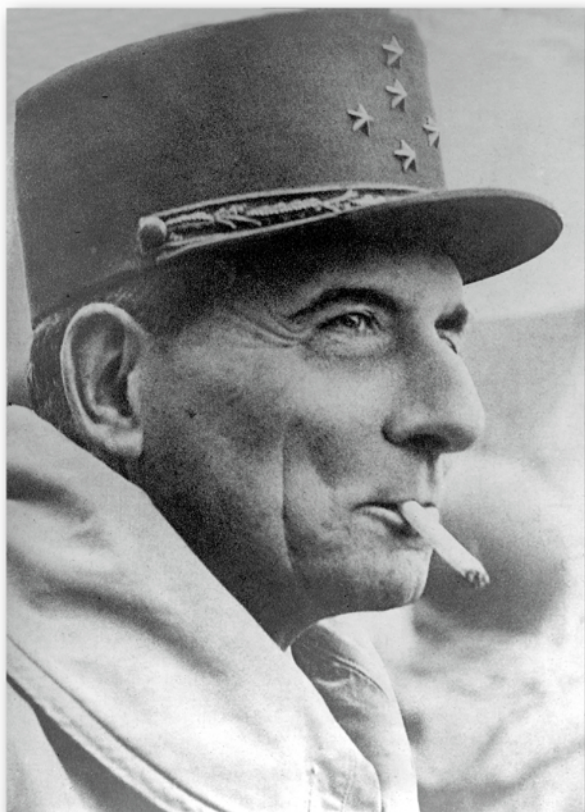


# **Military Review**

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# Learning From Our Modern Wars: The Imperatives of Preparing for a Dangerous Future

Lieutenant General Peter W. Chiarelli, U.S. Army, with Major Stephen M. Smith, U.S. Army

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PHOTO: Role players and U.S. military personnel hold a mock meeting for Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates and U.S. Army SGM William J. Gainey, Fort Riley, Kansas, 9 August 2007. The training focused on cultural awareness. (DOD, Cherie A. Thurlby)

*The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.*

SINCE RETURNING from my second tour in Iraq in December 2006, I have had time to reflect on how our collective experiences in that war, along with those in Afghanistan and our wider War on Terrorism, have affected our military, government, and Nation. Although we are still heavily committed in all of those operations and continue to adjust our approaches to ultimately achieve our objectives, I believe it is time to start looking more broadly at how our experiences in modern warfare should help shape our national security institutions in the years to come. This essay highlights the most significant lessons I have learned in the post-9/11 world and how I think they could be applied to better prepare us for the full range of challenges we will likely encounter in the future.

This article began as an effort to identify challenges the U.S. Army must prepare to face, but I soon realized that many of those challenges are connected to the other armed forces, the interagency, and the broader U.S. Government. Therefore, I address elements of our national power beyond just the military. The complexities of today's national security environment demand that we reevaluate missions across the U.S. Government, embrace the requirements for full-spectrum operations, and preserve our most important military principles while adjusting our organizations and values development to best meet the challenges ahead. This article is in no way an effort to propose answers to all of our potential challenges; rather, it is an attempt to join the conversation.

## How We Got Here and Where We Should Go

*The rapid diffusion of technology, the growth of a multitude of transnational factors, and the consequences of increasing globalization and economic interdependence, have coalesced to create national security challenges remarkable for their complexity . . . .*

—General Charles C. Krulak, 1999<sup>1</sup>

As the cold war faded into memory and new security challenges emerged at the beginning of the 21st century, military visionaries were promoting a view of future warfare characterized by increased complexity, unpredictability, and ambiguity. Others, less prescient, viewed concepts such as *low-intensity conflict*, *operations other than war*, and *nation-building* as anathema to our military's warrior culture. Despite repeatedly conducting such operations in the 1990s, we tended to quickly revert our intellectual capacities back to our traditional core competencies of synchronizing combat power on a symmetrically aligned battlefield.

The inevitable result was that the United States, even after an extraordinary round of initial military transformation efforts, entered the War on Terrorism after the 9/11 attacks with armed forces well suited to defeat opposing armies and topple political regimes, but significantly lacking the depth suited to the longer term requirements of stabilizing and rebuilding nations. In essence, we went to war with a military and interagency construct that was not prepared for the imperatives of full-spectrum operations and counterinsurgency warfare.

Since 9/11 and our experiences on the modern asymmetric battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, the military has learned hard lessons and forced itself to make significant generational leaps of adaptation. Meanwhile, much of our government and interagency seems to be in a state of denial about the requirements needed to adapt to modern warfare. Collectively, we must internalize and institutionalize the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan to ensure they truly become "learned" rather than merely "observed." We must also broaden our scope to include imperatives across our government—imperatives that will help us prepare for a future in which we will almost certainly encounter situations of equal or greater complexity than those we face today.

***...much of our government and interagency seems to be in a state of denial about the requirements needed to adapt to modern warfare.***

As events in our Nation's history have repeatedly demonstrated, it is virtually impossible to anticipate with any degree of certainty exactly what future battlefields will look like, or for that matter, where they will be. The only constant is change. Predicting future policy decisions is even more hazardous. However, it is possible to identify some of the trends that are likely to shape future conflicts. These include the increasing chasm between the developed and developing worlds, a population explosion in underdeveloped regions, the rise of ideologies and organizations that don't recognize national borders, a dramatic increase in ethnic and sectarian self-identification, and increasing global competition for energy resources. There have also been dramatic improvements in technologies that allow instantaneous global transmission of information—and thus provide the potential to create weapons of almost unimaginable destruction. All of these characteristics point to the complex, ambiguous nature of future conflict.

Some might seek to avoid the hard choices complexity entails by concluding that we are ill-suited to employ our national power in such multidimensional environments. They would argue that we cannot afford to intervene in another Iraq. But this argument is like those made against entering into another of Europe's wars after the experience of World War I: while tempting, it is unrealistic and invites risk. In the increasingly interconnected, interdependent, and dangerous world we live in, the U.S. cannot assume that it will be able to retreat from other nations' problems for very long. At some point in the not-too-distant future, our national interests may require us to engage in situations even more complicated than the ones we face today.

To meet the national security challenges of the future, we must create the capacity to engage in the full range of military and interagency operations, and we must embrace the concept of nation-building, not

just rhetorically, but entirely. The potential to lose the momentum of change in this emerging reality of conflict through the diffusion of funding, political positioning that takes a short-term view, and the natural reluctance of our forces to intellectually engage beyond the linear construct of warfare is real. Additionally, while we attempt to improve our capabilities in non-linear warfare, we must maintain our ability to defeat conventional military threats and deter the emergence of near-peer competitors. The challenge is to find the right balance without trying to attain competence in so many potential missions that we can't do any of them well.

## Developing Our Cultural Mind-Sets

*Transformation is not just about technology and platforms—"transformation takes place between the ears." The cultural and intellectual factors of transformation are more important than new ships, planes and high-tech weapons.*

—Colonel M.E. Krause<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the most important thing we need to do to prepare for a dangerous future is change the cultures of our national security organizations and increase our efforts to educate the U.S. public. Americans have traditionally viewed warfare as a struggle between friend and enemy, with both sides clearly identified and engaged on a delimited battlefield where outcomes result in verifiable winners and losers. In other words, we have been very comfortable with the idea of a symmetric battlefield. In fact, for the first 20 years of my Army career, spent as an Armor officer, I trained to defeat the Soviet 9th Combined Arms Army on the plains of Europe by reducing their formations to 60 percent strength so they would surrender. This kind of warfare was easy to understand and to translate into military organizations, equipment, and training. It was clean. The end of the cold war and the blitz victory of Desert Storm hindered our ability to grasp, as a Nation and a military, what would come next. Even to this day, some see conventional battle as the only way to fight. They believe that all we have to do to win our modern wars is kill and capture enough of the enemy.

To maximize our ability to succeed in current and future conflicts, we must change this mind-set. Warfare has evolved, and both the Nation and

the military must adjust accordingly. Part of this change must include a brutally honest assessment of what the U.S. must do to optimize its chances for success when it decides to go to war. The U.S. as a Nation—and indeed most of the U.S. Government—has not gone to war since 9/11. Instead, the departments of Defense and State (as much as their modern capabilities allow) and the Central Intelligence Agency are at war while the American people and most of the other institutions of national power have largely gone about their normal business.

A tangible example is the relatively slow procurement and fielding process we use to get new armored vehicles into combat. In a conflict that has lasted longer than World War II, the majority of our personnel in overseas combat zones still operate in armored HMMWVs—early 1980s technology not well suited to the hazards we face. Although the military rapidly fielded numerous upgrades to improve the performance of the HMMWV, the idea of a replacement vehicle better suited to the evolving threat was not, until recently, part of the debate. Thus, significantly improved alternatives are only now being fielded in large quantities to our troops in harm's way. In short, our industrial base has largely been operating on a peacetime footing compared to some earlier conflicts in which we accelerated our production capacity and quickly generated new equipment.

Of course, it must be understood that one of the causes of our industrial inertia was a series of incorrect assumptions about how long U.S. forces would be committed in Iraq. In the early years of the war, civilian and military leaders repeatedly assumed that force levels would steadily decrease over time, and they made many resourcing decisions accordingly. This highlights the peril in being overly optimistic about essentially unpredictable military operations. It clearly points out that strategic planning should include greater consideration of potential worst-case scenarios.

Our current problems raise the legitimate question of whether the U.S., or any democracy, can successfully prosecute an extended war without a true national commitment. History is replete with examples of countries that tried to fight wars in the absence of popular support and without committing their national resources. These countries often found themselves defeated on battlefields far from



home. After one such experience—Vietnam—the U.S. military was restructured so that it could never go to war again without relying heavily on reserve-component forces. We should now consider whether we can ever successfully go to war for an extended period of time without the informed support of the American people and the full commitment of all the elements of our national power.

The history of war is a history of change. The modern battlefield—a multidimensional, ill-defined place where a nation's ability to apply non-kinetic elements of national power is as important to victory as the application of firepower—is so revolutionary it demands that we educate our citizens to its consequences. Iraq and Afghanistan have illustrated that wars will likely be longer and more expensive, with victory and defeat much more difficult to determine. We as a Nation must understand this the next time we decide to commit ourselves to war.

## Organizing and Training the National Security Team

*I don't think the U.S. government had what it needed for reconstructing a country. We did it ad hoc in the Balkans, and then in Afghanistan, and then in Iraq.*

—Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice<sup>3</sup>

**Redefining roles and missions.** To improve its ability to succeed on the complex modern battlefield, the U.S. desperately needs to conduct a top-down review of the roles and missions of all of its elements

of national power. The latter include every organization that contributes to our diplomatic, information, military, and economic influence. In every overseas intervention the U.S. has undertaken since the end of the cold war, an integrated approach and an understanding of each organization's missions and capabilities have been woefully lacking. For years some in the military have criticized their interagency partners for not contributing enough to our efforts overseas, while some in the interagency have criticized the military for not providing enough security for them to do their jobs. What I've come to realize is that this finger-pointing wastes time and misses the mark. The real problem is that we lack a comprehensive overview of what each military and interagency partner should contribute in conflicts like Iraq and Afghanistan. Instead, there is a large gap between what we optimally need to succeed and the combined resources our government can bring to bear. This "capabilities gap" is not the fault of any single agency, but is the result of our government not having clearly defined what it expects each instrument of national power to contribute to our foreign policy solutions. Lacking such guidance, we have failed to build the kinds of organizations we need today.

You need only look at the State Department to prove this point. Charged with implementing the foreign policy of the greatest power on earth in our relations with some 180 countries around the world, State has only 11,000 employees in the foreign service, a miniscule number compared to the more than 2,000,000 uniformed personnel in the U.S. military. Whereas the Pentagon's budget is almost half a trillion dollars per year, the 2007 State Department budget request was \$9.5 billion.<sup>4</sup> During the Vietnam era, there were approximately 15,000 employees in the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Today there are roughly 3,000, making this once-robust organization little more than a contracting agency. Similarly, the United States Information Agency (USIA), so successful in public diplomacy during the cold war, was abolished as an independent agency in 1999 and its remnants incorporated into the State Department.

An interagency review undertaken by Congress in conjunction with the executive branch and the armed forces could help reduce the shortcomings in our current system. As a Nation, we must decide



DOD, Staff Sgt. Myles Cullen

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice listens to a question during a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing in Washington, D.C., 27 February 2007. The hearing was to request additional funding for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

what role each of our institutions should play in the implementation of our foreign-policy objectives and then resource them accordingly. For example, when required to increase indigenous-nation viability, should we send an agricultural expert from the Department of Agriculture, a governance expert from the State Department, and a rule-of-law expert from the Department of Justice, or should these experts come from the military, since it is most capable of mobilizing and compelling personnel to deploy to dangerous locations? Whatever the answer is, it needs to be codified and understood so that the responsible organizations can prepare properly for future contingencies.

Once the responsibilities beyond traditional war-fighting and immediate post-conflict consolidation are established, each member of the interagency team must adjust its organization to meet the requirements that should be nested into the broader governmental structure. Such adjustments will likely entail increasing the resources allocated to the non-military elements of our national power, such as the State Department and USAID. It might also be determined that we need to restore the capabilities of institutions such as USIA. What is clear, though, is that in this type of conflict, where the majority of our success will be determined by the non-kinetic aspects of our national power, we must substantially increase the resources provided to the organizations most capable of projecting that power.

We should also consider how to better employ some of our most effective nongovernmental elements of national power, such as the universities, businesses, and industries at the heart of our global economic influence. Our universities, for example, are filled with agronomists, engineers, and economists who, if asked and supported, would deploy to assist in advancing non-military development and ministerial capacity in targeted nations, just as they are doing today in some cases. Although implemented several years into the conflict, the Department of Defense's Task Force for Business and Stability Operations in Iraq has attempted to bring business leaders from the United States together with leaders of failed or faltering industries in Iraq in an effort to improve Iraq's economic potential. We should look to apply similar models of private sector/government integration in future operations when the critical means of achieving our objectives fall outside traditional military roles. Our Nation's economic power is often more important than its military power in ensuring strategic security; furthermore, the prosperity of our Nation and its people is what others covet—not our military power. We must continually look at ways to creatively leverage this influential element of national power to support our security objectives abroad.

**Military imperatives.** Once the decision to employ the military has been made, those of us in uniform must accept that in most modern conflicts, the decisive elements of power required to prevail may, more often than not, be non-kinetic. While we must maintain our core competency to defeat enemies with traditional combat power, we must also be able to offer the populations of countries affected by war the hope that life will be better for them and their children because of our presence, not in spite of it. In other words, in contrast to the idea that force always wins out in the end, we must understand that not all problems in modern conflict can be solved with the barrel of a rifle.

Another reality the uniformed forces must accept culturally is that, like it or not, until further notice the U.S. Government has decided that the military largely owns the job of nation-building. Although the Nation, its political leadership, and its military have routinely dismissed this mission since the end of the cold war, we have repeatedly decided to commit our national power to it. Today, the U.S. military is



U.S. Army, SGT Joshua R. Ford

**Paul A. Brinkley, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Business Transformation, presents a check for more than \$6 million to employees of the Bayji Fertilizer Plant, in Bayji, Iraq, 7 August 2007. The facility will use the money to buy new equipment and hire employees.**



the only national organization able to conduct some of the most critical tasks associated with rebuilding war-torn or failed nations. Indeed, since the end of the cold war, the capabilities of some of the interagency organizations that have traditionally played a large role in nation-building have decreased dramatically, even as the requirement to conduct these operations has multiplied. Unless and until there is a significant reorganization of U.S. Government interagency capabilities, the military is going to be the Nation's instrument of choice in nation-building. We need to accept this reality instead of resisting it, as we have for much of my career.

**Flattening our organizations.** Our national security organizations, and especially the military, must continually look at ways to flatten their organizational structures while increasing internal horizontal integration. This is the way many of our enemies operate, and it can put our more traditionally “stovepiped” organizations at a disadvantage. We don't want to break our structures, or make them suited only for asymmetric warfare, but they need to be modified.

Unfortunately, many of our most important capabilities are implemented at bureaucratic speed, not at the speed required by those at user level. We have the technology to share information much faster, but our legacy stovepiped approval processes can slow down the transfer of that information. Our enemies do not operate under such constraints. Thus, they often run circles around us, especially in the information environment, but also on the rapidly evolving battlefield.

One way to help flatten our military organizations would be for leaders and commanders to expand their focus both up and down the chain of command. Traditionally, military ground commanders have understood their superior's intent two levels up and conveyed their intent two echelons down. I firmly believe that on the modern battlefield, leaders need to expand their focus to three or more levels in each direction. I'm not suggesting that we should bypass the chain of command

or micromanage subordinates, but I have learned from recent battlefield experience that our operations are so decentralized and each area of operations so different that leaders need to expand their understanding of operations beyond what has traditionally worked for us on the conventional battlefield.

We can also help flatten our organizations by doing more to enable unconstrained horizontal integration and rapid knowledge transfer. Sometimes the most critical information on the battlefield doesn't come from the chain of command, but from external sources. We must enable those most in need of that information to access it without the filters a chain of command traditionally imposes. Closely related is the need to continually review how we classify and control information. I believe we in the military have a tendency to over-classify information that either perishes quickly or is not worthy of classification at all. This sometimes limits critical information to classified channels that small-unit leaders can't routinely access. Technologically, this problem can be addressed by increasing the number of tools available to disseminate classified information, but culturally, we can help solve it by using more common sense in deciding what truly needs to be classified in the first place.

**Splitting the force is not the answer.** Because of the complexity of our current wars, some believe we should reorganize our forces into two types of units: those that work only at the high-intensity level of a campaign, and those designed and equipped for the low-intensity fight and classic nation-building. Having done their jobs, the high-intensity force would hand off responsibility to the low-intensity force. This solution is both unsustainable and unaffordable: we simply don't have the resources to divide the military into “combat” and “stability” organizations. Instead, we must focus on developing full-spectrum capabilities across all organizations in the armed forces. Having said that, as the Army and Marine Corps increase their active-duty end strengths, we should consider increasing the number and adjusting the proportion of specialized units such as civil affairs, engineers, information operations, and others that play critical roles in stability operations.

We should apply the same thinking to how we train foreign armies and other security forces. I don't believe it is in the military's best interest to establish a permanent “Training Corps” in the conventional

***We don't want to break our structures, or make them suited only for asymmetric warfare, but they need to be modified.***

military to develop other countries' indigenous security forces (ISF). The Special Forces do this mission well on the scale that is normally required for theater security cooperation and other routine foreign internal defense missions. Rather, we should ensure our conventional forces have the inherent flexibility to transition to ISF support when the mission becomes too large for the Special Forces. If requirements exceed Special Forces capabilities, then training and transition teams should be internally resourced from conventional U.S. or coalition units already operating in the battlespace.

There are two significant advantages to taking trainers from military units assigned to the battlespace. First, the partnership has unity of command and effort built into it: the trainers belong to the unit; they know where to go to get the operational, training, and logistical support they need; and most importantly, they get the latter much more easily. Additionally, trainers and warfighters will have already established the personal bonds that are optimal for this type of mission. This is no small advantage. In Iraq, I heard from one training-team leader who said he had an easier time developing rapport with his Iraqi counterparts than he did with the leadership of his U.S. partner unit.

Second, unit-sourced ISF training addresses the criticism, so often leveled at the way we have

resourced teams in Iraq and Afghanistan, that we haven't consistently assigned our best leaders to these teams. If commanders on the ground know that the quickest way to complete their mission is to transition their operations over to the ISF, then they will be sure to assign their best people to ISF training. Should we take this approach, we may have to assign additional combat units to the theater, but that would only be the cost of doing business the right way. Furthermore, this sourcing strategy would eliminate the current requirement to cherry-pick units for officers and NCOs with special skills and experience to serve as individual augmentees on externally resourced training teams. Over the last three years, this practice has degraded units preparing to deploy and helped make it impossible to ensure OPTEMPO (operating tempo) equity across the force.

**Unity of command.** Unity of command has been an oft-violated principle of war in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The unintended consequence of this lapse has been risk of mission failure and unnecessary casualties. Whereas technological advances have given us unheard-of battlefield situational awareness and significantly lowered our number of fratricides, failure to ensure unity of command has stifled our ability to execute coordinated and synchronized campaign plans while making it easier for the enemy to inflict casualties on our forces and on civilians.

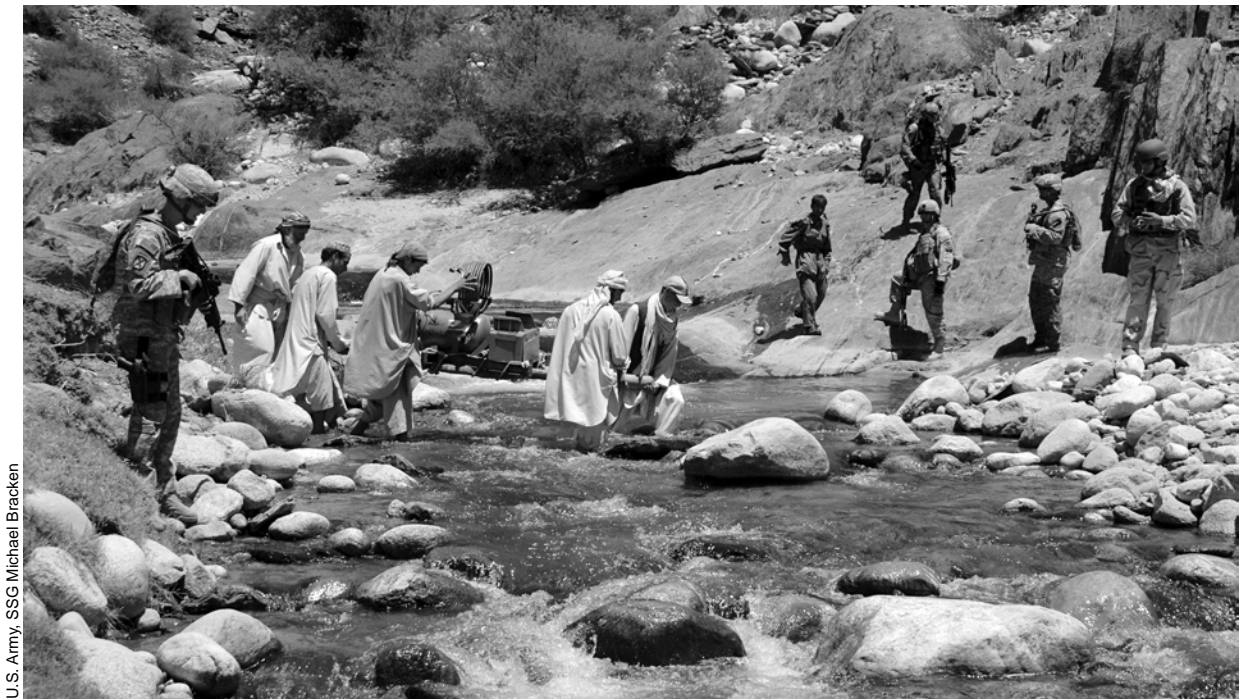
I believe that most of these unity-of-command violations are the unintentional result of institutional rivalries, coalition-building at any cost, and sometimes just failure to effectively organize and manage for these complex types of missions.

For example, the current command and control (C2) arrangement in Afghanistan is beyond comprehension even to military professionals. Political necessity may require such an arrangement, but the C2 in Afghanistan tends to support the axiom that the only thing worse than going to war with allies is going to war without them. Exacerbated by the national caveats of some coalition members, our Afghan C2 sacrifices unity of command and obviates theater operational awareness and meaningful strategic communications.



U.S. Navy, Mass Communication Specialist 2d Class Christopher Perez

U.S. Special Forces and Iraqi Army soldiers practice map-reading skills during their weekly training in Suwayrah, Iraq, 28 July 2007.



U.S. Army, SSG Michael Bracken

Road construction workers cross a stream while Afghan National Police officers and U.S. Army Soldiers of the provincial reconstruction team from Forward Operating Base Kalagush patrol Balik, in the Nuristan province of Afghanistan, 14 June 2007.

If NATO is to continue to be relevant, especially in an asymmetric security environment, real transformation is a necessity. Command and control is also a challenge we must address with other allies, as there are likely to be more cases in which we go to war with “coalitions of the willing” constituted largely outside of existing treaty organizations. Because coalition-building will almost always be required, even if only to reinforce the legitimacy of our operations, we must develop solutions for increasing our unity of command and effort.

While NATO and coalition operations in general are easy targets when discussing unity-of-command issues, purely U.S. military-interagency operations, so essential to our modern campaigns, can be just as problematic. We in the military are taught the necessity of unity of command; therefore, we can see violations of the principle in situations where our civilian counterparts may not. In peacetime, such violations may lead to nothing more than bureaucratic squabbles driven by budget considerations or turf battles. In combat situations, however, they undeniably cost lives and reduce our chances of success. For instance, few people I know argue against the value of provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in Iraq and Afghanistan, yet we suffered excruciating delays in

implementing them—delays that were a function of disagreements over everything from how they would be staffed and funded to who would control their activities. Unquestionably, there is a direct correlation between how well we organize and integrate our operations at the military-interagency level and how successful we are in accomplishing our mission and minimizing casualties. Nevertheless, we continue to struggle with this fundamental challenge. The PRTs are only one example, but our problems in setting them up reinforce the call for the U.S. to conduct a top-down review of the roles and missions of all its elements of national power.

## Exploiting the Information Environment

*Strategically, insurgent campaigns have shifted from military campaigns supported by information operations to strategic communications campaigns supported by guerilla and terrorist operations.*

—Colonel (Retired) T.X. Hammes<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the most decisive factor that will determine who emerges victorious in current and future wars is which side can gain consistent advantage in the holistic information environment that plays out across the globe, near and far from the “front



lines.” In short, the commander who prevails in the information war is almost certain to win the war itself. Perception has a nagging tendency of determining how our enemies, our allies, and our own societies view war, often regardless of what is actually happening on the ground. If we are unable to do a better job than our enemies of influencing the world’s perception, then even the most brilliantly conceived campaign plans will be unlikely to succeed. This is not a new phenomenon, as the U.S. found out in Vietnam when the Western world perceived the tactically disastrous North Vietnamese defeat in the Tet Offensive as a strategic victory for the North. What makes the information environment even more challenging today is the explosion of technology that connects the world at near real-time speed, making it increasingly difficult for democratic governments and militaries that value accuracy and truth to compete with enemies who do not.

Now, more than ever, it is essential for leaders at all levels to understand not only how the actions they and their subordinates take will impact the immediate situation they are trying to influence, but how the results of those actions could resonate with local, national, and international audiences. Of course, the old maxim that “nothing succeeds like success” still applies, and the best way to succeed in the information war is to succeed in the war itself, but that is no longer enough. We in the military must significantly improve our ability to compete in the information arena. This can be done by upgrading our capabilities in the two traditional areas of information operations (IO) and public affairs (PA), and by insuring that our leaders develop the critical skills and intuition required to understand the complex second- and third-order effects of their decisions and how they may play out before many different audiences. Although IO and PA officers, effects coordinators, and others provide critical staff support to the information campaign, commanders must take the lead and be intimately involved in ensuring that the information aspects of military operations are considered in every action we undertake. It is that important to our success.

To better understand the information environment we are operating in, I offer a vignette from an action in early 2006, when a coalition and Iraqi special operations force raid killed 17 insurgents in Baghdad. After the raid, the enemy dragged the bodies of the dead insurgents into a nearby prayer

room and staged it to look as if we had executed them. Although it only took the coalition about eight hours to confirm the original version of the story and discredit the insurgents’ version, eight hours was too long and the “massacre” story carried the day both on the streets of Iraq and in much of the Western media. In a national, and indeed a global information community, where people generally believe the first story even if presented with convincing contrary evidence later, this tactically successful raid by our forces nonetheless translated into a strategic defeat. Not even the testimony of a freed hostage was enough to discredit the insurgents’ story. Similar situations occur daily in Iraq. Sometimes the event receives national or international attention, but more often than not, enemy IO targets much smaller, local areas. Not bound by the same rules we work under, the enemy’s information attacks are very effective. Too often we have failed to take the initiative or even effectively defend ourselves in the information environment. We must look at ways to improve our competitiveness in this critical area.

**Information operations.** For many in the West, information operations that include any elements of deception or propaganda are anathema to a democracy and a threat to a free press. While this can rightfully be a hot-button issue when a government or military misuses information, IO is nonetheless an essential element of our information strategy, and we must continue to improve it. We should also recognize that the term *psychological operations* is an anachronism that should be replaced by the less offensive *information operations*. Regardless of the value we place on IO, the enemy has made it clear that his key to victory is the domination of this most critical line of operation.

In his book *The World Is Flat*, Thomas L. Friedman outlines what the proliferation of cheap and almost universally accessible information technology has meant for the world economy.<sup>6</sup> According to Friedman, information once available only to the world’s elites is now easily obtainable by anyone, anywhere, with a computer and an Internet connection. As if to prove Friedman’s thesis, our enemies in Iraq and Afghanistan are using the Internet and associated technology to feed their sophisticated information campaign and to build better improvised explosive devices faster than we can field counter-measures or train service members to defeat them.

We have consistently underestimated the importance the enemy places on the IO campaign. To improve our standing in this area will require creative thinking and solutions well beyond what I have discussed here, but there are a couple of steps we can take to start moving in the right direction. First, we must implement policies that recognize the need for IO. These policies should provide safeguards to prevent abuse, but not be so restrictive that commanders cannot effectively counter enemy IO or are kept from mounting their own information offensives. For their part, commanders absolutely must maintain a firewall between IO and PA to prevent IO products from coloring the information we provide the media. A firewall would not prevent the two functions from coordinating their operations, but media press releases and interviews must always be based fully on the truth as we know it at the time and never be approved for release or amended by those working in IO.

Second, we must improve both our technological and organizational capability to disseminate IO and counter enemy propaganda. Currently, we do not respond well enough to deal effectively with enemies who can say whatever they want without retribution. We need professionals who can design information campaigns and develop rapid-response capabilities that surpass those of our enemies.

As aforementioned, we must also streamline, or eliminate where possible, the bureaucratic processes we have been using to approve our IO messages. Hierarchical organizations with well-developed bureaucracies often erect effective barriers to the instantaneous passing of information. They tend to enforce approval and coordination protocols that were developed before the explosion in information technologies. Unfortunately, as was the case with the Baghdad raid “massacre,” information continues to flow uninterrupted to the rest of the world; it does not wait for bureaucracies to catch up. This means that decision-makers who can benefit most from information, or who can disseminate information most quickly to counter spurious enemy claims, are often denied permission to access or release information when it’s most vital. Our enemies do not have this crippling constraint and are making much better use of new information technologies. Thus, we must flatten our organizations, reduce bureaucratic impediments, and improve the attendant flow of information—both within our units and from us to

the media—to allow leaders at all levels to make the most advantageous, efficacious decisions.

**Public affairs and media relations.** Independent local, national, and international media coverage of our military operations and our enemies’ activities is critical to our success in the global information environment. This is particularly true in today’s 24-hour news environment. Unfortunately, our enemies in Iraq have won a significant victory by forcing most Western media to report only from secure compounds, to use embeds with coalition forces, or to retail second-hand information gained from local Iraqi stringers, some of whom have questionable agendas and loyalties.<sup>7</sup>

To address this situation, we must develop solutions for improving media access to the battlefield and to our activities without compromising the media’s independence or our operational security. This could include relatively simple actions such as making it easier for journalists to get accredited and transported to the combat zone, and offering increased logistical support to help defray escalating costs. It could also include more sophisticated approaches, such as soliciting media assistance in designing information policies and erecting firewalls that address their concerns about IO influencing PA. It is important, too, despite what we may sometimes perceive as unfair treatment from the media, that we understand and support the crucial role they play in reporting the realities of our combat operations to the world.



U.S. Army, SPC Davis Pridden

The commanding general of the 9th Iraqi Army Division, right, speaks with a journalist from the Al-Arabiya news channel, left, as they walk with General David Petraeus through the Al Shurja market in East Baghdad, Iraq, 11 March 2007.



In our dealings with the media, we must also become more sophisticated than we have sometimes been. First and foremost, we must always be truthful and forthright when talking to the press. In some cases, PA officers and commanders have chosen to use the media as an outlet for IO, or have put out inaccurate statements in the hope of shaping public perceptions. When this occurs it weakens our bond of trust not only with the media, but with the American population we serve and the indigenous populations whose trust and confidence we are trying to gain. Any short-term gains achieved by such strategies merely serve to weaken our institution in the long run.

Finally, since IO and PA are as important on the modern battlefield as Congressional Affairs is on the home front, it might be time to consistently assign some of the best and most qualified officers to these positions. Perhaps the top two officers in a battalion, brigade, or division should be PA and IO officers. Public affairs officers should be assigned down to battalion level and even company level for certain missions, and when they are, we need to give them latitude to publish news releases quickly and the support they need to overcome mistakes. We must ensure PA officers and NCOs develop fully by giving them opportunities early in their careers to train with private-sector print and broadcast news organizations. If we make this kind of investment in our information professionals, maybe someday we will trust one of them to lead the public affairs field rather than a general officer who has spent his career in the combat arms. In the same vein, we might also recognize the need to authorize a position for an Army chief of strategic communications, one who has the same three-star rank and clout as the chiefs of operations, intelligence, logistics, and other Army-level staffs.

## Training and Leader Development

*We must develop the confidence to grant authority to those we send to conduct these complex operations commensurate with the responsibilities laid on their shoulders... This confidence will only come with the selection and training of the right people.*

—General Rupert Smith<sup>8</sup>

In today's complex, constantly changing climate where the levels of war are increasingly interwoven—when they are even relevant at all—we must develop leaders at all levels, from small-unit to

strategic and political, who are agile and sophisticated enough to make adjustments. We must ask ourselves why our current system has produced some leaders who seemingly have adapted well to the complexities of modern warfare and created others who have not, and what we can do to improve the quality of leadership required at all levels. We must also ensure that the value we place on broader experience (versus traditional tactical military experience) is truly reflected in those leaders we select for continued advancement.

**Training critical tasks.** Prior to September 2001, much was written about asymmetric warfare, the nonlinear battlefield, and the need to train leaders who could synchronize combat power under uncertain, inchoate conditions. In many Army units the concept of mission essential task lists, or METLs, institutionalized by former Chief of Staff of the Army Carl Vuono, had been weakened. Commanders at all levels felt pressured to train for any and all contingencies they could face, ranging from high-intensity warfare to peacekeeping operations. They forgot that the METL concept demanded that we train to standard and not to time and that if a commander, after analyzing his mission, identified more METL tasks to train in a year than he could train to standard, he was required to go to his boss and ask for relief.

In some units, commanders refused to face the realities of the post-cold-war period and continued training regimes adopted during the height of the Soviet threat. Training in these units was kinetic, and those who tried to insert non-kinetic events into the training plan were thwarted by commanders who feared “mission creep” into roles they didn't think belonged to the military. A prime example of such intransigence occurred when the Army went to great expense to develop gunnery trainers. Leaders who wanted to give back portions of their yearly ammunition allocations in order to generate dollars to buy more gunnery trainers—which in turn would buy back time to train other tasks—were considered heretics rather than progressive thinkers who were trying to leverage the huge investments the Army had made in leap-ahead technologies.

Modern METLs must contain kinetic and non-kinetic tasks, but not so many that leaders are forced to train to time and not to standard. In units where training to standard is resourced and enforced, subordinates gain confidence in their leaders and learn

how to adjust to the dynamic, uncertain asymmetric battlefield. Units lacking METL discipline are never sure that their leaders know what right looks like, and they are less able to adjust to warfare that includes tasks they have not trained—especially non-kinetic tasks. As the Army emerges from today's conflicts, it must focus hard on returning to METL-based training programs.

**Education.** Our armed forces must continue to update and expand their educational programs. This means broadening the curricula of formal schools to reflect the complexity of the modern operating environment, and increasing opportunities—and rewards—for leaders to serve in assignments outside the traditional military structure. Although I have spent the majority of my 35-year career serving in traditional, “muddy boots” Army organizations, the experience that best prepared me for division and corps command in Iraq was the 5 years I spent earning a masters degree and teaching in the Social Sciences Department at the U.S. Military Academy. “Outside” assignments should include those in executive branch agencies, think tanks, media organizations, businesses, and similar entities that can help military leaders increase their agility. Further, we should consider expanding opportunities for interagency team members to work routinely with military organizations. These members would increase their understanding of what the military can and cannot contribute to our national security solutions. To the argument that this type of cross-training damages “warrior culture,” I say that a broad exposure to experiences outside the traditional military can only help our leaders as they operate in an increasingly interconnected world.

**Evaluations.** Closely tied in with how we develop our military leaders is how we evaluate them and promote them to positions of greater responsibility. It has been said that an individual can fool his superiors most of the time, his peers some of the time, and his subordinates none of the time. This is somewhat of a simplification, but there is certainly some truth to it. Yet, our current military evaluation systems consider only the evaluations of superior leaders in judging competency for career advancement. The time is long overdue to implement a military evaluation system for NCOs and officers that formally considers the input of peers and subordinates. The opinions of superiors should

remain predominant, but it is important to get the unique perspectives that peers and subordinates can contribute. They will allow us to make a more complete evaluation of our leaders.

**Preserving excellence.** Our current generation of junior military officers, NCOs, and enlisted personnel has answered our Nation's call during a time of crisis and has done what few in our history have done: volunteered to serve multiple high-stress combat tours. However, with the prospect of unending deployments on the horizon, we may be approaching a point where even the most patriotic Americans will find themselves unable to continue to serve. As we look to grow the next generation of the Army and Marine Corps, we must be very careful to recruit and then retain only those Americans who have the potential to succeed in today's and tomorrow's complex operating environments. If we fall into the trap of lowering recruiting and retention standards to meet numerical goals and near-term requirements, our Nation will pay for it dearly.

Many proposals have been presented for maintaining the quality of the force, but if none of those work, we may not know until it is too late. The executive branch, Congress, the armed forces, and indeed the American population need to look now at the type of military we want for the future and the price we are willing to pay to ensure our national security.

Within the military, perhaps the most important thing we can do to help secure the future of our institutions is to ensure that those junior leaders and service



The next generation: members of the West Point class of 2011 cross the bridge to Thayer Hall, where they will receive basic training classes.

members who are bearing the brunt of the fighting in today's wars have a significant say in how we reshape our armed forces for the future. A recent biography recounts the story of how General Dwight Eisenhower wrote a controversial article in the late 1920's about the emerging importance of tanks in warfare.<sup>9</sup> Eisenhower's views contradicted conventional Army doctrine and were considered so heretical that he was verbally reprimanded and even threatened with court martial if he continued to air them. Such intellectual obtuseness in the interwar years helped ensure that the U.S. Army was not optimally prepared for battle in the initial stages of World War II.

This story should serve as a cautionary tale as we engage in contemporary discussion about how to best prepare ourselves for the future. To maximize our chances for success, we must ensure all views are welcomed to the debate and that junior leaders have no fear of career retribution for freely stating their opinions about what is needed to make our leaders, organizations, and doctrine better.

**Moral and ethical imperatives.** There are troubling indicators from our experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan that some military leaders and service members have not internalized the moral and ethical codes that define who we are as an armed force and Nation. Our moral conduct in extreme situations when others fail has helped make us an exceptional Nation. When we fail, our actions can damage our credibility as a fighting force, our mission, and indeed our standing in the world. One need only look at the global backlash against our national interests from allegations made against U.S. forces in places like Abu Ghraib, Haditha, and Mahmudiyah to see how necessary ethical leadership and conduct is at all levels.

We must reinforce the importance of proper ethical conduct with our organizations at every opportunity. When we do fall short of our ethical and moral standards, we must candidly admit our wrongdoing, hold individuals up and down the chain of command accountable, and move forward. Too often, we are reluctant to admit mistakes, which only serves to further antagonize those whose support we rely on so much. Leaders must also be careful not to set "ethical traps" for subordinates by asking them to do too much with too little—a caveat we haven't always heeded in our recent operations. One of the military's greatest strengths is its can-do attitude, but that attitude can be a liability when it causes us

to take ethical and moral shortcuts to accomplish our mission.

**Reviewing jointness.** An area of career military officer development that deserves continual review is how we approach jointness. The Goldwater-Nichols Act (1986) appropriately requires officers with senior-rank potential to complete joint assignments. Responding to interoperability problems encountered during the invasion of Grenada, the act effectively forces the services to work in integrated teams; thus, wherever there are U.S. forces engaged in operations, they almost always consist of multiple services working together in joint or combined commands. What has not always kept pace with this reality, however, is how we acknowledge and track officers serving in positions that clearly allow them to demonstrate their understanding of joint operations. Congress and the Department of Defense have realized this, and the resulting Joint Qualification System (JQS), to be implemented 1 October 2007, will ensure that we recognize officers' joint experiences. The JQS will enhance the basic tenets of the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the JQS is that it will allow joint experiences gained while serving in various non-joint positions to count toward joint qualification. This change acknowledges the fast tempo of our military operations around the world and the fact that many duty positions, especially in deployed environments, are inherently joint even if they are not validated as such in an official document.

For example, an Army brigade commander and his staff who have subordinate Army and Marine battalions attached, along with Navy electronic-warfare officers and Air Force forward controllers, may now earn joint-qualification points for that experience. As the new system is introduced, criteria will be developed to assess such joint situations.<sup>10</sup> It will be important for military leaders to monitor this new program and to ensure that officers are properly credited toward joint qualification.

A second area that needs close review is how we select officers for joint assignments. Simply put, in our quest for equitable jointness, we have not always assigned the right people to the right jobs. We have created joint headquarters to ensure each service's capabilities are maximized, but in the name of jointness, we sometimes fill those headquarters staff positions according to service,

not to skill set. This is why Goldwater-Nichols can be deemed a success while the performance of our military in the numerous interventions since the legislation was passed appears, if we assess it honestly, to have been “disjointed.”

It can be argued, for example, that the senior operations officer or plans officer at the strategic level in a predominately ground, naval, or air campaign should come from the dominant service in that specific fight. Right now, they don’t. Whether stated or not, equity seems to require that each service get a fair share of these important positions in order to ensure no service is at a disadvantage when competing for senior joint billets. The combatant commander might have the greatest weight in choosing his command’s primary staff officers, but it seems that certain staff positions tend to go to the same service for every rotation. We must be cognizant of this “heir apparent” succession for key positions and be willing to make the necessary changes to eliminate it.

An unintended consequence of Goldwater-Nichols is the sentiment that there is “no such thing as being too joint,” which sometimes leads commanders to put some officers in positions for which they are not optimally qualified. We must change this “ticket punch” mentality and put the best qualified into critical positions regardless of their branch of the armed forces.

## Looking to the Future

*Americans had learned, and learned well. The tragedy of American arms, however, is that having an imperfect sense of history, Americans sometimes forget as quickly as they learn.*

—T.R. Fehrenbach<sup>11</sup>

Given our Nation’s inconsistent track record when reorganizing its forces following periods of national crisis, the time is now to start discussing how the military and interagency organizations that emerge from Iraq and Afghanistan will prepare for a dangerous future. These are not Army or military challenges alone; they are national imperatives that we must address to ensure our future national security. The ideas discussed in this essay will, I hope, contribute to the necessary discussion all serious national-security professionals should be having now on how best to prepare for the future.

Undoubtedly, some people would like to forget our recent conflicts. They would have us extricate ourselves rapidly from overseas and never involve

our country in another complicated engagement again. Unfortunately, our Nation’s history is full of examples in which we have fallen into this very trap and not been prepared the next time our interests were threatened. Indeed, we have been involved in many more of these so-called “small wars” than major conventional struggles, and there are few indications to suggest this trend will change. We must therefore prepare our military and other elements of national power to conduct the full range of operations against enemies who have proven to be every bit as adaptive as we are and sometimes even better than us at exploiting modern technologies. This is our primary challenge as we learn from our recent wartime experiences.

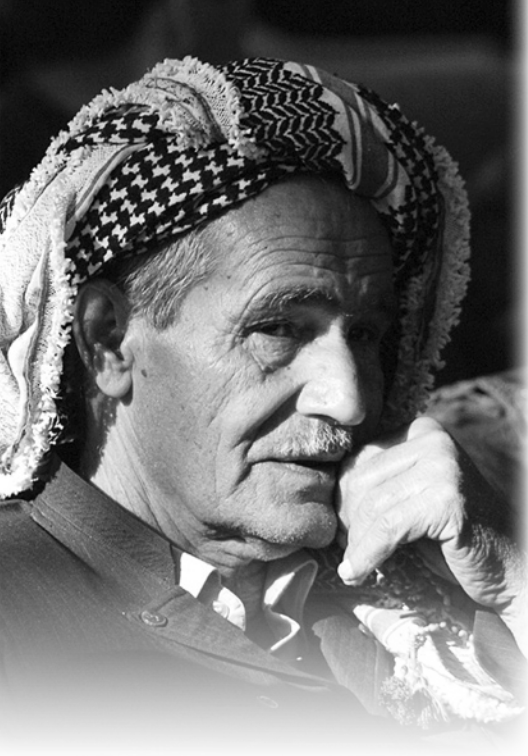
In 1983, when the military was undergoing a period of self-examination following the Vietnam War, an Air Force colonel wrote: “It has been said that Mars (the god of war) is a cruel and unforgiving master. We in the military do not have the luxury of choosing the wars we will fight—and the days of clean ‘declared wars’ may be forever behind us.”<sup>12</sup> Indeed, those of us in the military and the other institutions of national power don’t have the luxury of choosing when we will be called and where we will be sent to defend or advance our Nation’s interests. We do, however, have the opportunity to help decide how our national-security structures will be organized to deal with an increasingly dangerous world. It is important now that we accelerate the conversation on how we can best prepare ourselves for this future. **MR**

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# IRAQ TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT LESSONS LEARNED

Lieutenant Colonel Michael Eisenstadt, U.S. Army Reserve

**E**NGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES—overt interactions between coalition military and foreign civilian personnel for the purpose of obtaining information, influencing behavior, or building an indigenous base of support for coalition objectives—have played a central role in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). They have involved efforts to reach out to village headmen (*mukhtars*), tribal sheikhs, Muslim clerics, elected officials and representatives, urban professionals, businessmen, retired military officers, and women.

Tribal engagement has played a particularly prominent role in OIF. This reflects the enduring strength of the tribes in many of Iraq's rural areas and some of its urban neighborhoods. And tribal engagement has been key to recent efforts to drive a wedge between tribally based Sunni Arab insurgents and Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in Anbar province and elsewhere, as well as efforts to undermine popular support for the Mahdi Army in largely Shi'ite neighborhoods and regions of the country.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the growing importance of tribal engagement for coalition strategy in Iraq, its potential role in future contingency operations, and its potential contribution to future phases of the War on Terrorism, it is vitally important for Army leaders at all levels to understand what history and the social sciences suggest, and what coalition forces in Iraq have learned, about how to engage and leverage tribes and tribal networks.

## Anthropology 101 for Soldiers: What is a Tribe?

A tribe is a form of political identity based on common *claimed* descent.<sup>2</sup> It is not necessarily a lineage group, as tribal subunits (sections or subsections) may manufacture fictive kinship ties or alter their tribal identity or affiliations for political, economic, or security-related reasons.<sup>3</sup> Tribes may also be of mixed sectarian or ethnic composition. Thus, Iraq's Shammar and Jubur tribes have Sunni and Shi'ite branches, while Qashqa'i tribesmen in Iran are of Turkish, Persian, Arab, Kurdish, Lak, Luri, and Gypsy origin.<sup>4</sup>

There is no such thing as a "typical" tribe. Tribes may embody diverse kinship rules, structures, types of political authority, and lifestyles (sedentary, semi-nomadic, nomadic),<sup>5</sup> which may be influenced by security and economic conditions and government policies.<sup>6</sup> Thus, for instance, the Arab tribes of the Arabian Peninsula, Levant, and North Africa tended, at least traditionally, to be relatively egalitarian and non-hierarchical organizations lacking a well-developed leadership structure, while the Turkic tribes of the Central Asian steppes tended to be hierarchical, highly centralized organizations ruled by powerful chieftains.<sup>7</sup>

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PHOTO: An Iraqi tribal elder at a transfer of authority ceremony in Mosul, Iraq, 18 December 2006. (U.S. Army, SFC Robert Brogan)



Although Arab tribal ideology is relatively egalitarian, in reality, major disparities in status, power, and wealth exist within and between tribes.<sup>8</sup> Among settled tribes, sheikhly families and clans tend to form dominant lineages that are better off and more influential than other families and clans in the tribe.<sup>9</sup> Bedouin tribes of “common” origin are looked down on by those of “noble” origin, while smaller (“weak”) settled tribes are often looked down on by larger (“strong”) settled tribes.<sup>10</sup>

## Tribal Values, Processes, and Organization<sup>11</sup>

Tribal values remain deeply ingrained in Iraqi society and have had a profound influence on Iraqi social mores and political culture. (This observation holds for much of the rest of the Arab world as well.) These values include the high premium put on in-group solidarity (*‘asabiyya*), which finds expression in loyalty to the family, clan, and tribe,<sup>12</sup> coupled with a powerful desire to preserve the autonomy of the tribe vis-à-vis other tribes, non-tribal groups, and the authorities;<sup>13</sup> personal and group honor (*sharaf*); sexual honor (*‘ird*), which pertains to the

chastity of the family’s female members; manliness (*muruwwa*), which finds expression in personal traits such as courage, loyalty, generosity, and hospitality; and pride in ancestry (*nashb*).<sup>14</sup>

Tribal processes include traditional forms of interpersonal and group conflict such as the blood feud, as well as mechanisms for regulating and resolving such conflicts: the cease-fire (*atwa*), blood money (*fasl*), and peace agreement (*sulha*).<sup>15</sup> These processes are conducted in accordance with tribal law (*‘urf*), as opposed to *Sharia* (Islamic) or civil law, and are applied mainly in rural towns and villages and some urban areas, though the precise extent to which tribal law is applied in Iraq today is not clear.<sup>16</sup>

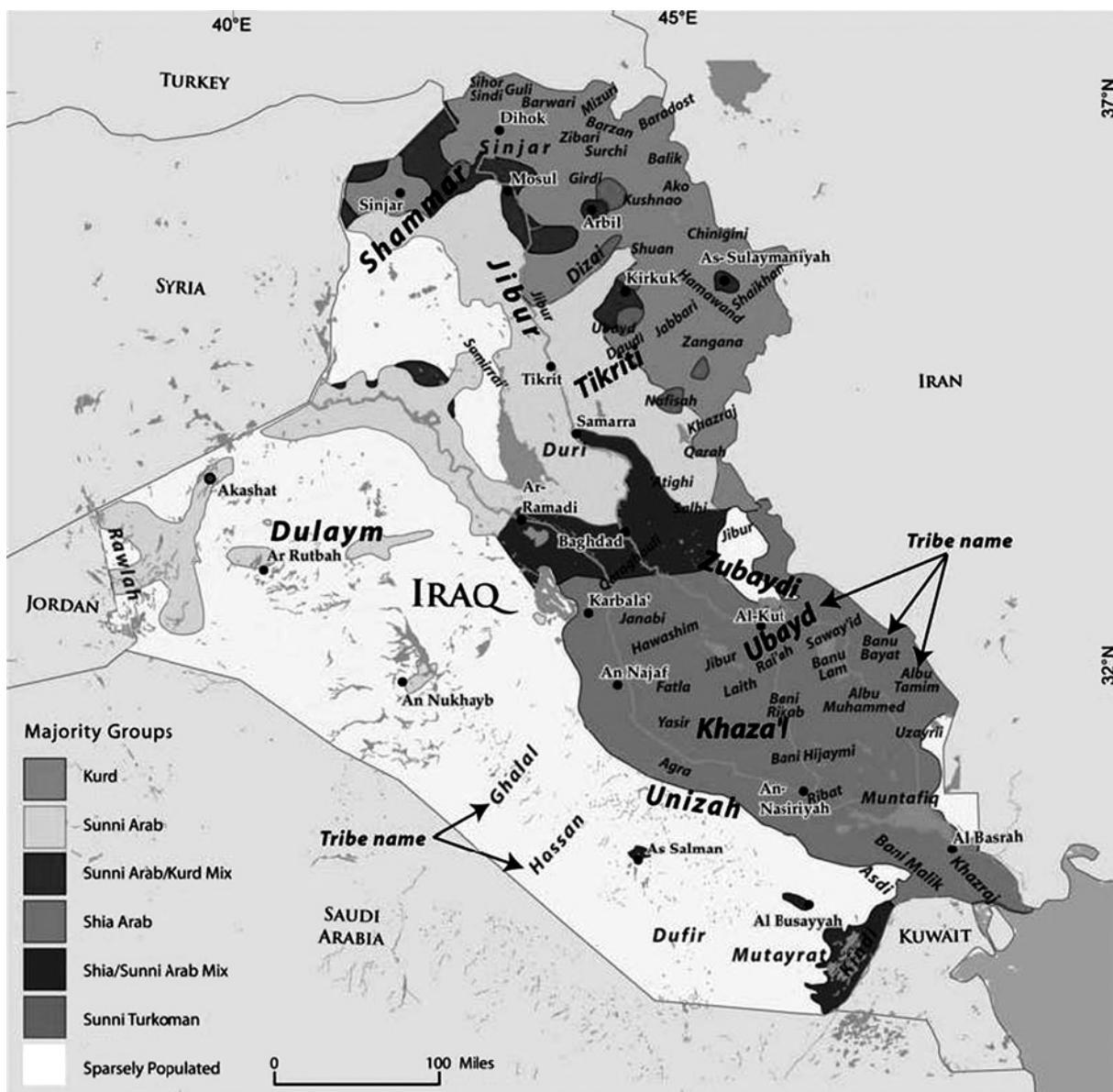
Organizationally, the tribes of Iraq consist of nested (vice hierarchically organized) kinship groups (see Table 1). There are thousands of clans, hundreds of tribes, and about two dozen tribal confederations in Iraq today, each with its own sheikh. (Saddam Hussein’s regime officially recognized some 7,380 tribal sheikhs.)<sup>17</sup> The terms used to describe these kinship groups and the meanings ascribed to them may differ by tribe or region, however, and tribesmen frequently disagree about

Tribal Segment	Number of Adult Males	Residence Patterns	Kinship
Asha’ir/Qabila/Sillif (Tribal Confederation)	Thousands–hundreds of thousands	Local areas, provinces, or large regions, sometimes crossing international boundaries	No traceable kinship
Ashira (Tribe)	Several hundred–many thousands	Neighboring villages or local areas	Descent from a common claimed ancestor, or an ancestor who came to be associated with the tribe
Shabba/Hamula (Clan/Tribal Section)	Several score–several hundred	Same or nearby villages	Descent from common ancestor
Fakhdh (Lineage/Tribal Subsection)	Several tens–several hundred	Same village	Three–five generations or more; may be coterminous with or encompass the <i>khams</i> , the five-generation group that acts as a unit for purposes of avenging blood and honor
Bayt (Family/Household)	One or more	Same house	Nuclear/extended family

Source: Adapted from Robert A. Fernea. *Shaykh and Effendi: Changing Patterns of Authority Among the El Shabana of Southern Iraq* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 82–83, supplemented by information from Shakir Moustafa Salim, *Marsh Dwellers of the Euphrates Delta* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1962), 43–54.

NOTES: 1) The terms *fasila* and *hamula* are sometimes used in Iraq to refer to a subsection of a fakhdh, consisting of an extended family of several adult males, often living in the same housing cluster or compound; 2) Alternative designations for a hamula include *lahama* or *kishba*; 3) Other terms used in Iraq to refer to various types of tribal sections or subsections include *batn*, *fenda*, *firqa*, *‘imara*, *sadr*, *sha’b*, and *‘unuq*.

**Table 1. The Arab tribal system in Iraq.**



Sources: CIA Iraq Country Profile, Map: Congressional Cartography, Library of Congress, 2007.

### Distribution of ethnoreligious groups and tribes in Iraq.

tribal lineages, relationships, and nomenclature.<sup>18</sup> This complicates efforts by outsiders to understand tribal relationships, dynamics, and politics.

The collapse of central-government authority and the rise in political and sectarian violence in the wake of OIF has caused many Iraqis to fall back on the family, tribe, sect, or ethnic group for support in confronting the daily challenges of living in post-Saddam Iraq. As a result, tribal identities have assumed greater salience in Iraq in recent years. It would, however, be a mistake to overemphasize the role of the tribes or to regard the tribe as the central organizing principle of Iraqi society today. Large parts of Iraq are inhabited

by detribalized or non-tribal populations, and tribal identity often competes with and is overshadowed by other forms of identity (sect, ethnicity, class, or ideological orientation). Moreover, the demise of the old regime has led to the rise of new social forces and actors in Iraq—particularly Islamist movements, militias, and parties, which are playing an increasingly important role in Iraqi politics. Recent events in Anbar province, however, demonstrate that under certain conditions, the tribes can still be decisive actors.

A detailed, up-to-date picture of the tribal system in Iraq does not exist—at least in the open literature. Much of what is known about it is based on a very

small number of studies done more than half a century ago, and information gaps frequently have to be filled by inferences drawn from more recent studies undertaken in neighboring Arab states. While there are a number of useful compendiums on the tribes of Iraq done by Iraqi scholars, these are largely catalogs of tribes, tribal sections, and their sheikhs that are in much need of updating.<sup>19</sup> Finally, there has been no systematic effort to assess the impact of violence and coalition and Iraqi Government policies on the tribes and the state of relations between tribal and non-tribal groups in Iraqi society.<sup>20</sup> This article will hopefully constitute a modest first step in this direction.

## The Cultural Logic of Tribes and Tribalism

How do tribal values express themselves in the conduct of Iraqi tribesmen and tribes? Tribesmen are intensely jealous of their honor and status vis-à-vis others<sup>21</sup>—to the extent that honor has been described as the “tribal center of gravity.”<sup>22</sup> The culture of honor and the implicit threat of sanction or violence if one’s honor is impugned may be a vestige of the Arabs’ Bedouin past—a means of ensuring individual and group survival when there is no higher authority around to keep the peace.

As a result, social relations between individuals and groups are characterized by a high degree of competition and conflict (usually nonviolent) over honor, status, and access to resources.<sup>23</sup> A well-known Bedouin Arab proverb expresses this tendency: “Me and my brothers against my cousins; me, my brothers, and my cousins against the stranger.” Some see the extraordinary politeness, generosity, and hospitality that characterize social relations in Arab society as a means of curbing this propensity for competition and conflict.<sup>24</sup>

What accounts for this tendency? One explanation is that it is a consequence of endogamy (marriage within the lineage group), which may have started as a functional adaptation to desert life, but which remains a powerful factor in Arab society today. (In the desert, endogamy reinforced group cohesion, enabling the group to better counter external threats.)<sup>25</sup> Another explanation is that it is a characteristic feature of segmentary lineage groups, which tend to divide into fractious, competing lineages (families, households, and clans).<sup>26</sup>

In tribal society, family, clan, and tribal affilia-

tions define one’s identity and status. Consequently, all personal interactions potentially have a collective dimension. Marriage is not a personal choice, but a family affair, with implications for the status and standing of the entire family. Conflicts between individuals always have the potential to become conflicts between groups.

Relationships are central to tribal life. In an environment marked by competition and potential conflict, building and maintaining relationships is a way to reduce the circle of potential adversaries or enemies. This is why feuds, when not resolved by the payment of blood money, were traditionally resolved by the gifting of brides—to create ties that bind between formerly aggrieved parties.<sup>27</sup>

In Iraq, as elsewhere in the Arab world, tribes rarely provide the basis for sustained collective action. Tribal solidarity has been undermined by the dramatic socioeconomic changes of the past century. (The last tribal rebellion in Iraq was in 1936.) And even in the distant past, when inter-tribal wars occurred, it was unusual for all sections of a tribe to participate; subsections of warring tribes often remained on friendly terms or opted to sit the war out.<sup>28</sup>

The household (*bayt*) is the fundamental unit of social, economic, and political action in tribal society, while the tribal subsection (the *fakhdh* or its equivalent)—the lowest level of tribal organization at which individuals are still bound by blood and marriage—is normally the highest level at which sustained social action occurs, usually as a result of a blood feud.<sup>29</sup> On the rare occasion when tribe-wide cooperation does occur, it is generally in response to an extraordinary event, such as an outside threat or attack.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, normally contentious tribesmen will band together to fend off an external threat, then return to a state of competition and conflict once the threat subsides.<sup>31</sup> This may be the dynamic driving the “Anbar Awakening,” wherein disparate tribes have coalesced to confront the growing influence and strength of AQI.

Another pattern that has repeated itself throughout Arab and Muslim history is that of the marginal man or transplanted outsider who unites otherwise fractious tribesmen under the banner of religion.<sup>32</sup> Examples include the Prophet Muhammad in Arabia in the 7th century; the Sanusis in Libya and the Sudanese Mahdi in the 19th century; and the Hashemites in the Hejaz, Jordan, and Iraq and

the Saudis in Arabia in the 20th century.<sup>33</sup> Today, this pattern is repeating itself in parts of Iraq with the emergence of religiously based movements and parties led by formerly obscure charismatic clerics (Muqtada al-Sadr and the Mahdi Army), former exiles ('Abd al-'Aziz al-Hakim and the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council), or foreigners (the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and AQI). However, many of the rank and file of these groups are neither of tribal origin nor particularly religious, consisting, to some extent, of opportunistic and criminal elements.<sup>34</sup>

Tribal identity has a territorial dimension as well.<sup>35</sup> Tribes are often identified with specific localities or regions: pastoral nomads with particular grazing areas, settled tribesmen with lands located near a particular village or town or in a particular region.<sup>36</sup> Thus, a description of tribal affiliation generally conveys information about both an individual's family and his geographic origins.<sup>37</sup>

For settled tribesmen, the tribal domain usually consists of a compact territory owned exclusively by members of the tribe. It is divided into plots owned by the various sections of the tribe, and surrounded by a belt of land partly owned by neighboring tribes or townsmen.<sup>38</sup> It is not clear how the tribal relocation and resettlement policies selectively pursued by Saddam Hussein's regime affected traditional tribal residential patterns.<sup>39</sup>

Among settled tribesmen, there is strong pressure not to alienate ancestral lands by marrying outside the tribe (lest land pass to another tribe through inheritance) or by selling land to a "foreigner" (i.e., a non-tribesman).<sup>40</sup> Infringement of a tribe's territorial domain by outsiders is often a cause for conflict. This has led to inter-tribal strife in post-Saddam Iraq, when the coalition has paid some tribes to secure oil pipelines in territory traditionally claimed by other tribes.<sup>41</sup>

Some tribes take the form of geographically dispersed networks. Tribes belonging to a large confederation may be spread over a vast area, even across international boundaries. Tribal ties are sometimes reinforced by marriage alliances and personal or business relationships, and may be mobilized in the pursuit of shared interests. Saddam Hussein's regime was particularly adept at mobilizing tribal networks and forging tribal alliances, which accounted in part for its durability.<sup>42</sup>

## Sheikhs, Tribes, and Power

Historically, states and empires have dealt with sheikhs as local power brokers to help rule or administer their territories or overseas possessions, and they have often attempted to co-opt tribes as part of a strategy of "divide and rule." Coalition forces have likewise attempted to engage the sheikhs and their tribes as part of their effort to stabilize Iraq and defeat AQI. It is therefore important to understand the sources—and limits—of sheikhly authority and tribal influence.

**Sheikhly authority.** The sheikh traditionally performs a number of functions related to the inner life of the tribe and its relations with the non-tribal world and the authorities. The role of the sheikh has not changed all that much over the last century and a half, and sheikhs still fulfill a number of important functions. These may include—

- Ensuring security throughout the tribe's domain.
- Mediating and resolving internal disputes.
- Trying cases and imposing punishments in accordance with tribal law.
- Representing the tribe to the non-tribal world and the ruling authorities.
- Extending hospitality to guests of the tribe.
- Providing conscripts or tribal levies for the security forces.
- Preserving the autonomy of the tribe vis-à-vis other tribes and the authorities.
- Organizing and regulating smuggling, to the extent that the tribe engages in such activities.<sup>43</sup>

An individual may become a tribal sheikh in several ways. Sheikhly status may be bestowed on the basis of an individual's character traits (e.g., generosity, wisdom, courage); inherited within "sheikhly families" (usually by the most capable son); wrested from others by force of personality, subterfuge, or even force of arms; and conferred by the state or the ruling authorities. Today, most sheikhs in Iraq belong to sheikhly families and have inherited their position.<sup>44</sup>

Among Bedouins, sheikhs traditionally led by consensus, functioning as a first among equals; their exercise of authority was generally based on their reading of popular sentiment in their tribe.<sup>45</sup> This is probably because Bedouin tribesmen could simply pick up and leave (taking all their worldly possessions with them) and join another section or tribe if they were unhappy with their sheikh.<sup>46</sup>



Among settled tribesmen, matters are more complicated. Various Iraqi governments (including Saddam Hussein's) cultivated the sheikhs as allies, contributing to their emergence as a privileged stratum of landowners and businessmen, whose fortunes have waxed and waned, depending on government policies and general economic conditions. This development, however, often transformed the relationship between sheikh and tribesman from one of formal equality to one marked by tension and resentment over the sheikh's status as a landowner, employer, or agent of the state. Nevertheless, elements of the traditional leadership model still apply: sheikhs cannot impose their will on their tribe and generally are constrained to act within the bounds of popular opinion. Conversely, their standing in the eyes of their tribesmen depends on their ability to secure the tribe's interests.

**Tribal influence.** In the distant past, tribal influence was reckoned in terms of the number of tribesmen under arms. Size mattered. Small ("weak") tribes were considered less powerful than large ("strong") tribes. Reputation also mattered. Some tribes were considered more warlike than others. Moreover, the influence of the tribes generally varied inversely with that of the state: the tribes were strong when the state was weak, and vice versa.

Today, as mentioned above, the tribal subsection is generally the highest level at which sustained social action occurs; tribes are no longer effective units of action. And the influence of a tribe is generally measured in terms of its sheikh's prestige among his own and other tribesmen, his ability to secure the interests of his tribe, and the willingness of a clan or tribe to exact retribution for slights to its honor or for harm visited upon its members.<sup>47</sup>

**The tribal system today.** The authority of Iraq's sheikhs and the influence of Iraq's tribes have varied greatly from place to place and over time, during the past century and a half.<sup>48</sup> Despite occasionally supportive government policies (e.g., during the Mandate, under the Monarchy, and during Saddam Hussein's rule), the impact of certain long-term socioeconomic trends such as urbanization, the decline of agriculture, the rise of the modern economy, and the emergence of alternative non-tribal forms of identity, have undermined sheikhly authority and tribal cohesion and influence. This is part of a broader trend also evident in other tribal societies

(e.g., Somalia, Afghanistan) where socioeconomic change, war, and resurgent Islamist movements have undermined tribal influence.<sup>49</sup>

The tribes experienced something of a comeback under Saddam Hussein. To strengthen central-government control, Hussein bought the loyalty and bolstered the authority of the sheikhs with cars, land, money, and arms, and he replaced sheikhs whose loyalties were suspect with more compliant ones.<sup>50</sup> (Because of this latter policy, identifying "authentic" sheikhs who enjoy legitimacy in the eyes of their tribesmen has been a challenge for coalition forces in post-Saddam Iraq.)<sup>51</sup>

Today, like most Iraqis, the sheikhs are consumed by the daily struggle to survive and to preserve what remains of their status and privileges. In some rural areas, they remain the dominant force. In this regard, former Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) official Rory Stewart's assessment of the sheikhs of Maysan province in southeastern Iraq, where he served from 2003-2004, is worth quoting at length.

Most urban Iraqis perceived the sheikhs as illiterate, embarrassing, criminal, powerless anachronisms who should be given no official recognition. The sheikhs could no longer, despite their claims, raise ten thousand armed men—perhaps they never could. I never observed them raise more than a couple hundred. Their daily visits to our office to request building contracts, clinics, and the chance to form militias proved how short they were of money and patronage power . . . . They were [however] still the most powerful men in the rural areas, where about half the population remained; they owned much of the land, and agriculture was the only half-functioning element of the shattered economy. Almost every crime in the villages was tried and settled by the sheikhs . . . .<sup>52</sup>

In other areas, the sheikhs find themselves jostling for power with the various Islamist militias and parties that are playing a growing role in the life of the country, and many are hard pressed to compete in an arena in which local political power increasingly comes from the barrel of a gun. Anthony Shadid of *The Washington Post* described this dynamic in a 2006 article about a visit with Sheikh Adnan Aidani in the village of Yusufan, near Basra. According to Shadid—

There is a saying in southern Iraq today, "No one pays respect to the saint who won't mete out punishment." Violence is the cadence of the



country. To navigate the chaos, Aidani tries to draw on century-old traditions honed by Bedouins in the desert, rules built on honor, respect, and reciprocity. He relies on the intimacy of a village where every neighbor knows the other. But in the end, the threat of punishment secures respect for Aidani. That same threat gives power to militias, gangs, and criminals who now hold sway even in the streets of a village like Yusufan.

The sheikh has his authority, backed by what he says are the hundreds of armed men he can cull from the tribe's 12,000 members. But in a sign of his curtailed reach, he twice failed to get elected to parliament, and villagers sometimes treat him as just another player... When trouble arises, villagers say, they try to settle it themselves, then go to the sheik, representatives of the Islamic parties or the town's part-time cleric... Usually, they keep to themselves. With violence endemic, it is often heard that if it's not your neighbor, friend or family killed, you keep quiet.<sup>53</sup>

Still, other sheikhs have adjusted well to the new rules of the game, participating in Iraq's conflict economy and transforming themselves, for all practical purposes, into local warlords. Perhaps the best example of this new type of leader is Sheikh 'Abd al-Sattar Biza'i al-Rishawi of the Albu Risha tribe, leader of the Anbar Awakening. According to published reports, after the fall of Saddam Hussein, Sheikh 'Abd al-Sattar led a band of highwaymen who operated near Ramadi and worked as a facilitator for AQI on the side, providing its operatives with cars, safe houses, and local guides. But when the AQI operatives he was helping started working as highwaymen too—encroaching on his 'turf,' cutting into his profits, and then killing his father and several brothers—the relationship soured, prompting the sheikh to turn on AQI and to ally himself with coalition forces.<sup>54</sup>

Based on these few examples, the most that can be said with confidence is that sheikhly authority and tribal influence in Iraq today vary in accordance with local circumstances and conditions, and that sheikh and tribesman are increasingly subject to conflicting pressures. There are strong incentives for people to seek refuge in tribal identities as protection against pervasive violence and economic insecurity, and for sheikhs and tribesmen to hang together for purposes of survival.

At the same time, the sons of Iraq's tribes are well-represented in the many insurgent groups and



U.S. Army, SGT Curt Cashour

**Sheikh 'Abd al-Sattar Biza'i al-Rishawi during a meeting with Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and LTG Ray Odierno, commander of Multi-National Corps-Iraq, at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, 2 April 2007. Sittar helped spark the Anbar Awakening, a widespread rejection of Al-Qaeda by leaders of the province.**

sectarian militias that are driving the violence that is tearing Iraqi society apart; consequently, sheikhs who are not involved with insurgent groups or militias must tread lightly vis-à-vis their tribesmen who are, lest they run afoul of the masked armed men who wield ultimate authority in Iraq today.

## The Unfulfilled Promise of Tribal Alliances in Iraq

Some analysts and practitioners have argued that tribal alliances are key to defeating the Sunni Arab insurgency in Iraq.<sup>55</sup> While efforts to engage and leverage Iraq's tribes have yielded some successes, particularly in Anbar province, the overall effort has fallen short of expectations. It is not clear whether this is due to flaws in the coalition's tribal engagement policy, the security environment—which often makes engagement difficult and dangerous—or unrealistic assumptions about the influence of the sheikhs and the tribes.

Clearly, at various times the coalition has harbored unrealistic expectations regarding the influence of the sheikhs and the tribes. Early coalition engagement activities reflected this misconception—for instance, in the run-up to the battle for Fallujah, when coalition military officers met with sheikhs in the expectation that they would be able to tamp down insurgent violence racking the town. In *No True Glory: A Frontline Account of the Battle for Fallujah*, Bing West describes a number of such episodes:

General Abizaid...met with the sheikhs, demanding that they show leadership and stop the violence. There were as many attacks on the outskirts of Fallujah, where the sheikhs had power, as inside the city, where the clerics dominated.... In a separate meeting with the sheikhs, Major General Charles H. Swannack, commander of the 82nd [Airborne Division], was equally forceful. “I am not going to tolerate these attacks anymore,” he said. “I know the sheikhs have the ability to control their tribes.” The sheikhs protested that the 82nd didn’t appreciate the limits of their power. Threatening them would do no good. Improvement projects made no difference to the men with the guns. In the eyes of the sheikhs, power had shifted from them to the young clerics in Fallujah preaching that America was waging a war against Islam and was bringing in Jews to rule Iraq.<sup>56</sup>

This tension between tribal elements and Islamists was also evident in largely Shi’ite areas, where newly empowered Sadrist challenged the established power of the tribes. According to Mark Etherington, a former CPA official who served in Wasit Province in south-central Iraq in 2003-2004:

As the threat from Moqtada al-Sadr’s followers increased and the death threats were made against CPA employees, the tribes increasingly instructed “their” interpreters to leave our employ, which many of them did immediately. This might seem a curious moral retreat, given the tribes’ much-vaunted resistance to external interference in their affairs; actually it merely shows the power that Sadr’s followers were able to wield over ordinary Iraqis in combining Islam with nationalism. If one concluded from this phenomenon that the tribes were actually weaker than they appeared, a recent CPA poll appeared to buttress the idea; of 1,531 people in five Iraqi cities only 1 per cent of respondents said that they would vote for a tribal

party; 4.8 per cent that they would vote for a party of the same tribe but 95.2 per cent that they would not; and 98.6 per cent that they would not comply if ordered to vote in a particular manner by a tribal chief. Conversely, one might as well say that the cities were not the best of places to canvass tribal loyalty given their overwhelmingly rural roots.<sup>57</sup>

Nevertheless, the coalition’s engagement efforts have yielded a number of modest but important benefits. Because the sheikhs are generally well connected and plugged into various tribal and non-tribal networks (essential if they are to look after the interests of their tribe), they have generally proven useful as sources of information and advice and as vectors of influence among their tribesmen. Sheikhs have assisted, too, in the pursuit and apprehension of insurgents and former regime officials, the screening of detainees for insurgent ties, and the recovery of kidnapping victims (such as journalist Jill Carroll).<sup>58</sup> Moreover, efforts to work with tribal sheikhs to reduce insurgent activity in their tribal areas of influence, in return for various *quid pro quos* (e.g., construction contracts, reconstruction projects, the freeing of detainees), have often yielded impressive results—most notably a significant reduction in the lethality and number of attacks on coalition forces (frequently by 50 percent or more).

On the down side, tribal engagement has not brought about a total halt in attacks in tribal areas of influence.<sup>59</sup> It is not clear whether this is due to the sheikhs’ inability to influence younger fighters—who are heavily represented in the ranks of the insurgents, or certain sections or subsections of their tribe.<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, efforts to employ tribes to protect strategic infrastructure such as oil pipelines and electrical power lines have failed. (See inset, “Freakonomics on the Tigris.”) And until recently, sheikhs have rarely delivered on promises to provide tribal levies for anti-AQI militias such as the “Desert Protectors” in Husaybah and the Albu Nimr police force in al-Furat or to provide large numbers of conscripts for the Iraqi Security Forces.<sup>61</sup> This is particularly telling, given the high rates of unemployment in Iraq today.

The success of the tribally based Anbar Awakening, which has reportedly recruited some 12,000 volunteers for local police forces this year, represents a sea change in coalition engagement efforts.<sup>62</sup> It has revived hopes that tribal engagement can turn the tide against the Sunni Arab insurgency and

## FREAKONOMICS ON THE TIGRIS: The Hidden (Tribal) Dimension of Infrastructure Protection

In their best-selling book *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Investigates the Hidden Side of Everything*, Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner argue that understanding the role of incentives “is the key to solving just about any riddle” pertaining to human behavior and to understanding that very often “things aren’t quite what they seem.”<sup>63</sup> Might Freakonomics help answer why the coalition has been unsuccessful at using Iraqi tribes to secure oil pipelines and electrical power lines running through their tribal domains?

Some background: due to the CPA’s decision to dissolve the Iraqi Army and the subsequent lack of trained Iraqi security personnel, the coalition has on a number of occasions paid tribes to secure strategic infrastructure in parts of Iraq, particularly oil pipelines and electrical power lines. However, attacks on the pipelines and power lines have continued, to the point that the vital Baiji-Kirkuk oil pipeline and sections of the national electrical grid have been shut down for extended periods. What is going on?

U.S. Government assessments have tended to focus on flaws in the incentive structure—an answer that could have been lifted straight from the pages of *Freakonomics*. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), “the Ministry of Electricity contracts with tribal chiefs, paying them about \$60-\$100 per kilometer to protect transmission lines running through their areas. However, IRMO [Iraq Reconstruction Management Office] officials reported that the protection system is flawed and encourages corruption. According to U.S. and UN Development Program officials, some tribes that are paid to protect transmission lines are also selling materials from downed lines and extracting tariffs for access to repair the lines. IRMO officials stated that they want the Ministry of Electricity to change the system so that tribes are only paid when the lines remain operational for a reasonable period of time.”<sup>64</sup>

The congressionally mandated Iraq Study Group (ISG) report echoed these findings, recommending that coalition forces improve pipeline security “by paying local tribes solely on the basis of throughput (rather than fixed amounts).”<sup>65</sup>

One problem with the GAO and ISG model for incentivizing the tribes is that it fails to explain how to prevent the tribes from maximizing their profits by taking money from both the insurgents and the coalition (tolerating a certain level of violence against the pipelines or power lines, though not enough to greatly reduce throughput). Clearly, a more complex model is called for here, one that recognizes that the tribes stand to make money by playing both sides of the game, and that they might not be the only relevant actors.

Moreover, the GAO/ISG solution fails to account for intra- and inter-tribal dynamics and politics and relations between tribal and non-tribal groups. There is good reason to believe that some, if not many, of the attacks on oil pipelines and electrical power lines have been undertaken by the same groups being paid to protect them. Why would they do this? Perhaps to—

- Justify their jobs.
- Extort more money from the coalition.
- Maximize profits and hedge their bets by working with both the insurgents and the coalition.
- Protest possible inequities in the distribution of funds within the tribe by their sheikh.

It is also possible that tribes not on the payroll are involved in some attacks, either to drum up business for themselves by creating a security problem that they then offer to solve, or to protest infringement of their traditional tribal domains by tribes on the coalition payroll.

In fact, it is likely that all of these factors have been in play at one time or another, and that a variety of actors—smugglers, insurgents, criminal gangs, and corrupt security officials—have also been involved. Interestingly, those Iraqis and coalition personnel who deal with this issue on a daily basis understand the complexity of the problem, even if some in Washington do not.<sup>66</sup> The solution to the challenge of employing tribes for infrastructure protection is not simply a matter of proper incentives; it is also a matter of understanding tribal dynamics and politics in the areas of concern. Indeed, things are *not* always what they seem.

perhaps undermine popular support for the Mahdi Army.<sup>67</sup> As part of this effort, the coalition has brokered a number of informal cease-fire agreements with local Sunni insurgent groups, freed detainees after extracting good-conduct pledges from tribal sheikhs, and hired tribal militias and their sheikhs as “security contractors.”<sup>68</sup>

Several factors likely account for the Anbar Awakening, including popular revulsion against the ideology and methods of AQI, the threat that AQI poses to the autonomy of the tribes and their way of life, and the damage that AQI has done to the local economy. As General David Petraeus recently noted—perhaps half facetiously—the sheikhs in Anbar province “all have a truck company, they all have a construction company and they all have an import-export business,” and the havoc that AQI has wreaked was bad for business.<sup>69</sup>

It remains to be seen, however, whether the Anbar Awakening can hold together, whether it will continue to work with coalition forces or eventually turn on them, whether successes in Anbar can be replicated elsewhere, or whether coalition efforts to work with the tribes and arm tribal militias are in fact paving the way for an even more violent civil war.<sup>70</sup>

## Lessons Learned

A recent study of 1st Cavalry Division operations in Baghdad during its OIF II rotation (April 2004–February 2005) concluded that—

- Nonlethal means were the most effective method to defeat the enemy.
- Spending time with local leaders and conducting information operations and civil-military operations were the most effective ways to influence the battle.
- Successful commanders used military operations to shape the environment, but engaged the civilian population to achieve success.<sup>71</sup>

Despite such acknowledgements of the importance of engagement and the fact that engagement activities in Iraq frequently consume between 20 to 50 percent of a commander’s time, it is remarkable how little attention has been devoted to this subject in the military professional literature.<sup>72</sup> Hopefully, this article will spur greater interest in what is probably the most important coalition line of operation in Iraq today.

The following engagement lessons learned—with particular emphasis on the special challenges of tribal engagement—are drawn from a review of

the military professional literature, journalistic dispatches, individual and group interviews with civilian and military personnel who have served in Iraq, and the author’s own experiences.<sup>73</sup>

**Cultural sensitivity, “hearts and minds,” and shared interests.** Because of the complexity of the operational environment in Iraq, particularly in tribal areas, missteps are inevitable—even by experienced individuals.<sup>74</sup> The local population will usually forgive such missteps if they have a vital interest in cooperating with the coalition and believe coalition personnel have fundamentally good intentions. Moreover, while winning “hearts and minds” may not be achievable in much of Iraq, neither is it necessary for success. What is important is for coalition forces to convince Iraqis that they have a shared interest in working together to achieve common goals.<sup>75</sup>

**Building relationships.** In Iraq, as elsewhere in the Arab world, persons are more trusted than institutions.<sup>76</sup> Personal relationships are the basis of effective professional partnerships, and a *sine qua non* for effective counterinsurgency operations.<sup>77</sup> These relationships, however, can only be established and maintained by engaging the civilian population.

Relationships take time to build and need constant tending.<sup>78</sup> “Face time” with locals is critical, even if nothing tangible comes of some meetings, since time together is an investment in a relationship whose benefits may not be immediately evident. In addition, such meetings might discourage fence sitters from going over to the insurgents.

A little knowledge of Arabic and Islam pays huge dividends, for it demonstrates the kind of respect for the local population and their traditions that helps establish rapport and build relationships. And contrary to the conventional wisdom, discussions about politics and religion need not be off-limits, although judgment and discretion are advised when dealing with such matters.<sup>79</sup>

Credibility is priceless; once destroyed, it is very hard to reestablish. Accordingly, it is vital to make good on promises and to avoid making commitments that cannot be kept. Broken promises undermine efforts to establish rapport and build the relationships that are essential to success.<sup>80</sup>

For these reasons, coalition forces should, to the extent possible, avoid practices that disrupt relationships with the local population, such as mid-tour realignments of unit boundaries or areas of operation



## MILITARY IMPLICATIONS of Tribal Land Tenure Practices

While a detailed discussion of how land is owned and inherited among tribal groups in rural Iraq is beyond the scope of this article, it is important to recognize the military value of such cultural knowledge. This point was driven home in a recent email from 1st Lieutenant Brendan Hagan of the 82d Airborne Division to an Army buddy, in which he described how, after stumbling across a weapons cache, his unit used knowledge of tribal land ownership patterns to discover additional weapons caches:

One way we've used simple info to get great results was with a [weapons] cache we found in an unused orchard. We stumbled onto the largest cache ever found in our division's history, by accident. But we used simple reasoning to lead us to another of equal size. When we found the first one we grabbed the local sub-sheik and showed him what was within his area of influence, then used him to tell us who owned every piece of land from the river to a major road in the region. It turned out that the land the cache was on and numerous other tracks [sic] of land were owned by a father and series of brothers. We used this info to search other orchards owned by the brothers and found a second large cache. Seems simple, but most people would not have asked who owned all the adjacent land and put the family connections together. This allowed us to refine our searches to specific fields and orchards.<sup>81</sup>

The details of this account are consistent with what is known about land ownership in lineage-based (clan- or tribe-based) communities in Iraq and the Levant. Among the practical consequences of Islamic inheritance rules is that individuals frequently own multiple parcels of land scattered

throughout the tribal domain. Moreover, land is often owned jointly by siblings (usually brothers), paternal cousins, or entire tribal subsections, to prevent the division of heritable land holdings into ever smaller, economically non-viable parcels among an ever-growing number of heirs.<sup>82</sup>

Another feature of the Iraqi rural landscape that may be militarily significant concerns the relationship between patterns of field cultivation and social relations among cultivators. Agricultural land in many parts of Iraq is divided into strip parcels (parallel strips of land worked by different cultivators). This is a widespread practice in the developing world.<sup>83</sup> A "virtual tour" of Iraq using Google Earth reveals that strip parcels are found in many villages around the country.<sup>84</sup>

Research of field patterns in iron-age Northern Europe and in contemporary East Africa has shown that strip parcels are generally associated with lineage-based communities. In such communities, the allocation of the strips often mirrors the family tree of the land-owning group and reflects the genealogical ranking of its members: older sons own strips of land (or sections of the family's strip of land) that are closer to the family dwelling than those owned by younger sons, while owners of strips on the right, when viewed from the dwelling, are senior to owners of strips on the left. Adjacent strips of land are generally owned by brothers, and adjacent plots of land are often owned by cousins (unless sold to an outsider).<sup>85</sup> Further investigation is required to determine whether such practices are followed in Iraq. If so, it may prove to be yet another bit of cultural knowledge that can help coalition forces locate insurgent weapons caches, and aid coalition military operations in Iraq.



A recent aerial view of strip fields in a village near Yusufiya, central Iraq.

and gaps during unit rotations that preclude incumbent coalition personnel from introducing their successors to their Iraqi partners.

**Engagement as a military activity.** Engagement planning at the lower tactical echelons—which are the echelons that interact most intensively with the civilian population—is often *ad hoc*, highly informal, and done “on the fly” by the commander with little if any formal staff input. Engagement, however, is too important to be done in such a manner, and should be approached like any other essential military activity.

There should be a formal engagement planning process, with input from all relevant staff elements, to identify engagement targets, assess their motivations and interests, determine engagement goals, schedule meetings, and set agendas. Commanders and staff should hold after-action reviews to evaluate the outcomes of meetings and plan for and prepare follow-on activities.

Engagement planning would probably benefit from the creation of small, dedicated engagement cells at the battalion and brigade combat team levels, to organize and oversee the aforementioned activities. The Army’s new human terrain teams and the Department of State’s new embedded provincial reconstruction teams will likely bring additional assets to bear on the problem as well.<sup>86</sup>

**Cultivating “native informants.”** Very few non-natives have the knowledge and expertise needed to navigate Iraqi tribal politics. While book knowledge is extremely valuable, it only goes so far. Thus, it is essential to cultivate a cadre of “native informants” who are intimately familiar with local history, personalities, and tribal politics. Translators generally serve in this role, although it is important to know how the local population perceives these individuals. A translator whom the locals look upon with suspicion because of his family or tribal background can be more of a hindrance than a help.

**A top-down, interagency-led process.** Because tribes often span unit boundaries and international borders, and because tribal leaders may interact with tactical as well as operational-level commanders, coalition military and civilian organizations could inadvertently find themselves working at cross-purposes.<sup>87</sup> Accordingly, tribal engagement should be a top-down, interagency-led process. Such an approach would help to—

- Develop a single, synchronized tribal engagement strategy that spans unit boundaries, military echelons, and international borders.

- Deconflict, and ensure synergies among, multiple engagement efforts.

- Develop a unified IO message for engagement inside and outside of Iraq.

- Coordinate kinetic targeting of high-value individuals and planned or ongoing tribal engagement efforts to ensure that former efforts do not hinder or harm the latter.

A top-down approach would also ensure that tribal engagement receives the attention and emphasis it merits, and that tactical units receive the support required to succeed in this important mission.

**Understanding limitations in sheikhly authority and tribal influence.** Power relationships are in flux in post-Saddam Iraq, and sheikhly authority and tribal influence may vary from place to place, depending on local conditions. Coalition forces have sometimes had unrealistic expectations concerning the authority of the sheikhs and the influence of the tribes. Nonetheless, tribal engagement has yielded important successes in places such as Anbar province, and it remains a key part of coalition strategy in Iraq.

Because of their connections, sheikhs are useful sources of information, insight, and advice. They can also influence their tribesmen, although their ability to do so often depends on their ability to dispense patronage (i.e., money, jobs, and contracts), and to otherwise secure the interests of their tribe. They generally have the greatest influence among members of their own subsection or section and their own generational cohort; thus, while they may be able to influence many of their tribesmen, they usually cannot influence them all, nor do they “control” their tribe. Additionally, just as a sheikh who agrees to work with the coalition may not be able to bring around all his tribesmen, the presence of insurgents among his tribe does not necessarily mean that he surreptitiously supports the insurgent cause—although he may hedge his bets by turning a blind eye toward insurgent activities he is aware of.

Given these limitations, while it is not unreasonable to demand 100-percent effort from the sheikhs in return for patronage and assistance, it is unrealistic to expect 100-percent results. Most sheikhs are just as vulnerable to intimidation and terror as any other Iraqi; scores, if not hundreds of sheikhs have been killed by insurgents and terrorists.

**Tailored engagement strategies.** Tribal engagement strategies should account for local variations in sheikhly authority and tribal influence. And because there are thousands of clans, hundreds of tribes, and about two dozen tribal confederations in Iraq, each with its own sheikh, tribal engagement is a potentially time-consuming activity. Mass meetings and “sheikh-fests” may help, but these are not always appropriate—the more prominent sheikhs at these meetings will often overshadow lower- and mid-level sheikhs, who may feel slighted. On the other hand, it might not be realistic to engage all the sheikhs in a particular area of operations; here, the commander’s engagement plan will determine who gets special attention.<sup>88</sup>

Because all tribal power is local, there is no substitute for engaging lower- and mid-level sheikhs who head tribal subsections and sections. However, engaging more prominent tribal or paramount sheikhs (of tribal confederations) may sometimes aid this effort, and may be useful for both symbolic and substantive reasons. Each tribe will require a different approach based on a detailed understanding of local conditions and the tribe’s history and politics. And that kind of knowledge can only be obtained by spending time on the ground with Iraqis.

**Avoiding the pitfalls of tribal politics.** Working with tribes poses special challenges. Tribesmen are intensely status conscious and competitive, and rivalry and intrigue often characterize tribal politics. Thus, tribal engagement often requires a careful balancing act among sheikhs, tribes, and non-tribal groups to avoid creating or aggravating rivalries or conflicts.

There are a number of specific pitfalls associated with tribal politics:

- *Errors of ignorance.* It is easy to err due to a lack of knowledge of local and tribal history and politics. Coalition forces initially dealt with a number of sheikhs who had been appointed to their positions by the former regime and therefore lacked legitimacy in the eyes of their tribesmen. Likewise, the coalition initially appointed an unpopular sheikh as governor of Basra, a large city with a largely non-tribal population. These actions created resentment and undermined coalition credibility.<sup>89</sup> It is therefore essential to become intimately familiar with the history and politics of the tribes in one’s area of operations and their relationships with other tribes, non-tribal elements, and the authorities, in order to avoid such missteps.

- *Rivalries and feuds.* Establishing a close relationship with a particular sheikh or tribe may often be necessary, but it may entail the risk of entanglement in their rivalries and feuds.<sup>90</sup> While it is usually best to stay above such frays, such situations can offer coalition personnel the opportunity to mediate local conflicts, thereby enhancing local security and the coalition’s standing in the eyes of the local population.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, in some circumstances it may be possible to use a relationship with one sheikh or tribe to entice a rival sheikh or tribe to work more closely with coalition forces or the local government.

- *Corruption and nepotism.* Funneling money to tribes through their sheikhs is one way to leverage tribal networks, but it can sometimes cause as many problems as it solves. Sheikhs may not disseminate funds among their tribesmen in an equitable manner, thus engendering resentment against the sheikh and the coalition. Intervening to ensure a more equitable distribution of funds—if the issue has become a problem—is risky, and requires an intimate knowledge of the politics of the tribe and a deft diplomatic touch. But if done right, intervention can help coalition commanders deepen their base of support among the tribesmen.<sup>92</sup>

- *Tribal vendettas.* Humiliating, injuring, or killing a tribesman can embroil the coalition in a vendetta with his family or relatives, thereby widening the circle of violence. There are many anecdotal reports about former fence sitters in Iraq opting to join the insurgency because of incidents involving coalition forces and family members or relatives. This only underscores the especially high cost of not strictly adhering to the rules of engagement in tribal areas or in societies founded on tribal values.

**Tribal engagement and long-term U.S. interests.** For a time after the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003, there was an ongoing debate among coalition officials about the desirability of working with the tribes. Some argued that wherever possible, the tribes should be leveraged to defeat the insurgency and create stability. Others argued that the tribes are an anachronism and an obstacle to the long-term goal of building democracy in Iraq.<sup>93</sup>

With the coalition now engaging the tribes as a matter of necessity, the debate has been overtaken by events. The concerns that drove the original debate, however, remain salient. The coalition cannot afford to forego the potential benefits of tribal engagement:

a modicum of stability and the weakening of AQI in large parts of Iraq. But neither can it afford to ignore the possible long-term costs of this policy: the strengthening of the tribes and tribal militias (many of which include former insurgents) at the expense of the eventual development of broad-based civil society and governmental institutions.

The challenge is to strike a balance between these two competing objectives. Tribal engagement should be part of a broader effort to engage multiple sectors of Iraqi society in order to support and strengthen not just the tribes, but civil society and governmental institutions that bring Iraqis of varied backgrounds together to work toward common goals.

## Conclusions

Engagement is probably the most important coalition line of operation in Iraq today. If coalition forces eventually achieve some degree of success in stabilizing Iraq, it will be in large part because they succeeded in engaging the civilian population and leveraging Iraq's tribes and tribal networks.

Tribal engagement, however, poses unique challenges deriving from the special demands of interacting with tribal communities whose norms, values, and forms of social organization diverge, in many ways, from those of non-tribal society. To succeed in this environment, it helps to have more than just a passing familiarity with the historical and social sciences literature on tribes and tribalism in Iraq and the Arab world. But ultimately there is no substitute for time on the ground with Iraqis, learning through dialog and observation about the history, inner life, and politics of the tribes of Iraq, and establishing through trial and error what engagement techniques do and do not work.

Finally, while tribal engagement lessons learned in Iraq may apply elsewhere, this should not be assumed to be the case. Every tribal society is unique in its history, its internal dynamics and politics, and its relations with the outside world. Further research is required in Iraq and elsewhere in order to better understand the nature of this human diversity and its implications for future tribal engagement efforts. **MR**

## CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE: "A Greater Security Than Firearms"

Czech explorer and Orientalist Alois Musil (1868-1944) is famous for his books about his travels in the Arabian Peninsula during the first decades of the 20th century. Musil faced many dangers on his journeys, not least from Bedouin raiders bent on booty and plunder who would not have thought twice about taking the life of a foreigner in the vast, empty expanses of the desert.

To defend against this threat, Musil made sure to ingratiate himself with the sheikhs of key tribes along his route of travel, and to procure from them the services of a local guide and a written pledge of safe passage through their tribal domains, which he could invoke when threatened.<sup>94</sup>

The guides were often able to distinguish "friendly" from hostile raiding parties at a distance through their knowledge of local personalities and customs, enabling Musil to quickly determine what kind of approach was appropriate for dealing with the raiders.<sup>95</sup>

When attacked by a raiding party from a "friendly" tribe (that of a sheikh who had promised him safe passage or of an allied tribe), Musil would invoke the local sheikh's name and remind the raiders that

violation of a sheikh's pledge of safe passage would dishonor the sheikh and could lead to the violator's expulsion from the tribe.<sup>96</sup> If this did not work or if the raiding party was from a hostile tribe, Musil would warn them that his sponsor would be honor-bound to seek revenge if any members of his party were harmed, or stolen property was not returned.<sup>97</sup>

Nonetheless, travel in the desert remained dangerous, even for as savvy a traveler as Musil, for as he was once warned by a friendly sheikh, there were always brigands and outlaw tribes that would not honor a pledge of safe passage.<sup>98</sup>

Musil's experience demonstrates the importance of knowing the cultural "rules of the road," of seeking out knowledgeable and dependable locals as guides, and of surviving by one's wits rather than by force of arms.

Musil's ability to talk his way out of many difficult situations led the anthropologist Louise Sweet to observe that, when confronted with a Bedouin raiding party, Musil's "shrewd use of the rules of intertribal relations was a greater security than firearms."<sup>99</sup> Or to put it in the modern Soldier's vernacular: cultural knowledge is the ultimate in force protection.



## NOTES

1. LTC Kurt Wheeler, "Good News in Al Anbar?" *Marine Corps Gazette*, April 2007, 36-40; Sean D. Naylor, "Jumping the Fence: Tribal 'Awakening' Brings Troops—and Hurdles," *Army Times*, 4 June 2007, 8-11.
2. Dale F. Eickelman, *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989), 126-150; Charles F. Swagman, "Tribe and Politics: An Example from Highland Yemen," *Journal of Anthropological Research*, Vol. 44, No. 3, Autumn 1988, 251-261. In the Middle East, Arab, Kurdish, and Turkmen tribes are organized along claimed patrilineal (male) lines of descent; tribes elsewhere may be organized along claimed patrilineal, matrilineal (female), or cognatic (male and female) lines of descent. Marshall D. Sahlins, *Tribesmen* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968), 49.
3. In late 18th- and early 19th-century Iraq, townsmen often joined the nearest tribe for purposes of protection. Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 73. Likewise, a study of the Beni Isad tribe in the early 1950s found that many lineages and clans were of "foreign" origin (i.e., they were not original members of the tribe). The usual reasons given for leaving one tribe for another were disputes over land or compensation or a desire for better protection. Shakir Moustafa Salim, *Marsh Dwellers of the Euphrates Delta* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1962), 45.
4. Batatu, 41; Lois Beck, *The Qashqa'i of Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 11, 23, 204.
5. Sahlins, 20-27, 48-55.
6. Samira Haj, "The Problems of Tribalism: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Iraqi History," *Social History* 16, no. 1 (January 1991): 49-52.
7. Charles Lindholm, "Kinship Structure and Political Authority: The Middle East and Central Asia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28, no. 2 (April 1986): 334-355.
8. Salim, 44; Robert A. Fernea, *Shaykh and Effendi: Changing Patterns of Authority Among the El Shabana of Southern Iraq* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 103-105.
9. Fernea, 101-104, 105-110; Salim, 14-15, 27-29.
10. The traditional tribal status hierarchy among the Bedouin is, in descending order of rank: camel herders, sheep herders, farmers, marsh dwellers, tinkers/smiths, and gypsy tribes. Batatu, 68-70; John Glubb, *Arabian Adventures: Ten Years of Joyful Service* (London: Cassell, 1978), 37, 51.
11. For the distinctions between tribal values, processes, and organization, see Richard T. Antoun, "Civil Society, Tribal Process, And Change in Jordan: An Anthropological View," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, No. 32 (2000), 441-463.
12. As a former cavalry squadron commander who served in Iraq observed, "First and foremost, tribes will protect their own. Individuals willing to provide information about insurgents or criminals would do so about members of other tribes, but never about members of their own." Lieutenant Colonel Ross A. Brown, "Commander's Assessment: South Baghdad," *Military Review* (January-February 2007): 29.
13. William Lancaster, *The Rwala Bedouin Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 128-131.
14. Fernea, *Sheikh and Effendi*, 77; Amatzia Baram, "Victory in Iraq, One Tribe at a Time," *New York Times*, 28 October 2003, A25.
15. For more on the institution of the blood feud and mechanisms for regulating and resolving such conflicts, see Joseph Ginat, *Blood Disputes Among Bedouin and Rural Arabs in Israel: Revenge, Mediation, Outcasting and Family Honor* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987). For more on tribal warfare, see Montgomery McFate, "The 'Memory of War': Tribes and the Legitimate Use of Force in Iraq," in Jeffrey H. Norwitz (ed.), *Armed Groups: Studies in National Security, Counterterrorism, and Counterinsurgency*, forthcoming.
16. Former deputy director of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Office of Provincial Outreach LTC Alan King claims that "the Iraqi people spoke often of tribal law, but I only witnessed its application in the most remote and rural areas of the country." By contrast, former British CPA official Rory Stewart noted, "Almost every crime in the villages [in southern Iraq] was tried and settled by the sheikhs." R. Alan King, *Twice Armed: An American Soldier's Battle for Hearts and Minds in Iraq* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2006), 178; Rory Stewart, *The Prince of the Marshes* (Orlando: Harcourt Books, 2006), 219-220.
17. King, 17.
18. This is true for both Arab and Kurdish tribes in Iraq. Fernea, 14; Salim, 44; Hosham Dawood, "The 'State-ization' of the Tribe and the Tribalization of the State: the Case of Iraq," in Faleh A. Jabar and Hosham Dawood, *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East* (London: Saqi, 2003), 115-116, 133-134; and Martin van Bruinessen, Agha, *Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London: Zed Books, 1992), 59-64.
19. See, for instance: 'Abbas al-'Azzawi, *'Asha'ir al-'Iraq* (The Tribes of Iraq) (Baghdad, 1937), three volumes; 'Abd al-Jalil al-Tahir, *al-Asha'ir al-'Iraqiyya* (The Tribes of Iraq) (Baghdad, 1972); 'Ali al-Wardi, *Lamahat Ijtima'iyya min Tarikh al-'Iraq al-Hadith* (Social Aspects of the Modern History of Iraq), (Baghdad, 1972), six volumes; Tamir 'Abd al-Hassan al-'Amiri, *Mawsu'at al-'Asha'ir al-'Iraqiyya* (The Encyclopedia of Iraqi Tribes) (Baghdad, 1992-1995), nine volumes; and 'Abd 'Awn al-Rawdan, *Mawsu'at 'Asha'ir al-'Iraq: Tarikh, Ansab, Rijalat, Ma'athir* (Encyclopedia of the Tribes of Iraq: History, Lineage, Personalities, and Exploits) (Amman: Al-Aniliya Publishing, 2003), two volumes.
20. It is interesting to note that during the occupation and Mandate (1914-1932), the British never conducted a detailed survey of the land and peoples of the area that was to become the state of Iraq. The resultant lack of empirical data was a major hindrance to the effective administration of these territories and to the formulation of effective tribal policies by the British, and it led to policies based on culturally grounded preconceptions and stereotypes about the nature of Iraqi society. Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), xi, 43, 63.
21. King, 182-183. King relates an episode in which he was made an "honorary sheikh" by one of the larger tribes of Iraq. He states that "when word spread among the

sheikhs that I had accepted this honor, many expressed their animosity. One prominent sheikh bluntly said to me, 'You are like a sheikh-of-sheikhs in this country. Why would you accept to be identified with one specific tribe over the rest?'"

22. SGT Christopher Alexander, CPT Charles Kyle, MAJ William S. McCallister, "The Iraqi Insurgent Movement," Unpublished Paper, 14 November 2003, 19-20. In one recent episode, the sheikh of the Albu Alwan tribe near Ramadi complained to a U.S. commander about a rival tribe's domination of the local council, exclaiming, "We are a bigger tribe than they are, so how can a majority be ruled by a minority? Where is democracy?" Yaroslav Trofimov, "To Find Peace in Sunni Triangle, Talk to the Sheikhs," *The Wall Street Journal*, 5 November 2003, A1.

23. Lawrence noted this tendency among the tribal warriors of the Arab Revolt: "We could not mix or combine tribes, because of their distrusts; nor could we use one in the territory of another." T. E. Lawrence, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph* (New York: Doubleday, 1926), 338.

24. Dawn Chatty, *From Camel to Truck: The Bedouin in the Modern World* (New York: Vantage Press, 1986), 52. According to Chatty, "Arab life is filled with interpersonal rivalry, tribal feuds...family and village quarrels...and intergroup hostility.... Politeness is a means of maintaining enough distance to prevent aggressive tendencies from becoming actual. Hospitality and generosity are means of demonstrating friendliness while warding off expected aggression. Such measures as excessive politeness (a form of avoidance) or hospitality (a form of ingratiation in a situation where intimacy cannot be avoided) appears at times to be absolutely necessary if social life is to be maintained."

25. Michael M. Ripinsky, "Middle Eastern Kinship as an Expression of a Culture-Environment System," *The Muslim World* 58 (1968), 225-241. The Arabs—and Iraqis in particular—have among the highest rates of endogamy in the world (though rates vary by country, socioeconomic class, and religion). While reliable data is hard to come by, rates of endogamy for the entire region are believed to be between 10 to 15 percent, while in some tribal groups, they may exceed 70 percent. Eickelman, 175-178; Fernea, 181-182; Salim, 48-49; A. H. Bitlles, "A Background Summary of Consanguineous Marriage," <<http://consang.net/images/dd/01AHBWeb3.pdf>>.

26. McFate, *Memory of War*, forthcoming.

27. Fernea, 88-89, 112; Salim, 51-54. In some parts of the Arab world, the payment of blood money was prolonged interminably to create an open debt, thereby perpetuating the relationship and ensuring the maintenance of peace between formerly aggrieved parties. Immediate payment of the debt would have signified the end of the relationship and the resumption of hostilities. Emrys L. Peters, "Some Structural Aspects of the Feud Among the Camel-Herding Bedouin of Cyrenaica," *Africa* 37, no. 3 (July 1967): 266-267.

28. Fernea, 90; Peters, 277-279. Not always, however. Salim reports that the entire Beni Isad tribe "rose up as one man" to participate in a war against a neighboring tribe in 1945. Salim, 43.

29. Fernea, 110-111, 119; Amatzia Baram, *Building Toward Crisis: Saddam Hussein's Strategy for Survival* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998), 28-29.

30. Fernea, 110-111; Salim, 43.

31. McFate, *Memory of War*, forthcoming.

32. This pattern was first noted by the medieval Arab thinker Ibn Khaldun: "The Bedouins are the least willing of the nations to subordinate themselves to each other, as they are rude, proud, ambitious, and eager to be the leaders. Their individual aspirations rarely coincide. But when there is religion (among them) through prophethood or sainthood, then they have some restraining influence in themselves. The qualities of haughtiness and jealousy leave them. It is, then, easy for them to subordinate themselves and unite." Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 120.

33. Andrew J. Shryock, "Popular Genealogical Nationalism: History Writing and Identity among the Balqa Tribes of Jordan," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 2 (April 1995), 346.

34. David Kilcullen, "Religion and Insurgency," *Small Wars Journal: SWJ Blog*, 12 May 2007, <[www.smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2007/05/religion-and-insurgency/](http://www.smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2007/05/religion-and-insurgency/)>.

35. The author would like to thank Montgomery McFate for this insight.

36. Batatu, 71-72; Fernea, 101. As an expression of this territoriality, Bedouins in times past would often extract tribute (*khawa*—literally "brotherhood" money) from travelers and caravans passing through their tribal domain. Glubb, 60.

37. Chatty, 44.

38. Lars Wahlin, "Inheritance of Land in the Jordanian Hill Country," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 21, no. 1 (1994): 77-78.

39. Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies 1991-96," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29 (1997): 4-6.

40. Wahlin, 80.

41. Agence France Presse (AFP), "Competition for Iraq Oil Contracts Spurs Tribal Clashes," 22 January 2004.

42. Baram, "Neo-Tribalism," 1-31.

43. In the past, sheikhs were also responsible for collecting taxes, registering births and deaths, and arresting military deserters. Batatu, 63-152; Fernea, 105-117, 131, 133-136, 143-145; and Lancaster, 80-84, 87-90, 92-94, 114-115, 127-131. See also Gabriel Baer, "The Village Shaykh, 1800-1950," in *Studies in the Social History of Modern Egypt* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 30-61, and Paul Dresch, "The Position of Shaykhs Among the Northern Tribes of Yemen," *Man* (N.S.) 19, 31-49.

44. Batatu, 63-152; Fernea, 105-117, 133-135; Lancaster, 80-96; Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq," 3-4.

45. Lancaster, 96; Chatty, 55.

46. Glubb, 159.

47. Anthony Shadid, "In a Land Without Order, Punishment is Power," *Washington Post*, 22 October 2006, A1.

48. See, for instance, Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 161-181.

49. Ken Menkhaus, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism*, London: IISS, 2004, Adelphi Paper 364, 28-31; Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 207-208.

50. Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq," 6-7, 12-13.

51. CPT Travis Patriquin, "The Ba'ath Party and the Insurgency in Tal Afar," *Military Review* (January-February 2007): 22-24.

52. Rory Stewart, *The Prince of the Marshes* (Orlando: Harcourt Books, 2006), 219-220. For many sheikhs, coalition contracts are their lifeblood. In the words of Sheikh Hamid Rashid Mahenna of the Albu Alwan tribe from Ramadi, "A sheikh has no power without contracts. If I do not provide for my people, they will not cooperate with me." Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "In a Hostile Land, Try Whatever Works," *Washington Post*, 23 December 2003, A1.

53. Shadid, A1.

54. Mark Kukis, "Turning Iraq's Tribes Against Al-Qaeda," *Time*, 26 December 2006.

55. See, for instance: Amatzia Baram, "Victory in Iraq," A25; Andrew Krepinovich, "How to Win in Iraq," *Foreign Affairs* (September-October 2005): 87-104; Kenneth Pollack, "Five Ways to Win Back Iraq," *New York Times*, 1 July 2005, A17; Montgomery McFate, "The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 38, 42-48; King, 178; Lieutenant Colonel Richard D. Welch, "Building Cultural Bridges: A Year in Iraq with the First Cavalry Division," Personal Experience Monograph, U.S. Army War College, 23 March 2006; McCallister et al., "The Iraqi Insurgent Movement," unpublished paper.

56. Bing West, *No True Glory: A Frontline Account of the Battle for Fallujah* (New York: Bantam Books, 2005), 33.

57. Mark Etherington, *Revolt on the Tigris: The Al-Sadr Uprising and the Governing of Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 104. Published polls are consistent with Etherington's CPA polling data. See: International Republican Institute, *Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion*, July 24-August 2, 2004, 27, 33; IRI, *Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion*, September 24-October 4, 2004, 42; IRI, *Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion*, November 24-December 5, 2004, 37, 38; IRI, *Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion*, December 26-January 7, 2005, 40, <www.iri.org/mena/iraq.asp>.

58. King, 161-166, 180; Operational Leadership Experiences Interview with LTC Paul Yingling, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 22 September 2006, and; Tulin Daloglu, "Freeing Jill Carroll: Iraqi Sheik Negotiated Behind the Scenes," *Washington Times*, 5 April 2006, 19.

59. Martin Rodriguez, Andrew Farnster, and John Bott, *Constructive Engagement: A Proven Method for Conducting Stability and Support Operations*, Association of the United States Army Institute of Land Warfare, Landpower Essay No. 07-1, February 2007, 2-3, 5; MAJ Morgan Mann, "The Power Equation: Using Tribal Politics in Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* (May-June 2007): 104, 106; Sudarsan Raghavan, "In Iraq, A Perilous Alliance with Former Enemies," *Washington Post*, 4 August 2007, A1, A12.

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61. For more on these previous efforts, see Andrew Tilghman, "Marines Entangled in Disarming Situation in Husaybah," *Stars and Stripes*, 21 November 2005; Kirk Semple, "U.S. Forces Rely on Local Informants in Ferreting Rebels in West Iraq," *New York Times*, 10 December 2005; John Ward Anderson, "Iraqi Tribes Strike Back at Insurgents," *Washington Post*, 7 March 2006, A12; and Ann Scott Tyson, "In a Volatile Region of Iraq, U.S. Military Takes Two Paths," *Washington Post*, 15 September 2006, A1. For more on the Anbar Awakening, see Sarah Childress, "Retaking Ramadi: All the Sheik's Men; U.S. Commanders Are Hoping Tribal Levies Can Help Fill The Ranks of Anbar's Police and Tackle Al Qaeda," *Newsweek*, 18 December 2006, 43.

62. Elaine M. Grossman, "Tribal Engagement" Has Mixed Record of Ups and Downs in Iraq," *Inside the Pentagon*, 7 June 2007.

63. Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Investigates the Hidden Side of Everything* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), xi, 13, 205.

64. Congressional testimony of David M. Walker, *Rebuilding Iraq: Governance, Security, Reconstruction, and Financing Challenges*, Government Accountability Office Report No. 06-697T, 25 April 2006, 12-13. See also *Report to Congress of the Special Inspector General for Iraq*, 30 July 2006, 27.

65. James Baker and Lee Hamilton, *The Way Forward—A New Approach: The Iraq Study Group Report*, (New York, Vintage Books: 2006), 84.

66. AFP, "The Fight for Oil Pipelines in Iraq," 12 September 2003; AFP, "Competition for Iraq Oil Contracts Spurs Tribal Clashes," 22 January 2004; Robert Collier, "Ethnically Diverse Oil Zone a Tinderbox," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 June 2004; Adam Handelsman, "BlastGard International, Inc. Completes Successful Oil Pipeline Test," BlastGard International Press Release, 6 December 2004, <www.blastgardintl.com/pdfs/pipeline\_test\_results.pdf>; Roger Brown, "Iraq's Pipeline War," *World Pipelines* 5, no. 5, (May 2005): 28-31; Samah Samad, "Tribes Accused of Iraq Oil Protection Racket," *Environment News Service*, 10 June 2005; Radio Free Iraq, "Judge Describes Corruption Case Against Lawmaker," RFE/RL Interview, 8 February 2006; and Philip Shishkin, "Pipeline Thefts Cripple Iraqi Oil Production," *Wall Street Journal*, 25 May 2007, A1, A13.

67. Naylor, 8-11.

68. William H. McMichael, "Odierno: Negotiations with Insurgents Underway," *Army Times*, 11 June 2007, 10; Thomas E. Ricks, "Deals in Iraq Make Friends of Enemies," *Washington Post*, 20 July 2007, A1; Raghavan, A12.

69. Naylor, 9-10.

70. Joshua Partlow and John Ward Anderson, "Tribal Coalition in Anbar Said to Be Crumbling," *Washington Post*, 11 June 2007, A11.

71. Rodriguez et al., 1, 6. Similarly, SGT Mounir Elkharni noted, based on observations

during his time in Iraq, that "the most effective [units] were always the ones with close ties to the local community." "Dealing with the Iraqi Populace: An Arab-American Soldier's Perspective," *Military Review* (January-February 2007): 113.

72. This estimate is based on the author's interviews with several dozen Soldiers and Marines who have served in Iraq.

73. The author was responsible for engagement in a Kurdish refugee camp along the border of Turkey and Iraq during Operation Provide Comfort (1991), and it was this experience that prompted his interest in tribal engagement.

74. See, for instance, late CPA senior advisor Ambassador Hume Horan's affirmation during a meeting with a large group of sheikhs in 2003 that U.S. forces came to Iraq as "occupiers," which provoked an angry response from the audience. King, 108-109. Horan was one of the U.S. foreign service's most knowledgeable and experienced Middle East hands, and while his statement may have been an accurate characterization of the status of coalition forces under international law, he probably should have known better than to have used a term so fraught with negative associations in the Arab world.

75. Michael Eisenstadt and Jeffrey White, "Fighting the War to Win the Peace in a Post-Saddam Iraq," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *PolicyWatch* No. 739, 2 April 2003, <www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=1617>.

76. Lawrence, 275.

77. According to a Special Forces team sergeant in Iraq: "These insurgencies are defeated by personal relationships." Ann Scott Tyson, "In a Volatile Region of Iraq, U.S. Military Takes Two Paths," *Washington Post*, 15 September 2006, A1.

78. Elkharni, 111.

79. King, 82-83, 90-91, 121-123; Rodriguez, et al., 5.

80. Rodriguez, et al., 2.

81. Thomas E. Ricks, "Tom Ricks's Inbox," *Washington Post*, 29 April 2007, B03.

82. Fernea, 80-81, 97-104, 192-193; Wahlin, 57-84; Lars Wahlin, "How Long has Land Been Privately Held in Northern Al-Balqa', Jordan?" *Geografiska Annaler*, 76 B:1 (1994), 33-49; and A. Granott, *The Land System in Palestine: History and Structure* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1952), 185-212.

83. The strip parcel system should not be confused with strip farming, which is an anti-erosion measure. See Granott, 208-212.

84. See, for instance, the hamlet north of Yusufiya in north Babil province at 33° 00' 41.52" N by 44° 22' 24.47" E; the village outside of Rumaythia in al-Muthanna province at 31°28' 20.42" N by 45°19' 07.90" E; the community on the outskirts of Habbaniyah in al-Anbar province at 33°25' 37.72" N by 43°31' 33.52" E; the community just outside of Taji in Salah al-Din province at 33°38' 14.70" N by 44°21' 20.56" E; and the village just north of Balad in Salah al-Din province at 34°04' 50.98" N by 44°05' 22.28" E.

85. Wahlin, "How Long has Land been Privately Held?" 39; Mats Widgren, "Reading Property into the Landscape," *Norwegian Journal of Geography* 60: 57-64; Parker Shipton, "Lineage and Locality as Antithetical Principles in East African Systems of Land Tenure," *Ethnology* 23, no. 2 (April 1984): 125.

86. Jacob Kipp, Lester Grau, Karl Prinslow, and CPT Don Smith, "The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21st Century," *Military Review* (September-October 2006): 8-15; Robert M. Perito, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq*, United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 185, March 2007.

87. COL Christopher Costa, "Phoenix Rises Again: HUMINT Lessons for Counter-insurgency Operations," *Defense Intelligence Journal* 15, no. 1 (2006): 137.

88. King, 110.

89. See, for instance, Patriquin, 22-24; and Susan B. Glasser, "Sheik's Appointment by British Triggers Protests and Accusations," *Washington Post*, 11 April 2003, A29.

90. See, for instance, Ann Scott Tyson, "In a Volatile Region of Iraq, U.S. Military Takes Two Paths," *Washington Post*, 15 September 2006, A1.

91. In Arab society, trusted and respected outsiders—even non-Arabs—may be called upon to mediate and resolve feuds. See, for instance, Ginat, 10-12, 32-37, 126-127; Wilfred Thesiger, *The Marsh Arabs* (London: Penguin, 1967), 213-219.

92. The author of an article offering guidelines for hiring Bedouin tribesmen for government conservation and development projects cautions that "it should not be assumed that an intertribal legal structure exists [sic] for allocating [jobs] fairly, or that tribal or clan leaders will decide in a just fashion which people within the kinship group should get those jobs. Indigenous leaders may not always act appropriately on behalf of their constituents, and may choose their own sons or other people to whom they owe favors. Ironically, the best arbitrator may sometimes come from outside, with project personnel in the best position to make fair decisions. This process requires careful diplomacy and explanation, especially to indigenous leaders, to ensure that local sensibilities are acknowledged. In [the case in question] a park ranger, specifically hired for the task because he had anthropological training, conducted interviews with community guard candidates, selected them, and had tribal leaders approve the choices. This process worked with few complications and had the locals' approval because they acknowledged that their own institutions could not deal fairly with the problem." Joseph J. Hobbs, "Guidelines for the Involvement of Nomadic Pastoralists in Conservation and Development Efforts," in Dawn Chaty, ed., *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa: Entering the 21st Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 796-797.

93. For a fascinating discussion of the debate among British administrators regarding the role of the sheikhs and the tribes in Mandatory Iraq, which in many ways prefigured the contemporary debate, see Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*, 101-129. See also Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 161-181.

94. Alois Musil, *Arabia Deserta* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1927), 22.

95. Musil, *Arabia Deserta*, 77; and Alois Musil, *The Northern Hegaz* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1926), 73-74.

96. Musil, *Arabia Deserta*, 26-29.

97. Musil, *Arabia Deserta*, 275, 299-300; Musil, *The Northern Hegaz*, 117-118.

98. Musil, *Arabia Deserta*, 120; Alois Musil, *Northern Negd* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1928), 167-168.

99. Louise E. Sweet, "Camel Raiding of North Arabian Bedouins: A Mechanism of Ecological Adaptation," *American Anthropologist* 67, no. 5, Part 1 (October 1965): 1139.





# Fighting “The Other War”

## Counterinsurgency Strategy in Afghanistan, 2003-2005

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*The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.*

*Strategy without Tactics  
is the slowest road to Victory.*

*Tactics without Strategy is  
the noise before Defeat.*

—Sun Tzu

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PHOTO: The author at TF Phoenix. TF Phoenix was responsible for the training and equipping of the Afghan National Army. Left to right are LTC Lyles, Operations Officer, TF Phoenix; BG Moorhead, Commander, TF Phoenix; MG Weston, Chief, Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan; and LTG Barno. TF Phoenix was based in eastern Kabul. (DOD)

AFGHANISTAN IN MID-2003 was at a point of transition—a strategic fork in the road. Major combat operations had ended in 2001, devolving into a long-term pursuit of Taliban and Al-Qaeda remnants, and humanitarian support was beginning to enlarge the nascent reconstruction effort; but Taliban-related activity was increasing in the south and east of the country, while heavily armed militias continued to dominate many areas. Politically, however, optimism across the nation was almost tangible. Plans were underway for a nationwide *loya jirga* (grand council) to draft a new constitution, an effort to begin the democratic process that would move beyond the 2002 jirga, which had appointed Hamid Karzai the leader of a transitional government. Additionally, presidential and parliamentary elections were being planned for 2004.

The Bonn process had organized the overwhelming international sympathy toward Afghanistan with lead nations designated to oversee security sector reform.<sup>1</sup> International support for stabilizing Afghanistan was strong, focused upon the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), which was led by the renowned and influential Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi. A 5500-person International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) had transitioned into a NATO-led mission, but remained confined to security duties in Kabul. On balance, however, the nationwide writ of the provisional government in Kabul was tenuous at best, and increasing security concerns threatened to undermine both international support and the nascent political process.

Unfortunately, the U.S.-led military coalition was not well postured to counter the rising threat. Coordination between the military and interagency partners was hampered by a U.S. Embassy and military headquarters separated by over forty kilometers. Unity of effort suffered; the military command and control situation was in flux; our tactical approach was enemy-focused and risked alienating the Afghan people; and the substantial draw of operations in

Iraq had put severe limits on the availability of key military capabilities for Afghanistan. To make matters more difficult, the American military leadership was rotating, and the first U.S. ambassador since 1979 had departed with no replacement. Clearly, without a significant change in course, Afghanistan was at risk.

This article outlines the changes subsequently made to U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. It depicts the approach, begun in October 2003, to create a successful counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign in “the other war” that resulted in over two years of relative stability and progress. It also provides a brief assessment of the situation in Afghanistan now, as we move toward the end of 2007.

## The Military Situation— Summer 2003

In mid-2003, the U.S.-led coalition embodied over 12,000 troops representing 19 nations. It was led by Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF)-180, formed in June 2002 as the forward headquarters in Afghanistan and based at the old Soviet airbase at Bagram, a 20-minute helicopter flight north from Kabul.

The U.S. had downsized the original CJTF in the spring of 2003, replacing a powerful and well-resourced three-star-led headquarters (XVIII Airborne Corps) and a subordinate division headquarters (Task Force 82) with a single division-level headquarters (10th Mountain Division).<sup>2</sup> As a result, operational tasks once performed by the corps headquarters and tactical tasks performed by the division headquarters were now assigned to one headquarters struggling to oversee both levels of war for a very large theater of operations.

In Kabul, an Office of Military Cooperation (OMC) had been formed in mid-2002 to take on the mission of building the Afghan National Army (ANA), and de facto a number of political- military tasks as well.<sup>3</sup> The focus of the U.S. military effort in the aftermath of the December 2001 fall of the Taliban had been two-fold: to hunt down the remnants of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban across the rugged landscape of southern and eastern Afghanistan, and to build the ANA. “Nation-building” was explicitly *not* part of the formula.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the presence of a large U.S.-led combined and joint civil-military operations task force (CJCMOTF) then based in Kabul, the military focus

on reconstruction was limited. Four provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) had been created—two American teams at Gardez and Konduz, a British effort at Mazar-e-Sharif, and a New Zealand mission in Bamian. All four were in relatively quiet areas. There was no PRT presence in the more volatile south and only one in the east (at Gardez), although an expansion of four more PRTs had been planned for the spring of 2004.

Overall, the military span of control in Afghanistan was vast: one division-size joint task force headquarters (with a series of temporary commanders in the summer of 2003) supported over 10,000 soldiers of a multinational force conducting security and reconstruction efforts across a nation the size of Texas with a population of 31 million. (Afghanistan is nearly 50 percent larger than Iraq and has 4 million more people).<sup>5</sup>

Of even greater concern, only one ground maneuver brigade had tactical responsibility for this immense battlespace. To complicate matters, Special Forces, civil-military operations, aviation, and logistics commands operated throughout the battlespace, but reported individually to the CJTF-180 headquarters in Bagram—not to the ground brigade commander.<sup>6</sup>

The primary approach on the ground was enemy-centric. Conventional units operated out of sizeable bases such as Bagram or Kandahar or smaller forward operating bases such as Shkin or Orgun-e. They gathered intelligence, planned operations, and sortied on “raids,” which could be small, prolonged patrols of some days’ duration or battalion-size operations lasting several weeks (e.g., Operation Mountain Lion). Underlying these actions was the concept that intelligence drives operations; as a result, tactical operations inevitably remained focused on the enemy.

This “raid strategy” combined with the small number of troops had the effect of largely separating coalition forces from the Afghan people. The tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) units used often worsened this separation. “Tossing” whole villages in a cordon-and-search operation based on an intelligence tip, regardless of its accuracy, could quickly alienate a neutral or even friendly populace.

At the time, the U.S. military had not published COIN doctrine since Vietnam, and units had relatively little training in COIN before their arrival



in country. There was much “learning by doing” and even disagreement as to whether the fight in Afghanistan was a COIN fight at all. In fact, unit commanders were forbidden from using the word “counterinsurgency” in describing their operations—they were executing a “counterterrorist” mission in keeping with U.S. strategic guidance and an operational focus on the enemy.<sup>7</sup>

In view of this situation, the commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) recognized the need for a different headquarters configuration. In October 2003, he ordered a new three-star coalition headquarters to stand up in Kabul and focus on political-military efforts, permitting the two-star JTF headquarters at Bagram to focus more fully on tactical operations.<sup>8</sup> This initiative represented a distinct break from the previous belief that the overall military headquarters should be somewhat removed from the capital, in part to avoid entanglement in the political complexities of a city of three million Afghans. Kabul was interlaced with all manner of international embassies, special envoys, NATO ISAF units, UNAMA, and a plethora of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), all working to bring a better future to Afghanistan—but in a free-wheeling, confusing, and sometimes counterproductive mix. “Kabul will consume you,” warned one senior U.S. commander who had served in Bagram.<sup>9</sup>

## A Counterinsurgency Strategy

Although the story of how we created a three-star operational headquarters with no existing core staff (and from a start point of six members!) in an ongoing operational environment holds important lessons of its own, the centerpiece of this article is the evolution of a COIN strategy for Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup> The latter story began shortly after my arrival in country, when Lakhdar Brahimi asked us to develop an approach to address the deteriorating security situation in the south and east of the country. The UN had responsibility for devising and implementing a plan to hold Afghan presidential and parliamentary elections in 2004, and it was becoming clear that the organization would be unable to extend its reach into significant parts of the Pashtun southern half of Afghanistan if the security situation continued to remain dangerous there. Moreover, a strong Taliban offensive was expected in the spring of 2004, which

would further threaten the elections and thus undermine the “roadmap” set forth by the international community in the Bonn Process.

After 10 days of intense staff work led by my talented director of planning, a British colonel whose 22-man J5 (future plans) shop now comprised over two-thirds of our entire staff, we were able to propose a new approach to security and stability to take into 2004.<sup>11</sup> Initially called “Security Strategy South and East,” this effort quickly grew into a comprehensive COIN approach for Afghanistan. Ultimately, it evolved into a detailed campaign plan co-written with the U.S. Embassy and broadly shared by the Afghans and international community. Titled “Counterinsurgency Strategy for Afghanistan,” the plan was crafted in the absence of U.S. military doctrine, but reflected a solid knowledge of classic COIN approaches. The bookshelves in my Kabul offices at the embassy and military compound were well stocked with my own COIN readings and several senior British officers on my staff supplied important operational insights from their Northern Ireland tours.<sup>12</sup>

To outline our strategy in simple terms, we created “The Five Pillars” diagram (figure 1). This graphic became a powerful tool for explaining the basics of our strategy to civilians, and within the command it circulated down to the very lowest tactical levels. In addition to providing an extraordinarily effective means of communicating complex ideas, it helped us implement the strategy’s fundamentals.<sup>13</sup>

## Overarching Principle 1: The People as Center of Gravity

The core principle animating the new strategy was our identification of the Afghan people as the center of gravity for COIN (roof of the five pillars).<sup>14</sup> This constituted a sea change in practice from earlier approaches, which had held that the *enemy* was the center of gravity and should be the focus of our military effort (a determination driven in part by the U.S. strategic outlook in 2003, which viewed nation-building as an inappropriate military task).

In making this change we were motivated by both classic counterinsurgency practice as well as thoughtful consideration of Afghan military history. In late 2003, international forces comprised nearly 20,000 armed foreigners living in the midst of 31 million (often armed) Afghans who, throughout



**Figure 1. CFC-A counterinsurgency strategy, 2003-2005.**

their history, had shown immense enmity to foreign forces. Two successive British expeditions in the 19th century and the massive Soviet invasion in the late 20th century had provoked virulent responses from the people of Afghanistan—each ending in the bloody demise of the foreign military presence. In fact, the “light footprint” approach taken by U.S. force planners was, in many respects, derived from a strong desire not to replicate the Soviet attempt at omnipresence.<sup>15</sup>

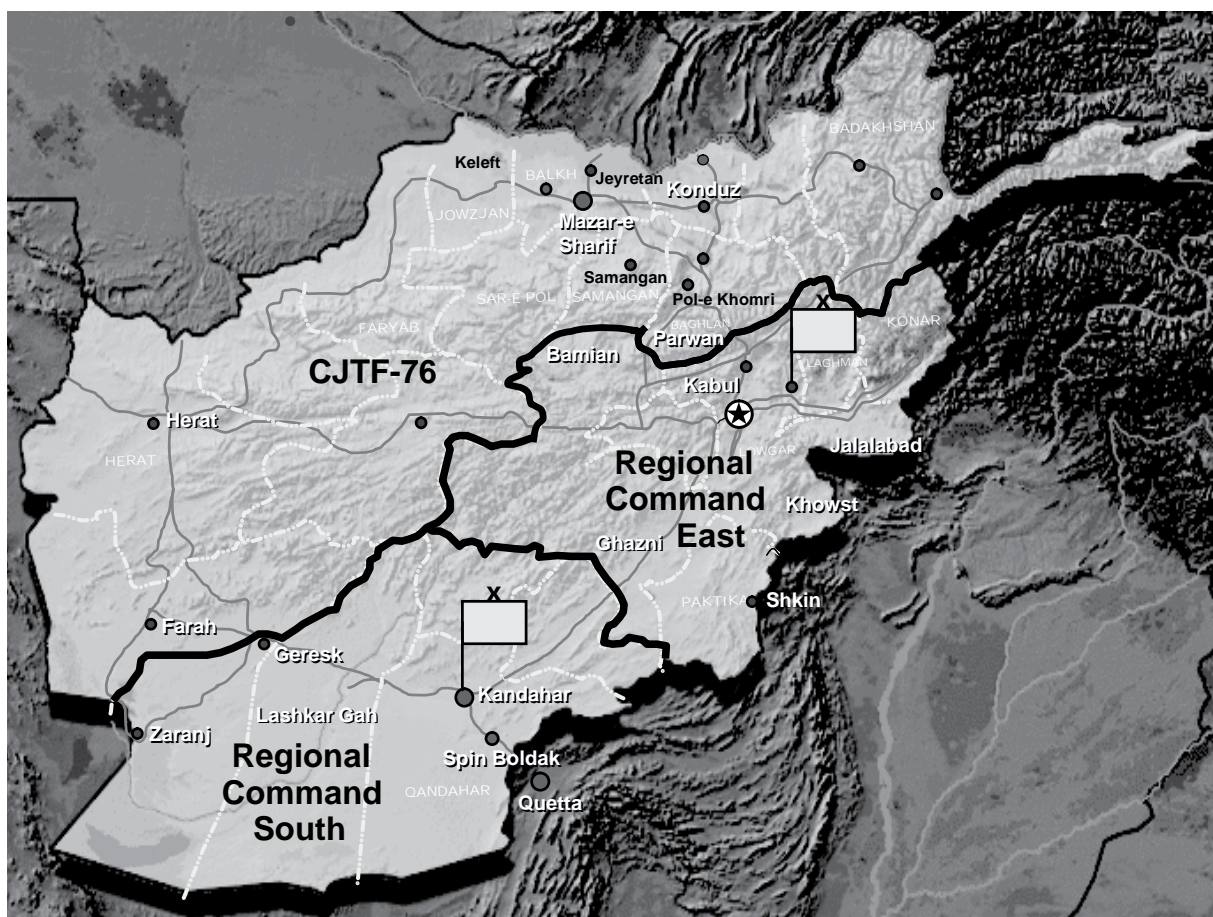
In our emerging strategy, I viewed the tolerance of the Afghan people for this new international military effort as a “bag of capital,” one that was finite and had to be spent slowly and frugally. Afghan civilian casualties, detainee abuse, lack of respect shown to tribal elders, even inadvertent offenses to the conservative Afghan culture—all would have the effect of spending the contents of this bag of capital, tolerance for foreigners, more quickly.

With “respect for Afghans” as our watchword, we decided that convincing the Afghan people to commit to their future by supporting elections for a new government would be the near-term centerpiece of coalition efforts. Thus, our military “main effort” in 2004 would be explicitly to “set the conditions for a successful Afghan presidential election”—certainly an unconventional military focus.

One of the changes in our military approach evinced by this focus on the population was a near-ironclad prohibition against using airpower to strike targets not directly engaged in close combat with coalition troops. Air strikes based solely on technical intelligence were almost entirely eliminated owing both to their conspicuous lack of success and the unintended casualties they characteristically caused among Afghan civilians. In my estimation, this new judicious reserve in the application of coalition firepower helped sustain the people’s fragile tolerance of an extended international military presence. In essence, we traded some tactical effect for much more important strategic consequences.

## **Overarching Principle 2: Unity of Purpose**

A second principle of our strategy was interagency and international unity of purpose. Militarily, this was paralleled by a deliberate and measured reorganization to achieve unity of command in coalition operations. As noted above, our military organizational structures had evolved unevenly as forces echeloned into Afghanistan in disparate increments following the Taliban’s fall in late 2001. During the execution of that early operational phase, most U.S. troops were based outside of Afghanistan, and those



**Figure 2. U.S. and Coalition Battlefield Geometry, May 2004**

in-country had only begun to establish what would become long-term operating bases. During 2002, Bagram and Kandahar became the primary base locations for large units, logistical infrastructure, and coalition airpower. As more units were added to the mix, and as the coalition presence continued long beyond initial expectations, a patchwork line of command authorities had evolved—an unsurprising situation given the need to cover a huge country with a small sliver of forces.

Our moves over the next months focused on establishing two ground brigade-level headquarters, one assigned the hazardous south and the other the volatile east (figure 2).<sup>16</sup> (The northern half of the country remained largely free from any enemy threat, and thus became an economy-of-force area.) The brigades' headquarters in the south and east became centers for regional command and control of forces in the vast southern half of the country. Each brigade was assigned an area of operations spanning its entire region. All organizations operating in this

battlespace worked directly for or in support of the brigade commander. This was a striking and powerful organizational change.

Establishing unity of purpose in the non-military sphere was much more difficult. Arguably, the greatest flaw in our 21st-century approach to COIN is our inability to marshal and fuse efforts from all the elements of national power into a unified whole. This failure has resulted in an approach akin to punching an adversary with five outstretched fingers rather than one powerful closed fist.

Oftentimes, this rift has had its origin in relations between the U.S. chief of mission (i.e., our ambassador) and the military commander—each reporting to different chains of command in the midst of a nation embroiled in a counterinsurgency war. Afghanistan in 2003 was no exception—a situation made even more difficult by personnel turnover. After the U.S. ambassador departed in July without a replacement, the deputy chief of mission served as the acting chief for four months, and the presidential special



envoy for Iraq and Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, shuttled in and out. Ultimately named as the new U.S. ambassador, Khalilzad arrived for full-time duties on Thanksgiving Day 2003—but retained his special envoy status and thus had direct and regular access to the president as well as to the Department of State (DOS).<sup>17</sup> As the U.S. and coalition military commander, I reported to the commander of U.S. Central Command, General John P. Abizaid, and through him to the secretary of defense and the president. Our system dictates that our top diplomat and main military commander receive orders from and report to different people, coming together only at the president. Moreover, the cultural differences which separate the departments of State and Defense—and their people—are well known.

Fortunately, chemistry counts, and personalities matter. Ambassador Khalilzad and I both recognized that our personal relationship would set the tone for embassy and military teams across Afghanistan. We established a strong personal bond in Kabul that became a keystone in what would be a seamless approach to the interagency challenges we faced in Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup> (In retrospect, I have viewed this approach as much akin to a “supporting-supported” relationship between the military and the embassy for many tasks involving other than the military elements of power). My guidance to our staff was that as the most powerful organization in the country, we would take a direct interest in *everything*—not just the traditional warfighting piece. As I told an exasperated and overworked staff officer in October 2003: “We own it all!”<sup>19</sup> Our tactics outside the military arena would largely be characterized as “leading from the rear” but were nonetheless very effective. To demonstrate personal commitment to this unified embassy-military approach, I moved into a half-trailer on the embassy compound and established an office there next to the ambassador’s. I began each day attending country-team and core security-group meetings with our new ambassador. The message to our staffs was unambiguous: there would be no “white space” between the military and interagency effort in Kabul, and by extension, throughout Afghanistan.

The close personal relationship the ambassador and I established paid us both immense dividends. Through daily meetings of key players in the embassy, we developed a common view of the fight that further cemented the unity of our integrated

effort. This shared view significantly shaped our unified interagency approach. It also had a major impact on the direction of our military efforts.<sup>20</sup>

Building teamwork and consensus among the diverse international players in Kabul was more problematic. The simple challenge was getting all the players on the same playing field, playing the same sport, and moving toward the same set of goal posts. (Having everyone in the same jersey was not expected!) We spent significant personal time and military staff effort building close relations with the Afghans, UNAMA, foreign embassies, the media, and even the NGO community. A key element in developing our COIN campaign plan was “shopping it around” in draft form—first to the members of the U.S. Embassy, then to the broader set of international and Afghan players who would be essential in supporting its goals. This unconventional approach sent a message of inclusion to all those committed to Afghanistan’s future. At the same time, it significantly refined and improved our planning.

We also seconded five military staff officers to the ambassador packaged as an unusual new group, the Embassy Interagency Planning Group, or EPIG. Led by a brilliant Army military intelligence colonel, this small core of talented planners—the “piglets”—applied structured military staff planning to the diverse requirements Ambassador Khalilzad faced in shaping the interagency response in Afghanistan.<sup>21</sup> With the ambassador’s guidance, the EPIG drafted the embassy’s mission performance plan, and it developed and tracked metrics for him on all aspects of interagency and military performance. Eventually, we also seconded military officers from our headquarters to many of the embassy’s key sections to augment a small, young country team. This served two important purposes: it lent structured planning and organizing support to overworked embassy offices, and it kept our military team well connected to the embassy’s efforts across the spectrum. This move, too, contributed to building a unified team with close personal ties, trust, and confidence.

## Five Pillars

As figure 1 depicts, our COIN plan for Afghanistan had five pillars:

- Defeat terrorism and deny sanctuary.
- Enable the Afghan security structure.



- Sustain area ownership.
- Enable reconstruction and good governance.
- Engage regional states.

Linking these pillars together was information operations (IO)—winning the war of ideas.

The keys to delivering on our COIN strategy were to implement and integrate the actions called for by these pillars, and to have every platoon, squad, and team in Afghanistan clearly understand their intent. We had departed notably from previous, more constrained approaches by naming the Afghan people as our operational center of gravity and by focusing on unity of purpose across diverse stakeholders. The five pillars reflected our reassessment of how to apply even long-standing military capabilities in new directions.

**Defeat terrorism and deny sanctuary.** As we switched our focus from the enemy to the people, we did not neglect the operational tenet of maintaining pressure on the enemy. Selected special operations forces (SOF) continued their full-time hunt for Al-Qaeda's senior leaders. The blood debt of 9/11 was nowhere more keenly felt every day than in Afghanistan. No Soldier, Sailor, Airman, or Marine serving there ever needed an explanation for his or her presence—they “got it.” Dedicated units worked the Al-Qaeda fight on a 24-hour basis and continued to do so into 2004 and 2005.

In some ways, however, attacking enemy cells became a supporting effort: our primary objective was maintaining popular support. Thus, respect for the Afghan people's customs, religion, tribal ways, and growing feelings of sovereignty became an inherent aspect of all military operations. As well, the “three-block war” construct became the norm for our conventional forces.<sup>22</sup> Any given tactical mission would likely include some mixture of kinetics (e.g., fighting insurgents), peacekeeping (e.g., negotiating between rival clans), and humanitarian relief (e.g., digging wells or assessing local needs). The 2001-2003 notion of enemy-centric counterterrorist operations now became nested in a wholly different context, that of “war amongst the people,” in the words of British General Sir Rupert Smith.<sup>23</sup>

Our forces in the field once again demonstrated their remarkable ability to adjust to changing situations with only general guidance—and deliver results. When I asked a superb battalion commander

how, in the absence of doctrine, he was able to shift his leaders toward a largely new COIN approach in the middle of their combat tour, he laughed and said: “Easy, sir—Books-A-Million.Com!”<sup>24</sup> Reading classic counterinsurgency texts in the field became a substitute for official doctrine. The realization grew that “First, do no harm” must be a central consideration, and that Afghan security forces must play a visible role in coalition military operations. Even local elders were enlisted, for we knew that intelligence could often be manipulated to settle old scores and discredit our efforts.

Our growing recognition of the need to respect the population eventually led us to develop the “Fifteen Points,” a coordinated set of guidelines (see sidebar) that we proposed to President Karzai in response to his growing concerns about the impact of coalition military operations. Together, we publicized these efforts in order to assure the Afghans that we recognized and respected the sovereignty of their country. This had the intended effect. It extended the freedom of action granted to coalition forces for perhaps years, allowing us to spend the “bag of capital”—Afghan tolerance—that much more slowly.<sup>25</sup>

**Enable the Afghan security structure.** Under this pillar, we extended and accelerated the training of the Afghan National Army, and ultimately turned our scrutiny to the police as well. The development of the ANA and the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MOD) were significant success stories in the two years after the fall of the Taliban. Despite intense tribal rivalries, the ANA and MOD were re-created with an ethnically balanced, merit-based leader selection process that, by late 2003, had established both as models among the most-reformed bodies of the Afghan Government.

The ANA training effort produced ethnically balanced, well-trained formations down to platoon level. The strikingly positive reaction these units evoked when they entered villages alongside their embedded U.S. trainers stood in stark contrast to the reactions elicited by the repressive tribal militias then still common in Afghanistan. In fact, villagers often assumed that ANA units were foreign forces until their members began to speak in local dialects. Their professionalism, discipline, and combat effectiveness stood out; they became sources of national pride. The Office of Military

## THE FIFTEEN POINTS

1. No searches of national government property are conducted without COMCFC-AFG approval.
2. **Units must coordinate to have a government official present during the search of the property of another government official.**
3. **All units must coordinate for local police or other government officials when conducting searches unless there is a compelling and time sensitive reason.** Approval authority for this is the regional commander.
4. All material/documents taken in a search will be returned, unless the person is detained, in which case the property becomes evidence.
5. Soldiers participating in searches will be briefed on local customs.
6. When possible soldiers will ask locals to open locked doors versus forcing entry.
7. **Units must avoid cuffing/binding hands unless necessary for security.**
8. **During low risk operations, a local person will be asked to enter a structure first to explain what is happening.**
9. Require Regional Commander approval for conducting night searches.
10. Units will infuse reconstruction funds into areas where people were detained and subsequently released.
11. Inform people that the International Committee of the Red Cross has information on detainees.
12. Establish a Joint Afghan led board in the Ministry of Interior to provide information on detainees and coordinate releases.
13. **Work with national government to identify ineffective or corrupt local officials.**
14. Monthly Joint review to identify which units are receiving the most complaints.
15. Assign an Afghan liaison to each of our units.

Cooperation-Afghanistan (OMC-A), initially led by Major General (now Lieutenant General) Karl Eikenberry, produced a remarkable training and combat organizational structure from a base of near-zero in less than a year's time. From 2003 to 2005, no ANA formations were defeated or broke in combat engagements. Moreover, ANA units showed notable discipline during intense civil-disturbance operations—operations for which they had not been specifically trained.<sup>26</sup>

The police forces in Afghanistan during this period were more problematic. Initially under-resourced and hampered by a training model that focused on the individual policeman (unlike the ANA, which adopted a “train as units” model), the police program faltered until interagency realignments in mid-2005 permitted OMC-A to assume joint oversight (with DOS) of the police. Lobbied for by both the military and the embassy from Kabul, this significant change allowed the coalition to put lessons learned in ANA training to good effect in police training. It also enabled the coalition to realize economies of scale by combining the two forces' training oversight. With the police widely acknowledged to be the “first line of defense” in a COIN campaign, it remains unfortunate that the fusion of police and ANA training oversight came so late.

**Sustain area ownership.** In my view, this pillar codified the most important, although least visible, change on the ground. *Area ownership* is an extension of unity of command. Under the previous “raid strategy,” units owned no battlespace save the ground they were on during a two- or three-week operation. Long-term, battlespace was “owned” only at the CJTF-180 level in Bagram; no subordinate unit had long-term responsibility for the outcomes in any specified area. With area ownership, we dedicated key contested areas of Afghanistan (i.e., the south and east) to each maneuver brigade and battalion. This seemingly simple concept had profound implications. Now, rather than pass through an area intent on simply routing out an enemy based on intelligence derived in a faraway operating base, units operated in their own distinct territory for up to 12 months.

Our approach consciously mirrored New York City's very successful policy in the 1990s of holding police captains responsible for reducing crime in their precincts. Like New York's captains, our commanders now “owned” their areas and were responsible for results. Area ownership meant that for the first time in the war, unit commanders had a defined area, clear sets of challenges, and direct responsibility for long-term outcomes.

Of course, they also had the authority to effect those outcomes, along with Commanders Emergency Response Program funding to address pressing civil needs with a minimum of bureaucracy. Commanders could become experts in their areas, build personal relations with tribal elders and key government officials, convince the population that they were there to stay—and then see the results.<sup>27</sup> The areas were unavoidably large—one battalion had an area the size of Vermont, another the size of Rhode Island—but those areas were *theirs!* Again, this is classic counterinsurgency, although it was new in Afghanistan.

**Enable reconstruction and good governance.** Extending the reach of the central government was fundamental to helping Afghanistan become a nation that embraced the rule of law and entrusted its elected government with a monopoly on violence. As Said Jawad, Afghan Ambassador to the U.S., often notes, “Afghanistan is a strong nation, but a weak state.” Afghanistan, over its long history, has stayed together as a country despite many opportunities for powerful interests to fracture the nation into separate tribal parts. At the same time, the power of the nation’s legitimate institutions grows weaker with every kilometer of distance from Kabul. Effective local government remains elusive, and traditional tribal and clan cultures hold powerful sway even today throughout much of the countryside—and will likely do so for generations. The primary military instrument designed to address this challenge was the provincial reconstruction team.

Conceived in 2002 by a British officer, PRTs were 80- to 100-person organizations normally posted to provincial capitals. Led by a colonel or lieutenant colonel, they typically comprised a security force, medical and logistics components, a civil affairs team, a command and control element, and senior representatives from the Afghan Ministry of Interior, U.S. DOS, USAID, and in certain areas, the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The mission of the PRTs included security and reconstruction, in fine balance. A PRT’s very presence in an area served as a catalyst for both, and it signified the international and Afghan commitment to bettering the lives of the people through improved government support. A multinational PRT executive steering committee in Kabul, co-chaired by the Afghan Minister of Interior and U.S./coalition commander, coordinated the PRT effort.<sup>28</sup>

PRTs became a powerful offensive weapon in our strategic arsenal as we crafted our plans for 2004 in Afghanistan. The four existing PRTs, as mentioned earlier, were deployed in largely quiet areas (Gardez, Konduz, Mazar-e-Sharif, Bamian) with the next four being developed at a very deliberate pace. We soon accelerated the latter by largely disassembling the combined and joint civil-military operations task force headquarters in Bagram and sending its well-resourced pool of civil affairs experts to form new PRTs in the field. The immediate goal became eight new PRTs in the south and east of Afghanistan, so that when the snows melted in the spring of 2004, we would have newly deployed PRTs confronting the Taliban across the most contested areas. (figure 3)

This bold move sent an incontrovertible message about the progress of the security and reconstruction effort into the most dangerous areas of Afghanistan. It was a calculated risk. PRTs had little ability to defend themselves, but the enemy well understood that 20 minutes after a distress call, any PRT in southern Afghanistan could have combat aircraft with bombs overhead and a rapid reaction force ready to arrive soon thereafter. The 2001 offensive that toppled the Taliban had produced a healthy respect for American airpower that allowed us, among other things, to conduct small patrols far from our bases in relative security. PRTs similarly benefitted from air support, and leveraged it regularly.

**Engage regional states.** This task fell largely into my in-box, but senior leaders at our tactical headquarters in Bagram ably supported me.<sup>29</sup> Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan’s (CFC-A) combined joint operations area for USCENTCOM included all of Afghanistan, all of Pakistan less Jammu and Kashmir, and the southern portions of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Our forces conducted combat operations only in Afghanistan, but my charter gave me authority to travel and interact regularly with the senior security leaders of the other three countries—with particular emphasis on Pakistan.

This Pakistani component of engagement was necessary to address border-security issues between Afghanistan and Pakistan (the Taliban operated in both) and to assist the Pakistanis in their own efforts to disrupt and defeat so-called “miscreants” in their tribal areas adjacent to Afghanistan. Quarterly



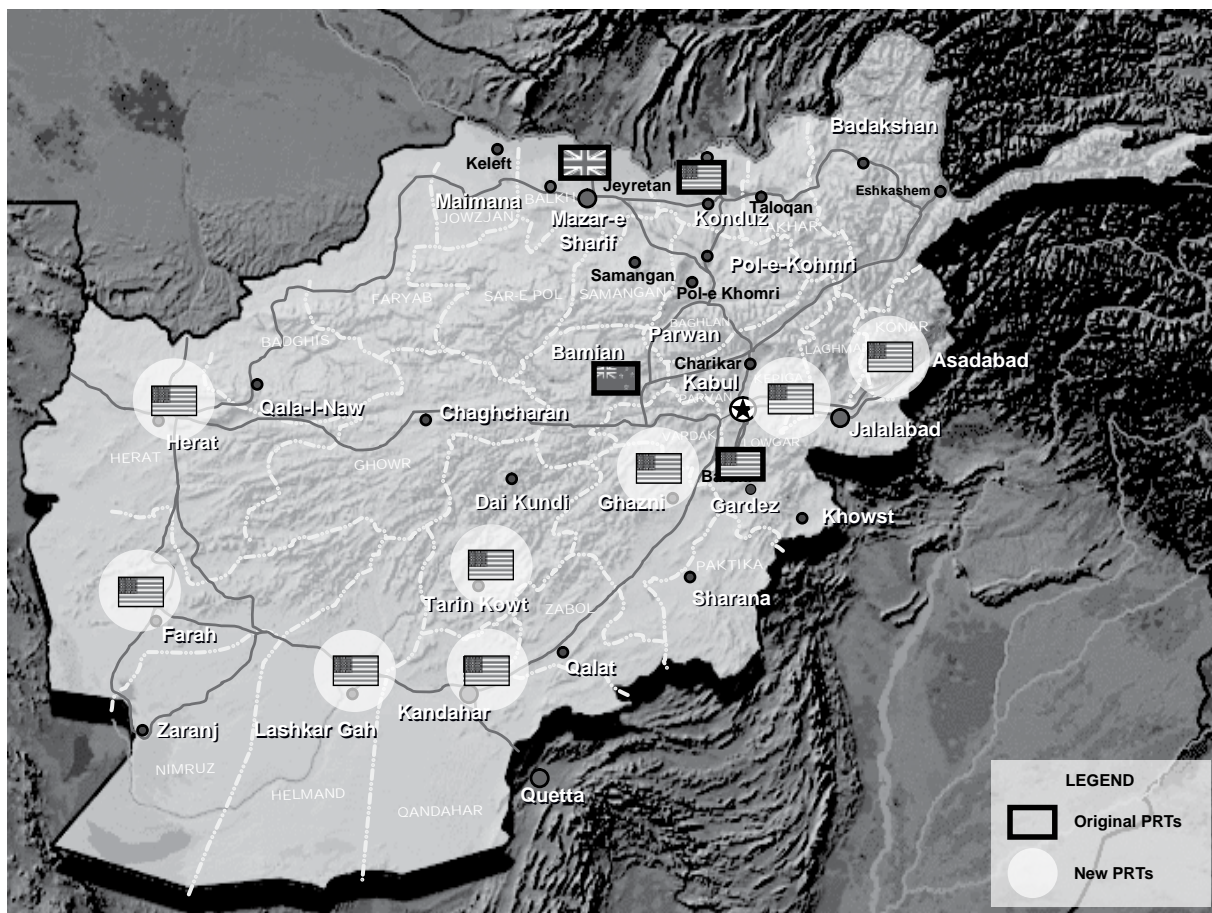


Figure 3. Provincial Reconstruction Teams, 2004.

tripartite conferences chaired at my level (and supported by the U.S. embassies in Kabul and Islamabad) brought together Afghanistan's and Pakistan's senior security leaders to address security issues of mutual concern. CJTF-180 (and later CJTF-76) also hosted monthly tactical border-security meetings along the ill-defined Pakistan-Afghanistan border to reduce local tensions; exchange radios, communications frequencies, and procedures; and build cross-border relations at the local level. Frequent trips to Islamabad rounded out our effort and kept me closely engaged with senior Pakistani military leaders.

All this engagement paid significant dividends when the inevitable exchange of fire across the border occurred between U.S. or Afghan and Pakistani forces. The close military ties that grew from building relationships also helped encourage Pakistani action against the enemy on Pakistan's side of the border. In mid-2004, the Pakistani Army conducted major operations in the Feder-

ally Administered Tribal Area for the first time in Pakistan's history. The effort inflicted hundreds of casualties on the enemy and noticeably disrupted Taliban and Al-Qaeda operations on both sides of the border.<sup>30</sup>

**Crosscutting vector: information operations (IO).** Winning the war of ideas and communicating effectively in a wholly foreign culture was among the most vexing tasks in our COIN strategy. We recognized early on that winning the war of ideas might decide the outcome of the conflict. How would the Afghan people perceive our efforts? Would they retain hope for their future? In the end, would they have more faith in the prospects of their own elected government and their embryonic political process, or would they turn back in despair to the certainty of total control represented by the Taliban?

On balance, it became apparent to me that international forces would always remain at a permanent disadvantage in perceptions, and that the IO effort had to be first and foremost an Afghan one. Our



***Winning the war of ideas and communicating effectively in a wholly foreign culture was among the most vexing tasks in our COIN strategy.***

challenge was to do everything we could to be truthful, to get the facts out, to let success speak for itself, and to create the unshakeable story of good outcomes—all uncompromised by “spin.” Results ultimately speak for themselves. Without demonstrably positive results, information operations can be perceived as spewing empty words that corrode credibility and legitimacy.

## **Evaluating Results of COIN, 2003-2005**

In retrospect, the late 2003 shift in strategy from an enemy-centric counterterrorist strategy to a more comprehensive, population-centered COIN approach marked a turning point in the U.S. mission. While dedicated forces continued unabated the hunt for Al-Qaeda leaders and remnants, the overall direction of the U.S.-coalition effort shifted toward a more classic COIN approach (albeit with a very light footprint) that would have been familiar to Louis Lyautey, Sir Gerald Templer, or Creighton Abrams.

Results over the 2003-2005 period were positive and dramatic. Meeting in a national *loya jirga*, Afghans drew up and approved the most moderate constitution then extant in the Islamic world. Throughout the spring and summer of 2004, 10.5 million Afghans—twice as many as had been expected to do so—registered to vote in the first-ever Afghan presidential elections. In the face of significant insurgent threats, intimidation, and violence, 8.5 million Afghans actually voted that fall, electing Hamid Karzai as president with 55 percent of the vote from among 18 candidates. By year’s end, a respected cabinet was in place and a peaceful inauguration completed. The year 2005 built on this success with a nationwide effort again turning out millions of voters to elect members of the *wolesi jirga*, or lower house of parliament. The winners took their seats by year’s end.

All in all, as 2005 came to a close, we had achieved significant progress toward accomplishing the objectives of the 2001 Bonn conference and the follow-on 2004 Berlin conference, but most importantly, we had built a solid basis of hope among the Afghan people for a better future. Without hope among the population, any COIN effort is ultimately doomed to failure.

## **Afghanistan since 2005**

Much has changed in Afghanistan since 2005 ended so promisingly. The Taliban and Al-Qaeda have gathered strength, changed tactics, and significantly increased both their capabilities and their attacks. As one measure, there were 139 suicide attacks in 2006, as compared to 17 in 2005, 5 in 2004, and 2 in 2003. In the first six months of 2007, there were over 80 suicide attacks.<sup>31</sup> Across the border in Pakistan, further offensive operations against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have been largely suspended since the aggressive Pakistani military efforts in 2004 disrupted much of the terrorist base structure in tribal areas of Waziristan.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, a large potential sanctuary for the Taliban and Al-Qaeda has gone largely unmolested for nearly three years.

On the American side of the ledger, the U.S. publicly announced in mid-2005 that NATO was assuming full responsibility for military operations throughout Afghanistan. By the end of that year, the U.S. declared that it was withdrawing 2,500 combat troops.<sup>33</sup> Unsurprisingly, this was widely viewed in the region as the first signal that the United States was “moving for the exits,” thus reinforcing long-held doubts about the prospects of sustained American commitment.<sup>34</sup> In my judgment, these public moves have served more than any other U.S. actions since 2001 to alter the calculus of both our friends and adversaries across the region—and not in our favor.

***All in all, as 2005 came to a close, ...we had built a solid basis of hope among the Afghan people for a better future. Without hope among the population, any COIN effort is ultimately doomed to failure.***

As promised, by late 2006 NATO had assumed command of the military effort in Afghanistan, commanding over 26,000 troops (including 12,000 from the U.S.). An additional 10,000 Americans served under U.S. national control, many in logistics units and SOF. Twenty-six NATO PRTs are now deployed across Afghanistan, but they vary widely in size, composition, and mission (according to the contributor)—and now report through a different chain of command than do NATO's maneuver units in the same battlespace. The American-led three-star CFC-A headquarters has been inactivated, and the senior U.S. military commander is a two-star general once again located at Bagram—but in tactical command of only one-quarter of the country, Regional Command East. Headquarters, ISAF, has tactical responsibility for all of Afghanistan—and is assisted by a staff including 14 NATO generals.<sup>35</sup> Operational responsibility for Afghanistan resides in Brunssum, the Netherlands—over 3,000 miles distant. An American four-star general commands ISAF, but he officially reports only through NATO channels, not U.S. Both the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, and the Commander of U.S. Central Command own the Afghan theater and its battlespace—and direct forces in Afghanistan who report separately up their two reporting chains.<sup>36</sup> OMC-A has evolved into Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan and remains located in Kabul. No senior U.S. military commander lives and works at the American Embassy. U.S. Embassy Kabul is in its final stages of a “normalization,” designed to make it function and look like every other U.S. embassy in the world. It remains, of course, in a combat zone.

Continual turnover of U.S. senior leaders has made continuity of effort a recurrent challenge in this very complex COIN fight. Since 2001, the U.S. endeavor in Afghanistan has seen five different chiefs of mission and six different military commanders—not counting those who served less than 60 days.<sup>37</sup> Since mid-2005, the comprehensive U.S.-led COIN strategy described above has been significantly altered by subsequent military and civilian leaders who held differing views. With the advent of NATO military leadership, there is today no single comprehensive strategy to guide the U.S., NATO, or international effort. Unity of purpose—both interagency and international—has

suffered; unity of command is more fragmented; area ownership has receded; and tactics in some areas have seemingly reverted to earlier practices such as the aggressive use of airpower.

The “bag of capital” representing the tolerance of the Afghan people for foreign forces appears to be diminishing.<sup>38</sup> NATO's ISAF has assumed a narrow focus on the “20-percent military” dimension of COIN. It views the remaining “80-percent non-military” component of successful COIN operations as falling outside the purview of what is, after all, a “military alliance.”<sup>39</sup> Both NATO and coalition tactics, too, seem to convey the belief that the center of gravity is no longer the Afghan population and their security, but the enemy. In many ways, these changes take us “back to the future” of 2002 and early 2003—and they in all likelihood do not augur well for the future of our policy goals in Afghanistan.

The Afghan people, whose aspirations rose to unprecedented heights in the exhilarating days of 2004 and 2005, have experienced a series of setbacks and disappointments. Besides facing threats from a more dangerous Taliban, President Karzai is under growing pressure from powerful interests inside his own administration. Corruption, crime, poverty, and a burgeoning narcotics trade threaten to undermine public confidence in the new democratic government. NATO, the designated heir to an originally popular international military effort, is threatened by the prospects of mounting disaffection among the Afghan people. This threat is perhaps only exceeded by political risk at home in Europe, owing to the prospect of dramatically increased NATO casualties as the lethality perfected in Iraq migrates east with jihadist fighters freed to fight other battles in Afghanistan.

## Looking Ahead— Tomorrow and the Day After

At the end of the day, what is most important to the United States and to our friends in this region is that success or failure in Afghanistan will dramatically shape the future of a strategically important region for decades to come. Afghanistan's popular image is that of a backward country once best known as a “terrorist-supported state,” but it remains at the center of a global energy and trade crossroads—one which is only growing in significance. It is also situated in an exceptionally important neighborhood:

to the east lies Pakistan, the second largest Islamic nation in the world, and likely armed with dozens of nuclear weapons; to the northeast is China, with growing regional energy and security interests; across the north, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, three former states of the Soviet Union, are struggling against internal forces of instability while confronting powerful neighbors; and to the west is Iran, whose looming nuclear program and

support for terrorism in the region is cause for grave concern. This neighborhood defines strategic interest for the U.S. and the West—and within it, Afghanistan remains a friendly state anxious to increase its connections to the West and especially to the U.S. At this juncture of history, the U.S. and its alliance partners in NATO can ill afford to walk away from this region with any other outcome save long-term success in Afghanistan. **MR**

## NOTES

1. Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Reestablishment of Permanent Government Institutions (Bonn: December, 2001), henceforth referred to as the Bonn Process. This UN-supported response assigned lead nations to oversee varied security-sector reform efforts in Afghanistan: police—Germany; military—U.S.; justice—Italy; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration—Japan; counter-narcotics—United Kingdom.

2. Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF)-180 (now comprising Headquarters, 10th Mountain Division) retained its name upon the departure of XVIII Airborne Corps until March 2004, when it became CJTF-76. Its focus became tactical and low-end operational as Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, the senior coalition headquarters in Kabul, assumed the role of high-end operational and theater (i.e., regional) strategic levels. NATO's ISAF in October 2003 consisted of approximately 5500 troops located exclusively within the city of Kabul.

3. Author's conversation with chief, Office of Military Cooperation, September 2003.

4. Conversations with senior U.S. commanders, 2003; see also Nicholas D. Kristoff, "The Wrong Lessons of the Somalia Debacle," *New York Times* (5 Feb 2002).

5. See *The CIA World Factbook* online entries for Afghanistan and Iraq, <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>>.

6. Author's first visit to Afghanistan, pre-deployment, September 2003.

7. Author's conversation with an infantry battalion commander, December 2003.

8. Author's conversation with General John Abizaid, October 2003: "... your mission is 'big Pol' and 'little mil.'"

9. Conversation with a former senior U.S. commander for Afghanistan, August 2003.

10. This headquarters officially became Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan (CFC-A) in early 2004. Command responsibility was assumed in November 2003.

11. The first augmentation of our staff beyond an original six members came by moving the entire CJTF-180 CJS (future plans) section to Kabul under Combined Forces Command. Colonel (now Brigadier) Ian Liles, U.K., was the CJS largely responsible for drafting the initial "Security Strategy South and East." By May 2005, CFC-A staff stabilized at just over 400 members.

12. See, for example, *The History of Revolutionary Warfare*, Vols. I-V (West Point, NY: United States Military Academy, 1974). Among other valued texts I read during my nineteen months of command were John Nagl's *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (University of Chicago Press: 2005) and Louis Sorely's *A Better War* (Harvest Books, 2007).

13. General Barry McCaffrey, U.S. Army (retired), comment to the author on the depth of consistent understanding of CFC-A COIN strategy during his visits to units across Afghanistan, 2004.

14. "Strategy" here is used as a more commonly understood interagency and international substitute for what would be called in military parlance a "campaign plan." Our complete campaign plan addressing all elements of power eventually became a 400-page document.

15. The footprint of fewer than 20,000 Western forces in Afghanistan in 2003 was light compared with over 100,000 Soviet troops at the height of their ill-fated military involvement. My belief remains that the "light footprint" approach in Afghanistan holds great advantages, despite its many challenges. See Rory Stewart, "Where Less is More," *New York Times*, 23 July 2007.

16. This occurred under CJTF-76, which succeeded CJTF-180 in April 2004.

17. This was a powerful advantage. Direct access and a personal relationship with the president, vice-president, and secretaries of state and defense gave Ambassador Khalilzad and the Afghan enterprise a strong voice at the most senior policy levels in Washington.

18. Christopher Griffen, "A Working Plan: Hope Isn't the Only Strategy for Afghanistan," *Armed Forces Journal* (April 2007).

19. Our entire headquarters staff at this point had fewer than 40 people.

20. Our six-day-a-week Security Core Group meetings brought top U.S. interagency leaders together to "synchronize" outlooks and information almost every morning. Among the attendees were the ambassador, military commander, USAID chief, Afghan Reconstruction Group (ARG) chief, intelligence chief, OMC-A chief, and deputy chief of mission. All left updated with a common view of events in Afghanistan, thus insuring our daily efforts remained well coordinated and mutually supportive.

21. The Embassy Interagency Planning Group (EPIG) was led by Colonel John Ritchie, USA.

22. General Charles Krulak, Commandant, USMC, created the three-block-war construct.

23. General Sir Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 5.

24. Discussion at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Shkin with LTC Mike Howard, USA, Commander, 1-87 Infantry, 10th Mountain Division, winter 2003-4.

25. Personal observation. The reaction of President Karzai, his cabinet, and outward reactions of the Afghan people to this effort were very positive.

26. Herat riots, August 2004; preparations for civil disturbances in Kabul, August 2004.

27. Paraphrasing LTC David Paschal, Commander, 2-87 Infantry, 10th Mountain Division: "The longer I spent in one place, the more people became comfortable with me and were more willing to share information. At first, they were fearful, then they watched with curiosity but then they gained confidence in us and our ability to provide security and services. With ownership we were able to build a level of trust." Outbrief to Headquarters, CFC-A, 5 May 2004.

28. The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Executive Steering Committee met monthly and comprised senior representatives of all nations contributing PRTs or considering such a contribution. It was typically attended by the UN senior representative of the secretary general and co-chaired by the Afghan minister of interior (who oversaw PRTs in the Afghan governmental structure) and the senior U.S. (and later NATO) military commanders.

29. After the departure of Headquarters, XVIII Airborne Corps, in the spring of 2003, CJTF-180 was formed around Headquarters, 10th Mountain Division; later, CJTF-76 formed around Headquarters, 25th Infantry Division (Light), and subsequently, Headquarters, Southern European Task Force (SETAF).

30. Personal observations and discussions with senior Pakistani military officers 2004.

31. Figures on 2003-2006 suicide attacks are from former Afghan Minister of Interior Ali Jalali.

32. Situation as of mid-July 2007. The Pakistani military response in the FATA to the outbreak of nationwide terrorist attacks following the government's 10 July assault on the Lal Masjid ("Red Mosque") in Islamabad had yet to fully develop as of this writing.

33. As reported by the Associated Press and AFX News Limited. See *USA Today*, "NATO to take over Afghan security in 2006" 4 August 2005; and *Forbes.com*, "U.S. to reduce troop numbers in Afghanistan soon," <[www.forbes.com/finance/feeds/afx/2005/12/26/afx2414408.htm](http://www.forbes.com/finance/feeds/afx/2005/12/26/afx2414408.htm)>.

34. A remark we commonly heard from Afghans of every stripe was "You Americans are not going to abandon us again, are you?" The Taliban were often noted for saying "the Americans may have all of the wristwatches, but we have all of the time."

35. CFC-A during this era operated with two generals: one U.S. three-star commander and one U.K. two-star deputy commander. U.K. deputies were, in succession, Major Generals John Cooper and Peter Gilchrist, both exceptional talents. The CFC-A staff principals were entirely composed of colonels or Navy captains; CFC chiefs of staff were, in succession, COL Tom Snukis, USA, and COL Dave Lamm, USA, whose efforts were nothing short of heroic.

36. For example, forces under the "Operation Enduring Freedom mandate" (e.g., U.S. Special Forces) in Afghanistan report through a U.S.-only chain to Admiral Fallon, Commander, U.S. Central Command, in Tampa; forces under the "NATO mandate" (e.g., U.S. infantry battalions) report through Headquarters, ISAF, in Kabul (tactical level), to Commander, Joint Forces Command, Brunsum, the Netherlands (operational level) to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, General Craddock, in Mons (strategic level).

37. Ambassador Finn, Deputy Chief of Mission David Sedney, Ambassador Khalilzad, Ambassador Neumann, Ambassador Wood; LTG Mikolashek, LTG (now General) McNeill, LTG Vines, LTG Barno, LTG Eikenberry, and MG Rodriguez.

38. President Karzai press conferences; April 2006 riots in Kabul; protests to civilian casualties.

39. David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger Security International Paperback, August 2006). According to Galula, successful counterinsurgency is 20 percent military effort, 80 percent non-military.

# Linking Doctrine to Action: A NEW COIN CENTER-OF-GRAVITY ANALYSIS



Colonel Peter R. Mansoor, U.S. Army, and Major Mark S. Ulrich, U.S. Army

*Special thanks to Major Edward Hayward of the British Army, currently attending the U.S. Army's School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, KS, for his valuable insights and assistance in the writing and editing of this article.*

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PHOTO: U.S. Marine Corps LTC Mark House, right, the commanding officer for 4th Reconnaissance Battalion, speaks through an interpreter to Iraqi men in Al um Waz, Iraq, 6 April 2007. (DOD, Cpl. John M. Odette, U.S. Marine Corps)

JUST AS THERE IS no one weapon that guarantees superiority in conventional warfare, there is no silver bullet when it comes to counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, provides a firm doctrinal foundation, as corroborated in Battle Command Knowledge System chat rooms, training at the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Center and the Taji Counterinsurgency Center for Excellence, and field experience in Iraq and Afghanistan. Even so, there is still a gap between doctrine and tactical results in COIN warfare. This article seeks to fill that gap by introducing what we believe is a useful planning tool: the COIN center of gravity (COG) analysis, integrated as the culminating step of COIN intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). COIN COG analysis translates theory into practice from the bottom up, exposing insurgent lines of operation (LOOs) and suggesting possible counters to them. Rather than thrusting objectives from the top down that may or may not apply to a given situation, it balances counterinsurgent efforts and provides metrics. Links between COIN IPB and the root causes of a conflict, and between COIN COG analysis and tactical actions, are analyzed to figure out how to preempt insurgent activity instead of merely reacting to it. The process approaches COIN from the dual perspective of the nature of the population and the nature of the insurgent, not from the perspective of the counterinsurgent.

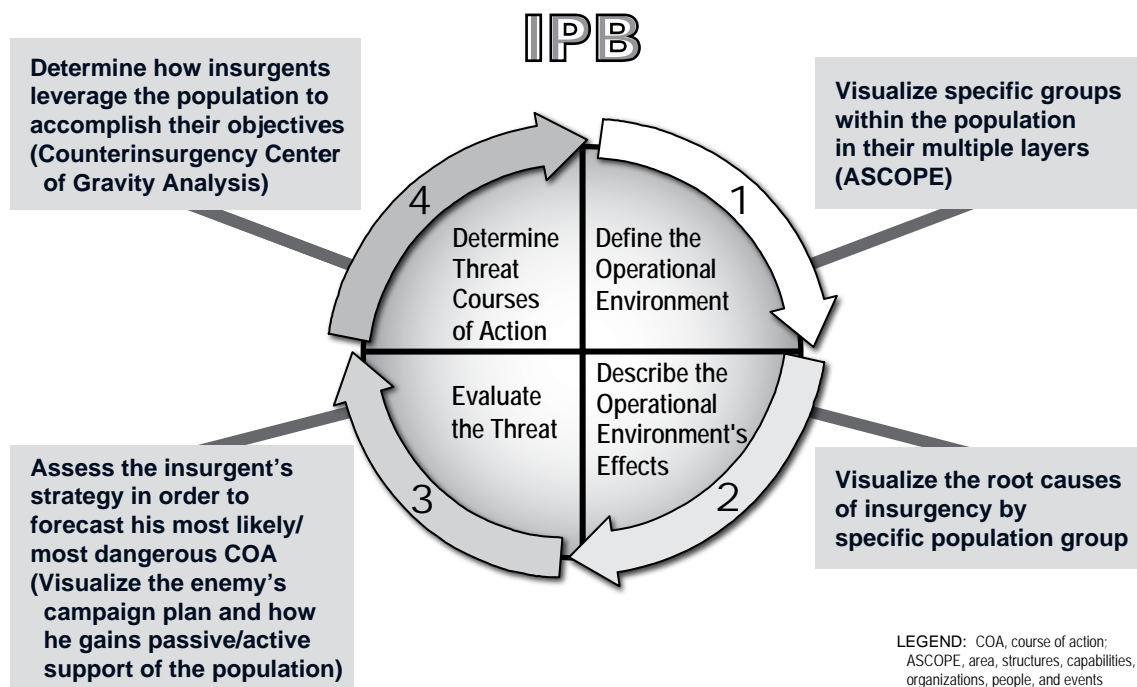
## A New COIN IPB and COG Analysis

Our aim is to understand the enemy's specific strategy, get inside his decision cycle, and predict his likely actions. To accomplish this, we use the four steps of COIN IPB:

- Understand the environment.
- Determine how the enemy is using the root causes of conflict to generate or heighten popular discontent and thereby manipulate the population.
- Discern the insurgent's strategy and his likely actions.
- Culminate steps 1-3 with an analysis of the COIN COG.

This approach focuses operations on eliminating the root causes of an insurgency, accounts for host-nation cooperation across all LOOs, and reconciles short- and long-term effects. Products from the process can help staffs prepare commander's critical information requirements (CCIR), devise means to nullify insurgent information operations, and forecast specific





**Figure 1. The four steps of COIN IPB.**

enemy actions. Critically, the process produces metrics that can help validate an adopted course of action (COA). Altogether, COIN IPB/COIN COG analysis is an integrated, comprehensive process that flows from the perspectives of the population and the insurgent.

## The People Are the Environment

Because the population is the key to success in a counterinsurgency, COIN IPB must start with the people and their issues. Both insurgents and counterinsurgents employ strategies to separate each other from the population while drawing the population's active or passive support to themselves. The people need to make choices in support of one side or the other; controlling their will is more important than controlling terrain. According to Clausewitz, a center of gravity is "the point against which all the energies should be directed."<sup>1</sup> For the counterinsurgent, all energies should be directed at gaining and maintaining control over the population and winning its support. Power emanates from the people; without their support, neither the insurgent nor the counterinsurgent can win.

In step 1 of COIN IPB, we assess the area, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, and events (ASCOPE) in an area of operation to

identify the links between the physical environment and the people. In other words, we move from the *what* to the *who*. The human element is the important part here. The ASCOPE assessment helps the counterinsurgent understand the people and the cultural, social, and physical environment in which they live.

## Addressing the Root Causes of Conflict

In COIN, the counterinsurgent's main thrust must be directed at eliminating the root causes of conflict. These root causes preexist the insurgent's arrival, and determining what they are is the essence of step 2 in COIN IPB. To use a medical metaphor, the root cause is a wound, the insurgency an infection stemming from the wound. The counterinsurgent must treat the infection to heal the wound, and then find and remove whatever caused the wound.

COIN doctrine prescribes general treatment for the ills that cause insurgency, but the medicine prescribed for a particular illness must be more specific: the counterinsurgent must address the root causes indigenous to each area, ideally before an insurgency materializes. A counterinsurgent needs to do more than defeat an insurgent group to be successful; if he eliminates root causes that could

spawn an insurgency, he attains his objective. It is helpful to identify the insurgent's special tactics, but it is key to understand the intent behind them—the insurgent's purpose or operational goals. The question to answer, then, is not what kind of an insurgency exists, but what is causing it. These causes will be sociopolitical—they will be the grievances of real people. The insurgent wants to use them for tactical gain. By *addressing the root causes*—the way—the counterinsurgent can achieve his desired *end state* of denying the insurgent the support of the population.

An accurate, detailed analysis and understanding of a specific operational environment is paramount for winning over a population. Such an understanding is achievable by tactical units down to platoon level; in fact, platoon level is the best place to start. Still, although insurgencies are unique, they do have some common characteristics. At the core, three prerequisites are necessary for insurgency: *a vulnerable population* (one with social, political, economic, or security-related grievances), *leadership for direction* (a person, group, or idea), and *lack of government control* (a non-responsive and/or overly repressive government).<sup>2</sup> COIN COG analysis sets these prerequisites in the context of insurgent strategy and host-nation shortcomings.

## Counter guerrilla Operations

Counterinsurgents earn the loyalty of the people and deny insurgents their life support by supporting or undertaking legitimate initiatives that address root causes effectively. Tactical actions such as finding improvised explosive devices (IEDs), defeating IED networks, seizing IED materials, clearing areas, and destroying IED cells and their infrastructure are aspects of *counter guerrilla warfare*; as such, they are merely part of one pillar of COIN operations, not the ultimate remedy to the root causes of conflict. Without a long-term solution to popular discontent, counter guerrilla efforts will continue to strike an enemy that is capable of infinite regeneration. To be sure, the counterinsurgent must confront guerrillas and their tactics, but he must not lose sight of the need for a long-term antidote to a sociopolitical problem. Effective COIN operations aimed at root causes will create an environment that inhibits the enemy's ability to fabricate, transport, emplace, and initiate IEDs in the first place.

## Insurgent Strategy versus Type of Insurgency

The type or nature of an insurgency (*what* they want) should not be confused with the insurgent strategy itself (*how* they intend to achieve what they want). To succeed, COIN operations must focus primarily on the enemy's strategy and how he sequences his actions in time and space—not on his ideology or desired end state. Misunderstanding the distinction between type and strategy at this level of analysis will skew our approach to counterinsurgency.

In considering the issue of nature or type versus strategy, it is worth noting that Kurdish separatist groups, Colombia's FARC, certain extremist Shi'a movements, Sunni Ba'athist cells, and Al-Qaeda all have distinct natures but employ essentially the same strategy: urban terrorism as developed by such revolutionary leaders as Frantz Fanon in Algeria and Raúl Sendic, head of Uruguay's Tupamaros in the 1960s and 70s. These groups all attack the government to provoke retaliation and generate collateral damage among the local population. In this way, they seek to separate the government from the people.<sup>3</sup>

By assessing the insurgent's strategy and what his capabilities will allow him to do, we can develop a good idea of what his operational goals might be. Examination of these goals and the insurgent's attempts to achieve them through guerrilla actions will then allow us to get in front of his decision cycle.

The insurgent's operational goals may be overt and publicly championed, or covert. They may have immediate consequences, or delayed effects in consonance with long-term objectives. (Car bombings of a local population, for instance, may seem counterproductive because they incite immediate anger against the bombings and their perpetrators, but a sustained campaign of massive

***...assessing the insurgent's strategy and what his capabilities will allow him to do... will...allow us to get in front of his decision cycle.***

violence can have two longer term results: it can weaken popular support for the government, and it can make the population believe that the insurgents can protect them better than the government can.) Whatever the insurgent's intent is, if we approach the problem from the perspectives of the population and the insurgent campaign plan, we can interdict him on a number of levels. COIN COG analysis encourages the counterinsurgent to undertake tactical actions that address the root causes of conflict. It enables the counterinsurgent to achieve lasting effects that will survive successive unit rotations.

## Insurgent Ends, Ways, and Means

The insurgent works in a premeditated fashion, in accordance with his strategy, to achieve his operational goals, his *ends*. COIN COG analysis translates these ends into insurgent LOOs (not to be confused with friendly logical LOOs) that can be grouped into four broad functions, or *ways*: political, military, social, and economic. The insurgent will seek to achieve freedom of maneuver by exploiting the root causes of conflict at the tactical level. Within his abilities, he will attempt to provide the needs of the population: governance, sustenance, a cause to belong to, and security. Because what works for the insurgent in one area may be futile in another, his specific course of action—his *means*—will be determined by the unique conditions of each demographic cluster (or groupings of people with enough similarities to have the same needs). The same holds true for the counterinsurgent.

## The Seven Pillars of Insurgency

Doctrine has identified seven key aspects or dynamics of an insurgency: leadership, ideology, objectives, environment and geography, external support, phasing and timing, and organization and operational patterns.<sup>4</sup> The counterinsurgent can use these dynamics to assess insurgent strategy and predict insurgent courses of action. An assessment must be done for every distinct region, since an insurgency might use a different strategy and different phasing in different areas. This step (step 3 in COIN IPB, "Analyze the Threat") considers, in detail, how the insurgency and the population relate to the environment.

## Enemy COIN COG Analysis

In COIN, the center of gravity is generally an aspect of the population (shared ethnicity, religion, or grievance discovered in COIN IPB steps 1 and 2) that the enemy exploits (step 3) to garner active or passive popular support. Enemy COIN COG analysis, otherwise known as Insurgency Course-of-Action (COA) Analysis (step 4), simply brings together the first three steps of IPB; it puts existing data into a context planners can use to visualize the complexities of the environment, and it integrates how the enemy uses the root causes of conflict to gain the support of, or control over, the people. The analysis is predicated on understanding the links between the insurgent and the population. The root causes of conflict offer the opening for insurgent interaction with the population. The people, in turn, facilitate insurgent actions and sustain the insurgency's existence because they believe that the insurgents can best meet their needs, or inversely, that the government cannot—whether the needs are material, physical, cultural, spiritual, or ideological.

Enemy COIN COG analysis enables a unit to think and act unconventionally, to discern the enemy's strategy and operational goals, and to deduce how the enemy plans to achieve his objectives through tactical actions. The enemy COIN COG analysis construct differs from the one used in conventional COG analysis. Instead of *critical capability*, *critical requirement*, and *critical vulnerability*, it considers *COG*, *COG enabler*, *principal facilitator*, *counter facilitator*, and *friendly force COA*. (See figure 2 for an example of how an enemy COIN COG analysis might proceed.) This construct is applied to each insurgent LOO.

As aforementioned, the enemy COIN COG is that aspect of the population that the enemy exploits to achieve his operational goals. Insurgents exploit that specific group's root causes to gain passive or active support. A *COG enabler* is an official or unofficial leader or specific information operations message or narrative that facilitates the insurgent's ability to exploit the COIN COG. *Principal facilitator* refers to an insurgent action designed to manipulate the COG enabler(s). Designed to play upon the root cause, the principal facilitator takes advantage of a vulnerability of the COG enabler. It is also the specific delivery method of the enemy's IO messages. *Counter facilitator* describes a counterinsurgent action designed to counter the principal

Enemy - Iraqi Sunni Extremists  
Former Regime Element (FRE)

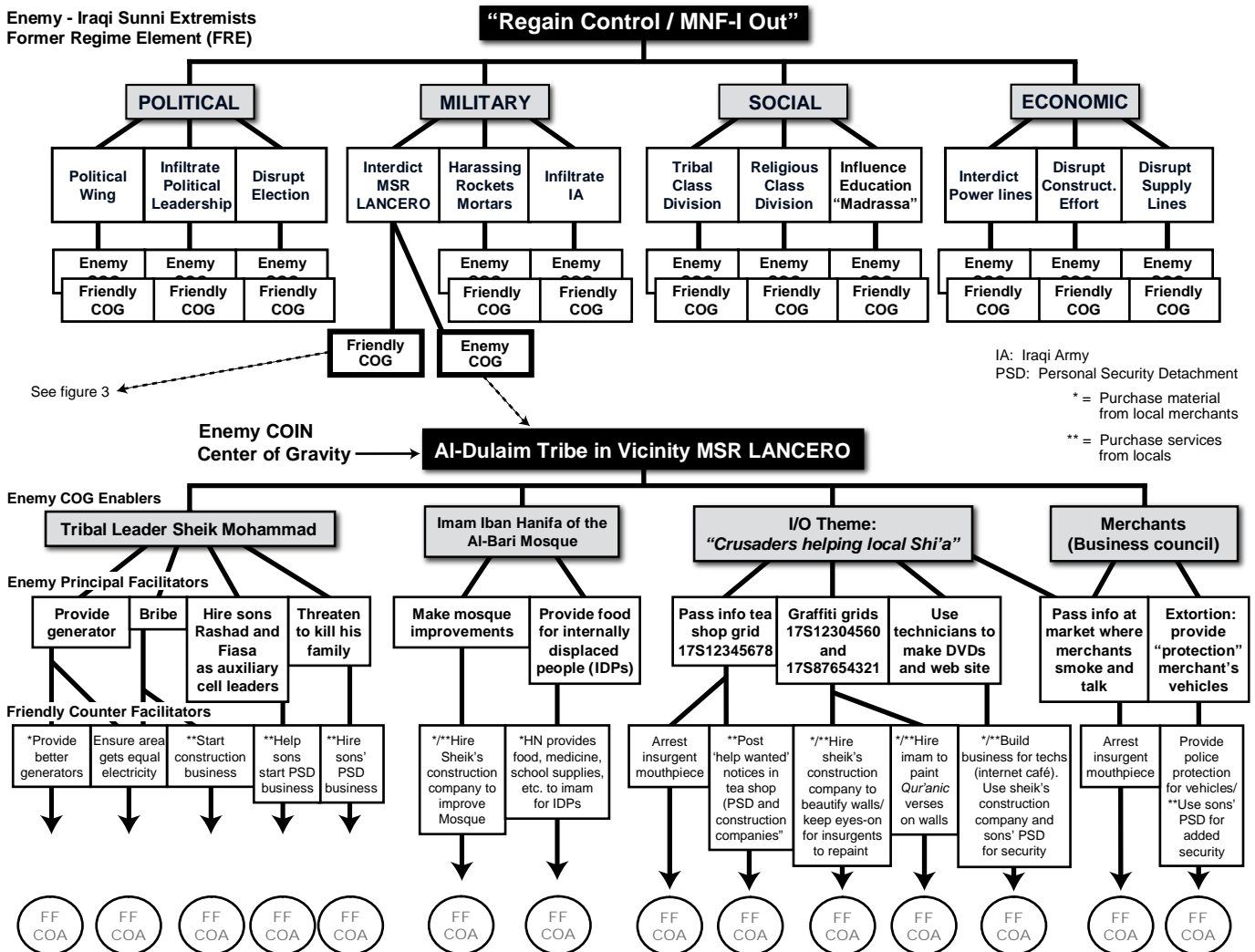


Figure 2. Enemy COIN COG Analysis: Culmination of steps 1 through 3 of COIN IPB.

facilitator. Defining effective counter facilitators is a part of the ongoing analysis and not a COA; it addresses *what to do* about the insurgent's attempt to coerce a COG enabler, not *how to preempt* the insurgent. And finally, the counterinsurgent arrives at his *friendly force COA*. Each counter facilitator should elicit several possible COAs. Ideally, the different COAs will help build cooperation and interoperability between the counterinsurgents and the demographic cluster.

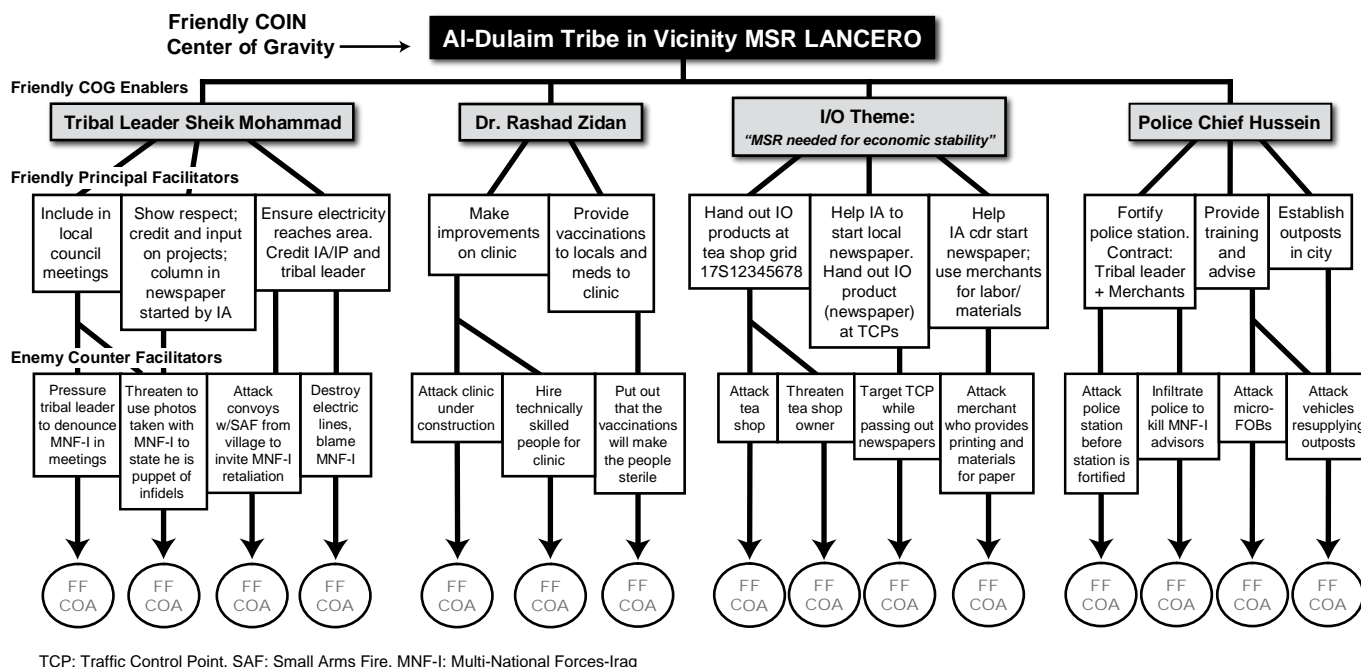
Enemy COIN COG analysis examines how to separate the insurgents physically and psychologically from the population. It proceeds like a war-gaming sequence, with consideration and assessment of actions, reactions, and counter-actions. The process helps planners grasp the complexities of the environment, effects, and threat, and it prompts

consideration of specific counter actions to take for each threat action or reaction. It enables the counterinsurgent to develop more than just COAs that counter current insurgent operations; its emphasis on the root causes of conflict allows the counterinsurgent to get ahead of the insurgent by conducting operations that build relationships with the local community across the logical lines of operation. Instead of focusing only on the IED or the network that emplaced it, enemy COIN COG analysis also considers the environment that enabled the network to arise and flourish in the first place.

## Friendly Forces COIN COG Analysis

In COIN warfare, COG analysis doesn't stop with the enemy; it also has a friendly forces component.





**Figure 3. Friendly COIN COG analysis.**

Whereas the former aims at denying the insurgent popular support, the latter helps identify the best COAs to draw the support of the population to the counterinsurgent, and thus the host-nation government. Using enemy operational goals and root causes to forecast how the enemy will react, it helps planners develop friendly initiatives. In friendly forces COIN COG analysis, planners must conduct COIN-specific war games based on the population and insurgency—conventional war gaming cannot predict insurgent actions. Figure 3 describes how a friendly forces COIN COG analysis might proceed.

## Linking Bottom to Top

The understanding of the environment gained through COIN IPB benefits counterinsurgent operations on a number of levels. COIN COG analysis, once again as step 4 of COIN IPB, links bottom-up intelligence to enemy strategy to help commanders design operational concepts to counter enemy actions, mitigate the population's vulnerabilities, and make the people choose to support the host-nation government. Decentralized execution of COIN operations still requires that higher level commanders and staff coordinate efforts, cover seams and fill in gaps, and pass forecasts and assessments among operating areas. The analysis can help to accomplish these tasks as well.

## Conclusion

As step 4 of IPB in a COIN environment, COG analysis is used to integrate our approach to operations. Undertaken from the perspective of the population and focused on the nature of the insurgency, it methodically builds detail at the lower levels and helps planners formulate CCIR that are truly crucial to achieving strategic goals. COIN COG analysis guides our identification of enemy initiatives and operations specific to an area. It—

- Highlights topics for discussion with community leaders, which in turn can produce information concerning the uniqueness and diversity of the population.
- Helps identify unofficial community leaders and their capabilities rather than simply identifying structures and features.
- Uncovers who the enemy's recruiters/mouthpieces are, where they operate, and how they interact with the population.
- Helps planners form tactical courses of action that can draw the enemy out and make him more visible.
- Identifies economic, social, and political reform projects for each community and provides insight about which local leaders to talk to and what we should talk to them about in order to further government initiatives.

- Underlines the links between insurgents, criminal organizations, and local support.
- Promotes interoperability between U.S./coalition military/political efforts and host-nation government elements, as this cooperation is necessary for the method to work.

COIN COG analysis stands in contrast to the “carrot and stick” approach, which focuses on short-term solutions to long-term issues and actually provides incentives for future violence.<sup>5</sup> COIN COG analysis maximizes resources, synergizes the staff, and improves interoperability. It provides specific messages tailored to the people’s unique concerns through ways they normally communicate. Examining the COIN problem through the population and enemy perspectives, it enables the counterinsurgent to tailor resources to each specific area, and in a balanced and measured fashion.

Critically, by conducting COIN COG analysis within COIN IPB, we use the enemy’s LOOs to shape our campaign to control the population and gain its support. To get in front of the enemy’s decision cycle, we must understand how he plans on pursuing his operational goals. If we only think tactically (e.g., counterinsurgency operations), we will be forced into a reactive way of doing business (e.g., passing tactics, techniques, and procedures back and forth; doing pattern analysis; pursuing insurgents in their base areas). Looking across the spectrum of the enemy’s operational goals and understanding his relationship to the people and his attempts to exploit them enables commanders to build proactive short-, medium-, and long-term counterinsurgency plans. This of course includes counterinsurgency operations, but only as part of the process and in the proper context.

COIN COG analysis is the comprehensive approach military forces and other government agencies need to take to operate effectively in an extremely challenging environment that typically takes years to understand. It “squares the circle” and facilitates the transition from descriptive COIN doctrine to prescriptive guidance. Currently, COIN COG analysis is taught to brigade combat teams on

the road to deployment, is part of the curriculum at the COIN Center for Excellence in Iraq, and is among regular lecture topics at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. It has also been shared with training centers, allied militaries, and curriculum developers for various professional military education programs. COIN COG analysis may not be a silver bullet, but it is a useful tool, one developed in the field to help overcome the challenges of the unconventional environment we find ourselves operating in today. **MR**

#### NOTES

1. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and eds. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 595-96.
2. Field Manual (FM) 90-8, *Counterinsurgency Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO] August 1986), Section II, 1-4.
3. The COIN campaigner should also take care not to pigeon-hole the insurgent group according to some historical precedent it seems to be following. Insurgents might begin with or borrow from one or more specific doctrinal models or theories (e.g., those of Mao Tse-Tung, Che Guevara, Abd el-Krim, Carlos Marighella, Frantz Fanon), but in time they will evolve into whole new manifestations of insurgency.
4. FM 3-07, *Stability and Support Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, February 2003), A-2.
5. The carrot and stick approach, whereby a commander offers an insurgent or community leader an incentive (say, a well for his village) in exchange for neutrality or support (e.g., not allowing insurgents to fire mortars from his village into a coalition operating base) can actually invite violence: the leader might figure that once he gets his well, another outbreak of insurgent mortar fire might yield an irrigation project, more kilowatts, or a new school. Coalition unit rotations that neglect good battle handover are particular targets for such stratagems.

*For additional information about COIN IPB and COG analysis, or to request software, class plans, and graphics for use in COIN IPB (including COIN COG analysis), visit the USA/USMC COIN Center website at <https://coin.army.mil> (This is a secure site.) Those using the process and wanting feedback on their analysis can contact Major Mark Ulrich ([mark.ulrich@conus.army.mil](mailto:mark.ulrich@conus.army.mil)) for a SIPR address. Those without secure access who desire further information, other tools, perspectives, briefings, workshops, and training programs can contact the USA/USMC COIN Center at 913-758-3157 or via email ([mark.ulrich@conus.army.mil](mailto:mark.ulrich@conus.army.mil)).*

# THE MAN WHO BENT EVENTS: “KING JOHN” in Indochina

**Lieutenant Colonel Michel Goya, French Marines, and  
Lieutenant Colonel Philippe François, French Marines**



Military Review wishes to thank Colonel François-Xavier Yves and Major Stanislas Demagnienville for their gracious assistance in the production of this article. COL Yves is currently the French liaison officer to the U.S. Combined Arms Center. MAJ Demagnienville is attached to the French Embassy in Washington, D.C.

*Lieutenant Colonel Michel Goya and Lieutenant Colonel Philippe François are both in the French Marines and have served in troop command and staff assignments.*

*A distinguished general is asked to assume command of an undersized military force fighting a counterinsurgency war widely criticized by opposition political leaders and broadly unpopular among his countrymen, and to do so with relatively limited resources and little hope for gaining political support or additional resources in the future. Yet despite the handicaps, he succeeds in turning the tables against the insurgents, seriously damaging their forces and capabilities while dramatically undermining the support they receive from the populace. In doing so, he forces enemy leaders to abandon their timetable for establishing totalitarian rule. The time is 1951, the place Indochina, and the man French General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny.*

## Background

When General de Lattre was selected to command French troops battling the Vietminh in Indochina, many in the French (and U.S.) Government saw him as France's last best hope to breathe life into a failing effort to defeat a nationalist-communist insurgency. De Lattre was a highly competitive, extremely demanding, and charismatic commander with a penchant for theatricality in communicating his orders. (In fact, early on he acquired the nickname “King John” from those with whom he served.) A cavalry officer, de Lattre had already enjoyed a long and distinguished career with service in two World Wars. He had seen combat action as a lieutenant in World War I, and he had served with distinction during the interval between wars, leading eventually to his selection as commandant of France's war college (*L'Ecole de Guerre*) in 1935. When France declared war on Germany in 1939, de Lattre was given command of the French 14th Infantry Division, which he led briefly until the armistice with Nazi Germany and the establishment of the Vichy Government. Choosing to remain on active duty despite the humiliation of France's partitioning and partial annexation by Germany, he then commanded Vichy troops in North Africa until 1941. In 1942, he assumed command of the 16th Division and attempted to organize it as an anti-German force. As a result of this effort, de Lattre was arrested and sentenced to 10 years in jail. However, he managed to escape and made his way out of Algeria to join Free French forces.

Recognized for his patriotism, military skills, and audacity, de Lattre was later selected to command French Army B, one of two armies of the U.S.

PHOTO: General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, 1951. (Courtesy of French Association Rhin et Danube)

6th Army Group, set up to organize the invasion of southern France. Under his command, French Army B landed in Provence in August 1944 and helped allied forces liberate French territory from Nazi occupation. French Army B later became the French First Army.

After the expulsion of Nazi forces from France, de Lattre’s French First Army participated in the invasion of Germany. Later, due to his reputation and achievements as a war leader, he was given the high honor of representing France at ceremonies marking the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany.

Unfortunately, the end of World War II did not result in a lasting peace for France, which almost immediately became embroiled in conflicts in its far-flung colonies and former colonies as it tried to salvage its pre-war economic and cultural ties. Against the backdrop of a chaotic postwar environment featuring a global clash between Western liberal democracies and Marxist-Leninist states, Stalinist acolytes began to fan the flame of indigenous nationalist and colonial independence movements in an effort to expand Communism throughout the world. France found itself facing just such a foe in Indochina, where Soviet-trained guerrilla leaders Ho Chi Minh and General Vo Nguyen Giap led the Vietminh, an indigenous insurgency that merged Vietnamese nationalism with Communist ideology.

Attempts at sharing power between the French and the Vietminh quickly failed. Still exhausted from World War II, France embarked on a war in Southeast Asia against insurgents who had gained much experience from battling the Japanese during World War II.

French commanders initially sought a quick victory through conventional means. In an effort to decapitate the insurgent movement, French paratroopers conducted an airborne assault against the Vietminh’s jungle headquarters in October 1947. They also attacked over land, using armored and riverine formations in a pincer movement aimed at capturing or killing the Vietminh’s leaders and engaging Giap’s forces in a decisive battle. However, choosing the Maoist tactic of retreating when



Portrait of Generals Montgomery, Eisenhower, Zhukov, and de Lattre in Berlin, 1945.

Library of Congress

attacked, Ho Chi Minh and Giap escaped into the jungle with the balance of their forces intact and denied the French the decisive battle they sought.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, the Vietminh guerrilla forces adopted small-scale hit-and-run and ambush tactics that avoided a pitched battle in which the French would have had a clear advantage. They embraced Mao’s strategy of wearing down the enemy politically while steadily building a conventional capability to use against him when he was most vulnerable. This strategy proved effective.

At the start of the conflict, the French Expeditionary Corps was a professional army that included Algerian, Moroccan, Senegalese, and French Foreign Legion infantry units, with mainly French artillery and armor in support. An all-French aviation unit and a strategic reserve of crack parachute battalions supported the force. French forces also included well-trained Vietnamese parachute units and colonial *bataillons de marche*—self-contained Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian infantry battalions led by French officers and NCOs.

The vast majority of Vietnamese people expressed a desire for independence from all foreign control, but deep religious and political divisions fostered violent internal conflict. While few preferred continuing under French rule (with a promise of eventual independence), many saw this as a much better alternative to the vicious intolerance toward personal liberty, religious expression, and dissent characteristic of Ho Chi Minh’s Stalinist movement. Indeed, the Vietminh’s ideological dogmatism and its use of



violence to stamp out dissent drove many religious groups into an alliance with the French. Chief among these were the Hoa (an ascetic Buddhist sect) and Vietnam's large Catholic population.

After conventional operations failed in 1947, Brigadier General Charles Marie Chanson in Cochinchina (southern Vietnam) and Major General Marcel Allessandri in Tonkin (the north) decided upon a dramatic change in strategy: they would emphasize pacification as a way to undermine the insurgents' popular support. The resulting campaign focused on rural economic development, medical programs, and construction projects in the key rice-growing regions of Vietnam's river deltas. By the summer of 1950, the strategy appeared to be succeeding.

Unfortunately for the French, the fundamental character of the war had already begun to evolve prior to 1950. In December 1949, Chinese Communists began establishing training camps near the Vietnamese border to train and supply Vietminh fighters. The Vietminh also acquired a great deal more firepower in the form of 75mm and 105mm American howitzers captured from the Nationalist Chinese during the Chinese civil war. Together, the Chinese-supplied training and new firepower produced a change in insurgent strategy.

From the camps in China, Giap reorganized his regiments into division strike forces, which he then began to employ against French outposts along remote areas of the Red River near the Chinese border. He expanded these attacks into a systematic campaign to isolate French garrisons along the border. As part of his plan, the Vietminh started ambushing resupply convoys on Colonial Route (RC) 4. By late 1949, resupply of the border posts had become extremely costly in terms of lost equipment and manpower, so the French began to abandon posts regarded as nonessential. In time, Vietminh ambushes entirely cut off ground resupply to Cao Bang, the largest and northernmost outpost along RC 4, which thereafter could only be resupplied by air.

Sensing that the French were in a precarious situation because their units were widely dispersed and difficult to resupply and reinforce, Giap ordered an all-out offensive throughout Vietnam. Although the offensive did not bring victory, it did succeed in diverting French support from defense of the northern outposts to defense of urban and rice-growing

areas. This further degraded French defensive capabilities and exposed isolated units to attack.

The French did not recognize the danger their northern outposts were in until October 1950, when in response to intelligence reports of massing Vietminh forces, they tried to evacuate Cao Bang. But it was too late. Seizing the window of opportunity ahead of French efforts to evacuate the camp, Giap attacked in full force.

In a matter of days Giap's forces annihilated eight battalions, including the garrison at Cao Bang and a relief force attempting to reach the outpost via RC 4. Lost were two full battalions of the Foreign Legion, three Moroccan battalions, a battalion of T'ai hill tribe partisans, and two parachute battalions—one of them the elite 1st Foreign Legion Parachute Battalion.

To destroy the relief force, Giap used the garrison at Cao Bang as bait to entice the relieving forces into a huge area ambush, where they were destroyed by infantry supported by heavy guns. Such an elaborate and deadly ambush was the direct result of Chinese Communist support. It was becoming glaringly evident that Giap, with Chinese help, had transformed his army from a relatively ineffective guerrilla force into a robust, capable conventional force with significant firepower.

The RC 4 ambush was a complete surprise and the shock to the Expeditionary Corps and the French Government was traumatic. When the magnitude of their losses became apparent, French forces in Tonkin descended into near panic and prepared to evacuate the country entirely. The stronghold of Lang Son surrendered without a fight, and many felt the French would soon abandon the Red River Delta. Not long thereafter, Giap announced that he would be entering Hanoi to take charge. There was broad public expectation that Communist forces would soon converge on the city, seizing control of it and Vietnam as well.

It is important to note that these events occurred at the same time Western forces were suffering a major setback elsewhere in Asia. In November, a large Chinese offensive in Korea inflicted the biggest battlefield defeat ever on the modern U.S. Army, pushing its Soldiers back from the Yalu River down to positions below the 38th parallel. In Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh and Communism must have seemed inevitable.

This was the dire situation that the new commander-in-chief of French forces, General de Lattre, faced upon his arrival in Vietnam some two months after the northern debacle. Called "the French MacArthur" because of his penchant for the dramatic as well as his audacity in taking risks, de Lattre had an immediate and electrifying effect on the Expeditionary Corps.<sup>2</sup> By his presence alone he stabilized the strategic situation overnight and breathed new life and courage into the troops.

## Transforming the Force in Three Days

Rarely has an arrival been as theatrical as the one de Lattre staged on 17 December 1950 at Saigon airport. The former commander-in-chief of the French First Army, the man fellow Frenchmen selected to represent the country when Germany formally surrendered, de Lattre waited for all the passengers to disembark ahead of him, including the secretary of the commonwealth. After making the crowd wait even longer, he finally emerged in his white uniform.

De Lattre's fits of anger were legendary, as was his reputation for not countenancing fools or those he perceived to be fools. As if to confirm this reputation, he paused on the top step of the airplane's staircase, scowling grimly at the crowd, and then slowly walked down the stairs to inspect the troops. During what was supposed to be a welcoming ceremony, de Lattre showed open disdain for the



General de Lattre with General Salan and Colonel Beaufre planning the defense of Tonkin, December 1950.

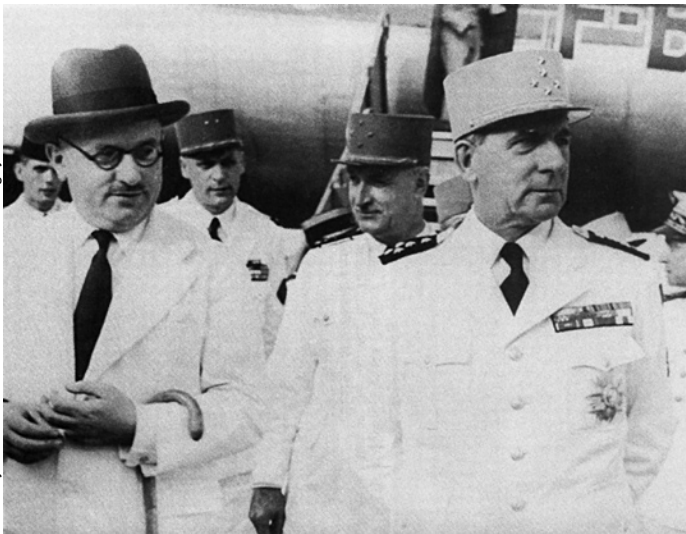
Courtesy Foundation Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny

officials who had come to welcome him, including his two predecessors, the high commissioner and the commander-in-chief of the Expeditionary Corps, whose powers he would shortly assume and consolidate.

It became clear from the moment that de Lattre stepped on the tarmac that he had not come to promote paternal fairness or provide benevolent comfort. Instead, he was there to instill iron discipline, by personal example, in a flagging force that desperately needed aggressive, decisive leadership. Stepping up to the formation he was to inspect, he set the tone for his assumption of command by immediately relieving the officer in charge of the troops, having assessed him as "shabby." The unfortunate officer, who himself had just arrived in Vietnam, was flown back to France in the same plane that had brought the general.<sup>3</sup>

De Lattre repeated this on-the-spot dismissal numerous times, summarily relieving and sending back to France many other officers who failed to meet with his immediate approval. He replaced them with his own men, in particular those called his *maréchaux* (marshals), the young colonels who had fought under him in World War II.<sup>4</sup>

To inform the public that he, not Giap, would control Hanoi, de Lattre ordered that a large military parade be held there on 19 December, two days after his arrival. Considering the situation at the time, such an order seemed to many to be surreal.



General de Lattre arriving at Saigon airport to assume command of the French Expeditionary Forces, December 1950.

Courtesy Foundation Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny

However, the parade proved to be a stroke of psychological genius. It boosted the martial spirit and morale of the French troops and the confidence of those living in French-controlled areas. Moreover, it gave de Lattre the opportunity to get a close-up look at his men in order to assess their condition and morale and to communicate with many of them in person, Soldier-to-Soldier, at a crucial time.

At the parade, de Lattre personally inspected the troops very slowly, as if taking possession of them. Afterwards, he mustered the officer corps present to give them a simple message. "Our fight is selfless," he said. "We are here to defend civilization. This fight is not a matter of supremacy, but of liberation. I came here to wage war with you, but also to make you proud to wage it. The era for indecisiveness is over. Gentlemen, I give you my word that from now on you will be given orders."<sup>5</sup> Addressing the junior officers, he added, "It is especially for you lieutenants and captains that I have come . . . for all those who are fighting to win." Among the junior officers in the group was Bernard de Lattre, the general's only son, a young lieutenant taken along on his father's mission to save civilization in a far part of the French world.<sup>6</sup>

De Lattre's rapid, forceful action served to calm and reassure the troops. Within just a few days, there was a marked upswing in the morale of French forces, and calm had returned to previously panic-stricken streets. The Expeditionary Corps appeared to have regained its faith and its will to fight.

## De Lattre versus Giap

Despite de Lattre's salutary impact, everyone knew that lofty words and theatrical parades were not enough to turn the tide of events against the determined Vietminh. Success would ultimately depend on shrewd, effective action in combat and subsequent exploitation of combat successes on the global political stage. The opportunity for the new commander-in-chief to change the tide of events in both areas came almost immediately.

During the night of 14 January 1951, the Vietminh launched a high-profile attack on the western forefront of the Red River Delta, near the little town of Vinh Yen, a few kilometers from Hanoi. The battle began unfavorably for the French. The Vietminh 312th Division attacked, cut off, and surrounded Mobile Task Force 3, one of five French

mobile task forces that had come to the rescue of troops withdrawing from their garrisons. At the same time, the Vietminh 308th Division had positioned itself to attack into the flank of expected French reinforcements.

De Lattre reacted immediately, but suspecting an attempted replay of the strategy in which Cao Bang had been used as bait for a ground ambush, he commandeered all available civilian planes and airlifted five battalions from Cochin China and Annam (central Vietnam) to a staging area, where he constituted two task forces to rescue the besieged troops. He then organized a relief effort with close air support from all available aircraft in the area of operation. He also devised his own surprise for the camouflaged and waiting Vietminh, ordering aerial attacks of their positions with a recently arrived supply of napalm from the Americans.

Late on the afternoon of the 15th, as the French counterattack had just begun, de Lattre flew to Vinh Yen with his deputy, General Raoul Salan. His first words for the colonel in command of the sector were, "Is this not over yet?" The bewildered colonel did not know if de Lattre was being critical or ironic, and the general did not elaborate.<sup>7</sup>

After three days of bitter fighting, Giap gave up the field and broke off the attack, having lost thousands of troops. It was a resounding victory for the same French Expeditionary Corps that, just two months before, had suffered a supposedly decisive defeat and been in the midst of preparing to abandon Vietnam.

De Lattre did not even pause to savor this first battlefield success against Giap's forces. Having successfully repelled one major assault by the Vietminh, he instantly began preparing for the follow-on attacks he knew would come. He reequipped the Expeditionary Corps to cope with the enemy's new conventional capabilities and began preparations to deal with a possible Communist Chinese offensive of the type that had inflicted such heavy losses on American troops in Korea.

De Lattre decided that the Expeditionary Corps would focus its main effort on Tonkin. In doing so, he put an end to public speculation that the French might choose to sacrifice the north to save the south. In de Lattre's mind, any move to sacrifice the north would shake the already slender confidence the new Vietnamese national government had in its French allies, further undermine the already threadbare



political will of the French Government, and jeopardize any effort to build a new, all-Vietnamese army. Such a policy would also cede the enemy a huge territory without a fight—territory that he could use as a staging-ground to improve his fighting capabilities and then continue the war into the south.

For de Lattre, the Vietminh’s principal combat advantage was its ability to attack in human waves using insurmountable numbers. Believing that these human-wave tactics resulted from an indigenous cultural disregard for taking casualties when attacking a superior enemy, he concluded that the only way to defeat them was by using massive firepower positioned in front of clear fields of fire. Therefore, he decided to transform the Red River Delta into a huge entrenched camp covered to the north by a line of positions virtually impregnable to an enemy lacking overwhelming firepower. Existing posts were fortified into a linked network of concrete strongholds supported by interlocking artillery fire—a disposition soon nicknamed “the de Lattre line.”<sup>8</sup> Native commandos led by French officers and NCOs patrolled and monitored the gaps between the posts.

Similarly, de Lattre turned Haiphong into a defensive fortress, to be used as a refuge for units withdrawing in case of a breach to the forward line of interlocking defenses. In addition, he set up a number of quick-reaction mobile task forces inside the overall defensive line. These were led by his *maréchaux*. The standard task force had three motorized infantry battalions, one engineer company, one reconnaissance company (to clear up and open roads), and one artillery battery. All were capable of conducting attacks or counterattacks with virtually no notice.

## Taking the Offensive Politically

The general also recognized the critical importance of promoting support for his objectives among the French Government and people. His strategic objective was to make the average Frenchman sympathetic to the fight for Vietnamese freedom

and French honor. Thus, he was one of the very first modern military leaders to understand the need to enlist the media to make his case to the public. In an effort to give the war in Vietnam the same kind of global media footprint the U.S.-led war in Korea was receiving and to promote the need for a similar international effort in Vietnam, he cultivated contacts with journalists. As de Lattre told the war correspondent for *France-Soir*, “What’s the use of military success, if nobody knows about it? Whatever is happening anywhere in the world will come to the knowledge of hundreds of millions of human beings. Journalists are go-betweens. However, they prove to be more than that: they are event-makers. An event will not come to light unless a newspaper writes about it. The focus is to deliver to the journalists the necessary raw materials, in order to meet the requirements of the huge news market.”<sup>9</sup>

De Lattre also aggressively sought opportunities to inform and educate French and Allied politicians about the situation in Indochina, the conflict’s ultimate purpose, and the resources required to win the war. In March 1951 he travelled to Paris, where he briefed the National Defense Committee on Indochina. While there, he met with French politicians



General de Lattre with Colonel Edon inspecting a recently recaptured Tonkin village, April 1951.

and Allied officials to ask for material and moral support for the war (and with journalists to outline his strategy, objectives, and requirements). The fight for Indochina was not only the French Expeditionary Corps' fight, he said, but France's fight on behalf of the Western world:

[The] war [is] indeed a litmus test for France in its endeavor to transform the Empire and to finish the building of a brand new French Union, as well as a test of capability against Communism and the U.S.S.R. . . .As long as we hold on to Indochina, we will remain a major power. If we happen to fail to do that, we [will] soon be considered the ill man of the second half of the 20th Century.<sup>10</sup>

De Lattre told the National Defense Committee that he had only temporarily restored the situation in Tonkin, and at the price of a dangerously reduced military presence in other sectors. He went on to testify that he needed reinforcements immediately to launch an offensive that would buy time for the Vietnamese troops then in training. Once the Vietnamese reached the level of capability necessary to replace French forces, the latter would withdraw. Said de Lattre:

If we decrease the ongoing effort, in a matter of weeks we will jeopardize what has already been accomplished. For this huge investment to bear fruits, an increased effort has to be accepted. On the one hand, we could lose everything; on the other hand, we could take the steps necessary to win.<sup>11</sup>

De Lattre's arguments proved at least in part persuasive. The French Government struck a balance between Indochina and the requirements of its new NATO membership and agreed to provide from 15,000 to 20,000 men under the condition that they were to be back in France before 1 July 1952.

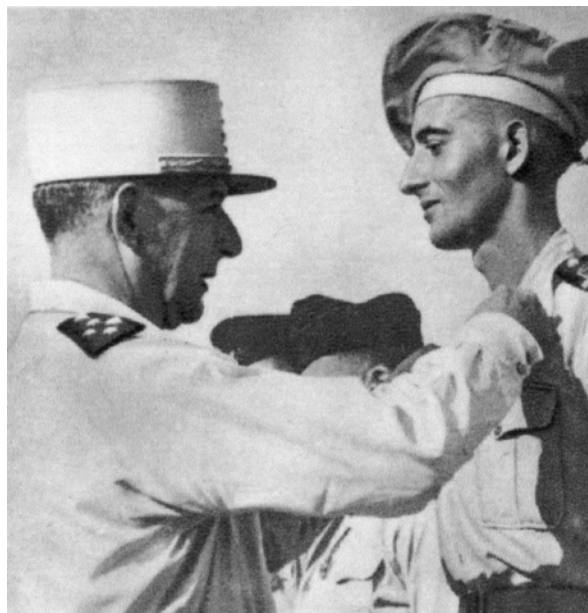
Before de Lattre's efforts could come to fruition, Giap struck for the second time. The Vietminh leader had reorganized his forces and, during the night of 29 March, he attacked the Mao Khe post north of the Red River Delta between Hanoi and Haiphong. The stratagem was the same one used at Cao Bang: place an outpost in peril as bait to entice relieving troops into a prepared ambush along the main avenue of approach. Giap anticipated the French would rush in to relieve the surrounded garrison. De Lattre refused to react in a precipitous manner. Suspecting yet another ambush attempt, he dispatched the "Sizaire task force" along an

indirect route to Mao Khe, bypassing RC 18 where the camouflaged Vietminh waited in ambush. Spurning the roads, the task force waded through paddy fields to make contact with the enemy surrounding the beleaguered outpost.

Thanks in large part to the staunch resistance of a colonial airborne battalion and the fire support provided by some assault naval divisions (floating fire-support units on the Red River), the relieving force successfully crossed the paddies and drove off the besieging enemy. After sustaining heavy casualties, Giap declined decisive battle and withdrew. Once again, intelligent battlefield maneuver, determined defender resistance, and superior firepower had defeated the Vietminh in open battle.

Shortly thereafter, in a third attack against de Lattre's forces, Giap tried to penetrate the Red River Delta itself. This time, he chose to attack from the south, still the weakest part of the de Lattre Line. In order to slow down any attempt at reinforcement, he first infiltrated several battalions into the delta to contact provincial troops and sympathetic village militias. Their mission was to harass French forces and seize supplies of rice while three full-strength divisions stealthily concealed themselves in the chalky rocks along the delta.

On the night of 18 May, Giap launched the main assault along the Day River. The situation quickly became desperate for the surprised French troops.



General de Lattre pins the Croix de Guerre, 2d award, on his son Bernard, 1951.

Library of Congress

Once again, however, quick and forcible decisions avoided a total breakdown. Because the enemy blocked the roads, de Lattre sent several river units into the area and dropped two airborne battalions. The fighting was fierce and lasted for more than a week, but the quick intervention of the mobile groups had taken the initiative away from the Vietminh, and yet again Giap withdrew with heavy casualties. On 7 June, Giap ordered most of his units to vacate the delta, leaving just a few behind as spoilers and a sleeper force.

Among the French fatalities during this action was Lieutenant de Lattre, the General's only son. Even as the battle raged, de Lattre took the bodies of his son and two brothers-in-arms killed next to him back to France. Covered by the French flag, their coffins were driven through the streets of Paris mounted on an armored car to bear witness to the sacrifice of French youth (and de Lattre personally) on behalf of France.

### **“Behave like men!”**

De Lattre's defensive successes drove Giap's forces back into the jungle and temporarily restored the situation. However, they weren't enough to lead to final victory. The political direction given to the commander-in-chief prior to his assuming command was to “base your actions upon the principles required to make the return of Commonwealth to independence as effective as possible.” This reflected the prevailing political opinion that because Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos had been independent since 1949, the final solution to Vietnam's problems was up to the Vietnamese. Some argued that France had pledged to help establish democracy in Indochina, but most French political leaders emphasized that as a prerequisite for French support, Emperor Bao Dai and the Vietnamese Government had to understand that the fight was first and foremost theirs; moreover, because Communist China might soon turn its attention toward Indochina, their time to act was short.

Expecting France would send insufficient reinforcements, de Lattre launched a vast recruiting campaign in the spring of 1951 to increase the Expeditionary Corps by “Vietnamizing” the rank and file. To speed the strategy of Vietnamization, he began a massive campaign aimed at the country's youth. On 11 July, he delivered a famous speech at a Saigon

public school in which he exhorted the students to “behave like men . . . If you are patriots, fight for your country because this war is yours. You have the privilege to have access to education; therefore it is your duty to ask for the privilege to fight at the head of troops.” De Lattre convinced Bao Dai to attend the 14th of July Parade (in honor of Bastille Day), where the very first Vietnamese units would march beside the French ones. An enormous, friendly crowd gathered to admire the troops. The next day, Bao Dai decreed a general mobilization.

Because of de Lattre's efforts, the Vietnamese Army increased rapidly, aided in no small measure by an egalitarian policy (authored by the general) that integrated Vietnamese troops into French units. De Lattre succeeded in increasing the Vietnamese Army's strength by some 25 percent in just a few months, and until the end of the war, each French battalion included a large proportion of Vietnamese volunteers.

If we cannot call de Lattre the father of the Vietnamese Army, we can say that he gave it a decisive momentum and put progressive methods into practice. At the end of 1951, the Vietnamese Army was more than 120,000 strong and the Vietminh no longer monopolized the strategy of achieving independence through war.

### **The Trip to America**

By mid-1951, France was having difficulty paying for the war. Both the Expeditionary Corps and the new Vietnamese recruits were badly in need of new equipment. The United States was already France's main supplier of military equipment, but its stocks were limited and its supply unpredictable because many American politicians looked on the conflict with disdain, considering it merely an outdated colonial war in which America should take no part. De Lattre therefore decided to undertake another pilgrimage, this time to persuade American political leaders that supporting the Indochina war was in their best interests. He would tell them that France was fighting in Vietnam for the same reason the U.S. was fighting in Korea: to contain Communist expansion.

De Lattre's long trip began in September, with a stop in Paris. He had to make the decision-makers there understand that the results he had achieved thus far, although substantial, were fragile, and needed greater material and moral support to be ultimately successful. His task was a tough one, for





**General de Lattre with President Harry Truman, Henri Bonnet, and Donald Heath in the United States, 1951.**

the government tended to save money at the expense of the war effort. Still, the general was candid about the prospects for success in Indochina. While stressing the need to fund the war fully, he bluntly apprised officials of France's precarious situation: "If the situation can quickly deteriorate as a result of Chinese intervention, it will, in no way, improve overnight. A disaster could occur in Indochina: no miracle is to be expected."

Recognizing that France was struggling with the financial burden of post-World War II reconstruction, and ignoring the pain caused by an as-yet-undiagnosed illness, de Lattre flew on to Washington. Dubbed "the French fighting general" by the American press, he used the full gamut of his skills in an attempt to convince the White House, Congress, and the Pentagon that it was in America's interest to give the French material support. He emphasized a few simple themes: the wars in Korea and Indochina were part of the same global war against Communist expansion; there could be only one peace; winning the war in Indochina required the same means and equipment used in Korea. He went on to describe Indochina's strategic importance and the consequences the war's outcome would have on the defense of the Western world. Before flying back to Indochina, de Lattre stopped in London to deliver a similar message and in Rome to outline the situation of Vietnamese Catholics to Pope Pius XII. (After his papal interview, the Catholic Front's

two million Vietnamese Catholics took a stand in favor of Bao Dai.)

The papal interview was to be one of de Lattre's very last political acts on behalf of operations in Indochina. The pain he had been feeling since March and throughout his trip would be diagnosed in early October as cancer of the hip. At the time, successful cures of cancer were rare. The general had no illusions about his fate.

## De Lattre's Final Battles

After a lull in large military operations during the rainy season, the Vietminh launched a new offensive directed not against the Red River Delta, which they now assessed as unassailable, but at the mountainous region along the Thai and Laotian borders. In mid-September, the Vietminh 312th Division surrounded Nghia Lo. The French blocked Giap's new offensive thanks to the local garrison's resistance and reinforcement by three airborne battalions led by de Lattre's deputy, General Salan. The battalions airdropped in the foe's rear and cut his logistical lines. Despite a favorable ratio of forces, the 312th had to retreat.

On 25 September, in an effort to prevent any infiltration that might precede an attack on the Day outpost, French forces launched operations to clear Vietminh cells out of the delta. A month of these operations achieved only limited success, but there was no Communist offensive. Although extremely ill, de Lattre seized the initiative at the end of October to launch an offensive of his own. In part, he calculated such an operation would bolster French support for the war. At the end of December, the French Parliament was supposed to vote on the budget for Indochina, and de Lattre badly needed quick and, if possible, dramatic successes to convince his countrymen (and the Americans) that victory was ultimately achievable.

De Lattre's offensive faced significant problems. There weren't enough troops to attack the Vietminh north of Tonkin, and it was difficult to lure Giap into fighting in areas without cover, where he knew he would face French firepower. Therefore, de Lattre decided to seize Hoa Binh, located only a few dozen kilometers from the western part of the Red River Delta, at the juncture between the northern and southern Vietminh bases. The general's intent was to lure Giap into besieging Hoa Binh (now fortified) and then wear him out in a battle of attrition.



Hoa Binh would be the first of a series of such operations.<sup>12</sup> (Unfortunately, after several initial successes, this strategy led to the Dien Bien Phu disaster.) On 10 November, the French seized the town with a well-executed airborne operation. De Lattre flew in to give his personal regards to his Soldiers for the last time. One observer noted, "He's smiling despite the fact that his suffering is more and more difficult to bear. He looks as if he is transfigured by this last encounter with his men."

On 15 November, de Lattre made one more airplane trip, this time flying to France for an emergency operation. He would never return to Indochina. Just before 6 p.m. on 11 January 1952, General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, Commander-in-Chief in Indochina, died in France. French and free-Vietnamese fighters all across Indochina went into mourning. To recognize his lifelong achievements, France posthumously awarded him the rank of field marshal. The award paid tribute to a life devoted to the service of his country. He had begun his Soldier's career in a cavalry charge in 1914; he had been one of the main actors in the liberation of France in World War II; and he had almost single-handedly rescued France from the brink of defeat in Vietnam in 1951.

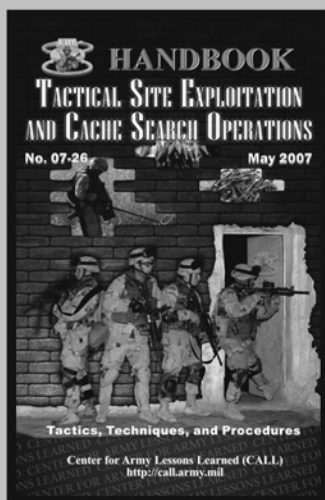
In just one year, "the French MacArthur" had restored fighting morale and esprit among French troops, won three major battles, given enormous impetus to the creation of a free Vietnamese Army, and shored up support for the war among French and Allied politicians. No one can say for sure that the war would have ended differently had de Lattre survived, but he undoubtedly was the right man in the right job in the right place at the right time. His single major failing was that he joined his only son too soon. **MR**

## NOTES

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2. Général Yves Gras, *Histoire de la guerre d'Indochine* (Plon, 1979), 369.
3. Lucien Bodard, *L'aventure, La guerre d'Indochine*, IV (Gallimard, 1967), 343.
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6. Ibid., 398.
7. Général René Gilli, "La marque du général De Lattre en Indochine," *Le Casoar* 167 (October 2002).
8. Général Yves Gras, 414.
9. Ibid.
10. Gilli.
11. Ibid.
12. Despite its smooth start, the Hoa Binh gambit did not play out as De Lattre had hoped. After three months of tough combat, the French abandoned the town and withdrew under heavy contact to the safety of the De Lattre Line. Each side is thought to have lost about 5,000 men in the overall action.

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# A Logical Method for CENTER-OF-GRAVITY ANALYSIS

Colonel Dale C. Eikmeier, U.S. Army

LARGELY DUE TO its enigmatic nature, the center of gravity (COG) determination process has always been considered more of an art than a science. But even art has rules and structures that can turn chaotic sounds into language and language into poetry. Currently, the COG determination process described in joint doctrine lacks the clear rules and structure that might rationalize, discipline, and therefore improve campaign planning. Joint doctrine only describes the COG construct and its utility to military planning. This is unfortunate because the value of this conceptual tool cannot be overstated. Joint Pub 5-0, *Joint Operational Planning*, clearly states the critical role of COG analysis: “One of the most important tasks confronting the JFC’s [joint force commander’s] staff in the operational design process is the identification of friendly and adversary COGs.”<sup>1</sup> It is the “most important task” because “a faulty conclusion resulting from a poor or hasty analysis can have very serious consequences, such as [impairing] the ability to achieve strategic and operational objectives at an acceptable cost.”<sup>2</sup>

This paper explores using the strategic framework of *ends*, *ways*, and *means*; a validation test; and a clear COG terminology to provide a logical and disciplined method for COG determination.<sup>3</sup> In military planning, determining the center of gravity is too important to leave to guesswork; therefore, any technique or method that improves COG determination is certainly worth exploring. My experience as an instructor at the School of Advanced Military Studies and the U.S. Army War College, combined with recent operational experience as a strategist with U.S. Central Command and Multi-national Forces-Iraq, has convinced me that there must be a better process for determining a center of gravity than the current guess-and-debate method.

By using clear terminology with accepted definitions, and by linking COG analysis to the strategic framework, we can create rules and structure that permit the creation of art from chaos. No method, no matter how detailed, will produce truly scientific solutions to our questions about centers of gravity; however, a disciplined process that includes a validation test can help separate the kernels from the chaff and focus campaign planning efforts.

The ends, ways, and means framework sets the foundation for COG analysis. Identifying the ends and the ways they may be achieved determines the means required (although in short-term strategies or crisis planning, the means currently available may determine the ways and ends). The ways of a strategy are the essential determinants of a *critical capability*, and the means that possess that critical capability constitute the center of gravity. In other words, the ways determine the critical capability, which identifies the

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center of gravity. Linking the strategic framework (ends, ways, means) and COG analysis will greatly enhance military planning.

## The Strategic Framework

Arthur F. Lykke Jr. developed the strategic framework of ends, ways, and means.<sup>4</sup> For Lykke, strategy is a coherent expression of a process that identifies the ends, ways, and means designed to achieve a certain goal. Mathematically, we might express this as “Strategy = Ends + Ways + Means.” Ends are the objectives or desired outcomes of a given strategy. The term *end-state* is synonymous with ends. An end or ends comprise the goal of the strategy. Ways are actions. They are the methods and process executed to achieve the ends. More simply, they answer the question, How are you going to get to the end-state? Means are the resources required to execute the way.

Lykke cites a need to balance ends, ways, and means, which he likens to the three legs of a stool (the stool itself representing the strategy). A strategy is balanced and entails little risk if the selected way (method) is capable and has sufficient means (resources) to obtain the desired end (objective). However, if either the ways or means legs are too short (due to inadequacies), or the end leg is too long (the goals are unrealistic), the strategy is out of balance, and the risk is high. To bring the strategy back into balance, the legs must be adjusted; for example, desired ends can be scaled back to fit within the available means, or means can be increased to fully support the selected way(s). When the means are inadequate, planners must consider alternative ways. Because all of these “balancing” choices are strategic decisions, the balancing act is the heart of strategic art.

While this framework is useful for developing strategies, planners can also use it to analyze friendly and enemy plans and actions in order to determine strengths, risk, and, most importantly, the center of gravity. To do this, we require a common COG analysis terminology.

## COG Terminology

The terms associated with COG analysis are *centers of gravity*, *critical capabilities*, *critical requirements*, and *critical vulnerabilities*.<sup>5</sup> To avoid confusion and misunderstanding, I propose we use Dr. Joseph Strange’s definitions:

- *Centers of gravity*: primary sources of moral or physical strength, power, and resistance.

- *Critical capabilities*: primary abilities which merit a center of gravity to be identified as such in the context of a given scenario, situation, or mission.

- *Critical requirements*: essential conditions, resources, and means for a critical capability to be fully operative.

- *Critical vulnerabilities*: critical requirements or components thereof which are either deficient or vulnerable to neutralization, interdiction, or attack (moral/physical harm) in a manner that achieves decisive results. The smaller the resources and effort applied and the risk and cost, the better.<sup>6</sup>

Note that centers of gravity are nouns: they are tangible things that exist. Critical capabilities are verb-like: they are actions or functions that a center of gravity can perform. To execute a critical capability, the center of gravity has critical requirements. These can be either nouns or verbs. Of these critical requirements, some are vulnerable, others are not. The former are simply called *critical vulnerabilities*. Since they are a subset of critical requirements, they can be nouns or verbs.

These terms form a hierarchy. The most important is the center of gravity that can perform some critical action or capability. Second are the resources (critical requirements) or abilities the center of gravity requires to employ its critical capability. In much the same way, an automobile (center of gravity) requires fuel (critical requirement) to move (critical capability). Last in importance are those critical requirements that are vulnerable.

## Linking the Strategic Framework to COG

The only accurate way to determine a center of gravity involves using systems theory and taking a holistic viewpoint; anything else is just guesswork. However, systems theory covers a lot of ground, and it is easy to get lost in a system’s networked forest of nodes and links. Lykke’s strategic framework offers not only a simple path through the system’s forest, but a shortcut as well (see figure). The framework’s three simple questions—What is the desired end-state? How can it be achieved? What resources are required?—is systems theory boiled down to its essential elements in support of COG analysis.

This is how it works, but since this is art, not science, be flexible:

- Step one: identify the desired ends. This process supports both mission analysis and effects-based planning.

- Step two: identify ways to achieve the ends, and select the one that the evidence suggests is most likely to work. Remember: ways are actions, so express them as verbs. Then select the most elemental or essential action—that selection is the critical capability. Remember also that ways are critical actions that will achieve the end-state. Ways are verbs, critical capabilities are the same verbs. Ways = critical capabilities.

- Step three: list the means required to enable and execute the way or critical capability.

- Step four: select the entity (noun) from the list of means that possesses the way or critical capability to achieve the end. This selection is the center of gravity.

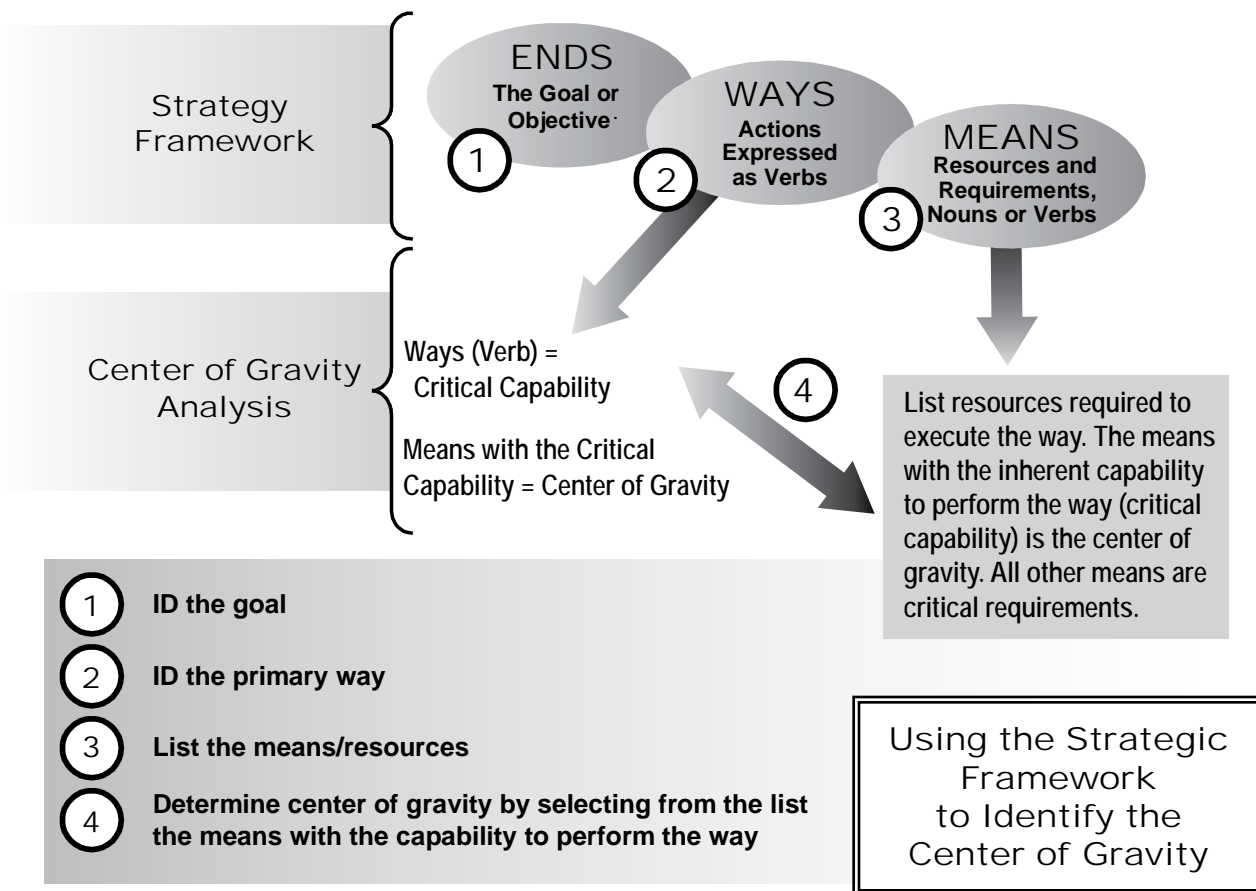
We might take the process two steps further to determine how best to attack the identified center

of gravity. In step five, we would select the critical items from those that remain on the means list. We would complete the process in step six by identifying which of the critical requirements are vulnerable. Steps four through six, by the way, are compatible with the operational net assessment process.

## Validity Test: Does/Uses

The “does/uses” test can verify the aptness of the center of gravity and distinguish it from critical requirements and critical vulnerabilities. Only centers of gravity are inherently capable of achieving the specific task or purpose defined in the ways. If something executes the primary action (critical capability) that accomplishes the way, it is the center of gravity. Put another way, the system that “does” the work and is the source of power that creates the force or critical capability is the center of gravity. Or, even more simply, the center of gravity does the action and uses resources to accomplish it.

If something is used or consumed by another entity to execute the primary action (critical capability), that





something is a requirement. If something contributes to, but does not actually perform, the critical capability, it is a requirement, not a center of gravity.

### Example: Madonna for President

An example of the strategic framework method in action might help illustrate how it works. Let's suppose that Madonna wants to become president of the United States. Her *end*, then, is "become president of the United States." Possible *ways* she might accomplish her end are by coup, purchase, miracle, or via election. Madonna rules out the first three because she doesn't have the *means*, that is, the military backing, sufficient funds, or faith, respectively, to accomplish those ways. She therefore makes the strategic decision to get herself elected. So the verb or action is "to elect."

**Means to elect.** To get elected, Madonna needs the following resources or means, to name just a few: political skills, media access, a campaign organization, funds, sufficient votes, convincing messages, and ideas. Of these means, which possesses the critical capability "to elect"? Political skills are needed, but they don't vote. Funding is certainly required, but dollars don't vote either. A popular message is a plus, but again, messages do not vote. People who vote elect; therefore, *voters are the center of gravity*. This is the "does" test. Madonna must feed the center of gravity (voters) enough critical requirements to make her share of the center of gravity bigger and stronger than her opponents'.

Voters consult her political campaign and all its elements to choose a candidate: this is the "uses" test. Because the campaign is used to corral voters, the campaign is a critical requirement. In other words, Madonna wants to attract more voters than her opponent. She will attempt to do this by improving and protecting her critical requirements (the campaign) while attacking her opponents' requirements.

Some will claim that Madonna's center of gravity is her popular message because without one she would certainly lose the election. This is not so. Remember: the center of gravity must be able to perform the way or critical capability. A popular message has no inherent ability to perform the critical capability; it is only an enabler or critical requirement that sustains (or fails to sustain) the center of gravity. (Incidentally, this bit about the message illustrates the fact that centers of gravity

***Let's suppose that Madonna wants to become president of the United States. Her end, then, is "become president of the United States." Possible ways she might accomplish her end are by coup, purchase, miracle, or via election. Madonna rules out the first three because she doesn't have the means...***

can be attacked and defeated indirectly, by weakening or destroying their critical requirements.)

Suppose again that Madonna somehow loses the election. We might surmise that if she had understood the strategic model, she could have adjusted her ends to match her means. Perhaps she could have settled for being elected president of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

This simple example illustrates the overall concept of using ends, ways, and means analysis and the does/uses test to identify critical capabilities and the possessor of those capabilities. Note that the election example, simple as it was, still required some creative thinking. In an election, candidates do not possess the center of gravity (the voters); rather, they compete for a greater mass of the same center of gravity. Ultimately, the winner is he or she who succeeds in capturing the larger share of the center of gravity—and that's where creativity comes into play. It's only logical that increased situational complexity requires even more creative and flexible thinking. One demonstrates mastery of the arts of strategy and military planning by adapting frameworks and models to situations, not by forcing a situation to fit a model.

### Strategic Analysis of an Insurgency

In the following example we apply the framework and COG analysis to a notional insurgency. The example starts with the insurgency's final phase and works backwards to the initial phase—after all, you have to know the destination before you can plan the route.

**Final phase.** The final *end-state* the insurgency seeks is to consolidate its victory by establishing a new sociopolitical order based on the movement's ideology. A way to establish (the critical capability) that order is to have the *means*, in the form of a revolutionary government, capable of establishing rule and authority. The revolutionary government is therefore the *center of gravity* for this final phase of the insurgency because it possesses the *critical capability* to establish rule and authority for the new order.

**Revolutionary phase.** Before you can establish a new order you must remove the existing order; thus, removal of the existing order is the end-state for the revolutionary phase. A way to remove the existing order is to force (the critical capability) its removal through a revolution. The means that possesses the critical capability to force removal would be an armed force. This armed force is the revolutionary-phase center of gravity because it alone has the critical capability to bring about the end-state.

**Initiation phase.** Revolutions are not spontaneous; leaders plan and ignite them when they believe the time is right. The initiation phase's end-state, then, is the start of the revolution. A way could be to provoke such a repressive or violent response from the existing authority that the masses rally to the insurgent cause. The means that possesses the critical capability to provoke would be the insurgency's militant cells; hence, they are the center of gravity in the initiation phase. Because the force required to start a revolution is much smaller than the force needed to win a revolution, the initiation and revolutionary phase centers of gravity are not the same force. A critical requirement for the initiation force is leadership with the skills to correctly decide when to start the revolution.

**Conspiratorial phase.** Revolutionary cells and support structures must be in place before a revolution can begin. Putting these in place is the end-state for the conspiratorial phase. The way is to build and motivate (critical capability) a force and support base. This is done through ideological indoctrination/conversion and military training and equipping. The means capable of this are insurgent cells of true believers. There are two types of such cells: those comprised of educators or ideological missionaries, and those made up of militant trainers

and organizers who form the armed wing. These pre-revolutionary cells are the center of gravity during the conspiratorial phase because they have the inherent capability to indoctrinate, motivate, and build a revolutionary force.

Altogether, this example shows that each phase's critical capabilities and the possessor of those capabilities—the center of gravity—can be derived from ends, ways, and means analysis.

## Summary

Linking the strategic framework with the COG concept provides a heuristic that contributes to a focused and disciplined approach to COG determination. This linkage suggests that the ends, ways, and means framework is the start point for any COG analysis. Only by starting with the ends, ways, and means analysis first can critical capabilities (ways), critical requirements, and the center of gravity (means) be determined. It is the critical capability contained in the ways, and the means that the critical capability requires, that identify a center of gravity. The does/uses test then validates the selection. This is not a scientific method or tool that will always provide the right answer; rather, it is a logical thought process that can focus and sharpen any analysis, and that should result in a more accurate COG selection that can be defended based on logical criteria. **MR**

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## NOTES

1. Department of Defense (DOD), Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Operational Planning* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 10 August 2005), IV-8.

2. Ibid.

3. Arthur F. Lykke Jr., ed., *Military Strategy: Theory and Application* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1998); Dale Eikmeier, "Center of Gravity Analysis," *Military Review* (July-August 2004): 2; and Joseph Strange, *Centers of Gravity & Critical Vulnerabilities: Building on the Clausewitzian Foundation So We Can All Speak the Same Language*, *Perspectives on Warfighting Number Four*, 2d ed. (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Association, 1996): ix.

4. Lykke, 3.

5. Strange, ix.

6. Ibid. The COG terminologies employed in joint doctrine and by Clausewitz in *On War* (Howard and Paret eds., 1994, 595-596) are less useful than Strange's. See JP 5-00.1, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning* (Washington, DC: DOD, January 2002), II-6, II-7; and JP 5-0, *Joint Operational Planning* (Washington, DC: DOD, December 2006), chapter IV, for joint doctrine COG terminology. Joint doctrine limits COG terminology to military forces. It also defines *critical capability* differently than Strange does. According to Strange, critical capabilities are inherent in a center of gravity. It is the "primary abilities which merit a center of gravity to be identified as such." In other words, the critical capabilities are what a center of gravity does. JP 5-00.1 states that "critical capabilities are those adversary capabilities that are considered enablers for the adversary's COG to function as such." JP 5.0 defines critical capabilities differently, saying, "Critical capabilities are those capabilities that are considered crucial enablers for a center of gravity to function as such." Together, the joint definitions imply that critical capabilities do not belong to the center of gravity; rather, they are enablers of the center of gravity in the same way that critical requirements are enablers. Due to these differences, I prefer Dr. Strange's definitions.



# MEDICAL DIPLOMACY in Full-Spectrum Operations

Major Jay B. Baker, U.S. Army

**A**MERICAN MEDICINE is a powerful “weapon of freedom” in our Nation’s arsenal against terrorists and the forces of oppression.<sup>1</sup> However, tailgate medicine, as commonly practiced by many well-meaning medical civil-assistance programs (MEDCAPs), is not an effective tool for commanders conducting counterinsurgency (COIN) operations in the Iraqi theater of operations. To legitimize the Iraqi Government, we must build capability in local institutions, not replace essential services like medicine with direct medical care by occupying forces.

The major fault of MEDCAPs in Iraq is strategic. MEDCAPs undermine local medical services sanctioned by the Iraqi Ministry of Health and provincial medical directors, thus decreasing support for Iraq’s national and provincial governments. The insurgency in Iraq will be defeated when Iraqis reject it through their acceptance of and dependence on the legitimate Iraqi Government. Instead of helping to achieve this end state, MEDCAPs, no matter how well intentioned, planned, or executed, weaken Iraqi Government services and, therefore, are counterproductive to U.S. strategic aims.

Military medicine can be an effective operational tool if we apply it thoughtfully. Many have noted that it contributed to social, economic, and political stability in past conflicts.<sup>2</sup> Tommy Thompson, the former U.S. secretary of Health and Human Services, has called for increased “medical diplomacy” in America’s foreign and defense policy, declaring it “the best chance to win the war on terror and defeat the terrorists.”<sup>3</sup> The 2005 *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq* cited the value of building and rehabilitating health care facilities.<sup>4</sup> More recently, *The Iraq Study Group Report* stated that “building the capacity of the Iraqi Government should be at the heart of U.S. reconstruction efforts.”<sup>5</sup> However, turning observations, strategic guidance, and situational understanding into effective operational missions presents a challenge for leaders on today’s battlefield. This article examines the U.S. military’s experiences with medical civil-military operations (MCMO); discusses current policy, doctrine, and practice; and describes the experiences of the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment (3d ACR) in Tal Afar, Iraq, in 2005 as an example of successful brigade-level operations that support, build, and promote local medical institutions.

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PHOTO: A sign, in Arabic and Turkman, at the entrance to Tal Afar’s general hospital.

*(All photos courtesy of the author)*

## Historical Perspective

We have used medicine as a tool for winning hearts and minds in previous COIN campaigns. For example, an essential part of the pacification campaign



in the Philippines Insurrection was establishing public health measures, along with organizing municipal governments and public schools. General E.S. Otis and General Arthur MacArthur's pacification policies were the foundation for the colonial civilian government that President William Howard Taft later established. The medical component of the program helped achieve a relative peace that lasted for nearly four decades.<sup>6</sup>

During the Vietnam War, the U.S. military invested between \$500 million and \$750 million in the Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP) and treated more than 40 million Vietnamese civilians.<sup>7</sup> MEDCAP was designed to provide aid to villages and communities by using Vietnamese military medical personnel assisted by U.S. medical personnel, but with the introduction of large numbers of U.S. troops into Vietnam in 1965, U.S. military medical teams assumed responsibility for medical care to civilians in their respective areas of operation (AOs).

A 2001 *Military Medicine* article described the Vietnam MEDCAPs:

Often, a MEDCAP team would simply show up and set up shop. A schoolroom was frequently the chosen locale. Mainly elderly women and children were seen. It was very rare to see a young man of working or military age. Every patient was given something. Most often, there was no available X-ray or laboratory backup. If the interpreters were not even slightly medically sophisticated, treatment was based on guessing. Because of security concerns, follow-up visits could not be scheduled on a regular basis. The session would last until the medical unit ran out of supplies, all of the patients were seen, or it began to get late in the day and it was necessary to return to the base camp before darkness set in. Generally, supplies gave out before the patients did.

There was supposed to be coordination between the various US military units and the Vietnamese civilian health care organizations. This was often absent or deficient. Not infrequently, a medical group from one unit would arrive in a hamlet or at an orphanage to find another medical group working there or having just been there. On one occasion, five different US civic action groups arrived at one hamlet simultaneously. None of them had coordinated their activities through the district or province advisors because of security reasons.<sup>8</sup>

There were other medical programs in Vietnam as well. The Volunteer Physicians for Vietnam program (coordinated with the American Medical Association) rotated volunteer civilian physicians into Vietnam for 60-, 90-, or 120-day tours. However, the number of volunteers was inadequate and the tours were too short to enable physicians to develop significant relationships with their Vietnamese counterparts; thus, the program was not sustained.

The Military Provincial Health Program (MILPHAP) was a team of U.S. doctors, nurses, and medics assigned to provincial hospitals to aid and train Vietnamese health providers. Initially, the MILPHAP teams provided medical care and health services directly to Vietnamese civilians while training hospital staff workers and improving Vietnamese physicians' surgical skills. By 1971, MILPHAP personnel were training Vietnamese medical personnel in preventive medicine and public health. These programs were thought to have improved the quality of medical care given Vietnamese civilians. However, there were problems: program administrators intervened before finding out what the Vietnamese wanted or were able to support; no long-range health plan existed; frequent rotations of personnel resulted in a lack of institutional memory; missing medical supplies often appeared later on the black market or in the hands of enemy soldiers; and some Vietnamese physicians believed that they lost face in their community because the presence of foreign teams implied that the foreign doctors had greater skills.<sup>9</sup>

In his book *Military Medicine To Win Hearts and Minds: Aid to Civilians in the Vietnam War*, Dr. Robert Wilensky concluded, "The medical assistance effort had little impact on the outcome of the conflict."<sup>10</sup> Although the locals appreciated individual benefits, these various medical programs did nothing to build support for the Republic of Vietnam, because its citizens did not identify U.S. military medical actions with the Vietnamese Government.

**...these various medical programs did nothing to build support for the Republic of Vietnam, because its citizens did not identify U.S. military medical actions with the Vietnamese Government.**



Although MCMO in low-intensity conflict may be a cost-effective and uncontroversial way to gain popular support, medical programs, in the words of Wilensky, “should aim the best light possible on the host government, not on the United States. The emphasis should be on developing capability, not providing service.”<sup>11</sup>

## Current Events

In Iraq, medical and combat arms officers alike often see MCMO as a drive-by operation for supporting pacification, gathering local intelligence, or rewarding locals for their cooperation. We can only practice “band-aid medicine” at MEDCAPs: we provide no enduring medical care. As in Vietnam, a MEDCAPs-like operation in Iraq often consists of a temporary “clinic” staffed by a physician or physician’s assistant and supported by several medics. We advertise the clinic for a short time in the local community, rush as many patients through as can be seen in a couple of hours, and then hastily decamp. We distribute over-the-counter medications to patients and then discover the medicine we dispensed is being sold on the black market.

In addition, MEDCAPs can create tactical and operational problems. Due to the perception that U.S. medicine is superior, huge crowds commonly gather at a temporary clinic, creating a target of opportunity for the would-be suicide bomber or for the enemy’s indirect fire.

Another problem is that theater medical rules of eligibility constrain medical care and prohibit referrals to higher levels of U.S. care; we refer patients with serious medical conditions back to Iraqi hospitals or clinics. All too often, the local citizens’ unmet expectations lead to their dissatisfaction and distrust of U.S. forces. Thus, whether due to a catastrophic attack or to inadequate medical care, the secondary and tertiary effects of tailgate MEDCAPs overshadow any goodwill that may have developed.

Many Arab leaders are physicians, including Ibrahim al-Jaafari and Ayad Allawi, the first two Iraqi prime ministers after Saddam’s deposal. In the cities and villages of Iraq, physicians are commonly the most educated members of their communities, and their influence is substantial. Courting their cooperation could result in greater community support. In this endeavor, American military physicians may take a leading role by virtue of their common

training and experience. However, like the programs in Vietnam with Vietnamese physicians, poorly planned MCMO may cause Iraqi physicians to lose face and feel that their honor is compromised. U.S. and coalition forces lose a prestigious and respected ally in the community when this occurs.

The enemy recognizes the powerful value of medicine as well. As part of their terrorism campaign, insurgents target Iraqi physicians because of their financial status and social prestige.<sup>12</sup> In other fronts of the War on Terrorism, terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah have established shadow medical systems to develop local support for their operations.

In his article “Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full-Spectrum Operations,” Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli, a former commander of Multi-National Corps-Iraq, noted, “Full spectrum operations are the continuation of combat operations by other means.”<sup>13</sup> In Iraq, these tactics include improving infrastructure, training security forces, and creating jobs. Instituting MCMO is another unconventional tactic that would contribute immensely to successful operations.<sup>14</sup>

***In Iraq...[i]nstituting MCMO...  
would contribute immensely  
to successful operations.***

On the battlefield, our ground forces are constantly using innovative solutions to adapt to current tactical and operational realities, and the Army is developing new doctrine on full-spectrum operations. Army Medical Department leaders recognize American medicine’s potential for combating terrorism, and they also see the need to adapt medical doctrine to incorporate medical civil-military operations. The new *Joint Task Force Senior Medical Leader Operations Guide* states that “the focus of Health Support Services initiatives during MCMO is to improve Host Nation capacity to provide public health and medical services to its population, thereby enhancing legitimacy of the Host Nation, enhancing force protection, and accomplishing the Combined Joint Task Force’s political-military objectives.”<sup>15</sup> In September 2005, the commanding general of the 44th Medical Command (MEDCOM)

recommended that the Army Medical Department Center and School develop a program of instruction for use in its basic and advanced officer courses for “the employment of medical forces in civil-military operations as well as for the development of strategic medical engagement strategy.”<sup>16</sup> In particular, the 44th MEDCOM after action review noted that there are not enough public health teams in Iraq to support the medical engagement strategy adequately.<sup>17</sup>

Optimizing the use of the combat units’ organic medical personnel and resources could help achieve strategic objectives. Lessons learned from operational and tactical successes in MCMO could be used to help develop doctrine for medical diplomacy on the battlefield, to include an MCMO toolset for combat commanders.

### 3d ACR’s Experience

The 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment’s experience in Tal Afar, Iraq, demonstrates how brigade-level medical units can successfully contribute to full-spectrum operations and help win the peace. When the 3d ACR arrived in Tal Afar in April 2005, Al-Qaeda had infiltrated the only hospital in the city, and the hospital director was reportedly an insurgent sympathizer. Violent crimes were committed at the hospital, including the murder of Shi’ite Iraqi police officers and the detonation of explosives attached to a Shi’ite youth’s booby-trapped corpse, a depredation that killed the youth’s father when he sought to retrieve his son’s body.

In May 2005, a platoon from 3d ACR’s Sabre Squadron took up an overwatch position near the hospital. However, the hospital soon became a target for attacks, and the public’s confidence in the hospital plummeted to new lows. Visits decreased to a nadir of less than 10 outpatients a day, and no patients would remain overnight because of the security situation. But the hospital was suddenly inhospitable to the enemy as well: injured insurgents were detained and medical support for the insurgency was denied. Third ACR forces continued to guard the hospital until August 2005, when an Iraqi Army unit assumed full-time responsibility. In the fall of 2005, a police station was established nearby, and the Iraqi Army stopped providing security for the hospital.

In September 2005, Operation Restoring Rights (ORR) succeeded in restoring security to the city,

which optimized conditions for successful MCMO. Before ORR, an international medical nongovernmental organization (NGO) and the 3d ACR civil affairs officer planned and coordinated medical services to meet the needs of Tal Afar’s citizens. Third ACR obtained a World Health Organization kit and pre-positioned medical goods in refugee camps. Three large-scale suicide attacks between the end of ORR Phase III and the nationwide constitutional referendum in October provided 3d ACR an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to the hospital and Tal Afar. U.S. medical personnel cared for scores of civilian casualties during these emergencies.

Guidance to the 3d ACR from higher headquarters regarding MCMO was “no MEDCAPs”, but no alternative doctrine existed, either formal or informal. Public health teams, which are a civil affairs asset, were not available after the conclusion of Phase III of ORR. To remedy the shortfall, 3d ACR initiated a novel plan, which it called Medical Clinic Action Teams (MCATs), to exploit the strength of its organic medical assets (see Table 1). The regiment conducted substantial planning and rehearsals and coordinated security before the mission. The MCATs delivered trauma supplies and textbooks, and the four teams split apart with accompanying security and collected over 100 findings of potential hospital needs.<sup>18</sup>

The MCATs did more than just hospital assessments: they created the opportunity for increased engagement with the region’s medical facilities and staffs. The regimental surgeon subsequently conducted bimonthly visits with Tal Afar hospital and clinic directors over the next three months. The MCAT assessments provided a starting point to negotiate aid activities. In many cases, consultation was all that was required to address identified needs, such as providing a packing list for a pediatric emergency crash kit. Table 2 below shows a variety of actions that were accomplished because of continued efforts after the MCATs’ missions.

Third ACR also actively sought to cooperate with local NGOs. Representatives from international medical NGOs frequently attended meetings with the Tal Afar medical leaders and pursued additional health-related aid projects (Table 3). The Ninewa director general of health sent a representative to Tal Afar to coordinate and synchronize priorities

Group Focus	Group Members	Assessment Tasks
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical troop commander</li> <li>• Support operations officer</li> <li>• Regimental surgeon</li> <li>• Civil affairs officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration of hospital</li> <li>• Communications</li> </ul>
Clinical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field surgeon</li> <li>• Regimental nurse</li> <li>• Support operations officer (supply and services)</li> <li>• THT(-)</li> <li>• Interpreter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obstetrics (infant mortality)</li> <li>• Pediatrics</li> <li>• Emergency room</li> <li>• Operating room</li> <li>• Nursing procedures</li> <li>• CL VIII supply procedures</li> <li>• HUMINT</li> </ul>
Physical plant and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seabee engineer</li> <li>• Medical platoon leader</li> <li>• Medical maintenance</li> <li>• Technician</li> <li>• Interpreter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural integrity of facility</li> <li>• Medical maintenance (identify non-mission capable equipment)</li> <li>• Medical maintenance procedures (identify services and repair part resupply)</li> <li>• Equipment serviceability (identify technology level)</li> </ul>
Ancillary Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical platoon sergeant</li> <li>• Ambulance platoon NCO</li> <li>• Lab and x-ray technician</li> <li>• Interpreter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laboratory assessment (identify capabilities and hazardous material procedures)</li> <li>• X-ray (Identify capabilities and training)</li> <li>• Ambulance/emergency vehicle fleet assessment (identify non-mission capable vehicles and trauma capabilities)</li> <li>• Ambulance utilization (identify dispatching procedures and partnership with other municipal agencies i.e. Iraqi Police, fire department, etc.)</li> </ul>

Table 1. Medical consulting action team groups.

Project	Donation/Labor Source
Ambulance repair prior to December elections	Commander's Emergency Response Program funds
Warehouse replacement with donation of two	Regimental S4 donation, coordination with support
Wheelchair donations coordinated	International non-governmental organization (NGO)
Donation of medicines	Corps donation
Donation of body bags	2/3 ACR medical platoon
Packing list for pediatric crash cart	Regimental support squadron medical troop
Ambulance load plan	Regimental support squadron medical troop
Intervention re: Shia complaints	Regimental surgeon (RSURG), 2/3 ACR Squadron
New water pipes in parking lot	Regimental engineer
Emergency telephone number flyers	Psychological operations (PSYOPS)
Preventive medicine teaching slides	RSURG
Preventive medicine flyers for community distribution	RSURG, PSYOPS
First aid kits for schools	2/3 ACR medical platoon
Project sharing with medical international NGO	RSURG

Table 2. 3d ACR MCMO activities following MCAT.

1. Established 8 water points with 10,000 liter capacity and rented water trucks to supply daily potable water to 8 districts.
2. Repaired broken pipes on main water line and supplied water office with manual tools, welding machine, uniforms, boots.
3. Constructed 12 garbage pits within neighborhoods.
4. Planned to supply Al-Salam public health clinic with furniture and medical equipment.
5. Initiated construction of birthing unit in Al-Amal public health clinic.

**Table 3. Selected medical international NGO activities in Tal Afar.**

and efforts. Interactive crosstalk with all interested parties created synergy and avoided duplication of effort.

The permanent presence of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) at the hospital facilitated a relationship of mutual benefit among the Iraqi hospital administrators, Iraqi medical personnel, and ISF. Initial doubt gave way to cooperation, and familiarity and trust developed. Medical care for Iraqi soldiers and police officers improved when the 3d Iraqi Army Division received a surgeon in December. The Tal Afar hospital director agreed to begin training ISF soldiers to become combat lifesavers, using a model already successfully implemented in the neighboring city of Sinjar.

In January 2006, the ACR capitalized on relationships that had developed in a few months of vigorous activity to organize a regional medical society. The newly arrived Iraqi Army surgeon at the Iraqi Army base near Tal Afar hosted the Western Ninewa Medical Conference (WNMC), inviting regional hospital and clinic directors as well as the Ninewa directorate governor of health. The intent was to organize the region's medical leaders, give them experience in the exercise of free assembly, and help them become a self-sustaining professional

organization. The conference conferred additional legitimacy on the Iraqi Army surgeon as a valuable partner with the local physicians to improve regional medical capabilities.

Third ACR's primary MCMO goal was to strengthen and rebuild Tal Afar's medical system to increase the local population's trust in and reliance on Iraqi Government institutions. Second Squadron commander Lieutenant Colonel Chris Hickey stated,

I used to believe in MEDCAPs, but I saw that we achieved greater, more long-lasting, enduring effects when we focused on improving their medical system. I could sense the level of fear and intimidation of the population by going to visit the hospital. During the summer of 2005, this level was very high. By the fall, I could sense people's confidence and faith in security and their government had drastically improved. One indicator was when the female doctors came back to work and the hospital started seeing women and babies again.<sup>19</sup>

By February 2006, the hospital was seeing over 800 patients a day, a huge jump from the 10 per day in summer 2005.<sup>20</sup> In my last meeting with the Tal Afar hospital director, in February 2006, he told



**Iraqi patients in the Tal Afar hospital in January 2006 after security had been reestablished and medical civil-military operations were underway.**





The day of the MCAT: (left to right) CPT Dan Liedl, med troop commander; MAJ Hugh Davis, support officer; Dr. Salih, Tal Afar hospital director; Dr. Said, Tal Afar clinics director; and the author.

me, "I see peace in the faces of the people for the first time in two years."

## Summary

In "Winning the Peace," Lieutenant General Chiarelli cited President John F. Kennedy's remark that "few of the important problems of our time have, in the final analysis, been solved by military power alone."<sup>21</sup> In a similar vein, Lieutenant Colonel Hickey stated, "restoring the community's faith in the hospital was one of the keys to our strategy of restoring confidence in the Iraqi government. The other keys were restoring confidence in the city government, getting the judicial system operating, improving the schools, getting markets reopened and people to work, improving the food distribution system, improving power and water services, and restoring trust in the Iraqi security forces."<sup>22</sup>

The U.S. Army Medical Department is a powerful force that can contribute to operational success on today's battlefield by exercising medical diplomacy. Army doctrine should leverage the full capabilities of Army physicians, physician's assistants, medics, and other medical personnel, and these capabilities should be tested during unit-level training exercises. Combat commanders will gain a valuable tool in COIN operations by directing their units' organic medical assets to conduct appropriate capacity-building MCMO.

The principles of successful MCMO are *secure*, *engage*, and *build*. First, establishing security for local hospitals and clinics should be paramount. Second, to ensure they understand the needs and

wants of Iraqis in their AOs, units should engage regularly with local Iraqi medical leaders, who are likely to be influential members in their communities. This should include frequent assessments to maintain situational awareness. Finally, after assessing the community's needs and their own priorities and capabilities, units should build medical capacity in the AO. They must take corrective action to avoid self-defeating actions, and should eschew any Vietnam-era kind of medical program.

As Iraqis begin to trust and embrace their national and provincial governments and rely on essential government services such as medical care, they will reject the insurgency. Building Iraqi medical capabilities instead of providing direct medical care will assist in that effort and increase Iraqi self-sufficiency. The combined acts, improving security using combat forces, engaging local health professionals and institutions using brigade-level medical assets, and employing MCMO-building activities will help achieve the combat commander's objectives on the battlefield and America's strategic objectives in the region. **MR**

## NOTES

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# The Economic Instrument of National Power and Military Operations: A FOCUS ON IRAQ

Lieutenant Colonel David A. Anderson, U.S. Marine Corps, Retired

*Those who can win a war well can rarely make good peace.*

—Sir Winston Churchill

WITH ONE EXCEPTION—the post-World War II Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Germany and Japan—Winston Churchill's statement was prophetic in describing American post-war experiences. It has proven particularly true of the current war with Iraq.

In its pursuit of national objectives, the U.S. uses diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) instruments of national power to influence other nations. The diplomacy component involves negotiating with other nations to settle differences. It is the job of statesmen, and it is most successful when supported by the other instruments of power. The information component comprises strategic communication, public diplomacy, and the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information about potential adversaries. The military component involves military activities ranging from peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and nation-building to large-scale combat operations. The economic component encompasses financial activities that run the gamut from providing foreign aid and market access to imposing trade sanctions.

In the past, when diplomacy and informational campaigns have failed to resolve a conflict, the U.S. has responded by imposing economic sanctions, and when these have failed, it has resorted to military options. Especially recently, the use of the military component of national power has been the subject of much discussion. Relatively little has been said, however, about how we have employed our economic power. This discussion is long overdue, for in our estimation, the economic arm has been ineffectively and even counterproductively employed in recent conflicts. Miscalculations or mistakes in its use have contributed greatly to the U.S.'s inability to terminate wars with a workable peace.

First, economic moves—usually sanctions—rarely, if ever, work as intended. They do not lead to concessions by the targeted government, and they do not stimulate citizens to seek their government's overthrow. In fact, sanctions usually cause the parties in conflict to harden their positions, and, by adding to the misery already imposed on people whose government the U.S. is attempting to influence, they portray the U.S. in a bad light. Both negative results have been evident in the cases of North Korea, Cuba, and post-Desert Storm Iraq.

Second, with the U.S. increasingly using the economic component coercively as a key part of its security strategy, it must begin to fund economic programs (e.g., foreign aid) much more robustly than it does at present. The economic objectives of our national security strategy and the funding needed to realize them must be more closely aligned.

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PHOTO: The \$1 billion NASDAQ mall (800 shops) and office (400 units) complex in Erbil, Iraq, exemplifies the Iraqi Kurdistan Region's rapid development, fall 2006. ([www.export.gov/iraq](http://www.export.gov/iraq))

Third, a nation considering war needs to make an honest, objective effort to assess how much the war and ensuing operations will cost. Politicians have historically lowballed war-cost estimates, even grossly, a tendency that stifles real preparation and invites eventual disillusionment. Neither of these augur well for a successful outcome. Additionally, as it assesses possible costs, a would-be combatant must be sure to take the effects of its pre-conflict economic moves, especially sanctions, into account. In particular, it must fully consider the implications such interventions will have for stability and reconstruction operations (SRO) should war (and victory) ensue. When sanctions precede war, nation-building can become a vastly more expensive and protracted proposition than it might have otherwise been.

Fourth, given the tremendous costs of SRO in the wake of sanctions and war, leaders should assume that they will need the financial assistance of international economic institutions and other nations. They need to lay the groundwork necessary to garner this assistance. The U.S. conspicuously did not do this prior to invading Iraq.

And fifth, only rarely has the U.S. employed all its components of national power in a synchronized, synergistic way when trying to influence other nations. Consequently, its actions have created voids that the military must fill.

Simply put, Washington must rethink how to best utilize the economic instrument of power in the contemporary global environment. Should it not do so, it risks eroding public and institutional support for America worldwide while creating domestic and international economic turmoil and exhausting the military.

## Historical Perspective: The Last 60 Years

Since World II, America has frequently intervened in other nations' affairs to support its national-security interests. In places such as Korea, Cuba, and South Vietnam, the U.S. intervened to defuse regional conflicts and protect democracy. In other places—Somalia and Haiti come to mind—the U.S. participated in humanitarian operations by sending military forces and providing foreign aid to stabilize a struggling nation. In none of these interventions did the U.S. anticipate the economic implications of either the initial operation or of follow-on stabilization and reconstruction.

**Korea.** To prevent the spread of communism, the U.S. and its coalition partners fought the Chinese-backed Communist North Koreans to a stalemate in the early 1950s, which resulted in a cease-fire and multinational, multilateral sanctions against North Korea. The cease-fire has lasted for over 54 years, but the sanctions, a U.S. defense buildup, and military posturing by North Korea, South Korea, and the U.S. to prevent possible acts of war have cost all parties billions of dollars. This political and ideological war continues today, only now it is underlined by the nuclear weapons threat North Korea poses. When the North Korean Government eventually collapses, as many observers say it must, it will cost billions of dollars to establish a new functioning government and economy or to integrate North Korea into South Korea.

**Cuba.** For the past 45 years, the U.S. has imposed multilateral sanctions on Cuba in an effort to oust Fidel Castro and bring democracy to the nation. The effects of this ideological war have left Cuba marooned in the 1950s. Like Korea, it will cost billions to restructure a post-Castro Cuba as a democratic state with a vital, free-market economy—assuming that that is even possible.

**South Vietnam.** During the 1960s and 1970s, the U.S. military sent hundreds of thousands of its members to the Republic of South Vietnam to stop the spread of communism and preserve a democracy. The unpopular war helped create a large U.S. deficit and high inflation. As a result, nations that used the U.S. dollar as their currency reserve grew so apprehensive that the U.S. had to abandon the gold standard to circumvent a run on the dollar. By the end of the war, the U.S. had approximately 17 cents in gold reserves for every dollar in circulation.<sup>1</sup>

**Somalia.** Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has said, "When Americans begin a noble cause, we finish it." Recent history, however, does not bear out her assertion.<sup>2</sup> The U.S. met with little success in Somalia during Operation Restore Hope, a mission meant to relieve famine and stabilize the country. U.S. forces withdrew without stabilizing the country, and Somalia is still embroiled in a conflict that pits clan against clan; Christian Ethiopians against Muslim Eritreans and radical Muslims; and Christians against radical Muslims with links to Al-Qaeda, Iran, and Syria. In many ways, the situation in Somalia and the Horn of Africa is worse than it was during the early 1990s.



**Haiti.** The U.S. has provided foreign aid and sent military forces to participate in humanitarian relief and stability operations in Haiti many times over the last 91 years, but it has never committed to Haiti's long-term economic and political stability. A 2003 Rand Corporation study concluded that U.S. aid to Haiti in the 1990s fell significantly short of making any meaningful difference.<sup>3</sup> Haiti is now the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with an unemployment rate of 50 percent. According to the United Nations, 56 percent of Haitians are malnourished, 80 percent live below the poverty line (on less than \$2 a day), and 60 percent live in abject poverty. The annual inflation rate is over 20 percent in an economy that is shrinking at about 2 percent a year.<sup>4</sup> Historically, much of the aid that nations and institutions pledge to Haiti never arrives because of concerns over political instability, crime, and corruption. This Catch-22 has had a devastating effect on the island nation.

After years of heated debate and failed legislation, the U.S. Congress finally passed several meaningful bills to promote economic growth within Haiti and Haitian trade with the U.S. The recently passed Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity Act, for example, allows particular items of Haitian apparel to enter the U.S. duty-free, even if the materials used to make the garments originated in a third country.<sup>5</sup> Some believe the act will help revive the Haitian textile industry, create jobs and tax revenues to get government services functioning again, and help curb crime. Others worry, though, that trade legislation with Haiti will mean the loss of U.S. jobs. This concern is somewhat of an embarrassment when we compare the booming \$13 trillion U.S. economy with Haiti's dwindling \$4.3 billion economy.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) says that for every dollar leaving the U.S. for Haiti, \$1.34 would return through trade.<sup>7</sup>

Since the end of the cold war, U.S. security strategy has increasingly emphasized foreign aid to fund humanitarian assistance and maintain or restore peace in failing nations. Nevertheless, the U.S. has most often responded to such problems with military force and limited State Department assistance—in effect, by applying short-term solutions to long-term geopolitical, cultural, and macroeconomic problems. It is evident that to increase global development and help stabilize weak, underdeveloped

countries, the U.S. must make more and better use of the economic instrument of power, and it must do so in conjunction with the other DIME components. The most urgent need is in Iraq, where economic assistance is clearly inadequate.

## Goals for Foreign Aid

The 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS) cited global development as one of its three primary objectives, or pillars, the others being defense and diplomacy. In support of these strategic pillars, the U.S. embraced the foreign-aid goals of economic growth, agriculture and trade, global health and democracy, conflict prevention, and humanitarian assistance.<sup>8</sup>

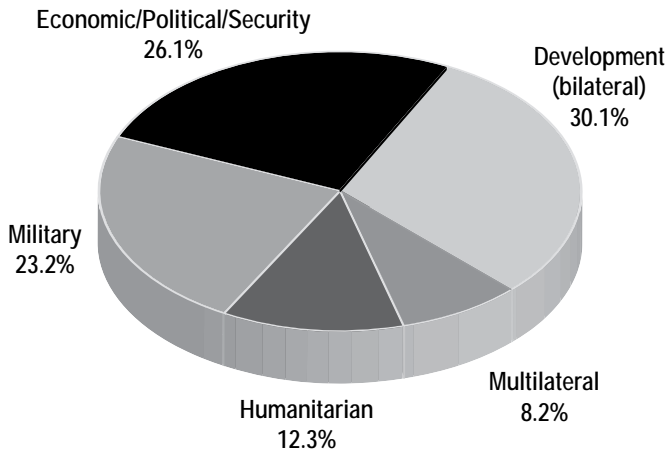
More recently, in line with the NSS, a USAID white paper on American foreign aid identified five core operational goals of U.S. foreign assistance:

- Promote transformational development, especially in the areas of governance, institutional capacity, and economic restructuring.
- Strengthen fragile states.
- Provide humanitarian assistance.
- Support U.S. geostrategic interests, particularly in such countries as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt, and Israel.
- Mitigate global and international ills, including HIV/AIDS.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the priority the NSS has assigned to foreign aid, the money for such aid has not been forthcoming. Figures 1 and 2 show the type and percent of foreign aid given for FY 2004 and the total annual U.S. foreign-aid contributions from 1946 to 2004. The figures include Iraq reconstruction costs, an amount that nearly equals all other foreign aid combined for FY 2004.<sup>10</sup>

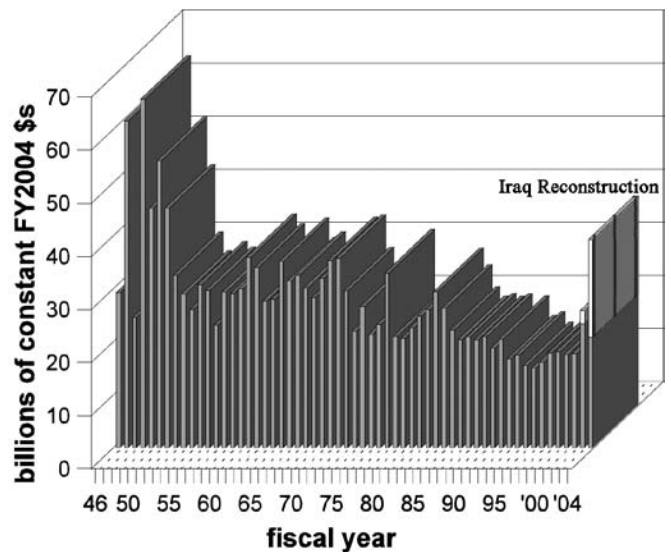
Figure 3 depicts foreign aid as a percentage of the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP). Prior to the mid-1960s, foreign aid represented over 1 percent of the GDP (except during the Marshall Plan period, when it exceeded 2 percent).<sup>11</sup> Following the end of the Vietnam War, and for 20 years thereafter, foreign assistance as a percentage of the GDP ranged between 0.5 percent and 0.25 percent. This dropped to 0.16 percent, its lowest level ever, in fiscal years 1997, 1998, 2001, and 2002. Funds to support Iraq's reconstruction aside, U.S. foreign-aid expenditures continue to shrink as a part of GDP, which seems inconsistent considering the increased importance the 2002 NSS placed on global economic development.<sup>12</sup>





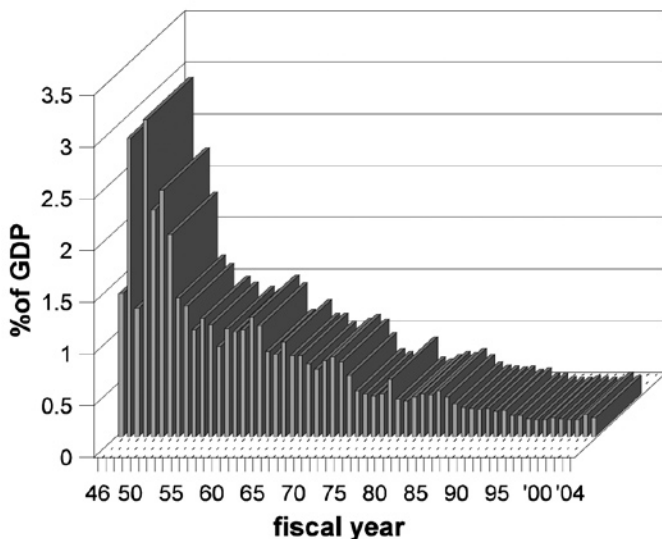
Sources: House and Senate Appropriations Committees and CRS calculations.

**Figure 1. Aid program composition—FY 2004.**

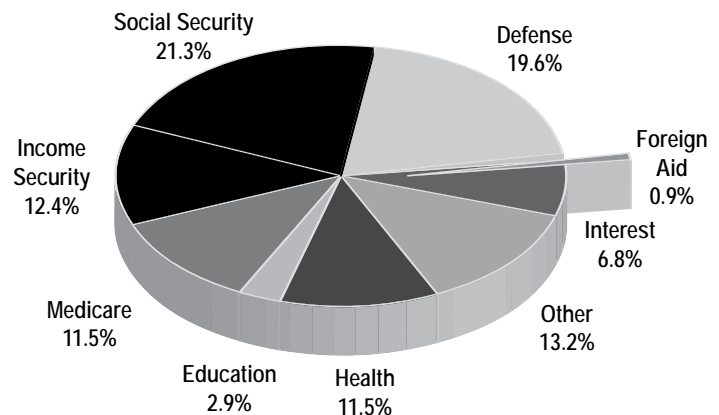


Sources: USAID, OMB, and CRS calculations.

**Figure 2. U.S. Foreign Aid, FY 1946 to FY 2004.**



**Figure 3. Foreign aid as a percent of GDP.**



Sources: OMB

**Figure 4. U.S. budget outlays, FY 2004.**

Figure 4 shows U.S. budget outlays for FY 2004 by service area. Note that foreign aid consumes only 0.9 percent.<sup>13</sup>

## The Economics of War

President Abraham Lincoln's secretary of the treasury estimated that the direct cost of the Civil War to the North would be \$240 million, which was approximately 7 percent of the region's annual GDP.<sup>14</sup> Actual costs were some \$3.2 billion—13 times the original estimate. The U.S. grossly underestimated the cost of the Vietnam War as well. It anticipated the war lasting less than a year at a cost of approximately \$10 billion, but it went on for the better part of a decade and cost almost \$550

billion dollars (adjusted for inflation). In January 2003, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld predicted that the war with Iraq would cost "a number that's something under \$50 billion."<sup>15</sup> The only other public estimate came from the Bush administration's economist-in-residence, Larry Lindsey, who said the war would cost from \$100 to \$200 billion.<sup>16</sup> Even the worst-case estimates by the Democratic staff of the House Budget Committee and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) had the war and subsequent U.S. presence lasting less than a year at a cost between \$48 and \$60 billion.<sup>17</sup>

Aside from a CBO estimate that occupation forces would cost from \$1 to \$4 billion per month, initial official estimates failed to even consider the

#### IRAQ CIRCA 1999

***With an estimated per capita income of \$237 [a year], Iraq, once one of the most developed countries in the Middle East, is now poorer than many countries in sub-Saharan Africa...Iraq's recurring annual budget needs for health, food and essential services, is \$12 to 15 billion. With the oil-for-food programs Iraq gets barely \$4 billion....With a total GDP of \$5.7 billion, Iraq's economy is worth about the same as four B-1 bombers. It is worth about half of Bill Gates' [net worth]....The entire Iraqi economy amounts to just two percent of the annual U.S. defense budget....***

—Ali Abunimah<sup>22</sup>

costs of a protracted war and postwar stability and reconstruction (e.g., occupation, peacekeeping, democratization, nation-building, post-occupation humanitarian assistance, and subsequent counterterrorism activities). Furthermore, they did not consider the federal budget's macroeconomic implications for the U.S. economy or the costs of persuading other nations to support the U.S. A 2002 study by Yale's William D. Nordhaus, which did include postwar costs for an extended U.S. occupation, reconstruction, and nation-building, projected the cost of the Iraq war (2002-2012) at \$1.6 trillion.<sup>18</sup>

### Iraq's Economy: Prewar 2003

In the best situation, it is a monumental task to convert a state-owned economy into a privatized, healthy economy. Attempting to do so in a nation weakened by years of war and international economic sanctions, and without first fully understanding the economic and sectarian situation of that nation, would be folly—yet that is what the U.S. tried to do in Iraq.<sup>19</sup>

Because of the sanctions, the international community and international financial institutions were largely absent from Iraq. As a result, little reliable data existed with which to gauge the state of Iraq's economy prior to Saddam Hussein's removal. Consequently, the U.S. greatly underestimated the seriousness of the economic situation. Furthermore, the U.S. did not plan adequately to provide security, restore power and infrastructure, supply water, and

help create jobs—and the interagency community was ill-equipped and under-funded to do what was needed.<sup>20</sup> Had the planners considered Iraq's recent history, they might have been better prepared.

When Saddam Hussein seized power in 1979, Iraq's per capita GDP was at around \$9,000 a year (in 2002-2003 dollars). Since then, Iraq's economy has declined catastrophically. Iraq has accrued massive international debt and suffered chronic inflation, a staggering drop in its GDP, a drastic currency devaluation, and the loss of foreign investment. By 2003, its per capita GDP had plunged to around \$1,000.

The Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s destroyed a large part of Iraq's capital stock, reduced oil production and exports, and depleted the country's foreign assets and foreign-exchange reserves. Then the first Persian Gulf War destroyed about \$230 billion of Iraqi infrastructure. The multilateral sanctions that ensued from the war were the most severe ever collectively imposed on a nation.

As of 2003, Iraq owed international lenders about \$120 billion, including billions of U.S. dollars in Gulf War reparations claims. For example, the U.N. Compensation Commission, which oversees the payment of reparations, awarded \$21.5 billion in compensation to oil companies that lost profits and equipment during the Gulf War. Reparation claims consumed 5 percent of oil revenues under a payment plan devised through U.N. Security Council resolutions, but the UN's oil-for-food program did not permit imports of equipment vital to the oil sector until 1998. All told, war, sanctions, and reparations have cost Iraq the equivalent of 20 years of GDP in lost output, capital, and financial resources.<sup>21</sup>

### Postwar Economic Realization and Internal Instability

A 2003 joint UN and World Bank report estimated that Iraq's key reconstruction needs through 2007 would cost \$55 billion. It also revealed that—

- Iraq had accumulated more foreign debt as a share of GDP than any other country, with roughly \$120 billion in debt owed to foreign governments and corporations.
- Banking was dysfunctional, with no credit facilities or effective payment systems.
- The agriculture sector was not a dependable source of food and income. The government imported

food rations and distributed them freely to all citizens, sapping the sector of its ability to compete.

- When sanctions were imposed on Iraq after the Gulf War, Iraq became a closed economy characterized by inefficient state-owned enterprises with no incentive to raise productivity.

- Only 5.5 million of Iraq's 25 million people had access to a safe, stable water supply, and Iraq's cities suffered from inadequate sewage systems.

- Iraq averaged 4,300 megawatts of peak electricity generation, enough to supply Baghdad with 12 to 24 hours of power a day, but only by diverting power from the rest of Iraq, which received 4 to 12 hours of power a day.

- Only select senior members of the Ba'ath Party had access to satellite television, cell phones, or the Internet.<sup>24</sup>

**Pledged support.** At the 2003 International Donors' Conference for Iraq, 73 countries and 20 international organizations pledged a total of \$32 billion in aid for reconstruction, most of it courtesy of an \$18.6 billion U.S. pledge (increased to \$20.9 billion in 2005) to the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) pledged \$5.55 billion and 37 nations and organizations together pledged over \$8 billion. After the U.S., the largest pledges were made by Japan, the United Kingdom, the European Commission, and Canada. Vested and seized assets of the former regime, \$2.65 billion in all, also were earmarked for reconstruction.<sup>25</sup>

Although these sums seem significant, the actual money has been slow to appear. Ongoing security problems that have given donors second thoughts, the need to get pledge money approved by political bodies, the fact that money pledged is typically spaced out over years anyway—all of these have undercut the positive effect donor money might have had on Iraq's reconstruction.

**Debt.** Seventeen of 18 Paris Club creditors have signed bilateral agreements to forgive 80 percent of Iraq's sovereign debt. They arranged debt-relief deals with commercial and other creditors for \$19.7 billion.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, though, Iraq has had to pay reparations (more than \$20 billion as of May 2006) for its Saddam-era depredations. The high cost of these penalties has strained Iraq's limited resources and handicapped attempts to rebuild the oil infrastructure, its main bill-payer.

*Iraq is a country torn by profound ideological, religious and ethnic conflicts. Before democratization can even begin, the U.S. would have to assemble a power-sharing agreement among ethnic Kurds, Shiites, and Sunni Muslims... Washington would have to provide the political and, most importantly, military and security infrastructure necessary for holding a new government together. In short, the U.S. would have to become engaged in nation building on a scale that would dwarf any other such effort since the reconstruction of Germany and Japan after World War II. And it would have to stay engaged not just years, but decades, given the depth of change required to make Iraq into a democracy.*

—Marina Ottaway, et al., 2002<sup>23</sup>

**Employment.** Since 2003, economic changes instituted by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), which were based on the neoliberal model that emphasizes privatizing government entities and cutting social spending, have neither increased domestic production or employment nor improved living standards.<sup>27</sup> Unemployment and underemployment remain at about 50 percent, comparable to figures noted before the Iraq war.<sup>28</sup> Iraq's structural economic problems have not eased, either. Except for trade and construction, industrial and agricultural activities are stagnant and private entrepreneurial initiatives are lacking.<sup>29</sup>

**Reconstruction.** Economic reconstruction in post-conflict settings depends on security and law and order and can involve such factors as—

- Establishing a market-based financial system.
- Developing a legal and regulatory framework.
- Setting up functioning government institutions.
- Privatizing state-owned enterprises in phases.
- Rebuilding critical sectors of the economy.
- Creating jobs.
- Phasing out government subsidies in an orderly way.
- Normalizing relations with the outside world.
- Providing basic services such as health care, education, power, and water.<sup>30</sup>

Prominent economists criticized U.S. goals for Iraq as too radical and warned of problems along the lines of those experienced in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, which underwent the “shock therapy” of privatization and institutional reconstruction in the 1990s. Even so, the CPA stuck to its plans to rapidly privatize Iraq’s state-owned businesses and to open Iraq to foreign ownership and investment. A lack of economic opportunities and a reluctance to modify Iraq’s long-standing oil and food subsidies (the latter caused by the realization that more than 60 percent of Iraq’s population relies on the government for food) have since forced the U.S. to put on hold plans to privatize Iraqi enterprises and end the subsidies, but not before the CPA’s avowed policies complicated U.S. efforts to win over Iraqi hearts and minds. In this sense, misuse of the economic arm contributed to the ongoing violence instead of stanching it.<sup>31</sup>

**Security.** Political and security problems caused by the insurgency and sectarian violence have deterred risk-averse foreign investors, nations, and institutions from pledging financial assistance to Iraq. The CPA anticipated that 10 percent of the \$18.6 billion the U.S. Congress originally appropriated for Iraq’s reconstruction would fund security costs—the actual amount was about 25 percent.<sup>32</sup> In 2006, inflation began to rise quite rapidly. Now annual inflation stands at 77 percent, largely because the ongoing violence has caused shortages of certain goods (especially gasoline) and slowed the growth of the non-oil sector.<sup>33</sup> Hundreds of sabotage attacks on Iraq’s oil infrastructure have caused the loss of tens of millions of dollars in oil revenue. Security of the infrastructure is particularly important because 98 percent of Iraq’s revenue is derived from oil.<sup>34</sup>

Thousands of other attacks occur monthly against the government (the military, police, and infrastructure), average citizens, commercial businesses, and foreign workers. The Central Bank of Iraq granted several foreign banks licenses to operate in Iraq in 2004, but not even one has opened its doors there.<sup>35</sup> Despite a series of U.S. Government-sponsored trade conferences meant to entice American companies into the Iraqi market, few have done so. Most firms appear to be holding out for a more stable security and political environment before making major investments.<sup>36</sup>

## Sharing Ownership

The United States, its allies, and the UN have not offered an economic reconstruction plan that could unify factions in Iraq or initiate the broad sharing of ownership and economic power that might lead to prosperity and stability. In light of the increased role and importance the NSS places on economic development, it’s curious that the U.S. went to war having given so little consideration to the economic challenges it would face. No one—at least no one in charge—estimated the tremendous damage and concomitant costs for SRO caused by pre-war sanctions. No one foresaw the sectarian-terrorist-insurgent violence that would undermine security and so greatly complicate the promotion of economic reconstruction. No one assumed that other countries and international financial institutions would not want to do business in such a violent climate.

The general lack of economic planning and situational awareness, coupled with the subsequent adaptation of a neoliberal approach to economic development, resulted in the displacement of government employees and workers of state-owned industries and businesses. This situation further fueled terrorist and insurgency activities and resentment toward the U.S. presence in Iraq, and it increased security needs well beyond what was anticipated. It will take years to recover from the mounting costs associated with ongoing operations in Iraq. The war has cost the United States billions of dollars, caused a whopping national debt, and prevented opportunities to help other nations with foreign aid.

The war in Iraq continues to claim America’s scarce resources and attention, distracting the Nation from fighting the War on Terrorism in other troubling areas. Moreover, legacy cold war concerns still have significant economic implications that aren’t being addressed because of Iraq’s claim on U.S. attention and resources. The war also threatens U.S. relations with allies and international economic institutions, particularly those that did not fully support going to war but are now called on to help with postwar SRO and to write off significant debt owed them by the Iraqi Government.

What can the U.S. do in the future when it contemplates using its military and economic instruments of power to intervene in what it perceives to be just causes throughout the world? First, before



committing its military and its foreign aid dollars, the U.S. should seek commitments from other nations to help resolve conflicts, so that others can share ownership of the cause. Additionally, the U.S. and its allies must realize that to stimulate economic activity, security is paramount. Until a region has law and order, pledges for economic development may be withheld and interagency teams, international institutions that can promote development (such as the UN, the World Bank, and the IMF), entrepreneurs, foreign and private enterprises, and multinational corporations will not show up.

Furthermore, the U.S., along with its allies and international economic institutions, should conduct an economic analysis before military forces or foreign aid are committed. Doing so will ensure that the U.S. knows what it is dealing with. In particular, analysts should seek answers to the following questions: What is the goal of intervention? What

should the end-state look like? Can the intervention succeed? How long will it take to succeed? What are the costs associated with success (political, financial, and social)? Will intervention be supported by the international community (other nations, nongovernmental organizations and institutions, commercial banks, multinational corporations, and so on)? Is the intervention a sound economic investment relative to other needs and options throughout the world?

Finally, the U.S. needs to increase its foreign aid budget significantly, so that it is in line with the NSS's ambitious objectives. Future sustained funding should approximate 1.5 percent of the GDP, which would go a long way toward improving Iraq's and Afghanistan's future, preparing the U.S. to support a post-Castro Cuba, and adequately funding initiatives to secure peace and economic prosperity for nations such as impoverished Haiti. **MR**

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# LESSONS LEARNED

## from the Recent War in Lebanon

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### PART I: Musings on War in General

1. Every war has its particular weapons. Every war has its own competing powers and military structures, and its own unique circumstances. Every war gives birth to new military thought.<sup>1</sup> Just as general knowledge accumulates across history to produce a loftier human awareness, so military knowledge and experience accumulate. Thus, what happened in wars of the past provides lessons for those who will fight the wars of the future.

2. In war, man exploits the peak of his knowledge. He also exploits the most modern science and technology he has arrived at.<sup>2</sup> Every wave of civilization creates its own particular weapons. Agricultural societies have forged the sword, the dagger, and the scythe, the basic weapons of war—the Rwanda massacre was all perpetrated with these weapons. Industrial societies fight with the tank and the airplane—think Syria and Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. As for post-modern societies, digital technology and computer science have entered the military framework—the United States is a pioneer in this field.

3. One might ask, Are wars the direct cause of technological advance, or is it technology that encourages wars?

4. In war, there is defense and attack. There is also maneuvering and out-flanking. In war, one side aims to kill the other, or, to paraphrase Clausewitz, to impose its will on the other. However, as Georges Khodor has noted, there will always be an “other.”<sup>3</sup> So, do we kill everyone?

5. With war, empires fall and rise. What was before a war is certainly not like what comes after one. Unless a war ends in stalemate, one side wins, the other side loses. On both sides, however, everyone is, at the very least, wounded.

6. After a war, nations live in a state of trauma, which they pass out of only gradually, just like an individual who loses someone dear to him. After a war, the victor seems intoxicated, living on his glories. The loser recalculates and prepares himself for a new stage.

7. In war, concepts fall and others appear. New technologies prove their effectiveness; others fail and are dismissed.

8. In war, weapons are tried out, plans are tested. Did Moltke the Elder not say that the most important, best-laid plans do not survive the first few seconds after a war breaks out? War as it is anticipated seldom matches war as it is practiced. On the battleground, prices are usually paid in blood.

9. In war, there are several dimensions: land, sea, and air. Now there is talk about hypothetical worlds. In World War I, the infantry proved that it was the best. In World War II it was armor, maneuvering, and penetrating the heartland. And if the infantry improved its anti-tank weapons, the tanks responded with

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PHOTO: A Hezbollah Katyusha-style rocket strikes a building in the Israeli coastal town of Nahariya, 13 July 2006. (AFP, Yoav Lemmer)

more armor, thicker and of better quality, and thus your waterwheel turns—action and reaction.

10. One time air power determines war's outcome and achieves the political goals without a land battle—as happened in Kosovo. Another time, air power is the most important factor in preparing the field for the battle of the land forces—as in the two wars on Iraq. But an air force can also fail to achieve its nation's political goals, as happened in the recent war in Lebanon.

11. So in war there is no heaven-sent principle; there are no immutable rules that cross time and place. The battlefield is usually the testing ground, even if certain postmodern countries invented what is called war gaming. As well, in war it is not enough for one country to possess the most modern weapons and technology to achieve victory.

12. The “creative human will,” as the French philosopher Henri Bergson called it, must find the magic equation for quick victory through a military plan that is unique and inventive and surprises the enemy before he is able to adjust to it. If the enemy does adjust to it, the plan loses the element of surprise, and the balance of power changes.

13. In World War I, the Germans wanted to make a flanking maneuver through Belgium to encircle the French. The French succeeded in converting the war into a trench war. France's leaders thought the next war would be like the one before it—defensive. And so they built the strongest defensive line in history, the Maginot Line. Germany responded with blitzkrieg, a new *modus operandi* founded on coordination between tanks and airplanes via wireless radios. The Maginot Line was bypassed, and France fell under German occupation.

## PART II: Thoughts About the 2006 War in Lebanon

In this part, we will analyze the 2006 summer war between Israel and Hezbollah. We will focus mainly on Hezbollah's military achievement, while reviewing the war's political aspects. We will also go over the negative repercussions of this war for Israel, and the positive repercussions for Lebanon and the Arab world; in other words, we will analyze what the battleground reflected, both positively and negatively, after Hezbollah tried out its new plans and weapons. We will investigate, too, why Israel failed to achieve all its announced political goals.

Taking this war and its lessons as a starting point, we will build a hypothetical strategic framework for a future Lebanese defense strategy. We will finish by proposing a logical, viable, and effective approach for solving the problems presented by Hezbollah's new warfighting ability.

## The War in General

Simply put, the July War, as the Lebanese call it, or the Second Lebanon War, as the Israelis call it, was unique. Why?

- It was a war between a non-state actor and a nation-state.
- The non-state actor participated in another state and in all of that state's branches: executive, legislative, etc.
- The state in which the non-state actor resided (the host state) did not know about the war before the first spark ignited.
- The war was fought by the non-state actor, but entered into diplomatically by the host state. The host state neither owned the war, in the official sense, nor managed the war's battles—not in the strategic dimension, not in the tactical dimension. This could be an example of what Clausewitz meant when he said that war is politics by other means: the non-state actor seized the political initiative from the host state's government by controlling the specific circumstances that led to the war.
- The non-state actor possessed a military arsenal and military organization that most nation-states in its region, and even in the world, do not possess.
- The war did not figure in the host state's national security strategy; therefore, the host state and its government had no say in setting goals for the war—even though the people and government were among the means being used in the war. Consequently, the host state's government has reaped no political benefits from the war's outcome: the only beneficiaries have been those who decided, planned, and sacrificed for the war—the non-state actor. On the other hand, had the war's results been negative, the state could not have escaped its responsibility.
- The host state was unable to enter the war. It had been absent from the war zone for more than three decades, and had abdicated its duty to defend the war zone to the non-state actor.
- The opposing belligerent (Israel) retaliated directly against the non-state party militarily, but

it did not exempt the host government, its military institutions, and its infrastructure.

- The war took place between Hezbollah (the non-state actor) and Israel (the opposing belligerent) with the host state (Lebanon) relegated to the sidelines. Hezbollah issued belligerent statements to which Israel responded with pamphlets—all part of the psychological warfare, all done in the absence of the concerned Lebanese ministry, the Ministry of Information. Hezbollah bombed Israel in its geographic depth. Israel responded by hitting the security quad—the Bekaa Valley and the south—where the Shi'ite majority lives.

- Israel imposed strategic paralysis on Lebanon, but the Lebanese Government more or less declined to respond in like or kind.

- Finally, Hezbollah is unlike all the other resistance movements we have known. It is resisting an outside power and not directly fighting its government for power. It says that its weapons are for all the sects in Lebanon—they are not just Shi'ite weapons. And it [Hezbollah] has reached the final

stages of maturity, as attested to by its effective organization and its military prowess.

## Was Israel Prepared for War?

The secretary-general of Hezbollah, Al-Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, has claimed several times that the party preempted Israel, dragging it into a war it was not ready for in terms of timing, preparation, and place.<sup>4</sup> Each time, Israel replied that it had not been preparing for war at all.<sup>5</sup>

Without relying on precise information, which only time will reveal, we can conclude that Israel mismanaged the war. It experienced significant logistical problems; its call-up of reserves was chaotic; its government continuously hesitated to specify the goals of the land campaign and did a poor job connecting military action to political goals; its intelligence about the areas adjacent to the Blue Line (the border between Israel and Lebanon) was inadequate; it failed to make needed substitutions in its Northern Command, especially during the course of military operations; etc. Altogether, the nature and extent of the problems Israel encountered suggest that it could



Billboards of Lebanon's Hezbollah leader, Hassan Nasrallah, are seen on a road leading from central Beirut to a Shi'ite neighborhood, 20 July 2006.



not have been preparing for a land war of the size it found in Lebanon. Furthermore, in a paper presented to the Center for Arab Unity Studies in Beirut on 31 August 2006, the Arab representative to the Israeli Knesset, Dr. Azmi Bishara, stated that the decision to invade Lebanon was made quickly, shortly after Hezbollah abducted two Israeli soldiers—the provocation that ignited the war—from inside the Blue Line.<sup>6</sup>

A news item published on an Israeli website might explain why Israel's land campaign was so poorly executed.<sup>7</sup> The website states that Hezbollah had broken up two spy rings Mossad had planted in the party, one before and one during the war. The rings' missions were to plant listening devices in Hezbollah's headquarters, observe the party's leadership, and place phosphorous markers on the party's headquarters and rocket-launching sites, marking both as targets for the Israeli Air Force. This suggests that Israel's real plan was to stage a simultaneous, swift, and comprehensive air strike against the entire Hezbollah leadership, effectively decapitating the party. When the rings were discovered and the plan negated, Israel had to come up with a plan B—the land campaign—quickly.

Bolstering this theory is the fact that the Israeli Air Force was very well prepared for action—above and beyond even its usual high state of readiness. Of course, to be positive about Israel's initial intentions, we will have to wait on the future and the information it brings.

## Hezbollah's Approach to the War

Analysts may disagree about the Israeli Army's first reaction to contact with Hezbollah forces; however, Hezbollah cannot be considered to have executed anything but a first-rate tactical-operational surprise. Just how well prepared Hezbollah was can be deduced from Nasrallah's speeches, especially the ones delivered during and immediately after the Lebanese dialog roundtable and before the war's start on 12 July 2006.<sup>8</sup> Nasrallah's speeches indicate that—

1. Hezbollah had correctly identified the possible forms Israeli aggression against Lebanon might take, namely—

- A violent bombardment without occupying the ground, as happened in 1993 and 1996.
- A violent bombardment with a partial, temporary occupation, as in the Litani operation in 1978.

● A violent bombardment with a complete, long-lasting occupation, as in 1982 (until 2000).

2. Hezbollah had studied all possible lessons from all of Israel's previous wars.

3. Hezbollah had studied the strengths and weaknesses of the Israeli Army, taking as a starting point Sun Tzu's dictum, "Know yourself, know your enemy, and victory will always be your ally."

4. Hezbollah had scrutinized and outlined the battleground—the area stretching from the Blue Line to the Litani River—before the war. In fact, Hezbollah imposed the battlefield, giving the Israelis the impression that no matter what they did outside of this area, what happened in this area would determine who won and who lost. The Israelis could bomb anything in the Lebanese interior. They could conduct a number of airdrops wherever they wanted. But all these bombings and operations would not be decisive. A decision would only be gained in the area adjacent to the Israeli border.

5. Hezbollah analyzed the strategic culture Israel had accumulated across all the Arab-Israeli wars. The founder of this culture was David Ben-Gurion, a believer in Clausewitz's insistence on the necessity of annihilating one's enemy. Thus, one of the most important principles of Israeli strategic culture is, "If you want war with your Arab enemy, it's necessary to defeat him such that he's unable to reorganize himself for another encounter for a very long time."<sup>9</sup> But because toe-to-toe wars of annihilation would be too costly, Israel combined Clausewitz's call for annihilation with B.H. Lidell Hart's advocacy of an indirect approach. The combination of these two approaches yielded a strategy based on maneuver, air superiority, and firepower superiority. It acknowledged the necessity of changing the characteristics of the battlefield to accord with Israeli political goals, of gaining a quick decision and not getting bogged down in a war of attrition, and of portraying the war domestically as important for Israeli national security and even vital for the nation's destiny—a war could not be optional, as happened with Ariel Sharon in the 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

6. After determining what the battlefield would be, and after studying the Israeli military fighting creed and absorbing lessons learned from previous violent encounters with Israel, Hezbollah decided it would rely on a fixed forward defense while exploiting geographic depth.<sup>10</sup> The goal was to buy time and



**David Ben-Gurion, Israel's founding father and first prime minister, is shown with Israeli troops during a visit to installations near the Gaza Strip region in 1957.**

to inflict the greatest possible losses, particularly human, on an unprepared enemy. Ground lost would not mean that the Israelis had won—ground is not important in guerrilla warfare. Put another way, Hezbollah decided on a tactical attack (seizing several Israeli soldiers) with the goal of dragging the Israeli Army into a well-prepared playground where it (Hezbollah) was positioned to adopt a strategic defense and where time would work in its favor. If and when it lost ground, Hezbollah would reorganize itself to fight a guerrilla war, as it had from 1982-2000.

Thus, I believe that many thinkers and military-strategic analysts err when they describe Hezbollah's recent war against Israel as only a type of guerrilla warfare. It was actually a concocted mix, Lebanonized from several models of warfare. As such, it cannot be immediately generalized or exported across the Middle East because it is utterly unique.

7. Hezbollah's new style of war required equipment and training geared to counter the quality of Israel's forces. It required modern anti-tank weapons, which Hezbollah had obtained in quantity. The operational framework was completed with the addition of a unique rocket dimension—short, medium and long range. The important point about the rockets was that they were able to reach, with effect, into the Israeli interior.

## Repercussions for Israel

In fighting Israeli forces, Arab armies had become used to clashing with an enemy that controlled the

air, enjoyed much greater mobility, was equipped with the latest fighting technology, and had the support of the strongest country in the world, the United States. For its part, Israel had grown accustomed to destroying these armies, even if it was unable to impose a political solution. That happened in nearly all of Israel's wars with the Arabs: 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982. In all of these wars, Israel failed to heed Clausewitz and prosecute war as a means toward political ends. War remained in the dimension

of force, even excessive force, with no purpose other than destruction.

In the July War, Israel failed as usual to achieve any political goals. This time, however, Ben-Gurion's advice to pulverize the enemy's army also went unfulfilled. In fact, given the much greater size and power of the Israeli Army, and keeping in mind Henry Kissinger's assertion that "the resistance wins if it does not lose, and the nation-state loses if it does not win," the war looks like an Israeli defeat.<sup>11</sup> That said, let us consider the following repercussions of the war for Israel:

1. The war revealed the precariousness of Israel's ongoing security dilemma, which is built on the nation's permanent aspiration to gain and hold land it thinks it needs to guarantee its security. Israel's strategy has always been built on the principle of safe borders. In 1956, Ben-Gurion wanted the Sinai as a buffer zone. In 1967, it was the occupation of the Sinai, the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. In the first invasion of Lebanon, Sharon wanted a buffer zone in the south. The same principle lies behind the recent building of a dividing wall on the West Bank. But because these new borders were not (and still are not) internationally recognized—especially not by Arab countries—all of Israel's efforts to achieve lasting security have failed.

In addition to its land aspirations, Israel has relied on preemptive strikes to maintain its security. However, with Hezbollah, which had been

preparing and lying in wait for six years, Israel would have to have fought a preemptive war every day—not a feasible option. Will Israel revive this principle? Possibly. It may depend on whether or not the international emergency forces in southern Lebanon today are a viable solution to Israel's border-security dilemma.

2. In all its previous wars, Israel plunged into battle on the edge of its safe borders, however far they extended (e.g., the borders after the Six-Day War). In the July War and in recent moves into the Gaza Strip, Israel began its plunge from the edges of its settlements, a clear indication that all of its previous efforts to secure itself by stretching its borders had not brought the magic solution.

3. By revealing hitherto unsuspected Israeli weakness, not just in the army but in the state, the war has lessened Arab fear of Israeli power; it has emboldened all Arab countries in their dealings with Israel. Those countries that made peace with Israel have been embarrassed in front of their publics, and they will be firmer in their stances towards Israel. Those countries that did not make peace have seen the results of last summer and now understand that there are other, not necessarily peaceful, ways to deal with Israel—a sentiment Syrian President Bashar al-Assad expressed in a speech after the cease-fire in Lebanon.<sup>12</sup>

What is especially significant is that there is now pressure on those countries still at odds with Israel to work towards liberating their lands. If Hezbollah was able to liberate Lebanon in 2000 and achieve a victory over the Israeli Army in 2006, why are the tougher, stronger Arab armies not able to take back their nations' lands? Did Hezbollah create the secret strategic formula for how to fight and defeat Israel? Perhaps, but such a judgment requires more time and study.

4. By exposing the inadequacy of Israel's safe-border strategy and reliance on force, the war has made it clear that Israel must work with its Arab

neighbors to create a just and lasting solution to the region's problems. Like the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan, Israel now finds itself facing war on two fronts, Gaza in the south and Hezbollah-controlled southern Lebanon in the north. The war has helped Syria's president realize his father's dream of forming an eastern front to contain Israel; moreover, it has done so even in the absence of Jordan. Who knows what could happen now?

5. Today it is certain that there is trouble in the Zionist utopia. Zionism is more or less the only ideology that has achieved all its goals: bringing the Jews of the world together, founding the Zionist state.<sup>13</sup> So how will the war affect social assimilation in Israel, especially since the state already suffers from ethnic, religious, and secular problems? The army has long been looked at as "the national factory where differences between Jews melted away."<sup>14</sup> Will its lowered stature as a result of the war diminish its ability to bring Jews of many sects and ethnicities together? Will the future witness more of what is called "neo-Zionism," or will it enter a period of "post-Zionism"?<sup>15</sup>

6. The war shook the Israeli state, politically as well as militarily. Israel today is threatened by the tanks of traditional armies and the rockets of a non-state actor, Hezbollah. Last but not least, there is the danger of the knife—terrorism (according to the Israeli definition, of course).<sup>16</sup> In the political dimension, long-time leaders such as Sharon were absent, their places taken by novices in the science of war—Ehud Olmert and Amir Peretz. In the army, there was stumbling over the distribution of responsibilities, accusations met with counter-accusations, etc. And now, in the absence of any political effort to resolve the region's problems, Israel must rely on its military to hit the tanks, keep the rockets from falling on Tel Aviv, and thwart the knives. These are projects that will require a lot of time, a lot of money, and a convenient reality. Does Israel possess all these?

7. When Ben-Gurion read Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's book *Philosophy of the Revolution* and grasped Nasser's dreams, he feared greatly for Israel's survival. What would happen if Arab unity were achieved over the vast expanse of the Middle East, with its inexhaustible population and its riches important to the whole world? At the time, Ben-Gurion felt that Nasser must be gotten

***...the war has lessened Arab fear of Israeli power; it has emboldened all Arab countries in their dealings with Israel.***



rid of, and so plans were laid to strike him and his model for bringing Arabs together. There was the Tripartite Aggression, the combined Israeli, British, and French attack on Egypt in October 1956; subsequent undercover operations inside Egypt; and the permanent aspiration to encircle the Arab encirclement of Israel by opening up to Africa and all the countries surrounding the Arab world, especially Egypt.

Today, Israel is suffering from a new model, the non-state actor. This actor accumulated victories in 2000 and 2006. It is capable of gathering together Arabs and Muslims from every branch and sector, and it has embarrassed Arab regimes both friendly and hostile to Israel. This actor has provided a model that could be adopted to achieve victory over the Arabs' one great enemy. Finally, this actor is a player. Because of its performance in the recent war, new game rules have been established, not only for those at the fingertips of Israel, but for the region at large.

8. Ben-Gurion said that Israel had to depend on the support of a great power to survive. When some suggested England, he rejected the idea and

decided to depend on the United States of America.<sup>17</sup> However, since 1991, the date of the first Gulf War, Israel has not played an important role in American strategy. It cited terrorism as a reason to invade Lebanon last July, but that seems to have been merely an attempt to jump on the American war-on-terror bandwagon. If the U.S. did delegate Israel the mission of wiping out Hezbollah, Israel failed in its mission. How will Israel regain Uncle Sam's trust? What does it have to do?

9. Although the negative effects of the war on Israel are many, naturally there were some positive results. For example, the war showed that Israeli society was able to absorb the impact of the rocket attacks in its interior, while its people cheered their soldiers on throughout the war.

10. In the recent war, the violent relationship between Hezbollah and Israel begun in 1982 finally reached a climax. Israel interacted with a non-state actor, much as it is doing now in the Palestinian interior. How has Israel's experience with Hezbollah affected its actions in Palestine? Israeli Prime Minister Olmert's first decision was to stop the



Israeli soldiers carry their gear as they walk along the international border with Lebanon, moments after crossing back into Israel, 18 August 2006.

AFP, Gali Tibbon



unilateral withdrawal from designated areas in the West Bank. However, because of Israel's inability to defeat one non-state actor, and because it is impossible to measure victory in a war with such an actor, momentum seems to be forming in both the region and internationally for a political solution to the Israeli security dilemma. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 is but one sign of such momentum. Will it pan out, and if so, what will its impact be on the Lebanese scene?

In the end, the war's repercussions for Israel are connected to the extent that the state's political goals were—or were not—achieved. According to Olmert, Israel's war goals were to destroy Hezbollah and its arsenal, prevent its neighbors from arming Hezbollah (thus carrying out UN Resolution 1559), recover its two kidnapped soldiers, and restore the

deterrent image of the Israeli Army. While it has made the Lebanese Army responsible for security on the border today—an outcome desired by those who want to see Hezbollah destroyed as a first step toward solving problems in the region created by the Iranian-American rift—Israel really achieved none of its war goals. Hezbollah was able to stand strong, particularly militarily, and is considered by many Arabs to have achieved a divine victory; additionally, it now has 20,000 rockets instead of the 8,000 it had left after the war.<sup>18</sup> Israel also failed to retrieve its kidnapped soldiers, and the deterrent power of its army has been significantly degraded. In fact, the war has decreased Israeli society's trust in the army and the ruling class, a condition compounded by the recent plethora of sexual and financial scandals at the state's highest levels.<sup>19</sup> **MR**

## NOTES

1. Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *Creating a New Civilization: The Politics of the Third Wave* (Atlanta, GA: Turner Pub, 1995).

2. Ibid.

3. Georges Khodor is a Lebanese Greek Orthodox archbishop, a theological scholar, and a regular contributor of editorials to *Annahar*, Lebanon's leading day newspaper. He has published many books, most of a philosophical bent. Khodor's assertion that there will always be another "other" can be read as a rebuttal to Clausewitz's claim for the efficacy of annihilating one's enemy.

4. Speech by Secretary-General Al-Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, *Al-Safir* (Beirut), 5 September 2006.

5. The interim Winograd Report, an Israeli Government inquiry into July War mistakes, claims that "[Israel's] decision to respond [to Hezbollah's provocations] with an immediate, intensive military strike was not based on a detailed, comprehensive and authorized military plan, based on careful study of the complex characteristics of the Lebanon arena." "Winograd Commission submits interim report," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, <www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/2007/Winograd+Inquiry+Commission+submits+Interim+Report+30-Apr-2007.htm>. The Israeli Defense Force's nonchalant approach to the war is perhaps epitomized by chief of staff Dan Halutz's taking the time, on 12 July, to manage his family's stock portfolio. See "Why did Halutz sell shares after Hizbullah attack?" <www.ynetnews.com/Ext/Comp/ArticleLayout/CdaArticlePrintPreview/1,2506,L-3291420,00.html>.

6. Azmi Bishara, paper delivered to Center for Arab Unity Studies, 31 August 2006, <www.daralhayat.com/opinion/08-2006/Item-20060816-18418797-c0a8-10ed-019d-d97b82b47fce/story.html>. In a raid across the Blue Line on 12 July 2006, a Hezbollah force killed three Israeli soldiers and wounded two. It also captured two soldiers, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, whom Hezbollah attempted to use as

chips in bargaining for the release of several Israeli-held Hezbollah prisoners.

7. "DEBKAfile Exclusive: Spy fever sweeps Hizballah after breaking up two Israeli Mossad rings which included Lebanese Shi'ite agents," <www.debka.com/headline\_print.php?hid=3208>.

8. For a collection of these speeches, see <www.moqawama.org/\_dailynews.php?filename=20070724173449>.

9. Isaac Ben-Israel, "The Crisis in the Oslo Process through the Prism of Israeli Deterrence," *Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies*, vol 5, no. 2 (August 2002), <www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v5n2p6Ben.html>.

10. Cited in speech by Nasrallah, 21 July 2006, Beirut, <www.assafir.com>.

11. Jeffrey Record, "Why the Strong Lose," *Parameters* (Winter 2005-06): 16-31.

12. See account of speech by Assad, <www.qudspress.com/look/sarticle.tpl?IdLanguage=17&IdPublication=1&NrArticle=1473&NrIssue=1&NrSection=4>.

13. Ephraim Nimni, *The Challenge of Post Zionism* (New York: Zed Books, 2003).

14. Gil Merom, "Israel's National Security and the Myth of Exceptionalism," *Political Science Quarterly*, 114, no. 3. (Autumn, 1999): 409-434.

15. Nimni.

16. Eliot Cohen, Michael Eisenstadt, Andrew J. Bacevich, *'Knives, Tanks and Missiles': Israel's Security Revolution* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998).

17. Allon Gal, *David Ben Gurion and the American Alignment for a Jewish State* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1992).

18. Speech by Nasrallah during the victory festival in the southern suburbs of Beirut, reported in *Al-Safir* (Beirut), 23 September 2006.

19. Ephraim Yaar and Tamar Hermann, "Public losing faith in IDF, and Supreme Court," <www.haaretz.com>.



# AFTER FIDEL:

## *What Future for U.S.-Cuban Relations?*

Waltraud Queiser Morales, Ph.D.

*Latin America always seems on the verge of something historic, always teetering between possibility and failure.<sup>1</sup>*

### CULTIVO UNA ROSA BLANCA

*Cultivo una rosa blanca,  
en junio como en enero,  
para el amigo sincero  
que me da su mano franca.*

*Y para el cruel que me arranca  
el corazón con que vivo,  
cardo ni ortiga cultivo:  
cultivo la rosa blanca.*

—José Martí

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PHOTO: Cuban General Raúl Castro waves to the people during the annual May Day parade, 1 May 2007. Behind him is a bust of José Martí, the national hero of Cuba. (AIN Foto, Marcelino Vazquez Hernandez)

**D**ESPITE THE END of the cold war over two decades ago and intractable post-9/11 security challenges, when it comes to Cuba, U.S. policy-makers remain mired in the past. Once again, it seems that Fidel Castro's Cuba is different. Cuba is not only the hemisphere's oldest dictatorship, but also a long-standing U.S. foreign policy failure. Radical change has engulfed the region since the end of 2005. Presidential elections across Latin America have swept in popular, radical, left-leaning, and often anti-American leaders and governments. In Chile, a woman became the first elected president of a South American country, and in Bolivia, an indigenous leader attained the presidency for the first time in the region's modern history—but the relations between Cuba and the United States have remained frozen in time.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout it all, Castro and his regime have survived.<sup>3</sup> Despite the dictator's old age and poor health and the economic and political failures of the Cuban Revolution, unrelenting efforts by the United States and its allies in the region and abroad to render Castro and his socialist model irrelevant have backfired.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the revolutionary spirit is alive and well in Latin America, thanks in part to the U.S.'s anti-Castro policy. The world is a different place today: the global and hemispheric climates are more critical of U.S. leadership and its economic and political models and more supportive of Castro and Cuban socialism. For a significant percentage of Latin America's population, Castro and the Cuban Revolution remain powerful symbols of success and resistance to the "Empire."

In spite of the U.S. economic blockade and the reactionary Helms-Burton legislation, Cuba has become a leader in education and medical care, providing free medical training to aspiring Third World doctors (and even some First World ones). Cuba's economy has defied predictions that it would collapse within months of the fall of the Soviet Union; instead, Cuba has developed a successful tourism sector and growing sports and biotechnology industries and attracted direct investments from around the world. Diplomatic and economic relations have expanded regionally and globally. In 2007, 30 of 32 Latin American governments maintained normalized ties with Cuba, and a number of governments, particularly Venezuela, Canada, Spain, and China, expanded trade agreements and commercial ventures with the island.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, since 1999, Hugo Chávez's Venezuela has provided a valuable political and economic lifeline to Castro and the Cuban Revolution.

But how permanent are these achievements? Can they and the Cuban Revolution survive Fidel's death? Or is Castro the indispensable glue that holds the system together? Since Castro became seriously ill in July 2006, critics and supporters of his regime have speculated over the future of Cuba without Fidel. The official successor and temporary head of government during Castro's recuperation, Fidel's brother Raúl, is also aging, having celebrated his 76th birthday in June 2007. What will Cuba's future be like when both Castros have left the stage?

More questions spring up. What should the U.S. response be to a Fidel-less Cuba? Will the immediate change in leadership further normalization of relations and an end to the embargo? Will the U.S. continue its long-standing policy of indirect subversion and sabotage? Or will Fidel's death and the transition to another leader provide the opportune climate for direct U.S. military intervention? Will the Cuban dissidents on and off the island be able to rally the Cuban people to overthrow a successor government? Should the United States have a role, either direct or indirect, in regime change in Cuba? Would an active U.S. role promote democracy in Cuba and the region? And what would be the immediate and long-term impact of U.S.-sponsored regime change on hemispheric cooperation and security?

How U.S. policymakers respond to these difficult questions will be critical to Cuba's political and economic development and to a renewal of U.S. credibility in Latin America. But before we begin to consider what the appropriate U.S. security framework for a new Cuba policy should be, we must first put the current U.S. foreign policy towards Latin America into context.

## Global and Hemispheric Context since 9/11

In this era of global terrorism and insecurity, U.S. unilateralism is not a viable long-term option. Power relations and capabilities are in constant flux, and even a superpower's resources are constrained and limited. Most global problems are a complex mix of economic, political, religious, ethnic, and cultural tensions and rivalries and involve non-state as well as state actors. Most of these problems are not amenable to military solutions. Even when they are, the



AP Photo, Gregory Bull

**Cuban daily life is reflected on an image of Cuban leader Fidel Castro in a store window in Havana, 30 April 2007.**

U.S. must employ its military resources judiciously and sparingly. More than ever, rational and realistic foreign and national security policies that appreciate the new global context are essential to success.

Since 9/11 and the Iraq war, the global political and security environment has become more threatening to all nations and particularly to the United States. Indeed, the popular global mind-set of "hating America" expresses not just a rejection of the Bush administration's foreign policy, but a wider repudiation of U.S. hegemony.<sup>6</sup> In the current climate of fear and hyper-security, military responses to global and regional problems have increased, but the use of force has not necessarily delivered greater security. The U.S. War on Terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq is a case in point. In a 2006 opinion poll of over 100 top foreign-policy experts, most agreed that the world is more dangerous for the United States and American citizens today. They did not agree that the United States was winning the War on Terrorism or that the war in Iraq has had a positive impact on the War on Terrorism.<sup>7</sup>

Such negative views of U.S. foreign policy and the U.S. role in the world resonate in the international community, especially in Latin America, where they have contributed to tense hemispheric relations. As our closest neighbor, traditional security zone, and “soft underbelly,” Latin America is more important to the United States today than ever. During the major security crises and global wars of the 20th century, Latin American support and hemispheric solidarity were the norm and were often taken for granted. Currently, the Iraq war and the War on Terrorism are widely unpopular in Latin America (as in many countries around the world), making it more difficult for democratic governments to support U.S. strategic goals and easier for unfriendly governments, or radical and populist ones, to confront and even undermine U.S. policies.<sup>8</sup> Once again, as during darker periods of U.S.-Latin American relations, most of the region’s governments and peoples are defining nationalism in terms of anti-Americanism. Standing up to the North American superpower has won recent elections for a half-dozen new, “left-leaning” Latin American presidents.

The aggressive U.S. focus on nation-building and democratic enlargement in the Third World and in the Middle East, where it has been problematic and largely unsuccessful, has increased skepticism over the U.S.’s “real” foreign policy intentions and fostered cynicism about the effectiveness of democracy itself.<sup>9</sup> Despite being a popular and desirable concept in theory, in practice democracy does not guarantee favorable or convenient outcomes for either voters or imperial powers. The propagation of democracy by foreign armies—whether by a humanitarian intervention sanctioned by multinational forces or by a unilateral imperialist invasion—has proven to be an illusory goal. “Powerful states,” Eric J. Hobsbawm argues, “are trying to spread a system that even they find inadequate to meet today’s challenges.”<sup>10</sup> The conditions for effective democratic governance are rare and demand legitimacy, consensus, and conflict mediation, and in impoverished countries, socioeconomic opportunity and justice are necessary as well. Hobsbawm is not alone in concluding that efforts to “spread democracy” have “aggravated ethnic conflict and produced the disintegration” of multinational and multi-communal states.<sup>11</sup>

The U.S. policy to democratize Latin America’s governments is under suspicion and assault. There are critics outside the region and even in the U.S. Government itself. Compared to earlier decades when dictatorships and one-party rule were the norm, since the 1980s most countries in the region have adopted democratic elections and governing structures. However, only a few are truly stable, and most are “borderline” (with Colombia ranked as “critical”) on an index of “failed states.”<sup>12</sup> In many cases, democracy has opened up political systems to historically disadvantaged and exploited groups and facilitated the rise of populist and leftist leaders across the region, but it has had negative consequences, too.

The problem is that an imbalance exists. Former Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo recently noted, “Political democracy will take root in Latin America only when it is accompanied by economic and social democracy.”<sup>13</sup> Latin America’s populist and indigenous resurgence is the result of this imbalance. Radical popular movements have targeted chronic poverty and socioeconomic inequality, which have not only persisted, but also worsened in many countries in spite of democracy. Indigenous and labor groups have benefited from the democratic opening, successfully organizing and electing populist governments more representative of their ethnicity and class interests and supportive of their reformist/revolutionary goals. However, popular civil movements have also mobilized outside the formal political system and used “direct democracy” or confrontational “street” democracy to push their agendas. Contests among competing groups that represent “the people,” the “elites,” and the government of the day have become the norm in many countries. In this sense, democracy has increased political and social instability in the hemisphere and complicated U.S. foreign policymaking.

There are two key reasons for this. First, the United States has been inconsistent and cynical in its relations, preferring “friendly” governments whether democratic or not, and challenging “unfriendly” ones even when they are democratic. Second, U.S. policymakers have married democracy to free-market capitalism and unfettered globalization and rejected the dominant role of the state in economic growth and development in Latin America as an insidious form of socialism.<sup>14</sup> The region’s elites are pro-market, but



the capitalist economic model has never persuaded the majority of the popular classes. Many repudiate it as an instrument of U.S. economic imperialism and a major reason for their chronic poverty and their country's socioeconomic underdevelopment. Indeed, in the last decade, as the region has experienced a major economic crisis, even the elites have turned against the U.S. economic formula. The pro-globalization, capitalist, free-market model of economic growth and development, the "Washington Consensus" that U.S. foreign policy has promoted internationally and in Latin America, is under full attack. Notwithstanding political or ideological orientation, most Latin governments reject economic "neoliberalism" and have reasserted a more state-centric trade and development model.

In short, the United States is on the wrong side of the major changes, movements, and trends in Latin America, and Fidel Castro, who has denounced U.S. policy as imperialist and directly challenged the American political and economic system for nearly half a century, is once again "in," just as he seemed on the way "out." Rather than fading into irrelevance since the end of the cold war, the Cuban Revolution's socialist principles have been redeemed by the rise of a new "21st-century socialism." The failure of U.S. foreign policy—its disconnect from the challenges of a post-9/11 world; the altered global context since the 2003 invasion of Iraq; U.S. neglect of Latin America; and the uncoordinated U.S. response to the region's leftward shift since 2000—is partly to blame for this change. The United States has lost moral authority in relation to Cuba and other repressive regimes around the world. Criticisms of Cuba and other governments for the infringement of democratic and human rights, extralegal detentions, and torture ring hollow after Abu Ghraib and the detentions in Guantánamo Bay. How can the United States condemn Cuba and brand governments that harbor terrorists as terrorist states when the U.S. judicial system protects an anti-Castro Cuban rebel who perpetrated terrorist acts against the Castro regime?

## The United States and Revolutionary Cuba

The history of the U.S.-Cuban relationship is an ambivalent one. After 34 years of struggle, Cuba, one of the last colonies of Spain, finally gained its independence through U.S. military intervention in the Spanish-American War of 1898.<sup>15</sup> On 20 May 1902, after four years of U.S. military occupation, the Cuban flag flew over Morro Castle at the entrance to Havana harbor, and the Cuban Republic was born.<sup>16</sup> From the *independentistas'* perspective, the U.S. intervention preempted and thwarted their independence movement. Nevertheless, despite the 1902 Platt Amendment, which placed conditions on Cuban independence and thwarted Cuban nationalism, the U.S. occupation contributed to the island's immediate political and economic stability and development. It also safeguarded "order, property, and privilege" as well as U.S. political and economic interests.<sup>17</sup>

Stability, however, was short-lived because in the long term, Cuba's "mediated sovereignty" and the elitist U.S.-dominated economic reconstruction undermined it and provoked several interventions by the U.S. Marines over the next two decades.<sup>18</sup> Relations improved somewhat in 1934, when U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy revoked the Platt Amendment and renounced the U.S. policy of military intervention, but this only occurred after a defiant nationalist Cuban Government had unilaterally revoked the amendment and prompted Sergeant Fulgencio Batista's September 1933 revolt, which led to a consolidation of power favorable to U.S. interests.<sup>19</sup> Over much of the next 26 years, and mostly with the blessing of the United States, the Cuban army and Batista (either as the power behind the throne or as president or dictator) maintained control.

On 26 July 1953, Fidel Castro and 165 Cuban youths rebelled against Batista, who had assumed full dictatorial power after a second coup, in March 1952. The insurrection failed dismally and Batista killed, tortured, and imprisoned many rebels, with

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Fidel Castro among the imprisoned. Attempting to legitimize his rule, Batista called elections in 1954 and ran unopposed. In another bid for legitimacy, in May 1955, the Batista government extended a general amnesty to all political prisoners, among them Fidel Castro, who soon went into exile and launched the revolutionary July 26th Movement.<sup>20</sup> For the next five years, the world watched, stunned by Fidel's guerrilla victories, and journalists turned the ragtag army and its leader into folk heroes.

On the eve of Castro's 1959 Cuban Revolution and for a year afterward, U.S. policymakers, as they had been during other U.S.-Cuban relations crises, were ambivalent and divided over U.S.-Cuba strategy. Despite favorable overtures from the United States to Castro and from Castro to the United States—again foreshadowing the wide pendulum swings of future relations—miscommunication and mistrust caused the two governments to become embroiled in a protracted contest after 1960. In January 1961, President Dwight Eisenhower severed diplomatic relations with Cuba and on 17 April 1961, President John F. Kennedy launched the Bay of Pigs invasion.<sup>21</sup>

From the outset, many U.S. policymakers misunderstood the Cuban Revolution's character and underestimated its radical goals. Although Marxist, socialist, and authoritarian, the revolution was primarily a populist *social revolution*. In March 1960, Castro emphasized the populist character of the July 26th Movement as "the revolution of the *humildes* [humble], for the *humildes*, and by the *humildes*."<sup>22</sup> The revolution was fundamentally committed to eradicating the social injustices endemic in Cuban society, and thus polarized that society between the haves and the have-nots, between the once powerful economic classes and the impoverished, emerging popular classes.<sup>23</sup>

The Cuban mix of nationalism and communism confounded U.S. policymakers, and the cold war's ideological blinders obscured the potential for accommodation with Castro and the revolution. As Marifeli Pérez-Stable has noted, although communists had controlled the unions in the 1940s and allied themselves at times with Batista, this had not created the crisis that it did in 1959. "More profoundly," she writes, "the controversy over



Fidel Castro, Cuban Prime Minister, answers a question from a panel on the NBC television program "Meet the Press," in Washington, 19 April 1959. He said at one point that Cuba would be committed to the West in the event of any struggle between Democracy and Communism. At left is Ned Brooks, the moderator.

AP Photo

communism masked the repudiation of radical change. A humanist ideology against capitalism and communism so eloquently espoused in the spring-summer of 1959 was a casualty of domestic and foreign confrontation. Had Cuba not been ninety miles from the United States, the revolution might have found those elusive middle grounds. That nearness and the historic intimacy it had imposed between the two countries had, indeed, contoured the radical nationalism that was now rendering the revolution so intransigent."<sup>24</sup>

The Cuban Revolution's radical rhetoric and ideological challenge to the United States—which had occupied the island, intervened militarily, dominated commerce and economic development, and exploited labor and natural resources—addressed the psychological need for national respect, dignity, and honor. From the outset, Castroism emphasized the power of ideas and ideals over money.<sup>25</sup> It rejected the crass materialism of U.S. capitalism and its imperialist role in Cuban history. This emphasis on ideals in the face of foreign economic interests, a David versus Goliath stand, established the Cuban Revolution as a model of struggle against great power domination and a beacon for the rights of small states. Castro's revolutionary idealism earned him the adulation of many Latin American and Third World peoples and remains the basis of his influence in the hemisphere.

Cuba has had a special relationship with the United States. For most of the 20th century, the United States and Cuba have shared common interests and challenges. Some scholars have described this interdependence as a "love-hate" relationship. After

the Cuban Revolution, the two countries became irrationally obsessed with each other. Perhaps, as some critics of U.S. policy suggest, U.S. leaders see a mirror image in Fidel Castro that reflects their own revolutionary heritage, megalomania, and messianism. Castro has no real military and economic power, but he has challenged the United States ideologically for political and moral leadership in the hemisphere. Castroism has become a powerful idea and may well survive Castro, the man.

Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, who can command oil wealth and economic power, has assumed Castroism's ideological mantle and historic challenge and undoubtedly will further revel in this role once Castro has left the stage. In many respects, Venezuela is "the new Cuba," and Chávez is the new leader of a "counter-hegemonic bloc."<sup>26</sup> Therefore, how the United States responds to the transition in Cuba may have a lasting and significant strategic impact in Latin America. The U.S. response has the potential to shift the hemisphere's "correlation of forces" for or against the United States and for or against radical populist leaders.<sup>27</sup> In short, how the U.S. manages a post-Castro transition will have far-reaching implications for the success of progressive change, reform, and democratization in the region. For most of the 20th century, the fundamental source of conflict between the United States and the governments and peoples of the region has been U.S. ambivalence and often outright hostility to social revolution and radical, progressive change.

U.S. policymakers have insisted on imposing their own interests, agendas, models, and formulas on Latin America—often against the wishes of most of the peoples in the region. At the same time that U.S. leaders insist on internal democratization, they maintain an undemocratic, hegemonic control over the region and demand that it do things "our" way. Democracy's essence is the people's right to choose, and—ironically—that includes the right to reject a particular version of democracy or to determine the appropriateness of democracy under special circumstances. Democracy also implies respect for sovereignty and greater equality in intra-regional affairs among nations in the hemisphere—a genuine reassertion of the Good Neighbor policy. The tragic history of U.S.-Cuban relations in the 20th century is testimony to the dilemmas and contradictions inherent in U.S. hemispheric policy. As in the case

***The tragic history of U.S.-Cuban relations in the 20th century is testimony to the dilemmas and contradictions inherent in U.S. hemispheric policy.***

of Cuba, controversy over ideology, especially communism during the cold war, has always "masked the repudiation of radical change" in "our backyard."

## **Realpolitik and a "New" Cuba**

The central question policymakers must consider, if the U.S. is to develop a realistic, pragmatic approach to a post-Castro Cuba, is how much the "new" Cuba will be like the "old" Cuba. After nearly 50 years of Castroism, what has permanently changed in Cuban society? Perhaps not even the island's citizens will fully know until the transition actually occurs. However, we can identify some tendencies. One hallmark of the idealistic early days of the revolution, which the regime has reaffirmed repeatedly since, was rejection of Western capitalism and consumerism. Nevertheless, limited market economic measures that have spilled over from the prosperous tourist sector and/or been tolerated by the regime to meet critical needs have eroded the revolution's anti-capitalist orthodoxy. As the Cuban economy has opened up to small-scale private enterprise, more foreign investment, joint venture companies, and remittances from exiled relatives in Miami, the regime has lost a degree of control over the economy.

Despite constant sloganeering that socialism is "stronger than ever," over 75 percent of Cuba's population was born after the revolution, and this post-revolutionary generation is clearly drawn to market-society materialism. At the Fifth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, in 1997, Castro emphasized the importance of reestablishing Marxist-Leninist principles, and in 2001, he launched the "Battle of Ideas" to shore up the socialist values of the revolution. Since 2003, the Cuban regime has also cracked down on dissent and internal opposition leaders. One Cuban expert felt that the more the regime made "structural or economic concessions to capitalism and globalization," the more it increased its ideological vigilance and intolerance of dissent.<sup>28</sup> The

dual economy has also introduced troublesome and demoralizing income inequalities. A service worker in the tourism sector or workers in foreign joint venture companies can earn more in a day than some professionals may earn in a week or a month. For some Cubans, the disparity between the Cuban Revolution's principle of socioeconomic equality and daily reality has undermined confidence in socialism.

While the U.S. economic embargo of the island and other forms of political and economic retaliation continue to limit and deflect popular discontent, Cuban socialism has delivered important educational and health benefits and reduced the corruption and class, race, and gender discrimination of pre-revolutionary times. Given the option, the island's citizens would probably not jettison socialism completely but opt for a mixed economic model that ensures state management of the economy and social welfare. In addition, economic control heavily resides with the Cuban military, which profits from the tourist and foreign investment sector, and this is unlikely to change in the short term. Copying the concessionary model of the Chinese Red Army, the generals control 60 percent of the economy and head lucrative companies. In addition, as Minister of Defense, Raúl Castro has maintained his close rapport with and firm support of the armed forces. Both want to protect their stake in the island's current political economy and, reflecting a popular attitude within Cuban society, both have a healthy skepticism of capitalism and the free market.<sup>29</sup>

Notwithstanding the Communist Party and the generals' skepticism, with the sugar days over, tourism and trade will remain central to a post-Castro Cuba, and Cuba's human capital in teachers and doctors will supplement the hard currency sector of the economy. Chinese investments in nickel mining and offshore natural gas and oil resources offer long-term prospects. In the short term, Venezuela subsidizes Cuba's energy needs by providing over 100,000 barrels of oil per day. Instead of collapsing, the Cuban economy has averaged a healthy 5 percent growth rate in the last several years despite the embargo.

Although the Cuban people have suffered political repression under Castro's authoritarian rule, it is unclear if the desire for a more Western-style, participatory governing structure is widespread. Full-blown democracy is highly unlikely in a post-Castro Cuba in the short term for three reasons. First,

repression is not applied equally. As Castro is fond of saying, "in the revolution, everything, outside of the revolution, nothing." The average Cuban who is apolitical or supports the revolution has little to fear. Anti-revolutionary organizers, however, are another matter. Second, high profile U.S. and European Union support of and engagement with political dissidents may continue to backfire, as it has under Castro, inviting more aggressive regime repression as transitional and successor governments feel more threatened by external subversion or outright invasion. Third, dissident groups lack a unifying figure, such as a Lech Walesa in Poland. Personal politics divide them, and they do not represent a broad sociopolitical movement, as Solidarity did in Poland.

Democratization is unlikely to come from the diffuse Miami exile community. Ideology, politics, and personal ambitions have fragmented it into several hundred different exile organizations. After decades in the United States, a "right of return" to the island is more symbolic than practical for many exiles. Most wealthy Cubans have lost their property and may prefer to do business in a post-Castro Cuba rather than live there. Their mansions and properties have deteriorated, and it might take three generations to rebuild their lives and recapture the privileges some exiles had achieved before the revolution. In a recent interview, one Cuban-American said such "revanchist" aspirations bordered on delirium.

## Policy Considerations

In planning for the post-Castro transition, it is important to take stock of the tortuous history of U.S.-Cuban relations. As the historian Thomas Carothers wrote, "Let us hope that whatever role the United States seeks to play in Cuba's future, it is based on a thorough understanding of that inglorious past."<sup>30</sup> Central to that understanding is an appreciation of Castro's appeal and the sources of Cuban and hemispheric discontent, both then and now. Such an understanding can go a long way toward explaining Hugo Chávez's appeal and the rise and consolidation of radical populist governments across the region.

Second, Washington policymakers need to recognize that Marxism, socialism, and populist radicalism in Latin America have intimate connections to nationalism. No matter how difficult things may become, most Cubans are likely to defend national



sovereignty; they will prefer self-rule to an externally imposed solution. This has been a perennial lesson of U.S. engagement and intervention in Latin America and the Third World.

Third, the American people deserve a foreign policy that puts their interests before the special interests of Cuban-Americans. Whatever policy Washington chooses must turn on what is best for the United States and not what is bad for the Castros or Chavez. In 1996, the distinguished expert on Latin American affairs, Cole Blasier, observed that after Cuba downed the Brothers to the Rescue aircraft, “the main United States national interest in Cuba is a negative: that the United States not be drawn into any violent military conflict in Cuba.” If civil war were instigated or broke out in Cuba during the transition, “the pressures for United States intervention would be greater than in Grenada, Panama, or Haiti,” and the resulting “costs in blood and money” would be great. An occupation of the island “would be a morass.”<sup>31</sup> Blasier’s warning is especially relevant in the wake of the current Iraqi occupation.

***Whatever policy Washington chooses must turn on what is best for the United States and not what is bad for the Castros or Chavez.***

## Policy Options

With these central points in mind, one might speculate on possible scenarios and the viability of various policy options.

**Option 1. Hands-off, or reforming the system away.** Whether an internally directed hands-off reform strategy is a viable U.S. policy option depends on what happens after Castro dies. Will there be continuity or change? Experts are divided. Hardliners believe it would be naïve and fruitless to pursue a hands-off policy that would allow internal conditions and reforms to improve relations gradually over time. More moderate observers think that a post-Castro Cuba governed by his brother Raúl promises greater pragmatism, but limited reforms and regime continuity—in other words, Castroism without (Fidel) Castro. Those of a more optimistic and concilia-

tory bent argue that Castro’s death strongly favors fundamental regime change in the long-term. They claim that Cuba without Castro as the glue that holds the system together would be like the former Soviet Union without Marxism-Leninism after Gorbachev’s reforms (which the Soviets enacted to preserve their system rather than further its demise).

If the latter analogy is right, a more open, flexible Raúl Castro regime would hasten its own downfall. Reforms would serve to reform away the reforming government. Therefore, a more proactive U.S. policy response in the post-Castro transition would be unnecessary and potentially detrimental, especially since a core principle of the Cuban Revolution has been respect for national sovereignty. Even the perception of U.S. engagement with internal and external Cuban dissident movements could undermine an autonomous, popular transition to democracy.

Given the history of U.S. interventions in the region, an activist U.S. response could further weaken U.S. moral authority and influence in the hemisphere. Respect for national sovereignty, traditionally the hallmark of cordial U.S.-Latin American relations since the Good Neighbor policy, is an especially contentious, critical issue in post-9/11 international and regional systems where U.S. power and hegemony have been in progressive decline.

**Option 2. Limited engagement or the “magic of the marketplace.”** The U.S. has tried the limited engagement model in various forms over the last 45 years.<sup>32</sup> Many of its proponents, especially those who oppose the economic embargo, have extolled the “magic of the marketplace” as an effective instrument of reform and, ultimately, regime change. Indeed, over the years a strong bipartisan consensus has emerged favoring commercial exchange and even normal relations with Cuba. For example, despite the embargo and the draconian premise of the Helms-Burton Act, both Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush waived Title III of the act, which would have allowed U.S. citizens to sue the Cuban Government over property the Cuban Revolution nationalized.<sup>33</sup>

Supporters of this option believe that capitalist markets and increased trade and tourism will intensify the contradictions between ideology and practice within Cuba’s socialist economy. One Cuban scholar expressed the potential consequences of increased engagement this way: “As long as all Cubans feel they are marching together toward the

same goal, and receiving relatively equal benefits for their sacrifices, the system can continue and even thrive. On the other hand, when ordinary Cubans see that some of their countrymen—and certainly the tourists who are flocking to Cuban beaches—are living on a different level, they will begin to doubt the sincerity of the revolutionary slogans.”<sup>34</sup>

However, the Bush administration has chosen the opposite course, further restricting scholar exchanges, monetary remittances, and travel, including family visits to the island. This policy has largely played into Castro’s hard-line approach by further justifying it; moreover, it has divided the exile community and imposed tremendous hardships on Cuban families, scholars, artists, and people-to-people contacts while doing little to promote democracy, reform, or regime change. In fact, it has had quite the opposite effect.

**Option 3: Military intervention or a major transition initiative.** Since 2003, the Bush administration has pursued a primarily confrontational approach toward Castro’s Cuba. Partly to appease conservative Cuban-Americans in South Florida who supported the president’s election in 2000 and 2004, the Bush administration condemned Cuba in international forums, increased funding for the island’s domestic dissidents, and energetically engaged the U.S. Interests Section in Havana with internal opposition movements. The administration also established the U.S. Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba in October 2003 and implemented the strict measures identified in the commission’s May 2004 report to hasten the end of the Castro regime.<sup>35</sup> Strict limits on travel to Cuba by Cuban-Americans, students, academics, and humanitarian and religious groups curtailed most people-to-people contacts.<sup>36</sup> In addition to reactionary measures denying the Cuban Government access to dollars and remittances, the commission’s detailed blueprint for the transition included \$59 million for subversion, anti-government organizing, and third-country support for these measures.<sup>37</sup> The travel and economic restrictions and tougher enforcement were so severe that exiled Cuban-American groups, like the Cuban American Commission for Family Rights and even the ultra-conservative Cuban American National Foundation, criticized them.<sup>38</sup>

Some have argued that this tension with a key domestic constituency indicated that the administration’s renewed antagonism toward Cuba reflected

a post-9/11 reassessment of vital foreign policy and national security considerations rather than efforts to appease the Cuban-American lobby.<sup>39</sup> Others believe the foreign policy shift to unilateralism and threatened or actual use of U.S. military power and preemptive force to enact regime-change and police global order predated 9/11.<sup>40</sup> These interpretations are not mutually exclusive: greater global instability, 9/11, and the subsequent Iraq war have forced a critical reassessment of national security concerns and new threats. Without question, how a post-Castro transition plays out in Cuba will have a direct bearing on U.S. homeland security and national security.

For that reason, Washington should avoid overreaction, especially the use of military force. Fidel Castro’s death is unlikely to usher in drastic changes. Raúl Castro is his brother’s legitimate successor, and only another Cuban general would be a direct threat to him. Cuban authorities convicted General Jorge Ochoa for drug smuggling and executed him, but none of the current generals has Ochoa’s command and popularity. There are no young lions or strong leaders in the Cuban Communist Party to head a revolt, and the revolutionary commandants are either dead or too old to do so. A military intervention and/or an engineered revolt like the Bay of Pigs would likely fail. Even if an invasion or revolt were to succeed initially, the already overextended U.S. military cannot risk becoming mired in what would very likely be another civil war and protracted occupation. In addition, the American public cares even less about Castro than it did about Saddam Hussein and would not support military intervention in Cuba.

## Short- and Long-Term Objectives

Ironically, as the head of a post-Fidel transition government, Raúl Castro may be the best alternative for both Cuba and the United States. There is simply no other leader or group able to maintain order in Cuba after Fidel Castro departs, and a smooth, stable transition is essential if both countries are to avoid a massive refugee crisis like the Mariel boatlift. This means that the first short-term move for the United States should be to accept Raúl Castro as the head of the transition and initiate a policy of re-engagement with Cuba.

A second move, which has both short- and long-term implications, would be to pursue comprehensive

**...the United States should ...  
accept Raúl Castro as the head of  
the transition and initiate a policy  
of re-engagement with Cuba.**

measures to improve life on the island. This will serve U.S. national security interests and advance political, economic, and commercial interests on both sides. Cubans will be less likely to flee the island if life there improves, and the seeds of hemispheric instability and radicalism emanating from the island will wither.

A related short-term objective includes the unconditional end of the embargo, without a *quid pro quo*. Congress should also lift the ban on travel and restrictions on trade. Today the blockade and Helms-Burton are not as effective, and even at its peak, the embargo, to paraphrase another Cuba-watcher, served to “bend them but not break them.” Supporters of the embargo argue that it is the only leverage we have. That argument merely reveals the meager influence U.S. policy has over the Cuban regime. It is time to honestly recognize that the embargo has failed to achieve either its central goal, regime change, or its secondary goal, isolating Cuba. And, although it has hurt Castro’s regime, it has also hurt innocent Cuban citizens and American interests. Removing Cuba from the State Department’s List of Terrorist States is another immediate action that can support an orderly, peaceful transition in Cuba—and lend greater credibility to the list.<sup>41</sup>

U.S. policymakers need a flexible, pragmatic approach that avoids all-or-nothing thinking. A policy of “democracy or nothing,” delivers the latter for both the United States and Cuba.<sup>42</sup> In December 2006, acting president Raúl Castro proposed negotiations to normalize relations. In addition, Cuba has begun debating economic reforms. The Bush administration has inflexibly rejected considering these overtures as long as there is no democratic opening. Washington’s Cuba policy under Democrats as well as Republicans has been counterintuitive and irrational: rewarding Castro for bad behavior and punishing him for behavior that is more positive. The primary reason has been domestic politics.

As an important short- and long-term measure, the stranglehold that domestic electoral politics has on U.S.-Cuban relations must be broken. The climate for doing so is more favorable now than ever. As one Cuba-watcher has written, in the post-cold war period, “major U.S. moves to intensify or relax economic sanctions against Havana have occurred in presidential election years, when partisan bidding for Cuban-American votes in Florida takes center stage.”<sup>43</sup> In the next 18 months, as another presidential election cycle approaches and unforeseen changes are in the wind for Cuba, policymakers in Washington must not let partisan pressures or special interests—whether Cuban-Americans, U.S. farmers, or U.S. corporations and business groups—draw them into an ill-conceived response. Moreover, the Cuban-American communities in Miami, South Florida, and New Jersey are not monolithic. Younger Cubans are not engaged on the Castro question, and older exiles are mellowing and becoming less dogmatic. A number of issues, including travel, remittances, and the blockade, divide the Cuban Diaspora, which is not a gigantic voting bloc anyway. The time may be right for a presidential candidate to test these waters and develop an independent Cuba policy.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, a fundamental reassessment of Latin American policy should be a vital long-term project. Since 9/11 and the start of War on Terrorism, Washington has neglected its relations with Latin America and become more conservative and reactive. Current policies are shortsighted and focus on a negative, defensive agenda. The United States, Latin America, and Cuba share a host of common concerns, including immigration, trade, the drug war, anti-terrorism, and the negative effects of corporate-led globalization and environmental devastation. It is in the interest of all the countries in the hemisphere to support democracy and sustainable economic development. A comprehensive program for the region that integrates these diverse and distinct policy concerns with broader objectives and emphasizes responsible leadership and reciprocity over dominance is long overdue.<sup>45</sup>

Whether Washington likes it or not, there will be a transition in Cuba after Fidel Castro’s death, and it may or may not end with Raúl Castro. It is in everyone’s interest—Americans, Cuban-Americans, and Cubans on the island—that the transition occur

peacefully and further the promise of normalized relations. In the final analysis, the Cuban Revolution has always been greater than Castro and the Communist Party. Its roots are in the principles of independence

and sovereignty, political freedom, economic development, social equality, justice, and resistance to foreign domination.<sup>46</sup> This is the real legacy of the Cuban Revolution, and it will outlive Fidel Castro. **MR**

## I GROW A WHITE ROSE (CULTIVO UNA ROSA BLANCA)

***I grow a white rose,  
In June as in January,  
For my true friend  
Who gives me his honest hand.***

***And for the cruel man who tears from me  
The heart with which I live,  
Thistle nor thorn do I grow:  
I grow the white rose.***

—José Martí

## NOTES

1. Teo Ballvé, "Listen to América," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 39, no. 3 (November/December 2005): 3.

2. This list includes the following: Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua; Rafael Correa in Ecuador; Hugo Chávez in Venezuela; Luiz Inacio da Silva in Brazil; Tabaré Vázquez in Uruguay; and Nestor Kirchner in Argentina.

3. For example see Esteban Morales Domínguez, "The Cuba-U.S. Conflict in a New Century," in Max Azicri and Elsie Deal, eds., *Cuban Socialism in a New Century: Adversity, Survival, and Renewal* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 320-338.

4. Castro celebrated his 80th birthday in 2006 and underwent surgery reportedly for a serious intestinal illness that year and in early 2007, which had many predicting his permanent incapacitation and/or imminent death.

5. Luis Suárez Salazar, "Cuba's Foreign Policy and the Promise of ALBA," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 39, no. 4 (January/February 2006): 27-32.

6. Fareed Zakaria makes this argument much more extensively in "Hating America," *Foreign Policy* (September/October 2004): 47-48. He calls "anti-Americanism" an "ideology of discontent" in a time of an ideological vacuum.

7. At the time, the American public was divided but generally more optimistic. See "The Terrorism Index," *Foreign Policy* (July/August 2006): 49-55.

8. For example, in Bolivia some taxis and inexpensive, popular buses have sported posters of Osama bin Laden in rear windows to express opposition to the U.S. War on Terrorism and Iraq war.

9. For example, see Michael Slackman, "Elections Abound, but Often There Is No Real Choice," *New York Times*, 7 June 2007, A4. He writes that democracy is not taking hold: "Elections, it appears, have increasingly become a tool used by authoritarian leaders to claim legitimacy."

10. Eric J. Hobsbawm, "Spreading Democracy," *Foreign Policy* (September/October 2004): 40-41.

11. *Ibid.*, 41.

12. Argentina, Chile Costa Rica, and Panama rank as "stable," and Colombia as "in danger." See "The Failed States Index," *Foreign Policy* (May/June 2006): 50-58.

13. Alejandro Toledo, "Silence=Despotism," *New York Times*, 6 June 2007, A23. Toledo's quote continues: "Likewise, Latin Americans will be able to achieve sustained economic growth and eliminate extreme poverty only when our political systems are free and fair for all." However, this is a complex relationship. Two scholars noted that "democracy" has replaced "development" as the buzzword for the 1990s and beyond and saw in this a paradox. "Yet the paradox of this new wave of democratization is that its 'success' is built upon the failure of 'development' both in the Third World and the former Second World." Not only is this "new democracy" flawed in terms of broader popular political participation, but also it has not solved fundamental social and economic problems. In the cases investigated, which include Argentina and Guatemala for Latin America, powerful domestic and international groups stymied reforms. Both cases developed what the authors termed "elite democracies" and experienced significant U.S. influence in their affairs. See Barry Gills and Joel Rocamora, "Low Intensity Democracy," *Third World Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (1992): 501-523; quote 501.

14. Western scholars, as well as policymakers, also identified democracy and capitalism. Two critics argue that this was "a not very well hidden ideological fiat of certain Western studies of Third World democracy," and the linkage was "specifically tailored to serve the interests of global capital in these countries." Barry Gills and Joel Rocamora, "Low Intensity Democracy," 502.

15. Three unsuccessful independence wars included the Ten Years War, 1868 to 1878; a second war in 1880; and the last war from 1895 to 1898. See Gary Prevost, "Cuba," 337-367 in Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost, *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford, 2006), especially 340-41; Charles H. Blake, *Politics in Latin America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), 247-287; and Pérez-Stable, 36-37.

16. Pérez-Stable, 37-38.

17. *Ibid.*, 37.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*, 52-53.

21. *Ibid.*, 77-81.

22. *Ibid.*, 81.

23. Here the terms *clases económicas* and *clases populares* are used by Pérez-Stable, 81.

24. Pérez-Stable, 78.

25. Pérez-Stable provides an enlightening quote by Castro on this point. He states in June 1960: "The revolution shows that ideals are more powerful than gold! If gold were more powerful than ideals, those large foreign interests would have swept us off the map . . . Workers, peasants, Cubans of dignity have conquered their revolutionary *conciencia*. . . They will not trade their revolution, their *patria*, for gold." *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy*, 81.

26. For elaboration of this argument see, Teo Ballvé, "Is Venezuela the New Cuba?" *NACLA Report on the Americas* 39, no. 1 (July/August 2005): 3.

27. This is a paraphrase of Leonid Brezhnev when he commented that the U.S. defeat in Vietnam resulted in a global shift in the "correlation of forces" in favor of socialism, as quoted by Peter W. Rodman and William Shawcross in "Defeat's Killing Fields," *New York Times*, 7 June 2007, A35.

28. Max Castro, a Cuba expert at the University of Miami, quoted in Laurie Goering, "Cuba's Youth Ignore Revolution," *Orlando Sentinel*, 28 January 2001, A20.

29. One Cuban American quoted a popular saying: "The capitalist will sell you the rope with which to be hung."

30. Thomas Carothers, "Backing the Wrong Tyrant," a review of *Contesting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution*, by Thomas G. Paterson, *New York Times Book Review*, 12 June 1994, 34. Also, see Thomas Carothers, *In the Name of Democracy: U.S. Policy toward Latin America during the Reagan Years*.

31. "U.S. Fixation on Castro May Do Us No Good," Letters to the Editor, *New York Times*, 1 March 1996.

32. For example, see William M. LeoGrande, "The United States and Cuba: Strained Engagement," in *Cuba, the United States, and the Post-Cold War World*, Morris Morley and Chris McGillion, eds., (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

33. Philip Brenner and Marguerite Jimenez, "U.S. Policy on Cuba Beyond the Last Gasp," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 39, no. 4 (January/February 2006): 15-22.

34. Paula J. Pettavino, "Cuban Sports Saved by Capitalism?" *NACLA Report on the Americas* 37, no. 5 (March/April 2004): 32.

35. "Fact Sheet: Report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba," Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, 6 May 2004; Brenner and Jimenez, 16-17.

36. Sheryl L. Lutjens, "Cuba and the Security Frame," *Latin American Perspectives* 33, no. 5 (September 2006): 3-13; quote, 8.

37. Lutjens, "Cuba and the Security Frame," 8.

38. Brenner and Jimenez, 18-19.

39. Brenner and Jimenez, 18-19; Lutjens, "Cuba and the Security Frame." For comparison, see Phillip Brenner, Patrick J. Haney, and Walter Vanderbrush, "The Confluence of Domestic and International Interests: U.S. Policy toward Cuba, 1998-2001," *International Studies Perspectives* 3 (May 2002): 192-208.

40. Lutjens, "Cuba and the Security Frame," 5. Also, see Steven Hurst, "Conservatism Resurgent? The Foreign Policy Agenda of the Bush Administration," in Iwan Morgan and Philip Davies, eds., *Right On? Political Change and Continuity in George W. Bush's America* (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2006), 41-59, who agrees that a major shift in U.S. foreign policy toward a national security strategy of conservative radicalism occurred but was formalized in 2002 and pre-dates 9/11; and Stephen Gill, "National in/security on a universal scale," in Isabella Bakker and Stephen Gill, eds., *Power, Production, and Social Reproduction: Human In/security in the Global Political Economy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 208-223, who dates to 1989 a more ready use or threatened use of U.S. military power as the United States asserts the role of global policeman.

41. "Cuba After Castro: The Future of U.S.-Cuba Relations," Transcript of Council on Foreign Relations, Speakers: Jo Ann Emerson, U.S. Congress, R-MO; and James McGovern, U.S. Congress, D-MA, and President: Julia E. Sweig, 23 January 2007; <[http://www.cfr.org/publications/12493/cuba\\_after\\_castro.html](http://www.cfr.org/publications/12493/cuba_after_castro.html)>.

42. Paolo Spadoni, "All or Nothing on Cuba?" *Orlando Sentinel*, 1 April 2007, A21.

43. *Ibid.*

44. "Cuba After Castro: The Future of U.S.-Cuba Relations," Transcript of Council on Foreign Relations.

45. Laura Carlsen and Tom Barry, "U.S.-Latin American Relations at Crossroads—U.S. Hegemony or Global Good Neighbor Policy?" International Relations Center, *IRC Americas Program Special Report*, February 2006. <<http://ggn.irc-online.org/>>.

46. See "Was Fidel Good for Cuba? A Debate between Carlos Alberto Montaner and Ignacio Ramonet," *Foreign Policy* (January/February 2007): 56-64.





# Battling Terrorism under the Law of War

Colonel David A. Wallace, U.S. Army

**T**HE WAR ON TERRORISM began with the atrocities of 11 September 2001. Approximately 3,000 Americans, as well as citizens of other countries, tragically died that day at the Pentagon, the World Trade Center, and in a field in Pennsylvania. The world now knows that the perpetrator of that attack was Al-Qaeda, an insidious ideologically and religiously motivated network of Islamic terrorists intent on destroying our Nation and our way of life. Despite our Herculean global effort over the last six years to detect, disrupt, degrade, and destroy this decentralized network of non-state, multinational terrorists, there is no end in sight to the fight against it. Even if the war in Iraq were to end soon, experts unanimously agree that the conflict against Al-Qaeda will continue unabated around the world for years to come.

Unquestionably, one of the most challenging issues confronting the United States since 11 September has been how—or even if—the laws of war apply to the War on Terrorism. The laws of war, also known as the law of armed conflict or international humanitarian law, are codified in multilateral treaties. They reflect ancient traditions of humanity, military chivalry, and internationally agreed-upon customary norms of behavior for belligerents. Current and former military leaders, federal judges, government officials, scholars, international lawyers, journalists, human rights advocates, and others are struggling to understand, adapt, and articulate the appropriate legal framework for fighting the War on Terrorism. Several reasons underlie the ongoing confusion and debate.

First, the United States historically addressed terrorism as a criminal justice matter. It responded to it under a law-enforcement paradigm that gave suspected terrorists significant due process and an abundance of procedural and substantive rights. Armed conflicts, on the other hand, are governed by a completely different legal regime with different rights, duties, and obligations. The convergence of these two legal frameworks in the context of an ongoing conflict has unquestionably led to uncertainty and frustration. For example, we currently use war-fighting powers to detain and interrogate without the restriction of law enforcement rules, then use law enforcement-type institutions to punish while disregarding or reinterpreting the laws of war. Choosing to use the authority of one paradigm, when advantageous,

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PHOTO: The setting sun lights up the entrance to Camp X-Ray, the first detention center at Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for enemy combatants captured in the war on terror. Photo taken 14 November 2006. In use for four months in 2002, Camp X-Ray was replaced by Camp Delta, a more permanent facility better suited for the safe and humane care of detainees. (U.S. Army, SSG Jon Soucy)

then using the other paradigm to avoid the restrictions of that choice, has created ambiguity.

A second reason for the confusion and debate is that government officials, in an effort to increase our security in the face of a genuine terrorist threat, have marginalized or ignored key principles of the laws of war. In other words, they did or are doing the wrong things for arguably the right reasons. The overriding justification for much of what has been done has simply been to save American lives from the insidious threat of Al-Qaeda and its surrogates.

In making such arguments, U.S. officials have characterized the Geneva Conventions as “quaint,” denounced them as vague or ambiguous, and attempted to redefine or reinterpret their provisions.<sup>1</sup> They have simply ignored the fact that the Geneva Conventions, the most ratified treaties in the history of the world, have withstood the test of time and are universally accepted by the civilized world. Similarly, senior U.S. officials have attempted to define “torture” as equivalent in intensity to the pain accompanying such serious physical injury as organ failure, impairment of bodily functions, or death.<sup>2</sup> U.S. officials also have been accused of engaging in extraordinary rendition; that is, sending prisoners to other countries so they can be tortured or subjected to cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment. And lastly, on 13 November 2001 the president established military commissions as the forum of choice to try suspected terrorists.<sup>3</sup> From the outset, military commissions have been harshly criticized for not providing suspects an opportunity for a full and fair trial based upon modern notions of justice.

Needless to say, we face a number of extraordinarily difficult questions that do not lend themselves to simple or quick answers: Should we regard the War on Terrorism as a true armed conflict, or see

it as a rhetorical one like the wars on poverty and drugs? Do the Geneva Conventions, Hague Regulations, other international humanitarian-law treaties, and customary principles of law apply to the War on Terrorism? Do we bring terrorists to the bar of justice, or do we just hold them as prisoners of war until the end of the conflict? How far can interrogators go in putting pressure on prisoners to obtain human intelligence? Whom may we lawfully target in the War on Terrorism? Is targeted killing lawful? What is the appropriate role for contractors on this battlefield, and how do the laws of war apply to them? Should the law of occupation function in this war? Do the laws of war need revision? In sum, are the rules developed for state parties during international armed conflicts out of date for modern conflicts like the War on Terrorism?

When considering such questions and possible responses to them, three points are worth bearing in mind:

- Given the severity and magnitude of the 9/11 attacks and our decision to respond with military force, a war-fighting paradigm is appropriate for this conflict.
- The long-standing policy of the United States has been and continues to be that its armed forces will comply with the laws of war during all armed conflicts, however such conflicts are characterized. The laws of war play a vital and continuing role in the culture, training, and operations of our armed forces. Our moral authority, values, and prestige are inextricably linked to compliance with the spirit and the letter of the laws of war during all of our military operations.
- When the United States interprets and applies the laws of war, it should always take the high road. Our enemies do not fight fairly. They kidnap, torture, target civilians, cut heads off, and hide behind and among innocent men, women, and children, as only cowards will do. Should we abide by the laws of war when they do not? The answer is a resounding “yes.” It might be more popular to say we are going to take the gloves off, but our conduct is ultimately about us, not them. Our Nation and our military justifiably take pride in abiding by the rule of law. Now, more than ever, we need to uphold the code of civilized behavior.

Several reasons compel us to abide by the laws of war in this conflict. First, by doing so, we will

***U.S. officials have...simply ignored the fact that the Geneva Conventions, the most ratified treaties in the history of the world, have withstood the test of time and are universally accepted by the civilized world.***

maintain domestic and international support for our military operations. To the degree that we do not abide by the laws, we risk inflaming public opinion against the United States and our armed forces. In a democratic society like ours, hostile public opinion erodes support for an operation and for the military in general. In the current conflict, Abu Ghraib, Haditha, and allegations about war crimes at Bagram and Guantanamo Bay have done more to undermine our position than anything Al-Qaeda could have done directly. Our enemies have used incidents in which we failed to comply with the laws of war as recruiting tools for their cause.

Second, the laws of war are the law. They are enforceable under our own domestic legislation. According to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, a member of the U.S. military who commits a war crime may be court-martialed and, in the most egregious cases, the death penalty may be imposed. The U.S. Army and the other services have aggressively prosecuted a number of service members who failed to follow the laws of war in this conflict. We must continue to hold to our standards.

Third, when the enemy knows that his captors will treat him humanely, he is more likely to surrender. During the first Gulf War, 86,000 Iraqi soldiers surrendered to U.S. forces because they knew we would treat them humanely in accordance with the laws of war.<sup>4</sup> If our adversaries believe they will be tortured or killed upon capture, they may be more inclined to fight to the death. Some would argue that our enemy in the War on Terrorism will not surrender under any circumstances. That might be true for some, but certainly not all of them.

Fourth, following the laws of war promotes discipline in our units. The most effective units in the U.S. Armed Forces scrupulously follow the laws of war. A unit that violates them suffers a reduction in combat efficiency, morale, good order, and discipline. Abiding by the laws of war is a combat multiplier, not a detractor.

Finally, abiding by the laws of war is simply the right thing to do. As Americans, we take enormous pride in the belief that we are the good guys. We treat our prisoners humanely. We do not torture anyone or condone torture. We protect civilians. Accordingly,

we should always meet or exceed the standards of the war conventions and international law.

In summary, the current fight raises many difficult issues associated with applying and interpreting the laws of war. When analyzing these matters, our default position must always be to uphold the letter and spirit of the law of war. We do not torture our enemy or in any way engage in cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment. If our enemies are arguably entitled to prisoner of war status (e.g., the Taliban, members of Saddam Hussein's military), we must give them all the protections afforded under the Third Geneva Convention. On the other hand, unlawful combatants such as Al-Qaeda members and Iraqi insurgents do not have combatant immunity and can be tried for their warlike acts.

Regardless of a prisoner's status, we must treat him or her humanely. We should never lower the bar for our treatment of prisoners. If we bring prisoners to the bar of justice, we must ensure they receive a full and fair trial. There should be no shortcuts under any circumstances—period. We must always respect and protect civilians. The success of our fight in the War on Terrorism depends on our acting on a higher plane than our enemy. We must always be true to our core values, which means upholding an unwavering commitment to the rule of law and the law of war. **MR**

*For an excellent discussion of how the law of war applies to the War on Terrorism, see David Wippmand and Matthew Evangelista, New Wars, New Laws (Ardsey, NY: Transnational Publishers, 2005) and Operational Law Handbook (The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School, 2006).*

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#### NOTES

1. White House Counsel Alberto Gonzalez, memorandum to President George W. Bush, 25 January 2002. The memo can be read in full at <[www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4999148/site/newsweek/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4999148/site/newsweek/)>.

2. Jay C. Bybee, Office of Legal Counsel, U.S. Department of Justice, "Memorandum for Alberto R. Gonzales, Counsel to the President," 1 August 2002, <[www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/documents/dojinterrogationmemo20020801.pdf](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/documents/dojinterrogationmemo20020801.pdf)>.

3. Actually, the 13 November 2003 Military Order and the Military Commissions Act of 2006 state that only terrorists who are not U.S. citizens can be tried by military commissions. This distinction has acted as further fuel for critics of military commissions, who make an equal protection argument; that is, American citizens get one form of justice, non-citizens another.

4. Number of surrenders cited in Jacqueline S. Porth, "Iraqis Who Commit War Crimes Will Be Prosecuted, Parks Says," Department of State website, <[usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2003/Oct/09-348669.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2003/Oct/09-348669.html)>.





# CHILE and ARGENTINA:



## From Measures of Trust to Military Integration

Lieutenant Colonel Felipe Arancibia-Clavel, Chilean Army

*This essay is adapted from the author's thesis on Chilean-Argentine integration, "Is it Time to Create Permanent Combined Military Units?" written as part of his masters program in political science at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. It was translated by Military Review.*

**I**N THE 21ST CENTURY, Chile and Argentina are undergoing a complex and exciting period as they strengthen their relationship and collaborate on political, economic, security, and military issues. Bilateral relations are in excellent condition.

This has not always been the case. When the two nations declared their independence from Spain in the early 1800s, they both claimed the totality of Patagonia.<sup>1</sup> Although efforts were made to settle the border dispute during the subsequent years, it was not until the Beagle Canal conflict in 1984 that negotiations finally resolved the problem and Chile and Argentina signed the *Tratado de Paz y Armistad*, or Peace and Friendship Treaty.<sup>2</sup> There were some difficult times in the preceding years, but both governments made it a priority to improve relations, particularly those regarding political and economic issues.

More recently, bilateral relations in the area of security and defense have improved; in fact, Chile and Argentina have embarked on an effort to integrate their security policies and forces. A brief review of the integration process carried out over the last 20 years demonstrates that their relationship is transitioning from mistrust to cooperation in the realm of security and defense.<sup>3</sup> Is it possible that Chile and Argentina have improved their relations to the point that they could create a permanent combined military unit?

### The Integration Process

Chile and Argentina's agreement on the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1984 was the turning point in their troubled relationship. The treaty resolved the long-standing conflict over possession of three islands south of Tierra del Fuego and navigational routes in the Straits of Magellan and Beagle Channel. Two commissions were established as a result of the treaty. The first was the Argentina/Chile Permanent Conciliation Commission, which was set up to arbitrate disputes, and the second was the 1985 Binational Commission on Economic Cooperation and Physical Integration, intended to encourage economic growth. The latter called for cooperative development and binational use of free ports and navigational zones, land transportation systems, air navigational routes, electrical interconnections, telecommunications systems, and the like.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Peace and Friendship treaty established the foundation for cooperation and integration, several border disputes remained an issue, and mistrust between the two nations in the political, economic, and military

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realms persisted for several years. Despite these difficulties, an evolution was taking place within the Chilean-Argentine bilateral sphere, as well as within the multilateral framework processes in the Southern Cone and Latin America as a whole.

## Developing a Bilateral Agenda

In the 1990s, relations improved dramatically between the two nations. With the end of the cold war, globalization and integration became the predominant concepts in relations among countries and blocs of countries. This impetus reinserted Chile and Argentina into the international community as both nations' newly elected democratic governments changed their foreign policy to reflect a greater desire to cooperate with one another and with their neighbors.<sup>5</sup>

On 2 August 1991, Presidents Patricio Aylwin (Chile) and Carlos Menem (Argentina) signed the "Presidential Declaration on the Border Between the Republic of Chile and the Republic of Argentina," definitively settling 22 border disputes between the two countries. Shortly thereafter, disputes over the Laguna del Desierto and the Southern Patagonia Ice Field were also resolved.<sup>6</sup> These resolutions were followed by the creation of a bilateral agenda focused on physical integration, Chilean investment in Argentina, and power-grid interconnection. This agenda had great potential to improve relations in the political, economic, and defense and security realms.

Although collaboration waned at the end of the century as an economic crisis gripped the region, when economic indices improved in 2000, interest in cooperation returned.<sup>7</sup>

## Military Integration

Despite the positive interactions between Chile and Argentina in the political and economic arenas in the 1990s, both countries continued to base their national security policies on a so-called "hypotheses of conflict" and on a balance of power, rather than on a cooperative regional security program. Basically, Chile and Argentina continued to view national security in the same manner as they had in the cold war era.

Argentina was the first to assume a more cooperative approach to security, either rejecting or minimizing these hypotheses. This change may have originated for a number of reasons—the advent of democracy,

the subordination of the armed forces under civilian authority, the resolution of border disputes, the need for integration to comply with security agreements with other states, or the shift in Argentina's foreign policy brought about by President Menem.

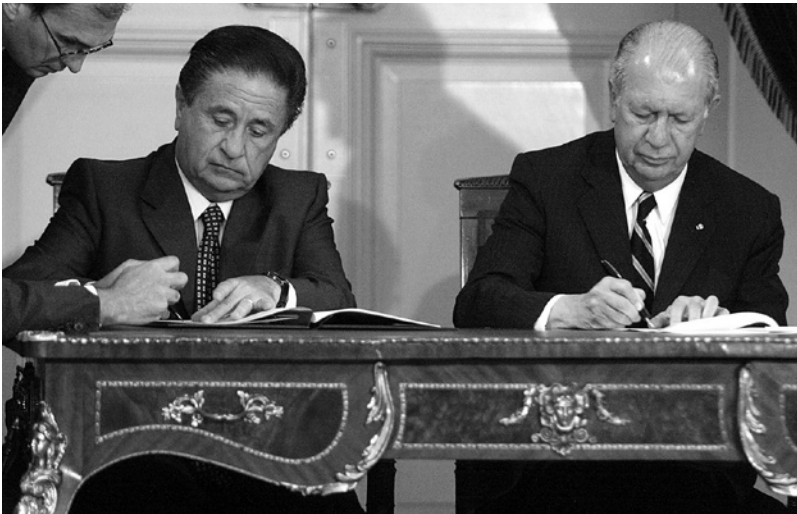
Chile's concept of security during this period was much more conservative. Then-Minister of Defense Patricio Rojas clarified the Chilean view of this period in his assessment of the defense sector between 1990 and 1994: "given the uncertainty of the international system and the transition process following the end of the cold war, defense policy focused on optimizing deterrent and defensive capabilities in the area of risk and contingency assessment that could affect the climate in the country."<sup>8</sup>

So the government felt the need to maintain the hypotheses of conflict, with a greater emphasis on deterrence. When the defense policy changed, it was built on a foundation for globalization and regional cooperation. Today, no one asserts that all suspicion has disappeared between the two countries, but a level of cooperation exists that was considered unthinkable only a few years ago.

Advances in the political and economic realms encouraged the two countries to seek more agreeable relations between their respective armed forces. To help with this process, "Measures of Mutual Trust" were instituted. The four measures—eradication of mistrust, trust building, deepening of trust, and cooperation planning—initially were rather formal or symbolic, bound to certain visits and meetings, their use limited by protocol. However, they were important after a period in which bilateral relations in the region, especially military relations, were largely distant.<sup>9</sup>

## Mutual Trust

By 1995, the general staffs of Chile and Argentina were meeting regularly and cooperating on security and military issues much the same as the politicians were doing at the national level. This led to the creation of the Permanent Argentine-Chilean Security Committee (COMPERSEG).<sup>10</sup> Among the noteworthy bilateral actions that resulted were consultation meetings between the ministers of foreign affairs and ministers of defense of the two countries (2+2) and establishment of the *Mecanismo de Interconsultas*, a committee comprised of members of the Chilean Defense Staff and the Argentine Joint Staff to ensure more fluid communication between the two countries' armed forces.



**Argentine President Eduardo Duhalde (left) and Chilean President Ricardo Lagos sign treaties of mutual cooperation between both countries at the presidential palace in Santiago, Chile, 29 October 2002.**

The COMPERSEG is considered an especially relevant development in defense integration. An analysis of the themes discussed in the numerous meetings conducted since its inception shows that the committee has considered a substantial number of actions and adopted measures related to defense and security. It is in this committee that different initiatives in matters of security and defense originate and/or come together.<sup>11</sup>

Chile and Argentina created the Mecanismo de Interconsultas involving the two general staffs to foster mutual trust and develop security policy in a South American regional framework. The mechanism has the technical authority to ensure coordination among the various committees.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the committees mentioned above, presidential summits, meetings of ministers of defense, personnel exchanges among the branches of the armed forces, and professional meetings between leaders of garrison and frontier naval zones were part of a marked increase in bilateral relations in the area of security and defense throughout the region. With these inroads, there is now a real possibility that Chile and Argentina will soon consider measures to create a permanent combined military force.

The benchmarks for the Measures of Mutual Trust specified that, by the mid-1990s, bilateral relations in the military realm would be at the second level—trust building. This level would be distinguishable by specific actions allowing a new way for organizations to relate to one another.

Overall, the program was completely successful and opened avenues for growing communication and a steady flow of information. A direct by-product of the program was increased collaboration among the military organizations, which included participation in combined military exercises and the formation of integrated units to serve in peacekeeping operations. What is most important is that it institutionalized the architecture for bilateral relations.

Combined military units can bridge the gap from the cooperation encouraged by the Measures of Mutual Trust to actual collaboration in military and defense issues. But to do this, Chile and Argentina must have the political will to forge ahead

with substantive discussions on technical and military matters. The politicians in both nations must add this proposal to the political agenda to stir debate.

## Integration Measures

One must bear in mind that the overall integration process will not be complete until it extends to the areas of security and defense. It is understood that security is based on deterrence, and that regional security is in every nation's interest. This thinking forms the foundation for combined military forces. Bilateral military integration can allow Chile and Argentina to work together to prevent aggression and live in peace, liberty, and cooperative security. At the same time, it will not interfere with the contributions made by these nations to other regional and hemispheric organizations.<sup>13</sup> Chile and Argentina have the political will to advance military integration, but what measures do they need to take to do so?

In 2005, the two nations' ministers of defense signed a protocol of understanding that called for a working commission to create a combined peacekeeping force.<sup>14</sup> Shortly thereafter, both ministries signed the resultant agreement—a bilateral accord establishing a combined peacekeeping force and the guiding principles for the formation of a combined joint staff.<sup>15</sup> The combined peacekeeping force has participated in United Nations' stabilization missions in Haiti and Cyprus. Although this is a great initiative, it still seems insufficient compared to other models of combined forces in the world.

For instance, consider the Franco-German Brigade that forms the foundation of the Eurocorps. Called the driving force of the European Union (EU), the brigade has benefited both nations, boosted European integration, and had the virtue of being useful to the three pillars of European security: NATO, the EU, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Could the Chilean-Argentine efforts to establish a combined military force represent the beginning of a similar multinational military organization?<sup>16</sup>

Combined Chilean and Argentine ad hoc units such as those in Cyprus and Haiti allow the two countries to gain invaluable experience that will facilitate the future creation of permanent combined units. But what became clear with the deliberations of the special working commission is that there was no central institution to address bilateral security and defense issues in a comprehensive way. Agencies created in the mid-1990s, such as COMPERSEG and the Mecanismo de Interconsultas, are fragmented and only address specific issues and initiatives. This makes it necessary to design a model that includes all of the elements of security and defense. The Franco-German Security and Defense Council (FGSDC) could serve as the model. It links the ministries of defense and foreign relations of both countries, which allows for coordination and cooperation on security initiatives and enables implementation of the two nations' political directives. Such a relationship builds trust and allows discussion of a variety of themes. It led to a number of security and defense initiatives in Europe.<sup>17</sup>

The creation of a combined Chilean-Argentine unit specifically for bilateral security and defense is the first step toward further integration. To ensure its success, Chile and Argentina should—

- Place the combined military unit under one command.
- Ensure mutual understanding between the armed forces of Argentina and Chile.
- Establish common work methods.

- Harmonize living conditions.
- Train for and establish interoperability between military units.
- Standardize materiel and equipment as efficiently as possible.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to contributing to regional security and defense, the unit should be an essential contributor to hemispheric and world peace. Other missions can include peacekeeping, peace restoration, and humanitarian actions.

As has already been suggested, Argentina and Chile must explain this initiative to their neighbors to negate mistrust in regard to the combined unit's purpose and scope. Moreover, in the not-too-distant future, this bilateral initiative should naturally evolve to a multilateral initiative—a multinational combined unit formed with the participation of all regional actors that wish to contribute to regional and world security and defense.

## Conclusion

The Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1984 has served as the roadmap for Chilean-Argentine integration, generating the diverse accords and protocols signed over the last 20 years on a variety of issues—political, economic, and, of course, security



A ceremony between Chile and Argentina in the Andes marking the centennial of a statue of Christ erected there as a tribute to peace in Cristo Redentor, Chile-Argentina border, 13 March 2004.



and defense. Without a doubt the treaty is the single most important milestone in Chilean-Argentine cooperation and integration. Chilean-Argentine relations are not limited to dealings between government leaders, but cut across all boundaries and at different levels in the decision-making process. Due to the sheer number of participants, there is an increasingly complex interdependence between the two countries.

This relationship is focused on cooperation and integration, and has rid itself of conflict by solving the causes that generated it. New problems might appear in the future, but an institution now exists to confront and solve them.

The Measures of Mutual Trust allowed Chile and Argentina to eradicate mistrust and build trust in its stead. The measures outline many of cooperative and integrative actions, including the ad hoc formation of combined units, combined training, officer exchange, naval repair, and defense-systems technology exchange.

Now is the time to plan yet other measures. Chile and Argentina must design a new institutional process to—

- Advance a common security and defense policy.
- Bring together political, politico-strategic, and strategic managers to obtain efficient results when common goals present themselves.
- Define and monitor the creation of combined units.
- Establish military personnel systems that facilitate interoperability.
- Standardize armament, materiel, equipment, and logistic procedures.
- Continue with other developed measures.

There are no obstacles on the horizon to prevent Argentina and Chile from forming a permanent combined unit. The goals of such a unit will depend on its size, composition, and functions. However, Chile's and Argentina's combined military forces should plan on contributing to internal and international security missions involving conflict resolution, regional crisis management, common defense, and peacekeeping operations. Missions should be progressively and deliberately adapted to the integration process.

Today's mission-based peacekeeping forces can be the foundation for future combined units. Argentina and Chile can invoke the concept of common defense

to establish more combined units in the future, so that integration efforts do not become simply cosmetic.

The 2005 Bilateral Accord Act makes it feasible for Argentina and Chile to create a permanent combined force. The act contains implementation designs for a combined peace force and a combined joint staff. Creating these organizations will require crossing the threshold from measures of trust to true integration. **MR**

## NOTES

1. To understand the dynamics of the southern conflict, I recommend reading *La Escuadra en Acción* by Patricia Arancibia and Francisco Bulnes (Editorial Grijalbo, 2004).

2. Chilean Foreign Ministry, Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the Government of the Republic of Chile and the Republic of Argentina (Tratado de Paz y Amistad entre el Gobierno de la República de Chile y el Gobierno de la República de Argentina), Vatican City, 29 November, 1984.

3. Measures of Mutual Trust aim to prevent crises and conflict and enhance international peace and security. Conversely, integration measures address a different phase in the relations of international actors, one that considers cooperation and interdependence within the wider concept of integration and takes into account all of the spheres, and certainly security and defense relations. A great deal of specialized literature regarding the Measures of Mutual Trust addresses these actions in detail. See the works of Augusto Varas, Juan Emilio Cheyre, Francisco Rojas, and Isaac Caro, to name a few.

4. See Annex No. 1 of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship for more on the commission on conciliation. The two-level impact created by the creation of the Binational Commission should be noted. The first level is bilateral and directly affects the two countries in question. The second is local and affects regions through physical integration (laying out border passages and creating corridors), which allows development and interdependence, complements integration at the national level, and permits private participation in local investments of interest.

5. Among other variables that facilitated this impetus and that indirectly affected the integration process or, perhaps better said, contributed to what would develop, was the end of the cold war and the consequent change in the international system, with globalization and integration becoming the predominant concepts in relations between countries and blocks of countries.

6. To better understand the cases of Laguna del Desierto and the Patagonia ice fields, see *Análisis Histórico de la Laguna del Desierto* (Santiago, Chile: Bernardo O'Higgins University, 1995) and Fernando Saenger, *Cuestión, de Límites entre Chile y Argentina* (Santiago, Chile: Editorial Cono Sur, 1997).

7. The integrative dynamism of the 1990s is evident in the number of commercial and political agreements signed in comparison to other periods. Between 1984 and 1990, there were only two bilateral accords with Argentina, as opposed to the 38 signed in the 1990s and 12 more between 2001 and 2004. On the economic level, I should point out that during the early years of the administration of President Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, Chilean investment in Argentina rose significantly, reaching \$5.5 billion, which meant that 60 percent of all Chilean foreign investment was in Argentina.

8. Source not given.

9. For the purposes of this article, I will use the classification of the Measures of Mutual Trust defined by Francisco Rojas Aravena, namely four phases or levels: eradication of mistrust, trust building, deepening of trust, and cooperation planning. However, there are other authors who use other classifications. For example, see Andrés Fontana, *Seguridad Cooperativa: tendencias globales y el continente Americano*, National Foreign Service Institute, Foreign Ministry, International Commerce and Culture, Buenos Aires, Argentina, May 1996.

10. Francisco Rojas Aravena, *Medidas de Confianza Mutua y Balance Estratégico: Un Vínculo Hacia la Distensión y la Estabilidad. Balance Estratégico y Medidas de Confianza Mutua* (Santiago, Chile: La Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales [FLACSO]-Chile, 1996), 35-36.

11. Felipe Arancibia-Clavel, thesis on Chilean-Argentine Integration Process, "Is it Time to Create Permanent Combined Military Units?" (Proceso de integración Chileno-Argentino. ¿Momento para crear una unidad militar combinada permanente?) in pursuit of a masters degree in political science at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, December 2005.

12. Chilean National Defense Ministry, minutes from consultation meetings between Chilean and Argentine ministers of defense and foreign relations (Actas de Reuniones de Consulta entre los Ministros de RR.EE. y de Defensa de Argentina y Chile), 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2001.

13. Chilean National Defense Ministry, Protocolo de Entendimiento.

14. Chilean National Defense Ministry, Bilateral Accord Act.

15. Chilean National Defense Ministry, Protocolo de Entendimiento, Santiago, Chile, 29 September 2005.

16. The author's thesis, previously cited (note 11), has a more detailed analysis of the French-German model and its similarities with and differences from the Argentine-Chilean model.

17. Felipe Arancibia-Clavel, 15.

18. Ibid, 18-19.



# MUDDY BOOTS IO: The Rise of Soldier Blogs

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PHOTO: The computer generation: clockwise from bottom left, SPC Matthew Timmons, SPC Jacob Smith, SPC Jared MacKenzie, SGT Michael Shriver, SPC Jeremy Beans, and SPC Kris Ohlensehnen watch movies, play video games, maintain blog websites, and stay in touch with families via their laptop computers. (SPC Chris Chesak)

A PHONE RINGS at the Pentagon. A journalist identifies himself and states, "I just read a blog that says Soldiers use dogs for target practice in Iraq. There's a video clip showing it, too. What's the Army's position?"

How should the spokesperson respond?

Military web logs, known as blogs or milblogs, are small websites that Soldiers maintain as informal journals for personal comments, images, and links to other websites. Blogs emerged concurrently with the War on Terrorism and have become an increasingly influential and controversial phenomenon. This form of communication gives a Soldier the potential to reach a global audience.

In fall 2005, in recognition of the potential effects of blogs on information operations (IO), the Army began educating deploying units about this aspect of the evolving information domain. This article explores the milblog phenomenon, its benefits to the Army, current challenges, and the way ahead. It concludes that qualified support of Soldier blogs is good policy when coupled with clearly defined boundaries and aggressive Soldier education.

## Why Do Soldiers Blog?

Soldiers create blogs because they are an effective, efficient way to communicate. Soldiers and their families now expect near-instantaneous Internet and voice communications as an essential quality-of-life element.<sup>1</sup> During deployments or other geographic separations, milbloggers communicate with friends and family in a way that is easier (many people type more quickly and clearly than they write) and faster than postal services (traditional mail does not meet modern expectations of timeliness) and less presumptuous than email distribution lists.

Once a blogsite is running, a Soldier can post blogs periodically, and those with Internet connections—friend or foe, American or foreign—can choose when and how often to stop by. According to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)

veteran Corporal Michael Bautista, “I started [my] blog because I felt bad that I didn’t write enough letters and emails to my family, and they can see what I’m doing, they can hear some of my experiences.”<sup>22</sup>

An equally important motivation is to communicate Soldiers’ experiences to outsiders. Soldiers understand that the public has become increasingly distrustful of mainstream news, and milblogs are a way to circumvent the media’s power to select news content.<sup>3</sup> This “gatekeeper” function is the media’s principal power, followed by its name recognition and access to consumers. Milblogs seize back some of this power, and many Soldiers relish the opportunity to share compelling descriptions of their reconstruction and warfighting experiences as well as man-on-the-scene coverage of daily life. In an interview, Bautista stated: “It kind of transformed itself from a desire to convey my personal experience into letting people know the real story. I think the main coverage that you’ll see at home is this car bomb blew up; this amount of people died. I think my main effort now is more toward showing that this is a good thing that we’ve done, regardless of . . . of what political decisions were made to get us here. We’re here. We have done a good thing.”<sup>24</sup>

Some milbloggers seek to counter inaccuracies in the media from a Soldier-level perspective. A high-profile example occurred in October 2005 when a teleconference was arranged between President George W. Bush, a group of 10 U.S. Soldiers, and one member of the Iraqi Army.<sup>5</sup> Once the communications link was established between Iraq and the White House, a senior Department of Defense (DOD) official and the Soldiers discussed what to expect. This preparatory talk, inadvertently broadcast live to the waiting news media, was widely pilloried by journalists as belying the White House assertion that the meeting was an unscripted conversation.<sup>6</sup> The White House and DOD responded to this criticism, but the most compelling response—widely disseminated within the blogosphere—came from one of the participants, Sergeant Robert Long, at [278medic.blogspot.com](http://278medic.blogspot.com):<sup>7</sup>

Yesterday, I . . . was chosen to be among a small group of soldiers assigned to the 42 ID’s Task Force Liberty that would speak to President Bush, our Commander-in-Chief. The interview went well, but I would like to respond to what most of the mass-media has dubbed as “A Staged Event.”

First of all, we were told that we would be speaking with the President of the United States, our Commander-in-Chief, President Bush, so I believe that it would have been totally irresponsible for us NOT to prepare some ideas, facts or comments that we wanted to share with the President.

We were given an idea as to what topics he may discuss with us, but it’s the President of the United States; he will choose which way his conversation with us may go. We practiced passing the microphone around to one another, so we wouldn’t choke someone on live TV.

... It makes my stomach ache to think that we are helping to preserve free speech in the US, while the media uses that freedom to try to RIP DOWN the President and our morale, as US soldiers. They seem to be enjoying the fact that they are tearing the country apart. Worthless!<sup>8</sup>

This perspective penetrated the mainstream media after syndicated columnist Michelle Malkin cited Sergeant Long’s blog in a column that strongly criticized the media’s predominantly negative interpretation of the interview.<sup>9</sup>

Milblogs may also satisfy a Soldier’s need for a creative, intellectual, or emotional outlet.<sup>10</sup> Previous generations of Soldiers wrote diaries or traded stories over a drink as a means of catharsis and retrospection, but many modern Soldiers prefer the electronic forum that can be simultaneously anonymous and public. Those who desire interaction create milblogs that allow visitors to respond with feedback and support.

Some milbloggers want to share lessons learned from their experiences. While online professional forums exist for junior Army officers, most notably [companycommand.army.mil](http://companycommand.army.mil) and [platoonleader.army.mil](http://platoonleader.army.mil), such forums do not exist for enlisted Soldiers. Troops heading into theater routinely read

***Previous generations of Soldiers wrote diaries or traded stories over a drink as a means of catharsis and retrospection, but many modern Soldiers prefer the electronic forum that can be simultaneously anonymous and public.***

the milblogs of those who have already deployed to better prepare themselves.

Finally, more serious milbloggers seek to enter the blogging community. The so-called “blogosphere” is filled with online friendships and rivalries, and bloggers comment on each other’s postings as well as engage in spirited commentary.<sup>11</sup> Bloggers build communities by creating reciprocal links to other blogs, thus indicating which blog is worth reading. Greater numbers of links equate to higher search engine ratings, increased traffic, and more prestige for the blogger. Conversely, fake or inaccurate milblogs generate scorn and disregard in a community that is largely self-policing, a critical point in understanding blogging culture.

## Qualified Support of Milblogs Is Good Policy

In simpler times (about 10 years ago), the Army’s corporate contribution to the public information domain was limited to what was produced by the traditional news media at local, national, and international levels, coupled with post newspapers and unit flyers. At the individual level, Soldiers wishing to publish a book or article or to grant a media interview were screened, and their unit public affairs officer (PAO) approved their activities.

Given that Soldiers’ abilities to publish were limited and that existing mass communications had a limited market reach, military control of Soldiers’ public communications was feasible. Commanders have traditionally sought to maximize control of influencing variables, and they effectively controlled this element of the battlespace. However, this also put power into the hands of the press, because Army efforts at public outreach were limited by editors and other gatekeepers who filtered the Army’s messages and controlled widespread access to the American people.

An era of greater risks and rewards has replaced this era of institutional control. The Army can reinforce its communications with the mainstream media by declaring its independence from it using the tools of the modern information domain. Without question, the domestic and international media are not a neutral force on the battlefield, and winning modern wars requires both battlefield success and mobilization of domestic and international public opinion.<sup>12</sup> By communicating directly with

the American public, using the Internet to provide accurate, timely information that previously was available only from the media—if and when they chose to report it—the Army now positively influences public discussion.

In fact, the 2001 Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, should be read with the understanding that the term “news media” includes use of the Internet. It reads: “Public affairs operations influence populations by transmitting information through the news media. They fulfill the Army’s obligation to keep the American people and the Army informed. Public affairs help to establish conditions that lead to confidence in the Army and its readiness to conduct operations in peace, conflict, and war. Disseminating this information is desirable and consistent with security. Information disseminated through public affairs counters the effects of propaganda and misinformation.”<sup>13</sup>

Since the Internet offers the most rapid, efficient, cost-effective, and direct means of reaching a variety of target audiences, the Army currently maintains dynamic websites to facilitate public information, community outreach, recruiting, internal (command) information, and media relations. This has dramatically increased the Army’s ability to communicate its story, to build the Nation’s trust in its Soldiers and capabilities, and to educate citizens about its efforts on their behalf.

However, this domain is not static. Forced to adapt to technological innovations and the evolving media culture, the Internet news market changes continually. One of the most important factors behind this has been the rising influence of blogs. In September 2006, Technorati search engine tracked 54.1 million blogs, a figure that has more than doubled in less than a year thanks to an estimated growth rate of 75,000 new blogs per day. Blogs are updated regularly with approximately 1.2 million posts daily.<sup>14</sup> A Pew survey conducted in early 2006 estimated that 39 percent of adult Internet users (57 million Americans) read blogs.<sup>15</sup> This is a communications phenomenon that cannot be ignored. To remain relevant and effective in the information domain, the Army must engage the power of this new medium by accepting and managing risk.

The primary reason to support Soldier milblogs is that they reveal the Army’s human face. According to consultant and author Robert Moskowitz:



Research shows that consumers get tired of the smoothly polished corporate message, and may even tune it out. Conversely, they tend to perk up their ears when they detect an individual's honest expression. It's the same phenomenon that causes hand-addressed direct mail pieces to earn a better response than identical but machine-addressed pieces.

Moskowitz advises:

Somewhere in your company are one or more people who are passionate advocates of your products and services, who are good communicators, and who know exactly how to get the most from your products and services. These are born bloggers, and if you don't let them put their gifts to use, you're under-utilizing a major marketing asset.<sup>16</sup>

In a Nation with decreasing numbers of citizens who have any personal connection to the military, blogs augment Army journalists' efforts to educate people who are interested about the values, beliefs, and humanity of those in uniform. Blogs offer readers Soldiers' perspectives that seem more credible than the Army's official pronouncements. They come straight from the trenches, complete with interesting anecdotes and colorful descriptions, a perspective that is clearly unsanitized by Army leadership.<sup>17</sup> According to one retired officer, "The best blogs offer a taste of reality of Iraq or Afghanistan that the news media rarely capture. And they're often a grand, irreverent hoot."<sup>18</sup>

This fresh perspective is of particular value to prospective recruits who are anxious to learn what the Army is *really* like. Blogs offer a way to connect with these recruits, their family members, and other influencers. Most milblogs contain extensive explanations about why a Soldier decided to join the service, and they describe the personal growth and benefits gained from military service; moreover,

***In a Nation with decreasing numbers of citizens who have any personal connection to the military, blogs...educate people who are interested about the values, beliefs, and humanity of those in uniform.***

they do so in language that is surprisingly pro-Army, pro-chain of command, and pro-mission.

In fact, the more the public perceives that military personnel who blog are honorable, interesting, intelligent people, the more it will respond with support and trust in our warfighting abilities and with volunteers in our ranks. During this period of intense warfighting, the Army receives constant media coverage and public interest. However, should the Army's news profile decline, milblogs will help maintain an essential, unique contact with citizens seeking insight into the Army.

A secondary, but equally vital reason to support blogs is to allow military bloggers to counter falsehoods propagated on other blogs. Bloggers exert significant control over fellow bloggers, and the blogging community is, to a large degree, self-policing. This policing function is one the Army cannot perform for itself because "official" blogs are not well received in the blogosphere.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, to silence the most credible voices—those at the spear's edge—and to deny them this function is to handicap the Army on a vital, very real battlefield. The Army's reputation is maintained on many fronts, and no one fights harder on its behalf than our young Soldiers. We must allow them access to this fight.

## **Troubles with Milblogs**

Of course, some milblog perspectives may be undesirable. Soldiers may use blogs as a forum for airing legitimate grievances or whining self-indulgently. Soldiers may also misrepresent, lie, exaggerate, backstab, embarrass fellow Soldiers, or play out personal feuds. But just as most readers consult multiple blogs to gain context, leaders should also view an undesirable posting in context with the entirety of the blog and the overall blogosphere.

The Army position should be that *we seek to protect operational security and individual privacy, but we have nothing to hide and much to communicate, and we comprise over a million uniformed individuals with over a million perspectives.*

Public affairs officers should tell the news media that leaders want to know when something is wrong, and dissonant milblogs help satisfy that desire (although we traditionally rely on long-established chains of command to communicate, investigate, and fix problems). At the same time, of course, we



should assure the media that the Army has long-standing mechanisms in place, such as inspectors general and equal opportunity offices, to support whistleblowers and ensure that Soldiers can get complaints and problems heard.

The worst-case milblog scenario would be the release of sensitive information that jeopardizes the success and safety of a future operation. Clearly, Soldiers should do no harm with their communications. If milblogs include inappropriate information about units and missions, this represents an unacceptable breakdown of discipline, unit cohesion, and Army culture. It also implies that leaders, operations security (OPSEC) officers, and PAOs failed to educate their Soldiers about information security. More senior milbloggers seem to understand these risks intuitively, although all milbloggers need clear-cut guidance.<sup>20</sup>

An August 2005 ALARACT (All Army Activities) message from then-Army Chief of Staff General Peter J. Schoomaker stated that commanders should be keenly aware of potential security violations.<sup>21</sup> Clearly, any instance of breached OPSEC may have catastrophic consequences. However, fear of OPSEC violations has far outstripped the reality experienced by commanders in the field: since 2001, hundreds of blogs have originated from deployed and stateside locations, and there appear to be few instances where commanders have ordered that blogs be discontinued or violators punished for divulging sensitive information. At the most basic level, the evident discretion of milbloggers may be linked to their personal interests as combatants operating within the region.

“Security violations are rare,” stated Brigadier General Carter Ham, then the commander of well-known blogger and now published author Specialist Colby Buzzell ([www.cbftw.blogspot.com](http://www.cbftw.blogspot.com)). “While [operational security] is a very real everyday concern for us, I do not see potential violations as widespread.”<sup>22</sup> Buzzell states that he was called to account for two blogged observations: that his unit ran low on water during an extended operation and that he took certain tactical steps to obtain additional ammunition during a firefight. He subsequently removed both items following counseling and command intervention, but he was specifically not ordered to discontinue his blog.<sup>23</sup>

A lesser but still significant concern is the milblogged publication of information that does not

***“Security violations are rare,” stated Brigadier General Carter Ham,... “While [operational security] is a very real everyday concern for us, I do not see potential violations as widespread.”***

jeopardize security but violates the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), Army policy, or the Army’s sense of propriety. Soldiers may share opinions about how to distribute and employ resources in the defense of our Nation, but their professional ethic demands that they refrain from partisan banter and public criticism of the chain of command. Even the most senior officers who are called upon to provide policy advice to civilian leadership cannot make public political statements. In fact, very few identifiable milbloggers violate this prohibition because they understand the penalties for breaching political boundaries set by UCMJ and DOD directives.<sup>24</sup>

Clearly, milblogs must also not infringe on the privacy of Soldiers or their families. Concerns range from descriptions of the follies and foibles of identifiable colleagues to real-time images of dead, wounded, or compromised individuals—friendly, enemy, or non-combatant. One milblog written by an Army doctor inappropriately revealed the numbers and types of casualties as well as the overwhelmed state of the local medical system following the December 2005 Mosul mess-hall bombing. Published prior to notification of next of kin, the blog increased the stress on frantic families awaiting word of their loved ones. While the products of embedded journalists are constrained by a contractual embedding agreement with DOD that forbids publishing a range of images and topics, milbloggers’ products are under no such clearly defined official restraint or review. (Nevertheless, the thoughtful doctor was ordered to discontinue blogging.)<sup>25</sup>

For unit commanders, the most basic gut-level problem with milblogs is that Soldiers may publish anonymous real-time information about the Army without the Army’s knowledge. This raises three concerns: Who speaks for the Army? If everyone may speak, what is the impact? What controls, if any, should the Army impose on Soldiers?

Current guidelines are adequate for printed books and articles, and most Soldiers comply with the requirement to consult a PAO if they wish to publish military content or use their military rank or title. Such PAOs serve the Army by ensuring that our personnel do not violate the traditional concerns of security, accuracy, policy, or propriety. They usually require the addition of a codicil, such as "This work does not reflect the views of the Department of the Army. The views here are his own." Presently, no such checks or statements are required on electronic communications, but many milbloggers voluntarily post a codicil.

Many leaders are aware that milblogs can spread information that might be damaging to unit morale, can create forums for gripes and hearsay, or can help enemies assess unit morale and other intangibles. Such forums could reveal embarrassing unmet needs for Army materiel, command information, or up-to-date lessons learned. When a leader learns the identity of a discontented milblogger, it may require extraordinary restraint to allow the blog to continue. But what a leader perceives as bad news might ultimately help his unit or the Army: if a unit is having difficulty, blogs can provide alternative means of communication with Army and outside leaders who may help to fix the problem. The release of negative information may be uncomfortable and embarrassing, but depending on how the blog is written, it need not represent indiscipline. Unremittingly positive blogs are both rare and unrealistic. We may be able to learn something from the more critical sites.

When a milblogger writes about the negative emotions and discomfort associated with military service, deployment, and war, these observations may accurately reflect that Soldier's experience. As the Army carries out the will of lawfully elected leaders on behalf of the American people, we want our fellow citizens to understand the true costs of service, including the burdens, the loss of comrades, and the toll on loved ones.<sup>26</sup>

A final, potentially significant problem is the prospect of phony milblogs. Like imposters who claim to be former members of the Special Forces or SEALs, such bloggers may misrepresent themselves and publish incorrect or harmful information. Such a blog might read, "I can't tell anyone what I saw for fear of retribution, but tonight we committed atrocities in my sector of Iraq." If the media picks up this phony story, what then?

## Milblog Controls

A basic truth is that the Army cannot effectively mandate that its personnel refrain from all public communications. To do so, the Army would need to prohibit Soldier access to all means of communications, because Soldiers' family members and friends are not restricted from publicly releasing information they receive from their Soldiers by regular mail, email, or telephone.<sup>27</sup> In fact, anecdotal insights from fellow Soldiers indicate that private Soldier communications to family members who subsequently make inadvertent or intentional public statements are the primary source of leaked sensitive information. Some Army units temporarily restrict Soldier movement and access to communications equipment before significant operations or following a unit casualty, but cutting Soldiers off completely from family and friends is not a feasible long-term control measure.

Instead, the risk associated with Soldier communications is best managed by educating and trusting Soldiers. Given our values-based organization, the Army should make the same assumptions as do many U.S. corporations. Successful companies believe and communicate that their employees are reasonable and trustworthy and act in the company's best interest.<sup>28</sup> A review of current corporate blogging policies reveals that their leaders believe employees must be educated as to what is allowable and forbidden. Companies typically do this in a clearly written, comprehensive, well-publicized document.

Just as milblog producers can be expected to exercise self-control, milblog consumers can be expected to exercise their own controls by heeding *caveat emptor*, "Let the buyer beware." Akin to news aficionados who consult several news sources, milblog consumers are likely to monitor a variety of milblogs to expand their understanding of the Soldier experience. Obviously, quality control measures do not exist for milblogs; in fact, few Internet websites have such measures. Therefore,

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some milblog consumers will seek to expand their understanding of the Army's story by visiting official websites such as [www.army.mil](http://www.army.mil)—to the ultimate benefit of the service.

An additional control is that the mainstream news media are particularly cautious about using information reported solely in the blogosphere, particularly since news content is now so thoroughly scrubbed by bloggers themselves. The media may have been prompted by gaffes such as the one that occurred in February 2005, when the Associated Press (AP) reported that an Iraqi militant website had posted the image of a captured U.S. Soldier and the threat of his beheading unless Iraqi prisoners were released.<sup>29</sup> While the AP article noted that the claim and the photo's authenticity could not be confirmed, the AP was subsequently embarrassed when bloggers quickly researched and revealed that the "captive" was a plastic toy action figure.

Some argue that milblogs can be cited by news media as convenient anonymous sources to "substantiate" all kinds of outrageous claims against the military. But for this threat, too, there is a control. Journalistic ethics decree that anonymous sources—say, milbloggers—can be cited only if the reporter has built up a trusting relationship with each one. To cite just any blog would be like trusting the contents of a leaflet found blowing in the street: it would equate to a violation of journalistic ethics.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, a reporter is duty bound to authenticate a blogged source. But, how to do so? As an Army spokesperson, I have received several inquiries from the media regarding blogged content. The real-life example that opened this article—a journalist requesting information about a blogged account of Soldiers shooting dogs—occurred because a journalist sought not only comment, but the confirmation needed to publish the account. Such contact gives the Army the opportunity to mitigate the impact of negative information.

As aforementioned, regardless of what we or the traditional media do, bloggers themselves exert significant control over fellow bloggers. Most Soldiers understand that when donning a uniform, they voluntarily agree to limit their free speech and political activity—a point that milbloggers reinforce among themselves.<sup>31</sup> Milblogs frequently link to other milblogs and comment on each other's content. Thus, the most credible milblogs are those

that have been recognized by a small cadre of hard-core bloggers. They have survived the self-policing provided by those currently in the field, by those who have returned from the field, and by veterans who know enough to be able to assume this role.

In fact, the online community takes pride in "outing" all forms of deception and often is the first to reveal a falsehood. Two of the better known examples of this are "Rathergate" and "Easongate." On 8 September 2004, a *60 Minutes Wednesday* story based on an inauthentic document questioned President Bush's service in the Texas Air National Guard. When bloggers exposed that the report was false, CBS resisted, then apologized, and ultimately Dan Rather resigned with two years left on his contract.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, on 27 January 2005, CNN news chief Eason Jordan publicly accused the U.S. military of deliberately targeting journalists with lethal force. Jordan subsequently recanted, but a blogger who publicized the original comments ignited a controversy that forced Jordan to resign 15 days later.<sup>33</sup> Such online outing takes place within the blogosphere as well, to authenticate or invalidate those who pass themselves off as veterans or award-ees, particularly those who claim to be affiliated with elite military organizations.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, because maintaining a milblog is hard work that requires time, Internet access, and some professional peril, the simplest controls on blogs are resources. For a blog to gain readership, it must achieve the blogging community's high standards of timeliness, consistency, and quality. Most Soldiers do not have the time or stamina to maintain such a blog, and most attempts wither from "diary syndrome"—a surge of up-front effort followed by fewer and fewer entries as interest and effort wane.<sup>35</sup> Internet access and bandwidth may not be available during a deployment, and commanders may limit use of scarce government resources for real-world communication missions. Ultimately, too, most individuals have no interest in subjecting themselves to additional command or peer scrutiny—a scrutiny that is itself evolving.

## Current Actions and the Way Ahead

The latest Army guidance regarding blogs focuses on maintaining OPSEC in electronic communications. A rapid revision of Army Regulation 530-1,

*Operations Security*, dated September 2005, calls on all Army personnel to properly implement OPSEC procedures in their communications and explicitly includes blogs in a listing of public forums.<sup>36</sup>

But the issues before the Army are larger than OPSEC. In recognition of this fact, the most specific guidance to date to Soldiers was released in April 2005 by Multi-National Corps—Iraq (MNC-I), in the policy memorandum “Unit and Soldier Owned and Maintained Websites.” The policy prohibits the release of any official information not generally available to the public or releasable under the Freedom of Information Act. It lists five types of prohibited information: classified information, casualty information before formal next-of-kin notification, information protected by the Privacy Act, information regarding incidents under ongoing investigation, and For Official Use Only information. The brevity of the MNC-I policy makes it difficult for a typical Soldier to understand it fully and comply, but it clearly communicates that specific types of information may not be released.

The primary effect of the MNC-I policy and the September 2005 ALARACT message has been to scare Soldiers. In response, many established milbloggers have voluntarily discontinued their milblogs, and most likely, many more never began one. Most signed off like this author of an extraordinarily insightful, positive, and moving blog, who wrote: “Operational security continues to be an issue for our Armed Forces. Therefore, it is with a heavy heart that I must back away from the blogging community. . . . I love my soldiers and want to do what is best for them . . . . I pray that I have been able to shed some light on the everyday events that our men and women overseas deal with . . . into their struggles and triumphs. . . . What I do, I do willingly out of respect for our leaders and love for our soldiers.”<sup>37</sup> Managing Soldiers by scaring them into silence is regrettable because this blog and nearly all of the discontinued milblogs had served their readers and the Army well.

Therefore, the way ahead must engender an appreciation in commanders for the warfighting advantages that their Soldier-authors bring to the information battlespace.<sup>38</sup> This can be accomplished by addressing the three basic concerns about blogging listed earlier:

**1. “Who speaks for the Army?”** First, Soldiers have always served as ambassadors of the Army within their hometowns, their military communities,

and throughout the world. Second, there are limited numbers of dedicated Army spokespersons (i.e., PAOs) to augment commanders. Third, it is a widely repeated truism that the best representatives of our Army—the best spokespersons—are our Soldiers themselves. Therefore, while commanders and PAOs serve as the “official” voice of the Army, all Army personnel represent and “speak” for the Army.

Similar to U.S. corporations, the Army needs to implement widespread training on information security and electronic communications to both support and caution Soldiers, Department of the Army (DA) civilians, and DA contractors. In addition, these personnel should receive traditional media training to “stay in their lane” and to preface comments with statements such as “What I know as a platoon sergeant is that . . .” and “I don’t speak for the Army, but I think . . .” Following instruction, individuals should be trusted to exercise self-control, as well as self-interest and selfless service, in publishing sensitive information.

In October 2005, the Army began sending out OPSEC mobile training teams to educate deploying units. This is a good start, but such education should be standardized into an annual classroom requirement, or a web-based tutorial and a predeployment refresher.

Most Soldiers want to do the right thing, but problems occur when they fail to recognize that their private and public electronic communications have merged. Education should ensure that milbloggers understand the potentially international nature of their audience.

A particularly pervasive problem is that most Soldiers do not understand the private-public merging of email. For example, an irreverent email from a Soldier to his father is a private communication, and one may certainly complain or question a superior in such a format. However, if the father forwards the email to his business associates, many of whom do not know the son personally, this private communication becomes public. As the email is forwarded or posted in the blogosphere, the result is widespread publication of a credible document with serious implications for the Soldier and the Army—no matter the sender’s original intent.

**2. “If everyone may speak, what is the impact?”** When everyone may speak—Soldiers and non-Soldiers alike—consumers become more savvy about what they consume. The fact that a milblog exists does not mean that it is read. Since the barriers to



Internet publishing are low, consumers choose their sources based on credibility, accuracy, and timeliness. When credibility is hard to determine, consumers choose those blogs that regularly post information that is both useful and consistent with other sources. Corroborating sources include personal experience, news media accounts, and other blogs.

Like private citizens, the Army has a limited ability to distinguish between authentic and unauthentic milblogs. One approach, contained within the MNC-I memo, is to require all milbloggers to register with their commanders. Unfortunately, such a policy discourages “good” Soldiers while allowing “bad” Soldiers to blog unfettered unless caught. From a policy perspective, the Army should not feel obligated to respond to blogged allegations that lack such vital data as date, specific location, or unit name, for it is impossible to provide detailed responses to anonymous, unspecified rubbish. We need not set a precedent for troublemakers to waste Army resources by blogging falsehoods. The media cannot credibly publish any such blogged accusations without first substantiating them.

The Army can also benefit when individuals quickly speak for themselves to rectify inaccuracies in the national and international media. In a small number of cases, milbloggers can defend the Army more credibly and more quickly than official spokespersons.

**3. “What controls, if any, should the Army impose on Soldiers?”** If the Army opts for total control and restricts Soldiers from blogging, then Soldiers who like the Army and who are proud of their service will comply by shutting down their blogs and removing their positive influence from the blogosphere. In fact, these pro-Army blogs were never an issue because the Army benefits from the positive coverage. Most Army detractors ignore positive depictions of the military—experienced PAOs will attest that good news is rarely deemed newsworthy. If the Army restricts milblogs, the only voices that remain in the blogosphere will be the disgruntled and disaffected few, egged on by fellow miscreants and fakers. These troublemakers are perfectly capable of shifting the “preponderance of the evidence” in the blogosphere or even concocting phony issues that create noise in the system.

The MNC-I memo presents a carefully crafted set of restrictions ending with a paragraph stating, “This is a punitive policy.” Since meaningful

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restrictions require enforcement, the MNC-I policy states that commanders are responsible for reviewing blogs within their commands quarterly. This requirement is an additional burden on commanders with a lengthy time lag between publication and possible command feedback, a lag which renders such effort nearly useless. At present, limited help is available from outside sources. The Army Web Risk Assessment Cell specifically monitors official Army websites, although it also samples milblogs.<sup>39</sup> Unless the Army unwisely devotes vast resources to monitoring personal transmissions, commanders must primarily rely on the honor system and their Soldiers’ common sense.

Not only is enforcement a problem, but most possible violations exist in the eye of the beholder. Valid opinions differ between honorable people. But as one milblogger stated, “All good soldiers crave appropriate guidance to avoid problems.”<sup>40</sup> The MNC-I policy is an excellent start, but Soldiers deserve a more expanded and operational definition than it currently offers.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, the Army needs to create a document on Soldier communications similar to the clearly written DOD media-embedding ground rules that constrain the publication of a range of images and topics.<sup>42</sup> Such a document would more clearly outline what is acceptable and unacceptable, although gray zones will always exist. Education on the document should be the centerpiece of annual OPSEC training and education requirements.

## **Muddy Boots IO**

Previous eras of widespread information control have been replaced by a present period offering greater risks and rewards. The newly found ability of Army personnel to communicate directly with the public, inadvertently or deliberately, anonymously or openly, requires updated and expanded guidance and education.

Military blogs written by those in muddy boots—of their own volition and in their own words—give readers precious insight into the quality, efforts, and sacrifices of our forces. Blogs written within the boundaries of security, accuracy, policy, and propriety are a combat multiplier in the information domain.

Commanders must educate Soldiers and provide them with specific guidelines in order to minimize possible OPSEC and other violations. However, commanders at every level must boldly accept risk in order to support the rewards and warfighting advantages that Soldier-authors bring to the information battlespace. **MR**

## NOTES

1. Family members now expect superb connectivity and may send computers and phones to deployed service members. See Moni Basu, "Georgia Guard: The 48th: Georgia GI's in Iraq often without Net," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 4 July 2005, 6A. Also, "Thanks to facilities stocked with computers and telephones, soldiers were able to keep in regular touch with loved ones. . . . Kadeisha Cornell and her husband, Sgt. Thomas Cornell, talked almost every day while he was gone." Claire Parker, "Tears, hugs greet GIs returning from Iraq," *The Fayetteville (NC) Observer*, 4 September 2006, <www.fayettevillenc.com/article?id=241214>.
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15. Lenhart and Fox, 17. As compared to a study about 18 months earlier that estimated that 27 percent of adult Internet users (32 million Americans) read blogs. See Lee Rainie, "The State of Blogging," *Pew Internet & American Life Project*, January 2005, 2.
16. Robert Moskowitz, "Five Reasons to Blog," iMedia Connection, 14 March 2005, <www.imediaconnection.com/content/5229.asp>.
17. This article specifically focuses on blogs, but much of the content applies to videos Soldiers create and post online to sites such as <www.youtube.com/> or <www.iftlm.com/>. For example, "Lazy Ramadi," produced by Indiana National Guardsmen Staff Sergeants Matt Wright and Josh Dobbs, became an overnight sensation among both military and civilian viewers and was profiled by ABC News. See "Soldiers Turn SNL Rap Skit Into 'Lazy Ramadi': Rapping About Pizza and Muncie, Ind., Iraq Video Becomes an Internet Hit," ABC News, 18 May 2006, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=1979301>.
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20. Younger soldiers such as Colby Buzzell, <http://cbftw.blogspot.com/>, a milblogger whose posts earned command attention, are less cautious than their experienced elders. In contrast, the popular blog allegedly written by a first sergeant, "Dadmanly," <http://dadmanly.blogspot.com/2005/08/profiles-ncioic.html>, wrote following an operation, "I can't share details about this attack, because to do so would:  
\* Aid an enemy making a Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) of the success of their attack;  
\* Spread knowledge of the tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) to other cells that otherwise might not learn of new methods;  
\* Jeopardize operations security (OPSEC) for the Scouts, Quick Reaction Force (QRF) and other first responders to Jihadist attacks; and  
\* Open up specific unit and leader decision-making to inappropriate public scrutiny. This can create situations where information, necessarily incomplete due to im-

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27. Witness the large number of blogs maintained by spouses and parents such as one of the longest running at <http://an-army-wife-life.com>.
28. "Corporate Blogging Policies: Introduction," <http://en.blogworkers.com/archives/2005/03/corporate\_blogg.html>.
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30. In one study, 53 percent of journalists self-reported that they use blogs for story ideas, but only 1 percent was willing to state that they find blogs to be credible. "Rebuilding Trust: Rebuilding Credibility in the Newsroom and Boardroom," Eleventh Annual Survey of the Media with Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, 18 August 2005, 26.
31. Greyhawk, the founder of milblogs located at <www.mudvillegazette.com/>, advises milbloggers to "Write under the assumption that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and your mother will read your stuff and know you wrote it," quoted in "10 Tips for Posting Your Blog," *Army Times*, 16 March 2005, 16.
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34. An example is the public discrediting of Robin Moore's 2003 book, *The Hunt for Bin Laden*, which relied on interviews of Jonathan Keith "Jack" Idema, a self-promoting felon who repeatedly capitalized on his previous (although unsuccessful) stint as an Army Green Beret from the late 70s and early 80s. Idema used his military credentials to further a variety of business ventures and to gain credibility with the media such as CBS's 60 Minutes. In September 2004, Idema was convicted by an Afghan court of charges that included operating a private torture camp. See Mariah Blake, "Tin Soldier: An American Vigilante In Afghanistan, Using the Press for Profit and Glory," *Columbia Journalism Review* (January/February 2005).
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41. Lieutenant General John R. Vines, Multi-National Corps—Iraq Policy #9, *Unit and Soldier Owned and Maintained Websites*, 6 April 2005.
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# Leadership in Counterinsurgency: A Tale of Two Leaders

1st Place  
MacArthur Writing Contest

Major Michael D. Sullivan, U.S. Army

*This man is different from the rest of the Englishmen whom we have seen so far, [in] that he listens attentively to the political organization of the Arabs and his questions show a depth in the subject, which is not present except with one who has in it a pleasure and a passion.*

—Dr. Sahbander on meeting T.E. Lawrence.<sup>1</sup>

*The answer lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people.*

—General Sir Gerald Templer, Malaya, 1952.<sup>2</sup>

THE IMPORTANCE OF military leadership remains constant in peacetime, war, or a counterinsurgency operation. To develop better leaders for the current counterinsurgency fight, let us look back at two highly successful leaders of the past. T.E. Lawrence, always a controversial figure, lived the life of an insurgent when he was posted as an advisor to the Arab forces fighting the Turkish Army during the Arab revolt of 1916-1918. General Sir Gerald Templer possessed the ideal leadership qualities necessary to defeat an insurgency and thus was able to shift the balance of power in favor of the British during the Malaya Emergency. Although both were great leaders, the two figures could not be more opposite. Lawrence was the eccentric misfit and Templer the essence of a proper British officer. Both, however, possessed a timeless trait our current leaders need in order to win in a counterinsurgency environment—bold leadership. We can evaluate the quality of the leadership these two officers had using the Army framework of “Be, Know, Do” found in FM 22-100, *Army Leadership*.

FM 22-100 describes the key characteristics needed by a U.S. Army leader as “Be, Know, and Do.” “Be” represents the leader’s character or inner strength. Character, demonstrated through behavior, helps build the moral courage to make difficult decisions.<sup>3</sup> “Know” involves interpersonal, conceptual, technical, and tactical skills. A leader masters all of these skills to build a team, transform a unit’s weaknesses, and enhance a unit’s strengths. The “do” of leadership characteristics includes influencing people, operating the systems of an organization, and improving an organization’s capabilities.<sup>4</sup> Both T.E. Lawrence and General Templer possessed the necessary qualities of “Be, Know, and Do” to be successful when they assumed leadership roles as insurgent and counterinsurgent leaders.

## T.E. Lawrence

The name T.E. Lawrence stirs up a variety of emotions today. His seminal work, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph*, brought him into a spotlight from

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PHOTO on the right: Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer, portrait in service dress. (Courtesy of the Council of the National Army Museum, London)



***Lawrence was the eccentric misfit and Templer the essence of a proper British officer.***

which he struggled to escape later in life. In *Pillars*, he paints a vivid picture of desert warfare, describes life with the Arab tribes, and writes about his role as an insurgent advisor. He discusses the troubles, motivations, and strengths of an Arab insurgency, as well as the challenges he faced as military advisor. Counterinsurgency students can gain valuable insights by looking at his leadership actions during the time he served as an advisor in the desert.

Lawrence developed a passion for archeology while he was in college; thus he chose to spend years doing research on crusader fortifications throughout the Middle East in the early 1900s.<sup>5</sup> He had a love for the desert and wanted to blend in with the Arab people; he would often spend weeks alone walking from region to region dressed as an Arab while absorbing their culture. His understanding of the culture, ability to speak Arabic, and knowledge of the terrain eventually won him a commission as an intelligence officer in Cairo when World War I started.

Lawrence had some limited military training while in college, but little other formal officer training.<sup>6</sup> Even so, he read and understood military theorists, both classic and those of his time. Lawrence often quoted Clausewitz and Joffe in his writings, along with Thucydides and other ancient writers. Yet he was somewhat of a misfit in uniform. His odd behaviors, lack of military discipline, and fondness for Arab culture frustrated his superiors, so they assigned him as a liaison officer to the Arab revolt primarily to get him out of the headquarters and to harness his understanding of Arab culture, which other British officers only vaguely understood.

Lawrence's lack of extensive officer training proved a benefit in the desert. He held neither the presumptions nor the fondness for formal procedures that most British officers held. As a result, he used his own knowledge of Arab culture, which he had learned about not through books or classes, but through experience.

Lawrence's mission for the British Army was to assess the Arabs' capabilities and the chances

of the revolt's success. When he met with Prince Faisal in the Arabian Desert, Lawrence quickly took in the situation of the Arab revolt and rendered his assessment to the British military. Lawrence, however, had the courage to go a few steps further. He returned to Prince Faisal's camp and became, in essence, an insurgent.<sup>7</sup> By living and working with the Arab fighters, Lawrence gained a better understanding of their capabilities.

Lawrence found that the Arab fighters had no unified effort and no clear identity as Arabs; their alliance was first to their kin and tribe. He planned to build alliances between tribes to unify the insurgents and focus their efforts.

The Arab fighters had no modern rifles, machine guns, or artillery. But at the same time, they were highly mobile, as they were not encumbered with heavy equipment. Therefore, Lawrence exploited the Arab's mobility. The fighters' camel-riding skills and heartiness allowed them to conduct hit-and-run raids wherever they desired, limited only by the amount of flour they could carry and the location of watering holes.

In contrast to the Arabs, the Turks lived in fixed fortifications (such as Medina) and established bases supplied by tenuous lines of communication. For supply, they relied almost entirely on railroads across the vast, open desert. Armed with this information, Lawrence planned to harass the Turkish supply lines and leave the larger fixed forces to wither away in their bases. (Medina alone held over 12,000 Turkish troops.)<sup>8</sup> He advised the Arabs to use insurgency tactics and avoid conventional battles. Lawrence continued to develop his technical and tactical skills to lead his insurgents. His successes resulted in more tribes joining his cause.

Lawrence eventually devised a daring plan to seize the port city of Aqaba with the Arab fighters. Aqaba offered a port to supply the Arabs, along with a fast method to communicate with the British military. Furthermore, he envisioned Aqaba as a stepping-stone for the Arabs' eventual drive to Damascus. Lawrence also wanted modern weapons, logistical support, and especially money, to sustain the insurgency. The port provided that logistical link to the British military so necessary to continue the revolt. However, Aqaba was well protected from any sea assault by strong coastal defenses. These



defenses prevented any British naval or amphibious reinforcements for the Arab fighters if they assaulted Aqaba. Nonetheless, Lawrence led a bold march over 600 miles of open desert, capturing Aqaba from the lightly defended east with a small party of Arab insurgents and stunning the British military command in Cairo.<sup>9</sup>

Day after day, Lawrence demonstrated his personal courage while leading the insurgents. He had received technical training from the Royal Navy on demolitions and became an accomplished train bomber, planting explosives along railroad tracks while his insurgent force waited in ambush. Lawrence and his insurgents wrecked dozens of Turkish supply trains, severely hampering the logistical situation at the fixed bases. He understood the Arab insurgents' strengths, saying: "We could develop a highly mobile, highly equipped striking force of the smallest size, and use it successively at distributed points of the Turkish line, to make them strengthen their posts beyond the defensive minimum of twenty men. This would be a short cut to success."<sup>10</sup>

As an insurgent leader, Lawrence seemed to live by the current U.S. Army leadership model of "Be, Know, and Do." His interpersonal skills appeared sharper when among the Arabs. He understood the capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses of the Arab insurgent organization and continually organized (and reorganized) tenuous alliances between tribes to maintain a delicate balance within the Arab coalition and thus keep the insurgency active. He used his British military links to improve the quality of equipment and logistical support for his insurgents.

Although Lawrence is often maligned by historians, there is little doubt that he demonstrated effective leadership in the Arab revolt and contributed to the British victory over the Turkish Army. During World War II, the British Army issued copies of Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* to resistance commanders as a textbook on irregular warfare.<sup>11</sup> Still considered by many as the perfect example of what a military advisor should be, Lawrence was instrumental in the success of the Arab revolt.

## Sir Gerald Templer

In June 1948, the Malayan Communist Party initiated an insurgency against the British and Malayan

government that produced the Malaya Emergency. The insurgents were primarily ethnic Chinese looking to conduct a Maoist revolution to bring about a Communist-run state. The situation in Malaya, however, was different from that in China when Mao revolted. The British had occupied Malaya since 1791, and the majority of Malaysians had no appetite for Communism. Most of Malaya's income came from British-run rubber plantations and tin mines. Only Malaya's minority ethnic-Chinese population had a desire for Communism. However, through 1951, the British had little success in stemming the Communist insurgency.

In February 1952, Templer arrived in Malaya as the new high commissioner. The year 1951 had been the most violent year in the insurgency. In fact, the security was so poor that on 6 October 1951, former High Commissioner Sir Henry Gurney was killed in a Communist ambush.<sup>12</sup> Templer faced an extremely difficult situation. There was a complete lack of cultural understanding within the Malayan security forces and the British Army.

A former commander of the 56th and 6th Armored Divisions during World War II, Templer had had the traditional military assignments. However, he had also served as the military governor of the British zone in occupied Germany after the war, which equipped him with a working knowledge of military governance. Once on the ground in Malaya, Templer wasted little time getting to work. He took a three-week tour of the country to gauge the situation. Based on his findings, he reorganized his headquarters to better address the insurgency.

He refocused his staff from warfighting to civil relief, social changes, economic stability, and small-unit operations. Templer concentrated on securing the police posts around the country and on capturing or turning, not killing, insurgents. Templer convinced the surrendered insurgents who worked for him to give statements to the media and distribute propaganda reports to encourage their former comrades to surrender. Psychological warfare sections, consisting of no more than 30 mostly Chinese ex-insurgents, known as psywar groups, broadcast surrender policies. Rather than kill insurgents, Templer chose a well-executed surrender policy that provided the best possible intelligence on the organization, morale, and weaknesses of the insurgency.<sup>13</sup> Radio broadcasts,

Chinese-language newspapers, government films, pamphlets, and personal appearances by surrendered enemy personnel in villages all aided the British counterinsurgency campaign.

Templer also made important changes to the military effort. Patrol reports became mandatory. An operational research team went through all the raw data gathered from the reports, analyzed it, and distributed lessons learned back to the troops in the field. Rather than continue the fruitless battalion-sized jungle sweeps conducted for the first three years of the insurgency, Templer emphasized deep jungle patrolling by small, well-trained units to gather vital intelligence on the insurgents. Jungle training schools taught army and police units small-unit tactics and effective methods for fighting insurgents. Doctrine also developed rapidly. Based on lessons learned at the jungle training school, a small book known as *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya* was printed. The book was small enough to fit in the pockets of a soldier's jungle uniform. Every six months, soldiers received an updated and revised edition containing the latest intelligence and lessons learned.<sup>14</sup> The Malayan police forces also received this valuable document, and they attended the same army schools as British soldiers to develop proficiency in fighting an insurgent force. Templer knew that integrating his security forces was an important step toward a stable future for Malaya.

Templer wisely focused on winning over the insurgents' support base, Malaya's ethnic-Chinese civilians. Public works projects and civic training in the ethnic-Chinese areas prepared local leaders to eventually take over an independent Malayan government. These projects provided huge incentives to either turn away from or turn in the insurgents. Templer accelerated the relocation (first implemented under the Briggs Plan) of entire Chinese squatter villages.<sup>15</sup> The British built brand new towns complete with schools and medical facilities and designated plots of land for the Chinese squatters. Villages located on the fringes of the jungles eventually relocated to these new

camps under British protection and control. A city government run by the ethnic Chinese within the villages prepared the population for an eventual merger into mainstream Malayan society. In addition, each family received a land title for their farmland. This was the first time a majority of ethnic Chinese had hereditary titles passable from father to son guaranteeing family land ownership. The new villages took away the vital insurgent support base and started to integrate ethnic Chinese into mainstream Malayan society, breaking down cultural walls.

Templer understood the cultural problems that caused the insurgency in Malaya. Knowing the situation, he was able to institute effective methods to win back the population. Templer's ability to influence, improve, and lead others in an organization—the “do” aspect of leadership—is what sets him apart as a counterinsurgent leader. Despite his career of traditional military assignments, Templer quickly grasped that the key to defeating the Malayan insurgency was not military action, but winning over the Chinese population through social changes and improved security. Templer understood the problems facing his organization from the first day he took command. Every one of his efforts focused on improving his organization's ability to understand the insurgent problem, finding solutions to the problem, and working toward applying those solutions. Templer not only possessed a military officer's technical and tactical skills, he was a military government expert as well. His ability to take traditional military organizational skills and apply them toward defeating an insurgency demonstrated his organizational leadership abilities. Lessons from Templer's military governance clearly could have helped U.S. military commanders at the end of hostilities during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Again, military commanders shed their traditional roles as warriors and took on the work of governance. In our current counterinsurgent fight, U.S. senior leaders continue to use techniques similar to those General Templer used successfully. The actions of General Petraeus in Mosul are a classic example

***Templer's ability to influence, operate, and improve an organization  
—the “do” aspect of leadership—is what sets him apart...***

of a military leader focusing on social, economic, and cultural lines of operation as well as traditional military operations.

Leadership remains the most important factor in the success of any military operation, be it conventional combat or a counterinsurgency campaign. The traditional education, training, and planning abilities of military officers provide a firm foundation for building counterinsurgency skills. A leader's responsibility to "Be, Know, and Do," however, never changes, regardless of the environment.

Both T.E. Lawrence and General Templer demonstrated different, yet important, types of leadership in two completely different insurgent environments. Lawrence successfully integrated himself within an Arab insurgency and helped transform a scattered band of tribes into a formidable force. Templer took over a difficult command as the

British leader of Malaya and wrested control of the country from the insurgents by winning over the population's hearts and minds. Both soldiers demonstrated the absolute need for strong leadership, regardless of the situation. **MR**

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# The Droning of STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION and PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Robert D. Deutsch, Ph.D.

**I**N THESE DAYS of smart bombs and unmanned drones delivering lethal payloads, we sometimes see strategic communication and public diplomacy as little more than engineering problems. We have jettisoned real people from our conception of warfighting, and we have forgotten that foreign audiences have emotions more complex than the electrical circuitry in modern munitions.

I am an anthropologist who, 21 years ago, traded backpack and quinine for a three-piece suit, Hartmann carry-on luggage, and Dramamine. I travel a lot, but I do so in search of contemporary narratives and mythologies that moderns create to account for how the world works. I organize these stories into “grand narratives” and consult with corporations, public communication agencies, and governments on how to understand the public’s mind and mood and communicate with them.

Using an amalgam of ethnography, narrative analysis, and semiotics, I uncover the ways people design information, emotion, and belief to create their own brand of meaning. No more product-oriented focus groups and survey questions for me! I voyage into peoples’ internal dialog, exploring nuanced attitudes, opinions, and reflections about life.

Soon after the fall of the Soviet Union, I asked a group of Russians, “What is life like, nowadays?” Their replies boiled down to: “It’s better now, but it wasn’t worse under communism.” You can’t quantify such a complicated notion in a survey statistic.

The mind evolved to act, not think. It doesn’t wait for Rosetta stones. Recent evidence in neuroscience demonstrates that emotion is the most important factor in the making of meaning. People constantly create emotionally-based narratives to make the fog of life manageable. Each brain is actually three brains—base, limbic, and neocortical—and they can be at odds with each other, authoring different, complicated, even contradictory stories.

A misguided assumption in public diplomacy is the notion that all people are rational actors, who, if they can just be pragmatic, would basically think like Americans; in other words, we think the world is a mirror image of us. This is a dangerous failure of imagination.

Our methods for assessing public opinion are similarly dubious. A recent poll indicated that most Americans were experiencing a rat’s nest of emotions about the war in Iraq. Within one day—or even one hour—they felt “yes,”

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***A misguided assumption in public diplomacy is the notion that all people...would basically think like Americans...***

“maybe,” and “no.” Given conflicting “facts” and emotions, they couldn’t find their way out of the maze. Nevertheless, in the face of complexity, we deploy the same old polling questions—mechanistic, made-for-TV questions such as that asked of an Iraqi just after Baghdad fell: “How do you feel about being free?” (To which the Iraqi replied, “I think freedom implies security. We still don’t have security.”)

Our government’s conception of people is too simplistic. Why does the State Department’s Office of Public Diplomacy believe it can change minds inclined to be against us by showing foreigners videos with man-on-the-street testimonials about the good life in the U.S.A.?

And what about the opinions of Americans, supposedly the most open-minded people in the world? When I talked with a group of Americans about their perceptions of Japan and the Japanese, I asked them, “What is the first thing that comes into your mind when you hear the word Japan?” The most frequent responses were Yoko Ono, Bruce Lee, and Godzilla.

I replied, half-mockingly, “What do you mean? Yoko Ono has lived in New York most of her life; Bruce Lee is Chinese practicing a Korean form of karate; and Godzilla, well, Godzilla is a cinematic creation.” Many yelled back that I was wrong.

I heard: “Yoko Ono *is* Japan. She took away what we liked best: the Beatles. That’s what Japan does. It invades and takes things away from us, like car markets.” Others said, “Bruce Lee and Godzilla are the same thing: bent on destruction and can’t be stopped. That’s Japan.”

So much for the cold logic of engineering. Brain circuitry always sees to it that connotation trumps denotation, and that prior belief runs roughshod over thought.

Just a few years ago a Nobel Prize in economics was awarded to two researchers, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, who explained some of the all-

too-human ways people calculate risk, uncertainty, and desired outcomes in their dealings with the world. The Nobel laureates didn’t conceive of people as one-dimensional stick figures operating in an idealized vacuum. They said people are not logical, rational actors who think in a linear fashion; rather, they decode the world symbolically and metaphorically using emotionally-based reasoning.

Since we know this, why not bring this knowledge to bear on public diplomacy, strategic military communications, PSYOPs, and information warfare?

Vaclav Havel, speaking to a joint session of the U.S. Congress in 1990 after he became the Czech president, said the world needs “understanding over explanation.” He suggested we stop seeing the world as governed by finite laws that humankind can direct through the scientific method of successive approximation. Havel advocated comprehending meaning from the inside out, in its unfolding.

Our current government’s style of strategic communication and public diplomacy works from the outside in. It demonstrates little insight into human behavior and fails to understand that the old “push-dominate” paradigm of public diplomacy is outmoded. You can’t capture hearts and minds. Moreover, neuroscience is now telling us that the juxtaposition of “hearts and minds” is a false dichotomy.

The task is not coercion or even persuasion; people—all people—possess a story about themselves to themselves, involving aspects of their identity that are latent, not fully constituted. If, through you, they feel that they can become more of themselves, their attachment to you is formidable. We must get this right now, not later, or the U.S. will be in Iraq for another decade, and terror in the Middle East—or in our own heartland—will go on and on. **MR**

***...people are not logical, rational actors who think in a linear fashion; rather, they decode the world symbolically and metaphorically using emotionally-based reasoning.***

# Understanding Airmen: A Primer for Soldiers

**Major General  
Charles J. Dunlap Jr.,  
U.S. Air Force**



*If you don't love Soldiers,  
you have no place in my  
Air Force.*

— General Hal Hornburg

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PHOTO: Maintainers finish working on F-16 Fighting Falcons, 6 June 2007, at a base in Southwest Asia. F-16s flew six close-air-support missions on that day in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. (U.S. Air Force photo)

**T**HE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT QUEST for victory in Iraq is putting enormous stress on the entire U.S. military establishment. As is predictable in such situations, one way the stress manifests itself is in a rising tide of interservice antagonism as the warfighting debate becomes more passionate.

This rivalry often seems more intense between the Army and the Air Force. Soldiers suffer most of the casualties in Iraq and are rightly concerned about the support they receive. Unfortunately, some Soldiers question the Air Force's role or denigrate it. Many Soldiers appear to believe that the Air Force is filled with people who, as the former chief of staff of the Army put it, are obsessed with "things that go fast, make noise, and look shiny."<sup>1</sup>

Airmen, however, see themselves as part of a service that has been at war in the Middle East for 16 years, was key in defeating Iraq's conventional forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and is very much in today's counterinsurgency fight. Despite this, Airmen feel that the Army under-appreciates and misunderstands them. Many Airmen are concerned, for example, that the Army's new Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, trivializes airpower's role by confining it to a 5-page annex in a 282-page text.

Honest disagreements as to how to address the greatest threats of the 21st century are the premise for some of the contentiousness. Sure, some of it is sheer service parochialism on both sides, but much of it is simply a mutual lack of knowledge. Much of that is, in turn, the fault of the Air Force, which often does a poor job of explaining itself.

Airmen—rather naively—believe that the Air Force's spectacular successes speak for themselves. Because the Air Force does so many things so efficiently—from air defense to airlift to precision attack to reconnaissance to operating and controlling the Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites—it might appear to the Army (and everyone else) that all this is "easy" to do.

Airmen do see their service as unique. While it is certainly true that America's "airpower" includes the vitally important air arms of the other services, it is an article of faith among Airmen that the United States has only one Air Force—one service that focuses on maximizing options for decision-makers by optimizing airpower. To an Airman, airpower includes air, space, and cyberspace power in all its many dimensions.

Airmen contend that airpower's flexibility, range, and payload make it capable of applying force at tactical, operational, and strategic levels across the entire spectrum of conflict. Of course, the Army and the other services can do so as well. However, Airmen believe that what makes airpower different from land and sea power is the fact that it can assert U.S. military muscle literally anywhere in the world with a *velocity* that none can equal. To an Airman, the ability to act quickly is the coin of the realm in the 21st century, as is airpower's ability to apply combat power in a way that puts relatively few Americans at risk.

Scarcely anyone disputes the supremacy that U.S. airpower now enjoys in the dimensions in which it operates. To achieve that dominance, the Air Force is vastly more technology-dependent than the other services need to be, and that fact greatly influences Air Force culture and thinking. Obviously, the Air Force operates in environments that are only accessible by mastering technology, but it is really more than that.

The sheer sophistication of the technology counts a lot, perhaps even as much as the skill of the Airman wielding it. For example, from the first moment jet aircraft appeared in World War II, they had an immediate and radical impact. By comparison, when mechanized units first appeared on the battlefield in World War I, they had little effect on the war. It took decades for mechanization to evolve into the decisive force it became. No aviator—however skilled and courageous—can consistently overcome an opponent who deftly operates technologically superior equipment.

As a result, Airmen, aware of the long lead-time needed to develop complicated aircraft, always press to acquire the most advanced systems far ahead of potential adversaries. This can be a source of irritation to the other services where technological advantage changes the calculus of battles more slowly.

This scientific orientation is one reason the Air Force considers itself, rather immodestly, to be the most forward-thinking of the services. There are many consequences to that self-assessment. The Air Force identifies the past with obsolescence, and for the air weapon, obsolescence equates to defeat. This is why, for example, FM 3-24's heavy reliance on experiences in long-past counterinsurgency efforts does not always resonate with Airmen the same way it does with Soldiers.

***...the Air Force considers itself, rather immodestly, to be the most forward-thinking of the services.***

Examining the past for “lessons learned” is certainly something Airmen value, but they know today's capabilities easily dwarf yesterday's technological limit. Historical models are of limited value in an Airman's mind because the nature of the air weapon gives him a keen appreciation of how quickly technological change can alter the warfighting equation.

Airmen may also not read FM 3-24's slogan of “learn and adapt” as the unqualified good the manual touts it to be. While “adaptability” is certainly an important military virtue, when we juxtapose it with “learn,” it strikes Airmen as too defensive and reactive. To Airmen, this sounds a lot like absorbing the first blow and then bending to the enemy by trying to figure out how to fight him on his terms (just do so “better”). That is not the Air Force “way.” In air warfare, the first blow can be fatal to relatively fragile aircraft. This makes Airmen extremely offensive-minded, and they are more inclined to take an “anticipate and shape” approach than a “learn and adapt” process. An Airman likes to seize the initiative and force the adversary to fight on his terms—terms in which he believes his superior technology and training will give him the advantage.

This leads to another distinguishing aspect of Air Force culture. The other services proudly trace their heritage to ancient warriors and foreign armies and navies. The Air Force unapologetically revels in its status as the youngest service, uninhibited by thinking derived from the days before man conquered the air.

Although some criticize it for doing so, the Air Force admires much in the efficient and creative culture of civilian enterprises. The service recognizes that private enterprise played, and continues to play, an irreplaceable role in making and sustaining the United States as the world's foremost aviation nation. Given the many synergies and analogs that can exist with commercial aviation, it follows that

Air Force culture is more open to adopting the ways of business than are, perhaps, the cultures of the other services.

Airmen are proud of the warfighting success U.S. air and space supremacy produces. Serbs, Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and Saddam Hussein's forces as well as today's Iraqi insurgents have all undergone what not a single American Soldier or Marine has suffered since the Korean War—the sheer torment and terror of death from hostile air attack. Because high-technology airpower can deliver persisting precision attacks in any weather, day or night, the effect is devastating. There is no escaping U.S. airpower.

Airmen believe that the precision revolution, along with air dominance, now produces an unprecedented ability to inflict a sense of helplessness that unhinges adversaries. Opponents who are slow to realize America's asymmetrical advantage in airpower suffer accordingly. A bitter Republican Guard colonel who survived America's air assault in 2003 castigated his leaders in *Time* magazine: "They forgot that we are missing air power. That was a big mistake. U.S. military technology is beyond belief."<sup>2</sup> Today, no military formation in the world can survive American-style air assault.

Yet, it is also true that Airmen's technological focus helps breed a culture of "assertive individualism" that is rather unusual in the armed services. Indeed, in the joint environment—especially with Soldiers—some view this trait as being unhelpful or even insolent. Why are Airmen this way? Some of this goes to the earliest history of flight: those who first stepped into flying machines were doing so against conventional scientific—and practical—wisdom. With that heritage, it is not surprising that an Airman's "DNA" inclines him or her to not accept the status quo and to ask "why" or, often, "why not?"

Moreover, as Airmen began to envision the military potential of flying machines, they ran into powerful bureaucratic and parochial resistance within the Armed Forces. The Airman's response was to question authority. Billy Mitchell is the obvious example, but there are many others. Hap Arnold, Claire Chennault, and Curtis LeMay, to name just a few, set a tone for the Airman's attitude that still resounds today.

Another element of Air Force culture that some Soldiers may find disquieting is its egalitarianism. Air

Force officers have never needed the formal social "distance" from its enlisted force that is common in the other services. Although the paradigm is changing, for most of its history, the Air Force, completely unlike its sister services, has been an organization in which mostly its *officers* fought, not its enlisted force. When the enlisted force did go into harm's way, such as members of crewed aircraft, the close comradeship of shared risk in tight quarters created traditions that shaped a somewhat different kind of officer/enlisted relationship than exists elsewhere in the U.S. military.

***...for most of its history, the Air Force...unlike its sister services, has been an organization in which mostly its officers fought, not its enlisted force.***

Some critics imply that the Air Force's egalitarianism and other aspects of its culture make it undisciplined and the least "martial" of the services. The facts show, however, that Air Force culture does not equate to any deficiency in martial qualities when it really counts—in combat. Clearly, Airmen have paid the price in blood. For example, during World War II, more Airmen died in the European Theater of Operations than did Marines in all theaters of that conflict.

Admittedly, Air Force culture can be perplexing to outsiders. Rick Newman and Don Shepperd's recent book about Airmen during the Vietnam War, *Bury Us Upside Down: The Misty Pilots and the Secret Battle for the Ho Chi Minh Trail*, provides great insight. Although the Airmen the book describes plainly had what we might charitably call a casual approach to military etiquette and behavior, there is no question that in probing the Ho Chi Minh Trail they magnificently executed a mission that was among the most dangerous and demanding of any performed by any service during the entire war.

In the current conflict in Iraq, Airmen have demonstrated courage equal to that of the other services—and not just in the air. For example,



U.S. Air Force, TSGT Brian Davidson



**Airman 1st Class James Blair coordinates air cover for Army 10th Mountain Division light-infantry Soldiers during operations in the Sroghar Mountains, Afghanistan, 2003.**

Airmen in truck companies have proudly driven more than 7.6 million miles in over 1,100 convoys into Iraq without refusing any mission.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Airmen were principally responsible for Operation Safeside, a highly successful “outside the wire” ground combat mission that “mounted 338 combat patrols [and] bagged 17 ‘high value’” insurgents while simultaneously suppressing attacks on Balad Air Base, Iraq.<sup>4</sup>

Nor is the Air Force undisciplined, as some seem to think. In fact, Airmen have, by far, the lowest rates of alcohol and drug abuse of any of the services, and their rate of disciplinary actions is much lower than those of the other services.<sup>5</sup> Airmen also perform well under stress. After improper activities among guards at Abu Ghraib imploded into sadistic abuse, hundreds of Airmen later took up the difficult duties without further incident. Let me be clear. I note these matters not to embarrass any other service, but only to demonstrate that the Air Force is a highly disciplined military force of warfighters.

The technological emphasis in the Air Force does, however, create a heavy demand for personnel who are extremely tech-savvy. This can produce challenges because the Air Force often competes directly with private industry for the same high-quality people. As a group, Airmen have ready options in civilian life. Fortunately, so far the Air Force has been very effective in recruiting and retaining the right people.

How does the Air Force do it? Actually, the answer has much to do with another misunderstood feature of Air Force culture, the emphasis on quality of life. All services recognize the importance of their people, but in the Air Force there is special deference to the axiom “recruit the individual, retain the family.” Specifically, the Air Force does not want to place its Airmen in the position of having to choose between the quality of life they could easily acquire for their families in the civilian world and what is available to them in the service of their country.

For that reason, the Air Force is unapologetic about having the finest, most family-friendly bases in the Armed Forces. To fill its ranks, the Air Force believes putting resources into quality of life improvements is more cost-effective than spending dollars on recruiting. Consequently, the Air Force spends the least on recruiting, yet has not been obliged to lower standards.

The technological orientation of Airmen that makes them so attractive to private industry also creates a perspective about warfighting that often differs from that of others in the Armed Forces. Airmen are the leading proponents of a way of war that seeks to benefit from technological advantage by substituting it for manpower in achieving victory. Although no Airman relishes the notion of killing another human being, when required to do so, Airmen do not seek the “fair fight” or the glory of close combat.

Rather, Airmen shamelessly seek to destroy adversaries with as little risk to themselves or friendly forces as possible. They always look for ways to subject the enemy to the impersonal machine against which the human cannot stand, however determined. In short, Airmen are disciples of George S. Patton Jr.’s view that the object of war is to get the other guy “to die for his country.” Airmen are proud of the fact that, for example, the

Serbs were forced from Kosovo during Operation Allied Force without the need to put a single American Soldier in harm's way.<sup>6</sup>

Still, few issues more frustrate Airmen than the apparently intractable belief among some Soldiers that the Air Force is wedded to a notion of "strategic bombing" at the expense of ground forces. It seems that no amount of data shakes that belief. Forgotten, it appears, are events such as 1968's Operation Niagara where B-52s poured 60,000 tons of high explosives on North Vietnamese troops, shattering their siege of the Marines at Khe Sanh. More recently, the statistics from Operation Iraqi Freedom show that over three-fourths of the strike sorties were in kill boxes or were otherwise close air support efforts.<sup>7</sup>

Providing support to U.S. troops on the ground is relentlessly imprinted on Airmen. As General Hal Hornburg, one of the Air Force's most distinguished combat veterans and the former commander of the Air Combat Command, put it, "If you don't love Soldiers, you have no place in my Air Force." Today's Airmen do "get it"—yet, sadly, the myth of Air Force indifference to Soldiers seems to persist.

All of this said, it is quite true that Airmen do not do enough to understand the cultures of their

sister services. That deficiency is one the Air Force is attempting to address through better training. Thousands of Airmen are also achieving a greater appreciation of the Army by working with Soldiers as augmentees or "in lieu of" forces at various forward locations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Regardless, no real Airman will ever suggest that there is a better army than the U.S. Army. Our Army is the finest ever seen in the history of warfare, not just because of the quality of its training and equipment but because of the valor and patriotism of its Soldiers. Those qualities are above any debate, and Airmen are honored to serve beside their brothers and sisters in green. **MR**

#### NOTES

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#### HAMSI

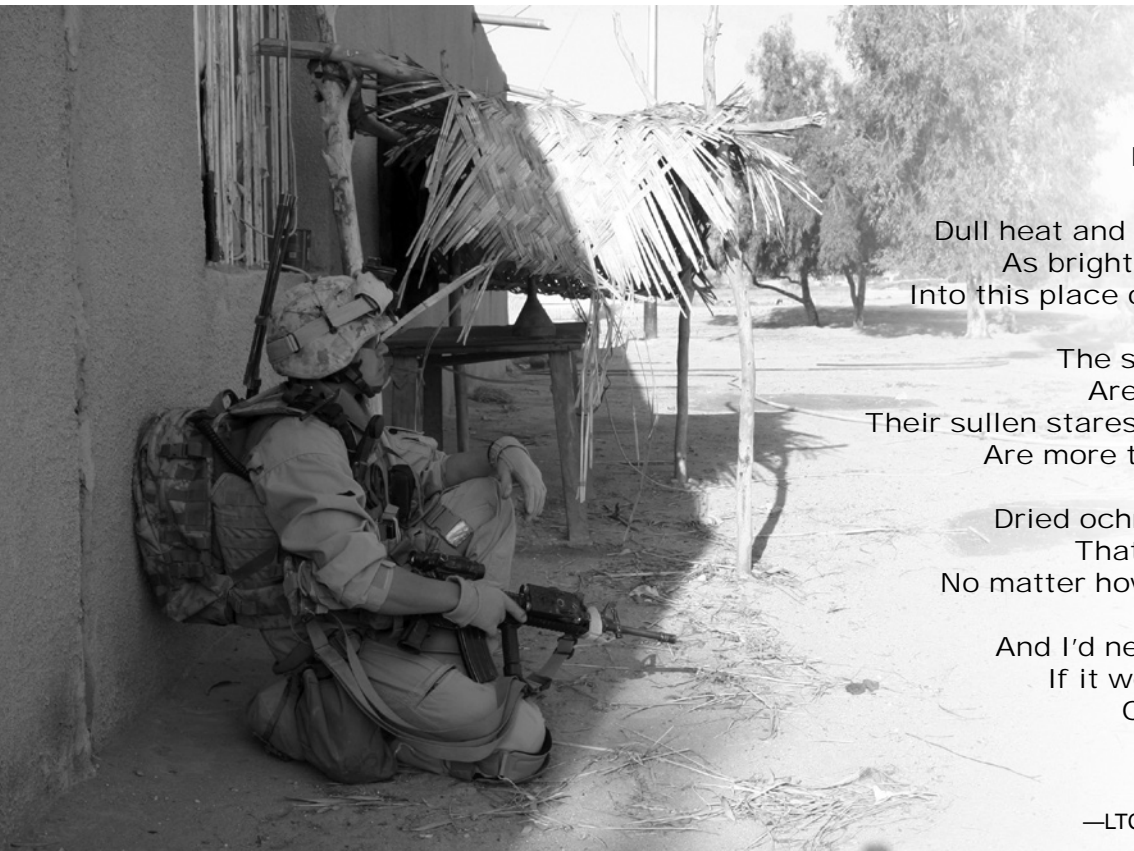
Dull heat and dust choke my soul,  
As bright red life drips, drips,  
Into this place of brown and waste.

The shallow smiles I see,  
Are only for our money,  
Their sullen stares behind bright veils,  
Are more the timbre of reality.

Dried ochre was once his life,  
That I can't scrub away,  
No matter how hard I try, and try.

And I'd never have been here,  
If it weren't for their hate,  
Of the green and joy,  
I've left behind.

—LTC Sean Michael Salene, USMC



# Paper and COIN: Exploiting the Enemy's Documents

Major Vernie Liebl, U.S. Marine Corps, Retired



**M**OST MILITARY MEMBERS, especially those with operational combat experience, understand that intelligence drives operations. Unfortunately, getting good, actionable intelligence is almost always a formidable challenge, a truth borne out in our recent experience in Iraq and Afghanistan. In these two conflicts, most of the collection methods we have used—technical means such as imagery exploitation and signals intercepts—depended on the adversary being somewhat cooperative (although that adversary might not recognize it as such). For example, if signals intelligence is to work well, the enemy must employ some type of emitting or broadcasting equipment in sufficient numbers and times for meaningful intercept and analysis to be done. Likewise with imagery: the enemy must, even if he employs sophisticated camouflage, present himself at some point as a somehow identifiable member of his side. In an insurgency, however, where the enemy imitates the seemingly innocuous traveler or nomad and restricts his communications to word of mouth or passing of notes, identifying him and collecting intelligence about him become much more difficult. In such instances, human intelligence (HUMINT) may be the only effective method of gaining needed information.

Discussion about how to do HUMINT has mainly focused on extracting information from individuals by interrogation or debriefing (the former implying hostile extractions from prisoners, the latter suggesting neutral or friendly extractions from friendly forces, civilians, etc). In such cases, much of the value of the information derived depends upon the training, knowledge, ability, and stamina of the person conducting the interrogation, as well as the cooperativeness of the person being questioned.

Human intelligence can also be collected through personal tactical observation (static) or combat patrolling, with observations and reports being submitted during or after the duty period or patrol. Again, however, we need the enemy's cooperation: he must come out of hiding and do something that we can observe.

There is one type of HUMINT, however, that does not require the enemy's cooperation. That method is media exploitation, also referred to as document exploitation, or DOCEX.

Unfortunately, despite the real potential of obtaining intelligence information simply by reading the enemy's paperwork, coalition forces all too often have ignored this means of collection. Sometimes they have simply overlooked exploitable information; other times, they have actively destroyed it before it could be examined. The following example is illustrative of such lamentable practices.

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PHOTO: Documents and items of interest are piled together after sensitive site exploitation prior to processing, Baghdad, July 2003.

*(All photos courtesy of the author)*



**...one type of HUMINT...  
does not require the enemy's  
cooperation. That method is  
...document exploitation, or  
DOCEX.**

On 10 November 2003, U.S. forces conducted a raid into the mountains of Nuristan in Afghanistan. Their target was a small cluster of buildings, reportedly a Taliban administrative center, perched on the side of a mountain just south of the small town of Aranas. Information about the objective came from the highest levels, which meant it was not to be questioned, just acted on.

First the buildings were attacked by air, then they were assaulted and occupied by troops from the 10th Mountain Division (after a 2,000-foot uphill attack). Unusually, the raiding force included a follow-on multi-agency intelligence team. Its mission was to identify enemy casualties (by gathering DNA samples) and examine any documents or equipment that might be about.

Although the assault was vigorous, the results were disappointing: only three prisoners of questionable value were detained, and no Taliban casualties were confirmed. Moreover, the site didn't seem to be the Taliban ops center higher level intelligence had claimed it was; in fact, it was hard to determine just what it was.



U.S. intelligence personnel, with captured Taliban member (far left in bed of truck), confiscated documents, and computer hard drives, await helo extract from Gardez, Afghanistan.

Much of the difficulty in determining the site's nature was caused by the assault force's lack of attention to media on the objective. Between the Soldiers' occupation of the buildings and the intelligence team's arrival, there was a delay of several hours. In that time, at least a third of the media, mainly loose papers and books, was blown away by high winds or burned by the troops to keep warm. (It was November and the site was in the foothills of the Hindu Kush, more than 6,000 feet high.) In fact, none of the troops picked up any of the media except to use it as kindling. To add to the problem, once the intelligence team arrived, its media collection effort was hampered by the presence of several unexploded 500-lb. bombs and the unstable nature of the ruined buildings. Animal and human waste on some of the loose papers—a not uncommon situation on such a secluded objective—also complicated the team's exploitation effort.

The site's apparent misidentification wasn't the only deficiency in the imagery-derived intelligence sent to the Soldiers by higher. During its search for documents, the intelligence team discovered several discrepancies between the picture intel had painted of the complex and the actual complex. Extremely effective (and simple) camouflage and placement in the shadows of overhanging rock ledges had concealed some structures, while supposed buildings or potential bunkers turned out to be terraced farm fields or large rocks.

The eventual exploitation of the media remaining on the site was illuminating, although disheartening. Analysis indicated that the location was not a Taliban operations center, but a madrassa—an Islamic school. The largest area in which documents were eventually found was identified as the living quarters of the head of the madrassa. The materials turned out to be documents pertaining to education, including school rosters and a couple dozen *Qurans*. Several of the *Qurans* indicated that the flavor of Islam taught was Deobandi with influences from Saudi Arabian Wahhabist organizations and the Pakistani Ahl-e Hadithi (Lashkar-e Tayyiba), but there was no evidence of a military presence other than some Chinese-style (Mao) green uniforms, whose sizes indicated that they were to be worn by young boys roughly three feet tall. Whatever other clues may have existed linking the madrassa to the Taliban had literally disappeared in the wind or gone up in smoke.



The “ops center” mission points to obvious problems in a coalition process that favors technological over human intelligence collection and ignores DOCEX. By way of contrast, consider the potential nuggets of information that can be gathered simply by searching clothing.

On 19 January 2004, U.S. Special Forces (SF) killed a sniper in the Bermal Valley, Paktika Province, Afghanistan. Recovered from the sniper’s body were 24 pieces of paper. Unable to interpret the papers themselves, the SF unit’s intelligence section requested immediate assistance, believing that any information recovered might be time sensitive. When examined by analysts with advanced linguistic and cultural skills, the bits and pieces of media indicated that the sniper had been a Taliban religious recruit from a madrassa most likely located in North Waziristan, Pakistan. He could be identified as Taliban (and not Al-Qaeda) by the presence of a religious amulet, a taweez, that indicates Sufi influence. (Al-Qaeda views Sufism as heretical.)

The bits of paper also disclosed phone numbers and instructions, in both Urdu and Pushtu, to contact certain persons in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Analysis uncovered a network that spanned from Pakistani areas within and east of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas [FATA] to locations in the Bermal Valley. Some of the phone numbers were traced to a number of front agencies in Pakistan working in the towns of Wana, Bannu, and Tank, and the city of Karachi. Other numbers were traced to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa, indicating the depth of support from abroad, likely Salafist at the least, Al-Qaeda at the worst, for one lone Taliban.

In another example, DOCEX was the key to exposing an enemy support network and its supply locations. On 27 December 2003, U.S. forces from the 1st Battalion, 501st Brigade, killed several insurgents in a firefight near Khost. From these individuals, the Soldiers collected 10 documents, 1 film negative, a small amount of cash, and three types of medicinal capsules. The material, which included taweez and several night letters in Pushtu from the “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan” (the Taliban), revealed definitively that the insurgents were Taliban. It also indicated they were coming in from Pakistan, specifically from Miram Shah,



**A room searched by Soldiers, with household items strewn around. Such treatment makes it more difficult to find documents and other items of interest.**

and were probably headed for Ghazni to conduct propaganda missions (distribute the night letters) and possibly an assassination or an attack, referred to in the documents as a “wedding.”

The capsules the insurgents carried also yielded intelligence. They contained the kind of over-the-counter medications (aspirin, antacids, and topical analgesics) that a foot soldier commonly uses in the field, and they had been manufactured in Pakistan or China. Along with the insurgent’s “battle-rattle” and assorted personal items such as mirrors and combs, the capsules indicated that a particular Pakistani market supplied the Taliban, with specific foreign industrial concerns possibly benefiting directly from or contributing directly to the Taliban effort in Afghanistan.

In still another example, the translation in November 2003 of a night letter obtained by a British patrol in Faryab Province (a northwestern Afghan province populated primarily by Uzbeks with some Turkmen and scatterings of Pushtuns and Arabs) caused quite a stir within the U.S. intelligence community and the staff of Combined Joint Task Force-180. The letter itself contained nothing unusual, as it repeated rather conventional Taliban themes calling for jihad against the government and the Americans and warning against sending children, especially girls, to school. However, where the letter had been found provided proof of the Taliban’s effort to reestablish itself in Afghanistan beyond the Pakistani border region and the traditional Taliban

stronghold in south-central Afghanistan. Prior to the document's discovery, the largely Uzbek areas of northern Afghanistan had been considered relatively free of Taliban influence.

Interestingly, the letter had been handed over to the British patrol by Uzbek villagers. The Uzbeks distrusted the Pushtun villagers "down the way" who were sending out the letters. These Pushtuns were one of the numerous small pockets of Pushtuns who had been forcibly relocated into northern Afghanistan in the late 19th century in a Pushtunization effort by the government of Amir Abdur Rahman. This, too, was intelligence that had operational and perhaps strategic implications.

Captured media can be very complex and yield surprising information, such as some documents taken in Bamiyan Province in January 2004. Bamiyan was considered quiet and peaceful by the Karzai government, so almost no coalition forces, Afghan National Police, or Army forces had been assigned there. Its inhabitants, the Hazara (ethnically Mongoloid Shi'ites) favored the Karzai government and were inhospitable to the Taliban—a reasonable attitude considering the genocidal treatment meted out to them by Pushtun Sunni Taliban forces.

Exploitation of the documents taken in Bamiyan revealed that the Iranian Embassy in Kabul and the Iranian Consulate in Herat had trained and financed some of the Hazara to combat the Taliban. Ironically, the documents were Taliban investigative reports, taken from Taliban operatives. The documents also discussed Iranian efforts to penetrate the Taliban and the Karzai government, alluded to connections between Burhanuddin Rabbani's Jamiat Islami organization and Iranian-sponsored militant Shi'a organizations, and named some of the commercial covers or ventures used by the Iranians and their Hazara associates in Bamiyan, Takhar, and Herat Provinces.

Just how much information can be gained through DOCEX is apparent in one more example: the delivery of two letters by a foreign visitor to the commander of Forward Operating Base Kandahar in early 2004. The letters, in Urdu, were extremely informative.

Analysis showed the letters had been designed for a Pakistani audience, specifically for people attending mosques and madrassas. Meant to introduce the Taliban and to elicit aid and support from the Pakistanis, they lauded the Taliban as defend-

ers of the faithful and the poor while depicting Americans, Jews, Indians, and UN personnel in the same light as communists and warlords. They called for Jihad and a return to Taliban rule that would reinstate Sharia (Islamic law), the perfection of Islamic rule, in Afghanistan. Sharia would solve all of Afghanistan's problems, just as it had before the American invasion. A list followed detailing casualties inflicted by the Soviets in the 1980s, the number of Soviets driven out in the late 1980s, and the number of deaths the populace suffered during the warlord era.

Clearly affiliating Osama bin Laden with the Taliban, the letters worked by invoking Pushtun cultural norms: sanctuary/hospitality (for Osama), honor (which demanded that Osama be defended), and antipathy for Hindus and Persians (Shi'a heretics). They also sounded several staple themes, such as the 1998 Clinton-era cruise missile attacks and calls for an Islamic revival (establishment of a Dar al-Islam) and resurrection of the Caliphate.

In addition to such propaganda, the letters contained an appeal for donations and a prioritized list of the Taliban's needs. Leading the list was cash, followed by warm clothing, food, and medical supplies. Notably, last on the list was support for the families of the dead, something usually omitted as it is assumed to occur automatically. This could have been interpreted in several ways: that Taliban casualties were heavier than had been anticipated and thus funds were inadequate; that there was less support for the Taliban than coalition intelligence assumed, and therefore families were not garnering the levels of sympathy and support expected; or that more Afghan refugee families had fled to Pakistan than was estimated, swamping the already overstressed and inadequate Pakistani refugee support services. The last supposition would account for the inclusion of educational material on the list (to restock madrassas and possibly to meet an expected influx of new, illiterate recruits to Taliban-controlled or sympathetic madrassas). The appeal for aid ended by asking the hearer to send money to a specific bank account care of the Taliban Islamic Movement Central Office (HQ), Karachi. The writers even promised to supply a receipt.

Apparently, these two letters had been circulated widely within Pakistani mosques (most likely by the Taliban-associated Jamiat-e Islamic Ulema,

or Assembly of Islamic Clergy, a Pakistani-based Deobandist religious organization). As such, they pointed to the possible presence within Pakistan of a widespread and apparently effective Taliban logistical structure.

All of the above examples show that DOCEX can produce actionable intelligence and help commanders develop the situational awareness they must have in an insurgency environment. While the vignettes have been drawn from Afghanistan, the observations regarding DOCEX apply equally to Iraq or elsewhere. For example, information collected from various items of medical equipment at Asmara hospitals in Eritrea in 2005 indicated the extensive and unexpected presence of Cuban medical personnel.

It goes almost without saying that not all recorded media is paper; in fact, much of it is now computer hard drives, CD/DVDs, tape cassettes, and old tape recordings. The challenge sometimes is not to assess the information, but to find the correct equipment to view it. In Baghdad, one entire Iraq Survey Group mission was conducted merely to find an obsolete machine of Russian manufacture that could play what turned out to be an old Czechoslovakian Army chemical training video.

As we continue to fight the long war, such painstaking media collection and exploitation must become an integral part of all our combat efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and wherever else U.S. forces are deployed. Even within the HUMINT field of which it is a part, DOCEX is frequently an afterthought; it is underfunded and understaffed.

***DOCEX can produce actionable intelligence and help commanders develop the situational awareness they must have in an insurgency environment.***



**Documents, electronic equipment, and computers processed and prepared for shipment to the Qatar facility, July 2003.**

Despite the truly heroic efforts of a few within the intelligence community, media collection is rarely emphasized. This writer personally witnessed U.S. Soldiers traipsing through papers blowing around destroyed sites, never once deigning to pick up the material (Kandahar and Nuristan provinces). When confronted, the Soldiers said that investigating such stuff was not part of the package of Soldier skills they had been taught at basic training, nor had it been addressed prior to deployment. This lack of DOCEX awareness is sometimes corrected by aggressive, situationally aware commanders. The Marines and Special Operations Forces appear to be trained up, but our forces need to be universally cognizant of the importance of document recovery and exploitation.

With any kind of intelligence in any kind of war, it is rare to get the golden nugget of information that will win a battle. Clearly, however, much useful intelligence information may be out there blowing about the battlespace, waiting only to be picked up and sent to analysts who can make it talk. If we are to succeed in Afghanistan and Iraq, we need to start picking up the seemingly inconsequential media we find on battlefields. We absolutely must begin taking document exploitation seriously. **MR**





# WORDS ARE WEAPONS ...so use them wisely

Major Michael D. Jason, U.S. Army

*Baghdad, 2006: Lieutenant Jones and his platoon have a simple mission: go search the large house on Haifa Street for illegal weapons. However, Jones also knows there is additional guidance; he is to conduct all missions in combination with his partner Iraqi unit. His chain of command has ordered him to “put an Iraqi face on it.” Jones is in a hurry and he does not really know anyone in the Iraqi Army (IA) battalion partnered with his own battalion, so he stops his patrol at one of the Iraqi Army checkpoints and asks, through his interpreter, to borrow a jundi (a junior soldier, equivalent to a U.S. private) for the mission. The IA captain is hesitant, but the jammers on Jones’s trucks drown out his radio and he cannot call his battalion for guidance. Jones moves on with a jundi and conducts the raid. That evening, there is a storyboard on a successful combined raid by the two partner units.*

*On the other side of town, an irate Iraqi battalion commander and his U.S. Army advisor from the military transition team (MiTT) embedded with the IA battalion are having a heated exchange. Both men are frustrated. This, it seems, is not the first time the U.S. partner unit has taken the colonel’s men and used them for their missions in his battle space. The advisor is caught in the middle. He relies on the partner unit for support, but a good relationship with his counterpart, the Iraqi commander, is critical to the overall success of his mission. Clearly, this cannot be partnership, he thinks.*

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PHOTO: The author, far right, and his counterpart, the 1st Battalion commander, on the left, brief the one-star commander of the 1st Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division, on the progress of an ongoing dismounted clearing operation, Taji, Iraq, April 2006.

(All photos courtesy of the author)

**I**N EVERY WAR, the U.S. Army gives birth to new terms and expressions that take on lives of their own: examples such as *the whole nine yards*, *jeep*, and *high-speed* come to mind. The War on Terror and Operation Iraqi Freedom have also given us new terms. Some, like *Shock and Awe*, have moved into American popular culture. Others are internal to the Army but have become so widespread that we use them throughout the force. Some, like the term *storyboard*, are easily understood and simply convey a new tool (albeit one dreaded by combat leaders) for providing specific detail on an otherwise doctrinal spot report. Others, like *presence patrol*, *cordon and knock*, and *battlefield circulation*, have made their way into our professional operational language in the guise of new counterinsurgency terms. The new terms are catchy, yet ambiguous—and thus dangerous—for professionals who deal with life and death on a daily basis.

Soldiering is a profession. Military professionals know from their military education and experiences at the combat training centers that success in the



profession, like all professions, depends in part on the precise use of a common lexicon. For example, one cannot fathom a surgeon asking a nurse for a *whatchamacallit* or *clamp thingy*, or an accountant preparing one's tax return with deductions for work *stuff* or income from *various moneys*. Our professional terms are clearly articulated in Field Manual 1-02, *Operational Terms and Graphics*, and in Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*. These are our doctrinal dictionaries; they lay out, with precision, the language of professionals for professionals. Neither one of these publications defines the terms *partner* or *partnership*.

In Iraq, the word *partner* has tactical and strategic implications, so its imprecise use is all the more dangerous. The term's ambiguity has caused, and will continue to cause, misunderstandings, mismanagement of resources, inappropriate taskings, poor command and control structures, and strained relationships among U.S. maneuver units, MiTTs, and Iraqi forces.

***In Iraq, the word partner has tactical and strategic implications, so its imprecise use is all the more dangerous.***

Military professionals began widely using the term *partner* sometime in 2005 in Iraq, when U.S. combat units began establishing relationships with units of the new Iraqi Army. U.S. units began to "partner" with Iraqi units, but the term's meaning varied from command to command. Some U.S. units began relationships with Iraqi units that were forming within their area of operations. This type of partnership was, in effect, an unofficial relationship that took the form of mentorship and support during force generation and training. Other U.S. units accepted tactical control of already formed Iraqi units and began employing them in combat operations.

There was never a hierarchy implicit in the term. A unit could have a partnership with a like unit or a higher unit and vice versa. For example, sometimes an American battalion partnered with an Iraqi battalion of

like size. Sometimes an Iraqi battalion was partnered with an American brigade. In 2006, the Multi-National Division-Baghdad (MND-B) commanding general, Major General J.D. Thurman, forbade his U.S. subordinate units to conduct U.S.-only operations. Commanders in the MND-B sector ordered that all operations would have U.S. and Iraqi forces acting as *partners*. In addition, in an address to the Nation on 10 January 2007, President George W. Bush laid out his plan for Baghdad and said that U.S. brigades would partner with Iraqi divisions. What does all this imply?

The vignette at the beginning of this essay is based on several actual events; it was used to illustrate that words matter. Words have meaning, and misinterpreting a word's intent can affect actions even at the lowest tactical level. The lieutenant in the vignette certainly thought he was meeting the MND-B commander's guidance. There were both Iraqi and U.S. forces working together on the search, in this case one *jundi*. In the lieutenant's mind, he was being a partner. His higher headquarters agreed with his assessment and proudly storyboarded the partnered operation.

The above illustrates the problem with non-doctrinal terms: they do not have a common definition known by all. Well-meaning professionals interpret them differently up and down the chain of command, from the commander in chief down to the lowest squad leader at the tip of the spear.

As a result, *partner* has come to mean many things. In my year as an advisor to an Iraqi infantry battalion, my Iraqi battalion (thus my transition team as well) was partnered with four different U.S. Army brigade combat teams (BCT), eight different U.S. Army combined arms battalions, four separate U.S. Army line companies, and even one Special Forces Team. The *Partner* relationship was different with every one of those organizations.

The term's vagueness also affects our MiTTs. Transition teams in Iraq are not structured to operate independently. In the case of my team, we relied heavily on our partner BCTs. Though fragmentary orders from MND-B outlined the support relationship between the MiTT and the partner unit, we had to thrash out the details of that support in time-consuming negotiations. In order for my team to merely function, BCTs had to provide us with maintenance support, fuel, ammunition, intelligence and imagery, and battlefield effects such as



The Iraqi Army's 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division commander, second from right, briefs his platoon leaders and first sergeants on the execution of a high value target raid, Taji, Iraq, February 2006. The author, far right, looks on.

air support, air medical evacuation, explosive ordnance delivery support, and unmanned air systems support. Additionally, we were usually augmented with a handful of BCT Soldiers for each MiTT team because our teams were so small.<sup>1</sup> Since the terms of the partnership were not clearly defined, the negotiations for support, along with discussions regarding the manner in which the Iraqi unit and its advisors would be employed, would begin anew when an Iraqi unit and its advisors were moved to a new AOR or an American BCT rotated with an incoming unit.

Operating in the same battle space as an American unit was an extremely problematic proposition. Sometimes we merely passed each other in the night. The lack of a formal relationship caused numerous problems for Iraqi commanders. For example, commanders could not maintain credibility with the local populace: just as they earned the trust of a local tribal leader, a U.S. unit would raid and trash the elder's home. Locals did not understand that there were literally two different, independent units in the same neighborhood. In a best-case scenario, the U.S. partner unit and the Iraqi unit leaders and their U.S. advisors would meet early on and often to plan for and conduct a combined mission. Unfortunately, these were rare occurrences. Usually, the units would plan and conduct mission preparation independently of one another and then

meet on location to conduct the operation.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the more frustrating experiences were much like the episode articulated in the opening vignette. Frequently a well-meaning U.S. junior leader would stop by one of my Iraqi patrols and ask the platoon leader to give him an Iraqi Soldier to "put an Iraqi face on" his mission. This expression, "putting an Iraqi face on it," is used throughout Iraq when planning or conducting combined missions. It is an expression U.S. advisors universally despise.

When it came to supporting the Iraqi units, American commanders all wanted to know the status of the IA's capabilities. Some resourced our training by helping us with fuel, training aids, or instructors. Others just wanted to see our assessments. Others were so overwhelmed conducting operations that development and training ceased completely as we tried to keep up with the increased operational tempo.

Events like those above were challenging, but for the advisor, nothing was as frustrating as sorting through command relationships and having to answer to multiple chains of command. Most U.S. units saw the advisors as part of their chain of command. Instead of bringing the Iraqi commanders onto the team, commanders and their staffs passed orders directly to the advisors. This was not limited to the BCTs: all parties involved did this. In addition, the MiTT chain of command passed its own guidance to subordinate MiTTs. Sometimes this crossed between three-star commands, Multi-National Security and Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) and Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I).<sup>3</sup> Likewise, the Iraqis began exercising their own chain of command: sometimes the Ministry of Defense (MoD) would call straight down to my battalion commander and direct a specific operation.

Rank and personalities also played roles in a partnership. Usually, an Iraqi colonel commands an Iraqi battalion, but his advisor is a major. The Iraqi colonel's partner unit may be a U.S. battalion commanded by a lieutenant colonel, but it could also be U.S. company commanded by a young captain. At the brigade level, the IA brigade commander might be an Iraqi brigadier general, advised by an American lieutenant colonel. Their partner might be a colonel U.S. brigade commander, but could just as likely be a U.S. lieutenant colonel battalion

commander. This structure makes rank almost insignificant. To be advised by an officer junior in rank or partnered to a peer with competing demands is tough for many professionals in a rank-sensitive culture. Without traditional command relationships and hierarchical rank structures, the interactions between these key players fall back to individual personalities and egos.

The plan the president presented on 10 January called for an American brigade, commanded by an American colonel, to partner with an Iraqi division, commanded by an Iraqi major general, whose principal advisor and MiTT chief is an American colonel. Who is in charge with a command and control structure such as this, and who is ultimately responsible for the Iraqi Security Forces' success or failure? Who is the main effort? Who supports whom? Who is the honest broker? Who is rated by whom, and who resources whom? These tough questions deserve doctrinal, precise, and professional answers. The devil is in the details. Clearly, the terms *partner* and *partnership*, as they are used to describe command relationships, deserve an explicit definition.

From the strategic to the tactical level, our partnership with Iraqi security forces has become the key to our efforts in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Thus, having a comprehensive definition for *partnership* and understanding what it implies may be the key to U.S. victory over extremist forces in Iraq. To increase our precision in conveying concepts and guiding the resulting actions, we must choose to either clearly define *partner* or drop the word from our lexicon and replace it with terminology that we all understand.

I propose the following definition: *To partner: To place a United States military tactical unit in a*

*habitual command relationship with a tactical unit of a foreign military. (We partner U.S. units with foreign units, not the other way around.) The U.S. unit will seamlessly integrate with all aspects of the foreign unit's operations, support, and logistics. U.S. units will only partner with like-sized elements or smaller formations (example, brigade to brigade, or brigade to battalion). When the foreign unit has an embedded U.S. military transition team, the U.S.-partnered unit may place subordinate formations under the command of the transition team using traditional command relationships as defined by FM 1-02. For example, if a U.S. division partners with a foreign division with embedded U.S. advisors, the U.S. division may place U.S. platoons or companies under tactical control of the foreign unit's senior advisor. The combatant commander may further tailor aspects of the partnership in order to accomplish the mission; however, he may not delegate this authority to subordinate commanders.*

The relationship we have with our Iraqi Army brothers-in-arms is of vital strategic interest. We use the term *partner* to represent the crucial tactical relationship that plays out on the streets of Iraq, and the president of the United States has used it to lay out the way ahead. If we are to use the word *partner*, it deserves a precise definition. **MR**

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#### NOTES

1. My team began with 11 Soldiers. My higher echelon, the brigade team, took my NCOIC, a SGM, to serve as the BDE NCOIC. After six months, one of my NCOs redeployed, and I usually had one or two advisors on R&R out of the nine that remained. To man three gun trucks just to go outside the camp, maintain a joint TOC with the Iraqis, and continue other advising duties, I needed at least six to nine additional Soldiers, mainly drivers, gunners, and RTOs. The young troopers attached to me from 3/1 AD, 1/4 ID, and 4/101 AASLT were an invaluable asset to our mission.

2. The youngest member of my team, our medic Corporal Tyler "Doc" Christensen best captured this problem, noting, "until we figure out how to work together, this will continue to resemble a 4th grade dance, with the boys on one side, the girls on the other, and no one having a whole lot of fun."

3. As my Iraqi division was still in force generation, the Division MiTT team was TACON to MNSTC-I. Because my Iraqi battalion and brigade were operational, my team and my direct boss, the brigade team chief, were TACON to MNC-I.



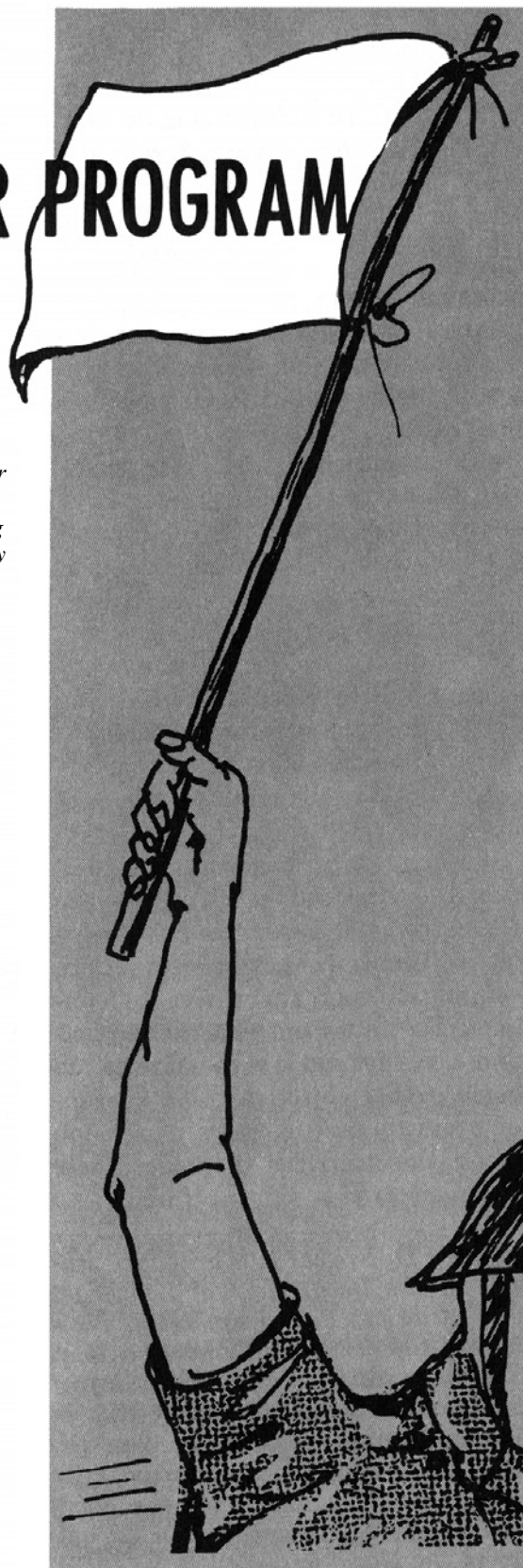
# THE SURRENDER PROGRAM

Garry D. Brewer

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This article from the Vietnam era is particularly relevant to resolving the insurgencies we are now encountering in Iraq and elsewhere. Amnesty is an emotionally charged issue: the anger and hatred generated by war are hard to forgive. Nevertheless, as we have seen in the Malayan Emergency, the El Salvador and Nicaragua conflicts of the 1970s–80s, and even our own Civil War, “wiping the slate clean” is essential for bringing a long, bitter conflict to an end. This article describes two key elements of the slate-cleaning process: offering amnesty to insurgents, and developing a government ministry specifically to manage a national campaign of reconciliation. The reader is invited to note that the Chieu Hoi organization eventually had branch offices in every province of South Vietnam. Its sole mission was to facilitate the repatriation of former enemies and their reintegration into society, economically and politically, to give them a stake in supporting the state.*

**T**HE experiences of the post-World War II years in the Philippines, Malaya, and Algeria have provided many instructive insights into the essential components of “revolutionary” warfare. These experiences have given present-day planners in Vietnam some minimum background upon which the surrender program (*Chieu Hoi*) might be developed. *Chieu Hoi* has been interpreted as “open arms.” The literal meaning of the term is “welcome return.” The entire program has been called *Chieu Hoi* to indicate the spirit or attitude that the government is supposed to hold with respect to the returnee or *Hoi Chanh*.

The worth of surrender programs has been demonstrated in the Philippines to a significant extent. The British in Malaya had successes with their program, but these undertakings never achieved the magnitude nor did they have the dramatic appeal of President



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Ramon Magsaysay's various efforts in the Philippines. The French experience in Algeria was a contrast with the Malayan and Philippine cases and was, in effect, an entirely different approach to the general problem. Each instance is unique in time, environment, cause, and general operation.

### Conceptual Framework

Surrender programs commonly make use of three types of appeal:

- Bribery, where the insurgent is "bought."

- Fear-inducing, where the counterinsurgent government forces have such complete control of the situation that they can afford to adopt a firm policy toward the insurgent of either unconditional surrender or death.

- Benevolent, where the individual insurgents are offered absolution for returning to the government side.

It is the combination of these characteristics that distinguishes the various efforts.

Surrender programs usually include measures designed to estrange the people from the guerrillas by demonstrating that the government offers the guerrilla an alternative to continued hostilities and that the government cares for and is responsive to the people. Other objectives of a surrender program seek to create dissension among the guerrillas to reduce their effectiveness as a fighting force.

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During the Hukbalahap insurrection in the Philippines, the program of the Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) of the Philippine Army showed the government's concern for all of its people. This program guaranteed land and initial capital for surrendered and captured Huks, if they demonstrated their loyalty to the government. In the EDCOR resettlement villages, the returned Huks were usually mixed with several retired and active duty soldiers who could observe them and act as a stabilizing factor in the farm community.

In conjunction with these resettlement projects, EDCOR undertook the rehabilitation of the ex-guerrillas. Vocational training as well as political reindoctrination were accomplished either in the resettlement villages or in special centers.

### Psychological Impact

The resettlement and retraining program was also effective for its psychological impact on still active guerrillas and on the population in general. Former Huks were quite persuasive when they talked of their experiences before and since surrender.

Tactical psychological warfare was also used, including leaflets; loudspeaker, radio, and press appeals; and rumor and whisper campaigns. Many reward circulars were issued against the Huks, ostensibly because they had committed crimes, not because they were Huks. The individual, common-criminal approach to the treatment of the Huks was designed to destroy what popular appeal and sympathy the movement had been able to generate over the years.

Government propaganda emphasized the point that the movement could not be excused; however, the guerrilla, as an individual, was told in



every conceivable way the means by which he could cast off the cause.

The returnees would have to face civil charges for whatever crimes they had committed, but they were not penalized because they had held the Huk ideology. Giving complete pardons to the guerrilla would have been a mistake. By not doing so, the people were made to view the guerrilla as a com-

their former brethren. Often, the SEP was leading British troops back into his old units within minutes of his defection, thereby making the best of his tactical knowledge. SEP's prepared leaflets and taped broadcasts for pinpoint employment. They also appealed indirectly to the guerrillas through their families and friends.

Bribery was used extensively by the



*US Army*

**Propaganda teams, armed with rifles and literature, contact families and friends of known Viet Cong**

mon criminal instead of as a dedicated soldier. The guerrilla "image" was thus the target of this practice.

In Malaya, besides the standard psychological warfare techniques, the British successfully used returned guerrillas as members of the counter-guerrilla security forces. Part of this process was the classification of prisoners as either captured enemy personnel (CEP) or surrendered enemy personnel (SEP).

SEP's could be screened, retrained, and then sent back into action against

British, with the scale of rewards being a major topic of the propaganda message. One British practice rewarded those returnees who brought evidence that they had disposed of their officer or leader before making their defection.

In Algeria, the French undertook psychological warfare campaigns that ranged from loudspeaker appeals to intense individual reeducation. There were three main objectives:

- Destruction of guerrilla communications.



- Destruction of the guerrilla (fear inducement).

- Reeducation of the captured guerrillas.

In Vietnam, the *Chieu Hoi* surrender program was inaugurated by President Ngo-dinh-Diem in his Lunar New Year message of January 1963. The basic elements of the program included rehabilitation and resettlement of the Viet Cong who surrendered, political reindoctrination, vocational training, and civil court action for civil crimes.

### Create Dissension

As the program has evolved, one important objective has been to create dissension among the Viet Cong. This has been accomplished by the use of *Hoi Chanh* stories of their escape, and treatment by the government since their escape. These accounts have been taped and printed for loudspeaker and leaflet distribution.

The intelligence gathered from the returnees also has been used in many instances to discover arms caches, to locate guerrilla forces, and to identify leadership elements within the Viet Cong. The relocation and retraining phases of the program were specifically designed to create a more benevolent image of the government.

Until the Nguyen Cao Ky government came to power in June 1965, the *Chieu Hoi* program suffered from frequent changes of leadership and from a general lack of high-level interest. This was exemplified in the agency's "burial" within other ministries that had other basic functions and interests. In spite of its status, *Chieu Hoi* accounted for some 11,000 returnees in 1963, 5,400 in 1964, and 3,000 through the first five months of 1965.

In the summer of 1965, additional psychological warfare and informa-

tion assistance to Vietnam was made available from the newly created Joint United States Public Affairs Office. This agency has been instrumental in helping the government of Vietnam revitalize the *Chieu Hoi* program. The turning point came sometime during mid-1965. Since then, the flow of defectors has increased markedly for a total of 11,000 in 1965, 20,200 in 1966, and nearly 11,000 for the first four months of this year.

The Vietnamese Information and Open Arms organization has been made a separate ministry of the government, and the former head of the agency, Dinh Trinh Chinh, has been named to the Central Executive Committee as a special assistant to Air Vice-Marshal Ky. The functions of *Chieu Hoi* are carried out by its various bureaus, particularly the intelligence, armed propaganda, and reception bureaus.

The intelligence bureau has the responsibility for detailed interrogation, classification, and analysis of the *Hoi Chanh*. In an effort to make pinpoint leaflet and loudspeaker appeals, it is essential that a thorough and up-to-date enemy order of battle be maintained.

### Family Contact

In addition to the usual information sought by conventional intelligence, *Chieu Hoi's* intelligence operation attempts to trace kinship patterns and relationships so that direct, personal contact can be made not only with a defector's old unit and former comrades, but also with the families of known Viet Cong. It is through the family contact by members of the armed propaganda teams that a significant number of defectors are attracted.

Armed propaganda teams utilizing



*Hoi Chanh* are employed to contact the families and friends of known Viet Cong to discuss the *Chieu Hoi* program and the treatment afforded them by the government since their defection. Armed propaganda teams are assigned to local province chiefs and are used at their discretion with the

the local centers, the *Hoi Chanh* is treated well.

The provincial *Chieu Hoi* centers form the heart of the program. The returnee is identified, interrogated, vocationally assisted, politically retrained, and eventually resettled—all within the purview of the provincial



*Army News Features*

**A Vietnamese psywar team member and a US advisor prepare to run a taped broadcast from a helicopter**

assistance of the local *Chieu Hoi* and Vietnamese Information Service personnel who actually maintain operational control.

The reception bureau, through the chief of *Chieu Hoi* on each province chief's staff, is responsible for keeping the low-level channels of entrance into the program open and available to potential defectors. This bureau is also responsible for seeing that, once in

center. This decentralized operation permits rapid tactical exploitation of information provided by the returnees. In addition, many *Hoi Chanh* are from the immediate area or region and are best handled at this level.

Motivational research involving thorough interrogation of *Hoi Chanh* has developed salient psychological warfare themes and techniques for use at the local tactical level.

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A Viet Cong local force platoon leader who had defected in Dinh Tuong Province stated that the most effective means of causing defections were appeals from families and Viet Cong leaders who had defected, coupled with an assurance of safe conduct.

Leaflet appeals are increasingly employing pictures and handwritten letters from the defector to members of his unit. Taped loudspeaker broadcasts from airplanes, trucks, and small boats include messages from the *Hoi Chanh* and relatives.

Face-to-face persuasion and immediate action messages appear to be the most effective. Attempts to develop abstract ideological concepts are becoming less frequent. It is obvious that the principal considerations are the immediate and the personal. *Chieu Hoi* is grassroots and fundamental in its approach and execution.

Given the continuous and fundamental indoctrination administered by Viet Cong political cadre to even their lowest level organizations, when a man defects, there is a need for an effective and substantial political retraining program.

The standardized course that has been developed is initially three weeks long and is composed of six, 4-hour days each week. About three-fourths of the course has been developed at the national level, leaving the

composition of the remainder to the discretion of the province chief and his staff.

Retraining is intended to be completed in the provincial *Chieu Hoi* centers and may progress well beyond this required three-week minimum. The objectives of this retraining are to discuss the Viet Cong operations, methods, and results; to acknowledge the past difficulties experienced by the government of Vietnam, while at the same time establishing respect for the accomplishments and aspirations of the republic; and to develop the history and politics of Vietnam in an effort to explain constructively the origins and growth of Vietnamese nationalism.

While the trend of defections over the last year is encouraging, with very few exceptions these *Hoi Chanh* have not been high-ranking leaders. Securing the defection of a village guerrilla of little political sophistication and little desire for fighting is one matter; encouraging a well-indoctrinated and disciplined officer to defect is an entirely different one. A crucial turning point will have been reached when and if these high-ranking cadre begin to defect in significant numbers. It is to this very task that many of the best Vietnamese and American minds are presently addressing themselves.

**AWAKENING WARRIOR: Revolution in the Ethics of Warfare,** Timothy Challans, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2007, 227 pages, \$24.95

In *The Age of Reason*, Thomas Paine remarks that “when a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime. Can we conceive of anything more destructive to morality than this?” In the groundbreaking book *Awakening Warrior*, Timothy Challans, who has taught philosophy and ethics to cadets and officers for 17 years and is the principal author of the 1999 version of Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership*, critiques the military’s system of professional ethics. Challans argues that using “values-based” moral examples without principles (what German philosopher Immanuel Kant called a “heteronomous” lack of critical reasoning) will lead the military into moral error with long-term strategic implications. In a blistering critique of the status quo, Challans argues for moral autonomy through reasoned principles instead of examples handed down from authority because, he claims, relying on the vagaries of authority is destructive to morality.

Challans asserts that chaplains need to get out of the ethics business, arguing that current modes of ethical indoctrination have morphed the war machine into a quasi-religious organization viewing itself as morally superior to the rest of society. He believes religious authorities cannot help but inculcate their own worldview without reflection. If one stops to think about it, it is odd that we believe that the caretakers of ideologies responsible for some of the greatest misery in human history are those most worthy to impart ethical knowledge. The religious authority’s moral injunctions are never reasoned, only received, and so there

is always the chance that status and rank will override everything. We should not expose those with the job of meting out death and destruction to that risk. Reason should rule.

For example, during “effects-based operations,” principles of minimal harm, proportionality, and discrimination are never considered in a systematic way. Not surprisingly, the war machine appears more concerned about homosexuality than about slaughtering noncombatants and dismissing the slaughter as collateral damage. A sense of moral superiority leads to contempt for the enemy, which can translate into contempt for treaties and concomitant moral responsibilities under constitutional law. For Americans to assume the ridiculously self-deceiving posture of moral superiority is dangerous. Every American officer who takes seriously the oath to support and defend the U.S. Constitution should read and digest Challans’ arguments.

A principled approach to ethics education will help officers avoid the problems of “means/end confusion,” where victory becomes an end in itself with no thought given to how one attains it and how that will affect the aftermath. A principled approach will also help avoid the problems caused by “is/ought conflation,” where what exists eclipses what ought to be. These two moral failures continue to plague military operations. Challans’ logic is the perfect antidote to the blithe certainties of historian Victor Davis Hanson, writer Ralph Peters, and the chorus of neo-conservative prophets who implicitly favor torture and other relaxation of rules. As Challans says, “It’s all about legitimacy. Without legitimacy, there is no hope.” A continuum of only legitimate means leading to legitimate ends suggests the two cannot be logically distinct. Challans recommends a return to Enlightenment attitudes, to engaging in reason.

Some may think Challans is a misguided idealist and ignore

or attack him, but he anchors his arguments solidly in well-reasoned judgments embodied in the Geneva and Hague Conventions, whose principles American officers have sworn to defend.

**LTC Peter D. Fromm, USA,  
Retired, U.S. Forces, Japan**

**VICTORY IN WAR: Foundations of Modern Military Policy,** William C. Martell, Cambridge University Press, NY, 2007, 436 pages, \$35.00.

According to William Martell, professor of national security studies at Tufts University, the national discussion about planning and conducting war suffers from an imprecise definition of the word “victory,” which has had three different meanings: defeating an opponent in battle, “tactical victory”; changing an enemy’s policy, “political-military victory”; and replacing the enemy regime, “grand strategic victory.”

As a consequence, the U.S. has not systematically examined the level of mobilization it must undertake, the force structure it must commit, and the post-conflict responsibilities it must assume to achieve the type of victory it pursues. Air and sea power, for example, are excellent instruments for changing a government’s policy, as we saw in 1986 when the U.S. punished Libya for conducting terrorism. On the other hand, a far larger contingent of infantry and associated ground forces are necessary for stability and support operations, as recently demonstrated in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Martell’s thesis is clear and virtually uncontested. Greater clarity about what victory means will help inform the debate about the costs, benefits, and risks of war. However, that in itself is not likely to establish a workable consensus or an accurate assessment of a contemplated conflict. The military

tends to “worst-case” the contingency and advise a larger ground force package. When advocating intervention, politicians are apt to predict far fewer difficulties lest we not allow them to conduct the intervention at all.

In the aftermath of Iraq, more credence will likely be paid to cautions, such as those articulated by some prominent officers who were largely ignored in 2001 and 2002. The 1994 warnings about falling into a quagmire in the Balkans reminiscent of Vietnam were nearly as inaccurate as predictions of a quick exit from Baghdad. We need more precise concepts to replace vague terms like “victory.” We also need more experts in the military, social, economic, and political intricacies of the areas in crisis and a political system that will not put them in limbo if they disagree with the opinions of senior government echelons. Martell himself says he has “no illusion” that his exposition “will end the debate; rather, there is hope that it will focus and encourage it.”

**Michael Pearlman, Ph.D.,  
Lawrence, Kansas**

**ASK & TELL: Gay and Lesbian Veterans Speak Out**, Steve Estes, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2007, 280 pages, \$29.95.

Steve Estes, a social sciences professor at Sonoma State University, former interviewer for the Library of Congress Veterans History Project, and author of several works on civil rights has garnered the assistance of a number of activist organizations and veterans groups to conduct more than 50 interviews with veterans from World War II up through the current war in Iraq. The result is that his new book, *Ask & Tell*, is the only work on this topic that has such historical breadth. The salient findings arising from Estes’s research are that gays and lesbians are not security risks, do not adversely affect combat effectiveness or morale, and offer no threats to the privacy of others.

Estes interviewed veterans from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the 1991 Gulf War, the Kosovo intervention, and the

invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and several who served during interwar periods. Included in the group are three retired flag officers. He records his findings in highly engaging first-person narratives via the interview process and provides valuable introductory notes prior to each account that outline the military policies toward homosexuals during the eras in which the veterans served. Throughout, Estes provides incisive commentary.

Aside from individual confrontations with policies banning open homosexuality, the character of service of most of Estes’s interviewees was not much different from that of their heterosexual counterparts. In sum, Estes found that gay and lesbian veterans believed that sexuality had little to do with job performance in or out of combat, although the military authorities believed it did (or could). As the interviews reveal, many kept their sexual identities secret for decades and often lived with implicit or assumed heterosexual identities, sometimes unwittingly. Some of Estes’s interviewees worked in legal areas, both in and out of uniform, to try to end the ban on homosexuals in the military.

This surprisingly refreshing work includes the names of those interviewed as well as photos of many of them in uniform. This is no dry textbook: its best feature is the fascinating personal narratives, which have an openness that is absent from earlier studies. Also included is a separate chapter on the environments of the U.S. military academies, a helpful appendix on the background of the U.S. Government’s history programs as they relate to Estes’s interviewees, interview transcripts, published texts, 12 pages of notes, and an index. Whether one believes the military should lift its ban on open confession of homosexuality or not, it is hard to argue with Estes that “at the very least, this volume documents courage that should not be forgotten.” Estes’s work is a welcome addition to the debate over homosexuals in the military and an appreciable addition to an all-too-elided aspect of military history.

**MAJ Jeffrey C. Alfier, USAF,  
Retired, Ramstein Airbase,  
Germany**

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR AMERICAN SERVICEMEN IN IRAQ DURING WORLD WAR II**, John A. Nagl (foreword), University of Chicago Press, IL, 2007, 64 pages, \$10.00.

In this reprint of the War and Navy departments’ World War II handbook for wartime service in Iraq (1943), John Nagl’s foreword opens with an apt metaphor: “History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes.” Men have long pondered the seemingly recurring character of history, with the sagest postulations coming from those few—such as Nagl—who recognize the enduring nature of mankind as the genesis of those echoes in time.

Readers will appreciate *Instructions for American Servicemen in Iraq during World War II* for its colloquial writing and commonsense approach to the social and cultural niceties of conducting operations among a foreign people. Erudite counsel on soldierly generosity (“Don’t offer Moslems alcoholic drinks.”) and promiscuity (“Prostitutes do not walk the streets but live in special quarters of the city.”) is quite unique to the period and unlikely to be found in contemporary military cultural guides. However, *Instructions* isn’t so much a reflection on times gone by as a gentle reminder of man’s inherent ability to discount the often subtle echoes of history.

In a region of the world where little of essence has changed in hundreds of years, *Instructions* is still cogent today. As Nagl notes repeatedly throughout his foreword, the short guide would have been invaluable to our forces on the eve of the current war. But just as we allowed our counterinsurgency doctrine to fall into disregard in the decades following the Vietnam War, so we failed to draw lessons from the “rhymes of history” in preparing for operations in “the birthplace of mankind.” As a historian and veteran of the effort to resuscitate the Army’s



counterinsurgency manual, Nagl himself appreciates the necessity of listening for the echoes of history.

In reintroducing us to *Instructions*, Nagl—currently commanding 1-34 Armor at Fort Riley, Kansas, and the author of *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: How to Eat Soup with a Knife* (Praeger, Westport, CT, 2002)—presents an invaluable collection of historical rhymes. Leaders, Soldiers, and historians alike will be captivated by this simple yet so remarkable cultural guidebook. Veterans of the current war in Iraq will certainly reminisce on the abundantly familiar fare. All readers will enjoy and value this “little” book.

**LTC Steve Leonard, USA, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**STALIN’S GUERRILLAS: Soviet Partisans in World War II.** Kenneth Slepian, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 2006, 409 pages, \$34.95.

In World War II, resistance movements were almost as common as mechanized maneuvers. One of the largest, best-organized resistance movements was in the Soviet areas occupied by German invaders from 1941 to 1944. In *Stalin’s Guerrillas*, Kenneth Slepian uses memoirs and Soviet documents to analyze this movement as a political and social entity within the larger Soviet society.

Slepian argues that we cannot view the Soviet partisans separately from their parent society, although paradoxically their very existence made them a challenge to that society. Of necessity, the partisans operated in an atmosphere of freedom and decentralized decision-making that was alien to Stalinist Russia. Thus, the central government sought to control the movement politically and militarily and dismissed any independent spirit as “partisan nonsense.”

For their part, many partisan leaders pretended to fit Soviet norms of political orthodoxy and culture in order to conceal their independent lifestyles and decision-making. To cite but one example, several partisan bands actually dedicated to

rescuing as many Jews as possible from German persecution portrayed themselves as “typical” Marxist irregular fighters.

Once Soviet leaders decided that the partisan movement should appear to be a genuine popular uprising, they insisted on a variety of militarily inefficient actions to portray that image. Among these actions were risky long-range infiltration raids into areas where there were no native resistance fighters. They also allowed people who lacked weapons and the stamina for active service to become full-time partisans. Once the Soviet territories were liberated, the regime put the surviving partisans under close scrutiny for political reliability and denied them a voice in the postwar portrayal of the “Great Patriotic War.”

Although Slepian describes the partisan organization and its effectiveness, he does not provide extensive information about the actual military conduct of the partisan war. What the reader will find, however, is an excellent analysis of the psychology and sociology of insurgents within the context of their larger society, and this is a topic of considerable utility in the current age of cross-cultural, asymmetrical warfare.

**COL Jonathan M. House, USAR, Retired, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**THE CIVIL WAR.** A&E Television, The History Channel, 2007, 10 hours, \$49.95, DVD.

Its liner notes announce that *The Civil War*, the History Channel’s new handsomely boxed set of six DVDs, is “the definitive collection of programming on the War Between the States,” one that “explores every aspect of this great conflict.” These ambitious claims fall short, however, because *The Civil War* lacks a thematic organization or premise beyond Civil War hagiography.

This set is a compilation of twelve episodes culled from *Civil War Journal: The Conflict Begins*; *Civil War Journal: The Commanders*; and *Civil War Combat*, arranged according to production rather than chrono-

nology or any unifying or organizing theme. It begins with “The Hornets’ Nest at Shiloh,” continues with “The Bloody Lane at Antietam,” “The Wheatfield at Gettysburg,” “The Tragedy at Cold Harbor,” “John Brown’s War,” “Destiny at Fort Sumter,” “The Battle of First Bull Run,” “The 54th Massachusetts,” “West Point Classmates—Civil War Enemies, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson,” and concludes with “Sherman and the March to the Sea.” Excepting the “March to the Sea,” the West and Trans-Mississippi West are ignored or forgotten, as is the war at sea.

Danny Glover and Tony Jay narrate the stories, with actors reading excerpts of letters and diaries against the backdrop of beautifully filmed battlefields and historic sites, period photos and illustrations, and dozens of re-enactors. Interspersed within the episodes are commentaries by historians, some of whom offer little more than stock or grossly simplistic views positing that “most historians consider [Gettysburg] the turning point of the Civil War,” or validating the myth that generals went into battle with a sword in one hand and Antoine-Henri Jomini’s *Art of War* in the other. Apparently, Winfield Scott’s 1847-1848 campaign against Mexico mattered little to Robert E. Lee or others.

Aimed at a general audience, this collection is more an affirmation of popular memory, the romanticized stuff of history, rather than a critical or analytical telling of the past. *The Civil War* is entertaining and sometimes informative, but it does not deliver on its promise. Watch it for the fun of it, but for sober and thoughtful television, fall back on Ken Burns’ *Civil War*.

**Ricardo A. Herrera, Ph.D., Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**WOMEN AT WAR: Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Conflicts,** James E. Wise Jr. and Scott Baron, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2006, 234 pages, \$29.95.

*Women at War*, by James E. Wise Jr. and Scott Baron, is classic oral



history on an old topic that continues to be controversial. The book is an anthology of the personal stories of women from all services ranging in rank from private first class (E-3) to colonel (O-6). The authors provide a wide variety of first-person perspectives from American women who have participated in combat or supported combat.

The book begins with the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and works back in time through Vietnam and Korea to World War II. Each section is preceded by a short introduction that describes the social and military context of each particular war. As usual in books of this type, the entries detail a wide range of situations, personalities, and concerns, and are best appreciated in small doses.

In the introductory essay, Wise and Barron argue that “women are still, in theory, excluded from combat. The reality in Iraq is that women are in combat, and continue to prove that gender distinctions are irrelevant.” Although women’s dedication to duty and patriotism unquestionably equal those of any of their male peers, it is evident that gender does have a powerful impact on the lives of military women. The experience of U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Lieutenant Commander Holly R. Harrison, who skippered a USCG vessel in the Persian Gulf, is both irritating and exasperating—the Iraqis refused, repeatedly, to believe she was the ship’s captain and insisted she was the cook.

Taken altogether, the experiences of Wise and Barron’s military women are so varied that it is impossible to generalize about them in such a short space. But the words of Captain Jaden J. Kim, a highly decorated former Marine fighter pilot, describe the challenges women still face: “When you’re constantly under the spotlight, people are bound to start tearing you apart, piece by piece.” The extra difficulties and sufferings experienced during war do not, however, deter talented and determined servicewomen like U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Jessica Lee Clements, who was so severely wounded in

Iraq that she was declared eighty-percent disabled. Her doctors called her “miracle girl” for her valiant recovery and indestructible spirit, but she preferred a more modest honorific—“Soldier.”

*Women at War* is by no means the definitive story of women at war, nor is it intended to be, but it does offer valuable source material that may serve for such a project in the future. The book should be of special interest to military professionals—both male and female—but also to civilian policymakers who have a say in what women are allowed to do or not do in the military, as well as to members of the general public who wonder what their daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers did, and continue to do, in war. I recommend the book.

**LTC Prisco R. Hernández, USA, Ph.D., Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**THE OSS AND HO CHI MINH: Unexpected Allies in the War Against Japan**, Dixee Bartholomew-Feis, University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, 2006, 425 pages, \$34.95.

Dixee R. Bartholomew-Feis takes the reader into the heart of World War II special operations with her thorough examination of the working relationship between the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and Ho Chi Minh. The story she paints is anything but simple. Brigadier General William Donovan’s OSS worked under the basic assumption that the only thing necessary for a working relationship with nonstate actors such as the Viet Minh was agreement on the common enemy. Donovan’s people could never be accused of worrying too much about the world that would follow the defeat of the Axis powers.

To stop the flow of supplies to Chiang Kai-shek’s forces in China, Japanese forces worked an agreement with Vichy France that permitted Japan de facto control over the area, but permitted French forces to administer the colony. Officially, the Japanese recognized the colony as a French possession. In reality,

Japanese documents referred to the areas as their new acquisition. The relationship between France and Japan was tenuous throughout with the latter finally moving to seize full control of the area in 1945, shattering badly outnumbered French forces in the process.

Ho Chi Minh quickly shifted his focus to helping the Americans rid Vietnam of the Japanese. He fostered a working relationship with OSS operatives that provided valuable intelligence and other logistics support to the U.S. while at the same time used his relationship to solidify his position as the key spokesperson for Vietnamese interests in his battle to rid his country of colonial powers once and for all. Despite having earned the respect of many OSS operatives, the relationship between Ho Chi Minh and the Americans began to disintegrate at the conclusion of the war. The anti-colonial policy of President Franklin D. Roosevelt did not survive the president’s death. His successor, Harry S. Truman, saw the world through a cold war prism that saw all communists as puppets of the Soviet Union. The author implies that this disintegration and the false assumptions on which it was based created the conditions that eventually pulled the U.S. into a long and bloody war in Vietnam.

Bartholomew-Feis’s account of the early U.S. involvement with Ho Chi Minh reads well and is based on sound and thorough research. The questions the author raises in examining the Viet Minh’s war against the Japanese and the French hold their relevance for the modern era as U.S. forces find themselves increasingly working with allies who share a common enemy but not a common end state.

**Joseph R. Fischer, Ph.D., Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**THE GREAT WAR**, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, Charles Messenger, ed., Greenhill Books, London, 2006, 236 pages, \$34.95.

*The Great War* is an edited single volume of Field Marshal Paul von

Hindenburg's memoirs, which were originally published in 1919, just after World War I. The book's editor, Charles Messenger, has retained brief accounts of Hindenburg's early military education and his career through the Franco-Prussian War, but the majority of the volume focuses on the field marshal's World War I experiences. While *The Great War* does not offer a complete history of World War I or even of Hindenburg's campaigns during that war, it does an excellent job of providing insights into the grand strategy of the German General Staff.

Hindenburg's descriptions of Germany's responses to the strategic problems it faced at various points throughout the war suggest not German invincibility, but German capability and competence. He also offers us a unique perspective on Germany's allies, especially Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria, and on the difficulties that coalition warfare forced on the German Army. He makes interesting comments, too, about the fighting capabilities of Germany's allies and opponents. In speaking of the latter, he praises Russian endurance, French proficiency, and British obstinacy.

Hindenburg has definite opinions on the influence of new technology on the war, especially submarines, airplanes, machine guns, and tanks, and he sees American strength as having played an important role in the reversal of German fortunes in 1918. Also of particular interest in this memoir are Hindenburg's descriptions of German strategic thinking through most of the war, from key decisions concerning east to west troop movements, to the decision to begin unrestricted submarine warfare.

As a whole, this edited version of Hindenburg's memoirs provides a fascinating glimpse into Germany's most influential and important soldier of World War I. One of its few disappointments is Messenger's decision not to include Hindenburg's political and philosophical diatribes. Messenger states in the preface that he did so to keep the focus on mili-

tary career and accomplishments, but such political ruminations could be immensely important to understanding Hindenburg's role in the interwar years and the rise of Nazi Germany. Despite this shortcoming, Messenger has given us an important primary source document for understanding World War I, and he has done so in a format that is both useful and enjoyable.

**MAJ Michael Bonura, USA,  
West Point, New York**

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**SHOCK TROOPS OF THE CONFEDERACY:** The Sharpshooter Battalions of the Army of Northern Virginia, Fred L. Ray, CFS Press, Asheville, NC, 2006, 414 pages, \$34.95.

Fred Ray's *Shock Troops of the Confederacy* covers a little-known but important aspect of the Civil War: the "sharpshooter battalions" of the Army of Northern Virginia. Overall, though, this book is really about adaptation and innovation on the battlefield.

In 1862, a Confederate "sharpshooter" was more of a skirmisher than a sniper, but as the war progressed, the Confederacy formed specialized sharpshooter battalions of volunteers who demonstrated superior marksmanship skills and boldness in battle. These units adapted to the battlefields of their day, leveraging the latest weapons technology and modifying tactics in a way that we often associate with the non-linear methods of late World War I German shock troops. Through extensive research, Ray has created a scholarly work that is worthy of serious study. His is the first book in over 100 years on Confederate sharpshooter units, and it fills an important gap in the study of Civil War history and tactics.

Although Ray uses a multitude of credible sources, including many firsthand accounts from sharpshooters on both sides, his best source is a diary kept by Major Eugene Blackford, a Confederate sharpshooter battalion commander in General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Blackford

trained his unit in skirmish drills and marksmanship out to 600 yards. Lee took notice of the battalion's performance at Chancellorsville in 1863, and soon ordered each infantry brigade to form a permanent sharpshooter battalion. By the opening of the 1864 campaigning season, over 7,000 sharpshooters had been trained and formed into battalions. These soldiers proved their worth during the Overland campaign, by dominating the skirmish line and killing Union officers at long distances. At Spotsylvania, Union Major General John Sedgwick was killed by a Confederate sharpshooter seconds after stating "they couldn't hit an elephant at this distance."

Ray also discusses Confederate sharpshooter units in the West, as well as some Union sharpshooter units that seem to have been formed in response to the Confederate innovation. During the last two years of the war, sharpshooters on both sides fought in most major battles. In great detail, Ray describes over 19 battles during which sharpshooters played an important, if not pivotal, role. Exceptional examples include Forts Stedman and Petersburg, where Confederate sharpshooters scouted, raided Union trenches, and brought back prisoners.

*Shock Troops of the Confederacy* contains 43 informative maps and 59 illustrations, including pictures with information of the sharpshooter's weapons and uniforms. More than just an account of the sharpshooters' exploits, the book makes a strong case that the late Civil War battles they fought in were predecessors to the nonlinear tactics of the 20th century. Ray follows the development of light infantry organization, tactics, and weapons forward to the Boer War, through World War I, and beyond. In fact, Ray's study is still relevant for our forces in the field today, as we learn again that small-unit battlefield adaptation, innovation, and precision marksmanship are just as important now as they ever were.

**LTC Scott A. Porter, USA, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

## The Center of Gravity in an Insurgency

Lieutenant Colonel Chris North, *U.S. Army, Retired, Taji, Iraq*—Major Mark Krieger’s article, “We the People Are Not the Center of Gravity in an Insurgency” (July-August 2007, *Military Review*), discusses an important issue. However, it misses the mark for “insurgencies” we face today. It uses an old model that is not so relevant anymore.

A model for a situation like Iraq today (one aspect that may include an insurgency) is it may be global in scope; focus more on defeating government resolve and political will than government forces; and the “bad guy” actors are numerous, fragmented, and factionalized, most of them pursuing divergent causes.

The organizational nature of insurgents is different: the leadership and command and control are decentralized; they operate in loose, networked affiliations, with mission-type orders; and are adept at replacing fallen leaders. Major Krieger claims that a cause attracts support, which leads to formation of an insurgent organization, which organization becomes the insurgent operational COG. That was one model, which worked in the 1960s, but it does not work that way today. “Cutting off the head of the snake” is no longer as effective as it used to be.

The new operating environment greatly affects the validity of ideas proposed by MAJ Krieger. He proposes that the strategic Center of Gravity (COG) for an “insurgency” is its cause, the operational COG is the insurgent organization, and control of the people is just a Decisive Point. A COG applies to actors, not to a situation like “insurgency.” In an insurgency, there may be different COGs for the government, coalition forces, insurgents, militias, any number of factions.

It is okay to say that the *strategic* COG for the various “bad guys” is their cause—recognizing that their

“causes” are loosely defined and usually different amongst the “bad guys.” However, the author asserts that the consensus among thinkers today is an “insurgency’s COG” is the people, and that they are incorrect—that is *not* a valid assumption. Those thinkers would probably tell you they are talking about the people as the *operational*, not strategic, COG—a distinction the author appears to ignore.

One has only to look to the definition of COG to realize that control of the population and resources (PRC) is the “source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act.” ALL the actors pursue the PRC COG at the *operational* level of war. PRC is both the prize and the means by which ALL actors survive, conduct operations, and pursue legitimacy for their strategic COGs. Successful PRC allows all actors to function in the environment—failure to achieve it degrades strength, restricts action, and undermines willpower. The great majority of thinkers DO believe control of population and resources is the operational center of gravity—with good reason.

Most “thinkers” would say the people are more than just a “decisive point”—they are the sea in which the fish swim (Mao’s analogy.) They are the objective, and who wins them wins the war (Galula). The author claims “the people provide a tangible target against which to apply military power . . .” All counterinsurgency doctrine, past and present, disputes this assertion—it is the combination of political, economic, social, and military factors, with primary emphasis on the political factor, which must be mustered in order to “win” the people. To persuade, not “militarily target” them.

The author claims an “insurgency’s cause is a system made up of the people’s grievances.” Not any more. Not in Iraq. Car bombs blowing up innocent people in a marketplace,

using murder and threats to intimidate—these are not likely actions to rally people to the insurgent cause today. Often, the major grievance is the very existence of the insurgents, which prevents the people from enjoying their potential for economic recovery and well-being.

“Successfully targeting and attacking the strategic COG, the cause...will cause the entire insurgency to fail.” Not likely, today. It is doubtful any success has been achieved in changing the beliefs and objectives—the cause—of Al Qaeda. One might say the strategic COG for the “bad guys” is their motivation or objectives (versus a “cause”). In Iraq, take away the ideology and power bids of Al-Qaeda, the fragmented political and power aspirations of the militias, the factionalized greed, criminality, and self-interest of some organizations—what they are striving to achieve—and one may say they defeat the “bad guy” strategic COGs.

A key point in conducting counterinsurgency operations is to plan well, then stick to the plan. It is the positive aspects of a plan that will win the Prize—persuade the people to support the government. Making that plan work at the operational level, not being distracted by enemy attacks, not diverting excessive resources to attack enemy strategic COGs—that is what is important and will be effective.

What about the *strategic* COGs for two other actors in Iraq: the U.S. and the Government of Iraq? Take away the political will to remain engaged in regional stability in the Middle East—and the U.S. strategic COG will be weakened. We hear that erosion of will every week in the halls of Congress. Fail to establish a competent government with some measure of consensus—this is the strategic challenge for the Government of Iraq. Where does this leave the contest for the *operational* COG—the people?

Few people will support a government that is obviously going to lose. The challenge for the U.S. and the Government of Iraq is trying to keep both their strategic COGs intact while simultaneously “winning” the people’s support at the operational level. If the U.S. and the GOI can maintain credibility while doing this, they will likely succeed in achieving some measure of stability for Iraq.

## **Toward Strategic Communication**

Christopher R. Paparone, *Ph.D.*, *Fort Lee, Virginia*—Brigadier General Mari K. Eder’s July-August 2007 *Military Review* article “Toward Strategic Communication” frames the debate and defines the scope of the strategic communication issue better than I have seen it before. However, these questions go unresolved with the conclusions:

- In a democracy, isn’t it dangerous to seek a unified “enterprise” message in the executive branch that was purposefully designed around diversity?
- Isn’t that diversity part of the diffusion of power that keeps our democracy strong?
- Does that diversity serve to protect the chief executive from “groupthink?”
- How do we separate political messages (or as you frame, “com-

municate policy”) from professional military advice (the latter directed to the public and the president and SECDEF)?

- Is it a fitting (both legally and morally) role for the U.S. Army to be involved in strategically communicating what could be construed as a political message?
- If we cannot discern the line between professional advice and a political message, can the role of the military in a democracy become blurred (and even dangerous)?

It seems to me that the people elect politicians to communicate policy and rely on an apolitical (career/merit-based) corps of professional civilians and military to execute the policy.

It also seems to me this whole idea is not really about information (implying the problem of getting the facts out), but about interpretation. Interpretation has social and psychological overtones. Should the professional military really be in the business of conveying social and psychological interpretations into the public domain?

## **BG Eder Reponds**

The questions you ask lead me to think that perhaps I haven’t framed the discussion as well as I had thought, and I have written and rewritten this article numerous times over the past two years.

At the seat of government, I am most concerned that our communications with friends and allies are based on awareness, not necessarily agreement, between the branches of government. From the executive branch, the State has the lead for strategic communications (SC). Sometimes we do not communicate well as a nation I think when one agency or branch is unaware of what others say or do.

Simply, I think SC is broad based, long term, and overarching. Our messages have to be consistent and repeated. I do not want to imply (and really hope I haven’t) that we should be involved in politics.

This summer I’ve been involved as an advisor with the Defense Science Board’s summer study on strategic communications. I believe the final report will concentrate on raising the visibility and importance of the SC function within the department and that it will also stress the awareness and coordination of messages within DoD and the services.

Some of this blurring you sense has come about, I think, from the roles the military has assumed from necessity—engagement, nation building, governmental aspects of peacekeeping roles that are better suited to diplomats, or other agencies but due to funding or other restrictions are unable to undertake.



# INSHALLAH

**Dismount!**

**Walking forward**

**Walking fast**

**Keeping your place**

**Left flank**

**Third from point**

**Wedge formation**

**Traveling overwatch**

**Walking...**

**Strangely calm**

**Scanning your sector**

**Rifle at the ready**

**Walking...**

**Remember**

**Positive target ID**

**Safety off**

**Aim center of mass**

**Squeeze, don't jerk...**

**Walking...**

**Breathing**

**Go forward**

**Do your duty**

**It's all in God's hands**

**Inshallah...**

—LTC Prisco Hernandez, CGSC

