

COUNTERINSURGENCY ADVISORY AND ASSISTANCE TEAM (CAAT)

# “The COIN Warrior” Waging Influence

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Hints for the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Strategy  
in Afghanistan

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Sean McKenna  
Russell Hampsey

ISAFCAAT-E

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**MEMORANDUM FOR:** All Personnel Preparing or Currently in the Afghan Theater of Operation

**SUBJECT:** “The COIN Warrior”; Waging Influence. Hints for the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Strategy in Afghanistan

1. Purpose: To flatten the information sharing process across the force and provide information that we have seen throughout the Afghan Theater.
2. The intent of this document is to provide information to personnel in their pre-deployment training at the National and International Training Centers, as well as forces currently operating in the Afghan COIN Environment.
3. The information contained in this document can be utilized as a pocket guide for continual reference.
4. Since the announcement of the Counterinsurgency Strategy with the publishing of the Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan (ICMCP) we have advised and assisted numerous units from Regional Commands to Platoon sized elements. There are a few common threads that resonate throughout the lower echelons of command and we identified a need to address these universal issues.
5. This document is not a panacea, but should provide personnel at all levels with insight as to several techniques and ideas to put into their tool kit to improve their repertoire especially at the battalion, company, and platoon levels.
6. The counterinsurgency environment in Afghanistan requires a customized approach in every village and valley; you are only limited by your imagination and ability to influence.

SEAN P. MCKENNA  
MAJ(R), SF  
COIN Specialist

RUSSELL J. HAMPSEY  
MAJ(R), PSYOP  
IO Specialist

**1. Outline:**

- a. Introduction
- b. Pre-Deployment Training
- c. Enabling the ANSF through Combined Action
- d. Protecting the Population
- e. Civilian and Military Integration to include additional enablers
- f. Conducting a Key Leader Engagement (KLE)
- g. Information Operations which is more than just Neutralizing Malign Influencers
- h. Supporting Governance
- i. Supporting Development
- j. Final Thoughts

**2. Introduction:**

The following is a compilation of recommendations to improve the counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy in your area of responsibility (AOR). These recommendations may already be taking place. It is for you to decide what will or will not work in your specific area. As you know or are discovering, the COIN fight is different from village to village and valley to valley. In view of this, there are a series of micro-insurgencies that you are responsible with managing by utilizing your individual leadership skills. Your country expects you to be successful, but understands that “you don’t know what you don’t know.” The conflict here in Afghanistan is one of the most challenging and complex COIN environments in history. The dynamics of tribes and sub-tribes coupled with enabling our Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) partners, protecting the population, building and supporting governance and development, neutralizing malign influencers, and messaging the numerous audiences (to include ourselves, our nation, and the international community) are all responsibilities placed upon you. The complexity of these challenges at the tactical level are unfamiliar to our Senior Leaders within the military, government, and international community, however, you are expected to negotiate them successfully. With the following information and recommendations in your repertoire, the COIN strategy in your AOR may progress more rapidly. Every soldier, sailor, airman, marine, and civilian within Afghanistan has been given a great individual responsibility in ensuring the success of the mission. It is primarily at the lowest echelons where you have the potential to have the greatest impact to positively or negatively reach out and touch the population and our ANSF partners each and every day. It is imperative that you provide an honest level of effort in support of your “National Strategic Objectives” here in Afghanistan. Rest assured that your efforts will make a difference as we navigate our way along the glide path toward success.

**3. Pre-Deployment Training:**

A unit’s pre-deployment training often sets a course for frustration while deployed in theater. In most instances, that training has prepared you for “kinetic” operations, however, lacks the

**Hints for the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Strategy in Afghanistan**

substance to accurately address the issues you will deal with on the ground in Afghanistan. This is not to say that all training venues have been considered or evaluated and can be grouped into this category. Training Centers need to ensure that they are providing the best and most accurate situational based training venue available. If the training centers are not providing the necessary training, then unit commanders should augment the training to ensure those gaps are filled. In addition, senior commanders should attempt to accurately forecast unit locations in order to afford a unit the best opportunity to prepare. Important training often falls through the cracks or is wasted on personnel that inevitably move out of the unit. The following recommendations can help address these perennial shortcomings:

- a. Ensure deploying units receive training on operational funding and processes to include; the Commander's Emergency Relief Program (CERP), Funds Ordering Officer (FOO) duties, and Contract Management. Any training conducted in CONUS should transfer to Afghanistan. Currently additional training requirements imposed by Joint Contracting Command-Afghanistan (JCC-A) upon arrival in theater increases the impact on units that are located at hard to reach areas. These units sometimes lose personnel for as long as ten days while they attend additional training and conduct fund management duties.
- b. Provide commanders training on Information Operations to ensure they understand its use as an offensive weapon. Commanders need to be intricately familiar with the advantages of waging influence on the local population and what enablers are available to assist them in this endeavor.
- c. Units must receive training on operating and managing the Radio in a Box (RIAB): types of RIABs, how it functions, propagation, programming, who will operate the system, and techniques for getting the message out.
- d. Request blocks of instruction dealing with Afghan Cultural Awareness and tribal training based on your specific proposed area of operation. Today's Soldiers are well versed in the general understanding of the "Afghan" culture, but the specificity required in different areas is what they need.
- e. Develop or attend training events that focus on a Foreign Internal Defense scenario advising an ANSF entity. If the unit is going to advise a Police element in country then they should work through Policing TTPs. They can request a local police agency to provide training for familiarity. In addition, this will provide development of additional soldier skills for younger more inexperienced soldiers.
- f. When possible, train in the environment that you will face when you arrive in Afghanistan. The convenience of the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) does not provide the challenges of traversing mountainous areas.
- g. Civilian enablers from the Department of State, USAID, and USDA should participate in pre-deployment training in order to share programmatic information and capabilities these entities provide to the COIN environment. Ideally these enablers would be tapped for deployment themselves.
- h. Political leaders from the local areas at home station should be utilized for their knowledge of grass roots level political decision making and administration. City Mayors, County Commissioners, and their staffs can provide insight into the challenges commanders will face on the ground.

**Bottom Line on Pre-Deployment Training:**

Training packages and scenarios should be kept current and tailored to a unit's forecasted area of operation. Units keep re-learning experiences every time they deploy due to leadership turn-over and personnel movements. However, within most units there still remains a collective base of knowledge that understands the problems and environment in which they are going to face while deployed. Training should be thought through and not overcomplicated to the point of diminishing returns; rather laid out comprehensively along the same precepts of the Afghan environment. Some generic training events are unavoidable, however every attempt should be made to ensure a challenging and dynamic scenario based training event is provided to deploying units. If you identify a training requirement for your unit then find the solution and present it for incorporation into the training plan.

**4. Enabling the ANSF through Combined Action:**

Combined Action is also referred to as partnering or embedded partnering. What does this mean? Typically, it means that your unit is conducting combined operations with the ANSF. Taking it further into a more successful model; it is being executed in the following ways:

- a. Removing all physical barriers which include gates, especially locked gates when you have guards posted.

Vignette:

A Forward Operating Base (FOB) for a Company sized element has a locked gate that separates the Afghan National Army (ANA) Kandak (equivalent to a US battalion) compound that they are "Partnered" with and the Coalition Force (CF) compound. The gate is also guarded on the CF side by an Afghan Security Guard (ASG) Force consisting of Afghans. The Company is also responsible for manning a platoon sized Combat Out Post (COP) that houses a 25 man CF Platoon with 6 to 7 personnel per squad, 22 ANA, and 15 ANP. The towers at the COP are manned by the ANA and ABP. The COP also has a squad sized Observation Post (OP) they man with 2 Afghan Border Police (ABP) personnel during the day and 7 at night. They live right next to each other, share meals, conduct basic mission planning, and execute ANSF led or ANSF unilateral operations on confidence targets (Traffic Control Points, information gathering, low level target interdiction and route reconnaissance). All of this with a split platoon force. Now, that is good COIN.

When asked why the gate had the lock on to two different members of the command team the response was "well it has always been that way and the last unit handed it off to us." Now, that is just weak COIN. We also asked why they didn't remove it and the response was that the ANA NCOs and Officers can still come and go, but the soldiers are not trusted. That is when it was highlighted that they still have the ASG, who are Afghans, on their side of the locked fence and in the towers. There was a little grumbling - and then it came out that they really didn't trust them either based on the events at another location. Again, it was pointed out that the platoon was required to conduct an embedded partnership at the COP and was having no issues. More grumbling ensued and they began to address the force protection issue. Again, this is just bad COIN. You cannot build a relationship when there are physical barriers present, because you are sending a message of distrust and lack of confidence in your ANSF partners. We understand the challenges and difficulties in changing mind-sets, but this has got to happen in order to progress. Your nation is asking you to accept an increased level of risk to ensure the success of the strategy - and we are asking the same. These are tough choices, especially after nine years of combat tours and watching our brothers in arms suffer the ultimate sacrifice. It is important to ensure that the key elements of the COIN strategy resonate at every level.

- b. Utilizing the same clinic with Afghan and Coalition Force (CF) medical personnel.
- c. Utilizing the same dining facilities. Some Afghan units will not eat in a combined facility due to dietary differences. However, an effort should be made toward sharing meals. This will signify cultural comfort between elements.
- d. Coalition Force soldiers talking to Afghan soldiers after missions.
- e. Combined Tactical Operations Centers (C-TOCs).
- f. Scheduled and Hip – Pocket Training with ANSF elements to include Rules of Engagement (ROE), Escalation of Force (EOF), and ISAF Directives.
- g. Recognition Certificates and Awards for ANSF (Hero of the Week, Best Squad Competition etc.).
- h. Integrate your squads into their formations or integrate the ANSF into yours, but inevitably you need them to lead.

**Bottom line on Combined Action:**

The ANSF are a combat multiplier. Use them that way, because they are now a part of your unit. Your slant reports should include the ANSF strength. Your who, what, when, where, and why (5Ws) and Concept of the Operation (CONOPs) should begin with ANSF elements. For example: *1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Company ANA assisted and advised by 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon Charlie Company, 1-187 INF conducts a Key Leader Engagement in village X bazaar.* Ensure that they understand that they are primary planners and executors as well. Basically, you have become an Observer/Controller (OC). Interact and train the ANSF with the knowledge that they are able to do what they can do at that point in time. It is your job to professionalize them. Understand that their standard, the Afghan standard, will not initially be the American standard; however you can move them in that direction. If there is no adequate method to verify the ANSF level of training, then develop one. Have them conduct individual and collective tasks. Get them to “Afghan Good Enough” and not “American Good Enough”, because you will probably not make it there. Utilize the Crawl-Walk-Run technique; while keeping in perspective that you maybe in the Crawl – Crawl – Crawl phase the entire time you are in country, due to a unit’s Relief in Place (RIPs) from ANSF and CFs, motivation of the ANSF, and the degree of difficulty to build relationships and wage influence. Do not be negligent or lethargic in the utilization of your ANSF. If you are at an isolated COP or FOB who else is going to train, assist, and advise them?

Lastly, keep in mind that ANSF will have a connection – by way of language and culture - to the local population that you will never have. That will translate into better information and better messaging. Remember: a mainstay of COIN is to connect the population to the government. Patrolling with your ANSF partners will enable that connection.

**5. Protecting the population:**

When protecting the population there are many things to consider, but several key factors that resonate are the Rules of Engagement and Escalation of Force procedures. Operating under real or perceived restraint will always frustrate both commanders and subordinates. There is a

**Hints for the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Strategy in Afghanistan**

constant assessment on the applicability of the guidance that is put out. Again, the nation and its leaders are asking you to increase your level of risk. By increasing your level of risk, it will allow you to become closer to the populace. Closing the distance between you and the population will enable you to establish a better relationship and flow of communication. Your efforts and sacrifices will negate the ability of the insurgent or criminal to coerce or intimidate the population.

You protect the populace by “getting out after it.” Do something that will disrupt the insurgent’s Freedom of Movement (FOM), planning and operations cycles, and grip on the population. It is far too often that young leaders lack the ability to see outside of leading and managing their own command. They are given the daunting task to operate beyond their own capability and capacity and are required to do it repeatedly. Leaders at every level need to ensure that they are considering each and every Line of Operation (otherwise called “LOOs” – Security, Governance, Development, Agriculture, and Information Operations) on a daily basis. However, protecting the populace is what we need to get right in order to create the space for our civilian colleagues to perform their duties and move the country of Afghanistan forward. It is important to understand that our civilian colleagues are more frequently being targeted, because of their natural vulnerabilities. Everyone needs to ensure that they remain vigilant, because the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and civilians cannot win this fight without the Afghan population.

Building the sense of an unquestionable relationship with the Afghan population in your AOR is difficult, because you are trying to protect them from an insurgency that is entrenched in their communities. It is important to build relationships in the villages, but you must also figure out “who is who.” A technique that you can use is to capture biometric data on personalities in a non-threatening way in order to begin cataloging the businesses in the bazaars and villages (to include farms). Something to remember; ensure you work through the District Sub-Governor (DSG). It will empower the DSG and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) who we are ultimately trying to legitimize. Additionally, collecting the biometric data can be worked into the National Taskera identification card program.

Cataloging businesses through Biometric data will enable you to:

- a. Build a smart book of your AOR for yourself, your command, and the follow-on unit. Remember your own frustrations with the previous unit when you came to take over the position. In view of this, ensure you will be able to answer your own questions and concerns.
- b. Build a database that is practical and can be tied into the governance of the area.
- c. Identify the “power-brokers.”
- d. Identify what Malik is in charge of the entire bazaar.
- e. Identify any local guard force for the bazaar or village area.
- f. Provide an accurate depiction of who owns what business in the bazaar and village.
- g. Identify where a business is located in the bazaar or village.
- h. Identify who actually works at a particular business.
- i. Understand what types of businesses are in the bazaar.

**Hints for the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Strategy in Afghanistan**

- j. Identify where their supplies come from.
- k. Identify how often they are supplied.
- l. Develop a zip code map of your area for quick reference.

All of the above includes the farms in the surrounding area.

Note: This is not a one man operation. Task organize your squad or platoon into areas of responsibility for example: 1<sup>st</sup> Squad is responsible for “painting the bazaar picture,” 2<sup>nd</sup> Squad is responsible for village X, 3<sup>rd</sup> Squad village Y. They actively participate in assisting the leadership which creates ownership and buy-in from all elements and personnel of a unit. The residual effects are enormous in the professional development of your subordinates in information collection, analysis, assessment, and briefing techniques.

**Bottom line on Protecting the Populace:**

The importance of getting out and connecting with the populace outside of your FOB or COP has never been so critical. The clock on the COIN strategy is ticking and we are at a point in history where we can make a difference one way or the other. Do not wait to be told to do something. You must be daring and creative. Unit Leaders - all the way down to the individual soldier - have a “dog in this fight.” There are individually and collectively talented personnel throughout every unit. Do not let an individual sense of unimportance deter you from being a player, because the solution you present may be the one that no one has thought of yet. However, assess your solution to ensure that it is feasible, practical, and obtainable. Be bold in your thinking and decisive in your decisions. If the ANSF in your area are inactive and are “FOB sitting” then advise them with positive reinforcement to develop and execute a daily strategy to protect their people from insurgents and criminal elements operating within the borders of Afghanistan. Break their lethargy by taking them with you and placing them in charge of operations from planning through debriefing. Do not be complacent about protecting the populace. They can ultimately be your biggest ally out on the fringes of security and the strategy.

**6. Civilian-Military Integration with additional enablers:**

You are not alone. So, do not isolate yourself. You don’t have to conduct COIN exclusively with your organic unit. There are operational enablers available and poised to assist you. International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) and the International Community have dedicated strategic enablers deployed to Afghanistan devoted to assisting and in the long run leading the efforts to build Afghanistan.

Examples of enablers and their activities include:

- a. Civil Affairs (CA) assets are adept at village and community assessments required to gain an enhanced understanding of the population you are working with.

**Hints for the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Strategy in Afghanistan**

- b. Regional Command-East (RC-E) is in the process of deploying a USG civilian surge workforce that will end with 350 civilian experts on the ground. The current total is approximately 175.
- c. Afghanistan is an Agro-Economy; the US Department of Agriculture has representatives throughout the RC-E formation. They can be the biggest "bang for the buck" at the village and village cluster level.
- d. RC-E enjoys the largest concentration of US National Guard Agricultural (Business) Development Teams (ADT) in Afghanistan.
- e. Law Enforcement Professionals (LEP) are invaluable in developing community policing techniques amongst the Afghan Uniformed Police.
- f. US Agency for International Development (USAID) has the capability to establish and run local radio stations.
- g. The Afghan Stabilization Initiative (ASI) or Office of Transition Initiative (OTI) has the ability to assist with short term, quick in-kind grant stabilization projects.
- h. Department of Justice (DoJ) has judiciary experts that can assist in linking traditional and formal justice systems.
- i. Department of State (DoS) governance experts are on the ground working with GIRoA to establish good governance techniques.
- j. Contracted Afghan (or Asia) Security Group (ASG) can provide COP security to free up forces to conduct combined patrols.
- k. If you need something not listed above identify it and request it; not doing so will prolong achieving the COIN effects. Example: If you live in a mining area request mining expertise.

Vignette:

A Company Commander was asked if he had requested support from an ADT to provide assistance to the local farmers in his area of operations. He replied that he had not and usually he opted for using his assigned forces to execute his missions even though they had no professional expertise in agriculture. This is not good COIN.

**Bottom Line on Civilian-Military Integration with additional enablers:**

Lessons learned over the past nine years of conducting operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have identified the need for an integrated civilian-military approach (crack open FM 3-24) to conducting operations designed to execute along the lines of operations. Using the COIN Campaign Design process (Chapter 4, FM 3-24, figure 4-2) to determine requirements along each of the LOOs will assist you in determining the types of enablers required to achieve the desired COIN effects. Solid requirements based in the COIN Campaign Design process should generate a request for forces or civilian expertise. Submit it, ask for it. No commander would use a DoS Governance expert in a night cordon and search, why limit yourself to using a Infantry Sergeant to execute a governance capacity building effort? Do not wait for assets to be provided; lack of identification of requirements is akin to telling higher headquarters you don't need anything. Get

outside the 25 meter target, let your team of enablers handle those, focus on the 300 meter target and build the capacity to focus on those objectives and goals now. Nature abhors a vacuum and any seam or gap not filled by GIROA or ISAF will be filled by the insurgent or criminal.

**7. Conducting a Key Leader Engagement (KLE) or Shura (a local Afghan Council meeting):**

KLEs and Shuras are important for the following reasons:

- a. It enables you to interact with the local populace and begin to build relations.
- b. It enables you to identify the key issues and concerns of the population you are either located within or adjacent to.
- c. It provides you with the ability to see how you and your ANSF are accepted by the community.
- d. It provides you with the ability to observe the ANSF interacting with key personalities from the local populace.
- e. This is the time to wage influence through your ANSF onto the population.

A KLE or Shura is more than just a meeting, mini-conference or working group between the ANSF/CF and the local population. They are exploratory engagements in order for both sides to identify one another's motives. KLEs are often frustrating and unproductive, because in most cases people are untrained in the art of gathering information in a discussion format, are really not interested in the other parties concern, and cannot listen and think at the same time. The last point is the major challenge. When you go into a KLE you should understand the following to make your life easier:

- a. Have an agenda or checklist of information you want to gather, but try not to read from a checklist. You will appear to be like the last twenty-five western faces that have passed through with the good news about delivering something and never return. This will be addressed below.
- b. Have another person with you that will concentrate on the answers. That is the challenge; thinking, listening, remembering, and managing the conversation is an art that most people need formal training or just outright experience doing.
- c. Have the other person take notes so you can continue the conversation.
- d. Have another person watch for body language and verbal signals. Your ANSF partner will be able to pick up on subtleties
- e. During large Shuras, use your interpreters and additional ANSF to listen to any conversations on the periphery. There will undoubtedly be some perception information to gather. Ensure they back brief everyone.
- f. Speak to the individual not to the interpreter. Ensure the interpreter understands complex questions or he will default to what he understands. Rehearse with new interpreters.
- g. Do not go in all “Jocked Up” with Body Armor and Helmet. This could send the wrong perception. You want to show that you trust them. However, this will not always be the case. If you have outer and inner security you should be safe. This is an individual

**Hints for the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Strategy in Afghanistan**

decision, but sometimes you need to get out of your comfort zone in order to understand that situations are less daunting than you assume.

- h. Watch who the ANSF speak to directly, because they know the people and who the power players are in the crowd.
- i. Always have themes and messages interwoven into the dialogue (see IO below). Reduction of civilian casualties, positive identification, prompting help from the populace in identifying threats, etc.
- j. KLEs are normally not the setting to gather biometric data. Use your best assessment to determine if it's right.
- k. Ensure introductions are made from all who are attending the KLE; find out who they are and what impact they bring to the KLE. Oftentimes interlopers attend and then report back to the Anti-Afghan Forces. NOTE: This is not always appropriate due to the size of the Shura.
- l. During small KLEs or Shuras or general topics try to add light humor or personality into the discussion in order to relax the mood. Sometimes, it pays to just be you in these situations. It presents a more natural interaction.
- m. Use the GIRQA or ANSF representative as the focal point and not yourself.

**Bottom Line on KLEs and Shuras:**

Use KLEs and Shuras to your advantage. Empower the ANSF elements that remain in the area to be the voice of the combined team; for example: if the Afghan Border Police never rotate out then use that commander to be the lead, because he will know the populace and the terrain. Get a thorough briefing from them on all the players in the AOR. Plan the agenda with the ANSF and interpreters. Ensure that the interpreters remain calm even if they are insulted. Have another person take notes and observe. You do not want to try and take notes, listen to the conversation with ANSF, and control the flow and content of the dialogue. Trying to juggle all of this will keep you derailed, you will lose track, and you may miss some key information or interaction. Talk along the Lines of Operation and do not stay on the same topic for more than a few questions and then bounce around and come back to the topics. This will keep you from following a specific checklist, but will enable you to interject all the pertinent questions without coming across as an interrogator. Also, include some small talk with the understanding that you are not going to rush through this, because your artificiality will be transparent to them. Include questions about personal topics without being intrusive, Afghans are relationship oriented, so establish commonality. The Afghan populace is well versed in the art of observation and gamesmanship. Establish a relationship and wage your powers of influence to achieve your end state. Remember to always be patient, but understand that in some locations they will utilize dialogue as a stalling technique to enable AAF elements to maneuver. So, in view of this, you must understand your Operational Environment.

**8. Information Operations (IO) is more than just Neutralizing Malign Influencers:**

Information Operations is more than just turning on a Radio in a Box (RIAB) and letting an Afghan Disc Jockey have free reign in running that station. Ask yourself if you would hire a

**Hints for the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Strategy in Afghanistan**

contracted Afghan National to fire your mortars to create the effects you need to accomplish your mission—you wouldn’t!

Target audiences to consider:

- a. Your own forces – it is important to message your own formation on the importance of their effort to the overall contribution. Make them COIN advocates and keep them engaged.
- b. The local workers on the FOB. Sometimes they come from different areas and can give you daily atmospherics or reports on what is going on “outside the wire”. They risk their lives everyday coming on to the FOB or COP to assist you. So, take the time to speak and listen to them. They are an asset. Monitor to ensure workers are being treated with respect as they enter and exit your FOB—dedicated security units may not be attuned to your counterinsurgency strategy.
- c. ANSF – They need to be professionalized and reinforced with their importance to the success of Afghanistan today and in the future.
- d. GIRoA – The governors and civil service workers also need to be supported in their efforts to legitimize the governance effort. Without governance what can really be achieved? Or alternatively, “COIN is ultimately a competition as to who can govern most effectively.
- e. The Insurgent – Determine their vulnerabilities and exploit them over and over again.
- f. The Population – Give them the information they are starving for, but be mindful of their sub-tribal peculiarities where they exist. Separate them from the insurgents.

Information Operations at the tactical level includes:

- a. Psychological Operations (PSYOP):
  - (1) Designed to influence key foreign audiences.
  - (2) Provide data on the population’s collective psyche; fears, suspicions, resolute opinions, cultural nuances, attitudes, and behaviors.
  - (3) Assist in developing messages that will resonate amongst the populace while influencing them to assist you in achieving your objectives (based on the data in para 7.a. (2).).
  - (4) Assist in developing messages to demoralize and induce surrender amongst the enemy you are facing.
- b. KLEs (see Section 7)
- c. Face-to-Face Communications: weave influence themes into every interaction with the populace. Listen; Afghans often talk in metaphors or indirectly address issues.
- d. Radio: use to draw in the local audience, keep them listening and message when appropriate; often the only source for local news. Analyze listenership using call in shows - or in areas without cell coverage, use drop boxes at the District Center (DC) or Bazaar.
- e. Commander’s Information: let the populace know how to approach the COP, what not to do, what to do, where and how to provide information.

**Hints for the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Strategy in Afghanistan**

- f. Information Sharing: IO atmospherics should feed and draw upon the intelligence analysis produced by the Company Information Support Team (COIST) and its enablers.
- g. Afghan Information Dissemination Officers (AIDOs). Afghan National Army Kandaks (US Battalion sized element) have an assigned AIDO, find him and use him. The Afghan Uniform Police (AUP) has similar officers. Use them.

**Bottom Line on Information Operations:**

The development of an IO plan integral to the LOOs is essential. Commanders don't have to do the in depth planning without assistance from assigned IO Officers, PSYOP assets, CA assets, AIDOs and civilian enablers. The commander should outline the desired effects and let these enablers develop the IO plan to create the effects. This does not abdicate the responsibility of the commander to control the IO ‘fires.’ Any interaction - whether face-to-face or over the radio - is a tactical engagement of the population. Ensure you are proactive and continue to message. Political Campaign Strategies, marketing, and population persuasion campaigns influence great numbers of people to think and act in a specific manner. Wage Influence through the many mediums that are available to you and sway the target audience in your direction. Remember that the “bursting radius” of an IO message can be huge. Coordinate both higher and laterally!

**9. Supporting Governance:**

Afghanistan is a Unitarian based government system. This means that “all roads lead to Kabul” in the execution of Governance. Provincial Governors are appointed by the President and District Governors are selected for appointment by the Provincial Governor and appointed by the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG); which works directly for the Afghan President. The power monopoly and control has consistently frustrated ISAF and Afghan leaders at every level. If decisions seem slow and painstaking it's because they are. While we have a timeline to accomplish tasks, Governors at the Province and District have a timeline for political survival. Armed with this knowledge, engage governors utilizing a measured approach with your eyes wide open, and although you may believe you are being slow-rolled, chances are there is a reason for reticence on the part of the decision maker. You must understand their governmental structure and the way it functions. Simply stated: they are not decentralized and in most areas will not take initiative.

Governance is probably the most overlooked LOO as it pertains to the success of our COIN strategy. At the end of the day, there cannot be an Afghanistan without Governance and Rule of Law. Our challenge is to integrate the local dynamics and traditional tribal/village power structures with the legitimate national government structures of the GIRoA. Reinforce the local elders and praise them for the social order they provide, but be clear that the formal GIRoA structures are authoritative. As you go about creating connectivity between the traditional and the formal governance systems, each case is different and will require a unique, informed bottom-up solution. A technique to “jump start” this process is to get the district sub-governor out to the villages. Use your understanding of both the government officials and the village elders to create common ground as they meet. If you do not have the luxury of a proactive district governor, start

**Hints for the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Strategy in Afghanistan**

with the ANSF and ensure they know that just as you are the face and the local ambassador of your country, they represent the same for GIRoA.

The provincial, district and community governance tools to look for include:

- a. Civil Service training programs.
- b. Provincial and District Budget Programs
- c. Community Development Councils
- d. District Development Councils / District Development Assemblies
- e. Provincial Development Councils

**Bottom Line on Governance:**

GIRoA Governance out on the periphery where you are operating in most areas is, at best, rudimentary and yet, this is where it matters the most right now. The villages, communities, and districts believe they are disenfranchised and isolated from the Government of Afghanistan. Afghanistan does not enjoy a history of strong, connected government. It will continue to be frustrating and would challenge even the most experienced governance figure to be in your position on the very edges of our COIN strategy. You will have the most aggravation with the greatest impact on this effort. It will be difficult to stay the course and wage influence in order to connect the populace with GIRoA. You should always be positive with what you are facing, vent your irritation in private, and simply do what you can. Sometimes it is just out of your control, but don't stop thinking.

**10. Supporting Development:**

Development in Afghanistan requires a comprehensive and well thought out engagement strategy. The all too often discovery of previous mismanagement of projects, programs, and funds due to a previous lack of knowledge, understanding, or ownership to ensure success has left a sense of disgust in the psyche of most stabilization and development personnel from both the military and civilian agencies that are now present in Afghanistan. It is now up to you to correct the course for development at your level. How do you do that?

There are several techniques including:

- a. Tie projects into effects you are trying to create.
- b. Ensure there is a system of sustainability.
- c. Use the local population as a work force to create economic stability.
- d. Use local contractors when able or ensure that outside contractors employ local laborers.
- e. Create long term projects, be entrepreneur-minded and develop businesses.
- f. Develop VOTECH training programs.
- g. Empower the local work force.
- h. Quality Control and Quality Assurance (QA/QC) of projects is a must.

**Hints for the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Strategy in Afghanistan**

- i. Ensure you have visibility on all projects in your area of operations (CERP, USAID, USACE, GIRoA, and NGOs). This is harder than it sounds.

Vignette:

One Battalion focused on building schools without the buy-in from the populace. The school was built near a district center using outside contractors. The intent was for ISAF to provide a school for the children to increase their access to education. The structure now sits empty and the village continues to send its sons to the Madrassas in Pakistan. The project checked a box for ISAF – but since it the battalion did not use the process of community involvement it did not create the effects desired. This is not good COIN.

**Bottom Line on Development:**

A constant question when looking at development is; do they really need it? The Afghan populace has been surviving through decades of conflict. They have been, are, and will continue to live their lives. Ensure you are not giving them something they are not ready to receive. The previous systems and techniques for development lacked the oversight, comprehensive strategy, and buy-in necessary to even be remotely successful. It appeared to border on negligence, complacency, and any sense of responsibility by the individuals tasked to deliver development aid and resources. As you will find QA/QC is one of the most important challenges and aspects of delivering development. If there is no system to ensure the proper execution of projects then it will continue to remain ineffective. The civilian experts are well versed in the importance of QA/QC and will provide you with a level of expertise that will support development success.

**11. Final Thoughts:**

There is no “silver bullet” in a COIN environment. You must be creative, dynamic, personable, and comfortable working out on the fringes of security. The overall contribution that every individual has toward impacting the success of this mission is extremely important. Using enablers means you must be open to their dialogue and recommendations. Being less directive and more cognitive will increase your capabilities. The Non-Commissioned Officers and Soldiers must inculcate and support ISAF’s COIN strategy, because they inevitably do the heavy lifting. Allow small units to take ownership and they will become believers and they will execute. One greeting, one hand-shake, one conversation with the local population shows an interest in their world and a human side to you behind your storm trooper like appearance. Walking a patrol or into a village with a weapon in your hand gives you the sensation of power and heightens your senses. You are scanning and looking for threats waiting to pull the trigger. It is what you are trained to do. Calm yourself and become skilled at turning it on and off.

In the COIN Environment the greatest impact and decisive point is:

- a. What you do and don't do.
- b. What you say and don't say.
- c. What you wear and don't wear.
- d. How you act and don't act.

Be the consummate professional and representative of yourself, your unit, your Armed Forces, and the ISAF country you represent. The most lethal weapon in conducting full spectrum COIN is not necessarily your firearm or ordnance, but rather your mind.



**Authors:**

Sean McKenna, Counterinsurgency Specialist

Russ Hampsey, Information Operations Specialist