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Essays

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Joint Special Operations University
and the Strategic Studies Department

The Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) provides its publications to contribute toward expanding the body of knowledge about joint special operations. JSOU publications advance the insights and recommendations of national security professionals and the Special Operations Forces (SOF) students and leaders for consideration by the SOF community and defense leadership.

JSOU is the educational component of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. The JSOU mission is to educate SOF executive, senior, and intermediate leaders and selected other national and international security decision makers, both military and civilian, through teaching, outreach, and research in the science and art of joint special operations. JSOU provides education to the men and women of SOF and to those who enable the SOF mission in a joint and interagency environment.

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On the cover. U.S. Army soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group instruct recruits in the Afghanistan National Army on the operation of their 7.62 mm AK-47 assault rifles, during a live fire exercise held on the range near Kabul, Afghanistan, during Operation Enduring Freedom (DoD photo).

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Comments about this publication are invited and should be forwarded to Director, Strategic Studies Department, Joint Special Operations University, 357 Tully Street, Alison Building, Hurlburt Field, Florida 32544. Copies of this publication may be obtained by calling JSOU at 850-884-1569.

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The JSOU Strategic Studies Department is currently accepting written works relevant to special operations for potential publication. For more information please contact Mr. Jim Anderson, JSOU Director of Research, at 850-884-1569, DSN 579-1569, james.d.anderson@hurlburt.af.mil. Thank you for your interest in the JSOU Press.

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Foreword

The Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) partnered with the Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC) Chapter of the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) in sponsoring the annual chapter essay contest. The first-place winner is recognized each year at the NDIA SO/LIC Symposium in mid-February, and the prize is $1,000 cash. The runner-up receives $500.

The competition is open to resident and nonresident students attending Professional Military Education (PME) institutions and has produced outstanding works on special operations issues. These essays provide current insights on what our PME students see as priority national security issues affecting special operations.

Essay contestants can choose any topic related to special operations. Submissions include hard-hitting and relevant recommendations that many Special Operations Forces commanders throughout United States Special Operations Command find very useful. Some entries submitted are a synopsis of the larger research project required for graduation or an advanced degree, while others are written specifically for the essay contest. Regardless of approach, these essays add value to the individuals' professional development, provide an outlet for expressing new ideas and points of view, and contribute to the special operations community as a whole.

JSOU is pleased to offer this selection of essays from the 2010 contest. The JSOU intent is that this compendium will benefit the reader professionally and encourage future PME students to enter the contest. Feedback is welcome, and your suggestions will be incorporated into future JSOU reports.

Kenneth H. Poole
Director, JSOU Strategic Studies Department

JSOU President Dr. Brian Maher presents plaque to essay contest first-place winner Major Joseph Long, U.S. Army.

Is Democracy the Answer to Terrorism?

Joseph E. Long

This essay examines the virtues and potential downfalls of a continued reliance on the policy of "democratization" to stop terrorism.

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has struggled with an identity crisis concerning its notion of grand strategy and the future outside the familiar framework of a politically bipolar world. Following the perceived success of democracy over communism in 1989, the United States adopted the strategy of *democratization* to replace one of *containment*. This new strategy was based on the idea that the failure of the United States to spread democratic reforms to all nations "devoid of freedom … will continue to breed instability, cultivate terrorism, and pose a direct threat to the security of the United States."[1] However, it remains increasingly difficult to argue that the end of the Cold War has triggered an era of increased peace in America. For example, since the fall of the Berlin Wall the United States has been involved in multiple conflicts and has witnessed the reemergence of terrorism. In terms of conflicts, America has been involved in the Gulf War in 1991, Somalia in 1993, the Balkans since 1995, Afghanistan since 2001, and Iraq since 2003.

In addition to violence from military conflicts, the end of the Cold War has been followed by several significant acts of terrorism directed against the United States. Key examples include the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995, the bombing of the American embassy in Africa in 1998, the bombing of the USS *Cole* in 2000, and the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. This seems to indicate that the new U.S. strategy of democratization has backfired. Instead of two decades characterized by

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peace, the United States has been affected by five "wars" and five significant acts of terrorism that roughly averages one war or terrorist incident every 2 years. Unfortunately, the terrorist attack of 9/11 resulted in the strengthening of the democratization strategy based on "the assumption that democracy is a 'cure' for terrorism."[2] However, the sad truth is that if America's goal of democratization came true and every country was a democracy, the threat of terrorism may change, but is not likely to decrease. The existence of terrorism within democracies, the wide variety of democratic governments, and continued struggle over religious domination would ensure that some form of terrorism would continue in a purely democratic world.

Terrorism within Democracies

As the world's largest liberal democracy, the United States can serve as a microcosm of what terrorism would look like in an all-democracy world. According to F. Gregory Gause, professor of political science at the University of Vermont, "most terrorist incidents occur in democracies and [that] generally both the victims and the perpetrators are citizens of democracies."[3] Therefore, it is important to understand the inherent relationship between democracy and domestic terrorism to gain insight into the potential for terrorism in a world where democracy is universal. As a federation "comprised of a number of self-governing regions," America is composed of multiple democratic states.[4] This means that just as domestic terrorism exists within the United States at the micro level, so too would terrorism exist in an all-democratic world at the macro level. To understand domestic terrorism requires first, understanding the definition of terrorism and second, interpreting how acts of terrorism could be useful in a democracy.

One definition of terrorism used by terrorism expert Mark Juergensmeyer aptly suits both domestic and international terrorism: "the use of covert violence by a group for political ends."[5] This means that terrorism can exist anywhere when one group disagrees with the political agenda of another group. This is certainly true in a democratic government since to be a democracy requires having elections, and having elections means that one group will win and another group will lose. Therefore, all democracies will have groups who fail to win the majority of the vote. This means that the potential for terrorism exists in democratic as well as autocratic governments. Consider the recent track record of democracies with terrorism.

In the 1970s and 1980s, a number of brutal terrorist organizations arose in democratic countries: the Red Brigades in Italy, the Provisional Irish Republican Army in Ireland and the United Kingdom, the Japanese Red Army in Japan, and the Red Army Faction (or Baader-Meinhof Gang) in West Germany. The transition to democracy in Spain did not eliminate Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) Basque separatist terrorism. Turkish democracy suffered through a decade of mounting political violence that lasted until the late 1970s. The strong and admirable democratic system in Israel has produced its own terrorists, including the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. It appears that at least three of the suicide bombers in the London attacks of July were born and raised in the democratic United Kingdom. Nearly every day brings a painful reminder that real democratization in Iraq has been accompanied by serious terrorism.[6]

Even the United States suffers from incidents of domestic terrorism. For example, since the Supreme Court's ruling on the case of Roe v. Wade in 1973, many acts of terrorism have occurred against abortion clinics in the form of arson, firebombing, and vandalism.[7] This indicates the potential for groups within any government to use violence for political ends. Likewise, the bombing of the government building in Oklahoma City by lone terrorist Timothy McVeigh demonstrates how even one disgruntled citizen of a democracy has the potential to inflict severe damage through terrorist attacks. With this in mind, a globe composed of all democracies would have little chance in stopping neither groups nor individuals from committing acts of terrorism.

The Variation of Democracy

Along with preexisting internal terrorism, an all-democratic world will result in a wide variety of democratic governments, each with potential political grievances and terrorism continuing to be a way to achieve political results. This means that democratic elections alone do not guarantee freedom and liberty in a government. For example, many Westerners associate the word *democracy* with liberal democracy, a "political system marked not only by free and fair elections but also by the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion, and property."[8] However, without the added liberal ideals of Western democracy, people of

a democratic country may only be voting for their next dictator. According to author and CNN political analyst Fareed Zakaria, "the tendency for a democratic government to believe it has absolute sovereignty (that is, power) can result in the centralization of authority, often by extra-constitutional means and with grim results."[9] This distinction itself can create groups both internally and externally with the potential to use terrorism to achieve political goals. This means that the same amount of terrorism occurring in the nondemocratic world of today will likely remain unchanged by the simple introduction of democratic elections.

Along with the tendency of democratic government to centralize authority, the lack of effective education systems in many countries would further lend to the opportunity for democratically elected governments to abuse their power. This means that an all-democratic world will not only share differences in their liberal ideals but will also share major differences in their educational systems. For example, nations with poor education systems and high rates of illiteracy will be free to vote, but will also lack "the skills and knowledge necessary to function effectively in, and thereby contribute to, the democratic process."[10] Therefore, as more and more democracies emerge, differing educational standards in new democracies will only produce autocratic regimes camouflaged by the electoral process and the title of democracy. This means that the political differences that contribute to both international and domestic terrorism today will therefore remain unchanged by democracy.

Just as with educational differences, economic disparity resulting from two competing social systems would also remain unchanged in an all-democratic world. This means that terrorist groups who "exist for the purpose of conducting politically motivated violence … to influence decision making and to change behavior"

> *… economic disparity resulting from two competing social systems would also remain unchanged in an all-democratic world.*

concerning international economics will also not go away.[11] According to International Relations professor and globalization expert Mosseau, this problem cannot be solved with economic equality, but rather "the social origins of terror are rooted less in poverty … and more in the values and beliefs associated with the mixed economies of developing countries in a globalizing world."[12] This means that recent advances in globalization have

created economic uncertainty by blurring the lines between two inherently competing economies. By projecting the Western "market-based economy" into the "clientalist economies of the developing world,"[13] Western countries have created economic disparity and panic that has lead to terrorism. Unfortunately, these economic differences are culturally based and also would not rapidly change due to the spread of democracy. In fact, if many developing countries were to attempt to transition into a democratic form of government, the future of that country's economic prosperity would likely intensify anti-Western sentiment and therefore increase the likelihood of terrorism.

Just as with economic uncertainty, another source for terrorism in an all-democratic world comes from those who currently live under autocratic regimes. This means that potential exists for previously repressed people to use violence to influence behavior once the autocratic regime has been replaced with a democratic one. For example, if Kim Jung-il's regime in North Korea were to be rapidly replaced with a democratically elected regime, the cultural and social shock to the North Korean people would be significant. This shock coupled with social and economic friction from a rapidly expanding view of the world would likely increase social anxiety and confusion. Just as the introduction of the market economy into a clientalist economy creates economic frustration in developing countries, so too would the implementation of democracy in an autocratic regime create similar social frustration. This sense of frustration and social uncertainty would invariably result in divisiveness and increased political grievances that frequently become causes for terrorism. For example, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the rapid transition for many East Berliners was "extremely painful on a psychological and social level."[14] One example of the problems occurring during transition was in the inability of the East German police to control crime. As the authority of the police quickly disappeared, the "confused citizenry took 'freedom' to mean 'anything goes.'"[15] This led to an immediate "increased level of violence … increases in highway accidents, weapons and currency smuggling," and also resulted in "hostilities towards African and Asian guest workers quickly exploded[ing] into racist violence."[16] Surely, this type of chaos and violence at the global level would only encourage increased levels of both international and domestic terrorism. Thus it must be remembered that free elections and titles of democracy will not necessarily produce the desired effect of a more harmonious world. Instead, the

transition to democracy would bring greater uncertainty, confusion, and more political grievance that would only serve to feed terrorist ideologies rather than subdue them.

Religious Terrorism

Even if an all-democratic world were to forever end political grievances, the threat of religious terrorism would remain unchanged. According to David Rapoport of the UCLA Political Science Department, the threat of religious terrorism is not expected to end soon, as terrorism historically comes in waves. The cycle of terrorism in waves describes how terrorism tends to come in a "cycle of activity" that is "driven by a common predominant energy that shapes the participating groups' characteristics and mutual relationships."[17] Therefore, fighting terrorism should be less directed toward particular governments or terrorist organizations, but more toward defeating the life cycle of the wave itself as "a wave lasts at least a generation."[18] Likewise, according to Samuel Huntington, the current wave of religious terrorism is driven less by religion and more by the inherent clash between two civilizations.[19]

According to Huntington, the previous system used during the Cold War to describe states as either first-, second-, or third-world countries is "no longer relevant," neither is "political or economic systems or … their level of economic development."[20] This means that the distinction between democratic states and others will become moot concerning the frequency and causes of terrorism. According to Huntington, the current cycle of terrorism is directly related to the inevitable clash between the Western and Islamic civilizations.

In Huntington's view, a civilization is a unifying culture at the broadest possible level. According to his article, "A civilization is thus the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes human from other species."[21] A person may identify himself at many levels, but the civilization is the highest level and therefore the source of the inevitable clash. Huntington further clarifies that civilizations can manifest in the form of multiple states as with Western civilization, or may include only one nation as with Japanese civilization.

According to Huntington's theory, the end of the Cold War saw the disintegration of the "Iron curtain of [conflicting] ideology" between the U.S. and the Soviet Union and has replaced it with the "Velvet Curtain of

culture."[22] This means that a global political realignment, when it comes to terrorism, will not have an effect on the energy driving the wave of religious terrorism. In fact, a religiously motivated terrorist living in a democracy will enjoy more freedom of movement to plan and conduct terrorist activity than if living under a totalitarian regime. Under totalitarian rule, less personal liberty among individuals means less ability to communicate, less access to resources, and increased observation and scrutiny by the government. Therefore, a transition to democracy in certain countries could potentially tap into a whole new group of newly liberated terrorists who were previously suppressed by their governments.

In contrast to Huntington's theory about conflicting civilizations, many proponents of the policy of democratization argue that democracy will provide legitimate channels for citizens to address their political grievances. By doing so, it is argued, groups and organizations will not need to resort to terrorism to achieve their goals. However, in the case of religious terrorism, this argument is not valid. Although a democratic regime will provide a much needed voice for some oppressed or marginalized groups, increased political power for religious extremists will not have a calming effect. In fact, the voice of religious extremism would only further define the barrier of the velvet curtain and further polarize the governments of both civilizations.

By further polarizing the two competing civilizations, the motivation for "religious terrorism as theater" will also increase.[23] This means that terrorism actually serves a second purpose beyond the desire for political change. According to Juergensmeyer, terrorism serves a dual purpose of "both performance events, in that they make a symbolic statement, and performative acts, insofar as they try to change things."[24] In terms of universal global democracy, only the performative aspect of terrorism would be affected by the political structure of a particular government. However, the problem on the performance side of terrorism will remain unchanged. In fact, although democracy may provide increased opportunities for groups to settle their political grievances internally, democracy will not detract from religious extremists' desire to make symbolic statements that validate perceptions of religious superiority.

Conclusion

The national strategy of democratization born out of the end of the Cold War continues to represent a false truth regarding the future of the global

community. Based on the historical notion that two democracies never go to war with each other, many believe that democratization would potentially cure international war and likewise stop terrorism. However, if the notion about democracies and war is true, politically aggrieved individuals or groups might lose faith in their government's will to act and therefore turn to terrorism despite the existence of mutual democratic governments. In addition, because democracies come in various forms, creating a more politically homogeneous collection of world governments is less likely. Also, as previously described, political systems have little impact on the ideology of religious extremism, making the continued wave of religious terrorism certain to continue with or without democracy.

The conclusion about the future of terrorism, therefore, must not center on the magic bullet of an all-democratic world. Rather than relying on a particular type of government to prevent terrorism, the emphasis instead should be on developing the ability of all governments in preventing grievances or religious differences from steering people to the top of Maghaddam's staircase.[25] Using the staircase metaphor, "As individuals climb the staircase, they see fewer

> *Rather than relying on a particular type of government to prevent terrorism, the emphasis instead should be on developing the ability of all governments in preventing grievances…*

and fewer choices, until the only possible outcome is the destruction of others, or oneself, or both,"[26] the psychology of terrorism becomes the best way to both understand and prevent the continued use of terrorism. Therefore, any government, any society, or any civilization is equally capable of reducing the perceived psychological need to continue the upward climb toward terrorism.

By understanding the psychological framework that leads to terrorism, it becomes even clearer that the political solution of democratization has been unwisely prescribed as an easy fix for a complex problem. However, instead of working toward a practical solution, the false notion of the peaceful virtues of democracy has only furthered anti-Western and antidemocratic sentiment across the globe. Therefore, until all forms of government gain a better understanding of the true nature of terrorism, the hardening of Huntington's velvet curtain between the Western world and Islamic civilization remains unchecked.

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Winning the Battle of the Narratives in Afghanistan

Dean J. Case II and Robert Pawlak

In order to win the information operations war against the Taliban, the U.S. policymakers first need to repackage their narrative and ensure that it is expressed using frames that Pashtuns are familiar with. Rather than pushing a secular frame filled with themes of democracy, human rights, and rule of law, the U.S. should use frames that reflect both Pashtun beliefs and moderate Islam.

The war against terror cannot be won with force or money alone; in order to beat Al Qaeda and the Taliban, you have to have a compelling cause; this is a war that has to be won through moral authority.

— Hamid Karzai[1]

The fight in Afghanistan exemplifies the challenges of irregular warfare, defined by the Department of Defense (DoD) as a "violent struggle for influence over the population." [2] Consequently, this struggle for influence can be neither enticed nor coerced. Rather, the battle for the proverbial *hearts* and *minds* of the Afghan population is one that neither force nor materiel resource alone, or in tandem, can win. By many accounts the Taliban is currently winning this war, despite a significant deficit in both military and materiel resources. One reason behind this asymmetric success is the edge the Taliban enjoys with their information operations (IO).[3] They

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are able to do this by employing narrative frames the Afghan population readily understands, providing ample proof to legitimize their narrative, as well as enjoying a high degree of consistency between their strategy and narrative. Alternately, the U.S. communicates through secular frames that lack cultural familiarity, tout a narrative lacking proof in comparison to the Taliban's, and lacks consistency with its strategic goals and narrative.

Table 1. Comparison of Elements of Taliban and U.S. IO

	Frame	**Social Proof**	**Narrative**
Taliban	Islamic Sharia	Transparent	Justified by Sharia
U.S.	Secular	Lacks transparency	Democracy, human rights, rule of law

The U.S., in order to win the IO war against the Taliban, needs to take advantage of the narrative gap that exists between the Taliban and Afghanistan's Pashtun population by moving its narrative closer to Pashtunwali than the Taliban's Sharia-laced narrative. However, expressing U.S. goals in Afghanistan through the lens of Pashtunwali is easier said than done. As Afghan President Hamid Karzai noted, it all starts with the cause.

In spite of the glaring differences between the Taliban's IO and those of the U.S., the U.S. still has both the time and opportunity to turn the tables and gain the advantage. As Max Boot, a senior fellow for National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, noted:

> The war in Afghanistan is far from hopeless. With a slightly greater commitment of resources and the introduction of a sensible, unified strategic plan (something we've lacked so far), we can still turn the tide against the Taliban who remain intensely unpopular with most Afghanis [*sic*].[4] That is far cheaper and more realistic than throwing up our hands in despair and dealing with the fallout of defeat.[5]

His comments directly address the lack of consistency within and proof to support the U.S. narrative. Alternately, the Taliban's IO relies heavily on a stilted, religious content that espouses their brand of Sharia law. While this construct adds consistency and clarity to their IO, it also abrades the Taliban's largely Pashtun audience.[6] While Pashtuns comprise approximately 40 percent (about 10 million people) of Afghanistan's population, they are the country's single largest ethnic group.[7] Likewise, the majority of the

Taliban's senior leaders come from Afghanistan's largest Pashtun tribe, the Ghilzais. The significance is that in order to win the war for the influence over Afghanistan's population, one must win the war to influence the Pashtun.

Pashtuns, who are largely xenophobic, hold their code of Pashtunwali closer than Sharia. Consequently, Taliban efforts to enforce elements of Sharia that conflict with traditional Pastun beliefs create fissures, which could be exploited to drive a wedge between the Taliban and the Pashtun. One example of this possibility was the shifting of support from the Taliban to the U.S.-backed Northern Alliance in 2001, where a catalyzing factor behind this realignment was widespread dissatisfaction with the Taliban and its heavy-handed enforcement of their version of Sharia law.

U.S. strategic goals in Afghanistan are to deny terrorist safe haven and prevent regional meltdown, yet U.S. narratives revolve around themes of democracy, human rights, and rule of law.[8] This nexus between a stable Afghanistan and American democratic values is tenuous at best. Simply put, a stable Afghanistan does not necessarily need to be an Afghanistan that embraces U.S. style democracy. Alternately, the longest period of stability in Afghanistan was brought about by the Taliban from the fall of the Soviet-backed government in 1991 through 2001.

Pastunwali

To begin to understand Pashtunwali and what it means to a Pashtun, it is necessary to examine some of its basic elements. The key element of Pashtunwali is *nang*: a concept that includes honor, dignity, and shame. Maintaining the honor of the individual, the family, and the tribe is perhaps the most important daily issue for a

> *Maintaining the honor of the individual, the family, and the tribe is perhaps the most important daily issue for a Pashtun.*

Pashtun. To be called *benanga* (shameless, undignified) is possibly the worst insult that can be delivered to a Pashtun. In such an instance it is considered acceptable that the insulted may kill the insulter to regain his *nang* and social status.[9] Maintaining and protecting one's honor is directly linked to one's identity as a Pashtun. All elements of Pashtunwali reflect back to the honor of the individual Pashtun and may concern elements such as *badal* (revenge) and *melmastia* (hospitality). Revenge is directly tied to honor in that it is a method for an individual to restore one's honor in the face of

insult or wrongdoing. Failing to seek revenge against a transgressor causes a further loss of honor on the original victim and his family. Such losses of honor are not limited to violent infractions such as the wrongful death of a family member, but include more benign acts such as providing hospitality. It is the obligation of a Pashtun to provide hospitality without desire for recompense to anyone who should ask for it. Failure to do so dishonors the individual and his family. What is important to understand is how closely related Pashtunwali and the notion of honor are to the identity of the Pashtun. Pashtunwali is so integral to the Pashtun that there exists no distinction between practicing Pashtunwali and being a Pashtun.[10] The individual Pashtun's identity is bound up in preserving his honor (*nang*) and is found in his close unquestioning observance of the code of conduct shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Elements of Pashtunwali

Nang	Honor, dignity, shame
Benanga	Shameless, undignified
Badal	Revenge
Melmastia	Hospitality

Pashtunwali stresses egalitarianism. It emphasizes personal autonomy and equality of political rights in a world of equals.[11] Understanding this factor is extremely important in conducting operations in Pashtun areas of Afghanistan. This is a world that does not welcome outside influence into matters that are considered personal and private. Members of families may be on equal footing, and boys are educated to obey elders, but there is a subtle line that cannot be lightly crossed. Even elders sitting in legitimately recognized councils, as members of shuras and jirgas, at times may not strictly dictate to younger men how to manage their affairs and must take care that their decisions are understood by the younger as just and in accordance with generally accepted values; the leaders cannot expect the younger to obey automatically.[12] This allows the individual Pashtun, young or old, to retain his honor in accepting the advice of others, as opposed to being subjugated to the will of another man or group.

Barfield writes that "being a *real* Pashtun demands that one not just speak Pashto, but *do* Pashto."[13] Part of this *doing* is accomplished by maintaining autonomy. Fredrik Barth noted that Pashtun speakers who had forsaken

their autonomy for the political protection of Baluch khans were no longer viewed as Pashtun by their neighbors, but instead were seen as Pashtun-speaking Baluchs.[14]

By these examples we can observe that within Pashtun culture a code of conduct exists; it is tied directly to an individual's identity and mandates he preserve his honor and autonomy. Understanding this factor is key in seeking a means of influencing this population. These examples illustrate that an individual Pashtun's autonomy and honor are matters of both private and public maintenance. Private matters are not for public interference, and any outside influence must be exercised in a manner that allows the individual or family the ability to maintain its dignity and honor. The further away from the individual or immediate family the interference comes from, the more delicate the influence must be because the potential for slight and resentment grows exponentially. Historically, governing bodies outside of the district such as the national government are not well received on principles of autonomy alone. The rift grows ever wider with the introduction of foreigners and yawns hugely in the face of non-Muslims. These factors indicate that any serious consideration of employing a strategy of influence in Afghanistan demands that the source of influence must be crafted to appear to emanate from as local a source as possible to ensure acceptability.

The Role of Frames and Social Proof

Frames are necessary elements of any social movement. They are employed by groups in order to build internal consensus, generate external support, and justify actions. When comparing frames, these three separate elements need to be examined in terms of the problem they identify, the recommendation they make, and the action they are requiring from both internal and external audiences.[15] Typically, these three elements are expressed in the form of a *motivating trinity* that labels the protagonist as good, the antagonist as bad, and justifies the necessity of the conflict.[16] Robert Benford and David Snow succinctly describe the reason that groups use frames:

> In part as movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attribution regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change.[17]

Other important elements contained within a frame are themes familiar to the target audience. By aligning frames with themes familiar to the target audience, a group is able to achieve narrative synergy. Thus they are able to deliver a message whose meaning transcends its content.[18] Similarly, by co-opting culturally familiar themes, audiences are generally less likely to filter out information contained within a given frame. This functions on the cognitive level since the frame expresses a message that conforms to the audience's sense of bounded rationality.[19] Simply put, bounded rationality
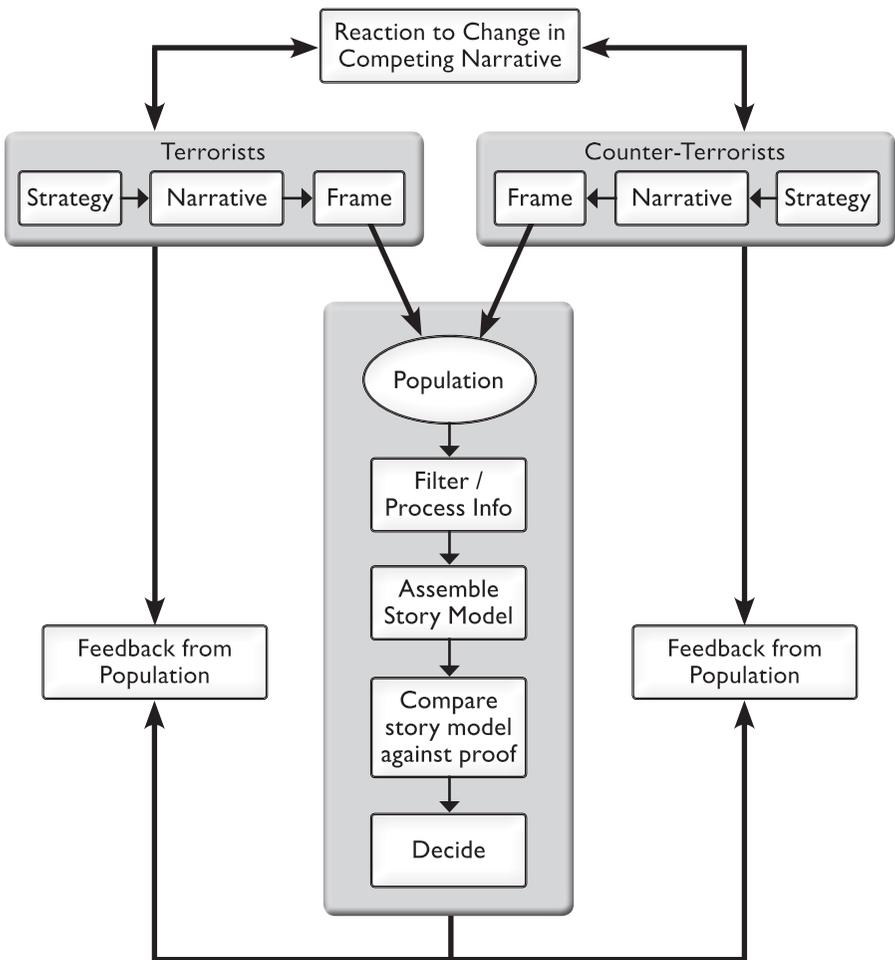
Figure 1. The battle for influence over the population in Afghanistan—the role of competing narratives, frames, and social proof

is the minimized model of the world that all people construct in order to effectively process all the potentially overwhelming information received from various, and sometimes competing, sources.

Frames are significant in the context of generating support for social movements because they represent an expedient means of providing information to the population from which a group is attempting to elicit support. The audience in turn unpacks the information contained in the frame and reassembles it to conform to their sense of bounded rationality.[20] Hastie, Penrod, and Pennington call the product of this process an individual's story model.[21] They then weigh this information against whatever proof exists to support a group's claims. Once the audience has reconstructed the information and assembled their story model, the audience then weighs the validity of a group's claims against the presence or absence of proof. Next the individual renders what is essentially a verdict. This verdict is not necessarily one of guilt or innocence, but rather one of legitimacy. Ultimately, a series of frames that effectively motivates intragroup consensus and motivates external support is deemed effective.

Consequently, frames play a large and central role in the development of social movements. Effectively constructed and employed, frames are able to help create movements able to overcome significant materiel deficits. This generally typifies the conditions experienced by insurgents or terrorists and further underscores the necessity of winning the IO war.

The U.S. Frame and Social Proof

The United States centers its narrative on democratic principles such as equality, human rights, and rule of law and expresses these themes though a secular frame. While these themes resonate with a domestic U.S. audience, they are not clearly understood by the average Pashtun. As altruistic as they may seem, the U.S. narrative unfortunately has the ability to both alienate the target audience and unwittingly provide another layer of proof for the Taliban's narrative. This does not mean that our goals or intentions in Afghanistan are wrong. Rather, it supports the observation that our goals in Afghanistan have been crafted and expressed through a uniquely American lens.

The vehicle for achieving these goals contained within the frames of the United States is the performance of the democratically elected Afghan government and their security forces. Yet many observers note that both

are essentially the same warlords who governed Afghanistan prior to the 2001 U.S.-led invasion and that Hamid Kharzi is little more than the mayor of Kabul.[22]

By attempting to compel Pashtuns to accept American solutions for governance and security, the U.S. is executing policy that was wrong footed from the start. Notoriously xenophobic, Pashtuns view outsiders and their influence as a violation of *nang*, their code of honor. Western concepts of rule of law and equality often undercut the authority of local leaders and customs by inviting outsiders into issues that are private matters to be settled privately, resulting in a loss of honor to those concerned. The ill will that this creates can easily fuel *badal* if left unchecked as well as provide opportunity for the Taliban. Consequently, John Dempsey, head of the U.S. Institute of Peace's Kabul office, noted in a May 2009 interview, "Afghans are largely disillusioned with the whole democratic experiment." [23]

While Pashtuns are admittedly egalitarian, the Pashtun audience largely fails to make a connection between their sense of freedom and the U.S. theme of democracy. The U.S. expresses Western ideals using themes that are rich in content when viewed through our cultural lens, but fail to resonate when viewed through the eyes of a Pashtun. An example lies in the perceived failure to curb corruption within

> *… the Pashtun audience largely fails to make a connection between their sense of freedom and the U.S. theme of democracy.*

the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) and the Afghan security forces. Rampant corruption within the government is a source of public discontent, and curbing it is a top priority for U.S. policy-makers.[24] Yet this is easier said than done. As noted earlier, many Afghan civil and military leaders are little different than the warlords who have traditionally governed Afghanistan. Consequently, calls to curb corruption are met either with skepticism or ignored.

When viewed through the U.S. lens, corruption is either a rule of law concern or a function of democracy that voters correct by casting their ballots. Alternately, when viewed through a Pashtun lens, corruption becomes a matter that local and tribal leaders remedy through *jirgas* where community leaders create transparency through consensus.

Likewise, the disparity between the U.S. strategic goals in Afghanistan and the themes contained in the U.S. narrative adds another layer of friction to the problem. Current U.S. strategic goals are focused on denying terrorists

safe haven and prevent a regional meltdown.[25] While an American may intuitively see the nexus between democracy and stability, this is a result of the effectiveness of the U.S. narrative on its own audience. Yet in the same manner that the U.S. narrative fails to resonate with a Pashtun audience, Pashtuns do not see how democracy is synonymous with stability. Alternately, the U.S. narrative potentially achieves the opposite of its intended effect by providing a constant reminder that the U.S. and its goals operate well outside the realm of Pashtunwali. This is the unintended consequence of projecting narratives that resonate with U.S. audiences onto a Pashtun audience.

Consequently, the U.S. frame in Afghanistan fails to generate the support needed to gain and maintain influence over the population. This is evident in the lack of internal consensus within the GIRoA and its security forces, as well as the lack of active popular support for the U.S.-backed government.

Ultimately the social proof provided to Pashtuns by the U.S. frame is that they—the U.S., coalition forces, the GIRoA, and Afghan security forces—are yet another outside influence seeking to push a foreign system of government on Afghans. From an Afghan or Pashtun perspective, there is little perceptible difference between the U.S. frame and that of the Soviets during the 1980s. Both are foreign nations who threaten their communities and their traditions.

The Taliban Frame and Social Proof

The Taliban, by using the formal theological language of Sharia, appeals to the rich and widely understood Islamic theological tradition.[26] Consequently, they are able to co-opt the inferred legitimacy of Islam into their IO. Importantly, this also allows them to extend the theological implications of the battle between good and evil into their narrative. Alternately, the U.S., while using local language, lacks the familiar and legitimate frames used by the Taliban. The result is that the Taliban's message, while not perfect, clearly dominates the message of the U.S.

The Taliban, by centering their frame on the language of Sharia, as Professor Thomas Johnson suggests, creates a box around their target audience. In order to penetrate this box, the Taliban reasons, one would have to adopt language whose perceived strength and legitimacy is greater than the theological language of Islam.[27]

Contained within these frames are the core elements of the Taliban's narrative: the Afghan government is corrupt, U.S. and NATO are malign

foreign actors, and the Taliban can restore security and order to Afghanistan. Barnett Rubin listed a series of specific themes contained within the Taliban's narrative and how these are used:

> Recruit support based on government corruption, civilian casualties caused by coalition/NATO (especially air power), resentment of the expulsion of Pashtuns from Northern Afghanistan, intimidation, supplying of justice, consistent and reliable organization, and ability to pay some fighters.[28]

Hence, the Taliban is able to connect their narrative with themes that resonate with their Afghan audience. Further packaging their narrative and its associated themes within a Sharia frame ensure that the audience will not filter out the Taliban's message. Lastly, by including themes that point directly to malign foreign influence, the Taliban also effectively aligns their narrative with Pashtun xenophobia. On a cognitive level, this functions to ensure that the message conforms to the audience's sense of bounded rationality. Since it conforms to the audience's preconception for what they expect to hear and it conforms to how they view the world, they are less likely to reject it without consideration.

Additionally, the Taliban is able to provide ample proof to substantiate their narrative. In large parts of Afghanistan, especially in the troubled Southern provinces, the Taliban operates an effective shadow government.[29] This government provides courts, levies taxes, and maintains their own governmental and security apparatus. Their courts not only enforce violations of Sharia but also hear civil complaints. While at times brutal, the Taliban's courts provide both reach and responsiveness that Afghanistan's legitimate legal system lacks. Similarly, the Taliban's taxes go to pay for the fighters who provide security within the Taliban's area of control. Likewise, the Taliban has gone to great lengths to stamp out *baksheesh* (corruption).[30]

The Taliban's consistent narrative, use of familiar frames, and ample social proof provide them a clear edge in the battle to gain influence over the Afghan population. An additional element of proof rests in the fact that the Taliban are virtually uncontested in large parts of Afghanistan. Taliban commanders and mullahs frequently and freely meet with village elders, spreading the Taliban's influence while sending the additional message that the *Americans and NATO may come and go, but we will always be here.*[31]

Comparing Competing Narratives and Frames

When comparing the competing narratives, the audience operates much in the same way a jury operates during deliberation. First, each opposing side's story is taken and reconstructed by the individual so that it conforms to their sense of bounded rationality. Then this repackaged story model is compared against the availability of proof to substantiate the claims of the story. What follows is that the story model is either legitimized or delegitimized by the presence or absence of associated elements of proof. Finally, the individual makes a decision or in the case of a jury member, renders a verdict in favor of one side of the story.

Table 3. Side-by-side comparison and evaluation of current Taliban and U.S. narratives, frames, and proof

	Narrative	Frame	Proof	Advantages/ Disadvantages
Taliban	Sharia law	Islam	Shadow government, civilian casualties caused by coalition, curbing corruption	(+) Narrative consistency (+) Employs familiar frame (+) Substantial proof (-) Conflicts with Pashtunwali
U.S.	Democracy	Secular	Elections, support for GIRoA	(-) Lacks consistency (-) Uses unfamiliar secular frame (-) Lacks proof

Given the current state of IO in Afghanistan, this process clearly favors the Taliban's narrative. While significant differences exist between members of a jury and a population in the midst of irregular warfare, the role played by competing narratives, frames, and proof is nearly identical. People, when making decisions to support or reject an insurgency, operate in a manner similar to an evidence-based jury; no matter how well scripted the argument, compelling evidence is required in order to gain majority support.

The Rift between the Taliban and the Afghan People

The fault line between the Afghan people, and the Pashtuns in particular, and the Taliban lies in the divide between the Taliban's brand of Sharia and Pashtunwali. While closely associated and even familiar to the beliefs held by Pashtuns, the Taliban's version of Sharia undermines several key elements of Pashtunwali:

   a. Role of the jirga in deciding local and tribal matters—that is, the Taliban's series of shadow courts have replaced the time-honored jirgas at the expense of local leader's influence.
   b. Local leaders are reluctant to issue orders or edicts to another Pashtun for fear of violating their deeply held sense of egalitarianism.
   c. Pashtuns bristle at the harsh punishments rendered by the Taliban.[32]

Regaining the Initiative

Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently noted that Afghanistan had been an economy-of-force operation for too long.[33] His statement coupled with the announcement that the new strategy of the U.S. in Afghanistan would focus more on increasing the capacity of the Afghan government to meet the basic needs of its people and less on conventional military operations. This shift in strategy results partially from the recognition that elements of U.S. strategy and operations in Afghanistan serve to enable and legitimize aspects of the Taliban's narrative.

Although the new strategy of the U.S. will help turn the tide against the Taliban and represents a clear and unified strategy, which was previously missing, it still lacks a consistent narrative that will help drive a wedge between the Taliban and the Afghan people. While U.S strategic goals focus on the basic needs of the Afghan people as the means to a stable and secure Afghanistan, its narrative still contains themes that resonate and motivate U.S. domestic audiences, not Afghan audiences.

An example is the recent firestorm of criticism, from both within the U.S. as well as from other NATO countries, over Afghanistan's passing of a body of laws that govern Shia family life.[34] One element of this family law was termed a *rape* law because it seemingly guarantees a husband the right to have sex with his wife, even when she says no.[35] While this theme resonates with domestic audiences, to Afghans it provides another example of how the U.S. is trying to force its will and beliefs on Pashtuns.

To win the IO war against the Taliban, U.S. policymakers first need to repackage their narrative and ensure it is expressed using frames that Pashtuns are familiar with. Rather than pushing a secular frame filled with themes of democracy, human rights, and rule of law, the U.S. should use frames that reflect both Pashtun beliefs and moderate Islam. A retooled U.S. narrative should rely on frames that reinforce local jirgas as the source

of grass-roots democracy in Afghanistan, reinforce the role of moderate Sharia within Afghan civil society, and continue to promote efforts to curb corruption within the Afghan government and security services. This new narrative, expressed within the frames of moderate Islam and Pashtunwali, would deftly enable the U.S. message to resonate better with the Pashtuns than the Taliban message.

Consequently, the final element necessary to gain narrative legitimacy and influence over the Afghan people is observable proof. This proof comes in three forms:

a. Increased security for the population, to include those in rural areas
b. Increase in the capacity of the Afghan government to meet the basic needs of its people
c. Success in curbing corruption within the Afghan government.

Ultimately, this will enable the U.S to win the war of the narrative, and the IO war in Afghanistan, by providing the Afghan people with a familiar narrative, fully supported by observable proof.

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Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Afghanistan 2001

Ian Langford

OEF was successful because of the fuzing of the President of the United States (POTUS) intent with the nature and capabilities of Special Forces (SF) and other niche elements. This essay analyzes the strategic context and operational design. The analysis, using the six principles of special operations, demonstrates the effective employment of SF in a joint campaign environment where the notion of inserting small teams, supported by air power and other key capabilities, was preferential to the commitment of large conventional forces.

How can a Special Operations Force that has inferior numbers and the disadvantage of attacking the stronger form of warfare gain superiority over the enemy? To understand this paradox is to understand special operations. — William McRaven[1]

OEF was the initial campaign of the United States (U.S.) and its allies in response to the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C. on September 11, 2001. The operation involved all four of America's armed services, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), teams from the State Department, and relied on the regional support of Russia, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan. The operation was conducted in some of the most rugged and remote land-locked regions on earth and signified a change in America's approach to dealing with militant Islamic fundamentalists. It also required the U.S. to fight in a war for which it required the use of

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indigenous freedom fighters and SF in order to achieve a decisive victory. This paper will analyze the operational conduct and execution of this high risk, dangerously complex mission. Ultimately, OEF was effective because it successfully fused the POTUS' intent with the nature and capabilities of SF and other niche elements. Its overall success was also demonstrated by the fact that the U.S. defeated the Taliban without having to commit large elements of U.S. national power, such as conventional forces.

The Strategic Concept

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the pressure to act against Al Qaeda and the Taliban was intense. At a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 12 September, President Bush defined his immediate strategic objective for Afghanistan: prevent further terrorist attacks by disrupting [terrorist] networks, including their leadership.[2] He expanded this objective as part of the broader overseas contingency operation by telling his military chiefs that the U.S. needed to take action that would force "the enemy off balance and put him on the defensive."[3] POTUS also noted his observation that "conventional warfare is not going to win this; it is a guerilla war."[4] At a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) on 20 September, the task of drafting the strategic guidance was given to Department of Defense (DoD) Under Secretary Douglas Feith and Lieutenant General John Abizaid.[5] By 2 October, this strategy was briefed via the NSC to Central Command (CENTCOM), the U.S. geographic military command responsible for Afghanistan and the wider Middle East. In line with earlier POTUS guidance, the planning strategy goals were to be "nontraditional."[6] Specifically, these goals focused on allowing the anti-Taliban and anti-Al Qaeda forces—specifically the Northern Alliance (under General Mohammad Qasim Khan) and a southern Pashtun anti-Taliban force (under command of Hamid Karzai—to generate sufficient combat power to defeat the Taliban and allow Al Qaeda to be identified and targeted as a result of the general upheaval across the country.[7]

Importantly, the strategy worked on defeating an enemy center of gravity not found in a single geographic point or a weapon capability; rather, the center of gravity existed in the minds (and support) of the tribal militia leaders across the country, who were passively aligned to the Taliban but not the foreign Al Qaeda. Essentially, the U.S. war was to be fought against the non-Afghan elements of the Taliban and their proxies. The intent was to

inspire indigenous Afghans to join the coalition.[8] Other significant features of the guidance included the following:

a. The U.S. would *not* consider peacekeeping or nation building as part of its responsibilities once the Taliban had been defeated.
b. The primary aim of the operation was to kill or capture Al Qaeda commanders and make the invasion of Afghanistan a global example of what happens when rogue states sponsor terrorism.[9]

The CENTCOM commander, General Franks, thus developed his campaign plan, which had already commenced with the sourcing of bases for SF and air components throughout central Asia.[10]

The Strategic Risks

The United States has a mixed history in fighting and winning guerilla wars.[11] POTUS and many senior officials within the government were sensitive to the *Vietnam syndrome*, which implied that the U.S. does not perform effectively outside of major conventional battles.[12] Additionally, many targets were not easily identifiable or masqueraded as a mosque, hospital, or a school.[13] This caused significant concern for the U.S. in its relationships with its allies in the Middle East. The U.S. would also be disadvantaged by the fact that Al Qaeda and the Taliban were experienced in the use of propaganda to project their information themes across the global media. They would be especially vulnerable in the early phase of the operation, which would be focused on strategic bombing.[14] POTUS had a broad mandate of support from the United Nations and NATO, when on 29 and 30 September the United Nations passed a resolution calling for member countries to cut financial, military, and political ties with any known terrorist group, and NATO invoked Article 5, declaring that any attack on a member nation constituted an attack on the alliance.[15] This gave the U.S. legitimacy for its forthcoming operations in Afghanistan.

At the operational campaign level, CENTCOM quickly realized a critical vulnerability to the plan was the lack of access for Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) across the theater. A downed pilot or air crew paraded by Al Qaeda or the Taliban in front of a global audience would invoke memories dating back to the hostage crises of Iran in the 1970s and Lebanon in the 1980s. These experiences demonstrated the leverage that an enemy can

gain from the U.S. if they can capture aircrew. General Franks eventually overcame this challenge by relocating a U.S. Navy carrier fleet from Japan to the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean.[16]

The geographic location of Afghanistan also posed significant logistical problems for CENTCOM. The country was set back deep into central Asia; B1 and B52 aircraft would be required to undertake a 16-hour flight before they even reached the target areas. Additionally, fighter aircraft launched from aircraft carriers in the nearby Arabian Sea could only sustain 30 to 40 sorties a day. This compared to over 400 sorties a day in Iraq in the first Gulf War.[17]

The Plan

CENTCOM had developed a four-phased plan:

a. Generate intelligence and defeat Taliban critical capabilities; generate local support via targeted humanitarian and security assistance in key areas.
b. Destroy Taliban and Al Qaeda sanctuaries.
c. Locate and destroy high value targets.
d. Transition to non-U.S. partner.[18]

CENTCOM decided early on in planning that an approach from the north was the most feasible option for the commencement of anti-Taliban operations. This was mainly due to the fact that the largest resistance movement, the Northern Alliance, came from the Tajik and Uzbek areas of the country. Additionally, CENTCOM realized that Pakistan would likely not accommodate U.S. forces inserting into Afghanistan from the south. With the north as the agreed entry point, General Franks' priority was the seizure of the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif before the onset of winter. This would enable the establishment of a land bridge into Afghanistan from the north and allow for the movement of essential supplies over land. He then determined that the Northern Alliance, supported by U.S. SF teams, would be able to advance south and defeat the Taliban forces on the Shomali Plains, then move south onto Kabul, Herat, and lastly, Kandahar.[19] Northern Alliance General Dostrum, with his forces from the northwest, would move in support of General Fahim and drive his forces towards Mazar-e Sharif. All of this maneuver would effectively isolate the Taliban forces in the north onto the Shomali Plains, allowing for their annihilation by heavy U.S. bombing

directed by the U.S. SF teams in location with the Northern Alliance. A defeat of the Taliban in the north would then inspire other parts of the country to join the U.S. in defeating Al Qaeda and participating in operations that would ensure the capture of key Al Qaeda commanders and capability.[20]

The Operation

The mission commenced on 3 October 2001 with the identification and certification of a key airfield in the north (Golbahar) to resupply the Northern Alliance. CIA teams commenced tactical surveys of Taliban and Al Qaeda positions, getting exact coordinates via GPSs handed out to local Northern Alliance soldiers. The operatives also conducted detailed humanitarian assistance site surveys and put together a detailed aid plan to be launched simultaneously with the bombing campaign.[21] CENTCOM was to support the Northern Alliance advance south; most of these Afghan forces would do the ground fighting. The CIA teams were chiefly focused on gathering intelligence; U.S. SF would flow into the country and chiefly focus on pinpointing targets for destruction by strategic bombers. They would also concentrate on establishing human intelligence (HUMINT) networks to support Phases 2 and 3.[22]

On 7 October 2001, the bombing campaign began. British and U.S. submarines and ships launched 50 Tomahawk cruise missiles; 25 strike aircraft positioned themselves from U.S. aircraft carriers USS *Carl Vinson* and USS *Enterprise*; and 15 U.S. Air Force bombers attacked 31 selected targets, mostly using Tomahawk missiles.[23] An important intention of the air effort in supporting the campaign was the need to demonstrate the raw power, speed, stealth, and precision of the U.S. forces and the coming operation. Within a few days, most Taliban training sites were severely damaged and the Taliban's air defenses were destroyed. The enemy was confused, his morale was shattered, and most significantly, he was *scared*.[24] The campaign quickly switched to target command, control, and communication facilities. The air campaign continued with carrier-based F/A-18 Hornet fighter bombers hitting key nodes using precision strikes, while other U.S. Air Force assets began bombing Taliban defenses.

CENTCOM demonstrated to the enemy its capacity to control all areas of the country, when on 19 October 2001, U.S. SF and Rangers raided deep into the Taliban's heartland of Kandahar seizing *Objective Rhino*, an airstrip 75 miles south of Kandahar. SF missions also inserted into the south to attempt

to kill Taliban leader Mullah Omar.[25] Phases 1 through 3 of the operation were now being conducted simultaneously, with U.S. forces focusing efforts to capture key Al Qaeda and Taliban leaders.

By 2 November, Taliban frontal positions in the north were decimated. The Northern Alliance and U.S. SF were well advanced on their offensive. On 9 November, Mazar-e-Sharif was taken. On 12 November, Taliban forces fled from the city of Kabul. The capital was now in the hands of the U.S. forces and the Northern Alliance. By 13 November, all of the provinces along the Iranian border, including the city of Herat, fell to the Northern Alliance. By 16 November, the Taliban had been forced back to their heartland in southeastern Afghanistan around Kandahar.

Kandahar, the movement's birthplace, was the last remaining Taliban stronghold and was coming under increasing pressure. Hamid Karzai and his 3,000 Pashtun fighters began to put pressure on Taliban forces from the east and cut off the northern Taliban supply lines to Kandahar. That same day 1,000 Marines set up a Forward Operating Base in the desert south of Kandahar. This was the coalition's first strategic foothold in Afghanistan, just 5 weeks after the operation had first commenced. On 7 December, Kandahar—the last Taliban-controlled city—had fallen. This was the end of the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan.

Operational Design and Principles of Special Operations

Unlike conventional campaigns or major operations, which are generally characterized by physical mass, special operations achieve strategic outcomes by using the operational art to ensure the clever employment of small discrete force elements.[26] Due to their small size and the necessity to be discrete, intermediate objectives are usually low key enablers at the operational level, rather than significant loud sequenced actions. This was the case for OEF, where both the CIA and SF teams with anti-Taliban generated the kind of conventional mass needed for offensive action. These teams were also able to fuze the Afghan forces with the broader U.S. support mechanisms such as close air support (CAS), key intelligence and imagery, and logistical resupply from the air via air-drop or air-bridge lines of communication (LOC).[27]

In order for a special operation to successfully defeat a numerically superior enemy and achieve its objective, adherence to six unique principles is required. William McRaven's theory on special operations espouses that "a simple plan, carefully concealed and realistically rehearsed, and executed

with surprise, speed, and purpose," coupled with moral factors, will work to overcome (Clausewitz's) frictions of war.[28] Ultimately, the unpredictability of a theater such as Afghanistan must be significantly offset by these principles if a special operation is to be successful.[29] Using the six principles of special operations, it is possible to identify how SF supported by joint assets were ideally suited to OEF. Arguably, the use of these forces in this operation has formed the template for the execution of future special operations.

Analysis

Simplicity. The three elements of simplicity critical to success in OEF were the number of objectives, intelligence available, and innovation employed.[30] Regarding objectives in OEF, a number of these formed nonlinear lines of operation (LOO), increasing the complexity of the mission. These objectives included the following:

   a. Operational campaign goals within and external to the theater (securing overflight and alliance rights with neighbouring countries)
   b. Taliban goals (defeat of the leadership, capturing of Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar, Kabul, and Herat)
   c. Al Qaeda goals (defeat the leadership, capture Bin Ladin, and collect additional intelligence regarding future operations.[31]

Operational-level planners reduced the complexity of these objectives during OEF by relying on the SF ability to multitask and remain flexible throughout all phases, meaning that they could achieve multiple objectives, instead of having to develop linear schemes of maneuver for each particular goal.

Simplicity is also achieved through good intelligence that acts to combat friction caused by uncertainty. CENTCOM had good geographical intelligence on the location of key areas within Afghanistan, and the CIA also provided actionable human intelligence, conducted route reconnaissance, and identified suitable hide sites for future operations. This greatly assisted in reducing the levels of operational risk and uncertainty; accurate, actionable intelligence enabled planners to reduce operational variables, thus minimizing situational uncertainty.

Finally, technological innovation and the use of unconventional methods helped to simplify the plan. American technological advances in targeting, as well as practical tools to assist the Northern Alliance such as the provision of night-vision technology acted as significant force multipliers, making an

impossible mission possible. Additionally, the use of unconventional tactics such as movement on horses rather than on vehicles enabled the SF and CIA teams to move about undetected, thereby avoiding decisive battle with the Taliban until the Northern Alliance was ready to fight. This need to exploit emerging capabilities and unconventional tactics simplifies friendly operations and creates friction for the enemy.

Security. The operational security (OPSEC) for OEF was logically based on denying the Taliban foreknowledge of the specific mission.[32] Information regarding the commencement of operations was withheld from most people until hours after the commencement of ground combat operations. It was not until 5 October, just 2 days before the commencement of operations, when the CIA stations within the region were given notice of the immanency of combat operations.[33] In order to achieve strict OPSEC, planning was heavily compartmented; this did not prevent collaboration between major stakeholders, however. CENTCOM liaised directly with Russia for access to airspace and an airfield for CSAR; the Russians agreed, allowing SF teams and the CIA to operate with the Northern Alliance in the north.[34] Additionally, the CIA and CENTCOM conducted formal planning meetings together; they also collaborated on HUMINT networks to synergize their overall efforts.[35]

Repetition. The honing of individual and collective skills through repetitious rehearsal reduces variables through the establishment of routine and synchronized interoperability.[36] During OEF the service components and CIA individually prepared for their missions. There was no ability for multiple mission rehearsals prior to inserting into Afghanistan. This created friction when the U.S. forces first met their Afghan allies on the battlefields in Afghanistan. It was overcome with the development of a carrot-and-stick incentive system, which was anticipated by CENTCOM from the NSC on 20 September.[37] Measures such as cash payments, and the use of U.S. personnel in the employment of complex assets such as CAS, ensured that the lack of training between the forces did not create the conditions for a critical failure—for example, a fratricide or logistical mishap at a critical moment in the campaign.

Surprise. While surprise was to be mainly achieved through OPSEC, the boldness of the plan also contributed significantly to deceiving the enemy regarding CENTCOM's overall intent. At the time, most experts and even

elements of Al Qaeda considered that the U.S. was only capable of a conventional response in invading Afghanistan. The notion of inserting small teams of CIA and SF operatives, who would subvert locals to take up arms against the Taliban regime was seen as unlikely. The fact that these teams not only generated local support but also coordinated air and sabotage strikes, as well as encouraged the creation of a new Afghan government, was totally unfathomable to comprehend.[38] The key to achieving surprise is to strike at a time and place that the enemy is not prepared for, thus creating confusion, a lack of situational awareness, and uncertainty for the enemy.

Speed. Sun Tzu wrote "war is such that the supreme consideration is speed."[39] In OEF, the endurance of the SF and CIA teams was a significant vulnerability to the plan. The teams were only lightly equipped, and their capacity to participate in long, pitched battles was very limited. CENTCOM recognized this and therefore emphasized speed as a requirement for initial operations as a mitigating factor for the vulnerability of their forces already in theater. Additionally, strategic pressure for a quick success in Afghanistan was intense, making SF the key capability to bring about a rapid, decisive victory. POTUS also demanded immediate results in defeating the perpetrators of the September 11, 2001 attacks in order to disrupt any future operations that they had planned. The typically long deployment sequence for large military forces meant that SF, and their ability to deploy immediately, made them the force of choice for this operation.[40]

Purpose. "Understanding and then executing the prime objective of the mission regardless of emerging obstacles or opportunities" provides an intangible force multiplier to offset the advantages afforded a numerically superior threat force.[41] Throughout OEF, the full integration of the efforts between all elements of the U.S. Government calibrated the conduct of the war overall. This partnership was the foundation of the entire kinetic war, and the linkages between the intelligence and operational decision cycles surpassed any past interagency effort. This also ensured that the actions in Afghanistan were fully endowed with strategic guidance, nesting the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of command in a way rarely seen before.

Conclusion

This essay provided analysis of the strategic context and operational design for the successful execution of a high risk, dangerously complex mission.

Overall, the POTUS strategic intent was spectacularly serviced by the nature and capabilities of SF and niche forces.

As a measure of success, it is worth reflecting on the fact that within 2 months of the commencement of the campaign, the Taliban had been deposed from government and an interim authority under Hamid Karzai had been established. What made this campaign a landmark in U.S. military history is that it was not fought in the large conventional operating environment on which the U.S. has been historically all powerful; instead it was SF focused, coupled with Navy and Air Force tactical airpower, and integrated with operations by the Northern Alliance and the CIA. No large land force was employed, which avoided many of the U.S. mistakes of the past when fighting outside the conventional sphere.

Endnotes

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8. Henry A. Crumpton, "Intelligence and War: Afghanistan, 2001-2002," in *Transforming U.S. Intelligence*, ed. Jennifer E. Sims and Burton Gerber (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 165.

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31. Feith, 84.

32. McRaven, 14.

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34. Ibid., 178.

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Fostering Gender Equality as a Means to Counter Radical Religious Islamic Movements

Stephane Wolfgeher

The U.S. has implemented various strategies in countries where radical religious threats abound and yet still continues to fight the same threats. Studies indicate states with higher levels of gender equality engage in less severe or lower levels of inter- and intrastate violence. This suggests that fostering gender equality may be a viable long-term alternative strategy to target the societal acceptance of these threats.

Recent conflicts have not been characterized as mass against mass or state vs. state, but as states against terrorist, insurgent, or radical religious groups. The United States has attempted to combat these adversaries through the elimination of specific threats and the establishment of democratic governments in states where these groups operate. Today the U.S. is still fighting against the same threats. It is unlikely that one golden strategy exists that will defeat or diffuse all these threats and, therefore, there are additional strategies that may be pursued to reduce support for these groups in the countries where they are present. It is under the guise of alternative methods that this essay argues for support for improved gender equality, especially in the realm of personal status codes (family law), education, and political involvement to foster an environment that is less tolerant of specifically radical religious groups.

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Why Islamic States?

The World Economic Forum Gender Gap report assigns a *grade* to all countries meeting minimum measurable requirements.[1] This grade is a compilation of economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. Of countries that are a part of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and that meet minimum measurable requirements (of which there are 35), only five countries are in the top 50 percent. Twenty-two countries occupy the bottom 28 places. Those occupying the bottom spots include Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Yemen.

Radical religious groups are not restricted to Islamic states or the Middle East. Gender inequality is also not limited to these areas. However, the focus of this essay is on states that have tangible means of implementing structural inequality through codes or laws. As the U.S. is actively engaged in combating the spread of terrorism by radical extremists, this essay targets areas that are often seen as the nexus of these movements.

Women's Peace Theory

There are two predominant arguments as to why women are associated with peace—the essentialist and the constructivist argument. The essentialist argument is based on the idea that "female aversion to violence is inherent in the essential nature of women" and the constructivist argument assumes that "gender roles and their accompanying attitudes are socially constructed."[2] There is, however, a third argument that distances the premise away from attributes of women, whether inherent or constructed, and focuses instead on the socially constructed attitudes of dominance, violence, and subordination in both the domestic and international sphere and which can be expanded to include other forms of discrimination, such as ethnic inequality. Structural inequality manifests when societal order is based upon "subjugation and inequality that is rooted in hierarchy, domination, and the use of force."[3]

The definition of gender equality changes depending on the source—it can be equality of opportunity in education, work, and political circles; equality under the law; suffrage; or equality of self-determination or choice. A United Nations (UN) report suggests a culturally neutral definition of gender equality: "Gender equality refers to the goal of achieving equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and boys and

girls."[4] This definition supports the argument for structural equality instead of focusing on individual characteristics and attitudes of men or women.

There is no one measure of gender equality. Rather, various studies have used different variables to capture the level of gender equality of states, such as the presence of state female leadership, percentage of female parliamentary participation, and the ratio of female-to-male higher education attainment; parliamentary participation and length of suffrage rights; or percentage of women in the workforce and fertility levels (positing that fertility levels are a complex measurement of interrelated social, political, and economic status of women in society).[5] Regardless of which variables were used to measure gender equality, the following hypotheses were supported in the studies on gender equality and inter- and intrastate violence:

   a. States with higher levels of gender equality use lower levels of violence during crises, are less likely to use force first in interstate disputes, and are associated with lower levels of intrastate armed conflict.[6]
   b. States with higher levels of domestic repression and discrimination are more likely to use force first in interstate disputes.[7]
   c. States with higher levels of inequality are more likely to experience internal conflict.[8]

These five studies focused on the state level of analysis and did not presume that gender equality directly caused reduced levels of violence. Instead they postulated a correlation between gender equality and reduced violence, with other intervening variables present.[9] They argued that measures of gender equality supersede those of economic development as statistically significant in the levels of internal violence. Specifically, the relationship between gender equality and economic advancement is what exerts the pacifying influence on inter- and intrastate violence.[10]

In the various studies, the following variables were significant in determining the resultant level of violence:

   a. Economic development, conflict history, and democracy[11]
   b. Presence and number of at-risk minorities, transitional polities, and GDP[12]
   c. Trigger and democracy score[13]
   d. Economic growth, allies, democratic homogeneity, and democracy.[14]

The following variables were considered insignificant: ethnic dominance, critical mass of women in parliament, and years since regime change; and polity type (either autocracy or democracy, but not transitory types).[15] As stated in one of the studies by Caprioli, "the spread of gender equality is an indirect method for reducing the level of violence among states internationally in the long term."[16]

Research at the state level of action seems to support the theory that increasing gender equality will ultimately result in less severe or lower levels of inter- and intrastate violence. At the individual level, societies whose attitudes are more inclined towards gender equality are more supportive of nonviolent conflict resolution. Under the UN definition of gender equality, the most obvious illustration of structural inequality in Islamic states are those related to family law and personal status codes.

Is Islam the Problem?

As personal status codes and family law are based on *shari'a* (Islamic law), one might wonder if Islam is the source of gender inequality in Islamic states. Various authors have made the argument that gender inequality is not congruent in Islam and is due to pre-Islamic cultures, geographic traditions, and historical predominance of patriarchal societies of those regions.

For example, Minault summarizes Sayyid Mumtaz Ali's quest to rectify gender inequality as early as the late 1890s.[17] Sayyid Mumtaz Ali was a Deobandi, with an education in Islamic sciences. He studied the Quran, Arabic grammar, Persian literature, *fiqh* (law), and *mantiq* (logic) and used these skills in his argument against gender inequality. He believed that "the position of women in Islamic law was theoretically much higher than their current status was in fact," and "keeping women in ignorance and isolation is not a requirement of Islam, and to say that it is betrays a lack of understanding of religion as well as a fundamental mistrust of women which is destructive of family life, of human love, and of all that the Prophet stood for in a dynamic, just human society."[18] His treatise on women's rights in Islam, *Huquq un-Niswan*, focused on disputing arguments about men's inherent superiority, advocating women's education, discussing *purdah* (modest behavior) and marriage customs, and clarifying the relations between husband and wife. He used not only Quranic verses to dispute conventional wisdom but also logically interpreted the Quran in an attempt to change archaic beliefs in response to current conditions. Ultimately, Ali stated that

gender equality is promoted in Islam, inequality is maintained by social customs (social structuring), and inequality is deleterious to society and to human relations.

Moghadam's UN background paper specifically targets the manifestation of gender inequality via the personal status codes or family law in Arab and Middle Eastern societies.[19] Often these laws (or the stricter interpretation of these laws) were implemented in order to placate Islamist movements, to reinvigorate state legitimacy, or as a means to distance a society from western influence. Secular feminists in the region have targeted the content of the laws as the source of oppression but are adamant that the laws are based on patriarchal interpretations of Islam and not true Islam. It is important to highlight they are not attacking Islam as a religion and not denying their adherence to Islam, but arguing that the laws are inaccurate interpretations of Islam; their cultures are sexist, their religion is not.

Mashour, in the discussion over divorce and polygamy in Tunisia and Egypt, focused on the idea of shari'a as an evolving concept.[20] She stated that of the five sources for shari'a, three are human creations, and specifically that *ijtihad* is the avenue of progressive (or new) interpretation using independent juristic reasoning. Her argument focuses on the fact that Quranic texts are traditionally interpreted by men, laws are traditionally drafted and enacted by men, and the societies where Islam is present are societies that are traditionally (not based on Islam) patriarchal and have repressed and marginalized women for centuries. The solution, she postulates, is that to change this mindset, there needs to be movement for feminist *ijtihad*—that women need "to engage in a process of understanding Islamic law, its interpretations, and Islamic jurisprudence as well as to articulate counter arguments to prove that patriarchal viewpoints are unwarranted and inconsistent with Islamic teachings." [21]

Interestingly, many Islamic countries guarantee equal rights in their constitutions. Most Islamic states have ratified (with reservations) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), a UN product.[22] Regardless of their constitutions or their ratification of international treatises, they still justify inequality based on their personal status laws or family codes, which in turn are supposedly rooted in Islamic interpretation, but more often are a result of structural inequality based on a traditionally patriarchal society.

What do women in these Islamic countries want? Esposito and Mogahed compiled information from Gallup polls and illustrated that "majorities of women in virtually every country we surveyed say that women deserve the same legal rights as men, to vote without influence from family members, to work at any job they are qualified for, and even to serve in the highest levels of government."[23] Women in these countries want equality; however, they want it in a way that is congruent with their culture and religion. They want equality to arise from within, not in reaction to pressures from without. The Gallup polls also refute the argument that greater religiosity correlates to decreased egalitarian views towards women.[24] This supports the argument that gender inequality in Middle Eastern states is more based on societal structure vs. religion.

> *Women in these countries want equality; however, they want it in a way that is congruent with their culture and religion.*

Case Reviews

Morocco and the struggle over the personal status law (*moudawwana*) is the first case review. Traditionally, in Morocco and in many other Middle Eastern countries, the society can be characterized as "hierarchical, patrilineal, patriarchal, and class-based, leaving women, children, and the poor as their most repressed elements."[25] Women were secluded and segregated; their roles included wife, mother, daughter, but rarely professional; women were discriminated against in areas such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and ownership of property; a woman was considered a minor throughout her life; and women were expected to embody morality, obey their husbands, and submit. The laws governing the *private* space for females were in direct contradiction to the laws governing the *public* space, such as the constitution and international covenants, which guarantee universal standards. The feminist movement in Morocco has existed since 1956, but it has not been until recently that it has seen significant changes in personal status laws.[26]

As early as 1947, the monarchy advocated expanding women's roles through their personal actions, such as educating their own daughters, but not in law reform. In the 1990s, women's movements and leftist political parties began pressuring for reforms to the *moudawwana*. Specifically, they wanted equality, majority status at legal age of maturity, rights for a woman to contract her own marriage, equalized divorce processes, polygamy outlawed, and to make education and work a right, not a concession. The monarchy

also joined the push for reforms at this time. There was strong opposition from religious circles, which resulted in shelving some efforts until later.

The King of Morocco has a unique position as the "Leader of the Faithful." [27] In that capacity, he framed the issue of equality in an Islamic context and asserted that 1) the *moudawwana* was not a sacred text, 2) Islam advocates equality and dignity, and 3) the new laws were not flawless and should be revised in an *ijtihad* effort (another association with Islamic interpretation). The major reform in 2004 came in the aftermath of the 2003 Casablanca terrorist attacks.[28] This important public opinion was decidedly soured against Islamists (the major opposition of the *moudawwana* reform) in response to these attacks and forced them to a position of weakness and cooperation with the Moroccan monarchy. While the reforms are not perfect, it marks a step along the path to gender equality.

Resistance was mainly from religious and conservative groups focused on maintaining the status quo. The dissenters argued that changing the *moudawwana* disparaged Islamic law and posed a threat to the Islamic way of life. The Moroccan King countered these arguments by couching the reforms in religious context, divorced from western influence. There was no mention of the inherent right of women, such as detailed in the CEDAW. In addition, there was great support from left-wing political groups, women's activist groups, and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).[29]

In contrast to Morocco is the second case review of Jordan's lack of advancement in personal status laws. Jordan and Morocco have similar political structures, majority Muslim populations, similar political relations with the U.S. and Israel, secular constitutions that guarantee equal rights, and influential Islamist movements that are socially conservative.[30] Both countries signed on to the UN CEDAW in the early 1990s with reservations regarding personal status laws, and both reform movements attempted to co-opt Islamists and/or religious conservatives by modifying the proposed changes to mollify some concerns. Women's movements began in earnest in the early 1990s (as was the case in Morocco) and the Jordanian monarch attempted to reform personal status laws in 1996, 2000, 2001, 2003, and 2004. Reforms were defeated in the lower house in 2004.

The differences affecting the eventual outcome were many. Islamists eventually cooperated with the Moroccan King, but not with the Jordanian King. Leftist parties in Morocco supported women's associations and human rights activists. Jordan lacked any significant left-wing political

groups, and its politics were dominated by groups with tribal affiliations. Morocco had more female representation in parliament due to active quotas, whereas female representation in Jordanian politics was small and biased and populated with women from rural, socially conservative tribes. NGOs were restricted in Jordan, resulting in less opposition to Islamist and conservative movements. Finally, Morocco couched their reforms in a culturally (and religiously) acceptable indigenous reform movement versus reliance on arguments about equality and human rights that were seen as products of western thought and institutions. The combination of supposed foreign thought and lack of political backing prevented the reform of the Jordanian personal status laws.[31]

Cautions

It is naive to think that implementing change so contrary to established customs and beliefs will be embraced by all. It is also naive to think that if the structural equality theory is correct, that in an environment of violence and oppression, the opposition will allow the change to peaceably occur. In Uzbekistan, women were either prosecuted by the communists for *failing to unveil* or killed by family members for *unveiling* during the 1920 reform movements by the Soviets.[32] Afghan women have been killed for demanding their rights and attempting to change the status quo.[33] Afghan girls have been assaulted with acid while attempting to go to school.[34] Women have been verbally attacked and defamed for working outside the home or failing to cover themselves.[35] Change will not be without resistance.

What can we do?

Studies about gender equality and violence have shown that patriarchal societies which foster domestic environments of oppression and dominance, measured as gender inequality, act in the same way in inter- and intrastate conflicts.

An avenue exists to combat structural (specifically gender) inequality by addressing personal status codes or family law. By addressing these laws, one aims to increase female education, participation in government, and overall levels of gender equality. While the studies did not propose a direct causal relationship between gender equality and less inter- and intrastate violence, and while there are multiple other significant variables that may also affect a state's level of violence, increasing gender equality has other

positive effects, such as lower infant mortality rates due to better education, lower fertility rates, potential economic growth, and basic adherence to intrinsic human rights.[36]

So how does the U.S. go about increasing gender equality in Middle Eastern or Islamic societies? One route that has *not* worked in the past is encouraging the change through western prodding, often taken as western cultural superiority. Boris Johnson, a British parliamentarian and journalist, said "it is time for concerted cultural imperialism. They are wrong about women. We are right."[37] Karen Hughes—in her tour of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt—compared the status of Saudi women to the "'broken wing' of a bird because they lack the right of full participation, including the rights to vote and drive."[38] This type of rhetoric alienates potential allies and fuels fundamentalist religious opposition. Changes put forth that hinted of western culture or influence often did not succeed.

In some movements for gender equality reform, there were bastions of support from NGOs, home-grown women's rights groups, and established political parties. In others, NGOs were forbidden, independent political parties were banned, and women's rights movements were only active underground. This emphasizes that there is not one solution to the problem. One must take a look at the society as a whole, the political structure and political freedom, the language and history, the laws codifying structural inequality, and the potential for social movements. It is important to recognize that not every state is the same and that the approach must be tailored to the situation.

Othman and others suggest multiple supporting avenues to stimulate change.[39] First and foremost, Islamic feminists must be taught and trained in Islam to be able to contest patriarchal interpretations. They must be credible to sway both men and women. Groups advocating change must establish coalitions; they must cooperate with domestic groups, such as civil society and political parties, and with international groups or organizations in other countries, such as the Malaysian group, Sisters in Islam (SIS). Actions to take include advocacy through memorandums to government officials or letters to the editor of public newspapers or magazines; public education and awareness; seminars and workshops to discuss gender and law issues; public lectures; training on women's rights for men and women, professionals, lawyers, and young political leaders; creating resource centers; and networking with state actors, NGOs, and other women's groups (secular, traditional, and Islamist).

If the U.S. wants to help change the status quo, it has to do it in a culturally sensitive and respectful way. In reality, it should be done in an indirect manner. Zainah Anwar stated "overt support by Western groups is actually counterproductive because it undermines the local authenticity of moderate movements in the eyes of the public."[40] Often, support and praise from western groups and governments are "shortsighted and unwelcome." The U.S. already supports some pursuits, such as funding for political education, voter education, and leadership training for women in Iraq, but could take some lessons from Special Operations Forces and find a way to work with feminist groups *by, with, and through*, with *only* a local face.[41] The U.S. could deploy specially trained groups or individuals to work directly with host-nation organizations to support changes with resources, knowledge, experience, and connections.

> The U.S. … could take some lessons from Special Operations Forces and find a way to work with feminist groups by, with, and through, with only a local face

Ultimately, this essay recommends investing in another approach to curtail support for radical religious, insurgent, and terrorist groups by increasing gender equality. This approach must not be framed as cultural superiority, or the West against the Islamic world. It must be tailored to the country the U.S. wishes to influence, congruent with their culture, language, societal structure, history, political capabilities, laws (and their basis), and beliefs. Overt support could jeopardize advancement and the best help the U.S. can provide might be using covert or indirect means to train, finance, resource, or otherwise support indigenous equality movements. Breaking down structural inequality and increasing gender equality may ultimately result in a society that does not support attitudes of dominance, violence, and subordination in both the domestic and international sphere, resulting in less support for domestic insurgent, terrorist, or radical religious violent movements.

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SOF-Led Joint In-Country Assessment and Planning Teams as a Method for Strengthening Weak and Failing Nations

Bryan Johnson

This essay recommends geographic combatant commanders (GCCs) organize and deploy Special Operations Forces-led joint in-country assessment and planning teams (JICAPTs) as a means to identify root causes of instability and develop plans in support of the ambassador's mission strategy and GCC's Theater Strategic Plan, thus linking the ambassador's and GCC's efforts and resources to achieve national objectives.

Officially recognized in the 2002 National Security Strategy and first addressed in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, weak and failing states pose substantial risks to U.S. national security.[1] To prevent Westphalian-state failure is a top priority, and the United States as a whole is working aggressively at the strategic level to develop and institutionalize doctrine and processes needed to bolster weak and failing states. New legislation, billions of dollars, and countless human resources are being dedicated to implement a broad spectrum of capabilities into a whole-of-government approach designed to generate stability and self-security within fragile nations. And while such a commitment of energy is encouraging, the Achilles' heel of preventive warfare remains: How to effectively link the right resources to the right weak state at the right time in the right context, then continuously assess the effects as part of a long-term process.

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The burden of executing this strategy falls to two inadvertent partners—ambassadors and military geographic combatant commanders (GCCs). The ambassador has always been America's primary political connection to partner states, yet our country teams remain small; post-cold-war constructs are ill-suited to assess, plan, synchronize, and implement whole-of-government operations to prevent state failure. Simultaneously, the GCC is tasked to develop and execute regional theater campaign plans to improve the ability of weak states to secure themselves from global and local destabilizing factions while better enabling them to support U.S. operations against global violent extremist organizations. This dual assignment of missions at the operational and strategic levels lends itself to confusion and disjointed efforts as noted by General Zinni: "I never found a way to effectively join forces with the State Department to link their plans with mine." [2]

Nation strengthening, like foreign internal defense (FID) and counterinsurgency (COIN), is a complex operation that constantly evolves. The U.S. experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have shown that nation strengthening starts with communities and that plans must come from the bottom up. Solutions must be locally identified and administered to be successful. One method to conduct effective nation strengthening is for GCCs to deploy joint in-country assessment and planning teams (JICAPTs), modeled after Provincial Reconstruction Teams, to weak and failing states. JICAPTs—built around a core of mature, culturally experienced, and strategically aware Special Operations Forces personnel—would provide ambassadors a tool to assess host-nation needs and develop culturally informed plans in support of their mission strategies. JICAPTs could allow GCCs and ambassadors to more effectively synchronize the agencies and elements of national power in order to efficiently employ resources for achieving national objectives in weak and failing states.

Nation Strengthening: Where Strategies Should Follow Plans

Many strategic scholars remain tied to the belief that top-down solutions are the key to achieving U.S. national objectives overseas. However, they erroneously tie predicted effects and outcomes in a multitude of sovereign nations to the strategies of U.S. government agencies and GCCs. The mistaken assumption with this approach is the belief that strategic planners located thousands of miles away can correctly identify root causes within weak nations and then plan to adequately address them as they evolve.

When it comes to strengthening weak and failing nations, recent experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have shown that top-down solutions born and directed from outside the recipient state are often less than successful. For example, the ideas L. Paul Bremer brought with him from Washington, D.C. in 2003 have been universally identified as catalyzing the Iraqi insurgency.[3] While Bremer's policies of de-Baathification and dissolution of the Iraqi military were issued with good intent, he lacked sufficient local perspective to realize the devastating effects his policies would generate for the Iraqi population and ultimately the United States.[4]

The local nature of internal threats to national stability necessitates local solutions. In fact, most advancements in areas where our government and military are actively involved in nation strengthening (Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Philippines) have been created by people working at the tactical level on long-term deployments inside those countries. These junior and mid-level military officers and government agency leaders experience the local situation through engagement with the people and by living in the geography every day. In time, they become intimately familiar with the local conditions; the populations' mindset, grievances, and cultural norms; and the best approaches the host-nation government can employ to improve conditions, which then generate popular support and legitimacy.

America's best successes in weak and failing states have occurred when local solutions were supported at the operational decision-making level. For example, as the insurgency in Iraq was at its peak in late 2005, U.S. military leaders in Anbar Province familiar with Iraq's tribal constructs and strong sense of honor recognized the critical role tribes could have in securing their own neighborhoods. Later dubbed the Anbar Awakening, protecting one's own family was so in tune with Iraqi tribal culture that it quickly spread to over two thirds of Iraq, dealing a death blow to Al Qaeda while providing pseudo employment to a large part of Iraq's male population and jump-starting the economy.[5] In the southern Philippines, the Abu Sayaf Group has been significantly degraded, not through direct attacks, but by U.S. military advisors training Philippine civilian and military leaders to listen to and address the medical, educational, economic, and political needs of individual island populations. Once viewed as outsiders, the Government of

America's best successes in weak and failing states have occurred when local solutions were supported at the operational decision-making level.

the Philippines has gained significant legitimacy with the islanders, further isolating violent extremist organizations.[6]

These successes were created by the adaptive and intelligent employment of FID and COIN doctrine and practices. Foreign internal defense and counterinsurgency are defined/described as shown below.

FID	Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency[7]
COIN	Aim to enable a country or regime to provide the security and rule of law that allow establishment of social services and growth of economic activity; it thus involves the application of national power in the political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure fields and disciplines[8]

Both FID and COIN doctrine recognize that the problems faced by weak nations are political in nature, but require a balanced political-social-economic response to address the conditions that foster instability and allow insurgency to exist. However, these underlying conditions cannot be resolved without legitimate security and therein lies the complexities and challenges of nation strengthening. Unfortunately, these complex problems and corresponding solutions cannot be understood, envisioned, or planned for by strategists located thousands of miles away in Washington, D.C. or at the GCC headquarters.

Instead, they are only obvious to those few who are intimately involved with the local conditions, culture, and geography. In the majority of weak states, the ambassador and the country team are the U.S. local experts who are charged with crafting the strategic linkages between the United States and the host nation. The Chief of Mission (CoM) drafts the Mission Strategic Plan that converts U.S. national interests to specific goals and objectives designed to advance U.S. and host-nation shared interests. To create this strategy and then operationalize and implement it when the time comes, the CoM draws on the available embassy staff including the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) station chief, the defense attaché, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) agent, and other U.S. agency representatives as available.

Mission Strategic Plans developed by embassy country teams seem the ideal, locally designed mechanism for nation strengthening. However, the experience level, cultural training, composition-by-agency, and size of each

country team varies widely—ranging from as few as 30 to as many as 400 personnel. Of these, less than one quarter are military, most of whom are dedicated to security assistance.[9] While those sent to work in embassies are expected to be seasoned and experienced professionals, many are poorly trained in information gathering and seldom have regional or linguistic expertise.[10] Consequently, typically few personnel at an embassy are trained in the operational art of assessment and planning with the cultural acuity necessary to develop plans that balance political, social, economic, and security considerations to produce the desired effects.[11]

Even when a country team is highly capable, the ambassador remains challenged by the independent, yet competing, agendas of the U.S. government departments and agencies back in Washington, D.C. The State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, for example, has initiated its own conflict prevention and mitigation efforts in states they identified as being at risk of collapse.[12] Meanwhile, the CIA has independently identified 50 ungoverned areas towards which it is unilaterally devoting increased collection efforts.[13] In addition, USAID has formulated its own Fragile States Strategy to bolster countries that may otherwise "breed terror, crime, instability, and disease."[14] Many other U.S. government agencies and nonprofit organizations are also implementing independent stabilization strategies—all part of Washington's incessant competition for resources and relevance.

Further adding to the list of organizations actively intervening in foreign nations, GCCs have been recently tasked to transform from contingency-centric operations to strategy-centric, thereby changing their focus from preparing to intervene after a crisis to a far more active role in preventing weak states from declining further. Consequently, post 9-11 engagements have been transformed into a mechanism "...aimed at creating partnerships and building the capacity of allies and partners to meet the challenges of the uncertain and complex security environment."[15] GCCs must now go beyond establishing basic security cooperation relationships and formulate Theater Campaign Plans designed to fundamentally strengthen each nation's security while simultaneously generating host-nation government legitimacy.

Each GCC accomplishes this task by initiating security cooperation and engagement activities based upon assessments and planning conducted at the theater strategic level by the military planning staff. However, the GCC planning staff's lack of intimacy with the political, socioeconomic,

and cultural nuances of each individual nation will inevitably produce theater strategic and subsequent supporting plans with different priorities and desired effects than those of each mission strategy. Consequently, the GCC's Theater Strategic Plan will compete with mission strategies for finite diplomatic, information, and economic resources, placing the GCC fundamentally in competition with individual ambassadors. However, there is a way for GCCs and ambassadors to cooperatively combine their efforts to produce and implement nation-strengthening plans while simultaneously gaining leverage to acquire resources from Washington.

Joint In-Country Assessment and Planning Teams

The not so subtle change required for the United States to implement an effective preventive war strategy is to accept that the strategy cannot drive our actions within foreign nations; instead the necessary and required tactical actions within each host nation must drive our strategy. The reality is that the unique cultural mechanisms at work within each nation require a unique, but locally devised and integrated plan incorporating a conceptual shift towards *population-centric* effects.[16] Success then results from the support and cooperation of the people living and working in the area of operations and is linked to tangible benefits delivered directly to the people through processes that can subsequently be sustained by the legitimate host-nation government.[17] Consequently, the outcome of our preventive strategy will depend on the preparation and adaptability of the human teams we place inside each weak and failing nation, because the task of assessing and understanding the root causes of instability, in the context of their culture(s), and then identifying, planning for, and helping implement workable solutions, lies with them.

First and foremost, effective nation strengthening requires comprehensive assessments of the host-nation infrastructure, governmental mechanisms, and social constructs so that the right resources and programs can be developed and then implemented with a host-nation face. Once operations are initiated, assessments must become continuous to identify when adjustments are required to meet changing conditions.[18] Assessments are the foundations of plans and operations and are critical to ensure the GCC and the ambassador provide the host nation with the right support at the right time to create the right effect. A single organization inside the host nation must be able to conduct these assessments and monitor the effects

of delivered resources and information. As previously noted, country-team structures vary widely from nation to nation and consequently, so do their assessment and planning capabilities. Conversely, GCCs possess exceptional assessment and planning capabilities, but typically not located within or intimately familiar with the host nation.

One solution is for the GCC to deploy to weak and failing states enduring JICAPTs built around a core of senior special operations soldiers. Unlike a Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group, JICAPTs would not be constrained to security assistance, but would function more like Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Augmented by diplomats and subject matter experts within the embassy, each JICAPT would be responsible for and capable of assessing a broad spectrum of conditions, processes, and governance practices and then using those assessments to develop short- and long-range operational plans to direct resources, training, and advisors where and when they would be most effective.

Each JICAPT would simultaneously feed the ambassador's Mission Strategic Plan and the GCC's plans. A single assessment and planning source within each host nation effectively ensures ambassador and GCC nation-strengthening activities are continuously linked from the bottom up. Fully synchronized, country-team and GCC efforts become mutually reinforcing and thus produce the maximum effect through minimal resources. They could then develop a comprehensive strategy to acquire resources necessary to ensure the successful implementation of their plans. In essence, JICAPTs would become the GCC's link between the tactical and the operational/theater strategic realms, thereby freeing up the GCC staff for higher level requirements. Furthermore, JICAPTs would allow military members at the embassy to focus on their advisory and training responsibilities while reducing the risk GCCs inherently accept by relying extensively on the inconsistent capabilities of each country team for key information.

Ambassadors would also enjoy the benefits of a dedicated and qualified assessment and planning capability. JICAPTs would free up key members of country teams to devote more time to their individual agency areas of expertise, thereby getting more from finite human resources. In semi-secure nations, SOF-led JICAPTs could provide their own security, allowing them greater freedom of movement than their civilian counterparts. But most importantly, JICAPTs provide ambassadors a mechanism to fully coordinate and synchronize nation-strengthening actions with the GCC. Together, the

GCC and ambassador would have greater leverage to overcome the *good* ideas generated by strategists back in Washington, D.C. and acquire relevant resources in support of their plans.

JICAPT Construct

Each JICAPT would be formed around a core of ten senior Special Operations Forces (SOF) soldiers who provide the assessment and operational planning capability. SOF operators are generally older than their brethren service members. They have survived the rigors of extraordinary physical and mental testing, have demonstrated maturity, leadership, self-confidence, tolerance for stress, and have the savvy to function in different cultures. SOF train extensively in unconventional warfare, COIN and FID operations and thereby have a proficient understanding of how communities operate and how local governments function as a viable and effective institution for the community. SOF also become cultural experts and many speak a foreign language. Furthermore, due to the extreme nature of the missions they are assigned, SOF leaders more readily recognize the strategic implications of their actions—a critical skill when working with any foreign government.

SOF are also skilled in intelligence assessment and operational planning. Every SOF operator is trained to collect intelligence, but more important is their ability to gauge a broad spectrum of information and identify the patterns as well as inconsistencies as part of a quality assessment. Equally important, SOF are trained tactical and operational level planners. From leading the Afghanistan Northern Alliance in defeating the Taliban to guiding the Philippine government and Army in quelling Abu Sayaf through humanitarian support and good governance, the people filling the ranks of SOF today are by far the most experienced warrior diplomats in U.S. history.

A recent interagency assessment of nation-strengthening operations concluded that "individuals assigned to Provincial Reconstruction Teams should be capable of making key assessments, refining analysis, and implementing response activities.[19] Senior SOF operators clearly meet these requirements. The recent designation of U.S. Special Operations Command as joint proponent for global security force assistance and its tasking to establish and lead six Provincial Reconstruction Teams adds further credence to SOF's critical skill sets and capabilities in support of nation strengthening.[20] Augmented by subject matter experts already located at each embassy, SOF-

led JICAPTs offer a structured and very powerful tool for strengthening weak and failing nations.

Why Not Joint In-Country Assessment Teams?

Despite the advantages the JICAPT concept appears to offer, there are some challenges to this approach. Foremost, the introduction into the U.S. embassy of enduring, highly trained military teams specializing in combat, intelligence collection, and irregular warfare could be viewed by the host nation as an aggressive move. The purpose of the JICAPT is to collect information in order to conduct analysis. Like the CIA, JICAPTs will delve well beyond the rudimentary data obtained by a census and into the grievances of the population and the weaknesses within the host nation's military, government, economic, and social infrastructure. While the overarching U.S. intent is for a greater good, sovereign states and their leaders are put at great risk when another state gains knowledge of its fundamental problems. Some host nations may view JICAPTs as a means for the U.S. to gain greater influence over their country rather than as a means to enable their stability. Consequently, military-led JICAPTs may be unfeasible in weak nations desiring to hide instability root causes or fearful of U.S. intentions.

Another consideration is the inadvertent disruption of diplomatic relations. Should a JICAPT discover host-nation corruption or cause sensitive information to be divulged, the U.S. ambassador or members of the country team could become *persona non grata*. Such an event would be detrimental to the U.S. and host-nation relations, which could set back achievement of U.S. national objectives. Thus allowing JICAPTs to operate within a host nation is a risk to the current level of influence that American embassy personnel have painstakingly cultured. Ambassadors may be unwilling to accept this level of risk, instead relying on status quo mechanisms to accomplish their objectives.

Finally, the addition of any personnel at a U.S. embassy can be problematic due to constraints applied by the host nation, the size of embassy infrastructure, and the effects of turnover. In several countries, embassy officials have reported that "the time required to bring military personnel up to speed, monitor their activities, and prevent them from doing damage is not compensated for by contributions they make to the embassy team." [21] To mitigate this effect, JICAPT members would have to conduct extended

and repeated deployments to the same host nation—the same practice now being utilized by Army and Marine Corps units conducting FID and COIN in Afghanistan. Or JICAPT members could be detailed through permanent change of station (PCS) orders to a country like members of the Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC). This approach, however, is outside the control of the GCC.

Conclusion

As significant human resources and national treasure are dedicated in a whole-of-government approach to generate stability and self-security within fragile nations, a difference in priorities, efforts, and strategies still exists between competing government agencies, GCCs, and embassy country teams. However, as FID and COIN doctrine reveal—backed by recent lessons relearned on the battlefield—strategies born and directed far from weak and failing nations often miss the mark. Culturally aware assessments that ultimately improve community access to political, social, and economic resources through the host-nation government are required to diminish the root causes of instability.

SOF-led JICAPTs are a mechanism to simultaneously provide both ambassadors and GCCs with those culturally oriented and detailed assessments. The key advantage of JICAPTs is that they are constructed to do what no other single entity can do: identify and bring a combination of military and civilian resources to bear on local causes of instability, support the development of viable governance and security institutions, and strengthen the hand of groups with an interest in stability. Ultimately, when the ambassador and the GCC can stand together when approaching the U.S. government for resources, they stand the best chance of getting what they need, when they need it, and thereby obtaining our national objectives.

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Postindustrial Warfare and Swarm Theory: Implications for Special Operations

Lino Miani

The revolution in information technology that has occurred over the last 15 years simultaneously enables and inhibits the operational freedom of American military units in combat. A corresponding increase in the complexity of the modern battlefield makes it time for the military, particularly Special Operations Forces, to relook traditional operational paradigms based on hierarchical structures of command and control.

The military system of the United States is a hierarchical, centralized, and functionally stovepiped bureaucracy structured for success in industrial era warfare. It is increasingly clear, however, that the world is in the midst of a social and military revolution that promises to replace the industrial model with a knowledge-based, networked one. This revolution manifests itself most clearly in the rise of an information-based economy that fundamentally alters the societies that participate in it. The hallmarks of industrialized warfare—mass, firepower, unity of command, and synchronization—are vulnerable to a force that uses as its principles dispersion, media engagement, unity of effort, and redundancy. When wielded by terrorists like Al Qaeda, such a force is nothing more than an annoyance to the international state system, but if adopted by an industrialized power with the ability to focus resources on rational objectives, this force could prove superior in battle. With this in mind, it is likely that emerging powers of the global East are learning from the terrorists' experience

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and adjusting their own hierarchical militaries in ways which the West is unwilling to consider.[1]

The revolution in information technology that powers these changes enables the free flow of information at a rate that will soon surpass all functional limits. This phenomenon gave birth to social networking and allows for the creation of self-organizing diasporas where none were possible before. Unlike diasporas of the past, which were confined to geographic enclaves and organized around race, religion, or ethnicity, modern social networks are composed of like-minded individuals that can disperse as widely as the Internet allows. This growing irrelevance of geography creates new challenges for America and new opportunities for its enemies.

Observers of military affairs are quick to note that America's enemies are organized and predisposed to derive all the tactical benefits of social networking whereas the paradigm armies of the industrialized age are not. This fact allows terrorist networks to fight and survive despite their inferiority in all purely military measures. Much has been written

> *… America's enemies are organized and predisposed to derive all the tactical benefits of social networking whereas the paradigm armies of the industrialized age are not.*

since 2001 about this emerging form of warfare. Many western governments expend an enormous amount of energy in an attempt to understand the evolution of conflict, but the disappointing results of their efforts are merely technical solutions to a systemic problem. By using an industrial-era approach to a postindustrial conflict, the military is failing to maximize the initiative of its dispersed units or the potential of social networking.

It is clear that to excel in or even survive future warfare, armies must decentralize, shed their hierarchy, and diversify. Following the lead of their smallest units, which have learned to adopt some of the tactics of their more flexible, socially networked enemy, armies must embrace the *uncontrol* unleashed by network technology.[2] Adjusting to this environment is a particularly daunting problem for the security system of the U.S., which has been the world's paradigm for over six decades. Although the necessary changes begin at the tactical level, they require a total restructuring of the doctrine and systems that support maneuver: command and control, logistics, fire support, and intelligence. What emerges then is the growing field of swarm doctrine.

Pioneered in the late 1990s by two political scientists at the RAND Corporation, John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, swarm theory advocates a force that is able to attack an enemy from all directions simultaneously. This requires, among other things, a multitude of small, autonomous, dispersed units connected to each other by a ubiquitous communications network and joined in a networked structure. The nodes in this networked swarm force will act as both sensor and shooter, a break from the differentiated roles of traditional intelligence and maneuver units. [3] Swarm systems in general are supremely adaptive, making them well-suited to the complex, uncertain environments common in the new warfare, but swarming also has a number of critical disadvantages that detract from its attractiveness to western military systems.[4] Among these disadvantages are difficult control, redundancy, and unpredictable effectiveness.[5] Furthermore, swarm systems in the military context will require command and control, fire support, and logistics systems that are more flexible than those commonly in use today.

Swarm doctrine demands advancements that focus on the underlying culture of organizations rather than on technological changes and unit structures. This is a bold break from the traditional, techno-centric American view of revolutions in military affairs (RMAs). For swarm doctrine to function, unity of effort must replace unity of command. This takes advantage of the self-organizing nature of a social network. The superiority of rank and position must give way to other principles such as knowledge of the target and combat power available. Unit boundaries must be relaxed or eliminated altogether in favor of a set of basic coordinating principles between adjacent units. Synchronization must succumb to self-organization. Fire support and logistics can no longer be unit-specific but must instead be a geographically based redistributive system. Intelligence must be open to all and analysis done by the collective whole with analytical capability pushed down to the lowest levels. Rules of engagement and authority for interaction with the media must also be delegated down. In order to allow small units to operate independently, they must have a broad base of skills rather than a single specialty. In short, swarm doctrine demands an RMA or perhaps an even broader military revolution.

Development of a more swarm-like mode of operation remains an imperative for success in both the ongoing global war on terrorism as well as in future interstate conflicts. Currently, only Special Operations Forces (SOF)

possess the requisite flexibility, structure, independent culture, and doctrine to even approach the ideal swarming technique laid out by Arquilla and Ronfeldt. There is, however, much room for improvement. SOF units are only capable of swarming in a limited sense due to command and logistics systems that are still hierarchical. The growing complexity of postindustrial warfare requires a deeper commitment to joint and interagency integration, a further flattening of Special Operations Task Forces, a decrease in centralized reporting requirements, and a delegation of authority for intelligence, maneuver, and adjacent unit coordination.

A fundamental requirement for the development of tactics that are more effective in this complex, nonlinear environment is that units must merge the roles of sensor and shooter. Certainly, this potential exists within the special operations community where the culture and doctrine of SOF enables a haphazard, bottom-driven evolution.[6] Paradoxically, the very information technology that enables the dispersion and innovative spirit necessary for swarm war also empowers the command hierarchy to exert ever-tightening control of subunits. Attempts to address a complex operational environment using intelligence and decision tools more appropriate for a complicated, linear battlefield lead to insatiable demands for information by the hierarchy and an increased expectation of obtaining it. Instead of achieving self-organizing, network-centric ubiquity, SOF units increasingly face paralysis by reporting.

One of the biggest challenges that one Special Forces (SF) battalion faced in Iraq in 2006 was how to encourage swarming behavior in its socially networked subunits and balance that behavior with the demands imposed by the hierarchical command structure. The battalion often erred on the side of control, eventually discovering that its subordinates were simply bypassing the chain of command in favor of direct liaison with adjacent elements. When those operational detachments detected time-sensitive targets, they used their communications technology to access intelligence on the target and plan joint operations with neighboring units. More often than not, those other units were not SF Operational Detachments-Alpha (ODA), but conventional units, interagency teams, or even local tribal forces. These tiny, ad hoc task forces would converge, establish a chain of command based on a set of principles that had nothing to do with rank or position, and then act on the target using a combined arms plan they developed themselves. The information they gathered on the objective was instantly input into the

collective knowledge pool before they left the target and their version of events could be broadcast on YouTube before the enemy had time to react. They did all this within their commander's intent but without informing their chain of command. While this mode of operation was completely unacceptable in the context of our industrial era, centralized hierarchy, it was highly effective and impossible for the enemy to predict or understand. As illustrated by this example, one of the principal challenges of swarm warfare is control of the force.

If it were possible to decentralize combat down to the squad level and unify it with the diversity of the interagency, control would become a critical problem for our democratic government. For this reason, Arquilla and Ronfeldt's vision is an idea that is unattainable in its entirety, yet there may be some utility in a hybrid solution. One way to do this is to shift the Army's structure by phase of the operation. SF, for example, maintains a hierarchical structure until a certain point in the operation, after which the unit assumes a functional form. Another solution would be to maintain a vertically differentiated structure that features a hierarchy at the top and a swarm force below that. In either scenario, the Army must reduce the size of higher level staffs, and commanders must focus less on controlling the swarm force and more on managing the systems that support it. Making this work will require a great deal of training, restructuring,

> *… commanders must focus less on controlling the swarm force and more on managing the systems that support it.*

and demonstrated success. With lives on the line, it will be most appropriate to do this on an experimental basis. As it has been so often in the past, SOF and certain interagency partners are the only likely candidates to develop and demonstrate effective swarm tactics.

While the U.S. military, and particularly the special operations community, can and should adopt some degree of swarm doctrine, questions still remain:

a. Can a swarm force defeat a conventional military force? There are few, if any historical examples, although it is possible to argue that SOF achieved just that in Afghanistan in late 2001.

b. Will one swarm force be able to defeat another? This is a critical question with implications not just for the global war on terrorism but also

for interstate warfare if we assume that potential peer competitors of the U.S. are moving toward their own version of swarm war.

c. To what extent will this force be dependent upon air superiority, sea control, and/or occupation of the territory as currently exists in Iraq and Afghanistan? If dependent, how will that occupation be established except by overwhelming conventional force?

d. Will military swarm systems be vulnerable to the confirmation bias and military deception? Does it matter? In an environment without stovepiped information systems, compromise of any part of the network is a compromise of the entire network. Does this represent a fatal vulnerability of the system or does its amorphous nature render this a nonissue?

These questions and more will shape the debate on swarm war but are largely outside the scope of this paper. Whatever the arguments both for and against, we must start and end with how and why SOF should take the lead on this. We cannot ignore the obvious advantages of limitless adaptability and expandability, resilience, and self-organization that make swarm war a natural next step in the evolution of conflict.[7] Even so, there are deeply rooted cultural and structural obstacles that must be overcome before the United States will fully embrace such a revolutionary change. It is likely that we will need to implement these ideas piecemeal on an experimental basis—slowly enough to allow a responsible coevolution of our strategic culture with our doctrine, yet urgently enough that we stay ahead of our rivals without losing sight of them.[8]

Endnotes

1. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *Swarming and the Future of Conflict* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND's National Defense Research Institute, 2000), 43.

2. Kevin Kelly, *Out of Control: The New Biology of Machines, Social Systems, and the Economic World* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994), 45.

3. Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 22.

   Mary Jo Hatch with Ann L. Cunliffe, *Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives*, 2d Ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 106, 113, and 132.

4. Kelly, 22.

5. Ibid., 24-25.

6. Ibid., 45-46. Kelly points out that this is the only viable option for development of a vivisystem, a word he uses to describe the combined function of humans or animals and their organizations or activities. He uses the example of an economy, a corporation, and a computer circuit. This could also apply to an Army unit.

7. Kelly, 22.

8. Ibid., 74.

Enhancing Civil Affairs Assessments with Social Network Analysis

Chad Machiela

While Social Network Analysis (SNA) has been used extensively for optimizing organizational structures within corporations, and more recently for targeting dark networks of terrorists or insurgents, SNA also offers an effective means to enhance Civil Affairs assessments to assist at-risk communities more effectively and with greater credibility and to better disseminate sociocultural information to other U.S. and host-nation forces.

Even when planned and conducted with the best of intentions, U.S. security and humanitarian assistance efforts often conflict with deeply held cultural values and are resisted by the very communities they were meant to assist. Too often development projects provide little value to the community or are accomplished only at great cost. Even more importantly, because aid officials too often lack understanding of the granular level of the communities they are attempting to assist, U.S. resources are expended supporting individuals recognized by other community members as illegitimate or even criminal. Gutelius reported that residents of Mali's capital city of Bamako have long expressed their frustration in watching international assistance dollars siphoned off by the elites of the Bambara-dominated government, which leaves the population susceptible to the influence of Islamist nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and religious organizations who also offer assistance.[1]

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The U.S. Army's Civil Affairs (CA) specialists have consistently proven to be a powerful tool for assisting civilian populations and opening access to key communities. However, these specialists are regionally oriented and employed in the same way that Special Forces Groups are regionally oriented. The high operational tempo of these units ensures that operators spend the majority of their time working outside their nominal areas of geographic orientation. Therefore, even when applying methods that have proven successful in the past, "techniques that have worked in one community may fail when applied in another not because they were inapplicable but because what was really involved was not understood."[2] Too many times U.S. officials define success of development projects based on the number of projects completed instead of how successfully each project has influenced the population. To achieve this real measure of success, CA specialists must understand the population well enough to not only design assistance projects that the community will take ownership of but also motivate the community to undertake them for themselves to change the way they live.

Social Network Analysis (SNA) offers commanders and analysts a method for studying not only the demographics of the communities they are

SNA offers a means to graphically depict relationships between actors to better understand how community members organize, communicate, and mobilize.

attempting to assist but also the social topography of the community. SNA offers a means to graphically depict relationships between actors to better understand how community members organize, communicate, and mobilize. Additionally, SNA offers a format to allow commanders and analysts to pass on the hard-won conceptual understanding of these communities to follow-on forces or other U.S. officials.

The Civil Affairs Assessment Format

While Appendix A (Assessment Formats) of FM 3-05.401 *Civil Affairs Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures* does offer a format for collection of sociocultural information, the value of the product developed is limited to how well the operator can translate bullet comments such as "Humor, entertainment" and "Individuality" into prose that will allow the operator to pass his conceptual framework for understanding a target community to a reader who may have never worked in the area. Paragraph C.5 includes a checklist for biographical sketches of key officials and other influential persons, but has no field for

recording *why* those individuals are key or influential or for quantifying their value. When considering civil-military aspects of planning for stability or reconstruction operations, the fact that a particular individual owns a transportation company with several trucks could be important for a number of contingencies, as could the location of those trucks.

Figure 1 depicts example information taken from biographical sketches of the key officials and influential persons identified during a CA assessment of a small village in northern Thailand called Mae Sariang. (In the interest of privacy, the names and locations depicted in these maps and sociograms demonstrate capability rather than any actual actors or businesses.) In this example, instead of trying to convey the social structure of the target community by offering a stack of biographical sketches, the analyst has imported the fields from the CA assessment into a shapefile for depiction using ArcGIS, a program for displaying and analyzing geospatial data. The
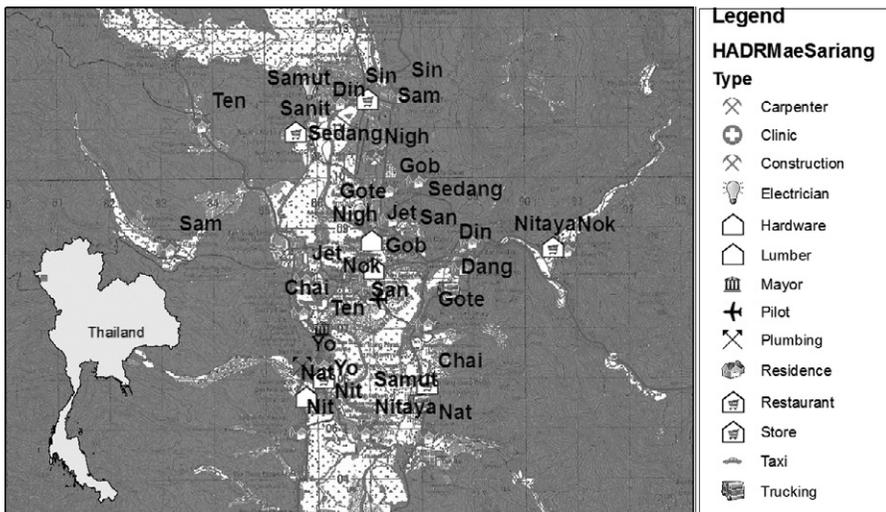
Figure 1. Example Network of Social Entrepreneurs in Mae Sariang, Thailand[3]

commander can then see at a glance where key individuals are located throughout the community and adjust his plans accordingly.

What neither the assessment format nor this geospatial depiction of format data offer is a means to capture, depict, or assist in the understanding of how individuals identified relate to one another. As described by Anna Simons, these ties and relationships form the very basis of how actors in the

non-western world recruit for and support their networks and organizations while also offering cover for their activities.[4]

Social Topography of Communities

Mapping the social topography of the community begins with identifying the primary actors and their roles, be they politicians, community leaders, criminals, or social entrepreneurs. Often an actor may have several of these roles at once. Understanding the community begins with identifying the relationships between actors. CA specialists operate in small teams and generally in resource-constrained environments. Therefore, identifying those members of the community with the social capital to most effectively assist the CA specialists in project development may be crucial to success. Even the small network of 20 individuals shown here is too many for a small team to efficiently leverage themselves. Analysis measures such as degree centrality, betweenness centrality, and Eigenvector centrality can assist CA specialists in identifying and empowering those community members most capable of leveraging others in support of development and assistance projects.

Degree centrality is a simple measure of how many ties a particular actor has within a network. An actor's degree centrality score can be compared to the scores of other network actors, from which the analyst can determine which actors are the most central within the network. Betweenness centrality is measured under the assumption that a particular actor has power over other actors within the network whenever that actor is located between other actors on the shortest path. An example of this relationship is a local new car dealer. While the factory wants to sell a particular car and a customer wants to buy that car, neither can escape the influence of the car dealer who sits in the middle. Eigenvector centrality assumes that ties to central actors are more important than ties to the periphery and weights those ties accordingly. These are only a few of the multiple analysis measures possible with SNA, but an example provided here demonstrates how even these few can be employed by the CA specialist to rapidly identify and depict key community members. There are several inexpensive or free software packages available to assist in SNA, and most are compatible with one another.

Community Networks

In the example below the CA specialists have added questions to their CA assessment format—for example, asking community members identified

as key and influential which other actors are considered friends and which members do they conduct business with. Figures 2 and 3 depict two sociograms (graphical depictions of actors within networks) showing first the social ties between the 20 key personnel depicted geospatially earlier, then
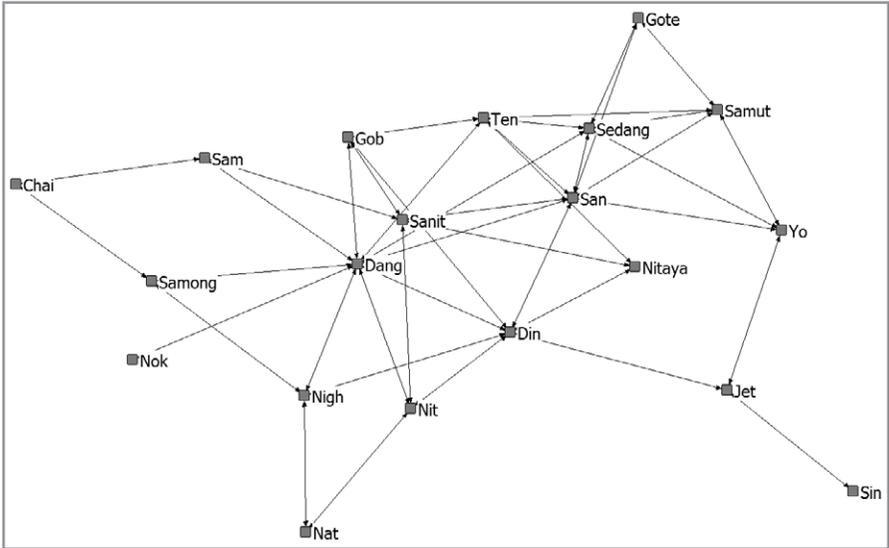

Figure 2. Community Network Depicting Social Ties
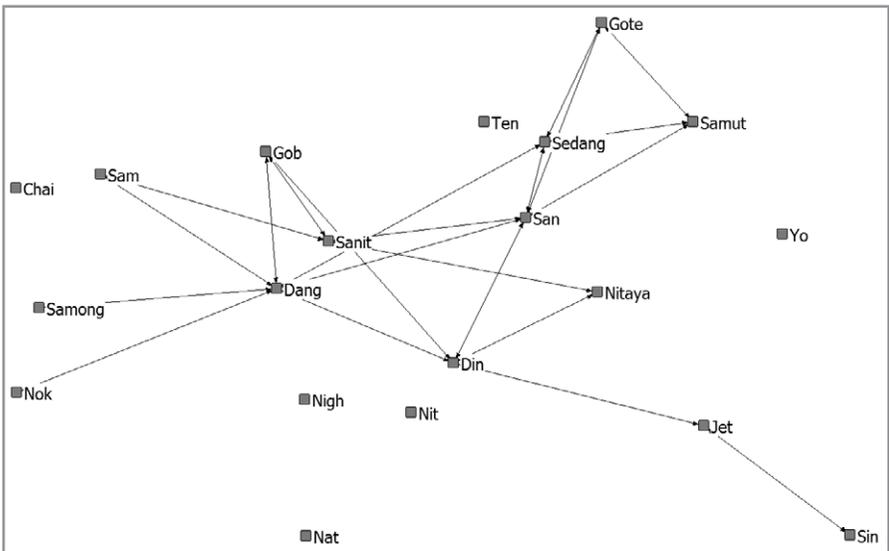
Figure 3. Community Network Depicting Business Ties

by their business ties.[5] While diagrams produced during link analysis depict actors spaced however they may be most easily viewed, SNA sociograms depict actors in two-dimensional space based upon each actor's similarity or dissimilarity to one another. The number and strength of the various ties under consideration determine this similarity or dissimilarity.

Instead of poring over files of biographical sketches in an attempt to determine the social topography of this community, the analyst can use these sociograms to rapidly visualize the community networks. In Figure 2 the analyst can easily see that Dang, Din, San, Sanit, and Ten are all central to this community, each with several social ties to each other and the rest of the community. Figure 3 depicts the business ties between these community members, and again Dang, Sanit, and Din are well connected.

Because of their high degree centrality, betweenness centrality, and Eigenvector centrality, Dang, Sanit, and Din all appear to be excellent candidates for use as primary community representatives. If the CA specialists were limited to these assessments, they would likely choose Dang, Sanit, or Din as their primary liaisons with the community and funnel their efforts through them. However, CA specialists have access to all-source intelligence products, and in this example they have learned that several community members, including Dang and Din, have been implicated in narcotrafficking,
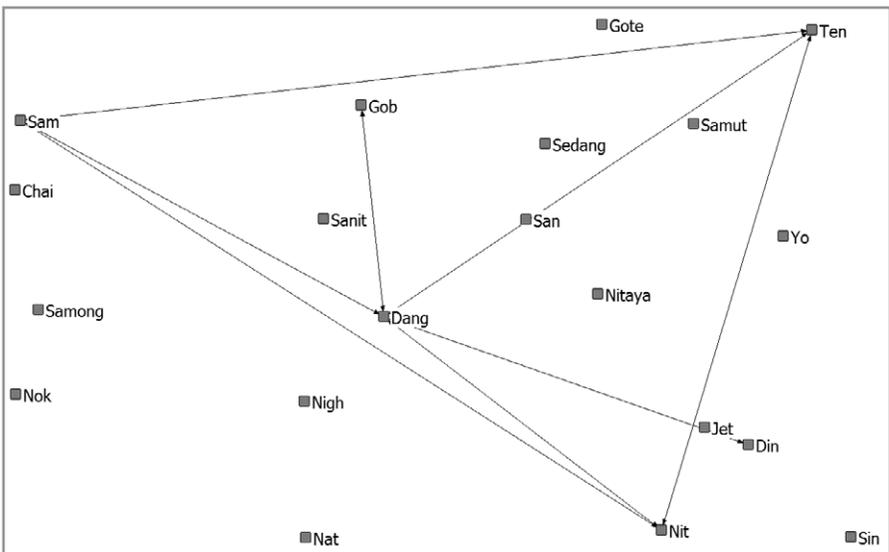

Figure 4. Community Network Depicting Narcotrafficking Ties

depicted in Figure 4. Employing these actors in development or assistance would likely destroy the very credibility the CA specialists are trying to build.

Fortunately the analysts can simply remove Dang and his network of potential dealers, then redraw the social network of this village (as shown in Figure 5) using dashed and dotted lines to differentiate the social and business relationships of the network in a single sociogram.
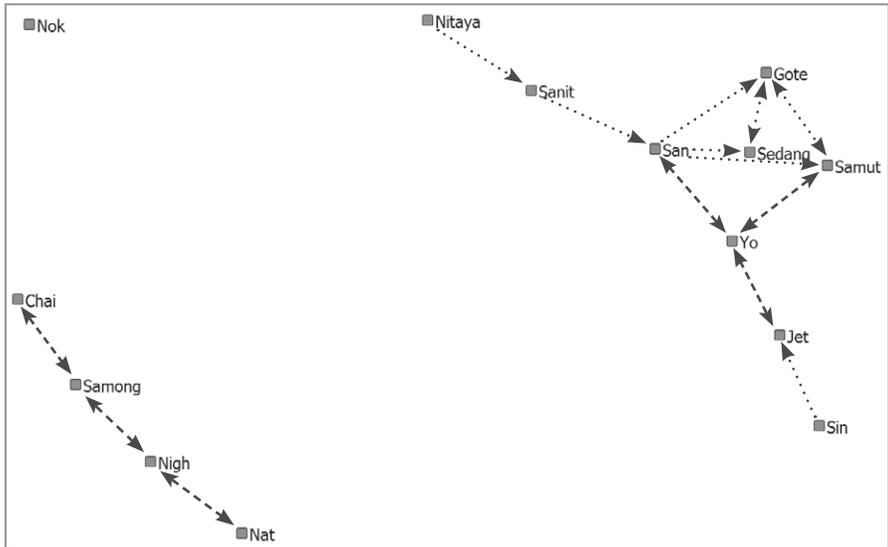
Figure 5. Community Network Depicting Social and Business Ties

Here analysts can see that San is probably a better choice to assist in the distribution of aid resources or leverage indigenous assets. San has both social and business ties to the largest portion of the community network, and by encouraging a relationship between San and perhaps Samong, the CA specialists can tie the entire village back into a potential working network without the loss of credibility that would have been incurred by empowering the narcotraffickers. As an important additional benefit, information detailed in SNA formats is easily passed to follow-on rotational forces, allowing units to familiarize themselves with community social topography and rapidly develop a conceptual framework for understanding the community instead of being forced to start fresh with each rotation.

The use of SNA discussed here is merely the most basic and superficial application. Far more detailed analysis of networks of thousands of actors

can be conducted using a variety of advanced measures, and identifying and recording additional ties will further enhance the analysis. The purpose of this essay was not to describe all the ways SNA could be employed in support of military operations or how SNA can support CA assessments. Rather, the intent was to introduce a methodology that commanders and analysts can employ to better understand the social topography of the communities they are attempting to influence throughout the spectrum of operations and to offer suggestions of how SNA can be used in support of one type of military operation. For more information about using SNA in support of military operations, see Dr. Sean Everton's step-by-step manual, *Tracking, Destabilizing, and Disrupting Dark Networks with Social Network Analysis.*

Endnotes

1. David Gutelius, "War on Terror and Social Networks in Mali," *ISIM Review* 17 (Spring 2006); http://religionresearch.org/martijn/isimreview/ (accessed April 2010).

2. Ward Goodenough, *Cooperation in Change: An Anthropological Approach to Community Development* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1963), 24.

3. NGA, General Navigation Chart (2009), Unclassified. Author created map using ArcMap, which is software by ESRI Data & Maps (2002), Redlands, CA: Environmental Systems Research Institute.

4. Anna Simons and David Tucker, "Improving Human Intelligence in the War on Terrorism: The Need for Ethnographic Capability" (unpublished manuscript, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2004).

5. Author created sociograms using NetDraw; S. P. Borgatti, M. G. Everett, and L. C. Freeman, UCINET 6.0 Version 1 (Natick: Analytic Technologies, 1999).

The Role of SOF Direct Action in Counterinsurgency

Mark Schafer and Chris Fussell

One of the greatest challenges facing today's counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign is that transnational extremists are fanning the flames of theater-level insurgency. Certain direct-action units within Special Operations have demonstrated an ability to remove these elements through surgical strikes. The conundrum is how to execute these operations without disrupting the local populace, thereby undermining the COIN effort. This essay offers one possible solution.

1. What is insurgency/COIN?

In simplest terms, an insurgency is an attempt by a smaller and less powerful force to overthrow an existing government, which is bigger and stronger than the insurgency. It is an internal struggle in which outside powers often find themselves entangled (e.g., the U.S. in today's Afghanistan). Insurgency is one of several ways that an internal force or movement might attempt to overthrow an existing government (as opposed to a political coup, military coup, spontaneous revolution). It is a favored approach of resource-deprived groups who lack fighters, arms, and finances. Insurgencies employ certain tactics (e.g., terrorism) to weaken the delicate relationship between the state and the population, then exploit the seam created by the insurgent activities.

As defined by Joint Publicaton 1-02, an insurgency is "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict." The French COIN theorist David Galula offers a more thorough definition in his classic 1964 study, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, where he describes insurgency

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as "a protracted struggle conducted methodically, step by step, in order to attain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to the overthrow of the existing order."[1]

The state's traditional role is to provide security and services (e.g., national army, legal system, and infrastructure) in return for cooperation from the population. The population reciprocates by following laws and paying taxes because they feel protected by the state. It is a relationship of trust. The insurgency attempts to weaken this relationship by making it appear to the population that the state is no longer able to maintain its part of the bargain, and a proven way to accomplish this is through the use of terror and guerrilla warfare. The nascent phase of an insurgency consists of two sides: a state that has the assets to strike the insurgent, but cannot see him; and an insurgent who can see the state's forces, but lacks the resources to strike. Whichever side is able to overcome their deficiency first (the state's information gap, or the insurgency's resource gap) will move toward victory.[2] A well-organized insurgency, when facing a legitimate or semi-legitimate state, will first create pockets of anarchy to make the population see the government as incapable of providing protection and services—at which time the government is no longer fulfilling its core purpose and becomes illegitimate in the eyes of the polity. The insurgents can then offer themselves as the only viable option to provide security and stability. This allows the insurgency access to what it needs from the population—new recruits, weapons, and financing. An effective insurgency grows as the state slowly losses control of the population.

The Taliban were born spontaneously in 1994 and by 1996 they controlled the majority of Afghanistan, to include the capital. They were able to rapidly conquer Afghanistan because the infighting and power struggles between Afghan warlords had created such a violent and unstable atmosphere following the Soviet's 1989 withdraw. That chaos drove the population willingly to the Taliban because the Taliban offered stability and security, albeit at the cost of Sharia Law.[3] Although violent, the current environment in Afghanistan is not yet as unstable as the post-Soviet period of warlord infighting. Therefore, the Taliban are attempting to generate this chaos through the use of terror and guerrilla warfare in order to weaken the polity's trust in the state. Such tactics, when successful, can convince the population that the state cannot protect them from violence. The Taliban can then capitalize

on the chaos they have generated and gain support from the population in the form of people, guns, and money, threatening to unseat the government.

A successful COIN must convince the population that the state is the most reliable element of power and capable of providing security. Historically, successful COINs have been those in which the state has managed to maintain or regain the confidence of the population. This is where the hearts-and-minds argument originates. As an insurgency grows, the state must work to convince the people, both emotionally and intellectually, that the government is still in control and will provide protection and services. Launching large-scale attacks against insurgents is commonly criticized as an approach to defeating them. Typically, the state pursues the insurgents with blunt attacks before they can truly see the insurgents, thereby leading to increased danger for the population because the insurgents are very difficult to differentiate from innocent civilians (and many locals are a little bit of both). The insurgency can then exploit these blunt actions, further delegitimize the state in the eyes of the citizenry, and gain support from the population. To break this cycle the state must first control the population and regain their confidence; only then will the insurgents become visible. This concept is at the root of General McChrystal's revised approach to the COIN in Afghanistan: "Protecting the Afghan people is the mission. The Afghan people will decide who wins this fight, and we [the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and International Security Assistance Force] are in a struggle for their support."[4] All activities must flow from and support this overarching strategic concept.

2. SOF Direct Action and How it Applies to COIN

Counter-Network Warfare. The Special Operations community and interagency partners have, since 9-11, created a network that mirrors, watches, and out-maneuvers the enemy's network. This capability can be applied to a global enemy network, as well as a localized insurgent network. Recall the popular phrase: It takes a network to defeat a network.[5]

The enemy network moves fast, but a highly focused and highly communicative element can move faster. Parts of the Special Operations community have organized themselves as a robustly connected network that overlays the transnational enemy network. They have combined this structure with unparalleled connectivity and seasoned interagency relationships to create

an organization capable of tracking and countering the enemy's network in near real time. These counter-network operations target the irreconcilables—those committed radicals who will plague the campaign as long as they are on the battlefield.[6] In Afghanistan, these are ultracommitted individuals (some indigenous, some transnational) with the connectivity and resources to significantly disrupt COIN efforts and the skill level to avoid being captured or killed during clear-hold-build operations.

But how does this unique counter-network capability apply to the COIN environment? The often-cited center of gravity in COIN is the population. The counterinsurgent must control and secure the population in order to expose the insurgent fighters. Only then can the enemy be accurately targeted in such a manner as to avoid creating *accidental guerrillas*.[7] It would appear that direct-action operations could be counterproductive in such a campaign; indeed, this is likely the case if these operations are not properly coordinated with the strategic campaign. If improperly sequenced or insufficiently integrated with the vision of the theater commander, direct-action missions could actually extend the lifespan of an insurgency by aggravating and alienating the population. However, with proper coordination and execution, the pinpoint accuracy of the well-executed direct-action missions will greatly enhance the effectiveness of a larger COIN campaign.

In today's conflicts there are two levels of enemy network, local insurgents and transnational elements. The lines between these two are often hazy, but both can be targeted in support of the COIN campaign. The transnational network is comprised of ultracommitted individuals who are able to finance, train, equip, inspire, and direct the insurgents. The U.S. saw examples of this network when Al Qaeda in Iraq, led by Jordanian-born Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, was able to utilize both foreign and Iraqi insurgents. The Al Qaeda Central (AQC) ability to influence the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan is another example. Their network is largely effective because of its ability to move key personnel in and out of the battlefield, thereby influencing events with a minimal amount of people relative to the number of local fighters (consider the ratio of Al Qaeda to Taliban fighters in Afghanistan). AQC's ability to move personnel quickly, maintain operational security, and employ sophisticated communications procedures makes them elusive targets. Yet while the AQC network has relatively few members, they are an element that must be dealt with as they have nested influence throughout the insurgency and tend to be the most radically committed players.

Certain Special Operations elements have a unique capability to address this network of indigenous and transnational radicals and are therefore a key component of today's COIN fight. A significant and unique strength of these forces is the combined effectiveness of highly skilled tacticians, a robust package of assets, and a networked command and intelligence support system. The deliberate and coordinated application of counter-network operations is a key component of today's COIN campaign.

Counter-Network Operations in a COIN Environment. An effective Special Operations direct-action unit is a sum of its parts. Experienced operators and robust assets are supported by a global intelligence network to create a force package capable of rapidly pursuing the enemy network in difficult or denied areas.

There are two main areas where Special Operations elements can support a COIN campaign; their counter-network capability gives them a comparative advantage to execute these operations with great speed and accuracy:

a. **Preparation for Clear-Hold-Build.** When properly sequenced, the ability of an effective direct-action unit to penetrate denied areas will act as a shaping operation for the clear-hold-build strategy of a larger force. Prior to the clearance portion of a COIN operation, these elements can be utilized for surgical direct-action missions targeting key insurgent leadership in the area to be cleared. These operations will not destroy the resistance; conventional forces will still face a fight to clear and hold the location. However, the pinpoint operations of these forces can remove key leadership in order to reduce the overall effectiveness of the insurgent network prior to the large-scale clearance operations. Timing is absolutely critical. Insurgents can exploit the collateral effects of direct-action missions and foster even stronger resistance to eventual clear-hold-build operations if there is a gap (time or space) between the execution of direct-action missions and follow-on clear-hold operations of the larger force. Shaping operations must be considered in terms of hours before clearing operations, not days.

b. **Sanctuary Disruption.** Past operations have shown that during the hold-and-build portions of COIN a significant number of the insurgents who survived clearance operations will move to sanctuaries where they are able to refit and plan future operations. There will also be a contingent of fighters who remain hidden (or just living)

among the populace. Hold-and-build operations will isolate this second group of insurgents from their network, and as conventional forces provide greater levels of security for the local population, the insurgents hiding among the populace can be ferreted out in large part by General Purpose Forces (GPF).[8] But SOF direct-action units have a significant comparative advantage in their ability to protect hold-and-build operations from insurgents operating out of sanctuaries.[9] While direct-action units will not occupy these sanctuaries, they can effectively disrupt them and make the enemy's ability to stage for and plan operations that much less effective. These sanctuary disruption operations will provide space and time for the larger force to conduct the difficult task of occupation and reconstruction.[10]

The Coordination Imperative

Coordination between units is too often confused with deconfliction. Informing units when and where you will be in their battle space is *deconfliction*. Ensuring that all operations are synchronized toward a common strategic goal is *coordination*. Deconfliction is one of many steps in the mission-planning process, while coordination must be an ever-present part of how all units look at their operations. Effective coordination will eventually drive operations; deconfliction will not.

Nonsynchronized operations can lead to individual successes for units while making no strategic advances. Coordination must be seen as an imperative in counter-network operations within a COIN environment. Proactive efforts are required at every level of coordination. Liaison officer exchanges and intelligence fusion cells are good examples of an effort to coordinate. Most importantly, officers in those positions must be informed and empowered to actually do the substantive coordination required and synchronize operations.

The inherent differences among coalition forces are, remarkably, enough to stifle the coordination imperative and hinder strategic gains. Differences in military service cultures, jargon, and appearances are petty, but have proven substantial enough to stymie effective coordination. Cultural differences lead to avoidance, which then leads to isolation and disunity of effort. Compound this issue with the challenges of using different computer networks, working in separate compounds, and reporting through different chains of command and one can quickly see that coordination requires

a disciplined effort. If units are not interacting, sharing information, and coordinating their efforts to the point of discomfort, they are not meeting the minimum standard of the coordination imperative. Without this, as over 8 years in Afghanistan have shown, our forces will execute countless commendable operations without consistent strategic gains.

Summary

SOF direct-action units fill the distinct role of counter-network operations within a COIN campaign. This essay proposes that these forces are best employed as the vanguard for larger clear-hold-build operations and as a surgical force to disrupt the insurgents' sanctuaries. The coordination imperative will ensure that offensive counter-network operations are designed to best complement the overarching COIN strategy, mitigating the secondary effects involved with rooting out the irreconcilable insurgent leaders. Only effective coordination can ensure that counter-network operations are properly focused on the goal of providing space in which larger forces can execute the highly complex mission of COIN.[11]

3. Application to Afghanistan's Insurgency

Coalition forces must never forget that they are fighting a thinking enemy in Afghanistan. The enemy has many years of battlefield experience. He fights on his terrain. The battles take place in his culture. When coalition forces redeploy to rest, refit, and train, the enemy remains in or very close to the fight. As long as the enemy is on the battlefield, his skill set grows exponentially. These are significant advantages. Therefore, today's leadership must outthink the enemy—on *our* terms and *his* terms.

To win in Afghanistan, the ability of the Taliban to grow must be destroyed. There are two basic ways in which an otherwise neutral Afghan male might come to join the Taliban insurgency: intimidation by the insurgents or being driven to volunteerism. Traditionally, direct-action forces would prefer to focus on the former—intimidation by the insurgents. But a thinking enemy is focused on the latter—gaining numbers through volunteerism.

Fighting on our terms. In the first scenario, insurgents use severe intimidation against the population. Direct-action units are the good guys seeking to protect the population from this cruelty, while the insurgents are the bad guys using extreme violence and threats to intimidate the local populace into

joining their ranks. In this scenario, direct-action forces do their best work. These units track, target, and remove evil elements from the battlefield in a highly effective manner. This, one would reason, should gain the support of the population. On our terms, direct-action forces are removing very bad actors and ending their tactics of intimidation and violence. On *our* terms, defeating the insurgency is a straightforward contest, and the population will appreciate our efforts.

Fighting on his terms. A thinking enemy prefers the second scenario—volunteerism. In this scenario, the population willingly joins the enemy's ranks and offers support. The insurgents know how skilled coalition forces are in targeting and kinetics. However, the insurgent also understands Afghan cultural norms, how coalition forces operate, and how to exploit those actions. While a kinetic action might remove a very bad actor (our terms), the thinking enemy is prepared for this loss and stands ready to exploit the action. The thinking enemy moves in quickly and quietly and plays to the cultural norms within the village or valley, offering his force as the only legitimate avenue to regain pride and self-rule. When this approach gains two new insurgents for the one that was removed, the thinking enemy wins.

The challenge is to break this cycle. When coalition forces outthink the enemy on his terms, the volunteer avenue is diminished. The insurgency will always need new members, so without volunteerism it must revert to our terms—intimidation of the population. When the enemy uses intimidation he is alienated from the population, making him more visible and therefore more targetable. Improved targeting shrinks the insurgency while increasing the legitimacy of the COIN force and the government in the eyes of the population. This is the path to victory, but requires extensive coordination amongst all elements.

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The challenge then is to win on *our* terms where the direct-action forces are incredibly effective and *his* terms where the enemy's strength lies and the most rigorous thought process begins. This is not to say simply reduce kinetic targeting; rather, it proposes that direct-action operations are a critical component of the COIN effort when synchronized with the entire battlefield. Coordination is an imperative and must be tirelessly enforced throughout every tactical operation. The thinking enemy's follow-on actions

must be countered. Coalition units must work as a synchronized element in pursuit of one common strategic goal. If the United States hopes to defeat this thinking enemy who possesses very dangerous comparative advantages, the efforts of direct-action units must be a coordinated part of the continuum of operations. That is the true test for our leadership.

Endnotes

1. David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 1964).

2. This concept is drawn from Dr. Gordon McCormick, Chair of the Defense Analysis Department at Naval Postgraduate School. For additional commentary on this initial imbalance, see David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla* (Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 60, where he expands on Dr. McCormick's concepts.

3. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (Yale University Press, 2001).

4. S. McChrystal, International Security Assistance Force Commander's Counter-insurgency Guidance, 2009; available at www.nato.int/isaf/docu/official_texts/counterinsurgency_guidance.pdf (accessed Mayl 2010).

5. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1996).

6. *U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (FM) 3-24 (University of Chicago Press, 2007). For further discussion on this topic, see p. 149:

   > With respect to the hard-core extremists, who would never give up, the task was more straightforward: their complete and utter destruction. Neutralizing the bad actors support[s] the main effort by improving the local security environment. Neutralization [should] be accomplished in a discrete and discriminate manner, however, in order to avoid unin-tentionally increasing support for insurgency.

7. David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla.*

8. Recommended reading is *Tell Me How This Ends* by Linda Robinson (New York: Perseus Books Group, 2008); it provides insight into the GPF ability to push insurgents out from the population during the Operation Iraqi Freedom surge.

9. For additional commentary on these complementary operations, see *U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, p. 176. During hold-and-build, it is key to "isolate the area to cut off external support and kill or capture escaping insurgents."

10. *U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*. For further discussion on the importance of environment and geography, see p. 28 where environment and geography are referred to as "perhaps the predominant influence on decisions regarding force structure and doctrine (including tactics, techniques, and procedures)." Direct-action forces have a comparative advantage (because of

lift capabilities, intelligence, and operator skill sets) in their ability to penetrate geographically difficult areas being utilized by the network.

11. Ibid. For further discussion, see p. 39: "Unity of effort must be present at every echelon of a COIN operation. Otherwise, well-intentioned but uncoordinated actions can cancel each other or provide vulnerabilities for insurgents to exploit."

Words Mean Something: Clarifying the Nuances among Irregular Warfare, Stability Operations, and Special Operations

John F. Griffin

This essay attempts to discern the differences among irregular warfare, stability operations, and special operations. The approach is linguistically based upon the doctrinal definitions. While today's conflict is the context for which the discussion is considered, this essay is not myopically based on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The intent is to clarify the doctrinal definitions of these terms and how they relate to war or the application of military force.

Words mean something. These words have been echoed by every instructor I have had since entering the military. While a simple sentence, the impact of the statement is profound. For a word to mean something there has to be a common acceptance and practical application of the definition. When a word fails to mean something concrete, it has lost its value. This essay offers a linguistic tangent to preface the topic because in the end, this essay is a linguistic argument.[1] Therefore to effectively lay the foundation of the argument, we need to begin with an acceptance of what does the statement "Words mean something" suggest.

While some words will state a fact, it may not be a universal fact. Consider the word *good*; it is not a good word. Many assume to understand its connotation, but it does not offer fact. It merely offers the user's perspective—for

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example, "He is a good Christian" or "He is a good criminal." The term *good* does not infer any fact, merely a perspective. Another challenge to defining words concretely is the definition may change over time from one that previously stated fact to a word that now provides a perspective, not fact. Consider the word *gentleman*; it used to mean that this person owns land and has a coat of arms—fact. It does not infer any reference to a man's moral fiber or social conduct. Today *gentleman* is a descriptive word only meaningful to the user, announcing his opinion—not a fact. Thus the inherent challenge to the Department of Defense is to establish a meaningful lexicon vice a vernacular because the meaning of the choice of words has an impact on resources, policy, and most importantly, human life.[2]

One of the topics offered in *USSOCOM Research Topics 2010* is about "clarifying the nuances between irregular warfare, stability operations, and special operations."[3] To begin, what follows are the approved definitions.

> **Irregular warfare.** A violent struggle among state and nonstate actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). Irregular warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will.[4]

> **Stability operations.** An overarching term encompassing various 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.[5]

> **Special operations.** Operations conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to achieve military, diplomatic, informational, and/or economic objectives employing military capabilities for which there is no broad conventional force requirement. These operations often require covert, clandestine, or low-visibility capabilities. Special operations are applicable across the range of military operations. They can be conducted independently or in conjunction with operations of conventional forces or other government agencies and may include operations through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces. Special operations differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and

political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets.[6]

The first discriminator in identifying the nuances among these three terms is to focus on the nouns, not the adjectives: warfare and operations. An operation is defined as a "military action or the carrying out of a strategic, operational, tactical, service, training, or administrative military mission."[7] Warfare does not have a doctrinal definition, but Webster's defines it as "the action of waging war."[8] Thus the immediate difference identified among these terms is warfare is the act of waging war while operations are those actions or missions conducted by the military, but operations do not necessitate warfare. For instance, stability operations can be a humanitarian relief effort. Special operations can be used to achieve economic objectives. Special operations may be in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments but that does not infer war in the Clauswitzian lexicon (an act of violence to compel our enemy to fulfill our will).

Irregular warfare is distinctly different from traditional or unconventional warfare but given today's vernacular, the difference is probably not within the realm of what most observers would expect. Irregular warfare is not the antonym of traditional warfare nor is unconventional warfare the antithesis of either term as well.

> **Traditional warfare** is characterized as a confrontation between nation states or coalitions/alliances of nation states. Traditional war typically involves small-scale to large-scale, force-on-force military operations in which adversaries employ a variety of conventional military capabilities against each other in the air, land, maritime, and space physical domains and the information environment.[9]

> **Unconventional warfare** is a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source.[10]

Thus while traditional warfare is a confrontation among nations states using conventional capabilities, unconventional warfare are those operations

(therefore by definition, not war because operations are military actions carrying out a military mission) through, with, or by indigenous forces by an external source. And finally, irregular warfare is the struggle by state and nonstate actors for legitimacy and influence over a population. The importance of clarifying the difference among irregular, traditional, and unconventional warfare is important because while different, they are not mutually exclusive. The means in which you accomplish your objective in war (national policy—an act of violence to compel our enemy to fulfill our will— not grand strategy, which is military

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specific) may be through traditional (force-on-force military operations employing a variety of conventional capabilities), irregular (a violent struggle for legitimacy over a population between state and/or nonstate actors), and/ or unconventional warfare (through indigenous forces).

How a nation decides to achieve its objective in war (compelling an enemy to fulfill our will) will dictate the style of warfare and the nature of the commensurate operations. If the nation seeks a traditional war, then by doctrinal definition, it does not employ special operations. Again, traditional wars are force-on-force military operations in which adversaries employ a variety of conventional military capabilities. Conventional forces are those "forces capable of conducting operations using nonnuclear weapons [and] those forces other than designated special operations forces."[11] Special operations are those operations that achieve objectives employing military capabilities for which there are no broad conventional requirements. But if a nation is fighting an irregular or unconventional war, the employment of special operations is germane; irregular war—influence the population, unconventional war—use of indigenous forces by an external source.

As previously identified, the conduct of stability operations does not necessitate a state of war. It can be incorporated as part of the national security strategy; it can be conducted in response to international calamities, but doctrinally not a function of war. However, stability operations can be conducted as a part of warfare. Most clearly through irregular warfare (earning legitimacy over a population), partially through unconventional warfare (establishing a safe and secure environment), but not as a part of traditional war (nation states employing conventional military capabilities

force on force). Stability operations were conducted after World War II in Germany and Japan by the military, but that was after the United States had compelled the enemy to fulfill our will. Stability operations are being conducted today in Iraq and Afghanistan by the military. In Iraq, stability operations are being conducted following the termination of the traditional war (against Saddam's regime; nonnuclear war). As the conflict transitioned to irregular warfare (a struggle between state and/or nonstate actor to earn legitimacy and influence a population), the enemy had changed from a state actor to a nonstate actor. The United States was still conducting stability operations as a product of the traditional war, but now stability operations were supporting the objectives of an irregular war. As a product of conducting irregular warfare, the United States conducted unconventional warfare-like operations (through, with, by indigenous forces by an external source), but Iraq is not an unconventional war; it is now irregular. In Afghanistan, the enemies have remained the same: Al Qaeda is a nonstate actor, and the Taliban was a state actor but is now a nonstate actor. But the doctrinal analysis is identical to Iraq. The military is conducting stability operations following the traditional war while simultaneously using stability operations to win the current irregular war.

As stated in *USSOCOM Research Topics 2010*, an important element of this issue is to ensure SOF are put to their best use within this environment. (By *this environment* I will assume stability operations and irregular warfare.) Clearly SOF are appropriate in irregular warfare. By definition, irregular warfare (population focused) favors indirect and asymmetric approaches in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will.[12] The more difficult consideration is whether special operations can support stability operations. Doctrinally, special operations have a finite role in stability operations. If the nature, or a portion, of the stability operation is to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, then special operations can perform that part of the mission that requires covert, clandestine or low-visibility capabilities" where there is no conventional force requirement.

There are two challenges to the SOCOM research topic—that is, regarding SOF being put to their best use within this environment:

a. The United States is currently fighting an irregular war against global terrorism. Because definitions are made to enhance clarity and communication, having a Department of Defense dictionary is a prudent

requirement. However, during a time of war, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and the President of the United States should not be limited by a government-produced dictionary in considering all options when prosecuting an act of violence to compel our enemy to fulfill our will.

b.   The term special operations is doctrinally at odds with itself. The requirement for special operations comes when there is no broad conventional force requirement. The definition then states they "can be conducted in conjunction with operations of conventional forces." And yet the definition of conventional forces states those "forces other than designated special operations forces." The special operations definition then concludes with "special operations differ from conventional operations . . ." If an operation is designated special because there is no conventional force requirement, then doctrinally, special operations are not conducted in conjunction with the operations of conventional forces. The line is blurred regarding the use of special operations because we are at war, and adhering to a definition is far less important than winning the war.

In an academic sense, irregular warfare and stability operations are useful words. Special operations requires more clarity to be precise. The current definition for special operations reflects how special operations are being employed today. That fact reflects the reality that the nation is at war as opposed to a doctrinally concise definition. To clarify the nuances among the three terms, irregular warfare is a style of warfare whose focus is to earn influence over the population. That is distinctly different from stability operations and special operations, which are not a form of warfare, but specific activities conducted by the military. Stability operations can occur during war or after war. The French colonialists in Africa eventually developed the technique of conducting stability operations as close to the front line of combat as possible. That was an irregular war, and the center of gravity was the population. Stability operations were an activity, not a form of warfare. However, the United States conducted stability operations at the conclusion of World War II. The war was over, but the military activity in the post-conflict theaters was necessary. Special operations are required when there is no conventional force requirement and they are different from conventional operations. Special operations are appropriate

for irregular warfare but have limited applicability to stability operations, doctrinally speaking.

Endnotes

1. Linguistics. n. The study of a particular language.

2. Lexicon. n. A dictionary, a special vocabulary. Vernacular. n. The jargon of a profession or trade.

3. See http://jsoupublic.socom.mil/publications/jsou/2010ResearchTopics_final.pdf, topic H28, page 58. Also, a comment on the quote, specifically "between"; *among* is the correct word here. Words mean something.

4. Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, 2007, xx.

5. Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 12 April 2001 (as amended through 30 May 2008).

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. *Webster's New World Dictionary* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1988).

9. Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*.

10. Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*.

11. Ibid.

12. Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*.