Institutions and Organizations: Exploring the Interdependencies of Legitimacy Theory and Strategic Communication in Afghanistan

A Monograph

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14. ABSTRACT
If the Department of Defense (DOD) better understands what legitimacy is, how strategic communication affects it, and how a prolonged counter-insurgency affects the legitimacy of specific Afghan and US institutions, we will be better prepared to make foreign policy recommendations that involve overt counter-insurgency operations. This understanding can drive DOD perceptions of future conflict, which in turn drives conceptualization and development of future US force structure and capabilities. Ultimately for the US Army, a better understanding of legitimacy and its interdependency with communication could shape our assumptions that drive the development of our US Army Capstone Concept. This study hypothesizes that in Afghanistan, legitimation and strategic communication are inextricably connected. However, strategic communication is overly focused on the external, attempting to influence constituents, and not focused enough on bringing cultural understanding and compromise back to the strategy, goals, and institutions within Afghanistan. Therefore the legitimation of fledgling institutions is slower and more problematic than is necessary. This study concludes that in Afghanistan, the legitimacy and strategic communication theories are deeply interwoven. Yet, the strategic communication process is not focused enough on internalization of socio-cultural norms and mores. This means communicating to understand the culture in order to conduct US and Afghan institutional remodeling, and behavior modification to fit within or work in concert with the current cultural institutions; integrating stake-holder perceptions into policy, plans, and operations to support national objectives. Fledgling institutions that do not challenge embedded institutions are more likely to succeed in the long term

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Abstract

Institutions and Organizations: Exploring the Interdependencies of Legitimacy Theory and Strategic Communication in Afghanistan by Major Beau A. Hendricks, United States Army, 46 pages.

If the Department of Defense (DOD) better understands what legitimacy is, how strategic communication affects it, and how a prolonged counter-insurgency affects the legitimacy of specific Afghan and US institutions, we will be better prepared to make foreign policy recommendations that involve overt counter-insurgency operations. This understanding can drive DOD perceptions of future conflict, which in turn drives conceptualization and development of future US force structure and capabilities. Ultimately for the US Army, a better understanding of legitimacy and its interdependency with communication could shape our assumptions that drive the development of our US Army Capstone Concept.

This study hypothesizes that in Afghanistan, legitimation and strategic communication are inextricably connected. However, strategic communication is overly focused on the external, attempting to influence constituents, and not focused enough on bringing cultural understanding and compromise back to the strategy, goals, and institutions within Afghanistan. Therefore the legitimation of fledgling institutions is slower and more problematic than is necessary.

This study concludes that in Afghanistan, the legitimacy and strategic communication theories are deeply interwoven. Yet, the strategic communication process is not focused enough on internalization of socio-cultural norms and mores. This means communicating to understand the culture in order to conduct US and Afghan institutional remodeling, and behavior modification to fit within or work in concert with the current cultural institutions; integrating stake-holder perceptions into policy, plans, and operations to support national objectives. Fledgling institutions that do not challenge embedded institutions are more likely to succeed in the long term

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INTRODUCTION

For the last two centuries scholars have considered the idea of institutions from an economic, political, and sociological perspective. In the last 60 years those ideas gave birth to the study of organizations and how institutions interact with them. The deviating arguments within organizational studies needed a broad legitimacy theory to bridge the divide between the strategic and institutional approaches to organizations. The research on legitimacy theory continues to provide detailed case studies on a variety of organizations within broader institutional areas. These case studies expose the enormous effect that surrounding culture has on organizations and institutions.

In addition, scholars have long known that the ability to develop and sustain institutions within a culture depends largely on the ability to communicate with a constituency. The communication interaction attempts to understand the surrounding culture and have the culture understand the institution. Therefore, as the influence of the US has spread worldwide, the need to coordinate continuous state communication with a variety of audiences has increased. This process is called strategic communication. The study of strategic communication is burgeoning; nevertheless it is sub academic and ethereal in many respects.

This study acknowledges that there is a great deal of scholarship on institutions and organizations. However, less research exists on legitimacy and strategic communications. The current scholarship leaves room for expansion into the subject of the United States' (US) nation-building efforts in the 21st century. A prime opportunity exists to explore the interdependent theories of legitimacy and strategic communication, and then use them to conduct a case study measuring the legitimacy of specific institutions in Afghanistan after several years of war.

Since the 1990's a collective body of international powers dedicated themselves to building working states after war. The 11 September 2001, terrorist attacks on the US solidified the view that failing states pose a great risk to the world.[1] If the Department of Defense (DOD) better understands what legitimacy is, how strategic communication affects it, and how a prolonged counter-insurgency affects the legitimacy of specific Afghan and US institutions, the DOD will be better prepared to make foreign policy recommendations that involve overt counter-insurgency operations. This understanding can drive DOD perceptions of future conflict, which in turn drives conceptualization and development of future US force structure and capabilities. Ultimately for the US Army, a better understanding of legitimacy and its interdependency with communication could shape our assumptions that drive the development of our US Army Capstone Concept.

Michael Barnett argues that peace builders do not operate from a single broad blueprint, however, the current values of peace builders are founded in liberal peace building. He goes on to claim that the arbitrary timelines and tremendous stress they are placing on post-war states to conform to a democratic ideal is actually sowing the seeds of future conflict.[2] Barnett hypothesizes that there is a need for an alternative "republican" concept of peace building grounded in the "incrementalist" approach which depends on local "societal actors" to decide what is good for that country, and takes incremental steps to achieve that vision, instead of striving for a "pre-determined vision of the promise land."[3]

This study hypothesizes that in Afghanistan, legitimation and strategic communication are inextricably connected. However, strategic communication is overly focused on the external,

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[1] Michael Barnett, "Building a Republican Peace: Stabilizing States After War," *International Security* 30, no. 4 (Spring, 2006), 87.

[2] Ibid., 89

[3] Ibid., 89-90

attempting to influence constituents, and not focused enough on bringing cultural understanding and compromise back to the strategy, goals, and institutions within Afghanistan. Therefore the legitimation of fledgling institutions is slower and more problematic than is necessary.

Additionally, the Afghan community's culturally ingrained perceptions tend to act as a filtering mechanism in response to US, or US influenced, actions and communications. These filters create a cultural reality altogether independent from the reality that the US may wish to create. The level of attainable legitimacy for US, or US mandated, institutions in Afghanistan may be limited by embedded cultural belief systems (institutions). These cultural belief systems by their nature are highly resistant to change and may take decades to transform. If the challenger to these Afghan institutions is not committed enough, or unable to influence them because of self-limiting institutions at home, then the Afghan cultural institutions may not change. If that were the case, then the Afghan and the US realities would continue to be divergent.

The Structure of the Paper

This main body of this monograph consists of 5 sections; Introduction, *Legitimacy, Strategic Communication, the Afghanistan Case Study*, and the *Conclusion*. The *Legitimacy* section consists of 3 subsections; *Early Institutionalists, Legitimacy Theory,* and *Summary and Criteria Selection*. The *Early Institutionalists* provides background information on early scholarly approaches to institutions in economics, political science, and sociology; additionally it covers an introduction to the new institutional and organizational theories. The *Legitimacy Theory* discusses the strategic and institutional approaches to legitimacy, where and how these theories converge, and the different types and phases of legitimacy. This section closes out with a *Summary and Criteria Selection* for the case study.

The Strategic Communication section is a composition of 3 subsections; *Defining It, the Structure of Strategic Communication,* and *Summary and Criteria Selection. Defining It* breaks down the current literature into two assemblages, the exclusive and inclusive groups. *The Structure of Strategic Communication* introduces the DOD principles, strategic communication goals, and an introduction to DOD information operations to display the supporting capabilities. This section ends with a *Summary and Criteria Selection* for the case study.

The Afghanistan Case Study is a composition of 2 sections, *The Case Study* and *Findings.* The case study consists of an introduction to the methodology and sources, the early context of the Afghanistan war, the case study goals, evaluating legitimacy in Afghanistan, and evaluating strategic communication in Afghanistan. The Findings describe a logical synthesis of information from the study for both legitimacy and strategic communication in Afghanistan.

EARLY INSTITUTIONALISTS

Throughout the research of legitimacy theory for this paper, it became evident that a brief discussion on the history of the theory would be appropriate. This paper begins the discussion of legitimacy theory by explaining its historical roots in the early and new forms of institutionalism. Institutional theory became prominent in the economic, sociology, and political science fields of scholarship in the late 19th century through the mid 20th century.[4]

Economics

Early scholarship suggests that the present day institutional economics started its evolution in the 19th century in Germany. The three types discussed in this paper are; classical, historical, and the new economics approach. The Germans, aiming for the industrialization of their "latecomer" nation, chose the organicist *Weltanschauung* approach to economics.[5] This was a challenge to British *laissez-faire* classic economics.[6] The late 19th century *Methodenstreit*, or debate over scientific methods in the social sciences, fostered arguments on the economic approach to institutions between the classical school and the Historical school of economics. Gustav Schmoller, the founder of the Historical School, hypothesized that history and culture shaped the greater social structure which shaped economics.[7] Therefore he proposed the "stage theory," which states that latecomer economies should develop in stages, "from village economy

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[4] Richard W. Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, Third ed. (Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc, 2008), 3.

[5] Yūichi Shionoya, *The German Historical School : The Historical and Ethical Approach to Economics*, Vol. 40 (London ; New York: Routledge, 2001), 15.Shionoya uses the term "latecomer" to describe an underdeveloped nation that is trying to catch up, industrially and economically, with developed nations.

[6] Ibid., 8

[7] Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 2

to the city economy to the territorial economy to the national economy."[8] The Historical School did not catch on in America until almost a half-century later.

Following after Schmoller, American economists such as Thorstein Veblen, John Commons, Wesley Mitchell, J.A. Schumpeter, Karl Polanyi, John Kenneth Galbraith, and Gunnar Myrdal continued to promote the Historical Institutional theory.[9] In the 1970's, new economic theory began to take root, until Ronald Coase declared the "new" institutional economics.[10] Menard and Shirley posit that new institutional economics is the study of "institutions and how institutions interact with organizational arrangements."[11]

<div align="center">Political Science</div>

Institutional scholars credit political science with developing the positivist, behavioralists, and rational-choice theories. While political scientists such as Woodrow Wilson, W.W. Willoughby, and J.W. Burgess led the institutionalists approach at the turn of the century, they focused on "constitutional law and moral philosophy."[12] Bill and Hardgrave point out that, "Emphasis was placed upon the organized and evident institutions of government, and studies concentrated almost exclusively upon constitutions, cabinets, parliaments, courts, and bureaucracies."[13] Eckstein credits the early political science institutionalists with developing "positivism."[14]

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8 Shionoya, *The German Historical School : The Historical and Ethical Approach to Economics*, 15

9 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 2-5

10 Ibid., 5

11 Claude Ménard, Mary M. Shirley, and SpringerLink, *Handbook of New Institutional Economics* (Berlin: Springer, 2008), 1.

12 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 6

13 James A. Bill and Robert L. Hardgrave, *Comparative Politics: The Quest for Theory* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981), 3.

14 Harry Eckstein and David Ernest Apter, *Comparative Politics; a Reader* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 13,14.Eckstein writes, "Primitive, unadulterated positivism insists upon hard facts, indubitable and incontrovertible facts, as well as facts that speak for themselves

In the early to mid 20th century, the advent of the "behavioralists" approach took root.[15] These changes led to the idea that the study of politics should include social behavior. March and Olsen opine that around 1950, political science was largely: "contextual," being interdependent with societal structure; "reductionist," the collective result of personal actions; "utilitarian," seeing actions as the product of personal desire; "functionalist," seeing history as mechanism to bring equilibrium; and "instrumentalist," the view that judgments and resource distribution were central to politics.[16] As Laswell described, politics is about "who gets what, when, and how?"[17] Additionally, the school of the "rational choice" approach developed in the late 20th century and together with the behavioralists approach is central to political institutionalism today.[18]

Sociology

Research credits institutional sociologists with the development or refinement of the organicist, realist, historical, economic sociology, and voluntaristic approaches to institutionalism. The early pioneers in institutional sociology were numerous and often contrary in perspective. Spencer and Sumner viewed institutions as "organic" in nature, evolving from the individual, to folkways, to societal norms, to institutions.[19] Cooley and Hughes held the view

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– and what facts of politics are harder, as well as more self-explanatory, than the facts found in formal legal codes?"

[15] Sven Steinmo, Kathleen Ann Thelen, and Frank Longstreth, *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 4. "Behavioralists argued that, in order to understand politics and explain political outcomes, analysts should focus not on the formal attributes of government institutions but instead on informal distributions of power, attitudes and political behavior."

[16] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life," *The American Political Science Review* 78, no. 3 (Sep., 1984), 735.

[17] Laswell, 1936 quoted in Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 3

[18] "Rational choice theory." Oxford Dictionary of Sociology. Ed. John Scott, Gordon Marshall. Oxford University Press, 2005. eNotes.com. 2006. 18 Mar, 2010, http://www.enotes.com/oxsoc-encyclopedia/rational-choice-theory, "A theory of action that sees individual self-interest as the fundamental human motive and traces all social activities back to acts of rational calculation and decision-making that are supposed to have produced them."

[19] Ibid., 9

that individuals and culture were interdependent and of equal importance to each other.[20] Hughes

hypothesized that "institutions are precisely the established way of doing things."[21] Karl Marx

shunned the naturalist and cultural views and proposed that social reality is the material world as

we see it. Emile Durkheim asserted that one must look from a historical viewpoint in order to

understand institutions. As to the nature of the institution he explains, "certain ways of acting are

imposed, or at least suggested from outside the individual and are added on to his own nature:

such is the character of the institutions (in the broad sense of the word)."[22]

Max Weber attempted to bridge the divide between these differing perspectives and

approached institutions from the standpoint of economic sociology. Swedberg describes how

Weber visualized the institution when he said that "institutions are hard to change; they are

deeply rooted in interests, something that gives them considerable strength and survival

capacity."[23] Weber also described legitimate domination as the likelihood that the ruled masses

will obey a ruler's specific order. He asserts there are three types of legitimate domination; legal,

traditional, and charismatic domination. Legitimate domination in this sense is analogous to

institutionalization.[24] Talcott Parsons, much like Weber, attempted to bring theories together,

eventually arriving at the "voluntaristic" theory of action.[25] Scott summarized Parsons' view of

[20] Ibid., 9

[21] Everett C. Hughes, "The Impact of War on American Institutions," *The American Journal of Sociology* 48, no. 3 (Nov., 1942), 398.

[22] Emile Durkheim as quoted in David Frisby and Derek Sayer, *Society* (Chichester, West Sussex; New York: Ellis Horwood ;$aLondon; Tavistock Publications, 1986), 36.

[23] Richard Swedberg, "The Changing Picture of Max Weber's Sociology," *Annual Review of Sociology* 29 (2003), 285.

[24] Max Weber and Richard Swedberg, *Essays in Economic Sociology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 99-108.

[25] "Voluntarism." Oxford Dictionary of Sociology. Ed. John Scott, Gordon Marshall. Oxford University Press, 2005. eNotes.com. 2006. 18 Mar, 2010, http://www.enotes.com/oxsoc-encyclopedia/voluntarism, "Voluntarism is A term usually contrasted with determinism, voluntarism denotes the assumption that individuals are the agents of their actions, and have

institutionalized action, "The actor conforms because of his or her belief in a value standard, not out of expediency or self-interest."[26]

New Institutional and Organizational Theory

As organizations began to surface as a field of study in the 1950's, academics such as Merton, Selznick, Parson, Simon, and March started applying "institutional arguments to organizational studies." This work, which scholars call the new institutional theory, or "neoinstitutional theory", has three primary academic approaches: economics, political science, and sociology. Economists generally bond to an "orthodox" view, "applying economic arguments to account for the existence of organizations and institutions." Political scientists apply either "rational-choice economic models" or a "historical view of the nature of institutions." Sociologists build their studies on "cognitive psychology, cultural studies, phenomenology, and ethnomethodology."[27] Margaret Levi defines institutions generally as organic entities possessing the dual characteristics of "containing and creating power."[28] Parsons proposes that organizations are subordinate to institutions in that organizations are part of "a wider social system which is the source of the 'meaning,' legitimation, or higher-level support which makes the implementation of the organization's goals possible."[29] This study uses Scott's neo-institutional definition which asserts that, "Institutions are comprised of regulative,

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some control over what they do. Voluntarism's alliance with action contrasts with the deterministic emphasis associated with structure. By accepting human unpredictability, voluntarism renders sociological analysis more difficult, though arguably more interesting. Voluntaristic theories place issues of decision, purpose, and choice at the forefront of sociological analysis."

[26] Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 14
[27] Ibid., 44,45
[28] Karen S. Cook and Margaret Levi, *The Limits of Rationality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 407.
[29] Parsons (1960b: 63-64) quoted in Scott., 24

normative and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life."[30]

LEGITIMACY THEORY

The need for an overarching legitimacy theory developed with the introduction of organizational theory. Legitimacy theory's diversity and inherent difficulty to understand comes from being a combination of economics, sociology, and political science. Diverse fields of study all contribute to the structure of legitimacy theory; therefore there are competing definitions.[31] Suchman suggests research on legitimacy exists in an unorganized fashion. The field of legitimacy scholarship risks becoming a confusing mass of conflicting information due to the lack of a common language and a methodology for capturing contrary views. The strategic and institutional approaches often conflict with one another, contrary to a holistic approach.[32] Scott and Suchman attempt to make sense of conflicting institutional and organizational theories. Many authors have written on the subject of legitimacy without defining it, rather they have written of concept and description. Since this leads to general confusion, it is imperative to define which elements of legitimacy one is discussing.[33]

Strategic Approach

The strategic approach promotes a management role whereby organizations manipulate the environment to extract the resources of public support.[34] Organizations assume an outward

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[30] Ibid., 48

[31] Josh Boyd, "Actional Legitimation: No Crisis Necessary " *Journal of Public Relations Research* 12, no. 4 (2000), 344.

[32] Mark C. Suchman, "Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches " *The Academy of Management Review* 20, no. 3 (1995), 572.

[33] Ibid., 572

[34] Ibid., 572

looking perspective gaining operational resources from their cultural environment.[35] Within this paradigm Maurer defines legitimation as "the process whereby an organization justifies to a peer or superordinate system its right to exist."[36] Dowling and Pfeffer, define legitimacy as, "congruence between the social values associated with or implied by [organizational] activities and the norms of acceptable behavior in the larger social system."[37] Meyer and Scott offer that: "Organizational legitimacy refers to the extent to which the array of established cultural accounts provides explanations for [an organization's] existence."[38]

<div align="center">Institutional Approach</div>

The institutional approach contrasts with the strategic in that organizations view legitimacy as a cultural belief system versus a resource that they can use. Suchman posits that "Organizations do not simply extract legitimacy from the environment in a feat of cultural strip mining; rather, external institutions construct and interpenetrate the organization in every respect."[39] He goes on to say that culture informs organizational construction, actions, and evaluations. In this sense institutionalization and legitimacy are the same.[40] Institutionalization happens to an organization when it achieves cultural value and taken-for-grantedness within society. Selznick bridges organizations and institutions by stating that "It is something that happens to an organization over time, reflecting the organization's own distinctive history, the people who have been in it, the groups it embodies, and the vested interests they have created, and the way it has adapted to its environment."[41] Selznick goes on to state that the most

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[35] Ibid., 576
[36] Maurer 1971: 361 as quoted in Suchman., 573
[37] Dowling and Pfeffer 1975: 122 quoted in Suchman., 573
[38] Meyer and Scott 1983b:201 quoted in Suchman., 572
[39] Ibid., 576
[40] Ibid., 576
[41] Philip Selznick, *Leadership in Administration : A Sociological Interpretation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 16.

important aspect to institutionalization is to, "infuse with value beyond the technical requirements of the task at hand."[42] Parsons defines institutionalization as "the integration of the complementary role expectation and sanction patterns with a generalized value system *common* to the members of the more inclusive collectivity, of which the system of complementary role-actions may be a part."[43] Scott submits that, "Institutions impose restrictions by defining legal, moral, and cultural boundaries, setting off legitimate from illegitimate activities."[44] Zucker provides two principles that make an entity institutional: "a rule-like, social fact quality of an organized pattern of action (exterior), and an embedding in formal structures, such as formal aspects of organizations that are not tied to particular actors or situations (nonpersonal/objective)."[45]

<div align="center">Legitimacy Convergence</div>

Although Scott's definition is more recent, this monograph uses Suchman's definition due to his ability to bridge the divide between the strategic and institutional approach. Suchman defines legitimacy as: "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions."[46] He also reasons that although the strategic viewpoint observes the environment as a resource and the institutional perspective sees the organization as a product of

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[42] Ibid., 17

[43] Talcott Parsons and Leon H. Mayhew, *Talcott Parsons on Institutions and Social Evolution : Selected Writings* [Selections.] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 117.

[44] Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 50

[45] Lynne G. Zucker, "Institutional Theories of Organization," *Annual Review of Sociology* 13 (1987), 444.

[46] Suchman, *Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches* , 574

the environment, these viewpoints become meaningless when one views organizations as both

"products and producers of larger, institutionalized cultural frameworks."[47]

Different Types of Legitimacy

The scholars best known for identifying typologies of legitimacy are Scott and Suchman. Scott, named the three pillars of institutions as regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive, based on his review of the theoretical foundation of institutionalism. These three pillars form a spectrum from regulative, which is enforceable, to cultural-cognitive, which is less tangible in nature.[48] Suchman named the three types of organizational legitimacy as; pragmatic, moral, and cognitive. Scott attempts to bring together a rich history of institutionalism. He claims that today's institutional evaluation of organizations comes from the neoinstitutional scholars. Suchman, in his 1995 work, takes an organizational strategic and institutional approach. In other words, he looks at what organizations can extract from the environment through legitimacy and how society and culture intertwines in an organization to create legitimacy, which is synonymous with institutionalism.

Regulative

The regulative pillar is legal in nature, centered on a constitutional right to exist and perform certain functions. Scott proposes that all disciplines generally accept the regulative view of institutions. Economists are likely to view institutions as resting primarily on the regulative pillar. Rational choice political scientists contend that individual and organizational desires cause competition that requires rules and enforcement to "preserve order."[49] Historical institutionalists identify problems associated with the regulative pillar. One such problem is that the state can

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[47] Ibid., 576,577

[48] Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 51 He quotes Hoffman (1997:36) "from the conscious to the unconscious, from the legally enforced to the taken for granted."

[49] Ibid., 52

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develop and enforce its own interests.[50] Sociologists such as Suchman and Edelman suggest that

the regulative role is not always coercive. Scott articulates that sometimes ambiguous laws and

rules provide an opportunity for "sense-making and collective interpretation, relying more on

cognitive and normative than coercive elements for its effects."[51]

Pragmatic

As Suchman points out, the pragmatic pillar of organizational legitimacy "rests on the

self-interested calculations of an organization's most immediate audiences."[52] Suchman's

scholarship suggests that the pragmatic aspect consists of the elements; exchange, influence, and

dispositional legitimacy. The first of these pragmatic elements, exchange legitimacy, submits

that audiences "support an organizational policy based on that policy's expected value to a

particular set of constituents."[53] A slightly different view exists with influence legitimacy, where

instead of dependence on a this-for-that exchange, an audience has some measure of influence on

the organizations decision-making structure. Constituents feel that the entity is "responsive to

their larger interests."[54] A third category offered by Suchman is dispositional legitimacy. In this

sense, institutions afford the organization a sense of individualism and autonomy. The result is

that constituents see the organization as having "good character." [55]

Normative

The normative aspect is primarily the "normative rules" that prescribe, evaluate, and

obligate an entity. Scott asserts that "Normative systems define goals and objectives (i.e. winning

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50 Ibid., 53
51 Ibid., 54
52 Suchman, *Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches* , 578
53 Ibid., 578
54 Ibid., 578
55 Ibid., 578 (See also Zucker, 1983; Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Selznick, 1949)

the game, making a profit), but also designate appropriate ways to pursue them."[56] Some of the values and norms in this pillar apply to society, and some apply to specific roles, for example judges and doctors. The normative systems are best known as external restrictions; however, they both empower and limit institutions. Political scientists such as March and Olsen acknowledge the normative aspect when they say that; "Much of the behavior we observe in political institutions reflects the routine way in which people do what they are supposed to do."[57] Early sociologists such as Durkheim, Parsons, and Selznick embraced the normative aspect, as it primarily relies on social foundations. Suchman calls this moral legitimacy; however, it fits quite well into normative legitimacy. The four forms of moral legitimacy are consequential, procedural, structural, and personal legitimacy. Consequential legitimacy may consist of audiences determining the "quality and value" of an organizations products, or it may be a "superordinate regulatory" audience that may judge the organizations effectiveness. Procedural legitimacy regardless of outputs relies on the public's perception that the organization is doing things the right way according to societal norms.[58] Structural legitimacy is to procedural as having a "quality control department" is to "does the organization inspect its products for defects."[59] It is the public's perception that the composite make up of the organization fits within institutional norms. Personal legitimacy "rests on the charisma of individual organizational leaders." Because of the waning effects of this type over time, it rarely has a lasting effect on institutionalism.[60]

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[56] Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 55
[57] Ibid., 56
[58] Suchman, *Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches* , 580
[59] Ibid., 581
[60] Ibid., 581

Cultural-Cognitive

The cultural-cognitive pillar consists of the social paradigms through which institutions and societies make meaning. Scott labeled this pillar because, "'internal' interpretive processes are shaped by 'external' cultural frameworks."[61] In this sense, an entity does what it thinks the social order expects. In other words Scott points out that, "To understand or explain any action, the analyst must take into account not only the objective conditions, but the actor's subjective interpretation of them."[62] Perceptions are powerful in that people can look at the same thing and see something differently. This pillar according to Scott can have the emotional effect of feeling "competent and connected" when compliant, and being perceived as "clueless" or "crazy" when non-compliant.[63] Suchman takes a slightly different approach to cognitive legitimacy. To Suchman it is an audience's perception that an organization's narrative adheres to culturally reasonable explanations for the organization's accomplishments, thus achieving lucidity, faithfulness, and a deep societal appreciation.[64]

The Phases of Legitimacy

The way an audience observes an organization and the way the organization views itself is constantly in flux. Suchman suggested there are three stages in which an organization operates, legitimacy building, maintaining, and repairing.[65] An organization experiences difficulty or proficiency managing these stages based on a multitude of factors; for example environment selection, organizational goals, and performance.

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[61] Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 57
[62] Ibid., 57
[63] Ibid., 58,59
[64] Suchman, *Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches* , 582-583
[65] Ibid., 586

Gaining

When an organization enters a new sector, the surrounding society and culture require it

to build legitimacy. There is a "liability to newness" in many ways.[66] Liabilities manifest in the

need to separate the public's perception of the new organization from that of past, less successful

organizations.[67] Gaining legitimacy generally conforms to three clusters, conforming,

environment selection, and environmental manipulation. To conform, an organization can "adapt

their outputs and goals to social understandings of legitimacy."[68] For environment selection, they

"identify with symbols, values, and institutions that already possess strong social legitimacy."[69]

To manipulate the environment, they "alter social ideas of legitimacy to fit their organizations'

practice."[70]

Maintaining

Maintaining legitimacy requires perceiving future changes and protecting past

accomplishments.[71] As Zucker reminds us, the tendency towards chaos is constantly at work in

the social world around us.[72] This entropy leads to what Suchman called the three "problematic

aspects" of maintaining legitimacy; publics are diverse, constancy is inflexible, and inflexibility

creates hostility.[73] To face these challenges, institutions should perceive future changes and

prepare, and focus on protecting successful undertakings. There are three methods to make

legitimation a permanent construct in the organization: be proactive in ensuring the organization

maintains social correctness; use the indirect approach to the legitimation efforts; and build a

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[66] Freeman, Carroll, & Hannan, 1983, page 692 quoted in Suchman., 586
[67] Ibid., 586
[68] Ibid., 587
[69] Ibid., 589
[70] Ibid., 591
[71] Ibid., 594
[72] Zucker, 1985: paraphrased in Suchman., 594
[73] Ibid., 594

defensive stockpile of public support, cooperative allies, and social taken-for-grantedness to use in the future.[74] Boyd carves a niche within institutional theory to look at day-to-day maintenance of legitimacy, which he calls actional legitimacy.[75] For Boyd, daily maintenance of specific, potentially controversial decisions is a good way to maintain legitimacy. During the conduct of daily affairs, corporations use dialog and actions to justify and gain public support for specific policies or actions that may be controversial to constituents.[76]

Repairing

Repairing legitimacy literature suggests offering normalizing accounts, restructuring, and not panicking.[77] Elsbach claims that if an audience questions an organization's legitimacy, there is the possibility of starting an uncontrolled feedback loop of legitimacy loss. She explores repairing legitimacy in three ways: by describing mediating messages most likely to repair legitimacy; the form, content, and language of the best accounts; and a framework to describe the architecture of legitimization accounts for organizations.[78] Organizations can approach mediating messages using rationality or understanding and consideration.[79] While rationality, understanding and consideration are important, an organization's best approach to unforeseeable controversies is using rationality. The best approach for foreseeable controversies is using understanding and consideration.[80]

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[74] Ibid., 594

[75] Boyd, *Actional Legitimation: No Crisis Necessary* , 344

[76] Ibid., 349

[77] Suchman, *Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches* , 597

[78] Kimberly D. Elsbach, "The Architecture of Legitimacy: Constructing Accounts of Organizational Controversies," in *The Psychology of Legitimacy*, 1st ed. (University of California, Davis: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4.

[79] Ibid., 5

[80] Ibid., 11,19

SUMMARY AND CRITERIA SELECTION

As one moves from regulative to the cultural-cognitive end of the spectrum, legitimacy becomes more difficult to attain and keep. At the same time, it becomes more valuable to the organization and impervious to attack.[81] Legitimacy requires intense communication, but it is not just words, it is actions.[82] No one can please everyone.[83] Therefore, certain audiences will be displeased with the organization at some point. All facets of legitimacy are not mutually supporting.[84]

The current censuses and surveys available for Afghanistan probe for trends in public perception of institutional areas concerning security, social welfare, and general governance. These institutions fit nicely into the broad overarching categories of legitimacy. Therefore, the legitimacy criteria used in the case study section are; normative, pragmatic, and cultural-cognitive.

To begin with, the case study will measure institutions reliant on the normative pillar; for example the police, military, and judicial aspects of the government. Then the study will measure institutions resting on the pragmatic pillar; for example perceptions of direction of the country, basic services, security, governance, corruption, and economic prosperity. Thirdly, the study will measure aspects of institutions dependent on the cultural-cognitive pillar; for example attitudes towards democracy and politicians, the idea of voter efficacy in democracy, and general confidence in specific institutions.

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[81] Suchman, *Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches* , 585
[82] Ibid., 586
[83] Ibid., 585
[84] Ibid., 572

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

DEFINING IT

The theory of strategic communication met a formidable match when the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq confronted the United States Government (USG) with a wicked problem on how to manage whole of government communications and actions to support USG policies and interests.[85] Since October 2001, authors and senior civilian and military leaders have increasingly used the term strategic communication without an identifiable context. Thus, it has become a point of debate in military circles and in the area of communication studies. It is often confused with corporate communications, military information operations, public diplomacy, public affairs, and public relations.

There are generally two assemblages when it comes to defining and describing this subject. The first group "exclusively" conceptualizes a whole of government process to coordinate actions and words to support national objectives. The second group "inclusively" uses strategic communication in place of the activity of communication and action at all levels of conflict.

The Exclusive Group

The professionals that view strategic communication as exclusive appear to visualize it as an overarching framework for all information activities. For instance, the Department of Defense (DOD) uses the term broadly, but separates the DOD actions from the broad term. The 2006 (DOD) Quadrennial Defense Review definition states that strategic communication is:

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[85] Horst W. J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," *Policy Sciences*, no. 4 (1973), 160. Rittel and Webber described wicked problems; "we are calling them "wicked" not because these properties are themselves ethically deplorable. We use the term "wicked" in a meaning akin to that of "malignant" (in contrast to "benign") or "vicious" (like a circle) or "tricky" (like a leprechaun) or "aggressive" (like a lion, in contrast to the docility of a lamb)."

> Focused USG processes and efforts to understand and engage key audiences in order to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable to advance national interests and objectives through the use of coordinated information, themes, plans, programs, and actions synchronized with other elements of national power.[86]

The Joint Publication 1-02, as of August 2009, defines SC as:

> Focused United States Government efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of USG interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power.[87]

The December, 2009 DOD Report on Strategic Communication addressed to the congressional defense committees, attempted to clarify the exclusive definition. In the report, the exclusivity is lost to an indefinite explanation. Secretary Gates described strategic communications as a process versus specific capabilities, organizations, or actions. As a broad term, it is integrating stake-holder perceptions into policy, plans, and operations to support national objectives.[88]

There are several definitions outside of the DOD as well. Jeffrey Jones defined strategic communication as "the synchronized coordination of statecraft, public affairs, public diplomacy, military information operations, and other activities, reinforced by political, economic, military and other actions, to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives."[89] Bart E. Stovicek suggests in his monograph that strategic communication should be a broad and overarching term for strategic level communication and actions. He concludes that the DOD and other government agencies

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[86] Department of Defense, QDR Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communication, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 25 September 2006), 3.

[87] DOD, *JP 1-02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, as ammended through 19 August 2009 ed. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 2001), 544.

[88] The Secretary of Defense, *Department of Defense Report on Strategic Communication* (Washington, DC 20301: Department of Defense, December 2009), 1.

[89] Jeffrey B. Jones, *Strategic Communication: A Mandate for the United States*, http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/editions/i39/i39_iad_01.pdf ed.: National Defense University, 2010), 114. Jones is a former Director for Strategic Communications and Information on the National Security Council.

support strategic communications through communications activities. When viewed separately they are not strategic communication.[90] Christopher Paul is likely the most exclusive of the scholars writing on this subject. According to Paul, the QDR Definition is vague and not specific enough for efficient use. Even though we do not have an agreed upon definition, there is a sense that when people use the term they have an inherent understanding of what they are talking about.[91] To Paul "the solution is simple, when you're talking about strategic communication, say what you mean."[92] He states that there are five elements of strategic communication. When a person uses the term strategic communication, they are usually talking about one or more of these elements; the enterprise level, planning and synchronization processes, strategies and themes, capabilities, and knowledge of human dynamics and assessment.

The first level Paul discusses is the Enterprise Level, which is the "capital S, capital C" of SC. This level expresses the commonly shared understanding of the term. To discuss the subject further, one needs to be specific. For more specificity one could use the second level, SC planning, integration, and synchronization processes. "As an element of enterprise level Strategic Communication, these constitute a discrete set of activities and require distinct organization, procedures, and personnel."[93] The third level is communication strategies and themes. "These SC elements concern content and involves both the inputs and outputs from the strategic communication planning, integration, and synchronization processes."[94] The fourth level is communication, information, and influence capabilities. These "are the broadcast, dissemination,

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[90] Lieutenant Colonel Bart E. Stovicek, Strategic Communication: A Department Of Defense Approach, USAWC Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013, (30 Mar 2007) pg 4. Accessed 30 Nov 09.
[91] Christopher Paul, *"Strategic Communication" is Vague: Say what You Mean*, http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/i56.htm ed.: National Defense University, 2010), 11.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.

and engagement elements of strategic communication."[95] The fifth level is knowledge of human

dynamics and analysis or assessment capabilities, which supports everything else in SC. "These

capabilities include media monitoring, media use pattern research, target audience analysis, and

social, historical, cultural, and language expertise, along with other relevant analytic and

assessment capabilities."[96]

The Inclusive Group

Dennis Murphy makes an inclusive argument on the nature of strategic communication.

To Murphy, "strategic communication is, at its essence, the orchestration of actions, words, and

images to create cognitive information effects." Although he praises Dr. Robert Gates for

seemingly closing the gap between words and actions within the DOD, this courageous attempt

does not mention the other elements of national power.[97] Focused primarily at the tactical level

of current combat operations, Murphy highlights that the people's perceptions of US presence

matter and our actions speak louder than words. In his opinion, military commanders are

proficient at the "art" but not the "science" of strategic communication. By Murphy's definition

and description, strategic communication is routinely conducted at the tactical level of war. He

suggests that at the tactical level commanders use strategic communication to achieve "cognitive

information effects." In addition he advocates that commanders provide an "information end

state" in the commander's intent statement for tactical operations. Murphy concludes that, "a

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[95] Ibid., 11

[96] Ibid., 11

[97] Dennis M. Murphy, *In Search of the Art and Science of Strategic Communication*, http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/i56.htm ed., Vol. XXXIX: US Army War College Quarterly, Winter 2009-2010), 105, http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/contents.htm (accessed 17 March 2010).

deep understanding of the human behavior model, specifically culture and how it informs

emotion is critical to obtaining behavioral change that is driven by perception and attitude."[98]

Emily Goldman defined strategic communication as the "information, ideas, and actions

that influence attitudes and behaviors of target audiences in support of our policy objectives."

We do this by managing "the synchronized promulgation of information, ideas, and actions over

time through means and content that are tailored for multiple and diverse audiences."[99] Lord

defines SC as "the promotion of national interests through efforts to inform, engage, and

influence foreign publics."[100] Matt Armstrong describes a DOD concept of strategic

communication when he says that "The analogy of Strategic Communication as an orchestra has

at its middle, the conductor representing the collection of senior leaders, a music score as the

strategic communication plan."[101] He goes on to state that this concept may be too stringent. The

comparison to a jazz improvisation is a better representation of what this model would look like.

This would allow for the flexibility and mistakes without drawing an unacceptable amount of

criticism when an agency gets off message temporarily. [102]

<center>THE STRUCTURE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION</center>

<center>The DOD Principles</center>

An August 2008 STRATCOM principles paper listed nine principles of STRATCOM.

These principles serve as guidelines for the integration of Information Capabilities in support of

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[98] Ibid., 106-111

[99] Dr Emily Goldman, "Strategic Communication: Theory and Application" June, 2008 (accessed 16 February 2010).

[100] Kristen M. Lord, *Public Engagement 101: What Strategic Communication is, Isn't, and should be*, http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/i56.htm ed.: National Defense University, 2010, 6.

[101] Matt Armstrong, A Theory of Strategic Communication: Like an orchestra producing harmony, September 29, 2008, http://mountainrummer.us/2008/09/sc_is_like_an_orchestra.html (accessed December 14, 2009)

[102] Ibid.

national strategic communications. These principles are; leadership-driven, credibility, understanding the human dimension, dialogue, pervasive, unity of effort, results based, responsive, and continuous.

Strategic Communication Goals

The DOD has four primary goals for the process of strategic communications which are: improve US credibility and legitimacy; weaken an adversary's credibility and legitimacy; convince selected audiences to take specific actions that support US or international objectives; and cause a competitor or adversary to take (or refrain from taking) specific actions.[103] Lord and Deutsch agree that the USG is in a trust deficit right now and that strategic communication's aim is to bolster legitimacy and tangible support from the foreign publics that we are engaging.[104] Thus, Lord lists what she thinks the USG objectives for strategic communication should be: the USG "has a legitimate need to inform and shape foreign policy;" it is in USG interests for all audiences to understand the US in all its diversity and complexity; the USG needs to create an atmosphere of enduring mutual respect and trust; the US achieves its interests more when we share common values and goals with foreign audiences; and US national security benefits when dense networks of personal and professional relationships are viable and able to buffer the system. In her conclusion, Lord hypothesizes that the mutual connectivity described above is the ultimate objective of Strategic Communication.[105]

Information Operations

Some inclusive authors suggest that DOD conducts strategic communication every day, through every action and word, including information operations. The exclusive authors may

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[103] The Secretary of Defense, *Department of Defense Report on Strategic Communication*, 2

[104] Lord, *Public Engagement 101: What Strategic Communication is, Isn't, and should be*, 6

[105] Ibid.

suggest that IO supports, but is not SC. Therefore, it is worth noting that the DOD has a specific

doctrinal construct for IO. This construct consists of core, supporting, and related capabilities

that the DOD uses to conduct lethal and non-lethal actions to shape the operational environment,

and in a larger sense to support the goals and objectives of the USG.

Current Joint Doctrine identifies the five core Information Operations capabilities as

Psychological Operations, Operations Security, Military Deception, Electronic Warfare, and

Computer Network Operations. "Together these five capabilities, used in conjunction with

supporting and related capabilities, provide the JFC with the principal means of influencing an

adversary...by enabling the joint forces freedom of operation in the information environment."[106]

Supporting capabilities include Information Assurance, Physical Security, Physical

Attack, Counterintelligence, and Joint Combat Camera. "These are either directly or indirectly

involved in the information environment and contribute to effective IO." Proponents should

integrate and coordinated these capabilities with the core capabilities. They also serve other

wider purposes, like supporting strategic communications directly.[107]

The three related capabilities are Public Affairs, Civil Military Operations, and Defense

Support to Public Diplomacy. "These capabilities make significant contributions and must

always be coordinated and integrated with the core and supporting capabilities." Commanders

and staffs should take care not to compromise the related capability's primary purpose and rules

under which they operate. "This requires additional care and consideration in the planning and

conduct of Information Operations."[108]

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[106] DOD, *JOINT PUB 3-13 Information Operations* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2006), II-1.
[107] Ibid., II-5
[108] Ibid., II-8

SUMMARY AND CRITERIA SELECTION

Both exclusive and inclusive groups describe strategic communication divergently. However, there is a thread of common ground in that both points of view describe strategic communication at some level to be a process. The key issue is that our nation exists in an environment of simultaneous competition, collaboration, and conflict with other actors. The United States will not win the current war or achieve other crucial national security objectives by military means alone. Instead, the application of unified statecraft (read strategic communication), at the federal level and in concert with allies and international partners is critical.[109]

As mentioned in the legitimacy section, the current censuses and surveys available for Afghanistan probe for trends in public perception of institutional areas concerning security, social welfare, and general governance. These institutional surveys can be valuable in measuring what Dr. Gates identified as the four SC goals for the USG. Those goals were: SC improves US credibility and legitimacy by improving the GOA's credibility and legitimacy; SC weakens the Taliban's credibility and legitimacy; SC convinces the Afghan population to support the US and GOA; and SC causes the Taliban to reduce violence. Therefore, the SC criteria used in the case study section are; increase US legitimacy, increase Government of Afghanistan legitimacy, increase support to the US, increase support to the GOA, reduce Taliban legitimacy, and reduce Taliban initiated violence.

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[109] Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report,* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2006), 92.

THE CASE STUDY

Methodology and Sources

This case study incorporates aspects of legitimacy and strategic communication theory, making the supposition that they are inextricably connected. It surveys the legitimacy of the US forces in Afghanistan and the Afghanistan National Government. It also measures the effectiveness of the USG strategic communication efforts. Since the evaluations rely heavily on cultural perceptions of the new government's performance and the effect of strategic communication efforts on the Taliban insurgency, this study starts the evaluation after the Afghan national elections of 2004. The study will accomplish these goals by evaluating and expounding on polling data that measures the Afghanistan population's attitudes and perceptions.

This study requires survey data which captures specific cultural attitudes over several years. This data is available in reports from the Asia Foundation, Charney Research, and the US Government Accountability Office. The Asia Foundation, with assistance from the US Agency for International Development, surveyed the greater Afghan population on issues pertinent to this study from 2002 through 2009.[110] Charney Research produced the "Afghanistan: Public Opinion Trends and Strategic Implications" survey. Charney Research of New York has worked in Afghanistan with the US Agency for International Development, Asia Foundation, and others since the beginning of the war.[111] The US Government Accountability Office's 2009 report provides statistical data on the security situation in Afghanistan.[112]

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[110] The Asia Foundation, *Afghanistan in 2009: A Survey of the Afghan People* (AINA, Kabul, Afghanistan: The Asia Foundation, 2009) (accessed 18 March 2010).

[111] Craig Charney, *Afghanistan: Public Opinion Trends and Strategic Implications* (New York City: Charney Research, 2008) (accessed 20 March 2008).

[112] U.S. Government, *Afghanistan's Security Environment* (Government Accountability

Early Context

On September 11, 2001, Osama Bin Laden directed terrorist attacks against the US. The 19 Al Qaeda terrorists hijacked four civilian airliners. Two airliners crashed into the World Trade Center towers killing 3118 people, according to *inmemoriamonline.net*. One airliner crashed into the Pentagon killing 190 people, according to *usatoday.com*. In the fourth airliner, civilians fought and overwhelmed the terrorists resulting in a fatal crash into a Pennsylvania field, killing 44 people, as reported at *usatoday.com*. In all, 3252 people died that day as a result of the attacks. The USG called for the ruling Taliban in Afghanistan to extradite Osama Bin Laden to the US for prosecution. The Taliban refused.

The Afghanistan war began on 7 October 2001, the direct result of the terrorist attacks on US soil. The US and Allied Special Forces worked by, with, and through the Afghan Northern Alliance, to route the reigning Taliban government. To put it simply, the Taliban either melted away into the social landscape, or they fought and died. A rather small force of less than 6,000 US soldiers with NATO allies continued to conduct offensive operations against a scattered resistance in 2002. In stark contrast to 2002, the most recent report by the US Government Accountability Office states that the yearly attacks by the Taliban exceeded 10,000 in 2008.[113] A 2008 Charney Research report stated that the resistant Taliban are considered to be approximately 10% of the total population of Afghanistan.[114] According to *nationalpriorities.org*, the US troop level in Afghanistan escalated to 62,000 in 2009. The Government of Afghanistan is calling for reconciliation with the Taliban. However, according to

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Office, November 2009).

[113] Ibid.

[114] Charney, *Afghanistan: Public Opinion Trends and Strategic Implications*

a 27 January 2010 *aljazeera.net* report, the international community and the Government of

Afghanistan are not ideologically aligned. Therefore the negotiations are failing to have effect of

reconciliation. According to *aljazeera.net*, "This has forced the Taliban to wage war."

<div align="center">Case Study Goals</div>

The goals for this Afghanistan case study are to: provide comprehensible legitimacy

trends within specific institutions in Afghanistan, by measuring the perceptions of Afghan

people; and to determine the effectiveness of USG efforts to attain strategic communication

goals in Afghanistan, by measuring the perceptions of Afghan people. The war in Afghanistan is

now mature and has produced valuable polling data on specific institutions and cognitive

perceptions of the Afghan people, which this study uses as a basis for evaluation.

<div align="center">Section 1: Evaluating Legitimacy in Afghanistan</div>

The first section of the study broadly evaluates the normative, pragmatic, and cultural-

cognitive aspects of legitimacy within Afghanistan. The systems of measurement are as follows.

In the "value" column, (<) means less is better and (>) means more is better. The stage of

legitimacy is described as building, maintaining, or repairing (B, M, or R). Building (B) is used

if there is a consecutive increase in legitimacy since the beginning of the war, or the beginning of

the measurement. Maintaining (M) is used if less than a 2 point net loss occurs over a three year

period. Repairing (R) is used if there is a two year consecutive increase in legitimacy after a drop

of more than 2 points. This study describes the overall perception of legitimacy in one of four

ways; very legitimate (Very), somewhat legitimate (Some), marginally legitimate (Marginal), or

not legitimate (Not). Very legitimate (Very) is used when more than 75% of the population

views the institution as legitimate. Some legitimacy (Some) is used when between 60% and 74%

of the population view the institution as legitimate. Marginal legitimacy (Marginal) is used when

45% to 59% of the population views the institution as legitimate. Not Legitimate (Not) is used when less than 44% of the people view the institution as legitimate.

The tables below provide data measuring institutions dependent on the; normative, pragmatic, or cultural-cognitive pillars. The normative table evaluates the Afghanistan national police and army, state court system, and the local jirga or shura (non-state forms of local conflict resolution). The pragmatic table evaluates the peoples' perception of Afghanistan's direction, availability of basic services, security, government, corruption, and economy. The cultural-cognitive table evaluates the peoples' perception of democracy, the effectiveness of voting, and general confidence in culturally-common institutions.

Table 1, *Institutions Dependent on the Normative Pillar*, shows that the ANP and ANA are honest and fair, promote a better security environment, and are somewhat efficient at enforcing the law. Yet, they are dependent on external assistance and lack professionalism. The state court systems are faltering while the locals view the non-state Jirga or Shura favorably.

Table 2, *Institutions Dependent on the Pragmatic Pillar*, illustrates that a majority of people do not think Afghanistan is headed in the right direction. The country is struggling to provide basic services. The public is generally confident in the security environment, except in the south and west of the country where they perceive very little security. The people approve of the government as a majority, even though they see the government as corrupt. The public is split in regards to whether they are more prosperous after the Taliban.

Table 3, *Institutions Dependent on the Cultural-Cognitive Pillar*, shows that the people perceive democracy as better than other forms of government. However, politicians are seen as self-aggrandizing. The people are generally satisfied with democracy. A small majority see voting as being effective. At the top of the general institutional confidence, the people have at a

great deal of confidence in the Afghan national army and police, and electronic media (which includes radio). Conversely, the people have the lowest confidence in political parties and the local militias.

Legitimacy Pillar	Institution	Short Title	Value	2007	2008	2009	AVG	Stage	Legitimacy
Normative	Afghan National Police	Honest and Fair	>	86	80	83	83	M	Very
		Unprofessional	<	65	60	58	61	B	Not
		Needs External Support	<	77	69	70	72	M	Not
		Improves the Security	>	86	80	82	83	M	Very
		Efficient at Arrests	>		73	71	72	R	Some
	Afghan National Army	Honest and Fair	>	90	89	91	90	M	Very
		Unprofessional	<	62	55	52	56	B	Marginal
		Needs External Support	<	77	69	69	72	M	Not
		Improves the Security	>	89	86	87	87	R	Very
	The State Court System	Are Accessible	>	78	68	68	71	M	Some
		Fair and Trusted	>	58	50	50	53	R	Marginal
		Not Corrupt	>	56	47	47	50	R	Marginal
		Follow Local Norms	>	57	50	49	52	R	Marginal
		Effective Justice Delivery	>	58	52	51	54	R	Marginal
		Resolve Cases Timely	>	51	38	40	43	R	Not
	Local Jirga or Shura	Are Accessible	>	83	76	79	79	R	Very
		Fair and Trusted	>	78	70	72	73	R	Some
		Follow Local Norms	>	76	69	70	72	R	Some
		Effective Justice Delivery	>	76	69	69	71	R	Some
		Resolve Cases Timely	>	72	59	64	65	R	Some

Table 1.   Institutions Dependent on the Normative Pillar.[115]

[115] The Asia Foundation, *Afghanistan in 2009: A Survey of the Afghan People*

Legitimacy Pillar	Institution	Short Title	Value	2006	2007	2008	2009	AVG	Stage	Legitimacy
Pragmatic	Afghanistan Direction	Right Direction	>	44	42	38	42	42	R	Not
		Wrong Direction	<	21	24	32	29	27	R	Some
	Available Basic Services	Clean Drinking Water	>		63	62	63	63	M	Some
		Water for Irrigation	>		59	47	53	53	R	Marginal
		Jobs	>		30	21	24	25	R	Not
		Electricity	>		31	25	34	30	R	Not
		Medical Care	>		56	51	49	52	R	Marginal
		Medicine	>			49	44	47	R	Marginal
		Education for Children	>		72	70	67	70	R	Some
	Security	Central/Kabul	>	80	80	74	78	78	R	Very
		South East	>	42	38	35	38	38	R	Not
		East	>	54	64	67	70	64	B	Some
		North East	>	74	88	80	76	80	R	Very
		North West	>	78	89	82	86	84	R	Very
		West	>	57	40	44	44	46	R	Marginal
		South West	>	47	35	26	32	35	R	Not
		Central/Hazarajat	>	75	74	80	77	77	R	Very
	Government	National government	>		80	67	71	73	R	Some
		Provincial government	>		80	74	75	76	R	Very
		Municipality	>		57	50	58	55	R	Marginal
		District authorities	>			67	69	68	B	Some
	Corruption	In Afghanistan	<	77	74	76	76	76	R	Not
		Provincial Government	<	66	60	63	61	63	M	Not
		Daily Life	<	42	47	51	53	48	R	Marginal
		Local Authorities	<		48	53	53	51	R	Marginal
		Your Neighborhood	<	40	43	48	50	45	R	Marginal
	Economy	More Prosperous	>	54	49	39	54	49	R	Marginal
		Same or Less Prosperous	<	38	42	52	38	43	R	Marginal

Table 2.   Institutions Dependent on the Pragmatic Pillar.[116]

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[116] Ibid.

Legitimacy Pillar	Institution	Short Title	Value	2006	2007	2008	2009	AVG	Stage	Legitimacy
Cultural-Cognitive	Democracy	Democracy is Better	>	84	85	76	78	81	R	Very
		Politicians Self-Centered	<	79	79	76	75	77	M	Not
		Satisfied	>	76	73	68	68	71	R	Some
	Voter Efficacy	Effective	>	47	53	66	56	56	R	Marginal
	Institutional Confidence	ANA	>	87	88	89	91	89	B	Very
		ANP	>	86	83	82	84	84	M	Very
		Electronic Media	>	84	74	76	70	76	R	Very
		IEC	>			57	67	62	R	Some
		Community Shura or Jirga	>		71	69	67	69	R	Some
		International NGOs	>		65	64	66	65	M	Some
		CDC's	>		64	65	64	64	M	Some
		Provincial Councils	>		69	65	62	65	R	Some
		Print Media	>	77	62	63	62	66	M	Some
		National NGOs	>		59	62	61	61	M	Some
		Public Administration	>		61	55	57	58	R	Marginal
		Government Ministers	>		58	51	53	54	R	Marginal
		Political Parties	>	44	39	43	47	43	M	Not
		Justice System	>	38	48	46	46	45	M	Marginal
		The Municipality	>		48	42	46	45	R	Marginal
		Local militias	>	31	33	36	37	34	B	Not

Table 3.   Institutions Dependent on the Cultural-Cognitive Pillar.[117]

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[117] Ibid.

Section 2: Evaluating Strategic Communication in Afghanistan

The second section of the study broadly and qualitatively evaluates whether the USG is achieving the established broad strategic communication goals. The systems of measurement are as follows. In the "value" column, (<) means less is better and (>) means more is better. The "goal attainment" (GA) column is described as succeeding, marginally succeeding, failing, not applicable, or needs further explanation (S, MS, F, NA, or NE). Succeeding (S) is used when 65% or more of the population perceives the institutional focus area favorably. Marginally succeeding (MS) is used when between 52% and 64% of the population view the institutional focus area favorably. Failing (F) is used when 51% or less of the people view the institutional focal area favorably. Not applicable (NA) is used when the value represents something other than favorable perception. Needs further explanation (NE) is used when the value represents a favorable perception but more information is required to assign an S, M, or F value.

The "trend" column is described as up, down, stable, variable, or not applicable. "Up" is used when the value goes up consecutively over the period of measurement. "Down" is used when the value goes down consecutively. "Stable" is used when the value has varied 5% or less over the last three years. "Variable" is used when the value has varied 6% or more over the last three years. Not applicable (NA) is used when there are not enough years to measure effectively.

The "leverage for USG" column is described as yes, no, or maybe. "Yes" is used when the subject qualitatively provides leverage for USG strategic communication efforts. "No" is used when the subject qualitatively does not provide leverage. "Maybe" is used when the qualitative analysis concludes that creativity and adaptive thinking may allow the USG to use the subject area as leverage. Additionally, the "source" column describes which source was used for the data. If the source is the Asia Foundation there is an (A), if the source is Charney Research there is a (B), or if the source is the US Government Accountability Office there is a (C) in the

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column. The colors used on the charts help focus the reader on key areas. The color light gray is good for the US; the medium color gray is a borderline color; and the dark gray with white font is bad for the US.

The tables below provide data measuring USG strategic communication goals: increase US legitimacy; increase Government of Afghanistan legitimacy; increase local support for the US; increase local support for the Government of Afghanistan; reduce the Taliban's legitimacy; and reduce Taliban violence. "Increase US legitimacy" evaluates reconstruction efforts, method of information intake, rating of the US in Afghanistan, and confidence in the US. "Increase Government of Afghanistan legitimacy" evaluates institutional confidence and communications infrastructure. "Increase support to the US" evaluates support of US presence in Afghanistan. "Support to the Government of Afghanistan" evaluates perceptions of the government and Taliban reconciliation efforts. "Reduce Taliban legitimacy" evaluates sympathy towards the Taliban and Taliban popularity. "Reduce Taliban violence" evaluates the rate of Taliban attacks per year.

Table 4, *Strategic Communication Goal Attainment*, shows within the "increase US legitimacy" goal that people understand the US is funding the majority of reconstruction projects in their area. The people are divided on how they receive information updates between media and community meetings. The US is losing popularity and the Afghan confidence in the US is dropping. For the "increase Government of Afghanistan legitimacy" goal the data shows that institutional confidence is generally acceptable with the exception of political parties, the justice system, municipalities, and local militias. The telecommunication infrastructure is staying stable; radio ownership is down while TV ownership is increasing. About half the people have cell phones and computer owners are almost non-existent.

Table 5, *Strategic communication Goal Attainment (Continued)*, begins with the "increase support to US forces" goal. A growing number of the population think the US should leave within two years, while almost half believe the US should stay until security is restored throughout the country. Within the "increase support to the Government of Afghanistan" goal, a large majority of the people agree that the government and the Taliban should reconcile. Within "reduce Taliban legitimacy," a majority sympathize with the Taliban. Additionally, Taliban opponents are getting fewer while supporters are growing in number. Within the goal of "reduce Taliban violence," the data shows that Taliban attacks have doubled in three years.

Strategic Communication Goal	Legitimacy Focus Area	Short Title	VAL	2006	2007	2008	2009	AVG	GA	Trend	Leverage for USG	Source
US Legitimacy	Reconstruction	US Funded	>				41	41	NA	NA	Yes	A
	Method of Information Intake	Newspapers	>		25	19	24	23	NA	Variable	Maybe	A
		Magazines	>		22	15	22	20	NA	Stable	No	A
		The Internet	>		4	2	0	2	NA	Stable	No	A
		SMS	>		9	10	19	13	NA	Up	Yes	A
		Community Meetings	<		51	48	53	51	NA	Stable	No	A
		Mosque	<		56	55	47	53	NA	Up	No	A
	Rate the US in Afghanistan	Good/Excellent	>	57	42			56	M	Down	Yes	B
		Fair/Poor	<	42	52			41	M	Up	No	B
	Confidence in US Forces	Confident	>	67	53			60	M	Down	Maybe	B
Government of Afghanistan	Institutional Confidence	Afghan National Army	>	87	88	89	91	89	S	Up	Yes	A
		Afghan National Police	>	86	83	82	84	84	S	Stable	Yes	A
		Electronic media	>	84	74	76	70	76	S	Down	Yes	A
		Independent Election Commission	>			57	67	62	M	Up	Yes	A
		Shura or Jirga	>		71	69	67	69	S	Down	Yes	A
		INGOs	>		65	64	66	65	S	Stable	Yes	A
		Community Development Centers	>		64	65	64	64	M	Down	Yes	A
		Provincial Councils	>		69	65	62	65	S	Down	Yes	A
		Print Media	>	77	62	63	62	66	S	Stable	Maybe	A
		National NGOs	>		59	62	61	61	M	Stable	Yes	A
		Public Administration	>		61	55	57	58	M	Stable	Yes	A
		Government Ministers	>		58	51	53	54	M	Variable	Yes	A
		Political parties	>	44	39	43	47	43	F	Up	Yes	A
		Justice system	>	38	48	46	46	45	F	Stable	No	A
		Municipality	>		48	42	46	45	F	Variable	No	A
		Local militias	>	31	33	36	37	34	F	Up	Yes	A
	Communication Infrastructure	Radio	>		88	84	81	84	NA	Down	Yes	A
		TV set	>		37	38	41	39	NA	Up	Yes	A
		Mobile phone	>		42	40	52	45	NA	Variable	Yes	A
		Computer	>				5	6	6	NA	Stable	No	A

Table 4.   Strategic Communication Goal Attainment.[118]

[118] Ibid., Charney, *Afghanistan: Public Opinion Trends and Strategic Implications*

Strategic Communication Goal	Legitimacy Focus Area	Short Title	VAL	2006	2007	2008	2009	AVG	GA	Trend	Leverage for USG	Source
Support to the US	Support to US Presence	Should leave in two years or less	<	36	46			41	M	Down	No	B
		Stay until security restored	>	60	48			54	M	Down	Yes	B
Support to the GOA	Afghan / Taliban Reconciliation	Strongly Approve	>				28	28	NE	NA	Yes	A
		Approve Somewhat	>				43	43	NE	NA	Yes	A
		Total Approve	>				71	71	S	NA	Yes	A
Reduce Taliban legitimacy	Sympathy Towards Taliban	Strong Sympathy	<				22	22	NE	NA	No	A
		A Little Sympathy	<				34	34	NE	NA	No	A
		Total Sympathetic	<				56	56	F	NA	No	A
	Taliban Popularity	Taliban Opponents	>	45	42			44	NE	Down	Yes	B
		Strong Taliban Opponents	>	27	17			22	NE	Down	Yes	B
		Total Taliban Opponents	>	72	59			66	S	Down	Yes	B
		Soft on Taliban	<	5	11			8	S	Up	No	B
		Claim to be Taliban	<	7	10			9	NE	Up	No	B
		Repelled by Taliban Attacks	>		90			90	S	NA	Yes	B
Reduce Taliban violence	Taliban Violence	Taliban Attacks	<	5,087	7,058	10,889		6356	NE	Up	Yes	C

Table 5.   Strategic Communication Goal Attainment (Continued).[119]

[119] The Asia Foundation, *Afghanistan in 2009: A Survey of the Afghan People;* Charney, *Afghanistan: Public Opinion Trends and Strategic Implications; and* U.S. Government, *Afghanistan's Security Environment*

Section 3: The Findings for Legitimacy

The third section of this study considers the previous legitimacy evaluations and presents the findings. The study presents institutions and illustrates whether people convey normative, pragmatic, and cultural-cognitive legitimacy and what stage of legitimation they are currently in. The systems of measurement are as follows. The table below describes the overall perception of legitimacy in one of four ways; very legitimate (Very), somewhat legitimate (Some), marginally legitimate (Marginal), or not legitimate (Not). The level and stage of legitimacy are based on the average level or stage present in the case study. For instance, if the data supports that the Afghanistan National Police are "very" pragmatically legitimate because they improve security, yet they are only "somewhat" pragmatically legitimate because of their perceived efficiency at arresting criminals, then they are considered "somewhat" pragmatically legitimate overall. This is a qualitative value assignment based on the average value, for clarity sake. If there are only two values, then the lower of the two will represent the overall value. If the case study did not provide data to support a value for a particular institution, then it is assigned a "has not been evaluated" (thin diagonal crosshatch) in the column.

Table 6, *Key Institutional Findings*, illustrates that the people have conveyed normative and pragmatic but not cultural-cognitive legitimacy on the Afghanistan national police and army, because of the need for external assistance. However, there is consistent marked improvement in this area. The state court system marginally achieves normative and cultural-cognitive, but not pragmatic. The local Jirga or Shura have an adequate amount of all three forms, which subtracts from the state's domination on conflict resolution. The people have conveyed pragmatic and cultural-cognitive, but not normative legitimacy on democracy. The perception of government's performance conveys some pragmatic legitimacy. However, in the southeast and southwest

people perceive little security and there is a high perception of corruption throughout the country. The color white is good for the US, light gray is a borderline color, and dark gray with white font is bad for the US.

Anchored In	The Institution	Normative	Stage	Pragmatic	Stage	Cultural-Cognitive	Stage
Normative	Afghan National Police	Very	M	Some	R	Not	B
	Afghan National Army	Very	M	Very	R	Not	B
	The State Court System	Marginal	R	Not	R	Marginal	R
	Local Jirga or Shura	Some	R	Some	R	Some	R
Pragmatic	Afghanistan's Direction					Not	R
	Available Basic Services			Marginal	R		
	Security			Some	R *		
	Government Performance			Some	R		
	Corruption					Not	R
	Economy			Marginal	R		
Cultural-Cognitive	Democracy	Not	R	Very	R	Some	R
	Voter Efficacy			Marginal	R		
	General Institutional Confidence					Some	R

* Except in the southeast and southwest where few people perceive a secure environment.

Color Legend: Good / Borderline / Bad

Table 6. Key Institutional Findings

Section 4: The Findings for Strategic Communication

The fourth section of this study considers the previous strategic communication evaluations and presents the findings. The section presents the strategic communication goals, whether the USG is attaining them, the trend in performance, and whether the focus areas provide leverage for the USG in Afghanistan. The systems of measurement are as follows. The "goal attainment" (GA) column is described as succeeding, marginally succeeding, failing, not applicable, or needs further explanation (S, MS, F, NA, or NE). The "trend" column is described as up, down, stable, variable, or not applicable. The "leverage for USG" column is described as yes, no, or maybe. This study attaches a value based on a qualitative average of the values presented in the strategic communication evaluation section. The color white is good for the US, light gray is a borderline color, and dark gray with white font is bad for the US.

Table 7, *Key Strategic Communication Findings*, illustrates that for the goal of "increase US legitimacy," the US is marginally successful. However, the US is generally losing the ability to maintain or increase legitimacy. Consequently, this is not an area of leverage for the US. For the goal of "Increase Government of Afghanistan Legitimacy," the US is marginally successful, with some level of stability. This is an area that the US can leverage. There is marginal "support for US presence" in the country, but this is trending downwards. This could be used as leverage to influence the Afghan National Government to take full responsibility for the country's security. This also lends credence to the idea of reconciliation with the Taliban. The "increase support to Government of Afghanistan" goal is a success. This judgment is primarily based on attitudes towards the government's reconciliation efforts with the Taliban. This is an area the US can leverage. The US has failed to "reduce the Taliban's legitimacy," in that sympathy towards the Taliban has increased and the Taliban's level of popularity continues to increase. Finally, the US has not met the goal of "reducing Taliban violence," because the Taliban induced violence

has doubled in the last three years of measurement and continues to climb. This is not an area of leverage for the US.

Strategic Communication Goal	Legitimacy Focus Area	Goal Attainment	Trend	Leverage for US
Increase US Legitimacy	Reconstruction	NE1	NA	Yes
	Method of Information Intake	NE2	Stable	No
	Rate the US in Afghanistan	MS	Down	No
	Confidence in US Forces	MS	Down	Maybe
Increase Government of Afghanistan Legitimacy	General Institutional Confidence	MS	Stable	Yes
	Communication Infrastructure	NE3	Variable	Yes
Support to the US	People Support US Presence	MS	Down	Maybe
Support to the Government of Afghanistan	Attitude Towards Reconciliation With the Taliban	S	NA	Yes
Reduce the Taliban's legitimacy	Sympathy Towards the Taliban	F	NA	No
	Taliban Popularity Among the People	NE4	Up	No
Reduce the Taliban's violence	Level of Taliban Induced Violence	F	Up	No

NE1 - Reconstruction funded by the US is good for US legitimacy; however it may pull from Government of Afghanistan legitimacy.

NE 2 - Methods of information intake are centered on institutions that the US does not have full access to, for instance mosque meetings, and newspapers.

NE 3 - The communication infrastructure is centered on radio, TV, and cell phones. Leveraging these outlets could increase Afghanistan Government legitimacy.

NE 4 - The Taliban's popularity among the people is increasing, although people are repelled by the Taliban attacks on innocent people.

Color Legend
Good
Borderline
Bad

Table 7.   Strategic Communication Findings

CONCLUSION

In Afghanistan, the legitimacy and strategic communication theories are deeply interwoven. As a process, the Afghan constituency conveys legitimacy to an institution. Yet, the strategic communication process for Afghanistan appears to be overly focused on the external audiences' behavior modification and not focused enough on internalization of socio-cultural norms and mores. This means communicating to understand the culture in order to conduct US and Afghan institutional remodeling, and behavior modification to fit within or work in concert with the current cultural institutions; integrating stake-holder perceptions into policy, plans, and operations to support national objectives. Fledgling institutions that do not challenge embedded institutions are more likely to succeed in the long term.

The way people think in Afghanistan is a result of thousands of years of cultural adaptation and social evolution. Centuries of socio-cultural norms and mores tend to act as a filtering mechanism in response to the US, or US influenced actions and communications. These filters receive information (actions and communication), deconstruct it according to customs and history, and then reconstruct it according to cultural norms and ingrained paradigms to create a cultural reality altogether independent from the reality that the USG may wish to promote.

Studies on legitimacy, institutionalization, and strategic communication are fundamentally important to the way the DOD perceives future conflicts. In order to give our best military advice to senior leaders, we need to understand the culture, challenges, and cost (materiel, personnel, and political) that comes with conducting institutionalization in a failed or failing state with an overt US military presence over an extended period of time.

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