanese raid on Port Darwin, Australia, on 19 February 1942—that's D'Arcy's trauma. The suicide appears

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to be the creation of the screenwriters. Redmond returned to San Francisco in June 1942, and ultimately published a book about her experiences.¹¹

Another incident “ripped from the headlines” is depicted in *So Proudly We Hail* as well. At one Bataan hospital base, personnel laid white sheets on the ground in the form of a cross in the hope that it would spare the facility from Japanese air bombings. On 10 April 1942, however, the base was attacked, wounding medical practitioners and soldiers in their hospital beds.¹² In the film version, while the cross is being laid out, the nurses speculate as to whether it will spare them from attack—or make them a target. Echoing the news reports, the latter turns out to be the case, because they are “bombed without mercy.” The film, though, omits a key detail: following American protests, the Japanese High Command at Manila apologized for the attack, calling it unintentional. Regardless of the truth of their assertion, such nuance could have found no place in a film of the WWII-WWII era because it would have contradicted the uncompromising portrait of the enemy as a subhuman aggressor. The BMP, in its advisory role, tried unsuccessfully throughout the war to dampen racist characterizations of the Japanese. From the BMP’s point of view, the fight was not about white versus yellow but about ideology: democracy versus fascism. Fascism could be defeated, an interpretation that offered hope for a lasting peace.¹³

D’Arcy’s act of self-sacrifice has been expanded into a metaphor: the American suicide bomber thus becomes the symbol of heroism for the entire campaign.

The final act of *So Proudly We Hail* covers the Americans’ evacuation to Corregidor, a widely covered news event, and the island’s eventual occupation by the Japanese. On the island, Davidson makes a surprising observation to the assembled nurses about why the war had sent them to places with foreign names that had become “American graveyards”: “It’s our own fault . . . because we believed we were the world, that the United States of America was the whole world.” It’s a rebuke of the isolationist policies that had delayed U.S. entry into World War II. She further explains that their role is to be a “delaying action,” to take heat while buying time for Allied forces to advance elsewhere. D’Arcy isn’t mentioned by name, but clearly her act of self-sacrifice has been expanded into a metaphor: the American suicide bomber thus becomes the symbol of heroism for the entire campaign.

The film was generally well received. The main complaint, from the predominantly male reviewers, was that the romantic subplots, seemingly plucked from the Hollywood screenwriter’s trick bag, detracted from the larger story of the war, even though, as is clear, these story lines were often adapted from actual news stories. The feature film will always focus on the experiences of individuals; the documentary plays by a different set of rules.

As to the film’s dramatic moments, if they are shocking now, then they must have been doubly so in 1943. Reviewer descriptions of the film bear this out: “a shattering impression of the tragedy of Bataan”; “death in its most terrifying aspects”; “grim, glorious, heroic and harrowing, a story that can be told only with sweat and blood and torment . . . sheer, heart-shaking tragedy”; “grim as war itself, [it] will leave you limp.”¹⁴

America fought its way from desperate straits to victory and postwar prosperity. Wartime agencies like the OWI were dismantled and forgotten. The BMP influenced the content of hundreds of films; the films remain, but many of the records are missing. Good times have a way of burying bad times.

Historians attempt to rescue the facts and meanings of the past, but films like *So Proudly We Hail* have great value in conveying elements that are often absent from written history, and are otherwise lost: the vivid moods and emotions that were unique to their times. ❖

Films like *So Proudly We Hail* have great value in conveying elements that are often absent from written history.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NOTES

- The ideas and opinions expressed by the author are his alone and do not represent the official positions of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. government, or any other official entity.
- These generalizations about the nature of the WWII-WWII movie apply to Hollywood's products, for practical reasons. The majority of the important Hollywood WWII-WWII movies, along with many British films of the era, are now available on DVD. Few foreign-language films of the era, in contrast, are available in the U.S. market; they appeal to a niche audience, and translated subtitles are an extra cost. Nations with vigorous cinema industries whose WWII films would be of particular interest include France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Japan. Based on a small sample, films from these industries contained propagandistic themes and messages and, like the British films of WWII, are worthy of separate consideration.
- So Proudly We Hail* (Paramount Pictures) was written by Allan Scott with uncredited contributions from First Lieutenant Eunice Hatchitt. It is worth noting that the script was written within months of the events it depicts, while the Japanese armed forces were still conquering Southeast Asia. The movie is available on DVD; see *So Proudly We Hail*, directed by Mark Sandrich, aired 9 September 1943 (Universal City, CA: Universal Studios, 2007).
- The Bataan Peninsula is the north arm enclosing Manila Bay on the Philippine island of Luzon. Corregidor Island lies 3–4 miles (5–6 km) from the tip of the peninsula in the mouth of Manila Bay.
- Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). The establishment of the Office of War Information and the Bureau of Motion Pictures (BMP) in June 1942 is discussed on pp. 58–59. For information specific to *So Proudly We Hail*, see pp. 98–104.
- One of *So Proudly We Hail's* four Oscar nominations was for Special Effects. All six films nominated in this category in 1943 were World War II movies. Paulette Goddard was nominated for Supporting Actress, Allan Scott for Writing (original screenplay), and Charles Lang for Cinematography (black-and-white). The film, however, was shut out on Oscar night.
- Philip K. Scheuer, "So Proudly We Hail: Heroic Tale of Eight Army Nurses in Pacific War Zone," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 September 1943.
- Bosley Crowther, "The Screen in Review: Misses Colbert, Goddard, Lake Seen in *So Proudly We Hail* as Army Nurses Who Aid the Wounded Men on Bataan," *New York Times*, 10 September 1943.
- Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*. While the authors examine the film and the exchanges between the BMP and the producers in detail, they describe D'Arcy's sacrifice as routine for war films without further comment. It is worth noting that the book, which is a valuable resource for movie buffs, was published in 1987, long before the War on Terrorism came into being.
- The film isn't very detailed about its geography. Whether the nurses actually moved more than a hundred miles from south to north and then back south again is unclear.
- Associated Press, "Eight Nurses of Bataan Back After Fleeing Japs," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 June 1942. See also Juanita Redmond's book, *I Served on Bataan* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1943).
- Associated Press, "Bombs on Bataan Hit Hospital Cots," *New York Times*, 12 April 1942.
- Koppes and Black, in *Hollywood Goes to War*, discuss depictions of the Japanese in chapter IX, "The Beast in the Jungle," pp. 248–77. In contrast, the Caucasian European enemy was regarded as a Nazi problem rather than a German problem, leaving room for "good Germans": honorable military men following orders and other reasonable people trapped by a harsh but temporary political system.
- The quotations, in the order they appear, are from Crowther, "The Screen in Review"; W. Ward Marsh, review of *So Proudly We Hail*, Paramount Pictures, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 2 September 1943; E.L., review of *So Proudly We Hail*, Paramount Pictures, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 2 September 1943; and Pericles Alexander, review of *So Proudly We Hail*, Paramount Pictures, *Dallas Morning News*, 10 September 1943.

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Strategic Culture

by Russell D. Howard

Issue Date: December 2013

In this monograph, Brigadier General (retired) Russ Howard presents an alternative to traditional International Relations Theory by asserting that a strategic culture analysis of states and non-state actors or groups is a better predictor of behavior. Specifically, General Howard posits that studying and understanding the strategic cultures of threatening states and non-state actors might be a more useful mechanism for analyzing potential adversaries' proclivity to using force to further their strategic security objectives. The author delves into the strategic cultures of the United States, China, Iran, North Korea, and al-Qaeda before analyzing commonalities among them. This foundation allows General Howard to develop and provide practical policy guidelines. This strategic culture analysis can be beneficial to all echelons, from the SOF operator in a village who must understand and work within the strategic culture of the operational environment, to the policymakers who must decide national strategy.

2014 JSOU and NDIA SOLIC Division Essay Contest—First Place Essay

by Colonel Cory M. Peterson

Issue Date: February 2014

We are pleased to present this winning essay from the 2014 contest. JSOU partners with the Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC) Chapter of the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) to sponsor an annual essay contest. Each year's first-place winner is recognized at the NDIA SO/LIC Symposium held in February and awarded a \$1,000 cash prize. The competition, which is open to resident and nonresident students attending Professional Military Education (PME) institutions, has produced outstanding works on special operations issues. This year's winning essay provides insight into what a recent PME graduate sees as a priority national security issue affecting special operations. The JSOU intent is that the essays from this annual competition will benefit our readers professionally and encourage future PME students to write on special operations issues.

Countering the al-Shabaab Insurgency in Somalia: Lessons for U.S. Special Operations Forces

by Graham Turbiville, Josh Meserve, and James Forest

Issue Date: February 2014

This work provides a meaningful context to al-Shabaab and the Somali milieu. The authors argue that al-Shabaab's prospects have probably never been so low as they are now. Al-Shabaab has been pushed from all of its major strongholds by a robust international effort, and its violent Salafism has alienated many Somalis. But it still has teeth. It continues to harass coalition forces, as well as ordinary Somalis, with improvised explosive devices, suicide bombings, and assassinations. Its tactics reflect a strategic decision made by its leadership to fight a guerrilla war, a familiar role for a group that thrived by waging an anti-Ethiopian insurgency in the mid-2000s.

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