



Reconceptualizing State Building in Africa (I): Non-State Systems, Decentralization and Refounding African Statehood

by Mark Massey Jr.

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Ed. Note: as of this printing, parts II and III of this series are also available online. Look for part IV in early February.

State building is asserted as the remedy to state collapse. It is heralded as both an immediate solution to contemporary collapse and the preventive medicine against future collapse. It has ascended to a new level of importance in the post-9/11 era. Analysts deem failed states more of a threat to international security than powerful, hegemonic ones, reflecting one prominent scholar's observation that "chaos has replaced tyranny as the new challenge" of the 21st century.¹ Yet, state building is exceedingly difficult and complex; its track record is mixed at best. This series of four articles, under the heading of "Reconceptualizing State Building in Africa," aims to provide a reconceptualization of state building. This introduction lays out the arguments to follow in the proceeding articles, in order to provide a roadmap connecting the arch of the overall series.

The troublesome record has as much to do with how we misconceive state *collapse* (the problem) as how we conceive state *building* (the solution). Thus the first article, "Start by Rethinking State Collapse," critiques the traditional theories of state collapse and offers an alternative way of understanding it. It presents seven key points—the seven deadly sins of state collapse theory. Some of these points identify erroneous assumptions and misunderstandings that must be shed, and some of these points suggest new ways to look at the issue. The traditional theories are constrained by state-centric dogmas of political science that oversimplify the problem (and thus solution). By adopting a multi-disciplined understanding that incorporates lessons from anthropology, sociology and conflict economics,

we develop a more comprehensive understanding of why states fail—and how to rebuild them.

The second article, "The Unbearable Lightness of Governance," argues for a fundamental reconsideration of traditional state building approaches. The standard centralized, top-down strategy is counter-productive. Instead, efforts must cultivate bottom-up, decentralized approaches based on fostering local governance.

The third article, "Below and Beyond the State," explores the implications of non-state systems (i.e. non-state structures, networks and complexes that provide economic, social and/or political services in cases of state collapse/failure). The emergence of such systems is an overlooked and under-

In This Issue

Reconceptualizing State Building in Africa (I): Non-State Systems, Decentralization and Refounding African Statehood <i>by Mark Massey Jr.</i>	1
Unnecessary Evil: The Necessary Exclusion of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar <i>by Adam E. MacAllister</i>	8
Karzai's Governing Strategy: A Threat to ISAF COIN Implementation <i>by James Sisco</i>	13
Motivational Interviewing: Improving Combat Advising to Strengthen Partnering with Afghan National Security Forces, <i>by James Cowan,</i> <i>Nengyalai Amalyar and Mohammad Mustafa</i>	21
Notes on the British Army Field Manual's Weltanschauung; <i>Counterinsurgency as a Whole of Government Approach:</i> An Interview with Colonel Alexander Alderson <i>by Octavian Manea</i>	26
Index of All Articles Published in Jan 2011	32

¹ Ignatieff (2003), p. 299

researched trend. Analysts typically dismiss them as temporary, criminal offshoots of anarchy. But this is premature and erroneous. These systems must be understood as emerging orders that challenge fundamental assumptions about state-society relations. While some are oppressive and violent, others are peaceful and democratic. We must stop ignoring them and start tracking them. The article looks at Somaliland (Northern Somalia) as a case study. Though Somalia is assumed to be a zone of violent anarchy, Somaliland's non-state system of "governance without government" is organically evolving from the bottom-up. It is surprisingly peaceful and democratic with "high levels of legitimacy and local ownership" capable of providing significant levels of governance, public security and social services.² It is striking how, in the absence of international support and recognition, Somaliland's bottom-up, organic, democratic peace stands in stark contrast to the violent, internationally-led, top-down state building failures in Southern Somalia. There are other similar cases across Africa. Thus far we have ignored them to our own detriment. However, they could prove to be building blocks for rejuvenating legitimate, stable and representative governments in Africa.

The fourth article, "Lessons for State Building," identifies the lessons and implications for state building. While the previous articles focused on the "why," it focuses on the "how." It suggests ways to incorporate these lessons and apply them to the design and on-the-ground implementation of state building missions.

As a collective, these articles are meant to open new perspectives urging state builders to craft nuanced approaches that fuse internationally assisted, top-down methods with organic, bottom-up reconstruction.

Part One: Start by Rethinking State Collapse

State building is asserted as the remedy to state collapse. It is heralded as both an immediate solution to contemporary collapse and the preventive medicine against future collapse. It has ascended to a new level of importance in the post-9/11 era. Analysts deem failed states more of a threat to international security than powerful, hegemonic ones, reflecting one prominent scholar's observation that "chaos has replaced tyranny as the new challenge" of the 21st century.³ Yet state building is exceedingly difficult and complex; its track record

is mixed at best. Its troublesome record has as much to do with how we misconceive state *collapse* (the problem) as how we conceive state *building* (the solution).

Simply put, the way we think about state collapse and state building is wrong. We must fundamentally change our approach to these issues. That is the main goal of this series of articles. This first article focuses on state *collapse*, and argues 1) why the dominant interpretations of collapse are flawed and 2) what we can do to better understand collapse. It presents seven key points—the seven deadly sins of state collapse theory. Some of these points identify erroneous assumptions and misunderstandings that must be shed, and some of these points suggest new ways to look at the issue. Together they present a "reconceptualization" of state collapse.

A starting point is to understand what we mean by the term "state" and how we measure its "success" or "failure." The basic purpose of a modern state is to provide: 1) *security* while maintaining a monopoly of violence (law and order and international defense); 2) *representation* (a process connecting people to their government); and 3) *welfare* (the provision of social and economic services funded through taxes).⁴ How effectively the government fulfils these core functions defines the success or failure of the state.

So how can we better our understanding of collapse?

The Seven Deadly Sins of State Collapse Theory

1. Consider context and do not oversimplify.

Many theories oversimplify state collapse by placing too much emphasis on a single, all-encompassing cause. For example, you will often hear that "globalization" has eroded the power of the state and made weak states even more fragile. Or that the end of the Cold War halted the US/Soviet funding of puppet regimes that were too weak to stand on their own, thus opening Pandora boxes of "ancient ethnic hatreds." The search for such causes is helpful, but to extrapolate a single, all-encompassing causality oversimplifies this complex phenomenon. Most cases of collapse have international *and* domestic causes. Universal explanations only tell part of the story. Each case is different; similar causes do not mean similar results and visa versa. Moreover, such explanations

² Menkhaus (2006/2007)

³ Ignatieff (2003), p. 299

⁴ Milliken & Krause (2002)

fail to account for cultural, ideological and personal motives (e.g. honor, prestige, fear, pride) that are “instinctively uncomfortable” to social science.⁵ Instead, we must adopt more context sensitive perspectives stressing that there are “quite distinct patterns of, and *different and contrasted trajectories to, collapse.*”⁶

2. Avoid the “great power bias.”

When studying the history, politics and societies of Africa, one must take care not to perpetuate the “great power bias” that often distorts our analyses. The traditional academic theories of international relations and security studies (realism, liberalism, Marxism, etc.) explain history through the actions of the big governments of great power countries: how this government reacted to that government and so on. The state is the basic character through which history is told. But this framework provides distorted, incomplete understandings of history and is less effective when looking at areas of the world where the state is a relatively new, weak and ineffective (even non-existent) entity.

Political scientists Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey provide an excellent argument for how this kind of great power bias (which they call “Eurocentrism”) distorts our understanding of the “developing” world. This Eurocentrism “renders invisible” the “interconnection” and “mutual constitution” of both the West and East—or what Thomas Barnett would call the “Core” and the “Gap.”⁷ In actuality, the two share a “joint role in making history” and must be analyzed in a “single analytic field.”⁸ When we explain history, we tend to focus on the actions of the big governments of the powerful states (i.e. the great power bias). The problem is that this relegates the weak, powerless states and non-state actors (i.e. governments and peoples of developing countries) as marginal, passive actors whose impact on history is trivial. In so doing, these analyses commit a “categorical error” that “underestimates and misrepresents” the impacts, roles and motives of these actors.⁹ Before 9/11, our security analysis was tailored towards analyzing threats from the big governments of the great power countries (e.g. USSR, China, etc.) while viewing weaker countries and non-state actors as “small

⁵ Berdal (2003), p. 490

⁶ Doornbos (2002), p. 799

⁷ Barkawi & Laffey (2006), pp. 346-7. To clarify, the terms “West and East” are synonyms for, respectively, “North and South,” “developed and developing,” or, in Barnett’s terms, “the Core and the Gap.”

⁸ Ibid., p. 330

⁹ Ibid., p. 332



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potatoes.” We did not fully understand the role minor states and non-state actors played in history. We thus misunderstood the forces behind terrorism, fragile states and “new wars.” This is why events like 9/11 caught us so off-guard.

This type of great power analysis is particularly problematic when it comes to understanding places like Africa and Southwest Asia, where the “state” has never been a strong institution. Trying to analyze the histories and societies of these regions by focusing on their governments misses much of the story. Much of what “happens” in Africa—both in the historical sense and the daily life sense—“happens” outside of the government. But traditional approaches of political science, international relations and security studies analyze history by

focusing on state governments. You cannot approach African history in this way because it creates a distorted, incomplete view. Two Africa experts have similarly remarked, “it seems to be the enduring fate of Africa to be ‘explained’ in terms so ahistorical as to be risible.”¹⁰

In today’s security paradigm, the role of minor states (e.g. Afghanistan, Pakistan, North Korea, Yemen) and non-state actors (terrorists, NGOs, international organizations, businesses, drug traffickers, etc.) will often be as important, if not more important, than the role of great power governments. We cannot rest on the self-centered assumption that if we choose the right policies, everything will play out properly. Afghanistan and Iraq continue to prove that the actions of the Afghan and Iraqi *governments*, and even more important, the Afghan and Iraqi *people*, may be greater determiners than the actions of the US government. While the great power, state-centric framework may have been more fitting for understanding the Cold War, it is more dangerous in today’s world in which our key adversaries are fragile states, non-state actors (terrorists, drug traffickers, etc.), and the “problems without passports” that they breed (terrorism, insurgency, international drug cartels, health pandemics, etc.). These problems do not fit within the old state-centric framework. Fortunately, since 9/11, most recognize the need to analyze these sorts of problems; unfortunately we do not necessarily know *how*. We have shifted our focus to these new, non-state problems but we are still viewing them through old state-centric lenses. We must adapt a new framework. But how?

Begin by questioning the basis of the nation-state form of government itself. Not necessarily because we seek to do away with it, but because this sheds light on why it works in some cases and fails in others. We often demand that countries around the world—from Africa to Afghanistan to Iraq—develop a strong nation-state government. But to do so effectively, we must understand the history of the emergence of the nation-state itself. Indeed, the assumption that the entire world must be divided into sovereign nation-states is a recent (and possibly transient) one.¹¹

3. Remember that the history of nation-state formation in the West was violent and centuries long and recognize that the current era of globalization is harder for nation-state formation than any other era.

The context within which the nation-state emerged in the Core (West) is dramatically different from its more recent rise in the rest of the world. The history of state formation in the Core was a centuries-long process involving violence, warfare, oppression, state collapse, state absorption and changing borders. It was like a Darwinian survival-of-the-fittest process: strong states conquered weak states and/or weak states simply fell apart into smaller entities.¹² In today’s world however, there are international organizations (e.g. the UN, the European Union, NGOs, etc.), international legal systems (human rights charters, the ICC, etc.), and stronger international values (democratic and human rights standards) that act against this Darwinian process. They are committed to upholding the sovereignty and borders of existing states preventing war.

Globalization also makes nation-state formation more difficult because it erodes governments’ abilities to provide the basic functions of security, representation and welfare.¹³ Many argue the globalized economy has consolidated itself in the Core countries of the West to the systematic exclusion of many in the Gap, forcing the Gap to either remain excluded from the global economy (which breeds poverty, terrorism and rogue tendencies) or reintegrate into the global economy through illegal, shadow markets.¹⁴ These economies often develop into vast networks of authority that undermine state capacities and contribute to collapse.¹⁵ Many of them are bigger and more powerful than the official economies and governments, and spread across national borders, contributing to regional instability.¹⁶

Exceedingly expensive economic and social costs also make the state difficult to maintain.¹⁷ For example, the poorer and sparser a population, the more expensive state maintenance becomes until, from a simple cost-benefit analysis, the costs of maintaining a state outweigh the benefits.¹⁸ “The

¹² Jackson (1990)

¹³ Strange (1996); Clapham (2002); and Barnett (2004). For other studies of globalization’s effects, see, inter alia, Jackson (1990), Kaldor (1996), Castells (1998), Keen (1998 & 2000), Reno (1998), Berdal & Malone (2000), Duffield (2001), etc.

¹⁴ Berdal & Malone (2000), Duffield (2001), Barnett (2004), Collier (2007) and Picciotto et. al. (2007)

¹⁵ Keen (1998 & 2000), Berdal & Malone (2000) and Duffield (2001)

¹⁶ Examples include subversive blood diamond and conflict trade networks as well as insurgent forces like the Lord’s Resistance Army. The DRC also provides excellent examples of these sorts of undermining and regionally interlinked economic networks. These networks are often bigger and more powerful than the official economies and governments.

¹⁷ Clapham (2002), p. 778-9

¹⁸ Clapham (2002)

¹⁰ Chabal & Daloz (1999), p. xviii

¹¹ Clapham (2002)

fundamental problem facing state builders in Africa,” historian Jeffrey Herbst summarizes, “has been to project authority over inhospitable territories that contain relatively low densities of people.”¹⁹

The social costs—obedience, social discipline, loyalty, national identification, shared social values, etc.—are likewise demanding. Societies historically compensated for the lack/failure of statehood through mechanisms such as kinship, spiritual beliefs and social values that are “very difficult to reconcile with the demands of... states.”²⁰ Some opine that the universality of the state was never questioned, while the question of “whether the whole world could *afford* states” was never asked.²¹

4. Recognize that the nation-state model may not fit many African societies, so we must allow for more “Africanized” variations of the state.

The nation-state was not a natural outgrowth in Africa; instead, it was forcefully and awkwardly imposed by European colonizers. The borders defining today’s African countries are essentially the same borders that colonizers drew to divide and command their colonial territories. When colonizers divided these borders, they did so with more concern for the economic and resource output of land and less concern for tribal, ethnic and religious demographics. The borders thus arbitrarily cut across demographics, haphazardly dividing and grouping different groups amongst each other under new flags of national identity. People were basically told to subvert their traditional identity to a new national identity. This is a rather absurd request considering that these various traditional identities had defined people and societies for centuries, where as the new “national” identity (whether it be Congolese, Rwandan, Sudanese, etc.) was a relatively new concept. It should be no surprise then, that “national” governments often turned into seats of power for one group to exploit resources and wealth over others.²² Yet classic theories rarely account for the impact of nonsensical borders, and the international community (and African governments) adamantly insists on upholding these borders. Few want to address the border issues because they fear the Pandora’s box it may open.

¹⁹ Herbst (2000), p. 11

²⁰ Clapham (2002), p. 778-9

²¹ Ibid., p. 778

²² This is not to say that conflict is due to ethnic hatred. Conflicts have many different causes, and many seemingly “ethnic” conflicts are in reality due to economic or other causes under the guise of “ethnic conflict.”

Political scientist Siba Grovogui remarks, “instead of treating the African condition as evidence” that the state may not be the best form of government for all societies, “theorists often construe deviations from the Western state model as a sign” that African states cannot “live up to the requirements” of government.²³ Instead, she suggests considering a different perspective: not that African societies cannot fit the nation-state model, but rather that the nation-state model may not fit African societies. One should not assume that because the modern state evolved to work so successfully in North America and Europe, it must be the natural evolutionary point of progress for all societies.

Given all these debilitating factors, is it not presumptuous to demand African states to replicate the success of European states within inalterable, arbitrary borders without violence in a mere number of years? Such demands forget the fact that violence and state collapse are *normal* phases of state formation.

5. Avoid a strictly internal technical / administrative understanding of state collapse.

Classic explanations of collapse narrowly focus on internal technical/administrative causes, such as African leaders’ inability to operate a state (i.e. bad governance, neopatrimonialism, etc.). Though accurate, this explanation is incomplete because it ignores many structural and international causes of collapse. Classic theories describe the failure of the African state in terms of the inability of Africans to succeed with the states they were given. This flawed logic assumes that: 1) the international system of sovereignty is neutral and 2) that states work if properly operated; thus collapse is a consequence of the inability to operate the state within a supposedly impartial international system. But this logic rarely considers the irrational and ahistorical form of the given state (or the international system). It sticks dogmatically to a one-size-fits-all blueprint. But this blueprint is not working: “The puzzle is not how and why [these states] may fail, but how and why they exist or persist at all.”²⁴

The international system of sovereignty (the political “rules of the game”) and the globalized economy (the economic “rules of the game”) are not a neutral setting. Rather, they are active factors that can contribute to collapse. In this way, collapse can derive as much from outside a country as inside. The point here is not to argue against the state per

²³ Grovogui (2002), p. 316

²⁴ Milliken & Krause (2002), p. 763

se, nor to locate blame. Rather, it is to broaden our understanding of state collapse.

6. Collapse and war may represent transformation into a new order rather than violent breakdown into anarchy.

How many times have you heard failed states in Africa described as vacuums of chaos and anarchy wherein senseless violence begets more senseless violence in an unending cycle? Scholars and reporters repeat this description so often that we assume that when governments collapse, societies automatically collapse as well, falling into vacuums of barbaric anarchy.

Now what if I told you that this is not necessarily true? New research increasingly reveals an overlooked and misunderstood trend: systems of informal, adaptive orders emerging in collapsed/failed states. These systems provide governmental services (i.e. economic, social, and/or political services) in the wake of state collapse. What we are witnessing, one scholar explains, is not the collapse of the state so much as the formation of alternative economic and political systems to replace the state.²⁵ This trend directly undermines the assumption that state collapse automatically begets violent anarchy.

One might refer to these systems as “governance in the mist,” because like the gorillas in the famous film, they may appear as a distant visage, difficult to see and even more difficult to trace. But this is only because we are not looking properly. We must counter this lapse, but how?

7. Absorb more anthropology, sociology and economics and think of war and peace as two sides of the same coin, not mutually opposed.

Start by stepping back and looking at how the world operates in a broader sense. Do not focus so narrowly on the state. This broader perspective should incorporate the numerous, overlapping and interconnected networks that make the world operate. These networks still include government relations, but to a much larger degree than any time in history, they also include business networks (legal and criminal), markets (legal and illegal), social networks, religious networks, tribal networks, so on and so forth. To grasp these changes, we should integrate more anthropology, sociology, business/economics (especially of illegal markets) and other disciplines. While the purpose of political science, international relations and security studies

is to study *government* relations, these other disciplines focus on understanding *societies*. You cannot build better *governments* without better understanding *societies*. Thus a multi-disciplined approach would help fill in the gaps for a more complete picture. The military’s adoption of “network-centric warfare” and “human terrain systems” are examples of similar approaches applied to war fighting. Analysts must apply “network-centric” approaches to state collapse and state building.

We must also rethink our definitions of war and peace. We tend to make a strict distinction between them, but this dichotomy is too black-and-white. Anthropologist Begoña Aretxaga writes, “Peace and war are not so much two opposed states of being as they are multi-faceted, ambiguous, mutually imbricated areas of struggle.”²⁶ We should blur the dichotomy between war and peace.²⁷ War, like peace, is a social project. One must deny it “special status” and analyze it as one such project among many competing others, made and moderated by social agents through social processes. Separating it from this context “risks disabling precisely the strategies and tools of social organization, culture and politics through which violence can be reduced.”²⁸

Conflict/development expert Mark Duffield argues that state collapse and the “new wars” associated with it represent modes of organic social transformation.²⁹ What we are witnessing is not the collapse of the state so much as the formation of alternative economic and political systems to replace the state. Many groups are deciding to opt out of the modern, liberal nation-state model that has failed them. Rather than irrationality and breakdown, Duffield sees “the emergence of new forms of rights to wealth, political legitimacy and modes of accumulation and redistribution”: in other words, new forms of governance that blur the line between society and state.³⁰ What analysts mistake for “complex political emergencies” are actually “emerging political complexes.”³¹ The point is not to champion these complexes per se (they are often predatory and illiberal), but to highlight the transformative processes underlying collapse.

We should thus reassess the strict state-society dichotomy. Political scientist Timothy Raeymaekers suggests adopting anthropologist Joel Mig-

²⁵ Duffield, Mark (2001), *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (London: Zed Books)

²⁶ Aretxaga (1997), p. 4

²⁷ Richards (2005)

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3

²⁹ Duffield (2001)

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 140

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14

dal's "state-in-society model." This model foregoes the state-society dichotomy, focusing instead on a "two-way state-society struggle" occurring not "between state and society as such, but rather between different social forces" competing for social/political/economic control.³² This broadens the focus beyond mere institutional/administrative failure, absorbs the social transformation and "emerging political complexes" considerations, recognizes state collapse as part of (rather than separate from) state formation, and liberates analysis from the state-centered, great power bias.

Conclusion

This research suggests two important considerations. Firstly, participation in the state order is not a given. Vast swaths of populations choose to opt out of inadequate state systems for alternative, non-state systems. Reasons for opting out may vary from violent, greedy opportunism to lack of other options. Nonetheless, (non)participation in the state is a *rational* calculation, and should not necessarily be seen as irrational, immoral or even bad. For many, the risks of participating in the governmental system outweigh the benefits. Analysts of Africa suffer from an "engagement paradigm" that fails to recognize this.³³

Secondly, collapse is as much a beginning as it is an end. It should be viewed for its potential to create a new, better system in the wake of the old. Unfortunately, state building efforts falter by reconstructing systems that maintain many of the same elements that contributed to breakdown in the first place. Fortunately, by shedding the old framework, we can avoid going in circles and instead forge a new path towards better states.

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³² Raeymaekers (2005); Migdal (2001)

³³ Azarya & Chazan (1987)

Unnecessary Evil: The Necessary Exclusion of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar

by Adam E. MacAllister



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The policy of reconciliation and reintegration in Afghanistan is not a new concept, but in 2010 it has received renewed emphasis. This, in large part, is due to NATO's acceptance of President Hamid Karzai's withdrawal timeline – a timeline that advocates 2014 as the final year of Coalition occupation. Focusing on Afghanistan's future takes the casual observer in many directions that includes an analysis of economic matters, geo-political alliances, and the daunting potential of a reinvigorated extremist presence inside of the country.¹ Additionally, given the importance of cultural geography, it can be argued that another significant factor is being purposefully overlooked. The critical factor in question is the close examination of the key players associated with the current Afghan reconciliation and reintegration program. And yet, it is believed that “absent a viable, broad-based reintegration and reconciliation plan, the Afghan conflict will not end within a politically acceptable timeframe.”²

Well articulated by Dr. Amin Tarzi, director of Middle East Studies at the Marine Corps University, the current reconciliation and reintegration program, originally articulated in the Bonn Agreement of 2001, has suffered continuous ambiguity, an absence of clear objectives, and competing, if

not contradictory, efforts by ISAF and Afghan Government officials.³ This point is made even more salient by the recent imposter who posed as the number two Taliban leader, Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour, who received an audience with the Afghan President and intelligence officials.⁴ Consequences of events such as these could precipitate the undesired movement towards personalities for which we are historically familiar. Specifically, a reliance on the personality of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar could be a particularly fateful decision by Afghan and ISAF leaders.⁵

The reintegration and reconciliation process is a critical element in the long-term success of Afghanistan. The process relies upon prudent decision making, which potentially runs counter to a socio-political environment that is seeking immediate successes to bolster its strength and legitimacy. The purpose of this paper is to inform the reader of the historical role that Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has played in the history of Afghanistan and demonstrate why his exclusion from the current reconciliation and reintegration efforts is absolutely critical to the long-term objectives of Afghanistan and the region. This is a matter of pragmatism and not one of social relativism or mirror imaging.

There are many who believe that as a foreigner it is our obligation to appreciate and accept the cultural norms in Afghanistan that cater to survival and the attainment of power. In 1857, Joseph Ferrier described this pension for reinvention best

¹ Foreign investment concerns have been significant since President Karzai expressed his intent to ban all private foreign security contracts potentially signaling the abandonment of millions of dollars worth of existing development projects. India and Pakistan both have a vested interest in the security of Afghanistan, Pakistan has expressed concern over a growing relationship between New Delhi and Kabul which threatens the influence that the Pakistani ISI currently maintains over existing militant groups that operate from within Pakistan or are financed through them. The return of extreme Islamic militants into the mainstream political sphere suggests a possible repeat of the Post Soviet collapse of Muhammad Najibullah (last Communist President of Afghanistan who was forced to step down in 1992 by the Mujahideen). Washington Post articles feature many of the specifics and can be obtained through their archives. Comments concerning the Post Soviet collapse is cited in the detailed work of Shaista Wahab in the book [A Brief History of Afghanistan](#) (see further citations).

² Amin Tarzi, “Recalibrating the Afghan reconciliation Program”[article online], NDU Press Archive, accessed 24 November 2010; available from <http://www.ndu.edu/press/recalibrating-the-afghan-reconciliation-program.html>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Joshua Partlow and Karen DeYoung, “Taliban imposter reveals perils of negotiation: too good to be true,” [Washington Post](#), 24 November 2010, A6.

⁵ Having served in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I have seen an arguable parallel between the perceived need to accept, and in some cases endorse, figures like Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (HiG, Afghanistan) and Muqtada al Sadr (JAM, Iraq) who are both outspoken anti-American militants. I have not found an in depth comparison of these two individuals but both figures are widely touted as religious/political/militant leaders of major factions within the existing construct of the War on Terror. It is argued that both figures require reconciliation prior to the creation of a truly stable environment. A basic overview of Muqtada al Sadr can be found at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/al-sadr.htm>.

when he said, “they will change their protectors as often as it suits them; for fear and the greed of gain are the only motives which influence their conduct, but they rarely pay their tribute to whichever suzerain they attach themselves for the time.”⁶ He then continued, saying that this trait “has existed from the earliest times, and will certainly be the same a thousand years hence.”^{7,8}

Know Your Enemy

Few people know Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s name outside of the defense industry. Those who do tend to remember his early claim to fame as the perpetrator of the many attacks against young women attending Kabul University who failed to wear “Islamic” veils and consequently had acid thrown in their faces.⁹ Amongst Afghan’s, he is often remembered for the atrocities committed in Kabul from 1992 to 1996, where as many as 50,000 Kabul civilians were killed as a result of Hekmatyar’s indiscriminant artillery barrages during his fight for control.¹⁰ Even fewer know of him as the champion of United States support during the anti-soviet era of the 1980s. However, it is reported that he received over 600 million dollars worth of U.S. aid during that time period.¹¹

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar was born in 1947 (or 1950 depending on the source), as a Ghilzai Pash-tun from Kunduz province. Prior to the murder of a Maoist student,¹² he was expelled from a military school and attended two years at the College of Engineering in Kabul University, earning him the nickname “the engineer.”^{13,14} Hekmatyar was a

member of the “Muslim Youth” and was an active advocate of a revolutionary uprising that supported a radical Islamist republic as early as 1970 (which was during the time of King Zahir).¹⁵ There is an important distinction between Islamist and nationalist movements; Hekmatyar and his Hesb-i-Islami, a militant group established in 1975, were of the former. This distinction offered Hekmatyar “considerable support from like-minded groups in Pakistan and the Gulf.”¹⁶ He and his organization were heavily influenced by the teachings and methodology of the highly-politicized “Muslim Brotherhood.” This group, among other things, advocated a centralized command structure, formation of cells, secrecy among members, infiltration of social and government structures (a concept reminiscent of Antonio Gramsci), and most importantly the heralding of the organization as an Islamist vanguard in Afghanistan.¹⁷

Much of Afghanistan’s history is categorized and understood by the unique forms of conflict that follow each other in close succession. That perpetual state of chaos allows individual leaders to distinguish themselves and develop a relative level of prominence based on the extent of their participation. In an effort to work within that framework and develop an appreciation for Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, an oversimplification of Afghanistan’s contemporary timeline is necessary. Hekmatyar’s influence will be viewed from the monumental paradigm shift of pre versus post so-viet withdrawal.

Pre Soviet Withdrawal: The Development of a Warlord

Important to understanding Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his influence is a basic comprehension of his actions after the 27 April 1978 Saur Revolution, which was the fateful precursor to the Soviet occupation in December 1979.¹⁸ The Soviets supported the 1978 coup against Daud and likely accepted his murder along with the murder of 30 members of his family on the 28th of April of that year.¹⁹ However, the Soviets quickly realized that they had opened the door to an uncontrollable radical Islamist regime that could destabilize the en-

⁶ Joseph Ferrier, *Caravan Journeys and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan, and Belochistan* (London: John Murray, 1857), 204.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ My experiences in Afghanistan attests to the truth of this statement, without disrespect or even apprehension, the Afghan leaders ability to cater to all sides was rooted in survival and the desired attainment of power. Members of the same family would fight for both the government and for the anti government forces (AAF) in order to preserve the balance which could be shifted one way or the other depending on the needs of the situation. Though frustrating, it was a critical understanding that often led to mutual success so long as all parties managed their expectations and definitions of success.

⁹ Michael Crowley, “Our Man in Kabul? The sadistic Afghan warlord who wants to be our friend.” [March 9, 2010 article online], The New Republic Archives, accessed 26 November 2010; available from <http://www.tnr.com/article/politics/our-man-kabul?page=0,0>.

¹⁰ Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History Of Afghanistan*, 2d ed. (New York: Checkmark Books, 2010), 241.

¹¹ Crowley, “Our Man in Kabul? The sadistic Afghan warlord who wants to be our friend.”

¹² Hekmatyar was imprisoned from 1972 to 1973 but fled to Pakistan during the Daud Coup of 1973.

¹³ Biographical data is from a compilation of sources including Wahab’s book, Crowley’s article, and the Historical Dictionary

of Afghanistan (see further citations for the specific location of the information).

¹⁴ Ludwig Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 2d ed. (London: The Scarecrow Press: 1997), 142.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 143.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Wahab and Youngerman, *A Brief History Of Afghanistan*, 138.

¹⁹ Ibid., 139.

tire Muslim region which prompted their invasion on 27 December 1979. On that same date the Soviets were successful in killing President Hafizullah Amin, the formidable counterweight to the Soviet preference of Nur Muhammad Taraki, who became the first president of the Communist regime.²⁰

After the 1978 revolution there was an influx of over 80,000 Afghan refugees into Pakistan, which swelled the population with willing militants.²¹ The President of Pakistan at the time was Zia ul-Haq and he demonstrated a willingness to accept them and bolster their cause with “financial aid and encouragement.”²² Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who had been developing his militant force in Pakistan since 1975, benefited greatly and was authorized in January of 1979 by Zia to take 5,000 rebels “to cross into Afghanistan’s Konar Province and attack its capital.”²³

In 1978 the United States was providing support in the form of propaganda and nonlethal equipment in the sum of roughly \$500,000.²⁴ Due to the Soviet Invasion and coupled with the developing situation in Iran, a change policy was directed under President Carter. By 1979 there was a large consortium of nations providing Soviet style arms to the anti-Soviet forces.²⁵ In 1980 the Pakistani government, based partially on a need to control the distribution of such aid, formally recognized 7 major political parties – all of which, coincidentally, had military style militias subordinate to them.^{26,27} To receive aid all refugees and organizations had to register with one of the seven dominant groups. “Most of the military and financial aid from Pakistan, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and other interested foreign parties was funneled through these seven groups.”²⁸

Led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Hezbi-i-Islami, in short HiG, was “the most radical of the Islamist groups.” Hekmatyar was favored by Pakistani leaders who were impressed by his Pashtun affiliation, fierce determination, and organizational skills.²⁹ It is said that a third of all U.S. Central

Intelligence Agency (CIA) assistance, to include a significant quantity of Stinger missiles, went to HiG.³⁰ Stated clearly by Michael Crowley, there was “no other Afghan leader [who] had received more money from the United States than Hekmatyar, yet he showed his Western patrons precious little gratitude” as he “claimed to despise the United States as much as the Soviet Union.”³¹ It is estimated that 30,000 rebels fought under Hekmatyar primarily in the North, East, and South but differed from other organizations as he did not have a geographical center in any region.³² With that said, Hekmatyar enjoyed during the soviet era a reputation amongst the varying groups as the “most ruthless and uncompromising of them all,” and to the soviets he was a fabled “bogyman behind the most unspeakable torture of their captured soldiers.”³³

Post Soviet Withdrawal: The Making of a Terrorist

In February of 1989 the Russians withdrew their occupation force from Afghanistan with President Najibullah’s communist regime maintaining control for a further three years before falling to the warring Mujahedeen. During the early 1990’s the Pakistani government sanctioned an Afghan Interim Government in exile, which was composed of familiar figures from the 7 political parties recognized ten years earlier. However, little unity existed as the Soviet withdrawal allowed traditionalists, in particular, to return to their homeland and pursue local interests. This was not opposed by Najibullah and his government. At the time, the Soviets were still providing 3 to 4 billion dollars a year to the communist Afghan government, who had purchased weapons and most importantly “put a large number of tribal leaders and even mujahedeen commanders on the payroll, a time honored Afghan tool to build support.”³⁴ Hekmatyar, for his part, did two things in the early 1990’s to assure disunity amongst the rebels. The first was when “he surprised friends and foes alike when he allied himself with General Shahnawaz Tanai, a radical Khalqi, in a coup against the Kabul government of Dr. Najibullah.”³⁵ The second was in 1991, when he

²⁰ Ibid., 153-156.

²¹ Ibid., 150.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 152.

²⁴ Ibid., 157.

²⁵ Ibid., 164.

²⁶ Of the 7 political parties, 3 were regarded as traditionalists while four were considered radical Islamists; political ends were the primary differentiating factor as the traditionalists tended to prefer a return to a monarchical system while the Islamists required a government/society “reorganized around Muslim principles and values.”

²⁷ Wahab and Youngerman, *A Brief History Of Afghanistan*, 176.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 177.

³⁰ Ibid., 177-178.

³¹ Crowley, “Our Man in Kabul? The sadistic Afghan warlord who wants to be our friend.”

³² Wahab and Youngerman, *A Brief History Of Afghanistan*, 178.

³³ George Crile, *Charlie Wilson’s War: The Extraordinary Story of How the wildest Man in Congress and a Rogue CIA Agent Changed the History of Our Times*(New York: Grove Press: 2003), 222.

³⁴ Wahab and Youngerman, *A Brief History Of Afghanistan*, 195.

³⁵ Ludwig Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 143.

This alliance demonstrated a willingness to compromise beliefs, overlook atrocities, and ally with the enemy all for the pursuit of power.

murdered seven commanders and twenty-three soldiers of Massoud's Jamiat and subsequently withdrew from his position in the exiled interim government.³⁶ This only further clarified his singular quest for power.

1992 to 1996 was deemed an era of Mujahedeen rule, but is better described as a prolonged siege of Kabul. At the time varying tribal factions violently fought for control of the government and a continued shift of alliances muddied any semblance of unity. Hekmatyar was regarded as the most horrific of the protagonists. He constantly refused power sharing agreements that would have made him the Prime Minister, as they would have placed him as a subservient to first President Mujadidi and then Rabbani. By decree he was in fact the prime minister from 1992 to 1994, but he never entered the office. After 50,000 civilians were killed and a further 100,000 wounded by his hand he did, in fact, concede to being the Prime Minister for a brief time period in 1996. The end result of this era with regard to Hekmatyar was well articulated by Shais-ta Wahab when he said:

The attacks [referring to the indiscriminant rocket and artillery attacks], as well as the failure to take Kabul, finally discredited Hekmatyar among most of his Pash-tun allies and, more important, persuaded Pakistan's ISI to begin searching for a more effective and popular protégé.³⁷

After four years of subtle development under the direction of Mullah Omar, who was now connected with the Pakistani government and ISI, the Taliban movement fought to develop the stability that the country's impoverished and abused population so desperately desired. Of interest, the remaining HiG forces reportedly succumbed to the Taliban not through fighting, but because the senior commander under Hekmatyar was bribed with 2 million dollars, effectively reducing all militia resistance outside of Kabul.³⁸ In September of 1996, the Taliban succeeded in expelling Rabbani and Hekmatyar from both Kabul and Afghanistan. Both figures sought refuge in Iran as they were no longer favored by the Pakistanis. During this time another faction began to weigh in, Osama Bin Laden fully backed the Taliban reportedly providing 3 million dollars in support of their cause.³⁹ In 1991, Osama Bin Laden and Hekmatyar were connected as outspoken opponents to the U.S.-led coalition in the Gulf War. Additionally, Hekmatyar also

claimed to have helped Osama Bin Laden escape from Tora Bora in 2001.⁴⁰

The Enemy Of My Enemy Is Still The Enemy

After Al Qaeda's September 11, 2001 attack on U.S. soil and the subsequent coalition ousting of the Taliban and Al Qaeda from Afghanistan, three primary threats have remained persistent throughout the current insurgency fight. Those three threats have been identified as the Quetta Shurra (Taliban), the Jalaluddin Haqqani Network, and the Hezbi-i-Islami. Al Qaeda is connected to all three and all three are once again enjoying a base of operations in Pakistan. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his forces have been responsible for a series of high-profile attacks within recent years. The most notable being his involvement in a complex attack against a combined Afghan and Coalition outpost in the Kamdesh region of north eastern Afghanistan in October of 2009.⁴¹ Then in September of 2008 he claimed responsibility for the death and mutilation of 10 French soldiers – another attack that reportedly massed over one hundred HiG fighters.⁴²

More applicable to the question of reconciliation and reintegration are the reported attacks that Hekmatyar has claimed were directly aimed at President Karzai. Notable among those attacks are the assassination attempt of 2002, and more recently the 2008 bombing of a military parade that nearly took Karzai's life.⁴³ Regardless, President Karzai has offered a broad-based reconciliation and reintegration concept that targets all levels of the opposition, in order to provide an opportunity to anyone who can be swayed by financial and political gain.

Appeasement has long been regarded by Western powers as a failed concept that often leads to

⁴⁰ Crowley, "Our Man in Kabul? The sadistic Afghan warlord who wants to be our friend."

⁴¹ The author was assigned to the task force involved in the attack that left 8 Soldiers killed but was not directly involved in the battle. Simply stated, the anti-Afghan government forces (AAF) of varying affiliations attempted to exploit the ongoing strategic consolidation of coalition and government forces towards more populated areas. The losses suffered by the enemy were significant; the heroic efforts of the individuals in that battle prompted a persistent disunity amongst the AAF for an extended period of time and allowed the successful and unimpeded closure of several distant outposts in the region. This attack is attributed to in HiG in an open source document by Michael Crowley (see previous citations).

⁴² "Warlord claims French ambush" [anonymous article online, 29 SEP 2008], RFI Archives, accessed 27 November 2010; available from

http://www.rfi.fr/actuen/articles/105/article_1719.asp.

⁴³ Crowley, "Our Man in Kabul? The sadistic Afghan warlord who wants to be our friend."

³⁶ Wahab and Youngerman, *A Brief History Of Afghanistan*, 195.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 209.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 216.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

greater problems. As Winston Churchill said, “an appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile, hoping it will eat him last.”⁴⁴ This simple allusion does not suggest that this effort could be the prelude to the next Adolf Hitler, but certain realities must be acknowledged. Una Moore, writing about Hekmatyar in the United Nations Dispatch, said, “in the eyes of ordinary Afghans, he’s a war criminal unfit to live amongst his victims, let alone govern them.”⁴⁵ Concerning the notion of reconciliation, she goes on to write that “granting him any position of influence – and he wouldn’t likely settle for a symbolic post – would have a chilling effect on Afghanistan’s beleaguered democrats.”⁴⁶ This is made more salient by Michael Crowley’s assertion that “cutting a deal with Hekmatyar that grants him legitimized power could amount to a horrendous moral compromise.”⁴⁷

Conclusion

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has cast himself as “a lifelong deal-maker, he cares most about one thing: power.”⁴⁸ He has proven that his allegiances are based entirely on benefit. He has also proven himself to be a brutal terrorist whose interests do not include the needs or protection of the people or Afghanistan. The only apparent constant throughout his turbulent life is his staunch anti-American opinions. That said, his condemnation is reactionary and generally extends to all those who challenge his power and fail to adhere to his unique interpretation of Islam. Despite his known affiliations with them, he bears more resemblance to Al Qaeda than many seem to recognize, the only differentiating factor is the scope of each organization’s influence. However, the relationship must be acknowledged as our nation’s objective, as clarified in March 2009 by President Obama, is to “disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return in either country in the future.”⁴⁹

Currently, Hezb-I-Islami is the most radical right wing entity of the Afghan parliament and enjoys 9 seats within the legitimate government structure.⁵⁰ Their current efforts to reconcile with the Afghan government ahead of the Taliban, and prior to the desired national elections of 2011, does not constitute pacification as much as an act of subversion. In response to the Taliban imposter into the reconciliation process, Mohammad Umer Daudzai (Chief of Staff for President Karzai) is paraphrased as saying that “foreigners should stay out of delicate negotiations with the Afghan Insurgent group.”⁵¹ This statement was made even in light of the 150 million dollars of international pledges that were offered in support of the reconciliation and reintegration process announced at the 2010 London conference, and in view of the fact that in 2009 a new organization was formed within ISAF known as the Force Reintegration Cell (F-RIC).⁵² This disparity simply highlights the need for the United States to be extremely cautious in their approach to the process of reconciliation and reintegration when it comes to negotiating with the key militant leaders – leaders who are driving this conflict at the expense of the Afghan people.

Hekmatyar and his organization represent an opportunity for the uninformed or willfully blind. Hekmatyar’s overtures since 2008 have painted him as a high-level and willing participant in the reconciliation and reintegration process and could be the window dressing that offers the illusion of success both for President Karzai and President Obama. The most notable historic example of creating an alliance of necessity that ended in failure was the Allied acceptance of Stalin. This alliance led to the Soviet occupation and atrocities committed in Poland and Germany (just to name a few) and the prolonged nature of the Cold War; given a reasonable simplification it also represents the precursor to the contemporary Afghanistan conflict.

Even more applicable is our own alliance of necessity with Hekmatyar during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, which was the fateful decision that has manifested itself in our current fight against extremist Islamist organizations. To assert that such alliances are necessary evils is likely to be

⁴⁴ Winston Churchill, “Winston Churchill Quotes”[quote online], Brainy Quote, accessed 28 November 2010; available from <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/w/winstonchu100130.html>.

⁴⁵ Uma Moore, “The Bloody Hands of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar”[article online, 26 March 2010], UN Dispatch Archives, accessed 27 November 2010; available from <http://www.undispatch.com/the-bloody-hands-of-gulbuddin-hekmatyar>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Crowley, “Our Man in Kabul? The sadistic Afghan warlord who wants to be our friend.”

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ President Barrack Obama as cited by Amin Tarzi, “Recalibrating the Afghan reconciliation Program.” The web address to the primary source was not provided in Amin Tarzi’s footnote and could not be independently verified.

⁵⁰ Crowley, “Our Man in Kabul? The sadistic Afghan warlord who wants to be our friend.”

⁵¹ Joshua Partlow, “British faulted for Taliban imposter: Afghan Official Casts Blame, Karzai aide says foreigners should stay out of talks.” *The Washington Post*, 26 November 2010, A1.

⁵² Amin Tarzi, “Recalibrating the Afghan reconciliation Program.”

the logic that dooms the future of Afghanistan to a repeat of 1992 through 1996.

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Karzai's Governing Strategy: A Threat to ISAF COIN Implementation

by James Sisco



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Karzai's initial governing strategy, focused at centralizing power within the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), has failed. He perceives that US and international community support for his regime is eroding. Therefore, Karzai is systematically building a coalition of regional powerbrokers in preparation for a post-American Afghanistan. By strategically reshuffling provincial, district, and ministerial positions, Karzai is gradually reproducing the powerbrokers' political and economic patronage structures he tried for seven years to displace with his own. He is doing so to create the political space required to maintain his family's influence beyond the 2014 elections or to exit the presidency intact.

Implementing this strategy allows President Karzai to achieve his objectives due to three effects. First, and most importantly, he begins to break his dependence on the international community for his administration's survival. Second, he is able to leverage remaining international assistance to secure continued powerbroker interest in the short-term viability of GIROA. Finally, Karzai can choose to reconcile with the Taliban to reinforce his bargaining position. This new Karzai governing strategy mitigates the consequences of the impending decline in international support, though at the expense of the Afghan population and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) counterinsurgency (COIN) implementation.

An effective counter to Karzai's power sharing strategy is a bottom-up, grass roots COIN implementation that directs international resources toward village-level and civil society capacity. GIROA, the Taliban, and local powerbrokers have very little legitimacy with the population. Building legitimate, accountable governance capacity at the

village level buys ISAF valuable time for reform efforts to take hold. Rebalancing Afghan society, so that the local areas exert more influence and checks on powerbrokers and GIROA, stands to make the entire political structure more accountable.

Karzai's Politics in Afghan Historical Context

Karzai's Dilemma

President Hamid Karzai is now caught in a paradox he cannot resolve without harming his own personal interests. Karzai believes the international benefactors sustaining GIROA are undermining his authority and ability to govern the country through the reform agenda.¹ His main patrons, the US, its allies, and the international community, are expected to drawdown their military forces and reduce their funding to the Afghan government, the main resources underwriting GIROA's viability.² Afghan public support for and faith in Karzai,

¹ "Afghan president blames U.N., international community for vote fraud." *Japan Today*. (April 2, 2010). <http://www.japantoday.com/category/world/view/afghan-president-blames-un-international-community-for-vote-fraud>; "Karzai demands halt to Afghan civilian casualties." *Reuters*. (February 7, 2010). <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6160KM20100207>; "Karzai May Compromise on Ban of Private Guards." *The New York Times* (October 24, 2010) <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/25/world/asia/25afghan.html>.

² Salahuddin, Sayed. "Afghanistan Boosts Budget Revenue by 45 Percent." Thomas Reuters Foundation AlertNet. (March 25, 2010). <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/SGE620070.htm>; "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan National Budget 1389." *The World Bank*. (2010). p.4. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/AFGHANISTANEXTN/Resources/305984-1264608805475/6739619-1282159147458/SY1389Budget.pdf>

his appointees, and GIRoA in general continues to dissipate due to rampant corruption and the ineffective extension of public services. At the same time, the Taliban influence has steadily expanded from 4 provinces in 2006 to 33 of 34 provinces in 2010.³ If Karzai maintains the cooptation governing strategy he adopted in 2004, he will inevitably lose the financial resources needed to support his governing alliance and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).⁴

Karzai's Attempt to Consolidate Power

Karzai's initial governing strategy was the direct result of the US war against the Taliban in 2001-2002, which focused on transnational terrorism rather than Afghan domestic reform. This created an unfavorable balance of power in Afghan society by relying on the latent mujahidin warlord structure to defeat the Taliban. The US reinforced the existing mujahidin structure at the same time it sought to build a government headed by ex-patriot aristocrats and technocrats.⁵ The US settled on Karzai due to his broad connections and ability to work across interest groups, but the fact remained that his base of support at the time was weak. Karzai, therefore, adopted a strategy of building a central government based on the cooptation of the US-backed powerbrokers that displaced the Taliban since they retained the bulk of the existing military power. Trading militias for government patronage and influence was the price of a limited deployment of US forces.⁶

Unfortunately, many of the powerbrokers invited into GIRoA were the same mujahidin-era warlords whose corrupt and self-serving rule made the Taliban a logical alternative for much of the population in the mid-1990s.⁷ Karzai's strategy of

cooptation resulted in a government bureaucracy headed in many cases by illiterate or semi-literate powerbrokers and their agents. This pathology in GIRoA bureaucracy was exacerbated by the fact that these individuals rose to power based on their ability to ruthlessly extract wealth from their localities and networks.⁸ As leaders of line ministries and GIRoA representatives, they extract massive amounts of money from both international development projects and the population. In the end, Karzai's cooptation strategy institutionalized GIRoA as a kleptocracy, empowered predatory powerbrokers over local populations, and divorced the government from the needs of the population.⁹

Karzai's new governing strategy seeks to form a government regime based on a power sharing agreement with Afghanistan's regional powerbrokers. This is consistent with the Afghan political culture of the "politics of relationships."¹⁰ However, by including powerbroker "rotten apples" into his governing alliance, Karzai is, to paraphrase Antonio Giustozzi, establishing the conditions for his government to meet the same fate as the *jihadi* movement in the mid-1990s: the resurgence of the Taliban.¹¹ To stem the Taliban resurgence, it is reasonable to assume that Karzai is willing to include the Taliban in the power sharing agreement.

Karzai's Evolving Governing Strategy

President Karzai's strategy is simple: to solidify his regime in the absence of international resources through a patronage network. There are two hypotheses as to why Karzai is implementing a power sharing strategy. One assumes that Karzai seeks to extend his family's political influence beyond 2014 and the other assumes he seeks to leave the presidency under controlled circumstances.

Hypothesis 1: Continuing the Karzai Regime

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Briefing Paper Series. (May 2009), p.7.

³ Talbi, Karim. "Shadow Taliban Government Rules Afghans' Lives." *Agence France Presse.* (January 26, 2010). <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gWl9u3ZojrsONNK4l9tiX5TViJyA>

³ Talbi, Karim. "Shadow Taliban Government Rules Afghans' Lives." *Agence France Presse.* (January 26, 2010). <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gWl9u3ZojrsONNK4l9tiX5TViJyA>

⁴ Giustozzi, Antonio. "Good' State versus 'Bad' Warlord? A Critique of State-Building Strategies in Afghanistan." *Working Paper #51, Crisis States Research Centre LSE, Development Studies Institute.* (October 2004), p.8.

⁵ van Grieken, D.D. *Collaborating Warlords in Afghanistan's Political Reconstruction Process.* (Utrecht: Center for Conflict Studies, 2005), p.64-68.; Giustozzi, Antonio. "Good' State versus 'Bad' Warlord? A Critique of State-Building Strategies in Afghanistan." *Working Paper #51, Crisis States Research Centre LSE, Development Studies Institute.* (October 2004), p.2.

⁶ Giustozzi, Antonio. "Good' State versus 'Bad' Warlord? A Critique of State-Building Strategies in Afghanistan." *Working Paper #51, Crisis States Research Centre LSE, Development Studies Institute.* (October 2004), p.3.

⁷ Rashid, Ahmad. *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).; van Bijlert, Martine. "Between Discipline and Discretion: Policies Surrounding Senior Subnational Appointments."

⁸ Giustozzi, Antonio. "Good' State versus 'Bad' Warlord? A Critique of State-Building Strategies in Afghanistan." *Working Paper #51, Crisis States Research Centre LSE, Development Studies Institute.* (October 2004), p.10.

⁹ van Grieken, D.D. *Collaborating Warlords in Afghanistan's Political Reconstruction Process.* (Utrecht: Center for Conflict Studies, 2005).

¹⁰ van Bijlert, Martine. "Between Discipline and Discretion: Policies Surrounding Senior Subnational Appointments." *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Briefing Paper Series.* (May 2009), p.21.

¹¹ Giustozzi, Antonio. "Good' State versus 'Bad' Warlord? A Critique of State-Building Strategies in Afghanistan." *Working Paper #51, Crisis States Research Centre LSE, Development Studies Institute.* (October 2004), p.10.

Abdullah Abdullah, Karzai's challenger in 2009, recently argued that the President is setting the stage for overturning the presidency's 2-term limit in the Afghan Constitution.¹² To accomplish this goal, the Afghan Parliament will have to change the Constitution. Karzai does not have enough allies in the Wolesi Jirga to do this without support from other powerbrokers. Given ethnic tensions,¹³ Afghanistan's Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara powerbrokers have no reason to agree to this arrangement unless they believe that they can consolidate their resource bases through the regime. Institutionalizing their rule and fortifying their patronage networks through GIRoA can solidify their resource bases while avoiding Wolesi Jirga oversight. Powerbrokers would therefore have a continuing interest in Karzai's presidency.

Alternatively, President Karzai might attempt to create an environment where a family member could replace him. The industrial base of Afghanistan has historically been dominated by elites affiliated with the monarchy,¹⁴ and it has been allowed to be dominated currently by elites and regional powerbrokers affiliated with Karzai.¹⁵ Powerbrokers invested in this system could influence the voter base in future elections if members of Karzai's family can be trusted to maintain the system. The Karzai family's ability to maintain international financing to sustain his patronage network would only enhance a power sharing strategy for this purpose. Divesting power to Afghanistan's regional powerbrokers could be sufficient inducement for them to support Karzai's agenda, especially in the absence of a clear successor in 2014.

Hypothesis 2: Controlled Exit from the Presidency

With a deteriorating security situation and less predictable international support, Karzai might determine that his best option is to exit the presidency through a negotiated peace. Former National Director of Security Amrullah Saleh is reported as stating that Karzai is pressing a deal with the Taliban because he has lost faith in the ability of

the coalition and GIRoA to defeat the Taliban.¹⁶ The fact that Karzai would openly weep that his son, Mirwais, might grow up in exile¹⁷ indicates that he has contemplated having to leave the country whether on his terms or not. Veteran journalist and commentator on Afghanistan, Selig Harrison, recently suggested that Karzai's reconciliation overtures are part of a broader power sharing strategy to maintain his presidency.¹⁸ Similarly, Karzai's powerbroker allies could lose interest in the regime if they cease profiting from it. His anti-Taliban supporters would also feel threatened by potential Taliban inclusion and require control over their own resource bases to protect themselves from Taliban expansion.

To achieve a controlled exit, Karzai will need to shrewdly utilize his powers of appointment to establish an acceptable balance of power among the participating powerbrokers. Absent reasons to work with the Karzai regime, the country could quickly Balkanize along tribal, powerbroker, and ethnic lines, leading potentially to a rapid and violent collapse of the regime. Divesting power to Afghanistan's regional powerbrokers could be sufficient inducement for them to support Karzai until his term expires.

Strategy Indicators

Karzai's recent decisions and actions, while perplexing to many observers, are analogous to the politics typical of a royal court. In describing a medieval court, Goldberg writes, "The king rewarded those members of his court with whom he was especially pleased with gifts of money and territory. Royal siblings...were perceived by the subjects of the realm as extensions of the monarch himself."¹⁹ That Karzai recreated a similar political structure is unsurprising since he comes from an aristocratic family. Foust notes,

Afghanistan does not have the benefit of strong institutions, so governance is based on relationships and patronage -- trading

¹² Farmer, Ben. "Hamid Karzai lines up ultimate showdown with Nato with plan to stay in power." *The Telegraph*. (October 27, 2010).

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/7970498/Hamid-Karzai-lines-up-ultimate-showdown-with-Nato-with-plan-to-stay-in-power.html>

¹³ Filkins, Dexter. "Overture to Taliban Jolts Afghan Minorities." *The New York Times*. (June 26, 2010).

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/27/world/asia/27afghan.html>

¹⁴ Giustozzi, Antonio. "Afghanistan: Transition without End, An Analytical Narrative on State-Making." Crisis States Research Center. (November 2008), p.19-20.

¹⁵ Giustozzi, Antonio. "Afghanistan: Transition without End, An Analytical Narrative on State-Making." Crisis States Research Center. (November 2008), p.42-43.

¹⁶ Filkins, Dexter. "Karzai is Said to Doubt West Can Defeat Taliban." *The New York Times*. (June 11, 2010).

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/12/world/asia/12karzai.html>

¹⁷ Foust, Joshua. "You would cry too: In defense of Hamid Karzai." *Foreign Policy*. (September 28, 2010).

http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/09/28/you_would_cry_too_in_defense_of_hamid_karzai

¹⁸ Harrison, Selig. "A Smart Pashtun Play: Why Washington Should Back Karzai." *Newsweek*. (July 6, 2010).

<http://www.newsweek.com/2010/07/06/a-smart-pashtun-play.html>

¹⁹ For an interesting comparison see, Goldstone, Nancy. "Miss the Middle Ages? Try Afghanistan." *The Wall Street Journal*. (October 16, 2010).

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-goldstone-karzai-20101016,0,7203364.story>

favors, or appointments, for money. In the West, it is normally called corruption. In Afghanistan though, corruption is, unfortunately, how the system works.²⁰

When viewed from this perspective, what Westerners consider corruption is in reality a matter of managing the realm. Evaluations of Karzai's governing strategy should map how his appointments and decrees affect his patronage system. As a result, Karzai's power sharing strategy can be discerned through his recent appointments to key positions, his manipulation of executive agencies, his flirtation with reconciliation, and his possible nationalization of private security companies (PSCs).

Appointments: Consolidate powerbroker control over regions

All ministerial, provincial, and district appointees serve at the pleasure of the President of Afghanistan, which means they can be replaced to meet Karzai's patronage needs. Karzai unsuccessfully tried for seven years to displace many powerbrokers' networks with his own. Since he now needs their support, Karzai can reproduce the powerbrokers' patronage structures by strategically reshuffling provincial, district, and ministerial positions. In this bureaucracy, "Political power is not exercised in a progressively depersonalized, formalized and rationalized way through agreed 'rules'. Rather, it continues to be exercised in a personal and patronage-based manner, but within the overall framework of bureaucratic rules."²¹

In the lead up to and following the 2010 Parliamentary elections, there have been a significant number of high ranking personnel changes in the Ministries of Interior (MoI) and Defense (MoD), the district governorships, and the provincial governorships. These appointments must be evaluated according to how the new appointees' political relationships align with a Karzai power sharing strategy. Although there has not been a systematic study along this line, there is some *prima facie* reason to suspect the moves are part of a calculated strategy.

The appointment of security officials at all levels has historically been subject to political consideration and recent attempts to establish a merit-

based system have had uneven impact.²² Harrison argues that Karzai has already begun the process by appointing new Pashtun leadership to important MoD positions.²³ A recent report commissioned by the Congressional Research Service notes this point, but also notes that some observers consider the security services to be controlled by Tajiks.²⁴ MoI Bismullah Khan, a Tajik, has also reshuffled the leadership in his ministry, with some indication of a stronger Tajik influence emerging there.

The appointment of provincial and district governors is also well known to be infused with political bargaining. Although the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) is charged with identifying and appointing qualified personnel to fill the positions, President Karzai is still known to make appointments as a result of political considerations as well.²⁵ The recent appointments of governors in the western provinces of Herat and Nimruz, known affiliates of Ismail Khan, and the strong alignment of the northern provinces' governors with Vice President Fahim Khan would suggest that close scrutiny should be paid to further changes in political appointments.

Establishing and Manipulating Government Entities

Constitutionally, the Wolesi Jirga is charged with acting as a check on presidential authority. President Karzai's relationship with it as an organization is now significantly strained. Nevertheless, Karzai has had some success in preventing the Wolesi Jirga from becoming a unified opponent by extending patronage and privilege to individual Members of Parliament (MPs).²⁶ It appears that Karzai already took advantage of the Wolesi Jirga's limited oversight of his ministers by appointing two key officials more amenable to a power sharing strategy than their predecessors, the National Di-

²⁰ Foust, Joshua. "You would cry too: In defense of Hamid Karzai." *Foreign Policy*. (September 28, 2010).

http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/09/28/you_would_cry_too_in_defense_of_hamid_karzai

²¹ Lister, Sarah. "Understanding State-Building and Local Government in Afghanistan." *Working Paper #14, Crisis States Research Centre LSE, Development Studies Institute*. (May 2007), p.6.

²² Wilder, Andrew. "Cops or Robbers? The Struggle to Reform the Afghan National Police." *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*. (July 2007).

²³ Harrison, Selig. "A Smart Pashtun Play: Why Washington Should Back Karzai." *Newsweek*. (July 6, 2010).

<http://www.newsweek.com/2010/07/06/a-smart-pashtun-play.html>

²⁴ Katzman, Kenneth. "Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance." *Congressional Research Service*. (October 13, 2010), p.3.

²⁵ van Bijlert, Martine. "Between Discipline and Discretion: Policies Surrounding Senior Subnational Appointments." *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Briefing Paper Series*. (May 2009), p.11-16; Nixon, Hamish, "Subnational State-Building in Afghanistan." *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Briefing Paper Series*. (April 2008), p.25.

²⁶ Larson, Anna. *The Wolesi Jirga in Flux, 2010: Elections and Instability I*. (Kabul: *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, 2010), p.5-8.

rector for Security (NDS) and the MoI.²⁷ Furthermore, a weak party structure prevents a coherent opposition from coalescing.²⁸

Karzai frequently exercises his strong constitutional authority to marginalize Wolesi Jirga's oversight. He does so by creating executive agencies over which the Wolesi Jirga has no substantive influence, such as the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) and the IDLG. While the opposition to Karzai in the Wolesi Jirga remains weak, he has the ability to manipulate appointments and executive agencies to fulfill his power sharing strategy.

Karzai has further insulated himself from the influence of the Wolesi Jirga by appointing the members of the APRP and the High Peace Council (HPC). The Joint Order formally authorizing the APRP makes the Chief Executive Officer, Secretary Stanekzai, "responsible for implementation of the strategic decisions made by the [High Peace Council]."²⁹ Provincial governors are charged with overseeing the operational and security components of the APRP, with NDS, ANA/ANP, ISAF, and UN-AMA sitting on provincial advisory boards.³⁰ This overall reconciliation and reintegration structure allows President Karzai to manipulate the entire process since he ultimately appoints the HPC/APRP members; the governors; the ANA, NDS, and ANP commanders; and the district governors who implement the program.

Most of the APRP members are mujahidin-era and regional powerbrokers.³¹ Notable members include Ismail Khan (Tajik), Sher Mohammed Akhundzada (Pashtun), Burhanuddin Rabbani (Tajik), Pir Sayed Ahmed Gilani (Pashtun), Said Nur'allah (Uzbek), Abdul Rasoul Sayyaf (Pashtun), Abdul Hakim Mujahid (former Taliban), and Sibg-

hatullah Mojadeddi (Pashtun).³² As noted Afghanistan scholar Martine van Bijlert writes,

In many ways, the list is a reiteration of the myths of the jihad, honouring those who made the emergence of the Taliban seem like a source of relief ... a list like this signals that 'reconciliation' may well end up simply adding the warlords that were excluded from Bonn to those already allowed in 2001 [sic] ... This is not a list of people that have been chosen for their contacts or mediation skills. It is a reconfirmation of where the armed – and increasingly economic – power lies and where it will remain; of what kinds of people are trusted by 'the palace', regardless of their impact.³³

High Peace Council members are comprised mainly of ministers with equities in the peace process, such as the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Defense, the National Director of Security, the Director of IDLG, and the Secretary of the APRP.³⁴

Similarly, the IDLG was formed by Karzai in 2007 as a concession to the international community to extend governance to the provincial and district levels. It is currently headed by a well-respected technocrat, Jelani Popal. If properly run and resourced, IDLG can be a significant partner in generating accountable governance at the village and district levels. However, the IDLG represents a potential threat to Karzai's power sharing strategy because empowered districts and villages undermine the influence of his powerbroker allies and, consequently, his new strategy.

There is increasing worry that Karzai is politicizing this agency and weakening its efficacy.³⁵ By placing a powerbroker at IDLG's head instead of a technocrat, the agency can quickly reverse any gains it has made. Moreover, Karzai can limit

²⁷ Harrison, Selig. "A Smart Pashtun Play: Why Washington Should Back Karzai." *Newsweek*. (July 6, 2010). <http://www.newsweek.com/2010/07/06/a-smart-pashtun-play.html>

²⁸ Larson, Anna. *The Wolesi Jirga in Flux, 2010: Elections and Instability I*. (Kabul: *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, 2010), p.5-8.

²⁹ "Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP)." *Islamic Republic of Afghanistan National Security Council, D & R Commission*. (April 2010), p.22.

http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/pdf/afghan_report_051110.pdf

³⁰ "Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP)." *Islamic Republic of Afghanistan National Security Council, D & R Commission*. (April 2010), p.22.

http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/pdf/afghan_report_051110.pdf

³¹ Riechmann, Deb. "Afghan government sets up 70-member peace council." Associated Press (September 28, 2010). http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iqETCMPbriSHgWTvfp3qa4_s3eAD9IGTPCoo?docId=D9IGTPCoo

³² van Bijlert, Martine. "Warlords' Peace Council." *Afghan Analysis Network*. (September 28, 2010). <http://www.aan-afghanistan.org/index.asp?id=1175>

³³ van Bijlert, Martine. "Warlords' Peace Council." *Afghan Analysis Network*. (September 28, 2010). <http://www.aan-afghanistan.org/index.asp?id=1175>

³⁴ "Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP)." *Islamic Republic of Afghanistan National Security Council, D & R Commission*. (April 2010), p.22.

http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/pdf/afghan_report_051110.pdf

³⁵ *Speaking from the Evidence: Governance, Justice, and Development*. (Kabul: *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, 2010), p.6.; Maass, Citha. "Searching for an Exit Strategy: The Afghanistan Donor Conference in Paris Marked the Beginning of a Paradigm Shift." *The Asia Pacific Times*, Vol. 2, #7 (July 2008). http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/common/get_document.php?asset_id=5193

IDLG's mission by restricting Popal's resources and freedom to interact with other service ministries. As an executive agency, Karzai can easily manipulate the IDLG's effectiveness.

Electoral Fraud

Karzai has been charged with influencing the elections process in both the last presidential and parliamentary elections. Although constitutionally and politically bound to conduct elections, Karzai has fulfilled this obligation with a procedural democracy that he is able to influence. Over one-third of the votes cast for Karzai in 2009 were thrown out by the United Nations-backed Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC), forcing him into a run-off election.³⁶ In response to the international pressure, Karzai blamed the international community for the voter fraud and unsuccessfully attempted to eliminate international representation on the ECC.³⁷

The 2010 Parliamentary elections were also tainted by voter fraud with 25% of all votes being thrown out.³⁸ There is no clear evidence at this point that candidates supported by Karzai were overly represented in the 295 already announced election probes.³⁹ Given that Karzai will want little resistance from the Wolesi Jirga while implementing his power sharing strategy, it is likely that his allies will be well represented in the fraud results. In addition, if he does desire to change the constitution to extend his term in office, he will need a strong voting base in the Wolesi Jirga. The main way for him to accomplish this objective is to guar-

antee candidates connected to his patronage network get elected.⁴⁰

Reconciliation

Since the conclusion of Parliamentary elections, President Karzai has stepped up the pace of his reconciliation efforts. With ISAF facilitating the movement of Taliban envoys to meetings with the Karzai's reconciliation representatives,⁴¹ Karzai must understand that a negotiated peace with the Taliban is acceptable in principle to the US and its international partners.⁴² The HPC's chairman, former President and noted anti-Taliban leader Burhanuddin Rabbani⁴³ even offered a somewhat conciliatory tone stating recently, "We are taking our first steps," he said. "I believe there are people among the Taliban that have a message that they want to talk. They are ready."⁴⁴ In other words, Karzai must realize that coming to an accord with the Taliban is acceptable and can be worked into his strategic calculus.⁴⁵

PSCs

President Karzai's recent decree eliminating PSCs by January 2011 has been interpreted by Western embassies and the international community as having "unintended" consequences, such as limiting NGO and development agency assistance to the population.⁴⁶ While Karzai has expressed concern about PSCs since his 2007 decree,⁴⁷ he has

³⁶ "Karzai declared elected president of Afghanistan." *Cable News Network (CNN)*. (November 2, 2009). http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/11/02/afghanistan.electon_runoff/

³⁷ Ahmad, Sardar. "Karzai appoints new elections chief for Afghanistan." *Agence France Presse (AFP)*. (April 17, 2010). <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hpcIHEDx1kuA5rnKA5j7GdXysuw>; "Afghan president blames U.N., international community for vote fraud." *Japan Today*. (April 2, 2010). <http://www.japantoday.com/category/world/view/afghan-president-blames-un-international-community-for-vote-fraud>; Boone, Jon. "Hamid Karzai takes control of Afghanistan election watchdog." *The Guardian*. (February 22, 2010). <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/feb/22/karzai-afghanistan-electoral-complaints-commission>.

³⁸ Abi-Habib, Maria. "Afghan Vote Tally Reveals New Faces, Fraud." *The Wall Street Journal*. (October 20, 2010). <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304011604575564103091339366.html>

³⁹ "120 more Afghan candidates face charges of electoral violation." *Xinhua News*. (October 24, 2010). http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-10/24/c_13573123.htm

⁴⁰ Coburn, Noah and Anna Larson. "Patronage, Posturing, Duty, Demographics: Why Afghans Voted in 2009" *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*. (August 2009), p.7.

⁴¹ Shanker, Thom, David E. Sanger and Eric Schmitt. "U.S. Aids Taliban to Attend Talks on Making Peace." *The New York Times*. (October 13, 2010). <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/14/world/asia/14nato.html>

⁴² "US, reversing course, backs Afghan peace effort." *Associated Press* (October 14, 2010).

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2010/10/14/afghan-peace-council-chief-taliban-ready-talk/>

⁴³ Riechmann, Deb. "Afghan government sets up 70-member peace council." *Associated Press* (September 28, 2010). http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iqETC MPbriSHgWTvffp3qa4_s3eAD9IGTPCoo?docId=D9IGTPCoo44 Riechmann, Deb. "Afghan peace council chief says Taliban ready to talk." *The Washington Times*. (October 14, 2010).

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/oct/14/afghan-peace-council-chief-says-taliban-ready-talk/>

⁴⁵ McGreal, Chris. "Taliban leaders met with Afghan government." *The Guardian*. (September 28, 2010).

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/sep/28/taliban-leaders-met-afghan-government>

⁴⁶ Abi-Habib, Maria. "Karzai Stands By Private Security Ban." *The Wall Street Journal*. (October 25, 2010).

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303864404575572412957210650.html>

⁴⁷ Rimli, Lisa and Dr. Susanne Schmeidl. "Private Security Companies and Local Populations. An exploratory study of Afghanistan and Angola" *Swiss Peace*. (November 2007), p.23. http://www.swisspeace.ch/typo3/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/PSC.pdf

since altered his position from regulating them to eliminating or nationalizing them. Examining this change of approach in the context of Karzai concluding a power sharing agreement indicates the decision was a calculated tactical move.

President Karzai recognizes the threat PSCs pose to his power sharing strategy. Estimates of PSC employees range from 18,500 to nearly 40,000 armed men, many of whom are hired by Afghanistan's powerbrokers.⁴⁸ By nationalizing these companies, Karzai achieves important strategic objectives. First, he establishes a new patronage system by eliminating PSCs he does not control while favoring PSCs that improve his relative influence. Second, this gives regional power brokers a vested (economic) interest in his presidency. International aid agencies and NGOs will likely have to contract with the MoI for security services, adding further funding to his patronage network.⁴⁹ For instance, estimates suggest a total of \$5.1bn worth of US aid is currently earmarked for spending and it will need to be protected.⁵⁰ Lastly, nationalized PSCs under MoI authority augment existing ANSF manpower by nearly 10-20%. As a result, he generates influence over armed groups that he currently does not enjoy. In the end, the nationalization of the PSCs expands Karzai's patronage network, provides PSC powerbrokers with GIROA authority to control their territories, and creates broader MoI oversight of armed groups.

Implications for ISAF's COIN Implementation

The implications of Karzai devolving district power back to his powerbroker partners are overwhelmingly positive for those involved, but largely negative for the Afghan population and ISAF COIN implementation.

Karzai Insulates Himself from International Pressure

The international community's reform agenda threatens Karzai's ability to spread patronage. If Karzai is to successfully establish a power sharing

arrangement, he must continue to mitigate the international community's influence in the districts and provinces. This enables his allied powerbrokers to solidify control with minimal resistance and oversight. Karzai will be unable to manage his network if GIROA's financial resources are limited by good governance restrictions. Additionally, his reliance on international assistance limits his political options since human rights norms are often attached. To establish a power sharing arrangement, he will need to free himself of such restrictions.

Weakening International Support for ISAF's Mission

President Karzai's new governing strategy will significantly undermine ISAF's COIN strategy. Though GIROA is a problematic and in many ways counterproductive COIN partner, there are still technocratic elements of the administration that approach good governance. The international community's ability to pressure the Karzai administration to either remove poor district and provincial governors or strongly suggest good replacements is an important component in the COIN strategy.

However, if Karzai is able to insulate his administration from the international community's influence, then he can appoint governors and police chiefs based solely on political expediency for his governing strategy. The likely result will be the installation of GIROA officials most concerned with extracting wealth from the population and consolidating power. ISAF's COIN strategy will be directly undermined by GIROA because popular legitimacy will have no bearing on Karzai's governing strategy whatsoever.

Americans are already questioning their commitment to Afghanistan, and a failure of the COIN strategy could easily push them against continuing the effort. International resolve, which has been girded by US diplomatic pressure, will wane as rapidly as American resolve. In short, Afghanistan will quickly find itself losing international support beyond already committed resources, leaving it to the fate Karzai and the powerbrokers involved set for it.

The Villages Pay the Price

A GIROA structure where powerbrokers or their subordinates control governorships and police offices will result in a return to the feudal economic structure that empowered the mujahidin in the

⁴⁸ Rimli, Lisa and Dr. Susanne Schmeidl. "Private Security Companies and Local Populations. An exploratory study of Afghanistan and Angola" *Swiss Peace*. (November 2007), p.6. http://www.swisspeace.ch/typo3/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/PSC.pdf

⁴⁹ Abi-Habib, Maria. "Karzai Stands By Private Security Ban." *The Wall Street Journal*. (October 25, 2010). <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303864404575572412957210650.html>

⁵⁰ Boone, Jon. "Hamid Karzai's crackdown on private security puts \$1bn Afghan aid at risk." *The Guardian*. (October 21, 2010). <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/21/karzai-private-security-crackdown-afghanistan>

1980s-1990s.⁵¹ As international resources diminish, this structure will support the powerbrokers that extract wealth from the people to maximize resources for their militias. Recent history suggests that many powerbrokers will rely upon poppy production and other illicit activities to underwrite their wealth and power.

As a result, political order in Afghanistan will be based upon ethnically and tribally-oriented political structures that dominate provincial political power institutions. This power structure will entrench the powerbrokers' predatory rule over the population. In other words, controlling the district becomes the most important GIROA institution for powerbrokers to co-opt, and the people of Afghanistan will soon find themselves unable to resist the authority of powerbrokers.

Countering Karzai's Strategy:

The only effective counter to Karzai's power sharing strategy is a bottom-up, grass roots COIN implementation that enables villages to insulate themselves from powerbroker predation. COIN implementation based solely upon resourcing and extending the reach of GIROA is doomed to fail. GIROA is a fully formed *kleptocracy* built upon a political culture of patronage, and it is functionally incapable of fulfilling its obligations to its people. A Karzai governing strategy based upon power sharing will only exacerbate these intrinsic GIROA deficiencies. While reform of GIROA must be a strong element of the COIN implementation, a GIROA-centric COIN framework alone will be unable to meet the strategy's objectives. Therefore, rebalancing Afghan society so that the local areas exert more influence and opposition to powerbrokers and GIROA stands to make the entire political structure more accountable.⁵²

The key to COIN in Afghanistan is to help villages rise above the subsistence level so that they have the resources to govern and secure themselves. A decentralized COIN approach that orients resources around enhancing existing legitimate political communities, the village or qawm, can bring security to the countryside as villagers

rise up to protect their own interests. But as Dorronsoro and Pothier observe, "District governments are currently only nominally functional and fail to deliver basic services, such as justice and education, to the people."⁵³

International assistance should therefore seek to rebalance the power in Afghan society at least to the degree it had prior to the Soviet invasion. Restoring village level governance structures, such as village shuras, business organizations, maliks, and community police, will generate immediate dividends with rural communities. Below GIROA, these elements of society can be relied upon to establish order and security if they enjoy sufficient resources. As Giustozzi notes, "They want, generally speaking, to reclaim some of the influence that they enjoyed in different periods of the past, but also, more pragmatically, to exercise some control over the activities of local authorities and demand the appointment of more professional and/or honest district managers, chiefs of police, heads of departments or even provincial governors."⁵⁴ Until the villages rise above the subsistence level, which can be accomplished fairly rapidly with proper COIN implementation, they will remain dependent on some external entity, be it GIROA, local powerbrokers, the Taliban, or the international community.

CFSOCC-A's⁵⁵ Village Stability Operations concept is an excellent model from which the broader ISAF COIN implementation framework can draw lessons. The core concept is to enhance village capacity for self-protection while building up governance and development resources. While the goal is ultimately to demonstrate GIROA's benefit to the population, many of the resources are temporarily provided by ISAF forces. Exploiting GIROA programs that grant the US and international community the political space to engage villages, and applying direct diplomatic pressure to expand them further, can redirect the international community's resources to develop healthier support networks for the Afghan population than the patronage networks debilitating GIROA.

⁵¹ For example, Hansen, Cole, Christian Dennys, and Idrees Zaman. *Conflict Analysis: Baharak District, Badakhshan Province*. Cooperation for Peace and Unity. (February 2009), p. 15.; and Pain, Adam. "Opium Poppy and Informal Credit." *A Report for the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit/UK Department for International Development (FID)*. (October 2008), p.25.

⁵² Giustozzi, Antonio. "Good' State versus 'Bad' Warlord? A Critique of State-Building Strategies in Afghanistan." *Working Paper #51, Crisis States Research Centre LSE, Development Studies Institute*. (October 2004), p.15.

⁵³ Dorronsoro, Gilles and Fabrice Pothier. "Beyond the Surge: A Political Strategy for Afghanistan?" *The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. (January 28, 2010).

⁵⁴ <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/events/?fa=eventDetail&id=2803>
⁵⁴ Giustozzi, Antonio. "Good' State versus 'Bad' Warlord? A Critique of State-Building Strategies in Afghanistan." *Working Paper #51, Crisis States Research Centre LSE, Development Studies Institute*. (October 2004), p.16.

⁵⁵ Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan

Conclusion

President Karzai is implementing his power sharing governing strategy to create the political environment to secure his future. These actions are illustrated by establishing and manipulating government agencies, strategically reshuffling provincial, district and ministerial positions and flirting with Taliban reconciliation and reintegration. This strategy threatens to undermine ISAF's COIN strategy by giving malign actors and powerbrokers formal control over the districts. Therefore, the US may consider a strategic course correction in order to align its national interest vis-à-vis the strategic environment that Karzai has created for himself. Clearly Afghanistan is a US strategic interest, but what is its interest within Afghanistan? Must the US align its national interests with Karzai's governing strategy? The answer is clearly no. Ultimately, the implementation of US strategy must consider first the US national interest, but must also consider how best to achieve these interests within the environment of Karzai's governing strategy. Two options are immediately apparent: 1) Operations which achieve US strategic goals which *counter* Karzai's governing strategy or 2) Operations which achieve US strategic goals *through an understanding* of Karzai's governing strategy.

A rapid and concerted effort to counteract this strategy is still possible, but ISAF must recognize Karzai's actions for what they are and change its COIN implementation to counter his strategy. The US and the international community can effectively counteract Karzai's strategy by supporting villages to increase their governing capacity. As Giustozzi concludes, "It is likely that with some support from the international community and particularly from donors, who are the ones with the real leverage, such efforts by 'civil society' actors could be more successful and have a greater impact."⁵⁶ However, the US must consider if a pure countering of Karzai's governing strategy aligns with the US national interest. Karzai has chosen his strategy in order to realize his own interests; the US should implement a strategy which realizes its own interests.

A change in strategy to align US interests and operations is also still possible. The US still possesses the time and resources to shape the political environment in which President Karzai operates by building up countervailing political organization.

In this way, the US can still support the elected Karzai regime while limiting its ability to completely control the political system. Better organized and resourced localities will be able to assert their interests through GIROA at all levels, which ISAF can support with its own COIN implementation and political influence. A proactive ISAF COIN implementation that enhances local governance while pushing national level reform will create a more viable and responsive Afghan government structure. The end result will be the people of Afghanistan taking greater control over their district resources and local government regardless of President Karzai's governing strategy. Though this COIN implementation will require years to mature, it sets the foundation for a more successful transition by ISAF's stated 2014 strategic objective than working principally through the Karzai regime.

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⁵⁶ Giustozzi, Antonio. "Good' State versus 'Bad' Warlord? A Critique of State-Building Strategies in Afghanistan." *Working Paper #51, Crisis States Research Centre LSE, Development Studies Institute*. (October 2004), p.16.

Motivational Interviewing:

Improving Combat Advising to Strengthen Partnering with Afghan National Security Forces

by James Cowan, Nengyalai Amalyar and Mohammad Mustafa



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“...Partnering is how we operate.”¹

Standing up a professional Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) is central to establishing a secure and more stable Afghan nation,^{2,3,4} and combat advising, as provided by US and coalition forces, is foundational to establishing a strong partnership with our ANSF brethren. Effective partnering, in turn, is critical to developing a capable and enduring ANSF.⁵ Given historical and evolving challenges and the contemporary importance of combat advising across US military operations, continuing efforts are necessary for further strengthening and preparing combat advisors to advise, coach, mentor, teach and partner with host nation security forces most recently in Afghanistan.^{6,7,8}

It is well understood that a strong partnership between combat advisors and their host nation security forces advisee is indispensable to supporting the ANSF’s readiness, willingness and ability to

accomplish their security mission.^{9,10,11} During the U.S. Army Foreign Security Forces (FSF) Combat Advisor Course and through the literature, advisors assigned to Afghanistan are told anecdotally that establishing an effective partnership depends on a number of essential elements such as developing rapport and respect, building trust, sharpening skills of persuasion, exercising patience, effecting empowerment, learning some Dari or Pashtu, and employing cultural awareness and competency while advising, training and conducting operations.^{12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20}

However, combat advising courses, journal articles, blogs and books have not delivered a comprehensive, integrated, evidence-based and practical approach for advising our Afghan counterparts. These sources do not provide substantial answers to many key questions relevant to effective

¹ GEN David Petraeus, “Updated Tactical Directive,” Headquarters International Security Assistance Force-Afghanistan, August 2010.

² LTG William Caldwell, IV “A Call to Action Command Philosophy,” NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan/ Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, June 2010, <<http://www.ntm-a.com/caldwell/blog/897-a-call-to-action-command-philosophy?lang>>

³LTG William Caldwell, IV, “Building the Foundation,” NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan/Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, June 2010, <<http://www.ntm-a.com/caldwell/blog/935-building-the-foundation?lang>>

⁴ LTC Daniel Davis, “War on the Brink of Failure, 7 Obstacles Stand in the Way of Success in Afghanistan,” Armed Forces Journal, October 2010, 4.

⁵ Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-24, Counterinsurgency, 2006.

⁶ Dr John Nagl, “Institutionalizing Adaption, It’s Time for an Army Advisor Command,” Military Review, September-October 2008, 21-26.

⁷ LTC Thomas Seagrist, “Combat Advising in Iraq, Getting Your Advice Accepted,” Military Review, May – June 2010, 65-72.

⁸ MAJ Michael Jason, “Integrating the Advisory Effort in the Army: A Full-Spectrum Solution,” Military Review, September-October 2008, 27-32.

⁹ SSgt Daylena Gonzalez, “Partnering, What You Need to Know to Stay on Track,” COIN Common Sense, Volume 1, Issue 2, April 2010, 2.

¹⁰ Mirwais Yasini, “An Afghan Perspective, A Member of the Afghan National Assembly Shares His Views on Partnering,” COIN Common Sense, Volume 1, Issue 2, April 2010, 4.

¹¹ Counterinsurgency Advisory and Assistance Team, “Partnering: A Counterinsurgency Imperative,” Small Wars Journal, November 2010.

¹² Randall Brumit, “10 Partnering Principles,” COIN Common Sense, Volume 1, Issue 2, April 2010,6.

¹³ LCDR “JW” Stolze, “What Does this Photo Mean to You???, Learning to Shed Our Cultural Perspectives and See the World Through Afghan Eyes,” COIN Common Sense, Volume 1, Issue 2, April 2010, 8.

¹⁴ MC1 Kurt Riggs, “Culture Shock,” COIN Common Sense, Volume 1, Issue 2, April 2010, 8.

¹⁵ LTC Gilbert Overmaat, “Rank, Respect and Partnering,” COIN Common Sense, Volume 1, Issue 2, April 2010, 10.

¹⁶ “Both Sides of the COIN, COIN is Not...COIN is...,” COIN Common Sense, Volume 1, Issue 2, April 2010, 10

¹⁷ United States Army, Center for Army Lessons Learned, Handbook 09-37, “Small-Unit Operations in Afghanistan Handbook,” August 2009, 109-119.

¹⁸ United States Army, Center for Army Lessons Learned, “Afghan Culture Newsletter 10-64, Observations, Insights and Lessons,” September 2010.

¹⁹ CPT Daniel Helmer, “Twelve Urgent Steps for Advisor Mission in Afghanistan,” Military Review, July-August 2008, 73-81.

²⁰ COL John Bessler, “Mentoring on the Edge or, What You Don’t Learn in a Classroom,” Small Wars Journal, July 2010.

advising. What type of dialogue is conducive to establishing rapport and respect? How do you advance an environment of trust? What are the means for truly placing control in the hands of your Afghan partner? How do you attain an understanding of your advisees' knowledge, experiences, beliefs, values and attitudes and apply this insight and perspective for the purpose of guiding your advisee to pursue actions that will professionalize the ANSF?

Enter Motivational Interviewing, "a skillful clinical style for eliciting from patients their own good motivations for making behavior changes in the interest of their health." For over 25 years, Motivational Interviewing has proven effective in encouraging people to adopt healthy behavioral change. Motivational Interviewing was first described as a counseling approach to support substance abuse counselors in helping people manage alcoholism and other substance abuse addictions. Since then, the application of Motivational Interviewing has expanded significantly to effectively address the behavioral components of a broad range of problems to include heart disease, tobacco use, diabetes, medical treatment adherence, hypertension, and criminal recidivism just to name a few. Motivational Interviewing has been taught to a diverse range of practitioners: dentists, health educators, fitness coaches, nurses, nutritionists, physicians, probation officers and others. Motivational Interviewing has repeatedly demonstrated, through more than 160 randomized clinical trials, its value in supporting practitioners during their efforts to effect voluntary behavioral change, inclusive of teaching new skills and assisting with setting and attaining goals, among diverse populations of people.²¹

Based on our experience in delivering and receiving combat advising, we believe that Motivational Interviewing has considerable utility in helping advisors guide their ANSF counterparts toward specific actions that will create a qualified and self-sustaining ANSF capable of protecting the Afghan population and defeating the insurgency. From our observations, combat advisors often face difficulty in reaching a consensus with their ANSF advisees about what operational goals and objectives should be pursued, what problems should be solved, and what courses of action should be planned, developed and implemented to either attain goals and objectives or resolve problems. Attempts to consistently and effectively deliver high quality combat

advising are often met with uneven success. A large part of the problem is that military personnel who are assigned as combat advisors do not receive adequate training and preparation to fully embrace and successfully realize their combat advisor roles and responsibilities. Combat advisors would be more effective in advising the ANSF if they learned and practiced Motivational Interviewing during the FSF Combat Advisor Course and were encouraged to voluntarily implement the approach during their combat advising assignment.

While it is well beyond the intent and scope of this article to sufficiently cover the breadth and depth of Motivational Interviewing, we do wish to impart upon combat advisors a desire to learn more about Motivational Interviewing, give informed consideration to using it and, most importantly, voluntarily incorporate the approach into the daily advising relationship with their Afghan partner. Over the remaining balance of this article, we will briefly describe the intersection between the "spirit" and four guiding and interrelated principles of Motivational Interviewing and some of the essential elements of combat advising.

Spirit of Motivational Interviewing

Motivational Interviewing is not a technique for tricking people into doing what they do not want to do. Rather, it is a skillful clinical style for eliciting from patients their own good motivations for making behavior changes in the interest of their health. It involves guiding more than directing, dancing rather than wrestling, listening at least as much as telling. The overall "spirit" has been described as collaborative, evocative, and honoring of patient autonomy.²¹

- Stephen Rollnick, William Miller,
Christopher Butler

Replace "people" and "patients" with "ANSF," "clinical" with "advising" and "their health" with "professionalizing the ANSF" and you have a working definition for the "spirit" of Motivational Interviewing in the context of combat advising in Afghanistan. Through Motivational Interviewing, the advisor's role is to work alongside their ANSF counterpart as an equal partner as opposed to "an uneven power relationship" where the combat advisor is the expert and ANSF personnel are passive recipients of instruction and direction. Guiding an ANSF partner toward a specific course of action depends on evoking an understanding of the individual's own thoughts (attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and values) about and good reasons for invoking

²¹ Stephen P. Rollnick, William R. Miller and Christopher C. Butler, "Motivational Interviewing in Health Care: Helping Patients Change Behavior," The Guilford Press, 2007.

ing the action. Honoring the autonomy of host-nation forces recognizes that they know best if, how and when a new action should be adopted in consideration of their own individual attributes and surrounding culture, norms and physical conditions. It also recognizes that ANSF are equal partners with, and not subservient to, U.S. military forces.

Four Guiding Principles²²

1. Resist the Righting Reflex

Many people are naturally inclined to tell others what to do or try to directly persuade them to adopt a particular course of action. This is especially true among U.S. military personnel who are trained and rewarded for their take charge spirit, can-do attitude, and problem solving skills and are also doctrinally directed to seize the offensive and aggressively defeat the enemy.^{23,24} Considering this milieu, it is not surprising that combat advisors would have a strong inclination to reflexively right (i. e. direct) the actions of others. And when people are told what to do, either directly or subtly, they typically demonstrate a natural propensity to resist these attempts at persuasion. Moreover, Afghans are a proud people and security forces of all nations, including the ANSF, have pride.^{5,8,15} This heightens the importance of resisting the affinity toward telling, suggesting or recommending what they need to do or should do. We have, on many occasions, experienced and witnessed where advisors adopted a directing approach with their ANSF counterparts and this led to animosity, disharmony and ultimately a failure to pursue courses of action and achieve concomitant objectives benefiting both U.S military forces and ANSF.

On the other hand, we have found that a guiding approach, as put forth and comprehensively described in the Motivational Interviewing literature, has been instrumental to creating rapport, respect and a productive relationship for our advisor-advisee team. It is important to note that there are occasions where a directing approach is warranted and Motivational Interviewing does not preclude its application. However, advisors are encouraged to exercise good judgment and discernment when deviating from a guiding approach.

2. Understand Your Advisee's Motivations

For their own reasons, ANSF personnel will decide whether to engage in actions that will eventually enable ANSF institutions to protect and defend Afghanistan. Rather than advisors explaining to ANSF partners what they consider to be the rationale for building a capable ANSF, advisors should seek to understand their advisees' own concerns, beliefs, reasons, values and motivations relevant to this aspiration. The goal is not "seek first to understand and then be understood." Instead, the goal is seek to understand and then assure the advisee is understood. Following Motivational Interviewing practices, the advisor should build upon a more certain knowledge of the ANSF partner's insight, perspective and motivations to guide and support the advisee toward mutually agreed upon objectives. We have also found that the very process of asking open-ended questions to secure a deep understanding of an advisee's motivations for change helps build rapport, trust and respect.

3. Listen to Your Advisee

The guiding approach, illustrated by Motivational Interviewing, is a balance of three basic and important communication skills: asking, informing and listening. As we presented earlier, asking questions is central to comprehending the thoughts, aspirations and motivations of ANSF partners. Informing occurs when the advisor shares information and knowledge with their advisee. Given that combat advisors are deployed to Afghanistan for the very purpose of providing advice and support to ANSF, it is not surprising that advisors often fall into a role where they expend most of their time trying to convey answers to problems faced by their Afghan counterparts at the expense of eliciting the answers from the Afghans themselves. Designing, developing and applying effective courses of action that can be independently sustained by ANSF depends, to a significant degree, on advisors bringing forth answers and contextual understanding from their advisees. Good listening, which the authors of Motivational Interviewing describe as a complex and core skill of Motivational Interviewing, is the active process necessary for achieving this end-state.

4. Empower Your Advisee

Within an advisor-advisee partnership, control over decisions and actions should reside with the advisee and not the advisor. Our Afghan counterparts are equal partners in joint security efforts within Afghanistan. Extensive research on the Motivational Interviewing approach demonstrates that individuals are more likely to adopt a specific

²² William R. Miller and Stephen P. Rollnick, *Motivational Interviewing: Preparing People for Change*, Second Edition, The Guilford Press, 1992.

²³ MAJ Mark Weber, "U.S. Military Advisor, A Need for Guiding Principles," *Military Review*, March – April 2007, 111-113.

²⁴ Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations*, 2008.

behavior if they are empowered and guided to contemplate and talk about the behavior in terms of their readiness, willingness, and ability to perform the action that is under deliberation. More specifically, a combat advisor using Motivational Interviewing seeks to empower their Afghan partner along the behavioral change continuum by helping the individual explore and articulate how they would like to proceed in accordance with their desire, ability, reasons, needs and commitment to the action in question.

Conclusion

Combat advising is integral to the advisor's primary mission, the professionalization of the host nation security forces.⁵ Partnering between combat advisors and their ANSF counterparts is the decisive ground where advisors are positioned to evoke, enable and empower their advisees to adopt actions that will lead to ANSF proficient in defending and protecting a sovereign Afghanistan. Reflecting the well-documented need to strengthen combat advisor training and subsequently improve the knowledge, skill, ability and ultimately the effectiveness of combat advisors, Motivational Interviewing should be among the core competencies taught to both aspiring as well as experienced combat advisors. By design, this article serves as a brief introduction to the spirit and principles of Motivational Interviewing. It did not cover the expansive and available base of knowledge, method and practice of Motivational Interviewing. Beyond encouraging combat advisors to read the Motivational Interviewing literature and give informed consideration to using the evidence-based approach while advising their Afghan partners, we also advocate for the incorporation of Motivational Interviewing training within the FSF Combat Advisor Course and medical pre-deployment training for Medical Embedded Training Teams deploying

to Afghanistan. Motivational Interviewing has been instrumental to our partnering success and we are optimistic and confident that it will do the same for combat advisors across Afghanistan who invest the time and energy to learn and apply this approach while advising their Afghan partners.

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Notes on the British Army Field Manual's Weltanschauung

Counterinsurgency as a Whole of Government Approach: An Interview with Colonel Alexander Alderson

by Octavian Manea

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An Interview with Colonel Alexander Alderson, British Army, conducted by Octavian Manea (Editor of *FP Romania*, the Romanian edition of *Foreign Policy*).

Ed. Note: this is part of the Counterinsurgency as a Whole of Government Approach series of interviews by Octavian Manea with many of today's foremost theorists and practitioners. See all his articles at <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/authors/octavian-manea/>.

Can you point out the purpose of the military and of the use of military force in countering an insurgency? After all, the classic counterinsurgency (COIN) arithmetic suggested by David Galula is now the conventional wisdom: 80% political action and only 20% military.

The principal role of the military is to provide security but it is often far from ideal to use soldiers to provide civil security. In many countries, this is the role of the police force. Unfortunately, in many cases when an insurgency emerges, it often does so at a point beyond which the police force can contain the situation. If it could, presumably the problem would not have developed in the way it did. But let's say that the government has not been able to stop the insurgency from developing and the insurgency goes on to challenge law and order and governance. Let's say that the insurgents have got to the stage where they control an area where they actively challenge the rule of law if not overturn it. In such a case the government needs to act. At this point extraordinary measures are needed and this includes using soldiers to support the police to re-establish the rule of law, to protect the population, and to confront the insurgent.

Of course, this is not ideal. A soldiers' principal role is to defend the state from external threats so their equipment, training and skills tend to be optimized for general war. That said, good professional armies should be able to rise to the complex challenges of a 'war among the people' by a process of adaptation and adjustment. Specialist training and some adjustment to organizations, equipment and tactics are generally required. The faster an army can do this, the more effective it can be. The initial advantage the insurgent has is that armies

tend to be large and often conservative organizations. They can take too long to respond the general environmental challenges of COIN and the specifics of insurgent tactics and equipment. So unless the institutional mindset is attuned to adaptation, the insurgent will have the advantage. It is not for nothing that both US and British COIN doctrine emphasizes the need for adaptation, in fact 'Learn and Adapt' was made one of the British principles to highlight the importance of not getting stuck in one's ways.

COIN needs its practitioners to be highly unconventional in their approach. This is because there is nothing 'conventional' about it. As the US Field Manual highlights, dealing with an insurgency creates many paradoxes and dilemmas. Nevertheless, COIN is still warfare. It is intensely political and it requires a wide range of responses - not just military; political, diplomatic, and developmental as well. Within this broad framework, the military role is principally focused on improving security but military involvement in internal security should be as short-lived as possible. But this creates a real challenge because the effect they need to create has to be enduring. The intention must be from the outset to hand security responsibilities back from the military to the domestic police force as soon as conditions allow. Key to this is developing a capable police force which can maintain security in the wider context of the rule of law and ministerial capacity which can direct routine police operations. This means that we are not just looking for troops who are expert in COIN, the counterinsurgent really needs an effective host country police force as soon as possible. This clearly takes time, resources and clear prioritization within the overall effort.

The point at which the army-police transition takes place is one of the important indicators that the situation is reasonably under control. The key of course is to create a sustainable police force that can uphold the rule of law. This is what the British Government had to do in Northern Ireland after the Army's intervention in 1969. It took seven years to build a police force - the Royal Ulster Constabulary - with the specialist capabilities of intelligence, public order, and armed intervention which allowed it to take the lead for law and order and counter-terrorist operations.

What is the main purpose of the counter-insurgent?

One issue today is that it is easy to lose sight of the broader issues that insurgency poses. This is in large part due to the ease with which the media can focus on military operations. The underlying logic is, however, simple: the counterinsurgent has to counter the insurgency, not just the insurgent. Dealing with the insurgent alone is not going to solve the problem of why the insurgent emerged in the first place. The list of possible causes is large, but some critical underlying societal, political, or economic conditions are likely to be at the bottom of it all and the government's inability or intent to deal with the root cause is the catalyst. General Sir Graeme Lamb - someone who has had a profound influence on my understanding about COIN - captures the essence of the approach needed when he says that the object of counterinsurgency is to build a better life. He is echoing General William Tecumseh Sherman's view that the purpose of the war is a better peace. The whole aim of counterinsurgency, therefore, is to give to those that have been victims of instability, of political pressure, of physical violence and intimidation a better life. It is not just dealing with the insurgent. That is important, but the challenge is to deal with the root causes and today this means moving a political process on and not simply getting back to the status quo ante. And of course at the same time as root causes are being dealt with, efforts will be required to provide the government with the capacity to avoid the problem flaring up again in the longer term.

This view only really started to shape British COIN thinking after 1945. If we look at British doctrine during the interwar period 1919-1939 - the period characterized as "Imperial Policing" - British doctrine showed no interest in either acknowledging or much less dealing with root causes. As we later saw after the war, this was not a sensible approach to take because all that happened was those unresolved grievances spilled over in the period of post-conflict uncertainty and confusion.

The classic example is, of course, Malaya, where the administration was still recovering from the enormous damage inflicted by the Japanese occupation when the Chinese Communists took up arms to fight for what they saw as unfulfilled promises on the part of Britain. Not only did the Malayan administration have to deal with security threats, it also had to develop its own capacity to govern more effectively, a process which required re-structuring of government departments at every level.

The critics tend to say that we responded to the post-Maoist insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan using the same techniques as in the '50s or '60s. So are we using old tactics for entirely new and different problems?

I think it is easy to get too focused on names. Terminology is important but the issue is not whether a particular problem was 'Maoist' or not how the motivation behind it challenged governance and how it affected the population. I have looked at very many insurgencies around the world and their root causes, and it is surprising just how many exhibit very similar characteristics and behaviors against which so-called 'Classical' methods can be applied.

The central issue insurgency throws up is its challenge to governance. One of the principal reasons why an insurgency emerges is because of some failure or weakness in governance. Sir Robert Thompson and General Sir Frank Kitson focus on ways to re-establish good governance. Remember what Bernard Fall said, that governments are not generally outfought by an insurgency, but they are out-administered or out-governed. If we look at the case of Colombia, in countering the FARC, the remarkable achievements made by President Uribe were made by reestablishing territorial control of the Colombian government over its people. This meant putting police, mayors and governmental officials into every municipality across the country; in short, reconnecting the people of Colombia to its government. The Colombians built a large counter-insurgency army with all the capabilities you would expect in an army optimized for COIN: Special Forces, special police and an institutional focus on intelligence work. This reinforces the value of the approach now laid out in both the British and the American doctrines and drawn from hard-earned experience.

That said, the argument keeps being drawn back to 'Maoism' or post-Maoism when the issue should focus more on the relationship between the

population, its government and security. The challenge of Maoist-inspired revolution has diminished but today's challenges still involve the people, their government, and security. Taking that line of approach, it is difficult to see where the theory of population-centric COIN has failed although there is a compelling argument to make that there have been issues in the application and resourcing of the theory. So, while it might be an attractive criticism to make, I think it falls short because its proponents don't have a ready answer to how the counterinsurgent should deal with the patchwork of local needs and challenges, each of which requires a range of responses - political, military, diplomatic, developmental, economic - in the way so neatly described by Robert Thompson, Frank Kitson and David Galula.

So I for one am not put off by terms like 'Maoist' or 'Post-Maoist' and if anyone wants to see why, I recommend they have a look at Thompson's book, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*. Read it and try to ignore the word 'Communist' and Vietnam and Malaya. It is interesting that once his theory is laid bare, it is much easier to see why it remains relevant to the insurgencies we face today. I suppose that should not be a surprise because insurgency has always presented a multi-faceted problem that requires a multi-faceted solution to counter it. And that is just what Thompson describes. In my view, I don't think anyone has found a better way of analyzing, conceptualizing and then addressing the problem, and if they had, I am sure we would have heard about it!

There is a classical criticism to make against the COIN discourse that it doesn't take into account the strategic context, remaining locked into the operational level instead.

I don't agree. Let's go back to Thompson. He was most definitely a strategic thinker who wrote taking the strategic-level view and produced strategic, operational-level and tactical responses. He actually linked strategy to tactics. To Thompson, the military aspects of the campaign were, rightly, secondary to a government's political and administrative responses. Thompson makes a clear point that without reasonably efficient government administration, no counterinsurgency program will deliver the results required. He emphasized the importance of effective governance, pointing out that government weakness and poor administration aid the insurgents. Assuming that the government has a plan, at the tactical level, Thompson then describes an approach of Clear-Hold-Winning-Won where intelligence-led operations

seek to clear insurgents from an area, control is imposed over the cleared area to protect the population and isolate the insurgent, good government in all its aspects introduced to win and the area won at the point when control measures can be lifted. Although Thompson devotes chapters to tactical operations they are in the context of the overall strategy and the campaign plan that follows.

Both Thompson and Kitson have written with a "comprehensive approach" in mind. Is this philosophy of comprehensive approach meant to close the gap between the tactical and strategic levels in COIN?

I don't buy into the idea that COIN is a tactic. Countering insurgency needs a wide range of measures to be planned, resourced, sequenced, applied and controlled at every level of the campaign. I repeat; COIN is not just a military affair. COIN requires much more than tactics alone, and as far as I am aware all current definitions of countering insurgency makes it abundantly clear that COIN is a whole of government approach which has to be applied at every level. Trying to deal with an insurgency through tactics alone, or at the tactical level only is probably going to drag the campaign out and I doubt if it has any prospect of reaching a successful outcome. And there is a further risk in defaulting to tactics. The campaign will start to be seen and defined in military and security terms alone. Not only does this allow focus to move away from the political issues which need to drive the campaign, it limits the campaign to treating symptoms and not the root causes of the insurgency.

Everything in COIN has a political dimension and politics are about governance and power. While the military focus must be to protect the general population, the campaign has to be underpinned by the re-establishment of effective political control and good governance and enabling an effective political process. Military operations may meet their military objectives, but if they are conducted without properly assessing their likely political effects, the overall outcome may well be unsustainable and entirely counterproductive. The key is for military commanders, development officers, diplomats and civil servants to ensure that their actions do not hamper the political outcome. In *Bunch of Five*, General Sir Frank Kitson highlighted that:

there can be no such thing as a purely military solution because insurgency is not primarily a military activity.....[once an in-

surgency] has taken hold, politics and force, backed up by economic measures will have to be harnessed together for the purpose of restoring peaceful conditions.

But Kitson also pointed out the fact that:

it cannot be said too often that countering insurgency involves a wide range of government activity and operations by the security forces only help matters if they are conducted within an overall framework that ties the whole programme together...insurgency can only be successfully countered by a government programme in which the activities of the country's security forces are closely tied into an overall campaign consisting of political, economic and psychological measures.

It is difficult to avoid the obvious conclusion we can draw from a wide range of campaigns - success in countering insurgency comes through very carefully coordinated cross-government action based on a well understood framework. The term in use in NATO today is 'the Comprehensive Approach'. The difficulty is that today's comprehensive approach is one reached by consensus, not by the sort of clear direction laid out in a unified strategy developed and used in Malaya in 1950 and then again in Baghdad in 2007. Some argue that it is impossible to have an effective COIN Comprehensive Approach today because past British 'successes' depended on some form of colonial or post-colonial administration. I have a difficulty with this argument because fails to take account of, certainly in the British case, the nature of the colonial administration and what it meant in practical terms at the time. True, it helped Sir Harold Briggs in April 1950 that there was a small group of British officers, policemen, diplomats and administrators across the Empire who had learned the hard way in successive campaigns. And it certainly helped that London could flex its muscles when needed, for example surging British battalions out to Malaya to deal with the increasing violence. However, unless I have completely misread history, the campaigns that still capture the imagination today were fought many thousands of miles away from London, in very remote and challenging circumstances, by colonial administrations under great pressure from an insurgency. Reductionists who like to boil down the Malayan campaign to the bare essentials to argue it was easy really ought to read Briggs' account of what he found and the immense challenges that he then had to overcome in Malaya in 1950 when he was appointed Director of Operations. Not one account I have read said something like "thank

goodness for a British-run administration; it really made things so much easier."

The challenge today is that of multinational, alliance-based expeditionary operations. None of these characteristics invalidate the concept of adopting a comprehensive approach. On the contrary, they underline its importance. Unity of effort is essential in order to overcome inter-departmental and multinational boundaries and to harness the considerable resources and skills an alliance generates. And all of this effort needs to be harnessed in support of the host government. True, each boundary is a potential source of friction but a comprehensive approach which harmonizes and applies the ends, ways, and means - in other words a strategy - is the only effective mechanism by which a campaign can be run.

Why, in any COIN campaign, should all energies be directed at gaining and maintaining control over the population and winning its support? There are a lot of critics, such as US Army Colonel Gian Gentile, who believe that COIN is a *strategy of tactics*: "when we make by rule the population as the center of gravity for any COIN, then we are trapped in the tactics of population centric counterinsurgency," ignoring strategy.

The accusation of being stuck in a "strategy of tactics" is another attractive headline grabber, and it is not one I agree with. However by raising it, it does draw attention to one of the inherent dangers of not developing a comprehensive approach to strategy. And, given today's media coverage, it is all too easy to focus on what the military is doing. Images of soldiers conducting operations seem to be more compelling than, say, politicians involved in politics. The weakness of the argument is that a COIN strategy needs effective tactics and, as I have already explained, those tactics need to be set in the context of a broad campaign plan, itself nested within an overall strategy. Without these last two components, strategy will undoubtedly become a slave to tactical outcomes. The answer cannot be anything other than a strategy, a campaign plan and the tactical responses - political, security, information and development - needed to reach the operational and strategic outcomes.

The second aspect of the question is that of population-centric COIN. *Why secure the population? Why bother with all this complicated comprehensive approach business if it is so difficult? Why not cut to the chase and deal with the insurgent?* The short answer is chasing insurgents, ne-

cessary though it is, only deals with one symptom of the problem and does not address the root causes that created it. Insurgents tend to live among the population, and they need people to provide support in its many forms. The people may not want to provide that support voluntarily but may well have to if the government cannot protect them. Hence my point about the importance of extending effective governance back across the population. The population is central to the eventual outcome, whether the insurgents prevail or the government succeeds, and experience backs this up. Security of the population and good governance of it are essential if political processes and conflict termination and resolution are to be instigated.

Population-centric COIN places the population as the vital ground, which means that COIN responses need to be centered around and focused on the population. This means the main effort has to be among the local population with a constant presence of soldiers and police out on the ground, protecting the people where they live and work. Careful work which places the population first helps to make that all important link between the population and its government. In this sense, without wishing to stretch the point, COIN is all very Clausewitzian. Hence my earlier point about COIN being warfare. COIN is warfare and is very much the extension of politics by the introduction of a wide range of means. As Kitson said “*the aim of the government when trying to counter such a campaign is to regain and retain the allegiance of its people*”. And this is central in both Iraq and Afghanistan. If you want a counter-balance look at the underpinning logic of the Colombian strategy to deal with the FARC. It was to link the population back to its government. There are other similar examples, such as the 1970-1976 Omani campaign to deal with Dhofari Communist insurgents in which the Sultan, assisted by a meager British support was able to connect its government back with the people and to deal successfully with the Communist inspired insurgency.

It is usually said that the Golden Age of the British COIN is the Malayan Emergency. Which are its key lessons for current doctrine?

The point to make first is that every insurgency is different and each set of circumstances differs to one campaign to the next. But this doesn't mean to say that there aren't some good ideas that if applied sensibly would fit either present or future campaigns. The golden lessons of Malaya were; first, you need a comprehensive plan that deals with the political, military and developmental is-

ues. Next, you need unified leadership and a unified chain of command right down to the lowest possible level - to the joint security post, for example. In Malaya, the key to success was the Briggs Plan which General Templer eventually galvanized when he took command of the operation in 1952. The Briggs Plan required full civil-military cooperation under a unified command structure through a system of joint committees from national to district level. It was very much a comprehensive approach. On the security side, the police force - once it had been rebuilt - had the task of securing the population and gaining information while the Army was to operate in the jungle to locate and destroy insurgent gangs. Under the Briggs Plan the administration's role was to extend good governance to the whole population.

The difficulty with Malaya is that, as I mentioned when we talked about the British colonial administration, it has developed an overly simplistic mythology. One aspect is that of 'Hearts and Minds', which is interpreted as soldiers treading carefully and being very conservative in the use of force. *Nothing could be further from the truth*. Sadly, there are some well-documented cases where human rights were ignored and violated, and some soldiers were rightly court-martialed as a result of what they did. The reality is that it was an incredible brutal campaign. 'Hearts and Minds' is a comfortable, but ill founded mythology which hides the reality of the campaign.

Professor Ian Beckett once said that Malaya created an obsession within the British Army that determined its institutional memory well into the 1980s. This was due in part to Thompson's influence through *Defeating Communist Insurgency* and the principles he laid out, but also because it was because Malaya was a success. Not only did we eventually get it right - don't forget that it took two years after the Emergency was declared for things to fall or more accurately be forced into place - but it was a transferable model. The British response in Kenya and Borneo was very much shaped by what was seen to be a workable solution in Malaya. One can have too much of a good thing and I agree with Beckett that Malaya's institutional effect waned in the 1980s. This was due, I suspect, to the emergence of Dhofar as a case study *par excellence* particularly at the Army Staff College, Camberley, and coincided with the arrival at Camberley of Major General John Akehurst who was the British commander when the campaign was won. I think that helped cement Dhofar's position as a first-class case study and that helped ensure it remained the

principal campaign taught to Army staff officers until Camberley closed in 1996.

The British Army's latest COIN doctrine, published in January 2010 and for which I was the lead author, explains why and how efforts must be focused on securing the local population and gaining and maintaining popular support. This is a task for the host nation, its security forces, and British forces and their allies, in concert with their partners across government. The doctrine explains why, as experience has proven, this is not simply a military undertaking. Instead it is a battle of political wills against the insurgent and his supports, all of which requires a multifaceted response which is coherent and coordinated. It should be self-evident that security forces of all types lead in creating an environment sufficiently stable to allow the other instruments of governance can be brought to bear to improve the lives of the local population. As we have seen over the last eight years alone, providing effective security is a complex, dangerous, and bloody business; it takes time and resources, and it tests the resolve of all involved. As every COIN campaign has shown, these are enduring characteristics of counterinsurgency.

Which was the winning formula, the winning mind-set that in the end defeated the insurgency during the Dhofar campaign?

Despite Beckett's comments about Malaya and its influence on British thinking, the campaign which was actually taught to staff college students was Dhofar. Dhofar is a fascinating campaign and has many valuable lessons for today. The first key point is that it was a COIN campaign outside the

'classical' model. Oman was not a British colony, so everything that needed to be done had to be done 'by, with and through.' Next, Britain had withdrawn strategically from East of Suez and there was no appetite in Whitehall for a major campaign. As a result, resources were deliberately constrained. This had the effect of magnifying the importance of 'by, with and through.' The ultimate objective was to connect the new Sultan and his government with the Dhofari tribesmen, and this was achieved in textbook manner, and very quickly. British military support was limited to a handful of British officers seconded to the Sultan's Armed Forces who fought shoulder-to-shoulder, and Special Air Service soldiers who raised local forces from the tribesmen and surrendered enemy personnel. The military action was backed up by civil action plans to improve village life through agricultural and veterinary services, shops, civil centers and a comprehensive and imaginative information campaign. The insurgents were eventually defeated politically, societally (because they could not connect with the traditional life-style the Dhofaris wanted to lead), and militarily. No wonder it has been described as the textbook example of COIN.

Colonel Alexander Alderson set up the British Army Land Forces Stability Operations and Counterinsurgency Center in 2009 and is now its director. He was the lead author for the British Army's Counterinsurgency Doctrine (November 2009) and his operational experience includes Iraq, Bosnia, Northern Ireland and the 1991 Gulf War. He holds a Ph.D. in Modern History and is a senior visiting research fellow with the University of Oxford and at King's College London.

Index of All Articles Published in January

By Author (alphabetical by last name)

<u>Author - Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>link</u>
Abbott, Philip K. – The Merida Initiative: A Flawed Counterdrug Policy	01/06	link
Aboul-Enein, Youssef – Discussions on the Complexity of Diverse Sunni Islamic Interpretations: History and Islamic Argumentation al-Qaida Chooses to Neglect	01/18	link
Amalyar, Nengyalai - Motivational Interviewing: Improving Combat Advising to Strengthen Partnering with Afghan National Security Forces	01/31	link
Bunker, Pamela L. – El significado espiritual de ¿Plato O Plomo?	01/13	link
Bunker, Robert J. – Criminal Insurgencies in Mexico: Web and Social Media Resources	01/12	link
Bunker, Robert J. – El significado espiritual de ¿Plato O Plomo?	01/13	link
Bunker, Robert J. - Why We Should Support Democratic Revolution in the Islamic World	01/29	link
Chickering, A. Lawrence – The New Physics: Key to Strengthening COIN	01/16	link
Clarke, Colin P. – Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Evidence of Effective Approaches to Counterinsurgency, 1978-2008	01/17	link
Clauser, Michael A. – Not Just a Job, an Adventure: Drafting the U.S. Civil Service for Counterinsurgencies	01/04	link
Cochran, John – The Need to Create an Unconventional Warfare Advanced Studies and Training Center	01/09	link
Cowan, James - Motivational Interviewing: Improving Combat Advising to Strengthen Partnering with Afghan National Security Forces	01/31	link
Culp, Robert – Strategy for Military Counter Drug Operations	01/24	link
Faughnan, Michael J. – Afghan National Security Forces Literacy Program	01/04	link
Fowler, Mike – Philippine Counterinsurgency Strategy: Then and Now	01/18	link
Glenn, Russell W. - Glory Restored? The Implications of the 2008-2009 Gaza War in Times of Extended Conflict	01/28	link
Grill, Beth - Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Evidence of Effective Approaches to Counterinsurgency, 1978-2008	01/17	link
Hollis, David – Cyberwar Case Study: Georgia 2008	01/06	link
Ince, Matthew – Counterinsurgency: Falling Short of the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan	01/23	link
Johnson, John D. – Root Causes of Islamist Extremism: Nine Years Later	01/10	link
Kirk, Thomas – Afghanistan: Reconciliation Plans, Tribal Leaders, and Civil Society	01/04	link
Kuruk, Auton – Counterinsurgency: Domestic Politics by Other Means	01/04	link
MacAllister, Adam E. - Unnecessary Evil: The Necessary Exclusion of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar	01/31	link
Manea, Octavian – Counterinsurgency as a Whole of Government Approach: Notes on the British Army Field Manual Weltanschauung. An Interview with Colonel Alexander Alderson	01/26	link

<u>Author - Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>link</u>
Massey, Mark – Reconceptualizing State Building in Africa (I): Non-State Systems, Decentralization and African Statehood	01/15	link
Massey, Mark – Reconceptualizing State Building in Africa (II): The Unbearable Lightness of Governing: Over-Centralized and Decentralized Governance	01/23	link
Massey, Mark- Reconceptualizing State Building in Africa (III). Below and Beyond the State: Incorporating Non-State Systems to Build Stronger States	01/30	link
Mustafa, Mohammad - Motivational Interviewing: Improving Combat Advising to Strengthen Partnering with Afghan National Security Forces	01/31	link
Paul, Christopher - Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Evidence of Effective Approaches to Counterinsurgency, 1978-2008McCullar	01/23	link
Reeves, Jeffrey – U.S. Cooperation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Challenge and OpportunitiesMeredith	01/17	link
Paparone, Christopher R. - Design and the Prospects for Frame Reflection	01/16	link
Sisco, James - Karzai's Governing Strategy: A Threat to ISAF COIN Implementation	01/31	link
Sullivan, John P. – Criminal Insurgencies in Mexico: Web and Social Media Resources	01/09	link
Schapiro, Mark - Team Ninewa Models Successful Civilian-Military Unity of Effort	01/12	link
Thiel, Joshua – COIN Manpower Ratios: Debunking the 10 to 1 Ratio and Surges	01/06	link
Wege, Carl Anthony – The Hizballah-North Korean Nexus	01/15	link
Wrona, Richard M., Jr. - A Better, Bad Choice	01/23	link

By Date

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Author(s)</u>	<u>link</u>
01/04	Afghan National Security Forces Literacy Program	Michael J. Faughnan	link
01/04	Afghanistan: Reconciliation Plans, Tribal Leaders, and Civil Society	Thomas Kirk	link
01/04	Not Just a Job, An Adventure: Drafting the U.S. Civil Service for Counterinsurgencies	Michael A. Clauser	link
01/04	Counterinsurgency: Domestic Politics by Other Means	Anton Kuruc	link
01/06	Widening and Flattening: The Case for Decentralized Thinking	Benjamin Summers	link
01/06	Cyberwar Case Study: Georgia 2008	David Hollis	link
01/06	The Merida Initiative: A Flawed Counterdrug Policy?	Phillip K. Abbott	link
01/09	SOF Detachment Civil Military Operations in Iraq	Shaun A. Reynolds	link
01/09	The Need to Create an Unconventional Warfare Advanced Studies and Training Center	John Cochran	link
01/10	Root Causes of Islamist Extremism: Nine Years Later	John D. Johnson	link
01/12	Criminal Insurgencies in Mexico: Web and Social Media Resources	Dr. Robert J. Bunker, Lieutenant John P. Sullivan	link
01/13	El significado espiritual de ¿Plato O Plomo?	Pamela L. Bunker, Robert J. Bunker	link

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Author(s)</u>	
01/15	Reconceptualizing State Building in Africa (I): Non-State Systems, Decentralization and Refounding African Statehood	Mark Massey	link
01/15	COIN Manpower Ratios: Debunking the 10 to 1 Ratio and Surges	Joshua Thiel	link
01/16	U.S. Cooperation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Challenges and Opportunities	Jeffrey Reeves	link
01/16	The New Physics: Key to Strengthening COIN	A. Lawrence Chickering	link
01/17	Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Evidence of Effective Approaches to Counterinsurgency, 1978-2008	Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, Beth Grill	link
01/18	Philippine Counterinsurgency Strategy: Then and Now	Mike Fowler	link
01/18	Discussions on the Complexity of Diverse Sunni Islamic Interpretations: History and Islamic Argumentation al-Qaida Chooses to Neglect	CDR Youssef Aboul-Enein, MSC, USN	link
01/23	Counterinsurgency: Falling Short of the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan	Matthew Ince	link
01/23	The Hizballah-North Korea Nexus	Carl Anthony Wege	link
01/23	Reconceptualizing State Building in Africa (II): The Unbearable Lightness of Governing: Over-centralized and Decentralized Governance	Mark Massey, Jr.	link
01/24	Strategy for Military Counter Drug Operations	Robert Culp	link
01/26	Counterinsurgency as a Whole of Government Approach: Notes on the British Army Field Manual Weltanschauung. An Interview with Colonel Alexander Alderson	Octavian Manea	link
01/28	Glory Restored? The Implications of the 2008-2009 Gaza War in Times of Extended Conflict	Dr. Russell W. Glenn	link
01/29	Why We Should Support Democratic Revolution in the Islamic World	Dr. Robert J. Bunker	link
01/30	Reconceptualizing State Building in Africa (III). Below and Beyond the State: Incorporating Non-State Systems to Build Stronger States	Mark Massey	link
01/31	Unnecessary Evil: The Necessary Exclusion of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar	Adam E. MacAllister	link
01/31	Karzai's Governing Strategy: A Threat to ISAF COIN Implementation	James Sisco	link
01/31	Motivational Interviewing: Improving Combat Advising to Strengthen Partnering with Afghan National Security Forces	James Cowan, Nengyalai Amalyar, and Mohammad Mustafa	link

