

DENYING SANCTUARY: REJECTING SAFE HAVENS IN COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**DENYING SANCTUARY: REJECTING SAFE HAVENS IN COUNTERINSURGENCY
OPERATIONS**

by

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ABSTRACT

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Physical sanctuary is one of the bedrocks of a successful insurgency. Denial of these safe havens is critical to a successful counterinsurgency campaign and the eventual defeat of the insurgents by the host state. The United States must create a policy or strategy to combat insurgency through elimination or minimization of safe havens. I will examine three methodologies that have proven successful in the past to deny sanctuaries and then show how each may or may not be a pertinent strategy to defeat or eliminate safe havens while combating insurgencies in Operations ENDURING and IRAQI FREEDOM.

DENYING SANCTUARY: REJECTING SAFE HAVENS IN COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

Special geopolitical conditions may bring about a situation particularly favorable to the sustenance of a revolutionary war. Probably the most important such condition is the existence of what—for the want of a better term—I call an active sanctuary. An active sanctuary is a territory contiguous to a rebellious area which, though ostensibly not in the conflict, provides the rebel side with shelter, training facilities, equipment, and—if they can get away with it—troops.¹

—Dr Bernard Fall
Noted Counterinsurgency Expert

Since the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, the United States has been engaged in continual conflict in either Afghanistan or Iraq. Following major combat operations in each theater, warfare in both countries is characterized by insurgent operations against the newly formed governments, United States' military forces, our coalition partners and non-governmental organizations. The United States has a seeming lack of consistent policy, strategy or guidance to deal with this phenomenon. I will describe sanctuaries and their effects on the outcome of insurgencies, look at three possible solutions to this issue, and, finally, make a recommendation for solving this problem in the context of Operations IRAQI and ENDURING FREEDOM.

As noted by Dr Fall, sanctuaries are critical for successful insurgency operations. Dr Thomas Bruschino of the Combat Studies Institute of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, reinforces this sentiment in the light of contemporary experiences:

The very name the United States has given to its struggles against fundamentalist Muslim terrorists indicates that international borders do not confine the enemy. Nevertheless, because the United States and its allies share a respect for the international system, they have chosen to fight this enemy primarily within the boundaries of two states: Afghanistan and Iraq. Despite their adherence to ideology, the terrorists understand and use the international system, despite their dismissal of nations and states for one united, pure religion...Therefore, international borders, and the

transnational sanctuaries and supply lines they protect, have become a crucial issue in the global war on terrorism.²

The availability of sanctuaries allows groups of insurgents, sometimes very small in numbers, to attack counterinsurgency forces at the time of their choosing, with relative impunity, and provides the opportunity for them to return to safety within the safe haven. Without sanctuary, the guerrilla is vulnerable to attack at all times, and to protect himself he must expend considerable time and energy that otherwise may have been used for attack or to train and equip his forces.³ In fact, Dr Fall writes, “the success or failure of all rebellions since World War II depended entirely on whether the active sanctuary performed its expected role.”⁴ Finally, one of the United States’ strongest allies recently reinforced this idea: Sir David Ormond, a noted British intelligence chief and author of the United Kingdom’s new National Security Strategy noted, “one of the necessary requirements to prevent terrorism is the removal of safe havens.”⁵

Does this reference to terrorism translate to insurgencies also? Terror is a tactic employed against the host government by any insurgency in its infant stages. For example, today’s post-9/11 terrorists are insurgents attempting to establish a Caliphate against Western influence and corrupt or totalitarian Middle East governments. For the purpose of this paper, whether discussing Baathist rebels in Iraq or radical Islamic fundamentalists’ intent on attacking the United States, the two groups are the same—insurgents or rebels.

Sanctuaries

The sanctuary’s importance to the insurgency is clear. Typically, sanctuaries are in remote, inhospitable terrain and may, or may not, have a sympathetic population.

Other times, weak or supportive states may allow the guerrillas to operate with impunity from their territory. We see both of these occurrences in Iraq and Afghanistan. This phenomenon is not new. History shows Spanish guerrillas worried the French army from mountain retreats during the Napoleonic Wars. Later, American patriots harassed the British from southern swamps, while more recently, the jungles of Cambodia provided safe haven during the Vietnam War. For years, the Kurdish rebels, operating in Turkey, sheltered in Iraqi and Iranian mountains, while today, the mountains of Pakistan and the deserts of Syria provide a base of support in the post-9/11 conflicts. Additionally, the late 2008 attacks in Mumbai, India, exposed possible radical Muslim sanctuaries in Pakistani Kashmir.

Internal safe havens also pose significant problems. These are sanctuaries within the rebellious territory with a population either sympathetic to the rebel cause or cowed by the insurgents. Paraphrasing Mao, the population is the “water” in which the guerrilla “fish” may swim. All of the sustainment for the insurgency comes from within.⁶ The inhospitable terrain in this case may be urban in nature where the rebels can meld into the population. Eliminating these urban sanctuaries poses significantly different problems than those across international boundaries. Mass populations hide the rebel cause just as effectively as rugged and inhospitable terrain or jungles. Both Iraq and Afghanistan have, or have had, areas within their respective borders where a significant portion of the population supported the insurgency. The old adage of “winning hearts and minds” is particularly important to a successfully counterinsurgency. The United States and Iraqi effort to eliminate internal sanctuaries has made a great deal of progress since “surge” operations began in 2007.

Sanctuaries are not only a threat to the newly formed governments of Iraq and Afghanistan, but also the governments hosting the rebels (Pakistan, Syria and Iran) and stability in the region. Eliminating these sanctuaries is vital to successful counter-insurgencies, thus providing the fledgling states security to develop their governmental systems. The host countries also need these areas eradicated to purge foreign-armed groups from within their lands and restore sovereign control of their territory. Both of these factors contribute to stability within the countries and, ultimately, within their region.

The United States seeks Middle Eastern and Southwest Asian regions noted for their stability and prosperity. Free trade of vital natural resources and goods from these regions is critical to a growing globalized economy. The solution to this goal is insurgent-free states allowed to flourish in the international system without fear of armed conflict or overthrow. As noted, at stake in both Iraq and Afghanistan is the fate of both nations' governments. Insurgencies are draining their national treasures and sapping the will of the populace to resist. For the United States and our coalition partners, the stakes are equally high. A stable Middle East and unhindered trade are necessary for vital economies within the United States, its allies, and the Middle Eastern countries. Also, the world cannot afford for terrorists to once again establish bases in Southwest Asian nations with sympathetic regimes. Finally, defeating these insurgencies will slow the drain of our national treasures, both blood and resources, while providing a growth of prestige amongst friends and foes alike around the world. To defeat the insurgencies, the sanctuaries must be eliminated.

While not current, but rather published in light of experiences in Vietnam, the National Military Strategy Executive Summary published in 1985 recognizes that there are three possible courses of action to achieve our immediate goal of abolishing safe havens. These include, in a prioritized order: 1) convincing a third-party government (i.e., Pakistan and/or Syria) to successfully secure the territory within their borders through diplomacy, 2) conducting cross border military operations to kill or capture insurgent leadership and denying localized sanctuary, and 3) effectively securing the borders against insurgent intrusion.⁷ We will examine each option with respect to the national elements of power, the feasibility, acceptability, suitability and risk to determine the most effective course of action.

Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the most desired of the three courses of action. Convincing a state sponsor to discontinue its flow of arms and money to the insurgents or persuading a state to halt their harboring of insurgents and rid their territory of insurrectionist forces and closing the sanctuaries is the ideal end-state for all parties. Unfortunately, due to terrain, weak governments, or sympathy to the rebels' cause, this may not happen. Paul Staniland, a doctoral student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology writes, "The carrot and stick approach can lead sanctuary-providing governments either to withdraw their active support for insurgents or provide resources for them to crack down."⁸ He states, "Diplomatic options generally require plentiful resources with which to bribe weak states as well as a strong counterinsurgent military available to lend credibility to threats."⁹ An issue to take into consideration: sponsoring states with strong ethnic, religious or nationalistic tendencies usually resist coercive diplomacy, although not

always.¹⁰ Also, states intentionally supporting insurgents are not easily intimidated or bribed and the states unintentionally supporting the rebels are incapable of suppressing the rebellion.¹¹ The Islamabad government is resisting direct United States assistance partly due to the political sensitivity of increasing bi-lateral cooperation in the face of rising anti-Americanism and partly due to the fear of jeopardizing their national security interests.¹² Improved India-United States relations worry the Pakistani officials in their conflict over Kashmir. Convincing the Islamabad government that an exchange of information or complete denial of the safe haven in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is in the best interest for all concerned is the solution to this very difficult issue. In a similar circumstance, the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism praised the Islamic government of Libya for ending its sponsorship of terrorism and rescinded its name from the list of state sponsors, effectively allowing it to return to the international community.¹³ Conversely, the government of Pakistan, a leading ally in the Global War on Terrorism, has repeatedly made peace initiatives with Taliban elements in the FATA. On September 5, 2006, the Pakistani regime signed the Waziristan Accord, essentially ceding North Waziristan to the Taliban and their Al Qaeda allies as a sanctuary. Since then, cross-border attacks in Afghanistan are up over 200 percent and suicide bombings have increased 500 percent.¹⁴

Weak or failed states present an additional dilemma. For these states, only the carrot approach may be feasible, and, even then, not effective. The United States recognizes the rich and fruitful grounds these areas are for sanctuary and insurgent recruitment. Under the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, the United States will “further counter-terrorist exploitation of under-governed lands, we will promote effective

economic development,” while in failing states we will continue to work with coalition partners and international organizations to “prevent state failure by building foreign capacity for peace operations, reconstructions and stabilization...”¹⁵

For diplomacy to be successful, substantial world opinion must be marshaled against the host country.¹⁶ Developing coalitions is crucial to build national power and legitimacy. Bringing the full weight of national power of multiple nations to bear against a rogue state may convince them to change their policy. Again, Libya is a great example of this. For many years, the United States and Great Britain led a coalition of nations against the Tripoli government using sanctions and other diplomatic tools to bend the will of Moammar Qadhafi and other leaders of the nation. In the end, Mr. Qadhafi renounced all weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. For his efforts, he met with the U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice in the fall of 2008, the first time since John Foster Dulles, a preceding Secretary of State traveled to Libya in 1953, and the highest ranking official since Richard Nixon, the sitting Vice President, visited the nation in 1957.¹⁷ Unilateral operations or diplomacy have high failure rates and cannot bring to bear the weight of all elements of power. History shows unilateral sanctions are toothless, representing more or less a formal message with little or no effect. Although the United States has considerable economic power, its ability to coerce a state to do its bidding alone is negligible. Good diplomacy is the recipe to developing these coalitions.

Achieving the diplomatic course of action will most likely require bringing to bear all the elements of power. Of course, a consistent, transparent diplomatic effort is required...by all parties. Convincing the other side that instability in the region hurts all is the key. For example, through diplomacy the world must persuade the leadership in

Islamabad that ceding their control of the FATA is a threat to the sovereignty of their nation. The foreign, armed radicals spreading their version of “right” among the Pakistani population will incite unrest and, possibly, lead to the disintegration of Pakistani society and a downfall of the government, and it is necessary for them to reverse their decisions. Within the past year, the radicals have conducted several operations verifying this concern. The assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in December 2007 and the bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad in September 2008 are two of the most prominent attacks leading to a renewed emphasis by the Pakistani government and renewed operations in the FATA to deny the insurgents’ sanctuaries.

Letting the world know through coordinated information operations that both parties are working together to solve the problem will lessen the legitimacy of the insurgency and bring good will and credit throughout the world to both sides. Globalization ensures this message spreads throughout every region. Again, coalition partnerships are critical to this information effort. A strong, unified world voice supporting a struggling or weak government against the insurgency is critical. Internal or domestic messages are as important as those broadcast worldwide. Eliminating the sympathetic population and the “waters” in which the insurgents “swim” is vitally important. Also, the insurgents’ information operations may backfire, as seen in Iraq. Deluded by the intense violence portrayed by Al Qaeda in Iraq, the Sunni minority, aided by the United States government, formed the Sons of Iraq and expelled the Sunni rebels, thus eliminating an internal safe haven.

Meanwhile, all parties should share intelligence efforts while keeping the militaries or law enforcement agencies on their respective sides of the border. If the sanctuary state is weak, financial support or third-party military or law enforcement training assistance may be required. Each year, special operations forces from the United States conduct Foreign Internal Defense training with partner nations around the globe. This training is designed to strengthen the host nation's ability to deal with internal threats while building a lasting partnership with the United States government and military. This type of training tends to be costly and a very lengthy process and may not be effective with the weakest states harboring sanctuaries or if begun after the insurgency has started.

As noted, diplomacy is the most accepted approach. It is the world's methodology for solving problems between states since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1649. It is also the most suitable since it will diminish the expenditure of the nations' wealth and resources. Unfortunately, diplomacy may take years to achieve a suitable outcome and may not be feasible if one nation is reeling from the effects of the insurgency generated from within the other's borders. Agreements and treaties are useless if the host nation is not strong enough to eliminate the safe haven and dislodge the rebels. In addition, diplomacy is probably not a factor when dealing with non-state actors. Unfortunately, the U.S. has little or no experience in dealing with this type of foe.

There is little to no risk associated with following a diplomatic course of action. Positive second and third order effects include building dialogue with the neighboring state while demonstrating positive efforts against the insurgency. Also, it should be

noted, as time progresses and there are developments within the conflict, any agreements are subject to modification and transformation.

Cross Border Operations

In a 28 October 2008, address to the Carnegie Endowment for International Speech, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates unveiled a new wrinkle in the War on Terror when he said:

Today we also make clear that the United States will hold any state, terrorist group or other non-state actor or individual fully accountable for supporting or enabling terrorist efforts to obtain or use weapons of mass destruction—whether by facilitating, financing, or providing expertise or safe haven for such efforts.¹⁸

Is this a policy statement or a new definition of self-defense? Known as “expanded deterrence,” senior administration officials cited this speech as the justification for increased cross border attacks against insurgents in Pakistani and Syrian sanctuaries.¹⁹ While no one knows for sure, open sources have reported at least 18 of these cross border incursions, including airstrikes and ground combat operations, between August and November 2008, a 300 percent increase over 2007.²⁰ There has been no noticeable decrease in this activity since the Obama administration has been seated.

Cross border operations are an effective military means to cripple the insurgency. Joseph Celeski writes, “If the advantages of sanctuary and access to border transit are critical to the insurgency, then the sanctuary becomes a center of gravity to be attacked.”²¹ Unfortunately, many believe that sanctuaries are denied only when the military retains control of the terrain. Increasingly, others argue that the coordinated use of surveillance and other reconnaissance measures gives the military commander localized denial of sanctuary by pinpointing enemy concentrations and allowing kinetic

destruction within the safe haven. In February 2007, Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry, the outgoing Afghanistan commander, called a “steady, direct attack against the command and control in sanctuary areas of Pakistan” essential to preempt the expected Taliban offensive.²² In 1964, Bernard Fall postulated the best answer to a revolutionary war waged from a sanctuary is the counter-infiltration of the sanctuary itself.²³ These operations can also cripple the insurgency by eliminating the leadership and destroying rebel morale while increasing the morale of the counterinsurgency forces. All these factors may lead to a collapse of the insurgency, therefore effectively removing the need for sanctuaries. Also, although not as widely reported, cross border operations are not phenomena unique to Afghanistan or Iraq. Recently, the Russians, Turks and Thais have all conducted cross border strikes against rebellious groups in response to attacks on their sovereign territory.

These types of operations rely heavily on the military and intelligence elements of power. Typically, actionable intelligence is quickly acted upon through airstrikes. In many instances, time and distance factors make these types of assaults the most suitable. Additionally, the growing accuracy of missiles and bombs has made the use of airpower increasingly appealing to counterinsurgent governments.²⁴ Airstrikes also lessen the physical risk to the counterinsurgents. Unfortunately, real-time results of these assaults are difficult to determine and collateral damage may be an issue. Rarely, if ever, are the insurgents isolated from the population when these strikes occur. In fact, one of their tactics, techniques or procedures may be to close with the populace when threatened, making collateral damage more likely.

In a differing view, Staniland writes, "...airpower is only effective when insurgents are acting like conventional ground forces, the counterinsurgency has excellent intelligence or the insurgent organization is led by a single, charismatic leader."²⁵ Airstrikes are most effective when utilized against mobile, conventional forces or against enemy supply lines. Unfortunately, insurgent supply lines are usually dispersed and not vulnerable to air attack. However, as Staniland writes, "Killing key leaders can trigger disarray and even disintegration within insurgencies or at least disrupt their operations and organization."²⁶

Regrettably, airstrikes are notorious for killing non-combatants, though they may be aiding and abetting the rebel forces. When this happens, the insurgents are very adept at using information operations to show the world the results and condemn the act. In today's globalized society, reporting, whether true or not, often leads to backlash within the international community. Staniland believes even limited incursions are not likely to succeed since the rebels can disperse until the counterinsurgency forces leave. Punitive expeditions or strikes may make a temporary difference, satisfy the domestic audience, or send a signal to the host state, but they will fail to end the problem and eliminate the safe haven, as intended.²⁷ Speed and stealth are required to minimize the dispersion. These traits characterize today's U.S. special operations forces.

Special Forces can infiltrate sanctuaries to raid against leadership or "soft" targets. The advantage of setting "boots on the ground" versus airstrikes is the real-time feedback and possible intelligence gathering by these troops. Unfortunately, the opportunities for these types of actions are limited to the actionable intelligence received by the counterinsurgent forces. Also, these operations are far riskier than airstrikes.

Special operations raids are usually conducted by small teams with limited firepower utilizing an element of surprise. Once the strike is in progress or the mission compromised, the assault force is in jeopardy if the enemy can react quickly enough.

Broad strokes versus narrow strikes carry a disadvantage in the public opinion realm. In the past, most notably in Cambodia for the American experience, ground forces launched an invasion to eliminate sanctuaries. Later, in 2007 and 2008, Turkey launched invasions into the Kurdish tribal areas of northern Iraq to weaken the Kurdistan Workers Party and stop rebel raids on Turkish territory. While effective in a broader spectrum, the world scorned these invasions as a violation of state sovereignty while the spotlight usually shone favorably on the rebels. On the other hand, a well-planned surgical strike against a high-priority target, with little or no collateral damage may demonstrate restraint to the world while still attaining the objective of the operation.

Information operations carry significant weight both with the domestic populace of all nations involved and with the world community. Carrying the right message concerning cross border operations is imperative. Convincing allies and the sanctuary nation is important, as well. Publicly, Pakistan condemns the recent United States actions in the tribal areas and calls for a halt of further actions. Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Gilani says U.S. missile strikes in northwest Pakistan are fueling anti-western sentiment in the country and uniting the militants.²⁸ A well-coordinated message should highlight the ongoing cooperation between Afghanistan, the United States and Pakistan to eliminate foreign fighters in the FATA and emphasize our shared interests instead of concentrating on the killing in the disputed areas.

Cross border operations are a feasible method of eliminating sanctuaries. Logically, the insurgent fails to have a sanctuary if under attack, even if the attack is not in the area of conflict. These operations are also acceptable under the United Nations' charter if in defense of the host nation or third party actors. They may not, and probably will not, be accepted by the sanctuary nation's populace or world public opinion. Cross border operations are also suitable if timely and supported by good and actionable intelligence. During these operations, great care must be taken to limit collateral damage and minimize the distress of non-combatants.

The biggest drawback to cross border operations is the risk involved. Obviously, there is risk to the assault forces or aircraft. A captured United States' military member or mass casualties shown on world-wide media will generate a domestic backlash and the consequences will reverberate throughout the world. Secondly, the diplomatic efforts taken between all the governments involved may collapse or be severely strained. We have seen this in both Pakistan and Syria in the fall of 2008. In fact, that fall the United States government closed its embassy for an indeterminate period in Damascus.

Intrusion into sovereign territory is not to be taken lightly. Also, cross border operations may legitimize the insurgent group and, if care is not taken to avoid casualties, attract more rebels to the cause. They may also erode the legitimacy of the striker and stress the coalition partnership. On the other hand, cross border operations eliminate sanctuary and, as stated before, cause the insurgents to spend tremendous amounts of energy and resources protecting themselves and their resources against

their enemies. Additionally, the elimination of key leaders or infrastructure may cripple the insurgency, especially in its earliest days.

Border Security

Only the smallest nations in the world may have impenetrable borders. In today's conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, border security is problematic due to the vast distances and terrain required to secure. Iraq's border is over 3500 kilometers long²⁹, through some of the world's harshest deserts. Afghanistan's border is 5500 kilometers long³⁰ and beset with some of the globe's highest and most imposing terrain. Each nation has six neighbors surrounding them. Some of these nations are hostile to the newly established regimes and may (privately) wish for continued instability, weak governance, or even failure.

In fact, many noted counterinsurgency theorists believe it is possible to deny or disrupt the rebels from transnational crossing using border security measures, thus rendering the sanctuary useless. Staniland, writes, "Turkey, Israel, India, Morocco and France (in Algeria) have all blunted determined transnational insurgencies by sealing off external sanctuaries..."³¹ The first step is to build barriers with the basic goal of limiting free-flow exchange of personnel or supplies. This will reduce the insurgent's combat power.³² Another, more highly sought-after goal is to isolate the rebels' manpower or supplies from the battlefield, thus reducing their ability to make military or political gains.³³

The French achieved both of these goals during their counterinsurgency operations in Algeria. In the late 1950s, they conducted one of the most successful counterinsurgencies this century by sealing off the border between Algeria and Tunisia.

Coming off their defeat in Vietnam, they opposed a 70,000-man Algerian guerrilla army seeking independence. These rebels were protected and supplied from sanctuary in Tunisia. In the spring of 1957, French troops began constructing a barrier almost 200 miles long along the Algerian-Tunisian border from the Mediterranean Sea to the Sahara desert. Called the Morice Line, this barrier featured an electric fence, minefields, and concertina wire backed by pre-sight artillery, electronic sensors, and a mobile strike group, consisting of helicopters, tanks and infantry.³⁴ Some estimate that the Morice Line reduced infiltration by as much as 90 percent.³⁵ France used 80,000 troops to aggressively patrol the area, and, by the end of 1959, less than 10,000 guerrillas remained in Algeria, most without the means to sustain the insurgency.³⁶ Although political unrest in France eventually led to the withdrawal of French forces, this barrier proved to be decisive in eliminating the Tunisian sanctuary. The rebels lacked mobility and were unable to flank the Morice Line either through the Sahara Desert or the Mediterranean Sea. France estimated over 30,000 rebels were cut off in Tunisia and the rest attrited inside Algeria.³⁷

The McNamara Line was a less successful example of isolating the sanctuary from the battlefield. Built in 1967 in the demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam, this barrier had an electric fence and sensors hidden along its length to alert U.S.-led forces of an intrusion. Unfortunately, due to political considerations, it did not extend along the Laotian border and its flanks secured, thus the very light and very mobile Viet Cong were able to move men and equipment easily around this obstacle.³⁸

Fences, minefields, surveillance and aggressive patrolling by light, agile forces are requirements to effectively seal borders. Staniland also notes, "The specific mixture

of fixed barriers and pursuit forces depends on the counterinsurgent's vulnerability. When the vulnerability is high, a serious investment in robust fixed barriers and surveillance is necessary along the border to minimize the damage."³⁹ When the threat is lower or the rebels need to transverse greater distances, a combination of light, agile pursuit forces and a defense in depth may be more appropriate to combat the incursions.⁴⁰

The United States military is quite suited to conduct these types of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. A Morice Line-type barrier in the desert areas along the Syrian border, using un-manned aerial vehicles, sensors, fixed artillery, electrified fences and a mobile assault force can be ultimately successful in slowing or halting the flow of men and material feeding Iraqi rebels. The line should be anchored against the Kurdish-held mountains in the north and the vast deserts in the south. The Syrian border is approximately 350 miles long, but only half of that may be necessary to defend.

A more daunting task is slowing the flow of men and supplies from Pakistan into Afghanistan. This border is over 1200 miles long with some of the world's harshest terrain and weather conditions. In addition, the Pashtun tribal areas sit astride the border region and any barrier will be sure to inflame anti-government passions further. To be successful here, utilizing the terrain is required. The highest mountains and bad weather slow even the hardiest rebel. Choose areas carefully to maximize the efficiency of the sensors while minimizing raising the ire of the local populace. The insurgents will never be isolated or their movement stopped in this manner, but they will be slowed by these measures and their effectiveness diminished.

This type of effort requires a significant commitment of military and/or law enforcement resources, including the most advanced surveillance systems available. These types of barriers will also be very expensive to erect, providing a drain on strained economic resources and manpower. For example, the French used approximately 200 troops for every mile of the Morice Line.⁴¹ Today, Iraq has 258 border posts and over 28,000 troops and police officers involved in border security.⁴² Unfortunately, instead of electrified fences there are sand berms and concertina wire, while actions between these posts are only loosely coordinated and not backed by the extensive array of technical assets and mobile assault forces required to be successful.

Meanwhile, if the governments wage a proper information campaign, the populace may be willing to bear this burden. Convincing the populace of Afghanistan to divide their tribal areas for better internal security will be a daunting task. Hopefully, through diplomacy, a border nation harboring insurgents can be convinced to reciprocate by tightening the border on their side, thus giving the plan a much greater chance of success.

A plan to seal the borders will be acceptable and suitable, but the risk lays in the feasibility. Establishing this infrastructure will require time and considerable resources of money and manpower, and the end result may not effectively isolate or slow a determined guerrilla effort. Time may not be available to a government threatened by armed conflict. Unfortunately, the effort has been mostly futile and the borders remain open.

Conclusion

A consistent, coherent policy or strategy is required to deal with this matter if the United States expects to be successful in Afghanistan or Iraq. In both of these states, factors such as host nation stability and security must be weighed when determining whether the country is able to build barriers or endure a lengthy diplomatic agenda. In this document, I have looked at the possibilities each course of action provides within their context, with historical example of each. Now, I will examine how they relate to today's issues.

As the world becomes more globalized and nationalism rises, the United States will continue to confront transnational insurgencies in coming conflicts. These insurgencies cannot survive without sanctuary. These safe havens must be eliminated early in these conflicts before the rebels can establish the required logistics and training areas necessary to feed the conflict. A phased, synergistic approach to eliminating sanctuaries using all three of these methods and proposals described above will be required for successful operations.

I propose a hybrid security plan to eliminate insurgents' physical or active safe havens in the border areas surrounding both Afghanistan and Iraq. The three methodologies presented must be fused using both conventional (diplomacy and border security) and unconventional methods (cross border operations) to create one coherent, comprehensive and consistent policy. This plan must use U.S. and coalition assistance to build infrastructure and international goodwill while exploiting the enemy's weaknesses using cross border strikes. Simultaneously, a significant information operations campaign must be launched to convince shaky domestic audiences in both the United States and Iraq and Afghanistan that while vast amounts of national treasure

will be required, the benefits will be long-lasting and lead to permanent security of both nations and stability within the region. These are goals the U.S., our allies, and the world seeks.

First, conduct diplomacy to dissuade the “host” country from harboring the rebels and garner world opinion against that nation for its actions. Next or possibly simultaneous to diplomatic actions conduct cross border operations to quell the insurgency in its early stages or destroy its leadership, if able. These operations must be conducted selectively, using only the best actionable intelligence against the insurgency’s most lucrative targets. Prioritization is the key to achieving the maximum effectiveness while minimizing the risk to this policy. Meanwhile, an active engagement plan with the sanctuary state’s government must be in place to minimize the fallout from these strikes. If the host government is too weak to conduct operations within its own borders, an agreement, possibly secret, may be reached to allow these strikes. Conditions may include a transparent exchange of strike details, targets and intelligence. If the host government is too weak to clear the sanctuaries themselves, they must be convinced using diplomatic or military pressure that cross border activities may enhance their internal security. Lastly, we must begin erecting barriers to secure the border. This will be a long process, but may end up being the most effective over time.

In Pakistan today, the Waziristan Accords are in shambles and the Sons of Iraq are making significant progress in Iraq. These sanctuaries, both external and internal, are in peril. The correct coordination of these three actions is required to capitalize on these events. Meanwhile, border security must continue during the lull, in anticipation of

future events and in the interest of host-nation national security. Indeed, border security in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq must be strengthened and the almost insurmountable flagrant corruption must be overcome.

None of the described methods can stand-alone. The U.S. Department of Defense must develop a strategy to implement a combination of these plans to eliminate safe havens for terrorists and other insurgencies. The United States cannot allow these ungoverned areas to exist or it will be under constant threat of terrorist attacks. From this strategy will flow doctrine, organizational tables, equipment requirements and the manpower required to be successful. This problem must be met head-on right now since, as has been noted, this systemic and enduring problem will not go away in the near future.

Endnotes

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²³ Fall, *Street Without Joy*, 378.

²⁴ Staniland, *Defeating Transnational Insurgencies*, 27.

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²⁶ Ibid., 27.

²⁷ Ibid., 26.

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³³ *Ibid.*

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