



SMALL WARS

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Notes from the Sweatshop -- ahhh, the irony. We're finally putting out an issue with all new content rather than reprints published earlier in the month, but we've slipped behind the calendar. So here we are in early July, but we'll call this June issue anyway. Even though all these articles are being published on July 7, we still need an Issue No. 6, and we've got to put out the index of the articles published in June.

We will either be transitioning to our new site in late July, or we'll be making piñatas out of the Publisher and the development team. Either way, join us for the party! With that big success we'll begin to bootstrap our way up to where the rest of the developed world is, with an issue actually coming out at the beginning of the month, rather than the end of the month (or a week after that). We will continue to publish timely individual articles as they ready.

On larger fronts, we've still got some small wars going on in this world and others bubbling. We also have at least one new feisty small war-ish looking but non-hostility, not subject to the War Powers Act thingamajiggy. We welcome the forward-looking tone of the pieces in this month's Journal. Even if, and we do mean *if*, US involvements continues to wind down in two theaters, our mission here at Small Wars Journal remains relevant and we are supremely confident (with great regret) that small wars are an enduring reality in global politics. They may ebb and flow from the front page of the news and in the cut lines of defense mindshare and spending. During the ebb, when they're unpopular or at least less trendy, we'll still be here with your help and that may be when it is most important to facilitate the work of this community. Just ask the post-Vietnam generation.

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Cover Photo: Residents turn in their votes during the elections in Marjah, Afghanistan, March 1, 2011. Elections were held to select Marjah district community representatives.

Photo by Cpl Nicholas S. Edinger, US DoD public domain.

Prospects for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

by John D. Johnson

Published [online](#) July 7, 2011

Will the Arab Spring turn into an Israeli-Palestinian Winter? Judging by the recent icy meeting between President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu, there is a significant chance it may. Also, the proposed vote for recognizing a Palestinian state in the UN General Assembly this fall may well be the critical turning point in the seasons of Middle East politics.

As has happened many times before, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was in the news recently as Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu met with President Obama in the Oval Office, Egypt brokered a unity agreement between Palestinian groups HAMAS in the Gaza Strip and Fatah in the West Bank, and Israel celebrated its Independence Day while Palestinians marked what they call the “catastrophe” where many Palestinians circa 1948 left or were removed from their homes in present-day Israel, to name just a few headlines.

Traveling to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem last month, I was armed with two principal ideas. The first, conveyed to me through numerous conversations with Turks, Saudis, Palestinians, Pakistanis and others, is that there is no more important issue facing the region than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This issue has also been used widely by Islamist terrorists as part of their anti-Western and anti-Israel narratives. The second idea is that a two-state Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement is a real possibility; that both sides have the political will to seek peace that would benefit their long-term security interests. In essence, I was optimistic about the prospects for a lasting peace. However, after leaving Israel and having talked to individuals on all sides, I realize now that the problems are more complex and difficult to overcome than I had expected. I guess you could say I’m more realistic now.

The major issues are settlements, Jerusalem, refugees, security, water and borders. All deserve significant individual attention, but it seems unlikely that all will be resolved satisfactorily to both sides in any future peace agreement. A more pragmatic approach might be for the two parties to agree to several of the issues where the sides are less far apart, saving the most difficult issues for future negotiations. But therein lays the problem,

peace negotiations first require talks and other preliminary contacts, none of which are occurring at the present time. Indeed, one could characterize negotiations as “stopped,” until such a time as conditions are set for talks to resume.

In contrast to the view of many of my Muslim friends and colleagues regarding the importance of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel’s priorities, which are driven by threat perceptions, look much different. A sentiment conveyed to me by Israelis is that problems (i.e., threats) look differently through the lens of a small country. For perspective, it is less than 20 miles from the Mediterranean Sea to the West Bank. Israel sees internal and external threats, but the prevailing threat is external. A short list of threats from the Israeli viewpoint might look something like this: Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, HAMAS, Egypt (whose future looks stable but remains uncertain) and then the Palestinians. Of course, with the Palestinian Authority (PA) now aligned with HAMAS, a terrorist group bent on Israel’s destruction, it makes negotiations with the PA virtually impossible. On the Israeli side, the fact that approximately 15% of the Knesset, or parliament, is controlled by Jewish right-wing parties makes compromise with the Palestinians on almost any issue difficult.

Regarding Iran in particular, Israel clearly takes Tehran’s nuclear ambitions and anti-Israeli rhetoric seriously. To appreciate Israel’s perceptions about the existential threat posed by Iran, one must take into account the psyche of Israel’s political and military elite, many of whom are older and have strong feelings about the existential threat faced by the Jews during WWII. Israel’s leaders today feel immense pressure and responsibility to protect Israel.

Finally, the PA seems intent on seeking a United Nations General Assembly vote in September on Palestinian statehood and there seems to be significant international support in favor of a vote. Some are trying to delay the vote, but the likelihood that it will occur seems better than in recent memory. However, the conventional wisdom is that a General Assembly vote will not change the situation on the ground and that is probably the most likely scenario; Israel still occupies the West

Bank and is the much stronger player militarily. Still, with Arab-spring emotions running high in the region, it is possible that a vote could result in real change and possibly increased violence.

As mentioned previously, the situation is complex and a comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement akin to the Belfast Agreement, or Good Friday Agreement, achieved in Northern Ireland in the late 1990s will be difficult to achieve. However, looking to the future, a few things are clear. First, the Israelis and Palestinians are too wedded to their respective positions on all issues and an outside broker (with the U.S. playing a leading role) will be required to facilitate peace negotiations, probably followed by an international peace force. Second, both sides will have to compromise on their positions (e.g., Israel on land swaps, the Palestinians on refugees, etc.). Obviously, compromise is made difficult by the fact that neither party wants to be seen as conceding on key issues of importance to their supporters. Third, HAMAS will have to renounce violence and accept Israel's right to exist for peace negotiations to start or Fatah will need to break its unity agreement with HAMAS and then deal directly with Israel. Lastly, neighboring Arab countries will need to take a constructive role in the peace process, including offering economic assistance to the Palestinians and assisting with the refugee problem. Unfortunately, none of these actions will be easy, but all will be needed to form a lasting peace.

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Watch for [Robert Haddick's](#) weekly editorial, [This Week at War](#). Friday evenings at Foreign Policy.

Challenges Ahead in the Middle East

by A. Lawrence Chickering

Published [online](#) July 7, 2011

Two decades ago, flying with a friend over Cairo's City of the Dead, Hosni Mubarak pointed to the forest of TV antennas below and remarked, "This is why I no longer control Egypt as I once did."

Although the United States knew the events were coming that have swept through the Middle East, it was utterly unprepared for them. These events, protesting dictatorships and promoting democracy in a number of countries, will disturb the region for as long as it takes to complete the revolution and transition to stable democracies. If U.S. policy is to support this transition and promote change, it must consider differences in internal conditions leading up to the unrest within each country. But underneath the differences are much deeper social and cultural similarities that represent the real challenge. Unfortunately, these similarities are now being largely ignored.

Mainstream comment on the recent unrest denies that any common social or political force is driving the unrest and only emphasizes the differences among the countries where the unrest is strongest (Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and other countries).¹ They emphasize different elements ranging from the role of the army, the nature of the autocratic governments, the state of the education system, the role of women, and a blizzard of other differences.

There is, however, a common force driving unrest that is spreading across the region. It is the desire of tribal people for freedom. The freedom they seek has many components: freedom to abandon lives rigidly defined by traditional roles, freedom to participate actively in their own economic and social progress, freedom from dictators and freedom to participate actively in civic life. In essence, it is the desire to be free to leave the passive role-bound nature of traditional tribal life and choose an active role in modern life.

If people are to be free to make such a change in their lives, they must embrace a new set of values: social trust, active citizenship, individual empowerment, self-governance, and a sense of equality.

¹ See, e.g., Lisa Anderson, "Demystifying the Arab Spring," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2011.

These values are crucial to any healthy and stable transition to democracy. Without them there will be increasing unrest and instability throughout the region.

SOCIAL TRUST AS THE CENTRAL DEMOCRATIC VALUE

The first step is to promote social trust. Trust is the "mother's milk" of all democracies. Increasing trust will tend to open the political system to wider circles of participation. It will bring people together and facilitate collective action. Trust leads to other basic values, including empowerment and citizenship; and these, in turn, lead to the modern democratic values of freedom and equality.

When people work together for the public good, they become citizens capable of expanding trust to groups further away, including governments. They feel, and truly become, empowered. Following this logic, it should become possible to develop a network of self-governing civil society organizations, which are the natural institutional form for integrating peoples in these societies into emerging democracies.

Under all recent Presidents, the U.S. has tried to promote objective, modern democratic values like freedom, equality, and voting without first addressing these underlying subjective, cultural challenges of trust, empowerment, and citizenship. To understand the importance of social development to modern democracies, it would be useful to recall the role that social development played in promoting the the social and psychological foundation for Western democracies.

If social trust is the core value of modern societies, trust depends on development of an active, individualistic concept of self, a self able to reach beyond family and tribe—or gender—to individuals. Expanding beyond the passive self happens with communication across loyalties, and the heart of social development is to institutionalize such communication.

Promoting trust is initially an intimate, personal experience, and promoting trust can only be encouraged (therefore) in local and personal experi-

ences. This is why governments cannot do it—why civil society organizations (CSOs) need to carry the principal burden of promoting it. This also explains why current foreign policy and institutions, focusing entirely on states, are struggling as they try to promote change in tribal societies.

The most urgent priority for change is to open space in the debate about policy to begin experimenting with civil society initiatives promoting trust. Such experimentation needs to be done by indigenous CSOs, guided by international experiences. Relying on indigenous CSOs will represent a very substantial challenge for us because it will require us to trust them.

It is hard to think how foreign policy, which has in the past been all about governments, must now reach out to civil society organizations and develop new policies toward societies and non-state actors. But that is precisely what needs to happen. Without new policies promoting social development as a high priority for policy, many countries in the region will become “failed states”. This frightening prospect will go on for years, if not decades and longer.

An early warning of the problems of stability in transition to democracies appeared at the end of February 2011, when renewed unrest in Tunisia led to the resignation of the newly-installed Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi, who replaced the deposed dictator President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Responding to the renewed unrest, Prime Minister Ghannouchi said: “I am not ready to be the person who takes decisions that would wind up causing casualties.” With the resignation of such a man, it is reasonable to wonder what sources of civil order will govern Tunisia’s transition to democracy.

The need is to build civil society institutions that will play active roles, building trust and citizenship, while mediating between individuals and the state in these countries. This social development took centuries in the West before democratic institutions and values emerged in the eighteenth century. A combination of well-designed policies and innovative uses of technology should be able to promote significant change in a much shorter period.

Very large issues arise in relation to promoting social development. Some of them have to do with what to do—how to begin the process. Others have to do with overcoming political challenges to implementing new policies and creating new institutions to address them. These challenges are not limited to those societies and the power relationships that currently exist in them. The challenges

are also about us, philosophically, institutionally, and operationally.

The Philosophical Challenge. This requires changing our habits of thought away from the mechanistic instinct to see all problems as objective and solvable by governments to acknowledging the subjective challenges embodied in culture, which need to be addressed by civil society initiatives, acting initially at the local level. Embracing new policies that act in local communities will require significant changes in how we think about foreign policy, which currently focuses entirely on governments and states. Addressing subjective cultural issues will require moving away from the mechanistic categories of law and economics and moving toward non-mechanistic, organic modes of person engagement. This shift will require moving away from false mechanistic certainty to uncertain, spiritual, and human forms of relationship and understanding.

A related challenge is how to shift from thinking that all problems need to be solved by us to thinking that most problems in developing countries need to be solved by them. (While everybody talks about solutions coming from them rather than from us, in the real world it is all about us, even in the most “progressive” quarters of the debate about policy.)

The Institutional Challenges. The first challenge here is how to open space in foreign policy dialogue and debate to include new actors who both think about societies and also have practical experience working in them. This is a huge challenge because the financial markets that currently dominate development programs are dominated very largely by the same foreign policy community that focuses on development in terms of mechanistic programs for helping rather than empowering people. While helping is needed in disaster relief, it is not what is needed in a new policy focused on promoting trust, empowerment, and citizenship.

Opening the debate on foreign policy to include these issues is important to alter and expand the perspective of the foreign policy community, which tends to regard the populace of a country as consumers of services, but otherwise a passive, irrelevant force. Recent events in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and other countries show in high relief how mistaken and limited this perspective can be.

The Operational Challenges. One challenge is how to open spaces in foreign policy institutions (which are currently focused only on states) so they can design and implement new models of civil society intervention toward societies. A se-

cond challenge is explicitly political: how to implement new policies that attempt to promote change in the cultures of other countries without producing powerful backlashes that destroy the initiatives before they can even begin.

A final, more general challenge has to do with the question of how any program or initiative directed toward the populace of a country—as opposed to the government—can possibly operate at scales sufficient to be truly strategic.

EDUCATE GIRLS GLOBALLY (EGG): PROMOTING CHANGE IN TRADITIONAL CULTURES

If we identify and analyze civil society initiatives that have successfully promoted social change throughout the world, we will find that important pieces of the democratization puzzle have already been solved. For example, Educate Girls Globally (EGG), which has developed a highly successful program for promoting girls' education by reforming government schools in the very traditional and tribal state of Rajasthan in India, reveals important pieces in how to meet the challenges we face. After experimenting with the issue for more than a decade, EGG has demonstrated:

- That the people of even the most traditional and tribal cultures can evolve in a very short time from passive, fatalistic followers of habit to active participants in promoting economic, social, and political progress;
- That very traditional, tribal people can shift from absolute indifference to girls' education to active advocacy of it;
- That such a program can work inside government institutions without confronting political opposition either from local communities or from the government; and
- That it can operate at high scales and low costs, which are truly strategic.

In short, EGG has developed various key elements of a new, strategic policy that can be effective in promoting social development, potentially addressing a variety of different challenges.²

² Educate Girls Globally (EGG) works in partnership with affiliates in individual countries. In India, the affiliate is Educate Girls (EG). EGG's model has won four awards for innovation (available on request). The most complete evaluation is the one completed for expansion to 500 schools in Pali District. Data are now available from the expansion to every school in Pali District or 2,342 schools serving 590,000 children, 263,000 of them girls. A report is now being written on those data. For the most complete report, currently available, see Evaluation in 500

Educated women are the principal agents of social change in developing countries. For issues including health, population control, education, and peace, educating mothers is the most powerful available catalyst of change and progress. Despite progress in many countries, the education of girls and empowerment of women has lagged badly, especially in the Muslim countries from Pakistan to Somalia, and in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Powerful models exist for educating girls, even in the most "difficult" cultures—in the most fundamentalist Islamic cultures in northwest Pakistan and Upper Egypt, for example. In such places, one might think no girls would be attending school, but every girl is. The successes, however, tend to reach only small populations.

Educate Girls Globally (EGG) has discovered several key components for scaling reform of education, especially for girls. The key is transferring the lessons of successful CSO pilot projects into operating government schools. Working in two states of India, EGG has done just that: created a scalable and sustainable model that empowers and animates communities, teachers, girls, and even government bureaucrats to reform schools and make them work for girls. The marginal cost is insignificant. When the program is operating at large scales, the cost is less than \$2.00 per child per year for the two-year program.

The key to EGG's success is empowerment through ownership. Schools that are run bureaucratically, like government schools, fail because no one owns them: not the teachers, nor parents and communities, certainly not the children, nor even the bureaucrats. Without ownership—the sense of authority that gives people stakes in institutions—people feel little commitment because they have no stake. EGG's program success is based on empowering all to work together to improve the schools. It mobilizes underutilized resources in the form of parents, communities, teachers, government officials, and even girls to bring girls who have dropped out back into school and to improve school quality.

EGG offers no financial rewards or incentives. Its only currency is empowerment. Rigorous evaluation of this model shows powerful impacts in enrollment, attendance, school and community improvements, learning, and personal qualities, including self-esteem, self-assertiveness, and lead-

Schools in Pali District, Rajasthan, 2010; Barbara Herz, Memorandum on Evaluation in 500 Schools in Pali District.

ership.³ After working in 500 schools, serving more than 70,000 children over two years, communities supporting 178 schools built clean water facilities. EGG provided no funding for this improvement; the communities built them on their own.

EGG expanded to nearly 2,342 schools in 2010 and has now expanded again this year to about 4,500 schools, serving 590,000 children, 263,000 of them girls. This amounts to every school in two whole districts—without opposition or conflict in any single school. The government of Rajasthan is now financing more than 30 percent of this work. EGG is planning to expand to two new districts in 2011, doubling its presence.

Building trust inside schools or inside communities is a beginning. Promoting and expanding trust then needs to reach out to other communities, building networks of engagement between communities. Then democratization strategies can evolve from the bottom up. This is true nation-building.

THE ROLE OF OUTSIDERS

What is an “outsider’s” role in social development? How can one promote it, avoiding the perception that we are interfering, provoking opposition and backlash?

Perception is everything. If they support the reforms, and the reforms are seen to be “theirs”, not “ours”, there is no problem. Reform agendas become “theirs” when they take the lead in promoting change. Leadership can come from anywhere—from government or business or CSOs. It can even come from local communities, sharing powerful reform experiences. Choosing who initiates the policy discussion that might stimulate a movement for reform can be a function of information about successful experiences.

An outsider’s role needs to be limited to sharing world experiences dealing with the problem at issue (i.e., education reform). The choice of “messenger” can be very important. In choosing the messenger, it is important to be aware of the hierarchy of authority for influence. The weakest authority is the U.S. Government. When the USG is an active player, the conditions for establishing “their” ownership of the reform are weakest. Private U.S. institutions are better. Better still will be institutions from other developing countries, especially from countries close by. Arab countries are

more apt to be influenced by other Arab countries than by countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

PROMOTING LOCAL OWNERSHIP

A starting point for promoting local ownership is to find and appoint as the “leader” a respected policy leader in a developing country. The International Center for Economic Growth (ICEG), founded in 1985, provides important clues about how to do this. They recruited as a leader Nicolas Ardito-Barletta, former President of Panama and a Ph.D. in economics, who was in personal contact with a network of U.S.-trained economists throughout Latin America. ICEG’s headquarters, therefore, was in Panama City for almost ten years, and the South-South dialogue it promoted, which included research grants to economists in different countries, played a role in major reforms in more than fifty countries. Timing was important in that experience. Gorbachev came to power in the USSR in 1985; central planning was losing favor as a means of organizing economies, and governments everywhere were looking for ideas on how to use markets to promote development.

This model of influence depends on trust. We need to trust other peoples to take leadership for change so that the change can be “theirs” rather than “ours”. Often this will mean approaching the potential agents of influence, indigenous civil society organizations (CSOs), in culturally accepted ways that produce this result.

Every party involved in the Middle East—corporations, CSOs, and the U.S. Government—is apprehensive about uncertainty in many countries there. They have reason to be apprehensive because they did very little to help promote institutions of civil society that could promote democracy and reduce uncertainty.

There is still much to do—much that needs to be done. All major parties operating in these countries, both public and private, have important roles to play to reduce their own vulnerability and help promote a smooth transition. How can policies be designed to be about “them”—to be approved by them and especially owned by them?

SKETCHING AN ACTION PROGRAM

The central message here is to create a vision of possibility for a transformed society in priority countries. There are two parts of what needs to be done.

³ *Ibid.*

First, create real, transformative experiences that will provide powerful visions of a different future. The EGG model provides a powerful, potential model to implement. Others, like it, need to be researched and experimented with. These projects should focus on increasing social trust, empowering people, and promoting citizenship. These projects, implemented by indigenous CSOs, will help integrate people into democratic institutions and values, and thus bring stability and order to the transition to it. These projects will provide real examples of possibility.

Second, develop a strategic communications program that will promote the strategic scale that can influence whole societies. This program would employ new social media to promote visions of possibility to mass audiences, based on real experiences and promoting strategic impact.

People in power will not oppose this initiative for two reasons: first, because it will operate organically from village to village, below the radar screen of the central government, as EGG's program does; and second, because this organic change will provide no operational moment that will galvanize opposition. The organic change stimulated by this approach is radically different from the mechanistic changes in traditional public policy reform. Traditional policy reform, acting by commands from the center, focuses all change at a single moment: everything happens on Tuesday—the regulation is passed, an election happens, a legislative vote or judicial decision comes down. Sudden, mechanical change causes uncertainty, and since “people prefer a known evil to an unknown good,” these moments create powerful opportunities for opposition.

When people come together and work for change, the organic change that results creates no strategic moment for opposition.

Increasing trust, focusing primarily on people (different families, different tribes), also needs to engage people with government officials. This will tend to open and encourage citizens' participation in the political system. Such increasing participation, moving through an increasingly open system, can provide role in promoting an organic path to full democracy.

ROLES OF CORPORATIONS, CSOs, AND GOVERNMENT

All institutions, both public and private, have important roles to play in promoting stable transitions to democracy in Middle East countries. In

the past, all energy in foreign and security policy focused on governments. One of the most important roles is to promote civil society initiatives that encourage social development.

The key is promoting social trust by bringing people together and institutionalizing communication across loyalties. Private institutions, both CSOs and corporations, need to do this in local venues, and powerful models, developed in different countries, show how to do it.⁴ By advertising their support for transformative programs and their employees' participation in them, these organizations will become “model citizens” in supporting strategic change.

Governments have the central role, working in concert with private profit and non-profit organizations. Strategic impact can be achieved by developing Country Strategic Plans that will create significant change in countries. An appropriate model is the “Country Strategic Plans” used by the Ford Foundation in its global operations when McGeorge Bundy was President.⁵ In these Plans, the idea was not just to “do good”, but to plan for doing good strategically.

THE CHALLENGE OF CAPACITY

The huge challenges we face, which, if anything, will grow in the future, raising questions about our capacity to address them. Technology will create perceptions of increasing economic, social, and political differences between societies. Technology will create increasingly destructive weapons for people enraged by those differences to strike back. Markets will accelerate the challenges—increasing economic differences, increasing perceptions of injustice, and accelerating the movement of weapons. The challenges explored here will only increase in the future.

Issues of capacity are both internal and external: how to promote a sense of “ownership” of these challenges so that every community members helps reform schools and every country helps solve international problems that do not respect national borders. That is the external problem. The internal problem is how to reform institutions—including governmental institutions—to promote

⁴ See A. Lawrence Chickering, Isobel Coleman, P. Edward Haley, and Emily Vargas-Baron, *Strategic Foreign Assistance: Civil Society in International Security*, 2006, especially chapter 4, which describes experiences in Northern Ireland, South Africa, and India. EGG's program, however, shows in great detail how to bring together a variety of different groups to promote common action.

⁵ *Ibid.*, especially chapter 6.

internal cooperation between departments organized separately by function.

Problems of capacity arise at every level, from grass roots villages to nations to the global community. Many factors discourage participation from important, potential actors at every level, and dysfunctional structures discourage cooperation within them. To solve these problems will require a) that everyone contributes, and b) that people work together to solve problems that cut across traditional, functional lines.

At every level, both international and local, mobilizing underutilized resources will hold a crucial key to solutions. This means increasing the countries contributing to solutions internationally and the stakeholders in civil society organizations, such as schools, contributing what they can to grass roots change. Educate Girls Globally (EGG) shows what is possible, bringing all major stakeholders together to help reform government schools. Promoting ownership is a powerful motivator in EGG's model reforming government schools.

EGG's model provides powerful lessons on how to increase participation. The key point is to rethink current approaches, reducing hierarchies ("experts" in local problem-solving and the U.S. globally) and recruiting help from all stakeholders (parents, teachers, and kids in school reform; all countries on global issues).

While major issues cut across functional lines, the USG is rigidly organized into separate departments and bureaus, which makes interagency cooperation difficult if not impossible. Unfortunately, such cooperation is essential for solutions to growing numbers of issues. The Department of Defense under COIN, for example, is supposed to promote development; yet this is the traditional province of the USAID, and DOD has little or no money for it. The rigid separation of their functions produces large transaction costs to accomplish things they need to do jointly. Similar examples exist in other problem areas involving multiple agencies. The Obama Administration has achieved important progress in solving this problem.

A second challenge is development of an international order that empowers small and medium-sized countries to increase their roles in addressing international problems. To create new "whole-world" approaches will require changes in global institutions and also changes in how the United States exercises its leadership. Just as with poor people in local communities everywhere, it will be important to create stakes for every country in the new order—in contrast to the present system, in

which many countries contribute very little because they have very little stake. A powerful example of this was President Obama's management of the U.S. role in Libya when Muammar Gaddafi turned the Libyan army on his own people. The decision to act was made in Paris. The first military weapons engaged were French. U.S. leadership was obvious for a few days, but the operation was quickly handed to NATO, headed by a Canadian general.

In applying these principles to the greater Middle East, it is important to understand a possible sequence of activities. The first task would be to do demonstration projects showing how to promote social trust. The project(s) need to show a model or models that can operate at strategic scales.

Building organically from the grass roots up will help build governmental capacity even in weak states. Demonstration projects will then provide material for a communications program, communicating possibilities to large audiences.

NEEDED: CIVIL SOCIETY RESEARCH

In reflecting on the challenges confronting us in the greater Middle East, it is important to acknowledge this is a very large subject, and little, unfortunately, is known about it. The first step, therefore, should be to establish an institution or institutions devoted to researching, experimenting with, and implementing civil society models that will address a large variety of different issues. Since civil society initiatives have become a crucial, potential instrument in the foreign policy "tool box", the incentive is very great for governments to invest significant resources in researching and developing models of intervention that gain support from host governments and from the societies they serve—and especially that allow proposed changes to be owned by them and not imposed by us.

Just as all countries invest significant resources to research and develop weapons systems because of their strategic importance, it is time we made a similar commitment to research civil society models, which are the new, more critical strategic instruments.

Without serious research and rigorous evaluation of all proposed civil society interventions, it will be difficult to make commitments on strategic scales to specific models. Empowerment models, working on and through government institutions, have natural advantages of cost, scale and sustainability. Unfortunately, little is known about how

they might be used in a variety of areas of social need.

Enormous amounts are spent on public health, for example, with powerful results. What public health benefits might we experience from getting people to wash their hands? (If added to EGG's basic empowerment model built on reforming schools, the additional cost from such a health message would approach zero.)

On clean water, huge efforts are made to solve this issue by digging wells. While this is important, EGG's project in 500 school produced 178 wells built by people, with no help from EGG. Beyond building wells, what about educating people about how to conserve clean water and perhaps how to purify contaminated water? Once again, existing empowerment models, already in evidence, can show the way, producing very much larger impacts that we are now achieving.

One can imagine significant impacts from empowering people in every area of social need. Private institutions, both CSOs and private corporations, can help enormously in this effort; and they need to help.

CONCLUSION

The challenge presented to dictators in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and other countries has created a powerful vision of change in the Arab and Muslim countries from Morocco to Pakistan. The vision is of transition from stagnant dictatorships to democratic systems and market economies, offering new opportunities for people, especially women and girls. Open opposition to autocratic regimes is a first step toward a better future. But promoting social development, grounded in local communities, is the real foundation for future democracies and market economies. This took centuries in the West, and there is no reason to expect it will not take great efforts in most countries in the Middle East.

With little idea what to do, Western policymakers often hide behind real engagement with these issues by passing everything to Israel, insisting it make bold concessions on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. No Israeli concessions can rescue these societies and international policymakers from the difficult challenges associated with social development in the region. Israeli peace concessions will contribute no more to solving these social and cultural challenges than the street demonstrations protesting dictatorships did, beginning in Tunisia.

The Arab and Muslim countries from Morocco to Pakistan have not as yet experienced the social development that is need to support democratic institutions and values. Help from outside can play an important role in this development. Most important is to increase social trust, while promoting empowerment and citizenship. For these are the crucial precursors to achieving strong, stable democracies.

I have concentrated here on promoting social development by using civil society initiatives. This development must start by promoting social trust. I have focused on civil society because relatively little is known about it. However, in conclusion, it is important to be aware that market economies and economic entrepreneurship can also play important roles in promoting this development. Creating institutions and rules on property rights, as well as sound economic policies, are also important for this purpose.

Both public and private institutions in the West can make important contributions to economic and social change. Unfortunately, little is now being done to promote these changes, without which the transition to stable democracies in these societies could last decades and even longer. A key impediment to social development is that the foreign policy community, which focuses all attention on governments, knows almost nothing about it. If this does not change, disorder and instability will continue to be the central, tragic realities of life for millions of people in the region.

The change that has begun presents a powerful opportunity to move to a better world. We face a significant opportunity to engage the world with a new strategy that should unite the U.S. political culture and also the political cultures in these societies for change. Deep conflict marred U.S. foreign policy for nearly a decade, beginning a couple of years after 9/11. The strategy presented here draws from the best of both conservative and liberal thought, and there is every sign that all sides of the U.S. political spectrum would support it.

It is difficult to sustain an effective foreign policy when a country is deeply divided about it. These proposals will bring people together. It is crucial, now, that Western governments and private organizations step up and start engaging more than just the weak governments in these countries. Peace in the region and in the world depends on it.

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A Tale of Two *Design* Efforts (and why they both failed in Afghanistan)

by Grant Martin

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TRYING TO BE A "GOOD NEIGHBOR" TO THE AFGHANS

One Friday morning not too long ago I sat facing a row of ISAF officers assigned to one of their many information offices. Maybe Strategic Communications (STRATCOM), I wondered. No, I thought, the new director of STRATCOM had changed their name, but to what I could not remember. Maybe they were from the Public Affairs office. On my side of the table a jumbled mix of staff officers from other sections of ISAF talked in low voices waiting for the lead planner to begin the meeting. A brand-new School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) graduate walked in and sat down confidently, his assistant clicking on the ubiquitous power point title slide that begins every gathering in the U.S. Armed Forces today from Washington, D.C. to Kabul, Afghanistan.

"Okay, everybody, we've got a directive from the Chief of Staff to come up with ideas on how to meet the commander's comment on being a better neighbor in Afghanistan," he began. "We will use a *Design*-like framework to first look at our environment, state the problem, and then come up with some solutions," he continued, describing SAMS's process of conducting "*Design*", the U.S. Army's doctrinal take on dealing with complexity.

We then spent the next hour wrestling with what the commander had really meant when he had reportedly said during a meeting that the Coalition needed to be 'better neighbors'. The Public Affairs-types started off dominating the discussion through their higher-ranking representative, a colonel, and her greater number of section representatives. She insisted that the commander had meant that we needed to stop bombing and doing

night raids. Although this was something President Karzai seemed to never stop saying, the position seemed a little outdated. Any more efforts along those lines, I thought, would have meant sending all our weapons home in boxes and canceling all air support.

Instead, the alternative (voiced by everyone else in the room) was that the statement had been made in the context of how not to be an "Ugly American". Bombarding ministers' offices with multiple and uncoordinated visits from different NATO commands, driving with our electronic jammers on where there was no associated threat, and wearing body armor at all times and driving in fast-moving convoys of up-armored vehicles were all examples given that had been brought up multiple times recently by various Afghan leaders as being problems.

In the end trying to avoid the "Ugly American" won out. The Public Affairs colonel and most of her staff did not return after the first day and the group ran smoothly through the SAMS-approved process of environment-problem-solution identification to arrive at several recommendations for the Chief of Staff: mandate that visitors to Afghan ministries from NATO coordinate through one appointed office and require all units to empower subordinates to use their own judgment as to the Force Protection measures needed in their daily activities. This meant that we could end the requirement that everyone wear body armor or even uniforms at all times (especially when the Afghans weren't), do away with the requirement for large convoys of up-armored vehicles in areas where the threat from IEDs were not high, and require that jammers only be used in areas that had an associated threat (jammers interfere with cell phone usage). We concluded by also recommending that

leaders stop micromanaging their soldiers' activities: that it shouldn't take the Chief of Staff of a three or four-star command to approve colonels (or others) going to dinner with their Afghan counterparts. Although many of these subjects seemed to only apply to Kabul, this was what many felt the commander's comments were aimed at: ministerial interaction and travel within relatively safe areas like Kabul.

The result of our work was a memorandum to the NATO commands signed by the Chief of Staff recommending all of our "solutions". What that meant was that it effectively changed nothing. Memos signed by the Chief of Staff were usually not even read much less acted upon. And, since they were only "recommendations", there were no repercussions for those leaders or units who ignored them, which everyone did.

I should have been frustrated and discouraged, but at that point in time I just smiled to myself. By then I had started my tenth month in Afghanistan and had recently gotten involved with a colonel and a lieutenant who were also very frustrated with the bureaucracy within the Coalition they had found in their attempts to carry out COMISAF's direct orders. Was it just the natural barriers to change that every established organization finds itself in? How could the Army's new "*Design*" efforts possibly overcome these obstacles, if they even could? Ten months prior I had been energized to give *Design* a try. The following anecdotes are my attempt to capture my experiences with respect to *Design* implementation in Afghanistan in 2010 and offer a few recommendations on how to change how we teach and practice *Design*.

I will attempt to do this by first describing the main two *Design* efforts I participated in while in Afghanistan: one at the ISAF Joint Command (IJC) and the other at the NATO Training Mission- Afghanistan (NTM-A). Along the way I'll offer some insights into why I think our efforts ultimately failed. In addition I hope to inform the wider Armed Forces community as well as those studying and teaching *Design* in our Armed Forces colleges about a few of the early efforts to apply *Design* in theater. Lastly, I would like to share some thoughts on possible ways to improve upon what we did as well as the concept itself. My intention is not to denigrate commands or commanders, and therefore I will be as general as possible in order to focus on the most important takeaways.

DESIGN EXPLAINED IN THREE PARAGRAPHS

I must admit up-front that I do not see myself as a *Design* "advocate". I do think some of the concepts have merit, but I am doubtful the military doctrine on *Design* takes advantage of the philosophy enough to truly give us an edge in complex environments. I am simply an advocate of "what works" and therefore I think the military should experiment with the concepts and philosophy that underpin *Design*, learn about acting creatively in complex environments, and adjust ourselves as we gain experience in order to take advantage of any beneficial concepts we identify. If, in the end, it would be too unsettling to our traditional procedures and identity to usher in the philosophical change *Design* requires, then maybe one day our political masters will realize that the military is not the tool to turn to when objectives are unclear, the environment is unfamiliar, and novel approaches are required. Most likely, however, the military will continue to be seen as the "least bad" tool to use in those situations and we will still have to "muddle through" towards either a politically acceptable conclusion or organizational frustration in those complex environments in which our politicians choose to involve us.

As for defining what *Design* is, I'm afraid there isn't much agreement within the military. According to an early take on *Design*, "*...Design is a commander-driven process of structured discourse to understand and modify strategic guidance in order to frame the problem and solution for the operational planners*".¹

According to Joint doctrine, design

*is the conception and construction of the framework that underpins a joint operation plan and its subsequent execution. ...design is the practical extension of the creative process. Together they synthesize the intuition and creativity of the commander with the analytical and logical process of design. The key to operational design essentially involves: (1) understanding the strategic guidance (determining the end state and objectives); (2) identifying the adversary's principal strengths and weaknesses, and; (3) developing an operational concept that will achieve strategic and operational objectives.*²

¹ Col. Mark Inch, "Systemic Operational Design: Case A Out-brief," Presentation to Exercise Unified Quest, Carlisle, PA, May 6, 2005.

² U.S. Army Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2006), IV-2.

According to the U.S. Army, design “is a methodology for applying critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize, and describe complex, ill-structured problems and develop approaches to solve them.”³

The U.S. Army’s *Student Text on Design*, version 2, describes *Design* by comparing it with COL Gerras’ description of rational decision-making model-based planning:

MDMP and any rational decision making model are typically rooted in several assumptions. First, the model assumes that the problem or goal is clearly definable. Second, the information that is required to make a decision is available or can be acquired. Third, there is an expectation that all options generated can be adequately considered, compared, and evaluated to identify an optimal solution. Fourth, the environment is presumed to be relatively stable and predictable, and finally, there is sufficient time for working through the decision making processes.

The Army’s Counterinsurgency Manual’s description of *Design*’s purpose: “to achieve a greater understanding, a proposed solution based on that understanding, and a means to learn and adapt.”⁴

The Student Text goes on to offer selected descriptions of *Design* from the literature:

the design approach acknowledges complexity rather than attempting to rationalize it, and implies a willingness to act in the face of uncertain relationships between causes and effects.”
“...Design education places a greater emphasis on learning by doing, supervised by coaches and mentors, rather than the memorization of technical knowledge or the copying of best practices.”
“...Leading design challenges the dominant model of power leadership, augmenting it with a more facilitative approach tailored to accommodating multiple perspectives in ill-structured problem situations.” “...action in design does not seek to bend reality to fit the idealized form of a design or plan. Instead, interaction always serves a dual purpose. ...action exploits favorable potentials within the operational environment... ...by stimulating the system, action generates information, which provides a learning opportunity to the de-

*signers. In design, action is taken both to transform the system and to learn.*⁵

In my mind *Design* is any attempt to reach greater effectiveness when acting in environments that are “truly” complex⁶. This complexity requires one to take novel approaches, which implies first a setting aside of assumptions followed by a willingness to interact with the environment prior to a plan (and, indeed, keep acting without much of a plan), an inclination to restructure one’s organization in light of the unknown environment (and keep restructuring as one learns what works), and the institution of a feedback mechanism and a structure (which can constantly change) that enables learning and adaptability. So, to me, *Design* isn’t about planning differently, it is about doing *everything* differently. Unfortunately, however, this is not the way the Army has introduced *Design* so far. In the two following examples of headquarters’ efforts to execute *Design* in Afghanistan, the Army doctrine was loosely, if not fully, followed. No headquarters that I am aware of used *Design* to change the way they were structured nor the way they approached planning and acting in order to be more effective in the complex environment that is Afghanistan.

DESIGN EFFORT #1: A NEW “HOPE”

As the Chief of Plans at one of the major commands in Afghanistan was to say once, “Hope isn’t a method, but it is the name of our plan.” We started the planning for the second iteration of the operational HQ’s portion of their Operations Order: *Omid II* (*Omid* is “Hope” in Dari) by launching into a formal command-supported *Design* effort prior to the start of the Military Decision Making Process, or “MDMP”- the Army’s formal planning process. This was a huge deal in my opinion, as for the first time that I knew a commander was devoting personnel and time to a *Design* effort while in a combat zone.

³ Student Text version 2.0, *Art of Design* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, 2010), 10-16.

⁶ There is great debate as to what really constitutes “complexity”. I hold to the idea that although complexity is, like beauty, in the eye of the beholder, in general things are more complex the longer they take, the more open-ended they are, and the more confused everyone is as to the objectives. Therefore, while many things can be termed “complex”, there is a sliding scale wherein some things are more complex than others. A 30-day operation to kill ten terrorists is not as complex as a 15-year effort to establish governance, spark development, and gain security.

³ United States, Field Manual 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Final Approved Draft) (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2010), 3-1.

⁴ United States, Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2006), 4-1.

The leadership of the operational headquarters (HQ) approved the planning staff to gather with representatives of other commands as well as other sections within the HQ in order to follow the doctrinal *Design* process: describe the environment, define the problem, and offer some solutions. The planners would then attempt to use their solutions and the rest of their *Design* products and conclusions to influence their Mission Analysis and the rest of the MDMP on their way to publishing their command's Operations Order. This order would take "the fight" out until the Summer of 2011 (a year from then), but the real focus seemed to be about 6-10 months out.

We met every day over at the operational headquarters. The days were filled with breakout group discussions as well as larger group meetings wherein everyone would present a synopsis of their days' work. At the very beginning we did what I thought was the right thing and began to question all of our underlying assumptions about Afghanistan. There was plenty of resistance to that, however, and I took it to be a combination of the perception of how far our leadership was willing to deviate from the current operational direction and some professional hubris: the same people who had been working under these assumptions found it difficult to have their worldviews questioned.

From the beginning, however, I felt the effort was doomed. Although the commander had authorized for the effort to commence, he never did participate himself. According to what I understood of the *Design* process- the commander *had* to be involved- deeply involved. It was, after all, *his* process. This was *for* him. All the commander got from the effort was a backbrief once the final product was completed. While this was perhaps better than no involvement- it was too little too late: at that point he was already divorced from the logic that had driven us to our solutions. As I was to conclude myself later on, a perhaps greater piece our solutions required was the commanders' mark on them in terms of any logic that was unknown to us: for instance politics that he was privy to, but had not shared with the entire command. These types of insights should play a HUGE role in one's "environment": we have to understand not only what is driving the local people and the "enemy", but we have to understand what is driving us as well. Only the commander can impart that kind of knowledge- whether tacitly or through other methods, but this was a piece I felt we were missing.

What was more frustrating was the seeming refusal to question underlying assumptions. In one of the breakout groups, the members came to the

conclusion that the people might not really matter, that we were perhaps too focused on "*the people*", as opposed to what had perhaps really traditionally influenced things in Afghanistan as well as what would perhaps better support a short-term timeline (we all assumed December 2010, July 2011, and the year 2014 were marks on the calendar not easily avoided in terms of having to show progress). If we were going to concentrate on something, in other words, it had to be a group that we could quickly show results with as well as something that wouldn't have us attempting to change "the system" too much (at SAMS many of us had studied "the propensity" of a system and how most "systems" tend to resist deviating off of the path they are already on). Our conclusion was not to concentrate on "*the people*" as much as concentrating on "*powerbrokers*". Whether it was a local mullah, a tribal elder, a police chief, a district governor, a warlord, or a drug dealer- we reasoned that we would get more "bang for our buck" if we concentrated on those already in positions of influence within their communities as opposed to trying to force a different system on them.

Opposing this stance was the assumption that the people just needed "good governance", and they would stop supporting insurgent groups that wanted to de-stabilize the government of Afghanistan (and maybe even openly fight the insurgents) if we helped the government provide this governance. This was one of the assumptions that we frequently stated as if it was a fact and the planners in our group were not ready to question that position. Between coming to the conclusion at the breakout group level on powerbrokers and presenting our findings to the entire group, somehow the group's conclusion turned back into "*must concentrate on the people*" and "*must provide them with security*".

The second piece had been troublesome in the breakout group's mind because our position of what "security" meant was that NATO would provide that security and eventually hand it over to Afghan security forces. As most of the breakout group on security noted, what many locales defined as "security" probably had little to do with Afghan security forces and even less to do with NATO forces. But, it would seem the logic that motivates freedom-loving Americans and Western Europeans was to be applied to most Afghans by our planning group. And that logic said they just wanted to be "free".

In the end, the entire *Design* group came to the conclusion that the environment that existed in Afghanistan was best described as "The Valley".

"The Valley" was our metaphor and that metaphor was characterized by cut-off areas that were very different than other areas or "valleys", that had to have their own ways and means applied (to get to the same ends, mind you) in order to bring about "progress" ("freedom!", if you follow Hollywood's view of universal human needs). This concept of "The Valley" was curiously close to the metaphor that the leaders of the *Design* effort had come up with while students at SAMS to describe Afghanistan, except back in the rarefied atmosphere of Fort Leavenworth they had used the term "The Village." A similar concept, but a little more nuanced.

That we were unwilling to address the major assumptions making up our logic underlying the entire campaign and the fact that our description of the environment was eerily similar to that which the group leaders had come up with while at SAMS six months earlier made me think we had failed. But, what solidified that thought in my mind was when Operation *Omid II* came out later on and there were really no major changes to what we were already doing with Operation *Omid I*. I concluded that because the commander had not been involved, our efforts were really never meant to affect anything (or were that way because of a misunderstanding of *Design* and our failure to articulate it well to the command). In addition, because we were guided by our previous assumptions, we ended up just concluding that the way the commander already thought about Afghanistan and how to effect change in Afghanistan must be right. As far as I saw we never questioned whether anything we were doing was wrong, whether our assumptions were wrong and how to find out whether they were or not, or what kinds of pressures from our own political masters were affecting our environment in ways most people were not privy to. In short, although this would have been a perfect opportunity to "*reframe*" (change direction based on invalid assumptions/logic), we decided to pretty much continue with the status quo in terms of our operational focus.

DESIGN EFFORT #2: THE "PIG"

Throughout 2010 I found myself a part of some *Design* efforts in my own command, most notably during our work on the command's operations order and subsequent subordinate orders and supporting annexes. Those *Design* efforts were usually small and did not affect much, but they did serve to challenge assumptions and offer a different perspective on the situation that we faced. One of the greatest challenges the entire planning effort faced,

not to mention the *Design* efforts, was to secure participation from other commands, agencies, Afghan entities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Since my formal *Design* education had drilled into me the necessity for looking at problems and the environment from as many perspectives as possible, it was frustrating to be constantly surrounded by not only American Army officers, but mainly American Army officers assigned to the same HQ.

Other HQs had some participation in our operations order planning, but their input was less than desired. The Operational HQ actually contributed a very capable planner who, during the planning effort, temporarily re-located himself so that he could be closer to the group and give his full attention and participation. From the Afghans we managed to bring an Army colonel over who was responsible for the Ministry of Defense's Counterdrug effort. And to be fair, there were representatives from within our HQ's different sections who were not American nor U.S. Army: an Australian led the planning effort, the British were represented very well, a Dutch officer participated as did a Canadian, a Turk, two U.S. Air Force officers, and a U.S. Navy officer. But there was no-one from the U.S. Department of State or any other embassy, no representative from the Afghan Ministry of Interior or representing the Afghan police, no-one from any NGOs, no European Police (EUPOL) representation, and no Special Operations Task Force personnel. That there was almost no Afghan participation in our planning efforts was- I was to find- something of the rule throughout the Coalition.

After our initial planning effort was completed, several of us felt that a few key HQ planners from the operations order process were really the most informed about the command in terms of a holistic perspective. We decided to form a *Design* group in order to first learn some *Design* fundamentals and then to offer the group up to the command in order to tackle some complex subjects.

At first the group was more of a "dinner-group" than a *Design* group. We met for about an hour two or three times a week late in the afternoon and then retired to the dining facility for dinner. We passed around papers on *Design*- works by BG (ret) Huba Wass De Czege, Dr. Jacob Kipp, and Dr. Christopher Paparone, talked about and heard presentations on critical and systems thinking, emergence, complexity theory, and different philosophies like post-positivism and the like. Our membership was made up of a Dutch Army officer from the plans section, British Army and Navy of-

officers from the Force Management, Police and Army Advisory Sections, a U.S. Air Force officer from the Intelligence section, an Australian officer from the plans section, and U.S. Army officers from the plans, Force Management, and the Strategic Action Group sections.

After much deliberation we decided to tackle as our first topic the Afghan National Police. At that point it was not a secret that the command was growing more and more concerned with the police and that the police were not at the same level of capability as the army was. We also all agreed that the police were a complex subject: “fixing” them- or at least making them better- was not going to be even a complicated task: many of us were unsure it was even possible, what it would take, or how to organize ourselves to make it happen. We held a few meetings gathering and sharing information about the police, receiving briefings about them from subject matter experts (SMEs), and even hosting Afghan police for dinner and conversation. We toured Afghan police training areas and engaged in conversation with trainees- especially those who had already worked as police prior to their training. We also attended meetings at the Ministry of Interior.

Because we were given a heads-up that *Design* was not exactly a welcome concept by all, we struggled with what to call ourselves. One staffer wanted to call us an Initiatives Group, as he thought the Command's initiatives group's time was taken up with too much of the Action Group's work. We had called ourselves the *Design* Group for a while, but figured that would not work for a formal name if *Design* did not inspire buy-in from everyone. Our sponsor, the plans chief called us the "Planning Initiatives Group", or, as he liked to say: “the PIG”.

THE AFGHAN NATIONAL CIVIL ORDER POLICE (ANCOP)

We continued studying the ANP for a few more weeks until we received our first tasking from the command: look at the civil order police. The Afghan National Civil Order Police, or “ANCOP”, was a three to five-thousand strong force (no-one really knew how many there were) of police officers dedicated to handling civil disturbance levels that regular police could not handle. They were modeled loosely after the para-military police forces in Europe and, indeed, were trained by, among others, French gendarmes, Italian Carabinieri, and the Spanish Guardia Civil. The ANCOP were literate (which meant the greatest number of them were

Tajiks), trained longer, and were better-equipped than other police.

We set about researching as much as we could about the ANCOP, to include visiting the headquarters, receiving briefings from SMEs, visiting training areas, and talking with those who advised the ANCOP. We also found out as much as we could about our command's sudden interest in ANCOP and the issues the operational HQ had with ANCOP in the field. We concluded with a description of the ANCOP environment: an organization trained longer and equipped better, but partnered the same as other police (not very much); heavily used in combat, but not as protected or capable as the army; suffering from lack of: leadership, equipment accountability, partnering, and operational down-time; made up of a heavy *Tajik* (Northern) population while most of the fighting and assignments were in the *Pashtun* South; and a disagreement between multiple parties on how (and how much) to utilize them. The problem as we saw it was: how to show progress in a short amount of time (the command had been given a short amount of time) while at the same time keeping these short-term efforts from upsetting longer-term efforts (building capability that would enable self-sustainment) AND while attempting to avoid affecting the Coalition's battle plans.

The solutions as we saw them were to 1) institute a cycle wherein they would train, deploy, and then rest; 2) partner them with coalition forces; and 3) pay them more. The first and third solutions would hopefully stem the tide of attrition, which were very high: a goal we thought we could reach in less than a year. The second solution would work on assisting in leadership development, ensure a feedback loop that would allow us to adjust to reality, assist in systems development, and ensure periodic training (something they were sorely lacking in).

We presented these concepts to the command during a twenty minute discussion with various leaders. We did this as part of a framework that showed the police as an overall effort with the ANCOP being part of a short-term fix, but addressing the greater issues of ISAF's structure and procedures, the Afghan judicial system (or lack thereof), and how to build both quality and a connection to the people.

The command leadership thanked us and commented that they had heard many of our conclusions already, and they were pleased we had confirmed them. We recommended and got approval

for taking on the entire police force (ANP) as our next topic.

The results of the ANCOP *Design* effort were hard to measure. The plans chief felt that our ideas, since we were sharing them with various sections and planning efforts, were bubbling up to the chain of command prior to our formal discussion, so he thought we were useful even if the command had already heard our ideas. In addition, we all felt that the command was not getting the same message about long-term concerns as they were from us. The eventual ANCOP effort did not go as planned, however, because we underestimated the importance that the operational command attached to ANCOP participation in current operations. Our command argued for less ANCOP in operations at any given time to fix attrition, yet the operational command said they could fix the attrition problem with partnering. Coalition units, however, were already overloaded with Afghan units they were responsible for partnering with, and ANCOP stayed mostly un-partnered.

Because we did not include outside-command representation in our *Design* group, did not seek out a clearer operational position with respect to ANCOP, did not feel-out other HQs for their positions, and did not understand the issues with police partnering, I submit that we really did not have a very good understanding of the environment with respect to ANCOP. In addition, because we had little actual direct contact with ANCOP, I would submit we couldn't learn and adjust on the fly—something I hold to be very important to affect preferred change in a complex environment. Looking back, having some kind of input from the advisory and partnering experts at the operational HQs and some input from a unit in the field that was currently or about to partner with an ANCOP force would have been much better. In other words, some kind of interaction with the actual forces on the ground and those at the closest level to us would have been preferable. But, the operational command was not subordinate to us, therefore going direct to other units, trying to force participation from other HQs, or contacting actual units assigned to other HQs would have been problematic.

In the end, even before the time limit was up to show progress a new focus had crept up and the command had for the most part shifted focus away from ANCOP.

THE AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE (ANP)

After about a two week break the group reconvened and we re-tackled the ANP. This time we attempted a more doctrinal approach to using *Design*. We took what we had learned over the ANCOP study, gathered more information, and then attempted to describe the environment for the ANP. Our result, our *environmental frame*⁷, if you will, was one that described the “average” policeman. This hypothetical person we saw as being molded by several experiences along the way to becoming a policeman: his up-bringing (culture, religion, tribe, schooling, family, etc.), a recruiting “system” that molded his first perceptions of the ANP and the government, a training system that gave him a foundation, and finally the system at his place of work: whatever atmosphere existed at the police station and the surrounding locale that forced him into certain patterns of behavior.

We then spent a few weeks tackling “the problem” of the ANP. We centered in very quickly on the issue that once a policeman found himself out in the countryside and having to deal with reality—“the system” he found himself in was not very conducive to doing what he had learned in training nor that which would endear him to the people. Our reasoning was that he had no tools or incentives to work within either the government's judicial system (if there even was one) or the system that was de facto in place. We further reasoned that the judicial system within Afghanistan was growing much slower than the police forces, so that the amount of prisons, prosecutors, and judges were woefully lacking. We initially concluded that there needed to be a two-pronged approach: train police to work within the de facto systems they may find themselves in (district-specific training) and slow the police force growth to match the judicial system's growth.

We were not allowed to go further into the ANP. As we started to get closer to some conclusions we were asked to take on another topic: the command's metrics and assessments tools.

The group reluctantly shelved the ANP effort a second time. We had really thought the ANP was a complex issue and one that needed serious effort in the right places to help make progress. Most of us, if not all of us, felt the ANP was going in the wrong

⁷ The doctrinal method of *Design* was a 3-step process: describe the environment, define a problem, and come up with solutions.

direction- or at least our development of them at the time. We felt that quantity was being prioritized over quality, that we weren't preparing them for transition (we were doing it all ourselves or using systems that only made sense for us), and that we weren't helping them to be effective in the reality that they would face once they found themselves working out in a police station.

On a final note, some of our ideas influenced the planning efforts for the police under the other efforts of the command at the time: namely the work being done on the police annex to our command's operations order. The major concept that was borrowed: synchronizing the development of the police with both the development of the government's judicial system as well as with the de facto systems in place in certain areas, ended up being ignored. The explanation was that we couldn't even accomplish our own mission- training enough police- at that point. We were not going to take on more until we could graduate enough numbers first. Regardless of the wisdom of the explanation, the fact that the planners and our *Design* team were ignorant as to the priorities of the command and why they were priorities was telling. *Design* efforts without an understanding of "self" were doomed from the start from my perspective.

METRICS AND ASSESSMENTS

After receiving our new subject, we received a more detailed email from the command. The email asked us to be a "red-team" and look at the command's assessment methodology and identify problem metrics and metrics that we might be missing.

The topic of metrics was not unknown to our group. Data went up daily to all kinds of military and political entities. Most of our metrics dealt with numbers: total numbers of soldiers and police in the field. There were other metrics that mattered, such as attrition, retention, casualties, literacy, females in the security forces, and the like, but no-one doubted that overall strength numbers were the most important.

Our HQ's problem, of course, was that many of the metrics that we tracked were outside of our control. Attrition was the easiest example: we were very concerned with attrition numbers because, obviously, it affected the overall end-strength numbers of the ANSF. Since we weren't reporting to Congress numbers of ANSF trained as much as how many total ANSF existed, we had a stake in everything that went into producing endstrength

numbers. This put us at odds many times with the operational construct, which was to prioritize operations and address attrition with partnering. During our *Design* group's ANCOP study we discovered that what constituted "partnering" was something that was largely left up to the Coalition unit in the subject Afghan unit's area of operations. Many coalition units made the argument that they were already partnered with several units and couldn't partner with any more. Others argued they were too busy conducting operations. Others didn't honestly know how to partner with police- which was the new requirement our operational HQs were pushing down.

Our group took all of these issues in during a briefing from the assessment folks. We discovered quite quickly that our metrics were measuring short-term progress and not a lot of long-term progress that would enable "transition". In fact, we could not find many metrics at all that gave us a feel for how the Afghans were coming along in terms of taking on more and more responsibility.

We concluded that our metrics were mainly measures of performance and not measures of effectiveness. We further recommended that transition metrics be developed and made the priority of the command. Lastly, we recommended that we team up with the operational HQs and develop metrics and an assessment plan that would test the Afghan's propensity to run things themselves as well as inform us if we were heading down the wrong path- basically telling us if our assumptions were wrong.

Our conclusion on this effort was that our recommendations did not make it to many audiences within the command, but some of our group assumed that our conclusions were not what the command even wanted to hear. First, quantitative assessments were easier to understand for outside audiences. Second, the current metrics had a track record and both the U.S. Congress was used to them and the Operational Research folks were tied to them. The thought process was that any new metrics would take a long time to tell us anything. What they advocated was using the old metrics- which they said had only been around a few years anyway, in order to establish a baseline and start making some conclusions based on the trends that we were only now beginning to be able to spot. Thirdly, there was no political appetite for setbacks- and prioritizing Afghan progress in terms of them taking over operations entailed risk of short-term negative metrics. Lastly, in terms of teaming

with the operational HQs, it was thought that they had a very different view than we did on what the priorities needed to be in Afghanistan. Because of those opinions, many in our group thought that our ideas had not met a friendly reception, if they had gotten one at all.

This experience reiterated the requirement for the commander to own the *Design* efforts in his command. That concept was in the doctrine and the literature making up the foundation of *Design* also made that argument. Without buy-in from the top, without the commander leading the effort and giving input all along the way, and without the trust and openness with the staff conducting the *Design* effort, the recommendations were mostly ignorant, flying without radar, making assumptions on top of assumptions. The *Design* Group at this time went into a frustrating and cynical period of time. We were frustrated that we were unable to understand the Coalition's actions vice our words in Afghanistan and that we were unable to get any traction at the higher levels on re-looking our underlying assumptions.

OUR HQ'S TASK ORGANIZATION

A few of the *Design* group wanted to keep meeting, if only to continue the deep discussions we had been having about our efforts in Afghanistan. They remarked that the *Design* group was the one place they could hear and tell the truth about their experiences, vent without seeming to be defeatist, and not be afraid of sounding like we were against the Coalition's efforts or what was "politically correct". All of us thought we were doing important work: we thought we were coming up with solutions and ideas that would make our efforts in Afghanistan more meaningful and improve the security of our nations in the long run. We decided to meet and decide on a new direction.

At this time we also did some recruiting outside of our command. We managed to attract three U.S. State Department personnel. We also invited a few contractors from our command to the meetings. Because there was a high level of turnover since the metrics effort, we did some more recruiting and filled out our ranks. We also added the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Liaison Officer of the command to our group.

We decided that our next topic would be either 'what the Coalition was really doing in Afghanistan- based on our actions and not our rhetoric', or 'what we needed to do in order to avoid disaster in Afghanistan'. We voted and chose the latter topic.

After a few meetings we had started to talk about the need to prioritize transition efforts, when we got a request from the Planning section: could we apply *Design* to the topic of our command's Task Organization (a unit's structure and how it is organized). The planning section had been involved in an effort to re-organize our HQ and they wanted an outside check on their efforts. We voted and the group unanimously decided to go with the new subject.

We began by turning to the "Wedemeyer" example. Wedemeyer was a staff officer in World War II who had been asked to look into how much equipment it would take to defeat the Axis prior to the war starting. In order to do that, Wedemeyer had to make some very broad assumptions about the war effort. In doing so, he basically, along with the help of many others, drew up the war plans for the U.S. We attempted to do the same.

We decided we had to figure out what we had already been trying to figure out after all: what were we doing in Afghanistan and what we needed to do to avoid disaster. Once we figured that out, we reasoned, then we could decide what our HQs needed to do- and then what we needed to look like in terms of structure.

After much debate we concluded that at this point in time the Coalition was not involved in Afghanistan for a simplistic reason. What we were doing in Afghanistan at that point had more to do with accidental emergence and mission creep (and a lack of a strategy to begin with, outside of "overthrow the Taliban") than anything prescriptive. We had gone in, overthrown the Taliban, and were looking for Osama Bin Laden when our military was diverted to Iraq. Afghanistan just kind of stayed on our plates as a default action.

Our narrative continued: we had to leave Afghanistan, but it couldn't fall back into a Civil War right away and Al Qaeda couldn't be offered a safe haven. To that end, the Taliban could not take over the whole country or even the major cities. So, we had to build up a system that we could support with money and advisers, and to do that we had to build up forces as fast as possible in order to show "progress" to the political masters back home: progress that was easily understood by the people and hard to poke holes in by the media. That way the politicians could relatively easily continue to support the effort until the ANSF was at sufficient numbers for the Coalition to draw down to a mostly advisory role. We also, however, had to get the ANSF to a point of self-sufficiency as soon as possible, in order for us to transition.

We then concluded that we needed to transition as soon as possible- that if we could articulate to the media and politicians the need to accept some downturn in our metrics in the short-term in order to enable transition, that that would be a better objective than simply growing the ANSF. We had to have an ANSF capable of leading themselves as soon as possible.

To that end, we further concluded that we needed to move the majority of our operations and work over to the ministries and have the ministries start taking on our work. All sections would start to be measured on how much work the Afghans were willing to do in their lane and how little the Coalition was having to do over time. Everyone would be expected to be working their way out of a job and the best evaluations would be for those who were able to transition sooner than expected, assuming a minimum level of competence on the Afghan's part.

In addition, we concluded that all of the systems we had in place had to be re-looked at in terms of how the Afghans viewed the systems and whether they could sustain them with a minimum level of support from us, with the long-term goal of no support from us (on that particular system).

Our Task Organization was thus affected greatly. We decided to recommend that our command empower the lower levels out in the regions and task them with managing and transitioning the Afghan forces themselves, instead of trying to run everything from Kabul. Our concept put all of the training centers and schools under the regional subordinates, put a lot of our general officer slots out there instead of in Kabul, and tasked those still in Kabul mainly with just advising in the ministries. The real work would be transferred out to the regional teams.

Interestingly enough, the same course of action, albeit with a few minor differences, was the conclusion of the planning team led by the planning section. And, interestingly enough, the recommendations were rejected outright. The feedback we got was that the command did not see a reason to change that much. Of course, politics and bureaucratic inertia got in the way during this entire effort. The *Design* team never briefed anyone outside of the lead planner. The lead planner didn't get to brief anyone outside of a principal staff member, instead the principal staff member briefed the command and was easily swayed to recommend against change. At the end of the day, our HQs saw no reason to change after a year of new direction. That we saw a reason to change

after the recent shift in focus to Afghanistan should not have surprised anyone, but the articulation effort of the need to change was not sufficient.

The conclusions the *Design* team took from the Task Organization effort were that, again, a lack of communication with the commander on assumptions and political realities- on what was really driving our train- made our efforts almost impossible. We also came to the conclusion that even though what we faced was most likely a complex subject- our own command and political structure and pressures made it even more complex, as some would say: "wickedly complex". We took something very complex to begin with and overlaid our own complexity on top of it. That this was frustrating to many was an understatement, but it hit the *Design* team especially hard. We felt like we didn't really understand our efforts in Afghanistan, unless they were explained through a very cynical prism. And we were not sure we were going in the right direction.

CONCLUSIONS

I wanted to write this narrative, not to criticize specific commanders or commands in terms of their efforts, decisions or priorities. This narrative gives as honest a description of what some staffers thought about and concluded during several *Design* efforts. Some of it can be used to attack the strategy or the operations of the commands, and some of that might be warranted. But the real value, in my opinion, would be to take this as some feedback on a few *Design* efforts that were attempted in theater.

The first lesson, and the most important one, in my opinion, is that the leader has to be involved- and involved in a personal way. It has to be his *Design* effort. He has to lead it and give it support and direction. Only the commander can clue his staff in to the missing pieces of the politics, the priorities and the hidden logic behind the command's actions and efforts. Only the commander can make conclusions turn into action.

The second lesson that we took away is that we can't do *Design*- a full *Design* effort- from a headquarters. We were truly banging around in the dark. Even if we had understood what the commander knew, we would not have been able to come up with even a 50% solution. Even though we had access to folks who had worked outside of Kabul, even though we took trips ourselves and interacted with Afghans on a daily basis, even though we brought in Afghans themselves to talk to

us, at the end of the day none of us were involved with doing anything that we were dreaming up. We were making just as many assumptions as the command was. In order to do a real *Design* effort we would have had to have brought in some practitioners and asked them for input (as well as become practitioners to some extent ourselves- and put practitioners on our *Design* team), then asked them to go out and try a few of our ideas, shaped some kind of feedback mechanism, and then re-shaped our views and future activities based on those mechanisms. And we would have had to be constantly adapting both our own structure as well as recommending changes to the command's structure and the structure of the teams we were sending out. In other words, a "full" *Design* effort would have meant *action*- not just "planning".

The third lesson was that as hard as it was- somehow the *Design* group had to be able to question underlying assumptions and that questioning had to be able to permeate out to the rest of the command. Underlying assumptions like questioning the motivations of those you are working with, why they are doing what they are doing, and why they aren't doing what you want them to. Assumptions like why we are there and what we are driving at. Assumptions like what "success" will look like, what our people will support, and what our politicians will accept. And assumptions about what drives people or groups of people to do what they do. We can't accept doctrine or popular psychology as dogma. We can't be attracted to the conventional wisdom of the day. We have to constantly question "why" we think something is the way it is.

The fourth lesson is that- as hard as it is- the *Design* group has to be as diverse as possible. If I could do things over again we would have had at least one Afghan, one non-command member, one contractor, one non ISAF member, and one non-military Coalition member. Amazingly, even in the Green Zone where all of these entities could walk to visit each other, getting all of these folks together more than once a week was very difficult due to schedules and security policies. But, I think it would have been worth the pain and worth going slower.

The fifth lesson is that the right people have to make up the *Design* group. They must be dedicated to come to the meetings. They have to be dedicated to learn and be open to new ideas. They can't be "know-it-alls" or those who stifle debate. They have to be intellectually curious. And they have to be trustworthy.

The sixth lesson is that the facilitator of the group has to be more comfortable managing the meeting than inserting his or her own opinions. I found my own role when I was the facilitator as one of asking questions, taking the devil's advocate position, keeping the group from going down ratholes for too long or jumping too far ahead. I had to quickly put a stop to those wishing to shut-down debate very quickly and I had to find ways to sooth egos without appearing to defend or protect people or ideas. I also thought that it was important for the facilitator- or someone in the group- to have some sort of influence within the command that would allow the group's ideas to see the light of day. Although many of our ideas did get to see the light of day, we either did not articulate them well enough or they lacked merit, and thus we perceived a steady loss of what little influence we did have. Looking back, we should have attempted to cultivate other sources of influence for the group outside of the inner command group.

In terms of how *Design* doctrine can be improved, I think the doctrine has to give practical direction for how staffs and commanders can incorporate it into their processes. Even in the operational command example, where the commander was happy to give personnel and time for a *Design* effort, it was unclear to many people how that effort's conclusions were supposed to be incorporated into operations. Even though the commander was reportedly excited about hearing the *Design* effort's conclusions, we missed the boat on incorporating the conclusions into actual efforts on the ground. Of course, one could argue that not having the buy-in or participation of the Regional Commands was partly responsible for that, and I would agree, but I also think the doctrine and instruction on how to incorporate *Design* conclusions into operations is weak and should be re-looked.

In terms of how *Design* practice can be improved, I think the second lesson above says it all: we have to turn *Design* into action more than just planning or an addendum to planning. *Design* should be more about how to act in a complex environment than plan in one, if there is a planning effort at all. If our HQs really wanted a *Design* effort put towards ANCOF, we could have set up six separate teams to partner with six different ANCOF *kandaks*⁸- each given the mission to figure out how to cut ANCOF attrition while still working within the Coalition's operational constraints. Each team could have been encouraged to try different things with the *kandak* in order to address attrition and operational effectiveness. At the end

⁸ Afghan unit most closely related to a battalion-size force.

of three months, each team could send a representative to a broader *Design* group that would cull the various experiences, frame a narrative around ANCOF attrition and ANCOF in general (as well as specific ANCOF *kandaks*), make some adjustments- to include structure of the teams- and deploy more teams to more *kandaks* with a little more means to address this complex subject.

Lastly, in terms of how *Design* preparation and training could be improved, I would recommend SAMS seminars and planners in units spend their prep time attempting to interact and learn from a localized complex environment. This could be a SAMS seminar studying and attempting to affect poverty in Leavenworth, Kansas. It could be a conventional division's planners attempting to address obesity in military families of the division. The key isn't to study a complex environment half a world away, but to interact and learn from a complex environment period- and to interact and attempt to affect it for the better means it has to be local. As teams get better at interacting in complex environments they should be able to do better in them- no matter the context. They will be more comfortable with the concept- and that will mean more than being more knowledgeable about a specific area like Afghanistan that has already changed by the time they read the first word in whatever literature they have.

Hopefully these anecdotes add to the corporate history of *Design* and give some of the theorists

better insight into the issues with incorporating *Design* today into the contemporary military and the practitioners into the issues with incorporating *Design* into operations. I do believe that *Design* efforts- even limited to our doctrine- could help us in complex environments. I further believe that *Design* efforts- following the collective literature and not just our, at-this-point-immature doctrinal concepts can make us much more effective in complex situations. But, I also believe that if we turn to the entire body of literature that underpins *Design* theory as well as study other disciplines' attempts to address complexity that the end result would be very different than anything we can imagine today. It could affect the way we look at conflict, peace, and military operations, and how we structure, educate, train, and deploy ourselves- and even how we define ourselves as members of the armed services.

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A Sino-Persian Grab for the Indian Ocean?

by Jamsheed K. Choksy

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China and Iran are constructing a series of strategically placed harbors – their strings of salt water pearls – partially for independent strategic reasons but equally to ensure maritime commerce in oil, gas, other licit resources, and illicit technologies between both nations can continue uninterrupted.¹

Those ports provide facilities for the two countries' warships as well, extending their military power into a region hitherto dominated by the U.S., Britain, and India. To ensure the Indian Ocean's vital transportation lanes continue remaining accessible to all nations and transfer of prohibited items does not occur, the U.S and Britain need to remain actively engaged in building political, social, and economic relations with several nations in South Asia. Diminishment in access to Indian Ocean ports will have serious long-term consequences for American and British military and commercial operations in a troubled yet important region of the world.

¹ "Energy Futures in Asia," Booz Allen Hamilton (January 18, 2004), http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=booz_allen_hamilton. See also Robert D. Kaplan, "Center Stage for the 21st Century: Power Plays in the Indian Ocean," *Foreign Affairs* (March-April 2009), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64832/robert-d-kaplan/center-stage-for-the-21st-century>; Harsh V. Pant, "Greta Game in the Indian Ocean," *Japan Times* (June 14, 2011), <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/eo20110614a2.html>; and "China Builds up Strategic Sea Lanes," *Washington Times* (January 17, 2005),

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2005/jan/17/20050117-115550-1929r/?page=all#pagebreak>.

CHINA AND IRAN AS PARTNERS

While it is not possible to access their diplomatic records, a series of developments suggest the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran are finding common cause in economic and military expansions focused on the Indian Ocean. Jointly and separately, they are establishing berths which will challenge American, British, and Indian activities in the maritime crossroads of Asia. These harbors represent "a string of pearls" – a potent metaphor across Asia – safely connecting the sea lanes between China and Iran.² Iran's naval fleet is the junior partner compared with China's blue-water juggernaut, but both nations stand to benefit from their Indian Ocean cooperation. They are getting bolder too, with submarines and battle-ships venturing further along important waterways.³

The real value of Indian Ocean ports for China and Iran lies in ensuring their maritime interaction remains unfettered.⁴ Iran has become the largest foreign supplier of crude oil and liquefied natural gas for China's rapidly growing industries. China has already invested heavily in a range of Iranian energy and mineral extraction projects. During recent meetings in Beijing of the Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and the Chinese and Iranian foreign ministers both countries agreed to establish an oil and gas committee to extend these economic partnerships. Indian Ocean ports com-

plement Persian Gulf ones at Abadan and Bandar Abbas by permitting vessels to load and unload cargo – worth U.S. \$30 billion in 2010 and set to grow to U.S. \$50 billion by 2015 – traded between Iran and China. Iranian defense sources report that China is seeking additional cooperation between the two nations' navies too.⁵

Among the items reaching Tehran via this maritime trade are nuclear and missile technologies, believed to originate in North Korea and pass through Chinese middlemen, despite U.N. sanctions. But China's role may not be merely that of a conduit. Construction of the Iranian nuclear facility outside Qom, revealed to the world by the U.S. in 2009, is reported to have involved both North Korean and Chinese scientists. By sharing licit and illicit technologies directly and indirectly, opening its markets readily to items made in Iran, and undermining effective international sanctions, Beijing is ensuring Tehran remains a dedicated supplier of energy resources.⁶

PAKISTAN'S CONNECTION

In the prevailing geopolitical context Islamabad's request that Beijing upgrade the Port of Gwadar, which the latter nation had built from 2002-2007 at a cost of U.S. \$200 million, into a naval base has troubled Western politicians and policy analysts alike. One of Beijing's state-owned corporations also has the option of taking over administration of Gwadar harbor once the current Singapore Ports Authority's lease concludes or is terminated. Relations between the U.S. and Pakistan are at a nadir due to constant drone strikes and the recent elimination of Osama bin Laden without local involvement. Islamabad's request to China is seen, in this context, by many Pakistanis

² Robert D. Kaplan, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (New York: Random House, 2010), pp. 7, 9, 12, 71, 79, 94, 280, 291, and "China's Port in Pakistan?" *Foreign Policy* (May 27, 2011), http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/05/27/chinas_port_in_pakistan?page=full; Christopher J. Pehrson, "String of Pearls: Meeting the Challenge of China's Rising Power across the Asian Littoral," *Strategic Studies Institute* (July 2006), <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB721.pdf>; and Christina Y. Lin, "Militarisation of China's Energy Security Policy – Defense Cooperation and WMD Proliferation Along its String of Pearls in the Indian Ocean," *Institut für Strategie- Politik- Sicherheits- und Wirtschaftsberatung White Paper* (Berlin: ISPSW, 2008), <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=56390>.

³ "Iran Navy," *Iranian Defense* (June 3, 2011), <http://www.iraniandefence.com/iran-navy/>; Abhijit Singh, "Iran Seizes Opportune Moment to Project Naval Power," *World Politics Review* (June 14, 2011), <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/9153/iran-seizes-opportune-moment-to-project-naval-power>; and Philip Walker, "Beijing's Blue-Water Navy," *Foreign Policy* (June 3, 2011), http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/06/03/Beijings_blue_water_navy.

⁴ Robin Wright, "Deepening China-Iran Ties Weaken Bid to Isolate Iran," *Washington Post* (November 18, 2007), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/17/AR2007111701680.html>.

⁵ "Iran is a Reliable Energy Provider for China: Chinese FM," *Tehran Times* (May 25, 2011), http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=241339; and "China Wants More Cooperation with Iran," *Iranian Defense* (February 15, 2011), <http://www.iraniandefence.com/china-cooperation-iran-20110215/>.

⁶ "China's Nuclear Exports and Assistance to Iran," *Nuclear Threat Initiative* (September 23, 2003), <http://www.nti.org/db/china/niranpos.htm>; Catherine Philip, Francis Elliot, and Giles Whittell, "How Secrecy over Iran's Qom Nuclear Facility was Finally Blown Away," *Financial Times* (September 26, 2009), http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article6850325.ece; and "UN: North Korea, Iran Share Ballistic Missile Technology," *Voice of America* (May 15, 2011), <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/middle-east/iran/UN-North-Korea-Iran-Share-Ballistic-Missile-Technology---121856789.html>.

as a much-needed show of defiance toward Washington's imperiousness.⁷

That display of independence is but one public act in a far less transparent growth of relations with China by a supposed U.S. ally which has netted billions of dollars in American military and civilian aid. Indeed, until Beijing confirmed its technicians were held hostage by Taliban militants during a recent raid, China's role in upgrading the Pakistan navy's main base at Karachi was unknown to Washington. India, which has its own troubled history with both China and Pakistan, also is wary of the growing alliance between Beijing and Islamabad. Indeed Chinese access to Pakistani ports threatens India whose western shoreline with its commercial center at Mumbai lies exposed. Islamabad most probably gains satisfaction from New Delhi's feeling of insecurity, even though China is unlikely to use its presence at Gwadar and Karachi to challenge India militarily. Islamabad's actions indicate it views China and Iran as useful foils for keeping funds from Washington flowing and politicians in New Delhi uneasy. So it has suggested to the Maldives, another Muslim nation in the Indian Ocean, that a Chinese presence there may be in order too.⁸

China and Iran are overtly reeling Pakistan into their networks through sale and joint construction of military hardware including fighter jets, reconnaissance aircraft, submarines, and frigates. Both countries may also have covertly assisted Islamabad's rapid increase in nuclear capability. According to Pakistan's former nuclear head A. Q. Khan that is exactly what Beijing did some years ago by providing technology which Pakistani scientists then passed on to Iran. Tehran in return is believed to have shared its ballistic missile plans with Islamabad.⁹ Iran and Pakistan also are widely sus-

⁷ Jeremy Page, "Beijing Agrees to Operate a Key Port, Pakistan Says," *Wall Street Journal* (May 23, 2011), <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303654804576339323765033308.html>; Alex Rodriguez, "U.S.-Pakistan Ties at a Crossroads, Clinton Says," *San Francisco Chronicle-Los Angeles Times* (May 28, 2011), [http://mondediplo.com/openpage/playing-the-china-cardMESH.DTL](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/05/27/MNME1Jhttp://mondediplo.com/openpage/playing-the-china-cardMESH.DTL); Dilip Hiro, "Playing the China Card," *Le Monde diplomatique* (June 2, 2011), <http://mondediplo.com/openpage/playing-the-china-card>

⁸ Ian Johnson, "China Admits Its Technicians Were Held in Pakistan Base Attack," *New York Times* (May 24, 2011), <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/25/world/asia/25china.html>; Sergei De Silva-Ranasinghe, "China-India Rivalry in Maldives," *Jakarta Post* (June 17, 2011), <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/06/17/china-india-rivalry-maldives.html>

⁹ Greg Scoble, "China's Pakistan Base," *Real Clear World Compass* (May 24, 2011),

pected of having facilitated movement and training of Al-Qaida operatives in addition to providing them safe haven.¹⁰

SRI LANKA'S ROLE

Pakistan is only one stop along the seaway between Iran and China. Beijing and Tehran are cooperating in the construction of deep-water ports for petroleum tankers and naval vessels off the island of Sri Lanka. They are widening and deepening the Port of Colombo, Sri Lanka's west coast capital city, plus harbors at Galle and Hambantota along the southern shoreline. Iran is constructing oil refineries in Sri Lanka not only for the island's domestic use but for export to China as well. Economic aid and joint ventures are pulling Sri Lanka deeper into Iran's orbit.

Hundreds of Chinese and Iranian merchant vessels already pass through Sri Lankan anchorages. The island's harbors are midway transit points for shipments of Iranian energy resources to China and of Chinese technological products to Iran.¹¹ The island's harbors, including the eastern Port of Trincomalee which once headquartered the British Royal Navy's Indo-Pacific fleet and served as an American airbase, are now visited regularly by Iranian and Chinese warships and less frequently by British and American ones.

Military equipment and economic aid are the bait once again. Iran and China – in the latter case again from North Korea – supplied much of the

http://www.realclearworld.com/blog/2011/05/chinas_pakistan_base.html; David E. Sanger and Eric Schmitt, "Pakistani Nuclear Arms Pose Challenge to U.S. Policy," *New York Times* (January 31, 2011),

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/01/world/asia/01policy.html?_r=4&pagewanted=1; and "Nuclear Iran," *Institute for Science and International Security* (June 4, 2011), <http://www.isisnucleariran.org/nuclear-history>.

¹⁰ Jamsheed K. Choksy, "Iran's Increasingly Dangerous Liaison with Al-Qaeda," *Real Clear World Compass* (December 21, 2009), http://www.realclearworld.com/blog/2009/12/iran_al-qaeda.html.

¹¹ Kaplan, *Monsoon*, p. 208; "Ahmadinejad's message submitted to Sri Lankan president," *Mehr News Agency* (June 6, 2011), <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1329059>; Jason Burke, "Chinese-Built Port in Sri Lanka Fuels Indian Fears Beijing is Encircling Them," *Guardian* (November 18, 2010), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/18/port-sri-lanka-india-china>; and Daniel Kostecka, "Hambantota, Chittagong, and the Maldives – Unlikely Pearls for the Chinese Navy," *Jamestown Foundation* (November 19, 2010), http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=37196&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=25&cHash=9c98f42516.

heavy weapons that helped Sri Lanka's government defeat Tamil rebels after a 26-year secessionist struggle. Some of those ordnances were shipped through Pakistan – yet another indicator of the Indian Ocean based nexus. Additionally, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is reported to be training military and intelligence officers for the island's government.¹²

BANGLADESH AND MYANMAR TOO

At the northern end of the Bay of Bengal, China and Iran are cultivating ties with Bangladesh. The seaport of Chittagong has benefitted from Beijing's finances – and the government in Dhaka seeks more. As happened in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, defense cooperation is on the rise with Beijing due to the Chinese military supplying frigates and other ordnances for Bangladeshi troops. In the meantime Iran is expanding its political links to Bangladesh by promising bilateral trade, most of which is waterborne, will grow swiftly from the current level of approximately U.S. \$100 million.¹³ Because Bangladesh sees rising value in ties with Iran and China, western military vessels although still frequent visitors to Chittagong now have to compete for docking facilities there.

In August 2010, the Chinese navy inaugurated relations with its Myanmar counterpart. That port call by Beijing's vessels culminated a diplomatic drive that began in 2007. Commercial ventures include Chinese construction of terminals at Kyankpyu port on the Bay of Bengal. From there, oil and gas pipelines stretch approximately 700 miles from the west coast of Myanmar (Burma) to Kunming in southwest China – ensuring that Iranian energy can bypass the congested narrow Strait of Malacca. A Sino-Burmese corporation linked to narcotics and arms smuggling already operates Yangon (Rangoon) port and safeguards shipments

¹² "Sri Lanka Turning to China, Iran for Funds," *IPS News* (April 22, 2008), ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=42075; "WikiLeak: Arms Procurement from North Korea and Iran," *Sunday Leader* (January 9, 2011), <http://www.thesundayleader.lk/2011/01/09/wikileak-arms-procurement-from-north-korea-and-iran/>; B. Raman, "Iran to Train Sri Lankan Intelligence & Army Officers," *Sri Lanka Guardian* (April 24, 2008), <http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2008/04/iran-to-train-sri-lankan-intelligence.html>.

¹³ "Bangladesh PM's trip to China: India Watching Closely," *Heritage Foundation: The Foundry* (March 24, 2010), <http://blog.heritage.org/?p=29683>; and "Bangladesh, China to Discuss Defense Ties," *Reuters-Arab News* (June 14, 2010), <http://arabnews.com/world/article65498.ece>.

passing through its docks between Shanghai and Bandar Abbas.¹⁴

By adding Bangladeshi and Burmese berths to the Pakistani and Sri Lankan ones, China and Iran will eclipse the U.S. and its allies in the number of naval facilities available within South Asia. So the Indian Ocean is becoming the maritime epicenter of Sino-Persian activities.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

Even if China does accept the Pakistani offer to upgrade the docks at Gwadar, it may not station forces there so as not to provoke the local Baloch population which is opposed to any foreign presence after the prolonged American one in neighboring Afghanistan. Moreover, despite recommendations by parts of its military, the Chinese government to date has not abrogated a policy against establishing foreign bases. But Beijing may increasingly be tempted to do so in the face of weak responses from Washington and London to its increasing interest in South Asia.¹⁵ The Islamic Republic has shown no such qualms for military assistance when opportunities have arisen in other

¹⁴ B. Raman, "Chinese Naval Vessels Make Port Call In Myanmar For The First Time," *South Asia Analysis Group*, Paper 4011 (2010), <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers41%5Cpaper4011.html>; "Chinese Minister of Commerce Inspected China-Burma Crude Oil Pipelines Terminal Project," *China Harbour Engineering Company* (April 9, 2010), <http://www.chec.bj.cn/tabid/81/InfoID/2708/Default.aspx>; "China, Burma Sign Oil Pipeline Agreement," *Irrawaddy* (March 27, 2009), http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=15383; William Boot, "China to build Huge Port, Highways in Burma," *Irrawaddy* (July 4, 2007), http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=7773.

¹⁵ Stephanie Ho, "China Refuses to Confirm Reports it Will Run Strategic Pakistani Port," *Voice of America* (May 24, 2011), <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/China-Refuses-to-Confirm-Reports-it-Will-Run-Strategic-Pakistani-Port-122498969.html>; Peter Lee, "China Drops the Gwadar Hot Potato," *Asia Times* (May 28, 2011), <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/ME28A01.html>; Nayan Chanda, "Asian Power-Play, Post-Osama," *Times of India* (May 14, 2011), [smallwarsjournal.com](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-05-14/edit-page/29542830_1_chinese-foreign-ministry-trillion-in-foreign-exchange-uighurs;Urmila Venugopalan, 'Pakistan's Black Pearl,' Foreign Policy (June 23, 2011), http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/06/03/pakistan_s_black_pearl?page=0,0; Richard Weitz, 'Global Insights: China Ponders Pakistan's Naval Base Offer,' World Politics Review (May 24, 2011), http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/8944/global-insights-china-ponders-pakistans-naval-base-offer; and Luke Butcher, 'Chinese Involvement in Somalia: Policy Change or Status Quo?', e-International Relations (June 15, 2011), http://www.e-ir.info/?p=9457.</p>
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regions of the world – as in Hezbollah-controlled areas of Lebanon and apparently now in Latin America. Iran is reported to have military troops and advisors in Syria too, assisting Bashar al-Assad's regime in suppressing a popular revolt.¹⁶

Washington and London may see the Sino-Persian thrust for harbors as nothing more than economic ventures and so choose not to respond. Granted, for now neither Beijing nor Tehran has the naval capacity and technology to challenge U.S. and British military might. But both nations are upgrading their capabilities rapidly. For China this includes refurbishing an aircraft carrier based at Dailan Harbor on the Yellow Sea and having direct access to the South China Sea – an important regional waterway – and then westward through the Strait of Malacca to the Indian Ocean. For Iran, the focus has been on adding submarines with longer ranges of deployment and greater offensive capabilities.¹⁷

Much of Washington's attention has focused, quite understandably owing to terrorism, on underwriting, cajoling, even threatening Islamabad – with few positive results.¹⁸ In the process India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh have been given short shrift by the West's administrations. So Iran and China see strategic openings in the Indian Ocean region. They are presenting themselves as “all-weather friends” who will still be there when the U.S. loses interest.¹⁹ Indeed Washington's on-

again off-again attention to the region, driven by relatively short term developments like the Soviet-Russian invasion of Afghanistan and the war against terror, makes Iranian and Chinese overtures appealing to Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar.

On the other hand, years of mistrust and border clashes with India will likely ensure that China makes little headway along the Indian Ocean's longest coastline. But Beijing may figure it can bypass and even neutralize India by using the other Subcontinental nations and leave Tehran to manage New Delhi. Indeed, Indian industry relies heavily on Iranian fuel and has been fighting U.S. attempts to restrict those fuel imports. To cover all scenarios, however, Beijing is reaching out to India as well through bilateral trade – targeted to reach U.S. \$100 billion by 2015. Caution by China and Iran in the case of India is due not only to that nation's own strategic might but also for ensuring New Delhi is given no reason to tilt politically toward Washington.²⁰

AMERICAN AND BRITISH RESPONSES

So where does this power grab, as Iran and China become “reliable partners,” leave the U.S. and Britain?²¹ Using political and economic pressure to block Chinese and Iranian presence at places like Gwadar, Colombo, Chittagong, and Kyankpyu will be counterproductive. Such arm-twisting would provoke backlash from those countries' whose citizens are already suspicious of Western intentions after having watched bloody events unfold in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Moreover, unduly restricting trade in legal commodities is not in the interest of furthering free market economies in South Asia. After all, China does business with countries all over the world including with staunch American allies. Moreover, Wash-

16 Fausta Wertz, “Iranian Training Camps in Latin America,” *Real Clear World Compass* (May 9, 2011), http://www.realclearworld.com/blog/2011/05/iranian_training_camps_in_lati.html; “Iran sends Advisers to Syria to Help Quell Unrest,” *AFP-Gulf News* (May 28, 2011), <http://gulfnnews.com/news/region/iran/iran-sends-advisers-to-syria-to-help-quell-unrest-report-1.813895>.

17 Wendell Minnick, “PLA 20 Years Behind U.S. Military: Chinese DM,” *Defense News* (June 7, 2011), <http://defensenews.com/story.php?i=6736116&c=ASI&s=LAN>; Edward Wong, “Chinese Warship May Be Nearly Ready,” *New York Times* (April 7, 2011), http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/08/world/asia/08carrier.html?_r=1; Abraham M. Denmark, “Crowded Waters,” *Foreign Policy* (June 7, 2011),

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/08/world/asia/08carrier.html?_r=1; “Iran to Equip Navy with New Submarines,” *Fars News Agency* (June 9, 2011),

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9003194128>.

18 “A Terrorist Tells All,” *Chicago Tribune* (May 27, 2011), <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/editorials/ct-edit-rana-20110527,0.6292680.story>; Joel Brinkley, “U.S. Entangled in Gordian Knot in Southwest Asia,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 29, 2011), <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/05/27/INO71JK7ME.DTL>; Thomas P. M. Barnett, “The New Rules: Why the U.S. Should 'Give' Af-Pak to China,” *World Politics Review* (June 14, 2011), <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/9006/the-new-rules-why-the-u-s-should-give-af-pak-to-china>.

19 David Pilling, “China's Masterclass in Schmoozing Pakistan,” *Financial Times* (May 25, 2011),

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/cac10ffe-8701-11e0-92df-00144feabdco.html>; Dan Blumenthal, “China Breeds Chaos,” *Wall Street Journal* (May 26, 2011), <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/cac10ffe-8701-11e0-92df-00144feabdco.html>.

20 Kamran Bokhari, “Increasing Complications in India-Iran Relations,” *Stratfor Global Intelligence* (June 14, 2011), <http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20110614-dispatch-increasing-complications-india-iran-relations>; “India and China set \$100bn trade target by 2015,” *BBC News South Asia* (December 16, 2010), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12006092>.

21 “FM Salehi: Iran Reliable Partner for China,” *Press TV* (May 26, 2011), <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/181818.html>.

ington's and London's opposition to Iran's trade stems from the dispute over Tehran's nuclear program obfuscation and its support of militant organizations.

Ultimately it is not legal trade between China and Iran or even those countries use of third-party Indian Ocean ports that are problematic. It is the ongoing shift in the balance of power which could leave the U.S. and Britain playing second fiddle in a region of rising geopolitical importance that is strategically worrisome. Additionally, failure to enforce sanctions on the exchange of proscribed items diminishes American and British effectiveness upon the world stage as Iran and China demonstrate to other nations that international will can be flouted.²²

India is still the most powerful nation, economically and militarily, in the region. It also is a relatively stable democracy with an English-speaking technologically-savvy population. Like Washington and London, New Delhi does not care for Iranian and Chinese hegemony in the Indian Ocean. Yet, Indians still remain ambiguous toward the U.S. owing to their perception of an American bias toward Pakistan. As Pakistan proves repeatedly that it is an unstable ally, and New Delhi sees Washington's rising frustration with Islamabad, the time is ripe for the U.S. to extend concrete overtures of partnership with India. Indians still recall favorably U.S. support against China in the early 1960s. Now as China and Iran begin to encircle India's waters, both London and Washington should deepen political, economic, and military ties with New Delhi. It is not an all or nothing situation for the West vis-à-vis the Subcontinent's two main rivals – the U.S. in particular needs to build confidence and relations with both India and Pakistan.

Frayed relations with Sri Lanka, resulting from its now-concluded civil war, should be repaired so that island nation ceases to be attracted by offers from China and Iran. Additional economic aid could be extended to Bangladesh to buildup social and economic infrastructure and make it less dependent on the autocratic regimes of Asia. Furthermore, when those nations seek military technology it would be prudent not to yield the field to China and Iran. Reaching out to Myanmar is more problematic owing to its regime's anti-western stance and Western economic sanctions against it. Yet, opportunities to normalize relations may be arising for U.S. State Department officials have met

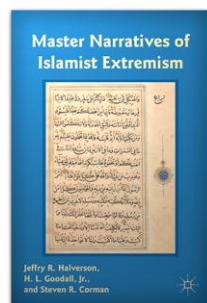
with Yangon's country's post-election government.²³

China certainly is more cautious than Iran when it comes to international adventurism. But like Tehran, Beijing is moving into areas where Washington seems to be wavering despite U.S. forces still guarding the politically, economically, and militarily strategic maritime choke points at Hormuz and Malacca. Iran and China seem intent of changing the naval status quo. It is not in the West's interest, or even that of the world, for one or two nations – especially those which have not demonstrated their full commitment to global order – to gain control over a strategic area. The Indian Ocean and its ports must remain freely accessible to all countries as well as cease being used to evade international prohibitions. The West cannot afford to lose this maritime Great Game.

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²² "China Must Do More to Stop Nuclear Proliferation," Nuclear Threat Initiative (May 27, 2011), <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/181818.html>.

²³ "U.S. Department of State Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Travel to Burma," U.S. Embassy Rangoon (May 20, 2011), http://photos.state.gov/libraries/burma/895/pdf/DAS_Joseph_Yun_Press_Release20110520.pdf.



Book Review: Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism

by Jeffrey Halverson, H. L. Goodall, and Steven Corman.

Published by Palgrave-MacMillan, New York. 2011.

Reviewed by Commander Youssef Aboul-Enein

Published online July 7, 2011

See a summary of the book contents at
<http://masternarratives.comops.org/contents.html>

Militant Islamist ideology represents fragments of Islam weaved together into a modernist violent narrative. It represents a pseudo-intellectual and post-modern reductionism of the complex and diverse set of beliefs inherent of 1.5 billion Muslims. Jeffrey Halverson is an Islamic Studies Scholar and his two co-authors, Goodall and Corman, are communications professors at Arizona State. They explore these narratives while immersing readers in the language, symbols, and reductionism of Islamist extremism.

Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism opens with a discussion defining a narrative as a “coherent system of interrelated and sequentially organized stories that share a common rhetorical desire to resolve a conflict by establishing audience expectations”. A master narrative is trans-historical and is deeply embedded in a culture, expanding over time. Among Islamist extremists, an example of a master narrative is the pharaoh master narrative which mirrors their own struggles against rulers and state regimes reinforcing the divine’s sovereignty over its creations (to include humankind). The pharaoh master narrative represents the conflict between the immortal (the after-life) and mortal (pleasures of this life).

The book conducts an excellent intellectual analysis of Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), considered the most important theoretician of militant Islamist ideology. A chapter is devoted to deconstructing Qutb’s notion of *hukm*, translated in modern times as “to govern” but meaning “to adjudicate” in Prophet Muhammad’s Arabic. This subtle change in translation is a powerful example of the Islamist post-modern reductionism in reinterpreting Prophet Muhammad’s legacy and meaning. Additionally, the authors do an excellent job discussing such imagery as *jahiliyah*, an Islamic concept that condemns pre-Islamic customs that were unjust and abhorrent. Pre-Islamic customs of female in-

fanticide is an infamous example of jahiliyah (pre-Islamic ignorance). Islamist extremist ideologues like Sayyid Qutb have redefined jahiliyah to condemn all of modern Muslim society inferring that because modern Muslim society does not strictly adhere to his vision of what constitutes Islamic law, they are no better than those who did not follow the law due to ignorance.

The book continues with a chapter on the Battle of Badr (624 AD), which is the Islamic David and Goliath parable. The Battle of Badr is weaved into such imagery as current conflicts, most notably, the Soviet-Afghan War. The term *munafiqun* (hypocrites) is used by Islamist extremists to condemn and sanction the killing of fellow Muslims. Of note, the author cites violent examples of scripture from the Quran and makes comparisons to New Testament to cultivate empathy not sympathy. For instance, he compares the select sword verses in the Quran with violent images in Numbers, Samuel and Deuteronomy.

Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism is a much needed volume that will enhance discourse on ways to counter violent Islamist ideology. It also provides a higher level of situational awareness by immersing oneself in the language and vocabulary of militant Islamists who are a threat to Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Commander Youssef Aboul-Enein is author of “Militant Islamist Ideology: Understanding the Global Threat,” (Naval Institute Press, 2010). He is Adjunct Islamic Studies Chair at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Commander Aboul-Enein wishes to thank LCDR Margaret Read, MSC, USN who recently returned from a deployment to Kuwait for her edits and discussion that enhanced this review.

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