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Peaceful protest in Binnish, Syria, June 2012

Post-Asad Syria

BY DANIEL SERWER

The situation in Syria has gone from bad to worse. United Nations (UN) observers have been unable to do more than report on numerous violations of the UN Security Council (UNSC)-sponsored ceasefire as well as atrocities committed against civilians. The authorities restrict their movements, threaten their security, and interfere with their communications. The Syrian government continues to use artillery, helicopter gunships, and paramilitary *shabiha* (loosely translated as “thugs”) against peaceful protesters as well as armed insurgents. The Free Syrian Army and other insurgent forces control at least some territory and are attacking Syrian security forces and installations.¹ Unknown assailants have committed a series of bombings against government offices and assassinated senior defense figures. Arms are flowing to the government from Russia while Saudi Arabia and Qatar are supplying the Free Syrian Army.

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s plan looks doomed, but it is still not too early to begin thinking about what Syria is going to look like postwar, assuming Bashar al-Asad eventually falls and a transition toward democracy begins. A year or two of lead time is not too early to begin planning. How the transition occurs will depend a good deal on the particular circumstances in which it takes place. An opposition military victory, a palace coup, and a negotiated turnover of power would look dramatically different, especially in the initial stages. This path dependency should not prevent analysis of the ultimate objectives and issues that will likely arise in trying to reach them. Working backward from the endstate eliminates some of the complexity associated with path dependency and allows a more farsighted and strategic approach to issues that are too often reduced to sequencing or other tactical details that cannot necessarily be decided in advance.

Unification of the Syrian opposition around a clear set of democratic transition goals and the organization needed to achieve them could provide the kind of cohesion that has been sorely lacking so far.² Once the goals are determined, some division of labor is appropriate. It would be particularly useful for expatriates to focus on longer term transition, as the opposition inside Syria will have difficulty focusing on anything more than tomorrow’s most urgent security and humanitarian requirements. This division of labor was at least partially productive in Libya,

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where the Stabilization Team worked abroad even while the fight against the Muammar Qadhafi regime continued. Expatriates will also have an advantage in dealing with the international community, if only because communication with the multination “Friends of the Syrian People,” as well as international organizations, will be easier for those located abroad. The expatriate Future of Iraq project, which the U.S. State Department conducted in advance of the Iraq invasion, might have been useful had the Pentagon been more receptive. But ultimately, people who have lived under the Asad regime will want to determine the country’s transition path.

Mine is not the first effort to consider future scenarios in Syria, nor will it be the last. I focus here on the situation inside Syria. Patrick Clawson has considered the regional implications of a democratic transition and other scenarios.³ Others have worried about the divided opposition—whether it can lead a transition and if so, to what.⁴ They have also outlined immediate steps to begin to establish security, rule of law, democracy, and transitional justice.⁵ The focus in this article is on longer term objectives associated with a transition to democracy and the medium-term measures (the next 1–3 years) needed to achieve them.

As we know from Iraq and Afghanistan, postwar failures can absorb resources and shape outcomes as much as wartime events. We are seeing that happen also in Libya, where wartime militias are refusing to disarm or put themselves under central command, weakening the new government and slowing—perhaps even derailing—the transition to democracy. Syria has a diverse population and displays many of the warning signs associated with mass atrocity following

political upheavals.⁶ Its transition is likely to be no easier than those in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen. It may be a good deal more difficult.

Every postwar situation is unique. Context matters. Syrians, not foreigners, should make the key decisions. The Syrian National Council, in a statement that has not generated dissent and appears to represent consensus, has laid out a broad goal for the transition in its National Covenant for a New Syria: “Syria is a civil, democratic, pluralistic, independent and free state. As a sovereign country, it will determine its own future based only on the collective will of its people. Sovereignty will belong in its entirety only to the Syrian people who will exercise it through democracy.”⁷ Within this overall objective, it is instructive to explore some of the main issues—using a framework that spans these endstates—for a successful democratic revolution:

- safe and secure environment
- rule of law
- stable governance
- sustainable economy
- social well-being.⁸

Safe and Secure Environment

This is job number one in many postwar environments and will certainly be the top priority in Syria. No matter how the war ends, there will be several armed forces in the country: the Syrian army, the shabiha (armed but not uniformed regime paramilitaries), the various internal security services, the police, and the disparate units of the resistance, usually but not always going by the appellation Free

Syrian Army.⁹ A stay-behind operation, such as the one conducted by Saddam Hussein's Fedayeen in Iraq, is likely and would probably have Iranian support. The mainly Alawite shabiha would be the likely vector for a post-war insurgency.

If serious post-Asad slaughter is to be avoided, the pro- and anti-regime forces will have to be kept separate, at least for a time. They will then have to be at least partly disarmed, demobilized, and reintegrated—with some of them going into a new army, some into other security forces, and some into civilian life, including prosecution of human rights abusers. It is difficult to see how separation of various forces can be accomplished without a substantial peacekeeping force, one that would assist the transition administration not only in disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating but also in reforming the security forces—that is, security sector reform. This will be a multiyear effort leading eventually to restoration of the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of violence.

Postwar environments often require police forces with more substantial firepower and manpower than are normally available to police on the beat in peacetime situations. These “constabulary” or “gendarmerie” forces, which are trained and equipped to act in “formed” police units of about 100 paramilitaries, will likely have to be supplied internationally at first. Their roles may include prevention of rioting and ethnic cleansing, confrontation with armed militias or spoilers, protection of vital infrastructure, and other internal security functions where enhanced capabilities are needed.

One particular problem will preoccupy the Americans: dealing with Syria's weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Although

thought to be mainly chemical weapons, Syria's WMDs are likely also to include nuclear and biological material. Special arrangements will need to be made to ensure that this material does not get into black market circulation.¹⁰ Of additional concern to both the Americans and Syria's neighbors will be other sensitive weapons such as MANPADs (man-portable air defense systems), antitank missiles, and heavy machineguns. We are facing problems with the circulation of arms of these sorts from Libya in the Sahel and elsewhere. Syria will be no less problematic. Its neighbors—especially Iraq and Turkey—will want the postwar regime to ensure that these arms do not get into the hands of their own domestic insurgents (mainly Sunnis in Iraq

only once a safe and secure environment is established under new and less abusive security forces can the new authorities hope to disarm the general population

and Kurds in Turkey). Israel will also have reason to be concerned. Weapons collection in the aftermath of war is always difficult. Young men do not give up their arms readily. Only once a safe and secure environment is established under new and less abusive security forces can the new authorities hope to disarm the general population.

Rule of Law

Syria has police, prosecutors, judiciary, and prisons, but they have been subservient to an autocratic and abusive regime for the past 40 years. The legal frameworks under which they have operated since the mid-1960s, which include “exceptional” laws and courts operating outside the constitutional framework,

will have to be dismantled.¹¹ The personnel will need to be vetted by a transition regime, the worst human rights abusers weeded out, and new people trained to take their places. Police are especially problematic in postwar situations; it is impossible to do without them, but at least some of them are likely to be deeply implicated in abusing the population. Whether to vet and retrain, or start a new police force from scratch, is an important decision. Establishment of a judiciary that is independent of executive and legislative power as well as impartial in applying law based on respect for human rights will be a major responsibility during the transition to democracy.¹²

Treatment of former regime persons is an important issue, especially if many share a distinct minority ethnic or sectarian background. Big shots are particularly problematic. Will they be tried in Syria, as was done in Iraq, or will they be transferred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague? Most countries prefer to try their own people, especially those who want to apply the death penalty, an option that is not available at the ICC. Ensuring transparent and fair treatment of Alawites will be especially challenging, since they provided mainstays of the Asad regime, even if some have joined the revolution. Some Druze and Christians will also be suspect. Not everyone will want to distinguish between those who benefited from the regime and those who did not. As the Public International Law and Policy Group notes, establishing clear criteria for who will be prosecuted and how, even before the fall of the regime, could be helpful in gaining support from those who are trying to decide now whether to support the opposition.¹³

The question of compensation for victims of the regime, including for misappropriated property as well as human rights violations, will need to be decided in due course. There are many different precedents. It is easy for expectations to grow inordinately. Their disappointment can be a serious political problem, so deciding on principles and a process that is clear and understandable is important, even if early compensation or restoration of property is impossible. It will likely take years and even decades before all the claims and counterclaims are definitively settled.

Notably, the question of shariah, which has arisen in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt, is not even mentioned in a 2007 review of political Islam in Syria.¹⁴ Nor does it appear in the National Covenant for a New Syria.¹⁵ Nevertheless, for many Islamists—and in particular for the Muslim Brotherhood that is said to strongly influence the Syrian National Council—rule of law necessarily entails implementation of some form of Islamic justice, or justice based on Islamic principles.¹⁶ Precisely what this means has varied widely in different countries and under different regimes, but the issue will likely arise, along with the status of women. The questions of shariah and the status of women are particularly problematic in a multiconfessional society such as Syria where significant portions of the population may not view shariah—whatever its specific meaning—as part of their cultural tradition.

Stable Governance

Syria, unlike Libya, has fully developed state institutions that will in principle be at the disposal of whoever takes over. State services, which in Syria include water, electricity,

education, health, and food subsidies among other things, will presumably continue their operations as best they can until decisions are made otherwise. But an autocratic state such as Syria is unused to the demands for openness, responsiveness, and efficiency that will quickly arise. Government employees may be even more sullen and resistant than usual. Keeping expectations down and performance of state institutions up is vital.

While some may hope that the Syrian army will push Asad out and guide the transition, Egypt illustrates how problematic military control of a political revolution can be.¹⁷ The Syrian army will have substantial interests of its own to protect, including economic interests and impunity for acts committed under the Asad regime. If it takes over, it cannot be relied on to move in a democratic direction, or to do so with conviction. Even more than in Egypt, the Syrian army has acted as an instrument of the autocracy, committing many of the worst abuses. Anti-regime Syrians would see an army takeover as a change in window dressing, from which the networks that supported the Asads would continue to benefit.

A civilian-led transition in a country wracked by war is no panacea either, as we have seen in Libya where the nominal civilian leaders have often played second fiddle to revolutionary militias. But let us assume that the Syrian National Council, or maybe some umbrella organization that encompasses it, becomes the de facto governing authority in the aftermath of Asad's exit. Whoever it is will need to lay out a process quickly for revising or replacing the constitution (the latest one supposedly approved in a referendum on February 26, 2012), electing a new president and a serious parliament—the one

supposedly elected in May 2012 is a sham—as well as new officials at the provincial and local levels. The covenant does not establish the order and timing of these essential steps.¹⁸ The order is important, as is transparency and breadth of participation. Best practice nowadays calls for a broad consultative or representative process in preparing the constitution and electoral laws.¹⁹ Achieving this can be difficult in postwar conditions. Temporary arrangements may be required, allowing time for a more deliberative process.

local before national elections provide a way to test the electoral mechanism and see who is beginning to emerge politically

The Syrian revolution has generated a remarkable array of local revolutionary councils and coordination committees. It would be wise to consider building local governance on their initiative, empowering them to organize elections and begin the reconstruction of governance from the grassroots up rather than from Damascus down. Local before national elections provide a way to test the electoral mechanism and see who is beginning to emerge politically. In addition, local elections are more often fought on issues and personalities rather than identity or ideology. In a society likely to be plagued by sectarian and ethnic division, focusing initially on local issues would provide an opportunity to build political parties driven more by economic and social needs than by ideological and sectarian wants.

Sustainable Economy

Syria has big problems in this department, largely due to excessive state involvement in a less-than-thriving economy.²⁰ Oil production

is declining and likely will continue in that direction even with foreign help. Some financial assets are frozen abroad and can be repatriated, but that process is often slow. While the stock of public debt is not large, the budget deficit is high and rising, as is inflation. Credit has dried up. Foreign currency reserves have been plummeting. The currency is collapsing. Income disparities have been widening, and the poor have tended to support the revolution. Half the population is younger than 25. Unemployment is dramatically high (likely 20–30 percent).

Any transition regime will be broke and face difficult economic issues: whether to continue subsidies (in particular to food and fuel), whether to keep the Syrian pound or replace it with a new currency, whether to try to slow inflation, what to do about foreign debt, and how to reverse the privatizations and other economic privileges granted to regime cronies that have aroused enormous popular resentment. All this will need to be

Syria will have to design accountability and reconciliation mechanisms that satisfy some of the craving for justice without preventing the government and society from moving forward

decided with the general population clamoring for jobs and continued state support. Disentangling the networks that bind elite business actors to state officials through ill-gotten wealth will be difficult. Even outside the inner circle of the regime, the economy is dominated by businessmen, many of whom have so far refused to join or support the opposition. This will not be forgotten and will fuel a great deal of resentment that could make economic stability difficult to attain.²¹

While there may be some frozen assets that can be repatriated quickly, Syria will likely face a much more difficult financial situation than oil-rich Libya—one more like Egypt and Tunisia. Quick international action to make resources available to Syria will be vital. The Syrian National Council has initiated planning for a “Marshall Syrian Recovery Plan” through the Working Group on Economic Recovery and Development, a Friends of the Syrian People group that is expected to provide funds to rebuild Syria.²² Anticipated initial needs amount to \$11.5 billion to stop the currency from collapsing and to pay public sector workers’ salaries.²³

Social Well-being

There will be massive requirements for immediate humanitarian assistance in Homs, Hama, Idlib, and other population centers the Syrian army has been attacking for the better part of a year. Food, shelter, and medical assistance are the obvious priorities.

In addition, Syria harbored approximately 1 million refugees from Iraq, more than 400,000 Palestinians, and more than 300,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) even before last year’s fighting (many from Golan).²⁴ The number of IDPs will now be much higher, and several hundred thousand Syrians are currently refugees in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq.

Sectarian and ethnic tensions will be evident quickly. Alawites will be at immediate risk as will Druze and Christians who have benefited from regime privileges. Kurds are unlikely to be resented as they have suffered discrimination and worse under the Asad regime, but it is not clear to what extent they will lend support to any transition, which Arabs will necessarily dominate. The Syrian National Council

recently elected a Kurd as its leader, but the Syrian Kurdish National Council remains separate, at least for now. Ensuring Kurdish and other minority representation in the transition is vital to overcoming the fears, resistance, and centrifugal forces to which it will give rise.

Looking longer term, Syria will have to decide how to deal with the legacy of the Asad regime, and in particular it must design accountability and reconciliation mechanisms that satisfy at least some of the craving for justice without preventing the government and society from moving forward. Egypt has not been successful at this, and the process has not even begun in Libya.

Bottom Line

This catalogue only scratches the surface in describing the problems that will arise in a post-Asad transition to a more open

society. While Syrians should lead, it is clear that a good deal of outside assistance will be required: financial, economic, technical, operational, military, and legal. It is hard to picture all this being managed without a substantial foreign presence, including peacekeeping forces to relieve the new authorities of the burden of maintaining a safe and secure environment while they focus on the many other matters requiring urgent attention. Planning may have begun for a UN/Arab League force, which would be the logical follow-on from Kofi Annan's UN/Arab League mediation effort.

Syria is a big country of over 22 million people, albeit not as populous as Iraq or Afghanistan. Any serious international peacekeeping/building effort would still require, even with permissive conditions, on the order of 50,000 troops and police. A significant portion might be Syrian, provided units can



U.S. Air Force (H.H. Deffner)

Syrian soldier aims Chinese AK-47 assault rifle and wears Soviet NBC warfare mask during Operation Desert Shield

be found that did not participate actively in Asad's repression. The international actors will not be easy to find and, of course, the transition authorities will need to invite them in.²⁵ This will be over and above a substantial international civilian effort, first for humanitarian relief and eventually to support the Syrians as they find their own way politically and economically.

Who can provide the forces required? The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is out of the question—neither Europe nor the United States would be prepared to consider the proposition for financial and political reasons. The Arab League has never done this kind of operation. It is time for them to figure out how, with help from Turkey and some others. But both Arab League and Turkish troops will be overwhelmingly Sunni, which will not reassure Alawites and other Syrian minorities. It is difficult to picture Lebanese or Bahraini forces, which are at least in part Shia, playing more than bit parts. Iraqi forces are preoccupied with their own country's challenges. Russia might be willing, but Moscow's position during the revolution will be widely resented. Indonesia? Republic of the Philippines? Raising the forces for any substantial international presence in post-Asad Syria is going to be extraordinarily difficult.

These requirements arise in the best of all possible worlds, where Syria is moving more or less decisively in a more democratic direction. But be careful what you wish for. Post-Asad Syria will be no picnic. **PRISM**

Notes

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understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Syrias_Armed_Opposition.pdf>.

² Elizabeth O'Bagy, *Syria's Political Opposition*, Middle East Security Report 4 (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, April 2012), available at <www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Syrias_Political_Opposition.pdf>. As this article went to press, a Cairo conference of 210 adherents to the Syrian opposition published a "joint political vision" concerning the transition period and a "national compact" laying out the future constitutional basis. See "Syria: the final statement of the Syrian opposition conference," July 6, 2012, available at <http://othersuns.wordpress.com/2012/07/06/syria-the-final-statement-for-the-syrian-opposition-conference/>. These documents confirm the overall democratic direction but leave a great deal of details still unspecified.

³ Patrick Clawson, *Post-Asad Syria: Opportunity or Quagmire*, INSS Strategic Forum 276 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, February 2012), available at <www.ndu.edu/press/lib/pdf/StrForum/SF-276.pdf>.

⁴ Yezid Sayigh, "The Coming Tests of the Syrian Opposition," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Commentary, April 19, 2012, available at <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/04/19/coming-tests-of-syrian-opposition/acqs>.

⁵ Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG), "Planning for Syria's 'Day After'—Security, Rule of Law and Democracy," March 2012; and "Planning for Syria's 'Day After'—A Framework for Transitional Justice in Post-Assad Syria," April 2012.

⁶ Barbara Harff, "Assessing Risks of Genocide and Politicide: A Global Watchlist for 2012," available at <www.gpanet.org/webfm_send/120>.

⁷ Syrian National Council, "National Covenant for a New Syria," March 27, 2012, available at <www.syriancouncil.org/en/issues/item/618-national-covenant-for-a-new-syria.html>. Steven Heydemann, a United States Institute of Peace (USIP) senior advisor for the Middle East who has worked extensively with a broad spectrum of the Syrian opposition, has confirmed the lack of dissent in a private communication.

⁸ This framework is laid out in *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction* (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2009), available at <www.usip.org/publications/guiding-principles-stabilization-and-reconstruction>.

⁹ "Appendix I: Structure and Command of Armed Forces and Intelligence Agencies," Human Rights Watch, December 16, 2011, available at <www.hrw.org/node/103558/section/12>; Holliday.

¹⁰ Andrew Exum, "What the Hell Should We Do About Syria: Lock Up the WMDs," *Foreign Policy*, May 30, 2012.

¹¹ Muhanad Alhasani, "An Analysis of Existing Legislative and Constitutional Structures in Syria," Strategic Research and Communication Centre, 2012, available at <www.syriancouncil.org/en/analysis/item/658-an-analysis-of-existing-legislative-and-constitutional-structures-in-syria.html>.

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¹³ PILPG, "Planning for Syria's 'Day After'—A Framework for Transitional Justice in Post-Assad Syria."

¹⁴ Salam Kawakibi, "Political Islam in Syria," Centre for European Policy Studies Working Document No. 270, June 2007.

¹⁵ Syrian National Council.

¹⁶ Liz Sly, "Syria's Muslim Brotherhood Is Gaining Influence over anti-Assad Revolt," *The Washington Post*, May 12, 2012.

¹⁷ March Lynch, "That's It for Egypt's So-Called Transition," *Foreign Policy*, June 14, 2012.

¹⁸ For one proposal as to how the new governing arrangements should be set up, see Rouba Al-Fattal Eeckelaert, "Electoral System in Future Syria," Strategic Research and Communication Centre, 2012, available at <http://strescom.org/sites/default/files/Electoral_Reform-en.pdf>. She favors a presidential system with a parliament elected by proportional representation with closed electoral lists.

¹⁹ Vivien Hart, *Democratic Constitution Making*, Special Report 107 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, July 2003). See also Laurel Miller, ed., *Framing the State in Times of Transition: Case Studies in Constitution Making* (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2010).

²⁰ "Syria," Heritage Foundation 2012 Index of Economic Freedom, available at <www.heritage.org/index/country/syria>.

²¹ Bassam Haddad, "The Syrian Regime's Business Backbone," *Jadaliyya*, March 22, 2012, available at <www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4778/the-syrian-regimes-business-backbone>.

²² Some of this work is reflected on the Syrian National Council Web site, available at <www.syriancouncil.org/en/bureaus/finance-a-economic-affairs.html>.

²³ "SNC Participates in Friends of Syria Economic Recovery Working Group," May 24, 2012, available at

<www.syriancouncil.org/en/news/item/681-snc-participates-in-friends-of-syria-economic-recovery-working-group.html>.

²⁴ Sherifa Shafie, "Palestinian Refugees in Syria," Forced Migration Online Research Guide, available at <www.forcedmigration.org/research-resources/expert-guides/palestinian-refugees-in-syria/fmo017.pdf>; and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2012 UNHCR Country Operations Profile—Syrian Arab Republic, available at <www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486a76.html>.

²⁵ James F. Dobbins, "Guidelines for Nation Builders," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* (Fall 2010), 15–42, available at <www.au.af.mil/au/ssq/2010/fall/dobbins.pdf>.



Intelligence officer from PRT Zabul listens to villagers from Khleqdad Khan, Afghanistan

“Left of Bang”

The Value of Sociocultural Analysis in Today’s Environment

BY MICHAEL T. FLYNN, JAMES SISCO, AND DAVID C. ELLIS

Hard lessons learned during counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, counterterrorist operations across continents, and the Arab Spring all contributed to a growing recognition within the Intelligence Community (IC)¹ of the importance of understanding the “human terrain” of operating environments. The Department of Defense (DOD), its Service branches and combatant commands, and the broader IC responded to the demand for sociocultural analysis (SCA) by creating organizations such as the Defense Intelligence Socio-Cultural Capabilities Council, Human Terrain System, and U.S. Central Command’s Human Terrain Analysis Branch, among others. For large bureaucracies, DOD and the IC reacted agilely to the requirement, but the robust SCA capabilities generated across the government over the last decade were largely operationally and tactically organized, resourced, and focused. What remains is for the IC to formulate a strategic understanding of SCA and establish a paradigm for incorporating it into the intelligence process.

Simply stated, the lesson of the last decade is that failing to understand the human dimension of conflict is too costly in lives, resources, and political will for the Nation to bear. Once a conflict commences, it is already too late to begin the process of learning about the population and its politics. The optimal condition is for our leaders to have the ability to influence budding conflicts “left of bang,” that is, *before* tensions turn violent. Left of bang, policy options are more numerous, costs of engagement are lower, and information flows more freely to more actors. After bang, options decrease markedly, the policy costs rise rapidly, and information

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becomes scarce and expensive. More than ever, military, intelligence, and diplomatic professionals recognize this reality.

A tremendous opportunity now exists for the Intelligence Community to build upon its world-class analytical foundation. Complex social phenomena such as population growth and demographic change, economic globalization, and the information and communication revolutions demand even greater attention. Unfortunately, the IC struggles to integrate sociocultural analysis into traditional collection and analysis because its structures remain rooted in the state-centric context of the Cold

the lesson of the last decade is that failing to understand the human dimension of conflict is too costly in lives, resources, and political will for the Nation to bear

War. The evolving nexus of threats among terrorist groups, transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), cyber-criminals, humanitarian crises, and pandemics is merely symptomatic of the need to reconceptualize the way populations, political systems, and geography intersect. A new concept should seek to explain how populations understand their reality, why they choose either to support or resist their governments, how they organize themselves socially and politically, and why and how their beliefs transform over time.

In contrast to the IC's typical state-centric analysis, which seeks to determine how states can or do impose stability, the IC must develop a sensory capability to better detect the precursors to political change, a "social radar" with a level of granularity, understanding, and confidence that enables policy leaders to make informed decisions that maximize national

influence left of bang. As a first step toward building a population-centric social radar, this article explains why integrating SCA remains counterintuitive to the IC, describes how social amplifiers compound the difficulty, offers a framework for inexpensively and proactively capturing sociocultural information, and suggests a paradigm for converting sociocultural information into intelligence production.

Old Structure, New Threats

That we are largely uninformed about populations and ill-prepared to understand them is a natural consequence of the IC being built upon the edifice of Cold War politics. Much of the IC was established to detect, understand, and maneuver against adversaries' actions and intentions by employing all methods of national influence, including military assets, economic strength, and diplomatic skill. Sovereignty as a core principle of international order meant that states would not generally concern themselves with how other governments managed their populations.² Yet in many parts of the world, weakening or eroded state sovereignty enables many of the above threats against our national interests to grow. Under conditions of meaningful sovereign state authority, these issues are manageable. However, failed and failing states create circumstances whereby aggrieved populations and nonstate actors can assert themselves in ways that are not easily comprehensible to the IC. To frame the challenge ahead, the Failed States Index asserts that approximately 20 percent of the world's states are now considered to be failed states or are at severe risk of failing.³

While our current intelligence architecture proved successful in the context of the Cold War, it has been much less successful in

the world of weak and failed states unleashed by the collapse of governments whose survival was, ironically, predicated upon the largesse provided by the United States and Soviet Union. In a recent Center for Strategic and International Studies report, Anthony Cordesman and Nicholas Yarosh reinforce this point:

*countries, intelligence experts, members of international institutions, NGOs [nongovernmental organizations], and area experts need to do a far better job of developing basic data on the causes of instability. . . . Far better data are needed in key areas like unemployment and underemployment, income distribution, the efficiency of the state sector, barriers to growth and economic development, the size and function [of] security forces and police, and quality of governance.*⁴

Equating sovereign authority with stability is no longer analytically appropriate. As Cordesman and Yarosh indicate, today’s conflicts are more about ideas and governance than they are about invasion by a foreign government.

The state-centric “order” the West enjoyed during the Cold War is in today’s world assessed by many populations to be illegitimate and worth their sacrifice to change. Many states formed after World War II and during the 1960s era of decolonization are dissolving or losing functional sovereignty because their regimes have been unwilling or unable to govern legitimately on behalf of many—or even most—of their people. Their populations are organizing in social movements or around insurgencies to change their circumstances.⁵ Even worse, narco-traffickers and other resource warlords

are now taking advantage of popular discontent with governments and asserting military dominance over valuable tracts of territory, often at the expense of the population itself.⁶ When amplified by social tensions (discussed below), populations as subnational actors can have greater political influence than in the past, with many of them threatening or raising the costs of maintaining the international political and economic order.

the state-centric “order” the West enjoyed during the Cold War is in today’s world assessed by many populations to be illegitimate and worth their sacrifice to change

Amplifiers and Accelerators

Population Growth. Global population has doubled since the early 1950s, predominantly in parts of the world where institutions of state are least able to create the conditions for social order and stability. Despite a trend toward slower rates of population growth on the global scale, through 2050 more than 95 percent of future world population growth will occur in developing nations. By 2050, the populations in some of the world’s least developed countries—many of which are experiencing or recently emerging from conflict—will be at least double their current size including Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Liberia, Niger, Somalia, and Uganda. These countries are also home to some of the world’s poorest and youngest populations, where continued high rates of population growth have created a large youth bulge.⁷

These disenfranchised youths struggle for limited resources, employment opportunities,

sense of belonging, and upward mobility in their communities, tribes, and villages. In many cases, the very states of which they are “citizens” proactively deny them opportunity.⁸ With limited options, the allure of quick wealth associated with illicit activities and the sense of purpose preached by radical movements are sufficient to mobilize enough of them to threaten many states’ integrity.

Even important demographic changes within allied nations should be of interest to the IC. For example, significant aging in Europe in concert with growing Muslim populations could alter the economic capacity or political calculus of governments to support the United States in foreign affairs. On the other hand, corresponding aging trends in China might prohibit future military adventurism due to the high costs associated with an expansive welfare state.⁹ Whether driven by youth bulges, deprivation, or aging, demographic changes now matter more analytically than they have in the past.

Economic Globalization. Globalization entails the qualitative and quantitative increase in the scope and intensity of “interactions and interdependencies among peoples and countries of the world.”¹⁰ The progressive erosion of barriers to trade—whether based on policy, geography, or transportation—has enabled a rapid expansion of trade and contact among previously distant populations. Economic globalization has resulted in an incredible degree of prosperity and rising incomes at an unprecedented rate for those able to participate.¹¹ The BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) demonstrate the amazing advances that accrue with freer markets, substantive technology transfers, and low policy barriers to trade.

However, economic globalization also amplifies vexing challenges such as income

inequality within nations, environmental degradation, the income gap between developed and developing nations, and fears of cultural decay. The increasingly competitive and interconnected world raises the potential for conflicts and crises to escalate in multiple domains.¹² Ethnic, racial, and religious stratifications correlated with differences in opportunity and wealth often reinforce existing tensions within countries, creating fertile ground for exploitation by nonstate actors such as TCOs and extremist groups. Individuals no longer accept the status quo from their governments and are demanding a better way of life for themselves, their families, and communities, especially when they know alternatives exist.

The Communication Revolution. The explosion in communications technology, social media in particular, has dramatically increased a population’s ability to organize and communicate. Whereas state governments could effectively limit association and information exchange in the past, the modern Internet and cell phone coverage make this objective more difficult. For example, as of December 2011, there were over 2.1 billion Internet users with 3 billion email addresses, 152 million blog sites, and 276 million Web sites with 45 percent of users under the age of 25. Facebook has more than 800 million active users who log in 175 million times every 24 hours, 65 million through mobile devices, sharing over 30 billion pieces of content each month. Traditional closed societies around the world are also beginning to use these media to rapidly disseminate information. In China, Weibo—a micro-blogging Web site equivalent to Twitter—has more than 250 million users, most of whom are educated and white collar, and it is becoming a major influence in

Chinese society. Grassroots social movements, as evidenced during the Arab Spring, are using these capabilities to organize demonstrations, spread messages to large audiences, and even overthrow governments.

While the sociocultural and research community has been interested in social media and how to leverage it for intelligence purposes for years, the Iranian Green Revolution and Arab Spring have given rise to a new fascination with it. However, the use of social media was incidental, not causal, to these popular uprisings. Discontent existed before the explosion of social media and was identifiable and measurable even in social media’s absence. What social media do provide populations is a virtual organizing capability in the face of physical repression by regimes. Unfortunately, there is a tendency to view the geospatial depiction of Facebook and Twitter feeds or ethno-religious human terrain maps to be the sum total of sociocultural analysis. In fact, this is but a

small part of the type of sociocultural analysis available to the IC, but it can be an insightful component if properly utilized.

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Integrating SCA within the Conflict Continuum

To proactively build a social radar capable of sensing important impacts on populations and political systems like the ones above, it is first necessary to conceptualize how the IC can come to know them, particularly in the coming era of constrained budgets. Unlike state-centric analysis that is often reduced to quantitative metrics, such as gross domestic product or mechanized infantry battalions, SCA requires deep, qualitative understanding



U.S. Marine Forces Africa

Members of Royal Moroccan Army conduct terrain analysis during intelligence staff training as part of exercise African Lion 2010

about populations. Though such a task seems daunting at first, the conflict continuum in the figure illustrates how the IC can inexpensively and proactively integrate SCA with traditional collection and analysis.

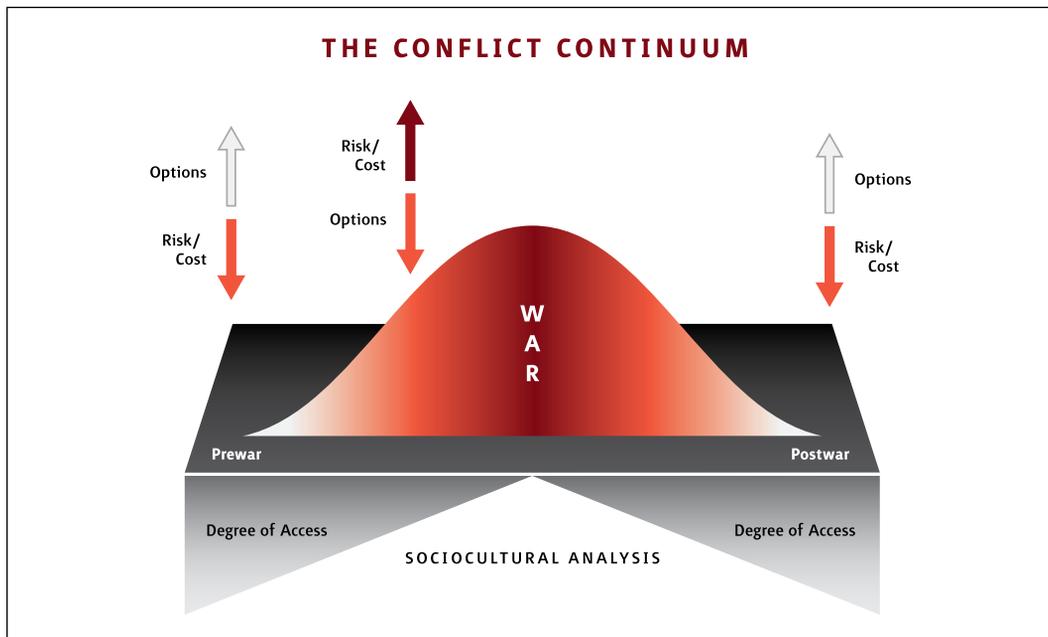
Prior to conflict, or left of bang, the IC has a great deal of access to various information sources. The universe of information sources includes partner nations, academia, private-sector companies, and social media, all of which often enjoy unfettered access to the population and generate information about it as a normal activity. These information sources can provide a wealth of information, enabling analysts to develop baseline assessments of populations, cultures, behaviors, and social narratives.

When SCA methodologies and techniques are applied, strategic indications and warning can be derived from deviations in the baseline. These deviations can inform military and

political decisionmakers of possible uprisings or conflicts so they can avoid them. At this stage in the conflict continuum, deeper socio-cultural understanding results in a broader range of policy options available to the nation and its allies to prevent conflict.

As tensions rise and move toward conflict, the potential for violence increases the risk and cost of available responses while constraining policy options and access to information. By conducting SCA in Phase 0 and having a baseline, the IC will be able to inform military planners of potential threats and recommend sound policy options consistent with the population’s worldview and attitudes. Such an approach puts policy and national interests more in line with the needs of the population to generate common achievable outcomes. This can prevent poor decisions based on a lack of information and understanding of social dynamics.

Figure. The Conflict Continuum



As conflict concludes, reconstituting a sustainable, legitimate polity becomes more likely if the new institutions of state reflect the values, norms, and organizing principles of the population. In addition, reduced violence results in greater access to the population through NGOs and humanitarian efforts. This will allow the IC to reestablish baseline understandings of the population in the new context. This reestablished baseline allows the IC to develop realistic recommendations informing actions to include forming a government, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction efforts, infrastructure development, reintegration and reconciliation programs, and establishing military and police forces. These initiatives are extraordinarily complex, so the more data and knowledge that are available before a conflict, the more likely the right questions and interests will be addressed after it.

U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Commander Admiral William H. McRaven, whose forces must be culturally attuned in the fight against extremists, recently stated, “Clearly, we need to continue to improve our understanding and respect for other cultures, improve our language capability and cultivate our ability to build relationships.”¹³ Hard lessons over the past decade demonstrate the costs associated with building government institutions that fail to coincide with and take into account the population’s ontology (worldview, identity, norms, and narratives). As Admiral McRaven notes, “Enduring success is achieved by proper application of indirect operations, with an emphasis in building partner-nation capacity and mitigating the conditions that make populations susceptible to extremist ideologies.”¹⁴ But discovering when, where, how, and why to apply that influence cannot occur in the midst of conflict without

resulting in significant errors. The IC can organize its resources and processes to ingest SCA into intelligence with the right framework.

Integrating SCA through RSI

The Intelligence Community has the opportunity to meet growing demands for socio-cultural analysis, but requires a paradigm describing how to resource this capability and explaining its value to foreign and military policy. This article asserts that today’s threat environment, in which subnational actors and complex social trends persistently undermine the state system, requires addressing budding conflicts before they turn violent. Doing so will allow the United States to better respond with a wider range of policy options at lower cost. The conflict continuum is offered to conceptualize the value of conducting SCA before

knowledge about populations has a long shelf life given that cultures, norms, and values change only gradually

crises manifest. Additionally, the reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence (RSI) framework is suggested to integrate whole of nation resources for understanding threats to populations, their states, and national interests.¹⁵ RSI is a paradigm codeveloped by USSOCOM’s Matthew Puls and U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command G2’s Dr. Kira Hutchinson for incorporating existing sociocultural analysis resources into the intelligence process.¹⁶ In contrast to intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), which is generally perishable (find, fix, finish), RSI suggests that a long-term research perspective is necessary for learning about populations (understand, analyze, engage). Populations

are, under normal conditions, easily discoverable and available, so national, international, allied, and private-sector resources can come to know them at relatively low cost. Moreover, knowledge about populations has a long shelf life given that cultures, norms, and values change only gradually.

In the notional RSI process, the reconnaissance phase is dedicated to understanding the world as seen, experienced, valued, and practiced by the population. Long-term reconnaissance allows a sense of what is “normal” to be assessed for a population. During the surveillance phase, changes in the baseline can be detected through a multitude of social science methods. When the changes are determined to merit further attention, intelligence activity can begin to clarify what the changes indicate, determine whether a threat appears likely, and suggest how national assets might shape events.

sociocultural analysis is now an indispensable component of intelligence, and the Intelligence Community can improve upon its already impressive gains

As the conflict continuum illustrates, the lowest costs and greatest opportunities associated with generating knowledge about populations occur well before conflict or tensions rise. The reconnaissance phase fits perfectly with this perspective, but it requires integrating professional population researchers into the information-collection process. Using nontraditional collections and analysis avenues such as academia, polling, census data, and international marketing firms, it is possible to generate the baseline understanding of a population, especially in Phase

0 environments. Social scientists will be particularly important given their innate desire and skill sets. The IC will have to employ its own professionals in order to ask the right questions and translate the professional jargon into digestible intelligence.

The RSI paradigm provides the IC with a means of conceptualizing how to efficiently integrate population-centric information into the intelligence process. It also suggests the types of personnel and relationships that will need to be cultivated to address new threats. With a deeper understanding about populations, the IC will be able during the surveillance and intelligence phases to more accurately analyze how contemporary threats will likely impact populations and identify means for counteracting them when they are potentially harmful. But the process begins with a robust reconnaissance capability before threats manifest themselves.

Conclusion

Sociocultural analysis is now an indispensable component of intelligence, and the Intelligence Community can improve upon its already impressive gains. The qualified character of sovereignty in many countries is rendering the IC’s traditional mechanisms and processes for developing information on populations and nonstate actors inadequate. The task ahead, therefore, is to develop the social radar to warn policymakers of and inform them how to keep potential crises left of bang.

Due to looming budget constraints, some in the IC believe it is time to focus on core competencies, while others believe it is time for a paradigm shift to effectively address the complexities of globalization. These perspectives are not mutually exclusive; rather, the objective is to integrate those scholarly and

investigative assets with the right expertise and skill sets into the overall intelligence process in order to understand cultures and populations. An intelligence enterprise that fails to adapt to the qualified nature of state sovereignty cannot generate the personnel, expertise, and processes to comprehend the problems ahead.

The Intelligence Community must develop and mature innovative capabilities that address the challenges of this new threat environment to provide nonlinear, holistic intelligence to decisionmakers and advance its analytic tradecraft. The social sciences, international marketing companies, polling firms, and others possess the data, knowledge, and expertise on foreign populations that the Intelligence Community lacks. By harnessing these assets more effectively and leveraging the capabilities of allies, the IC can in a relatively short period come to understand the key sociocultural constructs of relevant populations. By delving into critical questions, pathways, and indicators for those major and minor countries relevant to U.S. national security, the Intelligence Community can advance its own analytic transformation, deliver more powerful insights to customers, and better avoid strategic surprise. This will enable more effective diplomacy and better focused military activity to keep many budding conflicts left of bang or to more adeptly navigate the reconstitution of societies torn by conflict or natural disaster. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ For purposes of brevity, the Intelligence Community (IC) also encompasses the Defense Intelligence Enterprise in this article.

² Charles W. Kegley, Jr., and Gregory A. Raymond, *Exorcising the Ghost of Westphalia: Building World Order*

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³ “The Failed States Index 2011,” *Foreign Policy*, available at <www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/06/17/2011_failed_states_index_interactive_map_and_rankings>.

⁴ Anthony H. Cordesman and Nicholas S. Yarosh, *The Underlying Causes of Stability and Unrest in the Middle East and North Africa: An Analytic Survey* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 20, 2012), 2.

⁵ Lotta Harbom and Peter Wallensteen, “Armed Conflict and Its International Dimensions, 1946–2004,” *Journal of Peace Research* 42, no. 5 (September 2005), 623–635.

⁶ Michael T. Klare, *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001), chapter 8.

⁷ United Nations (UN), *State of the World Population 2011* (New York: UN Population Fund, 2011), 3–6.

⁸ UN, *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in Arab Countries* (New York: UN Development Programme, 2009), 2–7.

⁹ Mark L. Haas, “A Geriatric Peace? The Future of U.S. Power in a World of Aging Populations,” *International Security* 32, no. 1 (Summer 2007), 112–147.

¹⁰ Theodore H. Cohn, *Global Political Economy: Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005), 10–11.

¹¹ Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹² Mission Command White Paper 3, April 2012; Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, 2011).

¹³ “Q&A with Admiral William H. McRaven,” *Special Warfare* 25, no. 2 (April–May 2012), 11, available at <www.soc.mil/swcs/swmag/archive/SW2502/SW2502QAAdmiralWilliamMcRaven.html>.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁵ Matthew Puls and David C. Ellis, “Socio-Cultural ISR for Counterinsurgency and Stability Operations,” USSOCOM JICSOC: SCA Section Concept Paper, July 21, 2011.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*; Kira Hutchinson and Matthew Puls, “Mobile Computing Devices for Socio-Cultural Intelligence in Urban and Unconventional Environments,” USSOCOM JICSOC: SCA Section Concept Paper, February 21, 2012.



Civilians lead Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF to IED cache

Evolved Irregular Threats

BY BEN FITZGERALD AND PIA WANЕК

Almost every aspect of national security is colored by uncertainty. While it would be arrogant to consider that this moment in history carries more uncertainty than others, we presently find ourselves facing a multiplicity of uncertainties that pull us simultaneously in different directions. Drawdown in Iraq and Afghanistan, along with the future implications of those conflicts, the ongoing events of the Arab Spring, the rise and increased assertiveness of near-peer competitors, a variety of nonstate actors with increasingly sophisticated capability, and economic crises in Europe create additional contingencies that require our attention. Simultaneously, economic uncertainty at home limits our means, requiring prioritization and the acceptance of additional risk.

Analysis of trends in the operating environment and among threat groups affords national security professionals an opportunity to think more broadly in a step back from specific contingencies. A broader analysis can inform capability decisions in an effort to build a force capable of appropriately addressing as wide a range of contingencies as possible.

The U.S. national security community is traditionally most comfortable preparing for threats emanating from near-peer competitors. This is both appropriate and important to maintain given the capability of these actors. However, a singular focus on these potential threats may leave us open to surprise from seemingly low-level threats, stymieing our ability to project power and achieve national security objectives. This article investigates the significance of a specific aspect of the future operating environment—the urban, littoral environment—and the most likely adversaries operating therein—advanced nonstate actors posing evolved, irregular threats.¹

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The Future Urban, Littoral Operating Environment

Five broad trends suggest a need to focus on the urban, littoral environment. These trends are not exhaustive and are among many that can be expected to enable and shape the future environment. While no single trend will dominate the global future, all of them have mutually reinforcing characteristics and will influence the capabilities, priorities, and behavior of nonstate actors in a way that markedly reshapes the future conflict environment. This article focuses on a particular threat type, nonstate and substate groups, and therefore does not address many other threats facing the global future operating environment.

Trend 1: Rapid Urbanization in the Littoral.

Global urban environments and the populations they support are expanding rapidly against the backdrop of global interconnectivity. In 1800, only 3 percent of the world's population lived in cities. By 1900, the figure had increased to 13 percent, and by 2000, it was 47 percent. As of April 2008, for the first time in

where political systems are weak or oppressive, population growth and urbanization will foster instability, and nonstate and substate actors will emerge to challenge the state's monopoly on violence

history, more than 50 percent of humans on the planet live in cities, which is where over half the world's gross domestic product is generated.² By 2030, nearly 60 percent of the world's estimated 8.3 billion inhabitants will live in cities or expanding megacities (those with populations over 10 million) mostly in the developing world. In 1950, there were 83 cities with populations over one million. By 2007, there were

468. Although the overall rates of urban growth have slowed in recent years—and not all of the world's cities or 23 megacities are increasing in numbers—it is the scope and size of the current change among the world's growing population centers, including both middle-size cities with populations ranging from 500,000 to 10 million and smaller cities with populations under 500,000 (where over half of population growth actually takes place), that continue to fuel this trend.³ Consequently, most urban spaces exist in the littorals, where over three-quarters of the world population resides and in which nearly all of the marketplaces and transit hubs for international trade exist.⁴

With migration to urban centers along the coasts also on the rise, urban planners are continually challenged by the risks associated with overloaded infrastructure, the impact of climate change, environmental degradation, and resource scarcity. As people move to population centers, many are forced into poor areas, comprised of urban slums or shantytowns, where governance and the rule of law are weak. While smaller urban centers may gain from the growing worldwide trend of political and administrative decentralization in which national governments are devolving some of their powers to local governments, large urban centers most likely will not. Sprawling slums such as those in Karachi, Dhaka, Cairo, and Lagos and the conditions they breed may overload the systems, helping fuel the vicious cycle of disease, poverty, criminality, and political unrest. Where political systems are weak or oppressive, the combination of population growth and urbanization will foster instability, and nonstate and substate actors will emerge to challenge the state's monopoly on violence.

As the features of the world become more intertwined, the cascading effect of a

crisis stemming from one of the world's most populated cities would be all too amenable to exploitation by local actors, all of whom are seeking to manipulate local grievances as a way to tilt the status quo in their favor. In the developing world, weak governments cannot maintain the rule of law or provide the services, infrastructure, and social provisions necessary to prevent or mitigate instability, nor can they create the conditions necessary to foster and stimulate private-sector job growth. While foreign direct investment may present opportunities for growth, it may also act as a destabilizing factor when focused on exploitative or extractive industries. In cases where weak governance persists and nonstate actors can outgun, co-opt, or corrupt local security forces, intrastate conflict may erupt and cause widespread human suffering, prompting the U.S. military to consider initiating a range of humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and stabilization and reconstruction tasks alongside kinetic military operations. Because global societies increasingly live in littoral, networked slum-cities, and warfare is in itself a social activity, future conflict is likely to include a substantial proportion of military operations in such terrain.

Trend 2: Cross-border Migration. The mass movement of people from rural to urban littoral spaces is only one side of the migration equation. The other side involves the movement of individuals from poor countries and regions to wealthier ones and from violent and unstable countries to more stable ones.

As evidenced by Western Europe's attempts to integrate its growing Muslim immigrant population, these migration patterns sometimes upset the status quo of developed countries. While such migration often brings economic dynamism to the host nation

through migrant labor and mobility, it can also prompt violent nationalist backlashes. At the same time, migration has become an important component of population growth in countries in Western Europe as well as in the United States and Canada where birthrates have declined. But whether legal, illegal, or forced, migration from developing to developed countries is likely to increase, potentially aggravating governance problems and social tensions. This may lead to the fragmentation and destabilization of communities and possibly states as global networks of ethnic communities, or diasporas—linked together by information technology and shared heritage, language, and religion—play a larger role in international conflict and cooperation.

Trend 3: Globalized Diasporas. Diasporas are ethnic communities whose members have left a city or region for economic, safety, or political reasons and have settled in another city or region. Despite diminished physical ties, most migrants take with them the cultural aspects of their ancestral territory. The ties between groups remain strong as dispersed populations seek out current information as a way to stay connected to their homelands. Such nostalgia creates a demand for cultural products and information sources that maintain and celebrate the links between the diaspora and its homeland. Resettled communities use modern communications technologies such as the Internet, mobile telecommunications platforms, and the global media to close the distance between homeland and host nation.

The global spread of the Internet and social media affords these groups a rapid and reliable link to their home communities. Barely a decade ago, these linkages were slow and scarce, supported primarily by expensive

international landline phone calls, periodic and unreliable global postal services, newspapers, and the then fledgling and mostly inaccessible Internet. While governments try to maintain control over human movement and information flows within and across their borders, little can be done to prevent the facilitation and strengthening of connections once a diaspora has settled. Thus, host-nation governments are finding it increasingly difficult to encourage assimilation in the face of tech-driven bottom-up globalization. Due to technology innovation and access, homeland politics can quickly become flashpoints for politically active militant diasporas engaged in a wide range of legal or illegal activities.

host-nation governments are finding it increasingly difficult to encourage assimilation in the face of tech-driven bottom-up globalization

Diaspora political activity in a new homeland may fall into the following categories:

- virtual or physical political mobilization, recruitment, and fundraising within the diaspora by nonmilitant members
- advocacy and lobbying efforts targeted at host-nation and/or other national governments and international organizations
- criminal fundraising/activity to raise money for an organization or cause
- physical intimidation of members of an ethnic community in a host nation
- acts of terrorism executed against a homeland or nonhomeland third country, but planned, organized, or supported by diaspora militant groups in a host nation

- violence committed against host-nation installations, institutions, and populations by diaspora-based or -supported militant groups.

Trend 4: Interconnectedness. The widespread availability and integration of advanced communications technologies are exponentially accelerating the pace of globalization. According to the International Telecommunication Union, by the end of 2010, about 90 percent of the world population, including 80 percent of the population living in rural areas, had access to mobile networks. With an estimated 5.3 billion mobile cellular subscriptions worldwide, nearly 80 percent of the global population is connected via mobile phone. In fact, the mobile market is reaching saturation levels in developed countries, with more subscriptions than people reported at the end of 2010. Meanwhile, the developing world increased its share of mobile subscriptions from roughly half to nearly three-fourths of the population between 2005 and 2010. As developed and developing countries have moved from 2G to 3G platforms—and increasingly to 4G wireless platforms—short message service (SMS), a text messaging service component of phone, Web, and mobile communication systems, has become the most widely used data application in the world. Between 2007 and 2010, the number of SMSs sent globally tripled from an estimated 1.8 trillion to 6.1 trillion, meaning that close to 200,000 text messages are transmitted within and across societies every second. In addition to mobile connectivity, the number of Internet users has doubled recently. Today, an estimated two billion unique users access the Web annually, and growing demand for higher speed connections is increasing at a much faster rate than it can be

supplied.⁵ Whether through smart phones or cloud computing, rapid communication from one end of the globe to the other is no longer a luxury available only to highly developed states and societies.

In the future, virtually everyone will be connected via the Internet, mobile telecommunications platforms, hand-held computing devices, and global media. This growth in connectivity is allowing like-minded individuals, organizations, and societies to connect regardless of the physical distance and political barriers that separate them. Globalization is doing much more, however, than just flattening the world by eliminating restrictions on the flow of ideas and information within and across societies. It is also creating tightly interconnected networks of infrastructures and markets that are transforming economies, businesses, and the daily lives of billions of people. The interaction of globalization and communication technology diffusion will impact warfare's diversity as emerging threat groups learn to exploit the world's exploding social and economic cohesion. In some cases, borders that were formerly defined by politics will be increasingly fragmented by newer concepts including economic pacts such as the BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) or the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, and by others with ancient ties based on history, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture.⁶ In the future strategic environment, interconnected societies, economies, and critical infrastructure will present themselves as targets of opportunity prone to shocks and disruptions through attacks on flows of capital, energy, commerce, and communications. Such global interconnectedness will bring together opportunities and vulnerabilities in creative ways to produce familiar

disasters in unfamiliar forms and unfamiliar disasters in forms not yet imagined.

Trend 5: Ubiquitous Media. The targeted use of social and new media presents both threats and opportunities for state and non-state actors. Illustrative of this point is the 2011 military action in Libya between the rebels backed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Muammar Qadhafi's security forces. During the conflict, both sides repeatedly distorted the facts in what could be perceived as either weak attempts at disinformation or desperate attempts at self-deception.⁷ The difference now as compared to the initial stage of the information revolution is the speed, reach, and scope of communica-

globalization is creating tightly interconnected networks of infrastructures and markets that are transforming economies, businesses, and the daily lives of billions of people

tion platforms. While cell phones and email reach hundreds of people in a day, Twitter, Facebook, and the journalists who use these media can reach thousands who, in turn, can reach tens or hundreds of thousands more. The use of social and international media to influence local and global civilian populations is changing relationship dynamics between states and their citizenry as well as the acceptable norms of conflict.

In the future strategic environment, armed nonstate actors may use social and new media in different ways to achieve strategic, operational, and tactical ends. These include but are not limited to:

- organizing and inciting political and social activism

- mining for open-source information on potential targets
- promoting positive self-images while portraying the opposition in a negative light
- reporting on foreign military operations as they are conducted
- shaping the narrative or perception of a military operation/conflict
- applying pressure on local and foreign governments.

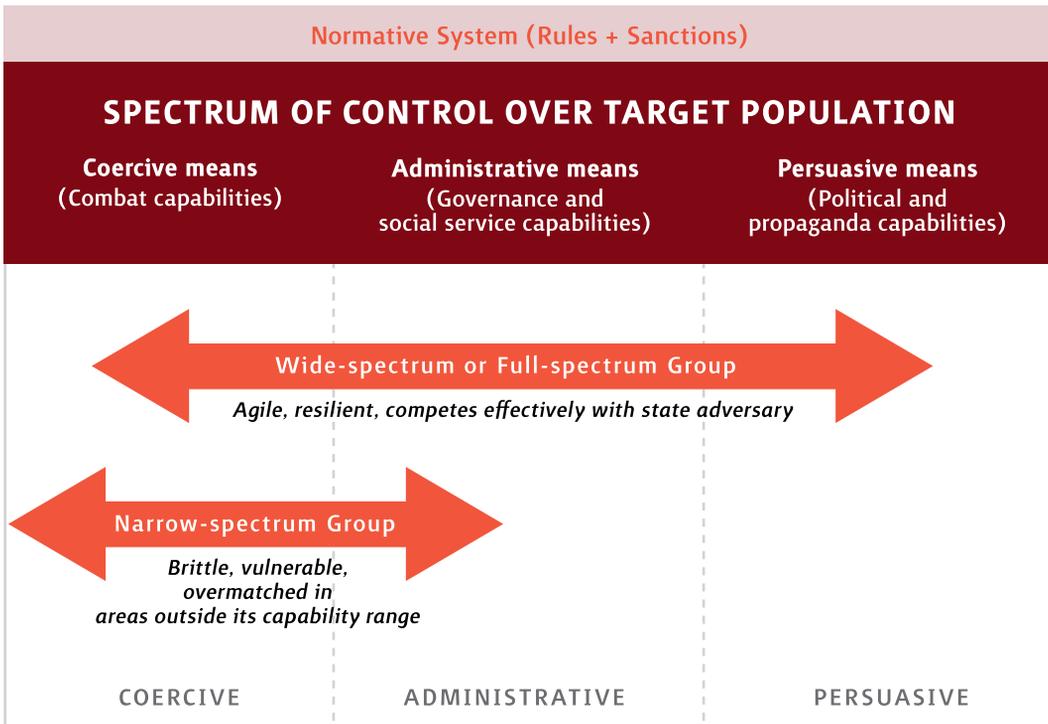
Ignoring this problem to focus purely on near-peer threats—or seeking to state as a matter of policy or as a tenet of planning that we will not fight in urban terrain—is unrealistic, as evidenced in recent operations. Furthermore, it limits our ability to project power in the future. And it does a significant disservice to military

personnel who will inevitably find themselves in situations they have not been trained or equipped for. The threats emanating from these urban centers use this terrain as the source of their power, a capability generator, and a force multiplier. Seeking to influence their behavior will require an ability to influence their environment.

The Threat

During the course of the past two decades, nonstate or substate actors have developed highly effective capability along a spectrum of competitive control from coercive (combat capabilities) through administrative (governance and social service capabilities) into persuasive means (political and propaganda capabilities).⁸ Competitive control theory is depicted in the figure.

Figure. Competitive Control Theory



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For the purposes of this analysis, Hizballah provides an excellent case study as a group that has proven successful along the full-capabilities spectrum. In addition to Hizballah, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) (focusing mostly on LeT's November 2008 Mumbai attacks) operate along different, narrower swaths of the spectrum, and serve to deepen a baseline capabilities analysis. LeT in particular is a group recognized as highly successful in the combat (or coercive) domain, but when engaging in expeditionary operations, such as those in Mumbai, it is brittle and vulnerable to tactics and capabilities outside its decidedly kinetic comfort zone. These groups are notable not only for their ability to innovate and shape-shift rapidly to changing conditions on the battlefield, but also for their ability to move, operate, and breed among local and global communities, fading into and out of complex physical and human terrain while employing various political, ideological, economic, diplomatic, and military means in pursuit of their objectives.

A baseline knowledge and analysis of the capabilities (including vulnerabilities and requirements) and centers of gravity of these established, lethal, irregular groups, generalized into how they operate in the current environment, can inform analysis on how similar groups might operate in the future.

If so much capability is available today, what will such groups be capable of by 2025? Given the current success of developing capability across a spectrum of control, irregular threat groups are likely to continue with this approach. With broader trends of technological advancement in the commercial sphere, some groups can be expected to inject advanced technology in specific areas to multiply their effectiveness. Other groups will be

able to further augment their capability with support from state sponsors.

The Future Threat

Thinking through a hypothetical scenario can be beneficial in order to understand the potential actions and capabilities of threat groups and the ways in which they will interact with their operating environment.⁹

Consider a large port city in Southeast Asia in 2025. A major shipping hub, this city also has a successful semiconductor and electronics industry and burgeoning light manufacturing. It is home to many expatriates, including Americans, working for international corporations. Despite strength in some economic sectors, development has been uneven with one ethnic group dominating the political scene and deriving the majority of economic benefit. With the impact of two civil wars still

a baseline knowledge and analysis of established irregular groups can inform analysis on how similar groups might operate in the future

in the memory of older citizens, a domestic nonstate actor now serves the interests of the city's second largest ethnic group, which is not feeling the economic largesse that the elites are enjoying. This large substate threat group, given the fictitious name Dardallah in this scenario, has matured from its anarchic beginnings as a formidable and creative guerrilla organization and possesses significant capabilities across the spectrum of control, a summary of which is shown below.

Coercive (Combat)

- elite commandos at sea and on land

- artillery and indirect fire capability (precision-guided munitions)
- mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs)
- drones, semi-autonomous systems, miniaturization, and artificial intelligence
- rapid hardware/software generation and regeneration
- autonomous targeting/intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance/command and control
- access to remote support virtual and physical networks.

Administrative (Governance/Social Services)

- knowledge and capacity to conduct economic warfare
- multiple, legitimate businesses, including those that operate the city port
- social service delivery, charity, and entrepreneurial organizations
- distinct, mutually beneficial relationships with business and banking communities
- parallel law enforcement and legal system to maintain law and order.

Persuasive (Political/Propaganda)

- mobile communications/information networks and platforms
- false flag operations and information exploitation
- use of social and conventional media to control and manipulate narratives
- established relations with diaspora.

Within this complex context, a separate nonstate actor seeks to create instability in order to achieve its own political objectives, drawing

heavily on the support of a third-country state sponsor. This small but lethal group, given the fictitious name Jovani Brigade, successfully executes a spectacular attack, assassinating the nation's president. The resulting turmoil within the state's security forces calls into question the ability of the weak government to maintain security and retain its slim grip on authority. Such an attack is well within the group's capability, as outlined below in a list of their capabilities across the spectrum of control.

Coercive (Combat)

- superior adaptability, rapid prototype fielding, and reverse engineering
- spectacular attacks (without mitigation by social or value constraints)
- excellent expeditionary maritime capabilities
- training and resources from a state-level sponsor
- sophisticated time-delayed explosives
- exceptional innovative capacity.

Administrative (Governance/Social Services)

- extensive human intelligence network of informants, indoctrinated and proliferated via religious/education establishments
- deliberate capitalization on weak host-nation state services provided for ethnic, cultural, and religious kin, and offer alternatives.

Persuasive (Political/Propaganda)

- false flag operations and information exploitation
- use of social and conventional media to control and manipulate narratives

- “suicide through fighting,” leading to widespread lethality
- terrorist motivation—ability to invoke fear in target population and undermine confidence in security forces’ response.

With the rapid deterioration of security following the assassination, the U.S. Ambassador requests a noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO) to evacuate American citizens and select host- and third-country nationals. An Amphibious Readiness Group/Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG/MEU) is tasked and responds. In addition to the evacuation mission, the ARG/MEU commander is cautioned to avoid becoming embroiled in local security matters and to avoid escalating the conflict. Despite concerns about antiaccess/area-denial threats, the ARG/MEU receives unopposed access to the city’s port. Commanders are aware of the complex dynamic that they are entering but do not have the means to rapidly vet the individuals they must work with to achieve the mission.

In the initial phase of the operation, U.S. forces work with both government forces and representatives of the Dardallah, the well-established domestic nonstate actor that is providing security across most of the northern parts of the city. While awkward and tense given the thinly veiled contempt these armed groups have for each other, this approach is initially acceptable since neither group involved wants to engage in a major conflict, particularly since the city is still in turmoil following the assassination, whose perpetrators, the Jovani Brigade, are still at large. Dardallah is deriving considerable prestige and revenue from their association with U.S. forces, so it is willing to allow them access to their “territory” in the northern part of the city.

Despite losing over half its force in the assassination operation, the Jovani Brigade has been able to regroup and has been further tasked by its state sponsor to stay in place, reconstitute, and plan follow-on operations aimed at further destabilizing the situation. The ultimate objective is to force an extended closure of the port, cutting off international trade, and crippling the local economy. Attacks that embarrass the United States are a major secondary objective.

Although some tension exists between the security arm of the local group and U.S. forces, the NEO progresses well. U.S. forces establish assembly areas at appropriate locations throughout the city, operating in a distributed manner to process individuals and provide safe passage out of the country. Things change dramatically when video emerges online that

commanders do not have the means to rapidly vet the individuals they must work with to achieve the mission

is quickly picked up by mainstream international media showing U.S. forces raiding a home and allegedly massacring unarmed women and children. This is combined with credible reports that U.S. forces have occupied a girls’ school and are mistreating the students, who are primarily from Dardallah communities. It will emerge some days later that this footage was created and subtly distributed by the Jovani Brigade and has no basis in fact.

An angry mob descends on the girls’ school, which is being used as an assembly area by a platoon of U.S. forces. Dardallah’s armed forces feel compelled to raid the school to protect the girls, who are allegedly being abused, and to maintain their credibility in

the face of the agitated mob. The situation quickly deteriorates.

A quick reaction force is dispatched to provide support to the isolated platoon. However, this force comes under frequent attack from remotely triggered IEDs previously emplaced by the Jovani Brigade and supported by an observer drone. The isolated platoon is able to maintain its perimeter but comes under sustained, accurate indirect fire from precision munitions. Air support is turned back by these fires and by swarms of different unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) with indeterminate capability. The port is closed, and while attempts at attacking and boarding U.S. vessels in port are easily repelled, accurate rocket fire, UAVs, and attacks from small boats force the sea base farther offshore, degrading the U.S. ability to provide meaningful support to forces ashore.

Local government security forces attempt to support the U.S. forces but are ineffectual.

Additionally, enemy groups are at times operating in local security force uniforms and vehicles and may even be members of the local security forces. U.S. commanders on the ground are compelled to make an ongoing series of unpalatable decisions. If desired, they can bring sufficient firepower to bear to address almost any given threat. However, that further escalates a conflict the United States does not want to be involved in. At the same time, the safety of American citizens and military personnel is paramount and significant losses will likely trigger a major troop deployment that places the United States at risk of becoming responsible for ongoing stabilization operations.

Implications

A variety of hypothetical strategic and operational approaches could be employed to resolve this hypothetical conundrum. However, the ultimate purpose here is to better



Scott Randall

Slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh

understand the future operating environment, enemy capability, and the implications for U.S. forces. Several implications and observations derived from this analysis are listed below. As with the majority of futures-based analysis, many of these phenomena can already be seen in today's world but will grow in frequency, significance, and impact over time. They range from the philosophical to the practical and cannot easily be considered in a single framework or context.

What Is the Battlespace? Globally distributed and highly connected national and ethnic groups are forcing changes to current thinking on what defines the battlespace. Tactical kinetic action is readily understood, but a number of other factors remain in a gray area, considered by some to be part of the battlespace and by others to be off limits in terms of decisive action. There are multifaceted challenges involved when evaluating where an enemy group's funding is coming from, or countering the information operations of a threat group, or when a group's leadership is based (or sponsored) in one or more third countries leading to remote command and control. Attempts to disrupt logistical lines, upset port operations, or provoke protests in countries that host large diaspora populations would have a direct impact on the battlespace. Nonstate and substate actors will continue to take advantage of these seams, which take the concept of a noncontiguous battlespace and expand it around the globe. It remains to be seen whether existing definitions of theater, strategic, and tactical battlespace will remain sufficiently meaningful to allow military professionals to effectively untangle the multiple "fronts" in enemy action and frame appropriate responses.

Adaptive Enemy Capability Development. Increasingly sophisticated technology will

further allow potential enemy groups to develop capability. The current adaptation competition around IEDs is the most obvious example of this dynamic and its implications in both combat effect and cost asymmetry. Existing evidence of groups such as Hizballah and LTTE developing or adapting drone capability, submarines, armor, and the ability to hack satellites indicates the probability of an even more heavily contested capability battle in the future. In a strategic sense, evolving technology trends suggest

globally distributed and highly connected national and ethnic groups are forcing changes to current thinking on what defines the battlespace

that military innovation is increasingly lagging behind commercial investment and development.¹⁰ What this means in a practical sense for current and future irregular threat groups is that technologies currently exist or are being developed in the open-access space that will empower them in ways that were unavailable, and indeed unimaginable, to even large state actors a generation ago. Unencumbered by large bureaucracies and with an imperative to adapt or face annihilation, irregular threat groups will likely continue to out-adapt government forces.

Information (as the Locus of) Operations. Increased connectedness and sophisticated information technology do not equal situational awareness. In a complex and noncontiguous battlespace, the importance of information operations increases even beyond the significance realized in the past 10 years. Information objectives will be the nucleus of operations and specific actions. False flag operations, information manipulation, and the intentional spread of misinformation will

form the core of a persistent battle that goes beyond social media, contested narratives, and perception to include the commencement or cessation of kinetic activity based purely on activity undertaken in the information space. Success in the physical world will not translate into overall victory if not supported by successful information operations.

Critical Infrastructure. Nonstate and substate actors will continue to seek to create niche critical infrastructure of their own (for example, fiber optic networks and radio relays) that serve legitimate public needs and enable clandestine activity. Established substate groups have demonstrated the ability to create charitable and/or entrepreneurial organizations that are used to raise funds

given the complexity of the human, physical, and informational terrain, requirements for situational awareness will grow to become even more demanding

via licit means and to inculcate populations to their cause by augmenting or replacing the insufficient services of a host nation. In a sobering trend, the global illicit economy has continued to deepen and expand in reach and effectiveness, leading to a twisted web of transnational criminal organizations and terrorist groups working together along multiple pathways.

Technology “Hugging.” Nonstate and substate actors will seek to protect their technology base via technology “hugging,” that is, by piggybacking on broadly available public assets. This may be in the form of capitalizing on the public Internet or freely available government assets, global positioning system (GPS), or mobile technology platforms.

In some cases, technology employed as part of a blue force operation may be utilized by threat groups. This will deter or make impossible jamming activity from a technologically superior government force.

The Impossibility of Situational Awareness. Given the complexity of the human, physical, and informational terrain, requirements for situational awareness will grow to become even more demanding. Situational awareness includes an understanding of the threat as well as the political, social, and physical elements of the environment. This requires the ability to understand relationships across a diaspora community, state sponsors, and regional tensions, and the implications of those in the tactical battlespace. This is in addition to the extant and growing requirement to be able to understand and navigate the geographic, cultural, and language realities of the tactical battlespace. The urban, littoral operating environment is too complex to track all of these elements simultaneously and continuously and would present instant information overload to almost any existing staff.

Recent conflicts have reiterated that, particularly in the first hours and days, it is nearly impossible to accurately separate good local partners from bad ones when rapidly deploying U.S. forces into an environment marked by complexity in many overlapping domains. A frequent and urgent need is to provide forward-deployed military units with support from virtual teams of intelligence analysts who would be able to process separate streams of open-source and traditional intelligence, thereby rapidly delivering a combined and more comprehensive intelligence product to military commanders. All efforts to increase the situational awareness of deployed forces while simultaneously creating a force that

can succeed without ever truly achieving situational awareness must continue.

Flexible Expeditionary Contracting. One mechanism to rapidly develop situational awareness is to hire vetted local expertise, such as through embassies or other trusted sources. Current contracting approaches and mechanisms lack both the flexibility and rigor to appropriately support deployed forces operating against irregular forces in an urban, littoral environment. Future forces will require a range of innovative approaches to rapidly acquire materials, knowledge, and vetted personnel in distant environments in order to accomplish missions on short notice, cost effectively, and with a small footprint. To support future warfighter needs, this contracting capability should include the ability to hire both providers of security services, such as armed personnel to protect private property, assets, and individuals, and service contractors who handle duties other than security, such as logistics, transport, linguistics, construction, and some intelligence analysis.

Any such solution would, of course, require improvements in situational awareness and rapid analysis as well as strong oversight to guard against abuse by friendly or enemy forces and to understand the second- and third-order effects of contracting with given groups.

Joint Forcible Exit. Antiaccess/area-denial capabilities are of increasing concern for U.S. forces. Working through our hypothetical scenario, enemy groups did not employ these capabilities for large-scale denial activities. Rather, U.S. forces were allowed to freely enter the area of operations. When kinetic operations commenced, these capabilities were used to deny U.S. forces access to tactical airspace and severely limit ground mobility. Effective

strikes on a sea base were deemed unlikely to succeed, but the ability to push assets farther offshore, thereby impacting frequency and time on target for sea-based support, was deemed exceptionally simple. This allowed enemy forces to isolate U.S. forces and deny them access to combat support and combined arms in an attempt to create overmatch.

Operationally, this approach left U.S. forces on the horns of a dilemma. On one side, U.S. forces would sustain significant casualties, allowing enemy forces to claim “victory” or forcing a potential large-scale deployment of forces and, conceivably, a long-term commitment. The alternative would be for U.S. forces to apply significant lethal force leading to civilian casualties and international condemnation. This ultimately led to a desire to develop concepts allowing for a fighting withdrawal that protected U.S. interests, supported operational objectives, and denied the enemy a propaganda victory. The presence of a few thousand American citizens and other civilian noncombatants requiring protection and evacuation placed U.S. forces in a sobering quandary of trying to quickly determine acceptable ways to “fight their way out” among an increasing number of agitated local civilians in a security environment that was rapidly deteriorating.

Thinking About Nonlethal Weapons. A sophisticated and highly lethal adversary operating within a densely populated urban environment points to a need for an advanced suite of nonlethal capability. Because most future military operations will be conducted under the constant spotlight of local and global opinion, U.S. warfighters will be expected to integrate and apply a wide range of lethal and nonlethal capabilities in order to avoid civilian casualties and damage to the urban infrastructure.

Current nonlethal capability focuses on the ability to actively change the behavior of a single individual or small group. There are few options for passive systems or capability to address larger groups. Most importantly, there is the paucity of operationally meaningful concepts of operation to support current or future investments in nonlethal technical solutions.

Counterproliferation

Given future enemies' likely ability to undertake adaptive capability development, U.S. forces will require a sophisticated tiered mitigation approach in responding to these capabilities. Three related categories of effort described below extend the idea of counterproliferation from its traditional focus on weapons of mass destruction.

First, from a counterproliferation perspective, there is acceptance that little can be done

the number and range of future threat permutations should be expected to be highly varied and increasingly lethal

to prevent the spread of advanced multi-use technologies such as GPS and various communication encryption devices. However, with technology increasingly being produced not only by individual states and companies but also by combinations of actors and organizations, the U.S. Government can improve its ability to target or exploit illicit cooperative arrangements and pathways through multiple capability pathway interdiction.

Second, mitigation requires the United States to maintain its competitive advantage in employing combined arms across multiple domains in the urban littoral battlespace. In this sense, mitigation includes a continuous

loop of tactical lessons learned, concept development, experimentation, and training to motivate U.S. adaptation to new threats during a single deployment.

Third, the Department of Defense can take advantage of new and continued partnerships and collaborative exercises with scientists, engineers, and industry to encourage and accelerate the emergence of commercial technologies that simultaneously meet defense needs. Although the U.S. military is likely to maintain its technical and tactical dominance in the emerging and future strategic environment, the use of increasingly accessible, multipurpose, and lethal technologies by non-state actors will give an entirely new meaning to "plug and play," leading to greater tactical proficiency for the enemy.

Without deliberate acknowledgment of the importance of all three of these tracks, particularly with an eye to emerging capabilities that impact the governance and informational spheres, the gap between how "red" adapts as compared to "blue" can be expected to widen.

Conclusion

When future conflict occurs, it is highly unlikely that it will look like either the "conventional" conflicts of the 20th century or recent counterinsurgency conflicts. Whatever the realities of evolved irregular threats and urban littoral combat in 2025, the historical antecedents of that reality will be visible in the circumstances of today.

Given the present rate of technological change and shifting geopolitical power, the number and range of future threat permutations should be expected to be highly varied and increasingly lethal. The United States cannot afford to optimize for one-threat

profile. Threats from near-peer competitors, for example, cannot be ignored or become the sole focus of national security professionals. Serious attention and investment must also be given to the evolving capability of irregular threats and their most likely operating environment, the urban littoral. Impending fiscal constraints and the current approaches to acquisition, capability development, and contracting, coupled with technology innovation in the open-source, private-sector world, will allow irregular adversaries to continue to gain ground on U.S. forces in terms of warfighting capability. Ignoring this problem space leaves us at risk of finding ourselves fighting expensive wars on terms the enemy has chosen against capabilities we are unprepared to counter in an environment we are unfamiliar with.

Despite these grim realities, the United States remains the world's preeminent fighting force, easily capable of achieving victory over any irregular enemy in a kinetic engagement. The key challenges in addressing evolved irregular threats are conceptual and organizational. Consequently, measured investments should be made in experimentation, concept development, education and training, acquisition, and capability development reform and private-sector collaboration in order to prepare future warfighters for the inherent uncertainty of their operating environment. Being unable to predict specific futures need not inhibit effective preparation. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ This article is based on the findings of an Office of the Secretary of Defense-funded project under the stewardship of Colonel Patrick Kelleher, USMC, on behalf of the Rapid Reaction Technology Office. The project was undertaken by Noetic Corporation, with the

intellectual guidance of Dr. David Kilcullen. The article is based on an internal report, authored by Kyle Flynn of Noetic, as well as the experience of the authors in developing and running the project.

² "Urban World: Mapping the Economic Power of Cities," McKinsey Global Institute, March 2011.

³ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision," available at <<http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/index.htm>>.

⁴ The littoral comprises two segments of operational environment: the *seaward*, or the area from the open ocean to the shore, which must be controlled to support operations ashore; and the *landward*, or the area inland from the shore, which can be supported and defended directly from the sea. See Joint Publication 2-10.3, *Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, June 16, 2009).

⁵ International Telecommunication Union, "The World In 2010: The Rise of 3G," *ICT Facts and Figures* (2010), available at <www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/material/FactsFigures2010.pdf>.

⁶ Joel Kotkin, "The New World Order: Tribal Ties—Race, Ethnicity, and Religion—Are Becoming More Important Than Borders," *Newsweek*, September 26, 2010.

⁷ David D. Kirkpatrick and Rod Nordland, "Waves of Disinformation and Confusion Swamp the Truth in Libya," *The New York Times*, August 23, 2011.

⁸ David J. Kilcullen, 2009. Used by permission. This diagram served as the theoretical underpinning of the Evolved Irregular Threat Project research.

⁹ The scenarios, operating environment, and enemy groups used in this hypothetical were developed and "evolved" over a series of wargames involving subject matter experts from academia, think tanks, and across the interagency, including Active-duty and retired military personnel. This short summary cannot fully summarize the significant analysis and justification for the plausibility of the actions described here.

¹⁰ Office of the Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, *Challenges to Military Operations in Support of National Interests*, Defense Science Board 2007 Summer Study, December 2008, 6.



Afghan National Police cheer for commander after training in Kabul during heavy snow

Challenges of Developing Host Nation Police Capacity

BY JAMES K. WITHER

Stability operations embrace a wide range of civil-military missions in fragile or conflict-affected states, and they range from traditional peacekeeping to combat with well-armed insurgents or criminal elements. Often different activities, including combat, policing, humanitarian assistance, and reconstruction, occur concurrently in the theater of operations. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) has described these operations as:

*military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.*¹

Establishing the rule of law is a key strategic objective of stability operations. In states plagued by conflict or where the government is discredited or lacking, the maintenance of law and order may fall to foreign military and police intervention forces. These contingents must impose and maintain order in the absence of the effective national and local police forces that would perform this task in stable, functioning states. They must also train and mentor indigenous police forces to enable the transition from conflict to normalcy that will allow foreign forces to withdraw.

Military forces are often essential to create the initial security conditions that allow the civilian components of a stability operation to build a durable peace. However, armed forces are not intrinsically suited to police work. Soldiers are trained to apply lethal force in war. Military force can have a deterrent effect on militias and criminal gangs, but the deployment of soldiers in a law enforcement role sometimes leads to excessive violence, which invariably alienates the local population and provokes armed resistance. Some militaries can and do perform effectively in a policing role, but their efforts are ultimately intended to buy time for the development of host nation police capabilities. As the latest British counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine acknowledges, “where armed forces have to act to support the civil authority they should *transfer such*

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security responsibilities to the civil police as soon as conditions allow. Any sense of permanent presence by allies or partners is likely to be exploited by insurgents and critics from home and abroad."²

In a postconflict situation, effective policing helps to keep violence at a manageable level and can build public confidence in the stabilization process so large-scale military force does not have to be employed. It is not surprising, therefore, that the number of police deployed in United Nations (UN) peace support operations has increased dramatically

armed forces are not intrinsically suited to police work

since the end of the Cold War. UN policing roles in the early 1990s were limited to monitoring, observing, and reporting on indigenous police services, but in the last 15 years, policing operations have become increasingly complex with the requirement to undertake executive policing functions and often the major reform of local police services.

Despite the increase in activity, building the capacity of indigenous police has often proved problematic. In Afghanistan, for instance, rapid expansion, inadequate training, and insufficient resources created an Afghan National Police (ANP) that lacked capability, legitimacy, and integrity and was plagued by problems of corruption, high desertion rates, illiteracy, and drug abuse.³ Although the East Timor operation (1994–2004) is regarded overall as a UN success story, the police capacity-building program has been described as hampered by “slipshod planning, squandered opportunities and unimaginative leadership.”⁴

This article addresses the challenges of policing UN and coalition stability operations and assesses efforts to achieve *host nation police primacy*, defined as a situation where indigenous police forces have the main responsibility for internal security and maintenance of the rule of law. It offers a broad perspective by identifying and discussing reoccurring problems that have beset policing operations and assessing national and international efforts to make better use of foreign and host nation police assets. It recognizes that reform and reconstruction of the judiciary, justice department, and penal system are also essential to establish and maintain the rule of law, but a discussion of these functions is beyond the scope of this article.

Police Roles in Stability Operations

The division of tasks between police and military forces and the composition and role of police forces vary according to mission-specific factors, such as the mission mandate, threat environment, condition of indigenous security institutions, and availability of foreign manpower and expertise. On major stabilization missions, police operate alongside military forces, ideally establishing an effective functional relationship while maintaining a separate operational profile. Depending on the nature of the operation, foreign deployed police may perform tasks that include:

- advice to host nation police services
- training and mentoring to build local police capacity
- executive law enforcement functions such as public order, riot control, criminal investigations, and intelligence-gathering

- establishment of new host nation police services
- support to military forces against terrorists and insurgents.

Law enforcement is the most important function of the civil police, but this function represents a particular challenge during stability operations. Postconflict situations are often chaotic, and the presence of insurgents and armed criminal gangs can cause foreign and indigenous police forces to be diverted to address high-end threats, thereby limiting their effectiveness in dealing with basic crime prevention and law enforcement at a local level. Population control and protection are important police functions during all stability operations. These tasks require a high level of skill and robustness as they can include public order management tasks such as riot control, maintenance of checkpoints, and enforcement of curfews. Formed units of paramilitary police, such as the Italian Carabinieri, are normally better suited for these roles than soldiers because the former are trained to deal with public order issues and the discrete application of force. For example, during the Albanian riots against Serbs in Kosovo in March 2004, the response by Kosovo Force soldiers proved woefully inadequate; most national military contingents were not trained, equipped, or mandated to deal with civil disorder.⁵

Police also have a crucial role in intelligence-gathering. The role of intelligence in the context of stability operations ranges from an awareness of local problems with essential services, governance, and crime to information about insurgents and their support networks. Foreign deployed police often lack local knowledge, cultural awareness, and language skills. Host nation police can

compensate for these deficiencies and provide valuable human intelligence. The use of indigenous police to arrest violent elements seeking to disrupt the stabilization process can reinforce the criminal nature of these activities, while the employment of soldiers in this capacity may reinforce a local perception that acts of violence are legitimate resistance against foreign occupation. Unfortunately, in many fragile states, police quality is poor and officers are unpopular with the people they are supposed to serve. A survey conducted in Iraq in 2006 found that 75 percent of Iraqis did not trust the police enough to tip them off to insurgent activity.⁶ Local police may have to be judiciously recruited, trained, and monitored by foreign law enforcement officers before they can operate independently. Patience and perseverance, as well as a broader political will to stay the course, are essential. A premature attempt to establish host nation

local police may have to be judiciously recruited, trained, and monitored by foreign law enforcement officers before they can operate independently

police primacy can jeopardize wider progress toward security and normalcy. In summer 2005, for example, the British army prematurely handed over responsibility for urban security in Maysan Province to the Iraqi police. The number, training, and motivation of the police were inadequate, and the force could not maintain civil order. The resulting security vacuum assisted the growth of Mahdi army militias with links to Iran.⁷

The UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has long stressed the need for “democratic policing,” recognizing

that a responsive and accountable local police force defending basic human rights is essential for a successful transition to long-term and sustainable security.⁸ Building such an indigenous police capacity requires special training for police officers seconded by donor countries as it involves skills outside normal police work including mentoring, advising, training, and consulting. The United Nations and other international institutions struggle to recruit sufficient police officers with appropriate skills for this vital work, and many do not receive appropriate or effective predeployment training.⁹

Reoccurring Policing Problems

Common policing problems have blighted successive stability operations. Often, foreign police do not deploy in sufficient numbers or early enough to prevent a rise in criminal activity and public disorder in the host country. Efforts to train and mentor host nation police forces tend to be insufficiently tailored to local requirements. They sometimes emphasize rapid throughput to get boots on the ground rather than an investment in long-term quality policing. Capacity-building programs for indigenous police forces are also often obstructed by poor coordination among the plethora of national and international agencies involved.

Planning for Operation *Iraqi Freedom* made no provision for an international police force, not least because senior U.S. officials assumed that Iraqi state institutions would remain largely intact. In May 2003, the U.S. Department of Justice belatedly called for the deployment of 6,600 international police advisors and 2,500 paramilitary police to help coalition forces maintain order.¹⁰ By June 2004, fewer than 300 police advisors, recruited

and trained by DynCorp International and under contract from the State Department, had arrived in theater. Moreover, the main U.S. coalition partner, the United Kingdom (UK), had not included professional police in its postconflict planning. Consequently, British training efforts remained inadequately staffed and resourced, and the hastily trained local police in southern Iraq remained weak and corrupt. The UN Kosovo operation in 1999 also included a robust police mandate with executive authority to conduct investigations, make arrests, and mentor a new Kosovo police service, but the slow pace of recruitment and deployment of UN police allowed ethnic Albanians to carry out reprisals against ethnic Serbs and for organized criminal gangs to become established.¹¹

Unfortunately, experienced and deployable police are in short supply, and the process of police mobilization takes much longer than the deployment of a comparable number of military personnel. In contrast to military units, police personnel in developed countries are employed in law enforcement duties in peacetime, and foreign deployment leads to vacant positions in domestic police forces. During a conference in 2000, European Union (EU) members established a Headline Goal of 5,000 police for stability operations. This included a rapid reaction force of 1,000 that would be deployable within 30 days. Despite these commitments, it proved difficult to find just 650 police to deploy on EU police missions to Bosnia and Macedonia in 2003.¹² Similar tardiness has characterized contributions to the European Police Mission (EUPOL) in Afghanistan since 2007.

Some major countries such as the United States and United Kingdom have no national police force. Therefore, the deployment of

serving officers requires the consent of state or local political and police authorities, suitable available volunteers, and their selection and training for missions in a more dangerous than normal policing environment. In the United Kingdom, the provision of police support depends on the agreement of chief constables from up to 53 separate police authorities. The United States has over 17,000 state and local agencies, as well as 9 major Federal law enforcement agencies. Funding for each mission has to be approved by Congress, after which the State Department contracts corporations such as DynCorp to recruit, deploy, and manage police officers. The United States has an additional constraint: the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 restricts expenditure on assistance to foreign police forces. During the UN mission to Somalia (1992–1995), it took 6 months for the State Department to obtain funding from Congress and the necessary Presidential waiver under Section 660 of the act to allow a new Somali national police force to be trained. By the time personnel from the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program deployed, the situation in Somalia had deteriorated to such an extent that their program had to be abandoned.

The training of host nation police rarely stems from an effective in-country training needs analysis. Therefore, standardized (Western) training models are imposed without sufficient regard for local circumstances. This criticism is endorsed by Ann Phillips, former director of the Marshall Center's program in Security, Stability, Transition and Reconstruction. She laments the continued tendency to focus on technical law enforcement skills rather than basic governance issues when training and mentoring indigenous police services.¹³ As lead nation for Afghan

police training, Germany established a police academy in 2002 to provide university-level training for senior police officers and a shorter program for noncommissioned officers. These programs, although of high quality, were based on a European model for professional police training that was unrealistic given the size of Afghanistan and the security situation there.¹⁴ Attempts by the U.S. State Department to create a Western-style police force in Iraq in 2003 were similarly bedeviled by the total absence of a normal professional police culture in the Iraqi police service (IPS). Authors David Bayley and Robert Perito aptly summarized the generic problem: "in mission after mission . . . training programs have been put in place like canned food that is assumed to be universally nourishing. In complex environments, however, one size doesn't fit all."¹⁵

the training process for local police forces has often been rushed on the assumption that large numbers of hastily trained recruits would prove sufficient

A tendency to emphasize the quantity rather than the quality of indigenous police has exacerbated the situation. Adequate numbers are important to impose and enforce security, but police forces must also be trained to behave in a manner that gains the confidence of the population and reinforces government legitimacy. The training process for local police forces has often been rushed on the assumption that large numbers of hastily trained recruits would prove sufficient regardless of local law enforcement conditions, culture, and history. In Afghanistan, for instance, basic police training was cut from 8 to 6 weeks in order to get police numbers on the ground

to support COIN efforts.¹⁶ Poor training has certainly contributed to high ANP attrition rates. Similar problems arose in Iraq. In late 2003, the U.S. Government ordered military commanders to institute a mass hiring program for the IPS with slogans such as “30,000 in 30 days.” This initiative helped to resolve some short-term Iraqi employment problems but did nothing to ensure the development of an effective police service. A Justice Department basic training program based at the International Police Training Center in Amman, Jordan, churned out up to 2,500 new IPS officers each month, but these large numbers could not be adequately managed, equipped, or supported once back in Iraq.¹⁷

Hasty recruitment and training also prevent an adequate vetting process. According to Jean-Marie Guéhenno, former UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, a rigorous recruitment and vetting process provides the most important means of dismantling abusive and corrupt networks within the security forces.¹⁸ In contrast to the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, the vetting of all law enforcement personnel in the country by UN mission staff provided a foundation for successful police reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina between 1999 and 2002.

The poor quality of host nation police recruits can present additional challenges. This has been marked in Iraq and Afghanistan but is by no means unique to these campaigns. In Kosovo, even with modest requirements for police recruits, 80 percent of initial applicants apparently failed to meet minimum standards.¹⁹ Low pay can be a disincentive, but the intrinsic vulnerability of local police also deters recruits. As security force first responders and a visible manifestation of the new regime, local police and often their families

are the first individuals targeted by peace “spoilers.” Dennis Keller of the U.S. Army War College criticizes police training policy because of a general failure to distinguish between the need for both “stability policing,” which necessitates a force with paramilitary capabilities, and “community-based policing,” which requires police officers with peacetime law enforcement skills. For Keller, decisions on the timing and manner of the transition from one form of policing to the other are of critical importance.²⁰ Lieutenant General James Dubik, USA (Ret.), who commanded Multi-National Security and Transition Command-Iraq in 2007, has argued that host nation paramilitary police forces should be established first to allow local police a “protective space” free from intimidation and violence in order to begin the law enforcement transformation process.²¹

Creating effective police forces takes sustained effort over an extended period. Experts estimate that it can take 5 years to create a new law enforcement organization from scratch.²² Writing in 2009, one independent analyst from West Point stated that it would take “a decade to create an Afghan Police Force with adequate integrity to operate at village level in a competent manner.”²³ These timelines are undoubtedly challenging for an international community that is impatient to see results and often reluctant to engage in protracted civilian capacity-building in fragile states.

The large number of national and international law enforcement organizations involved in stability operations can also hinder effective police capacity-building. Foreign police forces may include military police, formed police and paramilitary units, individual police specialists, and specialized units, including border, counternarcotics, and antiterrorist teams.

Since 1999, the United Nations has provided Formed Police Units (FPUs) of around 120 personnel that can perform the full range of police functions. In 2006, these were supplemented by a Standing Police Capacity (SPC) to try to bridge the police deployment gap already mentioned. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has introduced Multinational Specialized Units (MSUs) of 250 to 600 personnel to perform public order duties, while the European Union has created Integrated Police Units that can provide the full spectrum of law and order functions. Outside of EU frameworks, several European states with national paramilitary police forces formed a separate European Gendarmerie Force in September 2004. The African Union and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe also deploy police on stability missions, although the latter's role is restricted to monitoring and training duties. This proliferation of agencies has unfortunately contributed to a duplication of effort, inconsistency in approach, and a less-than-optimal use of scarce resources. *The World Development Report 2011* summarized the broader problem: "Internal international agency processes are too slow, too fragmented, too reliant on parallel systems, and too quick to exit, and there are significant divisions among international actors."²⁴

Like military contingents, police units deploy with different doctrines, operating procedures, and national caveats. In policing and civil justice, however, national systems, structures, legal frameworks, and practices tend to differ more than in the military sphere. Disagreements between donor countries can lead to weak and unsustainable mandates for international police assets. The UN International Police Task Force

(IPTF) that deployed to assist Bosnian law enforcement agencies in 1995 had an initial mandate limited to monitoring, mentoring, and training. The unarmed IPTF could only operate with the cooperation and consent of the Bosnian police and was in no position to deal with continuing interethnic unrest.²⁵ In Afghanistan, the problem has been compounded by contradictory concepts of policing. The U.S.-led NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) has focused on the rapid training of large numbers of recruits to provide a basic COIN force, while EUPOL and some bilateral efforts have sought to build a professional, community-based police force over the longer term. The lack of coordination among foreign police assistance programs is

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described by Thomas Wingfield as the "main weakness" in efforts to build Afghan police capacity. He claims that there was little or no coordination among NATO Allies or between U.S. agencies and nongovernmental organizations engaged in law enforcement during his time in theater.²⁶ Wingfield's observations are supported by a recent British parliamentary report that condemns the lack of consensus between both international institutions and individual countries regarding their respective approaches to police capacity-building.²⁷ Fortunately, an agreement in February 2011 among the Afghan Ministry of Interior, NTM-A, EUPOL, and the German Police Program Team has belatedly led to a standardized method of instruction for all ANP training.²⁸

Tension can occur between deployed military and police forces because of different organizational cultures and operating procedures, but more general interagency differences can create incoherent national approaches to building indigenous police capacity. The United States has particular problems with interagency coordination as the Departments of Justice, State, Treasury, Transportation, and Defense are

relatively small numbers of highly trained police officers prove more effective than larger numbers of semi-trained police rushed into service

all involved in some aspect of foreign police training. There is no central coordination of separate assistance programs and no agency has the lead role. As a result, programs are frequently disconnected, while training tends to be duplicated and is sometimes inappropriate for a particular country. Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli, USA (Ret.), former commander of Multi-National Corps–Iraq, has gone as far as describing the interagency process on stability operations as “broken for our lifetime.”²⁹

Developing Police Capacity

The reluctance to use the military in a policing role is understandable, but for countries that lack formed paramilitary police units, there is no real alternative to using soldiers to provide basic law enforcement, at least in the early stages of a stability operation. Based on recent experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, current British doctrine acknowledges that military commanders are likely to be drawn into policing and internal security matters and will have to take the lead in basic police training.³⁰ Military police (MPs) will naturally

play a lead role in such circumstances. In Iraq, thousands of U.S. Army MPs conducted a full range of policing and penal tasks. After 2006, MPs, together with international police liaison officers and interpreters, formed Police Transition Teams that were embedded with the IPS throughout Iraq. Some analysts favor MPs taking the lead in providing dedicated police forces for stability operations. Matthew Modarelli, an Office of Special Investigations agent, advocates the use of formed units of MPs to help promote “police protocols” in all forces, foreign and local, deployed during COIN operations.³¹ A study by the German institute Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik in 2010 also recommended an enhanced role for German MPs, advocating the expansion of the Feldjäger into a gendarmerie force capable of taking the lead in law enforcement and indigenous police training during the most challenging stabilization missions.³² MPs will probably continue to undertake major training and mentoring roles in future large-scale stability operations. However, as MPs have important functions in the full spectrum of military operations, there appears to be little general support for proposals such as Modarelli’s. MPs are soldiers and therefore lack the specialized expertise of civilian law enforcement agencies. On their own, they cannot offer more than a temporary solution to local police capacity-building needs.

Decades of experience of stability operations reinforce the importance of well-trained, well-led indigenous police forces and indicate that relatively small numbers of highly trained police officers prove more effective than larger numbers of semi-trained police rushed into service. The development of effective police takes time and resources and, as noted above, adequate security measures that provide a

protected space for the development of new or reformed law enforcement agencies. Security can be delivered by deployed foreign military forces, but their limitations in a law enforcement role have led to a growing demand for what are generically referred to as Stability Police Units (SPUs). These units, with paramilitary capabilities, can deal with public order problems, tackle violent criminals, and assist and strengthen local “high-end” police forces. An Italian Carabinieri unit, for example, played a key role in the training and leadership development of the new paramilitary Iraq National Police in 2007. As formed units, SPUs can deploy more rapidly into more dangerous environments than individual police. SPUs have also proved cost effective, being more employable in public order situations than

soldiers and 50 percent less costly than individual UN police.³³ Arguably, they provide the best means of managing the crucial transition from armed conflict to peace and stability. The SPU concept has been described as follows: “Stability Police are robust and armed police units that are capable of performing specialized law enforcement and public order functions that require disciplined group action. They are trained in and have the capacity for the appropriate use of less-than-lethal as well as lethal force.”³⁴

Efforts have been made to establish a consensus on the roles, missions, and standards required of SPUs, as well as the appropriate relationship with deployed military forces and other operational enablers. Since its establishment in 2005 under G8 auspices,



Norway, UN

UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti rebuilds and reforms National Police

the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units (COESPU) in Italy has led in training and developing SPU capabilities, especially for conflict-prone African states. By 2010, the COESPU had trained around 3,000 stability police and deployed mobile assistance teams to provide additional advisory and technical assistance to COESPU graduates.

Since the UN deployed FPUs for the first time in 1999 in Kosovo, the number deployed has grown to over 60 in 2010, comprising more than 6,000 police officers. The DPKO has also developed detailed policy guidance to assist countries contributing FPUs to UN missions. These instructions cover command and control and operational procedures. The instructions place emphasis on crucial issues such as the use of force and the norms and values that underpin the UN approach to policing.³⁵ Nevertheless, the harmonization and accommodation of different policing models and cultures are a broader problem for both the United Nations and other international institutions and can only be resolved over time by the continued development of common standards and doctrine.

SPUs/FPUs and equivalent units do address public order problems, but they do not deal with routine law and order functions and, therefore, do not represent a comprehensive solution to the objective of achieving police primacy. Capacity-building is not one of the UN FPU core tasks, and although some units might be able to assist with training programs on a case by case basis, such work is normally restricted to public order management tasks. Domestic police commitments mean that high-quality paramilitary police forces will only ever be available in limited numbers. In the Bosnia and Kosovo operations, NATO MSUs led by Carabinieri

and gendarmerie units made up less than 10 percent of the total international police force. Countries with the most professional paramilitary police forces, such as France's Gendarmerie Nationale, are not normally leading contributors to UN FPUs. According to Lieutenant Colonel Tibor Kozma of the DPKO Police Division, major donor nations such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and Ghana often deploy police contingents that lack appropriate training, experience, or expertise in either direct law enforcement or training and mentoring roles.³⁶ Other potential SPU-contributing countries, particularly from Africa, lack the financial resources to equip units to UN standards.

SPUs have become an essential partner alongside military contingents and individual international police advisors. In the United States, which lacks a national paramilitary police force, this has sparked significant debate about the desirability of establishing a constabulary force capable of undertaking high-end police tasks.³⁷ A 2009 RAND study recommended an American Stability Police Force formed within the U.S. Marshals Service that could deploy a battalion-sized unit within 30 days. Predictably, the RAND report acknowledged that any proposal to create a U.S. paramilitary police force would run into resistance from entrenched bureaucracies in the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and State.³⁸

Much of the civilian police effort in stability operations, especially regarding training and mentoring of indigenous community police forces, will remain the responsibility of individual police advisors who are normally retired civilian police officers or serving officers who have taken a leave of absence from their local forces. These individuals are normally

loaned or seconded to the United Nations and other international security institutions by national governments. The United States contracts the process out to the private sector. Companies, typically DynCorp or Civilian Police International LLC, are responsible for the recruitment, predeployment training, and management of deployed police officers. Concerns about accountability and political sensitivities have generally prevented European states from adopting this approach. However, governments have attempted to increase the pool of competent police and other criminal justice personnel available for stability operations. Countries with paramilitary police forces have added new stability roles to standing national capacities.

In 2004, Australia established an International Deployment Group (IDG) within its Federal Police for use in regional stability operations. Unlike most other countries, the IDG also provides robust predeployment training that includes enabling skills such as teaching, advising, coaching, and community development.³⁹ After a poor showing in Iraq, the United Kingdom has also taken a number of measures to improve its ability to deploy police overseas. A UK doctrine for policing peace support operations was released in 2007, and the UK national security strategy in 2008 mandated the creation of a 1,000-strong Civilian Stabilisation Capacity unit. This development included a pool of 500 police officers, which theoretically allowed up to 150 officers to be deployed on a single mission.

International security institutions still struggle to provide adequate numbers of well-trained police in a timely fashion. Progress to implement national pools of on-call police officers recommended by the Brahimi Report of 2000 has been slow and inconsistent.⁴⁰ As

noted earlier, the standing UN SPC enables police assets to be deployed rapidly in a crisis to assess the operational police requirement. This helped establish the UN police component on operations in Chad (2007) and Haiti (2010), but as the SPC numbers no more than 50 senior officers, it is no more than a modest enhancement to UN capabilities. The EU's Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability, introduced in 2007 with a mandate to plan, conduct, and support EU peacekeeping missions, is an equally modest improvement that has unfortunately not helped to recruit satisfactory numbers of police advisors for the EUPOL mission in Afghanistan.

countries with paramilitary police forces have added new stability roles to standing national capacities

A recent report by the Stimson Center recommended three new capacities for the United Nations: a Standing UN Rule of Law Capacity of 400 experts to plan, deploy, and lead new missions; a standby UN Police Reserve of 16,200 officers; and a Police, Justice, and Corrections Senior Leadership Reserve to provide short-notice, deployable senior police and rule of law experts.⁴¹ The authors claim that their proposal would greatly increase cost-effectiveness by creating timely, deployable UN policing assets at modest extra cost. Such initiatives are entirely in keeping with the need to address the growing demand for international police. Regrettably, donor countries have shown little interest in increasing UN funding, while the peacekeeping training budget has been cut as the main financial contributor countries seek to rein in government spending.

Despite the prevailing pessimism, it is worth stressing that there are examples of effective police capacity-building programs, which illustrate best practice and demonstrate that national and international security institutions can learn from past mistakes. The reform of the Haiti National Police (HNP) since 2004 has been generally successful, even allowing for the severe setback caused by the earthquake in 2010.⁴² A number of factors have helped this process. First, police reform was viewed as a political rather than just a technical process by Haiti's leaders. Second, the foreign military and police presence provided by the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti created a level of security that permitted a thoroughly professional police recruit training program. The HNP has become professional, introduced vetting, taken action against police abuses, and introduced women into the force, while effective financial support and regulation has ensured regular salaries and raised officer morale. As a result, the police service was transformed from being the least to the most trusted state institution in Haiti in just 5 years.⁴³ Since 2008, the U.S.-led Focused District Development (FDD) initiative has provided arguably the first effective and comprehensive police training and support package in Afghanistan.⁴⁴ FDD combines a mixture of formal training for ANP units in regional centers with followup support by a Police Mentoring Team consisting of civilian police advisors, military police, and interpreters. The complete 10-month FDD cycle consists of assessment, formal training, and a post-training support program. While ANP units are in training, police work in the district is covered by well-trained paramilitary Afghan National Civilian Order Police. The FDD curriculum is essentially paramilitary and is taught by military

officers, but it has provided those ANP units trained so far with the necessary survival skills for local police operations during an ongoing insurgency.

Both of these cases illustrate the need to provide a secure environment long enough to allow a rigorous indigenous police training and reform program. In Haiti's case, police capacity-building has undoubtedly been helped by a supportive government, a comparatively benign security environment, and the fact that the police development process has been part of broader security sector and governance reform. Stability operations in small states also allow a relatively high ratio of international police to population. This facilitates the establishment of security, which is a major reason why the measures used to stabilize Kosovo and Bosnia proved difficult to replicate in Iraq and Afghanistan with their much larger physical size and populations.

Future Developments

Despite gradual improvements in the capability of police missions, the international community is likely to continue to struggle to field effective police forces in sufficient numbers in a timely fashion during major crises. Military forces, supplemented by SPUs, will have to lead in establishing initial law and order in most postconflict environments, while the development of indigenous police capacity will still largely depend on a mix of rerolled MPs, individual civilian police advisors, and private contractors provided by various national and international institutions and agencies. Not surprisingly, the most successful interventions are likely to be in small states with manageable security problems and modest capacity-building needs.

“Manageable” and “modest” may well characterize the future of stability operations. Major campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan have proved to be difficult, protracted, expensive, and politically damaging for the United States and its allies. Painful recent experience, combined with the financial fallout from the worst economic crisis since the 1930s, has significantly reduced the appetite of Western governments for large-scale military intervention.⁴⁵ Yet the need for assistance to fragile and conflict-prone states is unlikely to diminish. According to the World Development Report 2011, one and a half billion people live in areas affected by “fragility, conflict, or large-scale organized criminal violence.”⁴⁶ Nevertheless, future stability operations are likely to emphasize lower costs and less intensive and intrusive interventions focused on a limited number of key issues such as the rule

military forces, supplemented by SPUs, will have to lead in establishing initial law and order in most postconflict environments

of law, the security sector, and civil administration. A lighter footprint in future stabilization missions will place greater emphasis on partnerships with indigenous security forces. The mentorship and training of indigenous police forces will be a critical element of these missions, not least to address the threat presented by the growing nexus between terrorist and criminal enterprises.

The U.S. State Department–directed Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership provides an example of such a capacity-building approach. Since 2005, several U.S. departments and agencies have cooperated to

strengthen regional counterterrorism capabilities through military and law enforcement improvement programs along with initiatives to promote democratic governance. Rather than a substantial foreign police and military presence, more stress will have to be placed earlier on the local ownership of security. In practical terms, according to Laurie Nathan, a specialist in security sector reform, it means “the reform of security policies, institutions and activities in a given country must be designed, managed and implemented by local actors rather than external actors.”⁴⁷ As noted at the beginning of this article, local ownership of security has long been recognized as an essential element in a sustainable peace process and a prerequisite for a successful exit strategy for deployed foreign security forces.

Early local ownership may force Western states to be more modest about the results they can expect from police capacity-building efforts, especially in societies with high levels of illiteracy and corruption. Shaping indigenous police culture will prove a significant long-term challenge in these environments and will best be addressed by embedded police advisors with an understanding of local customs and values. With a more limited foreign presence on stability operations, police advisors may have to accept basic standards of competence and behavior, although the success of a capacity-building mission will still depend on officers being perceived by the local population as legitimate and accountable. Normative standards of behavior will likely remain more important in this context than technical policing skills, and assistance may best be directed toward those states where there is already a strong political commitment to police reform and development.

Conclusions

Policing needs on stability operations will vary. Universal “lessons,” or more dangerously, “templates,” must be applied with caution. Nevertheless, the experience of numerous police missions has demonstrated a need for both paramilitary police units to work with military forces to establish law and order and police advisors and trainers able to develop local community-based police assets to sustain a durable peace. A safe and secure environment must be established early on to prevent the loss of popular support for the stabilization process, but the training of indigenous police should not be rushed simply to supply boots on the ground. Quality training, mentorship, and support will remain prerequisites for success, whether police are prepared for high-end tasks or for traditional law enforcement duties. Experience suggests that police officers rather than the military should take the lead in the development of indigenous police, although the latter may well remain essential to establish the secure space in which local police can receive the longer term training and support they need.

The provision of effective policing for stability operations will continue to challenge the international community, although the achievement of host nation police primacy will remain as critical as ever to the successful transition from internal conflict to sustainable peace. The problems discussed herein defy easy solutions. Even in long-established international institutions such as the United Nations and NATO, different perceptions of national interests, domestic political constraints, and bureaucratic inertia continue to have a negative impact on the policing dimension of stability operations. Consequently, although national and

international staffs have worked hard to improve policing issues over the last 20 years, their efforts remain a work in progress. **PRISM**

Notes

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² Ministry of Defence, *British Army Field Manual*, vol. 1, part 10, Countering Insurgency, Army Code 71876, October 2009, 1–25. Emphasis added.

³ Robert M. Perito, *Afghanistan’s Police: The Weak Link in Security Sector Reform*, Special Report 227 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, August 2010).

⁴ Ludovic Hood, “Security Sector Reform in East Timor 1999–2004,” *International Peacekeeping* 13, no. 1 (March 2006), 61.

⁵ See Human Rights Watch, *Failure to Protect: Anti-Minority Violence in Kosovo, March 2004*, July 25, 2004.

⁶ Michael Moss, “How Iraqi Police Reform Became Casualty of War,” *The New York Times*, May 22, 2006.

⁷ UK Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40, *Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution*, November 2009, 6–14.

⁸ United Nations, *Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations*, December 2003, 85

⁹ See, for example, William Durch and Madeline England, eds., *Enhancing United Nations Capacity to Support Post-Conflict Policing and the Rule of Law* (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, August 2010), 45–47.

¹⁰ Hilary Synott, *Bad Days in Basra* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 185.

¹¹ Robert M. Perito, *U.S. Police in Peace and Stability Operations*, Special Report 191 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, August 2007), 8–9.

¹² Peter Viggo Jakobsen, “The ESDP and Civilian Rapid Reaction: Adding Value Is Harder than Expected,” *European Security* 15, no. 3 (September 2006), 308–309.

¹³ Ann Phillips, interviewed by author, July 2010.

¹⁴ Perito, *Afghanistan’s Police*, 3–4.

¹⁵ David H. Bayley and Robert M. Perito, *The Police in War: Fighting Insurgency, Terrorism, and Violent Crime* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2010), 3.

¹⁶ House of Lords, European Union Committee, *The EU’s Afghan Police Mission*, HL Paper 87, February 16, 2011, para. 51.

¹⁷ Robert K. Byrd, "Foreign Police Development: The Third Time's the Charm," unpublished paper, U.S. Army War College, February 2010, 6–8; Bayley and Perito, 13.

¹⁸ World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (Washington, DC: World Bank, June 2011), 151.

¹⁹ Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF), 8th International Berlin Workshop: International and Local Policing in Peace Operations, August 2007, 53.

²⁰ Dennis E. Keller, *U.S. Military Forces and Police Assistance in Stability Operations: The Least-Worst Option to Fill the U.S. Capacity Gap* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, August 2010), 21–25.

²¹ James M. Dubik, *Creating Peace and Law Enforcement Systems* (Washington DC: Institute for the Study of War, October 2010), 7.

²² See, for example, Perito, *U.S. Police in Peace and Stability Operations*, 11.

²³ Barry R. McCaffrey, unpublished after action visit report for Department of Social Sciences, U.S. Military Academy, December 5, 2009, 6.

²⁴ World Bank, 23.

²⁵ Perito, *U.S. Police in Peace and Stability Operations*, 7–8.

²⁶ Thomas Wingfield, interviewed by author, August 2010. Wingfield was civilian rule of law advisor to General Stanley McChrystal's COIN Advisory and Assistance Team in Afghanistan from October 2009 to February 2010.

²⁷ House of Lords, 14–15. See also William B. Caldwell and Nathan K. Finney, "Building Police Capacity in Afghanistan: The Challenges of a Multilateral Approach," *PRISM* 2, no. 1 (December 2010), 121–130.

²⁸ Sebastian Bloching, "Policing in Conflict: An Overview of EUPOL, Afghanistan," *European Security Review*, briefing 7, International Security Information Service Europe, July 2011.

²⁹ Quoted in Matthew R. Modarelli, "Military Police Operations and Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars Journal*, 2008, 2.

³⁰ UK Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40, 5–10, 6–14.

³¹ Modarelli.

³² Ronja Kempin and Christian Kreuder-Sonnen, *Gendarmerieeinheiten in internationalen Stabilisierungsmissionen: Eine Option für Deutschland?* (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, March 2010).

³³ See statistics in Michael Dziedzic and Christine Stark, "Bridging the Public Security Gap: The Role of the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units in

Contemporary Peace," United States Institute of Peace, 2006.

³⁴ Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units, "The Future Roles for Stability Police Units Workshop," Washington, DC, April 4–5, 2005, 3.

³⁵ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO), *Formed Police Units in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, Ref. 2009.32, Effective Date: March 1, 2010.

³⁶ Tibor Kozma, interviewed by author, November 2010.

³⁷ See, for example, Rachel Bronson, "When Soldiers Become Cops," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 6 (November/December 2002), 122–127; Robert M. Perito, *Where Is the Lone Ranger When We Need Him? America's Search for Postconflict Security Forces* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2004).

³⁸ Terence E. Kelly et al., *A Stability Police Force for the United States: Justification and Options for Creating U.S. Capabilities* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, May 2009).

³⁹ Bayley and Perito, 123.

⁴⁰ United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, A/55/305-S/2000/809, August 21, 2000. paras. 122–125. States have shown greater readiness to deploy FPU, not least because the donor state is reimbursed by the UN for personnel in these units. No such individual compensation arrangements are in place for individual police.

⁴¹ Durch and England, 59–73.

⁴² See UN DPKO reports, available at <www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minustah/reports.shtml>.

⁴³ World Bank, 153.

⁴⁴ Memorandum by Ronja Kempin, House of Lords, 46–47; Bayley and Perito, 23–24.

⁴⁵ See Robert M. Gates, "Helping Others Defend Themselves," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 3 (May/June 2010), 2.

⁴⁶ World Bank, "Violence and Fragility Overview."

⁴⁷ Laurie Nathan, *No Ownership, No Commitment: A guide to local ownership of Security Sector Reform* (Birmingham, UK: University of Birmingham, 2007), 4.

Logistics Islands

The Global Supply Archipelago and the Topologies of Defense

BY PIERRE BÉLANGER AND ALEXANDER SCOTT ARROYO

For the Department of Defense (DOD), the most important difference between Operation *Iraqi Freedom* (OIF) in Iraq and Operation *Enduring Freedom* (OEF) in Afghanistan is neither cultural nor political, but logistical. Admiral Mike Mullen, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, summed up the difference with terse precision: “We don’t have a Kuwait.”² Lacking a secure staging ground adjacent to the theater of operations exponentially complicates getting materiel³ to and from forward operating bases (FOBs) and combat outposts (COPs), in turn requiring a longer and more complex logistical supply chain. Landlocked among non-International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) states, unstable allies (Pakistan and China to the east, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to the north), and regional “rogue states” (Iran), Afghanistan is, for logistical operations, a desert island.

Afghanistan’s Atoll

The key logistical hubs of Kandahar and Bagram are laboriously accessible via three costly, infrastructurally underdeveloped, dangerous, and inefficient routes: from the Arabian Sea via the port of Karachi, Pakistan; from the Baltic and Caspian regions via the transnational, heterostructural Northern Distribution Network; and by airlift via support facilities in the Indian and Pacific oceans or bases as far afield as Fort Blair, Washington. The infrastructural network undergirding OEF logistical operations via sea, land, and air demarcates an adaptive manifold

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that migrates its geometries in real time with geopolitical forces. To track those logistical networks, then, is to diagram the skeletal forms onto which urban generative processes may be grafted; the lasting legacy of ISAF in Afghanistan must therefore be equally read as a project of construction—in the form of infrastructural development and urbanization—in addition to any human, infrastructural, and environmental destruction caused directly or indirectly by combat operations. Indeed, the ubiquitous invocation of a “New Silk Road” as overcode for regional infrastructural strategy—ranging from General David Petraeus and his chief liaison between U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) and U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) to spokespersons for the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Asian

Development Bank—shows the logistical operations and networks deployed through OEF to be endemic to those processes of infrastructural development that would reconnect the old Silk Road from China to the European Union—this time, however, with iron links.

While logistical acquisitions are managed by the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), logistical operations in the field are predominantly coordinated by USTRANSCOM. On average, the command oversees almost 2,000 air missions and 10,000 ground shipments per week, with 25 container ships providing active logistical support. From October 2009 through September 2010 alone, USTRANSCOM flew 37,304 airlift missions carrying over 2 million passengers and 852,141 tons of cargo; aerially refueled 13,504 aircraft with 338,856,200 pounds of fuel on 11,859 distinct sorties; and moved nearly 25 million tons of cargo in coordinated sea-land operations. DLA and USTRANSCOM and their civilian partners are responsible for the largest, most widespread, and most diverse sustained logistics operation in history.⁴

USTRANSCOM is divided into three operating groups or “component commands” corresponding to the three infrastructural strata exploited for logistics operations: Military Sealift Command (MSC), managed by the Navy; Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC), managed by the Army; and Air Mobility Command (AMC), managed by the Air Force. While much attention is paid to the familiar iconography of the parachuting crate or the airdrop or the long tail of the fuel-truck convoy, the vast majority of materiel is transported beyond public purview via both chartered and military container ships under the aegis of MSC. According to the USTRANSCOM 2011 Strategic Plan:

Figure 1. Staging Grounds and Theaters of Operations



Geographic locations and key strategic positions of Diego Garcia and Guam amid growing, complex regions of the Indian Ocean and Pacific Rim

Map Diagram: OPSYS/Landscape Infrastructure Lab 2012

More than 90 percent of all equipment and supplies needed to sustain US military forces is carried by sea. Since the start of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, MSC ships have delivered nearly 110 million square feet of combat cargo, enough to fill a supply train stretching from New York City to Los Angeles. MSC ships have also delivered more than 15 billion gallons of fuel—enough to fill a lake 1 mile in diameter and 95 feet deep.

Neither metric nor imperial but geographic, the amount of materiel moved by

MSC accounts for itself in terms of continents and water bodies such that to transport its cargo, the MSC must quite literally move volumes on the scale of mountains and square footage on the scale of islands.

The first MSC-led logistical foray of OEF was, in fact, launched from Diego Garcia, an island 1,800 nautical miles from the African coast, 1,200 nautical miles from the southern tip of India, and the largest island of the Chagos Archipelago, British Indian Ocean Territory. Along with Guam, Diego Garcia is the most strategically important island base providing logistical support for USCENTCOM

(cont. on page 60)

Figure 2. Prepositioning



The banal yet essential work of the Seabees (Construction Battalion Squadrons) at work on marine platforms, port engineering, road construction, and airport infrastructure

From top left to bottom right: (1) U.S. Navy (Elizabeth Merriam), (2) U.S. Navy (Bryan Niegel), (3) U.S. Navy (Joseph Krypel), (4) U.S. Air Force (Shawn Weismiller), (5) U.S. Air Force (Jarvie Z. Wallace), (6) U.S. Navy (Ace Rheume), (7) U.S. Air Force (Robert S. Grainger), (8) U.S. Navy (Ernesto Hernandez Fonte), (9) U.S. Navy (John P. Curtis)

Figure 3. Military Mobilization



Diego Garcia as a link in the iron chain of command and responsibility for the U.S. Central Command remote theater of operations involving the Department of Defense, U.S. Transportation Command, Defense Logistics Agency, U.S. Air Force Air Mobility Command, U.S. Navy Military Sealift Command, U.S. Army Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, and U.S. Navy Military Sealift Command Office Diego Garcia.

DOD

Figure 4. The Fuel Chain



The extents, exchanges, endpoints, and hemispheres of fuel distribution across the U.S. Central Command inventory of fuel farms, tankers, convoys, bunkers, and bases

From top left to bottom right: (1) U.S. Air Force (Samuel Rogers), (2) U.S. Air Force, (3) U.S. Navy (Eddie Harrison), (4) U.S. Army (Steven P. Haggerty), (5) U.S. Navy, (6) ISAF Public Affairs (Russell Gilchrest), (7) U.S. Army (Ryan Matson), (8) U.S. Air Force (S.C. Felde), (9) U.S. Army (Tierney P. Wilson), (10) Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (Jon Rasmussen), (11) U.S. Marine Corps (M. Trent Lowry), (12) U.S. Air Force (Bradley A. Lai)

Figure 5A. Logistical Fleet

The relative size and distribution of the worldwide fleet of 116 noncombatant, civilian-crewed ships and 50 other standby ships operated by the U.S. Navy Military Sealift Command.



OPSYS/Landscape Infrastructure Lab 2012, adapted from U.S. Navy Military Sealift Command data

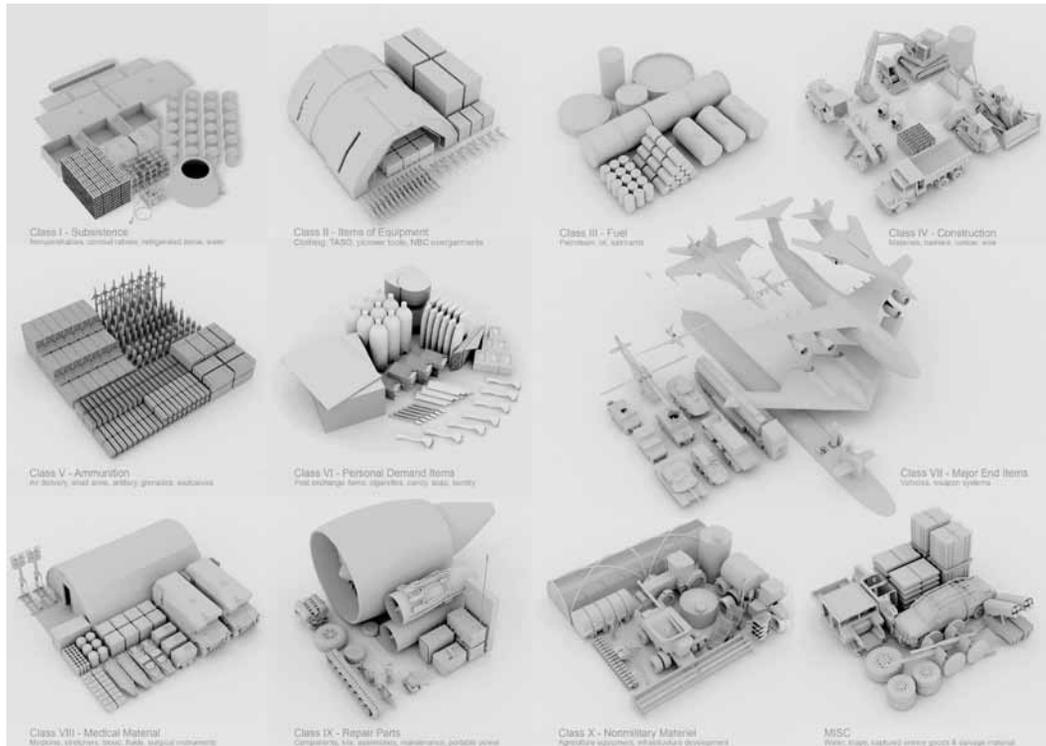
Figure 5B. Fleet of Logistics



Chain links of military and civilian ships carrying over 90 percent of military cargo and supply via oceanic infrastructure toward land-based military facilities

From top left to bottom right: (1) U.S. Navy, (2) U.S. Navy (Brian Caracci), (3) U.S. Navy (Eric L. Beauregard), (4) U.S. Navy, (5) U.S. Navy (PH2 Frazier), (6) U.S. Navy, (7) U.S. Navy

Figure 6. From Coral to Cargo



The typologies and topologies of the 10 classes of supply channeled via Diego Garcia by the U.S. Navy Military Sealift Command

OPSYS/Landscape Infrastructure Lab 2012, adapted using source information from Joint Publication 4-09, *Distribution Operations* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, February 5, 2010), C-11.

(cont. from page 57)

operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Pakistan, and U.S. Africa Command operations in Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, and Libya. In addition to its strategically desirable geographic location, Diego Garcia was selected, after extensive review of Indian Ocean sites (specifically the British Indian Ocean Territory) during the 1960s by U.S. Navy surveyors, for its geomorphological type: the atoll. Formed by the fringing growth of hermatypic (reef-building) corals around the rim of a subsided volcano, the atoll consists of a thin, supramarine strip of eroded geologic and animal material encircling its collapsed submarine interior, creating a ring of dry land around a

shallow lagoon. The atoll, simply put, is an island emptied of its geologic content. It is appropriate, then, that its interior has been filled with a history of logistical operations. From British slave galleons collecting coconut oil and harvesting sea cucumbers in the 1790s, steamers restocking coal supplies in the 1880s, German commercial raiding ships seeking shelter during World War I, or the operation of Great Britain’s Advanced Flying Boat base during World War II, Diego Garcia has served as a logistical lily pad for centuries prior to its adoption by the U.S. Navy as a keystone of its “Strategic Island Concept”—maximally isolated yet maximally connected—developed

Figure 7. Logistical Lily Pad



Aerial view of Diego Garcia and the classic, ring-shaped reef morphology of mid-ocean atolls that naturally harbors shallow and protected lagoon interiors for easy navigation and berthing

Image Science and Analysis Laboratory—NASA Johnson Space Center, Image STS038-86-104, 07-28-2012 03:53:33

during the first years of the Cold War to formalize and expand on Dwight Eisenhower’s “leapfrog” bases scattered throughout the volcanic islands of the Pacific.

Indefinitely leased to the U.S. military under a bilateral agreement between the British and U.S. governments—an agreement notable for its controversial exclusion of the 1,500 Chagos islanders that had occupied the island for centuries prior to its lease—Diego Garcia began its most recent round of infrastructural and logistical metamorphosis as early as 1971.⁵ Following the evacuation of armed forces from Vietnam, sites in Okinawa, Japan, and Diego Garcia were slated for significant introduction

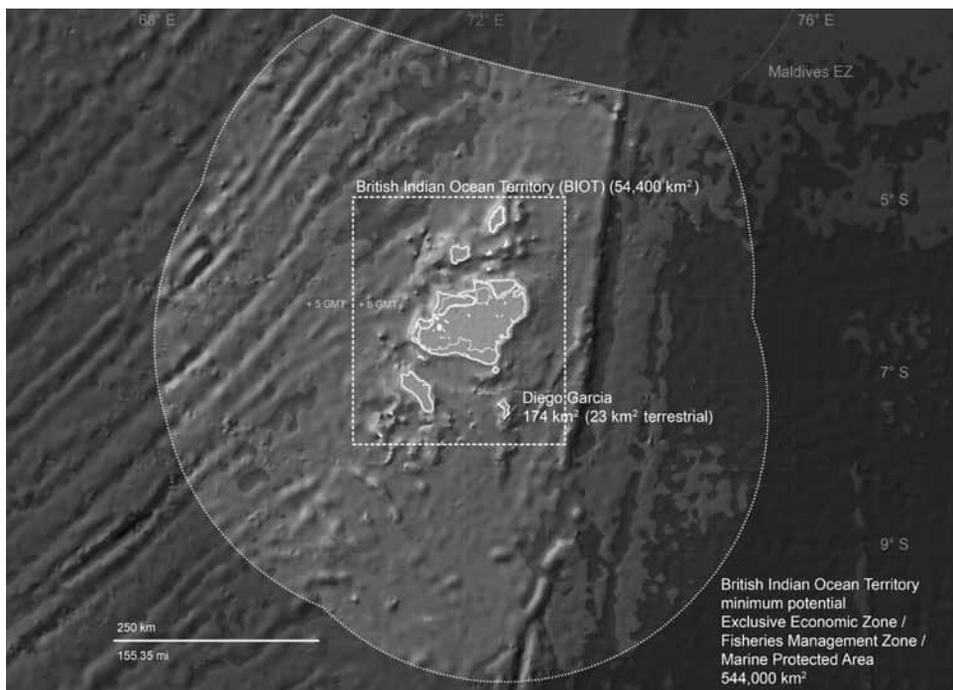
or expansion of capacity, requiring major investment in new facilities and infrastructure; accordingly, the combat engineers responsible for such work, predominantly drawn from the Naval Construction Force, were reallocated to sites emerging out of the post-Vietnam wave of military-infrastructural projects. Spearheaded by U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalions, better known as “Seabees,” Diego Garcia began its \$1 billion transformation in a manner well suited to the history of its militarized future: dynamiting deep-draft access channels into the lagoon and blasting out tracts of coral reef for use as paving aggregate for the airfield and fill for harbor breakwaters.⁶ By 1983,

the Seabees, along with private contracting firms specializing in underwater explosives and harbor dredging, had blasted 4.5 million cubic meters of coral fill for infrastructural projects, including expansions of the runway, wharf, and piers and for the accommodation and anchorage of a full carrier-force fleet in the lagoon.⁷ When locally sourced coral fill proved insufficient to meet construction material demands, the Navy sourced over 150,000 tons of cement and complementary quantities of sand and crushed limestone from contractors in Singapore and Malaysia, resulting in a land-filling operation comprising “115,000 cubic meters of concrete poured for airport

runways and parking aprons, 29 kilometers of asphalt road, antenna fields and support facilities” over 40 acres of internationally imported landmass. Incrementally turned over to U.S.- and UK-based contractors, including then Brown & Root, a Halliburton subsidiary, the process by which Diego Garcia has been developed results in a base “more reminiscent of the Florida Keys than of the Indian Ocean, with all the facilities of a small American town.”⁸

Despite Diego Garcia’s recent anthropomorphic history, its terrestrial episodes are only significant insofar as they are contextualized by the fluid systems in which it is grounded: water and fuel. Indeed, though the

Figure 8A. Territories of Deployment



Extents and overlaps of U.S. tenancy on Diego Garcia’s atoll, nested within the Marine Protected Area of the Chagos Archipelago and Exclusive Economic Zone of the British Indian Ocean Territory, whose boundaries were respectively drawn in 1971, 1965, and 2010.

Map: OPSYS/Landscape Infrastructure Lab 2012, with source information from Central Intelligence Agency *World Factbook*, U.S. Navy Naval Support Facility Diego Garcia Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (2005), U.S. Navy Marine Biological Survey, July/August 2004.

coral reefs that compose the atoll trace a 174 square kilometer footprint, only 27 square kilometers of that area protrude above water. The remainder is submarine reef and lagoon. Totalling approximately 125 square kilometers, the lagoon accommodates an area twice the size of Manhattan. And while the island only hosts a total resident population of about 360 military personnel, the atoll’s interior and surrounding waters—since 2010, protected from encroachment through inclusion in the largest marine reserve on the planet at 250,000 square miles—harbor U.S. Marine Pre-positioning Squadron Two (MPSRON TWO), a dynamically composed fleet of dedicated military

(“organic”) and chartered civilian vessels capable of distributing half a million tons of cargo to combat theaters in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. The atoll’s lost geological matter has thus been replaced by the lethal and nonlethal cargoes of MPSRON TWO, including Sikorsky Blackhawk helicopters, M-1 Abrams tanks, High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles, Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, Stryker Medium Tactical Vehicles, M4 Carabines, Depleted Uranium 30mm munitions, JP-8 jet fuel for engines in jets and tanks, medical supplies, and high-security prisoners captured during war on terror operations. In addition, the terrestrial minority of the atoll

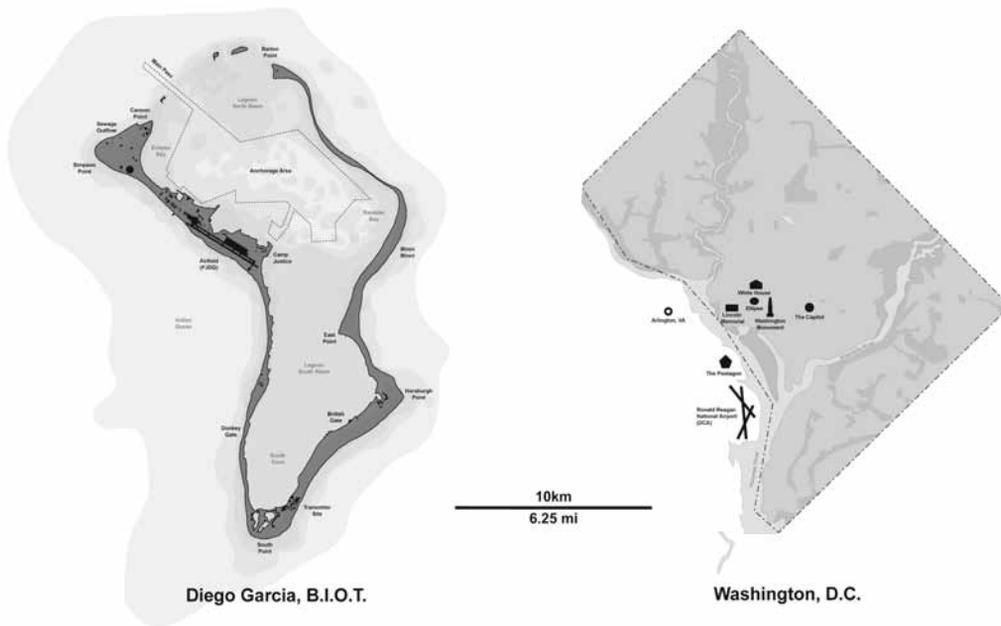
Figure 8B. Strata of Deployment



Layers of lagunal infrastructures and logistical land uses of the U.S. Department of Defense on Diego Garcia

Map: OPSYS/Landscape Infrastructure Lab 2012, with source information from Central Intelligence Agency *World Factbook*, U.S. Navy Naval Support Facility Diego Garcia Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (2005), U.S. Navy Marine Biological Survey, July/August 2004.

Figure 9. Islands of Influence: DG and DC



Comparative size of the Diego Garcia atoll with the Capital Region of Washington, DC
 OPSYS/Landscape Infrastructure Lab 2012, with source information from Federal Aviation Administration

hosts a 12,000-foot runway sufficient for landing a NASA Space Shuttle but most regularly used by B-1B, B-2, and B-52H Stratofortress long-range bombers, C-5 Galaxy troop transporters, KC-10 Extender air-to-air tankers, and KC-135 Stratotankers.

In fact, while supplies for ground operations were being readied for sealift to Karachi, Pakistan, B-1B and B-52H bombers flew the first combat sorties into Afghanistan. The B-52H, with its eight jet engines, consumes about 3,334 gallons per hour without afterburners. Though it carries 312,197 pounds (47,975 gallons) of fuel, the B-52H requires aerial refueling for any long-range mission that could exceed its maximum ceiling of 14 hours of flight; for sorties into Afghanistan—over 2,750 miles from Diego Garcia—bombers flew

between 12 and 15 hours over 5,500 miles, requiring accompaniment by KC-10s (356,000 pounds total fuel capacity, 4,400 mile range fully loaded), or KC-135s (200,000 pounds total fuel capacity, 1,500 mile range fully loaded). In addition to the dry lethal and non-lethal cargo filling the atoll’s aqueous interior, then, the demand for fuel proves paramount, filling Diego Garcia’s lagoon with a lake of fuel.

The demand for fuel is only increasing. Given the characteristics of contemporary conflict—typified by decentralized, asymmetric warfare, rapid deployment to climatically diverse, geographically remote combat theaters across the globe, and multiple, small, forward-deployed expeditionary forces in infrastructurally deficient conditions—both combat and

logistical operations have become increasingly reliant on airlift of fuel and sensitive military cargo from sealift and surface distribution terminals into locations inaccessible or insecure by road. In 2010 alone, airlift increased by a third.⁹ Longer distances and flight hours, heavier payloads, energy-intensive computer technologies, and the ubiquity of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) support operations integral to the security of airlift sorties—only combat helicopters find themselves targeted more than airlift aircraft—make airlift 10 times as expensive as surface distribution and spiral into an ever-lengthening logistical tail that coils over the globe.

It is no surprise then, that in addition to holding court as the largest landowner worldwide, DOD is also the largest single consumer of petroleum, burning through at least 5 billion barrels in 2010 (excluding between 100,000 and 250,000 private-sector security and logistical contractors).¹⁰ By the end of 2010, convoys were delivering 40 million barrels a month to roughly 94,000 troops in Afghanistan, consuming more oil per month—by several million barrels—than Indonesia, a country of 230 million people.¹¹ While munitions once dominated supplies delivered to a combat theater, fuel now makes up 80 percent of those supplies.¹² Moreover, though a fraction of that fuel is delivered to bombers, fighters, helicopters, and tanks for which fuel economy is best measured in gallons-per-minute, of the top 10 least fuel-efficient vehicles used by the Army, only 2, the M-1 Abrams Tank and the Apache helicopter, are combat vehicles with the rest providing logistical support.¹³ The Air Force, consumer of the majority of DOD fuel, expends over 85 percent of its annual fuel budget to deliver fuel; of that annual budget, fuel delivered

totals a mere 6 percent.¹⁴ By simple subtraction, more than 75 percent of the fuel is used for transporting and conveying it prior to arrival at its final destination. Once the fuel arrives at a FOB, as much as 80 percent may be allocated for facility rather than vehicular use, affirming that the vast quantities of fuel consumed are burned in between “tooth”—in-theater facility—and the tip of the “tail”—CONUS (continental United States)—based point of distribution.¹⁵ In short, logistical operations prove the greatest consumer of the very resource they supply; fuel demands only more and more fuel.

Iron Chain on the Silk Road

If such statistics convey the financial and material magnitude of military fuel consumption in Afghanistan, they fail to track the complexity of the supply chain that would properly anatomize the logistical body between tooth and tail. In June 2011, for instance, it was reported that the U.S. military spends \$20.2 billion annually on air conditioning for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁶ More than the entire annual budget for NASA, one and a half times that of the Department of Transportation, and more than double the budget for the Environmental Protection Agency, the figure exceeds the entire energy acquisitions budget of the DLA (\$15 billion, of which \$13.2 billion is spent on petroleum-based fuel).¹⁷ DOD spokespersons have cited this incongruity as proof of the falsehood of the assessment; however, the methodology by which one arrives at such an extraordinary figure better captures the movement of fuel through its DOD life cycle, from initial deployment to consumption, than does a mere budget total. As Brigadier General Steven Anderson, USA

(Ret.), chief logistician to General Petraeus during his command of OIF, explains, such a figure represents the “Fully Burdened Cost of Fuel” (FBCF), a DOD-adopted concept denoting “the commodity price plus the total life-cycle cost of all people and assets required to move and protect fuel from the point of sale to the end user.”¹⁸ FBCF incorporates into calculations costs associated with armed convoy protection, aerial ISR operations, command and control to coordinate the dynamic network of terrestrial and airborne security, ISR, and transportation forces, medical evacuation support, and most importantly the construction of transportation infrastructure. (This figure does not, however, include costs of hiring local trucking contractors, which compose over 90 percent of convoy operators, or the significant costs incurred due to local microeconomic and micropolitical conditions such as corruption and pilferage.) No wonder, then, that during a recent conference discussing the metrics and applications of FBCF, another geographically scaled referent provided a graphic placeholder for the concept as such: the iceberg.¹⁹

If the FBCF is an iceberg, the comprehensive tooth-to-tail military logistical spectrum constitutes the glacier from which it has been calved. The moraine of the military logistical glacier is infrastructure. Since 2001, DOD has spent in excess of \$2.5 billion on the “Ring Road,” a 1,925-mile stretch of asphalt linking Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, and Andkhoy. In 2011, DOD created the Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund, allocating an initial \$400 million for turning “goat paths” into a national network of highways, adding another \$475 million in 2012. In addition, nonmilitary funds directly support military logistical operations: from 2002 to 2009, nearly \$2 billion in U.S. Agency

for International Development funds to Afghanistan were spent on roads—a quarter of all funds and more than twice the funds spent on the second most costly category, power.²⁰ The economic opportunity to be gained from an extensive, defensible, reliable transportation infrastructure, shocked into development by ISAF logistical operations, is not lost on potential investors. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, linking transportation routes through Afghanistan to extant Eastern and Western routes would pave a New Silk Road:

- An overland route running from Lianyungang, China, to Rotterdam via Xinjiang and Central Asia would reduce the time to transport goods from China to Europe from 20–40 days to 11 days and lower costs from \$167 to \$111 per ton.
- If basic improvements were made to the transport infrastructure connecting Central Asia to Afghanistan, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) predicts overall trade would increase by up to \$12 billion, a growth of 80 percent.
- A separate estimate by the ADB found that the completion of new roads would boost total trade among Afghanistan’s neighbors by 160 percent and increase the transit trade through Afghanistan by 113 percent. The study also found that these roads would raise Afghanistan’s exports by 14 percent or \$5.8 billion and increase imports by 16 percent or \$6.7 billion.²¹

These advantages are not lost on insurgents, who recognize that larger fuel convoys and infrastructure construction make easy targets—from 2003 to 2007, the Army recorded over 3,000 personnel and contractor

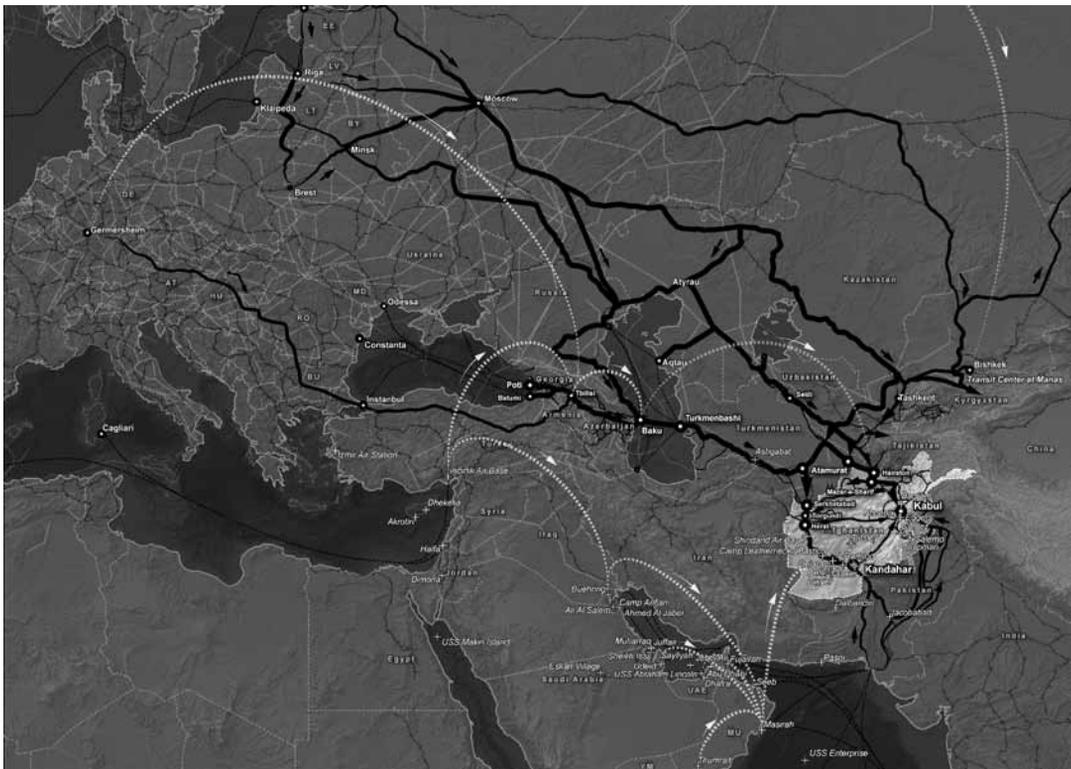
casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan resulting from attacks on fuel and water convoys, and in 2010 alone, more than 1,100 convoys were attacked.²² On average, 1 of every 24 convoys experiences casualties.²³ Many of these attacks exploited USTRANSCOM reliance on transportation of cargo along the Pakistan Ground Line of Communication (PGLOC), a set of treacherous highway routes from Karachi to Kabul and Bagram Air Base via Torman Gate, Khyber Pass, or to Kandahar via Chaman Gate, Chaman border crossing. As a result, since 2005, USTRANSCOM has sought rail and road alternatives to PGLOC, aiming to reroute

75 percent of nonlethal, nonsensitive cargo through the Northern Distribution Network (NDN), an alternative, heterostructural system scattered through the Caucasus.

Topologics of Defense

That infrastructure facilitates and follows military presence as both generator and residuum of logistical operations is as old as war; what is unprecedented, however, is the flexibility, speed, and magnitude with which that infrastructural transformation may be effected. Sharon Burke, newly appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense for Operational Energy

Figure 10. The New Silk Road



The circulation infrastructure of ports, bases, and highways that weaves lines of communication and modes of transportation across the Northern Distribution Network, AFGAK theater of operations, and Afghanistan's new Ring Road, forming the bones of a skeletal link between Asia and Europe

OPSYS/Landscape Infrastructure Lab 2012, with source information from U.S. Army Surface Deployment and Distribution Command

Plans and Programs—DOD’s first dedicated energy policy office—notes that though the importance of logistical operations is not new, “the amount of energy [DOD] consumes is new, down to the individual soldier, sailor, airman and Marine.”²⁴ These novel energy demands materialize in both the flexible and rigid infrastructures—typified by MSPRON TWO and Diego Garcia on the one hand, and the NDN on the other—and define the expeditionary built environment for the generation of warfare where *defense*, according to USTRANSCOM Strategy 2011

is characterized by numerous smaller, forward deployed forces operating around the globe. In many of the geographic areas likely to experience future US involvement, the critical infrastructure will be austere—lacking air and sea ports, and having few roads. At the same time, these areas will have limited or compromised water, electrical, and sewer services—directly affecting the American and coalition means to respond with humanitarian aid or sustain deployed military forces. . . . These implications for infrastructure will include a heightened requirement to integrate the needs of functional combatant commands (such as USTRANSCOM) with those of geographic combatant commands. The challenge will be to leverage existing infrastructure and partner internationally to achieve the greatest possible power projection capability.

The trope of the island returns here in terms of infrastructure: combat theaters become increasingly “islandized” into an archipelago of fragmented geographies brought into synchronicity and proximity by a catalogue of techniques drawn from the

“fourth-generation warfare” or network-centric warfare playbook: continuously cycling ISR and unmanned aircraft system operations, clandestine special forces strikes, use of private security contractors, cyberwarfare, and so on. Indeed, the most advanced techniques and tools fetishized in popular culture, those unthinkably sophisticated weapons and intelligence systems that give their wielders an insuperable advantage, are in thrall to the unremarkable ubiquity of fuel. Strategically located bases such as Diego Garcia create a global constellation of supply depots, conveyance chains, and fuel farms, fulfilling the Cold War-era Strategic Islands Concept; in addition to its three Maritime Pre-positioning Squadrons based in the Mediterranean Sea and the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic oceans, the Navy maintains 66 floating storage “defense fuel support points” that, when daisy-chained together with intratheater, intertheater, and extratheater surficial (SDDC) and stratospheric (AMC) logistical networks, begin to constellate a globally distributed, locally deployable, dynamically constituted system of logistical islands. Hard-infrastructure artifacts such as Afghanistan’s Ring Road register, codify, and crystallize these fluid systems. Each tactic of connectivity short-circuits the geographic and temporal constraints imposed by a petroleum-based supply chain—a fuel shed—predominantly oriented toward delivering the very product by which it is powered.

As the unit concept in the global supply archipelago, for contemporary discourse on “power projection” via logistics, the island has thus shifted from a concept inhering in geographic and topographic advantage to a concept inhering in topological advantage; thus, as argued by Paul Virilio, “If, as Lenin claimed, ‘strategy means choosing which

Figure 11. Stoppages/Blockages



When ground lines of communication are shut down, idle fuel tankers and supply convoys such as this one—marooned in Karachi, Pakistan, en route to the Chaman or Tormand border gates—cost \$100 million in monthly losses, as they provide 30 percent of NATO’s supplies to Afghanistan

ASIF HASSAN/AFP/Getty Images 2012

points we apply force to,’ we must admit that these ‘points’, today, are no longer geostrategic strongpoints, since from any given spot we can now reach any other, no matter where it might be . . . geographic localization seems to have definitively lost its strategic value, and, inversely, that this same value is attributed to the delocalization of the vector, of a vector in permanent movement.”²⁵ That is, where the island once supplied geographic advantage through a literal topographic superiority—indeed, in its most simple capacity, the island proved useful precisely insofar as it remained above sea level, a condition not to be taken for

granted, particularly in recent decades—it now functions in a network of linked sites that, through their interconnectivity, manufacturing bases and theaters of deployment, project and sustain a topologies of force.

Logistics simultaneously designates the form and content, process and product, medium and mathematics of maintaining the integrity of topological relations between heterogeneously programmed, mobile, and mutable nodes. Fragmentation and striation become the very media of radical fluidity. This shift from valuation of the island as static proximity embedded in an absolute

geography to a topological unit enmeshed in a relational, networked geometry of forces and flows reflects the historical adaptation of military theory—arguably the avant-garde of spatial thought—to novel modes of spatial production and a paradigm of poststructuralist geography. Corresponding with the military hijacking of the discipline of geography during the interwar period, it is no coincidence that the emergence of the topological concept of the island emerges during the long post-World War II moment during which the work of Norbert Wiener and others on cybernetic theory, broadly adopted by military thinkers across the Armed Forces (in particular, by the influential Air Force colonel-turned Pentagon consultant and organizational theory exponent John Boyd), came to prominence.

And while the work of cybernetics is ubiquitously discernible in what is likely the single most recognizable network of all, the Internet, the transformation of the concept of logistics islands is more difficult to track or identify.²⁶ Yet the simultaneous development of cybernetic theory and the island as topological concept for military logistics must be read as the most intimate of relations; indeed, it is precisely the addition of an informational stratum woven into the topologies of force projection that allows for the unprecedented flexibility, precision, and coordination of logistical operations, from Maersk and FedEx to USTRANSCOM, and yields the exponential growth of production and distribution of such operations after the opening of global markets following, first, World War II, and second, the Cold War. Indeed, reading the topologies of force as an open, logistical system renders its operations in both fragmentary spatial—*islandization*—and temporal—from second-based scheduling coordination

to longitudinal and latitudinal minutes—logics that engender its capacity for totalization. The topologies of force are omnipresent as a logistical notion of displacement rather than distance, of exchanges instead of settlements, that constitute “the realization of the absolute, uninterrupted, circular voyage, since it involves neither departure nor arrival”²⁷ but interminable delivery.

By rediagramming logistical operations as a topological technology of force projection, the island as strategic concept finds clearest iteration in the contemporary discourse of “sea-basing.” Building on the massive maritime logistical apparatus developed for World War II “transoceanic” operations following the collapse of global communism, naval strategists immediately recognized the need to reconfigure a fleet designed for large-scale naval warfare to a force capable of policing the world’s oceans—and through its oceans, its economies. That over 90 percent of military logistical operations are maritime-based mirrors the function of the ocean as the set of predominant operational surfaces through its varied strata on which economic and geopolitical relations of power are inscribed and its transformations are performed, from submarine fiber optic systems to high-orbit satellite networks. These operations, relations, and transformations are evidenced in the ledgers of container ship captains and crews, employed by MSC to command and crew the repositioning fleet as Civilian Mariners or “CIVMARS”: at least 77 percent of international trade moves via container ship, with the global fleet projected to grow by 9.5 percent by the end of 2012, delivering roughly 650 million cubic meters of cargo.²⁸ Perhaps more importantly, more than three-quarters of this daily maritime traffic, including half of

petroleum and crude oil imports and exports, is squeezed through a handful of manufactured and highly maintained waterways surveilled and managed by military engineers such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and security forces such as the Coast Guard.²⁹ Triangulated through these critical waterways, soft techniques of “antiaccess” and “area denial” (together known as the strategy of A2/AD³⁰) project a maritime presence into terrestrial territories via an amphibious interface:

*Our ability to command the seas in areas where we anticipate future operations allows us to resize our naval forces and to concentrate more on capabilities required in the complex operating environment of the “littoral” or coastlines of the earth. . . . As a result . . . we must structure a fundamentally different naval force to respond to strategic demands, and that new force must be sufficiently flexible and powerful to satisfy enduring national security requirements.*³¹

Emphasizing sea superiority as a means to economic dominance, while not new (indeed, the Coast Guard, as the first naval force established by the Continental Army in 1776, was conceived as protection and power for mercantile operations up and down the colonies’ Atlantic coast), returned strategic maritime priorities to the historical condition recorded by the very figure responsible for transforming the U.S. Navy into a global power during the late 19th century, Alfred Thayer Mahan:

It is not the taking of individual ships or convoys, be they few or many, that strikes down the money power of a nation; it is the possession of that overbearing power on

*the sea which drives the enemy’s flag from it, or allows it to appear only as a fugitive, and which, by controlling the great common, closes the highways by which commerce moves to and from the enemy’s shores.*³²

On the one hand, the contested geopolitical conditions to which Mahan was responding, consisting of a handful of maritime superpowers, no longer obtain: the United States Sea Services battle fleet displaces roughly the same amount of water, carries more firepower, and operates more than 2.5 times more aviation sea bases than the rest of the world’s navies combined.³³ On the other hand, the notion of the oceans as the “great common” is perhaps more important than ever: as globalized economies depend increasingly on import of basic foodstuffs and goods, marine resources, ecologies, economies, and infrastructure rapidly displace terrestrial systems as the most critical territories of strategic importance, and so demand an attendant militarization of the ocean at unprecedented scope and scale. Nor does the ocean’s surface serve as the primary medium for paired projections of privatization and militarization: submarine and air space are striated with zones of exclusion and defense to “protect the passage of nuclear submarines, sea-launched missiles, and maritime surveillance systems undergirded by thirty thousand miles of submarine cables.”³⁴ The infrastructural legacies of terrestrial logistics, in the form of highways, roads, and rails, while easily identifiable as physical artifacts, are of lesser strategic impact than the fluid, submerged, and littoral infrastructural legacies of maritime logistics: dredged channels, multi-lock canals, ports, dams, levees, ever-larger container ships, increasing marine

traffic, exclusive economic zones, engineered estuaries, marine ecosystem protection buffer zones, and new trade routes and territories of resource extraction opened up by global climate change inscribe the ocean and its depths with the vectors of power. Furthermore, the interweaving of maritime and terrestrial infrastructures through the ocean is evidenced by the jurisdictional regimes of the U.S. military's construction forces: USACE is affiliated with the most terrestrial force and manages the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of waterways and floodplains; the Seabees are affiliated with the most clearly marine force and perform the vast majority of base-building, road-laying, and other terrestrial infrastructural projects both in-theater and in non-U.S. territory. Thus:

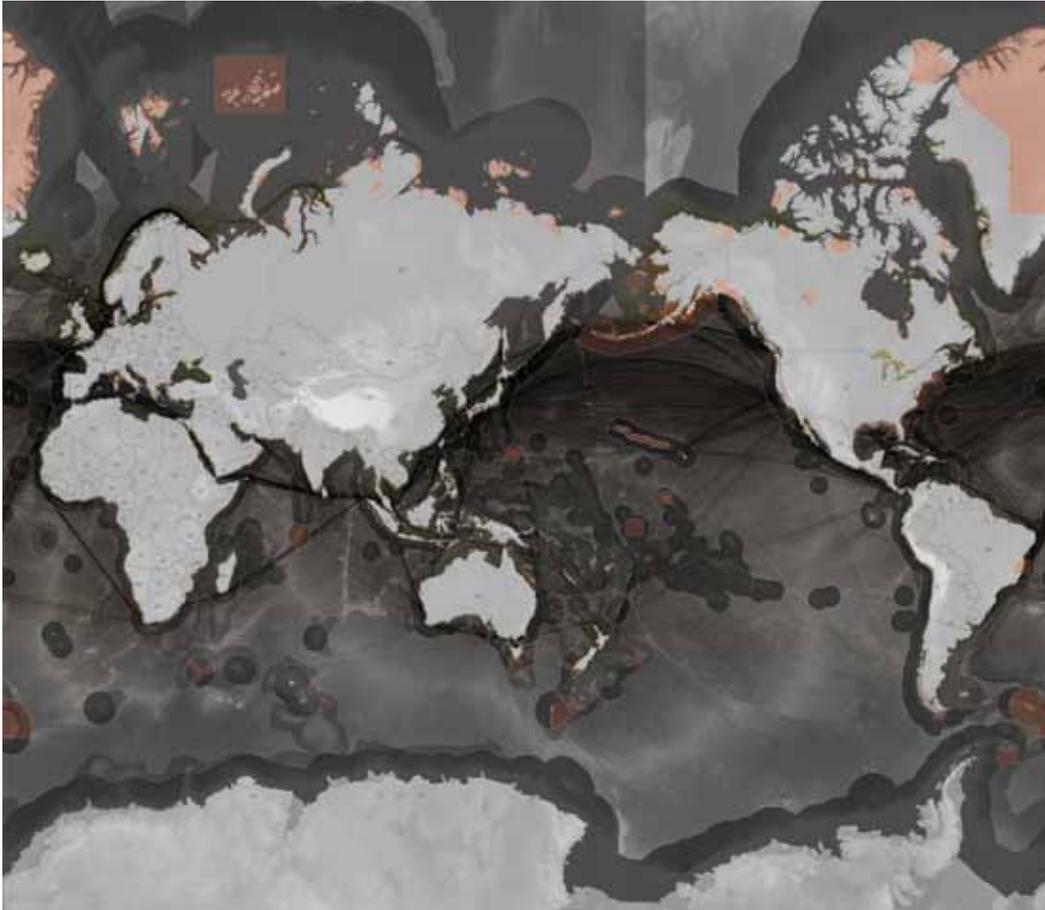
In a very real sense the sea is now the base from which the Navy operates in carrying out its offensive activities against the land. Carrier [navigation] is sea-based aviation; the Fleet Marine Force is a sea based ground force; the guns and guided missiles of the fleet are sea based artillery. . . . The base of the United States Navy should be conceived of as including . . . the seas of the world right up to within a few miles of the enemy's shores.³⁵

The concept of sea-basing is constituted by a double entendre for which the base is at once a sea and the sea as such. To expand the capacity and extent of sea basing through advanced, diversely scaled and equipped prepositioning fleets, Mobile Offshore Bases,³⁶ Mobile Landing Platforms,³⁷ Sea-Based Radar stations,³⁸ and other mobile logistics islands, then, is to deploy bases-at-sea, bringing the role of terrestrial bases in foreign territory into an era of destabilized strategic status; on the

other hand, the concept of logistics islands takes the sea-as-base, the very substratum of force projection and full-spectrum dominance. The sea, as both thickened medium and fluidity, becomes a "vast logistical camp."³⁹

In another sense, with the recent shutdown of NASA's Space Shuttle program in 2011, the concept of sea-basing allows for a return of the logistics island concept to its constitutive and material content—a *rappel à l'ordre* to bring the island back to Earth, as it were. As a purely topological concept, the island runs the risk of chorusing "a naturalizing discourse of fluid, trans-oceanic routes" originating in 19th-century American literature and culture—"precisely when the United States became a global naval power,"⁴⁰ recapitulated many times over by naval theorists and finance capitalists alike. Indeed, the discourse of fluidity is the native tongue of that Utopian vision of emancipated capital unfettered by regulation and governance. The false freedoms of fluidity, particularly in the context of the sea, are well-tracked through spatial thought: as we are reminded, the apparently "smooth space" of the oceanic surface is "not only the archetype of all smooth spaces but the first to undergo a gradual striation gridding in one place, then another, on this side and that . . . a dimensionality that subordinated directionality . . . [where] the striation of the desert, the air, the stratosphere" entrenches itself in a "vertical coastline."⁴¹ Moving between the smoothness that exceeds the grids of governance and the striations operations of governance inscribe through its fluidities, the "sea, then the air and the stratosphere, become smooth spaces again, but . . . for the purpose of controlling striated space more completely."⁴² What then can the constitutive content of the logistics island tell us about these operations of governance and

Figure 12. Oceanic Urbanization



Reorganizing the world Trans-Atlantic projection forwarded by the Central Intelligence Agency since World War II, this map privileges the regions of the Indian and Pacific oceans—where nearly two-thirds of the world’s population live in the crossflow and crossfire of pipelines and politics, boundaries and buffers—as the new field of urban focus

OPSYS/Landscape Infrastructure Lab 2012, with source information from United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, INOGATE, GAZPROM, TeleGeography, United Nations Environmental Programme, NATO

modulations of mechanisms of marine control? As the logic of the logistics island and its broader landscape of defense, a topologies of force is still, after all, a material and geographic system; and as with any system prone to entropy, a topologies of force and power projection has its externalities—conceptual, material, and ecological.

The concept of the logistics islands thus reconfigures the Strategic Islands Concept for the topological age and becomes the most critical, diffuse, and powerful mode of military spatial production and management: maximum protection to localized nodes of power for the bases-at-sea, and maximum connectivity for soft techniques of modulation and

control through ubiquity of the sea-as-base. At different scales, from the personal to the planetary, nation-states, regions, cities, and even identities may operate as islands. Recalling Churchill's words, then, the continental United States is the epitome of the base-at-sea, the inversion of *aqua nullius*; the only means to avoid the fulfillment of his prison-house prophecy is the exploitation of the connective medium of the geographic itself capable of conducting force to local expressions of power across the depth of the ocean and extents of the atmosphere—the militarized mediums of the globe that are the heavy waters and thick air of the world. **PRISM**

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²⁶ Cf. Antoine Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), chapter 4, "Cybernetics and the Genesis of the Computer," 93–120.

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³⁸ Boeing, "Sea Based X-Band Radar," available at <www.boeing.com/defense-space/space/gmd/gallery/photos1.html>.

³⁹ Virilio, 64.

⁴⁰ DeLoughrey, 705.

⁴¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 480. With augural prescience, Deleuze and Guattari go on: "How can one fail to mention the military technicians who stare into screens night and day and live for long stretches in strategic submarines (in the future it will be satellites)."

⁴² *Ibid.*



South Sudanese soldier mans machinegun while escorting convoy of returnees from North Sudan to Abyei

The Stabilization Dilemma

BY GREG MILLS

Nanette is pleased to have a job at the Hotel Ivoire, the somewhat bizarre, Israeli-designed 1970s grand statement located in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. This elegant woman in her 40s travels 15 kilometers from her home every night, a journey that daily soaks up \$6 of her \$240 monthly salary. But she is grateful to have a job, especially since her husband is paralyzed from the neck down, the result of an industrial accident. And things are looking up. The hotel is being renovated, occupancy is climbing, and the giant pool surrounding the entire resort has been freshly painted and is once more full of water.¹ Côte d'Ivoire is slowly getting back on its feet after a devastating civil war. In the longer term, Nanette's prosperity—like that of her 21 million countrymen and women—is linked to the things she cannot see and, in a fragile democracy, has little power over: the effectiveness of the process of political reconciliation, economic growth, and the governance necessary to ensure that the growth is spread beyond a tiny elite, and, above all, the maintenance of peace. The role of outside powers in this transition is limited, and they have to learn, first, to do no harm and, second, to link private sector-led growth better with donor interests and flows.

While economics often serve to compound political difficulties, the economic challenge is, overall, profoundly political. This realization has given rise to a global peace-building template usually involving a political agreement facilitated externally and backed by foreign guarantees. This is followed by elections and the advent of representative government; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of armed combatants; and collecting weaponry, delivering humanitarian assistance, reinstating the traditional drivers of growth (in postconflict countries these are often agriculture, mining, and remittances); restoring infrastructure; and reducing or eliminating inherited debt. In this process, there are inevitable tensions. For example, should the focus be on creating the conditions for stability rather than putting the long-term building blocks in place for development?

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Afghanistan illustrates these dilemmas. As one U.S. Marine general put it in International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) headquarters in Kabul in 2010, the “military is inherently corrosive to development, but necessary too. It’s a bit like treating cancer with chemotherapy. You try and kill the disease—the insurgent—before the patient—Afghanistan.”² There is a danger, for example, that humanitarian assistance would undermine Afghan farmers by deflating prices or yield increases through massive, sudden extension schemes that would not only be unsustainable but also not be followed up by the creation of markets in which to sell such goods. By 2010, more than 37,500 southern Afghan farmers had benefited from the Food Zone alternative livelihoods scheme, along with a further 50,000 farmers reached under the U.S.-funded AVIPA (Afghanistan

tensions include spending on the military rather than on longer term governance and job creation or on short-term humanitarian assistance rather than development

Vouchers for Increased Productive Agriculture) seed and extension project.³ While the livelihood programs such as Food Zone and AVIPA offered a carrot of institutionalized governance to the rural areas—bringing Kabul into contact with rural people often for the first time—they were missing the development aspects of postharvest handling, beneficiation, marketing, and sales so crucial to establishing a value chain. As an agriculture ministry official in Kabul put it, “[the Food Zone and AVIPA] are absolutely not sustainable. At some point things will have to give. . . . [AVIPA] is run by a bunch of beltway bandits.”⁴ Or as another with extensive experience in the pomegranate

and grape industry in the south put it, “They [AVIPA] have not understood what works in terms of crops, and what is needed after harvesting.”⁵

Similar tensions include spending on the military (such as in South Sudan, consuming as much as half of its \$2.5 billion budget) rather than on longer term governance and job creation or on short-term humanitarian assistance (often the delivery of food) rather than development. Should external agents backstop local partners or, in the process of maturation, risk their failure? Similarly, in an effort to maintain political stability and buy-in, what is the balance between reinforcing powerbrokers (that is, warlords) in a top-down governance engagement and addressing bottom-up governance concerns? These relate to other tensions: between justice and the imperative for reconciliation, such as is necessary in Côte d’Ivoire today; opening up space for the private sector versus rent-seeking by the elites; urban versus rural spending; and dealing with meeting short-term expectations versus long-term economic drivers (that is, consumption versus productive investment). Finally, much of the economic growth to be generated in the short term is through the informal sector, though the challenge overall is growing this in a manner so it can be regulated and taxed.

Such tensions can be distilled down to three central questions: Should we balance the powerbroker versus good governance imperative and if so, how? How can we get the politics right—or better? How can foreign interventions best assist private sector growth?

The Ivorian Illustration

At first glance, Côte d’Ivoire seems to have much that Africa lacks. Skyscrapers and outwardly classy hotels perch on Abidjan’s

business center “Plateau” above a beautiful lagoon. There is even a custom-made capital at Yamoussoukro, manufactured in the style of Canberra or Brasilia, including a near-replica of St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City, which was built at a cost of \$400 million in the 1980s.

A French colony from 1893, Côte d’Ivoire was a constituent unit of the Federation of French West Africa until December 1958. Then it became an autonomous republic while remaining within the French community. Independence followed on August 7, 1960, when Felix Houphouët-Boigny, the son of a wealthy chief, assumed the presidency. Houphouët-Boigny inherited an economy geared toward the export of cocoa, coffee, and palm oil (contributing 40 percent of the region’s entire exports) and dominated by a sizable population of French settlers, numbering some 50,000 at their peak in the 1970s (part of a total population of 7 million). The new president promoted agriculture, stimulating production with high prices. By the 1970s, Côte d’Ivoire became the world’s third largest coffee producer (behind only Brazil and Colombia) and the leading producer of cocoa, which by 2012, despite industry problems, still supplies more than 40 percent of world demand and 20 percent of government revenue. The country was also Africa’s largest producer of pineapples and palm oil, and measured only second to Nigeria in the region in many respects. “With nearly 7,000 kilometers of paved roads,” reminds Minister of Commerce Dagobert Banzio, “even today we possess one-third of the region’s highways.”

French domination and Houphouët-Boigny’s firm hand were tolerated in an environment where for 20 years following independence in 1960, the country maintained an annual economic growth rate of over 10

percent. Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita growth averaged over 80 percent in the 1960s and an extraordinary 360 percent the following decade. The focus on farming meant that these benefits were comparatively widespread, with much of the gain falling into the hands of small holders. Literacy also doubled to 60 percent during this period, while virtually every town was reached by roads and electricity. Not for nothing was Abidjan labeled the “Paris of West Africa,” a cosmopolitan hub of commerce, people, and nightlife.

But the collapse was sudden. A decline in the price of cocoa coupled with the burden of excessive state spending saw per capita GDP fall from \$1,300 in 1970 to \$700 by 1992. This was compounded by expectations that Houphouët-Boigny would step down on the 25th anniversary of his rule. When he did not, instead of reinvesting in the economy, businesspeople maintained a wait-and-see attitude. “There is not a single major building in Abidjan or bit of infrastructure built after 1985, aside from a half-completed mosque,” states business leader and politician Jean-Louis Billion. Moreover, a culture of corruption had begun to develop. The private stabilization fund for cocoa established with liberalization in the 1990s was empty—raided with impunity by the administrative elite.

It was a double-blow with political change paralleling economic stress. GDP tumbled as the country’s external debt trebled. The government’s response was to call in the International Monetary Fund, slash government spending and its bureaucracy, and send home a third of the expensive French advisors. This reaction did little to help, especially as it included cutting cocoa prices to farmers by half in 1989. Little wonder that Houphouët-Boigny only got 85 percent of the 1990 election vote,

opened to parties other than the ruling Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire [PDCI]) for the first time, compared to the usual 99.9 percent.

the government's response was to call in the International Monetary Fund, slash government spending and its bureaucracy, and send home a third of the expensive French advisors

In January 1994, the 50-percent devaluation of the CFA franc (the regional currency used in 14 countries, 12 former French colonies, and Equatorial Guinea and Guinea-Bissau), whose value was underwritten by the French government (hence making exports costly and imports cheap), led to a jump in inflation and further instability even though it ultimately improved export prospects.

Although the economy partly righted itself, the situation overall worsened with the political chaos that followed Houphouët-Boigny's death in 1993. According to Amadou Gon Coulibaly, the Minister of State for current President Alassane Ouattara, Houphouët-Boigny's personality had helped to mask weaknesses already evident in his administration:

In a single-party state, transparency was not the best one can have. The press did not play a positive role either, and while the private sector was important, actually it was the government on which the economy depended. It was very difficult for the state to maintain an acceptable level of management and efficiency.

In part this was caused by the culture inculcated by Houphouët-Boigny. As a Wharton School-educated Ivorian business consultant put it, "The country had a well-educated elite but not an entrepreneurial elite. As a result, they were dependent on hand-outs, not on making money for themselves."

Lacking Houphouët-Boigny's national appeal, it was too easy for those leaders who followed to play the identity card—xenophobia was encouraged by a combination of economic difficulties, youth frustration, and the widespread regional immigration encouraged by Houphouët-Boigny even during the best of times. Today perhaps as many as 40 percent of the Ivorian population can trace their origins to elsewhere in the region, with citizens of neighboring Burkina Faso, Guinea, Ghana, Liberia, and Mali being the most prominent.

Houphouët-Boigny's handpicked successor, Speaker of the Parliament Henri Konoan-Befie, was forced out in late 1999 by a military coup led by General Robert Guei. In October 2000, a presidential election marked by violence saw Laurent Gbagbo come to power. Ouattara was disqualified from running because of his alleged Burkinabé nationality, which was perhaps inevitable yet unprecedented in a country with 60 constituent ethnic groups. Violent protests culminated in an armed uprising in September 2002, when troops mutinied and launched attacks in several cities, prompting France to deploy troops to stop the rebel advance.

When Guei was killed (some say assassinated), Ouattara took refuge in the French embassy and Gbagbo returned home to negotiate an accord resulting in that African speciality in which no one can admit defeat. Amid ongoing violence, Gbagbo's original mandate as president, which expired on October 30,

2005, was extended, with elections finally being held in November 2010.

With both Gbagbo and Ouattara claiming fraud and victory, and both staging inaugurations, the United Nations (UN) certified Ouattara as the victor. This led to a further crisis and violence as pro-Ouattara forces seized control of most of the country, with Gbagbo finally evicted from his hideout in Abidjan in April 2011, by UN forces and external support, notably a French battalion. With civilian casualties estimated at around 3,000 and looting of factories, ministries, and homes widespread in the last 2 weeks of the unrest, many businesspeople fled the region. The trauma of the violence was palpable and remains so now.

In the absence of economic growth, and without any great ideological differences, it was too easy for political rivals to play to the politics of identity. The election showed that just under half of the population sees the Christian southern Gbagbo as their man; the others prefer the Muslim northerner Ouattara. These crude stereotypes perpetuate with the choice of international partners: for example, Ouattara is portrayed by opponents as Paris's guy. The cost of this, and the pernicious accompanying political-economy based on narrow personal agendas, is evident not only in the record of stability but also in the reality (or lack thereof) of development since the 1990s. As one businessman put it, "I estimate that 20 percent followed Gbagbo for political reasons; the other 30 percent just followed the cash." Côte d'Ivoire ranked 154/182 on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, for example.⁶

Instead of maintaining its place as an African and global success, Côte d'Ivoire quickly lost ground. In the 1960s, Malaysia and South Korea were among the Southeast Asian

countries that sent delegations to learn from Côte d'Ivoire's economic success. At the time, South Korea had just one bridge over the Han River in Seoul and there were two in Abidjan. Today the respective numbers, says Jean-Louis Billion, are 27 and still 2. Much the same can be said for the University of Abidjan, which was built to accommodate 6,000 students in the 1970s and today hosts 70,000. Illiteracy has increased to 60 percent of the population according to the government, inverting Houphouët-Boigny's achievement. "Such circumstances can only make the youth violent," Billion notes. Ouattara's first prime minister, Guillaume Soro, is a rebel leader grounded in the hard school of student politics.

Chief of the Cabinet Brahima Toure, who trained as an aviation engineer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, notes that Ivoirians are poorer today than they were in 1965. The government states that getting out of this situation will require focusing first on reinvigorating cocoa production, which still accounts for 12 percent of GDP and \$5 billion in export income and provides for more than 4 million Ivoirians in farming households. A second economic imperative is the need to diversify into mining and energy, the latter into hydrocarbons and expanding hydropower.

All this demands more spending on new infrastructure including roads and housing, along with health and education. But any reform process worthy of the name would also have to recognize the existence of various economies. The first is the formal sector (today fewer than a "few hundred companies," states one foreign businessman present for 35 years), which is heavily taxed (paying a combination of 18 percent value-added tax, punitive customs duties, 35 percent company tax, and electricity rates "two to three times the European average").

A second is the Lebanese economy, “comprising officially 100,000 people . . . many of [this economy’s members] . . . do not pay tax and operate on a cash-only basis, though they are important employers.” Lebanese entrepreneurs scooped up many former French businesses at bargain prices when the violence

the formal sector is heavily taxed (paying a combination of 18 percent value-added tax, punitive customs duties, 35 percent company tax, and electricity rates “two to three times the European average”)

erupted in the early 2000s. The goal of the government is to broaden the base of the economy beyond French and Lebanese interests. To do that, however, it will need to open to other investors and incorporate the informal economy in which the bulk of Ivoirians subsist. Government plans scarcely acknowledge such differences, though there is a general awareness that employment has to be driven by the private sector and that growth in the cocoa sector will, in reaching so many families, rapidly alter the fortunes of a large number of people.

At the start of 2012, the government’s ideas were being formulated into a national plan, picking up on Houphouët-Boigny’s planning preferences starting in 5-year cycles in 1965. Dagobert Banzio sums up the philosophy behind the government’s thinking: “We need peace, national reconciliation, and development.”

Today, Côte d’Ivoire has the second-largest UN peacekeeping mission in Africa—United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire—(behind the Congo), with 14,000 civilian, policing, and military personnel at a cost of \$650 million in 2011–2012.

On paper, the focus of the UN mission is to build and consolidate peace, with the emphasis on, first, keeping violence down, certifying the election, instituting DDR and security sector reform processes (thereby ensuring civilian control of the military), and deploying \$120 million annually through the gamut of 16 various UN agencies—all this to achieve, in the words of its own staff, “poverty alleviation, governance reform and sustainable development.” In practice, however, given the limits of its budget, the realization that “the government faces a multifaceted package of simultaneous emergencies” and the need to keep the peace process on track to benefit from \$6 billion in aid relief under the Highly-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) process, has been to ensure that “Côte d’Ivoire gets to HIPC [the decision point was June 2012] without falling over.” (Côte d’Ivoire receives nearly \$1 billion in aid currently apart from the cost of the UN military component and the \$500 million spent on the 2010 election.) “While Ouattara’s rule represents a deal between [former President Henri Konan Bédié’s] PDCI and his RDR [Rassemblement des Républicains], he has to recognise,” says a UN official, “that the rebels put him there.”

This is no small task given the presence of various armed groups within the government—the rebel Force Nouvelles and once-government FDS (Gbango’s melange of the police, gendarmerie, and military following the civil war) now grouped roughly 50/50 by Ouattara’s government into a 40,000-strong army known as the FRCI (Republican Forces of Côte d’Ivoire), and 20-odd other militias⁷—along with UN and French foreign forces. The UN’s postelection role has included joint patrolling, police mentoring, border patrols, and the pursuit of a humanitarian agenda

especially among the half million or so internally displaced persons (IDPs).

By the admission of its own staff, however, the impact of the UN mission has been marginal aside from its positive role around the election and its certification. Its ability to keep the peace from 2003 to 2010 speaks for itself, while the results of its postconflict role in resettling IDPs and the military integration process have been underwhelming. The reasons include the language problem with Bangladeshi, Jordanian, and Pakistani soldiers, comprising more than 50 percent of the international force, and the remainder of the UN contingent which, like the population, speaks French. Rumors also abound of black market activities during the mission in car, food, and fuel smuggling. "One has to ask," says a senior official, "whether \$500 million per year on average since 2003 is money well spent. If the UN mission was successful and influential,

then why did Gbagbo go completely around it in striking a peace deal in the form of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement in 2007?"

This illustrates a pattern of international engagement across Africa and other trouble-spots and highlights the tensions inherent in pursuing stability versus longer term development.

Instituting Good Governance

Such tensions are especially the case where societies operate on personal ties rather than according to rule and law, and where power-brokers are given (or have) the authority to cut the spoils, gaining access to resources for plunder. For outsiders, there is a temptation that working through and with warlords offers an attractive means of "getting things done." But this system is unstable and can lead to exclusion, resentment, violence, and support for terrorism. Moreover, economic development by

Figure. The Stabilization Dilemma

Need for Foreign Effect	Local Ownership
Visibility of Delivery and Evident Metrics	Inner Stuffings
Local Partners Who Get Things Done	Working with Democrats and Good Guys
Bolster Security and Military	Demilitarization and Empower Civilians
Parachuted Foreign Understanding	Knowledge of Local Systems, Culture, and Ethics
Elite Consumption	Productive Investment
Pick Local Winners	Open Competition
Economic Growth	Taxable Formal Sector Growth
Stabilization	Development

definition requires inclusiveness. Also, in such a system, there are few rules for succession.

Changing this system requires instead the creation of a country based on meritocratic lines, where competitiveness rather than redistribution and patronage defines the political economy. This demands the promotion of literacy and communications within the state—the circulation of ideas being imperative to development—and delinking the economy from the commanders. One way to do this is to disperse militia throughout new security forces, ensuring that they do not live and operate in their

for outsiders, there is a temptation that working through and with warlords offers an attractive means of “getting things done.”

old networks, making them more reliable on public support than lootable resources. This has to parallel the regulation of such resources, from poppies to timber to gold and diamonds.

Getting the Politics Right (or Better)

When a liberation movement takes over by force or at the polls, the country’s politics are especially traumatic in the transition from a liberation movement to a government. As Christopher Clapham has noted:

Governing a state . . . is not like conducting a war. It calls for an inclusive rather than an exclusive approach to those whom you govern. It requires openness towards the difficult choices that confront you, and a constant search for acceptable compromises between alternative policies, and between different groups and interests within the community of the governed. Governance within a globalised world is . . . greatly

eased by maintaining good relations with other (and especially neighbouring) states, and with non-state actors and international institutions. This all imposes the need for a massive and deliberate process of adjustment that the legacy of a liberation movement is extremely ill-suited to provide [emphasis added].⁸

This demands a fundamental shift in mentalities, systems, and attitudes, and a change in focus from liberation to governance, from victory to compromise, and from a them-and-us mentality to inclusivity. There is the omnipresent postliberation challenge of separating party and state (unpicking what is known as a “partystatal”). Similarly, relations with neighbors have to change from a war footing and “where you stood in the war” to friendly relations aimed at efficiency and mutual benefit. Similarly, with the advent of government power, the relations between top and bottom inevitably change from leaders and followers to rulers and the governed. There is a repeated lesson for these processes: elections do not mean democracy, and the latter is a process related to attitudes and institutions much more than a single event. Disarmament is essential, but retained armament is often politically justified against the need for security even though running an army does not translate into the skills necessary to run a government. Finally and most importantly, there is a need to guard against confusing liberation myths with government realities.

The Economy

The economy, while probably the least perfect aspect of peace-building, is the most important given the roots of economic and developmental marginalization, political exclusion,

and poverty that often lie behind violence, upheaval, and dramatic political change. The key challenges here are that learning and replicating the circumstances and processes of economic growth are difficult—and resolve is often lacking.

However, we know that stability and predictability of policy and regulatory environment are important, especially in attracting local and foreign investment, and that the latter usually follows the former. There is also a need to open competition despite the cost to local interests, as well as the need to reduce costs and improve access to finance, markets, and basic services, notably roads and electricity.

Aid projects have a generally patchy record in this regard for all the reasons given earlier, notably the tension between the need to get things done (and be seen getting things done) to ensure short-term stability and the need to institute longer term drivers of growth and prosperity. In 2010, the international community was spending more than \$100 billion on in-kind military and other assistance annually in Afghanistan. This included more than \$10 billion in development aid annually, amounting to \$333 per Afghan man, woman, and child. In some areas, such as the southern provinces, this concentration was much higher. Yet given the lack of development impact—as measured by the existence of an economy outside that supported by donor money—it may have been better (and considerably more efficient) if the international community had simply bombed the country with bundles of money. This picture is replicated across a range of postconflict settings, as illustrated above.

The scale of the failure and waste is staggering even among hardened aid workers. “Aid expenditure in Afghanistan is highly distributive,” said one U.S. Agency for International

Development official in Kabul. “There is too much money. It is so gross in its volume that the effort is mostly to disperse it rather than disperse it in a wise, sustainable way.”⁹ Moreover, jobs created by donors are normally in services, most notably construction. This makes sustainability problematic when the

the scale of the failure and waste is staggering even among hardened aid workers

geyser of donor funding is inevitably capped. Or as Lieutenant General Nicholas “Nick” Carter, a senior British army officer who commanded the combined forces, including British forces, in Southern Afghanistan, replied in 2010 to the question “Do you think that you got good value for the amount of aid expenditure in Afghanistan?”

Unquestionably not. I am in no doubt that one of the things [is] that we need to be more careful and be more circumspect in how we spend our resources in these environments. We went in there not necessarily understanding who our Afghan agents were in terms of how we spent our money. Many of our contracting processes and the way in which aid was distributed has undoubtedly fuelled elements of the insurgency because it has been done in a divisive way. Now that's not to criticize the people who have spent the money; it's simply that our understanding has evolved over a 5- to 10-year period and the consequence of that understanding is that I think we now understand that this is about spending money in [a] way that connects Afghan governance with its population and is about trying to encourage opportunity for

*all of the population and not just one or two rich and powerful families.*¹⁰

Just as the “problem” of Afghanistan is little different—though on a bigger, more lucrative scale—from stabilization situations elsewhere, the challenge thus facing the international community is much the same as the challenges it has attempted to remedy elsewhere. Where there has been success—Liberia is a good example—there is a willing if not always efficient local partner. Where an elected local partner is not effective, then little can be done to improve matters apart from providing an external security guarantee, constant urging, embedding external support in government, and maintaining hope. Sierra Leone

is a case in point. The United Kingdom has lavished diplomatic attention and military and development support for a decade but has taken baby steps regarding local progress in governance and development.

This is not surprising. Aid has also—even in conditions of relative peace—proven an ineffective means of delivering development. At best, as in Vietnam and Singapore, aid has been used to provide infrastructure, freeing up other government money for investment in productive sectors. The ratio of foreign aid to local expenditure remains pathetic. In Africa, this has been lower than 10 percent at times and averages around 50 percent. In Somaliland, given multiple channels through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs),



Terrie Schweitzer

Truck in border town of Sampa as part of UN presence in Côte d'Ivoire

this ratio is less than 20 percent according to government ministers there.¹¹ Private sector investment and capacity has so far consistently proven the most efficient and sustainable route to development, including in the donor nations themselves.

There is a more insidious problem. Donor and other forms of external support not only *disincentivize* normal entrepreneurial activity (there is an aid “mothership” happily distributing largesse sufficient for the elite) and distort key economic factors such as overvaluing the currency through large donor inflows, but also offer local politicians convenient means to externalize their choices, problems, and failures.

Combined with a pathological tendency “to examine” rather than “to do,” attempts to create jobs in postconflict countries follow a pattern. An idea is followed by a scoping study; this is normally backed up by a consultative process. Next an evaluation process produces a commission to conduct field work, which then delivers a detailed report “workshopped” along the way by various representative constituents and appraised by peer reviewers in “deep-dive longitudinal” processes. Moreover, the product has to be matched by a business plan that, usually after a period involving at least one turnover of donor staff, is condemned to a dusty existence on a shelf, forgotten when the idea is revived later and the process is started over again. The traditional route of an entrepreneur with a good idea who borrows money and starts a business is lost in the focus on easy money, where talents are diverted to tapping soft donor money. The businessman is seldom anywhere near this process. This results, too, in good ideas becoming international NGO causes rather than business cases.

Where aid-driven projects are likely to be more successful, there is a need to link these

two necessities, though there is a poor record in this regard. There is good preparation, good supervision, receptive and responsible local authorities, and overlapping priorities that complement spending. It follows that aid policies intent on the promotion of the private sector should prioritize three issues: address the most severe constraints to private sector growth, match the host government’s priorities, and target sectors and subsectors with proven track records. Or, as Minister of State Coulibaly says about Côte d’Ivoire, help invest in public services such as health, transportation, and education and in new job-intensive employment areas including agriculture. In essence, no rocket science is required.

Baking Fresh Cakes

Improving the success of postconflict peacebuilding missions is thus somewhat like making a cake. You need the right ingredients, a decent recipe, appropriate tools, and, more than anything, a top-class chef to mix the ingredients together, stir, and bake to perfection.

A huge amount of money has been spent on postconflict operations since the end of the Cold War: more than \$120 billion in Africa alone, over \$500 billion in Afghanistan, and \$3.7 trillion in Iraq. The security—or stabilization—aspect of such missions follows a well-trodden path: a ceasefire (or military victory), a political settlement that is often the outcome of international facilitation and local negotiations, elections followed sometimes by a unity government, and the DDR of former combatants. All this does not, of course, occur in an economic vacuum, which explains why foreign and local “chefs” attempt to work together using donor money to get things up and running.

The economic dimension to peace-building is crucial because poor socioeconomic conditions, unemployment, and exclusion are often the reasons for conflict in the first instance. There is thus a need not only to reinstate traditional economic drivers (usually mineral and agriculture commodities) along with improving basic infrastructure and services, but also to devise and create a new economic model that offers the opportunity for more inclusive growth.

The very people who take over often perpetuate the predatory system that led to collapse in the first instance

And here rests the key dilemma. The very people who take over often perpetuate the predatory system that led to collapse in the first instance. They are interested in the transactional aspect of investment where they can make money rather than in the development value of the inflows. The Democratic Republic of the Congo comes to mind, while there is little difference in this regard between the Belgians, Mobutu, and the two Kabilas.

Somalia is probably the best—or worst—example of this sort of extractive political economy. Along the southern coast today, especially around Kismayo and Brava, are large stocks of charcoal for export to the Gulf states. Charcoal, made largely from acacia trees in that region, is the epitome of a low-value, low-calorific, environmentally unsustainable, low-value-addition, rent-seeking, and low-technology commodity. Yet faced with few options, production of charcoal has steadily increased (for example, from 110,000 metric tons in 2000 to 150,000 metric tons 5 years later, with less than 15 percent for local use).

It also provides a key source of income for Islamic militias such as al-Shabaab.

Such a “charcoal rate of growth” offers little—actually zero—prospect for long-term national development. At best it will make a few individuals richer and enable a few subnational communities to survive. It is obviously a lousy formula for widespread economic growth and prosperity.

Fixing such economies is difficult. As with Zimbabwe, not only does economic improvement demand straightening out the macroeconomic situation, an often delicate task given the vested interests some have in keeping things in these places as unstable as they mostly are, but it also requires giving the locals a stake in change, even though they might not have the capacity to carry out this change themselves. It means fixing these economies in the very state structures that gave rise to these crises in the first instance. Changing local politics from being predatory to productive additionally requires donors getting tougher in changing the incentive structure. All this has to be managed in an environment where, in the wake of Afghanistan and Iraq combined with the global economic crisis, there is a reduced supply of the necessary money, people, and time.

The future of peace-building thus looks increasingly local because that is both a cheaper option and peace should matter most to the regions in which these conflicts occur. Briefly, Africa should expect, à la Somalia and Darfur, to do more alone and get better at it, including the economic dimension.

A focus on the fundamentals is necessary in those countries emerging from periods of conflict: Côte d’Ivoire, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo, Burundi, Somalia and Somaliland, and Afghanistan, for example.

The establishment of national peace through negotiated agreements, reconciliation processes, and elections in these environments has to parallel the pursuit of local human security, enabling citizens to go about their lives and seek livelihoods free from fear. Likewise, restoring the basic drivers of growth (including commodities and agriculture) and their facilitating aspects (including macroeconomic stability, ensuring macroeconomic sensibility, and providing infrastructure) is the next stage. Ultimately, when moving from short-term stability to development there is an overall challenge to change the country's operating system and political economy from one based on elite-driven interests characterized by consumption rather than longer term investment toward a more inclusive system, even though this may not necessarily be a short-term elite preference. This is a special quandary for donors and other external agents as they seek to change the incentive structure that contributed to conflict in the first instance. Such is the stabilization dilemma. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ This article is, in part, based on interviews conducted in Côte d'Ivoire during February 2012 and in Afghanistan in 2010 while the author was deployed with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kandahar, Helmand, and Kabul.

² Interview, ISAF Headquarters, Kabul, May 1, 2010.

³ According to the Ministry of Agriculture in Kabul, international funding to its sector in 2010 alone was over \$2 billion, with the U.S. Agency for International Development (\$789 million), U.S. Department of Agriculture (\$151 million), and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (£50 million) as the main donors.

⁴ Interview, Kabul, May 1, 2010.

⁵ Discussion, May 3, 2010.

⁶ Simon Rogers and Claire Provost, "Corruption Index 2011 from Transparency International: Find Out How Countries Compare," *The Guardian*, December 1, 2011, available at <www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2011/dec/01/corruption-index-2011-transparency-international>.

⁷ For a breakdown of these militias, see Safer Access, "A Summary of Armed Groups and Political Parties in Côte d'Ivoire," January 17, 2007, available at <www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/SAFERACCESS_armedgroupspolpartiesCôteDIvoire.pdf>.

⁸ Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Brenthurst Foundation, "The South Sudan Precedent: Maintaining African Stability and Comity in a Time of Transition," conference paper, Cadenabbia, Italy, September 4–7, 2011.

⁹ Discussion, ISAF Headquarters, Kabul, September 2010.

¹⁰ Lieutenant General Nicholas Carter, interviewed for Brenthurst Foundation documentary *Tswalu Dialogue on the Future of Stability Operations* (Johannesburg, South Africa: Brenthurst Foundation, January 2011).

¹¹ Discussion, Minister of Planning, Hargeisa, Somaliland, June 2011.



F-100D Super Sabre aircraft over South Vietnam

Political-Military Lessons from U.S. Operations in Vietnam and Afghanistan

BY MICHAEL J. WILLIAMS

Using history to understand the present can be a useful tool, but it is also a limited one.¹ Historical cases are not identical to contemporary ones, and there is a danger of conflating challenges in such a manner that, rather than illuminating a present challenge, history obfuscates it. This problem tends to be evident in the inaccurate use of analogies by policymakers, commentators, and analysts. Such may be the case in the contemporary American debate over the state of U.S. engagement in Afghanistan. Since President Barack Obama came to office in 2009 and deployed an additional 60,000 troops to Afghanistan in the first year of his administration, the debate over continued U.S. involvement has been dogged by analogies to Vietnam. But it is not readily apparent that Vietnam is an appropriate analogy for understanding the current challenge the United States faces in Afghanistan.

Analysis through analogy tends to be of limited use. As Yuen Foog Khong argued in his landmark *Analogies at War*, “More often than not, decision-makers invoke inappropriate analogues that not only fail to illuminate the new situation but also mislead by emphasizing superficial and irrelevant parallels.”² Analogies can help at an early stage, but at some point they become destructive, as Rand Spiro’s study indicates: “Simple analogies help novices gain a preliminary grasp of difficult, complex concepts but may later become serious impediments to fuller, more correct understandings.”³ Khong argues that it was such analogical reasoning that failed to deter the United States from entering Vietnam. In his study of the supposed rationale for the Vietnam War, the French experience in Indo-China and the American experience in the stalemate of the Korean War should have compelled Washington not to become militarily involved. But the use of analogical reasoning based on the appeasement of Nazi Germany at the Munich Conference led to a different policy.⁴ Such reasoning currently dominates much of the discussion related to Vietnam War–Afghanistan War comparisons. The vast majority of op-eds and short “analytical” pieces that look at the Vietnam–Afghanistan comparison cite a variety of reasons why Vietnam is not

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Afghanistan or why Vietnam is Afghanistan, but both sets of analyses fall under the rubric of “simplified comparative analogy” rendering them useless in terms of understanding the evolution of the conflict and lessons to learn. They retain potent political power, however.

One can read most anything one desires in the “Afghanistan is Vietnam” analogy. Does it mean that U.S. military leadership today is fighting the wrong war like General William Westmoreland did in Vietnam? Does it mean that U.S. soldiers today are drugged out of their minds and fragging officers as they did in Vietnam? Does it mean that Afghanistan is unwinnable because of insurgent sanctuaries in Pakistan, similar to Communist safe havens in Cambodia or Laos? Does it mean that the war is being won on the ground but is domestically unsustainable back in the United States and on North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) home fronts? The fact of the matter is that labeling Afghanistan as being the same as the war in Vietnam is a potent charge that deserves more investigation—not only to determine the validity of the comparison, but also to distill some lessons from the two conflicts that political-military policymakers can learn from.

This article is not specifically concerned with counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. An impressive COIN literature has developed over the last 50 years, and in the last decade alone, the number of writings on COIN has skyrocketed. The vast majority of these studies, however, are micro-level analyses—they are rightfully concerned with the mechanics of COIN campaigns, but this means there is a gap in our macro-level understanding of such conflicts. Thus, when such studies posit a pro-COIN argument along the lines of “the British won their counterinsurgency in Malaya,” they

often fail to appreciate the strategic context in which the mechanics of the COIN campaign took place. These studies are overwhelmingly tactical in nature rather than strategic in outlook. The success of a COIN campaign is as much about how the political-military leadership views a conflict and pilots the strategic level as how the first lieutenant conducts COIN in theater. In fact, one could argue quite convincingly that the first lieutenant has no chance of success if the political-military leadership sets him up to fail.

Labeling Afghanistan as being the same as the war in Vietnam deserves more investigation to distill lessons from the two conflicts that policymakers can learn from

This article is therefore concerned with the political-military interface and the resultant strategy (or lack thereof) that animates U.S. foreign policy rather than the mechanics of COIN. The mechanics of COIN are not the sole determinate of success. Indeed, as we have seen in Iraq, it is possible to secure military success as General David Petraeus did with the 2006 surge while still seemingly failing to achieve strategic success, a fact apparent in the daily press.⁵ Only time will tell if political stability takes root in Iraq, which would then validate the entire U.S. approach to the second half of the Iraq War.

This article, which is part of a larger study of how political-military leadership in the United States wages war, illustrates that Afghanistan is most certainly not Vietnam in terms of how the campaign was conducted. The two cases are also highly distinct in terms of ideological composition, terrain, and enemy command and control—to name but a few

examples. However, this comparative analysis indicates that, while they have undertaken numerous positive nation-building projects over the last decade, the United States and NATO will accomplish little lasting strategic effect as a result of the 11-year campaign in Afghanistan. Allies and the United States are in a rush for the exits.⁶

Whether the United States and its NATO Allies manage to stave off a downward spiral of chaos in Afghanistan as they draw down forces remains to be seen. The similarity in outcome is not because contemporary policymakers made the same mistakes they did in Vietnam. While some similar errors were committed, the U.S. military in particular learned much from Vietnam, which is reflected in operations in Afghanistan. The latter operations are significantly different. In that regard, the analogical comparison is faulty. But while the military learned relatively well, it has not resulted in strategic success. It is apparent from a historical reading of the two conflicts that the sum of the politico-military challenges are such that strategic outcome of U.S. and NATO involvement in Afghanistan will be similar to that in Vietnam. There is an exceedingly high probability that there will be little positive and lasting strategic effect. If the United States is lucky, Afghanistan may end up like Lebanon.

Lesson One: Clearly Defined Goals and Strategy Are Necessary

American policy written in the 1950s and 1960s was made in the context of the Cold War struggle between the United States and Soviet Union. The decision to intervene in Afghanistan in 2001 was taken at the peak of America's unipolar moment in 2001. While the context and historical periods are different, the United States made many of the same

substantive mistakes. In both cases, there was more of a slide toward full-scale intervention than a deliberate choice. In Vietnam, the United States saw regional/local issues against the relief of a wider global conflict.⁷ The Lyndon Johnson administration did not consider how prior U.S. involvement to support the French colonial administration would easily lend itself to coloring by the Communists as an imperial American war against the Vietnamese people. Senator Mike Mansfield was one of many who warned the Johnson administration of that danger.⁸ Such a development would inordinately increase opposition to U.S. forces, which would intensify as the war continued. A failure to distinguish the Communist-nationalist movement in Vietnam from the wider context of the Cold War would result in a terrible strategic mistake.

The civilians in the Johnson administration, however, did not slide the United States into war alone. Indeed, the civilian policymakers favored the use of airpower without a fighting force on the ground to compel North Vietnam to stop supporting a Communist insurgency in South Vietnam. As a State Department cable dated January 6, 1965, reported, there were "a large number of installations in which we have important US interests. They total 16 important airfields, 9 communications facilities, one large [petroleum, oil, and lubricants] storage area and 289 separate installations where US personnel work or live. Any one of these is conceivably vulnerable to attack."⁹ General Westmoreland requested 75,000 U.S. personnel in this telegram, noting that the large airfields alone required "up to six battalions of US ground forces."¹⁰

Never happy with the civilian's belief in the efficacy of limited war, John Lewis Gaddis posits that the military argued for

this “entering wedge” to secure a future Presidential mandate for a combat operation on the ground. The plan worked. In April 1965, President Johnson approved a combat role for U.S. forces to secure installations. McGeorge Bundy authorized two brigades (approximately 3,500 troops) to guard Da Nang. By the end of 1967, there were 486,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam. Westmoreland would pursue a strategy of search and kill against the Communists, which Andrew Krepinevich notes “was nothing more than a natural outgrowth of [the U.S. Army’s] organization recipe for success—playing to America’s strong suits, material abundance and technological superiority, and the nation’s profound abhorrence of U.S. casualties.”¹¹

In 2001, the George W. Bush administration committed a similar sin, confusing/confusing the weakness of Afghanistan in civil war and the subsequent rise of the Taliban (which had been inadvertently fomented by the United States) with a radical, globalized terrorist network.¹² That led the administration to aim its efforts elsewhere rather than concentrating on getting Afghanistan right and addressing the regional and local issues that enabled the rise of the Taliban and the manipulation of Afghanistan by Pakistan.

The strategy that the United States would implement as a result of this calculation and subsequent policy laid the groundwork for the outbreak of the insurgency in 2006.¹³ Although a clear decision was made to attack Afghanistan in October 2001, the Bush administration had no postconflict plans to develop the strategic situation to American advantage. Washington had repeatedly tried to apprehend Osama bin Laden since the 1990s, and the main goal was to dismantle al Qaeda.¹⁴ At one of the early principals meetings, Secretary of

State Colin Powell argued that for the impending mission in Afghanistan, “It is not the goal at the outset to change the regime but to get the regime to do the right thing. We hit al Qaeda targets because they were used for terrorism in the past. . . . We’ll sneak up on the Taliban issue.”¹⁵ Recalling other interventions, including Vietnam, there was a hesitancy to put boots on the ground. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld noted, though, that such an action sent a message: “Boots on the ground has a value in and of itself, it gives a different image of the United States. We’re not invading; we’re not going to stay. But we need to start creating an environment in which Afghanistan becomes inhospitable to al Qaeda and the Taliban.”¹⁶ Therefore, when NATO became involved in Afghanistan as a way to provide an “exit” from the impending U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, the United States was dragged back into a war that the Bush administration believed it had completed and walked away from. A critical error in both Vietnam and Afghanistan was strategic and ethnocentric myopia. Perhaps this was unavoidable and is only readily identifiable in retrospect; however, in both cases, there were countless warnings not to simplify the problem.

The failure to develop clear strategic goals would put the cart before the horse in both Vietnam and Afghanistan. As the United States was slowly dragged into Vietnam, the Johnson administration and its military leaders believed that it could achieve its strategic objective through the use of technology. Civilians thought that coercive airpower would save American lives and enable Washington to pressure the North Vietnamese economically. There was a robust belief among civilian policymakers in the Johnson administration that technology could get the job done at low risk.

Policymakers believed that not using an invasion force posed less of a risk in provoking a full-on response from the Soviets or Chinese.

While the military leadership and the organizational culture of the Army thought an airpower strategy was faulty, they also thought technology gave the United States the upper hand against a ragtag Third World military force.¹⁷ A similar strategic error was made in Afghanistan. The Bush administration, in the grips of the Rumsfeld revolution at the Pentagon, believed the United States could do more with less. Technology would enable the United States to fight the conflict in a “revolutionary” manner. Some observers went so far as to argue that the new “Afghan model” of war enabled the United States to

a critical error in both Vietnam and Afghanistan was strategic and ethnocentric myopia

leverage coercive diplomacy more because it required fewer American troops to facilitate the transition to stability and democracy.¹⁸ The result was a plan to deliver a crushing blow to the Taliban through the use of airpower and conventional ground forces.

The empirics of the campaign illustrate that, to the contrary, the U.S.-led war was not novel, as Steven Biddle has argued. While the technological edge of American forces was impressive and provided an advantage, in the end the campaign was a “surprisingly orthodox air-ground theatre campaign where heavy fire support decided a contest between two land forces.”¹⁹ H.R. McMaster reinforced this assessment with his assertion that the Pentagon’s “self-delusion about the character of future conflict weakened US efforts in Afghanistan

and Iraq as war plans and decisions based on flawed visions of war confronted reality.” Thus, contrary to some arguments that the war was a success, the Afghan model did little other than push the Taliban over the border into Pakistan. The Bush administration, similar to the Johnson administration, forced its opponent off the conventional field of battle and into the margins of guerrilla warfare. Both the Taliban and the Viet Cong along with the North Vietnamese army began to conduct irregular warfare against U.S. forces. Again, the character of the two wars is different, but the nature of the U.S. mistake was the same. The Bush administration, like the Johnson administration 40 years earlier, believed it could win a war with little economic, manpower, and materiel cost because of the superiority of American technology. Instead, both administrations simply forced their opponents to fight in a different fashion that reduced and nearly eliminated the conventional superiority of American forces following initial combat operations.

Many of those who decry the comparison of Vietnam and Afghanistan argue that Westmoreland never understood the nature of the war he was fighting. This is the argument presented by the “counterinsurgency school” of the Vietnam war, embodying thinkers such as Andrew Krepinevich, Guenter Lewy, Lewis Sorley, and John Nagl, who criticize Westmoreland for instituting a purely “search and destroy” approach to the war.²⁰ A revisionist argument by historians such as John Carland, Dale Andrade, Andrew Birtle, and Mark Moyar counter this position by stating that the threat posed by the main units of the North Vietnamese army required Westmoreland to conduct a conventional campaign.²¹ In the revisionist argument,

Westmoreland fought a semi-counterinsurgency campaign fused with a conventional search and destroy mission against North Vietnamese army forces in South Vietnam.

These arguments seem weak, however, when one considers that by 1967, conventional North Vietnamese soldiers numbered only 55,000 whereas there were 245,000 irregular combatants in South Vietnam.²² Westmoreland's "small war" was led by an array of U.S. agencies including the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), U.S. Agency for International Development, and U.S. Information Agency. They were eventually unified into what the Johnson administration would call Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS), which would become a joint civil-military program led by Robert Komer. Security was required to facilitate development, and indigenous South

Vietnamese forces were failing to protect villagers. To prevent the coercion of villagers by insurgents (and to stop villages from willingly offering support), the military initiated the Combined Action Program (CAP) in 1965. Although the program was a success, in the words of Max Boot, it was "a sideshow."

Casualties among U.S. forces in CAP were 50 percent lower than in the conventional forces, and British COIN expert Sir Robert Thompson proclaimed it "the best idea I have seen in Vietnam, and it worked superbly."²³ Unfortunately, Westmoreland never allocated more than 2,500 troops to the operation. He wrote, "I simply had not enough numbers to put a squad of Americans in every village, only in those not yet pacified." But as Boot notes, putting a squad in every hamlet "would have required no more than 167,000 troops—a fraction of the 540,000 eventually



U.S. Army (Justin P. Merelli)

Afghan checkpoint at Pakistan border, Paktika Province

deployed.”²⁴ Westmoreland talked the talk of COIN, but he fought the war of U.S. military convention. American forces in Vietnam fought the wrong war. If one looks to international relations theory for a general explanation of why the weak win wars, Ivan Arreguin-Toft’s work is an obvious place to start.²⁵ The war in Vietnam was lost, he argues, because in his typology, there are two types of strategies: direct strategies where the opponent’s ability to wage war is attacked, and indirect strategies where the will to wage war is attacked. The United States used a direct approach against an adversary using an indirect approach and therefore lost.

Commanders in Afghanistan have been far more adept in identifying the type of war being fought even if their analyses were slow to respond to events. The organizational culture of the U.S. Army favored a return to clear-cut wars as embodied in the Powell-Weinberger Doctrine that dominated policy until the mid-1990s.²⁶ Moving away from this mentality was difficult, and the Army adapted slowly following the initial military operations in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), but it did adapt in a manner dissimilar to the Vietnam experience. At the outset, NATO thought the mission in Afghanistan was state-building while the United States was focused on Operation *Enduring Freedom*, a terrorist hunting campaign. By 2006, it was evident that a different approach was needed.²⁷ U.S. and NATO forces worked to provide the same type of development as the CORDS program, and they ran into the same challenge of providing security to the local population. The vast majority of U.S. and NATO forces placed in Afghanistan were significantly more sophisticated in terms of people-centric COIN war as opposed to the vast majority of the forces

placed in Vietnam. This is a clear and marked difference between the approaches.

But whereas Westmoreland had enough forces to put a squad in every village and to conduct a proper COIN campaign *if he wanted to*, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan has been woefully understaffed from the day it began.²⁸ As President George W. Bush’s spokesman Ari Fleischer stated at the beginning of American operations in Afghanistan:

*The President’s position is unchanged about the use of the United States combat forces. The President continues to believe the purpose of the military is to be used to fight and win wars, and not to engage in peacekeeping of that nature. Having said that, the United States is committed to the long-term of Afghanistan, including its security and its safety. That’s one of the reasons that the United States is providing the amount of aid—funding aid we are giving to Afghanistan, the training aid that we’re providing to Afghanistan.*²⁹

The Bush administration had gone with the light footprint strategy, but over time the mission morphed from ousting the Taliban and hunting down terrorists to something akin to nation-building. But the lack of resources made this mission nearly impossible. Afghanistan received the least financial and military assistance of any postcombat operation since World War II, exactly as it had after the end of the CIA’s work with the mujahideen in 1989. In his accounting of how the insurgency developed, RAND’s Seth Jones illustrated the comparative barrenness of U.S. engagement well.

In U.S.-occupied Germany following World War II, Jones notes that there were

89.3 U.S. soldiers per 1,000 German soldiers. In the 1990s, there were 17.5 troops per 1,000 inhabitants in Bosnia and 19.3 per thousand in Kosovo. In East Timor, the ratio was 9.6 to 1,000. In Afghanistan, there were only 1.6 troops per 1,000 Afghans. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 with 150,000 soldiers (202 Iraqis per American) diverted valuable U.S. and European resources with disastrous consequences. Thus, even if it wanted to, ISAF was poorly placed to conduct COIN operations. Initial European deployments were far too small to adequately secure the population in what was still a hostile operating environment. Commanders allowed themselves to be strung out across the countryside in a vain effort to protect everything, thereby protecting nothing and opening them up to a series of prolonged campaigns to hold on to insignificant villages such as the British did in Musa Qala. In 2006, the situation was so bad that

ISAF commanders allowed themselves to be strung out across the countryside in a vain effort to protect everything, thereby protecting nothing

Taliban forces actually attacked Canadian and European forces in a conventional manner.³⁰ The Taliban/al Qaeda forces were destroyed, but NATO forces were essentially pinned down. As the NATO ISAF Commander General David Richards noted in his testimony to the British Defence Select Committee in 2007, choosing to fight a pitched battle against NATO was the best thing the Taliban could have done as it allowed the Alliance to concentrate manpower and firepower on the Taliban forces.³¹

To overcome limited numbers of troops, the United States and NATO relied on

airpower, which wrought civilian casualties. NATO air strikes accidentally killed far more people than Taliban bombings of bazaars. Thus they did not help the international forces to win over the population. Being no fans of the Taliban, the people chose to sit on the fence. U.S. military leadership decided in 2008–2009 that more troops were required to get the job done, but that followed on the heels of 8 years of near stagnation, and the numbers of troops eventually allocated meant they could still not adequately conduct the COIN operation they believed was necessary to win the fight for “hearts and minds.”³²

Despite having recently rewritten the COIN manual that specified one counterinsurgent per 40–50 people, the U.S. number was far below the ratio that stipulated a force nearer to 500,000. That begs one to ask why write a manual only to ignore it. The military was clearly making do with what forces it was being allocated, but given the political impossibility of committing a properly sized force, would it not have been best to pursue a different strategy rather than the same strategy poorly resourced? Complicating matters, U.S. military leadership advocated for the surge strategy in Afghanistan without considering the wider geopolitical picture involving Pakistan and India. The argument for COIN in Afghanistan took place within a strategic bubble, one the Obama administration also seemingly chose not to address. The new strategy approved by President Obama was contingent on Pakistan taking proactive measures against the Taliban, but in Pakistan’s opinion, that would have undermined its international security. Thus, the U.S. strategy was paradoxical. No matter how appropriate the military model of the conflict (COIN) might be, the strategic outcome may be very different than

expected because of external, rather than internal factors.

General Westmoreland chose not to wage a small war against the Communists; instead, he waged a large conventional war. Even though he had enough forces to attempt a COIN operation, that was never his operational priority. In Afghanistan, the strategy, first off, has never been as settled as it was in Vietnam. Westmoreland appraised the situation, instituted a plan, and stuck with it. In Afghanistan, commanders have rotated in and out every few months, and the strategy, while being supposedly population-centric since at least 2006, has meandered depending on the personal view of the commander at the time. For example, the period under British General David Richards was regarded as a high point of a people-centric approach despite too few resources, while his successor, U.S. General Dan McNeill, focused more on the use of airpower to attack the Taliban, moving ISAF away from a successful COIN strategy.

Despite differences in approaches to the conflict, the nature of the problem was the same: the United States failed to win the hearts and minds of the population enough to decisively affect the outcome of the war. Some have noted that the Afghan insurgency is not a broad-based insurgency. This is true. But the Communist insurgency was not initially broad based at all: the north fomented it with northern transplants to the south. Furthermore, for the strategic outcome, it does not matter if the population does not endorse the Taliban as much as it matters that they are onside with NATO/U.S. forces. In Afghanistan, much of the population has chosen to sit on the fence rather than root out the Taliban because NATO and American forces have been unable to provide enough security in the most volatile part

of the country. Victory for the Taliban, like the Communists in Vietnam, is not a matter of winning any battles against the United States; instead, the goal is to wear the opponent down. Therefore, the difference in scale between the two conflicts and the scale of the forces fighting the United States is irrelevant. So as long as the Taliban can continue to harangue U.S. and NATO forces, they can achieve their attritional objective to wear down the will to fight in the United States.

Victory for the Taliban, like the Communists in Vietnam, is not a matter of winning any battles against the United States; instead, the goal is to wear the opponent down

Lesson Two: External Safe Havens Cannot Be Tolerated

The objective of guerrilla forces is to win control of the population, but in Vietnam and in Afghanistan there is the added aspect of using irregular warfare to wear down the will of the United States to fight the war. This ability to outlast the enemy is greatly enhanced in conflicts where the insurgents have access to external refuge. In the Vietnam War, North Vietnamese Army Commander General Vo Nguyen Giap counted on the fact that U.S. forces would not pursue him into North Vietnam—and that they would not pursue or bomb his forces in staging areas outside of Vietnam. Giap made extensive use of Laos and Cambodia to evade U.S. forces, which prompted the United States to become covertly involved in these countries.³³ The Parrot's Beak and the Fishhook in Cambodia provided Giap with staging areas only 30 miles from Saigon.³⁴ He was able to build up supplies and mass his forces and move them in and out of the

conflict zone with near impunity. Once outside of South Vietnam, he knew his supplies, logistics, and regular and irregular fighters were safe.

In Laos, the Communists made extensive use of a network of trails that became known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Stretching from North Vietnam through Laos and on into South Vietnam, the route provided Giap with an unparalleled advantage in his campaign against the U.S. forces. He also benefited from a largely untouched homeland.³⁵ Although the United States was bombing North Vietnam in an attempt to coerce the Communists to the negotiating table, it was pursuing a strategy that slowly ratcheted up the pressure on the North. The United States did not blanket bomb the North or attack the industrial centers there. The bombing did little to hamper Giap's largely irregular forces in any way. Without U.S. forces on the ground in North Vietnam, Giap was mostly free to move about as he wished.

Even if the bombing of North Vietnam had been more intense, Robert Pape notes that it most likely would not have done much to hinder the Communist war effort. The Communist forces in South Vietnam were extracting large amounts of resources from the South and did not rely on supplies from Hanoi. Meanwhile, American forces pursued a conventional strategy based on the destruction of enemy forces while the Communists waged guerrilla warfare to gain control over the population. Air interdiction is aimed at knocking out the capacity of the enemy to fight, but the Communists did not rely heavily on resources from the North, and Giap also benefited from his sanctuaries in Cambodia and Laos. The Communist forces were never put on the defensive by the American war until Richard

Nixon shifted the American strategy in 1972 to include bombing of Cambodia and Laos. Nixon's strategy would prove more successful; in March 1972, the Communists transitioned from phase II to phase III of a guerrilla war—that is, they went conventional. Because North Vietnamese forces began with conventional operations, they were logistically more vulnerable. The Communists needed more equipment and munitions, and the inelastic nature of the conventional campaign meant that shortages in the supply chain could be exploited.³⁶ As such Nixon, through airpower and the use of conventional forces, was able to stalemate the Communists and compel them to the Paris peace talks.

In Afghanistan, U.S. forces faced a similar challenge to the one they needed to confront in Vietnam. The border between Pakistan and Afghanistan runs approximately 1,640 inhospitable miles.³⁷ This rugged landscape is home to a diverse number of ethnicities, the largest composition of which is Pashtun. Incidentally, it is the Pashtuns living north of the border in Afghanistan who offer the most resistance to NATO and U.S. forces. Large portions of the Pashtuns south of the border in Pakistan live in what is known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). This portion of Pakistan is loosely governed by Islamabad and has historically been considered a rather ungovernable part of the country. The precedent for FATA stretches back to British colonialism when Victorian imperialists decided that the Pashtun tribes were far too ungovernable to attempt to directly rule the region. Following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and subsequent defeat of the Taliban, many of the guerrillas took shelter in the FATA.

A cable from the U.S. Embassy dated November 13, 2002, noted that U.S. firepower

had pushed the Taliban, al Qaeda, and foreign fighters over the border. It also noted that while Pakistan and the United States agreed on the endstate, they did not agree on the means and that Pakistan was focused on the “long term.” In the FATA, Pakistan would need to gain “firepower superiority” over the local tribes before effective operations could be conducted. There was, following the U.S. assault on Afghanistan, a “window of opportunity” for the Pakistani military to work with the tribal leaders to apprehend Taliban.³⁸ But this window was small if it ever existed. The Pakistan military lost hundreds of troops between 2004 and 2007 as it attempted to control the region before President Pervez Musharraf decided to pursue “peace deals” with the tribes. This ungovernable space in Pakistan coupled with an open border means that Taliban and al Qaeda insurgents can move easily in and out of Afghanistan. U.S. forces have been using drones to target al Qaeda and Taliban leadership in Pakistan against the wishes of the Pakistani government, but targeted assassinations cannot dissolve the insurgent network in Pakistan that supports the insurgency against U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

To make matters worse, the Taliban does not just benefit from an ungovernable space in Pakistan; it also receives direct support from elements of the government, military, and intelligence service in Pakistan. It is difficult to determine to what extent the Taliban is officially supported by Islamabad, but it is an open secret that such cooperation exists. This has been the case since the early 1990s when Islamabad began supporting the Taliban as the group in Afghanistan that Pakistan felt it could “control.” With a civil war raging in Afghanistan, Pakistan wanted to ensure a friendly government in Kabul that would

be an asset against India and other regional concerns. As a U.S. Intelligence Information Report from October 1996 details, “Pakistan’s ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence] is heavily involved in Afghanistan.”³⁹ Islamabad consequently provided material and additional support to the Taliban. It also used commodities such as wheat and the fuel trade in attempts to control the Taliban.⁴⁰ A recent leaked NATO report based on 27,000 interviews

the Taliban receives direct support from elements of the government, military, and intelligence service in Pakistan

with 4,000 Taliban, al Qaeda, and other foreign fighters details official support for insurgents from Pakistan. For example, the report notes, “Senior Taliban representatives, such as Nasiruddin Haqqani, maintain residences in the immediate vicinity of ISI headquarters in Islamabad.” One detainee perhaps put it best: “The Taliban are not Islam. The Taliban are Islamabad.”⁴¹

The problem for the United States is that no matter how well crafted a COIN strategy is, unless the United States can stop Pakistani assistance, the campaign will fail. Two factors work against U.S. interests in this regard. First, the Taliban is an indigenous Afghan entity. For better or worse, it is part of Afghanistan, and it seems dubious that the United States can eradicate it any more than the British could eradicate the Irish Republican Army. Of course, unlike the British, the United States does not consider Afghanistan part of the Nation, and thus this war is ultimately a peripheral rather than central interest in the minds of Americans, making it difficult for the United States to wear down the Taliban

to negotiations. Second, a strong Afghanistan with a sound military is Pakistan's nightmare—particularly if India is involved in Afghanistan. Pakistan has no interest in being surrounded by “hostile” states and thus works to utilize the Taliban as a strategic lever of Pakistani interests in Afghanistan. Although this fact was widely discussed by military and civilian officials during the Obama administration review, the military still disregarded this absolute strategic fact when pushing its COIN strategy upon the President. Although civilians were cognizant of the wider strategy situation, the President found himself in a difficult position domestically. Having solicited the “expert advice” of the military, it was then nearly impossible to overrule the military without a negative domestic political blowback. The result was a hybrid strategy that assented to additional troops but confined the deployment to a specific timeline. This policy was the result of the policy process and political realities; it was not necessarily the best strategy.

Lesson Three: Corruption and Legitimacy Matter

Perhaps one of the most frustrating aspects of U.S. and NATO efforts in Afghanistan is that they are all ostensibly to support the government of Afghanistan to win the will of the people. But the Afghan central government is riddled with corruption, and corruption is essentially a way of life across the country. The United States attempted to instill legitimacy in Afghanistan through elections, but as Mark Moyar has written, what one does with power is more important than how one acquires it. In Afghanistan, the government has often not done as much for the people, or at least is not perceived to have done as much, as the shadow Taliban government.

Afghans want a government that performs traditional administrative functions, such as resolving disputes, in a just fashion. If someone violates their irrigation rights, they want the authorities to exact the standard fine of 31 pounds of wheat. If a thief takes one of their goats, they expect that the culprit will be found and compelled to transfer five of his goats to the victim. In such administrative matters, the Taliban's shadow governments have generally proven more energetic and impartial than Hamid Karzai's government.⁴²

Corruption in Afghanistan is problematic when it means the denial of justice to the people resulting in a collapse of government legitimacy. The rampant corruption there is reminiscent of the corruption within South Vietnam that undermined U.S. efforts 50 years ago. Much like modern day Afghanistan, the leadership of South Vietnam was to a large extent corrupt and delegitimized in the eyes of the people, a process that we further reinforced by an inappropriate military strategy in Vietnam. The legitimacy crisis in Afghanistan is actually worse than it was in South Vietnam although, in both cases, corruption weakened support for the governments supported by the United States. To remain in power, Nguyen Van Thieu relied on a military junta that was distanced from the people. Thieu, like Karzai, was more concerned with his own interests than the national interest. As the Americans pumped in supplies to the CORDS program—bulldozers, fire engines, concrete, tin, surgical instruments, foodstuffs—an estimated 25 percent went “missing” into the black market.⁴³ Although Thieu was never directly linked to any corruption racket himself, his administration presided over governmental rackets in prostitution, extortion, and drug-trafficking to name but a few. As one U.S. advisor explained,

"We had to make sure that the [Army of the Republic of Vietnam was not] alienating the local population by stealing their food."⁴⁴

Endemic corruption and legitimate governance in Afghanistan are highly problematic given that the strategy advocated by General Petraeus is based on winning the hearts and minds of the people, which is difficult at best when these people do not trust their "elected" government. While much of the problem in establishing legitimate government can be put on the leaders, the lack of a coherent ISAF

the legitimacy crisis in Afghanistan is actually worse than it was in South Vietnam

strategy that was well resourced has damaged efforts to provide an alternative to the harsh justice of the Taliban. The legitimacy problem has been an issue in Afghanistan for nearly three decades, although the challenges and varied ways of establishing legitimate governance in this region go back centuries.⁴⁵ Although a central goal of the ISAF state-building enterprise was to build a legitimate government, little has changed. An International Crisis Group report from June 2011 noted, "Nearly a decade after the U.S.-led military intervention, little has been done to challenge the perverse incentives of continued conflict in Afghanistan . . . the economy as a result is increasingly dominated by a criminal oligarchy of politically connected businessmen." A 2010 report from the International Crisis Group on the state of the Afghan judiciary bluntly opined, "Afghanistan's justice system is in a catastrophic state of repair" and that despite nearly a decade of international efforts, the majority of Afghans have little to no access to the judiciary, which is full of endemic corruption.⁴⁶

It is not just elements of the government that are corrupt; it goes all the way to the top. As former Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry wrote in an October 2009 cable, "The meeting with [Ahmed Wali Karzai] highlights one of our major challenges in Afghanistan: how to fight corruption and connect the people to their government, when the key government officials are themselves corrupt." Reporting on the cables, the *New York Times* reported, "President Hamid Karzai and his attorney general 'allowed dangerous individuals to go free or re-enter the battlefield without ever facing an Afghan court.' The embassy was particularly concerned that Mr. Karzai pardoned five border police officers caught with 124 kilograms (about 273 pounds) of heroin and intervened in a drug case involving the son of a wealthy supporter."⁴⁷

One can hardly expect a president who was elected to office in a rigged election to worry about corruption in his country. In the 2009 elections, ballot-box stuffing and intimidation were rife. The United Nations-approved Electoral Complaints Commission discredited so many votes that incumbent Karzai fell below 50 percent to avoid a runoff election.⁴⁸ Karzai's family also abused the position of the president to forge lucrative relationships and procure powerful positions in the government.⁴⁹ Karzai actively appointed family members to such positions to create an oligarchy of powerful families. For example, the husband of a Karzai woman was appointed a senior foreign affairs advisor to the president despite having previously only worked in retail shops in Leesburg, Virginia. The *New York Times* went on to report that "At least six Karzai relatives, including one who just ran for Parliament, operate or are linked to contracting businesses that collect millions

of dollars annually from the American government." Like Karzai, South Vietnam's Thieu promoted family and friends. Thieu did not want a cut of the action, but rather demanded favors down the road. One of the most scandalous rackets, reported by Jacques Leslie of the *Los Angeles Times*, involved the sale of scrap metal (all of which was legally owned by the United States) to Japan by South Vietnamese generals.⁵⁰ A State Department cable from Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker highlights concern over endemic corruption in South Vietnam and the effect it might have on U.S. operations.⁵¹

The situation in Afghanistan remains conflicted, and to speak of a broad-based insurgency would be incorrect. The insurgency is largely isolated to the south and east of the country and is primarily supported by Pashtuns. But the United States has done little to help itself over time. The U.S. strategy employed in 2001 helped to pave the way for corruption to take root. To be fair, it would have been impossible to avoid corruption to some extent, but the U.S. reliance on warlords to topple the Taliban ensconced the very people who destroyed Afghanistan in the civil war of the 1990s back into positions of power. This problem was highlighted in a *Time* magazine article where an Afghan official noted that seeking justice in Afghanistan today is "like going to the wolves for help, when the wolves have stolen your sheep."⁵² As a result, the majority of the population has chosen to sit on the fence to wait out the war rather than risk openly supporting the Americans. The Taliban consequently win when the populace fails to support the government, and as perceptions of government corruption become more obvious there is little reason for them to support the central government.⁵³

Afghanistan Is Not Vietnam (But the Outcome May Be the Same)

This comparative review of American involvement in Vietnam and Afghanistan illustrates that the character of the conflict and challenges the United States faced in Vietnam are different on the surface from those it faces in Afghanistan. The nature of the challenges, however, is nearly identical. In both cases, policymakers misidentified the basic nature of the conflict they were entering. In Vietnam, American policymakers failed to mark a division between central and peripheral interests as George Kennan argued they should during his time as Director of Policy Planning at the State Department. Much the same could be argued in the case of Afghanistan. In both cases, policymakers never adequately matched resources to achievable goals with a workable strategy. In both cases, the military was forced to determine the best way to fight its opponent. In Vietnam, General Westmoreland simply fought the wrong war. In Afghanistan, the U.S. military and NATO Allies have largely fought the right war at least since 2006 but never possessed enough troops and materiel to implement the strategy properly, thereby

the majority of the Afghan population has chosen to sit on the fence to wait out the war rather than risk openly supporting the Americans

greatly reducing the chances it would succeed. In both Vietnam and Afghanistan, U.S. policymakers needed to redress the role of external actors to the conflict. In Vietnam, the United States redressed this issue in 1972 when it began bombing Cambodia and Laos, which effectively damaged the ability of

the Communists to wage the conventional war they attempted starting in 1972. In Afghanistan, the United States has actively targeted insurgent leaders hiding in Pakistan since 2008 through the use of drones, but a Janus-faced ally and an impenetrable border area have enabled insurgents to largely elude U.S. and NATO capture and/or destruction. Moreover, both the bombings of Cambodia and Laos, as well as the drone strikes in Pakistan, have had a blowback effect on the operation.

Finally and perhaps most worryingly, the United States was fighting a war to win the hearts and minds of the people in both Afghanistan and Vietnam for governments that were corrupt and not seen as legitimate in the eyes of many inhabitants. This perceived lack of legitimacy was worsened by an inappropriate strategy in Vietnam and an ineffective strategy in Afghanistan that in the former case actively helped to recruit Communist-nationalist insurgents and in the latter case has at the very least prompted the majority of Afghans to sit on the fence. Given that the primary objective of an insurgency and the COIN campaign is to win the support of the people, it would seem that a U.S. “loss” is inevitable today as it was 40 years ago. Afghanistan may not be Vietnam, but that does not mean that the outcome will not be the same given the similarity in the nature of the challenges facing the United States and its allies. **PRISM**

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⁴⁹ James Riesen, "Karzai's Kin Use Ties to Gain Power in Afghanistan," *The New York Times*, October 5, 2010.

⁵⁰ Jacques Leslie, "Vietnam Generals Suspected in Brass Smuggling Scandal," *Los Angeles Times*, June 20, 1973.

⁵¹ Memorandum to U.S. Secretary of State from Saigon, July 19, 1972.

⁵² Aryn Baker, "Warlords Toughen US Task in Afghanistan," *Time*, December 9, 2008.

⁵³ Matthew Rosenberg and Graham Bowley, "Intractable Afghan Graft Hampering US Strategy," *The New York Times*, March 7, 2012, A1.



U.S. Navy F/A-18F Super Hornet receives fuel from aerial refueling drone of Air Force KC-10 Extender over Afghanistan

What Is Wrong with the American Way of War?

BY ANTULIO J. ECHEVARRIA II

Our understanding of the American way of war begins in 1973 with the publication of historian Russell Weigley's classic work, *The American Way of War: A History of U.S. Military Strategy and Policy*.¹ Weigley maintained that after the Civil War, American military strategy essentially narrowed from the practice of two types, annihilation and attrition, to one, annihilation. As the United States experienced a "rapid rise from poverty of resources to plenty," he argued, so too the American way of war tended to opt for strategies of annihilation, largely because it could.² As a consequence, however, the further evolution of strategies of attrition was cut short, and American military strategy became unidimensional, or imbalanced. That, according to Weigley, was part of the problem with the Vietnam conflict. The other part of the problem, in his view, was that the era of using military force rationally to achieve the aims of policy was nearing its end.

Between 1973 and 1999, fewer than one dozen pieces were published on the American way of war, and many of them were simply reviews of Weigley's book. From 2000 to 2012, however, the number of articles and books concerning the American style of war tripled. One of the reasons for this increase is that the agenda associated with the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) and U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's related transformation program drew attention once again to Weigley's *American Way of War*. Between 2000 and 2003, both the old and new American ways of war became popular topics among defense policymakers and scholars.³ Research into one way of war inevitably drew attention to the other.⁴ Although much of the literature in this period mischaracterized Weigley's thesis, the idea that there had been a traditional way of war became the foil against which the "new" style was defined.⁵

After 2004, as the war in Iraq transformed from rapid and decisive to prolonged and ambiguous, the literature on the American way of war became preoccupied with identifying what had gone wrong. Many experts were convinced that something, or several things, had indeed

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failed, but it was not clear whether the failure belonged to the new American way of war or was deeply rooted in the U.S. approach to war more generally.

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It Was the RMA

There were two basic answers to this question. The first pointed to the U.S. military's transformation as the crux of the issue, but it was divided. Some scholars held that transformation had gone too far, while others felt it had not gone far enough. The first group argued that transformation had proceeded too quickly: it had involved only a limited set of capabilities, concentrated on only a narrow segment of the operational spectrum, and ignored war's nature, in particular the elements of chance and uncertainty.⁶ The second view countered that the real problem was that transformation had not gone far enough because Service cultures had resisted it, preferring to shape new technology according to their own traditions and preferences rather than maximizing the revolutionary potential such technologies afforded.⁷ To be sure, the story of the transformation of the U.S. military took place over three decades, not three years. Still, Secretary Rumsfeld's idea of transformation was, at root, about developing fundamentally "new ways of thinking" that would permit employing evolutionary capabilities in revolutionary ways.⁸ Thus, the push in the late 1990s and early 2000s was to realize the RMA in the form of new concepts.

One thing this debate clearly tells us, albeit inadvertently, is that an RMA was precisely the wrong approach to take in transforming the U.S. military after the Cold War. Revolutions are not open-minded affairs in search of optimal solutions. For revolutionaries, the best solutions are already known: no testing is necessary. As with the French or Russian examples, revolutions rely on faith and conviction, not logic and skepticism. Revolutions succeed by putting people with the "right" ideas into positions of power and influence. That inevitably means marginalizing opposing ideas and suppressing contrary evidence. In that sense the RMA was a capital success.

Ironically, that very success also undermined the revolution from the start. The degree of certainty that revolutionaries must possess was quite unsuitable for the unfolding security environment, which most scholars and U.S. defense documents described as likely to be more "uncertain, ambiguous, volatile, and complex" than ever before.⁹ What one ought to have in such an era, logic suggests, is an open-ended approach, one that entertains and tests a variety of ideas and develops hedging actions in the event that initial assumptions prove false. The elements of chance and uncertainty, in other words, are equally powerful in environments outside war.

On the contrary, military revolutions—whether that of Gustavus Adolphus or another (to be sure, those that qualify as genuine revolutions are few)—can rarely afford such an approach. They have to get ahead of the competition and take advantage of an edge, which is invariably only temporal in nature. They typically have only one overriding strategic rationale, and it is usually strategic expansion. Under an RMA, the military arm is revamped

to become an offensive weapon. Rarely is such an effort undertaken for purely defensive purposes. This was true for Gustavus as well as for the vaunted German blitzkrieg (which many might well argue was not a military revolution at all). The latter case was the model most frequently mentioned in RMA literature. Despite historical narratives about decisive battles of encirclement, the blitzkrieg was actually about avoiding static, or position warfare, a *Stellungskrieg*, by breaking through an opponent's lines and keeping relentless pressure on him to prevent a reestablishment of those lines. It had little to do with German navy or air force ability to conduct long-range strategic bombing. And it broke down in theaters where opponents could trade space for time. The point is that it was as narrowly focused and operationally aggressive as RMA advocates wanted the new American way of war to be, though they looked to the air arm more than to ground forces to be decisive. Ultimately, both ways of war were called upon to accomplish too much.

It Was Systemic

The second basic answer as to what went wrong with the American way of war casts the net much wider and tries to identify systemic causes. The most frequent criticisms in this regard maintain that the American approach to war tends to be apolitical, astrategic, technocentric, and highly sensitive to casualties.¹⁰ European styles of warfare, one would have to admit, also would reflect many of these traits. Western militaries have been known to disregard political aims and to substitute military strategy for other forms. They have also been techno-centric since at least the industrial revolution by employing warships, fortifications, armored vehicles, aircraft, electronic

communication devices, computer technologies, ballistic missiles, radar, optically guided anti-vehicle missiles, landmines, parachutes, artillery, robotics, and drones. Certainly the U.S. military today has thousands of ground robotics and aerial drones in its inventory, but the numbers owned by the rest of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries and various other federal organizations are not far behind. Drones are clearly a controversial form of standoff technology—but so are improvised explosive devices and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices. Arguably, the chief difference between them lies only in their degrees of sophistication. What is more, all contemporary Western militaries seem to be highly sensitive to casualties, which incidentally does not square well with the first characteristic, that of being apolitical. Political control may not be absolute, but it can extend to individual patrols and combat actions—something Clausewitz could not have imagined.

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Indeed, the first and second characteristics deserve a closer look. The first goes hand-in-hand with another popular argument: that Americans have historically failed to appreciate the importance of Clausewitz's observation that "war is the mere continuation of policy by other means."¹¹ This observation has been taken to mean many things, but none of them should be that the continuation of policy by "other" means is necessarily easy. While policy may appear simple on paper, its extension by other means is bound to meet stiff resistance

332nd Air Expeditionary Wing (Jason Epley)

MQ-9 waits out sandstorm at Joint Base Balad, Iraq

or certainly considerable friction. It is worth noting that, while Clausewitz got much right in *On War*, there is at least one matter on which he was so egregiously simplistic as to be almost wrong—his reduction of policy to “the representative of all interests of the community.”¹² In fact, it is almost never that. Whereas Clausewitz saw policy as unifying and reconciling, it is just as often divisive and antagonizing. Even when policy is embodied in a single head of state, as it was in Clausewitz’s day, it is still frequently and fiercely contested by the interests of other classes and institutions.

It Was the Expectations of Policy

A review of the literature regarding the key political decisions concerning the war in Iraq

shows that it was largely because of politics that American policy initially tried too hard to keep the war it wanted rather than winning the war it had. History, in fact, suggests that the American way of war has never been apolitical. One may disagree with what American policy has been over the years, or what it was at the beginning of the millennium, but it clearly influenced the conduct of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan throughout every stage. What American policy wanted to achieve initially in Iraq and Afghanistan was simply too much to expect solely from any way of war, particularly one that was in many respects still evolving from a way of battle.

The contentious nature of U.S. politics eventually forced American policy to temper

its aims and bring them more in line with what could actually be achieved. This dialectical pattern is not so different from what some scholars have described as the American way of strategy.¹³ In their view, this way has been historically balanced, albeit not without some failures, between the “legitimacy politics” of international liberalism and the “power politics” of realism.¹⁴ Inconsistencies in American foreign policy and strategy are thus explained, perhaps too easily, by understanding the competing tensions created by upholding the values of self-determination and nonintervention on the one hand, and addressing the threats posed by imperial powers or anarchy on the other. It is thus more accurate to say that the American way of war is not so much astrategic as it is contradictory, reflecting the tensions inherent in American politics.¹⁵ With regard to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the dialectical tensions resulted in a strategic correction. To be sure, Americans have not always been so fortunate, but the fact that the tensions are there at all suggests that a strategy, even a poor one, is there too.

In one important respect, however, the above criticisms are entirely correct. The new American way of war did show a marked tendency to focus on the act of fighting more than on its follow-through, what is now commonly referred to as war’s aftermath. There were clearly plans drawn up for Phase 4, but the plan that was chosen was one that fit the politics of the day rather than the practical situation. That type of failure is not uniquely American, nor is it historically unique. War’s aftermath is also far from being a military issue alone. Fortunately, there are some positive signs with recent talk of reforming the interagency process and of institutionalizing a “whole of government” approach. The rhetoric is encouraging since identifying

the problem is half the solution. However, optimism is not necessarily justified just yet. Half a solution is ultimately just as useful as none. Under today’s conditions of austerity, it is not clear that there will be enough resources to carry through to a full reform.

All told, systemic causes are seductively convenient. Yet, as far as what is wrong with the American way of war, none of the answers that point to deep-seated flaws seems persuasive. The alleged roots are too shallow and the counterexamples are too many. Instead, the more likely answer is that what was wrong with the American way of war was about the same as what was wrong with any other: policy aims and physical capabilities were initially misaligned, and it took time to

the American way of war has fared rather better historically, and certainly no worse, than its British, French, and German counterparts

expand the capabilities and revise the aims. Tactically, operationally, and even strategically the American way of war has fared rather better historically, and certainly no worse, than its British, French, and German counterparts. Even in its most recent and most challenging conflicts, it eventually proved itself capable and adaptive, although whether the adaptations were altogether timely enough is another matter.¹⁶ Although there are critical issues still to be addressed and fixed, the real culprit seems to be that expectations were too many and too high. They rose all the more sharply with turn-of-the-millennium rhetoric about what the “new” American way of war was and what it could do, a rhetoric that, after 9/11, was matched with a political will that was impatient to act.

Paradoxically, we can know a way of war only historically—by what it has done. Unfortunately, historical knowledge tells us little about what that way of war will be in the years ahead. After more than 10 years of conflict, we now know better what the new American way of war was. Yet the force reductions under way in the United States are already changing that style of fighting in important ways, creating a different set of shortcomings than those we had to overcome just recently. By the next conflict there will be a newer American way of war, but the need to align, and realign, policy aims and real capabilities is the one continuity that will require constant attention. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of U.S. Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973).

² *Ibid.*, 36.

³ Michael Ignatieff, "The New American Way of War," *New York Times Review of Books*, July 20, 2000, surveyed new contributions to the existing literature. See also Eliot A. Cohen, "Kosovo and the New American Way of War," in *War Over Kosovo: Politics and Strategy in a Global Age*, ed. Andrew J. Bacevich and Eliot A. Cohen, 38–62 (New York: Columbia University, 2001); Stephen Biddle, "The New Way of War? Debating the Kosovo Model," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (May/June 2002), 138–144; Max Boot, "Everything You Think You Know about the American Way of War Is Wrong," *Foreign Policy Research Institute e-notes*, September 12, 2002; and Max Boot, *Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

⁴ Compare John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607–1814* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Wayne E. Lee, *Barbarians and Brothers: Anglo-American Warfare, 1500–1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2–3. Both make references to the contemporary American way of war.

⁵ Arthur K. Cebrowski and Thomas P.M. Barnett, "The American Way of War," *Transformation Trends*, January 13, 2003; Victor Davis Hanson, "The American Way of War," *National Review* 55, no. 7 (April 21, 2003), 10; Dick Cheney, "A New American Way of War," speech to the Heritage Foundation, May 1, 2003; Richard B. Myers, "The New American Way of War," *Military Technology* 27, no. 6 (June 2003), 64–74, and "The New American Way of War: Keeping the Legacy Alive," speech at the Navy League Air Space Exposition, Washington, DC, April 16, 2003; William B. Scott, "New Way of War: Strategies Based on 'Annihilation and Attrition' Are Relegated to History," *Aviation Week & Space Technology* 158, no. 19 (May 12, 2003), 38–39; Arthur Cebrowski, speech to the Heritage Foundation, May 13, 2003, reprinted in *Transformation Trends*, May 27, 2003; "Champion of 'A New American Way of War,'" *Sea Power* 46, no. 6 (June 2003), 15–16; and Donald H. Rumsfeld and Tommy R. Franks, "Summary of Lessons Learned in OIF," prepared testimony for the Senate Armed Services Committee, July 9, 2003.

⁶ Frederick Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy* (New York: Encounter, 2006); Grant T. Hammond, "The U.S. Air Force and the American Way of War," in *Rethinking the Principles of War*, ed. Anthony D. McIvor, 109–126 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005).

⁷ Max Boot, "The Struggle to Transform the Military," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 2 (March/April 2005), 103–118; Richard Lock-Pullen, "The U.S. Way of War and the 'War on Terror,'" *Politics & Policy* 34, no. 2 (2006), 374–399; Robert R. Tomes, *U.S. Defense Strategy from Vietnam to Operation Iraqi Freedom: Military Innovation and the New American Way of War, 1973–2003* (London: Routledge, 2007); Thomas Mahnken, *Technology and the American Way of War Since 1945* (New York: Columbia, 2008); John Arquilla, *Worst Enemy: The Reluctant Transformation of the American Military* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2008).

⁸ Donald H. Rumsfeld, "Transforming the Military," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (May/June 2002), 20–32, 21.

⁹ John J. Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War," *The Atlantic Monthly* 266, no. 2 (August 1990), 35–50.

¹⁰ Colin S. Gray, *Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt?* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2006), 30–49; Anthony D. McIvor, ed. "The American Way of War: Critique and Implications," *Rethinking the Principles of War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 13–40,

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¹¹ Wilson, xiv.

¹² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University, 1976), 607. For slightly different wording in the German edition, see Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, ed. Werner Hahlweg, 19th ed. (Bonn: Ferd. Dümmler, 1980), 993. To be fair, this was merely shorthand to avoid a lengthy discussion of policy that would surely have required another book.

¹³ Michael Lind, *The American Way of Strategy: U.S. Foreign Policy and the American Way of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁵ A similar case is made in Dominic Tierney, *How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War* (New York: Little, Brown, 2010).

¹⁶ James A. Russell, *Innovation, Transformation, and War: Counterinsurgency Operations in Anbar and Ninewa Provinces, Iraq 2005–2007* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); and Chad Serena, *A Revolution in Military Adaptation* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2011).



U.S. Navy hospital corpsman assists dehydrated patient during medical civil action project in Philippines

Operation *Enduring Freedom*—*Philippines*

Civilian Harm and the Indirect Approach

BY GEOFFREY LAMBERT, LARRY LEWIS, AND SARAH SEWALL

This study examines the military support provided by U.S. Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines (JSOTF-P) to Philippine military operations. Building upon the 2010 *Joint Civilian Casualty Study*—the first comprehensive examination of U.S. prevention and mitigation of civilian casualties based on U.S. operations in Afghanistan—this current effort aimed to assess civilian casualties in the different context of *indirect* U.S. operations. We found that the evolution of Philippine civilian and military strategy since the mid 2000s has reduced the occurrence and salience of civilian casualty issues during combat operations. Additionally, the study revealed many related best practices in JSOTF-P and Operation *Enduring Freedom*–*Philippines* (OEF-P) more broadly, and provided insights into the possible future evolution of the mission and wider implications for foreign internal defense (FID) in the 21st century.

This article provides a historical background of the insurgency and the evolution of the JSOTF-P mission and its impact. The next section describes a change in the nature of Philippine operations, followed by best practices, limitations, and a discussion of the issue of civilian casualties and broader violence against civilians in the Philippines. Finally, the article looks at overall implications for the U.S. Government in the future.

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Given its narrow mission, JSOTF-P has been highly successful—particularly considering its relatively small size and low cost. This success has been driven both by effective U.S. military support at the tactical and operational levels and by decisions and events outside of U.S. control. Key questions are whether the partnership has been able to achieve maximum strategic impact and what it teaches about the need to expand the flexibility and integration of U.S. responses to buttress weak states and combat regional instability.

A History of Insurgency in the Philippines

The history of the Philippines is marked with active resistance to standing governments. These resistance movements can be roughly divided into two camps: insurgencies rooted in religion (specifically, Islam) and those stemming from political ideology (communism). At the same time, the persistence of these insurgencies spans ideology, stemming from underlying factors that fuel discontent within insurgents and much of the population alike: widespread poverty, systemic corruption, ties to criminal interests, and weak governance over the roughly 7,000 islands that comprise the Philippine archipelago.

Islamic Insurgencies. Religious insurgency groups in the Philippines are rooted in external influences that arose five centuries ago. Over time, Islamic beliefs had been largely embraced by many of the islands. In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan claimed the Philippine islands for Spain (hence the name of the islands, after King Philip II of Spain), bringing both a Western and Catholic influence to much of the Philippines. However, the people of the southern islands resisted this influence (including the Dagohoy Rebellion, which

lasted 85 years, making it the longest lasting such movement in the history of the country) and were never completely subjugated to Spanish rule. After the Spanish-American War, these same southern islanders resisted the U.S. claim to the Philippines, leading to the Moro Rebellion, which constituted a southern front of the Philippine-American War.¹

After the establishment of the Philippine government in 1946, Moro elements in the southern islands complained about neglect and discrimination on the part of the Philippine government. General resentment crystallized into armed opposition when dozens of Moro Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) recruits were killed by other soldiers during their training in early 1968, followed by a government coverup. This event was the impetus for the formation of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which took up arms against the government in 1970. Peace talks were held in 1976 after significant losses on both sides, which led to a general stand-down of operations amid the government's agreement to give Moro areas more autonomy. A few years later, more conservative elements created a splinter group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

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President Corazon Aquino negotiated with MNLF leadership after President Ferdinand Marcos stepped down in 1986; these discussions resulted in the establishment of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao in 1989, which created autonomy for districts with significant Muslim populations in the

southern islands while preserving the territorial integrity of the Philippines overall. MNLF reached a comprehensive peace agreement with the government in 1996. Key aspects of this agreement included promises to provide farmland for enemy fighters, government resources for southern areas, and integration of MNLF fighters into the army.² The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) reinforced this initiative through focused development initiatives in the southern Philippines, such as the Livelihood Enhancement and Peace project.³ This move appeased the MNLF but not the MILF, and the latter continued active resistance against the government. The MILF and Philippine government have engaged in several peace negotiations since 2005.

Another Islamic organization, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), was created in 1990 as elements of the resistance to Soviet occupation in Afghanistan returned to the Philippines and joined forces with radical elements of largely nascent resistance groups. The ASG held the goal of establishing an Islamic state within the Philippines and used bombings coupled with extortion and kidnappings (to raise needed funds) to meet its ends. The Philippine government regards the ASG as a terrorist group, not a political group to be bargained with.

Both the MILF and ASG have been aided operationally via training, funding, and operational assistance by cooperating with international terrorist organizations such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and al Qaeda.

Communist Insurgencies. Communist resistance groups have also challenged the government since the country's inception as a sovereign nation. During World War II, an underground communist movement created in 1932 began a resistance movement to the Japanese occupation, known as Hukbalahap.

It was strongest on the island of Luzon but had presence in other areas. After the Philippines was established as a sovereign state in 1946 with leadership that opposed Marxist positions, the Hukbalahap movement (and its members, the Huk) resisted the newly established government. The Huk were aided in their efforts by significant operational experience gained during their opposition to the Japanese occupation. Early Philippine efforts to oppose the "Huk Rebellion" were largely heavy-handed, and they mostly increased the population's sympathy toward the movement, doubling the size of the insurgency.

In the early 1950s, the Philippine military began to employ a more discriminatory use of force and adopt unconventional warfare methods. Guidance provided to the Philippine forces was first "to act as an ambassador of good will from the government to the people; second, to kill or capture Huk."⁴ Philippine forces were instructed to appear as unthreatening as possible to the population and were supplied with candy and gum to give to children in order to recraft their image as friendly to the people. Philippine Army Chief Ramon Magsaysay also took a personal role in investigating and court-martialing troops accused of mistreating civilians. This resulted in improved professionalism of the force and an enhanced reputation among the population. Meanwhile, the Huk insurgency adopted practices that alienated the civilian population, and they lost their support base as a result. Combined with a surge in military forces in the early 1950s and a program for reintegration and land grants for surrendering Huk members, these factors led to the Huk force negotiating for peace in 1954.

Communist insurgents continued to exist at low levels through 1968, when the

movement divided into pro-Soviet and pro-Maoist groups, mirroring an overall tension in communist ideologies espoused by the Soviet Union and China, respectively. While the pro-Soviet group adopted an engagement strategy with the Philippine government, the Maoist group, known as the Communist Party of the Philippines, took on active resistance to the government through its armed group, the New People's Army. This group had the broadest presence of all insurgent groups in the Philippines, an active decision based on a lesson from the Huk Rebellion—that local resistance movements can be more easily isolated and defeated. After 20 years of insurgent activity, events in 1986, including the People's Revolution and the stepping down of President Marcos, removed a number of grievances held by the general population, and the group lost much of its support from the population. More recently, their activities have narrowed to extortion and shadow governance.

Abu Sayyaf Terror Campaign and U.S. Response

In 1998, ASG leadership changed to Khadifi Janjalani,⁵ who took the group in a new direction: kidnapping and demanding ransoms to finance operations and gain a platform to emphasize its demands for a separate Islamic state. The year 2000 marked a series of operations reflecting this new approach. For example, in March 2000, ASG kidnapped over 50 students and teachers from two schools in Basilan. Four were killed before the group was released. The following month, ASG kidnapped 21 people from a neighboring Malaysian resort island, Sipadan. Libya served as mediator and eventually paid a ransom of over \$20 million for their release. These and similar events in the southern Philippines led to Philippine

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo asking U.S. Pacific Command for assistance with ASG terror threats. The command responded by having Special Operations Command, Pacific (SOCPAC) conduct counterterrorism training for a Philippine Light Reaction Company (LRC) between March and July 2001.

In May 2001, another ASG operation took 20 hostages from the Philippine resort island of Palawan. Three of the hostages were American, including one who was beheaded a few days later. This incident intensified U.S. support to Philippine counterterrorism operations, with SOCPAC providing intelligence assistance in addition to training the LRC. SOCPAC had planned a terrorist coordination and assistance visit to help determine the capabilities and limitations of the AFP and inform future support. The visit occurred in October 2001, in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, which raised the relative importance of the issue of terrorism for the United States. In November 2001, in the aftermath of that visit, Philippine President Arroyo and President George W. Bush agreed to a plan of action to improve the ability of the Philippines to combat terror. The United States would provide the Philippines with military assistance and economic aid, and U.S. forces would deploy to the Philippines to “advise and assist” the AFP. These initiatives became Operation *Enduring Freedom–Philippines*, the second OEF mission addressing terrorist threats to the United States.⁶

JSOTF-P Mission and Impact

Prior to 9/11, Admiral Dennis Blair, commander of U.S. Pacific Command, funded the training of Philippine LRCs in order to improve the host nation's capability to address its internal insurgent threats. The training mission was assigned to 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces

Group (Airborne). The LRC project served to build personal relationships that would assist in partnerships that arose after September 2001.

After 9/11, initial U.S. planning for counterterrorism operations on Basilan Island included a course of action for a maritime joint task force (JTF) to conduct U.S. combat operations on the island. This plan was discarded quickly when it became apparent that the Philippine constitution forbade direct unilateral operations by other nations within the country. Therefore, an indirect/FID approach had to be developed.

When SOCPAC was given the preliminary counterterrorism mission, it first assessed the situation on Basilan to gain understanding of the environment. This assessment revealed that the AFP did not view the population as the center of gravity, abuses were not uncommon, and corruption was endemic. In addition, AFP tactics were based on maneuver of battalion-sized forces that were often unable to find and close with terrorists on the island. Complicating factors were the AFP's lack of maintenance capability, mobility, functioning weapons, and training ammunition, as well as weaknesses in platoon and company maneuver.

The initial intent of U.S. OEF-P forces was to train and equip AFP on Basilan, focusing specifically on increasing AFP tactical proficiency against terror elements of concern to the United States (such as JI and ASG). Restrictions on foreign military forces' use of force (except in self-defense) kept U.S. forces from a "trigger-puller" role, and, in deference to this restriction, guidance was given that U.S. troops had to be at least "one hill" removed from locations where contact with the enemy could be anticipated. In January 2001, initial forces deployed under the command of the SOCPAC JTF 510, a

rapidly deployable task force for responding to contingencies. In July 2002, JSOTF-P was established to replace JTF 510.

Special operations forces (SOF) trainers built ranges and taught basic rifle marksmanship and platoon- and company-base defense and maneuver. The host nation provided 30,000 new rifles and 1 million rounds of ammunition to support the training. The result was small units that could engage targets and conduct maneuver with confidence.

a course of action for a maritime JTF was discarded when it became apparent that the Philippine constitution forbade direct unilateral operations by other nations within the country

As tactical forces became more proficient through JSOTF-P efforts, SOF trainers began to shift to the professionalization of higher level headquarters. Once joint goals for training and equipping targeted AFP units were met, subsequent assessments resulted in downsizing JSOTF-P and a change in mission to "advise and assist," with a prohibition on military training. Operations were extended beyond Basilan Island to Jolo, Mindanao, and other areas of concern. After this change, JSOTF-P shifted to operating primarily at higher echelons, with advisors located at the brigade and higher levels and additional liaison coordination elements at other critical locations.

The vast Philippine archipelago complicated Philippine security force efforts to maintain presence and eliminate terrorist sanctuaries. JSOTF-P capabilities assisted Philippine efforts to provide security in the southern islands. The JSOTF-P focus transitioned from supporting the tactical edge of AFP counterterrorism operations to a more operational-level

focus, helping units to structure balanced campaigns in their local areas.

JSOTF-P provided support, such as fusing intelligence and developing targeting approaches, to specific counterterrorism operations. It also provided mentoring in areas that aided the AFP in separating terrorists from the population, such as civil-military operations,⁷ public affairs, and Military Information Support to Operations. JSOTF-P also contributed enabling capabilities in support of AFP high-value individual operations, including full motion video from Scan Eagle and video-equipped low-signature aircraft.

recent U.S. military assessments state that the major counterterrorism campaign objectives of OEF-P have been accomplished

The consensus between the U.S. and Philippine governments is that OEF-P has been successful, as terrorist groups in the southern Philippines since 2001 are isolated in smaller and smaller geographical areas, have increasingly ineffective and uncoordinated leadership, are unable to effectively recruit personnel and move them into the Philippines, are unable to garner significant financial support, and are unable to conduct significant operations. The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review points out OEF-P as a successful model for operations that is applicable to operational environments beyond the Philippines.⁸

Evolution of the AFP Approach and Accounting for Civilian Harm

A key component of the success against terrorist groups in the Philippines in the past decade appears to be the AFP transition from employing a brute-force approach to a highly focused

procedure that has considered the population and minimized civilian harm.

Prior AFP Approach: Scouring and Civilian Casualties. In the early 2000s, Philippine security forces (both AFP and Philippine National Police [PNP]) faced a series of high profile ASG operations in addition to continuing pressure from the New People's Army, MNLF, and MILF. Similar to the early days of the Huk Rebellion in the late 1940s, Philippine forces were seen as heavy handed in their response, causing significant numbers of civilian casualties and extensive damage to property.⁹ One factor was their indiscriminate approach to operations, engaging all individuals in areas where the enemy operated and considering civilians as the enemy or enemy supporters. Forces were rewarded for that because a metric for success was the body count from each operation.¹⁰ Forces also used imprecise methods of engagement, such as unguided air munitions, unobserved artillery, and naval gunfire to soften targets.¹¹

At the same time, Philippine security forces tended to be ineffective because of poor operational security. As a result, the enemy could evade AFP operations or prepare an ambush for the AFP, causing large numbers of friendly casualties.¹²

New Approach: Restraint and Considering the Population. By the end of the decade, the Philippine forces, particularly the AFP, had developed a different approach to dealing with terrorist groups. The AFP moved from indiscriminate operations to giving significant consideration to the general population, including civilian casualties, property damage, human rights, civil-military operations, and the welfare of displaced persons.¹³ This change of approach was illustrated in 2008 when MILF resorted to kinetic operations after a Supreme Court ruling that threw out

the proposed terms of a negotiated peace accord. The AFP responded with restraint and consideration of the population, establishing camps for displaced persons and providing food and water. The response from the population was positive, and the AFP was seen as protectors of the population, building trust that aided their overall campaign. One member of the U.S. Embassy team described this transformation, stating, “They were seen as the savior of the people—it was a watershed moment for them.”¹⁴ That reinforced the value of the population-centric approach they had recently adopted. This and other instances gradually showed the AFP that, as one officer noted, “Constraint is a weapons system”¹⁵ that can be effective in countering terrorist groups. Elements of the new approach are described below.

An 80/20 approach. The AFP changed its approach to focus on the population through the use of civil-military operations geared toward improving the relationship between the AFP and the population, winning civilian support for the AFP and Philippine government, and discouraging support for terrorist groups. Civil-military operations were seen as so valuable that the AFP established an 80/20 approach, where 80 percent of AFP activities were to consist of civil-military operations and 20 percent were to be targeting/combat operations. The shift began in April 2007 under AFP Chief of Staff General Hermogenes Esperon, Jr., who indicated that the military would abandon its previous procedure, focused on kinetic operations, and instead would concentrate on civil-military operations.

Under this new approach, battlespace owners would conduct the population-centric activities (the “80 percent”): protecting the population, gathering human intelligence,

and performing civil-military operations. The “20 percent” activities were mainly conducted by specialized units, specifically Joint Special Operations Groups (JSOGs), which specialized in direct action operations and targeting, and Philippine National Police–Special Action Force (PNP-SAF), a police element dedicated to warrant-based captures of high-profile individuals.¹⁶ The use of these specialized, highly trained elements for targeting helped to combat operational security problems and spared garrison forces from the fallout resulting from direct action operations.¹⁷

Civil-military operations. Following the early example of U.S. forces in Basilan in 2002,¹⁸ the AFP largely embraced the use of civil-military operations, providing services to the population overall and specifically flooding areas affected by kinetic operations with aid to win the support of the population and maintain freedom of action.¹⁹ Because the employment of civil-military operations created greater contact with the population, the AFP could better understand the local environment and know which areas were permissive or nonpermissive.

The AFP’s use of civil-military operations tended to sway the population as well as aid in counterterrorism operations. For example, in Cotabato City, one local stated that the AFP “used to come in with guns, missiles, and heavy weapons. Now, they are messengers of peace and building our schools.”²⁰ Similarly, in Basilan, the use of civil-military operations helped to communicate the message that the AFP was opposing only the ASG, with the goal of protecting the population.²¹ Activities included providing food, water, and shelter for displaced individuals and humanitarian assistance during natural disasters. These activities served to separate JI/ASG terror elements from

the population.²² In one example, an individual in Jolo was so impressed by local AFP care of the population that he provided the tip that led to Abu Solaiman in 2007, a key high-value individual in the southern Philippines. When the AFP formalized this method in 2007, Khaled Musa, the deputy chairman of the MILF committee on information, commented that the AFP's use of civil-military operations was "more lethal than brute force" to the organization, and noted that a similar approach to MNLF led to a mass surrender of insurgent fighters in the 1996 peace agreement with the government.²³

Focused operations. Specialized elements of the army and police conducted a large number of targeting operations comprising the 20 percent of the Philippine 80/20 approach. These operations were highly focused, aimed at capturing or killing the intended target with a minimum of civilian casualties or damage. This process began with solid and complete intelligence. JSOG tended to develop its own intelligence for its operations, though it did at times rely on intelligence from the United States to verify what it had.²⁴ PNP-SAF required intelligence and information adequate for obtaining a warrant before they could operate.²⁵ Both groups stated that they were careful about intelligence they gave to ground commanders to ensure it was reliable. On AFP direct action missions, the forces took great pains to obtain accurate positive identification of the target during the operation and chose precise means of engagement with a low risk of civilian casualties. They did not engage others on the objective even if they had weapons, unless the force was compromised and they needed to engage those individuals in self-defense. They also displayed tactical patience, where, despite having the opportunity to

engage their intended targets, they chose not to engage due to collateral damage concerns: "We will get them another day."²⁶

Currently, therefore, AFP conduct of focused operations is centered on consideration of civilian casualties and protecting the population.²⁷ This consideration even includes a medical evacuation response: if civilian casualties occur, the AFP will take those casualties to a military hospital to receive medical care. The AFP reported giving civilians a higher evacuation priority than its own forces to emphasize AFP concern for the civilian population.²⁸

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Philippine leadership: A forcing function for new approach. Philippine forces discussed how their changed focus toward the population and avoidance of civilian casualties and human rights was driven by senior leaders in the government. They ascribed prior heavy-handed practices to the legacy of the Marcos dictatorship and a lack of appreciation for how counterproductive these practices were. A pivotal year for this change in focus was 2007, when General Esperon emphasized civil-military operations in AFP operations. President Arroyo and the rest of the government reinforced this change in direction by establishing the National Development Support Command and putting human rights into laws governing Philippine counterterrorism operations.²⁹ Other senior AFP leadership promoting this new approach included Lieutenant General Raymundo Ferrer and General Alexander Yano. Leaders we spoke to noted that the Arroyo

government's emphasis on a negotiated solution also represented an important turning point. The momentum appears to be continuing in the new Internal Peace and Security Plan issued by the Aquino government on January 1, 2011, which recasts the ongoing counterterrorism campaign as "winning the peace." It focuses on an integrated interagency approach, nonkinetic aspects of the campaign, and trust-building in support of a negotiation process.

One senior leader concern also traced the new approach to policies and laws that affected rank and promotion decisions. For example, the AFP "relieves commanders a lot more than we [the U.S. military] do" for human rights concerns and civilian casualty incidents.³⁰ Philippine law now allows individuals to charge AFP and PNP forces with human rights violations, such as civilian casualties and violating the rights of detainees.³¹ A charge of a human rights violation is forwarded to the appropriate army or police office (for example, the human rights office for the AFP) and an unresolved charge can prevent promotion of officers accused of violations.³² Consequently, commanders and forces are aware of civilian casualties and how detainees are treated in their commands.

The change in mindset, while driven by Philippine leadership from above, was likely enabled in part by U.S. military efforts. JSOTF-P "advise and assist" efforts helped to professionalize the AFP and improve proficiency and professionalism, enabling both the more effective use of civil-military operations and the conduct of focused operations with minimized collateral damage. International Military Education and Training efforts also exposed AFP officers to U.S. doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures that aided in operationalizing the intent of the Philippine

leaders in their counterterrorism campaign. So, while the changes in the AFP approach to more carefully conform to human rights considerations and reduce civilian casualties was a Philippine-led transformation, JSOTF-P probably provided tools that helped the AFP achieve those changes.

Limiting second-order effects: Civilian casualties and political primacy. The Philippine security forces face a number of challenges that affect their ability to maintain security and neutralize terrorist elements. Specialized units of the AFP tended to capture and kill the majority of the targets. Because the specialized units³³ were better resourced and trained to support their missions so they could operate in confidence, the two main concerns of these units appeared to be mission success and avoiding civilian casualties. AFP concerns about not only potential civilian casualties but also any form of cost or blowback from an operation appeared to be a constraining factor in the AFP approach to offensive operations. As noted earlier, the AFP had come to see civilian casualties through a domestic rather than international legal lens. This meant that instead of a proportionality assessment of the potential risks of civilian casualties, they were effectively defaulting to a zero-casualty goal. This was reinforced by their keen perception that their careers were vulnerable to abuse allegations.

Additionally, the AFP was highly sensitive to the government's desire for a political settlement with insurgent (instead of terrorist) groups. The AFP thus sought to avoid alienating potential negotiating partners or otherwise prejudicing the political process. The effect of these political priorities allowed terrorist sanctuaries to exist, since the JI group enjoyed protection from an insurgent group (the MILF).

Nonetheless, most observers argued that JI was actually contained within this “sanctuary.” Political concerns also appeared to constrain military operations in specific geographic areas or times. One of the roles of U.S. intelligence support was to provide reassurance regarding the likely success and limited second-order effects of raids.

In one sense, this evolution of the AFP’s attitude represented a victory for civil-military relations, respect for human rights, and long-term effectiveness and internal trust of military institutions.³⁴ However, it also had accompanying near-term effects that reinforced “the speed of sovereignty” and the political, vice technical, limits on military operations. While American partners sometimes found this frustrating considering swiftly fulfilling the JSOTF-P counterterrorism mission, they fully accepted the need to allow the Philippine government and AFP to conduct operations as those actors deemed appropriate. Though difficult for some initially, this acceptance reflected the broad and sophisticated understanding of the indirect approach evident in JSOTF-P.

Shifting counterterrorism to law enforcement. One of the major advances in Philippine thinking was the need to integrate police into counterterrorism operations, both to expand capacity to handle terrorists “downstream” and to reinforce the notion that this is a criminal law enforcement effort. The ANP also noted that this minimized the potential for false claims of mistreatment of civilians.

However, both the PNP and Philippines criminal justice system in general are weak, limiting the effectiveness of this shift in approach.³⁵ Examination of the professionalism and capacity of Philippine administrative institutions is beyond the scope of

this article, but a wide range of reports and reporting suggests that corruption and a lack of effective ministry capability remain major impediments to sustainable progress in field operations. International Crime Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), a U.S. Department of Justice training program for improving Philippine police effectiveness, is one solution for addressing this key shortfall. However, the program has a tactical focus only, so institutional shortcomings were not being addressed in U.S. efforts. While the overall Philippine goal is to move the counterterrorism mission to law enforcement agencies, this goal is undermined by a police force that often lacks the capacity for that mission, with the exception of the PNP-SAF.

The next two sections contain the study team’s observations of best practices exhibited in OEF-P. The best practices include

one of the major advances in Philippine thinking was the need to integrate police into counterterrorism operations

approaches by JSOTF-P, the Country Team in the U.S. Embassy, and Philippine forces, as well as observations concerning key constraints that limited the benefits and sustainability of the overall OEF-P effort.

Best Practices

Creation of Precision Units. With U.S. assistance, the Philippines created and improved upon several specialized precision units that have additional training and higher levels of technology and resourcing than other host nation security forces: the Philippine JSOG, the Light Reaction Company, and the PNP-SAF. Operating with JSOTF-P advice and assistance,

these units allow the Philippines to be more surgical in the execution of combat operations, improving effectiveness against terrorist elements while lessening civilian casualties and human rights abuses.

Full Integration across U.S. Embassy Country Team: Mindanao Working Group. The Country Team/JSOTF-P relationship has improved significantly over the past year due to concerted attention. Weekly Country Team meetings and JSOTF-P's full-time liaison in the Embassy have been helpful in integrating JSOTF-P efforts into the overall Country Team plan. JSOTF-P elements working with the Deputy Chief of Mission crafted the Embassy's Mindanao Work Group, which by mid-2011 was essentially a steering group effort for the Country Team's initiatives in the southern Philippines. The JSOTF-P commander stated that such an integrated effort was essential for a comprehensive approach to addressing U.S. counterterrorism goals in the Philippines.

Robust Liaison. JSOTF-P liaison activities range well beyond a narrow U.S. counterterrorism focus, reaching broadly into host nation combat units, civic actions, police, and other locations, reflecting a deliberate effort to pursue an indirect approach. Resultant relationships with key influencers provide for optimal exchange of information, strengthened understanding of terrorist and insurgent operations, greater acceptance of U.S. presence, and opportunities for synergy and force multipliers in support of shared goals.

Activation of a National Civic Action Command. The AFP established a National Development Support Command, which includes forces such as civil affairs, medical, engineer, and other units charged with the old U.S. doctrinal mission of civic action as part of internal defense and development strategy.

This move enables the AFP commitment to a larger role for civil-military operations in its overall approach, a role that JSOTF-P has encouraged. The population views these units favorably since they demonstrate the government's will to improve the lives of its citizens, and the resulting operations have aided the effectiveness of counterterrorism operations. Corruption does, however, remain an issue.

Replacing Search-and-Destroy Tactics with Focused Operations. The Philippine approach to combating terror and insurgency has moved from counterproductive search-and-destroy tactics to focused targeting operations. Focused operations are characterized as having clearly articulated objectives, detailed planning and rehearsal, robust intelligence on both the target and the immediate environment, and the ability of ground commanders to abort operations when there are concerns of civilian casualties.

Partnered Control of Technology. U.S.-Philippine combined/joint fusion cells facilitate partnered use of U.S. weapon systems technology to enable host nation operations and give them capability they otherwise lack. Partnered control of precision weaponry equals partnered accountability and responsibility while allowing host nation use of advanced capabilities to maximize mission effectiveness.

Combining Direct and Indirect Approaches to Counterinsurgency. The Philippine political, military, and police leadership agree that the previous heavy-handed strategy for prosecuting the 40-year war against multiple simultaneous insurgencies, characterized by human rights violations and civilian casualties, has failed. The Philippines has adopted a new approach that combines direct and indirect methods in concert to combat terrorism. It uses a division of labor to blunt terrorism

while fostering national reconciliation. While precision security force units will focus on critical kinetic direct action operations, the battlespace owners in the AFP and locally based PNP will carry 80 percent of the load by conducting security operations, civic action, and intelligence-gathering to separate the people from the terrorists.

Strategic Tempo and Tactical Patience. Philippine counterterrorism operations are conducted in the context of an internal 40-year conflict. There is no timetable for Philippine forces to withdraw—unlike U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan—since they stand on national sovereign territory. Civilian casualties and human rights are key concerns that can outweigh temporary military gains from specific operations. Therefore, Philippine forces have learned the benefits of tactical patience—if necessary, many targets can wait for opportunities when they can be actioned and these key concerns can be avoided. JSOTF-P advisors have learned to adjust their tempo to avoid stressing host nation sovereignty, governance, and trust.

Host Nation Human Rights Officers and Training. The Philippine security forces require that an officer in each battalion serves as a human rights officer, usually as an extra duty. The officers train the units on human rights policy and ensure that human rights are a consideration during operations. Any citizen may accuse a member of the police or armed forces of a human rights violation. Those accused have their careers flagged until the matter is resolved in civilian court. The Armed Forces Joint Staff has a human rights office on it, and human rights training is part of the AFP National Police academy's curriculum. The AFP human rights office was established as a single point of contact for concerns about violations by the AFP. Soldiers met by the study team mentioned that

this office was helpful to individuals who had been falsely accused of such violations. This overall approach appears to clearly fix personal responsibility for conduct and avoidance of human rights violations, facilitating a change in mindset of host nation forces in ways that have helped the population welcome their presence and activities, leading to improved success in counterterrorism operations.

Low Visibility Dispersion. Having widely dispersed JSOTF-P air operations, command and control, and liaison coordination elements enhance force protection by lowering visibility of U.S. presence. Living in safe areas on host nation bases also reduces force signature and the likelihood of adversary attack.

Attention to Internally Displaced Persons. IDPs have been a significant problem throughout the Philippines' troubled past in light of its history of internal conflicts and natural disasters. IDPs are now considered in military and police operational planning. Capabilities of military, police, and governmental social welfare agencies can be integrated to mitigate IDPs caused by military operations or natural disasters. Such aid helps to influence the population and improve relationships between civilians and security forces. In contrast, failure to consider and factor in considerations for IDPs in operations in Afghanistan harmed the relationship with the population and provided material for enemy information operations.

Key Constraints

Indirect Operations Equal No Use of Force from the United States. A key aspect of planning by the United States for operations in the Philippines was the prohibition against the United States using force in offensive operations. Therefore, an indirect/FID approach was developed to accomplish the U.S. objectives

by, with, and through the Philippine security forces. What might have initially been perceived by the U.S. military as a constraint resulted in an operational strategy that helped the AFP avoid fueling the decade-long Philippine insurgency. Nonetheless, there were several other constraints that limited the benefits and sustainability of the indirect approach in the Philippines.

Limited Authorities/Capabilities/Resources for the Indirect Approach. Some limitations hindered JSOTF-P ability to influence the host nation. U.S. forces did not have all of the resources they believed they needed to build influence and relationships with Philippine forces and government elements. For example, the need for a low level of discretionary funding was an early lesson in Iraq and Afghanistan, which has been addressed by providing military forces with Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds to aid them in influencing the population and

local leaders. JSOTF-P lacked such a mechanism, however. Another lost opportunity was JSOTF-P inability to travel with AFP leaders on military aircraft without prior coordination and U.S. military four-star approval. JSOTF-P stated that the inability to host AFP leaders in certain occasions precluded taking advantage of opportunities for influence. Overall, military forces require flexibility to apply resources

the lack of an agile mechanism to get needed resources for influence operations led to missed opportunities

in unconventional ways to empower the indirect approach. Thus, the lack of an agile mechanism to get needed resources for influence operations led to missed opportunities.

Efforts Did Not Feature Institutional Reform (Sustainability). The later phase of OEF-P was an advise-and-assist mission in



DOD (Michael J. Carden)

U.S. Soldier serving in Operation *Junior Heroes* in Philippines looks at children’s book teaching IED awareness

support of Philippine counterterrorism operations and was not geared toward improving institutional capability. For example, JSOTF-P was not authorized to conduct training. While there were ways to work around this restriction, the study team sensed that this limitation was frustrating to some elements in JSOTF-P because their impact was limited to the forces with whom they could work directly. Authorization to include training in their mandate, even without additional resources, might have allowed them to create greater synergies and expand their impact. For example, they wished to use available resources to tie together advise/assist topics for inclusion in curricula for AFP schoolhouses, which would have helped make their advising mission more sustainable and increased the impact of U.S. efforts. This challenge is one example of the inherent stovepipes created by limited authorities granted in Title 10 (for example, operational advise and assist) and Title 22 (security assistance) missions.

Inconsistent Interagency Teaming. Ideally, OEF-P would be an integrated interagency effort, pulling in different aspects of national power to best effect. Different phases of OEF-P have featured such interagency integration. At the same time, this integration has been inconsistent, pointing out the ad hoc and personality-dependent nature of interagency teaming. Integration was reported by both military and Department of State elements to be strong between 2002 and 2007. During this time, different elements of the U.S. Country Team would meet weekly to focus and synchronize effects in Mindanao. Such strong integration appeared to emerge again in 2010 and 2011. While it is not clear why interagency teaming was not as strong in the years between these two periods, Iraq and

Afghanistan have many examples of senior leaders actively establishing and maintaining these relationships.

Even with an integrated U.S. Country Team effort in 2011, many of those interviewed expressed a lack of understanding or appreciation of a common plan or coordinated approach within the team. It was not clear whether a more conscious counterterrorism approach could be agreed upon across the U.S. Government or would be accepted by the Philippine government. Nonetheless, from the JSOTF-P perspective, it would be a welcome development. For example, despite USAID priorities having a strong focus on the southern Philippines, the agency dedicated \$400 million to work in Mindanao, which was 60 percent of the total USAID investment. JSOTF-P members noted that it was hard to see any impact from that development. Military officials perceived development work as conducted to “better the lives of people in the Philippines” instead of “make development work [to] reinforce [U.S.] interests.”

Another example is justice system reform. This appeared critical to military actors since the process to prosecute terrorists was lengthy and sometimes ineffective. To improve this process, JSOTF-P pursued a team effort with the Department of Justice’s ICITAP program. But the ICITAP program appeared to be a poor fit to the challenges in the Philippines. ICITAP trains police skills, but without a higher level program to reform police leadership accompanied by addressing pay issues, training basic skills to police forces can simply help make a corrupt force more efficient in its corruption. Importantly, this situation has changed in the past few months because of the work of the Mindanao Working Group within the U.S. Embassy, which started to

move U.S. efforts back toward an enterprise approach with increased unity of effort.

These considerations point to the fact that, for all its successes, OEF-P was not designed to be sustainable. There is no component of OEF-P that is chartered to fold key components of the advise-and-assist mission into AFP institutions so they can be perpetuated. Therefore, hard-fought progress could be lost when the U.S. effort is reduced in scope or eliminated. OEF-P also stands as an example of how the U.S. Government has not been consistently able to synchronize and synergize its efforts in the Philippines for maximum effect. In a time of decreasing U.S. resources, it becomes even more important to consider how effects can be made sustainable and how limited resources can be used to obtain maximum effect.

Lessons for the United States

The lessons of OEF-P are instructive for the United States over the next decade as it is faced with maximizing desired effects in an austere budgetary environment.

Use of the Indirect Approach for Security Concerns. Progress in the Philippines suggests the importance of the indirect approach to FID and security assistance in addressing U.S. national security concerns. While U.S. direct action operations alone can make short-term gains against global terrorism, a U.S. kinetic approach is unsustainable in itself. Partners are essential in the struggle against violent extremism, and partners may require the United States to adopt an indirect approach to a common challenge. In addition, the history of the Philippines experience with extremism shows that direct action without addressing underlying factors that lead to grievances can be a

temporary solution to a problem that will likely reemerge.

One corollary to this is that U.S. military forces require resources that are unconventional yet appropriate to the use of the indirect approach and influence operations in the name of national security. These can include a process for agile resourcing of requirements, such as a CERP-like mechanism, as well as the ability to obtain requirements that may seem unconventional to a procurement system that normally operates for conventional military resources.

while U.S. direct action operations alone can make short-term gains against global terrorism, a U.S. kinetic approach is unsustainable in itself

Other resources that can be useful in pursuing the indirect approach are intelligence products that support an accurate understanding of the population as well as threat groups, since this facilitates efforts to separate terrorists from the population. At the same time, assessments to understand host nation capabilities and limitations—including operations analysis for understanding what elements of the host nation approach were or were not working—would be valuable in helping the U.S. military tailor its advise-and-assist efforts to areas where they are most needed. It may also be valuable to provide expeditionary intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms to give intelligence support to host nation targeting and boost its confidence.

Monitoring and Reducing Civilian Harm. When host nation security forces injure civilians, the political costs can be significant both domestically and internationally. In the Philippines, extra-judicial killings (noncombat-related deaths of civilians) alleged to have

been perpetrated by government officials have been of particular concern over the past decade. Nongovernmental organizations have issued critical reports about extra-judicial killings, and, in 2007, the U.S. Government and United Nations Special Rapporteur for extra-judicial killings both issued critical reports about them in the Philippines.³⁶ Human rights violations remain liabilities for the host nation government and its partners, so much so that they become evidence of the government's failure to protect civilians or effectively prosecute human rights abusers. Moreover, where government employees are directly involved in such abuses, they bespeak the failure of government and its institutions. Such considerations impact U.S. assistance to foreign militaries such as the Philippines due to legislation prohibiting aid to nations with established human rights abuses. Therefore, human rights abuses committed by government actors, even if outside official military operations, are cause for concern of the Country Team as well as U.S. and host nation forces.

Despite this importance, neither the Philippine military nor partnered forces successfully tracked or analyzed violence against civilians. This is a common omission. For example, the United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization were both unaware of any civilian harm during Operation *Odyssey Dawn* and Operation *Unified Protector* in Libya in 2011, despite the mission being civilian protection and the likelihood of civilian harm during airstrikes.³⁷ The exception appears to be International Security Assistance Force operations in Afghanistan, where coalition forces both tracked civilian casualties and analyzed them to find opportunities for reducing civilian harm. Importantly, Afghanistan shows that focusing on civilian casualties can be a win-win

situation. For instance, several examples exist in which forces significantly reduced civilian casualties while maintaining or improving operational effectiveness. Other examples show that when the military does not address this issue, it can find its freedom of action seriously curtailed. Given these lessons, the U.S. military and Embassy team should be more deliberate in tracking and remediating civilian harm given its strategic impact, including in partnered operations.

Tailored Human Rights Training for Host Nation Forces. The Philippine forces' attitudes toward civilian casualties suggested the need for a more nuanced appreciation of civilian casualty issues and frameworks by U.S. Country Teams and forces working indirectly with host nation security forces. In the case of the AFP, concern about the potential personal career ramifications of causing civilian casualties appeared to induce significant caution with regard to combat operations. One contributing factor was the fact that AFP operated under domestic law, which served to reinforce consequences for their actions during operations. This stands in substantive contrast to the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC), which is more permissive with regard to civilian casualties, and in procedural contrast to the more insulated U.S. military justice system. The result for AFP soldiers was a desire to avoid military action in populated areas or without adequate intelligence or real-time verification that no civilians would be harmed. This case suggests that FID efforts should not simply assume the current U.S. framework for understanding human rights and LOAC (both of which are international in focus) when working with other forces. Instead, U.S. forces should develop the awareness to assess, discuss, and accommodate local national law and political considerations

regarding civilian casualties or human rights.³⁸ Failure to do so may make it more difficult to communicate and effectively shape host nation force thinking and behavior.

Training on Nonlethal Skill Sets. Military forces working in an indirect role would also appear to benefit from a focus on enhancing host nation nonlethal skill sets, such as civil affairs, military information support to operations, and public affairs. In the case of the Philippines, U.S. civil affairs and engineering initiatives provided an alternate population-centric approach to counterterrorism, addressing root causes that have fueled cycles of violence for decades. This model was so effective that Philippine forces adopted the practice in their own operations and established a permanent command to foster its practice.

Sustaining Progress: Supporting Both Operations and Institutions. Security assistance activities should also attempt to make their benefit as sustainable as possible given overall cost constraints and U.S. national interests in global stability. This is a matter of making the most of available resources to make long-lasting benefit. For example, training could be conducted now within JSOTF-P with little impact, given its expertise on AFP capabilities and limitations and its relationships that provide natural openings with AFP personnel in its schoolhouses. Funding restrictions for Title 10 and Title 22 activities can thus create an artificial impediment to U.S. forces when there are simultaneous requirements to provide support to operations and institutional security assistance activities.

Limited Authorities for Support to Police Forces. Most U.S. forces currently lack authorities needed to provide information and operational support to host nation nonmilitary agencies, such as the police or justice system.³⁹

Given that many nations approach counterterrorism as a law enforcement activity, this lack of authority is a significant limitation to supporting partner nation counterterrorism activities. This limitation is exacerbated by current shortfalls in scope in other U.S. Government programs that could potentially fill this gap, such as ICITAP.

in the case of the Philippines, U.S. civil affairs and engineering initiatives provided an alternate population-centric approach to counterterrorism, addressing root causes

A Model for Interagency Teaming. Joint Publication 3-08, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations, Vol II*, notes the challenges of interagency coordination and the value of a clear mission statement. The Philippines shows both that such interagency coordination can occur and success tends to be ad hoc and personality dependent. The Mindanao Working Group suggests a way ahead for formalizing such coordination in a focused geographical area that might be expanded across the country. The military often instigates innovation within the interagency, as was true in the exemplary example of Joint Interagency Task Force–South. U.S. Special Operations Command has a charter through its Global Synchronization Conferences to help coordinate the U.S. effort against terrorism, although this remains largely a top-down undertaking. The JSOTF-P support for the Mindanao Working Group represents a bottom-up approach that may be more successful because it more closely reflects agency capacity and self-interest in developing a common strategy and implementation plan.

Conclusion

The United States faces a host of national security concerns, which includes the threat of terrorist attacks and the global challenge of combating violent extremism. Given U.S. budget challenges and the exhausting legacy of two lengthy wars, future military operations to address these concerns will likely be characterized by presence and shaping combined with direct action against discrete threats and individuals. SOF will continue to be in high demand for direct action to counter more immediate threats to U.S. interests. SOF also have an opportunity to showcase their unique skills and value in FID, security assistance, and other shaping missions in order to address underlying factors that lead to violent extremism. Such activity can both sustain progress against terrorist elements and reduce the baseline of violent extremism in the future.

This indirect approach is a critical component of sustaining U.S. national security. However, while many resources and much attention have been placed on improving means of direct action and degrading terrorist networks, the indirect approach has not received the same attention. Indeed, the 2011 *National Strategy for Counterterrorism* concludes that a redoubling of efforts is needed in addressing “specific drivers of violence”⁴⁰ and terrorist messages. Seizing this opportunity may require some additional action, a slight rebalancing of resources, and creative thinking about partnerships. The alternative, however, would be to repeat post-Vietnam U.S. withdrawal from indirect activities with the resulting reduced influence and effects throughout the world.⁴¹ Given the strategic challenges the United States faces in a world of changing power dynamics, this would be a shortsighted approach. Overall, military forces

require flexibility to be able to apply resources in unconventional ways to empower the indirect approach.

Indirect military action can be a catalyst for reform of U.S. Government structures and processes to the requirements of national security. Best practices have been observed at the tactical edge of the interagency, such as the Philippines and certain activities in Iraq, as well as the counterdrug interagency command in Key West. These are examples where interagency partners, compelled by the need for success on the ground, overcame barriers of authority, resources, disparate goals, and culture and moved toward a synergistic whole-of-government approach. In times of limited resources and compelling global requirements, the need for better interagency integration is obvious, and the U.S. Country Team is a good starting point for pursuing such integration. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ Robert Day McAmis, *Malay Muslims: The History and Challenge of Resurgent Islam in Southeast Asia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002).

² Moro National Liberation Front fighters were promised positions in the Philippine army, with the ability to stay in their local areas.

³ The Louis Berger Group currently maintains the Livelihood Enhancement and Peace (LEAP) project for the U.S. Agency for International Development, available at <www.louisberger.com/OurProjects/Asia/LEAP>.

⁴ Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counterterrorism, 1940–1990* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992).

⁵ Khadafi Janjalani was killed in 2006 by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) during Operation *Ultimatum* in Jolo.

⁶ The first Operation *Enduring Freedom* (OEF) mission focused on al Qaeda leadership in Afghanistan; the third OEF mission addressed al Qaeda and associated enemy networks in trans-Sahara Africa.

⁷ *Civil-military operations* are the “activities of a commander that establish collaborative relationships among military forces, governmental and nongovernmental civilian organizations and authorities, and the civilian populace in a friendly, neutral, or hostile operational area in order to facilitate military operations that are nested in support of the overall U.S. objectives.” See Joint Publication 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, July 8, 2008).

⁸ *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, February 2010), 28.

⁹ Interview with Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG), May 2011.

¹⁰ Interview with U.S. Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines (JSOTF-P) personnel, April 2011.

¹¹ Interviews with JSOTF-P personnel, April 2011.

¹² Interview with JUSMAG, May 2011.

¹³ Interviews with JSOTF-P personnel, April 2011; and JUSMAG, May 2011.

¹⁴ Interview with JUSMAG, May 2011.

¹⁵ Interview with JSOTF-P personnel, April 2011.

¹⁶ Several individuals pointed to Operation *Petas* in Western Sulu on December 6, 2010, as evidence that the Philippine National Police–Special Action Force (PNP-SAF) were becoming an effective targeting force.

¹⁷ Interviews with JSOTF-P personnel, April 2011; and with Joint Special Operations Group (JSOG) and PNP-SAF, May 2011.

¹⁸ For example, this approach was discussed in a memorandum from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Deputy Secretary of Defense in September 2003 as an example of how effective the use of the indirect approach can be in combating terrorism.

¹⁹ Interview with JSOTF-P personnel, April 2011.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² “Global War on Terror (GWOT) Quick Look,” Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis brief, 15, August 2007.

²³ B.A. Patty, “To Raise Them Up. Part 1: The Lesser and Greater Insurgencies of the Philippines,” *Small Wars Journal*, October 15, 2007.

²⁴ Interview with JSOG, May 2011.

²⁵ Interview with PNP-SAF, May 2011.

²⁶ Interview with AFP, May 2011.

²⁷ “They’re very aware of the fact that it’s their own country,” interview with JSOTF-P personnel, April 2011.

²⁸ Interview with JSOG, May 2011.

²⁹ Republic Act 9327, Human Security Act, 2007.

³⁰ Interview with JUSMAG, May 2011.

³¹ For example, Philippine law affords much protection to detainees and specifies that detainees can only be held for 24 hours without being charged with a crime.

³² Interview with JSOG, May 2011.

³³ JSOG and PNP-SAF; interview with JSOTF-P personnel, April 2011; interview with JSOG and PNP-SAF, May 2011.

³⁴ One of the contributions to this evolution appears to be the Leahy Amendment, which applies vetting of human rights practices and policies to decisions regarding U.S. funding. This policy was seen by some to have a restraining effect on the host nation regarding human rights violations.

³⁵ “Several key institutions, including the judiciary and law enforcement agencies, remain weak,” *World Report 2012–Philippines* (New York: Human Rights Watch, January 22, 2012), available at <www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4f2007c83c.html>.

³⁶ U.S. Department of State, “2006 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Philippines,” March 2007; and United Nations Human Rights Council, “Promotion and Protection of All Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Including The Right to Development: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Appendix: Philippines, Philip Alston,” 2007.

³⁷ For Operation *Odyssey Dawn*, Vice Admiral William E. Gortney, former director of the Joint Staff, stated that there were “no reports of civilian casualties caused by coalition forces,” news transcript, Department of Defense, March 24, 2011. For Operation *United Protector*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary General Anders Rasmussen stated that “We have no confirmed civilian casualties caused by NATO,” transcript, Monthly Press Briefing, November 3, 2011. These claims are contrary to credible claims in the media and by the new government of Libya.

³⁸ This also suggests that Iraqi and Afghan forces that have been trained to U.S. military standards for operations governed under Law of Armed Conflict considerations may not have this mindset of restraint during their operations.

³⁹ U.S. Special Operations Command forces are an exception.

⁴⁰ 2011 *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*, 19.

⁴¹ This point is emphasized in the 2010 *National Security Strategy*: “It would be destructive to both American national security and global security if the United States used the emergence of new challenges and the shortcoming of the international system to walk away from it.”

An Interview with J. Brian Atwood

Dambisa Moyo and other critics claim that the global development enterprise has been a failure. What is your response to these critics?

Atwood: I was once on a panel with Dambisa Moyo, and it's interesting that perhaps her publishers write better headlines than what she actually believes. Her concern is that foreign aid has created dependencies in the past, and I share that concern. I think that the way to go with respect to development assistance is country ownership. Developing countries do not always have the capacity, so there's always a tradeoff between whether or not you feel that you can risk using taxpayer money in a country that doesn't have capacity. But we've studied these issues and believe there is more capacity out there than we're responding to. If we really embrace the notion of country ownership and the developing countries genuinely buy in, and we use the budgets of the recipient country, we can create a situation where there is mutual accountability that does away with the dependency problem. But Moyo is right that a lot of foreign aid in the past has created dependency and that has caused many governments to simply sit back and fail to do the job they're supposed to do as part of this mutual accountability prism.

Considering recent profound economic troubles in developed countries and the value-based challenge coming from the Islamic world, do you think the modernization paradigm that development has been based on is still relevant?

Atwood: I would dispute the fact that we've been basing development on the modernization model. I think we learned a few lessons from the effort to try to modernize Iran. We realized that it isn't the stark question of the "Lexus or the olive tree"; that development has to be in context;

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that we've got to work with countries; that we've got to understand the cultural issues and the institutions of the country; that we've got to build those institutions in those countries where they're ineffective. There hasn't been a modernization motif per se. There is, however, another aspect of modernization: we need to get these countries somehow tied into the global economy, and some of them resist that. They're not sure they want to do that.

We long ago dismissed the notion that we could operate on the basis of comparative advantage, meaning that if a country has minerals, you exploit the minerals, if you've got oil, you exploit the oil. We understand Dutch disease and that single-source economies haven't worked. If countries manage their resources well, then that's fine, but they have to find a way to compete in the global economy or else they're not going to develop. They have to make the decision as to what extent integration compromises their own values, their own norms, their own culture, their own history. I think if we do embrace the idea of country ownership, then they will make those decisions, and they will come up with the strategies that best fit their circumstances.

Since the 1980s, development agencies have been promoting development based on the model of consumer market capitalism. Is this model still the way to go for less developed countries?

Atwood: A lot of people are asking that question now as they look at some of the emerging economies and their success in achieving growth. Those emerging economies are moving along a timeline themselves, and the pressures that the Chinese feel, for example, are: should we become more

consumer-oriented? Are we doing ourselves any favors by being so export-oriented? They have a huge backup of capital now. Their balance of trade with other countries is skewed. They're worried because they have to operate within a global economy. Is their currency valued at the proper level? No. Most people think that it's tremendously advantageous to their exports. The fact is that they have had another model that isn't entirely based on capitalism and consumerism, but on a controlled capitalism.

Today, Chinese consumers are demanding a bigger slice of the pie. Everyone is looking at this. What the Western countries are looking at is the fact that they are hitting a demographic wall; they can't seem to grow fast enough to get out of normal economic downturns as they have in the past. People are beginning to ask the question: do we have this right? Should it be exclusively free-market oriented? To what extent should the government regulate the market? To what extent does government contribute to the economy by investing in education, health care, and human development? All of these issues are constantly debated, and now more than ever as we observe the growth rates of the emerging economies.

China is the most cash-rich country in the world. It is becoming a significant donor in certain regions. What is your assessment of the Chinese model for development assistance?

Atwood: It's a self-interested model. The Chinese are beginning to ask serious questions about their own model. Premier Wen Jiabao has said they need to do a better job of investing their money. They have only recently announced to their own people that they have

a foreign aid program. The Chinese people didn't know that until recently. The authorities have been getting feedback through Web sites that they put out there—they don't take public opinion polls, but they put out Web sites and allow the elite to comment. The feedback they've been getting asks, "why are you spending money overseas when we've got problems at home?" They still have serious poverty problems in China. They have problems with the quality of their economy. The Chinese development budget is probably in the range of \$10 billion [per year]. Compared to \$30 billion [per year] for the United States, that's pretty significant for a new South-South provider, as they like to call themselves.

They have what I call a "foundation model." They sit back and wait to see what African or other countries are making requests of them. They generally choose to build infrastructure. They will then send Chinese workers in to do the work. The sustainability of the development effort is questionable, and they've been making some bad investments so they have been seriously looking to share information. For the past 2½ years, the Development Assistance Committee [DAC] has had a China-DAC Study Group, and we've gone to Africa with them. We've had meetings in Beijing with Chinese development authorities; the exchange has been interesting. They're really thirsty for knowledge about these things.

Do you think the Chinese will try to take advantage of the lessons that U.S. and European donor countries have learned from their own development experience?

Atwood: For ideological reasons they won't admit this, and I think we've already

learned some things from them because they've done more in the area of poverty reduction than anyone. We've met the extreme poverty goal of the [Millennium Development Goals] because of the Chinese and their economic reforms, but it has been a kind of reform that might not work in a democracy. The question becomes whether their reforms will work in the long run if they don't have more democracy. Wen Jiabao himself has given a speech stating that they need political reform in China just as he's leaving office. He has also given a speech saying that they need to break up the banks; they're too powerful. So there's a lot going on inside China that we're not fully aware of. It's interesting to watch.

The United States became involved in formal development aid programs after World War II, when it was the strongest and richest country in world. As of today, U.S. outstanding public debt is \$15.6 trillion, and if you add in debt of households, businesses, individuals, and subnational government, national debt is well over \$50 trillion. Should the United States still be a donor nation?

Atwood: Yes, of course, because if you really want to work down the debt, you need to create new markets. That has been part of the philosophy for many years. That may sound like a hard, high number, but as a percentage of U.S. GDP [gross domestic product], we're not yet in the danger zone. The U.S. economy is beginning to grow again; we still have a triple-A rating, and we have the international currency. The American people are going to wake up one day and say this isn't healthy, and we're going to have to go through some serious reform, but it has to

be done carefully and over a period of time. We're going to have to cut back government spending, but if we do it too drastically, too soon, we will face another recession. It has to be done sensibly, though it's difficult in this political context to do it sensibly as you can imagine. Still, as a percentage of GDP, it's not such a huge debt. When you talk about official U.S. development assistance, you're talking about \$30 billion; that's a small amount compared to our defense budget, which is \$600 billion. A lot of people ask why Europeans have done so much better, many of them having reached 0.7 percent of their GDP. U.S. aid is at only 0.21 percent of GDP. Part of the reason is that the United States provides the defense shield for Europe. The Europeans can afford to invest in soft power as a result. They see that as a security investment as well as an investment for value reasons.

A development that has been marked over the past decade is the drawing closer together of the development and security communities, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, but in other places as well. What are the consequences of these two communities working side by side?

Atwood: It's very interesting because when John F. Kennedy's administration created USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development], it, for the first time, separated security assistance from development assistance. Today, you can honestly say that in many countries in which we're working, you can't have development without security, and you can't have security without development. It's obvious to me that the two have to work together, and that in many of the fragile states in particular, we have to find the way to ask

the military to coordinate its activities so they provide a secure area.

I was at USAID talking about Somalia. The military was working in some parts of Somalia. I asked the question: Is our military doing anything in that area? Can it possibly provide a little more security against al Shabab? If we really want to deal with the problems in Somalia, which is al-Shabaab—and al Qaeda—related terrorism and the pirate groups, Somalia needs development. We can't do development without security, so we need to train and work better together. We need to understand the concepts on both sides. When I was trying to rewrite the senior officers' course at the Foreign Service Institute, I wrote a whole section on defense and why Foreign Service officers ought to know more about the military, the way it builds and acquires weapons, the way it deploys, the doctrines that it follows. And some of the military officers in the groups asked, "Why do civilians need to know that?" They need to know more about the way the military operates, and the military needs to know more about the way civilians operate, if we're to take advantage of the strengths of both sides.

Should the U.S. development elements and defense elements of our foreign policy fuse even closer together, the way they were prior to the Kennedy administration separating them?

Atwood: No. Part of the challenge in development is trust. Unfortunately when people in developing countries see the American military in operation, the American military is obviously the point of a policy that is designed to protect American interests explicitly. That's why the military is there. That's why they are in Afghanistan. When

those same people see development civilians in the field, they know that those development civilians will only succeed if the country itself succeeds. There's a natural trust factor that comes into play. As much as I appreciate the fact that students at West Point and the Naval Academy are learning a lot more about development, and they're actually undertaking a lot of it, it's very difficult to effectuate that degree of trust when you have to carry a gun or wear a uniform.

Can military forces be effective purveyors of development assistance?

Atwood: They can do some things better than civilians in postconflict situations. There are many examples of this: civil engineers going in and building roads so that they can improve the security environment within a country. They do things extremely well when it comes to building things and logistics. But again, when it comes to the human development aspect of it, civilians are much more effective.

The military has a long tradition of helping in humanitarian disasters.

Atwood: But even in those situations when the President authorizes its mobilization for humanitarian assistance, it operates under a strategy that is designed by USAID.

Can development buy hearts and minds?

Atwood: I think development has bought hearts and minds over the years. I was moved at a recent conference the DAC held in Busan, Korea. Busan was the port where a lot of humanitarian relief was delivered during and

after the Korean War, and so many Koreans say, "I wouldn't be here today if I didn't have milk provided by USAID or food provided by USAID." Korea is the newest member of the DAC. Their per-capita income in the 1960s was under \$100. There is great appreciation for what we did back then. The USAID logo is a symbol of two hands clasping; I think that has bought friends for the United States all over the world.

What are your current thoughts about the priority or nonpriority status of democracy and democratization in development?

Atwood: I think it's a high priority because we've learned over the years that unless you enable the people of a country to participate in the development process, you really can't achieve sustainable development results. You can't just operate on a top-down basis. Those people have to have the institutions and the rule of law that protects their rights to private property, be they entrepreneurs or citizens, or to free speech or assembly. It's a question of institutions; it's a way of enabling this participatory development aspect. It's also frankly the way you keep governments accountable. If you don't have full democratic institutions that work, obviously consistent with the history and culture of the country, then the accountability factor is missing. Then you get issues like dependency and other problems that exist, and you may be able achieve a few results for a short period of time, but it's questionable as to how sustainable those results will be.

As an international development leader, do you think that the United States abandoned or diluted its commitment to democracy and

democratization in its efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq?

Atwood: No. The United States encouraged elections in Iraq. Some could argue that it was done top down, and it should have been done locally first and moved its way up. You can argue about how it was done. But one of the rationales—and I want to make it clear that I did not support President [George W.] Bush’s decision to go into Iraq, which I think was a big mistake—was to have a democratic Arab nation in the heart of the Middle East. I don’t know how Freedom House ranks Iraq today, but they have an elected government that has some degree of legitimacy even if it has all kinds of problems. I don’t think we abandoned democracy in Iraq. We certainly haven’t abandoned it in Afghanistan. The job that Lakhdar Brahimi did in setting up the parliament of Afghanistan and creating the election process is much more democratic than it would have been without the international effort. Certainly something has been created that is much more democratic than it could have been under the Taliban.

Many believe U.S. civilian agencies need some kind of expeditionary capacity. Is such a capacity still required in the post-Iraq, post-Afghanistan environment?

Atwood: Yes and no. I don’t have any question that a surge capacity is needed to be able to respond to postconflict situations or in fragile states. The conference I mentioned earlier resulted in the Busan agreement, called the New Deal on Conflict and Fragility. I think we need to be able to create a policing capacity. We have a hard time reconciling issues that came up in the 1960s and 1970s with respect

to police training when police trainees were abusing people. But we do need that capacity in postconflict situations. It isn’t right to ask our military, which is a vertically organized unit, which is top-down oriented and not supposed to be operating on a horizontal basis with the community at large. The police basically organize themselves along horizontal lines. We need that kind of civilian capacity. I created something when I was at USAID called the Office of Transition Initiatives [OTI]. That could be strengthened.

Just as defense is a different profession from that of diplomacy, so is the case with development and humanitarian assistance being different professions. The kind of people that do transitional work are a unique profession as well. They have to be a little more politically oriented than traditional development requires. Their job is to bring reconciliation to a war-torn society, and OTI has performed that function. I don’t think that the function belongs in the State Department; it belongs at USAID where the profession can evolve.

Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice used to speak of the 3Ds—diplomacy, defense, and development—working together. When Secretary of State Hillary Clinton took office, she said that two of those Ds are under her control. It has been observed that during her tenure, USAID has a lost a good deal of its independence. As the former administrator of USAID, how do you feel about that?

Atwood: USAID had lost control over its budget long before Hillary Clinton came in. I think in some ways because of Secretary Clinton’s intense interest in development, USAID has been strengthened. There are people who act as though the State Department

is in charge of development, but I don't think that's what Secretary Clinton intended or intends. I think she wants to—and she has said it a number of times and actually acted on it—strengthen USAID as an institution. It's fighting its way back toward a more strengthened role. The fact that the President and Secretary of State have asked USAID to coordinate all government activities with respect to the next G8 meeting, where food security is the top issue, is an indication that USAID is fighting its way back. Whether it will ever be on a plane with development and diplomacy is another question. I think the only way it will ultimately be on the same plane as the other two Ds is if it were to become a separate Cabinet department.

Do you advocate that?

Atwood: I've always advocated that. I advocate it with less enthusiasm when there's a Secretary of State such as Hillary Clinton who cares about development. But when she's gone, I will advocate it enthusiastically again.

U.S. foreign assistance is currently dispensed by numerous agencies. Many of these agencies have their domestic core activity, which is not development assistance. Do you think that there is an ongoing need to have a separate USAID, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or could those be fused into a single agency?

Atwood: They definitely should be fused. I'm less concerned about MCC. PEPFAR, I think, has modified its approach to its business somewhat. I'm more concerned about the domestic-oriented agencies, even the CDC

[Centers for Disease Control]. The CDC is concerned about communicable diseases affecting Americans, and it operates that way. When it goes overseas, and it has a lot of PEPFAR money, it operates on a short-term basis. The CDC vision is "let's get at this disease and let's control it right now" because that's its business. It doesn't think about putting a health-care system in place that will take 10 years to accomplish, whereas USAID people think in those terms. How do you create a sustainable healthcare system? A surveillance system? A system that delivers healthcare and can be sustained by the people of the country? CDC has a domestic mission.

The same is true of the other agencies. They're thinking about their domestic mission first; that's what they get their money for. I really do think it's been dangerous to see this proliferation of development agencies throughout the U.S. Government. It began at the time the Berlin Wall came down, and the Congress in its infinite wisdom decided that they would assign the responsibility for development in Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union to the State Department. The diplomats in charge of these programs said, "I don't want the Secretary of State to be receiving a call from the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of Energy wanting a role, so I'm going to disperse some money to them and let everyone have a role." Those other agencies got the money, but didn't have the capacity to deliver overseas. Often they would put out public requests for proposals and they'd end with the same contractors or grantees that USAID used. However, they didn't have the capacity to evaluate the programs or oversee them in the field because they didn't have people in the field. It was a huge mistake. From the point of view of the

DAC at OECD, when we critique the United States it's because of this proliferation of development agencies that don't have any business doing development.

One thing that the military does well is its disciplined approach to learning from its experiences. Does the development community need to develop such a capacity and practice?

Atwood: It most certainly does, and it's being developed. Development is a far more complex mission because we're talking about developing entire societies, and every sector is somewhat different. Some sectors lend themselves to quantifiable results and measurements, while others can only be measured by qualitative evaluations. It is really complicated. Then there is the question of attribution. Who is responsible for success, or the result? You want it to be the government you're working with; it's a partnership. You may be overlapping with another donor. Who's to take credit for the results? The Government Performance and Results Act requires all government agencies to be able to measure results. Unfortunately, in the aid business, congressional authorizers haven't enacted a new authorization bill since 1985. The appropriators have a different outlook: "I want you to spend the money we give you." It's an input-oriented perspective. Development should have an outcome-oriented perspective. We ought to have a new authorization bill that says this our overall national strategy as it relates to development, and these are the outcomes we want you to achieve, and you need to report to us and be held accountable for achieving those outcomes, not just to spend the money we give you by the earmark but to look at the outcomes.

How should leading donors such as the United States condition their assistance to countries that are corrupt or behaving in ways that we find unacceptable? For example, how should we respond to Egypt, having recently arrested a number of American workers from the USAID Democracy Development Program?

Atwood: First of all, we should react when they do something foolish like that. We should react the way we have reacted. What the Egyptians did is frankly outrageous, especially given the fact that these organizations had asked for licenses to practice as they're required to do as far back as 2006 during the Mubarak administration. They've asked every 6 months since, and they've asked for more information. They were never given the licenses and they were never told to leave. Then all of sudden they're arrested. However, you have to recognize that this is a transition situation. You have to play. You can't just leave the playing field because you're offended by something like this. The Egyptians are working their way toward a legitimate government. We need to be there. We've got too much at stake. Too many investments have been made over the years—investments in peace. I hope that Egypt will become again a leader in the Arab world and that it will become a democratic leader in the Arab world. The best aspiration would be that it would become a country like Turkey that is an Islamic people in a secular, democratic country.

Pakistan reacted strongly to certain conditions placed on our development program. How do we deal with that?

Atwood: Some countries obviously have insecurity problems. Pakistan has both

insecurity and security problems as well. Politics in Pakistan are difficult. People are looking to really go after the current civilian government, which isn't very popular. It makes them overreact—even though we should be offended by the fact that Osama bin Laden was sitting there all those months, and obviously someone knew it. It becomes a question of do you leave the playing field or do you try to work the problem. I think that we need to engage and we need to work the problem. It presents us with a diplomatic issue. I used to be the Assistant Secretary of Congressional Relations and I tried to sit down with Members of Congress who are trying to respond to a certain constituency without understanding what the implications are and how it will be read in a foreign country. We also need to work the congressional side of this as well as the diplomatic side with the Pakistanis. Don't do anything that's going to cut off your nose to spite your face. **PRISM**

Book Reviews

The Operators: The Wild and Terrifying Inside Story of America's War in Afghanistan

By Michael Hastings
Blue Rider Press, 2012
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REVIEWED BY GEORGE MICHAEL

As the U.S. military enters its 11th year of operations in Afghanistan, public support for the effort dwindles, according to recent polls, as a solid majority of Americans now believe the war is going badly and is not worth fighting. In *The Operators*, journalist Michael Hastings explores the recent history of America's longest military campaign through the prism of General Stanley McChrystal and his staff. Not long after his story broke in June 2010 in *Rolling Stone* magazine, General McChrystal was forced to resign. The episode illustrated the deepening division between the White House and Pentagon over the appropriate prosecution of the war.

Hastings begins his story in the autumn of 2008, when conditions noticeably deteriorated in Afghanistan. At that time, some major media outlets—including the *New*

York Times—suggested that the United States was losing the war. Under the leadership of General David McKiernan, USA, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) had reached a stalemate. McKiernan's main problem seemed to be a matter of style, as he preferred a low-key public relations approach with the media. Though well respected by his peers, McKiernan was looked upon as a member of the "old school" generation of generals, unlike General David Petraeus, who championed the popular counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine. McKiernan refused to resign, and Defense Secretary Robert Gates effectively fired him, which amounted to the first sacking of a wartime commander since President Harry Truman removed General Douglas MacArthur at the height of the Korean War. By removing McKiernan, the Pentagon saw an opportunity to escalate and reset the war in Afghanistan.

McKiernan's replacement, General McChrystal, was the first Special Forces Soldier to assume such a prominent battlefield command. Over the course of his career, McChrystal learned to walk a fine line in the rigid military hierarchy yet still succeed. He first entered the public spotlight in March 2003 when he served as the Pentagon spokesman during the invasion of Iraq. Later that year, he took over as commander of the Joint Special Forces Operations Command, overseeing the most elite units in the military, including Delta Force, Navy SEALs, and Rangers. Relentlessly, his special forces rooted out terrorists, most notably Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the recognized

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leader of al Qaeda in Iraq. His willingness to get results endeared him to Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney, even when it included bending the rules or skipping the chain of command. Controversy seemed to follow him. For instance, in Iraq, he oversaw a network of prisons where detainees were beaten and tortured. Furthermore, he was accused of attempting to whitewash the friendly fire death in Afghanistan of Pat Tillman, the NFL star who joined the Army not long after the September 11 terrorist attacks.

The pitched political battles that occurred over troop levels in Afghanistan are recounted by Hastings. Essentially, there were two major camps in the debate. The Pentagon wanted a big footprint in order to launch a comprehensive COIN program. The other camp, led by Vice President Joe Biden, favored a small footprint consisting of U.S. Special Forces that would focus on hunting and killing the remnants of al Qaeda. Through sporadic and strategic leaks, McChrystal was able to force President Barack Obama's hand. In September 2009, *Washington Post* writer Bob Woodward published McChrystal's confidential assessment of the war in Afghanistan, which concluded that the U.S. military was on the verge of "mission failure." The story spurred Washington to take action, and, in the end, Obama agreed to the 40,000 additional troops that McChrystal requested with the proviso that they begin leaving in July 2011, a year earlier than the general wanted.

President Obama, who voted against the 2003 invasion of Iraq as a Senator from Illinois, pushed for fixing Afghanistan, which he identified as the most important theater in the war on terror. But civil-military relations had been strained by the Afghan war, which led to disagreements over planning.

As Hastings explains, several members of McChrystal's staff questioned Obama's ability to lead the war effort. Early into his term, military leaders sensed that the new President was uncomfortable with the military. The Pentagon—filled with many Republicans from the Bush years—viewed him with suspicion.

McChrystal was disappointed over Obama's lack of engagement in the war. Hastings relates the tenuous relationship between U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry and McChrystal as they clashed over strategy. McChrystal also had difficulty selling his COIN plan to Afghan President Hamid Karzai, whom Hastings depicts as a less-than-competent leader of very questionable legitimacy who effectively rigged the presidential election in 2009.

McChrystal operated in the shadow of General Petraeus, whose COIN campaign in Iraq—the surge—did much to stabilize the security in that country. But applying the same template in Afghanistan has been more challenging. Petraeus, in *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, argued that the cornerstone of the new strategy was to protect and gain the trust of the population. So-called kinetic operations—that is, killing and capturing the insurgents—were given less emphasis. The goal was to recreate the Afghanistan of 1979, before it was wracked with foreign invasion and internecine warfare. For McChrystal, it was imperative to switch from the "shoot-first-and-blow-shit-up" soldiering of the Special Forces to the COIN emphasis on protecting the civilian population. To that end, he issued a tactical directive that encouraged soldiers to avoid shooting in situations in which civilians could be harmed. Over time,

however, soldiers became frustrated with the new policy, which hampered their ability to fight back.

Currently worrisome is the growing insularity of the U.S. military from the rest of America. As Hastings points out, less than 1 percent of the U.S. population serves in the military or has any connection to the ongoing wars. According to his reasoning, the guilt of the general public for not having served in the military is covered up by an uncritical attitude toward those who have. As for what motivated the soldiers, Hastings found it was not so much the objectives of the war, but rather a nearly metaphysical quality that one attained through tribulation that involved sacrifice and the risk of one's life. To his loyal entourage, McChrystal was a historic figure who gave them a sense of identity.

Why, Hastings asks, did McChrystal agree to the *Rolling Stone* story? According to his take on the man, the general sought to immortalize his image as a "badass" and a "snake-eating rebel" that would be cultivated by a cover story in the magazine. As the war in Afghanistan extended to the end of the decade, it is not surprising that Hastings found that McChrystal and his entourage often comported themselves irreverently in the style of soldiers on the front-line, displaying "frustration" and "arrogance" and "getting smashed" and "letting off stress." Not long after the story was released, President Obama fired McChrystal and named General Petraeus as the new commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. According to Hastings, what was most troubling about the story to the White House's national security team was not that it questioned the competence of the President and his advisors, but rather its suggestion that the troops were in near revolt against McChrystal.

In a protracted guerrilla campaign, perceptions are important. According to Hastings, the "military-media-industrial complex" in large measure shapes policy on the Afghan war. Ostensibly, Operation *Enduring Freedom* was launched to capture Osama bin Laden and crush al Qaeda in retaliation for the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Over time, however, bin Laden was practically forgotten in the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan. In a sense, his death at the hand of SEAL Team Six was anticlimactic. Nevertheless, it gave the Obama administration the political cover it needed to declare victory in Afghanistan and begin the draw-down of troops. White House officials could now make the case that the Afghan surge had worked.

The war on terror, Hastings explains, did not unfold as it was originally planned. When it commenced, President George W. Bush announced that there would be no "battlefields or beachheads." Rather, there would be a secret war, conducted in the dark with no holds barred. As it turned out, however, there were battlefields and beachheads after all, as evidenced by the fighting in Kabul, Kandahar, Baghdad, Fallujah, and Mosul. To Hastings, the military approach was misguided. Citing a 2008 RAND study—"How Terrorist Groups End: Implications for Countering al Qa'ida"—Hastings insists that the best way to defeat terrorist networks is through law enforcement rather than military force. Rejecting the "safe havens" pretext for the war, Hastings argues that terrorists do not need to take over a country and establish a sanctuary insofar as numerous terrorist plots have been planned and carried out in the West.

Overall, Hastings paints a grim picture of the U.S. experience in Afghanistan. After

the U.S. military withdraws, he believes that the warlords will take over. He questions the quality and reliability of the Afghan army, in whose ranks drug use and corruption are rife. Moreover, Afghan soldiers have occasionally opened fired on U.S. and ISAF soldiers, bringing into question their long-term loyalty to the new regime. Despite the substantial cost in blood and treasure, Hastings avers that the United States was getting its ass “kicked by illiterate peasants who made bombs out of manure and wood.” His pessimism, though, is arguably overstated. To be sure, gauging progress in a guerrilla war is inexact due to the tenuous quality of the metrics used to measure success. Nevertheless, according to a 2011 survey conducted by the Asia Foundation, the proportion of respondents expressing some level of sympathy for the insurgents groups reached its lowest level that year (29 percent). Moreover, despite serious concerns about government corruption, security, and economic future, nearly half of all Afghan respondents said that their country was moving in the right direction according to the Asia Foundation. Considering the daunting challenges of building a functioning state and civil society in the tribal and war-torn country, problems are to be expected. Still, the U.S. mission in Afghanistan is far from accomplished and Hastings provides a window to view it warts and all. **PRISM**

Galula in Algeria: Counterinsurgency Practice versus Theory

By Grégor Mathias

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REVIEWED BY RILEY M. MOORE

With the outbreak of insurgency in Iraq (followed by Afghanistan), an urgent requirement emerged for concise and easily comprehensible answers to the complex question of how to counter an insurgency. In the midst of two wars, with no time or current doctrine and with a Presidential mandate for solutions, strategic thinkers and generals were desperately searching for a foothold to halt what seemed to be the inevitable descent into chaos in Iraq. The works of David Galula played a significant role in fulfilling that mandate. Touted by General David Petraeus and other military leaders—General Stanley McChrystal, for instance, claimed to keep Galula’s publications on his nightstand to read every night—Galula’s work has been influential in forming current U.S. counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine. Indeed, his influence on Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, which was authored under the leadership of General Petraeus, is undeniable.

Amidst his notoriety and acclaim, there is a limited amount of information about who exactly David Galula was and how his military record measures up—specifically his successes

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and failures. Grégor Mathias has finally shed light on Galula's previously opaque personal history. He juxtaposes Galula's eight principals from *Counterinsurgency Warfare* and his success in applying these theoretical constructs in Algeria in methodical detail. Through Mathias's exhaustive research and primary source evidence, the real historical narrative of Galula in Algeria has now been brought to light. After examining all eight principals as applied by Galula in Djebel Aïssa Mimoun in Algeria (the district he commanded), the results were abysmal.

Particularly salient steps to current U.S. COIN doctrine are the second, "Assign sufficient troops to oppose the insurgent's comeback and install these troops in each village," and the fourth, "Destroy the local insurgent political organizations."

Galula's second step is interesting because this is where "[he] practiced the ink-spot strategy. . . . The ink spot refers to the idea of creating military posts that are gradually extended with economic and social development (markets, clinics, schools) and the establishment of local government, control of the populace, elimination of adversaries, and arming supporters before moving on to another region" (p. 23). This obviously sounds familiar to us all by now. It is commonly and simplistically referred to as "clear, hold, and build" in Afghanistan. By no means was this a new strategy; in fact, it was not even original to Galula. As Mathias points out, it was "invented by Marshall Gallieni in Tonkin from 1892 to 1896 and developed by Marshall Lyautey in his article '*Du rôle colonial de l'armée*' (The Army's role in the Colonies) in the journal *Revue des Deux mondes*" (p. 23). Galula's experience in applying this strategy was the primary point of influence on current U.S. doctrine; therefore,

one would assume that it would have been further investigated before it became the centerpiece of American strategy. Unfortunately, if we had looked deeper, as this book does, we would have realized that Galula's application of this was not successful. Although the platoons' presence in Djebel Aïssa increased security, it did not prevent or slow down the insurgent political cadre from exerting effective control over the population.

Similarly, when examining the fourth step, we realize that although there was initial success in the implementation of this principle, it was short lived. However, at the time Galula continued to publicize his self-proclaimed successes. Indeed, he wrote in *Lettre d'informations* that:

[I]n four purged villages, five members of the OPA [insurgent political organization] were killed, two imprisoned, 30 members were arrested and released on conditional liberty, and several became councilmen or harikis. . . . The community work is done voluntarily and without coercion. . . . It is easy to evoke Sisyphus when speaking to the destruction of rebel cells. On the contrary, if this operation is properly conducted, it is irreversible. [p. 39]

Galula had successfully decapitated the OPA, but its demise was far from imminent. Subsequent to Galula's promotion to the Division of Information in Paris and his departure from Djebel Aïssa Mimoun, the insurgents were able to adapt and were ultimately successful in their campaign.

This begs the question of why Galula was promoted if he failed. Mathias articulates the answer. Galula published his work

from Algeria in such a manner that it was easily comprehensible and undeniably successful. He wrote extensively in the public media and made sure his commanders were well informed about his success in the field. As Mathias points out in his discussion of one of Galula's failed steps, he "exaggerated his operations in giving a quantitative account in terms of populations and numbers of peoples treated by the AMG [*assistance medical gratuite*]" (p. 93). With advancement and personal gain in mind, he resorted to inflating his achievements. Although he experienced short-term success, this approach was unsustainable and ultimately led to the failure of his strategy.

Galula's failure continues to become clearer as Mathias provides further context for his exploits in Algeria. For instance, it is not evident how short a period these operations were conducted over. Galula states, "I set out to prove a theory of counterinsurgency warfare, and I am satisfied that it worked in my small area. What I achieved in my first six or eight months in Djebel Aïssa Mimoun was not due to magic and could have been applied much earlier throughout Algeria" (p. 96). However, Mathias counters this claim by rightly asserting that "In reality, Galula's activities at Djebel Aïssa Mimoun lasted a short time, just over 14 months, from August 1956 to October 1957. Over this period, a month was taken up in policing Tizi Ouzou, where he was cited for having contributed to the arrest of 27 rebels. *The period was too short to reasonably expect the subdistrict be pacified [emphasis added]*" (p. 96). This now makes all the more sense when looking at Galula's *Pacification in Algeria*. He makes no mention of his activities from 1958 to 1962, a span that was spent at the Division of Information in Paris. Galula's experience was limited not only in scope but also in time.

Exploring further into Mathias's work, it becomes apparent that Galula's theories were not original to any degree. They were paraphrased or truncated theories and thoughts from contemporary revolutionary war thinkers of the time. Indeed, when looking at Galula's *Pacification in Algeria*, he cites only one author, which as Mathias points out, is really quite puzzling given the numerous published works on the topic during that time. More startling is the fact that when Galula published his two books, he was a researcher at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard (1962–1963). How would a bibliography not be among his duties at that time? According to Mathias, "The apparent simplicity of Galula's counterinsurgency doctrine actually issues from the lack of bibliographical references to works of other thinkers. . . . Moreover, he deliberately avoids citing a number of references such as British general R. Thompson, the architect of the anti-guerilla war in Malaya (1948–60)" (p. 97).

Galula's simplicity served as the impetus for his rediscovery by contemporary U.S. strategists and generals grasping for doctrinal synthesis of simple solutions for complex problems. The fact is there are no simple solutions to complex issues—particularly in counterinsurgency. That said, as previously stated, these decisions were made in a compressed timeframe and at a critical juncture.

Through the years, there have been minimal challenges to Galula's claims of his reported successes. He remained unchallenged throughout the U.S. war in Vietnam despite the fact that the RAND Corporation incorporated his work into its study to establish a COIN doctrine for that conflict. With his contemporary rediscovery, he went largely unchallenged until recently. This book represents the most concerted effort in questioning his claims

and ideas. We must continue to challenge our assumptions in stability operations writ large. We cannot simply apply Galula's "eight principals" of *Counterinsurgency Warfare* to any given operation. But this is what we have ostensibly done in Iraq and Afghanistan given the undeniable influence of Galula's work on Field Manual 3-24. Take the example of "force ratio" in the manual where there is an actual minimum ratio force for success in COIN operations across the board. Such simplistic constructs, which have been used in a "plug and play" fashion, have hamstrung critical thinking in Iraq and Afghanistan. This search for a blueprint solution is emblematic of the historic rigidity in U.S. doctrine.

This book should be a mandated accompaniment for subsequent reading with any of David Galula's work. It is straightforward and meticulously sourced, and it ultimately "prepares the battlespace" for understanding the work and life of Galula. There is no doubt that Galula's work should be taken under consideration when considering solutions in a given COIN operation. With that said, it cannot be the only source. There is not one answer to a hundred different questions. We should bear that in mind when taking a strategic view of perceived challenges in the future. We must be ready for COIN operations, but not every threat will be unconventional just as not every threat will be conventional. Hopefully, *Galula in Algeria* will be one of many works that challenge current COIN doctrine and compel us to keep all tools sharp in the U.S. strategic bag of options. **PRISM**

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