IN THIS ISSUE

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Cover Photo: Isiolo, Kenya. Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, Command Master Chief Roy Maddocks, left, and Kenyan Defense Sergeant Major, Warrant Officer 1, Ashford Miriti Nbubi address students at the School of Infantry. U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Steve Cline. 2008.

One Team's Approach to VSO

by Rory Hanlin

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If you've seen one VSO, you've seen one VSO.

This paper is an effort to demonstrate my team's approach to VSO using the principles and TTPs that numerous articles have recently highlighted in the July-September issue of Special Warfare Magazine. It illustrates the practical application of the principles of VSO in the current operational environment and details exactly how these principles appear through the prism of the Military Decision-Making Process. This is the product of the team's assessment, planning, execution, after action review and refinement process over the last 150 days of VSO operations in an austere and isolated location.

The Village Stability Operations Methodology is a bottom up approach that employs USSOF teams and partnered units embedded with villagers in order to establish security and to support and promote socio-economic development and good governance. Each Village Stability Team is a distinct entity with its own culture, appearances and way of operating, which reflects the Afghan dynamic of that particular site. It is true that Village Stability Platforms (VSP) throughout Afghanistan vary greatly within the context of conducting Village Stability Operations (VSO), yet every VSP applies the same principles of the methodology and shepherds the village through the phases of *Shape, Hold, Build, and Expand/Transition;* culminating with connecting the village to GIRoA through the district and province.

Our VSP is one such site that has made significant progress in the year since USSOF teams began the VSO effort. This VSP is no exception to the rule; it has its own unique blend of VSO applied by the Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha (SFODA) and based on the cultural realities of the district. But like all VSO, operations are broadly categorized into Governance, Development and Security. It is useful, then to illuminate the particularities of specific VSPs to determine how the principles of VSO are at play across a broad spectrum of different and distinct sites. This analysis is an effort to do just that: to identify how the principles of VSO filter through the Military Decision Making Process to render a coherent campaign plan with a clear way forward. This analysis will cover the ODA's plan for the Governance, Security

and Development lines of operations with a definition of success in each.

The district in which we are operating presents distinct challenges that arise primarily from its deeply divided human and physical terrain and the lack of coalition and GIRoA presence over the last decade. Since our arrival we have continually developed the ground situation and our understanding of the district's idiosyncrasies. Based on this continual assessment, progress along the VSO shape-hold-build-transition/expansion model is inhibited by 3 key factors: a defunct system of governance, a divided population, and an underdeveloped economy based in subsistence farming. These factors collude to form a survivalist culture with a zero-sum worldview.

Currently, both traditional and GIRoA governance systems are defunct. The village elders that make up the traditional governance structures have had all visages of power stripped from them by years of constant fighting, instability and successive regime changes. They do not have access to the resources necessary to establish themselves as local power brokers. The vast majority of the elders represent villages dominated by subsistence farming. These villages do not produce any respectable degree of disposable income, thus the village and elders are denied the most functional source of power.

Tribal disputes between the Barakzai and Alizai tribes also play a key role in dividing the population. The Barakzai account for approximately 50% of the population and have been the traditional power holders. The disenfranchised Alizai tribe is between 25% and 35% of the population. Smaller tribes of less than 5% of the population comprise the remaining population. The Ishaqzi tribe is the most significant actor in this group. Largely discontented with the current government, the Ishaqzi are centered around Sakzi Kalay and are a traditional supporter of the Taliban in the district.

The harsh terrain, exacerbated by austere weather conditions, with no major Main Supply Route and limited movement through mountain passes truncates the lines of communication and interchange between the villages in the district and between the district and Kandahar proper. One of

the most inhibiting factors all aspects of progress in the district, the harsh terrain limits the district government's ability to collect information and project force via the ANP. It raises the cost of moving goods to markets and erodes the opportunities for economic expansion.

The majority of the district survives on subsistence farming. These farms do not yield any surplus income that can be invested in local economic growth. Currently, there are no natural resources in the district capable of driving economic growth other than the arable land. Any local economic growth will be based on increasing the ability of local farmers to produce surplus of agricultural products and preserve those products to take advantage of optimal market conditions.

Because the populace cannot conceive of cooperation in pursuit of a mutually beneficial outcome, it will ensure the survival of the individual, the family, the village and the tribe. The populace fights each other for any and all CF assistance, believing in a zero-sum game which cannot be mutually beneficial to all. To change this unproductive mentality, we are pursuing three key lines of operation in the district that addresses the major issues and problems. First, the ODA is focusing on enhancing the efficacy of the district government, its inner-cooperation and its relationship with the populace. Second, the team is actively fostering economic growth through various agricultural and civil affairs programs focused on the District Center and bazaar. Third, the ODA is expanding the ANSFs' ability to secure the district, expanding the overall ANSF security apparatus and establishing them as the district's sole dispute arbiter.

GOVERNANCE

Inefficiency, corruption and tribal bias characterized governance in the district. The length of tenure, differing tribal affiliation, lifelong connections to the populace and relative prevalence of financial corruption have severely hampered the district leadership's ability to effectively govern without bias. Our goal is to enhance the district government by focusing on three tasks: empowering the District Governor, establishing ANSFs' monopoly on the legitimate use of force and improving the efficacy of the district government.

Empowering the District Governor

The tribes of the district recognize the district governor as a fair and impartial judge, and our first effort is to build his power base. The District Governor (DG) has no functioning power over the ANP and lacks the ability to enforce his decisions through force of arms. The DG also lacks resources he can disburse to or withhold from the population. Because of these two factors, the district populace sees the DG as largely unable to address key grievances. To improve the DG's popular perception, we are executing these four sub-tasks:

1. **Establish the executive shura.** This provides the governor with a forum to engage the collective population. We are advising the district governor on the best way to use these shuras to expand and solidify his power base. The district has elected a four man shura to advise the District Governor on where to build small critical infrastructure projects (wells, irrigation ditches, etc). This District Development Assembly provides the necessary connection from the District Governor to the people receiving aid.

2. **Demonstrate the district governor's access to resources.** This requires enabling the governor to provide basic services, specifically popular access to medical care, access to a district school, and year-round low cost transportation to the provincial services and markets in Kandahar.

3. **Empower the district governor to grant or refuse village development projects.** We are encouraging the DG to focus on the construction of check dams, storage silos and farm-to-market roads that link towns to the district center.

4. **Enable the DG to build a broad district government.** By authorizing the DG to hire key leaders in the district and pay them a stable salary or to fire individuals whose villages defect from GIRoA, we encourage these leaders to assume a personal vested interest in supporting the government.

Improving the Efficacy of Government

For years, the District Government has consisted of two positions: the District Governor and the District Chief of Police (DCOP). However, this leadership duo has a relationship rife with disagreements, miscommunication, and power struggles. The DG of the Alizai tribe and the DCOP of the Barakzai tribe have held their positions for six and eight years respectively. This dysfunctional relationship leads to an ineffective governing body split largely along tribal lines. Additionally, no governmental staff exists to support these two positions. The DCOP has acted as the district's judge,

logistics officer, tribal affairs officer, general contractor, and cook. Both leaders are forced to govern outside of their traditional roles in order to accomplish marginal successes. To encourage better cooperation between the districts two main political leaders, we are executing these two sub-tasks:

1. **Persuade the DG/DCOP to act in their governmental roles.** As long as the focus and time of the district leaders remains so inefficiently divided, they will never be able to address the district's most important issues. We are addressing the district leadership's overextension by advising them to narrow their role, delegate to trusted individuals and focus on improving the entire district.

2. **Improve communication between the two district leaders.** To increase both the frequency and quality of the communication among the district leadership, the ODA conducts nightly meetings with the DG, DCOP and NDS Chief. The ODA focuses on constructing positive sum scenarios to create a balance of power between the District Governor and the Chief of Police that encourages mutual cooperation. These nightly meetings also allow the ODA to advise/assist in all major governmental decision-making, ensuring tribal rivalries and past biases are removed from government policy.

Monopolizing the ANP's legitimate use of force

In recent years, the DCOP and his ANP have aggravated the relationship between the government security apparatus and the local populace. A history of negative actions toward the Alizai and Ishaqzi tribes has bred their deep-seeded mistrust and anger towards the ANP. Additionally, insurgents in the district constantly intimidate and harass the local populace, thereby capitalizing on the pervading survivalist mentality and coercing the populace to acquiesce to their demands. To refute the popular view that ANSF no longer hold legitimate authority to police the district, we are executing these three sub-tasks:

1. **Improve the public image of ANP.** The ODA plans on improving the ANP's image by supervising, advising, assisting and participating in their operations at all times, ensuring they act as neutral mediators in all situations.

2. **Delegitimize the insurgents' use of violence.** The ODA is using its attached MISO assets to attack the insurgents' use of force,

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haphazard IED emplacement and intimidation of villagers. Broadcast radio messages are aimed at delegitimizing insurgent operations in the district.

3. **Train ANP on proper policing procedures.** The ODA is addressing ANP's lack of professionalism by allowing the Embedded Police Mentors (EPM), subject matter experts in policing, to train and advise the ANP in the conduct of policing in the district. These EPMs

will also advise the DCOP on proper procedures for the use of force, imprisonment and conflict resolution.

DEVELOPMENT

The underdeveloped economic system in the district is one of the most critical factors enabling insurgent activity and freedom of movement in the district. The lack of surplus production and access to markets discourages the residents from economically engaging the rest of Afghanistan. In turn, there is no taxable financial surplus to spark the provincial government's interest in the district. The lack of security and paved roads combined with a porous border makes commerce in Pakistan more cost efficient than commerce in Afghanistan. These factors combine to make the district disenfranchised and economically isolated from the rest of Afghanistan. Our goal is to improve the economy by stabilizing the supply-demand relationship in the district by executing four tasks: developing the bazaar into an economic center, creating a local surplus of agricultural production, lowering the cost of moving goods to markets and providing basic essential services that support long-term economic and social development.

Developing the bazaar into an economic center

The ODA is focused on creating a bazaar that supports year-round economic activity and functions as the cultural and social hub of the district. In our first step, we renovated the bazaar using the "cash-for-work" concept. To date, local workers cleaned the bazaar, installed trash cans, and dug a network of drainage ditches to keep the roads in the bazaar passable during the rainy seasons, and are planning on install lighting throughout the bazaar to increase the length of the business day. The ANP conduct regular patrols in the bazaar to maintain a security presence. Recently, contractors have arrived to build the District Clinic, a new District Center (DC), and refurbish the district's police station. Additionally the contractors will build the district's first road through the bazaar and DC connecting the surrounding villages and farmlands to its main marketplace and seat of governance.

1. **Support a year-round farm-to-buyer connection.** This connection requires supporting continuous communication between local farm owners and buyers that have access to capital reserves and broader markets in Afghanistan's urban centers. We can identify farmers that will grow a surplus of agricultural produce and connect them to buyers in large urban centers. These buyers begin inspecting the farmers' crops during the growing season and agree on a price prior to harvest time. This guarantees the farmers a set profit and ensures they have a vested interest in maximizing the productive output of their farms.

2. **Start critical businesses through micro-grants.** Attendance in the bazaar will increase proportional to the increase in desirable goods available in the bazaar shops at competitive prices. We can speed up this process by giving micro-grants to individuals willing to bring new goods into the market. Goods like the brick-fuel press and services like fee-based VOIP communications are a more efficient alternative to those currently available and spur growth of inter-dependence in the district.

Creating local surplus of agricultural produce

While enjoying the soil and climate conditions to support year-round planting and harvesting cycles, district farmers work their farms only a few months out of the year due to limited crop diversity and scarce water supply. This problem culminates at harvest time because the majority of the district harvests their crops at the same time. Without the ability to preserve their harvest for the most favorable market conditions, farmers must deliver their surplus crops to market simultaneously. This surplus exceeds demand for these goods and depresses the price to a point where the profit margin disappears. In addition, the crop supply cannot meet the district demand throughout the remainder of the year, destroying the economic incentive for any excess agricultural production. By setting the agricultural conditions that allow the local famers to produce crops beyond basic subsistence, we give them potential access to a profit margin. In addition, farming becomes a profitable alternative to illicit employment. In order to create this agricultural surplus, we are executing three sub-tasks:

1. **Improve crop quality and diversity.** To institute a winter growing season with the help of agricultural contractors we are continually distributing higher quality and more durable seeds to the local farmers. In the long term, this harvest will produce enough wheat for each farmer to both feed his family and have enough harvest to plant during the next November and December.

2. **Improve access to critical and scarce agricultural resources.** To increasing farmers' access to water, seed, fertilizer, and farming

knowledge, we are encouraging and supporting the construction of check dams and other water conservation techniques. The winter wheat and other seed dissemination programs are addressing the narrow and limited access to seeds. In addition, we are distributing urea-based fertilizer, as well as offering a urea nitrate for ammonium nitrate exchange program. To enhance farming knowledge, we (in partnership with USDA) have constructed two model farms to teach improved farming practices to the population.

3. **Improve methods to preserve goods for future sales.** By teaching produce preservation techniques and building storage silos we can stabilize the market for these crops through the year. This improves the profit margin for the farmers and encourages them to implement their farming practices throughout the round.

Lowering the costs of commerce

The district has no transportation infrastructure. Roads in the district are rough sewn out edges of even rougher terrain that facilitate marginally faster movement by motorcycle or pack animal. Trucks can traverse only a handful of roads. These travel conditions prohibit an efficient transit of goods to market, which greatly incentivizes subsistence farming. To facilitate the efficient trade of goods, we are executing two sub-tasks:

1. **Build farm to market roads in the district.** These roads are graveled, improved roads that connect the DC Bazaar to villages and subsequently from villages to the farm. These roads will help encourage farmers to bring their agricultural surplus to market for sale by lowering the cost of moving goods, as well as easing and shortening the journey. The first road has recently been completed, connecting surrounding farmlands to their villages.

2. **Facilitate and supervise construction of the DC Loop.** This road will run through the bazaar and the district DC. Currently contractors have begun the road and will complete it late this year.

Provide basic essential infrastructure and services

The District Government has no capacity to address the basic needs of its people. The district has little medical infrastructure, with all of the populace receiving medical aid from local doctors with minimal education and skill. The extremely underdeveloped school system lacks a formal education system with a graduated grade structure. Informal education exists in mosques and madrassas scattered around the district, and consists entirely of religious learning. Lack of support from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education exacerbates these problems and renders the District Government unable to provide for its people. To facilitate the district's delivery of the essential services, we will execute three sub-tasks:

1. **Fund schooling and distribute school supplies.** We are working with the DG to determine the locations of schools that will be instrumental in educating the children of the district. Two major schools have opened with a total of 350 students. We have enabled the district to open its own school near the bazaar with 20 students. We have also empowered the DG to be the focal point for all school supply distribution, delivering school supplies monthly to a total of over 1700 children. The program facilitates the transfer of responsibilities to the Ministry of Education representative for the district.

2. **Facilitate the construction of the district clinic.** Previously, medical infrastructure was limited to small, private practice doctors operating out of a random assortment of villages detached from the district government. The ODA has addressed this issue by funding a clinic focused on preventative medicine, public health and movement to higher care. It has recently opened in the bazaar. This temporary clinic provides basic medical care to the local populace and provides the district with its first centralized treatment facility in recent history. It houses the district medical staff until a more permanent district clinic is constructed. The clinic has a dedicated doctor with up to ten community health workers. Contractors also have recently started construction on the district clinic, located just northeast of the bazaar. This is a more permanent solution to the issue of lack of medical treatment in the district. This district clinic will eventually offer multiple doctors, nurses and community health workers in a full service setting.

3. **Refurbish the District Police Station, build a new District Center and Refurbish the District Mosque.** These three other major infrastructure projects will address the needs of both the local populace and the district government. The current district center is severely lacking in basic hygiene, available

living and work space, jail facilities, latrines and showers, electricity, kitchen and mess facilities. The current district center will be refurbished and upgraded to become the District ANP police station. The district annex will provide the DG with his advisors and secretaries workspace and lodging. The district mosque remains unfinished in the bazaar next to the district center. The UAE provides funding for mosque construction, while we oversee the contractors. Once built, the mosque will provide a central location for the local populace to gather, pray and interact with one another. We hope it will become an important cultural symbol of the government's commitment to its people, cooperation between Afghans and their government and the overall progress of the district.

SECURITY

The nature of the district presents numerous unique challenges that severely impede the security infrastructure from protecting the populace. The harsh, mountainous terrain dominates the district, restricting travelers to motorcycle and pack animal movement. The mountains scattered across the district present numerous opportunities for the Taliban to use as bed down locations, training camps and areas from which to stage attacks and emplace IEDs.

The district austerity and its rural populace inhibit the support it receives from higher levels of the Afghan Government. Until recently, the provincial government had completely ignored the district, preferring to treat it with benign neglect. This lack of support from the provincial government has lead to an unsupervised, ill-fitted, undermanned, poorly lead and largely untrained Afghan National Police (ANP) force that polices the district with imbibed tribal biases and little self-restraint. In fact, tribal differences in the district play a key role in determining the distribution of power, money and resources. These factors collude to create a serious security gap, which the Taliban exploit with their own customs and law to effectively intimidate, harass and coerce the populace into general acquiescence, despite the fact that many of the village elders are ex-mujahedeen fighters. Our goal is to build security by expelling the Taliban out of traditional operating areas in the district by executing three tasks: disrupting insurgent operations, supporting the district ANSF infrastructure and securing the district's key terrain.

Disrupting insurgent operations

Some patrols focus on engaging the populace, conducting Key Leader Engagements, Afghan Local Police recruitment, Civil Affairs project evaluation, IED location/reduction, intelligence gathering and establishing a security presence in the district. Other patrols focus on IED emplacement disruption/deterrence, reconnaissance/surveillance and overwatch. To successfully disrupt the insurgents operations in the district and build white space, we will execute two additional sub-tasks:

1. **Kill/capture/turn insurgents and disrupt major resupply routes:** By taking the Taliban personalities off of the battlefield we deny them the necessary leadership to conduct operations.

2. **Identify/disrupt insurgent district operations.** By developing intelligence sources, coordinating and enhancing intelligence collection through the National Directorate of Security (NDS) and ANP, conducting sensitive site exploitation on all IEDs, and increasing Intelligence, Surveillance Reconnaissance collection, we are acquiring a comprehensive picture of Taliban operational Tactics Techniques and Procedures in the district.

Supporting the district ANSF security infrastructure

The provincial government's denial of support to the district's ANP, NDS and Afghan Border Police (ABP) has crippled the ability of the security apparatus to effectively project force, recruit, equip and train new members, promote from within and address logistical deficiencies. The Afghan Local Police (ALP) program in the district has the potential to develop into the most important pillar in the ANSF structure and represents a promising way forward for establishing enduring security in the district. Though this program shows potential, the populace has been slow to cooperate. Village elders in the district have been supportive of the idea but are reluctant to demonstrate a substantive commitment, citing Taliban intimidation, coercion and fear of reprisals. With time, the ALP program may prove to be the decisive chapter in closing the book on the Taliban's hold of the populace and in bringing lasting security to the district as a whole.

1. **Increase the number of ANP.** We have recently received two embedded police mentors to assist in training, advising, mentoring and equipping the district ANP. They have a direct connection to mentors with the MOI and have already established more visibility on the

true number of ANP in the district, their supply of weapons and ammunition, their logistical infrastructure and the level of corruption. This link will also facilitate a necessary increase in the number of ANP in the district. Since the district ANP have no NCOs, only the DCOP has arrest authority. We plan to promote high achieving ANP soldiers to NCO rank and to populate the patrolman ranks with new recruits.

2. **Expand the NDS role in the district.** Historically, the district NDS have added little value to the security and intelligence network of the district. They lacked leadership, purpose, and motivation. After lobbying the NDS provincial leadership, they sent a strong leader to reorganize, reshape and assert control of the NDS mission in the district. Since his arrival, we have established an extremely productive relationship of information swapping. We will continue to pursue a greater relationship with the NDS to improve intelligence gathering.

3. **Solidify the logistical support chain.** While the ANP and NDS organizations have logistics officers in the provincial headquarters, they suffer from the district's austerity and almost completely rely on us for all classes of supply. Recently, we asked the Kandahar PCOP to create a mobile maintenance team (MMT) comprised of a complete package of maintenance and resupply personnel from MOI to travel to the district on a monthly basis to resolve all logistics issues.

4. **Support the ABP Checkpoints.** ABP's checkpoints (CP) along the AFPAK border range from a heavily fortified structure with an array of fully manned guard towers to a small almost abandoned outpost with little to no support. We communicate with the ABP CPs through the DCOP, and we plan on continued support of the checkpoints in the future.

5. **Build ALP.** We have trained and equipped ALP mostly centered on the DC. We plan to expand the role of ALP in the security infrastructure as we continue to train more of them further away from the DC.

Securing key terrain

IED emplacement in the river valleys of the district are a threat to local nationals, Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and Coalition Forces in the district. Both ANP CPs and patrolling will solidify the recent security gains and change the popular negative perception of security among the populace. A robust and permanent ANSF presence will prevent insurgent manipulation of the populace through their use of IED emplacement, night letters, intimidation, harassment and coercion. The support of the village elders in the key villages along the major wadis of the district will determine its future. Additionally, large civil affairs projects that provide the district populace with demonstrable progress are extremely important to secure from insurgent attacks. In addition to the civil infrastructure destruction, a successful attack would be an important victory at a time when the insurgency is perceived as weak.:

1. **Build ANSF CPs along the district's major river valleys.** We plan to establish fortified checkpoints manned by ANP and ALP near key villages in support of village security, ALP recruitment, infrastructure protection, IED emplacement interdiction, and demonstration of the government's commitment to security.

2. **Protect major CA projects in the district.** The ANP and NDS stationed at the district center are responsible for securing the planned civil infrastructure projects in the bazaar and district center. Additionally, the ODA will construct two fortified ANSF CPs near the bazaar to prevent a possible insurgent attack.

Success in the District

In Village Stability Operations establishing a common operating picture and defining success in pursuit of executing the commander's intent is a critical factor that affects the entire team effort. VSO in the district is characterized by managing and completing a vast array of seemingly unrelated tasks that interact in complex unimaginable ways, all in a system of decentralized execution. As the ODA continues along its three lines of operation we are constantly developing metrics to measure progress toward a common understanding of "success." This common understanding is vital in achieving unity of effort within the context of VSO. Without this common understanding and subsequent unity of effort, the ODA would be left with a disorganized array of concurrent operations that would likely result in either a duplication of effort or even worse, team members working against each other.

Security

- District ANP/ALP have the monopoly on the legitimate use of force and use it responsibly

- ALP checkpoint system links villages to the Chief of Police and the ANP; ALP dissuades insurgent intimidation, harassment and coercion
- Insurgents are disrupted and freedom of maneuver along major ratlines is significantly degraded
- ABP CPs able to effectively repel insurgent attacks and secure the border area

Governance

- District Governor promotes and executes development projects through the District Development Assembly shura
- District government seen as a legitimate, neutral arbiter of Afghan law. Government able to effectively resolve disputes
- DG/DCoP relationship is balanced and adequately effective

Development

- Lines of communication are open for the citizens of the district to major urban centers

- Economy based on Afghan products and not solely on Pakistani based products
- Infrastructure is improved to facilitate faster, easier movement from farm to market and village to village
- District Center Bazaar provides a market for the local farmers' crop surplus and accordingly becomes the economic center of the district

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This article reflects the personal opinions and observations of the author, not any sanctioned command view.

New Media: A Boon for Insurgents or Counterinsurgents?

by Sean Kennedy

<u>Comment on this article online</u>.

More than two billion people – approximately one third of the global population – now use the Internet, and that figure will increase dramatically over the next decade.[1] With this increased use comes ever-greater decentralization of information, which in turn has profound repercussions on societal interactions. For the purposes of this study, "new media" is defined as a host of platforms, including social media, generally supported by the Internet, that offer immediate and direct potential to receive and share information. The Internet is also ripe for the conveyance of opinions and political messages from a large field of users – including those who have historically lacked the opportunity or resources to frame the debate.

Insurgencies have utilized these new tools to improve their strategic and tactical communications. For the sake of this paper, "insurgency" is

defined as any group individuals whose protests and collective action threaten the existing regime. Most insurgents' communications strategies are indelibly entwined with their political strategies.[2] Information and technological revolutions have allowed insurgent groups through the Internet and its many platforms to compete with counterinsurgents' long-standing monopoly on conventional mass communication.[3] Personalized media platforms, i.e. social media, greatly benefit insurgents by allowing interaction with and contributions from participants.[4]

Though social media platforms are relatively new, they have already played crucial roles in several rebellions. During the April 2009 "Twitter

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[1] Molly Oldfield and John Mitchinson, "QI: Quite interesting facts about the Internet," *The Telegraph,* March 31, 2011, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/qi/8419186/QI-Quite-interesting-facts-about-the-Internet.html.

[2] Carsten Bockstette, "Jihadist Terrorist Use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques," *The Marshall Center Occasional Paper Series*, Number 20, December 2008, p. 11.
[3] Bruce Hoffman, "The Use of the Internet By Islamic Extremists," *Testimony presented to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence*, May 4, 2006.
[4] Bockstette, "Jihadist Terrorist Use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques," p. 15.

Revolution" in Moldova, protesters created Twitter 'hashtags' that allow those posting the information to indicate a topic or conversation to which their "tweet" pertains. Twitter allowed Moldovans to follow along and contribute to the political discussion and to coordinate with one another. It also allowed international observers to follow the conversation and activity. One hashtag proved so popular that it became a trending topic worldwide on Twitter.[5]

Moldova's Twitter Revolution highlighted two lessons about the strengths and weaknesses of social media as a revolutionary tool. Twitter's ability to mobilize support and to raise and sustain international awareness proved constructive.[6] However, it did not assist with coordination of those already involved in actions. As one commenter noted, "When you have angry and disorganized crowds, you don't need decentralized platforms – you want to centralize instead."[7]

The social rebellion movement next appeared in Iran. Though most of the tweeting in the "Green Revolution" that began in June 2009 appeared to occur outside of the country or by English-speaking participants (Twitter did not initially support Farsi), much of the information reported by the international media was delivered via the platform.[8] The protests in Iran also dominated worldwide Twitter hashtags during this time. The State Department even requested that Twitter delay scheduled maintenance to avoid disturbing the service of protesters, demonstrating the U.S. government's recognition of the power of social media.[9]

The rebellions in Moldova and Iran brought the role of social media and the Internet to the forefront of debate regarding the processes of political change. Some argued that social media and the Internet could become a transformative tool for insurgencies, while others downplayed their role, and even asserted they were of greater use to government forces. The more recent uprisings in the Middle East – in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya – have put the theories of the uses of new media in insurgencies to the test. On one hand, these platforms offer many advantages to insurgents. The Internet can facilitate the attraction of new members and international support, and assists with the formation of new coalitions. It can serve as an extension of fourth generation warfare, a core tactic of many insurgencies. It can also allow insurgents to successfully accomplish strategic messaging and serve as a virtual safe haven in which a group can carry on critical functions like recruiting and fundraising.

Conversely, new media poses some disadvantages to insurgents. Using the Internet as a primary strategy can potentially undermine an insurgency's leadership structure. It also reveals the insurgents' strategy to its opponents. Further, insurgents may have difficulty uniting disparate elements of the population and may recruit only passive supporters. Finally, counterinsurgents can also utilize new media to undermine the insurgency.

POSITIVE ASPECTS FOR AN INSURGENCY

Attraction of New Members

Insurgents can use new media to quickly attract new members and grow the insurgency, turning passive supporters into active participants. Studies suggest that people join insurgencies in part because of their social networks, so insurgents can use existing social networks to attract new members.[10] The interconnected nature of social media may also allow insurgent groups to recruit new members because of the associated peer pressure, a powerful motivator. Though slightly pre-dating the proliferation of social media, a Serbian youth movement named "Otpor" provides a clear example of political movements using peer pressure, in this case the positive form. Conducting street theatre inspired by Monty Python, the group attracted many followers through its use of satire and political pranks.[11] By creating an identity-based community and a corresponding culture, the movement grew from 11 individuals in October 1998 to more than 70,000 two years later and ultimately became

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[5] Evgeny Morozov, "Moldova's Twitter Revolution," *Foreign Policy*, April 7, 2009, http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/04/07/moldovas_twitter_revolution.

[6] Evgeny Morozov, "More analysis of Twitter's role in Moldova," *Foreign Policy*, April 7, 2009, http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/04/07/more_analysis_of_twitters_role_in_moldova.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Mike Musgrove, "Twitter Is a Player in Iran's Drama," *The Washington Post*, June 17, 2009, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/16/AR2009061603391_pf.html.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Tina Rosenberg interview on the Diane Rehm Show, National Public Radio, March 29, 2011, available at: http://thedianerehmshow.org/shows/2011-03-29/tina-rosenberg-join-club.

[11] Tina Rosenberg, "Revolution U," *Foreign Policy,* February 16, 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/02/16/revolution_u?page=full.

instrumental in the downfall of Slobodan Milose-vic.[12]

Social media can similarly further the effects of peer pressure. Although individuals may never have met in person, users often discover shared values that lead to the creation of an online community toward which an insurgent group can target its marketing and outreach efforts. Also, social media attracts a younger population, which makes up the majority of Internet users.[13] Youth, who are more susceptible to peer pressure, are typically vital for insurgencies and usually make up a large portion of the critical mass necessary to challenge a government.[14]

The Power of Individuals

Mohammed Nabbous of Libya demonstrated that one charismatic individual with a powerful message and the right skills to transmit that message can have a profound impact. Nabbous created an Internet TV station, "Libya Alhurra" (Free Libya) in Benghazi in February 2011.[15] He carried live footage 24 hours per day, depicting the city under attack by forces loyal to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Nabbous regularly pleaded to Western countries to intervene on behalf of those that opposed Gaddafi.[16] On March 19, while recording live on the streets of Benghazi, Nabbous was shot and killed. Since his death, Nabbous' cause has been widely celebrated.[17]

Called the "face of the Libyan protest," Nabbous was a regular contributor to Western media outlets such as CNN.[18] He managed to overcome government efforts to block Internet access, thereby connecting the international media directly to the opposition in Libya.[19] Images from the Libyan opposition were carried on his Livestream page, and rebroadcast via social media throughout the world.[20] Nabbous stood in stark contrast to the Gaddafi regime's clumsy disinformation campaigns and outright attempts to obscure unfavorable events. At times, the regime imprisoned and beaten international journalists; within this context, the rebel's counter-narrative became a powerful force.

Charismatic individuals also played a role in Egypt, where social media was crucial in recruiting new members. In one instance, Google marketing executive Wael Ghonim used his professional experience for recruitment purposes. To advertise for a protest, he created a Facebook group, "We Are All Khalid Said," named for an individual tortured and murdered by Egyptian police.[21] Ghonim applied his marketing knowledge to building an insurgency, stating, "I worked in marketing, and I knew that if you build a brand, you can get people to trust the brand."[22]

Attraction of International Support

New media can also provide a direct channel for international support. Globalization and the Internet allow an insurgent group to instantly and continuously broadcast their cause.[23] This could result in an insurgency gaining moral, political, or material support.[24] The use of new media by activists like Nabbous attracted global attention to the insurgent cause. Labels of "freedom fighters" and comparisons of the insurgents' struggle to the American Revolution[25] raised expectations of some reaction from those in the West who actively promote democratic ideals. Many states responded by providing moral, political, and material support.

New Media and Fourth Generation Warfare

Fourth generation warfare is characterized by the use of all available tools to convince opposition leaders that their political goals are not achievable or will cost more than they are willing to sacrifice.[26]

[12] Tina Rosenberg interview on the Diane Rehm Show.

[13] Alex Priest, "Pew Study Shows Social Media Use Nearly Doubling Among Older Users," *Technorati.com*, August 27, 2010, http://technorati.com/blogging/article/pew-study-shows-social-media-use/.; "Study: Ages of social network users," *Pingdom.com*, February 16, 2010, http://royal.pingdom.com/2010/02/16/study-ages-of-social-network-users/.

[14] Steven Metz, "Rethinking Insurgency," Strategic Studies Institute, June 2007, p. 51, http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub790.pdf.

[15] All Things Considered, "Remembering Mo Nabbous, 'The Face Of Libyan Citizen Journalism,'" NPR, March 22, 2011.

[16] All Things Considered, "Remembering Mo Nabbous, 'The Face Of Libyan Citizen Journalism.'"

[17] Ibid.

[18] "'Voice of Libya' silenced by sniper's bullet," *CNN.com*, March 20, 2011, http://news.blogs.cnn.com/2011/03/20/voice-of-free-libya-silenced-by-snipers-bullet/.

[19] Ibid.

[20] www.Livestream.com is an Internet site that allows users to stream content live.

[21] Accessed on April 10, 2011, https://www.facebook.com/elshaheeed.co.uk?sk=info.

[22] David D. Kirkpatrick and David E. Sanger, "A Tunisian-Egyptian Link That Shook Arab History," *The New York Times*, February 13, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/14/world/middleeast/14egypt-tunisia-protests.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print.

[23] David Kilcullen, "Counter-insurgency Redux," *Survival,* Winter, 2006-2007, volume 48, number 4, p. 113.

[24] O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse,* pp. 142-145.

[25] Russel L. Honoré, "We must help Libya's freedom fighters win," *CNN.com*, March 18, 2011, http://articles.cnn.com/2011-03-18/opinion/honore.libya.coalition_1_moammar-gadhafi-freedom-fighters-patriot-missiles?_s=PM:OPINION.

[26] Thomas Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone,* St. Paul, Zenith Press, 2006, p. 2.

It differs markedly from first-and-second generations of warfare in that it does not concentrate on the direct destruction of enemy forces and is often measured in decades.[27] This suits the asymmetric tactics preferred by most insurgent groups. International pressure is a vital tool of fourth generation war. In many ways, new media has strengthened the practitioners of fourth generation warfare by facilitating the insurgent's ability to deliver a message to its target audience, which oftentimes resides in another country.

In one example of the fourth generation warfare strategy of delivering messages to the opposition's home audience, following an August 18, 2009 ambush of a French patrol in Afghanistan that killed 10 soldiers, the Taliban managed to appear in a French magazine showing off captured uniforms, weapons, and personal effects of the soldiers.[28] As a result of the ambush, French support for the war effort in Afghanistan plummeted.[29] Defense Minister Herve Morin stated that the Taliban "understood that public opinion is probably the Achilles' heel" of the international forces involved in Afghanistan.[30]

The recent events in Egypt also provide a strong example of fourth generation warfare. Following fourth generation principles, insurgents in Egypt relied on new media to create intense political pressure on the Mubarak regime. These tools allowed members of the insurgency to carry their message directly to the international media and populace without interference.

Mahmoud Salem, Internet activist who runs a blog entitled "Rantings of a Sandmonkey," is a prime example of an individual who used new media to pressure the Mubarak regime. Salem received a strong following in Egypt and internationally, which enabled him to become one of the leading voices of the uprising. Salem's story resonated with international media, and allowed him to transmit his anti-Mubarak message to the world.[31]

Salem also recognized the value of disaggregated information sources in directing public engagement. He and others felt that Egyptian insurgents should use asymmetric tactics; they should never meet Mubarak forces head on.[32] According to Salem, the rapid-fire, open source nature of Twitter allowed protesters to accomplish this.[33] Google's Wael Ghonim's group also advocated asymmetric tactics such as flash mobs.[34]

Ghonim also pressured the Mubarak regime by transmitting a contrasting message to the world. Two days after his release by the Egyptian government, an interview by Ghonim appeared on CNN in which he discussed his confinement and the situation in Egypt.[35] This speech strongly resonated with protestors and strikingly re-energized the movement. In an interview the day Mubarak stepped down, Ghonim acknowledged the role of the international media in the resignation of Mubarak and thanked the media, stating, "You are part of the revolution."[36]

As a result of such pressure and the insurgents' ability to mobilize large numbers in protest, a decisive military victory over the Mubarak regime was unnecessary.[37] The resonance of their message in the international media contributed to pressure on political leaders in countries like the U.S., from which Mubarak received strong support. This contributed to former allies removing their support and the crumbling of his international legitimacy. This weakened his grip on the country and contributed to his fall.

The Importance of the First Truth

New media likely makes it easier for an insurgent group to be the first party to address and frame an event. Telling the story before one's adversary holds incredible strategic importance in a counterinsurgency.[38] Doing so effectively forces the

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[27] Thomas Hammes, "Insurgency: Modern Warfare Evolves into a Fourth Generation," *Strategic Forum, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University*, Number 214, January 2005.

[28] Jason Motlagh, "Why the Taliban Is Winning the Propaganda War," *Time.com*, May 3, 2009, http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1895496,00.html.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Originally aired February 4, 2011 on CNN's *Parker Spitzer*, available: http://inthearena.blogs.cnn.com/category/mahmoud-salem/.

[32] Speech given by Mahmoud Salem at American University, March 14, 2011.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ivan Watson, "Wael Ghonim: Negotiation days with Mubarak are over," *CNN.com*, February 9, 2011, http://articles.cnn.com/2011-02-09/world/egypt.protests.google.exec_1_egyptian-activist-egyptian-authorities-fellow-protesters?_s=PM:WORLD.

[36] Originally aired February 11, 2011 on CNN, available: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/02/11/egypt-wael-ghonim-cnn-revolution_n_822038.html.

[37] In fact, attempting to do so would have likely been counterproductive. Egypt's army is conscripted, and therefore, the population identifies closely with the military's personnel (who indicated reciprocal feeling by refusing to arrest protestors). By avoiding massive military bloodshed, insurgents maintained the support of a large base that might have otherwise defected in the face of deaths of family and friends currently in the army.

[38] George Packer, "Knowing the Enemy," *The New Yorker*, December 18, 2006,

opponent to react to the first version of the details. Oftentimes the initial version of the story holds up over the long run, as it is the first one digested by the public.

Insurgents typically hold an advantage in communication due to their presence amongst the population. Social media can emphasize this advantage due to the instant communication it facilitates. A well-crafted, concise piece of propaganda can easily be shared, reach viral levels very quickly, and be virtually impossible for counterinsurgents to comprehensively refute. Insurgent groups like al Qaeda, which operate without the assistance of a host government and the associated access to mainstream media, are particularly reliant on new media for strategic communications.[39]

Insurgents can also use the Internet to capitalize on the mistakes of counterinsurgents. Examples of previous blunders include scandals over the torture of detainees at Abu Ghraib and the Florida pastor Terry Jones' decision to burn a Koran. Insurgents can leverage the public relations advantage in the aftermath of such events in order to undermine the credibility of counterinsurgents.

Virtual Safe Haven

The role of safe havens in insurgencies has been well documented. The Internet and social media can supply for an insurgent group a "virtual safe haven," largely off limits to counterinsurgents. From this sanctuary, insurgents can transfer and receive financial, moral, and personnel support.[40] The Internet can also be used for propaganda, recruitment, training, communications, planning, and intelligence purposes.[41]

Footage claiming to show oppression of Muslims in Iraq, Palestine, the Balkans, and Chechnya frequently pass among jihadist websites to stoke support.[42] Similarly, jihadists post videos showing bombings of mosques and footage of U.S. soldiers using excessive force on civilians.[43] Examples such as al Qaeda's *Inspire* English-language magazine and media production unit *As-Sahab* demonstrate

a willingness to use the Internet to recruit new members.[44]

Jihadists also post videos of successful attacks by insurgent groups on counterinsurgent forces to increase morale. The "Baghdad Sniper" videos, which show attacks on American soldiers in Iraq by an individual named "Juba," constitute one such example.[45] The jihadist presence on the Internet has led to the slogan "keyboard equals Kalashnikov."

Posting attacks online also publicly demonstrates the capabilities of the insurgency and the vulnerability of counterinsurgents. They display to viewers the military initiative that is critical to maintaining participation and recruitment and to "create the impression that the insurgency has momentum and will succeed."[46] These demonstrations of potency may very well make the "Baghdad Sniper" videos and others like them the modern day equivalent of attacks like the Tet Offensive, in that they crystallize the cost to counterinsurgents and erode domestic support.

With the advent of chat rooms, email, website posting boards, and blogs, the Internet has facilitated semi-secure communications among insurgent groups.[47] Electronic communication allows leaders to avoid meeting face to face.[48] Strategies that prove effective are frequently shared online and sprout up in insurgencies elsewhere in the world.[49] For instance, improvised-explosive devices, first used in Chechnya, later appeared in Iraq and Afghanistan.[50]

Insurgents can often acquire intelligence on counterinsurgent locations or information on other targets from open source information contained on the Internet, saving time, money, and decreasing the risk of exposure. Readily available sources such as *Google Maps* can assist insurgents in their operations, as has occurred in Iraq.[51] Al Qaeda's Man-

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http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/12/18/061218fa_fact2?currentPage=all.

[39] Bockstette, "Jihadist Terrorist Use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques," p. 14.

[40] Kilcullen, "Counter-insurgency Redux," p. 113.

[41] Ibid.

[42] David Kilcullen, "Countering Global Insurgency," p. 11.

[43] Wael Adhami, "The strategic importance of the Internet for armed insurgent groups in modern warfare," *International Review of the Red Cross,* Volume 89, Number 868, December 2007, p. 865.

[44] Peter Grier, "Al Qaeda's new online magazine: Is it for real?" *The Christian Science* Monitor, July 1, 2010, http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2010/0701/Al-Qaeda-s-new-online-magazine-Is-it-for-real.

[45] Kurth Cronin, "Cyber-Mobilization: The New Levée en Masse," p. 85.

[46] O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, p. 107.

[47] K.A. Taipale, "Seeking Symmetry on the Information Front: Confronting Global Jihad on the Internet," Nat'l Strategy F. Rev. (Summer 2007), p. 5.

[48] Todd A. Megill, "The Dark Fruit of Globalization: Hostile Use of the Internet," U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project, March 18, 2005, p. 6.

[49] Kilcullen, "Countering Global Insurgency," p. 12.

[50] Ibid., p. 114.

[51] Taipale, "Seeking Symmetry on the Information Front: Confronting Global Jihad on the Internet," p. 5.

chester Manual stated that, "openly and without resorting to illegal means, it is possible to gather at least 80% of information about the enemy." Insurgents can also use the Internet to track international reaction to their operations and access national debates regarding the counterinsurgency effort.[52]

New media has played a crucial rule in financing operations as insurgents can quickly and easily collect donations online. Many sites promoting insurgent causes also facilitate money transfers.[53] Counterinsurgents have found it particularly difficult to shut down websites associated with insurgent groups. "Bouncing," the practice of linking a site on multiple servers (potentially in different countries) makes it difficult to eliminate insurgent material, not to mention identifying the individual responsible for initially posting the content.[54] Finally, problem exists with differing legal codes; posting insurgent-related material may be illegal in one country, but legal in another.[55]

Insurgents can also effectively communicate across borders using the Internet, which is helpful for transnational insurgencies or those wishing to strategically link with groups operating in other states. For instance, the April 6 Youth Movement collaborated online with former members of the Serbian group Otpor.[56] After deposing Milosevic, Otpor went on to form the Center for Applied NonViolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS), which has consulted with democracy movement leaders in 50 states, including Egypt.[57] Egyptians benefited from the experience of insurgents in Tunisia, who supplied practical advice via Facebook, including tips on how to counteract tear gas by using scarves soaked in vinegar.[58]

Multiple Benefits of Social Media

Social media is an ideal tool for transmitting ideas broadly. Insurgents can cheaply and quickly spread their message online, which is much more efficient than traveling from village to village. This also makes promoting antigovernment ideas comparatively safer. Government forces can still identify insurgents based on Internet communication,

but this requires technical expertise, and effective users can usually achieve anonymity.[59] The Internet and social media also make logistical coordination much easier. Though government forces can respond by shutting down the Internet, this will not stop access to Twitter, as users can Tweet via SMS on their mobile phones.

Further, the interconnected nature of social media can act as a force-multiplier by allowing smaller groups to project beyond their size.[60] Messages can be instantaneously shared among users on popular social media platforms independently of the creator of the message. This serves to advance the ideas of the insurgency far beyond origination. Also, the government and public cannot easily determine the scope of the originators of the message. Consequently, counterinsurgents (and the public) might overestimate the size of an insurgent group, thus allowing insurgents to leverage the psychological impact of their operations.[61]

The leaderless nature of an insurgency utilizing this platform would also make for harder targets for counterinsurgents. If no centralized leadership structure exists within an insurgent group, government forces could not end the insurgency by removing the leadership structure. Wael Ghonim hinted at this strategy when he claimed the Egyptian rebellion was modeled after the anonymous, faceless leader in the movie "V for Vendetta," who anonymously leads an uprising in a futuristic, Orwellian England.[62]

NEGATIVE ASPECTS FOR AN INSURGENCY

Effects on Insurgent Leadership

As mentioned above, one of the hallmarks of a successful insurgency – effective leadership – plays less of a role in a movement driven by the Internet, which may result in a flat leadership structure. This strategy can also stunt the development of leaders. While organizers might contribute to arranging events from the relatively safe confines of the Internet, this does not automatically translate into an active role in insurgent actions, where leaders typically become synonymous with an insurgency.

[52] Hammes, "Insurgency: Modern Warfare Evolves into a Fourth Generation."
[53] Hoffman, "The Use of the Internet By Islamic Extremists."
[54] Mark Baker, "World: Tracing, Closing Terrorist Websites Not As Simple As It Sounds," *Radio Free Europe*, July 1, 2004, http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1053641.html.
[55] Baker, "World: Tracing, Closing Terrorist Websites Not As Simple As It Sounds."
[56] Tina Rosenberg interview on the Diane Rehm Show.
[57] Rosenberg, "Revolution U."
[58] Kirkpatrick and Sanger, "A Tunisian-Egyptian Link That Shook Arab History."

[59] Adhami, "The strategic importance of the Internet for armed insurgent groups in modern warfare," p. 859.
[60] Bockstette, "Jihadist Terrorist Use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques," p. 19.
[61] Ibid., p. 8.
[62] Watson, "Wael Ghonim: Negotiation days with Mubarak are over."

Further, this flat leadership structure can have profound consequences on the conclusion of an insurgency. For instance, following Mubarak's resignation, the protest movement lacks a single leader to serve as the focal point for negotiations with the military. A lack of representation could result in a diminished voice in discussions about the new form of government. This has clearly occurred in the aftermath of Mubarak's resignation. The transitional military council has been accused of abuse, torture, baseless arrests, and incommunicado detentions, and former Mubarak regime officials have been taking up positions in the provisional government.[63] The election system instituted by the transitional military council in May 2011 awards two-thirds of the seats in parliament based on votes in individual districts, which favors the established Egyptian political parties at the expense of the smaller liberal movements formed after the revolution who cannot compete in every district.[64]

A leaderless insurgency also faces a significantly greater chance of splintering. Although this danger exists for all insurgencies, it is acutely so in one developed via social media because there is less of a need for leadership within the insurgency and no real threat of punishment (either social or otherwise) for defectors. Yet a successful insurgency requires cohesion. As Mao Zedong stated, "Without centralized strategic command, the partisans can inflict little damage on their adversaries."[65] Observers have noted this occurrence in Egypt, where the multitude of participants in the uprising that contributed to the resignation of Mubarak have by and large split to form their own political movements.[66] Libya also demonstrates the difficulty of a leaderless insurgency to act cohesively.[67] The lack of centralized leadership also would make the insurgency more susceptible to outside interference or manipulation.[68]

Questions exist as to whether an insurgency fueled by the Internet can operate effectively or attract international recognition or support. Authors have linked successful insurgencies to the existence of a complex organization capable of efficiently conducting training, performing logistics and intelligence, and coordinating operations.[69] Without a complex unifying organization, an insurgency's effectiveness is likely limited. An insurgency based on social media would have difficulty developing this complexity given the disparate voices that make up an online community. This might also limit the chances of attracting international legitimacy, as foreign states would not likely grant recognition to an insurgency with an indiscernible leadership structure.

That said, rebels in Libya proved it possible to develop complexity in short order after the challenge to the government began. A political structure was formed by the Libyan opposition on February 27, 2011, and two months later they drafted a constitution for the new government.[70] Whether this government will form an effective base capable of sustaining the insurgency in Libya remains to be seen as the Libyan opposition still struggles to stand on its own against Gaddafi's forces. They have suffered from an inability to increase their territory and difficulty in defending what they control, stemming from a lack of proper military leadership.[71] The situation in Libya reiterates the fact that a leaderless insurgency faces incredible difficulty in a military conflict because of the impossibility of fighting battles by consensus or as disparate parts.

Donor states are disinclined to support insurgencies composed of disjointed groups.[72] Material support received by an insurgency with an indiscernible leadership structure may increase the fracture within the insurgency. Donor aid in a fragmented insurgency tends to favor one group over others, which might be the intention of donor states.[73]

Revelation of Strategy

Insurgents who use new media extensively are in effect revealing their strategy to the opposition, which should allow government forces to better

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[63] Evan Hill, "Egypt's youth leaders vow continued protests," *Al-Jazeera*, April 7, 2011, http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/features/2011/04/2011471 24918409148.html.

[64] Lela Fadel, "Egypt unprepared for September elections," *The Washington Post*, June 29, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/egypt-unprepared-for-september-elections/2011/06/26/AGLwjNqH_print.html.

[65] O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse,* p. 125.

[66] Hill, "Egypt's youth leaders vow continued protests."

[67] Kareem Fahim, "Rebel Insider Concedes Weaknesses in Libya," *The New York Times*, March 23, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/24/world/africa/24minister.html.

[68] O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse,* pp. 127-128.

[69] O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, pp. 122-123.

[70] Charles Levinson, "Libya Rebels Build Parallel State," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2011, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703648304576265021509675668.html.

[71] Ben Hubbard and Hadeel al-Shalchi, "Libyan rebel leader says NATO isn't doing enough," *Associated Press*, April 5, 2011, http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/af_libya.

[72] O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, p. 127.

[73] Ibid., pp. 150-151.

neutralize the insurgency.[74] Counterinsurgents can monitor new media sources and insurgent communications to identify motivations or grievances. With this information, government forces could produce policies that allay existing societal grievances, thereby undercutting support for the insurgency.

Difficulty in Uniting Elements of the Population

Using new media to organize an insurgency might also cause difficulties in uniting diverse segments of a population. Older persons, less likely to use the Internet than the young, might be out of reach. This could limit the strategy's effectiveness in states with older societies. Also, those who live in rural areas, away from technological infrastructure and Internet service might prove difficult to recruit.

The Curse of Passive Involvement

An Internet-driven insurgency might also encourage participants to become only passively involved. New recruits might be satisfied with "liking" a group on Facebook or following someone's Twitter feed, but may not risk personal safety by taking part in street actions. Under such a scenario, the insurgency's message might expand to reach new people, but its actual strength (and ability to challenge the government) could stagnate.

Other Limitations

The use of new media as a primary strategy for insurgencies has several obvious limitations. Approximately 25 percent of Egyptians have Internet access, and a new media-based insurgency proved successful. However, in a country like Somalia, where only one percent of the population has Internet access, the strategy is not likely viable. Obviously, low literacy rates would also affect the potential value of this strategy.

In addition, as occurred in Moldova, Iran, and Egypt, a government that controls Internet service can respond by shutting down access across the country. While insurgents may develop alternative methods (e.g., text messaging with mobile phones), a lack of widespread access could prove damaging. An insurgency that has become organizationally dependent on the Internet while ignoring the development of traditional insurgent methods such as personal networks may find it difficult to survive if the government eliminates access.

Crucially, the use of new media by an insurgent group is contingent on the existence of societal grievances. If they exist, such grievances can be used to create an alternate vision for the country, which will facilitate the formation of a critical mass necessary to challenge the government. However, insurgents cannot create these conditions using the Internet; they can only hope to exploit existing grievances using online tools.

THE USE OF NEW MEDIA BY COUNTERINSURGENT FORCES

In the end, new media platforms represent just another area of competition between insurgents and government forces. While insurgents can use the Internet to their advantage, the government could use the same tools to undercut insurgent rhetoric, thereby reducing support. On the more aggressive side, counterinsurgents might use the same tools to identify and detain participants of insurgencies. They could also subvert social media platforms, sending false messages,[75] or set up "honeypots," websites monitored to identify potential insurgents.[76]

Although social media has been widely lauded as a positive force for social change, the successes of insurgents in Egypt might be best explained by the Mubarak regime's unwillingness to develop a proactive approach to the insurgency, and specifically his disregard of the Internet.[77] Counterinsurgents of the future will likely conduct a pervasive, coordinated, preventive Internet propaganda campaign designed to undermine opposition groups. China and Russia already practice these methods with the purpose of preventing insurgencies from forming in the first place.[78] Pro-regime forces in Syria have used the same new media tools as insurgents to disseminate information.[79]

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[74] Jeffrey Bartholet, "You Have to Rethink War," *Newsweek.com*, March 3, 2008, http://www.newsweek.com/2008/03/02/you-have-to-rethink-war.html.

[75] Lev Grossman, "Iran Protests: Twitter, the Medium of the Movement," *Time.com*, June 17, 2009, http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1905125,00.html.

[76] Ellen Nakashima, "Dismantling of Saudi-CIA web site illustrates need for clearer cyberwar policies," *The Washington Post*, March 19, 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/18/AR2010031805464_pf.html.

[77] John D. Sutter, "When the internet actually helps dictators," *CNN.com,* February 22, 2001, http://articles.cnn.com/2011-02-22/tech/authoritarian.internet.morozov_1_protest-bloggers-internet-discussions?_s=PM:TECH.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Jennifer Preston, "Seeking to Disrupt Protesters, Syria Cracks Down on Social Media," *The New York Times*, May 22, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/23/world/middleeast/23facebook.html.

Governments can certainly possess the ability to conduct counterinsurgencies much more effectively than the Mubarak regime. Chiefly, counterinsurgents can use social media sites to identify the opposition. Following the events in Iran, the government reposted on its own websites photos that protesters had published. The Iranian government then designated the individuals it could not identify, and requested that the public supply names.[80] In the future, counterinsurgents could use facial recognition software to match pictures of known insurgents to Facebook profiles. Facebook is already integrating such software within the platform. In the past year the social networking site added facial recognition to the default settings for users.[81]

It is easy to see a progression by social media platforms towards diminished user anonymity. Advertising revenue for such sites increases when they provide more detailed information about users, so social media sites are motivated to collect as much information as possible about users. It stands to reason that social media sites could become a very dangerous place for insurgents – especially if new features designed to collection information become compulsory. This reality could have contributed to Syria's decision in February 2011 to allow once more access to social media sites.[82]

CONCLUSION

The dramatic increases in Internet availability around the world will only increase in the near future. Likewise, the intensity of competition between insurgents and government forces will grow as each struggles to strategically harness the Internet and its diverse array of platforms. In many ways, new media serves as an extension of fourth generation warfare and supports asymmetric tactics. It can allow insurgents to attract new members, form coalitions, gain international support, and serve as a force multiplier. The Internet can also serve as a virtual sanctuary for an insurgent group.

However, reliance on the Internet can also act as a detriment to insurgent groups. It has negative implications for insurgent leadership, plainly reveals the insurgency's methods, and might fail to support insurgents' ability to unite dissimilar segments of a population. It could also lack the ability to promote more than passive involvement by the public. Finally, counterinsurgents can use the very same tools to undermine the insurgency.

Experts suggest that the success or failure of any insurgency ultimately boils down to the government's response, rather than the strength of the insurgency.[83] That is, the government innately possesses the upper hand but can relinquish it by failing to sufficiently respond. However, the Internet has become the main communication platform for insurgencies.[84] These platforms allow users to push the tempo of messaging and to dominate conversation, creating a higher bar for governments to reach in order to quell the insurgency.

As a result, government forces must address the strategic underpinnings of an insurgency, rather than reacting at the operational level. Waiting for an insurgency to establish itself online makes the counterinsurgents' job much more difficult. This becomes especially true when counteracting an insurgency employing new media. Counterinsurgents cannot possibly shut down all websites or refute all tweets or postings on Facebook. Government forces would be much better served developing a proactive solution. Though it faces many current problems with Islamic jihadist insurgencies, the U.S. has yet to develop an effective counter-narrative on the Internet. Focusing on older versions of media – such as its al-Hura TV station and al-Sawa radio station – may do little to counteract the presence of extremist groups online.[85]

Because it cannot possibly succeed in a reactive role, the U.S and its allies must develop a strategic counter-communication plan capable of undermining insurgent messaging online. They must integrate the plan with their wider counterinsurgency strategy, including military, law enforcement, political, diplomatic, and socio-economic aspects. Further, for transnational threats, the U.S. must institute its operations worldwide and ensure consistency at the strategic, tactical, and operational levels.[86] The U.S. should also tailor its counterin-

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[80] Preston, "Seeking to Disrupt Protesters, Syria Cracks Down on Social Media."

[81] Nick Bilton, "Facebook Changes Privacy Settings to Enable Facial Recognition," *The New York Times*, June 7, 2011, http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/06/07/facebook-changes-privacy-settings-to-enable-facial-recognition/.

[82] Jennifer Preston, "Syria Restores Access to Facebook and YouTube," *The New York Times,* February 9, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/10/world/middleeast/10syria.html.

[83] O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse,* p. 155.

[84] Bockstette, "Jihadist Terrorist Use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques," p. 21.

[85] Hoffman, "The Use of the Internet By Islamic Extremists."

[86] Taipale, "Seeking Symmetry on the Information Front: Confronting Global Jihad on the Internet," p. 3.

surgery strategy for individual insurgencies; a one-size-fits-all approach will not succeed.

Insurgent use of new media also imposes limitations. An insurgency will never succeed if it is limited to the Internet. Insurgents must motivate participants to take to the streets or become involved in some other form of action. Consequently, insurgents must create a message powerful enough to not only encourage participation on the Internet but also to risk personal safety and livelihood by taking part in street actions.

Contemporary insurgent successes in the Middle East will serve as a template for future Internet-fueled rebellions. However, they will also inform future counterinsurgent efforts. Recent innovations do not amount to a decisive advantage for insurgents or government forces. Consequently, in the future, the Internet and its many platforms will exist as yet another area of competition between insurgents and counterinsurgents.

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Asymmetrical National Security Policy – simple doesn't mean stupid

by Jason Thomas

The United States and most of its allies are being forced to consider a new approach to geopolitical security and stability driven a by war weary public and dire fiscal constraints. As former U.S Defence Secretary, Roberts Gates, said the overarching goal will be to preserve a U.S. military capable of meeting crucial national security priorities, even if fiscal pressure requires reductions in the force's size." (*Fmr U.S Defence Secretary Robert Gates 18 May 2011*)   This paper contends that asymmetrical warfare should become the most important approach to contesting the open space in failing or failed states that have the potential to be filled by those seeking to threaten our national security and foreign policy interests.

Smaller and weaker opponents do not have a monopoly on asymmetric warfare and it does not need to be left to Guerrilla movements for us to romantically read about in the future. We need to become better at fighting with very few resources and still be capable of a deep strategic presence with a light tactical and operational footprint; a military with a pioneering mindset. We need a fighting force that is sharp, focused and unpredictable. One that is aimed as much at undermining the insurgent's or terrorist network's psychological well-being as on their physical demise with simple instruments of persuasion. This application of asymmetrical or irregular warfare tactics by the next generation of military leadership will be more affordable and politically acceptable at the domestic and international level.   The trap is that in the West we have forgotten how good we are at being resourceful and fighting for our own survival with nothing but our wits and what we find at our feet.

THEY DON'T STUDY SUN TZU HERE…

When it comes to the theoretical and conceptual framework of asymmetrical warfare, we are all familiar with the great words of wisdom from the heroes in the Pantheon of military history. Sun Tzu wrote, "if the enemy is superior in strength, evade him. If his forces are united, separate them. Attack him where he is unprepared. Appear where you are not expected.[1]" Clausewitz wrote that, "where the weaker side is forced to fight against odds, its lack of numbers must be made up by the inner tension and vigor that are inspired by danger….If an increase in vigor is combined with wise limitations in objectives, the result is that combination of brilliant strokes and cautious restraint that we admire…[2]" Exploiting an adversary's weaknesses while exploiting one's own strengths is at the heart of the 'art of war. This type of kinetic engagement by opposing forces has been written about and taught to military leaders for more than

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[1] Sun Tzu The Art of War
[2] Clausewitz: On War

2,500 years, see Mac (1975)[3]; Metz & Johnson (2001)[4] and Arreguin-Toft (2005)[5]. In the history of conflict "[t]hose who adapt will survive; those who do not, die," Hammond (2001)[6]. Superior strength is broadly understood to mean material power, such as a larger army, more sophisticated weapons and technology and an advanced economy.

The irony is that the dominant U.S. standard of warfare gives its adversaries an incentive to differentiate, by adopting idiosyncratic technologies (the IED) or tactics (civilians as human shields). The U.S. was differentiated from its Vietnamese opponents in level of resources available, level of military technology, type of warfare (conventional or guerrilla), and in perceived costs of conflict (the Vietnamese were willing to take much larger casualties than the U.S.). Also, as Enders and Sandler (1993) note, when terrorists have a choice of targets (e.g. different countries or different objectives within the same country) effort being put into defending one target will provide incentives for the terrorists to differentiate, to substitute alternative targets[7].

We have just been engaged in ten years of conflict with opponents who use asymmetrical tactics everyday with probably no intellectual framework of asymmetrical warfare as a concept. The ability to apply asymmetrical tactics depends as much on a mindset as it does in how limited resources are utilised. Ahmed Rashid, author of the *Taliban* and *Decent into Chaos[8]*, explains this well. Rashid suggests that the devastation and hardship of the Soviet invasion and the following civil war influenced Taliban ability to survive. In my view the simplicity of life is a camouflage for their ability to prevail

against asymmetrical threats – climate, environment, the terrain and technologically superior foreign forces. They don't study asymmetrical warfare and have probably never read Sun Tzu, Clausewitz or *The Accidental Guerilla*. For the Taliban their method of engagement and how they deploy resources is a fact of life - they just do it.

Andrew Mack argues that an actor's relative resolve or interest explains success or failure in asymmetric conflicts. Mack contends that this resolve can be derived *a priori* by assessing the structure of the conflict relationship. Power asymmetry explains interest asymmetry: the greater the gap in relative power, the less resolute and more politically vulnerable strong actors are, and the more resolute and less politically vulnerable weak actors are. Big nations therefore lose small wars because frustrated publics (in democratic regimes) or countervailing elites (in authoritarian regimes) force a withdrawal short of military victory.

As Ivan Arreguín-ToftIf, argues in *How the weak win wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, if power implies victory in war, then weak actors should almost never win against stronger opponents, especially when the gap in relative power is very large. History suggests otherwise: weak actors sometimes do win. Understanding the conditions under which weak actors win wars is important for two reasons.

First, if there are dynamics unique to asymmetric conflicts or if their analysis provides fresh insights into symmetrical conflicts a general explanation of asymmetric conflict outcomes is not only desirable but necessary, both to reduce the likelihood of unwinnable wars and to increase the chances of U.S. success when a resort to arms is necessary. Second, because asymmetric conflicts ranging from catastrophic terrorism to military intervention in interstate, ethnic, and civil wars are the most likely threat to U.S. security and interests, only a general theory of asymmetric conflict outcomes can guide U.S. policymakers in their efforts to build the kinds of armed and other forces necessary to implement an effective U.S. strategic response.

FRIGHTENED BY WHAT IS SIMPLE

While this theoretical framework is important to conceptualise how to approach improving our asymmetrical war fighting capability, in reality it may require us to reward the simple and know how to do more with less. The United States Marine

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[3] Mack, Andrew J.R., (1975) "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict", *World Politics*, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp. 175–200

[4] Metz, Stephen and Johnson II. V. Douglass. (2001) Asymmetry and U.S. Military Strategy: Definition, Background, and Strategic Concepts. US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute

[5] Arreguin-Toft, Ivan, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, New York & Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005

[6] Hammond, G. T. (2001). *The mind of war: John Boyd and American security*. District of Columbia: Smithsonian Books.

[7] Enders, W., and Sandler, Todd., (1993) The Effectiveness of Antiterrorism Policies: A Vector-Autoregression-Intervention Analysis. *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 87: pp.829-844

[8] Rashid, Ahmed. (2008) *Descent into Chaos: The world's most unstable region and the threat to global security*. Penguin Books.

Corp manual *Warfighting* recognised the factors that have collectively been called friction that makes the seemingly easy difficult and the difficult almost impossible[9].

How would we fight if our forces were stripped of technological and asset superiority - back to the bare minimum? Think about our pioneering ancestors. Separated from their Colonial base of money, power and equipment, especially as supply lines were stretched, the pioneers had to adapt very quickly with minimal resources to survive the environmental and physical terrain challenges let alone any kinetic engagement from local antagonists.

In the West we are so spoilt for wealth, technology and complex solutions that many of us have forgotten our ability to be adaptable and resourceful. If there is one thing I've learnt from working in two war zones and leading groups up the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea, it's the simple things that get you; like the habits of life when operating low profile outside-the-wire or not drinking enough water even though you are wearing $500 trekking boots. It's the small things that have a big impact. Simplicity, not complexity, is the key when it comes to asymmetrical strategy, operations and tactics. The post Afghanistan conflict environment, regardless of whether it is counter terrorism, counter radicalisation or stability operations, is going to require more simplistic driven resourcefulness than ever before. This probably looks like a small teams approach with a light footprint in sensitive environments. A very clinical operational style that rewards *the* simple in places where we may not be at war but if we curl-back then non-state actors will manipulate and exploit the vacant terrain to our severe expense down the track.

We seek comfort in what is complex and yet we see intellectual weakness in the simple. Certainly, like to think we have evolved considerably and unrecognisably since our pioneering ancestors. Oscar Wilde wrote to a friend saying "I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead." In fact being able to see the simple beyond the haze of complexity takes intellectual rigour and courage to make the case in a group and yet highly effective when executed. In fact, a simple act doesn't even have to succeed. Take Richard Reid, the infamous shoe-bomber on American Airlines Flight 63. He failed and yet his simple act of failure has resulted in a global airport security headache for passengers.

THE WEAK PSYCHOLOGICAL UNDERBELLY

It is also as much about our societal psychology as our abundance of resources that blocks our entrepreneurial asymmetric spirit. We are required to go beyond the classic materialistic military definitions of asymmetrical warfare and look to the exploitation of an opponent's moral weaknesses. In The Descent of Man, Charles Darwin[10], suggests that humans have a naturally selected propensity to moral virtue, that is, a willingness to sacrifice self-interest in the cause of group interest. Humans are above all moral animals because they are creatures who love their group as they love themselves.

Some may have come across Ibn Warraq's *Why I am Not a Muslim*:

> Americans tend to think that deep down we all have the same values. Americans believe that all these terrorists, if you scratch beneath the surface, are looking for religious equality and justice. That's complete and utter nonsense. Americans can't face the reality that different people have different values. (Ibn Warraq; Why I am Not a Muslim. 1995)[11].

For the global Salafi movement and its deployment of ideologically inspired violence, our weakness is in relation to actions that we cannot and would not contemplate using either pre-emptively or in response to an attack. We are in a moral conflict with an adversary that suffers from acute narcissism. Therefore, getting inside the moral-mental-time paradigm of these regional or even local narcissists is crucial.

Michael Gross gives this notion a good shake that may make some feel uncomfortable in *Moral Dilemmas of Modern War: Torture, Assassination, and Blackmail in an Age of Asymmetric Conflict*[12]. A person, a tribe and a nation has to be placed into a position to ask whether they still have the ticker for the fight. Proponents of the global Salafi movement have a sense of the effects their actions will achieve in the cultural and religious environment in which they operate. We often misread the cultural context of this movement and

[9] *Warfighting* MCDP1. June 1997 Department of the Navy; Headquarters United States Marine Corp; Washington DC

[10] Darwin, Charles: The Descent of Man. First Published 1874: http://books.google.com/books?id=iArG1dDytFAC&printsec=frontcover&dq=agony+death#v=onepage&q=agony%20death&f=false
[11] Ibn Warraq (1995) Why I am not a Muslim. Prometheus Books
[12] Gross, Michael (2009) *Moral Dilemmas of Modern War: Torture, Assassination, and Blackmail in an Age of Asymmetric Conflict.* Cambridge University Press

misjudge is ability to undermine Western psychological and moral dimensions. The Ismaili poem says; "by one single warrior on foot, a king may be stricken with terror, though he own more than a hundred thousand horsemen." This was the fear and terror unleashed by the Assassins or Hashishins from the order of Nizari Ismailis, that existed from around 1090 across Syria and Persia[13]. The Assassins tactic is a simple but effective act that psychologically undermined a more powerful opponent at little cost.

This does not mean we need to abandon our almost *a priori* notions of human rights and the rule of law. In 1901, Winston Churchill said, "the wars of peoples will be more terrible than the wars of kings.[14]" While Churchill was not concerned with counterinsurgency he foresaw the challenges of implementing war in a democratic age, waged among a civilian population under the spotlight of Western democratic sensitivities. For example, could resort to barbarism, which may be an effective strategy for defeating insurgents. But as Arreguin-Toft (2005) point out, a quick look over postwar history illustrates that at best barbarism can be effective only as a military strategy: if the objective is long-term political control, barbarism backfires in the end.

The French, for example, used torture to quickly defeat Algerian insurgents in the Battle of Algiers in 1957. But when French military brutality became public knowledge, it catalyzed political opposition to the war in France and stimulated renewed and intensified resistance by the non-French population of Algeria. Within four years, France abandoned its claims in Algeria even though it had "won" the war. The Sri Lankan Government's bombing campaign towards the end of the Sri Lankan civil war is another example brutality that won the fight but may cement an even deeper hatred with a new generation of dissidents. Barbarism thus sacrifices victory in peace for victory in war-a poor policy at best.

US led strategy in Afghanistan has in some areas inflicted a simple, discriminate and psychologically effective tactic with the high rate of night-raids. Even though President Karzai continues to call for an end to night-raids the US Commanding Generals in Afghanistan should be praised for re-

sisting the pressure to stop the night raids. The insurgents can't stand these because they are effective and undermine an asymmetric weakness. Karzai's complaint is merely – political. That is, he is expressing the frustration of constituents and perhaps letting it slip that this tactic undermines the insurgents will to fight.

As John Boyd argues in his 1986 slide presentation on *Patterns of Conflict:*

1. Willingness to support and promote (unconventional or difficult) subordinates that accept danger, demonstrate initiative, take risks, and come-up with new ways towards mission accomplishment.

2. Dedication and resolve to face-up to and master uncomfortable circumstances that fly in the face of the traditional solution.

This may seem incongruent to the theme running through this paper however Boyd's summation goes to the heart of finding simple solutions that don't just focus on the material but also the moral and psychological. Simple things scar people especially when face with a moral conflict.

ESSENCE OF MORAL CONFLICT

Create, Exploit and Magnify	
Menace Impressions of danger to one's well-being and survival.	**Idea** Surface fear, anxiety, and alienation in order to generate many non – cooperative centres of gravity as well as subvert those that adversary depends upon thereby magnify internal friction.
Uncertainty Impressions or atmosphere, generated by events that appear ambiguous, erratic, contradictory, unfamiliar, chaotic etc.	
Mistrust Atmosphere of doubt and suspicion that loosens human bonds among members of an organic whole or between organic wholes.	
AIM Destroy moral bonds that permit an organic whole to exists	

Slide 122 John Boyd Patterns of Conflict 1986

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[13] The Assassins cited in Belfield, Richard (2005) Terminate with Extreme Prejudice. Robinson Books.

[14] Churchill, Winston, Hansard Speech to the House of Commons 13 May 1901: http://www.winstonchurchill.org/learn/speeches/speeches-of-winston-churchill/108-army-reform

What if for example in Afghanistan units of Coalition forces operated out of uniform? How would this change the mindset of our opponents and the local population?

This may seem a ridiculous suggestion and have certain echelons of the military fuming at the suggestion, especially from a civilian. But it is a simple, cost effective tactic that may cause enough confusion and uncertainty among insurgent groups to give us the advantage. This is as much of a psychological ploy as a physical shift in operating because it suggests we will no longer fight fair. When strong actors employ a strategy that ignores restraints of fighting fairly, weak actors are unlikely to win. Reminder, this does not mean debasing our own values and principles, the essence of which we are attempting to defend extend.

CONCLUSION

Everything in war is simple, but the simplest thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war.

—Carl von Clausewitz

As we slowly move towards the post-Iraq and Afghanistan era how do we turn the strategy and tactics used by resourcefully weaker opponents to our advantage to protect and advance our national security and foreign policy interests? Operating inside environments with factors that breed terrorists and their supporters will require careful study of exploiting simple weaknesses that inflict the greatest fear on the terrorist as much as reinforcing the positive decisions local people can make.

Maybe this is what counterinsurgency is about and I missed that slide. However, I believe (with a few exceptions) the West suffers from a mental block when it comes to actually *doing* asymmetrical warfare. We relish the intellectual and cerebral literature on the subject but have forgotten our pioneering past and that prevents us from just doing it. We need to have our military operations trained by being tested against opponents who are non-military, who will not follow a recognised process of engagement and who will employ psychological tactics that we may find abhorrent. Whether re-discovering our pioneering spirit or borrowing from our insurgent enemies the better we are at asymmetrical strategies the less it will cost to defend our national interests in the long run.

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The Terrorist Climate of Sudan

Forecasting Effects of the Southern Secession

by Jason R. Waller

Sudan is a country of volatile history and uncertain potential. Decades of civil war, religious persecution, and alleged genocide have literally torn the country in two. Following the secession of South Sudan, Sudan finds itself is in a precarious situation; having given up many of the economic and social centers of gravity in the south, it relies on diplomacy and foreign support more than ever. A newly impoverished base, coupled with an authoritarian regime, provide many factors leading to a violent insurgency. Such an insurgency, together with a strategic location and tolerant population, open doors for the growth of Islamist terrorism on a domestic and especially global level. In the absence of effective, multinational relations, this is precisely what will happen. With focused diplomacy spearheaded by the United States, though, Sudan will become an ally in combating terrorism and stabilizing in the region. Never has the country been more perilous, and never has it been more fertile with potential.

THE RISE OF A RADICAL STATE

The modern country of Sudan traces its roots to the prosperous Nubian state known as the Kingdom of Kush. Although some of the earliest forms

of Christianity were established in northeastern Africa, Arabic rule in the region converted most of the population to Islam over the course of several centuries. Sudan fell under the control of Egypt in 1820, under Mahdist rule in 1885, and effectively under the British crown, with Egyptian governance, in 1899 (Mamdani, 9). Although the British were effective in governing Sudan as a colony, the Sudanese were nonetheless subjugated to a set of cultures and norms at odds with their own. The resultant internal conflicts, in addition to pressure by Egypt to form a unified Egyptian-Sudanese state, led Britain to offer Sudan a chance to vote for its independence (Dagne, CRS-1).

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Sudan gained its independence from Britain and Egypt in 1956, becoming the first independent country in sub-Saharan Africa (*World Factbook*). This milestone, though, was marred by an almost constant conflict and civil war. The First Sudanese Civil War, or the Anyanya Rebellion, began in 1955 as the 1 January 1956 Independence Day approached. From 1924 to 1946, the British had run the south and the north as two distinct territories, galvanizing enmity between the two regions (Mamdani, 175). Fearing subjugation by the Muslim north, many in the Christian and animist south formed a guerilla insurgency to combat the new political authority. The civil war between southern and northern Sudan claimed over half a million lives and lasted, officially, until 1972—although conflict and social strife continued despite the ceasefire (Dagne, CRS-2).

Shortly after the 1978 discovery of oil fields in the south, then-President Gaafar Nimeiry violated peace accords by attempting to gain control over them. Five years later, with a growing Islamic fundamentalist presence in the capital of Khartoum, Nimeiry declared all of Sudan an Islamic state. The Second Sudanese Civil War, considered by many to be little more than an extension of the first war, began that year in 1983, eleven years after the peace accords. To further provoke the south, Colonel Omar al-Bashir led a bloodless coup against the Sudanese government and prime minister in 1989 (Dagne, CRS-2). Once a new government was enacted, al-Bashir became chairman of the legislative branch, prime minister, commander of the armed forces, and the minister of defense. Omar al-Bashir allied himself quickly with Dr. Hassan al-Turabi, an ideological leader of the National Islamic Front. Aggravating relations between Khartoum and south, al-Bashir suspended political parties

and introduced national-level Islamic law (Mamdani, 194).

The civil war lasted 22 years, officially ending with the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement on 9 January 2005. In all the second conflict caused the deaths, either directly or through famine and disease, of an estimated two million Sudanese (see fig. 1). Four million people were displaced during the war, almost all from southern Sudan. Regarding the period from 1955 to 2005 as a single war with intermittent cease fires, the Sudanese conflict is considered the longest-running civil war in history. The half century of fighting claimed more civilian deaths than any war since World War II (Dagne, CRS-2).

THE DARFUR CONFLICT

Sudan's most notorious violence, however, has been the war in Darfur. Although the Darfur Conflict affects the variable of terrorism less than South Sudanese secession, it is nevertheless one of the most internationally visible facets of the country. It is for this reason that it must be scrutinized through the lens of diplomatic relations. Darfur, a region in western Sudan, is yet another example of arbitrary national boundaries across ethnic lines. Formerly an independent sultanate, Darfur was integrated into Anglo-Egyptian Sudan in 1922 (Mamdani, 9). While tensions between the south and north can be condensed to religious lines, pressures between Darfur and the Khartoum government lie with the Arab and non-Arab distinction, as both are predominately Muslim (Mamdani, 14). Although both parties are equally indigenous to Africa, the Sudanese meaning of "Arab" does not fall into the typical, political definition. For the most part, Sudanese consider themselves Arab based on their tribal identity, or a lack thereof, and an association with geography or language (Deng, 405).

The region has been in a status of humanitarian emergency since early 2003, when several groups in Darfur began a militant remonstration against the Sudanese government (Dagne, CRS-2). Arab and non-Arab distinction aside, the animosity leading to this violence can be traced to extensive famine within the region and resource grievances by the nomadic populace (Mamdani, 11). The aggression in Darfur quickly escalated, with rebel forces winning most of the early conflicts. The tides changed, though, when the government began sponsoring the Janjaweed, a group of armed herders near the region (Mamdani, 69). The Janjaweed killed thousands of Darfurians and pushed many

more into the neighboring country of Chad, causing further political complications (Chalira).

After the Janjaweed gained international attention, the Khartoum government denied having direct ties with them. Funding and weapons, though, were sent to the Janjaweed by the government and many accounts exist of joint attacks involving both parties (Dagne, CRS-5). Several cease-fires were negotiated by Chad, the African Union, the United Nations, and others, but did little to quell the violence by rebel factions and the Janjaweed (see fig. 2). Although many have called the conflict a horrific civil war, major political leaders, including in the United States and United Nations, have issued allegations of genocide against the Khartoum government (Mamdani, 9). Death toll estimates in the region are between 200,000 and 400,000 Darfurians, with nearly 2 million displaced (*World Factbook*). This exodus has contributed not only to instability in Sudan but also in nearby Chad, where the majority of displaced peoples from Darfur have fled.

ISLAMISM AND JIHADISM IN SUDAN

Sudan has been listed by the United States as a state sponsor of terrorism since 1993, subsequent to an "exhaustive interagency review and congressional pressure" (Dagne, CRS-14). The country has a lengthy history of harboring what the U.S. defines as "terrorist organizations," tracing its earliest origins to a political endorsement of radical Islamic ideology. Dr. Hassan al-Turabi, a founding member of the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood in 1954, has since been in and out of various political roles and Islamist organizations. Dr. al-Turabi was appointed as Justice Minister in 1979, and over his four-year term began implementing Islamic Sharia law as the code of justice. Most notably, al-Turabi became Speaker of Parliament in 1996, serving until President al-Bashir declared a state of emergency and dissolved parliament in 1999. Prior to this event, al-Bashir and al-Turabi were considered to be politically and ideologically aligned (Mamdani, 194).

1989−2001

During the decade or so of mutual cooperation, President al-Bashir and Dr. al-Turabi landscaped the country of Sudan into a hotbed for terrorism and Islamist ideology. Following the coup in 1989, the county was essentially bankrupt (Sandee). With recent sanctions against Iraq, the Khartoum government began forming a strategic relationship with Iran. By 1991, the two countries had strong economic, political, and military ties. The Iranian President went as far as to name Sudan "the vanguard of the Islamic Revolution in the African continent" (Sandee). Iran began stationing troops in Sudan to train paramilitary, mujahidin, and jihadist forces. In one short year, Sudan became viewed as the strategic outpost for the export of Islamic revolution throughout the African continent (Sandee).

The same year that Sudan formalized relations with Iran, Hassan al-Turabi invited known terrorist figures to live in Khartoum—most notably, Osama bin Laden (Shinn, 56). There, bin Laden received privileges and tax exemptions, operating upwards of 80 businesses and charities in the country (Sandee). It was in Sudan that he was given authority to establish an estimated 23 militant training camps and bases of operation. The government, including President al-Bashir and al-Turabi, publically denied the existence of these camps. A defector named George Logokwa, however, formerly the Sudanese Minister of Labor, described many such camps where the instruction focused on "all types of combat, violence, and assassinations" (Sandee). With training from Iranian special forces, Lebanese Hezbollah, and Afghani war veterans, Sudanese terrorist organizations were in a strong tactical and strategic position to begin influencing world perception (Sandee).

Many of the terrorist attacks of the 1990s were linked, directly or otherwise, to Sudan. The most notorious of such attacks were the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, the failed assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in 1995, and the U.S. embassy bombings in 1998 (Sandee and Shinn, 60). Additionally, the 1993 attack on American forces in Mogadishu had several connections to Sudan, including fighters having been sent to Sudan for training and Sudanese instructors sent to Somalia (Sandee). The resulting pressure from the international community led Osama bin Laden to return to Afghanistan in 1996, a move for which the government of Sudan claimed responsibility. Concerns over Sudan as a terrorist safe haven became less significant in the nineties, after the departure of bin Laden. In 2001, though, after the 9-11 attacks and subsequent invasion of Afghanistan, many al-Qaeda fled to neighboring Pakistan. Some, however, returned to Sudan. This rekindled a focus on Sudan as a state sponsor of terrorism, a focus that the Sudanese government took more seriously than it once had.

2001—PRESENT DAY

Sudan has made significant progress in limiting the terrorist presence inside its borders, despite contradictory pressures in the government and conflicts within the country (Shinn, 62). In 2004, the United States removed Sudan from a list of countries considered non-cooperative in the Global War on Terror; they remain on the state sponsor of terrorism list (Dagne, CRS-14). According to the Department of State, "Sudanese officials have indicated that they view their continued cooperation with the U.S. government as important and recognize the potential benefits of U.S. training and information-sharing" (Country Reports on Terrorism 2009). With the exception of Hamas, which the United Nations does not consider a terrorist organization, the government of Sudan no longer supports the presence of extremist elements within the country.

The most significant development in Sudan's status with the United States took place on 9 July 2011, when the southern portion of the country seceded to become South Sudan. Following an overwhelming ballot in January where the south voted for independence, U.S. President Barak Obama stated that if the Khartoum government abides by the south's decision then the United States will begin to remove the country from the state sponsors of terrorism list (Landler). This is noteworthy also because the conflict in Darfur is removed from consideration in the overall decision. Previously, a resolution in Darfur was declared by the administration to be a necessary part in removing Sudan from the list (Sen). Separate economic sanctions directly related to Darfur, however, remain in place. Although the Sudanese government formally recognized the independence of South Sudan, there is still contention over the oil-rich border provinces (Sen).

CONSEQUENCES OF THE INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM

While Sudan has made recent leaps in removing terrorism from within the country, concerns linger over the extremist organizations and personalities that still remain (Shinn, 62). Additionally, the recent separation of South Sudan complicates the question of terrorism by putting indigenous Islamist groups in a new economic environment and new political system, both of which are now more influenced by western diplomacy. There are four areas of immediate significance to the future of radical Islamism in Sudan: economic disparity, religious homogeny, intra-African relationships, and diplomatic pressures. The former and the latter are likely to be the most significant in the near future, as South Sudan holds most of region's oil and agriculture, forcing Sudan to be that much more influenced by international relations.

DOMESTIC FRICTION

This is perhaps the biggest fear regarding the secession of South Sudan—that the southern portion of the region is, in essence, in the more advantaged position as compared to the north (Chalira). South Sudan posses the largest portion of the oil potential in the region, as well as many of the other natural resource and agricultural economies. Currently, oil profits are split between Sudan and South Sudan, who relies on northern countries for pipelines and refineries (Trivett). Over time, though, South Sudan will depend less and less on the infrastructure to the north. As Sudan loses relevance in this critical market, acrimony between the north and south will grow proportionately.

Most of the economic attention is rightly directed at oil production in the region. Prior to secession, the south claimed 80% of the country's oil sources (Trvett). This means that South Sudan now controls as much as four times the amount of oil potential as compared to its northern neighbor (see fig. 3). With few other options for immediate monetary stability, an estimated 98 percent of South Sudan's budget is to come from oil revenues (Rugangazi). What is of even more importance, however, is the fact that the country of Sudan still plays a major role in the oil's transportation and refinement. Per the 2005 referendum, oil income is to be shared equally between the north and south (Trivett). With the only stable pipeline to the sea, Sudan currently holds a leading position in oil profit negotiations. A large portion of the north's revenue will now be reliant on the independent country of South Sudan, who is expected to increase oil production dramatically. Despite the separation of Sudan and South Sudan by a new national border, tensions between the two countries may now be stronger than ever.

To further complicate relations between the states, the south controls many more natural resources than does the north. South Sudan exports teak and a variety of minerals, including iron ore, copper, tungsten, and gold, as well as producing cotton, peanuts, wheat, sugar, and other crops (Rugangazi). Sudan, however, is much more nomadic, dependent on cattle and other stock in its rural areas (see fig. 4). This means that, with the

secession of South Sudan, the country of Sudan is that much more impoverished and separated from the mining and agricultural resources that it once could have leveraged in the international community. With disenfranchised Islamists in Khartoum, this economic instability provides an almost immediate basis for the legitimacy of an insurgency. Historically, burgeoning insurgencies have been analogous to the negative social and economic conditions of a people (O'Neill, 4). Because the federal government of Sudan is weakened by the secession and delegitimized through its dependence on South Sudan for oil revenue, insurgent organizations in the country are given an opportunity to showcase the faults of the administration and thereby challenge its authority, likely with violence. While not a cause of terrorism in itself, an insurgency would nevertheless provide means and motivations for the tactic's use.

Economics aside, the next most noteworthy effect of the southern separation is the new lack of social diversity. The south has effectively cut itself away from the Arabic and Muslim north. What was once a point of contention within a country is now a point of contention across borders. Without a focus on civil war and ethnic or religious differences, the country of Sudan now finds itself with an essentially homogenous people. This, in addition to a perceived liberalism of the government, will likely cause Sharia law to be implemented on a wider scale than it has been in the past. Taking this into consideration, one might suppose that the country will now be more united than ever. One might otherwise predict that the nation will simply shift from religious lines to sectarian lines and, in light of poor conditions and an authoritarian regime, be more disjointed than ever. Likely, Sudan's future will fall somewhere in the median. The country will always face antagonism between factions, but it is difficult to imagine levels of bloodshed even approaching that of the civil war.

DIPLOMACY

Truly, the country of Sudan has many problems confronting its future stability. What is more dangerous, though, from the perspective of terrorism, is not the threat that the people are to Sudan but rather the threat that Sudan is to Africa. While the potential for violence is uncertain at the national level it is, in fact, much higher when considering militant, international insurgencies within today's global political and economic system. As a newly transformed country, Sudan is in an ill-fated position to harbor and export terrorism throughout the

region—namely, Islamist terrorism. This is due largely to the catalysts of Sudan's strategic location, tolerant environment, and porous borders. Additionally, because the new borders of Sudan contain an almost uniformly Sunni Muslim population, many in Sudan may feel that they truly are "the vanguard of the Islamic Revolution in the African continent" (Sandee).

It is for this reason, strategically more than ideologically, that Sudan will be a focal point for diplomacy in the near future. Dr. Jakkie Cilliers, executive director of the Institute for Security Studies in South Africa, stated that:

Since sub-state terrorism is already endemic in Africa, the future threat potential in the continent lies in a complex mixture of sub-national and international terrorism. Africa may come to play a central role in international terrorism. The motivation, means, and targets all exist and these opportunities will not go unheeded for much longer. Africa presents both a facilitating environment and a target-rich environment for terrorists that seek to attack the United States, and indeed the global system. (1)

With a coast on the Red Sea and nearby countries such as Libya, Egypt, Chad, Kenya, Somalia, Algeria, and, now, South Sudan, the nation of Sudan is a perfect entrance into North Africa. Adding to this the human terrain of a 97 percent Islamic population and a poor, unstable government, this entrance is easily opened by many Islamist organizations (*World Factbook*).

The position in which Sudan finds itself is concerning to many, but three countries in particular, other than South Sudan, have an extraordinary interest in the fate of the nation. The United States, for obvious reasons, is concerned with suppressing this potential for terrorism and stabilizing cooperation throughout the region. It has sought to accomplish this almost entirely through economic sanctions and diplomacy. Iran, a long-time partner of the Sudanese government, is not interested in advancing terrorism per se, but in spreading Islamist ideals throughout the continent. With the recent changes in Sudan, it is likely that Iran will place a strong diplomatic focus on the country and on Islamic ties, despite Iran being mostly Shia Muslim. Finally, China has a strong but purely economic interest in Sudan and South Sudan.

Being the almost exclusive customer to the region, China receives a significant percentage of its oil supply from Sudan and South Sudan (Trivett). Although South Sudan has most of the oil fields, the pipeline and infrastructure to transport this oil

leads through Sudan. It is for this reason that Sudan can still effectively negotiate its share of the oil profits. It is also for this reason that the United States cannot purchase oil from South Sudan, with revenue shared between still-sanctioned Sudan (Trivett). China has offered, however, to build a pipeline—as well as railways, roads, and fiber optics—to the coast of Kenya and in doing so effectively cut out Sudan from the south (Rugangazi). While this is not likely to happen for some time, the economic effects on Sudan if this came about could be devastating. This potential alone is likely to encourage Sudan into relying on diplomacy more than it ever has. Accordingly, relationships with the three aforementioned countries—the U.S., Iran, and China—will shape the country of Sudan more than any other outside pressures.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Much of Sudan's future posture in international relations will be depend upon economic and ideological influences from within the country. As mentioned earlier, the country post-secession finds itself financially disadvantaged, especially in contrast to South Sudan's potential. It lost most of the oil that once made up a considerable portion of its revenue. It also lost fertile lands and minerals, most of which were untapped. This, combined with a national religious uniformity, provides several factors which can increase the possibility of a resurgence in local terrorist groups. Bearing these new developments in mind, several countries will be strategically invested in Sudanese stability, South Sudanese stability, and the Sudan-South Sudan relationship. This multinational interest is not likely to waver for some time, especially as political alliances are built and economic disparity between the two countries grows.

Both Sudan and South Sudan face a long and complicated road to stability. For this reason, regional terrorism may encounter a fertile environment in which to reestablish itself. At present, Sudan seems to be influenced by diplomacy more than in the past, as evidenced most through the allowed separation of South Sudan (Shinn, 62). It is nevertheless in a unique position to export violence into Africa. Although the regime has taken a stand against radical Islamist factions, such groups continue to be tolerated by many in the populace and perhaps some in government. Sudan has made noteworthy progress in eliminating terrorism from within its borders, but these borders remain permeable and this impetus could yet be stopped. Even the new country of South Sudan poses a

threat of terrorism, having gained an unstable and volatile independence in much the same fashion as its northern neighbor 50 years earlier. Truly, both countries will play a principal role in shaping the landscape of Africa over the next decade. With appropriate international pressures, this landscape can be one of cooperation and collaboration. In the absence of productive diplomacy, though, Sudan could once again become a safe haven for terrorism and one of the most considerable threats to the region's stability.

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Book Review: Grab Their Belts: The Viet Cong's Big-Unit War Against the U.S., 1965-1966

by Warren Wilkins.
Published by Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland. 312 pages, 2011.
*Reviewed by* CDR Youssef Aboul-Enein

Comment on this article online.

Warren Wilkins has written a valuable book on the early phases of the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. The Vietnamese adage of "Grab Their Belts to Fight Them!" was an attempt to neutralize massive American firepower by hugging the enemy, a tactic used by the Soviets fighting the Germans in World War II. Wilkins makes a well-researched argument that redefines and cuts through the popular mythology of the Viet Cong being a insurgency of fighters in black pajamas. Wilkins, a Fellow at the Center for Threat Analysis, demonstrates that between 1965 and 1966, the Viet Cong conducted large scale complex operations at the regimental level, forcing General William Westmoreland to fight a large footprint, expensive big unit war. The North Vietnamese conducted massive combined arms ground tactics using infantry, artillery, and even armor, a tactic useful against the French, but tactically disastrous when faced with America's combined air, sea, and ground arms. Wilkins dissects several key battles between Viet Cong and U.S. combat forces that resulted in deep strategic soul searching in Hanoi and Washington.

In *Grab Their Belts to Fight Them*, readers will get inside the minds of North Vietnamese divisional commanders like General Tran Van Tra, and the better known General Vo Nugyen Giap, the architect of the 1954 Battle of Diem Bien Phu against the French. After the Battle of Ia Drang in 1966, Giap's influence waned as senior commanders considered potential strategies against the United States. Their discussions centered on whether to shift the war to an insurgency or continue big unit operations despite the effectiveness of U.S. air and helicopter-borne assets that decimated these formations. Readers will gain an appreciation of the capability and discipline of a Viet Cong Army that was well trained, well-equipped, and whose commanders were concerned about mounting casualties. In the west we think of a logistical tail, in which supply units support front-line combat units, the North Vietnamese thought of the logistical nose, meaning they prepped the battlefield logistically before deploying combat units. The North Vietnamese conducted massive operations which were carefully scripted and rehearsed. Improvisation in large unit warfare was not a strong trait of either the Viet Cong or North Vietnamese Army and would be a problem for many former Soviet indoctrinated armies.

Wilkins has done us a service with this new book. While my specialization is al-Qaida, it is important to appreciate that the late al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) leader Abdul-Aziz al-Muqrin appreciated the Vietnamese insurgency
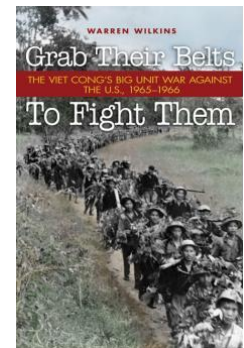
tactics, which themselves built upon Mao Tse Tung's insurgency principles. Wilkins book helps me to better understand the importance of preventing al-Qaida from gaining the capacity to transition to big-unit wars that the Viet Cong undertook between 1965 to 1966, while simultaneously raising the issues of legitimacy and strategic communications in insurgencies. However, winning an insurgency is not as simple as insurgents gaining the capacity to fight large unit wars or COIN commanders defeating insurgents in big unit wars as the Vietnam War ultimately showed. The book also shows the power of managing the narrative, with Hanoi painting a picture of being willing to

sacrifice to the last person, and that their efforts were mainly guerilla based, versus the reality that they were concerned with casualties, and did conduct large scale coordinated operations, being well equipped and trained. Wilkins book helps keep these realities in focus.

Commander Aboul-Enein is author of "Militant Islamist Ideology: Understanding the Global Threat," (Naval Institute Press, 2010). He teaches part-time at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF). He wishes to thank his ICAF colleague CAPT Chan Swallow, USN for his edits and for discussing this book.