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Afghanistan: The De-evolution of Insurgency¹

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Many years ago a wise old Afghan man once told me the mythical story of how God made Afghanistan. When Allah had made the rest of the world, He saw that there was a lot of rubbish left over, bits and pieces and things that did not fit anywhere else. He collected them all together, and threw them down on the earth. That was Afghanistan,' the old man said.

--Ahmed Rashid, Taliban: The Story of the Afghan Warlord²

HISTORY

Given the complex nature of conflict in Afghanistan and the history of external pressures in the region, there exists a need to constantly reexamine the local situation. The dynamic nature of tribal cultures in South West Asia and the shifting relationships that occur at local levels demand revisiting the question of military strategies and reassessment of US and Coalition involvement in the Afghan theater. Afghanistan, as a country ensconced in conflict for centuries, is homeland to numerous ethnic groups. It is further divided into hundreds of tribes and villages; all with varied needs, wants and demands. Scholars have argued that the root causes of regional and local conflict stem from geographic location, imperialist domination and colonial oppression. This article will not focus on these root causes, though important to the present situation. Instead, this article will focus on the present conflict and the label of Insurgency that it bears. In this article we will examine contemporary definitions of insurgencies as presented in The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24), compare the insurgency in Afghanistan to other insurgencies and present an argument that the present situation in Afghanistan is in-fact, not an insurgency. In our conclusion, we will present a theory that the situation in Afghanistan more closely resembles a synergy of criminal elements that have coalesced into a loosely organized front to form an anti-government, anti-coalition movement that has insurgent elements involved. Our theory also suggests that there is a cyclical nature of conflict in Afghanistan that includes the growth of insurgency and the de-evolution of insurgency as a part of a constantly changing Chaotic Cannibalistic State; a state of being that consists of groups of people in perpetual conflict, feeding on each other until a foreign body is introduced, at which point they frenzy on the foreign body, sapping strength and resources until the foreign body must limp away.

¹ The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and not those of HTS, TRADOC, the U.S. Army, or the U.S. Marine Corps. This paper is primarily based on field experience and research conducted prior to the author's involvement with HTS. The Authors would like to convey special thanks and credit for editing and collaboration to the AF18 Human Terrain Analysis Team Research Managers: Elizabeth Berry and MSG David Babin. We would also like to convey our thanks to Major General Richard Mills, Commanding General, 1 MEF FWD RCSW for support and encouragement.

²² Singh, Deepali Gaur. *Drugs Production and Trafficking in Afghanistan*. Shah M Book Company, 2007. Pg. 1.

IMPORTANCE

There are those who believe that there exists in Afghanistan a core element of Taliban (TB); *True Believers* who continue to perpetrate an insurgency against the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) and Coalition forces in order to reestablish an Islamic state such as existed during the time of the prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him) during the 7th century. This paper does not intend to disprove that belief per se, but rather it is our position that if such a group still exists, it has, through effective counterinsurgency, been reduced and marginalized to the point of near irrelevance in the present situation. This paper will also demonstrate that there have been other armed groups in Afghanistan with distinct motivations for many years.

The language we use to describe the world around us is indicative of our relationship with that world; it shapes the way we see things and determines how we develop our policies. The argument against labeling the situation in Afghanistan as an insurgency may have profound impact on policy and strategy for the region. Our present Counterinsurgency (COIN) policy is grounded in the view that we are fighting insurgents. But, what if we are not fighting insurgents? What if the insurgent element in Afghanistan is so insignificant, or has changed to the point where they are no longer the single unifying destabilizer, or no longer have the end-state goal of seizing governance? What does it mean if our very presence has coalesced groups of criminal enterprises, who would otherwise be competitors, into a group which might only bear similarity in a name, “Taliban”? The concept of *non-insurgency* in Afghanistan is not by any means new. Practitioners in the field have been discussing this possibility for years; however, the articulation of this theory has yet to be formally presented. If this theory is accepted as sound, then the present COIN policy should be changed and a more appropriate strategy for dealing with the present Afghan situation adopted. At very least, this article should generate discussion about current strategies and policies for irregular warfare in South West Asia.

INSURGENCY DEFINED

Present definitions of Insurgency have evolved over very recent times from early models describing asymmetric guerilla warfare with grassroots political goals founded in land-dispute to similar asymmetric guerilla warfare but with political goals that blur the lines distinguishing terrorism and insurgency. Older examples of insurgency had one thing in common; they had land-related disputes. Definitions set forth in FM 3-24 no longer consider territoriality a defining characteristic of all insurgencies. In the case of South West Asian politics: civil wars, terrorism, criminal activity and regional politico-religious hegemony are intertwined with such complexity as to make the distinction of conflict type and therefore strategy and policy very difficult to determine. Western nations have a tendency to follow established rules of war. Even in the case of guerilla warfare, when rules of engagement and strategy must be flexible, we have manuals that determine our courses of action. Though it is not as extreme, our present situation brings to mind the U.S. Revolutionary War when British soldiers lined up in firing lines and Roger’s Rangers utilized guerilla style tactics to destroy them. We are presently fighting, utilizing COIN tactics because we have labeled the conflict an insurgency. To establish proof of what insurgency is not, we must first determine what insurgency is according to U.S. Military lexicon and comparisons to other well known insurgencies. The following elements have been extracted from contemporary definitions as stated in FM 3-24:

“Joint doctrine defines an insurgency as an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict” (JP1-2). This definition implies that there must be a tangible end-state goal of change in governance for an insurgency to exist. At very least, by this definition, an insurgency must have a goal of distinct territorial sovereignty, or legitimacy as a legally recognized political entity in a legitimate state. An example of distinct territorial sovereignty would be domestic sovereign nations within the United States. There are many examples of insurgent parties that have transitioned to political parties in Central America when offered by the legitimate government.

(FM 3-24, 1-2) modifies this definition by stating that, “an insurgency is an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control.” This definition waters down previous definitions exchanging political control by the insurgent party as a goal to weakening of control of the government. By this definition, any form of dissent manifesting as conflict or struggle meets the qualification of being an insurgency; even in the case of Afghanistan, which more closely resembles an egoistic anarchy.

Regardless of definition, “In all cases, insurgents aim to force political change; any military action is secondary and subordinate, a means to an end.” (FM 3-24, 1-24). According to this manual, the ultimate goal of an insurgency is to reach an end-state of political stability, whether coerced or recognized by popular support.

General Petraeus et al state that in order to succeed at COIN, we must confront it with unity of effort. In a nation-state plagued with corruption at all levels of government, it is nearly impossible to act with unity. In our experience, the people will often not stand up for their own freedom out of fear and mistrust. They fear the TB, they fear drug-lords, they fear criminals, and they mistrust GIRoA and have a deep xenophobic mistrust of the West. The history of the region and the people, the strain of generational conflict on the cultural psyche, and actors of instability, internal and external, have created a cultural worldview of survival. This worldview has been present for generations before US involvement in Afghanistan and manifests itself in the social cannibalism described above.

(FM 3-24, 1-3) further describes the disintegration of insurgency movements into smaller criminal franchises as they attempt to attain financial backing for their cause. It briefly mentions that at this time in the life-cycle of an insurgency, coalition forces must hold and stabilize the area until such a time that local police and military forces can maintain order and stability. In the case of Afghanistan, when local cultures have been disrupted to a point that corruption is expected and for the most part accepted, and individuals within the police, military and GIRoA are actors of instability, the fight becomes more of a police mission than military or civil affairs holding mission. The insurmountable goal is to rebuild and change a culture impacted by thousands of years of war and strong-man rule, corruption and chaos into a culture that accepts peace, stability and equality. Though there are individuals within the populace who want this, the individuals engaged in corruption and graft consistently cannibalize the process. There is no profit in peace.

THE QUESTION OF INSURGENCY AND CRIME

COMPARATIVE INSURGENCY MODELS

A review of the literature about insurgencies around the world reveals certain patterns; common fundamental elements can be readily observed. For example, one can find patterns about their causality, inceptions and development. Despite this observation, it is important to highlight our careful consideration for common pitfalls made by others. When comparing insurgencies across continents, many researchers make broad and sometimes false generalizations. Therefore, having a clear understanding of particular insurgencies in one part of the world, only presents a point of reference by which to compare and understand the nature of the Afghan conflict.

Central America Model

Latin American examples of insurgencies of the 1950s and 1970s were very similar in causality, inception and development. In particular, the Central American model was spurred on by communist expansionism beginning in Guatemala. El Salvador and Nicaragua also had causalities revolving around land issues or disputes, or associated injustices. For example, the initial common spark of those insurgencies is found in their individual efforts to garner support against injustices perpetrated by their respective governments when they illegally seized lands, pushed people out of their ancestral lands on behalf of big corporations, or dealt with some other related issues. It was these kinds of causal factors that gave these insurgents an air of quasi-legitimacy in the eyes of the international arena. In fact, it was his observations of extremely marginalized peoples clinging to survival outside the fringes of poverty that led Ernesto Guevara De La Serna (El Che) to leave behind his pursuit of a medical practice, and join the struggle to free those oppressed by their governments. As such, resolutions of land issues or associated injustices are the criteria common among these insurgencies. The desire to topple a government was not the initial goal.

Another commonality in Latin American insurgencies is that its fighters were homogeneous to their respective countries, or simply “home grown”. In other words, those fighting as part of the insurgency were native to Guatemala, El Salvador, or Nicaragua, people who had a personal stake in their own cause. This of course is separate from those external agencies that funded or sustained these struggles, but did not directly participate in them. Subsequently, forward thinking insurgents began to understand that the only way they might retain their lands (after winning the war) would be to simultaneously push a political agenda. This point, however, should not be confused with purely political agendas pushed by terrorist organizations, which, by their very nature, are void of the cause to retain or regain lost lands.

Another fundamental element about insurgencies is the amount of support, and the level of support afforded by the population itself. At the height of these insurgencies, they enjoyed wide popular support. However, at the point when the population starts to fear the insurgency because of their heavy handedness and atrocities, as well as the obvious economic gain from emergent criminal activities, insurgents by default break their ties with the community, thus alienating themselves from the populace at large.

The insurgencies mentioned above, as well as the Afghan insurgency, suffered a type of “death”. At some point, their “actions” indicate their pursuit of something other than their stated goals. In other words, at some point they seemed to have lost sight of their original cause, thus

altering their upward momentum, resulting in de-evolution into something else. In Central America, by way of U.N. intervention, elements of those insurgencies turned to a political struggle under peaceful democratic means. Other members of these insurgencies, already trained, experienced, and armed, reverted to criminal enterprises. From another perspective, the Nicaraguan example in particular (and Colombia discussed later) is almost a mirror image of the situation in Afghanistan in that other home-grown groups coalesced to fight off the effects of the de-evolution of their respective insurgencies, but later adopted the same criminal behaviors.

The FARC Model (Colombia)

The Colombian model, particularly the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) shares a similar evolutionary process with Afghanistan. It is our opinion that it too has been displaying the same behavior, that is, a transition from insurgency to a collection of disparate groups of criminal networks. For example, beginning in the 1950s, Manuel Marulanda exploited other people's land issues and disputes in order to organize against the government which gained him popularity, but would often instigate government over-reaction to small protests. Eventually, Marulanda became so popular that the insurgency grew to major parts of Colombia. But like many other insurgencies, over time, either through the desire to grow quickly or out of desperation it adopted drastic measures of which effects caused the distancing of the insurgents from their supporting population.

Observed measures included forced and even brutal recruitment practices, including the protection of drug mafias' transshipments of coca. Eventually, seeing the monetary benefits of the drug trade, key FARC efforts turned to Coca production, processing and sale, and other illicit activities. These measures helped the FARC sustain the "fight" with a steady exchange of arms and contraband which later caused American analysts to question the FARC's motivations. Maintaining instability in roughly 3/5ths of the country allows them to sustain their illicit activities.

As a result of the growing list of disconnects between ideology and behavior, analysts began questioning the FARC's motivation and started referring to them as narco-guerrillas and narco-terrorists. Another indicator of this change in perspective, is the Colombian-U.S. response which makes it a practice to extradite all key captured FARC members to the United States to face charges related to drug trafficking and continuing criminal networks. The de-evolution of these insurgencies is observed in their shift from fighting for a "cause", to fighting for criminal gain as indicated by their illicit activities. This progression in the insurgency cycle is addressed in FM 3-24. A closer study of the TB and other organized groups in Afghanistan demonstrating similar behaviors should be conducted to determine if they have reached this point in their cycle of development.

Mexican Zapatista Movement

The January 1, 1994 insurrection by the Zapatista movement in Southern Mexico became what might be the most classic insurgency in recent times. It has been argued that Commandante Marcos (the group's spokesman), is not from the people that he represents; a grass roots, homogeneous organization of Mexican Indians arguing for recognition and equality. They have successfully appealed to many people in Mexico as well as around the world. Their insurrection was conducted at a very strategic geographic area within Mexico known for its natural resources. Tired of their marginalization and incited by Libertarian Socialism and Anarchist-Communist ideologies, Indigenous peoples coalesced into a limited armed struggle to achieve their objective,

recognition and Indigenous rights and autonomy in Mexico. They also seek to directly benefit from residual income the government makes from exploiting their lands. In an effort to distance himself from other would-be insurgencies, Marcos made the following statement to highlight his group's difference: "We don't want to impose our solutions by force; we want to create a democratic space. We don't see armed struggle in the classic sense of previous guerrilla wars that is as the only way and the only all-powerful truth around which everything is organized. In a war, the decisive thing is not the military confrontation but the politics at stake in the confrontation. We didn't go to war to kill or be killed. We went to war in order to be heard."³ Unlike the other insurgencies here discussed, the Zapatista's ideological and publicized goals have never strayed from their measured and observed actions and their popularity has increased tremendously.

Today, the hope for Zapatista equality and recognition by the Mexican government is pursued by a peaceful strategy. They enlist the support of NGOs by way of the internet, publishing articles, public speeches. Also, they seek-out other Indigenous groups within Mexico as if campaigning for office in an effort to understand the other's issues and bring national and international attention to their struggles as well. Unlike the other insurgencies discussed here, the Zapatista movement seemed content in simply bringing the world's attention to their struggle, but quickly set aside their arms and today pursues their goals under peaceful means.

The Afghan Model

In the 1990s, the TB was pursuing fundamental goals related to land or territory in combination with ideological issues. They were seeking to have a geographically defined state under Sharia. However, today, when one compares the TB's original goals to their observed actions, including those of other organizations operating in Afghanistan sometimes labeled under the TB umbrella; it can be observed that they mirror other insurgencies once they devolved into mere criminal networks. While key Taliban leaders may continue to refer to the original goal of an Islamic state under Sharia, their actions indicate otherwise, as presented in the tables below.

Anti-government elements once rallied around the Taliban as the iconic paramilitary force that furthered the individual goals of each small group. In retrospect, whether through a successful counter-insurgency effort and / or due to the historic volatile social landscape, the TB is quantifiably no longer the single-most destabilizing organization in Afghanistan. There have always been other organizations just as powerful and ruthless as TB, they range from organized criminal enterprises to drug smugglers, chiefdoms, warlords, thieves, land mafias, etc. In addition, many of these organizations' behaviors do not support the "insurgency" label for the following reasons: They seek personal power, money, and land; they willingly violate Islamic laws, one of their fundamental reasons for establishing their own government; they break tribal and ethnic loyalties, and even make temporary alliances in disregard for traditional family feuds. This is just a surface description, while closer analysis reveals unquestionable and quantifiable data that argues the existence of competing criminal elements often hiding behind ethnicity and tribalism.

³ Gresh, Alain. "The Dream of a Better World is Back." Middle East Online. Obtained 12 SEP 2010. <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=31942>

Comparative analysis of criminal elements

As discussed previously, the TB displays the same characteristics as those insurgencies whose degradation was brought about by engagement in criminality. In Afghanistan, that death is part of the cycle of a chaotic cannibalistic state where many competing groups remain the dominant destabilizers. These similarities are demonstrated by qualitative and quantitative data below.

Behavior of criminal elements

Criminal elements around the world are motivated by common desires that have existed for thousands of years; money, power, and prestige. Globalization has affected their vices by providing greater access to mobility and communications, in-turn adding to their flexibility, operational reach, illusiveness in capture, and tremendous potential for profit. In our experience, law enforcement investigations of criminal conspiracies, networks and drug organizations in the U.S. have revealed common themes. Many of these commonalities are predictive and can be followed to eventually lead to arrest and subsequent conviction.

Comparing commonalities among criminal groups in two ways, the individual and the organizational, one can map out behaviors and determine if these actions are present in our subject groups operating in Afghanistan. Western criminal organizations normally operate in a clandestine manner. In other words, they have a tendency to not operate in the open or with impunity. At the individual level, criminals achieve quick and personal enrichment, act as though they are invincible, intimidate people, commit murder, and involve themselves in a variety of other criminal activities. In many cases, they also attempt to bribe officials and sometimes succeed. In the U.S., a mere drive-by of a criminal's home, particularly the leadership, often reveals disconnects between their lifestyle and possessions (tangibles as homes, cars, boats, etc), and where they work. In other words, their potential income given their known profession does not pay for the luxuries they have.

At the organizational level, criminal elements have clear hierarchies, may have front organizations to pass as legitimate businesses, and possess the ability to launder money (if involved in drug trafficking). The strongest similarity among criminal organizations is that at some time or another, they are overcome by greed. It is at this time they take more risks and become more vulnerable to making mistakes. These mistakes often lead to their capture, or make it easier for police to obtain sufficient incriminating evidence. Ordinarily, the risk to criminal elements in terms of evidence depends on a police departments' manpower and resource allocation capabilities to conduct thorough investigations, sometimes ending in convictions.

Although criminal organizations in the U.S. tend to be more careful about how they conduct their illicit activities, more parallel comparisons with Afghan criminal types can also be found in Latin American examples. There, criminal organizations and in particular drug cartels, operate with impunity in weak states (as in Mexico and other Latin American countries). These countries' inability to effectively enforce the laws of the state gives criminal elements the ability to gain and retain power. For example, they have unfettered freedom of movement, engage in extreme violence, retain officials on their payrolls, and retaliate even against innocent civilians. Often they control large tracts of land, possess military-grade weapons, hire former military personnel, and have ties with other criminal elements across borders that at times serve as safe havens or support. These international ties make them more elusive to capture and give them the

ability to leverage those foreign organizations to expand operations. These ties often also lead to bribing officials of neighboring countries which further increase their impunity across borders. Today, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) is notorious for having cross-border safe havens in Ecuador and Venezuela, and allegedly receive some level of support from Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. However, these similarities are not unique among U.S. or Latin American criminal organizations; in fact, open-source research reveals parallel patterns of operation with Afghan groups.

Criminal-like behavior among groups in Afghanistan

Criminal-like behavior among groups in Afghanistan is flagrant and obvious. Official reports and public knowledge of events clearly challenge the status quo label of the Afghan conflict as an insurgency. In 2008, the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) published the Afghanistan Opium Survey. In it, they recognized that within the seven provinces producing 98 percent of the opium of Afghanistan, those unstable regions contained groups of TB, warlords, and organized criminal groups and networks, all working as drug traders.⁴ Under the original TB rule, following the defeat of the Soviet Union, opium poppy production was reduced to nil. The original TB forbade the growth of opium poppy. As the price of opium and heroin soared and TB leaders realized the potential for personal profit, as well as support for their cause, they ignored their own edict banning Opium production, justifying the income by its harm to their enemy.⁵

Why Afghan insurgency falls short of its given label

The situation in Afghanistan has for many years been referred to as an insurgency. While some practitioners in the field have informally acknowledged witnessing un-insurgency-like behaviors, they have not formally publicized this. Our argument is that the Afghan problem does not meet traditional insurgency criteria, nor does it meet FM 3-24's definition. In fact, the TB and other armed groups more appropriately meet the definition of criminal enterprises, continuing criminal enterprises, and organized crimes as defined by U.S. government laws.

The TB is no longer the single most unifying destabilizing force in Afghanistan due to the unmet criteria which challenge the legitimacy of the "insurgency" label. Unlike all insurgencies considered in this paper, TB suffers from a lack of homogeneity, and like the others, it now has a questionable cause, shows clear signs of de-evolution into criminal networks, and it has through its behavior, distanced itself from the population. Internal fissures exist between loosely grouped elements which routinely engage in armed conflict with one another.

Compared to its emergence in 1994, TB today is not a homogenous organization; Antonio Giustozzi describes it as a "Taliban Caravan" in which different people or groups have attached themselves for various reasons.⁶ It is composed of both loosely tied domestic and international players. Domestically, the TB itself has been described as being composed of five types of armed groups which when considered carefully, actually disconnects those independent elements from the only thread linking them together--the TB label. Consider the following types of TB groups as described by Afghans during interviews:

⁴ Afghanistan Opium Survey 2008. United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), page vii, 19. September 1, 2010. http://www.unodc.org/documents/publications/Afghanistan_Opium_Survey_2008.pdf

⁵ Gretchen Peters, United States Institute for Peace. How Opium Profits the Taliban. August 2009.

⁶ Giustozzi, Antonio. Decoding the Taliban. C. Hurt and Company, 2009. Page 160.

1. The Taliban-e-jangi (fighting or insurgent TB) as opposed to the Taliban-e-darsi (madrassa student), or those considered TB without being actively involved in combat;
2. The Taliban-e-asli (real TB) or Taliban-e-pak (clean TB), normally referring to the non-corrupted TB who is committed to Islamic principles of justice and purity compared to the opportunistic and violent movements; these authors believe this group is the one some coalition members now refer to as the core [remaining] element. It is also the group considered to be undermining Afghanistan's welfare by doing Pakistan's bidding;
3. Taliban-e-dusd (thief-TB) is a term used to describe local bandits and thugs who hide behind the cover of the movement in order to prey on the population;
4. Taliban-e-mahali (local TB) are opposed to TB from other areas who are generally considered more violent and indifferent to the local population's interests. Accordingly, even some local TB are also ruthless with their own populations;
5. Taliban-e-khana-neshin (TB who stays home). These TB are considered to have held positions during the TB movement but are not currently active and who may be living in their place of origin or elsewhere.

This typology, although well documented and described by Guistozzi, does not include independent tribal organizations, warlords, and other criminal networks who do not adopt the TB label (Specific groups are provided in a separate table). Unlike Guistozzi, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) members distinguish TB members in two basic forms. Tier 1 are those defined as being committed to the cause, and Tier 2 are the contracted fighters (domestic and international).⁷ Externally, Pakistan TB, as well as other foreign fighters who do not adopt the TB label also operate within Afghanistan. All these groups, including the other present criminal networks are collectively now the most destabilizing force in Afghanistan.

The original cause of the TB movement pushing a Jihad for the purpose of establishing Sharia (Islamic law) is now also questionable. The very foundation of their argument runs counter to Islam. An analysis of this condition leads one to conclude that TB and other groups fighting to institute Sharia anywhere are not insurgents, but simply criminals. A dogmatic and spiritual argument against the exploitation of Islam for the justification of criminal acts and personal enrichment is now well known around the world. In one example, Dr Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, a highly renowned Islamic scholar and recognized authority on Islam, referred to rebels, criminals, evil-mongers, [and] tyrannous brutes as having nothing to do with the defense of Islam.”⁸ Furthermore, he and other scholars are not simply claiming personal Islamic interpretations, but in fact reference Islamic verses which explicitly prohibit TB and TB-like elements' behaviors. So severe is the Muslim response that many scholars have banded to call for a Fatwa (a declaration) condemning TB and other similar groups that twist Islamic law to justify their criminal behavior. They further compare TB and others to well known Islamic infidels in the history of this religion. For example, TB and others are viewed as Khawarij, which during Prophet Mohammad's time (Peace be upon him), were considered rebels of Islam⁹.

⁷ Lobjakas, Ahto. "NATO Downplays Conventional Threat In South". Date: January 23, 2007. Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1074237.html>. Obtained August 2, 2010.

⁸FATWA on Suicide Bombing and Terrorism. SHAYKH-UL-ISLAM, DR Muhammad Tahir-Ul-Qadri. © Minhaj Publications, February, 2010. ISBN 10. 0955188849. Page 52. <http://www.minhaj.org/images-db2/fatwa-eng.pdf>

⁹ Et al, page 42.

Therefore, the implication is that Islamic law and its respected proponents consider TB and like networks in Afghanistan as being mere criminals. Finally, these groups' criminal activities and resulting power, money, and prestige run counter to their stated cause.

The deterioration of the TB's original cause for which they took up struggle and subsequently made a popular movement has since suffered a type of death, much like the Latin American examples. In essence, it devolved into criminal networks. As the popular TB cause died, it was replaced by criminal behavior and as a result, became distanced from the populace. One can deduce this "distancing effect" when we acknowledge that the local populace continues to support the armed group only out of fear from real and perceived threats when they fail to support them. Today, visible evidence of atrocities and analysis of the human terrain reveals the reality of the threat to personal security. When coalition or government forces are not permanently available to provide security, a survival instinct is to succumb to criminal's pressures.

Countless articles, news reports and interviews reveal the fact that TB force locals to provide support; farmers to grow opium, individuals to fight for the "cause" in forced recruitment, and the population at large to provide logistical support and safe harbor for fighters. Sometimes, TB members simply take what they need and in all these respects, are very similar to Colombia's FARC. These circumstances challenge the status quo belief that TB members are predominantly supporting the Jihad for religious fervor, when in fact, some do so out of fear, for monetary gains, or in some cases for clanship loyalties.

Taliban, no longer the single-unifying destabilizing force

Today's TB seems to have lost its momentum in being the single most unifying destabilizing force in Afghanistan for various reasons: First, the original motivation behind their movement is overshadowed by behaviors attune to criminal motives resulting in personal gain of money, power, and prestige. These actions have caused them to fall out of favor with the populace, who support them now mostly out of fear; similar to Latin American insurgencies. Second, there are many different networks and groups throughout Afghanistan that oppose each other and are motivated by competing factors. Some of these groups include regional militias, leaders of sub-tribes, local and international organized criminal enterprises, drug smugglers, chiefdoms, thieves, and land mafias to name a few. Collectively, the competition for money, power, prestige and territory are root causal factors destabilizing the country today.

Inter and intra fissures (fault lines) in the landscape of struggles (the breakdown of the TB)

Another piece of evidence signaling the breakdown of the TB from an insurgent group to a criminal element and their associations with others like them include verifiable secondary data reports and interviews. Giustozzi and Sing have conducted in-depth interviews of current and former TB members and their criminal network associates who reveal deep organizational fissures within the TB. There are many examples of fissures within the TB, as well as between different groups in Afghanistan that further challenges the perception of a unitary organization acting single-handedly to disrupt government and destabilize peace and security. Here only a few examples are presented, but is important to highlight the fact that many more published examples exist.

Table 1. Fissures Internal to TB.

Groups:	Fissures Internal to TB:	Source:
Older pious TB leaders	Not following TB Code of Conduct; these leaders express abhorrence to TB killing of innocent afghans through bombings and suicides, resulting in divisive arguments	Giustozzi, Antonio. <i>Decoding the Taliban</i> . C. Hurt and Company, 2009. Page 78.
Islamic TB clerics order opium growth	Violations of Islamic law: grow opium, condone and promote suicide, bribery, murder, drug running, etc.	...Page 12, 283.
Inter-fighting among TB subordinate leaders	TB sub-commanders fight each other over power, money, water, and taxable land; 2007 eight TB die while rival commanders fight over land and smuggling rights	Giustozzi , page 13, 197, 210.
Mostly Hataki sub-tribe members privileged to senior TB leadership positions	Senior TB leadership positions are reserved for Ghilzai tribe lineage, particularly Mulla Omar's Hataki sub-tribe.	Thomas H. Jonson and Chris Mason. <i>Understanding the Taliban in Afghanistan</i> . Page 76, and 78.
Mulla Zakir vs. Mulla Mansoor	Internal conflicts among TB leaders from two different tribes claiming military leadership over control of Helmand Province and 'Defense Minister' status. Each also flooding province with fighters from their own tribe	Starsky, Jerome. "Taleban Rift Ignites Power Struggle Over Who Controls The Insurgency". London Times, April 23, 2010.
Mulla Obaidulla vs. Mulla Dadulla and Mulla Ahktar	Key TB leaders fighting over drug spoils since 2001.	Giustozzi , page 13.
Alizai vs. Mutakzai sub-tribes (both within the Achekzai)	TB leaders in political competition in khas Uruzgan promote their own tribal members to "official" government positions in order to increase family and tribal influence and power	Giustozzi , page 167.
Jalaluddin Haqqani	Members who know him well doubt he is mainly interested in promoting Islam as his cause.	Giustozzi , page 73.
TB commanders	They win lucrative appointments based on their fund raising abilities	Giustozzi , page 13.
Senior leadership and subordinate commanders	TB commanders enrich themselves through drug deals with criminal elements; e.g., prior to 2008 TB had ties with Haji Juma Khan (king pin), extradited to U.S. to face drug charges	Giustozzi , page 16-17.
TB today, including former Mujahadin	Competing religious sects, competing ideologies made it difficult for them to coalesce and prevent in-fighting	Singh. <i>Drugs Production and Trafficking in Afghanistan</i> ,, pg 65.
TB	Domestic TB fighters discontent or at odds with foreign fighters (from Pakistan TL, contract fighters, etc)	Singh. <i>Drugs Production and Trafficking in Afghanistan</i> , pg 111
Among several TB groups	Differing ideologies have led to in-fighting	Singh. <i>Drugs Production and Trafficking in Afghanistan</i> , 65

Although the table above only describes the weakening of the TB's internal structure and effectiveness, it is only one aspect of the major argument. The other piece of evidence highlights the existence of other severely disrupting and independent groups existing in Afghanistan, including a sample record of criminal activities. These collective dynamics further indicate that the Afghan problem is in fact a collection of types of criminal elements competing for territorial control in order to enrich themselves.

Table 2. Fissures Among Competing Groups in Afghanistan.

Group:	Fissures Among Competing Groups in Afghanistan:	References:
Ethnic, linguistic groups and tribes	Competing end-states among groups representing different types of ethnic, linguistic, histories, and tribal backgrounds	Singh, Deepali Gaur. <i>Drugs Production and Trafficking in Afghanistan</i> , pg xi, 104
Various Shuras and subordinate TB commanders	Economic disparities between leaders and fighters: U.S. Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates estimated TB makes between \$60-80 million dollars a year mostly from local Afghan criminal sources, giving rise to the potential of fractionalization between the leader (Quetta Shura) and the led (subordinate groups); Commanders enrich themselves, while contracted fighters can make \$150 a month.	Giustozzi, Antonio. <i>Decoding the Taliban</i> . C. Hurst and Company, 2009. Page 151; 13.
Average TB fighter and subordinate leaders	Existence of differing reasons why Afghans fight: Money, land, opium, water, retaliation/revenge for loss of relative, desire for excitement, honor; prestige, tribal loyalty or solidarity (In 1958, Sir Olaf Coroe, British Colonial Administrator described the Mahsud tribe as a “legendary, well-organized, dangerous and cohesive tribe as a ‘wolf-pack’”; and the Wasir to a panther.	Giustozzi, Antonio. <i>Decoding the Taliban</i> . C. Hurst and Company, 2009. Page 240; Foot Note 18, page 245.
Gulbedin Hekmatiar vs. Nasim Akhundzada (1980s)	Groups competing for, and fighting over control of drug-producing lands	... Page 21.
Pakistan TB vs. Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (April, 2007)	Fighters from each group clashed over land and smuggling routes (like Mexican cartels)	...page 13.
All tribes	Tribal differences among groups competing in the landscape	Singh, Deepali Gaur. <i>Drugs Production and Trafficking in Afghanistan</i> , pg 34
Ghilzai vs. Durani tribes	300 year family feud between major tribes: Senior TB leadership including Mullah Omar, belongs to the Ghilzai Tribe, and have been in a feud with the Durani tribe (President Karsi’s family) who have a history of national leadership in Afghanistan.	Thomas H. Jonson, and Chris Mason. <i>Understanding the Taliban in Afghanistan</i> . Page 76, and 78.
Elements of GIRoA agencies and/or key leaders within them	Government corruption an everyday occurrence	Sanders, Doug. <i>Corruption eats away at Afghan government</i> . The Globe and Mail, Online (8 SEP 2010).
ISI (Pakistan, Inter-Service Intelligence Agency)	TB considered an asset of ISI	Steve, Coll. <i>Return of the Taliban</i> . Front Line. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/taliban/interviews/coll.html Obtained 8 SEP, 2010.
Afghan population	1. Small amounts of the population actively support the TB: Estimated 15% support TB, 10% are active government supporters, 75% are fence sitters. 2. Tribal elder from Barakzai tribe in Gereshk (2007) estimated 20-25% support for TB, 25% for government, and 60% of the population supported non one.	Giustozzi, Antonio. <i>Decoding the Taliban</i> . C. Hurst and Company, 2009. Page 133.

	3. Interviewed TB member (2008) stated TB enjoyed 30% support in Helmand Province.	
Key historical example of inter/intra-fighting	Inter/intra-fighting even when fighting a common external enemy (soviets, U.S.): in 1989, Sayed Jamal ordered his men to kill Amahd Sadd Massood. They failed to kill him but ambushed 36 of his followers. Jamal later tried and executed for killing members of his own group who represented another tribe.	Yusef, Muhammad and Adken, Mark. <i>The Bear Trap</i> .Page 129.
Haqanni Netwok	Lack of inter-tribal confidence within this group between Kandaharis and Paktiawal (from Paktika): In 2000, Paktiawall twice resisted Kandahari dominance because they tried to ban Paktiawall's tradition of egg-fighting.	Yusef, page 72.

Failing to meet the criteria set forth for *insurgency* and the recent disintegration of the core organization, TB in much of Afghanistan can also be analyzed from a different point of view. The following definitions serve as a point of reference to help the reader understand that the Afghan phenomena fit U.S. Federal criminal statutes. In reading these definitions, the reader should consider TB and other group's behaviors just addressed.

Table 3. Definitions; U.S. Criminal Statutes.

Crime	Definition:	Reference:
Organized Crime	The FBI defines organized crime as any group having some manner of a formalized structure and whose primary objective is to obtain money through illegal activities. Such groups maintain their position through the use of actual or threatened violence, corrupt public officials, graft, or extortion, and generally have a significant impact on the people in their locales, region, or the country as a whole	http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/orgcrime/glossary.htm
Criminal Enterprise	The FBI defines a criminal enterprise as a group of individuals with an identified hierarchy, or comparable structure, engaged in significant criminal activity. These organizations often engage in multiple criminal activities and have extensive supporting networks.	(http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/orgcrime/glossary.htm)
Continuing Criminal Enterprise	(2) such violation is a part of a continuing series of violations of this subchapter or subchapter II of this chapter-- (A) which are undertaken by such person in concert with five or more other persons with respect to whom such person occupies a position of organizer, a supervisory position, or any other position of management, and (B) from which such person obtains substantial income or resources	http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/21cfr/21usc/848.htm
Significant Racketeering Activities	The FBI defines significant racketeering activities as those predicate criminal acts that are chargeable under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations statute. The following list of U.S. federal crimes only includes those the TB and other criminal groups in Afghanistan	http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/orgcrime/glossary.htm

	<p>are known to continually engage in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bribery ▪ Money Laundering ▪ Obstruction of Justice ▪ Murder for Hire ▪ Drug Trafficking ▪ Sexual Exploitation of Children ▪ Alien Smuggling ▪ Trafficking in Counterfeit Goods ▪ Theft from Interstate Shipment ▪ Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property <p>And the following state crimes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Murder ▪ Kidnapping ▪ Arson ▪ Robbery ▪ Bribery ▪ Extortion ▪ Drugs 	
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The following list of known behaviors perpetrated by TB and TB-like organizations can be compared to the above statutes used to label types of criminal elements. This comparison leads a reasonable person to conclude that many of the elements in Afghanistan, who by their actions and activities are destabilizing the situation there, can be labeled as criminal elements themselves.

Table 4. Sample list of groups operating in Afghanistan fitting U.S. Statutes.

Group:	Links to:	Reference:
Various groups	Trafficking in Drugs	Singh, Deepali Gaur. Drugs Production and Trafficking in Afghanistan, pg 50
Key TB leadership	Connections to major traffickers as Haji Juma Khan. Indicted by U.S. Attorney, Southern District of New York: “The Taliban's terrorist insurgency has been funded in part by drug traffickers who provide financing to the Taliban in exchange for protection for their drug routes, production labs, and opium poppy fields.” ALIZAI, Haji Azizullah (a.k.a. AZIZULLAH, Haji),	U.S. Attorney, Southern District of New York. Public Release, April 21, 2009. http://www.justice.gov/usao/nys/pressreleases/April09/khanhajijumas2indictmentpr.pdf . Placed on the list of targets by Office of Foreign asset Control, U.S. Department of Treasury, June 1, 2007. https://www.treasury.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/actions/20070601.shtml
TB, Haqanni Network, others	Atrocities committed against innocent	Kelly Wallace. “U.S. releases Taliban

	populations: Murdering eight boys, burned an entire family alive, killed over 100 Afghans and hung their bodies from lamp posts.	'catalogue of atrocities". 22 NOV, 2001. CNN. http://articles.cnn.com/2001-11-22/us/ret.wh.taliban.atrocities_1_taliban-osama-london-and-islamabad?_s=PM:US
TB, Haqanni Network, others	Operating as criminal enterprise; crimes include: Murder, loan sharking, protection racketeering, money laundering, etc	Giustozzi, Antonio. <i>Decoding the Taliban</i> . C. Hurst and Company, 2009. Page 10, 18.
Afghan groups/gangs	International drug deals and ties with groups across borders	Singh, Deepali Gaur. <i>Drugs Production and Trafficking in Afghanistan</i> , pg 75. Cooley, John. <i>Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism</i> , Pluto Press, 1999, p. 131
Haqanni Network, others	Ties to other criminal elements: Since at least the 1990s TB was making millions of dollars in protection money for drug couriers, and taxation of territories crossed	Singh, Deepali Gaur. <i>Drugs Production and Trafficking in Afghanistan</i> , pages 133-138.

Coexistence of competing elements and interests

Many official U.S. and coalition organizations have argued that parts of Afghanistan can be distinguished between those having government presence, and those having little or none. It has also been argued that wherever weak tribal hierarchies exist, there is that much less security and control. In these areas warlords prevail. According to Giustozzi, three elements are essential for the growth of this phenomenon: weak leadership (traditional in the area), a non-ideological mindset, and independent financial resources.¹⁰ Even when the TB was at the height of its movement, other independent elements were already competing for regional resources. To illustrate this point, a short list of competing groups is provided below:

Table 5. Sample list of competing elements and their interests.

Leader:	Name of group:	Type of activities:	Associated with:
Jalaluddin Haqqani (warlord) ¹¹	Haqqani Network	Violence, weapon smuggling. Believed a very loose confederation with TB, but separate insurgency/criminal group	TB, Al Qaeda (Giustozzi, Page, 59-60)
Gulbuddin Hikmatiar (Rebel leader)	(Hezb-I Islami (Gulbuddin; HIG)	Military, violent faction; moving towards political legitimacy	

¹⁰ Giustozzi, Antonio. *Decoding the Taliban*. C. Hurst and Company, 2009. Page 49.

¹¹

Yed Munawwar Hassan	Jamat-e Islami	Pro-Taliban sentiment	TB
Mohammad Nabi Mohammad J	Harakat-e-Inqilab-e Islami (HII)	Fought against Soviets. Broke up during 1990s	Former members defected to TB
Abdul Latif Mansur	Mansur Network		TB
Mullah Mohammad Omar	Taliban		TB
Abnan Gulshair El	Al Qaeda		TB
LTG. Ahmad Shuja Pasna	Pakistan Inter-Service Intelligence Service (ISI)	Manipulating TB leadership and Pakistani TB. Funding and promoting TB and others; harboring TB and other criminal elements in Pakistan.	TB
Syed Ahmad Effendi Gaillans	Mahaz-e-Milli Islami (Drugs, pg 63)	Advocates (?) to former Zahir Shah	Opposed to TB
Sebhantulla Mojaddidi	Jabba-e-Nejat-e-Milli Drugs, pg 64		Opposed to TB
TB Rahbari or Ali Shura (Leadership or Supreme Council)	Independent TB led by the leadership	Provide security and support to TB senior leadership	TB
Local TB commanders operating within their own tribes	Local TB	Murder, rape, robbery, human rights violations	TB
Mawlawi Nasrallah Mansur (Now deceased)	Mansur network	Fighting, kidnapping, targeting and killing U.N. and government representatives	Ties with Kashmiri Harakat-ul- mujahaddin; associated with TB
Anwarul Haq Mujahid	Tora Bora Nizami Mahaz, or Tora Bora Military Front	Engages coalition troops in Nangarhar Province	New group supporting TB
Dr. Badr Munir	Kashmiri Harakat-ul- Mujahadin	Militant operations mostly in Pakistan, but known to also operate in Afghanistan	Links to Osama Bin Laden. Politically aligned with the radical political party Jamiat Ulema-i- Islam's Fazlur Rehman faction (JUI- FF) Haqanni Network
Allegedly, Ebu Yahya Muhammed Fatih	Uzbek-Turkish Islamic Jihad Movement	Fighting in Sarobi District, Paktika Province	Aligned itself with TB. Partly operates with Haqanni Network
PDPA		PDPA activities helped HiI	Polarization with

		in their influence operations leading to growth of their insurgency	Hisb-i-Islami (HiI); Pg 87
Khost Protection Force Militias	Sometimes led by military officers in Khost	Security operations; ruthlessness with population, human rights abuses	Paid by U.S. Special Forces (certain periods of the war); Pg 87
Gul Agha Sherzai; Barakzai tribe	Serves as Nangarhar Governor*	Accused of contracting fraud, drug trafficking, corruption	Official ties to GIRoA
Sher Mohammed Akhundzada; Alizai tribe	Meshrano Jirga	Former governor. Narco-trafficking, corruption	GIRoA:
Abdul Rahman Khan (Jan): Noorzai tribe	Former Helmand Provincial police chief	Narco-trafficking, corruption	Former official ties to GIRoA
Abdul Wahid (Rais Baghrani); Alizai tribe	Former TB commander; Now Wallesi lower house of parliament	Now reconciled with GIRoA	GIRoA: Serves as Helmand Militia commander

Two proposed theories questioning the Afghan problem as an insurgency

The observation of behavior on the ground and discussions of printed accounts of TB and TB-like elements in Afghanistan, led to the formulization of two supporting theories. The first theory describes the behavior of observed organizations in relation to each other. Also, a literature review of historical examples reveals consistent patterns of independent criminal behavior present during foreign occupations despite temporarily coalescing against the foreign enemy. The second describes the “de-evolution” of insurgencies themselves and help explain what insurgencies look like after their transition to criminal elements.

Afghanistan Conflict Theory

An inductive approach to the Afghan problem using quantifiable and qualitative data-sets has shed light on observed behavior which led to its description. Early in this study, we knew we were not dealing with an insurgency, but did not know what it was, or what to name it. What was clear, however, is that the Afghan problem is very unique and its seemingly chaotic appearance could easily confuse those too close to the data. We further realized that any attempt to coin the observed behavior would challenge the status quo.

Considering the data as presented in this paper, the following is an effort to piece the individual parts of the puzzle with this theory. In understanding the applicability of this theory, it is important to break it down into component elements and compare it to specific historical examples in explaining the Afghan model.

Therefore, we theorize that the Afghan problem is observed as follows:

The Afghan problem is a delicate, yet self-balancing coexistence between chaotic elements possessing competing ideals, motivations, boundaries, histories and cultures, at times

...serving as negotiable differences which over the passage of time, have loosely coalesced into temporary steady, or intermittent alliances

The *delicate* and *self-balancing coexistence* addresses relationships among *chaotic elements*. First, the chaotic elements are composed of those elements (addressed in Table 1, 2, 4, 5) which included militia, insurgents, warlords and others in brief. Second, its *delicacy* resides in the fact that these elements have diverging or competing factors as *ideals, motivations, boundaries, histories and cultures* which at any given time have also caused friction within and among groups. However, these same factors have shown to allow for *self-balancing acts of coexistence* when faced with a more immediate and overpowering mutual cause(s).

It is during these times that many groups in Afghanistan have loosely banded. In other words, the diverging factors became *negotiable differences* when faced with a common enemy. Two modern specific examples caused many of the mentioned groups to combine into major alliances. During the Soviet invasion, many independent groups coalesced into the Mujahedeen resistance funded by the U.S. and others, including Pakistan's ISI. A similar response later included the Northern Alliance composed of different tribes and groups that also cut across different ethnicities and cultures. Later, the U.S. presence sparked a common cause among them supported by a struggle, but since then that cause has died. However, one should not be fooled into believing this coalescing action was a seamless union with a unified command and mutually supporting efforts at the operational and tactical levels. In fact, it was quite the contrary as previously mentioned.

Therefore, although the presence of a foreign enemy caused them to overlook their differences, before, during, and after the soviet and U.S. presence, diverging factors continue to cause rifts (like those in Table 1 and 2) within and among all organizations. However, *over the passage of time*, despite not being under the threat of foreign invaders, these groups have negotiated their differences and *have loosely coalesced into temporary steady, or intermittent alliance*. During these times of "perceived" peace, some of these chaotic groups have negotiated their differences and today, despite the U.S. presence, appear to have another common cause--the mutual destabilization of Afghanistan. A destabilized Afghanistan in terms of peace and stability, and a corrupt government, gives illicit elements the freedom of maneuver to continue their criminal enterprises within the country, as well as enjoying unfettered access across the border into Pakistan.

The De-evolution Theory of Insurgencies

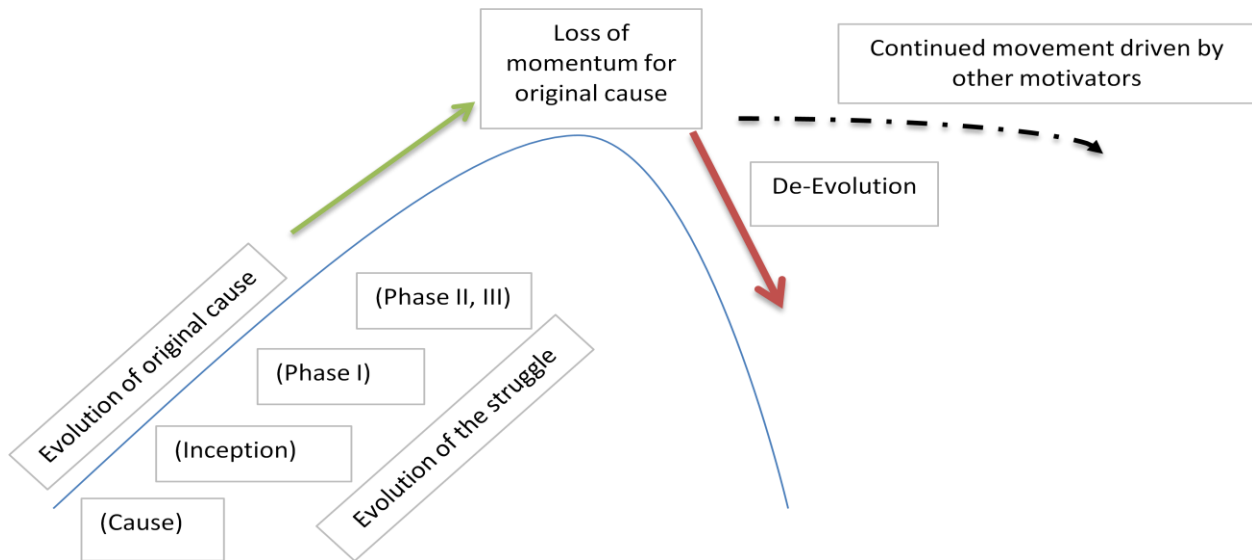
These authors' personal experiences in counter-insurgency in Afghanistan, as well as knowledge of other insurgencies in Latin America led to the development of this theory. The attempt to apply those lessons learned for the purpose of understanding the Afghan problem, and asking questions about previous insurgency outcomes, led to the conclusion that insurgencies transform, given the death of their original causes. Here, The De-Evolution Theory helps explain the disparity between the original purpose or cause of those insurgencies compared to observed behavior and actions.

Realizing that insurgencies want to grow their capabilities to be able to compete in open warfare with government troops, the assumption is that all efforts are an upward momentum. However, at some point, observed behaviors challenged stated goals and even countered them. It is here we concluded that although original goals are left behind, the struggle continues, though

it no longer makes sense. Relying on personal experience dealing in law enforcement and in particular counter-narcotics, observed criminal behaviors and associations became so clear. Continuously toying with this theory and its application to various insurgencies, and ultimately to the Afghan problem, led us to conclude the similarities in fate, or death of cause as being an expected progression.

Therefore, presented below is a model of this phenomenon, illustrating the rise and fall of the original cause, and the sustainment of operations to achieve “other” causes that emerge during on-going struggles.

Figure 1. De-Evolution Theory of Insurgencies



Almost all insurgencies begin with injustices perpetrated by the government. At some point, a convincing person or charismatic leader engages the population in an effort to bring them together. This can be a slow process, especially when the target populace does not have a history of insurgency, is not their culture, or disconnects in communications exist. Assuming this hurdle is achieved, the cause is born, and efforts then focus on developing an armed struggle. These normally begin with the inception of small operations as acts of sabotage, use of Molotov cocktails, small explosives, etc., for the purpose of sometimes causing government forces to over react and take it out on the people. Vladimir Illich Illianov (aka. Lenin) became an expert instigator, and the spread of communism into Central America initially, made extensive use of this tactic. The purpose of this effort is to exploit the government’s overreaction against the people as cannon fodder to rouse larger portions of the population to support the cause, and eventually, to grow the armed struggle. During the inception phase, the insurgents remain in hiding, are very careful about their movements, and distrust many strangers for fear of getting caught. Here, also, they rely on themselves or a small group of people for support (concealment, protection, food, and operational funds). Noteworthy leaders who have been successful in growing an insurgency have often come from the middle to upper class given that country’s social economic scale.

Some of these have included Vladimir Illich Illianov whose father was well off and received hereditary nobility from the Tsar of Russia himself. Others include Fidel Castro whose father was a rich plantation owner, Osama Bin Laden who belongs to the royal family of Saudi Arabia. During the small scale insurrection of the Zapatista movement in southern Mexico in 1994, Comandante Marcos, although his economic status is currently unknown, is nevertheless, clearly a well educated person. His contemporary knowledge and deep understanding of regional and geo-politics, social-cultural struggles, capitalist struggles (as argued by Carl Marx, Engels, and Max Weber), including knowledge of guerrilla operations implies at least affluent ties.

In phase one, insurgents attempt to establish an independent base of operations way from urban areas where they can grow their ranks, train, and maintain a safe haven. From here, they are able to escalate their level of violence and conduct hit and run guerrilla operations, often associated with the recovery of arms and ammunition. Heavy propaganda efforts for funding and recruiting, including the spread of ideology is key. Eventually, insurgencies (at least until a few years ago) focused ultimately on achieving phase III, which is where they might be able to fight government forces in open combat as the FARC in Colombia did on several occasions. This struggle to maintain an upward momentum requires a steady stream of funding for salaries, logistics, arms and weapons, and their success in achieving such support depends on several factors not addressed here. The quicker alternative, however, is the establishment of ties with drug cartels or other illicit trades.

At this point, things begin to change as funding and man's human weakness as greed begin to grow. This is when egotistic motives begin to take shape and the goals of the insurgency begin to change in the "spirit" of their application, while still remaining loosely tied to the original. At this point the populace still supports the insurgency. However, when egotistic motives and criminal behavior become apparent to the people, coupled with insurgent atrocities against their own supporters, a distancing effect among both groups occurs. Up until a few years ago, one of these authors was convinced that the FARC in Colombia was still a true insurgency despite clear evidence of illicit activities. However, an NGO associate, also working in Colombia, successfully persuaded him that the fact the FARC still invest time and money to indoctrinate new recruits and those in the ranks, is only an effort to maintain the recruits under their control. Selling them on higher-ordered or intangible goals helps keep the average insurgent focused on a common ideological struggle. The same case can be applied to TB and other groups who purport to fight for an Islamic state in order to keep fighters in the ranks despite the obvious atrocities committed against other Muslims in Afghanistan and their well known illicit activities. Therefore, although the original cause or goal of these insurgencies suffered a death, they have continued their armed struggle in pursuit of altered motivating factors.

A new conclusion to the Afghan conflict

Afghan criminal groups enjoy a very permissive state by virtue of the state's inability to govern effectively. Lack of trust in the government and individuals accustomed to a cultural narrative of individual power and wealth at the expense of others results in small groups standing in dissent. There is no doubt that what we're encountering in Afghanistan is a collection of competing groups disguised as militias, insurgents, drug lords, warlords and others, which collectively equate to mere criminal organizations. Acknowledging that the heart of the insurgency was destroyed at some point and that we cannot and should not commit to

maintaining Afghanistan as a permanent welfare state, a different approach to the current plan is advisable.

Although the current COIN effort would normally be an effective measure if it were truly engaging a single insurgency with legitimate causes, it does not effectively address the criminal element. The most important initial action is to label the Afghan problem for what it is—a *Chaotic Cannibalistic State* composed of criminal elements as described in the theory. A modified approach in engagement to increase our effectiveness, cut our civilian and military losses, and reduce our budget footprint must be considered if we wish to achieve success in Afghanistan.

Policy recommendations should consider the potential second and third order effects of our actions and also the long term consequences for the region and for the world. As a *Chaotic Cannibalistic State*, Afghanistan has been, is and will be embroiled in instability and violence for generations. For this behavior to change, a systematic assault on dysfunctional cultural values must be waged on a multigenerational scale. Intensive (re)education must occur and be sustained for at least three generations. Lacking the public backing, capital and will to commit to Afghanistan for this length of time, other options must be considered.

Continuing along our present COIN strategy, our ability to engage an amorphous enemy varies from location to location. Given the shifting nature of the enemy and the lack of support we can hope to realize from local populations, as well as the corruption that exists at all levels of the government we are backing, we cannot engage the enemy with a unity of effort. Simply wishing for democracy to happen will not work. A functioning democracy must be something that the population is willing to sacrifice for. The people have no will or education to promote any but those already in power to office. Given the long-history of Afghanistan as a *Chaotic Cannibalistic State*, corruption is the norm instead of the exception. There is no accountability for men of power and influence in this country. As long as these power-brokers of Afghanistan are lining their pockets with Coalition money, there is no need for them to implement a functioning democracy. As long as we enable them to become wealthier and wealthier, the people will suffer. Our present COIN strategy simply promotes one set of people over another; granted the people we are promoting do not have fundamental Islamist beliefs...at least not today. As history has shown, however, where individual Afghan loyalty is forever, the loyalty of a group is rented for a short time only. The COIN approach in a *Chaotic Cannibalistic State* is only effective during the short insurgency phase of the cycle. If applied to the long cycle of conflict, it means an indefinite commitment.

With the Obama administration's promise of a 2011 withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, a reasonable end of operations can be achieved. Recognizing that Afghanistan is a narco-state with a serious criminal problem that creates a very unstable nation in a volatile region of the world, we would be remiss to simply leave them to their own accord. The long term commitment of combat troops to police the largest gang-land in the world is unconscionable. Our economy cannot withstand such a commitment and our national security comes into question with so many assets dedicated and experiencing combat fatigue. Understanding the security threat of an unstable Islamic state in an age of global terrorism, we must arrive at a strategy that promotes a more stable Afghanistan but does not cost us in lives and dollars. The themes presented in this work provide opportunity for the Obama Administration to craft an exit that should satisfy their political goals and provide relief for the American people. Reexamining Afghanistan within the context of de-evolution of insurgency and rise of criminal elements is the

political exit strategy so desperately needed to support Obama's 2011 withdrawal. Publically declaring the fall of TB due to the success of the international effort is victory. The problem is no longer such that it merits an international coalition force, and troops can be withdrawn. By default, this political exit strategy creates the diplomatic conditions to set in motion a second opportunity to initiate the execution of an *operational exit strategy* before December. Finally, acknowledging the rise of criminal elements and their destabilizing efforts does merit continued support yet uniquely in an indirect way, or by proxy. As troops draw down in Afghanistan, professional advisors, mentors and consultants should increase. These professionals should be placed to enhance the capacity of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. The security of the Afghan people should be indigenous in nature, fought for and achieved by the people, not purchased by Coalition partners.

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