RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESS IN AFGHANISTAN

Dr. M. Chris Mason, Ph.D.
Editor
with
Colonel John Crisafulli, U.S. Army
Colonel Fernando Farfan, National Army of Colombia
Lieutenant Colonel Aaron French, U.S. Air Force
Brigadier General Yama Kambiz, Afghan National Army
Lieutenant Colonel Bryan Kirk, U.S. Army
Colonel Matthew Maybouer, U.S. Army
Lieutenant Colonel John Sannes, U.S. Army
Contributing Authors

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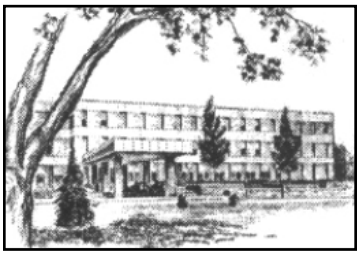

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M. Chris Mason
Editor

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FOREWORD

This monograph is the result of an integrated research project conducted by a group of eight officers at the U.S. Army War College during the 2017-2018 academic year. Three of the officers were international fellows, and five were U.S. military special operations officers with multiple tours of duty in Afghanistan. Together they had more than 20 years of experience working on various aspects of the complex problem set facing the United States in Afghanistan before arriving on campus. Significantly, while integrated research projects are common, this project was the first such endeavor ever to be generated at the student level and then set in motion by the U.S. Army War College faculty, rather than vice versa. In addition to their experience, the officers brought with them to Carlisle Barracks, PA, an intense desire to put their knowledge and lessons learned on paper and continue to push ahead against the problems they faced in Afghanistan.

The group identified the four most important and challenging issues which the Resolute Support mission grapples with on a daily basis: (1) maintaining the equilibrium of power and control between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban at its current level; (2) bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table to begin peace talks with the Afghan Government; (3) getting Pakistan to curb its 17-year support to the Taliban; and, (4) start to roll back the pernicious dominance of opium production in the Afghan economy and its corrosive influence on national governance and state-building. Everyone involved in this project was keenly aware that thousands of dedicated U.S., Afghan, and international personnel from the military,

diplomatic, and academic spheres have been struggling with these same four issues for almost 2 decades. The group's intention was to enhance that ongoing effort through academic research and the application of the members' experience in order to develop specific, implementable solutions for each of the four problems. The faculty tasked the group with avoiding both long history lessons and the kind of vague bromides (i.e., "so-and-so must do more such-and-such") which tend to dominate external reviews of the challenges facing Afghanistan but which are too nebulous to implement.

Some of the proposed lines of action are unconventional. Because this monograph is the product of an international team of military officers, not all of the views, analyses, and recommendations it contains reflect U.S. Army or U.S. Government policy. Furthermore, because the officers divided themselves into teams of two to address each of the four challenges discreetly, not all of the analyses and proposals reflect the views of all eight of the participants. Given the task of addressing these four persistent problems in Afghanistan with a wide-open aperture, and without the restraints and constraints of current policy and lines of action, the group responded with a blend of recommendations for both current operation improvements and recommendations for new and sometimes unorthodox approaches. This monograph is the product of a combined 8 academic years of research and analysis (not counting faculty engagement), and the set of

proposals contained herein for enhancing the prospects for success in Afghanistan are indeed worthy of further consideration and discussion.

DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.
Director
Strategic Studies Institute and
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PREFACE

This monograph is the result of an integrated research project conducted by a group of eight resident students at the U.S. Army War College in 2018. The group was comprised of five U.S. special operations officers with experience in Afghanistan and international fellows from Colombia, India, and Afghanistan. This group brought a unique set of experiences to the challenging problems now pressing on the nation-building effort in Afghanistan. The research project took on the four most difficult problems confronting the international community in the ongoing conflict for in-depth research and analysis. The problems themselves have long been identified and have been the focus of concerted efforts by the United States and our allies for 15 years:

1. The open border with Pakistan and cross-border sanctuary for Taliban forces.
2. The cultivation of opium poppies and its effects on the Afghan Government, civil society, and guerilla operations.
3. The challenge of creating and sustaining a capable state security architecture during an ongoing conflict.
4. Reducing the capabilities of a persistent and confident enemy and getting to a negotiated conflict resolution.

As these are already well known, the group was directed away from either elaborating on descriptions of these challenges or devoting much space in the core paper to the history of these problems, as this would add little to the literature already available. Rather, the

researchers were charged with bringing their practical experience and analysis to bear on developing solutions with the highest probability of success. A pair of researchers addressed each of the four major problems, and each of the four teams was tasked with producing at least four detailed, actionable recommendations to solve the problems. In addition to a short chapter for each problem with its recommendations, the group also created appendices detailing its research, sources, and case studies.

The group was specifically directed to avoid the usual, vague recommendations that everyone working on the problems has seen and heard so often, such as "Pakistan must do more" or "the Afghan Government must eliminate corruption." While certainly true, such bromides do little to advance practical solutions to stubborn problems, which have resisted the best efforts of two generations of Americans. Within a year or two, the first American Soldier or Marine will deploy for duty in the Afghan conflict who was not born when it began in October 2001. There is little which has not been tried before.

The eight researchers studied what has been tried and sought to draw out what worked and why. They focused on realistic recommendations that were specific enough to be begun by this generation of soldiers and diplomats on the ground. Because this is the product of military officers, many of the solutions that emerged from their research are within the power of

security forces in Afghanistan to test and implement. However, as thousands of dedicated men and women now focused on these persistent problems know only too well, there are few silver bullets which will solve these challenges overnight. The problems are unusually complex and often intertwined with each other, and even vary from one region of Afghanistan to another, such that what could work in one place might not be as effective in another.

The man-years invested in analyzing the problems focused on by this project, guided by faculty members with decades of experience in Afghanistan and Pakistan, have yielded a valuable product for discussion. This monograph provides some distilled wisdom derived from the 17 hard years of struggle that are already behind us to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan, and specific, sometimes "outside-the-box" recommendations to improve the odds of success there in the coming years. The authors believe that these are valuable suggestions; if even one of these suggestions is tested locally, found to enhance the war effort, and could be implemented more broadly with success, the prospects for peace and stability in Afghanistan will be improved.

Dr. M. Chris Mason, Ph.D.
Group Faculty Advisor
July 10, 2018

SUMMARY

The United States will soon enter the 18th year of combat operations in Afghanistan. During that time, multiple approaches to stabilize the country have been tried, including support to regional security initiatives, "nation-building," counterinsurgency, counternarcotics, counterterrorism, and "train and equip." The constellation of anti-government elements known collectively as the Taliban continues to refuse reconciliation or a negotiated peace under the existing Afghan constitution. There are few, if any, silver bullets, but to optimize conditions for success, the United States should continue to prioritize its efforts against the four major challenges in Afghanistan and engage the recommended solutions herein for each:

1. The Pakistan problem—reducing the Taliban cross-border sanctuary;
2. Decreasing opium profits and Taliban access to them;
3. Improving and retaining Afghanistan's security forces and decimating Taliban cadres; and,
4. Widening the spectrum of options for reconciliation with the Taliban.

This monograph consists of four chapters that address these challenges in order and suggests at least four specific, implementable policy recommendations for each one. Appendices are provided which summarize research, sources, and case studies. This monograph is the result of an integrated research project completed in 2018 which had a unique mix of senior military contributors, including two brigadier generals from South Asia, a colonel from Colombia with extensive experience against the Revolutionary Armed

Forces of Colombia-People's Army ("FARC" in Spanish), and five U.S. special operations officers with multiple tours of duty in Afghanistan. The project advisor was Dr. M. Chris Mason, an Afghanistan specialist since 2001.

CONTENTS

Foreword vii

Preface xi

Summary xv

Introduction 1

Four Key Factors for the Future of Afghanistan 1

Chapter 1. Recommendations for Reducing Cross-Border Taliban Support 5

Pakistani Support 5

The Afghanistan-Pakistan Border 9

Regional States 12

Recommendations 13

Endnotes – Chapter 1 16

Chapter 2. Recommendations for Reducing the Opium Trade 19

Recommendations 23

Endnotes – Chapter 2 26

Chapter 3. Recommendations for Improving the Afghan National Defense Security Forces 29

ANDSF Attrition 35

Security Architecture Realignment 37

Recommendations 46

Endnotes – Chapter 3 49

Chapter 4. Recommendations
for Moving Toward Reconciliation 55

A Brief History of Reconciliation Efforts
1978 to Present.....56

Recommendations 68

Endnotes – Chapter 4 71

Appendix I. The Soviet Construction of
Afghanistan's Security Forces 75

The Design 75

The Sarandoy.....76

The KhAD 77

The Afghan Military.....77

Aviation.....79

Border Forces.....79

Citizen Militias 80

Tribal and Border Militias 80

Takeaways 81

Endnotes – Appendix I 83

Appendix II. Afghan Reconciliation Historical Review 85

Annex: Pashtun Uprising and Hadda Mullah Case Study 92

Endnotes – Appendix II 95

Appendix III. Colombia's Reconciliation With the FARC—Case Study 99

Colombia's Military Strategy to Take the FARC to Negotiations 102

Demobilization Program Before Talks 107

The Contrast Between the Two Conflicts 110

Conclusions 112

Endnotes – Appendix III 114

Appendix IV. Reconciliation Terms and Definitions 117

Endnotes – Appendix IV 118

List of Contributors 119

Project Editor 119

Contributing Authors 119

INTRODUCTION

FOUR KEY FACTORS FOR THE FUTURE OF AFGHANISTAN

The United States will soon enter the 18th year of combat operations in Afghanistan. The original mission to topple the Taliban and establish an interim Afghan Government was accomplished within the first 12 months of the war, but mistakes were made and stability remained elusive. In the years following the 2001 Bonn Conference in Germany, multiple approaches emerged which included support to regional security, "nation-building," counterinsurgency, counternarcotics, counterterrorism, and creating an Afghan national security architecture from scratch. A mixture of these approaches remains in place today. Meanwhile, the Taliban continue to make minor tactical and territorial gains using a "death of a thousand cuts" approach to sapping Afghan Government security forces and their morale. Battlefield losses and the shrinkage of the security forces through persistently high annual attrition suggest the patient Taliban adage of "you have the watches, but we have the time" is working via the classic guerilla tactic of seemingly random, scattered attacks against weak police checkpoints and minor army positions all over the country. It is a well-known principle of counterinsurgency that "if you are not winning, you are losing." To reverse this sense of Taliban confidence in victory and the slow, creeping erosion of government control of the rural areas, it is critical to first establish a true military standoff, defined as a situation in which no significant Taliban military action can be taken or

territorial progress made. Few would suggest that this is the case today, or that the Taliban lack confidence in their gradualist strategy of attrition.

To optimize the opportunities for success going forward, it is broadly agreed that the United States should continue to focus strategic efforts against four key challenges. First, reducing the cross-border Taliban sanctuary in Pakistan should be the highest priority of the U.S. effort. Second, incremental improvement in efforts to decrease poppy production and its corrosive effects on Afghan society at all levels is essential if Afghanistan is ever to move out of the narco-state shadow. This problem has frustrated planners for 15 years, and it is time to try new approaches and reinforce points of past success. Third, these approaches have to be reinforced by increasing and improving Afghanistan's military capacities and the effectiveness of current targeting priorities. Taliban foot soldiers and tactical leaders are easily replaced, but village and district cadres are less so. Fourth, new and unpalatable approaches to a negotiated end to the conflict must be considered, as the war seems unlikely to end on our terms.

The chapters in this monograph analyze these efforts and offer four concrete, implementable recommendations for improvement in each one. The integrated research project which led to this monograph was conducted by a unique mix of senior military officers. It was centered on two brigadier generals from South Asia and a colonel from Colombia with decades of experience against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army ("FARC" in Spanish). The group also included two colonels and three lieutenant colonels in U.S. special operations with extensive experience in Afghanistan. Worth noting is the

unanimous consensus of the research group that, for the United States to be successful in Afghanistan, the effort will take a commitment of decades. There are no short-term fixes and few silver bullets.

The layout of this monograph consists of four chapters which address the challenges in order, each concluding with specific policy recommendations. Appendices are included which summarize research and case studies. This approach allows the reader to scan for the main points and use the appendices to access underlying research and data in greater detail. Every strategy has prioritized efforts. The four well-known challenges with recommended approaches described herein should remain as the priority considerations for leaders and planners supporting the Afghanistan mission. The views and recommendations contained in this monograph and any factual mistakes it may inadvertently contain are entirely the responsibility of the monograph editor.

CHAPTER 1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDUCING CROSS-BORDER TALIBAN SUPPORT

It has been well-understood for more than a decade that Pakistani support for the Taliban guerrillas and poor control of Afghanistan's borders plague the stabilization effort. The goals of finding a means of addressing Pakistan's support to the Taliban and other violent extremist organizations, improving border control between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and securing the cooperation of other regional states remain elusive, despite 17 years of effort. Reducing cross-border support for the Taliban in Pakistan would require a harder assessment of the factors in Pakistan that support the insurgency and a willingness to "take the gloves off," so to speak. Everything that has been tried since 2001 has failed to change Pakistani behavior, and more repetition of the same talking points will not have the desired effect.

PAKISTANI SUPPORT

"External sanctuary and support is a decisive factor in determining the outcome of an insurgency."[1] As Steve Coll notes in his recent history of Pakistani support to the Taliban, *Directorate S*, Western military strategists and planners in Afghanistan have known for a decade that no insurgent movement since World War II which had cross-border sanctuary and support, as the Taliban does, has ever lost its fight against its government.[2] There is no longer any debate that the Taliban in Afghanistan obtains sanctuary in Pakistan, as well as financial, logistical, military, and medical support from the Pakistani Government.[3] Pakistan's

policy of waging war through terrorist groups is planned, coordinated, and conducted by the Pakistani Army.[4] To curtail the external support to the insurgency in Afghanistan, it would be necessary to alter the behavior of the Pakistani Army, and this, in turn, requires an honest appraisal of its true overall aims and intents. There remains some serious misunderstanding of both in Washington.

"Pakistan's Army sees itself as the defender and protector of the ideology of Pakistan."[5] It has, over time, consolidated its hold over the governance of Pakistan by linking this primary task to an imaginary existential threat from India and by creating a nexus with the "custodians of Islam."[6] Pakistan's overall grand strategy—and its domestic audience's definition of victory, for all intents and purposes—is to maintain strategic parity with India.[7] In other words, Pakistan's definition of victory is not being attacked by a country which has no intention of attacking it. In effect, India not invading is mission accomplished. But to make this mission credible, the illusion of India as an existential threat must be maintained in the public mind, and the Pakistani Army follows several well-crafted strategies to sustain the illusion. Herein lies the dilemma: Pakistan is a country, not a nation. In fact, it is four different nations—Baluchistan, Sind, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjab—each with its own distinct language, ethnicity, and culture. Enormous centrifugal forces threaten to pull these four nations apart, as they did when the former fifth nation, Bangladesh, spun off in 1972 and became independent. The only things holding this fragile construct together are (1) the weak inertia of day-to-day life, (2) the security state (which violently suppresses nationalist activity via extrajudicial killings), (3) an increasingly strident

brand of Islamism (via support for terrorist groups), and (4) the imaginary threat of invasion and conquest by India. Removing any of the legs of this four-legged stool would destabilize the cohesion of Pakistan—and at least two of the four legs act directly against the Government of Afghanistan and U.S. interests there. This is why 17 years of U.S. persuasion and diplomacy seeking change in Pakistan's policy of destabilizing and controlling Afghanistan were fruitless. Such a change is not only in opposition to Pakistani foreign policy interests, but it would also seriously threaten the fragile cohesion of the conglomerate of the four nations that make up the Pakistani state. U.S. diplomats who sought to persuade Pakistan that support for terrorism was against Pakistan's long-term interests were wrong. Support for terrorism is part of what keeps Pakistan together as a country. Therefore, the only lever long enough to change this fundamentally Pakistani calculus would be one which posed a greater threat to Pakistani state cohesion than removal of one of the four legs of the stool (i.e., applying a type of pressure which constitutes a greater danger than maintaining the status quo).

The first element of the Pakistani strategy to maintain the status quo is its position on Kashmir. Kashmir for Pakistan is not a territorial dispute, but an ideological one.[8] Viewed from that perspective, Kashmir can be understood as a symbolic cause celebre to be maintained for political purposes, rather than an unresolved dispute over a specific piece of land. Kashmir maintains the fiction of India as the boogeyman. If it was not Kashmir, it would be something else. It is this **symbol** of Kashmir which assists the Pakistani Army in propagating its unifying narrative to its domestic audience—i.e., that India is an evil, existential threat.

This explains why international efforts to resolve the Kashmir dispute have failed. It is a priceless issue as a rallying cry and Pakistan does not really want it resolved.

The second element of its strategy is the Pakistani Army's use of radical Islamists as part of the state glue holding the country together, as proxies to sustain its ideological war, and to maintain its hegemony over the Pakistani state.[9] The "Pakistan problem" has always been how to dismantle these two mutually supporting narratives that ensure the primacy of the Pakistani Army as a political force. Diminishing the dominance of the Pakistani Army, in turn, would allow civil society to grow normally and curtail the power of the various Islamist groups which it supports; however, as noted, it would also likely dissolve the weak glue holding Pakistan's four nations together, or at least the Pakistani Army believes it would, which amounts to the same thing.

In support of these two elements of the Pakistani Army strategy to remain in de facto power and preserve what is left of the map of Pakistan created by Ali Jinnah in 1947, there exists a vast network of foundations, businesses, and organizations built by the Pakistani Army over the years to provide it with leverage over political and economic institutions.[10] Real estate ownership by the Pakistani Army, for example, gives it significant political capital in a feudal society. The sprawling economic network which underpins the Pakistani Army and provides jobs and income for tens of thousands of retired officers, as well as cover for covert operations, would have to be heavily modified in order for civilian democratic, political, and economic institutions to develop normally and become more relevant. This is also unlikely to occur. There is

far too much money and power at stake. The United States can and will continue to demand concrete political-military reforms from the Pakistani Government.[11] After 17 years of doing this without any appreciable progress or genuine cooperation, however, this is largely understood in Washington now—as it was not a decade ago—to be a fool's errand (i.e., a task or activity that has no hope of success). But as Archimedes said, "give me a lever long enough . . . and I can move the world."[12] Simply put, the United States needs a much longer lever.

Furthermore, U.S. influence over Pakistan in mid-2018 is at its lowest point in history. Military aid has been suspended, and Pakistan is turning increasingly to its "all-weather friend," China, which is conveniently sympathetic and ready to backfill any shortages of equipment and money in the form of strategic loans. Pakistan has not learned yet that everything that comes from China has strings attached, as Sri Lanka recently learned at the cost of its sovereignty over the Hambantota port. Because of this, changing Pakistani behavior and policy through bilateral diplomacy and the usual "carrots and sticks" is **less likely** to happen now than at any point since the U.S. chapter of the war in Afghanistan began.

THE AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN BORDER

The border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is, at best, for most of its length, porous and ill-defined. The border, stretched across the United States, would run from New York to St. Louis, MO. Thousands of trails and footpaths cross the border; it is literally non-existent for hundreds of miles in places. For more than a century, this border has been hypothetically

delineated by the Durand Line. The British Government of the Victorian period drew a line on the map in 1893 that was revised slightly by multiple treaties over the subsequent years.[13] However, to date, this border has not been officially recognized by either the Pakistani or the Afghan Governments. According to Vinay Kaura:

> The new border, dubbed the Durand Line, divided the Pashtun tribal lands in two. Half of the Pashtun tribal region became part of British India, and the other half remained as part of Afghanistan. The boundary has since been viewed with utter contempt and resentment by Pashtuns on both sides of the line, which also causes Afghanistan to lose the province of Baluchistan, depriving the country of its historic access to the Arabian Sea.[14]

This lack of a defined, mutually accepted border not only exacerbates the problem of sanctuary for insurgents but also permits **a lack of defined responsibility for control** by either the Afghan or Pakistani Governments. If there is no demarcated border, it is impossible to enforce one. A great deal has been written on the "whys" of not being able to solidify a recognized border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, the salient point of this border issue is the value of it to long-range strategic plans. It would be difficult to control the border if one existed, but it is impossible to do so without one.

There are two major negative outcomes that are by-products of having no agreed-upon international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The first is, as noted, the lack of defined areas of responsibility, artillery duels over contested segments, and the consequent impacts on Afghan security. The second negative outcome is the benefit to both countries' smugglers and gray or black market economies; all of

these profit from the status quo, thereby significantly reducing Afghan Government tax and tariff revenues.

In regard to the first of these, Dr. M. Chris Mason's study of counterinsurgencies noted that, since World War II, in more than 50 case studies, no government has defeated an insurgency where there has been an external, cross-border, insurgent sanctuary.[15] Recent U.S. military history in Vietnam, where both North Vietnamese regulars and Viet Cong (VC) guerrillas had freedom of maneuver and sanctuary in Cambodia and Laos as they came and went from North Vietnam into South Vietnam, illustrates this sine qua non of foreign internal conflict.[16] Insurgents will always take advantage of areas that are lacking in security and that offer sanctuary; making porous borders more of an advantage to an insurgent when the counterinsurgent has no authority to cross into other countries' geographical space.

In regard to the second, the lack of a defined border also degrades the Afghan and Pakistani Governments' ability to optimize control of trade and commerce for badly needed tariff and tax revenues. According to Arwin Rawhi (former adviser to the Parwan Governor), for example, "to import power—for which demand is skyrocketing in Pakistan—from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Pakistan has to rely on Afghanistan."[17] Both governments are missing economic opportunities and financial revenues, because of poor border control over the flow of goods and resources, and the collection of taxes.

Analysts point out that the elaborate fences, rivers, and roads between Mexico and the United States are insufficient to secure that border, even when its location is mutually agreed upon and accepted. However, the illegal immigration and drug smuggling problems

between the United States and Mexico would be much **worse** without these border controls. Police forces on both sides of the border use these controls to focus and coordinate border security operations, but, between Afghanistan and Pakistan, in most places, there is nothing at all.[18]

REGIONAL STATES

The problem of the spread of fundamentalist extremism and narcotics from Afghanistan to its neighbors is obviously a major concern for all of the neighboring countries in the region. These countries thus have an obvious stake in controlling these problems. As China expands its global footprint and its "One Belt, One Road" network, for example, stability in Afghanistan is increasingly important for enhancing its reach and influence. Narcotics flowing through Iran destabilizes that country and causes domestic health problems, as some of the opium inevitably stays inside Iran. The Central Asian Republics and India seek to both gain greater reciprocal access to each other and mitigate the corrosive social effects of extremism and narcotics on their own populations. India is in alignment with U.S. policy on the elimination of terrorism from the region, and could become a greater ally to the United States in Afghanistan via access to ports for increased trade, sales of India's Russian-built helicopters, and intelligence sharing in support of Afghan counterinsurgency efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The United States has few partners in the region that are fully aligned with all of its interests in Afghanistan, but all of the regional countries **do** have some specific self-interests which coincide. Focusing the aperture down onto very specific concerns and initiatives rather than broader bromides about "regional cooperation" is the key. Chief among these is China's concern about narcotics flowing into China from Afghanistan and the spread of Islamic fundamentalism in its predominantly Muslim western Uighur region. With this shared interest in mind, the United States should engage with China to a much greater degree to moderate Pakistani behavior. Pakistan calls China its "all-weather friend," and, although it maintains as low a profile as possible, China's influence on Pakistan is far greater than is generally recognized. China's chief interest in Pakistan for the last 10 years has been its potential to be part of its sprawling "One Belt, One Road" economic transit network via improved roads through the Karakoram to the massive Chinese-built port at Gwadar. However, now that China has taken territorial sovereignty over a significant part of Sri Lanka's port facility at Hambantota, Gwadar has been somewhat reduced in importance.[19] The downsides of narcotics and Islamic extremism flowing into western China partially counterbalance China's interest in gaining hegemony over Pakistan's Gwadar port and limited overland transit potential. At this point, with U.S.-Pakistan relations at a low ebb, focusing on China-Pakistan relations are the only real possibility of applying diplomatic leverage on Pakistan. Seventeen

years of direct U.S. engagement with Pakistan have produced no discernable effect on Pakistani support for the Taliban, and the United States itself has few, if any, overt diplomatic cards left on the table.

Recommendation 2

The current approach to Afghanistan calls on India to play an enhanced role in stabilizing the country. India is cautious about provoking Pakistan's bellicose high command, but, again, there is little to lose in terms of Pakistani behavior. The ongoing effort to encourage India to increase further its engagement with Afghanistan should be intensified. Pakistan will undoubtedly try its best to create a wedge in the U.S.-India relationship, but India in the coming years is a better option for the United States to partner with to bring peace and stability to the region than Pakistan. The United States needs India's influence and reputation, not only in Afghanistan but also in Iran and the Central Asian Republics. It is fully and finally past time to dehyphenate India-Pakistan policy.

Recommendation 3

It is also past time to take the gloves off in regard to Pakistan's support to the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. Why should Pakistan be permitted to continue this egregious sabotage of international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan with complete impunity? Why should this be consequence-free for Pakistan? As this chapter has pointed out, only the introduction of risk to Pakistan's state cohesion will ever change its behavior. Pakistan's ongoing support for the Taliban in Afghanistan **must** be stopped if the U.S. effort there is to succeed. It is past time to

introduce reciprocity in kind: The United States and Afghanistan should begin to provide sanctuary and non-lethal support to the 70-year old Baluchistan independence movement inside Pakistan's restive western province. Baluchistan, an independent country in 1947, was invaded and illegally occupied by the Pakistani Army in 1948, and the Baluch people have sought to regain their independence ever since. They have endured brutal repression by the Pakistani state, including the use of napalm on Baluch villages and the abduction and extra-judicial killing of thousands of Baluch by the Pakistani secret police. Above all, Pakistan fears another independence movement similar to Bangladesh; thus, this is perhaps the pressure point that could change Pakistani behavior. The United States and Afghanistan have the necessary assets in place in Kandahar province to retaliate for Pakistani support to the Taliban in kind. When Pakistan learns that two can play their favorite "double game"[20] and that the potential internal consequences to the Pakistani state outweigh the potential external benefits of continued support to the Taliban, then its behavior will change.

Recommendation 4

Solving the Afghanistan and Pakistan border dispute should be a major diplomatic initiative if there is to be long-term stability in the future. It has been said that we have not been in Afghanistan for 17 years; we have been in Afghanistan for 1 year 17 times. It is necessary to look beyond the "closest wolf to the sled" and invest in long-term solutions to the border problem that may not bear fruit for a decade, but are essential if peace and stability are ever going to be permanent.

The mindset of "victory during my 12-month tour of duty" must give way to longer perspectives and a commitment to long-term efforts that will take decades to accomplish. Foremost among these is the resolution and demarcation of a recognized, international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. A defined border should be a major diplomatic initiative and engineering effort, and moved now from the "too hard" category to the "let's get started now" category. Until there is a border, and Pakistan respects that border, U.S. efforts in Afghanistan are the equivalent of pouring water into a leaky bucket.

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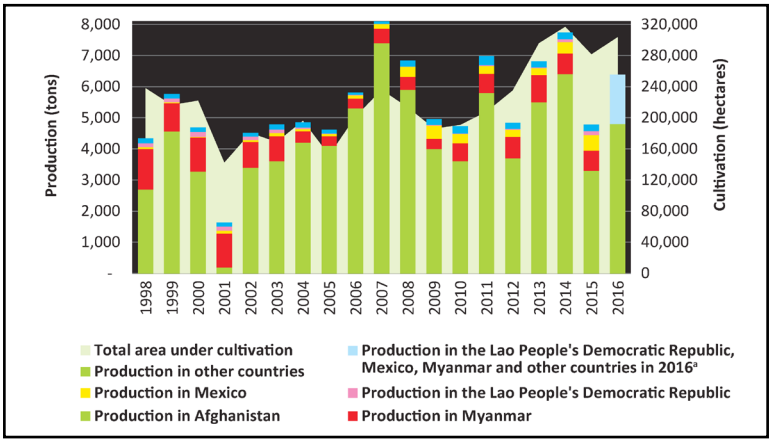
CHAPTER 2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDUCING THE OPIUM TRADE

While much of the country is mountainous and arid, Afghanistan is capable of producing high-quality wheat, cotton, lumber, saffron, and grapes. However, overshadowing legal crops, poppy production in Afghanistan is now supplying over 90 percent of the opium in the world's heroin market (see figure 2-1).[1] The effect of this is that "the drug trade has undermined virtually every aspect of the Government of Afghanistan's drive to build political stability, economic growth, and [the] rule of law."[2] Narcotics also provide an important funding stream to the Taliban, although the extent of this funding and the degree to which its absence would impact the viability of the Taliban insurgency is the subject of some controversy. Nevertheless, the reduction of opium production in Afghanistan remains an essential goal of any security strategy.[3]



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Figure 2-1. Opium Cultivation and Production of Opium, 1998-2016[4]

This chapter will suggest new or modified approaches for tackling this epidemic.[5] Specifically, this chapter will propose four recommended approaches, which Afghanistan and the supporting multinational coalition can potentially employ to buy time for the Afghan Government's growth and stabilization.

By one estimate, as of 2017, as much as 60 percent (US$100-300 million) of the Taliban's annual income was believed to come from the distribution of narcotics.[6] Other estimates have suggested a lower figure, and analysts largely agree that other funding sources would be found to replace it so that the insurgency would not be seriously reduced by the complete eradication of the opium trade in the long term. In other words, eradicating the entire poppy crop would not end the Taliban insurgency. Because of the corrosive effects of narcotics on civil society and the security forces, which suffer from drug use and corruption in their ranks (an excellent example of how these four problems are interconnected), counternarcotics remains a necessary but insufficient condition for long-term stability. Yes, eradication would destroy the livelihood of a large percentage of Afghanistan's subsistence farmers.[7] Nevertheless, Afghanistan cannot be permitted to continue to produce 90 percent of the world's opium simply because a few hundred thousand poor farmers want to grow it. Having said that, wiping out poppy cultivation **rapidly**, even if it were possible, would create a humanitarian crisis and put severe political stress on the fragile Afghan Government. This conundrum has led to the current understanding that: (1) eradication must be gradual and accompanied by comprehensive "seeds-to-market-stall" crop substitution efforts; and, (2) while

long-term solutions are being developed, the drug trade today is best interdicted post-cultivation without inflicting economic harm on the noncombatant farmers, who currently have no economic alternatives to growing the crop (see figure 2-2). All of this, too, has been well-understood for many years.

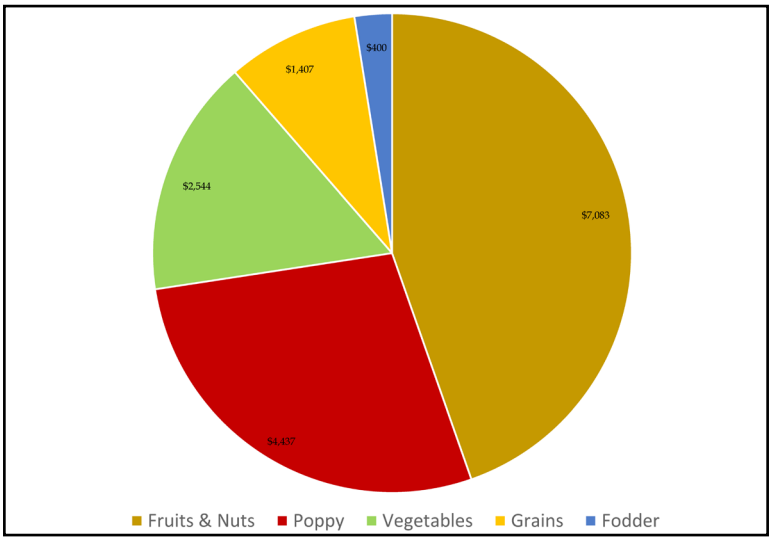
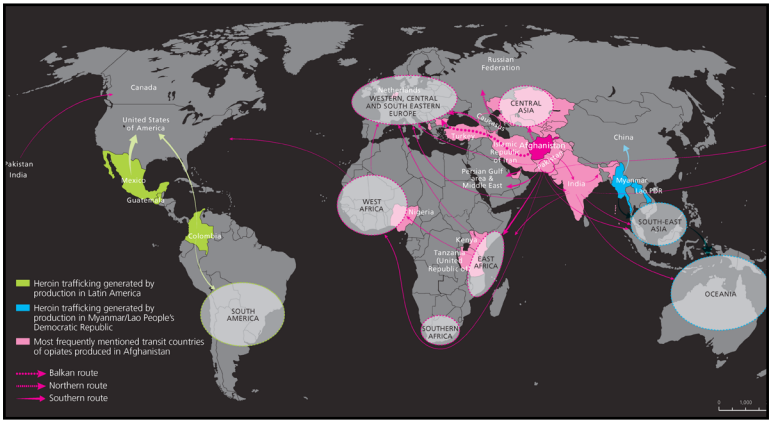


Figure 2-2. Afghan Farmer Net Income Potential (1 hectare = 2.5 acres)[8]

In November 2017, Operation RESOLUTE SUPPORT tried a different approach and "launched its first counter-narcotics military offensive to deprive the resurgent Taliban of its largest source of funding."[9] According to General John Nicholson, "we hit the labs where they turn poppy into heroin [and] their storage facilities where they keep their final product, where they stockpile their money and their command and control."[10] However, analysts indicate that

opium producers quickly adjusted to the possibility of lab destruction by limiting the amount of money and opium on hand at any given time at any one lab. Furthermore, labs can be replaced quickly at a fairly low cost, or even made mobile, to avoid detection and destruction. Blowing them up is a "whack-a-mole" exercise. Nevertheless, the targeting of opium convoys and drug labs has a harassment value analogous to artillery harassment fires, if nothing else, and it increases the risk for drug producers and puts some pressure on their operations. For this reason alone, it is well worth continuing, but, alone, it might solve only 5 percent of the problem.

In addition to lab targeting, it is essential to improve border security cooperation with neighboring countries to interdict the flow of narcotics (see figure 2-3). This is one of the specific areas of concern mentioned in chapter 1 of this volume. To enforce the security of Afghan borders, it is understood that improved border infrastructure, better border police, and increased patrols at border checkpoints are necessary.[11] More effective cross-border cooperation is also needed to choke drug trafficking routes along the porous Afghan borders to the north, south, and west.



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Figure 2-3. Main Opiate Trafficking Flows, 2011-2015[12]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The United States should create an international counternarcotics coordination center or fusion center in Kabul, Afghanistan, to facilitate cross-border cooperation. Afghanistan's neighbors share the concern about the toxic effect of narcotics flowing out of the country. Greater cooperation among them would improve the efficiency of regional counternarcotics efforts by enhancing cooperation and intelligence sharing among the ministries of interior, counternarcotics forces, and border police of participating countries. Each regional country, including Iran, should be invited to post counternarcotics agents at the coordination or fusion center.

Recommendation 2

The United States should further increase support to the Afghan Border Police by providing more training, mentoring, infrastructure improvements, and equipment. Training should focus on the application of locally sustainable technologies and capabilities for locating and apprehending traffickers.[13] Hi-tech solutions, which break down or require high literacy levels in rural areas, have proven to be ineffective. A very small corps of well-paid special agents similar to Elliot Ness's "Untouchables," who operated in a similar environment of pervasive corruption in the United States in the late 1920s, needs to be created from Afghanistan's best counternarcotics men.

Recommendation 3

Before the 1930s, a quarter of all trees in the United States were American chestnuts. A blight accidentally brought into the country from Asia wiped them all out in a decade. The blight affects no other living organism, and continues to this day to prevent the growth of new American chestnut trees. A similar organism kills only Dutch Elm trees, and it is harmless to all other living things. For over a decade, the United Nations has supported research into the bioengineering of poppy-destroying organisms, hoping to find a variant harmless to the environment, people, and legal crops in proximity to the poppy.[14] However, due to the lack of adequate funding and scientific effort, a poppy-destroying organism has not yet been found.[15] This actually **is** a silver bullet. We recommend that the United States and its European partners significantly increase funding for ongoing research into an

environmentally safe organism that would be bio-engineered to destroy only poppy plants and leave other agricultural products unharmed. This would permanently solve the opium problem and would be a complete game-changer in Afghanistan. A fraction of the US$8.5 billion wasted so far on counternarcotics (only to see narcotics production triple in 15 years) would go a long way in scientific research, and would enable the United States to lead a massive research effort to develop a solution to the narcotics problem.[16]

Recommendation 4

The United States should take a new, direct, and more culturally effective approach to strategic messaging to educate and influence the rural poppy grower. U.S. efforts to influence the rural Afghan population since the war began have been haphazard and largely ineffective due to a lack of cultural knowledge and a persistent pattern of simply transliterating U.S.-created messages into Pashto and Dari, disregarding the fact that such Western-created messages make little or no sense in the Afghan cultural context. The most effective approach to such messaging, according to Afghan scholars, would be Afghan-created messages with an emphasis on the religious taboo of narcotics production. The United States could not do this directly, for obvious reasons, but the Afghan Government could and should. Rural Afghans are deeply religious, and their daily lives are infused with religious sensibilities. Rural mullahs, for example, are routinely consulted to ascertain whether a decision or policy is Islamic—i.e., in keeping with Islamic principles and tenets. The Taliban's engagement of religious values as motivation for its movement, in contrast,

is all-pervasive. There is no reason why the Afghan Government cannot also invoke religion and religious obligations in the same manner in coordination with Kabul's Ulema. Indeed, this is being done now to promote peace talks; why not also counternarcotics? Afghan-designed messaging via radio, television, billboards, public schools, and social media, created in cooperation with legitimate and credible national religious authorities, should stress the un-Islamic nature of drug cultivation and production in order to create social pressure against growing and harvesting poppies.[17]

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CHAPTER 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE AFGHAN NATIONAL DEFENSE SECURITY FORCES

Current negative strength, recruiting trends, and combat losses in the Afghanistan National Defense Security Forces (ANDSF) are vital concerns, which future planning by Afghan and Resolute Support (RS) leaders should address.[1] In May 2017, a new 4-year ANDSF "Road Map" plan was initiated by President Ashraf Ghani to "continue to increase the capabilities of the ANDSF, secure major population centers, and incentivize the Taliban insurgency to reconcile with the Afghan government."[2] This plan includes senior leader changes and significant force structure realignment that will need to be executed in a "no growth" environment, which has heightened preexisting tension between the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the Ministry of Defense (MOD).[3]

As part of the Road Map plan, the MOD and the MOI have undergone significant changes in leadership and structure. Realignment of Afghan Border Patrol (ABP) and Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) forces to the MOD, MOD structural modifications, and the formation of new "Territorial" forces are examples of these changes. Senior leader dismissals to disrupt the status quo, reduce corruption, and remove poor performers have increased. For example, both the Defense Minister and the Afghan National Army Chief of Staff resigned in April 2017 after the deadly Taliban attack on Camp Shaheen, an Afghan base in Balkh province where more than 140 Afghan security personnel were killed. In addition, between May and December 2017, 16 senior MOI officials were replaced—including the top three: the MOI, the First Deputy Minister, and the Deputy Minister of Security.[4]

These aggressive changes can be linked to the current National Defense Authorization Act, which requires the United States to consider accountability and corruption within the Afghan MOD and MOI in order for U.S. funding to continue.[5] Against the positive outcomes of these personnel changes must be weighed the chaotic effect of senior leadership turnover; the resulting loss of continuity in ongoing programs; and, the departure of experienced civilian personnel from the ministries, as the new senior leaders replace the former leaders' relatives and friends with their own. This turnover percolates down through all levels of ministerial operations. By the time the personnel structure has stabilized again, another round of senior leadership changes typically occurs. This is known as the Golden Gate effect, named after the painting of the bridge in the San Francisco Bay, which, as soon as it reaches the end of the bridge, begins again at the starting point. This state of perpetual change is sustainable in the professional U.S. military, but is very disruptive in the Afghan military, where nepotism, functional illiteracy, and ethnic distrust are pervasive.

Proposed changes to the alignment of the Afghan defense structure also include the formation of National Joint and Regional Commands as well as a realignment of sub-commands. The final design and implementation of these efforts is incomplete, but the Afghan security apparatus' ability to achieve the necessary level of proficiency and effectiveness in an increasingly downward-trending security environment is doubtful. As currently designed and employed, the lynchpin of security remains Afghan National Army (ANA) and National Police capability and capacity, which need to be assessed from the perspective of their strength and attrition.

ANDSF Strength

In addition to the changes in senior leadership in the security ministries mentioned earlier, leadership changes at the ANA operational level have also been significant. In 2016 and 2017, President Ghani relieved or replaced four of the six ANA Corps commanders. In addition, at least 162 Army generals were "retired" in April 2017 because they "had all reached the retirement age of 60 and some had served in Afghanistan's military for as long as 40 years."[6] It remains a top-heavy army. While these changes suggest positive efforts toward improved leadership, significant ANA manpower challenges remain. A steady decline in force size driven by attrition, which has remained above 30 percent per year for 16 years, has resulted in a decade of force shrinkage. This challenge is magnified by the inability of RS to confirm Afghan information. "Coalition advisors rely heavily on the ANDSF's reporting because of their lack of visibility. With the exception of Afghan special operations and aviation units, U.S. advisors have little or no direct contact with ANDSF units below ANA corps and Afghan National Police (ANP) zone-headquarters levels."[7] The potential for "ghost soldiers and police" is enormous.

RS's ability to validate current ANA and ANP force strength and to maintain accurate strength and attrition reporting remains elusive. The Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan continues efforts to implement automated systems to address problems in personnel and pay accountability, but such "new programs" have been a regular, recurring feature of every Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF)/RS rotation for almost 15 years, and they remain a work in progress.[8] The ubiquitous OEF/RS

response to inquiries about problems—"we have a new program in place to fix that"—has become a sarcastic phrase among analysts and journalists covering the ANDSF. The new staff officers and programs come and go; the problems remain.

To complicate the external and independent evaluation of ANDSF force posture and capacity further, "RS classification [guidance] has restricted the public release of the exact, assigned (actual) and authorized (goal) force strength and attrition data for the ANDSF as a whole, as well as each force element individually (ANA, ANP, Afghan Air Force [AAF], etc.), with the exceptions of the Afghan Local Police (ALP)."[9] A classified annex now contains that information, so estimates included herein are based on prior reporting and trend analysis. As the Taliban are known to have spies and agents, willing or coerced, in virtually every security element in Afghanistan (who are regularly reporting back manpower strength to their Taliban handlers outside the bases), the Taliban almost certainly has the most accurate and reliable ANDSF strength statistics in Afghanistan, so this "security measure" only hampers us.

Unsustainable attrition and casualty rates, coupled with recruiting challenges for the ANA over the last 5 years, indicate that the current (now-classified) figures are unlikely to have improved and, in fact, are still trending downward.[10] The October 2017 Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction report, which provides the most recent official ANDSF strength (ANA, AAF, and ANP) reporting from RS sources, indicates an overall decrease by approximately 6,000 men between July and September 2017.[11] Statistical analysis by monograph editor Dr. M. Chris Mason at the U.S. Army War College indicates that the ANA has actually shrunk in size by an average of 1,000

men per month every month for the last 3 years. In every measurement provided in the last RS-reported strength chart estimations in October 2017, every ANDSF component (ANA, AAF, and ANP) is smaller than it was at the beginning or end of 2014. According to these figures, since the ANDSF took responsibility for security in 2015, only the ANA has shown a slight increase (approximately 300 personnel), even while overall ANDSF strength remains smaller. Research and analysis of desertions, recruitment, recruit drop-out rates, ghost soldiering, combat casualties (missing, wounded, or killed in action), and non-combat (accidental) losses since 2002 suggest that the true number of ANA men present for duty in August 2018 is well under 100,000 men. Official strengths of the Afghan Corps and below, as well as all components of the police (ABP, ANCOP, etc.), are now classified.

ANDSF ASSIGNED FORCE STRENGTH, FEBRUARY 2014–JANUARY 2017				
	2/2014	**5/2014**	**8/2014**	**11/2014[b]**
ANA including AAF	184,839	177,489	171,601	169,203
ANP	153,269	152,123	153,317	156,439
Total ANDSF	338,108	329,612	324,918	325,642
	2/2015	**5/2015**	**7/2015[a]**	**10/2015[a]**
ANA including AAF	174,120	176,762	176,420	178,125
ANP	154,685	155,182	148,296	146,026
Total ANDSF	328,805	331,944	324,716	324,151
	1/2016	**4+5 2016[c]**	**7/2016**	**11/2016**
ANA including AAF	179,511	171,428	176,058	174,950
ANP	146,304	148,167	148,480	147,635
Total ANDSF*	325,815	319,595	324,538	322,585
	1/2017			
ANA including AAF	177,711			
ANP*	153,997			
Total ANDSF*	331,708			

Note: ANA = Afghan National Army; AAF = Afghan Air Force; ANP = Afghan National Police; ANDSF = Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. ANA and AAF numbers include civilians except for the May 2016 numbers; available data for ANP do not indicate whether civilians are included.
[a] Total "ANA including AAF" numbers for July 2015 and October 2015 are not fully supported by the detailed numbers in the USFOR-A response to SIGAR data call; Trainee, Transient, Holdee, and Students (TTHS) may represent all or part of the unreconciled portion.
[b] Reported November 2014 ANP number appears to double-count some Afghan Uniformed Police; actual number may be 151,272.
[c] ANA data as of 5/20/2016; ANP data as of 4/19/2016.
*NISTA (Not In Service for Training), generally students, are now included in the above "ANP" and "Total ANDSF" figures (as of 1/2017). This quarter, there were 4,940 NISTA. Prior figures do not include them. None of the figures include Standby personnel, who are generally reservists.

Source: CSTC-A response to SIGAR data calls, 3/31/2014, 7/1/2014, and 10/6/2014; RSM, response to SIGAR request for clarification, 3/14/2015; USFOR-A, response to SIGAR vetting, 4/10/2015, 7/12/2015, 1/29/2016, 4/12/2016, 10/9/2016, and 10/11/2016; USFOR-A, response to SIGAR data call, 12/28/2014, 3/24/2015, 6/29/2015, 9/11/2015, 12/14/2015, 3/4/2016, 6/3/2016, 8/30/2016, 11/20/2016, and 1/20/2017.

Source: Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).

Figure 3-1. ANDSF Force Strength[12]

Reported ALP strength numbers remain just below 30,000, but verification is not possible.[13] Again, the potential for fraud is enormous. No one knows how many of these men are actually physically present for duty and armed. Their effectiveness against well-armed and experienced Taliban guerrillas is questionable in any case, as is their impact on local support for the Kabul government. Plans to increase the size

of the ALP force and professionalize training remain topics of discussion, but with the United States as the sole source of funding and the expiration of congressional approval in September 2018, current planning is focused on whether to maintain the ALP or to transition as much of the force as possible into an existing Afghan organization with ANP control and oversight.[14] Of the 11 specialized police programs under MOI control initiated by the United States after 2005 (including the Afghan National Auxiliary Police, the Afghan Public Protection Program, and the ALP), only the ALP continues to operate today.[15] Continued reports of ALP corruption and abuse as well as a lack of integration into the ANP remain unanswered and pose serious challenges for the future of the ALP.[16] Instead, the best option would be to transfer these men into the new Territorial Army forces in order to provide some measure of MOD visibility, logistics, medical support, accountability, and leadership. As it stands, the ANP has very limited, if any, military value, and the current bifurcation of security forces between the MOI and MOD—with their inherent lack of unity of command and unity of effort—has plagued security operations for 15 years. Incorporating the ALP into the ANP would only perpetuate this fractured security architecture, and would constitute a loss of valuable manpower which could instead enhance the Territorial Army.

ANDSF ATTRITION

Unclassified reporting from July 2017 by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction indicates an average 2.3-percent monthly attrition rate across the ANA (including the AAF, Special

Operations Forces, basic trainees, and students), or approximately 28 percent annually.[17] This number may be an underestimate. On average, the ANA loses one-third of its members to attrition every year, and the ANP loses one-fifth, rates that have garnered attention and concern from U.S. and international military and civilian leadership for many years.[18] ANP attrition remained, on average, above 2 percent for the July 2017 reporting period.[19] In addition to desertions, combat casualties remain at alarming levels. An article in August 2017 stated: "on an average day, 31 members of the Afghan national [defense] security forces are killed, according to data from official sources."[20] In 2018, losses on many days exceeded 100 men killed in action per day.

ALP casualty rates from RS (specifically, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Special Operations Component Command) are not available because "advisors to the ALP staff-directorate level in Kabul do not track retention, attrition, or losses."[21] However, 2015 International Crisis Group reporting shows that "in 2014, an ALP officer was three to six times more likely to be killed on duty than his ANDSF counterpart."[22] Whether this is due to a lack of training, a lack of equipment, or a lack of support from the ANP or the ANA in extremis (or some combination of those factors) is debatable, but the results are disastrous, and the losses are unsustainable.

Attrition most severely impacts the noncommissioned officer corps and junior-ranking enlisted soldiers, undermining efforts to develop a trained and experienced cadre of soldiers and officers.[23] This trend is mirrored in declining Afghan Government district control, while the number of insurgent-controlled and -influenced districts has incrementally increased.[24] In

May 2017, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats warned that conditions in Afghanistan "will almost certainly deteriorate" in 2018, even with a modest increase in U.S. support.[25] High attrition rates and the loss of more government-controlled territory have continued in 2018. The hidden, potentially fatal flaw in the manpower problem is declining recruit potential. For whatever reason, virtually 100 percent of security force recruits come from the rural areas. As Taliban control of the rural areas increases, the pool of potential recruits decreases correspondingly. A Najibullah-style status quo in which the government controls the urban areas and the guerrillas control the rural areas is unsustainable because government access to recruits to replace desertions and combat casualties would be limited. Force size may soon reach a crossover point at which continuing declines become irreversible. Thus, a major effort to reduce desertions and promote the retention of existing soldiers must be initiated immediately. Guaranteed retirement benefits in the form of land grants or a government-subsidized Hajj and retention benefits such as greater reenlistment bonuses, pay increases, or other creative, Afghan-centric incentives need to be dramatically increased. Continuing to lose one-third of the force every year in a shrinking recruit environment is setting the stage for a manpower crisis. If we cannot increase the number of recruits, we have to retain the soldiers we already have more effectively.

SECURITY ARCHITECTURE REALIGNMENT

Coalition efforts to consistently build and project power and security across Afghanistan from a national, centralized government continue to fail.

Tribal affiliations and locally based allegiances with no military backup in extremis and low levels of reliability, equipment, and training continue to erode support for the government in the rural areas, where Taliban forces can mass and strike weak, local units opposed to Taliban rule. Recognizing this dilemma, multiple efforts (Village Stability Operations, Afghan Public Protection Program, etc.) have been made to incorporate or develop security at the local level. However, with:

> limited oversight from, and accountability to the Afghan government and the United States, [many of] these police forces were reported to have engaged in human rights abuses, drug trafficking, and other corrupt activities, ultimately serving as a net **detractor** from security [emphasis added].[26]

In fact, according to Dr. Mason at the U.S. Army War College:

> There have been at least nine failed efforts by the U.S. military to establish irregular forces in Afghanistan since . . . November 2001. . . . What these programs all had in common—besides failure, getting a lot of people killed, and adding nothing to Afghan security—was that all of the forces created were notionally under the control of the Afghan Ministry of Interior Affairs, which Afghanistan's own President calls the 'heart of corruption.'[27]

There are two related efforts emerging in Afghanistan today which attempt to address the challenge of building local forces that are willing (and able) to fight locally against the Taliban and other threats (e.g., Islamic State of Iraq and Syria [ISIS]), but which have national backing and oversight and, more importantly, the ability to request **and receive** required support from the ANA or other government forces when

necessary. One of these, referred to as the Peoples' Uprising Force (PUF), are groups of Afghan villagers who arm themselves in order to resist the Taliban and maintain the security of their villages.

It is not a new concept, and has been a "double-edged sword" since the beginning of the war in 2001. Most often, funding, training, and equipment are received by PUF (or militia) elements through coalition or Afghan national support networks in order to maximize a:

> calculated but clumsy strategy of misaligned state patrons mobilizing old mujahedin networks against the Taliban—a counterinsurgent strategy and a final gasp before US forces left the province to its own devices.[28]

Locally organized, irregular armed forces have always been a vital component of successful counter-insurgency. No regular police or military force can be large enough to be in every village in sufficient strength all the time. Whether they are a net security positive or a net security negative, however, depends on how they are organized and led. Their presence in Achin District, Nangarhar Province, in October 2017, for example, is said to have "halted the ISIS encroachment into their territory with savage fighting long before regular Afghan army units or US forces arrived to help them."[29] In contrast, on the other side of the country, in Faryab Province, five districts fell to the Taliban after ANP and PUF were overrun. *Pajhwok Afghan News* reported, "A public uprising group commander said all areas of the district had fallen into the hands of the militants" when ANA support did not arrive.[30]

The PUFs clearly have a limited ability to hold their districts against the Taliban on their own after

their districts have been "cleared" by coalition or ANA forces. The PUFs are more of a tripwire than a barrier; they require closely coordinated military support from a vertically integrated command structure that is responsive and reliable in order to survive. Without this element, recruitment, retention, reliability, and morale will be low. The challenge presented by these militia forces is two-fold: first, providing rapid military assistance to the PUF when it is necessary to prevent it from being overrun and destroyed; and, second, maintaining its allegiance to Kabul and not to local strongmen who will use the PUF to exploit and thus alienate the local population. The solution to both challenges is vertical integration into the MOD. The U.S. Army learned this lesson in Vietnam, where the Regional Forces and Provincial Forces were integrated into the South Vietnamese Army and came under the command of the local South Vietnamese Army battalion commander.

It is important to recognize the political limits of such irregulars, however. They have no sense of national identity or a national cause. Dr. Mason states that the "'People's Uprising Forces' is something of a misnomer." They are **not** a national (popular) movement. They are angry locals responding to local power struggles, often tribally based, usually competing for advantage in local village economies, and focused on local issues like land and water rights. Carter Malkasian's book on the war in Helmand province, *War Comes to Garmsir*, expertly documents this. "They care nothing about the central government in Kabul, or even their nearest provincial government," Mason says.[31] The "ink blot" theory of counterinsurgency does not apply: the irregulars are not pro-government; they are simply anti-Taliban. A striking example of

this was seen in July 2015 when Vice President Abdul Dostum's so-called "uprising forces" were accused of "rape, extortion, arbitrary arrests, and theft" after securing villages in Faryab—the sort of accusations that continue to roil the Afghan Government as of August 2018.[32]

As a result, the second emerging effort in the security sector is a new **MOD-led** effort to establish an irregular defense force with ANA oversight, training, and support—the Afghan Territorial Army (ATA). The model for such a territorial force is the old Afghan Army from the 1930s to the early 1970s, when the king was overthrown and the current civil war began. This is how Afghan armies were organized before the Communist period. Afghan military leaders understood the nature of their own people and knew that they needed to serve close to their homes. "The need for creating such force was born out of the experience of [Afghans] fighting largely on their own since 2014, with American troops reduced to a small advisory role."[33] More importantly, the maxim that "all resistance in an insurgency is local" demands a locally focused irregular, territorial, or provisional approach that is vertically integrated into the national security apparatus. As Dr. Mason notes,

> irregular forces which are not vertically integrated into the ANA force structure will continue to be slaughtered by the Taliban as they are now. If they are not vertically integrated into the ANA, the ANA does nothing to help them.[34]

Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman Dawalt Waziri announced the creation of this "new militia force" in February 2018, stressed that "the new force will work under the direct command and control of the defense ministry," and stated that the "recruitments

will be made from Afghan Government-controlled areas where they ultimately will be deployed after undergoing military training."[35] The size of the force is not confirmed, but it is estimated to exceed 20,000, to be based on the Indian Territorial Army model, and to have active ANA leadership installed at the local level to oversee training as well as provide direct linkage to the ANA in case of need.[36] Perhaps the component most critical in this effort that was lacking in so many failed efforts before will be the "vertical integration" of this force directly into the MOD. Time will be the final indicator of success, but "the new approach of putting the latest iteration of irregular forces under MOD control is a step in the right direction."[37] The successful precedent for such a force is the Regional Forces-Provincial Forces model in South Vietnam, which ultimately inflicted about 40 percent of all casualties suffered by the Viet Cong (VC) during the Vietnam War.

In addition to the ATA development within the MOD, "The process of transferring the [ABP] from MOI to MOD control has nearly been completed, and the transfer for the [ANCOP] to MOD control is ongoing."[38] Only a small number of ABP will remain under the MOI to maintain customs and border crossing responsibilities. Much like the ATA vertical integration, this shift to the MOD will better utilize the ABP within the ANA Corps regions and provide the possibility of better coordination and synchronization.

Redirection of Targeting

In addition to this much-needed realignment and rationalization of the security architecture, a similar broad revision of kinetic targeting is necessary. "Clear

and sweep" operations—currently being conducted solely by the Afghanistan Commandos with U.S. Special Forces Advisors—have repeatedly proven to be little more than harassment to the Taliban forces, which simply merge into the local population during the operation and flow back into control once government forces are beyond visual range. We have consistently overestimated the ability of Afghan Government forces to retain control of the "swept" areas after the departure of U.S. firepower. We have also consistently underestimated the ability of the Taliban to replace ground force losses, as we did in Vietnam. We have been killing Taliban for 17 years, and there are more on the battlefield today than there were 17 years ago, just as we killed the North Vietnamese regulars and VC for 8 years in Vietnam, and there were more on the battlefield in 1970 than there were in 1962. Neither the enemy in Vietnam nor the enemy in Afghanistan can be forced to negotiations by attrition. Both are (or were) highly ideologically motivated, and both have (or had) the ability to replace combat losses at a far higher rate than the United States could inflict them. Conventional operations over the past 17 years have focused on killing enemy forces and temporarily clearing areas of Taliban fighters with less of an emphasis on targeting the underlying Taliban infrastructure. This is ineffectual and needs to change.

The Taliban infrastructure, like the VC cadres in the Vietnam War, consists of "underground bureaucratic structures with functional elements devoted to intelligence and counterintelligence, media and propaganda, finances, recruitment, and religious affairs."[39] In actuality, these interconnected, local cadres sustain and enhance the national Taliban's military efforts directed from the Quetta Shura. A targeted shift to a

highly detailed understanding and mapping of the Taliban infrastructure, combined with a relentless dismantlement of its infrastructure, can be conducted through anti-infrastructure forces in conjunction with populace control.

The U.S. Army learned important lessons in Vietnam that can be applied now. During the conflict in Vietnam, the United States established Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRUs), which were designed to target the similar Viet Cong infrastructure (VCI) through the compilation of coordinated intelligence and direct elimination. The VCI consisted of a communist-supported network of cadres and agents who lived undercover among the rural population. The PRUs were a joint effort between the U.S. military, the Central Intelligence Agency, and Vietnamese intelligence officers.[40] The intent was to conduct "a large countrywide counterintelligence effort involved in counterespionage and counter-subversion activities" through the capture and/or elimination of VCI leaders.[41] In comparison to modern-day tactics, the VCI's approach to the task was similar to the targeting cycle known as F3EA: **find**, **fix**, **finish**, **exploit**, and **analyze**.[42]

The PRUs were a conglomerate of indigenous and U.S. intelligence experts that mapped out the VCI through document and material exploitation, interrogation, and repetitive interaction with the local populace. Coined the "Census/Grievance and Aspiration Program," the PRUs interviewed all men and women within their areas of responsibility.[43] This method opened the door to intelligence collection, as the program allowed an accurate account of who belonged in the villages, what issues the people were having, and what expectations the people had of the government.

As the intelligence became actionable, assault teams (combined U.S. and Vietnamese soldiers) were used to target VCI leadership. This line of operation, which was dubbed "Operation PHOENIX," received significant negative (and exaggerated) publicity, but the historical record is clear that it was **by far** the most successful, effective, and enemy-feared counterinsurgency program in South Vietnam.

One of the most valuable tools of the PRUs against the VC cadres were the "Kit Carson Scouts" (Chiêu Hồi or Hồi Chánh Viên), who resulted from the flipping or "rallying" of VC members. Former VC who now chose to serve the South Vietnamese Government were dubbed Kit Carson Scouts and attached to operational PRUs and other elite forces, such as the South Vietnamese Rangers. The scouts were invaluable as their information expanded the existing networks, led the teams directly to VC supporters, uncovered tunnels, and located VC supply caches. The development of the scouts had a snowballing effect: as more VC were identified and captured, more were rallied to the government side. That this proved extremely effective can be seen in intelligence reports in the National Archives. The Anti-Infrastructure Operations reporting of 1970, for example, states: "6,405 [VC] were sentenced, 7,745 were rallied, 8,191 were killed in action, and 10,689 were captured."[44] Despite the scouts' exceptional record of success in Vietnam, no similar groups have been formed in Afghanistan in the past 17 years.

The Afghan intelligence agency (the National Directorate of Security [NDS]) is tasked with intelligence collecting, arresting collaborators and members of the Taliban, and conducting several counterinsurgency operations, with limited success. The NDS is a linear descendent of the *Khadamat-e Etela at-e Dawlati*,

also known as the Afghan Secret Police, who were trained by the *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* (KGB). See appendix II of this volume for more information. As an intelligence organization at the district level, the NDS has limited direct presence and capability. At the provincial level, NDS has an organization of varying size and competence with varying numbers of armed operators. To begin to dismantle Taliban cadres, the NDS would need to be augmented with highly reliable, trained operators (an asset in short supply, but also of low priority for development). However, experience shows that a priority of effort in this dimension with a specific focus on dismantling the Taliban infrastructure could potentially "reverse [the] insurgents' unprecedented territorial gains."[45] The extent of unity of effort and command, however, in an interagency counterinsurgency task force "empowered to establish objectives, set priorities, and direct operations"[46] would be directly proportional to its success. Additionally, this organization must "protect populations from the insurgent's coercive methods, pursue social and economic development to eliminate root causes, and mobilize populations to support the counterinsurgency."[47]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The U.S. military should dissolve the ALP and encourage or incentivize its members to transition into the ATA, where they can be socially accountable, administratively counted, logistically supported, and properly led. The legacy of the ALP, for all of its good intentions and all the years of effort by U.S. special

operations forces, is unrepairable, unmanageable, and unaccountable. As such, ALP will continue to both challenge and embarrass the government in Kabul. Unity of command, unity of effort, and vertical integration of security forces under the Afghan MOD are major steps in the right direction toward redesigning the security architecture, which was originally created for a country at peace.

Recommendation 2

The United States should assign active-duty ANA officers to leadership positions within the realigned ABP and the new ATA. These assignments would be critical to the new organization's success, support, and accountability. These assignments are the only way to hardwire the units to the ANA, ensure vertical integration with higher headquarters, and fulfill lower-echelon needs for logistical and combat support. Furthermore, the MOD should never lose sight of the "territorial" aspect of the Territorial Army. This is the old, pre-1975 way of creating and manning the Afghan Army (i.e., men from a province stay and fight for their own province), so the Afghans should need little mentoring in this regard. However, attention needs to be paid to ethnic and tribal allegiances in the assignment of ANA officers to the territorial forces. Outsiders will be less likely to be respected or obeyed; on the other hand, tribal rivalries within a province have to be carefully managed. In other words, existing and historical associations and social ties within the geographical region should be the priority basis of assignment for eligible officers in order to enable effective unit loyalty and stability operations; however, one tribe must not be allowed to dominate a unit and victimize or exploit

other local elements. Allowing one tribe to control a unit would naturally disintegrate the force or, worse, it could add to regional instability and violence rather than improve it, and open the door for the Taliban to "save the people" from the territorial forces.

Recommendation 3

A more effective counterinsurgency approach that employs the successful lessons of historical experience and proven-effective programs targeting guerrilla infrastructure rather than military forces is critical. The targeting of Taliban military forces "scratches an itch" but does little to reduce Taliban presence or morale, as Taliban foot soldiers and field commanders are easily and quickly replaced. The United States has been targeting and eliminating Taliban military forces for 17 years, and there are more Taliban combatants in the field today than at any time during that period. Afghan Pashtun male population growth vastly exceeds the rate at which the Taliban can be killed, meaning, as it did in Vietnam, that a war of attrition will fail because the enemy will always have recruits at its disposal. On the other hand, the PRU anti-infrastructure force in South Vietnam proved highly successful in dismantling the underlying guerilla support network upon which the foot soldiers relied. Information in U.S. archives indisputably shows that the VC feared the Phoenix program, which dramatically sapped cadre morale and threatened the entire VC infrastructure in South Vietnam with widespread defections and desertions. This lesson learned should not be forgotten.

Recommendation 4

A major new effort to reduce desertions and promote the retention of existing soldiers must be initiated immediately. Culturally effective retirement benefits in the form of land grants or a government-subsidized Hajj after the completion of 20 years of good service should be offered. In addition, durable reenlistment incentives (such as paying one-fourth of a reenlistment bonus every 3 months, versus a lump sum payment, which soldiers could take up front and then desert) should also be offered. Quality-of-life improvements for second-enlistment soldiers; across-the-board pay increases; cash valor awards; and, other creative, Afghan-centric forms of compensation should be instituted or dramatically increased. Continuing to lose one-third of the force every year in a shrinking recruit environment is setting the stage for a manpower crisis in a few years' time.

ENDNOTES – CHAPTER 3

1. The ANDSF is composed of elements in the MOD, ANA, AAF, ANA Special Operations Command, *Ktah Khas*, Special Mission Wing, and ABP; it is also composed of elements in the MOI, ANP, Afghan Uniform Police, ANCOP, General Command Police Special Units, and the ALP or "Guardians."

2. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress," Arlington, VA, July 30, 2017, p. 61.

3. The total number of authorizations remained the same for both the MOD and MOI aggregate, so all changes were accomplished by transferring authorizations.

4. 1225 Report, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, December 2017, p. 79.

5. SIGAR, "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress," Arlington, VA, January 30, 2018, p. 80.

6. Amir Shah, Associated Press, "2 Afghan generals fired, to stand trial over academy assault," *Stars and Stripes*, February 7, 2018, available from *https://www.stripes.com/news/middle-east/2-afghan-generals-fired-to-stand-trial-over-academy-assault-1.510493*, accessed February 7, 2018.

7. SIGAR, "Quarterly Report," July 30, 2017, p. 97.

8. Afghan Human Resources Information Management System (AHRIMS), Afghan Personnel Pay System (APPS), the Afghan Automated Biometric Identification System (AABIS), and the ANDSF Identification Card System (ID); SIGAR, "Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan," Arlington, VA, September 2017, p. 118.

9. SIGAR, "Quarterly Report," January 30, 2018, p. 81.

10. Daniel L. Byman, "Order from Chaos: The case for continued U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, Part 1," Brookings, September 5, 2017, available from *https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/09/05/the-case-for-continued-u-s-involvement-in-afghanistan/*, accessed February 9, 2018.

11. SIGAR, "Quarterly Report to the United States Congress," Arlington, VA, April 30, 2017, p. 22, available from *https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2017-04-30qr-section3-security.pdf*, accessed March 15, 2018.

12. Ibid., p. 99.

13. Ibid., p. 124.

14. Graeme Smith, "The Future of the Afghan Local Police," International Crisis Group, June 4, 2015, p. 2, available from *https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/afghanistan/future-afghan-local-police*, accessed February 18, 2018.

15. SIGAR, "Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces," p. viii.

16. Sultan Faizy and Shashank Bengali, "Afghanistan's 'internal war'; The Country Is Struggling to Bring Order to Its Militias, Both Legal and Illegal," *The Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 2016, available from *https://latimes.newspapers.com/search/#query=Afghanistan%27s+%27internal+war%27%3B+The+country+is+struggling+to+bring+order+to+its+militias%2C+both+legal+and+illegal*, accessed February 22, 2018.

17. SIGAR, "Quarterly Report," July 30, 2017, p. 106.

18. SIGAR, "Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces," p. 156.

19. Ibid., p. 116.

20. Daniel L. Byman, "Order from Chaos: The case against involvement in Afghanistan, Part 2," Brookings, September 5, 2017, available from *https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/09/05/the-case-against-involvement-in-afghanistan/*, accessed January 23, 2018; Daniel L. Byman, "Order from Chaos: Why are we losing in Afghanistan?" Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, August 22, 2017, available from *https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/08/22/why-are-we-losing-in-afghanistan/*, accessed January 23, 2018; Helene Cooper and Rod Nordland, "As Trump Rolls Out War Plan, Taliban Are Gaining," *The New York Times*, August 21, 2017, available from *https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/21/world/asia/trump-afghanistan-war-taliban.html*, accessed January 22, 2018.

21. SIGAR, "Quarterly Report," July 30, 2017, p. 104.

22. Smith, p. 3.

23. SIGAR, "Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces," p. 81.

24. Merrit Kennedy, "Watchdog Report Shows Gaps In Information About Afghanistan War," *The two-way*, January 30, 2018, NPR, available from *https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/01/30/581640748/watchdog-report-shows-gaps-in-information-about-afghanistan-war*, accessed January 18, 2018.

25. Byman, "Order from Chaos," August 22, 2017.

26. SIGAR, "Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces," p. xii.

27. M. Chris Mason, "Strategic Insights: Better Late than Never," Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, October 23, 2018, available from *http://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/index.cfm/articles/Better-Late-Than-Never/2018/10/23*.

28. Matthew P. Dearing, "A Double-Edged Sword: The People's Uprising in Ghazni, Afghanistan," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol. 28, Iss. 3, June 2, 2017, pp. 576-608, especially p. 578.

29. Anthony Loyd, "'We Put Their Heads Out Along the Road'; For Afghanistan's New Reservists, Decapitating ISIS Prisoners Is Justified," *The Times* (London), October 2, 2017, p. 33.

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36. Mashal.

37. Mason, "Better Late than Never," pp. 1-7.

38. SIGAR, "Quarterly Report," January 30, 2018, p. 93.

39. William Rosenau and Austin Long, *The Phoenix Program and Contemporary Counterinsurgency*, Santa Monica, CA: National Defense Research Institute, 2009, p. 23.

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41. Douglas Valentine, *The Phoenix Program*, New York: William Morrow and Company, 1990, p. 86.

42. Gunilla Eriksson and Ulrica Pettersson, *Small Operations from a Small State Perspective: New Security Challenges*, Cham, Switzerland, 2017, p. 165.

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CHAPTER 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING TOWARD RECONCILIATION

"The objective of the campaign is to convince the Taliban that they cannot win on the battlefield. The war will end in a comprehensive, Afghan-led political settlement that will include all parties, including the Taliban."[1] The U.S. goal, as outlined in the recent report to Congress, is a "stable, independent Afghanistan at peace with its neighbors," with political reconciliation as the flagship of the strategy.[2] The report emphasizes how increased tactical success against the Taliban will, in theory, deny them victory and force them to a negotiated settlement. A settlement involving reconciliation and reintegration is not a new idea but, since 2005, all efforts to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table **to discuss peace** have failed. U.S. naiveté about the Taliban's intentions in discussions have resulted in embarrassments on at least three occasions. Numerous surveys, prisoner interrogations, and reliable field reports show that the Taliban are convinced that they eventually will win the current conflict. Battlefield successes throughout 2018 have done little to convince the Taliban of the need to negotiate. At present, they control more territory than at any time since 2001, with complete or near-complete suzerainty over as much as 40 percent of the rural areas of Afghanistan. The Taliban now control a population larger than Belgium's, and this area is slowly increasing. The major cities and predominantly Dari- and Turkic-speaking provinces in northern Afghanistan are the exception, underlining the ethnic nature of what is, for all intents and purposes, a civil war.[3] Herein lies the contradiction—the Taliban are certain they are winning militarily with no incentive to negotiate, while the United States follows

a strategy centered on forcing the enemy to the peace table through military pressure.

This chapter will briefly review previous Afghan reconciliation efforts to date and make several recommendations based on those efforts for increasing the likelihood of success. This monograph makes a distinction between formal reconciliation, which the Afghan Government and the West desire, and acceptance of a status quo. Acceptance of a kind of military standoff which tacitly accepts Taliban de facto control across much of the country might be relatively peaceful, but it is not reconciliation. Rather, this type of peace is best described as "accommodation" brought about by a military balance.[4] The term "stalemate" should not be used—a stalemate is a position in chess in which a player must move, but cannot do so without moving **into** check, which is illegal in chess. Therefore, it is technically a draw. That is not analogous to any outcome in Afghanistan, as the United States and the Taliban will always be able to make moves. The correct term would be "standoff."

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RECONCILIATION EFFORTS 1978 TO PRESENT

A study of Afghan reconciliation efforts since 1978 reveals a pattern of futility and Taliban gamesmanship in which the guerrillas have demonstrated a singleness of purpose and an adroit ability to manipulate Western diplomats to their benefit. The Taliban and the West are operating in two completely different cultural worlds. The West persists in absurdly viewing the Taliban through a Western political lens, while the Taliban appear to understand the West far more clearly (and reject it). Afghan tribal leaders,

rarely consulted, probably understand the dynamic better than even the dysfunctional Afghan Government does. Former British diplomat Michael Semple observes, "The legacy of reconciliation in Afghanistan includes traditions drawn upon all eras and pursued as statecraft by previous administrations."[5] He states, "given the country's long history of internal and external conflict, the pursuit of reconciliation can be said to be integral to Afghan statecraft and [the] local practice of war" and the "institutions invoked during traditional reconciliation are a core part of Afghan cultural heritage."[6] It is, therefore, of considerable importance to understand these traditional approaches, as Western cultural paradigms are not working.

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) Reconciliation (1978 to 1992)

During this period, the communist party PDPA sought United Nations (UN) mediation and tried a host of reconciliatory approaches to gain cease-fires intended primarily to support a solution leading to Soviet withdrawal. Initially, the non-aggression pacts were supplemented with financial and logistical support, which permitted the local mujahideen commanders to be in charge of security in their own areas as long as they did not attack Soviet forces or Soviet-backed Afghan security forces.[7] These agreements were unsuccessful during the peak of the conflict because the mujahideen leaders simply used the government support to increase their power and consolidate their positions without any intention of keeping the peace over the long term or of reconciling with the government. In essence, the Soviets were in a cage with a lion, and their strategy was to feed the lion.

Afghan President Najibullah Ahmadzai pursued reconciliation "relentlessly" during his reign, but got few takers as long as the "Soviets still had troops in the country."[8] This is quite similar to the Taliban position today—there will be no reconciliation as long as foreign forces are in the country. By the late 1980s, when the Soviets had withdrawn, Najibullah attempted to incorporate the mujahideen into a post-Soviet Afghanistan via power-sharing, but he relied heavily on cash subsidies from the Soviets to pay the mujahideen not to fight the government.[9] In the lion in the cage analogy, when the Soviet Union collapsed and the subsidy payments (i.e., the food) dried up, the lion ate Najibullah. Similar payments to the Taliban today not to fight would not be a credible option for the same reason.

The Bonn Accords and the Loya Jirga (2001 to 2003)

Reconciliation efforts after the Taliban was defeated in 2001 were a litany of poor decisions, hubris, squandered opportunities, bad advice from would-be experts, and cultural tone-deafness. These failures to grasp opportunities for stability ranged from: refusing multiple Taliban surrender offers; forcing the elimination of the Afghan king as a beloved figurehead of national unity, similar to the Queen of England and the Emperor of Japan; Central Intelligence Agency meddling that established warlords in power; and, creating an unworkable constitution which ensconced democracy and a theoretically powerful central government (which had no real power at all) in a country which has never had either democracy nor a strong central government. Consequently, these failures to grasp opportunities for stability set the resulting Afghan Government up for failure. These failures also set up the return of the Taliban to Afghanistan, similar

to the way that the Versailles Treaty set up the rise to power of the Nazis in Germany.

The earliest refusal by the United States and the Afghan Government to accept a formal Taliban surrender came when the Taliban Supreme Leader, Mullah Omar, sought to negotiate:

> In December 2001, with the movement in full collapse, Mullah Omar publicly offered to surrender the Taliban's stronghold, Kandahar, to Afghan tribal leaders. Soon after the Taliban fell, a brother of a top Mujahideen figure aligned with al Qaeda, Jalaluddin Haqqani, participated in consultations with Afghan government patrons in Khost, a subtle indication that the family was seeking entrée into the new Afghanistan. It was only after these overtures led nowhere that the family's network joined the insurgency.[10]

As Fotini Christia and Michael Semple point out, there were numerous, similar scenarios involving senior Taliban figures seeking inclusion in the new Afghan Government, including "Sahib Rohullah Wakil, the head of the Salafi movement in eastern Afghanistan."[11] The early period from October 2001 to early 2002 was full of missed opportunity from a willing and defeated opponent. The Bonn Conference was another missed opportunity. While reconciliation was mentioned in the Bonn Accords, the Taliban were not even participants in what was considered a peace agreement, an indication of American hubris. By 2005 and into 2006, many experts, such as Thomas Waldman, assessed that "leaving the Taliban out of Bonn was a big mistake."[12]

In June 2002, the Loya Jirga in Kabul selected the new Parliament members. Several senior Taliban leaders sought positions within the new government and even attended the Loya Jirga, despite the

awkward position many found themselves in after being excluded from Bonn. Many others chose to stay in traditional Pashtun-dominated regions aligned with their tribal affiliations to reassume their old places in those hierarchies before the rise of the Taliban. During this period, Hamid Karzai "publicly left the door open to the possibility of the Taliban playing a role in the government."[13]

But the Northern Alliance warlords sought individual opportunities to advance their own power and settle old grievances, and they made it clear to the senior Taliban leadership, mid-level Taliban commanders, and rank-and-file fighters that there was no room for them in the new Afghanistan. For most young, rank-and-file Taliban soldiers and low-level commanders accustomed to the prestige and respect accorded to Taliban mujahideen in Afghan culture, this meant returning to a lowly peacetime social status in traditional tribal power structures where social standing was derived largely from seniority and in which they were again essentially peons.[14] For them, it was a fall from the top of the social totem pole to the very bottom. To the former mid-level Taliban commanders, mostly former mujahideen, who might have expected a modicum of respect in the new Afghanistan, Karzai's December 2001 declaration of amnesty and his public appeal seemed hollow and lacked credibility. Senior Taliban leaders, shut out from the Bonn Accords and excluded from the new Afghanistan, went south and—with extensive help and support from the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)—gradually reformed their network in northern Pakistan. There they began, again with the active support of ISI, to plot a return to power through the classic stages of a Maoist model

of people's war. Warning signs of incipient insurgency were dismissed or ignored.[15]

In 2005, the Afghan Government initiated the Afghanistan National Independent Peace and Reconciliation Commission by Presidential decree, to be headed by Sebghatullah Mojadedi (a respected former 1990s mujahideen leader), who would administer a new group of reconciliation programs.[16] The main effort was the *Proceayee Tahqeem Solha* or "strengthening peace program," better known by its Dari acronym as PTS. The thrust of the PTS effort was to "certify that former insurgents are living peacefully and have accepted the new constitution."[17] The PTS program was crippled from the start by lack of resources, low credibility, the inability to protect reconciled insurgents carrying their certificates from harassment, bureaucratic corruption, and little or no effective management. The program yielded dismal results. Disillusioned and destitute former Taliban returned to their former networks with accounts of broken promises, disrespect from Tajiks, and abject poverty and near-starvation at the hands of corrupt government functionaries.

Neo-Taliban Movement Efforts (2006 to 2011)

The weak and under-resourced reconciliation programs, growing Pashtun disenfranchisement with a Northern Alliance-dominated government, loss of the Afghan king, Karzai's lack of tribal credibility and legitimacy, unemployment, and a lack of economic progress in the rural areas further fomented the Pashtun insurgency. The most significant reconciliation effort occurred in 2007 in Musa Qala (Helmand province). While there are conflicting accounts of what

happened at Musa Qala, it is clear that the British forces in Helmand brokered a locally negotiated settlement. Not surprisingly, the agreement failed along tribal lines. Later the same year, the Afghan Parliament passed the controversial Amnesty Resolution, which offered full amnesty to:

> those individuals and groups who are still in armed opposition . . . and who will end their opposition after this charter is in effect, join the national reconciliation process and respect and observe the Constitution and other laws of the country.[18]

The resolution was never signed by President Karzai, and it was largely viewed by the international community as an amnesty effort by those in Parliament to avoid war crime prosecutions under President Karzai's endorsed strategy of transitional justice.[19]

President Barack Obama unveiled his new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2009, stating that the United States will "work with local leaders, the Afghan government, and international partners to have a reconciliation process in every province."[20] The Obama administration's efforts to include Pakistan in a trilateral effort to broker reconciliation among moderate Taliban resonated internationally, and certainly in Islamabad. Kabul was less enthusiastic, based on its distrust of Pakistani intentions, rising internal competition over control of the reconciliation effort and its resources, and valid concerns that Pakistan would use the effort to reinforce its control over its Taliban proxies rather than genuinely seek peace. The arrest and semi-permanent detention of Mullah Abdul Ghani Barader in Karachi by Pakistani intelligence underscored Islamabad's duplicity, as Barader was a known advocate for a negotiated settlement. A Saudi-initiated

dialogue in 2008 was successful at engaging the Quetta Shura indirectly through Islamabad. Again sabotaged by Pakistan, the engagement was short-lived but may have influenced some insurgent attitudes about "the idea of engagement."[21]

The Afghan Government and the U.S.-led coalition attempted to capitalize on the U.S. troop surge, a new U.S. administration willing to negotiate with the Taliban, and moderate successes on the battlefield with a new Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program in July 2010. According to Seth Jones:

> ISAF Joint Command had the responsibility to operationalize reintegration and to help synchronize efforts from the Afghan government, ISAF, United Nations Development Program, and other entities.[22]

However, in a way that recalled the Vietnam War, escalation of the conflict against the Taliban actually deepened enemy resolve. In a way that recalled the politics in Hanoi in the mid-1960s, escalation of the conflict against the Taliban resulted in hard-liners in the insurgent leadership pushing aside moderates and solidifying their control over the national movement. Despite funding from international donors, International Security Assistance Force prioritization, and sustained UN efforts, the program was disregarded by the Taliban leadership, who declared the government in Kabul to be "puppets of the infidels."

One outcome of Karzai's multiple Loya Jirga peace efforts was the opening of the Taliban's Doha (Qatar) office. Over a 5-year period, secret meetings were held between the United States and the Taliban. Next, these meetings expanded to include the Afghan Government in hopes of finding an exit ramp for the United States. What occurred instead was the Taliban

breaking an explicit agreement not to open the office in Doha as an Embassy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, followed by series of bilateral meetings between the United States and the Taliban, which was fixated solely on the release of five senior leaders from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The Taliban steadfastly refused to speak to the Afghan Government, which they have referred to for years as "illegitimate puppets." The Taliban then adroitly manipulated U.S. naiveté and desire to see this step as a "confidence-building measure" upon which to build for future talks to secure the freedom of five top members of their high command structure in exchange for U.S. Army deserter Bowe Bergdahl. Once the Taliban had achieved this tactical objective, the "talks" ended, as the Taliban had intended from the start.

Recent Efforts (2012 to 2018)

Little effort at reconciliation took place as U.S. forces continued to transition security responsibility to the Afghan National Army (ANA). The Pakistani ISI forced a couple of low-level Taliban strap-holders to attend a meeting in Murree with threats of reprisals and promises that they only had to go once to placate the Americans and make it look like Pakistan was cooperating with the West. Shortly after the failure at Murree in 2016, a tectonic shift occurred when it was revealed that the founder of the movement, Mullah Omar, had been dead for several years. A concerted effort to connect the collapse of the "talks" at Murree with the announcement of Mullah Omar's death is a case of post hoc ergo propter hoc. In reality, the event at Murree was a one-time ISI sham. Several senior Taliban leaders were subsequently assassinated on

the streets of Quetta, and others were eliminated by drone strikes before hardliner Mullah Haibatullah, a religious scholar rather than a fighter in the Taliban's medieval religious-military order, took over the position of supreme leader.

Under Haibatullah Akhundzada (Akhundzada is an honorific, not a name, meaning, loosely, "respected religious teacher"), Taliban attacks increased, with the Taliban capturing Kunduz temporarily, seizing most of Helmand province, and placing significant pressure on the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah.[23] So far, the Taliban campaign in 2018 has seen the temporary occupations of Faryab and Ghazni and the seizure of several more districts around the country; in one case, the Taliban overran and destroyed an entire company of Afghan commandos.

As of August 2018, reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan remained the centerpiece of the Donald Trump administration's "new" South Asia policy, but they are at a standstill. The Taliban maintain their Doha office and, in July 2018, Ambassador Alice Wells, the South Central Asia Senior Bureau Official, held low-level discussions with Taliban officials in Doha, apparently arranged by Saudi Arabia. On the battlefield, the Taliban continue to fight aggressively and make tangible gains across the vast rural areas. They occasionally attack major urban centers, as they did in Kunduz in 2017 and Faryab and Ghazni in 2018, apparently more for political and propaganda purposes than from a desire to seize and permanently hold them. In all three cases, the Taliban withdrew in good order rather than being forced out block by block. The misnomered "National Unity Government" under Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai continues to carry out limited counteroffensive operations with U.S. support, but is still

struggling to gain political legitimacy, and establish the capability to provide a modicum of governance beyond major urban centers. By August 2018, lacking the military means to reverse the gains, it was apparent that the U.S.-Afghan coalition was willing to cede control of Taliban-captured rural districts while continuing to pull security forces back from isolated posts vulnerable to the Taliban. The United States continues outreach efforts to the Taliban for peace talks. There is no overlap, however, in the Venn diagram of what the Taliban considers an acceptable outcome (elimination of the "puppet government" and Taliban control of the entire country) and what the United States considers an acceptable outcome (the Taliban acceding to the current constitution and joining the existing government as a political party).

Analysis

Foreign forces do not win other countries' internal conflicts. The future of Afghanistan will be determined by the Afghans themselves, and the international community cannot want to defeat a Taliban takeover of Afghanistan more than the Afghan people themselves want it. However, at this stage, the sustained commitment of U.S. military power and the support of the international community are critical for the survival of the current Afghan state.

Analysis of the previous 40 years of reconciliatory efforts with belligerents similar in method and outlook to the Taliban, coupled with relevant case studies, indicates a very low probability of success for reconciliation, which is predicated on current levels of military pressure leading to negotiations and the Taliban integrating into the existing political order. This

assessment is based on analysis of Taliban statements and publications; analysis of historical Pashtun tribal uprisings with similar religious mobilization undercurrents (see appendix III of this volume); and, analysis of historical precedents in insurgency with equally committed enemy forces, as in the Vietnam conflict, in which a virtually identical strategy was pursued. In all of these cases, increasing military pressure and aerial bombing actually bolstered the enemy's morale, cohesion, will to resist, and commitment to victory. There is no reason to believe that what has never worked in similar insurgencies under similar conditions will now work in Afghanistan.

In other words, doing more of what we are doing now within the same parameters is not going to work. Either what we are doing has to change, or the parameters have to change. Continuing the same ineffective policies, staying the course, and thinking "inside the box" are not going to get us where we need to go. The current glide path is into the side of the mountain, not over it. In order to achieve a negotiated settlement in Afghanistan, it is necessary therefore to widen the acceptable solution spectrum (see figure 4-1) and be willing to consider less palatable and even unconventional solutions across a broader range of outcomes. This will likely necessitate accommodation, partition, acceptance of de-facto Taliban-governed areas, or a combination of these options.

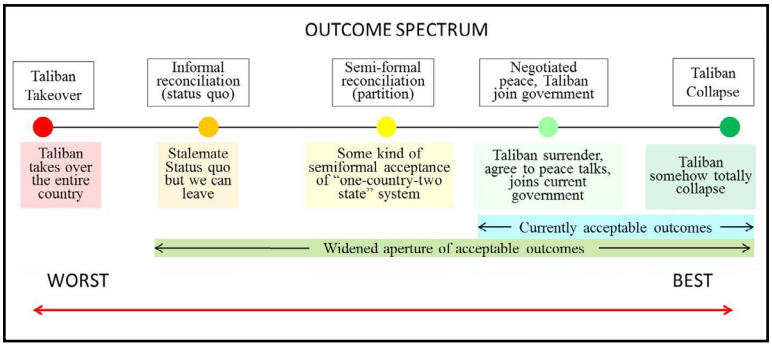

Figure 4-1. Outcome Spectrum[24]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Taliban will not be forced or cajoled into reconciling with the current government, regardless of the "carrots" from Ghani or the "sticks" from the United States. In regard to the former, the Taliban consider the current government to be illegitimate puppets and refuse to speak to them. In regard to the latter, the Taliban perceive that they are winning the war, and can absorb their current level of losses virtually forever. From a purely military standpoint, they are correct in that assessment, based on the amount of territory controlled, their available financing, Pashtun birthrates, their continued access to safe haven, ongoing Pakistani support, lack of popular Afghan Government legitimacy, and their moral acceptability in most of the Pashtun regions. Mao Zedong theorized that the guerrilla could win with 15 percent support from the population. The Taliban are currently estimated to have 40 percent. The cities of Afghanistan can be held

as Najibullah held them, but the rural areas, which contain 75-80 percent of the population, are slowly slipping away from government control.[25] Reports that Operation RESOLUTE SUPPORT continues to recommend further withdrawals of Afghan security forces from rural outposts in order to strengthen urban garrisons suggest that efforts to retake rural territory seized by the Taliban are essentially over.[26] In addition, the United States is not likely to pursue the unprecedented levels of violence, including the direct targeting of all Taliban mullahs necessary at this stage to weaken the Taliban will to resist, although historical analysis shows that this level of violence, plus targeting mullahs directly, is required to defeat a rural Pashtun insurgency in Afghanistan. **Therefore, it is necessary to widen the spectrum of acceptable outcomes to the conflict** because it is not going to end within our current spectrum.

Recommendation 2

The most favorable resolution to the conflict we are likely to get is accommodation of some variant resulting from a mutually recognized military standoff. Achieving this, however, would require a reversal of Taliban momentum, a significant increase in ANDSF military capabilities, a change in Pakistani behavior, and a willingness on the part of the Afghan Government and its Western backers to settle for less than the current expectations. Current policies which consider the Taliban as if it were a secular political force rather than a medieval, religious-military order reflect the same issue found in the Vietnam War, which was a comprehensive failure to identify and understand the enemy.

Recommendation 3

In an insurgency, the only political level that matters is the village—"the level of the people." District and provincial centers are irrelevant. This is as true of Afghanistan as it was of Vietnam. Concurrently, the interethnic conflict remains unresolved between the loosely allied Turkic/Dari-speaking ethnic groups and the Pashtuns, creating a Pashtun belt that divides Afghanistan roughly into upper and lower halves. It is the authors' assessment that Afghanistan is currently partitioned de facto along tribal lines. The intertribal conflict among Pashtuns in the lower half of the country continues to be one of the main dynamics of the war. Where there is conflict in the Pashtun majority areas, it is not being driven by pro-government sentiments versus Taliban control but, rather, by inter-Pashtun tribal conflict. Some Pashtun tribes remain fiercely anti-Taliban for local reasons, as discussed earlier. However, this does not translate to support for the central government because "The enemy of my enemy is not necessarily my friend."[27] Figuring out how to support these elements, and especially security forces in Kandahar, will be the most difficult aspect of the endgame. Considerable thought should be given to this immediately, unless these anti-Taliban elements, like the Montanyards of the Vietnam conflict, are simply to be left to their fate.

Recommendation 4

Flowing from the assumptions in recommendations 1, 2, and 3, what follows logically is the approach with the highest likelihood of an outcome that preserves some of the strategic objectives of the United

States in Afghanistan, as well as some of the social gains made by minorities and women in the Dari- and Turkic-speaking regions. This approach is to open a negotiation space, to include a de facto partition of the Pashtun-dominated south and east into semi-autonomous tribal areas—effectively the current status quo in much of the south of the country today. Such regions could remain part of Afghanistan but be administered in a more federal, autonomous manner, like Switzerland or the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan. In this scenario, the country retains its current borders, the Taliban can administer what they now control, anti-Taliban forces such as those now operating in Kandahar can be assisted, and the former Northern Alliance can remain free of Taliban suzerainty. This could conceivably satisfy both Pakistan's obsession with "strategic depth" in Afghanistan and the needs of the United States for counterterrorism bases in Afghanistan. Assessed realistically, the Kabul government's bargaining position is not going to improve over time.

ENDNOTES – CHAPTER 4

1. *Report to Congress In Accordance With Section 1225 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015,* "Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan," Washington, DC: The Department of Defense, December 2017, p. 1, available from *https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/1225-Report-Dec-2017.pdf*, accessed March 14, 2018.

2. Ibid., p. 1.

3. "a war between opposing groups of citizens of the same country," definition of "civil war," Meriam-Webster.com, n.d., available from *https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/civil%20war*.

4. Author discussions with Professor M. Chris Mason during research, at Carlisle, PA, U.S. Army War College, February 13, 2018.

5. Michael Semple, *Reconciliation in Afghanistan*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2009, p. 13.

6. Ibid., p. 13.

7. Ibid., p. 16.

8. Ibid., p. 19.

9. Ibid., pp. 16-17.

10. Fotini Christia and Michael Semple, "Flipping the Taliban: How to Win in Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 4, July/August 2009, p. 3, available from *https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2009-07-01/flipping-taliban*.

11. Ibid.

12. Thomas Walman, "Reconciliation and Research in Afghanistan: An Analytical Narrative," *International Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 5, 2014, p. 1051.

13. Semple, "Reconciliation in Afghanistan," p. 29.

14. Ibid., p. 30.

15. Monograph editor Dr. M. Chris Mason went to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) headquarters in early 2003 and, using the *CIA Handbook to the Analysis of Insurgencies*, presented a briefing on the incipient Taliban insurgency to the Afghanistan section of the Agency, crosswalking the line items in the *Handbook* to events on the ground being reported in cable traffic. He was told that this judgment was "premature."

16. Semple, "Reconciliation in Afghanistan," p. 54.

17. Ibid.

18. Joanna Nathan, "A Review of Reconciliation Efforts in Afghanistan," *Countering Terrorism Center Sentinel*, Vol. 2,

Iss. 8, August 2009, p. 2, available from *https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2010/06/Vol2Iss8-Art4.pdf*, accessed March 4, 2018.

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20. Jesse Lee, "A New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan," the White House: President Barack Obama (blog), March 27, 2009, available from *https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/03/27/a-new-strategy-afghanistan-and-pakistan*, accessed March 4, 2018.

21. Semple, "Reconciliation in Afghanistan," p. 77.

22. Seth G. Jones, *Reintegrating Afghan Insurgents*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, July 2011, p. 11.

23. Mushtaq Yusufzai, Abigail Williams, and F. Brinley Bruton, "Taliban Begins Secret Peace Talks with U.S., Afghan Officials," NBC News, July 17, 2018.

24. Author discussions with Professor M. Chris Mason about expansion of conflict resolution outcomes across a spectrum dialogue and outcome spectrum graphic provided by email to author from Professor M. Chris Mason during research, at Carlisle, PA, U.S. Army War College, February 13, 2018.

25. The exact percentage of the population in rural areas, and even the exact size of the population itself, are speculative. There has not been a census in over 50 years. It is almost certain that the rural population is undercounted, and the accepted urban estimate of 25 percent is therefore likely to be overstated as a result.

26. Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Helene Cooper, "Newest U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan Mirrors Past Plans for Retreat," *The New York Times*, July 28, 2018, available from *https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/28/world/asia/trump-afghanistan-strategy-retreat.html*.

27. The Daily Kos member (arendt), "The enemy of my enemy is not necessarily my friend," The Daily Kos, October 25, 2015, available from *https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2015/10/25/1438976/-The-enemy-of-my-enemy-is-not-necessarily-my-friend*.

APPENDIX I. THE SOVIET CONSTRUCTION OF AFGHANISTAN'S SECURITY FORCES

From 1980 to 1992, the Soviet Union's efforts to enhance Afghanistan's security by training, advising, and assisting the Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police, and other security forces were in concert with standard counterinsurgency methods. The Soviets utilized all instruments of national power with a heavily weighted effort on the military to facilitate stability within Afghanistan. The Soviet contributions (mostly in the form of developing, equipping, and training) were not haphazardly implemented, but substantially aligned with methodical and dedicated efforts.

THE DESIGN

Although not always the most qualified individuals, the Soviets sent an abundance of specialists who worked in organizations within the Soviet Union to bolster Afghanistan's parallel security organizations. The Soviet government departments from which these specialists originated were held directly responsible for their counterpart government departments within Afghanistan. For example, the Soviet Ministry of Defense (MoD) was responsible for the Afghan MoD and had the goal of developing and advising the Afghan military. The *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* (KGB), which translates to the Committee for State Security, advised and assisted the *Khadamat-e Etela at-e Dawlati* (KhAD), also known as the Afghan Secret Police. The *Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del* (MVD) or Ministry of Interior directly assisted the Afghan Saradoy, which held responsibility for the nation's police forces and paramilitary units. The Soviets designated senior advisor teams within each department

to reside in Afghanistan and maintained a chain of command in Moscow. The Operational Group of the Ministry of Defense of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics served as a coordinating body among the senior advisor teams, with the intent of facilitating security operations and efforts between Afghan and Soviet forces.

THE SARANDOY

The Sarandoy, under the Ministry of Interior, consisted of provincial police, corrections facility officers, and traffic police who were all responsible for the "broadening and strengthening of government control through policing and other actions, securing government and party components, and securing important facilities and structures."[1] The Sarandoy policed throughout the territories with the preference to allow members to serve in their hometowns. They were centrally commanded at company, battalion, and brigade levels. This mostly conscripted force, enlarged from a force of 14,500 in 1980 to over 98,000 in 1987, was divided into divisions.[2] In conjunction with training the Sarandoy on military tactics to defeat insurgents, the Soviets supplied the Sarandoy with armored vehicles, mortars, and small arms. The intent was to train and empower the Sarandoy to be more paramilitary in nature in order to relieve some of the operational burden on the Afghan and Soviet militaries.

The Sarandoy focus was on "securing government control throughout the country, protecting key facilities, and participating in combat operations with military forces against insurgents."[3] The Soviets relied heavily on the Sarandoy for its reliable intelligence collection capabilities as well as its competence in

conducting raids and hostage rescues. In alignment with many other types of security force leaders, more than 12,000 Sarandoy officers were trained at MVD facilities in the Soviet Union.[4]

THE KHAD

The Afghan State Information Agency, also known as the KhAD, blanketed Afghanistan with representation in every province, town, and administrative district. This force was comprised of a political directorate, a personnel directorate, 11 support services, and 11 operational sections. Additionally, the KhAD had a foreign intelligence branch called the Tenth Directorate that trained in the Soviet Union and Kabul, Afghanistan. The KhAD's roles included arrests of counter-revolutionaries or opposition, intelligence collection, and counterinsurgency operations. The KhAD served as a clearing force post-operations to take captured enemies into custody and to negotiate with local political, militia, and tribal leaders. With training and advising, the KhAD grew from a force of roughly 5,000 in 1980 to close to 70,000 by 1988.[5]

THE AFGHAN MILITARY

Upon occupation, the Soviet Union did not dismantle the substantially sized (three Army Corps) Afghan Army. The Afghan Army was reorganized and restructured in a Soviet fashion. The country was divided into 21 zones of operation and then subdivided into military command areas, with forces maintaining a permanent presence in each of their designated areas.[6] This design caused the conventional Afghan Army to stagnate because its primary role was guarding facilities. The Soviets, who were

taking on the brunt of the combat, transitioned the Afghan Army away from most security guard duties and incorporated them into combat roles alongside Soviet forces. In the mid-1980s, following a few years integrating combat operations with the Afghans, the Soviets strived to create an Afghan Army that had the competence to conduct operations autonomously. There was some success with independent Afghan Army operations, but the Soviets retained the brunt of operational responsibility because of their expertise, capabilities, and strong will.

The ineffectiveness of the Afghan military is partially attributed to the Soviet advisory methods. The Soviets embedded advisory teams down to the battalion level, but these advisory teams were not from the Soviet military force that occupied Afghanistan (40th Army). The advisory teams were responsible for some training, compound infrastructure, and payment of Afghan soldiers. However, the advisory teams rarely coordinated with the 40th Army. This disconnect was worsened when the senior advisors reported to the Soviet Defense Ministry and not the 40th Army command.

In efforts to shape and strengthen the Afghan military, the Soviets instituted a 2-month training period for conscripts prior to employing them in the field. Afghan soldiers were trained on basic skills (weapons, maneuvers, etc.) and reading and writing. Afghan officers were trained through Afghan civilian universities, within the Soviet Union, and in Afghan military academies.

AVIATION

The Soviets faced a significant challenge in training and equipping an Afghan aviation force because the pool in which to find qualified rotary- and fixed-wing pilots was small. Out of 400 candidates, 5 typically met the health and education requirements to become a pilot.[7] The qualified candidates typically came from wealthier families that had the resources to care for and school their children. The Soviets succeeded in training pilots to fly independently (40 in 1982) in support of combat operations.[8] Although not ambitious, prone to accidents, and averse to dropping or firing munitions, the Afghan pilots did provide adequate air support to Afghan ground forces.

BORDER FORCES

Under the MoD, the Afghanistan Border Guard grew from 1,200 in 1980 to over 30,000 in 1987.[9] The Soviets saw the Afghan borders, particularly with Pakistan, as the conduit for mujahideen supplies and as sanctuary areas for rest and training. Controlling these borders hampered the mujahideen's ability to conduct operations, therefore giving the Afghan and Soviet forces the opportunity to contain the insurgency. The long border (2,430 kilometers) traverses over mountainous terrain that is not easily controlled. The Border Guards were deemed competent and able to control the border within designated areas, but there were not enough guards to oversee the vast area. Their success was minimal.

CITIZEN MILITIAS

With the assistance of the Soviets, the Afghan Government organized citizen militias across the country. These militias were paid and trained, mostly by the KhAD and the Sarandoy, with the main purpose of community defense and propaganda. The militia participants grew from 18,000 in 1983 to about 35,000 in 1988.[10] These citizen militias were somewhat effective in defending villages and places of work but were eventually marginalized by the robust infiltration of the mujahideen, particularly throughout the rural areas.

TRIBAL AND BORDER MILITIAS

Under the MoD, tribal and border militias were armed groups that worked for the Afghan Government. Many of these militias existed prior to the Soviet invasion, and some were previously mujahideen groups that flipped and dedicated their support to the Afghan Government. These forces were commanded by Afghan Army officers but had their own internal commanders who were given military rank and who reported to the Afghan Army or the KhAD.

The border militias, having lived in the vicinity of the border their whole lives, were integrated into the Border Guard, which provided the Border Guards with local intelligence and knowledge of the terrain. The regional militias were charged with controlling the countryside and to "hamper the movement of rebel groups."[11] These militias received training, though it was likely minimal, from the Afghan and Soviet military. The size of the militia forces was estimated to be between 60,000 to 70,000 in 1990.[12]

In addition to training and modest pay, many of the militias were outfitted with heavy weapons, artillery, and tanks. The loose authority the Afghan and Soviet militaries had over these militias, combined with their training and military equipment, established a high level of instability throughout the country. Militias' loyalty wavered among the Afghan Government, warlords, and tribal ties, all of which undermined the militias' role in support of a legitimate Government of Afghanistan.

TAKEAWAYS

- Soviet military advisors were poorly trained for an advisory mission, did not understand the language and culture, and were typically the least qualified. Competent advisors would have enabled better coordination and training and facilitated proficiency within Afghan security forces.
- Soviet military advisors worked separately from the Soviet 40th Army and reported to the Soviet Defense Minister. This separation led to a disconnect in planning, training, and conducting operations.
- Soviet and Afghan military did not train or conduct exercises together. Fundamentally, units that do not train together are normally less effective when conducting combat operations alongside each other.
- The Soviet 40th Army was not trained in counterinsurgency, nor did the Soviets train the Afghans on counterinsurgency tactics and strategy. The Soviet and Afghan operations mostly consisted of "clear and sweep" missions, which

have proven to be ineffective when executing a counterinsurgency operation.

- Although a force of over 30,000, the Border Guards were not positioned on lines of communication and did not attack mujahideen supply routes. The Border Guards' strategy was flawed with inadequate positioning and a lack of aggressiveness.
- Militias were overly equipped and not adequately controlled by the Afghan or Soviet military. The militias, specifically after the Soviet withdrawal, changed loyalties in support of warlord and tribal affiliations.
- Afghan Army unit strength was at 53 percent, with 43 percent of officers not receiving officer training in 1983.[13] This can be attributed to a high desertion rate (the Afghan Army's desertion rate was 30,941 in 1988), anti-government mujahideen propaganda, not meeting recruiting goals, and dissatisfaction with a soldier's life.[14]
- Although the Soviets incorporated mullahs into the Afghan military ranks to assist in morale, religious facilities and prayer opportunities were not provided. Not promoting and allowing Muslims to practice their religion is antagonistic and deters their focus on mission accomplishment.
- The Soviets did not adequately train or require the Afghans to repair and maintain equipment and vehicles, which led to a low degree of readiness. Most of the vehicles (air and ground) fell into disrepair when the Soviets withdrew. With the lack of equipment, the Afghan Army became ineffective against the insurgents.

- As the Soviet occupation progressed, the command and control over all of the security forces was not understood between the MoD and Ministry of Interior. Conflicting guidance, lines of accountability, and reporting became foggy between the ministries.
- Soviet forces destroyed villages, dishonored mosques, and conducted various human rights violations. Their profoundly unprofessional behavior influenced the local populace to turn against the Afghan Government and, in many cases, support the mujahideen.

ENDNOTES – APPENDIX I

1. Olga Oliker, *Building Afghanistan's Security Forces in Wartime: The Soviet Experience*, Arlington, VA: RAND Corporation, 2011, p. 25.

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3. Quote from Olga Oliker, *Building Afghanistan's Security Forces in Wartime: The Soviet Experience*, Arlington, VA: RAND Corporation, 2011, p. 28, that referenced N. E. Tsygannik, "Afganskie Sobytiia," in Vladimir Filippovich Nekrasov, ed., *MVD Rossii: Entsiklopediia* (*Russian MVD: Encyclopedia*), Moscow: Ob'edinennaia Redaktsiia MVD Rossii, 2002.

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6. Ibid., p. 38.

7. Ibid., p. 50.

8. Ibid., p. 49.

9. Ibid., p. 51.

10. Ibid., p. 54.

11. Antonio Giustozzi, *War, Politics and Society in Afghanistan: 1978-1992*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2000, p. 201.

12. Oliker, *Building Afghanistan's Security Forces in Wartime*, p. 57.

13. Ibid., p. 59.

14. Ibid., p. 61.

APPENDIX II. AFGHAN RECONCILIATION HISTORICAL REVIEW

> Najibullah was now determined to accept the reality of the country: 'national reconciliation is a precise calculation of the present national and tribal structure of our society'. People like rebel leader Abdul Hakim, commanding 2,000 mujahidin in Herat Province, went over to the government partly because of material support from the government, but mainly thanks to the fact that Kabul had 'corrected its mistakes,' recognizing the limits of its authority and avoiding interfering with local affairs. Had the government tried to interfere once more, he would have had no problem in taking up arms again.[1]

The stunningly quick capitulation of the Taliban; close cooperation with the Northern Alliance partners; and rapid, aggressive pursuit of al-Qaeda across the Pashtun-held regions of Afghanistan created a stunned group of security and political actors nearly completely beholden to the United States and our political, military, and diplomatic efforts in conjunction with Pakistan and the emerging Northern Alliance leadership.

The United States chose Hamid Karzai, a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) contact and minor Afghan political figure, to lead the interim Government of Afghanistan, effectively short-circuiting any indigenous process. The only real historical source of political stability in Afghanistan, the monarchy, was shut down by the United States during the Bonn Process, which heavily favored the northern Afghan ethnolinguistic groups. Under effective U.S. control, a new Afghan constitution was put in place which imagined a liberal parliamentary democracy in a fractious, feudal, tribal society with 10 percent literacy. The resulting government was seen to largely exclude a

broad swath of Afghanistan's largest ethnic group, the Pashtuns.

The refusal to negotiate with any belligerent entity centered on hardline political personalities within the George W. Bush administration captured under the "we do not negotiate with terrorists" rhetoric. This strong statement demonstrated American ignorance of the strategic situation across Afghanistan and Pakistan after the fall of the Taliban.

The U.S.-led coalition, composed of mostly CIA and Special Forces operatives supporting the Northern Alliance and other former mujahideen and tribal leaders, had "scores of Taliban fighters defect for money and the promise of honorable positions in the new government."[2] This cash infusion, coupled with promises of positions in the new, U.S.-backed Afghan Government to former mujahideen and tribal leaders "alongside whom commanders and fighters had battled earlier . . . prompted many early realignments."[3]

Despite the significant number of early Taliban peace and reconciliation overtures, many of the early, successful negotiations and realignments favorable to the newly forming Afghan Government were local or regional at best, despite clear signals that the Taliban were willing to negotiate. Furthermore, Abdul Wahid, selected by Mullah Omar in 2001 to lead the surrender effort, reconciled with the Afghan Government several years later. Walid's example was not the normal path charted by the United States and the Afghan-led Government, despite the clear willingness of the Taliban and tribal rivals to negotiate when conditions were favorable.

Frequently, the fate of Taliban leaders and their groups seeking opportunities to reconcile met the same fate as Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil in February

2002. Wakil, "the Taliban's Foreign Minister and a man widely regarded as the most reasonable Taliban leader, voluntarily approached the new Afghan authorities expressing a desire to join the new order."[4] He was subsequently arrested; held in the U.S. detention facility in Bagram, Afghanistan; and "then held under house arrest."[5]

Colin Clarke expertly articulates from Thomas Ruttig that the U.S. strategy during this timeframe was essentially "mopping up Taliban remnants," which complemented the U.S. policy pertaining to not talking to terrorists.[6] It is unclear whether the Taliban, in disarray in late 2001 and early 2002, were in a position to participate in a coherent manner at the Bonn Conference or even integrate any political entity into the emerging Kabul government.[7] Even more uncertain is whether U.S. policymakers would have allowed the Taliban to integrate into the Kabul government.

While Karzai made overtures to the Taliban, Northern Alliance warlords sought to consolidate and expand their power in the emerging government and settle old scores. Concurrently, the United States and the United Nations (UN) felt little need to talk with the Taliban as it was a dying organization. The United States and the UN Security Council contradicted Karzai's efforts by maintaining a list of Taliban leaders and senior officials generated prior to the international intervention.[8] However, the United States generated its own blacklist of more than 150 individuals who were suspected of conducting terrorist attacks or harboring and aiding al-Qaeda which heavily overlapped with the UN list.[9] The United States and the coalition immediately started detaining these suspects, many of whom were senior Taliban officials and mid-level commanders. The blacklist grew as

the terror threat assessment changed. To add further confusion to the post-Taliban lull from 2001 to 2003, many Taliban leaders were the subject of "predatory" arrests, seizures, and harassment tactics, particularly in the Pashtun regions, despite efforts to invoke traditional reconciliation and reintegration methods.[10] Old scores settled from behind the new Karzai administration often leveraged ill-advised U.S. or coalition raids or arrests, undermining traditional, tribal-based, reconciliation and reintegration methods and clearly contradicting Karzai's public rhetoric on reconciliation. Michael Semple stated that, during this period, "most [Taliban] were left in an ambiguous position in terms of their status relative to the new administration and coalition forces."[11]

Professor Mojadedi was to reach out to insurgents and, upon reconciliation, provide them with government reconciliation paperwork. The program had field offices, one of which administered a reentry program for insurgents arriving from Pakistan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. That office featured a guesthouse and offered economic aid to reconciled insurgents.[12]

The Program-e Tahkim-e Sulh (Strengthening Peace Program), one of the few programs that could claim international legitimacy through funding, was comprehensive in its execution, and received significant media attention. On the heels of British efforts with the Taliban unconnected to the Kabul government, President Karzai stepped in to welcome former Taliban provincial governor Mullah Abdul Salaam and appointed him a district administrator ahead of the efforts led by the United Kingdom and the Afghan National Army (ANA) to recapture Musa Qala.[13] The British forces, along with the ANA, brokered a cease-fire in the Musa Qala district center, with all

sides accommodating each other's presence. The British forces and the ANA were able to keep the district center open and free of attacks to encourage economic growth and development, while the Taliban fighters avoided the district center and did not attack coalition members, ANA members, or Afghans taking advantage of the government or coalition development efforts.

On March 27, 2009, the White House released the "White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan." The report listed "Encouraging Afghan government efforts to integrate reconcilable insurgents" as one of the principal objectives.[14] The white paper further articulated the Obama administration's policy, stating:

> While Mullah Omar and the Taliban's hard core that have aligned themselves with al Qaeda are not reconcilable and we cannot make a deal that includes them, the war in Afghanistan cannot be won without convincing non-ideologically committed insurgents to lay down their arms, reject al Qaeda, and accept the Afghan Constitution. … We can help this process along by exploiting differences among the insurgents to divide the Taliban's true believers from less committed fighters. Integration must be Afghan-led. An office should be created in every province and we should support efforts by the Independent Directorate of Local Governance to develop a reconciliation effort targeting mid-to-low level insurgents to be led by provincial governors.[15]

The program included a High Peace Council, complete with provincial and district committees to assist in overseeing the effort. The program added economic incentives, which were missing in previous efforts by the Karzai administration, UN Development Programme, and International Security Assistance Forces.

The new program included a Force Reintegration Cell run by International Security Assistance Forces to "help facilitate the delivery of policy, resources, and capabilities in support of reintegration."[16] Further straining a series of diplomatic patches by the United States, Karzai vented publicly about U.S. and International Security Assistance Forces engaging without his lead or consent, alluding to accusations that the United States denied the Afghan Government the right to lead peace and reconciliation efforts.

In April 2016, the Taliban announced that their leader, Mullah Omar, had been dead for several years. Shortly after that announcement, Mullah Aktar Mansour became the new Taliban leader. Immediately, Pakistan attempted secret peace talks, which failed after newly appointed Mullah Akhtar Mansour was killed in a U.S. drone strike in May 2016.

From 1978 to the present, reconciliation efforts have been many and varied, with some achieving success, but none decisive enough to achieve reconciliation at the national level. After 40 years of trial and tribulation, the following lessons are critical when discussing any future reconciliation issues:

1. The Taliban, warlords, and mujahideen leaders do not form a monolithic, anti-government entity. Rather, the Taliban is comprised of multiple entities of varying complexity representing opportunities to reconcile individually versus lengthy, unsuccessful efforts at national-level reconciliation requiring consensus.
2. The Taliban have deep tribal affiliations that impact their propensity to reconcile specific sets of grievances. The more complete the tribal understanding, the better the odds of reconciliation solutions.

3. The Taliban are susceptible to provincial, district, and local power-sharing arrangements with the central government that equate to a cease-fire and government accommodation of the group into reigning over select segments of traditional tribal or ethnic lands.
4. The Taliban or any other anti-government group from the last 40 years should be receptive to dialogue and see it as a traditional means of resolving disputes. However, none of these groups, specifically the Taliban, will compromise on their demands when they perceive that they are winning on the battlefield. The Taliban will absorb significant leader and fighter losses and still not compromise or negotiate, particularly when it involves a foreign power or occupant.
5. The government and foreign entities need to be united, coherent, and credible for the Taliban or other insurgent groups to trust reconciliation efforts. Follow-through and organized support at each echelon is critical. Individual trust and credibility are often best achieved through "political patronage" or sponsorship, leveraging tribal and traditional Afghan ethnic values of protection.[17]
6. The Afghan Government, foreign powers, and international supporters that have sought to negotiate with the Taliban or any other anti-government entity in Afghanistan in the last 40 years have encountered many problems. The United States and the Afghan Government are forced by regional history and culture to seek negotiations and corresponding reconciliation from a position of political and military strength, as they did in 2001-2003. Insurgent groups have

historically used reconciliation or cease-fires as ruses or ploys to enhance operational capabilities or pursue strategic, intermediate objectives.

The prospects for Afghan reconciliation after the rise of Antonio Giustozzi's proclaimed "Neo Taliban movement" in 2006-2007 has been reframed in the context "of a search for peaceful, political approaches that will stabilize a deteriorating situation—that is, win the war."[18] Paradoxically, reconciliation in the Western tradition is no longer possible in a post-conflict Afghanistan, without first changing the battlefield calculus of the insurgents. Recent events in Afghanistan prove this valuable lesson.

ANNEX: PASHTUN UPRISING AND HADDA MULLAH CASE STUDY

The Pashtun revolt allows for informative analysis about the socio-political nature of the two conflicts. Both groups are Pashtun, straddle the Durand line, and move freely through the porous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Both share foreign intervention as an impetus for perpetuating the conflict with fervor. Both share conservative Sunni theology and are driven by a long-standing, unresolved, intertribal conflict that generated opportunities for mullahs and their interpretations and teachings through madrassas and isolated Pashtuns to displace traditional Khans and Maliks with mullah leadership, obfuscating traditional tribal conflict resolution.

How the mullahs were targeted by the British and the impacts of this targeting on the end of the uprising are noteworthy. The mullahs were widely known to employ a distributed and resilient mullah social net-

work that interconnected the majority of the Pashtuns at the tribal and religious levels, whether advanced teacher, deputy, or pupil. These strong, redundant, social and hierarchical connections across Pashtun tribal regions enabled the mobilization of the Pashtuns and powerful religious messaging to excite the Pashtun masses, leveraging foreign provocation to rally the tribes against the threat to their way of life.

Brutal responses from the British, such as targeting homes, crops, and the mullahs themselves, were effective in severing the mullah social network over time, undermining the mullahs' direct mandate for Jihad from God, and destroying the myth that the mullahs were undefeatable and that they wielded the best solution to perceived British provocations in their lands.

Interestingly, the British studied the uprising with fervent dedication, which led to a change to the "forward policy," suggesting it was too provocative and costly in Pashtun regions. As a result, the British transitioned to "local militias and the deployment of more Political Officers."[19] In one case, 130 mullahs attended a jirga in which the Hadda Mullah preached vehement anti-British sermons; the jirga deeply affected "Hadda Mullah's *murids* (acolytes) . . . [who] offered to end all clan feuds in order to facilitate this greater calling [italics in original]."[20]

> Pashtun society values consensus dictating no man can direct another what to do or allow their consequences to impact another without agreement under Pashtunwali perpetuating conflict when aligned with other Pashtunwali tenets like badal or nung.[21]

Pashtuns are fractured based on their organization into clans, tribes, and subtribes, and their geographic dispersion. This organizational structure acts as both a

strength for mullahs to excite and exploit and a weakness that the British attempted to exploit. The British did so by isolating subgroups, destroying their homes and crops, and offering resources in exchange for demobilization and an agreement to end fighting and accommodate the British that was based on quid pro quo arrangements.

> the fragmented nature of Pashtun society was beginning to have an effect. On 21 November 1897, the *jirgas* of the Malikdin Khel, Kambar-Khel, Adam-Khel, and the Aka-Khel offered to accept British terms, namely a fine, the restitution of property, the surrender of 800 rifles, and a formal act of submission [italics in original].[22]

British political officer interrogations yielded a confession about the reasons for the revolt. Political officer Robert Brice wrote that the Pashtuns blamed the revolt on 1,500 mullahs from Ningrahar, while another political officer was convinced that the source of the revolt was local grievances.[23] Robert Johnson further concludes from his research of Pashtun accounts of the revolt that Pashtun fanaticism "was, in fact an impassioned reaction to the changes they could see taking place around them as the British advanced into their territory, or, eroded their way of life."[24] The perception of the threat matters just as much as the actual threat—both illicit fear and a call for honor-bound Pashtuns to resist as long as foreigners remained in Afghanistan.[25]

The high Pashtun attrition resulted from British employment of fixed fortifications on key terrain and rapid troop positioning using roads to enable classic, pitched battles against the lashkars that included pursuit and exploitation efforts. After decisive battles, a favorite tactic was to destroy houses and crops to lure the remaining Pashtun fighters into the open terrain and

overcome them by leveraging superior tactics, small arms, and artillery fires.[26] Over time, the British cycle of response shifted to include punitive expeditions to attrite Pashtun fighters and destroy their homes, crops, and resources.

The Pashtun revolt, which began in 1897 and concluded with the death of the Hadda Mullah in 1903, illuminates numerous historical factors and determinants relevant to the ongoing Taliban insurgency, which consists of mostly Pashtuns fighting in territories traditionally held by Pashtuns. The case study is captivating because of the strong correlations between the Pashtun revolt and the Taliban of today. The Pashtun uprising informs us on numerous levels what factors will enable conditions for reconciliation, and provides likely determinants for success in reconciling with the Taliban and accomplishing U.S. strategic objectives in South Asia. Arguably, like the Pashtuns of today, the Pashtuns of the early 20th century did not want to defy Islam. For that reason, "a collective pressure [to fight] created a momentum that was hard to resist."[27]

ENDNOTES – APPENDIX II

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2. Colin P. Clarke, "Throwing in the Towel: Why Insurgencies Negotiate," Doctoral Thesis, Pittsburgh, PA: The University of Pittsburgh, 2012, p. 431.

3. Fotini Christia and Michael Semple, "Flipping the Taliban: How to Win in Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 4, July/August 2009, p. 2, available from *https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2009-07-01/flipping-taliban*.

4. Ibid., p. 3.

5. Ibid., p. 3.

6. Clarke, p. 432.

7. Ibid., p. 1051.

8. Ibid., p. 30.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., p. 54.

13. Ibid., p. 53.

14. The Interagency Policy Group on Afghanistan and Pakistan, "White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group's Report on US Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan," *The New York Times*, March 27, 2009.

15. Ibid.

16. Seth G. Jones, "Reintegrating Afghan Insurgents," Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011, p. 11, available from *https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/occasional_papers/2011/RAND_OP327.pdf*, accessed March 4, 2018.

17. Michael Semple, *Reconciliation in Afghanistan*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2009, p. 69.

18. Ibid., p. 2.

19. Robert A. Johnson, *The 1897 Revolt and Tirah Valley Operations from the Pashtun Perspective*, Williamsburg, VA, November 2009, p. 11.

20. Robert A. Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War: How and Why They Fight*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 158.

21. Author discussions with Professor M. Chris Mason about Pashtunwali code of ethics and logic for joining jihad during research, at Carlisle, PA, U.S. Army War College, March 8, 2018.

22. Johnson, *The 1897 Revolt*, p. 20.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., p. 14.

26. Ibid., p. 10.

27. Ibid., p. 23.

APPENDIX III. COLOMBIA'S RECONCILIATION WITH THE FARC—CASE STUDY

To understand reconciliation, it is important to know that each country and society has to find its own solution to achieve peace. In addition, as Desmond Tutu says in the handbook *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict,* written in 2003, "**new solutions must be devised that are appropriate to the particular context, history and culture in question** [emphasis added]."[1] Nevertheless, reconciliation is more likely to succeed if there is happiness, welfare, and productivity.[2] When a reconciliation process needs to be initiated, common goals between parties must be established. At this moment, the initial phase may be called the "pre-agreements," where both parties agree to these common objectives. Also, it is important to know that a reconciliation process will end in the creation of policies that will affect both parties. Changes in laws, and even in the constitution of the state, may be required in order to achieve a real reconciliation.[3]

Recently, Afghanistan began one more attempt to achieve reconciliation. The Afghan High Peace Council (HPC) announced it is ready to hold peace talks with the Taliban without any preconditions.[4] This case study examines why the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) accepted negotiations and the reasons individuals demobilized years before negotiations. The case study will analyze the negotiation process to end conflict, Colombia's military strategy to take the FARC to negotiations, the demobilization program before talks, and the differences between the two conflicts. Conclusions and recommendations will end this appendix.

Before formal talks with the FARC, some secret encounters between representatives from each side

occurred. These encounters defined an agenda that had to be followed when formal negotiations started. This agenda was made up of five points that attempted to cover the causes and effects of the conflict. The five points were rural reform, political participation, illicit drugs, victims, and the end of the conflict.[5] Each point had to be discussed to arrive at a solution. To compare Colombia with Afghanistan, the main demand by the Taliban is the withdrawal of foreign troops. This withdrawal could be the first point to be discussed among others, all of which would have to be established while building the agenda. In Colombia's case, the most important activity before the talks began was establishing the key issues to be discussed. Therefore, it is vital for the HPC and the Taliban to identify those fundamental concerns when talks start. These concerns may be grouped to avoid a list of requirements that will only make negotiations longer. Once these key issues have been determined, a timeline for each of them has to be established. Participants should be made aware that the issues likely will not be solved overnight.

Identifying the key agenda points is a subject to analyze in future negotiations with the Taliban since some neutral and external actors have to be identified to participate in the process. Parties may feel compromised during negotiations without those neutral or external actors. Indeed, the United Nations (UN) presence in Colombia guaranteed FARC concentration and, thereafter, the handing over of their weapons. External or third-party actors have key roles in planning, participation, and contributions toward success.

The Colombian Government demanded a ceasefire from the FARC in addition to the five points of the initial agenda. During the talks, the terrorist group

ceased hostilities, and, after more than 3 years of negotiations, both sides agreed to a cease-fire. Some optimism started to emerge, but society did not entirely trust the negotiations. Negotiators had to tolerate FARC representatives' arrogance, which was not easy for them to do. The president intended to achieve the end of the conflict, and sometimes society indicated that the price to obtain peace could be too high. Whenever FARC negotiators appeared on the news, they showed a sense of euphoria to the public, as if they were declaring victory over the government. It was clear that this was not the case because, if the FARC were winning, they would have never sat at the table to negotiate. Maybe the president had to wait before approaching the FARC to negotiate to let military operations continue for at least another year and allow the enemy to become weaker. FARC leaders were hiding in Venezuela, desertions from their ranks were increasing every day, the population supported the armed forces as the operations were successful, the state's holistic approach was proving to be effective, and insubordination was occurring within the FARC. The FARC was becoming weaker as time progressed. Nevertheless, negotiations continued, and many "frogs had to be swallowed."[6]

Military operations were key in causing the FARC to negotiate. However, during the talks, the FARC's demands reached unexpected levels, even though the state was defeating the FARC in battle. Therefore, politically, the country became more polarized on account of the negotiations. However, at the end of the talks, the ones who turned in their weapons, explosives, uniforms, and "caletas," and the ones who submitted to justice, were the FARC members.[7] In other words, a transitional justice was established to which

some former members of the state, including members of the military, had to submit. In short, many crimes committed because of the conflict by armed forces members and other institutions required this type of justice, which had benefits on both sides of the conflict.

At the time of this writing, the FARC has demobilized as an armed group, handed over its weapons, and submitted to transitional justice. Simultaneously, the FARC obtained 10 seats in congress, created its own political party, and avoided jail time. To put it another way, the terrorist group obtained more than society was expected to grant. Violence decreased but did not end because of the existence of many other criminal groups that commit crimes and threaten the Colombian population in several regions. FARC dissent groups persist in drug trafficking, and Venezuela has not stopped being a safe haven. It is probably more accurate to see how military strategy succeeded in weakening the rebels than to see the mixture of political concerns that appeared after the FARC became a legal party. However, a strategy that included not only military operations but also other types of activities covering the areas that the FARC was dominating is worth further study. Demobilization programs and military control of areas are the subjects of the next part of this appendix.

COLOMBIA'S MILITARY STRATEGY TO TAKE THE FARC TO NEGOTIATIONS

When the FARC started as a guerrilla group, its ideology was Marxist-Leninist-oriented. Many rural areas of Colombia had no state presence, and the country had just endured terrible bipartisan violence. Communists found a perfect environment in which to grow

their ideas and promote an armed rebellion against the state using guerrilla warfare. Colombia saw the issue as a security problem and not as a menace to democracy. Therefore, when a specific region was threatened by guerrillas, the state sent the army to manage the violent groups. The Colombian Army had experience in maintaining its presence and avoiding the culmination of a level-of-war growth of bipartisan violence. Guerrillas used the tactics that Mao Zedong and Che Guevara promulgated, a small-group offensive methodology that encouraged melding the forces with the population.[8]

Colombian armed forces leaders developed a plan that aimed to reach isolated towns, where basic needs were not fulfilled. The army would bring medical aid, barber services, and some entertainment. These activities were called civic-military day trips and were done simultaneously with military operations. The plan was named, "Lazo."[9] If this plan had garnered proper government support, the guerrillas' success would have been less probable. The Colombian Army had just started to know the environment that encompasses counterinsurgency warfare. When this plan enabled the recovering of many zones, the FARC found out that the state could be a competitor in the areas where it had influence.

The FARC knew it needed to keep the army busy and that it needed to use guerrilla warfare tactics. Ambushing regular troops and hiding among the population, the irregulars were able to take advantage of any move the army was making. At the beginning of the war, the guerrillas did not try any frontal attacks but initiated raids and ambushes. The army tried to be stronger, but it was slow to adapt, and the guerrillas' influence was increasing in many areas of the

country. The army's strategy was not clear, and the government just wanted to destroy the rebels. Large operations were executed, but when significant results were not accomplished, the FARC felt empowered by their ability to maneuver and disperse in both rural and urban environments. During the 1970s and 1980s, there was no vision of a grand strategy, and the threat consumed the military and the police. At the beginning of the 1990s, guerrillas already had the power to attack company-size military bases.[10] In December 1990, more than 300 guerrillas attacked a military base in Taraza, Antioquia, where Lieutenant Colonel Jaime Fajardo, the battalion commander, was posted. During the attack, Fajardo lost his life.[11] For the rest of that decade, guerrillas could concentrate and scatter swiftly, which allowed them to conduct more attacks.

The army started to adapt, creating what is now called the Mobile Brigades. These units began to do Military Control of Areas (MCA), in which regular units remained in a region, patrolled, and showed their presence. These units were always looking for the enemy based on terrain intelligence. Many times, Mobile Brigades and their units had encounters in which guerrillas did not expect to meet them. The Colombian Army adapted well, and battalions started to operate in smaller units; as a result, their movements were not detected. In fact, the army used the same tactics that the guerrillas used; these tactics included organizing into small units, moving during the night, and conducting irregular and unpredictable maneuvers. Numerous times, due to laziness, lack of military professionalism, and attrition, failures occurred. Long deployments in the jungle or the mountains exhausted the troops, but the permanent presence of troops enabled them to know the areas and the population.

Competition against the FARC in other areas outside of the fight was underway, but all of that could not take place until a holistic strategy had been created.

A strategy that involved all of the agencies and the total determination of the state did not exist until President Álvaro Uribe took office in 2002. Some military operations were successful before this administration, but a significant strategy to weaken the FARC had not been implemented. Integration of efforts, including U.S. support, military budget augmentation, institutional involvement, regional leadership commitment, and intelligence cooperation among all agencies contributed to the takeover of the FARC over the next 8 years and reduced it to its weakest point in decades.[12]

One of the most significant factors that made the FARC weak was itself. The indiscriminate kidnappings; the recruiting of children by force, rape, and terror; the attacks on small towns; and the destruction of infrastructure caused the population to hate the FARC. As a result, the Colombian Military Forces and the National Police developed a strategy that let them perform an adequate MCA that pushed the FARC to a strategic withdrawal. Once this pressure was complete, intelligence obtained by human and technological means let the army find high value targets (HVTs). Some of the FARC's most important leaders who were scattered along the county's rural areas were found. Hence, armed forces carried out military operations that attacked these HVTs. This led to the weakening of the command and control capability of the FARC as it hid its group's leaders. The long presence of the army deployed deep in guerrilla areas, the adequate MCA, the location of HVTs, the irregularity of military operations, and the integration of all state institutions

resulted in the Colombian Government achieving near-victory over the terrorists.

It is important to clarify that the army was in charge of rural areas and police were in charge of urban areas. Nevertheless, operations were made simultaneously, or they were coordinated between the two organizations. Mobile Brigades became irregular; this meant that they were conducting counter-guerrilla operations. The Colombian Army developed its own doctrine within *The Irregular Combat Manual*, which had many editions, but essentially developed procedures that eliminated conventional warfare techniques. Operations lasted for long periods of time and platoon-sized units stayed in the area of operations for as much as 4 months without going back to base. They were resupplied by air or on the roads every 2 or 3 weeks and then went back into the jungle or the mountains. The omnipresent order was to be as unpredictable as possible; any routine was a detriment to their tactics. Having these operations based on many types of intelligence helped the army to track the enemy, and the main victory was that territories controlled by the FARC were taken away from it. This process took years and was not the only method used to obtain victory over the group. The holistic approach and the demobilization program were fundamental factors in weakening the FARC. The demobilization approach used brigades, called "territorial brigades," which were different from the mobile ones; they used demobilization programs, psychological operations, offensive operations, MCA operations, operations coordinated with the National Police, and others that used simultaneous training cycles. When areas were recovering from FARC menace, some of the other

agencies of the government started to arrive at places where even the mayors could not perform their duties.

DEMOBILIZATION PROGRAM BEFORE TALKS

Another significant factor in helping to defeat guerrillas is next analyzed. The Humanitarian Attention Program to Demobilized Individuals (HAPDI) designed a package of benefits to promote demobilization that was not made only to FARC members but also to other illegal groups' adherents.[13] These benefits included entire families; thus, if the person thinking of demobilization had a family, he or she would not have to worry about his or her family not obtaining those benefits. One of the benefits was that, at the end of the process, the demobilized person would have a proper place to live until he or she was financially able to obtain housing independently. Transitory homes were acquired by the government for the program; these were located in some of the main cities of the country. When those who joined the program were taken to their hometowns, a special allowance was issued in order to let them have access to public transportation. This allowance provided evidence of freedom of mobility since some insurgents thought that once they joined the program, they were going to jail.

When guerrilla members decided to abandon their organizations, most of the time they had no clothing other than their uniforms; therefore, the program offered more than two outfits to the deserters. Healthcare was also a benefit provided to all demobilized people. In some cases, demobilized people were afraid that victims of the violence carried out by the group to which the demobilized person had belonged would try to retaliate once they became a civilian. Therefore,

security was also provided. Furthermore, since most of the insurgents for most of their lives were in an illegal environment and committing crimes, psychological attention had to be offered to them as well.

The Ministry of Defense had to issue a certificate to adherents who wished to join the program. To obtain this document, each person had to demonstrate he or she belonged to one of those illegal organizations, had a real will to abandon the group, and had never committed a crime against humanity. Afterward, the program would grant a legal identification card since these ex-combatants had never had the opportunity to be genuine citizens. Then, judicial benefits were granted because, even though adherents joined the program, they still belonged to an illegal group, and that constituted a crime in and of itself. In Colombia, the punishment for rebellion is jail time; however, since many adherents were political lawbreakers, the program sometimes granted them amnesty. After joining the program and obtaining a certificate, an adherent would receive permanent psychological care, and demobilized persons were tracked. Likewise, the program included a literacy plan, since most of the people joining the program did not know how to read or write. This plan was followed with an elementary and high school education that helped members of the program earn their school certificates. Whenever studies were completed, additional training was provided that focused on a specific job or occupation. Here, counseling on designing a new life project accompanied the education plan. The objective was to equip adherents who joined the program with the necessary tools to have a productive life and economic autonomy. The main program goal has been to help demobilized people "Return to the Society."[14]

The program developed a handbook that was distributed over the areas where the FARC and other illegal groups had influence and presence. The purpose was to clarify every step of the program to avoid any misunderstanding and, especially, to create confidence in FARC members at the moment of abandonment. The handbook, which tried to be as detailed as possible, explained six steps. First, it provided adherents instructions regarding how to turn themselves in to authorities with as much military equipment as possible, especially weapons. The handbook also had a list of phone numbers for adherents to call if they wanted to ask questions or arrange their surrender. When adherents called the numbers, they could hear detailed recorded instructions.

Following the handbook instructions, the second step talked about what was going to happen the first night out of the illegal organization. Regulations ordered officials in charge of military bases, police stations, and other state installations to accommodate defectors and provide hot food. Some of the regulations were created after interviews with guerrillas who described the concerns that they had before making the decision to defect.

Third, the directions stated that the week after the desertion, adherents would have to participate in interviews, and nothing much would happen since the program needed time to arrange for their accommodation and prepare paperwork. If an adherent was a minor, he or she would be sent to the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) and would bypass the interview stage.[15]

The fourth step stated that the adherent had to spend the following month in the "Peace Home." The Peace Home was a place where accommodation, food,

a TV room, a reading room, personal care supplies, and food would be provided. The amount of time spent in that home would depend on how long the Ministry of Defense would take to issue the certificate that confirmed that the guerrilla had been accepted into the program.

As a fifth step, adherents had to demonstrate that they had been a member of an illegal group, that they were serious about leaving the group, and that they had not committed crimes against humanity.

For the final step, the adherent learned how to read and write, received an elementary and high school education, received training for a specific occupation, and received a subsidy with which to start a project. This would end the steps of reintegration. However, the government continued to track the adherent and maintained contact with him or her.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO CONFLICTS

It is important to understand the differences between Afghanistan and Colombia and the two conflicts that this appendix has discussed. First, in the economic sector the gross domestic product growth for 2017 in Afghanistan was 2.5 points; in Colombia, it was 1.7 points (according to the International Monetary Fund).[16] The two countries' size and population also present challenges for establishing control over the territories. While Afghanistan is 652,230 square kilometers, Colombia is 1,141,748 square kilometers. That is about 490,000 square kilometers of difference. In terms of population, Colombia and Afghanistan are also relatively different; according to *The World Factbook,* there are 47,698,524 people in Colombia and

34,124,811 people in Afghanistan.[17] Furthermore, it is known that, among the three most difficult geographies in the world, Afghanistan and Colombia are placed second and third, respectively, after Nepal. In addition, 27.8 percent of Colombia's population is below the poverty line; that statistic for Afghanistan is 35.8 percent.[18] These comparisons suggest that the same solutions that worked in Colombia could perhaps work in Afghanistan. For instance, the Colombian rural population was quite vulnerable which made the FARC a reliable means of support, and, in turn, created the motivation for the population to join the group. That critical economic environment and its associated social problems were a breeding ground in which the FARC could find recruits, as is the case for the Taliban in Afghanistan now. Thus, there are economic and social measures that could be taken, rather than just military action, to weaken the Taliban.

Conversely, data from The World Bank suggests that education must be a major focus in Afghanistan. The illiteracy rate was more than 50 percent in Afghanistan in 2011; whereas, in Colombia, it has been reduced to 1.8 percent through a change to government policy concerning education.[19] A comprehensive strategy should incorporate education because when a population is enlightened, it is less likely to support a group like the FARC or the Taliban. Nonetheless, if people are starving, education will have less of an effect on their attitudes toward illegal groups. Starving people are more likely to follow those who provide them with food. For that reason, as much as an educational course of action should be taken, an economic one that provides a minimum standard of life should be taken too. Colombia understood that the government had a competitor, especially in the rural

areas. Certainly, in order to reach those areas where the presence of the state was needed, the army had to be the first to arrive. As was said earlier, a strategy modeled after plan "Lazo" and adapted to Afghanistan's strategic environment could have good results. In fact, elements like access to electricity do not differ much from one country to the other: 90.5 percent of the population in Colombia has access to electricity, whereas 87.8 percent of Afghanis have access to it. Besides, both countries have similar agricultural land to entire country ratios: Afghanistan has 379,100 square kilometers of agricultural land, while Colombia has 449,871 square kilometers.[20] This is why one of the five points established by the Colombian Government and the FARC to be discussed during negotiations was agricultural reform. For Afghanistan, agriculture would be even more important, taking into account that employment in the agricultural industry in this country is 48 percent greater than it is in Colombia.

CONCLUSIONS

When any negotiation process begins, the main goal is to establish what both parties see as the best outcome. The Colombian Government found the correct starting line when it defined five clear points to discuss based on how it wanted the negotiations to end. In Afghanistan, the HPC has started to organize talks with the Taliban, but having the agenda planned like the Colombian Government did with the five points is essential. It was an adequate path that the FARC accepted due to the government's strong arguments. The FARC saw in that agenda a way to achieve some of the goals the organization had been struggling to reach for decades. The HPC has to motivate

the Taliban with an agenda that encourages them to sit and talk. Key points in the agenda have to show that, in the end, the Taliban will not only reconcile and cease hostilities but will also obtain something to their benefit.

The Colombian military included several other institutions in its strategy. However, operations have been decisive. The counter-guerrilla (or, more appropriately, counter-insurgent) concept was understood by the army in terms of tactics. These tactics were that of an irregular force rather than a regular force. It is important to note that it took years to achieve strategic results, but it is also important to note that, in many areas of the country, territorial control had not been performed by any agency before MCA. Irregularity and lack of routine on the field were key factors in the Colombian Army's success. The new Afghan National Army has to be trained in tactics that let it focus on operations for a long time. As a result, the army will know the terrain and the population and, once it assimilates into the environment, intelligence will flow more freely. Years of the Colombian Army's presence in affected areas helped it to find HVTs who were part of the center of gravity of the FARC. Nevertheless, the political decision to integrate all of the elements of power was fundamental in applying the military strategy. Notwithstanding Afghan institutional weakness, plans of integration could have positive results.

The demobilization strategy was as successful as the combat with the FARC was, and sometimes more so because those who turned themselves in brought information and equipment and motivated others to demobilize. Well-structured norms and procedures made the demobilization program clear for all who

were thinking about abandonment. The program was supported by a law which strengthened the strategy and helped in obtaining economic resources. There were not great offers, but minimal benefits encouraged many adherents to abandon their illegal groups. Taliban members will have a large number of demands, but those that are likely to motivate them the most should be found, granted that they are affordable to the state. A well-devised demobilization program would have hundreds of more benefits than any "body count" strategy. However, military pressure is part of a demobilization plan. Undoubtedly, the differences between Colombia and Afghanistan are substantial, but some similarities in their environments are also present. It is clear that the two conflicts are different, but Colombia's case offers some good ideas, and Colombia's case as a model for a new strategy for Afghanistan should be a topic for future in-depth analysis.

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APPENDIX IV. RECONCILIATION TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The term "reconciliation" is problematic without putting it in the context of Afghanistan because the conflict has changed the dynamics in the country since 2001. This change necessitates an evolved view of reconciliation; the shape its programs must take and the roles of key actors must be identified.

In 2001, the Bonn Accords referred to the notion of reconciliation and a parallel political structure for implementing a politically based, post-conflict "road map" that included "significant potential to further a process of reconciliation."[1] In this United Nations (UN) context, reconciliation was a post-conflict political process at the national level.[2] Additionally, in the UN Bonn Accords context, reconciliation "was expected to help secure a tentative, preexisting peace."[3] While this was attractive to the Afghan Government and the international community based on its context, timeliness, and inclusion, the context lacked other post-conflict reconciliation implications, such as altering relationships among the conflicting parties and citizens to create "a basis for coexistence."[4]

In the current context, reconciliation must account for previous failures which have impacted the willingness of all parties to enter into negotiations, ongoing external sponsorship activities from Pakistan, weak and illegitimate governance, and the realization that the conflict is ongoing. Reconciliation's context must now include how to stop the current fighting and concurrently "create permanent, peaceful relationships."[5] The shape of the reconciliation programs and the roles that major actors play create a necessary and appropriate contemporary definition of reconciliation,

which will be needed to construct a feasible reconciliation strategy that complements the Trump administration's South Asia strategy.

Reintegration is the integration of mid- and low-level insurgent leaders and their fighters back into society. Reconciliation implies a negotiated settlement or political solution among both government and insurgent senior military and political leaders.

ENDNOTES – APPENDIX IV

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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

PROJECT EDITOR

Dr. M. Chris Mason.

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Colonel John Crisafulli, U.S. Army.

Colonel Fernando Farfan, National Army of Colombia.

Lieutenant Colonel Aaron French, U.S. Air Force.

Brigadier General Yama Kambiz, Afghan National Army.

Lieutenant Colonel Bryan Kirk, U.S. Army.

Colonel Matthew Maybouer, U.S. Army.

Lieutenant Colonel John Sannes, U.S. Army.

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