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# An Operator's Guide to Human Terrain Teams

Norman Nigh

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# CENTER ON IRREGULAR WARFARE AND ARMED GROUPS



An Operator's Guide to Human Terrain Teams  
Norman Nigh

United States Naval War College  
Newport, Rhode Island



# **An Operator's Guide to Human Terrain Teams**

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Norman Nigh

# NIGH: AN OPERATOR'S GUIDE TO HUMAN TERRAIN TEAMS

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## Message from the Editors

In 2008, the Naval War College established the Center on Irregular Warfare & Armed Groups (CIWAG). CIWAG's primary mission is twofold: first, to bring cutting-edge research on Irregular Warfare into the Joint Professional Military Educational (JPME) curricula; and second, to bring operators, practitioners, and scholars together to share their knowledge and experiences about a vast array of violent and non-violent irregular challenges. This case study is part of an ongoing effort at CIWAG that includes symposia, lectures by world-renowned academics, case studies, research papers, articles, and books. Our aim is to make these case studies part of an evolving and adaptive curriculum that fulfills the needs of students preparing to meet the challenges of the post-9/11 world.

Mr. Norman Nigh is the author of this case study, which focuses on the use of Human Terrain Teams (HTT) in Afghanistan. The Human Terrain System (HTS) is an innovative military intelligence support program used by the US Army that employs civilian social scientists with backgrounds in linguistics, anthropology, sociology, and regional studies to provide military commanders with clearer insights into the local population and culture in the regions in which they are deployed.

Mr. Nigh relies on his extensive experience as a Human Terrain Team Advisor to create an insightful analysis of the opportunities and challenges associated with the use of the Human Terrain System in Afghanistan. This case study was created for three key purposes: first, to explore how HTT advisors help military commanders enhance operational effectiveness in the battlespace; second, to examine the specific strengths and limitations associated with the use of civilian social scientists in the battlefield environment; and third, to help military and civilian leaders be better prepared to use Human Terrain Teams more effectively in future engagements.

## NIGH: AN OPERATOR'S GUIDE TO HUMAN TERRAIN TEAMS

We believe Mr. Nigh has presented a balanced treatment of the subject matter. Balance, however, does not mean that the case study will be uncontroversial. In fact, Nigh's analysis contains some rather blunt appraisals of many actors in this conflict, including both Human Terrain Teams and the US Army. The point is to shed light on the value of the program and how the US military might exploit the Human Terrain System more effectively in the future.

This case study was submitted in October 2011 and the vignettes are from 2009-2010. Currently under USA TRADOC, the HTT program continues to grow and develop, but this case takes a snapshot of the program—at a point where both operators and HTT analysts were figuring out its utility and limitations—in order to give the reader insight into the challenges and dilemmas they faced on the ground.

It is also important to note three critical caveats to this case study. First, the opinions found in this case study are solely those of the author and do not represent the views of the Department of Defense, the Naval War College, or CIWAG. Second, while every effort has been made to correct any factual errors in this work, the author is ultimately responsible for the content of this case study. Third, the study questions presented in all CIWAG case studies are written to provoke discussion on a wide variety of topics, including strategic, operational, and tactical matters as well as ethical and moral questions confronted by operators in the battlefield. The point is to make these case studies part of an evolving and adaptive curriculum that fulfills the needs of students preparing to meet the challenges of the post-9/11 world and to show them the dilemmas that real people faced in high-pressure situations. Some of the most challenging questions asked in the case are: what would you do, what are your rules of engagement and moral and ethical constraints, and what would be the operational and strategic consequences of your decisions?

## Author Biography

**Norman Nigh** is a graduate of The George Washington University (BA, Political Science), Yale University (MA, Religious Studies) and Vanderbilt University (MA, Economics). He has lived in the Middle East and Asia, focusing his efforts on Iraq (OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM), Afghanistan (OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM) and China (Tibet). Mr. Nigh's experience as a US government employee includes post-conflict reconstruction, conflict mediation, and counterinsurgency. He has worked extensively with Canadian and French forces, as well as with Afghan National Army and Army Special Operations Forces.

# Table of Contents

Message from the Editors .....	iii
Author Biography .....	v
Acronyms .....	1
I. Introduction: Counterinsurgency — Theory vs. Reality .....	2
II. Heart of Darkness.....	11
Figure 1: Nakhonay .....	11
A. Recommendation One: Rethinking Corruption .....	17
B. Recommendation Two: Responding to Taliban Presence .....	19
C. Recommendation Three: Addressing Combat Outpost Compensation .....	22
III. Tagab: The Lost Valley.....	25
Figure 2: Tagab Valley .....	25
A. Recommendation One: Address Road Compensation .....	31
B. Recommendation Two: Identify Layers of Leadership .....	33
C. Recommendation Three: Prevent Dollarization and Crowding Out the Population.....	34
IV. Relevance of Social Science Research in Combat Zones .....	39
A. Consumers of Social Science Research in the Battle Space.....	41
V. Methodology .....	45
A. Step One: Social Identity.....	45
B. Step Two: Civic Power Study.....	46
C. Step Three: Hierarchy of Needs .....	47
D. Implementation and Field Research.....	48
VI. Social Science Operational Schedule (CONOP).....	51
A. Schedule.....	51
B. Example of a Mission Conducted in Afghanistan.....	52
VII. Annexes.....	54
Annex A: Collection Objectives .....	54
Annex B: Bibliography .....	62



## Acronyms

AF-IV – Afghanistan IV (Team)

ANA – Afghan National Army

ANP – Afghan National Police

ASCOPE – Area, Structures, Capabilities, Organizations, People and Events

ASF – Afghan Security Forces

CCIR – Commander’s Critical Information Requirements

CERP – Commander Emergency Response Funding

CF – Coalition Forces

CIDNE – Combined Information Data Network Exchange

CONOP – Concept of Operation

COP – Combat Outpost

DCGS – Distributed Common Ground System

FM 3-24 – Counterinsurgency Field Manual

FOB – Forward Operating Base

HiG – Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin

HTS – Human Terrain Systems

HTT – Human Terrain Team

HUMINT – Human Intelligence

HVT – High Value Target

IPB – Information Preparation of the Battlefield

ISAF – International Security Assistance Force

KPRT – Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team

OS – Oil Spot

PRT – Provisional Reconstruction Teams

RMT –Route Maintenance Team

SME – Subject Matter Experts

TFK – Task Force Kandahar

## I. Introduction: Counterinsurgency — Theory vs. Reality

“Yeah, I’m all about hearts and minds, two shots in the heart and one in the head, now that’s COIN,” jokingly remarked a young US Marine Corps captain while flipping through FM 3-24, the official US Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual. The Marine captain was one of 22 US military and civilian personnel that had come together in a makeshift conference room at Forward Operating Base Shank in Afghanistan’s Logar Province to attend General Stanley McChrystal’s “COIN Academy.”

The battle-hardened group of men and women, made up of soldiers from the Army and the Marines Corps, as well as civilians from various government agencies, represented the frontline of counterinsurgency warfare (COIN) in Afghanistan. They had been called to the COIN Academy because commanders realized that the fate of Operation Enduring Freedom rested on the ability of operators to implement COIN doctrine in the field.

Despite the initiative to implement COIN objectives at the tactical level, an atmosphere of confusion at the operational level persists. In large part, a decade-long conflict, with revolving strategies, ambiguous objectives, and a clandestine enemy, has fueled frustration, anger, and resentment among military forces:

The people who wrote this don’t understand what it’s like on the ground. It sounds good on paper and stuff like this gets people promoted but at the end of the day it’s our lives they are playing with. I am told to secure a village, get to know the people, shake hands, take pictures with locals and tell my superiors about what the hell is going on – what bull\*\*\*\*.... I have no idea who these people are, what they want, or how to communicate with them. The locals accuse

me of peeping on their wives, disrespecting their culture and killing their friends. When we're not getting shot at or finding IEDs, local kids throw rocks at my guys and the locals demand money. Yet I am told to exhibit tactical patience and focus on the big picture. The situation is f\*\*\*ed.<sup>1</sup>

The above snapshot captures the situation faced by many operators on the ground in Afghanistan. Talk of COIN is everywhere, especially on the lips of senior military and civilian leadership. In practice, COIN presents complex operational challenges. To implement a COIN strategy successfully, a company or platoon must fully understand the people with whom it is dealing. It must then use that knowledge of local customs and traditions to develop a COIN-centric strategy unique to the area. Many soldiers in Afghanistan, however, have not studied the region's history or its tribal languages, and consequently struggle to interact with local populations. Moreover, the generic COIN checklists and principles handed down from headquarters are rarely applicable to specific situations, and only exacerbate the challenges of implementing counterinsurgency strategies.

In 2007, after nearly six years of setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan, military strategists began devising alternatives to the enemy centric model of warfare. During the early stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003) and Operation Enduring Freedom (2001), policy makers did not anticipate prolonged conflicts. In each case, when traditional, kinetic methods were applied, insurgents went "all quiet" – a strategic response that U.S. planners incorrectly interpreted as a sign of imminent victory. But insurgents in both Iraq and Afghanistan reemerged, engaging American and NATO forces in protracted military campaigns. Coalition involvement in these conflicts has proven costly; NATO and the U.S. have not only

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<sup>1</sup> Anonymous, February 18, 2010

exhausted their resources, but – because of continued incidents of collateral damage – have continued to alienate local populations. As a result, the Coalition has actually furthered the objectives of Al Qaida and its affiliates.

Recognizing this, Gen. Petraeus, Gen. McChrystal, and others implemented a stronger counterinsurgency model, one explicitly focused on securing the population as its primary goal. This new emphasis on COIN required military operators and commanders to become more knowledgeable about the indigenous population. In order to protect and gain the trust of the people, local concerns, attitudes, and needs were given precedence. As Gen. Petraeus noted, “You have to understand not just what we call the military terrain...the high ground and low ground. It’s about understanding the human terrain, really understanding it.”<sup>2</sup>

One of the greatest challenges US and NATO forces have faced in recent COIN operations is comprehending and overcoming their enemy’s antiquated warfare culture. “Afghan social, political, economic, and cultural affairs are complex and poorly understood. ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] does not sufficiently appreciate the dynamics in local communities, nor how the insurgency, corruption, incompetent officials, power brokers, and criminality all combine to affect the Afghan population. A focus by ISAF intelligence on kinetic targeting and a failure to bring together what is known about the political and social realm have hindered ISAF’s comprehension of critical aspects of Afghan society.”<sup>3</sup> In 2005 the Department of Defense released hundreds of millions of dollars to fund new programs that would bring this alternative COIN perspective to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Programs were designed to help operators in the field better understand the local culture and develop stronger relationships with the population while also providing senior leadership with expert advice. Ultimately, these new programs intended to

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<sup>2</sup> Babak Dehghanpisheh , “Scions of the Surge,” *Newsweek*, March 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Dreyfuss, “Blind in Afghanistan,” *The Nation*, January 2010.

transform what General McChrystal has called “a conventional force that is poorly configured for COIN.”<sup>4</sup>

Implementing the newly revised COIN doctrine successfully required academics and subject matter experts (SMEs). Recognizing that senior leadership depends on operators to interpret a very complex and paradoxical battle space, US Army leadership created Human Terrain Systems (HTS), teams of social scientists who seek to "recruit, train, deploy, and support an embedded operationally focused socio-cultural capability; conduct operationally relevant socio-cultural research and analysis; develop and maintain a socio-cultural knowledge base, in order to enable operational decision-making, enhance operational effectiveness, and preserve and share socio-cultural institutional knowledge."<sup>5</sup> This socio-cultural information allows NATO forces to compete with insurgents for “hearts and minds”; groups such as Al-Qaida and the Taliban are no longer the only actors who can use knowledge of local cultural and religious practices to their advantage.

The fundamental mission behind the creation of HTS was to embed SMEs and individuals with formal training in the social sciences with operators in the field. HTS personnel used their knowledge of linguistics, psychology, anthropology, economics, history, sociology, and political science to help decipher and articulate characteristics of the social terrain to command. The idea was to support operators in the field by developing COIN principles appropriate for specific areas of operation (AO), and to aid senior leadership by providing a more nuanced articulation of the battle-space – a perspective that would serve as a counterweight to the traditional U.S. view of war. As Sun Tzu observed,

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<sup>4</sup> David B. Edwards, “Counterinsurgency as a Cultural System,” *Small Wars Journal*, December 2010.

<sup>5</sup> CPT Nathan Finney, “Human Terrain Team Handbook,” *TRADOC G2*, 2008.

“So it is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you can win a hundred battles without a single loss.”<sup>6</sup>

One of the greatest challenges HTS confronted was making their advisory support applicable to direct and indirect warfighters alike. Initially, HTS doctrine was created with the Special Operations Force (SOF) community in mind. As SOF assignments shifted to kill/capture missions, however, and as the interagency responsibilities of SOF increased, they had less and less time to engage non-kinetically with the population. “While some of the Special Forces missions are centered on training of allied forces, often that line is blurred. In some cases, ‘training’ is used as a cover for unilateral, direct action. It's often done under the auspices of training so that they can go anywhere. It's brilliant. It is essentially what we did in the ‘60s,” says a Special Forces source.<sup>7</sup> As a result, command began placing more and more responsibility on conventional forces to engage the population, train indigenous forces, and promote stability through the use of development funds. Thus, the mission of HTS teams evolved, and embedded personnel refocused their efforts on supporting conventional units and their role in the irregular warfare battle space.

In irregular warfare, COIN exists on the chalk line between direct and indirect action.<sup>8</sup> Relying on one method exclusively creates an

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<sup>6</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

<sup>7</sup> Jeremy Scahill, “Obama’s Expanding Covert Wars,” *The Nation*, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> **Direct:** In the context of military special operations, direct action (DA) consists of “Short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets. Direct action differs from conventional offensive actions in the level of physical and political risk, operational techniques, and the degree of discriminate and precise use of force to achieve specific objectives.” -US Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (2007-07-12). **Indirect:** Military action in support of political, economic, and informational initiatives which are so dominant that they shape the form of the military action; military action through support of another party, such as security assistance to

operational vacuum easily exploited by the enemy. The problem with employing both strategies jointly, however, is that direct and indirect actors often undermine each other's efforts. This zero-sum relationship is based on the premise that direct and indirect action compete for control of the battle space. When both methods are implemented without coordination, the populace receives a distorted – and often competing – message. In indirect action, the population is told that it is the priority, that efforts will be focused on reconstruction, peace building, and the elimination of the insurgency. In direct action, the population is often involved in collateral damage or marginalized during the targeting of insurgents. Although both actions play a vital role in counterinsurgency, they must be coordinated to achieve a cohesive result. As former Commander of US SOCOM, Admiral Olson, stated in 2009, “While the direct approach is mostly decisive in its impact, it also buys the time for the indirect approach to have its desired effect.”<sup>9</sup>

To conduct indirect and direct action, operators must be able to explain the ground-level complexity to commanders and policy makers. This is not an easy task. It requires a thorough understanding of the human terrain, strong relationships with local allies, a detailed understanding of localized conflict triggers, and a deep respect for the indigenous people. To help direct and indirect operators engage noncombatants more successfully, US policy makers and military strategists have developed engagement programs focused on the population, such as HTS, to aid operators in the field. These programs aim to help operators contextualize the population, develop a deeper understanding of their actions, and better articulate characteristics of the battle-space to commanders and policy makers. To better understand how programs such as HTS work to support

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friendly foreign armed forces.

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/fm/100-20/10020gl.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Admiral Eric T. Olson, “A Balanced Approach to Irregular Warfare,” *The Journal of International Security Affairs* 16 (2009).

direct and indirect action, it is important to discuss the roles of conventional and irregular warfare in counterinsurgency operations.

Historically, military might has been defined by the strength of conventional forces. Metrics such as the number of soldiers, units of military equipment, and volume of ordnance, along with a military's level of technological sophistication, are often used as indicators of capacity and effectiveness. In symmetrical warfare, these capabilities are paramount to success. In irregular conflicts, however, one needs to look deeper to understand how – or even *if* – conventional tactics are effective. By conducting operations in accordance with the laws of a host country, for instance, conventional forces can give credibility to governments whose legitimacy is in question. On the other hand, the use of direct action allows conventional forces to isolate and terminate threats. Merely carrying arms and conducting operations openly can provide an interim system of order, temporarily stabilizing regions that had been corrupted by insurgency. In Operation Phantom Fury, for example, American and British forces dislodged insurgents from Fallujah, depriving them of their last stronghold in Iraq. While this kind of conventional approach does usually prove necessary, its effects are mostly short-term.

The ultimate goal in creating HTS was to supplement military and civilian efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan by providing a subject matter capability and helping to interpret social grievances and the role they play in conflict. By identifying the factors leading to violence, Human Terrain Teams (HTT) help field operators, commanders, and policy officials better understand the civilian population. Each program assists with strategy implementation, consensus building, and casualty reduction. Secondary efforts focus on leveraging community resources and gradually reducing US and NATO expenditures – measures that will help achieve the end goal of Afghan self-sufficiency. Further, HTS's capability is aimed at helping military and civilian leadership map out a nexus of second- and



third-order effects, an activity that will ultimately increase operational efficiency and maintain combat strength.

Sections I and II of this case study explore how HTT advisors can aid operators and military/civilian leadership in the irregular warfare battle-space. The sections begin with a community profile that identifies the social, cultural, economic, and political issues affecting a specific local environment. This is followed by an outline of NATO strategies and an analysis of their effects on both the population and the insurgency. A net social science assessment is presented in Section III, which examines the effects of COIN activities on operations and analyzes alternative courses of action. Finally, Section IV discusses matters related to the implementation of social science methodologies – including their limitations in the field – and a sample operational schedule is presented in Section V. Ultimately, this case study aims to serve as a resource for operators utilizing counterinsurgency advisory support and is intended to make those operators better prepared for the challenges of irregular warfare.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. COIN doctrine vs. COIN application: Can doctrine be applied despite an unwilling population?
2. Can non-military entities be effective in a non-permissive environment? Do they present challenges, liabilities, support, or guidance?
3. Do academics and subject matter experts have a place on the battlefield? Can soldiers be taught to implement research and analytical techniques that experts could provide? If yes, can soldiers overcome groupthink or institutional biases that could distort their findings?

## NIGH: AN OPERATOR'S GUIDE TO HUMAN TERRAIN TEAMS

4. In irregular warfare, do direct and indirect operators need COIN/SME advisors? Is one operator better suited over another to implement COIN?
5. Can indirect or direct action undermine COIN application?
6. What limitations do operators have in the field when it comes to developing relationships with locals, understanding their culture, and mitigating conflict with non-kinetic actors?

## II. Heart of Darkness

**Figure 1: Nakhonay**



The young Canadian lieutenant glared furiously into the eyes of village leader “Haji Malma.”<sup>10</sup> “I know who you are, you piece of \*\*\*\*. You are the man responsible for the death of my friends and I’m not going to let that go. I am going to take Nakhonay back from you and we are never going to give up!”

Malma, a stoic village elder, known Taliban judge, and suspected architect of countless Canadian deaths, smiled unapologetically at the 15

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<sup>10</sup> Name has been changed.

well-armed Canadian troops staring him down. There was nothing the Canadians could do, and Malma knew it.

Like most sophisticated Taliban leaders in Afghanistan, Malma was taking advantage of McChrystal's COIN war. On the surface, he appeared to be a benign village elder, interested only in the well-being of the people of Nakhonay. This cover gave him credibility in the community and with the wider NATO public. He often sought "development funds" from aid organizations and NATO troops.

Beneath the surface, however, Malma was a key Pakistani-educated Al-Qaida supporter who controlled one of the most dangerous and strategically important areas in Kandahar. "No progress happens because Haji Malma stop-drops it all," the lieutenant argued as she briefed Milner and Lt.-Gen. Peter Devlin, Canada's Chief of Land Staff. "But other than him, the other village elders have actually supported us."<sup>11</sup>

The problem facing this Canadian platoon – the mendacity of local Afghan leadership – was endemic throughout Afghanistan. On the surface, village elders, mullahs, and business owners appear to cooperate with NATO forces. But behind the scenes these individuals plotted frontline attacks and orchestrated targeted killings. NATO troops know that Afghan leaders are involved in these actions, yet they are required to stand-down. Frustration and seething anger can result, as soldiers are unable to realize justice for the friends they've lost. When they take root, these heightened emotions often blur an operator's ability to understand the population and wage an effective COIN war.

Nakhonay, located in Panjwayii district, is considered one of the most volatile areas in Afghanistan. According to a recent newspaper article, "While much of Panjwaii has stabilized in recent months due to a surge of American and Afghan troops, Nakhonay has remained something of an exception. Over the years, it's been a notorious trouble spot, where at

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Watson, "Afghanistan: Where Success Can Bring Failure," *The Star* (2010).

least seven Canadian soldiers have died since 2009.”<sup>12</sup> From Alexander the Great's arrival in the region in 300 BC to Operation Enduring Freedom, Nakhonay has been a center of tribal, religious, economic, and logistical conflict. Its proximity to Kandahar, the Argandab River (the largest river in southern Afghanistan), Pakistan, and major transportation lines (including the export route for opium from Helmand), as well as its strategic position regarding southern Asia and the Middle East, has made it a hotly contested area for over a thousand years. Over the past fifty years alone, Nakhonay has been occupied – but never subdued – by British, Canadian, American, Indian, Pakistani, and Soviet troops.

Nakhonay is located near the Maiwand, home of the Taliban's Mullah Omar, and is rife with Taliban sympathizers and militants. Considered the spiritual home of the Taliban, it is symbolically important to the insurgency. With strong connections to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf states, Nakhonay is known for housing some of the most radical Muslims in Afghanistan. In the mid-1990s, Saudi militants introduced Kandahar to a strict form of Salafi Islam. While Riyadh has downplayed the Kingdom's ties to the fundamentalist movement (even going so far as to offer “rehabilitation” programs for captured Islamist fighters), Salafism remains a potent force in the Islamic world. As Michael Scheuer argues:

Perhaps the best way to get a handle on this issue is to understand that much of the above—the attacks, the recanters, the re-education camps, Riyadh's ecumenical outreach—is a diversion from the key variable in the future vitality of Islamist militancy: The doctrine of Salafism and its continuing proliferation. Bin Laden and his allies are overwhelmingly Salafist; men and women who profess an austere, semi-martial brand of Sunni

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<sup>12</sup> Keith Gerein, “Soldier slain in Afghan blast 2 weeks from vacation,” *Edmonton Journal*, March 29, 2011, p. A5.

Islam based on the Quran, the Sunnah and the traditions of the “pious ancestors,” the first four generations of Islamic leaders. Salafism is Saudi Arabia’s state religion; it is taught at all levels of its school system to Saudis and others who come from abroad to study or are the children of immigrant Muslim workers and it is the faith Riyadh exports to all areas of the world via a large, well-funded proselytizing program staffed by Salafi clerics educated in the kingdom. Salafism is the engine of contemporary jihad; its base is in Saudi Arabia; and no amount of jihadist recanting or damning by the “king’s clerics” will stunt Salafi jihadism as long as the doctrine is taught and continues to grow in popularity.<sup>13</sup>

Militants focused on Nakhonay because of its central location, strong Islamic background, and independently sustainable agricultural economy. Shortly after they targeted it, the area became known as the hub of the Taliban’s shadow government in Kandahar.

Strategically speaking, Nakhonay and its surrounding villages in Panjwai District represent major choke points in southern Afghanistan. Not only is the area the historic birthplace of the Taliban, but its resilience against NATO forces sends a strong message to Afghan citizens to keep up the fight. From Nakhonay, Taliban leaders have coordinated large-scale attacks against NATO forces and interests. They keep fighters in nearby communities and are careful to use layers of communication when contacting them – strategies that allow the “shadow” leadership to maintain plausible deniability after incidents of insurgent violence. As one journalist covering the region has observed, “Canadian soldiers cleared Nakhonay in 2007 and twice in 2008 but, without the troop strength to

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<sup>13</sup> Scheuer, Michael, “Saudi Salafism a Stronger Force in Islamist Militancy than Recanting Clerics,” *Terrorism Focus* vol. 5 no. 26, July 16, 2008.

remain in the area, insurgents seeped back in as soon as they left. The village continued to serve as the seat of the Taliban's shadow government in Kandahar province.”<sup>14</sup> For the past decade, NATO forces have been attempting to build a case against the local officials in Nakhonay. Without direct evidence of their participation in insurgent activities, however, NATO has been unable to transition a new cadre of leaders into positions of power. Taliban leaders continue to operate freely in Nakhonay.

The implementation of COIN strategies in the area is further complicated by the military's use of ASCOPE (Area, Structures, Capabilities, Organizations, People and Events) – a method of assessing the role of cultural factors in tactical operations. Under ASCOPE, Coalition officials may not easily interfere with local power structures. So long as village leaders are perceived as key members of the community and are not directly involved in anti-NATO activities – such as placing bombs, directly attacking troops, or harboring weapons – it is virtually impossible to remove them.

It's clear that NATO forces have been tasked with a difficult, seemingly contradictory, mission: they must work to build relationships with local communities while also distancing themselves from the first layers of leadership in those groups. Haji Malma and his band of Taliban associates actively put themselves between the Canadian troops and the population, creating a complex social and military environment for the Canadian forces to navigate. As difficult as situations like this may be, NATO forces must explore alternative courses of action when confronted with them; they must pursue strategies that will ultimately delegitimize the Taliban's "shadow" leaders, influence local populations in positive ways, and bring stability to Afghan communities.

To fulfill these objectives, command directed a Human Terrain Team to develop a comprehensive picture of the operational environment and to

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<sup>14</sup> Dene Moore, "Canadian platoon's life in Afghan village is a lesson in patience," *The Record* [Waterloo, Ont.], Sept. 13, 2010.

present its findings to the Commander of Task Force Kandahar. This six-man team, consisting of subject matter experts, military tacticians, and communications specialists, embedded with Canadian forces for a 21-day mission.

Mission objectives were as follows:

1. Define characteristics of key civilian areas, including districts, municipalities, and provinces in the targeted area of operation. Focus efforts on areas of high economic value, centers of government or political discourse, culturally important areas, and tribal/ethnic enclaves.
2. Analyze the capability of local authorities to perform key functions and provide the populace with essential services. Develop metrics of essential capabilities required to save and sustain life, including the development of health clinics, the provision of food, water, and sanitation services, and the operation of public administration and public safety organizations.
3. Understand how the community is organized according to local definitions of order and influence. Distinguish who is formally and informally influential in the community and what characteristics (wealth, education, family lineage, ethnicity, and tribe) influence perception. Determine if influential members of the community are affiliated with organizations that may be indigenous to the area.

When the assignment was over, the team had compiled significant data on Nakhonay's social groups, power brokers, and hierarchy of needs. The team outlined targets of opportunity for implementing COIN and development strategies, assessed progress in the AO, determined second- and third-order effects of the current strategy, and identified fault lines between the Canadians and the populace.

The team gave General Menard and General Vance of Task Force Kandahar recommendations in three areas:

1. How to frame the issue of corruption



2. How to respond to Taliban supporters
3. How to address combat outpost compensation

## **A. Recommendation One: Rethinking Corruption**

Human Terrain System advisors encouraged Task Force Kandahar (TFK) not to remove key business leaders from the community, despite allegations of corruption.. Rather, they recommended that Task Force Kandahar focus on reconsidering its perception of development and stabilization in context with the cultural nuances of the community; specifically, distinguishing between market integration and our Western perception of corruption.

At the local level in Afghanistan, where grassroots development and foreign direct investment have taken place, certain individuals are the major beneficiaries of those activities. These individuals control the majority of local business in their respective areas and absorb 99% of foreign development contracts from NATO, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and multinational corporations. Most development professionals and military decision makers do not know how to deal with these individuals effectively because of the specific Afghan business ethic; by Western standards, these businessmen should be in jail.

If we pull back and take a long-horizon perspective, the situation is far better than it appears. What these men represent is the first rung on the development ladder. In a country that lacks a rule of law, a structured economic market place and any accountability, these men have found a way to mitigate enormous risk and productively employ the local labor force, acquire scarce resources and synthesize labor and management to effectively achieve results. The effect accomplishes staggering economic gains and sets a precedent that is deeply encouraging for the local people. Furthermore, the economic structures they help establish lead to something even more important than higher rates of employment. Trade

and the opportunity for economic advancement make people behave more fairly. When individuals – regardless of their social stature – see themselves as part of the economic system, they recognize a sense of ownership in the community and begin to develop a competitive ethos that will drive them to improve their circumstances.

There is no doubt that Afghanistan, ranked 176 out of 178 on the Corruption Perception Index,<sup>15</sup> is one of the most corrupt countries on the planet. In order to understand why corruption is so prevalent there, it is helpful to first differentiate between bribery, kickbacks, and wholesale embezzling. Wholesale embezzling, or otherwise absconding with public money at the expense of the population, is a moot argument; its effect on the population, with the exception of the primary embezzler, is entirely damaging. On the other hand, corruption and kickbacks of public procurement act as a necessary evil to mitigate risk, leverage against liabilities, and promote cooperation. Afghanistan lacks accountability in the central government and regulation in the financial system. In light of these shortcomings, corruption may serve an important economic function; instead of being a product of dishonesty and greed, it may simply be a method toward market integration, a rational means of making up for a lack of oversight. Consider the following: Economic systems are built on relationships. In the West, the majority of time spent in business is devoted to soliciting clients and to maintaining relationships with them once they have been secured. This form of trust building enables each party to develop confidence in, and loyalty toward, the other. The amount of money spent on these activities dwarfs the amount that is spent on bribes, payoffs, and other “corrupt” payments in Afghanistan. While the patterns of exchange that exist in Afghanistan are defined as “corruption,” it’s worth remembering that these exchanges represent a rudimentary economic system, that they’re a form of establishing trust and cooperation with strangers, and that they’re intended to lower transaction costs and

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<sup>15</sup> [http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2010/results](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2010/results)

generate greater prosperity for all involved. Ultimately, they ensure mutually beneficial exchanges in situations where the participants are not bound by kinship, status, or other social ties.

Ultimately a cost benefit analysis was conducted; results indicated that the removal of key business leadership in the area would inflict a catastrophic impact on the economy, including the larger Panjwai province. The assessment highlighted the vulnerabilities that new management would face in completing construction, training, and development tasks. Retaliation from said key business leadership could be expected through sabotage, direct attacks on NATO forces, and increased cooperation with Taliban forces. The contagious effect on unemployment would also create disastrous second- and third-order effects such as increased partnerships between locals and the Taliban, locals returning to poppy cultivation, increased vulnerability toward religious radicalization, and dire humanitarian consequences. Furthermore, after a comprehensive ethnographic study was completed on the topic of corruption, virtually the entire village agreed that the Western term “bribery” was nothing more than *tarrun*, an Afghan word for contract or agreement.

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## **B. Recommendation Two: Responding to Taliban Presence**

Social science operators advised TFK *not* to use violence when engaging low-level Taliban supporters and empathizers in the community.

The Taliban have significant influence in Nakhonay. Members have direct ties to civic and business leaders, and there is virtually no distinction between supporters of the insurgency and the local population. The community’s identity is rooted in the inception, history, and evolution

of the Taliban ethos. For the people who inhabit Nakhonay and the surrounding villages, the Taliban is not an insurgency of foreigners; the Taliban is family. Three decades of conflict, abuse, and manipulation have solidified the need for Taliban leadership in Nakhonay. Changing influence, needs-based strategic decision making, an evolving ethos, and a willingness to adapt to enemy tactics, however, have redefined the Taliban's identity and operational tempo. In an effort to maintain legitimacy, allocate finances, garner support, and recruit members, the Taliban has evolved into a more shrewd and cosmopolitan insurgency. Essentially, the organization's associates in the region are learning the advantages of waging war on multiple fronts — economic, political, and religious — making Nakhonay an excellent case study for the new face of the Taliban.

The Taliban exist in Nakhonay on multiple levels. From information gathered on the ground, it would seem that “virtually everyone is associated with the Taliban.” Taliban exist in every mosque, business, farm, and home. Taliban leaders commute in and out of Nakhonay daily, their identity protected by a strong warrior ethos and “Takfiri”<sup>16</sup> methodology. They're mullahs, elders, shop owners, farmers, teachers, and doctors, and are represented in both the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP). Interestingly, the Taliban presence in Nakhonay has evolved over time, and the insurgency now exists in various layers within the community – all of them significant. Observing these layers, it is possible to distinguish between Taliban warriors, representatives, and supporters. The warrior class – including fighters, suicide bombers, and IED strategists – represents the frontline of the Taliban. The second layer, comprised of men known as

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<sup>16</sup> Takfiris have been classified by some commentators as violent offshoots of the Salafi movement, yet while Salafism is seen as a form of “fundamentalist Islam,” it is not an inherently violent movement and does not condone terrorism. Takfiris, on the other hand, condone acts of violence as legitimate methods of achieving religious or political goals.

“representatives,” seeks to influence community behavior by engaging in consensus-building activities and by lobbying decision makers in key industries. A third layer – the insurgency’s supporters – is not involved in direct action, but instead affects the community through propaganda and recruiting. The Taliban’s presence in Nakhonay consists predominately of the latter two groups, representatives and supporters.

Ultimately, HTS encouraged Task Force Kandahar to allow Nakhonay to continue growing unabated, despite the area’s strong Taliban connections. At the time this recommendation was made, Task Force Kandahar was preparing for another clearing operation in the area. Since the many previous clearing operations had resulted in little to no change, it was the opinion of HTS field staff that a better strategy was needed. Analysts believed it might be more effective to divide and conquer the population through an oil spot plan, a strategy described in detail by Karl Slaikeu:

The oil spot (OS) COIN strategy draws on the analogy of a cheese cloth representing a country. Drops of oil, one at a time and over time, eventually cover the entire cloth. The process begins with establishing a 100% secure perimeter, accomplished by CF in the first instance, and then transferred to local military in a particular village or other area of operation, and then, within this safe environment, launching stability initiatives, including services, governance, and development. With one OS functioning and under the protection of local army and police, CF partners with the Afghan Security Forces (ASF) to launch other OS villages. The advantages of this approach lie in the discrete gains that can be protected (as in shape, clear, hold, and build [FM 3.24]), and most important, each oil spot is a visible manifestation of the desired end state for the entire war. Any friend, foe, or fence sitter can see what CF is up to by looking at

security protected and services rendered within the oil spot village/town/city.<sup>17</sup>

Implementation of an OS strategy required both short- and long-term planning. In the short term, TFK would develop a community on the periphery of Nakhonay (Haji Baba); there, troops would undertake reconstruction activities, broaden employment opportunities, and provide security. The long-term strategy involved further development of Haji Baba, ultimately giving the inhabitants of Nakhonay a perspective of what life could be if they cooperated with the Canadian forces. As a 2010 article suggests, the strategy appears to be working: “Canadian troops have since pulled out of Nakhonay. Reintjes' team has set up in a compound in the neighboring village of Haji Baba, where warm food and running water are a luxury. Reintjes recently set a personal record: 34 days without a shower.... A lot of things have changed since then, and they were in the thick of the action by August around Nakhonay, a town now infamous as a killing zone....”<sup>18</sup>

### **C. Recommendation Three: Addressing Combat Outpost Compensation**

As discussed in the beginning of this case study, a Canadian regiment established a combat outpost in an abandoned home in the center of Nakhonay. After they moved in, they noticed a sharp uptick in the acts of violence directed against them. This violence did not match Human

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<sup>17</sup> Karl A. Slaikeu, “Winning the War in Afghanistan: An Oil Spot Plus Strategy for Coalition Forces,” *Small Wars Journal* May 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Montpetit, “Canadian soldiers resume mentoring Afghan National Army after turbulent spring,” *Military World*, Oct. 28, 2010. Even locals seem to have been anticipating a relatively calm few months due to the increased Canadian troop presence.

Intelligence (HUMINT) reporting, which indicated that Taliban fighters had left the area to harvest poppies in Helmand. General Menard of TFK instructed HTS members to go into the field to determine the source of the hostility and what could be done to fix it.

A team of six HTS members visited the area and interviewed locals. The team learned that a sub-tribe was angry at the regiment for having moved into one of the local homes. This home was owned by a village elder, a man from their tribe who lived in Kandahar half of the year and in his Nakhonay home the other half of the year. The Canadian regiment hadn't realized this when they selected the home as their outpost station. The violence, then, was the sub-tribe's method of retaliation; they were attacking the Canadian troops in an effort to drive them from the elder's property. After the HTT discovered this, they organized a meeting between the Platoon and the elder, ultimately devising a compensation repayment plan covering the regiment's occupation of the compound. Within days, violence in the area noticeably decreased and relations between the community and the Canadians improved.

### *Discussion Questions*

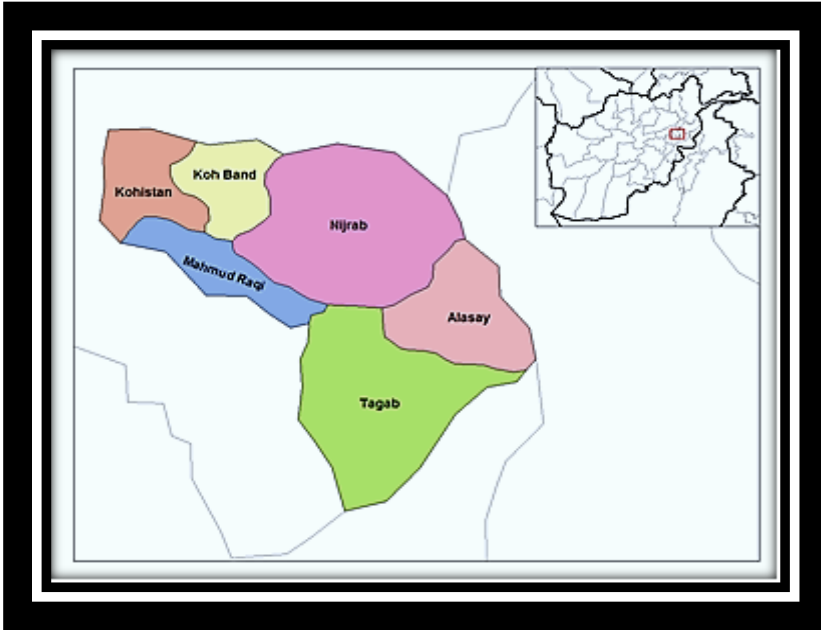
1. Can the population be positively influenced despite corrupt leadership? Do you always have to remove corrupt leaders, or can you work around them? How do you do this? What are the risks to your objectives and to the people you are working with?
2. If you knew that the only way to build a school, health clinic, or road in Afghanistan involved bribery, would you pay the bribe in order to pursue the development project? Where would you draw the line?
3. When we talk about "helping the Afghans," does that imply that we indoctrinate them with U.S. values? Can we help them while also observing their ethical standards? What are the

risks/rewards of each approach? When do the risks outweigh the rewards? What does “helping Afghans” really mean?

4. In an area that is thick with Taliban sympathizers and insurgents, can COIN-by-proxy (as in the case of Haji Baba) create a demand for change among the local population?
5. Given Nakhonay's profile, what other options were available?
6. What was missed?
7. What vulnerabilities can be exploited in Nakhonay to turn people against the Taliban?
8. What is the role of land tenure?
9. What negative effects are associated with giving in to local pressure?
10. Despite the success of the mission, what were the risks and limitations of the effort?
11. What could have prevented the escalation in violence in the first place?
12. What would have been the likely outcome in each scenario without the HTS recommendations? What alternative courses of action would have been taken, and what would their effects be?



### III. Tagab: The Lost Valley



**Figure 2: Tagab Valley**

Tagab Valley has never been held by a foreign force. Known as “The Lost Valley” by the Soviets, Tagab has long been a major Pashtun enclave, housing some of the greatest fighters in Afghanistan. For centuries, Tagab has celebrated a strong warrior culture by housing, feeding, and providing medical care for fighters in the area. The legacy that defines Tagab is based on the work of the late Mashayakh Miagul Jan Aga (aka Mohammad Sharif). Mohammad Sharif was a prominent leader who was instrumental in organizing regional opposition to the communist government in northern Afghanistan. Mujahedeen fighters used Tagab as a regional combat outpost for direct attacks against Soviet interests in Kabul

and Bagram Air Base. That esprit de corps is still present in the region today, and is bolstered by external actors who have helped create a strong indigenous fighting force in the community. As noted in a recent Center for Naval Analysis report, “The southern Tagab Valley was a stronghold of Pakistan-based insurgents responsible for numerous large-scale attacks in eastern Afghanistan. Enemy fighters moved freely through the area and controlled the population. There was no government presence there in 2008.”<sup>19</sup>

Since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2001, NATO allies have been unable to clear and secure Tagab. Fierce Taliban fighters, as well as politically motivated insurgencies such as Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HiG) and the Haqqani network, compete for territorial control of the area.<sup>20</sup> “Many of the insurgents making this push, according to this NGO worker, are actually from Pakistan: the HiG networks in the province remain mostly as they were, at least geographically (so mostly limited to places like the Tagab). While last night the police finally arrested one of the insurgent surveillance teams, there is tremendous concern that, much like in early 2008, Haqqani Network and HiG fighters will use Kapisa as a staging ground to launch anti-election attacks on Kabul.”<sup>21</sup>

Logistical, historical, and geographic features make Tagab especially attractive to these groups. Located at the base of the Hindu Kush Mountains, Tagab Valley is a weapons and narcotics hub. Insurgents have established complex routes through the seemingly impassable chain of mountains that directly link Tagab to Pakistan and the Islamic Emirate of Waziristan. “The [Tagab] valley, only 30 miles from Kabul, is rife with drug and timber smugglers, as well as insurgents. The insurgents are

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<sup>19</sup>Jerry-Katt Meyerle and Jim Megan-Gavrilis, “Counterinsurgency on the Ground in Afghanistan,” *CNA Analysis & Solutions*, November 2010.

<sup>20</sup>Jeffrey H. Norwitz, “Armed Groups,” US Naval War College, August 2008.

<sup>21</sup>Joshua Foust, “Kapisa Teeters,” *Registan.net*, 2009.

Taliban fighters and gunmen loyal to warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Officials say that based on their accents, some of the men appear to be Pakistani and Uzbeki.”<sup>22</sup> Tagab’s proximity to Kabul and Bagram Air Force Base has also made it a significant strategic location for the Taliban. Over the past decade, countless attacks on Kabul and Bagram have been planned and executed from this Taliban staging ground.

On April 28, 2008, during a high-profile parade honoring Afghanistan National Day in downtown Kabul, Afghan President Hamid Karzai and dozens of top-ranking NATO military and civilian leadership experienced the brazen contempt of the Taliban. At the height of the ceremony, gunfire erupted in close proximity to Karzai and several NATO dignitaries, sending the crowd into a panic. Chaos ensued as Afghan and NATO troops worked frantically to secure an area in which there was no clear shooter and thousands were running for their lives. The Taliban experienced a major victory that day. It sent a global message that, despite the best efforts of the world’s most powerful countries, *it* was still in control of Afghanistan. NATO leadership, stunned at the clandestine nature of the attack, tracked the center of the operation to Tagab, a small village in Kapsia Province. According to a reporter covering the story, “The Taliban's ability to attack a ceremony amid heightened security in the heart of Kabul while scores of VIPs attended served as a major propaganda coup for the Taliban who previously claimed they can launch an attack anywhere in Afghanistan at a time of their choosing. The preceding raid in Kapisa may also be significant, indicating the Taliban's reliance on the Tagab Valley as the key staging ground for attacks against targets in Kabul and Bagram.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson, “US-Afghan Forces Try to Stabilize Lawless Region,” NPR, 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Matt Dupee, “Kapisa Province: The Taliban’s Gateway to Kabul,” *The Long War Journal*, April 2008.

## NIGH: AN OPERATOR'S GUIDE TO HUMAN TERRAIN TEAMS

As of October 2010, ISAF forces switched from an offensive to defensive operational posture in Tagab. The area of operation, governed by the French with an embedded US Army SOF ODA and a Provincial Reconstruction Team, has yet to clear the AO (excluding the Tagab bazaar). Simply stated, the area is too dangerous to conduct an offensive “build” strategy. As one French commander observed, French troops take fire four out of five times outside the wire and are unable to drive the Taliban back from their positions. In a conversation with a French soldier, an American-born Legionnaire echoed the commander’s sentiment:

When we go on patrol we get contact from all sides. Other than FOB Kutschbach, we have no safe areas. For example, we see farmers working in the fields. We stop and talk with them. Sometimes they offer us a drink, raisins or nuts. We part with a smile and a hand shake. A kilometer down the road we take contact. Ten minutes later we are taking fire from all around in a complex attack. When the dust settles it was the farmers that we talked to who coordinated the attack. A different culture and language drives our inability to connect to the people. Half the time we just hang around the Afghans without even talking to them and check the COIN box.

US forces in the area have not fared better. The US Army SOF at Kutschbach in particular has their hands full. They’re tasked with the important role of training the Afghan military and police, as well as the local route maintenance teams (RMT) that provide security along major roadways. Recently, however, SOF at Kutschbach have been ordered to undertake more High Value Target (HVT) missions. This change in strategy has limited the unit’s ability to achieve its grassroots objectives. The HVT missions have had a double edged effect in the community. The assassination of Taliban leaders – tenured officials in many Afghan

communities – often creates a power vacuum, reviving long-standing feuds and rivalries among political factions. These factions then jockey for position, as each is hoping to win territorial control of the country when NATO pulls out. Without accountable, pro-NATO replacements prepped to replace Taliban leadership, the effort is circuitous.

US Army SOF are also restricted to the immediate area around the FOB and are not able to realize their full potential in the battle space. Valleys and main supply routes in Tagab are deemed “too risky” by ISAF command. These limitations have been construed as stifling to both Army SOF operators and members of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), both of whom are eager to effect change in Afghanistan. Part of the tension is due to friction between French and US command, the two Coalition entities competing for control of the battlespace. Unable to communicate with each other effectively, they’ve set aside many pressing issues in the AO so as not to worsen their already tenuous relationship. Furthermore, PRTs, USAID, and other aid organizations implement programs, train locals, and give generously to construction projects for schools, roads, and wells. However, schools are empty, roads unused, and wells dry. This has been the situation for almost five years, and little or no change has occurred in the region. Although this case does not represent all regions in Afghanistan, it does exemplify a decade’s worth of operation protocol in which strategy has been sacrificed for tactical ambition. French-led operations in Tagab have evolved haphazardly; instead of implementing proactive, consciously formulated strategies, French commanders have developed a largely reactive posture. Understanding this phenomenon, military and civilian leadership have begun to take greater care in consulting operators in the field. Their hope is that doing so will prevent further errors and help construct strategies with longer-term success.

## NIGH: AN OPERATOR'S GUIDE TO HUMAN TERRAIN TEAMS

An HTT member embedded with US Army Special Forces Operation Detachment Alfa for a 60-day mission. Based on the problems presented, the following mission objectives were developed:

1. Define characteristics of key civilian areas, including districts, municipalities, and provinces in the targeted area of operation. Focus efforts on areas of high economic value, centers of government or political discourse, culturally important areas, and tribal/ethnic enclaves.
2. Analyze the capability of local authorities to perform key functions and provide the populace with essential services. Develop metrics of essential capabilities required to save and sustain life, including the development of health clinics, the provision of food, water, and sanitation services, and the operation of public administration and public safety organizations.
3. Understand how the community is organized according to local definitions of order and influence. Distinguish who is formally and informally influential in the community and what characteristics (wealth, education, family lineage, ethnicity, and tribe) influence perception. Determine if influential members of the community are affiliated with organizations that may be indigenous to the area.

A specific directive was given by French General Chavany to answer the following questions:

1. How are insurgents undermining NATO efforts in the region? Are they using our capabilities against us (development funding, SOF training, technological prowess)? How does the population respond to NATO forces working in the area? Has there been a trend of

success or failure with gaining the support of the population?

2. How can NATO control the direction and outcome of the conflict? What are our weaknesses and strengths, and how can we improve upon them?
3. Who are the informal leaders in the community? Other than appointed district governors and village elders, who does the population trust? Where does the population go in order to resolve conflicts or receive advice?

When the assignment was over, the HTT member reported his findings. He identified development funding as a trigger point for conflict in Kapisa, drew attention to the unintended economic consequences of providing direct aid to locals in Tagab, and underscored the value of identifying and working with second and third layers of leadership. Ultimately, the information, resources, and effort that went into the mission were subject to the discretion of NATO leadership. The following assessments were made to General Chavancy, PRT Kapisa, the civilian and military leadership in Kabul, and the political and military leadership in France.

### **A. Recommendation One: Address Road Compensation**

PRT and French commanders implemented a road construction plan in Kapisa. The concept behind the program was to pave roads and open routes to otherwise inaccessible villages. The long-term goal was to increase traffic frequency to remote areas, bringing about economic and security gains for each village. PRT Kapisa contracted the work to an Afghan construction and security company. A noticeable increase in violence occurred within the area shortly after the road construction plan went into effect. PRT Kapisa and French forces utilized Human Terrain Systems to engage the population and determine the cause of the violence.

According to the HTT assessment, the second- and third-order effects of the road compensation plan had fueled hostility, violence, and corruption. The Afghan construction team used its private security force to intimidate and forcibly remove individuals from homes and farmland. Afghan private security teams demanded payment from homeowners to build around their properties; those who could not afford the collateral lost everything they had. Building through homes and private farms yielded a higher profit margin for the construction company, cutting costs that would have otherwise gone into building around local properties. This increased violence in Kapisa province and created a security/accountability vacuum in which the population felt it had no recourse to justice.

Moreover, the contractors paid off local Afghan police and military forces so that they would not interfere with the company's program of extortion. Taliban forces took advantage of this situation by providing the community with immediate justice and security. They further capitalized on the situation by creating a divide between the populace and NATO forces.

After social scientists completed their field work and assessments, they reported their findings to command leaders and field operators. This led to a change in strategy and immediate results. For example, "[w]hen the local population expressed dissatisfaction with previous attempts at road compensation for homes and shops that were destroyed so the road could be widened, Kapisa PRT and the Human Terrain Team re-initiated road compensation discussions during a meeting with 20 local farmers in April at Forward Operating Base Morales-Frazier."<sup>24</sup> Subsequent measures included a successful road compensation program and the firing of the contracted construction and security companies.

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<sup>24</sup> "Kapisa PRT, Contractors Pay Road Compensation," n.d., <http://www.dvidshub.net/news/58062/kapisa-prt-contractors-pay-road-compensation> (accessed August 2012).



## B. Recommendation Two: Identify Layers of Leadership

Tagab Valley, a Taliban incubation point with strong foreign connections, has been under comprehensive Taliban rule since the early 1990s. Taliban infestation saturates the community to the point where NATO forces have called the AO a “no go zone.” “When the Marines arrived in April 2008, the Tagab Valley was considered a no go area where insurgents moved freely.”<sup>25</sup> Leadership in the community was restricted to two or three individuals in town. Locals appealed to NATO forces, pleading that their needs were not being met. After nearly six weeks, US Army SOF and a Human Terrain Team social science field researcher devised an alternative plan to address the needs of the populace. This entailed marginalizing the first layer of leadership and identifying new sources of power and authority. A key finding was that mullahs held considerable influence in the community. Using religion as a unifying force, they were able to transcend tribal, ethnic, and familial bonds. Furthermore, they had the unique ability to challenge the Taliban while still holding the respect of the population.

To gain influence among the population and establish new leadership in the community, HTS personnel began holding an “alternative *shura*.” The intent was to appeal to the vanity of patriarchal figures in the community. Implementation of the strategy was fairly simple: at the first community-wide *shura*, local elites were asked, in front of the larger community, to join ISAF leaders for a special leadership *shura*. While the first layer participated in this exclusive *shura*, second and third layers of leadership were identified; using a method of systematic questioning, HTT analysts drew out natural leaders in the community, those who locals respond to when the community’s institutionalized leaders are not present.

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<sup>25</sup> Jerry-Katt Meyerle and Jim Megan-Gavrilis, “Counterinsurgency on the Ground in Afghanistan,” *CNA Analysis & Solutions*, November 2010.

Not only did the team identify these unofficial leaders but they also learned important information about the community as a whole. The general consensus of the people in Tagab was that their leaders were a disappointment. In the end, the alternative shura concept helped identify new layers of leadership and addressed the communication gap between Tagab's population and its leaders.

After nearly two months, social scientists developed a strategy for engaging with Tagab's highly kinetic populace. This strategy was based on the development of a working relationship between the Coalition and local mullahs. Unlike the area's businessmen, elders, and other leaders, Tagab's mullahs were not susceptible to Taliban influence. They not only had the respect and trust of the community but were connected to syndicate insurgencies in the AO,— ties that further distanced them from the Taliban. When roaming Taliban teams came through Tagab and tried to intimidate the mullahs, locals routinely stood up and drove the Taliban out. Ultimately, the people unanimously pointed to their mullahs as the most trustworthy individuals in the village. In Tagab, Mullahs hold a special place in the community because they are able to overcome tribal, ethnic, familial, and economic feuds. This is extremely important in a society influenced by multiple ideologies and ethnicities. The mullah, through Islam, represents a point of cohesion, a unifying force in a land defined by foreign occupation, war, and death.

### **C. Recommendation Three: Prevent Dollarization and Crowding Out the Population**

Within Tagab is a bazaar that hosts over 10,000 people a week. This bazaar is one of the main commercial hubs in Kapisa Province, and is also the economic lifeblood for the people of Tagab. Food, medical supplies, farm equipment, and basic household products are imported to

the bazaar from Iran and Pakistan, as well as from other provinces within Afghanistan. These products are essential for the survival of the people of Tagab. Over the past few years, prices in the bazaar have undergone unprecedented levels of inflation. This has had a dramatic effect on the population; goods and services that were previously accessible are now fiscally out of reach. The community has suffered greatly and correctly blames NATO for their predicament.

During a comprehensive review of the economic situation in Tagab, subject matter experts discovered that NATO forces were purchasing significant quantities of food and medical supplies from the bazaar. This practice, extremely common throughout Afghanistan, essentially crowded out the local population, depriving them of access to the market and its goods and services. According to the subject matter experts who investigated this economic conundrum, several factors were at play. First, NATO forces had unintentionally bid up the value of the local merchandise. Markets in Afghanistan do not have the same level of accessibility that markets in the West enjoy. Restrictions in transportation, barriers to entry, and a lack in vendor supply limit the quantity of most goods throughout Afghanistan. When NATO forces in Tagab began attending the bazaar, they bought nearly all of the limited goods that were available. Local merchants, cognizant of NATO's purchasing power, increased their prices, a measure which only served to exclude the local community further. NATO troops, believing their behavior to be generous, continued to satiate the price demands of the merchants.

Another problem stemmed from NATO's use of non-Afghan currency when purchasing goods. This issue, loosely dubbed "dollarization," effectively drove down the value of Afghan currency in the community, thus increasing the cost of goods and services to area residents. According to the local population, the infusion of large amounts of cash in the bazaar economy never trickled down. Rather, it helped pay for lavish homes in Dubai, where a cartel of owners – men who controlled

shops in bazaars throughout the region – lived. “Jabarkhel [Brigadier General Mohammed Asif Jabarkhel] is referring to the huge amounts of money regularly being secreted out of Afghanistan by plane in boxes and suitcases. According to some estimates, since 2007, at least \$3 billion (€2.4 billion) in cash has left the country in this way. The preferred destination for these funds is Dubai, the tax haven in the Persian Gulf. And, given the fact that Afghanistan's total GDP amounts to the equivalent of \$13.5 billion, there is no way that the funds involved in this exodus are merely the proceeds of legal business transactions.”<sup>26</sup> Back in Afghanistan, the bazaar cartel paid insurgents to protect their financial interests.

These factors have contributed to growing resentment and anger toward NATO in Tagreb. As locals themselves have noted, the economic disruption has contributed to increased violence against NATO forces in the community. Social science operators and subject matter experts provided this information to French military and civilian leaders in Afghanistan and France. These leaders determined that Coalition forces should NOT enter the Afghan commercial market, a strategy which would prevent them from inadvertently determining how much the average Afghan pays for goods. Instead, NATO payments were to reflect the average consumer price index.

The problem of Coalition troops distorting local economies is persistent throughout Afghanistan. In Kabul, for instance, prices of homes have increased to the point where locals are no longer able to afford living in the capital. NATO forces, NGOs, and multinational corporations have effectively driven the prices of homes up and the indigenous population out. “According to local estate agents prices in some parts of Kabul have risen by 75% in the past year. Part of this is due to the fact that international agencies are willing to pay to acquire properties in the best

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<sup>26</sup>Susanna Koelbl, “US Cuts Aid After Millions Siphoned Off to Dubai,” Spiegel Online International, July 5, 2010.

locations, but also wealthy Afghans are buying again, having had their fingers burned in badly hit real estate markets such as Dubai.”<sup>27</sup>

### *Discussion Questions*

1. What role does the military have in coordinating with USAID and following up with the allocation of Commander Emergency Response Funding (CERP)?
2. What was wrong with the assumption that having an “Afghan” face on the road construction project would have positive effects?
3. How can a situation like this be prevented in the future?
4. Why was it necessary to bring in an HTT to determine the source of the road construction conflict? Why did it take team input to initiate a compensation plan for the disenfranchised locals?
5. How were local Taliban taking advantage of friction, and of seams and gaps in communications? Why were they able to do this?
6. What could have backfired in the alternative shura? What were the risks and were they worth the rewards?
7. What happens when the Taliban identify this strategy and how might they adapt? What do you do next?
8. What are other methods to communicate effectively with the population without being filtered by the Taliban and corrupt leadership?
9. What does it take to develop a working relationship with power brokers in the community? Can you do it without providing money and doing favors?
10. If the mullahs worked with NATO and were protected by the population, how would the Taliban respond?
11. How can NATO forces support the Afghan economy without crowding out the local population?

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<sup>27</sup> James Melik, “Property Market in Afghanistan Capital Bucks Trend,” BBC World Service, 2009.

12. If NATO forces do decide to purchase goods from a local merchant, what steps can be made to ensure price stability for the Afghan consumer?
  13. Other than buying goods from locals, what can NATO forces do, even at a combat outpost, to encourage development and protect the interests of the Afghan livelihood?
  14. What are the primary economic weaknesses that are exploited by the Taliban?
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## **IV. Relevance of Social Science Research in Combat Zones**

Bringing a social science capacity to the battle-space offers leaders a unique perspective, adding substantive value to the military decision-making process. Individuals trained in the social sciences (economics, sociology, psychology, political science, anthropology) understand the many social factors germane to conflict and are well-positioned to present qualified viewpoints on relevant issues. Broadly speaking, they provide a baseline on how to understand and interpret social dynamics. But they can also address more specific information needs. For instance, if a need exists for an in-depth analysis unique to a particular social science discipline, commanders can request a consultation to suit that need. Ultimately, the value social science provides is in three areas: challenging group think, mapping second- and third-order effects, and providing technical analyses.

People who are collectively taught, isolated from outside influences, and exposed to a single point of view are potentially limited in their ability to think outside the parameters of their training. This is true regardless of the organization responsible for instruction, and it results in individuals who are prone to lapses in self-awareness. Defined as “groupthink,” this phenomenon can make people reluctant to offer diverse opinions, as doing so may upset the larger organizational balance. Instead of considering alternative scenarios and opposing arguments, individuals are encouraged to make hasty, often irrational, decisions. In the aggregate, these “programmed” behaviors can have a debilitating effect on an organization. This situation is exacerbated in hierarchical organizations like the military, where individuals are tempted to misrepresent themselves to superiors in order to further their careers. To battle this type of cognitive failure, it is necessary to encourage exogenous factors of

influence. As noted in a 2008 *US News and World Report* article, the Army itself has become wary of the role groupthink plays in military affairs: “In the wake of chaos and a lethal insurgency in Iraq, blamed in no small part on poor decisions and a lack of planning at the highest levels, the U.S. Army has had a startling insight that is upending conventional thinking about how the military works. That epiphany is that the force needs fewer yes men.”<sup>28</sup>

Social scientists can play a fundamental role in creating a more adaptive force precisely because they bring a civilian mindset to the military context. They can ameliorate a soldier’s temptation to stereotype, self-censor, and display unquestioned discipline. By playing “devil’s advocate,” they encourage deeper levels of analysis and reflection. Ultimately, their involvement in military operations is designed to improve the quality and consistency of military decision-making process.

In a counterinsurgency environment, it is paramount to the success of the mission that military officials and frontline soldiers fully understand how they are perceived by the local public. It is equally important to realize how the strategies of outside actors affect the populace. The application of systems such as HTS fulfills both missions. Commanders can utilize social science research by tasking SMEs with specific investigations related to planned courses of action. Studying social reactions in this way enables Coalition forces to anticipate or prevent the development of community grievances and, ultimately, violence. If we are to minimize failures on the battlefield, if we are to learn from previous errors and realize success in Afghanistan, mapping second- and third-order effects must be a standard requirement in military decision-making processes.

The greatest benefit derived from mapping second- and third-order effects has to do with prevention. Using forecasting techniques, social

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<sup>28</sup> Anna Mulrine, “The army trains a skeptics corps to battle groupthink,” *US News and World Report*, May 2008.



science operators can evaluate and project how the population will react to military action, albeit overt or covert.. Knowing the likely effect is fundamental to building confidence and establishing consistency with the populace. In virtually every field – including business, sports, government, academia, science, and entertainment – professionals seek to develop a matrix for understanding the second- and third-order effects of their work. It stands to reason, considering the complex nature of war, that military leaders embrace a similarly analytical approach.

## **A. Consumers of Social Science Research in the Battle Space**

Military and civilian personnel, regardless of rank or position, benefit from the higher degrees of understanding, awareness, and interpretation that social science frameworks offer. Social science research can be tailored to the operational relevance of the consumer, whether a general, a commander, or an intelligence organization; in fact, it is best utilized when guided or administered by the consumer. Sending social scientists into the field, where they can pick up the rhythm and feel of battle, allows for a unique perspective in the decision-making process.

General officers have the most to gain from these efforts. Acting as consultants, social scientists are tasked directly by the general officer and therefore operate outside the purview of his support staff. This arrangement is by design. Securing a direct line of communication from SMEs to command leaders ensures that information is delivered unfiltered, with no additional commentary or bias. Considering the evaluative nature of this information, direct communications are essential. Social scientists assess the effectiveness of strategies that have already been implemented, including their impact on the populace and on other critical information components. They evaluate campaigns, leadership, operational efficiency, and public sentiment – all in an effort to contribute to the overall

effectiveness of the general's operational strength. This work is also important in that it fills a gap in command's understanding of the battlespace. In traditional military operations and chains of command, generals only get information about the enemy. Indeed, it is striking how little knowledge generals and commanders above the brigade level have of the population in their charge. This is especially worrisome in places like Afghanistan, where the populace is extremely segmented and diverse.

Commanders at the battalion, company, and platoon levels benefit from the work of social scientists both strategically and operationally. Embedded SMEs provide cultural information to help soldiers better understand and work with the target population. They help soldiers develop a greater awareness of cultural nuances and share specific strategies and techniques for engaging locals. Social scientists participate in level zero planning processes; this includes working with military personnel to develop targets of opportunity with the community, to contextualize the various layers of influence present in target areas, and to anticipate points of contention. It also entails training locals to isolate insurgents. Social scientists work on cultural and economic assessments to determine the pace of development and the origins of influence – cultural, financial, and religious – in each community. Furthermore, social scientists give soldiers on patrol a sense of purpose and direction. Instead of walking through a community, social scientists encourage patrols to stop, talk with individual Afghans, and develop relationships with them. Social scientists develop frameworks for understanding the businesses, mosques, agricultural fields, and ethnic enclaves in which Coalition soldiers must operate – frameworks that they then provide to command for consideration.

Finally, social scientists provide intelligence organizations a clearer picture of the non-combatant side of the population. While traditional intelligence is mainly focused on the kinetic population, social science research focuses entirely on the non-kinetic side of the population.

As alluded to in a 2010 report on intelligence operations in Afghanistan,<sup>29</sup> a narrow kinetic focus puts the entire mission in jeopardy:

Eight years into the war in Afghanistan, the U.S. intelligence community is only marginally relevant to the overall strategy. Having focused the overwhelming majority of its collection efforts and analytical brainpower on insurgent groups, the vast intelligence apparatus is unable to answer fundamental questions about the environment in which U.S. and allied forces operate and the people they seek to persuade. Ignorant of local economics and landowners, hazy about who the powerbrokers are and how they might be influenced, incurious about the correlations between various development projects and the levels of cooperation among villagers, and disengaged from people in the best position to find answers – whether aid workers or Afghan soldiers – U.S. intelligence officers and analysts can do little but shrug in response to high level decision-makers seeking the knowledge, analysis, and information they need to wage a successful counterinsurgency.<sup>30</sup>

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[http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/AfghanIntel\\_Flynn\\_Jan2010\\_code507\\_voices.pdf](http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/AfghanIntel_Flynn_Jan2010_code507_voices.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Flynn, GEN. Michael T./Pottinger, CAPT Matt/Batchelor, Paul, “Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan,” Center for a New American Security. Jan 2010.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. What are the limitations to social science research in a battlefield environment?
2. What difficulty might there be in persuading a military officer or his superiors to accept unexpected second- and third-order effects that a SME foresees?

## V. Methodology

The methodology outlined below is designed to draw out societal grievances that explain and predict anti-NATO activities . This data collection plan serves as a resource for commanders and field operators in Afghanistan, including leaders tasked with implementing COIN strategies, building consensus, and reducing casualties. The methodology is simple in theory, but it is dangerous to execute and its effects are challenging to analyze. To implement this type of advisory program successfully, individuals must act resolutely and examine data rigorously. They must also be flexible, as the methodology itself may be refined to meet operational needs.

The method of analysis is ordered into a three-step data collection plan: the identification of group identity, the study of community power structures, and the analysis of local hierarchies of need.

### A. Step One: Social Identity

In the counterinsurgency battle-space, identifying social groups must be the first priority. Ancillary factors such as economics, religion, and culture must be contextualized within the sphere of the social group. This is especially important in less developed states that lack accountability in the central government. Foundational elements like religion can vastly differ from one social group to another, despite logistical proximity and historical ties. This phenomenon has become prevalent in Afghanistan, due to years of destabilization from war, poverty, and lawlessness. Social groups have developed as religious and tribal microcosms. Afghans can no longer be identified through their tribe or region. The Afghan identity is understood at the village level and is subject to innumerable factors relative to each region. The following outlines a systematic process for developing an awareness of the social groups that exert spheres of influence in Afghan communities.

To begin, it is important to develop an outline of how people identify themselves in a community. What beliefs do they subscribe to? Where do they live? How are they organized? Where do they congregate? The purpose of asking these questions is to collect metrics, which are then used to identify similarities in how people identify themselves relative to one another. The collector must make these determinations himself, rather than depend on the community's definition.

Considerations such as geographic location, territorial control, tribal/sub-tribal affiliation, mosque affiliation, areas of contention, and leadership provide a broad picture of how social groups define membership. The key factor is identifying how these groups interact with each other. Chances are that conflict exists within the community, and identifying those conflict triggers will play a large role in understanding how the insurgency manipulates the population. Ultimately, the community will divide into social groups for the purpose of survival and shared interest. Make no mistake: on the surface, ideology will appear to be the primary adhesive component to the group. In reality, however, pragmatic factors such as security and mutual economic interest are more fundamental to group dynamics.

## **B. Step Two: Civic Power Study**

After a thorough collection and analysis of the social structure, focus should move toward developing an exhaustive understanding of who is formally and informally influential in the community. Understanding layers of leadership in the community is essential for developing allies and identifying enemies. On the surface, community leaders may deliberately misrepresent themselves in order to lull interviewers into dropping their guard and being more trusting.

If leadership in the community is not tied to insurgency, it is still important to understand who is effective and who is not. To develop metrics on leadership, understanding which leadership traits are esteemed

in the community is essential. Traits such as wealth, prestige, number of wives, education, familial lineage, land ownership, and insurgent ties will afford varying degrees of power and influence. The weight of each trait is relative to each community. That being said, it is necessary to seek answers from the population to understand what it takes to become a leader, to review how leaders in the community gained power, and to understand how those positions have evolved historically. Finally, gaps and layers of leadership in the community should be identified. This is the most important component in plotting the power scheme that determines social hierarchy. Generally speaking, first-layer leadership in a community under the control or influence of an insurgency will have connections with said insurgency. The first layers will not always represent the will and voice of the community. To properly assess and affect the populace, identifying who is in informal leadership positions is absolutely essential. These individuals form the second layer of leadership and can accurately represent the true dynamics of the community. They can also fill leadership vacuums in the event that first layers are removed.

### **C. Step Three: Hierarchy of Needs**

Finally, the social science operator will establish a hierarchy of needs in terms of economy, infrastructure, education, and health care. It is important to establish a rank of needs in the community to determine the urgency of implementing scarce resources. More importantly, it is paramount to the success of the development scheme to identify if the allocation will trigger conflict.

It is important to consider the most unbiased perspective when assessing the community. Virtually everyone is going to have a personal stake in acquiring development/reconstruction funds and will do and say whatever it takes to benefit. To properly assess the needs of the populace, a thorough examination of the community must occur outside the observations of the community members.

The first priority must be to develop a baseline collection plan that will focus on cataloguing the quality, availability and restrictions of food staples. Who has access and why? It is important to consider the current price and what the pricing trends have been over the past few years. Other factors include where the food comes from, price discrimination, environmental factors (flood, drought), and abundance (does farming exist to the level to provide for the whole community?). The next priority should be to assess the quality of waste management, including the sanitary condition of the community. Social scientists need to collect water samples, examine refuse outlets, and determine where human waste is discarded. In less-developed communities, disease caused by unsanitary conditions can wipe out the populace despite ample food resources. Development professionals are often afraid to tackle this issue out of fear of offending the populace and a general disdain for the subject. The reality is, no matter how many schools, medical clinics, or roads are built, if the people cannot live in sanitary conditions, efforts are moot. Other areas of infrastructure include quality and availability of roads, medical care, schools and communications. Determining the availability and abundance of said infrastructure inputs will provide a clear picture of the community's priorities.

## **D. Implementation and Field Research**

Field research and collection techniques make up the meat of what the social science operator does in the field. Without time in the field, observing, analyzing, and interviewing, the product is nothing more than a regurgitation of previous work and effort. Thus it is important to understand what a social scientist does in the field, how he/she collects information, interacts with the populace, assesses events, analysis data, and essentially creates a niche that others, without similar training and experience, could not do. Social science field research or combat ethnography cannot occur without fluid integration with the unit. The unit



must feel comfortable with the individual both professionally, tactically, and personally. A humble, honest, and professional demeanor is absolutely necessary to make the relationship work. Ultimately, the social scientist works at the behest of the unit and subsequent commanders. Although he or she should have a voice in the planning process, hierarchical decrees ultimately dictate operational tempo and priorities.

The intent of pursuing data is to provide a baseline assessment that will grow and develop according to knowledge gaps and operational needs. The requisite objectives are neither exclusive nor subjective toward a specific end-state. Rather, they serve as a starting point, according to the aforementioned three tiers of analysis. It will best serve the quality and rigor of the analysis to make every effort to personally interview the population in their own environment. This approach will reduce bias and contextual influence that interviewing on a base or other NATO-enforced complex will provide.

The collection and dissemination process of field data is never static. To maintain a comprehensive picture of operational environment, collection procedures must constantly be employed. The optimal scenario is full attachment and integration, which begins at the brigade level under the purview of a general. The general has full control of the social scientist and his or her team. The critical component is providing the brigade with a constant flow of relevant information and following the Commander's Critical Information Requirements. From the Brigade, the team will embed with a platoon, generally at a combat outpost. The relevance and quality of the work will rely on the working relationship and respect of the Platoon. A key component to this is having current military or ex-military personnel on the team with the social scientist. Conflicting cultural nuances between the military and civilians can be brokered through this component.

As explained above, the aim of the social scientist is to uncover layers of the social dynamics that make up the identity of the community.

This is done through a systematic collection plan that digs beneath casual observation. Generalizing this plan is difficult, and considerations must be given to the location in which it is being implemented. An example of a plan follows, including the initial questions that were used in Afghanistan.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. If the social scientist clashes with the forces he or she is embedded with, what might the consequences be? What might influence how seriously a SME's recommendations are taken? What would be the consequences of that?
2. Is an outside professional always required to figure out such things as the social structure and a community's needs? If so, why? If not, how else could this be done?
3. If a proposed development plan is identified as low priority or likely to cause conflict in the community, what should happen? What relationship should there be between an occupying military force and the international development community?

## VI. Social Science Operational Schedule (CONOP)

### A. Schedule

The following is a systematic schedule that was employed in Afghanistan by social scientists in Kandahar and Kapisa provinces. The process is broken down into a six-week actionable program that concludes with Command and staff briefings. Ultimately, these briefings resulted in recommendations for moving forward in the same AO or moving into other AOs as designated by military or civilian leadership. This particular operation took approximately six weeks to complete. Variations in operation procedures are dependent upon a myriad of factors and thus not bound to set timelines. The following is simply an example of one such schedule implemented over a 12-month period in Afghanistan.

The process usually begins by meeting with the general and his staff to capture a picture of the AO, requisite Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIRs), and the operational timeline. From that point, the team takes about a week to develop a pre-baseline assessment. Phase One focuses on data capture from the general's staff, identifying knowledge gaps, engagement strategies, operational challenges in the field, and expectations. Analysts review intelligence material to paint a clear kinetic and non-kinetic picture of the AO. Data is consolidated with CCIRs, Company and Platoon Leaders Stability Operations Aide-Memoires and Societal IPB's to identify knowledge gaps. Analytical efforts conclude with a comprehensive research plan that outlines implied objectives. Phase Two includes pre-mission preparations, coordination with field entities, and all tactical/support requirements. Phase Three, lasting at least three weeks, is spent in the field. Effort is concentrated on conducting original field research designed to answer all socio-cultural CCIRs. Finally, Phase Four concludes the concept of

operation with analysis and dissemination of all captured data. Information is consolidated and presented through Command and staff briefings.

## **B. Example of a Mission Conducted in Afghanistan**

The following timetable was developed for a mission in March 2010 in Bazaar'e Panjwai (Kandahar Province).

### 1) Concept of Operation (CONOP)

#### i) Phase 1: 30 March – 1 April

- (a) Data capture from TFK, AF-IV, DCGS, CIDNE, and KPRT
- (b) Analyze consolidated data and build baseline assessment
- (c) Use CCIRs, "Company and Platoon Leaders Stability Operations Aide-Memoire" and "Societal IPB" to identify knowledge gaps and create research plan
- (d) Pre-mission prep and research

#### ii) Phase 2: 2 April – 18 April

- (a) Conduct original, specific field research designed to answer socio-cultural CCIRs

#### iii) Phase 3: 19 April – 25 April

- (a) Analysis, production and dissemination
- (b) Command and staff briefs
- (c) Way Ahead

### 2) Implementation

- i) Three social scientists spent 21 days in Bazaar-e Panjwai
- ii) 32 foot patrols in the community
- iii) Held shuras with local community leaders
- iv) Occupant interviews at vehicle checkpoints
- v) Conducted over 50 individual interviews
- vi) Surveyed local businesses and mosques
- vii) Held interviews on base

- 3) Findings
    - i) Social Groups
    - ii) Community Power Study
    - iii) Hierarchy of Needs
  - 4) Commander's Guidance?
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## VII. Annexes

### Annex A: Collection Objectives

The intent of pursuing data on the following will provide a baseline assessment that will grow and develop according to knowledge gaps and operational needs. The requisite objectives are neither exclusive nor subjective toward a specific end-state. Rather, they serve as a starting point according to the aforementioned three-tiers of analysis. It will best serve the quality and rigor of the analysis to make every effort to personally interview the following in their own environment. This approach will reduce bias and contextual influence that interviewing on a base or other NATO-enforced complex will provide.

#### Mosques

- Obtain or update grid coordinates on all major mosques and sub-mosques with picture
- Identify tribal affiliation to mosques
- Identify associated elders to mosques and or persons of influence
- Determine if and how mosques generate revenue
  - Populace (tithes)?
  - External factors?
  - Wealthy beneficiaries?
- Determine congregation size and affiliation for or against NATO or insurgency

#### Mullah

- Basic biometrics (Get Picture)
  - Name
  - Age

## NIGH: AN OPERATOR'S GUIDE TO HUMAN TERRAIN TEAMS

- Tribal Affiliation
- Spoken Language & Dialect
- Place of Birth
- Education
  - Location?
- Determine who the most influential Mullah or Imam is in Tagab.
  - Is there a hierarchy?
  - How is the Mullah appointed or recruited?
  - What relationship do they have with the community?
  - Is there conflict between Mullahs?
    - Ideology?
    - Congregation size (competition)
    - Money?
  - Does the community approach the Mullah or Elder when they are faced with problems?
  - How can the Mullah effect change in the community?

### **Business & Commerce (Excluding Agriculture)**

- Get grid coordinates and picture on all businesses in Tagab
- What do they sell?
- Where do the goods come from?
- What specific products are in demand?
- What are the major impediments of growth in the specific business?
- How many customers do they get every week/month?
- What are the busiest days of the week and why?
- Where do customers come from?
- What is their average monthly profit?
  - What is the most lucrative month or months of the year?
- Who are their major competitors?

- Do they have to give a certain percentage of their income to anyone? Insurgents, government officials, etc?

### **Business Owners**

- Biometrics including:
  - Name
  - Age
  - Tribe
  - Birth Location
  - Education
  - Spoken Language
- What mosque they attend?
- Who they trust in Tagab and why?
- What are the major factors of conflict in Tagab?
- Who is the most influential business person in Tagab and why?
- How can business improve in Tagab?
- Perceptions of ANA/ANP/RMT?

### **Second Layer Leadership**

- **Mirro (Water Distributor)** ultimately it is going to be very difficult to approach every farmer. The Mirro acts as a conduit to the farming community and can be an excellent resource.
  - Basic Biometrics
  - How he come to his position (elected, appointed, etc)?
  - How water is “fairly” allocated?
  - Does he have a list of all major landowners?
  - Who is the most influential landowner/farmer in Tagab?
  - How can Tagab expand its agricultural market?
  - Where do agricultural products go after harvest?
  - What is the most lucrative agricultural product in Tagab and why?



- **Teachers**

- Basic Biometrics
- Where they teach?
- Subject(s), syllabus, teaching materials/resources?
- Where were they educated? In what subject? To what level?
- How many hours do students stay in school?
- How old are oldest/youngest students?
- How many students are taught?
- Is education a problem in Tagab? If so why?
- What are possible impediments toward comprehensive education in Tagab?
- How do insurgents effect education in Tagab?
- What resources are needed to improve the educational system?
- Should women be educated? Why?
- What is the difference between a Madrassa and a traditional school?
- Do traditional schools have a positive or negative influence? Do Madrassa's have a positive or negative influence?
- Does the community or insurgency react differently to a Madrassa then a traditional school?

- **Doctors**

- Basic Biometrics
- Where were they educated? Do they have any specialties? What is their highest level of education?
- How many clinics operate in Tagab?
- How many doctors are in Tagab?
- Does the insurgency impact how the doctors operate? If so, how?
- What are the major illnesses of the populace? Why?
- How can NATO work with “you” to improve health care in Tagab?

- Are clinics run by the government?
- Do private clinics operate in Tagab?
- Where do pharmaceuticals come from?
- Can the populace afford the cost of pharmaceuticals?
- Does tribalism or other social factors effect who doctors or clinics choose to support or help?
- **Elders**
  - Obtain biometrics on all Elders
  - Try to identify layers of Elder leadership including Mosque affiliation, spheres of influence, insurgent connections, political affiliations, etc
  - How does an Elder obtain a seat of power at Shuras or other decision making gatherings?
  - How are Elders viewed by the populace?

## **Baseline Engagement (Broader Picture)**

### **1. Protect the Population.**

- What are the influences on the population in Tagab and how can the negative influences be defeated, and the positive influences be enhanced, to extend the influence of NATO and the Afghan Government?
  - Who are the key formal and informal leaders?
  - Who are the second- and third-tier formal and informal leaders?
  - How do the formal and informal leaders interact / cooperate / compete with one another? In what arenas? What are the foundations for this cooperation / competition?
  - How do the religious, social, political, and economic

leaders interact / cooperate / compete?

- Which leader(s) would the populace most likely go to and for which issues?
- What does the populace identify as their hierarchy of needs?
- What are the primary / secondary / tertiary social, political, and economic groups within the community and how do they interact?
- How does Tagab connect with the rest of Kapisa? With the rest of Afghanistan? With neighboring countries?
- How does the population feel about their formal and informal leaders? Who is seen as effective / ineffective and why?
- How well does the populace believe NATO/Afghan central government is doing?
- Who resolves conflict? At what level and between whom? Whose decisions are binding? Why?

## **2. Separate the Insurgent.**

- Where is the insurgent finding sanctuary and how and from whence is he supplied and sustained? How can we disrupt this to separate the insurgent from the population?
  - Which individuals / groups support the insurgency and why?
  - Which individuals / groups resist the insurgency and why?
  - How strong does the insurgency appear to the populace? How strong do ISAF appear to the populace? What factors play into these perceptions?
  - How is the network of insurgent support in Tagab connected with other areas in Kapisa? With other areas in Afghanistan? With neighboring countries?

- What services / functions does the insurgency provide to the population? Where are the gaps in NATO/Afghan government services and regional functions?
- What kinds of support (intelligence, resources, safe haven, transportation, weapons, fighters, etc.) do the different parts of Tagab provide – if any – to the insurgency and why?

### **3. Freedom of Movement.**

- What is preventing freedom of movement for Afghans on the key highways and how can these impediments be removed?
  - Are there any roads that the populace cannot use? Which ones are they? Why are they unavailable?
  - How does the populace work around closed roadways?
  - Are there any particular groups / individuals that the populace goes to in order to use certain roadways?
  - How does the populace resolve transportation issues?
  - Which roadways are most important to the populace and why?
  - How does the population know that a road is closed or off-limits?
  - Who does the population believe is most responsible for transportation issues and closures?
  - How is the Tagab transportation network interconnected with the rest of Kapisa? With the rest of Afghanistan?

### **4. Mission Protection.**

- How will the insurgency attack our cohesion and seek to separate us from the people and their Government (local, regional, national)? How can we defeat that threat?
  - What is the insurgency's information operations campaign?
    - What does it focus on?

## NIGH: AN OPERATOR'S GUIDE TO HUMAN TERRAIN TEAMS

- How effective is it in effecting a change in the population's behavior?
  - How successfully has it penetrated the Tagab area?
  - What methods are employed to disseminate their message?
  - What actors within the community actively re-broadcast or otherwise disseminate the insurgents' message?  
How?
  - What are the key elements of the NATO/Afghan government I/O campaign?
    - How effective is it in effecting a change in the population's behavior?
    - How successfully has it penetrated the Tagab area?
  - What are some of the most important issues facing the Tagab community?
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